THE SPIRE T

June 2022 Volume 63 No. 6

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Pittsburgh, PA

"Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name..." Did I just put the jingle from the television series *Cheers* into your mind? This catchy tune conveys the desire that rises from our hearts to be in a place where we feel as though we belong. Where we are at home.

Knowing each other's name matters. Scripture assures us in the prophets, psalms, and gospels that God knows us by name. Jesus calls each of us as surely as a shepherd calls a wayward sheep.

Churches become places of comfort and significance when people are invited and receive a warm reception. Our recent new member class confirmed this as each person shared stories of when they felt welcomed and known – and of those times their church excluded them or others they loved.

Recently, Faith Kemmler, our Director of Children's

& Family Ministry, presented to the Session an overview of the programs she oversees. The reinvigorated commission, volunteers, and staff breathed new life and technology into programs, reaching even more of the community's children.

When asked how we could further strengthen this vital ministry, Faith challenged the elders: "Learn the names of five children in this church who are not part of your family." She then told her story of an elder in her home church who knew her name and supported

her throughout her childhood and youth. Even today, when she returns, this man greets her – by name.

Faith's personal experience, confirmed in research, highlights how churches thrive when younger ones walk through the doors and know they are loved and welcomed. Parents feel supported in the Herculean task of raising children when others – outside of the family – walk alongside them and their kids. Just last week, a member, who raised her children at Westminster and

is now a grandmother, remarked that at trying times, older members quietly said, "you are doing just fine, we are here to help." Without any other family in this community, she felt at home.

Regardless of age, it matters to know and call each other by name.

Unquestionably, it feels risky – to open up to another person you do not know.

You might forget their name. That's okay, we've got nametags. They too forget. Just ask again.

You can practice with everyone after the all-church worship service on June 5. When we bring together people from the 8:30 and 11:00 services and the Bridge, expect to see and worship with someone you do not know. Take the leap, say "hi, my name is" and let the spirit move among you. This is exciting.

In faith,

Jo



CHURCH STAFF

412-835-6630

PASTORS

DR. JO FORREST, Senior Pastor, Head of Staff REV. LOUISE ROGERS, Associate Pastor for Congregational Care

ADMINISTRATIVE & BUSINESS SUPPORT

CAROL WEBBER, Director of Finance & Operations

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

FAITH KEMMLER, Director of Children's & Family Ministry
DEBB EGLI, Assistant Director of Children's & Family Ministry
ED SUTTER, Director of Youth Ministry & Family Counseling
LAURA ECKLIN, Associate Director of Youth Ministry
CASSANDRA MILLIS, Youth Ministry Advisor

COMMUNICATIONS

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WESTMINSTER RECREATION & OUTREACH CENTER (WROC)

KATHY LONG, Director

WESTMINSTER EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS (WECEP)

DENISE BURKE, Executive Director

NURSERY SCHOOL 412-835-2906

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER 412-835-9450

Staff email addresses and phone extensions are available on our website, www.westminster-church.org.

Read the *Spire* online at: www.westminster-church.org

The Spire is published monthly by the church staff from September through June. Contributions can be made by emailing a Word document to Spire editor Sara Kyle at sara@ruhlekyle.org. The deadline for submitting an article is the fifth day of every month for the following month's issue. Please include the author's name, telephone number, email address, and a title. All articles are subject to editing.

Table of Contents

3 Worship

Worship at Westminster
Upcoming Events
Pentecost Birthday Party

4 Spiritual Growth

Caregiver Support: Stronger Together
Wrapping Up, Yet Still Going
Between Here and There
Westminster Seminars

8 Outreach

Westminster Men's Softball – 2022 Season Opener Mission on the Move: Pittsburgh Prebytery Westminster Organ Summer 2022

11 Other

Financial Report Session Highlights Baptisms, Deaths

WORSHIP AT WESTMINSTER

All are welcome to join Westminster for worship!

If you are not comfortable attending in person worship or are traveling, visit our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/WestminsterUSC or our website for links to the livestream services at 9:45 and 11:00 a.m., or watch anytime later on YouTube.

Bridge Contemporary Worship

Sundays

9:45 a.m.

