



Westminster  
Presbyterian Church

# THE CHRONICLE



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Trevor A. Lansville  
courtesy of the Department of Defense

## AUDIE MURPHY

By Rev. Dr. Larry Hayward

A month or so ago, Maggie and I were in Santa Fe for the annual meeting of the Moveable Feast Preaching Group I attend. She was able to travel with me this year, and we took an extra weekend to visit her hometown of El Paso, Texas. I had been there with her once many years ago for a rushed family reunion, but this was the first time we were able to drive around the city and for me to see the schools she attended, the homes she lived in, and the church she watched her father found and serve for nearly twenty six years. We also had lunch with a couple who were in the congregation from its earliest years and who still live in their home well into their nineties.

Like many parishioners Maggie admired as a child, John Blankinchip

enlisted in the U. S. Army out of high school, served until his retirement, and is proud of his service. At their favorite Mexican restaurant where we ate tacos and hot sauce, when he realized that we live in the D.C. area, he talked about Arlington National Cemetery, which he has never visited. He asked me how large it is, how much land it has, how long it can continue to receive the bodies and remains of those who have served our country. With repetition that often comes with age, Mr. Blankinchip expressed several times that he would like to visit the cemetery to see the grave of Audie Murphy, his hero, and one of the most decorated American combat soldiers of World War II and well known through movies in which he starred after the war.

When Maggie and I got home to Alexandria, we decided to invite them to come and stay with us and let us take them to see Audie Murphy's grave. They wrote back that at their age they just

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couldn't see making the trip. I doubt that Mr. Blankinchip will ever see the grave of his hero, but neither will he ever stop thinking about him.

The incident made me think a lot about Arlington Cemetery, the heroes and heroines, the flawed and the famous, the known and the unknown, for whom it is their final resting place. It made me think of people from this church and neighborhood who are buried there, of the funerals I have done in the Old Post Chapel or at gravesides. It made me think of how different the fallen are, what their families have become, what memories – positive and painful – their children and grandchildren have expressed concerning them. It made me think of TAPS and 21 gun salutes and the folding and presenting of the national colors to families.

It also made me think of how important it is for us to have heroes – as citizens and as Christians, as a church and as a nation – and how important it is to remember them appropriately, to understand their limitations and their feats and their accomplishments. It made me think of the ways in which all heroes are marked by their time, by forces and beliefs and practices we no longer accept as normative, and marked as well by characteristics needed and found in all eras and that therefore make them heroes.

And it made me wonder: Who will be our heroes today – personal and public, well-known and obscure? How will we remember them? What will we have learned from them? How will we understand the ways they have impacted us, even when we will have forgotten many things but them?

The Blankinchips were probably right to decline our invitation. But as long as he has breath Mr. Blankinchip is also right to remember and honor his hero Audie Murphy.

– Larry



## Recent News From the Children's Choirs

*Saying Hello and Goodbye, A New Group, Celebrating Communion*

As we regretfully must say goodbye to Miss Cambria, we welcome Chris Hagan as accompanist for our young choirs and Westminster Music Academy.

On Wednesdays, our children receive a combination of instruction in basic musicianship, learning to sing beautifully, and repertoire that supports their Christian Formation. We now enjoy rehearsing with four different choirs! Cherubs (ages 4 & 5); Genesis (Grades K-2); Covenant (Grades 3-5), and our newest ensemble, Choristers (girls in Grades 5-7). For the Candlemas service February 8, the Choristers sang the elegant and glorious soprano solo line in the "Magnificat" by Charles Standford. Brava, ladies!

On a recent Wednesday, about 20 families participated in an engaging service of holy communion especially designed for families. Pastor Whitney, Dr. Ben and our string trio (which includes two parents of our young singers!) led our worship together.

All of our young choirs will be singing for worship on Ash Wednesday, March 6, for the 6 PM service.

## Westminster Life Events

*We welcome to the Westminster nursery:*

**Charles Touhey**, son of Katherine & David Touhey. Charles is the brother of Cole & Ryan and grandson of Mike & Susan McAdoo.

