



The Voice of Westminster

We are a servant church, nurturing each other's spiritual journey and personal gifts. All are welcome!

January 2021

Comfort or Comfortable?

I admit that when I have a few spare moments, I like playing Scrabble on my phone. Most of the people I end up playing seem to have a broader vocabulary than I do, and I find myself often saying, "Well I certainly did not know that was a word. What in the world does that mean?" In reexamining 2020 I know that two vocabulary words that we did not have in our regular usage were "derecho" and "pandemic." I would have preferred not to have expanded my vocabulary in these two areas, yet God in his sovereignty allowed them not only to invade our world, but to become part of our day-to-day conversation and concern.

We still talk find ourselves talking about things like, "When will we get back to normal?" or "What will be our new normal?" I began reflecting more deeply on these, and it hit me that some of the reasons we talk so much about "normal," is that change can be scary, jarring, and disruptive, and when all is said and done, we like to be "comfortable."

We like to know what to expect, so we can plan accordingly; we like to have a sense of control. A friend reminded me, though, that God's goal for our lives is not to make us comfortable, but to provide a sense of *comfort* (along with joy, hope and peace) **in the midst of**, or despite our challenges, crisis, and catastrophes. (See II Corinthians 1:3-4).

I decided to read what I wrote a year ago at this time (our first Christmas and New Years here in Cedar Rapids). Toward the end, I wrote: "*It is impossible to know what 2020 will bring. (HOW TRUE that was!). We simply do not know what the future holds, but we are deeply grateful, we do know who holds the future; we trust his guidance to navigate the challenges that will come.*" I have needed to often come back to this truth, along with numerous scriptures, among them Romans 8:28: "***And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.***" We may not see how he is doing this, but we can trust that he is.

No matter what 2021 brings, may you experience God's comfort and strength.

- Pastor Roger

Session Notes

Church to Remain Virtual Through January 2021

Westminster's Session met Dec. 15 at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom. Pastor Roger read Psalms 126 and Zechariah 4:6-10 for the devotional. Discussion regarding what the church and Session can accomplish in 2021 followed. Below are the main points of action for the meeting.

- The Annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled for January 31, 2021 per the bylaws. It is recommended we have a virtual meeting this year due to COVID.
- With the COVID cases still high, it was decided to continue to have virtual worship services through January.
- Warren Feerer reported on the finances, which are in good condition. Pledges to date are \$195,000 compared to last year at this time of \$190,000. This is a good position going into 2021. Finance approved the 2021 Budget and recommends Session approve it as well. The Budget will be presented at the Annual Congregational meeting January 31, 2021.

The meeting closed with prayer. Session meets again on January 19.

Annual Meeting

Westminster will hold its Annual Meeting on January 31, 2021. A virtual meeting is being planned for this year due to the pandemic. Look for additional information in your weekly e-announcements. If you are moderating a committee, please type your report on actions, as usual, and e-mail it to Pastor Roger at pastorroger@crwpc.org no later than Jan. 15, so a comprehensive annual report can be compiled.

Envelopes in the Mail

Offering envelopes have been mailed thanks to extra work by our bookkeeper, Tina Mueller. Fewer and fewer people are using the envelopes as people shift to automatic withdrawal from their bank accounts or fund transfers. This year, envelopes were ordered for those who used envelopes in 2020.

Loaves & Fishes

Year of Challenge, Year of Innovation

One so often hears the words “unique” and “unusual” to describe the year 2020 that it has become cliché. For many, it has meant near hibernation as they isolate to avoid Covid-19. When the derecho hit, it seemed that insult had been added to injury, with widespread property damage to contend with.

But, for the volunteers who operate the church’s most visible mission in the community, it meant pushing ahead, adapting to new challenges and innovating beyond anyone’s imagination.



By year’s end, L&F was operating in a new, interim facility at Tanager Place, that provided more space for social distancing and indoor waiting areas for clients. Both of these challenges had become impossible in the old, cramped Westminster Mission House. Clients have learned the importance of wearing face masks during the pandemic, something L&F provided to those who needed them.

L&F volunteers don’t need to watch the national news to know that hunger has become an even greater, more urgent need during the pandemic. They see it every Tuesday afternoon. Numbers have reached as high as 200-plus coming to pick up food—a far cry from the earlier days when 40 was considered a large turnout. In the past few weeks, 150 clients picked up frozen hams and all the trimmings to make their Christmas dinner a bit brighter. But it’s not just the food. It’s the friendly faces of volunteers, the kindness, the



handknit scarves

from the Prayer Shawl Ministry and handmade hats from Val Neubauer. Goldfinch Cyclery, which typically holds “Cranksgiving” to send friends out on bicycles to collect food, adapted, too with a non-cycling food drive. They dropped off the contributions at L&F (see photo to the left). Again, it’s not just the food, it’s the kindness.



Playing Santa to a Neighbor

Westminster adopted 84 residents in the over-55, lower income Commonwealth Apartments on 2nd Ave, after the office got a call that many had no family or friends. Coffee cups were stuffed with goodies and Pastor Roger did the honors of delivering them. It was an easy task for us, and provided a bright spot for our neighbors.



January Needs

Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry

Mac 'n Cheese

Canned fruit

Shampoo

Thank you for supporting this
important mission!

Remember, despite the move to Tanager
Place, you can still bring your L&F donations to
Westminster!



January Birthdays

Roger Grandia	1
Ken Ngombwa	1
Luman Colton	2
Antoinette Mukakabanda	4
Karol Cooper	10
Sherry Cornish	10
Signe Henderson	11
Leanne Leeper	15
Ann Buckheister	19
Linda Smith	21
Jackie Alff	28
Jack Haney	28
Val Neubauer	30
Tim Winegarden	30
Jan Kupka	31

January Calendar

The Session has decided to continue virtual services through the month of January. Any committee meetings will be conducted via Zoom. There will be no January calendar. A weekly calendar will be included in "This Week at Westminster," your weekly announcements.

Westminster Presbyterian Church
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Return Service Requested

The Voice of Westminster
January 2021

Westminster Presbyterian Church

9:00 a.m. FUEL service in the Family Life Center

11:00 a.m. Traditional service in the Sanctuary

Livestream on YouTube or Facebook

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Visit us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or at www.crwpc.org

PHONE: 319-366-7185

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Gale Smetana
Choir Director & Church Musician,
Damon Cole
FUEL Music Director, A.J. Plummer
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