



WEST HEMPFIELD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

I was reminded recently of a message I gave a while back on Matthew chapter 6. Here in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus takes a moment to talk about our treasures (Matthew 6:19-24). In Matthew 6:21 Jesus says, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

What we treasure, he says, will begin to influence our hearts. It’s the spiritual equivalent of “You are what you eat.” We are shaped and molded by what we allow into our lives.

The world is full of negative things. It’s everywhere I look. Fear, accusation, prejudice, violence, selfishness, blame, anger, hatred. We are in the middle of a global pandemic. People are dying. People are losing their jobs and businesses. People are scared. People disagree. We are tired. We are on edge. If this is all we see, all we hear, all we take in every day, it will shape us in unhealthy ways.

Look for the good news. Look for love in the world. I’m not saying we should ignore the bad things in the world. Pretending they don’t exist solves nothing. But we can’t let the negative be the only stories we see.

In the midst of all that has been happening, the West Hempfield Preschool followed the West Hempfield School District and has been closed for over two months. Mrs. T and Mrs. Simpson (the Preschool teachers) continued to love and care for their students. When this pandemic extended the closure beyond the end of the school year and prevented the opportunity for a Preschool graduation, they hopped in their cars and drove to each student’s home to say “hello” (from a safe distance, of course), congratulate the students on the completion of the school year, and offer a gift. Now that is some good news!

Look for the good news this month.

Share those stories with others, too.

And if you can, help make a little good news.

We can’t all heal the sick. I can’t cure this virus. You can’t afford to feed every single hungry person in the world. But there will always be opportunities to do something to help someone else. Maybe all you can manage today is a smile for the neighbor or an extra story for the kids before bedtime. And that’s ok.

I found a Mister Rogers quote.

Some days, doing “the best we can” may still fall short of what we would like to be able to do, but life isn’t perfect—on any front—and doing what we can with what we have is the most we should expect of ourselves or anyone else.

Don’t be discouraged because you can’t do it all. Do what you can. Do something. Let’s feed our hearts with good news.

Blessings, Rev. Andrew Wirt

Pastor Andrew Recommends:

Practice Gratitude

When we find a little good news, it’s important to take a moment to be thankful for it.

We’ve been carefully washing our hands long enough now. Maybe you don’t need to count to 20, sing Jesus Loves Me, or say your ABCs to make sure you hit 20 seconds when you wash any more.

If that’s the case, may I suggest a new substitute? Whenever you wash your hands this month, try to think of something you are thankful for and say, “Thank you, God, for _____!”

(And if you still need to hum *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* to mark 20 seconds, no judgement. You can say thank you while you dry.)

MAY SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The Session of West Hempfield Presbyterian Church met on May 26, 2020

Together we covered our church and congregation with prayer, read and reflected on Scripture, and reviewed all that has been going on with the church and the world. We reviewed and approved minutes from previous meetings and had an opportunity for committees to share reports.

Policies were approved and added to the church's Manual of Administrative Operations regarding our new online giving program. They were required by the company that handles our online giving and approved unanimously by the elders.

We reviewed the congregation's responses to the survey about reopening the church. There were 52 responses (total, online plus mail). The official results have been printed and will be kept in the church office. They can be made available to anyone, by request to the office. There were a variety of responses reflecting the way we are all torn between wanting to be together again but also wanting to love our neighbors by being careful. These responses are aiding all of us as we consider how best to move forward.

COVID-19 UPDATE May 26, 2020

Governor Wolf's new information about the Green Phase has the elders feeling hopeful we will see this milestone in early June. As such, we have decided it would be prudent at this point to wait for that announcement. The Session will continue our pattern of meeting every two weeks throughout this pandemic, which means our next meeting will be on June 9, 2020. If Westmoreland County has entered the Green Phase, or it has been announced when we will enter the Green Phase, the Session has agreed to discuss and, if we are able, to set the date of our reopening for in-person worship on that night.

Worship will continue to be at-home with no in-person option through at least June 14, 2020.

Building closure continues as long as we are in the Yellow Phase. By agreement of everyone at the meeting, when Westmoreland County enters the Green Phase, the hallway alongside the sanctuary – from the main door back to Tony's office, including the old kitchen and one set of bathrooms – will be opened and available during church office hours and in the evenings for meetings. At first, the rest of the building will continue to be limited just to staff. If this limited opening goes well and our community stays in the Green Phase, the Session will consider opening more of the building for use in the future. It is very important that all building use be scheduled through the church office to prevent over crowding the small space and provide opportunity for proper cleaning.

As we begin looking forward to and planning for re-opening the church, cleaning supplies will be very important. We are beginning now to stock up as much as possible. See announcement on the side of the page.

With the help of the Payroll Protection Plan, Board of Pensions, and the continued generous giving of our church family, we have been and will continue to fully financially support all church staff.

Special Request

As we plan and prepare for reopening the church, we would like to ask you for help in stocking up on hand sanitizer. It can be hard to find right now, and when found in stores there is often a limit on purchasing.

If you find sanitizer that meets the CDC recommendations, please consider purchasing one to donate to the church.

CDC recommends using ABHR (Alcohol Based Hand Rub) with greater than 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol in healthcare settings.

Unless hands are visibly soiled, an alcohol-based hand rub is preferred over soap and water in most clinical situations due to evidence of better compliance compared to soap and water. Hand rubs are generally less irritating to hands and are effective in the absence of a sink.

