



## This I Believe

In the 1950s, there was a radio program that went by the title of this article. It was hosted by the acclaimed journalist, Edward R. Murrow. Each day, Americans gathered by their radios to hear compelling essays from the likes of Eleanor Roosevelt, Jackie Robinson, Helen Keller, and Harry Truman as well as corporate leaders, cab drivers, scientists, and secretaries—anyone who was able to distill in a few minutes the guiding principles by which they lived. These essays, it is reported, “brought comfort and inspiration to a country worried about the Cold War, McCarthyism, and racial division.”

Over the years, this radio program has been revived, and now has become a global project in partnership with Henry Holt and Company, gathering “This I Believe” essays into books and school curricula.

What is it that *you* believe, and how does it guide the way you live your life?

In worship, after we hear God’s word read and proclaimed, we respond with prayer, offerings, and a declaration of faith. Most often, we use the Apostles Creed, but we have a whole book from which to choose our Confession of Faith.

This Book of Confessions is a collection of statements made by the church since the Reformation. Some statements cover spiritual basics: Who is God? Jesus? The Holy Spirit? What do we believe about Holy Scripture? Communion? Baptism? Some statements were made in response to critical historical moments like the rise of Christian Nationalism under Hitler, Racism in America, or Apartheid in South Africa.

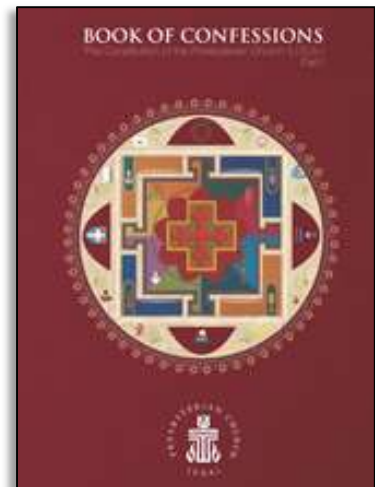
The Book of Confessions (this collection of statements) and the Book of Order make up the constitution of the Presbyterian Church USA, our denomination. The Book of Order has this to say about the confessional statements found in the Book of Confessions:

*The Presbyterian Church (USA) states its faith and bears witness to God’s grace in Jesus Christ in the creeds and confessions in the Book of Confessions. In these statements the church declares to its members and to the world who and what it is, what it believes and what it resolves to do. (BOO F-2.01)*

Who we are. What we believe. What we resolve to do.

At the dawn of this new year, I invite each of us—and all of us—to a time of learning and

*Continued on page 2*



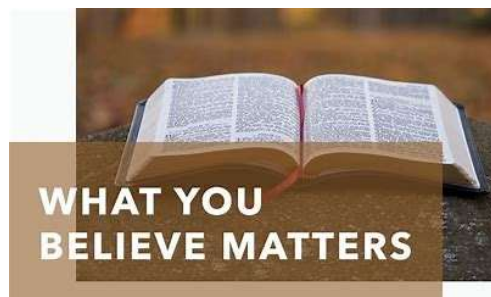
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reflection. Who are you? What do you believe? And based on that belief, how do you resolve to live? How will you act in times of equilibrium? And in times of strife or crisis? How will your faith guide you?

Who are we as a church? What do we believe? How will our belief guide our life together as a church?

How will we start? Perhaps each of us will start by listening to or reading some of the “This I Believe” essays found at [thisibelieve.org](http://thisibelieve.org). And then writing “This I Believe” essays of our own to share with our church family.



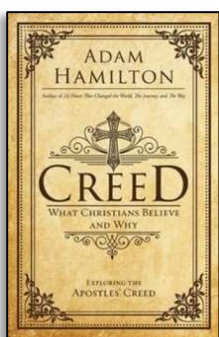
At church, we will start with a Sunday School Class (more details below) and a sermon series (more information on page 3) to learn more about the creed we say together most Sundays, the Apostles Creed. This creed is a faith statement about what we believe. We will explore these faith statements along with the question, “If this is what we say we believe, how does that shape the way we live?”

