

# WESTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



## NEWSLETTER

## November 2023

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(269) 344-3966

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## 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*

## 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 OFFICE HOURS :

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

**A Memorial Service for Bill Potts will be on Saturday, November 18, at 2 pm,** with visitation in the narthex from 1-2 pm and a reception following the service. Please remember Bill's family in prayer as we prepare to give thanks for his life.



## November Birthdays

2 Sara St uut	12 Lizz Cardwell
3 Ernest Pueblo	Samantha Poliak
4 Fatch Chapeyama	17 Tom Hamilton
5 Rob Boven	18 Bud Toorman
9 Nancy Husk	19 Mary Carlson
11 Melissa Martin	Sharon Brouwer
Suzanne Rop	26 Amy Ruimveld

## Anniversaries

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



## Pandemic Response Team

Just a reminder to EVERYONE to get your fall vaccinations for flu, COVID and RSV. It is safe for you to get all three vaccines at the same time. Right now there is a significant amount of COVID in our area, and it seems to be very transmissible.

So let's be extra careful at Westminster activities: Don't come to church if you feel sick, DO test yourself for COVID if you have upper respiratory symptoms like fever, cough, runny nose. If you test positive, the CDC says you should isolate at home for five days, but after that you may go out if you wear a mask for five more days.

You can order four free at-home tests at: <https://www.covid.gov/tests>. Also, some COVID tests may have expiration dates on them. Personally, I'm ignoring that—if you are doing an at-home test, as long as the "control line" comes up (usually designated "C" on the test cassette), that test should be reliable. If the "C" line doesn't show up when you put the sample in the test cassette, that is an invalid test and you should throw it away and get a different test kit. Hope that helps. Stay healthy out there!



Paula Schriemer, M.D.

## 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.

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Westminster's Worship Team works hard and intentionally to make our services meaningful to both in-person and virtual worshippers, and to help everyone feel a sense of connection.

Whether you're worshipping in the sanctuary or virtually, we encourage you to 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.

### HELP PREPARE THE CHURCH FOR ADVENT!

The Worship Team invites you to join us after the Christian Education hour on Sunday, November 26 as we decorate our sanctuary and narthex for Advent and Christmas. We'll have a little something to eat, and have a fun time making our space festive. All ages are welcome. Let Leslie know you plan to attend.



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

**WORSHIP IN NOVEMBER**

November 5

**ALL SAINTS SUNDAY**

**Communion**

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

November 12

**GIVE WITH INTENTION:** Stewardship Dedication Sunday  
We will celebrate and dedicate our giving intentions in support of Westminster's ministry in 2024.

Children & Worship

November 19

**HARVEST SUNDAY**

We'll bring our donations of non-perishable food items for Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes (see list for items needed)

Children & Worship

November 26

**CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY**

Children & Worship



**COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING SERVICE ~ Sunday, November 19, 5 pm**

We're pleased to join with several other Portage congregations for a community worship service in celebration of Thanksgiving. This is a great way to make connections with others in our community.

This year's service is hosted by Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (1747 W.Milham Rd).

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

The service will be followed by a **PIE SUPPER... so (if able) bring your favorite pie** (sweet or savory) and stick around for a delicious time of fellowship.

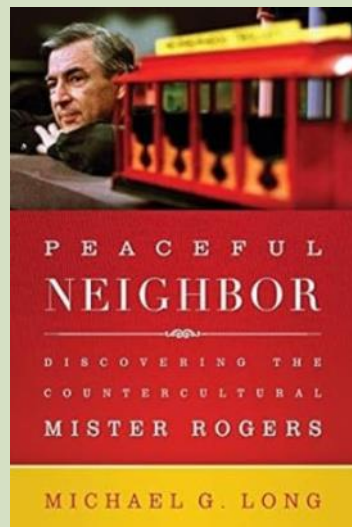
## SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION

10:45 am in the choir/Zoom room

Continuing through November 12:

### ***Peaceful Neighbor: Discovering the Countercultural Mister Rogers.***

Fred Rogers, a Presbyterian minister, engaged in ministry to children through his television program, *Mister Roger's Neighborhood*. This book explores the ways in which "Mister Rogers" addressed the difficult issues of war and peace, hunger, gender identity, racism, homosexuality and earth care, while nurturing children's sense of their own value and beginning to build a moral center as they move toward adulthood. That ministry continues to challenge how we think about these concerns today.



## Fall 2023 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 will be using PCUSA curriculum "Growing with Grace and Gratitude."

Parents are welcome to participate.

