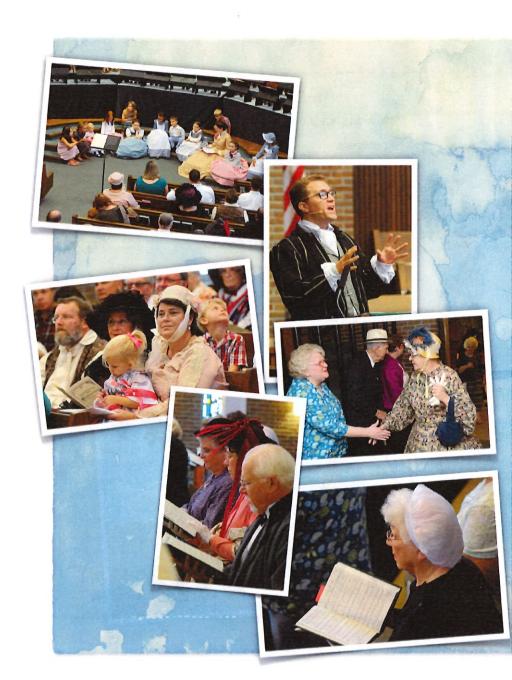


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Writing a history of an institution that has been in existence for 150 years is a rather daunting task, to say the least and we are so grateful to the church community for their help and support. In particular, although she is no longer with us, we would like to honor Irene Hargreaves. Irene wrote (and must have spent countless hours researching), the history of Westminster for the 100th and 125th anniversaries in 1965 and 1990. Much of the early history written in this book came directly from Irene's work previously. The church archives provided a wealth of information and pictures, so we express our thanks to Christine Thurman who has organized and preserved so much of our church's history. We are incredibly appreciative of Carol Castrodale, Arvilla MacPhail, Jean Hill, Elaine Edwards, Karen Schoeppach, Marcy Chambers, Russ Marvin, Joyce Hegenauer, Mary Lou Higgins and Colleen Schmidt who shared memories and stories for this book. In addition, information was gleaned about Westminster from the History of Bay County, written in 1883. The City of Bay City and the Bay County Historical Society shared the wonderful picture of Bay City from the early days (page 3). A special thank you to Dick Van Nostrand who obtained that picture and, in addition, took many of the pictures throughout this book. Thanks to Dana Schramm, who designed the layout of this book. Last, but certainly not least, the 150th Anniversary Committee would like to thank each and every member of Westminster, past and present. This is a rather obvious statement, but we wouldn't have a history without all of you.

And one more note: (From this history's author Heather Heidtman)

While hunting around in the church archives during yet another round of research, I found a short history of the church, written at the time of the its 75th anniversary. I thought it was fitting that I found this at that moment, just as I was struggling with rewrites and worrying that I wasn't capturing all of Westminster's remarkable story on these pages. This was the last paragraph of a short two page history and after reading this, it almost immediately gave me some comfort. Unfortunately, I was unable to find the name of the author.

"These are material facts concerning the history of Westminster Presbyterian Church. As such, they must of necessity be unsatisfactory, for no historian is able to tell the spiritual victories and the far reaching influences of any church of Jesus Christ. It is rather for us who are now members to carry the light of Christ further into this world in that same worthy fashion in which our fore-runners have carried it."

Onward friends, to the next 150 years!



### **BEGINNINGS**

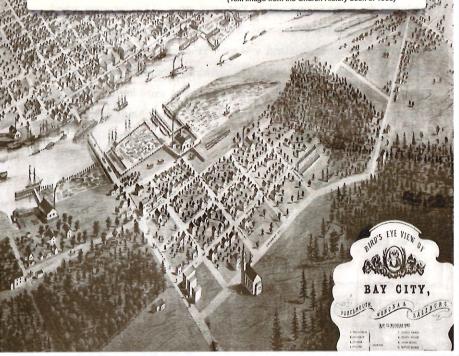
Like so many stories, it is difficult to know where to begin. The history of Westminster Presbyterian Church, like the city it resides in, didn't have a neat start date, but evolved and grew as new churches and cities often do.

The area, with a landscape abundant with pine trees and a river for transporting them, became a booming lumber town in the late 1800s. In 1863, a small group of Presbyterians began worshiping together three miles up the river from the mouth of the Bay. This group, unorganized and without a pastor or a church building, was the precursor to Westminster Presbyterian Church. The next year, with the area still growing and sawmills dotting the landscape up and down both sides of the Saginaw River, that small group of Presbyterians asked the Presbytery of Saginaw for a pastor. The Reverend Donald Campbell, an ordained minister born in Scotland, was sent to them; and though never installed, he served as a missionary and was instrumental in the history of Westminster. The congregation began worshiping in a small log school house near what is now Linn and Vermont Streets. Within a year, Rev. Campbell sought funds and a location. The land, two lots on Catherine street between John and Jane streets, came from lumber barons Henry Sage and John McGraw. Mr. Sage also included a matching donation. The church with furnishings cost \$4000.00. The cornerstone of the newly organized church was laid on August 23, 1865 and named the First Presbyterian Society of the Township of Bangor; and, this is where we start our story.

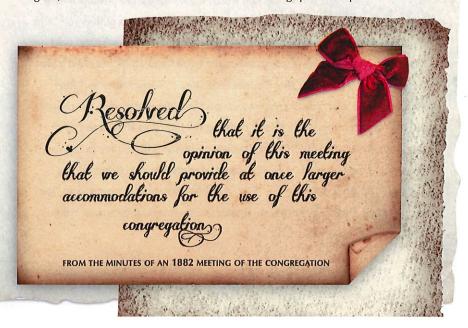
It is a story of faith, friendship, community and family. The story of an enduring commitment of spreading the Gospel near and far, providing a place for spiritual fellowship, education and worship. Through good times and bad, what has never wavered is our faith in God, and in Christ's church.

