

# Inside Wayside

VOLUME 62, NO. 10

OCTOBER 2023

## COMMITMENT CELEBRATION

As we approach our Commitment Celebration on October 15, 2023, we are guided by the theme from Matthew 6:21, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart also be." These words illuminate the powerful connection between our contributions and our faith as we prepare for our financial pledges for 2024.

In 2023, your generosity allowed us to make a significant impact in our community. Through your pledges and contributions, we supported those in need, enhanced our ministries, and strengthened our bonds as a congregation. As we look forward to 2024, we invite you to continue this meaningful journey with us.

On October 15, 2023, join us for Commitment Celebration and prayerfully consider your 2024 pledges. Together, we can make a difference, ensuring that where our treasure is, there will your heart also be.

After the 11:00 am service, we invite you to a special Commitment Celebration Luncheon. All are encouraged to attend and share in the joyous fellowship of this day.

As we embrace this journey, let's remember that our contributions strengthen our faith, uphold our values, and expand our outreach. God's blessings abound as you plan your 2024 pledges.

We eagerly await this celebration of faith, unity, and commitment.



## *On Gratitude and Demanding a Better World*

John's Gospel tells us that Jesus came as one "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). These words are comforting, but also speak a tension in Christian spirituality. Sometimes we wish to live with complete grace with others, but uncomfortable truths need to be spoken among broken systems and abusive relationships. And often, we can sacrifice grace for the sake of telling hard truths. The challenge is to live in the balance of living and speaking the truth in a genuine spirit of grace. Many parts of our walk with Jesus involve tensions and balance like this.

In Jesus' parable of the workers in the field (Matthew 20:1-14), we experience a story that illustrates resentment's ability to extinguish gratitude. The landowner has ensured the personal security and fortune of all workers, but those who worked the longest are embittered that they are paid the same as those who arrived late.

Gratitude is a tricky concept, especially as it is abused by so many who are uncomfortable with the grief and pain of others or who attempt to justify unjust social and economic arrangements: *You ought to be grateful!* After preaching about resentment's power to drown gratitude, I had conversations with some Waysiders about some of the pain hanging over them: dreadful diagnoses, hurtful relationships, violence and injustice in the world. Are we supposed to be *grateful* among such brokenness?

Gratitude is not a dismissal of pain nor an acceptance of injustice. We live in a broken world that demands healing, reconciliation, and correction. Jesus comes both to forgive and to proclaim a kingdom that will set the world right. We will grieve, suffer, and be angry; we should be. Gratitude does not diminish those realities, but asks us to be in touch with a reality deeper than the world's hurt: that creation, life, existence itself is a gift; that our lives and world are filled with gifts that bear witness to the generosity, faithfulness, and love of God. Suffering and wrong are interwoven into all things, but we do not lose sight of the original goodness of a world made in love. Our orientation to that reality—known as gratitude—grounds us in that goodness and love, gives us eyes to recognize the giftedness that is life. Gratitude reassures us in hope as we work for healing in our world. It preserves our hearts from succumbing to resentment as we truthfully acknowledge what demands healing and correction.

May we all walk in wisdom as we live in the tensions of grace and truth, righteousness and peace, and gratitude in the midst of a world desperately out of whack.

### BUDGET BYTES from the Budget/Finance Committee

We will make this a quick report on August's financial picture. The official August revenue numbers do not reflect the income generated from your *Erie Gives* donations because we did not receive our check from The Erie Community Foundation until after August 30. On paper it looked like receipts were short by (\$140,000) for the month but when you read the "Budget Bytes" detailing September's finances in next month's newsletter, you will get a better picture of where we stand in terms of revenue. (For an early preview, you can read about those *Erie Gives* numbers elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Another revenue source continues to perk along and that is the Per Capita Appeal. We have surpassed our goal of \$6,000 by \$1,000, yet in August we received an additional \$126 which is gratifying. Each additional donation helps to whittle down our on-going budget deficit, so if you have not contributed your \$33 per each confirmed member of your family, we will happily receive your gift through December.

Expenses for August showed a savings of \$8,000; however, a portion of that will go right back out in September to cover some August bills that were held off. Therefore, we will also have a better picture of where we stand on expenses in September's report.

