

# December



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Hello to all the newsletter readers of West Hempfield Presbyterian Church!

“Love your neighbor as yourself” ... Scripture says this a lot. Lev 19:18, Matt 19:19, Matt 22:39, Mark 12:31, Luke 10:27, Rom 13:9, Gal 5:14, James 2:8

One of the ways to consider this is: think of your neighbor as though it was yourself in their position.

Empathy (*the ability to understand and share the feelings of another*) can be very difficult, however. How often have you said something like “I can’t even imagine what they must be going through”?

This year and this pandemic are giving us a rare opportunity. In all of its difficulties, this year can teach us empathy, if we let it.

Rather than thinking about ourselves, let’s take the opportunity to think of others.

When we feel trapped in our homes ... let’s pray for those who are in prison, for those in nursing homes, for those with disabilities that limit their mobility in one way or another.

When we feel sad that someone is not able to visit over the holidays ... let’s pray for the families of our service men and women, for those who have moved a great distance for one reason or another and cannot easily visit with family, for those who are mourning the death of a loved one.

When we feel frustrated because of the loss of “normal” and everything seems turned upside down ... let’s pray for those who lost their homes to natural disasters (fire, flood, hurricane), for those who have lost their job, for those in the foster care system.

This year has been hard, but for many the difficulties will not end with a vaccine. Let’s remember those in need with our prayers and our generosity.

Blessings, Rev. Andrew Wirt

**Pastor Andrew Recommends:**

## Daily Devotions

I don’t want to add extra stress. This season and this year already have enough of that. Adding one more thing or changing your regular routine can be a challenge. But if you can find the time to focus on the arrival of Jesus this month, I am confident in the promise of Isaiah 55:10-11 [“... My Word,” declares the Lord,] “will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

WHPC provides several daily devotional options at no cost to our congregation.

- Our Daily Bread
- These Days

And there are many more available free online

- [Presbyterians Today and Presbyterian Mission Agency](#)
- [Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Advent](#)
- [D365.org](#)

(Those last two are available as an app for smart phones as well)

Or sign up to receive one each day in your email inbox.

- [Frontier Fellowship](#)

Read alone; read together as a family; commit with a friend to read the same thing each day and discuss it later. Do what works for you.

I once heard someone say ... Which devotional is the best? Whichever one you will actually read.

Do what works for you.

## DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**December 6** – Communion Sunday, 8:30 & 11am, Sunday School 9:45

**December 13**– Regular Services 8:30 & 11am, Sunday School 9:45

**December 20** – Family Friendly Christmas “Eve” Services 8:30 & 11am, Sunday School Christmas Party 9:45 in Fellowship Hall

**December 24** - Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 5:00pm & 7:00pm

**December 29** – Regular Services 8:30 & 11am, Sunday School 9:45



## WORSHIP AT HOME

When putting together the Thanksgiving Eve service, as a rehearsal for Christmas Eve, we learned a few things. One thing I learned is that the whole process took longer than I expected. For Christmas Eve, I will be working further ahead to make sure we are ready to go.

I wanted to encourage everyone to learn this same lesson today.

### **It is important to plan ahead.**

This year continues to bring surprises and chaos. I don't know what to expect from one week to another. Any one of us could find ourselves in the unexpected situation where we need to quarantine for a week or more.

Please make sure you know how to stay connected to the church community should that happen.

Do you know where your church directory is if you want to give someone a call?

Do you know how to participate in worship-at-home services?

- Watch on the church website
- Watch on Facebook
- Watch on YouTube
- Request a DVD from the church office
- Call in and listen to the 11am service LIVE as it happens. Both Christmas Eve Services 5:00pm & 7:00pm call in will be available. (Contact the church office for instructions)

Do you receive the One Call messages from the church? If not, please call the church office to add your number.

## NOVEMBER SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

### ***The Session of West Hempfield Presbyterian Church met on November 24, 2020***

Opened in prayer and studied scripture from the Frontier Fellowship Advent Devotional.

Minutes approved from October session meeting.

Approved budget for 2021.

Approved painting in sanctuary to begin in the early 2021.

Approved Christmas Eve services at 5:00pm & 7:00pm.

