



Westminster

Presbyterian Church

ZEPHYRS

SUMMER 2022



A FAITHFUL ROAD

Pastor Rob McClellan

We have come such a long way. This time last year, we were still getting used to worshiping in person again, slowly creeping back with limits on singing and praying aloud. It wasn't until the middle of summer that I wrote a series of reflections on the experience of trying to reemerge from the pandemic.

Now, even with the recent uptick in COVID cases, we seem to be emerging in earnest. Full worship is happening, in person and online. Classes and gatherings at the church have resumed. The new and expanded facility is getting great use, making exciting new ministries possible. In just the past few months alone, we have been able to host a powerful grief series *(cont...)*

THE RHYTHM OF SUMMER

Associate Pastor Bethany Nelson

As the school year begins to wind down, summer is just around the corner. One of my most favorite things about summer is that it has a different rhythm than the rest of the year. Though most of the tasks of daily life remain the same for me – walk the dog, go to work, figure out what is for dinner, etc. – there always seems to be just a little more room to breathe in the summer.

A quick disclaimer ... I write this fully aware that my child is old enough to now have a summer job that keeps him occupied. I definitely remember the days of frantically trying to figure out what he would do all *(cont...)*



A FAITHFUL ROAD

Continued...

through an exciting new initiative we're calling "Westminster Events," an ecumenical Celtic Prayer service and enjoyed a special homecooked meal with local food, and a conversation with our very own Lee Darby about her recent memoir. (See more details on pages 6-8) We have begun to lay the groundwork for a new evening worship and fellowship experience for the fall.

We have come a long way, and we have enjoyed the benefits of the commitments made during our Forward in Faith Campaign. Now it is time to finish the job and plot the next steps in our journey. We have entered the discernment phase of a potential campaign to pay off the debt from our renovation, fund new initiatives, or grow our mission potential. A leadership team has contracted with consultant Jim Buggy to engage the congregation in deciding together the best path to follow to meet the needs of the church as we seek to do God's will in this corner of Marin.

In concert with this process, we are continuing the strategic work of the past few years. We are focusing on five key areas in the church and accordingly we have:

- Written, ratified, and featured in worship a strong, clear, and novel statement of our Christian identity at Westminster
- Built charters for all of our committees giving them a clearer sense of areas of responsibility and process
- Worked to grow and retain membership through improving communications by creating new staff and volunteer roles
- Commissioned a financial working group to help guide us to sustainable future
- Focused on creating events to foster connections within and beyond the congregation helping us to build upon our beloved community.

Our work on a larger strategic plan continues.

As we make our way through this resurrection season, I am reminded of the story of the risen Christ encountering the disciples on the road to Emmaus. In the steps we take in faith together, we can be assured that Christ goes with us, showing us the way, and giving us what we need to get there.

God's Peace,
Rob

THE RHYTHM OF SUMMER

Continued...

summer. I used to joke that I needed a degree in organizational management just to get my kid through the summer months. So, I realize that not everyone will be feeling this more relaxed summer rhythm.

I do hope, though, that summer brings more spaciousness to your days and weeks even if only every now and then. Perhaps some of your usual activities will take a summer break. Or perhaps the longer summer days offer more opportunities to relax outside. Maybe you have a summer get-away planned.

However you plan to spend your summer days, I encourage you to consider giving some renewed attention to your spiritual life in the upcoming weeks. If you do find yourself with a more relaxed summer schedule, it might be the perfect time to try something new here at Westminster. You might try out our Wednesday morning class, or our Friday morning hiking group. If you haven't quite gotten into the swing of returning to Sunday worship following the pandemic, we look forward to welcoming you back on Sunday mornings during the summer. If you feel God calling you into more intentional service, consider one of the WPC committees that make so many things happen here at the church and in the wider community. Rob and I are happy to talk with you in more detail about various ways to get plugged in here at the church.

Now that I have encouraged you to consider a greater involvement in the life of the Westminster community, in my next breath, I will also encourage you to not fill all of your summer free time with more things to do. If your summer has some extra spaciousness, revel in that! Spend more time in quiet, or out in God's creation, or relaxing with friends and family, or in prayer, or reading a good book, or listening to music ... whatever it is that fills your soul. Not every season of our lives offers us a chance for rest, so it is important to take advantage of that whenever we can.

From Mary Oliver's, "A Summer Day" –
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.

