

the

HARBINGER

open minds open hearts

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From the Pews, Scott Clark

A few years back, in *The New Yorker* I encountered an excerpt from a book of photographs titled “The Pillar” by photographer Stephen Gill. The excerpt in the magazine included photographs as well as an essay which accompanies the book written by acclaimed Norwegian writer Karl Ove Knausgaard. [Reader – Please know that the previous two sentences are in no way a fair portrayal of how the Clarks consume media or spend their time and likely represent the most pretentious reference I believe I can make.] The photographs themselves are stunning, showing birds in motion and existence in ways I had never seen. However, it was a piece from the essay that has been in my head through the years –

“He [Gill] told me about a pair of wood pigeons that were nesting in a tree on the property. They’d first appeared four years before, building their nest, laying eggs, hatching them, and feeding their young—and just before the young reached the fledgling age a goshawk had come and taken them. But, the following spring, the pair returned to lay new eggs, feed new young—only for the goshawk to come and take them again, just days before they were ready to fly. Strangely, this didn’t stop the pair from returning, again and again, to the very same place, with the very same result.

The story is a gruesome one. The wood pigeons did not only lose all their young that first spring; they exposed themselves to the same danger again, not just once but three times over, in each case with open eyes. They could do this only because they lack any conception of past or future, living their lives wholly and fully in the now, and in the now there is no goshawk. In the now is the nest, the eggs, the sun, the leaves of the tree, the warm air, the sounds drifting up from below, hunger, thirst, the overwhelming instinct that compels them to feed their screeching young. From the viewpoint of the wood pigeons, their life is no tragedy. They are, on the contrary, joyful: listen to how they coo, see how busily they seek food for their hungry chicks.”

There are times in our lives when burdens threaten to overwhelm us, and we walk through periods of pain for so long that we become numb to its presence. Numbness slides into sorrow, which gives way to a sadness that turns into bleakness, and life loses its luster, and then, we despair. We despair and we fear.

Perhaps you have been in that place where hope seemed like a mirage. Where happiness seemed so distant that you feared you would never feel it again. Or a place where loneliness or depression descended upon you like a cloud. Most of us will relate to this experience at some point in our lives.

Sadly, unlike the wood pigeons we have a conception of past and future and for us, seasons of despair can seem endless and unrelenting. In such times, as Psalm 42 illustrates, we must fight for hope, know that we are loved, remember the joys of the past and count on the promise of tomorrow.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, February 28, 2021 | In Person at 11:15a | Second Sunday in Lent



Preparation for **Worship**

There are many things that can only be seen through eyes that have cried.

Oscar Romero

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

Welcome and Announcements

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

People: And also with you.

Prelude

"As the Deer, Fairest Lord Jesus"

arr. Hayes

* Call to Worship

Psalm 77

I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord;

I will remember your wonders of old.

Your way, O God is holy. What god is so great as our God?

You are the God who works wonders;

you have displayed your might among the peoples.

Your way was through the sea, your path, through the mighty waters;

yet your footprints were unseen.

You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Let us worship God!

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

* Prayer of Confession

**Holy and compassionate God,
we turn to you confessing our sins,
not even aware of all the ways that we have fallen short.
We know we have not loved as you have asked us to love.
We have been quick to judge,
we have been harsh with our words,
and too often we have failed to be a voice for the voiceless.
Forgive us, O Lord, and recreate us in the image of Christ.
Help us to let go of our fears,
so that our own brokenness would be healed by your Spirit,
and your grace would flow freely from our lives of faith.
Amen.**

* Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.
People: **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

Hearing **God's Word**

Prayer for Illumination

Gospel Lesson, Matthew 14:13-21

Old Testament Lesson, Psalm 42

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

"A Diet of Tears"

Piano Meditation

"It Is Well with My Soul"

arr. Smith

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

* 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 steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.

God's mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning.

Great is your faithfulness, O Lord.

