Westminster Presbyterian Church



website www.wpcportage.org facebook @westminsterpresbyterianportage Email westminsterp@wpcportage.org

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

NEWSLETTER
September 2025

Welcome Statement

We open our doors to all persons to join in worship, fellowship, educational programs and service.

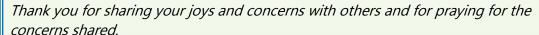
We welcome into membership all who profess faith in Jesus Christ without regard to gender, age, race, ethnic origin, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, disability, or any other human condition.

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 Thursday 9:30 am. The Prayer List will be sent out by email and postal-mailed to homebound on Thursday afternoon.





September Birthdays

1	Rebecca Netz	18 Tom VerHage
	Diana Rosa Ramos Garcia	19 Ed Ruimveld

4 Beth Myer 21 Bethany Werme Chuck Moerdyk Mark Cardwell

7 Alec MacDonald 25 Karl Busching

9 Alissa Worstell 29 Bob Cox

10 Lindsay Davidson 30 Owen Worstell

11 Carol Pratt

12 Sara Vogel

13 Martin Schultz

15 Liz Jarzambek Jeffrey Cardwell Gladys Little



September Anniversaries

3 Jodie & Mark Gerard

5 Paul & Laurie Bushnell



OUR REGULAR OFFICE HOURS:

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



Shortened Office hours Sept. 8-18:

Mondays: 9 am to 4 pm Wednesdays, and Thursdays: 10 am - 2 pm

COMMUNITY NEWS

Marie K. will Music Direct *Camelot* in September and *Annie* in December and our award winning **Val G.** will stage manage *Dog Fight* in late February. Contact the Kalamazoo Civic box office for a Flex Pass, the most economical way to see many great shows this season!

Get Two free admissions if you buy a flex pass 8 or 16 on or before August 31.



First up: *Camelot*, An epic story of love, honor, and betrayal, *Camelot* is the musical retelling of the legend of King Arthur. With a soaring score by Lerner and Loewe, this musical captures the magic of a bygone era and remains a classic for audiences of all generations. Show Dates: September 19 – 28

Tickets Link: https://kazoocivic.com/ticket-information/

Box Office: Open 10am-4pm, Monday-Friday,

















Join us for WORSHIP in September!

Our 2025-26 theme: "Celebrating Our Ministry"

September 7 "The Last Supper" COMMUNION

Luke 22:14-30 & 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

Welcome back, choir!

September 14 "CELEBRATING Our Ministry"

Psalm 150; Matthew 13:44-45; Luke 13:18-21 Children & Worship

Join us after worship for our annual church photo & picnic!

September 21 "Celebrating OUR Ministry"

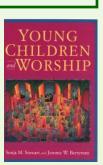
1 Corinthians 12:4-26 Children & Worship

September 28 "Celebrating Our MINISTRY"

Romans 12:1-21 Children & Worship

CHILDREN AND WORSHIP Returns September 14! Please join in this month on: September 14, 21 and 28. SEPTEMBER 14 IS ORIENTATION SUNDAY. PLEASE BRING ONE ADULT.

The *Young Children and Worship* curriculum helps children experience worship at their own level with hands on, experiential learning. Children are encouraged to be part of the worship experience and respond by working with wooden figures, the desert box, gift parable boxes and art materials so that the stories come alive in their hands.



CHURCH PICNIC!

The annual WPC picnic is Sunday, September 14th-right after church! It will be a coordinated potluck - burgers, hot dogs, veggie burgers, condiment watermelon & drinks will all be provided.

We ask everyone to **sign up to bring a side dish or a dessert**.

Side dishes could be a vegetable or fruit salad, pasta or potato salad, baked beans or chips. Vegan, vegetarian, & gluten free items are welcome! We will have cards available to label your dish.

We will also need volunteers for set-up and clean-up. A sign-up sheet will be available at church and in the gathering area at church OR you can email your information to Pastor Janet. There will also be **fun activities for the kids!** Plus we will take our **annual all-church picture!** We look forward to seeing you!

CHOIR REHEASALS BEGIN AND OUR CHOIR RETURNS!

We will resume choir rehearsals on Wednesday, September 3, from 7:00-8:30 pm in the sanctuary.

Choir Practice

Our first time to share in worship will be Sunday, September 7. For anyone who has ever thought of joining the choir: we welcome you as we begin a new season of music making together.

1. Take a minute to PREPARE silently. 2. READ the chosen Bible passage out loud slowly three times. 3. REFLECT on the passage. What word or phrase stands out to you? 4. PRAY briefly. 5. REST and commit to applying what you've learned.

