



WESTERN SPIRE

JANUARY 2024

Happy New Year to you, my brothers and sisters in Christ!

What comes to your mind when you think of New Year? Do you have your resolutions already, or you don't make any resolutions since you were not enthusiastic about it anymore? It seems that most gyms get most of their annual revenue in January from the sweaty and unfit people who will eventually give up their annual membership in a month. All the music, art, martial arts, and computer classes are fully booked in January until they begin to dwindle from February. People have new hopes and plans until they make a good excuse to give up on them, calling them 'over-desires.'

Don't get me wrong. I don't want to discourage you from making New Year's resolutions. I want you to feel the raw human smell of sweat and others' unlovely odors in the gym because it is a good thing to exercise. I want to encourage you to explore new skills that you can learn fairly easily without making you stressed out because it is good to learn something new. I still want you to make your resolutions small enough that you can enjoy marking off the list one by one. But I would like to suggest you consider your spiritual resolutions more than other resolutions, such as 'eating healthy' or 'getting organized' types of things.

One of the shocking experiences I had about other religions was to watch Tibetan Buddhist monks creating a sand mandala (if you've never seen it, please check YouTube videos for a mandala). A mandala is a geometric design that holds a symbolism of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and culture to represent their understandings of the universe. To make a mandala is a part of the meditation of the monks. During my seminary years, I attended a conference for interreligious dialogues in Melbourne, Australia, and I watched six Tibetan monks making a mandala by carefully dropping colored sand powder little by little with a special tool for full four days.

The highlight of the process was not about how much effort they put into making a beautiful mandala through the extremely arduous work with kneeling, bending over, and stretching for hours. It happened after their masterpiece was completed as they destroyed it by sweeping the sand art with brushes, which in itself symbolized the futility and meaninglessness of human life. (Remember they were Buddhists.) I almost screamed because I hadn't taken my selfies yet, but the beautiful piece was gone quickly.

The image of the mandala broken down at the end taught me about the wisdom to focus on what would be permanent (in Christianity language, 'eternal') and what would be fundamental in human life. I don't know how you have lived your life thus far, but I hope you agree with what C.S. Lewis said, "You can't go back and change the beginning. But you can start where you are and change the ending." In this New Year, I encourage you to stick to the word (with the Bible) and the Word (with Jesus) of God.

In the New Year, I would like to urge you to make a commitment to prioritize keeping The Lord's Day as much as possible. You may want to join the Bible study group in our church, or you may start a new one (with my help) to study it deeper. You may join our mission committee (ask Irene Fadden about it), or you may start a new mission project for a specific group of people you want to help. You may serve the church through joining a committee, or you can bring your own ideas about how we grow our church in number and in spirituality. If you are sure of God's calling for your life, it is great. But if you aren't sure about it yet, there is a reason why God put you in this faith community. Please consider that this church is your spiritual playground to use for your full potential if you are to please God through your life.

Praise God who began a good work in us will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus!
(Philippians 1:6)

Peace of Christ,
Rev. Hodong Hwang

January 7, 2024
10am Worship
Service



A Message from the CE Team:



Confirmation class will be starting this winter for four young people. We are looking for interested mentors. If you are interested, please contact Emily Hunt.

We really appreciate your consideration.

The Women's Association would like to thank everyone who purchased RADA products at our coffee hour sale. We appreciate your continued support. Enjoy the holidays using your new cutlery! Products can still be purchased from Elaine Hassler at 315-597-5211.



FAMILY STORY TIME

Join us for fingerplays, songs, a craft, small snack & movement games at our beach themed story time.

GUEST READER:

Chris Oaks

*Pal-Mac Varsity Girls Swim Coach,
Summer Swim Lesson Instructor &
High School Math Teacher*

FEBRUARY 1, 2024

6:00pm-7:00pm

**Western Presbyterian Church
101 East Main Street, Palmyra**

Bring your own beach towel



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

There are no anniversaries this month.

