



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Bay City, MI  
Permit No. 278

# THE WESTMINSTER LOG

In the weeks leading up to Advent, we'll be considering our faith practices and rituals that surround the mystery of death and the grief that accompanies this and other losses in our lives. Our religious practices seek to honor the one who has died, and surround those who grieve with needed care and support. Inspired by our faith, we *Comfort Those Who Mourn*. When there is a death, family, friends, and neighbors reach out: calls are made, cards are sent, social media messages are posted. Stories are told and retold. Meals are shared.

The Rev. Cynthia Campbell writes, "Some social scientists have suggested that *empathy*, the capacity for feeling another's suffering, is hard-wired into human beings. The instinct to reach out to others proved an evolutionary benefit, they argue. Providing care and support to one another enabled communities or extended family groups to survive and thrive, thus passing on that trait to succeeding generations. Those who follow the Jewish and Christian traditions might say much the same thing in another way. We are created in the image of God, and thus the compassion we extend to those who suffer or grieve is a reflection of God's own character. Our ability to comfort one another is a response to the comfort we have received from God. In whatever ways we think of its origin, comforting one another appears to be deeply embedded in the human experience."

While most closely associated with death, there are many other things that we grieve and many other occasions for mourning. The loss of a job or marriage or physical health or the future we imagined for ourselves or someone else. A dear friend moves away. A beloved pet dies or gets lost. A family member becomes estranged. Our ability to comfort one another is a response to the comfort we have received from God. Loss takes many forms, and so does grief. As those who seek to *Comfort Those Who Mourn*, it is vital that we recognize the wide range of both grief and loss.

Henri Nouwen suggests that we care best when we recognize our own broken places and know what it means to receive healing. When we acknowledge our own losses and are grateful for the comfort we have received, we are most able to come alongside those who mourn.

As we look at comforting others, in worship we'll explore:


- Name Loss and Receive God's Comfort (November 3)
- Show Up and Comfort Others (November 10)
- Share God's Promises (November 17)

*Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.*  
Isaiah 40:1

WWW.WPCBC.ORG NOVEMBER 2024 ISSUE 192

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.

Visit us on Facebook:  
Westminster Presbyterian Church - Bay City



Phone: 989-686-1360  
E-mail: office@wpbc.org

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

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

## IMPORTANT DATES IN NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

### Sunday, November 3

- All Saints' Day Remembrance

### Sunday, November 24

- Hanging of the Greens (pg. 10)
- Packing Thanksgiving Baskets

### Sunday, December 1

- First Sunday of Advent
- Advent Dinner (pg. 10)

### Friday, December 13

- Parents Night Out

### Sunday, December 15

- Children's Christmas Program (pg. 11)
- Christmas Caroling 4:00 p.m.

### Thursday, December 19

- Longest Night Service 6:00 p.m.

### Sunday, December 22

- Christmas Cantata

### Monday, December 23

- Christmas Movie

### Tuesday, December 24

- Christmas Eve Services 4:00 & 7:00 p.m.

### Sunday, December 29

- Pancakes and PJ's

# November

## Sundays

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

**9:00 a.m. Sunday School**  
Sunday school for PreK-4th grade

**9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study**  
This month, we'll continue our study on the Gospel of John. Please see page 3 for more details.

