



Westminster Presbyterian Church

come encounter grow serve

1250 W Exchange • Akron, Ohio • westminsterakron.org • 330-836-2226

The Script November-December 2020

Pastor's Corner

Each year, Advent and Christmas highlight some of the most beautiful celebrations of the Christian calendar. To commemorate these occasions, we have decorated the church facility with festive greens, red bows, Advent candles, and poinsettias. We have worshiped God with a retelling of the Christmas narrative, provided by our children, Tweens, and youth. We have been lifted by the soaring tones of a full choir, and we have been summoned to the urgency of praise by the Paragon Brass Quintet. Throughout this holy season, we have enjoyed traditional hymnody and the improvisational sounds of jazz. So, too, we have lost ourselves in wonder amid organ notes that, while certainly familiar, feel as fresh and alive as the first time we heard them.

As Christmas approaches, we are reminded of Jesus' birth, both humble and triumphant, as we hear the call to give our lives in service of God. In response, we faithfully bring our offerings. *(cont'd.)*

There are offerings of hats, scarves, and mittens for those in need, which proudly adorn a Christmas tree. There are offerings of time and talent in the form of a Third Sunday Dinner, providing fellowship and sustenance to our neighbors. There are offerings of love, as we take part in a Christmas basket project for those less fortunate.

While many Advent and Christmas seasons have come and gone with ritual and purpose, no year is ever quite the same as the last. I commend the pages of this Script newsletter to you, with the hope that you will note how creative and intentional ministry continues, even in the midst of a global pandemic. For just as the church did not close in 2020, Christmas will not be cancelled this year either. Even if we are not worshipping in person, I am grateful for your presence in the life of Westminster Presbyterian Church, and I look forward to welcoming the birth of the Christ-child in both familiar and new ways.

Expectantly,
Jon

Church Events

Sunday, December 20 at 10:30 a.m.

“Family Sunday” - Children’s Virtual Christmas Pageant during the online worship

Thursday, December 24 at 5:00 p.m.

Online Christmas Eve service

***The church offices will be closed on Christmas Eve Day and Christmas Day, December 24 and 25, as well as December 31 and January 1.**

WPC Giving Tree

For most of 2020 we have all been living in unusual times. But it has been even more trying for the underprivileged. For this upcoming holiday season, as in the past, Westminster will be sponsoring its annual Giving Tree. This year however, even that tradition will be different because our Sunday morning services will continue to be virtual. But those scarves, mittens, hats and gloves will be needed by our area homeless women and children that rely on ACCESS Inc. for shelter more than ever. So this year, please pay even closer attention to those in need and donate freely. Our Giving Tree will be placed in Wright-Herberich Hall. Watch your weekly Bulletin and Sunday Update for the dates of the Giving Tree Collections.



Acme Fresh Market Community Cash-Back

The Outreach Committee will be collecting Acme Fresh Market receipts through December 26. Please put your register receipts in an envelope and drop them off with your First Sunday Food Collection Drive-In/Drop-Off or feel free to mail or deliver them at another time. Last year Presbyterian Women received over \$400 from purchases made by our Westminster family. This year Acme Fresh Market Community CashBack will support our Outreach Ministries. We can earn 5% on purchases of Acme Fresh Market, Food Club, Simply Done and other select brands. Thanks for helping us support our community and ministries with your Acme Fresh Market receipts.



Christmas Food Baskets

The Salvation Army has funding concerns for this Christmas season as they expect low kettle contributions due to the pandemic. Now, more than ever, the reliable and generous contributions of the Westminster congregation are needed to support the programs of this important Outreach partner. You can help make another family's Christmas a little brighter by delivering and/or contributing money to help fill the grocery baskets.



Our annual Christmastime delivery of food baskets is scheduled to take place on **Saturday, December 12.** The Christmas Basket Team is working on a plan to provide grocery baskets or gift cards to 200 needy families in the Greater Akron area. Opportunities to support the project through financial and volunteer support will be announced during a Moment for Ministry on November 22. Please plan to help with this important annual Christmas project.

