Westminster Presbyterian Church
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Bay City, MI 48706

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November 2026 Issue 216

The Westminster Log

Your Kingdom Come

This fall, we've followed Jesus' final teachings in Matthew's Gospel, asking how he shows us God's kingdom and how we help bring it here — "on earth, as it is in heaven." In September, we focused on **Shaping Our Community**. In October, we turned to **Sharing Our Gifts**. Now, as our series comes to its close, we arrive at **Serving Others** — and, fittingly, at our beloved Matthew 25, the passage that has guided our life together as WPC for several years.

Serving Others

The call to faithful service is not always easy to respond to, but all things are possible when we realize how much God loves us and trusts the church to care for the world. When everyone realizes they are needed, responsible, and have something to contribute, amazing transformation can happen.

November 1 — All Saints' Day / Communion Sunday *Matthew 23:1-12 — Leading by Example* "…the one who is greatest among you will be your servant." We remember the saints who've gone before us and gather at the Table, reminded that true greatness looks like service.

November 8 — Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost *Matthew 25:14-30 — Multiplying Our Impact* "You've been faithful over a little. I'll put you in charge of much."

November 15 — Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost *Matthew 25:31-46 — Seeing the Kingdom* "when you have done it for one of the least of these siblings of mine, you have done it for me."

November 22 — Reign of Christ (Hanging of the Greens) Our beloved special service to kick off the holiday season as we decorate the sanctuary together and explore the symbolism behind each tradition.

November 29 – First Sunday of Advent Our Advent Series this year will be "Until the Dawn: Actions for the Work of Advent." Printed devotionals for the series will be available. More on that series in next month's Log.



On Sunday, October 18, Westminster Presbyterian Church was blessed to witness the baptism of Eliza Joy Morse, daughter of Aaron and Emily Morse and baby sister of Everett, Ivy and Astrid.

Looking ahead

In addition to the full schedule of activities detailed in this month's Log, be sure to mark your calendars for these exciting Advent opportunities in December!

- Christmas Pageant (Dec. 13)
- Live Nativity Community Event (Dec. 17)
- "The Winter Rose" Choral Cantata (Dec. 20)
- Cookie Decorating (Dec. 19) and Christmas Caroling (Dec. 20)
- Longest Night Contemplative Christmas Worship (Dec. 21)
- Christmas Eve Services (Dec. 24) 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.

The Westminster Log

The Westminster Log is published monthly by Westminster Presbyterian Church, 103 East Midland Street, Bay City, Michigan, 48706. Articles must be submitted by the fifteenth day of each month before publication unless otherwise noted. We reserve the right to edit submissions for content and space. The Westminster Log is formatted to be printed in color.

www.wpcbc.org November 2026 Issue 216

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Financial Secretary
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Visit us on Facebook:
Westminster Presbyterian Church - Bay City

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Office Hours:
Monday through Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
(closed 12:00-1:00 p.m. for lunch)

November

Sundays

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

9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study
This month, we'll continue The Wired Word Bible study series that pairs current events with Biblical wisdom. (Page 4)

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

10:30 a.m. Worship
The call to faithful service is not always easy to respond to, but all things are possible when we realize how much God loves us and trusts the church to care for the world. In November, we turn our focus to Serving Others (on the cover)

