



## How Shall We Use this Freedom of Ours?

For you were called to freedom, siblings, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become enslaved to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment,  
“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

*Galatians 5:13-14*

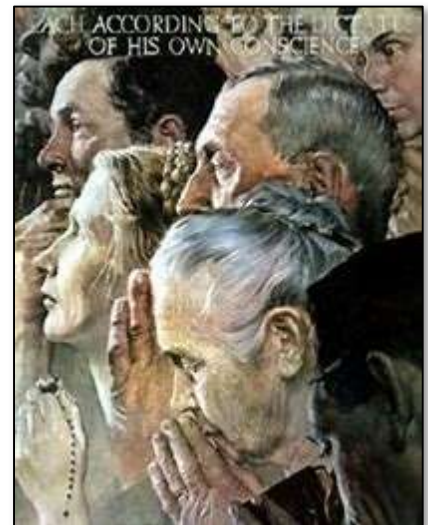
In this month marked by celebrations of the birth of our nation, we are thinking much about *freedom*—about those who labored to secure it, and those who have labored to extend it to all people, and those who work even now to ensure our freedoms from want and fear, our freedoms of speech and religion.

I think about the thread of freedom that runs through our sacred scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. From God’s instructions to Adam and Eve, “You are free to eat of every tree... *except*,” to the freedom God sent Moses to secure for the slaves in Egypt, “Let my people go so that they might be free to worship me,” to the freedom Christ secured for us on the cross.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul writes about the right use of that freedom. This freedom is not an opportunity for self-indulgence or to devour one another, but it is an opportunity to serve one another.

In America, we are doubly blessed, for we live in a land that claims freedom as part of our national identity. As citizens of this nation and citizens of God’s beloved community, we are called to live out our freedom responsibly, seeking not our own comfort or our own way, but the well-being of all.

In his missionary work, Paul is amplifying Jesus’ message, “You have been set free for love.” May we use our freedom well as we live into the vision of the Founder of our faith, the One who came so that we might know God’s love and share it.



Norman Rockwell’s painting  
“Freedom of Worship” –  
see also page 2



Your pastor and friend,  
*Caroline*

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## Sermon Series for July: The Spirit at Work

At Pentecost, God sent the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised to the church. In his letter to the Romans, Paul is teaching the church about the work of the Spirit among them. During this series, we will read these ancient and beloved texts searching for clues as to how we might collaborate with the Spirit.



### **July 2: What is Special about the Fourth of July**

*Guest Preacher: Jim Foote*

† Matthew 10:40-42

### **July 9: Left to Our Own Devices**

† Romans 7:15-25a

### **July 16: Jesus Meets a Woman at the Well**

*Dinner Church at 5:00 P.M./Make a Friend*

† John 4:1-42

### **July 23: The Deep Longing of Creation**

† Romans 8:12-25

### **July 30: When There Are No Words**

† Romans 8:26-39

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***Remember: Worship on the Water***

*10:00 A.M. every Sunday*

*At Camp Fellowship*

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## Visualizing Freedom

In his January 1941 address to Congress, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt articulated his vision for a postwar world founded on four basic human freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. Norman Rockwell, one of the preeminent painters of the day, decided to illustrate those freedoms. It was a daunting task, but the results were worth the effort—those paintings of “The Four Freedoms” have become American icons. Visit the Rockwell Museum’s website to see all four: <https://www.nrm.org/2012/10/collections-four-freedoms/>.

In 2019, a group of artists took on the challenge of reinterpreting those paintings to represent a more diverse America than was pictured in the Rockwell paintings. Hank Willis Thomas, Emily Shur, Eric Gottesman, and Wyatt Gallery produced and displayed the works in an exhibition titled, “For Freedoms: Where Do We Go From Here?” at the International Center of Photography Museum.

