



THE WESTMINSTER LOG

Happy Anniversary, Westminster!

In 2015, Westminster Presbyterian Church celebrated its 150th anniversary and reflected on its future. What would Westminster look like in 10, 25, or 50 years? What would our children’s and youth ministry look like? What programs would still be in place? How might they have changed? What new programs would be added?

In the 10 years since that celebration, we have been through a global pandemic, which expanded the way we use the internet and digital media to connect with our community. The livestreaming of our services went from a novelty to a necessity. We continue to offer Zoom bible study for its accessibility. We have a new smartphone “app” for our members to use. We are engaging our members and new online communities, allowing us to spread the good news of God’s love beyond the walls of our church.

We have become more engaged in the community. We host an annual End-of-School Block Party welcoming hundreds of our neighbors for food and fun. Our food pantry has expanded beyond a closet with pre-made bags, into a room where guests can choose what they need. We now offer fresh produce, eggs, and meat. We have dedicated volunteers who manage, staff, and stock the pantry.



Pictured above are Westminster from days past, left, and Westminster today. What new things will God be doing in our midst over the next 10 years?

We gather often for games and meet for lunch to chat, laugh, and learn. Our Food of Faith ministry continues as a “takeout” model that allows us to serve more people than when we provided a sit-down meal. We have joined with the Salvation Army to take a turn preparing and serving at their Matthew 25 Café once a month.

We continue to adapt our children’s Sunday School classes to meet the needs of our church families and any young families looking for a church home. Our nursery is staffed for every service, ready to help parents when needed.

We offer youth fellowship opportunities and confirmation classes to encourage our young

people to nurture their connection to God, further their faith journey, and play an active part in the life of Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Over these last 10 years, we’ve witnessed the passing of many of our long time, faithful, and supportive members. During their time as a part of our church family, they shared their time, talents, and treasure with us all teaching us to do the same. They are missed!

What will 2026 bring? What new things will God be doing in our midst over the next 10 years? We haven’t come this far by ourselves, and the future depends on how each one of us responds to God’s call in our

See FUTURE on Page 1

WWW.WPCBC.ORG

NOVEMBER 2025 ISSUE 204

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Visit us on Facebook:
Westminster Presbyterian
Church - Bay City



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

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November

Sundays

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

9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study
This month, we'll continue our study on our
What Disciples Believe DO series. (Page 2)

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

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

10:30 a.m. Worship
We will be finishing up the "What Disciples
Believe DO" series this month before Advent
begins on November 30 (See Page 2)

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

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

5:30 p.m. Youth Dinner

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

Sunday	Monday
Happy Birthday* Pam Binder Scott Newcombe Anna Pavlawk Fred Meyer Shirley Howell Alma Watton Mary Ann Meyer Buzz West	
2 160th Anniversary Celebration / 50-year Member Recognition. 11:45 a.m. Catered Meal	3 5:30 p.m. Mission Mtg. 7 p.m. Deacon Mtg.
9 All Saints Candle Liturgy 11:45 a.m. Fellowship & Outreach Meeting 11:45 a.m. Gathering and Games (pg. 1)	10 10:30 a.m. Outreach and Hospitality Mtg. 4:30 p.m. Property Mtg. 5:30 p.m. Finance Mtg. 6:30 p.m. Stewardship Mtg.
16 5:30 p.m. Being Presbyterian	17
23 Hanging of the Greens (pg. 3) / Pack Thanksgiving Baskets (pg. 4)	24
30 6 p.m. Advent Dinner (pg. 3)	

