

Mottville children's chairs



We are selling the remaining Mottville chairs from the nursery school to church members for \$15 each. There are various sizes (small and medium) available. Samples are in the narthex. See Robyn Warn for more information.

Elder Care Conversation Circle

Are you caring for an aging loved one?



Westminster hosts a support group on the last Tuesday of each month to bring together people who are "parenting their parents" and dealing with the struggles and stresses of health care, family dynamics, and figuring out living options for aging family members. The group meets 7-9pm on the last Tuesday of the month in the church social room, and welcomes new members at any time. The March meeting will be March 26, and the April meeting will be April 30.

Salvation Army Kitchen

Westminster cooks and serves a hot meal for the guests of the Salvation Army Miracle Kitchen on the 4th Sundays of 5-Sunday months. Our next opportunity is March 24. Join the merry band of cooks and servers by letting Christina Thornton know you'd like to help. We need about 10-12 volunteers.



Flowers

Fresh flowers on the chancel add a touch of beauty to Sunday worship and can be given in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a special occasion. Check the chart in the outer narthex for available dates. With Spring approaching consider bringing flowers in from your own garden. You could also order from a florist, or purchase fresh flowers at the farmer's market.



The newsletter of Westminster Presbyterian Church

17 William Street
Auburn, NY 13021
315-253-3331

The Rev. Patrick D. Heery, Pastor
office@westminsterauburn.org
www.westminsterauburn.org

Worship 9:30am Sundays

March and April 2019

Sharing announcements, joys, and concerns



The Worship Committee, with the help of our pastor, is implementing some changes to the beginning of worship to help it be a more worshipful experience. Starting in March, announcements will be abbreviated;

Patrick will highlight announcements only regarding that Sunday, and will not take announcements from the floor. Printed announcements will continue to be included in the order of worship, so if you have an announcement to be shared, please submit it to Melanie by Wednesday morning (315-253-3331 or office@westminsterauburn.org) and it will be included if appropriate.

Joys and concerns will be shared by writing them on a card to be placed in the prayer box which will be outside the sanctuary doors. Patrick will retrieve the cards prior to worship, and will share prayer concerns during the intercessory prayers. Ushers will be on hand to assist if needed.

Sharing of joys and concerns, and sharing news and announcements, are important parts of our lives together, letting us support each other as a community of faith. The Worship Committee and Patrick hope that this new way of beginning worship will help us continue to hold each other in prayer in a way that is meaningful to each other and pleasing to God.

Church Growth Retreat

All church members and friends are invited to a Church Growth Retreat on Saturday, April 6 from 10am to 2pm at the church. Pastor Patrick and members of the Membership & Evangelism Committee will lead the retreat to help everyone learn how we can better care for each other and how we can welcome others into the family of God that is Westminster Church. Lunch will be provided. Please come and invite others!



Membership Care Survey



We are called to care for others in our church family, and there are many ways to do that. Each of us has different gifts and interests to share. The Membership & Evangelism

Committee will be reaching out with a brief survey to find out who can help in areas like writing cards, visiting shut-ins, providing transportation to church or to doctors' appointments, making meals, or being "buddies" to others. The Deacons and the Membership Committee do so much already, but the work of caring for each other is the work of the whole church. We know there are many others who want to contribute their time and talents but maybe were never asked. Watch for the survey in worship soon.

Westminster welcomes everyone, no matter where you are on your faith journey or your life journey. In faithfulness to our understanding of Christ, Westminster affirms the full inclusion of all God's people in the life and ministry of the church. We welcome persons of every race, gender, age, sexual orientation, family status, and economic status into full participation in our faith community. We value questions as much as answers. We encourage curiosity, discovery, and honest struggling with questions of faith.



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Auburn, NY 13021

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What God sees

A note from Rev. Patrick D. Heery



This year, Westminster has been inspired by the theme "We are God's eyes." We have looked at our community, at our neighbors, at ourselves---at suffering and at joy---and asked what God sees. We continue that theme with our Lenten soup and study as we turn to Matthew 25, which calls us to see with God's eyes and perceive Christ in "the least of these."