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

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

**9:55 a.m. Chime Choir**  
For children K-4th grade

**10:30 a.m. Worship**  
Beginning November 5 our theme is Lament; see page 2 for more details

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

**5:00 p.m. Youth Bells**  
For Youth 5th-12th grade

**5:30 p.m. Youth Dinner**

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

| Sunday  | Monday   |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p><u>Happy Birthday</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>Pam Binder<br/>Hazel Kish<br/>Betty Lunger<br/>Scott Newcombe<br/>Anna Pavlawk</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <p>Fred Meyer<br/>Shirley Howell<br/>Alma Watton<br/>Mary Ann Meyer<br/>Buzz West</p> </td> </tr> </table> |  | <p>Pam Binder<br/>Hazel Kish<br/>Betty Lunger<br/>Scott Newcombe<br/>Anna Pavlawk</p> | <p>Fred Meyer<br/>Shirley Howell<br/>Alma Watton<br/>Mary Ann Meyer<br/>Buzz West</p> |
| <p>Pam Binder<br/>Hazel Kish<br/>Betty Lunger<br/>Scott Newcombe<br/>Anna Pavlawk</p>   | <p>Fred Meyer<br/>Shirley Howell<br/>Alma Watton<br/>Mary Ann Meyer<br/>Buzz West</p>    |   |   |
| 3   | 4  |   |   |
| <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <i>All Saint's Remembrance</i> </div>  | <p>5:30 p.m. Mission Mtg.<br/>7:00 p.m. Deacon Mtg.</p>                                  |   |   |
| 10  | 11   |   |   |
| <p>11:45 a.m. Fellowship &amp; Outreach Mtg.</p>  | <p>5:00 p.m. Property Mtg.<br/>6:00 p.m. Finance Mtg.<br/>7:00 p.m. Stewardship Mtg.</p> |   |   |
| 17  | 18   |   |   |
| <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <i>New Members</i> </div>  |  |   |   |
| 24  | 25   |   |   |
| <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <i>Hanging of the Greens</i> </div>  |  |   |   |

| Tuesday  | Wednesday   | Thursday   | Fri/Sat    |
|--|---|--|------------|
| <p><u>Office Hours</u><br/>Monday – Thursday: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.<br/>(closed 12:00-1:00 p.m. for lunch)</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://wpcbc.org">wpcbc.org</a></p> <p><u>Join us on Facebook</u><br/>Westminster Presbyterian Church - Bay City</p> |   |  | 1<br><br>2 |
| 5  | 6   | 7  | 8          |
| <p>10:00 a.m. Hearts &amp; Hands Knitting<br/>10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting<br/>6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts<br/>6:00 p.m. Personnel Mtg.</p>   | <p>5:15 p.m. Worship Mtg.<br/>6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir</p>       | <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS<br/>5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran<br/>7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom</p>   | 9          |
| 12   | 13  | 14   | 15         |
| <p>9:00 a.m. Matthew 25 Cafe<br/>10:00 a.m. Hearts &amp; Hands Knitting<br/>1:00 p.m. Lions Club<br/>6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts<br/>6:30 p.m. Spiritual Growth Meeting</p>   | <p>5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir<br/>6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir</p> | <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS<br/>5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran<br/>7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom</p>   | 16         |
| 19   | 20  | 21   | 22         |
| <p>10:00 a.m. Hearts &amp; Hands Knitting<br/>10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting<br/>6:30 p.m. Session Meeting</p>   | <p>5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir<br/>6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir</p> | <p>8:30 a.m. TOPS<br/>1:00 p.m. Lydia Circle<br/>5:00 p.m. Food of Faith at Messiah Lutheran<br/>7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study via Zoom<br/>7:00 p.m. Deborah Circle</p> | 23         |
| 26   | 27  | 28   | 29         |
| <p>10:00 a.m. Hearts &amp; Hands Knitting<br/>12:00 p.m. Lunch and Laugh<br/>6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts</p>  | <p>5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir<br/>6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir</p> | <p><i>Happy Thanksgiving</i></p>   | 30         |

The **Operating Fund** had income of \$25,427.06 in September and expenses of \$34,181.29. We made Mission donations to the Presbytery and General Assembly and Synod. I know I say this almost every other month, but keeping our building cool in the summer, warm in the winter, keeping the lights on, among other expenses, allows us to worship together and do all the good work we do within our church and outside our walls. Your gifts to the Operating Fund matter and are important. Thank you for your commitment to Westminster.

The **Building Improvement Fund** received contributions of \$505.10 in September and did not have any expenses for the month. The Fund ends the month at \$13,800.43.

The **Major Repairs Fund** had income of \$220.75 in September. There were no expenses during the month. The balance at the end of September is \$43,177.69. Thank you to those who contribute to the Major Repairs Fund.

Contributions to the **Capital Campaign Fund** totaled \$1,317.10. The loan balance at the end of September stands at \$117,880.30.

As the Log goes to print the books for October are still open, but I wanted to update you on the special collections we had during the month. The Board of Deacons and the Mission Ministry designated \$1000.00 each to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to help with Hurricane relief efforts and challenged the congregation to match their donations. Not surprisingly, you responded, donating over \$2500.00!

