

**“You can’t change your past, but you can change your response to it by speaking to your inner child differently.”**

# WESTERN SPIRE

## JULY 2025

After becoming a pastor, I attended a conference for new pastors. During the event, the instructor shared a cautionary tale about a church that experienced a division over the choice of carpet color, highlighting the risks of discord and schism within a local congregation. She noted that some people preferred a red carpet due to its association with Jesus' blood. Some others insisted on a blue carpet because it symbolized heaven and was more effective at hiding dirt on the floor. I thought it would be a made-up story because the issue seemed too trivial to me, but she confirmed it was a true story. She also shared her own experiences of managing conflicts within her church, where minor issues later escalated into significant disputes.

The way she resolved the conflict was inspiring because it could be universally applied to any situation. You may have heard of the important factors in resolving conflicts such as actively listening to all parties involved and identifying the mutually agreeable compromise. As she built common ground, she engaged in personal conversations with individuals from each group to hear their stories rather than their arguments. During the conversation, she asked them, “Why is it important to you? Why does it matter so much to you?”

Through her conversations with each of them, she realized that it was not about the color of the carpet but about confronting their own egos, for example, their unresolved childhood relationships or traumas. When they heard the words of disagreement, the emotional pain of rejection from their childhood was triggered in the conflicted situation, which reminded them of their damaged self-esteem once again. By listening to their stories and encouraging them to share them in random ad-hoc groups in the leadership, tension was reduced and all of them learned how to treat minor things appropriately.

We all live with these kinds of traumas from our past experiences one way or another. They resurface in times of conflict, stress, or anytime we feel emotionally vulnerable and insecure. In a sense, Christian faith both allows us to anticipate future blessings and address past traumas, helping to give ourselves the love, care, and validation that we didn't receive during our childhood.

I guess every season can be a good season for finding the unsung songs in ourselves we are meant to sing. But summer is the best season to explore it or cultivate our ground as we are surrounded by the season's vibrant energy. As you know, I visited Korea for two weeks at the end of May through early June for family time, but it was also an opportunity for me to revisit my past struggles and unbearable challenges I faced in my younger years. I thank God for turning those experiences into something beautiful in myself to help me choose empathy towards others over judgment. Because of my own unfortunate circumstances in the past, I firmly believe what St. Augustine said, “The church is not a museum for saints, but it is a hospital for sinners.”

Many psychologists and therapists suggest that we need to talk to our inner child, not figuratively but literally. Recall a childhood moment when you experienced emotional distress and heard your negative inner voices. For example, I heard a story about a man whose father was abusive to his mother. During their fights, his mother used to send him, who was the youngest, out of the house while his four older sisters remained in the house. When evening came, his sisters came to the park where he hid himself all day and said to him, "If you were a real man, you should have protected mom, instead of running away from her." Growing up, he has found himself avoiding confrontation and direct conflict with anyone because he was afraid.

His therapist suggested that he talk to his inner child who was scared in the park and was blamed for not doing his part to protect his mother. The therapist asked, "If you could speak to yourself as a child in such a moment, what would you like to tell yourself that might have helped you during the abuse?"

It is the same question for anyone who grew up with a parent who expressed hateful words to him/her or who had gone through difficult situations that harmed his/her positive self-esteem. Of course, you can't change your past, but you can change your response to it by speaking to your inner child differently. You can look into the eyes of your inner child and say this to him/her,

"It is not your fault and has never been your fault."

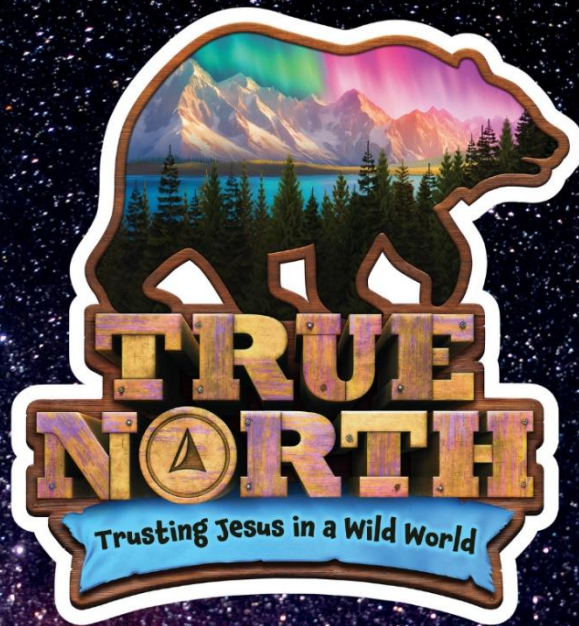
"You did nothing wrong."

