What’s better than spending a Sunday afternoon enjoying a delicious lunch and a wonderful live show with friends? How about knowing that you are also supporting a wonderful cause at the same time! And yes, Westminster members and friends can do just this on March 26, when the annual Youth Talent Show and Luncheon will be held, following the 11 a.m. service.

A few spots still remain, but with musicians, dancers and thespians galore, the 2017 show is sure to be memorable. If you’re interested in participating in the show, please contact Diana Wright as soon as possible (diana@westminsac.org). Due to time constraints - we do have to go home at some point!! - there is only enough room for pre-approved acts, so pre-show signs ups are essential. As is a full house, so plan on attending.

It’s always amazing that one church community can produce so much talent. And, of course, the kids on stage are always warmly received, whether they are dancing, telling jokes or playing their instruments. And adult acts also reveal many hidden talents among congregants. The funds all go to youth mission trips and this summer Westminster youth will enjoy a combined trip for middle and high school students to Smith River, CA. The trips are life-changing as participants not only enjoy the time together and meeting new friends, but they also provide amazing service to the communities they travel to. There is a lot of hard work, as well as personal and spiritual development for these impressionable participants. Knowing they are supported by their Westminster family really helps them on this journey.

Again, the number of acts is limited for the popular show, so be sure and register with Diana Wright. Anyone wanting to donate raffle items, or completed gift baskets, can drop them at the office before March 20. Thanks!

Westminster hosted an open door Hospitality-TEA on Saturday, Feb. 25 in response to anti-refugee policies proposed by the federal government. Over tea with members and friends, people shared their stories about coming to America. See the story on Page 5.

Laugh, be inspired, enjoy the Talent Show

The raffle baskets are a highlight between the many talented acts during the Talent Show.

Join the Lenten Challenge!!
- see page 5 for all the details

Classes focus on parenting, church

The Sunday 10 a.m. adult education classes during the Lenten season will offer something for everyone.

One session will address the grace and gratitude that is discovered and utilized in parenthood. Led by Nan Fitpatrick, the 5-week program will discuss ways to bring more love, grace and gratitude into people’s homes.

Another session will discuss the essentials of Christian practices, with each class devoted to a specific topic.
- See CLASSES, page 5
Challenged to enhance your Lenten experience

The season of Lent is a time of preparing ourselves for the joys and transformation of Easter. It is traditional to prepare ourselves by taking on Lenten disciplines of engagement or abstinence - taking on activities that are good for us and the world or abstaining from activities that we like or have grown accustomed to so that we can place our trust more fully in God. These disciplines help us focus on God’s ever-present grace and allow us to get rid of some of the stuff in our life that may be distracting us from a life lived in full appreciation of God’s grace.

Starting March 5 and running through Holy Week, we are asking you to participate in a congregation-wide Lenten discipline called the Westminster Lenten Challenge. Each week we will be challenged in our worship services to take on a new discipline for the week, either a discipline of engagement or abstinence. During the week, on our Facebook page, by emailing in, or filling out a form in the bulletins, you’ll be able to share with others your experience of the discipline for the week. Whether it’s going well and you feel great or you are utterly failing, there is grace in both experiences. Time will also be given during worship services for folks to share about their Lenten experience.

The disciplines include gratitude, fasting from meat, engaging in civic life, fasting from technology, fasting from consumerism and engaging scripture. You can read more about the suggested activities for these spiritual disciplines in this newsletter and in our Lenten brochure.

Please join us for this Lenten exercise and involve yourself in other church Lenten activities, of which there are many described in this newsletter. And the God of peace and power grant you the peace and power to live a grace-filled, spirit-filled life as you prepare for the resurrection experience of Easter.

Courageously,

Wes

March’s readings and sermon titles

March 5
1st Sunday in Lent
Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7
Psalm 32
Romans 5:12-19
*Matthew 4:1-11
Tempting, Yes?

March 12
2nd Sunday in Lent
Genesis 12:1-4a
Psalm 121
Romans 4:1-5, 13-17
*John 3:1-17
How Not to Start a Conversation with Jesus

March 19
3rd Sunday in Lent
Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 95
Romans 5:1-11
*John 4:5-42
Here’s the Water, Bring a Bucket

March 26
4th Sunday in Lent
*1 Samuel 16:1-13
Psalm 23
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41
The Important First Step

The underlined texts will be read in worship. The text with the asterisk will be the main focus of the sermon.