Questions? contact Leslie Ashbaugh.

### **PUT THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR:**

November 5 – Faith Formation following Worship

November 19 – Faith Formation following Worship

December 3 – Faith Formation following Worship

December 17 – Faith Formation following Worship



**Wednesday Morning  
BIBLE STUDY**

**10 am at church or Zoom**

*We're studying 1 Peter*

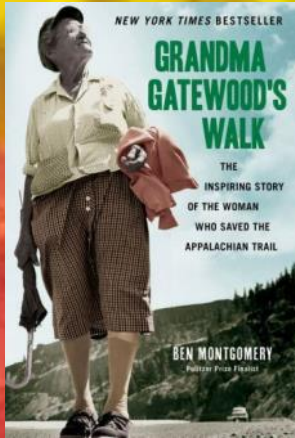
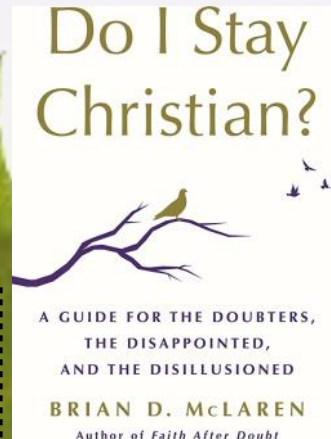
*Contact Pastor Jerry for info or Zoom link*

**MEN'S BOOK STUDY**

1st & 3rd Tuesdays

8:30 am at the church

*Do I Stay Christian?* by Brian McLaren



**FAITH BOOK CLUB**

*Our November book is*

*Grandma Gatewood's Walk* by Ben Montgomery

Join us November 7, 7 pm by Zoom

New to FBC?

Contact Lorie Leak to request the Zoom link!

**What:** Centering Prayer and the Practice of Letting Go

**When:** Sundays, November 19 and 26 from 10:45-noon

**Where and How:** TBD

**Facilitator:** Nancy Husk

Centering Prayer is a form of silent prayer encouraged by Richard Rohr, whose book *The Universal Christ* we studied this past year. It is the practice of opening to God's presence by letting go of obsessive thoughts and reactive feelings. When we spend time in this form of prayer, God transforms us and equips us to be Christ's eyes, hands, and feet in the world. We grow more fully into our lives as God's beloved and unique expressions of the Christ.

The format will be a mini retreat with opportunities for shared responses, listening to music, learning the elements of Centering Prayer, and practicing this prayer together.



## FROM THE PASTORS' DESK

As I look at the calendar for the next month or two, I'm a little overwhelmed... but also grateful. Overwhelmed because it seems like we have quite a lot going on, including new and challenging responsibilities. But grateful, too, because these plans flow from the caring, committed heart of this faith community.

First of all, some of what's feeling a little overwhelming: the Advent and Christmas seasons are right around the corner, of course. This is nothing new, and neither is the fact that every year it seems that summer is barely over before Advent planning is upon us. I don't mind this, because I love this season, but there are extra services to get ready and mission projects like Angel Tree to organize... just as we're also having a Fair Trade Sale and wrapping up stewardship season and having Harvest Sunday and working out a next-year budget. All of this happens because as a congregation, we are centered in worship and passionate about the needs of our neighbors near and far. A Community Thanksgiving Service is now part of our November, which is a great joy and represents renewed connections with other Portage churches. These "routine" things are really not ordinary at all, but reflect a vital and compassionate faith for which we can be grateful. It's a lot, though!

This year, we're also looking toward the hiring of a part-time staff person to help us with communications, outreach, welcome, and engagement. We hope to hire in the new year which means we'll be devoting some time to this over the next several weeks. This is a significant step... and it's happening because our Session is thinking about the future and our congregational staffing needs. Another thing to be grateful for!

Our Session (folks who really take their leadership responsibilities seriously) have also decided to provide opportunities for security training this fall for staff, Sunday morning volunteers, and any members who can participate. None of us want to think that any kind of threat, emergency, or crisis could arise at church, but we know it's not outside the realm of possibility. So a lot of us will be getting some training to be better prepared to respond effectively in the unlikely event of an emergency. The whole idea is overwhelming. But at the same time, I'm grateful (I hope you share that sentiment) to be in a place where we care about keeping one another safe.

Probably the biggest and most challenging prospect on the horizon is the warming center we will be opening in our gym/fellowship hall at the end of November.



