



## WEST HEMPFIELD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

8 West Hempfield Drive

Irwin, PA 15642

724-863-1260

[www.westhempfieldpc.org](http://www.westhempfieldpc.org)

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

What can I write this month? We are half a year into a global pandemic. Some are still in situations that necessitate isolation. Even as restrictions loosen, we can't really do all the things we want to do. We're alone, a lot, for long times.

We've found little streams of strength to keep us going. We can go to church or watch online. We can have food delivered. We can stay in touch with friends and family on our phones and computers. It's not ideal, but we found a routine and we get by.

But it hasn't ended! Our reserves are running low (maybe running out). Reserves of food, courage, unwatched movies, patience, sanity. What's next?

Recently, I was reminded of an Old Testament story about the prophet Elijah and a kind widow who experienced a miracle that inspired Olive Garden's never-ending breadsticks.

I don't know if the Olive Garden part is true. I just made that up. But, I Kings chapter 17 is an amazing story, and it is even referenced by Jesus once in the Gospel of Luke.

Right now, however, I want to take a few minutes to look at the lead up to this popular story.

Before meeting the widow at Zarephath whose kindness leads to unlimited bread, Elijah announced that God would bring a great drought and then he had to go into hiding. He was all alone for a long time. But he had a little stream providing him water and the Lord sent ravens to deliver him food every morning and evening. I'm sure it was not ideal, but I imagine he got into a routine and was getting by.

But the drought didn't end! ... and then, one day ... the brook dried up and the ravens stopped coming.

And here is what I want us all to see today:

**God was still there for Elijah, and God will still be with you too.**

Blessings, Rev. Andrew Wirt



**Pastor Andrew Recommends:**

MY MASK  
PROTECTS YOU.  
YOUR MASK  
PROTECTS ME.

*CDC recommends that you wear masks in public settings around people who don't live in your household and when you can't stay 6 feet away from others. Masks help stop the spread of COVID-19 to others. ~ quote from cdc.gov*

You may have noticed that there seems to be some debate in the world today about whether churches (and/or Christians) should follow government restrictions and guidelines around the corona virus pandemic (or any number of other topics).

Many have been guilty (intentionally or unintentionally) of taking single verses of Scripture and applying them without context to support an opinion they had already formed beforehand.

- ◆ Romans 13:1 says we have to obey the CDC!
- ◆ Galatians 5:1 says I can do whatever I want!

Well, I know the CDC says I should wear a mask, and I know I don't want to. So what should I do?

Going a little deeper, **Galatians 5:13-14** says that whatever freedom we do have, we are to use to serve one another humbly in love.

Therefore, if we are free to make our own choices, it seems to me that followers of Jesus should choose personal humility and service to others. Right now, regardless of what it physically does, a mask sends a message. It says, "I'm willing to sacrifice my own comfort in the chance that it might protect you," and that sounds like something Jesus (and Mister Rogers) would say. So I still don't know what I have to do, but I know what I will choose to do.

## WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Worship Attendance is different than it was in March. (That's probably an understatement.)

There have been a few questions about what WHPC attendance looks like these days. With all the different options for attending worship now, you can't just look around and know who all is with us.

It's difficult to compare to pre-pandemic statistics because so much is different. However, we have been reopened long enough to start to have a picture of the post-shutdown situation that we can share with you.

Looking at attendance numbers since July when we fully reopened to 2 in-person worship services, the 8:30 service averages 14 people, the 11:00 service averages 23 people, bringing the in-person average to 37 people.

Our live call-in has a small but steady attendance of 1-3 listeners.

Worship at-home online is harder to gauge because one view could be one person on their phone or an entire family streaming it to the television. So let's split the difference and imagine each view is two people.

YouTube shows lots of views at first, but they count every time a video plays even just a few seconds. If you account for "unique views" and average play time, it would seem that we average 6 times per week that the video is played start to finish. (There has been some conversations though that YouTube may be only counting the views actually at the YouTube page. Are they counting views through Facebook or on the church website? So our number here could be even higher.)

We have an audio only, podcast version available from the church website, but the average weekly download is between 0 and 1.

We also mail DVDs of the full service to those who have requested, and that is usually 3 each week.

Pulling all this together, it looks like our average attendance across all platforms is around 55 people right now.