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri/Sat
Office Hours Monday – Thursday: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (closed 12:00-1:00 p.m. for lunch) Website: wpcbc.org Join us on Facebook Westminster Presbyterian Church - Bay City			October 31 1
4 10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting 11:30 a.m. Do-All Inc. Yoga 1:30 p.m. 5:00 p.m. Personnel Mtg.	5 1:30 p.m. Writing Group 4-6 p.m. Food Pantry 5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir 7 p.m. Cantata Rehearsal	6 8:30 a.m. TOPS 10-12 Food Pantry 1:30-3 p.m. Caring Connections (pg. 7) 5 p.m. Food of Faith 7 p.m. Zoom Bible Study	7 8
11 9 a.m. Matthew 25 Cafe 10 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 1 p.m. Lions Club 1:30 p.m. Book Group 6 p.m. Boy Scouts 6:30 p.m. Spiritual Growth Meeting	12 1:30 p.m. Writing Group 4-6 p.m. Food Pantry 5:30 p.m. Worship Mtg. 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir 7 p.m. Cantata Rehearsal	13 8:30 a.m. TOPS 10-12 Food Pantry 5 p.m. Food of Faith 7 p.m. Zoom Bible Study	14 15
18 10 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 10 a.m. Staff Meeting 11:30 a.m. Do-All Inc. Yoga 12 p.m. Lunch and Learn (pg. 1) 6:30 p.m. Session Meeting	19 12:30 p.m. Out-to-Lunch Bunch at Mandy's (pg. 8) 4-6 p.m. Food Pantry 5:15 p.m. Contemporary Choir 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir 7 p.m. Cantata Rehearsal	20 8:30 a.m. TOPS 10-12 Food Pantry 1 p.m. Lydia Circle 4 p.m. Deborah Circle 5 p.m. Food of Faith 7 p.m. Zoom Bible Study	21 22
25 10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands Knitting 10 a.m. Log Folding 1:30 p.m. Book Group	26 4-6 p.m. Food Pantry No Choir Rehearsals	27 <i>Happy Thanksgiving</i> Office Closed Pantry Closed	28 29

*Birthdays listed are for our 75+ Members

Thank you for your generosity!

As you can see from the graphic, your generous giving continues to exceed expenses year to date. Although the fourth quarter of the year traditionally has higher spending, we are hopeful that giving continues generously, thus minimizing the amount (if any) that we need to take from investments to cover expenses.

The **Building Improvement Fund** received \$112 in contributions and incurred no expenses in September. At the end of the month, the Fund has a balance of \$9,556.47. The **Major Repairs Fund** received \$59 in contributions and paid \$4,400 to replace the air conditioning in the food pantry room. Its September Fund balance is \$36,537.69.

Happy 160th anniversary to Westminster! And here's to many more.

GENERAL FUND	Month to Date	
	thru October 21	Year to Date
Pledges & Other Giving	\$ 35,334	\$ 357,362
One-time Gifts	\$ -	\$ 31,000
Other Cash Received	\$ 245	\$ 28,820
Total Income	\$ 35,579	\$ 417,182
Expenses	\$ 20,574	\$ 336,732
Net Income/(Loss)	\$ 15,005	\$ 80,450

Budgeted expense total for the year is \$474,000.

If you have any questions about these numbers or anything else finance-related, please feel free to contact me.

Pat Foster

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

Help families in need

Get Ready! The Angel Tree will soon be here!

Mission Partnership Committee once again invites you to help make Christmas a little brighter for families in our community. Working with our partners at **The Salvation Army**, we will receive 75 Angel Tags listing toys, gift cards, clothing items and bedding for kids ranging in ages 0 – 17-year-olds. Angel Tree tags will be available starting Sunday, November 23 until Sunday, December 7. Participants are encouraged to take an angel tag from the tree located in the Wenona Lobby. Write your name and contact number on the bottom portion of the tag and leave that section with representatives or gift box at the Angel Tree table. Purchase the gifts and return them in a gift bag (no tissue paper) to the church by Noon on Sunday, December 14. We suggest a spending limit of \$25-\$30 per item - one toy/"fun" and one clothing/textile. Don't forget to attach the angel tag to your gift!

