

Westminster Presbyterian Church
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Bay City, MI 48706

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THE WESTMINSTER LOG

The Gospel of Gumby — Blessed are the flexible

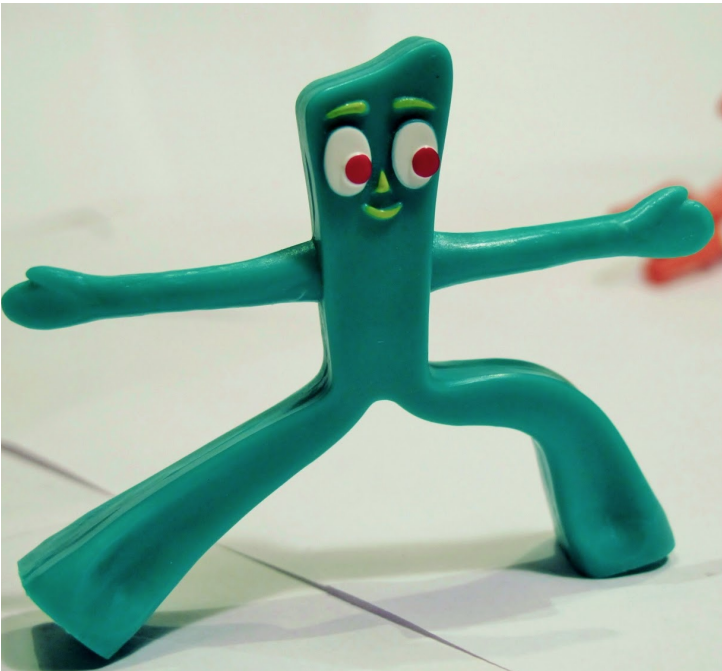
Sometimes we are going right along happily in our lives, and then something unusual happens that we aren't used to. Something changes. Something that can make us feel disoriented, even if only for a brief time. It is often at those moments that our lives are re-shaped.

Gumby, created in 1953, is a flexible character made from stretchable material. Alongside his clay horse friend Pokey, Gumby starred in a TV show where they could transform into different shapes and even return to their original clay forms.

The themes of moldability and adaptability in Gumby may reflect creator Art Clokely's own life: born in Detroit, Clokely's father died when he was 9 and then abandoned by his mother. While still a child, Clokely was adopted by a church musician and his wife. Later Clokely attended seminary and worked with his wife to produce religious films like Davey and Goliath. And although Clokely's spiritual journey was eclectic, some have viewed Gumby's malleable nature as a metaphor for spiritual flexibility and adaptability

Like Gumby – once a little green slab of clay - who adapts to any shape, individuals can embrace spiritual flexibility by staying open to God's will and adjusting their actions. This adaptability reflects the practice of surrendering personal desires to accept life's changes with an openness to change, with an open heart. "The Gospel according to Gumby."

In our re-shaped series we explored not only our capacity for change, but the idea that change is written into the very core of who we are as human beings...whether we like it or



not. The familiar passage from Jeremiah reminds of God's presence in the midst of change.

I went to the potter's house, and sure enough, the potter was there, working away at the wheel. Whenever the pot the potter was working on turned out badly, as sometimes happens when you are working with clay, the potter would simply start over and use the same clay to make another pot. Then God's Message came to me: "Can't I do just as this potter does, people of Israel?" God's Decree! "Watch this potter. In the same way that this potter works the clay, I work on you."

As we kick off this new year filled with programs and opportunities — outlined in this issue of the Log — we encourage you to explore how change and growth are possible through new experiences in our Westminster community of faith.

WWW.WPCBC.ORG

SEPTEMBER 2025 ISSUE 202

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Visit us on Facebook:

Westminster Presbyterian Church - Bay City

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Monday through Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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Bill Petzold (ext. 201)
Facilities Manager
Harold Miller (ext. 205)
Financial Administrator
Pat Foster (ext. 206)
Director of Children and Youth Ministry
Leah Sneller (ext. 208)

September

Sundays

8:45 a.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal
The Bells play during Worship once a month. The first rehearsal will be on September 7, and the first performance will be October 12.