At right is their inclusive representation of freedom of worship for today. Both the original and the recreation reflect the key American tenet that we must all be free to worship according to the dictates of our own conscience. To read about and see images of the new “Four Freedoms,” visit the New York Times website:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/12/lens/norman-rockwell-paintings-hank-willis-thomas-emily-schur-for-freedoms.html>



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## Westminster Happenings

	<p><b>Note: Pastor Dennis and family are on vacation through July 5; contact the church office with any pastoral emergencies</b></p> <p><b>10:00 A.M. Worship on the Water at Lake Greenwood</b> Enjoy casual worship at Camp Fellowship in Waterloo, SC. Come in your boat, come in your car, come as you are (<i>see page 6</i>)!</p> <p><b>10:00 A.M. at Cokesbury Campus: Choir Room</b> <b>Sunday School: Coffee &amp; Conversation</b> Gather at 10:00 A.M. in the Choir Room. Consider Paul's message and method in the book of Romans.</p> <p><b>11:00 A.M. TO 11:15 A.M. at Cokesbury Campus: Fellowship Time</b></p> <p><b>11:15 A.M. at Cokesbury Campus: Sanctuary</b> <b>What Makes the Fourth of July Special</b> <i>Guest Preacher: Jim Foote (see page 7)</i> Worship at 11:15 A.M. in person or via live streaming. Consider our God-given freedom and give thanks.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Star Word Sharing Time will <b>not</b> meet</p>
<b>Tuesday July 4</b>	<p><b>Church closed for the July Fourth holiday</b></p>
<b>Wednesday July 5</b>	<p><b>Note:</b> Books &amp; Brown Bags Study will <b>not</b> meet this week; resumes July 11.</p>
<b>Sunday July 9</b>	<p><b>10:00 A.M. Worship on the Water at Lake Greenwood</b> Enjoy casual worship at Camp Fellowship. Hear the Word surrounded by the beauty of God's handiwork.</p> <p><b>10:00 A.M. at Cokesbury Campus: Choir Room</b> <b>Sunday School: Coffee &amp; Conversation</b> Gather at 10:00 A.M. in the Choir Room. See how Paul's words to the Romans apply to us in Greenwood.</p> <p><b>11:15 A.M. at Cokesbury Campus: Sanctuary</b> <b>Left to Our Own Devices</b> Worship at 11:15 A.M. in person or via live streaming. Accept the futility of wrestling with human sinful nature on your own.</p>
<b>Monday July 10</b>	<p><b>Congregational Care &amp; Fellowship Clean-Up Day</b> Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 10:00 A.M. (<i>see page 7</i>) Help keep our fellowship space and kitchen "decent and orderly"!</p>

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## Westminster Happenings, *continued*

<b>Tuesday July 11</b>	<b>Mindful Greenwood</b> Meet in the Branches Sunday school room upstairs at 6:30 P.M. Open yourself and quiet your mind to hear the still, small voice.
<b>Wednesday July 12</b>	<b>Books &amp; Brown Bags Study</b> Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M. Discover who Timothy and Titus are, and why they are important.
	<b><i>10:00 A.M. Worship on the Water at Lake Greenwood</i></b> Enjoy casual worship at Camp Fellowship. Tune in to God's word as you worship outdoors in natural beauty.
	<b><i>Note: Cokesbury Campus Sunday school and morning worship pause for a third-Sunday sabbath rest.</i></b>
<b>Sunday July 16</b>	<b><i>5:00 P.M. at Cokesbury Campus: Fellowship Hall</i></b> <b>Dinner Church: Make a Meal, Make a Friend, Make a Difference!</b> Participate in mission, worship, and fellowship activities at 5:00 P.M. Invite all your neighbors to this special opportunity to celebrate God. <i>For more about Dinner Church, see page 5.</i>
<b>Tuesday July 18</b>	<b>Mindful Greenwood</b> Meet in the Branches Sunday school room upstairs at 6:30 P.M. Practice patience in your meditation discipline.
<b>Wednesday July 19</b>	<b>Books &amp; Brown Bags Study</b> Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M. Return to the adventures of Timothy and Titus.
	<b><i>10:00 A.M. Worship on the Water at Lake Greenwood</i></b> Enjoy casual worship at Camp Fellowship. Hear the Word surrounded by the beauty of God's handiwork.
	<b><i>10:00 A.M. at Cokesbury Campus: Choir Room</i></b> <b>Sunday School: Coffee &amp; Conversation</b> Gather at 10:00 A.M. in the Choir Room. Come and contribute to this exploration of the book of Romans.
<b>Sunday July 23</b>	<b><i>11:15 A.M. at Cokesbury Campus: Sanctuary</i></b> <b>The Deep Longing of Creation</b> Worship at 11:15 A.M. in person or via live streaming. Join all creation in waiting eagerly for God to end all suffering.