"I want you to know that you deserve better from your parent."

"You are wonderfully and beautifully made as Psalm 139:14 says."

May you experience the joy of reconnecting with your inner child as a cherished summertime blessing this year. Acknowledge and validate his/her emotions. Identify and challenge the negative self-talk you grew up with. And rebuild your health and practice self-care because God wants you to be whole.

Peace of Christ,  
Rev. Hodong Hwang



# Vacation Bible School

**July 28-August 1 | 9AM-11:30AM**

**Ages 3 years old-6<sup>th</sup> grade**

**Free lunch provided every day**

**Sponsored by Western Presbyterian Church &  
Palmyra Reformed Church**

**[www.wpreschurch.org](http://www.wpreschurch.org) | 597-9171**



## Can we match Lois Daniels Generosity?

As of June 15<sup>th</sup>, we have collected 340 boxes of cereal, so we are one-third of the way to Lois's 1000 box donation.



And June 15<sup>th</sup> we collected 96 boxes – Total collected **340** boxes.

Thanks for the donations!

We will collect 1,000 boxes.



**Children in foster care often leave their belongings in trash bags.**

These bags are used to transport their personal items when they move from one home to another. The practice has raised concerns about the lack of dignity and support for these children during such transitions.

There are different projects to bring more dignity to the Foster Care practice of changing homes. But one was on the **CBS Evening News**.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/comfort-cases-nonprofit-foster-care/>

(You may copy this link and watch a 3 minute news story.)

A man who grew up in foster care and who has 5 adopted children who were in foster care began a program called "Comfort Cases." Book bags or duffels are pre-filled with items for the foster kid: pjs, hygiene kit, blanket, book, and a stuffed animal.

A woman who grew up in her teenage years in foster care in PA, said, "To carry your stuff in a trash bag, it makes you feel like this is your fault, you're worth nothing, none of this stuff is worth anything to anyone else."

**The Mission and Social Concerns Team** is in contact with Social Services in Wayne County. We are discussing starting such a program in Wayne County. We will have more information about this project in future Spires, in announcements, and on Facebook.



### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

July 2	Sara Bush
July 5	Logan Babcock
July 5	Wendi Lynch-Gagliano
July 7	Steve Kennard
July 10	Carol Sloan
July 15	Jan Taylor
July 29	Jacob McFarlane



### HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

July 3	Frank & Bron Lawrence
July 8	Chris & Katie Mitchell
July 16	Jim & Anita Adams
July 21	John & Roxanne Dobson
July 26	Gary & Mary Beth LaBerge

**If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the office at 597-9171 so we can add it to our list next time!**

## **The team minutes received for July include:**

WPC Christian Education Team

Minutes June 3, 2025

Building Faith, Family, and Fellowship. WPC nurtures spiritual growth, joyful fellowship, meaningful community, and global involvement: worshiping and serving God with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

Present: Jody Pruitt, Emily Hunt, Cim McFarlane

In Spirit: Ellen Avery, Pastor Hodong

### **Upcoming Events:**

July 28- August 1- VBS

### **Continuing and New Business**

**Sunday School News-** Cim reported that '24-'25 Sunday School year was a success! She was overjoyed that we welcomed new Sunday School students.

**Camp Whitman Board-** Cim reported the staff reports on Sunday for training. New counselors are coming this summer from the UK. Enrollment in youth camps is lower this year due to the Triennium. There will be another fundraiser dinner on September 13 in Elmira.

**VBS-** The True North- Gary will bring up two trees for us to create our "forest" by the tent. Thanks, Gary! We discussed how many students to expect. Lisa and Cim will meet on Thursday to plan. We have a games/sports leader, Bible story leader, worship leader, arts and crafts leader. We are working to secure age group leaders and kitchen staff.

**High School Youth group-** Cim shared that when she and Lisa meet on Thursday, they will discuss the youth group and if it will continue through the summer. Cim was happy that a youth group member came to the youth service on Sunday.

**Spring Youth Service-** Block party was a success! We had so many children involved and some in new ways. Thank you to all of the youth that participated and to Cim and our SS teachers for their leadership.

**Committee Restructuring-** 1. VBS- we will take any help we can get from people volunteering for an hour once, to committing to volunteering the whole week. People can donate cereal for the cereal drive we are doing in conjunction with the Mission team.