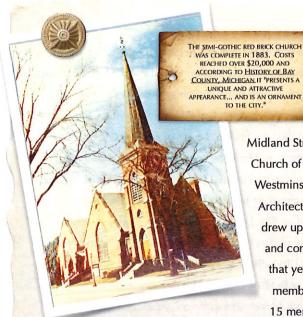
About the first of November, 1863, the Reverend D.B. Campbell was sent as a missionary by the Presbytery of Saginaw to the lower part of the Saginaw Valley. His area comprised Bangor, Kawkawlin and Portsmoth Townships. Services were held in the Services were held in the school houses of Banks and Wenona for the convenience of people In January, 1864, after living in the township of Bangor. Henry W. Sage had purchased the site of what was later to become the Village of Wenona, Rev. Campbell called upon Mr. Sage and asked for a donation of two lots on which to build a church. The request was promptly granted and two lots on Catherine Street were given. On behalf of the firm, Mr. Sage agreed to double any subscription that could be secured for the purpose of building a church. Early in 1865 a meeting was held at Rev. Campbells's home at which time a church society was organized. At this time, the church was called the First Presbyterian Church of Bangor. The first elders were Stephen Buchanan and J. H. Plum. The first trustees were J. S. Taylor and J. B. Ostrander and John G. Sweeney. They were successful in raising funds for a church and the work of building was vigorously pushed forward. The cornerst was laid on August 23, 1865 and the house of worship was dedicated on the 3rd of the following December. The cos The cornerstone The cost of the structure was 3500.00 and the furnishings cost \$500.00 more. Of this amount, Sage & McGraw contributed \$200.00

(Text image from the Church History book of 1963)



Fifteen members were part of the first congregation of the newly organized church. Did they dare to dream this congregation would stand the test of time for 150 years? That would have been difficult to imagine. In those early days, the church continued to grow and change. Rev. Campbell, having been so influential in the building of the new church, left just three years later to accept a call in the Monroe Presbytery. In 1869, the congregation welcomed Rev. Elihu Turney Sanford, the first pastor to be installed to the congregation; his installation took place in Saginaw on January 13 of that year. He stayed just a short time and was replaced by Rev. Lucius W. Chapman. During Rev. Chapman's tenure, the name of the church was changed to First Presbyterian Church of Wenona in 1872. The village of Wenona was named West Bay City in 1877, and three years later the Rev. Donald Munro became pastor. Rev. Munro led the church through continued expansion. As church membership grew, the small church on Catherine was becoming quite cramped.





With another donation of land from Henry Sage, this time on

Midland Street, First Presbyterian
Church of Wenona became
Westminster Presbyterian Church.
Architects from Pratt and Koeppe
drew up plans for the new church
and construction began in June of
that year. At this point, church
membership had grown from just
15 members in 1865 to 126. On

Christmas Day 1883, the congregation of Westminster held its worship service for the first time in the new church, a gothic, red brick building. The steeple, with a clock, was the official time piece for the west side of the river. During the decade between 1887 and 1896, the church was served by three ministers: Rev. Charles Frost, Rev. William Miller and Rev. William Irwin. Rev. Edward Strong took over in 1896 and guided the church into the new century. In 1899, the congregation voted to abolish the pew rental system used to fund church operations; henceforth, money to support the church was obtained through pledged offerings. In the History of Bay County, Michigan, published in 1883, it tells of Westminster's early days "the history of the society has not been marked by any unusual events. For the most part, the church has prospered."

#### THE GREAT WAR AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION

In 1903, Bay City and West Bay City were united. The lumber boom has come and gone and now Bay City and Westminster begin a new era. In 1908 Rev. Charles Marvin was called to service. The Marvin family began worshiping at Westminster in 1900. Russel Marvin, representing the third generation of Marvins at Westminster shares this history of his family:

The first Marvins joined Westminster in 1900, moving from Bay Mills, Michigan, they included my grandfather and grandmother. They had four sons and five daughters. My father met and married my mother on February 14, 1925 with Rev. Elmer H. Douglass officiating. My parents had two boys, myself and my brother William. We both became members in 1948. William moved to Ohio Leaving me to carry the torch. I married Lois Lange in 1967 with Rev. Lomas officiating. We had three children,

I MARRIED LOIS LANGE IN 1957 WITH REV. LOMAS OFFICIATING. WE HAD THREE CHILDREN
PATTI, RUSSELL AND ELLEN. PATTI AND ELLEN ARE STILL MEMBERS OF WESTMINSTER.

-RUSSEL MARVIN

In 1915, Westminster celebrated their Golden Jubilee, tickets cost \$10.00 and cover a banquet, decorations and advertising. Two years later, a manse was built on church property at the corner of Midland and Wenona Streets, costing \$3300.00, the two story home was painted white with green shutters and served as the home for Westminster's pastors until the current church is built. The same year, America entered World War I, and the boys from Westminster joined the armed forces. The Ladies Aid group and the Missionary Society rolled bandages for the Red Cross.

The Rev. Aladar Tomshany, was installed as the pastor in 1918. One of his many accomplishments was organizing the largest men's Bible class in the state. The 1920s and 30s saw membership increase with 664 members on the rolls in 1931. With the stock market crash of 1929 and the depression that followed, times were difficult for the church and its members.



City on the map...the New Era Bible class is directing the people's attention all over the country to the religious activities here."

Our longest serving member, Arvilla "Rae" MacPhail joined the church in 1933, she shares her story:



also of Bay City. Our two daughters, Sally and Linda were baptized by Rev. Donald Lomas and were raised in the Presbyterian faith here at

As my family grew older so did our beautiful old church under Rev. David Castrodale. The fellowship hall was built and used as a church while our old building was torn down and the present day church was

During my life at Westminster my parents were buried, a daughter built. married, grandchildren were baptized, I was widowed and I remarried Wallace M. MacPhail. My life always included my belief in God and membership in the Westminster family. It is reassuring to have a family built on faith in Jesus Christ and a church family that I have always loved

and connected with on a very personal level.
I am truly grateful for all of the people I have known and worshiped with in these 82 years at Westminster. -Arvilla "Rae" MacPhail

The Elliot family, starting with Robert and Margaret were members of Westminster followed by their son William and his wife, Maude, their son, Robert married Edith. Edith, along with their three daughters, Elaine Edwards, Susan Armstrong and Jean Hill are all members of the church, as is Sue's daughter Samantha making her the 5th generation of the Elliot family here at Westminster.

-Jean Hill

Multigenerational families have always been a part of Westminster, from the beginning of the congregation until today. Jean Elliot Hill shares the history of her family's time here at Westminster.

> By 1940, Westminster was celebrating another anniversary -75 years. The bombing of Pearl

the Second World War and once again

Harbor brought America into

the Westminster boys signed up to fight. Several were severely wounded and two were killed in action. Those that stayed behind collected metal for scrap drives, worked with the Red Cross and Salvation Army, and placed a memorial in the sanctuary honoring all the men and women who served.

The 1940s saw the organization of the Presbyterian Women's Association at Westminster. Ignoring social conventions that women should remain in the home, women throughout the Presbyterian Church began organizing as far back as the early 1800s. They gained support from missionaries in the field who were grateful for their prayers and offerings, some of which still continue to this day - the Thank Offering and the Birthday Offering. Westminster's own PWA includes all women of the church. For decades this amazing group of women has worked to bring people together and to foster peace; working to eradicate hunger and the exploitation of women and children and war. Throughout their storied history they continuously worked towards Honorary Lifetime Membership Pin: equal rights for women in A different Presbyterian society and the church. Woman is recognized annually for their service to the church and awarded this symbolic pin.

