

Westminster Presbyterian Church

come encounter grow serve

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

The Script June-July 2021

<u>Pastor's Co</u>rner

GRAND REUNION

It is with great joy that we anticipate the resumption of in-person worship at Westminster. On June 6, and the Sundays to follow, we will gather in the sanctuary at 10:30 a.m. Many of you have not seen one another face-to-face for over a year. The grand reunion that we have envisioned awaits!

Masks, Social Distancing, And Sanitation
Still, while the return of in-person worship and
activities provides cause for celebration, our
fellowship will not look or feel as it once did. First,
due to work on the steeple, most access to the narthex
will be blocked. Entry to the church will be through
the North and South Education wing doors. Our
gatherings will include the wearing of masks for all
except our youngest children (under age 2) and social
distancing for all who do not live in your home.
Nursery care will require taking temperatures and
hand sanitization. We are also requesting that no toys
or books be brought from home.

(cont'd.)

The pews will be marked accordingly, and the ushers will assist in the seating process. COVID-19 decays on surfaces in a relatively short time of less than one week. Additionally, it is not easily contracted through the touching of surfaces. Since the pews will be occupied on a weekly basis, Session has determined that customary cleaning is adequate. Sanitation stations will be available throughout the facility and the congregation is encouraged to use products provided for use in the restrooms and elevator.

Singing Westminster will provide a soloist or instrumentalist to present the anthem and lead the congregation in singing. All singing and readings will continue to require the wearing of masks. If anyone does not feel comfortable participating in singing, or does not wish to be seated in front of those singing, an usher will gladly find an appropriate place for you, either in the balcony or in the back of the sanctuary's main level. It is the hope and prayer of our Session that conditions in the fall will allow the return of our choir. However, such decisions will be made in consideration of virus trends and CDC guidelines.

Live Streaming We recognize that some in our congregation may not feel comfortable returning to in-person fellowship in June. Others are homebound with mobility or health issues. Some travel for work, and others wish to connect with us from out of state. For these reasons, we will continue to livestream our worship services on Sunday mornings, and make recordings available on our church website.

Sanctuary Video Upgrade Worshipping in the sanctuary provides the benefit of improved sound quality and allows us to incorporate the organ. We have recently installed the new video cameras that sync with our sound board. (cont'd.)

These will support high-quality streaming in our main worship space.

Fellowship Given that we are at the greatest risk of contracting COVID-19 indoors, whenever the ventilation is poor and masks are not worn, there will be no coffee service, pot lucks, food receptions, or fellowship meals on church grounds for the time being. When our Session feels confident that we can safely resume these activities, we will.

Zoom Meetings While in-person gatherings will be permitted on church grounds beginning June 6, committee meetings and church life activities may also still take place via Zoom. Recent experience has taught us that hybrid meetings (where some participate in-person and others log in via Zoom) are not very effective. We encourage you to choose one or the other in keeping with the wishes of the group that you are serving. Whether you plan to meet in-person or via Zoom, please contact our main office to make sure that the calendar and Zoom account, if needed, can accommodate your meeting.

With in-person worship and activities now on the horizon, the energy level and overall excitement of the congregation is growing. This, of course, is a fitting reminder of the value of our shared community. I have missed you all deeply and I look forward to resuming regular, in-person Christian fellowship with you on June 6.

In the meantime, may God be with you and yours, Jon

With thanks to Don Rearick, The Safety and Security Task Force, and Session





Akron Pride Festival



Westminster's PRIDE Committee is pleased to announce it will be participating in the Akron Pride Festival at Lock 3, downtown Akron, August 28, 2021. Hours will be 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Save the date! The event will start with the equality march from

Highland Square to downtown Akron at 10:00 a.m.

Volunteer signup sheets will be in WHH to participate in the march and serve refreshments at Westminster's booth at Lock 3. Please contact Ellen Daugherty, Phil Fry, Kara Hauerwas, or Becky Pool for any questions regarding this important event.



