

WESTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



NEWSLETTER

February 2026

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

Email westminsterp@wpcportage.org

website www.wpcportage.org

facebook [facebook@westminsterpresbyterianportage](https://www.facebook.com/westminsterpresbyterianportage)



Our Welcome Statement



We believe in God's generous, inclusive love.

We welcome all who wish to join in worship, fellowship, learning, and service.

We welcome into membership all who profess faith in Jesus Christ without regard to gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, family or socio-economic status, sexual orientation, abilities, or any other human conditions.

We elect and ordain as leaders in the church persons who are called by God and committed to serving the Lord Jesus Christ in the Church.

adopted by the Session, May 18, 2009, revised October 20, 2025

Please send JOYS AND CONCERNS

for the Prayer List each week **by 9:30 am on Thursday.**

The Prayer List will be sent out by email Thursday morning and postal-mailed to those who can't get it via email.

Thank you for sharing your joys and concerns with others and for praying for the concerns shared.



February Birthdays

- 3 Janet Duggins
- 6 Abby Dunlop
- 7 Jim Gluys
- Cindy Green
- Laurie Nic
- 8 Margaret Charron
- 11 Vicki Hoover
- 12 Mary Lou Rohwer



- 13 Sarah Sullivan
- 15 José Soto
- 18 Kelly Ray
- 19 Virginia Bushnell
- 29 Heather Zerban

Anniversaries

- 21 Martin & Kelly Schultz





OUR REGULAR OFFICE HOURS :

Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays: 9 am to 4:30 pm
Note: Laurie is on vacation February 5-23 so hours are:
M: 9 am - 4 pm, W and Th: 10 am - 2 pm

An Important Reminder

We've noticed at church lately that we are receiving more scam or "phishing" phone calls and emails than ever before. Maybe you've experienced this at home or at work also. Many of these contacts are particularly targeting churches and church folks... and they are increasingly more sophisticated and, well, sneaky. Sometimes they pretend to be a person or organization you know and trust. This is a gentle reminder to please be very discerning about what you click on or respond to and very careful about sharing any information, especially financial or contact information, over the phone or in email.

Please know that no member of Westminster's staff or other church leader will ever ask you to send them cash, transfer funds to their account, or mail them gift cards. Any donation request from your church will invite you to send or bring a check (made to WPC) to the church. It will never be an urgent emergency requiring instant response; you can always call the church office for more info. Also, we will not give your contact information to groups or individuals outside the church and "refer" them to you.

If you have general questions or concerns about this, or about any church-related communication, please call the church office; we will do what we can to assist you.

Follow Westminster on Instagram

We're now on Instagram at @wpcportage! Follow along for updates, events, and glimpses of life at Westminster. If you take photos at church events, meetups, or ministry gatherings, please email them to matt@wpcportage.org so we can share them on Facebook and Instagram.

Westminster on YouTube

We've launched a new YouTube channel at @wpcportage. www.youtube.com/@wpcportage. This channel serves as a library of past Sunday worship livestreams and special services, making it easy to watch again or share with family and friends who may not be able to attend in person.

WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY

February 1 "Meditations on Philippians" part 4 COMMUNION

Sermon series concludes with chapter 4 of Paul's letter.

No Children & Worship today

February 8 **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN SUNDAY**

Readings from Ruth **Creating Home and Places of Possibility"**

Children & Worship

February 15 **TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY**

Guest Preacher: Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom

Children & Worship

February 18 7 pm Taizé Service for **ASH WEDNESDAY**

February 22 **FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT**

Matthew 4:1-11 "Lessons in Ministry" part 1

Ordination & Installation of Deacons

Children & Worship

Our Lenten theme is "**Lessons in Ministry.**" Throughout the season, as we move toward Easter, we will reflect on Jesus' words, actions, and conversations as models for our lives. Lenten worship will also feature a brand **new Lenten anthem series, by Jason Zerban.**

Our Lent devotional, "Discipleship in a Divided Age," from the *Presbyterian Outlook*, will be available at church or in electronic form —watch your email. We'll have options for kids and teens at church as well.

FEBRUARY CHILDREN AND WORSHIP STORY SCHEDULE

February 8: *The Mustard Seed*

February 15: *The Good Samaritan*

February 22: *The Great Pearl*

Invitation to Join the Worship Space Task Group

One responsibility of the Worship Team is keeping our worship space well maintained and supportive of meaningful worship. It is helpful to have a small group of people to share ideas and to explore possible strategies for needed updates and improvements.

