



Westminster

Presbyterian Church

ZEPHYRS

LENT 2026



A SEASON OF MIRACLES

Pastor Rob McClellan

We have taken to doing more sermon series in recent years. Rather repeating the same 3-year cycle of scripture readings known as the lectionary, these series have opened up texts not always preached on and have given us the chance to explore topics in greater depth over time. This Lent, we will be doing a series on miracles as we practice looking for God's activity in our lives and world.

Miracles intrigue and yet, in some cases, embarrass us. We are drawn to the extraordinary, the sign of "something more." At the same time, when many come to a church such as Westminster, there isn't the expectation to check the thinking mind at the door. (cont.)

LENTEN DEVOTIONALS

Associate Pastor Bethany Nelson

Many of you have indicated a desire to further explore the intersection of your own faith journey and social justice. How and what does your faith call you to be and do in our world today? During the season of Lent, if you are interested in reflecting more on how God is calling you to interact with current events, I recommend to you the devotional guide titled, "The Work of Imagination." Written by Presbyterian and Baptist pastors, this guide invites us into themes such as "Rooted Resistance," "Disruptive Blessings," and "Holy Confrontation."

The writers of the devotional share the following: "Lent begins in the ache, the questions, the tension between love and loss. (cont.)



A SEASON OF MIRACLES

Continued...

Here, we embrace science; we don't see a conflict with religion.

Are the stories of miracles, which dot the pages of our Bible, mere remnants of pre-scientific people that we should overlook if not excise (as some have done post-Enlightenment)?

With the help of New Testament scholar Luke Timothy Johnson, we explore a third path, one that lets miracles work on us to help us find new ways of looking at the world and recognizing not God's distant manipulation, but God's intimate connection and involvement.

We won't get bogged down in whether these miracles must only be taken literally or whether they are merely metaphors. It's a false choice and one that leaves too much off the table. Rather, we will recognize the experiential truth of the miracles. In doing so, we will grow our understanding of what it means to be a person of faith in a world that is both beautiful, enchanted, yet also often troubled and seemingly forsaken.

You might, as you prepare for Lent, the season of preparation for Easter (which runs this year from Wednesday February 18th-Sunday, April 5th), read through the miracle stories in scripture. Ask yourself, "What's going on here?" "What does it mean?" "What does it say about God?" "What does it say about us?" "Where is the invitation for me?" "Where are the miracles happening now?"

As we wrap up our series on journeys ("On the Road"), I look forward to this next journey with you.

God's Peace,
Rob



LENTEN DEVOTIONALS

Continued...

It does not rush toward resolution, but invites us to slow down, to turn with honesty, and to journey with Jesus through wildness, confrontation, and cross. Along the way, we listen to voices from the margins, learn from stories of resistance and renewal, and remember that God meets us not in strength, but in surrender.

This is the work of imagination: to envision a world remade by mercy, to trust that healing is possible even in the shadow of empire, and to practice love that outlasts despair. Lent calls us into this holy labor—not as a solitary act, but as a communal path toward transformation.”

Each week of Lent, the devotional offers a suggested scripture reading, followed by a written response and reflection questions. The guide will be available on the WPC website (wpctiburon.org) under the “Member Hub” tab. The password to access that page is Moses10. If you would like a printed copy, just let me know.

On that web page, you will also find a “Lenten Spiral.” Similar to an Advent calendar, the spiral suggests something to do/consider/share for each day of Lent. Though written for families to share, it can certainly be adapted for individuals.

Whether or not you make use of these devotional options, I do hope you find some time for reflection and contemplation this Lenten season. Poet Ann Weems writes, “These forty days stretch before us, and those of us who believe yearn to feel Your presence, yearn to be Your people; and yet, the days fill with ordinary things with no time left for seeking the holy. Where, O Holy One, can we find You in this unholy mess? How, O God, can we find the holy in the ordinary?”

Though Weems wrote those words over 30 years ago, they still ring true today. It often seems like our world is an unholy mess. May we each make the time this Lent to notice and celebrate God in the midst of the ordinary ... in the midst of the mess.

Blessings,
Bethany



FINDING GRACE

Jeff Shankle | Director of Youth Ministry

On my recent trip to Jerusalem, our young adult group visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the traditional site of Jesus' crucifixion and tomb. It can be an overwhelming place. Lines of pilgrims shuffling their feet, dim, layered with centuries of prayer and devotion. As you walk in the doors, towards the right are steep stone steps leading up to the site of Jesus' crucifixion.

