

**JUNE/JULY
2018**

The Westminster
WINDOW

**Issue 6
Volume 16**

Sunday Service Time: 10 AM Worship

**LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY
READINGS FOR JUNE**

6/03 - 2nd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
1 Samuel 3:1-20; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18;
2 Corinthians 4:5-12; Mark 2:23-3:6

6/10 - 3rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
1 Samuel 8:4-20, 11:14-15; Psalm 138
2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35

6/17 - 4th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
1 Samuel 15:34-16:13; Psalm 20
2 Corinthians 5:6-17; Mark 4:26-34

06/24 - 5th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
1 Samuel 17:(QA, 4-11, 19-23) 32-49;
Psalm 9:9-20; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13;
Mark 4:35-41

**LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY
READINGS FOR JULY**

07/01 - 6th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27; Psalm 130
2 Corinthians 8:7-15; Mark 5:21-43

07/08 - 7th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10; Psalm 48
2 Corinthians 12:2-10; Mark 6:1-13

07/15 - 8th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
2 Samuel 6:1-5 12-19; Psalm 24
Ephesians 1:2-14; Mark 6:14-29

07/22 - 9th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
2 Samuel 7:1-14; Psalm 89:20-37;
Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

07/29 - 10th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
2 Samuel 11:1-15; Psalm 14;
Ephesians 3:14-21; John 6:1-21

Year B Schedule Readings

**WICC Moss
Avenue Sale
JUNE 9
8 a.m. to 3 p.m.**



SING! SUMMER CHOIR CAMP

Tom Clark-Jones

Once again the church and parish house will be filled with the joyous noise of children during the last week of June. In the past three years it has been a ministry to the children of Peoria who join us to sing and learn about music. This year, our Director Sharon Reed will lead a choir of young people from grades five through eight, and Tom Clark-Jones will direct the younger choir with children from grades 2 through 4. This camp truly makes a difference in the lives of these children and serves as a witness to our love and concern for our community. If you are able to volunteer, even for a day or two, we need you! Keeping some 40 children busy and happy all week is a community job. So join with us in influencing the lives of Peoria's children for the good. You are sure to find a blessing in service. ☼



WESTMINSTER OPENS FOR BACH FESTIVAL

Tom Clark-Jones

On Friday evening, June 1, at 7:30 o'clock, Organist Stephen Buzard opens the Peoria Bach Festival for 2018. This is the third year Westminster Church has had the privilege to open the Bach Festival presenting a major concert organist on our superb Visser-Rowland pipe organ, an instrument Bach himself would be proud to play.

Continued on page 7

The **Window** Newsletter is a monthly publication of



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ON-SITE MISSIONS

WestMark Food Pantry **Elizabeth Richmond**
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Westminster Infant Care Center
Director **Valerie Sager**
Phone 309-674-6701
Hours Monday-Friday 6:30 to 3 PM
in accordance with Peoria school calendar
Email WICC1973@gmail.com

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

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Peggy Carter

Collating/Securing

Dick and Norma Helfrich, Pat Wagner,
Monte and JoAnn Gibson, Alice Nash,
Marilyn Luman, Adele Fleming and
Peggy Carter.

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Anna Bussian

The Circle of Friends will meet Tuesday, June 5, at 9 a.m., at LePeep's Restaurant located at 7501 N. University, Peoria.

We will meet for breakfast and fellowship. There is no program. Please join us and bring a friend.

Those attending please call Anna at 589-0656 or email her at ruthab237@aol.com so she knows how many seats to reserve. You may also sign up in the Narthex if you plan on attending.

This will be the last one of the season. We will see you in the fall. ☼

LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY

It has been decided that we will not meet in June, July, or August for Bible study. We will resume our studies in September. You may continue to do the lectionary readings on your own over the summer. Scriptures to read are on the front page of each *Window*.

