

**WOODLAND PARK
PRESS**
A PUBLICATION OF
WOODLAND PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



DECEMBER – 2018

From the Pastor...

Can you believe Advent is here already? If not, don't worry -- Advent is all about preparing...and waiting...and waiting...and preparing.... The Spiritual Formation Committee (nee Worship Committee) has been preparing for several months already. When we first read the lectionary texts for Advent, we noticed how each individual in those texts faces an incredible challenge—maybe one of the darkest moments of their lives—and the way they make it through is by rooting themselves deeply in the faith, traditions, and lessons of those who have gone before. By finding a place of strength to root themselves, they each find incredible resilience to face the darkness.

In the socio-political moment in which we find ourselves, it seems like most of us are getting more than a little weary. When we were reading the texts and talking about the parallels with our current context, images came to mind of the trees my friend Rachel and I used to find while hiking on the Marin Headlands in California. These trees are battered day in and day out by relentless winds coming off the ocean—so relentless that the trees have grown first upward but then parallel to the ground, matching the direction of the wind. These days, as I listen to the news and to the people in the circles in which I travel, I see those trees all around me. Incredible people of faith and justice who need a source of resilience to keep going...so, to withstand the relentless battering winds, to

find that level of flexibility, they root themselves deeply.

So, this will be our Advent journey this year: Rooted and Resilient. I pray that, as we wait in the darkness for the light that is to come, we will root ourselves strongly and find the resilience we need together.

With you in hope,

~Pastor Staci

WPPC Survey

The Communications Committee is conducting a survey on how you receive information about the church, its events, and other pertinent information! Please take some time to answer the questions to the best of your abilities. The more thorough you complete the survey, the better the committee can help facilitate communication throughout the church and its members. The survey shouldn't take more than about 15 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your time!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WPPCCOMMS>



A Member Congregation of the
Covenant Network of Presbyterians

**Toward a Church as Generous
and Just as God's Grace**

Come Join the All-Ages Advent Pageant!

The Spiritual Formation Committee has been working hard on our next *All-Ages Advent Pageant*. As the name indicates, all ages are truly welcome! Not just all ages, though, all abilities and levels of experience and confidence are also welcome and encouraged to join us. Minister of Music Jeff and Pastor Staci created this new pageant just for this year and we hope you will join them.

Rehearsals are during the education time before church.

Join us in the Mural Room at 9:00 a.m. for rehearsals on December 2, 9, 16, and 23. Even if you'll have to miss a rehearsal, you can still participate! The pageant will be performed during church on December 23.

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Articles for the **WOODLAND PARK PRESS** are due by the 20th of the month. E-mail them to me at debbiealan@yahoo.com.

Please make sure to note **your name and phone number** with your article so I may contact you if I have any questions. Thanks again to all of the contributors for this month's **PRESS!**

Thanks -

Alan Herbig - Editor

WOODLAND PARK PRESS

December Worship and Scripture Readings

December 2: First Sunday of Advent:
Communal decorating of Sanctuary
Christmas tree during worship and Soup
and Bread potluck lunch after church
Text: Habakkuk 1:1-7; 2:1-4; 3:[3b-6], 17-19

December 9: Second Sunday of Advent
Text: Esther 4:1-17

December 16: Third Sunday of Advent
Text: Isaiah 42:1-9

December 23: Fourth Sunday of Advent:
All Ages Advent Pageant
Text: Matthew 1:18-25

Bits and Pieces

WE CHOOSE WELCOME!

THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE is conducting a survey on how you receive information about the church, its events, and other pertinent information! Please take some time to answer the questions to the best of your abilities. The more thoroughly you complete the survey, the better the committee can help facilitate communication throughout the church and its members. The survey shouldn't take more than about 15 minutes to complete. Thank you for your time!

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SCRIPTURE CONVERSATION with Pastor Staci meets Tuesday, noon, [Green Bean Coffeehouse](#) ; 8525 Greenwood Ave N.
December 4: Isaiah 42:1-9 December 11: Matthew 1:18-25
December 18: Luke 2: 1-14, [15-20] (Christmas Eve Text)
December 25: Christmas Day! No Scripture Conversation this week.

MOVIE NIGHT AT WPPC will not be held November or December, in recognition of so many other events and holidays this time of year. Please watch for information as we prepare to restart Movie Night the 3rd Friday of January, 2019.