Volunteer opportunities

Friends, we are grateful for the many ways that you provide the gifts of your time and talent in service to God through Westminster Presbyterian Church. As we resume in-person worship services, there are a number of ways in which our community could benefit from your assistance. Please prayerfully consider the following

volunteer opportunities:

- Weekly liturgist scheduler this responsibility can be accomplished from any location and coordinated several weeks in advance. Most communications with liturgists take place via email. Please contact Kyra Bosnik or Jon Hauerwas for more information.
- <u>Sunday morning usher</u> provide a warm welcome to our members and visitors alike. For a list of additional responsibilities, please contact Dave Stobbs.
- Flower arranger join our dedicated group of arrangers who bring nature's beauty to the sanctuary each Sunday. Please contact Kristy Yates for more information.
- <u>Audio/visual support</u> for Sunday worship livestream Westminster will continue to livestream our worship services, even when the congregation returns to the facility on June 6. We have a new video system featuring two pan-tilt-zoom cameras that will need to be operated from the balcony level. The new system is very user friendly and training will be provided. Please contact Jon Hauerwas for more information.



Adult Education

Last summer, due to the pandemic, Westminster's adult education class went virtual using Zoom every Thursday evening. During those months, we have studied and discussed the Old Testament books of Jonah and Ruth, and the New Testament books of John and James. At the end of a long year, we are taking a break for now. Watch for announcements about our future educational plans.

WPC Book Group

As always, all bookworms are welcome to join us for fellowship and eclectic book discussions, held 2nd Mondays at 7:00 p.m. With the weather improving and things opening up we are now meeting in-person, outdoors when possible. For our June meeting Kacey Yates Gable will be hosting us on her patio, with future meeting sites to be announced. Email Cathy Melver for details at chwdoc@gmail.com.

Our books for the summer include:

- 6/14/21 **Nine Perfect Strangers** Liane Moriarty—Kristy Yates
- 7/12/21 **The Ones We Choose** Julie Clark—Cathy Melver
- 8/9/21 **Paris is Always a Good Idea** Jenn McKinlay—Kacey Yates Gable



Food Distribution

The Outreach Committee wishes to thank the congregation for their generosity in contributing food for distribution at the back door during the past months. Thank you also to the Tweens who have faithfully given of their time to help. That distribution program will cease effective July 1. HOWEVER, we will continue to collect food on the first Sunday of each month, and the food will be given to Goodyear Heights Good Neighbors unit for distribution there. Anyone who is unable to attend the in-person worship service but wants to contribute food can place it in the wooden box in the coatroom during the hours that the church is open, and the committee will see that it gets to Good Neighbors.

Suggested food items include:

Canned Tuna
Canned Green beans, corn or carrots
Rice/Pasta/with Cheese side Mix
Canned soup (Vegetable, Tomato or
Chicken Noodle)
Cereal
Peanut Butter

Canned Chicken breast
Macaroni and Cheese Mix
Canned fruit (peaches, pears or
fruit cocktail)
Jell-O gelatin or pudding
Muffin mix
Jelly



Youth Group/Cleaning the Memorial Garden



Many thanks to Phil Fry and Lisa Bansen-Harp, as well as youth Dean Gable, Sam Grau, Caden Labbe, and Kinsie Willis for all of their efforts on April 25, in cleaning the Memorial Garden!

Fellowship Trip to Cedar Point

Our youth completed their last online class of the 2020-2021 church year on May 9. I would like to extend my gratitude to Mike Grau and Andi Jopperi for all of their efforts in team teaching the youth curriculum with me this year. I would also like to extend my thanks to our youth for their flexibility in the midst of a challenging year of social distancing and Zoom meetings. Looking ahead, we are excited about the fellowship trip to Cedar Point on June 17. God is good, even in the midst of a pandemic!