The beginning of the year is often a time for resolutions. This year we have the opportunity to step back from what we resolve to do and take a look at the underlying assumptions that guide our resolutions. “I believe this... therefore, I resolve to do this.”

What do you believe? How does this belief shape the way you live? The way you resolve to live differently in the year to come?

With joy in this journey, I am your pastor and friend,

 *Caroline*



## “Christians, What Do You Believe?”

Every Sunday, we affirm our faith during worship, and much of the time, we do so by reciting together The Apostle’s Creed. But what are we *really* saying? What *deeper* message can be found in those familiar words?

Beginning Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, the Adult Sunday Study group will strive to answer those questions and more through the new Adam Hamilton study, *Creed: What Christians Believe and Why*. Hamilton believes that some powerful answers to important life questions are contained in the Apostles’ Creed, an early statement of foundational Christian beliefs. In this book, Hamilton considers important questions of life, reality, and truth. He explores not only what Christians believe, but also why they believe it and why it matters.

Our weekly study meets at 9:00 A.M. on Sunday mornings in the Choir Room. New to church? New to adult studies? This is a great opportunity to jump in and explore some core beliefs that have the power to change your life!

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## January/February Sermon Series: This I Believe

What is the solid ground upon which you stand? Do you trust wholeheartedly in wisdom your parents taught you? Has your own experience given you solid wisdom? What of this faith we profess and practice? Is it something that has been passed down to you by family or culture, or have you claimed it as your own firm foundation?



In this sermon series, we will be exploring the foundations of our faith as described in the Apostles Creed, a statement we say together most Sundays, but that you may have some questions—or even doubts—about. Jesus welcomes those who have doubts and questions. So do we! Exploring these doubts and questions with trusted partners helps us lay a foundation for a stronger faith.

### January

#### January 7: Gathering Light—"I Believe"

*Epiphany/Baptism of the Lord Sunday  
Communion/Food Collection for Food Bank*

- † Mark 1:4-11
- † Acts 17:22-34

#### January 14: "In God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth"

*Congregational Meeting*

- † Genesis 2:1-3
- † Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

#### January 21: "And in Jesus Christ, God's Only Son, our Lord"

- † Mark 1:14-20
- † Acts 2:22-42

#### January 28: "And in the Holy Spirit"

- † Genesis 1:1-5
- † Galatians 5:13-26

### February

#### February 4: "The Church and the Communion of Saints"

*Communion/Food Collection for Food Bank*

- † Psalm 84:1-12
- † 1 Peter 2:1-10

#### February 11: "The Forgiveness of Sins"

*Souper Bowl of Caring Special Offering*

- † Psalm 103:1-22

#### February 14: Ash Wednesday

*Beginning of Lent*

- † Psalm 51:1-17
- † Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

#### February 18: First Sunday in Lent

- † Genesis 9:8-17
- † Mark 1:9-15

#### February 25: Second Sunday in Lent

- † Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
- † Mark 8:31-38

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"All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that the person of God may be proficient, equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16-17

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## Children Study Stories of Faith from the Old Testament



When Jesus studied the Bible, He studied the Old Testament...so that's a great place for our own children to focus their attention during January and February! The children meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing every Sunday. Older children join the adults for worship in the Sanctuary at 10:00 A.M.

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## Westminster Happenings: January

**Monday**  
**January 1**

*Note: The church office is closed for New Year's Day.*

**Wednesday**  
**January 3**

**Books & Brown Bags**

Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.  
Dive into PC(USA)'s *Sustainable Goals Study and Devotional* (see page 6).

**Saturday**  
**January 6**

**The Feast of Epiphany (or Three Kings' Day)**

The traditional end of the Christmas season  
*See page 12 to learn about this important date in the liturgical calendar.*

**Sunday**  
**January 7**

**Sunday School**

Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room.  
Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing.  
*See pages 2 and 3 for information about new Sunday School studies.*

**Gathering Light—I Believe**

*Communion Sunday/Food Collection for Food Bank*  
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.  
The kingdom of God is near—believe it!

**Westminster Irregulars Jam Session**

Unleash your inner musician at 11:15 in the Sanctuary (see page 9).  
Make a joyful noise during this informal preparation for special music.