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

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



GATHERING AND GAMES

Join us for our next "Gathering and Games" afternoon on Sunday, November 9. We've had a lot of fun at our last two gatherings learning new, simple games! Do you have a favorite game to share with us? Do you want to learn a new game, or play one of your all-time favorites? And don't worry...the Lions don't play until 4:25!

LUNCH & LEARN: OUR LEGACY OF FAITH

Tuesday, November 18 at 12:00 p.m.

What story will your life tell? Join us for our November Lunch & Learn with Dave Friebe, Financial Advisor with Thrivent, as we explore how our values of faith, generosity, and care for others can continue to make a difference well into the future.

This isn't just about wills or finances — it's about **how we live and give as people of faith**, shaping a legacy that blesses our loved ones, our church, and our community. Bring your lunch and join us! All are welcome!

FUTURE from the cover

lives today. How can we continue to support the ministry that Westminster has been engaged in for the last 160 years? How can we ensure that this community of faith is around to share God's love and welcome long after we are gone? We are grateful for Westminster's storied past, for the support and love that we feel each week, and look forward to seeing God work in and through us well into the future!

With love from
 your Stewardship Ministry

With sincere gratitude!



My dear Westminster family,

Words cannot describe how much love and support I felt upon my ordination on September 21. It was a beautiful culmination of both my time on staff, and my journey through seminary. I am honored to have been a part of this community for almost 10 years, and it will always have a special place in my heart. You are a loving and generous congregation bringing God's light into the world around you.

My heart is full of gratitude for all of those who were part of my ordination service. It would not have been the beautiful and meaningful service that it was without all of you, and I am eternally grateful. There are too many people who were a part of the service, helped prepare the service, joyfully provided snacks, and music, to list them all here! And I shall cherish the notes of encouragement and love.

With much thanksgiving,

Nikelle

WESTMINSTER IN WORSHIP

What Disciples Believe

Do: We've spent two months with some of the most difficult teachings of Jesus in Luke's Gospel and some important lessons from our ancestors in the faith. These texts have been helping us explore the role of disciples and what we are called to DO for the kingdom of God. In the weeks leading up to Advent, we'll continue to look at these traits of disciples:

November 2 - Disciples Affirm Resurrection Hope

November 9 - Disciples Take Their Faith Public

November 16 - Disciples Give Ultimate Allegiance to Christ

November 23 - Disciples Prepare for Christ's Coming



Advent Begins November 30!

Our Advent theme this year invites us to think about how hope and fear are interwoven in our lives, much like it would have been for Jesus' family and their community at the time of his birth.

Every Advent, we light candles, sing carols, and pray for Christ's coming because we believe God entered a

frightened world to bring good news. We hold onto hope because we believe that Christ did come—that's the promise of the season.

Our hope is not flimsy or fleeting. It's gritty, resilient, and can endure—no matter what we fear or face.

This season, let us insist on hope and trust that good news is greater than fear.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

During the month of November our Bible studies – Sunday morning at 9 a.m. in the Conference Room AND Thursday evening at 7 p.m. via Zoom – our focus will be on "What Disciples Believe-DO."

We will be reading Jesus stories from the Gospel of Luke:

• **November 2nd** — Disciples Affirm Resurrection and Hope – Ephesians 1:11-23

• **November 9th** — Disciples Take their Faith Public – Isaiah 65:17-25

• **November 16th** — Disciples Give Ultimate

Allegiance to Christ– Colossians 1:11-10

• **November 23rd** — Christ the King/Reign of Christ Sunday

Advent Bible Study

November 30th will be the beginning of our Advent study.

We are continuing to use the Feasting on the Word materials that challenge us to consider –

What is important to know in this Bible passage?

Where is God in these words?

So what does this mean for our lives?

Now what is God's word calling us to do?

And always one final question – why study the Bible if each time we don't consider these four questions?