Recently folks have shared interest in exploring options for new chairs in the sanctuary, new décor for the walls, increasing accessibility of the chancel area, and a fresh coat of paint. The Worship Space Task Group will be exploring these ideas and more. We anticipate convening a first meeting in early March.

Please let Mary Anderson know if you are interested in joining the group by using her contact info found in the church directory!

Plans are taking shape for our 14th Annual **WESTMINSTER ART FESTIVAL!**

Our theme this year is "WHOSE BACKYARD?" Artists and poets will be invited to reflect on issues of environmental justice. Poetry submissions will be received beginning March 1 and visual art submissions begin April 8. The deadline for all submissions is April 13. The exhibit will open with a meet-the-artists reception on Saturday, April 25, and will be open through June 11. The festival will include awards presentation, poetry reading, music, and more.

You can read more about the theme and our jurors (Maya James, visual art, and Alison Swan, poetry) on the art festival website (westminsterartfestival.org) or pick up a flyer with more information at church.

The Art Festival is a unique, fun, and meaningful way for our congregation to connect with our community. Your help and support is important! Please share information about the Art Festival with poets and artists you know.

Take one of our great posters, if you know of a place to hang it. Help with receiving submissions, preparing the exhibit, or hosting events. Bring friends to see the art or enjoy a poetry reading. You can also make a donation to help with costs.

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



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION

In **February**, we continue the study of the book *Being Presbyterian in a Dysvangelical America*, by Ted Foote and P. Alec Thornburg.

Ann and Francis Cirvencic are leading the discussion about this book which investigates the interaction between evangelical and Presbyterian beliefs and how each set affects our culture.

You do not have to read the book to join the discussion.
This class will meet February 1st and 8th and will conclude on the 15th.

Sunday mornings during **LENT**, we will read, reflect on, and maybe even be inspired by short essays from readers of *The Christian Century*. This magazine regularly offers a one-word prompt (such as *promise* or *gravity*), then publishes a small collection of the responses, which tell personal stories and reflect on insights, struggles, and questions of faith. We will look at six of them. Pastor Janet & Lisa Buesing will facilitate conversation and invite responses.

Anyone is welcome to the **next meeting of the Adult Education Team** which is February 24 at 12:30 pm at church.

February 2026 Schedule for Faith Formation

Faith Formation usually meets the first and third Sundays (during the school year) and starts about a half hour after morning worship ends. Children are welcome to attend this "One Room Schoolhouse" type gathering of kids along with their parent/guardian/family members. Bible Stories are from the PC(USA) curriculum and most weeks Ms. Leslie offers a craft, science experiment or activity to reinforce the story from the Bible lesson. Questions? Contact Leslie Ashbaugh.

PUT THESE FAITH FORMATION DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR:

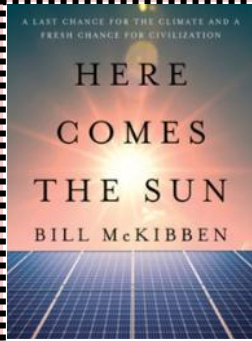
February 1

February 15



WELCOME TO WESTMINSTER

We plan to offer a 2-session "Welcome to Westminster" class (exact dates tbd) in March during the Sunday morning Christian Education time. This is for anyone wishing to become a church member or just new to the church and wanting to now more about us. No pressure! Let Pastor Janet know if you are interested.



MEN'S BOOK STUDY

February 3 & 17

8:30 am at the church

Here Comes the Sun: A Last Chance for the Climate and a Fresh Chance for Civilization

by Bill McKibben



Wednesday Morning BIBLE STUDY

10 am at church or Zoom

We're studying the prophets using

Richard Rohr's book

The Tears of Things

Contact Pastor Jerry for info or Zoom link



Listening Together will meet by Zoom Tuesday, February 3 from 7:30 - 8 pm to practice Lectio Divina/Sacred Reading of a text from scripture, poetry, or song.

