
THE MESSENGER

Community Conversations: Civility in Public Life

Community Conversations has been the Adult Education Forum theme in January for at least a decade. This year's focus is not a new one but something we believe God wants us to practice until we get it right - Civility in Public Life. The line-up provides good diversity in several categories.



January 5 | Jack Gould, Issues chair Common Cause Nebraska

January 12 | Roy Christiansen, Lincoln City Council

January 19 | Deb Schorr and Rick Vest, Lancaster County Commissioners

January 26 | Anna Wishart, Nebraska State Legislator

Join us on Sunday mornings in the Lounge during January for our Adult Education Series on Community Conversations beginning at 10:45 a.m.

The Woita Family

Megan and Jason Woita are both from Wahoo. They knew of each other, but they didn't know each other because they went to different high schools, and at 42, he's a year older.

But they both ended up in Lincoln, she at Nebraska Wesleyan, and he at Southeast Community College in Milford. They reconnected in 2003 and married in 2005.



How they ended up at Westminster is a compromise of sorts. Megan had been raised in a non-denominational evangelical Christian household, Jason as a Catholic. They found Westminster through the preschool, which their children, Porter, 11, and Kendall, 9, attended. They liked what they saw. "We wanted a stable faith environment for our kids," said Jason.

They've been members now for about five years; Jason serves as an Elder, Megan as a Deacon.

"We wanted a stable faith environment for our kids."

-JASON WOITA

They've been members now for about five years; Jason serves as an Elder, Megan as a Deacon. Both are pleased with the welcoming feeling of the church and the fellowship of young families that goes beyond church services on Sundays. Giving back to the church by giving of their time is a great way to model for their children, they say. Taking on a leadership role comes naturally for Megan, who spent 20 years in such positions with State Farm. She stepped down

last year to get her real estate license – she's now with SimpliCity – and to handle the business end of Jason's homebuilding operation, Woita Homes.

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The two are full of surprises. Megan spent much of her youth showing quarter horses. From the ages of 12 to 18, she qualified for the Youth World Quarter Horse Show in showmanship and Western riding events and traveled to cities across the country for the competition. Although she doesn't own horses now, she still rides occasionally when visiting her parents in Wahoo.

And Jason dabbles in painting during the winter months when the weather keeps him inside. Several of his masterful works hang on walls throughout the house.

But Jason's getting ready for a new passion – racing vintage cars, made possible by his purchase of a red '63 Corvette. He'll explore the basics of competitive driving then take the car to competitions out of state. It could be an "epic failure," he confides, but the guy who grew up around body shops is willing to give it a try. Porter declares that he wants to be a race car driver when he grows up; Kendall is undecided – either a veterinarian like her grandpa and aunt, or a singer.



Nurturing talent isn't new for the Woitas. Several summers ago they hosted a neighborhood kids' production of "Shrek" in their backyard. Jason built the stage, but the whole Backyard Theater operation was run by the youngsters. When news of the play traveled beyond Lincoln, owners of the "Shrek" copyright demanded fees for the rights to stage the show. Someone from New York got wind of the controversy and covered the fees for the neighborhood troupe. The next summer they did "Wizard of Oz" -- legally, says Jason, who, by the way, is a Bruce Springsteen fan and has seen the "Boss" seven times in concert, traveling to Milwaukee, Denver and Kansas City for concerts..Megan finds time to volunteer for Make-A-Wish Foundation and serves as treasurer of the Rousseau PTO, where Kendall is a fourth-grader. As a family they all are learning to play golf, although Jason and Porter are clearly better learners.

Completing the family is Molly, a four-year-old white English lab, who is a rescue dog, and Clifford the cat, rescued as a kitten and is 9. He's the neighborhood socialite, says Megan, who notes that he's often wandering into other homes for food and drink. Article written by Patty Beutler.



Your Pastor Nominating Committee did not meet on December 26th but normally meets for at least two hours every week. At home, we review Pastor Information Forms (PIF) received from the national Church Leadership Connection (CLC) matching service. For your information, this method is like a blind date. We list the top qualities we hope to have in a new pastor and the website looks at the PIFs in their file to “match” individuals to us. The pastors have no idea who might be looking at them until a church contacts them.

Since our Ministry Information Form (MIF) was approved by the Presbytery in mid-September, we have reviewed almost 100 PIFs from 26 states as well as those nearby. Many pastors state they want to be in a large metropolitan area or lead an international congregation. These matches are easy to move aside but they must be read and evaluated or our process isn't appropriate.

We have advertised in a Presbyterian magazine and have also received about a dozen self-referrals to consider. This means a pastor has read our Ministry Information Form on the CLC and is interested in us. We have also talked to over 40 Executive Presbyters across the nation to plant the seed that Westminster is terrific and looking for a new chapter in the life of our church. Some of you have provided personal contact information and others used social media to show our ad. Our net has been spread wide and far.

Our Ministry Information Form has been adjusted to increase our possible matches. We hope to begin Zoom interviews in January of a few candidates but we currently have no clear choice. Pastor Sue Collier, our Presbytery liaison, told us when we began in August that most likely this will take us nine months to a year. We want it to be less than that but we want the right person.

As always, we want your input. Your comment might be the spark that leads us to our next Head of Staff. Please feel free to contact Andrew Finkner, Michael Gregg, Steve Hughes, Jim Kinkennon, Sandi Larson, Deb Schorr, Alisha Stokes, Allen Wachter or me.

