
~FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE~

Volume 19 Issue 1

January 2026

Dear Church Family,

First and foremost, I'd like to say that it is my deep and very real prayer that this now new year will be one that brings peace and prosperity, health and renewal, learning and community, and all of it with great joy. This past year has had its challenges, especially socially and politically, but on the other side of that coin, there's also been a great amount of good that has been seen, and especially here at West Milford Presbyterian.

This past year, we celebrated three baptisms; Lorelai, Danica and Matthias. Baptisms are always a joy in the church, because with every baptism, the future of the church grows brighter. We celebrated the Eucharist 13 times, with, I think, the most notable celebration being that of World Communion Sunday, which left everyone rejuvenated by what we can be as the church when we come together. For learning, we took the first six months of the year to finish the second half of the Book of Acts, having started the first half the previous September of 2024. Over the summer we then looked into Presbyterian Worship and Prayer, and then we began a deep dive into the Book of Judges at the beginning of September that saw us through to Advent, where we looked especially at how the Psalms address the Advent of Christ.

Of course, high mention also has to be made of the many events and programs that have taken place throughout the year for the church and for the community. THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING HAPPENING AT WMPC! Whether it be the Food Pantry, or Wine & Design, or the Christmas Bazaar, or the Rummage Sale, or VBS, or Movie Night, or The West Milford Players, or Scouts, or the Bagpipers, or Bible Studies, or the Toy Giveaway, or the Farmer's Market, or the Sports Teams, or Aunt Jenny's, these buildings are rarely still, and I know that I'm missing things. This church is an important element of the West Milford general community in probably many more ways that we generally realize. AND, I will say that it's a privilege for me to be a part of this community and I very much look forward to what the new year brings. And so let's take these words of Paul with us into the New Year.

"Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again, rejoice! Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything, instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Then the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:4-9)

And lastly, I wanted to share a thought about Phyllis Wilson who passed into God's loving arms this past December. Phyllis was one of the first people that I really got to know when coming to WMPC. I could tell from our first meeting that she was a character. Sandy would go and get Phyllis every Wednesday and bring her to the office and we'd all have lunch together. Sometimes we'd get pizza, always taco pizza for Phyllis, on rare occasion McDonald's, one of Phyllis' favorites (chicken nuggets), or from a deli (chicken fingers). She had the diet of a child and the heart of one as well. Phyllis spent her life at WMPC fulfilling most every role there was to fill at one time or another. She will be greatly missed and never replaced.

Be Good & Do Good
Pastor Chris

JOYS:

- *A joy that the Nursery is open every Sunday Morning. A big Thank You to all who have volunteered to help. If you would like to sign up please see Roberta Schmidt.
- * Rich reported that the WM Players have donated \$1000.00 to the church. Thanks to them for this nice gift.
- *Kara Pierce had a birthday on 12/6. Happy birthday, Kara.
- * Reilly was named "student of the month" at Macopin- way to go Reilly, we're proud of you.
- *Ken and Gladys returned from a wonderful trip to West Virginia.
- *Riley is so very happy that Scobbie is better and he considers it a miracle.
- *Thomas is happy that his uncle Andy came up from Florida.
- *Mackenzie Arias and Carol Hashimoto have birthdays this week. Happy birthday to them.
- *Betsy is thankful for the guardians of the church. Marty took care of Phyllis for years and others do things we don't hear about. We have a wonderful church family and we are all grateful.
- *Thanks to Kathi and Dale for all their hard work with today's pageant. The children did a beautiful job. Also thanks to Greg for his beautiful solo.
- *Howie announced the Passaic County donated 200 bags of food to the pantry. Forty families received Christmas dinners.
- *Jan announced that a complete honey ham dinner was donated to us. Everyone should put their name in to see who wins it. Victoria McGurr was the winner.
- *May everyone have a blessed Christmas.
- *Danica Star was one on Saturday, happy first birthday to a happy girl.
- *Betsy is thankful for all the caregivers that work on holidays to care for those who need it.
- *Happy birthday to Irene and many more.
- * Joy that Karen and Kit are here today.
- *Riley is happy that his leg no longer hurts.
- *Happy New Year to all.