**Monday**  
**January 8**

**BEMA Bible Discussion Group**

Meet in the Joe Gettys Classroom at 6:00 P.M.  
Discuss Episodes 13 & 14 of the BEMA Podcast (see page 10 for details).

**Tuesday**  
**January 9**

**Presbyterian Women**

Come together in the Choir Room at 11:30 A.M.  
Enjoy fellowship and learn about a leper's sacred encounter with Jesus.

**Wednesday**  
**January 10**

**Books & Brown Bags Study**

Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.  
Learn more about how to fight systemic poverty, a key Matthew 25 goal.

**Sunday**  
**January 14**

**Sunday School**

Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room.  
Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing.

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## Westminster Happenings: January, *continued*

<b>Sunday</b> <b>January 14,</b> <i>continued</i>	<b>In God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.</b> Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming. Celebrate the power of the Creator of the Universe!  <b>Congregational Meeting</b> Participate in Westminster’s governance in the Sanctuary.  <b>Session Meeting</b> Gather at 11:15 A.M. in the Joe Gettys Classroom. Conduct the business of the church, as led by the Holy Spirit.
<b>Monday</b> <b>January 15</b>	<b>BEMA Bible Discussion Group</b> Meet in the Joe Gettys Classroom at 6:00 P.M. Discuss Episode 15 of the BEMA Podcast—“Into the Pit.”
<b>Wednesday</b> <b>January 17</b>	<b>Books &amp; Brown Bags Study</b> Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M. Consider the role of individuals and churches in eradicating poverty.
<b>Thursday</b> <b>January 18</b>	<b>Rainbow Fellowship</b> Connect with friends in the Youth Room upstairs at 6:00 P.M. Enjoy lively Bible discussion and creative crafts.
<b>Sunday</b> <b>January 21</b>	<b>Sunday School</b> Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room. Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing.  <b>And in Jesus Christ, God’s Only Son, Our Lord</b> <i>Elder ordination and installation</i> Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming. Witness the recognition that Jesus <i>is</i> the Christ.  <b>Sunday Sustenance with Chef Rob &amp; Friends</b> Feast in the Fellowship Hall immediately following worship.
<b>Monday</b> <b>January 22</b>	<b>BEMA Bible Discussion Group</b> Meet in the Joe Gettys Classroom at 6:00 P.M. Discuss Episode 16 of the BEMA Podcast—“Out of the Pit.”
<b>Wednesday</b> <b>January 24</b>	<b>Books &amp; Brown Bags Study</b> Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M. Discuss the role of faith in promoting social justice.

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## Westminster Happenings: January, *continued*

**Sunday**  
**January 28** | **Sunday School**  
Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room.  
Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing.  
**And in the Holy Spirit**  
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.  
Recognize signs that indicate the Holy Spirit is present...or not.

**Monday**  
**January 29** | **BEMA Bible Discussion Group**  
Meet in the Joe Gettys Classroom at 6:00 P.M.  
Discuss Episode 17 of the BEMA Podcast—"A God Who Hears the Cry."

**Wednesday**  
**January 31** | **Books & Brown Bags Study**  
Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.  
Wrestle with intractable problems related to poverty.

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### B&BB Resumes Wednesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>

*Joe Gettys Classroom at 6:00 P.M.*



We believe that God cares about the plight of the poor. We are curious about how we as individuals and as a church can participate in the eradication of systemic poverty in our community and world. This is the third focus area of the Matthew 25 Initiative.

In January and February, as we lead up to important collective efforts through The Souper Bowl of Caring and The One Great Hour of Sharing, our Books & Brown Bags study will be working with the *Sustainable Goals Study and Devotional Guide* from the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations, available for download from WPC website's Resources page. Each week in January and February, we will learn about and discuss two of the sustainable goals addressed in this book. Don't forget to bring your snack supper!



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## Westminster Happenings: February

**Thursday  
February 1**

### **Rainbow Fellowship**

Connect with friends in the Youth Room upstairs at 6:00 P.M.  
Make a difference by making sandwiches for the Soup Kitchen.