January 4	Marietta Koeberle
January 6	Sally Chase
January 6	Molly Budziszewski
January 12	Dave Taylor
January 15	Andrew Budziszewski
January 16	Erika Mitchell
January 24	Norm Underwood
January 28	Jack Moak
January 29	Roxanne Dobson

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 December include:

WPC Christian Education Team

Minutes December 5, 2023

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, Pastor Hodong

In Spirit: Ellen Avery

Upcoming Events:

December 16- Junior High Fellowship Winter Festival of Lights Outing

December 24- No Sunday School Christmas Eve

December 31- No Sunday School New Year's Eve

January 7- Sunday School Led Epiphany Service

January 21- Valentine Card Production

February 11- Camp and Retreat Sunday

February 18- No Sunday School February Break

February 20-22- East Avon mini-VBS

March 3- Easter Card Production

March 23- Easter Bunny Breakfast

March 31- No Sunday School- Easter Sunday

May 19- Sunday School Led Service/Last Day of Sunday School

July 29-August 2- VBS

Continuing and New Business

Sunday School News- We have had 6-7 children each week. Middle School students have even taken on a teaching role lately, leading a lesson. The musicians are practicing before Sunday School for our Epiphany Service

New WPC Webpage CE Content- We are hoping to add more photos with captions and less paragraphs/narratives for the web page. Emily will write a blurb about our SS curriculum and include a link to the PCUSA webpage with the curriculum. Everyone will contribute photos. Jody will write up a blurb about the adult classes. Cim will write up a VBS blurb with Cave Quest graphics and information about volunteering and attending.

We can get materials/drafts emailed to each other and then put together something whole to send to Bill Bush as soon as possible.

Confirmation- Emily sent a parent survey to get availability. We will have classes on Monday evenings (starting in mid-January for 10 weeks) in Fellowship Hall. Emily will fill out a property use form on Sunday. Pastor Hodong would like to use the big tv in Fellowship Hall and will need access to a DVD player. James M. will help teach Pastor Hodong how to set up the tech for classes. Emily sent an email to families with our tentative plan. We brainstormed an idea for a few mentors- two mentors have been secured.

Festival of Lights-Jody reserved the wagon for December 16. We will meet at church in Fellowship Hall afterwards for pizza and hot chocolate. Emily will fill out a property use form.

Toddler Time- Cim reported she had 16 children at the most recent WPC Toddler Time. CE will make a proposal for a line item in the budget for Toddler Time supplies. We will be asking for \$150-\$200. Session approved up to 4 Toddler Times a month at WPC to give leeway when the PCC is unable to host. Cim is planning on a beach themed Family Story Hour on February 1 from 6-7. She has invited lifeguard "celebrities" to be our guest readers.

January 7 Epiphany Service- Lights of Christmas Hope Shines Bright- the service is almost completely planned. Nella and David will be playing their instruments. We will not need an organist.

Camp Whitman Board Update- Cim shared that the search committee has offered the position to someone for the Camp Director. They are still in negotiations.

VBS-Cim reported we will use Cave Quest as our VBS theme this year. Session has approved the Sanctuary use if we need it for VBS this summer.

Pastor Hodong's Adult Education Ideas- Pastor Hodong shared he would like to have 3 adult lecture series. We will plan this in depth at our February meeting.

Next meeting: January 2, 2024 at 7:00 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Emily Hunt

PROPERTY MINISTRY TEAM - MINUTES

November 15, 2023
WPC

Present: James McFarlane, Gary LaBerge, Phil Opdycke

Absent: Don Dantz

The new boiler system is in and working. May still need to bleed some air from the system, but almost all locations are working ok now. North hallway is getting warm, but not reaching set temp on the thermostat. May be related to need to bleed air from that zone. Chimney covers are in process.

Winterization of facilities are almost complete with remaining items on schedule in the next couple of weeks.

Firewall settings on office computer were adjusted after discussion with Net360 owner, Sam Carini. Val has been able to remotely access the church database again. Within the next 6 months, will probably be upgrading a piece of network hardware that should allow a more stable remote network connection. The expected cost is up to \$400.

Issue list and wish list for the AV system have been assembled and hope to talk to Applied Audio representative shortly after the first of the year. The wish list includes options for camera(s) in choir loft for alternate view of sanctuary and for viewing organist when playing.

Considering additional lighting in the muscle room to brighten some of the corners. Looking into options.

Gary plans to contact Jim Jeffery about options for moving the gas meter outside to try to reduce the meter reading issues we have experienced with NYSEG over the past couple of years.

Gary is still checking on options to make sure the lightening protection system is up to par. Found possible issues when working on chimney as part of the boiler installation.

James looking into options for building a DIY teleprompter for Rev. Hodong to use when recording items for Facebook (or other platforms).

We have several items on our list for next spring: Adding cold patch material next to the new concrete section of the front driveway; Install additional slate for easier access to the Churchill plaque on southeast corner of building; Clean out and repair the tool shed near the northwest corner of the building.

Will skip the Dember meeting and meet in January. If anything urgent arises in December, then will use email and phone to address the issue.