This is not an easy invitation. I think back on the story of God sending the prophet Elijah to the widow of Zarephath for help (1 Kings 17). Elijah arrives hungry, expecting to find a divinely appointed rescuer. And instead he discovers a poor and hungry widow, bent over, gathering sticks outside the safety of the city gate. Whose eyes do you think Elijah was looking through when he first saw her? Did he think God had made a mistake sending him to this woman for food?

I can tell you what the world likely saw. It saw a charity case, another of the vulnerable and unwanted bound to die. It saw gaunt, sun-scorched skin, protruding ribs, hands trembling from dehydration. It saw weakness.

In fact, the Hebrew word for *widow* resembles the word meaning "to be mute."

And this is whom God chooses to shelter and nourish Elijah. This is whom God chooses to *save* Elijah.

Trusting in God's eyes, Elijah sets aside his initial misgivings and asks for water. The widow gives him some water. But he needs more. He, like the widow, is also starving. So he asks for some food. But this time, the widow says no. She barely has enough for her and her son.

How easy it would have been for Elijah in this moment to decide that God was wrong and the world right. This widow's no savior.

How easy it would be for us to do the same---when looking at our neighbors, or ourselves, or the gospel itself.

Elijah for one refuses the world's way of thinking. Sounding much like an angel, Elijah says, "Do not be afraid." He says there will be enough for all three of them. In fact, he says there will be enough until the rain returns.

But that's not the end of the transformation. When the widow's son is dying or perhaps already dead (the text is unclear), she goes to Elijah and argues with him. This is not a mute, powerless victim; this is a woman who is ready to fight for life and God's promises. Moved by her plea, Elijah confronts God and heals, or perhaps even resurrects, the boy.

By the end of this passage, we see two seemingly powerless victims of the world's politics and deprivation become feisty agents of resurrection.

Elijah and the widow learn they have power they never realized they had. The truth is that the widow was always a fighter. What do you think kept bringing her out into the dangerous area beyond the city wall? Or what do you think drove her to argue with Elijah when he asked for food?

The widow always had more power than she or the world knew. But God knew. Elijah was simply the messenger to make sure the widow knew. To make sure she saw herself as God saw her.

What would happen if Westminster became such a messenger, a prophetic voice proclaiming to the world what God sees? What would happen if you dared to see your neighbor and yourself as God sees you? What power, what hope, what wonder, would you discover? Would you come to see a feisty agent of resurrection in the hungry man on the street, or the guy who's just got out of prison, or the woman with mental illness who's shouting on the corner---or the face staring back at you in the mirror?

When the world's perception is supplanted by God's, the powerless and the mute discover they have a voice, they are strong, and they belong to God. For where the world sees scarcity, God sees abundance. And where it sees a broken and crumbling life, God sees a fire waiting to be kindled, a fire of gospel and salvation and love and mute widows who speak and prophets who resurrect.

All we have to do is look with the eyes of God.

Lenten sermon series: Understanding Jesus and the cross through his parables

This Lent and Easter, our worship will focus on those mysterious, pivotal parables taught by Jesus as he prepared his disciples for his crucifixion and resurrection. Based on our popular Wednesday Noon Study in the fall, the series will take these enigmatic, contextually-bound stories and make them relatable to our everyday spiritual and practical needs, as we walk with Christ to the cross and salvation day.

Culinary Kids Classes

By Chris Patch

One of my fondest childhood memories is Sunday dinner at my grandparents' house. The smell of fresh bread in the oven and the sight of homemade spaghetti sauce simmering was the highlight of my week. I couldn't wait for my family to gather around the table for dinner, and once there, I never wanted our time together to end.

As a former chef, I tried for years to recreate my grandmother's sauce. I bought the same ingredients, simmered it all day, but the taste was never quite the same. As I grew older I realized it wasn't the recipe I was unable to duplicate, it was the experience. The food is what brought us together, but my memories were really about family, tradition and love. As I've cooked over the years, with each plate I gave a part of myself; on each was a part of my family, my culture, my heritage and my heart.

