



Westminster

Presbyterian Church

ZEPHYRS

ADVENT 2021



THE FAMILIAR AND UNFAMILIAR TERRITORY OF ADVENT | Pastor Rob McClellan

This year, Advent may be a return to the familiar or it may be stepping into some unfamiliar territory.

Perhaps for you it is a return to treasured traditions of the past, getting together with family, having life feel more like normal, taking comfort in stability and predictability. This has been a wearying stretch, and after operating in survival mode for almost two years, we should expect fatigue to continue to hit us in waves. Maybe what you need this year is to play the treasured carols, delight in the decorating of your home, and readying for Christmas in a way that draws on memories past.

Perhaps for you, this year is about new territory, chosen or not. You may have had a job change, either a direct result of the effects of the pandemic on (cont...)

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

Associate Pastor Bethany Nelson

I find that Advent provides a wonderful opportunity to slow down in the midst of what can be a hectic season and spend some time contemplating anew the birth of the Christ Child. Yes, we celebrate Christmas every year, but what does Jesus' birth mean in your life this year? What does the message of Emmanuel – God with us – offer to you this year?

We will have several different devotional opportunities for you as you move through the Advent season. For our children, Karen Halsey has created a wonderful daily devotional focused on various creatures of God's creation. This will be featured on our Instagram stories at wpctiburon. If you do not yet follow us on Instagram, be sure to do so for the Advent season, and please share the daily story with the young people in your life. (cont...)



THE FAMILIAR AND UNFAMILIAR TERRITORY OF ADVENT

Continued...

the economy, because you have joined “the great resignation” and discerned a change is needed in your life, or something else altogether. You may be without loved ones or exploring bigger changes in your life. You may find yourself in a place without the stability you’ve had in the past, in a place you wouldn’t have predicted this time last year. Think how many institutions you interact with have changed, from favorite restaurants to clubs, organizations, workplaces, and even the church.

Advent offers something for people in both of those situations, and anywhere in between. We are told of the magi bringing the Christ child three gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh; Advent offers us three gifts as well. These gifts can help us find treasure this season.

First, Advent gives us the chance to be more prayerful and reflective about our lives. Countering the busyness and consumer-driven impulse of the wider culture, Advent calls us to go within and connect deeply with others, as we invite the Spirit into a season of anticipation. We open this gift by taking the time to ask what it is for which our hearts are truly yearning and how then we can go about meeting that yearning with conscious decision and realignment of our priorities. Second, Advent asks us to consider what it would look like to actively participate in the birthing of Christ in the world. Sister Elia Delio, OSF, PhD offers a lovely image, that in the nativity scene we are the manger, holding the newborn Christ child and making a place for him. How as individuals and as collections of people will we make room for Christ in a world that is a combination of eager for, indifferent, suspicious, or hostile to this transformative way of love?

Third, Advent gifts us with some shape and form to our preparations. The week’s themes – hope, peace, joy, love, and finally Christ can focus our prayer and contemplation. What does it look like to manifest each of these qualities in small and large ways?

Sister Joan Chittister reminds us that Advent is about a two-fold coming. Advent is about the coming of the Christ child, about which we have heard since we were children ourselves. The knowledge of the stories of Jesus bolsters us throughout our lives. It is also about the mysterious promise of a second coming, leading us to imagine how a world fulfilled with God’s dream would look. In that sense it is necessarily about both the familiar and the unfamiliar.

May this Advent be a time for us to lean on the familiar that we might step out into the unfamiliar in faith.

God’s Peace,
Rob

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

Continued...

On our website (under the members section), we have posted a weekly Advent devotional guide with scripture readings, discussion questions, and coloring pages. Though it is written with children in mind, I invite all ages to take a look!

Each week, we will offer a candle-lighting ritual based on the weekly Advent themes – hope, peace, joy, love. In addition to lighting the Advent candles in worship each Sunday morning, we invite you to light Advent candles at home each week. You might use a fancy Advent wreath, or you might use a few mismatched candles. The important thing is not what the candles look like, but taking the time to consider the light of the world coming into our lives. Finally, we offer the Advent Word calendar again this year. This is a global Advent calendar that offers one word per day as a prompt for reflection. I love these words because each of them encourages me to think a little differently about how I am preparing for the birth of Jesus. The words are printed below. I encourage you to keep them somewhere where you will see them regularly, and then take some time each day to slow down, breathe deeply, and make room in your heart and in your life for the Christ Child to enter

Blessings,
Bethany





WE WANT TO SEND OUR YOUTH AWAY

Jeff Shankle | Director of Youth Ministry

From time to time we talk about how unique the youth group at WPC is. There simply are not many active, open, and affirming youth ministries out there. That is part of the reason why we want to send our young people away during the summer. We want them to know they are not alone. There are other kids their age who care deeply about their faith.

