
~FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE~

Volume 12 Issue 1

February 2021

From the Pastor's Desk...

The season of Epiphany is a moment during which we pay attention to the ways in which God is manifested in Jesus. Led by the star we come to pay homage to the one in whom God is made known (Matthew 2:1-2). Those who follow the star, who see and hear the good news, have the opportunity to bear witness to the one who has come into the world as the revelation of God.

It has become a well-known fact that many Christians find it difficult to share their faith. Several years ago Martha Grace Reese published several books that share the news that mainline Protestants struggle with "evangelism." We tend to keep our religious beliefs to ourselves. For one thing, we consider religious beliefs to be private, but we also have an aversion to offending others. Thus, religion, like politics, remains off-limits in polite company. But, can we keep silent about that which defines our very being?

I think it's really important to identify for ourselves what elements of our congregation draw other people to come to church. But first, we need to be happy with who we are and what we do as the children of God. Can you imagine if we invited others and shared what we appreciate? If we don't know why we come, or can't name anything we enjoy, why would we invite others? I know even though we appreciate each other in this church, we may not feel comfortable or confident in inviting others. If that's the case, we may want to discuss competence and confidence in sharing our faith and inviting others to church. I highly recommend Martha Reese's "Unbinding the Gospel: Real Life Evangelism." This book will help encourage you to invite other people into our church. Creating a culture of invitation will take time, of course, but we need to get started as we witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

The future of the church may rest on our ability to invite others to come and see what we have found in our congregations. In a culture that no longer has a vested interest in encouraging congregational participation, the future of our faith communities will be greatly determined by our willingness to invite others to share what we have found. But the future of the church is without a doubt in God's trustworthy hands. And the same Spirit who descended on Jesus at Baptism is still working among us. Indeed, the Spirit that inspired Philip and Andrew, who reached out through their efforts to others, and who overcame even the skepticism of Nathaniel is still offering all kinds of people all over the world an invitation to "come and see" and creating in them the desire to do just that.

West Milford Presbyterian,

God is working in you and through you for the nurture, care, and growth of God's people and church. Thank you for your faithful witness.

In His Grace,
Pastor Justin Choi



SESSION'S REFLECTIONS

FEBRUARY 2021

SUBMITTED BY BETSY ENGELHARDT, CLERK OF SESSION

It's been almost a year since the last publication of our church newsletter – and what a year it has been! Despite the limitations of social interactions all around us, including our church buildings and sanctuary worship services, the Session has been hard at work throughout the year making sure the business of Church continues to move forward and addresses the needs of our congregation. Following are some of the key issues addressed throughout the year:

- How to initially react to pandemic concerns to ensure the safety of our congregation, leadership, staff, and organizations who regularly utilize our buildings and properties. With closure decisions came the tasks of reopening again – documenting covid19 protocols and establishing policies and procedures to protect our church community.
- How to conduct Church business in a virtual world, utilizing the Zoom platform to conduct meetings, news blasts and mass mailings to communicate with our membership, and social media such as Facebook and YouTube to broadcast weekly sermons. Thru a donation, purchased a new church laptop to update our technical abilities.
- Installed a Listening Enhancement system throughout the sanctuary that provides headphones or connects with hearing aid devises for those with hearing difficulties.
- Updated our "Come Grow with Us" church pamphlets and tweaked our church website to better reflect our staffing and programs. Thanks to Carol Stanhope for design expertise and covering the pamphlet printing costs.
- Purchased a Ministry Safe software program that provides:
 - o Comprehensive program for child abuse training, testing, certification, and tracking for our church school staff.
 - o Back ground checks for staff and volunteers.
 - o Resources for publishing policies and procedures detailing safe child practices.
- Completed staff evaluations and renewed Pastor Choi's Interim contract through October 14, 2021.
- Outreach Committee is working with Deacons in maintaining an outreach log to ensure members who are ill or homebound, have lapsed in attendance, or moved from the area remain in contact with us.
- Voted on a Christian Education policy concerning curriculum to ensure the Book of Order mandates that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior be the center of all teachings. Vote was unanimously cast to eliminate other religious faiths, practices, and traditions from entering into the weekly curriculum. Session also voted to postpone Confirmand 2020 Class from confirmation until Spring 2021 to catch up on lost instruction time.
- Stewardship completed a successful pledge campaign – themed "Honor our Past by Tithing our Future".
- Worship planned the first ever drive-in worship service offered by our church to accommodate in person worship on Christmas Eve. Thru the wonders of technology, members were able to dial into our service on their car radio in the church parking lot while Pastor Choi offered a worship service from the back of a pickup truck.
- Nominating committee offered a slate of candidates for Elders & Deacons class of 2023 along with new candidates for Pastoral Nominating Committee.
- Finance Committee worked hard throughout the year to monitor the effects of donations with our church closures, find cost reductions, and fine tune our budget to more adequately reflect our income and expense reporting. Session approved fund raising efforts through a book sale, Autumn Bazaar, and virtual auction.
- Property Committee worked hard throughout the year to repair and maintain our property and buildings.

