



In My Middle

One of my favorite books from my childhood is “Mr. God, This is Anna.” The author has only one name, Fynn. It is the story of a burly dock worker, Fynn, and the young waif, Anna, he adopts. Despite her youth, Anna is a mystic. She has a lot to teach her elders about Mr. God. Anna’s answer to Fynn’s inquiry, “Where is God?” reminds me of some of Jesus’ teaching in the Gospel of John.

"Where are you?" she had said.

"Here, of course," I replied.

"Where's *me* then?"

"There!"

"Where do you know about me?"

"Inside myself someplace."

"Then you know *my* middle in *your* middle."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Then you know Mr. God in my middle, in your middle, and everything you know—every person you know, you know in your middle. Every person and everything that you know has got Mr. God in his middle, and so you have got his Mr. God in *your* middle too. It's easy."



As I think about this month of March, I think about what is at the beginning: the forty-day season of Lent, bare trees and windy days. And I think about what is at the end: blossoms, and spring green leaves, and Easter! And I look at the middle, and note St. Patrick’s Day, with its symbol of the shamrock, the three-part leaf that Patrick used to teach people about the great mystery of the Trinity. One leaf, three parts. One God, three persons.

And I remember what is meant to be in the middle of my life and the middle of our life as a church. We are called to remember this relational, three-in-one God at our center, inviting and equipping us to be in relationship with God and neighbor.

So often, we get off track and allow other things to take that middle place... things that have a tendency to divide us rather than unite us. Sometimes these things have to do with our preferences, or the way things have always been done, or a perception of scarcity. But, when we are Christ-centered, our preferences no longer seem so important. Our differences become not dividing lines but gifts we bring to a common life. We recognize that we have everything we need to be Christ’s body... He is in our middle.

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

When we recognize the triune God in the middle of a transformational month like March, or in the middle of a church, or in the middle of an enemy, or friend, or ourselves, we discover peace and unity, security and joy... Which is I believe, why Christ came to walk among us.... So that he might live eternally in us. This is how St. Patrick put it in his beautiful prayer of protection, often called *St. Patrick's Breastplate*:



It turns out, it seems, that while Christ is in our middle, we are also in the middle of Christ. In the words of the little teacher Anna, "It's easy," if we will let it be.

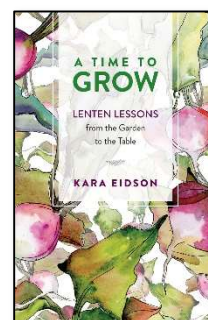
In the middle of it all, I am your pastor and friend,



Adult Sunday School: A Time to Grow

Sundays 9:00 A.M. – 9:45 A.M.
Choir Room

Our March study is *A Time to Grow: Lenten Lessons from the Garden to the Table*, by Kara Eidson. According to the publisher, "Readers will explore the intricacies of how faith is required to produce food and how that faith can lead us all to feast at the table on Easter morning.



Journeying through the season of Lent with this in mind, *A Time to Grow* encourages readers to slow down, move through the painstaking process of growth, and end together with great feasting and celebration of the resurrection." Books are available in the Choir Room (\$12).

March Sermon Series: Rooted in Promise, Growing in Faith

The Old and New Testament parts of our Christian Bible can be understood also as the Old and New Covenant. During these days of Lent, we are giving a look at the seeds of promise and relationship planted in both the Old and New Covenant, and considering the fruit we can bear in our lives when we are nourished through these roots of our faith. At Easter, we emerge from death's grasp and rejoice in the glory of resurrection morning!

March 3: Sign of the Covenant

Third Sunday in Lent

Communion/Food Bank Collection

† Exodus 20:1-17

† John 2:13-22

March 24: Blessed One

Palm Sunday

† Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

† Mark 11:1- 11

March 10: Signs of Salvation

Fourth Sunday in Lent

† Numbers 21:4-9

† John 3:14-21

March 28: Maundy Thursday

Communion

† Exodus 12:1-10

† John 13:1-17, 31b-35

March 17: What is Written on My Heart?

Fifth Sunday in Lent

† Jeremiah 31:31-34

† John 12:20-33

March 31: Life Everlasting

Easter!

† Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

† John 20:1-18

B&BB Delves into Roots of Israel/Palestine Conflict

Wednesday, March 13 and March 27

6:00 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.

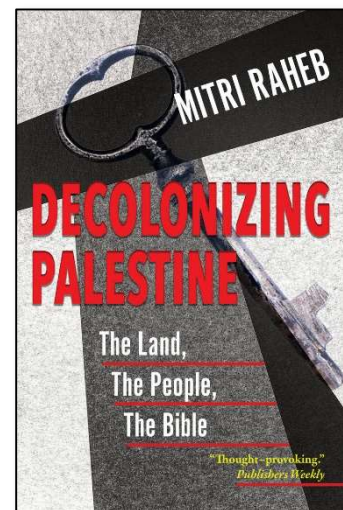
Joe Gettys Room

Always eager to tackle tough topics, the Books & Brown Bags group is studying *Decolonizing Palestine: The Land, the People, the Bible*, by Mitri Raheb.

Published in July 2023, this book offers insight to the current war in Gaza, from a Palestinian Protestant scholar and pastor. Many people do not realize that among those who were displaced by the establishment of the State of Israel were many Christians who trace their lineage and their residence in the region back to the time of Jesus.

This small book assumes a great deal of knowledge about the history of Israel/Palestine. It will help readers to spend some time exploring the history of the region and the state of Israel beyond what we know from our Bibles. The Encyclopedia Britanica online is an excellent resource. This is a challenging study to accompany our prayers for peace in the Middle East.

Remember to bring your brown bag supper or snack and a beverage. You will be nourished in many ways by your participation.



Westminster Happenings

- 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 8 for information about Sunday School studies during Lent.
- Second Sunday in Lent**
Third Sunday in Lent/Communion Sunday/Food Collection for Food Bank
Guest Pastor: Phillip Dennis
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.
Look for the many signs of God’s covenant with the chosen people of God.
- Boston College Mission Group in Residence March 3 – 8**
Welcome the volunteers from Boston College who are visiting Greenwood to support Habitat for Humanity projects in our area.
Prayers and snacks appreciated! *See page 10 for more information.*
- Sunday**
March 3
- BEMA Bible Discussion Group**
Meet in the Joe Gettys Room at 6:00 P.M.
Discuss Episode 24 of the BEMA Podcast (*see page 9 for more info*).
- Monday**
March 4
- Family Night Supper with our Boston College Guests**
Gather at 6:30 P.M. in the Fellowship Hall.
Meet and greet these great representatives of America’s youth.
Note: No Books & Brown Bag Discussion Group meeting this week.
- Yoga Class**
Come upstairs to the Middle School Classroom at 5:30 P.M.
Stretch and strengthen as a Lenten discipline (*see page 10*).
- Wednesday**
March 6
- Thursday**
March 7
- Note: NO Rainbow Fellowship meeting this week—Spring Break*
- Westminster Session Retreat**
Pray for your Session as they devote the day to worship and planning.
- Clean-Up Event at Camp Fellowship & Lake Greenwood**
Come to Camp Fellowship at 9:00 A.M. (*see page 11*).
Join this county-wide “Keep Greenwood Beautiful” litter pick-up event.
- Saturday**
March 9
- 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.
- Sunday**
March 10

Westminster Happenings, *continued*

Sunday March 10, <i>continued</i>	Signs of Salvation <i>Fourth Sunday in Lent</i> Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming. Consider how stories of serpents and salvation are linked. Stated Session Meeting Meet in the Joe Gettys Room immediately following worship. Conduct the business of the church, as led by the Holy Spirit
Monday March 11	BEMA Bible Discussion Group Meet in the Joe Gettys Room at 6:00 P.M. Discuss Episode 25 of the BEMA Podcast, "A Kingdom of <i>What?</i> "
Tuesday March 12	Presbyterian Women Come together in the Choir Room at 11:30 A.M. Enjoy fellowship and discuss the eunuch's encounter with Christ.
Wednesday March 13	Books & Brown Bags Study Bring a sack supper to the Joe Gettys Room at 6:00 P.M. Learn about the geographical context of the Bible and its impact today. Yoga Class Come upstairs to the Middle School Classroom at 5:30 P.M. Discover your body's natural energy centers.
Saturday March 16	WPC/TLC Easter Egg Hunt Bring all the children in your life to the Fellowship Hall at 9:30 A.M. Have a joyful morning discovering hidden treasures in the churchyard,
Sunday March 17	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. What is Written on My Heart? <i>Fifth Sunday in Lent</i> Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming. Encounter Christ, the long-promised new covenant. Sunday Sustenance with Chef Rob & Friends Feast in the Fellowship Hall immediately following worship.
Monday March 18	BEMA Bible Discussion Group Meet in the Joe Gettys Room at 6:00 P.M. Discuss Episode 26 <i>and</i> 27 of the BEMA Podcast.

