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# THE WESTMINSTER LOG

Beloved Partners in Ministry,

I think we have all heard the phrase, “You learn something new everyday,” sometimes said in jest, when one discovers something new. I know I’ve said it on more than one occasion when I learn something obvious that I should already know. With Google at your fingertips, YouTube-ers uploading hours of new content every second, and social media streams filled with memes, lifehacks, and “did you know” facts, our minds are flooded with information from the time we wake up in the morning, until the time we are finally able to turn our brains off at night. Some of it, we want to remember, but most of it, we don’t have much need for in our lives.

Being a lifelong learner, seeking knowledge and understanding, is important for us when we are learning things that will make us better people and better disciples. Our Scriptures have a lot to say on this subject. Proverbs, our “Book of Wisdom” offers this passage:

*4 if you seek [wisdom] like silver,  
and search for [wisdom] as for hidden treasures—  
5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord  
and find the knowledge of God.  
6 For the Lord gives wisdom;  
from [God’s] mouth come knowledge and  
understanding...* (Proverbs 2:4-6)

How do we seek wisdom? How do we search for it as for hidden treasures? Where does the Lord give us this wisdom? I think the answer to these questions can be found in our connection to our worshiping community. When we gather together to study Scripture, God’s wisdom is revealed in our discussions together. When we worship together, we learn how to pray, how to seek forgiveness and forgive others, and how to be better disciples. When we pray for one another, we come to a better understanding of others’ situations and can love them more openly.

In the letter to the Colossians, Paul writes “we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, <sup>10</sup> so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to [God], as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:9-10).” This is the prayer that your pastor, Westminster’s staff, and the church’s Deacons and Elders offer for you all. This is the prayer behind all the work our committees do, that this worshiping community might offer places to learn, worship, and fellowship together, that are pleasing to God and help us all to bear fruit and grow in the knowledge of God. Join us as we become better disciples of Jesus, together.

In Christ’s love,  
Pastor Jamie

## September Happenings!

**September 8**  
Sunday School Kickoff  
Ice Cream Social (page 4)

**September 8 and 12**  
Adult Bible Study begins (page 3)

**September 11-13**  
Fall Rummage Sale (page 9)

**September 22**  
Meeting of the Women of  
Westminster (page 9)

**September 29**  
50 year member recognition  
(page 8)

All the  
Details are  
Inside!

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# September

## 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**  
Adult Bible Study begins September 8, we'll be studying the Parables of Jesus. Please see page 3

**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'll finish the "Soul Food" series on September 1st and begin the Follow Me unit "Walk Humbly"

**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><b>1</b> <i>Communion</i></p> <p><i>Dirty Hands and Clean Hearts</i> Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Church office closed in observance of Labor Day</p>
<p><b>8</b> <i>Church School Kickoff</i></p> <p><i>Remember That You Are Dust</i> Genesis 2:7, 3:19b; Luke 12:16-21</p> <p>11:45 a.m. Ice Cream Social</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>5:00 p.m. Property Mtg. 5:30 p.m. Mission Mtg. 6:00 p.m. Finance Mtg. 7:00 p.m. Deacon Mtg. 7:00 p.m. Stewardship Mtg.</p>
<p><b>15</b></p> <p><i>Favor the Lowly</i> Luke 1:46-55; 4:17b-19</p> <p>11:45 a.m. Fellowship and Outreach Mtg.</p> <p>11:45 a.m. Game Gathering</p>	<p><b>16</b></p>
<p><b>22</b></p> <p><i>Avoid Judging Others</i> Luke 18:9-14 1 Corinthians 12:14-26</p> <p>11:45 a.m. Confirmation Parent Mtg. 11:45 a.m. Meeting for the Women of Westminster</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>1:00 p.m. Volunteering @ Food Bank of Eastern Michigan</p>
<p><b>29</b> <i>50-Year Member Celebration</i></p> <p><i>Speak Less, Listen More</i> Ecclesiastes 5:1-3; Luke 24:13-35</p> <p>11:45 a.m. 50-Year Member Luncheon</p>	<p><b>30</b></p>

