

# Westminster Presbyterian Church

103 E. Midland Street  
Bay City, MI 48706

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OCTOBER 2024

ISSUE 191

# THE WESTMINSTER LOG

*"Know this: the Lord takes personal care of the faithful. The Lord will hear me when I cry out to him ...you have filled my heart with more joy than when their wheat and wine are everywhere! I will lie down and fall asleep in peace because you alone, Lord, let me live in safety." (Psalm 4)*



Beloved Partners in Ministry,

Fall has always been one of my favorite times of the year. I love the slight chill in the morning air and watching the leaves change their color from green to a beautiful array of red, yellow, and orange. It is a different change than in the springtime where we celebrate the budding of new life as the earth awakens from its winter slumber. In the fall, the earth prepares itself for a much-needed time of rest.

For me, October also seems to be the perfect time for a little rest and relaxation. After the busy summer months traveling to visit family and the anxiety and excitement of preparing to get the kids back to school, October brings a little bit of breathing room before Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas come rushing in. I think we should take a cue from the earth and embrace this as a time to recharge ourselves for the busy months ahead. Whether it be settling in on a Saturday afternoon to binge watch a new series on Netflix or curling up on the couch on a Sunday afternoon to read a book, or taking a walk after work, I hope you are able to find some rest in the coming weeks. (You should also consider joining us for our fall retreat on Saturday, October 12! Details inside).

*Prayer  
Rest  
Reflection*

I sometimes joke that I don't mind if people were to sleep through one of my sermons (not that any of you would do that!). Outside of extreme circumstances, most people only fall asleep in places where they feel comfortable, welcome, and at home. If we have created such a space on Sunday morning that invites that level of comfort, by all means, sleep away, the organ will wake you up soon enough. But, more seriously, I hope that you all find your experiences in worship, fellowship, and service with your church family at Westminster to be restful and life giving experiences.

For many people taking time to rest may seem like an impossible task. I mentioned the word "Christmas" above and I am sure there are those whose internal monologue just went crazy. As a pastor, mine definitely goes into overdrive every time I look at how close it is! When we look too far ahead, we may not think we will ever accomplish all that needs to be done. In those moments, I invite you to *make* some space for prayer, rest, and reflection. We remember the many Gospel passages of Jesus going off by himself to spend time with God, even in the midst of his busy schedule. Simply taking five minutes and asking God to help you along the way can do wonders for you.

May the God of peace be with you,

*Pastor Jamie*

## IMPORTANT DATES IN OCTOBER

- Sunday, October 6**
  - Blessing of the Animals worship services (page 11)
- Saturday, October 12**
  - Fall Retreat ( page 4)
- Sunday, October 13**
  - Mission Sunday (page 2)
- Sunday, October 20**
  - Children's Sabbath (page 2)
- Sunday, October 27**
  - Harvest Party (page 11)

OCTOBER 2024 ISSUE 191

WWW.WPCBC.ORG

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Westminster Presbyterian  
Church - Bay City



Phone: 989-686-1360  
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Office Hours:  
Monday through Thursday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
(Closed 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. for lunch)

Facilities Manager  
Harold Miller (ext. 205)

Leah Sneller (ext. 208)

Director of Children and Youth Ministries

Church Secretary/Treasurer  
Heather Heidman (ext. 201)

Parish Associate  
Rev. Linda Williams (ext. 203)

Pastor  
Rev. Jamie Milton (ext. 204)

# THE WESTMINSTER LOG

# October

## Sundays

**8:45 a.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal**  
for our Adults; the Bells play during Worship once a month

**9:00 a.m. Sunday School**  
Sunday school for PreK-4th grade

**9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study**  
We'll continue studying the parables of Jesus through October 13th and then use the Feasting on the Word Bible Study.