Westminster Happenings, *continued*

- Wednesday
March 20** | **Walk Through Holy Week Snack Supper and Experience**
Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 5:00 P.M.
Join in this unique journey through Holy Week (*see page 8*).
Note: No Books & Brown Bag Discussion Group meeting this week.
- Yoga Class**
Come upstairs to the Middle School Classroom at 5:30 P.M.
Foster flexibility of body, mind, and spirit through yoga.
- Thursday
March 21** | **Rainbow Fellowship**
Connect with friends in the Youth Room upstairs at 6:00 P.M.
Enjoy lively Bible discussion and creative crafts.
- Friday
March 22** | **Friday Foray to Hopeland Gardens in Aiken, SC**
Meet in the church parking near the church office at 8:30 A.M.
Immerse yourself in the beauty of God's handiwork (*see page 11*).
- Saturday
March 23** | **Westminster Clean-Up Day**
Gather in the Courtyard at 9:00 A.M. (*see page 11*).
Bring tools, gloves, and love for our facility to make us sparkle for Easter.
- Sunday
March 24** | **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.
Blessed One
Palm Sunday/One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering (see page 12)
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.
Grab a palm branch, join the throng, and sing "Hosannah!" to our King.
Liturgist Training
Gather in the Sanctuary immediately following worship (*see page 10*).
- Monday
March 25** | **BEMA Bible Discussion Group**
Meet in the Joe Gettys Room at 6:00 P.M.
Discuss Episode 28 *and* 29 of the BEMA Podcast.
- Wednesday
March 27** | **Books & Brown Bags Study**
Bring a sack supper to the Joe Gettys Room at 6:00 P.M.
Conclude our study of *Decolonizing Palestine*.
Yoga Class
Come upstairs to the Middle School Classroom at 5:30 P.M.
Foster flexibility of body, mind, and spirit through yoga.

Westminster Happenings, *continued*

Thursday
March 28 | **Maundy Thursday Worship**
Communion
Worship at 7:00 P.M. in person or via live streaming.
Experience the Lord's last supper anew.

Sunday
March 31 | **Flowering of the Cross** (*see page 13*)
Greet each other in love and peace at 9:00 A.M. in the Courtyard.
Note: No Sunday School

Life Everlasting
Easter
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.
Prepare to welcome the light that *always* shines our darkness.
Note: Church office is closed Easter Monday

What is Holy Week?

Downloaded from Britannica.com

During Holy Week, Christians recall the events leading up to Jesus' death by crucifixion and, according to their faith, his Resurrection. The week includes five days of special significance:



The first is **Palm Sunday**, which commemorates Jesus' humble entry (on a donkey) into Jerusalem to observe Passover. According to the Gospel account, he was greeted by crowds of people who spread their cloaks and laid palm leaves in his path and proclaimed him the Son of David (Matthew 21:5). In many Christian churches Palm Sunday is celebrated with a blessing and procession of palms.

Maundy Thursday marks Jesus' institution at the Last Supper of the Eucharist, thereafter a central element of Christian worship. In some churches, Maundy Thursday is accompanied by worshipers washing each other's feet, in imitation of Jesus' washing of the feet of his 12 disciples at the Last Supper.

Good Friday commemorates Jesus' suffering and death on the cross; it is traditionally a day of sorrow, penance, and fasting.

Holy Saturday, also called Easter Vigil, is the traditional end of Lent.

Easter Sunday is the celebration of Jesus' Resurrection, according to the Gospels, on the third day after his crucifixion.

