



January

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

Planning ahead for the year 2026, we will be spending a lot of time with the gospel of Matthew.

Matthew is the first book of the New Testament, but it was not the first written. The leading understanding of the gospel of Matthew is that it was written around 80-90 AD, which puts it after Paul's letters and the gospel of Mark. In fact, Matthew and Luke (we think written about the same time) both seem to use Mark as a reference.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the synoptic gospels and have a lot in common, but each has its own personality.

Matthew seems to be written by a Jewish author to a Jewish audience. We will find lots of references to the Old Testament and Jewish traditions.

The book emphasizes that Jesus was Jewish and does not seek to convert its audience from Judaism to Christianity, but rather to convince the audience that they can and should be both.

However, Matthew does not suggest that Christians need to be Jewish. From the very beginning with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph still in Bethlehem, Matthew is the one to tell us of magi from the east who follow a star to meet and worship the newborn Messiah.

Come as you are and meet the Lord.

I've heard a couple of very smart people say something like "The Bible may not have been written to us, but it was written for us."

Matthew was written a very long time ago to an audience of first century Jews, but that does not mean it has nothing to say to us today.

I think this is a great time to be reading Matthew.

Just thinking about what we have said already: Matthew is written to people who believe in God and want to faithfully serve the Lord of the Old Testament. But the world has brought them many changes and challenges. The temple was destroyed in 70 AD and the way they worshipped had to change. The faithful were dividing into many different groups (parties or denominations, if you will) debating over what was most important and how best to move forward into a scary and unpredictable future.

The church today is very similar. We want to follow God, but wonder how best to move forward into a scary and unpredictable future.

Matthew invites us to hold onto who we are, but also to be welcoming to those who are different — a new family/community united by and with God. Together we will learn from Jesus and follow God.

Come as you are and meet the Lord.

Blessings,
Rev. Andrew Wirt

WORSHIP



DO YOU HAVE LEFTOVER CHRISTMAS COOKIES?

Are you willing to share?

Worship Committee is inviting members to bring in cookies for Fellowship Time after our first worship service of 2026 on Sunday, January 4, 2026.

Don't have leftover cookies?

Come help the rest of us enjoy ours!



WINTER WEATHER RESPONSE TEAM

WHPC is putting together a team of volunteers to help clear the church sidewalks of snow and ice on Sunday mornings in the event of winter weather.

A sign up sheet is on the Welcome Center table in the lobby if you would like to be put on the call list of possible volunteers.

If you have any questions, talk with Elder Rick Forsyth.



WINTER WEATHER UPDATES

Decisions about winter weather cancellation of worship will be made the day of the service.

If we need to cancel because of bad roads or ice at the church, a message will be sent out at least one hour before the start of worship using the text message service and Constant Contact email service lists "All News" and "Special Events". (*This only refers to worship. Sunday School is a small enough group that Mary Esther will communicate with involved families directly, and the Sunday School may or may not decide to do the same thing as the worship service.*)

If there is no cancellation, there will be no message. Everyone should assume that if they do not receive an emergency message, service will continue as usual.

No matter what, everyone please be careful! Even if you don't hear that the service is cancelled, if it looks messy where you are, stay home and stay safe. Service livestreams through the church YouTube channel, and the link can always be found on the church website.

The system that we used to use to make automated mass phone calls is no longer in use by the church. (It was too expensive for its limited usage.)

If you know someone who might not be reached by text message or email, give them a call. I am sure they will appreciate the check in.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**WHPC's Annual Congregational
Meeting will be held on
Sunday, January 25, 2026
(after 10:45AM worship service)
with a snow date of February 1, 2026**

We will present the 2026 budget as approved by the Session at their November meeting and the 2025 Annual Report. Those present will vote to reaffirm the pastor's contract, set the pastor's 2026 compensation, and elect the new class of church leadership.

When the Annual Report is ready (at least one week before the meeting) we will send it out as a PDF through the Constant Contact email lists "All WHPC News" and "Special Event News". If you are not currently signed up, you can do so on the church website
westhempfieldpc.org/subscribe

Print copies will also be available in the lobby of the church Sunday, January 18. If you pick up a physical copy at the church to take home, please bring it back for the meeting to help reduce the number of copies we need to print.

Reminder: As we start the new year, it's time to get annual reports to the office. Please have your annual *GROUP OR COMMITTEE REPORTS* emailed to the office **NO LATER THAN JANUARY 12, 2026**

FELLOWSHIP LUNCH

After the congregational meeting on Sunday, January 25, we will head downstairs to enjoy lunch and fellowship together!

Please help us prepare enough food for everyone by signing up in the lobby or contact the church office.

If you can help with setup on Saturday, January 24, talk with Larry and/or Mary Esther DeTesta.

