

*The
Westminster*

WINDOW

WESTMINSTER INFANT CARE CENTER

By Valerie Sager

I would like to update everyone on what is happening with your mission at Westminster Infant Care Center. All Illinois daycare centers were closed in mid-March for COVID-19 by order from Governor Pritzger. The Peoria Public Schools went to all virtual learning at that time and finished the school year in May. Unfortunately, we were unable to have the WICC sale since the Moss Avenue Day Sale was cancelled in June due to COVID-19. And further, we haven't been able to have any sale due to COVID-19 restrictions on group gatherings.

WICC really counts on the sale as our major fundraiser for the year, and last year we raised over \$7,200 at the sale. This funding will be sorely missed as it also helped us start the school year off as we begin getting our enrollment numbers up and wait for state subsidy money to start coming in. WICC has had added expenses this school year to purchase PPE for our reopening and to adhere to DCFS guidelines to keep us all safe. Currently, all of Peoria Public schools are doing virtual learning from home for the first semester. Our center has reopened following all DCFS, CDC, and IDPH guidelines for reopening for daycares. Our teen parents are able to bring their children to Westminster Infant Care Center and the parents return home for their virtual learning day. Transportation is provided for them to and from their residence and WICC. Finally, I want to assure you that your mission is still providing a valuable service during this pandemic and making a difference in our young people's lives. Your mission is an amazing outreach into the community. Our hope is in the future success of our parents and their small children. The parents are dedicated to achiev-



The *Window* Newsletter is a monthly publication of



1420 W. Moss Avenue - Peoria, Illinois 61606

Phone 309-673-8501
Fax 309-673-6708
Website westminsterpeoria.org
Email wpc@westminsterpeoria.org
Office Hours Monday - Friday 8:30 to 2:30 PM

STAFF

Pastor **Rev. Denise Clark-Jones**
Direct Line 309-439-9737
Phone 309-673-8501 Opt. 5 / Ext. 6
Email pastor@westminsterpeoria.org
Hours Monday-Thursday 9 to 2 PM

Financial Secretary **Denise Wirth**
Direct Line 309-439-9740
Phone 309-673-8501 Opt. 5 / Ext. 4
Hours Working from Home
Email financesecy@westminsterpeoria.org

Buildings Mgr./Custodian **Steven Sager**
Direct Line 309-224-6237
Phone 309-673-8501 Opt. 5 / Ext. 2
Hours Mon., Wed.-Fri. 8 to 3 PM
Email buildings@westminsterpeoria.org

Admin/Communications **Mary Lee Caudle**
Phone 309-673-8501 Opt. 5 / Ext. 3
Hours Working from Home
Email admin@westminsterpeoria.org

Organist/Choirmaster **Thomas Clark-Jones**
Phone 309-673-8501 Opt. 5 / Ext. 5
Hours Monday-Friday 11 to 1 PM
Email music@westminsterpeoria.org

ON-SITE MISSIONS

WestMark Food Pantry **Elizabeth Richmond**
Phone 309-673-8501 Opt. 3
Hours Mondays 9 to 11 AM
Email wpc@westminsterpeoria.org

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 ALL OF OUR
VOLUNTEERS WHO HELP WITH
THE WESTMARK FOOD PANTRY
AND IN PREPARING THE
WESTMINSTER WINDOW. WE
COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!**

ing their educational goals and caring for their children. Thank you for your support and prayers for Westminster Infant Care Center. ✨

WESTMINSTER INFANT CARE CENTER

By Jeanie Olson

The WICC nursery is cleaned and sanitized thanks to Steve Sager.

The scrubs and personal protective equipment (PPE) have been purchased thanks to Valerie Sager. Every effort has been made to protect our teen mothers who are ready to continue their education and the staff who will nurture and guide the babies.

Our driver, Pat Flynn, will transport the moms and babies to and from the daycare center and their homes. The parents will do their virtual learning from home while the babies receive excellent care at the daycare center. The moms and babies will enter the facility and have their temperatures taken. The moms will not enter the classroom.

WICC operated at a \$32,424 loss for fiscal year 2019. All bills have been paid thanks to the generous bequest by Bill and Marian Hardin of their IRAs. We also received a matching gift grant from Tom and Mary Cummings family. Those funds are getting exceptionally low. WICC applied for and received the paycheck protection program loan in May so that has helped maintain our bank balance.

The June Moss Avenue Sale, our main fund raiser, was canceled for 2020. It has raised a lot of money from the community in past years. Those funds will not be available for 2020.

WICC has greatly appreciated all the help from Westminster folks over the years. Please consider more help in 2020. Gifts are 100% tax deductible as WICC is a stand-alone 501(C)(3) organization. You can send checks directly to WICC at 1420 W. Moss Avenue, Peoria, Illinois 61606.

