

THE THREAD



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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

OCTOBER

“UPDATE ON THE CHURCH CONSULTANT”

By

Rev. Bernard Nti

I am writing to update you on my relationship with Rev. Dr. Graham Standish, the experiences and benefits I have gained from this relationship, as well as my plans for continued leadership development in the future.

Dr. Standish and I dedicated significant time exploring the concept of collaboration. The reason is simple: in a healthy church organization, collaboration is essential for growth, development, and achieving meaningful goals.

When navigating a complex church organization like ours, with its diverse participants, collaboration doesn't need to be tightly controlled to be effective, as is sometimes thought. Instead, we need an unconventional approach to collaboration, where all ideas are valued and space is made for different perspectives and possibilities. This involves encouraging everyone to focus on collective goals, embracing connection—even conflict—that fulfills the message of Christ, and sharing ideas and talents in a culture where each person is appreciated and valued.

This does not mean an absence of criticism but rather constructive feedback, thoughtfully given and spiced with love.

As written by Paul in Colossians 4:6, “Let your speech *be* with grace, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”

The result of this approach is a healthier church organization where every hand, foot, and voice contributes to the larger mission of building God's kingdom here at WPC. A key advantage of this collaborative method is the ability to work alongside those who may not always agree, fostering unity in diversity.

Some of the books that were helpful during my time with Dr. Standish include *Leader Shift* by John C. Maxwell and *Resonant Leadership* by Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee.

On his advice, I established a pastoral support team to provide me with a space to share my challenges, hopes, and areas where I need help. The team was also tasked with offering me constructive feedback in support of God's mission here at WPC. This team has been meeting ever since, and their work will continue.

My relationship with Dr. Graham has now transitioned into a new phase, and we have mutually agreed to conclude our current collaboration. I am now shifting from a leadership coaching focus to a broader leadership development approach, which will include all the leadership at WPC. This education and training will be provided by LeaderWise.

LeaderWise is a consulting firm whose mission is to foster spirit-filled leaders for lives of service. They empower leaders to lead with purpose, passion, and integrity. They believe that healthy leaders are the key to creating healthy organizations and are committed to improving the well-being and effectiveness of leaders in all organizations, with a special focus on mission-driven organizations, like nonprofits and faith communities, which share a commitment to a greater purpose.

This training will start on October 16th with a Healthy Boundaries and Ethics training, a recommendation in the Presbyterian Book of Order for all presbyteries and churches to make available for their leaders.

Additionally, I will be attending a LeaderWise retreat called *The Shape of Leadership*. This retreat is designed for clergy seeking to renew their leadership and enhance their abilities to significantly impact the future of their faith communities.

Friends, I am committed to my ordination vows, which include promoting the peace, unity, and purity of the church; proclaiming the good news in Word and Sacrament; teaching the faith; caring for people; actively participating in the governance and administration of the church; serving in the councils of the church; and striving to reflect the love and justice of Jesus Christ.

A wise African proverb says "He who makes a path does not know if it is crooked." Hence, to anyone I may have wronged through my actions or inactions, I sincerely apologize and extend an offer of peace and reconciliation. My door is always open to listen, understand, and address your concerns and make amends.

Now is the time to move forward! Let's go and share the Kingdom of God with the lost.

Together, let us make WPC the best church that it can be.



SAMARITAN
Counseling
Guidance • Consulting

Offering Hope and Healing

202 Beaver St., 3rd Fl., Sewickley, PA 15143

September 7, 2024

Westmont Presbyterian Church Session
Redstone Presbytery Committee on Ministry
The Rev. Benard Nti

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The Rev. Dr. Graham Standish,
PhD, MSW, MA, MDiv
Executive Director

Our Purpose

*For those who silently suffer
with emotional, relational, or
spiritual pain, we offer
compassionate care that helps
them heal, gives them hope,
and allows them to change.*

Office Locations

Beaver
Butler
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Upper St. Clair
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Dear Westmont Session, Redstone COM, Rev. Nti:

Over the course of the past month, I've been reflecting on my work with Rev. Nti, Westmont's session, and Redstone Presbytery's Committee on Ministry. Our work has attempted to nurture reconciliation between parties within the church who are in conflict with each other. I've been working as a coach with Rev. Nti to consider alternative ways of addressing the conflict, as a guide to Westmont's session to pursue a process that would allow the group that has become the Faithful Remnant to find a way to reconcile, and in concert with the Redstone Presbytery COM to enable them to be a healing party to the process.