Listening Together in September

We will practice Listening Together on three Tuesdays in September (16, 23, and 30) from 7-7:30pm over Zoom. We'll pray together silently, noticing how God is speaking through a text, what associations you have with a word or phrase that arises, and what God may be inviting you to through your word or phrase. We end with 3 minutes of silence and then share our experience as we wish. Nancy Husk will send out the week's text and Zoom link the day before for those who wish to join the group or pray the text individually. Please email Nancy if you would like to be included.

SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION BEGINS SEPTEMBER 21

Our Sunday morning Adult Education program invites us to explore faith and faithfulness together as we think about (and have lively discussion on!) topics ranging from scripture to current issues. We hope you'll attend when you can! You'll find it enriching, as well as a great way to connect with others in your faith community.

We'll begin our adult education for this program year on September 21st with an exploration of the 2025-26 theme: "Celebrating Our Ministry." After introducing the theme with sermons beginning September 14th, the pastors will lead a conversation during the adult education time on the 21st. Questions, comments, and hopes for the coming year will be welcome. On the 28th some elders and deacons will share about their experience of serving in these leadership roles. The series will conclude on October 5th with a presentation from a representative of this year's Westminster Peace Prize recipient, Peace House.



WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

We will resume
Wednesday, September 10th at 10 am
and then continue weekly.
In person or by Zoom.



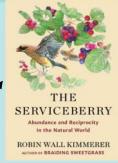
FAITH BOOK CLUB

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 18
7 pm on Zoom

How to Age Disgracefully by Clare Pooley

New to FBC?

New to FBC?
Let Lorie Leak know
if you need the Zoom link.



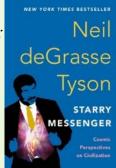
Looking ahead: November 20 The Serviceberry by Robin Wall Kimmerer

MEN'S BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP:

The men will be reading Neil de Grasse Tyson's book *Starry Messenger: Cosmic Perspectives on Civilization* this fall beginning on **Tuesday, September 23** at 8:30 am in the choir room with zoom option.

Regular meeting time will then continue two weeks later on the first and third Tuesdays of the month, **October 7 & 21, November 4 & 18, December 2 & 16.**

If you need help getting the book, contact Nick Pratt.



FAITH FORMATION Resumes October 5! Typically the 1st and 3rd Sundays

We will do children's activities during the picnic, September 14.

Meet Leslie after church – children of all ages for an hour of learning, crafting, playing, and gathering to hear stories from the Bible!

Parents and Grandparents welcome as well!

Upcoming Dates:



raielis

October 5, October 19



CHURCH LIBRARY NEWS

You'll soon be seeing some changes in the Westminster Library! We are looking to make this room not just a meeting or gathering space with books along the walls, but a church library collection of books and other resources that are helpful, appealing, and easy to access. We've been working to sort through, pare down, focus, and organize what's there... as well as adding a few newer books here and there, to fill in gaps in a few subject areas. *

Books that were outdated, duplicates, or just not suited for our church library have been removed. Some new categories (social justice, daily devotions, "living faith when it's hard," "parents & kids," etc.) will hopefully provide a better sense of what's available. New and bigger signage (coming soon) should make it easier to see what's where.

What else is in the library? You can check out a shelf of "Faith Book Club" selections. There are many books for kids. Our library includes a "Westminster History" section – with photos and other materials that tell the story of our congregation. (Special thanks to the Westminster Historical Society for all of their hard work organizing and identifying!) There are also several shelves of "General Fiction" and "General Non-fiction" which offer a wide variety of genres and subject matter. Coming soon: the puzzle library will relocate to the church library, and we will also have "Children & Worship" story figures that kids can borrow to play with at home.

The Westminster Library is also now easier to use: there's no card catalog (nobody has time to keep up with cataloging!) and no more "checking out." If you want to read a book, just borrow it. Return it to the return bin when you're done (preferably in a reasonable time). We think the honor system will work just fine for us!

The library refresh is still a work in progress (there's more sorting and organizing to do) but we hope you will check it out. We think there will be something in the Westminster Library for everybody!

* Please note: we are not inviting general donations at this time. (Sorting and disposing of what's needed can be a big job!) Please don't bring in a bag of books you want to re-home! However, there are subject areas we hope to fill out a bit more, including Nature & Earth Care, Arts & Poetry, Mental Health, and Social Justice. High quality, inclusive children's books would also be welcome. If you have titles you think would be suitable, please send a list to the church office. Books should be relatively recent, in good condition, and consistent with the beliefs and values of our church. Questions? Contact Laurie Nic, Debbie Netz, Pastor Janet, or Pastor Jerry.