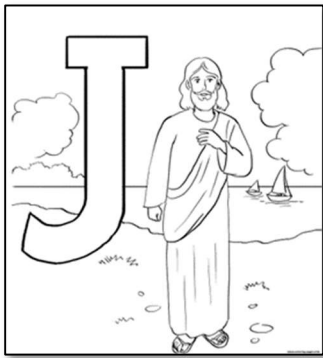
Alleluia! Alleluia!! Christ is Risen!
Christ is Risen, Indeed! Alleluia! Alleluia!!

Children's Sunday School: Making Connections

Submitted by Kathy Gillespie

The children's Sunday School class continues to study Old Testament stories, as well as to learn about Lent, and make connections between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The students learned about Moses and the Ten Commandments; they also learned which commandments Jesus considered the most important. They studied the new commandment He gave to his disciples:

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples—if you love one another." (John 13:34-35).



The children learned that Lent lasts for 40 days and that the number 40 is mentioned in the Bible over 200 times.

During March, they will learn that "J" stands for Joshua, Jericho, Judges, and Jesus! (Color the picture on page 20) In addition to reading stories from the Bible, learning is reinforced with music, crafts, games, and even snacks! Bring all of the children in your life to Westminster on Sunday mornings every week at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing. What a wonderful way to start their week!

Walk Through Holy Week

Wednesday, March 20

5:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.

Westminster Grounds and Building

Sometimes we go from the exuberance of Palm Sunday to the joy of Easter Sunday without taking the time to consider what happened in the week in between.

This intergenerational, multi-sensory event allows us to walk together through all the parts of Holy Week (*see page 7*). This is a meaningful way for the whole family to embrace the entirety of Christ's gift to us.

A simple snack supper is included.

The walk concludes with an activity that helps us share the good news of Easter with others. This year, we will be making treat baskets to share with some of our church members and friends at home.

If you'd like more information, or to help with this event, please contact Pastor Dennis.



The BEMA Bulletin

Submitted by Luke Christie



January and February may be “midwinter” in South Carolina, but BEMA Greenwood spent the months following the ancient Hebrew people out of Egypt and into the arid wilderness.

After a slow journey through Genesis and Exodus, we’ll be picking up the pace in March, tackling all of Leviticus (fun!) and Numbers. Along the way, we’ll develop a new appreciation for some of the most frequently used images in the Bible.

BEMA Greenwood is a community Bible study hosted by Westminster. Gloria and Luke Christie facilitate discussions about the BEMA Podcast (www.bemadiscipleship.com), a context-rich study of the Bible from Genesis through Revelation. The group meets every Monday from 6:00 P.M.-7:00 P.M. in the Joe Gettys Room. To learn more about BEMA Greenwood, contact Gloria Christie at ggchristie716@gmail.com or 864-379-5034

All are welcome! You may join at any time and participate 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).

BEMA March Schedule

Date	Episode	Bible Reading	Length	Presentation
3/4	#24 – Creating a Space	Exodus 24-40	55 min	Yes
3/11	#25 – A Kingdom of <i>What?</i>	Leviticus	40 min	Yes
3/18	#26 – Images of the Desert: Shepherd —and—	Numbers 1-12*	36 min	Yes
	#27 – Images of the Desert: Rotem and Acacia		24 min	Yes
3/25	#28 – Images of the Desert: Ar’ar and Tamarisk —and—	Numbers 13-24*	22 min	Yes
	#29 – Images of the Desert: Wadi and En Gedi		33 min	Yes

** Suggested reading pace. The podcast does not approach Numbers sequentially.*

Greenwood Annual Lenten Journey Continues

Enrich your Lenten experience by participating in Greenwood’s annual Pilgrimage. Churches throughout the county host worship and provide a light lunch. For the full schedule of locations and other details, see page 18.



WPC Hosts, Fetes Boston College Mission Team



Once again, our friends at Boston College are providing a team of helping hands to work on a Greenwood Habitat for Humanity project. BC has a long history of sending students on mission trips during their Spring Break, and we are delighted to host a team once again this year. A group of ten students will arrive on March 3 and stay in our facility through March 10.

