

WESTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



NEWSLETTER

September 2023

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website www.wpcportage.org
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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

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

OUR REGULAR OFFICE HOURS are Monday, Wednesday, & Thursday, 9 am – 4:30 pm

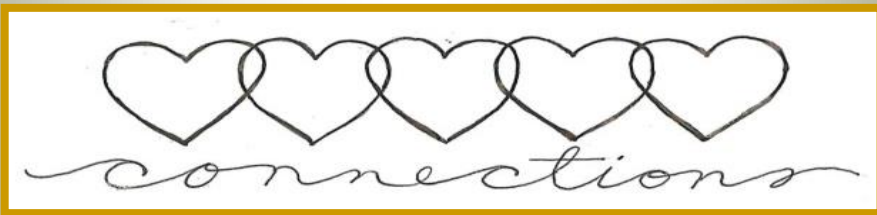
OFFICE HOURS IN SEPTEMBER

Our Administrative Assistant Shannon will be on vacation from **September 14 – 25**. Church office hours will be adjusted during this time:

The week of September 11, the church office will be open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, regular hours 9 am – 4:30 pm.

The week of September 18, the office will be open Monday and Thursday from 9 am – 4:30 pm and 9 am-noon on Wednesday.

The week of September 25, the office will be open Tuesday 10:30 am – 4:30 pm, regular hours Wednesday and Thursday.



September Birthdays

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|----|------------------|
| 1 | Rebecca Netz | 13 | Martin Schultz |
| | Diana Rosa Ramos Garcia | 15 | Liz Jarzambek |
| 3 | Dee Busching | | Jeffrey Cardwell |
| 4 | Beth Myer | | Gladys Little |
| | Chuck Moerdyk | 18 | Tom VerHage |
| 6 | Bill Potts | 19 | Ed Ruimveld |
| 7 | Alec MacDonald | 21 | Bethany Werme |
| 8 | Deb Boven | | Mark Cardwell |
| 9 | Alissa Worstell | 25 | Karl Busching |
| 11 | Carol Pratt | 29 | Bob Cox |
| 12 | Sara Vogel | 30 | Owen Worstell |

Anniversaries

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 2 | Norm & Mary Carlson |
| 3 | Jodie & Mark Gerard |
| 5 | Paul & Laurie Bushnell |



Please send JOYS AND CONCERNS



for the Prayer List each week by Thursday noon. 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 with others and for praying for the concerns shared.

Fall Worship

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 wants our services to be meaningful to both in-person and virtual worshippers, and to help everyone feel a sense of connection to one-another. We encourage you to remember, whether you're in person in the sanctuary or worshipping virtually, that there are more folks sharing in our worship time than you can see. Consider taking a few minutes to find out who some of those folks may be... maybe even 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.

WORSHIP IN SEPTMEBER

September 3

Summer sermon series concludes:
Ecclesiastes: "What gain have the workers from their toil?"

Communion

September 10 **We'd-Love-to-See-You Sunday**... worship in person if you can!
Introducing our 2023-24 Worship Theme: "**Intentions**" **Welcome back, choir!!**

Children & Worship

Church picnic follows the service!

September 17

"Why Intentionality Matters"

Children & Worship

September 24

"What is it you plan to do...?"

Children & Worship

LOOKING AHEAD: **October 1 is World Communion Sunday**

We'll have communion, receive the Peace & Global Witness Offering, and present the Westminster Peace Prize.

CHOIR REHEARSALS BEGIN Wednesday, September 6.

You can join Westminster's choir anytime, of course, but this is a great time to get started! Everyone is welcome, Jason is a wonderful and encouraging leader, and our choir is a fun group. Also, studies show that singing with others is good for your physical and mental health. If you can't participate every week, that is ok; we'll be glad to have you whenever you can come. If you want to know more, our Choir Director Jason will be glad to talk with you.

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS is back!

Sunday, September 24 at 4 pm

Under the portico at the back of the church

Bring yourself and your pet(s) to a service dedicated to our animals who live with us. Each pet will be blessed by a minister and a time dedicated to our furry friends will ensue. All animals should be on a leash or in an enclosure to assure the safety of all.