Thanks be to God for guiding us through all the ups and downs of this journey to advance God's kingdom through Wayside. We are never alone on this path and there is no uncertainty about that.

### FINANCIAL REPORT

**AUGUST REV \$18,819.09    AUGUST EXP \$33,915.75**

**YTD REV     \$266,400.13     YTD EXP    \$356,757.13**

### NOISY OFFERING

The third Sunday of each month, bring your spare change to make a joyful noise to support our monthly brown-bag lunches for the homeless.



### ERIE GIVES 2023 ANOTHER SUCCESS FOR THE COMMUNITY & FOR WAYSIDE

*Erie Gives* again received tremendous support from the Erie community, topping last year's total, as it has for the past 13 years in a row (\$8,269,362 from 10,234 donors benefitting 492 nonprofits). 93 Waysiders contributed to the success of this annual fundraiser sponsored by The Erie Community Foundation, both in terms of the gifts you gave to benefit Wayside's ministry and mission efforts, as well as your support through your donations to other local nonprofits (our +2 concept).

We received a check from *Erie Gives* for \$159,150 which included \$7,936 in matching funds. \$30,000 of those monies are prepaid 2024 pledges and thus will be held in reserve. 25% of the matching funds (\$1,984) will be directly returned to the community via our mission allocations, as determined by the Outreach Committee. The balance of this match will enable us to support other Wayside programs and mission opportunities, all made possible by your gifts. Thanks to all Waysiders who were able to generously support *Erie Gives* in 2023.



## WAYOUTH EVENTS OCTOBER 2023 Grades 6-12

### October 1

Mission Trip Introduction—The Boston Project Ministries—during Sunday School

### October 28

Mercy Center Halloween Event

## ISSUES OF FAITH

Issues of Faith meets Sundays at 9:45 in Room 18 for stimulating conversations about spirituality and social justice. Upcoming topics include:

**October 1** Jamie Borowicz, Ph.D. A morning of art

**October 8** "Lake Erie, Our Kin": Part 1 We will watch the first episode in this WQLN series and have a talk-back with one of the activists working to protect our lake. Mike Campbell, PhD. Professor of Biology, Mercyhurst University.

**October 15** "Lake Erie, Our Kin": Part 2 We will watch the second part of this WQLN series and have a talk-back with another local activist, Art Leopold

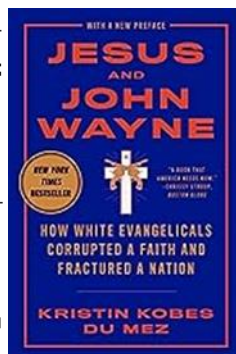
**October 22** Congregational Meeting

**October 29** Gary Larson, "Trees"

## RAUCOUS READERS

The Raucous Readers (Wayside Book Club) will be discussing *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation* by Kristin Kobes Du Mez. The author is a professor of history at Calvin University in Michigan and has written a "paradigm-influencing" book (*Christianity Today*) that could transform our understanding of white evangelicalism in America. It provides a sweeping history of the last 75 years of white evangelicalism and offers the thesis that evangelicals have worked to replace the Jesus of the Gospels with an idol of rugged masculinity and Christian nationalism.

Linda Lorah will be leading the discussion on October 24 at 7 PM in the Parlor and all are invited. Contact Mary Marsh with questions (mmarsh43@gmail.com or 814-392-3241).



## WOW CLUB

WOW Club, Wayside's fellowship for 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders is back. Every Wednesday we come together to build relationships, explore our faith, and celebrate life together. See you then!

Normal Wednesday Schedule:

4:00 Snack

4:15-5:00 Choir Practice

5:00-6:00 Club Activities

6:00 Wayside Dinner

For weekly reminders, contact Pastor Nathan at [nathan@wayside-erie.org](mailto:nathan@wayside-erie.org)

## OCTOBER

- 4 Presque Isle Hike to see Eagles' Nest
- 11 Celebrating Diversity with Shayla Jones, Pt. 1
- 18 Distribute Food Pantry Drive Letters to Neighborhood
- 25 Cook Dinner

## REFORMATION SUNDAY

October 29

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted his Ninety-Five Thesis on the doors of the Wittenberg Cathedral. These propositions, which disputed Church practices of the time sparked the idea that the Church could be questioned. Over time, this sparked a movement known as the Reformation, which went in several different directions, but was based on the idea that the Church's authority could be questioned based on the teachings of scripture.

