

January
2022

2022
— HAPPY NEW YEAR —

**HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

worship
WITH US

**WORSHIP WITH US
ON SUNDAYS
SANCTUARY AT
9:30 AM OR ONLINE**



**SUNDAY COMMUNION
SANCTUARY &
VIRTUAL ON JAN. 2**

THE MESSENGER



Westminster Family,

January not only a new year and the kick-off of our “Why Westminster” vision, but it is also the time we kick-off our 2022 Confirmation Class! At the time of the Messenger Deadline, we have twelve youth committed and begin classes on Sunday, January 9th. This month I want to share a little with our whole church family about Confirmation from my perspective as one of the hands-on leaders.



Personally, I have either led or been a key part in planning Confirmation classes for more than 18 years. Through those classes, many trial-and-error adaptations, and a wonderful seminary class on Confirmation Journeys with Dr. Rodger Nishioka - a leading expert on Christian Education in the PC(USA) - I have developed the view that Confirmation is a process 'not just' for youth, but for the work of the whole church and our individual families. Core components are group sessions on Sundays, a church-member Mentor relationship, and weekly "@home" discussions with an adult parent/guardian.

What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is a short-term journey of Christian learning, living, and commitment. The Confirmation journey's goal is growth in a young person's relationship with Jesus Christ and the church *and* their basic understanding of core Biblical, theological and Reformed concepts. As in all areas of our education at Westminster, tying knowledge to our practice as Christians day-to-day is a crucial part of our process and the denominational curriculum we use.

Confirmation gives our youth a chance to intentionally explore, articulate, and live out what they believe as followers of Jesus. It is not the beginning nor the end of an individual's faith journey, but instead, an intentionally formational part of the life of faith in our tradition. This process culminates with the writing of a faith statement and the opportunity to make a commitment by professing one's faith and joining the church on Confirmation Sunday. Again, the big-picture goal is formation that leads to bearing fruit in daily life.

It is possible we will still need mentors for our youth at the time of the Messenger's publication, so please reach out to me (chris@westminsterlincoln.org) if you are interested or have questions about that part of the process. Otherwise, I encourage you all to pray for our youth, the volunteer teacher team, and the families engaged in this journey together this Winter/Spring.

Looking ahead to 2022, it's good to remember that "Why Westminster?" is the framing question for our congregational vision. In the days and years ahead the nurture of our youth and children will be a priority in the vision and ministry of Westminster, and Confirmation is one of many wonderful ways we express that priority!

With Gratitude,
Pastor Chris

Tree Sabbath Worship – A Note from Pastor Chris

“As part of the Faith to Forest initiative, Westminster will have a tree-centric worship service on January 23! We’ll worship God while celebrating the good gift of trees as part of God’s creation with scriptures referencing trees**, tree hymns, tree decorations, and a sermon with stories about trees.

I hope you’ll join us for this special time of worship that uplifts our Westminster value for cultivating environmental stewardship as a congregation, from church to our homes. **There are at least 290 scriptures referencing trees, but we won’t read them all that Sunday!” – Pastor Chris

Faith to Forest—to Photos

The Lincoln Camera Club will add their talents with an exhibition of tree-related photography in Memory Lane (the hallway south of the sanctuary).



Introducing Faith to Forest

- A collaboration among Lincoln’s faith communities focused on trees’ special place in our call to tend creation and to care for the least of those among us.
- Celebrating all that we enjoy about trees and acting on our responsibility to care for them.

Trees benefit life on this planet in many ways such as absorbing carbon dioxide, preventing erosion, removing pollutants, affording us shade, moderating weather extremes, providing wildlife habitat, supplying timber, and producing food. But currently we are losing trees at a much faster pace than they are being regrown. During January and February Westminster will respond in a variety of ways. You can follow Faith to Forest on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FaithToForest>



Faith to Forest—I’d give anything not to . . .

Trees are badly needed - in Lincoln, to replace the 1000 that are lost every year, and even more badly needed in the tropics, where deforestation increasingly contributes to climate change. Westminster will be raising money for tree-planting and contributions will be shared locally (25%) through the Lincoln Parks Foundation and globally (75%) through One Tree Planted. To make it more fun, you are invited to pledge NOT to do something:

I’d give \$ 100	not to	have Jimmy play bagpipes outside my home at 5:00 am.
I’d give \$ 85	not to	dog sit for Chris and Lauren Peters’ pups.
I’d give \$ 75	not to	host a playdate for the Westminster Preschool
I’d give \$ 50	not to	have Tom Pappas raid my yard for Hostamania
I’d give \$ 35	not to	do the Children’s Chat or sing a solo in church
I’d give \$ 25	not to	change the lightbulbs in the sanctuary chandeliers
I’d give \$ 10	not to	entertain Green@Heart for dinner

Pledge forms available on January 23rd, due back by February 6.