Chocolate eggs for sale

Equal Exchange will be selling its popular chocolate-covered eggs during the March 12 sale. If supply remains, they will also be available on April 9. This year Easter will be on April 16, and these delectable treats are the perfect addition to any Easter basket!

Of course, weary bunnies may also enjoy a bag of the stimulating, fair trade coffee, which will be available both Sundays - thank goodness!
MINISTRIES

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN OF WESTMINSTER
MARCH CIRCLE MEETINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary/Martha</td>
<td>3-20</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Club Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia</td>
<td>3-28</td>
<td></td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Esther/Ruth</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>12:30 pm</td>
<td>Club Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Searchers</td>
<td>3-14</td>
<td>11:30 am</td>
<td>Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>3-2</td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>Serra Room</td>
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All women of the church are invited to join a Circle for Bible study, fellowship and fun. Call Sharyl Stevens at 942-9534 or Mary Jane Root at 362-3485 for additional information.

No Peace and Justice meeting in March

Due to scheduling conflicts, the Peace and Justice committee is sorry to report there will be NO March meeting.

However, mark your calendar for April 9, when the regular meetings will resume.

PWOW
St. Patrick’s Day Dinner
Saturday, March 11
5:00 P.M.
Westminster Church
Social Hall
Enjoy
Corned Beef & Cabbage, Dessert & Beverage

Live Irish Music
Music Works With Linda Keen

Cost is $20.00
$5.00 Children

Tickets will be on sale after both Worship Services. Call the church at 442-8939 for ticket Reservations. Deadline is March 5
Gordon retires from office work, ready for church life

Gordon Zerkel, our Office and Facilities Administrator, is retiring from his position at the church on March 10 after almost three years of service. We give thanks to God for Gordon's faithful service to the church and celebrate with him at his retirement. A Presbyterian elder, commissioner to the Presbytery of Sacramento, and church member, Gordon looks forward to participating in other aspects of church life after his retirement from his staff position. Please thank him for his service and congratulate him on a job well done.

We look forward to having our Finance Coordinator, Rebecca Venegas, take over the duties of Office and Facilities Administrator on an interim basis on March 13.

Dinners, classes part of Connecting program

Connecting on Wednesdays is back for the Lenten season! This popular program meets weekly, starting with a delicious home-cooked meal that’s served at 5:30 p.m. (free-will donation)

Afterward, classes are held at 6:30 that will address a variety of topics, suitable for all ages.

Youth will explore their faith and spirituality through art and sports.

Spirituality and the Brain will be offered by the Rev. Richard Pearson and will discuss a variety of aspects about this intriguing subject, including scientific approach, rituals, health, forgiveness and free will. He uses lessons from Dr. Andrew Newberg, a neuroscientist who focuses on the brain and how its functions influence spirituality and are affected by spiritual practices.

Participants in the Kerygma program will continue meeting on Wednesday evenings throughout Lent. Due to the structure of this class, participation is limited to people who have already signed up for the Kerygma program.

Choirs join to create lovely program

When choir director Lee Hoffman met Julie Adams, Choir Director at Shepherd of the Sierra they decided they HAD to have the choirs collaborate. They chose two anthems: The Majesty and Glory of Your Name and The Storm is Passing Over.

In early January the choirs began preparing the anthems individually and on Feb. 18 had their first joint rehearsal. On Sunday, February 19, people attending the 11 a.m. service were treated to a wonderful experience as Shepherd of the Sierra Choir joined the Westminster Chancel Choir and sang the two anthems. The following week, Westminster traveled to Shepard of the Sierra for their service. Both choirs benefitted richly from the fellowship, augmented numbers of singers, exposure to the conducting styles of different directors, and the enhanced motivation of working toward a special event.
Lenten Challenge offers chance to enhance community experiences

Please join the Westminster Lenten Challenge! This is an opportunity to grow individually and as a congregation, through mindful practices of engagement or abstinence and sharing of our experiences.

A person will address the weekly topic during Sunday services and the bulletins will include forms to record your experience (or email them to communications@westminsac.org, or post to our Facebook page!)

At the end of Lent we will share and see how we were transformed by this exciting challenge.

Topics include: **March 5-11, Embracing Gratitude.** Keep a gratitude journal. Write a thank you note each day to a person who has made your life better.