On October 20th, during Children's Sabbath, we collected funds for Sleep in Heavenly Peace and donations totaled over \$750.00.

Westminster, you have always amazed me with your generosity. It has been a great joy to serve as Financial Secretary since 2009 and Treasurer since 2014.

*Peace and Blessings,  
Heather Heidtman*

**SUNDAY MORNING FELLOWSHIP GATHERINGS**

We invite you to join us for **Fellowship Time**, a wonderful opportunity to connect with your church family!

**Before our worship service** (9:30-10:15) plan to stop by the Fellowship Hall for a warm welcome with coffee and donuts. It's the perfect time to start your day by meeting new people, catching up with old friends, and sharing a moment of community.

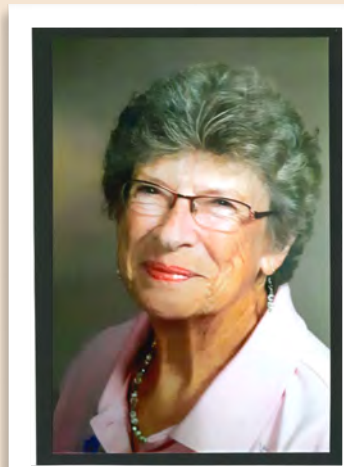
**After the service**, we continue the fellowship in the chapel, where cookies, coffee, and lemonade will be served. This is a relaxed time to reconnect with those you may not have seen in a while, and build new friendships within our congregation.



Whether you are new to our church or have been here for years, Fellowship Time is a great way to strengthen our bonds as a church family. We hope you'll join us for this special time together!



*With Sympathy*



Prayers of the congregation are extended to the family and friends of Annabelle Morse. Anne passed away October 5, 2024.



**GRATITUDE FROM OUR 50-YEAR MEMBERS**

The Church and the Board of Deacons received a few thank you notes for the wonderful celebration of our 50-year members. Here are a few snippets from each thank you note:

*"It is an honor to be a part of this amazing group of individuals and displaying our commitment to God's ministry." "What a lovely celebration of new 50 year members. I appreciate what everyone does." "Thank you much for the wonderful luncheon you provided to celebrate 50 year members"*



Thanks to each and every one of you for your kinds words of sympathy in the recent passing of our mother, Anne Morse. Your thoughts and prayers mean so much to us.

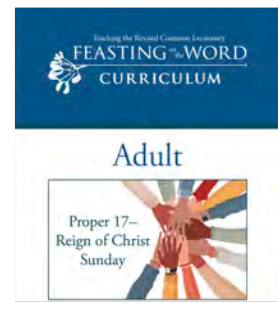
*~Alicen Rogers and Bev Buchanan*

Dear friends,  
I want to thank you for all the cards, thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. It means a lot knowing we have so much support.  
*~Carolyn Eichhorn*

**APPRECIATION FROM OUR MUCH APPRECIATED PASTORS!**

It may seem kind of funny to say "Thank You" for a "Thank You" note, but we found it impossible to let them go by unacknowledged! We were both overwhelmed by the congregation's expressions of support and love for the ministry that we are blessed to be a part of with all of you. Thank you for all the notes, gestures, and words of appreciation that we received during Pastor Appreciation Month. May God continue to bless our journey together!

**ADULT BIBLE STUDY-FEASTING ON THE WORD**



In October we wrapped up our Sunday morning study on the Parables or Short Stories of Jesus. And now we are exploring the **Gospel of Mark**, or at least the final chapters of the Gospel. We've been challenged to consider Jesus' response to the rich man's question – "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"; Greatness Redefined when two disciples were vying for first place, and "Faith that Heals." The remaining chapters of the Gospel of Mark are equally thought provoking. "Faith is answers and questions simultaneously" (S. Guthrie); Bible study is that as well – we explore both our questions and answers.

Come join us **Sunday mornings at 9 AM in the Conference Room**. Discussion materials are available that morning. Please call the church office or Rev. Linda with any questions.