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri/Sat
<p><b>3</b></p> <p>6:00 p.m. Personnel Mtg. 6:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 150</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>4:00-7:00 p.m. Food Pantry Open 5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Food Pantry Open 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>7</b></p>
<p><b>10</b></p> <p>9:00 a.m. Matthew 25 Cafe 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting 10:00 a.m. Hearts &amp; Hands Knitting 1:00 p.m. Lions Club 6:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 150 6:30 p.m. Spiritual Growth Mtg.</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>3:00-6:00 p.m. Rummage Sale (Members Only) 4:00-7:00 p.m. Food Pantry Open 5:15 p.m. Worship Mtg.</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. Rummage Sale 10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Food Pantry Open 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Rummage Sale</p> <hr/> <p><b>14</b></p>
<p><b>17</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. Joint Session Mtg w/Board of Deacons</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>4:00-7:00 p.m. Food Pantry Open 5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir</p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Food Pantry Open 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>20</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>21</b></p>
<p><b>24</b></p> <p>10:00 a.m. Hearts &amp; Hands Knitting 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting 12:00 p.m. Lunch and Laugh 1:30 p.m. Book Study 6:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 150</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>4:00-7:00 p.m. Food Pantry Open 5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir</p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Food Pantry Open 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 7:00 p.m. Deborah Circle</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>28</b></p>
<p><b>Office Hours</b> Monday- Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Closed 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. for lunch)</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://wpcbc.org">wpcbc.org</a> Find us on Facebook Westminster Presbyterian-Bay City</p>		<p><b>Happy Birthday</b></p> <p>Peter VanDerwill Royce Stokes Ross Brown</p> <p>George Estabrook Nancy Swantek Marilyn Len</p>	





“Oh Lord it’s hard to be humble,” Mac Davis sang, “when you’re perfect in every way.” His tongue-in-cheek song paints a picture of the self-deception and loneliness that fame and money can bring. It may sound paradoxical, but walking humbly is God’s way to abundant life. To walk humbly does not mean putting ourselves down or hiding our gifts, but it does require putting aside our obsessions with wealth, reputation, and power. It means we stop our anxious grasping and, instead, rest secure in who we are and who God has called us to be. To walk humbly is to claim the truth of who we are as God’s beloved children.

The phrase *walk humbly* comes to us from the prophet Micah:

“God has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8)

Micah denounces the pretensions and corruptions of the capital city, Jerusalem. The people of Judah have tried to secure themselves through violence and injustice. Micah tells them that no showy acts of public worship will set them right with God. Instead, they must act like covenant people in their daily lives. The three things that God requires in Micah 6:8 are not separate items on a to-do list. They are interconnected and complementary; trying to practice one without the others will lead us astray. In particular, doing justice without walking humbly often devolves into self-righteousness. Practicing loving-kindness without walking humbly can turn into mere charity. We talk a lot about God’s call to justice and love. Micah shows us that walking humbly is key to embracing that call.

Once again we will continue our Follow Me series. Each week, the Sunday morning worship service (see the box at the left) and Thursday evening Bible study (see page 3) will focus on the same theme.

Throughout September, we’ll explore what to walk humbly by looking at four core biblical themes:

**September 8**

Remember that you are dust  
Luke 12:16-21

**September 15**

Favor the lowly  
Luke 1:46-55; 4:17b-19

**September 22**

Avoid judging others  
Luke 18:9-14;  
1 Corinthians 12:14-26

**September 29**

Speak less, listen more  
Ecclesiastes 5:1-3



*Members to Remember Luncheon and Worship Service August 21, 2024*



**CHOIR SCHEDULES**



“Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre! Sing praises to him with the ten-stringed harp! Sing to him a new song! Play your best with joyful shouts!”  
Psalm 33:2-3

**Contemporary Choir**  
Rehearsals:  
Wednesdays at 5:15 p.m.  
Starting September 4th

**Chancel Choir**  
Rehearsals:  
Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.  
Starting September 4

**Adult Bell Choir**  
Rehearsals:  
Sundays at 8:45 a.m.  
Starting September 8

**Chime Choir**  
(Grades 1-4)  
Rehearsals:  
Sundays at 9:55 a.m.  
Starting September 8

**Youth Bells**  
(Grades 5-12)  
Rehearsals:  
Sundays at 5:00 p.m.  
Starting September 8

*If you ever thought about praising God with song, attend one of our choir rehearsals and see what we’re all about. Our choirs are open to everyone—whether you’re coming from years of musical experience, none at all or somewhere in between!  
For more information, reach out to our directors: Dawn Auger, Seth Cunningham and Judy Harrelson.*

**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 \$10. 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, September 19th.

