The People at Worship
The Changing Chimes...

With this issue the Chimes takes on a reflective role for us in the Westminster family. This is first of all, about us, and for us. The mission of the Chimes is to reflect back to us that “this is who we are.” Here we hope to provide articles by and about our life together, as in this issue on Worship. We hope that this will be educational—helping us all to better understand the what and why of worship, for example—but inspirational as well, prompting us to take measure of the meaning, the value, and even the practical application of worship.

You will find only a few announcements here—calendar and announcements are left to the bulletin each Sunday and then sent to those who receive email in the “Westminster Weekly” every Tuesday; and, to those who only receive print communication through the “News & Notes” that is sent out every other week.

The Chimes is a periodical, in magazine format, that will be published four times this year—in mid-September, November, February, and April. The theme of each issue...
Fall 2015

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Grace and peace to you in the Lord Jesus Christ and in God our Creator.

You may have wondered why, when I use the above salutation either in this letter or in Sunday worship I seem to use that vague preposition “in”—what’s that about? “In” is a close translation of the Greek word that Paul most often uses in his greeting in his letters in the New Testament. The oldest piece of Christian literature we have is Paul’s First Letter to the Thessalonians, which he begins: To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

Scholars debate what he precisely means by that, but the interpretation of his intent that I like best is this. When Paul greets the church “in” God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, he is saying, we are “in” this together. We are all under the same umbrella. We are all in the same sphere, and it is a sphere in which God is Creator and Jesus is Lord. Both the greeter, Paul, and the ones greeted, the Thessalonians, are in the same world, created by God and ruled by Christ; it is a view they hold in common.

When in worship I say, “Grace and peace to you in the Lord Jesus Christ and in God our Creator,” I imagine that in the same way that we are all gathered under the same roof, we are all under the same kind jurisdiction of our loving God. And, as I write to you now, I imagine a similar thing: that, as we are under the same canopy of the sky, we are under the same loving power of our God’s embrace.

This issue of the Chimes is the first of a new approach to this publication. And the focus is on worship, which also turns out to be the focus of the fall’s preaching series. Dave Baak has a more full description of our hopes for the Chimes and our communicating with you about the life of Westminster. I hope you will let us know how this is working. Great blessings to you in this turning of the seasons.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Chandler Stokes
Senior Pastor

will be conditioned by broad program areas, or the season or sometimes the liturgical calendar. We anticipate that the four broad areas (Worship, Leadership, Education, and Mission) will be continued in the 2016-2017 year with a full review by the Communications Committee, including your input, in the spring of 2017.

So, the informational role of our communications effort will be filled by our other in-house media vehicles (including the bulletin, as stated previously, but also the web page www.westminstergr.org, the “Westminster Weekly,” and “News & Notes”). We have wanted for some time to emphasize the electronic side of our media – web page, Facebook page, “Westminster Weekly,” and other emails, etc. – for information on a more timely basis as well as in less expensive ways than paper and mailing costs demand.

Finally, we are mailing this issue to everyone on our list—even those of you who will also receive the electronic edition—just to make sure that you have a chance to see this new Chimes. We hope that you will let us know what you think about it, and whether we should continue a print edition for everyone (Becky at 717-5532; beckyw@wpcgr.org). The Communications Committee and the staff would like to know whether this is best in electronic form or in printed form for you. Is this new magazine format better in print than the old Chimes for those of you who receive email?

We hope you will suggest articles and themes for the Chimes; we will regularly call on members of the congregation to do some of the writing. The “new” Chimes is intended to be a means for all of us to understand ourselves as a congregation more deeply. We trust that it will also help us all think more clearly about our ministry and the faithfulness to which God calls us.

Let us know your own reflections on worship and what it means for you and your family in the life of our congregation.
Confirmation Series Fall 2015

Pray and Work: The People at Worship

September 27: “The Architecture of Worship”
The Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Commissioning WCDC Teachers
Rev. Chandler Stokes preaching
The Outline of the Service & the Exchange of Blessings
Music: Viviana Kloostra, Soprano at 8:30a;
Sanctuary Choir at 11:00a

October 4: “Sacrament”
The Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time
World Communion Sunday
Camp Henry Staff Commissioning
Rev. Jen Porter preaching
Scripture: Revelation 7:9-17
Baptism & Communion
Music: Elise Turke and Adrian Pool, duet at 8:30a;
Sanctuary Choir and Carol Choir at 11:00a

The Stewardship of Prayer & Work

October 11: “What Does It All Mean?”
The Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Third Grade Bible Presentation
Rev. Chandler Stokes preaching
Scripture: Romans 14:7-9
Confession of Sin & Assurance of God’s Grace
Music: Cantus Choir at 8:30a; Sanctuary Choir and Kirk Singers at 11:00a