### **Mission & Outreach Committee Meeting**

Come together in the Choir Room at 6:00 P.M.  
Lend your thoughts and skills to Westminster's outreach planning.

**Sunday  
February 4**

### **Sunday School**

Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room.  
Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing.

### **The Church and the Communion of Saints**

*Communion Sunday/Food Collection for Food Bank*  
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.  
Contemplate the significant of being "a royal priesthood" of all believers.

### **Westminster Irregulars Jam Session**

Raise your voice or play your instrument at 11:15 in the Sanctuary.  
Relax and get ready to share special music next Sunday.

**Monday  
February 5**

### **BEMA Bible Discussion Group**

Meet in the Joe Gettys Classroom at 6:00 P.M.  
Discuss Episode 18 of the BEMA Podcast—"A Tale of Two Kingdoms."

**Tuesday  
February 6**

### **Presbyterian Women**

Come together in the Choir Room at 11:30 A.M.  
Share fellowship and discuss lesson 6 in the Sacred Encounters study.

### **Congregational Care & Fellowship Committee**

Congregate in the Choir Room at 7:00 P.M.  
Bring your ideas and enthusiasm for building WPC family relationships.

**Wednesday  
February 7**

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

Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.  
Challenge the status quo in pursuit of sustainable development goals.

**Sunday  
February 11**

### **Sunday School**

Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room.  
Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing.

### **The Forgiveness of Sins**

*Souper Bowl of Caring Special Offering (see page 11)*  
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.  
Bless the Lord—your transgressions have been removed!

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## Westminster Happenings: February, *continued*

- Monday  
February 12** | **BEMA Bible Discussion Group**  
Meet in the Joe Gettys Classroom at 6:00 P.M.  
Discuss Episode 19 of the BEMA Podcast—“A Strengthened Heart.”
- Tuesday  
February 13** | **Shrove Tuesday**  
The traditional end of the Christmas season  
See page 12 to learn about this important date in the liturgical calendar.  
**Business Affairs Committee Meeting**  
Come to the Parlor at 6:00 P.M.  
Contribute your energy and ideas to the “back office” work of the church.
- Wednesday  
February 14** | **Ash Wednesday**  
Worship at 7:30 P.M. in person or via live streaming.  
Mark the beginning of Lent with the imposition of ashes (see page 12).
- Thursday  
February 15** | **Rainbow Fellowship**  
Connect with friends in the Youth Room upstairs at 6:00 P.M.  
Engage through creative crafts and lively Bible discussion.
- Sunday  
February 18** | **Sunday School**  
Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room.  
Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing.  
**The First Sunday in Lent**  
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.  
Remember God’s covenant with Noah.
- Monday  
February 19** | **BEMA Bible Discussion Group**  
Meet in the Joe Gettys Classroom at 6:00 P.M.  
Discuss Episodes 20 and 21 of the BEMA Podcast—with heart *and* soul.
- Wednesday  
February 21** | **Books & Brown Bags Study**  
Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.  
Identify opportunities to make a difference for those in need.
- Sunday  
February 25** | **Sunday School**  
Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room.  
Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing.



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## Westminster Happenings: February, *continued*

	<b>The Second Sunday in Lent</b> Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming. Remember God’s covenant with Abram.
<b>Sunday February 25, <i>continued</i></b>	<b>Worship &amp; Music Committee Meeting</b> Meet in the Choir Room at 11:15 A.M. Share your thoughts and hopes for how we worship at Westminster.  <b>Nurture &amp; Education Committee Meeting</b> Come to the Parlor at 4:00 P.M. Weigh in on adult and child study curricula and scheduling.
<b>Monday February 26</b>	<b>BEMA Bible Discussion Group</b> Meet in the Joe Gettys Classroom at 6:00 P.M. Discuss Episodes 20 and 21 of the BEMA Podcast—with heart <i>and</i> soul.

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## First Sunday Fun Enhances Second Sunday Worship

Westminster is blessed to have a diverse assortment of musicians in our congregation. To give those individuals a fun, low-stress channel for enhancing worship, Denise Waldrep has assembled the Westminster Irregulars, an ad hoc assortment of music-lovers who are eager to incorporate a variety of musical offerings into WPC worship. You’ve already enjoyed their additions to our services through familiar spirituals and beloved carols, sung and accompanied by an astonishing array of instruments—everything from mouth harp to viola to guitar and more.

