

# WESTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## NEWSLETTER

May 2024

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

Email [westminsterp@wpcportage.org](mailto:westminsterp@wpcportage.org)

website [www.wpcportage.org](http://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*

## May Birthdays

2	Nicolaas (Nico) Worstell	15	Renée Szostek	25	Annie Cardwell
4	Rosemary Jungel	16	Eileen Best	26	Barb Knickerbocker
6	Charlie Golyar	18	Sean Kirkwood	29	Paul Bushnell Val Kirkwood
7	Stuart Werner	19	Judy Nettleton	30	Wilhelmina Vogel
8	Paul Paget	20	Henry Vogel	31	David Teugh
10	James Watson	21	Jeanne Trompeter		
12	Becca Murphy Don Taylor	23	John Kuchta Calvin Kirkwood		
13	William Weiss Frances Potts	24	Steve Keizer Karen VerHage		

**HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY!**

### On-line worship participants: the Worship Team has some questions for you!

Whether you make use of the live-streamed worship option regularly or occasionally, we want to know what makes this meaningful for you, whether it is easy or difficult and a few other things like that. Watch for a link to an on-line worship feedback invitation. If you have questions or need help, our Engagement and Communications Director Matt Ray is the person to talk with.

### May Anniversaries

6	Jason & Melissa Martin
16	Sean & Val Kirkwood
18	Bob & Mary Anderson
25	Dave & Paula Schriemer
26	Jim & Mildred Watson
30	Ed & Jayme Ruimveld

## Welcome to our Engagement and Communications Director.

It has been a joyful month as I settle into my new role. I'm grateful for the warm welcome from the congregation. I've had the privilege of meeting many wonderful people, attending committee meetings, and a session retreat.

One of my primary focuses is enhancing our online presence and engagement. I've set up a WPC Google Business account to manage the church's online presence, such as requesting and responding to reviews, posting updates and events, optimizing for local search to increase visibility, and making data-driven decisions to engage the community.

I'm honored to be part of this community, and I look forward to working alongside you to strengthen in-person and online connections.

All good things,

Matt Ray



## IN OUR CHURCH OFFICE

The Session and pastors are delighted to welcome back to our church office Laurie Nic, who has (again!) agreed to serve as our Interim Administrative Assistant, enabling us to have a seamless transition following Shannon's resignation. Laurie brings us skills, lots of experience, and familiarity with our congregation, which will serve us well as the Personnel Team and Session determine next steps. We are very grateful for Laurie's presence and willingness to serve. Please help and support her in any way you can.



### Office hours will generally be:

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

### Memorial Week office hours:

Wednesday and Thursday: 9 am to 2 pm

**Closed on Monday, May 27**

**Our 2023-24 Worship Theme is "Intentions"**

**WORSHIP IN MAY**

May 5

**6<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER**

Lisa Buesing, guest preacher  
*No Children & Worship today*

May 12

**ASCENSION SUNDAY**

Children & Worship

**Communion**

May 19

**PENTECOST!**

Children & Worship

Wear **RED** to celebrate the birthday of the church  
& the bright-burning flame of God's Spirit

May 26

**TRINITY SUNDAY**

**PORTAGE PRIDE PICNIC** Sunday, June 2 at Portage United Church of Christ

Mark your calendar for this fun event, which will be a joint effort of several churches including Prince of Peace, Chapel Hill, and Westminster, as well as Portage UCC. It will be 12:30 – 3 pm, a potluck (burgers, veggie burgers, hot dogs, and drinks provided). It'll be a family-friendly event, outdoors (weather permitting), with live music, some simple activities, and maybe a mission/giving project.

More info will be forthcoming! Some volunteers will be needed; if you're interested in volunteering, please talk to Pastor Janet. This is a great way to join with some of our neighbor congregations and put our commitment to welcome and inclusivity in action!



### 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/](http://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

### SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION

We'll be talking with artists and poets during the adult education time. We'll find out more about their background, how they got interested in art, and personal perspectives that they bring to their work. We'll also see other examples of their work in addition to the ones on exhibit in the art festival. On May 19<sup>th</sup> we hope to hear a presentation from The Michigan Southwest Land Conservancy in keeping with the art festival theme, "Grounded," which speaks to our relationship to land.



