



Westminster

Presbyterian Church

ZEPHYRS

SUMMER 2020



CHURCH IN THESE TIMES | Pastor Rob McClellan

At the time of this writing, the old narthex at the church has been removed and there is a giant whole in the church campus with exposed earth. I can think of no better symbol for this moment. Part of the church has literally disappeared, other parts remain empty, and yet in the midst of it, the church very much continues. In fact, the church is laying the groundwork for all kinds of new forms and growth.

Just as new foundations and structures are being laid at the physical church site, new organizational structures are supporting the church virtually. An administrative commission and an additional task force are working ably to help navigate how to do church now, and to prepare us to face the challenges of tomorrow. From developing creative ministries to *(cont...)*

OUR VIRTUAL WORSHIP JOURNEY

Associate Pastor Bethany Nelson

Our worship experience has undergone quite the transformation in the last couple months. We thought it would be fun to give you a “behind the scenes” look at how worship has evolved.

When the shelter in place order began in mid-March, one of the staff’s first priorities was to figure out how the Westminster congregation would continue worshipping together. There are many important aspects of a church congregation – service, fellowship, education, and more – but it is worship that roots and grounds our community.

Never having done this before, we had no idea how to include *(cont...)*



CHURCH IN THESE TIMES

Continued...

ensuring an eventual safe physical reopening to preparing financially, elected lay leaders are putting us in the best position for health and vitality.

Just as we've dug up the old building, staff and members alike are pulling up the old ways of doing church that can't serve us anymore and making room for all kinds of creative expression and connection, virtually and beyond. Some of these ways will undoubtedly make space for the building up of God's people even beyond the present circumstances.

It has been heartening to see just how many people have remained engaged, from worshiping at home to participating in classes and discussion groups. Hundreds of meals are being collected each week at the church and distributed to those in need. Deacons are reaching out and connecting with those in the fold.

We want to be sure every single person has the chance to be and stay connected during this time, and we intend to continue to work toward that goal. This very issue of Zephyrs contains information on ways to engage the church community virtually, and we will continue outreach efforts to help reach people personally. At any point, reach out to the staff or lay leaders if you, or someone you know, needs assistance or simply a contact from the church. And, remember to be the church yourself, by being that connection.

The wellbeing of the community is our number one concern, and we see the nurturing and living out our faith as a critical piece of that. We don't know how long this way of being together will last, but following the guidance of public health officials we will find a way to do the work of Christ in whatever circumstances persist.

Finally, we know the economic impact of this pandemic, and the ripple effects of that impact. Remember, you are a part of this church because of God's grace and your choice, not because of how much you make or contribute. People, I know, worry about what this economy will mean for the church. Of course, we don't know, but we are working diligently to plan for ways to both reduce expenses and grow revenue over the long-term. We will act both responsibly and faithfully in caring for this beloved church.

*God's Peace,
Rob*

OUR VIRTUAL WORSHIP JOURNEY

Continued...

multiple people on a screen at the same time, so we decided that just one person would lead worship each week on Facebook Live. I was the one lucky enough to lead that first at-home worship service.

Though I did not make any major gaffes, we realized that 45 minutes of one person is A LOT. No one needs to see me on the screen for that long! The following week, we split the time. I began with some music and prayer, and then we went to Jeff on a second live feed for the scripture and sermon. Jeff was so fancy, he even preached part of his sermon while walking outside! Rob recorded a Time of Discovery and RuthE. an anthem, so we had not one, but four worship videos for you to track down.

This was an improvement, but quite cumbersome. At this point, we were all getting more familiar with Zoom, so we decided to give a Zoom service a try for Palm Sunday, made available for viewing on Facebook, YouTube, and the WPC website. Finally, we found a way to have 5 different worship participants in one video!

In the last several weeks, we have continued to make improvements to the worship experience. We have discovered that Jeff is a master video editor, so more and more of our miscues have been edited out. (We would have quite the blooper reel!) RuthE. and Patty have found that pre-recording their music on a platform other than Zoom has helped the quality ... Zoom is good for a lot of things, but not for music. All of the preachers are figuring out what it means to offer a sermon on-line, rather than in person. We have added greetings by various people in the Westminster community.

Many of you have asked when we will be able to worship in person again. At this point, we just don't know. In the meantime, we are closely monitoring both state and county guidelines. We are also collecting resources and best practices about how to safely return to worship when it is allowed. We are also having some fun brainstorming about how we might experiment with in-person worship to make it as safe and meaningful as possible for all. We welcome your comments and ideas.

*Blessings,
Bethany*



A SUMMER UNLIKE ANY OTHER

Ruth E. Wells, Music Director

I used to spend the summer bartering with my musician friends to help me cover summer Sundays while the sanctuary choir takes a break. I also looked forward to spending some time at a music directors' conference at Zephyr Point, reviewing new music and sharing experience with my colleagues. This year, I had been looking forward to attending a conference in Atlanta with other composers and church music publishers. COVID-19 has changed all this.

