

CHRISTIAN HERALD

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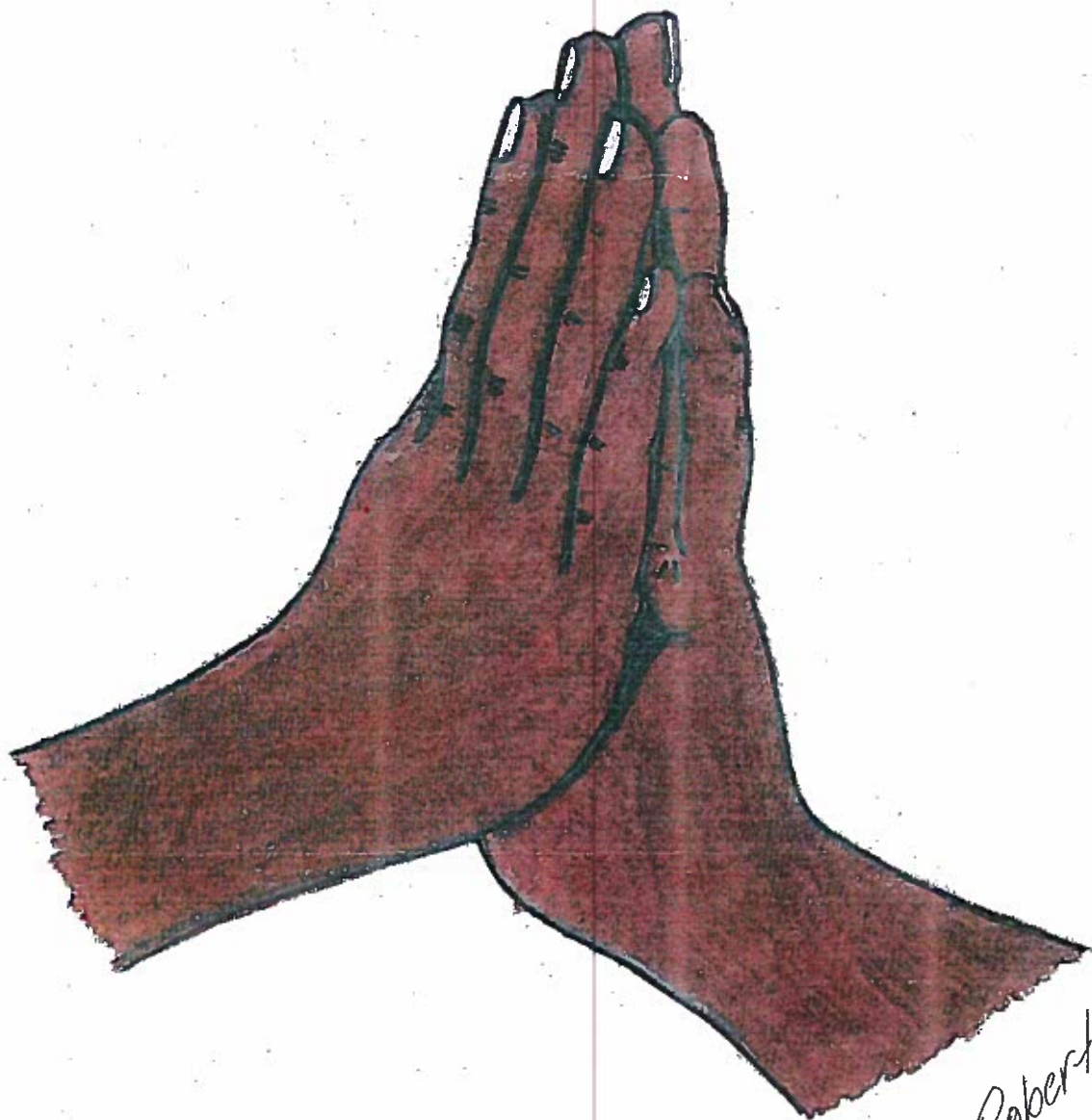
CHURCH

January 2018

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Rev. Laddie J. Benton, Pastor

JANUARY NEWSLETTER



*Robert
Peters*

Pray without ceasing. 1 Thessalonians 5:17
The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. James 5:16

From the Pastor's Desk
The Rev. Laddie J. Benton, Pastor

GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR THE CHURCH OF CHRIST JESUS

*I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf
of those who will believe in me through their word,
that they may all be one...*

(John 17: 20-21 –New Revised Standard Version)

PRAYING FOR UNITY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH

Dear members and friends of Washington Presbyterian Church (USA),

Welcome to the "New Year" of 2018! The question that I put forth to all is ..."Are you ready to start this new year being challenged to make changes for the better?" I recently read an article that..."According to StatisticBrain.com the top five New Year's Resolutions are 1) lose weight/eat healthier, 2) institute life/self improvements, 3) make better financial decisions, 4) quit smoking, 5) do more exciting things." Most certainly these are well-intended goals for self improvement. However, after a few weeks, many will revert back to their old habits and ways.

