

December



WEST HEMPFIELD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

8 West Hempfield Drive

Irwin, PA 15642

724-863-1260

www.westhempfieldpc.org

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

My family has been enjoying a show on Netflix called “Is It Cake?” In the show, bakers compete to create a delicious cake that looks convincingly like something else entirely. We’ve seen a burger, a shoe, a purse, hats, toys, and more!

How do we know what is real?

In Matthew chapter 23 Jesus talks about things that look real, but are not. He isn’t talking about cake though, he’s talking about people.

Verse 3 *they do not practice what they preach,*
and verse 5 *Everything they do is done for people to see.*

How do we know what is real?

Jesus uses the term “hypocrite” for those who are not real. His accusation is that (like the cakes in the show) the hypocrites have created an outward appearance that hides what is truly on the inside.

Verse 28 *On the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.*

How do we know what is real?

To help answer our question, I was thinking about some of our Christmas decorations — especially the Christmas tree. Decorating pine trees with lights and ornaments has become an exciting part of many of our Christmas celebrations. And artificial trees are incredibly popular. They are easier in many ways. Long lasting. Pre-lit. No shedding needles. Etc.

Like the hypocrites Jesus spoke of, they look great on the outside, but they are not real. They are not full of life.

They might fool the eyes, but they won’t fool the other senses. They don’t have the same feel or the same smell.

The Bible actually talks about smell too. II Corinthians 2:15 *For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ.*

How do we know what is real?

Looking back to what Jesus said in Matthew 23:23 the hypocrites *have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness.*

Even if we decorate artificial Christmas trees ...
Even if we have trouble answering “Is it cake?” ...
I pray that we will all be real followers of Jesus,
full of life, and sharing the aroma of Christ ...
justice, mercy, and faithfulness

Merry Christmas!

Blessings, Rev. Andrew Wirt



DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

December 4 – Communion Sunday, worship 8:30 & 11am,
Sunday School 9:45am

December 11 – worship 8:30 & 11am, Sunday School 9:45am

December 18 – worship 8:30 & 11am,
Sunday School Christmas Party 9:45am

December 24 – Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 5:00pm & 7:30pm

December 25 – Family Friendly Casual Christmas Service 11am

*sermon videos continue to be available on the church website, Facebook, and YouTube

*Call-in to listen live to the 11:00am service every Sunday
(please call the church office for instructions)

*Call-in will be available for both Christmas Eve service times



2023 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Like so many other places, we have struggled to recover after the COVID pandemic. Our goal is to get back to a place where we have two well-attended Sunday morning worship services. It's going to take some work, and maybe some sacrifice, to make that happen. Right now, our low attendance numbers (occasionally single digits at one service or the other) are not welcoming to guests.

In an attempt to create a more full, warm room for guests to be inspired to return, church leadership has decided to ask the congregation to join together in a single Sunday morning service from Christmas through Ash Wednesday, and then again after VBS through Labor Day (exact dates for the summer are still TBD)

Starting December 25, 2022 through February 19, 2023 we will have only an 11:00am worship service, with 9:45am Sunday School. From February 26 through June 18, 2023 we will have worship at 8:30am and 11:00am with Sunday School at 9:45 (until SS begins summer break). For a period of the summer after VBS we will have only an 8:30am worship service. In the fall we will return to worship at 8:30am and 11:00am with Sunday School at 9:45.

This schedule will be reevaluated at the end of 2023 as we continue our attempts to grow our congregation and get back to two well-attended Sunday morning services every week.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

The new Sanctuary Flower sign-up sheet is in the lobby at our "Welcome Center" table.

If you would like to provide the flowers on the Lord's Table for Sunday morning worship in honor or in memory of a friend or loved one or for a special event or anniversary in 2023, we invite you to sign up or contact the church office. Your gifts are greatly appreciated and add so much to our worship together.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PARTY

Please join us **Sunday, December 18 at 9:45am** in the big Sunday School classroom for our Annual Sunday School Christmas Party. There will be no Sunday School on Dec. 25 and Jan. 1.

