

Easter Grief & Hope

*But we do not want you to be uninformed, siblings,
about those who have died,
so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.
For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again,
even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.
1 Thessalonians 4:13-14*

We who have experienced loss know that grief is a complicated emotion. Even when we have faith in Christ's resurrection and ours, grief can feel like a sweet sadness. Grief is memory and gratitude mixed with emptiness. It can weigh us down like a weighted blanket and confuse our thinking like a fog. It can be overwhelming one moment, go into hiding the next, only to creep in and surprise us the next.

We most often think of grief in the loss of a loved one: a family member, friend, or pet. But we can also experience grief over the state of the world, a friend who has moved away, the loss of ability as we age or our identity when we retire, the loss of a treasured object. When we are grieving, it may be difficult to see and appreciate beauty, to experience joy, to have a vision of the light beyond the darkness.



As days grow longer, flowers blossom, and Easter morning arrives, we who carry fresh or lingering grief long to lean into the hope these offer, but even so, hope can feel illusive.

In Luke's telling of Easter morning (Luke 24:1-12), there are women who are participating in the grieving rituals of their faith. They go early in the morning to anoint Jesus' body with spices for burial. Instead of Jesus body, they find two dazzling angels who remind them of the things

Jesus had told them about his death and resurrection, and shared with the women the good news that all that Jesus has said had occurred.

They return to grieving apostles with this good but perplexing news. All the apostles except one consider it to be "nonsense." One apostle, Peter, runs to the tomb. And, there it is... hope! Peter is running towards the impossible. There, in a moment, light breaks through Peter's darkness. We are told that Peter returns home amazed.

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

If grief is a lingering reality for you, I hope you will remember times when light has come again. I hope you will remember the promise of the Gospel, the good news of Easter morning. It is not that we will not grieve, but that because of Christ, because of Easter morning, we have hope... joy will come.



With Easter hope, I am your pastor and friend,

 *Caroline*

Lenten Sermon Series: Forty Days In Between



Our Lenten series *Everything [in] Between* continues into Holy Week, Easter, and beyond. Appreciating more fully now that God is present in the “in between,” we seek to navigate the polarities in our lives with more faith, intention, and openness to transformation. We pray for vision to see through false dichotomies and to see a full spectrum instead

of just black and white. And we pray for strength and courage to manifest Westminster’s own Vision (see page 16), embracing the *yes/and* mindset rather than the *either/or*.

April 6: “Righteousness & Mercy”

Communion/Food Bank

Zacchaeus greets Jesus

† Luke 19:1-10

April 13: “Shouting & Silence”

Palm Sunday/Sunday Sustenance

Jesus enters Jerusalem

† Luke 19:29-40

April 17: “Power & Humility, Acceptance & Resistance”

Maundy Thursday/The Last Supper

† Luke 22:1-17

Jesus dies alongside a penitent thief

† Luke 23:32-49

April 20: “Grief & Hope”

Easter Sunday—Alleluia, Alleluia!

The women grieve and Peter runs to the tomb

† Luke 24:1-12

April 27: “Belief & Doubt”

Second Sunday in Easter

In the evening, the risen Lord appears to the Disciples. Thomas is not there.

† John 20:19-31

“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

Easter Morning Festivities

Since 1997, Westminster has incorporated “The Flowering of the Cross” as a treasured element of our Easter morning celebrations (see page 12). Once again, we will bring flowers from our gardens (some will be provided at church, too) and cover the ugliness of the cross with multi-colored signs of new life. Come to the Courtyard at 9:00 A.M. for flowering, fellowship, and continental breakfast.



Alleluia! Christ is risen. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Westminster Happenings

Note: Office Manager Charleston Warner is on maternity leave; however, the office is open as usual Monday-Thursday 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

**Tuesday
April 1**

Presbyterian Women's Circle

Gather in the Choir Room at 11:30 A.M. (*see page 10*).

Discuss issues related to intergenerational justice.

Crazy Heart Meditation Community

Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.

**Wednesday
April 2**

Community Lenten Lunch Series

Gather at Main Street United Methodist Church for worship at 12:30 P.M.

Enjoy a light lunch before (12:00 Noon) or after (1:00 P.M.) the service.

