



# *The Voice of Westminster*

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

**December 2020**

## **A COVID Christmas**

For many Christians, Christmas is about *community*, coming together as a family of believers to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the one come to save us from our sin, Immanuel, God with us. It often consists of special decorations, Advent wreaths, a sermon series, and a candlelight Christmas Eve Service. This year with Covid numbers at an all time high (at least at the writing of this), it appears that much of the festivities will be shared virtually.

While we have been having the option of in-person or online worship, for safety, it seems wise to return to only virtual services. Session passed at the their November 17, 2020 meeting to offer just online worship, for at least for the immediate future. While most of us prefer in person when it is safe, we can be thankful that technology allows us to experience some sense of community, even if it is virtual. Growing up, what we are able to do with Zoom and Skype, were the marks of science fiction, not reality.

For most families, holiday plans have changed with the pandemic raging forward. Fewer gatherings with extended family are seemingly the norm, rather than the exception. Many of the office parties, and other social gatherings beyond the church have taken a sabbatical.

While much has changed, the good news has not! We have so much to celebrate. Plus, there is a great deal of free resources available to still make this Advent and Christmas season special. A simple Google search of "Free Advent and Christmas Resources" will enable you to see numerous possibilities. Perhaps if we are intentional, we can spend Christmas virtually with many more than we would if we had a "normal" year, and physically had to prepare for the various gatherings. Covid may affect how, when, and if we gather together, but it does not affect our identity in Christ, nor the love, joy, peace and hope of the babe of Bethlehem.

*Pastor Roger*

## Session Notes

### Church to Close Down Again Due to Covid

Westminster's Session met Nov. 17 at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom due to the rise in Covid cases in Linn County and the rest of Iowa. After devotions and prayer, Session took action on the following:

- Voted to suspend in-person worship through Dec. 31, 2020, due to the rise in Covid-19 cases. Session will reevaluate the situation at its January meeting. Virtual worship will continue on Westminster's YouTube channel.
- Voted to allow outside groups using Westminster for meetings to decide whether they will continue meeting as long as they meet CDC guidelines to wear facial masks and social distance.
- Reviewed market comparisons submitted by Scott Olson for the mission house at 1251 3rd Ave SE. Session is considering options now that Loaves & Fishes is no longer using the house. No decision has been made.
- 

### Pledges Please

Late November is the traditional time for finalizing next year's church budget. In order for the Session and our key Committees to properly plan, we must determine both our expenditures and our income. I can tell you that Westminster remains in good financial shape. We continue to meet all of our obligations and mission-support commitments, plus we have significant reserves.

Looking forward to 2021, we ask you to prayerfully support the work and ministries of Westminster Presbyterian Church. In times such as this, when we are experiencing totally unexpected challenges, your financial support is one critical piece that allows us to impact our neighborhood, our city, and our world. We need every member's participation; your gifts, your interests, your time, and your resources—all of us working together.

The 2021 budget is predicated on pledge income that matches our 2020 level of \$280,000. We receive additional revenue from the Westminster Foundation and a few other sources that will bring our total budget to \$359,000. To date, approximately half of our Stewardship Pledge Cards have been returned and we are nearly halfway to our goal. The average pledge has been \$3,119.

If you haven't already done so, please return your pledge as soon as possible. You can mail it in the enclosed envelope. Please contact the church office, 366-7185, if you need another pledge card.

*John Swanson*, Treasurer

*Warren Feerer*, Finance Committee Moderator

## Movin' On

### New Location for L&F

*-Jan Kosowski, Director*



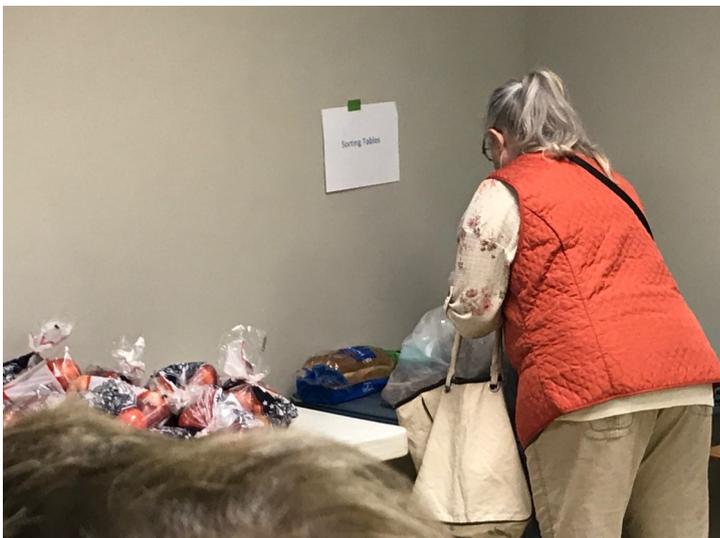
*We couldn't do it without HACAP's food reservoir. Here workers unload fresh milk.*

Well we did it! The move of our L & F food pantry is complete and we held our first give away on Nov. 10th. Thank you to HACAP which brought us two truck loads of food for our first give away and to restock our shelves. I have to say that the move of the pantry was ALOT of work but it had to be done. Our new space provides us the ability to social distance volunteer-from-client, and client-to-client. We are able to have a restroom reserved for our volunteers and one for our clients. Our entire operation is able to occur inside, out of the elements. Everything is on one floor which is a big deal when you are hauling

thousands of pounds of food around. All our refrigeration is up and running. A huge thank you to Christ Episcopal, our partner, for arranging with Two And A Truck to facilitate our move! A huge thank you the WPC for deciding to invest in this ministry by paying the rent on this new space. While we have been told that this is an interim solution for the pantry, having a year's lease gives us breathing room. Our volunteers are AWESOME! So many spent hours preparing for the move and then getting us up and running again. Seeing God's hand in all of this!



*The new location allows for pre-bagging, distributing through a window opening and letting clients choose other items in the adjacent room.*





### December Birthdays

Dawn Schuettpelz	6
Douglas Horton	7
Audrey Fashimpaur	8
Bob Richardson	13
Jerry Hewitt	14
Barb Moss	19
Maggie Lampe	24
Brenda Warner	25
Scott Olson	28
John Conkling	29
Carol Ferguson	29

### December Needs

#### Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry

Boxed potatoes

Sugar

Bar soap

Thank you for supporting this  
important mission!

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

### December Calendar

Due to the church closing until Dec. 31, 2020, there will be no calendar in the December newsletter. Any committee meetings will be conducted via Zoom.

**Westminster Presbyterian Church**  
1285 Third Avenue SE  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403-4084

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*Return Service Requested*

*The Voice of Westminster*  
*December 2020*

# 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](http://www.crwpc.org)*

PHONE: 319-366-7185

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