

WESTMINSTER WITNESS

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Reverend Joseph Hein

MARCH

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

1. Pastor's Message
2. Sanctuary Improvement Spaghetti Luncheon
3. Crossroads Café, Youth Event & First Communion,
4. Women's Retreat, Lenten Study, PAR Garden
5. Music Corner Deacon's Food Pantry, & Per Capita
6. Lily Order Form

Dear Members and Friends,

According to the ancient plan of the church, Lent begins in the cold and dark, then journeys slowly toward warmth and light.

Lent 2020 began for us on February 26th, meaning that Easter will be fairly late. I love a late Easter because it means that the earth itself echoes the joyful message of resurrection—the fresh smell of damp soil, and all the buds, and the birds, and the flowers lending a kind of emotional power to the mystery of new life that we proclaim.

The old traditions of Lent include a lot of penitential acts that were meant to tame the willful flesh of its sinful desires. I was a little bit amused to come across a Protestant publication from the 1880s that suggested the following rules for Lent: “Eat nothing sweet. Do not put salt, pepper, or mustard on your food. Put no sugar or cream in your coffee or tea.

My first reaction to this list was, “Mustard? What about ketchup? Horseradish sauce? Salsa?” If we were to extend the spirit of these rules to the 21st century, we might include: Watch nothing on TV but the news. Stay off Facebook. Don't play Candy Crush—or whatever.

No, I don't often ask people to “give things up for Lent.” As a pastor, I'm much more likely to ask you to take up a good cause for Lent (almsgiving) or build a good habit (i.e. daily Bible reading) that will bring you closer to God. And yet...I've got to admit that there's something powerful about occasionally saying no to our desires.

There's something compelling, perhaps even something wise, about practicing resistance against the constant urge to indulge ourselves.

When we deny ourselves the luxuries that we're used to, we learn a liberating thing: we need very little in life. When we deny ourselves the excesses of life, we learn a new appreciation for things we once took for granted. Most importantly, perhaps, when we say no to our desires, we become their master. And in a society that is largely ruled by its empty wishes and desires, how peace-giving and empowering it is to become their master

Lent is a holy time, a joyful time to discover anew what it means to be spiritual beings, following after the way of the Christ. I hope you'll use this time intentionally and well.

In Christ's Peace, Pastor Joe



EASTER SUNDAY APRIL 12

SANCTUARY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT NEARING COMPLETION

I am mindful of the Biblical text: “I was glad when they said unto me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.” (Psalm 122:1). Thanks to the care and quality of the work of **Whirl Construction**, owned and operated by Westminster members, Jim Davis, Sr. and his son, (Elder) Jim Davis, our Sanctuary has taken on richer and deeper hues.

Whirl Construction’s generous gift of labor and materials made the financial cost our Sanctuary improvement project significantly less burdensome, and now a quiet and dignified beauty adorns our way as we pass through the doors to take our places amidst God’s saints gathered to worship him.

There is a longing in the hearts of God’s peoples for a sacred or holy space in this world. Although we understand that we are God’s workmanship and His temple, to have a beautiful context or setting in which to worship him seems consistent with the Majesty of God’s Being. The congregation of Westminster Presbyterian is very thankful for what God has given to us by way of such a setting.

Writing on behalf of our entire congregation, we thank Whirl Construction for your attention to detail, quality of product, our concerns, follow-up, and the high level of skill your employees (Glen and Bob) brought to their work. What a joy it will be to walk through the doors this Sunday and say with the Psalmist, “How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord. (Psalm 84: 1-2).

DEACON’S SPAGHETTI LUNCHEON SUNDAY, MARCH 8TH



The Deacon’s will prepare the pasta, sauce/gravy (tastes great/less filling), and salad for the annual Spaghetti Luncheon to be held immediately after church on Sunday, March 8th in Harlan Hall. Please support the Deacon’s Ministry of sympathy and witness by attending and making a generous donation.

CROSSROADS COFFEE HOUSE FRIDAY, MARCH 20TH 7-9 PM

Please join us for the next installment of our Christian music coffee house! Doors open 7pm, music will run 7:30-9pm. Free-will offerings will be accepted and refreshments provided. We are blessed to have Nancy Scharff with the King of King bands and Malena Towers, who is now the music director at St. Mary's church, will join us with members of their praise team as well! It promises to be a wonderful evening of faith and fellowship, hope to see you there!



