



Westminster

Presbyterian Church

ZEPHYRS

ADVENT 2020



CHANGING AS WE WAIT | Pastor Rob McClellan

Our deepest desires will not be fulfilled all at once. That is a truth that has become especially clear during this time. This year, Advent takes on a particular relevance for us because it can teach us how to wait in a way that changes us.

Not long after the pandemic set in and our in-person gatherings were suspended, I began envisioning the day when we would gather again. The doors would swing open and people would once again pour into that sacred space. That is not how it will be.

Instead, we have crept slowly back into gathering, and that is a journey that will continue with both steps forward and backward (*cont...*)

MORE ADVENT WORDS

Associate Pastor Bethany Nelson

Last Advent season, we introduced an “Advent Word” devotional, where I offered a reflection on a different word each day of Advent. The words are pre-chosen, and it was quite an interesting experience for me to reflect on the various words – some of which resonated deeply with me and some that left me scratching my head. I remember that the first word of last year’s Advent season was “*unexpected*.” If only I knew then just how unexpected the coming year would be!

This year, you are encouraged to participate in the Advent Word devotional. Take a look at the list of words. Does one specifically stand out for you? If so, I invite you to create a reflection on that word. Your reflection (*cont...*)



CHANGING AS WE WAIT

Continued...

(and many to the side). At the time of this writing, worship is scheduled to resume in the sanctuary on November 29, the First Sunday of Advent. Still, it will be limited in capacity and in form, and many will understandably choose to stay away out of safety for themselves or others. It will be a pleasant reunion to be sure, but not the one I had envisioned.

Not only will the pandemic not end on our timeline, its impact on our lives will not disappear all at once. The old will bleed into the new and a different reality will emerge. This, I have come to realize, is how many of life's changes happen. We like to remember in terms of dramatic moments, but transformation happens because of forces that unfold over time, even if largely hidden. Thus, the skills for navigating this life are not primarily in generating dramatic moments, but rather learning the hard, slow work of transformation. We love the image of the butterfly emerging, but it's all made possible by the cocoon time.

Advent can teach us to cocoon well. To take the Scriptures on the most basic level, which no doubt sells them short, is to see stories of expectation met in unexpected ways, hope for one kind of momentary change met with another sort of change and change agent. People expected a particular Messiah, it seems, and they got quite another. To dabble in literalism (if only for the symbolism it holds), it took Jesus 30 years to begin his ministry. Talk about post-Christmas letdown.

Advent is about getting ready for the fulfillment of our deepest, most sacred desires. It is about training ourselves to long for and expect the right things. The secular/religious tension of the holiday season is a good illustration. Advent is not about empty waiting for a time when our houses will be filled with new stuff. Advent is about a steadying filling of the soul with desire for the presence of God enfleshed, love in motion, God's shalom and justice for all.

The secret is that in that kind of active, prayerful waiting, the transformation begins in us. To take a familiar line from Gandhi, we begin to become the change we wish to see in the world. So, we will not return to normal all at once. But, if we wait well, we will not want the old normal in its entirety. We will want some of what we have lost, and we will want something else as well, something that looks more like the Christ God has given us than the one we might have expected.

*God's Peace,
Rob*

MORE ADVENT WORDS

Continued...

might use writing, music, art, photography ... however you chose to express your thoughts and feelings about the word you choose. Then, send it to me and we will post it on the appropriate day.

You will be able to find the Advent Word devotionals on both the blog section of the WPC website (**wpctiburon.org/our-blog**) and on the WPC Facebook page. Some of the reflections will also be included on the WPC Tiburon podcast.

The first word of this Advent season is "tender." I'm guessing this is referring to the precious, tender baby Jesus. Or perhaps to the tender way Jesus' parents cared for him after his birth, even in a difficult situation. When I hear the word tender, though, I can't help but think about the state of each of our hearts and lives heading into this Advent season. After all that has happened in 2020, I'm guessing we are all feeling just a bit tender. Just a bit raw around the edges. Or, maybe you're even more than "just a bit" tender.

This Advent, may our tender selves be reflected in the tender baby Jesus. The love that God had for the Christ Child in his tender state is the same love that God has for each of us in our tender states. Just as Jesus drew both his strength and his peace from God during the tender moments of his life, so might we do the same.