Our first Lunch & Laugh will be held on **Tuesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> at noon**. Any questions, please call the church office. One Tuesday this fall though we will be having a speaker from the community since we do enjoy learning as well. Again, lunch will be catered.



We had a great week of VBS in August, with Bay Shores On-The-Road Day Camp joining us, along with several WPC volunteers. The week was filled with Bible stories, crafts and games, plus bounce house and a climbing wall! The smiles say it all!



From a grateful parent:

*I just wanted to take a moment and say a HUGE thank you to your church for hosting and providing funding for the Bay Shore Day Camp this week. My kiddos had an amazing time and we're very sad it was over today (which is a good thing!). My husband and I have desired to send our kids to a camp this year, but sadly could not afford to do so on our own. I am so grateful for the generosity of those who paid the way for my kids to have this experience that they will remember forever. It was a big hug from the Lord for us! Blessings upon blessings to my fellow brothers and sisters at Westminster Presbyterian. We love you!*

**THURSDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY**



**Thursday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, Week One: Remember That You Are Dust.** In Genesis 2 & 3, God fashions the first human from the “dust of the ground.” It is to dust that we return at death. Jesus tells a parable about a foolish man, in Luke 12:16–21, who builds large barns to store his earthly treasures, forgetting that these are only temporary.

**Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, Week Two: Favor the Lowly.** Mary’s Magnificat in Luke 1:46–55, describes the subversive power of walking in humility. Jesus begins his public ministry, in Luke 4:17b–19, echoing his mother’s insistence on God’s good news for the poor, oppressed, and lowly.

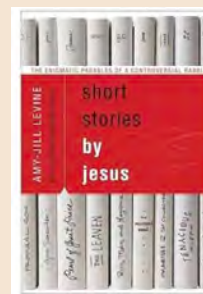
**THURSDAYS VIA ZOOM  
7:00 P.M.**

**Thursday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, Week Three: Avoid Judging Others.** Jesus presents a parable in Luke 18:9–14, contrasting judgment and humility. In his religious zeal, a religious leader fails to walk humbly; in asking for mercy, a tax collector exhibits humility. First Corinthians 12:14–26 emphasizes the importance of valuing of each person in the body of Christ.

**Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Week Four: Speak Less, Listen More**—The Teacher of Ecclesiastes 5:1–3 advises us to take care in the words uttered before God, to listen and let our words be few.

Come join us for one or for all of the weeks as we consider what it means to “walk humbly” with our God.” Any questions, please call the office or Rev. Linda. Books are available in the church office. A zoom invitation will be sent out each week as requested.

**SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY**



As Christians we tend to consider Jesus’ parables through the lens of our Christian heritage. Maybe, though, we might benefit from reading some of Jesus’ parables, remembering that Jesus was a Jew, speaking to his early followers who were both Jewish and Gentile. The renowned biblical scholar, author of *The Misunderstood Jew*, in the book, **Short Stories by Jesus**. Jesus was a skilled storyteller and perceptive teacher who used parables from everyday life to effectively convey his message and meaning. Life in first-century Palestine was very different from our world today, and many traditional interpretations of Jesus’ stories may ignore this disparity in a way that limits the richness of what Jesus was saying then that is still very relevant for today.

**SUNDAYS  
9:00 A.M.**

In this wise, entertaining, and educational book, Amy-Jill Levine offers a fresh, timely reinterpretation of Jesus’ narratives. In **Short Stories by Jesus**, she analyzes these “problems with parables,” taking readers back in time to understand how their original Jewish audience understood them. Levine reveals the parables’ connections to first-century economic and agricultural life, social customs and morality, Jewish scriptures and Roman culture. With this revitalized understanding, she interprets these moving stories for the contemporary reader, showing how the parables are not just about Jesus, but are also about us—and when read rightly, still challenge and provoke us two thousand years later.