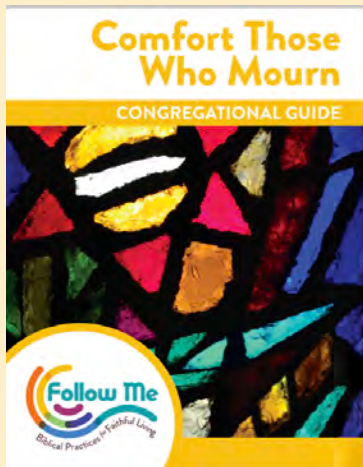
**ADULT BIBLE STUDY-SUNDAY MORNINGS**

**ADULT BIBLE STUDY-COMFORT THOSE**

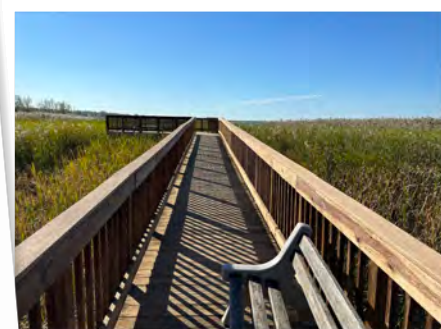
On November 7<sup>th</sup> 7 PM our Thursday evening Bible Study via Zoom will be returning to the Follow Me/Jesus series – **Comfort Those Who Mourn**. Our themes for the three weeks will be:

1. "Name Loss and Receive God's Comfort" based upon readings from Isaiah
2. "Show Up and Comfort Others" based upon readings from both the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament (Job, Psalm 23, Isaiah, and the Gospel of John)
3. "Share God's Promises" based upon readings from Philippians and Romans.

Study guides for this series are available in the church office. The Zoom invitation will be sent out weekly. Please call Rev. Linda with any questions.



**ADULT BIBLE STUDY-THURSDAY EVENINGS**



**CHURCH RETREAT**  
OCTOBER 12, 2024

Our third annual Church Retreat, brought members together on a journey "Quest: The Awakened Traveler" The fall weather was beautiful and a wonderful, relaxing day was had by all.



*The Women at the Well*  
By Pam Binder

*Annual Christmas Pageant*



I am so excited for this year's Christmas Pageant which is The Colors of Christmas. The children and youth are hard at practicing and are excited to share their gifts and talents with you. There will be singing, acting, and recitations throughout the program. Hope to see everyone on December 15<sup>th</sup> to not only celebrate the children and youth and their hard work but to celebrate Jesus' Birth.

And Parents, mark your calendars, we'll have a dress rehearsal, Saturday December 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. here at the church.

~Leah Sneller

**A SNEAK PEAK AT OUR ADVENT SERIES**



Last Advent, we asked "How Does a Weary World Rejoice?" and during Lent we journeyed with Peter using the "Wandering Heart" series, both from A Sanctified Art. This year, they are debuting a new Advent series "Words from the Beginning". "We imagine the words Mary would speak to her newborn son. What scriptures and stories she would impart on him?" They will be stories and blessings and affirmations we've heard before, filled with lessons of hope and goodness. Like the previous 2 series, our Children, Youth and Adults in Sunday School, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study will follow the same weekly theme that we hear in Worship each Sunday morning.

Devotional booklets with poetry, visual art, hymns and reflection prompts will be available. The series creators invite us to enter this Advent season remembering these words from the beginning...blessings to wrap around and comfort you no matter where you are on the journey.



*Continuing wonderful traditions...*  
*Hanging of the Greens*

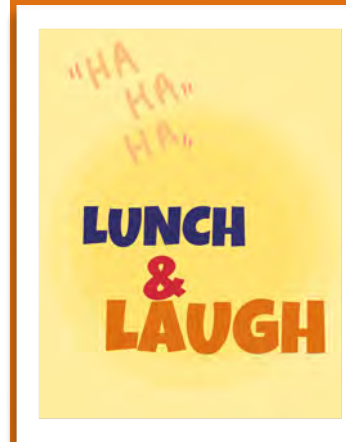
Worship Service, November 24th

Our annual *Hanging of the Greens* service will be held on Sunday, November 24. This interactive worship service invites us to take a closer look at the symbolism with which we adorn our sanctuary as we work together to prepare for the Seasons of Advent and Christmas. We hope that you will plan to join us for this special service! If you are available to stay *after* worship on November 24<sup>th</sup>, we'll finish decorating the rest of the church building. Snacks will be provided by the Fellowship and Outreach Committee.