If you'd like to be added to the email list for the Zoom invitation and text we'll be praying, contact Nancy Husk,

FAITH BOOK CLUB

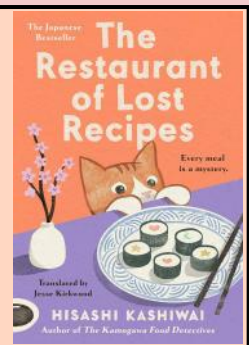
Our March book is

The Restaurant of Lost Recipes by Hisashi Kashiwai

Join us Thursday, March 19 at 7 pm on Zoom

New to FBC?

Contact Lorie Leak to request the Zoom link!



A lot of folks have been asking Janet and me what we plan to do in retirement. I've not really known what the right answer is to that question except to say that we have plenty of interests and options. But the truth is that we don't really know, and... there's so much holding our attention in the present. I'm excited about the Lenten sermon series coming up, working with the confirmation class on faith statements, another Easter season, and the forthcoming Art Festival. It seems too soon to be "planning retirement."

Several years ago, we attended a Post-Easter retreat at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico. It was intended to provide a time of rest for clergy after a busy Lenten season, Holy Week, and Easter Sunday. Meals were scheduled but everything else was very flexible. I remember one pastor (just retired) who said that he would probably spend most of the time sleeping. And he did!

Who hasn't thought how much could be accomplished if we didn't have to sleep? In fact, most pastors have experienced lost sleep at some point in their ministries: worrying about a parishioner, upset over a conflict, or just struggling to meet the "inevitable return of Sunday." Johnathon Bennett offers up an essay in the January 2024 issue of *The Christian Century* on "sleep." In it he points out that sleep belongs to our DNA, that we need it to function in a healthy manner. During a moment of sleeplessness, he writes: "I don't want anything more than what I, at that moment, cannot have. I want nothing else than to lie down like every other creature and give up those hours to vulnerability and motionlessness. To surrender just a few moments and admit that all the other minutes in the day are enough" (p.55).

Not only does our need for sleep give perspective for our waking hours, it makes us more effective during those hours, argues Roger Talbott in the next essay of the same issue. Unlike our daydreams, he writes, "The dreams that arise

in the night... steer me through ever-changing circumstances. They are brutally honest about my faults. Yet they also offer compassionate encouragement in my journey toward wholeness" (p.55).

I don't know what retirement will look like, but I do know that it won't mean abandoning the "journey toward wholeness" that we've been walking with you for these many years. When that day comes we will begin walking a different path from the church; but the goal for all of us will remain the same.

We will all need to tend the dreams of our sleep, to listen to God's leading. It will be tempting to busy ourselves with all that needs to be done. Transitions are like that; but long journeys are best begun after a good night's rest. That's true for our present ministry together and our future ministries beyond.

Peace,
Pastor Jerry



FEBRUARY is PER CAPITA MONTH. The Presbyterian Church (USA) is a connectional church, which means that our congregation is part of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan, which is part of the Synod of the Covenant, which is part of the whole denomination. We support the work of the church at these different levels through per capita apportionments, to share costs fairly with each church's portion based on its number of members. Per capita funds support all kinds of things: preparing people for ministry, helping churches find pastors and pastors find churches, ecumenical relations, worship resources, leadership training, ... and much more. **For 2026, the per capita (per member) amount is \$42.42.** Many church members like to cover this amount for themselves and/or their family members, as a special offering in addition to their pledges. The Finance Team encourages all of our members to consider this. It helps our church fulfill this important commitment AND it says that we are grateful to be Presbyterian! If you make a donation, include "per capita" in the memo and/or use one of the Per Capita Offering envelopes available at church. Thank you!



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN NEWS 2026 Schedule

Indoor Walking Group – Thursdays at 7 pm. at the PNHS Doghouse, Jan 6-Feb 27

Gifts of Women Sunday Service – February 8

Spring Mini-Retreat – Saturday, March 14, 8:30 am – noon at church, theme “Making Time ... To Tell Our Stories,” (bring a photo of a memory)

Outdoor Walking Group – Thursdays at 7 pm at various parks, April 9 – October 29

Spring Tea – Monday, May 11, Janet’s home at 6:30 pm, theme TBD

Summer Road Trip – Saturday, July 18, meet at the church at 10 am. Fernwood Botanical Gardens (includes lunch at the Garden)

Mission Project – July, collect menstrual products for Church World Service and Generous Hands

Card Making Night – October, date TDB

Fall Mini-Retreat – Saturday, November 14, 8:30 am – noon at church, theme TBD

Christmas Dessert – Sunday, December 6 at 3 pm at church

Questions? Contact Kelly Schultz, Barb Daniels or Leslie Ashbaugh



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

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE NEWS

February Coffee Plus Needs You!