### **GROWING IN FAITH**

The Rev. Donald Lomas was installed as pastor of Westminster in 1945 as

Westminster and Bay City were just coming out of the Great Depression. In later years, Rev. Lomas wrote that "...for all practical purposes Bay City experienced a depression beginning in 1910 and continuing to World War II," much longer than the country as a whole. While financially, things began to look up, the church was in dire need He oversaw the first of improvements. major renovations to the church since its construction in 1883. In 1948, Westminster appointed a renovation committee. The committee found, that the most pressing needs were a new ceiling, with a spending limit of \$18,000. Another \$11, 344 was spent to sand blast and paint the exterior, replace the boiler, steam lines and radiators. The kitchen was also remodeled. Lack of additional funds meant repairing the stained glass windows, belfry and steeple, and replacing the dining room floor and front doors would have to wait.

SO MANY OF OUR MEMBERS WERE DRAWN TO THE CHURCH BY THE EXAMPLE SET BY THEIR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS. NOW A GREAT-GRANDMOTHER TO CHILDREN BAPTIZED AT WESTMINSTER, MARY LOU HIGGINS, WHO JOINED IN 1955, SHARES POWERFUL MEMORIES OF HER GRANDMOTHER AND HOW SHE BECAME INSTRUMENTAL IN LEADING MARY LOU TOWARDS HER OWN SPIRITUALLY FULFILLED LIFE AT WESTMINSTER:

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN MY LIFE IS MY CHURCH AND MY FAMILY. SINCE I WAS A LITTLE GIRL, MY GRANDMOTHER NELSON TOOK ME TO CHURCH WHERE I LEARNED MANY SCRIPTURE VERSES IN SUNDAY SCHOOL THAT I STILL REMEMBER TODAY. I CAN STILL HEAR MY GRANDMOTHER'S VOICE WHEN I HEAR THE HYMN, "THE OLD RUGGED CROSS." MY HUSBAND CLARENCE AND I JOINED WESTMINSTER WHEN WE GOT MARRIED AND HAD OUR BOYS, WHO WERE BAPTIZED BY REV. LOMAS, AND LATER ON, OUR DAUGHTER MARY JO, WHO WAS BAPTIZED BY REV. CASTRODALE. WE WERE MEMBERS WHEN FELLOWSHIP HALL AND OUR CURRENT SANCTUARY WERE BUILT. I SERVED ON THE TRUSTEES, DEACONS AND SESSION FOR SEVERAL TERMS. I ALWAYS WORKED IN THE KITCHEN, TAUGHT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND ASSISTED THE PASTORS ON HOME VISITS. I WAS ALWAYS ACTIVE IN CIRCLE AND CHURCH WOMEN UNITED FOR AS LONG AS I WAS ABLE. I STILL ATTEND CHURCH ALMOST EVERY SUNDAY AND PUT GOD FIRST. I LOVE OUR CONGREGATION, FRIENDS AND ALL OF THE PASTORS WE HAVE HAD.

-MARY LOU HIGGINS



Rev. Lomas continued to oversee small renovations and improvements to the building with office space and two small classrooms added. In 1956, a Long Range Planning Committee was appointed. The committee stressed what was needed most was a fellowship hall and even more classrooms for children. Church membership was growing steadily and a new addition was planned, financed by a capital campaign. By 1958, the campaign had

raised \$135,000. By April 1959 the cornerstone of the new addition was laid; by November, Fellowship Hall was dedicated, along with five new classrooms and kitchen. Despite the growth in both members and funds, the church faced substantial debt from these improvements. At the end of the decade, church membership had reached 713. In 1962, Rev. Lomas accepted a call to Bethany United Presbyterian Church in Flint, MI.

That same year, the Rev. David Castrodale came to Westminster. Born in Burlington, Iowa, Rev. Castrodale received degrees from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota and from Dubuque Theological Seminary in Iowa. He was ordained by the Presbytery of St. Joseph in June 1957. He took over from where Rev. Lomas left

off continuing to make needed improvements to the building. During his tenure, church membership grew by leaps and bounds. Despite what seemed like overwhelming debt, the church paid off the loan for the Fellowship Hall addition in just two years. Another Long Range Planning Committee was established.



Membership was continuing to increase and an Associate Pastor, the Rev. Paul Heberlein, was called to the growing church. With the debt from earlier improvements paid off, plans got underway for a new sanctuary, second floor classrooms, and a manse. Land purchases were made for more parking. The 1960s saw active groups for both men and women of Westminster, with Men's Club and Women's Association, the latter having seven active circles.

There were three active choirs at Westminster during this time period as well. Karen Schoeppach shares her memories of her time with



Westminster's Intermediate Choir.

> WESTMINSTER INTERMEDIATE CHOIR IN THE 19608

I think I was about 11 years old when we started attending Westminster and my

most solid memory of that time is being in the Intermediate Choir. I'm sure Sunday School and worship held a place as well, but choir is what stays with me the most. We had mostly, if not only, girls in the choir. Sometimes eight, sometimes more, young people made up the choir. Not many, but we were there to praise God. There was also a Junior Choir-

Those were the days when Westminster had several very large families and so a greater number of children from which to draw. Whenever those two choirs would sing, there was hot chocolate served at the coffee time between services (we had two in those days, 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. and we always sang at both). The hot chocolate always burned my tongue, but I drank it anyway. As the years have gone by, children's choirs have changed and then gone away. Still, we have several opportunities during the year to hear the children sing during worship and in special programs. We also have bell ringers and chimers to help praise the Lord with music.

Westminster celebrated its centennial anniversary in 1965, with a banquet, luncheon and special services. An historical book was published recounting Westminster's beginnings, but also including an eye toward the future. In 1969, the congregation approved building a new sanctuary for a total of \$680,000. Easter Sunday of that year marked the last worship service held in the old church. Until the new sanctuary was complete, services were held in Fellowship Hall.

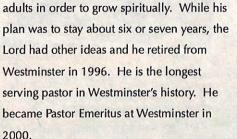


### A New Era: A New Church

Under the leadership of Rev. Castrodale, on September 27, 1970, the new blond brick church was dedicated; it is the home we know today. The Rev. Tom Frazier served as Associate Pastor, starting that same year. He served the congregation for just a short time, but made a lasting impression on many members.

In December 1976, the Rev. Lloyd Umbarger began his call at Westminster.