Assessing our work in light of recent events, and through discussions with members of Redstone's COM and Rev. Nti, it's become apparent to me that the approach we're taking will not lead to the reconciliation we seek. This is disappointing to me as someone whose whole vocation and work has been to be a healing influence with individuals, groups, and congregations.

At this point I believe the best course of action is for the Westmont Presbyterian Church session to be in the forefront of efforts to deal with the issues based on its perspectives and role as leaders of the church. It is important for the elders to prayerfully seek God's will in prayer to adopt a course of action that it believes will be the best for the future of the Westmont congregation.

I have agreed with Rev. Nti to potentially be available for future coaching with him, but that this work should be based on his desire to seek coaching. Also, I am happy to talk with individual parties about my decision, but with the caveat that I will not disclose confidential information to one party regarding another.

My prayers are with you all. I do believe God has an answer to this situation. Unfortunately, I prayerfully sense that I am not called to be part of that answer.

Blessings to all of you,

The Rev. N. Graham Standish, Ph.D., M.S.W., M.A., M.Div.
Executive Director
gstandish@samaritancounseling.net

**LECTIONARY CALENDAR
OCTOBER 2024**

1. October 6th 2024
20th Sunday after Pentecost
World Communion Sunday
Psalm 8, Mark 10: 13 - 16

2. October 13th, 2024
21st Sunday after Pentecost
Minute for Mission by Safety Committee
Psalm 90: 12 - 17, Mark 10: 17 - 31

3. October 20th, 2024
22nd Sunday after Pentecost
Congregational Meeting
Psalm 91: 9 - 16, Mark 10: 35 - 45

4. October 27th, 2024
23rd Sunday after Pentecost
Reformation Sunday
Psalm 34: 1 - 8, Mark 10: 46 - 52

HEAR BETTER !

I am hearing challenged. Sitting in our beautiful Sanctuary, I confess I have difficulty hearing the sermon on Sunday as well as the other spoken elements of the service. Sometime go Kevin Howell reiterated that we have headphones. Even though I was only hearing 70-80 % of the words, my stubbornness prevented me from trying them. But that changed. I tried them and was amazed. I could hear the spoken word almost perfectly. If you are not hearing the service as well as you like, I encourage you to try the headphones.

Barney Custer

Sympathy – We extend our most sincere Christian sympathy to the family and friends of Judy Berkish, who passed away on September 15; and to the family and friends of Trena Couch, who passed away in September; and to the family and friends of Audrey Lipuma who passed away on September 20; and to Tom Young and family/friends of Claryne Young who passed away on September 26, 2024.

**A Very Special *THANK YOU!!* from
Shelly Boback and the Girl Scouts for your generosity with "The Birthday Box"**

Prayers and Squares Can you touch a prayer?

You can if it is tied into a prayer quilt made by our Prayers and Squares group. If you know someone who is in need of prayer support and would like to have a prayer quilt made.....or if you want to be part of this ministry, please call Joyce Norris at 243-2659 or you can email her at joyceanorris@gmail.com.