One of our students, Grace, has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair. When we arrived, it was immediately clear she wouldn't be able to climb the steps. Grace is a passionate young woman who seemed frustrated

as we were leaving. She was looking up at the top of those stairs. As we were leaving, she asked, "Could I come back tomorrow and try again?"

So, the next morning, before breakfast, just after the doors opened, a couple of us returned with her. The church was quieter then, but the steps were still just as steep. This time, Grace climbed them on her hands and knees. Slowly. Deliberately. When she reached the top, she sat at the literal foot of the cross.

Later she told our group, "I didn't want to regret not trying."

Lent invites us into that same kind of honesty.

This season is not about spiritual perfection or a life free of struggle. It is about showing up - especially when showing up feels heavy, awkward, or incomplete. I don't know why, but for many young people there's always been a false sense that a life with Christ is free from struggle. Yet Lent assumes that life comes with difficult seasons. Lent recognizes that the world can weigh heavily on us. Lent does not remove those burdens.

For many of us, the foot of the cross is not an abstract idea. For Jesus and His disciples, it was the worst day possible. Today it is still where many spiritually place their grief. It is where we bring our worries about the world, our concern for our children, our weariness with conflict, injustice, and violence. "The cross" is where we come when we simply cannot stay away. We have no other options.

Grace did not come to the cross triumphantly. She did not arrive without struggle. None of us do. We all come just as we are. We come vulnerable, faithful, and sometimes slow to take each step. Faith often feels like standing at the bottom of a staircase, conscious of the gap between where we are and where we hope to be... where God's presence lies. Lent does not demand that we bridge that gap by sheer force. And as Grace's "spotter" I can assure you that is a blessing as well.

Lent reminds us that regret is not avoided by having everything figured out, but by refusing to turn away. We may come slowly. We may come unsure. We may come on our knees. What matters is that we come.

You could say I literally found Grace at the foot of the cross that day. That changed the way I'm thinking about Lent this year. Lent is not about arriving strong, certain, or prepared. These were things I was sure I possessed that morning. What I learned is that Lent is about choosing to come, even when the way is slow, possibly embarrassing, inconvenient, and a struggle. May this season draw us to take our places at the cross also. And when you get there, I pray you'll find grace there too.

GETTING TO KNOW WPC'S MUSIC DIRECTOR, RITA LILLY

On January 15, we welcomed our new music director, Rita Lilly. Choir member Rebecca Nowlen asked her to answer some questions to help our congregation get better acquainted with her. It's a pleasure to introduce you to Rita. Here's what she had to say:

I was raised in a Catholic family in NY, where we went to church every week. My favorite part of mass was singing the hymns! Aside from singing at home, I was singing at church at a very young age. I took up the violin in elementary school, added drums in middle school, and did all three in high school. But singing was always my passion.

I was in orchestra and band, but my focus was always on choir, singing the leads in musical productions and entering vocal competitions.

I went to the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam, NY, where I earned my degrees in Vocal Performance and Music Education. A few years after college, I was fortunate to land the soprano position of the Waverly Consort, the premier early music ensemble in the country at that time. We were six singers and four instrumentalists touring the US and abroad. I was their soprano for nine years.

My love for early and sacred music led to my specialization in Baroque music. I was fortunate to sing with some of the finest ensembles and orchestras in NY before moving to California and singing with some of the finest ones here too - American Bach Soloists, SF Bach Soloists, California Bach, to name a few.

I did some teaching in NY, but my love for teaching and directing really took off in California. Aside from private students, I was the voice teacher for the Pacific Boychoir Academy, Music Director for Mills College Choir and Music Director at two churches for many years before accepting my position here at Westminster.

Directing and teaching a church choir is by far my favorite! Why? Because I feel that the singers genuinely want to be there. They are volunteering their time to offer beauty to their church. How could one not be inspired by that?

I am excited to be at Westminster! There is a lot of talent here and much music making to be had and to share. I encourage anyone who loves to sing or wishes to try singing to join the choir. Rehearsals are fun! Yes, it takes some work and discipline, but the reward is great. There are those in the choir with a lot of experience and those with far less. It does not matter...just come with your love of singing. We will learn together!