There is one resolution that I would like to hear from among believers of the church of our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus..."That we be united as one in the body of Christ." So often the church is divided by doctrines, denominations, and internal divisions. Christians/believers can easily bring about unity within the church by following the example of the prayer that Christ prayed for the church: "...As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one." (John 17: 21-22).

One way to ignite the flames of Christian unity is through prayer. January 18 should be circled on each of our calendars, this date marks the beginning for the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity." Make a commitment to attend an ecumenical prayer service and pray for the unity of the church with people of different faiths. During this week, take time every day to say a prayer for the unity of the church.

"As you sent disciples into every land, O God, gather them now, from the ends of the earth, into one fellowship that chooses your purpose and praises your name, in one faith, hope, and love. Amen."

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

Your Brother in Christ,
Rev. Laddie J. Benton, Pastor

STAND UP FOR JESUS!
STAND UP FOR WPC!



Minestrone with Pesto

PREP: 20 MINUTES PLUS OVERNIGHT TO SOAK BEANS

COOK: 1 HOUR

In Genoa, this hearty soup is traditionally topped with a dollop of pesto.

- 8 ounces dry Great Northern beans (about 1½ cups)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 medium carrots, peeled and sliced
- 2 celery stalks, sliced
- 1 large onion, diced
- 2 ounces sliced pancetta or bacon, diced
- 1 pound all-purpose potatoes, peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes
- 2 medium zucchini (8 ounces each), quartered lengthwise then cut crosswise into ¼-inch pieces
- ½ medium head savoy cabbage (1 pound), sliced to equal 4 cups
- 1 large garlic clove, crushed with garlic press
- 2 cans (14½ ounces each) chicken broth or 3½ cups homemade (page 24)
- 1 can (14½ ounces) diced tomatoes
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons pesto, homemade (page 141) or store-bought

1 Rinse beans under cold running water and discard any stones or shriveled beans. In large bowl, place beans and 6 cups water. Allow to stand at room temperature overnight. (Or, in 4-quart saucepan, heat beans and 6 cups water to boiling over high heat; cook 2 minutes. Remove from heat; cover and let stand 1 hour.) Drain and rinse beans.

2 In 4-quart saucepan, heat beans and enough water to cover by 2 inches to boiling over high heat. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 40 minutes to 1 hour or until beans are tender, stirring occasionally. Drain beans.

3 Meanwhile, in 5-quart Dutch oven, heat olive oil over medium-high heat until hot. Add carrots, celery, onion, and pancetta; cook 10 minutes or until onion begins to brown, stirring occasionally.

4 Add potatoes, zucchini, cabbage, and garlic; cook, stirring constantly, until cabbage wilts.

5 Add chicken broth, tomatoes with their juice, and 1 cup water; heat to boiling over high heat. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 30 minutes or until vegetables are tender.

6 In blender or food processor, with knife blade attached, blend ½ cup beans with 1 cup soup until pureed. Stir salt, bean puree, and remaining beans into soup; heat to boiling. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 10 minutes.

7 Top each serving of soup with 1 teaspoon pesto. *Makes 6 servings.*

Each serving: About 360 calories, 16 g protein, 52 g carbohydrate, 11 g total fat (3 g saturated), 6 mg cholesterol, 1100 mg sodium.

Vegetable & Black-Eyed Pea Soup

PREP: 20 MINUTES ~ COOK: 10 MINUTES

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 6 ounces cooked ham, in one piece, diced
- 4 medium carrots, peeled and thinly sliced
- 3 medium celery stalks, chopped
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 1 medium zucchini (about 8 ounces), quartered lengthwise, then cut crosswise into ¼-inch pieces
- 2 cans (16 ounces each) black-eyed peas, rinsed and drained
- 2 cans (14½ ounces each) no-salt-added stewed tomatoes
- 1 can (14½ ounces) chicken broth or 1¾ cups homemade (page 24)
- ¼ teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper

1 In 5-quart Dutch oven or saucepot, heat vegetable oil over medium-high heat until hot. Add ham, carrots, celery, and onions and cook, stirring frequently, until vegetables are almost tender, about 10 minutes. Add zucchini and cook about 5 minutes longer or until vegetables are tender.

2 Stir in black-eyed peas, stewed tomatoes, chicken broth, pepper, and 3 cups water; heat to boiling over high heat. *Makes 6 servings.*

Each serving: About 305 calories, 17 g protein, 43 g carbohydrate, 9 g total fat (2 g saturated), 17 mg cholesterol, 1265 mg sodium.