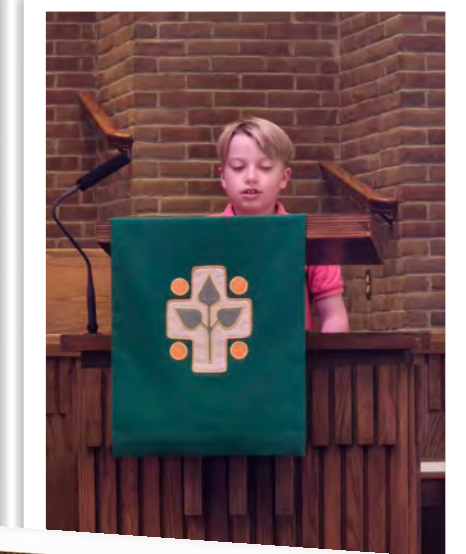
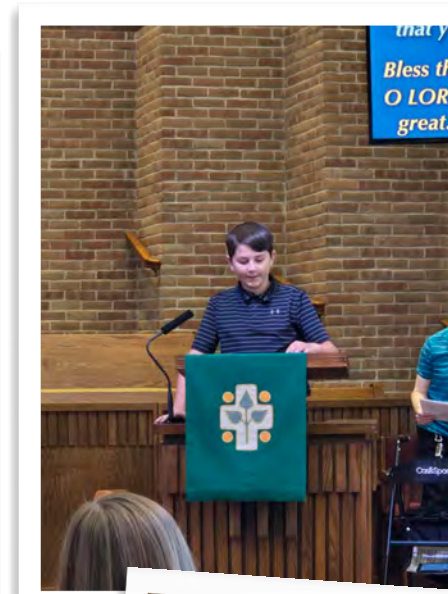
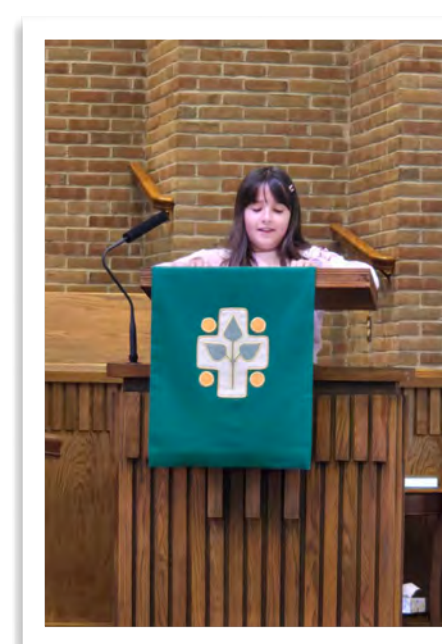


**LUNCH AND LAUGH IN NOVEMBER**

After enjoying a very informative and thought provoking speaker - Attorney Mike Huber, Director of Bay County's Public Defender's Office - at our October Lunch & Learn gathering, in November we return to the opportunity to gather just for Lunching & Laughing. We will meet in Fellowship Hall at noon on **Tuesday, November 26<sup>th</sup>**. Some may say that the week of Thanksgiving may already be filled with lots of food - turkey & all the fixings, so we are planning a lunch of Italian favorites. Come join us. Please register your attendance by Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup>. Cost is \$15. Please call Rev. Linda with any questions.



**CHILDREN'S SABBATH-OCTOBER 20TH**



*Advent Dinner and Workshop*

Sunday, December 1  
5:00 p.m.

Start your holiday season with your church family at our annual Advent Dinner! On Sunday evening, December 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 pm, we'll join together in the Fellowship Hall for dinner and holiday themed crafts for all ages. The main dish will be provided, but you're invited to bring a salad, side dish, or dessert to round out our holiday meal. Be on the lookout for your chance to sign up!



As we prepare our hearts for the Christmas season, we invite you to share a special part of your holiday tradition with the congregation. As part of our Advent Dinner (December 1), we would like to display your nativity scenes around the church. This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the birth of Christ and enjoy the unique beauty of each nativity set.

