

THE WESTMINSTER LOG

"I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust."

-2 Timothy 1:12



Beloved Partners in Ministry,

Paul writes Second Timothy while sitting in prison awaiting trial. Yet, even while at an obvious low point in his life, Paul's letter is full of encouraging words, a commitment to the gospel, and a call to trust God throughout all of life's questions.

Some of the questions that Paul attempts to answer in this letter resonate with us today.

- Do we believe that God has called us as a church and as a people, and continues to call us to ministry?
- Do we believe that God is faithful to the promises that God made to our ancestors and to us?
- Do we believe the stories of Scripture that tell us of God's love, God's care, and God's provision?
- Do we believe that God has been with us in the past and will continue to be with us?

Our response to these questions has everything to do with our attitude towards stewardship. God has called us together as a community of faith and has already given us all that we need to accomplish the good works that God calls us to. We trust that God has abundantly shared the gifts that are required to minister to God's people. Gifts of faith, love, and mercy. Gifts of compassion, stewardship, and wealth. God has entrusted us with these gifts to be used for the building of God's kingdom.

I believe that our answer to these questions is a resounding "YES!" Because we believe these things, we can continue to support the mission and the ministry that God has placed before us by sharing from our abundant blessings. We trust that God will provide a way for us as we serve God in our community. We trust God in times of plenty and in times of want, because we know that no matter what, God faithfully walks with us.

Please join us on Sunday, February 18, as we gather on the First Sunday of Lent to worship God, to commit ourselves to the work that God is doing in our midst, and dedicate our "Celebration of Giving" cards as a way to offer our gratitude to God and demonstrate our trust in God's good provision in all the areas of our lives. Please prayerfully consider how God is calling you to share the good treasure that has been entrusted to you.

Yours in abundance,
Stewardship Ministry

Frequently Asked Questions about Stewardship

What benefits does Westminster receive from pledged gifts?

Pledges are the financial cornerstone for all that we do at Westminster. Pledges, unlike donations and loose offerings (also very appreciated and helpful) allow our Session and Finance Ministry a solid basis on which to map our programs and ministries for the coming year.

What benefits do I derive from pledging? *Making a commitment expresses the love we have for God and our gratitude for gifts God has given us.*

How are our gifts used at Westminster?

Your gifts fund every aspect of our ministries. Every thing we do and the costs incurred are made possible because of your gifts. While we are a non-profit, we have expenses like any business. Personnel, facilities costs, and other monthly costs.

How do I make my pledge?

Pledge cards will be handed out at the annual meeting or mailed out, if your unable to attend. There is also a pledge card insert here in the Log. Pledge cards are due February 18th.

Thank you for continuing to support the church during the month of January. Despite waiting to collect commitment cards in February, your giving to Westminster didn't waiver. Any gifts made during this time, will be applied to your commitment for 2024.

FEBRUARY 2024 ISSUE 183

WWW.WPCBC.ORG

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Visit us on Facebook:
Westminster Presbyterian
Church - Bay City



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8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Pastor
Rev. Jamie Milton (ext. 204)
Parish Associate
Rev. Linda Williams (ext. 203)
Church Secretary/Treasurer
Heather Heidman (ext. 201)
Facilities Manager
Harold Miller (ext. 205)

February

Sundays

9:00 a.m. Bell Choir Rehearsal
for our Adults; the Bells play during Worship once a month

9:00 a.m. Sunday School
For children PreK-4th grade

9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study
This month, we'll continue the study on the Gospel of John and then begin our Lenten Bible Study "Wandering Heart" on February 18th.

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

10:30 a.m. Worship
We will finish the "Worship God" series on February 11th and begin our Lenten series on February 18th.

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

5:30 p.m. Youth Dinner

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

Office Hours

Monday – Thursday: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Website: wpcbc.org

