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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2016 NEWSLETTER

A Quarterly Publication of Millwood Community Presbyterian Church



# MILLWOOD PRESS

Millwood Community Presbyterian Church, 3223 North Marguerite Rd, Spokane, WA 99212  
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## Children of God

By Rev. Craig Goodwin, Pastor

One of my favorite duties as your Pastor is to lead the congregation in celebrating the Lord's Supper.

As hard as I try to find the right words in my sermons, I always feel inadequate to fully communicate the truth of God's amazing grace. There are no words that can quite measure up to that truth. So on those Sundays when we celebrate communion, I feel a sense of relief when we transition from the sermon to communion. Where my words have fallen short, I know that the Lord's Table will make clear.

I know that with the breaking of the bread and lifting up of the cup we will remember God's sacrificial love for us.

I know that when I utter the words, "Do this in remembrance of me," we will understand anew that the Christian journey is as simple as remembering what Jesus has done for us, and following in his footsteps.

I know that by gathering around a table we will be reminded that we are a family, called together as God's children around the family table, bound together by our humble reliance on God's grace.

My favorite part of celebrating communion is watching the parade of people come forward to be served. I especially enjoy watching the kids come forward with their parents.

At the 9:30 a.m. service I offer a blessing to the children as an alternative, or in addition to, receiving the communion elements. I make the sign

of the cross on their foreheads and tell them, "You are a blessed child of God."

Last Sunday during communion a father approached me with his daughter Lauren in his arms. I spoke the blessing over her, "You are a blessed child of God," and after a short pause, she looked at me and said, "And I'm four." Lauren knows that she's four years old and that she is a child of God. She's got all the important details figured out.

Another girl named Rosie approached me with the juice and bread in hand, and held them out to me and said proudly, "This is my first time doing this." After years of having that blessing spoken over her, she is taking big a big step of faith in claiming that blessing as her own. It's as if the tables were turned and she came to me saying, "I am a blessed child of God."

Lauren and Rosie are good examples for all of us, to receive and rejoice in the truth that God has claimed us as His own children. As Paul puts in the book of Galatians, "...in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith."

As we enter the Advent season and anticipate the joy Christmas, may we all remember our true identity as God's very own children, saved by grace, and blessed beyond all measure by God's abundant love.

– Pastor Craig

## Mark Your Calendars

### STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT SUNDAY – NOVEMBER 20

On Sunday, November 20, we will invite members and friends of the church to turn in pledge cards indicating their planned giving to MCPC for 2017. This helps the Session form the 2017 budget.

### ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE

November 27: Advent Party at 4:00 p.m.

December 4: Christmas Cantata at 11:00 a.m.

December 11: Children's Christmas Performance and Christmas Cookies

December 24: Christmas Eve

5:30 p.m.–Family Service

7:00 p.m.–Bell Concert

7:30 p.m.–Traditional Service

December 25 – Christmas Day : One Worship Service at 9:30 a.m.

January 1 – January 15 : One Worship Service at 9:30 a.m.

### YEAR-END DONATIONS DUE DECEMBER 31

Please have all donations for the 2016 calendar year either into the church office or postmarked by December 31.

### WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR THE NEW YEAR

December 25 through January 22, we will have one worship service at 9:30 a.m.

On January 29, we will return to two services at 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Children’s Ministry News

By Kim McGiveran



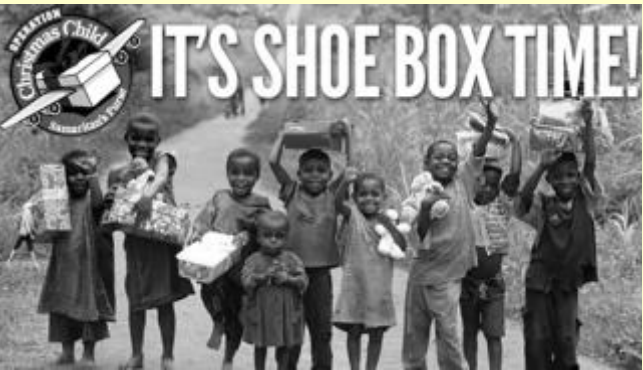
The Harvest Party celebration last month was a well–received community event. It’s hard to say exactly how many people came to our event, but I will say that the room was full and I met several families from the neighborhood who had received a postcard invitation. Thank you to all the volunteer game leaders and snack

providers who helped make this a fun day for kids. This event truly does shine His light upon our neighborhood and provides an opportunity for all His children to come together.

