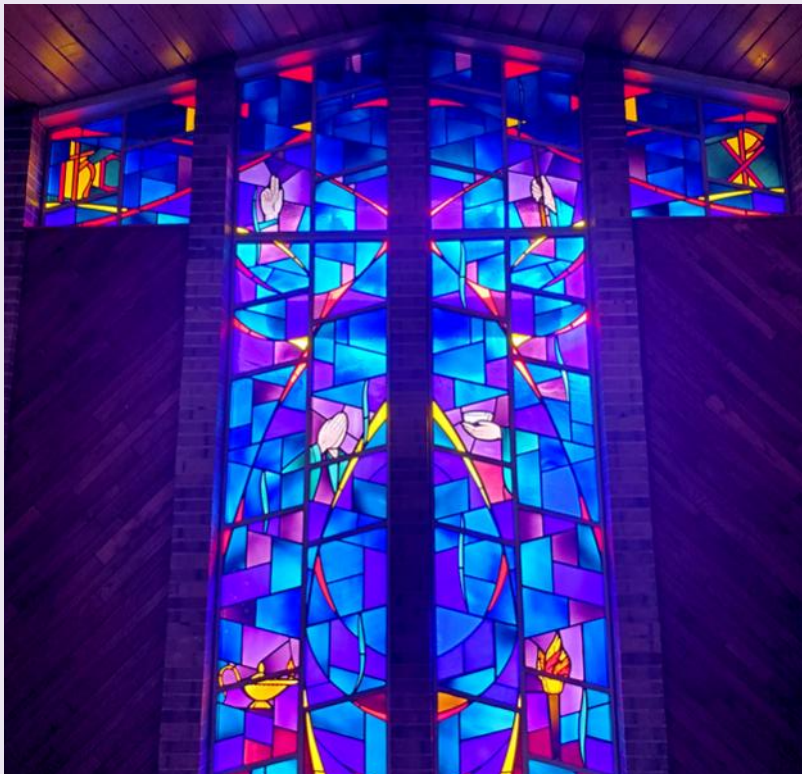


WESTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2025

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

Email westminsterp@wpcportage.org
website www.wpcportage.org
facebook@[westminsterpresbyterianportage](https://www.facebook.com/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

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

Note: Laurie is on vacation March 5-20

Please see the calendar insert for office hours.

March Birthdays

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



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE NEWS

Saturday, March 1st - Game day 2:30-5pm

Bring your favorite board game or card game and join us for a fun afternoon of games.

Folks of all ages are welcome to come—we'll have a sign up so we'll have an idea of what games people will be interested in playing.

We will provide some beverages and you can bring in your favorite snacks or finger foods to share.

Whether it's Candyland or Euchre or Monopoly or Uno, please save the date and plan to sign up for a fun afternoon!



Save the date: Easter Sunday, April 20th - Easter Brunch after church.

COMMUNITY

Join us for the 3rd annual

AACORN JIGSAW PUZZLE CONTEST

SUNDAY, MARCH 2ND

Teams will race to see who can put together a jigsaw puzzle the fastest!

Teams of 2 @ 11:30am | 300 piece puzzle | \$50 } Includes lunch featuring AACORN 3rd MI chili, bread, cocoa, and other treats!
 Teams of 4 @ 1:30pm | 500 piece puzzle | \$80

Located at:
 AACORN Farm,
 6409 34th St S
 Kalamazoo, MI

All proceeds are donated directly to AACORN Farm. For more information including registration, visit our website or use the QR code! Pre-registration is required. <https://aacorncommunity.org>

2025 REGIONAL CONCERT TOUR

Dr. Nicola Bassoli, Director

CASTLE SINGERS AND KAMMERSTREICHER

Dr. Barbara Nienhuis, Organist

Tuesday, March 4 7:30 p.m.
 Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
 1747 W. Milham Ave., Portage, MI 49024

NEWS

KALAMAZOO CIVIC THEATER:

Parade in the Civic Auditorium



March 14, 2025 — March 23, 2025
 Marie Kerstetter: Music Director

Dancing at Lughnasa at Carver Studio



March 28, 2025 — April 6, 2025
 Traci Glasscock plays Maggie

WORSHIP NEWS

Our 2024-25 Worship theme is "CLAIMING HOPE"

WORSHIP IN MARCH

March 2

Luke 9:28-43a

Transfiguration Sunday

"Mountain Top Moments"

Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom, guest preacher

COMMUNION

No Children & Worship



March 5

Lent begins...
7 pm **ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE**

readings, music, prayer, quiet time, and ashes.

