BECOMING A “ZERO-WASTE” CHURCH

In December, the Session adopted the following policy: Westminster shall take actions consistent with the goal of becoming a zero-waste church.

What does this mean? According to the Zero Waste International Alliance, zero waste is the conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of all products, packaging and materials, without burning them, and without discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health.

OK, that’s a mouthful, and this goal will not be met overnight, but we can take a first step by implementing a strategy to strongly discourage the use of single-use plastic tableware and bottles at all church functions.

Plastic waste is a big problem. According to a recent PBS documentary – “The Plastic Problem” (which can be viewed online at www.pbs.org/newshour/series/the-plastic-problem) – since 1950, an estimated nine billion tons of plastic have been manufactured, and the vast majority of this material is still around. Plastic truly is forever!

According to the California Coastal Commission, the primary source of marine debris is urban runoff (i.e. litter). Most plastic marine debris exists as small plastic particles, which birds and marine animals mistake for small fish, plankton, or krill. Over 600 marine animal species worldwide have been negatively affected by ingesting plastic. The extent to which humans are in turn ingesting this plastic, through our consumption of marine life, is as yet unknown.

In light of these disturbing issues surrounding plastic waste, Westminster can be a part of the problem or part of the solution. We often pray for the health of God’s creation. Let’s put those prayers into action, both in our church and in our own homes!

Our society seems to demand ever-greater convenience, from on-demand TV programs, to next-day delivery of online purchases, to ride-hailing services. The widespread use of single-use plastic materials is yet another convenience that we have come to take for granted. Using alternatives to single-use plastic, such as compostable or reusable kitchenware, may be more expensive to purchase or require more work to clean rather than throw away, but such actions will help contribute to a more healthy world.

To summarize: In lieu of single-use plastic, for church functions, the goal is to use the church’s dishes, glasses, pitchers and silverware or, if using some of these items is not practical for a particular occasion, to use paper or compostable alternatives. In the coming months, we will be taking concrete steps to assist the congregation in meeting this goal.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Chuck Nicol at csnicol@outlook.com.
For the second month in a row, I am using this space in our newsletter to express my thanks and say goodbye to a longtime staff member. Effective December 31, 2019, Jean Harlow will no longer be our Faith Community Nurse.

Jean began serving Westminster in this capacity in 2003. Since then, she has worked closely with the Deacons and Health Ministry Team to enhance the health and wellbeing of this congregation. She has taken countless blood pressures, driven and accompanied many parishioners to medical appointments sometimes as far away as San Francisco, visited the homebound, overseen the Medical Benevolence Fund, counseled those who are ill or facing other life crises, written health articles for the newsletter and developed classes and seminars on health and caretaking. I’m sure I missed some activities. In short, Jean has been busy. Her body is now telling her to slow down. She is listening to her body, as we all should.

Thankfully, Jean will continue to worship at Westminster. This is wonderful, but it presents us with a particular challenge. We will need to learn not to rely on Jean for health counsel as we have for many years. It’s important that we let her be a member of the congregation, rather than a staff member. Let her rest and enjoy her retirement. Hopefully, we will soon find someone, just as special as Jean, to fill the role of Faith Community Nurse.

So, though I am not liking to have to say goodbye to another beloved staff member at the end of 2019, I am so thankful to Jean and to God for Jean’s faithful ministry here, and I affirm her need for rest. I’ll be working with the Deacons to plan a church-wide celebration for Jean in early 2020.

New Year Peace,

Wes

Scripture readings, sermon titles & themes for January

January 5 - 2nd Sunday of Christmas
Jeremiah 31:7-14
John 1:1-9
The Body’s Holiness

January 12 - Baptism of the Lord
Isaiah 42:1-9
Matthew 3:13-17
Born Anew

January 19
Isaiah 49:1-7
1 Corinthians 1:1-9
Not Lacking Spiritual Gifts

January 26
Psalm 27:1, 4-9
Matthew 4:12-23
Sheltered
The beautiful array of cookies and desserts was fabulous. It was hard not to eat too many. Thank you to everyone who provided them for Christmas Cheer! Please know that your gift of cookies keep giving—we donated a container to CASH for its Christmas celebrations, stored containers for coffee hours in the next few weeks and left an ample supply for the office and church staff. Thank you so very much for participating in making Christmas Cheer a beautiful celebration!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR AWESOME SUPPORT OF THE 2019 ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR!

Exciting news about the 2019 Alternative Gift Fair—the sales for SERRV, Mayan Hands and Women of the Cloud Forest totaled $3,200! The goal of the Gift Fair is to return a fair trade amount to the artist families for their beautiful luminaries and pottery, jewelry, hand loomed scarves, Christmas ornaments, baskets woven from their native grasses, balsa wood ornaments and earrings, and recycled metal pieces. We do not seek to make a profit but rather cover our necessary expenses (e.g., the shipping costs). We work only with groups that follow fair trade practices—Mayan Hands, Women of the Cloud Forest and SERRV. Friends of San Juan has also participated for many years in this event but handles its own transactions. The money returned to the artist families enables them to sustain their families and send their kids to school. These groups ensure the artists get fair values for their beautiful creations. A final report will be provided in the near future. Thank you for your fantastic support of this effort and enjoy your wonderful handmade gifts.