Christmas Pageant rehearsals began the first Sunday in November and will continue until the performance Sunday, December 11, at 9:30 a.m., during the church service. This year, the play centers around characters from *Star Wars* as the wise men follow the new star to King Herod’s “Dark Side” empire. The kids are learning songs and movement to four contemporary Christmas songs which will be sung in the musical performance. Start inviting your friends and family now to the December 11 performance – it’s always a good show!

We have been collecting shoeboxes for our annual mission project for *Operation Christmas Child*. I’m curious to see if we’ll beat our record (66 boxes in 2013). I laid out 100 red and green cardboard OCC boxes and all were taken! I’m praying that this will be our greatest turnout. When the boxes are shipped to Denver’s processing center, they insert a message called *The Greatest Gift*, that tells about Jesus Christ. The children also are invited to *The*

*Greatest Journey* program where they follow a series of Bible lessons that invite them to respond to the Gospel. Those who complete this program receive a New Testament (in their language) to anchor their faith and guide their lives. What a way to celebrate the gift of Jesus with others!



I also want to highlight a "MUST DO" for families coming up at the end of November: The annual Advent Party is Sunday, November 27, from 4:00–7:00 p.m. Diane Williams and her crew of elves have prepared several different projects for you to make. You'll go home with several new ornaments and decorations, along with a full belly from all the yummy treats we eat and share during the party. Please join us as we welcome the beginning of the Advent Season with this fun celebration.

**Join Us!**

**Advent Party**

**November 27**

**4:00 – 7:00 p.m.**

**Carols, Crafts and**

**Cookies!**

Deacon Thanksgiving Baskets

NOVEMBER 15

The Deacons are planning for 50 Thanksgiving baskets. Please bring your donations to the box in Reception Hall by November 15. We are in need of turkeys, sweet potatoes, cranberries, green beans, mashed potatoes, gravy, and stuffing. If you would like to help, but can’t make it to the grocery store, monetary donations are also gratefully accepted. Basket pick up will be Saturday, November 19, from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. Thank you again for making Thanksgiving a happier time for those in need.

Music In Millwood

NOVEMBER 20

Music in Millwood presents a concert of chamber music featuring a piano trio by Swedish composer, Dag Wiren, and a Mozart piano quartet. Performers are Margaret Bowers, violin, David Armstrong, viola, Louise Butler, cello, and Rachelle Ventura, piano. The concert will be held Sunday, November 20, at 3:00 p.m., in the Sanctuary. Admission is free with a non–perishable item for the food bank.

Church Decorating For Christmas!

NOVEMBER 26

Join us at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, November 26, to decorate our Sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas season. Volunteers of all ages and abilities are needed and appreciated. With many hands, we can complete the project in just a few hours. See you at church November 28!

Christmas Cantata

DECEMBER 4

Join us for a special Christmas Cantata on Sunday, December 4, at the 11:00 a.m. service. We will perform timeless, wonderful music. Christmas is a

time for family and friends to be together so please invite yours!

Millwood Mobile Food Bank

DECEMBER 9–2<sup>ND</sup> FRIDAY EVERY MONTH

Our next monthly food distribution is Friday, December 11, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., in the church parking lot. If you can help distribute food, please call 924–2350 and let Christy know you plan to volunteer so that she can get a count. There will be free produce and perishable products for those in need of food assistance. If you need food, we will be there rain or shine! Please bring a box or bags to take your food home in. Thanks again for all you do working to ease hunger in Millwood!

