



# THE MESSENGER

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## **2015 Westminster Annual Report**

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## Senior Pastor's Annual Report

2015 was Westminster's 110<sup>th</sup> year! We saw a variety of excellent experiences in this vibrant community of faith.

First, there was a festive congregational dinner at the Embassy Suites, with Tom Osborne giving our keynote address. It was a warm evening of memories and friendship.



A highlight of the year was a celebration campaign focusing on The Westminster Foundation. We became more aware of the sacrifices of love made by members in the past. Our special focus was to take a series of great steps forward through the Westminster Foundation. The response was truly overwhelming. New endowment gifts from our members include:

Stained Glass Windows Endowment:	\$104,790.
Building and Grounds Endowment:	\$ 17,470.
Visual and Performing Arts Endowment:	\$ 40,000.
Boyd & Masako Bacon Music Endowment:	\$ 49,663.
Hoppe Columbarium Endowment:	\$ 13,000.
Great Commission Endowment:	\$ 10,500.
General Purpose Endowment:	\$ 82,661.
Children & Youth Ministries Endowment	\$ 51,135.
Major Event Endowment	\$ 2,365.
Mission and Outreach	\$ 7,268.
Sanctuary Organ Endowment	\$ 4,653.
Audio-Visual Endowment	\$ 1,310.
Worship and Music Endowment	\$ 5,395.
Preschool Scholarship Endowment	\$ 4,340.
Total new gifts to the Endowments so far	\$394,550.

While the principal of these gifts is restricted to remain intact in perpetuity, the income generated by these gifts will bless the church forever. These gifts to future generations deserves an overwhelming "Thank-You!" to all who made them possible. And thank you to the Foundation Board for managing these funds

We have pledges for the next few years which will help grow The Foundation's endowments by approximately an additional \$200,000. We will celebrate these gifts as they arrive. Members also told us that they expect to give to the church Foundation, through bequest and estate gifts, in the neighborhood of an additional \$705,000. dollars. The combined gifts help us take a great step forward, to about a third of the way toward the long term goal of the \$10 million dollar endowment that a church this size needs.

Again, we are all so grateful to the donors for the gifts given, and for their future plans. They are planting seeds that will nurture future generations.

In this historic year, we discovered that Westminster has supported 20 Seminarians. This demonstrated record of faithfulness is one that few congregations can match. Two special joys: the return of seminarian #5, the Rev. David McShane, who preached and shared a day of friendship with us. We also recognized the 20<sup>th</sup> ministerial candidate, Christy Dempsey, as she began her theological studies this year.

We saw the beginning of a new Sudanese worship service. We are now supporting a worshipping group of approximately 40 people, many of whom came from that war-torn region in Africa. It is an honor to welcome them to Westminster and to provide the support that allows them to feel at home on the other side of the globe.

Westminster was recognized as the first Presbyterian Creation Care Congregation in the state. This honor was given in light of the many ways that Westminster focuses on being good stewards of the earth through our building, our worship and our mission.

Our Children and Family Ministry saw an increase in non-parent volunteers, as their goal was to connect the children with more adult friends in the church. Thank you to all who taught our children and shared the love of Christ this year! We also said hello to MaKayla Kort as our energetic Interim Director of Children's Ministries.

As for Member Care and Deacons, we celebrate their on-going work to care for and watch over the congregation. In particular, we want to show our gratitude for all the Cook N Carry volunteers who help people feel fed, figuratively and literally, during times of difficulty. And for Dan King, who led the Deacons in seeking rides for Over-the-Road. Thank you all.

We had a vision to grow in our ministry to the hungry by inspiring the congregation to give 110 food items per week to the Westminster Food Pantry. Thank you to all who gave. Also, Outreach helped to carry out a more global awareness, as preparations were made for the mission trip to Nicaragua.

Adult Education broadened our awareness of congregational members with excellent expertise. New Member added a second, "Invite a Friend" Sunday, to help us spread the love of Christ and knowledge about this wonderful congregation. Small Groups continued to expand the central ministry of helping us to love one another. The Youth Groups went on a mission trip to Milwaukee WI and expanded their vision for ministry. Stewardship helped inspire the needed giving and Budget and Finance helped manage the funds so we finished the year with a slight surplus.

These are just some of the wonderful ministries of the people of Westminster. For these wonderful things to celebrate and all the others that are too numerous to mention, we are grateful to God, and grateful to the leaders and members of this church who make it possible.

Sincerely,

Andrew L. McDonald, Senior Pastor

## Adult Education

The Adult Education Ministry at Westminster is comprised of three programs. The first program is the Westminster Bible Class. This group meets on Sunday mornings to discuss the Bible, using *The Present Word* as its guide.

