

MUSINGS FROM MARK

With some certainty I can say that most people will be glad to see the end of the year 2020. However, the New Year will not begin for most with a giant celebration. The pandemic has not gone away. More people will die before it is over even though there is a glimpse of hope with the vaccines. That is why there will be little change to our format for worship and fellowship until things change. However, there are changes for the church beginning this January.

After evaluating our financial picture and the needs of the church in its current work, the session voted to restructure the staff going into 2021. This means we will be saying goodbye to some of our valued staff. Nicky Gower, Diamond Mack, Erwin Clark, and Rodney Pearson will no longer be a part of our staff. We give great thanks for their work and they will be missed greatly. For those remaining, some things will also be changing. The role of pastor and building manager will not change. However, Vicki Carmichael will become Music Ministry Coordinator in addition to her responsibilities as Choral Conductor. Rick Burk will be wearing a few hats as Organist, Accompanist, Bell Choir Director, and Office Assistant. This current arrangement will be reevaluated once we are back in the building. I believe this will not only enable us to be more effective for the remainder of the pandemic but also position us to be stronger when we are back in the building.

This New Year will also see more fruit in our work with Partners for Sacred Places. The promotional video and building assessment are complete. We will be meeting with our outside advisors remotely in the first quarter of the year to prepare for the next and major phases of the work once we no longer need to work remotely. It has been frustrating to all that this work has taken longer than anyone anticipated but we are making plans to hit the ground running as soon as it is safe to do so.

I believe that 2021 will be a better year than 2020... However, I believe we will all be changed because of what we have faced in the last year. It is my hope and prayer that we will take the lessons we have learned about ourselves and each other and go confidently into the future in ways that help us live out our mission. "Westminster Presbyterian Church is a multiracial congregation called by the radically inclusive love of God in Jesus Christ to ministries rooted in grace-filled hospitality, social justice, and transformation."

Peace and Grace

Mark

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

A congregational meeting has been called for Sunday, January 10, 2021, at 12:00 p.m. via Zoom. The purpose of the meeting will be to vote on the Terms of Call for the Pastor and for a presentation of the budget.

WORSHIP

January 3 – Epiphany and Holy Innocents

Zoom Communion at Noon

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-23

Title: “Sacrificing Children”

January 10 – Baptism of the Lord

Scripture: Mark 1:4-11

Title: “Torn Identity”

January 1 – MLK Sunday

Union Council Churches at Worship

Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration

Hosted by Union Avenue Christian Church

January 24 – Third Sunday after Epiphany

Guest Preacher

January 31 – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Scripture: Mark 1:21-28

Title: “Come Out”

LITURGISTS

January 3

Will Hudson-Lewis

Carole Redd

Lacy Miller

January 10

Bryan Taylor

Cynthia Jones

Sharon McCaslin

January 17

Joint Service

January 24

Sharon McCaslin

Eva Kozma

Cynthia Jones

January 31

Stan McCaslin

Susan Baron

Lawson Calhoun

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Wednesday Lunch Bible Study: Online with Zoom

Noon – 1:00 p.m.

Horizons Bible Study: *Into the Light: Finding Hope through Prayers of Lament*

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Presbyterian Women will close 2020 meeting all our obligations, except for one or two which seem to have closed. We are thankful for our faithful members and our hard working treasurer Sandra Browder. We are also thankful that Mark Miller is leading us through the Bible study on Wednesday noon meetings via Zoom. It is indeed a blessing. We contacted our folks who are unable to come to church with greetings cards and notes. It is our prayer that 2021 will bring peace and good health to all peoples.

MEMBERS & FRIENDS DIRECTORY UPDATE

As in past years we like to update our Church Directory each January. In the past, most of you have had the opportunity to submit corrections and changes in person. Obviously, that is not an option this year. Therefore, we are requesting that you email any changes or corrections by January 31, 2021. Also, if you have not been included in the Directory in the past but would like to be included this year, please provide as much of the following information as possible:

Full name(s)