Food is an important part of life and culture; the Bible weighs in on the topic as well. In the New Testament, multiple verses teach us that food is more than a substance for life. Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine. (John 2:1-11) He fed a crowd of 5000 with fishes and loaves and broke bread with his disciples at the Last Supper (Matthew 14:20-21, 26:26). Jesus used food to teach spiritual lessons while encouraging a more intimate relationship with his followers. He used food to cross the divisions of language, politics, religion and socio-economical status by sharing a meal.

But, food is more than a social experience. For many, it is a daily struggle to eat, and in many instances knowing how, or having time, to prepare food that is not precooked or microwavable is a challenge and frustration. The Bible, however, teaches that there is a responsibility to feed the poor and hungry. In particular, Matthew 25 is a powerful command to welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, and clothe the naked.

So, why is a church offering culinary classes for children? Because at Westminster Presbyterian, we embrace the command of Matthew 25. Westminster Culinary Kids will teach children basic cooking techniques, recipes and safety in the kitchen. But, the goal is beyond culinary arts. The hope is to encourage our next generation of children to build relationships outside of their social norms and learn that preparing food that touches the heart and soul and creates memories is not found in a microwavable container.

On March 16 and 30 classes for Westminster and community youth will be in Westminster's church kitchen. Others will be offered specifically for kids at Cayuga Centers. Kitchen space is limited, so classes will be small and by reservation only (talk to me to reserve a spot). It will be fun to see "what's cooking" for youth and families at Westminster!

Book Group



The Westminster Book Group will meet on March 21, April 25, and May 16 in the Social Room at 7pm. In March the group will choose a book for May. Please attend and express your preferences or let Ann Wiley know what you'd like to suggest.

On March 21, the group will discuss *Seeking a Better Country, a history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* by D.G. Hart and John R. Muether. Ann Wiley and Tony Gero will lead the discussion. The church has copies that you can borrow. Check with Melanie to see if one remains in the workroom, or ask Ann Wiley to help you locate a copy.

On April 25, the group will discuss *Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande. Seymour Library and the Finger Lakes Library System have multiple copies of this book about care for elderly and disabled people, palliative care and its role in treating all patients, and care of people in the last stages of their life. The elder care conversation circle will join the book group for this discussion, and Jill Fandrich will lead. Please attend any book group meeting if you are interested, even if you have not read the book, and please invite others from the community who may be interested too.

Westminster Women

Westminster Women will be meeting on Tuesday, March 19 in the Social room at 1:30 pm. Our program entitled "Traveling With Susan" will be a power point presentation given by Susan Marteney. Susan has traveled to many unusual and exotic places, which you can enjoy from a comfortable chair, seeing amazing photos of places you might like to visit.

Mark your calendar for the April meeting scheduled for the 3rd Tuesday of April which falls on the 16th at 1:30 pm. Details will follow through church bulletins and email.

Gilchrist Scholarship Deadline

April 1, 2019 is the deadline for Westminster college students to submit an application to receive a new or continuing scholarship from the Douglas J. Gilchrist Memorial Scholarship Fund.



The applications and guidelines can be found on the Westminster Church website (Education page) or they may be picked up in the church office. Please note that first year applicants need to submit letters of recommendation with their applications, and will be interviewed by the committee.

March Loose Change

ARISE

Each month, the loose change in the Sunday offering plates is designated

for a particular organization or cause. In March, loose change will support ARISE. ARISE Auburn's mission is to work with people of all abilities to create a fair and just community in which everyone can fully participate. ARISE is in its 40th year of providing assistance, information, referrals and advocacy services to individuals with disabilities, their family and friends, service providers, and businesses within Cayuga and Seneca Counties at no charge.

In April of 2011, ARISE began an entirely new program designed to assist people who do not have access to the items of daily personal care that many of us take for granted...toilet paper, shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant, paper towels, and laundry detergent just to name a few. In our community, many families struggle to provide the basic necessities for themselves and their children. The barrier to accessing these items is that they cannot be purchased with SNAP (Food Stamps) and they are rarely available through other community resources. Since its inception, ARISE has served 125 families with over 18,000 products.