October 18: “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”
The Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Reception of New Members
Rev. Chandler Stokes preaching
Scripture: Ephesians 3:14-21
Offering & Doxology
Music: Westminster Winds at 8:30a & 11:00a;
Sanctuary Choir at 11:00a

October 25: “Go into the World in Peace, For I Am With You”
The Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Stewardship Dedication
Rev. Chandler Stokes preaching
Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28 & Matthew 28:16-20
Charge & Benediction
Music: Nancy Patterson, Mezzo Soprano at 8:30a;
Sanctuary Choir, Cherub Choir, Chapel Singers at 11:00a

Pray & Work (Resumes)

November 1: “Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs”
The Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time
The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper
Rev. Chandler Stokes preaching
Scripture: Colossians 3:12-17
Music in Worship
Music: Josh Leckrone, Baritone at 8:30a;
Sanctuary Choir and Carol Choir at 11:00a

November 8: “The Law”
The Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
The Sacrament of Baptism
Rev. Chandler Stokes preaching
Scripture: Luke 15:11-32
The Summary of the Law & Passing the Peace
Music: Karl Falb, Violin at 8:30a; Sanctuary Choir, Cantus, and Cherub Choir at 11:00a

November 15: “The Word of the Gospel”
The Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
Confirmation Sunday
Rev. Chandler Stokes preaching
Scripture: Romans 15:4-6
Scripture & Sermon
Music: Lee Copenhaver, Cello at 8:30a;
Sanctuary Choir and Kirk Singers at 11:00a
The assumption in this fall’s preaching series is that, if we can understand our worship service, we can go a long way toward understanding our calling to be Christian. That is, in exploring the meaning of our worship, we can understand better our life in God.

This year, confirmation will be taught through the lens of our order of worship. And, as we have for some years now, we will all go through confirmation together, at least in our worship services. We began the series **Pray & Work: The People at Worship** on September 13.

Behind the title of the series is the old word, liturgy. “Liturgy” literally means *the work of the people*. Thus, Worship is both *Prayer & Work*. In some ways worship is the work that most clearly defines us as God’s people. Liturgy says a great deal about who we are and who God is. As Prof. Jamie Smith said, “Worship shapes what we love.”

The series runs throughout the fall until Confirmation Sunday on November 15. As we reflect on the basics of our faith, we will examine nearly every aspect of our worship. Here is a quick outline of our Sunday bulletin:

### Gathering: Preparing to Hear the Word
- Voluntary
- Westminster Welcome
- Call to Worship
- Hymn
- Prayer of Confession
- Assurance of God’s Grace
- Summary of the Law
- Passing of the Peace
- Music
- Blessings with the Children

### The Word
- Scripture
- Sermon

### Responding to the Word
- Baptism
- Lord’s Supper
- Prayer
- Offering
- Doxology

### Going Out To Be the Church
- Hymn
- Charge
- Benediction
- Voluntary

By examining these elements and the way that they fit together, we will end up covering the basics of Christian faith. And, as last year, the confirmation series will include three weeks’ reflection on Stewardship (of time, money, and life), which is central to the expression of our faith beyond Sunday morning (see page 7).

Why do we worship? There are a lot of answers to that question. I like this one that my colleague Doug King, Associate Pastor at Brick Presbyterian Church in New York, offers: Why do we worship? Just because. We worship just because. We worship for the same reason that we breathe, it is what we do, it is who we are.... If you are a hammer all the world’s a nail. If you are a part of creation, your every breath, your very existence is an opportunity to praise.

*continues on page 6*
And what exactly is worship? I paraphrase Doug’s colleague at Brick Church, Michael Lindvall, here: Although we may learn something from worship, it is not education. Although we may be healed in worship, it is not therapy. Although we may be deeply engaged in worship, it is not entertainment. The vector of worship is toward God and not toward us.

Worship is not entertainment. It’s not education. It’s not therapy. There really isn’t anything that takes the place of what happens here on Sunday morning. This is worship. And it’s different. We participate in worship. We worship actively. We are directed in worship toward God, turning ourselves inside out, a turning which is against the easy grain of our lives.

Helen Hofmeister, our Minister for Music, attended a workshop in Atlanta recently where this was quoted: “When congregations have not been taught to worship, they have to be entertained.” Louise Eubanks, one of the wise, old women in the Oakland congregation, throughout her life was truly taught to worship. She once said to me, “Pastor, if I’m not getting something out of the service, I think, ‘Louise, what’s wrong with you?’” To bring ourselves to worship that way, with that heart, is to get beyond the self-centeredness that so easily comes to us if we think we are in worship to be entertained, educated, or healed. Those gifts of healing, engagement, and learning are collateral blessings. They are not the focus. Our receiving isn’t the first order of business in worship.