The second program is also held on Sunday mornings. This facet of Adult Education covers a wide range of topics. The 2015 programming included community conversations, diversity issues, spiritual practices, creation care, Westminster celebrates 110 years, human trafficking, the Protestant Reformation, *The Road to Character* by David Brooks, mental health issues, aging today, and a history of favorite hymns and Christmas carols. The 2016 programming begins with community conversations on character and will include speakers such as Tom Osborne and Hank Bounds.

The third program is held on Wednesday evenings in conjunction with WOW. Highlights of the 2015 WOW schedule included a series on contemplative prayer, spiritual practices, creation care, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, One Westminster One Podcast, difficult conversations about race relations and same-sex marriage, and a discussion of Oprah's "Belief" program. The 2016 programming begins with Dr. McDonald leading a series on Biblical ethics and same-sex marriage.

Adult Education has enjoyed collaborating with the Small Groups and Outreach Ministries this past year. We would like to express our gratitude to the members of our church and staff who have contributed to this year's successful programming.

Respectfully submitted,

Maggie Stuckey, Moderator

### Committee Members:

Tanya Hoham	Sandi Larson
Dale Minter	Ken Moore
Tom Pappas	Maggie Stuckey, Moderator

## Administration & Planning

The A&P Committee's work again this year was primarily focused on Session ministry goals for the year. As a group we spent considerable time monitoring progress of each committee goals to assist with coordination of these efforts. We feel this coordination of goals will continue to better focus the work of each ministry and the Session as a whole. Some takeaways from this process included the establishment of measurable, objective numbers to better track progress based on simple, realistic baselines. We have also looked for improved formulation of goals that will align the body's work with the church's medium and long-term objectives.

This year we began to consider what the church's next long-term goals are as we work to identify the "one BIG thing" for Westminster. Reviewing a publication authored by Kenneth Callahan (Callahan's Big 12), we utilized those recommendations for a renewal of Westminster's Strategic Plan. We plan a short survey based on Callahan's points beginning with church leadership. This survey process is still pending at this time. Kenneth Callahan was used by Westminster several years ago as a consultant for planning.

We have solicited goals again from each ministry committee as they plan for 2016. We will work to collect this information in January, hopefully before the Session planning retreat.

This year we considered a new service to be added that will target the Sudanese population in the area. The Mission committee is considering this service as part of their outreach efforts.

A&P considered some efforts to promote a Foundation Capital Campaign this year and how that can dovetail into a long-term plan. The committee also discuss some issues related to our denomination's new position on same-sex marriage.



Our conversations regarding the church's strategic goals have been productive towards a renewed long-term plan using the Callahan steps and recommendations. We will continue to focus on improving our strengths and identify what can be leveraged for spiritual growth throughout the community.

Lastly, I want to sincerely thank both the past and current members of this committee who have given their time and insight to helping Westminster grow in many areas.

Submitted by Jim Smith, Chair

### Committee Members:

Dave Atkinson	Dan Hoffman
Jim Smith, Modeator	SharonWherry

## Budget and Finance

The Budget and Finance Committee spent the year monitoring the church's finances on behalf of the Session and congregation. Our combined church budget, including the Westminster Preschool, is approximately \$1.28 million. Thanks to the generosity of our members we were able to finish 2015 with a small surplus. In addition to the generous support of our members, it would be impossible for us to accomplish our fiscal goals without our church staff being fiscally responsible in all they do. Thank you to each of them for their diligence.

The 2016 budget is a challenging one for Session. The Budget and Finance Committee asks each of our members for your continued financial support of Westminster. In particular, if you have not yet made your 2016 pledge, please do so. This small act on your part will aid the Session as it undertakes the mission and ministry of your church in the year to come.

With thanks and gratitude,  
Rachel Pultz , Moderator

### Committee Members:

Rachel Pultz  
Harry Seward, III  
Cheryl Rennick, Staff  
Sue Wood

## Building and Grounds

The Building and Grounds committee removed, repaired and replaced one window in the sanctuary. This is a project that we will continue to work on in the following years.

We resurfaced the floor on the downstairs preschool. We will monitor this floor to see how it wears, for potential use of this flooring in other parts of the building.

There is now a safe in the usher room for placement of offerings collected in the sanctuary.

Projects we are working on are:

replacement of the furnace that heats the administration portion of the building,

repairs to the parking lot

and much needed roof repairs.

Dale Burrage, Moderator

### Committee Members:

Dale Burrage  
Jeremy Gegg  
Cheryl Rennick, Staff  
Jana Voracek

## Children and Families Ministry

The Children & Families Ministry had a very busy 2015!

Family Fellowship Night in February featured an “Earth Care Theme” and offered families a locally sourced meal and a creative “Recycled Olympics” opportunity for them to play together.

The Mizzoula Children’s Theatre returned in March for our Spring Break Drama Camp featuring “Hansel & Gretel” with students K-8 putting on a complete production following a week full of rehearsals, fun and new friends.