That movement would eventually move throughout Europe. Scottish Reformers would find their way to America, where they established what would become the Presbyterian Church.

On October 29, Wayside will honor the historic legacy of the Reformation and the Presbyterian Church in two ways:

- All are invited to wear Tartan plaid to worship
- Bibles will be gifted to 3-year-olds and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders



# News from Presbyterian Women



## SOPHIA CIRCLE

**Sophia Circle meets on October 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm in the Parlor.**

We will be studying Lesson Two- The Exorcism in Geraga. The scripture is Luke 8:26-39. The main idea is Jesus' presence and human vulnerability can result in a personal and communal transformation. All women are invited to attend! If you have any questions, please contact Karen Haas 814-397-1619.



*The Healing of the Demon-possessed Man by Julia Stankova*

## ELIZABETH CIRCLE

Thursday, October 26

11:30 AM

Wayside Parlor

## LUNCH BUNCH

Thursday, October 12

Noon

Location TBD

## SPAGHETTI SUPPER

Each year Presbyterian women sponsors a Spaghetti Supper to benefit the Ghana Partnership of Lake Erie Presbytery. This year our supper will be held on **Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>**. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend you will enjoy a delicious meal and help forge our bond with Presbyterian brothers and sisters in Ghana. All donations will go to the Ghana partnership.



## BAKERS NEEDED

The Wayside Presbyterian Women will again be having an **Election Day Bake Sale** at the church on **November 7**. Please support our mission fund by baking pies, breads or cookies. Items can be brought to the church on Sunday, Monday or early Tuesday morning.

You can also stop in to make a purchase even if this is not your voting place. Call Pattie Pora at (814) 449-3271 with any questions.

## PW 4<sup>TH</sup> QUARTER BUSINESS MEETING

Presbyterian Women will hold our 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Meeting after church on **Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>** in the parlor. A light lunch will be served. We will discuss our end of year activities and plan for next year. All women are welcome to attend!



## BAKED POTATO DINNER FOR CROP A BIG SUCCESS!!

The Potato Dinner chaired by Karen Sidorowicz and Pattie Pora was excellent as usual! Lots of yummy toppings were brought in and everyone had a delicious meal. We enjoyed great fellowship and thanks to the generosity of the group, **\$647 was raised for the Wayside Crop Team!** Thank you to everyone who brought toppings and donated to CROP – together we are helping fight hunger!



Linda Lorah asking Sister Rosemary O'Brien to sign letters to our Senators to pass the Farm Bill.



## HAVE YOU MET THE DIEHLS YET?

Mark and Roxanne are new members of Wayside who live right in the neighborhood on Wilkins Road. Mark says they liked Wayside after their first visit and their visit with James. Mark grew up in the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church and Roxanne in both Lutheran and Methodist Churches.

The couple will be married 50 years this October and their family includes two grown daughters, Jodie Diehl employed by Glen Bay Rehab of Erie and Elizabeth Towns employed by Erie VA Medical Center, a son-in-law Steve who works at Erie Insurance, and finally one granddaughter Charlotte, 10, who attends Fairview Middle School.

Both Mark and Roxanne are retired after long careers. Roxanne worked for Hamot Medical Center and the Barber Center and Mark's career included 28 years at AMSCO (STERIS), as a Plant Superintendent, 8 years as the Plant Manager of Nucor Steel, and two years as a Manager at GE Building 10. In Mark's spare time he was a home builder and remodeler for 20 plus years and a board member of the Builder's Association. In the past, both Mark and Roxanne were volunteers with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Mark as a Flotilla Commander and Roxanne as Recording Secretary for Flotilla 5-9 teaching boating safety and performing boat inspections. Mark is a Navy Viet Nam veteran and his daughter Elizabeth is a Navy Iraqi Freedom veteran.

Mark likes to contribute in any way he can and has already become part of the building and grounds committee at Wayside.

Be sure to say, "Hello" and welcome these new folks and wish them a happy golden anniversary, too.