On **Wednesday, March 6**, the students are invited to share our **Family Night Supper** (6:30 P.M. in the Fellowship Hall). We'll make new friends and learn more about what Habitat is up to these days, thanks to a presentation by Steven Baggett, Habitat's Executive Director here in Greenwood.

If you are interested in assisting with hosting this group, please contact Nancy Dozier at 864.941.2199.

Yoga Can Benefit Mind, Body, and Spirit

Wondering what yoga is all about? Need to learn how to unwind and open the mind? Then our 7-week yoga series is just right for you!

Amy Alley is leading the classes, and promises that she is providing a gentle practice suitable for beginner and intermediate levels. The class is open to everyone age 13 and up. The group meets upstairs in the Middle School Youth Room from 5:30 P.M. to 6:15 P.M. every Wednesday through Lent, ending March 27.

Mats will be provided, along with a limited number of props. Or you may bring your own equipment. No registration necessary—drop-ins welcome.



Learn to be a Liturgist

Submitted by Luke Christie

Calling all Westminster liturgists—current *and* future! Liturgy is an important part of worship at WPC.

Meaning “the work of the people,” liturgy is *our* part, and we want to give it our very best. To help us do that, the Worship & Music Committee is hosting a liturgist training session after worship on Sunday, March 24, in the sanctuary.

Together, we will learn about this sacred tradition and sharpen our public speaking skills. Please plan to attend if you are an active liturgist or if you are interested in serving as a liturgist for the first time.



It's Party Time!

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

- ❖ 4th – Steve Kuhl
- ❖ 6th – Theresa Jacobs
- ❖ 21st – Caris Broadway
- ❖ 28th – Rob Graves

Additionally, let's rejoice with these fine couples who are celebrating their wedding anniversaries this month:

- ❖ 4th – Caroline & Phillip Dennis
- ❖ 31st – Charisma & Joseph Broadway



Keeping our Grounds Beautiful—Spring Cleaning

March 23rd is the date for the annual Buildings & Grounds spring workday at WPC. Outside, we will be trimming hedges, spreading pine straw, weeding, and sprucing up the courtyard. Please bring work gloves if you have them, along with any gardening tools you might have.

If you are unable to participate in outside activities, the chairs of our program areas, such as Worship & Music and Nurture & Education, may have some inside projects you could participate in.



Contact Claire Kuhl for more information about available projects.

Friday Foray: Hopelands Gardens in Aiken

When it comes to feeling that Spring has sprung, nothing beats a day surrounded by flowers and trees, wandering the winding paths of a well-tended garden! So to kick off your personal Spring, join your Westminster family on March 22 for a Friday Foray to Hopelands Gardens. This destination comes highly recommended by Tina Corley, who, with Katheleen Watkins, is organizing this outing.



Plan to meet in the parking lot nearest the office at 8:30 A.M. to get organized. The convoy will leave promptly at 8:45 A.M. The drive takes about an hour and 15 minutes. Tina and Kathleen welcome your ideas about possible lunch spots in Aiken.

According to the HopelandsGardens.com website, the site offers a variety of locales to visit, including the Arboretum Trail, Bird & Butterfly Garden, Wetlands, Camellia Garden Trail, a gazebo, sculptures, reflecting pool, and a labyrinth.

See You at the Lake—Keeping Greenwood County Beautiful

Submitted by Nancy Hart Wicker

Come one! Come all! Westminster Presbyterian Church is joining Keep Greenwood Beautiful to participate in a Lake Greenwood Cleanup on March 9th from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon. This is a kid-friendly event and a great opportunity to teach your kids how to be a part of bettering their communities.



Please register you and your family using the Google document link below, and let Nancy Hart know if you plan to come via text (843) 991-7411 or email (nhwicker@gmail.com), as we will be organizing a post trash pick-up lunch for those who participate. This was a very fun event last year, and I hope you will join us.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScPtzF9NvL6fOPXG7LMkz1B2Bt5oxRwSWlRh fQbutjuazQRjQ/viewform?usp=send_form

Making a Difference through One Great Hour of Sharing

Submitted by Laine Horowitz, Mission & Outreach Co-Chair

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need:

- **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance**
 - Works alongside communities as they recover and find hope after the devastation of natural or human-caused disasters
 - Support for refugees receives 32% of funds
- **Presbyterian Hunger Program**
 - Takes action to alleviate hunger care for creation, and the systemic causes of poverty so all be may be fed
 - Receives 36% of funds
- **Self-Development of People**
 - Invests in communities responding to their experiences of oppression, poverty, and injustice and educates Presbyterians about the impact of these issues
 - Receives 32%



OK. Enough from the pamphlet.

