WPC is on Social Media. Follow us on **Facebook** at Westminster Presbyterian Church, **Twitter** @ WestPresAkron, and Instagram.

The church office is open from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday-Friday.

WPC Staff

The Reverend Jonathan S. Hauerwas, Pastor jhauerwas.wpc@gmail.com
(office hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Friday, 9:30-12:00 pm)
(cell phone 330-606-4551)
Valerie Thorson, Music Director/Organist wpcmusicdir1250@gmail.com
(weekly office days: Tuesday—Thursday)
Sheila Svoboda, Dir. of Children & Family Ministry wpcchildren1250@gmail.com
(weekly office days: Tuesday and Thursday)
Mallory Gray, Youth Coordinator wpcyouth1250@gmail.com
(weekly workdays: Tuesday and Thursday)
Claudine Schooley, WPC Church Office wpcoffice1250@gmail.com
(weekly office days: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday)
Debby Evrard, Staff Accountant wpcfinance1250@gmail.com
(weekly office days: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday)
Dave Bodnar, Daytime Custodian wpcbuilding@gmail.com
(weekly workdays: Sunday—Thursday)
Zack Troyer, Director of Adult & Youth Bells, and Children's Choir
(cell phone 330-285-0213) wpcchildrenschoir1250@gmail.com
Traci Range, Director of Childcare wpcchildcare1250@gmail.com
(cell phone 330-459-1177)

Westminster Presbyterian Church
1250 West Exchange Street, Akron, Ohio 44313
westminsterakron@gmail.com - 330-836-2226
www.westminsterakron.org

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The Script

July-August 2020

Pastor's Corner

Friends,

Throughout my ministry, it has been important to me to reach out to those who are isolated. Now, more than ever, large numbers of individuals are isolated - cut off from friends, family, church, and other activities that bring them joy and enliven their spirits. The suspension of in-person worship services, along with other, in-person gatherings at Westminster has been both lengthy and challenging for all of us. Yet, even in the midst of a global pandemic, we have found new ways to be the church.

I am grateful that many of you have engaged with our community virtually. You are taking advantage of audio and visual advancements to participate in online worship, Bible studies, discussion groups, and committee meetings. The food collections we previously enjoyed as a part of the regular worship experience in the church sanctuary have shifted outside to the parking lot.

(cont'd.)

Amid trying times, you continue to find creative ways to carry on as the body of Christ. Thus, while our Session has chosen to suspend in-person worship through the end of August with my full support, we all understand that the church was never actually "closed." Rather, the church simply adapted and evolved, just as it has been doing for the last two millennia.

Even so, not all were equally prepared for the changes we are now experiencing. A number of our members do not own a computer, do not use email, and do not otherwise have access to our virtual worship services. For them, the current challenges are not merely an inconvenience but are the difference between living in community and feeling totally cut off from it. Recently, I had the pleasure of speaking with Mary Johnson on the day of her 69th wedding anniversary. Less than two weeks earlier, she had celebrated her 88th birthday. She and Herb are doing well, physically, but living in daily isolation is not how they imagined spending their golden years.

Human beings are social creatures and we long for life in community. To this end, our Session continues to monitor the safety and security issues related to resuming a variety of in-person activities. Presently, groups of up to ten people are permitted to gather on church grounds by observing social distancing precautions, agreeing to mask, and utilizing hand sanitizing stations. Additionally, our staff is available to you from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday - Friday. Please continue to reach out to fellow members who may be feeling isolated. Your positive interaction serves as a hopeful reminder of the enduring nature of the body of Christ.

Peace and best wishes,
Jon

New Membership & Accounting Software

ACS software was developed over 35 years ago. Westminster began using ACS in mid-2012. Over a year ago, ACS developed a new more technological and mobile based software titled Realm. They are in the process of moving their clients to the more mobile system with the intent of replacing the current ACS software.

There are several levels of Realm based on the user. Realm Inform is for churches with less than 200 in weekly worship attendance and is designed for use by church staff. Reviews on the new software indicate that it is easier to use and it is less expensive. WPC anticipates savings of $2,500 or more per year in software support charges after the upgrade. Session approved the software upgrade at its meeting on May 26, 2020.

In preparation for the upgrade, WPC staff, Finance Committee and Membership Committee recognized that our membership and accounting databases were in dire need of "cleanup" before the conversion. The Membership Committee established some basic rules for the clean-up procedure and new "member" categories were established. Beginning June 1, staff began the process of reviewing nearly 3,000 records to identify those that should be carried into the new software and update information about our current church family. The conversion is tentatively scheduled for the week of August 10. During that week, we will be unable to access the database or accounting records until the data conversion and upgrade is complete. Staff will participate in a five-hour web training program to introduce them to the new features available and teach them to utilize the new software.