May 5 – Vicki Nelson and TBA

May 12 – Dawn Edwards and TBA

May 19 – Michigan Southwest Land Conservancy  
(Poets/authors TBA if unavailable)

### 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.

#### FAITH FORMATION DATES FOR MAY:

May 5th & May 19th

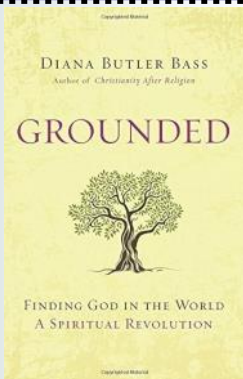


## Wednesday Morning BIBLE STUDY

10am at church or on zoom

*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

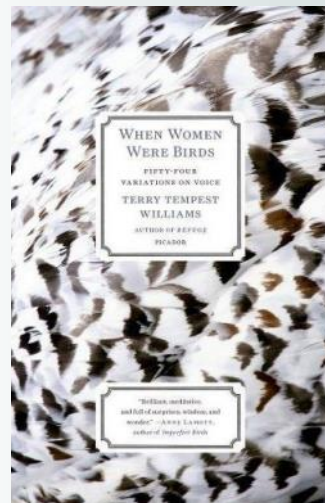
*When Women Were Birds* by Terry Tempest Williams

Join us on May 14 at 7 pm

*New to FBC?*

*Contact Lorie Leak to request the Zoom link!*

"I am leaving you all my journals, but you must promise me you won't look at them until after I'm gone." This is what Terry Tempest Williams's mother, the matriarch of a large Mormon clan in northern Utah, told her a week before she died. It was a shock to Williams to discover that her mother had kept journals. But not as much of a shock as it was to discover that the three shelves of journals were all blank. In fifty-four short chapters, Williams recounts memories of her mother, ponders her own faith and contemplates the notion of absence and presence in art and in our world.



## FROM THE PASTORS' DESK

Yes! It's May! I'm thinking about blossoms and birds and the sun's warmth. I'm thinking about art and poetry as the Art Festival gets into full swing. I'm particularly thinking about the artists and poets with whom we've been building relationships over the last several years. Since 2013, with the opening of our first festival, spring has been a season of hospitality for the congregation. We intentionally welcome strangers to our building to celebrate art, music, and the earth.

I love what Diana Butler Bass says in her book, *Grounded*. "Hospitality is the spiritual practice that saves tribes from tribalism, allowing them to open their gates and widen the boundaries of neighborhood to include those who wander by" (pp. 218-9). The Art Festival has provided a means of expanding our "neighborhood." Artists and poets are becoming a part of our community, helping us to bring the message of earth care to the larger community. This is one way we live out our intention statement by "engaging the world."

Being connected to the larger community is not a new thing for us. Westminster has always engaged the world through its service in places like Loaves and Fishes and Ministry with Community and more recently with our warming center. The art festival has taken us from an engagement largely defined by service "for" to a concept defined more as ministry "with." We're exploring together ways to be in the world for the good of the "neighborhood." It feels to me like welcoming them "home."

Bass writes: "Home is more than a house. It is a sacred location, a place of aspiration and dreams, of learning and habit, of relationships and heart. Home is the geography of our souls" (p.166). Our faith urges us to create places of belonging, where guests are active participants in the household.



Members, those who claim ownership of the organization, are important in any institution, but vitality and growth result from the open door that welcomes “participants.” This is why we don’t refer to those who participate in worship virtually as people who “watch” our service and why I think of “our” artists and poets as participants in the life of the church. This is what stands behind making a good home. Again Bass writes: “making a home was a spiritual work of inhabiting new places well and knowing how to open the door to strangers – something not easy to achieve, but necessary to fill the ache that dwells in human hearts to belong” (p.165).



More than any other season, spring reminds me that I am welcome in God’s world. I feel like I belong. My hope is that we, as a congregation, are creating a place of belonging throughout the year.

Peace,

Pastor Jerry

### Art Festival Preview





The **2024 Westminster Art Festival** is underway! We had a wonderful response from area poets and artists, who submitted a total of 103 works reflecting our theme of connection to and care for the LAND we inhabit and depend on.

**Awards will be presented on Friday, May 10** by our jurors Conrad Kaufman (visual art) and Anita Skeen (poetry). We'll get to hear the prize-winning poems and also some poetry from our juror. The exhibit will be open 5- 8 pm; program begins at 6 pm. This is another great opportunity to meet the artists and poets **and welcome guests** to our church.

We have a couple of other new **POETRY** opportunities this year:

**POETRY-INSPIRED-BY-ART WORKSHOP** with Anita Skeen

May 11, 9 – 10:30 am Cost \$20 Contact Jerry or Janet to sign up.

**OPEN MIC Poetry Night** May 31, 6 pm

Read your poems and/or hear other poets' share their work

The art **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. This prize will be presented at the closing celebration June 13.

To learn more, check out the website: <https://www.westminsterartfestival.org/>

**Want to help?** Distribute a few posters, help with hosting, 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

### Congregational Life:

— Thanks to everyone who made the Easter brunch a success! Thanks to those who brought food and helped with set up and clean up.

— The sign up for Coffee Plus for the whole summer is posted on the narthex bulletin board. Please consider picking a date to help out!

— Using mugs and china is going well—directions for using the dishwasher are printed up in the kitchen.

— Summer community activities will be starting soon: a list of Face Off Theater plays and community outdoor concerts will be posted on the bulletin board in the narthex. Folks can sign up so that others can see who may be going from the WPC congregation. (See page 12 for more info.)

