

WESTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



NEWSLETTER

April 2024

1515 Helen Avenue,
Portage, MI 49002
(269) 344-3966

Email westminsterp@wpcportage.org
website www.wpcportage.org
facebook@westminsterpresbyterianportage



Our Welcome Statement

We open our doors to all persons to join in worship, fellowship, educational programs and service.

We welcome into membership all who profess faith in Jesus Christ without regard to gender, age, race, ethnic origin, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, disability, or any other human condition.



We elect and ordain as leaders in the church persons who are called by God and committed to serving the Lord Jesus Christ in the Church.

adopted by the Session, May 18, 2009

April Birthdays

4 Dave Schriemer	11 Adam Rice	23 Chris Hamilton
6 Marilyn Pierce	14 Eliza Shull	25 Dick Jackson
8 Phil Netz	15 Jennifer Shimer	26 John Best
9 Marta Best	16 Katie Rohwer	27 Jodie Gerard
10 Marlin Gerber	18 Jerry Duggins	29 Lorie Leak
Tyler Ashbaugh	22 Natalie Shull	Val Glasscock
Marie Kerstetter	Sandy Welch	

Anniversaries

3 Mike & Rosemary Jungel

27 Rob & Deb Boven

Get Connected, Build Relationships, Enjoy Exercise!

Play Pickleball (WPC Gym)

Monday mornings, 9-11 am

Tuesday evenings, 6:30-8:30 pm

2024 WPC Walking Group

Begins Thursday, April 4, 2024, 7pm

@ Celery Flats (7335 Garden Lane)

**walking schedule is available at church*



A Goodbye...with our best wishes.

We are sorry to have to say goodbye to our Administrative Assistant Shannon Egan, who will be leaving us this month. Shannon has been a faithful presence in our office for the past year and a half, doing a great job with bulletins, newsletters, powerpoints, office management, and many, many other responsibilities. She has really grown into the position and we will miss her! However, we are excited for her, and the new adventures that await her as she moves to California to live with her sister. We wish her all the best. Her last day will be April 15. Please wish her well and pray for her as she makes this big move.



Carol Pratt (Personnel) and the Session are making plans for interim office coverage and to fill the Administrative position. There may be some changes (or temporary adjustments) in our office hours, so check the announcement emails for the schedule.

A Note from our Administrative Assistant

It has been a great pleasure working for Westminster Presbyterian Church. Though I am sad to be departing from my position, I am grateful for this experience and for the opportunity to grow personally and professionally. I want to thank the pastors personally as well as other personnel for their warm welcome and support from day one. I am looking forward to what lies ahead and am excited to take with me my experiences here.

Sincerely,
Shannon Egan

OUR OFFICE HOURS :

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays: 9 am to 4:30 pm
The pastors will be away from April 4-9



Our 2023-24 Worship Theme is "Intentions"

WORSHIP IN APRIL

~ It's still Easter! ~

April 7

2nd Sunday of Easter

Communion

Guest Preacher: Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom

No Children & Worship today

April 14

3rd Sunday of Easter

Luke 24:36b-48

Children & Worship

April 21

4th Sunday of Easter / EARTH DAY

Psalm 23; John 10:11-18

Children & Worship

Faith Intentions Moment: Ann Cirvencic

April 28

5th Sunday of Easter

John 15:1-8; 1 John 4:7-21

Children & Worship

The Easter Season is a lovely and joyous time in worship: we sing our happiest hymns and think about the ways that Jesus is alive in our lives and our world. Some other special things happening this Easter Season: A guest preacher we think you'll love. A first look at our Art Festival exhibit. And on April 21, we'll celebrate Earth Day *and* recognize our Administrative Assistant Shannon for her service to our church.

Worship at Westminster

Worship is In-Person AND Online every Sunday morning at 9:30 am

You don't have to have a Facebook profile or be a regular user to access livestreamed worship; you just need internet access.

