

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER



The Messenger

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"He has made everything beautiful in its time." Ecclesiastes 3:11

Sunday Service

We welcome you to Worship in the Sanctuary with us on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. and/or worship virtually with us on our YouTube channel at <https://westminsterlincoln.org/youtube-videos>



(402) 475-6702



2110 Sheridan Blvd, Lincoln, NE 68502

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2025

VOLUME 95 ISSUE 9

A message to the congregation

Westminster Friends, I am excited! I'm excited for a journey we will begin together in September! This journey will help us envision and empower our future together as a church.

Westminster's Session, Foundation, and "Missional Future Task Force" have all approved working with Ministry Architects, a highly-regarded church consultant organization with many ties to the PC(USA). Beginning this month, Ministry Architects will walk alongside our church in an 18-month strategic planning process for children, youth, building use, volunteer structure, and more!

My last pitch before the details is that we value your input in Listening Groups on Monday, September 29th and your presence for the Ministry Architects Church Report the evening of Wednesday, October 1st!

With Gratitude,
Pastor Chris

Initial Visit Schedule

Monday, September 29th - Listening Sessions with Consultants

Times: 2:15-3:15p, 3:30-4:30p, 4:45-5:45p, 6:00-7:00p (WPC Session), 7:15-8:15p

Sign-Up link available by Wednesday, September 10th!

Tuesday, September 30th - Ministry Architect Consultants meet with WPC Staff and Write Report.

Wednesday, October 1st - Special Westminster on Wednesday: Ministry Architects Initial Report

Dinner - 5:30pm; Report around 6:00pm

All are welcome and encouraged to attend! Dinner will be catered. RSVP's will not be required but are encouraged for food planning. Dinner link will be available by Wednesday, September 10th.

Creation Celebration Pt 2

Creation Celebration '25 continues in September with a full slate of activities for all ages. Look elsewhere in this Messenger for more information on all these features:

- All month—Westminster Children and Youth classes explore creation themes.
- All month, 10:00—In worship sermons and scripture, the lectionary readings from Jeremiah remind us of our relationship to the land.
- All month—An exhibit of John Janovy's photographs taken around Holmes Lake is on display in the Gallery Corridor. Find more details in the next few pages, and put some dates on your calendar!

• **Saturday, 9/6, 10:00-12:00**—tour of Pat Leach and Bill Oberg's prairie. Free, but registration is required:

lbvanham@gmail.com .

• **Friday, 9/12, 7:00**—An Evening with Author Jeff Chu in Conversation with Pat Leach. Community event hosted by First Presbyterian Church. Free and open to the whole community, but please register if you plan to attend.

• **Sunday 9/14, 11:15**—Adult Education takes a (short) road trip to First Presbyterian Church to share a potluck lunch and hear Jeff Chu talk about his new book, Good Soil. What is the earth trying to tell us, if we'll only stop and listen? RSVPs requested— lbvanham@gmail.com

• **Sunday 9/21, 11:15**—Edison McDonald returns to Adult Education to continue an exploration of regenerative agriculture as introduced during Climate Jeopardy last spring.

• **Friday 9/26, 9:00-3:00**—Interfaith Power and Light hosts their annual Youth Climate Summit at UNL East Campus Union. Open to all high school and college age youth. Registration, snacks, and lunch are free, but please register.

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WESTMINSTER PRESCHOOL

AUGUST 2025



Look What We're Learning!

We're are off for the 2025-2026 school! Preschool started back to school on August 11th. We had an Open House the weekend before so our new families could meet their teacher and see the classroom. Everyone brought a stuffed animal and we had a stuffy sleepover! Teachers took funny pictures of the animals having fun at Preschool, and they were waiting for their owner on the first day!

Take a look at some of the themes we're learning about in September:

STARFISH CLASSROOM:
FAMILY & PETS

BUMBLEBEE CLASSROOM:
FAMILY & PETS

OWL CLASSROOM:
BUBBLES, BOATS, & FLOATS



UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPT. 1ST & 2ND --
NO SCHOOL

SEPT. 8TH --
CHAPEL CHAT BEGINS

SEPT. 10TH & 11TH--
PICTURE DAY

SEPT. 25TH & 26TH --
FAMILY DAY



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Upcoming Events and Important Dates

Justice & Peace Calendar – September

• National Hispanic Heritage Month [Sep 15–Oct 15]; hispanicheritagemonth.gov

01 World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation; creationjustice.org/world-day-of-prayer-for-the-care-of-creation.html

01 Labor Day; dol.gov/general/laborday/history

08 International Literacy Day; en.unesco.org/commemorations/literacyday

21 International Day of Peace; pcusa.org/worship-with-us/yearbook/september-21-2024

26 Native American Day; pcusa.org/resource/native-american-day

Hearts & Hands | Church Library | Wednesdays 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Hearts & Hands is a fun-loving group that meets every Wednesday in the church library. All needle work folks are welcome to come visit and see what you're missing! Laughter is free. All yarn donations are welcome! Questions? Call Dorrie Gage at 402-730-9676.

Lunch Bunch | Tuesday, September 2 | Ollie & Hobbes | 11:30 a.m.

Adult Education Goes Across Town | First Presbyterian Church | 11:15 a.m.

