"CLARK HOUSE" IS DEDICATED

On Sunday, December 13, the property at 1307 N. Rodney Street purchased by Westminster this past July, was dedicated as Clark House in honor of the tireless and faithful work of late WPC member James S. Clark. Jim offered countless hours of volunteer time with the residents of our Burton and Daughtry house transitional houses and the staff of Friendship House who manage these sites. Most significantly, Jim served as Chair of the Burton House Program Board that provided strategic guidance and tactical oversight to this joint ministry, which will now expand to include Clark House.

We express deep gratitude to the team that spearheaded the acquisition of this wonderful property; the volunteers who worked long hours under the guidance of our New Life Furnishings Program Director, Joyce Ruston, to put donated furniture and household goods in place as they transformed the house into a home; Westminster staff members who facilitated the project; and individual donors who gave generously to help defray the costs of the house purchase.

Continued on page 4
Raise your hand and shout if you never want to see another year like 2020. I say unequivocally, "Goodbye, good riddance, and please, please, please, never return!"

Prior to 2020, when I heard the word "plague," I thought it was something to read about in the Bible or history books. I pictured Moses squaring off with Pharaoh in ancient Egypt or the Black Death sweeping across Europe, Africa, and Asia in the 14th century. I am still amazed that in the 21st century a virus brought most of the world to its knees. I never imagined that we would one day need to shelter in place for months, carry out our ministry online, avoid dining in a restaurant, and keep our distance from family members who were not part of our household. I never dreamed of being prevented from entering a hospital to visit members, or families being forced to say goodbye to loved ones over the phone, or not being able to hug loved ones.

The past year devastated many businesses and put millions out of work. It laid bare some of the inequalities in our economy and exposed the widening gap between the rich and the poor.

Of course, COVID-19 was not the only culprit to make 2020 a year to scorn. Protests and riots in reaction to systemic racism, attempts to overturn the certified results of the presidential election, a record number of Atlantic hurricanes (records date back to 1851), enormous wildfires in Australia that killed as many as a billion animals, and currently on track to be the warmest year ever recorded, all contributed to a troublesome year for our planet.

However, as bad as it was, 2020 was not a complete disaster. It taught us some valuable lessons and reminded...
us of things we had previously taken for granted. Surely most of us have deepened our appreciation for time with our family and friends. I will never again take hugs for granted!

Surely we will never take health care workers for granted or forget how dangerous their environment can be. I have a greatly renewed appreciation for those who teach, protect our communities, stock our grocery shelves, pick up our trash, deliver items to our front door, and drive buses.

One of the lessons I learned is to never again take for granted the chance to gather together with our church family for worship and to sing. One of the blessings of COVID-19 was to force us into becoming more creative in how we carry out our ministry and upping our game online.

Although you might feel a sense of satisfaction in slamming the door on 2020, you might benefit from pondering the gifts the past year gave you. What can you name?

As we begin 2021, I am hopeful. The coming year looks brighter to me and I pray it will be true. Simply knowing that a vaccine will be available casts an entirely new light on the year to come. Exactly what this new year will bring is unknown, however I hope that each of us will keep in mind that how we choose to live it is within our grasp. Will you bow to your anxiety or will you reach into your depths for the intrepid Spirit that waits to be awakened? Will you allow your small self to dominate your dealings with others, or will you heed the whispers of God to let the light of Christ shine through you?

I pray that in 2021, your journey of faith will be such a rich and exciting adventure that 12 months from now, you will be able to say, "What a wonderful year!"

Blessings,
Continued from front cover...

How blessed we are to have this expanded opportunity to partner with Friendship House as together we aid those in our community working to transition from experiencing homelessness into a new home and community.
"Bring It! SATURDAY"

A COLLECTION EVENT FOR FRIENDSHIP HOUSE

Saturday, January 9
9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Westminster Parking Lot

Not one of us needs to be reminded of the challenges our country and the world have faced this year. As we say goodbye to 2020 (!) and greet the new year with anticipation and hope, I want to invite you to be a part of “Bring It! Saturday,” a properly-distanced, mask-required, drop-off collection event for Friendship House.

The pandemic has hit the homeless, and those at risk of becoming homeless, particularly hard. Please help us collect items that will directly help those served by Friendship House.

1. Our annual “Helping Hands” glove and mitten collection will take place on this day. Please bring new gloves and mittens for men, women and children. These will go to those served by Friendship House’s Empowerment Centers and Code Purple.