CROSSROADS CAFE
Featuring local faith-focused praise and worship favorites:
PRESENTED BY
Westminster Presbyterian Church
94 Tindall Rd. Middletown, NJ

Nancy Scharff
King of Kings Church

Malena Towers
St. Mary's Church

FRIDAY MARCH 20, 2020
7PM TO 9PM CONTACT US AT (732) 671-2585

FREE ADMISSION & PLENTY OF PARKING
Holy Grounds Coffee & Light Refreshments

GRADES 4-8 YOUTH GROUP EVENT SATURDAY, MARCH 21ST, NOON to 3 PM



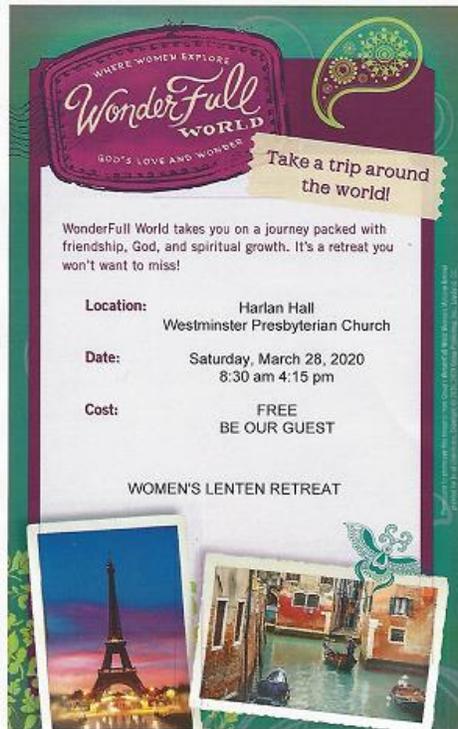
Westminster's newest Youth Group, fresh off the heels of the exciting Xbox Tournament, will meet for a second energy filled event on Saturday, March 21st from 12-3 pm. A pizza lunch will be served at noon for both the First Communion Training group and the Grades 4-8 Youth Group. Please invite a friend!!! and email Pastor Joe at pastorwpc@verizon.net if your child plans to attend.

FIRST COMMUNION TRAINING SATURDAY, MARCH 21ST 10 AM

A two-hour First Communion Training class for children ages 7 and above will be held on Saturday, March 21st from 10 am to noon in Harlan Hall. Please email or call the church office at wpcmiddletown@verizon.net or 732.671.2585, respectively, to register your child.



**WOMEN'S RETREAT
WONDERFULL WORLD
MARCH 28, 8:30 - 4:14 PM**



**LENTEN BOOK STUDY ON IDOLATRY CONTINUES...
COUNTERFEIT GODS
SUNDAY'S 4-5 PM IN LENT**

You shall not make for yourself an idol... You shall not bow down to them or worship them.. (Exodus 20: 4-5)

What is an idol? It is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give.

**PAR GARDEN OPENING EVENT
SATURDAY, APRIL 4TH 9AM**

The congregation is invited to join the new PAR Garden committee to prepare the raised beds for planting on Saturday, April 4th at 9:00 am.

A continental breakfast, coffee, and tea will be served in Harlan Hall at 8:30. Music, fun, and friendship will take place in God's Garden as we plant to feed the hungry in His name.

MUSIC CORNER

As we begin this Lenten season, I thought it would be nice to find some music for Lenten meditation. I have several favorites in my music library but decided to google "playlist for Lenten meditation" and.. turns out, there are many out there with a beautiful mix of traditional hymn tunes, modern worship songs and ancient music alike. As we turn within to reform ourselves in Christ's image this Lent, and are reminded of His ultimate sacrifice to save us from our sin, we often turn to guided readings and scripture for intellectual stimulation and inward contemplation but music can also aid us in this endeavor. Even if on in the background, music stimulates our brains to process thoughts in a different way. One favorite of mine that might be new to you are albums recorded by the **Benedictines of Mary Queen of Apostles**, a religious order in Missouri whose nuns sing as part of their daily prayer. They have quite a beautiful collection of recordings but the album for Lent is especially moving. Have a blessed Lent and see you around the sanctuary!

DEACON FOOD PANTRY Items for March

Instant Potatoes, Stuffing, Soup, Hot and Cold Cereal, Mayo, Peanut Butter and Jelly.

He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. John 21:16 KJV



How to Access Our Food Pantry

The food pantry in Harlan Hall is kept stocked through the generosity of and for the benefit of Westminster members and the community at large. Should an emergency arise and a member or someone from the community needs food, call either Lori at the church office or Pastor Joe at 732.671.2585 (your call will be kept in complete confidence). They will notify the Moderator of the Deacons, Alyssa Cuttrell, and she will put together the parcels. The groceries may be picked up immediately in some cases or as early the next day by arrangement with either Pastor Joe or Alyssa.

2020 PER CAPITA

As members of Westminster Presbyterian Church, our allotment for 2020 is \$40.00 per member. In your envelope box, there is an envelope marked per capita.



Order your Easter Lily

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

I would like to order _____ Easter Lily(s) in memory of:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

*Enclosed is \$10 for each plant (5-7 blooms).
(Make checks payable to Westminster Presbyterian Church)*

____ *I would like to take plant(s) home after the service.*

____ *I would like plant(s) to be sent to an area nursing
home.*