Again, my colleague Doug King reminds us that in worship, we come to give. And that is a hard place for us to start. That’s why our parents used to MAKE us come to church, because we were too self-centered to go anywhere to GIVE something. Worship is turning ourselves toward God, not an easy task, but what follows for us in myriad ways are “collateral blessings” from our turning toward God.

Perhaps we can think of it this way. Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, when he was asked about how we can communicate anything at all about the transcendent God, said: First of all, I think that God is witnessed to, and in that sense spoken of and communicated by lives that in their practice continually refer to him—lives that look towards God for renewal and repentance, adoration. He suggests that our witness in worship is a means by which God enters the world meaningfully. And lest we forget that our witness is confined to Sunday morning, we remember that Dorothy Day once said, “To be a witness … means to live in such a way that one’s life would not make sense… if God did not exist.”

In our tradition we have long called our gatherings on Sunday morning Public Worship. Worship is a public witness to God who is beyond us, and that witness is rich with collateral blessings. Please join us this fall as we partner with our ninth graders in their confirmation process and as we turn to the work of public worship and anticipate the blessings in seeking God’s presence.
Advent 2015 will revolve around five passages from the Gospel According to Luke, most of them the traditional readings for this time of year. Advent is always, always, always about two Advents, of course, about two Arrivals: one arrival in the birth of Christ and one arrival in the coming of Christ in the fullness of time, what's often called the Second Coming.

This year, we will focus on Luke's understanding of Advent and Christmas. We will hear Luke's story of Jesus telling us about his final return, Luke's story of John the Baptist, Luke's story of Gabriel coming to Mary, and then we come to Luke's Christmas. Whereas as Matthew's Christmas includes the magi and their journey from the east to worship him in Bethlehem, Luke's story is about shepherds and angels and a baby born in a manger.

Join others on Wednesday evenings during Advent as we journey the season together in worship and prayer. As God's people we are caught in the wondering and the waiting of the season; some in great joy, some in profound hurt. Midst the darkness and cold, we long to hope that a light will come to warm our weary souls.

So, of course, there will be the Christmas Concerts to celebrate the Light. The worship service for the third Sunday of Advent will include all the children's choirs in their distinctive and joyful voices. And "Lessons and Carols" will be presented on December 6 by the Sanctuary Choir and Kirk Singers, with Orchestra.

The Stewardship of Prayer & Work

As last year, our confirmation preaching series will overlap with the fall stewardship campaign. The Confirmation Series will be an exploration of our Order of Worship as a picture of the essentials of our faith. That's from where the phrase “Pray & Work” derives. Our worship is at once both prayer (our direct address to God), and work (as in the word “liturgy” meaning “work of the people”). And the essentials of our faith can be found in the Order of Worship. At the same time, if we expand the notions of prayer and work, we can begin to talk about how faith includes every aspect of our lives: we don't just work in worship, and we don't just pray in worship.

The stewardship portion of the nine-week Confirmation series will cover the stewardship of time, of money, and of self—on October 11, 18, and 25. Each of these forms of stewardship is symbolized in a different portion of our worship service: time, in the confession & assurance; money, in the offering & doxology; self, in the charge & benediction.

Is there anything in our lives that cannot be included under the headings of time, money, and self? That’s a fairly comprehensive list. Clearly, stewardship is about our whole lives. That’s why we are using such broad categories for the name of the series itself. Though they are different words (ones borrowed from the Confirmation Series), they intend to be just as broad and comprehensive as “time, money, and self;” so the theme of this year’s campaign is, “The Stewardship of Prayer and Work.” Stewardship is about our whole lives.

We give Thee but Thine own
Whatever the gift may be
All that we have is Thine alone
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

Advent Coming; and Coming
The Sanctuary Choir sang at Camp Henry this past Labor Day weekend, as they always do, to wrap up the summer. One of the pieces they sang was the perennial favorite, “How Can I Keep from Singing?” It begins:

My life flows on in endless song; 
Above earth’s lamentation, 
I hear the real, though’ far-off hymn 
That hails a new creation; 
Through all the tumult and the strife 
I hear the music ringing; 
It finds an echo in my soul— 
How can I keep from singing?

