



Newsletter

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Worship with us at 9:30 AM or online
@ WestminsterAuburn.org

MARCH/APRIL 2024

Growing deeper. Reaching wider.



Lent is a period of reflection and repentance that leads us to the promise of hope in Easter.

Lent began on Ash Wednesday (this year it was February 14) and lasts for 40 weekdays, reminding us of the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness as he prepared for his public ministry.

The Ministry Team has chosen the theme "Growing deeper; Reaching wider" for this season, reflecting the goals of individual spiritual growth as well as community witness and service.

You are invited to take part in the worship, education, and mission activities described in this newsletter as you prepare your hearts this Lenten and Easter season at Westminster.



Pastor Nominating Committee



The Pastor Nominating Committee (the PNC) continues to meet weekly searching for a new pastor for Westminster. We have reviewed over 60 candidates (blind matches with

pastors seeking calls) in the Church Leadership Connection. Of these, we have invited 38 to apply. Some declined, some didn't answer the invitation, and fourteen accepted. A few withdrew from consideration after accepting, and we have been and still are conducting initial (and sometimes second) interviews with others. It is a very competitive "market". Although we consider Westminster to be an attractive and desirable church, we are in competition with other similar churches for what is a very small pool of call seekers. Still, we are confident that the right person is out there, and that we are the right church for them. The committee is working hard and taking its job very seriously, and we appreciate the congregation's patience, trust, and prayers.

The Pastor Nominating Committee: Jill Fandrich and Audrey McNally, co-chairs; Brian Teucke, Sarah Trapani, Eli Hernandez, George Fay, Lilyanna Thornton, Thomas Fessenden, and Amy Sargent.

A NOTE FROM PASTOR PAM



Dear family and friends of Westminster Presbyterian Church,

One of the blessings I have received since I arrived in Auburn has been to drive around my old stomping ground. And as these things

go, I found myself transported back to my childhood at my grandparents' homes. My siblings and I were super fortunate to have 2 sets of grandparents while growing up and all of them lived nearby. We got to spend a lot of time with them and had many sleepovers with Grandma and Grandpa! Every time we slept at my maternal grandma's house, we would kneel on the old creaking wooden floor at night before bed to say our prayers and recite this prayer:

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee Lord my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee Lord my soul to take. Amen.

Now it's not in the Bible, but it is a classic children's bedtime prayer from the 18th century. Some of you remember this prayer from your childhood! And thankfully, I don't remember worrying about whether I would die before morning!

But that memory is special, and it taught me to take time in the evening to pray. I am grateful for my grandma's legacy and the very visible way she taught my siblings and I the importance of prayer.

The book of Psalms is also a wonderful source of prayers. The psalmist reminds us of the goodness of the Lord, and invites us to consider this question in Psalm 116: How can I, how can you, repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?

In Psalm 116, the psalmist is giving thanks to God for saving him from when he was brought low, in verse 6. The psalmist doesn't go into detail about the nature of the peril, except it was bad, *really bad*. He might have been in danger of death, which was referenced in verse 3, but his comments

about the snares of death could be a metaphor for some other sort of peril.

The psalmist cannot repay God for saving his life, but he can give thanks. And, he can give thanks in a public setting where his thanksgiving will honor God in the assembly, that is, in the presence of the assembled worshippers.

Throughout Psalm 116, the psalmist records the ways that God has helped him.

Why is the psalmist grateful?
Because he has turned his ear to me.

Why is the psalmist grateful? Because he listens to my voice.

Why is the psalmist grateful? Because he listens to my cries for mercy.

Friends, what if we spend time on our knees every evening, thanking God for blessing us, and remembering all the ways that God has saved us and continues to give us second chances. What if we take just a couple of minutes every evening and say 'Wow, look what God has done today!'

Let's see, today, I am among and with and am privileged to serve alongside my people, right here at Westminster and in Cayuga County. Thank you, God.