9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study
Adult Bible Study begins September 7, and we'll be pausing together to reflect, listen, and be shaped by the Spirit. (See Page 3)

9:30 a.m. Fellowship
Join us in Fellowship Hall for Coffee and Donuts and Conversation (See Page 1)

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

10:30 a.m. Worship
We will learn how to be "good neighbors" on September 7 (See Page 9), then begin a new series on how we are not identified by what we believe, but by what we do (See Page 2)

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
(See Page 10)

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

Happy Birthday

Peter VanDerwill Nancy Swantek
Royce Stokes Marilyn Len

*Birthdays listed are for our 75+ Members

Sunday	Monday
	1 Labor Day Church office closed in observance of Labor Day
7 Communion Fall Kickoff 11:45 a.m. Kickoff Tailgate Potluck (See Page 9) Youth Group Begins (See Page 10)	8 5 p.m. Property Mtg. 5:30 p.m. Mission Mtg. 6 p.m. Finance Mtg. 7 p.m. Stewardship Mtg.
14 Fall Town Hall immediately after service. (See Page 12) First week of Sunday School (See Page 10) 5:30 p.m. Being Presbyterian (See Page 12)	15
21 11:45 a.m. Fellowship and Outreach Mtg. 3 p.m. Ordination Ceremony for Nikelle Johnson (See Page 1)	22
28 Rummage Sale Setup After worship (See Page 8)	29 Rummage Sale Setup

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri/Sat
2 10 a.m. Hearts and Hands Knitting 5 p.m. Personnel Mtg. 6 p.m. Boy Scout	3 4-6 p.m. Food Pantry Open 5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir	4 8:30 a.m. TOPS 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Food Pantry Open 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran	5 6
9 9 a.m. Matthew 25 Cafe 10 a.m. Staff Meeting 10 a.m. Knitting 11:30 a.m. Yoga 1 p.m. Lions Club 1:30 p.m. Book Group	10 4-6 p.m. Food Pantry Open 5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir	11 8:30 a.m. TOPS 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Food Pantry Open 5 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran	12 13
16 10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 1:30 p.m. Book Group 6:30 p.m. Joint Session Mtg w/Board of Deacons	17 1 p.m. Out-to-Lunch Bunch at Old City Hall (See Page 11) 4-6 p.m. Food Pantry Open 5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir	18 8:30 a.m. TOPS 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Food Pantry Open 10:30 a.m. Outreach and Hospitality 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	19 20
23 10 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 10 a.m. Staff Meeting 10 a.m. Log Folding 11:30 a.m. Yoga 12 p.m. Lunch and Learn 1:30 p.m. Book Group	24 4-6 p.m. Food Pantry Open 5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir	25 8:30 a.m. TOPS 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Food Pantry Open 4 p.m. Deborah Circle 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom	26 27
30 10 a.m. Hearts and Hands Knitting 1:30 p.m. Book Group Rummage Sale Setup		Office Hours Monday- Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Closed 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. for lunch) Website: wpcbc.org Find us on Facebook Westminster Presbyterian-Bay City	

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 a sweet treat. It's the perfect time to start your day by meeting new people, catching up with old friends, and sharing a moment of community.

Following the worship service, we continue our time together with 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!

If you are interested in helping to serve **Fellowship Time**, you can sign up on the volunteer board near the Wenona Street entrance, or contact Joyce Hegenauer. Unless you would like to provide your own treats, everything you need to serve (coffee, donuts/cookies, etc.) will be in the kitchen for you when you arrive on Sunday mornings!

Volunteer Board

Be sure to regularly check the Volunteer Opportunity Board outside the sanctuary in the Wenona Street welcome area for opportunities to serve and help out around the church and in the community!

Save the Date

Even as we kick off a busy September, make sure to mark your calendars for these other upcoming events this fall:

- **Fall Retreat** at Bay Shore Camp in Sebewaing - October 11
- **Harvest Party** and Chili Cookoff - October 26
- **Westminster's 160 Anniversary Celebration** - November 2

You're Invited to the Ordination of Nikelle Johnson

Westminster is excited to host Nikelle Johnson's service of Ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament at 3 p.m. on Sunday, September 21.