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

5:00 p.m. Youth Group
We will gather for dinner at 5 p.m. and enjoy Bible study, fun and fellowship until 7 p.m.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri/Sat
1 All Saints' Remembrance Communion Sunday	2 4 p.m. Safety Team Meeting 5 p.m. Mission 6 p.m. Deacons	3 10 a.m. Hearts and Hands Knitting Group 1:30 p.m. Book Group (Page 10) 5 p.m. Personnel 6 p.m. Boy Scouts	4 12 p.m. Bunco (Page 3) 4 p.m. Food Pantry open until 6 p.m. (Page 5) 5:15 p.m. Contemporary 6:30 p.m. Chancel 7:15 p.m. Cantata Rehearsal	5 8:30 a.m. TOPS 10 a.m. Food Pantry open until 12 p.m. 5 p.m. Food of Faith 7 p.m. Zoom Bible Study	6 7
8 5 p.m. Youth Group until 7 p.m. (Page 11)	9 4:30 p.m. Property 5:30 p.m. Finance	10 9 a.m. Matthew 25 Café 10 a.m. Hearts and Hands Knitting Group 12 p.m. Do-All, Inc. Yoga 12 p.m. Lions Club 1:30 p.m. Book Group 6 p.m. Boy Scouts	11 4 p.m. Food Pantry open until 6 p.m. 5:15 p.m. Contemporary 6:30 p.m. Chancel 7:15 p.m. Cantata Rehearsal	12 8:30 a.m. TOPS 10 a.m. Food Pantry open until 12 p.m. 1:30 p.m. Caring Connections (Page 7) 5 p.m. Food of Faith 7 p.m. Zoom Bible Study	13 14
15	16 5 p.m. Stewardship 6:30 p.m. Spiritual Growth and Faith Formation	17 10 a.m. Hearts and Hands Knitting Group 10 a.m. Staff Meeting 12 p.m. Lunch and Learn (Page 9) 5 p.m. Session Meeting 6 p.m. Boy Scouts	18 1 p.m. Out to-Lunch Bunch (Page 1) 4 p.m. Food Pantry open until 6 p.m. 5 p.m. Technology Team Meeting 5:15 p.m. Contemporary 6:30 p.m. Chancel 7:15 p.m. Cantata Rehearsal LOG DEADLINE	19 8:30 a.m. TOPS 10 a.m. Food Pantry open until 12 p.m. 1 p.m. Lydia Circle 4 p.m. Deborah Circle 5 p.m. Food of Faith 7 p.m. Zoom Bible Study	20 21 9 a.m. Food Bank of Eastern Michigan volunteer opportunity until 12 p.m. (Page 10)
22 Hanging of the Greens (Page 10) Pack Thanksgiving Baskets (Page 4) 5 p.m. Youth Group until 7 p.m.	23	24 10 a.m. Log Folding 10 a.m. Hearts and Hands Knitting Group 12 p.m. Do-All, Inc. Yoga 6 p.m. Boy Scouts	25 4 p.m. Food Pantry open until 6 p.m.	26 *Happy Thanksgiving!* Office Closed Pantry Closed	27 28
29 First Sunday of Advent 5 p.m. Advent Dinner (Page 10)	30				

Happy Birthday*

Pam Binder	Shirley Howell
Mike Jean	Alma Watton
Scott Newcombe	Mary Ann Meyer
Anna Pavlawk	Buzz West
Fred Meyer	Margaret Majchrzak

Office Hours
Monday – Thursday: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
(closed 12:00-1:00 p.m. for lunch)

Website: wpcbc.org

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*Birthdays listed are for our 75+ Members



Town Hall Recap

Following worship on Sunday, October 11, the Session hosted our Fall Town Hall. If you would like to view the recording of the Town Hall, please contact the office and a link to the video will be shared with you. Here's a brief recap of what was shared.

Finances: Through September, your gifts have contributed $365,000 toward our 2027 operating budget of $467,000. We anticipate about $76,800 more by year-end. That leaves a projected shortfall of roughly $25,200, assuming pledges and giving stay on pace. *If half of our member families were able to give an extra $30 a week in November and December, that deficit would easily be met!*

General Fund: We shared a reminder that the General Fund (weekly offering, pledges, undesignated gifts) supports nearly everything Westminster does — worship, staff, building upkeep, and our 10% mission commitment. Designated funds (like the Building Fund and Music Ministry Fund) help ease pressure on specific needs. As we head into the final months of the year, we hope everyone will continue giving as they are able to help us overcome our projected shortfall, and to start thinking ahead to 2027 pledges.

Pantry: The Community Pantry is funded mostly outside the General Fund, relying heavily on direct gifts. Beyond financial support, we're now looking for connections to local businesses and organizations who might sponsor or partner with the Pantry. Please contact Jack Smylie if you can help connect us in this way.

Upcoming Building Costs: A task force is forming to study some larger projects on the horizon. More details and funding plans will be shared before any decisions are made.

Fun & Fellowship: These final few months of 2026 will hold LOTS of opportunities to gather together for worship, fun, and fellowship! We hope you'll continue to attend and invite your friends and family to join you.