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## Westminster Happenings, *continued*

**Tuesday  
July 25**

### **Mindful Greenwood**

Meet in the Branches Sunday school room upstairs at 6:30 P.M.  
Practice patience in your meditation discipline.

**Wednesday  
July 26**

### **Books & Brown Bags Study**

Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.  
Consider with gratitude your own spiritual mentors.

**Thursday  
July 27**

### **Crossover Contemplatives: Interfaith Discussion and Book Club**

Gather in the Youth Room at 6:30 P.M.  
Discuss *who* or *what* God is in world religions.

**Sunday  
July 30**

### ***10:00 A.M. Worship on the Water at Lake Greenwood***

Enjoy casual worship at Camp Fellowship.  
Hear the Word surrounded by the beauty of God's handiwork.

### ***10:00 A.M. at Cokesbury Campus: Choir Room***

#### **Sunday School: Coffee & Conversation**

Gather at 10:00 A.M. in the Choir Room.  
Come and contribute to this exploration of the book of Romans.

### ***11:15 A.M. at Cokesbury Campus: Sanctuary***

#### **When There are No Words**

Worship at 11:15 A.M. in person or via live streaming.  
Know that *nothing* in all creation can separate you from your loving God.

**Make a Meal  
Make a Friend  
Make a Difference**



**June 18, July 16, August 20  
Fellowship Hall  
5:00-7:00pm**

## Inaugural Dinner Church Nourishing in Many Ways

An adventurous group of almost 20 worshipers gathered in the Fellowship Hall the evening of June 16<sup>th</sup> to experience Westminster's first-ever Dinner Church. The participants made piles of PB&J and pimento cheese sandwiches (70!) for the Greenwood Soup Kitchen, and later enjoyed a gourmet sandwich buffet of their own, thanks to Chef Rob and his team.

Worship started with singing, and included a brief homily on Jesus "Making a Meal" for His disciples and charging Peter to feed His flock. During table talk and full-group discussion, everyone—regardless of age and background—experienced being a *theologian*...i.e., someone thinking about and talking

about God. And the evening wrapped up with recreational activities inside *and* outside.

**July Dinner Church** happens at 5:00 P.M. on **July 16<sup>th</sup>**, exploring the "Make a Friend" aspect of our theme. Spread the word to everyone you meet, especially folks without a church home, and invite them to "**Make a Meal, Make a Friend, Make a Difference**" with WPC.



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## Ahoy! The Word is Being Heard!

Participation at this year's WOW series started strong and just keeps on growing. Around 40 worshipers attended on June 25, including five boats afloat and two Great Danes cavorting on the lawn!

Feedback on the worship experience has been extremely positive, with participants enjoying the different styles of preaching and music. The word is being proclaimed with power and verve in this beautiful setting!



This year, Worship on the Water continues through Labor Day weekend. Here's the schedule of preachers who'll be bringing messages of hope, faith, and love:

**July 2:** Brian Purcell

**July 9:** Brian Purcell

**July 16:** Cliff Cain

**July 23:** Jim Caprell

**July 30:** Kyle Hite

**August 6:** Buzz Wilcoxon

**August 13:** Phillip Dennis

**August 20:** Duke Dixon

**August 27:** Myron Wilkins

**September 3:** Caroline Dennis

Please support Worship on the Water by praying, by attending, and especially by inviting everyone you know to come experience God's grace, love, and bounty.

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## WPC Offers Many Opportunities for Spiritual Growth

### Wednesday Books & Brown Bags

B&BB returns on July 11 and continues throughout the summer on Wednesdays in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.



The Books in question are 1 & 2 Timothy, and Titus. This trio of tiny epistles packs a New Testament punch for the early church and for us today. The Brown Bags are the ones you use to tote your sack supper.

Make a point of attending Books & Brown Bags—you will be richly blessed.