Now it’s your turn to join the fun! No training or experience required. No audition necessary. No formal rehearsals—just “jam sessions” on first Sundays and joyful noise during worship on second Sundays.

Want to be part of this merry band? Check the Westminster Happenings calendar for Jam session dates. If you want to know more or are interested in giving this a whirl, contact Denise at [dforthearts@gmail.com](mailto:dforthearts@gmail.com).



# The BEMA Bulletin

Submitted by Luke Christie



BEMA Greenwood is on the map! BEMA Discipleship has added our group to their map of BEMA discussion groups. So, now we're "official." Midwinter will see BEMA Greenwood travel to and back out of Egypt as we finish our study of Genesis and tackle Exodus.

*A community Bible study hosted by Westminster, BEMA Greenwood meets 6:00-7:00 P.M. on Mondays. Gloria and Luke Christie facilitate discussions about the BEMA Podcast, a context-rich study of the Bible from Genesis through Revelation. All are welcome! You may join at any time, and you may come and go as your schedule permits. But please honor the group's one Cardinal Rule: Whenever you participate in discussion, you must have listened to all podcast episodes through the episode being discussed (i.e., be "caught up" with the group).*

To learn more about the podcast, visit [www.bemadiscipleship.com](http://www.bemadiscipleship.com). To learn more about BEMA Greenwood, contact Gloria Christie at [ggchristie716@gmail.com](mailto:ggchristie716@gmail.com) or 864-379-5034.

## January-February Schedule

Discussion Date	Episode	Bible Reading	Length	Presentation
1/1	New Year's Sabbath - No Discussion Group Meeting			
1/8	13 - Grappling with God, Part 1	Gen. 25, 27-31	37 min	No
	<b>and</b> 14 - Grappling with God, Part 2	Gen. 32-25	38 min	No
1/15	15 - Into the Pit	Gen. 37-40	47 min	Yes
1/22	16 - Out of the Pit	Gen. 41-50	46 min	Yes
1/29	17 - A God Who Hears the Cry	None	43 min	Yes
2/5	18 - A Tale of Two Kingdoms	None	43 min	No
2/12	19 - A Strengthened Heart	Exodus 1-13	35 min	No
2/19	20 - With All Your Heart	Exodus 14-15	31 min	Yes
	<b>and</b> 21 - With All Your Soul & "Very"	Exodus 16-17	41 min	Yes
2/26	22 - Under the Chuppah	Exodus 19-23	40 min	Yes
	<b>and</b> 23 - Falling on Joyful Faces	Exodus 24-40	23 min	Yes

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## 2024 Souper Bowl of Caring Kick Off

Submitted by Laine Horowitz, Mission & Outreach Co-Chair

“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.” *(from Matthew 25:35)*

“Are you ready for some football?” *(from every sports announcer in America)*

How on Earth are these two ideas possibly connected?!?

On Super Bowl Sunday, February 11, Westminster is once again joining forces with the non-profit organization “Tackle Hunger” to raise money for the Souper Bowl of Caring. Our funds will go to the Greenwood Soup Kitchen, feeding the hungry right here in our own community.



Why are we participating?

- More than 24 million households in America do not have enough food to live a healthy lifestyle.
- 11.6 million households with children do not have enough food.
- 1 in 5 children in our United States are food insecure.
- 25.1% of households in Greenwood, SC have income below the poverty level.

Neilson has done a deep-dive survey into the viewership of the last two Super Bowls. They came up with a figure of 208 million people having viewed the Super Bowl in 2022. Just imagine if everyone watching the Super Bowl this year gave \$1.00 to help those households in need!

While we have no control over that, we *can* control what action we take in our own community. Westminster has a terrific track record:

- In 2022, we gave \$279 to this cause.
- In 2023, we raised our game to donate \$703 to the Greenwood Soup Kitchen
- In 2024, the sky’s the limit!