## WEST MILLCREEK FOOD PANTRY

### SUGGESTED ITEMS FOR OCTOBER

Mac and cheese, peanut butter, cereal, baked beans, spaghetti and sauce, tuna, toilet tissue, bar soap, canned spaghetti, and soup.

All non-perishable items including diapers, feminine hygiene products, and pet food are always welcome.

West Millcreek Food Pantry relies heavily on donations received directly from volunteers like you.

Checks may be made out to "West Millcreek Food Pantry."



## HOMELESS MEALS

*October 21, 9:30-10:30*

Join us as we prepare and assemble bagged lunches to feed the hungry in Erie; contact Pastor Nathan at [nathan@wayside-erie.org](mailto:nathan@wayside-erie.org).



## THANKSGIVING DINNERS

Wayside is again going to participate with other churches and community organizations in the City Mission's Thanksgiving Dinner gift. Many Erie County families suffer from daily food insecurity, and food for a traditional

Thanksgiving Dinner is out of their reach. You can help provide that gift to them. Beginning on October 15 we will have grocery

bags to pick up in the lobby. On the bag is a list of exactly what you need to buy at the grocery store. Do your shopping, put it in the bag, and bring it back to church one of the next 3 Sundays (Oct. 22, 29, or Nov. 5). We will take them to the City Mission, who will add the turkey to each bag and distribute them to our neighbors in need. Thank you for sharing your many blessings with others.





Thanks to Bethany Hurley for sharing the full text of the poem used in her benediction on September 17.

### Beloved Is Where We Begin

If you would enter  
into the wilderness,  
do not begin  
without a blessing.

Do not leave  
without hearing  
who you are:  
Beloved,  
named by the One  
who has traveled this path  
before you.

Do not go  
without letting it echo  
in your ears,  
and if you find  
it is hard  
to let it into your heart,  
do not despair.

That is what  
this journey is for.  
I cannot promise  
this blessing will free you  
from danger,  
from fear,  
from hunger  
or thirst,  
from the scorching  
of sun  
or the fall  
of the night.

But I can tell you  
that on this path  
there will be help.

I can tell you  
that on this way  
there will be rest.

I can tell you  
that you will know  
the strange graces  
that come to our aid  
only on a road  
such as this,

that fly to meet us  
bearing comfort  
and strength,  
that come alongside us  
for no other cause  
than to lean themselves  
toward our ear  
and with their  
curious insistence  
whisper our name:

*Beloved.*

*Beloved.*

*Beloved.*

—Jan Richardson  
from *Circle of Grace*

"Beloved Is Where We Begin" ©  
Jan Richardson from *Circle of  
Grace: A Book of Blessings for the  
Seasons*. Used by permission. jan-  
richardson.com

### Breakfast, friendship, and a little business . . .

The October **meeting of the congregation and corporation** will be held October 22, at 9:30 AM, in the church fellowship hall with breakfast

beginning at 9:15. This meeting is called by ses-

sion to **elect elders and deacons** to their respec-

tive boards for the class of 2026, and members-at-large to the **nominating committee**. Many thanks to the current nominating committee for their diligent and prayerful work, to those finishing their terms in December, and all those who have answered the call and have agreed to serve.



## **Talent Auction in Action!**

A group of Waysiders purchased a chicken dinner from the Shawn and Vic Babcock. The travel to Grove City was well worth an evening full of fun and delicious food!



Amy and Randy Valentine, with help from their sous-chef (son) John, prepared an amazing multi-course feast for 8—a truly outstanding and generous experience!!



The Day, Haas, Grimm, and Twinem diners

If you have a Talent Auction experience to share, email [wpc@wayside-erie.org](mailto:wpc@wayside-erie.org); we would love to see it!





## WORSHIP IN OCTOBER

**Sunday, October 1**

Exodus 17:1-7

18th Sunday after Pentecost

"Between a Rock and a Hard Place"

Holy Communion

Nathan Preaching

**Sunday, October 8**

Matthew 21:33-46

19th Sunday after Pentecost

"Insanely Gracious"

Charlie McClung Preaching

**Sunday, October 15**

Romans 14:1-12

20th Sunday after Pentecost

"Who are we to judge....?"

