



# White Rock Presbyterian Church

# Overlook

An informative newsletter published by the White Rock Presbyterian Church

September 2013

## From the Pastor's Desk

A church-growth guru was once asked, "What if a church feels stuck in a rut and its leadership isn't inspired for movement or change?" The guru is said to have replied, "Go deeper spiritually."

When I first heard this I was surprised that the answer was so devoid of practical steps and seemingly unconcerned with denominational politics. But then I was embarrassed. I was embarrassed that I hadn't thought of the *spiritual* "track" that is always at hand for addressing such concerns.

Maybe some of you are guilty of this too. We get weighed down by something, a question or concern that nags at us, and try to address the dilemma by researching, gathering data, strategizing, and speculating. Oftentimes, it seems that it is only when we cannot find a human-driven solution, and have finally become so overwhelmed with more "what if's" than we can stomach, that we will finally allow our brains to defer to our spirits.

While our brains have been in high gear and in the spotlight, the spirit and heart within us have been sorting through their own wisdom and probably have insights to offer toward a solution. How do we learn to tap into the voice of the Spirit that abides within us? What is listening to the Spirit? What does it mean for a run of the mill Christian in this day and age to listen to the Spirit? What does that look like? How is it different from prayer?

The church is struggling with members who feel like misfits, conflict that hangs unaddressed under the

surface, and a desire to grow, but not so much that intimacy is sacrificed. What do we do?  
Go deeper spiritually.

Many of you have heard of the practice of Spiritual Direction. There are certified Spiritual Directors and programs to launch you into the lifestyle of either a Director or a Directee. But, in truth, spiritual direction is all about the process of discerning God's movement/presence/voice within our lives.

In spiritual direction, you reflect deeply on the experiences of your daily life with an alert inner eye for where God's footprints are. Gradually, through contemplation, you may begin to recognize the threads of the tapestry God is weaving within you and with you. And God's presence and grace in your life becomes more visible. You may come to realize how God's Spirit is truly with you every day and everywhere. You have "gone deeper" and in the process, you discover that God has been waiting for you to seek this closer relationship all along.

Spiritual direction is really not about being "directed." Rather, it is very much about being encouraged to draw closer to God. Spiritual direction invites you into this relationship and holds you to the journey by virtue of sharing that journey with your "director" (which some have also called a prayer partner, a spouse, or anyone willing to be on this intentional path with you).

I would encourage each of us to find one other person to help us "go deeper spiritually" for the next three months – longer maybe. It would help if both of you are committed to the following:

- To explore, identify and trust your own experiences of God

- To strive to integrate spirituality into your daily life
- To pray toward discernment and making difficult choices
- To share your hopes, struggles and losses
- To develop a sensitivity for justice and mercy
- To live your faith with integrity

I would be interested in knowing if you are willing to engage in this exercise on a short-term basis. I do not need to know any details, only that you are, with me, trying to “go deeper spiritually.”

Grace and Peace,  
Rev. Elizabeth Graham

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## WRPC Contact Information

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Office Hours for Gillian Erickson  
Tuesdays and Thursdays only, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM.

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*A psalm. For giving thanks.*

*Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.  
Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.  
Know that the LORD is God.  
It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.*

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name  
For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all  
generations.*

*Psalm 100*

## Letter from the Editor

I recently returned from a tour of the Baltic republics that offered some fascinating insights into a part of the world that many of us do not know very much about. One of the places we visited is the Hill of Crosses, located about a dozen kilometers from the town of Šiauliai, near the northern border of Lithuania. Here we saw, amidst a rolling countryside, a hill completely covered in crosses of all sizes and varieties. More crosses are added each day, as this has become a pilgrimage site for believers seeking peace and hope or to commemorate a loved one.



To understand what is happening here we need to review some history. In the late eighteenth century the remnants of Poland and Lithuania were divided up among their more powerful neighbors. What is now Lithuania became part of the Russian Empire. Unsuccessful rebellions were staged in 1831 and 1863. Around that time crosses began to appear on the hill to commemorate loved ones lost during the wars. This was done in defiance of the authorities, who condemned and repressed the practice. Nevertheless, the crosses continued to appear. In 1918 Lithuania gained its independence. While no longer a symbol of defiance, crosses continued to be placed on the hill to honor peace, the country, and lost freedom fighters.

During World War II Lithuania was successively occupied by Russians, Germans, and then Russians until it was finally incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1944. During the Soviet occupation the hill became a focus of passive resistance, with the crosses demonstrating allegiance to Lithuanian identity, religion, and heritage. The Soviets, who attempted to destroy all vestiges of Lithuanian identity, regarded the placement of crosses as a dangerous and subversive threat to the state. They vigorously suppressed the practice and repeatedly removed the crosses from the

site. They even bulldozed the site on several occasions. Miraculously the crosses continued to appear in ever greater numbers. Finally, in 1990 Lithuania regained its independence and people could venerate the site without fear of reprisals.