Today, I heard the church bells ringing through Auburn and it reminded me of God's beauty. Thank you, God. Today, my son sent me a text saying, 'I love you', for no reason! Thank you, God.

What if we all spend time on our knees every evening thanking God? As the psalmist reminds us: How can I possibly repay the Lord for all his goodness to me? Prayers of thanksgiving, on our knees, just may be the prescription God is giving us during this time of transition *and* on this Lenten journey. Will you join me?

I can't wait to see you on Sunday!

Grace and peace,
Pam

NEWS AND UPDATES

Gilchrist Scholarship Applications



Applications for scholarships from the Douglas J. Gilchrist Scholarship Fund are due April 1, 2024 in the church office.

Scholarships are for Westminster members attending accredited institutions of higher education. The application form and guidelines are available in the church office and on the church website. Questions can be directed to Monta Faye Tuxill, chair of the Scholarship Committee.

Rummage Sale 2024

Clean out those closets and your kitchen, basement and shed for Rummage Sale 2024 on June 7 from 5 – 8 pm and June 8 from 9 am – 1 pm in The Great Hall. Profits will support the Ugandan Family Education Fund which is also the May Loose Offering beneficiary. No electronics (old computers and such), clothing (donate to the Rescue Mission store) or moldy books. DO NOT leave items in the Work Room or the downstairs hallway; take them to the stage in the Great Hall. After-church drop-off dates have been scheduled for May 5 and 19. Helpers are needed! Sorting Days are scheduled for May 29 from 1 – 4; May 30 from 4 – 7; June 3 from 10-2; June 4 from 4-7; June 5 from 1 – 4; and June 6 from 3 – 6 pm. Questions? Ready to sign up to sort, price and sell sell sell? Contact Susan Marteney.



Calling all Volunteers!

In response to all the new offerings for children and youth, we are seeing more and more children and families regularly attending church. Because of this, we hope to expand our current team of volunteers to help in the nursery, assist in the Worship Center and Worship & Wonder class, and/or assist with monthly youth programs.

If you'd like to be involved as an occasional sub or a regular helper, talk to Noel Cregg.



Deacons

The Deacons celebrate Linda Mackay who is the new President of Deacons. Thank you to Amy Sargent who is now the vice president and Donna Riester who is the secretary.

The Deacons are here to offer prayer, help, and support in anyway they can.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Adult Forums in March: Being a Matthew 25 Church



MATTHEW 25

Westminster is a "Matthew 25 Church," calling us to actively engage in the world around us. Gather in the Social Room following worship March 3, 10, and 17 for Adult Forums on how we live out the "reaching wider" part of our Lenten theme "Growing deeper. Reaching wider."

On March 3, Nina and Jerry Wickett will lead a forum on social justice ministries at Westminster, and ways we can build the kingdom of God here on earth by living as Christ commanded.

On March 10, the Rev. Kathleen Dain, the temporary Resource Presbyterian of the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse, will talk about "Being a Matthew 25 Church." Kathy recently attended the Matthew 25 Summit in Atlanta, and will speak about her experiences there.

On March 17, Pastor Larry Bell will talk about Emily Howland, educator, philanthropist, and suffragist from Sherwood NY. Larry is on the board of the Opendore, Howland's restored home which preserves the story of the Quaker woman who worked tirelessly to teach freed slaves, obtain suffrage for women, and better the lives of others.

Adult Forums in April: Being Good Stewards

Adult forums in April will focus on stewardship. Pastor Pam Masten will lead a discussion about the theological basis for stewardship on Sunday April 7 following worship. The second Sunday, April 14, we will hear about stewardship of our property and how our building needs to be maintained and used for God's work. On Sunday, April 21, the day before Earth Day, we'll hear about stewardship of our environment, with an update on Owasco Lake from representatives from OWLA (the Owasco Watershed Lake Association).