WPPC'S SOUP KITCHEN (Monday morning feeding program) needs volunteers Mondays, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (or part of that time) to help prepare and serve meals to homeless people. Our Soup Kitchen serves an average of 40 people per Monday and over 2,000 meals a year. We especially need volunteers on holidays as we are open **every** Monday. The Soup Kitchen has been closed only 3 times (due to heavy snow) in 34 years of operation! If you'd like to join a convivial Monday morning group, please contact Gordon Merritt.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Recovery: Debbie Blane, Flo Bliss, Ken Doak, Bethany Erickson, Evelyn Merritt, and Salwa Nemr .

Missionaries: Brian and Sandi Thompson-Royer.

Our college students: Arthur Bale, Miki Bale, Lupita Barren, Colin Bronsdon, Jessica Cruz, Erin Emery, Kai Hirayama, Luke Luttrell, Myles Sproul Nelson, Ben Peterson, and Emily Peterson.

Presbytery Connections - December, 2018

By Roger Lee

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) recently sent me for a week to help in El Paso. I helped a local Presbyterian group expand the capacity of Annunciation House (AH), a nonprofit serving refugees “who cannot be assisted by existing programs, agencies or offices.” They provide asylum seekers with accommodations, meals, hygiene, warm clothing, miscellaneous travel needs, orientation and encouragement. Before being discharged —with only the clothes on their back and their immigration papers— refugees must clear background checks and customs.

Transition to a local shelter is usually coordinated beforehand, however, in late October, ICE began releasing people without making any prior arrangements. Faced with this new reality, the faith community has come together yet again to expand transitional housing and put out a call for aid. The Presbyterians’ satellite shelter serves roughly 90 asylum seekers per week.

A PDA El Paso host site for volunteers is scheduled to open in early December. To learn how other regional Presbyterians are responding to this need and how you can help, see:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/pda-blog/2018/11/08/called-to-help>

A Book Review from the WPPC Library

Celebrating Abundance: Devotions for Advent

by Walter Brueggemann



To "prepare for Christmas" in our society is to be sucked into a vortex of indulgence, from decor to gifts to calorie-rich foods. Layer upon layer of tinsel, lights, and wrapping paper create the illusion of abundance, disguising the feeling of emptiness in our souls. The arrival of the Messiah, by contrast, is true abundance disguised by the impression of scarcity. Training our eyes to see through the rough stable, the adolescent mother, and the anxious escape to Egypt, we can see in that poverty and powerlessness the wonder of God's abundant life and grace coming down to dwell among us.

This powerful devotional by best-selling author Walter Brueggemann includes daily reflections on the Scriptures and stories of Advent in order to invite us to see beyond the world's faux extravagance and realize the true feast laid out before us. Twelve prayers are also included for the twelve days of Christmas. - (from the Amazon.com website.)

"Everything changes when we read." --Neil Gaiman (author)

Jeri Lee
WPPC Librarian

WPPC Traditions

Gene Oliver

Traditions are customs or things we do over time based on our beliefs. Churches have lots of traditions. This is a big time of year for traditions. Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, year end and year beginning, all include traditions.

Traditions can make us feel good, because they reflect who we are and their predictable repetition gives us comfort. People who study human behavior have identified tradition as a value and find that, like all values, we each place different degrees of importance on them. Some of us have strong values around traditions and others not so much. That means that for some people in a group maintaining a tradition may be very important *because* it is a tradition. Some people will place less value on the fact that a certain behavior of activity is traditional.

Do we have traditions that are no longer important to some of us? Maybe we have traditions that should be changed. Sometimes traditions engaged in for a long time are hurtful to some and need to end or be changed. Other times they just don't fit who we are and what we believe. And, of course, some traditions continue to make sense for us and express our beliefs well.

At WPPC there are new traditions developing and some older ones dropping away or changing. Considering our traditions, their benefits, their significance and their value to various members of our community is best done with thoughtful, mindful, prayerful consideration. In fact, isn't that a WPPC tradition?