NOVEMBER SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The Session of West Hempfield Presbyterian Church met on November 22, 2022

We gathered to cover our church, congregation, and community with prayer and review all that has been going on with the church and the world.

- Reflected on Scripture using an Advent Devotion from Frontier Fellowship (link included on this page) and shared what we are thankful for
- Approved Session minutes from October 25, 2022
- Reviewed reports from the pastor, treasurer, deacons, presbytery meeting, and WHPC committees
- Voted to approve the 2023 budget. It will be presented to the congregation for the Annual Congregational Meeting in early 2023. Thank you Stewardship Committee for all your work!
- Thank you to the Fellowship Committee and Gourmet Affairs of Jeanette for our fantastic Thanksgiving lunch on 11/20!
- Set Christmas Eve services for 5:00 PM and 7:30PM
- Christmas Day we will have an 11:00AM worship service. Sunday School and the 8:30AM service will be cancelled.
- New Year's Day we will have an 11:00AM worship service. Sunday School and the 8:30AM service will be cancelled.
- We approved a schedule for 2023, which will be finalized and shared with the congregation soon, where several Sundays in 2023 will have only one service. For a portion of the winter there will be only an 11:00AM service and for a portion of the summer there will be only an 8:30 service.
- Discussed the church/sanctuary anniversary, sanctuary air conditioners, and "Sanctuary Refresh" ideas and approved a budget goal of \$60,000 (for our 60th anniversary) to make improvements to the sanctuary (primarily the AC units)
- Approved rental requests
- Thank you Sewickley Presbyterian Church for donations to our Coat Drive and Deacon Baskets!
Closed with prayer

Next meeting will be December 27, 2022

Reminder: As we approach the end of the year, it's time to get annual reports ready.

***Please have your annual **GROUP OR COMMITTEE REPORTS** emailed to the office
NO LATER THAN JANUARY 6, 2023***

ADVENT DEVOTION OPTIONS

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.”

- [Presbyterians Today and Presbyterian Mission Agency](#)
- [Frontier Fellowship](#)
- [Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Advent](#)
- [d365—Devotions 365 days a year](#)



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.

DEACONS BASKETS

The deadline for all donations will be December 11

Deacons are collecting non perishable items of all kinds.

If you can help with packaging, we will be gathering on **Thursday, December 15 from 10am-1pm and from 6pm to 8pm** in the Fellowship Hall. Distribution will be on **Sunday, December 18, 9am-12noon.**

Please contact Larry DeTesta for more information at 724-516-7744.

GINGERBREAD TREE



We are once again organizing the Gingerbread Tree program as a way of blessing families and children in need in our community.

If you would like to provide a gift for our tree, please take one of the Gingerbread Boys or Girls from our tree in the lobby (elementary school side) and be sure to sign the page on the table nearby with the number on your card.

Shop for your child and return the wrapped gift to the tree.

The gifts are due back at the church by **Sunday, December 11** – with the recipient’s information attached to the outside of the gift wrapped package.

Thank you to everyone for caring for local children who receive so little at Christmas time.

HOLIDAY SERVICE PARTICIPATION

During the holidays we all love to hear Christmas music. If you are musically talented and would like to share your gift by singing or playing an instrument as special music for a worship service this Advent and/or Christmas season, please contact the office and let us know. It would be a blessing to hear you.



POINSETTIA ORDERS



Each year we decorate the sanctuary with poinsettias as part of our Christmas Eve celebration of the birth of Jesus. WHPC would like to invite you to purchase a poinsettia to help bring beauty and color to our Christmas Eve celebrations.

