

West Berlin Presbyterian Church

The MESSENGER March 2025



The mission of West Berlin Presbyterian Church is to follow God's law and act in true faith by being a welcoming place where community members come to learn, take part in worship, find fellowship, and serve those in need, for the glory of God.

The Small Strong Church with a Big Heart



From the Pulpit

I wanted to share with you a few thoughts from a book I am currently reading by Allen T. Stanton entitled "The Gift of Small: Embracing Your Church's Vocation."

The book addresses the question of what do small churches do well? His premise is - small churches aren't just waiting to grow or to die but are vibrant and healthy places with gifts. Often, small churches are seen as deficient — institutions in decline, where the pastor serves as a chaplain to a dwindling congregation.

But Stanton disputes that idea. "The small church is a place where we can learn a lot of things about adaptability, about nimbleness, about resiliency," he said. "I want to pop the myth that small churches are lacking something."

Stanton spoke to Faith & Leadership's [Sally Hicks](#) about the myths and misconceptions about small churches. The following is a highly edited transcript.

Faith & Leadership: What's the most important thing you want people to understand about small churches? Stanton: A bigger church is not necessarily a better church. We sometimes look at a small church and we immediately think that there's a problem inherent in it because it's small, and that if it's going to become a good church, it must be a bigger church. I don't think that captures some inherent gifts that are inside the small church or some things that small churches do well.

F&L: What's the most important thing that small churches do well? Stanton: What small churches do well is emphasize the relationship between people. Everything becomes an opportunity to theologically think about how we are doing life together, just because you're always surrounded by it. In the small church, you show up and you're going to be forced into it. You just are. It may be tense. Yet tension is a virtue that helps us grow.

F&L: What can pastors do to bring people together and shift the idea that because you're small, you're dying? Stanton: Finding those natural ways that we can live out our faith and encouraging those to take shape. It can be a little daunting for a pastor, I think, because there isn't a program to report. Once you figure out people are engaging differently, then the question becomes, "How do we live out our faith through these very natural ways?" And small churches are quite adept at doing that.



F&L: You say that being a formational community is the main job of the church. How are small churches particularly good at being formational communities?

Stanton: Being formed in something is about habits of being in a community. You learn what it means to have a faith in a community. You learn how to think about the faith in a community. You learn the practices of faith and the habits of your tradition. It goes back to that relationship. You can't really escape it.

If you would like to read the book when I finish, let me know.

Pastor Bob

Women's Society Luncheon

The Women's Society will be meeting on Wednesday, March 5th, for a noon lunch meeting. Please come and enjoy some fellowship.

Please bring items for Open Table contributions (food, hygiene, clothing). Please let one of the hostesses - Diane Cox, Yvonne Gustafson, and Mary Johnson -know if you plan to attend.

Deacon and Mission Board – Two Challenges

Challenge One – Session empowered the Deacon and Mission Board to come up with ways to support Community Refugee and Immigrant Services (CRIS) at this time of unexpected reduced federal funding and future restricted service provisions. Boards members themselves have pledged \$500 and the Board is challenging congregational members to give matching gifts toward this worthy cause.

CRIS is a non-profit with the mission "To help refugees and immigrants reach safety and stability, sustain self-sufficiency, and achieve successful integration into the Central Ohio community." In a Dispatch article (Monday, Feb 24) CRIS is at the top of the list for organizations it lists under "How you can help legal refugees in Columbus".

Checks to WBPC with a notation of CRIS can be used along with your regular donation to the church during the month of March.

Challenge Two - Twice during the year (Advent and Lent), we make a concerted effort towards our collection of food, hygiene, and clothing items for the Open Table Program at our neighboring Grace Point Church. You are encouraged to use the season of Lent to accumulate items.

- All shelf-stable food items are welcomed, but Open Table folks say the following are their highest need: canned fruit, cereal, mac/cheese, fruit bars, Ramen noodles, sugar, flavored oatmeal, and spaghetti sauce.
- Hygiene items needed include shampoo, conditioner, soap, toothpaste, deodorant, denture care items, Kleenex, Q tips etc.
- Gently used or new clothing has been added to what we are collecting.

We are planning to have collection the 11:00 – 2:00 PM, Saturday before Palm Sunday (April 12, 2025) and Palm Sunday (April 13, 2025). Of course, donations can be brought at any time and placed in the Red Wagon just inside the east door.

**Important Dates!!!
March 2025**

March 2
Worship*
Communion

March 3
Adult Study
7:00 p.m.

March 4
Session Meeting
7:00 p.m.

March 5
Women's Society – Noon

Ash Wednesday Service
With Communion
7 PM

March 9
Start Daylight Savings
Worship*

Info Session On Hospice
Care
11:30 AM lunch
12:00 PM Program

March 10
Lenten Study
7:00 p.m.

March 11
Worship & Outreach
Committee
7:00 PM

March 12
Deacon and Mission Board
Noon

March 16
Worship*

March 17
Lenten Study
7:00 PM

March 23
Worship*

March 24
Lenten Study
7:00 p.m.

March 30
Worship*

***Worship** is Hybrid
10:30 a.m.
See email invite for Zoom
link and bulletin. Mailed
copies of bulletin and
sermons are available upon
request from Pastor Bob



One Great Hour of Sharing (March 5 – April 20, 2025)

For over 75 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has provided Presbyterians a way to share God’s love with our neighbors in need around the world. It is PC(USA) largest special offering. Typically received during the season of Lent, each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing supports efforts to relieve hunger through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, promote development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and assist in areas of disaster through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. All three programs work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

OGHS will be a focus of giving during Lent (March 5 – April 20, 2025). In a separate attachment to this Newsletter is “A Sharing Calendar for Lent 2025” that we hope you will use daily. This, along with traditional Fish Box Banks, will be passed out at our March 2nd service.

Please designate on donations that this is for One Great Hour. More can be found at <https://pcusa.org/special-offerings/one-great-hour-sharing> . We will highlight collection of Fish Banks on Easter Sunday (April 20).

March Birthdays:

- 8– Charles Glass,
- 20–Travis Martindale,
- 24–MaryAnn Johnson,
- 29– Coleen Parrish,
- 30–Paul Martindale



Anniversaries:

None

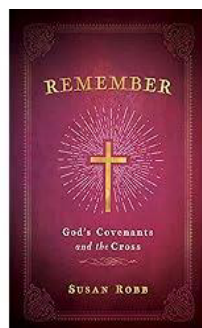
PRAYER LIST:

- Rodger Glenn, Dan Cottrill, Gene & Penny Ford, John & Debbie Rucker, William Nierman, Mary Ann Johnson, Linda Fields, Debbie Rucker, John Temple, Janet Thompson, Bill Philput, Jr., Halie Heath, Krista George, Norma Harper, Karen Lawrence

Join Lenten Study - Remember the God Who Remembers Us, with Susan Robb

Our Lenten Study will start Monday, March 10, at 7 PM. We will use a six-week study prepared by Rev. Susan Robb. Books by Robb will be available by March 9 at the church. God’s covenants throughout the Old Testament show the character of God’s promises to the people of Israel.

In this book, Susan Robb leads readers through the covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, followed by the new covenant established on Maundy Thursday. The Lenten story culminates with an examination of the cross as another example of God’s promise for a new world. All meetings are hybrid.



Education Committee Survey Summary 2025

Jerry Stein, Chair

The Education Committee wants to thank the ten people who completed our survey at the 2025 Annual Congregational Meeting. Input is always helpful as the committee plans our educational programs. The following is a summary of the Committee observations based on the survey. Feel free to give us additional feedback.

Adult Education

- We had a distribution across interest level, (4 -already consistent participants, 2 – more likely to participate if changes, 4 – not interest, no able, or no response).
- No consistent time for offering was suggested (1 Sunday before church, 1 Sunday at 5 PM, 1 suggested morning, 2 keep as is).
- For Method of Offering – four supported current hybrid system, no other suggestions were made.
- For Method of Presentation – one person suggested rotating leadership if members are comfortable.
- For Topics – three persons suggested more Bible study, one said good mix as is, one said fewer contemporary issues.
- No specific Format Changes were suggested.
- Constraints noted included: 3 Can not drive in evening, 2 not comfortable or do not have online access, 1 work schedule

Storybook Walk - Only one suggestion received – focus on conservation.

Advent/Lenten Devotionals - 7 respondents indicate they use the devotionals

Random Suggestions Made: Promote Toddler Time; Consider having a second congregation use the church; Sponsor a community picnic with fund raising activities

From the Treasurer

February Attendance:

Feb 2
39 - 23 On-site
16 On-line

Feb 9
38 - 20 On-site
18 On-line

Feb 16
26 - 4 On-site
22 On-line
(Snowstorm)

Feb 23
33 - 26 On-site
7 On-line

Contributions:

Feb 2 - \$ 890
Feb 9 1,735
Feb 16 696
Feb 23 803
\$ 4,124

Please make your contributions via mail to Church Treasurer Edmund Cox, 257 Pennsylvania Av, Delaware, OH 43015. On-line giving through westberlinpc.info

Ringing the Bell

This picture celebrates MaryAnn Johnson ringing the bell to celebrate the end of her cancer radiation treatments. She is back with us by Zoom and hopes to be back in person soon.

Three cheers for MaryAnn!!!!!!

