



TIDINGS

WESTHAMPTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JANUARY 2024

A Word from your Pastor

Most pastors worry about what will happen if they become deathly ill on Saturday night without time to ask someone to fill in the next morning. But what I never expected was to wake up feeling physically fine, but with no voice. Not that I was hoarse or raspy. My voice was gone. As in, I could manage a whisper and some high-pitched squeaks, but that was it. The previous day at the church Christmas fair, I had spoken to a couple of church members who heard my failing voice and joked maybe I could do an interpretive dance instead. One even joked she would work on her best “Vanessa impression.” But waking up on Sunday morning, my voice was worse, not better. In fact—almost completely absent. It was the first Sunday of Advent. Communion Sunday. A day full of announcements, a pageant rehearsal, with a hospice remembrance service in the afternoon.

It was early so I started texting, God bless technology. One of our members who directs local theatrical productions and is quite an actress herself agreed to read the sermon, I emailed it to her. The president of the Trustees agreed to open the service with the call to worship and prayer of confession. As I came in the door to the church one of the trustees asked me if there was anything I needed (most likely expecting me to ask her to turn on the heat), but agreed she could read the words for the offering. In the parking lot I met a retired English teacher who was willing to read the pastoral prayer and I ambushed a retired pastor into reading communion. Former teachers, deacons, and just plain good church folk stepped up to help. Not one said no to my whispers of desperation.

As the service started, I immediately felt better because I was never alone on the chancel. One person came to stand beside me, then the next, as they read through their parts of the service. Their different voices reflected not only their own personalities, but the diversity and breadth of gifts present in our congregation.

It is a singular experience to hear your own sermon read to you in front of 100 people. But it was also what I needed. I found myself feeling as though I was hearing those words directed at me, much in the same way the congregation does. It was a reminder of my own need for the Word. During the pastoral prayer, I felt the warmth and love of God’s assurances wrapping themselves around me. My former English teacher did not let me down. He not only listened to and responded to prayer requests from the pews, he prayed with a faith-filled and loving voice, reminding us all of the power of prayer. I was able to sit and listen as my wonderful retired pastor presided at the communion table, and I was reminded that Jesus gave his blood and body for me too.

As the service finished, the charge and benediction was read by one of the deacons. As the words were laid upon me like a mantle of God’s work on my shoulders to carry out into the world—I had tears in my eyes. This congregation had come together to help their pastor, on short notice. On no notice. They had supported and loved me in ways they weren’t even aware of. Most of all, they had personified the body of Christ.

As we pastors are fond of reminding our congregation—the church is not a building, and it’s certainly not the pastor. The church is the body of Christ, God’s people, the people who show up each Sunday usually to listen, but occasionally to lead worship. Sometimes it is these people who nourish the souls of others, even their pastor’s. On the first Sunday of Advent at Westhampton Presbyterian Church this year, I showed up without a voice, but I left with a sense that God is in this place. The Holy Spirit is still blowing through our sanctuary, often in ways that surprise us. And I thank God for that.

*Prayer Concerns

Recent: Family & Friends of Fran Graham; Ruth Feitl, Karl Feitl's mother; Libby Hirsch, cancer, Tom Rogers' cousin; Raymond Hann; Trisha Knotoff (Hospice Care), Kathy Tureski's sister-in-law; Terry Heffernan(chemo), friend of Mimi & Stu Wood; Jane Busking; Vita Collery, cancer, Karen Derryberry's cousin; Ralph Neubauer; Amanda Walters, cancer, friend of Karen Derryberry; Helen Fitzsimons; Kevin Fitzgerald; Marjorie Ridgway, home;

Long Term: Phyllis Styrzo, Hamptons Center for Rehab; Kimberly Rogers Murawski; Ralph Downs, Florida; Dana Barrett, friend of Nancy Miller; Chelsey Carter Collins, Hamptons Center for Rehab; Ellen Pfaff; Dottie Evans

Fundraising: Scrap Metal

We continue collecting throughout the year and 100% of donations collected go toward fundraising for the church. The total to date we have collected is \$11, 630.20!



Church Family News

Deaths

November 12th

Anjele Kalfayan

Long time member of WPC
Funeral to be announced at a later date.

November 14th

Seamus Naughton

Husband to Jessica Howard

November 21st

Bob Van Cleef

Husband to Rev. Dr. Ann Van Cleef

PAINT NIGHT WITH LOCAL ARTIST, GINGER ANDERSON BAER FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2024 7-9PM



Join us as local artist Ginger Anderson Baer provides step-by-step instructions and guidance to help you create a beautiful one-of-a-kind winter scene. Previous artistic talent not required!

Come out and have a great time and create a beautiful piece of art to take home! \$40 provides you with all of the materials you need for your artwork and refreshments will be served. Space is limited so sign up soon!