Please bring your nativity scene to church on Sunday morning, or arrive early to the Advent Dinner and we will take care to ensure that it is carefully displayed. While every effort will be made to prevent them from being touched, please keep in mind that accidents can happen. If your nativity holds particular sentimental or monetary value, you may want to consider sharing a photo or other alternative display.

If you'd like to share the history or significance of your nativity set, please include a short note we can include with your display. We look forward to celebrating the season with you and your family's nativity!

*...and something new*



### DRESS THE TURKEY, GIFT A FAMILY

We all have much to be thankful for, but there are those in our community who are not as fortunate as we are. Nearly 30% of Bay County families struggle with where they will get their next meal. Our Food Pantry helps some with their need, but during this "Thankful" time of year, we want to do something special. The Mission Partnerships Committee will be providing **Thanksgiving Baskets** to **100** needy families again this year, and we need your help.



Here is how you can participate:

- Dress the Turkey, Gift a Family:** Your \$10.00 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.
- Buy food items.** Below is a listing of what is needed for each basket is. Or you can write a check to WPC and write Thanksgiving baskets in the memo.
- Volunteer to shop.** Items not donated and additional items such as rolls and bread need to be purchased before the Thanksgiving Baskets are sent out for distribution. Volunteers are always needed to shop.
- Volunteer to load baskets.** Baskets will be loaded in Fellowship Hall on **Sunday, November 24 after church.**

We would like to have your food items brought to the church by **Sunday, November 17.** This gives us time to sort items and purchase any additional food to fill the baskets.

This is always a successful project and greatly appreciated by the families we serve. We can all help make Thanksgiving a more joyful time for those in need. The Mission Partnerships Committee appreciates the support Westminster members and friends give to this project.

Items included in the Thanksgiving Baskets:

|                    |                      |                     |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Canned Corn        | Stuffing Mix         | Macaroni and Cheese |
| Canned Green Beans | Jello                | Instant Pudding     |
| Canned Fruit       | Instant Potatoes     | Brownie Mix         |
| Cranberry Sauce    | Turkey/Chicken Gravy |                     |

A bag of sugar donated by Michigan Sugar is added to each basket, and fresh rolls and bread purchased with your donations are also included.

One person that can be seen sharing God's love around our church is Mrs. Peggy Hanson.

Mrs. Hanson has been involved in and has worked for Westminster for several years. In addition to being an elder she was also a Sunday School Superintendent for grades K-2. She has put in over 25 years of service at our church!

Her pride and joy was teaching and performing with the handbell choirs of all ages. She would teach from little ringers and chimes all the way to the adult handbell group. We are especially grateful for the multiple times she has come out of retirement to lead the Bell Choir. She is always there when we need her!

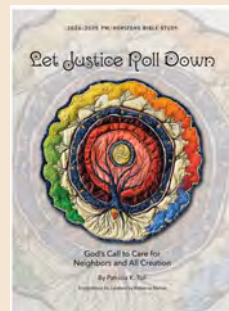
Her talents of teaching and performing allow a harmonious melody to ring out from our church.

Thank you, Mrs. Peggy Hanson for sharing your gifts from God within our church!



### PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Two of our Presbyterian Women's Circles continue to meet. If you are new to the church or aren't part of a Circle and would like to be, please call the church office or reach out to one of the circle leaders.

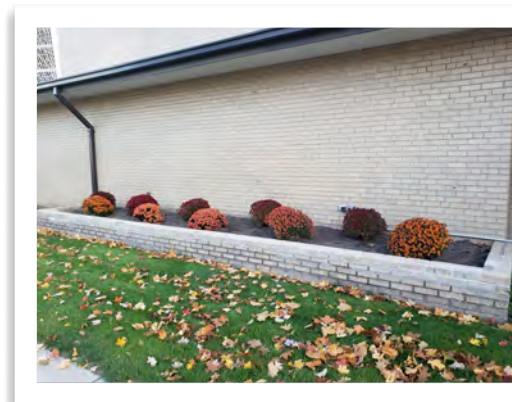


**LYDIA CIRCLE**

Lydia Circle continues to meet on the third Thursday of the month at 1:00 p.m. Lydia Circle is using the 2024 PW Bible Study, *Let Justice Roll Down*. Please call Barb Tolles with any questions.