Join us on Facebook

Westminster Presbyterian Church - Bay City

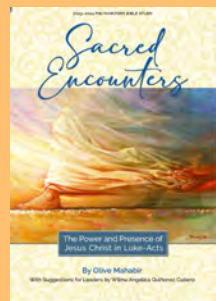
Sunday	Monday
<p><u>Happy Birthday</u></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: left;"> <p>Penny Reagh Richard Hebner Richard Talbot Leslie Frontjes Ann Morse</p> </div> <div style="text-align: left;"> <p>William Auger Beverly Sivertson John Young Donna Horn</p> </div> </div>	
<p>4 <i>Annual Meeting of the Congregation</i></p> <p>11:30 a.m. Souper Bowl of Caring and Bake Sale</p>	<p>5</p> <p>5:00 p.m. Food Pantry Mtg. 6:00 p.m. Mission Mtg. 7:00 p.m. Deacon Mtg.</p>
<p>11 <i>Scout Sunday</i></p> <p>11:45 a.m. Fellowship and Outreach Meeting</p>	<p>12</p> <p>5:00 p.m. Property Meeting 6:00 p.m. Finance Meeting 7:00 p.m. Stewardship</p>
<p>18 <i>First Sunday of Lent Stewardship Sunday</i></p> <p>11:30 a.m. Stewardship Celebration</p>	<p>19</p> <p>6:00 p.m. Promise and Possibility at WPC</p>
<p>25 <i>Second Sunday of Lent Ordination and Installation</i></p>	<p>26</p>

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri/Sat
		<p>1</p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p>2</p> <p>3</p>
<p>6</p> <p>10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts</p>	<p>7</p> <p>5:15 p.m. Worship Mtg. 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Personnel Meeting</p>	<p>8</p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p>9</p> <p>10</p>
<p>13</p> <p>9:00 a.m. Matthew 25 Cafe 10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting 1:00 p.m. Lions Club 1:00 p.m. Nine Essentials Book Study 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts 6:30 p.m. Spiritual Growth Meeting</p>	<p>14 <i>Ash Wednesday</i></p> <p>5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir Rehearsal 6:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship Service 7:00 Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>15</p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 1:00 p.m. Lydia Circle 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran</p> <p>(no Bible Study this evening)</p>	<p>16</p> <p>17</p>
<p>20</p> <p>10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 1:00 Nine Essentials Books Study 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts 6:30 p.m. Session Meeting</p>	<p>21</p> <p>5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>22</p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p>23</p> <p>24</p>
<p>27</p> <p>10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting 12:00 p.m. Lunch and Learn 1:00 p.m. Nine Essentials Books Study 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts</p>	<p>28</p> <p>5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>29</p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 2:00 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 via Zoom</p>	

*Birthdays listed are for our 75+ Members

Stewardship Celebration

Join us, Sunday, February 18th as we celebrate Stewardship Sunday. Westminster's Session Members will be hosting a Celebration luncheon after worship. Please plan to attend and celebrate all that we're able to do together!



LYDIA CIRCLE THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15 1:00 P.M.

Lydia Circle will meet monthly in person on the third Thursday at 1:00 p.m. in the Session room. We are using the *Horizons* Bible Study, Sacred Emotions.



DEBORAH CIRCLE



Deborah Circle will meet **via Zoom at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 29.** If anyone wants to join, please call Karen Schoeppach at 989-684-1322 or email her at kaysue@chartermi.net.

FELLOWSHIP TIME

Join your church family for a time of fellowship before and after Sunday's worship service.

Coffee and donuts included!



In December, the **Operating Fund** had income of \$45,533.85 and expenses of \$56,262.36. The Mission Ministry made their quarterly gifts to the Presbytery Mission and General Assembly Mission, plus gifts to the Children's Grief Center, Bay Area Women's Center, Hidden Harvest, and once again purchased duffel bags for foster kids in our area. The Worship Ministry had expenses that included supplies for Advent and our special services in December and we had the pianos tuned before the holidays. Spiritual Growth had expenses for Sunday School and Adult Faith Formation purchased books for the upcoming FYI Happenings.

Building Improvement Fund received contributions of \$521.00 and did not have any expenses in December. The Fund ended the year with a balance of \$11,725.17. Thank you for supporting the Building Improvement Fund.

The **Major Repairs Fund** had income of \$352.00; there were no expenses for December. The balance at the end of the year is \$40,820.28. Thank you to those who contribute to the Major Repairs Fund.

Contributions to the **Capital Campaign Fund** totaled \$12,871.93 in December. We made our regular loan payment and the balance of the loan at the end of the year is \$152,543.52. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Campaign, we were able to cut the principal down by over \$50,000 in 2023.

Heather Heidtman

treasurer@wpcbc.org
989-225-5718

Per capita for 2024 is \$29.50.
This is per active,
confirmed member.



With Sympathy
Prayers and sympathy of the congregation are extended to the family and friends of Claire Jacobson. Claire passed away, January 17, 2024.