Come mid-January, it will be time to bring out our fantastic football field and dust off the old soup pot that your generosity will fill. Look for more exciting details to come in bulletins starting in 2024!

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## WPC Committees—Always Room for You!

Volunteers serving on Westminster’s committees are the driving force behind our work and worship as a Christ-centered community. Whatever your spiritual gifts and faith-related interests may be, there is always room for you in our committees. Check out the Westminster Happenings calendar for February to see when and where the committees meet. Bring your energy and insights to the committee(s) where you feel God is calling you to serve. No special training or experience necessary—Westminster is blessed with an abundance of seasoned leaders who are eager to mentor newcomers. Contact Pastor Dennis or any Session member for more information.



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## January: What is *Epiphany*?

From PCUSA.org

January 6<sup>th</sup> is the twelfth and final day of Christmas, according to the Christian liturgical calendar. It is known as Three King's Day, or the Feast of Epiphany.



### EPIPHANY

Epiphany is the celebration of God's manifestation or self-revelation to the world in Jesus Christ. In particular, we celebrate the revelation of God's promise and purpose to the nations of the world, as the magi came from the East to worship to the Christ child, and God's covenant of grace is extended to all who believe the good news of Christ Jesus. The symbolism of light is important: not only because of the star that guided the magi, but as it relates to the bright dawning of God's self-revelation in Christ.

The word *epiphany* (from the Greek *epiphaneia* or *theophaneia*) means *appearance* or *manifestation* of God, and has roots in the word for sunrise or dawn. In ancient times, an epiphany meant either a visible manifestation of a god or the solemn visit of a ruler venerated as a god.

For Christians, Christmas marks the coming of God to us; Epiphany celebrates the appearance of the Lord in the midst of humanity. The Christmas stories of the birth of Immanuel declare the divine entry; Epiphany extols the revelation of God to the world in the person of Jesus.

In our celebrations of Christmas and Epiphany, we rejoice in the dawning and the arising of Light in darkness. ... The timeless mystery of the incarnation, God in flesh, leads us forth to show and tell of Christ as God's gift of grace and salvation for all persons. Some call this ongoing epiphany the work of Christmas.

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## February: What is *Shrove Tuesday*?

From Britannica Online

Shrove Tuesday is the day immediately preceding Ash Wednesday (see below), the beginning of Lent in Western churches. *Shrove*, derived from *shrive*, refers to the confession of sins before Lent, a usual practice in Europe in the Middle Ages.

Although the day is sometimes still used for self-examination and introspection, Shrove Tuesday eventually acquired the character of a carnival or festival in many places and is often celebrated with parades; e.g., Mardi Gras ("Fat Tuesday") in New Orleans, Louisiana.

As the final day before the austerity of the Lenten fast, Shrove Tuesday also has many customs pertaining to food. Pancakes are traditional in a number of European countries because eggs, sugar, and fat, commonly forbidden during the Lenten fast, are used up so they will not go to waste.

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## What is *Ash Wednesday*?



Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the 40-day season of Lent. This transformational season moves us from sin to salvation, as we hear the epic stories of our faith and contemplate our place in them.

The sign we receive on Ash Wednesday, ashes in the shape of a cross, is a reminder of both our mortality and our salvation. We come to this service to confess, perhaps even to claim our emptiness, and to be filled again, created again, by the life-renewing Spirit of God, made known to us in the life-giving sacrifice of Jesus.

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## February: What is *Lent*?

Lent is a season of 40 days, beginning with Ash Wednesday (February 14th this year) and ending on the Thursday (March 28<sup>th</sup>) before Good Friday. Just as Advent is a season of waiting and preparation for the coming of Christ, Lent is a season of waiting and preparing for the new life we have come to know in Christ, a life of intimate connection with God and neighbor, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Biblically, 40 is a number that signifies transformation. Through prayer and devotional practices, we hope to grow through these 40 days. Plan to join us at Westminster as we begin the Lenten Season together with our Ash Wednesday service on February 13<sup>th</sup>.

Did you do the math? Why are there more than 40 days between those two dates? Because each Sunday is a little Easter!