April’s “Eggstravaganza” continues to be a huge draw in the community, including crafts, music and the Easter story, followed by the ever-popular Easter egg hunt. BIG thanks to the congregation for filling eggs with treats and surprises for the children.

In May we thanked and said farewell to Betsy Guyer, Director of Children’s Ministries, who blessed Westminster’s children with her gifts and energy for ten years. A Search Committee formed and continues its good work to find our next Director. It is appropriate to recognize and thank Sonia Harford, Carrie Lee, Sarah Baltensperger and Marge Tomlinson for their collective work and dedication to our young ones in Kindergarten of Eden (preschoolers) and Faith Village (K-5<sup>th</sup> grade). Our program didn’t skip a beat and the children have continued to feel the love of Christ each and every Sunday due in large part to these individuals, as well as the *many* teachers and shepherds who give their time.

Our June Vacation Bible School brought 97 children through our doors for a week of experiencing God’s unstoppable love through a “G-force” theme, learning that “In God we live, move, and exist.” Acts 17:28a.

Genesis Sunday kicked off the school year and our Sunday School programming. By year-end our weekly children’s offering was enough to purchase a goat and then some from Heifer International. What an amazing gift this was to a family so far away. Our kids rock!

October brought the most successful “Spooktacular” event yet with over 600 people filling our parking lot on a beautiful fall afternoon for Trunk ‘o Treating and activities. This is another of our awesome community outreach events and we thank Maggie Stuckey, Grace Willnerd and Rob Bennetts for their incredible planning and hard work!

The season of Thanksgiving reminded us of how much we have to be thankful for, including the opportunity to welcome Interim Director of Children’s Ministry, MaKayla Kort, who jumped in to lend her energy and enthusiasm to our children’s programming!

“C is for Christmas” once again marked the beginning of Advent, including delicious chili, caroling and crafting, and setting us on the journey of anticipating Christ’s birth.

Our kindergarteners and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders received Bibles, and there were Faith Building Blocks experiences, too. We received a new laptop for use in Faith Village and continue to maintain our beautiful spaces where children can explore and learn about God’s love.

CFM wishes to thank YOU, the Westminster family, who surround, teach, shepherd, and model Christian love and kindness for our small friends. I’m excited to see what 2016 will bring as we continue this journey of faith together! – Karen Hoffman

### Committee Members:

Karen Hoffman, Moderator  
Rob Bennetts  
Amy Fricke  
Stacy Graham  
Sonia Harford  
Emily Killham  
Carrie Lee  
MaKayla Kort, Interim DCM





## Deacons

The Deacons completed another year of dedicated service to the Westminster congregation. We offered 500 rides to members this year with our Share.A.Ride program, hosted a fabulous Easter brunch, visited over 39 elderly and homebound members, provided service at 11 funeral receptions, and sent cards to over 150 members. We also continued serving Communion along with the Elders.

If you attended this year's "C is for Christmas" event, you likely saw the Deacons running around in red Santa hats, bussing dishes, replenishing the cheese platters, and keeping the water pitchers full. Hopefully everyone tasted some of the delicious Christmas cookies we provided during the Sundays of Advent as well as Christmas Eve.

The Deacons joyfully welcomed our new youth Deacon, Abby Peterson, and enjoyed the youthful vibrancy she brought to our group. Additionally, we added a new tradition at our monthly meeting of calling a few members celebrating "big" birthdays and singing to them over the phone.

Pastor Jen Strickland

## Member Care

The continuing goal of the Member Care Ministry is to provide needed support for all members. We deliver meals with our Cook 'n' Carry program during times of stress. This could be in response to health issues when cooking is difficult or extra food is needed for the death of a family member. Dorrie Gage administers this program and implemented a web-based system if on-going food is determined necessary. During 2015, 26 members received 57 meals provided by 83 volunteers. In addition to these normal activities, 13 members provided two meals to help workers of the Presbyterian Habitat for Humanity house during construction. Additional cooks are always welcome. Our Ministry is also the core for the Prayer Chain. When Westminster is notified of an illness or time of crisis and prayers are requested, the 45 members of the Prayer Chain are notified by an email. During the year, 34 individual requests for prayers were received. The volunteers also receive a weekly listing of members who need on-going prayers. Prayers are powerful healing tools whether they are simple or elegant. Everyone is encouraged to join the Prayer Chain for an easy way to assist those who are having difficult days. We also coordinated information for Older Adult Sunday in May. Brochures of local health care providers were on display during May. In June, we organized and served the noon picnic meal for Presbyterians in the Park which was attended by 125 individuals. "Genesis Sunday" on August 16<sup>th</sup> included information on the activities of this Ministry and we assisted with the meal provided to the Congregation.