Books & Brown Bags Study Group (*see page 7*)

Bring a sack supper to the Joe Gettys Room at 6:00 P.M.

Find meaning in the *[In] Between*.

**Thursday
April 3**

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 Ministry Team Meeting

Meet in the Choir Room at 6:00 P.M.

Set the course for upcoming activities.

**Saturday
April 5**

Westminster Spring Work Day

Bring your energy and gardening tools to the Courtyard at 9:00 A.M.

Spruce up our grounds so they sparkle for Easter (*see page 11*)!

Crazy Heart Meditation Community

Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 10:00 A.M.

**Sunday
April 6**

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.

Stranger & Neighbor

Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.

Hear how Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan redefines *neighbor*.

Westminster Happenings, *continued*

**Sunday
April 6,
*continued***

Dinner Church Planning Team Meeting

Come together in the Choir Room at 11:15 A.M.

Get the jump on organizing our signature Summer series.

Nurture & Christian Education Ministry Team Meeting

Meet in the Choir Room at 3:00 P.M.

Plan faith formation opportunities for every age group.

**Monday
April 7**

Prayer Time in the Upper Zoom

Look for the Monday prayer list email and click on the Zoom link at noon.

Share your praises, intercessions, and supplications with our loving God.

Worship & Music Ministry Team Meeting

Come to the Choir Room at 5:00 P.M.

Collaborate to coordinate the many elements of meaningful worship.

BEMA Bible Discussion Group

Meet in the Joe Gettys Room at 6:00 P.M.

**Tuesday
April 8**

Business Affairs Ministry Team Meeting

Meet in the Parlor at 6:00 P.M.

Juggle the many back-office tasks that sustain the church.

Crazy Heart Meditation Community

Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.

Congregational Care & Fellowship Ministry Team Meeting

Gather in the Choir Room at 7:00 P.M.

Identify and plan how to address our congregation's unique needs.

**Wednesday
April 9**

Community Lenten Lunch Series

Come to First Presbyterian Church for worship at 12:30 P.M.

Enjoy a light lunch before (12:00 Noon) or after (1:00 P.M.) the service.

Books & Brown Bags Study Group

Bring a sack supper to the Joe Gettys Room at 6:00 P.M.

Engage with the meaning of Lent using *Everything [In] Between*.

**Thursday
April 10**

Rainbow Fellowship

Connect with friends in the Youth Room upstairs at 6:00 P.M.

Enjoy lively Bible discussion and creative crafts.

**Saturday
April 12**

Crazy Heart Meditation Community

Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 10:00 A.M.

Westminster Happenings, *continued*

- Sunday
April 13** | **Palm Sunday**
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.
- Power & Humility**
One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.
Wave your palm branch and shout “Hosannah—save us, Lord!”
- Sunday Sustenance**
Stay for a relaxed lunch provided by Chef Rob and his sous chefs.
Bring some extra cash to contribute to One Great Hour of Sharing.
- Easter Egg Hunt**
Bring a basket to the Courtyard at 3:00 P.M.
Find out what goodies are hidden among the plants and flowers.
- Monday
April 14** | **Prayer Time in the Upper Zoom**
Look for the Monday prayer list email and click on the Zoom link at noon.
Pray together for this congregation, for friends, and for the larger world.
- BEMA Bible Discussion Group**
Meet in the Joe Gettys Room at 6:00 P.M.
- Tuesday
April 15** | **Crazy Heart Meditation Community**
Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.
- Wednesday
April 16** | **Community Lenten Lunch Series**
Gather at Morris Chapel Baptist Church for worship at 12:30 P.M.
Enjoy a light lunch before (12:00 Noon) or after (1:00 P.M.) the service.
- Books & Brown Bags Study Group**
Bring a sack supper to the Joe Gettys Room at 6:00 P.M.
Continue exploring *A Lenten Devotional: Everything [In] Between*.
- Thursday
April 17** | **Power & Humility, Acceptance & Resistance**
Maundy Thursday/Communion
Worship at 7:00 P.M. in the Sanctuary.
Feel the love, the fear, and the reality of Christ’s crucifixion.
- Friday
April 18** | **Good Friday**
Prayerfully remember Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross.

Westminster Happenings, *continued*

Saturday | **Holy Saturday**
April 19 | Also called *Easter Vigil*—we are called to pray while Jesus is in the tomb.
Crazy Heart Meditation Community
Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 10:00 A.M.