Minestrone with Pesto ▶



BEING FREE IN JESUS

**Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is,
there is freedom. 2 Cor. 3:17**

For thirty-five years Bill had been very careful to live by the minute requirements of a conservative Christian lifestyle. He was convinced he must do that in order to obtain salvation. Suddenly, however, he turned his back on all religion. "I've got to be free to become myself," he complained.

Perhaps Bill had never studied today's text. Probably he felt, as do many Christians, that the Spirit's presence and freedom just don't seem to go together. Such people see God as needing to impose upon them a heavy sense of "ought-ness" – "You ought to do this," or "you ought not to be that." Freedom seems a cruel joke, but to admit it would be rebellious, and they "ought not to be rebellious!"

But if there is in one's religious experience such a feeling of oppression, of heavy demands for submission to power, then we can be sure that the Spirit of the Lord is not there. He is not involved in such religion. For the Spirit of the Lord does not work by force.

We must recall that there is more than one kind of force. Far more subtle (and therefore more effective) than physical force is emotional force. And that comes in myriad forms: the threat of withholding love, using past failings to rub the raw nerves of hurting self-worth, and verbal scoldings and harangues, to name just a few.

Our God works not by force but by imparting the principles of truth and illuminating the mind to understand that truth, making it vital to our lives. God doesn't need to use force to support His truths for they are well able to stand on their own merits.

In human structures, whenever leaders become deficient in truth they must immediately compensate with a display of power. Such leaders either do not have truth behind their schemes or they do not trust the ability of their subjects to grasp what truth they may have.

But God has neither problem. Not only is His government rooted in sensible, coherent truth, He also has great confidence in the capacities of His creatures to perceive that truth! To use force is to deny both these principles.

In an atmosphere of freedom, how quickly our minds respond to grasp the principles of truth on which God builds His gracious government. Are you free in Jesus?

Then thank His Spirit for showing you how to be free!

THE FORUM

“LET’S START THE NEW YEAR WITH AUTHORITY – WPC”

This is a chance to move forward in a creditable manner, to shake off the lackadaisical mode of the Christmas Holidays and move very energetically into a New Year. This year of 2018 can be challenging to “do the right thing” to get more people in the church pews, continue to do more community outreach and engage more in church-to-church communication on activities in the coming year. The first few months may and can be a catalyst to a new beginning in bringing more people to the church, great for the “box office” collections of course, and the experience of reaching out to the community.

The three months of February, March and April present a unique combo for great gatherings. Black History Month of February can be exceptional with a last Sunday of the month Jazz Vesper Service, as well as the beginning of Lenten Season starting on Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2018. This can follow through the month of March of breaking and dipping bread and sipping soup with the multitudes, each Wednesday eve before great services. Then top it off with great, grand celebrations on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018. Although the Lenten Services on Wednesday evenings can be a problem for some people and congregants due to driving at night, we should emphasize the fellowship during this period and if transportation is needed we all must help out. It should also be noted that the Lenten Season lasts from 40 to 48 days and is a period involving dual disciplines of abstinence and fasting. Remember, “GOD IS WATCHING.”

Congratulations to the young lady of WPC who stepped up to the plate to undertake the gargantuan task of Church Treasurer. I am sure the job will be in good hands and with the proper guidance by the retiring Ms. Brooks, the new Treasurer will continue the job of “cooking the books for WPC.” Just be aware to make timely deposits of checks and payments to vendors and you should have smooth sailing. Again, thanks for being blessed with the fortitude to undertake the job. More on the volunteer in the next FORUM.

Child Protection Policy

At a recent Session meeting, the WPC (U.S.A.) passed a resolution establishing guidelines for a child protection policy as described by a government agency and Lehigh Presbytery. The policy is to provide a safe and secure environment for children who participate in our church programs and activities. It also protects church staff and volunteers from false accusations. The brief statement sums up the main basis of the policy. It is my opinion that every member/family of the church should have a copy of this policy statement. This is for the protection of all who will be involved in activities and sanctioned events at WPC.

Glory Hallelujah

The Christmas Caroling performed on Friday evening, December 23, 2017 was a great success. The multitudes came from “miles around” (the neighborhood), to hear the beautiful voices of the WPC Choir and Friends. People shouted from the “rooftops” (porches and windows) for more. The “hood” was alive and pleasantly surprised and enjoyed it immensely and even shouted for joy and made requests. They invited us into their “homes” (beauty shop) to serenade the beauticians the clients, topping it off with the Hispanic Christmas rendition of Feliz Navidad. Good time was had by all. With a repertoire like that we must take this “show on the road.” Come join us! As we returned to church we sang heartily “Go Tell It on the Mountain.” Once back in the church we feasted on pizza – olé.

If you see something suspicious say something. Dial 911.

That’s all folks!

A THOUGHTS TO PONDER

Verse of the Month

Through Thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Psalm 119:104
Teach us Thy name to own, Whilst waiting Lord for Thee.
Unholiness and sin to shun, From ALL untruth to flee.

