



Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Preparation for **Worship**

“Midway along the journey of our life, I woke to find myself in a dark wood, for I had wandered off from the straight path...How I entered there I cannot truly say, I had become so sleepy at the moment when I first strayed, leaving the path of truth.”

Dante, *The Inferno*

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 "Be Thou My Vision" arr. Love

Introit "We Praise You, O God" Lawes

* Call to Worship from Psalm 107:1-2

Leader: O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good;

People: God’s steadfast love endures forever.

Leader: Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,
those God redeemed from trouble.

**People: God gathered them in from the lands,
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.**

All: Let us worship God!

* Hymn No. 475 "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" NETTLETON

* Prayer of Confession

Almighty and merciful God,

we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep.

We have followed too much the devices

and desires of our own hearts.

We have offended against your holy laws.

We have left undone those things which

we ought to have done,

and we have done those things which

we ought not to have done.

O Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lead us to repentance,

and restore us to faithful paths once again.

Help us to live holy, humble, just, and joyful lives,

for the sake of Jesus Christ, through whom we pray. Amen.

* 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.

Children in K5 - first grade are invited to leave for Children’s Church.

Hearing **God’s Word**

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Lesson, *Ezekiel 34:11-15* p. 702

Gospel Lesson, *Luke 15:1-10* p. 850

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon “One in a Hundred”

Responding to **God’s Word**

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

We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father.

In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone

equally in God’s image, male and female,

of every race and people, to live as one community.

But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.

Ignoring God’s commandments, we violate the image of God in

others and ourselves, accept lies as truth,

exploit neighbor and nature,

and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.

We deserve God’s condemnation.

Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.

In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah chose

a covenant people to bless all families of the earth.

Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel

from the house of bondage.

Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.

Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,

like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home,

God is faithful still.

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 "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" arr. Lojeski

* 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. 187 “Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us” BRADBURY

* Charge and Benediction

* Choral Response "Glory Be to the Father" Lawes

* Postlude "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" arr. Limbaugh

**All who are able may stand*

Leading Worship **this Morning**

Ben Dorr, *preaching*

Leigh Stuckey, *liturgist*

Nancy Smith, *organist/pianist*

Sanctuary Choir Ensemble

Brandon Coker, *head usher*

Hastings Blumer, Emily Busby, *greeters*

With Thanksgiving We Celebrate Nursery/Children’s Church

BIRTHS

The birth of twins, *John Finla Murphy* and *Margaret Anne Murphy*, to Hunter & Erin Murphy on Tuesday, August 17, 2021.

Childcare is available for infants through four-year kindergarten. Our childcare program provides safe, secure nurseries for our babies and toddlers during worship services. Our nurturing staff of experienced caregivers and parent volunteers offers a welcoming environment to all children.

During worship, children in K5–1st grade follow one of our ministers out for Children’s Church.

In Memoriam

Mary Poe
(12/27/1926 – 8/12/2021)

Eleanor ter Horst
(7/14/1931 – 8/20/2021)

*“I am the resurrection and the life.”
– John 11:25*

We Remember in Prayer

The family of Mary Poe
The family of Eleanor ter Horst

OPEN HEARTS • Gathering@WPC

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

Children are invited to bring their backpack for a blessing this Sunday, 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. Join us as we celebrate and pray for a new school year!

SAVE THE DATES FOR

WOMEN OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS!

• **September 30, 6:30p**

Fall Women of Westminster Social at home of LeAnne White (9 Rockingham Rd., 29607)

• **October 3, 12:30p**

Churchwide Chili Cook Off Luncheon

Contact Coleman Dixon at 607-8778 for more information or to enter the cook off!

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.

Our Fall Schedule will resume on September 12th, with worship at 9a, and 11:15a, and Sunday School at 10a.

BAPTISM CLASS

If you would like to have your child baptized at Westminster, our next Baptism class is scheduled for Sunday, September 12, at 4p. Please notify the church office if you would like to attend, and we will be glad to send you the information for this class.

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? Contact Julia Watkins.

OPEN MINDS • Education@WPC

JUNIOR AND SENIOR CHORISTERS RETURN!

We are pleased to welcome back the Junior Choristers (gr. 1-2) and Senior Choristers (gr. 3-5) on Wednesday afternoons. These choirs meet immediately following the It's Elementary program from 4:30 until 5:15 and are led by Katie Knauer and Mark Kemp. We are fortunate to have large meeting spaces to allow us to safely spread out, and all participants will be required to wear masks. Register your child on the event registration page at wpc-online.org. Please contact Katie Knauer (kknauer@wpc-online.org) or Mark Kemp ([mkemp@wpc-online.org](mailto:m Kemp@wpc-online.org)) for more information.

INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK RETURNS SEPTEMBER 19-25

Extend hospitality to families through the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN), which helps people experiencing homelessness achieve self-sufficiency and fulfillment. Through IHN, Westminster welcomes parents and children to stay in the church as they work toward sustainable independence. Volunteers are needed to stay overnight, prepare meals, extend fellowship, grocery shop, and offer on-call medical advice. Questions? Contact Kelly Taylor (bkewc.taylor@gmail.com).

In preparation for IHN, the Women of Westminster will be collecting the following items between August 15-September 15:

- travel sizes of deodorant,
- soap,
- shampoo/conditioner,
- male/female razors (disposable),
- shaving cream/gel,
- toothpaste/toothbrush/mouthwash,
- hairbrushes,
- shower caps,

as well as G-rated DVDs, new or like-new family games, craft items, and kid-friendly puzzles. Drop off outside the front office.

MOVIE GROUP

The Movie Group will meet this Sunday, August 29. A movie will be selected when the schedule is released. We generally meet to watch a movie, then gather afterward at a restaurant for discussion and fellowship. Anyone is welcome to join us. For more information, contact Susan Robbins (270-6747 or jamrobbins@aol.com) and you will be put on our email list.

WPC BOOK CLUB:

The Westminster Book Club will meet Tuesday, September 7, at 7p at McAlister's Deli (Augusta St.). Arrive at 6:30p if you want to have dinner and fellowship before the meeting. Susan Robbins will lead the discussion of *The Baker's Secret* by Stephen P. Kieman. Join us! New attendees are always welcome.

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THE HARBINGER

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 29 - September 5, 2021

Sunday, August 29

14th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

- 9:30a Blessing of the Backpacks
- 10:00 Worship Service
- 11:00 Fellowship in the Atrium
- 5:00p Youth Group Kick-Off

Wednesday, September 1

- 2:20p WPC Kids After School
- 2:45 It's Elementary
- 4:30 Junior & Senior Choristers
- 7:00 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, September 5

15th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

- 9:00a Membership Committee Meeting
- 10:00 Worship Service
- 11:15 Rise Against Hunger

SUPPERS 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. Suppers 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.

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the
HARBINGER
open minds open hearts

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From the Pews, Russ Williams

During my teenage years, I often heard my parents making statements out of concern that one of their children could fall in with the “wrong crowd.” It was clear to me at a fairly young age that there were certain groups of kids that I was to avoid so as to not fall into a pattern of bad behavior or engage in dangerous activities. Many years later, Josie and I, as concerned and responsible parents, did our best to encourage our three children to associate with the “good kids,” those showing high character, studying hard and exhibiting the proper behaviors. The old saying “birds of a feather flock together” comes to mind as we think about the parental desire to have our kids associate with the right sort of folks. As an aside, after raising three children into young adulthood, with all of the related challenges, Josie and I have become much more humble about our parenting skills and less likely to be critical of the parenting and behaviors of others!

Our scripture today, Luke 15:1-10, begins with a clear exhibition of the concern of the Pharisees about Jesus and his tendency to associate with the “wrong” sort of people: tax collectors and sinners. In verse 2, “And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying “This man receives sinners and eats with them,”” it is apparent that the Pharisees are being critical of Jesus and his choice to eat and socialize with the less than righteous. The passage goes on to tell the parables of the Lost Sheep (15:3-7) and the Lost Coin (15:8-10).

So what message can we take from today's scripture? The parables and Jesus' proactive association with the less than respectable members of society seem to emphasize a few themes. The overriding theme is that Jesus fully embraces those whom the rest of the society shuns and rejects. Another theme evident in the two parables is that, in spite of very low odds of recovery, the lost sheep and the lost coin are sought with great diligence and energy. The sheep, one of a flock of one hundred, would, as a practical matter, not likely survive in the wilderness if it could be found at all. Likewise, finding the coin in the dusty and primitive housing of that era would be a difficult exercise. These lost items seem to represent the sinners or the rejects of society that may be very difficult to bring to repentance. Interestingly, the scripture does not seem to condemn the sinners but rather emphasizes the great celebration and feasting that occurs when the lost are found (seemingly meaning that the sinner is brought to the faith).

Like Jesus, it seems that the church is being called to welcome all: sinners, tax collectors and the Pharisees among us. It also seems that we are asked to enthusiastically seek out opportunities to act in spiritual humbleness rather than with the attitude of self-righteousness exhibited by the Pharisees as they openly criticize Jesus as he breaks bread with undesirables. As with the shepherd and the woman, Jesus does not waver in his quest to bring home the lost. As in the parables in this selection, in spite of the seemingly impossible recovery of the lost, all is possible with God!