Thank you! Westminster's ministry continues because of YOUR presence, YOUR gifts, and YOUR willingness to show up for one another. **THAT'S STEWARDSHIP!**



Pastor Jamie will be out of the office from November 3-15. He will return to the office on Monday, November 16. If you need anything during this time, please contact the church office or Rev. Linda.

Thank You

It always seems a little strange to say "thank you" when others show their appreciation by saying "thank you." However, the cards, words, and expressions of gratitude from so many of you during October's Pastor Appreciation Month were such a welcome gift that we don't know what else to say. Our office doors are covered with visual reminders that we are loved and appreciated by this Westminster family, and we can only hope that y'all know how much we love you and appreciate the opportunity to be in ministry alongside of all of you! Thank you!

Pastor Jamie and Rev. Linda

Share Your Nativity Scenes!

As we anticipate the arrival of the Christ child, we'd love for you to share a piece of your family's holiday tradition with the church community. On the evening of the Advent Dinner (November 29), nativity scenes from members and friends will be set up on display throughout the building.

Feel free to bring your nativity set with you to worship that morning, or come a bit early to the dinner so we can help set it up. We'll take great care with every piece, though we can't promise full protection against accidents—so if yours is fragile or holds special value, you might prefer sharing a picture or telling its story instead.

If you're able, please jot down a short note about where your nativity came from or what it means to you. Every nativity carries its own story of faith and hope, and we're excited to celebrate those stories together this Advent season!



With Sympathy

Prayers and sympathy of the congregation are extended to the family and friends of Gena Gates. Gena passed away on Monday, October 12.

The Out-to-Lunch Bunch

The Out-to-Lunch Bunch's delicious destination for November is Pfund's Sandwich Company, 508 E. Midland St. in Bay City. We will gather for lunch at 1 p.m. Wednesday, November 18. If you would like to join us, please RSVP with Dave Crook by Monday, November 16 by calling 847-624-5798.

Floral Gardens Burial Plots Available

A member of Westminster has generously donated a set of four adjacent burial plots in the Garden of Resurrection at Floral Gardens Cemetery. We're grateful for this meaningful gift to our church family.

These plots are now available for purchase, and we'd like to offer them first to our congregation. The cemetery estimates the current market value for the set at around $13,000. We'd prefer to keep the four plots together as a single family set, so they are being offered as a complete package.

If you or your family are interested or would like more information, please contact the church office, and we'll have the appropriate person follow up with you.

What A Busy Place!

Although Westminster continues to have activities during the summer months, when Fall arrives our church and our church family really get going!

- **Kick-off Sunday** to celebrate the return of some programs
- **Lunch & Learn** resumes
- **Sunday morning education** for children and adults
- All the **choirs start practicing** and joining worship
- **Youth Group** starts meeting
- **Committees** begin making plans for upcoming activities and programs
- **Cantata practice** begins
- We hold our annual **Harvest Party/Chili Cook-off**
- November brings Thanksgiving and our opportunity to share by providing turkeys and Thanksgiving dinner with the **Thanksgiving Baskets**
- We decorate the church with the **Hanging of the Greens**
- We celebrate **Advent** with a dinner and activities
- The **Giving Tree** appears for another opportunity to share with our community

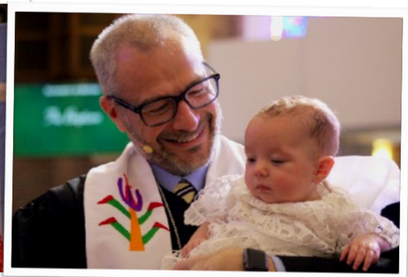
Yes, Westminster and its people are very busy learning, sharing, and caring.

Hey everybody!

THAT'S STEWARDSHIP!

SIGHTS FROM THE SANCTUARY








The Angel Tree will soon be here!

Mission Partnership Committee once again invites you to help make Christmas a little brighter for families in our community.

Working with our partners at **The Salvation Army**, we will receive 75 Angel Tags listing toys, gift cards, clothing items and bedding for kids ranging in ages 0 – 17-year-olds. **Angel Tree tags will be available starting Sunday, November 29 until Sunday, December 13.**

Participants are encouraged to take an angel tag from the tree located in the Wenona Lobby. Write your name and contact number on the bottom portion of the tag and leave that section with representatives or gift box at the Angel Tree table. Purchase the gifts and return them in a gift bag (no tissue paper) to the church by Noon on Sunday, December 13.

