



Westminster

Presbyterian Church

ZEPHYRS

FALL 2017



WELCOME TO THE NEW ZEPHYRS!

Pastor Rob McClellan

With the implementation of a new web site last year, we realized that it was time for the role of the newsletter to evolve. **ZEPHYRS** has long been an important communication tool for this congregation, and it will remain one. Over the years, it has offered us staff commentaries, updates on coming events, and calendar items. Now that more and more of the time-sensitive announcement information is available online (and elsewhere), we want to use it to tell more stories, about what's happening in the life of the church, what's coming up, and what might sustain us and engage us on our journeys.

This change is in keeping with what many churches around the country are doing, trying to make the best use possible of the available means of *(cont...)*

NEW THINGS

Pastor Bethany Nelson

This newsletter format is not the only new thing at Westminster this fall! It has been a joy to be a part of many new things happening in the life of our church community.

YOGA | Thanks to the leadership of Erin Elliott, we have gathered every Monday morning in the Frost garden to practice Yoga, and to celebrate the connection of our spirituality with our bodies. How important it is to remember that our faith journeys are not just in our heads and hearts! Erin has generously donated all proceeds from this class to Westminster's legacy fund. *(cont...)*



WELCOME... | Continued

communication, distributing accompanying resources accordingly. Like these other churches, Westminster will be going to a less frequent publication, from 4-6 times/year. This is both to allow for more in-depth pieces, and to allow us to put our energy in communicating timely information elsewhere including the web site, the weekly e-newsletter, the bulletin, and social media.

Just as the development of the web site is ongoing, the new Zephyrs will continue to evolve over time. You can still look forward to regular columns from staff, inspiring contributions from members, and highlights of key events. In addition, you may see profiles of members, deeper dives into some of our ministries & partnerships in the wider community, and features on exciting happenings in the church that you may not be aware of. Commissions will have a larger platform from which to share their good work, and leadership will have more space to provide important information about key developments in the life of the church. If you have a skill set or a passion that may be of service to the Zephyrs moving forward, please reach out as we continue to develop this tool anew.

Before saying anything else about what Zephyrs will be, I want to express my deepest gratitude to Mari Robinson for helping to make Zephyrs what it has been for so many years. Mari's careful work editing has been a true ministry—gathering and curating articles from staff and beyond, collecting and sharing the prayer concerns from the congregation, and all the while paying attention to every jot and tittle. Mari's dedication has been something to behold. I've been told stories of her literally scheduling vacation around publication deadlines! As Zephyrs transitions to a new leadership team, Mari we can't say, "Thank you!" enough. We love you, and we are grateful.

*God's Peace,
Rob*

NEW THINGS... | Continued

CHRISTIANITY 101 | As we began our annual high school Confirmation class this fall, several people wondered if we ever had a Confirmation class for adults. Thus birthed our Christianity 101 class series on Sunday mornings. We have had lively discussions about Christianity "basics," such as God, Jesus, Church, and the Bible ... and we have discovered that none of these is very "basic." What a joy it has been to learn with and from each other.

COVENANT GROUP | Twice a month, Rob gathers with about a dozen church members who have committed to spending six sessions together exploring a variety of prayer practices. They offer support and encouragement to each other as they share their prayer experiences with each other.

MESSY CHURCH | On the third Sunday of each month, we have been getting messy at church. Through crafts and games, children explore a Bible story in their own way at their own pace with the help of older youth and adults. We then gather for some music and storytelling, and share dinner together. All ages are welcome to join us on November 19 and December 17 at 4:00pm.

Do you have something new you would like to try or to see at Westminster? I would love to hear about it! Our spirits are nourished when we do new things together.

*Blessings,
Bethany*

“ See, I am doing
a new thing!
Now it springs up;
do you not perceive it? ”

- Isaiah 43:19a

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

FUNDING OUR FUTURE TODAY! | Our 2018 Stewardship campaign is off to a strong start. As Zephyrs went to print, we had received \$455K from 129 pledges. 55% of these pledges are increases from last year while 12% are decreases. Seven of those pledges are brand new. Thank you to those of you who have already pledged! If you have not yet pledged, there is still time. With a goal of \$740K and 100% participation, we are asking everyone to thoughtfully consider what you can do to help ensure the future of our thriving community.



WPC Local Pilgrimage Fall 2017

A LOCAL PILGRIMAGE

Polly Chandler

Imagine a day spent in community, reflecting on your spiritual journey, and focusing on gratitude while using the metaphors of our local landscape to deepen your spiritual insights and connections. Earlier this fall, ten people participated in the first WPC Local Pilgrimage.

Rob McClellan, Joe Chapman and Polly Chandler planned the pilgrimage over a series of four hikes. Together they agreed that giving people space and time to be a pilgrim in our local landscape was a unique approach to pilgrimages. After looking at multiple themes and routes for the pilgrimage they settled on gratitude and a coastal walk.