### Sunday Morning Bible Study

Coffee & Conversation is an informal study and discussion group that meets before worship at the Cokesbury campus on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays in July. The Rev. Phillip Dennis is leading the participants in a highly interactive exploration of Paul's message to the Romans—not the easiest book to understand, but certainly one that is rich in content. Bring your Bible, grab a mug, and join us for this spiritual wake-up call!



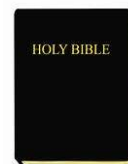
### Children's Sunday School



During the summer months, when 11:15 A.M. worship at Cokesbury is in session, our youngest worshipers will continue their walk through the Old Testament. And kids of all ages are especially welcome at Dinner Church on July 16<sup>th</sup> (*see page 5*).

### DIY Devotionals & Studies

You don't have to be part of a group to engage in a meaningful way with God's word. Our church library has many options for self-study. Or ask Pastor Caroline for a recommendation. Do-It-Yourself study invites Godly growth.

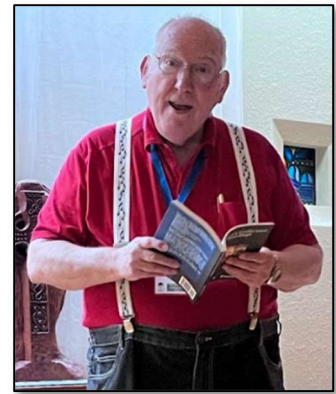


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## Meet July 2<sup>nd</sup> Guest Preacher, Jim Foote

You don't want to miss the message delivered by guest preacher Jim Foote on Sunday, July 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Cokesbury sanctuary! Jim is a professionally trained Storyteller and is well known for his pithy and often playful way with words. He serves as a Commissioned Ruling Elder in our denomination and is much in demand to lead worship around Trinity Presbytery.

Jim has many talents, including accounting and writing skills, and singing in his church choir and in the Palmetto Statesman Chorus. He notes that in addition to his joy in sharing stories from the Bible, he also delights in telling eager audiences—especially his grandchildren—about his childhood growing up in a small town. Jim's message on July 2<sup>nd</sup> will explore what makes July the Fourth such a special day. Welcome, Jim!



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## Hooray, Hooray, It's Clean-Up Day!



If you've ever enjoyed a tasty and sustaining meal from our kitchen, or experienced fun with friends in our Fellowship Hall, then you are an excellent candidate for lending a helping hand on **Monday, July 10<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 A.M.** for Clean-Up Day.

The Congregational Care & Fellowship Committee is hosting a clean-up day, bringing together volunteers for tackling some organizing and cleaning tasks while enjoying each other's company.

No experience required! Cleaning products will be provided. Bring rubber gloves and wear clothes that you don't mind getting a little messy. "Many hands make light work," so bring your willing hands, joyful heart, and cheerful spirit to keep our facility beautiful.

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## Wedding Shower Time!

You're invited to a wedding shower celebrating the upcoming wedding of Autumn Brown and Tim Mossman:

**Event:** Drop-in style shower

**Date:** July 15

**Time:** 3:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.

**Host:** Joyanna Hancock

**Place:** Joyanna's home  
116 Creek Road East  
Greenwood, SC

Autumn and Tim are registered at Wal-Mart and Amazon. Their wedding is scheduled for October 20, 2023.



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## July 14<sup>th</sup> Prayer Vigil Invitation from Saint Mark Methodist



*An invitation from the Men's Wednesday Morning Prayer Group—call 864.377.8609 for more information:*

"We are a group of men who meet each Wednesday morning at Saint Mark United Methodist Church. Our multi-denominational Discipleship Group consists of Christian men who love Christ, love each other, and love humanity, and WE NEED YOUR HELP. We feel we are being led by the Holy Spirit to facilitate a revival in Greenwood and the surrounding community, and that this revival will spread through the state, the country and to the rest of the world. Will you join us on that day for fasting and prayer? A prayer vigil will be held at the Pathway House, located at 208 Panola Ave, Greenwood, SC 29646, on Friday, July 14, 2023, from 8:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. If you cannot join us in person, please take time to pray on 7-14-2023 to pray for revival and healing."

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14

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### July 4<sup>th</sup> Treat at Magnolia Park!