Jon Hauerwas

Children's Ministries/VBS 2021 - July 12-15



From 9:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m., MONDAY – THURSDAY, welcome to WPC's Vacation Bible School Compassion Camp - Be loved, be kind, be YOU! This year we will be in-person (Yay!) but always adhering to COVID-19 precautions. As we look around the world, what becomes clearer each day is our deep need for compassion. Now more than

ever. Each of the four sessions has a central Scripture passage about the day's theme. The goal of Compassion Camp is to cultivate compassion for each other, ourselves and our world. We will examine different places in our lives where we can foster compassion through gathering, music, Bible stories, creative play, movement and games. Come and join us!

Children aged four through the 5th grade are invited to participate, while students 6th grade through 12th grade are needed to help "shepherd" the younger children. This year, as we gather with caution, we are limiting the number of participants to 40 (including the shepherds.) We are offering spots to our WPC families/members first, then opening to the public as room allows. Please sign up on WPC's website, starting June 3rd.

Information to Know



Celtic Garden

The Celtic gardeners have been working to once again provide a beautiful oasis at the corner of West Exchange and Mull. The Celtic garden is not only an outreach to the neighborhood, but is also the source of the flowers that are used to create the beautiful arrangements for our Sunday services, church dinners, and other special events. We have a great gardening team. We not only enjoy growing things, but we have fun doing it! If you would like to join our team, we would love to have you – no experience necessary.





Please contact Marge at marger2732@gmail.com

Memorial Garden

In past Script articles, the Memorial Garden committee has updated you on the history of the garden, those interred there, its location, how to purchase the Interment Agreement, statements from members as to why they have chosen the garden as final resting places. Committee members have been introduced and have hosted two open houses in the garden. Due to COVID-19, a third open house that was scheduled for June 27 has been postponed to June of 2022.

Here is another thought by church members about the Memorial Garden: "We have been active members of Westminster for 45 years; over half our lives. Our children grew up in the church and were married here. Our extended family is familiar with Westminster and feels comfortable here. It just made sense to choose the church as our final resting place." *From Jim and Barb Shriner*



Please consider choosing
Westminster's
Memorial Garden in your plans. You can contact any committee member with questions: Shelley
Koutnik, Phil Fry,
Marcia Holcomb, Earl
Pierson, Kara
Hauerwas or Barb and
Jim Shriner.

Please take a moment to consider

this Memorial Garden thought ... "Gates of memories will never close. How much we miss you no one knows. Days will pass away into years. And we'll think about those memories with silent tears."



Sanctuary Video Upgrade

Session recently approved a video system upgrade to provide high quality live streaming of our worship services. We would like to extend our appreciation to the Sound Task Force, comprised of Shelley Koutnik, James Gray, Valerie Thorson, and Jon Hauerwas.

We began live streaming with the new system on May 22, and will be making minor adjustments to the system in the weeks to come. This project was made possible thanks to funding provided by the Bequest Fund and the generosity of the Roger H. Nelson family.

Staff Farewells



Sheila Svoboda began serving as Westminster's Director of Children and Family Ministries in August of 2013. Now, eight years later, she is saying "farewell" and entering retirement.

Throughout, we have been blessed by Sheila's compassion, her love of children, her dedication to others, and her timeless wisdom regarding what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Her creative energy and loving spirit has enhanced our ministry in countless ways, and she will be deeply missed. Sheila Svoboda had a drive-thru farewell on May 23, 2021.



Letter from Sheila

I wish I did not have to write this letter. It was not my intention to leave this position until I was ready to retire. If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans. So, my plans have been led now by my health, which has proven to be unpredictable and the Pandemic hasn't helped

any! I am unstable in my balance and my voice is much quieter, not good for corralling children or running groups. My off times and on times have a mind of their own, so I can't be sure if I'll be able to confidently walk. All this and more led me to the decision to resign. Susan Shellito is heading up VBS this year and I am sure Compassion Camp (July 12-15) will be a real success. The search has begun for a new Director for Children & Family Ministries and I pray you find a loving and energetic person to fill the position.