We are in need of volunteers to set up and clean up after coffee plus in February. Val or Jayme would be happy to train you on the simple process to do this important and popular job for the church. Please contact them with information found in the church directory.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SPRING!

Our Easter Brunch will be Sunday, April fifth!
Please save the date for food and fun!



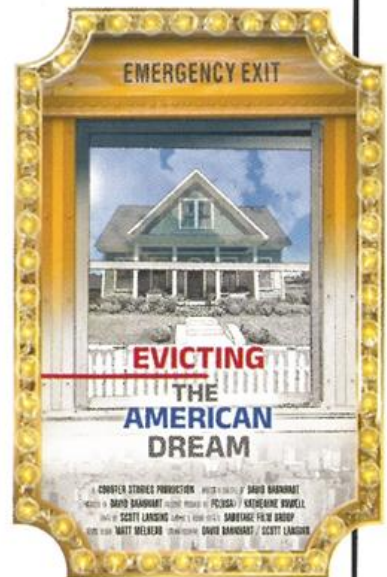
FEBRUARY FILM STUDY: Every Monday evening

Evicting the American Dream

A Churchwide Film Study

Join us for a church-wide film study on this excellent new documentary about homelessness, the U.S. housing crisis and its impacts on children. We will gather online weekly after having watched each week's segment of the film. We will hear from featured speakers and discuss issues of redlining, housing commodification, eviction, the impact of housing insecurity on children, and ways our churches and communities can take action. Advance registration is required to receive the meeting links and instructions to view the film segments each week.

To register: <https://pcusa.info/44kAH20>



MISSION NEWS



Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes 2026 Warehouse Volunteer Schedule

02/23/26
03/23/26
04/27/26
05/18/26
06/22/26
07/27/26



Time: 1-3 pm.

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

08/24/26

09/28/26

10/26/26

11/23/26

12/28/26

MEALS ON WHEELS WEEKS FOR 2026

February 9 - 13

March 23-27

May 4-8

June 15-19

July 27-31

September 7-11

October 19-23

November 30 - December 4



North Carolina Work Trip

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

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



Sandwich Making for Ministry with Community

Six Volunteers are needed twice each winter month to put together a Paper Bag Supper for the unhoused people staying overnight at the Ministry with Community (MwC) Shelter.

A sign-up list is located on a clipboard in the front entrance.

Volunteers are also needed to deliver the bags to MwC.

Upcoming dates are February 8 & 22
and March 8 & 22.



Warming Center News: Here are some quick facts.

We are serving an average of 18 people a day.

Current needs are: sweatpants/snow pants - larger sizes are better.

Sweatshirts - larger sizes

Thermal socks

Women's gloves

We are getting enough volunteers but would **Not** say "no" to more!

A huge thank you to everyone who is making this critical service possible!

Judy Paget



SAVE THE DATE: Sunday, May 3, 2026

Kalamazoo Valley CROP Hunger Walk

Location: Trinity Lutheran Church, Kalamazoo

Time: 2 pm

Distances: 1.15 miles, 3.1 miles

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

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

for the latest information.



Contact Barb Daniels, Team Captain, if you want to participate or help with this event. Her information can be found in the church directory.

Equal Exchange Pecans from African American Farmers

Westminster has a display of Equal Exchange foods that are for sale in the narthex. To purchase, place cash or a check made out to Westminster in an envelope and put in the black box in the copy room. To learn more about New Communities, check out the full article on the bulletin board beside the food.

Our congregation offers Equal Exchange pecans sourced from New Communities, Inc., an organization based in Albany, Georgia. Co-founded in 1969 by activists Shirley Sherrod and her husband, Baptist Minister Charles Sherrod, New Communities is a grassroots organization working to empower African American families in Southwest Georgia and to advocate for social justice. The Sherrods actively advocated for the rights of African Americans during the civil rights movement and beyond.

New Communities has a unique structure. It's a land trust, in which the community has control of the land. In New Communities' case, African American farmers own their land, work together, share resources, and are able to farm successfully. When you purchase Equal Exchange pecans from New Communities, you will enjoy large and savory pecans while supporting African American farmers, civil rights, and community development.