Westminster friend Suzy Holloway invites everyone to "A Parade of Puppets" at Magnolia Park on July 4 from 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. A professional puppeteer from Atlanta will be a special guest of Ms. Suzy's Puppet Place.

Bring out the children, young and old, for this joyful community celebration.



Pssst...rumor has it that a Westminster choir will be forming soon! Stay *tuned!*

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### Fall Kickoff Planning Begins

Sunday, **September 10<sup>th</sup>** marks the end of our Summer session and the kickoff of Fall. We'll be coming back together after months of being church in three places. If you have ideas for how to celebrate, contact the Worship & Music co-chairs, Kathy Felder and Elizbeth Watkins.



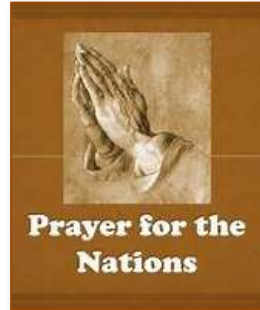


## Independence Day

*From pcusa.org*

Independence Day can be tricky to navigate since, as Christians, our primary allegiance is to our Sovereign God first and foremost. As instructed by scripture (I Timothy 2:1-3), we pray for our leaders and are good citizens of our country insofar as its policies and practices cohere with the Reign of Christ.

When nations abuse their God-given power, however, we are to call them to accountability to the Reign of God as preached by Christ. Many people died to ensure that we have the freedom to do this in our sanctuaries, too, and we do not want to minimize the sacrifices that have enabled our freedom, but the primary sacrifice we honor is that of Jesus Christ.



**Prayer for Responsible Citizenship & Social Justice** *from the Book of Common Worship (WJKP, 2018), p. 629*

Lord, keep this nation under Your care.

Bless the leaders of our land, that we may be a people at peace among ourselves and a blessing to other nations of the earth.

Help us elect trustworthy leaders, contribute to wise decisions for the general welfare, and thus serve You faithfully in our generation.

Grant, O God, that Your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, that the barriers that divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease, and that, with our divisions healed, we might live in justice and peace; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen!**

## Church Family Celebrations

Best wishes and sincere prayers for these members and friends with birthdays in July:



- ❖ 1<sup>st</sup> – Dashe Case
- ❖ 3<sup>rd</sup> – Beth Hammond
- ❖ 5<sup>th</sup> – Nevaeh Sholar
- ❖ 10<sup>th</sup> – Anna Gillespie Schneider
- ❖ 12<sup>th</sup> – Deb Jones
- ❖ 19<sup>th</sup> – Caroline Dennis

Congratulations are also in order for these amazing couples celebrating their wedding anniversary:

- ❖ 12<sup>th</sup> – Holly & Mac Hubbard
- ❖ 14<sup>th</sup> – Anna G. & Eric Schneider

*If you haven't already done so, please send your family's special dates to the church office (wpcgwd1@gmail.com) or call 864.229.3595.*

“Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother or sister.”

Romans 14:13

## Listen for God's Call

Westminster's nominating committee is working to prayerfully discern who among our membership might be hearing God's call to service in 2024.



Don't worry about whether you have the right background or experience. As the saying goes, “God doesn't call the equipped; God equips the called.”

Contact any Session member or the Pastor to learn more about becoming an elder.

## Save the Dates: August 7-10



Thanks to an eager group of volunteers, Westminster will once again host Vacation Bible School for our children and for the community. VBS will meet from 4:30 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. Monday through Thursday, and will be open to kids ages 2 through middle school. To volunteer or get more info, contact Tina Corley.



One way to experience spiritual growth is to share your personal testimony with others. And those who *receive* your sacred story grow, as well. Send your written faith journey to the church office, or, if you prefer to let someone else do the writing, call Claire Kuhl at 864.344.1716 to be interviewed. Make a difference—share your story with your Westminster family!

## Stewardship Snapshot

The Stewardship Snapshot is a regular report from the Session to the *Westminster Times* newsletter. Please note that because of the newsletter publication schedule vs. timing of month-end close, these reports will typically be about six weeks behind.