We all know it takes more than staff to be the church and with the teachers already in place for the fall that is entirely evident at WPC. I have been honored to walk with you and your children these past years and very happy to be a part of sharing our faith. My ideal is to continue my walk of faith and find my disease and all its components transformational in my growth. Thank you for your support and well wishes, and know that you all will continue to be in my prayers and heart.



Valerie Thorson joined our staff team in 2019 as our Interim Music Director and Organist before accepting the permanent position in 2020. She is now saying "farewell" and entering retirement. Valerie's depth of skill and giftedness, not only as a musician, but also as a writer and presenter of the spoken word, have greatly enhanced our community of faith.

Valerie Thorson seated at Westminster's organ.

She will be dearly missed. Valerie's last day at the organ will be June 6, which coincides with the resumption of in-person worship at Westminster. She looks forward to greeting you at that time.

Not Goodbye, But "Au Revoir"

The past two years as Music Director and Organist here at Westminster have provided me with some of my most demanding experiences as a church musician. In my over 50-year career, I've certainly dealt with emergency situations galore, but an extended, global pandemic was not among them--nor was an unexpected cancer diagnosis.



Despite these undoubtedly challenging life events, my tenure here has also given me some extremely rewarding times: working with Pastor Jon, a dedicated and talented choir, and our phenomenal Choral Scholars; playing the fabulous Schantz pipe organ; helping to launch a new Jazz Vespers series with the amazing Theron Brown; planning special healing services and a "Virtual Renewal of Wedding Vows;" and many more.

I am thrilled that my dear friend Bob Carlyon, known to many of you, will be taking over as organist for the summer months. Bob is a supremely gifted organist and church musician, and he will help keep the standards of music-making at a high level.

I will not be leaving the area, and will look forward to seeing you "out and about" as we (hopefully!) begin to return to our normal activities. I wish all of you at Westminster the very best in the days and years to come.

Faithfully, Valerie Thorson



Adam Kalcic joined our staff team in 2020, as the pandemic caused the suspension of in-person worship. Throughout, Adam has been instrumental in the production of our livestream services and their upload to the church website. He has also assisted Westminster with our communications, website, and social media platforms.

We are grateful to Adam for his service to the church.

Adam Kalcic in Westminster's sanctuary.



Church in a Pandemic/Guidance



Since we have resumed in-person worship, we are also live-streaming our services on YouTube for those who are not comfortable meeting in-person yet, and our services continue to be found on our church website at <u>westminsterakron.org</u>.

We are taking extra care to follow the following COVID-19 safety precautions:

- Masks required (available at entrance if you don't have one)
- 6-ft. distancing (entryway and aisles marked)
- Ushers will guide you to marked seating
- Offering plates and bulletins at door (for non-contact use)
- Bibles, hymnals, and offering envelopes have been removed from the pews
- Contactless passing of the peace (a nod of the head and wave will suffice)
- No coffee hour or food service following worship

August/September 2021 Script

August/September script will be online on July 30, 2021. Please have your articles and pictures ready to be sent to wpcoffice1250@gmail.com by noon on **Tuesday**, **July 13, 2021**.



Monthly Financial Report

April 2021	Actual	Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
<u>Total Revenues</u>	\$37,941.43	\$36,547.66	\$251,855.22	\$180,765.64
Total Expenses	\$32,606.83	\$48,018.32	\$152,191.10	\$195,275.09
Net	\$5,334.60	(11,470.66)	\$99,664.12	(\$14,509.45)

Please contact the Finance Office if you would like a copy of the detailed financial report for the period ending April 30, 2021.

WPC Worship Service In-Person (starting June 6) & on YouTube LIVESTREAM 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 jhauerwas.wpc@gmail.com (weekly office days: Monday, Tuesday, and Friday)

(cell phone 330-606-4551)

Valerie Thorson, Music Director/Organist wpcmusicdir1250@gmail.com

(weekly office days: Tuesday—Thursday)

Claudine Schooley, WPC Church Office wpcoffice1250@gmail.com

(weekly office days: Monday, Wednesday, 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)

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