I have to say, this is one of my favorite special offerings because of the Self-Development of People. We are now a Matthew 25 Church. Two of the core tenants of the Matthew 25 movement are dismantling **structural** racism and eradicating **systemic** poverty.



Do you see those two words I put in bold? Compare those to the Self-Development of People's work. It's a perfect match.

We have now received the call *twice* to work on structural and systemic change. They are just that important. It is fabulous that we donate to the Soup Kitchen/Food Pantry, but do our donations stop the beneficiaries of these charities from needing to come back the next day, the next week?

Our call is to enact radical change. Volunteer at the soup kitchen. Talk to the people who are there. Find out the reasons they are there. When you get home, ruminate on what you have heard. Is there something we could do to change that person's circumstances for good? That's what the Self Development of People is actively doing.

Please prayerfully consider a donation for the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering on Palm Sunday, March 24th. Let's also challenge ourselves, as a Matthew 25 Church, to follow their lead in our community.



The Flowering of the Cross—a Unique Westminster Tradition

Since 1997, Westminsterites have gathered in the courtyard by the fountain to adorn a plain wooden cross with flowers. The flowers represent spring and the return to life that it brings. But what about that cross? Where did it come from and how did it become a tradition?

The story of Westminster’s Easter cross actually begins shortly after Thanksgiving in 1996. With Christmas just around the corner, Lou Johnson and Nancy Dozier decided they’d better get busy and round up a big tree to decorate with Chrismon ornaments in the sanctuary. Lou was

Westminster’s Certified Christian Educator, and was on staff from 1996 to 2000. She had a big job wrangling lots of Sunday school classes, youth activities, and “other duties as assigned.” Fortunately, she had a big heart and a lot of energy for all of the above!

Nancy and Lou piled into her car and drove to a Christmas tree farm not far away in search of the *perfect* evergreen. They settled on a magnificent specimen—a 12 footer!!—and delivered it to the church. With a lot of help from Larry Dozier, and an equal mix of grumbling and giggling, the three managed to get the tree into the sanctuary and onto a stand.

Fast forward to January 1997. Just as the tree was stripped of its ornaments and ready for retirement, Lou was struck with an inspiration! What if we used the wood from the tree to make a cross to decorate in the courtyard on Easter morning?

Lou approached ace wood-worker Tom Bryson with the idea. His response? “I love it! We can see the joy of Christmas and Christ’s birth extended to the joy of Easter and Christ’s resurrection!”

So this Easter morning, as we so gratefully gather *in person* once again to flower our cross, remember the creativity of Lou and Tom, and the joy of Christmas eternally linked with the joy of Easter.



*Virtual Flowered Cross
from 2020*



Footnote: In 1996, the Greenwood City Fire Marshall had to deal with a serious church fire that was linked to their live tree. So live trees were banned, and our cross was made from the last live tree that Westminster ever had. *Thank-you to Nancy Dozier for sharing this delightful story!*

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.

Matthew 6:28b-29

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.



January 2024

	January Actual	Monthly Budget	Year-to-Date Actual	Year-to-Date Budget
Total Income	\$36,088	\$17,938	\$36,088	\$17,938
Total Expenses	\$15,524	\$21,495	\$15,523	\$21,495
Net Gain/Loss	\$20,564		\$20,564	

The remarkably high income received in January reflects the gifts of families who chose to pay their entire pledge in full at the beginning of the year. The lower-than-expected expense figure is at least partly attributable to some payroll expenses being deferred because the Board of Pensions' new software system is experiencing problems.

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

What is Religious Trauma?

Part of a series on mental health issues; excerpted from <https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-health-and-wellness/millions-lgbtq-americans-religious-trauma-psychiatrists-want-help-rcna135728>

Religious trauma occurs when an individual's religious upbringing has lasting adverse effects on their physical, mental or emotional well-being, according to the Religious Trauma Institute. Symptoms can include guilt, shame, loss of trust and loss of meaning in life.