"Pray-and-Play" Space

Our new "Pray-and-Play" space is taking shape nicely! We've been working to spruce up the room off the sanctuary to create a more welcoming space for our youngest worshippers (and their parents). The area now has new child-friendly furniture and some quiet toys, books, and activities. The new window coverings let in more natural light. Take a peek, and see the improvement! We still have a bit more cleaning out and redecorating to do, but already we love it.

You can help us keep the area clean and limit what other items are placed in it. You might also wish to donate supplies (such as soft or board books, coloring books for young children, washable crayons, or quiet fidget toys -new or like-new items only, please) or funds. See Leslie or Janet if you want to know more. But the most important way to help is by letting parents know they and their small children can use this space and by welcoming presence of little ones in our midst.

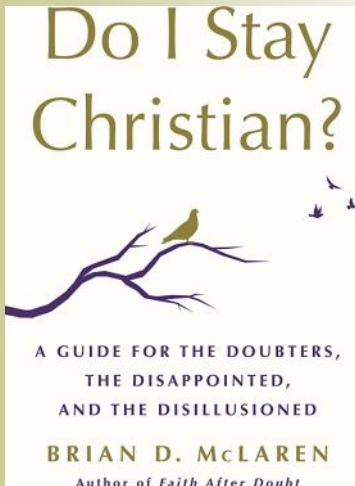
ADULT EDUCATION IN SEPTEMBER:



Pastor Janet invites you to “Interrupting the Bible”

Three Sundays beginning September 17

“Interrupting the Bible” was the way we jokingly referred to the Intro to the Bible course all students had to take when Jerry and I were in seminary. That wasn’t the actual name of the class, of course. It was officially titled “Interpreting the Bible.” But seminarians can sometime be a bit irreverent, so pretty much everybody used the unofficial name. I think the idea might have been to poke fun at some of the scholarly approaches to Biblical studies that we learned about; to suggest, perhaps, that such difficult material somehow interfered with the Bible’s message. But it strikes me in a different way now. I’ve come to think that “interrupting the Bible” is actually really important for our understanding and appreciation of these writings we call scripture. When we “interrupt” Bible texts with our own questions and observations, concerns about the world, insights from science and literature and history and yes, even Biblical scholars... we find out how much there is to discover in these books. When we “interrupt” popular misconceptions about the nature of the Bible with a close look at what this book is (and isn’t), we see what a gift we have in this collection of sacred texts. What I’m talking about here is an interpretive process. And no, you don’t need a fancy seminary education to engage in it, just a bit of curiosity and a willingness to think. I hope you can join me for our first Adult Ed series of the fall, when I’ll lead us in three weeks of conversation about what it means to approach scripture with curiosity, integrity, and intelligence. ~ Pastor Janet



MEN’S BOOK STUDY

Resumes September 19th

8:30 am at the church

Do I Stay Christian? by Brian McLaren

BIBLE STUDY

Resumes September 13th

We’ll be studying 1 Peter

Fall 2023 Schedule for Faith Formation

Meet Ms. Leslie after Sunday morning worship and fellowship for Faith Formation. This Sunday gathering group for kids Kindergarten aged and older will meet for about an hour. We will hear a Bible story then follow it up with activities to reinforce the story. We will be using PCUSA curriculum "Growing with Grace and Gratitude."

Any questions, please contact Leslie Ashbaugh.

PUT THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR:

September 10 – Stay after Worship for Fall Picnic

October 1 – Faith Formation following worship

October 15– Faith Formation following Worship

November 5 – Faith Formation following Worship

November 19 – Faith Formation following Worship

December 3 – Faith Formation following Worship

December 17 – Faith Formation following Worship



CHILDREN & WORSHIP

Do you like kids? We need a few more volunteers to help lead Children & Worship. You would be scheduled about once every six or seven weeks during the school year only. Training provided! Contact Kelly Schultz or Mary Lou Rohwer for more information.

YOUTH GROUP – YOUTH GROUP - YOUTH GROUP – YOUTH GROUP

T. A. G. Youth Group Fellowship will also kick off September 17 from 5:30 – 7 pm Kalamazoo First Presbyterian Church. This Group of 6th – 8th graders will meet bi-weekly on SUNDAYS. Be on the lookout for further details as this date approaches!