WROC & YouTube Livestream

Traditional Worship

Sundays

PENTECOST BIRTHDAY PARTY

Confirmation Sunday, June 5

8:30 & 11:00 a.m.

Sanctuary & YouTube Livestream (11:00 a.m. only)

The Lord's Supper is celebrated the first Sunday of each month.

Upcoming Events

Pentecost Confirmation JUN Sunday

Worship @ 10 a.m.

Trinity Sunday

Organ Summer Concerts begin

Barefoot School





SCHEDULE FOR JUNE 5

fun in the WROC.

8:45 a.m. Westminster Seminars 9:00 a.m. Welcome Center open

10:00 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary

Sunday School for PreK-6th Grade Wiggle Room open in Room 239

11:00 a.m. 75th Birthday Party in the WROC

CAREGIVER SUPPORT: STRONGER TOGETHER

If these thoughts have crossed your mind, you are not alone!

"I'm so overwhelmed, getting more involved helping my parents as they get older."

"It's a matter of time; my parents need me and I want to be there for them."

"There's so many decisions to make – I could use some help."

"I feel so guilty sometimes..."

Virtually every one of us will care for a loved one at some point in our life. Though rewarding, it is not always easy. To provide support, we are planning a gathering for caregivers at Westminster Church in June. This will be a small group time because family caregivers need somewhere to turn for information, strength, and connection during the caregiver journey. Our gathering provides practical approaches, tools, and resources from the organization Nourish for Caregivers to help navigate these times with a Christ-centered view.

The group is for anyone juggling the challenges of everyday life, health, career, and caring for a disabled child or an ill or aging parent, spouse, or grandparent, either in town or at a distance. Care groups provide caregivers a faith perspective as well as practical and emotional supports, useful tools, and shared experiences. Be empowered. Discover the blessings that come from caring for another. Be nourished.

The meeting will be held on **Tuesday**, **June 14**, **at 6:30 p.m. in Room 176**. Contact Louise Rogers at rogers@ westminster-church.org if you have any questions.

WRAPPING UP, YET STILL GOING

I probably don't have to tell you that Westminster's youth group, Veritas, has had to adapt a lot in the last two years. We had a global pandemic, staffing changes, and last year we graduated a large core group of kids. Coming into the fall of last year, we weren't exactly sure what to expect, but we knew we wanted it to be great. Veritas has an amazing values list (I'd love to share it with you if you ask) and we use that as a guide for everything we plan and do. Unsure of what events we'd be able to have and who would even show up, we started our year at the end of August and knew, no matter what, God would walk beside us.

Every year we have a theme that inspires the "vibe" and helps us frame our lessons month by month. If you listen to our podcast, Veritalk, you might be familiar with this. (If you don't listen to our podcast, you should – we review our lessons from

the past week and share insights from the kids. It's pretty good). This year's theme was Rejoice inspired by 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. To our delight, we have a new and solid core group of kids. They are fun and hilarious and caring and compassionate and talented and deep thinkers. They inspire adults every single week. We have a strong group of volunteers who help us on Wednesdays. Do they come to support Ed and me? I am sure that's some of it. But they really love spending time with those kids and exploring their own faith in conversations with teenagers. I think the average adult would be amazed at the insight they provide, which is what inspired me to start the previously mentioned podcast.

Our weekly Veritas meetings end at the beginning of June, but this summer we have big plans. We will see a lot of smiling faces helping out with Barefoot School in June. We are taking students to Elkview, West Virginia, in July for a mission trip. Later that month we will enjoy the crowd favorite event "Charlie" where we do a different fun activity every day for a week, including one day of mission when we will replenish our QuicKits. In August we have a minigolf pro tour to compete for the title of champion. The kick-off for our new program year is at the end of August, and we will start all over again.

This ministry is beyond a blessing. For the kids, for the community, for the church, for the volunteers, and for me. If you ever want to know more about the next generation of this church, call me – I'd love to tell you more. Listen to our podcast – you'll get a good glimpse of our weekly life. Sign up to volunteer – no commitment required. Pray for us – we've been entrusted with a lot, and we want to serve the kingdom well.

