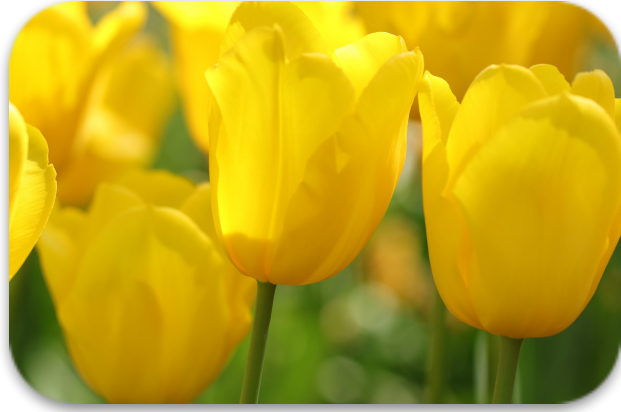


THE WESTMINSTER LOG



Beloved TEAMMATES in Ministry:

There is no shortage of sporting events to watch this time of year. Baseball and softball are in full swing. The playoffs have begun in both the NBA and NHL. Cars and trucks are zooming around the speedways at NASCAR events. Soccer teams are dusting off their shin guards and cleats ready to run through the mud at any given moment. And we're just a few months away from the 2024 Summer Olympics!

By now most of you probably know that I am an avid sports fan and really enjoy watching teams compete. While I am partial to College Basketball (GO TAR HEELS!), I have a deep appreciation of the level of team work, discipline, and dedication that athletes display regardless of their sport. Watching a pitcher strike out a team's best hitter, seeing a home run ball go out over the deepest part of the field, or watching the infield turn a double play are all impressive things to watch. Watching a well-executed play on the football field is a thing of beauty. Everyone is where they are supposed to be, doing what they've done in practice a hundred times, and successful or not, they are fun to watch.

Whether it's the Tigers, the Red Wings, the Wolverines, Spartans, or the Tar Heels, a good team is made up of unselfish players. Everyone has a role to play, and they do it for the good of the team. Not everyone can be a starter on the team. A good baseball team needs more than just good starting pitching, they need a good bullpen too. A great basketball team needs great bench players who can come in and play just as hard while giving the starters a chance to rest. Your team needs a balance of defense and offense. On a good team EVERYONE is important.

I don't think it is that difficult to draw a connection between a good team and a good church. Every person is important and plays a role. The pastors and the staff cannot do everything, no matter how hard they try. The Session could not perform all the tasks of the church without the help of many other volunteers. It takes the gifts and time of everyone to make a church successful. There is no coincidence that on Pentecost, the Spirit was poured out on ALL those who were present and on several occasions in the New Testament, Paul uses an analogy of the church being the body of Christ, with each person making up a part of the whole.

Just like a good team is not at its best when a player is injured or unable to play, our church is not at its best when we aren't all invested and active. We need you with us! We need your voice, your story, your hands and feet, your prayers. We need your gifts to help in make Westminster Presbyterian Church everything that God intends us to be. Thank you for being a part of our service and witness to Bay City and beyond.

As a small way to say THANK YOU, the Staff and the Session are hosting this year's **Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon following worship on Pentecost Sunday, May 19th**. We hope that you can join us for this free TACO lunch and time of fellowship.

In Christ's peace,
Pastor Jamie



MAY 2024 ISSUE 185


WWW.WPCBC.ORG

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.

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

Visit us on Facebook:
Westminster Presbyterian
Church - Bay City



- Pastor
Rev. Jamie Milton (ext. 204)
- Parish Associate
Rev. Linda Williams (ext. 203)
- Treasurer/Secretary
Heather Heidtman (ext. 201)
- Facilities Manager
Harold Miller (ext. 205)
- Children and Youth Director
Leah Sneller (ext. 208)

May

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
Sunday school for PreK-4th grade

9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study
During the month of May we are studying the Book of Ephesians

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

9:45 a.m. Chime Choir
For Children PreK-4th grade

10:30 a.m. Worship

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

Youth Parents please refer to the Sunday dates in May or checkout the WPC Parents page on Facebook for a schedule for the remainder of the program year.

