



February 2017

From Our Pastor

Running with Passion

I hope you have been around the last few weeks and noticed all the activity going on with our youth group! I am so excited about all the people who have stepped up to provide youth leadership on the newly-formed Youth Ministry Team. They are Jeff Flynn (facilitator), Joe Neely (youth elder), Steve Angerman, Al Banning, Linda Brown, Tom Brown, Patsy Gregory, Cydney Heed, Eric Klooster, Ryan Klooster and Sue Miller. This team came together with absolutely no arm-twisting, hit the ground running on January 11, and hasn't stopped since!

Every time we meet, I see two characteristics uniting them – first, a deep sense of purpose grounded in their love for youth; and second, a passionate enthusiasm and energy for this ministry.

They plan to keep the congregation informed as they go along, and I hope all of you will take notice and develop an active interest in our young people. The priority the entire congregation named as first on the CAT survey was: "Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church." You can read more about youth activities on page 3.



On another note, Ash Wednesday falls on March 1 this year, so I want to give you an early heads-up.

We will start with a pancake supper at 5:30 PM; we invite you to bring your favorite pancake condiment to share. We'll do some reflection on the meaning of repentance in our everyday lives, before proceeding to the service of Ashes and Communion at 7 PM.

Be well and glorify God in all you do!

Judy
Judy

Engaging Our Neighbors

Westminster welcomes HEART Rotating Shelter guests

February 13–20

Thank you to all who are contributing HEART-felt love of neighbor with offerings of food, personal items, Valentines, time and hospitality this week as Westminster hosts neighbors in need of overnight shelter and a warm welcome. Even if you did not sign up, you are welcome any evening to come and serve food, play games, make snowflakes with Tom Clark (Tuesday

evening), or just chat with our guests.

Electric griddles are needed for HEART breakfasts this Saturday and Sunday. If you have one to lend, please contact Sue Miller (sjcirmill@sbcglobal.net).



Shop at Lucky's in February and March, to benefit Washtenaw Refugee Welcome. Use your own bags, and Lucky's Market (cor. E. Stadium and S. Industrial) will contribute to efforts to help new Americans establish new lives in Washtenaw County.

Have you taken the Matthew 25 Pledge? Let's do it together as Westminster's 2017 Mission Outreach theme: Pledge to protect and defend vulnerable people and creation in the name of Jesus.

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, **I was thirsty** and you gave me something to drink, **I was a stranger** and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, **I was sick** and you looked after me, I was in prison and **you came to visit me.**

We can work toward reconciliation by learning and talking about difficult issues, we can work for just systems, and we can bring relief to vulnerable neighbors by working together on Westminster outreach projects, supporting programs that serve where we cannot, and serving in God's world in our individual lives.

Pledge to intentionally live as a Matthew 25 disciple, seeking God's justice and bringing relief and hope to the vulnerable in Jesus' name. Sign up on the Mission bulletin board.

Events & Announcements

CAT Survey results presented

After the First Sunday Dinner on Sunday, February 5, we heard a presentation on the results of the Congregational Assessment survey we took part in last fall, as part of our preparation for calling a new pastor. Those results present us with opportunities for growth as a congregation, better equipping us to move on in the pastor search process.

Two additional CAT survey presentations are planned, for those who were not present on February 5. Those presentations take place **on Sunday, February 19, at 4 PM, and Wednesday, February 22, at 6:30 PM.** Sign up in the fellowship hall entry to give us an idea of numbers – or just come.



Please note: The First Sunday Dinner in March takes place on March 12, due to our chef's vacation schedule. **And a note about doors:** The Greenview door is now locked weekdays while the Uno Dos Tres preschool is in session, as a standard precaution in situations with young children. If you need to enter by that door, please ring the doorbell. Remember also that all our exterior doors are now handicap accessible.

