

the

HARBINGER

open minds open hearts

VOLUME LXXIV | August 15, 2021 | No. 14

From the Pews, George McLarty

Our scripture reading this week is Mark's reflection on an encounter between the Pharisees and Jesus. The exchange starts when the Pharisees and some scribes notice many of the disciples eating without first washing their hands. The Pharisees proceed to ask Jesus, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" But why do the Pharisees take such strong offense?

The Pharisees are known for their strong intention to obey God's law. Their passion to enforce Biblical commandments resulted in the establishment of a set of rules intended to ensure they lived in accordance with the written word. This oral interpretation became known as "the tradition of the elders" and was the accepted proper behavior of the Pharisees. Their oral laws were very specific and direct. In this case, the tradition of the elders requires that everyone wash their hands before eating as a step to ensure ritual purity. The Pharisees were likely shocked by the disciples' choice to not adhere to the oral law, by washing their hands before eating. Today, we simply think of washing hands before a meal as good hygiene but likely not ritual purity.

Jesus did not appreciate the Pharisees calling out the disciples, and he defends the disciples in his response. He knows the disciples well, sees their actions, and undoubtedly knows that they are followers of God's word. Jesus also seems to disagree with some of the oral interpretations and feels these traditions are inferior to the written word.

This passage makes us think about the societal norms and traditions of today; they are all around us. No matter their origin, societal norms impact our families and social networks. Many of today's traditions do not have a Biblical origin. Even more, these norms are often influenced by our culture and social media. If we do something out of tradition, is it for the right reasons? Are we challenging these traditions or simply following others? Do we place judgment on others for not following certain traditions we find important?

The pandemic has forced all families to deviate from many of our traditions. We altered our celebration of birthdays, graduations, vacation travel, holiday gatherings, anniversaries, weddings, baptisms, worship, and more. Did you struggle with having some of these norms taken away? Or are you okay with leaving some of those previous norms behind?

As we reflect on our passage, we should continue to challenge our own traditions and frequently reevaluate why these traditions remain important in today's world. May we learn from the Pharisees' actions and resist the urge to judge traditions that contrast our own.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, August 15, 2021 | In-Person at 10a | Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost



Preparation for **Worship**

Fill us with your holy love, O Lord, and open the treasures of your wisdom to us. You alone know all that we desire. So perfect what you have begun in us, and answer the prayers you instill in us through the stirring of your Holy Spirit. Even as we seek your face, turn to us and show us your glory. Then our longing will be satisfied, and our peace will be complete.

Based on a prayer of Augustine of Hippo

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	"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"	arr. N. Smith
Introit	"God Reveal Your Presence"	Tersteegen

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

* Call to Worship

Psalm 111:1-2, 9-10

Leader: Praise the Lord!

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

**People: Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them.**

Leader: God sent redemption to God's people;
God has commanded God's covenant forever.

**People: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
God's praise endures forever.**

All: Let us worship God!

* Hymn No. 49

"The God of Abraham Praise"

Leoni

* Prayer of Confession

Good and gracious God,

we know that we get stuck in our ways.

**We would rather take the comfortable path
than the challenging road.**

**We are more focused on the way we've always done things
than on becoming the people you have called us to be.**

**We trust in the world's wisdom instead of your grace,
and are reluctant to let Jesus lead us.**

Forgive us, O Lord, and remake us in Christ's image.

**Help us to cherish people instead of possessions,
to value relationships over being right,
and to open our hearts to the transforming claim
that Christ makes on our lives. Amen.**

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

* Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

* Gloria Patri (Hymnal, No. 581)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.

Hearing **God's Word**

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Lesson, Isaiah 29:13-16

p. 572

Gospel Lesson, Mark 7:1-8

p. 818

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

"Breaking Tradition"

Responding to **God's Word**

* Affirmation of Faith, *from The Confession of 1967*

The reconciling work of Jesus was the supreme crisis in the life of humankind.

His cross and resurrection become personal crisis and present hope for women and men when the gospel is proclaimed and believed.

In this experience, the Spirit brings God's forgiveness to all, moves people to respond in faith, repentance, and obedience, and initiates the new life in Christ.

The new life takes shape in a community in which people know that God loves and accepts them in spite of what they are.

They therefore accept themselves and love others, knowing that no one has any ground on which to stand, except God's grace.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Choral Call to Prayer "O Lord, Hear My Prayer" Berthier

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.**

Offering

Offertory "I Will Lift Mine Eyes" Runestad

* Doxology (Hymnal, No. 606)

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God,
all creatures here below; Praise God above, ye heavenly
host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

* Prayer of Dedication

* Hymn No. 63 AZMON

"The Lord Is God"

* Charge and Benediction

* Choral Response "To God all Glory, Praise and Love" Mason

* Postlude "A Song of Praise" Handel

**All who are able may stand*

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Leading in Worship **this Morning**

Ben Dorr, *preaching*

Lauren Slingerland, *liturgist*

Nancy Smith, *organist/pianist*

Sanctuary Choir Ensemble

Ross Glidewell, *head usher*

Tony Atkins, Sarah Beasley, *greeters*

In Memoriam

Carl Nuttall

(3/6/1950 - 8/5/2021)

"I am the resurrection and the life."