Our May Birthdays

Donna Gould	Charley Curtiss
Judy Randall	Carol Eagle
Larry Wilson	Patricia Horning
Susan Wilson	Doreen Newcombe
Terry Molyneaux	Ronald VanTol
Judy Hudson	John Hegenauer
Gerald Bruce	Sharon Costello
Jeff Rogers	Chris Vanderwill

*Birthdays listed are for our 75+ Members

Sunday	Monday
<p>Office Hours Monday – Thursday: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.</p> <p>website: wpcbc.org</p> <p>Join us on Facebook</p> <p>Westminster Presbyterian Church - Bay City</p>	
<p>5 Communion Sunday</p> <p>No Youth Activities Tonight (If you're able, go out and support some of our youth friends who are in Grease and The Wizard of Oz.)</p>	<p>6</p> <p>6:00 p.m. Mission Mtg. 7:00 p.m. Deacon Mtg.</p>
<p>12</p> <p>Happy Mother's Day</p> <p>No Youth Activities Tonight</p>	<p>13</p> <p>5:00 p.m. Property Mtg. 6:00 p.m. Finance Mtg.</p>
<p>19 Pentecost Sunday & Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon</p> <p>Youth Fun Night-more details to come</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>26</p> <p>No Youth Activities Tonight</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Memorial Day Church Office Closed</p>

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri/Sat
<p>Titus Youth Theatre will be using our building again this year. They are here Tuesday and Thursdays 3:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. & Saturdays 10:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m.</p>			
<p>7</p> <p>10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 10:00 a.m. Staff Mtg. 1:30 p.m. Grateful Book Study 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts 6:00 p.m. Personnel Mtg.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>2</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>3</p> <p>4</p>
<p>14</p> <p>9:00 a.m. Matthew 25 Cafe 10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 1:00 p.m. Bay City Lions Club 1:00 p.m. StarGazers and SoulSearchers 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts 6:30 p.m. Spiritual Growth Mtg.</p>	<p>8</p> <p>5:15 p.m. Worship Mtg. 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>9</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>10</p> <p>11 Postal Food Drive</p>
<p>21</p> <p>10:00 a.m. Staff Mtg. 10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 1:00 p.m. StarGazers and SoulSearchers 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts 6:30 p.m. Session Meeting</p>	<p>15</p> <p>5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>16</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>17</p> <p>18</p>
<p>28</p> <p>10:00 a.m. Log Folding 10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 12:00 p.m. Lunch and Learn 1:30 p.m. Grateful Book Study 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts</p>	<p>22</p> <p>5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal 5:00 p.m. ISD Prom</p>	<p>23</p> <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran</p>	<p>24</p> <p>25</p>
<p>28</p> <p>10:00 a.m. Log Folding 10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 12:00 p.m. Lunch and Learn 1:30 p.m. Grateful Book Study 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts</p>	<p>29</p> <p>5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>30</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. Deborah Circle</p>	<p>31</p>

In March, the **Operating Fund** had income of \$34,423.45 and expenses of \$35,219.16. In addition to the normal, recurring costs we have to keep the church operating each month, the Mission Ministry made gifts to the Presbytery of Lake Huron, the Synod and General Assembly in March to fulfill their quarterly commitment to support the mission work of the greater church. New music was purchased for Holy Week, as well as other items for some of our Lenten services and other activities during Lent.

The **Building Improvement Fund** received contributions of \$317.00; there were no expenses in March. The fund balance at the end of the month is \$14,550.17 We're grateful to those who contribute to the Building Improvement Fund.

The **Major Repairs Fund** had income of \$357.00 in March and no expenses. The Major Repairs Fund has a balance at the end of March of \$42,015.28. Thank you to those who contribute to the Major Repairs Fund.

Contributions to the **Capital Campaign Fund** totaled \$12,213.01. In addition to our regular loan payment, we were able to put another \$25,000 on the principal of the loan, bringing the balance down to \$124,513.51. Thank you to everyone who has and is continuing to contribute to the Campaign. We're getting closer and closer to paying this off.

If you ever have any questions about Westminster's finances, please don't hesitate to give me a call, send an email or stop by the office.

Heather Heidtman
treasurer@wpcbc.org

Dear Westminster Family,

Thank you for the wonderful day you gave me on April 7th, celebrating my 15 year anniversary working at Westminster. In ways I'll never be able to fully express, your kind words, hugs, and cards were such a lift to my spirits. But really, if I think about it, that Sunday, while indeed special, wasn't much different from all the other days I've had around here. Because in those 15 years you have always supported me, stood by me and encouraged me as I have taken on new tasks and roles. I am so, so grateful for that continued support.