Family Sunday

Family Sunday will take place on December 20, the Fourth Sunday of Advent, and will feature our annual Christmas pageant (pre-recorded in small groups), along with a child liturgist.

The lighting of the Advent candles will continue this year, utilizing worship team leaders as Advent candle lighters. As a result of Covid-19 precautions, we will not be incorporating the Paragon brass quintet on Christmas Eve and will be providing alternative forms of worshipping God through music.

The Third Sunday Dinner

Third Sunday Dinner Crew reopened on August 16th for the first time in several months and again provided hot meals to the community in September. Following social distance protocols and using a drive-through service, Akron community members were able to pick-up a hot meal prepared by WPC's outstanding chefs: Mike Grau, Anne Karney and Raphael Peoples. Several other volunteers helped to make this service possible including help in the kitchen, running food to the pick up point and distributing meals. Left over meals were given to Haven of Rest Ministries. We continue to need members to consider signing up to wash dishes or pass out meals. All social distancing and covid guidelines are being utilized. Please consider volunteering. You can sign-up on the website under deacons and third Sunday dinner. Any questions, please call Rob Gilbert at 330-310-0564.

Drive-In/Drop-Off Food Collection

Thanks to your generosity, the Outreach Committee with the help of the Tweens and Youth has received and packed over 100 bags of groceries. Distributions have benefitted Good Neighbors, those who come to the church during the hours of distribution, and a food pantry located on North Hawkins that serves an area of disabled and low-income households. Collections are scheduled for Sunday, November 1 and Sunday, December 6 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. Thank you for your generosity!



Items needed include: Spaghetti and Canned Spaghetti Sauce; Boxed Macaroni & Cheese Mix; Canned Soup (Vegetable, Tomato or Chicken Noodle); Rice or Pasta Side Dishes (Knorr, Near East, Zatarains); Canned Vegetables (Green Beans, Corn, Carrots, or Mixed); Canned Fruit (Peaches, Pears, or Fruit Cocktail); Peanut Butter/Jelly; Canned Chicken Breast; Packaged Muffin, Cookie or Brownie Mix; Oatmeal or Cream of Wheat; Packaged Muffin Mix.



Monthly Financial Report

September 2020	Actual	Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Total Revenues	\$42,243.80	\$56,657.70	\$439,652.10	*\$465,170.45
Total Expenses	\$34,423.24	\$47,551.21	\$364,949.18	\$462,011.08
Net	\$7,820.56	\$9,106.49	\$74,702.92	\$3,159.37

*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 September 30, 2020.

Year-End Gifts and Contributions

Just a reminder that your year-end gifts must be physically delivered to the Finance Office or postmarked on or before December 31, 2020 to be included on your 2020 Giving Statement according to IRS regulations regarding tax deductions allowable in a specific year.

The church offices will be closed on Christmas Eve Day and Christmas Day, December 24 and 25, as well as December 31 and January 1. **Because we will be closed on December 31, we will need all contributions by 2:00 p.m. Thursday, December 30.** Thank you for your generous support of Westminster Presbyterian Church during 2020.

Stewardship

“God Has a Plan for Us.” During these very volatile times in the midst of a global pandemic, we take comfort in knowing that God has a plan for each one of us. We continue to have many opportunities to share our talents, time, and gifts with our shared community of faith, the greater Akron community, and on behalf of the national and international work of the church.

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Your contributions are critical in keeping our church family and community strong and vibrant. With this in mind, we share our two stewardship goals for 2021:

1.) Obtain 60% of family units pledge for 2021.

2.) Reach and exceed our 2020 pledge amount of \$321,901. This is necessary to offset the reduced loose offerings in the Sunday morning collection due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The kick-off of our 2021 Stewardship Campaign started on October 18, 2020 and will conclude during worship on November 8, 2020, with the Consecration of Pledges. There are several ways to give. You may mail or physically deliver your pledge cards to the church, or you may pledge using our church website. We have much to be thankful for at our church and in our community. Please help us reach our two Goals for Stewardship 2021. We thank you for your consideration and for all you have done in the past to support Westminster Presbyterian Church. We all look forward to getting through these difficult times together and worshipping in person again.