Please be patient as we all learn a new system. I can guarantee that reports and other information will need adjustments and refinement before they are just perfect!

Our Friends Who Have Entered Eternal Life

Charles J. Pearson died May 16, 2020 in Cincinnati, OH. Pastor Hauerwas officiated at a graveside service in Copley on June 22.

Mary Josephine Stasell (Mary Jo) passed away peacefully on June 25, 2020 in Arroyo Grande, CA.

Pastor Hauerwas officiated at a memorial service for Mary Ann Strassburg on July 11. She died on January 23, 2020.

Session

Session has been meeting virtually and through e-meetings frequently since mid-March. Approved minutes as posted on the church website include our best estimates of worship attendance based on Facebook viewings. We will continue to meet as needed.

From the Finance Office

Monthly Financial Report

June 2020	Actual	Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Total Revenues	$44,157.06	$57,107.70	$307,381.43	*$317,480.30
Total Expenses	$41,799.72	$53,248.52	$250,281.03	$313,006.76
Net	$2,357.34	$3,859.18	$57,100.40	$4,473.54

*Budgeted total revenues include anticipated withdrawals from Rowley investments necessary to balance the budget totaling $20,969 for the year.

Please contact the Finance Office if you would like a copy of the detailed financial report for the period ending June 30, 2020.

Church Events

Renew Your Wedding Vows

Love is in the air at Westminster! We invite you to renew your wedding vows with Pastor Jon during our livestream service on **Sunday, July 26 at 10:30 a.m.** All couples are invited to participate in this virtual renewal. Valerie will be playing wedding music for the opening and closing Voluntaries, and Paul and Valerie Stewart will sing a special duet. We also encourage you to send us pictures of your wedding and/or special anniversaries. Please let us know if you have a milestone anniversary approaching, so we can share in your joy.

We will post the pictures on the WPC website so that we may all enjoy them on this special Sunday. For those of you who may have lost your partner/husband/wife, we still would love to see and share your pictures! Send your pictures to Mallory Gray at wpcsmedia1250@gmail.com

Announcements

Holy Communion

We will be celebrating The Sacrament of Holy Communion together during our virtual worship service at 10:30 a.m. on **August 9**. Please have your bread and juice nearby and be prepared to partake at the appropriate time.

WPC Puzzlers Unite

A lot of us are enjoying puzzles as we keep our social distance, and this brought out an idea of a new way we can share fellowship while we are apart this Summer. We are setting up a "little library" of sorts to allow us to share jigsaw puzzles. If you have finished with a puzzle and want to share it, place it in the new box near the back entrance to the church. Feel free to take any puzzles that others have left, and keep the cycle going. People are encouraged to leave their names in the boxes, or even leave pictures of the completed puzzles so others can share the enjoyment.

A few ground rules: 1) Please be sure all pieces are accounted for before sharing a puzzle. 2) Please tape or otherwise seal boxes (putting the pieces in a Ziploc bag inside the box is even better). 3) Be aware that once a puzzle is shared it is not meant to return to its original home. 4) Please help keep the box tidy. 5) Puzzles that do not seem to be circulating for a period of time may eventually be donated for others to enjoy.

For more information or to help with this fellowship, contact Cathy Melver at chwdoc@gmail.com

Information to Know

Calling All Members

If you saw a strange phone number on your caller id sometime in May or June, it may have been someone from the Westminster congregation calling you.

From The Church Office

An Unexpected Diagnosis

Hello friends. Because I am a visible part of the Ministry Team here I need to explain some of my behavior that is seen when I am speaking sometimes now. I was diagnosed in May of 2017 with Parkinson's Disease. Parkinson's Disease (PD) is a chronic and progressive movement disorder that involves the malfunction and death of vital nerve cells in the brain, called neurons. Some of these dying neurons once produced dopamine, a chemical that sends messages to the part of the brain that controls movement and coordination. As PD progresses, the amount of dopamine produced in the brain decreases, leaving a person unable to control movement normally.

I take a variety of medications that provide synthetic dopamine. It is very tricky to get the dosage right. I need to have enough to help loosen the rigidity that comes with the lack of natural dopamine and not too much that gives my body uncontrolled movements. You may see some of that right now as the disease progresses and we are always tinkering with medications. There are also many other symptoms of Parkinson's that just show up! Never a dull moment with this unpredictable disease. The positive news is that there is a LOT of research going on! I am actually in a year long trial with the Cleveland Clinic looking at exercise and PD. I am thrilled to be using a Peloton bike in my home (provided by the study). They are looking at exercise intensity. It is clear that exercise helps the symptoms of PD, but they are now trying to zero in on just what kinds of exercise work in what ways and the medicines that work with the exercise. I just started on June 29 and I am hoping for some improvement in my symptoms.