- Laura Ecklin

BETWEEN HERE AND THERE

Just a few weeks ago I sat with a friend who posed a scenario that he had been weighing, uncertain of how to proceed or where his ultimate stance would land. In response to his dilemma. I asked him. "What do you think Jesus would say to you if he were sitting here right now?" His reply was thoughtful, profound, and illuminated the depth of his relationship with Jesus. As our conversation continued, we both agreed that my original question would be nearly impossible to answer if one lacked an intimate relationship with Jesus.

It makes sense, doesn't it? If someone were to ask you, "What do you think Ed would say about that?", but you and I had never met, there would be no way for you to answer with any clarity. At best, you might venture a guess on the basis of what others have told you about me, but even that would be rather suspect. Without a relationship, how would you ever dare to guess what Jesus might say to you?

This all came to mind for me when I read a scripture that appears in both the 10th chapter of Mark and the 18th chapter of Luke. A rich man approaches Jesus and asks of him, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" At first, Jesus gives a relatively

simple answer and begins to quote the commandments. When the rich man replies that he has upheld these commandments since he was just a boy, Jesus replies with a far more personal and specific answer: "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." It makes it seem like Jesus asks some things of all of us, and perhaps more specific things to us as individuals. For this one man, Jesus' reply was "sell everything and give it all away."

What would Jesus say to you if you asked him what was needed to inherit eternal life? Would he remind you of your anger or your impatience? Would he invite you to look through a new perspective? Would he challenge your envy or greed? Perhaps the real question ought to be, do you know Jesus well enough to consider his answer? Do you know yourself well enough to be honest about what might need to change?

As we walk through this summer season, I encourage you to consider how Jesus might respond to you if you asked him a few of these questions. If you're not so sure what he might say, or why he might say it, perhaps there's an invitation to get to know him a bit better. If you know what he might say to you, perhaps there's an invitation to act upon his words for your life.

Friends, I mean this as earnestly as ever: I would love to hear your story. The more I walk this road of faith the more I realize how meaningful it is to sit with others, to learn from one another and share our experiences. If you have a few minutes, an open lunch break, or can find a morning for coffee or tea, please reach out. I'd love to sit together.

Be well, friends.

- Ed Sutter



WESTMINSTER SEMINARS

Westminster Seminars

In Person and Online

Sundays, 9:45 - 10:30 a.m. Galbreath Chapel & Zoom

The Westminster Seminars address, in various ways, how our beliefs and practices as Christians enrich our lives in today's culture. Everyone is welcome - come every week or whenever the topic appeals and your schedule allows. If you can't join in person or on Zoom, plan to watch or listen later on the Westminster website - under News & Media - here: https://www. westminster-church.org/ news-&-media/westminsterseminars.

The Zoom meeting opens at 9:30 for greetings and conversation. Find the link on the church website under Featured Events or in the Friday church email.

SUMMER SEMINAR SCHEDULE NOTES

Westminster Seminars will take a break in August and return on September 11 with Jennifer Kaalund, Associate Professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, who will look at the Letter to the Hebrews through a new lens.

June 5* & 12

*special 8:45 a.m. start time on June 5 only

A Time to Laugh: Biblical Humor

Ann Morris

The best laugh is an unexpected laugh. With a little help to get past the unfamiliarity of the culture of biblical times, you too can enjoy scriptural puns and word plays, the satire of Jonah's pout, and revel along with the Mardi Gras atmosphere of Queen Esther's story. Understanding where the Bible is trying to make us smile and even laugh out loud not only aids our exegesis, but it also leads us to apply biblical wisdom and truth to our own lives. Laughter is God's gift that helps us to endure life's incongruities and reminds us to be humble. Learn how to get more enjoyment out of reading the Bible. Lighten up and open up your expectations of where and how the Holy Spirit illuminates God's Word.

Ann Morris joined WPC soon after she and her husband Bob were married in 1984. Ann soon became a regular attendee of its weekly seminars, which were often taught by faculty of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. This adult education program, as well as the congregational life at Westminster, influenced her to explore a call to the ministry. Blessed by a scholarship received by way of connections at Westminster Church and a college friend, Ann graduated from PTS and was ordained in 2000. She has served as Stated Supply of a small Presbyterian church within Pittsburgh Presbytery and pulpit supply to numerous churches in Allegheny and Beaver Counties. Much of Ann's career life included work in banking and the treasury departments of several major Pittsburgh corporations. She is now retired.