Go to: www.facebook.com/WestminsterPresbyterianPortage/

If you plan to worship virtually, look for an email each week on Thursday with the order of worship & other info (including the above link) for the upcoming Sunday.

Westminster's Worship Team works intentionally to make our services meaningful to both in-person and virtual worshippers, and to help all feel a sense of connection.

Whether you're worshipping in the sanctuary or virtually, do remember that there are more folks sharing that worship time than you can see. Consider taking a few minutes to find out who some of those folks may be... perhaps reach out to say hello to some of them. The Worship Team welcomes your ideas about how we might enrich our sense of connection to one another as we worship God together.

Please send joys and concerns for the Prayer List each week **by 10 am on Thursday.**

The Prayer List will be sent out by email (usually Thursday or Friday) and postal-mailed to those who can't get it via email.

Thank you for sharing your joys and concerns and for praying for the concerns



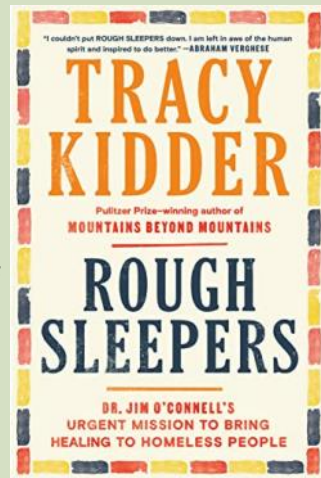
Happy spring everyone!! A reminder: if you're sick (fever, cough) PLEASE STAY HOME and worship with us on line. We do have some vulnerable people in our congregation who attend in person, and we don't need to put anyone at risk unnecessarily.

Thanks! *Paula Schriemer, M.D. for the Pandemic Response Team*

SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION

10:45 am in the choir/Zoom room

We've finished our first winter with the warming center and have begun the process of reflecting on the experience. Judy Paget and Fred Welch will be sharing the learnings and experiences from that ministry on April 7th. We learned many things about how to do this ministry and much more about unhoused people. If you were a volunteer, come and share your own insights. We'll follow this week up with two weeks of conversation about Tracy Kidder's book *Rough Sleepers*, an account of one doctor's efforts to deliver medical care to the unhoused in the Boston area. Several people will be sharing about things that spoke to them as they read it. This is an opportunity to learn more about the unhoused and to have our own misconceptions challenged.



Beginning April 28th, we look forward to hear more about the work and poetry of Westminster's Art Festival participants. Look for more information about specific speakers as we near the opening.

April 7, 14, 21: Outreach to the Unhoused

April 28: Art Festival Artists and Poets

April/May Schedule for Faith Formation

Meet Ms. Leslie after Sunday morning worship and fellowship for Faith Formation. Faith Formation is for kids Kindergarten age and older. We meet for about an hour. We hear a Bible story then follow it up with activities to reinforce the story. We use PCUSA curriculum "Growing in Grace and Gratitude." Parents are welcome to participate. Questions? contact Leslie Ashbaugh.

PUT THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR:

April 7th & 28th

May 5th & May 19th



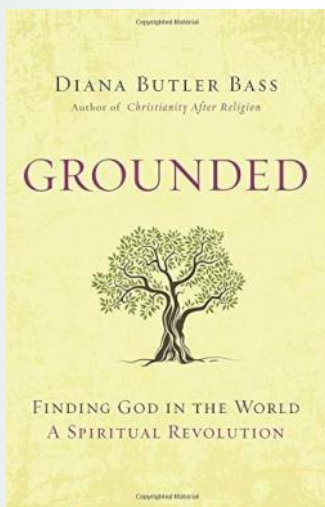
Wednesday Morning BIBLE STUDY

10am at church or on zoom

(No Bible Study April 10)