Faith to Forest—Zoom to Learn

Zoom in on Thursday evenings, 7-8, for a special series presented by Westminster friends and other experts. Links will be posted in each week's eVine and at <https://www.firstplymouth.org/catforest>

Jan 6: Out on a Limb in God's Forest Rev. Dr. Jen Strickland and Rev. Dr. Jacob Buchholz: Why trees and the environment are issues requiring attention and action by people of faith.

Jan 13: Trees: Our Superhero Friends Justin Evertson of the Nebraska Forest Service: The economic value and health benefits of trees, planting native species, and how trees interact with climate change.

January 20: The Nitty Gritty of Tree Selection and Care Three tree experts—Sarah Browning, Bob Henrickson, and Kaylyn Nerverve: Ensuring the long-term success of a tree planted in Eastern Nebraska.

January 27: Introduction to Prairie Pruners Lorri Grueber, Lincoln Parks Department: An overview, initial training, and next steps for joining "Prairie Pruners," a new volunteer program in our city parks.

February 3: The Future We Choose, The Stubborn Optimist's Guide to the Climate Crisis Pat Leach, Director of Lincoln City Libraries, and Martha Shulski, Nebraska State Climatologist: Perspectives on the book chosen for community-wide discussion.



Faith to Forest—Train as a Volunteer

The Lincoln Parks Department is responsible for over 1500 new trees each year—and each tree needs to be pruned three times during its first 15 years of life! In this new program Prairie Pruners volunteers will learn how to provide the necessary care for newly planted trees and then put that knowledge to use in Lincoln's parks.

Training will consist of a Zoom presentation followed by an in-person field session. The Parks Department will designate workdays and areas, and will provide tools and haul the debris. All pruning will be done without the use of ladders, using small tools like hand clippers and small hand saws. Trees also benefit from mulching, another volunteer opportunity that requires less training and can be done as a one-time service project.

For more information see <https://www.firstplymouth.org/cattakeaction> and get started by Zooming in on January 27.

Life Group Gatherings

Adult Education Bible Study of Acts of the Apostles

Join us via Zoom for Bible Study on Wednesdays. Contact Tom Pappas to enroll and get the Zoom Meeting information. This group is open to all who wish to attend and learn about scripture book by book.

Hearts & Hands | Church Library | Wednesdays 1:30 -3:00 PM & 6:30 - 8:00 PM

Feel free to bring anything you'd like to work on. Some creative things you can enjoy doing with your hands are coloring, rock painting, embroidery, knitting, and stitching. Men and women and ALL craft projects welcome! Questions: Call Franci Scheele at (402) 310-4212.

Presbyterian Woman's Circle 4 | Monday, January 3 | 7:00 p.m.

Circle will meet via Zoom in January.

Lunch Bunch | Olive Garden | Tuesday, January 4 | 11:30 a.m.

Lunch Bunch will be meeting at the Olive Garden, 90 Gateway Mall. Join us for good food & fellowship. All are invited to attend.

Prairie Readers | Fellowship Hall | Wednesday, January 19 | 1:00 p.m.

Prairie Readers will meet in Fellowship Hall. Book: *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell. Discussion Leader: Linda Burchard. All are welcome.

Faith and Cancer Support Group | Parlor | Tuesday, January 18 | 7 p.m.

Cancer is associated with many emotions wrapped up within. In our support group at Westminster we can share those thoughts and feelings with others who are experiencing similar concerns. All are welcome. Contact Janice Rohwedder 402 730-5568.

Ladies Night Out | Billy's | Monday, January 31 | 5:00 – 7:00 PM

We will be gathering at Billy's Restaurant, 1301 H Street. The cost is \$14.00/per person (plus, the cost of your drink and tip) and served family style. Our prearranged pricing takes into consideration what Nader has available in his kitchen. As always, feel free to bring a friend, sister, aunt, daughter or mother to all our gatherings.

Messenger Articles Reminder:

All information for The Messenger is due to Tracy Hoffman at tracy@westminsterlincoln.org by the 18th of each month. And all announcements for The eVine are due to Tracy and Joanne Gabriel at joanne@westminsterlincoln.org by 5 pm on Monday of each week.