We suggest a spending limit of $25-$30 per item — one toy / "fun" and one clothing/textile. Don't forget to attach the angel tag to your gift!

If you prefer, you may choose to donate, and we'll do the shopping for you!

For questions or help, contact Darlene Kusterer at 989-385-4062.

Youth Group Schedule

- **November 8th** - Youth Group
- **November 22nd** - Youth Group
- **November 29th** - No Youth Group! Advent Dinner that night, please try to make it!

Youth Group Dinners

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. We usually have dinner from 5:00 to 5:30 p.m. You will get a count a couple of days in advance. Please scan the QR code or see Leah Sneller to sign up.

Go see our TALENTED Youth!

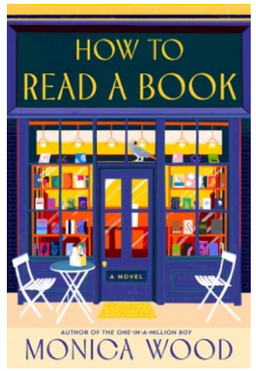
We've got your plans for every weekend in November! Westminster is well represented in our local middle and high school theater departments. You can find our youth on the stage at Western's "The SpongeBob Musical", John Glenn's production of "Newsies" and Central's adaptation of "The Wizard of Oz."

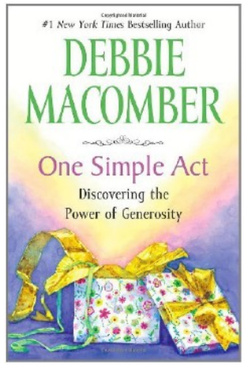






Book Group announces next two selections





We recently wrapped up the moving novel Theo of Golden, and now we're looking forward to the final two selections in our Fall Book Group series.

How to Read a Book by Monica Wood is a heartfelt, hopeful novel about three lives brought together in a bookstore. Through themes of forgiveness, second chances, unlikely friendship, and the transforming power of stories, it offers rich material for thoughtful conversation.

One Simple Act: Discovering the Power of Generosity by Debbie Macomber shares true stories and faith-filled reflections showing how simple gifts of time, encouragement, prayer, service, compassion, and forgiveness can make a lasting difference in the lives of others—and in our own lives.

We will discuss *How to Read a Book* on Tuesdays, November 3 and 10. Next, we will spend three weeks reading and discussing *One Simple Act*. All are invited to join us for good conversation, thoughtful reflection, and fellowship.

Books have been ordered for book group attendees. If you are interested in joining our discussion and need a book, please call the church office. And as always, any questions, please call the church office or Rev. Linda.

Hanging of the Greens
November 22

Join us on Sunday, November 22, for our annual Hanging of the Greens service. This has quickly become a favorite tradition at Westminster that sets the stage for Advent and Christmas. We'll explore the significance of the symbols, candles, and greenery that will soon fill our sanctuary.

Stick around after the service! We'll need hands to finish decorating the building and pack Thanksgiving bags for families in need. We'll have light refreshments on hand, so come enjoy the fellowship as we kick off the Advent season together.

Advent Dinner & Seasonal Activities
November 29

Mark your calendars for another favorite tradition, the Advent Dinner and Craft Workshop! We'll gather in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, November 29 at 6:00 p.m. for a festive evening of food, fellowship, and creativity. A main dish will be provided; please bring a salad, side, or dessert to share as we enjoy this time together. After dinner, there will be holiday crafts for all ages—a chance to create, laugh, and get into the holiday spirit.

FOOD BANK of Eastern Michigan

Volunteer Opportunity!

The holidays are not only a busy time for our pantry, but our main food supplier, the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, is especially busy during November and December as it prepares to send thousands of holiday boxes to partners all across eastern Michigan.

Westminster is putting together a volunteer group to work at the FBEM's Hunger Solution Center in Flint on Saturday, November 21, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. We'll meet at the church at 7:45 a.m. and carpool together, returning by 1:30 p.m.