The book of James writes that we must be "Doers of the word and not only hearers ...

otherwise we are like those who look in a mirror, see themselves, and then walk away, immediately forgetting what they saw/heard." (James 1:22-25)

Come join us as we weekly "feast on God's word" with others. See Rev. Linda if you have any questions.

60 Years of Joy! The Bay Chorale

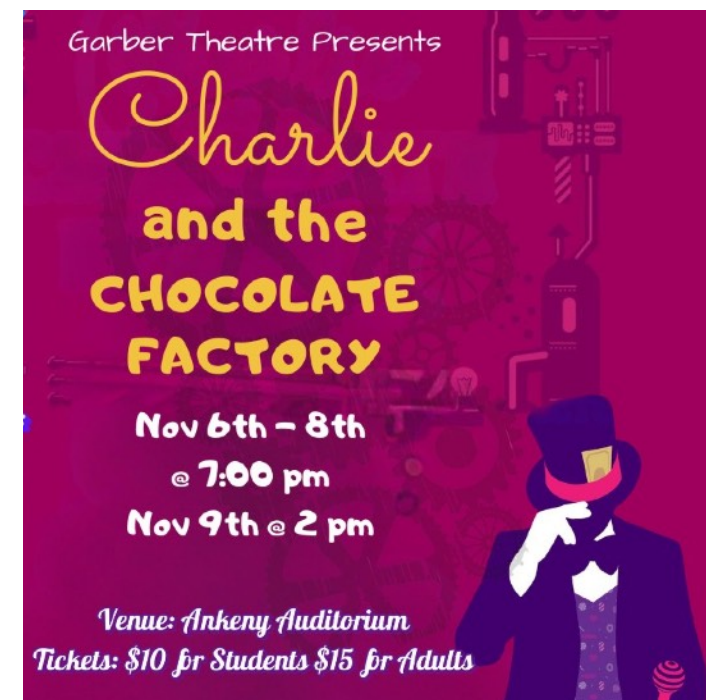
Yes, it's hard to believe, but The Bay Chorale is currently singing together for the 60th season in the Bay Area.

The group's joyful holiday concert is scheduled for **7 p.m. Friday, December 5 in the John Glenn High School Auditorium.**

The 50-voice Chorale, directed by longtime Chorale member John Rickert, will be singing a variety of seasonal favorites. Special guests will be the John Glenn High School Varsity Choir, under the direction of Anna Doering. Extra-special featured guest musicians for this concert will be Katie Lindahl on violin and Scott Stuijbergen on djembe hand-drum.

Westminster is well represented in The Bay Chorale, with six members currently: Judy Harrelson and Dawn Auger, who are both board members, along with Ken Wright, Don Clough, Jeff Rogers, and Buzz West.

Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 students, children 12-and under free. Get tickets at the door or online at the new website (thebaychorale.com).



Garber Theatre presents Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, **starring Westminster's own Mason Call as Mike Teavee!** Tickets are \$10 for students and \$15 for adults.

Scan the QR code to buy tickets:



Fresh from her star-making turn as SpongeBob Squarepants, **Westminster's own Harper Lindahl Milton** will play a lead role in Bay City Central High School's production of **Annie**. The cast includes student from Central High, Handy Middle School and many of our surrounding elementary schools.

Tickets available: <https://tinyurl.com/BCCAnnie>



November 20-23

Bangor Township Schools Drama Program presents Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella. Performances are scheduled for 7 p.m. Thursday, November 20 and Friday, November 21, and at 2 p.m. on Saturday, November 22 and Sunday, November 23. **Westminster's own Lauren Graves and Jimmy Graves will take part!**

Join us for an enchanting experience! Step into the magic of Cinderella and see our students in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade take the stage.

Fairytales, laughter and happily ever afters await — don't miss it!

Scan the QR code below to purchase your tickets today and be part of the magic — before the clock strikes midnight!