Beginning on **Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup> at 9 AM** in the Conference Room, we will meet for six weeks:

- September 8 - *Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, Lost Son*
- September 15 - *The Good Samaritan*
- September 22 - *The Pearl of Great Price*
- September 29 - *The Mustard Seed*
- October 6 - *The Laborers in the Vineyard*
- October 13 - *The Widow and the Judge*

Come join us for one of the parable or for all. Any questions, please call the office or Rev. Linda.

*We couldn't do all that we do for our Children and Youth Ministry without our volunteers. Check out the ways you can help below! Thank you!*



Do you like to cook or bake meals? If yes, then we would love for you to sign up to help with **Youth Dinners** for Sunday night youth group meetings. If not, there is still a way you can help with dinner. You can choose to provide dinner by providing pizza, KFC, or something along those lines. We usually have dinner from 5:30-6:00. You will get a count a couple of days in advance. Please scan the QR code or call the Church office to sign up.



We are looking for assistants to volunteer with Elaine in the **Nursery** on Bell Sundays. This doesn't have to be a long-term commitment. Sign-up on a Sunday that works for you. Please see Leah for more details.

Ever wonder what the children do after they leave worship... here's a chance to find out! Miss Leah is looking for some weekly volunteers to join the children in the **PRAY-ground**. It starts at the beginning of the service and goes until the end of service. It is a space for the children to worship with everybody else. There are activities for the children to do. Hope you can join them as they worship with us in their own way. Please see Leah for more details.

**Confirmation Parents:** For parents of youth, 7th grade and older who have not been confirmed, please make plans to attend an informational meeting after worship on **Sunday, September 22nd**. Confirmation classes will take place January - May. With so many of our students involved in school and extra curricular activities we want to find a time that will work best for everyone! Bring your calendars. Please reach out to Pastor Jamie with any questions.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

### PRE-K THROUGH 12TH GRADE

#### Weekly Schedule

#### Sunday Mornings

Sunday School 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

(beginning September 8)

PreK – 1st grade: 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Room 105

2nd – 4th grade: 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Room 102

Chime Choir

K-4th grade: 9:55-10:15

Room 201

#### Sunday Evenings

Youth Group 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

(beginning September 8)

**Youth Bells** (5th – 12th grade) 5:00-5:30 p.m.

**Dinner** 5:30-6:00 p.m.

**Youth Group** 6:00-7:00 p.m.

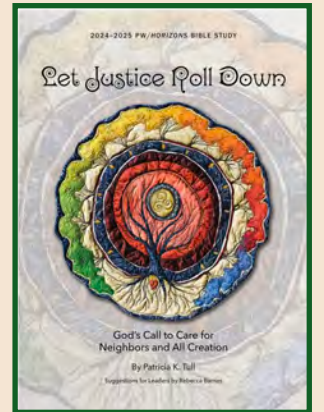


### ICE CREAM SOCIAL!

The Fellowship & Outreach Committee is ready for Church School Kickoff. We want to celebrate the beginning of our program year with you! Please join us after service on **September 8th** as we kick off another year with an ice cream social!

## LYDIA CIRCLE-HORIZON'S BIBLE STUDY

**Let Justice Roll Down: God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation** by Patricia K. Tull is this year's PW/Horizon's Bible Study. As we work to answer the call to be a Matthew 25 Church, this year's study is fitting. Scripture is filled with calls to care for the least. Amos, the earliest recorded prophet, emphasized the strong ties between societal fairness and social well-being, saying, "Hate evil, love good, and establish justice in the gate" (Amos 5:15). These themes will be explored during Lydia Circle's monthly meeting.



Books are available in the church office.

**Lydia Circle meets the third Thursday of the month at 1:00 p.m. in the Session Room.** Please see Barb Tolles for more information.

## DEBORAH CIRCLE



Deborah Circle continues to meet on the last Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. (except in December); please call Karen Schoeppach for more information about their gatherings.



### PW MEETING

As many know, the Presbyterian Women's Association here at Westminster has been somewhat dormant for several years. While we do have 2 active Women's Circles and continue providing funeral dinners and hold an annual Rummage Sale, there currently isn't a PW Board. This arrangement is not sustainable.