Speaking of support, I work with an amazing group of co-workers: Jamie, Linda, Harold, Elaine, Dawn, Rachel, Seth, Mrs. Hanson, Judy, Leah, and Martha. I could fill up this entire Log with what you all mean to me and the ways you inspire me. I watch you put your heart and soul into everything you do around this church. Never looking for praise or accolades; always keeping what is best for our church at the forefront.

And then there is all of you, the congregation of Westminster. Every single day, I come to work and get to witness the ways you love this church, the ways you care for each other, how you give of your time and talents.

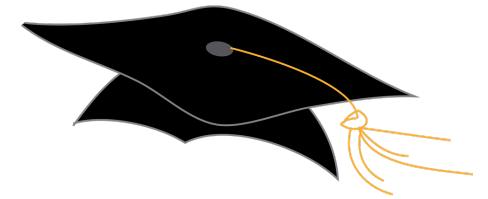
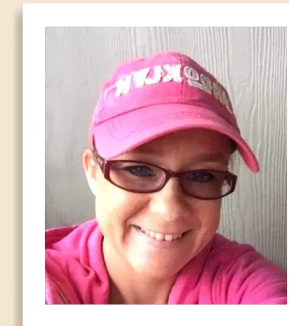
And so, over all these years, what I've tried to do, quite simply, is follow the example you all set. Needless to say, it's a high bar.

The worship theme on April 7th as we wrapped up our Lenten and Easter series on the disciple Peter, was "Here's My Heart". The Holy Spirit was at work in church again that day as I found that theme very fitting... Westminster, you have my heart.

Much love to you all,
Heather

With Sympathy

Prayers of the congregation are extended to the family and friends of Samantha Kosta. Sam passed away March 23, 2024. A funeral service was held at Westminster on April 11th.



If you know someone who is graduating from high school, college, or university, please call the church office and let us know! We will honor graduates on **May 19th** during the worship service.

*To Our Church Family, Friends, and Wings of Prayer:
Thank you for all your prayers, love and support for Dale's procedure and follow-up testing. At this point, it appears the outcome has been successful. The power of prayer, love and support is amazing. Many thanks to all of you.*

*In Christ's Love,
Patti and Dale
Wesenick*



Thank You

BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARY

In April, we began a new monthly addition to the Log, listing the names of our children who are celebrating their baptismal anniversary. The Spiritual Growth Committee prays for each child and sends them a card, and we encourage you to pray for them as well!

May Baptismal Anniversaries: James Graves

TALENT ABOUND AT WESTMINSTER

We wanted to give a shout out to some of our members that are sharing their gifts with our community this Spring. Several of our choir members took part in Bay Chorale's "Dream" concert held at Garber High School on April 19th. Dawn Auger, Ken Wright, Buzz West, Judy Harrelson, and Don Clough all lent their voices to an amazing choral concert, with Katie Lindahl sharing her talent on the violin. Upcoming, the Midland Concert Band has a performance May 5th and the Bay Concert Band is performing on May 7th.

Our youth are showcasing their acting chops too! Olive, Lauren and James Graves, along with Sabine Sivy have roles in John Glenn's production of *Grease*, the first weekend in May. Harper Lindahl Milton is putting on her ruby slippers as Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* at the Masonic Temple, May 3-5, and we hope you got to see Grace Rezler as she shined in Western High School's production of *Once Upon a Mattress* a few weeks ago.

In addition to this wonderful talent, we also have a congregation that is so supportive of each other. One of our members remarked after the Bay Chorale concert, "I think half the church was in the audience that night!"

Please keep the church office informed of any events that feature our congregation, we'd like promote these events in the monthly Log and in Sunday's announcements. We love cheering you on!

END OF SCHOOL BLOCK PARTY AND 2024 PENTECOST OFFERING

On June 4, 2023, our youth group, joined by dozens of volunteers from Westminster, and 5 community organizations, took a leap of faith. We had invited neighborhood school children, teens, and their families. We had secured a \$1000 grant, \$500 for a bike raffle, and donations of food. We were also supported by forty percent of the congregation's donations to the 2023 Pentecost Special Offering. By 12:30pm, everything was set up: the bounce house inflated, the popcorn hot, and the ice cream cold. And then we waited to see what the afternoon would bring.



Over the next three hours, we estimate around 300-350 people were welcomed to our space. We went through ALL our cotton candy, fruit, and gift bags. Our popcorn maker was busy the whole time, as were the "guardians" of the bounce house and our face painters! Several of our community partners in attendance remarked that it was one of the best such events they had attended.

