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ANNIVERSARY

WAYNE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Wayne Pres 



WRITE IT FORWARD BY JANICE MACK

When I moved to California for my first job, long distance phone calls were expensive, so my mother would put a letter in the mail for me about once a week. I loved seeing her formal cursive and hearing her voice as I read the words. The letter wasn't about the perfect words, but the sentiment and effort that it took to deliver a piece of paper from one household to another, whether it was near or far. The time and love my mother spent thinking about me, her words of encouragement, a copied poem, a recipe to share, a Bible verse that seemed to apply perfectly, or even the little craft of decorating a card, brightened both of our days.

A letter-writing campaign is being launched to help keep us connected and to bring us closer as a church family. These are challenging, once-in-a-lifetime circumstances. Many are dealing with burdens way beyond COVID, and we are all seeking genuine fellowship and authentic relationships centered upon our community of faith. Over half of the New Testament is filled with letters from the Apostle Paul to Christian communities far and wide in the days of the early Church. Though Paul couldn't always be physically present with his Christian friends, he wrote them letters to encourage them, keep them connected to a broader community, and always centered upon the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. Letters are an ancient way to lift up one another and to think past our current circumstances, toward a future of hope and fellowship.

The invitation is to **“Write It Forward.”** Each of us can participate by writing a church member, who then is encouraged to write another church member. This will create a web of connection, support and faith that will cross generations and ministries at Wayne Presbyterian. If you are seeking ways to connect with church members during his difficult time, please consider making a commitment to this church-wide project. We will have weekly writing prompts in the News and Views and more details on the church web site. If you would like a suggestion of who to write to, please email Dave Robinson at dmr2020@outlook.com.



HOW WPC SUPPORTS EDUCATION

Besides our own Biblical educational programs, WPC has traditionally supported organizations involved in education. Although curtailed in 2020, the social justice advocacy and adult education committees co-sponsored an adult education series in September 2019 entitled "Educating All God's Children: Our Presbyterian Call." Two speakers spoke to us about the Pre-K process in PA, and Imperatives for Equality Public Schools. During this time of COVID it is particularly important that we continue to help those who are helping educate the next generation under very unusual circumstances. Here are some updates from our partners.

LOCAL

Main Line Mentoring is a 501c(3) non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of school age children in the Mt Pleasant and Highland Avenue areas of Wayne. Education is at the forefront of their agenda, while also being committed to offering opportunities that foster responsible citizenship, leadership, and self-respect to children of all ages. Their programs include free academic tutoring, plus social and cultural growth through exposure to activities to enhance their learning. They partner with the community to assist us in providing opportunities to attend various events and field trips while building positive relationships with peers and mentors. Since 1994, there have been many contributions of money, books, electronic equipment and loving hours of service to which we are forever grateful! Founder Kevin Stroman grew up in the village of Mt. Pleasant, in Wayne, Pennsylvania. Upon returning from California in 1994, he saw the need for an organization to help young children in the neighborhood.

Foundation for Learning in Tredyffrin Eastown

(FLITE)-- WPC provided a grant for 2 years. FLITE supports After School Programs and provides financial assistance to under-resourced students to help afford necessary school supplies (e.g., graphing calculators), leadership training and school projects and trips. Starting last spring they were able to provide needed computers and internet service to students needing support with on line learning. This year they also began providing college scholarships for selected students in need of financial aid.

Gemma Services (formerly The Village): provides a range of programs to help at-risk children and families from throughout our region. Gemma provides a residential program for boys and girls 6-14 in Plymouth Meeting, a special education school for k-8 students, foster care and

adoption services, Outpatient mental health services, and prevention programs to help at-risk children and families to build resilience and connect them with necessary supports in the community. During COVID, Martin Luther School's k-8th grade educational programs are being provided virtually due the ongoing pandemic. Approximately 200 students are enrolled in the school, including children who are being served by our residential program in Plymouth Meeting as well as students referred by approximately 45 school districts throughout the region who, if the school were open for in-person education, would be "day" students. Our dedicated teachers, social workers, school counselors, and other staff members are delivering personalized education and supporting students via video and online platforms. During COVID, donations have helped us provide students with access to technology that they need to participate in their education.

Across all our programs, our WPC and other church partners are incredibly helpful to Gemma in donating holiday gifts for children and families, backpack and school supplies, and financial donations to support Gemma's work to help at-risk children and families to heal from any traumas they have experienced, learn new skills, and reach for brighter futures.