“Why do you look for the living among the dead?
He is not here but has risen.”
Luke 24:5b

Sunday | **Easter Sunday**
April 20 | **Flowering the Cross**
Bring flowers to the Courtyard at 9:00 A.M. to reclaim the cross.
Celebrate the Resurrection with singing and feasting!
Grief & Hope
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.
Relive the joy and relief of finding that the tomb is empty!

Monday | **Note: Office closed for Easter—no Upper Zoom**
April 21 | **BEMA Bible Discussion Group**
Meet in the Joe Gettys Room at 6:00 P.M.

Tuesday | **Crazy Heart Meditation Community**
April 22 | Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.
Interfaith Dialogue
Gather in the Youth Room at 7:00 P.M.
Compare and contrast some of the humanity’s great belief systems.

Wednesday | **Books & Brown Bags Study Group**
April 23 | Bring a sack supper to the Joe Gettys Room at 6:00 P.M.
Kick off a brand-new study—details to follow.

Thursday | **End of Life Seminar Series: Taking Care with a Few Last Things**
April 24 | Come to the Fellowship Hall at 5:00 P.M.—program begins at 5:30 P.M.
Learn to prepare for and navigate the pain of loss (*see page 13*).

Saturday | **Crazy Heart Meditation Community**
April 26 | Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 10:00 A.M.

Westminster Happenings, *continued*

**Sunday
April 27**

Sunday School

Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room.

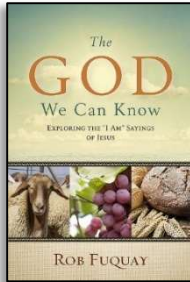
Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing.

Belief & Doubt

Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.

Join Thomas in asking hard questions and dealing with doubt.

Adult Study: April is a Great Time to Sample Sunday School



This month, the adult Sunday morning class wraps up their study of *The God We Can Know: Exploring the "I AM" Sayings of Jesus*, by Rob Fuquay. Each Sunday session is led by a different facilitator discussing a stand-alone lesson. So this is a great time to “come taste and see” what’s happening in adult faith formation. Try it—you’ll like it! Note that on Easter morning, the class will participate in the flowering of the cross in the Courtyard during the 9:00 A.M. hour.

Children’s Class Learning More About Lent

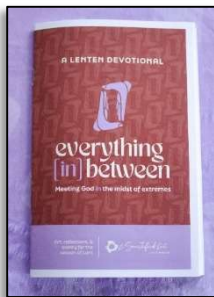
Submitted by Kathy Gillespie

During April, the children will continue learning memory verses, and they will create memory verse journals. The students are learning about Lenten symbols and traditions. They are opening “resurrection eggs” and using the symbols inside to decorate a “Lenten tree”.



We are also reading the book *Easter is Coming*, by Tama Fortner, and looking forward to the Easter egg hunt for Westminster kids on April 13. Check out the poster on page 20.

*Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.
Psalm 100:3*



Books & Brown Bags: Lenten Study

Wednesday, April 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 23rd

6:00 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.

Joe Gettys Room

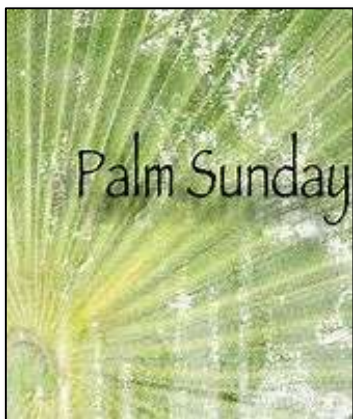
The Books & Brown Bags group completes the Lenten journey as enriched by the poetry, music, art, and insight provided by *A Lenten Devotional: Everything [In] Between*, from A Sanctified Art. LLC. The themes parallel our Lenten sermon series: “Righteousness & Mercy,” “Shouting & Silence,” “Power & Humility,” “Grief & Hope,” and “Belief & Doubt.” Booklets are available in the Narthex.

Why *Palms* on Palm Sunday?

Excerpted from *pcusa.org*

The palm frond (from the leaves of the *Aracaceae*) was a symbol of triumph in Roman times, bestowed upon the winners of military or athletic contests. They were the original pom-poms, or if you prefer, those giant foam fingers at football games.