This year, on **Sunday, June 2**, we're taking the opportunity to open our doors again, and we're asking for your help and support. If you have some time to help that afternoon, we'll have a place for you to serve. We'll need help with food, set up and clean up, volunteers for our hospitality tent with directions, gift bags, and other helpful information for our guests. We've been awarded a grant from the Bay Area Community Foundation to cover some of the costs, and any financial support is also welcome, either through direct donations, or by supporting the 2024 Pentecost offering we'll be collecting on Sunday, May 19th. Please prayerfully consider how you might be able to use your gifts to help support our community and its youth during this year's End of School Block Party!

Bell Choir Sunday



Last summer we sent our 5-octave handbell set to Schulmerich Bells in Pennsylvania to be refurbished. The cost was over \$12,000, paid out the Major Repairs Fund. As a thank you to the congregation for their financial support, the Adult Bell Choir will have a "Bell Sunday" playing many of your favorite tunes (and ours too!) We hope you'll make plans to attend this special worship service on Sunday, June 9th.



WPC AND ME! (NEW MEMBER INQUIRY CLASS)

Have you been participating in the life and worship of Westminster and want to know more about what it means to become a member of the church? You are invited to attend our new member inquiry classes! We will hold two, one-hour classes before worship on Sundays, **June 2 and June 9**, beginning at 9:00 AM. Participants will learn about our PC(USA) denomination and what it means to be an active member of Westminster Presbyterian Church. There is no obligation to join the church after taking the class, but the classes are required for those who would like to become members. Please let Pastor Jamie or the church office know if you are interested in attending or know of someone who might be.



WELCOME MARTHA TAPLEY!

Longtime member Martha Tapley is joining the staff at Westminster as Financial Secretary, assisting Heather with some of the financial duties here at church. Martha retired from Wieland Sales in 2019 and mentioned to Rev. Linda that she was willing to help out in the office a few hours a week. Needless to say, we're thrilled, Heather especially, that Martha is joining the team. She brings her love of this church and is willing to share her time and knowledge to support the work we do around Westminster.

Reflections from Lent and Easter

I don't know about you but sometimes, even without knowing, I assume the minister can solve all the problems. I'm so glad I'm not the minister.

I've enjoyed our study of Peter. I believe his life can help me with mine. In Pastor Jamie's Easter sermon one line in particular stand out for me: "We can always try again." These words certainly hold comfort and hope. They have something to do with forgiveness. They encourage us to "try again".

It was some time ago that Pastor Linda lead a study on the book of Ecclesiastes. That's the book that says there is a time for everything-"A time to be born, and a time to die" etc. There is a piece of wisdom in Ecclesiastes that has helped me, that I have carried over time. The teacher or preacher in Ecclesiastes says we shouldn't necessarily "seize the day" or believe we are in control, or believe everything is up to us. Instead, we should calmly go about our day doing our tasks and allow the day to unfold as it will. I find when I follow this advice, my day goes better. I accomplish more. I find more joy.

Since much of Ecclesiastes is negative, the other day I felt a certain gladness when in our study of "Nine Essential Things I've Learned About Life," (A wonderful book, well worth reading!) Rabbi Kushner points to some joy in Ecclesiastes. "Go eat your bread in gladness and drink your wine with joy, and your acts will be approved by God... Enjoy happiness with someone you love all the fleeting days that have been granted you on this earth." (Ecclesiastes 9:7-9) In other words, we are to seek joy in living.

During this Lent and Easter, because of our church staff, we the congregation have shared many special and enjoyable moments. I hope you agree with me in saying our staff deserves our thanks and praise. Our church has much to be grateful for. (And thank you to Tom Tolles for the beautiful crosses!)

*Our Loving Creator-
Thank you for our church and all the love it embodies. Thank you for the many programs and activities our church provides. May we the congregates, be willing to participate and thus reap the many benefits. Amen.*

~ Anne Remington

Mother's Day Baby Shower

Binkies, bottles and blankets-oh, my!

It's time to start thinking about the Annual Mother's day Baby Shower here at Westminster. For those who are not familiar with this event, it is our opportunity to collect and distribute baby items to area agencies that provide for babies in need. On May 12th, we will have tables in the hallway outside the sanctuary. Please bring your baby items to church that Sunday and place them on the table.

During the following week, we will distribute the items to Good Samaritan Rescue Mission, Women's Center, and the Salvation Army. We will also take packages of diapers to the Diaper Alliance in Midland. See the suggested list of items below.