Count all the days except the Sundays, and you should come up with 40. Many people commit to a discipline during the 40 days of Lent, like the discipline of doing a small kindness every day, or the discipline of dedicating a period of time each day to prayer, or the discipline of giving up something that may stand in the way of your commitment to loving God and neighbor, like television or chocolate.

What will you do in these 40 days to open yourself up to the way that God is shaping you for a resurrected life? These days ahead of Lent are a good time to listen and discern your Lenten practice.



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## More to Come...

Come mid-February, be on the lookout for a newsletter supplement containing more details about Lenten activities leading into Holy Week and Easter.

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We put our hope in the LORD.

He is our help and our shield.

In him our hearts rejoice,

for we trust in his holy name.

Psalm 33:20-21



## Time to Celebrate!

Best wishes and sincere prayers for these members and

friends with January birthdays:

- ❖ 3<sup>rd</sup> – Emily Hughes
- ❖ 14<sup>th</sup> – Kathy Felder
- ❖ 16<sup>th</sup> Laine Horowitz
- ❖ 21<sup>st</sup> – Gary West
- ❖ 21<sup>st</sup> – Gemma Craven (*Sholar family*)
- ❖ 22<sup>nd</sup> – Kathleen Watkins

February birthdays:

- ❖ 1<sup>st</sup> – Kathy West
- ❖ 6<sup>th</sup> – David Hammond
- ❖ 10<sup>th</sup> – Eric Schneider (*Gillespie family*)
- ❖ 11<sup>th</sup> – Danielle Sholar
- ❖ 12<sup>th</sup> – Lucia Horowitz
- ❖ 22<sup>nd</sup> – John Funke

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

- ❖ 1<sup>st</sup> – Gary & Kathy West

*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.*

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# Thank You for Supporting What Really Matters!

The results are in, and once again, the giving hearts of the Westminster family have faithfully and generously committed to supporting our worship, programs, and outreach for the coming year financially and through sharing your gifts and talents.

Out of 45 possible family units that might have made financial commitments, 37 did so (82%). That number includes 8 pledges from people who have not pledged in the past, and 5 who increased their amount. All together, the pledges totaled almost \$200,000. That is an amazing achievement for such a small congregation! It is worth noting that we are one of only two congregations our size in Trinity Presbytery that can sustain a full-time pastor.

What matters is faith  
working through love.  
*Galatians 5:6b (GNT)*



At a called meeting on Sunday, December 10, your Session applied some careful cuts to the original asking budget, and successfully approved a solid fiscal plan for 2024. This final budget will be presented as part of the annual meeting on Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup>.

Pray for God to continue guiding Westminster and providing for us abundantly. If you made a financial commitment, please be attentive to making your contributions in whatever timing works best for you. And if you didn't pledge, no worries! The offering plate and the online app are always available to joyfully receive whatever you can give, whenever you can give it. Also be expecting to hear from Committee Chairs if you indicated your interests in the Time & Talent survey. Thanks be to God for people like you who cheerfully support what really matters!

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## 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.

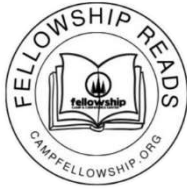


### November 2023

	November Actual	Monthly Budget	Year-to-Date Actual	Year-to-Date Budget
<b>Total Income</b>	\$25,657	\$17,530	\$213,737	\$193,834
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$14,523	\$20,132	\$203,115	\$226,326
<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>	\$11,134		\$10,621	

Income numbers look particularly positive due to contributors catching up on their annual giving commitments.

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



## Camp Fellowship Offers New Discussion Group

Tuesdays in January, beginning January 9

Noon in person at Camp Fellowship or online via Zoom

8:00 P.M. via Zoom only

Our friends at Camp Fellowship are kicking off a new program called “Fellowship Reads.” For this inaugural season, they have selected *We Aren't Broke: Uncovering Hidden Resources for Mission and Ministry*, by Mark Elsdon.