Lenten Soup & Study

On three Wednesdays in Lent (March 6, 13, and 20), Westminster members and friends are invited to gather in the Social Room for a light meal of soup and bread at 5:30pm, followed by reflections on the Psalms, led by volunteer leaders from 6:00 to 6:45pm. The group will look at a variety of Psalms of different types-- joy, praise, lament, sorrow-- and consider how they speak to us today. Participants will be given the opportunity to contribute toward the meals with soup, bread, milk, or cookies by using the sign-up sheet in the social room. Andrea Creighton is coordinating the "soup" and Audrey McNally and Donna Riester are among the discussion leaders for the "study."

Children & Youth Christian Education



Time with Children.

On Sunday mornings, children age 3 through 2nd grade worship in the age-appropriate Children's Worship Center following the

Kids in grades 3-6 join an experienced team of teachers for "Worship & Wonder" to hear a Bible story and consider its impact on their lives. On Communion Sundays, the Worship &



Wonder class will focus on worship education (how to follow the order of worship, how to find and read hymns, how and why we pray, etc) and then the students will join the congregation for the sacrament of communion. Nursery care for infants and toddlers is available during worship and education hour.

FELLOWSHIP & SMALL GROUPS

Youth and Families

Youth (grades 7-12) join with Miss Noel on the third Sunday of each month from 4-6pm (March 17 and April 21) for fun activities and discussion.

Kids of all ages (and their “grownups”) are also invited to Open Gym on Mondays, March 8 and 22, and April 22 from 3-4pm.

On Monday, April 8, we'll observe the eclipse together at a location to be determined.

Following service on Palm Sunday the youth will be hosting a pancake breakfast in the Great Hall in lieu of coffee hour. Take part in fellowship, make palm crosses, and enjoy some pancakes with your coffee.



Refresh

Refresh will meet on Saturday, March 9 and April 13 at 10:00 am. Bronwyn O'Connor will send out the Zoom link for those who need it, and will advise if local attendees can meet at the church. The group will begin discussing “The Chosen”, starting with Session 1, Episode 01 - I Have Called You By Name.

All women are invited. There will be further information provided in emails and westminstergrams, prior to the meetings.



Social Justice & Community Advocacy *by Nina Wickett*



At our October 2023 Adult Forum, it became clear that the congregation was interested in learning more about social justice issues and ways to become involved in advocacy and action. Over the

past few months, information gathering meetings have been held with the leadership of Westminster and other congregations in the area to learn more about their social justice initiatives. It has become apparent that there is a lot of work being done throughout Cayuga and Onondaga County! Based on this information as well as Sheriff Schenck's February 11 presentation to the congregation, homelessness has been selected as the first issue to explore. On March 3, Nicole Gee, Director of Housing & Street Outreach for Cayuga Community Health Network, has agreed to speak at an Adult Forum here at Westminster in the Social Room following the service. She will discuss the homelessness situation in Cayuga County and ways in which our congregation can help address this pressing issue. Hope to see you there!

Contemplative Hikes

Monthly contemplative hikes will resume in March and April, led by Brian Teucke. Details regarding dates, times, and places will be shared in announcements, bulletins, emails, and westminstergrams.



MISSION AND OUTREACH

Loose Offerings

March loose offerings support Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a local organization that builds beds for children who have none. Their slogan is “No kid sleeps on the floor in this town.”

April loose offerings will support the Adaptive Design program at ARISE, which brings together community members to design and build customized equipment and devices for adults and children who have disabilities. Collin McGough, program director, will talk about Adaptive Design in a Minute for Mission on April 14.

Loose offerings can be made by placing cash or checks (marked “loose offerings”) in the church shaped box in the narthex, or by donating online on the church’s website.



One Great Hour of Sharing



During Lent, we collect the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. For 75 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has provided a way to share God’s love with our neighbors in need around the world. OGHs supports the Presbyterian Disaster Program, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and the Self-Development of People. The offering will be collected and dedicated on Palm Sunday, March 24.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace Bed-Build Dates

Volunteers are welcome to participate in these upcoming Bed-Build dates. No previous experience is necessary!

