

WESTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

NEWSLETTER

November 2025

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Portage, MI 49002
(269) 344-3966

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website www.wpcportage.org
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Our Welcome Statement



We believe in God's generous, inclusive love.

We welcome all who wish to join in worship,
fellowship, learning, and service.

We welcome into membership all who profess faith in Jesus Christ
without regard to gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, nationality,
family or socio-economic status, sexual orientation, abilities,
or any other human conditions.

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, revised October 20, 2025



Please send JOYS AND CONCERNS

for the Prayer List each week **by 9:30 am on Thursday.**

The Prayer List will be sent out by email by Thursday afternoon.

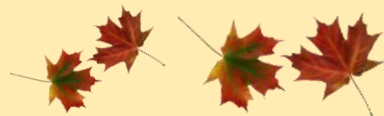
*Thank you for sharing your joys and concerns with others and for
praying for the concerns shared.*

November Birthdays

2 Sara Stuut	17 Tom Hamilton
3 Ernest Pueblo	18 Bud Toornman
4 Fatch Chapeyama	19 Mary Carlson
9 Nancy Husk	Sharon Brouwer
11 Melissa Martin	26 Amy Ruimveld
12 Lizz Cardwell	Fox Ray
Samantha Poliak	

Anniversaries

5 Bernie & Helen Rodee
22 Bob & Jean Cox
25 Carol & Harry Madison



Our core values:

Inspiring Worship
Compassionate Service
Mind, Body & Spirit
Arts & Music
Earth Care
Caring Community
Justice and Peace

TRANSITION TEAM NEWS

As we plan for Pastors Jerry and Janet's retirement, the Session has appointed Kathy Stuut and Val Glasscock (co-chairs), John Kuchta, Cindy Green, Paula Schriemer, and Matt Ray to oversee the various aspects of this big transition.

We've had our first meeting, and identified three goals:

1. Communicate to our congregation.
2. Determine celebration plans
3. Identify things Jerry and Janet currently work on that will need to be done by others in the congregation.

We hope that you'll stay tuned for as much as we can provide you with, and that you'll pray for our team as we continue to prepare for this transition.

OUR REGULAR OFFICE HOURS :

Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays:
9 am to 4:30 pm

please join us at the annual
HOLIDAY MEMORIAL
Candlelight Ceremony

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH, 2025 at 2:00 PM
at **Langeland Westside Chapel** 3926 S. 9th St. Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Langeland Family Funeral Homes in collaboration with Heartland Hospice, Centrica Care Navigators, and Compassus Hospice invites you to an afternoon of remembrance and reflection to honor our loved ones with a candlelight ceremony featuring music, community, and encouraging words, followed by a light reception.

A special acknowledgement to our Veterans will also be included.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT DANA NAUMANN 269-343-1508

HARVEST SUNDAY is **November 16, 2024.**

We as a congregation annually collect food items for Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes. Paper bags and lists of preferred items will be available at church on November 9th. Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes has grown to be the largest charitable food assistance organization in Kalamazoo County, serving over 38,000 unduplicated individuals each year. KLF is the largest independent food bank in Michigan and with help from our community, they provide an average of 850 people with groceries each day. KLF serves Kalamazoo County and surrounding communities with a focus on nutrition, equity, and dignity. Please donate generously.



Helpful items always in demand:

- ⇒ Peanut butter & nut butters
- ⇒ Canned tuna, chicken, or salmon
- ⇒ Canned beans
- ⇒ Rice (white, brown, jasmine)
- ⇒ Pasta & pasta sauce
- ⇒ Shelf-stable milk (dairy or dairy-free)
- ⇒ Canned vegetables (low-sodium)
- ⇒ Canned fruit (in juice, not syrup)
- ⇒ Cooking oil (olive, vegetable, canola)
- ⇒ Whole grain cereal & oatmeal
- ⇒ Granola or Cereal Bars
- ⇒ Pop-top cans of chili, stew, ravioli, soup



WISH LIST

Loaves & Fishes is always seeking baby formula/food, can openers, and birthday cake kits (cake mix & frosting) Please consider including one of these items this year.

