

# WESTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



## NEWSLETTER

### MARCH 2026

1515 Helen Avenue,  
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(269) 344-3966

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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 Thursday morning 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.*



### OUR REGULAR OFFICE HOURS :

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

## March Birthdays

1	Anne Meyer	15	Chris Rohwer	28	Rocco Ray
	Allison Poliak	17	Kathy Stuit	29	Matt Ray
2	Luke Anderson	18	Susan Weng		
	Catriena Kauffman	20	David Mann		
4	Julie Davis		Fred Welch		
5	Cam Stuit	22	Mitch Groenenboom		
7	Vienne Ray		Kirk Truesdell		
8	David Kauffman	24	Bennett Werme		
	Sky Gerber	26	Emily Ruimveld		
14	Debbie Netz		Elizabeth MacDonald		



The **Interim Pastor Search Committee** has been meeting and working on documents for the search. The committee members are Kathy Stuu, Carol Pratt, David Schriemer and Jason Zerban who were approved by Session.

## FINANCE NEWS

Thank you to all who responded during per capita month (February) with donations to cover your part of our Presbyterian per capita obligations. If you still wish to contribute, the 2026 amount is \$42.42 and envelopes can be found at the back of the sanctuary.

### Housing Resources, Inc. **A Walk to END Homelessness**

Saturday, March 21, 2026

5K walk from Homer Stryker Field, 251 Mill Street, along the Kalamazoo River Trail to HRI's Rickman House and back to Homer Stryker Field.

9 am registration--Walk begins at 10 am.

Go to <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/hriwalk2026/>

to register or donate.

Contact Barb Daniels if you want to join the Walk.



**SAVE THE DATE: Sunday, May 3, 2026**

**Kalamazoo Valley CROP Hunger Walk**

Location: Trinity Lutheran Church, Kalamazoo

Time: 2 pm

Distances: 1.15 miles, 3.1 miles

Walk with the WPC Team or support our team with a contribution.

Visit <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/chw/event/kalamazoomi>

to register or donate to the Portage Westminster Church Team.

Contact Barb Daniels, Team Captain, if you want to walk or donate.

A table with more information will be set up in the narthex in April.



**COMMUNITY NEWS**



# WORSHIP IN MARCH



Throughout the Lenten season, as we move toward Easter, we reflect on Jesus' words, actions, and conversations as models for our lives.

Our choir is also excited to present a series of four **brand new Lenten anthems composed by Jason Zerban.**

## March 1

John 3 1-17

Second Sunday in LENT  
"Lessons in Ministry" part 2

COMMUNION

*No Children & Worship today*

## March 8

John 4:5-42

Third Sunday in LENT  
"Lessons in Ministry" part 3

Children & Worship

## March 15

John 9:1-41

Fourth Sunday in LENT  
"Lessons in Ministry" part 4

Children & Worship

## March 22

John 11:1-45

Fifth Sunday in LENT  
"Lessons in Ministry" part 5

Children & Worship

## March 29

## **PALM/PASSION SUNDAY**

Palm procession and the Holy Week story from the Gospel of Matthew

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Lent devotions, "Discipleship in a Divided Age," from the *Presbyterian Outlook*. are still available at church. We also have options for kids/families and teens at church.

**It's not too late to start!**



Our 2026 **WESTMINSTER ART FESTIVAL** is now only a couple of months away!

As we look forward to the work artists and poets will submit on our theme, we are excited to announce a **PRE-FESTIVAL EXHIBIT of pieces by our 2026 Visual Art Juror Maya James**, whose art resonates strongly with this year's focus on environmental justice. Look for this to appear in the narthex sometime in March.

Poets and artists, take note: we'll begin receiving poetry submissions March 1 and anytime through the April 13 deadline. Visual art submissions will be April 8-13. You still have plenty of time to be creative!