The Personal Care Bank is funded in part through a small grant from the United Way, and relies heavily on fundraisers and donations. Over the last several years, ARISE has received many extremely generous donations from the Loose Change Offering, the Church Board of Deacons, the Women's Group and its members.

One Great Hour of Sharing

A gift to the One Great Hour of Sharing enables the church to share God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world by providing relief to those affected by natural disasters, providing food to the hungry, and helping to empower the poor and oppressed.

The three programs supported by the offering are Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self Development of People.

We are Presbyterians and ecumenical partners dissatisfied with poverty and oppression, united in faith and action through sharing, confronting, and enabling by participating in the empowerment of economically poor, oppressed, and disadvantaged people, seeking to change the structures that perpetuate poverty, oppression and injustice.

Thank you in advance for your generous offering, which will be collected and dedicated on Palm Sunday, April 14th.

April Loose Change

In April, the Loose Change Offering will support the Community Preservation Committee in its efforts to preserve the Willard Memorial Chapel and to support historic preservation in the local community.



Willard Memorial Chapel is located on the former campus of the Auburn Theological Seminary. This Presbyterian seminary was chartered in 1818 for the purpose of training clergy to lead the many churches that were being established as the country moved west. The Seminary operated in Auburn from 1821 until 1939 when it moved to New York City. The Auburn Seminary still exists after 200 years, now with the mission of enhancing leadership skills among religious leaders and other constituencies.

Willard Memorial Chapel was built between 1892-94 to honor the good works and life of Dr. Sylvester Willard and his wife, Jane Frances Case Willard. Dr. Willard served for 40 years as Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Seminary. The Willard daughters, Caroline and Georgiana, provided the funding for the Chapel's rare "Total Tiffany" interior and were involved in the details of its construction.

Many connections exist between the Auburn Theological Seminary and Westminster Presbyterian Church. Presbyterianism thrived in Auburn due to the very presence of the Seminary. Through the years Seminary students and faculty were active in local churches, providing leadership, energy and ideas. Ministers and prominent congregation members participated in governance and the educational aspects of the Seminary.

A number of Seminary graduates and professors served as ministers at Westminster and its predecessor churches. These include Rev. Edward D. Morris, Rev. Ezra A. Huntington, Rev. Henry Fowler, Rev. Allen Macy Dulles, Rev. Charles C. Hemenway, Rev. Frederick W. Palmer, Rev. Albert S. Hughey, Rev. Erastus W. Twitchell, Rev. Lem Losey, Rev. Robert Loyer and Rev. Grant S. Miller.

During an Adult Forum on March 28, a video will be shown illustrating the history of the Seminary and discussing the artistry of the Chapel interior designed and constructed by Louis Comfort Tiffany's Glass and Decorating Company of New York City.

Upcoming sermons

Mar. 3: "The new Moses," a Transfiguration sermon about a new Exodus

Mar. 6: "A sign of the living God," an Ash Wednesday homily

Mar. 10: "A sure harvest," a Lenten sermon about the parable of the sower

Mar. 17: "God wants you," a Lenten sermon about the parable of the vineyard workers

Mar. 24: Noel Lardeo and children will teach us a parable, using the Worship Center's storytelling technique

Mar. 31: "Mutual liberation," a Lenten sermon about the dishonest money manager

Apr. 7: "The un-borrowed life," a Lenten sermon about the parable of the 10 bridesmaids

Apr. 14: "Risk management," a Lenten sermon about the parable of the talents

Apr. 18: "An upper room," a Maundy Thursday homily

Apr. 21: "A living parable," an Easter sermon about the Parable of God: Jesus Christ

Apr. 28: A special Easter lessons and carols service

Worship Retreat: Finding God's Voice



Join Pastor Patrick, seminary student Shavonn Lynch, and worship chair Jill Fandrich on Saturday, March 30, 10 am - 2 pm, at Westminster, for a dynamic spiritual retreat and practical training, designed to help us reconnect with the heart of worship, as we listen for God's

voice in our own voices. Drawing upon our collective experiences and insights, we will reflect on what makes worship meaningful, inspiring, and Spirit-led. With Patrick's help, participants will discover new gifts and confidence for worship leadership, Scripture reading, and preaching. This will be especially helpful for our liturgists. But the experience will also deepen our capacity to participate in life-giving, God-centered worship, and to envision such worship for Westminster. Lunch will be served. Please RSVP to Patrick.