Annual Reports are due

It's that time of year to start preparing your reports for the Annual Meeting. Please **email** your reports to admin@westhamptonpresbyterian.org no later than Friday, January 5th. Reports are needed to begin preparation for distribution the week before the Annual meeting is scheduled. Thank you for your attention.

**Presbyterian Women
Wednesday, January 10 at
12pm
Soup and Sandwich
Looking back and forward
(see page 5 for PW news)**

*Remember to submit your Tidings articles by the 20th each month so that it can be displayed in the next newsletter. Lets stay connected!

Youth Group and Sunday School News

As I write the last Tidings article for 2023 and the new one for 2024, it gives me time to reflect on the year and make plans for the coming year.

December went out with a BANG! The advent Festival was held on December 3rd, and we had about 21 kids counting the older ones that helped out a bit! The Gingerbread stables were a big hit as always. Eloise, Marie and I chatted afterwards about how we might be able to do some things to offer something new, so that will give us something to work with for 2024!

The following week we jumped right into the Annual Christmas Pageant. Kimet Speed out did herself again with the rewriting of *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* into *'Twas The Day Of The Pageant*. Her adaptation of personalizing it to the Westhampton Presbyterian Church and telling the story of Mary was fabulous! A good time was had by all. The Santa Brunch followed our pageant where Santa and Mrs. Claus attended! Lastly, we worked with the Deacons and caroled to some of the shut-ins at our church. The weather for the day was not great but it held off once we got going and we shared some Christmas spirit with about 12 families.

Our Heifer Project for the year is moving right along, we're almost halfway to the cost of an Ark! Thank You! Remember there are envelopes in the pews in case you'd like to make a donation besides the monthly quarter collection.

Souper Bowl For Caring is right around the corner..... watch for details about that!
 "We spend January 1st walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives....not looking for flaws, but for potential." Ellen Goodman

Happy New Year!
 Kathy



Christmas Pageant



*Santa & Mrs. Claus
 Santa Brunch*

Offering

During the Thanking God trough the Offering, you may have noticed some fellow worshipers not giving anything in the collection plate.

There are several ways to give; pledge envelope, pew envelope, direct deposit and prepay. The pledge and pew envelopes are easily seen. Direct deposit is a way to have your giving amount deducted from your bank account once a month by filling out an authorization for the treasurer. Prepay is another way that some members have figured their finances and give an amount at the stewardship time for the coming year. So at the passing of the collection plate, there are worshipers who give prior by direct deposit or prepay and you will not see them not give during offering.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT SERIES

The fundraising committee is excited to announce a new fundraiser!

The church will be hosting four concerts on Sunday afternoons at 3PM in the sanctuary. Performances will feature Ruth Bennett, Harpist on January 28th, Emma Ozman, Soprano on May 19th, the Red Door Chamber Players String Quartet on July 28th, and a Woodwind Trio on October 20th.

All of the performances will be approximately an hour in length and will feature a mix of traditional classical music and some lighter numbers.

Tickets for the concerts can be purchased individually, or for the entire series. Prices are \$30 for adults (\$100 for the series), \$15 for seniors and students ages 12-18 (\$50 for the series), and \$10 for children ages 5-11 (\$30 for the series). Tickets will be available during coffee hour, in the church office, and at Lynne's Cards and Gifts. You may also purchase tickets at the door.

If you are interested in sponsoring one or more of the performances, please speak to Betsy Doyle during coffee hour, or you can call her at 631-495-5179.

Introducing our first performer in the concert series:

Ruth Bennett, Harpist



Sunday, January 28, 2024 3PM

Harpist, Ruth Bennett is highly regarded as a versatile and engaging artist having performed throughout the United States, Latin America, Europe and Japan. Recently appointed (fall 2022) as Assistant Harp Professor at Boston Conservatory at Berklee, she has been the Principal Harpist with the Yucatan Symphony Orchestra in Mérida, Mexico since 2007. Maintaining an active schedule between the U.S. and Latin America, she has appeared frequently as soloist, orchestra member and educator throughout Mexico and Peru. She has performed with American Ballet Theater and The Metropolitan Opera and been invited as guest principal harpist with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in the U.K. as well as playing in several on and off Broadway shows.

A Note from the Presbyterian Women

For the December PW meeting, we decided to extend the invitation to men and asked Betsy Doyle to lead and accompany us in singing some Christmas music. Sixteen people showed up at this busy time to enjoy a lasagna lunch, various desserts and fellowship. Brady Munn had brought a letter for Stu Wood to read that the congregation had sent to Ted Alpert. Ted used to babysit the children during the Christmas service so that their parents could attend the worship services. After singing John David "Happy Birthday", we joined in singing many Christmas tunes. Thank you to Meryle and John King for providing a meat lasagna and the encouragement to go ahead with this lovely event.