Special note: for 2020 there is a \$300 above the line Federal Tax Deduction for those who do not itemize their deductions. In addition, if you are a Caterpillar employee or retiree for 2020, the Caterpillar Foundation will match a gift of \$50 up to \$2000.

Many thanks for your consideration.
Jeanie Olson, WICC Treasurer ✨

From Your Pastor...

A LONG SUMMER

Each time I write or address on the Internet members and friends of Westminster, I feel, acutely, the desire to see and hear you in person. It has seemed like a long summer. Tom longs to play the organ, which has been covered for more than a month. News of each new delay to the end of the sanctuary project generates a mournful groan from him. It has been said that grandparents and grandchildren get along so well because they have a mutual enemy. I am joking, of course, but my daughter and son-in-law are concerned they will spread the virus to us. My son-in-law, a college cross-country and track coach, has started his season with students. Before the first day of practice, his assistant coach tested positive for the Covid-19 virus and was forced to quarantine himself for 14 days, a few days later, the young man began showing symptoms of the virus, so his time away from work may be much longer. Always a counselor to the 18-year-old freshmen, away from home for the first time, this year the students on his team come with new concerns and are dealing with new choices to make about their behavior during a pandemic. Teenagers, not being the best at making wise decisions or resisting the temptation to follow the crowd, are prime targets for getting the virus. He worries he might bring the virus home to his family, not to mention his “high risk” in-laws who want to visit.

As I am writing this, I am worried about all the people who are in harm’s way of Hurricane Laura or endangered by being evacuated to crowded indoor emergency sites. Off the front page of national newspapers are the refugees who are crowded together on borders, many without adequate supplies of soap and water to defend themselves against the virus. Our trust in being informed about the virus’ spread and the health threats it poses has been tainted by political agendas and conspiracy theories. Politicians in this election year alternate between promising the moon and scaring us with threats of Armageddon. We are living in a suspended state of anxious waiting.

Yet, as Christians, we are buoyed in these troubled waters by hope. Not just hope for a return to normalcy but hope for a new and better normal that is shared by all. To paraphrase a 70’s Helen Reddy song, ‘We know too much to go back an’ pretend.’ We cannot go back to a perfect country or society because we now know it never existed. Christ calls us to continue seeking the kingdom of God, drawing closer as we mature in the faith. Christ comforts us that our past failures do not determine our future. Christ promises us He will be with us and empower us through the Holy Spirit to endure our present trials and lead us beyond them to a future more closely aligned with God’s vision for us.

If this message were a sermon for a worship service, I might use these verses for the scripture readings:

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. ¹²Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. ¹³When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, ¹⁴I will let you find me, says the LORD.” Jer. 29:11

“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me.” Psalm 23:4

“Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.” Romans 12:12

“I am with you always, to the end of the age.” – Matt. 28:20

In my own words: Do not lose hope. Keep the faith. Pray for your needs and the needs of others. Do what you can to help those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Take care of yourself, God has plans for you.

I’ll keep in touch. You do too. We are all in this together.

Pastor Denise 

MUSIC ISSUES AT WPC

Thomas Clark-Jones

Since moving to a webcast service at Westminster Church, the music for our services has been covered by two of our soloists ... Melissa Blain and David Kortemeier. Also Matthew Winkler has participated with his saxophone several times, giving a bit of variety to the occasion. I am grateful to these talented folks who have been willing to make music for us during this time.

All of us have missed the choir. It is one of the most problematic issues facing churches ... how to have choral music in services without getting everyone sick. In talking with colleagues across the country, I have tried to put together a solution that will work for us until we can safely return to full choral activities. As soon as the sanctuary work is completed (mold remediation, some lighting improvements, ceiling fans and floor refinishing), we will again record our services from the sanctuary. However, beginning on September 13, we will have a vocal quartet, using four of our paid professional singers from the choir to achieve this goal. It is within social distancing bounds to seat four singers in the choir loft. In addition, they will wear masks even in singing. We have experimented with this in several rehearsals and find that the masks do little to impede the sound while catching all our 'spray' thus created. It should keep us all safe. This may last even for a while when we return to worshipping in the church ... we will have to follow the best advice from public health and state governmental officials.

It is my hope that the resumption of some choral music, even if it is only four singers, will bring a greater sense of normalcy to this time that is anything but normal for us. Hearing familiar anthems, and having four-part leadership on hymns and liturgical responses should help bring greater excitement to our services. It will also be nice to have the organ back after its being 'tented' for a couple of months to keep it safe from dust and dirt from the work.

Our resident IT expert, Larry Hicks, has been most helpful in obtaining good recordings for the webcast. We are indeed fortunate to have him and his expertise as well as the modern miracles of recording and internet access to help us keep in touch with our church's worship and our church family. We will continue to do our best to improve sound quality, balances between singers and accompaniment, and clarity of sound for hearing the Word. If you have any helpful suggestions, don't hesitate to call me or e-mail. I'm always happy to hear from members of the congregation and will do my best to incorporate suggestions into our worship.