Holy Hops - December 2018 Edition

6:00 p.m. on Monday the 17th at [The Dane](#) (8000 15th Ave NW)

Come join the conversation - Open to all -

A New Spin on an Old Tradition

by Pastor Staci



For the last couple of decades at least, WPPC has had a tradition of hanging what are called “Chrismons” on the Sanctuary tree on the first Sunday of Advent and then joining together in a circle to sing. This is a lovely and cherished tradition and it’s wonderful to have yet another ritual to look forward to each Advent. The ritual of hanging ornaments together and singing together in a circle will continue this year and into the future, and the Spiritual Formation Committee (nee Worship Committee) has decided (after 4 years of discussion and discernment) to change the nature of the actual ornaments.

First, some background. Some people believe that Chrismons are an ancient tradition, but the practice was started at a Lutheran church in Danville, CA, in the 1950s as a reaction to the start of cultural secularization in the United States. Those who started the practice said it was an attempt to “Christianize” the Christmas tree. That’s not too surprising given the context of the time...and that’s not longer the time we live in. In our culture, Christmas is not under threat and, as I half-jokingly point out, the Christmas tree was “Christianized” centuries ago when Christians in the Middle Ages appropriated it from pagan tradition. The other reason why we’ve decided to move away from the Chrismon ornaments is maybe the more significant one. Chrismon ornaments were supposed to all be symbols for Christ. However, in reality, there are only a few symbols for Christ among them. The rest of the symbols developed by the Danville church and other communities are symbols appropriated from the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament). In theological traditions that believe that everything in the Hebrew Bible points to Christ, that might make sense...and that’s not the theology we teach at WPPC. We believe that the stories and symbols of the Hebrew Bible are important for our tradition, but we try to let them stand on their own, recognizing that they were responses to specific historical circumstances that were very important to the communities that developed the stories, and we don’t want to dismiss that context by interpreting everything through the lens of the New Testament.

Given these concerns, the Spiritual Formation Committee (and, before that, the Worship Committee) had many discussions among ourselves and with many members of the church community over the last few years. We discovered that, for most people, the important parts of the tradition were getting to pick out an ornament, hang them all together as a congregation, and sing together in a circle. For the vast majority of community members, the exact nature of the ornaments was less important to them and, in fact, many remember fondly the time when the ornaments were not official Chrismons at all but a collection of homemade snowflakes and other holiday shapes. After all of our discussions, we decided to have a special set of new ornaments made for WPPC. Our new ornaments are four different patterns of Bethlehem stars. We landed on this idea because the Bethlehem star is a symbol of Advent—it symbolizes hope for another light to come and the courage to journey on faith alone, so it seemed fitting for the season and the theology of our community. We decided to have them made from wood so they would be made of a natural material and so they would match the aesthetic of our sanctuary, and we were lucky that Jeff Wilson’s uncle was willing to volunteer his time to make them for us!

As mentioned before, you will still have the opportunity to pick out an ornament, to hang them together, and to join in our circle singing. The difference will be the shape of the ornaments and a new understanding of their symbolism. We’re grateful to Betty Wight, who lovingly made and maintained our previous set of Chrismons, and we’re also grateful to the great number of community members who gave us feedback and helped us to discern our way about how to move forward with this tradition. We look forward to inaugurating this new phase in this beloved tradition on the first Sunday of Advent, December 2.



Human Rights Day - - - December 9th

Nancy Horman

On December 10 the United Nations will celebrate the International Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948. The day before, December 9, we will be celebrating Human Rights Day as we did last year - by writing letters in support of Amnesty International's Write Four Rights (W4R) campaign. However, this year we will have more options: write a regular letter, with stamps, or send your letters on-line. Amnesty has chosen to feature 11 women who are under threat this year. They face discrimination, are imprisoned, are targeted, are harassed, or are persecuted. We send copies of our letters to government officials in the countries involved.

Our letters let these women, and officials, know that they are not alone. The world is watching.

New Welcome Team

The Fall Welcome Team is wrapping up duties as of the end of November. Many of the team members met for dinner on November 4 to celebrate the team's accomplishments and give feedback on what worked and what did not. Many thanks to team members, Judy Borish, Abby Brockway, Elizabeth Bryant, Ken Doak, Nate Fitzpatrick, Amy Gest, Gene Oliver Nancy Horman, LeAnn Onishi, Margi and Keith Luttrell and Team Leader, Pat Moberg.