SW PHILADELPHIA:

Cornerstone Christian Academy: The conditions of the COVID pandemic hit Cornerstone hard, but through preparation, grace, and the support of partners like Wayne Presbyterian, the school was able to open on time and resume their mission of education and building Christ-like character. When the school year resumed in August, Cornerstone implemented a Remote Learning schedule, leveraging their technological preparedness to instruct students remotely. They soon segued into a Hybrid Learning schedule which allowed families to choose whether or not to send their students to campus for in-person instruction. With the recent spike, the CDC has recommended re-implementing the Remote model, which the school has buttressed with weekly virtual Chapel sessions, and various extracurricular activities and events conducted remotely using Zoom. Vital support for these initiatives has also come via the CARES ACT which helped to implement new health and safety protocols that keep students, staff, and faculty safe.

As Cornerstone has just received re-accreditation through the Association of Christian Schools International—a testament to their academic growth and curriculum's

technological integration—they are looking ahead to a bright future of resuming on-campus learning.

Mitchell School: Mitchell began 2020 as usual until March 12th when it wasn't the "usual". Schools were closed, switching to online learning. Children stayed home and volunteers, including those from Wayne also did. Maintaining the school community and keeping Mitchell a part of students' lives became an immediate focus of Principal Stephanie Andrewlevich who personally transformed the school's Facebook page into a community communications hub and initiated a "pop-up" surprise balloon delivery to celebrate student birthdays.

Eight grade graduation was converted into an online event with photos of students, staff, memories and a moving tribute to Quadir Beverly, the classmate who drowned the night before trying to save his friend's life. Individual student photos were taken for families and Wayne's CityLights Board contributed funds for gifts (a Chrome Book, a planner and a Mitchell shirt).

"While virtual school is draining on both students and teachers, Mitchell has once again become a leader in student and staff participation with more than 90% of students attending on many days and teachers in place." - Ed Riehl, DE Valley Fairness Project

During the pandemic, Wayne's Rita Fisk and her "troop" of Wayne members and their friends have continued at home to catalogue hundreds of new books. "Ms. A" in seeking new ways to inspire reading and interaction with families, initiated with staff a Mitchell "book club". Class sets of newly published books, many by African American authors, are discussed in virtual classes and given to students to share with their families and keep. Over 600 books have been purchased for the project with Rita's assistance, bookplates designed by students and donations from Wayne's WINGS and the CityLights Committee. Traditionally, Wayne has given staff a holiday gift, usually homemade cookies or breads. Because this was not possible this year, a charming hedgehog screen cleaner was chosen – cute and practical!

The Common Place (TCP): In response to the COVID pandemic, the nimble nature of the TCP programming staff allowed them to shift from the afterschool program, to a day access program that allows school children to attend their virtual classes at TCP. Many of these young people either

don't have reliable internet access or parental supervision at home, or both. We provide internet access, adult supervision, and meals and snacks. There are about 25 students registered for the program. We have also continued with homework help and the enrichment programs from our afterschool program, staying open until 6pm.

LESSONS LEARNED: 20+ YEARS OF CITYLIGHTS BY TED BEHR

WPC's urban ministry can inform your "Faith in Action"

As we noted in "CityLights: The Early Years," in the January 2021 Wayne Pres Newsletter, the spark that lit the lamp and fed the fire of that ministry was Carey Davis. Recently, Carey reflected further on "Lessons Learned: 20+ Years of CityLights." These invaluable insights, detailed below, are helping to inform our church's ongoing outreach partnership with The Common Place in Southwest Philadelphia. But Carey's thoughts can also provide wise counsel for each of us as we orient our own personal "Faith in Action" priorities in the coming months and years.

Her dozen guidelines to servant leadership are based on a cornucopia of activities and relationships she developed in Southwest:

- Emboldening our WPC Session to make CityLights the primary mission cause for a full three years.
- Bringing financial expertise to dozens of residents through the "Common Cents" investment club.
- Inspiring Target Inc. to support the Mitchell Elementary library with a major grant and 250 hours of work by company volunteers.
- Reviving and sustaining the Southwest's local newspaper to emphasize "Good News" about the dedicated people and positive programs there.
- Helping the city's largest men's homeless shelter with food, clothing, job skills, and outlets for them to serve their community.
- Providing an open, caring forum for individuals and organizations to share their needs, resources, and capabilities with other community-minded people.

The needs of our sisters and brothers in Southwest Philadelphia and underserved areas elsewhere differ only in

degree from our own: productive education for our children; reliable medical and behavioral healthcare for our families; adequate, affordable housing; nutritious food on the table; fulfilling, adequately compensated jobs; safe streets and playgrounds; dignity, respect and a sense of self-worth. Carey's message can help each of us discern, with God's help, where we can best contribute our time, talent, and treasure to meet these needs.