Sign up on the volunteer board in the Wenona Street Welcome Area, or by contacting Pastor Jamie. Anyone aged 8+ is invited to come. Let's make this a family event!

Trivia night

We had a great time at our inaugural Westminster Trivia Night! Congrats to "Woodstock to Doomscrolling" for taking home the winning prize and to "Pantry Pride" for coming in second. Thanks to the Excited Goat Coffee Company for the special deal they gave us on the gift cards!





Fallin' for Bunco!

A dedicated group of Bunco players continues to meet monthly in the Fellowship Hall. November's Theme is FALLIN' FOR BUNCO. Everyone is invited to join the fun! We meet monthly in the Fellowship Hall and our next gathering is **Wednesday, November 4**. Bring a bag lunch and come **at noon** if you'd like to eat and visit together. The dice start rolling at 12:30 p.m. No experience needed—just come ready for a good time! Join in laughter, fellowship, and a friendly game where luck is all you need. Please call the church office if you have any questions.

Financial Snapshots

If you have any questions about financial matters, please contact Financial Secretary Lisa Carelli at 989-686-1360, ext. 208.

GENERAL FUND	Oct 20, 2026	Year to Date
Pledges	14,789.56	323,592.86
General Gifts/Donations	1,803	35,353.08
Investment Interest		15,959.92
Loose Collection	131	1,386.22
One-time Gifts	0	0
Other Cash Received	49.2	4,682.38
Total Income	16,772.76	380,974.46
Expenses	23,048.38	350,481.51
Excess(Loss)	-6,275.62	30,492.95

Budgeted expense total for 2026 is $467,000.

FOOD PANTRY		
October 20, 2026		
Beg Balance		8,335.43
Gluten Free Grant		7,171.8
Gluten Free-Holiday Boxes		5,600
		21,107.23
Donation October		
Contribution		2,712.85
Mission Transfer		3,000
Online Giving		101
Less Expense October		3,576.55
		10,572.73
Meijer		
Simply Give Gift Cards		7,300

Dress the Bird, Gift a Family

Dear Westminster Family:

The Session has approved providing a Thanksgiving Basket for community members. More details to follow. **We will be collecting grocery items during the month of November on Sundays November 1, November 8 and November 15.**

We will be packing the baskets on Sunday, November 22, so please plan to stay and help us if you are able! They will be picked up the following day by those selected to receive them.

Here is a list of items we pack in the turkey baskets:

- Canned corn
- Canned green beans
- Canned fruit
- Cranberry Sauce
- Stuffing Mix
- Jell-O (Large Box)
- Instant Pudding (Large Box)
- Turkey or Chicken Gravy Packets
- Macaroni and Cheese boxes
- Brownie Mix
- Reusable grocery bags



Dressing the Bird

We will also be "Dressing the Bird" again this year. Your $15.00 donation will be used to purchase a voucher for families to buy a turkey, and your name will be displayed on our turkey display board. Feathers to dress the turkey can be purchased on Sundays before and after worship services, or you can write a check to WPC and write "turkey" in the memo.

If you have any questions, please contact Patti Wesenick at 989-737-6844.

Bible Study

We're delighted that our Adult Bible Study series is underway and has already received such an enthusiastic response from participants. We are using ***The Wired Word***, an adult Bible study curriculum that connects current events and weekly news stories with Scripture. Each lesson includes Bible passages, commentary, and discussion questions designed to help participants reflect on faith in relation to everyday life and the world around us. The material is interdenominational and encourages open, meaningful discussion as we consider how God's Word speaks to today's realities. A few of the news stories have been: Queen of Country Leaves the World a Better Place, Christian Nationalism, 100,000 Church Closings — just to name a few.

All are welcome—whether you have attended Bible study for years or are joining for the first time. Come with your questions, your curiosity, and your willingness to listen and share as we explore Scripture together.

You need not attend each week; feel free to drop in and even call the church office on Thursday mornings or check out our Face Book page to hear what the topic will be for Sunday morning and the following Thursday.

We gather in person on **Sunday mornings at 9:00** in the Conference Room and **Thursday evenings at 7:00 by Zoom**. Whether you prefer to meet in person on Sunday mornings or connect from home on Thursday evenings, we hope you will join us for thoughtful conversation and fellowship.

Any questions, please see Rev. Linda.