- *Diapers (preemie, newborn, #1 and #2 especially)
- *Pacifiers
- *Bibs
- *Blankets
- *Onesies
- *Sleepers
- *Baby Shampoo
- *Baby Wash,
- *Baby Lotion
- *Diaper Cream
- *Baby Bath Towels and Washcloths
- *Socks
- *Booties
- *Hats
- *Outfits
- *Bottles
- *Infant Toys
- *Infant Dishes and Utensils
- *Sweaters



DEBORAH CIRCLE

Deborah Circle continues to meet on the last Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Their next meeting is May 30th. Please call Karen Schoepach for more information about their gatherings.



SPRING RUMMAGE SALE ON HOLD

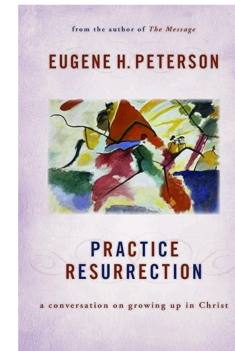
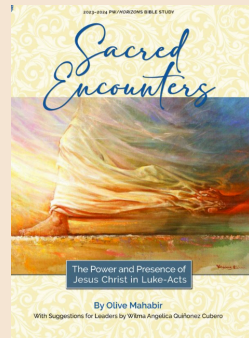
The Presbyterian Women will NOT be holding their Spring Rummage Sale this month. They have decided to have one sale a year and will hold their next sale in October. We'll share details as we get closer.

Remember, the Salvation Army, the Good Samaritan Rescue Mission, and the Cat's Meow are just a few places in the area that accept donations of gently used items.

If you are interested in helping with the next Church Rummage Sale, please contact the church office. It's a giant undertaking and while it is a win-win for all of us—we're able to donate items we don't need anymore and the church benefits from the sale of those items—it takes a lot of work from so many people to make it happen.

LYDIA CIRCLE

Lydia Circle continues to meet on the third Thursday of the month at 1:00 p.m. Their next meeting is May 16th. Lydia Circle is using the 2023 PW Bible Study, Sacred Emotions. Please call Barb Tolles with any questions.

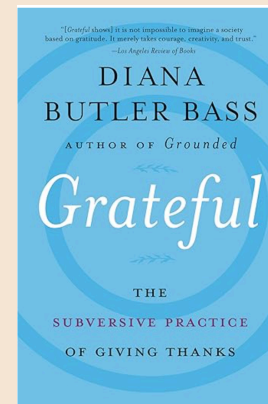


SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

In this season of Easter, our Sunday morning Bible study is focusing on the letter of Paul to the Ephesians – and to all Christians even in this day and age, even here at Westminster Presbyterian Church. In addition to focusing on scripture, we are using the book – Practice Resurrection by Eugene Peterson – as a resource book to help us gain additional insights into the timeless message of Ephesians. In the introduction to his book, Peterson calls the book of Ephesians one of “soulcraft”– the formation of a mature life in Christ. He writes: “All of us are born. No exceptions. Birth brought us alive into a world that is vast, complex, damaged, demanding...and beautiful....Jesus used the birth event as a metaphor for another kind of birth: becoming alive to God...vast, complex, damaged, demanding and beautiful. Alive to God's holiness, God's will, kingdom, power, and glory.”

Please don't hear this as too abstract to have practical value in our everyday living; Ephesians is a down-to-earth help for our faith journey in the 21st Century. As Peterson wrote: “The Bible is not a book to carry around and read for information on God, but a voice to listen to.” Even if you haven't been able to attend thus far, you are invited to join us **Sunday mornings at 9 AM** in the Conference Room. Please call the church office or see Rev. Linda with any questions.

NEW BOOK STUDY



If gratitude is good, why is it at times, so hard to do? In *Grateful*, Diana Butler Bass untangles our conflicting understandings of gratitude and sets the table for a renewed practice of giving thanks.

We know that gratitude is good, but many of us find it hard to sustain a meaningful life of gratefulness. Four out of five Americans report feeling gratitude on a regular basis, but those private feelings seem disconnected from larger concerns of our public lives. In *Grateful*, cultural observer and theologian Diana Butler Bass takes on this “gratitude gap” and offers up surprising, relevant, and powerful insights to practice gratitude.

Bass, author of the award-winning *Grounded* and ten other books on spirituality and culture, explores the transformative, subversive power of gratitude for our personal lives and in communities. Using her trademark blend of historical research, spiritual insights, and timely cultural observation, she shows how we can overcome this gap and make change in our own lives and in the world.