I am excited to share some easy as well as more challenging songs (anthems) with everyone. I envision the choir being more of a presence at church and perhaps even beyond Sunday mornings!

If you wish to offer music but cannot join the choir, please come talk to me. We will find a way for you to offer your gift of music too.



CARING FOR OUR CHURCH: A CONVERSATION WITH ELKE BRAY, CHAIR, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

It's been about five years since the building renovation. How has the project served the life and mission of our church?

Elke: The renovation continues to make a real difference in how we use and experience our building. We now have more flexible meeting spaces for ministries and group rentals, a kitchen that better supports shared meals and fellowship, improved office space, and important upgrades to climate control and accessibility. All of this helps our physical space better support worship, education, outreach, and community connection.

What kinds of facility projects and improvements have taken place recently?

Elke: Taking care of a church campus is ongoing work, and in the years since the renovation there have been several major projects in addition to routine maintenance. These have included installing solar, replacing the preschool roof and repaving the parking lot.

More recently, we focused on addressing deferred maintenance, including landscape irrigation repairs, grounds clean-up and re-planting, exterior drainage and sump pump replacement, HVAC maintenance, and pest control measures. These projects may not always be highly visible, but they are essential for protecting the property and keeping the campus safe and functioning well.

Many people have noticed how good the grounds look lately. What's been happening outdoors?

Elke: Over the past year, we've moved to a more consistent, professional approach to landscape care. We now have a quarterly maintenance contract with Heritage Landscapes, which provides ongoing upkeep and seasonal maintenance. Heritage also helped us tackle the one-time clean-up and irrigation repairs. A generous designated gift helped offset a portion of these costs. Just recently we had the Sanctuary steeple professionally cleaned, and it now looks almost new!

Looking ahead, what projects or needs are on the horizon?

Elke: Two significant projects came onto our radar in 2025 that we'll be preparing for in 2026 and beyond.

First, Marin Municipal Water District notified us that the backflow preventer on the fire suppression water line must be replaced to meet updated county regulations.

This will require excavation near Greenwood Drive and is a sizable project. We'll be working closely with the Treasurer and Finance Committee to determine the best way to fund this unplanned work.

Second, we've been monitoring the aging furnaces that heat the Sanctuary and recently learned about potential integrity concerns with the underground duct system. We've received estimates for replacing both the furnace and ductwork with a more modern, efficient solution. While this isn't an emergency, it is a significant long-term investment that will require careful planning and coordination.

Our goal is to stay proactive and identify issues early so we can plan responsibly and avoid larger, more urgent problems later.



Is there anything else you'd like the congregation to know?

Elke: The Buildings & Grounds Committee is always looking for new members to join us in caring for our church. Serving on the committee is a great way to contribute to the life of the church through how our spaces are maintained and to help plan for the future. We welcome anyone who is interested in supporting this important work and we're grateful for the congregation's continued financial support and partnership.



Before and after getting our steeple professionally cleaned

WESTMINSTER EVENTS CONTINUES ITS COMMITMENT TO THOUGHTFUL, TIMELY CONVERSATIONS

By Lucy Carrico, Westminster Events Committee Chair



Westminster Events is pleased to offer another special program—this time in partnership with the Outdoor Art Club of Mill Valley—continuing our commitment to hosting thoughtful, timely conversations that serve both Westminster Presbyterian Church and the wider Marin community.

Please join us on Sunday, March 8, for a community conversation on The Future of Public Health, featuring Dr. Lisa Santora, Marin County’s Public Health Officer, in dialogue with long-time civic and public health leader Teri Dowling.

Together, they will explore the issues shaping our lives today—from COVID’s lasting impact and childhood vaccine guidance to mental health, climate-related health risks, health equity, and emergency preparedness. The conversation will also highlight how local public health agencies are adapting, collaborating, and planning for what lies ahead.

This program offers a rare opportunity to hear directly from a key local official as Dr. Santora shares lessons learned, current priorities, and ways we can all help build a healthier, more resilient community. A reception will follow, providing time to connect with local health organizations and enjoy light refreshments.

We hope you’ll join us—and if the conversation feels relevant to others in your life, please invite friends, neighbors, or family to attend what promises to be a thoughtful and engaging afternoon.

Westminster Events remains committed to creating respectful, inclusive forums on topics that matter to Marin. Through gatherings like these, we continue to Learn, Connect, and Grow as a community.