OUR LENTEN THEME: "Pathways to Hope"

March 9

Luke 4:1-13

First Sunday in Lent

"Love(not fear)"

Children & Worship

March 16

Luke 6:46-49

Second Sunday in Lent

"Action(not helplessness)"

Children & Worship

March 23

Matthew 6:5-15,25-30

Luke 5:15-16;6:12-13

Third Sunday in Lent

"Spirit(not stress)"

Children & Worship

March 30

Matthew 18:10-20

Luke 15:3-7

Fourth Sunday in Lent

"Community(not isolation)"

Children & Worship



Our Lent devotional is "Grieving Change and Loss: the unpredictable, non-linear, faith-filled, journey toward resurrection," published by the Presbyterian Outlook. Copies will be available at church beginning March 2, and it will also be emailed. We have Lent devotions for kid & families and teens also available at church.



The 2025 WESTMINSTER ART FESTIVAL is just around the corner!

We begin receiving poetry submissions March 1; Visual art submissions begin March 31, with a deadline of April 7 for both. Submission forms, guidelines and instructions, along with hours when we'll be receiving visual art, can be found on the website: <https://www.westminsterartfestival.org/>

This year's theme is "ONE PLANET." Poets and artists will submit work reflecting on the reality that we have only this one planet. We and all the living beings we share it with depend on the health of our earth and its interconnected ecosystems. If you're a poet or artist, please consider submitting work! If you know a poet or artist, please tell them about it. Give somebody a flyer about the festival events or hang up one of our lovely posters where it can be seen by others. Help us spread the word and make this year's Art Festival another wonderful celebration of art, poetry, earth care, faith, and community.

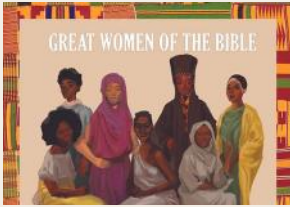
Our first event will be a POETRY WORKSHOP, led by local poet and retired PNHS English teacher Nancy Nott, on Saturday, March 29, 10 am – noon. Nancy is a fantastic teacher and a great advocate for poets and poetry. This is open to anyone. Cost is \$20, limit of 15 participants. Call or email the church or contact one of the pastors to sign up.

If you'd like to help receive art submissions, prepare the exhibit, host or provide treats for one of the events, talk with a member of the planning team: Miriam Duggins, Jodie Gerard, Val Glasscock, Traci Glasscock, Lisa Buesing, Marta Best, Renee Szostek, Pastor Jerry, or Pastor Janet.



We're pleased to once again host a **WATERCOLOR PAINTING CLASS** here at Westminster, taught by local artist Kay Severson. The spring class will be a practice class (for those who have previously taken a watercolor basics class). The focus (which might be flowers, landscape, or something else) will be determined by a survey of the participants. The class will meet five Tuesdays in April, 6:30- 8:30 pm in our Craft Room. Cost is \$70 (you provide your own supplies). Registration forms available in the church office.

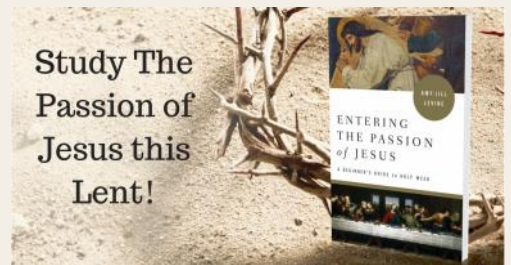
SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION



March 2: Lisa Buesing will finish her study of "Little Known Women of the Bible." She'll be pulling from both the Old and New Testaments.

March 9- April 13: Pastor Jerry will lead a study designed by Professor Amy-Jill Levine of the Vanderbilt Divinity School called *Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week*.