Giving Online

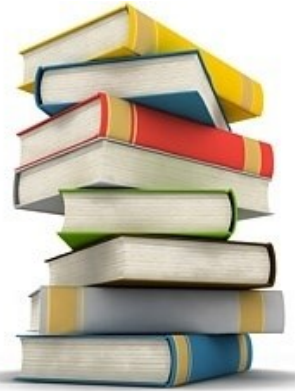
During these difficult times, the church remains grateful for your faithful support of our ministries through your financial contributions.

Please help us continue to serve the WPC family and our neighbors by ensuring that our staff is supported, our facility remains operational, and the "least of these" are served. To give online, click under the tab "online giving" and use this QR Code.



WPC Book Club

As always, all are welcome to join WPC's book group for fellowship and discussion of an eclectic range of books. Meetings are held on 2nd Mondays via Zoom. Please contact Cathy Melver or Kacey Yates Gable for the Zoom link if you are interested in joining us. **On November 9** we will be discussing *Circling the Sun* by Paula McQueen, led by Kristy Yates. We are usually more casual for our **December 14** meeting, so this year we will gather in Wright-Herberich Hall, in masks and with room to spread out.



We can set up the Zoom link if anyone prefer to join us remotely. There will not be a specific book to discuss, and programming suitable for social distancing is still in the works.

Adult Bible Study

It is never too late to start studying the Bible in the midst of these trying times. Give your week a dose of inspiration and find some joy in fellowship with friends. We study a new chapter of John's Gospel every week so you can pop in anytime. Thursday Bible study Zoom meetings are from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Just contact Rae Leonard at leonardrae4@gmail.com or 330-256-9316 so she can send you a link. Come join us on Thursdays.



Pastoral Portraits Unveiling

On October 11, three pastoral portraits were unveiled during our online worship service by Elder Michael Dunbar. One reminds us of a difficult past, while two others proclaim that God is not done with us yet. Together, we continue to wrestle with the challenges and triumphs of our shared history.

The first pastoral portrait we unveiled is of Bill Markley. Markley arrived at Westminster in 1992. From his sermons to his leadership style, Markley was a divider. His pastorate here was brief and, as a direct result of his words and deeds, our congregation endured a very painful schism. Consequently, Markley lost his ordination status in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).



Today, we are aggrieved by the pain caused by Bill Markley, and for the wounds that remain. We also recognize that remembering the past does not mean honoring each actor in it. Sometimes it is, instead, a call for repentance. By including Markley's portrait among the other pastoral leaders of this church, we are affirming our commitment to the healing and wholeness embodied by Jesus on behalf of the one body of Christ.

Following Markley's tumultuous time at Westminster, capable pastors served this congregation with their care, concern, and skill.

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They attempted to heal wounds and to move the church forward. The second pastoral portrait that we unveiled is of The Reverend Dr. Clifford Hayes. Dr. Hayes, who served our congregation from 1997 – 2004, was a healer in almost every respect.

He was particularly gifted at ministering to others in one-on-one settings. During his pastorate, Westminster rallied around the effort to rebuild the organ, and embarked on a renovation of what would become known as Wright-Herberich Hall. Dr. Hayes' ministry is a powerful legacy of the endurance and fortitude of the people of God.

The third pastoral portrait that we unveiled is of The Reverend Derek Starr Redwine. The Reverend Starr Redwine was an energetic organizer who was eager to experiment with new approaches. As a result, he was instrumental in beginning numerous new ministries in the life of this congregation.

In time, Derek was joined on staff by his wife, Amy, also an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who served as Westminster's Associate Pastor. Together, they were a dynamic team, making friends easily and engaging in inter-generational ministry.

Friends and fellow believers in Christ, this is a brief snapshot of where we have been. Today we not only remember and reflect on a difficult past, but also joyfully celebrate what God has accomplished among us.