**9:30 a.m. Fellowship**  
Join us in Fellowship Hall for Coffee and Donuts and Conversation

**9:45 a.m. Choir Rehearsal**  
Pre-service rehearsal

**9:55 a.m. Chime Choir**  
For Children in K-4th grades

**10:30 a.m. Worship**  
We have several special services in October-see page 2 for details.

**11:30 a.m. Fellowship**  
Join us in the Chapel for Coffee and Cookies and Conversation

**5:00 p.m. Youth Bells**  
For Youth 5th-12th grades

**5:30 p.m. Youth Dinner**

**6:00 p.m. Youth Group**  
For Youth 5th-12th grade

Sunday	Monday
<p><u>Office Hours</u> Monday – Thursday: 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. (Closed for lunch 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m)</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://wpcbc.org">wpcbc.org</a></p> <p><u>Join us on Facebook</u> Westminster Presbyterian Church - Bay City</p>	
<p><b>6</b> <i>World Communion Sunday</i></p> <p>4:00 p.m. Blessing of the Pets</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>5:30 p.m. Mission Mtg. 7:00 p.m. Deacons Mtg.</p>
<p><b>13</b> <i>Mission Sunday</i></p> <p>11:45 a.m. Fellowship and Outreach Mtg.</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p>5:00 p.m. Property Mtg. 6:00 p.m. Finance Mtg. 7:00 p.m. Stewardship Mtg.</p>
<p><b>20</b> <i>Children's Sabbath</i></p>	<p><b>21</b></p>
<p><b>27</b> <i>Reformation Sunday</i></p> <p>11:30 p.m. Harvest Party</p>	<p><b>28</b></p>

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri/Sat
<p><b>1</b></p> <p>10:00 a.m. Hearts &amp; Hands Knitting 1:30 p.m. Book Study 6:00 p.m. Personnel Meeting 6:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 150</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir</p>	<p><b>3</b> 8:30 a.m. TOPS</p> <p>5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>5</b></p>
<p><b>8</b> 9:00 a.m. Matthew 25 Cafe 10:00 a.m. Staff Mtg. 10:00 a.m. Hearts &amp; Hands Knitting 1:00 p.m. Lions Club 1:30 Book Study 6:00 p.m. Scout Troop 150 6:30 p.m. Spiritual Growth Mtg.</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>5:15 p.m. Worship Mtg. 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir</p>	<p><b>10</b> 8:30 a.m. TOPS</p> <p>5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>12</b> 9:00 a.m. Fall Retreat at Bay Shore Camp</p>
<p><b>15</b></p> <p>10:00 a.m. Hearts &amp; Hands Knitting 1:30 p.m. Book Study 6:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 150 6:30 p.m. Session Meeting</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir</p>	<p><b>17</b> 8:30 a.m. TOPS 1:00 p.m. Lydia Circle 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>19</b></p>
<p><b>22</b> 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting 10:00 a.m. Hearts &amp; Hands Knitting 12:00 p.m. Lunch and Laugh 1:30 p.m. Book Study 6:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 150</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir</p>	<p><b>24</b> 8:30 a.m. TOPS 1:30 p.m. Coffee and Conversation 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>26</b></p>
<p><b>29</b></p> <p>10:00 a.m. Hearts &amp; Hands Knitting 1:30 p.m. Book Study 6:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 150</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir</p>	<p><b>31</b> 8:30 a.m. TOPS 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p><u>Happy Birthday</u></p> <p>Iraline Yahrmarkt Marlene Mehlhose James Rowley Leota Clark Joyce Hegenauer Beverly Pacynski Carol Lange Cheryl Harpst Kathy Elzinga</p>

Treasurer's Report

The Operating Fund had income of only \$18,012.90 in August and expenses of \$38,132.63 While it seems that things slow down during the summer months, there are still bills to pay and plans for upcoming fall programming. Remember that you can set up recurring gifts using our online giving portal, found on the church's website [www.wpcbc.org](http://www.wpcbc.org) or look for the QR code in the bulletin. Thank you!

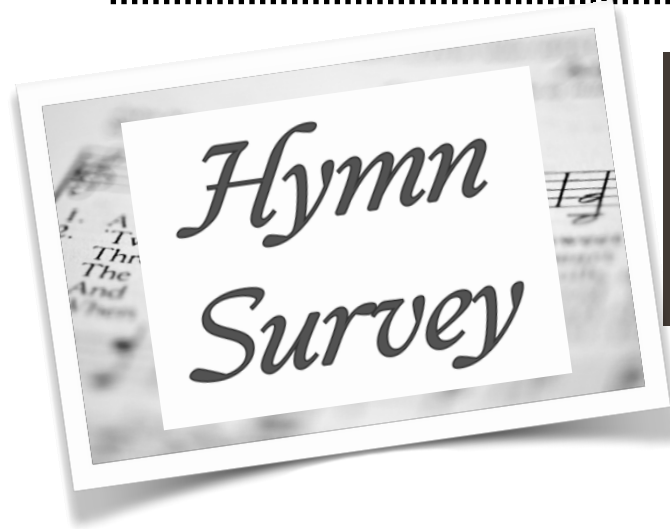
The **Building Improvement Fund** received contributions of \$315.00, in August and expenses of \$3000.00 to steam clean the carpets throughout the building. Thank you for contributing to the Building Improvement Fund which keeps our building welcoming and in good condition. The Building Improvement Fund ended August with a balance of \$13,295.33

The **Major Repairs Fund** had income of \$179.00 in August. We did not have any expenses. The balance at the end of August is \$42,956.94. Thank you to those who contribute to the Major Repairs Fund.