The Art Festival is a unique, fun, and meaningful way for our congregation to connect with our community. Please help us by sharing info about the Art Festival with others, especially artists and poets. The website ([westminsterartfestival.org](http://westminsterartfestival.org)) has information about the theme, jurors, prizes, and entry requirements. We have posters and flyers at church. You might also follow us on Facebook and share posts. You can support the festival by volunteering to help receive submissions, prepare the exhibit, or host events. Donations toward costs are also welcome.

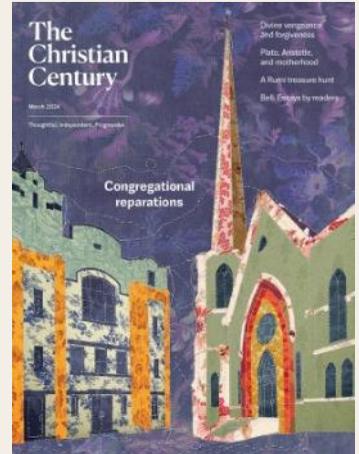
The exhibit opens with a meet-the-artists reception on Saturday, April 25, and will be open through June 11. The festival will include awards presentation, poetry reading, music, and more.

Talk to any member of the planning team for more info: Jodie Gerard, Miriam Duggins, Val Glasscock, Traci Glasscock, Lisa Buesing, Marta Best, Pastors Janet and Jerry.

## SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION IN LENT

### “Words to Inspire”

Sunday mornings during **LENT**, we are reading, reflecting on, and discussing short essays from readers of *The Christian Century*. This magazine regularly offers a one-word prompt (such as *promise*, or *gravity*), then publishes a small collection of the responses, which tell personal stories and reflect on insights, struggles, and questions of faith. Each week, we will consider several different perspectives on a single word. Pastor Janet & Lisa Buesing will facilitate conversation and invite responses. Who knows? Maybe we will even be inspired to some new insights of our own.



### “Welcome to Westminster”

A two-session “Welcome to Westminster” class will be offered in March 15 and 22 during the Sunday morning Christian Education time. This is for anyone wishing to become a church member or just new to the church and wanting to know more about us. No pressure!

Let Pastor Janet know if you are interested.



### FAITH BOOK CLUB

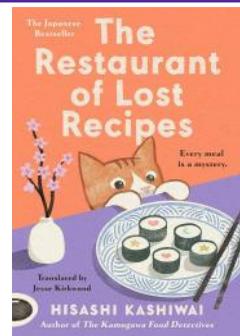
Our March book is

*The Restaurant of Lost Recipes* by Hisashi Kashiwai

Join us Thursday, March 19 at 7 pm on Zoom

New to FBC?

Contact Lorie Leak to request the Zoom link!



## 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.



WESTMINSTER  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



*adopted by the Session, April 25, 2011*

### March 2026 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:

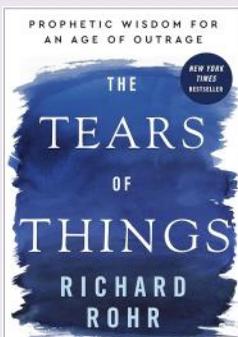
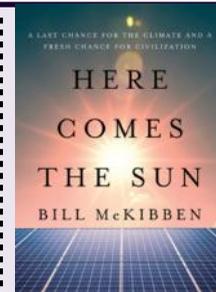
March 1 (With Miss Hillary)  
March 15 (With Miss Leslie)

### MEN'S BOOK STUDY

March 3 & 17

8:30 am at the church

*Here Comes the Sun: A Last Chance for the Climate and a Fresh Chance for Civilization*  
by Bill McKibben



### Wednesday Morning BIBLE STUDY

10 am at church or Zoom

We're studying the prophets using

Richard Rohr's book

*The Tears of Things*

Contact Pastor Jerry for info or Zoom link

## FROM THE PASTORS' DESK

Hardly a day goes by that we don't encounter someone calling attention to how divided we are as a society. It's hard to argue with that assessment; the reality seems obvious. And yet... something about the statement feels... not *quite* true to me, enough so that I can't simply nod in agreement. I think maybe this is because of what is implied but unstated: divided is bad; we didn't *used* to be divided; we should put our differences aside in the interest of unity. I'm not convinced any of those things are true.