The group gathered at Sutro Baths in San Francisco at 9am. We walked to the Land's End Labyrinth to focus our pilgrimage. We then followed the coastal headlands, crossed Baker Beach, climbed up to the Golden Gate Bridge, hiked through the Marin Headlands and finished at Rodeo Beach.

This 14+ mile pilgrimage allowed for moments for quiet, conversation and group sharing. We made the distinction between friends going on a hike together and a pilgrimage by setting intentions. We began by reflecting on a time where we had overcome a challenge. We slowly shifted from that place of reflection and sharing to expressing gratitude for overcoming the challenge. As we crossed the Golden Gate Bridge, with whales below us, we released

our challenges and opened our hearts to what's possible. As we climbed to the top of the ridge overlooking the ocean we let gratitude fill our hearts as the 25-mph wind blew in our faces. In our first descent, we walked in silence for 15 minutes to set our intentions on gratitude towards the future.

As we stepped onto Rodeo Beach, we celebrated our accomplishments by looking back at Sutro Baths and seeing how far we had walked. As we stood in the late afternoon light, we shared what had shifted in us since we began our time together. We were grateful for new friendships, an appreciation for our local landscape, and a deeper respect and compassion for each person's spiritual journey. It was a day of celebrating our local landscape, discovering new places, meeting new people, and most of all filling our hearts with gratitude. In a recent conversation, Polly Chandler asked a fellow walker, "Should we do it again?" the response was... "Definitely, let's do the same route twice a year. I loved it!" If you are interested in future pilgrimages, please send your name to Polly Chandler. She'll keep you posted on future walks.

On Saturday, November 11, Polly will lead a group of WPC walkers to Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. Come enjoy this walk of hidden stairwells and scenic views to the top of Nob Hill. This is more of a walk than a pilgrimage but we will stop at Grace Cathedral to walk the labyrinth and tour the cathedral. If you would like to join this hike, please sign up with Polly Chandler and she'll send you details.

EMAIL: paulinesarachandler@gmail.com,

CELL: 603-730-4210.

“...we released
our challenges
and opened
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to what's possible.”



EWIGE FREUDE (ETERNAL JOY)

Ruth E. Wells, Music Director

I have been remembering the Henry Purcell setting of Psalm 102 this week, a sonorous eight-part a cappella anthem singing wave after wave of the petition,

“Hear my prayer, o Lord, and let my crying come unto thee.”

Beginning simply with plaintive phrases, it builds with each reiteration to an anguished cry. This piece is sung every year as part of the Good Friday prelude at St. Gregory of Nyssa Church in San Francisco (where I was a member for several years and have been a Holy week pilgrim for many years since). Written 350 years ago, this piece still speaks to the emotional pain of the psalmist as well as my own pain when I was processing the recent death of a friend.

Nothing speaks to emotions for me like choral music. Poetry layered with melody and harmony and artful chord progressions that can convey everything from devastation to exhilaration. I cannot imagine being without it as I work through the experiences of grief (Tom’s death), anxiety (the Santa Rosa fire), senseless violence (Las Vegas) and sympathy (Puerto Rico/V.I.). And I know that some how, some day, I will again live the words from the second movement of Brahms’ German Requiem,

“Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit.”

But the word of the Lord endures for eternity.

“Freude und Wonne werden sie ergreifen”

They shall take joy and gladness,

“und Schmerz und Seufzen wird weg müssen.”

and sorrow and sighing must depart.

Farewell, Tom. I will see you anon.

ECO FAIR

We at Westminster are blessed to live in Marin’s wonderful natural world and have a history of being passionate supporters of the environment, seeking actions that we can take to address the climate crisis. We wanted to do something more than learn about the crisis or wring our hands about how big the problem is. So, on September 24, the Loving Creation group hosted WPC’s first Eco Fair with over 15 exhibitors sharing their personal approaches to this challenge.

From the time the idea was broached in February, congregants were enthusiastic in volunteering their time and ideas. Neighbors and local organizations also got on on board --- all wanting to be engaged and share their expertise and experience across a broad range of environmentally active issues. On Sunday morning after worship, Findlay Hall, Frost Garden and even the parking lot were buzzing with activity. We had electric cars and electric bicycles for adults and kids to test out. Folks sampled vegan smoothies, checked out planet-healthy recipes and learned about how buying imperfect produce can reduce food waste. We learned about bees, organic gardening, how to cut down on plastic use and how food insecurity impacts our planet. The Sunday School classes decorated the hall with pictures of their ideas for loving God’s beautiful world. We took home tips on Marin county bike routes, solar energy, grey water plumbing, and environmentally responsible investing.