Contributions to the **Capital Campaign Fund** totaled \$1176.60 in August. We had interest expense of \$385.34. Did you know at the start of our Loan period, our monthly interest payments alone, were around \$2200.00?! As you can see, our payments and our extra principal payments have brought that down drastically. At the end of the month, the principal sits at \$118,994.71. Thank you for contributing to the Capital Campaign Fund.

If you have any questions, please reach out to me or anyone on the Finance Ministry: Julie Kelly, Phil Reagh, Jeff Rogers, Karen Schoepach, Bill Shelt and Randy Thibo

Heather Heidtman  
Church Treasurer



Have you noticed that many of the songs we sing on Sunday mornings compliment the scripture readings and theme for worship that day? But we like to include your favorites, as well. Do you have a favorite hymn you like to sing? Perhaps 2 or 3? The Worship Committee would like to take an informal survey. In the spaces below list a few of your favorites.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

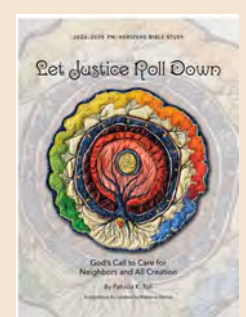
\_\_\_\_\_

Please turn this survey into the church office. It will be forwarded to the Worship Committee to help with planning the musical selections for upcoming worship services. Thank you!

With Sympathy



Prayers of the congregation are extended to the family and friends Jeanne Bradley. Jeanne passed away August, 26, 2024.



LYDIA CIRCLE

Lydia Circle continues to meet on the third Thursday of the month at 1:00 p.m. Lydia Circle is using the 2024 PW Bible Study, *Let Justice Roll Down*. Please call Barb Tolles with any questions.

DEBORAH CIRCLE

Deborah Circle continues to meet on the last Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. (except in December); please call Karen Schoepach for more information about their gatherings. \*Please note: Karen will reach out members about the date of your October meeting.\*

Rides to Church needed!



SUNDAY MORNING FELLOWSHIP GATHERINGS

We invite you to join us for **Fellowship Time**, a wonderful opportunity to connect with your church family!

**Before our worship service** (9:30-10:15) plan to stop by the Fellowship Hall for a warm welcome with coffee and donuts. It's the perfect time to start your day by meeting new people, catching up with old friends, and sharing a moment of community.

**After the service**, we continue the fellowship in the chapel, where cookies, coffee, and lemonade will be served. This is a relaxed time to reconnect with those you may not have seen in a while, and build new friendships within our congregation.



Whether you are new to our church or have been here for years, Fellowship Time is a great way to strengthen our bonds as a church family. We hope you'll join us for this special time together!



THANK YOU to everyone who made our Annual Rummage and Bake Sale a huge success! Thank you to everyone who donated items, and baked goods, and all those that helped with setting up the sale, and with the clean-up afterwards. \$1,947.31 was raised through the Rummage Sale and \$318.76 from the Bake Sale. The Women of Westminster were able to meet on Sunday, September 22nd and voted to give the funds raised from the Rummage Sale and the Bake Sale to our Westminster Community Food Pantry.

SHARING OF TRANSPORTATION FOR WPC MEMBERS TO WORSHIP ON COMMUNION SUNDAYS

In our Matthew 25 language, to bless others is to bless God. The love God has for us is returned to God in the ways that we love our neighbor.

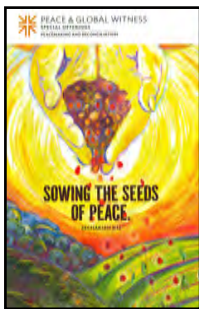
A few WPC members need rides to worship. Can you perhaps take some extra minutes to share your ride to and from worship on Communion Sundays? The more fellow members who volunteer, the more flexibility in days to drive.

Please contact the church office for more information.

### OCTOBER WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

This October as we gather for worship, we're taking the opportunity to focus on some of the matters that are close to our hearts as a faith community, the things that unite us together as a family of faith.

#### October 6



**World Communion/Peace and Global Witness-** As we celebrate the Lord's Supper here in Bay City, this special Sunday reminds us of our Christian siblings around the globe sharing in the same table of Christ. As we gather to think about the global reach of Christ's message of love, hope and peace for all of humankind we will also be collecting the PC(USA)'s **Peace and Global Witness Offering**. This offering gives us a concrete way to contribute locally and nationally to the work of peace and the mission work of the church.