2. This year, we will also collect new socks. All sizes are appreciated, but men’s are particularly needed.

3. The (Friendship House) Clothing Bank will have its van in our parking lot that morning to collect your gently used clothing, winter coats and blankets.

4. Friendship House is still providing hot coffee to those without shelter. Please consider a donation of bulk-size ground coffee, powdered creamer, or sugar.
Over the past six years, you have donated thousands of pairs of gloves and mittens to those served by Friendship House’s programs. Please join me on January 9 in the Westminster parking lot and add to this collection in this unprecedented year. Collection areas will be marked by signs and balloons. Please don’t forget to keep your masks on and practice responsible social distancing protocol as you drop off your items!

As Westminster’s representative on the Friendship House Board of Directors, I am always happy to talk with you about WPC’s involvement and answer any questions you might have. Please call me at (302) 379-1575 for information or if you would like to become more involved with any of the Friendship House ministries. Thank you for all you do, and I look forward to seeing you on January 9!

- Sandy King

DO YOU MAKE RECURRING ONLINE PLEDGE PAYMENTS?

Are you one of our faithful who gives regular donations online? Remember to update your periodic payment amount to reflect your 2021 pledge. You should do this before January 13, 2021.

Go to www.wpc.org and click “Donate Now” to log in. Under “My Scheduled Transactions,” click Edit and update the dollar amount only if necessary. Please do not add a transaction (unless you have deleted the existing transaction). Contact Colleen Falasco at cfalasco@wpc.org or (302) 654-5214 ext. 131 if you have any questions.
BIBLEBOX – CHRIST-CENTERED CREATIVITY GOES VIRTUAL AT WESTMINSTER

Westminster Christian Education and Youth Music rolled out a new virtual Sunday school offering this past semester: BibleBox. The program is the brainchild of Alexis Droke, Director of Music for Children and Youth at Westminster. Ms. Alexis says, “I was actually inspired by my recipe delivery service. I realized how nice it was during the pandemic to have a project I could work on that was delivered to my house each week, and I thought, I wonder if we can adapt this to help our families still have a Sunday school experience, even if they can’t come to church in person.”

At the beginning of the semester, each child received the iconic light blue box containing folders with each week’s craft for the duration of the program. Then each week Ms. Alexis would post a video to the WPC YouTube Channel with that week’s lesson and worked through the craft in real-time. The program was offered to two age groups, with each group having unique projects.

Alexis Droke leads a video lesson and fun craft for kids every week.
“I think the families really appreciated the flexibility the program offered,” Ms. Alexis explained. “They were able to do each lesson on their own time and at their own pace. I also hope it provided them with a moment of peace each week.”

The program required a lot of work and forethought. Each craft was designed by Ms. Alexis from scratch. The episodes were filmed at the church with the beautiful backdrop of the mural in Classroom 4, the Art Room. Ms. Alexis noted, “It was a lot of fun to explore new video editing and filming techniques while trying to bring this program to life. I am looking forward to learning more as the program continues.”

BibleBox will return in the new year with an expanded scope. The program will run for 11 weeks starting on Valentine’s Day, February 14, through April 25. A new group will be added, making the age groups 1) age 2 – preK, 2) kindergarten – 2nd grade, and 3) 3rd grade through 5th grade.

Families who are already participating will be automatically enrolled in the next semester’s program. If you would like to join BibleBox, please email Ms. Alexis at alexisdroke@wpc.org to be placed on the participant list.
Today’s Age of Conflict: Causes, Cures and Challenges

Thursdays, January 7, 14, 21 and 28
7:00 p.m. on Zoom
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86027521655
Zoom Meeting ID: 860 2752 1655

Current and Historical Ages of Conflict (January 7)
The heightened polarization and conflict of today is not unprecedented. It has happened in the past, and there are lessons to be learned about its causes, cures and the challenges to remedying it. Many believe those who disagree with them are the cause of the conflict, but this diagnosis misses the more fundamental causes that create the tensions evidenced by both sides. Societies create instruments to accomplish necessary social goals, but these institutions become increasingly ineffective as the circumstances that existed at the time of their creation change. This causes conflict. Unless this dysfunction is remedied, the conflict will only continue and heighten, often resulting in violence and a coercive political response.