Having graduated in May and completed all of the requirements for ordination, Nikelle has accepted a call to serve as a solo pastor and will begin her service shortly after her ordination!

We hope you will join us as we celebrate with her. A reception will follow in the Fellowship Hall.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR ...

Lunch & Learn will be resuming in September. For the Fall months we will be Lunching and Learning at noon in Fellowship Hall. Bring your own bag lunch; beverages and dessert will be provided. Stay tuned for finalized details around our September gathering.

Tuesday, October 28th Logan Reder, physical therapist will be sharing Part 2 of his presentation on upper body strengthening exercises. On November 18th Dave Friebe from Thrivent will be sharing with us about generosity.

Any questions, please call the church office.

A QUICK GLANCE AT CHURCH FINANCES

In July, the **General Fund** received \$32,385.25 in income and spent \$30,068.93. Once again, we didn't need to transfer any money from our investment funds this month.

The **Building Improvement Fund** received \$116 in contributions and had no July expenses. At the end of July, the Fund has a balance of \$9,324.55. The **Major Repairs Fund** received \$84 in contributions and incurred no expenses. Its July Fund balance was \$40,798.69.

Stewardship Snapshot

GENERAL FUND	YTD through August	
	17	Annual Budget
Income	\$ 326,403	\$ 349,910
Expenses	\$ 254,515	\$ 474,270
Net Income/(Loss)	\$ 71,888	\$ (124,360)

I look forward to seeing you at the September Town Hall! If you have any questions about these figures or anything else finance-related, please feel free to contact me.

Pat Foster

Financial Administrator
treasurer@wpcbc.org
616-485-8272 (cell phone)

Fall Town Hall – September 14

The Session is preparing for another Town Hall meeting following worship on Sunday, September 14th. We'll provide an update on the 2025 budget, congregational giving through the end of August, and church spending to this point in the year. There will be a time for questions, but if you'd like to send a question in ahead of the meeting, (which helps us have the facts ready for you!) please fill out one of the cards located at either entrance to the church or send it to pastor@wpcbc.org.

What is a Presbyterian?

(Hint: it's NOT someone who only eats fish!)

Do you ever wonder what our youth learn in confirmation class? Are you in need a refresher in all things Presbyterian? Do you want to learn a little more about what it means to be a Presbyterian? Do you just want to eat with some friends and listen to Pastor Jamie geek out about being Presbyterian?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, or if you have any other questions about Westminster, plan to join us once a month for a series of classes on Being Presbyterian. Sunday evenings. We'll gather for dinner at 5:30 and then spend about an hour and a half looking at some Presbyterian beliefs and practices while exploring our individual faith together!

Fall Schedule: September 14, October 19, November 16, December TBD

FALL WORSHIP SERIES

The textbook definition of “disciple” is someone “who accepts and assists in spreading the message of another.” We might sum this up by saying that a disciple is “a follower.” We are most familiar with the idea of a disciple from the Gospels as those who are followers of Jesus, specifically, the twelve people closest to Jesus. Living into our calling as modern-day followers of Jesus, what the world calls “Christians,” the word disciple applies to us as well. We are (or should be) disciples of Jesus.

I once heard someone say, “The world has a lot of Christians, but too few disciples.” Throughout the Gospels, Jesus presents some difficult instructions for his disciples to follow. He notices that many of those who follow him are caught up in the emotional draw of the crowd following him. His difficult teachings ensure that those who commit themselves to being a disciple know what they are getting themselves into. He wants them to know what it means to truly follow him; to walk in his footsteps. Over the years, it has become easy to say that one is a Christian, without really being a disciple. We need the reminder that Jesus asks a lot of his disciples in the Gospels, and importantly, Jesus asks a lot of us today.



Although Christians are often identified by what they believe, Jesus seemed to care more about what his followers **did**. Putting our faith into practice, alongside of our theological beliefs, is what really matters. Over the course of our study and worship this fall, we will be exploring what disciples of Jesus are called to **DO**, rather than what they are asked to **BELIEVE**. Our journey together will explore texts that span the whole scriptural witness, from the Gospels, to Paul's letters, and passages from the Hebrew Scriptures as well.