**Blessing of the Animals-**check out page 11 for all the details for this special afternoon worship service for our beloved pets.

#### October 13

**Partnerships From the Heart-** During worship, we'll hear from four of the local agencies that we partner with in God's mission. We'll have the opportunity to listen to the good work that Impact Designs, Sleep in Heavenly Peace, Hidden Harvest, and the Matthew 25 Café, a ministry of the Salvation Army of Bay City. Plan to join us as we continue to support these important partners!



#### October 20

**Children's Sabbath-** Our annual celebration and recognition of the divine mandate to listen to, follow, nurture, and protect children, calls us to act with urgency in responding to the needs of children today. This service places special focus on our commitment to improving children's lives and working for liberating justice with, and on their behalf. This years' service liturgy was written by our own Nikelle Johnson!



#### October 27

**Reformation Sunday-** We'll honor some of our Presbyterian history, as we recognize the significance of the motto *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda*, or "the church reformed, always reforming." In 1517, when Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses on the door of the castle church at Wittenberg, a movement began to reform the Catholic Church. The term "Reformation" is used to describe the series of changes in Western Christendom that began in the fourteenth century and continued until the seventeenth century. In the mid-1500s, John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* became the driving force of the Reformation in Western Europe. It was from Calvin that John Knox gained the knowledge of Reformed theology and polity that he used as the basis for founding the Presbyterian denomination.



**Harvest Party and Chili Cook-off-** Following worship we'll join together in the Fellowship Hall for our annual Chili Cook-off, complete with games and fall themed crafts for the whole family! See page 11 for more details!



### Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, October 6  
4:00 p.m. - for all animals  
(please remember to cage or lease your pets)



Our annual blessing for our furry, scaly, and feathery family members will be held on the north lawn at **4:00 p.m.** We'll have a brief service of worship that will conclude with an individual blessing for each pet and family present. All animals are welcome, but must be caged or on a leash at all times (for everyone's safety, especially your pets!). You may also bring a photo of your pet if you do not wish to bring them to the church, or more likely, your pet doesn't want to travel.

Gather with your church family and friends at our annual Harvest Party and Chili Cook-off on **Sunday, October 27, 2024** after worship! We'll have games for the children and the young at heart, a photo station and photographer, and a selection of tasty chilis, grilled cheese sandwiches, and delicious desserts! If you're interested in entering your chili into the contest, please register on the bulletin board located in the Wenona Street Lobby or reach out via email to [sandra.graves@gmail.com](mailto:sandra.graves@gmail.com).

We are also looking for volunteers, donations of desserts and chili toppings! If you'd like to help or donate, please scan the QR code for the SignUp Genius or send an email to [sandra.graves@gmail.com](mailto:sandra.graves@gmail.com).



### Christmas Cantata



On Sunday, December 22, Westminster's Cantata Choir will be performing a special Christmas Cantata, "Glorious Light of Christmas." *This cantata presents songs of the season made popular by some of your favorite Christian music artists, such as Sidewalk Prophets, Lauren Daigle, and Chris Tomlin, paired with brilliantly written new songs written by Lee Black and Jason Cox, all arranged by Marty Hamby, and artfully enhanced by powerfully moving narrations. Share the hope and promise that came down to earth in the form of a Baby on that first Christmas night so long ago as you sing and celebrate the glorious light of God's love this Christmas!*



All singers are invited to join this inspiring Christmas musical event. If you would like to be a part of the special Cantata Choir, plan to attend rehearsals on Wednesday evenings at 7:15 pm beginning on October 2nd. For information call Dawn Auger: home (989) 894-0426 or cell (989) 327-0412.



Our Promise During Teacher Commissioning:  
*We receive you as servants of Christ;  
 we pledge to support you in your service.  
 We will encourage you with works and prayers.  
 We will consider ourselves coworkers with you in the  
 service of Christ.*

THE FELLOWSHIP AND OUTREACH  
COMMITTEE INVITE YOU TO OCTOBER'S

# GAME GATHERING

BOARD  
GAMES  
PUZZLES

SNACKS  
CARD  
GAMES

Meet in Fellowship Hall

**OCTOBER 20TH  
AFTER WORSHIP**

All Ages are Welcome!

Join us Sunday after worship on **October 20th** for our next **Game Gathering** in the Fellowship Hall! Whether you love strategy games, card games, or just want to enjoy a good chat and snacks, there's something for everyone. Bring your favorite game or play one of ours, and feel free to bring a snack to share. Also, check out our **Perpetual Puzzle Place**—a communal puzzle that stays up until it's completed. We're almost ready to start a new one! Add a few pieces on Sunday mornings or during the week whenever you drop by. Let's have some fun and connect with one another!

## ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN OCTOBER

Recently someone remarked that one of their favorite Sunday Worship services is the yearly World Communion Sunday because it blesses her heart and spirit to know that Christian churches throughout the world are celebrating Holy Communion at the same time, or at least on the same day. The same can be said for the use of the common lectionary readings – a three-year cycle in which many Christian churches throughout the world read, study, and worship on a Sunday morning using the same Gospel, epistle, and Hebrew scripture readings.

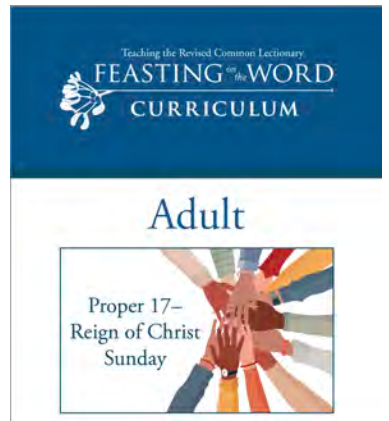
Over the next several weeks here at Westminster our Sunday morning worship services will be using scripture readings from the Common Lectionary. Feasting on the Word Bible study curriculum follows the Lectionary and allows anyone interested in doing so, to explore the same Bible passage in our two Bible study gatherings – Sunday morning at 9:00 in the Conference Room or Thursday evening at 7:00 via Zoom. Our children will also be studying the same Bible readings. In our gatherings we will explore the what, where, so what, and now what of each biblical passage. This helps to connect our intentional spiritual growth and education offerings with our worship service.

Come join us for the next few weeks, beginning Thursday evening, October 10<sup>th</sup> via Zoom or Sunday morning, October 20<sup>th</sup> at 9 AM. Our first few weeks we will focus on the Gospel of Mark.

And just to note: the Follow Me series "Walk Humbly" wraps up Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Sunday morning Bible Study "Short Stories by Jesus" will continue October 6<sup>th</sup> with the parable of "The Laborers in the Vineyard" and will finish on October 13 with the "The Widow and the Judge".

Looking ahead in November, we'll go back the Follow Me Curriculum "Comfort Those Who Mourn"

Any questions, please call the church office or see Rev. Linda.



One person around our church that helps out behind the scenes in so many ways is Marilyn Bechtel. If you were to look up the word "gracious" in the dictionary, you may find a picture of Marilyn. She demonstrates that graciousness in so many ways here at Westminster. But it began long before she became a member in 2014.

Marilyn grew up going to church with her family in the Detroit area. Later, when she married Jerry, she was a gracious hostess for the many dinners she hosted as an Army Captain's wife. That gift of



hospitality is shared in many ways here at Westminster, as well as with neighbors and friends. Marilyn is always willing to lend a hand around the church. She is ready to help out with anything in the kitchen, making calls to others to bring salads or cookies or whatever is needed for a funeral luncheon, as well as bringing one of her own delicious dishes. Marilyn has served as a Deacon here at Westminster since 2021 and helps to co-organize our annual 50-Year Member Luncheon.

Marilyn also extends hospitality and kindness to others through the card ministry of the Deacons, sending out cards and notes to those celebrating a birthday or simply in need of knowing that their church is thinking of them and praying for them. Before joining Westminster, Marilyn was an active member at another church, serving in various ministries, including serving as a Stephens Minister. Here at Westminster Marilyn volunteers to secure a liturgist for the Sunday morning worship services, - and if no one says yes, then she volunteers herself!

Thank you Marilyn for sharing God's love through all of the hard work and dedication you put into our church and faith community.



“Life is a destination, not a journey” is a phrase commonly heard in years past to frame how we live. It reminded us to pause and take in the many moments of each day that make up the life we live day-by-day, rather than always be looking ahead to where we want to “get to.”

The theme of our retreat this year is **Quest: The Awakened Traveler.**

Whether you travel far away or see your local surroundings as if for the first time, pilgrimage has long been a spiritual practice, and “journey” a deeply-felt metaphor for our spiritual lives. “Quest” comes from the Latin root meaning “ask, seek.” Throughout the retreat, we’ll be encouraged to open ourselves more fully to the curiosity and wonder, reflection and transformation that travelers—not merely tourists—experience when they choose to immerse themselves in soul-widening adventures.

Through worship, reflection, music, prayer, and creative activities, we’ll explore the ideas of:

**Leaving Home-** Beginning a journey involves leaving “home”—whether that is a physical place in order to explore another part of the world, or changing a mindset that keeps us from expanding our spiritual capacity. What must we do to embark into the unknown?