Today’s Economic Problems and Divide: Energy, Equality and the Middle Class (January 14)
The prosperity of the postwar decades was built on oil and an increasingly prosperous middle class. However, the more recent decades have seen the security and prosperity of the middle class impaired, and that economic stress has created social and familial stresses, including heightened racism and intolerance. And the oil based economy needs to adapt to climate change that threatens our economic and physical well-being.

Today’s Social Problems and Divide: Church, Community, Meritocracy and the “Left Behind” (January 21)
The economic problems of today have caused and been caused by a plethora of social problems. The decline of the family, community and religion has created a stress on the very purpose and meaning of each
of us. Are money, power and fame the only currency of happiness today? And what of those who have been left behind from the prosperity experienced by those in the “meritocracy”? The economic challenges of the middle class are compounded by a diminished sense of self-worth that family, community and religion may be failing to remedy.

**We Can Fix This: The Challenge Is Political But the Dangers Are Real (January 28)**

The problems are complex and the causes many, but we have the ability to solve them. The problem is political. Western Civilization and the United States have reformed themselves in the past. Free markets structured by law can produce corrective change, but not if those who benefit from the status quo have the political or monopolistic power to frustrate change. Democracies have the ability to produce change responsive to the needs of the majority, but not if politics is dominated by moneyed interests or the electoral process is distorted to disenfranchise the majority. The history of the United States and Europe from the late 1800s to 1945 demonstrates the possibilities for reform and the dangers of failing to reform with uncanny parallels to today.

**GUATEMALA CHICKEN UPDATE**

During Advent, members of Westminster made generous contributions to the Guatemala Egg-Laying Chicken project. As of mid-December, the Guatemala Partnership of New Castle Presbytery had already received funds for 435 chickens! This means that 145 indigenous families will have more than a dozen eggs each week for protein. Thank you!

This project will continue into the new year, so if you have not made a gift yet, there is still time! A gift of $40 will purchase a set of three chickens for a family struggling with food insecurity. To learn more about this project and donate online, visit [www.ncpguatemala.com/chickens](http://www.ncpguatemala.com/chickens). Custom gift cards for any occasion are available.
We are called as Christians to care for God’s creation, and there are many practical ways to do so. What follows are ways to help improve the sustainability of the planet.

Environmental justice lies at the intersection of improving the environment and addressing the injustices present in society. While at first glance these two topics may seem disparate, a closer look shows that they are, in fact, highly connected. Therefore, this article is devoted to outlining the ways that they are linked, and a future Chimes article will provide concrete ways to support environmental justice in the Wilmington area as well as globally.

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) states that environmental justice “seeks equity for minority and low-income communities that may be disproportionately exposed – and vulnerable – to adverse environmental impacts. Simply put, practicing environmental justice ensures that everyone has an equal seat at the table where decisions are made.” The description highlights two major components of environmental justice: first, that certain communities are disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation; and second, these communities are excluded from decision making regarding this degradation. This description includes the terms “equity”, “equal”, and “justice”. The graphic below illustrates these terms in this context. The goal of environmental justice, therefore, is to address current environmentally-based inequities.
There are many examples of environmental injustice as outlined in a recent presentation by Delaware Interfaith Power and Light (DeIPL). The inset provides examples of environmental justice issues as stated by DeIPL and other sources. Each item in the list can easily be expanded to include additional examples of environmental injustice, but you can see the breadth of scope of the connection between justice and the environment.

Environmental justice’s two core aspects of earth care and social justice creates a unique opportunity for two Westminster committees to work together to promote education and advocacy (hence this article!): the Earth Care Task Force and the Peace and Justice Work Group. Hopefully upon reading this article you are now aware of the importance of environmental justice and how it plays an important role in the lives of many underserved communities.

Look for “Environmental Justice Part 2” in the next Chimes issue for actions we can take.

**Examples of Environmental Injustice**

- **Air Pollution.** Air pollution is responsible for over 100,000 deaths in the U.S. and 5 million deaths worldwide each year, with a higher concentration of harmful pollutants concentrated in poor communities of color. In New Castle County, for example, neighborhoods of people of color have over four times the number of facilities emitting air pollutants and almost twice the cancer risk versus white neighborhoods. This is also part of the reason why black Americans have a COVID mortality rate more than twice that of white Americans.

- **Water Pollution.** Children of migrant farmworker families, those in rural areas, in low-income communities, and in indigenous communities are more likely to have contaminated water than those in other communities. As a result, these communities can exhibit widespread health issues.