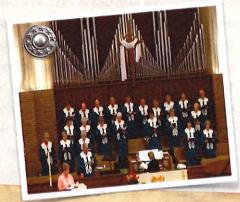
Born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1932, Rev. Umbarger earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Maryland in 1954 and a Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in 1959. He was ordained by the Baltimore Presbytery, also in 1959. He earned a Master of Theology degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1973. Rev. Umbarger was the leading force behind establishing the Delta College Ministry Program. He was instrumental in opening the church to outside community groups, something that continues to this day. He stressed educating both youth and adults in order to grow spiritually. While his





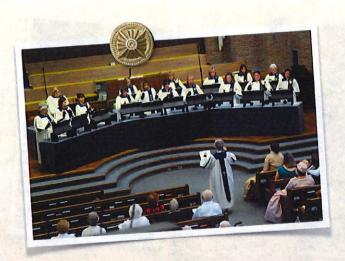
The Deacons took on an expanded role in the late 1970s. With an increased budget, they formed the Crisis Committee and began helping those in severe need. From The Presbyterian Deacon: an Essential Guide, by Earl S. Johnson, a Deacon must "exhibit within the church and before the world, the exemplary moral authority of sympathy, witness and service after the example of Jesus Christ." Westminster's Board of Deacons has, for decades, lived up to the job description, serving those both inside our church community and around the globe.

Westminster's Chancel Choir also expanded their horizons, traveling for performances and workshops. Longtime choir member Carol Castrodale shares wonderful memories from some of those occasions:



Lloyd Umbarger, our Lastor, invited the choir to travel to his former pastorate in Woodstown, New Jersey in 1979. We accepted and had a great trip; we traveled in car caravans with the adult choir members and their families. We stayed in the homes of their members and sang in their Sunday Services along with their choir. It is still a highlight for those of us that participated. Throughout the years the Westminster Chancel Choir has attended Music Workshops and worked with well-known composers. The Choir has a wonderful library of music as a result of these workshops. Laul Spencer Adhins came to Westminster. Paul was an Opera and Gospel singer and was brought to this area by Dow Chemical. He sang with our choir and soloed for our morning Worship service and then our choir joined him at the State Theater for a performance. I consider it a privilege to sing and direct in our choir since 1962.

-Garol Gastrodale



In addition to the Chancel Choir,
Westminster
purchased three
octaves of bells in
the 1970s and a
choir was formed
shortly after, led by
Neil Everson.
After a somewhat
long hiatus, the
Bell Choir was

formed again in 1995 under the direction of

Margaret Hanson. Two more octaves of bells have been added to the original three. The Westminster Bell Choir has been invited to play at the State Theater and the Bay City Players. Along with the Bell Choir, Chimes were purchased for our Chime Choir, comprised of children in 2nd grade and up and small bells for our Happy Ringers, children in Kindergarten through 1st grade.





## CHRISMON TREE

The Chrismon Tree has been a part of Westminster for almost 40 years. Colleen Schmidt shares the story of how she and former member Barbara Thorson decided it was time to change the Christmas decorations in the sanctuary.



In December, 1975 we found a church in Bay City [that] had a Chrismon tree. We went to see it, but they would not share any information about the tree. Their tree ornaments were made out of Styrofoam. The important thing to us was that they were Christian symbols. We could not find one person to tell us about their tree. Months went by, the entire winter, spring and summer. In the fall, we received a phone call telling us about a church in Danville, Virginia; they had books for sale telling about the Chrismons (Christ's monograms) and how to make them. We ordered the books and received them the first part of September. We quickly learned that the instructions were to make them out of Styrofoam, we came up with our own patterns using felt and sequins. We made 17 different patterns and made one of each to be approved by Session.

On October 1, we started making the ornaments in earnest. Barb cut the shapes out of felt and stuffed then ran them over to me and I sewed the sequins on, one at a time. Somewhere in that time period our husbands bought the artificial Christmas tree. Of course they asked, "how big?" We said, "We don't know-BIG!" We ended up with a 15-foot tree. We decided to make 20 ornaments of each pattern, a total of 340. We had no idea if that was enough or not. It was time consuming and in the last four weeks, we worked at least eight hours a day. We lived on McDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken. We wanted a large star for the top of the tree and a skirt which was also made.

We sent Howie to the store two days before we put up the tree to buy lights (small white lights). Of course he asked, "How many?" Again, we said, "We don't know." He had to go to the store two more

times. We started with 10 strings of 100 bulbs and added many more.

On December 4th, Howie and I and Barb and Mike started putting up the new tree. We worked from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. This entire project really was a work of faith. We didn't know how big a tree to buy, how many lights to put on and how many Chrismons to make. We had no idea what it would look like when it was done. When the tree was finished, it was dark so we turned on the lights and found it was beautiful; we knew that God definitely had his hand in the entire process.

Howie and I were in the Chancel Choir and being so busy, we did not know what the Cherub Choir or the Chancel Choir were singing on Sunday December 5th, the first time the Chrismon tree was up in the sanctuary. After the prelude, the Cherub Choir sang "This Little Light of Mine" and while they sang, someone turned on the tree lights. For the offertory, the Cherub Choir sang "Light One Candle". The Chancel Choir sang "All Things Are Possible," and they truly are, with God's help. We could not have planned it so perfectly ourselves. We definitely felt God's presence.

-Colleen Schmidt -

In 1981, Rev. Ronald Miller joined the congregation from Buffalo, New York as Associate Pastor. In the Annual Report of that year, Rev. Umbarger

wrote that calling Rev. Miller and welcoming him and his

family into Westminster was the highlight of the

year. In 1982 the Board of Trustees was dissolved and the 12 members merged with

the Session making 24 elders in all.

Elaine Edwards began serving as the nursery supervisor in 1982. She shares some of her memories of the past 33 years



Rev. Schramm honors Elaine for

her decades of

service at

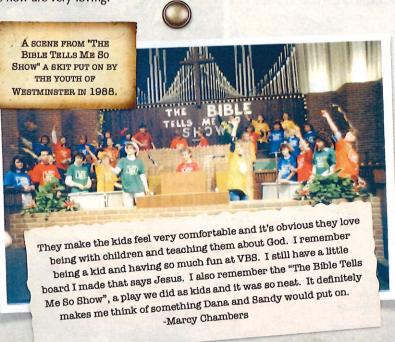


I have so many fond memories from working in the church nursery. One of the moments that comes to mind has to do with how so many toys now have batteries; I had a young helper one week watching me use a push sweeper that has a roller to pick up debris off the carpet. She wanted to know where the batteries went. Also, a child couldn't get the rocking chair to rock, she said the chair needed new batteries. When I got a TV in the Nursery, so I could follow the service, one child wanted to know when the movie was going to start. Sometimes I'm amazed when a child starts playing with a toy and does something completely different with her imagination that I haven't seen before. I knew I was getting older when the babies stopped calling me "Mommy" and started calling me "Grandma!"

-Elaine Edwards

The 1980s continued to be a decade of great change, some of which was difficult. With the economic recession during the time, budgets and salaries for staff were cut. There were bright spots though, and by 1985, the mortgage on the church sanctuary was paid in full and a ceremony to burn the loan paperwork was held and a dessert reception followed.

Education for members of all ages continued to have strong emphasis at Westminster during this time. Marcy Buchanan Chambers had the unique perspective of attending Sunday School and Vacation Bible School as a child at Westminster during the 1980s and now brings her own children here. Asked if there are any similarities, Marcy says that her Sunday School teachers then and the teachers her kids have now are very loving.