Lessons Learned in the words of Carey Davis.

For two decades, I had the honor of working with WPC members, Southwest Philadelphia leaders, and a host of volunteers from the region to develop an urban/suburban and inner-community network. Our focus was to improve the quality of life for residents of the Southwest neighborhood, but it was quickly evident to all of us that the friendships and camaraderie we shared with each other and the common commitment to "thy kingdom come on earth..." enhanced each of our lives immensely.

So what lessons does one take away from 20 years of urban ministry through urban/suburban partnership? The following are just a few:

- 1) **Begin from a place of spiritual grounded-ness** (and return there often!). CityLights was launched in 1995 when WPC was in a very solid position spiritually. Strong preaching, theologically rich music, commitments to small group bible study and to pastoral care through the emerging Stephen's Ministry, and mission-focused Christian education at every age level, all converged to provide congregation members with the foundation needed to reach beyond themselves eagerly and sacrificially.
- 2) **Commit to a focus project for a 3-year period.** As most congregations have multiple mission projects that they support in various ways, it was important to highlight the developing CL partnership as the "focus" of mission efforts and funds for a designated time frame. The three-year period allowed enough time to test the waters re: how the church was received in the community and how readily church members chose to engage. It was important that during this time frame, CL leadership found ways to link what was happening in the partnership to other mission endeavors of the church. For example, a mission trip to Kikuyu, Kenya included not only WPC members, but SW partners as well. Mission efforts were not in competition, but could complement each other.
- 3) **Maintain strong communication with church staff members and the Session.** Report quarterly to Session and have a representative attend staff meetings periodically.

Not only does this help to avoid conflicts between various program areas, but allows for every aspect of the church to be involved in the partnership in some way. Church orchestra members performed at the 58th Street Home talent shows; nursery school children collected art supplies for Myers Tots; Men's Bible Study gathered bagels from local businesses for Outley House men's shelter, or rehabbed homes through Hammers with Heart.

- 4) **Establish a community-based leadership team early on.** From the beginning stages, there was a committed team at WPC guiding the involvement of church members in SW Philadelphia. Further, we had strong relationships with community partners and interacted freely on projects that they helped to define. We did not, however, engage community leaders in strategizing to set the overall agenda of the partnership until several years in. I believe this would have helped to focus our energies on issues and tasks that were most pressing to the broader SW community.
- 5) **Make relationships, not funds the focus of the partnership.** And its corollary: give to individuals or families only through a partner organization. More than once, the church loaned a community member funds for a specific need, but the loan was not repaid, putting the church in a difficult and awkward position. Community partners often have a clearer picture of issues faced by families and are aware of resources that might address their need.
- 6) **Work closely with local churches.** While community leaders from a variety of churches were involved in CL, we had only a few churches participate in the partnership. This may have been an issue of autonomy – not wanting to be reliant on others, wanting to set their own agenda for their involvement in the community, etc. Helping to develop a strong network of congregations for prayer support, and to address the spiritual needs of the community would have been helpful. It is exciting to see the recent creation of the Salt and Light congregation in the strategic 58th and Chester location. Linking with additional churches in the community will be pivotal for deeper change.
- 7) **Build upon the existing assets of the community.** Organizations, businesses, institutions, neighborhood groups, block captains, and every resident has assets to bring to the community, whether capital, skills, expertise, connections, history, talents, or hands and feet. Be in the habit of watching for and commending assets as you see them, then inviting participation in efforts that can get everyone involved.
- 8) **Support those already paid to care for the marginalized.** Social workers, teachers, rec center leaders,

health professionals – these people entered their line of work to help others. They are often underpaid or under-resourced. Encouraging them and offering support for their endeavors can go a long way in maintaining a strong cadre of community servants on the front lines.

9) **Determine one or two areas that your congregation is particularly suited to address.** While CL touched nearly every organization in the community in some way, we developed deeper roles in the areas of education (supporting both a local public elementary school and a private Christian school with volunteers, resources, and connections), and in economic development (through the acquisition of a grant, hiring a consultant, and the development of a strategic plan for the community). These two areas were of paramount importance to both SW leaders and WPC congregation members; expertise in the church could be tapped to move projects forward. Other issues such as the police/justice system, health care, and housing might also be tackled, or better yet, partner with other churches that find those issues compelling.

10) **Take racism seriously.** Its impact is pervasive and will impact the partnership at every level, no matter how well meaning we are. Learn to talk about it openly with partners, to listen carefully, and to address concerns that are race related as they arise.

11) **Have the partnership team become trauma informed.** And help to build a coalition of organizations in the community that are trauma informed and competent. There is no issue facing the community that does not have its root in trauma, whether the chronic daily issues of poverty, racism, violence, etc. or specific incidents that people endure without support. Had I stayed with CL a few more years, this would have been my focus.

12) **Celebrate often!** Community work is hard and ongoing. Take time regularly to celebrate what has been accomplished by the partnership. Highlight people and events in local news (or start/re-start your own community paper!). Invite local officials to witness the good going on in their areas of service and seek their support for the future.



Carey Davis (right) and a typical CityLights interaction between Wayne Presbyterian members and the Southwest community. This group was a gathering in June 2014 of “First Ladies” from local SW churches. This ministry of CityLights continues today as a ministry of The Common Place with quarterly gathering for the women of SW Philadelphia called Holy Rest Mornings.

ALTERNATIVE GIFTS 2020

To my wonderful, thoughtful, understanding, GLORIOUS Wayne Presbyterian Church Family: Please allow me to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the generosity you showered upon the 2020 Alternative Gifts program. You rolled with the new online process (next year I promise we will ALSO meet in the Connector to share stories and hugs). My husband Mark worked his magic and we tried to make the forms and the process ‘doable’ for everyone and it WORKED! Thank you all SO MUCH. Checks have already been sent out to our deserving partners for \$13,865.00. Peace and hugs, The Faberes



FEBRUARY 2021
FEATURING
DR. STEVE BOYER

THURSDAY
MORNING MEN'S
MINISTRY



7:00 AM Via Zoom | Wayne Presbyterian Church
Four Thursdays this month (4th, 11th, 18th & 25th)

Dr. Boyer is Professor of Theology at Eastern University. His major area of interest is philosophical and systematic theology. He also teaches courses in contemporary Christian thought and World Religions. He is very interested in the work of C. S. Lewis; his doctoral dissertation at Boston University was on Lewis's understanding of hierarchical authority.

The Gospel in Black and White: McCaulley on Christianity and Race--In recognition of Black History Month, and also in awareness of issues we see in the news regularly, Steve will lead us in February in conversation about Esau McCaulley's influential new book, *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope* (InterVarsity Press, 2020). Is historic Christianity a helpful guide to 21st century racial issues? How can we read the Bible in a way that is faithful and also sensitive to contemporary concerns? We will try to think critically about some of the answers offered by this professor, priest, and African American Christian.

Thursday Morning Men's Ministry is an informal group of Wayne Presbyterian Church that meets (via Zoom until further notice) at 7:00 am each Thursday. It is a wonderful opportunity for relationships, prayer, and learning. The program year runs from September through June.

The morning begins with prayer & fellowship. This is followed by learning time: a 30-minute presentation typically from professors from Eastern University. We usually wrap up at 8 am, although the speakers often stay online for a while to answer questions and chat.

Are you looking to explore the world of history, bible study, astronomy, philosophy, theology, and a host of Bible-related topics? This might be just what you are looking for. The lineup of speakers will challenge your mind and fill your spirit. Zoom in for a morning or two or the entire

series. You will be glad you did.

For more information or to get on the email Zoom invite list please contact Tim Pretz at tpretz@eastern.edu or Sal Ambrosio at sambrosio55@gmail.com

A DEEP DIVE INTO THE GOSPEL OF MARK

This spring, Adult Education will offer a semester-long exploration of the Gospel of Mark, taught by Eastern University Professor Joe Modica. Class will begin Sunday, January 24 at 9:30 am.

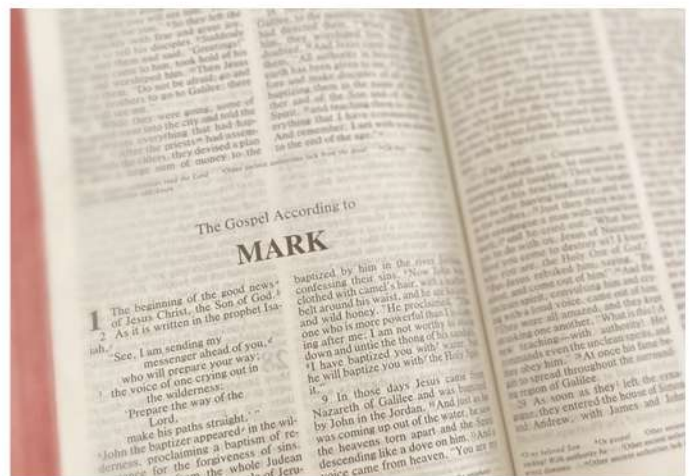
Per Professor Modica, the presumed author of the gospel – John Mark – was not one of Jesus's original disciples. Mark's gospel is also considered to be the earliest written gospel with the Apostle Peter's influence noticeably apparent. The early church father Papias (d. 130 CE) notes that Mark wrote the gospel in Rome while recording Peter's preaching. It should be an interesting and interactive study.