**March 12-18, Abstaining from Meat.** Do not consume meat. Donate the saved money to an environmental or health-care organization.

**March 19-25, Engaging in Civic Life.** Contact a public official to thank or advocate. Get out of the house and into the streets or meet with neighbors, clean up a local park, take public transit.

**March 26-April 1, Tuning Out Technology.** Turn off the TV; stop using the internet for entertainment and distraction. Instead, learn a new way to pray, read the Bible, a devotional book or start an exercise program.

**April 2-8, Engaging Frugality.** De-clutter, give away at least one item per day and don’t buy more. Prepare meals rather than eating out.

**April 9-15 (Holy Week), Engaging Scripture.**

Sharing some Westminster Hospitali-TEA

An old Irish saying claims a cup o’ tea solves everything. So in early February, when rhetoric about refugees infiltrated our national dialogue, some Westminster members decided it was time to put on the kettle and practice some radical Christian ‘Hospitali-TEA.’

Kace Schwarm coordinated the event, which was designed to bring members and neighbors together, to share stories and simply get to know one another. She contacted World Relief, Sacramento, which helps relocate and settle refugee families in the Sacramento community. On Saturday, Feb. 25 they brought along some clients, and Westminster members made delicious snacks, the hot water was ready and everyone enjoyed a delightful afternoon of tea and conversation. was on.

“We had a significant number of community residents who aren’t members who also attended,” said Kace. “People seemed to feel really energized.”

After the event there was discussion about steps that people could take to continue to support refugees within our community.

Some options include starting a program to provide essential items (welcome kits) and maybe even forming a good neighbor group to “adopt” a local refugee family for six months. As plans develop, we’ll share them with members.

Also, any donations received during the day went directly to World Relief, Sacramento. Over $1,000 was collected and additional checks were still arriving as of press time.

The Hospitali-TEA brought many people together in the Patio Room. There were many participants in addition to the Westminster members.
The differences between dementia, forgetfulness

By Jean Harlow, MSN, RN
Faith Community Nurse

Forgetfulness?? Dementia??
Where are my keys? Where did I leave my sneakers? What happens next? Who are you? Do these questions sound familiar to you or a family member or friend? Is it forgetfulness or dementia?

What is the difference? How do you know?
The first question many people ask is: Is it “normal” to forget? Yes, from time to time.
A Harvard Medical School newsletter updated in March 2016 states that “Healthy people can experience memory loss or memory distortion at any age. Some of these memory flaws become more pronounced with age…” This article identifies several normal memory problems. They are

Transience – the tendency to forget facts and events over time. Memory has a use-it-or-lose-it quality. While this may be disturbing and frustrating at times, brain scientists regard it as beneficial because it “clears the brain of unused memories, making way for newer, more useful ones”.

Absentmindedness – the type of forgetting when you don’t pay close attention; you were thinking of something else. It also forgetting to do something at the appropriate time like keeping an appointment or taking your medicine.

Blocking – you know the answer to the question, but can’t think of it. Often it is because a competing memory has popped into your head and you can’t think of the memory you want. Research shows that people are able to retrieve about half of the blocked memories within a minute.

Misattribution – this occurs when you remember something accurately in part, but misattribute some detail like time, place, or the persons involved. This can increase with age as your memories grow older as well.

Suggestibility – the vulnerability of your brain to the power of suggestion. Little is known how this works in the brain, but suggestibility fools your mind into thinking it is a real memory.

Bias – Your memory and your perceptions are filtered by personal biases - experiences, beliefs, prior knowledge and even your mood at that moment.

Persistence – most people worry about forgetting things. Think of the “rituals or cues” many of us have to help us remember. This can also include memories of traumatic events, negative feelings, and ongoing fears. People suffering from depression are more prone to have persistent, disturbing memories. Flashbacks and PTSD are some examples of this type of memory problems that involve very powerful, stressful experiences.

There can also be medical reasons why we forget. This can include prolonged stress, lack of deep (REM) sleep, inadequate nutrition, medications and feelings of isolation. These are all important symptoms to discuss with your primary health/illness care provider.

DEMENTIA DIFFERENCES

Now, what about dementia? This is what so many of us fear, especially the concern: “Am I getting Alzheimer’s Disease?”

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke defines dementia as “…[A] word for a group of symptoms caused by disorders that affect the brain. It is not a specific disease. People with dementia may not be able to think well enough to do normal activities such as getting dressed or eating. They may lose their ability to solve problems or control their emotions. Their personalities may change. They may become agitated or see things that are not there.”