Therefore, when the people of Jerusalem greet Jesus with palm branches (Matthew 21, e.g.), they aren't just grabbing what is handy to express their jubilation. The palms symbolize victory, a fitting tribute for the return of a triumphant king. There



are multiple levels of irony in this scene: the one they greet is a not a king in a chariot, but a humble man riding on a donkey; he comes not with military might,

but to establish a reign of peace; his "battle" is ahead of him, and it will seem to end in tragic and crushing defeat; the very crowds who are now crying "hosanna" ("save us") will soon be shouting "crucify him!"

For the early Christians who suffered under Roman persecution, the symbol of the palm branch took on new significance as a sign of faithfulness and perseverance under the threat of death. In Revelation 7, the white-robed redeemed from every tribe and nation — "those who have come out of the great ordeal" — wave their palm branches around the throne of God, crying out: "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Palm Sunday Worship Service
Sunday, April 13—10:00 A.M.

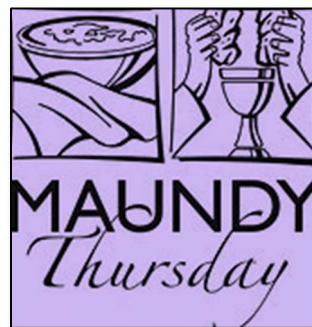
What is Maundy Thursday?

Excerpted from *pcusa.org*

Maundy Thursday begins the Three Days (or *Triduum*), remembering the new commandment that Christ gave us in word and deed as he taught us how to love one another, washing our feet as a servant. We also celebrate the Lord's Supper, remembering the meal Christ shared with his disciples before his death.

A New Commandment

Excerpted from
the Companion
to the Book
of Common
Worship (*Geneva*
Press, 2003, 113-
116, 131-132)



The name is taken from the first words sung at the ceremony of the washing of the feet, "I give you a new commandment" (John 13:34); also from the commandment of Christ that we should imitate his loving humility in the washing of the feet (John 13:14-17). The term *mandatum* (maundy), therefore, was applied to the rite of the footwashing on this day.

The opening service of the Triduum is not inherently mournful. The penitential acts of Maundy Thursday have celebratory aspects as well: restoration through the bold declaration of pardon; the act of footwashing connoting humility and intimacy; the celebration of the Lord's Supper embodying the mystery of Christ's enduring redemptive presence. Maundy Thursday's acts provide the paradox of a celebratively somber and solemnly celebrative service.

Maundy Thursday Worship Service
Thursday, April 17—7:00 P.M.

Great Hour of Sharing: Palm Sunday Special Offering

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 that 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.

Speaking of developing people, you can help the young people in your sphere strengthen their sharing muscles by giving them an OGHS Fish Bank from the Narthex and challenging them to put in a few coins every day. And of course, please prayerfully consider your own donation for the **One Great Hour of Sharing special offering on Palm Sunday, April 13th**. If you give by check, please note the OGHS designation on the memo line. Thank you for helping to repair the breach.

The Joy of Eastertide

From PCUSA.org

Easter isn't just a Sunday — it's a *season*. One day out of 365 is hardly sufficient to celebrate the great mystery of our faith — that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. Accordingly, the season of Easter lasts seven weeks (see a "week of weeks" below), spanning the 50 days from the Sunday of the Resurrection to Pentecost Sunday and encompassing the festival of the Ascension of the Lord.



The season of Easter is intended to be a joyful time for celebrating the presence of the risen Christ in the church.

Of course, Easter really isn't just a *season* either. In the fullest sense, Easter is a new way of life — in which we are "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:11), called to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). Every year, for fifty days, the church celebrates and rehearses this new way of life in the Season of Easter — as we await its completion in the fullness of Christ's reign.

A Week of Weeks

An excerpt from the Companion to the Book of Common Worship (Geneva Press, 2003)

The period of seven weeks of jubilation can be traced back to its Jewish roots of the fifty days celebrated from the day after Passover to Shavuot (Feast of Weeks, Exodus 23:16). In a similar manner, early Christians observed a fifty-day period of celebration from Easter to the Day of Pentecost. To underscore the uninterrupted rejoicing of these fifty days, fasting and kneeling in prayer were forbidden at least as early as the end of the second century.