Mark Twinem Preaching

**Sunday, October 22**

Matthew 22:15-22

21st Sunday after Pentecost

"Render What to Caesar?"

Nathan Preaching

**Sunday, October 29**

22nd Sunday after Pentecost

Verna Ehret Preaching

### WORSHIP LIVESTREAM

Wayside Worship is now being livestreamed each week. You can join Wayside Worship as it is happening at 11:00 (on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/@waysideerie1070>, or tune in to the same link later to view on demand. The link is also included in the Wayside Weekly email.

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Oct 3 Amy Brinling		
Oct 4 Robin Scheppner		
Oct 5 Ella Kruse		
Oct 6 Rick Kocan		
Oct 6 Evan Watkins		
Oct 7 Anthony Kuzmin-Fremer		
Oct 8 Bryce Yahn		
Oct 8 Claire Fair		
Oct 9 Maddie McGill		
Oct 11 Ella Garrity		
Oct 12 Nancy Herold		
Oct 12 Jalane Waka		
Oct 12 Miki Waka		
	Oct 13 Gretchen Kelley	
	Oct 13 Justin Eddy	
	Oct 14 Lisa Moyer	
	Oct 15 Karina Wismer	
	Oct 15 Alex Mitten	
	Oct 15 Kim Garrity	
	Oct 15 Michael Mitten	
	Oct 16 Denise Pollifrone	
	Oct 16 Ella Grimm	
	Oct 17 Josie McGill	
	Oct 17 Sarah Jay	
	Oct 18 Gracie Gehrlein	
		Oct 19 Adam Snyder
		Oct 20 Paula Vilushis
		Oct 21 Denise Johnston
		Oct 22 Virginia Bowes
		Oct 23 Caroline Grimm
		Oct 23 Jenny Martin
		Oct 26 Diane Garcia
		Oct 26 Adam Fried
		Oct 27 Aurora Fuchs
		Oct 27 Benjamin Sesler
		Oct 28 Linda Behn
		Oct 31 Brynn Gleason
		Oct 31 Scott Bastow



## Anniversary Wishes



Oct 1 David and Pam Johns	Oct 12 Timothy and Laurie Brugger
Oct 2 Ray and Paula Reade	Oct 15 Cathleen Norris and John Bucci
Oct 2 Katie and Nicholas Jones	Oct 18 Todd and Mary DeBello
Oct 4 Brian and Staci McGill	Oct 19 Jay and Brittany Shaffer
Oct 5 Ramon and Lisa Watkins	Oct 21 Gregory and Heather Yahn
Oct 6 Karen and James Haas	Oct 23 Tim and Lynn Lewis
Oct 11 Suanna and Eric McGuire	Oct 26 Mark and Roxanne Diehl
Oct 12 Tim and Leanne Keibler	Oct 28 Rick and Sheila Kocan



