

The Westend Window

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Because of the LORD's great
love we are not consumed, for
his compassions never fail.
They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
— Lamentations 3:22-23



WESTEND
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

MISSION STATEMENT OF WESTEND

Grateful for God's amazing gifts, we:
gather for joyful worship of God,
give ourselves in loving service,
grow in faith and love,
guide people to Jesus Christ.



Talking Donkeys and Prophetic Promises

- Pastor Kory

A few days ago Lauren asked what my next sermon series would be covering. When I told her we would be spending six Sundays looking at the story of Balaam in Numbers, she was a bit surprised: "Man beats donkey. Donkey tells him to stop. End of story, right?"

Well, that's part of the story, but it's not all. The story of Balaam and his talking donkey is only a brief episode in the middle of a longer story. Balaam is called upon by Balak, king of Moab, to curse God's people. Balaam's journey, his repeated prophetic promises about God's people, and the aftermath of his time among the Israelites lasts four full chapters. Balaam is going to show up again in Revelation 2 - and not in a positive light! If we read the book of Numbers from beginning to end, it feels a bit like an accordion - it covers significant ground - both in distance and time, then zooms in to narrow minutiae - census data, for instance - zooms out again to cover broad distance or time, and then zooms in once again to focus on a smaller episode. The four chapters of Balaam, Balak, and the Israelites is more than 10% of the book of Numbers, one of the largest sub-units in the entire book.

As we turn into the new year, my hope and prayer is that we will find the story of Balaam to be relevant in unexpected ways. We will find that it is the story of a wise man who travels a great distance from the east and declares the greatness of God, fitting for the time in the life of the church when we remember the visit of the Magi and the truth that the birth of Jesus is good news of great joy for all people. We will find that the story of Balaam celebrates God's covenant faithfulness in profound ways - a helpful reminder at the start of the new year (especially after a year that has been as strange and challenging as 2020). We will find an invitation to examine our hearts and our motivations, to wonder what it is that drives us and how our actions reflect the grace and love of Jesus Christ. We will also find that Balaam's place in the story of Scripture as a whole serves as a warning against temptation and the ways that we can be led to choose paths that are less than healthy - something other than the new creation that God is calling and making us to be.

In other words, these four chapters on Balaam are, indeed, much more than just a talking donkey. I am excited to explore this story together in the new year and to find how God continues to speak to us like He used a donkey to speak to Balaam.



Kids' Hope Update

- Sue Mellema

Thank you so much to all who claimed a gift tag and purchased a gift for children in need in our community! We were able to bless 32 children with 3 gifts each: something they want, something they need, and a book.

Although this year looked different, as we delivered gifts to each family the one thing that stayed the same was how thankful the families were to receive these gifts! Although you did not get to hear the "thank you" - we want you to know you have been a blessing to so many people this Christmas season! This is exactly what being a part of the family of God means.

WE Bless has definitely blessed again this Christmas season!



We Do, God Helping Us!

"Looking Back and Looking Ahead"

The end of the holiday season after Thanksgiving and Christmas brings reminders of the reason for the season---JESUS! Jesus continues to give us love, joy, peace, comfort and hope at the end of a "crazy" 2020 year and looking toward the new 2021 year.

Looking back, the CEMC (Christian Education Ministry Committee) praises God for His continued faithfulness through the Westend congregation who generously gave toward tuition assistance and participated in our fund-raising activities.

The year was "crazy" to navigate for all of us personally and for the work of the CEMC. As we trusted God for His help, the work of the CEMC moved forward. Sometimes work was conducted through emails and other times we met in the backyard of the church office.

We were able to hold two fund-raisers. Thank you to all who participated in the Crazy Faith Acts of Kindness and to those who sponsored the fund-raiser. It was a fun way to connect with our neighbors and church members during late summer and early fall. Then late this fall, we appreciated all those who purchased burritos in this tasty way to earn additional funds for tuition assistance.

God has blessed us even in this crazy year! Since the start of our fiscal year in April, 2020, gifts of \$66,094 toward our goal of \$71,770 have been received to date. These gifts came from collections, individual gifts, and our fund-raisers. To date, \$36,385 has been paid out to the six Christian Schools (Allendale, Calvin, Grand Rapids, Hudsonville, West Side and Zeeland) to assist 18 families with 34 students from Westend Church. The balance of the \$71,770 goal will be paid out between January and March, 2021.

Looking ahead, we know that God will continue to be faithful in 2021. We don't know the future but we know that God holds the future. We ask for your continued prayers and financial support as we work towards raising the final \$6,000 to meet our goal by March 30, 2021.

We will also be planning ahead for the 2021-2022 school year. In February and March, parents will already be asked to consider their plans for the fall. The CEMC will be looking at possible fund-raisers for the next fiscal year of April, 2021- March, 2022. If you have any ideas for fund-raisers, please let us know. We are always looking for new ideas!