FROM THE PASTORS' DESK

As we have been planning for the 2025-26 program year, we are very aware (maybe you are too!) that this will be a year of getting ready for a transition, as Jerry and I anticipate retiring at the end of June 2026. This is a really big deal for all of us, especially for those of us who find change difficult (even though we know in our heads that change can also be good for us). The most important thing you need to know about this particular upcoming change is that *all will be well.* There are very good reasons to believe that, and you'll certainly hear them from us over the next several months.

Another thing you should know is that Westminster's leaders, especially the members of the Session, have been thinking, praying, and preparing for this transition for some time. One big part of that has been getting really capable lay staff in place – with a particular focus on communication responsibilities. The Session will soon appoint a Transition Team to guide and oversee the many things that will need to happen between now and next spring. For example, they may help identify things Jerry or I have been doing that need to be handed off to others. They will work on plans for celebrating and saying goodbye. They may help the Session prepare for and welcome an interim pastor. Throughout, they will be available to answer questions that you might have. (*Note: the Transition Team is not the Pastor Nominating Committee; that Committee, which will search for a new called pastor, will come later, during the interim time.*)

Another thing you should know is that many things will *not* change. The most important things that make Westminster the kind of church community it is – the faith, caring, values, welcoming spirit, and sense of purpose - will continue to undergird everything you do as a congregation. I've realized that a transition like this is about both looking back and looking forward. As the Session has reflected on where we are, we've spent time thinking about Westminster's Intention Statement, Welcome Statement, and Core Values. All agree that these simple statements (intentionally short and simple!) and this little collection of key words have been really valuable time and time again as we've made decisions, considered new directions, and asked "who are we?" Looking to the future, the Session believes that these words are still important for discerning direction and decisions, and still express Westminster's values and intentions well.

Jerry and I have often appreciated these statements and the core values, partly because they have been genuinely helpful, but also because we are proud and grateful to be pastors of a church that cares about these things. And now, they give us confidence that Westminster's ministry has a solid foundation. The Worship Team has chosen "Celebrating Our Ministry" for the 2025 Worship Theme... what could be more appropriate?

Grace and peace, Janet

Our Core Values

CARING COMMUNITY

INSPIRING WORSHIP

ARTS & MUSIC

WPC Intention Statement

adopted by Session, April 25, 2011

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

COMPASSIONATE SERVICE

JUSTICE & PEACE

EARTH CARE

MIND, **BODY** & SPIRIT

Welcome Statement

adopted by the Session, May 18, 2009

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, ethnic**ity**, **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.

Take a look at Westminster's Intention Statement, Core Values, and Welcome Statement, shared here with a few small changes made by the Session to better reflect the things that are important to our congregation, as demonstrated in what we devote our collective energies to. Most notably, it was observed that our core values omitted both our concern for peace and justice and the importance we place on being a caring, connected community. The Session welcomes your thoughts about our Intention Statement, Welcome Statement, and Core Values... particularly with respect to the changes and additions (in bold red). Please share with any member of the Session! Thank you!

EARTH CARE NEWS

Have you all been enjoying the abundant harvest from our Church Garden? This is a perfect example of gift reciprocity that Robin Wall Kimmerer writes about in her book entitled, *The Serviceberry, Abundance and Reciprocity of the Natural World".* She discusses how Indigenous people view everything in nature as a gift rather than something we take. All the vegetables from our church garden are gifts from Mother Earth. These are gifts for all to share. Notice that we all appreciate these bountiful home grown vegetables. This nurtures the bond we have with each other and promotes well being. Thanks to Eileen & John Best who planted the seeds in spring, now the vegetables have grown as the result of Mother Earth providing the gifts the soil, water, insects pollinating the plants, and sunshine.

This act of giving away the vegetables keeps the wealth of our garden in motion with enough for everyone, no scarcity, no hoarding. This is what a gift economy looks like. We then see the earth as a gift rather than as a commodity to exploit. Imagine if the gift economy was put into action in the whole world there would be enough for all, taking only what we need, giving Mother Earth time to replenish what we have taken. Can you think of other ways our church and community can promote the gift economy to help preserve and nurture our earth?

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE NEWS



Family Fun at the Apple Orchard!

