

Wespress for February 2015

This edition of Wespress contains information on the following subjects:

1. Educational Retreat	3. Sandwiches for Center 507	5. Calendar (attached)
2. Mission News	4. Lenten Notes	6. Finances

Coming Events

Tuesday 17 Feb	8:30 a.m.	Shrove Tuesday Breakfast at Carlingwood
Wednesday 18 Feb	7:00 p.m.	Ash Wednesday Service in Sanctuary
Sunday 22 Feb	10:30 a.m.	Congregational General Meeting ** (see below)

	Book Studies	Living in Grace *** (see below)
Mondays 23 Feb – 31 March	10:00 a.m.	Bible Study (William)
Sundays 1 March 22 March	9:30 a.m.	(William)
Wednesdays 4 March – 25 March	7:00 p.m.	(Marina)

Saturday 7 March	10:00 to 3:30 p.m.	Lenten Contemplative Day Retreat *** (see below)
Wednesday 1 April	7:00 p.m.	Ash Wednesday Service
Thursday 2 April		Maundy Thursday Youth Vigil
Friday 3 April		Good Friday Service
Sunday 5 April	7:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Easter sunrise service; breakfast at Kristy's; Communion service
Saturday 11 April	7:00 p.m.	Choir Concert with 15 children from the ORKIDSTRA group
Saturday 2 May	7:00 p.m.	Choral Festival at All Saints Westboro – several local church choirs

**

February 22 will be a Sunday of Celebration. During the Service, we will be joined by all branches of the 3rd Ottawa Scouts to honour the memory and contribution of Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of the Scout Movement. Following the service, the scouts and their families will join Westminster for a pot luck lunch (**family** surnames A-M bring sandwiches and N-Z bring dessert). After lunch, the Westminster congregation will hold its 86th Annual Congregational Meeting. Come to learn more about our blessings from God in 2014 and have input into the plan for 2015.

*** there will be sign-up sheets in the Lower Hall for the book studies and the retreat.

1. Retreat



**Caring for the Heart: A
mid-winter
educational retreat**
Saturday, February 21
9:30am 12:30pm
St. Andrew's Hall
82 Kent St Ottawa

A beginning
conversation on faith,

Christian love and mental/emotional health
challenges with guest speaker Dr. Wendy
Berghuis-Hummel.

Dr. Hummel is a family physician whose practice is
now centered on personal counseling using a
Biblically based model called 'caring for the heart'.
Both her personal and professional experiences
have given her a special desire to see people
dealing with emotional/mental issues come to
freedom.

Refreshments will be provided. Admission is free.
Advance registration is required by February 15.
Phone: 613-869-9042

Please check the link for more details.

[http://www.standrewsottawa.ca/calendar/caring-
from-the-heart-a-mid-winter-educational-retreat](http://www.standrewsottawa.ca/calendar/caring-from-the-heart-a-mid-winter-educational-retreat)

2. Mission News

Sunday March 22 is the date for a Soup Lunch in
aid of the Afghan Girls Education Project. Jeanine
Cudmore at Presbyterian World Service and
Development tells us that they are working with the
Canadian International Development Agency and
other partners to continue the work in Laghman
Province past June 30 when the current contract
expires.

The Kenora Fellowship Center will be involved in
the "Coldest Night of the Year" fundraising and
awareness event on Sat Feb 21st. This is a
national campaign involving 80 communities.

The Kenora Fellowship Center Book sales in the
Lower Hall continues to be well supported by the
congregation! Last year's total was more than
\$1281. Thanks to all who assisted in this plus other
donations to AKFC and of course to Bill Rankin
who has tirelessly worked the bookcase since
2011.

Susan James from PWS&D (Africa) is keeping us
up to date with the situation in Southern Malawi
with the flooding which has displaced 100,000
people. The emphasis is now on rebuilding the
1000 latrines that were destroyed in the flooding.
For \$35 you can help build one of these facilities
by donating online or sending a cheque to PWS&D
marked "Malawi Flooding."

On Feb 9 the Ottawa Citizen reported that Center
507 will lose 50% of its government funding (about
\$350,000) at the end of March. This will have a
significant effect on service to the homeless here in
Ottawa.

PWS&D continues to support efforts to fight the
Ebola crisis in Africa. Again donations can be made
online or by cheque marked "Ebola".

Our next meeting is on Wednesday evening Feb 25
at 7 p.m. at the church for anyone who is interested
in any of these issues. For more information see
Bill Rankin, Bill Miller, Bruce Thompson, Don
Gibson or Dave Mansell.