November 23 at 5 pm at UCC COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Unitarian Universalist Church: 10441 Shaver Road, Portage, MI

Participating congregations in addition to Westminster: Prince of Peace Lutheran, Portage United Church of Christ, Chapel Hill Church, St. Barnabas Episcopal and the Unitarian Universalist Community of Southwest Michigan.



WORSHIP NEWS

Our 2025-26 theme is "Celebrating Our Ministry"

WORSHIP in November

November 2

Luke 6:20-36; 19:1-10
Ephesians 1:11-23

ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY

Communion

*Our service includes a time of remembrance
for members of our faith community
and other loved ones who have died during the past year.*

No Children & Worship today

November 9

Joshua 3:14 – 4:7

STEWARDSHIP DEDICATION SUNDAY

"Marking the Path Together"

Children & Worship

We dedicate our financial stewardship commitments for 2026.

November 16

HARVEST SUNDAY

"Ministry Is About Personhood"

Children & Worship

We receive a new member.

We offer our donations of non-perishable food items for Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes

November 23

REIGN OF CHRIST SUNDAY

"Humanity and Ministry"

Children & Worship

5 pm

THANKSGIVING SERVICE with Community Choir

"We Gather in Thanks for What Lifts Us Up"

November 30

ADVENT BEGINS!

"Lighting the Advent Path with Hope"

Join us for candle lighting, music of the season, and anticipation.

HELP PREPARE THE CHURCH FOR ADVENT!

The Worship Team invites you to join us after the Christian Education hour on Sunday, **November 23** as we decorate our sanctuary and narthex for **Advent** and Christmas.

We'll have a little something to eat, and have a fun time making our space festive.

All ages are welcome.

Let Kelly or Leslie know you plan to attend.

(Find contact info. in the directory.)





CHURCH LIBRARY UPDATE

Be sure to step into our Westminster library to see the changes! Bigger signs make it easier to find the kind of book you're looking for. New books on social justice topics have been added, and there are a number of new inclusive children's books. Our puzzle library has been relocated here as well. The albums that celebrate Westminster's history have been edited and organized. And checking out resources is as easy as can be. The library "refresh" is ongoing, but we're pleased with the progress so far. Look for displays highlighting what's available... and do make use of this resource. Need help? Ask Laurie Nic or Pastor Janet.



SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION

10:45 am in the choir/Zoom room

We have entered the season of change and gratitude. I am grateful for the amazing colors, smells, and tastes that come with the changing of the season and look forward to celebrating all that I have to be thankful for towards the end of the month. I am especially thankful for this congregation, which enthusiastically engages in study, reflection, and discussion each Sunday.

During the first two weeks of November, we will conclude our study of the book, *Hope Is Here!* You do not have to read the book to participate, so please join us after Coffee Plus for discussion about spiritual practices that help bring hope.

Nov. 23--John and Eileen Best will discuss the idea of Pilgrimage and how it can be a part of our spiritual journey. They will share pictures from their recent experience of walking the Camino in Portugal

Finally, November 30 begins the season of Advent. During the four weeks of Advent, Nancy Husk will lead us in sessions based on *Give Me A Word*, "which refers to the practice of desert mothers and fathers seeking a word or phrase to ponder during the coming season of weeks, months, or years."

The Adult Education Team will meet again in November at a time to be determined, so keep an eye on the "This Week at Church" emails, as anyone is welcome to join us. Have a wonderful autumn, everyone!

Fall 2025 Schedule for Faith Formation

Faith Formation usually meets the first and third Sundays (during the school year) and starts about a half hour after morning worship ends. Children are welcome to attend this "One Room Schoolhouse" type gathering of kids along with their parent/guardian/family members. Bible Stories are from the PC(USA) curriculum and most weeks Ms. Leslie offers a craft, science experiment or activity to reinforce the story from the Bible lesson. Questions? Contact Leslie Ashbaugh.