We're studying the Gospel of MARK

*Contact Pastor Jerry to get weekly email with
Zoom link*



MEN'S BOOK STUDY

1st & 3rd Tuesdays

8:30 am at the church

Grounded by Diana Butler Bass

FAITH BOOK CLUB

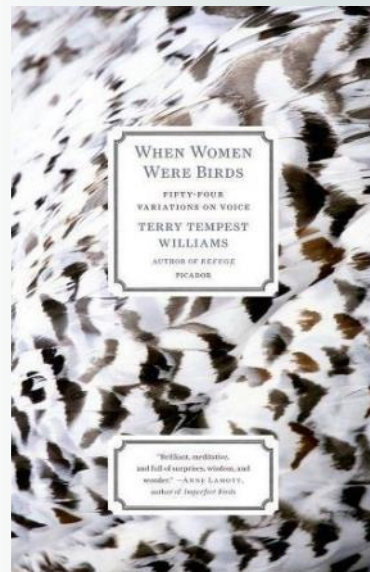
Our May Book is

When Women Were Birds by Terry Tempest Williams

Join us on May 14 at 7 pm

New to FBC?

Contact Lorie Leak to request the Zoom link!



What started last month with snowdrops, crocuses, and hyacinths is picking up its pace in April. Tulips and daffodils are showing off their beauty. Forsythia is in bloom and the trees are pushing out their buds. By the end of the month, spring will be a reality, not just a technicality. There'll still be a chilly night here and there, perhaps even a little snow, and May always interrupts nature's awakening with a frost or two. But the earth is coming back to life after its winter sleep.

I'm happy to live in the northern hemisphere where spring and Easter coincide. It's so much easier to talk about and believe in resurrection when the Cornelian Cherry is pushing out its yellow blossoms, when the grass is turning from brown to green, and when the early flowers command your attention.

New life is happening all around us, and not just in nature. Snow birds begin their journey back to us. People who have been participating in worship virtually are beginning to return to the sanctuary. Toward the end of the month, new art will adorn our walls as the Art Festival opens for its 12th season.

The best thing about Easter in the spring, for me, is that I'm not distracted by the theology that sees "our" resurrection as the "next" life. Spring reinforces the notion that God means to renew our lives today. Belden C. Lane wrote this in *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes*:

"...human beings don't long for another world, far beyond the ordinariness of this one. We long for our own world, perceived in all its hidden glory. We sense it to be filled with a glory we could see if only we had the gifts of attentiveness and the proper rituals of entry.... We want to see the ordinariness of our lives transformed into glory, lifted up to clear view on the horizon of our world, like a snow-capped mountain in the morning sun. **The God we seek is always nearer than we suspect**" (pp. 144-5, emphasis added).

The faith of the church is as much about a “better” life as it is about the next life. And it’s not just about a better life for us. Jesus’ resurrection calls us to new life and to ministry in the world. The many ways we engage the world are “resurrection ministries.” This is true of the important work of our deacons, of our volunteering at Loaves and Fishes, of the new warming center, of our educational programs, and of our worship. The sacrifices and commitments we make are for the new life, a life we only have because God is near.

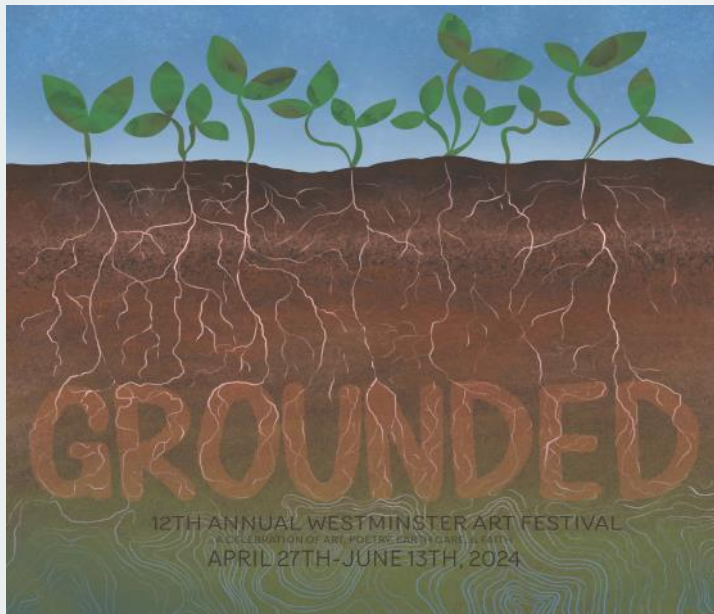
*Peace,
Pastor Jerry*



Pastors Jerry & Janet will be away for a few days of study leave after Easter, April 4—9. Contact one of your deacons or the church office if you have a pastoral care need. We also will have pastors on call for emergencies:

