



To invite people into

God's larger story as we

follow Christ together

Phone: 512.327.1116 | Fax: 512.328.4238 | Email: whpc@whpc.org | whpc.org

JANUARY 2011 ISSUE

Midweek Moment Resumes on January 12

On hiatus since November, Midweek Moment will resume on January 12. Sponsored by the Discipleship Division, Midweek Moment has been a Wednesday night time of fellowship, community and discipleship in the life of Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church for the past 25 years. Families gather for dinner, children attend handbells, choir rehearsal and classes, Middle School students meet for JAM, adult Bible studies and support groups convene, the adult choir rehearses – and our community grows together in study, fellowship, and fun. Sundays are a joyous occasion of worshipping God together. Wednesdays are about coming together as a family of faith to enjoy one

another's company, learn more about the Bible, and grow together as we journey through our often hectic and busy modern lives.

One of the foundations of the Christian life is growing together in community with one another. There is no better way to do this than to set aside an evening each week to break bread together with our brothers and sisters in Christ, to study the Word, to have a shoulder to cry on, to share a laugh, and to enjoy the company of our fellow WHPC family members.

Childcare and dinner is offered for all who are involved in classes, rehearsals or groups meeting on Wednesday nights.

Registration for Children Participating in MidWeek Moment begins January 2. Forms are available downstairs. This Spring, the children in Kindergarten - 5th grade will be studying *Heroes of the Bible*.

Weekly cost for Dinner:

3 yrs - 5th grade: \$3 (or semester card for \$40)
6th Grade - Adults: \$5



The Spring 2011 Midweek Moment offerings and schedule is:

- 4:30 – 5:15 p.m. Children's Handbell Rehearsal (grades 3 – 5)
- 5:15 – 6:15 p.m. Children's Choir Rehearsal (grades K – 5)
- 5:45 – 6:45 p.m. Midweek Moment Dinner is served
- 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. JAM (Middle School)
- 6:15 – 7:45 p.m. Midweek Moment for Women - Facilitated by Jane Knudsen and Susan Whiteside
Jonah, Navigating a Life Interrupted by Priscilla Shirer
(6 week study)

Dive into the study of Jonah and discover that what you may experience as interruptions may truly be God's divine invitation to a life so much bigger than you can imagine.

One in a Million, Journey to Your Promised Land by Priscilla Shirer (6 week study)

If you hunger to experience His power, hear His voice, and live in the abundance promised to you, then this study is for you.

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WESTLAKE HILLS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Senior Pastor

Dr. Peter Barnes

Associate Pastor

Dr. Carol Friesen

Associate Pastor

Rev. Peter Haas

Interim Associate Pastor for Discipleship

Dr. Jim Bankhead

Director of Music

Emily Craven

Organist

Paul Keith

Director of Women's Ministry

Kathryn Weldin

Director of High School Ministry

Doug Congdon

Director of Middle School Ministry

Kyle Bender

Director of Local & Regional Missions

Mark Charbonneau

Director of Children's Ministry

Cindy Gangstad

Assistant Director of Children's Ministry

Lisa Ruth Pullen

Sunday School Preschool Coordinator

Judy Crochet

Director of Support Services

Bud Reynolds

Director of Communications

Nancy Gray

Financial Administrator

Anita Maxwell

Facilities Manager

Kyle Key

Librarian

Peggy Greenawalt

Preschool Director

Susan Bright

The Echo

Nancy Gray, Editor
Travis Hardy, Design

It seems to me ...

by Dr. Peter Barnes



I have always been impressed with how people in the Bible planned strategically as they sought to carry out the mission of God:

- Moses appointed officials over the people of Israel and had them serve as judges.
- David planned and provided for the building of the temple and left everything needed for Solomon to complete the task.
- Nehemiah made careful preparation and plans for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in order to restore security and self-esteem to the people of Israel after the Babylonian captivity.
- As the time approached for Jesus to complete his mission, he set his face like a flint toward Jerusalem. It was as if Christ had orchestrated the events of his final days on earth in order to accomplish God's divine plan.
- The apostle Paul developed a missionary strategy of proclaiming the gospel and establishing churches in centers of commerce from which believers could take the gospel to outlying villages.

