

THE EXTENDED FAMILY

Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church

Steve's Slant

BY REV. DR. STEVE RUNHOLT



Given that we pray one nearly every Sunday in worship, let me start this, my final installment of Steve's Slant with a confession:

I'm pleased. Not that after writing 220 of them, this will be my last cover article for the Extended Family

I'm pleased, rather, that it is appearing in Advent.

It feels like such a pregnant time for all of us: for you, the members of the congregation, and for me. A time when we wait to see how God's purposes will be born anew in us in this new season of our lives.

Over the balance of this season of waiting and preparation, we'll hear the marvelous stories, every Sunday, that surround Jesus' birth. And we'll place ourselves in these stories, to hear the truth they might offer us in the midst of our busy, complex lives, which we lead in the midst of this busy, complex world.

Then, finally, on Christmas Eve, our Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols. This service is always a special moment for me, the way it ends with all of us encircling the sanctuary, forming a ring a light as we sing "Silent Night". It is among the top highlights of the year for me, liturgically and theologically.

And not so long ago we couldn't do. Remember? It's been three years ago now, but in December 2020 our doors were still closed to in-person worship. What I thought was going to be one of the saddest moments in my ministry – an empty sanctuary on such beautiful and holy night – proved, in the end, to be among the most moving experiences of my entire time here.

We couldn't do it. But we did it anyway.

Several of you came to the church and I filmed you (from a safe distance!) reading the lessons for the service, in an empty sanctuary. I came to your homes and we stood outside and I filmed you passing the light from left to right. Or you filmed yourselves at home, passing the light to one another.

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Steve's Slant continued...

I then came home and uploaded all the videos I had taken, and you emailed me the ones you had taken. I passed all those on to Robyn, and then Joel and Heather added the soundtrack we needed, and they, too, sent that on to Robyn.

She spliced it all together and when it was all done and ready, we shared that service with you and the world on our YouTube channel. And it was among the most beautiful things we did together. (You can still find it there, by the way. Go to YouTube and search for "Warren Wilson candlelight service" and the link will come up. It's just as beautiful now as it was then, and perhaps even more poignant, as some of those beautiful, familiar faces are no longer with us.)

It was impossible. And we did it anyway.

That's always been the story of Warren Wilson—both the college and the church, going all the way back to their beginnings as a farm school and chapel.

It was always impossible. And we did it anyway.

The transition that now lies ahead may feel big and unsettling. I understand that. Mine feels that way, too, to be honest.

But here's the good news: what lies ahead of you is not remotely impossible. Indeed, it is the very thing I had hoped for when I first stepped into the pulpit here eighteen years ago.

I believe what lies ahead of you is a bright hopeful future.

Yes, your staff will look different. But with several positions open – and with Margaret's wise and capable guidance -- you can think about how you might staff the church not just for the present but for the future.

Yes, some things will likely be different. There will be change, inevitably. But change is a sign of a healthy, living, growing ecosystem. True of churches, too.

So on December 31st I will take my leave confident that what was true on my first Christmas Eve here, and what was true on that Christmas Eve when we could not gather for worship in this beautiful sanctuary is still true:

You can do it, and you will do it. Not just because you always have. But because what's been true every Christmas from the first one is still true: the child whose birth we celebrate is Emmanuel, God with us and for us.

Such very Good News.

THE WARREN WILSON BOOK GROUP



The Warren Wilson Book Group will meet at noon on Thursday, December 14 to discuss *This House is Mine* by Dorte Hansen. Chris will lead our discussion. Interested in becoming part of a great community of readers? We'd love to have you join us from 12-12:30 for lunch followed by our lively book discussion. Hope we'll see you in December!



JOYS AND CONCERNS

Our Healing Prayers go out to: Betty Smith’s family, on her death; Martha Dugger and family, on Lee’s death; Derron Daugherty : Beth Newman; Susan Runholt, Steve’s sister; Salyna Morgan; Blake Joslin and his parents, Carol Lee and Brooks; Houston Huggins, Beth Meriwether’s brother; Bartley Spencer, Sandy Brauer’s brother; Jackie Wintle’s sister, Judy Reynolds; Pat Crumpler; Shane Reece, Nancy Garrison’s son; Pat Wilson’s son, Kell; Erika Lytle; Jackie Ligon Cole; Rick Garrison; Fran Roberts’ sister-in-law, Linda Briggs; Flo Bishop; Jon Hettrick and his family; Marjorie Hettrick; Kim Reece, daughter of Nancy and Rick Garrison.



We want to celebrate more joys with our congregation. If you have something you would like to share (birth of child/grandchild, anniversary, wedding or any type of good news), please complete this [form](#) or scan the QR code at the right of the screen to take you to the form.