Saturday, September 27th at Schultz Fruitridge Farms 60139 CR 652 Mattawan, Michigan 49071

We will meet at the orchard at 10:00 am. There is a short walk

to the orchard to pick apples.

Afterwards, we can look around the store, where they sell a variety of fresh produce, gifts, pumpkins, mums and more. Cider and warm donuts will be available from their Donut Depot! You can come for a short while or stay as long as you wish. Join us for some fall fun!

MORE CONGREGATIONAL LIFE NEWS

THEATER FUN!!

Last Call for ticket reservations to go with our Westminster group to see *The Colored Museum* at the Parish Theatre on Sunday, November 9th at 2 pm. This is a collaboration of the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre and Face Off Theatre.

Please email or call the church office to sign up asap.

Here is a snapshot of the production to whet your theater appetite from

https://kazoocivic.com/show/the-colored-museum/

"George C. Wolfe's razor-sharp satire *The Colored Museum* offers a thought-provoking journey through the Black American experience. This groundbreaking play tackles stereotypes and

historical struggles with biting humor and poignant insight."

Contact Jayme Ruimveld or Val Glasscock with any questions.





SAVE THE DATE FOR A SPECIAL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

We will celebrate **Mildred Watson's 90th** birthday during Coffee Plus on **Sunday, October 12.**Let us shower her with cards and enjoy a big birthday cake after worship.



Coffee Plus Volunteers Needed

We are looking for a few more people to take a turn helping out with Coffee Plus.

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 and 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 (and very popular) ministry! Jayme and Val

Get Connected, Build Relationships, Enjoy Exercise!

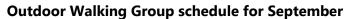
Play Pickleball (WPC Gym)

Play Volleyball (WPC Gym)

Monday & Thursday mornings 9-11 am

Wednesday evenings, 7:30 pm

Tuesday evenings, 6:30-8:30 pm



Sept. 4: Portage District Library front parking lot, 300 Library Lane (Garden Ln. East)

Sept. 11: West Lake Nature Preserve, 9001 S. Westnedge Ave.

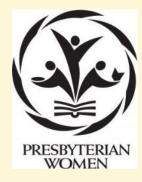
Sept.18: Celery Flats, 7335 Garden Lane

Sept. 25: Y'OPA parking lot, 165 W. Centre Ave. (Frozen yogurt treat after walk.)

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN NEWS

The Walking Group will continue on Thursday evenings from 7-8 pm until **October 30**th. A schedule is available on the table in the front entrance. See above for September schedule.

Mission Project: Join other women on Saturday, **October 18th** from 9-noon to create occasion cards for the WPC Deacons to give to parish members throughout the year. Materials, templates, stamps, etc. will be provided. Bring a friend! This event will take place in the Arts and Crafts Room.



Mark Your Calendar for a Retreat Treat: Westminster Presbyterian Women Mini-Retreat, Saturday, November 8th, 8:30-noon at church.

JOIN IN THE FUN OF WATERCOLOR OPEN PAINT

Open to everyone. Drop in anytime. No sign up required. Every Tuesday in September 6:30 pm in the Arts and Crafts room.



RACIAL EQUITY GROUP NEWS

On Sunday, September 7 at 3:30 pm at Westminster, a staff member from the

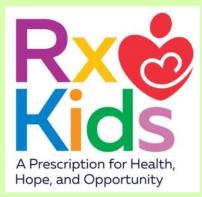
Kalamazoo Community Foundation will present information on an amazing new program in Kalamazoo called "RX Kids." This initiative seeks to address the devastating maternal and infant mortality rates our community has faced for decades.

We're especially excited since RX Kids received our local share of the Pentecost Offering!

Please feel free to invite friends who might be interested in learning more about this transformative program.

Please contact Paula if you have any questions.

Paula Schriemer and Cindy Green





Service Sunday Thank You

Over 30 people, of all ages. participated in the two Service Sundays in July!

A grateful thanks goes out to all who helped prep, facilitate, and complete the projects. Our goal of completing 100 puppet kits,100 banded markers and 1,200 red ribbons for Malawi Matters' HIV/AIDs education program was achieved. Greeting cards and origami cranes were created for members and friends of North Presbyterian Church and for the young patients at Bronson's Children's Hospital. Many Love Notes were mailed to members of our church community, and over two dozen letters were written and mailed to members of Congress asking them to support programs, such as the Farm Bill, to help end hunger as a part of the Bread for the World Offering of Letters Campaign.

The coordinator of the Seita Scholars Welcome Pack program at WMU thanks all who contributed to providing basic household/dorm items to two incoming freshmen who are a part of the foster care system and need extra support.