Contemplative Hikes March 23 and April 27

Spent partly in silence and partly in conversation, our contemplative hikes offer renewal as we reconnect with God, the earth, and our selves.



On Saturday, March 23, from 10 am to 12 pm, we will hike among the stunning frozen waterfalls, canal, and beauties of the Keuka Outlet Trail near Dresden, about an hour away. Perfect for all skill levels, and

dotted with scenic points, this hike will be lovely whether we have winter or spring weather. Stay in the area for lunch.

On Saturday, April 27, from 10 am to 12 pm, we will hike the beautiful Montezuma Wildlife Refuge, hopefully enjoying the spring wildflowers and the song of the thousands of birds that call Montezuma home. It's about 20 minutes from Auburn, and the trail is easy to moderate.

Anyone is welcome to join us, whether affiliated with the church or not. In fact, this would be a great opportunity to invite a friend, neighbor, or family member.

RSVP is required. Please contact Patrick (pastor@westminsterauburn.org, 315-253-3331). Detailed information will then be provided.

Harriet Tubman Day Prayer Service



Join the Auburn community in embodying the living legacy of Harriet Tubman, as area churches come together for second annual Harriet Tubman Day Prayer Service on March 9, at 3 pm, at the Apostolic Church of the Lord Jesus Christ (103 Fitch Ave.). Special honors will be paid to

Pauline Copes Johnson, descendant of Harriet Tubman, who will share her testimony with us. Standing together as one community, we will channel peace, love, and justice with the power of prayer through a variety of musical and prayer traditions. You won't want to miss this Spirit-filled, diverse, riveting worship experience. A meal will follow.

The following day, March 10, you are invited to the Equal Rights Heritage Center at noon for special Harriet Tubman Day learning events. That evening, you are invited to Auburn Public Theater for a poetry and music jam.

Lent



Lent is the season of preparation before Easter. It is a time of study, reflection, and repentance that leads us to the promise of hope in Easter. Lent lasts for 40 weekdays (but does

not include the six Sundays in that time because every Sunday is a "little Easter" celebrating Jesus' resurrection). Many Christians observe a period of moderation and spiritual discipline (sometimes including fasting), setting aside time for intentional reflection on the life, death, and teachings of Jesus. This can happen both individually and within the faith community. This newsletter contains information about many opportunities for study, reflection, and service during Lent.

Holy Week

Palm Sunday: April 14

Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, commemorating the day of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. We will distribute palm branches to worshippers and the children will process to the theme of "Hosanna". The One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (and children's fish banks) will be received and dedicated.

Maundy Thursday: April 18

Westminster members and friends will gather in the Junior Room of the Education building at 6pm for supper and communion, remembering Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples and his commandment to "Love one another." The meal will be provided by the Worship Committee, and is incorporated into the service with readings, songs, and communion by intinction. This is a child/family-friendly service; we welcome all ages to participate.

Good Friday: April 19

Area churches and their choir members will combine for an ecumenical Good Friday service. Details will be provided as they become available.

Easter Sunday: April 21

The Resurrection of Our Lord will be celebrated at two services on Easter. The sunrise service will begin at 6:00am on the front sidewalk of the church around a lantern, from which we will light candles to bring the light of the resurrection into the chapel for liturgy and communion by intinction. Coffee and donuts will be provided in the social room following the service. At 9:30am our traditional Easter service will be held in the sanctuary with readings, sermon, festive music and communion by intinction. An Easter egg hunt for kids will be held in the sanctuary following worship.

Ash Wednesday



On March 6, Westminster Church will observe Ash Wednesday with a soup supper (provided by the Membership Committee) in the Social Room at 6pm, followed by a communion service in the sanctuary at 7pm. In addition to observing communion by intinction, Pastor Patrick will mark the hand or forehead of each

worshipper saying the words, "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." The ashes remind us of our mortality, and, because the mark is in the shape of a cross, of the hope we have in Christ.