*Continued on page 14*
• **Climate Change.** Climate change disproportionately impacts women, people of color, and indigenous communities: members of these groups are more likely to be displaced or die due to climate change effects. Models predict an increase in droughts in Latin America, causing a growth in hunger and malnutrition for subsistence farming families. This effect correspondingly results in an increase of crime in an already dangerous region and exacerbates its migrant refugee crisis. In addition, rising temperatures and drought cause increased wildfires, which collectively affects the air quality for everyone.

• **Toxic Waste.** A recent report shows that more than half of people in the U.S. who live within 1.86 miles of a facility that produces toxic waste are people of color.

• **Food System.** Racism inherently exists in the food system, beginning in the slavery era. A dichotomy exists: one group of privileged people wastes a large amount of food, whereas another group suffers from food insecurity. The charity Feeding America has indicated that one in four black children in America are food insecure.

• **Food Deserts.** Food deserts, occasionally referred to as food apartheid, exist in low-income communities and communities of color where access to fresh, healthy food is limited due to geographical and financial reasons. As a result, these communities have higher rates of health problems due to the high consumption of processed foods.

• **Lead.** Children of color are much more likely to experience lead poisoning from either lead-based paint or from their water (recall the Flint, MI crisis) than Caucasians.

• **Energy Inequity.** The minority and low-income communities located near power plants and mining facilities are disproportionately affected by the environmental burdens imposed by these facilities. In addition, when hydroelectric dams are built these types of communities are excluded from the planning process, often resulting in their displacement. Finally, 37 million American homes are unable to meet a household's energy needs due to financial inequalities.

• **Severe Weather.** Climate change results in more severe weather, including (1) increased extreme heat-related illnesses and deaths; (2) increased coastal/inland flooding, which exposes populations to a range of negative health impacts; and (3) increased water temperatures and flooding, which could result in increased water-related viral and bacterial infections. All three effects disproportionately impact poorer communities and communities of color.

Further reading:


• DNREC, *Environmental Justice*.


The Guatemala Partnership of New Castle Presbytery invites you to an evening filled with sweet bites, celebration and camaraderie! Registration is $52 per household. This includes: four hand-crafted Guatemalan/Nicaraguan chocolate bars from Triangle Roasters and Diego’s Chocolates (delivered right to your front door), an interactive tasting with chocolate sommelier Estelle Tracy of 37 Chocolates, a virtual journey to visit with our partners in Guatemala and see their work in action, and a $20 tax-deductible donation. Makes a great “date night” or “family fun night.” All are welcome! Click here to register.
THREE POTTER’S FIELDS

By Faith Kuehn

A potter’s field is cemetery for poor, unclaimed, or indigent people. Potter’s fields forever hold the remains of those who have lived among us and our collective history. Discerning their stories helps preserve the voice of people often left out of our historical narrative. Lost, forgotten, or ignored cemeteries reflect a lack of respect and denied dignity.

There are three Potter’s Fields on the Delaware Department of Health and Social Service’s Herman Holloway Campus in New Castle. Since 1979, The New Castle County Potter’s field has received more than 1,000 burials from the State’s Indigent Burial Program. In 2012, I organized the Friends of the Potter’s Field to clean up this site and erect a monument listing grave marker numbers and names. The Friends next worked to recognize the Spiral Cemetery. It had been surrounded by trees and hidden from view and memory until the Friends developed a plan to restore dignity to those buried there. This Potter’s Field for the Delaware State Hospital has 776 graves, with burials from 1891 to 1983. A monument was created in 2016, giving a name to each marker number and a historical marker dedicated.

From 1891 until 1933, the Farnhurst Potter’s Field served people who died in the almshouse and New Castle County Hospital. In the 1960s, an interchange was planned to connect I-95 and Delaware Memorial Bridge, right over the Farnhurst Potter’s Field. Highway department officials could not uncover any the names of the deceased in this cemetery. Construction proceeded, covering 85% of the graves and markers with a 20-foot-high embankment. A promised marker describing the Potter’s Field was never installed. For nearly 50 years, the site was neglected and nearly forgotten, accumulating construction debris and trash, and a tangle of vines and trees. The Friends worked with District 13 Senator David McBride to clean up this Potter’s Field. A historical marker was dedicated on November 1, 2020.
Available records reveal that some of those buried in the three Potter’s Fields were stillborn, premature babies, and infants. Several were killed by accident or taken by diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and cancer. There were people with disabilities, dementia, and mental illness. A number of veterans are buried in the two historical cemeteries. Many were laborers, essential workers of their time. The identity of others has been lost to history. Several were immigrants. Like generations of immigrants before them, and generations to follow, they likely came to America seeking freedom and a better life.