2. School Supply Drive at the Back to Sunday School Breakfast in September. We will host our usual Back to Sunday School Breakfast in September. We will "charge" anyone who comes a school supply donation that we will then donate to local schools for children who can't afford to buy their own school supplies.

**Next meeting:** Due to vacations we will be unable to meet on July 8. Would July 1 or July 15 be better? Please let Emily know soon.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Hunt



## Deacons Team Meeting Minutes

**May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**Present:** Sandy McMenamin, Randy Kennard, Nancy Talma, Muffie Beato, Linda Pulcini, & Sandy Betts

**In Support:** Hodong Hwang, Patti Dlugosh, & Sara Bush

**Meeting opening with lighting of the Christ Candle** *This month's scripture and prayer Lamentations 3:22-24*

- **Old Business:**

1. Approval of last month's minutes *corrections?* *Motion: Muffie B Second: Sandy M*
2. **Treasurer's Report:** Current balance & expense/donation Status– Sandy M. –

Apr-25	Deacons Checking Account
<b>Initial balance</b>	\$1,290.90
Additions	\$ 96.50
Deductions	
<b>Ending balance</b>	\$1,387.40

a. Balances

Offertory donations

3. Sharing Correspondence: letters/emails/cards - card from J.B, B.L. & D/B.D.

4. Next Communion – on Sunday, June 8

- a. Prepared 60 and served 57 on May 11<sup>th</sup>
- b. Verify that enough Pita, loaf and juice for this month? Currently have enough
- c. Who can assist in set-up– in June.. wait till June meeting to assign
- d. Discussion of gluten free elements – prepare 6 gluten free elements for when more than one of need is located in the same section of the sanctuary. Try to place bags away from bread on trays.
- e. Purchase of dedicated gluten free cutting board and knife to be kept with communion supplies.
5. Review of Prayer List and adjust accordingly of needs
  - a. Discussion of experiences of those close to death and sightings of a loved one who already passed that appears to be waiting. Perhaps waiting to escort them beyond death. We spoke of those holding vigilance who may also see the spirit. A powerful experience.
6. Prayers for those in need and beyond
7. Visits/ Calls/ cards counts - visits with special meaningful moments of faith

2025					
Month	Visits	Phone Calls	Cards sent and Email outreach	Communion Served	Communion Date
January	15	24	69	49	1/12/25
February	5	18	56	39	2/9/25
March	16	16	99	49	3/9/25
April	22	15	57	41	4/20/25
May				57	5/11/25
<b>f Year to Date</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>235</b>	18 Lilys delivered

8. EASTER LILY **Delivery feedback** regarding receiving of visitor...
9. Special Needs Mailings – rotating list of those needing a special hug and care. List managed by Sandy B.

Bible Verse: **Lamentations 3:22-24** *"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion." says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him".*

- **New Business:**

- Session Information: no information to be shared
- Housekeeping – assess Sara Bush's role going forward in the deacon's committee.

Meeting **closed with prayer.**

**Next meeting Tuesday 6/3/2025 @ 10:00 am**

Respectfully - Randy Kennard, Chairperson



## **Fellowship Meeting**

**5/6/2025**

**Present:** Roxanne Dobson, Jan Taylor, Norm Underwood and Sue Pringle

**Excused:** Terry Gendron, Val Gendron, Ray Marr

The Fellowship Team discussed the picnic attendance. We had a good turnout of 33 with plentiful food furnished by the congregation. We have decided to reduce the hots and hamburgers to a count of 30 because of leftovers.

Discussion continues about when we should plan our next progressive dinner. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board outside the fellowship hall for the congregation's input. We have hosts already signed up! Main dish is planned to be a Baked Potato with all your favorite toppings and salad bar.

There will be a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Potluck on June 29<sup>th</sup> following worship. Norm will bring ice cream for dessert. No theme this time, just bring a dish to pass and your table service.

There will be no meeting in June or July.

Next meeting will be August 5<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 PM to decide a date for the Progressive dinner.

Other ideas discussed were a Euchre tournament with entry fee being something for the Food Pantry and a Bible Trivia night. I will speak with Emily for assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Dobson

## **Mission and Social Concerns Minutes 6-12-2025**

Present in person: Ruth Dantz, Edie Chapman, Sally Chase, Cassie Hughes, Nancy Roets, Irene Fadden, Pastor Hodong Hwang

The meeting opened with the Lighting of the Christ Candle and opening prayer.