What you may not know is that every woman of Westminster is part of Presbyterian Women, even if you are not active in a Circle. We would like to hear from you, on how you would like the work of PW at Westminster to continue. We are inviting and encouraging all women of Westminster to attend a meeting **Sunday, September 22nd after worship**. We hope you will make plans to attend.

## FALL RUMMAGE SALE & BAKE SALE

You may drop off items for the rummage sale beginning Sunday, September 8th **after the Ice Cream Social** through Tuesday, September 10. If you're able to donate baked goods, please bring them to the church on Wednesday, September 11

### Wednesday, September 11

For Members Only  
3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

### Thursday, September 12

Open to the Public  
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

### Friday, September 13

Open to the Public  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.



50 -Year Member Celebration

On Sunday, September 29, 2024 we will celebrate our 50-year members during worship

Thank you to the following parishioners on their continued witness to the glory of God.

Fifty-Year Members

1952 Elizabeth Dore

1953 Betty Lunger Patricia Quantz

1954 Alma Watton

1955 Ross Brown Neil Everson Margaret Hanson

1957 Hazel Kish

1958 Peggy Hawkins Janice VanNostrand

1959 JeAnne Hebner Joyce Hegenauer

1960 Joyce Grigg

1961 Thomas Kayner Philip Reagh

1962 Donna Horn

1963 Colleen Schmidt Sharon Hignite Joy Thompson

1964 John Hegenauer Carol Lange Karen Schoeppach

1965 Marie Capp Elaine Edwards Marilyn Kayner Judy Randall

1966 Robert Merritt

1967 Dianne Young John Young

1968 Jean Manning Penny Reagh

1970 Sue Armstrong William Capp Leslie Frontjes Richard Frontjes Ruth Ostrander

1971 Ross Wayne Brown Joy Hebner Richard Talbot

1972 Priscilla Cramer Shirley Howell Julie Kelly Randy Thibo

1973 Janet Beattie Irene Eskilsen Janet LaFave

this year's 50 Year's Members:

1974 Sally Calvo Marilyn Lapham Christine Thurman Patti Wesenick

After Worship on Sunday, September 29th, join us in Fellowship Hall as we celebrate ALL our 50 year members with a luncheon from Latitude 43. Everyone is welcome!



The US Department of Agriculture defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active healthy life. Food insecurity is different from hunger which is a physical sensation of discomfort.

Our Food Pantry volunteers see both food insecurity and hunger from our Pantry guests who graciously appreciate the opportunity to help with their needs as well as the needs of their families.

Recently the Food Pantry at Westminster received a call from the Bay County Emergency Food Pantry Network.

A disabled veteran living close to our church had an empty pantry. AND he had a hungry four year old toddler. They were invited to visit our Food Pantry.

Quickly they arrived and were welcomed to shop for food they needed. As the four year old walked through the door, he excitedly said, "Oh Daddy, I'm so hungry".

Fulfilling this father and son's needs as well as many other Bay County residents is the mission of our Westminster Food Pantry.

In Michigan in 2023 nearly 1.5 million people faced food insecurity or hunger. Over 300,000 were children.

July Food Pantry Statistics

105 Households that utilized the Pantry in July

54 New Households of the 105, 54 or 51% visited our Pantry for the first time

354 Individuals we helped

3637 Pounds of food distributed at a cost of 44 cents per pound



FALL RETREAT: SAVE THE DATE



Back by popular demand...Our third annual Fall retreat will be held this year on Saturday, October 12th. This will again be a day long retreat held at Bay Shore Camp in Sebawaing.

We will gather mid-morning in Patton Lodge, a delicious lunch will be provided in the dining hall, and we will close the retreat around 4:30 so you can be back home in Bay City in time for dinner with family or friends.

Details regarding this year's retreat theme will be forthcoming as the time draws closer.

If a picture is worth a thousand words – please enjoy these pictures from previous retreats and consider them a special invitation to join us this year on Saturday, October 12th.