DECEMBER/JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Hythe Hamilton	Dec. 5	Doug Orr	Dec. 9
Jon Hettrick	Dec. 12	Darrell Spencer	Dec. 14
Emily Pulsifer	Dec. 15	Tacci Presnell-Smith	Dec. 22
Jack Cole	Dec. 26	Andrew Daugherty	Dec. 30
Derron daugherty	Dec. 31	Sandy Brauer	Dec. 31
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	Rachel Sparling	Jan. 25
Elijah Bradley	Jan. 26	Jackie Cole	Jan. 28
Cadence Cowal	Jan. 30		



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY



This townhouse in Arden on Nov. 10 has Habitat's House of Faith #3 on the right and Episcopal House XV on the left. Each 864 square foot unit will have two bedrooms and one bath..



WWPC volunteers Don Collins and Emily and Andrew Pulsifer at the Glenn Bridge Habitat site on Nov. 11. They helped install a folding staircase for the House of Faith attic.



WWPC volunteers at the Glenn Bridge Habitat site on Nov. 10. Bob Gambrell helped finish the construction of a firewall that morning.

HABITAT CONTINUED...

IN HONOR OF ALL FAITH PARTNER VOLUNTEERS

Last month's newsletter included a large photo of the blue and white sign in front of House of Faith #3 now being built in Arden. You could see the listing of 20 faith communities including our Church that are helping build this house with both donated funds and volunteer workers.

What you could not see was a smaller sign below it that says

In Honor of All Faith Partner Volunteers

Once again volunteers from our Church have helped build a Habitat house, this time on Fridays and Saturdays in September, October and November. On behalf of Habitat I would like to say "thank you" to Don Collins, Anne and Jamie Dale, Andrew Daugherty, Bob Gambrell, Ken Murchison, Emily and Andrew Pulsifer, Brent Roberts and Jim Storey for giving some of their time and helping with this important mission project. You all made a positive difference!

I'll add a second "thank you" to Don, Ken and Andrew Pulsifer for volunteering twice.

If the current schedule holds, this brand new green-built house will be ready for Deborah Humphries to close and become the homeowner on May 17. There is much more work to do before then however, so if you might be interested in helping continue the building of this House of Faith, contact Larry Griswold or go to <https://aahh.volunteerlocal.com/volunteer/?id=56039>

MUSIC AND CHOIR

We are happy to welcome Ted Stewart as our temporary Choir Director and Organist as we continue the search for our Director of Music Ministry. Ted has stepped in at just the right time to bring us through the Advent season with choir voices singing. THANK YOU TED!



HANGING OF THE GREENS



SOMETIMES A LIGHT SURPRISES

STEWARDSHIP AND YOU

Sometimes a Light Surprises.

As we work our way through the Season of Advent, we're thankful for the generosity of this congregation as we establish where we've landed at the end of Stewardship. Technically our stated Season for Stewardship closed out with our Harvest Celebration, though we all know, stewardship never really ends. Now begins the stewardship and work of the AMT's Budgeting Team members. Their job is to reconcile our prepared draft budget, with a target of \$216,500, to the current level of commitments received. As of Dec. 4 that figure was \$176,843.96. As you see, the team has some work to do.

For reference the budgeted commitment we've been working from for 2023 is \$209,215; gratefully, we've already received 96% of those pledges this year!

The church's stewardship responsibility is to work within our means. If it's within your ability and intention to send in a pledge form, this would be a great time! You can easily do so on our website as well. Commitments are secure and confidential, as well as appreciated.

Faithfully, your Stewardship Team





Sign up for
BREEZE

Access the Online Church Directory and Calendar anytime, anywhere!

Scan the QR Code for Instructions



The BREEZE app interface on a smartphone shows a calendar for November 2023. The calendar lists events for several days: November 1st (All Saints' Day, Staff Meeting, Fellowship Hall Fellowship), November 2nd (All Souls' Day, Communications Meeting, Zoom Meeting), November 5th (Adult Ed, Adult Classroom, Worship Service), and November 8th (Staff Meeting, Fellowship Hall Fellowship).

NOTEWORTHY EVENTS

Cookies and Carols December 5



Blue Ridge Orchestra Concert December 10



Wassail and Celebration for Steve and Robyn



Christmas Eve Daytime Service

We will have our regular Advent service at 11:00 am on December 24.

Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols

Join us for our very special and much loved Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve, beginning at 7:00 pm in the Chapel Sanctuary. For many, this is their favorite service of the year, ending in a special way that will send you out into the night feeling blessed and connected. All are welcome to this special service.



Steve's Last Service at WWPC

Join us on December 31, as we listen to Steve preach his last sermon at WWPC. Filled with mixed emotions, sad that he is leaving, but happy for his newly chosen direction, we'll listen once more to him as he leads us through scripture and word. All are welcome!



January 2024

Welcome Rev. Margaret Lamotte Torrence



The Transition Team (Janice Collins, Jamie Dale, Rodney Lytle and Dennis Stockdale) and the Session are very pleased to announce that Rev. Margaret LaMotte Torrence will join Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church as our Transitional Pastor and Head of Staff on January 1, 2024.

Rev. Torrence is looking forward to preaching for the first time at Warren Wilson PC for Epiphany Sunday on January 7.

We will have Star Words ready and waiting for you! All are welcome.

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