We can't sing together on Zoom, but I expect we can review recordings together and provide and receive feedback. It will be helpful, but not the same.

I'm working on putting together a virtual quartet, but it's a lot harder than it looks. Recruiting the participants to prepare the individual parts is only half of it. In an explanation of the process of constructing a 25-voice choir piece, the editor said it took him 48 hours to assemble the individual videos (which probably took each artist a minimum of an hour to learn and record.) A quartet won't take as long, of course, but it's a lot more than the 5-6 hours of rehearsal some of our small ensembles typically put in for a 3-4-minute anthem.

We'll figure it out. But it looks like we'll continue with solo artists for worship music for a while. The upside for me is, my piano skills are being kept fresh. And I do love to sing.

Gratefully,
Ruth E.

REPORT FROM ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION | Ginny Quick, Commission Chair

An Administrative Commission was formed by Session in March in accordance with the Book of Order to act with the authority of Session in special circumstances such as the COVID-19 shelter-in-place mandate. The members of the Administrative Commission are Coral Kisseberth, Harbo Jensen, and Ginny Quick. The commission members have been meeting with Rob and Bethany on a weekly basis to discuss programs and needs of the church family during the shelter in place mandate. A significant amount of time has also been spent on the church's finances.

While WPC has some cash and reserves, we are currently operating at a deficit with pledges lower than budget. We also recognize the likelihood that this trend may continue with some members impacted by shutdowns and job losses. Thanks to the hard work of Harbo, Bookkeeper Diane Newman and Treasurer Scott Bray, WPC received a forgivable Payroll Protection Loan to cover eight weeks of salaries and benefits as well as some rental and utilities expenses. This is great news! The Commission will continue to monitor cash and expenses very closely, and make adjustments as needed. At their April meeting, the Session appointed a separate task force to evaluate potential areas for savings, should the need arise in the coming months. The members of this task force are Jim Snipes (chair), Ron Meserve, Mary Mossteller, Sally Pasternack, and Peter Sayers, with helpful guidance from church Treasurer Scott Bray.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to any members of the Commission.

SPIRITUAL LIFE WORKSHOP – THE EMPTY NEST

Is the empty nest approaching for you? Do you have kids in high school, in college or have already moved out of the home?

Transitions can be a powerful time to step back and ask the heroic questions: What is life asking of me now? How can I use this transition as an opportunity to grow? And what is next for me?

If you are open to these questions, then this workshop is for you! Together we will explore the possibilities in this significant change — **THE EMPTY NEST.**

Lisa Bartschat will lead the workshop, which is sponsored by the Spiritual Life Commission. Lisa is a certified Life Coach and is entering the empty nest as well.

The framework of the workshop will be based on the book, “**Transitions: Making Sense of Life’s Changes**” by William Bridges and will be comprised of three phases: endings, the in-between and new beginnings.

There will be three meetings (approximately one hour): **Thursday evenings at 7:30 pm on: June 4, June 18, July 9.** We will meet on zoom, pending further notice. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Lisa at: **ebartschat@comcast.net**



Lisa Bartschat

UPDATE ON WESTMINSTER’S FOOD OUTREACH DURING THE SHUT DOWN

Judi Sachs

Many in our caring, giving congregation have asked how we are continuing the many ways Westminster engages in ministry to people experiencing homelessness or food insufficiency. While in-person involvement has been significantly limited due to the shelter in place regulations, efforts are ongoing to serve our neighbors in need. This is an incomplete list, but it shows the generous spirit of our beloved community:

- Several groups of WPC neighbors and friends have been collaborating to make regular deliveries of sack lunches/dinners to St. Vincent DePaul’s kitchen in San Rafael.

Contact: volunteer@vinnies.org

- A group led by Jeff Shankle and Jeff Heely are sourcing sack lunches for Wednesday delivery to Sausalito Presbyterian as part of what was formerly The Hot Lunch effort. They deliver extras to St. Vincent DePaul as well.

(See page 7 for more information.)

Contact: jheely17@gmail.com

- The burrito suppers at Voyager Carmel on the last Sunday of the month continue.

Contact: Carol Coffman: boco54@gmail.com

- In-person/in kitchen meal prep for The Street Chaplaincy is no longer possible, but 100+ hot burrito dinners are prepared by a “chef and wife” team in First Presbyterian San Rafael’s kitchen every Tuesday for take-out. They cannot take food donations but appreciate financial assistance.

Contact: www.streetchaplaincy.org

- A new team, inspired by Jordan Decker’s work with TransHeartline, is providing home-made meals and shopping for groceries to support people who are recovering from gender confirmation surgery.