WESTMINSTER PEACE PRIZE

The recipient of the 2025 Westminster Peace Prize is Peace House.

Our annual Westminster Peace Prize will be awarded to Peace House, a local organization that is dedicated to building community in the Eastside neighborhood. Through their summer camps and after school programs for children, they provide a safe and nurturing space with green spaces to play, creative activities, and help with homework. Volunteers are an important part of their program and come from our high schools, Kalamazoo College, and United Campus Ministry. More information can be found on their website www.peacehousekzoo.org. During worship on October 5, Molly Mechtenberg, one of the founders of Peace House, will join us to accept the Peace Prize and tell us more about their work, both in our worship service and in Adult Education.

The Peace and Global Witness Offering, one of our denomination's Special Offerings, will be dedicated on October 5. One quarter of the offering funds the Westminster Peace Prize to Peace House. The remainder of our offering is used to support peacemaking efforts across the Presbyterian Church (USA).



14

like helping the workers."

Rocio, age 9

friends. I like eating free food and

running around." Tristan, age 10

#KUDOS is a home weatherization project to help residents in the Northside neighborhood lower their winter heating expenses. Started in 2018, #KUDOS has evolved into a volunteer service project with a Mission to "Love Our Neighbor through Service." Volunteers are the heart of #KUDOS. Volunteers bring their own tools (ladder, safety glasses, box cutter and a positive attitude), and #KUDOS will supply the plastic, caulk and double sided tape or heavy duty staples, to caulk around the windows and secure plastic coverings over the windows. JOIN US for #KUDOS 2025 on **Friday, October 3** to bring good news, a helping hand and connect with our brothers and sisters in community. We meet at **Allen Chapel on North Avenue at 8:30am and work till 1pm**, concluding with community lunch. Contact Eileen Best if you are interested in participating.

PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE WORK TRIP

Western North Carolina was deeply affected by hurricane damage and the rebuilding efforts will continue for several years. In response to a call for volunteers from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Mission Team is considering sending a team to help with clean up, repairs, and rebuilding. All hands are welcome--no particular skills are necessary. We are looking at mid April in 2026 but the dates are flexible. We will stay for a week at the Canton Presbyterian Church, which is set up to host work groups. If you are interested in going, please contact Eileen Best.

A brief **information meeting** is scheduled for **Sunday, September 28** in the sanctuary, after worship and Coffee Plus and before Adult Education. We are hoping to take a group of eight to fifteen people.

ISAAC (Interfaith Strategy for Advocacy & Action in the Community)

is hosting their 3rd Walk/Run/Roll: Justice on the Move: Rally, Resist, Reform on Saturday, September 6, 2025 at 2:30 pm at Spring Valley Park in Kalamazoo. This inclusive event allows participants to choose their own movement, distance and pace.

After the walk/run/roll there will be community fellowship with food, vendors, music, singing, and performances from social justice, cultural, civic and faith communities.

Registration for the Walk/Run/Roll ended on August 29, 2025 but you can make a custom donation to ISAAC at https://runsignup.com/



COME OUT AND SUPPORT ISAAC & THE PORTAGE WESTMINSTER TEAM!!

ISAAC, the largest faith-based organizing group in Southwest Michigan, commit themselves to the pursuit of a just community; seeking to build a world where hope triumphs over fear, where God's abundance meets the needs of all, where we live in a sacred and beloved community.

Westminster Staff



Reverend Janet Duggins Reverend Jerry Duggins

Parish Associate Pastor – Reverend Dr. 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 Stuut, Clerk; Val Glasscock, Carol Pratt, Jayme Ruimveld, Fred Welch, Tom VerHage, Alissa Worstell, Mary Anderson and Eileen Best

DEACONS

Ann Cirvencic, Moderator; Jean Cox, Cathy MacDonald, Kettie Chapeyama, Val Kirkwood, Nick Pratt, Barb Daniels, Pat Kurtz and Judy Markusse Paget

Team Leaders

Administration

Finance	Fred Welch, Leslie Ashbaugh
Personnel	•
Building & Grounds	Tom VerHage
Children & Youth Ministries; Faith Formation	
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, Pastors
Presbyterian Women	Kellv Schultz

Worship Participant Coordinators



Hosts	Cindy Green
	Sarah Sullivan
Liturgists	Jean Cox
	Kelly Schultz
Children & Worship	Laurie Nic, Kelly Schultz
Communion	Kelly Schultz
Coffee Plus	.Jayme Ruimveld, Val Glascock