**Bennett Stilmar**, son of Scott Stilmar & Emily Knickerbocker. Bennett is the grandson of Ben & Jane Stilmar.

*We rejoice in the marriage of:*

**Grace Stuntz & Stash Graham** on December 15, 2018. Grace is the daughter of Reid & Linda Stuntz.

*Please remember in prayer the family and friends of:*

**Raymonda Wheless Mackay**, who died on December 3

**Col. Fitz W. M. Woodrow, Jr.**, who died on December 22

**Nance Christine Biehl**, who died on January 29

**Geraldine Black "Gerrie Lou" Parker**, who died on February 12





## Tough Questions at the Family Retreat

*For families with infants-5<sup>th</sup> grade children*

Does your child ever ask you a question that really puts you on the spot? Ever find any excuse to end a conversation because there's no easy answer? Jen Cort, educator, clinical social worker and consultant on inclusion and diversity will lead us in exploring techniques and tips for having tough conversations with your children. As we learn and worship together, we hope you will leave the retreat feeling more confident to talk to your child about hard topics such as race, sex, faith and money.

Join Westminster families as we share our stories, grow in our faith, have meals

together, enjoy a campfire and s'mores, worship together, and have a lot of fun. Children say "we love being outside, getting to know other church families better, the bonfire, and the s'mores." Parents say, "it's a relaxing and fun weekend and the setting is wonderful. The programming is relative to our lives. I have found it to be the best way to get to know other families. My kids really look forward to it every year!"

The retreat will be on May 11-12 at Bishop Claggett Center in Adamstown, MD. For cost and registration information, visit [wpc-alex.org/families](http://wpc-alex.org/families). Please register by March 31!



## Many Hands Make Light Work... So They Say!

Can you volunteer once a year?

Your friendly, hard-working Congregational Life Committee would love to have you join us for a time or two this year to help us pull off more great all-church events. We are a small steering committee which relies on extra volunteers to pitch in to help with events. Your commitment can be one day a year or several. As you wish! Coming up are the Palm Sunday Breakfast on April 14 and the Summer Kick-Off Picnic on June 2. We can use all sorts of help from set-up to kitchen help to monitoring serving tables to clean-up. And of course, cooks are always welcome! Just let us know when and how you'd like to help. Contact Congregational Life chair Joy Cameron at [cl@wpc-alex.org](mailto:cl@wpc-alex.org).





## Roadsters (Boomers & Beyond)

[wpc-alex.org/roadsters](http://wpc-alex.org/roadsters)

Nancy Hall Berens, Director |

[nhallberens@wpc-alex.org](mailto:nhallberens@wpc-alex.org)

Please register for events

Nancy or with the church office.

## New Year, New House

Learn from our members about  
the midterms



In January, Westminster members Matt Viser, Dan Judy, and John McArdle teamed up to bring the Roadsters group up-to-date on the implications of the 2018 mid-term elections with insights, analysis, wit, and humor! Matt, National Political Reporter with the Washington Post, Dan, Vice President at North Star Research, and John, Producer and Host at C-Span are always popular guests. You can listen to their talk at [wpc-alex.org/adult-education-podcast](http://wpc-alex.org/adult-education-podcast).

### Coming up for the Roadsters:

- Visit to the Museum of the Bible on Monday, March 18.
- Little Theatre of Alexandria's "The Savannah Disputation" on Thursday, April 25.



## Developing a Deeper Relationship With God Through Nature

Join the outsiders on an event this spring

Open to all fitness levels and ages, the Outsiders meet monthly in the fall and spring to explore the outdoors, fellowship with one another, and develop a deeper relationship with God through nature.

In the last six months, the group has visited a variety of places and experienced a myriad of activities. In August, we traveled to Harper's Ferry for tubing down the Shenandoah River. Barbara Studenmund says, "participating in the Outsiders Group provides an opportunity to spread Christian fellowship outside the church grounds, while having fun. I appreciate both getting me moving outside my typical boundaries and making good friends." Despite rain, the group gathered at Burke Lake Park for a morning of hiking around the lake in September. We saw lots of animals and birds. Ben Hutchens led a Taize Service in the Bloomberg Courtyard in October. In early November, the group hiked at Sky Meadows State Park, toured the historic home on the property, fed chickens,