Author Elsdon challenges readers to “reexamine our perceived limits and our assumptions about how resources are supposed to be used.” This book is an invitation to envision a different way of putting God’s gifts to work in the world. It draws upon a remarkable story of rebirth at a Presbyterian-affiliated campus ministry center at the University of Wisconsin, along with profiles of other creative social enterprises, to describe how church property and investment assets can be put to work for innovation, transformation, and financial sustainability. Theologically rooted but practically minded, this book provides guidance and tools for church and nonprofit leaders, entrepreneurs, and investors of all kinds who are seeking new ways to fund and participate in God’s work in the world.

For more information and to register for the program, visit [campfellowship.org/events](http://campfellowship.org/events).

## Tips for Boosting Mental Health

Part of a series on mental health issues; excerpted from *Mental Health America*:  
<https://mhanational.org/31-tips-boost-your-mental-health>



- **Track gratitude and achievement with a journal.** Include 3 things you were grateful for and 3 things you were able to accomplish each day.
- **Start your day with a cup of coffee.** Coffee consumption is linked to lower rates of depression. If you can’t drink coffee because of the caffeine, try another good-for-you drink like green tea.
- **Experiment** with a new recipe, write a poem, paint or try a Pinterest project. Creative expression and overall well-being are linked.
- **Show some love to someone in your life.** Close, quality, relationships are key for a happy, healthy life.
- **Boost brainpower by treating yourself to a couple pieces of dark chocolate every few days.** The flavonoids, caffeine, and theobromine in chocolate are thought to work together to improve alertness and mental skills.
- **Feeling anxious? Take a trip down memory lane and do some coloring** for about 20 minutes to help you clear your mind. Pick a design that's geometric and a little complicated for the best effect.
- **Take time to laugh.** Hang out with a funny friend, watch a comedy or check out cute videos online. Laughter helps reduce anxiety.
- **Spend some time with a furry friend.** Time with animals lowers the stress hormone cortisol and boosts oxytocin, which stimulates feelings of happiness.

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## Let Us Pray...

*"Pray without ceasing"*  
1 Thessalonians 5:17



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

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

- John Bacot and family
- Mary Corley
- Tina Corley's daughter, Christina
- Kathy Felder
- Oliver Gouldsmith
- Mac & Holly Hubbard
- Kelli Lott and Gabby
- Savannah, Dakota, and Briar Rose
- Ed Watkins
- Gail & Glenn Yonce, and Georgiana
- Our pastor and her family
- Your Session

*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
- NAMI
- Pathway House
- Food Bank
- Soup Kitchen
- Meg's House
- Beyond Abuse
- GG United Ministries
- Camp Fellowship
- Community Initiatives
- TLC staffers Carolyn Allen, Tiara Brown, Wanda Stewart, and Amelia Sheard



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

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

- Judy Buck
- Ted Colcolough
- Asher & Sumir Din
- Dean & Albert Fadden
- David Gillespie
- Lois Grice
- Beverly Grier
- Joan Herin
- Michael Knight
- The McClendon family
- Terence Reese
- Trae Steelmon
- Dave Watson
- Kathy & Mike



### **For the World**

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

- For strength, comfort, and courage to victims of war and mass killings
- For those whose lives have been affected by natural disasters around the world
- For justice and mercy to prevail throughout the world—*thy* will be done
- 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 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 voters in democracies around the world to discern wisely how to use their vote
- For our enemies, that their hearts may be transformed by Your love and truth



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## And God Saw (and Heard) That It Was Good...



## Giving Hearts Make a Difference



A heart-felt thank-you to all who supported our special offering to purchase safety equipment. Early in the new year, our AEDs and first aid kits will be ready for use.



WPC readers supported the Call Me MISTER children's book drive.



Our 2023 Angel Tree initiative made sure that two families being helped by Meg's House had a bright Christmas with plenty of gifts under the tree. Meg's House is committed to ensuring that those affected by domestic violence or chronic homelessness are offered the opportunities they need to reach their full potential. Meg's House provides housing and supportive services to help women and children rebuild their lives.

# Presbyterian Women Enjoy Festive Brunch



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## From Denise Waldrep's Portfolio

### The Work of Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the pris'ner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among others,  
To make music from the heart.

- Howard Thurman