Volunteer at the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan

We had a great group to help volunteer at the Food Bank on August 26. We're planning another volunteer day on Monday, September 23 from 1-4. You can sign up on the Volunteer Board in the Wenona Street lobby or through the office.



Each month the Spiritual Growth and Faith Formation 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.



"Well, every one can master a grief but he that has it." - William Shakespeare

You need to get away for a while. Have you thought about getting a pet? Are you sure you want to stay in that house? - It's going to be a lot to manage. You shouldn't keep their things around the house, it's too hard on you. Aren't you feeling better by now? You shouldn't... You should... I would...



You sure can hear a lot from others about your own grief. How you look, how you should be feeling, what you should be doing, what they did or (even better) what they would do. Sometimes, it feels like everyone else has the perfect formula to get you over your grief and back to "normal." The truth about grief is that it is as unique as a fingerprint to each of us and what is helpful for one person may not be helpful to someone else—even amongst family members.

We each have our own unique personalities, social tendencies, and comfort levels. Losing a loved one already throws you off balance and then it can just seem like the world is spinning with all the should's, should not's, new roles, added responsibilities, business side of things, family dynamics, and the list goes on and on.

Many have the best of intentions, but maybe you just are not in the place to hear it. It may also be that what others are suggesting is just not a fit for you. That is okay! Now, is not the time you should feel as though you have to please others. But, realize when the support and suggestions around you are genuine and coming from a place of love and care. It can help to have a different perspective aside from the voice in your own head because when we are grieving instead of being our own best friend, we tend to become our own worst enemy. Grief is work. It is not something you get over, but something you continuously work through. It takes time, effort, attention and energy. Qualities you may find in low reserve, at this time.

### How Others Can be There for You

Oftentimes, people want to be of support, but words and fear get in the way. Here are some ideas you can share to let others know how they can be of help to you.

- Give them permission to talk about your loved one.
- Let them know grief is not something you recover from, but something life changing.
- Remind them you are not someone to be fixed and that the situation is not fixable, but something you are learning and having to adapt to every single day.
- Ask them not to judge your grief or tell you that you are doing it wrong.
- Ask them to be a supportive, patient, kind, compassionate and familiar presence in an unfamiliar and scary time.
- Let them know grief is not a linear process. There are going to be good days and bad days. Sometimes, more so, good moments and bad moments.
- Let them know if you do not answer the phone or call them back it is not because of them, but that maybe you just do not know what you need.
- Encourage them to keep checking in with you.
- Ask them to love you as you are.
- Let them know how much their love, care, friendship and support means to you!

### Being There for Yourself

We need to be better to ourselves as we grieve. Here are some ideas to help you.

- **Look after your physical and mental health.** Let your doctor know about your loved one's passing. Reach out to a friend or counselor to help process your loss. Consider joining a support group.
- **Acknowledge your grief and feel it.** Grief is nothing you can run from. Check in with your feelings and share them.
- **Be careful of expectations on yourself and others.** Expectations can be hard, especially when they are unrealistic to live up to or when others do not know what you expect of them.
- **Allow others to be there for you.** As you discover your needs, share them. Talk. Delegate. Be open.

- **Keep lists.** Give yourself credit as you complete tasks.
- **Don't compare your grief to someone else's.** Each loss is unique and so is how we grieve.
- **Plan ahead.** There are some days we just know are going to be hard. Make plans.
- **Have things to look forward to.**
- **Remember to take time for you.**
- **Find moments of gratitude.**
- **Take your loved one with you.** Talk about them. Share their legacy. Celebrate their life!

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

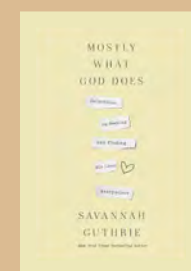
### Coffee and Conversation

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, September 26<sup>th</sup> 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.

### NEW FALL BOOK STUDY



#### Mostly What God Does: Reflections on Seeking and Finding His Love Everywhere by Savannah Guthrie

In this recently (2024) published book 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?

In this collection of essays, Guthrie shares 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, beginning September 17<sup>th</sup> 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;

Books have already been ordered and are available in the church office. Cost is \$15 per book. We will order more books as needed or you can purchase from a local bookstore or online. If you have any questions, please call the church office or Rev. Linda.