VBS was scheduled for June 14-18, 2021

Annual Congregational meeting was scheduled to take place at 12:00 noon on January 17, 2021 (Snow/COVID rescheduled date 1/24/20) Pastor Andrew is planning to make it an option to attend the meeting via zoom if possible.

Received committee reports from committee chairs.

Spent a significant amount of time discussing the reality of the COVID situation for our church and our community. We do not wish to close the church building again, but we are taking everyone's safety very seriously. Please see page \_\_\_ for more of the Session's thoughts and comments on COVID-19.

Approved the use of Memorial Funds to purchase new chairs for the Preschool. Thank you to everyone who has supported this fund over the years! Your generosity makes gifts like this possible!

***Please have your annual GROUP OR COMMITTEE REPORTS emailed to the office  
NO LATER THAN JANUARY 3, 2021***

## DEACONS BASKETS

**The deadline for donations will be December 13**

Deacons are collecting non perishable items of all kinds.

If you can help, packaging will be on **Thursday, December 17 at 6:30PM** in the Fellowship Hall and distribution will be on **Sunday, December 20** 9am-12noon. Please contact Larry DeTesta for more information at 724-516-7744.

## GINGERBREAD TREE



Check the tree in the lobby for gingerbread men. Each one represents a family that you can adopt for Christmas. Each Gingerbread has a number which represents which family they belong to, along with the Sex, Age and Child's interests. When you take a gingerbread, please write your name and phone number on the index card provided and place in the envelope next to the bulletin board. Once you have finished shopping and packaged your gift, please attach the gingerbread man to the gift and return it in front of the tree.

The gifts are due back at the church by **Monday, December 14** – gift-wrapped, with the recipient's information attached. Thank you to everyone for caring for local children who receive so little at Christmas time.

## COVID UPDATE

Cases are rising nationwide and in our county. In a way, it is not as scary as it was in the spring because we know more about the disease now, but there are far more cases now than there were even in the worst weeks of the spring, especially in our area. As hospitals become overwhelmed, it can still be very dangerous.

Positive test rate in our county has passed 11%; previously we had been told the goal was to keep it below 5%.

Death toll nationwide has surpassed 250,000. (By comparison, the flu is around 30,000.) 179 people have died in our county. The situation is likely to get worse after Thanksgiving.

A Georgia Tech project based on available statistics estimates that any given worship service (even as few as 15 people in the room) has a more than 1 in 3 chance of someone in the room being contagious.

We already know of members of the church who have COVID and several cases where a family member of someone in the church has or had COVID.

Many schools are making the move to online only.

Church leadership does not want to stop in person worship or close the building to visitors during the week, but we should all be prepared for new state or federal guidelines in the weeks to come. We should also prepare for the very real possibility that, if we maintain in person worship and open offices during the week, there could be an outbreak among our congregation.

Also, though he is taking every precaution he can reasonably take, we must be prepared for the possibility that Pastor Andrew will test positive for COVID. At least one pastor in our presbytery has tested positive for COVID and it forced a shut down for their church.

We all need to work together. Care for one another. Please follow the guidelines, here at church and everywhere you go. Wear a mask whenever you are with someone not from your household. Stay home if you have symptoms. Stay home if you have been exposed to someone who tested positive.

We are not just a church, we are a family. We love one another. We look out for one another. Thank you for all that you have done to protect one another and support one another this year!

### Westmoreland County COVID numbers

Confirmed Cases

**6,388**

Probable Cases

**1,771**

Negative Tests

**61,588**

Deaths

**179**

## PRESCHOOL NEWS

A member of the WHPC staff, preschool teacher Andrea Tuttoilmondo, has tested positive for COVID-19 over the Thanksgiving weekend.

As a result it was necessary to close the West Hempfield Preschool for at least two weeks. Looking ahead at the month of December and the Christmas break that was already scheduled later in the month, the teachers decided to close the preschool for the entire month of December. We will reopen on January 4, if we feel it is safe to do so.

## POINSETTIA ORDERS

### Poinsettia Orders for Christmas Eve

Each year we decorate the sanctuary with poinsettias as part of our Christmas Eve celebration of the birth of Jesus.