Throughout biblical history godly people have been strategic planners. Prayerful and thoughtful analysis and preparation are the keys in designing for success in the work of God. The **five phases** of effective planning include: (1) **analysis**, which asks, "Where are we?" (2) **vision**, which asks, "Where are we going?" (3) **planning**, which asks, "How are we going to get there?" (4) **funding**, which asks, "How are we going to pay for it?" and (5) **implementation**, which asks, "How are we doing?"

The purpose of strategic planning is to create a set of priorities that enable us to act courageously and responsibly today to advance toward the future with a greater expression of God's work in the world. It is an intentional effort to see the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to discern the will of God as we move into the future.

My experience as a preacher is that the Holy Spirit often moves just as well in the quiet of my study as he does in the pulpit, and there is no substitute for good planning and preparation. As Solomon once wrote, "*Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint*" (Prov. 29:18).

On November 28th, the Session of our church voted to approve a Strategic Plan which will guide the leadership of our church for the next five years. You can read about that in an article Ray Mashburn, who served as chair of the Next Steps Task Force which produced the report and recommendations for Session to consider, wrote about the plan.

I'm excited about this new vision we believe God has given us for WHPC, and I'm excited about the tool the plan will be for our officers and staff as we live into the future God has planned for us. Please join me in prayer as we seek to implement the recommendations and the strategic initiatives Session adopted. It will take all of us to make this dream become a reality.

The Spring 2011 Midweek Moment offerings and schedule (continued):

- 6:15 – 7:30 p.m.** Children's Midweek Moment Dinner & Classes (grades K - 5)
- 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.** Discover Your Spiritual Gifts, Personal Style and God-Given Passion for Serving – Taught by Carol Friesen
- 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.** *Basics of Growth in Christ*, taught by Jim Bankhead
This class will encourage you to study scripture for yourself and to interact on what you will discover in your study. The class is for 3 levels of participants:
1. For those who will lead others in using this method.
 2. For those who want to do the homework
 3. For those who want to just participate in the class
- All are welcome!
- 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.** *Divorce Care* – Facilitated by Kerry and Diane Pollard.
A support group for people who are separated or divorced.
- 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.** *Grief Share* (meets the first Wednesday of the month only)
Facilitated by Susan Reynolds.
A support group for those who are grieving and in need of personal support.
- 6:45 – 8:15 p.m.** Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Ongoing - Adults)

Coming on February 9: Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University will be held from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. The class will run for 13 weeks. Also coming in February: A couples marriage class. Stay tuned for more details!

Cooking Teams Forming Now!

Do you like to work in the kitchen or help with dinner preparations? Contact Cindy Gangstad to join a team of volunteers to prep and cook the weekly meal for Midweek Moment. If you have a favorite dish you would like to help prep, contact Cindy soon at cindyg@whpc.org or visit the bulletin board sign-up downstairs.

Five Year Strategic Plan Approved

by Ray Mashburn

In November the WHPC Session approved a plan which will serve to guide our programs and ministries for the next five years. Earlier this year Session commissioned a Next Steps Task Force to study what WHPC is uniquely called to do, how can we better align our ministries and staff to accomplish our mission, and to identify the steps in the next 3-5 years that God wants us to take. The Next Steps Task Force consisted of nine members – three elders, three staff and three from the congregation at large.

The Task Force looked at what we do well and where we might improve. We examined other churches in the same vein to see how their experiences might guide us as we strive to do God's will. Following are Guiding Principles which were identified:

1. We need to increase our relational focus and measure each program and ministry against how it helps deepen our relationships with God, others, our neighbors and the world;
2. We need to maintain our missional emphasis, to be inwardly strong, but outwardly focused; and
3. We have to prune and sharpen what we do and seek to do a few things well rather than a lot of things poorly.

It was determined early in our process that our current Vision and Mission Statements serve us well and require no revisions. However, the group recommended several initiatives to help us live more intentionally into and out of the mission and vision of our church. With that in mind, the task force recommended, and Session approved, the Strategic Initiatives below.