So, I just would like to be transparent with this part of my life, I would like to continue to serve Westminster as long as I am useful. I don't want your sympathy (there are worse diseases!), but I DO appreciate your prayers. And I continue to pray for all of you as we navigate this frightful pandemic.

Peace, Sheila.

- The much anticipated steeple project has been delayed until next year.

If you have any questions or concern, please call or text Ginny Melver at 330-256-0742.

Celtic Garden News

Caring for a garden the size of Westminster's is a significant undertaking. Annually, the flowers need to be planted, watered, deadheaded, and staked alongside weeds that continually grow and require removal. COVID-19 provided additional challenges this year, as social distancing guidelines limited the number of gardeners who could work simultaneously on a given task. Still, our dedicated gardeners remained committed to the work at hand and once again provided a beautiful oasis in the city. We hope that you will take the opportunity to visit this year's garden and enjoy the abundance of God's provision, made known in a multitude of colors, shapes, and fragrances.

Additionally, anyone is welcome to join this incredible team -no experience necessary. The next workdays will be **July 25, August 8, and August 22.** Please contact Marge Rearick or Kristy Yates if you might be interested in serving.

Twenty-six Elders, Deacons and other volunteers attempted to call all of the households in our Westminster Church Family. We wanted to make sure you were surviving the "stay at home" isolation and find out if you were able to connect with us through a computer or mobile device. We learned that some of you no longer use a computer or email service and desire a change in the way you receive written communications from the church. In order to continue receiving information about the church, these individuals were added to our homebound list.

Additionally, individuals were added to our prayer list as many of you had family or friends affected by the COVID-19 virus or were experiencing other health concerns. Our calls also generated a list of individuals who have moved or changed phone numbers. If we are without your correct phone and email address, or you are receiving this communication as forwarded mail please send us the correct information as soon as possible. We want to stay in touch!

First Sunday Drive-In/Drop-Off Food Collection

First Sunday Food Collection resumed on July 5 as a "Drive-in/Drop-off" event. Our collection was very successful. We plan to pack grocery bags for distribution to the neighborhood between 1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, July 19. Our Youth, Gabby Gray, Kinsie Willis and Holden and Caden Labbe were in the driveway receiving the donations. They also unpacked and sorted all the goods. Our next collection will be on **Sunday, August 2**. Please note the **new hours are 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

(cont'd.)

We are requesting these non-perishable food items:

Spaghetti	Canned Vegetables
Jell-O	Spaghetti Sauce
Canned Fruit	Peanut Butter
Macaroni and Cheese	Canned Tuna or Chicken Soup

Thank you for your generosity so that we may serve the "least of these."

Grow

2 Virtual Bible Studies

Pastor Jon is leading a zoom Monday-night Bible study at 7:00 p.m.

Adult Education

Rae Leonard is leading a new study on the short story of Ruth, every Thursday on zoom at 7:00 p.m.

current system. Early on we learned that the speakers were not providing sound to the back half of the Sanctuary. We also discovered that some of the speakers had been disconnected. Much to our surprise, one of the technicians referred to us was involved with the original quotes to install the current system. He remembered the Sanctuary very well and noticed that the rear Sanctuary speakers were directing sound to the balcony rather than to the rear of the Sanctuary on the main floor.

Session hired RNR Systems, Inc., to check all of the wiring and components of the sound system. All of the equipment was found to be working properly, and after rewiring some connections in the lower level sound room, the sound in the Sanctuary improved significantly. To complete the project, RNR Systems, Inc., will rehang the rear speakers to match the angle called for in the original specifications; meet with WPC Sound Board Operators to make final adjustments; and provide any training needed to keep the system working at its optimum. All of this was accomplished at a cost of less than $5,500. We hope you are pleased with the improved sound in the Sanctuary.

What Is Happening With Properties

Since mid-March few have been to the church. Thank you for staying home and being safe. Properties Committee has been meeting, via Zoom, to keep things going. Here is our update.

- WYDACA started back on June 1. The number of children has been reduced due to covid-19 restrictions. We are happy they are able to provide this much needed service.
- The steam boiler is being repaired, actually replaced, during the summer when it is not needed.
- All (about thirty) the overgrown arborvitae will be removed from the northeast corner of the property.
- The Royal Oak recycle bin has been removed from the Rockynol Ohio Living parking lot.

(cont'd.)