Thank You

Dear Westminster Congregation,
We thank you for your gift of \$1000.00, it is greatly appreciated. Blessings to you all for your generosity to the Economy Center.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Colone,
Corresponding Secretary

The Economy Thrift Center helps out foster children with needed items. Our Mission Partnerships Ministry made this donation in December, along with a gift of over 75 duffel bags, so these children and youth have something to keep their belongings in.



Dear Friends,
Thank you for joining us in our mission to eliminate domestic violence and sexual assault. Through your compassion and generosity, we were able to continue essential work to provide 24/7 services to survivors. Because of donors like you, survivors know there is somewhere they can turn to get the support they need to address the trauma they have endured as a result of violence. We are so profoundly grateful for your support in helping us live our mission each and every day. We could not do this without you.

Truly,
Jeremy Rick, Executive Director
Bay Area Women's Center



GOD SIGHTINGS

January 21
Sophie
Hildebrant



God's children play a vital role in the growing of our church family and are a light and uplifting spirit. Sophie is kind and caring and always willing to help a friend. Sophie always has a smile on her face and shows her excitement and enthusiasm through her participation in Sunday School and taking part in the Children's Christmas Pageant.

Sophie's positivity radiates to everyone she meets and as her church family we couldn't be more thankful that she is a part of it.

Thank you, Sophie, for sharing your light and positivity with us all!

This year during Lent, we'll be focusing on the life and faith of one of Jesus' most famous disciples. In Peter, we see a person who is both steadfast and unsteady, a dear friend and a betrayer, a follower and a wanderer. In Peter, we often see ourselves. By following Peter's journey, we watch the story of Jesus unfold through the eyes of a very normal human trying to figure it all out—just like us.

Like many of us, Peter has a wandering heart. His journey is not polished, or linear, or perfect, but he is always tethered to the love of God. When you look closely at Peter's story, you find Jesus at each step along the way—offering him abundance, catching him when he begins to sink, challenging him when he stands in the way, washing his feet, predicting his betrayal, and offering him agape love. This Lent, we'll join Peter in figuring out faith. Along our journey, we'll wander alongside him, open to what we might learn about Jesus (and ourselves) by stepping in his shoes.

As we follow Peter's story, we will sing our way through Lent, guided by verses in the hymn "Come Thou Fount" whose lyrics seem to mirror Peter's journey.

Ash Wednesday, February 14th

"Tune my heart"

Psalm 51

This service reminds us of our mortality and invites us to begin Lent with confession, as we tune our hearts into God's love and grace. For those who choose, the sign of the cross is administered using ashes as we hear, "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."



The First Sunday in Lent, February 18th

"Jesus sought me"

Luke 5:1-11

Jesus told some fisherfolk, "From now on you will catch people instead of fish." Simon Peter left his boat and followed Jesus.

The Second Sunday in Lent, February 25th

"Rescue me from danger"

Matthew 14:22-33

Simon Peter attempted to walk on water with Jesus. When he got scared, he began to sink and cried out to Jesus, "Rescue me!" Jesus caught him and brought him safely to the boat, saying, "Why did you doubt?"

The Third Sunday in Lent, March 3rd

"Praise the mount"

Matthew 16:13-20

Jesus asked his disciples, "What about you? What do you think [about me]?" Simon Peter answered right away: "You are the Messiah, the Son of God!" Jesus blessed him and gave him the name Peter, which means rock.

Mid-Lenten Potluck, Worship, and Workshop (Wednesday, March 6, 6:00 PM)

On Wednesday, March 6th, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall for a potluck dinner. After the meal, there will be a Lenten themed activity for everyone to work on, followed by a brief service of evening prayers. Please bring a dish to share and plan to join us for this special worship and fellowship event for all ages.

Seek out mental health support:

While we always encourage outreach to our grief counselors, we also want to take this time to stress the value of mental health support during times of grief. Grief can take a toll on our mental health from ongoing experiences of isolation, exhaustion, depression and anxiety. It's important to know that mental health support and seeing someone weekly can be used as an uplifting tool towards self care, rather than a last resort in an emergency.