SESSION MEETING

WHPC Session did not meet in December due to the busy holiday season. Reports were shared and reviewed via email.

The next scheduled meeting will be January 27, 2026.

DEACONS MEETING

Due to a schedule conflict for Pastor Andrew, the January Deacons meeting will have to be rescheduled. Deacons, keep an eye out for communication from Pastor Andrew about rescheduling. Thank you for understanding.

DEACONS OFFER A RIDE

If anyone would like to come to church, but is in need of a ride, please contact the church office. There are several deacons who are willing to help.

STEWARDSHIP

WHPC no longer passes the offering plate through the pews during worship services. We still have a time of honoring and blessing our gifts and offerings in each service and the plates are available before and after worship at the primary entrance to the sanctuary, by the bulletins.

The Stewardship and Finance Committee also no longer distributes personal, numbered, and dated giving envelopes. To avoid waste and decrease costs, we stopped this practice several years ago. However, boxes of envelopes are still available for those who make cash donations and can be found in the lobby at the Welcome Center and near building entrances. You will need to write your name on the envelope if you do not wish for your gift to be anonymous.

These envelopes are also not dated, so if you still have some in your box from last year, there is no need to throw them away.

If you give by check, you are certainly welcome to use the provided envelopes, but you do not need to use one. You can simply put your check in the offering plate or mail it to the church.

STEWARDSHIP (continued)

You can also **donate directly through your bank**, and **online offering** continues to be available on the church website or by texting WHPC to 73256 (you will not receive any marketing as a result of using this service). **You can set up a one time gift or automatic, recurring donations through the online offering.**

We will continue to provide you with periodic giving statements.

The deacons, coat drive, and other special envelopes will still be available in the pews or near the offering plate throughout the year.

Thank you for your continuing support of WHPC!



HOMEBOUND AND NURSING HOME FRIENDS

We encourage you to remember those who can't be with us physically with a card or phone call.

The winters are long, especially for them.

THANK YOU NOTES

On behalf of the Deacons and Mission committee....a great big thank you to everyone who donated food and gifts to this year's Deacon's Baskets and Angel Tree. It is heartwarming to see the outpouring of food items and gifts for struggling families in our community. An additional thank you to those who came and helped sort food, pack the boxes, and help with the distribution. Thank you WHPC family and friends!

Thank you to everyone who volunteered to read and light Advent candles. This made our Advent and Christmas Eve services so special!

Thank you to Thomas and the choir! and to everyone who attended our Indoor Christmas Caroling event!

Thank you to our great bakers who shared Christmas cookies for several of our December events!

Thank you to all who bought poinsettias to help decorate the church for Christmas. You made everything look so beautiful!

Thank you to everyone who joined us for Christmas Eve service!
Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year!

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Cheryl Bookheimer	January 2
Marcus Dawson	January 2
Richard Hazlett	January 4
Jon Grinder	January 6
Neil Graham	January 10
Leah Iwinski	January 14
Keith Pritts	January 16
Donald Stewart	January 18
Joseph Smith	January 20
Randy Greenawalt	January 20
Marge Jackson	January 21
Bob MacIntosh	January 22

MORE THANK YOU NOTES

Thank you for the many Christmas cards that brought joy to my room. I am also thankful to the Deacons for the beautiful poinsettia and the Sunday School class for the ornament. Your thoughtfulness and warm wishes were a wonderful blessing to me this Christmas season.
~ Kitty Toms~

I would like to thank everyone for your prayers during my recent surgery.
Thanks,
Jon Grinder

Thank you to our Christian Ed. Committee for the awesome Sunday School Christmas party for our students.



JANUARY 2026



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SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	<u>Church Office Hours</u> Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 10am — 2pm			1 <i>Happy New Year</i>	2 FH - Rental	3
4 9:30am Sunday School 10:45am Worship with communion	5 Upstairs Rental FH - Dartball (H)	6 FH - Rental	7 11 am Senior Cards	8	9 FH - Rental	10 FH - Rental
11 9:30am Sunday School 10:45am Worship	12 Upstairs Rental FH - Dartball (A)	13 FH - Rental	14 11 am Senior Cards	15	16 FH - Rental	17 FH - Rental
18 9:30am Sunday School 10:45am Worship	19 FH - Dartball (H)	20 6:30pm Stewardship (Zoom) FH - Rental	21 11 am Senior Cards	22	23 FH - Rental	24 FH - Rental
25 9:30am Sunday School 10:45am Worship Congregational Meeting and Lunch	26 Upstairs Rental FH - Dartball (A)	27 6:30pm Session FH - Rental	28 11 am Senior Cards	29	30 FH - Rental	31 FH - Rental

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January 2026