PUT THESE FAITH FORMATION DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR:

November 2 & 16, December 7 & 21



THE SERVICEBERRY

Abundance and Reciprocity
in the Natural World

ROBIN WALL KIMMERER
AUTHOR OF BRAIDING SWEETGRASS

FAITH BOOK CLUB

Next Meeting: November 13, 7 pm on Zoom

Our November book is

The Serviceberry by Robin Wall Kimmerer

New to FBC?

**Let Lorie Leak know
if you need the Zoom link.**

(Find contact info. in the directory.)

Wednesday Morning BIBLE STUDY

10 am at church or Zoom

We're studying the prophets.
Contact Pastor Jerry for info or
Zoom link.

MEN'S BOOK STUDY

1st & 3rd Tuesdays

8:30 am at the church

*Starry Messenger:
Cosmic Perspectives on Civilization*
by Neil deGrasse Tyson

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Some years ago, a member of Westminster happened to discover (I forget now how this came about) that Jerry and I always make a financial commitment to the church during each year's stewardship campaign. She expressed surprise at this... and I was surprised that she was surprised. Of course, the church pays our salary. And it's true that Presbyterian ministers are not considered members of the church they serve (we are members of the Presbytery), but we have always seen ourselves as part of the community of folks we worship with and work alongside. For us, financial stewardship is an important dimension of being part of a faith community.

I have really appreciated all the folks over the years who have shared, as part of stewardship campaigns, the reasons why they give. Many of their stories have struck a chord with me. So I thought that this year, I would share with you why it is that we give (and make a pledge).

First of all, we give because we are blessed by the ministries of the church. I don't mean by the fact that we get a paycheck (although that's very necessary and we certainly appreciate it!) I mean that we are lifted up by the music ministry and feel close to God in worship. That we grow in our faith and understanding through the conversations that happen in Bible studies, at Presbyterian Women retreats, and Adult Education. That we have been on the receiving end of our Deacons' care. That it's rewarding to be part of planning a program or doing a mission project. That we appreciate Advent traditions, Coffee plus, discussing books, sharing communion... as much as anyone.

Jerry and I also give because we are grateful for the ways this community of faith has loved and supported us – and our family – over the years. Our daughters always felt accepted and affirmed here. My mom (who some of you remember) was welcomed and made to feel at home. We felt the loving concern of this community as many individuals reached out to us in times of grief, stress, and anxiety. We've been grateful for so many congregational leaders who have been beside us when there have been challenges and changes in the life of the church. We have never felt alone.

We give because it's part of what our faith calls us to, and because giving reminds us that everything we have is from God – not ours to be kept for ourselves alone. Giving connects us in a really tangible way to the work that Jesus calls us (all of us together) to do in the world. Giving is an act of faith. Sure, we could (easily) find other ways to spend what we give... but when we set an intention to give, we are

saying that we trust that God will provide for us as well as make possible the giving we intend.

We give because we know it makes a difference. There's no way to carry out all the ministries of the church without financial resources. I think everyone who has served the church in a leadership role has come to appreciate how complex and challenging it can be to manage those costs in a responsible and effective way. It's far beyond what one person or a few households can support. But we see how much can be done together as many give.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we give because we believe in the mission and values of this congregation – your commitment to welcome and inclusivity, to engagement with the world, to learning, to worship, to caring, to service, to justice, to beauty, to the earth. We love the way this congregation wants to know God, tries to follow Jesus, and is flexible enough to go in new directions as the Spirit leads. We believe in Westminster's vision of church, because we believe it can take you into the future with faithfulness, resiliency, and hope. Thank you all for believing in that vision too.

Grace and peace,

Janet



We will have copies of *Draw Near: Lighting the Advent Path with Hope, Peace, Joy and Love* (the Presbyterian Outlook Advent Devotions for 2025) available to pick up at church beginning November 23. If you'd rather have an electronic version, watch your email; we'll send that out the week before Advent starts. There will also be Advent devotions for kids and teens available at church. Daily devotions during Advent is a wonderful way to infuse this busy season with peace and to keep a spiritual focus at the heart of your celebration. Lighting Advent candles at home (like we do at church) helps to create a holy moment in each day. (All you need are four candles, one for each week!)