**The Encounter-** When we seek out and open to new encounters, new people, new relationships, we allow ourselves a spiritual rendezvous with humanity. And in this act, we discover more spiritual depth within us than we previously imagined. How can we shift our perception, redefining “strangers” as “friends we have not yet met?”

**The Reflection-** The light we seek and life-sustaining river that runs through the “Kin-dom” of God is full of common themes across religions: peaceful coexistence, food and shelter, love and compassion for those suffering and oppressed. How can deeper reflection about our own hesitation to connect to the wider human family free us to explore more possibilities for a better world?

**Returning Home-** We contemplate what it means to return home. After stretching our spirits and our love to include more of the glorious creation and its peoples, we return to a home that will never be the same to us. We have returned with “guests”—memories of new friends and new perspectives.

Travel with us on **Saturday, October 12th at Bay Shores Camp in Sebawaing.** There will be an opportunity to carpool if you would like to ride out to the camp with other participants. **The retreat will begin at 9 AM and conclude around 4 PM. Cost will be \$25 which includes lunch and snacks. Please call the church office to register by October 8th.**



### Weekly Schedule for Youth & Adults

#### Sundays

8:45 a.m. Adult Bell Choir  
 9:00 a.m. Sunday School (for 3-year-olds – 4th grade)  
 9:55 a.m. Chime Choir  
 9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study (see details on page 3)  
 10:30 a.m. Worship Service  
 5:00 p.m. Youth Bells  
 5:30 p.m. Youth Dinner/Youth Group

#### Tuesdays

1:30 p.m. What God Mostly Does Book Study (see details below)

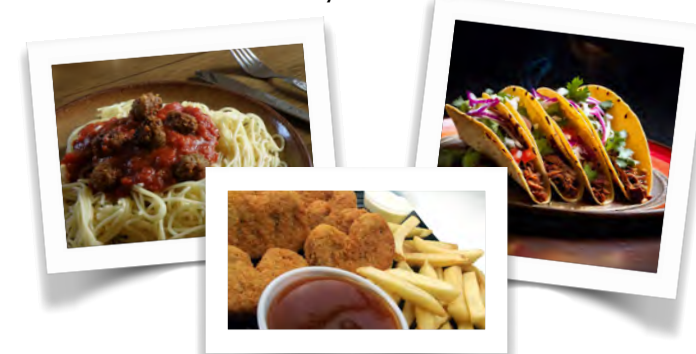
#### Wednesdays

5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir  
 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

#### Thursdays

7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study (see details on page 3)

**Dinner volunteers are needed for Sunday evenings!**

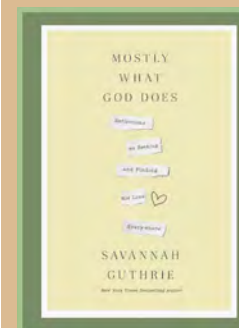


#### Sunday Evenings

This program year, Westminster will offer a time of fellowship and food for 5th through 12th grade students on Sunday evenings. Spaghetti, chicken nuggets/tenders, burgers and tacos are all favorites! If you would like to bring dinner for our youth and volunteers, please review the dinner schedule by scanning the QR code at the right. Or call Leah 989-686-1360 ext. 208. Dinner will take place from 5:30 until 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.



### FALL BOOK STUDY CONTINUES



In this recently (2024) published book Savannah Guthrie inspirationally and openheartedly writes of her hard-won religious belief that makes room for imperfection and "does not require us to ignore... the sorrows we experience or the unjustness we see but to believe past it." Her conclusion is – “Mostly what God does is love you.”

If we could believe this, really believe this, how different would we be? How different would our lives be? How different would our world be?

One reviewer notes: *If you ever struggle with your connection to God (or whether you even feel connected to a faith at all!), you're not alone. Especially in our modern world, with its relentless, never-ending news cycle, we can all grapple with such questions. Do we do that alone, with despair and resignation? Or do we make sense of it with God, and with hope? In these uncertain times, could believing in the power of divine love make the most sense?*

*Guthrie shares why she believes it does, telling personal stories from her own joys and sorrows as a daughter, mother, wife, friend, and professional journalist, co-anchor of the TODAY Show. She explores the place of faith in everyday life.*

*This book is a perfect companion to your morning cup of coffee and for our Tuesday afternoon book club gathering, continuing Tuesdays in October at 1:30 PM. This beautiful tapestry of reflections includes:*