3. Sandwiches for Center 507

We are now into our 23rd year of making cheese
sandwiches for Center 507. This is buying white loaves
of bread, thick slices of cheese, margarine, and plastic
baggies etc. There are now more street people than ever
that need these cheese sandwiches.

We also collect gently used clothing such as jeans,
heavy pants, winter coats, long sleeve shirts or
sweaters, mitts boots, etc.

Audrey and Bill Miller have been selling calendars with a
free pen and the money that they have made is
\$345.00 will go to center 507 to help to feed the street
people. Donations can be made by using your
envelope; by marking the special line on the envelope
Cheese sandwiches and that money will be used to
make sandwiches to be delivered to Center 507.

If anyone has any 4ply wool, any color, any amount we
have people who will make beautiful scarves for the
street people.

Many thanks to all those who have given to this mission
in the past and to those who will give in the future .

Best Regards,

Audrey and Bill Miller

4. Lenten Notes

All God's Children at Westminster

During the Lenten season we will have an opportunity to study the book *Living in Grace*. Two concepts from this book which were highlighted during the Stewardship by Design conference are *hope* and *belonging*. How do we, how can we, foster hope and belonging for all in our Christian community (church family)?

Perhaps by reflecting on the stories of Jesus we can gather a perspective of how Jesus offered hope and belonging to diverse groups and individuals that he encountered each day. Guided by a phrase from William Parker "First let me hear how the children stood round his knee" (Tell me the stories of Jesus, 1851), let's read a familiar story from scripture to watch a tired Jesus with the children.

Take a moment to pray for an open heart. Take a deep breath, relax. Smell the blossoms; hear the birds, the children and the sea. Feel the warmth of the sun. Read with all of you and imagine—you are there.

Jesus Blesses Little Children

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. ¹⁴ But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it."

Mark 10:13-15 (NRSV); also found in Matthew 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17;

What do you see? The hillside along the Sea of Galilee? Blue sky? White clouds? Where is the sun? Is it full and warm?

Can you hear the children as they form a ragged line waiting to see Jesus? Some are hiding behind their mother's legs as they are being brought to Jesus. Thumb in mouth, toes worrying the dirt, eyes glancing at him and then away, wondering. Who is this strange man? Why are we waiting here? Others are playing tag, climbing trees, kicking sticks. A toddler runs towards the sea, enamoured

with the light dancing on the waves. What does she see? Can you see it too?

The parents are chatting amongst themselves, are trying to hold the children in line. Are they worshipful, tired, wondering, hoping—for a blessing, a miracle or simply kindness, a little rest? The disciples start to mutter and the muttering gets louder. "What are they doing here? Look at them all. And they're so disorderly. Why do their mothers not do something about that? I don't think we should let them bother Jesus. He is tired. It has been a long day. Let's turn them away."

Where were you in this story; amongst the children the parents the disciples?

Perhaps you found yourself amongst all three groups;

Have you been

- a five year old child giggling with siblings in church before the service – then reprimanded by the "wrinkly" "old" person sitting in the pew behind.

- a young mom trying to discreetly breastfeed in church fearful that someone would be upset by a fidgety baby - but too fearful from postpartum depression to take him to the nursery.

- a grandparent of rambunctious small ones with little knowledge of church manners, anxiously praying for understanding by others and patience for self. "I hope they will feel accepted because I hope they meet Jesus."

- a proud parent of well-behaved children.

- a disciple—frustrated and upset at crying babies and wiggling toddlers—annoyed with parents that don't have proper control of their children. "Don't people realize that I am trying to hear the sermon? They are getting in the way of my worship experience."

- a model Jesus of Jesus love —welcoming and blessing the children around me.

Does it depend on your own mood, level of fatigue, awareness of your own need for grace and the ability to offer it to others?

But Jesus says "*whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.*"

How do children help us in our Christian walk? Do we need one another - learn and offer hope and joy from our diversity? Each one is a child of God, seeking a touch from Jesus, a blessing and a reassurance that we are precious and we belong even when we are not at our best.

In the issues of Wespress this year, we will give glimpses of different ages, different stages, and different needs at various points in our lives,

through story and reflection. The May issue will discuss the faith formation of infants and toddlers. We welcome your feedback and input.

Marina Dykstra, Spiritual Growth Worker
Beth Cluff, C.E.

What are you giving up for Lent?

I first became aware of Lent as a young adult. The question of course was, "What are you giving up for Lent?"