1. Establish a Clear Path of Discipleship and Engagement for members of our church by:
 - a) Enhancing our Small Groups ministry and creating a greater culture of invitation, nurture and community;
 - b) Transforming the New Member class to be more of a relationally-driven one while still communicating important information;

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- c) Launching a new member involvement initiative by which members can identify their spiritual gifts, personal working style and passion for ministry; and
 - d) Creating new access points into the life of our church, to engage those who are on the sideline.
2. In the next 3-5 years, explore the creation of an alternative service at a time other than Sunday morning to better accommodate those whose schedules are not conducive to Sunday morning worship and perhaps a different worship format than we currently offer.
 3. Explore new ways to address some much needed maintenance, repair and replacement to our facility and vehicles and re-establish appropriate reserves to provide a sound footing to our finances.

Session has directed that an Implementation Team be established to ensure that these initiatives are undertaken and that we monitor progress. That action is now underway.

Let's be in prayer for this new strategic plan and for our officers and staff as they put into motion the various plans to make this vision become a reality. If you have any questions about the new plan, contact an elder or a pastor who can give you more details.



Christmas Service Update

As we spend the Advent Season celebrating and worshipping the Incarnation of Christ, we have built a tradition of service. Thank you for continuing this tradition in a powerful and beautiful way. Here is a collection of what our faith community can do as we came together to serve others in our city and around the world during the Christmas Season:

Operation Christmas Child: On Monday, Dec. 13th, 257 boxes were mailed from WHPC to serve with Operation Christmas Child. These boxes are traveling all over the world sharing gifts and the Good News of Jesus.

Angel Tree: In only two weeks, our entire list of Angel Tree recipients were claimed. 133 children in the Austin area will be met face to face by members of our church community as we desire to extend love from an incarcerated parent and from God. Our thanks to Ashley Allemann and the Journey Sunday School class for leading this effort for our faith community.

Record Sales with Manos: Adding \$1,000 to our order from last year, WHPC raised \$2,436 for our mission partner, Manos de Cristo through the Tamale Sale. Not only does this money go to a good cause, but many in our church also receive the gift of delicious tamales!

Matthew's Market at WHPC: This year, we had sixteen ministries and organizations take part in our Christmas bazaar, Matthew's Market. On this single-day event, we were able to raise \$13,570, beating our all time record of \$9775 from last year! Thank you all for your support and partnership with this event and these mission partners.



Plus, our Christmas Offering: We took in our offering on Christmas Eve to lift up chronically homeless individuals in Austin through Mobile Loaves and Fishes' Community First! program. These individuals receive trailer homes that are home-ready in a community setting that Mobile Loaves and coordinates. Also, 10% of the money raised is going to be given to Empact Africa to help fight the AIDS pandemic in Sub-Saharan Africa. We look forward to sharing the total amount raised soon.

May God continue to grow our compassion for our brothers and sisters in need as we seek to follow Christ into the world.



A Listening Ear During Tough Times

By Susan Whiteside

As I sat in the pew and watched the video, the face of the woman who said she had been meeting with her Stephen Minister over the past two years wasn't shown, but I could hear her words. They touched my heart deeply. *"The most meaningful aspect of this relationship for me is that when I'm going through something as difficult as I am, there are times that it's hard to feel that I'm very close to God. Having a Stephen Minister by my side consistently, continually, she represents the presence of God to me, and that's very profound,"* she said.

We all go through difficult times in our lives. I believe that God doesn't want us to have to walk the path alone, and that He often sends people to walk with us. They come in varying forms, and one of those forms is as a Stephen Minister.

Stephen Ministry is an inter-denominational program designed to equip lay persons to provide emotional and spiritual support during life's challenges, such as divorce, major illness, loss of a loved one, retirement, relocation, and many other situations. Stephen Ministers are men and women trained to listen without offering unwanted advice. They listen patiently, without judging, and can assist people in identifying feelings they are experiencing. These volunteer lay people have completed extensive training and participate in continuing education. When appropriate, a Stephen Minister can help people explore other resources that are available to them.

"I have great friends and I have a wonderful family, but there is something about the Stephen Ministry relationship that's different. It's not counseling, it's not someone giving advice, it's not preachy...it's just a very powerful presence."