Blessings,
Bethany



SUMMER MUSIC

Ruth E. Wells, Music Director

Back in the “before time,” when the sanctuary choir was part of worship most Sundays through the academic year, we used to take a 12-week choral break during the summer months and schedule a variety of musical guests...instrumentalists, soloists and small ensembles.

If you’re in worship regularly these days, you know we’ve been on a modified “summer” program for the past year, and that is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. There will be choral music once or twice a month, guitar-based music a little more often, and instrumentalists or soloists who have a gift they want to share only on occasion.

Please don’t wait to be asked. Singers usually volunteer their interest, but I may not know you play a sweet viola or a soulful clarinet. If you think it can contribute joy or meaning to worship, I’d love to schedule it. How about the spoken word? Any writers or poets among us with a 2-3-minute meditation to share?

I love the diversity of the worship music program, because it both reflects the diversity of who we are and hopefully attracts a variety of new members. Do you have something to offer in the coming weeks (not just summer)? What were some of your favorite worship music experiences over the past year that we should cultivate going forward? I’d love to know.

Ruth E. Wells
music.at.wpctiburon@gmail.com

PLANNING FOR SUMMER, FALL OR HOLIDAY GATHERINGS?

Why not consider Westminster for your next special family event, fundraiser or board meeting?

With the emergence of Spring and the relaxing of pandemic rules in Marin, each of us are looking forward to gathering to celebrate with loved ones. No doubt a special milestone family gathering, professional or community meetings are coming up on your calendar.

Perhaps you are looking for a place to accommodate your group?

As most of you know, WPC has a beautifully remodeled campus, which includes our light and bright Findlay Hall, kitchen with commercial-grade appliances, gorgeous glass-enclosed Narthex, and upgraded garden space, not to mention our A/V-equipped meeting spaces. Why not consider Westminster for your next event? We offer SPECIAL reduced rental rates for WPC members and non-profit organizations.

See this link for photos and descriptions: www.wpctiburon.org/rentals.

For availability, rates and more details, contact Traci in the WPC office (Tues-Friday) at 415-383-5272 or wpcadmin@wpctiburon.org.



SPIRITUAL LIFE SUMMER READING LIST

Now Available for Checkout in our Library

By Steffen Bartschat, *Spiritual Life Committee Co-Chair*

Expand your spiritual horizons by exploring one or more of these books this summer. These titles may sound familiar, as they were the selections that we studied in our Spiritual Life Book Group over the past two years. Every 3-4 months our group votes its selection from a large list of nominations, so these books are sure to entertain and enlighten.

A copy of each title is available for checkout from our upstairs Library. Look for the shelf entitled, "Spiritual Life Book Club Selections".

The Spiritual Life Book Group will reconvene with a new selection in late summer. We usually meet once a month on Monday evenings via Zoom. If you'd like to join our group, email Coral Kisseberth (coralkisseb@yahoo.com) or Steffen Bartschat (sbartschat@comcast.net).

Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life

by Richard Rohr

Richard Rohr seeks to help readers understand the tasks of the two halves of life and to show them that those who have fallen, failed, or "gone down" are the only ones who understand "up." Most of us tend to think of the second half of life as largely about getting old, dealing with health issues, and letting go of life, but the whole thesis of this book is exactly the opposite. What looks like falling down can largely be experienced as "falling upward." In fact, it is not a loss but somehow actually a gain, as we have all seen with elders who have come to their fullness.

An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith

by Barbara Brown Taylor

Taylor shares how she learned to find God beyond the church walls by embracing the sacred as a natural part of everyday life. In *An Altar in the World*, Taylor shows us how to discover altars everywhere we go and in nearly everything we do as we learn to live with purpose, pay attention, slow down, and revere the world we live in.

Convictions How I Learned What Matters Most

by Marcus Borg

On the occasion of his seventieth birthday, the renowned scholar Marcus J. Borg shares how he formed his bedrock religious beliefs, contending that Christians in America are at their best when they focus on hope and transformation and so shows how we can return to what really matters most. The result is a manifesto for all progressive Christians who seek the best path for following Jesus today.