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE NEWS

Coffee Plus Volunteers Still Needed

Thanks to those folks who have stepped up and are willing to join our crew of Coffee Plus volunteers. We can still use a few more to join us. You are welcome to sign up for just setting up & making coffee OR just for clean up OR both! If you are new to Coffee Plus, we can train you! Please contact Jayme or Val and we will arrange an orientation for you. (Find contact info. in the directory.)

We offer lots of support in providing treats, crackers, cheese and drinks, coffee creamer, and other supplies. We thank you for considering helping us with this important (and very popular) ministry!

Come join our Congregational Life Team!

Do you like helping with events? The Congregational Life Team would like to have you! We are a small, very casual and informal group that meets occasionally. We plan and coordinate events such as the picnic, Breadfest, potlucks, and more. Please see Val or Jayme if you might like to join us!

Calling all worshipers! Do you like hearing the service? or seeing the slides? or watching the live stream? We need at least one more person on each of the teams who help those things happen. Training is provided and you get to stay in and watch the service! If you are interested in being a **sound person, handling the live stream, or running the projector** during the service, contact Kelly Schultz (Contact info in the directory) and she can sign you up (or answer your questions).

A group of 12 will attend *The Colored Museum* at the Parish Theater on Sunday, November 9th at 2 p.m. If you have requested tickets, please turn in your \$20 to either Jayme or Val - or put it into their mailboxes ASAP Thanks! Tickets are still available at regular price through the Civic theater box office which can be reached at 343-1313.

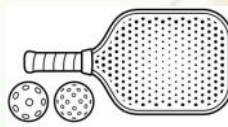
Get Connected, Build Relationships, Enjoy Exercise!

Play Pickleball (WPC Gym)

Monday mornings, 9-11 am
Tuesday evenings, 6:30-8:30 pm
Thursday mornings, 9 - 11 am through 11/13
Friday mornings, 9-11 am starts 11/21

Play Volleyball (WPC Gym)

Wednesday evenings, 7:30 pm





A HAPPY WELCOME to our newest member: **José Soto** who was received by the Session in October. He will be formally received in worship on November 16. He comes to us by transfer from First Presbyterian, Michigan City, Indiana. José is passionate about mission and about being Presbyterian, and has previously served the church as Elder, Deacon, and lay preacher. Now residing in Kalamazoo, he works as a caseworker with Integrative Services of Kalamazoo.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN NEWS

Presbyterian Women Mini-Retreat: "Make Time ... to Give and Receive"
Saturday, November 8, 8:30 am-12:00 pm, WPC

Presenter: Janet Duggins

Enjoy breakfast, conversation, stations for thinking about the theme, and small group discussion. Those interested could also go out for lunch after the retreat.

RSVP to Kelly Schultz (Info. in the directory) or sign up at church.

October Update: A small group of women had fun creating 55 birthday and anniversary cards for our Deacons to send to members in their parishes.

Our Intention Statement

At Westminster Church
we live a whole life in response to God
attentively
together
engaging the world
for the good of all
following Jesus Christ.



adopted by the Session, April 25, 2011

MISSION NEWS

A NEW MISSION OPPORTUNITY FOR WESTMINSTER

Beginning November 1st, Ministry with Community (MwC) will be offering overnight accommodations to 80 adults from November through March. It will be a “bare bones” service - each individual will receive a mat, a blanket, and a lite evening meal. MwC has asked us to help provide evening meals. The Mission Team has agreed to provide sandwiches, chips and cookies twice a month for the overnight guests at MwC. On the 2nd and 4th Sundays, 6 volunteers are needed to make sandwiches in the church kitchen after Coffee Plus.

Please let Judy Markusse Paget (Contact info. found in the directory.) to let her know that you are interested in volunteering for this new mission opportunity to serve the unhoused in our community.

WARMING CENTER AT WESTMINSTER THIS WINTER

The Westminster Warming Center will begin on November 18, 2025. We will be **open every Tuesday and Thursday, 10am-2pm through March**. (Except Thanksgiving Day, Christmas and New Year's Day) We may extend the Center into April, depending on weather.