Pope John Paul II visited the Hill of Crosses in 1993 and declared it a place of peace, hope, love, and sacrifice. In 2000 a Franciscan Hermitage was built nearby, overlooking the site. Today the site is visited by large numbers of pilgrims and huge numbers of tourists every year. If you are so inclined you can buy a cross and place it on the site, or you can bring your own. It is impossible to determine the exact number of crosses currently on the site. Many estimates exceed 100,000.

The Hill of Crosses is a testament to the courage, persistence, and determination of the local population to preserve their religious and cultural identity in the face of fierce repression. It also reminds us that these freedoms must not be taken for granted. As I have learned more about what those people endured over successive foreign occupations I am ever more thankful to be living in a time and place where freedom of religion and the embrace of one's cultural heritage are honored and cherished traditions.

Dick Heaton

## Session News

Following a discussion during the Officer Training session lead by John Detterick in June, the Session has changed the opening of our meetings from "devotions" to an expanded "devotions and Bible study." We have been using as a resource the book, **Not By Sight**, by Jon Bloom.

The Session is also beginning to study some new approaches to financial stewardship planning. Some of the results may be apparent in the approach to gathering 2014 financial commitments later this fall. However, the more fundamental changes should be visible in a stewardship approach that is not tied to a "routine" annual campaign. Stay tuned for more on this as the Session learns.

George Callaghan

## PNC Update

The WRPC Church Information Form, prepared by the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC), was published in May and we have been blessed with a good response to the announcement that WRPC is seeking a designated pastor. With help from the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery, and especially Sallie Watson, Regional Presbyter, the Pastor Nominating Committee has focused on six candidates for our pastoral position. Through prayer, careful reading, diligent discussion, and e-mail correspondence, the PNC has recently been considering three of the six candidates. In late July the PNC conducted about 2-hour phone/internet interviews with each of the three candidates, learning more about each than can be conveyed in written communication and, hopefully, helping the candidates know more about the congregation, its history, its aspirations, its successes, and its shortcomings than can be conveyed in the six short paragraphs of the Church Information Form.

Over the next weeks, the PNC will be conducting in-person interviews with several of the candidates. For these interviews the committee invites candidates to visit the local area, and see more about us face-to-face.

A key aspect of the pastoral search process is maintaining confidentiality of the candidates to avoid compromising their current situations, so we ask the congregation's continued patience as we conduct this next stage of the search.

The Committee continues to covet your prayers for discernment and for the energy to continue in this demanding process.

Bob Reinovsky

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*

*John 3:16-17*

## Raffle Drawing Winners for Julie's Helpers Memorial Scholarship Fundraiser

**Selma Reinovsky** was the first-place prize raffle drawing winner on August 23 at Ashley Pond for a sterling silver inlay lapis jewelry set of a bracelet, pendant, and earrings. The jewelry was hand crafted by Navajo Artisans Mark and Edith Tso of Twin Lakes, NM. The retail value of the jewelry is \$540.



*Handmade Sterling Silver Inlay Jewelry Set*

**Vernon Kerr** was the second-place prize raffle winner of the handmade Navajo 20" x 38" wool rug woven by Alice Etsitty. Alice is the Mother of our mission partner Lorraine Thomas at the House of Fellowship. For the wool yarn used in the rug, Alice sheared the sheep, dyed the wool, and spun the wool into yarn! The retail value of the rug is \$175.



*Handmade Navajo Wool Rug*

The raffle was held to raise funds for our Julie's Helpers Memorial Scholarship(s) for 2014. With help from Julie Meadows's Beta Sigma Phi sorority sisters we raised \$1,000.00 in raffle ticket sales and donations.

In July 2013 we gave two scholarships, for \$2,500 and for \$750, to two young Navajo women to pursue their education in Nursing and Civil Engineering, respectively. (See the August 2013 *Overlook* for more information on the recent scholarship awards.) With their education, our scholarship winners hope to improve the health of the Navajo people and improve the deteriorating infrastructure on the Navajo Reservation. We have awarded five Julie's Helpers Memorial Scholarship awards since 2011.

You can still make tax deductible contributions to WRPC for the "Julie's Helpers Fund."

Susan Buxton

## PW News

**PW PURPOSE:** "Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves

- to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible Study,
- to support the mission of the church worldwide,
- to work for justice and peace,
- and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom."

Welcome to September—already! We trust that everyone has enjoyed pleasurable summer times with families and interesting safe travels. PW is eager to serve our "purpose". However, we are still in the thoughtful process of reorganizing and making decisions about how best to pursue these goals, since our numbers are small. We are looking for suggestions, regarding speakers and programs for Wednesday luncheons, Bible Study/Circle, Mission projects, etc.