We hope you'll join us as often as you can for this in depth look at discipleship as we explore ways to put our faith into action as Jesus challenges us to live out our faithful call to discipleship.

September 14-Disciples Take Faith Seriously- Luke 14:25-33

September 21- Disciples Resist Greed- Luke 16:1-13

September 28- Disciples Practice Generosity- Luke 16:19-31

October 5- World Communion Sunday- Disciples Serve with Faith- Luke 17:1-10

Mission in Motion:

Remembering that we are a Matthew 25 Church and that one of the responsibilities of the Mission Partnerships Committee is “to promote and encourage congregational support of various mission efforts,” we offer you these volunteer opportunities to put your faith to work!!

Food of Faith: Every Thursday nearly 300 meals are distributed at Messiah Lutheran Church through Food of Faith. Can you spare a few hours on Thursdays? Right now Food of Faith is looking for volunteers to help with food chores from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. each week. Contact Pam Johnston at 989-392-1958 for further details or to sign up.

Matthew 25 Café: The Salvation Army provides meals daily to those in need. Volunteers from Westminster commit to a 2-hour shift once a month. On the second Tuesday from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. food prep help is needed, and then from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. the same day, volunteers serve to the hundreds of hungry visitors. Contact Darlene Kusterer at 989-385-4062 for further details or to sign up.

Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) Council: Looking for a volunteer opportunity deeply rewarding and life-changing? Become a CASA volunteer. CASAs (Court Appointed Special Advocates) receive special training to speak up for vulnerable children who have been abused and/or neglected and placed in a foster care home. For more information, contact Ryan Landrey, Community Engagement Manager for the CAN Council. He can be reached at 989-752-7226, extension 112.

Food Pantry: The Pantry is always in need of volunteers, not only to work a shift when the pantry is open, but to pick up supplies,

stock shelves, clean, recruit sponsors or seek donations. For more information contact co-chairs Janet Beattie at 989-280-3108 or Janet Smylie at 248-320-2009.

Upcoming Events:

Thanksgiving Baskets: Westminster is once again going to provide Thanksgiving meals for those in need through referrals from local social service agencies. Keep your eyes open for those sales on canned goods, stuffing, Jello pudding, gravy mix, brownie mix, mac and cheese. Watch for more details in the Log and weekly bulletins, or contact Patti Wesenick for further details and volunteer opportunities.

Giving Tree: Westminster is once again going to provide Christmas gifts to children in need through the Salvation Army. Watch for more details in the Log and weekly bulletins, or for further details and volunteer opportunities, contact Darlene Kusterer at 989-385-4062 for further details or to sign up.

Have a cause near and dear to your heart you would like to share? Come to a Mission Partnerships Committee meeting. We would love to hear from you.

The Out-to-Lunch Bunch

The next Out to Lunch Bunch will gather at Old City Hall, 814 Saginaw Street, Bay City, on Wednesday, September 17 at 1 p.m. Please RSVP if you plan to attend to Dave Crook, 847-624-5787 or crookds@earthlink.net so we can assure sufficient seats.



About 60 children took part in this year's Bay Shore Day Camp on the Road and Preschool VBS from August 4 through 7, filling the church building with laughter, cheers and the sounds of young people having fun!

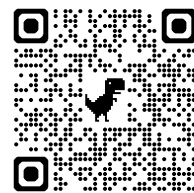
CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY NOTES

A new year of learning for our youth and children begins

- **Youth Group** will start on September 7th. We will have a fun kickoff event with games and food. The Sunday night schedule will look like this: Junior Bells (5th-12th Grade) 5:00-5:30 p.m., Dinner from 5:30-6:00 p.m. and Youth Group from 6:00-7:00 p.m.

- Starting on September 14th **Sunday School** this year will be a little different. The new name will be Children's Church. Children's Church will be taking place after Time with the Young Disciples or when announced in church to go to the back of the Sanctuary. The teachers will meet the children there to take them to the classroom. They will come back at the offering.

- 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, chicken tenders, Mac & Cheese 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, visit <https://tinyurl.com/bd7hv7u8> or see Leah Sneller to sign up.