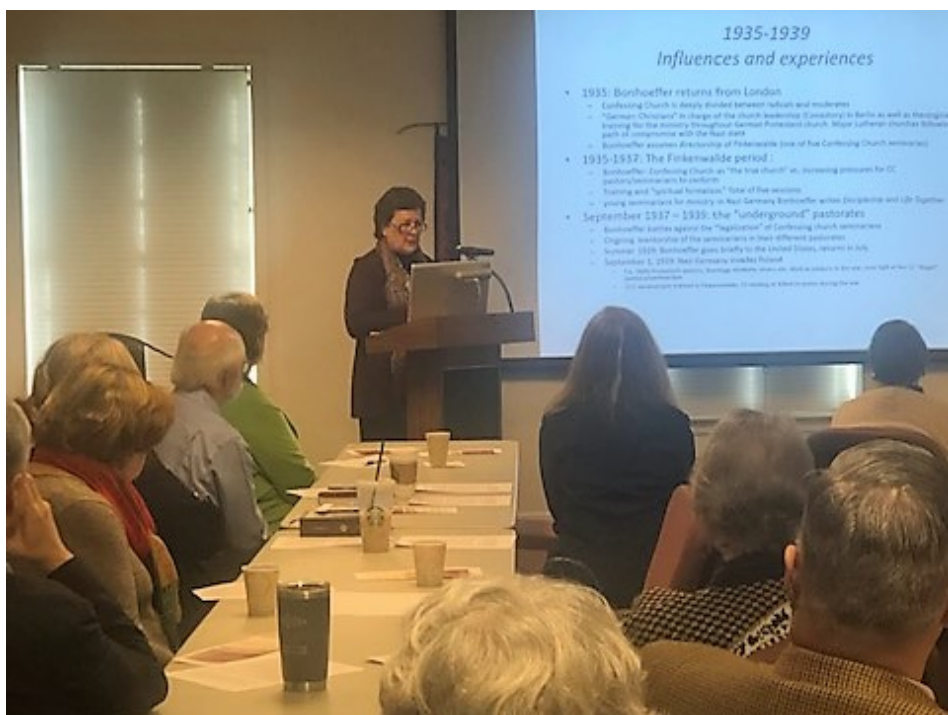
watched a blacksmith presentation, and sampled pumpkin pie and cake.

When our destination and activity is outside the D.C. Area, we take the church bus, allowing everyone the opportunity to fellowship. Kay Torpey states, "For me, being a part of the outsider group brings me into the whole of God's creation: the earth, plants, animals, people together in peace and love as God intended." Cindy Shaw notes, "A good feeling of fellowship with Westminster friends sharing an adventure together."

### Join us for any or all of the spring 2019 events:

- Saturday, March 9, 4:30 to 10:30pm – Astronomy Night at Sky Meadows State Park
- Saturday, April 6, 8:00 to 11:00am – Birding at Huntley Meadows with Dr. Judy
- Saturday, May 19, 8:00 to 2:00pm – Hiking at Manassas Battlefield Park





## Embracing Transformation

### Adult Christian Formation

Displaying an incredible wealth of knowledge, Dr. Victoria Barnett (Director for Ethics, Religion & the Holocaust at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum) packed the Haverkamp Room with her classes on Dietrich Bonhoeffer in January. Giving "... a fantastic introduction to Bonhoeffer, who lived in difficult times like we do today," she traced his life from student to pastor and teacher to his resistance of Nazi Germany. In small groups, we discussed the divisions in the church at this time in history through the contents of his various sermons. Class participants reflected, "the sermons Dr. Barnett chose to share gave us important ways to apply our Christianity personally;" and "the things Bonhoeffer said felt so very personal to me."

Dr. Diana Bermudez, psychotherapist and professional counselor, invited us to embrace transformation in our relationships and parenting skills. We learned about current brain research, challenged our parenting (and grandparenting!) styles, and considered

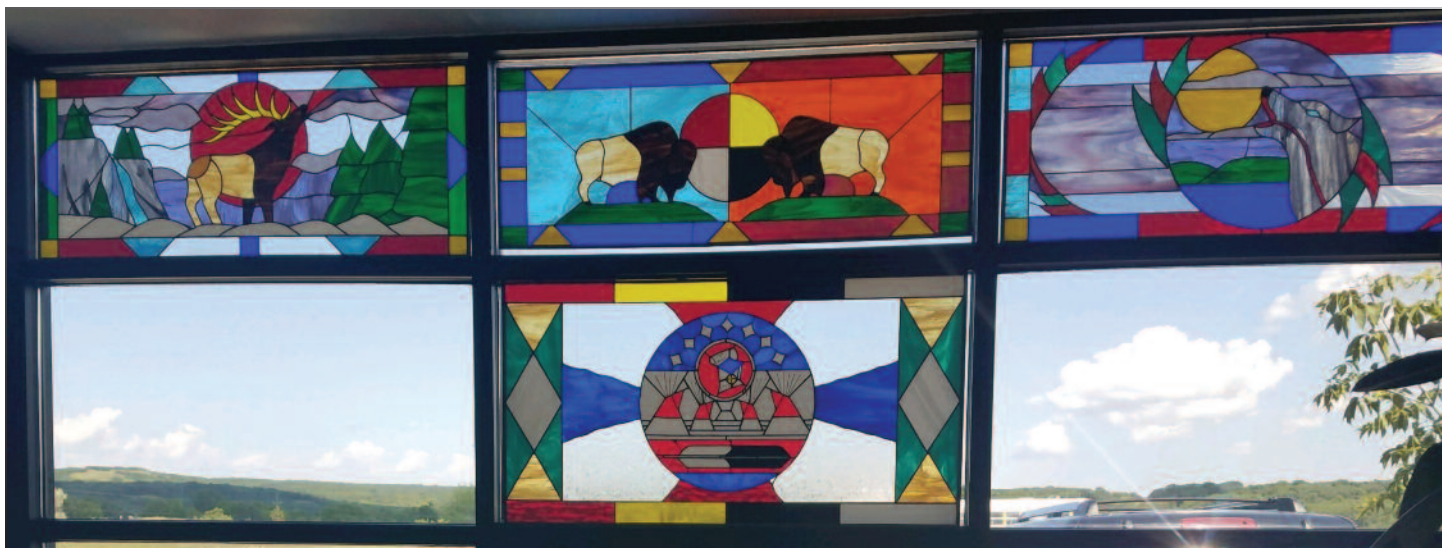
what behaviors we might be promoting without realizing it. Just think about your own ability to bounce back in adversity, to build skills for new situations, to be able to tolerate many emotions. Diana encouraged us to nurture our relationships, as a gardener tends a garden. She called us to identify the negative emotions that ruminate in our heads when we face adversity and helped us conjure our own self-berating as we strive to better manage our anxieties.