The same goes for something else we often hear: "both sides" are equally bad (or good). There's a lot to question here: are there really only *two* sides? Is every position always equally justifiable? based in truth? moral? helpful? And perhaps most important: Is this observation that people are imperfect a legitimate reason to decline responsibility for getting involved and making ethical choices?

And yet we do let ourselves be swayed by such sentiments, persuaded into disengagement, acceptance, or silence -even when we ought to be involved, asking questions, or speaking up. We feel pressure to keep our opinions to ourselves, or even to hold back from having opinions at all, in the interests (or so we tell ourselves) of open-mindedness.

I've been reading a little book *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies*, by Marilyn Chandler McEntyre, which is helping me think about this. She acknowledges (many people still don't) that everybody has a point of view. It can't be helped; complete objectivity is not possible. However, she says that we can "take the measure of our own slant and be accountable for our points of view." But It's a mistake to confuse this with bias, "as though having a point of view, a set of assumptions, or a firmly held opinion is in itself unscrupulous or unfair. And as though neutrality is the mark of fairness or truth. But opinions are the stock in trade of thoughtful people, to be earned and held strongly until further evidence requires their modification. Perhaps suspicion of opinions, or the hesitancy to form one... comes from long exposure to opinions aired too soon on too little evidence, adopted without argument, for private gain. Opinions are selling points or sticking points more often than points of departure from which one takes stock before embarking on further investigation or reflection." (p.41-42)

McEntyre suggests that we have been exposed for such a long time to so many forms of untruth that they have come to feel normal. We hardly notice, let alone question, the unsupported claims, hyperbole, clichés, euphemisms, jargon, omissions, vague generalities, over-simplifications, and just plain careless use of language we hear and read all day long. Words meant to sell, persuade, manipulate, pacify, or hide slowly accustom us to the not-quite-true without us really noticing. This makes it harder for us to discern truth in all its

nuances in complex situations. It can make us hesitant to listen to our own conscience and to risk speaking.

It may be that this long exposure to carelessly used words and untruth has made us more and more tolerant of increasingly unabashed lies from many parts of the public sphere. But we are people of the Word, and words (are supposed to) matter to us. With Marilyn Chandler McEntyre, I do believe that we are called to use our words carefully, courageously, and with as much clarity, precision, and truthfulness as we can muster.

Some people believe we are at an inflection point in our country. Maybe it's true. Or maybe we are already long past the point at which people of faith should have stopped politely avoiding having opinions. Of course we have a lot of different views on many subjects, as we should. But people of the Word have a responsibility to seek and speak truth. To resist normalization of lies. To refute the lie that "neutrality" is good.

If people of faith who believe in the power of words can't call out the lies that make up white "christian" nationalism, who will?

If we can't say that putting children (not to mention adults who've committed no crimes) in concentration camps is evil, what *will* we call evil?

If we aren't crying out about powerful people covering up the biggest sex scandal of our lifetimes, what are we all about?

If we aren't outraged about denial of science, attempted erasure of history, and the characterization of compassion as weakness, haven't we succumbed to the slow erosion of truth?

I know that for some, what I'm saying will be too pointed, too "political." I can't help that, I guess. I simply can't see another side to these issues that is in any way consistent with Jesus' call to us. Of course they are "political," which just means they have to do with our common life. But more fundamentally they are about our allegiance to truth. I believe the integrity -and maybe the future- of the church are on the line here. I'm happy to see more and more people of faith speaking out about these things. This gives me courage and hope. We need courage and hope, because what is asked of us in this time isn't easy. But here we are in Lent- season for truth-telling, sacrifice, and following a difficult path. Lent always asks us "who are you?" This year, that question seems more serious, more consequential, and more pertinent than ever. I'm very grateful to all of you who keep asking that question with me.