My friends were often giving up chocolate, gossip or sweets. I followed—usually giving up sweets or caffeine—the two things that I thought would be good to give up anyway. I realized much later that there were problems with the question being asked. It was all about me and what I was giving up. It was my choice and the teaching about giving things up was vague. The reasoning seemed to be that I would feel closer to God because every time I didn't eat chocolate or forwent my coffee I had the time and inclination to think about God. The other problem with the question was the idea of giving up something. Giving up something meant I was sacrificing something which was a good thing to do. Right? Again the focus remained on self.

In reality this did not work well for me. Either I quit part way through as it was too difficult which resulted in feeling like a failure and a disappointment to God or I managed by sheer grit and self-control which resulted in a feeling of pride without a discernable change in my relationship with God.

Maybe your experiences were similar, maybe they were very different.

On Wednesday February 18th Ash Wednesday signifies the beginning of Lent. What is it for? What do we do? What does God require of us?

There isn't a one size fits all in the Christian walk. We are all different. The purpose of Lent is to become closer to God in relationship. And so we need to seek him to find out what would benefit us in this journey. It may be giving things up, it may be adding things, and it may be both. They may be very visible things, they may be hidden so that only you and God are aware of the changes occurring.

Repentance. Fasting. Increased Prayer. Increased Giving. Increased Worship. These are some of the cornerstones of Lent through the ages.

God has created you. He knows you—your strengths, your weaknesses, your fears, your secret sins. He knows what you long for and he longs to be in relationship with you. So as you approach Lent discuss with him in prayer what he would have you do.

Some ideas that may help incorporate spiritual disciplines into your daily life:

- Set an alarm on your phone/PC to ring at regular times during the day as a reminder to take a deep breath, express gratitude to God and/or neighbour, or take a moment of silence to reflect.
- Reset your computer password to a word or theme that resonates with what you are focusing on during Lent: Love mercy; Forgive (fill in blank); Psalm 51; Be Still;
- Try the online book study on the *Prodigal Son*:
http://wp.henrinouwen.org/rgroup_blog/
- Put the 40 Day Prayer Calendar for Westminster on the fridge so it's easy to find.
- Try fasting from meat or social media or whatever you are attached to.
- Take part in the services and activities offered at Westminster during Lent and Holy Week.

The Lenten Stations

The focus of the Lenten Stations is walking with Jesus through the Psalms. Each week the Lenten station includes a short meditation to reflect upon and a question to ponder and respond to on the white board if desired. The benefit of responding is that it expands the experience from that of an individual to one of community. The Lenten stations are intergenerational.

You will find the stations in the front foyer of the educational building with a second one in the lower hall which may be moved as needed (i.e. in the vestry during the all-ages service on Palm Sunday). Take a few quiet moments each week to reflect at a Lenten Station.

To set up the stations the following items are needed. If you can lend something from the list below you can drop off these items in my office or at the front office during the appropriate week. If you have any questions please give me a call at the church or send me an email at

mdykstra@mywestminster.ca

Week 1: Thursday February 19th

-several small blankets of quilts (6-7)

Week 2: Thursday February 26th

-map (topographical preferred) (2)
-hiking boots (2 pairs)
-walking stick (2)

Week 3: Thursday March 5th

-large shallow plastic storage container (under-bed type works well) (2)
-stones of various sizes

Week 4: Thursday March 12th

-Chalice (2)

Week 5: Thursday March 19th

-lengths of cloth in shades of blue
-marbles or glass pebbles in shades of blue

Week 6 (Palm Sunday): Thursday March 26th

-blocks (Lego or Duplo or wooden?): needed to build 2 strong towers

Week 7 (Easter Sunday) please bring on Maundy Thursday (April 2nd)

-black and gray fabric, ribbon or crepe paper streamers
-Easter lilies or other flowers

These Lenten reflections have been prepared by Erica Schemper, a PCUSA pastor.

6 Church Finances

Financial highlights for the period January 1, 2015 through January 31, 2015.

Funds:	<u>General</u>	<u>Capital</u>
Income	\$15,039	\$610
Expenses	<u>\$21,222</u>	<u>\$8,300</u>
Difference	(\$6,183)	(\$7,690)

Offerings given for:

General Fund:	\$10,915
Capital Fund:	\$610
Presbyterians Sharing:	\$351.67
PWS&D:	\$200

Offerings given and funds raised for:

Centre 507:	\$10
Kenora Fellowship:	\$164.45
Education Langhman Province:	\$270

David Wice