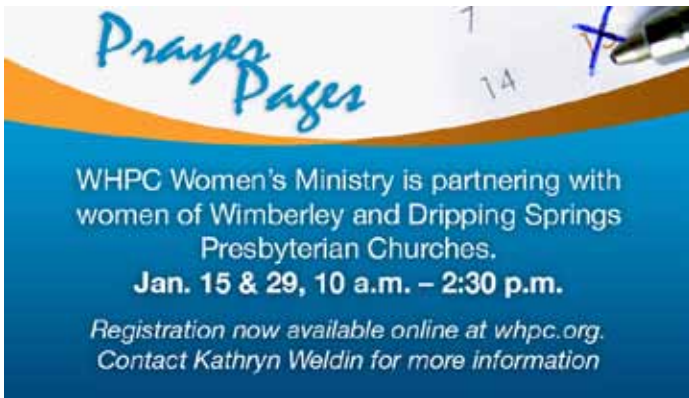
If you or someone you know is experiencing a difficult time, you are invited to talk with Pastor Carol Friesen or one of the Stephen Leaders. (Watch for their blue nametags on Sunday mornings.) They are prepared to explain Stephen Ministry and answer questions you may have. Stephen Ministry is available on a confidential basis to anyone – not just to members of WHPC. More information about this ministry and contact information for the Stephen Leaders can be found on the WHPC website at whpc.org/whpc/caring_ministries.

CARING MINISTRIES

GRIEFSHARE Meets on the first Wednesday of each month.

DIVORCE Care (Wednesday groups meet as part of MidWeek Moment, resumes on January 12)
For more information, contact Peter Haas, peterh@whpc.org.

Job Support Group Meets on Mondays (ongoing)



Living Beyond Our Walls

Prayer Pages Women's Ministry Offering

By Kathryn Weldin, Director of Women's Ministries

The Women's Ministry seeks to serve the women of WHPC and surrounding communities by providing opportunities to glorify God through worship, study, service, and fellowship, while celebrating who we are as women in Christ. But perhaps the most important aspect of our Christian life through studying God's Word, is seeking to live in relationship with Him through an understanding of His most intimate form of communication with us – *Prayer*.

The Prayer Pages ministry offering birthed from a desire to help women both develop and *put into practice* this understanding of relational time with Him. By offering women the opportunity to create a personalized prayer journal and teaching on various components of prayer, women join together in fellowship as they learn and share in this process.

Since our first Prayer Pages offering in February 2008 beginning here at WHPC, the Women's Ministry has held 8 different 6-week sessions, both during the week in the daytime and evenings. With this momentum, it soon became clear to the team to consider what God might have planned for us as we lived out our church vision statement to "...be a Christ-centered community of faith that intentionally nurtures relationships with God, one another, our neighbors and the world."

In that effort, we reached beyond the walls of WHPC and offered 2 separate sessions held over 2 Saturdays at

Children's Ministry News: Third Graders' Bibles

Do you have a third grader? Email Cindy Gangstad at cindyg@whpc.org to register your child to receive a Bible on January 16 at either the 9:30 or 11 a.m. service. Please indicate the way you wish your child's name to appear inside the Bible. Time is quickly approaching and we need to give our calligrapher time to print each child's name. All third grade parents are encouraged to attend Sunday School with their third grader on January 9 at either 9:30 or 11 a.m. The children will be instructed on how to use their new Bible. The adults will be given an opportunity to write special notes to their child. Please let Cindy know which service you wish to attend on January 16.

God and Me Class

Our next God and Me class for first through third graders will meet on Wednesdays from February 2 - March 9 during MidWeek Moment. The class, taught by Vicki Jessich, is open to all children, not just Scouts. Parents attend the class with their child. Registration will be limited to 8 children. To register contact Vicki Jessich at Jessich@hotmail.com.

Wimberley Presbyterian Church. Women from over 7 different churches were represented! It is indeed amazing to see how God continues to bless this ministry offering calling us to keep our hearts open and our eyes set on where He leads us!