With honest stories and heartrending examples from history and her own life, Bass reclaims gratitude as a path to greater connection with god, with others, with the world, and even with our own souls. It's time to embrace a more radical practice of gratitude—the virtue that heals us and helps us thrive.

Please call Rev. Linda with any questions.

PERPETUAL PUZZLE PLACE

We hope by now you've found the “Perpetual Puzzle Place” in the corner of the Fellowship Hall! We'll keep updating the puzzle each time one gets completed. You can work on it Sunday mornings or stop in during the week when the building is open and plug in a few pieces.



Stop in anytime the church is open!

We've already gotten a great start on a puzzle featuring Main Street on Mackinac Island.

GRATEFUL SCHEDULE

Come join us as we begin this journey with gratitude on Tuesday afternoon, April 30th at 1:30. In May we will meet on May 7th and 28th at 1:30, two afternoons in June (18th and 25th), and then wrap up in July, meeting weekly beginning on July 2 and wrapping up on July 30th. Books are available in the church office.



The Mission Partnerships Ministry wanted to share some updates on their work and ways you help, plus some upcoming events.

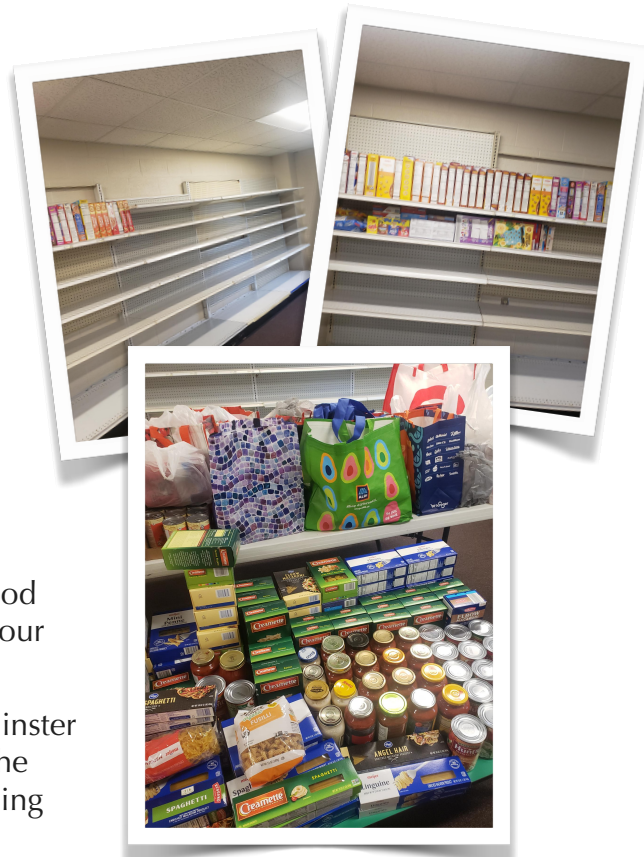
Food Pantry:
•Hidden Harvest and the Food Bank of East Michigan will be our guests at the May 28th Lunch and Learn and will

explain the benefits to Westminster and our community in need (see below).

- We are looking for funding sources for specific shelving needed for the new pantry location. Grant opportunities are being investigated.
- Do you have a stand-up freezer you no longer need? We'll take the donation!
- Volunteers to staff regular pantry hours will soon be needed.
- Contact Janet Beattie for further information.
- If you would like to make monetary donation towards the Food Pantry, please write that on your envelope or memo line of your check.

The Good Samaritan Rescue Mission has been supported by Westminster since their doors opened in 2005. The Labadie Lofts, provided by the Rescue Mission, is an affordable apartment complex for students aging out of the foster care system. A tour of the Lofts will be offered one evening in early June. Stay tuned for details, and join the Mission Committee as we learn more about our mission dollars at work.

More Volunteer Opportunities: Habitat for Humanity, another local charity supported by your mission contributions, is planning a neighborhood revitalization project for late August or early September. All skill levels will be needed. Further information will be coming.



Thank you Bill Shelt for the donation of shelving for our new Food Pantry space. And Westminster, THANK YOU for the over 1700 items donated during our Lenten Challenge. We're in the process of filling up those shelves with all that food!