Many people can find clarity and personal growth through ongoing work with a counselor, but it is common to not know where to start with finding someone you would like to work with. Below are a few helpful places to begin, if this feels correct for you and your needs:

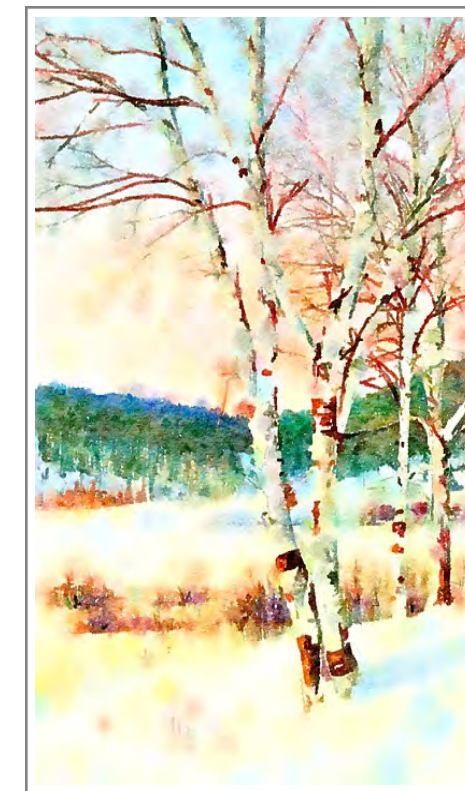
- If you do have health coverage, begin looking at your health insurance providers site to see what providers might be available to you. Often, insurance companies offer websites with tools to filter a search based on what you might be looking for. Explore these and see if anyone within your network looks appealing.
- It can be overwhelming to start looking for a counselor for the first time, especially when you are unsure what questions to ask or who would be a good fit for you. Ask yourself more about what traits would make you feel trusting and comfortable with a provider in terms of personality and style. Looking for a therapist can be a shopping process and not every provider is the right fit for everyone. We recommend calling to ask if someone is taking new clients and speaking on the phone before scheduling a session to get a feel for your personal comfort level.
- Remember you're trying to hire someone that is the right fit for you. That person might not be the first person you speak with and that's okay!

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

Coffee and Conversation for those grieving

*By request we will continue to provide the opportunity for those who are experiencing grief to get together over a cup of coffee or tea as we share and listen to each other's experiences of grief, learning from each other and providing support as we recognize the similarities and differences in our journey through grief. Our next informal gathering will be **Thursday, February 29th at 2:00 p.m. in the Narthex***

And this spring, we will wrap up our series – Praying Our Goodbyes – with a focus on "New Melodies Break Forth." The date for this evening gathering is yet to be determined. We will keep you posted as the date draws near.



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.

"Grief never ends. But it changes. It's a passage, not a place to stay. Grief is not a sign of weakness, nor a lack of faith. It is the price of love."

~Unknown

As we enter into this New Year, many of us might be thinking about new resolutions or changes we want to see in the future. When embarking on a new year, it's natural to wonder how we can make this year different. You might feel hope. Hope that things will be brighter and warmer than they have been. You might feel fear. How can we move forward through the fog when we still don't know what comes around the corner? When we experience a loss it's common to experience an increased fear of the unknown. We can feel a loss of safety and a loss of control over what happens to us. We might feel deeply aware of how little control we have.

It can be easy to feel lost when we don't feel empowered. Empowerment is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, specifically related to controlling one's life. This is an ongoing process that takes time, effort and support to engage in. This is never more true than after a loss when our feelings of control have been taken away from us.



How can we feel more empowered? Often empowerment comes over time, from lots of little acts that make us feel like we have choices and are free to make the choices that best serve our needs. This can give us a sense of control and greater peace.

So what can we control? Maybe we can control the way we make a meal, preparing it just the way we like it. Maybe we can reach out and call a friend. Maybe we can commit to going for a walk every day, even on the coldest days. Maybe we can decide to learn how to lower our anxiety with deep breathing. Maybe we can seek the support of a therapist and deepen our understanding of ourselves. The beauty of starting a journey of self empowerment is that it is an ongoing practice and it looks different for everyone.

The start of the new year can encourage us all to seek spaces that make us feel empowered and to ask ourselves the tough questions about how we can take on the enormous task of building lives that serve our hopes, rather than feed our fears.

Ideas for Increasing Empowerment

Increase engagement in hobbies and self care activities:

This looks different for everyone. It might mean that you take a nap when you feel like it, just because you choose to. It might mean that you make yourself breakfast and sit in the sun without being rushed. It could mean making things or taking space to build a new routine. Asking ourselves what choices we do have that can impact the outcome of the day ahead can increase feelings of freedom and control, even through small actions.

Carve out space and limit feelings of being rushed:

This might mean sitting in your car enjoying a quiet moment before going into a crazy work day. It might look like taking a few deep breaths after a busy morning. Finding pockets of time that are yours and that offer you space to get in touch with yourself can help strengthen that feeling of connection with oneself.

