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HARBINGER

open minds open hearts

VOLUME LXXIII | MARCH 7, 2021 | No. 43B

From the Pews, Jennifer McDavid

God works in mysterious ways.” How many times have we heard that cliché little statement (or any of the potentially more damaging others like “God won’t give you more than you can handle” or “Everything happens for a reason”)? Throughout history, we as humans have often tried to figure out ways that we can attribute our trials and tribulations back to God. Let’s be honest: many of us still do this. I can’t tell you how many times this year I have heard people say something to the effect of “this pandemic is happening because of our sins, such as (insert favorite sin here).” It fits our sense of legalism and fairness that in order for something bad to happen, we (or “they”) must have done something to deserve it; in other words, karma comes around to bite you on the hind parts.

I don’t know how many of you know someone who has become seriously ill or died from COVID itself. I personally know 5 people who have died and several more who continue to suffer with complications from the disease. Our country passed a grim milestone last week. We have now lost over half of a million people to COVID. If you count the people who died because their care suffered secondarily (i.e. my husband’s grandmother that died because there was not enough staff at her nursing home to replicate the care she got pre-COVID-lockdown when my mother-in-law and other family and friends could ensure that she ate at least one full good meal every day and could more tightly monitor her mental and physical status every day), that number soars to even greater heights. The people who have died did not “deserve it.” Those who continue to suffer with complications have not sinned any more than the rest of us. We cannot mentally comprehend loss this large. We have difficulty understanding how God can fit into this story of suffering on such a monumental scale, which is why we so often reach for explanations that appeal to any standard of fairness. Where is God when the suffering is so immense?

The answer is that God is always with us. God gives out grace and peace and love abundantly. God’s hands are our hands. We are called to bring God’s grace, peace, and love into the world and thereby bring this world into the fullness of creation. This year, we have done that by wearing our masks, staying home when we are sick, and reaching out to friends and family in new ways when physical distancing kept us apart. For some, being God’s hands has meant actually physically caring for people when they are sick. For others, being God’s hands has meant buying groceries for friends, family, and neighbors when you are at the store. We each have our own place in the body of God’s creation. God does indeed work in mysterious ways in that he works through us. Let us go out into the world today as the hands and feet of God. Let us ask ourselves every day how we can bring God’s light into the world. How can we love one another as God loves us?

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, March 7, 2021 | In Person at 11:15a | Third Sunday in Lent



Preparation for **Worship**

We praise you, we worship you, we adore you, gracious God. You hold the heavens in your hand, and all the stars rejoice in your glory. You come in the sunrise and the song of morn, and bless the splendor of the noonday. The stars in their courses magnify you; day and night they tell of your glory. Your peace blows over the earth, and the breath of your mouth fills all space. Your voice comes in the thunder of the storm and the song of the wind whispers your majesty. We give you thanks, O God, for your steadfast love endures forever. Amen.

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

“Melodie”

Gluck

* Call to Worship

Psalm 105:1-3

Leader: O give thanks to the Lord, call on God's name,
make known God's deeds among the peoples.

People: **Sing to God, sing praises to God;
tell of all God's wonderful works.**

Leader: Glory in God's holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

All: **Let us worship God!**

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

* Prayer of Confession

Almighty and everlasting God,
we know that our memories are selective.
We have not been honest about our own motivations,
far too eager to blame others when our own lives are broken.
We look at the world through a narrow lens,
ignoring our need for our neighbor
and forgetting our dependence on your grace.
We have placed our trust in possessions, power,
competition, and control.
Forgive us, Holy One, and shape our hearts after Christ.
Help us to grow in our faith,
so that we would approach the world with generous souls,
spreading hope and healing to all of your children.
In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

* Assurance of Pardon

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

The Sacrament of Baptism

Simmons Wills Matthews

Presentation

Questions to the Parents

Question to the Congregation

Thanksgiving over the Water

Baptism

Prayer

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Hearing **God's Word**

Prayer for Illumination

Gospel Lesson, Romans 8:31-35, 38-39

Old Testament Lesson, Psalm 107:1-31

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

“Gathered In”

Anthem

“Come Ye Disconsolate”

Johnson

*Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish;
Come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel.
Here bring your wounded hearts;
here tell your anguish.
Earth has no sorrow that heav'n cannot heal.*

*Here see the bread of life; see waters
flowing forth from the throne of God,
pure from above.
Come to the feast of love; come ever knowing.
Earth has no sorrow but heaven can remove.*

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.**

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Call to Prayer

“The Steadfast Love of the Lord”

McNeill

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.

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.**

Charge and Benediction

Postlude

Toccata in G Major

Dubois

Leading Worship **this Morning**

Ben Dorr, *preaching*

Mary Kathleen Duncan, *liturgist*

Nancy Smith, *organist/pianist*

Deirdre Hutton, *violinist*

Bradley Wingate, *head usher*

Scott Clark, Brandon Coker, *greeters*

**All who are able may stand*

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Join Us in Welcoming

BAPTISM

This morning we welcomed into our fellowship *George Henry Freeman*, son of Zach & Lee Freeman, at our 9a recorded service.

We welcome Simmons Wills Matthews, son of Dan & Sarah Matthews, in our worship this morning.

With Thanksgiving We Celebrate

The birth of a daughter, Eleanor James Mercado, to TJ & Tifani Mercado on 11/27/2020.

OPEN HEARTS • Gathering@WPC

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>.

A SEASON OF OUTDOOR WORSHIP: YOUTH SUNDAY

On Sunday, March 14 all ages are welcome to the Green Lot at 3pm for a worship service led by our older Senior High Youth. We will be exploring the theme of community through Bible stories and images. You will need to register prior to attending and you can easily do so starting Monday, March 8 at wpc-online.org. Bring a chair and a mask; we look forward to welcoming and worshipping with you!

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OPEN MINDS • Education@WPC

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.

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.

Meeting ID: 980 3425 3372

Passcode: 700049

IT'S ELEMENTARY!

On Wednesday, March 10, It's Elementary meets on Zoom to learn about Paul and the early church, explore the states of matter, and play some games together. See you at 3pm on March 10!

Meeting ID: 912 9081 0826

Passcode: 257026

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).

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 7 - 14, 2021

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
- Zoom Confirmation Class
- 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

March 10, WEDNESDAY

- 1:00 p.m. Zoom It's Elementary!

March 11, THURSDAY

- 12:00 p.m. Zoom Finance Committee Meeting

March 11, FRIDAY

- 8:00 a.m. Hiking Group to Estatoe Creek Heritage Preserve

March 14, FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Daylight Savings Time

- 8:45 a.m. Zoom Witness & Service Committee Meeting
- 9:00 a.m. Online Worship Service
- 10:00 a.m. Zoom Sunday Bible Study
- Zoom Children's Sunday School
- Confirmation Class: Session 2
- 11:15 a.m. In-Person Worship Service
- 12:30 p.m. Zoom Called Session Meeting
- 2:00 p.m. Zoom Education Committee Meeting
- 3:00 p.m. A Season of Outdoor Worship: Youth Sunday
- 5:00 p.m. WPCYG Middlers Shepherd Groups
- 6:30 p.m. WPCYG Senior High Shepherd Groups

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Remember to turn your clocks forward one hour early next
Sunday, March 14.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CHURCH STAFF

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