June 19 & 26 Love Letter to the Church

Jo Forrest

Church historian Phyliss Tickle observed that the church has a giant rummage sale about every 500 years. Her comment primarily refers to history of theological reforms, including the great Reformation of the 1500s, and the resulting impact on denominational hierarchies, churches, and believers. Just as we crossed over to the 21st century, many predicted the demise of traditional congregational life, particularly for those with 100 members or less, and the emergence of new forms of gathering.

Then COVID-19 upended all churches and accelerated the change. The questions before us are how much more change and to what end? These seminars will review some recent research and predictions for churches as we emerge from the pandemic.

The Reverend Dr. Jo Forrest is senior pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church.

JULY SERIES

July 10, 17, 24 (No seminar on July 3)

LIVING WITH DIFFERENCES:

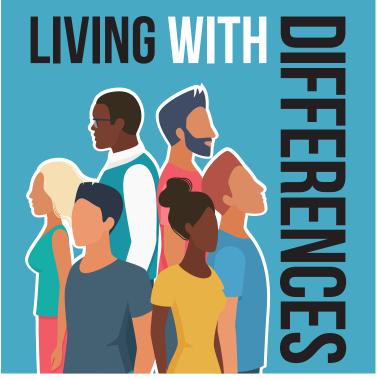
Sharing the Pew but Maybe Not the Point of View

Sponsored by Westminster Peace and Justice

Can we build bridges with people who are different from us in places where we are often separate – for example, race, religion, gender, family roles, cultural experience, and point of view?

These days, when everyone seems to be going to their separate corners and preparing to fight, we hope to provide tools for coming together, or at least seeing things from the other person's perspective. Currently, public education seems to be the focus of much of the dissention around race, cultural, and gender issues.

Our speakers will guide us in learning how to connect around some of these difficult questions.



Westminster Peace and Justice

Summer Seminar Series 2022

July 10 - Identity Pie

Dr. Marta McClintock-Comeaux

How are we the same and how are we different from one another? Join in an exercise reflecting on what makes up each of our identities. Can learning about one another's experience and perspectives help us connect with people having different points of view?

Marta is Director of Women's Studies and Professor of Social Work at California University of Pennsylvania. Her courses embrace intersectional theory and practice, incorporating race, gender, socio-economic status, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, and abilities She is also part of the Cultural Humility an Equity Collaborative.

July 17 - Cultural Humility & Refugees in Our Region

Dr. Azadeh Masalehdan Block

We will learn basic concepts of cultural humility and whiteness as the centering dominant perspective. Dr. Block will help congregants focus on both internal and external processes; this could be of particular value as Westminster prepares to welcome a refugee family.

Dr. Block has experience in mental health services research. Her most recent work focuses on peer group work with newer immigrants and refugees. She currently serves as Associate Professor of Social Work at California University of Pennsylvania. Her teaching and research areas include cultural humility and diversity and work with immigrant and refugee populations.

July 24 – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Our Schools

Dr. Charles Herring

Dr. Herring will share his work helping school districts create and maintain culturally-responsive, safe spaces for all students, faculty, and staff. He will discuss his work within the schools using SHOUT (Social Handprints Overcoming Unjust Treatment) and other methods for developing cultural competence.

Dr. Herring is the Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in the South Fayette Township School District. He has worked as an educator for over 25 years and has received a number of awards for creative work withing the schools, including the PA School Board Association's 2021 Innovative School Leader Award.

WESTMINSTER MEN'S SOFTBALL — 2022 SEASON OPENER

On a chilly evening, an undermanned Westminster club fought gamely but could not overcome defeat at the hands of St. Paul's and ended with a 15 - 9 loss. Two newcomers performed well in their Westminster debuts. Scott Lammers led Westminster with four hits in five trips to the plate, scored two runs, and drove in one. Kenny Simon, so far the leader for nonmember of the year, went two for five with one of the club's two extra base hits, a double. One of the team's mainstays, Bobby Beck, made a diving catch in left center, laced a triple and two singles, scored a run, and drove in three as well as coaxing a walk from St. Paul's southpaw hurler.