THE COOKIES AND DESSERTS WERE BEAUTIFUL AND WONDERFULLY DELICIOUS

The beautiful array of cookies and desserts was fabulous. It was hard not to eat too many. Thank you to everyone who provided them for Christmas Cheer! Please know that your gift of cookies keep giving—we donated a container to CASH for its Christmas celebrations, stored containers for coffee hours in the next few weeks and left an ample supply for the office and church staff. Thank you so very much for participating in making Christmas Cheer a beautiful celebration!

SAVE THE DATE!

Enjoy a winter reprieve at Movie Night - PWOW SOUPS & MOVIE

On February 7th, 2020, PWOW presents a warm and happy winter retreat of soups, bread and desserts along with a stimulating movie. Last year we watched “RBG”...this year the movie will be “On the Basis of Sex”, The true story of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, her struggles for equal rights, and the early cases of a historic career that lead to her nomination and confirmation as U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice.
Habitat for Humanity Unity Build

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Join us on Saturday, January 25, 2020

Sign up at the office. Only 12 spots available!

No construction experience necessary!

In 2016 Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento came up with the idea of the Unity Build to counter the rhetoric in our country by bringing together members of the various Faith Communities to build housing.

Westminster has contributed monetarily to this project and on Saturday, January 25, 2020 we will have the opportunity for 12 volunteers to work on these houses. The workday begins at 7:30 and ends at 1:30 with a lunch break. Anyone over the age of 16 is welcome.

PARENT’S NIGHT OUT

2020: Feb. 7, April 3 and May 15

NEXT DATE IS FEBRUARY 7, 2020

FREE childcare... drop the kids off at 6 p.m. and pick up at 8:30 p.m. Enjoy a night out on the town while your kids eat yummy snacks, play games, do crafts and watch a movie. Parenting is a challenging job and providing childcare is our gift to you. Plan now to enjoy some time for yourself and leave the rest to us!
Adult Education Class Coming January 5, 2020!

We will explore the roots of our Presbyterianism, starting with St. Augustine and the Reformation (week one); Presbyterianism in America (week two and week three); Westminster Presbyterian Church (week four). Each class will include about 25 minutes of lecture and 25 minutes of discussion. Hope you will join in!
### Got 2019 receipts for reimbursement?

Please submit any and all receipts for reimbursement with a completed check request form to the church office no later than Wednesday, January 8, 2020. Anything after that will be taken from the 2020 budget. Thanks for your cooperation!

### 2019 Westminster Annual Report

This is your friendly reminder for the 2019 Westminster Annual Report. The congregational meeting is scheduled for February 23, which means annual reports need to be received by Monday, January 20 for a February 9 distribution date.

Note that this year, we’ve decided to keep with the shorten report like last year.

Meaning, reports should be no longer than a single page and should include a bulleted list of 2019 highlights and goals/upcoming events for 2020. Additional reports can be submitted, but those will only be available upon request.

Please submit information to [membership@westminsac.org](mailto:membership@westminsac.org) by January 20.

### Giving Tree Results

The congregation of Westminster has once again brought joy to hundreds of people in need in our community this Christmas. Yesterday, Deacons delivered 217 gifts, including 18 for newly homed seniors, as well as 199 gifts and 48 packages of diapers for the children receiving services through Opening Doors, the local refugee resettlement agency.

Both agencies were thrilled with our generosity! Blessings and thanks to all who participated in this Festive ministry! You’ve brought joy and grace to many!

### CE CPR Training

Westminster’s Children’s Education staff will be recertified in CPR on February 11, 2020. This certification course is also open to the members of Westminster as well, in this case, the cost will be $50 per person.

You can signup at the office. More details to be announced.

### Christmas Offering Results

The Christmas Joy offering totaled $3,795.00 of which 50% goes to the board of pensions and 50% goes to Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries.

The Christmas offering totaled $2,877.61 and that money goes to Westminster sponsored homeless/hunger ministries.

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The church office will be closed on Monday, January 20th, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day
WESTMINSTER'S DEACONS PRESENT

SOUP or BOWL

JANUARY 25 | 5:30 - 7:00 PM

HOT PRIZES FOR THE WINNERS!

ALL YOU CAN EAT! BRING SOUP, CHILI, CHOWDER, OR ANYTHING THAT CAN BE SERVED IN A BOWL OR JUST ATTEND, JUDGE, EAT, PARTICIPATE IN THE RAFFLE, AND OF COURSE ENJOY YOURSELF!

Proceeds go to the River City Food Bank
January, 2020

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED
TIME DATED MATERIAL
(916)442-8939

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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.