# October 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 8:30 Early Worship 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Celebration of Worship 12:00 PW Quarterly Business Meeting	<b>2</b> 9:30a Stronger Srs. 6:30p AA 6:30p Sanctuary Bells 6:30p Symphonic Singers	<b>3</b> MTwMM*	<b>4</b> MTwMM 9:30a Stronger Srs. 4p WOW Kids 5p Generosity 5:30p Primary Choir 6p WOW Dinner	<b>5</b> 1:30p North Coast Sewing 6p Alanon Newcomers 7p Chancel Choir	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 9:30a HAAEQG
<b>8</b> 8:30 Early Worship 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Celebration of Worship	<b>9</b> 9:30a Stronger Srs. 6:30p AA 6:30p Sanctuary Bells 6:30p Symphonic Singers	<b>12</b> MTwMM 10a Prayer Shawl Ministry 2p Presbytery State Meeting	<b>11</b> MTwMM 9:30a Stronger Srs. 11a Carrie T Watson 4p WOW Kids 5:30p Primary Choir 6p WOW Dinner 7:30p Session	<b>12</b> 12p Lunch Bunch 6p Alanon Newcomers 7p Chancel Choir	<b>13</b> <b>Newsletter Deadline</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> Commitment Sunday Noisy Offering 8:30 Early Worship 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Celebration of Worship 12:00 Commitment Celebration Dinner	<b>16</b> 9:30a Stronger Srs. 6:30p AA 6:30p Sanctuary Bells 6:30p Symphonic Singers	<b>17</b> MTwMM 7p Sophia Circle	<b>18</b> MTwMM 9:30a Stronger Srs. 4p WOW Kids 5:30p Primary Choir 6p WOW Dinner	<b>19</b> 6p Alanon Newcomers 7p Chancel Choir	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 8:30a HAAEQG 9:30a Bag Lunch Packing
<b>22</b> 8:30 Early Worship 9:15 Congregational Meeting & Breakfast 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Celebration of Worship	<b>23</b> 9:30a Stronger Srs. 11a Mobile Food Pantry 6:30p AA 6:30p Sanctuary Bells 6:30p Symphonic Singers	<b>24</b> MTwMM 1p Newsletter Collating 5:30p HAAEQG 7:00p Raucous Readers	<b>25</b> MTwMM 4p WOW Kids 5:30p Primary Choir 6p WOW Dinner 7p WMFA	<b>26</b> 11:30a Elizabeth Circle 6p Alanon Newcomers 7p Chancel Choir	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> Reformation Sunday Bible Sunday 8:30 Early Worship 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Celebration of Worship	<b>30</b> 9:30a Stronger Srs. 6:30p AA 6:30p Sanctuary Bells 6:30p Symphonic Singers	<b>31</b>	*MTwMM—Music Together with Ms. Mary rents space in our building for music classes for children and their families. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.musictogetherwithmsmary.com/">www.musictogetherwithmsmary.com/</a> .			



### MOBILE FOOD PANTRY

The October distribution for the Second Harvest mobile food pantry at the Federated Church in East Springfield is October 23. Volunteers can park behind the church at 11995 Main Street in East Springfield to begin set up at 11:00 AM. Please see Harry or Sue Hain for more information or sign up in the lobby.



### WAYSIDE MULTICULTURAL DINER'S CLUB

We will meet on Tuesday, October 10 at 5pm at Shish Kabob restaurant, 1202 French St. in Erie. As we have been doing of late, no reservations are necessary, and each person orders off the menu and pays for the meal. Kabob serves very generous portions and has a wide menu which you may want to research on line. For example, they have a Kabob variety plate which they say serves 3 people, but in our opinion, it could feed 4 or even 5. Thus, you may want to talk with WMDC friends and consider doing a meal together, or there is plenty of variety on the menu. We set the meal at 5pm so hopefully you may be home by dusk.

Gary Larson 716-307-5815

### WAYSIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1208 Asbury Road Erie, PA 16505

email: [wpc@wayside-erie.org](mailto:wpc@wayside-erie.org)

Phone: 814-833-7653

[www.wayside-erie.org](http://www.wayside-erie.org)

#### STAFF

- The Reverend James Bernhardt Senior Pastor/Head of Staff  
[james@wayside-erie.org](mailto:james@wayside-erie.org) 828-381-6582 (cell)
- The Reverend Nathan Royster Associate Pastor  
[nathan@wayside-erie.org](mailto:nathan@wayside-erie.org) 814-715-6367 (cell)
- The Reverend Jim Haas Pastor Emeritus
- Nicholas Nasibyan Director of Music  
[nick@wayside-erie.org](mailto:nick@wayside-erie.org) 814-490-8012 (cell)
- David Sickles Sexton
- Karen Pastewka Financial Secretary  
[steward@wayside-erie.org](mailto:steward@wayside-erie.org) 814-600-4586 (Thurs/Fri)
- Jennifer Lockett Office Administrator  
[wpc@wayside-erie.org](mailto:wpc@wayside-erie.org)

*Be who you are  
and be welcome here.*

#### WELCOME STATEMENT

**"I will show love to those who were called unloved and, to those who were called 'not-my-people', I will say 'you are my people' and they will answer, 'you are our God'." (Hosea 2:23)**

Wayside Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) is a place where the mind is nourished as well as the spirit, and where we affirm the dignity and worth of every person. As we are all created in the image of God, we believe discrimination is incompatible with Christ's Gospel of unconditional love. While we celebrate our Presbyterian identity, we acknowledge that we are not alone on the path to understanding God. We invite conversations that move us to seek a deeper understanding of life in the Spirit.