



Westminster

Presbyterian Church

ZEPHYRS

FALL 2021



ON VACCINATIONS, MASKS, AND CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO COVID | Pastor Rob McClellan

As a pastor, it is my charge to help people understand what it means to love God and neighbor. Indeed, one of the best ways we can love God is by loving neighbor. I am not a doctor, so I do not give out medical advice, but I do know what doctors, infectious disease specialists, and health officials have said. They have made it clear that vaccines are safe and effective, and furthermore are critical for us overcoming this pandemic. I encourage you to speak to your physician about this directly if you have medical questions.

Because sometimes religion has offered a problematic voice in these matters, I feel compelled to offer my voice in supporting vaccination from a theological perspective. One hears a lot of talk about “freedom” these days, but it is *(cont...)*

SHARING WESTMINSTER WITH OTHERS

Associate Pastor Bethany Nelson

It is a natural thing to share things we like with others. Have you ever recommended a favorite book, tv show, or movie to someone? Have you ever asked someone for a recipe that was especially tasty? When we come across something good, we want to share!

Have you shared Westminster with someone lately? I would not be surprised if your answer is no. Though it is fun to share good things, many people find it difficult to share about our faith experiences. There are many reasons for this. Perhaps you don't want to sound too pushy. Or maybe you don't want to be compared to an in-your-face televangelists. Or maybe you have *(cont...)*



ON VACCINATIONS, MASKS, AND CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO COVID

Continued...

clear this talk is working off a definition of freedom that is lacking or at least not Christian. In the wider culture, freedom may well have come to mean freedom from imposition or even inconvenience, freedom from having individual choices impacted by communal decisions.

For the Christian, however, I believe freedom is not primarily freedom from, it is freedom for and freedom to. In Christ, we are free to live for our neighbor. We are free to serve one another. We recognize that living in a way that endangers others is not an enactment of true freedom; it is putting the self above others, something against which the Scriptures warn us continually. For Christians, sacrifice for others is not an infringement, but a spiritual discipline and key religious value. Another way to think of sacrifice is making an offering, an offering of oneself for the good and protection of others. After all, that is precisely what Jesus made of his life, a holy and sacred offering.

One of the many tragedies of this time is that seemingly everything has become politicized, where basic actions get put in one of two neatly defined camps, ideologies, or affiliations. The problem is life is more complex, issues are more nuanced, and people are more diverse than this simplistic binary thinking. A functional society has to be able to agree on certain basic facts in order to be able to come to decisions for the common good. As people of faith, we can be constructive participants, both by our individual actions and by engaging in the public sphere, holding leaders accountable for governing in good faith, with particular concern for the vulnerable.

A vaccination, a mask, these are offerings we can make for our neighbors if not ourselves. They are ones I have made and will continue to make.

In Christ,
Rob

SHARING WESTMINSTER WITH OTHERS

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tried and been shut down by someone who is uninterested. Whatever the reason, sharing about our faith can be hard.

That being said, I encourage you to give it a try. Surveys have shown that one of the main reasons people are moved to try out a church for the first time is because they have been invited by a friend. A personal invitation goes a long way! If Westminster is important and meaningful for you, it will likely be important and meaningful for someone you know who does not yet have a church home. Let's share the amazing community that is Westminster.

We have several events coming up that would serve as a great introduction to our church community. Our In-Gathering brunch on September 12 (see page 5) is a wonderful time to meet people over a tasty plate of food. Our Christian Education Commission has a three-part series of events planned (see page 6) that would be a good opportunity for your child to invite a friend.

In addition to inviting someone to attend worship with you, consider inviting them to a class or small group of which you are a part. Perhaps someone would enjoy the Wednesday morning class, our Friday morning Men's Connection, our hiking group, our Women Connecting gathering, our Spiritual Life book group ... There are so many ways to get to know Westminster!

Jesus began his ministry by inviting people to follow him and to join with him in ministry. His disciples may never have gotten involved without that personal invitation from Jesus. May each of us offer that potentially life-changing invitation to someone in the weeks to come.

Blessings,
Bethany



A recent WPC hiking group. Join in on the 2nd and 4th Fridays and invite a friend!



WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

Jeff Shankle, Director of Youth Ministry

Like many things of late, our mission trip was more of a mission “trip.” In other words, we didn’t go anywhere. We stayed at the church and mostly went to work and see our friends in Marin City. While it was certainly different, it gave us an opportunity to reconsider one of the more familiar lessons of the Bible.