Presbyterian Women Consider Issues of Justice

Submitted by Beth Hammond

Westminster's Presbyterian Women will gather on Tuesday, April 1, at 11:30 A.M. in the Choir Room. Remember to bring a bag lunch and beverage!



Following lunch, Beth Hammond will lead the Bible study, focusing on "intergenerational Justice," in the PW study book, *Let Justice Roll Down*.

Following Jesus to the Cross: Lenten Luncheons

Traditionally, churches in Greenwood, South Carolina, visit one another on Wednesdays during Lent.

Each week, the host church provides a worship service at 12:30 P.M. A light lunch is offered both before (at Noon) and after (at 1:00 P.M.). A \$2.00 donation is requested for lunch. Offerings collected during worship go to benefit Greater Greenwood United Ministries.

Mark your Spring calendar now to enrich your Lenten season:

- † April 2 – Main Street UMC
- † April 9 – First Presbyterian Church
- † April 16 – Morris Chapel

Behold the Lily ...



Many thanks to everyone who sponsored the Easter lilies that grace our sanctuary during Holy Week. Please be sure to take your lily home after Easter worship.



April 1, 2025 – 10:00 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.
Camp Fellowship
457 Camp Fellowship Road
Waterloo, South Carolina 29384

A *Red Letter Day* is a day of significance or opportunity.

It's a day for cancer-survivors and their caregivers to celebrate friendships and fellowship as we embrace healing and

wholeness in community. It's a day to engage in shared experiences in the out-of-doors (fishing, boating, and strolling through nature)! It's a day to experience creative expressions—including music, art, and crafting—that help us to share in our common journey. It's a day to give back through service, caring, and sharing!

Red Letter Day is a program of the Fellowship Camp and Conference Center offered to the local community, including individuals involved in Self Regional Health Care Cancer Center, the Cancer Support Community at Prisma Health—Greenville Memorial and Friends, the YMCA of the Lakelands, neighbors, friends, and other local organizations supporting the Fellowship Camp and Conference Center.

This program is provided free of charge to cancer survivors and their caregivers, thanks to the generous support of donors. Register online at campfellowship.org.

Spring into Action— April 5th Work Day

Is gardening your groove? Are you yearning for some fun in the sun? Then make sure you are on hand on Saturday, April 5th from 9:00 A.M. to about 1:00 P.M. for Westminster's annual Spring work day.

We will be trimming hedges, spreading pine straw, spraying sidewalks and parking lot, weeding the courtyard, and other fun activities. Bring your gloves, trimmers, and garden sprayers. If anyone has trimmers that are extendable for taller bushes, please bring them as well.

(Note: Saturday April 12th will be the rain date in case of rain on the 5th)



Have a Happy!

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

- ❖ 4th – Mary Corley
- ❖ 11th – Margaret Funke
- ❖ 18th – Lynn Bornemann
- ❖ 21st – Phillip Dennis
- ❖ 25th – Callie Rose Watkins
- ❖ 26th – Macie Hale Watkins
- ❖ 27th – Claire Kuhl



And a hearty “Happy Anniversary!” to:

- ❖ 10th – Emily & Walter Hughes
- ❖ 12th – Richard and Mary Anne Wilson

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.



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

End of Life
TAKING CARE WITH A FEW LAST THINGS
A SEVEN PART SERIES

Fellowship Hall
Doors open: 5:00 P.M.
Program begins: 5:30 P.M.
Note: Session does not include dinner

April 24 Topic: Good Grief

How do we prepare ourselves for loss? How do we navigate the long road of grief? How can we be good companions for children, teens, loved ones, and friends who are experiencing grief? What is grief... and how long does it last?! What resources are available?

At this month's session of our End of Life Series, Good Grief, our presenters, Caroline Dennis and Jessica Jacobs, will offer answers to these questions as they share from their experience walking with families and individuals through the uneven terrain of grief. Every individual processes grief in their own way and in their own time—please share this opportunity with anyone you know who has experienced loss and especially anyone anticipating the death of a significant person in their life.