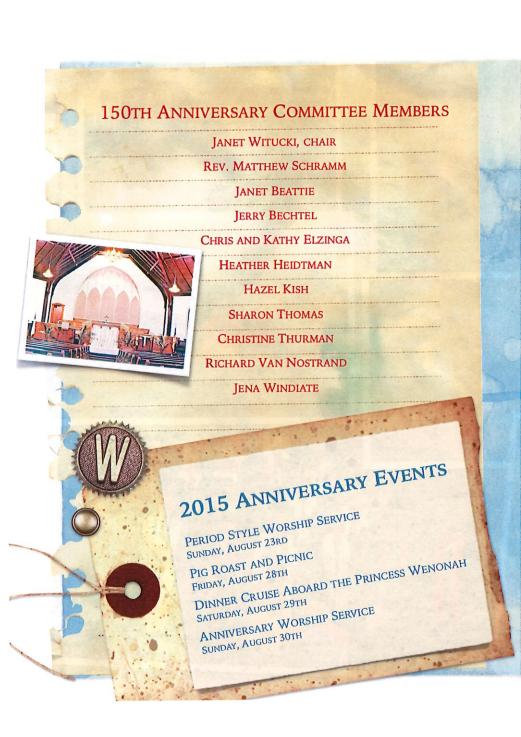


#### CELEBRATING OUR FIRST 150 YEARS SPECIAL CENTER SECTION

On August 23, 2015, Westminster began its sesquicentennial anniversary celebration, with a period style service; many members were dressed in costumes patterned after the 1860s. Hymns from the era were sung, the Bell Choir performed The Battle Hymn of the Republic and Onward Christian Soldiers. Rev. Schramm was able to obtain a sermon from former pastor Edward Strong from the 1890s The following weekend saw more celebrations, with a pig roast and picnic on Friday evening. With beautiful weather and amazing food, members gathered on the lawn outside of fellowship hall, while children played games. Saturday evening included an elegant dinner cruise aboard the Princess Wenonah. The rainy weather did little to dampen spirits as music was provided by the Josh Ramses band while members cruised to the mouth of the Bay and back. Sunday, August 30, marked our celebration in worship, with an anniversary service that included seven current and former pastors and associate pastors of Westminster. A standing ovation resulted when Rev. Schramm introduced and brought out to the chancel each minister. Together they represented over 50 years of leadership and spiritual guidance for the church. It was one of the many highlights of the weekend. Following the service, tea and hors d'oeuvres were served, hosted by the Board of Deacons.







In 1990, the church celebrated its 125th year. A special worship service was held on November 4 with a dinner and slide presentation following. Throughout the decade, there were many changes to Westminster. Rev. Miller left to accept a call in Indiana. Rev. James Cramer joined Westminster as Associate Pastor. Continuing through the mid-1990s, times were difficult financially for the church. The Annual Report of 1994 reported the Session's recommendation to the congregation of a budget that put the church's assets at risk in order to meet the needs of others.

Continuing into the latter part of the decade, there were budget deficits and ministries were asked to cut their spending; yet despite financial difficulties, much needed improvements were made to the front of the sanctuary, the organ, and the

roof. The church, having been through hard times before, continued to share their time, talents and gifts with others. In 1993, Westminster began supporting Anne Dayanandan, a mission co-worker serving in India, educating young women. It is a connection that remains to this day.



Greetings from South India! Congratulations to all of you on 150 years of Witness and Service and Fellowship of Westminster. By the grace of God, Westminster has been a beacon of light for thousands of families, thousands of people over the years.

I am so glad to watch the anniversary celebration service on August 30. It's good to think of being part of God's story! As I wrote to Pastor Matt, looking at the balance of vision for the future and legacy from the past gives us much to think about, much to remember. It's so good to see previous Pastors and to recognize the leadership that Westminster enjoys and has enjoyed. I'm happy to recognize four of them personally.

World Communion Sunday is here and I send you my thoughts in honor of our connection in the church through Jesus Christ. I hope you can share the attached letters with members of the congregation (but please remember not on the Internet; small is fine). Please convey my deep gratitude to all the congregation for your faithful support of PC(USA) ministry in India through our connections. Our years together in mission are good to celebrate and as we say here, giving of yhanks.

-Anne Dayanandan

### **COMING TOGETHER IN FAITH**



It is never easy when a church decides to close its doors. While we celebrate our sesquicentennial history, we can not forget two Presbyterian churches in our area that ended their storied histories. On December 31, 1999 Munger Presbyterian Church celebrated its final service; And, on June 6, 2004, Covenant Presbyterian Church held its final worship service. Both were heartbreaking decisions for church families that have strong ties to their communities and deep bonds. Several members of both churches transferred to Westminster. Joyce Hegenauer shares her thoughts and reflects on how quickly the members of Covenant became part of the Westminster family:

I have only been a member of Westminster for a little over ten years. We, and when I say we, I mean myself and about twenty others, came to Westminster after we closed Covenant Presbyterian. It seemed like a reunion of sorts because the meeting to form Covenant was held at Westminster! That being said, the congregation of Westminster was welcoming, warm and loving. We quickly became part of the church and its activities. Many of us usher, work on Food of Faith, assist in worship and are officers in the Presbyterian Women's Association. We are very much a part of this church. In closing, I want to say thank you to Westminster for accepting us and letting us be such a huge part of your family.

-Joyce Hegenauer

#### GROWING IN GRACE



After a lengthy interim period, the Rev. William Hennessy was called to serve Westminster in 2000. Born in Lawrenceville, Illinois, Rev. Hennessy received a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from University of Illinois at Champaign – Urbana, and a Masters of Divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary

in Chicago. During his time at Westminster, he

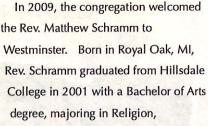
stressed pastoral care, introducing Pastoral Partners during his first year here. In addition, he began inter-generational worship services, encouraging members of all ages to become involved in worship at Westminster and emphasized sharing not only our gifts, but our time and talents as well. In 2003 Rev. Hennessy participated in the ground breaking ceremony for the newly renovated Sage Library, 121 years after Henry Sage participated and played such an instrumental role in the ground breaking of the church building at our current location. While the Associate Pastor position had been eliminated years earlier, the congregation voted to hire Beth Hennessy as Parish Associate.

Also in 2003, Westminster started Food of Faith, with a coalition of other Bay City churches serving hot meals once a week to those in need. In 2008, Rev. Hennessy accepted a call in New York. During that same year, Westminster led the way for a Men's Wing to be constructed at the Good Samaritan Rescue Mission, pledging \$15,000 to the project.