— The dates for “Ice Cream Sundays” at 4PM at Appleknockers in Vicksburg are: June 30, July 21 (National Ice Cream Day!) and August 25. These will be on the church calendar. Please feel free to join us!

Paula Schriemer and Jayme Ruimveld



### CRAFT NIGHT



Calling all crafters! Since the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday is Memorial day, we will meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, May 20 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. Our next meeting is June 24.

### PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN DESSERT NIGHT

Come enjoy some good conversation, laughter, and treats!

Monday, May 13, 7 pm at church

**Theme:** “Faith and Fellowship”

**Bring:** One item that represents YOUR faith and/or sense of calling  
(Nothing big; bring it in a bag so it can’t be seen.)

**You can also bring:** a friend

**Sign up:** at church or by contacting Leslie Ashbaugh  
or Kelly Schultz



## RACIAL EQUITY GROUP:

This group is an expression of our commitment as a Matthew 25 congregation to the goal of dismantling systemic racism. Every day, people of color face injustice. Every individual has a story. It is so important that we, as followers of Jesus Christ, be open to listen, learn, and act. This is a journey... all are welcome to join with us.

We are learning to be aware of racist situations encountered every day. We keep our eyes open for resources and learning opportunities in the community, such as Face Off Theater productions. (See below.)

This summer we look forward to a "field trip" to the Charles Wright Museum of African-American History in Detroit. (Want to come? Contact Cindy Green!)

We also plan to review our congregation's policies, mission projects and other things we do, in order to work toward greater inclusiveness.

As a group we are discussing the book *The 7 Deadly Sins of White Christian Nationalism: A Call to Action* by Carter Heyward. This book is helping us understand these issues as theological (and not just social or political) issues. Most important, it is helping us think about what our call as Christians is in this time. Next meeting: Sunday, May 19 at 3:30 pm at church. (You don't have to read the book to participate.)



## CONSIDER THOUGHTFUL THEATRE:

Tickets are \$5 and you can purchase them on their website or call the box office directly. Barb Daniels is the point person for these events.

June 23 "Ain't Misbehavin'"

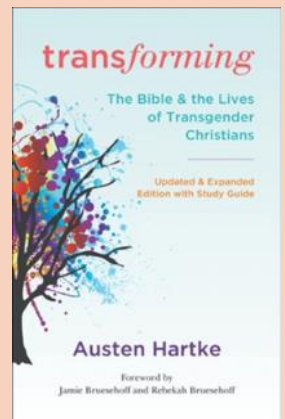
August 18 "Bambiland"

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](https://presbyterianwomen.org/justice).



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

## 2024 PENTECOST SPECIAL OFFERING

## MISSION NEWS

The PC(USA)'s four church-wide Special Offerings help share Christ's love with millions of people around the world.

We will receive the Pentecost Special Offering on Sunday, May 19, 2024.



A gift to the Pentecost Offering helps the church encourage, develop, and support its young people and also address the needs of at-risk children. Forty percent of the Pentecost offering can be retained by individual congregations wanting to make an impact in the lives of young people within their own community. The remaining 60% is used to support children-at-risk, youth, and young adults through ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The 40% retained by our congregation will go to Ripple Effects Community Inclusion Center in Portage. This non-profit organization champions inclusive recreational and social opportunities for all. Our donation goes beyond mere financial assistance; it signifies our participation in a movement that values diversity and strives for a community where no child or family feels overlooked. Please give generously.



**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 in 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](http://www.aacorncommunity.org).



### **YOU'RE INVITED TO A SPRING CLEANING EVENT**

**Inside and outside cleaners needed.**

**Saturday, May 4, from 9 am—noon.**



We will work to clean up the exterior grounds by collecting sticks, trimming trees that interfere with mowing, rake out gardens, clean out a few gutters, etc. For anyone comfortable working on the roof, we can also clean rocks out of the Sanctuary roof gutters.

We will also be able to wash windows both inside and out.

If your passion is to be more inside than out, we can deploy people to search after cob webs, wipe down door frames and window sills, clean ceiling light lenses and more.

If you have your own tools, please bring them for yourself and some to share. We will have other supplies to support the clean-up. We look forward to being able to come together to freshen up the properties as we welcome the nicer weather.

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 with information contained in the church member directory.

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](http://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](mailto:info@hopeforcreation.net)  
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
345 W MICHIGAN AVE, KALAMAZOO

### 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

#### Play Volleyball (WPC Gym)

Wednesday evenings, 7:30 pm

#### 2024 WPC Walking Group 7 PM *\*Full walking schedule is available at church*

May 2: Bicentennial Park, 910 E. Milham Ave.  
May 9: Haverhill Park, 6577 Hampton Street  
May 16: Portage district Library front, 300 Library Lane  
May 23: Y'opa parking lot, 165 W. Center  
May 30: KRESA Service Center Parking Lot, 1819 East Milham Ave.



**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  
Interim Office Manager – Laurie Nic  
Custodian – Ernest Pueblo

**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