As you have heard, so much was accomplished with our recent Food Pantry Challenge. We are now beginning to coordinate our food distribution efforts here at the church with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan and Hidden Harvest. Because there has been a rapidly increasing number of food insecure people and families within Bay County, local pantries like ours, have experienced an increased need for help. To help us better understand the need in Bay County, Jeremiah from Hidden Harvest and Katie from the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan will be our guests at the Tuesday, May 30th Lunch & Learn.

Come join in on Tuesday, May 28th, at noon in Fellowship Hall to learn and better understand the needs of our Bay County neighbors and what we can do to be of support. You are welcome to bring a bag lunch; beverages will be provided and a small, sweet treat as well. Any questions, please call the church office.

Healing Through Nature: Nature can serve as a powerful healer during times of grief. Individuals might find comfort in the sights, sounds, and smells of spring, allowing them to connect with something larger than themselves and find a sense of peace amidst their pain.

Acceptance of Change: Spring is a season of change, as winter gives way to warmer temperatures and longer days. Individuals could experience a parallel journey of accepting the changes that come with loss, ultimately finding growth and transformation in the process.

Remember:

Your grief is your own. It may sneak up in mementos that feel inconvenient. But the loss of someone you love was never something that was convenient. So your grief won't be either. You will grieve. You will cry. You will break down. You will be a mess. But you don't owe anyone an apology for how you choose to grieve. Grief is messy. Grief is unkind. Grief comes bearing a heaviness you didn't know about before. But in that grief what you find is the kind of people who will at least try to lighten the load of what it is you're carrying. No one can bring them back or make that pain go away. But on the other side of this coin is that grief is so much love for someone who left too soon.

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

In April we wrapped up our series – Praying Our Goodbyes – with a focus on “New Melodies Break Forth.” Participants found the book very meaningful and so although we have completed the book, there still may be some interested in reading the book. If so, please, call the church office and we will order a copy for you. Cost is approximately \$5. 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 Tuesday, May 30th at 2 PM.

Coffee & Conversation



FELLOWSHIP TIME

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



Coffee and donuts included!

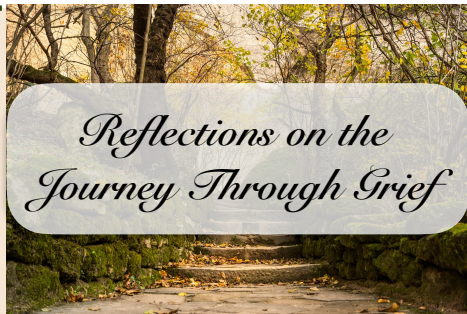
And if you're able to help with Fellowship Time, please reach out to Dawn Reszke. It's as simple as picking up some donuts and making coffee on Sunday mornings.

Church telephone number marked as SPAM



Have you received a call from the church and had it come up on your caller ID as spam? Heather has been working with our telephone carrier, and unfortunately, there isn't a quick fix for this issue—but there is something you can do to help. If you have the option on your cell phone, after you've received the call, it may ask “Is this SPAM?” Select “no” or “allow”. With those using a landline, that isn't an option. However, if you see the church number, (989) 686-1360 come up on your caller ID, please know it is someone from the church calling you.

Each month the Spiritual Growth and Faith Formation Committee will share 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.



“There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love.”

—Washington Irving

As we step into the season of renewal and new beginnings, we are met with a juxtaposition of emotions. Spring brings forth vibrant blooms, warmer weather, and the promise of growth, yet for those navigating grief, it can also stir feelings of longing and loss. You may find yourselves grappling with the complex interplay of grief and the vibrant energy of spring.

Through this season of renewal and growth, it is OK to feel the weight of your grief. Just as flowers bloom after a harsh winter, your heart will find its way to healing. Remember, each day is a step forward, no matter how small it may seem. Embrace the beauty around you, and know that you are not alone in this journey.

As you do journey through the season of spring, you may find moments of solace, connection, and renewal amidst the complexities of grief. Remember, it's okay to embrace both the joy and the sorrow that this season brings, for it is through our experiences of loss that we cultivate a deeper appreciation for the beauty of life.

April brought rain and a shift from being cooped inside to a sudden desire to be outside. Many may host parties, invite you to outings, and have more energy than you feel at this moment.

During your springtime grief, it's essential to acknowledge and validate your emotion, even if they don't align with the season's outwardly positive atmosphere. Seeking support from friends, family or a therapist can provide a safe space to process your feelings and find comfort during this challenging time. Additionally, finding ways to honor and remember your loved one can help you navigate grief while still embracing themes of growth and renewal in your own time and way.