NEW MONTH BEGINS WITH NEW BOOK

This November, our Book Group will begin a thought-provoking journey into Kate Bowler's acclaimed memoir, **Everything Happens for a Reason and Other Lies I've Loved**. Bowler's candid and compelling writing invites readers to reflect deeply on the meaning of faith, suffering, and the stories we tell ourselves during life's most challenging moments.

Kate Bowler recounts her personal journey after a sudden cancer diagnosis at age 35. Through humor and vulnerability, she explores how popular clichés about happiness and suffering often fall short in the face of reality. Her book (and her lived experience) challenges us to consider what it means to live with uncertainty while finding hope and meaning in everyday life.

Each week we have an open discussion of book themes like hope, community, and



resilience. We'll review main chapters together and welcome everyone to share or simply listen; we value diverse perspectives. Light snacks and drinks will be provided during our conversations. Mark Your Calendar! Book Group meetings are scheduled for **every Tuesday in November at 1:30 p.m.** We meet in the Lounge. Participants are encouraged to read two chapters each week, which will form the basis of that week's discussion. You are welcome to attend any or all sessions, whether you have read the entire book or only selected chapters.

Come join us to engage with other readers and expand your understanding through our collaborative reading and discussion sessions. Any questions, please call Rev. Linda.



Westminster members and friends traveled to Bay Shore Camp on Saturday, October 11 for the annual Fall Retreat. They enjoyed worship, reflection, music, prayer and creative activities.

Hanging of the Greens – November 23

Join us on **Sunday, November 23**, for our **annual Hanging of the Greens service**—a joyful, hands-on time of worship as we prepare our sanctuary and our hearts for Advent and Christmas. Together, we'll reflect on the meaning behind the greenery, candles, and symbols that adorn our worship space.

After the service, everyone is invited to stay and help finish decorating the rest of the building or join in packing the Thanksgiving bags! There will be plenty of good company and light refreshments provided by our Fellowship Ministry. Come be part of this beautiful beginning to the Advent season!

Advent Dinner & Craft Workshop – November 30

Mark your calendars for one of our favorite traditions—the **Advent Dinner and Craft Workshop!** We'll gather in the Fellowship Hall on **Sunday, November 30 at 6:00 p.m.** for a festive evening of food, fellowship, and creativity. A main

Important Dates

- Nov. 2** - 160th Anniversary Celebration / 50-year Member Recognition
- Nov. 16** - All Saint's Remembrance
- Nov. 23** - Hanging of the Greens and Packing Thanksgiving Baskets
- Nov. 30** - First Sunday of Advent and Advent Dinner
- Dec. 14** - Cantata and Christmas Caroling
- Dec. 18** - Longest Night
- Dec. 21** - Christmas Pageant
- Dec. 24** - Christmas Eve 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.

dish will be provided; please bring a **salad, side, or dessert** to share as we enjoy this time together. After dinner, there will be **holiday crafts for all ages**—a chance to create, laugh, and get into the holiday spirit.

Share Your Nativity Scenes!

As we prepare to welcome the Christ child once again, we invite you to share one of your family's traditions with the congregation. During our **Advent Dinner (November 30)**, we'll display **nativity scenes** from church members and friends around the building.

You may bring your nativity set to worship that morning or arrive early to the dinner so we can arrange it for display. Please remember that while we'll handle each piece with care, we can't guarantee complete protection—so if your nativity is especially delicate or valuable, consider sharing a **photo or a written story** about it instead.

We'd also love to include a brief note about the history or significance of your nativity. Each one tells a story of faith and hope—we look forward to sharing those stories together this Advent!

Sing We Noel Composed and Arranged by Joel Raney

Prepare to be renewed by the music of the Christmas season. Westminster's Chancel Choir will be performing an amazing cantata during the worship service on **Sunday, December 14**. *Sing We Noel* consists of six "suites" of traditional carols woven together with a uniquely modern sound, Bible verses, and a narrative. The carols include favorites such as

"While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks," "Silent Night," "The First Noel," "Sing We Now of Christmas," "Mary Had a Baby," and "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear." Chancel Choir and accompanist Seth Cunningham have been working hard in rehearsals since September for this beautiful musical event. It will be enjoyed by all – so bring a friend or neighbor or your favorite cousins!