Jesus said that “to love your neighbor as yourself,” is the second most important command of all. While it ranks second behind loving God (according to Jesus), it also is the summation of all the other teachings that came before Jesus.

A good question to ask then is, “Who is my neighbor?” When Jesus was asked this question, he responded with the parable of the Good Samaritan. Essentially, in Jesus’ telling, the most unlikely person to care for someone in need is a good neighbor. The person we are to love, therefore, is simply someone in need ... regardless of our relation to them.

We tend to think of loving our neighbors in the big picture sense. We’re supposed to be nice to everyone. We’re supposed to care about what’s going on around the world. While that is true, the parable itself directs our attention to more immediate matters. In the parable, the word “neighbor” makes us think about the people near to us.

So this year, instead of loving the people who live hundreds of miles away, we dedicated a week to considering what it means to love our neighbors who are:

- Across the hall (at school, home, or office)
- Across the street (in our neighborhoods)
- Across town (around Marin and the Bay Area)
- Across the country
- Around the world

We hope this can serve as inspiration for all of us. Hopefully we can continue to travel and contribute to the needs of those far away. Hopefully we’ll also recognize the gift of serving those who are closest to us. Yes, even those next door.

HIGH SCHOOL CONFIRMATION CLASS

Our annual Confirmation Class will begin on **Sunday, September 12** following the In-Gathering Brunch. Any high school student who has not yet been confirmed is invited to participate. We will meet twice a month from September-March and celebrate **Confirmation Sunday on March 20, 2022.**

See Bethany or Jeff with questions.



IT IS TIME TO START SINGING AGAIN

Ruth E. Wells, Music Director

What a long, fraught time this has been for singers and other performing artists. After a Skagit Valley Chorale rehearsal in March 2020 was identified as a super spreader event, choral singing and pretty much every other indoor activity involving vocal projection or strong exhalation (into wind instruments or on gym equipment) was banished for months.

We've learned a lot more since then about how to avoid creating aerosol opportunities, and it has been heartening to see and hear the congregation singing in worship in recent weeks. We have a singing faith tradition, and it will return, slowly but surely.

As County guidelines permit, we will begin including choral music in worship this fall. I am looking at ways to keep rehearsals short in hopes of making it possible for more folks to participate, and for the choir to be used once or twice a month. If we have a handful of people, we'll make that work. If we have a dozen, we'll work out how to space everyone out in a safe way. Perhaps we'll work in more ways for the congregation as a whole to join us in singing.

We have been too long silenced. Please reach out to me if you'd like to join in the choir's rebirth. Soli Deo gloria (to God alone be the glory).

Ruth E.

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

As we plan for the year ahead, WPC Elders and staff want to collect your feedback on a couple of areas in the life of the church. As a result, a brief survey has been developed with two sections. First, the church wants to do a better job of connecting people with areas in which they might like to participate. There are a number of questions that will help leaders know where members, friends, and even visitors might like to plug in. Second, COVID has had a large impact on our music program. Ruth E. and the pastoral staff are taking the opportunity to consider how music would best serve the church moving forward.

Your participation in the survey will give you a chance to share your insights on music.

Look for a survey in your email inbox and contact the church if you don't get one in the next couple weeks. Please fill out as individuals (rather than households). Paper copies will be made available as well.



IN-GATHERING BRUNCH

By Randy Huyser, Congregational Life Commission Chair

The annual In-Gathering Brunch is back better than ever this year on **Sunday, September 12** following worship. It will feature food prepared in our brand-new kitchen as well as dishes brought by some of our congregation's finest cooks.

Our In-Gathering celebration at Westminster has always been an important event on the calendar and it is the biggest all-church fellowship event of the year. For many years, it was primarily a potluck meal after the morning worship service. It has become more elaborate in recent years as the Congregational Life commission, which organizes and hosts the In-Gathering, has significantly expanded the brunch theme and now prepares all of

the main courses, several of which are becoming traditions themselves. People are still encouraged to bring a side dish to share, or they may make a donation to help cover the costs of the event. Some of those side dishes have long and storied reputations too, especially the various recipes of deviled eggs, of which there are never enough.



The In-Gathering is a long-enduring church tradition, originally conceived as a biblically-grounded thanksgiving celebration after the fall harvest, originally known as the Feast of the Tabernacles in ancient Jewish tradition. But as congregations have become less agriculturally-oriented over the years, In-Gathering celebrations have assumed other related and worthy themes surrounding our material blessings and the spiritual blessing of fellowship.