Jessica Jacobs Biography

Jessica Jacobs is the Director of Behavioral Health at Carolina Health Centers, Inc. and has worked in the Mental Health and Wellness field for over a decade. She received her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Denison University and graduated from Westfield State University with a graduate degree in Mental Health Counseling. Throughout her education and career, Jessica has focused on effective treatment for those who have experienced traumatic events. The majority of her clinical work focuses on trauma, addiction, and grief.



Caroline Dennis Biography

The Reverend Caroline Dennis is the pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church. Over her years as an educator and pastor, she has accompanied children, families, and individuals through experiences of loss and seasons of grief. Caroline brings expertise in children and young adult literature related to grief and loss, believes in the healing power and closure offered by religious ritual around loss, and has been informed by recent studies in neurological and physical effects of grief.

Westminster has orchestrated this multi-part series to meet the unique needs of older adults, for those who love and care for them, and for those who will someday be older adults. Taking care with a few last things brings peace to this season of life for those going through it and those who care for them.

Final Topic

May 15: Caring for the Caregivers: Upper Savannah Council on Aging
Aeriell Bowick, Family Caregiver Advocate
Christy Stroud, Medicare Counselor

Music in Worship: FAQs



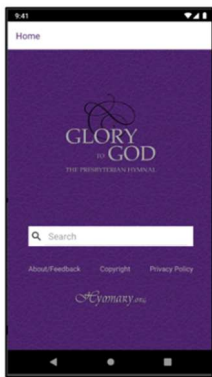
Music has been an integral part of worship since religion's earliest days. Pastor Caroline and Westminster's Worship & Music Ministry Team, under the leadership of Elder Luke Christie, strive constantly to enrich our worship experiences with a variety of music—something to speak to each of us, and sometimes all of us. Here are answers to some questions that often crop up.

Q1: Who picks out the hymns, and why do we sing stuff I've never heard before?

A1: The Pastor generally selects the hymns, seeking primarily to find texts that enhance or underscore the scripture and sermon topic for the day. Many of us who grew up in the church have a large repertoire of old favorites that fully satisfy our needs. Others, especially those new to church participation, enjoy exploring new words and new tunes. As you participate in worship regularly, you'll start to appreciate both what's old *and* what's new to you.

Q2: What am I supposed to do when I don't know the song?

A2: If you spot an unfamiliar hymn or response in the bulletin, take a minute before worship begins to read through the words. That will help you fit it into the larger context of the service. When it comes time to sing, listen to the introduction (usually the whole song, if it's unfamiliar) and the first verse or two. Before long, you'll be able to jump right in.



And don't worry if you don't sing every note or word perfectly—God listens with the ears of a loving parent. God values your acts of glorifying and enjoying more than God values perfect performance.

A great way to learn new hymns is to download the Glory to God hymnal app on your phone. The premium version gives you access to everything in the pew hymnal, plus recordings of the tunes. Or you might search YouTube to find a video of a church or individual's performance of that piece.

Q3: How do I get some of *my* favorites included in the order of worship?

A3: Give your hymn requests to the Pastor or any member of the Worship & Music Ministry Team. We'll make every effort to incorporate your recommendation either as a congregational hymn or perhaps as special music from our vocalists and instrumentalists.

Q4: Why don't we have a regular choir?

A4: Sustaining a choir requires an enormous amount of effort, including but not limited to engaging a director, volunteer singers, and an accompanist who are willing and able to rehearse regularly to prepare hymns and anthems. Beyond just weekly rehearsals, directors and accompanists have to spend extra hours reviewing and selecting music, and then preparing it for rehearsals. Fortunately, we do have a delightful variety of "Westminster Irregulars" who treat us to informal special music when they can.



WPC Hosts Trinity Presbytery May 17th

Each year, the four stated meetings of Trinity Presbytery are held at different member churches. On May 17th, Westminster's is once more the chosen host church, welcoming all Presbytery members, commissioners, and guests to our facility for this important gathering.

After registration, connection time, and continental breakfast in the Fellowship Hall at 8:30 A.M., the meeting begins appropriately with worship in the Sanctuary. It's always a moving experience, especially singing hymns among so many skilled and powerful voices!

All of the Westminster congregation is encouraged to attend and see first-hand how our mid-council operates. If you are new to being Presbyterian and would like to know what the heck a *presbytery* is, and why Trinity Presbytery matters to us, contact Claire Kuhl, Past Moderator.