Dawn Auger,
Chancel Choir Director

CHRISTMAS CANTATA



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. More than 40% 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:

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.

4. **Volunteer to load baskets.** Baskets will be loaded in Fellowship Hall on **Sunday, November 23 after church.**

We would like to have your food items brought to the church **Sunday, November 2, 9 and 16.** 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
- Canned Green (Cut) Beans
- Canned Fruit
- Cranberry Sauce
- Stuffing Mix
- Jell-O (Large Box)
- Instant Pudding (Large Box)
- Turkey or Chicken Gravy Packets
- Macaroni and Cheese boxes
- Brownie Mix
- Reusable Grocery Bags

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

BEING PRESBYTERIAN

There are 12 Creeds and Confessions in the PC(USA) Book of Confessions. In October, we made it through the Nicene and Apostles' Creed and spent some time with the Confessions written in the early years of the Reformation. At our next session on **November 16**, we'll continue with our conversations about the Confessions as we look at the statements made by Reformed Christians professing their faith in the time of World War II, the height of the Civil Rights movement, and statements over the last 40 years addressing equality and unity.

We hope you'll join us as we continue to explore what it means to be a Presbyterian! You can attend even if you were unable to attend the first two classes. We'll gather for dinner at 5:30 and then spend about an hour and a half in conversation together.



This month's God Sighting is Harper Lindahl Milton. She is a shining example of leadership within our church family.

Harper is an incredibly active youth member which is evident in all she does. Whether ringing with the Youth Bells or joining the Adult Bells, she brings dedication and joy to worship through music. She stepped in to help with the younger children doing the acolytes, making sure that they had guidance and a lift if need be.

She's also a consistent and caring presence for the preschoolers during VBS, bringing energy, patience, and love to the youngest in our community. Most recently, Harper has joined one of our Usher teams, further expanding her service to the church and welcoming others into worship.

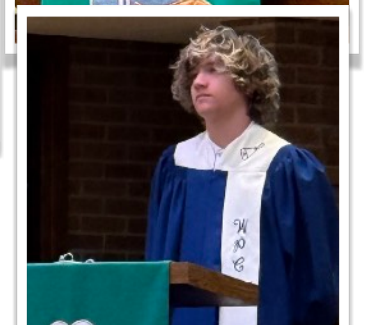
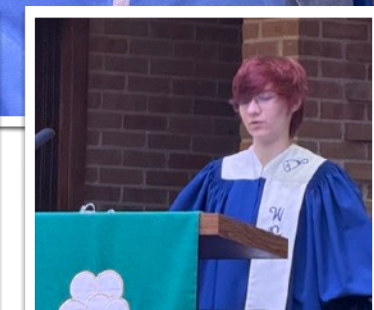
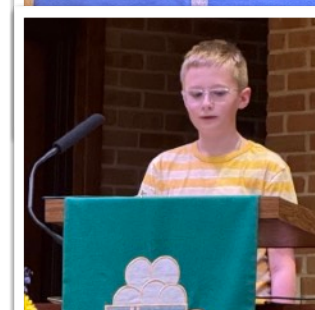
No matter how big or small the task is Harper is always ready to step in or help with whatever is assigned to her. Her commitment to her faith by



helping and serving others is a reflection of God's love in action.

Thank you, Harper for being a light in our church and for helping and serving in so many ways.

CHILDREN'S SABBATH



MATTHEW 25 CAFÉ AT THE SALVATION ARMY



We are 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 to help the second Tuesday of each month at the Matthew 25 Café, 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 to 11 a.m. on Meal Prep. Second crew will work 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Lunch Service and clean-up. A sign-up sheet is located on the Bulletin Board just outside the sanctuary.