In view of September holidays and other commitments, the First Wednesday Luncheon will be **October 2**, unless announced otherwise. Watch for future announcements about Bible Study dates.

# Treasury Notes

## What Your Donations Accomplish

Thank you for all your donations—we continue to collect product labels and box tops for Menaul School (Albuquerque) and also your surplus travel-size personal care items for the Northern N.M. Crisis Center Family Shelter in Espanola, which also serves Los Alamos County.

Joyce Berzins

**Go Paperless!** Save a stamp! If you would like to receive your copy of the Overlook electronically rather than through the mail, just let our WRPC Office Manager know and make sure she has your correct e-mail address. We'll send you a PDF file at the beginning of the month. You'll get your Overlook quicker and it will be in glorious color as well.

- **Provide Meaningful Weekly Worship:** To provide meaningful worship every week, January through July, we have held 31 Worship Services on Sundays and during Lent to praise God, hear His Word, lift our voices in song, ordain and install new elders and deacons, and receive a new member.

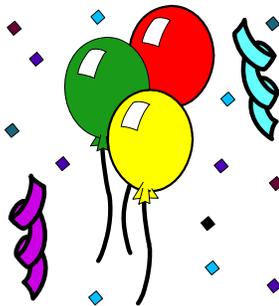
To accomplish this we have spent \$24,968.35 or 58% of our Budget Actual Expenses to pay guest pastors; Pension Vacancy Dues; a percentage of our part-time pastor's salary and pension dues for five months; our part-time Music Director; worship accompanists; Session Moderator; a percentage of our part-time Office Administrator's wages, custodian's wages, and employer taxes; and facility overhead and office expenses.

- **Nurture our family in their faith journey:** To grow in our relationship with the Lord we spend a lot of prayer and energy to have: weekly Sunday adult classes and, on a less frequent schedule, children/youth Sunday classes (with a summer break); a weekly Monday evening prayer group in the Sanctuary; several weekly small group meetings; countless dinners, lunches, and receptions to promote fellowship; monthly publications of our WRPC newsletter, **Overlook**; donations for our friends in crisis; monthly Presbyterian Women meetings; coffee bean purchases of Café Justo from our Frontera de Cristo PC(USA) ministry; and, last but not least of all, pastoral care.

To accomplish this we have spent \$8,651.74 or 20% of our Budget Actual Expenses to pay for facility overhead expenses; a percentage of staff salary, wages, and taxes; curriculum; and program expenses.

- **Witness our faith in service:** We have financially helped support the work of: The Presbyterian Church (USA) to provide missionaries (including our friends Carol & Leith Fujii and Rachel & Michael Weller in Ethiopia) and programs to those most in need in the world through our Unified Giving and One Great Hour of Sharing; the Young Life

## September Birthdays



Vickie Teel	10
Sheila Schiferl	11
Kathleen Fergus	12
Alexandra Edelmann	28

Christian ministry that reaches out to teens locally and nationally; Love for Life for the Giron, Ecuador, fire department; and ARTA (Appropriate Rural Technologies Association) in Mexico. Committees such as our Pastor Nominating Committee and the Julie's Helpers Memorial Scholarship Committee have used our facility for meetings; we have shared our facility weekly with the Santa Fe Korean Fellowship, two Bible book studies by outside groups, and several secular organizations.

To accomplish this we have spent \$9,365.84 or 22% of our Budget Actual Expenses for financial giving to mission organizations; facility overhead expenses; a percentage of staff salary, wages, and taxes; and office expenses.

Susan Buxton

## Facilities News

### Buildings & Grounds

If you look around our grounds you can see a lot of recent activities. The weeds in the rock gardens and the front planting, which had flourished with the recent prolific rains, have been pulled. The Prayer Garden is looking beautiful and has some new donated child-sized benches. Trees have been trimmed and overgrown bushes removed. Our sizable lawn has been mowed with a walking mower and trimmed. The rain showers have turned brown to green. We have so much for which to be grateful.

### Tractor Fund

Last month I reported on a special giving campaign to replace our old, unrepairable lawn tractor. I want to thank everyone who has contributed. We currently have collected \$1,275!

The tractor we have decided on has been ordered to take advantage of sizable cost savings and will be delivered early in September. We are currently \$540 short of our goal and trust that the remaining funds will be forthcoming.

Maintaining and replacing equipment may seem to be mundane, but the Bible is replete with stories about maintaining the Temple. David wanted to replace the Tabernacle of the Exodus. Josiah performed repairs on Solomon's temple. Even the evil King Herod performed maintenance and beautification on the

Temple of Jesus's time. We at WRPC are following in this grand tradition.

Terry Buxton

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