### May 2023

	May Actual	Monthly Budget	Year-to-Date Actual	Year-to-Date Budget
<b>Total Income</b>	\$17,151	\$17,630	\$85,990	\$87,753
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$17,914	\$17,857	\$82,362	\$86,822
<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>	--\$763		\$3,629	

*Please direct any questions about church financial matters to our treasurer, Len Bornemann, or any member of the Business Affairs Committee.*



## His Tithes and Our Offerings

Giving of your time, talent, and treasure shows your gratitude for God's many gifts to you. The Bible tells us that tithing (giving 10%) is expected, *and* that offerings of *any* size are welcomed and celebrated in heaven.

You can share your pledges and contributions by scanning the QR code at right, by using the offering plate in the narthex, or by mailing to:

Westminster Presbyterian PC(USA)  
2330 Cokesbury Road  
Greenwood, SC 29649

Thank you for all of your contributions—time, talent, and treasure—in support of Westminster's many programs and ministries.



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## Let Us Pray...



### **For Those in Our Church**

*We share one another's joys and concerns:*

*"I urge that... prayers... and thanksgivings be made for all people."*

*1 Timothy 2:1*

- John & Mishie Bacot
- Mary Corley
- Nancy & Larry Dozier
- Kathy Felder
- Suzy Holloway
- Mac & Holly Hubbard
- Kelli Lott & daughters  
Savanah and Gabby
- Ed Watkins
- Denise Waldrep
- Gail & Glenn Yonce,  
and Georgiana
- Our pastor and her  
family, staff, elders

*We pray daily for our prayer partners and their special concerns. We pray for our sister churches: New Faith, Ware Shoals, First Presbyterian, Abbeville Presbyterian, and others.*

*We pray for the ministries of our church, especially:*

- Presbyterian Communities of SC
- Prison Ministry
- Thornwell Home
- Presbyterian College
- Greenwood Place
- NAMI
- Pathway House
- Food Bank of Greenwood
- Meg's House
- Beyond Abuse
- Greater Greenwood United Ministries
- Camp Fellowship
- Community Initiatives/TLC



### **For Those in Our Hearts**

*We pray for these members of our wider community:*

- Betsey Blimline
- Judy Buck
- Rodney Cleveland
- Ted Colcolough
- Nancy Cooper
- Dean & Albert Fadden
- Family of Ethan Flowe
- David Gillespie
- Lois Grice
- Beverly Grier
- Joan Herin
- Michael Knight
- Terence Reese
- Trae Steelmon
- Family of Nancy Cooper
- Dave Watson
- Abigail
- Candy
- Diana
- Geri
- JK
- Kathy & Mike
- Savannah



### **For the World**

*We pray for our neighbors everywhere who we are called to love:*

- For all those suffering from recent tornadoes and other natural disasters
- For healing in communities everywhere that are affected by gun violence
- For our Greenwood Place friends as they pray for a new opportunity for community
- For true peace on earth, good will toward all of humanity
- For a positive conclusion to the war in the Ukraine
- For wise leadership at every level in our community, country, and world
- For those living with mental, emotional, and/or physical illnesses
- For all who experience exclusion, or who struggle to meet basic needs
- For justice and mercy to prevail throughout the world—*thy* will be done
- For unity among Christians in every congregation, country, and corner of the world
- For those serving in the American armed services, especially those in harm's way
- For our enemies, that their hearts may be transformed by Your love and truth



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## And God Saw That It Was Good...



At Dinner Church on June 16th, a fine flock of friends, members, and guests made and wrapped 70 sandwiches that then fed our hungry neighbors at the Greenwood Soup Kitchen.

Through creativity and cooperation, they established an efficient workflow while sharing stories about what brought them joy and laughter during the week. Plan now to experience

Dinner Church on Sunday, July 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 P.M. in the Fellowship Hall.



Trinity Presbytery was well-represented at the PAM conference in Montreat.



Worship on the Water  
*Ahhhhhhhhhhhh....*



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## Welcome, Jane Sadler Hughes



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## Important Events



Congratulations,  
Rey Wicker—  
all dressed up for  
fifth grade graduation



The Greenwood Amateur Radio Society (GARS) conducted its annual Field Day event at Grace Street Park on Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup>. The event prepares ham radio operators to manage communications in case of disaster. In addition to the usual on-air activities, participants also donated 14 pints of blood. Club member Tommy Owens, K4XB, helped Caroline use the equipment. GARS meets at Westminster every second Tuesday.