God Sighting
Mary Nicholson



Mary has led a life full of using the unique gifts God has blessed her with.

She has been married to her husband, Ed, for nearly 61 years and has raised four daughters. She is a grandmother to nine and a great-grandmother to (nearly) fourteen!

Her gifts have led her down many interesting paths, including (but not limited to) being a preschool teacher, working at a funeral home, and creating beautiful cakes and decorations for weddings (which comes in very handy when you have that many daughters)! Some of her other talents include painting, crafting, sewing, and baking.

Mary also carries a deep love for gardening and being outdoors. Some might even call her ability to bring dead things back to life "supernatural." She can make plants grow simply by the sheer force of her will (and a little help from the Lord, of course). But what makes her truly special and worthy of "spotlighting" is her genuine love and compassion toward her fellow human beings. She has volunteered countless hours providing support for those experiencing food insecurity, those experiencing grief from the loss of a loved one, and in general, comforting and supporting anyone around her who might be hurting or in need of encouragement.

Her children can testify to the many, many individuals Mary has welcomed into her home and "adopted" into her family, ensuring that those people are included in special family events, holidays, and everyday life. Because no one should be alone, on Christmas Day or just a regular Tuesday.

In short, she loves God, she loves her family, and she loves people very well.

Lunch & Learn

Over the past few years, our monthly gatherings have focused on self-awareness and personal growth. This year, we will use the next three months to build greater awareness of the needs in our community.

On October 27th, Annette Jeske, Director of The Arc of Bay County, shared how ARC advocates for and supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. As a follow up in April of 2027, we will also hear from the Disability Network of Bay County to help us continue to better understand needs within our community so that we are better informed and able to assist with compassionate care for our neighbors.

With that in mind – being informed and compassionate neighbors – in November our Lunch & Learn is planned for **Tuesday, November 17 at noon**. Join us for an informative and interactive session about ALICE.

What does ALICE mean? It is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, and represents a growing number of families who are unable to afford the basics of housing, childcare, food, transportation, healthcare, and technology. These workers often struggle to keep their own households from financial ruin, while keeping our local communities running.

Gina Huynh, Senior Impact Manager from the Bay County United Way Foundation will inform us and lead us to join in some interactive activities. We hope you can join us!

Call the church office if you have any questions.

Gramma

We may innocently believe we are independent beings once our umbilical cords are cut, weaning has occurred, we're walking on our own, potty training is complete, we head off to pre-school or kindergarten, a driver's license is issued, we get a diploma, then move out of our parents' house.

But so much of who we think we are and how we comprehend the world when we are "on our own" comes from parents and grandparents, siblings and cousins, uncles and aunts, all through a blood connection to them as well as to all we learn from them. I've come to believe our spirits are linked as well.

As Rafiki tells Simba about his father, Mufasa, in The Lion King, "he lives in you." In my case, "she" lives in me: my Gramma, Bridget Ellen Mullett Duggan — Nellie to those who could address her by her first name. I am who I am today because of her love, care, faith, lifestyle, and stern guidance.



Pat Duggan's Gramma, Bridget Ellen Mullett Duggan (in polka dot dress), known to friends as Nellie.

She personally saw to it that I survived what could have been an overwhelmingly stressful upbringing. A father enslaved by alcohol, profoundly troubled by memories of war. A mother captive to a mental illness that could never be completely cured, which cycled through her every couple of years. Certainly, both parents loved me and my three siblings. Both were whip smart, but unable to sustain the behavior and peace critical to succeed at anything — most importantly their relationship and raising their kids.

Before I knew what words meant, Gramma said I was a "bold" boy who should be seen and not heard, a blatherskite, a hooligan who ran the streets with other obnoxious boys. Her steering my personality and conscience in the direction of a more sublime and better view of the real world helped me avoid succumbing to dangerous — even deadly — temptations.

At the most desperate time in the life of my family, Gramma stepped in as she had so many times in the past. But this time, she moved my sister and me in with her, so that we might finish growing up in a different town where we could see a future with hopeful eyes. During what turned out to be the last year of her life, there were so many "talks" in which she interacted with me as if I were a "grown up" even though I was just 13. I was beginning to grasp that what I earlier had viewed as harsh discipline was "love in action," intended to keep me physically, mentally and spiritually healthy.