Her background in Judaism and knowledge of the Old Testament offers a unique perspective on the events of Holy Week. Beginning and seasoned students of the Bible will discover new insights. We'll cover Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, his actions and teachings in the temple, his anointing by a woman, his last meal with his disciples and his time in the garden of Gethsemane.



Study The
Passion of
Jesus this
Lent!

"Welcome to Westminster"

This two-session class will be offered Sunday, March 16 and Sunday, March 23, during the Adult Ed time, from 10:45 am - noon. This is for anyone new to Westminster who wants to know more about the church or anyone who's been involved for a while who would like to consider becoming an "official" member. It's an opportunity to an opportunity to learn more about who we are as a congregation and as Presbyterians, maybe get some questions answered, and find out about ways to get more connected. This is a no-pressure event! It's ok to come just to learn more and meet people. Please talk to Pastor Janet for more information and to confirm which Sundays we will meet.

March 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.



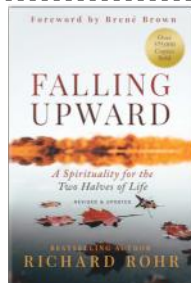
PUT THESE FAITH FORMATION DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR:

March 2 (With Miss Hillary)

March 16 (With Miss Leslie)

MEN'S BOOK STUDY

March 4 & 18
8:30 am at the church
Falling Upward
by Richard Rohr



Wednesday Morning BIBLE STUDY

10 am at church or Zoom
We're studying *I Corinthians*
Contact Pastor Jerry for info or Zoom link



FAITH BOOK CLUB

Our March book is
One Hundred Years of Lenni And Margot
by Marianne Cronin
Join us Tuesday, March 11 at 7 pm on zoom
New to FBC?
Contact Lorie Leak to request the Zoom link!

FROM THE PASTORS' DESK

"So many good books, not enough time to read them." We say this a lot in our family. As I was going through my calendar, I noticed that I had actually been spending a lot of time reading. Three books in particular have moved me and since I haven't written about books in this column for a while, I thought I would share a little bit about them.

I'll begin with the one that has not found its way into a sermon: Mitri Raheb's book *Decolonizing Palestine: The Land, the People, the Bible*. A Palestinian theologian, Raheb observes that in seeking to create a homeland for the Jews, supporters have confused the modern state of Israel with "biblical Israel" in order to justify dislodging the indigenous peoples already living in the land. It's been 3000 years since David ruled in Israel and a lot has happened since then. For nearly 2000 of those years, Christians, Jews and Muslims have shared the land. Raheb points out that Palestinians have just as much history in the land, with ancestors dating back to a time before Joshua entered the land.

It saddens me that Christians, both conservative and liberal have played a major role in contributing to the perception that the land belongs to Israel by some divine right. Even Walter Brueggemann seems to fall into this group, argues Raheb.

His book reinforces for me the importance of being careful with our use of scripture as we apply it to our world. It's probably too late to change the terms of the debate but his book offers a way of thinking about the conflict that we don't usually hear.

On a completely different note, I want to live in the world that Robin Wall Kimmerer describes in her book *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World...* Oh wait! I do! As a scientist, she is well aware of the negative impact climate change is having on our world, but she is so good at drawing on the wisdom of the natural world and teasing you with its beauty that you almost forget that we are losing much of it.

She opens the book with a little story about picking fruit from the serviceberry tree. "The abundance of berries," she writes, "feels like a pure gift from the land. I have not earned, paid for, nor labored for them. There is no mathematics of worthiness that reckons I deserve them in any way. And yet here they are – along with the sun and the air and the birds and the rain.... You could call them natural resources ecosystem services, but the robins and I know them as gifts. We both sing gratitude with our mouths full" (p. 2). A short book (about 100 pages), beautifully written, less dense and more focused than *Braiding Sweetgrass*, the indigenous wisdom just keeps coming. She makes you believe that if everybody understood this, as Julian of Norwich said, "All will be well and all will be well."

I'm only three chapters into Norman Wirzba's *Love's Braided Dance: Hope in a Time of Crisis*, but I expect to find more material that will appear in future sermons. He's shown up in at least two so far. With stories from his own life and history he explores in a variety of contexts how we can sustain hope in trying times. The short answer is to act from love because love

gets into everything. It wraps itself around things, ties things together, creates space; it dances!