Why Join Our New Bible Study This September?

Shape, Renew, and Deepen Your Spiritual Life

As the seasons shift and a new chapter unfolds, we invite you to step into a transformative journey with our upcoming Bible study series, launching this September. In a world that often pulls us in a thousand directions—full of responsibilities, changes, and uncertainties—there is profound wisdom in pausing together to reflect, listen, and be shaped by the Spirit.

Inspired by the imagery of the potter and the clay from Jeremiah, our Bible study centers on God's invitation: "Can't I do just as this potter does, people of Israel?" It is a reminder that we are works in progress, ever capable of being reformed, renewed, and redirected for purpose and hope. Whether you find yourself in a season of new beginnings, or simply longing

to reconnect with what is deepest and most true in you, our Fall series – Feasting on the Word – is an opportunity to remember: "we were made for this"—for play, for change, for adapting and flourishing in the hands of our Creator.

Throughout September, October, and November, we'll explore not just biblical texts, but the lived experience of being shaped by God in community.

But why attend? Because this series is not about mastering a checklist or striving for perfection. It is about being, belonging, and becoming. It is a space where grief and hope, questions and insights, laughter and learning walk side by side.

Together, we will:

- **Reflect on God's desire to mold us**, both as individuals and as a community, into vessels of love, service, and hope.

- **Share space for honest conversation**, gentle encouragement, and the support that comes from studying scripture together.

- **Practice "Feasting on the Word"** in a way that is nourishing, inclusive, and deeply relevant to our everyday lives.

This is an invitation to all — whether seasoned in faith or stepping into study for the first time — to rest in the assurance that you are being shaped for abundance, joy, and connection. Join us in September as we open the scriptures, open our hearts, and let the Spirit's gentle hands tend to our wild gardens. We will meet weekly on **Sunday mornings at 9 a.m.** in the Conference Room or by Zoom on Thursday evenings at 7 p.m.

Please call the church office or Rev. Linda with any questions.



A number of Westminster members took in a ballgame together on GRIT Night at Dow Diamond, Friday, August 8. Fans were encouraged to wear their Detroit Lions gear, and special GRIT & Grace shirts were ordered for the occasion.



God Sighting

Westminster's Youth Group is small but mighty. They are a very fascinating bunch of youth that have passion and dedication to this church and to their faith.

Last fall, the youth held a service project that helped benefit our Food Pantry. They picked more than four pounds of apples that were donated to the Food Pantry, which were handed with recipe cards so that people could make items with their apples. Youth



Group also has gone on adventures like Crazy Quarters, Escape Rooms, and Bowling. The youth are vital as they grow into the church of the future. The church is thankful they are involved in

bake sales and other activities and love seeing how much they learn from the Bible. They show God's love through every kind act they share with the church members and others.

Fall Writing Group will focus on 'Tending the Wild Garden'

"Tending the Wild Garden" is the title of this Fall's writing group and, as you will hear about later, the focus of this Fall's retreat at Bay Shores on Saturday, October 11th.

Eugenia Anne Gamble has written a delightful and uplifting book that encourages us to deepen our relationship with God by looking inward – sensing God as the Gardener of our soul.

She begins with this Jewish proverb: "Before every person there marches an angel proclaiming, 'Behold, the image of God.'" That's you. Within you – the image of God. As Gamble writes in the introduction, "It is easy in the crush of responsibility and activity to lose sight of the part of us that is deepest and most true, the part that is in constant communion with the Spirit."

This Fall's retreat and the four-week writing group that will follow is designed to help us become more aware of the "being" part of ourselves in relationship with the Holy Spirit that lives within us.

Our reflecting and writing focus will be on the "fruit of the Spirit", not as a checklist that we use to evaluate our Christian life or a set of moral characteristics to master. This is not about fixing ourselves; instead, it is very much about "being" ourselves.

To help us tend that Wild Garden, we will begin with the retreat and then follow up with the opportunity to write and reflect on our awareness of the fruit of the Spirit in our own lives. We will meet weekly at 1:30 p.m. in the Lounge - with other "gardeners" to reflect and to write. Each week we will consider one fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience – already growing within us. There will be an opportunity to journal, to write poetry, or maybe even write our own brief proverb like the one above.