In early October, we assisted with updating the Membership Directory. Life Touch photographers were on-site to take pictures of new members to have a "mid-term" addition to our Directory. At Halloween, Kay Ballard represented our Ministry in the neighborhood event of "Trunk 'n' Treat". "C" is for Christmas is another highlight every year and we placed second in the Chili Contest. Kay Ballard, with help from Allen Wachter for pictures, prepares Christmas cards for seniors who are unable to attend this event. The cards are available to sign by all attendees to spread the joy of the evening.

Ellen Davis is the Staff Representative with five members to assist in providing continuing care to our congregation.

Joyce Douglas, Moderator

### Committee Members:

Kay Ballard  
Judy Buss  
Joyce Douglas, Moderator  
Rev. Ellen Davis  
Dorrie Gage  
Mary Beth Johnson  
Kathy Rohwedder



## New Member Ministry

We set ambitious goals for 2015 and made progress in a number of key areas. We welcomed 35 new members into our church family this year. Membership stands at 1282 as of December 31<sup>st</sup>. We doubled our designated "Invite a Friend" dates on the calendar and saw positive results and we began utilizing social media and search engine marketing to actively promote Westminster as a destination of choice in the community for those seeking a new church home. Our committee began a long-term update of the committee manual to help leadership in the future better understand our programs and initiatives over the years. We are very pleased to support Westminster's new outreach to the Sudanese community in Lincoln with new member classes that embrace and support this expanded diversity in our growing congregation.



Looking ahead, we are forming goals for 2016 that build on the work in 2015 and likely will touch on refining our new member classes, improving our website so it includes additional content important to potential visitors and new members, and expanded marketing initiatives to promote Westminster and its distinct worship services (especially The Rising) in our neighborhood and throughout the Lincoln community.

Members Allen Wachter (moderator), Rob Baltensperger (vice moderator), Donna Wyatt as well as reverend Dr. Ken Moore served on the committee. Pastor McDonald is our staff representative to this committee.

If you have a cheerful and welcoming spirit and think that participating to help us support and grow new membership at Westminster, we would love to have you join our group.

Respectfully submitted,

Allen Wachter, moderator

## Nominating

The 2015 Nominating Committee presented the following slate at the annual congregational meeting, held Sunday, November 15, 2015. The slate was unanimously elected.

### **Elders (3 year)**

David Anderson  
Marybell Avery  
Nancy Delgado  
Michael Dempsey  
Amy Fricke  
Gwen Hlava  
Ernie Hines  
Matt Kirkland  
Rob Otte  
Mike Rasmussen

### **Elder (1 year)**

Michael Gregg

### **Elders (1 year youth)**

David Chapp  
Abby Peterson

### **Foundation (6 year term)**

Harry Seward, III  
Jim Smith

### **Foundation (3 year term)**

Nancy Dawson

### **Deacons (3 year)**

Jeanne Atkinson  
April Douglas  
Treva Fricke  
Mary Beth Johnson  
Karen McManus  
Amanda Mason  
Marcie Ryan  
Chris Stokes

### **Deacons (1 year)**

Pat Hackley  
Larry Wieskamp

### **Deacons (1 year youth)**

Josie Ford  
C. J. Jurgens

### **2016 Nominating Committee**

Darin Anderson  
Ken Goverts  
Angela Pearson  
Gwen Thorpe  
Dan Wherry

### **Ushers (3 year)**

Chip DeBuse  
Rauch Kang  
Ed Plander  
Regi Schirmer  
Steve Titus  
Eric Wachter  
Brian Wallace

### **Ushers (1 year)**

Ken Koop  
Larry Peach  
Kiann Ridgeway  
Caroline Schainost  
Jennifer Smith  
Brenda Waggoner  
Josh Whitfield  
Katie Zulkoski  
Walker Zulkoski

### **Ushers (1 year youth)**

Olivia Hoffman  
Rock Sita  
Audrey Smith

#### **2015 Nominating Committee:**

<b>Dorrie Gage</b>	<b>Brian Lammers</b>
<b>Bob Leavitt</b>	<b>Pam Martin</b>
<b>Deb Minter</b>	<b>Gwen Thorpe</b>
<b>Dan Wherry, Moderator</b>	