Faith Village

In Faith Village, we will kick the year off with a pajama party on January 2! Kids can wear their favorite pajamas to church and have pancakes in Cole Hall while we play games and have fun.

The next week, we will begin to look at the time Jesus was left behind in the temple, speaking with the teachers. This is the only story in the Bible that addresses the time between his birth and the beginning of his ministry. Through art, cooking, science, missions, and more, Villagers will discover that Jesus learned many things as he grew, just as they do, and will learn that Jesus was once a child who then grew up, just as they are growing.

If you have not done so already, Please be sure to register your villager. It is important for us to know if your child has allergies and how we can contact you in the event of an emergency. The registration form is here: <https://forms.gle/6bc1PSDmRBipe336A>.

Whatchamacallit Wednesdays

Wednesday nights are a great opportunity for kids to get together with their friends and have fun learning about God. Kids from nursery age through middle school meet from 5:30-7:30 PM.

In January, Faith Village kids will return to Cooking with Jesus. We will be making s'mores, rice krispie fish, popcorn, and ants on a log we work our way through the life of Jesus.

The Youth Group will begin a new series called "Faith in an Anxious World."

Wondering what to expect for dinner? The amazing Zanders have assembled a menu to help you out. Here is what will be on the table Wednesday nights in January.

Jan 5: Spaghetti, garlic bread, apple slices

Jan 12: Chicken nuggets, roasted red potatoes

Jan 19: Toasted cheese, chips, grapes

Jan 26: Walking taco, banana



Youth Group

Are you ready for the new year? We are starting the year off with a Lockin, January 2-3 (Covid permitting). Plan to play games, eat pizza, and hang out with friends all night at church. We start at 8:00 PM on January 2 and finish at 8:00 AM on Monday, January 3. We can't wait to get the fun started!

This month we begin a new series called "Faith in an Anxious World."

All Youth Group members are welcome to attend either Wednesday evenings, 5:30 PM-7:30 PM. or Sunday evenings, 7:00 PM-8:30 PM.

Youth Sermon Set-Up

Youth are invited to take part in a sermon set-up discussion on Sunday mornings at 9:15, a session designed to deepen the worship experience. We enjoy donuts and juice while discussing the theme of the upcoming sermon and identifying how it applies to our lives today. Youth are invited to attend service with their families or together in the balcony.



As we usher in a brand new year, Westminster Preschool is already preparing for the 2022-2023 school year! Registration for current preschool families and Westminster church members begins January 5, 2022. All other registrations occur on February 1, in conjunction with our Registration Open House. The Open House runs from 6-7pm and provides an opportunity for families to tour our school and meet the teachers.



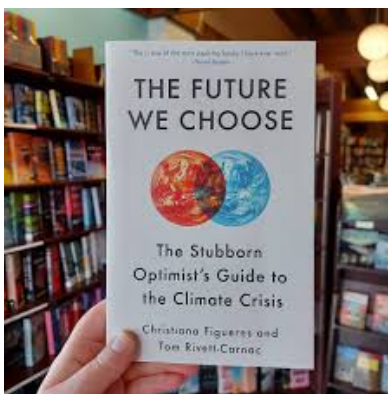
If you, or someone you know, is interested in enrolling for next school year or the summer, please contact Rachel Hinze at 402-475-6702 or rachelh@westminsterlincoln.org.



Faith to Forest—Coming in February

The Future We Choose, The Stubborn Optimist's Guide to the Climate Crisis is a practical and inspiring book. Westminster and nearby St. Matthew's Episcopal Church will come together for a neighborhood book group.

Tree Pie Buffet—Bring a pie to share and enjoy sampling the variety. Only one stipulation: the pie filling must have come from a tree.



"The Future We Choose, The Stubborn Optimist's Guide to the Climate Crisis" is a practical and inspiring book. Westminster and nearby St. Matthew's Episcopal Church will come together for a neighborhood book group. The book is available at Francie and Finch and at Barnes and Noble.

Volunteer Spotlight: Laurie Lofquist

From ushers and greeters to children and youth leaders and everyone else in-between, Westminster volunteers use their gifts to serve others on a daily basis. These committed individuals make everything we do here at Westminster possible, and this month our spotlight is on another generous and talented individual, Laurie Lofquist.