Indeed, it seems that at Westminster, we can't keep from raising our voices in song; every worship service includes congregational singing. We have a long tradition with many opportunities—vocal and instrumental—for all ages to participate in the musical life of the church. According to our website, WPC is “a congregation united in praising God through music and song. We believe music is one of God’s greatest gifts, and it has an important role to play in the life of our church.”

According to Rev. David Baak, music at its most fundamental is the “essential, ‘practical’ unit in worship—it leads us into centering and opens us to the experience—to hearing and action alike.”

“With music, as in all worship, there is a dialogue going on between God and God’s people,” says Elder for Music Frank Van Haven. “In some parts of the liturgy God is addressing us; in other parts we are addressing God. Music has the happy function of doing both. Some hymns or anthems express our thanks or praise to God ... while others invoke words of scripture to allow God to speak to us.”

Singing is a way for the community as a whole to worship, says former Elder for Music, Bruce Klein-Wassink. But beyond that, music also connects us with God in an elemental way. “Music,” he said, “takes us to a place of connection with God that the spoken word cannot.”

Frank Van Haven agrees. “Music has a greater emotional power than just words alone,” he said. “It reaches more parts of the brain than mere words do.” Then he takes things up a notch. “So by its very use, music is an enhanced way of worshiping that involves those participating at a higher level of consciousness.”

That higher level is where music ultimately takes us. Rev. Chandler Stokes spoke of music in worship recently, referencing Revelation Ch. 4 (And the four living creatures [surrounding the heavenly throne]... day and night without ceasing, they sing) and underscoring the point, “There is nonstop music in heaven. “Why?”
“Because music, like the sacraments, can evoke that uncontrolled, immeasurable, mysterious presence of God.”

Music—something so accessible to us that we can’t keep from singing—is the best way we know to express the unknowable (immeasurable, mysterious) presence that is our God. It is the closest we can get to heaven from here.

And so we sing, and play and sing some more:
No storm can shake my inmost calm,
While to that rock I’m clinging.
Since love is lord of heaven and earth
How can I keep from singing?


Kathy Vander Velde is a writer, and a member of our Sanctuary Choir.

It is a joy to work at Westminster, where the music in each service is valued and appreciated. The congregation understands that everyone worships differently, and people can be as moved by a piece of music as they are by the spoken word. The music might be simplistic, as sung by our youngest choir of 3 to 5 year olds, or it might be as complicated as a Stephen Paulus piece, sung by our Sanctuary Choir. It might be an instrumental band piece played by the Westminster Winds, or a string piece, played by any number of our string players in the congregation.

All of the music chosen for the Sunday services is specific for that service for a reason. Whether it is sung or played, the hope is that it will somehow help people become closer to God through their worship. Different styles speak to different people, so the anthems and the instrumental music are all selected with that knowledge in mind. I do so appreciate the gifts of our music volunteers and hope that we as a congregation are all growing in our faith as a result of their participation!

— Helen Hofmeister, Minister of Music

Worship in Church—Ruth Stubbs

A Personal Reflection

Maybe the question to ask is: Why worship in church? Wouldn’t the back porch or a walk in the woods do as well? If all of life is worship, that is, being in relationship with God, can’t we do that wherever we are, working or playing? The answer is: Yes. Of course we can and we do. But is there something important about worship together? And in church? Since we place so much emphasis on it, I’m sure there is.

God wants us to worship together in a special place. The Bible is clear on that in Old Testament instructions and New Testament practice. Though God does not need our worship, God knows that it’s good for us to come together in community where we can practice those activities that remind us of who God is and who we are in relationship with God.

The Call to Worship acknowledges that God is our audience. The Call to Confession reminds us that we fall short in our attempts to live as God’s people and is followed by the assurance of God’s forgiveness and constant love. Reading Jesus’ summary of the law together reinforces how to live with God and others. We listen to God’s word and to sermons that challenge and encourage us every day. The Lord’s Supper and baptism are communal activities reminding us of who we are as a body of Christ. Prayers are more conversation with God, including the Lord’s Prayer, which we say together. Music in church elevates our spirits and touches our senses in unique ways. We share our blessings in the offering.

As Jesus called the children to him, we also include them in worship. Little ones are cared for in the nursery; preschoolers through second grade begin in the sanctuary and then go to their own age-appropriate worship. Older children sing in the choirs and assist in leadership in the liturgy. Every year the young people lead an entire worship service with their remarkable gifts. May God bless us all as we strive to worship well.

Ruth Stubbs is Elder for Worship.
Small Groups as an Expression of Worship

At Westminster, worship does not stop after the closing voluntary is played on a Sunday morning. In fact, many individuals from the Westminster family have chosen to gather together during the week to participate in another form of worship, often through discussing issues, reading books both fiction and nonfiction, and even quilting. Each of these groups sees what they do as an expression of worship during the week, outside of the sanctuary.