- a fresh, biblically rooted look at what Guthrie describes as her six essentials of faith: love, presence, grace, hope, gratitude, and purpose.
- an honest exploration of questions, doubts, and fears about the love of God;
- a dose of encouragement for the faith-full, the faith-curious, and the faith-less;

*This deeply personal collection is designed to engage the practical ways that God loves you—not just the world, but you—and to inspire you to venture down a path of faith that is authentic, hopeful, destiny-shaping, and ultimately life-changing.*



Ice Cream Social!  
September 8, 2024



# LUNCH & LAUGH

As we often say, Presbyterians love learning and love lunching. So, for the past several years, folks have been meeting in Fellowship Hall on the fourth Tuesday of the month to hear a variety of speakers from the community while bringing in our own bag lunches. 🗨️

But Presbyterians also love laughing, so this fall we are kicking off a new series – Lunch & Laugh. Most months it will be a more informal time with lunch catered by a local restaurant; we expect the average cost to be about \$15. There

will be plenty of time to share time with each other in conversation and enjoy a meal. And if you would like to bring a card game or a board game, we'll have time for that as well. Keep in mind though our emphasis is on "laughing" so no cut-throat game playing!

Because the meal is going to be catered, we will need to take reservations in advance...but not too far in advance. We're asking that you call the church office by Thursday, October 17th.

Our next Lunch & Laugh will be held on **Tuesday, October 22nd at noon**. Any questions, please call the church office. Stay tuned on Facebook or in the Sunday morning bulletin for updates regarding scheduled speakers.



Here are some comments our Volunteers have heard during their time working in the Food Pantry:

"This really helps."

"No thanks, I don't need that as much as a larger family will."

"I'm laid off and feeding 5 kids and 3 teenage boys. It is hard. This really helps."

"Our family of seven just grew to nine as my in-laws lost their home and moved in with us. Thank you"

"My husband lost his job and I just got laid off. I'm so grateful."

"Thank you"

## August Food Pantry Statistics

175 Households that utilized the Pantry in August

114 New Households of the 175, 114 or 65% visited our Pantry for the first time

554 Individuals we helped

5381 Pounds of food distributed at a cost of 40 cents per pound



Our **Westminster Community Food Pantry** has been going strong for four months. We are so grateful to those who volunteer their time and their resources and those who have supported the Food Pantry since the expansion in June. Volunteers are always welcome on **Wednesdays and Thursdays**.

There are other opportunities to help in our community. Our amazing **Food of Faith** team will be serving a hot meal Thursday evening, **October 3rd**, beginning with meal prep at 2:00 p.m.



MATTHEW 25

A team from Westminster serves lunch on the second Tuesday of each month at the **Matthew 25 Cafe** (formerly the Salvation Army Soup Kitchen). They will be serving **October 8th**, beginning with meal prep at 9:00 a.m.

If you are interested in helping with any of these opportunities, please see the sign up sheets on the bulletin board outside the sanctuary.

In a few weeks we'll begin collecting for our annual **Thanksgiving Basket drive**. Westminster, you always display your generous spirit by providing funds and your time to make Thanksgiving a special holiday for our neighbors. Let's continue this! More details to follow in the coming weeks.

**Each month the Spiritual Growth Ministry will share in the Log, a few thoughts on the journey of grief that we all experience. We hope these brief thoughts will be of help and support to all.**



*"Sleep is that golden chain that ties health and our bodies together." ~ Thomas Dekker*

Coping with grief isn't easy. In addition to the emotional, cognitive and spiritual upheaval you may be experiencing, there are a myriad of physical side effects as well. Sleeplessness is one of the most frustrating symptoms that occurs after the death of someone you loved. When you are sleepy but can't fall asleep, it adds insult to injury. While insomnia is considered a common grief reaction, sleeplessness should not be ignored. Good sleep often suffers following a death because the griever has so many thoughts and memories about the person who died. A griever may experience distressing thoughts about how their loved one died or feelings of guilt, regret, worry, fear and sadness about the future. If you have lost a partner or spouse, your empty bed will no doubt be a constant reminder of this loss. It can be especially heartbreaking to sleep without your bed partner or to awaken and realize that they are not there. Even if your loved one did not share a bed with you, the death of a loved one often impacts sleep.

When grieving individuals don't get adequate and restful sleep on a regular basis, they exist in a constant state of sleep deprivation. Being sleep deprived worsens the intensity of grief symptoms and makes life more challenging to manage. Sleep deprivation impacts the brain's ability to process memories and it also affects judgment, so you may become more forgetful, less able to retain new information and more likely to make poor decisions. Emotionally, you may have a harder time balancing your moods, which can increase stress hormone levels as well as anxiety. And finally, sleep deprivation impacts you physically. The immune system is compromised, making you more prone to illness. In the long run, sleep deprivation has been linked to cancer, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and obesity.