New Online WPC Directory

You can now access the Westminster church directory online—and you are invited to enrich and update your listing any time. Here's the link:

<https://members.instantchurchdirectory.com/>

You can also download the app from the Apple Store and Google Play Store.

Note that this online directory is available to Westminster's congregation *only*. We are serious about protecting your privacy.



WPC Needs *YOU!*

Being part of a small church ensures large opportunities for service. You don't have to be an Elder or even an "official" church member or ministry team volunteer to keep us moving forward.

Consider becoming a worship host or Tech Team member. Would you enjoy serving as liturgist? Perhaps you can help out in the nursery or the kitchen once in a while? And frankly, we'll need a *lot* of volunteers to ensure that the May 17th meeting of Trinity Presbytery runs smoothly.

Sharing your special gifts enriches everyone...especially you. Your Pastor and Session members can help you spot just the right niche where you can find fulfilling and enjoyable service to glorify God. As we are told in 1 Peter 4:10,

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

Sharing the Bread of Life with All Who Hunger

Your Congregational Care & Fellowship Ministry Team is committed to making sure that *everyone* who desires to receive Communion can do so, wherever in Greenwood they are—at home, in hospital, in hospice.

If you or someone you know would welcome having Communion brought to a special location, please contact Elder Rob Graves, Pastor Caroline, or the church office to arrange a date and time (864.229.3595).





Including, Abiding, Enjoying, Following, and Growing

A series exploring Westminster's foundational statements and strategic intention

Westminster has engaged with our new Mission Statement for several months—ideally, by now you know it well enough to carry it in your heart and mind, both to inform your own faith journey and to communicate it as a witness to others.

But a Mission Statement by itself is incomplete. A healthy, thriving organization needs to have a shared *vision* of what things look like when the organization truly delivers on its mission. And so your Session adopted this **Vision Statement** for our congregation:



As the Body of Christ, when we abide in God's love and live into our mission, Westminster Presbyterian Church will be:

- Focused outward to hear, serve, and proclaim while turning inward to reflect, renew, and equip
- Remarkable in our diversity while being united as the Body of Christ
- Open to God's transforming Spirit while remaining faithful to our history and our calling
- Accessible to the un-churched and de-churched while sustaining long-time Christians in their ongoing faith journey

At first glance, this vision looks, well...impossible to achieve. How can we be both outward *and* inward focused? How can we be diverse *and* united? Aren't these all pairs of polar opposites, doomed to constant conflict?

As we have discovered in our Lenten studies of *Everything [In] Between*, life for the Body of Christ is rarely about simple choices between only two opposite options: "We begin to see a full spectrum instead of black and white. We might find that God is present *in between*."



So it is with our Vision Statement. It calls us to be a "yes/*and*" church, constantly striving for *balance*. Recognizing that each vision element represents a continuum, not a binary choice.

What does this "striving for balance" look like in real life? The Mission Statement itself points us in the right direction:

- *Including* everyone in discussions and prayerful discernment about decisions
- *Abiding* in God's word, firm in the knowledge that we all love God and each other, as God loves each of us and all of us—*no matter what*
- *Enjoying* each other as one way we enjoy God
- *Following Jesus* by welcoming and caring for every single beloved child of God
- *Growing disciples* by using our differences as an opportunity to strengthen our faith

Next month: Pursuing our Vision as a way to continue building the Body of Christ.

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.



February 2025

	February Actual	Monthly Budget	Year-to-Date Actual	Year-to-Date Budget
Total Income	\$27,380	\$20,295	\$62,900	\$40,490
Total Expenses <i>(includes Major Capital Expenditures)</i>	\$18,871	\$19,796	\$40,123	\$39,595
Net Gain/Loss	\$8,510		\$22,777	

Contributions were about \$6,000 favorable for the month due entirely to a full year lump sum pledge payment. Ministry team expenses were all in good control. The total income after expenses was roughly \$8,500 for the month.

Please direct any questions about church financial matters to Treasurer Len Bornemann or to the Business Affairs Ministry Team.

Gratitude Boosts Mental Health & Success

Originally published at JesusCalling.com. Written by Terri Savelle Foy.