If you have any questions, please contact Marilyn Luman. ☼

MEN'S COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

This fellowship is an informal meeting time, providing an opportunity to connect with other men. All are invited. Bring a buddy! We meet at Panera Bread, 2515 N. Westlake, weekly on Wednesday mornings at 7:30 a.m. Invite a friend. It is always a good time and there is always room for more. ☼

FINANCE MEETING

The Finance Committee will meet on Wednesday, June 20, and Wednesday, July 18, at 12 p.m. The meetings will be held in the Chapel. If you are unable to attend a meeting, please let Gary Leonard know. ☼

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The office will be closed Wednesday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day. ☼



A FINAL ENTRY BY JEANIE & BILL OLSON A DAY IN BERMUDA

It was a picture book day on a picture book island. We toured the western end of the island in a minivan with three other folks. Our driver's name was Erwin and he was an excellent driver and a wonderful tour guide.

Our ship was docked right downtown and Erwin was waiting for us dockside. We started with a tour of the city of Hamilton. We went by a police stand built like a bird cage and Her Majesties Garden with lovely flowers that bloom year-round. Around the block on Church Street we went by City Hall built in 1960, the bus terminal and the State Church built in 1890 in the gothic style. We also went by Session House where the Parliament meets. Bermuda is a British Territory. It is Britain's oldest colony dating from 1612. Today there is a local government composed of 36 members representing the 9 parishes on the island. The Supreme Court also meets in the building. The population of the islands is 65,000. St Andrews Church built in 1846 is pink and is representative of the lovely pastel colors of buildings on the island.

(to read more the rest of the story about Bermuda go to olsonwwcruise.com) ☼

LAST CHANCE TO DROP OFF

Valerie Sager

Please bring your donation, Saturday, June 2, between 9 a.m. and noon, for the Westminster Infant Care Center Moss Avenue Sale. This will be the last day to drop off your items. If you need a different date, please contact Steve Sager at 224-6237 to make those arrangements.

☼

UPDATE ON OUR LIBRARY

Jan Leonard

We have faith-based non-profits and other churches that will be contacted to look at the library contents for their own libraries. Afterwards, the books will be given to the Moss Avenue WICC sale to benefit them. ☼

APRIL SPRING CLEAN-UP DAY !!KUDOS!!

Janet Kelley

Many thanks to Don Bell, Gary Dutro, Rob Elson, Pat Flynn, Janet Kelley, Alan Kupper, John Jackson, Susan and Roger Leighty, Jan and Gary Leonard, Michael Link, and Steve Sager for making the church's annual spring Clean-up Day such a success! And many thanks to Gary Dutro for the yummy donuts and to Panera Westlake for the welcome coffee boost! ☼

LIFT PROJECT

Steve Sager

It was the best of times...it was the worst of times. Somehow Dicken's opening lines to his historical novel *A Tale of Two Cities* epitomizes the challenges and successes faced in the Parish House Lift Project.

Some may ask, "What is the Parish House Lift



Continued on page 5

HUNGRY BULLETIN

Ashley Foster

In March, the House Agriculture Committee finally passed the Farm Bill, which had been in the works for a long while. As a result of this bill being passed, improvements will be made to hunger programs internationally. However, it will negatively impact the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). According to David Beckmann, President of Bread for the World, the organization is “pleased that the House Bill maintains and improves international food aid programs, but [they] must oppose the bill because it proposes changes to SNAP that will put millions of women, children and families at risk of hunger.” Based on a report that was given by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, SNAP would be cut about \$23 billion dollars over the course of the next ten years. The bill “imposes benefit and eligibility cuts in addition to stricter work requirements” with the goal of getting those who receive SNAP back in the workforce. SNAP is very good about being supportive of those who are looking for work though. It is much easier for someone to put all the energy he or she can into looking for work when hunger is not something that is being worried about. Beckmann stated that it is a “cornerstone of our society that all adults who can work, should work.” This may be the case, but making the work requirements for SNAP stricter is not going to help decrease poverty. ☸