Three books: one to wrap your head around, another to make your heart sing and a third to get your feet moving. "So many good books, not enough time to read them." But that's not a good reason to not make a start. Maybe one of these appeals to you.

Peace,
Pastor Jerry



EARTH CARE NEWS

EARTH CARE MISSION STATEMENT:

To inspire, educate, promote and mobilize our congregation and community to protect the Earth through environmental stewardship and practices that aim for sustainability for all life on earth that encompasses God's creation.



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE TEAM MEMBERS NEEDED:

Do you enjoy planning events and activities? You may want to consider joining the congregational life team. We are a small informal group that plans activities, such as potlucks, the picnic, Easter brunch, and other activities. We will be having a planning meeting for the upcoming year soon, so if you'd like to be a part of this fun group, please contact Val or Jayme .

We are also looking for a few additional volunteers to help with Coffee Plus. This is a very popular ministry and a few extra folks would be most helpful. 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 with information found in your church directory. We will arrange an orientation for you.

We offer lots of support in providing treats, crackers, cheese and drinks. We thank you for considering helping us with this important ministry!

Spring Mini-Retreat – April 12 – "Making Time for Wonder"

Join the Presbyterian Women of Westminster for a time of discussion, fellowship, and breakfast on Saturday April 12th from 8:30 a.m. to noon.

Our guest speaker is Rev. Amber Nettleton, an Associate Pastor at the First Presbyterian Church of Kalamazoo. Amber was born and raised in "Cajun country" where the Louisiana phrase "laissez les bons temps rouler" (Let the good times roll) greatly influences her life and ministry. Amber earned her M.Div. from McCormick Theological Seminary in 2012 and has served churches in the Cascades and Lake Michigan Presbyteries, as well as served as a hospice chaplain at the V.A. Medical Center in Portland, Oregon. Amber is a mom to three young children and the daughter-in-law of Doug and Judy Nettleton. When she isn't working, she can be found volunteering at her local public school, cooking plant-based meals, washing never-ending piles of laundry, or hiding from her children to read historical fiction novels.



During our time together in April, we will explore cultivating spiritual wonder and awe in our fast paced, politically divisive, and digital age characterized by constant change and loss. The book that has inspired Amber's presentation is "Enchantment: Awakening Wonder in an Anxious Age" by Katherine May.

Breakfast and opening begin at 8:30 a.m. Sign up on the sign up sheet at church or by emailing Kelly Schultz. We hope to see you there!

Presbyterian Women at The Crew!

Please join other women for lunch at The Crew Family Restaurant following Adult Ed. on March 23rd!
5200 Portage Road



Indoor Walking with the Presbyterian Women ends March 6



PNHS Doghouse, Thursday, March 6, 6-8 pm
Everyone is welcome! It's not just for women! Outdoor Walking begins on Thursday, April 24th. Watch for a printed schedule in April of the various meeting spots.

Get Connected, Build Relationships, Enjoy Exercise!

Play Pickleball (WPC Gym)

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



Play Volleyball (WPC Gym)

Wednesday evenings, 7:30 pm

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

A few big updates to report since the January Annual Meeting.

1. The mini-split heating and cooling system for the main office is fully complete and operational. The system covers both the copier/mail room area and the office manager's inner office. The initial remote controls for the system were "upgraded" to traditional, more intuitive to operate wall thermostats.
2. The Fellowship Hall gymnasium athletic lights were updated from high energy halogen lights to lower energy consuming and more light producing LED lights. We have the new lights on the lowest output setting for these fixtures. The three light switches control the 10 light fixtures: 4 lights on the left, 2 lights in the middle, and 4 lights on the right so we have a little extra control over light intensity for these powerful fixtures.
3. By the time this newsletter is distributed, we anticipate that the exterior lights around the gymnasium will have been replaced by an electrical contractor. This will improve both safety and security at night time.
4. The mail room received a new, wall-mounted, drop box for donations. An earlier box was deemed a bit too small, and a larger unit was procured. The change from the previous freestanding silver box was a step at improving the security of our financial gifts.
5. A new hand cart has been obtained to replace the cart stolen in the 2024 Fall break-in. Please return the hand cart to the B&G room when finished using.
6. The exterior entry mat to the Presbytery was replaced, and the latch pins to the building's exterior doors were lubricated to improve latching function when doors swing closed.