## Outreach

- \* Promoted 4 special offerings, with an increase of giving in each one. Pentecost offering, our share, went to Camp Calvin Crest and scholarships for children at risk. Peace and Global Witness offering helped support Salam Hanna, our speaker from Syria.
  - \* Did a spring cleanup of yards.
  - \* Sponsored 2 Pilger mission trips to help rebuild after the 2014 tornado.
  - \* Helped sell fair trade coffee to raise awareness of small farmers in Central America and their challenges.
  - \* Promoted the Mission Yearbook of Prayer, which will only be online in 2016.
  - \* With the encouragement of the committee, Creative Arts Camp students and parents collected items for hygiene kits for Clinic with a Heart.
  - \* Collected underwear for school children for Willie's Underwear Project.
  - \* Participated in the Presby Build Habitat for Humanity with workers, food, and donations.
  - \* Sponsored Hunger Sunday in August, with Alex Morse from Foods Resource Bank and Ruth Farrell from Presbyterian Hunger Project speaking, and provided lunch afterwards for them and those interested in learning more about how to become involved in alleviating hunger.
  - \* Led Neighbor Helping Neighbor groups in support of a number of local organizations.
  - \* Planned and promoted an international trip to Nicaragua, which will be Jan. 3-10 to learn more about the challenges of people there, and how to relate with them.
  - \* Packed disaster and hygiene kits from money donated for missions. Also from this money, gave to Foods Resource Bank, and tree seeds for developing countries.
  - \* Helped with Trunk or Treat.
  - \* Revised our Policies and Procedures.
  - \* Hosted the Peacemaker from Rwanda for a week.
  - \* Participated monthly at Gathering Place, and bimonthly at Matt Talbot Kitchen.
  - \* Weekly offerings of food collected for the Food Pantry for 6 families.
  - \* Donated 100 winter items to Community Action Program.
- Susan Kehrli Moore, Moderator



**Pilger Mission Team**

### **Committee Members:**

Harold Bowen	Carolyn Harp
Lois Katt	Bob Michaud
Susan Kehrli Moore, Moderator	
Joan Roberts	Jennifer Smith
Rev. Jennifer Strickland	Alice Szabat

## Personnel

The Personnel Committee welcomed a number of new staff in 2015. Our youth program has seen many changes; Makayla Kort was hired as the Interim Director of Children's Ministry. Makayla has a degree in Christian Ministry from Hastings College, and was very active in the youth programs at her home church. Devon Nelson moved from middle School Youth Leader to the High School Youth Leader, and Andrew Finkner was hired as the Middle School Youth leader.

A search committee was organized for a new permanent Director of Children's Ministry. The committee has diligently conducted numerous interviews for this integral position at church.

This year the remaining job descriptions were updated to bring them in-line with their actual duties. It was found that some sections of the employee handbook should be revised. Next year the involuntary separation and vacation policies will be revised, and a new grievance policy will be generated.

It is exciting to announce our newest seminarian Dr. Christy Dempsey, who will be attending Dubuque Theological Seminary.

Many thanks to the following committee members for their work this past year

Kathy Anderson, moderator

### Committee Members:

Kathy Anderson	Dawson Dowty
Dr. Andrew McDonald	Carolyn Otte
Robert Rediger	Erika Schafer

## A Message from Christy Dempsey

Westminster family, it is with such great joy that I report on my progress in seminary. I am currently an Inquirer under Homestead Presbytery and have completed my first semester of classes at Dubuque Theological Seminary. Dubuque, a Presbyterian Seminary, offers a Masters of Divinity via a distance program that incorporates an interactive internet platform along with periodic campus visits. If you know me well, you know that I get very excited every time I get to visit the Mississippi River!

I have just returned from a two-week intensive in Dubuque where I bonded with my Spiritual Formation group, connected with fellow seminarians and studied Worship in the Reformed Tradition. The worship course steeped me in the specifics of our Presbyterian worship practices, and in particular, emphasized the nuances of worship outlined in our Book of Order. My online work included courses on the Old Testament and a course in Mission and Evangelism.

I am so appreciative of the tremendous support from Westminster Presbyterian Church over the past year. From feeling a sense of call to stepping foot on the seminary campus is an exciting but emotionally and spiritually exhausting experience. Changing my vocation to ministry mid-career has truly required a leap of faith. Your prayers and guidance are invaluable to my progress.



## Small Group

Our committee's mission to serve as a resource connecting members of the Westminster church family with each other in order to foster experiences of belonging, growth and service in the context of our community was fulfilled this past year in a variety of group contexts.

### Friendship and Fellowship Groups



*World on a Plate* members continued to explore international cuisine and Presbyterian Church (USA) missions every month in homes and at church. These small groups were comprised of 8-12 people and realigned every four months, to accommodate new members and foster new relationships. While deepening international awareness over homemade cuisine, a Bread Basket mission was collected every month and approximately \$800 was raised to support PCUSA missions.

Many groups continued to meet and included *Lunch Bunch*; *History Buffs*; *Westminster Club*; *Faith & Cancer*; *Young Adult Group*, for singles and couples; *Men's Tuesday AM group*; *Ladies Night Out*; *Barky Parky* dog group; and *Silver Screenings*, a movie-buff group.

### Sports and Recreation Groups

*Yoga for the Soul* group continued to meet in the church sanctuary the last Monday of the month.

The *Tour de Friends* cycling group met spring through fall exploring a variety of Lincoln bike trails while getting to know one another better and enjoyed God's creation.