Over 50 members joined a discussion of our Congregational Read book, *An Invisible Thread* by Laura Schroff. Thanks go to our fabulous facilitators: Kathy Harkness, Steve Sinclair, Anne Ledyard, Cathy Smyles, Betsy Preston, and Mary Filicetti. Many got to know people in the church they did not know previously. The book certainly led to lots of dialogue, with questions surrounding child abuse, poverty, and perceptions of culture. Could Laura & Maurice meet in that way today? One group said they "looked at God in

the story and asked if it was 'coincidence' or God that brought Maurice and Laura together, versus fate." Another group delved into "whether God's hand is at work behind the invisible thread in our lives," and noted "...not many of us have made this level of commitment in our lives, but we shared how we have answered the 'call' in our own lives and how we have been blessed and been a blessing in doing so." Finally, "Was this just a nice white woman rescuing a poor, black child? And who was rescuing whom?" Laura Schroff is joining us for our annual Dessert and Dialogue on March 3.

### What's next?

Stay tuned for a provocative Sunday morning Lenten Series (March 10 – April 7) with Dr. Kathleen Staudt. Kathy will guide discussion about how we can continue to grow as Christians. We'll look at today's secular culture, at Jesus as the heart of our faith, at practices of faith and what spiritual maturity might look like. What's the difference between being a good Christian and a good person? As Christians do we have to reject other religions? What does it mean today to follow Jesus? Kathy has a long career as a teacher at Virginia Theological Seminary and Wesley Seminary. We are excited to have her here at Westminster to explore her wealth of research and practice as a Christian, teacher, poet and writer. Following that we will have Dr. Paul Cho, Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible at Wesley Seminary, to round out our year of embracing transformation in April–May. Models of traumatic transformations can be found in the Book of Psalms and in Job. He will help us consider the impact of trauma on the formation of the Old Testament as models for resilience.



## Westminster Awards Native American College Scholarships to Seven Students

### Through our partnership with Bdecan Presbyterian at Spirit Lake

In December 2018, our Westminster congregation again provided much-needed scholarships to several members of the Dakota Sioux Mdewakan (Spirit Lake People), helping these students pursue their degrees at Cankdeska Cikana (Little Hoop) Community College on their reservation. Westminster has provided these grants since 2016 as part of our national mission outreach to the Bdecan Presbyterian Church on the Spirit Lake reservation in Devils Lake, North Dakota, enabling students to achieve educational goals that also enrich their community. The National Mission Committee would like to introduce you to the seven scholarship awardees that you support.

**Adrian**, a newcomer to CCCC, is pursuing a degree in Business Administration, with the goal of starting a business on the reservation. He wants to serve as a business mentor and work with tribal members to provide more economic resources on the reservation.

**Loren** is in his second year at CCCC and anticipates graduating in Spring 2019 with a degree in Liberal Arts. Loren plans to look for a job on the reservation, where he can use his education "to help benefit [his] tribe."

**Jaylen** is also in his second year at CCCC and working on his degree in Liberal Arts. He ultimately wants to be a teacher and work with children. He especially wants to help children avoid so many of today's dangers, such as hunger, drugs, and violence.