Rev. Schramm has a passion for mission work, having served a 6 year term on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, with two of those years served as the Chair. His role with the Mission Agency sent him all over the globe with trips to Korea and Thailand in 2012; Palestine, Israel (shown here) and later San Juan, Puerto Rico

PRESBYTERIAN



Philosophy and Mathematics. He graduated from Princeton
Theological Seminary in 2004.
Ordained in 2004, he served his first call as pastor in Sussex, New Jersey in 2004 until 2009 when he became pastor of Westminster Presbyterian
Church. As described below, it was later that year when Session approved

starting a Stephen Ministry at Westminster.

Westminster has long discussed having a need for a member care program. In October 2009, seven members, including Pastor Matt, attended a Stephen Ministry Workshop at St. Lorenz Church in Frankenmuth. The Stephen Series is a complete church in Frankenmuth. The Stephen Series is a complete to provid one-system for training and organizing lay people to provid one-to-one Christian care to hurting people in and around the congregation. In Stephen Ministry congregations, lay caregivers (called Stephen Ministers) provide one-on-one care to the bereaved, hospitalized, terminally ill, separated, divorced, unemployed, relocated and others facing a crisis or life challenge. Stephen Ministry helps pastors and congregations provide quality caring ministry for as long as people need it.

Working to include special services and education for all ages, start a Young Adult Group, and oversee increased attendance in Church School, Youth Group, and Vacation Bible School, Westminster called, ordained, and installed the Rev. Isaac Chung as Associate Pastor.

Colorful, vibrant classrooms greet our youngest members each Sunday for Church School and Children's Church. VBS attendance has grown in recent years with children inspired and guided under a Baobab tree, a Kingdom's Castle, and last summer on Mount Everest. Monthly puppet shows and weekly Children's moments are a delight for all ages. Our young members sing each month, something all our members look forward to. Our Youth Group continues to remain active with weekly meetings, joined by a new group, Club 345, for children in grades third, fourth, and fifth.

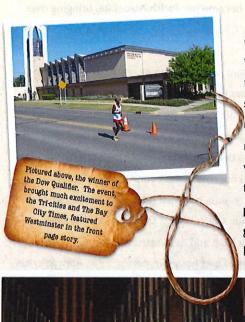


Karen Schoeppach can see the changes that have come about in recent years and how members of all ages are welcome in the sanctuary.

As a youth, the sanctuary seemed a dark and mysterious place. A place only to be entered with permission or when there was a reason for our presence. This was only a perception; still, whenever we entered it when there were no adults present, it seemed as though we were "sneaking in". And, if "caught", we could get into trouble. I'm sure we weren't meant to feel as though we only belonged in the Sunday School area or the Fellowship Hall. But, we did. Things have evolved over the years. Just as our sanctuary changed from a place of dark wood, ornate stained glass windows and a "heavy" atmosphere to a place of light and a feeling of being open; Westminster's children no longer seem to experience that "separate" feeling that many of us had all those decades ago. Over the years I watched my niece, my nephews and the children of friends exhibit a sense of belonging that was a joy to see. Today our children are comfortable in every room of this "wing" of God's House. We have worked hard to make it so. I don't want you to think that my memories of those younger days are sad ones or that my experiences were uncomfortable to recall. That was just how things were then. As Westminster moves toward a 200th anniversary, I hope we continue to move forward with the care and nurture of our children and youth. At the same time, I hope we respect and value what our senior members have done and will continue to do. Westminster Presbyterian Church was, is, and will continue to be my church family and I treasure all the people in it.



30



The beginning of the second decade of the millennium brought many wonderful opportunities to share our faith with a wider audience. In the spring of 2012, the Dow Qualifier marathon was held with the race route running right past Westminster. We welcomed the opportunity to cheer on the racers with a bounce house, face painting and a Hallelujah Chorus to greet runners as they neared the finish line.

Members of Westminster and the community put on a production of Godspell. The group performed for a packed "house" three nights during Holy Week, in 2015 In 2011,
Westminster'
welcomed Jason
Gray. The
sanctuary was
filled to
capacity as we
listened to his
music, which
included top 10
hits. He later
performed at
the State
Theatre.

Also in 2012, the Rev. Dr. George Baird became our Parish Associate, bringing over 50 years of experience with him, as Rev. Chung accepted a call in southern Michigan.

Mission continues to be an important part of Westminster's legacy. In recent years, the Mission Partnership Ministry has undertaken several large projects, including raising enough funds to fill an "ark" for Heifer Project International, and fulfilling its commitment to fundraising efforts toward a Men's Wing at the Good Samaritan Rescue Mission. In addition to being generous in our community, we have had the opportunity to better understand our role in the connectional church, both nationally and internationally, developing more personal relationships with several



Mission Co-Workers. Over the last few years,
Pastor Matt and the Mission Committee have
arranged and hosted in-person visits from Michael
and Rachel Ludwig (Niger), Kari Nicewander
(Zambia), Anne Dayanandan (India), and a couple
(names withheld) serving the Presbyterian Church
in Iraq. We also enjoyed a video conference call
during worship with Esther Wakeman, who serves

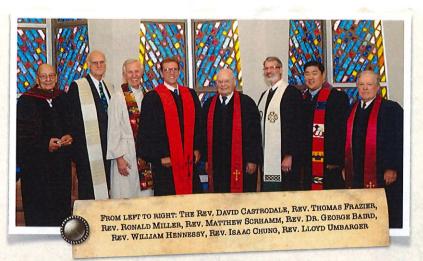
in Thailand. Westminster has been honored to host visits from two sitting Moderator(s) of the General Assembly of the PC(U.S.A.) as well as national staff leaders in areas such as Compassion,

Evangelism, and Theology, Worship, and Education. Finally, in the Fall of

Peace and Justice,

2015, a team of seven headed to the village of Gambell, on St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea, to work with a Presbyterian congregation there.

July 2014



As we celebrate our sesquicentennial, the church looks to embark on a major capital campaign with renovations that have been a long time coming, similar to the happenings around Westminster in the late 1960s. It is comforting to know that so many members that are here today were there then as well, and are able to guide the church through another transition.

And therein lies the heart of our story. Changes and new beginnings wrap around traditions and history. Old and new; young and old; all of us united as children of God. In 2013 we studied the Six Great Ends of the Church; and while known to some, many were hearing for the first time the six purposes for the church, outlined in the Book of Order.

For 150 years, we, at Westminster have been shaped by our pursuit of those ends as we seek to serve the people of God. The Six Great Ends of the Church are: the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world. Fixing our eyes on these ends, and upon our Savior Jesus, we will surely see the blessings of fellowship and faith at Westminster Presbyterian Church into our next 150 years.