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth did an in-depth study on the effects of gratitude and discovered just how much it contributes to your success. People who show more gratitude are reported to have higher levels of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, attentiveness, and energy, and they also get better sleep. Journaling is a wonderful way to help you focus on what you are grateful for.



Top five benefits of journaling your gratitude:

1. **Less Stress** – One study found that after twenty-one days of journaling gratitude, you retrain your brain to start automatically looking for the positives. After forty-two days, levels of depression and anxiety decrease and levels of happiness increase.
2. **Greater Self-Esteem** – Journaling gratitude about your life helps you appreciate what God is doing for you, rather than comparing your life with what's happening around you and with others.
3. **Better Sleep** – Research shows that before you turn in for the night, focusing on a few things you are grateful for will lead to a much better night's sleep—you clear your mind of anxiety and restlessness, promoting peaceful sleep.
4. **Increased Optimism** – As you shift your focus from complaining to gratitude, you naturally become more optimistic. You'll be magnifying all the amazing things in life.
5. **Mood Boost** – Writing what you're grateful for makes your memories feel more real and concrete. As you reflect on previous entries, you see each entry as proof that good things are happening in your life. The more grateful you are, the more you'll have to journal about.

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
- Larry Dozier
- Kathy Felder
- Lucia Horowitz
- Mac & Holly Hubbard
- Theresa Jacobs
- Kelli Lott & Gabby
- Savanah & Briar Rose
- Dashe & Aaron Hoang
- Tim Mossman
- Kim Purcell
- Louise Tabor
- Ed Watkins
- The Watkins Family
- Mary Anne Wilson
- Gail & Glenn Yonce, & Georgiana
- The Dennis family
- WPC's 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
- Healthy Learners
- Camp Fellowship
- Community Initiatives
- Toddler Learning Center
- Trinity Presbytery



For Those in Our Hearts

We pray for members of our wider community (and our connection to them):

- Greg Anderson (*Theresa*)
- Dan Blimline (*Mary Anne*)
- Judy Buck (*Lucia*)
- Jeff Crisp (*Hammonds*)
- John Gettys (*Mary Anne*)
- Lib Grier (*many*)
- Amy Jennings (*Denise*)
- Randy Kuhl (*Steve*)
- Katherine Martin (*many*)
- Dabney Mahanes (*Denise*)
- Susy Mitchell (*many*)
- Amy Jennings (*Denise*)
- Patricia Lytle (*Beth*)
- Tarri McKinney (*Suzy*)
- Lillian Moneyhun (*many*)
- Cameron Murphy (*Sarah*)
- Richard Pinkney (*Len*)
- Margaret Rada (*Joyce*)
- Tatum Foley (*Heather*)



For the World

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

- For justice and mercy to prevail throughout the world—*thy* will be done
- For those who have been affected by fires and other natural disasters
- For real peace in Ukraine and Russia, in Israel and Palestine, Syria, and elsewhere
- For all children, especially those who lack loving, stable homes
- For persons affected by domestic violence
- 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

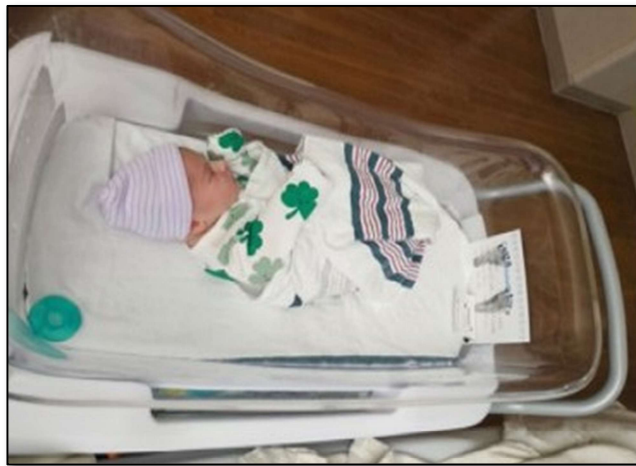
And God Saw That It Was Good



↑ Presbyterian Women enjoy lunch at Wesley Commons ↓



Westminster welcomes new member Luann Sellers



Warner family and WPC rejoice at the arrival of James David



Denise Waldrep shares this photo of the Iona Abbey located on the island of Iona, just off the Isle of Mull on the West Coast of Scotland.