The Winter Welcome Team takes over Sunday activities on December 2 with the Soup and Bread Potluck. The members of the new team are:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Joy Shay – Co-Leader | Roberta Gurtowski – Co-Leader |
| Len Andrews | Tom Gurtowski |
| Roger Brockway | Lindsay Harris |
| Dean Fournier | Sonia Highet |
| Mary Fournier | Gordon Merritt |
| Pat Moberg | Todd Peterson |
| Karen Siscel Smith | |

There are many activities on Sunday morning and you do not need to be a member of the current welcome team to participate. Anyone is welcome to sign up for a Sunday activity. Contact Judy Andrews if you have questions.

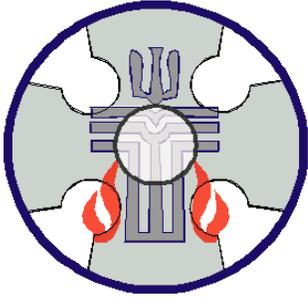
Advent Happenings at WPPC –

We will be continuing our Advent tradition of the Holden Evening Prayer sing and dinner gatherings. These will be held on each Sunday evening in December at 6:00 p.m.. The location will change each week and will include a soup and bread dinner. These gatherings have become significant to many during this time of our Advent journey towards the birth story at Christmas. All are welcome to attend. You can join in the singing or just be present and listen.

The locations this year are as follows:

- December 2 – Jan and Gene Oliver's home
- December 9 – Cathy and Mike Bronsdon's home
- December 16 – Abby and Roger Brockway's home
- December 23 – Pat Moberg's home

The Christmas Pageant this year will be on December 23. Staci, Jeff and Dustin are working on putting this together. As in past years, practice times will be Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. in the Mural Room. No acting skills are needed! These have been quite enjoyable to participate in in past years so take a chance and join us.

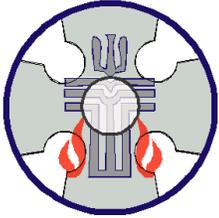


DECEMBER 2018

WOODLAND PARK PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
SEATTLE – WASHINGTON



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Each Sunday 9:00 Sunday School for All Ages 10:30 Worship Service RAC Coffee Fellowship</p>	<p>Please let us know your (Birthday) so we can note it on the calendar.</p> <p>JBC = Just Before Church RAC = Right After Church</p>					<p>1 8:00 Men's Breakfast Group (Bay Café)</p>
<p>2 (Robert Barren) (Lupita Barren) First Sunday of Advent RAC–Soup and Bread Potluck 6:00 Holden Evening Prayer – Oliver Home</p>	<p>3 Soup Kitchen</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6 7:00 Choir</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>
<p>9 Second Sunday of Advent RAC Amnesty Letter Writing RAC Deacons 6:00 Holden Evening Prayer – Bronsdon Home</p>	<p>10 Soup Kitchen</p>	<p>11 7:00 - Stewardship Committee</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13 7:00 Choir</p>	<p>14 (Anne Morrison) 6:15 Open Mic Check In 7:00 Open Mic Night!</p> 	<p>15 (Pat Moberg)</p>
<p>16 Third Sunday of Advent Birthdays Cake Sunday 6:00 Holden Evening Prayer – Brockway Home</p>	<p>17 Soup Kitchen 6:00 Holy Hops The Dane on 15th</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 (Don Lueckert) 7:00 Choir</p>	<p>21 No Movie Night this month! Winter Begins</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>23 Advent Pageant 6:00 Holden Evening Prayer – Moberg Home</p>	<p>24 Soup Kitchen Christmas Eve 7:00 Christmas Eve Service Church Office Closed</p>	<p>25 Christmas Church Office Closed</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27 (Barbara Barren) 7:00 Choir</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>
<p>30</p>	<p>31 Soup Kitchen New Year's Eve</p>					



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'Tis the Season to Start Being Jolly

On Saturday, December 1, WPPC will be hosting a holiday extravaganza for our church family and our Phinney Ridge neighbors to help kickoff the Christmas season. There will be holiday crafts for adults and children, games, pictures with Santa, a Holiday Café, greenery sales, alternative gift giving opportunities, Christmas Sing-along, Holiday Performances and more. Festivities begin at 10:00 and wrap up at 4:00 with a sing-along and a concert by our choir!

We hope to see you there!



A Tartan Christmas

*Woodland Park
Presbyterian Church*

225 N 70th St., Seattle (206) 782-3776