Seek out things that feel comforting to you:

This could be time with a friend you trust. Investing in your living spaces to make them more aligned with what you like. It might also mean limiting the things you feel you "should" do and prioritizing the things that actually feel good to engage in.

The Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 10th

"I'm fixed upon it"

Matthew 16:21-23

Jesus told his disciples that being the Messiah meant that he would be killed in Jerusalem, but would be raised from the dead. Peter told Jesus, "Absolutely not! It can't happen that way, and I won't let it." But Jesus told Peter, "Get out of my way! You're trying to tempt me away from the path I must take. I'm seeing God's big picture, but you're only worried about what's here on earth."

The Fifth Sunday in Lent, March 17th

"Teach me"

Matthew 18:15-22

Jesus was teaching people about how to live the way God wants us to live. He told them, "If someone does something to hurt you, tell them and try to work it out." Then Peter asked, "What if the person hurts me again? How many times do I need to forgive? Seven?" But Jesus told him, "You should forgive over and over again. Not seven times, but seventy-seven times!"

Palm / Passion Sunday, March 24th

"Songs of loudest praise"

John 12:12-16

In scripture and song, we'll hear the stories leading up to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem while the crowds shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of God, the King of all Israel!"

Maundy Thursday, March 28th

"Streams of mercy"

John 13:1-20

During his last supper with the disciples, Jesus got up to wash their feet. Since this was a servant's job, Peter said, "You shouldn't be washing my feet!" But Jesus told him, "Unless I wash your feet, you won't really be one of my disciples. Just because I am your Lord doesn't mean I can't also serve you. I wash your feet as an example. Just as I have taken care of you, you should also take care of others."

Good Friday, March 29th

"Prone to leave the God I love"

John 18:15-27

When the leaders arrested Jesus after dinner, Peter followed. Outside the place where they took Jesus, a girl asked Peter, "Aren't you one of his followers?" But Peter lied and told her he wasn't. Another person asked if Peter knew Jesus and again, he denied it. Someone else said, "Didn't I see you when he was arrested?" A third time, Peter lied and said he didn't know Jesus just as the rooster crowed. Later that day, Jesus was sentenced to die on the cross.

Easter Sunday, March 31st

"And I hope"

Luke 24:1-12

Women went to the tomb where Jesus had been laid after he died. When they arrived, they looked around but couldn't find Jesus' body anywhere! Instead, two angels told them that Jesus was alive, and the women ran to tell the other disciples. Even though it sounded impossible, Peter ran to the tomb and saw for himself that Jesus was not there. So he went back home, wondering what it could mean.

The Second Sunday Of Easter, April 7th

"Here's my heart"

John 21:1-19

While eating breakfast on the shore, Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" He replied, "Yes, you know I love you." So Jesus told him, "Feed my lambs." Again Jesus asked, "Do you love me?" Peter replied, "Yes, you know I love you." So Jesus told him, "Take care of my sheep." And a third time, Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" Peter was sad that Jesus had asked him again and said, "You know I love you." So Jesus told him, "Feed my sheep and follow me."

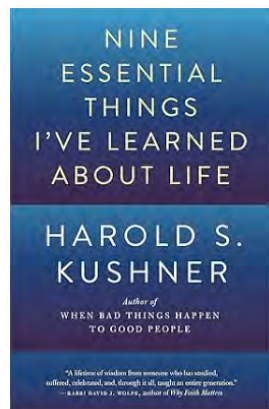
This Lent, we will look for ourselves in the stepping stones of Peter's story. We will reflect on the stages of our own faith journeys as well as who and what has shaped us along the way. As we wander, let us tune our hearts to sing God's grace. May we rest in streams of mercy, never ceasing.

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FYI HAPPENINGS

From the #1 national bestselling author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*—"a lifetime of wisdom from someone who has studied, suffered, celebrated, and through it all, taught an entire generation" (Rabbi David Wolpe, author of *Why Faith Matters*).

In this compassionate and deeply personal work, Rabbi Harold S. Kushner distills his experiences as a twenty-first-century rabbi into nine essential takeaways. Offering readers a lifetime's worth of spiritual food for thought, pragmatic advice, and strength for trying times, he gives fresh, vital insight into belief, conscience, mercy, and more. Grounded in Kushner's brilliant readings of scripture, history, and popular culture, *Nine Essential Things I've Learned About Life* is practical, illuminating, and compulsory advice for living a good life.



