
~FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE~

Volume 15 Issue 2

February 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It seems we were almost there. With good reason, we had been thinking and talking more about the future. But now comes a surge in illness caused by the Delta and Omicron variants of the COVID-19 virus, and we are faced once again with uncertainty and anxiety made worse by imperfect, partial knowledge. Our church had begun to plan with hope for new beginnings, and for an unrestricted return to worship, fellowship and ministry. But now what? What shall we do?

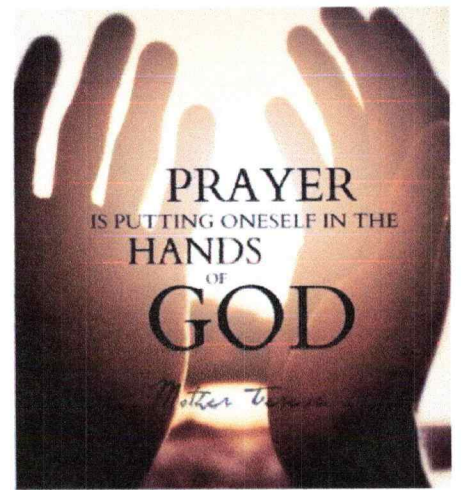
Pray! Pray for the sick and for those who care for them. Pray for your church leaders who are continually called upon to make the best possible decisions in the midst of changing situations and partial knowledge. The church protocols they have developed and implemented, along with the Guidelines, are useful tools that have served us all well, by God's grace. Pray that your church's leaders will be given wisdom to continue adapting and responding, for the greatest common good. Pray for yourself also, that you might hold fast to the truth that "nevertheless, the Kingdom of God has come near."

"Above all these, put on love!" We have put up with so much during this season, from inconvenience to grief. We have put off so many things that matter to us, big and small. We have put away cherished customs and habits. Now it is time for us to rededicate ourselves wholeheartedly to putting on the love of Christ, regarding one another through the eyes of Jesus, and loving one another as he loves us. Because we are his Body, there can be no other way for us than this. It is the only way for us to continue living in and moving through this pandemic together, in the name of Christ and for the life of the world.

Let us commit ourselves to our Christian calling: Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God. If we love one another, God lives in us and his love is perfected in us. (1 John 4:7, 12). As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. (Colossians 3:12-15)

In His Grace,

Pastor Justin Choi, Interim



Phyllis Van Hooker is still at re-hab. Prayers for her.

Irene Ferris: Sophie's friend's mother passed away after a bout with cancer.

Sandy Smit: China is on mandatory testing, lockdown for Covid.

Justin: Family has all tested negative. Thanks for your prayers and concerns

Bonnie: Reminding us of Souper Bowl Sunday...bring food for food pantry...February 13

Aunt Jenny's Attic has reopened on Friday, 21st.

Kathi Holley is reminding us to buy Script.





SESSION'S REFLECTIONS

FEBRUARY 2022

SUBMITTED BY BETSY ENGELHARDT, CLERK OF SESSION

Most of us have been hoping that by the time year 2022 came, the restrictions of the pandemic would be behind us. Unfortunately, January found us making hard decision about closing our in-house worship and church building usage due to the dangerous increase in covid variants in our area. Our focus is always to keep our doors open to the public, however safety of those we serve must remain a priority. As Session discussed reopening plans, we proceeded with the understanding we all hold responsibility for our own health and safety. There are precautions we can personally take to protect ourselves. It is with this mindset we formed the following protocol list when visiting our church:

- Masks must be worn by everyone inside our buildings
- Social distance of 6 feet should be observed as best as possible
- Social events such as coffee hour are being postponed until further notice. All socializing should take place outside.
- When utilizing building space, use disinfectant wipes to clean all surfaces upon entry and exiting a work area. Wipes will be made readily available by property committee in all public areas.
- If you are ill, or have been exposed to Covid, we ask that you refrain from visiting the church until CDC guidelines indicate it is safe to return.
- We offer virtual clips of all our worship services. If you feel uncomfortable attending services, we hope to see you viewing our services through the facebook link: west milford presbyterian.