### Bible and Book Study Groups

Small groups that focus on study and discussion continued to meet this past year in a variety of settings and dynamics. Small Group committee lent studies were *24 Hours the Changed the World* (Adam Hamilton) and *The Last Week* (Borg & Crossan). *One Church, One Podcast* was introduced in the fall during W.O.W. And, *Prairie Readers*, book study group continued to meet and enjoy discussion this past year.

### Mission and Discipleship

*Turning Pages*, prison book club ministry; *Knit N Sit* and *Green @ Heart*, groups reached out in mission this past year. More information can be found on the Westminster church website at [westminsterlincoln.org](http://westminsterlincoln.org), go to Small Groups under the Opportunities link.

Robyn Uebele, Moderator

#### Committee Members:

Geoff Cline	Annette Marquez
Janice Rowhedder	Kathy Rohwedder
Rev. Jennifer Strickland	Robyn Uebele

## Stewardship

The theme for the Westminster Stewardship Committee this year was Ecclesiastes 3:1 - "To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven." The focus of the campaign was to highlight how Westminster supports and performs God's works through all seasons of the lives of the members of the congregation.

The committee established four goals for the year:

To develop and provide an educational component on the importance, and use of pledging to the church as a means of individual and family support of the church.

Expand use of multiple communication channels to congregation including social media (Facebook, video, e-mail)

Double committee membership to 4 members

Increase new pledges by 25 and Auto Pay pledges by 25.

Significant achievement was made on the first two goals with the creation of a video campaign that was shared during all three worship services. Additionally, the written brochure mailed to all members highlighted the plethora of programs and activities at Westminster supported and sustained by the pledges of the congregation. Consecration Sunday was held on November 8, 2015, when congregation members brought their yearly pledges to the front of the church to formally make their commitment to funding the church for 2016.

The generosity of the congregation continues to inspire our committee and the Session as we continue to work to be faithful to our calling. The committee would like to give special thanks to Brielle Anderson, Sarah Gergen, Allen Wachter, and Ken Moore for providing their messages and talents to help with this year's Stewardship message,

Contributions of time, talents, and treasures extend the reach of Westminster to our own congregation, the local community, and the world. We are grateful for the generosity of the congregation and proud to be a part of the great work God has called us to do at Westminster.

Cyndy Maddux, Moderator

Rev. Andrew McDonald

Cheryl Rennick

Christina Nevitt

Matt Nyberg



## Worship, Music and Fine Arts

This was an exciting year for the Ministry of Worship, Music, and Fine Arts. The following are just a few of the highlights of the many things that this ministry was involved with or oversaw during this past year.

Debuted our new choir robes on Easter Sunday.

Initiated a fund drive for the purchase of new hymnals.

On May 25th at 7:30 p.m., Alleluia Ringers, a nationally known bell choir from Wisconsin gave the final concert of their tour at Westminster.

Changed the time for the "Rising" service and continue to work on making changes to improve the service.

Creative Arts Camp was held July 13 - 17th. The children's musical, "Don't Rock the Ark", was presented on October 11th.

The Sudanese service started on November 7th with about 41 people attending.

The kids did a great job Dec. 13th with the Christmas Pageant.

There are far too many people to thank by name. Thanks to the members of this ministry, the members of the "Rising" committee, the AV technicians, the 8:00 communion crew, all of the musicians in the children's and adult choirs, the bell choir, and I am sure there are many more that I am not thinking of at the moment.

Finally, this Ministry enthusiastically acknowledges and gratefully appreciates the remarkable skill, time and energy given by our Ministers of Music, Masako and Boyd Bacon. Their extensive development of material for our services provides great spiritual enrichment and saves Westminster a tremendous amount of financial resource.

Respectfully submitted  
Steve Hughes, moderator

### Committee Members:

Boyd Bacon, Staff	Steve Hughes, Moderator
Martha Kingsbury	Lisa McConnell
Bob Schoettger	Mary Tomlinson
Mike Tomlinson	Sydne Wirrick-Knox
Lois Zulauf	

## Westminster Foundation

The Westminster Foundation had an outstanding year in our efforts to grow the assets of the Foundation. We were able to add an additional \$17,345 to the General Fund and \$231,700 to the Endowment Funds.

At year end 2015 the balance of the General Funds within the Foundation were \$1,127,599.70. The year end balance in the Endowment Funds stood at \$1,690,771.65. Thanks to all that have supported the Foundation in the past and we hope others will feel inclined to help grow the Foundation in the future. The Foundation has helped to serve the financial needs of Westminster in many ways for many years. We look forward to doing the same for generations to come. Thank you for your support.