Experts say LGBTQ people — who represent more than 7% of the U.S. population, according to a 2023 Gallup poll — experience religious trauma at disproportionate rates and in unique ways. Very little research has been done in this field, but a 2022 study found that LGBTQ people who experience certain forms of religious trauma are at increased risk for suicidality, substance abuse, homelessness, anxiety and depression.

Dr. Harold G. Koenig, a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Duke University Medical Center had said that LGBTQ people who have experienced trauma but don't want to leave religion entirely should consider joining an affirming church where leaders may be able to help with the healing process. "Christian acceptance of [the LGBTQ] community is growing," he said. In fact, majorities of every major religious group favor laws that protect LGBTQ people against discrimination, according to the Public Religion Research Institute's 2022 American Values Survey.

Experts are currently debating whether religious trauma should be classified as a mental disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

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
- Mary Corley
- Tina Corley's daughter, Christina
- Kathy Felder
- Mac & Holly Hubbard
- Dave & Deb Jones
- Sally Kauffmann
- Kelli Lott and Gabby
- Savannah, Dakota, and Briar Rose
- Jennifer Sholar
- Ed Watkins
- Kelly West
- Gail & Glenn Yonce, and Georgiana
- Our pastor and her family

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

And God Saw That It Was Good...



Palms from last year's Palm Sunday processional become the ashes for Ash Wednesday, marking the beginning of forty days of Lent



↑ Laine and Tiffany celebrate Laine's birthday Mexican style

← Mary Corley welcomes visitors to Wesley Commons

Looks Like Team Spirit!



Westminster was well-represented at the MLK March.



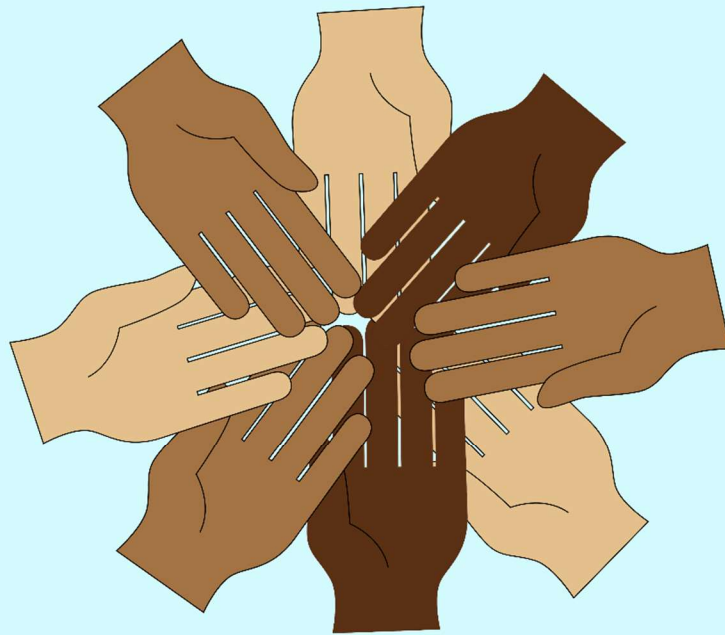
Members of the Emergency & Disaster Preparedness team test the new AEDs, now mounted near the office and near the kitchen. First aid kits are also mounted in the sacristy and kitchen. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the special offering that funded these!

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE
GREENWOOD COMMUNITY
LENTEN PILGRIMAGE

FEBRUARY 21ST: IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
FEBRUARY 28TH: SOUTH MAIN BAPTIST CHURCH
MARCH 6TH: ARP CHURCH
MARCH 13TH: FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
MARCH 20TH MAIN STREET UMC CHURCH
MARCH 27TH: 1ST PRESBYTERIAN

Lunch Seatings are before and after
Worship. 12 and 1 p.m. \$2 for lunch
Worship will be from 12:30-1 p.m.
The Offering will be for Greater
Greenwood United Ministries