FROM THE PASTORS' DESK

A number of people have commented about how much they enjoyed our summer preaching series on little known books of the Bible. Even though the books have been short, preaching on the whole work is a very different task than preaching on a single story or unit within the book. As with any work of literature, saying what a book is about has a different intent than reciting your favorite quote.

One of the things that makes the Bible such a challenging book is that we often don't understand the contexts in which its separate parts are written. This leaves us at the mercy of those who like to quote single verses of scripture to justify their own moral or theological agendas.

There are a host of problems with reading the Bible in this way. Though Janet will be more focused on some of the positive ways in which we "interrupt the Bible," I'm sure some of these other things will surface as well. I hope many of you will take advantage of our first Adult Ed series of the Fall for a different perspective on reading on the Bible. (See the description elsewhere in this newsletter).

For an ongoing opportunity through the year, our Wednesday morning study always welcomes new faces. Because of the positive responses we've received from the summer series, I've decided to choose books that we preached on. For the last several years, we've always tried to keep in mind the larger message of a book while looking at individual units. Understanding the big picture is really the first step in making the Bible less intimidating.

One of the things I enjoy most about this group is the curiosity each person brings to the study. The Bible, difficult as it is sometimes, has had a positive impact on their lives, and their thirst for knowing more is evident in the conversation. Some do a little research beforehand, while others just bring their personal history with the text. Together, we sort it out, and almost always leave with a message to take home.

So if you've enjoyed our summer series, I hope you'll contemplate joining us on Wednesday morning at 10 am (zoom or in person). The Bible is a difficult book, but when the effort is made to understand it, it can become sacred scripture for us, today.

~ Peace, Pastor Jerry



PRESBYTERIAN HUNGER PROGRAM

BOOK STUDY:

The Land is Not Empty

Following Jesus in Dismantling
the Doctrine of Discovery
by Sarah Augustine

EVERY TUESDAY FROM 7PM-8PM EDT
SEPTEMBER 12 - OCTOBER 10, 2023

Gather with PHP's Global Solidarity Network in examining the Church's complicity in colonization and the exploitation of Indigenous lands, resources, and peoples that continues today. Join with us as we work to answer the call to transform the Church and our relationships with our neighbors, the land, and all of Creation.

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER AT
WWW.PCUSA.ORG/LANDISNOTEMPTY

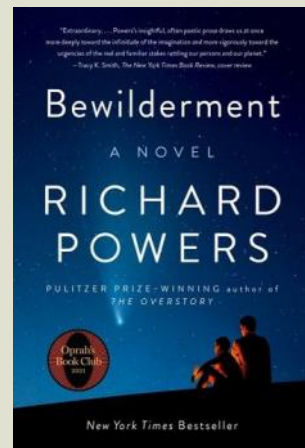
FAITH BOOK CLUB

Tuesday, September 12 at 7 pm by Zoom

Bewilderment by Richard Powers

New to FBC?

Contact Lorie Leak to request the Zoom link!



EARTH CARE TEAM NEWS

Hope for Creation's Festival of Unity

Hope for Creation, our local interfaith environmental group, is hosting the third annual Festival of Unity to gather folks from various congregations to celebrate harvest time together. The celebration is on Saturday, September 23 at First Congregational Church from 5 to 7 pm and includes a plant based dinner, cooking demonstrations, and discussions about caring for the earth through the food we eat. All are welcome.

More information and reservations are at www.hopeforcreation.net.

The Green Team becomes the Earth Care Team

The Green Team, a sub-committee of the Mission Team, has decided to change their name to the Earth Care Team. Earth Care is one of our core values and we are an Earth Care Congregation, a certification that we receive through the Presbyterian Church (USA). The Earth Care Team helps the Westminster congregation fulfill its pledge to care for God's creation in every way that we can.

Please join us on this journey and share your ideas with us as we all work together for environmental justice for everyone.