For Laurie, rejoining Westminster was coming home to the church of her childhood. After graduating from college, she spent a number of years teaching psychology at Millard South in Omaha and several more years in Hastings. In 2019, Laurie, her husband, Kraig, and their two daughters, Lexi, 12, and Brooke, 10, moved to Lincoln, where she now teaches at School Middle School as well as serving as a professor in the Doane College of Education Graduate program. The Lofquist family also includes Haley, Laurie's 29-year-old stepdaughter, and their dog, Oliver, a senior lab/Saint Bernard mix, who the family considers to be a 100% lovedog.

Volunteering has long been an important part of Laurie's life. While teaching at Millard South, she was asked by the local Lions club to sponsor the development of a service organization at the high school. Through that experience, she was able to see how powerfully her service impacted the teens in her program. Laurie observes "There is a certain energy that can happen when you serve."

After moving to Omaha, she continued volunteering, serving at church and at school on the PTO. In Hastings, she was active in the children and youth program at the First Presbyterian Church, cooking and teaching on Wednesdays as well as helping out with VBS. While it was an exhausting experience, it was also highly rewarding and allowed her to get to know the church members and their children. Laurie is currently serving at Westminster on Session, as Chair of the Children and Youth Committee, and volunteers to help teach on Wednesday.



Laurie recognizes that "Those who serve in a volunteer role are invaluable to organizations." But volunteering serves a more personal purpose as well. While her individual spiritual journey has, at times, brought doubt, she always finds herself returning to the realization that there is something larger than our own selfish existence. "I want my kids to grow up in a church which helps them think of others and the larger picture, while also being a place where they can express doubt and grow in their faith." For her, the Presbyterian church provides exactly that type of environment.

Being a volunteer often means having to be flexible and deal with unforeseen circumstances. Those are the times, however, that can wind up being the most meaningful. Laurie shared how she felt great disappointment that the first "Trunk-or-Treat" after the pandemic lockdown was rained out and had to be moved inside. "As I stood at the door and greeted people who were walking into Westminster for the first time, I felt an important role of being welcoming. I would like us to be a place where strangers can come and feel welcome, and I felt this to be true that evening."

As for what she has learned about herself through volunteering, Laurie acknowledges that she prefers to show up and do the work rather than serve as the organizer – meetings are really not her thing. She also has found that volunteering leads to the development of great relationships with other volunteers. Also, she says to keep in mind that volunteering does not need to be a long-term commitment. It can be as simple as showing up when asked and helping out with a single event. “I served on PTO and there would be parents that never attended meetings but I could count on them to show up and do the work when asked. Organizers of events very much appreciate any service people can offer!”

“Take a chance,” Laurie encourages, “and find something you think you might enjoy. In the process, you will find roles that fit you and those that do not. Service to others may be altruistic, but it also is incredibly fulfilling.”

Fun facts about Laurie:

- Favorite ice cream flavor? *Chocolate French silk pie.*
- Dream vacation destination? *I like anywhere with a lot of interesting outdoor activities.*
- Favorite sports team? *Nebraska sports.*
- Favorite board game? *Catch Phrase.*
- Favorite movie/TV show? *Sound of Music and Parenthood.*
- Favorite Bible verse? Micah 6: 6-8
“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

If you’re wondering where you fit in and what it means to live on mission, consider volunteering to serve in our children or youth ministry. Whatever your interests or gifts are, we can use you. Complete the volunteer form here <https://forms.gle/ffJLjZbMzw2qjEUg6> to get started.

Advent Workshop

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to help with the Advent Workshop with a special thank you to the youth for providing such incredible support. Thanks also to everyone who stopped by and enjoyed coffee, cocoa, cookies, crafts, and fellowship.

Our Great Cookie Bake-Off participants did a wonderful job providing some truly creative cookies.

The Best Tasting Cookie award goes to Rita Kinkennon.

The Most Festive Cookie award goes to Reese Baltensperger.

The Most Unique Cookie award goes to Ron Souliere.

Thanks to all our contributing bakers!

It is not too early to begin planning your cookie for next year’s competition. Remember, everyone who brings cookies gets to take home a sampling of all the other cookies.



“JUST IN CASE”

“When you reap the harvest of your land, you are not to reap to the very edge of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not strip your vineyard bare or gather its fallen grapes. Leave them for the poor and the resident alien; I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 19:9-10

Now that Christmas has come and gone, and we have quietly moved into a new space full of hope and promise, it is time to think about how this new year will unfold. Many of us will begin to write lists that include resolutions about how we will change in the next 365 days. This is the year I will...begin going to the gym, quit smoking, lose weight, pay off credit cards, spend less time working, go back to school, study harder, practice an instrument more... anything that will make us different than we were last year.