Simply put, the lack of sleep makes us feel worse and results in a poor outcome. If you are experiencing grief and sleep loss, there are fortunately a number of things you can do to improve your "sleep hygiene" and invite slumber. It may take some time for restful sleep to return,

but the actions below and on the next page may get you there quicker. Your sleep is important to your healing, not only physically, but also emotionally, spiritually and psychologically.

### Simple Suggestions to Improve Your Sleep

Developing and practicing healthy sleep habits will make the difference between restful slumber and restlessness. Researchers have identified several practices and habits known as "sleep hygiene" to help maximize the hours people spend sleeping, even those whose sleep is affected by grief. Here are some tips from the Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School to make sleep a nightly reality:

1. **Avoid caffeine, nicotine, alcohol and other chemicals that interfere with sleep.** Caffeinated products decrease the quality of sleep. Caffeine is a stimulant and it's in coffee, tea, chocolate, cola and even some pain relievers. Avoid caffeine four to six hours before bedtime. Similarly, smokers should refrain from using tobacco products too close to bedtime. Although alcohol may initially make you sleepy, it decreases the quality of sleep once your body begins to metabolize it.



**2. Turn the bedroom into a sleep inducing environment.** Why do bats congregate in dark caves for daytime sleep? Because a quiet, dark and cool place promotes sound slumber. To achieve this effect in your bedroom, use earplugs or a "white noise" appliance to block outside noise and traffic. Use heavy curtains, blackout shades or an eye mask to block out light. Keep the room temperature comfortably cool— between 60 and 68 degrees—and make sure your bed has a comfortable mattress and pillows. Most mattresses need to be replaced within 10 years. Remove computers, TVs and work materials from the bedroom so that you train your brain to associate the bedroom with sleep.

**3. Establish a soothing pre-sleep routine.** Ease the transition from wake time to sleep time with a period of relaxing activity an hour or so before bedtime. Take a bath, read a book or practice relaxation exercises. Avoid stressful or stimulating activities such as doing work or having emotional discussions. Physically and psychologically stressful activities can cause your body to secrete cortisol which increases alertness.

**4. Don't be a clock-watcher.** Staring at the bedroom clock when you're trying to fall asleep increases stress and makes it harder to fall asleep. Turn the clock face away from you. If you should wake in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep after 20 minutes, get up and engage in a quiet, restful activity such as reading or listening to music. Keep the lights dim during this time as bright light will stimulate your internal clock. When your eyelids begin to droop, return to bed.

**5. Keep a consistent sleep schedule.** Going to bed and waking up at the same time each day sets the body's internal clock to expect sleep at a certain time each night. Try to stick as closely as possible to your routine on weekends to avoid a Monday morning sleep hangover.

**6. Lighten the evening meal.** Eating a pepperoni pizza at 10 p.m. can be a recipe for insomnia. Finish dinner several hours before bedtime and avoid foods that cause indigestion. If you get hungry before bedtime, have a light snack such as a carbohydrate.

**7. Balance fluid intake.** Drink enough fluid in the evening to keep from waking up thirsty, but not so much and so close to bedtime that you will be awakened by the need to visit the bathroom.

**8. Exercise early in the day.** Exercise can help with sleep disturbances. A walk will expose you to natural light, which will contribute to a healthy sleep cycle. Get regular exercise but finish exercising at least three hours before bedtime.

**9. Nap early or not at all.** Many people make naps a regular part of their day. But if you have difficulty falling or staying asleep, afternoon napping may be one of the culprits. If you must nap, keep it short and do it before 5 p.m.

~St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program, Bethlehem, PA

INFORMAL GRIEF GROUP

*Coffee and Conversation*

October 24th  
@ 1:30 p.m.

*Grieving is a universal, human experience. While we will all experience grief in our lives, it is also a unique journey each time. Mourning is a sign of love and this wisdom is embodied in Jesus' words in Matthew 5:4, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."*

*We will continue for the next few months to meet informally over a cup of coffee to share any experiences or feelings for those moving through a time of grief. It may be that you have reached the first anniversary of your loved one's death, or it may be that you are newer – or even longer – in this journey, but if it feels that it would be helpful to gather with others, please join us on **Thursday, October 24th at 1:30 pm** in the lounge.*

*As the holiday season approaches, we will again offer a time of focused conversation and information materials on the universal, human experience of grief. Any questions, please call the church office or Rev. Linda.*