

# THE EXTENDED FAMILY

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## *Steve's Slant*

If you are a long-time reader of the Extended Family, then you know that for the January/February issue, I reserve this space for what I rather loftily, but also a little playfully, think of as my "State of the Church Address". (Fortunately, I do not have to worry about where, or even whether, I will deliver this address, as I happen to know this space is open and available!)

If I had to describe where we are right now in our shared life, I would say it's a healthy mixture of stability, change, opportunity and challenge.

Looking back on 2018, perhaps the highlight of the year was the enhancements we experienced in our worship services. We explored -- and I think most of us enjoyed -- different ways to pray. We used different voices and different instruments in our music program. The children were much more involved in leading worship, particularly during Advent but also for other services, too. Easter and Pentecost Sundays were especially memorable in this regard.

So I would like to take a moment here to thank the members of our Liturgical Arts Team and our Children and Youth Ministry Team for their hard work and ongoing investments in our worship life. Looking ahead, I anticipate that in 2019 we will continue to explore creative and innovative ways to enhance our worship experience musically, visually, liturgically and multi-generationally.

On one hand, then, our worship life felt especially rich last year. This richness was further enhanced in July, when you all welcomed Fraser Penny as the preacher here during our two-week pulpit exchange--something I hope we can perhaps do again someday.

But it's also true that our average attendance on Sunday morning dropped compared to the year before, and it has declined - slightly- every year since 2014. That's obviously a trend we hope to reverse in 2019. (More on this shortly.)

As for our membership as a whole, we lost some beloved members this year, as we always do -- some passed away, others moved away.

But we also see many signs of new life and vitality in our congregation. As I alluded to above, our children's ministry is as healthy and vibrant as it has ever been. And although the Session of our church is anchored by several long-time members, many newer members are also involved in the leadership of our church at every level, from action teams, to ministry teams, to Session. I make this point explicitly because diversity of leadership is one of the most important metrics of church vitality, so this is especially encouraging news. (Continued on page 7)



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**PRAYERS FOR:** Ray Stock; Ron Wilson; Barbara Higgins; Dr. Steven Williams and Mary Moorrees.

**Church contacts:** Church Office 298-9092  
 Church Administrator; Donna Eagle Joslin 771-2097 e-mail= [deagle@Warren-Wilson.edu](mailto:deagle@Warren-Wilson.edu)  
 Minister; Rev. Dr. Steve Runholt 712-7803 e-mail= [srunholt@Warren-Wilson.edu](mailto:srunholt@Warren-Wilson.edu)  
 Associate in Ministry, Rev. Grace Boyer 713-1491 e-mail= [graceeboyer@gmail.com](mailto:graceeboyer@gmail.com)  
 Interim Director of Music, organist; Dr. David Foster  
 Treasurers; Leslie Sayyar, 333-8867 e-mail= [treasurerwwpc@outlook.com](mailto:treasurerwwpc@outlook.com)  
 Ray Stock 298-0955 e-mail= [stoc5054@bellsouth.net](mailto:stoc5054@bellsouth.net)  
 Assistant Treasurer; Alisa White 298-6778 e-mail= [aliswht@yahoo.com](mailto:aliswht@yahoo.com)  
 Book Keeper; Barbara Escalante e-mail= [bookkeeperwwpc@outlook.com](mailto:bookkeeperwwpc@outlook.com)

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**January/February Birthdays!**

Sarah Anne Eller	Jan. 5	Sandee Butterworth	Jan. 7
Jamie Dale	Jan. 12	Carolynne Cowal	Jan. 15
Robyn Castellani	Jan. 15	Mary Kells	Jan. 16
Corise Gambrell	Jan. 24	Joyce Ackerman	Jan. 27
William Hamilton	Jan. 29	Cadence Cowal	Jan. 30
Diana Sanderson	Feb. 1	Mike Levi	Feb. 5
Jack Ballard	Feb. 9	Clotilde Guisasola	Feb. 11
Karen Crusier	Feb. 12	Georgena Millar	Feb. 13
Brownie Newman	Feb. 16	Edythe Wiener	Feb. 19
Milt Butterworth	Feb. 22	Burnace Roberts	Feb. 24



The Warren Wilson Book Group will meet on Feb. 14 at noon in the Fellowship Hall. Sandy Brauer will lead the discussion of "A Gentleman in Moscow" by Amor Towles. It promises to be an interesting discussion based on the wide range of topics presented by the author. Corise Gambrell will provide dessert to go with your sandwich. Bring a bag lunch and join us for stimulating and interesting conversation.