Without Gramma's repeated rescues, I wouldn't have made it on my own. When she died in 1967, I was 13. I'm 73 now, and still her presence in every part of my life is palpable. I have success, peace, joy, direction, and the ability to share all of those things because she is alive in me and her nurturing presence surrounds me.

Of course, many other people in my life have contributed to the person I am now. But Gramma Duggan's voice urges me to love others, and she is my source and sense of duty to care for family members, friends, fellow parishioners, and strangers. She continues to convince me that all will be well.

I know the Holy Spirit, in doing what it wills, impacts my spirit every day — if I'm paying attention. However, in a deeply felt way, my spirit is animated by Gramma's spirit. I sense that she is always up to something, in cahoots with the Holy Spirit, trying to coax me closer to "Thy will be done." Although I may fail to meet the spiritual standard they set for me, thanks to Gramma, I know what the standard is.

Thank you, Lord, for her and for all the Grammas.

Pat Duggan

Community support keeps our pantry going!

September Statistics: We shattered records this month, serving 790 people from 279 families with 10,204 pounds of food over 9 days. For reference, in January 2026 we served 527 people from 179 families with 6,038 pounds of food in 8 days. That's a big increase! Thanks for all the ways you help us feed our hungry neighbors, showing God's grace to the people in our community.

New Pantry Leadership: Janet Beattie has resigned from her position as Pantry co-chair. We are grateful for her leadership and the energy she brought to this ministry over the last couple of years as we transitioned from a small closet to the ministry that we have today. Working closely with many of you, she played an important part in helping this pantry grow into something far bigger than any of us imagined when it began.

Our new pantry leadership team consists of Janet Smylie (chair), Carol Campbell (vice-chair), Karen Brown-Fackler (volunteer coordinator), Kathy MacDonald (Wednesday representative) and Ann West (weekly statistics). We look forward to continuing our mission of serving our community by providing food to those in need.

Thank you to everyone who donated fresh produce to the pantry this season! Our guests enjoy the variety of fresh produce we have available, and we are grateful to be able to provide this fresh, healthy option. Please know how much we appreciate your support.

Our Community Supports the Pantry! We are incredibly grateful for these donations received in October from the following community partners:

- **Salvation Army** gave us produce that would otherwise have gone in the trash. We hope to keep partnering with them so no food goes to waste.
- **Bay City Noon Optimist Club** and **Bay City Rotary Club** donated spices they received through a Spice Drive.
- **Financial Edge Credit Union** donated a variety of food and a generous financial gift.
- **Michigan Sugar Company** donated granulated, brown and powdered sugar.

Meijer Simply Give Program Returns: Great news! We were once again selected as a recipient





of the Meijer Simply Give program through the holiday season. Through December 26, all Simply Give donations made at the Wilder Road store will be collected for our pantry. Simply Give donation cards are available at the church and in the checkout lines at the store. Just hand your Simply Give donation card to the cashier and tell them how much you want to give (in $10 increments). They will scan your card and your donation will be added to your grocery total. You can also donate through online shopping on the Meijer app. And **mark your calendars for Saturday, December 12, when Meijer will double-match all donations!** At the end of the program, all donations will be totaled and given to our pantry in the form of gift cards that we can use to purchase food. Please share the news with all your family and friends! The gift cards we received from last year's campaign have been stocking our pantry for the last few months. Questions? Talk to Janet Smylie or email pantry@wpcbc.org. Don't shop at Meijer? We always welcome donations made directly to the pantry.

Item of the Month: We are pausing our requests for Item of the Month until January 2027 so you can support other church mission projects like the Thanksgiving food baskets and the Angel Tree Christmas gifts. If you'd still like to donate to the pantry, any food items are welcomed. Please know how much we appreciate your food donations.

Extra Venison? Did you know the pantry accepts venison if it was processed at a licensed facility? We are happy to take your extras off your hands!

Why We'd Rather Feel Guilty Than Helpless

If you've been replaying the same moment over and over since your loved one died — the phone call you didn't make, the treatment you wonder if you pushed hard enough for, the last conversation you wish had gone differently — you are not alone, and you are not doing anything wrong. You may simply be witnessing your mind do exactly what minds do. This quote by David Kessler is one that speaks to that experience and may be one you can relate to: "Our mind would always rather feel guilty than helpless."