- John 11:25

We Remember in Prayer

The family of Carl Nuttall

OPEN HEARTS • Gathering@WPC

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

Children are invited to bring their backpack for a blessing on August 29 at 9:30a in the Sanctuary Atrium. Along with prayers for a year of learning and growing, they'll receive a backpack tag to remind them of God's love through the school year and an extra donut! Join us as we celebrate and pray for a new school year!

SUMMER/FALL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

We will continue our Summer Worship Schedule of one worship service at 10a through Sunday, September 5th. Following worship on September 5th, we will pack meals to alleviate global hunger through Rise Against Hunger.

Join us September 12th for Rally Day (breakfast at 9a, Sunday School at 10a, and worship at 11:15a).

On September 19th, we'll resume worship services at 9a and 11:15a with Sunday School at 10a.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OPEN MINDS • Giving@WPC

RISE AGAINST HUNGER:

Make plans to stay after worship on Sunday, September 5th (Labor Day Weekend) for Rise Against Hunger, a fun opportunity for folks of all ages to make a collective impact. Together, we will alleviate hunger by packing 20,000 life-sustaining meals for communities across the globe, including those where Westminster has partnerships in Africa and the Caribbean. Meal packing will take place in the Fellowship Hall immediately following worship, and volunteers are also needed to set up and clean up. Registration is strongly encouraged: [http://events.riseagainsthunger.org/WestminsterPres2021 Questions?](http://events.riseagainsthunger.org/WestminsterPres2021Questions?) Contact Julia Watkins.

OPEN HEARTS • Gathering@WPC

SUPPER WITH SEVEN

SEPTEMBER – NOVEMBER

Sharing a meal is one of the best ways to establish or renew relationships with members of the Westminster church community. Supper With Seven is a group of church members – some couples, some singles, some older and some younger – gathering for a series of two or three meals at times convenient to the group. Deadline to sign up is Monday, August 30.

To sign up, return this form to the church office, or fill out the online form on the church website (<https://wpc-online.org/events-registration/supper-with-seven/>).

Name(s): _____

Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Please check as many as apply:

_____ I/We would be willing to host a first gathering of seven or so people.

_____ I/We cannot host the first gathering, but would consider a subsequent one.

_____ I/We cannot host but would like to be part of a group.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OPEN HEARTS • Education@WPC

IT'S ELEMENTARY

It's Elementary kicks off on Wednesday, September 1! This fall, students will explore the stories of children in the Bible. As they learn about God's faithfulness, they will learn how they are part of God's story, they are God's children, and they belong in this faith family at Westminster Presbyterian. Children in 1st through 5th grades gather in grade level groups where volunteers lead a Bible story, crafts and recreation.

Each week, It's Elementary meets from 2:45-4:30p. Registration is required and runs from August 1-15. After school tutoring is offered this year from 2:15-2:45 for children from Augusta Circle Elementary. Children registered for after school will be provided with a snack, homework help, and free time. Qualified staff members will support and nurture our children in after school care. You can find the link to register for It's Elementary on our church website.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 15 - 22, 2021

Sunday, August 15

12th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

10:00a Worship Service

11:00 Fellowship with donuts

11:15 Stated Session Meeting

Tuesday, August 17

12:00p Gifts & Gratitude Committee Meeting (Zoom)

Wednesday, August 18

7:00 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, August 22

13th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

9:00a Education Committee Meeting

10:00 Worship Service

11:00 Fellowship with donuts

11:15 Youth Group Orientation/Parent Meeting

2:00p Youth Group Advisor Training

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CHURCH STAFF

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WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THE SESSION

The Class of 2022

Talitha Allen

Michael Dixon

Sarah Beasley

Ben Edwards

Brian Blount

Ashley Gettys

Scott Clark

Anna Hanor

Brandon Coker

Susan Jones

Bob Dellert

Becky Warth

The Class of 2023

Mary Ashmore

Kevin Lancaster

Tony Atkins

Lisa Mangione

Jeff Beck

Rob Morgan

Emily Busby

Carl Muller

Caroline Clark

Mae Todd Mullins

Durden Collins

Laura Williams Sanders

The Class of 2024

Hastings Blumer

Toni Paylor

Jay Culclasure

Neil Shurley

Ross Glidewell

Keith Stevenson

Jara Jones

Lesley Usher

Meg McKnight

LeAnne White

Kate Weaver Patterson

Russ Williams