We see the “Flat Jesus” project as a way to keep our church family connected during this time of social distancing. Color “Flat Jesus” and take him with you as you travel around your house…or create some scenes for Jesus too! Take a picture of him doing lots of different things: eating dinner with the family, watching a movie, having fun at the beach or the mountains, hanging out with your siblings or whatever you are doing! It will be an amazing adventure! It is a great way to remember that Jesus is always with us, wherever we go, and with whatever we do. And it just might start up a conversation with someone about what you are doing…and why.

HOW TO CREATE YOUR VERY OWN “FLAT JESUS”:

1. Print out the template (on heavy cardstock, if possible) or take a printed “Flat Jesus” from the Puzzle box outside at the Education Wing.
2. Decorate your “Flat Jesus.” Be creative!
3. When you have taken photos of “Flat Jesus,” you can upload your “Flat Jesus” picture by:
   - emailing it to Mallory at wpcsmedia1250@gmail.com
   - or you can upload them to our Facebook page, Westminster Presbyterian Church.

It will be so exciting to see what our church family members are doing during this time. And remember, Jesus is with you ALWAYS!

Church Life

Sound System Just Like New

When you return for in-person services, you will have the opportunity to experience our Sanctuary Sound System just like it was heard when it was brand new. The Sound Team Task Force has been looking at many options to improve the sound quality in the Sanctuary, from installing a brand-new system to restoring the

WPC Book Group

The book group has continued to meet via Zoom throughout this time of distancing. As always, all are welcome to join us for fellowship and eclectic discussion. See Cathy Melver for the Zoom link if you are interested in joining us.

Our books are:
7/13/20 *The Starless Sea,* Erin Morgenstern - led by Neal Enrick.
8/10/20 Bring a book on topics of race to share.
9/14/20 *Hypnotist's Love Story,* Liane Moriarty- led by Kacey Yates Gable.

For August, we have decided to change format a bit to reflect our important national discussion about race. There are so many good books that we will each bring one to share.

Serve

Chancel Flowers

Many thanks to WPC members and friends!

We are truly grateful to the members and friends of WPC who have donated flowers as memorials these past few months. Floral arrangements continue to add a beautiful atmosphere to Sunday morning worship services. If you would like to contribute flowers please call Kristy Yates at 330-807-6228.

Also, thank you to the small but dedicated group of arrangers who creates every week. If you are interested in joining this group, this would be the perfect time to volunteer. Our award-winning garden is in full bloom and individualized instruction is available!

Our Homebound Members

Every week the office sends our homebound members 3 pages by mail, in order to stay in contact. Jim Shriner and Claudine Schooley are currently taking turns to write the devotional with a prayer.

We Need More Volunteers

As this ministry is very appreciated and will probably continue after summer, we are asking for help and some volunteers to write the devotional with a short prayer.

Would you be interested in participating? Please contact Claudine at wpcoffice1250@gmail.com and she will add you to the calendar.

Example Of Devotional & Prayer From Jim Shriner

"Some churches around the nation have recently opened for in-person service. Some are readying themselves to open in the near future. And some, like Westminster, are choosing to continue their "virtual" services for several more months. Whatever the choices, these churches will all need to be in our prayers. The prayer I have chosen this week comes from a recent newsletter of "The Cathedral Community Church in Rochester, New York." It calls for God's grace for the considerations that lie ahead.

God's grace is frequently mentioned in the Bible. I believe that theologically speaking, grace is a term present in many religions. It has been defined as the divine influence, which operates in humans to regenerate and sanctify, to inspire virtuous impulses and impart strength to endure trial and resist temptation; and as an individual virtue of excellence of divine origin."

PRAYER
Almighty, ever-living God, pour out your grace upon this place and extend the gift of your help to all who call upon you, that the power of your Word and of the Sacraments may strengthen here the hearts of all the faithful. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

FINAL THOUGHT
Without God's grace, no person can be saved. To receive it, we must acknowledge that we cannot save ourselves, that only God can save us, and that our only way to receive this loving favor is through faith in Christ.

The Third Sunday Dinner/Free Hot Meal

The Third Sunday Dinner will resume with a drive in option for **August 16** with service times from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. We will be following social distance guidance and have simplified our staffing needs, but still will need volunteers to help with traffic control and running food to cars. Please find the link on WPC website to sign up and help serve our community.

http://www.westminsterakron.org/deacons-volunteers/free-third-sunday-dinner/

Education News

Children's Ministries

Please join us in a Flat Jesus Adventure!
WHAT IN THE WORLD IS "THE ADVENTURES OF FLAT JESUS?"
"Flat Jesus" was created from the basis of a children's book called Flat Stanley, (written by Jeff Brown). In the book, a boy named Stanley becomes flattened and is able to be mailed to different places, having all kinds of exciting adventures.