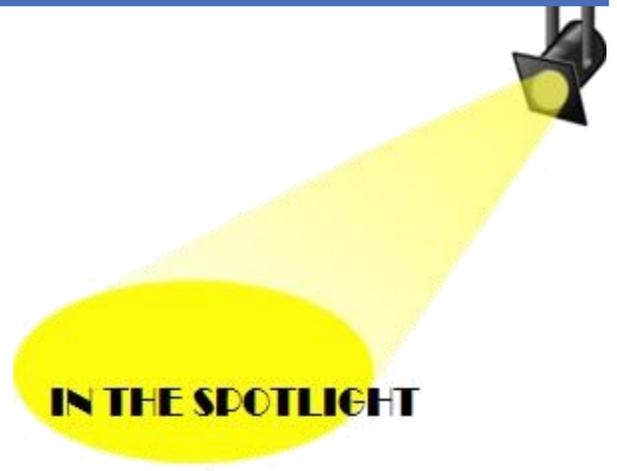
Poinsettias can be picked up after the Christmas Eve services. Any that are not taken home on Christmas Eve will be used to decorate the sanctuary on Christmas Day as well. If you cannot pick up your flowers by Sunday, December 25, you should contact the church office to make other arrangements.

Flower pot size	How many?	Cost	Total
6 ½” Red	_____	\$ 10.00 each	\$ _____

Orders must be placed no later than Dec. 5th. Cut off this portion of the page and drop in the offering plate with payment, or call the church office to give your name, how many Poinsettias you would like, and information if the plant is in Honor or Memory of a loved one.

GENEROSITY SPOTLIGHT

Deacon Baskets



Gingerbread Tree



Coat Drive



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

Church Decorating



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

★ HAPPY ★
BIRTHDAY!

Jenny Cameron
Anita Toth
Gil Sekely
Raymond Lutz
Bruce Bookheimer
Bert Bartko
Jen Mikluscak

December 4
December 5
December 8
December 10
December 10
December 12
December 14

McKenna Graham
Pam Siegel
Irene Simler
Ken Vandermer
Carol Horvat
Karen Kifer
Lenole Gross

December 18
December 19
December 19
December 24
December 24
December 28
December 29



The Worship Committee would like to thank everyone who helped decorate our Church for the Holiday season. It is beautiful!

Thank you to everyone involved with the presentation of beautiful illustrations portrayed on the screens and to the operators of the screens.

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

Deacons Baskets
Gingerbread Tree Gifts
Coats for WHE children

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

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

Thankful for WHPC

The Thanksgiving feast on November 20 was once again a success! Thank you Fellowship committee members, Gourmet Affairs Catering, as well as set-up and clean-up volunteers. You did a wonderful job ensuring that everyone went home full!

Thank you to everyone who filled a shoebox for a child in Haiti. You blessed them with your kindness!



Merry
Christmas &
Happy New
Year from
WHPC
Preschool!

A BIG thank you to everyone for their calls, cards, and prayers for Lee. He is home and recovering well from his very serious hospital stay. We have been blessed!

Jan Ober



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



December 2022



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 8:30 & 11:00am Worship Sunday School 9:45 Communion	5 Dart Ball 7:00pm	6	7	8 Deacon Basket Organizing and Packing	9	10
11 8:30 & 11:00am Worship Sunday School 9:45 Birthday Party in Gym 3-5:00pm	12 H.E.L.P Group 4:30pm Girl Scouts 6:00-7:00pm Dart Ball 7:00pm	13 Deacons Meeting 6:30pm	14 Senior Cards, 11-2:30pm	15	16	17
18 8:30 & 11:00am Worship Sunday School 9:45 Deacon Basket Distribution 9am-12pm	19 H.E.L.P Group 4:30pm Dart Ball 7:00pm	20	21 Senior Cards, 11-2:30pm Confirmation Class 6:30pm	22	23 Newsletter Deadline Session Reports Due	24 Christmas Eve Services 5:00pm & 7:30pm
25 11am Worship 	26 Dart Ball 7:00pm	27 Session Meeting 6:30pm	28 Senior Cards, 11-2:30pm	29	30	31