CONCERNS:

- *Today is the 84th anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day.
- *Jan asked for prayers for Lynn Madden, a fellow Lions member, upon the passing of her husband, Larry.
- *Annette's sister Carol had an embolism in her lung and is now doing better, and her friend Carol is suffering with neuropathy.
- *Prayers for Marcie, her daughter Amanda, and her husband Michael.
- *Prayers that Karen feels better. Also, Kathy Holley.
- *Prayers for Adeeb as he waits to hear about job offers.
- *Remembering Phyllis with love.
- *Prayers for all who are traveling.
- * Bobbie DeSol- She had a feeling about uncle Georgie in Brooklyn so she went and picked him up and brought him to her house. He had a stroke at her house and first responders came quickly, he went to the hospital and then had a helicopter ride to a different hospital. They performed surgery and now is doing well. He really like the helicopter ride.
- *Kathy's uncle Dino passed away. Prayers for the family.
- *Kathy Mc Gurr sisters boyfriend Eric was driving and his car got hit by a tree. He's in the ICU. Please pray.
- * Riley slipped on black ice and hurt his leg. Scobbie is doing well.
- *Aurdrey asking for prayers for her sister in law, Rosa who is suffering with spinal stenosis and is in rehab.
- *Bill is asking for prayers for his daughter in laws family. Her uncle Ray died this morning. He is no longer in pain which is a blessing.
- *Audrey is asking for prayers for her brother George who has pneumonia and Rose who is suffering with spinal stenosis.
- *Gladys needs prayers for her head and neck pain. She's awaiting results of her CT scan. Feel better Gladys.
- *Prayers for Kathi Enering's co-worker/friend, Frances whose husband died.



SESSION'S REFLECTIONS

JANUARY 2026

SUBMITTED BY BETSY ENGELHARDT, CLERK OF SESSION



The year 2025 has come to an end. Looking back over the last 12 months, the church remains as committed as ever to offer outreach opportunities to our community. Whether it be the welcoming doors of Aunt Jenny's Attic each week, special events such as Wine & Design evening and Fish & Chips dining during the Winter, Tea Party during the spring, VBS during the summer along with outdoor movie night, Blessing of the Animals in the Fall, food pantry packages weekly, farmer's market throughout the year along with play productions by WM Players, support of Scout troops, softball & football teams, bag pipe practice, and our holiday bazaar, there is seldom an idle period at our church. Of course, the support of our virtual community auction and rummage sale help provide the funds to keep all this going. We are always looking for support, helping hands, and creative minds to ensure these activities and more remain vibrant in the year ahead. Let us all reflect on where God may be calling us to serve, reaching out to offer your support.

Leadership in our church is vital, whether it be serving as an Elder on Session or offering to serve as a Deacon. There is one vacant position open on Session and one open on Deacons to fill out the roster for 2026. Please reach out to Pastor Chris or any Elder/Deacon if you would like to serve.

There has been much attention drawn to our Finances in the past 3 months. It costs us about \$15,000 monthly to pay our bills. We all know that the cost of insurance increases exponentially every year – liability insurance and health insurance are large budget items along with increased cost in heating, building maintenance and repairs. Our weekly giving falls short on meeting these obligations. If you have not yet pledged for 2026, we encourage you to do so along with considering increasing your pledge amounts in the year ahead.

Sophie Ferris has been hard at work on an Eagle Scout project to build an outdoor worship area on the manse property. Session will look forward to viewing her plans so she can move ahead with this project. I'm sure she will be looking for donations to fund this project.

We have achieved our goal of opening our nursery during Sunday worship services BUT need 2 volunteers to cover the room each week to keep the nursery open. Every volunteer must have completed and passed the Ministry Safe sexual abuse training to serve. See Roberta Schmidt or Betsy Engelhardt to request training – for those trained, please pick dates on the signup sheet in Fellowship Hall so we can plan proper coverage each week.

Wishing everyone a blessed new year!

Writing is one of my many hidden talents. This is my last written monthly report as a Deacon, a chore I won't miss. Being a Deacon has helped me to be aware of the many needs of our church.

Thanksgiving service was over. It was time to set the sanctuary for the Advent season. Boxes, trees, wreaths and garlands were brought down from the attic. Wreaths and garlands were hung by Senior Saints. Chrismons were hung on two alter trees. The nativity was set on the communion table. After the season ended, we reset the sanctuary for Epiphany. All was done by Deacons, friends, and Senior Saints. Epiphany has passed; the sanctuary is "back to normal."