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.**

Charge and Benediction

Postlude

Trumpet Tune in F

Brunner

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Leading Worship **this Morning**

Ben Dorr, *preaching*

Lauren Slingerland, *liturgist*

Nancy Smith, *organist*

Elizabeth Palmer, *head usher*

Brian Blount, Caroline Clark, *greeters*

*All who are able may stand

About Today's Liturgy

In the month of February, we intentionally welcome diverse voices in our written liturgy for Sunday morning worship. This week, our Preparation for Worship is a quote from Oscar Romero (1917-1980), a Roman Catholic archbishop in El Salvador who spoke out on behalf of the poor and was nominated in 1979 for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Join Us in Welcoming

BAPTISM

This morning we welcome into our fellowship Elizabeth Thiel Buice, daughter of Will & Stacy Buice at our 9a recorded service.

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PARTICIPATING IN WORSHIP FROM HOME ON SUNDAY MORNING?

Our pre-recorded service will continue to air on our website at 9am, and on our social media platforms. Our in-person worship service will air on our website via livestream at 11:15a. The Harbinger that you receive in the mail will be for our pre-recorded worship. If you would like the Harbinger for our 11:15am livestream worship, you may download it from our website at <https://wpc-online.org/sermon-archive>.

WELCOMING CHILDREN IN WORSHIP

Children are always welcome in worship at Westminster, and are a vital part of our community of faith. We are aware that despite our best efforts to be child friendly, there may be a time when parents need to step away from the Sanctuary. Please know in those times that you are welcome to stream worship from the Atrium, and that there are changing tables in both sets of Atrium restrooms. An usher will be glad to show you where the restrooms and Atrium are. When appropriate, we look forward to opening the Women's Lounge and nursery. Until then, we welcome you in whatever way you need to experience worship, and especially welcome our youngest worshippers!

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SUNDAY MORNING

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

The Pastor's Zoom Bible Study is scheduled for Sunday mornings 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

ZOOM CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Join us each Sunday for a Zoom Children's Sunday School at 10a.

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 980 3425 3372

Passcode: 700049

SHEPHERD GROUPS

All Youth are invited to register now for Spring Shepherd Groups via our church website. Even if you participated in the fall, we need you to register again. Groups will begin meeting today and all meetings will be outside in backyards or the Green Lot.

JUSTFAITH:

FAITH AND RACIAL HEALING

Zoom meetings have resumed and will continue through Monday, March 22 at 6p. For information, previously registered class members may call Susan McLeod (787-6262).

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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WESTMINSTER BOOK CLUB

The Westminster Book Club will meet on Tuesday, March 2 at 7pm. Verify location or type of meeting with Ellen Stevenson (ellens7377@gmail.com). Susan Robbins will lead the discussion of The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon. Join us! New attendees are always welcome.

HIKING GROUP

The Hiking Group will meet Friday, March 12, for a hike at the Estatoe Creek Heritage Preserve. Hike Leader: Donn James (donnandsalliejames@gmail.com).

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CALENDAR OF EVENTS February 28 – March 7, 2021

February 28

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

9:00 a.m.	Online Worship Service
10:00 a.m.	Zoom Sunday Bible Study
	Zoom Children's Sunday School
	Zoom Confirmation Class
11:15 a.m.	In-Person Worship Service
1:00 p.m.	Zoom New Member Class
3:00 p.m.	Zoom New Elder Training Class
4:00 p.m.	Spring Youth Shepherd Group Kick-Off in Green Lot

March 2

TUESDAY

12:00 p.m.	Zoom Administrative Committee Meeting
7:00 p.m.	Westminster Book Club

March 7

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

9:00 a.m.	Online Worship Service
10:00 a.m.	Zoom Sunday Bible Study
	Zoom Children's Sunday School
11:15 a.m.	In-Person Worship Service
3:00 p.m.	Zoom New Elder Training Class
5:00 p.m.	WPCYG Middlers Shepherd Groups
6:30 p.m.	WPCYG Senior High Shepherd Groups

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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