PASTORAL NOMINATING COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 2021 UPDATE

Pastoral Nominating committee members were elected in May and began their work in earnest in June 2020. There have been some changes to the committee members in the past 8 months, with our current PNC consisting of the following dedicated volunteers:

Betsy Engelhardt, Chair
Kathi Eninger
Bill Francis
Matt Smart
Carol Stanhope
Marty Tappan
Cyndy Taylor

The summer months were spent reviewing the details required to complete our Ministry Information Form (MIF) and analyzing our Church's financial stability, and its ability to support an installed Pastor in the years ahead. With the pandemic postponing our usual fund raising efforts throughout 2020 and the impact this virus had on US company's ability to conduct business and keep employees on their payrolls, we felt our financial future was unknown. We offer a special thanks to the Women's Association to committing to support the benefit package of a newly installed Pastor, but also hear their concern for their own fund raising efforts going forward. We were advised by our Presbytery Liaison that due to church closures, the market for candidates looking for a placement was negligible at this time. In September, the committee decided to postpone our work until January 2021, at which time we would meet quarterly until we felt the environment was favorable to continuing our search. Our next meeting is scheduled for early February. Our wish is to keep our committee intact and communications flowing so we can immediately get to work when the timing is right.

A special thanks to our Palisades Presbytery Liaison, Joan Davies. She has been a valuable resource to the committee. In March 2021, WMPC will become a member of the North West Palisades Presbytery and will be assigned a new liaison at that time. By the time our second PNC meeting is scheduled in the new year, we will be introduced to any changes that may exist between the 2 different Presbyteries in conducting PNC business. We will look forward to this new connection and continuing our work in finding the best candidate to serve our church in the years to come.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Engelhardt, PNC Chair



WA INFORMATION

Happy February everyone!

We need to remain optimistic that we will soon be able to visit with each other and enjoy fellowship. Missing hugs is going around.

We are trying to do some things we are accustomed to doing.

Therefore we will be having our annual cookie walk. A prepackaged bakers dozen for \$5.00.

We're happy to announce that on March 5th we will hold our annual Fish and Chips dinner. It will be take out only. We will have our famous cole slaw! We have also decided to have only 2 desserts because we all spend too much time trying to decide which wonderful treat we want and this year we must keep things moving. So this year apple pie or cheesecake only. Next year big choices again. Hope to see you stop in on March 5th.

Also we are looking for to a Spring Bazaar and our Rummage Sale. It may have a different look but it will be held.

Check your shoutouts for the date of our next meeting which we hope you will attend.

Happy Valentines Day and stay healthy.

Linda and Pam





Deacon's Doings- February 2021

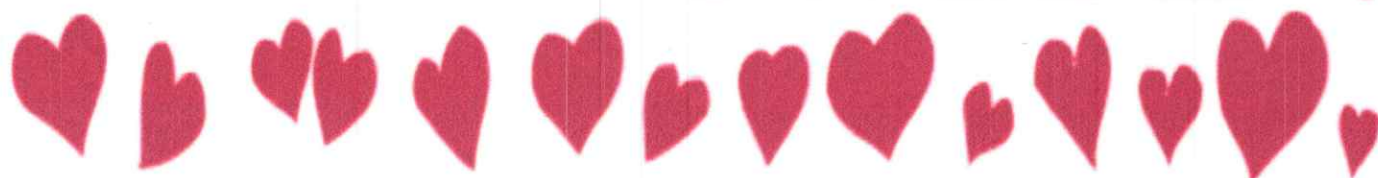
By the time this newsletter comes out you might have already voted with your donation to the food pantry for the team you felt would win the Super Bowl. Thank you for that! On February 14th , instead of carnations for Valentine's Day, the Deacons have assembled a small Valentine's Dinner bag for you to take home after church as our way of saying "We love you". I want to talk about February 14 th in another context, because that date is the official end of Epiphany. In other words our last link with 2020 ends. The Epiphany decorations come down and the church gets ready for what is to come next in 2021. Our church will hopefully be open and we can catch up on information among our members and re-establish lines of communication that might have been lost because we're not worshiping in person. Linda Fredricksen has faithfully been sending cards out for both joys and concerns but who might we have missed? Now is the time to sharpen our vigilance and we need the Congregations help. Marty Tappan is heading up an outreach program to keep track of those who might like a card or a call. Those who might feel forgotten by the church or alone. Please help us to help others by letting Marty know if there's someone you haven't heard from or have been wondering about. The Deacons thank you for all you do.