The writing group will be facilitated by Judy Hudson and Rev. Linda. Please reach out to either of them with any questions.

Meeting dates will be **October 15, 22 and 29 and November 5 and 12.**

Building our Family of Faith

The Outreach and Hospitality Committee invites all of our WPC family to join in a special challenge this fall. We believe the good news of WPC is worth sharing—the news that we are a faith family rooted in love, joy, and community, eager to welcome others into God's embrace.

To add a little extra fun (and some friendly incentive!), we're launching the *Bring a Friend* Challenge. Here's how it works:

- **Invite a Friend:** Each time you bring a friend, neighbor, coworker, or family member to worship or another church event, both you **and your guest** will receive an entry into our raffle.
- **Win Prizes:** At the end of the challenge, we'll draw names for a variety

of prizes—from gift cards to a stainless-steel tabletop grill.

• **Celebrate Together:** This is more than a raffle—it's about growing our family of faith and celebrating the gift of community, all while sharing God's love with our neighbors!

A member of our committee will be at the Wenona Street Welcome kiosk before and after worship each week with entry tickets and to answer any questions.

We can't wait to see how God uses our invitations to grow friendships, strengthen community, and build up our family of faith. Let's spread the word and see what God can do!

Won't You *Bring Your Neighbor?* — September 7

We are gearing up for something exciting to kick off our fall activities. Our morning worship service on September 7th will be centered around what it means to be a loving community of neighbors, using Jesus' teachings and examples from everyone's favorite neighbor, Mr. Rogers!

We are hoping that you will bring a friend or invite a neighbor to join us for worship, where we'll reflect on what it means to love our neighbors near and far. After worship, join us for a special Tailgate Potluck in the Fellowship Hall! Some food will be provided, but you're welcome to bring a dessert, finger-food or tailgate favorite to share!

Football fans, don't worry — we'll wrap up in time for you to catch the first games of the NFL season (and the Lions don't play til 4:25!). So wear your team colors (or your WPC GRIT & Grace shirt), bring your sweet tooth, and help us kick off a season of learning, serving, and growing together in faith and friendship.

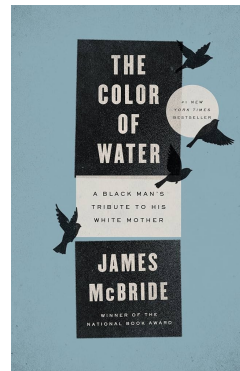


Don Clough was ordained as a Deacon and installed with Mary Rose Davis during worship on Sunday, August 17.

New Book Group begins in September

Cooler days signal the arrival of fall, making it a great time to relax with a book. And so, our Book Group starts in September. Four titles have been selected based on receiving the highest number of first-place votes, with each book earning at least two top rankings: **The Measure of a Man** by Sidney Poitier, **Everything Happens for a Reason,* and *Other Lies I Have Loved** by Kate Bowler, **The Color of Water** by James McBride, and **The First Phone Call from Heaven** by Mitch Albom.

After collecting the book suggestions, votes, and rankings, it's pretty clear that the group has diverse and eclectic reading interests. But even more notable were the comments you made that reflected an openness to participate in any selection made



by the group. Things like – “I’m in. It’s just great to be together and read and share and laugh.”

And so we begin ... **The Color of Water** by James McBride on **September 9th** during Kick Off Week at Westminster. This book alternates between the author’s own life experiences and the life story of his mother, a Polish woman who emigrated to the U.S. as a child and faced significant challenges including an abusive father and complexities of her Jewish heritage. There is a beautiful and moving tribute to hope and faith, Jewish and Christian. We will meet in the Lounge **every Tuesday afternoon at 1:30 p.m.** The office will again order the books; donation to cover the cost is appreciated. Please call the church office or Rev. Linda to reserve a book.

Fall Rummage Sale and Bake Sale fast approaching

Preparations for the **Fall Rummage Sale and Bake Sale** are well underway. Organizers are hoping for a successful sale that will benefit the Presbyterian Women’s Association.