~ Eileen Best, chair of the Westminster Earth Care Team

Work Day

Come and join the Earth Care Team to clean up the church flower beds on Monday, September 18 at 9:00 am. Please bring your own tools. All help is welcome.



Recycling Tips

Westminster is a collection point for the City of Kalamazoo's recycling program for foam (commonly called styrofoam). Clean items can be placed in the blue bin in the coat room or in the large plastic bag in the hall beside the kitchen. We can only take foam that breaks when bent (not the soft bendable kind) and no peanuts, please.

Meijer (and possibly other grocery stores) will recycle plastic grocery bags and now they are taking other kinds of plastic too, such as dry cleaner bags, cereal box liners, newspaper sleeves, bread bags, food storage bags, ice bags, air pillow packaging, and more. Look for the bins right inside the grocery store doors.



Get Connected, Build Relationships, Enjoy Exercise!

Play Pickleball (WPC Gym)

Monday & Thursday mornings 9-11 am
Tuesday evenings, 6:30-8:30 pm

Play Volleyball (WPC Gym)

Wednesday evenings, 7:30 pm

Outdoor Walking Group schedule for September (7 pm unless otherwise noted)

September 7: Bicentennial Park: 910 E. Milham Avenue

September 14 (6 pm): Haverhill Park, 6577 Hampton St.

After-walk option: "The Family Tradition Band" at Overlander Bandshell, 7 pm

September 21: Portage District Library front parking lot, 300 Library Lane

September 28: Y'OPA Parking lot, 165 W. Centre Avenue (Frozen yogurt treat after walk)

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE NEWS

The annual WPC picnic is Sunday, September 10th. We are doing a coordinated potluck - burgers, hot dogs, veggie burgers, condiments, watermelon & drinks will all be provided. We are asking everyone to sign up to bring a side dish - such as, vegetable or fruit salad, pasta or potato salad, baked beans, etc. Vegan, vegetarian & Gluten Free side dishes and desserts are welcome, also! We will have cards available to label your dish.

We are also looking for some volunteers for set-up and clean-up. There is a sign up sheet in the lobby at church OR you can email your information to Shannon. There will be some fun activities available for the kids, too! We look forward to seeing you!

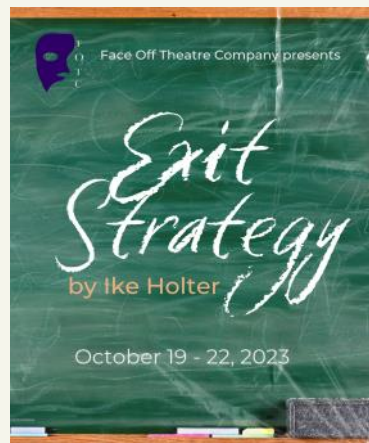
Apple Picking - We are again planning to go apple picking at Schultz Fruitridge Farms on Saturday September 30th. We will tentatively plan on meeting at the orchard at 11:00 am, but be sure to watch for future announcements for more details.

Save the (weekend) date! The Mission Team has given us information on a local theatre company that is holding an interesting play in October. The play is **EXIT STRATEGY** by **Ike Holter** and directed by **Marissa Harrington**.

The show dates are:

Thursday, October 19, 2023 7:30 pm
Friday, October 20, 2023 7:30 pm
Saturday, October 21, 2023 7:30 pm
Sunday, October 22, 2023 2:00 pm

In-person AND virtual tickets are available. We will have more information available soon. In the meantime, you may visit their webpage at www.faceofftheatre.com for more information.



RACIAL EQUITY DISCUSSION GROUP

Meets Sunday, September 17, at 3:30 pm at church.

God's House / Our House...WPC Building & Grounds Update

The spring storm damage activity is happily coming to a close. We were able to repair one neighbor's damaged fence ourselves (east of Fellowship Hall), and this provided an opportunity to make a neighborhood connection. A bigger fence repair project has now been hired-out to a local contractor. This fence is at a neighbor to the south of the vegetable garden. Repair should be finished by the end of September. Many may have noticed the piled-up limbs and brush disappeared. We hired that activity out, too, as there was a lot of material to be removed as well as a few large trees that needed felling. The contractor had the skill, equipment, and team to make short order of the work once they arrived at WPC. In late fall or early spring once the vegetation has diminished, we will likely go back and clear out additional branches.