# STAFF

Rev. Matthew Schramm, Pastor/Head of Staff Rev. Dr. George Baird, Parish Associate Rev. Linda Williams, Parish Associate Judy Harrelson, Church Secretary Heather Heidtman, Treasurer Harold Miller, Custodian Sandy Graves, Christian Education Director Dana Schramm, Christian Education Director Elaine Edwards, Nursery Supervisor Elden West, Music Director Wendy Tally, Organist Sara Taylor, Organist Margaret Hanson, Bell Choirs Director

## ELDERS

Moderator: Rev. Matthew Schramm Clerk of Session: Janet Witucki Parish Associate: Rev. Dr. George Baird

## AUGUST 23, 2015

#### CLASS OF 2016

Jacob Bennett Ed Griffin Neil Harrelson Judy Randall Jan Witucki

### CLASS OF 2017

Richard Frontjes Joy Hebner Russ Marvin Len Petroff Donna Tetil

### CLASS OF 2018

Janet Beattie Vicki Fitak Tiffany Frontjes Brian Graves Julie Kelly

### DEACONS

Moderator: Sherry Holley Vice-Moderator: Ann West Secretary: Lisa Beson Treasurer: Janet LaFave

### CLASS OF 2016

Lisa Beson Jan Dannesberger Sheryl Petroff John Tapley Ann West

### CLASS OF 2017

Irene Esckilsen Diana Hennrick Sherry Holley Janet LaFave Sandy Thibo

### CLASS OF 2018

Chris Elzinga Dianne Grabke Nancy Harrelson Marilyn Len Patti Wesenick

# CHURCH OFFICER NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Elder Chair: Len Petroff
Elder Rep.: Marilyn Lapham
Deacon Rep.: Chris Elzinga
Members At-Large: Joyce Hegenauer,
Tim Holley, Tami Sivy, and Walt Whitney





1933 Arvilla "Rae" MacPhail

> 1945 Elizabeth Dore Marilyn Lewis (D)

1946 Russel Marvin (E)

> 1947 Marie Coyer

1948 Marian Larive (D)

1951 Janet Dannesberger (D, E)

> 1953 Betty Lunger (D, E) Patricia Quantz

1954 Alice Haertel Alma Watton (D)

1955 Ross Brown (E) JoAnne Deuscher (D, E) Neil Everson (E) Margaret Hanson (E) Robert Hanson (D, E) Mary Lou Higgins (D, E) Bonnie Scheddel (D)

> 1956 Marjorie Lambert

1957 Claire Jacobson Hazel Kish (E) Howard Schmidt (E)

1958 Peggy Hawkins (D, E) Janice VanNostrand Florie Wright (D) 1959 JeAnne Hebner (D) Richard Hebner (D, E) Joyce Hegenauer (E)

1960 Doris Bibbee (D, E) Charlotte Blumenstein Edith Elliot (D) Joyce Grigg Roy Grigg (E)

1961 Dianne Grabke (D) Thomas Kayner Philip Reagh (E) Richard VanNostrand (E) Robert VanNostrand (E)

1962 Carol Castrodale (D, E) Dorothy Eickel (D, E) Carmen Schoeppach Lloyd Schoeppach (D, E)

1963 Ronald Deuscher (E) Thomas Lange Beryl Mall Colleen Schmidt (D) Sharon Thomas (D, E) Joy Thompson (D)

1964 John Hegenauer (E) Carol Lange (E) Karen Schoeppach (E)

1965
Marie Capp (E)
Richard Case (D)
Elaine Edwards(D)
Marilyn Kayner
Molly Molyneaux
Judy Randall (D, E)
Elizabeth Talbot (D)

1966 Gloria Bublitz (D, E) Paul Dannesberger (D, E) Robert Merritt Mary Kay Prudden (D, E)

> 1967 Dianne Young John Young (E)

1968 Jean Hill (D) Arlene Oettmeier (E) Arthur Oettmeier Penny Reagh (D) Ellen Stahl

1969 Gregory Kish (D, E)

1970 Susan Armstrong (D) William Capp (E) Leslie Frontjes Richard J. Frontjes (E) Marisue Johnson Ruth Ostrander Pamela Stahl (E)

1971 Terri Baney (E) R. Wayne Brown Joy Hebner (D, E) Marie Rabideau Richard Talbot (D, E)

1972 Priscilla Cramer Shirley Howell (D, E) Julie Kelly (E) Randy Thibo (E)

1973 Janet Beattie (E) Irene Esckilsen (D) Janet LaFave (D) Ermal Oswald Stanley Ziaya 1974
Sally Calvo
Marilyn Lapham (E)
Terry Molyneaux
Christine Thurman (D, E)
Patti Wesenick (D)

1975 Mark Lewis Nancy Swantek (D, E) Isabelle Zuehlsdorff

1976 Michael Bacigalupo James Belknap (E) Margaret Belknap (E) Lucille Newcomb Andre Toth Ronald Witucki (E) Janet Witucki (D, E)

1977 Jane Lockhart (D) Phoebe Lutz Gerald Wachowiak Joyce Wachowiak

1978
Brian Bacigalupo
Cecilia Buchanan (D, E)
Rick Buchanan
Leota Clark (D)
Darcy Goss (D)
John Gustafson (D, E)
Donna Horn
Karen Kayner
Ellen Lesniak
Barbara Tolles (E)
Thomas Tolles (D, E)
Ruth Toth (E)

1979 Bruce DeBoe (E) Amanda Halvorsen Harlan Halvorsen (E) Fred Meyer (E) Mary Ann Meyer 1980 Leanor Robinson (D, E) Alicen Rogers (D) Bethany Vernon Bradley Vernon (D)

1981 Joyce Whitney (D) Walter Whitney (E) Doreen Newcombe Scott Newcombe (E)

1982 Brenda Clark Darlene Kusterer (E) Steve Kusterer (E) Pamela Monville (D, E) Thomas Monville

1983
Anthony Bacigalupo
Chris Elzinga (D, E)
Kathleen Elzinga
Robyn Ferguson
Debbie Hopkins
Pamela Johnston (D)

1984
David Lange (E)
Kenneth Lange
Peggy Lange
Marlene Mehlhose
Sandra Thibo (D)

1985
Jeff Bills
Carol Haertel
Sally Kish
Jeffery Rogers (D, E)
Christine VanDerwill
Peter VanDerwill

1986 Michael Beattie (E) Diego Calvo (E) Lenin Petroff (E) Sheryl Petroff (D)

1987 Conrad Drescher (D, E) James Hankinson Ruth Hankinson Lois MacPhail (D, E) James Rowley (D, E) 1988 Gary Bishop

1989 Mark Capp Cheryl Harpst Gregory Harpst Gregory Higgins

1990
Tina Bacigalupo (E)
Terrell Baney
Nancy Dobson
Diane Hoff
Betsy Kolm
Sharon Rutzen
Timothy Rutzen (E)
Herbert Collver