For our next 2-Saturday session we are once again *Living Beyond Our Walls* and now reaching out to the women of Dripping Springs Presbyterian Church! They have graciously agreed to host our next offering and WHPC will be co-hosting with a team from Wimberley Presbyterian Church. We will also be extending this invitation to women of other area churches as well as encouraging women to invite their friends and neighbors. Please join us for our next:

Prayer Pages Offering - Held over 2 Saturdays

January 15 & 29

10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

At Dripping Springs Presbyterian Church

Childcare is available with registration

For more information or to register, please refer to our website, whpc.org/whpc/women

For questions, contact Teresa Ward, teresaw@whpc.org

...If you want to hear more, please also join us for an intimate evening designed to build friendships and to hear personal stories from women through their prayer and journaling experiences:



A Winter's Fireside Gathering

Thursday, January 13, 7 - 8:45 p.m., Parlor

Our theme is

Prayer Through The Wonderful Exchange

We will also explore our understanding of Jesus Christ as our High Priest who leads us in our praises and prayers. *Hebrews 4:14-16*

Register online or contact [Kathryn Weldin](mailto:Kathryn.Weldin@whpc.org), 327.1116, x135.

Together! At Mo-Ranch **All Church Retreat**

April 1-3, 2011

If you have never been to an All Church Retreat at Mo-Ranch, we hope you join us this year! Due to Easter, our All Church Retreat is happening a little earlier this year, so mark your calendars for April 1-3 and be sure to register on-line beginning Sunday, January 9 at 3 p.m.

Mo Ranch has been described as the best Presbyterian Church camp in all of America. It is a wonderful place to meet together with old church friends and make new ones. Many think the All Church Retreat is one of the best ways to build meaningful Christian community and friendships in a relaxed, fun setting for all ages! There are activities for almost any age and for any person. We worship together, we play together, we swim together, we laugh together, we dine together!

We believe you and your family will find Mo Ranch to be a very special and memorable weekend. Of special note, this year we will have the privilege to hear Rev. Jim Candy as our guest speaker. Jim is an engaging and powerful Biblical teacher who brings truth to life. He is an associate pastor at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church serving with John Ortberg.

Let's meet together at MoRanch April 1-3! It's a chance to slow down to the pace of the hill country. We bring swimsuits and jackets. We fish, we canoe, we read, we listen and we learn. We look forward to being Together! Visit www.allchurchretreat.com to register or learn more.

Middle School Girls – On a Mission

The mission of the South Austin Pregnancy Resource Center (SAPRC) is to change as well as save lives in Jesus' name by sharing positive solutions to issues surrounding unplanned pregnancy. The vision of the SAPRC is to build meaningful relationships with women and families facing an unplanned pregnancy while providing for both their physical and spiritual needs.

All of the services of the South Austin PRC are provided free of charge and include sonograms, pregnancy tests, counseling, diapers, baby clothing and baby food, formula, and other services. Trained volunteers will also openly share

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the Good News of Jesus Christ at every opportunity. The SAPRC is funded 100% by gracious donations.

The SAPRC needs volunteers to join us on our mission to serve the pregnant women and mothers of south Austin. The staff's desire is to offer assistance in a low pressure environment. The resource center is staffed by trained, volunteer client advocates who offer direction and support for women of all ages who are facing an unplanned pregnancy and for new mothers needing assistance in parenting. The center strives to encourage, to affirm dignity and self-worth, and to suggest positive alternatives for individual situations and needs. Every client situation is handled with strict confidentiality. At the South Austin Pregnancy Resource Center, there is love, acceptance and support.



Last month the WHPC middle school girls worked on a mission project for new moms and babies for the SAPRC. Our middle school girls created new baby bags filled with precious gifts, prayers and sweet notes for the moms-to-be who are clients of the SAPRC.

Recently this group of dedicated young Christian girls came to visit the SAPRC for a tour, to learn more and pray for the young women who come as clients. They met the Executive Director of the non-profit agency, Lore Cottone, who answered questions and concluded the tour with prayer. (www.SAPRC.org)

Focus is Coming!

Mark your calendars for the annual student ministries Focus weekend to be held on February 25 - 27. The weekend-long retreat is open to both middle school and high school students. Activities include rallies led by a guest speaker and guest worship band, service projects, and a fun event on the town. Volunteer WHPC families house the students each night according to gender and grade. Cost is \$75 if registered by January 24, or \$100 if registered later. Registration deadline is February 16. Register online at whpc.org, or contact Melissa Carter, melissac@whpc.org, to register.



**New
Member
Class**

January 9 & 16
In the Fellowship Hall

12:30 – 3 p.m.
Lunch will be served

*Contact Barbara Phillips, barbarap@whpc.org,
for more information and to register*