Westminster teens meet for learning, service and friendship

Sunday school is every Sunday in the teen room, at 9:30 am. Steve Angerman, Linda Brown and Jeff Flynn comprise the teaching team. Middle and high school youths meet on Wednesday evenings also, 5:30–8 PM, in the teen room. Other events currently planned include:

- **Sunday, Feb 5 Souper Bowl Sunday** Youths collected money in soup pots after worship for Food Gatherers. Here are the totals:

Patriots	\$200.95
Falcons	268.21
Lions (aka <i>We really don't care</i>)	178.85
Total to Food Gatherers	\$448.01
- **Sunday, Feb 19 Prepare and serve breakfast** to our HEART visitors. Begin at 6 AM.
- **Saturday, Feb 25 Youth Led Worship rehearsal,** 10 AM–NOON, followed by lunch out.
- **Sunday, Feb 26 Youth Led Worship**
- **Sunday, March 26 Faith and Family Night** at the Toledo Walleye Hockey game. RSVP and payment due by Feb 14.
- **Friday, April 21–Sunday, April 23 Youth Retreat** (tentative)
- **Saturday, May 6 Church Prom** (aka Christmas by Candlelight)
- **Saturday, June 17 Cedar Point**
- **Monday, July 31–Thursday, August 3 Camping trip** (in planning stages)

Twenty years in Costa Rica and counting

February 11–24, Phoebe and Roger Vance travel to Costa Rica to serve in mission with the United Methodist Church – their 20th annual trip! They'll continue work from a year ago, on the Methodist Children's Home in Coronado. They look forward also to seeing former Westminster education director Julie Chamberlain and Westminster member Noelle Smallish while there. They welcome prayers, and invite you to read the daily blog at civism2017.blogspot.com to keep track of their work and activities.

Learn and Grow



Buildings Like Flowers: Friday, February 10, Marti and Tom Burbeck describe to Sixty Plus Club club their “living home” and food forest plan. Lunch is at noon; program follows at 1 PM. RSVP to Phoebe Vance or sign up in the fellowship hall entry. All are welcome!



Everyday Extraordinary film series continues with *Friendly Persuasion* on Saturday, February 25, at 6 PM. The films in this series depict everyday, ordinary people living their ordinary daily lives; in the midst of their faithfulness, the extraordinary happens. Their stories give us hope, renew our faith and inspire us to live our everyday lives with great expectation that each day has the potential to become extraordinary. Join us! Snacks and discussion follow the movie.

Financial Stewardship

by Gordon Beeman, chair, Finance Ministry Team

Our congregation's generosity during the first six months of our fiscal year (July through December) led to excellent financial results. Pledge payments were \$231,933, compared to a budget of \$216,795 – or 107% of the amount budgeted. Expenses were well managed, with actual six-month expenses at \$247,177 compared to a budget for this period of \$273,023. Six-month net income was \$33,517. Financial results are usually weaker in the second six-month period (January through June) than in the first half of the fiscal year. But the Finance Ministry Team is hopeful that our actual results for the fiscal year ending June 2017 will exceed budget projections.

Members of the Finance, Stewardship and Facilities Care Ministry Teams have discussed the possibility of a capital campaign at Westminster, and a professional consultant has been identified to assist. The purpose of the campaign would be to fund modest capital improvements – likely including updating signage and repaving the parking lot – and to pay off our existing mortgage (the current balance is approximately \$125,000). The mortgage payoff would eliminate monthly mortgage expenditures, permitting a more attractive financial package for our next permanent pastor. The first step is a feasibility study, which will occur later this year or perhaps in 2018, followed by the capital campaign itself.

Session gives support for PC (USA) anti-racism policy

Following several months of discussion, the Session at Westminster wishes to publicize the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s stance against racism in any form. The Session offers as background and as a rationale, two sections in particular from The Confession of Belhar, unanimously approved in June 2016 by the General Assembly to be added to the Book of Confessions. The PC (USA) document describing the church's vision may be read at www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/racialjustice/new_2016_antiracism_policy.pdf.

The relevant sections of The Confession of Belhar read as follows:

4. We believe that God has revealed himself as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people; that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged; that God calls the church to follow him in this, for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry; that God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind; that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly; that for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering; that God wishes to teach the church to do what is good and to seek the right; that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream; that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.
5. We believe that, in obedience to Jesus Christ, its only head, the church is called to confess and to do all these things, even though the authorities and human laws might forbid them and punishment and suffering be the consequence. Jesus is Lord. To the one and only God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be the honor and the glory for ever and ever.

Therefore, we reject any ideology which would legitimate forms of injustice and any doctrine which is unwilling to resist such an ideology in the name of the gospel.



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