THE GRETCHEN R. IBEN ART SERIES

Thomas Clark-Jones

It is my hope to have several 'live' Iben concerts for this fall season. It will depend upon the public health situation at the time they are to take place, but if all is considered possible, this may be the first use of the church building by a congregation since last March. Many details will have to be worked out, but in brief ... we will look for a congregation of no more than 50 persons, socially distanced. Couples or families living together can sit together, but those units will be separated as per public health directives at the time. In order to attend, it will be necessary to get a ticket (offered free) from either the church office or an agency yet to be determined. If we have more than 50 requests for tickets, we will have a second performance of the concert either later the same day, or on the next weekend. For this to happen, we will have to have some volunteers who will act as ushers and make sure all wear masks (available at the church) and keep proper distancing. Also to help seat people and dismiss the congregation. These are important issues, and I will need at least four ushers for each concert to help with the details. You will be trained in advance. So, if you can give of your time, let me know.

The proposed programs for the fall will be a Jazz concert with the Westminster Jazz Band led by David Hoffman. It will be good to hear the church swing for a change with happy music. That should be at the end of September, if all goes well. Then we are looking at

bringing the brilliant KAIA string quartet back for another concert of classics and South American tango music. This, hopefully in October ... and then in November, Tom Clark-Jones will give a recital of the works of Cesar Franck, the great French organist-composer. Again, this is totally dependent on what happens with the local cases of Covid-19. With in-person schools opening this week in areas around Peoria, and Bradley University beginning fall semester on campus, the current situation could change dramatically in the next few weeks. As with the decision to return to in-person worship, the Session will decide when we open the church for any activity.

We are preparing a Festival of Lessons and Carols to be sung by the quartet and led by Rev. Clark-Jones. This will be a webcast only event that will give some added beauty to our Christmas celebration.

These are plans for now. We pray that God's guidance will lead us into a meaningful, inspiring worship experience, even when it has to be through our computers, pads and phones! We ask for your prayers to choose our programs well and to bring to our congregation music to uplift and inspire. Blessings to everyone ... and stay tuned. There is some good music on the way! ✨



PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS
SPECIAL OFFERINGS



On September 6, Peace and Global Witness season begins. This offering “encourages the church of our time to cast off anxiety and fear, discord and division, and embrace our reconciling God’s mission with those around the corner and around the world.” Your gift to Peace & Global Witness Offering enables the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of injustice across the world. **25% of the offering stays with Westminster.** Mid councils retain an additional 25% for ministries of peace and reconciliation. The remaining 50% is used by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate for peace and justice in cultures of violence, including our own, through collaborative projects of education and Christian witness.

Peace and Global Witness offerings will be taken through October 4, which is also known as World Communion Sunday. You will find a special offering envelope in this newsletter. Please pray about what kind of offering you

continued on back page...

YES! I want to help more people experience the freedom and dignity that Christ wants for everyone. 25% of this Offering stays with our congregation to support peacemaking in our own city of Peoria. Enclosed you will find my donation in the amount of \$ _____

Clip and mail this form along with your contribution to: Westminster Church
Peace & Global Witness
1420 W. Moss Avenue
Peoria, Illinois 61606

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Make checks payable to:
WPC or Westminster Church

Write on memo line:
Peace Offering

Thank you for your participation in the Peace and Global Witness Offering.

WESTMINSTER
Presbyterian Church

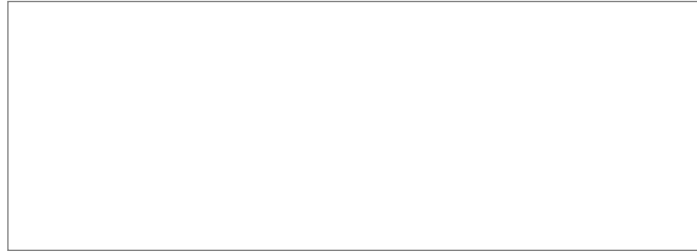
1420 W. Moss Ave.
Peoria, Illinois 61606

Rev. Denise
Clark-Jones

JOIN US
SUNDAYS
ONLINE
10 AM

westminsterpeoria.org

God Loves . . .



should make and mail it to *Westminster Church, Peace & Global Witness, 1420 W. Moss Avenue, Peoria, Illinois 61606*. Please make your checks payable to **WPC or Westminster Presbyterian Church** and write **Peace Offering** on the memo line of your check. You may also visit the "Online Donation Portal" on the website westminsterpeoria.org/support/ and choose "Peace Offering" as your fund on the drop-down box ▼. ✨



Grace and Peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ!