



Christmas Services



Saturday,
December 24
7:00 pm,
in the Sanctuary

On Christmas Eve, we will sing carols, hear the Christmas story, receive the Christmas Joy Offering, and conclude our worship with candles and singing Silent Night. As we depart, let us wish Peace on Earth to one another.



Sunday,
December 25
10:00 am,
In the Fellowship
Hall

Christmas morning falls on a Sunday this year! We will have an informal worship service in the Fellowship Hall, with coffee cake, juice, coffee and tea. Casual dress is encouraged (even those new Christmas pajamas!). We will have opportunities to share with one another the meaning of Christmas, hear God's Word, pray, and enjoy fellowship. A special table will be set up for children to create their own Christmas wish for the world.

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From the Pastor: In Search of Our Kneeling Places



With the busyness of the season upon us, I want to share another poem written by Ann Weems (from her book, *Kneeling in Bethlehem*), to remind us to take time to follow the Star – the light in the darkness, God’s gift to all of humanity – Jesus Christ,

Our Lord and Savior, Prince of Peace, Emmanuel, God with us. My Christmas wish for everyone is peace and love – both in the giving and in the receiving.

Pastor Debbie

Kneeling in Bethlehem

In each heart lies a Bethlehem,
an inn where we must ultimately answer
whether there is room or not.

When we are Bethlehem-bound
we experience our own advent in his.

When we are Bethlehem-bound
we can no longer look the other way
conveniently not seeing stars
not hearing voices.

We can no longer excuse ourselves by busily
tending our sheep or our kingdoms.

This Advent let’s go to Bethlehem
and see this thing that the Lord has made
known to us.

In the midst of shopping sprees
let’s ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.

Through the tinsel
let’s look for the gold of the Christmas Star.

In the excitement and confusion,
in the merry chaos,

let’s listen for the brush of angels’ wings.

This Advent, let’s go to Bethlehem
and find our kneeling places.



Notes from Congregational Conversation, November 13, 2016

Why did West Side purchase our current land?

So that we could have growth and expansion and eventually another building for a sanctuary. We have moved from 6th to be bigger and to be where the people are / were. Presbytery required us to have additional land so that we would have space to grow. Space to the north was to be for sanctuary and an education wing. The land is one parcel that extends north, and includes the gravel driveway, to the triangle south all the way toward Harvard, east up to the trees. Another reason we are here is that First Presbyterian was downtown and there was no Presbyterian church out west.

Technically, Presbytery owns the land and building. But it's in partnership with us. IF we were to consider selling land, it would include a conversation with them. They likely would not restrict us as long as we remain in ministry. The Boy Scouts do not own the land or building that they use, but they are stewards of it (much like our relationship with Presbytery). We work with the Scouts in their mission and ministry as their Chartering Organization.

In 1968, the Sanctuary was a block linoleum floor, and we had white chairs that linked together for worship. If there was a church dinner after worship, they stacked the chairs, put tables up, and served the dinner. The sanctuary was really a multi-purpose area. Eventually we got pews, carpet, etc. and now the sanctuary is dedicated to worship. This was possible because of the addition of the Fellowship Hall.

What is the history and meaning of the Memorial Garden and Memorial Trees?

The Memorial Garden (located on south side of the building) was established because Ruth Sleeper wanted to help with landscaping and people wanted to share plants they had. Session approved use of the space for this purpose. As people/members moved out of their homes, they could share their plants and remember their homes, sharing with their church family. Hoped to include a bench, patio to sit and reflect, read scripture, and sit quietly. Not everyone at our meeting knew about the Garden and its purpose.

The Memorial Trees are the two trees planted along Kasold on the north lawn. Most, but not all, those in attendance today knew about the trees. One tree was planted in memory of Julia Compton (Madge's daughter), one in honor of Bill Woodard's secretary, Katie, and the last one in memory of Ruth Sleeper. One tree did not survive and needs to be replanted. This location was selected because it was part of a future landscape design.

What do the Memorial Garden and/or Memorial Trees mean to you?

"I like the concept of a Memorial Garden...The idea was to have some private spot -- peaceful, in nature, for quiet reflection. I like that idea."

"Julia Compton passed away around the same time my son (Ben) was born, and when she died, it was a personal loss....Then when Ruth's tree was planted, our family has watered it and cared for it." There is a lot of love and commitment displayed in the care of the tree.

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Notes from Congregational Conversation, November 13, 2016, continued

Some did not know there were ashes buried in / with some of the trees. This area can represent potential space for us to enjoy and to share the trees and landscape with neighbors and others to use for contemplation.

Is it a good policy to put ashes on our property?

Some stated that it was not a good policy. We don't want this space to be perceived as a cemetery. That is not our purpose. We need to think forward about the legalities. Perhaps not appropriate. But we have great love and respect for those who ARE already in the ground (around our church). (Pam) What it means to have my Mom's ashes here? "The fact that the church was her life." Would you have the same feeling if it were just the tree, but here ashes were not there? "Not quite as deeply, but still there." All agreed that the Session needs to consider a policy and the legalities of having ashes buried here.

Do you consider the trees to be sacred ground?

In the past there was some conflict between those who wanted the gardens and those who had to mow / do yard maintenance, and there are still complications with caring for that space.

Is the land there sacred ground?

"What does "sacred" mean?" Isn't where the church sits "sacred ground?" Sacred means "set aside." Set aside from the profane (ordinary). But is often used today to mean it should never be touched. If we say it's sacred ground, does it mean it should never be touched ever? Special vs sacred?

"Yes, it is sacred to me. My father was cremated and where he was laid is sacred ground." Some agreed (about half in attendance) that the land where the memorial trees are located is sacred.

Aren't there legal questions about having ashes out there? We need to find out for the future.

IF we were to think about selling any land, what do we need to know?

Is it zoned for this purpose? Changes will require re-zoning. Where are the easements? In case of sidewalks, for example. Does our land cost us? -- No taxes because we are a church but what about maintenance?

What is the value of the land to the Community?

"When I was on Session, we wanted to do a playground for the neighborhood, but we ran into snags with the insurance and liability." When they pave Kasold – put in sidewalks --will we get a big bill for that? And will we be responsible for maintaining, clearing the sidewalks?

How does our land contribute to our mission and ministry?

It's our home field. Creates space in a neighborhood that is pretty dense. Brings people together...not necessarily physically (although that, too). Almost always people "around" -- any time of day. Our open spaces give opportunity to commune with nature and with others. To rejoice. AA says this is a healing space. Potential to have others join us to further our mission and ministry. "I remember seeing the land used for VBS, water games; I have taken children out of worship when they got rambunctious." Would like to see outdoor worship area or labyrinth.

A final comment

"We drove by the church many times. What are the plans to bring the original vision and mission to fruition? If we want to remain small, it's one set of questions. If we want to grow into the original vision, it's another set of questions."



Session Report

The Session of West Side has met monthly to address issues and on-going leadership needs of West Side. Here are some of the significant issues we are addressing:

- At the October session meeting, an inquiry into the possible purchase of the north portion of our land was received from Kansas Zen Center. The session decided to request further information for purposes of evaluating the level of interest only. If, and when, a detailed proposal is made to the session from any outside entity regarding purchase or lease of any church property, the session will bring a recommendation to the congregation for discussion and a vote.
- Because we do receive outside interest in our land on occasion, the Session led a congregational conversation on November 13 about what our land and property mean to us, and what would be helpful information or further areas of conversation for congregational discernment in the future.
- Continued our discussions about “Who is West Side?” and “What is our mission?” Participated in a half-day retreat to focus on these questions.
- Reviewed financial reports and noted that actual income to date is less than actual expenses (as of early October). Began the budgeting process for 2017.
- Reviewed the church calendar and noted that many (and varied) groups use the church for meetings, fellowship, family gatherings, and other uses, including a number of Eagle Court of Honor celebrations.
- Accepted a report from Troop 55 and learned that the Troop is healthy and active financially, also in membership, and leadership.
- Met with members of Presbytery’s Committee on Ministry to review our relationship with Pastor Debbie and her ministry as Designated Pastor.
- Met with and accepted Lynne Zollner into membership at West Side (by letter of transfer). Have started conversation with others who are interested in becoming members of West Side.
- Accepted, with gratitude for the wonderful work done, a report from the Deacons on the many and generous ministries they perform.
- Updated IT services and procedures, with special thanks to Bruce Liddel. Continued updating and finalizing several documents in our Policies and Procedures Handbook, including Personnel policies.
- Learned that West Side raised over \$2,800 for CROP Walk!
- Planned for additional time spent on visioning, budget, long-term planning and other significant areas during our November and December Session meetings.
- Heard reports from Pastor Debbie about several continuing education conferences she has attended this year and how we can put what she has learned into action at West Side.



{ CALENDAR OF EVENTS }

**December 3, Saturday, Advent Tea, 2-4pm,
Fellowship Hall**

December 4, Sunday, Worship

Nominating Committee, 9:30am, library
Worship and Communion; Advent Party;
Youth Group; Girl Scouts

December 8, Thursday

LINK

December 11, Sunday, Worship
Worship

Book Group after worship
Girl Scouts, 6:30pm

December 14, Wednesday

Girl's Night Out, Noon, Hyvee 23rd

December 18, Sunday, Worship

Worship and Christmas Skit

December 19, Monday

Men's Lunch, Perkins, Noon

December 21, Wednesday

Martha Circle,
Pioneer Ridge Assisted Living, 9:30am
Lydia Circle,
Big Biscuit, 9:30am

December 24, Saturday

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 7pm

December 25, Sunday

Worship, coffee cake, Fellowship Hall, 10am

Advent Tea, December 3, 2-4pm, Fellowship Hall

It's time for the annual Advent Tea, sponsored by the women of the congregation. Join us for tea and light snacks, and fellowship. All are invited!

Advent Party, December 4 after Worship

Stay and help us decorate the Fellowship Hall tree! We will play with our Advent theme of "Follow the Star" by creating Star Ornaments to take home. We will also create sparkly stars for our Epiphany banners. There is something for every age and ability, so stay a short while for some Advent fellowship and fun.

Handbell Practices:

Wednesday, December 7, 6:30pm; we will play in worship on Sunday, December 11. No other practices in December.

Book Group

We will meet after worship on December 11 to share what we are reading for our Advent devotionals. All are welcome!

Follow Us on Facebook During Advent

As part of our faith formation journey in Christ, you will be invited to reflect on a scripture verse for each week of Advent using our **West Side Presbyterian Church Facebook page**. If you don't use Facebook, a print out of the conversation will be posted (location TBD) for you to read and add to.



Prayer List

Wes & Ruth Buller
 Diane McFarland
 Char & Bob Freitag
 Madge Compton
 Mike and Connie Ducey

Birthdays This Month

4 Mike Ducey
 7 Lydia Folks
 7 Sharon Hull
 8 Barbara Currant
 15 Chrystal Hunter
 20 Esther Kinsey
 25 Ruth Buller
 26 Becky Campbell
 28 Alex Van Pelt
 29 Gary Freeman

Anniversaries This Month

12/11 Gary and Mary Freeman
 12/22 Chip and Sharon Hull
 12/22 Sam and Becky Campbell
 12/31 Patrick and Lynne Zollner

In Service This Month

Date	Liturgist	Acolyte	Minute for Mission	Ushers	Fellowship	Sunday School
12-4	Elizabeth Gabel	Robbie Messineo	Craig Chappell		Sarah Beer, Alecia Gray	No Sunday school
12-11	Pam Mooney	Morgan Beer	Deacons	Barbara Braddy, Elizabeth Gabel, Jim King	Jon Snyder, Barbara Braddy	Jan McElwain
12-18	Ted Burgess	Zoë DeBoard	Debbie Liddel	Christina and Rob Messineo, Robbie Messineo	Sara Chappell, Anne Emert	Jan McElwain
12-24	Christmas readers	Ben Gray	Christmas Joy Offering	Debbie Liddel, ??	None	None
12-25	Everyone	None needed	None	None needed	Coordinated by Mary Freeman	Children in worship

A New Face Around the Building!

You hopefully have noticed that various maintenance projects, long-overdue, are getting done. We can give thanks to Gary Pike for all this hard work. We brought him on staff (temporarily for 2016, hopefully for 2017) to handle repairs, maintenance, work with contractors, and to oversee all cleaning in the building. Gary brings a wealth of experience to the job. He is also employed part-time at Lawrence Heights Church and as a crossing guard for the school district. Gary is generally at West Side on Wednesdays and Fridays, for about 10 hours a week. His hours will vary, but if you see something that needs to be fixed, please let Pastor Debbie know and she will pass it on to Gary. Please welcome him to West Side! We'll get his photo up in the Fellowship Hall. (Gary is the husband of our pianist, Mary Alice Pike. Gary and Mary Alice have two children, Molly and Joey.)

West Side Presbyterian Church
1024 Kasold Dr.
Lawrence, KS 66049

The West Wind

December 2016

West Side Presbyterian Church

www.westsidelawrence.org