After the success of our first six-week book discussion (*The Well-Lived Life* by Dr. Gladys McGarey) we will be diving into this next book by Rabbi Harold Kushner, **beginning Tuesday, February 13th**. This book was chosen because someone from the previous discussion said that they have turned to this book time and again – "almost like a Bible" – when life brings challenges to life and faith.

Books have been ordered and already are available in the office. Any questions, please call the office or see Rev. Linda.



Lunch & Learn

After a brief holiday hiatus, Lunch and Learn is back, **at noon on Tuesday, February 27th**. Bonnie Fritz, a nurse educator and Director of Golden Horizons Adult Day Center will continue her discussion from her time with us last September about dementia and other memory issues with an opportunity for questions and a round-table discussion. Bonnie will share information over lunch. Bring a brown bag lunch if you desire; we will supply beverages and dessert. Please feel free to bring friends and/or family members that would like to learn more information.

Any questions about our series or suggestions for topics and speakers, please call the church office or Rev. Linda.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

&
Soup Luncheon



The Session has called for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation to be held during our Worship Service,

Sunday February 4, 2024 at 10:30 a.m. During the meeting we will hear from Elders and Ministry Chairs and members on the work they have done and wish to continue in 2024. A Narrative budget (or a line item budget) will be available for you that morning.

After the meeting, make plans to attend our annual Souper Bowl of Caring and Bake Sale. We'll have a variety of soups, breads and crackers, plus desserts you can purchase. A free-will offering will be collected for the Soup luncheon, with the collection going towards our Food Pantry. Proceeds from the Bake Sale will benefit our Youth Group.

The following message was received for all Stephen Minister Leaders from Stephen Ministries in St. Louis, MO the week before Christmas. I would like to share this message with our church family.

Merry Christmas from all of us here at Stephen Ministries!

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, we're reminded that the stable in Bethlehem is both the place where the Son of God became one of us and the beginning of Christ's ministry here on Earth. The love and care Jesus demonstrated during his time among us provides a powerful model for all to follow, a model that inspired the mission of Stephen Ministries - to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

The past year has been an exciting one for Stephen Ministries as we've pursued this mission. Here are a few highlights.

In April, we published our newest book, *The Gift of Empathy*. This book is the result of three years of researching, writing, editing, and refining, and we've been delighted by the response since its release. The world desperately needs more empathy, and our hope is that *The Gift of Empathy* can help meet that need.

Empathy in West Africa

The Gift of Empathy is also spreading, internationally. In November, our own Steve Glynn visited Monrovia, Liberia, to teach concepts from the book to over 50 pastors and church workers from all over the country as part of a Practical Theology seminar.

80,000 Trained Stephen Leaders

In May, we reached a major Stephen Ministry milestone: 80,000 Stephen Leaders trained

since 1978. The first Stephen Leader Training Course cohorts for 2024 beginning in January are already full, so the number of Stephen Leaders will continue to grow in the new year. What's most exciting about this landmark is not the number itself, but the ministry that number represents. Through the service of these Stephen Leaders, hundreds of thousands of Stephen Ministers have been – and will continue to be – trained to provide excellent care for millions of hurting people.

The year 2023 has been full of blessings, and we're excited about what God will do in 2024.

On behalf of the whole Stephen Ministries team, thank you for your ongoing support of our ministry and your partnership with us in making the world a more caring place.

May the birth and ministry of Jesus bring you joy this season and throughout the new year!

Westminster's Stephen Minister Leaders: Pam Monville/Nancy Harrelson/Jan Witucki
Stephen Ministers: Marilyn Bechtel, Irene Eskilsen, Linda Johnroe, Leonor Robinson, Judy Randall, Randy Thibo, and Pastor Linda Williams (Stephen Minister Leader).



PICTORIAL DIRECTORY



The year is 2016. The musical Hamilton takes Broadway by storm. Simone Biles wins four gold medals in Rio. The Chicago Cubs win the World Series, snapping a 108 drought. This was also the last time that Westminster published a pictorial directory.

Now, its 2024 and we are preparing for a new directory, and we want YOU to be in it! We have 5 dates to choose from for you to get your pictures. Each individual or family that is photographed receives a free 8X10 photo and directory!

The dates and times the photographers will be at Westminster are:
 Thursday, February 29, and Friday, March 1, from 2:00 pm until 8:30 pm
 Saturday, March 2 from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm
 Tuesday, March 12 and Wednesday, March 13, from 2:00 pm until 8:30 pm.