I would like to share my thoughts of repast. My husband's college roommate and his wife were a part of our life. In their Pennsylvania church, they were both very active for many years. He died. She followed soon after. Their two sons wanted to hold a simple church service for her. The pastor did not greet us, nor did anyone else. The service was simple and impersonal. The sons found a local deli to supply sandwiches, salads and drinks which we enjoyed in the basement. The sons pointed out the Boy Scout room. They were both Eagle Scouts.

When their mother passed, Dale and her sister had to make their own repast.

Recently, Phyllis Wilson passed. The guests commented on how Pastor Chris made her service very personal. One of her two chosen hymns was not familiar, so Pastor Chris sang it as a solo. A beautiful bulletin was created. Her family donated money for the repast. Tables were set with white tablecloths and an appropriate theme. Food was purchased; desserts were made by church members. Later, tables were cleared for Sunday. Deacons and all our church members are always ready to work together.

During the Advent service, I gazed at the two Christmas trees, purchased by memorial funds by the Van Hooker family in memory of Phyllis, our church organist. The Chrismons on the two trees were created by Diane Erickson, her second set. Hung from the pulpit was a banner with three kings, made by a church member. The name Peggy is there.

The Deacon year of 2025 has ended. Deacons look forward to serving in 2026.

Marty Tappan, moderator



WA January Newsletter

Happy New Year 2026!

Last year was a busy one and the new year promises to be the same.

I want to thank everyone who helped with our special events by either working at them, attending them, or encouraging other members of the community to participate. It all helps us raise money for our beloved church.

Aunt Jenny's Attic will reopen on January 7th. Our first event in 2026 will be our second wine and design on January 24th at 2 p.m. This way, no one needs to drive in the dark. All you need to bring is a smile and something to drink; we supply everything else, so save the date. Also, you don't need to be an artist to do this.

Looking forward to a happy, healthy 2026.

Blessings, Linda



SUNDAY SCHOOL DOINGS



"Happy New Year!" May God's grace and peace be with you always.

We hope you were able to attend our Christmas pageant-"The Christmas Story." Our children through speaking lines, actions and song brought to life the birth of our Savior. They sure did a fabulous job-don't you agree? 2026 will find Sunday School continuing hearing God's word. We will focus on the ministry of Jesus. We will do this through bible readings, crafts and games bringing the teachings to life. We will also continue to serve God by being active in the life of our church. You will find Sunday School ushering, preparing and serving coffee hour and helping in any way that is needed.

IMPORTANT DATES

- | | |
|------------|-------------------------------------|
| January 4 | Family Service No Sunday School |
| January 11 | Sunday School Resumes |
| January 18 | Miss Dale's class ushers |
| | Miss Kathi's class does Coffee Hour |

Miss Dale and Miss Kathi are blessed to have your children each Sunday as we hear the Word of our Lord.

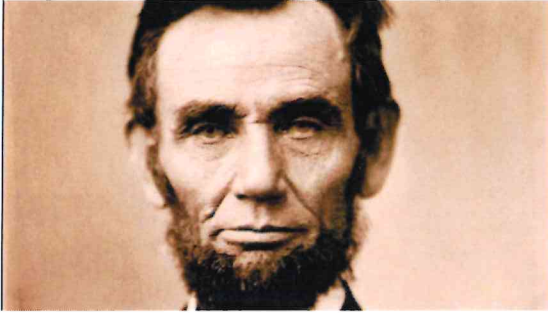
Faithfully submitted,

Kathi Enering



With malice toward none - Presbyterian News Service

Image



President Abraham Lincoln (photo courtesy of the National Endowment for the Humanities)

December 15, 2025 - Mike Ferguson

LOUISVILLE — Seated last week in the sanctuary of [New York Avenue Presbyterian Church](#), where Abraham Lincoln used to worship during the most trying time in American history, a conservative and a progressive joined for a conversation on what “with malice toward none,” a soaring phrase in Lincoln’s [Second Inaugural Address](#), might mean in today’s fraught political setting.

Dr. Tim Shriver and Judge Tom Griffith, at right, were the guests last week of New York Avenue Presbyterian Church's McClendon Scholars program, "With Malice Toward None."