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**SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPPLIES-- WISH LIST**

Looking for a way to help the children and youth in the church as they grow in their faith? The children's Sunday School classroom is in need of some supplies. If you can provide any of the supplies, just place them in Grace Boyer's office OR on the table down in the Youth Room. Needed are: large scissors, markers, glue, pencil sharpener, a CD player or tablet, a gallon of water, some bottled water (small).

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**Adult Education**

**Jan 27 - Feb 3 *Mindfulness***

Our own Jane Corbin leads a two session class on Mindfulness. Mindfulness is a spiritual practice of focus and paying attention to the present moment.

**Feb 10 - March 3 *Angels & Demons***

Dr. Marc Mullinax is a professor of Religion at Mars Hill University. The class will explore the questions: what is "good", what is "evil", and how do we know? Religion and spirituality have a great deal to say about these categories to us. Come learn how our worldviews shape how we view the angelic and the demonic.

Dear WWPC congregation,

Thank you so much for the beautiful farewell reception after worship on my last Sunday. The Advent candle and the message of that Sunday was all about Love. My lovely and loving send-off included a special rendition of "God bless you so, sweet Vivian" and many parting gifts from the choir, the staff and the children ~ including a wonderful gift certificate from the choir, a lovely prayer tower from the staff and congregation and a very special custom-made book from the children and their leaders with their pictures and sweet notes to me on each page. What an incredible keepsake! All are just wonderful!

It has been an honor serving this congregation and together we have shared in special music and liturgical arts with instrumentalists, soloists, choir, children and our whole congregation, as well as the choir's V.A. hospital chapel singing. Drums, flute, guitar, piano, harp, dulcimer, chimes, violin, liturgical dance, soloists, children, processions...and even a didgeridoo. And more. There are so many gifts within this congregation and serving among you has been a joy!

One gift I received may not have been known to anyone but to me and two others - it was a handmade note from little Cadence and Izzy that they wrote sometime during the reception - it simply reads, "Miss Vivian, We love you." That awesome and special gift will remain between us all.

With deep gratitude for the special gifts of music we've all shared and hoping that our paths will continue to cross.



(Attached picture of some of the beautiful parting gifts)

Peace and joy to all,

**Vivian**

Vivian Hare

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## Room In The Inn

WWPC will be hosting the women guests of Room in the Inn, **February 10-17**. Room in the Inn is a Homeward Bound program with more than 2,000 volunteers from over 40 faith congregations. **Please be one of those MANY volunteers that make this program so successful at our church.**

Room in the Inn partners with local faith communities to provide shelter for up to 12 women. Each week, a different congregation opens its facilities to welcome the women, offering a safe place for them as they work toward gaining permanent housing. One goal is to keep homeless women from sleeping on the street and risking their safety. Another goal is to build caring, supportive relationships with them, one week at a time.

Susan Laney is coordinating this program for our church, with the help of Vicki Collins and Carolyn Cole. Please contact Susan if you wish to volunteer, or use the sign-up sheets in the Narthex after church.

**We need lunches, dinners and overnight hosts.** Many thanks!

## Music Director Search Cranks Up

The Music Director Search Team (MDST) met for the first time on Sunday, Jan. 13. We reviewed the results of the most recent survey of the congregation. That survey was done prior to Vivian Hare's hiring, and is reasonably recent. After reviewing it, we added a couple of additional skills that we felt were essentially important.

The following is a list of the skills we agreed to prioritize as we begin the search process. Some of these emerged as a result of Vivian's ministry, in particular her focus on working with Grace and the children and youth ministry team. Her work not only benefitted and enhanced our children's faith development directly, it also enhanced and enriched our worship services.