Thank you, Joyce Douglas

GREEN AT HEART

Recycling actually has a rather minuscule effect on diminishing carbon emissions, but it does a lot to keep our air and waterways clean and healthy for all living things. Westminster encourages you to keep up your good work of Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling all the STUFF that comes into our homes! Your church is helping out by collecting some materials that can't be recycled locally. During January bring your unwanted tree lights and Styrofoam packing materials to the reception area (no packing peanuts or food containers, please). We'll fill a trailer with your discards and take it to Omaha where there are reprocessing facilities.

Another recycling opportunity is being offered locally by Goodwill Industries. Celebrate National Technology Day and reduce e-waste by bringing your unwanted electronics to the Vine Street location on Saturday, January 11th, 10:00a to 2:00p. Keyboards, radios, alarm clocks, curling irons, small appliances, video games, monitors, and almost anything you can connect to a computer are accepted. <https://z-m-www.facebook.com/events/589174068502290/>

2020 marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. Westminster's Green@Heart is working on plans for this year's Creation Celebration and also for participating in community events. We would love to hear your ideas for ways to celebrate and to increase our commitment to caring for creation. Pass on your thoughts to any Green@Heart member, or better yet, join us during this consequential year.

Contact Laurel Van Ham at lvanha@windstream.net with your comments or for more information.

MUSIC

Sunday, Jan. 5, we will have a **pickup choir** that will meet at 8:30 am to rehearse an easy anthem for 9:30 am worship. We will be singing a three-part arrangement of "Go, Tell It On the Mountain." This one-time commitment is open to all!

Westminster Choir welcomes all singers, and January is an excellent time to join! We will not rehearse on New Year's Day, but add Wednesday, January 8 to your calendars! We will dive into new music for the spring from 6:30-8:00 pm in the sanctuary on the 8th.

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WEDNESDAYS AT WESTMINSTER

Parent's Night Out will Resume on January 8th

Parents' Night Out | Wednesdays | 5-7 PM

Parents have 2 hours to take a breath, restore your soul & enjoy some free time while your newborns through 5th grade are lovingly cared for by Westminster Church Staff. Your child will enjoy: games, meal, music, Bible Study and a bed time story just before you pick them up at 7 PM. Open to ALL. Please encourage your child (children) to invite friends. Parent's Night Out will not meet on Wednesday, January 1 as the church building will be closed.



Knit & Sit | Wednesdays | Church Library | 6:30 PM

We warmly welcome you to come to knit, crochet, do other hand work, or just sit and enjoy the fellowship. We can also help you learn to knit and we have some supplies to share. We meet year round, just come when you can.

FELLOWSHIP AT WESTMINSTER

Presbyterian Women of Westminster Circles

Presbyterian Women of Westminster Circles engage in monthly Bible study, mission, prayer and nurturing of one another. Women of all ages are welcome. PW Circles follow the expectations and goals of the National Presbyterian Women's Assoc. (PW/Presbyterian Church USA). Circles meet once a month September through June; meeting days, time and locations depend on the individual Circle. Contact: Ellen Davis at edavis11@neb.rr.com, or Contact: Linda Miller at dplrmiller@windstream.net.

Lunch Bunch | Tuesday, January 7 | 11:30 AM

We are meeting at The Pizza Ranch located at 8420 Lexington Ave, Lincoln, NE 68505. Pizza Ranch is a Buffet chain offering pizza, fried chicken & classic American sides in an Old West-themed setting. Join us for fellowship & good food. Contact: Ed Plander at plander@eprodigy.net

History Buffs | Saturday, January 11 | Lounge | 9 AM

Our speaker will be Judi Gaiashkibos, Director, Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs. Her topic is: "Chief Standing Bear Statue/Washington D.C./The Rest of the Story." Learn how this beautiful sculpture came to reside in the Rotunda of the Nation's Capital. Contact: Bruce & Margaret Sheffield.

Faith & Cancer | Tuesday, January 21 | Parlor | 7 PM

No matter where you are in your journey, this group is where cancer survivors can come together for fellowship, prayer and study. This Life Group meets at the same time every third Tuesday of each month.

Sausage, Eggs & Scripture | Saturday, January 18 | Scooter's | 8 AM

Men of Westminster are invited to a breakfast Bible study on the third Saturday of each month. We meet in the private dining room of Scooter's located at 2901 S 84th Street. Pastor Shelbourn leads the study which concludes promptly at 9 AM. This month's scripture will be Mark 7:24-37. For more information, call Pastor Jimmy at 402-475-6702.



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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The church building & office will be closed January 1st for New Year's Day.

The Spring Stated Meeting of the Congregation will be Sunday, February 23rd, immediately following worship. This meeting will receive the 2020 Budget; audited financial reports; and committee reports.

Annual committee reports are due to Tracy by January 16, in order to be included in The Messenger. If you have any photo jpegs of your committee events, please include them in your email to Tracy at tracy@westminsterlincoln.org.

We are looking for one or two people to be the **Funeral Reception Moderator(s)** at WPC. They should be able to communicate with grieving family members using compassion, patience and gentle guidance; possess good time management and organizational skills; quickly solicit volunteers from a list to assist in serving; and work with catering coordinators to order food/refreshments. Talk to Val if you have questions or are interested in this ministry.