As the Mission Task Group has met over the past several months to plan for this, I've been struck by how many decisions and details are involved in starting a ministry like this: Volunteers. Security. Funds. Food. Supplies. It's overwhelming, especially because, for most of us, our experience with this kind of ministry is limited. We don't know how it will go. We expect to learn a lot. We'll very likely end up adapting and changing what we do as we go along. And that kind of uncertainty is overwhelming in its own way.

BUT what makes me also feel grateful about it is that this feels like a calling for our congregation. For some time, many people have expressed a wish to see our building used for mission. When we heard that there might be a need for a place for unhoused folks to get out of the cold for a few hours at a time, our Mission Team couldn't refuse to look into what it would take to address that need. As they've done so, we've become more and more aware that there is in fact a significant unhoused population within a short distance of Westminster. The more we know about the need, the more strongly the push to see what we can do to help. This effort will push us a bit outside our comfort zone (overwhelming!) but it's wonderful to see folks willing to go there (gratitude!). We may find that this project brings us new friends, new connections, new understanding, and many new reasons to be grateful.

So in this month of Thanksgiving, in spite of all that feels overwhelming, I'm going to try and focus on gratitude for all the ways we are engaged together in being attentive to the Spirit, to our neighbors, and to one another. I hope you will, too.

Happy thanksgiving!  
-Pastor Janet

\*And I haven't even mentioned all the things going on in the world around us, things that overwhelm us with sadness, anxiety, and helplessness. Please let's keep praying, advocating for peace and justice, and looking (as Mr. Rogers advised) for the helpers, in order to do what we can, alongside them.

P.S. You probably have questions about the warming center plans. I encourage you to attend a short informational meeting following worship on November 12. The warming center task group members will do their best to answer your questions.



## CONGREGATIONAL LIFE NEWS

**Attention puzzlers!** We are going to start a puzzle swap/lending library. If you have some puzzles you love, and would like to share OR if you would like a new puzzle to try for free, this is for you!

Puzzles can be brought to the classroom just beyond the choir room and will be stored in the last cupboard. If you want to drop off some puzzles (all pieces accounted for please) just put them in the cupboard. If you want to take a puzzle home to work, feel free and return it when you're done so others can enjoy them as well!

We will get a sign on the door, so you will know exactly where the puzzles are.

### COFFEE PLUS

We hope everyone is enjoying all the many treats at Coffee Plus! Please remember to donate to the baskets to help offset the costs for the donuts, muffins, pastries, cheese & fruit. Thank you for your support!

Save the date: Breadfest will be Sunday, December 17th during Coffee Plus. This is our annual sharing of holiday breads. Please plan to bring your favorite breads, coffee cakes, muffins, rolls or pastries to share with all.

### Get Connected, Build Relationships, Enjoy Exercise!

#### Play Pickleball (WPC Gym)

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

#### Play Volleyball (WPC Gym)

Wednesday evenings, 7:30 pm

### CRAFT NIGHT



4th Monday of each month, 6:30—9 pm in the art room at church. Bring a craft you're working on ... or just come for the conversation & laughter! Everyone is welcome! And of course you can invite a friend.

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

**A BIG THANK YOU!** to the Green Team for their pruning activities around the grounds, especially near the rear entrance island and the area around the gazebo. Some additional pruning took place separately in October in the Memorial Garden and in areas closer to the building and the Memorial Garden irrigation system was winterized.

The rapid transition from air conditioning to heating caught us off guard again this year. Fortunately, our HVAC contractor was able to get our boilers turned on in time to avoid too many cool sanctuary Sundays.

A program to reduce energy consumption has begun in the Narthex. Our "Re-lighting Project" was done in 2013. This program converted many older magnetic ballasts, T-12 fluorescent four-bulb light fixtures to electronic ballasts, T-8 two-bulb fixtures. In early COVID, we replaced many of these refurbished fixtures with LED fixtures. LED "bulbs" use 50% of the energy that the T-8 bulbs use. A few LEDs have been installed, and all the ceiling lights in the Narthex will be converted this month. The Narthex lights are heavily used, and the LED investment should provide a nice payback as we reduce our electricity consumption. A vision exists to eventually convert the Fellowship Hall fluorescent bulbs to similar LED bulbs to improve the lighting and reduce consumption.

There will be a snow clearing sign-up sheet coming in November. This is only for Sunday mornings when we don't have custodian coverage. "Training" will be provided to anyone willing to assist.

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, please contact Jim Gluys.