*Blessings,
Bethany*





THE HYMNS OF ADVENT | Ruth E. Wells, Music Director

I'm sure I've written in previous years, maybe every year, that Advent is my favorite season of the church year. And I'm frustrated by those eager to sing Christmas carols during the season. The season of watching and waiting is important, and I invite you to learn more about the church's commemoration of anticipation in the monthly Hymn Sing on Dec. 3 at 7:00pm.

We'll look at eight hymns from our present hymnal in the order in which they came into being, with origins as early as the 9th Century, and marching into the current millennium. You'll see that even the more contemporary entries use music that looks back and remembers traditions from earlier times.

While the text of newer hymns give more contemporary language to the hopes and fears of all the years, we'll also see how poets from the church's early years faced challenges and longings similar to our own.

Come, sing with me on Dec. 3! Use the SignUp Genius link in the eNews, or email music.at.wpc240@gmail.com.

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS FAIR | Kurt Peterson, Outreach Commission Chair

In spite of the global pandemic, we were able hold our 32rd annual Christmas Fair this year. The committee, consisting of Sandy Smith, Judi & Mark Sachs, and Kurt Peterson met in August to plan how to get it done. We decided to create a brochure and mail it to parishioners and past participants in order to publicize the event. Rather than the normal 2 Sunday in-person Fair, we planned to process everything by mail and through the WPC website. John Trotter came through with his time and creativity to design and produce a full-color catalog. Mark and Kurt worked with Martha Vujovich to create a means to process the transactions on-line. Diane M. and Diane N. were both there to verify that the new process would work.

The Alternative Christmas Fair truly went virtual as we also publicized the deserving organizations via short videos during Westminster's online worship services and featured them on the Westminster website.

This year, church leadership, Deacons, and the youth groups came up with 9 deserving organizations to which people could contribute in honor of friends and family. They are Bridge the Gap (Men's Connection), Canal Alliance (Women of Westminster), Horizon Community School (Outreach), ALS Association (Spiritual Life), the 2 Mission Trips (WPC Youth Ministry), Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (Deacons), Center for Domestic Peace and Marin Foster Care (both by Congregational Life).



The brochures were mailed in late October and as of this writing on November 5th, 15 donations have already been received. By the time you read this, we won't know the totals, but we will still accept your donations. Please see the instructions on the WPC website. Thank you for your participation!



A GENERATION OF HOPE

Jeff Shankle, Youth Director

"This generation gives me so much hope."

We talk about the Biblical prophets with some regularity. It's always an engaging conversation. When we do, we try to make connections to modern-day prophets - people who will do anything to bring attention to justice. Whether it's the Biblical prophet Jeremiah walking with a yoke around his neck or John Lewis and others marching 54 miles from Selma, prophets have done whatever they had to do to bring a necessary message to the wider public.

This year we talked about Greta Thunberg, the teenage climate activist, who sailed from Europe to New York to deliver a message to world leaders assembled at the United Nations. Like most prophets, she did not hold back in her use of words:

"I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet, you all come to us young people for hope. How dare you?! You have stolen my dreams and my childhood."

I tear up nearly every time we play it back for a new group of youth. It cuts to my heart probably because I know it's true. When I was a teenager, I did not have many concerns about the world around me. I'm guessing many of us didn't. Our biggest concerns revolved around school gossip, sports, and grades.

However, this generation of young people have had a different childhood. A high schooler or college student today would've been born post 9/11 during the War on Terror, started going to school during the Iraq War, hit adolescence during the Great Recession, and now they stare into their young adult lives in the midst of a global pandemic, climate change, racial tensions, and all the other problems that have come into focus this year.

Yet this generation of young people gives more time serving their local communities than any other in US history. They are more aware of global issues, care and push for equality, and work harder than most of us do. Not sure about how hard they're working? When's the last time you tried to schedule something with a teenager? This generation of young people do give us a great deal of hope. As a youth pastor though, I just wish our generations could return the favor.

ADVENT SERIES

The Spiritual Life Commission invites you to join us via Zoom on **December 1, 8, 15, and 22 from 6:00-7:00pm** for a special Advent Series. Featuring speakers, spiritual practices, yoga, music, and more. Watch the eNews and website for the Zoom link.