April 4-6 Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom

April 7-9 Rev. Terry Tessari



Our **2024 Westminster Art Festival** will invite poets and artists to submit work that reflects on what it means to be connected to and to care for the LAND on which we live and depend. The art exhibit opens with a **reception on April 27**, from 5—8 pm, featuring a **concert** with the wonderful celtic trio **Selkie**. We hope you can attend (and maybe bring a friend!)

This is a great opportunity to meet the artists **and welcome guests** to our church.

On May 10, you can hear some poetry and learn from our jurors Conrad Kaufman (visual art) and Anita Skeen (poetry) about the 2024 prize winners.

We're also excited to offer a **EKPHRASTIC* POETRY WORKSHOP** with Anita Skeen on May 11. Cost \$20/person (\$15 before May 1) ~ Call the church or email Jerry or Janet to sign up.

**Ekphrastic poetry is poetry inspired by art!*

The exhibit will be on view in our narthex through June 13. Please make time to enjoy it, share it, and vote for your "People's Choice Prize" favorite.

Art submissions will be received April 1-8. Deadline for poetry submission is April 8.

For information about the theme and how to submit work, visit:

<https://www.westminsterartfestival.org/>.

Want to help? Distribute a few posters, help prepare & hang the exhibit, host or contribute snacks for an event, make a \$ donation, invite a friend to enjoy some art and/or music with you.

Talk to Miriam Duggins or Jodie Gerard for more info.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE NEWS

EASTER BRUNCH is Sunday, March 31st right after church. Please join us - even if you didn't sign up! We hope to see you there!

You may have noticed that Coffee Plus is using our "real dishes" and not paper products. This is an intentional effort on our part to be greener and to generate less waste. The mugs and plates are used and then returned to the bus tub, where the clean up volunteer(s) wash them in the dishwasher, and return them to their carts for the next week's set up. You are also welcome to bring in your personal travel mug for coffee - that will save on the washing of dishes - just remember to take it home with you!

We are piloting this program right now to see how it goes. If you want to sign up, but know that you don't have the extra time to do the dishes, you are still allowed to use paper cups and/or plates.

If you would like to sign up for either set-up or clean-up for Coffee Plus using our "fine china," please put your name down on a Sunday that is convenient for you. If you have questions, or need some training on the dishwasher - or coffee maker - please see Sandy Welch, Jayme Ruimveld or Paula Schriemer.



CRAFT NIGHT



Calling all crafters! We meet the 4th Monday of the month in the craft room from 6:30—9 pm. Come for all or part of the time and work on your craft project or just visit. We meet next April 22nd.

Presbyterian Women Event

Presbyterian Women is sponsoring a night at The Art Bayou on Tuesday, April 16, 6-8 pm. You have the opportunity to pick a ceramic piece (varying prices) and paint it. Staff will glaze and fire it. Contact Leslie Ashbaugh to sign up. Minimum of 10 people needed. Please join us!



RACIAL EQUITY GROUP

Members of our congregation (and others interested) are invited to attend a meeting of the Just Sanctuary Group at First Presbyterian Church, Kalamazoo (321 W. South St.) on Saturday, April 27, 10-11:30 am. This event will feature the organizers of the Justice League of Greater Lansing, founder Willye Bryan and President Prince Solace. The Justice League is working to address the impact of slavery, fostering relationships and reparations to boost wealth equity for African Americans in Lansing. They link faith with racial justice, promoting healing and unity.