### RACIAL EQUITY DISCUSSION GROUP

meets Sunday, November 12, at 3:30 pm at church

## A NEW MISSION

**A task group of the Mission Team continues to develop plans** to offer a **WARMING CENTER** at Westminster for unhoused folks needing a place to keep warm during the winter months. As we work through the needs, possible services that could be offered, and the many details involved, we are consulting with others who have done this work. We have learned a lot but the biggest things we've learned is that this is definitely a need in the community.

We plan to offer the warming center in our gym/fellowship hall two days a week, November 28th to March 2024. Tentative schedule is Tuesdays and Thursdays 10 am to 2 pm. We'll serve coffee and hot chocolate and provide food (in accordance with regulations and with support from Loaves & Fishes). There'll be space allotted in the gymnasium for people to rest or meet with others. Other services may be added as resources and volunteers are available.

**Volunteers will be needed**—several each day—to work in this important ministry. Each day there will be a team leader, and we'll ask others to sign up for shifts. Training will be provided for all volunteers. We expect to have volunteers from the community, but involvement of Westminster folks will be crucial. Please consider volunteering for this mission opportunity.

There's no doubt this is a big undertaking. But there is a need, and mission to serve those in need has always been a top priority at Westminster. Many folks have expressed a desire to see our building used more intentionally for mission.

Watch for more information as the plans develop. If you want to know more or would like to be part of this new ministry, please talk to one of us!

Fred Welch, Barb Daniels, Cindy Green, Judy Markusse Paget  
Pastors Janet and Jerry Duggins



## HARVEST SUNDAY is November 19, 2023.

We as a congregation annually collect non-perishable food items for Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes. Paper bags and lists of preferred items will be available at church on November 5th.

The current list is below and information can be found at [https://kzoolf.org/files/2020/09/2020\\_Food\\_Wish\\_List.pdf](https://kzoolf.org/files/2020/09/2020_Food_Wish_List.pdf)

L & F is always seeking baby formula/food, can openers, birthday cake kits (cake mix & frosting), gluten free, low sodium, and organic foods. Please consider including one of these items this year.

Canned Fruit/Canned Vegetables  
Ramen Noodles  
Easy to Open, Main-Meal Dishes

Snacks for Children  
Soup  
Peanut Butter

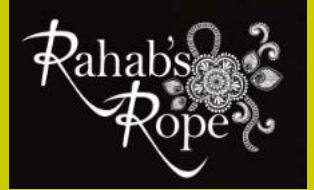
Lactose Free Milk (shelf stable)  
High Protein Meal Drinks (Ensure)  
Spaghetti Sauce and Noodles

## FAIR TRADE SALE November 19 & 26, and December 3

In the Narthex after worship (and during office hours November 20 – December 4)

This is your opportunity to do some Christmas shopping (or treat yourself) and at the same time support artisans and farmers to receive fair return for their work and empower their communities.

**Rahab's Rope** exists to empower women and children in the fight against human trafficking in India. Their products include home décor, kitchen items, shawls, jewelry and other accessories.



Read more about this work or shop other products at <https://www.rahabsrope.com/>



**UPAVIM** ("United for a Better Life") provides employment and empowerment opportunities for women in Guatemala to strengthen their community. UPAVIM sales also support a children's center and a K-6 Montessori school.

UPAVIM products include home décor, textiles, accessories, and holiday items like ornaments and nativities. Read more about their mission and see other products available at <https://www.upavim.org/>



We will also have goats' milk soap (many lovely scent options!) from AACORN Farm and delicious coffees, teas, chocolates and more from Equal Exchange. These items make great stocking stuffers!

## Angel Tree's Coming . . .

For over 30 years Westminster in partnership with Prison Fellowship has purchased Christmas gifts on behalf of prisoners and delivered them to the prisoners' children. Toward the end of November the Angel Tree will appear in the narthex with gift tags. We'll email everyone with the details the week before the tree and tags go up.





## A Conversation with Dr. Mark Braverman, Executive Director, Kairos USA

**When:** Wednesday, November 1st 7:00-8:30 pm

**Where:** WMU College of Health and Human Services Auditorium - Room 1010 1200 Oakland Dr, Kalamazoo, MI. (located north of Kalamazoo Psychiatric Hospital). Free parking.

**Sponsored by:** Kalamazoo Nonviolent Opponents of War (KNOW) Palestine Solidarity Working Group and Kairos West Michigan.

**More Info:** [NewsFromKNOW@kzoo4peace.org](mailto:NewsFromKNOW@kzoo4peace.org)

### Tragedy in Gaza-What can we do & how can we help?

With the recent horrific outbreak of hostilities between Israel and the Palestinians, we struggle to understand the unending cycle of violence between two peoples. As we mourn all loss of life, and stand against continued oppression of Palestinians, we invite the Kalamazoo community to join us for a conversation with Dr. Mark Braverman.