Allen Moore, President

### Foundation Trustees

Jody Batten  
Kevin Harford  
Karen Janovy  
Ken Koop  
Allen Moore  
Lillie Larsen  
Jim Nissen  
Marilyn Maude  
Bill Roper  
Ross McCown  
John Hoppe, Jr.  
Leslie Jagers



## Youth and Young Adults

The Youth and Young Adult Committee (YAYA) oversees and supports the middle school, confirmation, and high school youth groups. The groups prepare activities that educate, inspire, entertain, and celebrate the young adults of Westminster Presbyterian Church. In 2015, YAYA saw continued growth in attendance for the high school group, led by Devon Nelson who is in his third year as a youth leader. Andrew Finkner who guides the middle school group with heart and enthusiasm.

Christy Dempsey continues to lead our two-year Confirmation program. The members of YAYA are very grateful for her expertise and dedication year after year.

Weekly meeting opportunities Sunday mornings, Wednesday evenings, and Sunday evenings for different groups provide activities, discussion, and opportunities for spiritual growth.

### Committee Members:

Mark Davis, Christy Dempsey, Andrew Finkner, Sarah Gergen, Thea Kerns, MaKayla Kort, Devon Nelson, Pastor Jen Strickland, Maddie Whitehead

We also welcomed new leader,



Confirmation Class - 2015

Confirmation, in particular, is an important part of the faith journey in all of our lives.

Activities, such as the overnight lock-in, Calvin Crest retreats, laser tag, and Roca Scary Farm bon fires help make youth group fun. Several youth spent a week in July in Milwaukee WI where they served in a soup kitchen. The events also help promote relationships between the youth in this faith journey. We agree that an open invitation for any youth of WPC to start attending is paramount and we invite you to encourage your youth to get involved at any age at any time.



Milwaukee Mission Trip

We are in close partnership with parents as we provide for their youth. Any support of the YAYA programs helps enrich what we have to offer and we appreciate the help you've given, immensely. Thank you! We look forward to continued growth, both spiritually and in attendance in 2016.

Sarah Gergen, Moderator

## February 2016 Adult Education

## The Conversation Continues...

A 2015 ruling of the U. S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage across the nation. Join us on Sunday mornings as our conversation on this topic continues.

- \* **February 7** "The Supreme Court Ruling regarding Same-Sex Marriage"  
Presented by Eric Berger, JD, UNL Professor of Law
- \* **February 14** "What Psychology is Telling Us about Same-Sex Marriage"  
Presented by Debra Hope, PhD, UNL Professor of Psychology
- \* **February 21** "What Social Research is Telling Us about Same-Sex Marriage"  
Presented by Emily Kazyak, PhD, UNL Assistant Professor of Sociology
- \* **February 28** "Presbyterians and Same-Sex Marriage"  
Presented by Brian Ellison of the Covenant

## Westminster Bible Class

Looking for a Bible study on Sunday morning? One of the best kept secrets is the Westminster Bible class which meets in the parlor each Sunday morning at 9 am. Our focus in February will be on Holy Days as experienced in the Old Testament books of Exodus and Leviticus. While we as Christians do not observe these festivals in the way Jews do, we will discover in them the guidance and care God extends to us as we journey through the days of our lives.

- ◆ **February 7** Exodus 12:1-14 The Passover Leader Rev. Ellen Davis  
As we begin our Lenten journey, we will explore the relationship between the Passover and our Christian celebration of the Lord's Supper.
- ◆ **February 14** Leviticus 23:15-22 Feast of Weeks Leader Dr. Bud Tenney  
Following will be an exploration of the Feast of Weeks and its relationship to the Christian celebration of God's blessing through the Holy Spirit of Pentecost.
- ◆ **February 21** Leviticus 16:11-19 Day of Atonement Leader Gary Haller  
The third lesson of the month will explore the Day of Atonement and an understanding of Christ as both the high priest and the lamb slain for the forgiveness of sin.
- ◆ **February 28** Leviticus 23:33-43 Leader Gary Haller  
Finally, we will discover in a study of the Feast of Booths an understanding of thanksgiving for the gifts God has given his people.

## All in the Family

**Marriage:** Best wishes to Carmen Erway and Erik Petersen who were married on February 23.

**Birth:** Congratulations to Kayla Vergith and Les Blyden on the birth of Kasen Lee' Ander born January 19; grandparents Lyndee and Keith Vergith .

**Bereavement:** Comfort for the family and friends of Neal Wilson who died on January 3 and Jeanette Alexis on January 13.

### Out with the Old, In With the New

It is a milestone moment when a church changes hymnals. We are ushering in new Hymnals in recognition of Westminster's 111<sup>th</sup> year. These will be dedicated on the first Sunday in February. Thank you to everyone who made these new hymnals possible. If you would like a copy of the old hymnal, they will be available for free at a table in the hallway by the Library.

