

the

HARBINGER

open minds open hearts

VOLUME LXXIII | JANUARY 24, 2021 | No. 37

From the Pews, Phil Gehman

The Time Has Come

Mark 1:14-20

The clock and calendar dictate much of our behavior. It's time for the news; time for school; time to go to work; time to start gathering tax documents. It's time to face the chasms of inequality in healthcare, employment, opportunity, food, and shelter that grow ever wider and deeper among us. It's time to acknowledge and respond to the disease abroad in our land.

Christ stepped into just such a setting. John the Baptist's call for repentance had been silenced by the bars of Herod's prison, and citizens struggled to find meaning and hope in the midst of Roman occupation. Mark reports in terse phrases: "Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'"

The time had come for a good word in difficult times. But the question remained, "Whom would Jesus call to share this good news?"

In the nineteenth century, Thomas Carlyle introduced the "great man theory" of history. If he were with us today, we would hope that he would call it the "great person theory." He believed that history can best be understood by looking at the impact of great men, human super heroes, born with traits and abilities that enabled them to rise and lead with historical impact. Think of Martin Luther, Eleanor Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Mother Theresa, Nelson Mandela, Angela Merkel, or Abraham Lincoln.

But Jesus did not scour the Galilean countryside looking for the "best and the brightest" to call as his disciples. He didn't perform background checks or require academic transcripts, IQ tests, professional skills, or thorough religious training to screen candidates to be his followers. For certain, he picked disciples who were anything but perfect to continue his work after he left. In other words, he called ordinary people to be reshaped by God's forgiveness in order to share the good news that God had broken into the world.

What about today? Evidence surrounds us arguing for despair and discouragement. The time once again has come for a good word to be spoken and embodied in difficult times. Whom has God chosen to share this good news?

Surely in our heart of hearts we know the answer to that question. As he extended the invitation, "Follow me," on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, Christ calls you and me to share in that company of disciples today. Life that is given meaning by the call and grace of Christ is the key that will unlock the gloom in our time. This is the gift that you and I bring to the human family; it is the offering that we give to our home, school and work environments, even in the midst of a pandemic. Ours is the good word of hope, the clear word of confidence in the inbreaking kingdom of God, for which our world hungers.

The time has come for a good word in difficult times. May God enable us to joyfully, generously, and thankfully respond to our Lord's call to discipleship in our time.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, January 24, 2021 | On Demand on Facebook & YouTube | 9a & 11:15a wpc-online.org



Third Sunday after Epiphany

Preparation for **Worship**

Loving God, through your Son you have called us to repent of our sin, to believe the good news, and to celebrate the coming of your kingdom. Strengthen us by your Spirit, that we may hear his call to discipleship, and, forsaking old ways, proclaim the gospel of new life to a broken world. Amen.

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

Prelude *"Come, Christians, Join to Sing"* arr. Jones

Welcome and Announcements

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

People: And also with you.

Call to Worship

Psalm 62:5-8

For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him.

He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

On God rests my deliverance and my honor;

my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.

Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him;

God is a refuge for us.

Let us worship God!

Hymn #327 "From All That Dwell Below the Skies" LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Pardon

Holy God, you have called us to follow your Son,

but we have been idolatrous and followed other gods.

We have neglected our duties as neighbors,

turning a blind eye to those who need our hospitality.

We have been captured by the allure of individualism,

forgetting how dependent we are on community.

Forgive us, and renew our hearts today.

Give us the courage to be faithful, the confidence to trust your love,

and the compassion we need for one another.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Presentation
Questions to the Parents
Question to the Congregation
Thanksgiving over the Water
Baptism
Prayer

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Prayer for Illumination
Epistle Lesson, Romans 12:3-5
Gospel Lesson, Mark 1:14-20

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

"He Couldn't Do It Alone"

Anthem

"I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me"

traditional

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Affirmation of Faith, *The Apostles' Creed*

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

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 #721

PESCADOR DE HOMBRES

“Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore”

Charge and Benediction

Postlude

“Rondeau”

Mouret

LEADING WORSHIP

Ben Dorr, preaching

Leigh Stuckey, Amos Workman, liturgists

Becky Warth, sponsor

Nancy Smith, organist

Judy McKenney, Emily Sweezey, Hunter Ditsch, Mark Kemp, vocalists

Join Us in Welcoming

BAPTISM

This morning we welcome into our fellowship *Henry Sawyer Morris, Maddox Charles Morris, and Benjamin Richard Morris*, sons of Bradley & Hannah Morris.

We Remember in Prayer

Lindsey Batavia on the death of her father, John H. Saunders, Sr., in Chapin, SC - 1/11/2021.

CHILDREN’S MINISTRY FAMILY EVENT

Come make a bird feeder to care for creation on Sunday, January 24. Stop by the WWS loop on Westminster Drive from 1-3p to make a bird feeder or pick up materials to take home. All families with children 5th grade or younger are welcome to join us! Contact Lauren Slingerland for more details.

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.

The meeting will be held entirely over Zoom at 1 pm. Zoom information will be sent to the congregation in the week preceding the congregational meeting. If you would like assistance with how to use Zoom, please contact the church office.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GIVING HEARTS •

Financial Update @WPC

2021 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

As of Tuesday, January 19, we have received \$2,234,351 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

YOUTH BOOK CLUBS

Join us on Sunday mornings in January (24th, 31st) from 10-11a for Book Club via Zoom. Lauren Hood will be leading our Middlers in discussions on *What Lane?* And Mary Kathleen 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

The Pastor's Zoom Bible Study resumes this Sunday, January 24, at 10 am and will run through early May. Leigh Stuckey will lead participants in engaging and provoking discussions based on the texts of the day. We hope you will join us.

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 918 5587 5662

Passcode: 785672

WESTMINSTER BOOK CLUB

The Westminster Book Club will meet Tuesday, February 2, at 7pm. Contact Ellen Stevenson (ellens7377@gmail.com) for meeting log-in information. Beth Holladay Edwards will lead our discussion of *All Fall Down* by Jennifer Weiner. Please join us! New attendees are always welcome.

JUSTFAITH: FAITH AND RACIAL HEALING

Zoom meetings resume on Monday, January 25, at 6p. For information, previously registered class members may call Susan McLeod (787-6262).

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 24 - 30, 2021

THIRD SUNDAY after EPIPHANY

9:00 a.m. Online Worship Service

10:00 a.m. Zoom Sunday Bible Study

Zoom Middler Book Club

Zoom Senior High

Book Club

11:15 a.m. Online Worship Service

1:00 p.m. Children's Ministry

Family Event in the

Westminster Drive loop

3:00 p.m. Zoom Baptism Class

MONDAY

6:00 p.m. Zoom JustFaith Meeting

THURSDAY

12:00 p.m. Zoom Endowment

Committee Meeting

At the recommendation of the Covid-19 Task Force, indoor meetings at Westminster are not taking place at this time. Please see digital communications for online meeting information.

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