**Travis** is likewise in his second year at CCCC. Travis was raised by his grandparents as his parents were mostly absent from his childhood. He is pursuing a degree in Business Administration, with the goal of opening his own carpentry business on the reservation to support himself and his son.

**Lisa**, another second year student at CCCC, is pursuing a degree in Business Administration. Once she completes her degree at CCCC, she plans to pursue a degree at Mayville State University and return to the reservation to work for her tribe. She wants to start a youth business leaders group and also mentor youth.

**Julian**, in his second year at CCCC, is pursuing a degree in Liberal Arts and plans to pursue further education in the medical laboratory sciences field. Ultimately, he would like to open a medical clinic on the reservation.

**Shaun**, in her first year at CCCC, is a single mother of five children. She is pursuing a degree in Early Education. She plans to become a teacher on the reservation. She wants to be a role model to her own children and to those that she teaches.

Each of the recipients is working very hard to improve their lives and their community. We are proud of their efforts and grateful for the support our congregation provides them!



# Men of Westminster

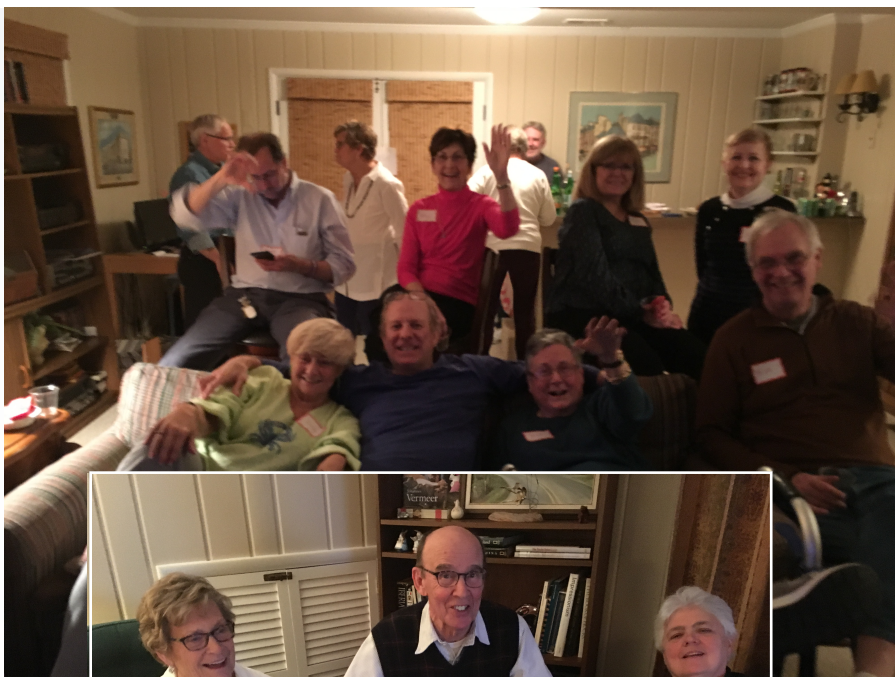
## Join Us For Breakfast!

*Second Fridays of the month*

Men of Westminster sponsors a hot breakfast with a speaker throughout the year on the second Friday of the month. Last year, speakers included Vice President of North Star Opinion Research Dan Judy; International economics consultant and former economist at the World Bank John Hansen; Executive Vice President of International Policy at Frontiers of Freedom Miklos Radvanyi; U. S. Congressman from the 6th District of Michigan Fred Upton; Policy Analyst with the Cato Institute Patrick Eddington; and producer and host of C-SPAN's Washington Journal John McArdle. The breakfasts start at 7:00 AM and conclude at 8:30 AM. Come join us for breakfast – all men are welcome.



The Men of Westminster had a great time on their retreat at Hallowood in February.



Flying Solo friends enjoy fellowship, food, and fun at our annual Super Chili Bowl party!



# The Chronicle

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Dawn Campbell, Production Editor

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Church Office: 703-549-4766 • wpc-alex.org

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Larry Hayward .....Pastor  
Patrick Hunnicutt .....Associate Pastor  
Whitney Fauntleroy .....Associate Pastor  
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## Fun At The Boar's Head Feast Celebrating the End of Christmastide

Lords and ladies came from far and near to the great Boar's Head Feast in the Westminster Royal Banquet Hall in celebration of the end of Christmastide. We dined on delicious Renaissance fare complete with flaming figgy pudding! We were entertained by the choir and young guests with music and more in a special madrigal play. A grand time was had by one and all.