**Food Cupboard** – Edie - June & July, Irene – August, Cassie and Sally – September, and Edie - October

**Food Pantry** – Ruth will continue to pick up non-SNAP items.

Sally reported that 29 families in one night used the pantry. Grace House was open that evening and many came for food from non-Pal-Mac-Farm. area. This meant the Pantry was low on food. It has also been reported that the Newark Pantry is not as available to residents of Newark as it has been in the past.

**Lions Food Cupboard Donations** – Rena Haigh will arrange

**1,000 boxes of Cereal in Memory of Lois Daniels** – Lois's birthday – July 6, 1926 Total given by June 1<sup>st</sup> 222 boxes, CE will collect cereal during VBS.

**Church World Service hygiene kits** –

120 Kits were assembled and sent to CWS in May. After the packages were received by CWS, we received a request for \$2 per kit for handling. \$130 was donated by members of the congregation and was sent to CWS for handling.

**Good Neighbor Fund – In May**

Beginning Balance \$1,109.96

Donations \$3,026.00 deposited – 2 individuals, Farm. Friends, WPC, Reformed Church

2 checks written \$1,185.00 2 Rent for 2 adults and 4 children

Ending Balance \$2,950.96

**Weekend Wellness update** –

Beginning and Ending Balance \$2,050.00

No Deposits or checks written

# of bags delivered in May – 462 bags

# of bags delivered 2024-25 school year – 3,736 bags

59 families have already signed up for Weekend Wellness through the summer using the library as the place to pick up bags.

**One Great Hour of Sharing** – \$1,002.75 was sent to OGHS – this was about \$200 more than last year.

**Summer Lunch** – I sent out Signup on June 1<sup>st</sup>. and many slots have been filled.

**Foster Kids moving into a new home.** – Sally gave contact to Irene. A list will be made of what Wayne County Social Services would like to give to the children. Nancy has purchased books, and Irene has some blankets from the bags. Hygiene kits will be made with travel sized toothpaste, shampoos, lotion, etc. Irene was able to get duffle bags that were 14” and 17” for \$10 from Amazon.

After Irene talks to Lindsay at Social Services, we will let the congregation know about the project. We need a storage space to keep the items.

**Family Promise** – in Newark apartment, host one family beginning in June.

Movie Night – at Rose City Drive In with a family movie “Home.” A \$20 donation per car will go to Family Promise.

Fundraising Events – To bring up at Session

- We would like to sell pies (for \$10 each) in the front yard next to Knucklehead Farms Market this summer. We will start with a few pies and see if it is worthwhile.
- We are also interested in holding a chicken BBQ. From information received from Kings Catering, the cost might be \$12 per person for the first 200 dinners. We will investigate the Black Heart BBQ. If we could get someone to BBQ the chicken, we could make salads, potatoes, dessert and make more money for Family Promise. **This would be a project we would like to do with other churches.** We will continue to discuss this and see if there is any interest.

**Budget:** Irene will ask that checks be written. \$500 for Clint McCoy Feeding Center in Malawi and \$800 for Healthy Ninos Honduras.

The meeting was closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Fadden

The stated meeting of session of Western Presbyterian Church & Society, Palmyra, New York was called to order by the moderator, Reverend HoDong Hwang at 7:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. We started with prayer and lighting of the Christ Candle.

**5 Present:** Philip Opdycke, Irene Fadden, Emily Hunt, Roxanne Dobson

**3 Excused:** Courtney Marr, Alicia Lynch, Randy Kennard

**0 Absent**

**A quorum was present.**

- Motion made by Philip Opdycke seconded and carried to approve the agenda.

Phil led us in devotions.

### **Clerk's Report**

### **E-Mail votes:**

- Motion made by Philip Opdycke seconded and carried to approve the minutes from the April 2025 session meeting. Minutes were approved early so they can be sent to the state as documentation of approval for Little Froggies Child Care LLC.
- Motion made by Randy Kennard seconded and carried to approve Bill Hassler opening our sanctuary for people to view as part of the Historic Palmyra Walk on May 22.

The following death is recorded: **Beverly J. Koeberle (inactive) DOD 4/10/2025**. The funeral service was held at Murphy funeral Home on April 18, 2025.

### **Business of the Church**

**Daycare Update:** the state inspection and fire inspection have been done. They didn't find any problems.

**HoDong-** spoke on restructuring our committees. We should pick a small project from each committee and invite a member of the congregation to help on just that project. This will get more people involved.

- Motion made by Philip Opdycke seconded and carried to approve the use of our parking lot on June 6 and 7<sup>th</sup> by the former Methodist church for their convention.