Contact: Carol Coffman: boco54@gmail.com

- Randy Huyser and Carrie Burroughs coordinated our traditional (and delicious) Easter meal for Voyager Carmel. Thanks to all!

It is inspiring to see all these outreach efforts continue even as food shopping and social distancing complicates our lives.



RENOVATION UPDATE

Ron Meserve, Renovation Committee Chair

The most exciting event for the Renovation Committee since March 12, 2020 was the resumption of construction on Monday, May 4! By Wednesday, May 6 the “old” Narthex was demolished making way for the new, stunning Narthex. The contractor, McDevitt Construction, now estimates completion of construction by end of October.

Thanks to the generosity of the Spiritual Life Commission, with a bequest from Sarah Todd, a permanent Labyrinth will be installed on the floor of Findlay Hall. Thanks to the Building and Grounds Commission, the sanctuary will get

a new coat of paint when the renovated building is painted. This will promote continuity of “curb appeal”. This was a concern of the Tiburon Planning Commission.

Thanks to the Women of Westminster, a high-end refrigerator/freezer will grace the new kitchen. Members of the congregation have been extremely generous with their willingness to “sponsor” (underwrite) costs of items that were not within the scope of the renovation budget. The sponsorship total currently exceeds \$63,000! We are still seeking sponsors for the following: conference room furniture, landscaping, and a new church sign.

Every Tuesday the contractor, architect, project superintendent, Tod Moody and I (the OCA team) meet to monitor and manage the construction progress. We make decisions every week with a focus on looking for the most cost-effective ways to complete various aspects of the renovation. This Value Engineering (VE) has resulted in significant reductions in total construction cost. In October 2019, the estimated construction cost was \$2,718,383. As of April 30, the contract \$2,591,120. This will likely change but the VE work has substantially reduced the risk of significant change orders.

ALWAYS, A HUGE THANK YOU | The Stewardship Commission

In April, the Stewardship Commission evolved to include new roles and new members. The commission is now chaired by Elder Christina Hanson, who joined the commission in 2018, and graciously offered to take the helm from Bill McLeod. Bill will remain on the team, guiding us through our next annual pledge campaign. Chuck Friede will focus on analytics, and Christina H. will bring her fundraising expertise to outreach and marketing. We’re also blessed to have the perspectives of Sophia Harkins, Christina Werner, and Karen Halsey who recently joined the commission as a new Ruling Elder.

Always, the Stewardship Commission thanks everyone for their steady support of Westminster. **Thank you! Thank you!** We’re pleased to shine the light on two new giving mechanisms less known but more relevant nowadays.

NEW TEXT-TO-GIVE CAPABILITY

Why give through texts? It’s easy and a good way to replace the offering plate during COVID-19. For some of us, distributing funds from a bank account or credit card via texting is second nature. For the rest of us, it’s a new concept. The Stewardship Commission gave it a try and found the experience to be surprisingly simple.

Here’s how you do it: Text the word GIVE to WPC’s text number: 1-415-329-3537 and follow the prompts.

For more instruction, visit www.wpctiburon.org/give.

AMAZONSMILE

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support Westminster every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you’ll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience (*cont...*)

ALWAYS, A HUGE THANK YOU

Continued

as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. Please consider designating WPC as your organization of choice with AmazonSmile.

If the Stewardship Commission can help or answer any of your questions, please contact us at: wpcstewardshipteam@gmail.com.



DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME (ALONE)

Jeff Shankle, Youth Director

Nearly 8 out of 10 young people reported that when a trusted adult outside their house connected with them during COVID-19, they felt less lonely. So how has our work changed since the shelter-in-place to meet this vital need?

Well, I moved my office hours to 8:00pm - 10:00pm and spend all that time on Snapchat and Instagram. I would play more Fortnite and Madden if only we had a TV. It probably goes without mentioning that I'm a grown man... not a celebrity... and I try to do this quietly so the family isn't disturbed from all the random noises that come from teenagers posts and stories.

Grown adults spending hours on Snapchat and Instagram. Is that weird? Yes, of course it is! It's very weird! Unless we step back for a moment and

consider where our youth are. How will we continue to meet the needs of our youth if we are not where they are? (To be noted, some of our leaders are much younger than I am therefore it is much less weird.)

Since schools and all other social activities have shuttered, we cannot physically enter the world our teenagers inhabit. No more WPC youth leaders showing up at games, concerts, or In-n-Out. We always talk about "contact work" with our volunteer leaders, which is any time we spend with our youth outside of church activities. Obviously, contact work has gotten much harder. So, like everybody else, we've had to move to doing that mostly online. Our middle and high school youth groups continue to meet weekly over Zoom but really everything else that's happening is what's uplifting. As many of you heard, our youth joined with Men's Connection to help provide meals for our weekly hot lunch crowd. Every week two of our leaders, Jeff and Elaine, greet people as they drop off bagged lunches for those in need.