Upcoming Dates
Tuesday, November 11, 2025
Tuesday, December 9, 2025
Tuesday, January 13, 2026

THE OUT-TO-LUNCH BUNCH will gather for our next meal together **Wednesday, November 19 at Mandy's Diner**, 819 Saginaw St. in Bay City.

The Out-to-Lunch Bunch

Mandy's closes at 2 p.m., so we will be meeting at 12:30 p.m. instead of the normal time. Since

Mandy's also has a fairly small staff, please RSVP with Dave Crook at 847-624-5798 no later than November 17 so we can provide an accurate headcount for our party.

The **Fruit of the Spirit writing group**, facilitated by Judy Hudson and Rev. Linda, will continue to meet in November. Please reach out to either of them with any questions.

Two more meeting dates remain on November 5 and 12 at 1:30 p.m. in the Lounge.

Each week we will consider one “fruit of the spirit, and there will be an opportunity to journal, to write poetry or maybe even write a proverb or two.

The writing group continues the reflection that began at the Fall Retreat, but any newcomers are welcome to attend!

September Statistics: We served 552 people from 179 families with 5,370 pounds of food. Those 522 people included 203 children and 107 seniors. 46 families came to our pantry for the first time. We are doing a good thing in Bay County!

Thank You to everyone who donated fresh produce to the pantry this season! Our guests enjoy the variety of fresh produce we have available, and we are grateful to be able to provide this fresh, healthy option. We would thank you all in person if we knew your names, but please know how much we appreciate your support.

Meijer Simply Give Program Continues at the Wilder Road store through December 27: Simply Give cards are available at the church and at the end of the store checkout lanes. Each time the card is scanned at checkout, a \$10 donation will be added to your grocery bill and that \$10 is then credited to our pantry. At the end of the



program, all donations will be totaled and given to the pantry in the form of Meijer gift cards we can use to purchase food. Please share the news with your family and friends. The more people donate, the more the pantry benefits. With the help of the community, this can be a huge gift for the pantry! Questions? Talk to Janet Smylie or Janet Beattie.

Surprise Gift of Meijer Gift Cards: To kick off our participation in the Meijer Simply Give program, Meijer sent us \$2,500 in gift cards.

We didn't know in advance that this was part of the program. These Meijer gift cards will go a long way to help us keep our pantry shelves full this fall. This year, Meijer announced its Simply Give hunger relief program has donated an incredible \$100 million to help alleviate hunger in the Midwest since the program's inception in 2008. We are so grateful to be part of this program.

Item of the Month: We are pausing our requests for Item of the Month until January 2026 so you can support other church mission projects like the Thanksgiving food baskets and the Angel Tree Christmas gifts. If you'd still like to donate to the pantry, any food items are welcomed. Please know that we always appreciate your food donations.

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



Pam Johnston and Patti Wesenick were the winners of the 2025 Harvest Party Chili Cook-Off! Congratulations!

BUILDING OUR FAMILY OF FAITH

This fall, the Outreach and Hospitality Committee is inviting WPC members into a little friendly competition. When you bring someone to worship or a church event, both you and your guest get entries into a raffle for prizes like gift cards and a tabletop grill! Stop by the Wenona Street Welcome kiosk for tickets and questions before or after worship each week. The challenge runs through the end of 2025, with plenty of upcoming events to share. **We love our church** and want to get the word out about how great it is to be a part of this community. Help grow our faith family, strengthen our community, and spread God's love!

A Season of Healing, Transformation and Hope

As summer gives way to fall, the air turns crisp, the days grow shorter, and trees shed their leaves in a slow, graceful surrender. Nature itself seems to pause—marking an ending, even as it prepares for something new.

For those who are grieving, this season of change can stir deep emotions. Autumn often brings a sharp awareness of absence. The empty chair at the table, the missing voice in the conversation, the singular cup of morning coffee where there once were two, the traditions that feel different now. These small, everyday moments remind us that life has changed in ways we're still adjusting to and learning to understand.