There are several forms of dementia. Again, discuss your concerns with family or close friends. Definitely talk with your primary health/illness care provider.

There are simple screening tests they can use to determine if further testing and/or referrals are needed. Speak up – ask. Otherwise stress and worry can overwhelm you.

There are several pamphlets about these conditions in the Health Resource Center in the Health Ministry office on the first floor. Also, a copy of articles I have used in researching this article can be made available to you, your family and friends.

Knowing is more powerful than fearing the unknown.

Love and blessings,
Jean
Youth participate in the 30-hour famine program

All Westminster youth and their friends, from 8th through 12th grade, are invited to participate in the World Vision 30-hour Famine to be held at Westminster Friday, March 31 - Saturday, April 1. And Westminster members are invited to support this effort by sponsoring a participant.

The youth will be attending coffee hours after service on March 12 and March 19, which will give people a chance to talk with them and learn more about this effort.

The event is designed to raise both funds and awareness about world hunger. The fast will start after lunch Friday and that night the group will gather at Westminster and enjoy activities and also learn about poverty and hunger. The youth will then sleep out in the patio in makeshift cardboard huts (weather permitting.) Saturday will be a day of service working in our community and there will be a closing ceremony. While there will also be fun, games and DVDs to watch throughout the night, education will be a critical part of the fast. (Liquids will be provided for participants throughout the fast.)

In 2014, 16,000 children younger than five years old died every DAY - most from preventable causes. It’s estimated half these deaths are tied to hunger, with malnutrition not starvation, a key factor according to World Vision. Worldwide, 795 million people - about one in nine— are chronically hungry every day.

The young participants in the 30-Hour Famine will raise money by seeking sponsorships from family, friends and fellow church members. Please support them if you are able. World Vision uses the money for: Emergency Response; Recovery (in wake of crisis) and long-term development.

Every $40 raised will feed a child for a month. The funds will also be used by World Vision to teach improved farming techniques, provide access to clean water and healthy harvests, and, in an emergency distribute food supplies and run malnutrition centers in areas suffering a food crisis.

This program will also include youth from Northminster Presbyterian all youth, 8th grade through 12th grade, are invited to participate in this unforgettable experience.
Our Mission Statement:
Westminster is a welcoming, inclusive community of faith, following Christ’s example by supporting spiritual growth, serving others, and promoting peace and justice.

Kerygma program enthusiastically received

The new Kerygma Class is well underway. Attendance has been strong and consistent and the more than 20 participants are having a great time according to class leaders John Stevens and Bob Fernandez, retired pastors at Westminster. Participants use the Kerygma Resource Book and prepare with extensive individual reading of the assigned Scriptures in advance of the classes. The studies are carefully planned to guide the class members through Biblical history and literature, currently focusing on the Hebrew Scripture—the “Old Testament.”

A key element of the weekly class, which runs through May, includes discussion around the group tables, which is lively and helpful.

“The best part for me is our learning from one another in the small group discussions and in the group reports to the class,” said participant Connie Brown. “It has been interesting and challenging.” Connie wanted a Bible study that was compatible with progressive Christianity and was attracted to Kerygma because it focuses on stories of events in the lives of God’s people and what these stories are trying to tell us.

Lita Munich says the leaders shine a light on what may be beneath the stories of the Bible “Some may say it is a product of the ‘sacred myth’, an attempt to ‘explain the unexplainable,’” she says. “(But) the idea is presented that God made a covenant with the protagonists of each story & this mutual relationship meant that God, using the vehicle of mutual agreement, followed through with his promises & always showed faithfulness. God's gifts were both physical & spiritual, allowing the creation if communities & ultimately nations.” She appreciates the leaders’ insights about the formation of the biblical language, and the group discussions.

Patrick Romano had never participated in a formal Bible study program, but is excited about his experience with Kerygma. “Of course, I have read large portions of the New Testament books over the years … but I have never had the opportunity to study the Old Testament stories that provide the foundation of Judeo-Christian faith,” he says. “Pastors Bob and John are leading us through a wonderful process of learning and discovery as we explore these ancient writings and discuss their implication for modern faith.”

After a summer break, the current study will continue with 15 sessions on the New Testament. Current class leaders John Stevens and Bob Fernandez hope additional leaders will be found among participants.