### **Team Reports**

**Fellowship Ministry Team** – about 33 people attended the church picnic. They will start using the church dishes for people who forget to bring theirs to any potluck dinners.

**Mission Ministry Team** – will be putting Hygiene kits together on May 10<sup>th</sup>. Everyone is welcome to come help.

**CE Ministry Team** – They are looking into hiring a person to do nursery during the Sunday worship service.



**Property Ministry Team** – looking into getting a digital sign for the church yard.

- Motion made by the Property Ministry Team and carried to approve removing the unused organs in the parlor.
- Motion made by the Property Ministry Team and carried to allow the Pal-Mac JV Girl's LaCross team to use Fellowship Hall for dinner on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Presbytery**- meeting next Monday

Next meeting June 17, this will be a combination meeting for June and July.

Devotions – Irene

- Motion made by Roxanne Dobson seconded and carried to adjourn at 8:10 PM with prayer.

Janet Manktelow

Clerk

## Our Prayer Concerns (updated June 18, 2025)

### **Grieving:**

Family & Friends of Katherine Dantz (requested by the Deacons)  
Family & Friends of Jared Oswald (requested by Trudy Double)  
Family & Friends of Nancy Kay Sinclair (requested by the Deacons)  
Family & Friends of Tane Robinson (requested by the Marr family)  
Family & Friends of Harvey Smeatin (requested by Alicia Lynch)

### **Serving in the Armed Forces:**

AJ Bliss, Josh Polle

### **Please pray for those of our congregation with immediate concerns:**

Ellen Avery, Joan Barnard, Bob Dardenne, Joan Durfey, Bentley Matz, Tricia Owen, Wilma Redman, Patti Squier

### **Congregation members needed continued prayers:**

Irene Fadden, Pam Gnagy, Frank Lawrence, Cim McFarlane, Jody Pruitt, Nancy Roets, Jan Semans

### **Congregation members in nursing homes or shut-in:**

Rochelle Morse, Bev Mouton, David Squier

### **Others for whom prayers have been requested:**

Sarah Carone, Ted & Nancy Elsenheimer, Mark Fiegl, Dean & Anne Guest, Don Hagen, Janet Haigh, Russell Harris, Jerry Locey, Iris McConnell, Luke Medina & family, Megan Melville, Jack Milliken, Sheryl Patton, Kate Pfaff, Earl Pringle, Jack Sweeney, Andy Umreiko, Donna Wirth

### **May your prayers go out to:**

All caregivers; All those affected by natural disasters; All those who have no one to pray for them; All victims of violence, hatred and hunger; Please pray for those that wish to remain anonymous

*Names will remain on the prayer list for 30 days unless renewal has been requested.*

**Prayers of Intercession** are offered each day by our Deacons. To request prayer for yourself or another, please contact Randy Kennard, chair of Deacons, Sandy McMenamin, or Kathy in the Church office.



# JULY 2025

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
		1 7 pm Christian Ed. 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	2	3	4 Independence Day Office Closed	5
6 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost 10 am worship service No Youth Group	7	8 3:15 pm Worship 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	9 7 pm FH Boy Scouts	10	11	12
13 Communion & Cereal Sunday 10 am worship service 5-7 pm Youth Group	14	15 SPIRE DEADLINE 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	16 6:30 pm Property	17	18	19
20 6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost 10 am worship service 5-7 pm Youth Group	21	22 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	23	24	25	26
27 7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost 10 am worship service 5-7 pm Youth Group	28 9-11:30 am VBS	29 9-11:30 am VBS 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	30 9-11:30 am VBS	31 9-11:30 am VBS		



## AUGUST 2025

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
					1 9-11:30 am VBS	2
3 <b>8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b> 10 am worship service 5-7 pm Youth Group	4	5 10 am Deacons 3 pm Fellowship 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room 7 pm Session	6	7 9:30 am Mission/ Social Concerns	8	9
10 <b>Communion &amp; Cereal Sunday</b> 10 am worship service 5-7 pm Youth Group	11	12 3:15 pm Worship 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	13 7 pm Boy Scouts FH	14	15	16
17 <b>10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b> 10 am worship service 5-7 pm Youth Group	18	19 <b>SPIRE DEADLINE</b> 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	20 6:30 pm Property	21	22	23
24 <b>11<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b> 10 am worship service 5-7 pm Youth Group	25	26 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	27	28	29	30
31 <b>12<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b> 10 am worship service 5-7 pm Youth Group <b>Potluck Luncheon</b>						