Blue Shirt Sunday

The first Sunday of Lent, March 10 is designated "Blue Shirt Sunday" by the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Program. Blue



shirts are worn by PDA mission volunteers wherever they are called to work shoulder-to-shoulder helping people in need. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is supported by the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering, which Westminster will collect and dedicate on Palm Sunday. If you have a PDA "blue shirt," wear it to church on March 10!

Worship Center



The Children's Worship Center will be beginning the season of Lent with a Lenten Puzzle story on March 10th. On March 24th they are excited to share with the congregation the

parable of "The Good Samaritan" in place of Pastor Patrick's sermon. It will be a fun and exciting time for all to see how we worship in the center, as well as a learning time for all. Throughout March and the beginning of April all stories being told are about Jesus leading up to the story of "Jesus is Risen", to be told and celebrated on Easter Sunday. The third Sunday activity in March will be focused around the "Good Samaritan Parable" and there will not be one in April due to it being Easter Sunday. Miss Noel is also planning to establish an emergency plan with Paul Dungey for the Worship Center and will be sharing that with parents as soon as it becomes available.

Soup and Study: Living Out Matthew 25

Westminster's Soup and Study series is a long-held tradition, meeting together for five Wednesday evenings during Lent to share a simple soup supper followed by exploration of a Lenten theme. This year, we build on the stewardship theme of being a "Matthew 25 Church," seeing those in need around us and taking action to help. Each week on the following Wednesdays, we will gather in the social room for two or three choices of homemade soup (provided by the participants on a sign-up basis) and bread at 6pm. At about 6:30, we will begin discussion of the various verses of Matthew 25, facilitated by someone in our community who is actively being Christ's hands and feet addressing that specific need. Each study time will begin by reading the scripture passage, Matthew 25: 34-46, and then the speakers will talk about specific needs in their particular area or agency. We will include a brief discussion of possible congregational or individual response.

"For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited Me in. I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me, I was in prison, and you came to Me."

Matthew 25:35-36

March 13: *I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.* Nancy Sheffield, Calvary Food Pantry

March 20: *I was in prison and you visited me.* Paul and Kim Dungey, prison ministry

March 27: *I was a stranger and you welcomed me.* Daryl Files, InterFaith Works, focusing on specific volunteer needs for refugees.

April 3: *I was naked and you gave me clothing.* Christina Thornton, Chapel House Homeless Shelter

April 10: *I was sick and you took care of me.* Dr Brian Bennett on the palliative care approach to treating illness and disability throughout our lifetimes

All ages, including families with children, are welcome to attend Soup and Study so that all can learn about God's work in our church and our community, and think about our individual calls to respond.

Introducing A Different Kind of Adult Forum Series

Monika Salvage, Chair, Education Committee



Instead of giving up chocolate or meat during Lent, how about giving up bad habits that impact the environment or starting new habits that help protect our Earth?

Starting March 10, the Christian Education Committee is offering a series of Adult Forums during Lent that will focus on a different aspect of a more sustainable and responsible lifestyle every week, inspired by a program of the Passionist Earth & Spirit Center called Lent 4.5, a faith formation program which inspires and informs Christian communities on how to use the traditional Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving to protect God's creation, embrace Gospel justice and nurture spiritual fulfillment. It offers practical opportunities for people of faith to apply the values of Christian simplicity to their everyday lives.

What does Lent 4.5 stand for, you wonder? If the Earth were divided equally among all of us, each person would receive 4.5 acres, a fair share. All we need should come from these 4.5 acres - food, clothing, home, energy, etc. In America, in contrast, it takes over 22 acres to support the average person's lifestyle. You see the discrepancy? The series of planned discussions around food, consumption, water, energy, transportation, and gratitude provides a new way of observing Lent to help us care for God's creation by taking steps towards only using our fair share of resources.

Please join us for some thought-provoking discussions and who knows, maybe we pick up a few habits that we can sustain for the rest of the year.



Protecting God's Creation