Eye of the Heart: A Spiritual Journey into the Imaginal Realm

by Cynthia Bourgeault

Cynthia Bourgeault investigates the imaginal realm--an energetic realm well known to the mystical traditions but often forgotten in our own times. It is invisible to the physical eye, but clearly perceptible through the eye of the heart. The imaginal realm has long been associated with the personal world of dreams, prophecy, and oracles, and it also points toward a higher vision of our human purpose that is both evolutionary and collective. Bourgeault explores both aspects of imaginal reality and shows readers how we can cooperate more fully with its guidance in our lives.

Walking in Wonder: Eternal Wisdom for a Modern World

by John O'Donohue

John O'Donohue, beloved author of *To Bless the Space Between Us*, is widely recognized as one of the most charismatic and inspirational enduring voices on the subjects of spirituality and Celtic mysticism. These timeless exchanges, span a number of years and explore themes such as imagination, landscape, the medieval mystic Meister Eckhart, aging, and death. Presented in O'Donohue's inimitable lyrical style, and filled with rich insights that will feed the "unprecedented spiritual hunger" he observed in modern society, *Walking in Wonder* is a welcome tribute to a much-loved author whose work still touches the lives of millions around the world.

Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul: Celtic Wisdom for Reawakening to What Our Souls Know and Healing the World

by John Philip Newell

John Philip Newell shares the long, hidden tradition of Celtic Christianity, explaining how this earth-based spirituality can help us rediscover the natural rhythms of life and deepen our spiritual connection with God, with each other, and with the earth. (cont...)

Continued...

Newell introduces some of Celtic Christianity's leading practitioners, both saints and pioneers of faith, whose timeless wisdom is more necessary than ever.

The Book of Joy Lasting Happiness in a Changing World

by The Dalai Lama & Desmond Tutu

Nobel Peace Prize Laureates

His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have survived more than fifty years of exile and the soul-crushing violence of oppression. Despite their hardships—or, as they would say, because of them—they are two of the most joyful people on the planet. In April 2015, Archbishop Tutu traveled to the Dalai Lama's home in Dharamsala, India, to celebrate His Holiness's eightieth birthday and to create what they hoped would be a gift for others. They looked back on their long lives to answer a single burning question: How do we find joy in the face of life's inevitable suffering?

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS UPDATE

By David Elliott, B&G Committee Chair

The big news is that the garden beds on the east and south side of the Sanctuary are in the process of receiving a total overhaul to reflect the themes of the front and entrance planting beds, which were created during the recent building remodel project.

The overall landscape plan has, as a main focus, to be good "Earth Stewards". To that end, we have removed invasive species, upgraded our drip irrigation system to reduce water consumption, and replanted with fifty thoughtfully-selected, drought-tolerant natives.

The next time you are at church please make a point of taking a walk outside and notice this big upgrade!

We have done this project with the dependable work of a handful of volunteers, in addition to the dedicated work of our now-resident Boy Scout troop.

I especially want to recognize Dave Heneghan, Fred Montgomery, Polly Chandler, Jeff Newman, Kurt Peterson, and of course Jesus Posada. And a special shout out to David Mandel, (partner of Traci Eckels, WPC's office administrator), who has been an invaluable irrigation consultant. We are excited to get this big project completed and hope you take a moment of reflection and enjoyment in our new garden space.

WRITE A REVIEW FOR WPC

Google and Yelp reviews are important for those looking for a church community.

Please take a moment to write a review for WPC on these platforms. Instructions can be found in the eNews. Post your reviews by June 24 for a chance to win a \$50 Book Passage gift card!

POETRY CORNER

Blessings from John O'Donohue

*Submitted by Debbie Dybsky on
behalf of the Spiritual Life Committee*

May we live this day,
Compassionate of heart,
Clear in word, Gracious in awareness,
Courageous in thought,
Generous in love.

May our minds come alive today
to the invisible geography
that invites us through
thresholds to new frontiers.



RECENT WPC HAPPENINGS!