Naturally, there is fluctuation in the numbers week to week, but overall the numbers are steady, neither steadily increasing or decreasing. The last Sunday in September, September 26, was actually our second highest in-person attendance since the shut down.

## SEPTEMBER SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

- Together we covered our church and congregation with prayer, reviewed all that has been going on with the church and the world.
- Approved Session minutes from August 2020.
- The preschool has began and has a total of 23 students in the am&pm classes combined
- The hallway by the school side is now the Sunday school hallway from Pre-K through 6th grade
- The Food2Go4Kids program will begin distribution on October 8.
- We are asking the Congregation to donate the Preschool with individually packed snacks the 2nd Sunday of each month. (Though thanks to your generosity, the stock is in good shape for right now)
- One of the furnaces will be repaired for \$200
- Baptism approved for Emmett Vanderlee (date TBD)
- Sunday school Halloween party approved
- Signs regarding skateboarders to go out front

## SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE



10/4 – 8:30 & 11AM Worship, World Communion Sunday

10/11 – 8:30 & 11AM Worship, Sunday school

10/18– 8:30 & 11AM Worship, Sunday school

10/25 – 8:30 & 11AM Worship, Sunday school

\*at-home worship continues to be available on the church website, Facebook, and YouTube — hopefully available by 11:00am on Sunday mornings

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

## COMMUNION

*We will celebrate Communion on Sunday, October 4 at the 8:30AM & 11:00AM Worship Services.*

We will be using single-serve, pre-packaged communion cups that will be handed out as you enter the sanctuary. Gluten free wafers available, please ask an Usher.

If you would like to celebrate communion with us, but are not able to join us in-person, you can still participate at home with your own bread and juice on the call-in or by requesting a DVD to watch



## PRESCHOOL

From a grateful preschool: Dear session members and dear church family. Our preschoolers have been enjoying their snack time. Thank you for providing prepackaged treats for the children, to assure that snack time is not only delicious but safe. Our snack pantry is filled to overflowing and we are very appreciative. We do not need any snacks for the month of October.

With gratitude,  
Linda and Andrea



## SUNDAY SCHOOL TRICK-OR-TREAT

Join your Sunday school friends on Sunday, **October 25 between services**. Come dressed in your **not-so-scary**, church appropriate Halloween costume and enjoy trick-or-treating in the Fellowship Hall from the church committees.

Each church committee will have a table with treats for the kids! If your child(ren) plan to attend, please let your Sunday school teacher know or call the church office.

\*this will be open to all children of WHPC, we will not have a lunch



## Please remember our friends with cards and/or visits...

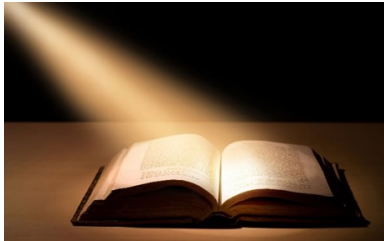
Tom Iwinski's father passed away. If you'd like to send a card to the family... Tom & Leah Iwinski 2800 Ipnar Rd. Irwin, Pa 15642

Former member, Robert Morris passed away. If you'd like to send a card to his wife... Peg Morris 2016 W. Grove Drive Gibsonia, Pa 15044

Sam Joseph is moving to Weatherwood in Greensburg, no room number yet



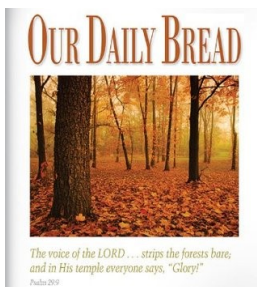
## ADULT BIBLE STUDIES



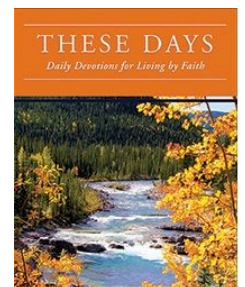
**MEN'S GROUP:** The Men's Group has resumed weekly meetings on *Wednesday evenings at 7:00pm*. If you'd like to join this study, please call John Reed 724-864-2488

**Adult Sunday School:** Will resume beginning on *Sunday, October 4* between services in the upstairs kitchen. Call Janice Potthoff with any questions. The study will continue with Jane Hamon's book, "The Deborah Company"

## DEVOTIONALS



WHPC is able to provide anyone with devotionals. Our Daily Bread and These Days. If you are unable to attend church in person and would like a devotional mailed, please email [office@westhempfieldpc.org](mailto:office@westhempfieldpc.org) or call the church office at 724-863-1260 and we'd be happy to mail you one or both.