**About Mark Braverman:** Mark was raised in the Jewish tradition, and trained in trauma studies and crisis intervention. Traveling to Israel and occupied Palestine in 2006, Mark was transformed by what he witnessed and by encounters with peace activists and civil society leaders from the Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities. Since then, Mark has devoted himself full-time to a just peace in Israel and Palestine. Mark brings his deep and unique perspective as a Jewish American with family roots in Jerusalem and decades of experience working with Israelis, Palestinians and activists throughout the world dedicated to a just resolution of this conflict [www.markbraverman.org](http://www.markbraverman.org)

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

The fourth Monday of each month is Westminster's volunteer day at the Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes warehouse. Tasks might include sorting food donations or packing produce boxes—whatever is needed. We work together from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm on those days. We can bring five to twelve volunteers (18 or older) each month.



This is a great opportunity to share fellowship while supporting efforts to fight hunger in our community.

Sign up is on a month-to-month basis.

For more information or to sign up, contact Judy Markusse Paget

**Next Volunteer date: November 27**

## CHURCH SECURITY TRAINING

Westminster's Session takes the safety and security of all our participants seriously. In the United States, we've witnessed an increase in mass shootings that have occurred not only in malls, community centers, schools, and workplaces, but even in places of worship. For that reason, we feel it is extremely important to be prepared and to have folks trained in responses to such violent acts.

Any Westminster member or participant of Westminster Presbyterian Church is invited to attend a **security training workshop** this fall. We especially need all shepherds, hosts, ushers, deacons, and elders to participate in the security training.

The next session will take place Monday, November 6 from 5:30 pm to 7 pm at the church and food will be provided. We will receive training from an expert in the area who worked for both the Kalamazoo Public Safety Department as well as Kalamazoo Public Schools. There will be time for questions and answers.

We strongly encourage anyone who is able to participate. Please sign up by using the Google form (link below) or notifying the church office, Pastors Janet or Jerry, or Cindy Green. If you have questions, contact Cindy Green or the pastors.

[WPC Security Training Sign Up](#)



## GIVING WITH INTENTION : Stewardship 2023

On November 12, Stewardship Sunday, we will dedicate our financial commitments to the ministry of Westminster for the coming year. Please prayerfully consider how you can support, with your resources, the work of Christ in and through this congregation. The regular, faithful giving of the members and friends of this community of faith is the main source of funds for all the things that we do: Big things, like supporting Presbyterian and local mission, employing our staff members and pastors, caring for our facility and keeping the lights on, and the all the things from internet to postage, that keep us connected. Little things, like piano tuning, coffee, and materials for Christian education.

Our church budget isn't just numbers; it represents our commitment to our core values and our intention to be a faithful, vital, caring, and engaged Christian community, together, in 2024 and beyond. Every financial commitment, of whatever size, is important, in that it reflects a desire to be a part of the work of the church in this place. Watch for a letter with a pledge card, and bring your card to church November 12. If you can't join us for worship that day, please send or deliver it by November 20 (or you can email Paul Paget with your pledge information). Receiving the pledges in a timely way helps greatly with budget planning! Thank you for being part of the ministry of the church.

## Westminster Staff

Reverend Janet Robertson Duggins

[jerryorjanet@wpcportage.org](mailto:jerryorjanet@wpcportage.org)

Reverend Jerry Duggins

[jerryorjanet@wpcportage.org](mailto:jerryorjanet@wpcportage.org)

Parish Associate - Reverend John Best

[johnmbest@gmail.com](mailto:johnmbest@gmail.com)

Pastor Emeritus – Reverend Richard Jackson

Sunday School Coordinator – Leslie Ashbaugh

[lesliea83@gmail.com](mailto:lesliea83@gmail.com)

Director of Music & Pianist – Marie Kerstetter

[kpianogirl@aol.com](mailto:kpianogirl@aol.com)

Choir Director – Jason Zerban

[jzerban@hotmail.com](mailto:jzerban@hotmail.com)

Office Manager – Shannon Egan

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Bookkeeper - Audrey Curry

[bookkeeper@wpcportage.org](mailto:bookkeeper@wpcportage.org)

Custodian – Ernest Pueblo

[ErPueblo@aol.com](mailto:ErPueblo@aol.com)

## Congregational Leaders

### **SESSION**

Kathy Stuit, 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