Every summer, various colleges and universities offer intensives for high school students funded in part by the Lilly Endowment. Youth get a taste of the college experience - living in a dorm, attending workshops led by college professors, eating pizza past midnight, and enjoying the mentorships provided by college students on campus. They even get college credit for the coursework.

We also want to send them away because, for once in their lives, they're not the only committed, open, affirming Christian in the room. They are one of about 20-30 who make up a small cohort. Since youth have to apply (and be recommended in some cases) for these programs, you know these young people are serious! All that means our youth get to meet other youth like them! The camps themselves take on various themes which appeal to different youth's focus. Among the camps we work with include:

- Academy for Faith, Science, and Ethics at Gustavus College
- Ever to Excel at Boston College focuses on Ignatius' spiritual practices in modern life
- Faith & Sports Institute at Baylor University focuses on leadership in sports and life
- Immerse at Seattle Pacific University focuses on spiritual formation amongst community
- Lux Institute focusing on environmental justice and Biblical studies at Monmouth College
- Youth Theological Initiative focusing on philosophical questions at Emory University
- Youth Theological Institute focusing on rural and urban poverty at Shenendoah University



For those WPC youth we have sent previously, it has been wonderful to see how they've taken what they've learned and applied it in their lives.

If you'd like more information, contact Jeff Shankle.

Also, the WPC students who are alumni would be happy to share about their experiences as well.

33RD ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS FAIR

Our church groups have once again chosen nonprofit agencies we can support while honoring loved ones. If you couldn't join us in person in November, you can still participate. Simply print the order form from the church website and follow the mail-in instructions.



MUSIC THROUGH ADVENT

Ruth E. Wells | Music Director

After being held in by the pandemic for so long, it might be hard for us to celebrate the “waiting” season of advent, but take heart, friends. Christmas is coming in a few more weeks.

As we prepare our hearts, the anthems for worship in December will include Brian Tate’s “May I Be Still,” the women’s trio movement from J.S. Bach’s Magnificat and a Service of Lessons & Carols.

Rob, Bethany and I have reworked the Lessons & Carols program to shape a message of the Love manifest to us in the gift of Jesus.

God so loved the world that she gave her only child to be with us in our joys and our sorrows. This service also will involve more congregational singing than in past years.

The “carols” will include traditional ones like “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”, “Once in Royal David’s City” and “While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks”, as well as newer additions to the hymnal in “The People Who Walked in Darkness” and “Love Has Come”. There will be a couple of choir carols as well.

Christmas Eve and Sunday, Dec. 26 will be filled with the carols of Christmas. For all of the December services, come, sing to your heart’s content.

Soli Deo gloria (glory to God alone)

Ruth E.

THE 8:30 SERVICE:

A HUSH AND A PAUSE TO REFLECT AND BEGIN THE NEW WEEK ANEW

By Polly Chandler



I tried out many different churches when I moved to Tiburon. As a Quaker who loves music, I was particularly taken by the 8:30 service. It had moments of contemplation, moments of joy from the music, authenticity in sharing

and a very quiet grace filled service that lifted my spirits, every time I went. I also found that because the pacing of the 8:30 service was a little slower, it gave me more time to reflect on sermons, prayers of the people and my own thoughts. Overall, I found that the 8:30 service provided me with some breathing space to explore my faith more deeply. I recognize that others may be able to do that same thing at the 10 am service. However, for me I found it was a lovely fit.

So, if you are considering which service to go to, you might want to ask yourself:

1. Are there times when I need more time to reflect on the prayers and sermon?
2. Do I lean more towards introversion, get my energy from my inner life?
3. Have I had a very fast paced week and want to slow down a bit?

If so, maybe 8:30 service might be worth a try.

Happy to answer questions.

PS. The side benefit of the 8:30 service is I bike to church and when we finish at 9:30 my husband arrives on his bike and we set off for our weekend ride. We have a full day ahead of us to play, enjoy each other’s company and explore the beauty of this gorgeous area.