## Foundation Birthdays

### January

Pam Martin  
Linda Petersen  
Tami Wellmann  
Lois Zulauf

## Westminster on Wednesday (WOW)

Join us weekly for great food, education, music and more!

Dinner is served from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. in Cole Hall. \$4/children, \$6/adults, \$17 max per family.

**WOWXL (6:30)** Youth in grades 6-8 meet weekly during the school year for engaging activities and to grow in faith together.

**Knit N Sit (6:30)** Come knit, crochet, learn either craft, or do other projects for the church. Women, and men of all ages are welcome to attend this fluid group.

**Adult Education: (6:30)**

**February 3** Come hear about the mission trip to Nicaragua.

**February 10** Ash Wednesday. No Class

**February 17- March 16** Join us as we explore, in depth, each day of Holy Week using *The Last Week* by Borg and Crossan as our guide. Pastor Jen will lead.

### Music Rehearsals (6:30)

Westminster Carillon (Adult Handbell Choir, Sanctuary)  
Cherub Choir (age 3-Kindergarten, Room 210E)  
Alleluia! Amen! Choir (Grade 1-5, Room 210)  
Westminster Choir (Adult Choir, 7:30 pm, Sanctuary)

### WOW MENU

February 3 Turkey Casserole  
February 10 Pancakes and sausage  
February 17 Brats and mashed potato  
February 24 Mac n Cheese

# Upcoming Events & Small groups



Westminster

## **Lunch Bunch**

February 2—11:30 a.m.

Penelope's Lil Cafe—4724 Pioneers Blvd

All men and women are welcome

## **History Buffs**

**Saturday, February 13**

9:00 am Lounge

Ernie Hines will present a very interesting history on the "Life of John Wycliffe". This man was born in northern England and lived from 1320-1384 and encompassed all the major elements of the protestant reformation relating to the many fallacies and dogma of **the Church** at that time. This was almost 200 years before Martin Luther. This is informal and all are welcome to a fascinating story.

## **Second Sunday Lunch**

February 14—11:30 a.m.

BBQ Pork Sandwiches, Baked beans,

Cole Slaw

\$6/Adults; \$4/Children (10 and under)

## **World on a Plate**

February 15—6:30 p.m.

Laurel & Tom Pappas

We're going to Pakistan! Veda Gill with the Presbyterian Education Board in Pakistan will join us. Call church office 402.475.6702 if interested in this group for more information

## **Prairie Readers**

**Wednesday, February 17**

1 pm in Westminster's Parlor

*Just Mercy* by Brian Stevenson

Facilitator—Linda Burchard

All are welcome.

## **Men's Tuesday Breakfast**

Meets at 7 am in the Parlor.

**February 2:** Dr. Andrew McDonald

**February 9:** Presentation on the Telegraph Distrist by Clay Smith

**February 16:** Pastor Jen & Ken Moore—Trip to Nicaragua

**February 23:** Kari Lundeen  
Nebraska Community Blood Bank

## **Presbyterian Women Circle Meetings**

### **Circle 3**

**Wednesday, February 3**

10:00 a.m.

Linda Miller

### **Circle 4**

**Monday, February 1**

7 :00 p.m.

Carolyn Harp

2905 S 41 St

### **Circle 5**

**Tuesday, February 9**

10 :00 a.m.

Pat Hackley

### **Circle 6**

**Tuesday, February 23**

7:00 p.m.

Jane Hines



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## **Psalms of Lament**

Wednesdays 6:20 p.m. Chapel

February 10 - March 16

Lent is a time of deep reflection. This year, we will be exploring a particular group of Psalms: Psalms of lament. They help us to get in touch with the suffering of the world. In particular, it gives us time to reflect on the losses in our lives. The Psalms help us to become aware of that about which we may be in denial and to bring it to the surface. The Psalms help us to explore our hurt and pain, and discover how God is at work to heal our pain. In particular, these Psalms help us to lament the loss of loved ones in our life and open ourselves to God's grace. The greatest grace of all comes at the end of Lent—the joy of resurrection on Easter. Join us on this journey toward Easter.

### **DRAW CLOSER TO GOD**

#### **TAKE THE WESTMINSTER LENTEN CHALLENGE**

Unlike the Ice Bucket Challenge, which was a chilling experience, the Westminster Lenten Challenge will warm your heart and soul.

Join us for book studies on Wednesday evenings and Sunday morning as we journey toward Easter.

On Wednesday evenings, starting February 17, Pastor Jen will lead us through *The Last Week*. This book is a day-by-day examination of the key events that occurred during Holy Week.

On Sunday mornings in March, Dr. Ken Moore will lead us through Henri Nouwen's *The Return of the Prodigal Son*. Inspired by Rembrandt's painting of the prodigal son, Nouwen explores our call to love as the father and be loved as the son.

Take the Westminster Lenten Challenge...

Buy the book and read it.

Join our discussions and draw closer to God.