The sale will open on Wednesday, October 1 for church members only from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, October 2, the sale will be open to the public from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Friday, October 3 the sale will be open from 9 a.m. until noon when shoppers may fill a bag of items for \$1 per bag.

Setup will begin on Sunday, September 28



following worship. Please bring your garage sale items that day. **Please no furniture or televisions!** You may also drop them off on Monday and Tuesday until 4 p.m.

Volunteers are needed to help set up on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, as well as staffing the sale on

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. **We will need volunteers with trucks or larger vehicles** to help with hauling away the leftover items Friday after we tear down at noon.

If you would like to **help by preparing items for the bake sale**, please drop them off Tuesday afternoon or Wednesday.

Sign-up sheets have been placed on the volunteer board outside the Sanctuary. If you have questions, please contact chairwomen Bev Buchanan (989-778-0670) or Alicen Rogers (989-798-8675).

Westminster Community Pantry News

July Statistics: The Pantry served 731 people from 245 families with 7,033 pounds of food. This included 237 children and 133 seniors. We also see quite a few single young adults. There is a huge need in our community, and we are blessed to be able to help with nutritious food and some goodies. We truly appreciate the support of this congregation!

Fresh Produce: It’s that time of year when our pantry is blessed with lots of fresh produce. We thank Dr. Burk for his donations of tomatoes, corn, peppers and potatoes, and Hidden Harvest for whatever they give us each week. If you have extra produce from your garden, we are happy to share it with our guests! For the freshest

Westminster
COMMUNITY PANTRY

choices, bring it on Tuesday afternoon or Wednesday morning so we can distribute it on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning.

September Items of the Month are spaghetti sauce and pasta. Your generous donations help us keep our shelves stocked with items that our guests prefer. Please leave your items on the cart by the Pantry door. Thank you!

Thursday Hours Changing: Starting September 1, our Thursday hours are changing to 10:00 a.m. to noon (instead of 1:00 p.m.). This change is made after seeing how many guests are coming each week,

looking at what other pantries are doing, and by the request of our Thursday volunteers. We will still serve the same number of our neighbors, just in a shorter time frame. If you have been reluctant to work at the pantry for three hours on Thursdays, sign up to help now that we are only open for two hours. Come join our growing team of wonderful volunteers!

Westminster Community Pantry **is completely funded** by congregational and community donations. If you would like to support this ministry at any time, simply indicate “Food Pantry” on your check or envelope. Thank you for your continued support of this ministry and our neighbors in need!



Members to Remember

Westminster’s Deacons welcomed some longtime members for a special luncheon and communion service on Wednesday, August 13.

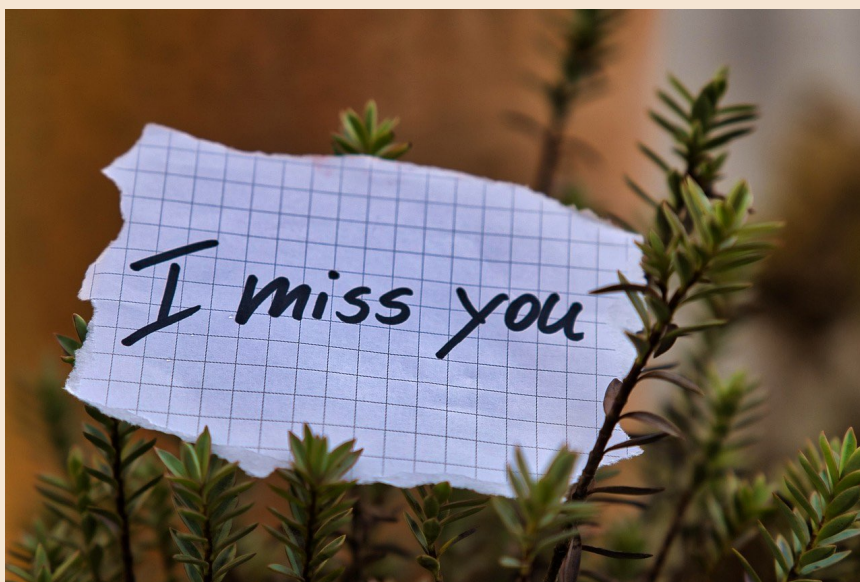
You Can Hold Both ...