The PW will meet at 12 noon on Wednesday January 10th for soup and sandwich lunch. We will look back at 2023 and plan for 2024. Hope to see you ladies there.



Presbyterian Walkers

There will be more walks and hikes. I am gathering information on places that are safe from the hunters. January is the shot gun month so a lot of areas allow hunting. I have some possibilities and once the details are planned there will be an announcement as to when and where. Let's not hibernate during the winter grab your coat and mittens and walk your neighborhood for a start.

Per Capita 2024

The 2024 Per Capita is \$43.90 per church *member* which includes the \$5 Presbytery Salary Supplement.

Fundraising: Scrap Metal

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Christmas Party Fundraiser at the Shane & Pizzarello Residence



Who is a Member?

If you've ever seen a membership list for our church you have probably been surprised to see people's names that you haven't seen in church in years, like some of our children who grew up here but long since have moved on with their lives and live far away. We haven't updated except when someone dies or sends us a letter saying that they won't be here any more. This didn't use to matter much as we didn't have to pay anything for their membership.

That isn't true any more. In order to keep the government of the church as a whole functioning a per capita (or per person) charge was instituted a number of years ago at the presbytery level. Right now it is nearly \$45 per person and it is a shame to pay that for all of those people whom we never see. So we formed a membership committee and asked the question "Who is a member?" The answer, from the Book of Order, is that a member is someone who comes to worship services, or contributes financially to the operation of the church, or is involved in the work of the church, say helping with scrap metal drives or overnighting with Maureen's Haven. Of course we hope that members will do most or all of these, but we established minimum criteria and started checking through the list.

Our investigation in 2023 came up with approximately 85 people who had not acted as members in some years, and in March we wrote each of them a letter saying that they would be removed at the end of the year if they didn't meet any of these criteria. It was necessary for them to respond. Full membership could continue if they at least paid their per capita or made a financial pledge or came to worship services.

Very few people responded at all and in late November the Session voted to cancel their memberships. It was also possible for people to ask to be put on the Friends list where there is no need to meet any of the three criteria, and a few people did that. The point is, no membership stays automatic—we needed to hear from each individual.

This sounds strict at first glance, but what is a church if members don't come or support us in any way? Of course it is easy to get back on the membership list. You know how to do it.

Stu Wood for the Session Membership Committee.

Maureen's Haven

10 Maureen's Haven guests were welcomed on Monday, December 18th.

A huge thank you to those who volunteer their time to help with set up, food prep, laundering and overnights. The Rotary Club provided meals courtesy of Justin's Chop Shop in Westhampton. This wouldn't be possible without your generosity.



"I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made straight and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together." –

Martin Luther King Jr.





Happy Birthday & Happy Anniversary

1	Scott Campbell	20	Christian Carter
2	Oliver Bradley	23	Brian Mosher
2	Crawford Jackson IV	25	Cathy Holliday
3	Mia Victoria Tortorella	26	Eric Wootten
5	Lilly Wagner	29	Lynda Confessore
5	Marjorie Ridgway	30	Maik Jornitz
6	Diane F. Perry	30	David Rowe
7	Mary Hull	31	Ralph Downs
7	Jared Jessup	31	Sophie Rouhandeh
9	Mason Gragg	31	Josephine Levitt
11	Ralph Hubbard		
11	George Burns		
11	Samuel Miller		
13	Karen Neubauer		
15	Derik Herzing		
15	SuzAnne Jessup		
17	Allison Hoch		
18	Steve Ravenhall		

January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<p>1 New Year's Day Office Closed</p> 	<p>2 2-3:30pm EEH Adult Bereave- ment 7pm Deacons</p>	3	<p>4 10am Men's Group</p>	5	6
<p>7 Baptism of the Lord 10am Worship</p>	8	<p>9 2-3:30pm EEH Adult Bereave- ment 6pm Session</p>	<p>10 9:15am Mission 10:30am Staff 12pm PW Luncheon</p>	11	12	<p>13 9am Budget Meeting 10:30am Audit Meeting</p>
<p>14 2nd Sunday after Epiphany 10am Worship</p>	<p>15 Martin Luther King Day Office Closed 5pm Maureen's Haven</p>	<p>16 2-3:30pm EEH Adult Bereave- ment 7pm Trustees</p>	17	18	19	20
<p>21 3rd Sunday after Epiphany 10am Worship</p>	22	<p>23 2-3:30pm EEH Adult Bereave- ment</p>	24	25	26	27
<p>28 4th Sunday after Epiphany 10am Worship 3pm Concert: Harpist, Ruth Ben- nett</p>	29	<p>30 2-3:30pm EEH Adult Bereave- ment</p>	31		<p>AA: Sat. 10am –Choir Rm Sun. 12pm—Classroom Sun. 6:30pm– Choir Rm Wed. 6:30pm– Choir Rm Boy Scouts meet each Fri. 5pm</p>	

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Your issue of the January Tidings