We have invested in an industrial carpet cleaner. Ernest, our custodian, has started to use the machine already. Ernest will work his way around the building a little bit at a time as he familiarizes himself with the machine. This investment will make the carpet look better, and it should extend the carpet life. A loose toilet in the Narthex ladies' room was also remounted with a new wax ring and flange bolts.

A recent Portage Fire Marshal inspection revealed three items for us to address: 1) the need to post the participant capacity of meeting rooms for 50 or more people (Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall), numbers posted near the room entrances; 2) a circuit breaker enabled extension chord for the Pastors' office air conditioner (a new compliant chord was installed); and 3) an updated inspection of the metal roller door in the service window of the Fellowship Hall kitchen (this was addressed by our fire protection service provider).

With the above items addressed, more time is now available to finally install the new water fountain in the Narthex. We have the skills, but it may take a while once started.

There is a B&G vision to make repairs to the garage that is south of the main office on the far side of the parking lot. A new garage door, new soffits, new fascia boards, and eventually a new roof are needed. This will likely occur in steps as time and budget allow.

The Building & Grounds Team continues working to provide a safe, welcoming Space while being good stewards of money and the environment. If you have a desire to help with this mission or have input on our facility, you can contact Jim Gluys.

MISSION NEWS

The Westminster Mission Team has secured a monthly outreach opportunity for our members and friends. Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes will be stocking its warehouse on the fourth Monday of each month, and Westminster has been assigned a three-hour shift from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm on those days. We can utilize five to twelve adults (18 or older) each month.

You can sign up on a month-to-month basis by contacting Judy Markusse Paget.



Upcoming dates: September 25, October 23, November 27

Join us for a good time of service and fellowship while fighting hunger in our community!

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PEACE PRIZE

We are excited to announce that the **Face Off Theatre Company** will be the recipient of the Westminster Peace Prize for 2023! The Peace Prize is our annual recognition of an individual or group that has gone above and beyond to create or foster peacemaking and reconciliation work in the community. Representatives of the **Face Off Theatre Company** will be honored during a church service in October, and will receive a portion of the funds collected in the Peace & Global Witness Offering to continue their service to our community.

More information is available on their website: <https://www.faceofftheatre.com>. Their next production, *Exit Strategy*, will be presented **October 19 – 22**, and we plan to organize a group outing to attend. Watch for future announcements!



PEANUT BUTTER COLLECTION

We are continuing our ongoing support of Generous Hands, Inc. by providing one of the most needed items for food packs that are made available to more than 150 families in the Vicksburg area to help them get the nutrition they need. Please bring 16 oz. jars of peanut butter, any type, to church during the month of September!



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

SESSION NOTES

At the August meeting, Westminster's Session:

- received new (returned!) member Sandy Cline by letter of transfer
- approved funds for cleanup of tree damage from spring storms
- approved a job description for a new position: Director of Communication & Engagement
- reviewed an updated job description for our pastors
- approved the Mission Team's recommendation for this year's Westminster Peace Prize recipient
- endorsed the application of Eileen Best to serve as one of the Lake Michigan Presbytery's commissioners to the 2024 PCUSA General Assembly
- discussed fall plans in our various areas of the church's ministry



FALL WATER COLOR CLASS

Once again this fall we are hosting WATERCOLOR CLASSES taught by Kay Severson. Beginner class is September 5, 19, 26, October 3 & 10. Practice class starts October 17 for five weeks. Cost for each five-session class is \$70. Information about how to sign up is available at church.

Westminster Staff

Reverend Janet Robertson Duggins

jerryorjanet@wpcportage.org

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jerryorjanet@wpcportage.org

Parish Associate - Reverend John Best

johnmbest@gmail.com

Pastor Emeritus – Reverend Richard Jackson

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; Laurie Bushnell, Connie Campbell, Jean Cox,
Jodie Gerard, Valerie Kirkwood, Nick Pratt, Mary Lou Rohwer, Chris Rohwer

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
Green 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