Note: Pennsylvania Primary Election is June 2, 2020. For safety reasons, the church office will be closed and we ask that NO ONE enter the church on this date other than for election purposes in the Fellowship Hall. As recommended by the election commission, because of the large volume of people entering and exiting the Fellowship Hall on this one day during a pandemic, the Fellowship Hall will be closed to EVERYONE, INCLUDING ALL STAFF, June 3 through June 9.

JUNE WORSHIP SCHEDULE



*For now Worship-at-Home alternative continues, if anyone is having trouble, please let us know (we are happy to send a DVD or CD to your home)

AT-HOME COMMUNION — June 7, 2020

We have not been able to celebrate communion together since March. Hopefully restrictions will be lifting soon, but even then we know that not everyone will feel safe gathering together right away. In response to this unusual situation, we will be trying something new. On June 7 at 11:00am we will all have the opportunity to participate in at-home communion together even though separate. Here's the plan:

Step 1 — Prepare ahead of time. You will need to have your own bread (any kind of bread) and grape juice/wine (grape juice would be preferred, but since that is something that everyone might not have or might not be willing to go out and buy just for one small drink, water could be substituted as it is our most common drink).

Step 2 — “Tune in” at 11am on June 7, 2020. We will do a Facebook Live video, like our videos during Holy Week. If you are unable to watch online, let the church office know as soon as possible and we will mail you a script that you can read Sunday morning which will help you take communion at about the same time as those following along online.

Step 3 — We all take communion together, even though separated in space.

Just in case — We will take the Facebook Live video and put it on the church website for the rest of the day. It should be available from around noon to midnight on June 7, 2020. If you miss the Live broadcast, you can still participate on the same day as everyone else.

After June 7, the video will go away, hopefully, making this something special that we all made time for and did together.

GRADUATES & SCHOLARSHIPS

HIGH SCHOOL & COLLEGE GRADUATES

Please supply the church office with information if you/your child is graduating from high school, college, vocational school, graduate school or any other continued education program. **The congregation would like to recognize and celebrate your accomplishment during online worship on June 7.**

Submit your name, from where you are graduating, & your immediate future plans to the office by June 3.



WATSON SCHOLARSHIP

West Hempfield Presbyterian Church is pleased to announce the availability of scholarships offered on behalf of the Bill and Delphine Watson Trust Fund.

Each high school graduate who will be furthering their education is eligible for a one-time scholarship in the amount of \$1,000.00. Student or parent(s) of student should be a member of the church.

Applications are available by calling or emailing Heather in the office.

Please return the application along with the student's acceptance letter for their school to the office.

Once the application is approved, a check will be mailed directly to the school address you provided on the application form.



JUNE BIRTHDAY'S

Lester Smith	June 3	Bill Sturdevant	June 22
Larry DeTesta	June 6	Austin Hladek	June 24
Marianne Ernhart	June 6	Debbie Hilewick	June 25
Allan Immel	June 6	David Ailes	June 26
Janet Lore	June 9	Tom Iwinski	June 26
Sandy Weaver	June 9	Albert Balister	June 29
Marianne Balister	June 21	Janice Potthoff	June 29
Dick Burhans	June 21		

*If you have a JUNE birthday, and we've missed you –
PLEASE, let the office know!*

EMAIL COMMUNITY PRAYER LIST



We have started an email prayer list that the church office has been sending out each Monday. Anyone can submit a prayer request by contacting the church office. However, please respect privacy and do not submit requests for others without their permission. In some circumstances, requests may be given to the pastor/elders/deacons but not placed on the email to everyone. ALL requests will be prayed for, even if they are not placed on the public list.

WEST HEMPFIELD PRESCHOOL

The 2019/2020 Preschool Year concluded on May 20, 2020, with a special visit to each student's home presenting them with an end-of-year gift and some of their work left behind. We covered 52 miles and got lots of smiles!

We had a wonderful school year despite the closure on March 13. We enjoyed a field trip and visits by a police officer, firefighters, a dental hygienist, Santa and even a chef. In between, we cooked, had a Thanksgiving feast, PJ party, danced and sang, all while learning the basics of the preschool year. See you in September! Both AM & PM classes are still accepting registration!





Thank you to everyone who purchased an at home worship t-shirt or hoodie. The church will be receiving a check for over \$400. If you shipped your shirts to the office, Heather will be in touch as they arrive, probably second week of June.

Thank you for your continued support in worshipping at home with WHPC!

THANK YOU PRESCHOOL TEACHERS!!

Thank you Linda Simpson & Andrea Tuttoilmondo for your dedication to the children of West Hempfield Preschool.

Thank you all for your patience!!

This whole global pandemic situation has been confusing, frustrating, stressful, and more. As a leader I want to give you answers, but so often it seems that there are no clear answers. I don't know what is coming next. I am sure you have had moments of frustration as well. Thank you for your patience as we try to figure out together how to keep everyone safe, but also regain some normal.

~ Pastor Andrew

FOOD 2 GO 4 KIDS

THANK YOU!!

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered throughout the year from packaging, helping with the Spaghetti Dinner, donations of food and plastic bags. During our current situation, there are many without food, we look forward to starting back in the Fall and helping those in need. It takes a village... and we appreciate you!



THANK YOU SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS!!

This school year has ended differently than most. Nevertheless, as we enter the summer break, we look back over the last year and thank our Sunday School Teachers for helping us grow in our faith.



Dear friends of WHPC,

Thank you so much for your kind words of sympathy on the loss of my dad, Bill Hughes. We feel so lucky to have been able to spend these last few years with him. West Hempfield meant so much to him and my mother. We truly appreciate your support. Sincerely, Pat & John Hutchinson