You can sign up for your time slot before or after worship on Sunday mornings beginning February 4th, or on weekdays using the online scheduler. To schedule your photography appointment online, simply go to www.ucdir.com, click on "photography appointment scheduling login" on the right side, enter **mi1852** in the "Church Code" field and enter **photos** in the "Church Password" field. Follow the prompts to schedule your family's appointment time. If you have 5 or more in your family please use 2 consecutive time slots. The online scheduling option is only available Monday through Friday. **Appointments fill up quickly, so schedule as soon as possible to secure your preferred date and time.**

PRAYground

Parents and Grandparents: Be on the lookout for updated worship bags and our new "PRAYground" space. Westminster wants your children to feel welcome in worship, and for you as their grownups to have a space to worship and feel connected. Before worship, feel free to help your child choose a worship bag containing items to keep busy bodies and minds focused during worship while they sit with you. We also understand that young children may need to move and have different ways of experiencing God. A new addition in the coming weeks will be a supervised space at the back of the church, where your children (3rd grade and younger) can explore quiet activities while also absorbing the sights, sounds, smells, movement, and emotions connected with worship. And, as always, nursery care is available for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers during the service!



In January 2023 Westminster accepted the call to become a Matthew 25 Church. This denominational initiative invites churches to live out one Jesus' final sermons in the Gospel of Matthew—to walk with him in discipleship. The well-known passage calls on us to display our faith through our actions. Looking back on 2023 and our plans for 2024, we have found and continue to find ways to answer that call, reminding us of Jesus' words "I assure you that when you have done it for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me."

There are two opportunities to help our neighbors in need by serving meals. Westminster has a team of volunteers helping with Food of Faith (our next date is March 7th) and on the second Tuesday of each month we have a team serving lunch at the Matthew 25 Cafe at the Salvation Army. Use the QR Codes below to sign up or feel free to call the church office for more details.



FOOD OF FAITH SIGN-UP



MATTHEW 25 CAFE SIGN-UP



Did you know our Food Pantry is utilized, on average, about 25 times a month! Rarely does a day go by, that we're not handing out a bag of food, many times more! We're in the process of finding ways to provide not only our normal staples, but fresh food too! Think about it...a box of macaroni and cheese is great, but milk and butter are needed to make it!

Sometimes people come in and don't have can openers, so canned goods with pop tops have been very helpful. Peanut butter and jelly are a favorite, if only we could give out a fresh loaf of bread too!

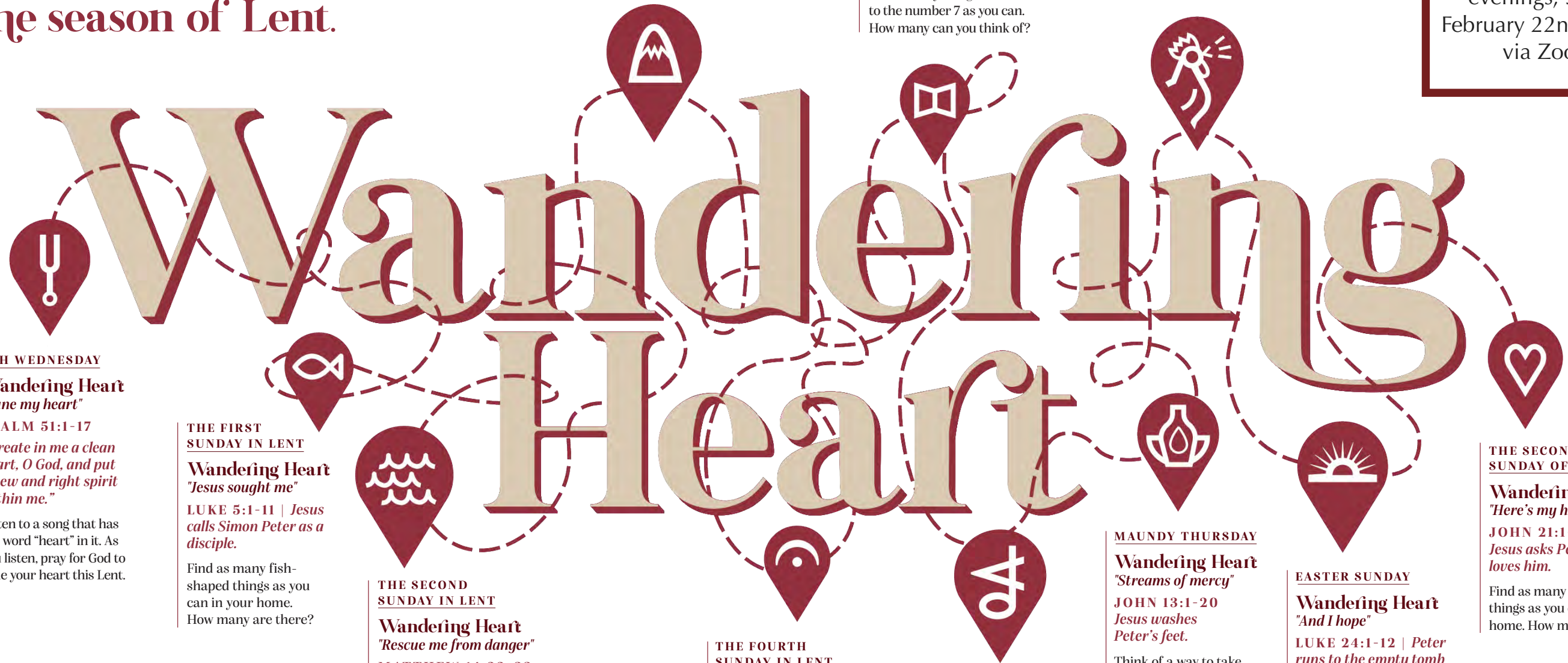
Our Mission Ministry meet last month to talk about these things and more. Including finding ways to coordinate with other pantries and organizations that serve food so we can work together to help even more.