Next Meeting: Currently scheduled for 1/17/24 at 6:30 PM

Our Prayer Concerns (updated December 20, 2023)

Grieving:

Family & Friends of Rev. Lucinda O'Leary (requested by the Presbytery)

Serving in the Armed Forces:

AJ Bliss, Adam Hill, Sarah Jagger, Joe Krebbeks, Josh Polle

Others for whom prayers have been requested:

All caregivers, All those affected by natural disasters, All those who have been affected by the Coronavirus, All those who have no one to pray for them, All victims of violence, hatred and hunger, Ellen Avery, Jill Berber, Sandy Campbell, Sarah Carone, Joyce Clark, Marilyn Clary, Ed Cole, Tracy D'Arduini & Linda Pulcini, Jacquie DeBrine, Irene Fadden, Jonathan Groff, Elmer Hanna, Linda Hanna, Laurie Harvey, Julie Maragus, Angelo Mascioli, Deb Merla, Mary Greenlaw-Meyer, Sue Nussbaumer, Joyce Oster, Gail Rapp, David Sanford, Dennis & wife Ann Sapienza, Fran Storm, Frank Surace, Sam & Marguerite Vizzini, Rose Ann Wagner

Please pray for those who wish to remain anonymous as they, too, need our prayers.

Others for whom we continue to pray:

Wes Barager, Janet Hassler Costa, Gary Culver, Kathleen Dougherty, Joan Durfey, Janet Haigh, Marge Harloff, Russell Harris, Bobby & Eileen Haurand, Dave Jankowski, Christine Stachecki Johanessen, Roger King, Gary Lashway, Frank Lawrence, Jessica Locey Otto, Cim McFarlane, Patrick Miller, Karley Mott, Tracy Murphy, Dawn VerStraete Nieskes, Wilma Redman, Kathy Rynders, Doug Sloan, David Squier, Joan Verstringhe

Congregation members in nursing homes or shut-in:

Beverly Koeberle, Rochelle Morse, Bev Mouton

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. Please remember that all prayer requests are automatically removed from the list after one month unless the giver specifically requests continuation.



JANUARY 2024

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
	1 New Year's Day Office Closed	2 9 am Annual Reports due 7 pm Session 7 pm Christian Ed. 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	3 10 am Mission/ Social Concerns	4	5	6 Epiphany of the Lord
7 Baptism of the Lord 9 am Sunday School 10 am children led Epiphany service Fellowship team meeting after worship	8 10 am Deacons	9 10 am to Noon Toddler Time 3:15 pm Worship 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	10 7 pm Boy Scouts FH	11	12	13
14 Communion & Cereal Sunday 9 am Sunday School 10 am worship service	15 Martin Luther King's Birthday 5-8 pm FH Confirmation Class	16 SPIRE DEADLINE 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	17 1 pm FH Women's Circle Bible Study 6:30 pm Property	18	19	20
21 3 rd Sunday after Epiphany 9 am Sunday School 10 am worship service Annual Meeting	22 5-8 pm FH Confirmation Class	23 10 am to Noon Toddler Time 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	24	25	26	27
28 4 th Sunday after Epiphany 9 am Sunday School 10 am worship service	29 5-8 pm FH Confirmation Class	30 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	31			



FEBRUARY 2024

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
				1 6:00 -7:00 pm FH Family Story Time	2	3
4 5 th Sunday after Epiphany 9 am Sunday School 10 am worship service	5 5-8 pm FH Confirmation Class 7 pm Fellowship	6 10 am Deacons 7 pm Christian Ed. 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	7 10 am Mission/ Social Concerns	8	9	10
11 Camp & Retreat Sunday 9 am Sunday School 10 am worship service Sweets & Treats	12 President's Day 5-8 pm FH Confirmation Class	13 10 am-Noon Toddler Time 3:15 pm Worship 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	14 Ash Wednesday 7 pm Service	15	16	17
18 1 st Sunday in Lent Communion & Cereal Sunday No Sunday School 10 am worship service	19 President's Day Office Closed 5-8 pm FH Confirmation Class	20 SPIRE DEADLINE 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	21 1 pm FH Women's Circle Bible Study 6:30 pm Property	22	23	24
25 2 nd Sunday in Lent Scout Sunday 9 am Sunday School 10 am worship service	26 5-8 pm FH Confirmation Class	27 10 am-Noon Toddler Time 7 pm Session 7 pm Boy Scouts Muscle Room	28	29		