**We are so blessed to have such a caring Congregation!
Bonnie**



Valentine's Day

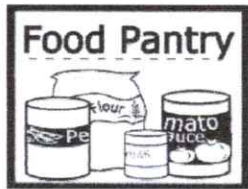
There's a feeling of warmth, friendship, love in the air as Valentine's Day approaches and what better way to celebrate than with a special dinner. Who can forget the scene in the 1955 Disney movie "Lady and the Tramp" when Lady and Tramp share the plate of spaghetti? With that scene in mind, the Deacons are putting together a red Valentine's bag with spaghetti sauce, pasta and chocolates for you to celebrate with. For pick up on February 14th 2021. It's our way of saying we love you.



Good Morning Jesus

This exercise is both simple and powerful. Before you even crawl out of bed, and no matter what your mood might be, start every day saying out loud, "Good morning Jesus." Yes, God knows our thoughts and feelings, but when we speak words, we give them a greater presence, a greater significance. When we begin our days greeting God's presence among us, we are more likely to sense God's presence throughout our day. These three simple words can wash away despair and help us center our minds on hope and possibilities.

(quoted from the Susanville United Methodist Church, Susanville, CA)



"Bits and Bites"

News from the Food Pantry

Our Community Food Pantry continues to be a vital outreach to so many seeking assistance during these uncertain and stressful times. We are able to keep our doors open because of the generous giving of so many including our congregation, community groups, churches, schools, and those in the community who drop off food or gift cards.

Nonperishables as well as fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products, meats, health and beauty aids, cleaning supplies, and paper goods are available to those in need. Individuals/families who ask for our assistance remain anonymous. Requested items are taken by phone and packed bags are placed outside Fellowship Hall for a scheduled pickup time. We serve 7 days a week.

If anyone wishes to donate food or other essentials, please call the church office. (973-728-3081) The office will forward your information to one of the "pantry people" who will then contact you.

A BIG THANK YOU TO BILL SCHMIDT! This past December, Bill took it upon himself to make student desks. He had realized many students didn't have a "private place" to complete their schoolwork. So with the help of Roberta, who stained and painted, many local students now have their own place to work. If anyone knows of someone who needs a desk, free of charge, we still have some available. Please call the church office.

Questions? I can be reached at 973-728-7369 or janlee702@gmail.com.

Jan Halvorsen

CE NEWS

Hi friends, Since we still can't be all together Miss Dale, Miss Diane, Mr. Doug , Miss Ruth and Miss Kathi are bringing your Sunday school class to you! We have some fun ways you can spread God's Love for Valentines Day!

1John4:19 We love because he first loves us. The bible tells us love is from God and that God is love. Now for some fun ways to spread God's love to your family and others.

Have everyone sit in a circle , and using anything with a heart on it ie: a pillow, a paper heart whatever you have-pass it to the one sitting next to you and keep passing play music when passing, have someone stop the music, who ever has the pillow says "God loves you and so do I because..."

Ready to make a craft? All you need is:

- pencil with an eraser
- Small amount of red paint or any color
- Cup
- One cutout heart any size
- Tape
- Folded piece of paper any size

Tape the cutout heart on the folded paper, dip the eraser into the paint that is in a cup and dot around the heart a few times. Take the cutout heart off and write- God loves you ,on the inside write And so do I

*. a marker can be used instead of paint.

Now for some fun games!

Blow up a ballon put on top of head see you can write God loves you on the ballon the quickest.

Have 2 family members sit in chairs facing each other very close to each other. Each will have a paper cup using a small ball try to throw the ball into the cup then move the chairs apart, keep moving chairs further apart see how many times you can catch the ball!

Hide paper hearts around your house, see you can find the most!

Snacktime! Using clementines or oranges even bananas write Valentine messages on the outside. Maybe: Be Mine, God loves you!, Thank-you, Spread God's love, Awesome-peel and while eating share ways you can spread God's love.