Financial
Operating

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

APRIL YTD OPERATING BUDGET

Gary Leonard

	April YTD Actual	April YTD Budget	Over/ (Under) Budget	Notes:
Revenues				
General Offering	\$ 116,676	\$ 65,000	\$ 51,676	1. Revenues - General Offering includes \$44,197 of pre-paid pledges actually received in 2017.
WDFund	70,425	121,398	(50,973)	
Other Revenues	3,783	3,417	366	
	<u>\$ 190,884</u>	<u>\$ 189,815</u>	<u>\$ 1,069</u>	2. Restricted contributions and the offsetting expenses like for WICC, Food Pantry, OGHS, etc., are not included.
Expenses				
Operating Expense	\$ 149,979	\$ 161,148	\$ (11,169)	Tips: 1. You can monitor your Giving throughout the year by requesting access to the church’s database (Realm) from the church office. 2. You may write “ WPC ” as the payee on checks payable to Westminster.
Major Prop. Improve.	13793	28,667	(14,874)	
	<u>\$ 163,772</u>	<u>\$ 189,815</u>	<u>\$ (26,043)</u>	
Net: Rev. less Exp.	<u>\$ 27,112</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 27,112</u>	

Project and what is its purpose?" The project's goal is to install a hydraulic vertical platform lift that has a 3 foot by 4 ½ foot platform and will accommodate up to 750 lbs. The lift will travel vertically to three stops in the Parish House...first floor next to the women's restroom, the foyer, and the LaRowe library entrance. With installation of the new lift, Westminster Presbyterian Church will be able to accommodate visitors who have difficulty navigating stairs and persons with disabilities...a "must have" to rent/lease any part of the facility to a perspective lessee.

To date the Lift Project has been ongoing for two weeks, and what this reporter hopes to capture is the progression of the Lift Project from start to finish at its best and its worst of times. The key figures in this project include "Eric & Neil," referred to simply as "the masons," "the electricians," "Lifts of Illinois," and our very own "Dave Carlson and his laborer Bill," who will be doing carpentry and finishing work. Each of these skilled professionals plays his parts in this orderly and carefully orchestrated dance of coordination, technical knowledge, experience, and communication.

Day 1: (17 April 2018)

The masons, Dave Carlson, and Lifts of Illinois conduct a pre-construction meeting. Measurements and measurements again and again are taken to calculate the needed supplies. The mason's supplies are delivered to include a cement mixer, bags of mortar, rebar, tools and three pallets of concrete blocks totaling nearly 150 blocks and each weighing 54 pounds. All 150 blocks were hauled by hand down two flights of stairs to the basement. This reporter chipped in to lend a hand in an effort to lighten the mason's load and to help build a positive rapport with the workers. I discovered a newfound respect for those masons and their durability as I would not have been work-ready the next day without a two-hour Epsom salt soak the night before.

Day 2: (18 April 2018)

A three-person masonry team arrives and they begin by erecting scaffolding in the basement and making mortar for the block walls. The masons begin construction on the block walls which will be the new lift shaft and support. The mortar is mixed outside and hauled down to the basement in buckets to be used by the masons. At the end of the day they have constructed a block wall 12 blocks high and were required to halt work as electrical conduit was discovered on the north basement wall obstructing continued work on the wall. Before work can begin, electricians will need to reroute these wires.

Day 3: (19 April 2018) – Scott, an electrician from Foster-Jacobs, is on site to remove a basement overhead light and reroute some electrical conduit so work can continue on the wall. During Scott's visit, it was discovered that some of the wires running through the conduit were control wires for the building's heating system. Ruyle was called to evaluate and reroute the control wires.

Day 4: (20 April 2018) – Josh, an electrician for Ruyle, arrives to begin work on rerouting the heating system control wires. These wires were traced from the controllers in the basement all the way to the other side of the building in the Food Pantry. These control wires were temporarily relocated and it was discovered that some of the wires were part of the Oberlander alarm system. Definitely one of the "worst of times" in the lift project.

Day 5: (23 April 2018) – Two electricians from Oberlander begin work in cutting, splicing and rerouting the Oberlander alarm system wires. All electrical wires have been cleared and work can progress on the block wall.

Day 6: (24 April 2018) – Hurray.... the masons return and work commences on the block walls...."the best of times." In addition to wall

Continued on page 7 . . .