- openness to working collaboratively and creatively with staff and lay-level team leaders to continue developing our music program
- experience directing adult choirs
- experience (or at least openness to) directing a children's choir
- proficiency on pipe organ or piano
- openness to other instruments and enthusiasm for diverse musical offerings
- experience of playing for worship in a variety of liturgical contexts

We may not find all of these qualities and gifts in one person, so the team is open to finding a qualified Director of Music and then bringing in an organist, if necessary.

Even though we decided not to do another survey, we still want to hear from the congregation. We hope you will contact any of us by **Feb. 3** with your ideas, wishes, hopes, druthers....

MDST members:

Beth Meriwether, [bethmeriwether@gmail.com](mailto:bethmeriwether@gmail.com)

Emily Pulsifer, [ewdpulsifer@hotmail.com](mailto:ewdpulsifer@hotmail.com)

Fran Roberts, [Fran.Roberts@charter.net](mailto:Fran.Roberts@charter.net)

Jamie Dale, [samdale2@gmail.com](mailto:samdale2@gmail.com)

Natalie Cowal, [forestchick07@gmail.com](mailto:forestchick07@gmail.com)

(Submitted by Jamie Dale)



**NEARLY DONE - HABITAT PRESBYTERIAN/METHODIST HOUSE IN ARDEN ON JANUARY 10  
SHAKETIA SIMPSON IS THE NEW HOMEOWNER**

Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity’s Presbyterian/Methodist House # 27, which members and friends of our church helped build, is now an affordable home in a safe neighborhood.



Having completed all Habitat requirements including 200 hours of sweat equity, homeowner Shaketia Simpson and her two children, who visited us last September, will close on February 7 and move in to their new house on Jon Kraus Way in Arden.

Once again Warren Wilson Presbyterian was among the leaders for volunteer hours among churches that build each Presbyterian/Methodist house, and on behalf of Habitat and the Simpson family, a very special “thank you” goes to the following people. They donated more than 160 hours to help build Presbyterian/Methodist House # 27:

- |                  |               |                  |
|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Sally Broughton  | Don Collins   | Elisabeth Cook   |
| Anne Dale        | Jamie Dale    | Andrew Daugherty |
| Derron Daugherty | Bob Gambrell  | Larry Griswold   |
| Ned Guardenier   | Bill Heck     | Rodney Lytle     |
| Toby Ives        | Ken Murchison | Emily Pulsifer   |
| Brent Roberts    | Adeeb Sayyar  | Steve Runholt    |
| Jerry Vaneman    | Betsy Warren  |                  |

Another very special “thank you” also goes to all who contributed a total of more than \$1,900 to the special offering for building materials when the family visited our worship service in September, and to the Community Outreach Team for their continued support of Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity.

Before construction of each new faith partner house begins, there is a kickoff meeting at Habitat’s Asheville office. At this meeting, representatives sometimes talk about other ways to help such as bringing lunches to their church members or other volunteers working at the site. Last August 14 Barbara and Larry Griswold put together and delivered lunches for 15 volunteers from across the country who came to Asheville to build Habitat houses.

Founded in 1983 as the first Habitat affiliate in North Carolina, Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity has built 326 new, affordable houses in safe communities for families, and made repairs to 270 homes.

Plans for the next Presbyterian/Methodist House, which will be built on Curry Court in Candler, Asheville Area Habitat’s newest community, will be announced as soon as they are available.



## CLERK'S REPORT



At the December stated meeting, the session took the following actions:

1. Approved hiring of David Foster as interim music director and naming Fran Roberts, Jamie Dale, Beth Meriweather, Natalie Cowan, and Emily Pulsifer as the search committee for the music director.

2. Approved a reallocation of Grace Boyer's salary document to allow her to purchase health insurance for herself.

3. Approved a recommendation from the Community Engagement Ministry Team that the local portion of the peacemaking offering be distributed to Jews for Justice in Asheville.

At the January stated meeting, the session took the following actions:

1. Received the financial reports for the year and expressed its appreciation to the treasurer and bookkeeper for their timely and accurate preparation of the documents.