The text for the course will be *The Gospel According to Mark* (New Collegeville Bible Commentary series) by Marie Noonan Sabin.

Here is the link to buy it on Amazon:

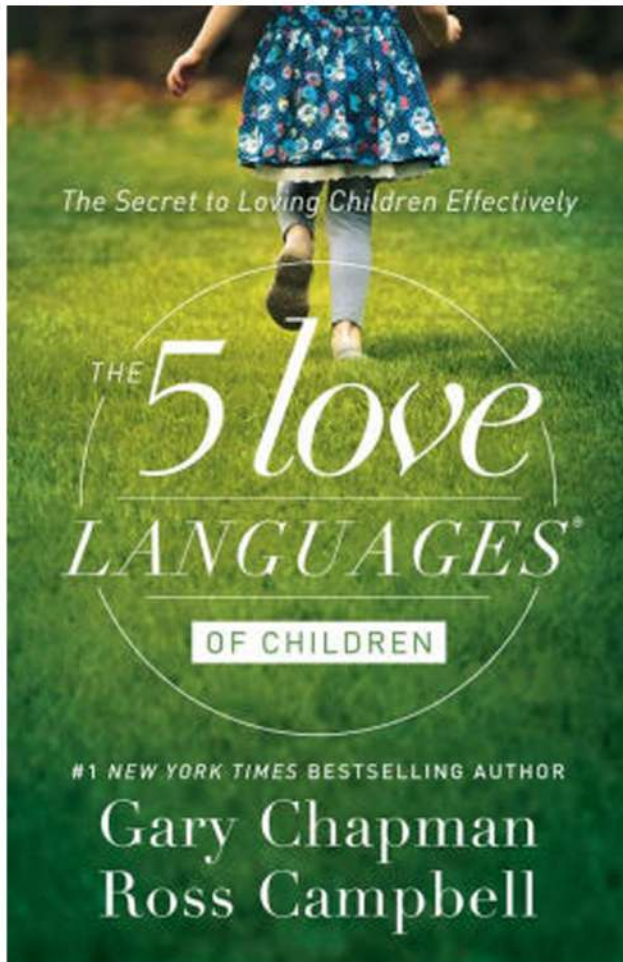
https://www.amazon.com/Gospel-According-Collegeville-Bible-Commentary/dp/0814628613/ref=sr_1_1?crid=33PPSDNRR5X7T&dchild=1&keywords=marie+noonan+sabin&qid=1610493446&s_prefix=marie+noon%2Caps%2C138&sr=8-1

If you participated in last semester's Isaiah class, the Zoom link will be sent to you. To register for the class, please contact Todd Cameron at wtoddcameron@gmail.com



MOM'S GROUP

The MOMs group is finding ways to stay connected and support each other even when we can't physically be together. The group is currently working through Gary Chapman's *The 5 Love Languages of Children*. We meet for a time of catch-up and discussion on Zoom every Thursday at 4pm. Everyone is welcome whether you have read the chapter being discussed or not and it is never too late to join in! Books are available in the church vestibule. If you would prefer a more casual time of conversation and fellowship, please consider joining one or both of the weekly check-ins. These Zoom gatherings are held Monday and Friday mornings at 9:15am. Please contact Debbie Rothkopf at debbierothkopf@aol.com if you are interested in learning more.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Virtual Sunday school on the Parables is great fun.

Up next will be a 4 week unit on Holy Week beginning on February 14th.

Watch for details of a special Virtual family event to be held on Palm Sunday afternoon, March 28th.



LIFE EVENTS

Weddings

We celebrate the weddings of...

Andrew Born & Kaitlyn O'Hara
December 23, 2020

Deaths

We give thanks for the life and the ministry of...

Robert Donecker
October 23, 2020

Martha Kistler
December 17, 2020

Ray Mangold
December 17, 2020

Nancy Roberts
December 20, 2020

Bill Monroe
December 21, 2020



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