Several of us from Westminster's Racial Equity group plan to attend . If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to Paula or Cindy and so they can let the Just Sanctuary group leaders know.

MATTHEW 25

THOUGHTFUL THEATRE

The Racial Equity Discussion Group invites you to attend the Face Off Theatre Company production, "**Northstar,**" at the **Jolliffe Theatre** at The Epic Center on Saturday, April 27 at 2 pm. Tickets are \$5 and you can purchase them on their website or call the box office directly (see info below). Contact Barb Daniels for more information, if you are interested in attending this historical coming-of-age drama, and/or you want to carpool. We have two other events coming up that the Racial Equity Discussion Group invites you to attend:

June 23 "Ain't Misbehavin'"

August 18 "Bambiland"

For information and purchasing tickets:

Visit <https://www.faceofftheatre.com/> or call the box office at 269-250-6984.

Learn about justice and peace concerns through online book discussions the second Monday every other month, 6:30-8:30 pm on Zoom. An opportunity for readers, advocates and **Presbyterian Women** to learn and respond. It's free to participate, but registration is required. You will receive questions for reflection/discussion, as well as a Zoom link, 24 hours prior to each session.



To register for one of the following book discussions, go to presbyterianwomen.org/justice.

May 8 *A Place Called Home: A Memoir* by David Ambroz

May 13 *Transforming: The Bible & the Lives of Transgender Christians* by Austen Hartke

WARMING CENTER

Our Warming Center continued to serve unhoused folks in our community Tuesday and Thursday each week through the end of March, offering a warm space, delicious lunches, and a place to feel comfortable with good conversations, warm showers if needed, jigsaw puzzles, and pickleball. On any given day, we have had between one and 17 patrons. Our last day of service was March 28.

We continue to learn how to serve our neighbors as a Matthew 25 congregation. It is clear that there is a need in our community to serve those who do not have housing. We understand more about the needs and concerns of those who are homeless. We discovered that our location is a challenge, and, with a special donation, were able to rent a van to pick up individuals at downtown Kalamazoo sites. We've also built relationships with others in the community who serve the unhoused.

Many thanks to those who have volunteered to help at the Warming Center. We have greeters, kitchen staff, and a lead person, along with a hired security officer. Everyone has done a great job of helping our patrons feel welcome. Several patrons have stated that they appreciate the work we are doing for them with the biggest compliment being, "You make us feel human." Leads Fred Welch and Judy Markusse Paget have done an outstanding job of problem solving and coordinating services.

We appreciate the support received from donors including Biggby Coffee on Portage Road near the airport (go there!), and also from grants provided by the Presbytery of Lake Michigan and the Synod of the Covenant.

We will review this season's efforts with our volunteers to see how we can improve. We plan to build on what we have learned and the connections we've made to offer the Warming Center again next winter.

Serving our neighbor is our call and mission. What a great way to use our facility and provide a warm place, generous hospitality, and lunch with those in need!



MORE MISSION NEWS



AACORN

Westminster is a big supporter of AACORN

Community, the working farm that is a program for

adults with autism. We have three people on the Board (John Best, Francis Cirvencic, and Jeanne Trompeter) and Leana Best is the longest serving staff member. We also offer their goat milk soap for sale in the narthex. But many folks have never visited the farm, so we are planning a field trip. We want to go a few weeks after the baby goats are born because there is not much that is cuter. The date will depend on when the baby goats are born, but it will probably be on a weekend in April or early May. Everyone is invited! The farm is located at 6409 South 34th Street, Kalamazoo. Contact Jeanne Trompeter for more information about the trip.

For more about the program at AACORN, go to www.aacorncommunity.org.

Walk to End Homelessness

There is an urgent affordable housing crisis in Kalamazoo.

Please join other walkers at Growlers Stadium, 251 Mills Street, on Saturday, April 13th 2024 at 10 am for a 5K Walk to End Homelessness to raise funds for Housing Resources, Inc. Register online at www.housingresourcesinc.org.

Contact Barb Daniels for more information.