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2018 GRADUATES

Valerie Sager

KATERRA FLORA is a senior graduating from Manual Academy. Katerra began the program at Westminster Infant Care Center in August of 2017, when her son, I'Meir, was just 6 weeks old. Katerra will be attending ICC this fall and is enrolled in the Associates in General Studies program. She has hopes to transfer to either ISU or Western Illinois University. She worked her senior year and was able to go to school, take care of her infant son and work! We are very proud of her and will miss both Katerra and her son I'Meir. We wish Katerra the best and we hope to see I'Meir return in the fall while Katerra attends ICC.



MYLAKIA THOMAS is a senior graduating from Manual Academy. Mylakia began the program at Westminster Infant Care Center in August of 2015 when her daughter, A'marea, was just 2 months old. Mylakia will be attending ICC this fall and is enrolled in the Associate in Applied Science in Nursing Program. She worked her senior year and we are proud of her and her accomplishments. We consider A'marea a graduate as well, as she is entering preschool this summer as a three-year old! They both have a place in our hearts and we wish them all the best as they continue on their educational journey.



HANNAH WILLADSEN is a senior graduating from Peoria Regional Learning Center. She will miss the people - faculty and peers the most. Hannah's plan is to attend Illinois Central College (ICC). She is looking at either Early Childhood or Special Education. She has plans to transfer to Eastern Illinois University and to live a good life.



OLIVIA RICHMOND is a senior graduating from Limestone High School. She is a member of the National Honors Society and the Limestone Key Club. She has received the Girl Scouts Gold Award, she is the Limestone High School Business Student of the Year and she is a rocket scholar to boot. She has also received Limestone Scholars Recognition. What she will miss most about high school is the Easter Seals fundraisers that Limestone does every year. Olivia plans on attending Bradley University this fall. Her major will be Social Media Marketing. Upon graduation from Bradley, Olivia plans on attending grad school.



BEN WILLADSEN is graduating from Ball State University with a degree in BSN, Nursing and Interpersonal Relations, and Psychology. Ben, who made the Dean's list, has been the Treasurer and Vice President of his Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity. In Ben's free time, what he had of it, he enjoyed playing Rugby. Ben is going to miss, most of all, the little moments with his friends where he would catch himself thinking "This Is Unreal!" His future plans are to pass the Nursing Boards and then practice in a hospital in Indiana or Arizona.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH would like to congratulate you on this great milestone in your life. Remember . . . always thank those who have helped you get where you are and cheer you on! As you go forward and move on to your next adventure, remember our great God, who says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." ☺

Peoria Bach continued from cover . . .

Stephen Buzard is a native of Champaign, Illinois, and is currently Organist-Choirmaster of the Cathedral of St. James in Chicago. Stephen is the son of John-Paul Buzard, the distinguished organ builder whose staff cares for our instrument. Mr. Buzard was trained at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NJ, and at the Yale School of Sacred Music in New Haven, Connecticut. He was hired as the associate Organist-Choirmaster at St. Thomas Church on Fifth Avenue, New York, and ended up running the entire world-famous choral program for a year after the untimely death of Sir John Scott. Stephen received brilliant reviews from the *New York Times* and other media in New York for his work with this choir that has been led by the finest Organists and Choral Directors, including the legendary Gerre Hancock, who was followed by Sir John Scott, who came to America from his appointment in England to lead the St. Thomas music program.

When he completed his duties in New York, Stephen returned to his native Illinois as the Organist-Choirmaster of the Cathedral Church of St. James in Chicago, one of the country's most respected music programs. He maintains an active schedule of recitals, as well as his busy musical life at the Cathedral. We are pleased to welcome to Peoria this famous son of Illinois. The Peoria Bach Festival continues through the next week with numerous programs at Trinity Lutheran Church on Randolph Avenue. Join us for a thrilling evening of organ music from the great master ... Johann Sebastian Bach.

Information about this concert is available on the web at www.westminsterpeoria.org or from the webpage of Trinity Lutheran Church, Peoria. Plan to join us for this fine concert right here at Westminster. ☸

PH Lift continued from page 5 . . .