“Twas The Bite Before Christmas

DECEMBER 11

During the Christmas season, most of us have many opportunities to gather and make meals, taking little bites along the way to make sure everything is perfect. For some of us though, the Christmas season is a reminder that there will be very little to eat. Families have to make their budget fit more meals than usual because of having children at home to feed during Christmas Break from school.

The Deacons are making food baskets to help families that would otherwise go without a Christmas dinner and we could use your help. When you go Christmas shopping, please grab a bite of something and bring it to church with you that Sunday. We are in need of 40 turkeys, sweet potatoes, green beans, mashed potatoes, gravy and stuffing. For those on the go, monetary donations are also thankfully received. Food can be dropped off until December 11. Thank you again for helping the Deacons take a bite out of hunger.



## Youth Update

By Brandon Comella

To say the Youth Banquet was a success is an understatement! Our goals on all ends were exceeded! The Millwood Community Center provided the perfect environment for a fantastic night full of energy, laughter. It was a space where both church folks and community members came together to hear about the youth and their summer camp experience, as well as the vision we have with our after-school programs and the power of mentors. There were several students who spoke about their own experiences with both the youth programs and the power of having a positive mentor in their lives. The desserts were phenomenal, and we had close to 30 students there welcoming and serving! Over 100 people attended the event and there has been nothing but positive remarks about the night. In the many years I have done events like this, we had never raised more than \$5,000. This year our Youth Banquet event raised over \$19,000!!! I want to thank everyone who helped in any way for this event and we are more and more excited for the future here at the church and in our community with the many things we have going for the youth.

Youth programs have been exploding this year. I have to admit that in the nine years of being here, I have never been quite as excited for our high school group as I have this year. I believe it has to do with taking 30 high school students to summer camp and them coming back on fire! They are inviting their friends, and it has become the most welcoming environment we have ever had in our high school group.

We have averaged around 55 high school students each week at Young Life, and to be honest I think that has to do with the new kids who come, feel welcomed, and want to stay and be a part of a community of leaders and peers who care for each other.

Within both middle and high school groups, my leaders have started some amazing small groups outside of our weekly programs. This has deepened those relationships so much between student and leader. Last Spring we started *Pancakes & Bible Study* in The Crossing on Wednesday mornings because the West Valley High School has late start that day. 12–15 students get up early on the one morning they are free to sleep in, so they can be with us eating pancakes together and going through the *Book of Acts* as our Bible study.

At Coffee House, we have between 7–15 middle and high school students going through the *Book of Job* as the study... and between these groups, we began in November to all read a chapter a day of the *Book of Proverbs*.



(Youth Update, continued on page 5)

(Youth Update, continued from page 4)

Linda Lehman, from our church, has provided a good number of Bibles for kids who don't have them, and encouraged them to do the reading challenge, so we are all reading *Proverbs* together. ☺

In October, three leaders and eight students went to the Fall Retreat at Camp Spalding. Our high school group will be doing the same thing this November. Other than the retreats, we will have our annual High School Thanksgiving feast the week after on November 30, and slowly wrapping our different talk series up and planning our Bible Studies for the new year.

We are planning at the beginning of the year to have our Youth Ministry leaders cared for specifically through volunteer church members.



At the banquet, we also spent time talking about our after-school programs. STAR Club, coordinated by our Children's Ministry Director, Kim McGiveran was one of the high lights. STAR Club has been meeting for a few weeks now, and we plan to begin our middle school program (NOVA Club) in late January. Our future goal is to have a high school option launched by next fall. We are currently seeking mentors for each student that registers.

Thank you for reading, please feel free to connect with me if you are interested in serving or have any questions. You can contact me at [brandon@millwoodpc.org](mailto:brandon@millwoodpc.org) or 509-481-5720.