2. Approved the Administration Ministry Team recommendation that the session approve the revised budget for 2019.

3. Established the special offerings that the congregation will receive in 2019.

4. Elected Ken Murchison as clerk of the session for 2019.

5. Elected the elders who will serve as commissioners to the 2019 meetings of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina.

6. Elected Bob Gambrell and Vickie Collins as members of the congregational nominating committee for 2019.

Ken Murchison

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## SOUPER BOWL OF CARING OFFERING February 3

During coffee hour next Sunday (February 3), our youth will be collecting the annual Souper Bowl of Caring Offering. This national one-day event receives monetary and food donations that remain entirely within local communities to help address the issue of hunger experienced by our neighbors. This effort is based on a line of prayer by the youth leader in the original Souper Bowl of Caring event.

*"Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat."*

Please come prepared to support our youth in this effort.



### *Steve's Slant continued...*

On another bright note, I believe the church staff functioned very effectively together last year, despite the fact that our core staff -- Donna, Vivian, Grace and myself -- had only been together for a relatively short period, and despite various comings and goings throughout the year. For example, when we needed help in the church office, Leslie Sayer filled in so capably it felt like we did not miss a beat. Leslie has now taken over from Jerry Vaneman as our church treasurer. Similarly, Barbara Escalante took over from Nan Woodard as our church bookkeeper and continued the good work Nan began of keeping track of our financial life.

But of course we are now facing another big staff transition this year, having said good-bye to Vivian at the end of December. We have assembled a strong team to search for our next Director of Music, and I'm hopeful we will have that position filled soon. (Please see the initial report from the team on page 4.)

Given all the losses in membership we experienced in 2018, our financial life is remarkably stable. We finished the year with a deficit of \$3,300 but we expected that. The shortfall was due to unbudgeted expenses related to providing administrative coverage during a medical leave, and to some professional fees for consulting services centered around improving our accounting and financial practices. Absent these extra-budgetary expenses, we would have finished 2018 solidly in the black.

As for the year ahead, our stewardship campaign for 2019 fell just two percent short of meeting our challenge goal. But that goal had an additional \$4000 built in over last year's expense budget, which was meant to help get a jump start on "paying ahead" on Grace's salary, in anticipation of the day when the Waldrop monies which currently subsidize her salary run out.

In that regard, it was a true challenge budget, meant to help us prepare to cover future expenses. Earlier this month, Session removed that \$4000 from the mix and approved a balanced budget, between income and expenses, for 2019. Your ongoing faithful support of this church, its programs and staff, made that balanced budget possible. So I want to offer my personal word of thanks here for your generosity. So that's where we are right now -- and why I characterize this moment in our history as a mixture of stability, change, opportunity and challenge. On balance we are a healthy congregation but, like any organization, we will need to make investments in our future in order to remain healthy, and to continue providing vibrant ministry here in this beautiful valley.

To that end, we are planning to convene another leadership retreat at William Black Lodge in March, to review our Ministry Plan and to renew our commitment to meeting its goals.

But in the year to come, I also want to invite every member of our congregation to give some thought to how you, as an individual, or as a member of an action or ministry team, can help us reach out to the wider community and invite new people to become involved in the life and ministries of our wonderful congregation.

We have some challenges ahead of us, but I genuinely believe we can meet them. Because time and time again I have seen that when we pool our collective resources, there is nothing we can't do!

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### **SWANNANOVA VALLEY MLK BREAKFAST**

This year's Prayer Breakfast honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., will be held at Camp Dorothy Walls, on Saturday, February 9, 2019, starting at 8:00 a.m. It would be wonderful if our congregation could show our strong support for the life and legacy of Dr. King. Tickets are available at [www.svmlk.org](http://www.svmlk.org).

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2019

At Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church we are mothers and fathers, single and married, gay and straight, young and old, black and white, prosperous and poor, uncertain and sure, broken and whole-and everything in between.

Together we are the many faces of humanity, yet as a joyful, caring and loving community of faith, we are committed in our diversity to be one in Christ!

Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church  
CPO 6355/PO Box 9000  
Asheville, NC 28815-9000  
01-0001-1320

## *The Extended Family*