Look for more information in the coming months and thank you for your donations of food and money to help keep our Food Pantry stocked.

**Sleep in Heavenly Peace
 Bed Build
 January 20, 2024 at Delta
 College**

Faith Map

Following Peter through the season of Lent.



THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Wandering Heart
"Praise the mount"
 MATTHEW 16:13-20
Simon Peter calls Jesus the Messiah, and Jesus gives him the name Peter.

Find an item with your name on it. What does your name mean?

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Wandering Heart
"Teach me"
 MATTHEW 18:15-22
Jesus tells Peter to forgive seventy-seven times.

List as many things related to the number 7 as you can. How many can you think of?

GOOD FRIDAY

Wandering Heart
"Prone to leave the God I love"
 JOHN 18:15-27 | *Peter denies knowing Jesus*

Find the word "no" in as many places as you can in your home.

Join us Sunday mornings at 9 AM, beginning February 18th in the Conference Room, or Thursday evenings, starting February 22nd at 7 PM via Zoom.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Wandering Heart
"Tune my heart"
 PSALM 51:1-17
"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me."

Listen to a song that has the word "heart" in it. As you listen, pray for God to tune your heart this Lent.

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Wandering Heart
"Jesus sought me"
 LUKE 5:1-11 | *Jesus calls Simon Peter as a disciple.*

Find as many fish-shaped things as you can in your home. How many are there?

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

Wandering Heart
"Rescue me from danger"
 MATTHEW 14:22-33
Jesus calls Simon Peter to walk on water.

Try walking on a path made of pillows and imagine you are walking on water. What does it feel like?

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Wandering Heart
"I'm fixed upon it"
 MATTHEW 16:21-23
Jesus scolds Peter after he questions Jesus' mission and calling.

Build an obstacle course. How quickly can you make it through?

PALM / PASSION SUNDAY

Wandering Heart
"Songs of loudest praise"
 JOHN 12:12-16
Jesus rides into Jerusalem while people praise him.

Imagine Jesus is coming to your town. What items can you find that you would use to throw a parade?

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Wandering Heart
"Streams of mercy"
 JOHN 13:1-20
Jesus washes Peter's feet.

Think of a way to take care of a person or pet you love. What can you do for them?

EASTER SUNDAY

Wandering Heart
"And I hope"
 LUKE 24:1-12 | *Peter runs to the empty tomb and learns Jesus is alive.*

Imagine you are Peter racing to the tomb. How fast can you go?

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Wandering Heart
"Here's my heart"
 JOHN 21:1-19
Jesus asks Peter if he loves him.

Find as many heart-shaped things as you can in your home. How many are there?

Devotional Booklets for the Lenten Season are available in the church office. You can see each week's theme on the "Faith Map" and the devotional readings for the week are included in the Devotional. Come be inspired by the Bible readings as well as the commentary, artwork, poetry, and music. The same study materials will be used at both gatherings.

Please visit our Adult Bible Study page on our website at www.wpcbc.or or see Rev. Linda or Pastor Jamie with any questions.