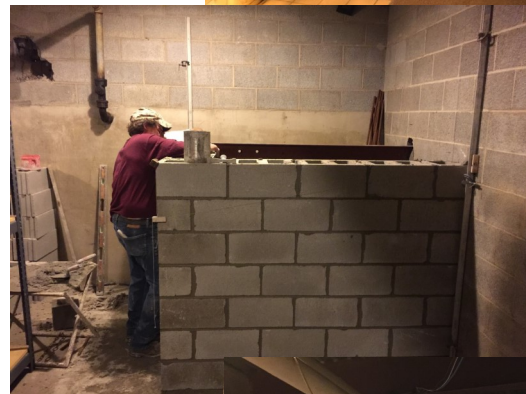
construction, they cut a doorway in the first-floor brick which will become the lowest stop for the lift. The masons use a water spray system while sawing through the brick to keep dust at a minimum. WOW.... what a mess to clean up.

This is a good place to stop in the Lift Project saga. Join us in the next edition of the *Window* to see how the Lift Project progresses. ☸



Mortar being made

Parish House becomes a make-shift warehouse for I-beams, cement blocks, and mortar.



The wall seven courses high.

Electrical wiring rerouted around the block walls.



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

2 Jessica Case
4 Karen Bueneke
4 Mary Dill
8 Jean Osterman
9 Dewey Fitch
12 Donald Bell
13 Lesley Matuszak
15 Larry Hicks
19 Janet Andrews
19 Alma Fassett
21 Adele Fleming
26 Hettie Beers
26 Phyllis Rafferty
26 Nancee Dykstra

JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

10 Dave & Carol Carlson
11 Robert & Betty Jean Oaks
12 Michael & Lynn Hedden
14 Lee & Edna Nugent
18 John & Bonnie Jackson
24 Dewey & Sally Fitch
25 Bruce & Janet Andrews
29 Tom & Elizabeth Richmond

SUMMER HYMN SING

Tom Clark-Jones

During the months of July and August we will set aside fifteen minutes each Sunday morning to sing favorite hymns. We will gather at 9:45 a.m. to sing before the Sunday Service. These will be YOUR favorites. To prepare, please note your favorites on a Hymn Sing card found in your pew and in the Narthex and put it in the offering plate or email the information to wpc@westminsterpeoria.org

If you choose from the Hymnal or the Supplement in your pew, all we need is the number and title. If it is from another source, please submit a copy of the music so we can prepare it for all to sing.

Come along, be creative and give us your favorites, and then come and sing the choices of the whole congregation. 🎵



JULY BIRTHDAYS

3 Alan Kupper
6 Jill Bell
7 Steven Koch
8 Bruce Andrews
13 Jeanie Olson
13 Wanda Terry
14 Donald Shay
14 Horst Prohaska
15 Caden Richmond
18 Byron DeHaan
18 Ann Belcke Nerad
19 John Grimes
20 Dave Carlson
21 Peggy Carter
22 Bernard Hofreiter
22 Alan Willadsen
23 Kim Fisher
24 Jessica Rumfelt
27 Amy Streibich
30 Dorothy Crozier
31 Riley Fisher

JULY ANNIVERSARIES

3 Bill & Jeanie Olson
7 Dick & Norma Helfrich
20 Gary & Janet Leonard
27 Roger & Susan Leighty
29 Michael & Jessica Rumfelt

JUNE SERVANT SCHEDULE

	USHERS	GREETERS	SOUND	LITURGIST	ACOLYTE
3 Sun AM	John Jackson Bonnie Jackson Alice Nash Kim Mitchell	Dick Helfrich	Don Bell	Conrad Stinnett	John Jackson
10 Sun AM	Alan Kupper Linda Kupper Gary Dutro Marge Willadsen	Dick Helfrich	Steve Sager	Laura Van Riper	Alan Kupper
17 Sun AM	Diane Case Jeff Case Laura Van Riper Susan Leity	Dick Helfrich	Steve Sager	Dan Callahan	Diane Case
24 Sun AM	Gary Leonard Jan Leonard Dan Callahan Gary Dutro	Dick Helfrich	Steve Sager	Jim Burnham	Dan Callahan