Grief, like fall, is a season of transition. It may not always be dramatic, but it is always moving—shifting within us, asking us to pay attention. Some days may feel heavy, others unexpectedly peaceful. Sometimes, just when we think we are moving forward, a memory will pull us back. This is all part of the process. Grief doesn't follow a straight path, and it certainly doesn't follow a timeline. Just as trees release their leaves to prepare for new growth in the spring, grief invites us to release the pressure to "move on" and the belief that healing has a deadline. Instead, we are



encouraged to move through, gently and honestly, at our own pace.

In nature, fall is also a time of preparation—a turning inward before the stillness of winter. It's a reminder that rest and reflection are not only necessary, but sacred. For those who are grieving, this season may be an invitation to slow down and care for your heart. You might find comfort in quiet rituals: lighting a candle at dusk, walking among the falling leaves, sharing conversation with a trusted friend, writing down your thoughts, or simply allowing yourself to feel without judgment.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Some may find strength in community, while others need solitude. Some may feel emotions close to the surface, while others feel numb or unsure. However it shows up for you this fall, know that your grief is valid, and you are not alone. Whether it's been a few weeks, months, or many years, your grief matters and deserves to be witnessed. As the leaves fall and the world turns again, may you find moments of peace in the quiet. And may this season, though it may feel heavy, hold glimpses of healing, transformation, and hope.

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice
Bereavement Program

Caring for Yourself Through the Fall: Practical Ways to Cope, Connect, and Find Comfort

Fall reminds us of change—and with it, memories, emotions, and longings may rise. Here are some gentle, practical things you can do to care for yourself this season.

Connect with Nature

- ◆ Take a quiet walk through the leaves.
- ◆ Sit outside and simply observe.
- ◆ Collect a few fallen leaves as symbols of love, change, and letting go.

Being in nature gently reminds us that change can hold beauty, too.

Stay Gently Connected

- ◆ Call a friend or write a note.
- ◆ Join a grief support group if you feel ready.
- ◆ Let others know how they can help — even if it's just sitting with you.

You are not meant to carry grief alone.

Do Something Grounding

- ◆ Bake something simple
- ◆ Knit, paint, walk, garden, journal
- ◆ Write a letter to your loved one—just to say what is in your heart.

Your hands can lead your heart toward steadiness.

Give Yourself Permission to Rest

- ◆ Listen to calming music.
- ◆ Take a nap or let yourself slow down without guilt.
- ◆ Try 2–5 minutes of breathing or meditation each day.

Grief is hard work —rest is part of healing, not something to earn

The holidays are fast approaching, and soon the hustle and bustle of shopping, preparing, decorating and family tradition will be upon us.

For some who are going on their grief journey, these things are overwhelming and painful. Your special someone is gone and there's a void in your life that nothing can fill. Your life has changed forever. You no longer want to be a part of the traditional experiences — or so you believe at this time in your life.

What do you do?? You can't let the remaining people down! You need to keep pushing! You need to keep going for the rest of the gang, you don't want to disappoint them even though your heart and soul are far away from what's going on. Your life is in a frenzy! How can I do all of this and still keep my sanity!? STOP!!!

Caring Connections

There is nothing wrong with changing tradition. There is nothing wrong with opting out of certain things you've always done at the holiday season. You need to take care of you.

This is where our Caring Connections can help you through the holidays. Ways to help you cope, but carry on some old traditions at the same time through your grief journey.

Please join us the first Thursday of every month. We'll share our experiences and learn to better deal with our losses. Join us on Thursday, November 6,

from 1:30 to 3 p.m. at Westminster Presbyterian Church. If you have a friend who's dealing with a loss, please bring them along. All are welcome!

Grief has its common and its unique sides. Although it is a universal experience, no two people grieve the same. Like a snowflake or a fingerprint, each person's grief has characteristics all its own.

Continued healing to you,

Mary