**DEBORAH CIRCLE**

Deborah Circle usually meets on the last Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom, (except in December), but in November with the Thanksgiving holiday, they will be meeting November 21st; please call Karen Schoeppach for more information about their gatherings.



### THANK YOU HAROLD!

*Have you noticed the front of the church, specifically the masonry improvements and fall mums? Earlier this fall, we received a bid for close to \$9000 to repair the brick on Midland Street. Harold decided he could do this work for us...saving thousands of dollars.*

*Harold, we are so grateful for your hard work, can-do spirit and knowledge and expertise. Our church looks beautiful because of your continued hard work!*

### FOOD OF FAITH

Food of Faith continues to serve a hot meal each Thursday evening at Messiah Lutheran Church, beginning at 4:00 p.m. Westminster will be serving the meal on December 12th. If you would like to help, please see the sign up sheet outside the Sanctuary.



### FELLOWSHIP TIME

Look for the sign up sheets on the Bulletin Board to help with Fellowship Time before and after worship each Sunday. This time provides a wonderful opportunity to meet with friends and meet new friends! Dates are open in November and December. Thank you in advance!

#### Upcoming Dates

- Tuesday, November 12, 2024
- Tuesday, December 10, 2024
- Tuesday, January 14, 2025

**First Crew will work 9-11 a.m.  
Second Crew will work 11 a.m. -1 p.m.**

### MATTHEW 25 CAFE AT THE SALVATION ARMY

It was wonderful to hear from the Salvation Army during Mission Sunday last month and know we are a part of a network of volunteers that follow the teachings of Jesus "whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me." A team from Westminster volunteers on the second Tuesday of each month at the Matthew 25 Cafe, serving lunch to those in need. It's a fun, rewarding opportunity to connect with others in the community and work with fellow Christians. Two crews of 4 people will be needed. First Crew will work from 9:00 – 11:00 am on Meal Prep. Second crew will work 11:00 am – 1:00 pm on Lunch Service and clean-up. A sign-up sheet is located on the Bulletin Board just outside the sanctuary.



### SUNDAY NIGHT MEALS FOR OUR YOUTH

This program year, Westminster continues to offer a time of fellowship and food for 5th through 12th grade students on Sunday evenings. If you would like to bring dinner for youth and volunteers, please review the dinner schedule by scanning the QR Code to the right, or call the Church Office. Monetary donations are also greatly appreciated. Dinner will take place from 5:30 until 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.



Thank you to everyone who has provided a meal or donated funds for meals!

### SEPTEMBER FOOD PANTRY STATISTICS

103

Households that utilized the Pantry in September.

286

Individuals helped

51

**New Households**  
Of the 103 households, 49% utilized the pantry for the first time

3763

Pounds of food distributed



New Refrigerator purchased with a grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield

*More comments, our Volunteers have heard in the Community Food Pantry*

"This helps my family so much. Thank you."

"I just had my baby. You really helped while I was on maternity leave. Getting food here meant we could pay for gas and medical bills. Thank you."

"I never thought I'd need to go to a food pantry, but, here I am. Thank you for being here. When things get better, I will help you."

Thank you for your contribution to the Westminster Community Pantry, ITEM of the Month. We received lots of cooking oil which is now on our Pantry shelves. We know it will be greatly appreciated by our Pantry guests.

The **ITEM OF THE MONTH for November is butter or margarine** to help with holiday preparations. Just place on the cart outside the pantry door.

We have had 500, 2-lb. bags of sugar donated by Michigan Sugar. One hundred bags will be used by the Thanksgiving committee, led by Patti Wesenick, prepares 100 Thanksgiving baskets to be distributed to Bay Country homes.

The remaining sugar will be used in our Food Pantry. The **ITEM OF THE MONTH for December is 2 to 5 lb. bags of flour** to partner with our sugar. Our hope is that these items will help with upcoming Holiday preparations for our Pantry families.

Each month the Spiritual Growth and Faith Formation Committee 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.