1991 Kristin Hetzel-Homann Bre Hetzel-Nugent (E) Jena Windiate

1992 Joyce Hunt (E) Julie Kukla (E) Linda Stuifbergen Scott Stuifbergen (E)

1993 Dawn Auger (D) Chad Capp Diana Hennrick (D, E) Ryan Schmidt Ronald Vantol

1994 Jeannette Bain Sheila Collver Anne Remington (D)

Sherry Holley (D)
Timothy Holley (D)
Angela Jerome (E)
Lee Pratt (E)
Elaine Rector
Christine Rutzen
Ira Yahrmarkt

1996 Richard L. Hebner, II(E) David Hill (E) Kimberly Wendell 1997
Emily Butts (D)
John Butts (D, E)
Beth Corey (D, E)
Carole Fulcher
Dawn Reszke (D)
Kristopher Reszke
Cort Schepeler
Sherri Schepeler
Dale Sneller (D)
Jodi Williams (E)

1998
Matthew Beattie
Louis Berta (E)
Nancy Berta (D)
Barbara Conklin (D)
Heather Heidtman (D)
Barbara Kish
Danielle Tacey

1999 Anna Pavlawk (E) Gerald Pavlawk (E)

Andrew Beattie
Kenneth D.Birch
Helen Bishop (E)
Marcy Chambers
Nicholas Chambers
Nicholas Chambers
Neil Harrelson (D, E)
Mitchell Kusterer
Patricia LaLonde (D)
Kevin Pockrandt
John Tapley (D)
Martha Tapley (E)
Amanda Thibo
Kathryn Wiese

2001 Patricia Horning (D) Nathan LaFave Nicholas Petroff Pamela Ritterscamp Harold Sauer

> 2002 Michelle Kerr Larry Wilson (E) Susan Wilson

2003 Erica Kaznowski Benjamin Kusterer Tyler Thibo Brittnay Thurston

2004
Karla Grant
Robert Grant (E)
Janice Gray (D)
Mason Gray (E)
Laura Gustafson
Lindsay Irrer
Carol Jeske
Kenneth T. Lange
Steven Petroff
Beverly Rector
Janel Rutzen
Webster Tally
Elden West (D)

2005
Kristie Burr
Matthew Burr
Samantha Burr
Timothy Burr
Candice Green (E)
Gay Greene
Nelson Greene
Judy Harrelson
Matthew Linkowski
Jaime Linkowski
Beverly Martin

2006
Bernice Anderson (D)
Lillian Asiala
William Auger (E)
Meredith Bishop
Tomas Calvo
Jason Forgash
Margaret Forgash (E)
Sandra Jatczak
Kameron Lange
Rebecca Layle
William Layle (D)
Larissa Petroff
Breanne Reitzel
Karen Russell
Richard Russell
Leslie Stuifbergen

Janelle Ballard
Lisa Beson (D)
Beverly Buchanan
Ronald Buchanan
Karen Pratt
Lisa Schueneman (D)
William Schueneman
Bethany Werner
Jeffrey Werner

2008 Samantha Armstrong Caroline Asiala Emily Morse Melissa Rutzen Kaye Walker (D)

2009 Rachelle Anderson Jacob Bennett (E) Diego Calvo, Jr. Alison Capp Travis Corey Debra Duggan (D) Patrick Duggan (E) Vicki Fitak (E) Rae Goodrich Abigail Kelly Jordan Kolm Ann Morse Carmen Schepeler Dana Schramm Jason Sivy (E) Tami Sivy Kori Tacey Kevin Weaver (E) Kristi Weaver Brianna Williams Marc Woodward Melissa Woodward (D) Judy Wycoff (D)

2010
Chrisita Ackerman
Johann Ackerman
Sara Bennett
Jeanne Gilbert
Mary Jessup
Marilyn Len (D, E)
Cassandra Maude
Jeanna Peglow
Jeremy Peglow
Wendy Tally
Amy Wolfe
Carl Wolfe

2011
Sara Doyle
Brian Graves (E)
Sandra Graves
Nancy Harrelson (D)
Amy Miller
Freda Nader
Vicki Reidelberger
Margy Schulz
Diane Shelt
William Shelt (E)
Linda Skrocki
Lynne Umbarger

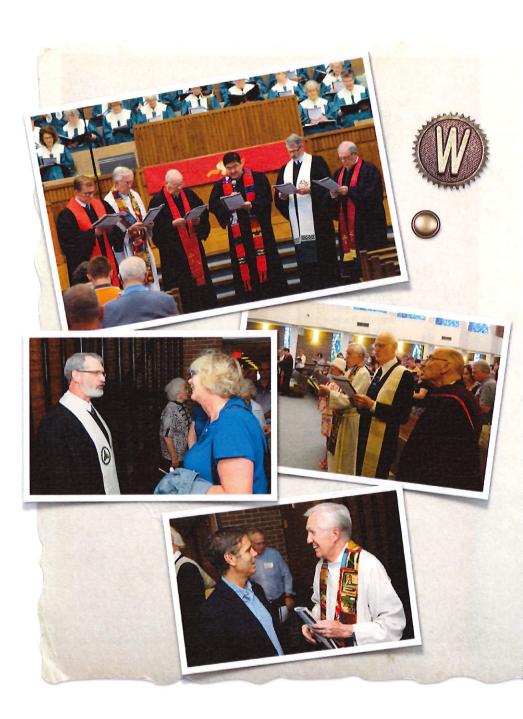
Pamella Binder
Jeannie Bradley
Allison Corey
Audrey Griffin
Ed Griffin (E)
Mario Karnath
William Lockhart
Margaret Majchrzak
Tom Majchrzak (D, E)
Ellis McRae
Donna Tetil (E)
Miles Tetil
Amy Weatherwax
Ann West (D, E)

2013 **Austin Bills** Karen Brown-Fackler **Richard Davis** Frances Ferdinand Patrick Frontjes Tiffany Frontjes (E) Rhianna Holley Jill Jean Michael Jean Grant Layle George Loesel Susan Loesel Kendra Reszke Jodi Schisler Scott Schisler (D) Leah Sneller

2014 Carol Arnesen (D) Fred Arnesen (E) Brenda Badgero Jerry Bechtel (E) Marilyn Bechtel (D, E) Charley Curtiss Susan Curtiss Jared Elzinga Sandy Falardeau Gena Gates Michael Hankish Jason Hildebrant Samantha Hildebrant Brandi Holloway Ann Jay Jayne Jay Laura Jay Catherine Kelly Karen Mitchell (D) **Aaron Morse** Don Stokes Royce Stokes Sheri Young

2015
David Bremer (D, E)
Jennifer Eaton
Vi O'Hare (D)
Beverly Pacynski
Susan Portwood
Eric Rezler
Nicole Rezler
Jennifer Schmidt

D - denotes Deacon E - denotes Elder











Westminster is here to serve God and humanity sharing the love of Jesus through faith, hope, and love, with an open and genuine spirit.