The RACIAL EQUITY Group meets Sunday, February 22 at 3:30 pm

The WPC Racial Equity Group continues to meet monthly. We value learning and growing to respect all people; especially those of color who have been discriminated against on a regular basis.

On January 11, 2026, we hosted a screening of the film "My Father's Name". This powerful documentary short film tells the story of a woman who discovers that her father participated in a lynching, and the personal journey she takes to grapple with this revelation. We had approximately 40 people in attendance.

At our next meeting we will gather at church and discuss the book by James Baldwin *The Fire Next Time*. Everyone is welcome to attend and you do not need to have read the book to join us. We hope you will come.





The 2026 guiding theme for the **Face Off Theatre Company** productions is **"Because We Are the Story"**.

February: *Black Playwright Festival: Freedom Isn't Finished*

A staged reading festival centering Black Midwest voices.

May: *Cinderella: The Remix*

September: *Harlem Duet* (in partnership with Kalamazoo College)

November: *Bambiland* (Touring Production)

Dates TBA

EARTH CARE NEWS

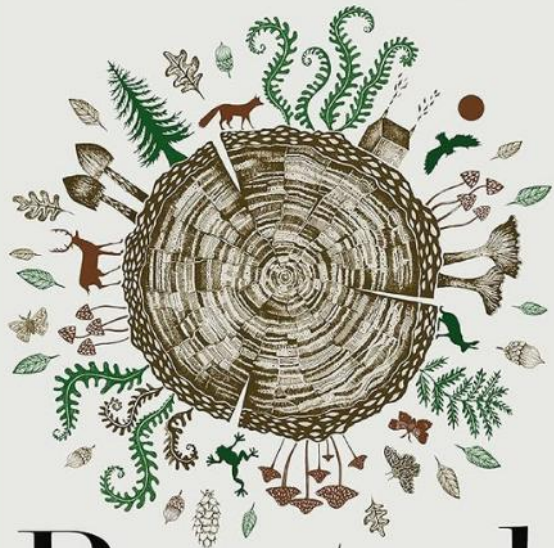
You are invited to a
**Book
Discussion**
Sunday, Feb. 22
5-7 pm

Prince of Peace Lutheran
Church, 1747 Milham Ave.

If you can, read the book! If
you don't have time, you are
still welcome to join – we'll
have excerpts to read and
questions to generate
thoughtful discussion.

Snacks and drinks provided

Life at the Crossroads of
Science, Nature, and Spirit



Rooted

LYANDA LYNN HAUP T

Author of Mozart's Starling

Westminster Staff

Reverend Janet Robertson Duggins

Reverend Jerry Duggins

Parish Associate - Reverend John Best

Pastor Emeritus – Reverend Richard Jackson

Engagement & Communications—Matt Ray

Sunday School Coordinator – Leslie Ashbaugh

Director of Music & Pianist – Marie Kerstetter

Choir Director – Jason Zerban

Office Manager/Administrative Assistant – Laurie Nic

Bookkeeper - Nathan Schultz

Custodian – Ernest Pueblo

Congregational Leaders

SESSION

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

DEACONS

Ann Cirvencic, Moderator; Jean Cox, Cathy MacDonald, Kettie Chapeyama, Barb Daniels,
Val Kirkwood, Pat Kurtz, Cathy MacDonald, Nick Pratt and Judy Paget
Beginning February 22: Francis Cirvenci, Jodie Gerard, Traci Glasscock

Administration

Finance..... Fred Welch, Leslie Ashbaugh

Personnel..... Carol Pratt

Building & Grounds..... Martin Schultz, Tom VerHage

Children & Youth Ministries; Faith Formation..... Leslie Ashbaugh

Adult Education..... Lisa Buesing

Congregational Life & Evangelism..... Jayme Ruimveld, Val Glasscock

Art Festival..... Miriam Duggins, Jodie Gerard

Mission..... Eileen Best

Earth Care Team..... Eileen Best

Worship..... Kelly Schultz, Mary Anderson, Pastors

Presbyterian Women..... Kelly Schultz

Worship Coordinators:

Hosts..... Cindy Green

Ushers..... Sarah Sullivan

Liturgists..... Jean Cox

Livestream, Sound & Techs..... Kelly Schultz

Children & Worship Kelly Schultz

Communion..... Kelly Schultz

Coffee Plus Jayme Ruimveld, Val Glasscock