[Dr. Tim Shriver](#), a film producer, the chairman of the board of [Special Olympics](#) and the co-creator of [The Dignity Index](#), and [Judge Tom Griffith](#), a retired federal judge who was previously general counsel of [Brigham Young University](#), talked about the spiritual and moral values needed to combat today’s toxic political polarization. Dr. David McAllister-Wilson, president of [Wesley Theological Seminary](#), moderated their 97-minute discussion, which can be viewed [here](#).

Asked to talk about their faith, Shriver said it’s his conviction “we are all children of God, and we have a lot of evidence to that effect.”

“The problem of missing the dignity of other human beings is a fundamental human problem,” Shriver said. “Every time we miss it, we make a huge mistake. That’s where my faith starts — around the equality of every human being.”

Griffith said despite devoting much of his life to jurisprudence, the U.S. Constitution and the rule of law are “not my primary allegiance.”

“I am in awe to be in this space,” he said, adding that before the discussion started, he’d sat in Lincoln’s pew and taken a video to send to his grandchildren. “This church has been at the forefront of fighting for human dignity, and to be here with these people I love and admire — I’m grateful to be here.”

“I have faith in the Constitution, but primarily I am a Christian and I practice my Christianity as a Latter-Day Saint,” Griffith said. “The biblical story is Christ is going to win. It will look dark at times, but he is going to win. Any effort we make to follow him and copy him is worthwhile and valuable and important.”

Asked about the surge in political violence over the past few years, Shriver assigned part of the blame to what he called the “contempt industrial complex.”

“Partisan journalism is super profitable,” he said. “You’ve probably seen 3-5 examples of hateful rhetoric today. The toxin normalizes and rewards hatred.”

“Political violence has been with us forever, but there’s something different about this moment. Political scientists call it ‘[affective polarization](#),’ and we’ve never seen it at the levels where it is now,” Griffith said. “Democrats and Republicans should disagree, but they now feel the other side is immoral.” Our political system “can’t work with that level of contempt,” he said.

When he speaks on college campuses and at law schools, Griffith pleads with students to stay off social media. He tells them, “You are being played, and it’s dollar-driven.”

“This is the opioid crisis of our time,” Griffith said. “It puts the level of enmity on steroids.”

McAllister-Wilson pointed out that polling shows that religion is often a driver of polarization and even political violence. He asked: What do people of faith do with their sense of righteous anger?

“Act on it without becoming the evil you oppose,” Shriver said. “Differences of opinion are not the problem; they are the solution to problems. It’s the whole purpose of a vote. That’s how we solve problems.”

In his Second Inaugural Address, delivered March 4, 1865, Lincoln was addressing, in part, “slaveholders in the South who tried to destroy the United States of America,” Griffith noted. “How do you do that? I don’t know, but that’s what we’re called to do.”

A fan of C.S. Lewis, Griffith was at Oxford University recently. “I always go to University Church, where Lewis delivered his ‘[The Weight of Glory](#)’ sermon,” Griffith said. Lewis ends his sermon with these words: “Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses.”

“I think that’s right,” Griffith said. “The people we disagree with who are so wrong — we need to treat them with dignity and respect.”

Lincoln’s [First Inaugural Address](#) — which reminded hearers in the South that “we are not enemies, but friends” and included Lincoln’s “the better angels of our nature” reference — “fell on deaf ears, and we are all living with the consequences today,” Griffith said. “The country was defined by the conflict of the Civil War.”

Keeping dignity front and center

Shriver said The Dignity Index “was an attempt to go from the idea of giving platitudinous advice to people.”

“It grades how you treat another human being,” he said. He suggested that those gathered in the sanctuary and online “score yourself on the last time you talked politics” with someone on the other side of an issue.

“These are skills you could teach members of Congress,” he said, “if they would listen.”

Griffith called himself “a big fan of The Dignity Index” and called it “a powerful tool for self-regulation. I hope people will say, ‘I like her tax policies, but does she have to be so nasty about her [political] opponent?’”

Griffith asked those in attendance to “find a [Make America Great Again] person and take them to lunch. Pay for it, and at the lunch, just ask questions and listen to why that person feels the way they do. My theory for why MAGA is so powerful is that when people are humiliated, they don’t respond well.”

Griffith cited Judge Learned Hand’s 1944 speech, “[The Spirit of Liberty](#),” where Hand calls the spirit of liberty “the spirit which is not too sure that it is right.” It is, according to Hand, “the spirit of Him who, near 2,000 years ago, taught [human]kind that lesson it has never learned but never quite forgotten: that there may be a kingdom where the least shall be heard and considered side by side with the greatest.”