CLAY IN THE POTTER'S HAND

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me, Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

GENESIS 2:4-7

1 This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens—⁵ and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, ⁶but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground—⁷the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.

“From the dust of the ground” implies that there is nothing fancy about the chemical elements making up our bodies. The body is a lifeless shell until God brings it alive with His “breath of life.” When God removes His life-giving breath, our bodies once again return to dust. Therefore our life and worth come from God’s Spirit. Many boast of their achievements and abilities as though they were the originators of their own strengths. Others feel worthless because their abilities do not stand out. In reality our worth comes not from our achievements but from the God of the universe, who chooses to give us the mysterious and miraculous gift of life. Value life, as He does

NIVLASB

JEREMIAH 18:1-11

1 This is the Word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ²Go down to the potter’s house, and there I will give you My message

God has power over the clay (Judah), and He continues to work with it to make it a useful vessel. But Judah must soon repent or the clay will harden the wrong way. Then it will be worth nothing and destroyed. NIVLASB

³So I went down to the potter’s house, and I saw him working at the wheel. ⁴But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

⁵ Then the word of the Lord came to me: ⁶ O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does? declares the Lord. Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in My hand. O house of Israel.

As the potter molded or shaped a clay pot on the potter’s wheel, defects often appeared. The potter had power over the clay, to permit the defects to remain or to reshape the pot. Likewise, God had power to reshape the nation to conform to His purposes. Our strategy should not be to become mindless and passive—one aspect of clay—but to be willing and receptive to God’s impact on us. As we yield to God, He begins reshaping us into valuable vessels.

NIVLASB

⁷If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, ⁸and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. ⁹And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, ¹⁰and if it does evil in My sight and does not obey Me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.

¹¹Now therefore say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, This is what the Lord says: Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and your actions.

ISAIAH 29:13-16

¹³ Thus says the Lord:

These people come near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. Their worship of Me is made up only of rules taught by men.

¹⁴ Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.

The people claim to be close to God, but they were disobedient and merely went through the motions; therefore,

God, would bring punishment upon them. Religion has become routine instead of real. Jesus quoted Isaiah's condemnation of Israel's hypocrisy when He spoke to the Pharisees, the religious leaders of His day (Matthew 15:7-9; Mark 7:6-7). We are all capable of hypocrisy. Often we slip into routine patterns when we worship and we neglect to give God our love and devotion. If we want to be called God's people, we must be obedient and worship Him honestly and sincerely. NIVLASB

¹⁵ Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the Lord, who do their work in darkness and think, "who sees us? Who will know?"

Thinking God couldn't see them and didn't know what was happening, the people of Jerusalem tried to hide their plans from Him. How strange that so many people think they can hide from God. In Psalm 139 we learn that God has examined us and knows everything about us. Would you be embarrassed if your best friend knew your personal thoughts? Remember that God knows all of them. NIVLASB

¹⁶ You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to Him who formed it, "He did not make me?" Can the pot say of the potter, "He knows nothing?"

ISAIAH 64:8

Yet, O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You are our potter; we are all the work of Your hand.

SHAPED AND RESHAPED

I watched intently as the potter rhythmically spun the wheel with her foot while molding the clay with her hands. Gradually, the clay took on a distinctive shape. Then quite abruptly she stopped the wheel, mashed the piece she had just created, and started again. This time the pot turned out more as she intended. She placed it on a shelf with many other pots of various shapes to dry. Later, it would be fired or heated in a special oven called a kiln, then trimmed, sanded, glazed, and fired a second time.

After watching her, I thought about how God is our potter. We were created from the dust of the ground and molded into the shape our Creator intended—in God's own image. But we sinned by doing what we were warned not to do. (See Genesis 1:1-3). As a result, we became like pots in need of reshaping. So God gave us new life, the chance to be recreated through the blood of His Son, Christ Jesus.

In this holy season of new beginnings, we can become clay in God's hands again by letting go of our desires to control life. Then God can begin to re-shape us into the image of Christ, born so that we can be re-born to life that our Creator intended for us from the beginning.

Prayer: Holy God, we thank You for the birth of Your Son, Christ Jesus, through whom we can be re-created and re-born to eternal live with You. Amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

No matter what shape we're in, God can re-shape us.

Xavia Arndt Sheffield
(From the Upper Room)

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the potter, I am the clay; Mold me and make me After Thy will, While I am waiting, Yielded and still. Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Search me and try me, Master, today! Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now, As in Thy presence Humbly I bow. Have Thine own way, Lord, Have Thine own way! Wounded and weary, Help me, I pray! Power, all power, Surely is Thine! Touch me and heal me, Savior divine! Have Thine way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Hold o'er my being Absolute sway! Fill with Thy Spirit till All can see Christ only, always, living in me!