Finally, we welcome your ideas. Please reach out if you have suggestions for timely topics, engaging speakers, or would like to learn more about getting involved.

See you on March 8!

WESTMINSTER ART SHOW

See the Spirit come alive through works of art! Inspired by Westminster youth artist, Maggie Bray, WPC artists have come together to share their talents with the congregation and community. Over a dozen Westminster artists will be displaying their work in Findlay Hall during the month of March.

The official exhibition opening is Sunday, March 8 at 11:00 am. The artists will be present at that time to discuss their art with you. The show will then remain in Findlay Hall for two weeks. Don’t miss this wonderful display of creativity and imagination.



Art by Maggie Bray

WESTMINSTER HOSTS TIBURON TROOP 48 SCOUTING AMERICA

By Jim Arce

Sunday, February 8 was Scout Recognition Sunday throughout the United States. This day celebrates the anniversary of the founding of Scouts in the United States, now 116 years old. You may have seen members of Tiburon Troop 48 at the service. We currently have 25 young men in the Troop from age 11 to age 18.

Westminster has sponsored our Troop for 5 years now. It is one of our many ministries that many don't know much about. Westminster gives us a warm place to meet and a wonderful place to serve. We are so grateful to be part of the community and appreciate all the support that we receive. We particularly appreciate your buying so many Christmas wreaths as that is our main source of fund raising! Half of the money actually goes to the Scouts who use it to pay for camps, outings and gear.

The Mission of Scouting is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices by instilling in them the values and ideals of the Scout Oath and Scout Law and Scout Motto and Scout Slogan. The Aims of Scouting are: Moral Strength and character development: what you do when no one is looking; Citizenship to other individuals and society: learning to lead, follow and be a member; Fitness of body, mind and emotions: stretching the body, the mind and the spirit.

The Scout experience is built around the outdoors. Awareness of nature and self-reliance in nature is a great way to build self-confidence. We have frequent camps, numerous hikes, two weeklong Scout camps and at least two back packing trips a year.

One of our favorite events just occurred – Code Red. This is a Marin County wide first aid competition where Scouts compete in evaluating staged scenarios simulating accidents. They are judged on their ability to correctly assess the situation and provide appropriate first aid. We won first place out of 16 entries!

Scouts advance in rank by learning both life and fun skills, by taking on more responsibilities and by demonstrating leadership. In the early ranks they learn values, outdoor skills, hiking, camping, self-reliance. For the higher ranks up to the final rank Eagle, they study targeted topics— money and time management, communication, first aid,



Troop 48 Court of Honor ceremony

emergency preparedness, cooking, camping, personal fitness, citizenship in the World, the Nation, the Community, and Society.

Service to others is a key part of Scouting. Part of our Oath is to “Help other people at all times”. Scouts live this by providing community service on a regular basis which includes Westminster. The highest level of service is provided through the Eagle Scout project, where Eagle candidates lead a major project that shows their leadership skills and that benefits an important community.

Westminster has had several Eagle projects: the wooden seating risers in the youth room; the recycling program; benches in the courtyard and a garden refurbishment and path installation. Also, many of our Eagle projects have served Marin City, an important ministry for Westminster as well. To date, we have completed 9 Eagle projects that have helped build their Intergenerational Garden; this has become a popular gathering place for the Marin City Community.

Scouting USA has approximately 1 million youth members and 600,000 adult volunteers. We welcomed young women as Scouts in 2019, and approximately 20% of Scouts are female. Troop 48 is a troop for males, Troop 1G in Mill Valley is an excellent troop for females.

Thank you again for the Westminster community's support of Scouting. It means a lot to these young men and their families. Feel free to contact me if you would like to learn more about Scouts.

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

PALM SUNDAY

March 29

Worship and Palm Processional at 8:30 and 10:00 am

MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 2

Celebration of the Lord's Supper at 12:00 and 6:00 pm

GOOD FRIDAY

April 3

Contemplative worship at 12:00 pm

HOLY SATURDAY

April 4

Labyrinth walk and quiet reflection from 7:00-8:30 pm

EASTER SUNDAY

April 5

Worship and Flowering Cross at 9:00 and 11:00 am



HOLY WEEK AT WESTMINSTER



MARCH 29 - APRIL 5, 2026