It was a welcome sight to see Brian **Heitman** return to the lineup after a series of debilitating injuries. Heitman, who has been limited to doing a fine job as the club statistician in recent years, put down his slide rule and picked up a glove and bat. He made several fine catches in left field, tied for the club lead in runs scored, stroked two singles, and drew a walk. As always, the ageless **Phil Holmes** played like a man 20 years younger. He did a fine job on the mound and reached base four times with two walks and two hits. Jim Roberts managed three hits and a walk, though he failed to get a hit in a bases loaded situation. Brad Hamel hit two singles. Matt McClintock made many excellent plays at shortstop and singled. **Robert White** made some fine running catches in right center field. Lou Craig generously came to play for us when we needed a tenth man, and he played a solid game.



WESTMINSTER MEN'S SOFTBALL 2022 SCHEDULE

Wednesday, June 1 @ 7:00 p.m. - Westminster vs. Chapel Gray

Wednesday, June 8 @ 7:00 p.m. - Westminster vs. Holy Child

Tuesday, June 14 @ 8:30 p.m. - Westminster vs. St. Paul's

Tuesday, June 21 @ 8:30 p.m. – Westminster vs. Bethany Red

Tuesday, June 28 @ 7:00 p.m. – Westminster vs. Corpus Christi

Wednesday, July 6 @ 7:00 p.m. - Westminster vs. St. Valentine

Wednesday, July 13 @ 7:00 p.m. – Westminster vs. Christ United Methodist Church

Wednesday, July 20 @ 8:30 p.m. - Westminster vs. Chapel Gray

All games are held at Chartiers Park in Bridgeville. Come and cheer on our team as they strive to win the coveted Calvin Cup!

MISSION ON THE MOVE

PITTSBURGH PRESBYTERY

Mission on the Move is highlighting the Pittsburgh Presbytery. Currently there are 128 churches in Pittsburgh Presbytery, both large and small congregations. Westminster is one of the largest and in many ways is a leader, demonstrating through generous giving and volunteer service what God has called us to do.

The 128 PCUSA churches in Pittsburgh Presbytery are divided into four branches – North Branch has 34 churches, South Branch has 30, East Branch has 29, and West Branch has 35 churches. Westminster is a part of the West Branch. This configuration has been arranged "to help assist churches near each other to connect and collaborate." This link is an interactive map of all the churches in the Presbytery: https://batchgeo.com/map/84e707fc3a006b1a68d92936c06ff741

Most of the funding for the work of the presbytery comes from each church's per capita assessment of \$34.79 per member. \$23.41 of that amount goes to Pittsburgh Presbytery. The rest goes to Synod and General Assembly of the PC(USA). In addition to the per capita funding, Outreach Commission of Westminster has allocated \$13,500 in 2022 for the outreach work of the presbytery.

Currently four presbytery meetings are held each year. Ruling elders and pastors from the churches register to attend the meetings, receive a Presbytery Packet, and vote on actions to be taken by the presbytery. In 2022 two more meetings will be held: September 22 at Camp Crestfield and December 8 at Bethany Presbyterian Church.

Pittsburgh Presbytery has a relatively small number of paid staff – five leadership team members and four support staff members. Additionally, a Presbytery Moderator and four Vice Moderators, one from each branch, oversee the work of the various commissions and committees. The paid staff and the moderators are liaisons to the following groups:



Administrative Commission for Transformation (ACT) assists churches of Pittsburgh Presbytery to reach others for Christ, to provide hands-on training and mentorship for future pastors, to encourage congregational partnerships, and to be involved in the mission of Jesus Christ.

Commission on Ministry (COM) serves Pittsburgh Presbytery by visiting regularly and consulting with each minister of the presbytery, ensuring they are successful in their calls, and reporting to the presbytery annually the type of work in which each minister is engaged. The commission counsels with churches and their sessions to discuss their mission and ministry in their community, the presbytery, and the larger church, and helps guide them in the process of finding new pastors to lead them when there is an opening.

