

# WESTMINSTER WITNESS



May 2020  
Volume 1 Issue 5

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My Family in Christ,

These times are certainly full of things that none of us as individuals have experienced before, but they are not unprecedented. Even if widespread contagion is not at all new to our world, it is at least new to us.

One thing that I've seen, even as we've had to distance ourselves from one another, is the world coming together in some beautiful new ways. Symphonies perform in perfect concert from the privacy of the musicians' homes. Grateful Americans emerge from their homes at 7 pm each evening and make a din by banging pots and pans together to encourage front-line workers in the battle against the coronavirus. Good Sunday attendance before the pandemic was something better than 150. Now I'm disappointed if fewer than 250 join our worship services online. Suddenly, we're in touch with neighbors and friends, and relatives from whom we rarely used to hear. Everyone just wants everyone else to be okay.

In this ongoing season of Easter, let us look for new life in old things. Let us seek out the great returns that these times afford us: returns to people, returns to places, returns to God, perhaps returns to ourselves.

While we grieve for the suffering and fear that this pandemic brings, there is new Resurrection life here, too. Don't forget that your church is not closed; we're always here. And we're grateful for your presence with us in these unfamiliar and uniquely blessed times.

Peace be with you.

Pastor Joe

## WEDNESDAY NITE 5

7:30 pm

Please continue to join us for Wednesday Nite 5, a weekly five-minute time of devotion and prayer offered by Pastor Joe. Wednesday Nite 5 will not appear on the first Wednesday of each month as WPC's Taizé service will be live streamed to Facebook. May's Taizé service has been cancelled due to health precautions but will back on the first Wednesday in June.

## WPC VIRTUAL COFFEEHOUR

SUNDAY, MAY 10TH, 11AM

JOIN US ONLINE FOR



The WPC Membership and Communications Committees have brewed up a plan to connect us all and perk up your spirits on Mother's Day, May 10<sup>th</sup>. We'll have a Virtual Coffee Hour right after the live stream Service. It will be hosted on Zoom by Membership Committee Member Kim Kosko. Zoom is the most user friendly on-line meeting program that's become so popular during this pandemic!

Anyone interested can join the after-Service get-together next Sunday. Zoom is so easy to use even if you never heard of it or aren't a big fan of or comfortable with computer technology in general. You won't have to do much more than click on a link you'll get in an email.

If you'd like to see and chat with other church family members, send an email to Kim Kosko at [kkosko19@gmail.com](mailto:kkosko19@gmail.com) or respond in the comment section of the FB posts about the Coffee Hour saying you'd like an invitation! Please respond by Friday May 8<sup>th</sup>.

Kim will get back to you with an email with the link to the Zoom Coffee Hour Meeting and specific simple instructions about how to log in. She'll include another link with a simple how-to user video about Zoom to help you get comfortable with it. Hope to see many of you there. PJ's are permitted but you'll have to provide your own coffee.

## IMPORTANT DATES IN MAY

Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup> - National Day of Prayer

Sunday, May 10<sup>th</sup> - Mother's Day

Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> - Armed Forces Day

Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup> - Memorial Day

Sunday, May 31<sup>st</sup> - The Day of Pentecost

## WPC INTERNET ISSUES

This past Sunday's live streamed worship service suffered from internet issues. We contacted Verizon on Monday and believe that the problem(s) can largely be corrected for next Sunday's service (May 9th).

## POP-THE-TRUNK FOOD DRIVE SATURDAY, MAY 2ND



WPC found another creative way to serve Christ and community during these unprecedented times. Using the highly successful model of our drive-thru Palm Sunday cross distribution which drew national attention, a dozen or so masked and gloved WPC volunteers came together under the leadership of Elder Lenita Gullman to serve 68 families trying to make ends meet.

Community members rolled through the WPC parking lot, stopping to pop their trunks and having a WPC volunteer place 2 heavy bags of groceries in bright red paper shopping bags in the trunks of their vehicles.

Pastor Joe asked community members if they had prayer concerns and prayed with many of them through open car windows.



Good morning,

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you. Deuteronomy 31:6a*

First, I hope this finds you all safe and well. I know the coronavirus has touched WPC very closely and personally. My prayers go all with those who have suffered illness and loss.

Secondly, I would like to thank all of you for your continued financial support of Westminster during this difficult time. Many of you have sent in your pledges and donations and we appreciate it so much!

I'd like to share with you how some of your gifts enable Westminster to continue its mission even in these dark and restricted times.

- The Palm Sunday cross give-away enabled many to continue a long and well-loved church tradition. The drive-thru distribution enabled those WPC members who were able to drive to the church to remember Palm Sunday in that special way and even drew people from other churches who wanted to honor Jesus. Our delivery to our vulnerable shut-ins brought smiles to many faces on that important Sunday.
- The Session acted quickly to enable Holy Communion to continue in a safe and correct social-distancing method by purchasing the all-in-one sealed Communion cups and distributing them with the palms.
- The technical skills of a few enabled all of the special Holy Week services to continue and to be brought directly into the homes of congregants, even as gathering together in the Sanctuary was prohibited.
- These same skills enabled Wednesday Night Live to morph into Wednesday Night Five to bring special words of comfort from our Pastor into our homes.
- In the same manner, our regular Sunday services and Holy Communion will continue forward during the restrictions of the pandemic.
- The Deacons Food Pantry remains open for those with needs.
- Our recent food drive and distribution touched many lives. The generosity of the congregation and the community enabled us to give two full bags of groceries plus fresh bread, fresh fruit, paper and cleaning products to 75+ families.
- The Deacons' Blood Drive will take place in May.
- The Session and Board of Deacons continue to reach out to and stay in contact with our most vulnerable.

So even as WPC seeks to tighten its belt and curtail expenses (a special thank you to Pastor Joe and Erika for leading our worship in an unheated sanctuary!), we are still looking for ways to be the body of Christ in the community and share the Good News of Gospel.

Again, Stewardship is about time and talent as well as treasure. Please continue to watch out for and help the most vulnerable. Shop for your elderly neighbors. If you have the skills, consider making masks, or knitting for our baby program. Spend some time in the scriptures. Make time to pray for all!

Also remember to take care of yourself: stay connected, stick to a daily schedule, do something you enjoy every day, wash your hands often and eat a healthy diet.

AND MANY THANKS FOR CONTINUING TO SUPPORT WESTMINSTER!

Your Stewardship Committee

So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. *Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless* (1 Corinthians 15:58, NLT)

## A Prayer for Memorial Day



We remember, O Lord, all those people throughout the years who have made the supreme sacrifice for our country, for liberty, for us. Whenever we breathe the air of freedom or claim the right to justice or enjoy the privilege of worship, fill us with gratitude for those who selflessly gave the last full measure of devotion – their very lives – for our benefit. May these brave men and women now know the joy of eternity and your presence. And may the families of the fallen receive comfort and peace amid their grief. Help us as we minister to their needs. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## Keep in Prayer

Prayers of celebration and joy on the birth of Brody VanFossen, son of Jessica and Eric VanFossen; Amelia Dawn D'Arcy, infant daughter of David and Heather D'Arcy, waiting on surgery to repair a hernia; family of Dorothy Tobia on her passing, Carol Neary's aunt; Dwight Batson; Violet Schaefer; Mitch Johanson, son of Carol and the late Alex Johanson, hospitalized with pneumonia; Lori Hein, Pastor Joe's wife; and sister, Nancy Alston, cancer; the family of Ed Harris; persecuted Christians throughout the world; and all medical professionals in our congregation who are on the front lines; and all those affected by illness, especially the Coronavirus, locally, nationally and globally.