And yet each list of new year’s resolutions piles more and more on top of schedules that are already packed full; it seems that we tend to operate with very little margin. We are constantly spread way too thin with our money, our time, and our emotions. Or, to borrow a phrase from the Bible, we tend to *“plow to the edge of our fields.”*

In the book of Leviticus, we see that God instructed his people to leave some margin on the edge, not just so that His people would have healthy habits, but also for the sake of others who might wander into their fields. Some days the people might not come; other days they would. Regardless, the edges of the field were for “just in case” someone needed food for themselves or their family.

What if, instead of pushing to all the way to every proverbial edge, we adopted a “just in case” mentality? What if we left some time in our schedule “just in case” we had the

opportunity to listen to someone in need of attention? What if we left a little unspent money “just in case” we had the chance to provide for a family who was having a tough year financially? What if we intentionally didn’t go all the way to the edge because, in faith, we believed that God would bring someone’s need our way?

Good things can happen when we live with a sense of “just in case.” During some dark days of Israel, there was still a man who took seriously the law of God and didn’t plow to the edges. And because he didn’t, a young widow named Ruth was able to glean the wheat from the edges in order to provide food for her and her mother-in-law, Naomi. Boaz, the owner of that field, ended up marrying the gleaner Ruth.

Amazing things can happen when you don’t plow to the edges of your life.

So this year, instead of making a list of all the ways you need to do more and be better, try not plowing to the edges of your life; try making room for “just in case.”



STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE MINISTRY

THE POWER OF TEN

The past year has been a wonderful time in our church as we move forward toward a bright, new future for Westminster. Pastor Chris Peters has been leading us in crafting a vision plan for the next five years. We look forward to its unveiling soon. And that plan will guide us as we “Dream Big” about where we go as a church and a congregation. These are exciting times!

It is also the time for us to express our financial commitment to making dreams and visions turn into reality and do God’s good work within our church, our community, and across the globe.

So now, as we look ahead to 2022 and beyond, it is time for us to faithfully pledge to empower our potential by once again embracing the **The Power of Ten**.

In addition to being the percent of the tithe... giving 10% of your household income to God through the ministry and mission of Westminster... TEN serves as an inspirational number in so many ways. As we learned last year, the number ten appears an amazing 242 times in the Bible.

Now we are asking everyone to once again embrace the Power of Ten in their giving commitment plans for the coming year. As you give generously, we ask you to affirm your giving plans and perhaps consider your commitment to 2022 giving in one of the following ways:

Make a Pledge for the Year
Increase your Giving by 10% for the Year
Increase your Giving by \$10 a Week or \$10 a Month

Generosity inspires generosity. If we each increase our giving for 2022, we unleash the true potential of Westminster, the vision that Pastor Chris and the session provides us, the direction we take our adult and children’s educational programming, the outward expansion of our ministry programs and our ability to provide mission assistance to our neighbors near and far, and the ability to grow in new ways not yet realized.

In scripture, 2 Corinthians 9:8 reminds us “God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly.”

That’s the essence. God has already blessed us and now calls us to give back generously for the blessings we have already received. How will you respond? How will you step up your giving commitment and embrace the Power of Ten in your giving plans?

If you have not done so yet, please return your pledge card to the church office or submit it online so we can budget and plan the year to come. THANK YOU!

Allen Wachter, Co-Moderator
Gwen Thorpe, Co-Moderator

Ray Stevens
Walker Zulkoski



Westminster Presbyterian Church

2110 Sheridan Blvd

Lincoln, NE 68502

Community Conversations

As is our long established custom, knowledgeable community members have been invited in January to speak to pertinent issues of the day. There is no issue more all-consuming than COVID and this will be WPC's first opportunity to learn about and consider Lincoln's response to the pandemic.

Please look over the list below then plan on attending sessions on how various entities in Lincoln have fared. We've asked speakers to respond to the question, "What did your institution do to cope with COVID and what are your ongoing plans while we still have an active pandemic".

We'll gather in Fellowship Hall at 10:45 after Worship.

Our presenters are:

- **January 9:** Dr. Steve Joel is superintendent of Lincoln Public Schools
- **January 16:** Dr. Rich Lloyd is Health Sciences President of Bryan School of Nursing and Executive President of Hastings College
- **January 23:** Teresa Ewins is Chief of Police for the Lincoln Police Department
- **January 30:** Dr. Bob Rauner is founder and president of Partnership for a Healthy Lincoln