*"In November, grief whispers in the rustling leaves."*

Experiencing grief and loss is often a deep experience, characterized by a unique blend of emotions that can mix with the changing seasons. The month of November can symbolize both loss and renewal, much like the falling leaves that gently carpet the ground. As the days grow shorter and the air colder, those who are grieving may find solace in the reflective solitude that November provides. Other may find these shorter days are heavy to walk through.

In November, the natural world undergoes a profound transformation, mirroring the process of mourning. The trees, once resplendent with vibrant foliage, shed their leaves, creating a somber and contemplative atmosphere. Similarly, those grieving may feel a sense of detachment and loss as they navigate the changing landscape of their lives without their loved ones.

The gray skies and fading light can mirror the feelings of sorrow and grief that may surround a loss.

November is marked by traditions of remembrance, with events like All Souls' Day and Veterans Day, which pay tribute to those who have passed away. These observances can offer an opportunity for those in mourning to honor their own loved ones and find a sense of belonging in the wider community.

Just as the trees will eventually bud anew in the spring, those who are grieving can find hope and healing in time. It's a month that invites people to embrace the bittersweet symphony of life, where memories of the departed coexist with the faith of renewal as the year winds down. This tension between opposites can be almost impossible to hold at times.



The weight of loss and the work of grief can be hard labor and feel like something we just don't always have the energy to do day in and day out.

But we can look to the natural space around us and remember that we do not have to do every part of our process all at once. We are in a season of life and we can only do its work one moment at a time.

*Dealing with grief in November, or during any time of the year, can be challenging, but there are several tips that may help you navigate this difficult period:*

- **Acknowledge Your Feelings:** It's essential to recognize and accept your feelings of grief. Allow yourself to feel sad, angry, or whatever emotions come naturally. Grief is a personal journey, and there is no right or wrong way to experience it.
- **Seek Support:** Reach out to friends, family, or a support group. Talking to others who have experienced loss can be comforting and reassuring.
- **Self-Care:** Take care of your physical and emotional well-being. Get enough rest, eat healthily, and engage in activities that bring you joy and relaxation.

- **Memorialize:** Consider creating a memorial or participating in remembrance activities to honor your loved one. Lighting a candle, visiting a gravesite, or making a memory box can help you celebrate their life. Reflect on the positive memories and moments you shared with your loved one. This can bring comfort and a sense of connection
- **Express Yourself:** Journaling, art, music, or any creative outlet can be therapeutic for processing your emotions and memories. News & Events
- **Take Things One Day at a Time:** Grief doesn't follow a strict timetable. Be patient with yourself, and understand that it may ebb and flow.
- **Routine and Structure:** Maintaining a routine can provide stability during difficult times. Simple, regular activities can help you regain a sense of normalcy.
- **Professional Help:** If you find it particularly challenging to cope with grief, consider seeking therapy or counseling to help you navigate your emotions and develop coping strategies.
- **Mindfulness and Meditation:** Practices like mindfulness and meditation can help you stay grounded and reduce anxiety and stress associated with grief.
- **Celebrate Holidays Mindfully:** November often includes holidays. It's okay to modify your traditions to accommodate your grief. You can choose to participate in holiday festivities or opt for a quieter, more reflective approach.
- **Lean on Your Faith:** If you're religious, your faith and spirituality can provide guidance and comfort during times of grief.

*Remember that everyone's grief journey is unique, and it's okay to seek help and support when needed. Grief can be a long and challenging process, and it's essential to be patient with yourself and allow your feelings to evolve over time.*

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



The holidays can be difficult to navigate, whether it be the first year or tenth year, actually any year. Feelings of grief and loss can return unexpectedly and take us by surprise. This month's grief article reprinted from St Luke's Hospice reminds us of ways in which grief whispers in the falling leaves of November and I think too in the soft snows of winter. The holidays can sometimes feel more like a shout than a whisper, so having someone – or some others – can be reassuring and comforting that we are not alone in our grief.

Come join us for Coffee and Conversation on **Thursday, November 21st at 1:30 PM**. Any questions, please call Rev. Linda.

*As the holiday season approaches, we will again offer a time of focused conversation and information materials on the universal, human experience of grief. Any questions, please call the church office or Rev. Linda.*