Kathleen Denison



Colette Lafia



Ted Scott

- **December 1** - Spiritual Director Kathleen Denisonz- *Welcoming Inner Peace*
- **December 8** - Spiritual Director Colette Lafia - *Surrendering Into Love*
- **December 15** - WPC Parish Associate Ted Scott - *Living a Resilient Life*
- **December 22** - Erin Elliott and special guest - *Movement and Music* (Read more from Erin on the next page.)



CULTIVATING THE GIFT OF GRATITUDE THROUGH YOGA

Hello WPC community, I'm Erin Elliott, longtime community member. I have delighted in offering a regular yoga classes, in Findlay Hall, since Fall 2017; transitioning to Zoom video yoga classes earlier this year. I truly enjoy providing this all-level, "pay-what you can" yoga class to our community, and would love to share why.

My students regularly tell me that these classes help them feel more open and fluid in their bodies, as well as develop greater awareness on how to manage discomfort and tightness, not to mention experience a kinder attitude towards any physical limitations or conditions. Here's what one long time student, Bob Miller, says about his regular commitment to the class: *"I end this class feeling more fluid and serene than when I arrive. What a fabulous way to start the week!"*

I do believe that this serenity lies in a special alchemy that occurs by tuning into one's natural breath cycle and matching it to the basic movements of the yoga postures. This integration can lead to enhanced experiences of expansiveness, fluidity, and this serene sense of oneness. In each class it is my intention is to guide students towards an overall sense of friendliness and gentleness towards self. To me this is the inherent gift of gratitude.

I believe that cultivating this self-compassion is the centerpiece to the student's experience. Especially when the yoga postures become challenging. Yes, the class does offer up physical challenges! To me, that is part of the magic. The movements are introduced with clear, concise instruction, together with appropriate modifications to allow the student to make their way safely and comfortably. Meeting these challenges, as in life, has many rewards. That sense of wow, wonder and pleasure are all possible outcomes, which of course can enhance how we relate to ourselves, as well as support our everyday interactions with others. To me, it is an honor to witness this "aliveness" unfolding in my students.

Does this class sound like something you'd like to learn more about? If so, I encourage you to reach out for a chat. I can answer any questions, address any concerns, and provide you tips on how to optimize your Zoom yoga session. The class meets most every Monday from 9:30-10:30am (via Zoom, until further notice).

To arrange a time to talk, simply drop me a note at: erinielliott7@gmail.com. Or register for a FREE FIRST CLASS here: <https://erinelliottyoga.com/online-classes/>. ***Also, if customized one-on-one sessions are more appealing, please reach out for details.*

POETRY CORNER

Submitted by Debbie Dybsky,
Spiritual Life Commission

A POEM FOR AUTUMN DAYS

God of autumn, the trees are saying goodbye
to their leaves, letting go of what has been.
We, too, have our moments of surrender.
Help us to let go when we need to do so.

God of geese going south for another season.
Your wisdom enables us to know what needs to be
left behind and what needs to be carried into the
future. We yearn for your insight and wisdom.

God of life, you believe in us, you enrich us,
and you entrust us with the freedom to choose life.
For all this, we are grateful.

By Joyce Rupp

RETURN TO INDOOR WORSHIP

WE RETURN TO INDOOR WORSHIP ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29.

Here are a few important logistics:

- Worship will be by reservation only through the online tool “**SignUp Genius.**” That link is available on the home page of the web site and in the weekly eNews. **Anyone unable to access that tool online may contact Bethany Nelson to register for worship.**
- We will begin with two services at 9:15 and 10:30am.
 - * 10:30 will be geared toward families with school-age children, though all are welcome.
 - * 9:15 will be for adults only to protect sensitive populations.
 - * Services will last 30-40 minutes.
- Safety protocols will include mandatory masking for all participants (leaders included), temperature screenings, physical distancing, open windows (dress accordingly), regulated flow of foot traffic.

We encourage you to make the worship decision that is best for you. Worship will continue to be live-streamed online for those who choose not to attend in person.