A BIG THANK YOU to Cindy Green for coordinating the snow removal volunteers who are preparing the sidewalks for Sunday morning. Our electric snow blower makes this a bit easier for everyone.

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 or Tom Verhage with information contained in the church member directory.



MISSION NEWS

Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes 2025 Warehouse Volunteer Schedule

Monday, March 31
Monday, April 28
Monday, May 19
Monday, June 30
Monday, July 28
Monday, August 18
Monday, September 29
Monday, October 27
Monday, November 17



Promoting a Hunger-Free Community Since 1982

Time: 12:30-2:30pm.

Please contact Judy Paget
with any questions. Her contact
information is in the directory



Thank you to everyone who made our extended **Angel Tree Project** possible this year.

- ☺ In December we delivered two gifts to each of 50 children on behalf of their incarcerated parent or grandparent. Several folks sent holiday cards to the imprisoned relatives.
- ☺ In February so many people wrote individual notes or signed the Winter Blessings Notes for the 23 prisoners whose children we served. We also enclosed a sheet about Deep Breathing, suggested by a Citizens for Prison Reform advocate.
- ☺ In February we also sent a letter to each of 24 Angel Tree caregivers,
- ☺ connecting them with the Family Participation Program
- ☺ (Citizens for Prison Reform), which provides support groups and
- ☺ resources for families of incarcerated people.

Thanks for bringing love and light to these families.

Nancy Husk on behalf of the Mission Team



MARK YOUR CALENDAR! The Kalamazoo CROP Walk is BACK!

Join other walkers on Sunday, April 27th at 2 pm to raise awareness and money for Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes and Church World Service Hunger programs around the world. The walk will start and end at Trinity Lutheran Church on S. Westnedge in Kalamazoo. Two routes (1.25 mi and 3.1 mi) will take walkers through the downtown, Vine & Edison neighborhoods and the Central Business District.

Stay tuned for registration information.

For more information contact Barb Daniels who will be Westminster's coordinator.



WARMING CENTER AT WESTMINSTER

Thank you for all your support of our Warming Center this winter!

Below is an update on current needs. Only these items, please! If you have something else you want to donate, please check with Judy, Fred, Sandy, or Carol first. We are well-supplied with towels, so we don't need more at this time. Please bring donations no later than March 16. (The last day for the Warming Center will be March 27.)

PATRON NEEDS:

-WARM clothing for men and women – coats, sweat pants, long-sleeved shirts; also a few belts would be welcome. New or gently-used items only.

-Hand/ foot warmers

-Back packs/ duffle bags

-Travel size soaps, lotions, shampoo, conditioner, shave cream, deodorant, toothpaste

-Monetary donations to assist with purchase of warm, insulated gloves, hats, and socks.

(We can purchase these items – heavy-duty and high quality items at B & G in Schoolcraft at much less expensive prices than can be found elsewhere.)

FOOD ITEMS:

-Large cans of tomato, chicken noodle, or chili from GFS.

-Large packages of sliced cheese for grilled sandwiches.

Please also continue to pray for our Warming Center volunteers, and especially our patrons.

Have questions? Talk to one of these members of the planning team:

Judy Markusse Paget, Fred and Sandy Welch, Carol and Nick Pratt, Barb Daniels, Cindy Green, Nancy Husk, Pastors Janet and Jerry Duggins.



VOLUNTEER AT THE WARMING CENTER AT WESTMINSTER

Volunteers are needed, especially as we plan for next year. Contact Nancy Husk (info. Found in the directory) to schedule a time to volunteer OR just drop in between 10:30 and 1:00 when we are busiest. Bring a friend who likes to contribute to the community. Plan to volunteer next year starting in November.

RACIAL EQUITY NEWS

Join other Westminster folks for the Friday night production and community discussion of *Smoldering Fires*.