The Warming Center offers the following services: shelter from the weather, lunch, socializing, activities such as jigsaw puzzles and an occasional game of pickleball, coloring and more. We also offer showers to the patrons. Our patrons tell us – one of the things they admire most about our center is the space. They do not feel crowded. It is a quiet, relaxing atmosphere – a rare commodity if you are unhoused.

We had a sufficient response on the recent mission survey for volunteers. HOWEVER – We could use more! The volunteer commitment may be as little as one shift a month or as much as two days a week. Positions include: driver (requires special training from Metro Transit), rider (assists driver with paper work and patrons), greeter, kitchen help, and general helper. Please let Judy Markusse Paget (Contact info. in the directory.) know if you have any questions.

We have an ample supply of warm sweatshirts to hand out. We could always use THERMAL socks, hats, and gloves.

Thank you for your support! We are looking forward to another successful



ANGEL TREE 2025

This year we will again shop for imprisoned parents who registered with Prison Fellowship. We buy and deliver gifts to be given to their children on their behalf. Angel Tree is as much about sustaining loving family relationships as gift-giving. Westminster participants will provide one clothing and one toy/entertainment item for each of 50 children in the Kalamazoo area. Each gift is \$20-\$30. Tags describing each gift will be available to claim beginning November 23. Watch for an email with further details before that Sunday.



DISASTER RELIEF TRIP TO NORTH CAROLINA

The dates are set for our work trip with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to help with clean up and repair after Hurricane Helene in western North Carolina. We will travel together from April 11 to April 18, 2026. Canton Presbyterian Church will be our home for the week, providing a place to sleep and eat. Expenses will be shared by the participants, our church, and possibly some fundraising. Contact Eileen Best with questions and to be added to the list of participants.

MORE MISSION NEWS

WELL KNOWN AUTHOR TO SPEAK ON PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

Dr. Mark Braverman, a Jewish American author and executive director of Kairos USA, will speak in Kalamazoo on Wednesday, November 5. He will unpack the historical context for the 2023 Hamas attack and discuss U.S. government support for Israel in view of the rise of Christian nationalism. What is the role of the churches, in alliance with Jewish, Muslim and secular groups, in taking a stand against the forces that threaten human rights not only abroad, but here at home? How can we work for peace and justice in the land that is called holy?

Dr. Braverman will lead two sessions on November 5 at the Skyridge Church of the Brethren (394 S. Drake Road, Kalamazoo). A small group gathering for clergy and lay leaders is at 3:00 pm and the talk for everyone is at 7:00 pm. This is an important opportunity to hear an expert speak on difficult topics concerning Palestine and Israel.



The Racial Equity Group will meet on Nov. 30, after Adult Education

Westminster's Racial Equity Group met on October 19. We heard an update on reparations work from the Justice League of Greater Kalamazoo. We participated in an activity examining media resources through an equity lens, noting that media sources slant information in favor of white people and organizations that serve majority white persons.

Many of us will be attending the Face Off Theatre/Civic Theatre joint production of "The Colored Museum" on Sunday, November 9 at 2 pm at the Parish Theatre. Tickets are available online for this open-seating show.

Our next meeting will be **Sunday, November 30 right after Adult Education**. We will have a lunch together and begin to discuss James Baldwin's book *The Fire Next Time*. This short book includes two essays. We will also read another of Baldwin's essays, "The Price of the Ticket." Copies of the book (\$6.50) and the essay are available from Pastor Janet.

We are planning a **community event on Sunday, January 11, 2026 to show the film *My Father's Name***, a powerful new documentary about a woman's discovery that her late father had participated in a lynching as a young man. Put it on your calendar and watch for more information! All of these activities are open to anyone. Consider inviting a friend. More info? Talk to Cindy, Paula, (Contact info. in the directory.) or a pastor.



Update from Alyssa Stewart, the Chief Community Office at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation. She gave a presentation to our Racial Equity Group (+ guests) early in September about the **RX Kids program**.

"I just wanted to loop back with some exciting news for you and the group I presented to: In the recently passed and soon to be signed Michigan state budget, **Rx Kids received a mix of TANF and General Fund commitments totaling \$270 million**, a majority of which can be utilized across three years.