We are grateful for the creativity and generosity of all the exhibitors – this was a great premier for the Eco Fair. We also give thanks for the leadership of Judi Sachs and Mary Mossteller. If you missed it, look for pictures during coffee hour and plan to attend the next one – or participate and share your expertise!



WPC ECO Fair 2017



A PARENTS ROLE

Jeff Shankle, Director of Youth Ministry

At a barbecue not very long ago, I was introduced to Brandon. Brandon is currently a career coach for young adults and worked in the public school system before that. We reconnected over social media recently as we were in the planning phase for our Discernment Project with the high schoolers. I asked Brandon what sorts of tools adolescents needed most to help them find their best paths forward in life. What he said was interesting.

“They need good parents who are personally more engaged.” (emphasis his)

Teenagers today have an abundance of resources at their disposal to help them find their callings in life. There are guidance counselors at every

school, career coaches like my friend Brandon, and even youth pastors! But Brandon feels that many parents are outsourcing this crucial aspect of life to professionals like himself. Not bad for his career prospects, but probably not the best situation for his clients.

Bob Fisher, writing for the National Career Development Association, warns,

“Without parent involvement, some students will postpone career exploration indefinitely... Significant time and financial resources will be wasted. Parents will become frustrated. Students will feel increased anxiety as the need to find a job approaches.”

Maybe Brandon isn’t alone in his thinking. So what’s a parent to do? Noted theologian Frederick Buechner famously declared that,

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

As a high school class we’ve been discussing various ways to go about discerning where those two things come together. However, nothing would compare to a “good” parent who is “engaged” in the process.

On Sunday, November 5, the Rev.

Ineda Adensaya will be spending some time with our high schoolers about the topic of discernment and how we discover which paths God might desire for us. Directly following the 10:00am worship service she will then meet with our parents (and any other interested uncles, aunts, grandparents, etc.) to discuss what role a parent plays in helping their children discover God’s call for their life.

Rev. Adensaya comes to us from Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland where she serves as Spiritual Director. She is also an author, adjunct faculty at SFTS, and Pastoral Counselor at Pacific Lutheran. Maybe most importantly, she also is also a mother ... with two teenagers in her home currently.

What if God is calling your child to be an engineer but math isn’t their thing? Can an altruistic child waste that gift if they want to be an entrepreneur? How do we know when (and how long) to let our children explore different vocations?

WHAT: Prodigal Parent Series #4: Discovering God’s Will for Parents
WHERE: Findlay Hall, WPC, 240 Tiburon Blvd, Tiburon, CA
WHEN: Sunday, November 5, 11:15am - 12:30pm
WHO: Parents of all ages!
COST: Free, donations welcome

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEAM

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to Cindy Lightfoot, our Sunday School Coordinator who has done such a wonderful job with our children’s ministry over the last year. We will still see Cindy at Westminster, but with her family and a full-time job keeping her busy, she has decided to step down from the Sunday School Coordinator position. Continuing the theme of new things, we welcome a Sunday School Team to Westminster. Rather than filling the position with one person, we have three people who will now shepherd our children’s ministry. **Coral Kisseberth, Camie Sumrall, and Jenn Mangosong-Shankle** will work together to ensure that our Sunday School and children’s programs continue to thrive. If you have any questions about our children’s ministry, don’t hesitate to reach out to Coral, Camie, or Jenn.



WPC LEARNS PLAN FOR MARIN'S HOMELESS AS REST WINTER SHELTER PROGRAM ENTERS ITS FINAL YEAR

Trigg McLeod

In October, over thirty members attended two informative sessions on homelessness in Marin. Judi Sachs organized the events with Outreach and Society Commission, featuring speakers from the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Marin, Homeward Bound of Marin, and the Marin Organizing Committee (MOC).

For the last ten years, Westminster has been one of the Rotating Emergency Shelter Teams (REST). Each winter, November through April, volunteers sign up to serve home-cooked dinners and friendly conversation to men before they curl up on the floor for a warm night's rest.

This is the last year of funding for REST. Suzanne Walker, Deputy Director for St. Vincent de Paul, addressed the issue directly: *"REST falsely suggests that things are fine, so we need it to get out of the way of more permanent solutions."* Howard Schwartz, St. Vincent's Housing Director, encouraged us to see the end of REST as a positive development among collective efforts

to reduce homelessness. Our speakers shared optimism and reported progress in the last year due to more effective coordination among the agencies trying to address the issue. Homeward Bound and St. Vincent's are aligned on two key goals: systematically identifying the most vulnerable members of the housing population and working with that population toward permanent housing solutions. Their current strategies, based on a national "Housing First" model, include:

- Use of a nationally recognized "vulnerability assessment" tool that helps identify those who most need permanent support versus temporary shelter.
- A Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) that identifies the most vulnerable on a shared "by name" list.
- Coordinated entry, offering the same intake process to everyone, rather than allocating resources and coveted housing vouchers to those first to arrive.
- An increased number of "master leases" where the agency rents units on behalf of otherwise homeless clients, and helps educate neighbors and dispel concerns.
- Low-barrier entry to shelters and housing, allowing pets and belongings, for example, and less-than-perfect sobriety or completed treatment of other health issues.