Seeking to be ever-faithful to the leading of God's Spirit, and striving forward to what lies ahead, let us give thanks for the ministry of Westminster Presbyterian Church that carries on in us. And, together, may we embrace a future that even now is being revealed.

The accompanying letter is from The Reverend Cathy Ulrich, the General Presbyter and Stated Clerk of Eastminster Presbytery.

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A Letter from Cathy Ulrich

Dear Saints of Westminster,

On behalf of Eastminster Presbytery, I bring you greetings and give thanks for your faithfulness during this time of pandemic. Westminster continues to shine the light of Jesus Christ into dark and lonely places. I am humbled to call you my friends.

Today is an extraordinary example of how Westminster understands God's grace. Your ability to name your past and honor it for its strengths while recognizing its weakness, is a profound act of faith in a loving God. This also calls the presbytery to acknowledge its role in the life of the church. The portrait of each pastor represents a season of ministry in which the presbytery was a partner. Each pastor was elected by the congregation and the presbytery and the congregation may not call a pastor without the support of the presbytery. On behalf of Eastminster Presbytery, I offer sincere apology to Westminster for the mistakes, misunderstandings, and errors committed by the presbytery. There are times the presbytery fails, and the church suffers. Congregations, presbyteries, and pastors are all fallible human beings who seek to do the will of God. Pastoral relationships are established with prayer, discernment, vows of commitment, and the expectation that we are following the will of God. In each of these, we are deeply in need of the saving grace of Jesus Christ. The truth affirmed today is that though there is a portrait hung that many would see as a dark time in the life of the church, there are two others which represent seasons of healing and fruitful ministry. My guess is that a review of all the portraits which hang in your church would reveal that pain and disappointment are present in each ministry, and that the memories of grace and blessing outnumber the times of pain.

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The truth you represent today is that the light of Christ shines through us; it shines on the pain, it shines on the blessing, it shines on the ordinary. May these portraits be a reminder that, in season and out of season, we are known by God, and we are each called God's beloved.

Thank you for your faithfulness and your courage. May the Spirit of Christ continue to surround you and lead you as you seek to serve Almighty God.

Blessings and peace,

*Cathy Ulrich
General Presbyter and Stated Clerk
Eastminster Presbytery*



**The Rev. Dr. Arnold A.
(Bill) Markley III**
(Dec. 1, 1992 - Nov. 1, 1994)



**The Rev. Dr. Clifford
John Hayes**
(Sept. 15, 1997 - Dec. 31, 2004)



**The Rev. Derek
Starr Redwine**
(Aug. 1, 2006 - June 30, 2013)

Flower Memorials for Christmas

Your gift in memory or in honor of loved ones enables the Flower Committee to provide a beautiful setting in the sanctuary for Advent and Christmas. Send the name of the person(s) you are remembering along with your donation (there is no set amount) to the church office, attention Debby Evrard. Checks should be made payable to Westminster Presbyterian Church. We are planning to have the poinsettias in the sanctuary starting on December 13.



Poinsettia donors may pick up their chancel flower memorial gifts on Sunday December 27th 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. situated at the rear driveway entrance. The church office may be contacted during business hours for those that are unable to arrange a pick up on December 27th.

The deadline is **Tuesday, December 17, 2020**. You may also give electronically under “chancel flowers”. Email Debby at: wpcfinance1250@gmail.com with your memorial wording.

Music During the Sundays of Advent

This year will feature a journey through some of the most dramatic and lovely Recitatives and Arias from Part I of Handel’s “Messiah,” during the Opening and Closing Voluntaries. Our Choral Scholars will sing solos and duets of “Comfort Ye;” “Every Valley Shall Be Exalted;” “Thus Saith the Lord...And I Will Shake;” “Then Shall the Eyes of the Blind Be Opened...He Shall Feed His Flock;” and “But Who May Abide the Day of His Coming.”

As a special treat on Advent 4, which will be “Family Sunday,” the ILP will feature one of their young dancers to interpret the lyrical “Pastoral Symphony” during the Opening Voluntary.