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## Webinar Notes: How Revitalization Is Really Working in Some Churches



Thom Rainer & Sam Rainer, authors of *Autopsy of a Deceased Church* and *The Post-Quarantine Church*, recently hosted a webinar discussing trends in church revitalization. It focused on things that their research demonstrates are effective in helping churches survive and thrive in today's post-Christendom, post-pandemic world.

Happily, Westminster is already moving in very positive directions. This is a summary of the Rainers' findings and what they might mean for us.

### **Trend #1: Churches are intentional about knowing their community**

Churches benefit enormously from doing in-depth analysis of the communities they serve. The Rainers recommend accessing detailed demographic information to feed that analysis. Successful churches are intentional about looking like their community—striving to engage with its different groups and subgroups in a way that is Christlike and meaningful to them and to us. Finally, successful churches love and serve their community. One church they described has committed to serving foster children as a key way of connecting and serving. Some members became foster families, and the whole church supports foster families, both internal and external.

#### **WPC Observation:**

- We have obtained excellent, mission-focused demographic information from Presbyterian Foundation, and have a “data divers” group analyzing the material and discussing what it might mean for us. Stay tuned for input from that team.
- God has already provided us with strong connection to the foster family network of Greenwood. We can continue to build on this as we seek other opportunities for service and outreach.

### **Trend #2: Churches are developing discipleship paths**

Beyond just attracting and welcoming visitors, effective churches provide clear pathways for evolving from interested party to member to mature Christian. Successful churches offer many different opportunities for spiritual growth for every age group. Having inquirer/newcomer classes is particularly valuable. Another key idea is to encourage small group participation. Research shows that people engaged in a small group are five times more likely to stay with a church for five years or more.

#### **WPC Observation:**

- Our recent values exercise confirmed that we see *spiritual growth* as our priority. Our programming emphasizes faith formation for children and for adults.
- The Presbyterian 101 series that just finished is an excellent example of helping newcomers deepen their understanding of what it means to be a Christian at WPC.
- The new Books & Brown Bags study is an excellent example of our commitment to developing and supporting small-group activities.

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### **Trend #3: Churches are focusing on conversion, not transfer growth**

Churches today that are growing are generally growing the New Testament way—by sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and bringing in *new* believers. With the rise of “none of the above” religious affiliation as the largest demographic, it doesn’t help to just lure members from one church to another. As a result, outreach efforts need to focus on evangelism, targeting the non-believer/unchurched. And that means you can’t rely on using “insider” language and knowledge to reach the intended audience.

#### **WPC Observation:**

- This is a true challenge for most congregations. Keep praying about how God will use us and where the Holy Spirit is leading us.

### **Trend #4: Church leaders are changing their mindset from recruiting seat-fillers to making disciples**

Similar to Trend #3, the point here is to remain focused on The Great Commission and The Greatest Commandments. Successful churches focus on what they have to offer their neighbors (e.g., the Gospel, love, support, connection), not on what they need those neighbors to bring to the church (e.g., money, volunteer time).

#### **WPC Observation:**

- Westminster is making a conscious effort to keep disciple-making and spiritual growth as the driving forces of our outreach. At the same time, we also do celebrate and appreciate the contributions of every type that our newest members and friends are bringing to our congregational life.

### **Trend #5: Church leaders are focusing more on horizontal growth rather than vertical growth**

*Vertical growth* refers to the classic model of having as many bodies as possible in one place at one time—preferably in the sanctuary for Sunday morning worship. *Horizontal growth* recognizes that you can be one church in many places at many times. Successful experiments in other churches include weekday and weeknight worship services, meeting in multiple venues, and adopting/merging with other congregations. Linked to the small-group data mentioned earlier, having multiple small worship opportunities can add up to a larger, deeper spiritual connection.

#### **WPC Observation:**

- The success of Worship on the Water shows that Westminster already has a great history of using this model. The summer experiment with offering worship at different times is a great opportunity to reach those for whom 10:00 A.M. Sunday morning is not a good fit.

*Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.*

*Acts 2:46-47*