St. Vincent's runs Marin's oldest homeless prevention program. Every year their Help Desk assists over 100 homeless individuals and families locate a place to live and offsets move-in costs. In addition, they own or lease units for formerly chronic homeless individuals. Last year they had only eight units; this year, they managed 29; they hope to increase that number to 50 in 2018.

Mary Kay Sweeney, Executive Director of Homeward Bound of Marin, said there's an opportunity to transition Mill Street Center from emergency shelter to permanent housing, if another permanent emergency shelter were found. Next Key is pursuing additional transitional housing units in Novato. Other than Mill Street, with 55 beds, Marin still has no dedicated emergency shelter building. But our speakers agree that permanent housing should remain our primary focus. Pat Langley started as a REST volunteer with Saint Anselm Catholic Church and then engaged with the issue through the Marin Organizing Committee, a dues-paying advocacy coalition of 17 mostly faith-based nonprofits.

"I've learned a lot," she said. "My concept about what a shelter should be has changed from a warm meal and a clean floor. What's needed is housing."

"While REST as we know it will end," Judi Sachs explained, "the need for housing-focused shelter in Marin will continue. At this point we don't know what that looks like, but it will still rely on congregations for support. We will need to support and encourage efforts to find a new location."

"Although I'm saddened by the future defunding of REST, I'm glad that the program has moved on to a more sustainable alternative that will hopefully fully address the issues,"

offered Kyle Sayers. A high school senior and WPC member, he has spearheaded a REST team of fellow Branson schoolmates for the past few years. This year they will staff six Sunday dinners at various locations. (cont...)

REST | Continued

"My friends frequently tell me that REST is the best experience they've ever had in community engagement. It's a real privilege to work with the men and see my classmates open up in a foreign environment to people they would never interact with otherwise."

Looking ahead our organizers will stay in close touch with these agencies to find out how we can transition our efforts. Many volunteers want to find tangible ways to continue meaningful relationships with and honor the dignity of our most vulnerable neighbors. Our efforts may include bringing meals to a new home, rides to appointments, help with basic furnishings, and continued fellowship through outings and informal gatherings, or volunteering at community centers in master-leased properties.

In the meantime, what is needed most right now is another successful REST winter, financial support of these agencies, and consistent advocacy for affordable housing and a permanent shelter in Marin. Most valuable are tips on housing units or properties that may lend themselves to low-income housing. Every unit helps someone find a home.

REST RESUMES AT WESTMINSTER

The REST winter schedule runs from November through the end of April. We will host guests every Sunday night. Westminster's first night to provide dinner will be November 4. We also will be providing food on Christmas Eve (a shared responsibility), New Year's Eve, February 18, March 18 and April 8. To volunteer, look for sign-up boards in the narthex or contact **JUDI SACHS** at:

Homeward
Bound
OF MARIN



VISIONARY MARIN

The Marin Interfaith Council hosts a "Visionary Marin" event every November, where they honor visionary leaders in our county. This year, they will honor three people who have been tireless advocates for affordable housing in Marin County.

KATIE CRECELIUS: An affordable housing advocate who has completed 30 low-income rental housing and other developments for non-profit organizations.

STEVEN SAXE: A board member of the Marin Environmental Housing Collaborative, affordable housing developer EAH, Fair Housing Advocates of Northern CA.

JEFF BIALIK: The retiring Executive Director of Catholic Charities, which has added several new programs focusing on homelessness and housing, children and youth, and refugees and immigrants under his leadership. This will be a wonderful afternoon as we celebrate not only these three visionaries, but all of the work that so many Marin faith communities have done and are doing to ensure shelter and housing for all.

Visionary Marin will be November 12 at 3:30pm at Congregation Rodef Sholom. To buy tickets and to learn more about the Marin Interfaith Council, visit: **marinifc.org**.



ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS FAIR

Don't miss the Christmas Fair on November 12 & 19 after both worship services in Findlay Hall. Shop for family, friends, teachers, coaches and inspire those who receive donations in their name. Refreshments will be served Payment can be made with cash, check or credit card. Some of the organizations sponsored this year include Bridge the Gap College Prep, Center for Domestic Peace, Canal Alliance, Friends of Ruwenzori, Next Generation Scholars, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and the Westminster youth mission trips.




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240 Tiburon Boulevard, Tiburon, CA US 94920