By Erin Elliott, Communications Committee Member

There is a whole lot of “buzz” happening at Westminster these days on our newly revitalized campus. We’ve summarized some of the most-recent events for you. Please regularly check out the weekly E-News and Sunday Bulletin so you don’t miss out. (If you aren’t yet signed up for the weekly E-News, arriving to your email in-box every Thursday, you can sign up with Bethany – bethany@wpctiburon.org)

SCAN TO SUBSCRIBE



TO WPC E-NEWS

CELTIC EQUINOX SERVICE AND DINNER

March 20, 2022



Rob McClellan brought a new, unique and enriching evening to Westminster to celebrate and honor the Earth’s shift from dark to light; integrating Earth’s elements while focusing on the natural cycles and seasons. Susan Bertelsen teamed up with Rob to organize a group of volunteers to bring a seasonally-attuned meal to gorgeous buffet tables set up outside, as well as dining tables inside our glass-enclosed Narthex. There was also time provided for individual “active” contemplation for folks interested in walking our Labyrinth. The result was a multi-layered experience for all guests; both WPC members and community members joined us for this evening. It is hoped that this Special Event becomes a regular experience; ecumenical in nature and perhaps rotating to different sites and with folks from across congregations and those of no congregation. If you are interested in helping plan for future Events, please reach out to Rob or Susan.

LET’S TALK ABOUT GRIEF

Three-part series in March | Presented by Westminster Events



What IS “Westminster Events” you say?

Westminster Events (WE) is a brand-new effort to bring relevant and engaging programming to our beautifully revitalized campus, welcoming one and all to learn and grow in community. We hosted our two inaugural events in the past few months. Watch for more opportunities to participate in these events open to ALL.

This kick-off Series in March was hosted by two local end-of-life-doulas. Attendees shared their personal experiences of grief, and developed new tools to manage this difficult to discuss, yet universally experienced topic. The first two events

were Zoom gatherings. The final event, “Grief over Dinner” was hosted at WPC and attended by 32 individuals from around the Bay Area. At each of the beautifully Spring-themed tables, a simple nourishing meal was served, and facilitators prompted thoughtful discussion. Those attending provided feedback that they felt some relief in being able to safely share their personal experiences. They also learned in their sharing that there is a connection between us all, no matter the details of our personal stories. The evening ended with talk and Q&A from a local Buddhist teacher and author, Frank Ostaseski, (“The Five Invitations” <https://fiveinvitations.com>) For more about the presenters, Karen and Anthea, see this interview: www.mercurynews.com/2022/02/28/mill-valley-end-of-life-doula-helps-people-navigate-death-and-grief.

We hope to repeat this Series at WPC in the Fall. For more info, please contact erinielliott7@gmail.com.

YEARBOOK PRAYER EVENT

Week of April 10, 2022

With a collection of donated Yearbooks from our Marin teens, WPC hosted a unique Holy Week experience for our congregation and its extended community. Using these Yearbooks, 16,160 students from all over Marin County were individually honored with prayers of support. In fact, by our count, we collectively prayed for each of them 3 times over!

These students from Marin and all over the world are now being referred to as the “COVID-generation”. What habits will they bring into their adulthood? How will they be changed? We don’t yet know the answers to these questions. But we feel comforted - and hope they do too in some way - knowing that we have petitioned God on their behalf. May we continue to be mindful of their unique teen experiences these past couple of years as we return more normalcy. And may we continue to pray on their behalf, that their souls would be saved from the effects of it.

By Jeff Shankle, Director of Youth Ministry



COMMITTEE FAIR

May 1, 2022

At our very first Committee Fair, each of Westminster’s nine Committees offered up details on their efforts within the church and various missions. These Committees meet about once a month to engage in meaningful efforts to support the life of this congregation as well as the wider community. We rely on these efforts and these dedicated leaders to do SO MANY THINGS! To name just a few examples, these committees provide time and talents to beautify the church, provide support to the spiritual life of the membership, and provide support to those in need - both locally, regionally and globally. We even have a committee that communicates all that is going on in the church to one another and to our broader community.

Interested in learning more? Why not check out one of the Committees that interests you to learn more. There is no obligation to make a commitment! Many of the next Committee Meetings will take place on Tuesday, June 7. Ask Bethany for more information and how you can get involved.



“IN CONVERSATION” WITH LEE DARBY, LOCAL AUTHOR AND LONG-TIME WPC MEMBER, AND REV. BETHANY NELSON

May 7, 2022

Presented by Westminster Events

About 35 attendees gathered for a lively and engaging conversation and reception, focusing on Lee’s recent memoir “Stars in Our Eyes”. Books are available for purchase from your local bookseller or wherever you buy books.

Do you know a local author, storyteller or community leader that has something to share with the community? If so, please contact Erin Elliott erinielliott7@gmail.com.




Westminster
Presbyterian Church
240 Tiburon Boulevard, Tiburon, CA US 94920