Spring and grief can intertwine in various poignant and meaningful ways, reflecting the complex nature of human emotions and the cycles of life. Here are a few ideas:

Renewal Amidst Loss: Spring symbolizes renewal and rebirth with its blossoming flowers and budding trees. Explore the theme of finding moments of renewal and hope amidst the grieving process. Individuals could discover that even in the midst of grief, there are signs of new life and growth around them.

Metaphorical Resurrection: Use the imagery of spring as a metaphor for the resurrection of hope and joy after experiencing loss. Just as plants emerge from the ground after a long winter, individuals experiencing grief can find strength and resilience to emerge from their sorrow.

Seasonal Contrasts: Highlight the contrast between the external beauty and vibrancy of spring with the internal turmoil and sadness of grief. This could create a powerful juxtaposition, underscoring the complexity of emotions during times of loss.

Memories in Bloom: Spring can serve as a reminder of past memories and moments shared with loved one who are no longer present. Individuals might find solace in revisiting these memories as they navigate their grief, finding comfort in the beauty of the natural world that surrounds them.

Symbolism of Flowers: Explore the symbolism of flowers in the grieving process. Different flowers could represent various stages of grief or emotions, such as daisies symbolizing innocence or lilies representing purity and rebirth. Individuals could find solace in creating floral arrangements or tending to a garden as a way of processing their emotions.

Seasonal Rituals: Develop rituals or traditions specific to spring that individuals use to cope with grief. This could include activities like planting a tree in memory of a loved one, participating in a springtime festival as a form of celebration and remembrance, or simply taking walks in nature to find solace and peace.

Westminster Presbyterian Church

VBS 2024

AUGUST 5-8

REGISTER NOW!

Come join us, August 5-8 for a fun-filled week! Bay Shore Camp's "On the Road" Day Camp is coming to Westminster for VBS! Monday-Thursday from 8:30 a.m - 4:30 p.m.

Grades Entering K-5th grade

The cost for VBS is free thanks to an anonymous donation from a member of our congregation.

Scan the QR code to register or call the church office for more details!

SUMMER CAMP

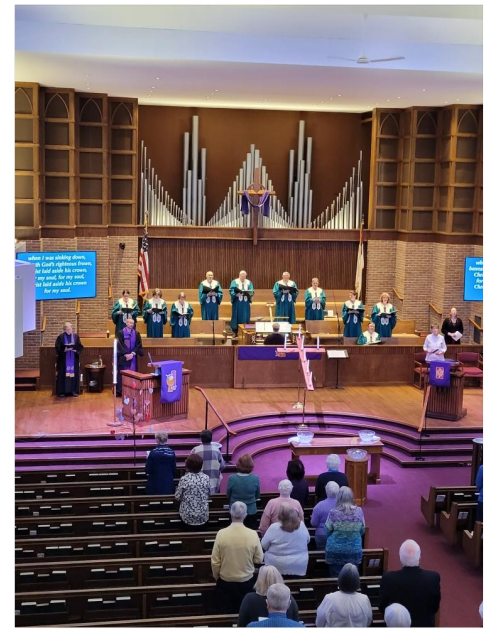
STARGAZERS AND SOULSEARCHERS

Writer and Presbyterian Pastor, Julie Hester shares each week (Email or post) a writing prompt, meant to be jumping-off points for us to write about what matters. She encourages us to use the prompts however we like—to journal, to draft thoughts for our own writing project, as meditation or prayer ideas, or for another creative endeavor. As she always says – “Grab your pen and paper and let your words loose on the page.”

In April we took her suggestion and a group of us began meeting for 1½ hours on two Tuesdays. We will be meeting again in May – 14th & 21st – to continue a time of seeing God all around us and seeing God at work in our inner lives. We could do that alone, but there is something meaningful in doing it in community, even if we do not share what we have written.

Phrases from the Beatitudes will be our writing prompts – reflecting on our own impressions of the Beatitudes for today's world. Even if you did not participate last month or can only participate one time in May, come along anyway. Each session is complete in itself; one does not build upon another.

These informal sessions are convened by Judy Hudson and Pastor Linda. As always, no one will be required share their writing, unless they want to share. Hope to see you on **May 14th at 1:00 pm**. Please call the church office with any questions.



Maundy Thursday



Good Friday



Easter Vigil and Egg Hunt



Easter Sunday

Thank you to EVERYONE who made Holy Week such a meaningful and special week for us all! A special thank you to our Fellowship and Outreach Committee for the delicious Easter Breakfast.