We want to offer a special thanks to Pastor Choi for keeping our services current during our closure by creating virtual worship opportunities, despite his battle with another covid infection.

Another special thank you goes to our hard-working Finance Committee. Much time, effort, and research went into presenting a balance budget for year 2022. They manage to stretch our decreasing dollar resources to continue to cover all the critical expenses and outreach efforts of our church.

We look forward to great participation in our virtual auction scheduled for February 24 to 26. This is a major fund raiser for our church and will be critical to keep our budget for the year in balance. Everyone can help support this event by offering donations, obtaining sponsorships, providing labor, and most importantly logging into the auction to bid on an exciting list of items. Preview days start February 22. Log in to charityauction.bid/wmpchurch.org to join the fun and support our church.



Deacons Doings-February 2022

Time to put away our holiday trappings and embrace Valentine's Day symbols....hearts, chocolates, red roses! February 29th 2020, we were gathering for a Community Dinner here in Fellowship Hall, but Covid curtailed those plans for 2021 and now possibly also for 2022. However, the Super Bowl will be with us on February 13th and piggy backing on that name will be our Souper Bowl. On Souper Bowl Sunday you will get a chance to vote for your favorite team by tossing money in the bucket (provided by the Deacons) that bares the name of your choice for winning the game and becoming Super Bowl Champion for the 2021 season. The buckets accept change, bills, checks...you get the idea. All of this money goes to the pantry. You might be wondering if the pantry is still as busy as in the beginning months of Covid. The answer is that the number who use our resources is dynamic, always changing. There is a core of families, mostly elderly who need care, that have remained for years. We have a substantial number of young families that come and go and we always pray they will find new opportunities that allow them to take care of their families themselves. There are many families of all ages that need our help because of sickness, operations, depression, etc. We pray for their health and renewal of faith for their future. Where there is a need, the WMPC Pantry will be there for them, with kind words, good food and help in ways that allow them to get through life's challenges.

Please help us in our outreach also by identifying those who should be remembered by a card or a call for whatever reason. Just bring it to the attention of a Deacon. We pray that the Lord will bless you ,
Bonnie

Deacons: Jan Halvorsen, Pat Wright, Marty Tappan, Karen Willmott, Linda Fredricksen, Carol Stanhope, Janet Donus, Bonnie Seufert



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

JANUARY 2022

Covid has affected our church and Sunday School again and it was so disappointing to miss our Christmas Eve services, our post-Christmas Sunday and the brightest Sunday of Epiphany. Classes resumed on January 16th with masks required throughout the church and Sunday School. We realize how important it is to protect our little children who are yet to be vaccinated. Also, thank you to Ms. Ashlee Smart for helping with our youth classes until the mask mandate is lifted.

Along with catching up with the lessons that were missed, our children have been enjoying teachings about "God's Abundant Love" through the story of the miracle Jesus performed at the wedding in Cana when he turned water into wine. Also, the children were versed in the celebration of marriage and the customs that were practiced "back in the day." Through this miracle, Jesus is revealed. This miracle speaks of God bringing extravagance and abundance into everyday life. God's glory and unending love (in abundance) are revealed, and the disciples believe in Jesus as do all the people at this wedding who saw this miracle happen.

The children continued to learn about God's Spirit. Jesus reinforces the fact that God will help them understand and practice God's good ways, and they will be supported by their experiences of loving, caring relationships in their own family and in their faith community. Jesus speaks of God's Spirit which the children may experience as a feeling of God being with them, and that it is God's hope that hearing the good news will lead to living in God's way. They learned when people help each other they are sharing the good news of God's love. Lastly, the children were reminded that Jesus brought the good news of God's love for all people and that God will help us understand and practice God's good ways of living. However, *they learn that what God wants for our lives and all creation does not always coincide with what they may want.* God calls them to speak out, telling of God's love and justice for all people.... especially if they are different from themselves. We learn that Jesus is now spreading the good news in different towns in the area, he is performing miracles, and crowds are coming to listen to Him, as He is getting closer to the "cross."

The planning of our next communicant's class is underway. Again, such decisions are impacted by covid spread and constrictions. Please remember to have your children wear masks to Sunday School until further notice. Thank You.



SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 13, 2022

More than 29 years ago, the Souper Bowl of Caring began. Since that day, more than \$143 million has been raised for local charities and food banks across the country. It has become a powerful movement that is transforming the time around the Big Game into the nation's largest celebration of giving and serving.

Want to be a part of the movement of sharing God's love with those in need? Please give generously on Super Bowl Sunday by placing your coins, cash, or checks into the bucket of your favorite team. (as of this printing we don't know the teams playing) All proceeds will benefit our church's food pantry. If you prefer to donate a non-perishable food item that would be most welcome also. (please see Bits and Bites article for items most needed)

Through this mission, you'll be helping to make a positive difference in the lives of those in our community. Thank you.



"Bits and Bites"

News from the Food Pantry

The West Milford Presbyterian Church Food Pantry would like to thank our church members, community individuals, businesses, and organizations in our community who continue to support our Food Pantry.

Just because the weather is cold, windy, snowy, or rainy doesn't mean our doors close. We continue to serve new clients. Some have been able to find employment and they call to tell us how much they appreciated the help we were able to give. This is why we do what we do.

There are some items that we aren't in need of at this time. These include dried pasta, tuna fish, and cake mixes. Items that we most often run out of are:

sugar, flour, vegetable oil, toilet paper, paper towels, laundry detergent, tissues, pudding cups, salad dressings, juice bottles adult cereals, and spam.

We ask that if you want to donate food items please do so when the church is open. With the cold weather, items left outside can freeze and then are unusable if no one is at church and can bring them inside. Any questions? I can be reached at 973-728-7369.

Jan Halvorsen



RECIPE ROUNDUP

ALOHA PARADISE BARS (makes about 24 bars)

Wishing you were lying on a tropical island right about now? Satisfy that feeling by baking up a pan of these cookie bars. They make a lot so share with family and friends.

Ingredients:

- 1 pouch Betty Crocker sugar cookie mix
- ½ cup butter, softened
- 1 egg
- 2 cups white vanilla baking chips
- 1 cup coarsely chopped dried pineapple or mango
- 1 cup flaked coconut
- 1 cup chopped macadamia, walnuts, or pecans
- 1 can (14 ounce) sweetened condensed milk (not evaporated)

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Spray bottom only of a 13 x 9 inch pan. In a large bowl, stir cookie mix, butter and egg until soft dough forms. Press dough into the bottom of the baking pan.

Bake 15 minutes. Remove pan and sprinkle with baking chips, pineapple or mango, coconut and nuts. Drizzle evenly with sweetened condensed milk.

Return pan to oven and bake 30 to 35 minutes longer or until light golden brown. COOL COMPLETELY.

Cut into small bars. I usually do 9 rows by 4 rows. Store covered in the refrigerator.

ENJOY!!! THESE ARE VERY RICH!!!

Mark your calendar! It's almost here!

Our second annual **Community Virtual Auction**, which is held completely online, begins with



PREVIEW DAYS on February 22 and 23. This is a great opportunity to check out all the items up for bid and mark down the numbers that interest you. There is something for everyone! Then on **Thursday, February 24 through Saturday, February 26, 2022,** you will be ready to start bidding.

There is still time for you to help make this auction a success by becoming a sponsor if you have a business, providing an auction item (maybe a Christmas present you can't use!) and encouraging your friends and relatives to take part in the auction. Contact Roberta Schmidt at rbschmidt@optonline.net or call the church office if you would like to donate.

[Charityauction.bid/wmpchurch.org](https://charityauction.bid/wmpchurch.org)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
		7 of Black History		9am - Sr. Saints		
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
10am - Worship/Scout 6pm - Scouts				9am - Sr. Saints		10am - Deacons Meeting
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Souper Bowl Sunday 10am - Worship 10am - Worship 11am - Cookie Walk 11am - WA Meeting 6pm - Scouts	Valentine's Day 7:30pm - Session	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE		9am - Sr. Saints		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
10am - Worship 6pm - Scouts	Presidents' Day			Virtual Auction 9am - Sr. Saints		
27	28	1				5
Virtual Auction 10am - Worship 6pm - Scouts						

