

# **WELCOME**

**8:15 informal Worship and Communion Each Week**

**10:45 Formal Worship Hour**

**August 15 – Adult Sunday School Leader and 10:45 Guest Preacher:  
Rev. John Welch, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary**

**August 22 – Living Your Strengths Group Meets Following 10:45 Worship**

**August 29 – James 1:1-8 Sermon: “Hard-Won Lessons”**

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## **The Pastor’s Reflections From the Beach - August 2010**

The sound of the sea swallows everything. It fills your ears, your senses; your awareness. The long grey horizontal band of the ocean is there, too, and the gulls swooping down. With the push, push, push of my legs against the sand, the seashore unfolds in homecoming. “I must go down to the sea again, to the lonely sea and the sky... and all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by.”

The beach is crowded today, and so I set my towel down near the life guard chair. The young man sitting in that chair is intent on his charge. Tanned to a deep bronze, with a whistle around his neck, his eyes are seriously on the sea and the dozens of bathers in front of him. There is a chalkboard on the life guard chair. Written on it are: Water Temp. 68; High Tide 2:09 p.m. Shark Week: Don’t Go In The Water.

Hmm.

With a shrug I join the people already playing and swimming in the surf: the toddler at the edge with his beach bucket and shovel, intent on catching the ocean as it slips away (again) between his fingers. The octogenarian, with sun-toughened and leathery skin, picking his way out through the backwash; the teenage girls laughing as an unexpected wave adjusts their bikini tops. The coolness of the water stings. “Shark Week”, I think, and for a moment head back to the life guard to ask with a light tone, “Are the sharks really out there this week?” He looks down for just a brief moment, and I see that he is young – almost impossibly young. “No, ma’am”, he smiles. “It’s Shark Week on the Discovery Channel, and we thought we’d kid people a little. Sorry.”

I smile back and in that brief instant wonder about him. What are his thoughts and dreams? Does he have good parents who care about him? Is he happy? Are his co-workers treating him well? Does he know that God loves him? But he has a job to do, and my job is to not distract his eyes from his charges in the water, so I nod and move back into the sea. The undercurrents are strong today, and all of us in the water keep checking our bearings with that tall white chair. It becomes the anchor for us, and we recognize that in the event of any trouble, the young man sitting in the chair is our appointed savior. Such a burden and responsibility on one so young!

**It is a jolting reminder that when God planned to send the world a Savior, God's angel asked a young girl if she would consent to be central to that plan. And with this girl's "Yes", God sent the Savior Jesus, born a baby in a stable. Both mother and baby so young: so impossibly young.**

**We older folks behold our young people and are often downright frightened by them: their courtship behavior, their proficiency with - and reliance on - electronic gadgets, their seeming lack of caring for older traditions which we hold dear. And yet, scripture commands us to pay attention to the lessons that they so often teach us. The great stories in the Bible remind us that we are made in the image of God, and that God dwells among us not only as ancient and old wisdom, but as young bodies, young minds, and eager personalities.**

**Westminster Presbyterian Church's Youth Group has returned from a week of sharing in God's redemptive presence in this world. At The Pilgrimage in Washington D.C. they have fed the hungry, helped to furnish homes for the homeless, and prayed with the people that Jesus called "the very least of these". Their hearts, minds, and hands were engaged in ministry, and they will have much to share with us at the Mission Trip Dinner on August 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. Join us for the dinner and learn more about their week.**

**In the meantime, please remember to affirm the holy undertakings of young people, and pray for them even if you are not sure what their needs may be: God knows their needs, and ours as well. Pray also for the Young Presbyterian Volunteers who are serving in the U.S. and abroad in mission placements (see the YAV program at the [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org) website), and of course the young people serving in our armed forces.**

**Blessings,**

**Rev. Donna Havrisko**