The committee's theme verse from Proverbs 22:6, "***Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it***", helps drive our committee with a spiritual vision to offer families of Westend Church the opportunity for tuition assistance. We are excited to have children in a Christian school setting as an extension of the Biblical instruction given in their homes and our church.

Thank you again for your prayers and financial support! Have a blessed New Year!

Christian Education Ministry Committee,

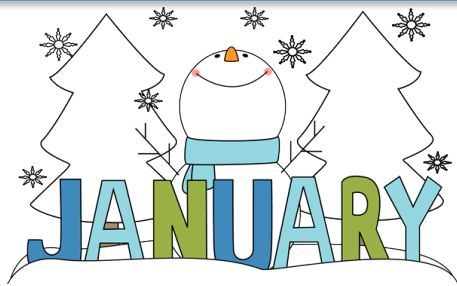
Co-Chairs: June Atsma and Vern Groenendyk

Deacon Liaison: Mary Ouwinga

Ad Board Liaison: Doug Stapely

Members: Judy Goote, Jamie Mata, Joan Miller, Dick Myers, Dave Offringa,

Jane VandePol, Kathy Verhey, and Teresa Wyngarden



birthdays

- 2 Wendy Burghraef
- Tres DeRuischer
- Quinnley Marsh
- 4 Natalie Deppe
- Todd Langeland
- 6 Michael Brecker
- Grace Cremer
- Zaida Viveros
- 7 Natalie Veltema
- 9 Rob Milanowski
- 10 Staci Carroll
- Isaac Davies
- Ron Griffin
- 13 Rick VanDam
- Kimi Vreeke
- 14 Jackie Baker
- Alec Mulder
- 15 Karen Hop
- 16 Jan Byle
- 18 Ben Cleveland
- Pam Johnson
- 20 Kelly Johnson
- Philip Miller
- 21 Joe Betten
- Bernice Kroeze
- Levi Offringa
- Stephanie Smith
- Chris Woy
- 22 April Myles
- 23 Dee Dee Johnson
- Carl Kaufman
- 24 Gerie Breen
- Renz Verbeek
- 26 Marcia Cappendyk
- Elma Curnow
- Dave Horstman
- 27 Buss Kunst
- 28 Deb Hudson
- 29 Nichole Quigley
- 30 Stephanie Payton
- 31 Zachary Payton
- Ruth Vanderwilp



Schedules for January & February

Sermon Schedule

- Jan 3 Only as the Lord Commands Me
Numbers 22:1-20
- Jan 10 A Talking Donkey
Numbers 22: 21-41
- Jan 17 See What the Lord Has Done
Numbers 23:1-26
- Jan 24 How Beautiful!
Numbers 23:37 - 24:14
- Jan 31 The Nation-Ruling Star
Numbers 24:10-25
-
- Feb 7 The Adulterous Nation
Numbers 25
- Feb 14
- Feb 17 Snakes and Vipers
Matthew 23:33-36
- Feb 21 Slamming The Door in God's Face
Matthew 23:13
- Feb 28 Reproducing Our Faults
Matthew 23:15



Feeding America

We don't yet have our Community Dinners, but we have monthly Feeding America distributions on Wednesday evenings at 5:00 on the following dates:

January 20
February 3
March 3
April 14
May 12





We were also asked if our parking lot could be used for additional food hand-outs that were normally held at Union High School. Union has ongoing construction, which makes their site unavailable for now. These are all Tuesday evenings, with a 4:30 distribution:

March 30
June 8
November 23

Collection Schedule

- Jan 3 Ministries & Faith Promise
- Jan 10 Ministries & Christian Education
- Jan 17 Ministries & Benevolence
- Jan 24 Ministries & Hope Unexpected
- Jan 31 Ministries & Feeding America Truck
-
- Feb 7 Ministries & Faith Promise
- Feb 14 Ministries & Christian Education
- Feb 21 Ministries & Access
- Feb 28 Ministries & Benevolence

January 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 	2
3 9:40 AM Morning Worship	4	5 6:30 PM Divorce Care	6 6:30 AM Men's Bible Study 8:00 AM Men's Life-New Beg 	7	8	9
10 9:40 AM Morning Worship 6:00 PM Study w/ D Kroeze	11 7:00 PM Ad Board	12 6:30 PM Divorce Care 7:00 PM Men's Group	13 6:30 AM Men's Bible Study 8:00 AM Men's Life-New Beg	14	15	16
17 9:40 AM Morning Worship	18 	19	20 6:30 AM Men's Bible Study 8:00 AM Men's Life-New Beg 5:00 PM Feeding America 	21	22	23
24 / 31 9:40 AM Morning Worship	25	26 7:00 PM Men's Group	27	28	29	30