RENOVATION UPDATE | Elke Bray, Renovation Committee member

As the Renovation Project comes to a close, we would like to reflect on the journey and celebrate the results. While the pandemic hinders our ability to have a large-scale grand opening, the pastors are offering tours to individual households.

Welcome to Westminster2020!

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

2014/2015 Reviewed deferred building maintenance, interview key stakeholders, and planned for future church needs.

2016 Hired a consultant and conducted a capital campaign feasibility study.

2018 Westminster2020-Forward in Faith capital campaign ran January through June. The campaign raised \$2.5 million!

2019 Hired the architect and general contractor, secured financing, and obtained permits to begin construction.

2020 Completed construction of the new narthex, community building, and office space in 10 months. Landscaping, new signage, and solar panel installation to be completed by the end of the year.

(continued on page 7....)



Beautiful, enlarged narthex

RENOVATION UPDATE

Continued...

WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED?

Essential Renovation to Facility Infrastructure

- addressed years of deferred maintenance
- performed seismic upgrades
- installed energy-efficient upgrades including windows, siding, solar, and roofing
- replaced plumbing and sewer infrastructure

Strengthening Service and Community

- built a large and efficient kitchen
- revitalized fellowship space in Findlay Hall and Fireside
- provided increased classroom space
- created flexible and modern meeting spaces
- reconfigured and expand office space

Creating a Welcoming Environment

- enlarged the Narthex to provide a dynamic and welcoming entry
- provided ADA compliant access to the entire facility

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Our work is not quite done. Construction costs rose significantly over the past four years. To complete the project, Session approved a loan of up to \$1 million from the Synod with the expectation that there would be a subsequent campaign to pay off the debt. Through diligent expense management we were able to keep the final loan amount just under \$1 million. We will be asking the church community to again consider the value of this revitalized space when we launch a combined annual and capital campaign next fall.

“ Welcome to
Westminster2020! ”



Brand-new second floor multi-purpose room



Refrigerator and freezer in the new kitchen



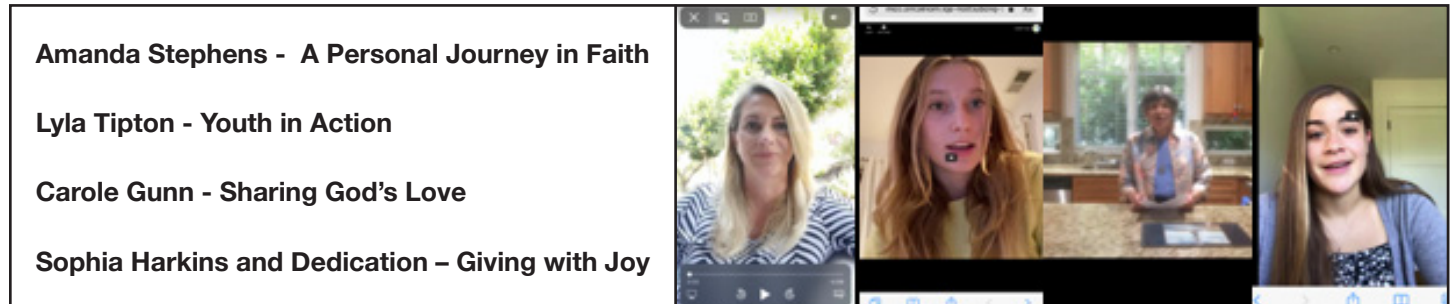
Library space with new conference table

2021 STEWARDSHIP ANNUAL PLEDGE DRIVE

A BIG THANK YOU to all of our congregants who have pledged thus far for the 2021 Stewardship Campaign! We have received pledges of over \$500,000 toward our \$750,000 goal from 143 WPC members.

Still planning to make your pledge? There is still time to share your financial commitment for next year! Simply send an email to secretary@wpctiburon.org, mail in your pledge card, OR set up your 2021 credit card donation on the church website: www.wpctiburon.org/give.

Needing some inspiration? If you missed any of these insightful messages from members of our congregation about how WPC has shaped them, simply click on their short videos on the church's website: www.wpctiburon.org/give.



Amanda Stephens, Lyla Tipton, Carole Gunn, Sophia Harkins