Our youth and leaders have also been reaching out to others who may be feeling more isolated because of a lack of family or other reasons. We've conducted numerous "virtual visits" with these friends of ours. Of course, not all of them are seniors! One demographic that gets forgotten are the young adults, single, without children, living without the social life they were accustomed to. If only I had a dime for every 20-something who told me how lonely this whole thing is.

This youth ministry has apparently built a reputation, as evidenced by Jeff and Elaine's first trip to St. Vincent's in San Rafael, to drop off our extra bag lunches. "Aren't you the youth group that goes to San Diego every summer?" How do they know that?! When the SF Marin Food Bank needed someone to move their schedules around to accommodate their very fluid one, naturally it was the families of WPC youth who responded and helped distribute meals to the hungry.

You know who else gets hungry? Teenagers. The most fun we're having is the games played during those weekly Zooms. Winners have received burritos, boba, and pizzas delivered right to their door! Winner, winner, chicken dinner!

Again, nearly 8 out of 10 young people reported that when a trusted adult outside their house connected with them during COVID-19, they felt less lonely. *If you have young people in your house, please don't try to do this alone.*



FISHES AND LOAVES | Jeff Heely

The story of fishes and loaves is told in all four Gospels. The story of Jesus taking just a small amount of bread and fish, blessing them, and feeding 5,000 is one of my favorites. GOD's gifts are incredible.

When I was back in St. Louis years ago, our pastor at Ladue Chapel offered an alternative interpretation of the fishes and loaves story. He asked if we thought that it was possible that the many attendees had brought food for themselves only, yet when they saw Jesus' generosity, the people put their excess in the baskets. The excess could have been the reason why the baskets were overflowing when the baskets came back. Everyone ate and there was food left over; Yahweh is great!

Regardless of how literally one wants to read that story, we have seen a miracle brought about by many members and friends of Westminster.

In the first 6 weeks of making and delivering bag lunches to Sausalito Presbyterian Church and to St. Vincent de Paul in San Rafael for further distribution to those in need; we supplied over 850 meals! The need is consistent and your gifts so far have been incredible. We aren't done, though! Please, if you would consider making lunch(es), we will ensure they get to those who need them.

Here's how it works: In order to maintain proper social distance and simultaneously do our part to help our friends in need, please follow these procedures:

WEDNESDAY MORNING

• 10:30 -

11:00 Drop off brown bag lunch at WPC parking lot. Jeff Heely will be there with my trunk open to accept your kind gifts. (Feel free to make as many as

you would like.)

- **11:00** Heely or Jim Gibbs (Thank you, Jim!) departs to drop off lunches at Sausalito Presbyterian Church
- **11:25** Heely continues to St. Vincent's in San Rafael to drop off surplus

Brown bag lunch(es) may consist of combination of the following:

- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich
- Thinly sliced deli meats and cheese
- Fruit
- Yogurt
- Hummus, guacamole, etc.
- Juice or water
- Chips/crackers
- Soft cookies or soft treats

Please print contents on outside of bag, thanks! Additionally, you may include a written note of encouragement and/or sanitary supplies. If you are so inclined, say a prayer for



ZOOM YOGA

Many of you were able to join Erin Elliott's Monday morning yoga class when it was meeting in person. Erin is now enthusiastically offering yoga via Zoom, and invites the Westminster congregation to join her on Monday mornings at 9:30am.

This slow, contemplative-style yoga class is open to all WPC community members, friends and family members. All levels welcome, including yoga "skeptics." Erin is collecting donations for the class, which she then passes along to COVID frontline community organizations.

Contact Erin at erinielliott7@gmail.com for details and for the Zoom link.

STAYING CONNECTED

Many of you have figured out how to stay connected virtually with the Westminster community during this shelter in place time. If you are still struggling to find us online, the best place to start is our church website – wpctiburon.org.

- On the homepage of the website, you will find two large buttons – one for **Facebook** and one for **YouTube**. Each of those buttons will take you directly to the Westminster page on each platform. On these platforms, you will find worship each Sunday, stories for children, special music, devotionals, and more.
- Our website is also a good source of information about **Zoom** gatherings during the week. We have a film discussion group that meets on Tuesday afternoons, our Wednesday morning class, the Friday Men's Connection, and more. Reach out to us any time if you need a specific Zoom link.
- Finally, have you been receiving our weekly “**eNews**” by email? We use this email to keep you informed about what is happening in the week to come. Let us know if you need to be added to this list.

*Still struggling to connect? Not sure how to use Zoom?
Reach out to Rob, Bethany, or Jeff. We have a team of tech experts who are ready to help you figure it out.*




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