*If you are unable to work on your scheduled date, please try to find your replacement or switch with someone, before contacting the Ministry Elder of the changes.
You may also find a copy of this schedule on our website if you happen to lose your copy.*

COMMUNION

Bread	Diane Case
Wine	Jeff Case
Bread	Bonnie Jackson
Wine	Pastor Denise
Traveler	John Jackson

JUNE 3

WESTMINSTER SESSION

Clerk of Session	Brian Hakes Class of 2018
Christian Education.....	Bonnie Jackson Class of 2019
Church Life.....	Jill Bell Class of 2018
Finance	Gary Leonard Class of 2019
Membership	Carol Carlson Class of 2018
Missions/Outreach	Jan Leonard Class of 2019
Personnel.....	Larry Hicks Class of 2019
Properties	Don Bell Class of 2018
Worship	Suellen Kirkwood Class of 2020

**SESSION MEETS ON THE
SECOND TUESDAY, MONTHLY,
6:30 PM, IN THE PARLOR!**

DEACONS

Moderator	Jeanie Olson Class of 2019
Anna Bussian.....	Class of 2020
Sue Burnham.....	Class of 2020
Mary Dill	Class of 2018
Kim Mitchell	Class of 2019
Alice Nash	Class of 2019
Edna Nugent	Class of 2019
Phyllis Rafferty	Class of 2020
Marge Willadsen.....	Class of 2020



SESSION NOTES

From the May 8 Meeting

Respectfully,
Brian Hakes, Clerk of Session



In Brian's absence, Jan Leonard, Missions Elder, took notes from the May 8, 2018, meeting.

Received report from Elder Kirkwood, who attended the PGR quarterly meeting:

- Voted to approve a new Lead Presbyter for Transformation – Reverend Ryan Landino
- Heard about mandated reporting of sexual abuse in the church
- Heard a report on Hands and Feet mission work in St. Louis
- Addressed church gun violence and medical emergencies
- There are two open positions at the Presbytery level – a ruling elder on visioning and the committee on ministry

Heard a report from Elder J. Leonard on the status of The Children's Home utilizing space in the Parish House. The Children's Home is making some contacts in the Moss/Bradley area and will be in touch with us. The plan is to move forward with occupancy.

The food pantry number of clients served in April was 1,458.

WICC has received a grant from the Ruby Worner Trust for \$6,800 for playground equipment.

Elder Carol Carlson has announced her resignation from Session due to her and Dave moving to New Mexico.

The lift is being installed in the Parish House. Once installed, Elder Don Bell will file for a permit to use.





SPOTLIGHT ON MISSIONS

The Dream Center

Jan Leonard

Dream Center Peoria is a faith-based not-for-profit organization located in downtown Peoria. Founded by Riverside Community Church in 2002, the mission of **Dream Center Peoria** is to impact individuals and families in poverty, starting with kids and youth. They accomplish this goal through a three-pronged approach – Basic Human Needs, Community Outreach and Youth Development.

Basic Human Needs

The Shelter is the only 24/7 emergency shelter in the area for women, children and families, providing meals, showers and resources to help our guests break the cycle of homelessness.

The Village is a 2-year transitional housing program for women, families and children. The goal is to take a woman or family from homeless to self-sufficiency.

The HOPE Store is a free clothing and household item store. It is open twice a month to the public and upon appointment for area resources. Everything in the store is donated and everything is given out for free.

Community Outreach

Backpack Peoria is a partnership with Peoria Public Schools and various community organizations to provide families with a one-stop shop to get ready for school.

Mission Peoria is a week-long mission trip for youth groups to give back to the city, neighborhoods and organizations of Peoria.

Occurring in the fall and spring, Serve the City is a condensed Mission Peoria where families and organizations can serve your city.

Youth Development consists of after-school programs and summer camp, as well as opportunities in athletics, arts, life skills and vocational development courses.