- The Celebrate Saint Patrick’s Day Bed-Build. Saturday, March 9th 9:00AM – 4:30PM. The SHP Auburn chapter has a large goal for the day: 45+ beds!
- Join the folks from the St. John Paul Academy on Friday, April 12th from 9:00 AM – 2:00PM
- The Spring-is-Sprung Public Bed-Build Day. Saturday, April 13th from 9:00 AM – 2:00PM.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace-Auburn is a 100% volunteer organization. Your donations stay in our community and serves kiddos right here. All funds are used to build and deliver SHP fully furnished beds to kiddos. SHP-Auburn’s expenses include tools, lumber and hardware for Build Days and new mattresses, bedding and pillows for bed deliveries.

The Auburn Sleep in Heavenly Peace workshop is located in the Fingerlakes Mall, 1579 Clark St. Rd., Auburn, NY 13022. Visit the website for the Auburn Chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace’s <https://shpbeds.org/chapter/ny-auburn/>



WORSHIP NEWS

Worship

Rev. Janet Newman will lead worship on March 3 at 9:30am with Communion. Pastor Pam Masten will lead worship the remaining Sundays. Her sermons will reflect on the themes of wilderness and "Growing deeper. Reaching wider."

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday on March 24, followed by a pancake breakfast social hour with pancakes prepared and served by the youth.

On Good Friday, March 29, Pastor Pam will lead a special Good Friday service in the chapel at 12 noon, with light lunch to follow in the social room.

Easter Sunday March 31 will begin with a Sunrise Service at 6:15 am at St Joseph's Cemetery with Rev Larry Bell. Worshipers are invited to gather at the top of the hill by the large cross. Twilight begins at 6:20 with full sunrise at 6:45. Dress warmly!

Easter worship continues at 9:30am with a traditional service in the sanctuary with spring flowers, glorious music, readings and message led by Pastor Pam, followed by an egg hunt for the kids.



Pastor Pam's Last Sunday



Pastor Pam Masten is with us through April, which means her last Sunday with us will be April 28.

We have been truly blessed with her presence, and grateful for her leadership, kindness, and love.

Join us on April 28 for Pam's final worship service with us, followed by a reception in the social room with sandwiches, snacks, and of course ice cream (her favorite!).

Holy Conversations

The Holy Conversations Assessment Team continues its work to review and assess the original HC design to identify its strengths, identify areas in church ministry and organization to be adjusted, and to make recommendations for better practices/procedures, particularly regarding the seasonal ministry process. The team decided that a new, more concise document was needed and has drafted the majority of this new document. However, as discussions continued, the areas of administration, communications, personnel, financial procedures and oversight were identified as needing more clarity. The team continues to finalize recommendations and complete the rewrite. When ready, the new document will be presented to session and the congregation for approval.

Seasonal Ministry Teams

One of the greatest blessings of the Seasonal Ministry Team approach to ministry at Westminster is the variety of church members and friends who have stepped up to gather for a season to help plan what worshipping God and serving others might look like in the life of the church. Newcomers and seasoned leaders join together to discern where God is leading the church, making the best use of their gifts and talents. Each team considers areas of worship, Christian education, mission/outreach, fellowship, and stewardship.

The current ministry team has focused on February-March-April (Lent). The next ministry team will focus on May-June-July, the season of Pentecost and the celebration of the Holy Spirit. It is also the season of school graduations, moving up days, and the launching of summer plans.

The new seasonal ministry team will hold an initial meeting Monday, March 11 at 6:30pm, in person (conference room) and via Zoom. Questions? Willing to serve? Contact one of our annual members (Paul Dungey, Jill Fandrich, Susan Marteney, Audrey McNally, Linda Russell, and Ann Wiley).



Westminster

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

where you're already home

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, ability 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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