# Missions Update

By Maria Naccarato

You may be wondering... Are you home? Yes! I am back in Spokane now, living with my parents, visiting with partners and thinking and praying about next steps. Was it difficult to leave Kg? Yes, it was. I am thankful that I had time to spend with people before I left. I took a few days and went to the beach with students, my Russian teacher and co-workers. I was able to say goodbye to my church and to all the people who have been kind and gracious towards me. The whole process, while sad, was also very affirming of how these relationships have changed me and the community I was part of.

What are you going to do now that you're back stateside? This is a fair question, but I don't really have a good answer. I have no plans or thoughts to continue working in formal ministry, though I will continue to serve in whatever way I can. In a way, I am waiting on God again, taking small steps and praying for his providence.

How are your ministry finances? What about our monthly giving? One of the things that I have been so thankful for throughout my time overseas, was that I never once had to worry about my financial standing.



People who pledged to give, for the most part, continued to give, and others were generous with one-time giving and there was always enough money. However, as I review the last year, with summer camp expenses and my travel home, I am coming up a little bit short. It is close considering the amount I raised for the almost three and a half years of ministry, but I still need a bit more to leave in good standing. I would like to close out my account with Intervarsity soon, but I need to make up a difference of about \$4,000. If you are able to support my ministry I would greatly appreciate it. You have all been such an integral part of my journey and without you, it wouldn't happen!



Thank you for being part of my journey!

# Fall Stewardship Campaign

By Craig Goodwin, Pastor

The Session of Millwood Presbyterian is in the process of planning the budget for 2017 and needs your help. Every fall we invite members and friends of MCPC to fill out a pledge card indicating their planned giving for the coming year. The Session uses this information to set the budget.

You should receive a pledge card in the mail or you can pick one up on Sunday morning at church. On Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup> we invite the congregation to bring those cards as part of our Stewardship Commitment Sunday. You can also mail the pledge card into the church or drop it off at the office. You can also go to the church website and fill out the confidential online pledge card that you'll find linked on the front page of [www.millwoodpc.org](http://www.millwoodpc.org).

Lesa Simpson, our church treasurer, is also available to help set up regular automatic donations through your bank, credit card, or debit card. She can be reached at 509-924-7328 or [lesa@millwoodpc.org](mailto:lesa@millwoodpc.org).

At a recent Session meeting we were talking about what to share with the congregation when it comes to giving. There were two themes that emerged in our conversation that I want to pass on as we consider how God is calling us to give in the coming year.

Some of the Session members explained how giving to the church, for them, is a response of gratitude for God's faithfulness. We find this theme throughout the Bible.

In the Old Testament, God's people had a practice of giving a tithe, or 10% of their harvest to God. The New Testament church carried that practice forward, lifting up a tithe as a goal for giving to the

church. So we continue to lift up that as a goal for the church today.

And we don't do that out of a sense of guilt or obligation, rather we do so out of deep sense of gratitude and joy. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9, "Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Nancy and I are celebrating our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, which marks 20 years that we have given a 10% tithe to the church. It hasn't always been easy, and there have been seasons where finances were tight, but we have found it to be true that there is a "cheerfulness" and joy in giving.

Some are able to give more than a tithe, and many others less, but as Paul says, we should all give freely as we feel led by God.

The other theme that came up in our Session conversation has to do with the impact that giving has in people's lives. Some elders mentioned that when they look at donating to a non-profit organization, they want to know that the organization is responsible with the money, and that it goes to make an impact in serving the community.

It's hard to measure that objectively at MCPC, but I once heard it said that the true test for a church is to answer the question; if your church no longer existed, would it be missed? Would the community even notice? I think it's safe to say that we are passing that test with flying colors. At Millwood Presbyterian, by God's grace, we are part of an important and meaningful mission that is making a big difference. The Session's commitment is that every dollar that is given to MCPC will go far toward serving the mission God has called us to in the West Valley of Spokane.

Thank you for our generous support of Millwood Presbyterian Church.