Full mailing address

Any telephone/mobile numbers

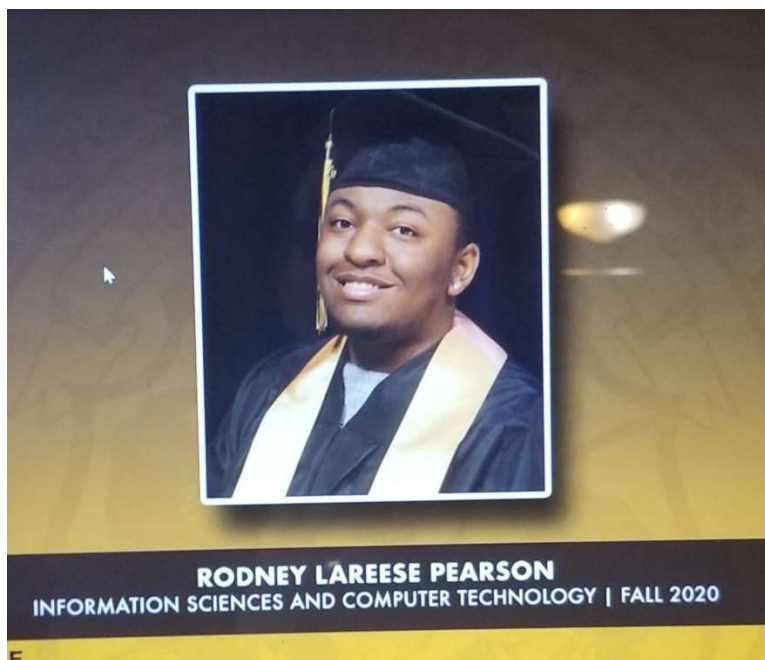
Any email addresses

You may address your email to the church office at westminsterstl@sbcglobal.net or to the pastor at pastor5300@sbcglobal.net. If for some reason you are not able to provide the information via email, please let us know and we can make other arrangements.

Once all changes, etc., have been received and an updated directory is completed we will then tackle the issue of how to make it available to everyone.

Thank you for your cooperation.

CONGRATULATIONS



MUSICAL NOTES

Westminster family,

As I move into the role of Music Ministry Coordinator in 2021, I will be playing a slightly larger role in planning and coordinating music for our worship services. Previously, I coordinated with Rick our choir anthems and some vocal solos for our worship services. That will continue, but I will also be looking for other ways in which to use the musical skills and talents of those in our congregation. If you have suggestions of things you would like to see and hear, please let me know. Even better, if you have skills/talents that you would like to use in our worship, please let me know. This includes singing, yes, but also any instruments you play, or if you write music, lyrics, or hymns (you might never have thought of your poetry as a hymn, but consider it) - my job is to help coordinate and facilitate all the creative musical ways you may wish to serve and give glory to God. I look forward to hearing from you and collaborating with you. You can reach me via email at vcarmichael44@gmail.com or call me 314-620-0111.

Vicki Carmichael
Music Ministry Coordinator

It certainly felt strange to be at home all day and evening this past Christmas Eve. It was the first time in at least 50 years that I was not participating in person at a church in a worship service for that festival. Yet I was so grateful that we were able to put together a video worship service that captured much of what we have become accustomed to experiencing in our Christmas Eve worship. I would like to thank the various musicians who gave of their time and talents to record music for the service: Stan and Sharon McCaslin, Lawrence Hudson-Lewis, Éva Kozma, Ashleigh Moffitt, Viktor Freesmeier, Vicki Carmichael and the Westminster Singers.

I think I can speak on behalf of all the musicians in revealing how unusual it was to participate in the Christmas Eve worship service this past year. It is not unusual for church musicians to select music far in advance of a worship service, and to spend weeks learning and rehearsing the music. But normally that all leads up to the time of the actual service and you pray that you will perform the music to the best of your ability. What was vastly different in 2020 was that the actual “performance” of all the music took place well in advance of December 24 so that it could be recorded and submitted for use in the worship video. In some cases, the recordings occurred more than a month in advance. The other unusual experience that has become a part of preparing video recordings for worship is that you do have more than one chance to “get it right.” What you as the worshipper see and hear each week may be the result of two, three or as many as ten attempts to get a performance with as few errors as possible. We have yet to conclude whether that is a good thing or not!

But with all that said, I still yearn for the day when we can offer our music together, in person, in the sanctuary once again. As we turn the page to a new calendar year, there are glimpses of hope that we may be able to return to that experience before another year comes to a close. In the meantime, let us remain steadfast in taking care of ourselves and others.

Peace and grace,
Rick Burk
Organist/Handbell Director

JANUARY CALENDAR

(All events are virtual unless otherwise noted.)

- 3 9:30 a.m. – Adult Study Group
11:00 a.m. – Online Worship
12:00 p.m. – Communion
- 6 12:00 p.m. – Bible Study
1:30 p.m. – Staff Worship Planning
6:30 p.m. – Westminster Singers
- 9 10:00 a.m. – Presbytery Meeting
- 10 9:30 a.m. – Adult Study Group
11:00 a.m. – Online Worship
12:00 p.m. – Congregational Meeting
- 13 12:00 p.m. – Bible Study
1:30 p.m. – Staff Worship Planning
6:30 p.m. – Westminster Singers
- 17 9:30 a.m. – Adult Study Group
10:45 a.m. – MLK Worship hosted by Union Avenue Church
12:00 p.m. – Session Meeting
- 20 12:00 p.m. – Bible Study
1:30 p.m. – Staff Worship Planning
2:30 p.m. – Worship, Music & the Arts Committee
- 24 9:30 a.m. – Adult Study Group
11:00 a.m. – Online Worship
12:00 p.m. – Fellowship
- 27 12:00 p.m. – Bible Study
1:30 p.m. – Staff Worship Planning
- 31 9:30 a.m. – Adult Study Group
11:00 a.m. – Online Worship
12:00 p.m. – Fellowship