We have some jokes for you to share: Did Adam and Eve have a date? No they had an apple!

Knock-knock-Who's there? Peas Peas who? Peas be mine Valentine!

Why did the girl put candy hearts under her pillow? She wanted sweet dreams!!

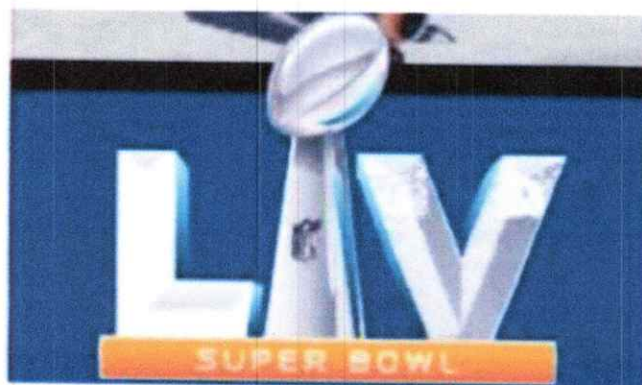
GOD loves you and so do we!!! HAPPY VALENTINES DAY!!





SUPER BOWL (SOUPER BOWL) SUNDAY VOTES

Do you love football? We have a tradition that on Super Bowl Sunday, February 7th this year, everyone in church has a chance to vote for the team they think will emerge victorious. The voting is done by putting money in either of two buckets labeled with the team names, at the end of the service. All donations go to our pantry so we call it the Souper Bowl. But alas, we won't be in church on February 7th as it will be a virtual service. Not to fear however because the Deacons will have the buckets outside the kitchen doors! You could drive by on Saturday, February 6th or Sunday, February 7th and toss your donation into what you think will be the winning teams bucket. If you don't want to drive by maybe just pop it in an envelope and send it or drop it off in the church office. A huge thank you from the Deacons for supporting our pantry and enabling us to do this outreach.



West Milford Presbyterian Church
Women's Association



Take-Out Dinner

Friday, March 5, 2021

West Milford Presbyterian Church

**Delicious "Tastefully British" Fish or Chicken
with homemade coleslaw, roll and dessert!**

\$17 (\$16 for Seniors)

5:00-7:00 p.m.

Tickets must be Pre-Purchased by March 3rd

Call: 973-728-3081 (Mon. & Wed. 9:30-3:00)

WEST MILFORD
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

COMMUNITY VIRTUAL AUCTION

Thursday, March 18 -

Saturday, March 20

Preview Days on March 16 & 17

Bid online from the comfort of your home!

**Lots of great items...home decor,
experiences, food, and much more!**





RECIPE ROUNDUP

Looking for a quick and easy dinner recipe? Why not try this chicken dish. Very easy to make. Serves 4 – 6, depending on how many people you are serving and if you have big eaters!

APRICOT GLAZED CHICKEN THIGHS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a baking dish or roasting pan.

4 – 6 bone-in chicken thighs, skin removed

1 medium onion, thinly sliced (this is optional)

1 12 ounce jar apricot jam or preserves

1 package dry onion soup mix

1 16 ounce bottle French, Russian, or Catalina dressing (you will only use about 3 /4 of the botte)

In a large bowl combine the preserves, dry soup mix, sliced onion and about 12 ounces your choice of dressing. Mix well.

Place the chicken thighs in baking dish or roasting pan and pour the mixture over the top. Cover either with aluminum foil or a lid.

Bake for 45 – 55 minutes until juices run clear.

Serve with rice, egg noodles, sweet potatoes, or mashed potatoes and vegetable.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31	1 First Day of Black History	2	3 7pm - AA Meeting	4 9am - Sr. Saints	5	6 10am - Deacons Meeting
7 10am - Worship 6pm - Scouts	8 7:30pm - Session	9 Pastors Vacation	10 7pm - AA Meeting	11 9am - Sr. Saints	12	13
14 Pastors Vacation	15 Valentine's Day 10am - Boy Scout Sunday 10am - Worship 11am - Cookie Walk 6pm - Scouts	16 Presidents' Day (Regional)	17 7pm - AA Meeting	18 9am - Sr. Saints	19	20
21 Pastors Vacation 10am - Worship 6pm - Scouts	22	23 7pm - AA Meeting	24 9am - Sr. Saints	25	26	27
28 10am - Worship 6pm - Scouts	1 Pastors Vacation	2	3	4	5	6