DEEP FRIENDSHIPS FORMED AT CHURCH

By Karen Halsey | Community Communications Committee co-chair

When asked the question, “How do you know when someone is really a friend?” Dr. Maya Angelou answered, “Most people really don’t become friends. They become deep and serious acquaintances. But in a friendship, you get to know the spirit of another person; and your values coincide.”

It’s not easy making a new friend, at any age, yet it’s one of life’s greatest wishes and gifts.

At Westminster, friendship is so important to the congregation that it appears in the second line of our church’s identity statement: *We strive to grow spiritually, to nurture friendships, and to better the world.*

But how do you make friends at church? It’s easy to admire certain people you see during service, but approaching them afterward can be incredibly awkward.

So, we asked Carol Coffman how she found her church friends, Susan Bertelsen and Linden Berry, and for some advice on how to befriend others at WPC.

WPC: How did you meet?

Carol: Susan and I met for the first time at an organizational meeting for the Camino De Santiago pilgrimage. Fifteen of us including Rob were about to embark on the week-long pilgrimage in Spain, and Susan hosted our group for a paella dinner.

Susan: Although we had been going to WPC for over ten years, Carol and I hadn’t met.

Linden: I think Carol and I met about three years ago through church. I admired her comments on immigration and other issues at the thoughts-and-concerns part of the service.

Carol: I remember Trisha Farrow introducing us. She said you must meet my dear friend, Linden, who is so talented. She’s a therapist, poet, teacher of poetry, and a beautiful, lovely woman. She was correct on all fronts.

WPC: How have your friendships evolved?

Susan: We support each other through the highs and lows of life. I could go on about the orthopedic surgeries, loss of loved ones, and other major milestones. What is important is that Carol was always there for me in ways that really matter. She even came to Tahoe right before her hip replacement surgery and during the wildfires to attend my son’s wedding.

Carol: Susan has supported without hesitation all the things I have attempted to start at WPC, such as Trans HeartLine where we cook meals for guests of



the house who are healing from gender confirmation surgery. Linden and I joined the same spiritual book club and through that we got to know each other better and better. But truly, it just seems like we have always been friends.

Linden: When Carl [my husband] became ill two years ago, Carol was one of the first on the spot with cheery visits and gifts of food and offers of help. She spent some time cheering him up and then we walked in the rain with the doggies – my two and her two. That is another story (cont...)

Continued... – we have both lost our beloved older dogs in the last few months. It took a lot of courage to get through these events and I think I borrowed more than a little of hers this last time around.

WPC: How can people make friends at WPC?

Carol: How many people do you know only on a very surface level at church? You see them say “hello” and inquire about them or their health. Then we move on to the rest of our day. This is what prompted me, along with Judi Sachs, to start the WPC Hikers Group. Getting folks out hiking allows time to ask questions, get to know each other on a deeper level and share joys and concerns naturally. Working on committees, the session, as a deacon, etc. also allows you to see folks in a different context and learn about their skills and talents.

Linden: I think there are so many good women at WPC, and that many more friendships could evolve. It just takes time to find out more about each other, and the hiking, diaper collecting and cooking for Trans HeartLine are just a few of the opportunities Carol has created to make these friendships happen.

Susan: I do believe that there is something very special about WPC friendships and the bonds that form. It is the very reason I decided to become an elder so that I could give back to the community that has given me so much.

In the months to come, we will profile other friendships. In the meantime, please consider joining one of our many different events or choose to serve as a deacon or an elder to meet new people at the church and form deeper, closer bonds.

WELCOME TRACI ECKELS, WPC’S NEW OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR



Traci Eckels has recently completed a 32-year career as a fundraising professional. She mostly worked in the Bay Area and has helped secure significant support for Public Broadcasting, national parks, universities, and affordable home-ownership. During those years she spent five years at UC Berkeley, four years at the YWCA in Seattle, two years at San Francisco State, sixteen years at KQED, four years at the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and the last year at Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco. She has served in just about every fundraising position including as the Chief Development Officer.