Now that these three cemeteries have been recognized, the work ahead is to develop plans for long-term maintenance and appreciation. The Friends of the Potter’s Fields will be reorganized for these purposes, and will offer tours, presentations, and work days.

In these times of deep divisions within our state and country, those buried here have brought people together. These long-departed souls, parents and children, black and white, soldiers, farm workers, and servants have a message for us today. They remind us of our common humanity. They remind us that we can rise above divisions to acknowledge the dignity of each person. They remind us that our care for the dead must always include the stranger, the forgotten, the poor, and the indigent. We must demand justice for those who have no voice, or whose voices have not been heard and need to be amplified. We raise our voices above all the currents and counter currents of these times to and acknowledge the dignity of those buried here.

For more information or to join the Friends, contact Faith Kuehn at fbkuehn@gmail.com. Be sure to also check out this educational video: youtu.be/ADttt9sU_eg.
Last month we introduced you to our work of discerning a way forward for Westminster. We've started talking with you and we're really enjoying it. Thank you if you have taken the time to talk with one of the members of the discernment team. We're already gaining insight on the things that are important to our congregation.

The Challenge

A couple of people asked why would we want to make change, especially during a pandemic. Well, quite frankly, the pandemic is only confirming that we must make change. Two prolific Christian authors have written books in the last 22 years so specifically addressing this that they put it in the titles: Why Christianity Must Change or Die (John Shelby Spong, 1998) and Everything Must Change (Brian D. McLaren, 2007).* While we might not feel the urgency, there are some very clear messages that are driving us to pay attention and consider what change might look like at Westminster.

“Our Creator wants us to pursue virtue, collaboration, peace, and mutual care for one another and all living creatures,” asserts author Brian McLaren. “If we align ourselves with God’s wisdom, character, and dreams for us...then our society will take a radically different direction, and our world will become a very different place.

For the last decade, leaders have been advised to be agile and ready to respond to disruption. Thank God we had people in our church community who were able to help us do just that in March. We all live with change daily and we know that change is all around us constantly. Our country was founded on curiosity and innovation. That energy has only amped up with time. That brings with it

*For the sake of space, the book titles are abbreviated here. The full titles are included in the original document.
a velocity that ensures change is continuous. So, we might ponder, what is the spirit of these times? How is God speaking to us today?

In the last few years, the leadership challenge has been to not only be agile, but be disruptive. In other words, don’t wait for disruption; bring the disruption about by paying attention and pivoting to meet the needs of the community you serve. We are not so much looking to make change as to be relevant today, and in the years ahead. Over the last century there has been very little change in faith-based organizations. Even while watching membership levels plummet, churches have continued to do what they do year after year, decade after decade.

The Good News

Westminster is a vital community and you make it so. Many of us comment in our Zoom meetings how grateful we are for all of the opportunities we have to serve, grow, and worship. Just flipping through the *Weekly Word* and the *Chimes* tells the story of our vibrant, active culture. Whether it’s a clothing drive, food drive, providing chickens for families to manage food insecurities, learning about racism, responding to Westminster’s property needs, protecting God’s creation through shared information on lighting options, car care, and eating habits, or learning for all ages through our various educational opportunities, we are on the move.

What’s working at Westminster? People are empowered and empowering. There is always plenty to do…and plenty to do that is interesting and meaningful. People have told us they feel good about the activities and programs they get involved with. It makes their lives meaningful and brings them hope. We’ve also learned that people like being invited into

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projects and experiences, and we’ll try to do more of that. Committees welcome new ideas and additional support. We hope you’ll insert yourself and let us know about your interests.

Many of you noted the welcoming environment at Westminster. We also know there are people who have not felt welcomed, or are intimidated by our big, beautiful building. Well, we certainly don’t want to change the building, but there are things we have done and can do to reduce the intimidation factor. Our Community Garden and Saturday evening services on the front lawn bring us out to the public. The 180 Youth Ministry team meetings in the parking lot, food collections, and the tower chimes ringing out (especially with the spontaneous additions of Fly Eagles Fly) all impact how others see us. In spite of the pandemic, we are still having fun together, while doing good works.