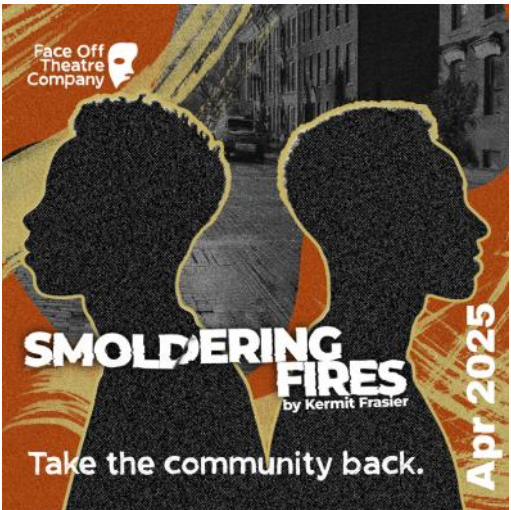
Friday, April 11 @ 7:30 pm

The Jolliffe Theatre @ The Epic Center, Kalamazoo

The tickets are \$20 per performance. Visit their online box office or call 269-250-6984.

Smoldering Fires tells the poignant story of two young boys grappling with their dreams and the harsh realities of their environment. This play is a compelling piece that resonates deeply with Face Off Theatre Company's mission to inspire change and dialogue.

Contact Barb Daniels if you are interested in attending this show.



**The RACIAL EQUITY Team will meet briefly
Sunday, March 9 right after church**

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 2025 amount is \$42 and envelopes can be found at the back of the sanctuary.

Our Intention Statement

At Westminster Church



we live a whole life in response to God
attentively
together

WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

engaging the world
for the good of all
following Jesus Christ.



adopted by the Session, April 25, 2011

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT REPARATIONS

All,

Since the murder of George Floyd in 2020, the Westminster Racial Equity Group has been studying the history of racism both in our culture and within the church. The group has also been looking at the ways in which racism continues to manifest itself today. We're focusing on how the church and individuals can act in ways that don't reinforce racism, but introduce an anti-racist perspective.

After four years, we became aware of the Justice League of Greater Lansing of Michigan which is doing the work of "reparations" on a regional level. We've been in conversation with folks from First Presbyterian Church in Kalamazoo and others in the community about implementing a similar program in Kalamazoo. In March, we're providing opportunities for the Westminster congregation to learn more about reparations and our local efforts. We'd love for you to be part of this early conversation.

You may have been contacted recently by a member of the Racial Equity Group by phone or email about attending one of these informational sessions in March. Please respond to the email or phone call to let us know if you're planning to attend, or if you need a different date/time that can also be arranged.

Again, these are informational sessions designed to bring the Westminster congregation up to speed on what the Racial Equity Group has learned and what the concept of "reparations" might involve in our community.

Thanks for your kind attention,
Paula Schriemer and Cindy Green
(For the Racial Equity Group)"

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT REPARATIONS SCHEDULE

March 9: 3 pm at Church

March 13: 7 pm at Cindy Green's house

March 18: 7 pm at David and Paula Schriemers' house

March 23: 4 pm at Pastors Janet and Jerry's house

Addresses are all in the Westminster Directory.

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 Stuu, Clerk; Val Glasscock, Jim Gluys, Carol Pratt, Jayme Ruimveld, Fred Welch, Chris Rohwer, Tom VerHage and Alissa Worstell

DEACONS

Ann Cirvencic, Moderator; Jean Cox, Cathy MacDonald, Kettie Chapeyama, Jodie Gerard Val Kirkwood, Nick Pratt, Deacons-elect: Barb Daniels, Pat Kurtz

Team Leaders

Administration

Finance.....Chris Rohwer, Leslie Ashbaugh
Personnel.....Carol Pratt
Building & Grounds.....Tom VerHage, Jim Gluys
Children & Youth Ministries; Faith Formation.....Leslie Ashbaugh, Alissa Worstell
Adult Education.....Pastor Jerry
Congregational Life & Evangelism.....Jayme Ruimveld, Val Glasscock
Art Festival.....Miriam Duggins, Jodie Gerard
Mission.....Fred Welch
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 & WorshipMary Lou Rohwer, Kelly Schultz
Communion.....Kelly Schultz
Coffee PlusJayme Ruimveld