Westminster has been certified as an **Earth Care Congregation** by the Presbyterian Church (USA) for over ten years. We have just received our certificate for 2024. We are one of 331 churches in our denomination to be recognized for our care of God's creation. More information and a map of all of the Earth Care congregations can be found at www.pcusa.org/earthcarecongregations.



HOPE FOR CREATION ~ 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

How can we be Earth Healers?

Soup Dinner and Climate Conversation
with Debra Reinstra, author of *Refugia Faith*



May 2

6 - 8 PM

RSVP at info@hopeforcreation.net

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
345 W MICHIGAN AVE, KALAMAZOO

RECYCLING! Styrofoam and more!

Mayors' Riverfront Park, 251 Mills St 49048 ~ April 20 from 10 am -1:00 pm

Always wondered what to do with your Styrofoam from packaging or carry-out containers? Kalamazoo has Styrofoam recycling now! Better yet, you can bring your Styrofoam to the church and drop it off in the back hallway (by the kitchen foyer). Recycling is quarterly, and John & Eileen Best take the bag of Styrofoam to Mayors' Riverfront Park. Dart (Mason MI) takes the recycled containers and packaging to their facility to be cleaned. They are then sent to a manufacturer that uses it to make premium picture frames and many other products.

Styrofoam can take up to 1,000 years to decompose and has neurotoxins that are dangerous to the environment.

A couple rules apply:

Items with the number 6 on the bottom of a container can be recycled.

Check out the website below for guidelines for recycled items:

<https://www.kalamazoocity.org/Residents/Waste-Recycling>



Help needed!

There will be Building & Grounds outside clean-up on Saturday, May 4, from 9-12.

Westminster Staff

Reverend Janet Robertson Duggins	jerryorjanet@wpcportage.org
Reverend Jerry Duggins	jerryorjanet@wpcportage.org
Parish Associate - Reverend John Best	johnmbest@gmail.com
Pastor Emeritus – Reverend Richard Jackson	
Engagement & Communications—Matt Ray	matt@wpcportage.org
Sunday School Coordinator – Leslie Ashbaugh	lesliea83@gmail.com
Director of Music & Pianist – Marie Kerstetter	kpianogirl@aol.com
Choir Director – Jason Zerban	jzerban@hotmail.com
Office Manager – Shannon Egan	westminsterp@wpcportage.org
Bookkeeper - Audrey Curry	bookkeeper@wpcportage.org
Custodian – Ernest Pueblo	ErPueblo@aol.com

Congregational Leaders

SESSION

Kathy Stuu, Clerk; Leslie Ashbaugh, Val Glasscock, Jim Gluys, Paul Paget, Carol Pratt,
Jayme Ruimveld, Paula Schriemer, Fred Welch

DEACONS

Ann Cirvencic, Moderator; Jean Cox, Cathy MacDonald, Kettie Chapeyama, Jodie Gerard
Karen VerHage, Mary Lou Rowher, Val Kirkwood, Nick Pratt

Administration

Finance.....	Paul Paget, Leslie Ashbaugh
Personnel.....	Carol Pratt
Building & Grounds.....	Jim Gluys
Children & Youth Ministries; Faith Formation.....	Leslie Ashbaugh
Adult Education.....	Linda DeYoung
Congregational Life & Evangelism.....	Paula Schriemer, Jayme Ruimveld
Art Festival.....	Miriam Duggins, Jodie Gerard
Mission.....	Fred Welch
Earth Care Team.....	Eileen Best
Worship.....	Kelly Schultz, Val Glasscock, Pastors
Presbyterian Women.....	Kelly Schultz

Worship Coordinators:

Hosts.....	Cindy Green
Ushers.....	Sarah Sullivan
Liturgists.....	Jean Cox
Livestream, Sound & Techs.....	Kelly Schultz
Children & Worship	Mary Lou Rohwer, Kelly Schultz
Communion.....	Kelly Schultz
Coffee Plus	Jayme Ruimveld