For more information, please go to www.dreamcenterpeoria.org. ☺



"Kathi Jamieson Palmer has provided a gift of plant material being used in the containers outside the church entrance. The plants are in memory of her mother Evelyn Jamieson, a long-time member of Westminster."

Westminster Window



WESTMARK FOOD PANTRY

Elizabeth Richmond

During the month of **April** we provided food to **1458** individuals. The partnership we have with St Mark's Church creates an amazing opportunity to help those that might otherwise be hungry. This makes for lots of work for our volunteers but it is great to help hungry, grateful folks.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Elizabeth Richmond

Come help unload deliveries: every first and third Tuesday, June 5 & 19, at 11:30, Thursday, June 14, at 1:00, and Thursday, June 28, at 11 a.m. We also can use some help filling in for our regular volunteers on Monday morning. Questions? Contact Elizabeth Richmond or the Church office.



PRACTICING CHRISTIANITY

Rev. Denise Clark-Jones

Starting in mid-February, Christians observed the season of Lent and Easter. Jews celebrated Passover around the first week of April. Now, Muslims are observing the month of Ramadan from mid-May to mid-June. These are the three major Abrahamic faiths in the world, which claims 4,300 different religions. We share, with Jews and Muslims, belief in one God; and, God's covenant with Abraham as the beginning and foundation of the faith we claim today.

Most of us think of fasting when we think of Muslims' observance of the most holy month of Ramadan, although other spiritual practices are also practiced during this time. Not eating or drinking (not even water!) from sunrise to sunset is not an easy task and takes planning every single day. For most Christians, the only time-bound spiritual practice is worship, which is most often for one hour on Sunday morning. According to recent surveys, the majority of people who claim Christianity as their religion do not attend worship services even twice a month. American Christians are recognizing their freedom not to worship in record numbers!

The purpose of spiritual practices in monotheistic faiths, such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam, is to get closer to God; and, by doing so, live lives that more closely resemble the life of a believer modeled in our sacred scriptures. Coming together with our faith community to worship God is the defining spiritual practice of these three faiths. So, why do people who claim the Christian faith find it so hard to attend communal worship services for one hour a week?

Recently, I have read several articles addressing "entertainment worship," which seems to be losing its attraction – particularly for the Millennials (Millennials are those born between the early 1980's and the early 2000's). What researchers are finding is that it is not the style of music, but the

quality of worship that is the most important factor in attending a church worship service. Getting closer to God is more important to worship than being entertained.

Also, serving others is reported to be a very strong factor in drawing people to church. Isn't that how Jesus defined "The Greatest Commandment?" Loving God and loving neighbor is our call. God-centered worship, Christ-driven mission, and an openness to receive the Holy Spirit are the true marks of an authentic church.

We are now in the season of Pentecost, which marks the time when the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to the church to continue Christ's mission, serving as Christ's body in the world. Westminster's mission work still needs to be done – support it. God still needs to be worshiped, for our sakes, lest we find ourselves wandering away from God. If you are away from Peoria on a Sunday morning this summer, use the opportunity to worship with Christian sisters and brothers from other places. The message of Pentecost is that the Holy Spirit will not be contained by any human-created boundaries. God's covenant with Abraham was that his descendants would extend throughout the whole world and all worship God -- by whatever name given. If we choose not to worship with other Christians, how can we be a part of God's plan to embrace the whole world in God's kingdom? If we are not part of God's eternity, we are enslaved to the temporal realm and have no stake in life eternal, which is both now and in the future.

Our observance of the Christian calendar and its seasons orders our time with Jesus' life, ministry, death resurrection and ascension. When we mark our time with God's through Christ's time in the world and beyond the world through the Holy Spirit, we are reminded – using John's words -- that Christ abides in us when we abide in him. ☸

WESTMINSTER
Presbyterian Church

1420 W. Moss Ave.
Peoria, Illinois 61606

Rev. Denise
Clark-Jones

JOIN US
SUNDAYS
10 AM
Traditional Worship

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