Those Who Serve

ACOLYTES

10/6 Daphne Rehm
 10/13 Izzy Maciorowski
 10/20 Elsie Alberter
 10/27 Avalyn Rehm

LAY READERS

10/06 Rev. Carole Isley Corey
 10/13 Kate Smith
 10/20 Georgia Yeager
 10/27 Kevin Priest

FELLOWSHIP HOUR

10/06 Jeff & Shelley Boback
 10/13—Open
 10/20 Lana, Joan and Jerry
 10/27 The Stephens Family

OPENERS

10/6 Ron Good
 10/13 Jim McCann
 10/20 Bill Harris
 10/27 Kevin Howell

CHANCEL FLOWERS

10/6—open
 10/13—open
 10/20—open
 10/27—open

NURSERY

10/6 Need Volunteer
 10/13 Shelby Esch and
 Izzy Maciorowski
 10/20 Geona & Brittany
 10/27 Ashley Stufft

CHILDREN'S CHAT

10/6 Communion—No chat
 10/13 Sarah Riffle
 10/20 Mark Parseghian
 10/27 Betsy Suppes

USHERS: Monica Black,
 Gabby Riffle, Jen Priest,
 Anita Faas, Josh Hinson,
 Lana Custer.

HOST GREETING ELDERS

10/6 -
 10/13 -
 10/20 -
 10/27 -

General Giving for the month of August

August 2024	\$ 15,691
YTD 2024	\$ 231,450
Prior YTD	\$ 252,014
2024 YTD Budget	\$ 250,933

The Flower Calendar and Fellowship Hour sign-up sheets are posted in the Koinonia Room.



DEADLINE:
Newsletter Articles

Deadline for the
 November Thread is
 Friday October 18, 2024

*2024 Mission Payments
through September*



October

Donation of Bibles to	
Prospect Church	\$214.38
Austin Theological Seminary	\$100.00
Bible 2 School	\$200.00
Hope In a Stocking	\$200.00
Joy Media/Roland Maust	\$1000.00
Prayers & Squares	\$250.00
Ghana Mission Network	\$100.00
Sudan Presbyterian Church	\$300.00
Westmont Hilltop Baccalaureate Committee	\$100.00
Johnstown Christian Home	\$100.00
Young Life	\$500.00
Geneva Pre-School	\$1000.00
Good News Club	\$500.00
Johnstown Free Clinic	\$500.00
New Day	\$500.00
Pittsburgh Theological Seminary	\$500.00
Westmont Family Counseling Ministries	\$1500.00
Pine Springs Camp	\$ 1500.00
Sudan Mission Conf.	\$ 205.00

1 Constance Alexander	1 Derek Yates	2 Gail Landis
2 Ian Lohr	5 Kenneth Robb	5 Derek Edwards
5 Emma Pote	6 Greg Suppes	7 Judith Crookston
11 Deborah Price	11 Tim Dabbs	12 Ben Curry
14 Taylor Kaseler	17 Jamie Rhoades	18 Amanda Kirkstadt
26 James Webb	27 Dawn Johnson	28 Nicholas Pote

September Session Recap

- The Chapel roof project is complete
- World Communion is October 6
- Reminder—Our 100th Anniversary arrives in 2026.
- Safety Committee has completed the signage on the doors.
- Eight new cameras have arrived
- New Sunday School curriculum has arrived

*Blessed to be a
Blessing*

BOOK CLUB
OUR WPC BOOK CLUB WILL BE RESUMING IN OCTOBER THE BOOK TITLE WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN FUTURE BULLETINS AND *THE THREAD*

Women in the Woods 2024

Journey Together. Enjoy a relaxing and refreshing retreat at Pine Springs Camp designed to be physically and spiritually refreshing for women of all ages. You will explore God's design for relationships based on what we discern through Scripture. How do we faithfully love one another on life's journey? This is a great opportunity to draw near to God and enjoy fellowship and fun with old and new friends!

**October 4th (after 6:00 pm) to
October 5th (7:00 pm)**

For more information and online registration please visit www.pinesprings.org or email ellie@pinesprings.org



Our annual Trunk-or-Treat/ Movie Night will be on Saturday, October 19th from 4-6 PM. This FREE community event is open to ALL ages! Join us for fun, safe trick-or-treating in the church parking lot and outdoor games from 4:00 to 5:00, then we'll all go down to Fellowship Hall for a viewing of "Spookley the Square Pumpkin." Hot dogs & other refreshments will be available.