The poinsettias will be displayed Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24. They can be picked up after the Christmas Eve services or on Sunday, December 27 or contact the church office to make other arrangements.

If you would like to order a flower for yourself, in honor of, or in memory of another, please complete the information below.

Flower pot size	How many?	Cost
6 ½" Red	_____	\$ 10.00 each
6 ½" White	_____	\$ 10.00 each
<b>TOTALS</b>	_____	\$ _____

Please print legibly:

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



***Orders and payment due by Sunday, December 6.***

## CHRISTMAS CARDS



As you are working on your Christmas cards this year, be sure to keep WHPC in mind! In December we will be converting the Bulletin Board into a display for Christmas cards from our church family.

*The Staff of West Hempfield Presbyterian Church  
wish you and your families a most blessed Christmas.  
It is a privilege to worship, fellowship, and serve alongside you.  
Merry Christmas!*





# GENEROSITY SPOTLIGHT

Deacon Baskets



A Great Big **"Thank You!"** to everyone who has donated and continues to donate time, talents, and gifts this season and throughout the year!

Gingerbread Tree



Food2Go



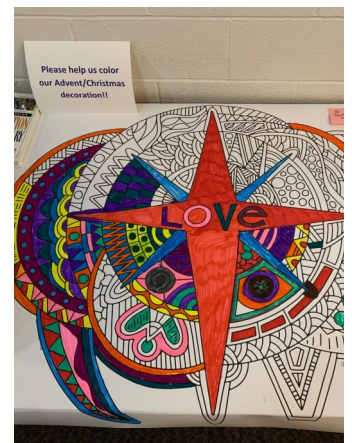
Coat Drive



Church Decorating



Poster Coloring





**Thank You to Our Decorators...** Thanks to the Worship Committee and the many volunteers who prepared our facilities for Advent and Christmas.  
It's beautiful!

**Thank you to Dance Expressions by Erica for all of the generous food donations and packed bags for our Food 2 Go 4 Kids Program.**



**MANY, MANY THANKS FOR ALL OF THE WAYS YOU SERVE, SPREAD JOY, AND OFFER HOPE!**

Food 2 Go 4 Kids – donations and packers  
Deacons Baskets & Gifts  
Coats for WHE children  
Men's bible study  
Sunday School

Thank you, as always, for your financial support of the mission and ministry of WHEPC.

***There is no church HERE without you, your time, talent and love of God!***

**Thankful for WHEPC**

Over 100 West Hempfield Presbyterian Pilgrims enjoyed a lavish Thanksgiving feast on November 22. Thank you Fellowship committee members as well as set-up and clean-up volunteers. You did a wonderful job in seeing that everyone went home full!

**Dear Pastor Wirt and our Church Family,**

**We want to thank you for providing one of your delicious meals so that we could share Thanksgiving with all of you.**

**Please keep Ivan in your prayers and we pray that all of you have a blessed and wonderful Thanksgiving Day. (also, a better one next year after the virus departs!)**

**Love to all, Betty & Ivan Baughman**

# December 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
6 Communion Sunday 8:30 & 11:00 Worship Sunday School 9:45 am	7	8	9 Senior Cards, 11-2:30pm Soccer Shots, 5:00pm	10 Food2Go Distribution 3-5pm	11	12 Salvation Army Bell Ringing 10:00am-6:00am
13 8:30 & 11:00 Worship Sunday School 9:45 am	14	15 Stewardship & Finance 6:30pm	16 Senior Cards, 11-2:30pm	17 <b>Session Reports Due</b> Food2Go Distribution 3-5pm Deacons packing, 6:30pm	18	19
20 8:30 & 11:00 Worship Deacons basket distribution 9-12 noon Sunday School 9:45am	21	22 Session Meeting, 6:30pm	23 Senior Cards, 11-2:30pm <b>Newsletter Deadline</b>	24 Candlelight Services 5:00pm & 7:00pm	25 Merry Christmas!	26
27 8:30 & 11:00 Worship Sunday School 9:45am	28	29	30 Senior Cards, 11-2:30pm	31		