Executive Committee of Pittsburgh Presbytery is its governing council and corporate board of directors. It is empowered by the Manual of Pittsburgh Presbytery to act on presbytery's behalf on some matters and to advise presbytery on others, especially those that may be considered controversial or those dealing with finance and budgets.

New Worshiping Communities Commission helps individuals discern if they are feeling called to be a leader of a new worshiping community and helps them connect with resources.

These commissions are comprised of pastors and elders from the member churches, usually serving a three-year term. Over the years, and currently, many members of Westminster have served on these commissions and committees. A weekly PNews newsletter can be subscribed to by emailing PNews@pghpresbytery.org. Find more information about Pittsburgh Presbytery on their website: https://www.pghpresbytery.org/

- Paul and Sandy Conley





THURSDAYS JUNE 16 — JULY 21 @ 5:00 P.M

WESTMINSTER ORGAN SUMMER 2022

Thirty Minutes of Exceptional Organ Music

Thursdays @ 5:00 p.m. June 16 - July 21 In Person and Livestream Free admission

Westminster Organ Summer 2022 returns for its 12th season beginning June 16. Enjoy the free 30-minute concerts either in person in Westminster's sanctuary or via livestream on our YouTube channel at www. youtube.com/user/WestminsterUSC. The concerts are friendly and informal, so come as you are.

Organ Summer offers the community a unique chance to hear a delightful variety of organ music on Thursday afternoons during the Upper St. Clair Farmers' Market in the church's south parking lot. It's a winning combination of great music and fresh food.

All six performers have ties to the Pittsburgh area and represent its long tradition of nurturing and celebrating outstanding organists. Each organist reveals the beauty of the magnificent Austin organ in a distinctive and memorable way. Beyond that variety, the programs feature an appealing range of sacred and secular music.

June 16 - Aaron Sproul St. Michael the Archangel Parish

June 23 - Christine Clewell Indiana University of Pennsylvania

June 30 - Ethan LaPlaca Mt. Lebanon High School

July 7 -Jacob Gruss The Juilliard School, New York City

July 14 -**Doug Starr** St. Paul's Episcopal Church

July 21 -**Daniel Ficarri** The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, **New York City**

Organ Summer is a musical outreach to the community sponsored by the Music & Arts Series of Westminster Presbyterian Church and the generosity of the performers. All organists donate their time and talent. A freewill offering defrays their expenses. Checks are welcome, made out to Westminster Presbyterian Church, with Music & Arts/Organ Summer on the memo line. Contribute online using the donate button on the event page for Organ Summer.

FINANCIAL REPORT

As of April 30, 2022

APRIL 2022	Actual	Budget	Variance	Apr. 2021
Income	\$147,443	\$186,806	\$(39,363)	\$171,264
Expense	\$146,692	\$166,067	\$(19,375)	\$171,365
Net Total	\$751	\$20,739	\$(19,988)	\$(101)

YTD 2022	Actual	Budget	Variance	YTD 2021
Income	\$683,724	\$730,699	\$(46,975)	\$727,345
Expense	\$636,119	\$665,628	\$(29,509)	\$652,352
Net Total	\$47,605	\$65,071	\$(17,466)	\$74,993

ENDOWMENT LOAN BALANCE \$994,326

BAPTISMS

May 15

Colton Charles Coady parents: Brittany and Lucas Coady

Lincoln Richard Pasay parents: Ashley and Justin Pasay

DEATHS

Margaret Barati May 10

Ernest (Ernie) Maley May 20

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

During May, the Session voted to welcome new members presented by the Membership Commission. Each of these families described how their involvement began from a personal invitation by someone already here – a friend, relative, or co-worker – and the unique experience of being accepted with love by this congregation. They also shared the importance of being able to worship

online before venturing into our building and plan to mix online and in-person attendance going forward.

At this same meeting, the Childrens & Family Ministry Commission presented an overview of their reinvention during the past year and plans for 2022+.



Monica and Chris Conroy



Colleen, Keith, and Grayson Eddy



Ashley, Michele, and Elliott Modany



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