We’ve also heard that you’re grateful we serve our own through Stephen Ministry and pastoral care. It is certainly a time of high anxiety, loss, and sickness and it is good to be part of a community that recognizes and prepares and responds in such times.

In our next article, we’ll tell you about some of the trends we’re learning about that keep faith-based communities thriving. Spoiler alert: Social justice and earth care work is among them.

*In the new year, Janet Steinwedel, Convener of the Congregational Engagement Discernment team, will be leading small group discussions on books and articles that are helping to inform the recommendations that will be made at the end of the discernment process. Some of the Elders are currently reading *Grounded* by Diana Butler Bass. You can find her YouTube presentation of January 10, 2016 (The Sunday Forum: “Grounded” Finding God in the World – A Spiritual Revolution, Washington National Cathedral) at [https://youtu.be/tHFsK0BNz7Y](https://youtu.be/tHFsK0BNz7Y).

If you feel called to serve on this team, please be in touch with Janet Steinwedel at (302) 690-5207 (call or text) or at janet@leadersinsight.com. We can give you a little job or a big one!

Members: Michele Butler, Jill Getty, Jon McPheeters, Nancy Michener, Janet Steinwedel. Friends of the team: Nicole Hughes, Teresa Lunardi, Barbara Stratton. Staff liaison: Sudie Niesen Thompson.
WILL WE CANCEL IN-PERSON SUNDAY WORSHIP IN INCLEMENT WEATHER?

Weekly worship is essential to our well-being, so we try not to cancel Sunday worship due to inclement weather. One advantage Westminster has in snowy conditions is that we are located on a main artery in Wilmington, and the city generally does a good job of clearing Pennsylvania Avenue. In addition, we can have our parking lot plowed and our entrances cleared. However, we are concerned about your safety and do not want you to slip on ice or have an accident due to slippery roads. Some live near main streets that are plowed, but others have great difficulty getting to a main road.

Therefore, if we have a snowstorm but do not cancel in-person worship for those who have a reservation, please use your own judgment. If you are comfortable driving in the snow and will not put yourself in jeopardy, we welcome you to attend worship. If you stay at home, tune in to our livestreamed/recorded service on our YouTube channel, which can be accessed by going to the homepage of our website (www.wpc.org) and clicking on the link under the “Sunday Worship” section or clicking on the red YouTube icon on the right hand side.

If the weather is bad enough that our clergy and worship participants cannot make it into the church, consider setting aside time to pray and to read (or watch) and reflect on a past sermon, which can be found on our website at www.wpc.org/sermons.

If in-person worship is cancelled, a message will be on the church phone (302-654-5214) and the homepage of our website (www.wpc.org).
Much of the racial turmoil in our country today can be traced directly to elements of our history, even before the founding of the United States. Many of the racial stereotypes we hear – or hold – are a direct consequence of intentional public and economic policy. For a variety of reasons, much of this history was never included in our American History classes or textbooks. As a result, our opinions and attitudes are shaped by an incomplete picture of the political, social and economic forces that have led us to this point in our racial understanding.

Other countries with similarly sordid racial pasts have sought to move forward via a process called Truth and Reconciliation. America is in desperate need of such a process.
This six-part class has been developed to help us, and those in our community, embark on a search for more truth. Much of it is painful, especially for those of us who profess to believe that every person is a child of God, who believe that we are good people who seek justice and peace.

We believe that, in bringing to light this history of ours, that we should have known but didn’t, we may be transformed in deeply meaningful ways, with a desire to engage in honest dialogue with one another, and a new or a renewed urgency to take action, to finally and truly address the profound inequities that exist in our society today.

For information on upcoming class schedules or to access YouTube videos of these classes, please contact Sue Linderman (srlinder@dca.net or 302-239-7650).

THE HISTORY WE DIDN’T LEARN IN SCHOOL CLASS SERIES

- THE EARLY YEARS
- SLAVERY BY ANOTHER NAME
- PUBLIC POLICY AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT
- MASS INCARCERATION AND THE WAR ON DRUGS
- VOTER SUPPRESSION - THEN AND NOW
- WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
PROPERTY NEWS:
LOOKING FOR GOOD NEWS IN 2020

2020 has come to an end. Thank goodness! What will you remember about this eventful year? Financial challenges? Social unrest? Increasing inequality? Rising food insecurity? A pivotal election? A horrid pandemic that dramatically altered our lives and especially our interaction with others? All of the above? Certainly a spate of events transformed the past year into one long, sad slog. But amidst the gloom, good news did emerge. At Westminster, we experienced the pleasure of coming together for outdoor summer services on the lawn along Pennsylvania Avenue. Thanks to a dedicated team of volunteers, we mastered the art of live-streaming church services — a skill that will surely prove useful in the future. Since March, we have taken comfort in Greg Jones’s weekly letters to the congregation. The opportunity to purchase the Victorian home on Rodney Street, adjacent to the church parking lot, enabled the church to expand its mission commitment with Friendship House. And, while we might regret our reliance on Zoom, it offered an indispensable means of communication, which we’ll continue to use long after COVID resides in the rear-view mirror.