Mary Dirkse, who has participated in the Evergreen Circle at Westminster, experiences her small group as a tight-knit community of women supporting one another through life. “It is an encouraging, welcoming, supportive group of women, and I am blessed to be a part of it,” she said. “I would certainly consider our meetings an act of worship. We not only discuss various faith-related topics but also share our concerns and prayers for each other.” That form of worship is exactly the aim of Westminster’s small groups.

Small groups at Westminster do not end at circles. In fact, there are many small groups that meet as a branch of the Westminster community. Men’s Morning Prayer Breakfast meets every Tuesday morning for an hour at the church. During this hour, Westminster members and individuals from the broader community come together to study a chapter or two of Scripture. Each participant gets a chance to lead the conversation, discussing how the Scripture passage applies to daily life, bringing forth prayer petitions, and meditating on the Word of God. This ecumenical group includes a few Westminster members but also individuals from the broader community who come from a range of religious backgrounds. It is that ecumenical mix that adds richness to the discussion every week, leading the group into honest conversation on the Scripture and their lives as God’s people.

Rick Spafford, who is involved in the Tuesday Night Men’s Group, says this group began with the purpose of spiritual formation, but it has also functioned as a support group for its members. “It turned out that every man in it had experienced or was experiencing, or eventually did experience, tragic and/or very difficult life events or passages,” said Rick. Through general discussion, devotions, and a spiritual formation-driven discussion, men in the group grow relationally and spiritually. Rick feels very strongly that what they do is an act of worship: “I personally would say that all mindful focus, experience, or conversation about and with God, through the work of the Spirit or within the Body of Christ, is worship,” he said.

Other small groups at Westminster include the Elisabeth Circle, Spiritual Formation, Fiction Book Group, Saturday Morning Book Group, Ann Rinck Quilters—the list goes on. Each group that meets participates in a form of worship in community with one another.

If you are interested in joining a small group, keep your eye out for a bulletin insert coming out in the next few weeks that will highlight each group and give information on their meeting times and places. Perhaps it’s time to consider joining one of these as a part of your worship life.

Alena DeYoung is Administrative Assistant for Mission.
The Furniture of Worship

Here are some of the answers to the questions that some of us have when we come to worship but never get around to looking up when we get home.

My guess is that most everyone can explain the Communion Table—it is simply that: a table for communion, for the Lord's Supper.

It replaces the altar that is used in other traditions; instead, the table is a symbol of our emphasis on the spiritual presence of Christ in the sacrament rather than his sacrifice.

So too, we know the Pulpit—it’s a raised stand for preachers in a Christian church (from the Latin pulpitum that means “platform” or “staging”). In some traditions it was (and sometimes still is) reserved for clergy. That’s part of the explanation for having a Lectern (from the Latin verb meaning “to read.”)

Traditionally, many Reformed and Presbyterian churches had a single pulpit (centrality of the Word) rather than the altar/communion table in the center. In many other traditions the lectern is on the right (“epistle side”) and the Pulpit on the left (“gospel side”). Today there is no single “right” place.

Of greater interest to Westminster, perhaps, is the fact that our “single” pulpit was changed in the 1937 installation of the organ and renovation of the choir loft. Our current pulpit and lectern were installed at that time... but does anyone know why we put the Pulpit on the right side?

The Baptismal Font, as we know, is for baptism. We place it in the back of the sanctuary when not used for that purpose, as some other traditions do, for persons to touch the water as they enter the sanctuary, to remember their own baptism. The shape also reflects our theology—it is small for sprinkling rather than large, for immersion. The latter was common in the first centuries of Christianity, and is still practiced by some other traditions.

Finally, the Paraments are not strictly “furniture” but are always obvious. They are “adornment” (Late Latin paramentum) and “to prepare, equip” (parare) “a term applied by ancient writers to the hangings or ornaments in a room of state” (my “Wikipedia” source). They mark the liturgical year: purple for Advent and Lent; white for Christmas and Easter; red for Pentecost; and, to mark the weeks of “ordinary—that is, numbered—time” (green). White also usually signifies a service that includes the sacraments of communion or baptism.

Paraments are ancient in origin, but they now often are very “local” in function—an expression of the character of the congregation.

And, of course, there are more items about which to ask; and, many places from which to find out more than these few details. But this will get you started and perhaps, even, it will prompt your reflection or two on the ritual with which our worship practice uses this furniture.

David Baak is Executive Pastor.
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