Grief brings all sorts of feelings to the surface. Some are expected, some are unexpected, and some are downright shocking. But what happens when you find yourself feeling conflicting emotions at the very same time?

Our brains like to feel safe and sure and are, therefore, used to thinking and feeling in black and white, all or nothing, either/or. Someone is either all bad or all good. Something is either totally easy, or totally impossible. We feel either happy or sad.

But suddenly, grief has opened this unsettling and confusing grey area of both/and. You may find yourself thinking, "How can I possibly be feeling both frustration and relief? Anger and gratitude? Longing and peace? Loneliness and support?" All these conflicting feelings make you feel like you're losing it or need to get yourself together.

And even more unsettling, since death and loss are, on the surface, something we have identified as bad, we often find ourselves feeling



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guilty for feeling anything beyond that.

In these moments of doubt or guilt, it is important to remember that experiencing waves of hope, relief, happiness, or gratitude is not a betrayal of the person who has died. It is a part of loss. It doesn't indicate the absence of pain, grief, or deep sadness. The truth is that it is normal for opposing emotions to coexist. Grief, as in life, is not either/or; all or nothing...it is messy and full of complexities.

The loss you have experienced has revealed

in you the ability to hold two (or more) opposing feelings at the same time. It may not be a superpower, but it certainly reflects your strength and the deeply complex and beautiful relationships you share with one another.

At certain times or moments on your journey, it's hard to imagine having the capacity to hold anything but sadness, much less gratitude or happiness or hope. But trust that, in time, those moments will come, and you can hold both.

— Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program, Bethlehem, PA

Some of the "Both/And's" you may be holding

(and are normal & okay to feel):

I miss my loved one ... **AND** ... I am grateful for the time we shared.

I struggled with the difficulty and exhaustion of caretaking ... **AND** ... I am so glad I was able to care for my loved one.

I wish my loved one was still alive ... **AND** ... I am so glad they aren't suffering anymore.

I feel so exhausted by my grief, I don't want to get out of bed ... **AND** ... I am looking forward to playing with my grandchildren.

I am totally overwhelmed at the thought of going back to work ... **AND** ... I am looking forward to the distraction and routine.

The thought of looking at photos of my loved one breaks my heart ... **AND** ... I love seeing their smile and remembering the good times.

Doing the things we used to do together by myself makes me feel alone ... **AND** ... doing those things makes me feel closer to them.

I love them ... **AND** ... I am angry with them for leaving me with a mess of paperwork and bills to pay.

I dread seeing people I know at the grocery store because I might cry when they ask me how I am doing ... **AND** ... it is nice to be cared for and reminded of my support system.

— Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program, Bethlehem, PA

Caring Connections

Grief is a normal reaction to loss, and it shows up in many ways you might not expect...

Most of us know this to be true, but most of us have times of forgetting that truth in our own life experiences. We've been angry with ourselves for not taking more heroic steps for our loved one. Or sometimes have felt that no one understands what you're going through. Or been crabby and cried for no apparent reason. Maybe these feelings and many more. The fact is - You're absolutely normal.

About two years ago, Westminster began a grief group to provide an opportunity to connect with others who are grieving. The group went on hiatus during the summer months, but will be meeting again beginning on Thursday, **October 2 from 1:30 to 3 p.m.** in the Lounge. Our new name —

Caring Connections — comes with a new facilitator, *Mary Nicholson*.

Mary is one of our newer church members but comes with 15 years of experience in leading grief support groups. We are very grateful to have her add her life experience and professional experience as we begin this next chapter of care and support for those who are grieving. Grieving the loss of a parent, a spouse, a job, health, a pet...sadly so many different kinds of losses in this journey of life.

Come join us on the first Thursday of every month. Our Caring Connections Group will also be open to the Bay City community. In addition to the monthly meetings, we will hold our annual Longest Night Service on Thursday evening, December 18th.

Any questions, please see Mary Nicholson or Rev. Linda.