## OUTREACH

If you are interested in ringing the bells this year, please call the church office 724-863-1260.

Date and times to follow in upcoming bulletins and newsletters.



## MISSION

## FOOD2GO4KIDS

Because bags can no longer be placed into backpacks at the school, the Food2Go4Kids program has made some changes this year. Bags will be available by drive-by pick-up at West Hempfield Presbyterian Church in the lower parking lot every week. Here are a couple ways you can help.

- Volunteer packing weekly items (committees, groups outside the church, staff) contact the church office.
- Donate plastic bags and/or food items (microwavable mac n' cheese, individual applesauce, pop tarts, fruit snacks, granola bars, rice krispie treats, pretzels or chips individually packaged, microwavable ramen noodles, individual cereal boxes, and microwavable chef boyardee ravioli's
- Donate by texting **WHPC food2go** to **73256** or go to [www.westhempfieldpc.org](http://www.westhempfieldpc.org) and visit the mission page or you may write a check to WHPC memo line Food2Go

## FELLOWSHIP

## THANKSGIVING DINNER

Join your church family for our Annual *Thanksgiving Dinner* following our *11am worship service on November 22*. Sunday school 9:45am. Meals served for you to eat in or take out.

**Tables will be set if you would like to sit and Fellowship.**

**Please RSVP no later than November 8.** Thank you!!

Call the church office or sign up at the Welcome center table in the lobby.



## OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Joseph Iwinski	October 1	Pat Cloonan	October 13
Brianna Smith	October 1	Lee Ober	October 13
Thomas Mihalko	October 4	Marge Jessen	October 16
Wesley MacIntosh	October 5	Helen Toms	October 17
Barbara Langham	October 6	Elsie Barton	October 20
Rev. Andrew Wirt	October 7	Doug Jessen	October 20
Ryan Cameron	October 9	Cindy Bankosh	October 21
MaryEsther DeTesta	October 10	Jan Ober	October 28
James Crust	October 11	Brian Pritz	October 29





Thank you Building Committee for making a coat rack for preschool students.  
They are enjoying the use of it.

Thank you Debbie Miller for organizing the Sanctuary pews. We appreciate your help.



Thank you Mary Esther for taking the time to re-organize the resource room.  
Very much appreciated!

We want to thank everyone for their cards, thoughts and prayers such a difficult time. It's been a great comfort.

John, Cindy, and Johnny Bankosh

I wanted to write and thank you for allowing us to use your church parking lot for our Pop Up Event! It was a huge success! We appreciate your continued support and please continue to pray for us.

Thanks again, In Christ,  
PSC Staff

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my church family for the support given to me with get well cards and telephone calls as I reciprocated from a medical medication mistake. A special thank you to Larry DeTesta and RJ Dixon for enabling my daughter LuAnn to come to our aid. Also, a big thank you to the PWA board for all their encouragement. It's a tough world out there these days. Our congregation is very caring, a soft place to land.

Sincerely, Marlene Bookheimer

# October 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 World Communion Sunday 8:30AM & 11:00AM Worship	5	6 Girl Scouts, 5:00pm Kids Yoga, 6:30pm Ages 7-12	7 Senior Cards, 11-2:30pm Men's Group 7pm	8	9 Office Closed	10
11 8:30AM & 11:00AM Worship Sunday school 9:45am	12	13 NAMI, 7:00pm	14 Senior Cards, 11-2:30pm Men's Group 7pm	15	16	17
18 8:30AM & 11:00AM Worship Sunday school 9:45am	19 Stewardship & Finance 6:30pm	20 Kids Yoga, 6:30pm Ages 7-12	21 Senior Cards, 11-2:30pm Men's Group 7pm	22 Session Reports Due	23	24
25 8:30AM & 11:00AM Worship Sunday school Halloween Party between services	26 <b>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</b>	27 Session Meeting, 6:30pm	28 Senior Cards, 11-2:30pm Men's Group 7pm	29	30	31