At Westminster and at many other churches, the In-Gathering highlights the beginning of a new church year and celebrates the depth, breadth and closeness of our church community.

Despite the complexity of putting on an elaborate event such as this, especially coordinating the many hands and details involved, it is a labor of love and of respect for each individual's role in our church community. The reward is in seeing new and long-time members, visitors and guests, old and young alike, dining and laughing together while enjoying delicious food and getting to know each other better. There is no better glue to help strengthen and hold us together. And no better way to introduce Westminster to someone new.

UPCOMING FAMILY FUN

Our Christian Education Commission has planned a special three-part series of fun for children and youth. We hope you will join us!

SHAVE ICE SOCIAL

Sunday, September 19, 11:00 AM

As the back to school routine heats up, chill out with Kona Ice and some friendly conversation in our parking lot. Share a snow cone with a new friend from our community or use the opportunity to invite someone new to join us.

For all ages!



Enjoying Kona Ice last summer

BIG FUN AT MINI GOLF

Sunday, September 26, 12:00 PM

Fill a hole in your social calendar by joining Jeff and the Youth Group leaders for a round of mini-golf at McInnis Park. A great opportunity to bond with some new “par”-tners, all are encouraged to bring a friend and play with a fresh fore-some. Contact Jeff for questions about costs and carpooling.

For middle school students.

HANG AT THE HOUSE OF AIR

Sunday, October 3, 12:00 PM

(Jump)start the Fall fun by inviting a friend to an afternoon of bouncing and bonding.

Contact Jeff for questions about cost or carpooling.

For high school students.



POETRY CORNER

Poem for Fall Days

By Joyce Rupp

Submitted by Debbie Dybsky on behalf of the Spiritual Life Commission

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.

PEDAL FOR PROTEIN (“P4P”)

By Kurt Peterson, Outreach Commission Chair



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

For the past seven years a dedicated group of Presbyterian cyclists who reside in the Redwoods of the Presbytery, as we do, have organized and executed a remarkable fund raising program, Pedal for Protein (“P4P”).

It has consisted of a week of riding for long distances to inspire fundraising in their home congregations. They have raised over \$300,000 to fund food banks on the North Coast. Riders from WPC have been steady participants, usually for one day and 50 miles each.

In 2020 the event was canceled as a big ride and switched to stationary bikes and day rides. WPC fielded 12 enthusiastic riders who logged 676 miles and raised over \$1,000.

We are going to plunge in again this year with a combination of individual efforts at home and a group on the road on Saturday, September 25.

REGISTER AT
www.pedalforprotein.com

Please consider joining this happy effort. You can register for the day ride or any part of the week ride at www.pedalforprotein.com.

If you register please inform Jim Gibbs (jhgibbs@comcast.net or 415-608-1744) who will coordinate our ride out of Santa Rosa on September 25.

A separate effort is forming to organize donation support for the team from the congregations.



UNDERSTANDING THE BLACK EXPERIENCE

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 9 AM – 12 PM

This cultural immersion program takes a candidly deep look at the complexities of race and the current shared worldview of the US's African American community. Moderated by outside educators, the Zoom session is being provided pro-bono to the WPC and greater Marin community. Class is limited to 50 people.

Contact Lisa Dini (lisa.e.dini@gmail.com) for more information.

SCAN TO SIGN UP



OR GO TO:
<https://bit.ly/3m4Alb0>

PLEDGE YOUR LOVE FOR WPC!



The Stewardship team is thrilled that our church community is REUNITED IN PERSON after a long year! We hope that you are re-engaging with our congregation, as you feel comfortable.

One way that we demonstrate our collective love and commitment to WPC is through the annual pledge drive when we ask our congregation to prayerfully make a written financial commitment of support for the 2022 calendar year. Our church budget, including staffing and programs, is set based on the pledges received. As you reflect on WPC's impact on your life, local community and the world, please consider increasing your pledge by 10-15% this year and help WPC live out its vision in our new space.

Please look for materials in the mail mid-September or visit wpctiburon.org/give, and be sure to attend church to hear testimonials from fellow members.

We hope you'll pledge your love for WPC by October 17, 2021.

The Stewardship Committee

Chuck Friede, Christina Hanson, Sophia Harkins, Bill McLeod, Lyla Tipton and Christina Werner

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