Bring your car already decorated or come early and we will provide the supplies and help you.

Please register your vehicle by calling the church office at 814-536-0796

YOU CAN HELP BY DONATING AND HANDING OUT CANDY, DECORATING VEHICLES AND/OR SERVING FOOD DURING THE MOVIE.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MEETING

Come join the Christian Education Committee for their monthly meeting on

October 6th at 11:45 after worship in UL4.

Found out about & discuss upcoming events!

HELP WANTED

Come play at church

We are in need of adult volunteers to help with Nursery during worship, just once a month. Please contact the office if you are interested. 814-536-0796



CALLING ALL KIDS

What's your specialty? Is it:

Academics - Math, Science, Reading;

Art - Visual (Drawing, Painting) or Performing (Dancing, Music, Drama);

Sports - Team or Individual; **Scouting**;

Community Service? Tell us about it and we'll put it in PRINT each month.

PLEASE JOIN US!

WESTMONT COMMUNITY TRUNK OR TREAT

**CANDY &
GAMES**

**FOOD &
MOVIE**

**COSTUME
CONTEST**

OCTOBER 19, 2024

4-5 PM TRUNK OR TREAT/GAMES

5-6 PM FOOD & MOVIE

**WESTMONT PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

601 LUZERNE STREET
JOHNSTOWN, PA

RAIN OR SHINE!

PLEASE BRING A CANNED FOOD DONATION. THANK YOU!



Community Events

WPC SPECIAL MINISTRY WILL HOLD A HALLOWEEN DANCE AND PIZZA PARTY IN FELLOWSHIP HALL ON OCTOBER 30 FROM 6:30 UNTIL 8:30 PM. VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED THAT EVENING TO HELP WITH DRINKS AND PIZZA. DONATIONS OF COOKIES ARE WELCOMED AND VERY MUCH APPRECIATED. FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL JOAN RUSH AT 814-255-2094 OR LANA CUSTER AT 814-659-0046. THANK YOU.



WESTMONT COMMUNITY FARMER'S MARKET (16th SEASON)

It has been a wonderful year so far! Our hours are from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM on Saturdays into October in the church's parking lot. Many of the same fabulous producers who were here last year are once again selling their home grown, vegetable, fruits, flowers and other goodies produced on their own farms. We have had up to 15 vendors so far!

We had a **Surprise** on Saturday September 7, 2024! **WJAC News** showed up to interview our Vendors about the drought they all faced this year. We noticed their presence and Gary went to talk to the reporter about our Westmont Community Farmers Market. It's beginning and history and the reason we started it and continued! She was very intrigued and asked Gary if he would go on camera for an interview! The newscast was aired Saturday evening and Monday morning! The feedback from members of our Church and friends was very positive? This may bring more people and introduce them us! **BEING THE HANDS, FEET, AND VOICE OF GOD** is what we do!

The P.E.O. organization is finished this year! They did well with their fundraising efforts and everybody enjoyed the Hot Dogs any way you want it and the Sloppy Joes! In fact they named one Hot Dog Combination "The Gary". A Hot Dog with Chili sauce and sauerkraut "Delicious"!

Gretchen Lohr prepared a pancake breakfast for the community on September 21, 2024 !

ALSO the last Saturday of September 9/28/24 was our annual Homemade Donut Day with Hot & Cold Apple Cider

We have had **Music** at the Market by **Rodney** since August 3, 2024. What a blessing.

So, Next spring, mark your calendars for each Saturday, pray for good weather and enjoy the fellowship with the farmers and those in our community. It's a great way to spend an hour or two on a summer Saturday morning buying fresh vegetables and fruits and enjoying each other's company.

Farmer's Market Committee

The Westmont Presbyterian Church

An excerpt from *Presbyterians in the Upper Conemaugh Valley*. Written for the 125th Anniversary of the First Presbyterian Church, Johnstown PA. –by– Donald H. Matthews, Jr 1957.