For those of us charged with caring for the church and its surrounding property, 2020 marked a momentous milestone. During the late spring and summer of 2017, Westminster had mounted a game-changing capital campaign to fund building maintenance and mission work. A generous congregation pledged more than $2.7 million. By this past December, $2.34 million of that amount had been received — nearly 87% of the total — with the remainder expected over the next twenty months. After deducting the expenses of the
campaign, these contributions have now added $2 million to the endowment for property care and almost $150,000 for mission work. Once all the pledges have been paid, the endowment for mission should grow to more than $500,000.

The benefits of these endowed funds became most obvious in 2020. Three years earlier, Westminster’s general operating budget earmarked $100,000 for property-related projects. As pledge contributions accumulated, that number dropped to $50,000 in 2018, $20,000 in 2019, and $0 in 2020. The Property Committee’s budget is now underwritten entirely by endowed funds, thus allowing the general operating budget to support other expenses within the church.

Westminster is blessed with a sizable structure of unquestionable beauty. But such a structure, in combination with the satellite buildings and parking area on the property, require continual attention. Repointing the stonework, repairing the roof, restoring stained glass windows, installing security locks for the sanctuary doors, upgrading the audio-visual equipment, replacing worn carpeting, redecorating the Ruth Christie Room, enhancing the landscape — these are just a few of the tasks undertaken over the last three years. The list will never end. We are grateful to the volunteers of the Phix-It Corps who address some of the smaller tasks, saving the church precious dollars. Other projects demand extensive resources. In 2020, Westminster endowments yielded $230,000 to address property needs. Without the success of the capital campaign, only half that amount would have been available.

The Property Committee is deeply indebted to the entire congregation for its faithful support of the campaign. Your kind and generous spirit reminds us that 2020 was more than a year of sorrow and suffering. Good news is there. One only has to look for it.
WHO SAYS YOU CAN’T WALK ON WATER?

As a child, Megumi Field attended Westminster with her grandmother, Mary Field. Now she is in California training for Artistic Swimming (aka Synchronized Swimming) Team USA for the Tokyo Olympics. At 15, she is the youngest member of the team! Other members of the team are providing the “floor” supporting her in the 16’ deep pool. Please cheer for her and the team!

STAFF ANNIVERSARY

Sudie Niesen Thompson, Associate Pastor (5 years)

Thank you, Sudie, for your years of faithful service and dedication to Westminster. Congratulations on your anniversary at Westminster! We are so blessed to have you!
FLYING SOLO

Flying Solo is a group of single adults who meet to support each other in friendship, through social activities and fellowship.

Due to the coronavirus outbreak, Flying Solo has suspended its activities for the foreseeable future. While we miss gathering as a group and seeing each other, we only want to plan activities when it is safe to do so.

If you would like to be added to our email list, please contact Bill Kaye at billkaye3@verizon.net.

CHURCH OFFICE HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

The Westminster church office will be closed on the following days in January:

Friday, January 1, 2021 (New Year’s Day)
Monday, January 18, 2021 (Martin Luther King Day)
CALL FOR ANNUAL MEETING (VIRTUAL)

Sunday, January 31
10:30 a.m. on Zoom

The annual congregational meeting of Westminster Presbyterian Church will be held on Sunday, January 31, 2021, at 10:30 a.m. for the purpose of conducting the following business:

1. To receive the report of the Church Officer Nominating Committee and to elect elders, deacons, and trustees;
2. To elect congregational at-large members to the Church Officer Nominating Committee;
3. To receive the financial report of 2020;
4. To receive the budget report for 2021;
5. To consider changes to the calls of the pastors; and
6. To consider any other business that may properly come before the meeting.

By order of Session:
Gregory Knox Jones, Moderator
Jan Patrick, Clerk of Session

An email will be sent the week of January 25 with the Zoom meeting information.