

the

HARBINGER

open minds open hearts

VOLUME LXXIII | JANUARY 17, 2021 | No. 36

From the Pews, Ashley Brown

From the sanctuary of my home in Austin, I put on a black dress, walked the dogs, and lit a candle. I prayed and then turned on my computer to log in to the funeral's live feed only to be greeted with images of a few people milling about and leaving the screen view. I had missed the funeral. I forgot that Austin, TX was an hour behind the East Coast, and in my time-calculation error, my opportunity to properly pay remote virtual respects had faded away.

The missed funeral was for a friend's parent who had died from Covid. They themselves were unable to attend the funeral, as they had contracted Covid in caring for their ill parent. They sat alone unable to hug even their spouse or their children in their isolated spare bedroom, coughing into a Kleenex, watching on their laptop their parent's last mark on this Earth. A virtual funeral seems anticlimactic to the magnitude of a single human life.

When this is all over, we will need to properly grieve the hundreds of thousands who have died, from Covid, and other non-Covid related deaths. But for now, grief has seemed to be given a backseat to our mental survival. Everyone is simply making the best decision they know how to make with the information that they are gathering.

If anything, a pandemic has always been a grim harbinger of death. A reminder that our lives are short, and our time may come up at any point. Many 2021 resolutions are stark, "I just want to make it 2022" a nursing home resident told me over the phone. Previous goals of "being our best selves or losing that extra ten pounds" fall to the wayside as we simply pray that our loved ones can be vaccinated in time or that our fractured marriages, friendships, and relationships might recover from the financial and emotional turmoil of the past year. Unification is paramount for our spiritual well-being, and yet, as humans, it is incredibly hard to do.

I write this moody article in hopes that I might give you permission to grieve. Your anger, and sadness and grief are natural, righteous, and holy in their own significant way, and your way through these strong emotions is yours to know alone. No one can direct you properly in your spiritual healing from this past year, only you intuitively know how you best might need to recover and to release the emotions in your heart.

Whatever it is you may be mourning- be it a family member, friend, lost job, broken relationship, postponed wedding, understand that you are in your right to mourn these losses. I desperately wish I could give you each a hug, but instead, I send one through this harbinger cover. Know how dear you all are to me, and that after our grief is resolved, a time of gladness will be upon us. Joy is coming and the darkness will soon lift.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, January 17, 2021 | On Demand on Facebook & YouTube | 9a & 11:15a wpc-online.org



Second Sunday after Epiphany

Preparation for **Worship**

Everlasting God, in whom we live and move and have our being: You have made us for yourself, so that our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Give us purity of heart and strength of purpose, that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing your will, and no weakness keep us from doing it; that in your light we may see light clearly, and in your service find perfect freedom, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Gathering and Preparing for **God's Word**

Prelude O Worship the King arr. Love

Welcome and Announcements

Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Call to Worship Psalm 133

How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!
It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard,
on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.
It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion.
For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life forevermore.
Let us worship God!

Hymn #63 "The Lord Is God" AZMON

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Pardon

**Good and gracious God, we know that we have been stubborn
and unwilling to change.
Too often we choose comfort and convenience over the command to
love our neighbors as ourselves.
Too often we fail to examine our complicity in the greed, violence,
and injustice of this world.
Forgive us, Holy One, and help us to trust your power to make us new.**

**Where we are afraid, give us the courage to step forward in faith.
Where we are too cautious and calculating with our gifts,
move us to be abundantly generous.
Help us to share our gratitude for your goodness and grace
with all of your children.
In Christ's name we pray. Amen.**

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Lesson, *Deuteronomy 6:4-9*

Gospel Lesson, *Mark 12:29-31*

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

"Beloved Community/Divided Society"

Anthem

"For Everyone Born"

Trenney

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Affirmation of Faith, *From A Brief Statement of Faith*

We trust in God the Holy Spirit

everywhere the giver and renewer of life.

The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,

**sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor,
and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ,
the Church.**

The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles

**rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,
engages us through the Word proclaimed,
claims us in the waters of baptism,**

**feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,
and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.**

In a broken and fearful world the Spirit give us courage

**to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.**

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts
as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.**

Hymn #295

"Go to the World!"

SINE NOMINE

Charge and Benediction

Postlude

How Firm a Foundation

arr. Page

LEADING WORSHIP

Dr. Jonathan Lee Walton *preaching*

Ben Dorr, *liturgist*

Nancy Smith, *organist*

David Saliny, *cellist*

Katie Knauer, Diana Dailey, Derek Pitman, Mark Kemp, *vocalists*

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



The Heritage Lecture Series presents

Dr. Jonathan Lee Walton

Professor and author Dr. Jonathan Lee Walton will speak at Westminster on Sunday, January 17 as this year's speaker in our Heritage Lecture series. Dr. Walton comes to us from Wake Forest University, where he has been Dean of the School of Divinity, Presidential Chair in Religion and Society, and Dean of Wait Chapel since 2019.

Dr. Walton grew up mainly in Atlanta. His great-grandfather and several uncles and cousins were in the ministry, and he states he was raised as a "progressive evangelical." He attended Wofford College for one year and transferred to Morehouse College. After Morehouse, he became a licensed minister. He served as officiating pastor at Memorial West United Presbyterian Church, Newark, NJ and lecturer at Princeton University, all while pursuing his M.Div. and Ph.D. degrees at Princeton Theological Seminary. He served as an assistant professor at the University of California, Riverside from 2006 until 2010, when he became an assistant professor at Harvard Divinity School. In 2012, he was appointed Professor of Christian Morals at Harvard University, Professor of Religion and Society at Harvard Divinity School and Pusey Minister at Memorial Church at Harvard.