Children's Ministries

We will have Christmas!

Yes, we'll have a Pageant (virtual!!) and we will collect gifts for the Children's Services Foster Parent Room. Bring your unwrapped gift on Sunday afternoon Dec. 6th along with your food donation, from 1-2:30, to the back of the church. Tweens will be collecting toy AND first Sunday food donations from your cars. Stay tuned for more information and a list of needed toys!

Advent 2020

November 29th is the first Sunday of Advent. Look in your e-mail for ideas for Advent this year for families. The pandemic has slowed us down a bit. You may actually have the opportunity to keep Advent and focus on some simple home rituals. We'll let the time speak to us and discover a less hectic and more focused, loving and intentional Advent.

Youth Program

Westminster's Youth group, with participants ranging from the 7th-12th grades, and comprising members from many school districts, began meeting in September. Some of our gatherings have been online. Others have been in person. Either way, it has been great to see everyone as we explore biblical themes, participate in hands-on service projects, and daily seek to find meaning in life as disciples of Jesus Christ.

If you know someone who could benefit from taking part in youth activities at Westminster, then please don't hesitate to get in touch with our pastor. These are formative years, and we are glad to walk this journey together.

Our Friends Who Have Entered Eternal Life

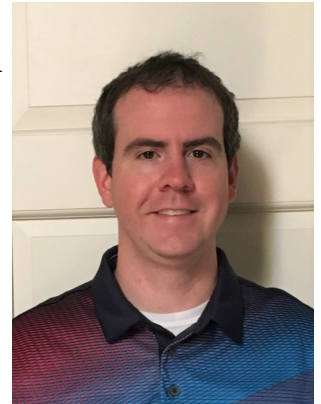


Regina Dickerson, a long-time member of Westminster Presbyterian Church, entered eternal life on September 14. She was 90 years old.

New Staff Member

Adam Kalcic is our new Communications Coordinator. Adam is originally from the Youngstown area and has a bachelor's degree in Web Communications from Youngstown State University. He has lived and worked professionally in the Akron area for over ten years.

As the Communications Coordinator he will be managing the Worship live streaming, website, newsletters, and other communications at Westminster. Adam and his wife Christa have one daughter, Amelia, and currently reside in Tallmadge.



Ways to Connect

During this time of continued social distancing, online worship services, and “virtual” meetings, we invite you to reach out to the church office or Adam Kalcic for assistance coordinating group meetings. We encourage you to stay in touch with fellow members during this difficult time and to participate in a time of group fellowship utilizing the comments section of Facebook Live following worship each Sunday.



**WPC Worship Service is on Facebook Live
every week at 10:30 a.m.**

Follow us on Social Media: **Facebook** at Westminster Presbyterian Church,
Twitter @WPCAkron and **Instagram**.



The Reverend Jonathan S. Hauerwas, Pastor (weekly office days: Monday, Tuesday, and Friday) (cell phone 330-606-4551)	jhauerwas.wpc@gmail.com
Valerie Thorson, Music Director/Organist (weekly office days: Tuesday—Thursday)	wpcmusicdir1250@gmail.com
Sheila Svoboda, Dir. of Children & Family Ministries (weekly office days: Tuesday and Thursday)	wpcchildren1250@gmail.com
Adam Kalcic, Communications Coordinator (weekly office days: Thursday and Friday)	wpcsmedia1250@gmail.com
Claudine Schooley, WPC Church Office (weekly office days: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday)	wpcoffice1250@gmail.com
Debby Evrard, Staff Accountant (weekly office days: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday)	wpcfinance1250@gmail.com
Dave Bodnar, Daytime Custodian (weekly workdays: Sunday—Thursday)	wpcbuilding@gmail.com
Zack Troyer, Director of Adult & Youth Bells, and Children's Choir (cell phone 330-285-0213)	wpcchildrenschoir1250@gmail.com
Traci Range, Director of Childcare (cell phone 330-459-1177)	wpcchildcare1250@gmail.com

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



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