Peace,  
Janet

## Get Connected, Build Relationships, Enjoy Exercise!

### Play Pickleball (WPC Gym)

Monday mornings, 9-11 am  
Tuesday evenings, 6:30-8:30 p  
Friday mornings, 9-11 am



### Play Volleyball (WPC Gym)

Wednesday evenings, 7:30 pm

## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN NEWS

### PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN Spring Mini-Retreat– March 14

#### “Making Time... to tell our stories”

*Please bring a photo that sparks a memory for you.*

When? Saturday, March 14, 8:30 am – noon at church

What? Time away from routines for renewal and friendship

What else? Breakfast snacks; lunch out afterward for those who wish

Who? Women of all ages (yes, you can bring a friend?)

How much does it cost? Retreat is free! (but you have to buy your own lunch)

Where? At church

Why? Because you deserve it, you probably need it, and you'll be glad you came.



## CONGREGATIONAL LIFE NEWS

Thanks to all who stepped up and volunteered to help out with Coffee Plus for the next few weeks. We really appreciate your support of this special ministry. Watch for a sign-up sheet for the summer months to go up soon - so you can sign up for times most convenient for you during the busy summer travel months.



### **Save the date:**

**Easter Brunch is Sunday, April 5th** right after worship.

This is a coordinated potluck - Congregational Life provides some mini quiche and other appetizers, and folks can sign up to bring fruit or juice, deviled eggs, or pastries, muffins or rolls.

Watch for the sign-up sheet to be out in mid-March!

Do you like planning events? Socializing with church friends? Organizing potlucks? Congregational Life could use you!

We are a small and informal committee that plans and organizes our potlucks, picnics, Easter Brunch, and other outings and activities. We always welcome new folks to join us - please see Val or Jayme if you would like to join our friendly little group!

### **Water Color Paint Class:**



“EXPLORING CREATIVITY” is the theme of the SPRING WATERCOLOR PAINTING CLASS which will be held at Westminster five Tuesdays March 31 – April 28. Anyone with some watercolor experience can participate. Kay Severson will be the instructor. Cost is \$70 (plus your own supplies and materials). Limit of 12 participants. Registration forms are available in the church office.

## Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes

### 2025 Warehouse Volunteer Schedule

Monday, March 23  
Monday, April 27  
Monday, May 18  
Monday, June 22  
Monday, July 27  
Monday, August 24  
Monday, September 28  
Monday, October 26  
Monday, November 23



*Promoting a Hunger-Free Community Since 1982*

Time: 1-3 pm  
Please contact Judy Paget  
with any questions. Her contact  
information is in the directory.



## North Carolina Work Trip

In response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene in September 2024, Westminster is forming a team to do repair work in western North Carolina with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. We have nine people committed to going and have room for more. The dates are April 11 to 18. We will travel together on both Saturdays and work from Monday to Friday. Canton Presbyterian Church will be our home for the week, providing a place to sleep, eat and relax. Contact Eileen Best with questions and to be added to the list.



If you are not able to go and would like to support this ministry, the Session has approved a fundraising effort. Please send a check to the church or place in the offering plate, clearly marked for the "North Carolina Work Trip." Thank you for your support.

## Special Offerings news for 2026

This year some changes are happening with the Special Offerings received by the Presbyterian Church (USA). There will be **three Special Offerings** (the Pentecost Offering is being retired) and the causes that we support are shifting a bit.

The **One Great Hour of Sharing** Offering has the fewest changes. It is still the main way that Presbyterians support those in need around the world. Millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. Through the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering, we support people in need in these areas--disaster assistance, hunger, poverty, climate change, and immigration, migration and refugees. At Westminster, we will dedicate the offering on Palm Sunday (March 29) and receive the offering through the month of April. Envelopes, bulletin inserts, fish coin banks, and a daily giving calendar are available to help interpret the offering.

The causes supported by the **Pentecost Offering** (children in need, the Young Adult Volunteer Program, and youth programs, including Triennium), are moving to the Christmas Joy Offering.

The **Peace and Global Witness Offering** is renamed the **World Communion Offering** and will still include giving for the **Westminster Peace Prize**, awarded to an organization in our community. The causes supported are peacemaking efforts, racial and gender justice, global witness, and nurturing ecumenical and interfaith relations.