Shriver and Griffith were asked: what gives you cause for hope?

“That this is still a country of enormous innovation and compassion,” Shriver said, adding that Special Olympics relies on a half-million volunteers to hold events across the nation.

“I am hopeful because on Easter Sunday, something miraculous happened,” Griffith said. “Christ began a new Creation he calls us to be part of.”

“When we are seeking reconciliation,” Griffith said, “he’s with us.”

During a question-and-answer time, the two were asked, “what do we do if something really evil is being done?”

“You attack programs, policies, outcomes and positions, but not the person,” Shriver said.

“Lincoln said the only way you persuade people to change their mind is to be their friend,” Griffith said.

New York Avenue Presbyterian Church offers its McClendon Scholars program both in person and online. Learn more [here](#). As part of last week’s discussion with Griffith and Shriver, organizers offered [this “Invitation to Action” guide](#).

West Milford Presbyterian Church Women's Association WINE & DESIGN

Enjoy the fun and create your own

wine glass masterpiece!

Ticket Price \$25.00 per person

Price includes all art supplies,

wine glass and delightful appetizers!

BYOB

January 24th 2:00-5:00pm



To Purchase Tickets

Call Church Office

973-728-3081

or Aunt Jenny's Attic

Wed, 1-4 PM Fri & Sat. 1-3 PM



West Milford Presbyterian Church
1452 Union Valle Road, West Milford, NJ 07470

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
<p>Comunion Sunday</p> <p>9am - Worship/Epiphany</p> <p>6pm - Scouts</p>	<p>7:30pm - Zoom Bible Study</p>	<p>9am - Community Food Pantry</p>	<p>11am - Bible Study @ WMPC</p> <p>1pm - Aunt Jenny's Attic</p>	<p>New Year's Day</p> <p>9am - Community Food Pantry</p> <p>9am - Sr. Saints</p>	<p>11am - Aunt Jenny's Attic</p>	<p>9am - Community Food Pantry</p> <p>11am - Aunt Jenny's Attic</p>
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<p>9am - Worship</p> <p>6pm - Scouts</p>	<p>7:30pm - Zoom Bible Study</p>	<p>9am - Community Food Pantry</p> <p>7pm - Session</p>	<p>11am - Bible Study @ WMPC</p> <p>1pm - Aunt Jenny's Attic</p>	<p>9am - Community Food Pantry</p> <p>9am - Sr. Saints</p>	<p>11am - Aunt Jenny's Attic</p>	<p>8am - Winter Farmers Market</p> <p>11am - Aunt Jenny's Attic</p>
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<p>9am - Worship</p> <p>6pm - Scouts</p>	<p>7:30pm - Zoom Bible Study</p>	<p>9am - Community Food Pantry</p> <p>7pm - Session</p>	<p>11am - Bible Study @ WMPC</p> <p>1pm - Aunt Jenny's Attic</p>	<p>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</p> <p>9am - Community Food Pantry</p> <p>9am - Sr. Saints</p>	<p>11am - Aunt Jenny's Attic</p>	<p>11am - Aunt Jenny's Attic</p>
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<p>9am - Worship</p> <p>6pm - Scouts</p>	<p>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</p> <p>11am - Congregational Meeting</p> <p>7:30pm - Zoom Bible Study</p>	<p>9am - Community Food Pantry</p>	<p>11am - Bible Study @ WMPC</p> <p>1pm - Aunt Jenny's Attic</p>	<p>9am - Community Food Pantry</p> <p>9am - Sr. Saints</p>	<p>11am - Aunt Jenny's Attic</p>	<p>Wine & Design</p> <p>9am - Community Food Pantry</p> <p>11am - Aunt Jenny's Attic</p>
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
<p>9am - Worship</p> <p>6pm - Scouts</p>	<p>7:30pm - Zoom Bible Study</p>	<p>9am - Community Food Pantry</p>	<p>11am - Bible Study @ WMPC</p> <p>1pm - Aunt Jenny's Attic</p>	<p>9am - Community Food Pantry</p> <p>9am - Sr. Saints</p>	<p>11am - Aunt Jenny's Attic</p>	<p>11am - Aunt Jenny's Attic</p>