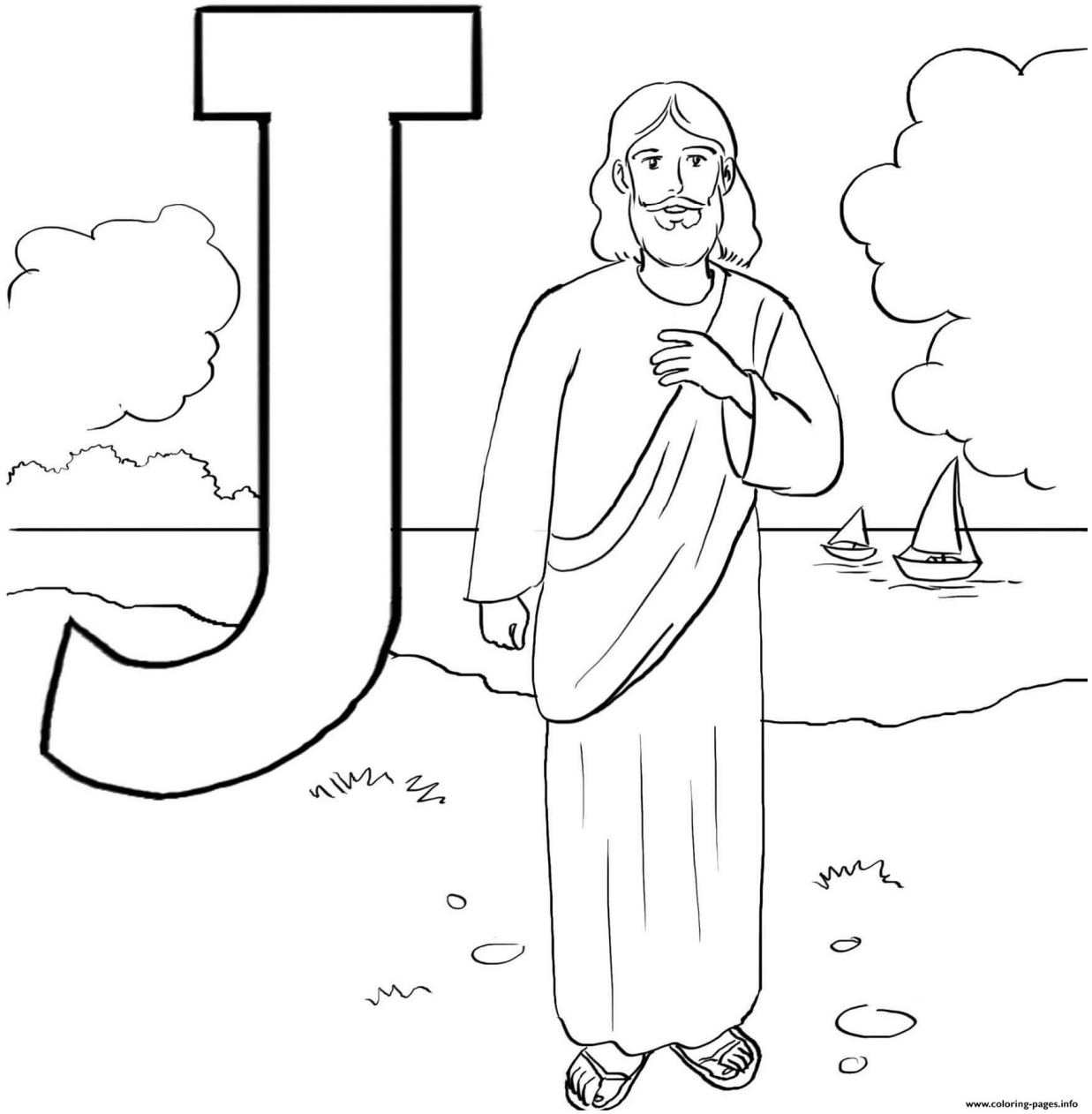


UNITY OF THE CHURCH DIVERSITY IN THE CHURCH

Spring Adult Retreat
April 5-6, 2023
at Camp Fellowship

KEYNOTE LED BY DIANNA WRIGHT
Director of Ecumenical Relations for the
Office of General Assembly, PC(USA)

REGISTER AT
WWW.CAMPFELLOWSHIP.ORG/EVENTS-PROGRAMS/SAR2024



J stands for Joshua, Jericho,
Judges, and Jesus!