Traci grew up in Davis with three siblings and attended U.C. Berkeley. She lives in El Cerrito with David, her significant other of 32 years who is retired landscape architect, landscape contractor, and long-time guitar player, and their cat Miss Kitty. David keeps their garden beautiful and they spend lots of time there watching hummingbirds, smelling the roses, and enjoying the Bay Area weather. They also love to travel and have postponed a trip to southern Italy twice due to Covid. They have been to other parts of Europe, Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore, Borneo, and Bali. Visiting an orphanage for baby orangutangs in Borneo was an amazing and heart-breaking highlight since they are losing habitat at an alarming rate.

Traci has chosen to scale back her from full-time work and being responsible for reaching high fundraising goals. She was looking for a part-time job that would keep her connected to making an impact in the community and that was working for an organization with caring and friendly people. She is so pleased to be here at WPC as our new Office Administrator, working Tuesday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Please come by the office and meet her.

SPIRITUAL LIFE ADVENT SERIES

The Spiritual Life Committee invites you to an uplifting Advent Series. All sessions except the last will be on Wednesday evenings from 7:00-8:00pm on Zoom. The link is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87239964425>.

December 1 - Ted Scott was a Parish Associate at Westminster Presbyterian Church and a beloved member of our community for many years. He now lives in Palo Alto with his wife Arlene.

We are living in a time of great stressors, demands, and difficult complexities. Ted will discuss how, as followers of the Way, we also participate in a profound Mystery that at its heart is profoundly simple. This Mystery, this Way, opens us to love, fortitude, and hope in the midst of life as it is.



December 8 - Gayathari Narayanan has had a personal meditation, yoga and contemplative practice for over 20 years. She is the founder of Myndtree (myndtree.org) which is based on the values of mindfulness, compassion, non-violence, and healing.

In this session, she will lead us in a guided mindfulness meditation followed by a presentation on the topic "Dawning of Wisdom and Freedom through the Practice of Meditation".



December 15 - Erin Elliot is a long-time member of the Westminster community. She is a Yoga Teacher registered with the Yoga Alliance and a registered Meditation teacher. Erin has been offering weekly yoga classes for the past four years at WPC (live and via Zoom.)

Erin will lead a special restorative Yoga-inspired Movement session. This will be a deeply nurturing hour of rest and renewal from the comfort of your home. This session is appropriate for anyone and everyone. Adaptations will be offered for those with physical limitations, and no special equipment is required.



December 21 – In person labyrinth walk in Findlay Hall with sacred music and candlelight. At the center, listen for Spirit's quiet guidance as you prepare your heart and mind for the birth of the Christ Child. First timers are always welcome. Drop in any time between 7:00-8:00pm on this Tuesday evening.

CHRISTMAS EVE SCHEDULE

This year, we will have 3 in-person Christmas Eve services in the sanctuary on Friday, December 24. We will also have a live-stream option.

10:00 am and 9:00 pm – Traditional service with carols and candlelighting.

4:00 pm – Pop-up Christmas pageant for all ages. (Also with carols and candlelighting.)

FROM THE LEGACY COMMITTEE

Have you included Westminster in your estate plans - or are you considering it?

The Legacy Committee would love to know your intentions so we can thank you!

Please reach out to Ginny Quick at ginnyquick@comcast.net or 415-847-8428 for more information.

WHAT DO POINSETTIAS HAVE TO DO WITH CHRISTMAS?

By Sharon Terrill | Worship Commission Chair

One interpretation of the plant is as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem, the heavenly body that led the three magi to the place where Christ was born. Another is a Mexican legend that tells of a girl who could only offer weeds as a gift to Jesus on Christmas Eve. When she brought the weeds into her church, they blossomed into the beautiful red plants we know as poinsettias, known as Flores de Noche Buena in Mexico ("Flowers of the Holy Night")

We are still remembering those you honored two years ago when you donated to provide poinsettias for our worship services through the Advent and Christmas season. We were able to save some of those funds for future Christmases, and can now use them to decorate our sanctuary once again! Thank you, again, for those past contributions that continue to bring joy and brighten our Advent and Christmas services.



THANK YOU TO OUR CONGREGATION FOR PLEDGING FOR 2021!

We **MET THE \$50,000 CHALLENGE** offered by an anonymous congregant matching all new and increased pledges. We are grateful for your generosity in helping us realize this gift, as well as placing our church in a more stable financial position next year, as we rebound from the pandemic.

The Stewardship Committee is still hoping to achieve 100% participation by our congregation, so please consider making a pledge if you have not yet done so.

Your Stewardship Team:

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