His writings center principally on religion, media and society in America. His book *Watch This! The Ethics and Aesthetics of Black Televangelism* (2009) is a study of African-American religious broadcasters. His most recent book, *A Lens of Love: Reading the Bible in Its World for Our World* (2018), advocates the critical reading of scripture, concentrating on the treatment of the most vulnerable and exploited in society then and now. His many articles and essays cover such topics as Black evangelicals, the "prosperity gospel" and social justice. He has delivered numerous lectures at universities and churches across the country. He has been described as "both public intellectual and prophetic preacher." Dr. Walton lives in Winston-Salem, NC with his wife Cecily Cline Walton and their three children.

The Heritage Lecture Series seeks to expand the religious horizons of Westminster Presbyterian Church and the Greenville community by inviting guest lecturers to challenge and inspire us toward deeper understanding and renewed commitment to Biblical teachings, our Judeo-Christian heritage and our responsibilities in the world.

Dr. Walton will lead our Zoom Sunday School at 10:00 am this Sunday.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94069186290?pwd=SnVjMVJOanhocVRQRUVOU00vT2phZz09>

Meeting ID: 940 6918 6290

Passcode: 454280

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING • JANUARY 31

The Session has called the annual meeting of the congregation for January 31. The purpose of the meeting is to elect twelve elders to the class of 2024, one trustee to fill an unexpired term for the class of 2025, to vote on the 2021 terms of call for the pastoral staff, and to receive the 2021 operating budget.

The names of the Session nominees are the following:

Hastings Blumer
Jay Culclasure
Ross Glidewell
Jara Jones
Meg McKnight
Kate Weaver Patterson
Toni Paylor
Neil Shurley
Keith Stevenson
Lesley Usher
LeAnne White
Russ Williams

The nominee for trustee is Paul Grier.

If we have returned to in-person worship on January 31, the meeting will occur in phases, as it did on December 6. If we have not yet returned to in-person worship, the annual congregational meeting will take place entirely over Zoom at 1pm.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

We Remember in Memoriam

Mary Dill Branch •

(6/20/1935 - 1/7/2021)

and

The family of Mary Dill Branch

"I am the resurrection and the life." -

John 11:25

GIVING HEARTS •

Financial Update @WPC

2021 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

As of Monday, January 11, we have received \$2,207,151 in pledges toward our 2021 budget goal of \$2,513,715.

For your convenience, you may pledge via our website at wpc-online.org/pledge-today, you may mail in your pledge, or send your pledge by email to the Church Financial Secretary, Sherri Owens, at sherri@wpc-online.org.

OPEN MINDS • Education@WPC

BAPTISM CLASS:

If you would like to have your child baptized at Westminster, our next Zoom class is scheduled for Sunday, January 24, at 3p. Please notify the church office if you would like to attend, and we will be glad to send you the Zoom information for this class.

YOUTH BOOK CLUBS

Join us on Sunday mornings in January (17th, 24th, 31st) from 10-11 am for Book Club via Zoom. Lauren Hood will be leading our Middlers in discussions on "What Lane?" and Mary Kathleen Duncan will be leading our Senior Highs in a discussion on "All American Boys." Come to one or all! We'd love to see you there.

SUNDAY MORNING ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

We will resume our Zoom Bible study on Sunday, January 24, at 10a.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 17 - 23, 2021

SECOND SUNDAY after EPIPHANY

9:00 a.m. Online Worship Service

10:00 a.m. Zoom Sunday School

lecture featuring

Dr. Jonathan Lee Walton

Middler Book Club (Zoom)

Senior High Book Club (Zoom)

11:15 a.m. Online Worship Service

12:30 p.m. Stated Session Meeting

MONDAY

Weekday School and Church Office Closed

3:00 p.m. Zoom It's Elementary Meeting

WENDESDAY

3:00 p.m. It's Elementary Pop-Up in Green Lot

FRIDAY

8:30 a.m. Hiking Group to
Jones Gap State Park

Amos Workman
Parish Associate
aworkman@wpc-online.org

Mark Kemp
Director of Music
mkemp@wpc-online.org

Jennifer Dillard
Volunteer Coordinator
jdillard@wpc-online.org

Kathryn Knauer
Children's Choir Coordinator
kknauer@wpc-online.org

Lauren Hood
Associate Director of Youth Ministry
lhood@wpc-online.org

Nancy Smith
Organist
nsmith@wpc-online.org

Cara Puntch
Weekday School Director
cpuntch@wpc-online.org

Sherri Owens
Financial Secretary
sherri@wpc-online.org

Michelle Little
Office Manager
michelle@wpc-online.org

Wendy Bagley
Secretary
wendy@wpc-online.org

Aly Friend
Director of Nurseries
alyfriend@wpc-online.org

CHURCH STAFF

Ben Dorr
Pastor & Head of Staff
bdorr@wpc-online.org

Leigh Stuckey
Associate Pastor
lstuckey@wpc-online.org

Mary Kathleen Duncan
Associate Pastor
mkduncan@wpc-online.org

Lauren Slingerland
Associate Pastor
lslingerland@wpc-online.org

Steve Phillips
Building Supervisor
sphillips@wpc-online.org