The **Christmas Joy Offering** supports the past, present, and future leaders of the Presbyterian Church (USA), including children, youth, and young adults, Presbyterian related schools and colleges equipping communities of color and the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions.

It is through these Special Offerings that we at Westminster join Presbyterians across the country to make a significant difference in sharing the love of God with others. Please give generously.

## RACIAL EQUITY NEWS

**Next meetings: March 15 and May 3, 3:30 pm at Westminster**

**Westminster's Racial Equity group** met in February to discuss James Baldwin's book *The Fire Next Time* and to make a plan for study for the spring. We hope to view the James Baldwin's documentary *I Am Not Your Negro* at our March meeting. Our May meeting will feature a presentation on reparations from the Justice League of Greater Kalamazoo. This group's meetings are mainly focused on learning together about racial equity issues, past and present, and are open to all (whether or not you've done any reading). Please reach out to Cindy Green or Paula Schriemer with questions.

Some members of this group hope to attend the Palm Sunday Path event (part of a nationwide ecumenical movement) in Lansing on the afternoon of March 29. The Palm Sunday Path is a peaceful, positive, non-partisan Christian witness against white Christian nationalism. This day was chosen because Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey as a humble and peaceful leader. The focus of this Palm Sunday event is on the Matthew 25 values of feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, and welcoming the stranger. It involves a one-mile walk to the state capital where there will be speakers, singing, and prayer.

For more information, talk with Pastors Janet or Jerry or Wendy King.

**FREEDOM ISN'T FINISHED**  
BLACK MIDWEST VOICES PROJECT  
Feb 12-15

*Cinderella*  
**THE REMIX**  
May 1-9

**Harlem Duet**  
September  
11-20

*Bambiland*  
Nov 14-20

**FACE OFF THEATRE COMPANY** **WE ARE THE STORY** **2026 SEASON**

Mark your calendars for this 2026 season! Contact Barb Daniels with information found in the church directory if you want to attend a production and/or carpool.

**Save the Date:** Saturday, April 25, 2026  
**Recycling Event** at Homer Stryker Field Parking Lot, 10-1 pm



Accepted Materials for Recycling:

- Cardboard dumpster available for any large boxes and cardboard, via Republic Services
- Electronics and Batteries with Schupan team on site.
- Paper shredding available, with Roy from Shred It.
- Water Filters (all brands, filters only) through Terracycle
- Toothbrushes, flossers, and Oral Care products can be recycled through Terracycle
- EPS Foam, #6 Polystyrene is recycled by DART Container Corp. of Mason, MI

**Hope for Creation invites you to**



**Faith.  
Climate.  
Action.**

AN INTERFAITH GATHERING TO BUILD  
RESILIENCE AND WORK TOWARDS A  
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

**Saturday, March 21, 2026**

**1-5 pm**

**An afternoon of workshops, discussion, and  
community building**

Portage United Church of Christ (2731 Milham Ave)  
More information coming soon!

## Westminster Staff

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

## Congregational Leaders

### SESSION

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

### DEACONS

Judy Paget: Moderator; Traci Glasscock: Vice Moderator, Cathy MacDonald, Kettie Chapeyama,  
Barb Daniels, Val Kirkwood, Pat Kurtz, Francis Cirvencic, and Jodie Gerard

#### Administration

Finance.....	Fred Welch, Leslie Ashbaugh
Personnel.....	Carol Pratt
Building & Grounds.....	Martin Schultz, Tom VerHage
Children & Youth Ministries; Faith Formation.....	Leslie Ashbaugh
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, Mary Anderson, Pastors
Presbyterian Women.....	Kelly Schultz
Worship Coordinators:	
Hosts.....	Cindy Green
Ushers.....	Sarah Sullivan
Liturgists.....	Jean Cox
Livestream, Sound & Techs.....	Kelly Schultz
Children & Worship .....	Kelly Schultz
Communion.....	Kelly Schultz
Coffee Plus .....	Jayme Ruimveld, Val Glasscock