One of the greatest ambitions of Dr. Hays during his many years in Johnstown was the establishment of a church in Westmont to replace the 1902 Sunday School Chapel. He was a firm believer that the “church should go where the people go”. While the downtown church maintained an average gain of 93 members per year during the long pastorate, Dr. Hays maintained a steadfast interest in the religious welfare of all and knew that Presbyterianism would gain in the end by the establishment of a church in Westmont.

The year 1920 was important to the still-to-be-organized Hilltop church. At that time the small Calvinistic Methodist denomination merged with the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. The result was that the purpose, plan and appeal of the larger body enlarged the vision and stimulated this church to greater activity, so that when the opportunities came in 1924-25, recognizing the same general assembly and being one in doctrinal belief and purpose, particularly occupying the same field of work as the First Presbyterian Church (Johnstown), an agreement was entered into (subject to the approval of the two Presbyteries) to join forces and finances to form an organization and build a church in Westmont.

The Calvinistic Methodist Church in Johnstown was known as the Welsh Calvinistic Church and later the Vine Street Presbyterian Church, now occupied by Christian Scientists , less than a block from the First Presbyterian Church. In 1924, a merger of the two Calvinistic congregations was effected, with the Vine Street group joining their larger neighboring congregation .

Dr. Hays wrote that the “merger was for the express purpose of establishing a new congregation and building a new church in Westmont.... This agreement which brought the two churches together was carefully drawn and made a matter of record in the minutes, both of the Session and congregation. It has been faithfully carried out with excellence results...”

The merger consummated during the winter of 1924-25, made the long cherished dream of formally organizing the Westmont Presbyterian Church become a reality. Almost immediately plans were laid for a building “which shall be creditable to the Presbyterian name an worthy of Westmont”.

A professional fund-raising group was hired and an advance subscription of \$75,000 was raised in First Church before any steps were taken to move forward with a building program in Westmont. Plans for the new \$ 150,000 structure were approved by First Church and the Vine Street group following which a building committee was appointed.

Work on the beautiful fieldstone structure at Luzerne Street and Fisk Avenue (formerly Sixth Avenue) was started in 1925, and the cornerstone was laid later that year, with Dr. Hays returning to give the main address, part of which follows: “We are about to lay the cornerstone of a house of worship-an event of no ordinary interest and of no small importance to this community. This building when completed will be dedicated to Almighty God. The Lord said to Solomon at the dedication of the temple: “I have hallowed this house which thou hat built, to put my name there forever and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. “ What he did for the temple we expect him to do for this house when finished.

“A church building is a hallowed place, a consecrated place, devoted and set apart to purposes different from that of my other building. Years ago, when we erected a chapel in Westmont, I recall that a newcomer in the community, not yet identified with any church, said to me: ‘I consider the erection of this chapel the most important work that has been done for this community.’ In testimony of his conviction he was one of the first to subscribe to the building. “

“What is a church building and what does it stand for? It is for one thing, an expression of the soul’s deepest need...This building will stand as a witness for God. And a very important witness it will be in a day like ours when the spirit of commercialism and worldliness has so taken hold upon the race.....

“Standing for God, the church is a testimony of God’s interest in them and of his desire to bless.....Again, this building will stand for the Bible, for morality, and for good government and for the highest civil and social interests....

“And finally, let me say it will stand as an evidence of your desire not only to receive good, but to give good; not only to be blessed, but to bless. Many of you who are putting money into this building are not doing it because of any direct benefit you expect to get from it yourselves, but because you believe in helping and blessing others. This building will be a center of influence such as never measured or weighed and no one can make a better investment than to put his money into it...”

Westmont Presbyterian Church became an official organization Thursday, December 16, 1926 when members were received by the committee and constituted into a church. Some officers were elected that night. December 17, elders and deacons were ordained and trustees were elected. The committee received 308 members, the largest number ever taken in at an organization meeting of Presbytery. Of this number, 173 were from.....to be continued in the November *Thread*