The impact of this is twofold:

1. These funds will **allow the program to be launched in additional cities**, townships and counties across the state that have higher than average Medicaid birth rates (a proxy for high child poverty). As many as 100,000 Michigan babies each year will benefit from this expansion!
2. For already launched communities like the City of Kalamazoo (our County's only area with a higher-than-average Medicaid birth rate), **this means that the local philanthropic and municipal resources raised to date will be able to go further** because starting in 2026 state funds will cover a much larger portion of the cash prescriptions. Once the new state funding starts to flow, our locally raised dollars will be matched almost 3x by state dollars—which means the funds already raised for the first 2 years of the program can now stretch further to fund the program for additional years.

Much more to come in the coming weeks and months, but I wanted to thank your group for your engagement and your direct outreach to legislators!

Your voices matter and were heard!"

Stewardship Sunday is November 9

"Show me the path where I should walk, O Lord;
point out the right road for me to follow."

Psalm 25:4

God is our guide.

Our stewardship theme this year is **"Marking the Path Together."** As we look to the future, 2026 will be a year of transition. We have accomplished a great deal, and we look forward to new opportunities and challenges. We will honor and celebrate the many years of spiritual leadership of Pastors Janet and Jerry as they approach retirement. At the same time we will begin to prepare for new pastoral leadership.

We are so grateful for a caring congregation, a place of worship and music, a place to learn, a place that supports mission and relief efforts, a place that seeks justice, a place to grow together. We are grateful for this congregation's faithful support of the church and its ministries.

We ask for your continued support and consideration of increasing your pledge for 2026. If you have never pledged support for the church we especially ask you to consider what you can do to support Westminster in 2026. Overall we expect an 8-10% increase in expenses supported by congregational giving. Your pledges help us to meet the costs of these vital functions.

In God's economy, every pledge, whatever its size, is significant and valued.

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."

Jeremiah 29:11

Please bring your pledge card for 2026 to the November 9th service. We will dedicate our financial commitments then, and continue the journey on our path together.

The Stewardship committee.



Westminster Staff

Reverend Janet Duggins
Reverend Jerry Duggins
Parish Associate Pastor – Reverend John Best
Pastor Emeritus – Reverend Richard Jackson
Sunday School Coordinator – Leslie Ashbaugh
Director of Music & Pianist – Marie Kerstetter
Choir Director – Jason Zerban
Office Manager Admin. Assistant – Laurie Nic
Engagement & Communications Director - Matt Ray
Bookkeeper – Nathan Schultz
Custodian – Ernest Pueblo

Congregational Leaders

SESSION

Kathy Stuut, Clerk; Val Glasscock, Carol Pratt, Jayme Ruimveld, Fred Welch, Tom VerHage, Alissa Worstell, Mary Anderson and Eileen Best

DEACONS

Ann Cirvencic, Moderator; Jean Cox, Cathy MacDonald, Kettie Chapeyama, Val Kirkwood, Nick Pratt, Barb Daniels, Pat Kurtz and Judy Markusse Paget

Team Leaders

Administration

Finance.....Fred Welch, Leslie Ashbaugh
Personnel.....Carol Pratt
Building & Grounds.....Tom VerHage
Children & Youth Ministries; Faith Formation.....Leslie Ashbaugh, Alissa Worstell
Adult Education.....Lisa Buesing
Congregational Life & Evangelism.....Jayme Ruimveld, Val Glasscock
Art Festival.....Miriam Duggins, Jodie Gerard
Mission.....Eileen Best
Earth Care Team.....Eileen Best
Worship.....Kelly Schultz, Pastors
Presbyterian Women.....Kelly Schultz

Worship Participant Coordinators

Hosts.....Cindy Green
Ushers.....Sarah Sullivan
Liturgists.....Jean Cox
Livestream, Sound & Techs.....Kelly Schultz
Children & WorshipLaurie Nic, Kelly Schultz
Communion.....Kelly Schultz
Coffee PlusJayme Ruimveld, Val Glascock