The Strange Comfort of Guilt

It sounds backward, doesn't it? Guilt is painful. Why would our minds choose it?

Because guilt, however painful, comes with a hidden promise: if it was my fault, then I had control. And if I had control, then perhaps in some other version of events, I could have done something different.

You see, guilt keeps a door open, even a door into the past. And there is a strange comfort in that.

Helplessness offers no such door. Helplessness means the truth was simply this: some illnesses cannot be outrun, some moments cannot be redone, and love — even fierce, devoted love — does not come with the power to prevent death. That is a much harder thing to sit with than "I should have called sooner."

The mind, trying to protect us, often reaches for guilt instead. Guilt feels bad, but it feels active. Helplessness just feels, well … like death.

This is Not a Character Flaw

If you notice yourself building a case against yourself — combing through decisions made months or years ago, judging them by information you only have now in hindsight — know this is an extremely common part of grief, especially after a long illness or a sudden loss. It doesn't mean you did something wrong. It often means you loved someone and



could not save them, and your mind is offering you guilt as an alternative to that unbearable, painful act.

What Can Help?

- Name it when it happens. Simply noticing, "this is my mind offering me guilt instead of helplessness," can loosen its grip.
- Ask yourself gently: Am I judging a decision I made with the information and resources I had at the time? Or am I judging it against a perfect outcome that was never actually available to me?
- Talk to someone who was there. Other family members, friends or your hospice bereavement counselor can offer a perspective you cannot see from inside your own guilt.
- Let helplessness be sad instead of shameful. Helplessness in the face of illness and death is not a failure. It is the human condition. Grieving it as a loss — rather than fighting it as a flaw — is often the more honest path through.
- Be as gentle with yourself as you would be with someone you love. If a friend told you the story you tell about yourself, would you believe they had failed? Or would you tell them they had done their best with an impossible situation?

Reprinted from St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program, Bethlehem, PA

Grief is a part of everyone's life at one time or another

November is Thanksgiving month — a time for giving "Thanks."

I'd like to take a brief moment to say "thank you" to my Westminster church family. I came here to attend a funeral, but I was also "church shopping" at the time. In a five-year span, I probably visited more than 20 different churches, none of which said "this is the one!"

Everyone in this church was so welcoming, warm and friendly, I decided to come back and have been coming ever since. That was three years ago and I am also now a member and feeling very much at home.

I appreciate all of the kind words and encouragement I have received since I began facilitating the Caring Connections grief support group. The participation and people are awesome. I truly hope we are helping individuals along their grief journey. It has been very helpful and rewarding for me as well.

Grief is a part of everyone's life at one time or another. We all approach it differently, but coming together in a group and sharing our experiences with each other can help lift that load for you. It's amazing to learn how much we have in common with others and we are not alone.

The Art of Giving

We give of ourselves when we give gifts of the heart: love, kindness, joy, understanding, sympathy, forgiveness. We give of ourselves when we give gifts of the spirit: prayer, vision, beauty, aspirations, peace, faith. We give of ourselves when we give the gift of words: encouragement, inspiration, guidance.

Emerson said it well: Rings and jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only true gift is a portion of thyself."

If you are on a grief journey or have just recently lost someone, please consider attending one of our Caring Connections where we share our gifts with you. We meet the first Thursday of every month from 1:30 to 3 p.m. NOTE: The November meeting will be the second Thursday, November 12 from 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Hope you'll join us. No pressure. Meetings are very laid back and informal. The point is not (and never will be) to stop the grief. That's like stopping the ocean. The point is to find ways to swim.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Love and Peace,

Mary

A Gentle Reminder

Learning to tolerate helplessness may be one of grief's most difficult tasks. Not to resolve it, not to explain it away, but to develop the capacity to stand inside, "I could not control this" without immediately needing to connect it into, "therefore it was my fault." That tolerance takes time, patience and a whole lot of compassion for yourself.

You do not have to have all the answers about what you could have done differently. Sometimes the most loving thing you can do for yourself is to let the guilt soften into grief — and let grief simply be grief, without the extra weight of blame.