Sunday, September 14, 11:15. Join our friends at First Presbyterian Church, 840 South 17th Street, for a potluck lunch and a relaxed conversation with Jeff Chu about his new book, *Good Soil: The Education of an Accidental Farmhand*. "For nature lovers, foodies, and anyone who has dreamed about a more fulfilling life . . ." For more details and to sign up, email lbvanham@gmail.com.

Left wanting more? First Presbyterian will have several *Good Soil* book groups meeting at different times and places over a period of seven weeks, and WPC folks are welcome to join.

Faith & Cancer Support Group | Tuesday, September 16 | 10:00 AM | Church Library

Author and cancer survivor Lynn Eib describes the feeling of hearing the diagnosis of cancer is like "driving down the road and hitting a patch of "black

ice". I am out of control--scary!

The Westminster Cancer Support group is an informal place of safety from 'black ice' where we share laughter, burdens and blessings. We meet on the 3rd Tuesday each month at 10am in the Church library. All are welcome. Contact Bruce Sheffield at 402-303-2363 with questions.

Prairie Readers | Wednesday, September 17 | 1:00 PM

Margaret Sprude will lead the discussion of *James* by Percival Everett. The book won the 2025 Pulitzer Prize for fiction and is a finalist for One Book One Lincoln. Everyone is welcome!

Guest Speaker | September 21 | 11:15 AM | Lounge - Care for the Land—Because the Land Cares for Us

Sunday, September 21 at 11:15 in the lounge. Edison McDonald, Development and Government Relations Director for GCResolve, returns to talk about good soil, good food, and good earth care. Can farmers make a profit without depleting resources for the next generation? Can cattle, people, and robots work peaceably together? At our Climate Jeopardy game last spring Edison described some of the natural techniques employed in regenerative agriculture and we all wanted to hear more. So hear here! Bring your coffee, and no registration necessary.

Ladies Night Out | Tues. September 27 | Tico's | 5 - 7 p.m.

Please RSVP by Sat, Sept 27th; robynu2@hotmail.com

Presbyterian Women's Circles Begin

Just like kindergarten classes, PW's return, sit in Circles, and find friends, purpose, and learning. Any Presbyterian woman is welcome to join us. This year's 2025–2026 Bible study is "Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ". Surely we all need a bit of these qualities in our stressed and anxious lives! The author Rhashell Hunter sets out 9 lessons to help us. Circle 3 and Circle 5 will meet in the Lounge. Circle 4 will meet in the Parlor. Circle 4: Tuesday, September 2 at 6:30 pm in the Parlor (usually Mondays) Circle 3: Wednesday, September 3 at 10:00 am Circle 5: Tuesday, September 9 at 10:00 am (For information contact Linda Burchard at 402-477-5572)

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Westminster Whisker Weekly SPECIAL EDITION: Disability Awareness Sunday in September! Trusted church journalism from beneath the pews.

Calvin and Knox Interview Josh and Albert About Disabilities

By Calvin & Knox, Roving Rodent Reporters

This week, Calvin and Knox scurried straight to the source for Disability Awareness Sunday: an exclusive interview with their favorite church greeter and member of Church Life Committee, Josh, and his amazing service dog, Albert.

The duo sat down to learn about disabilities, service dogs, and the power of love, focus—and cheddar.

First Question: What's a Disability?

"Good question," said Josh with a smile. "I have a disability. I have an intellectual disability, and I also have seizures sometimes. That means I need a little extra support."

"And that's where I come in," said Albert, his voice surprisingly deep and noble (only the mice could hear it). "I help Josh stay calm, focused, and safe. I alert people if Josh is having a seizure. I'm like a furry alert warning system... with paws."

Super Powers Alert!

Josh explained that disabilities don't define people—they're just part of someone's story.

"People with disabilities have super powers too," he said. "Mine are kindness, greeting skills, and I can give you a topping for almost every food item!"

Calvin added, "Mine is dodging communion cups without spilling a drop." Knox whispered, "Mine is finding cheese cubes faster than a deacon at coffee hour."

Albert wagged proudly. "My super powers? Loyalty.

Focus. And a supernatural ability to detect the opening of a cheese wrapper from across the narthex."

On Supporting Josh

Knox leaned in. "Albert, how do you know when Josh needs help?"

Albert replied, "I'm trained smell tiny changes in Josh's body before a seizure happens. I let others know, so he can get help quickly. I also stay close when he's feeling overwhelmed or anxious. My mission: keep him safe, steady, happy and surrounded with love."

Calvin dabbed his eyes with a Kleenex from under the pew. "You're a hero in a vest."

Albert nodded. "And I look good in blue."

Albert's Fun Fact Corner

- Favorite treat: Cheese Yak Chews
- Favorite church moment: "The time someone dropped a donut hole in the Garden Room. I thought I had ascended. And you may have noticed a woof Amen in church after some beautiful music."
- Least favorite: "When Knox tried to ride me like a pony. Not cool."

Knox looked away. "It was ONE TIME."

Disability Awareness Sunday Reminder

Calvin squeaked to the congregation:

"Disability Awareness Sunday is about recognizing the gifts, dignity, and full inclusion of every person—especially our friends with disabilities."

Knox added:

"Also, to thank our support teams. That includes teachers, friends, church family, and dogs named Albert who deserve their own stained glass window."

Josh smiled. "Church is where I feel safe and loved.

That's what matters most."

Final Words from Westminster's Mouse Reporters:

- Disabilities are part of someone's story—not the whole story.
- Everyone belongs here.
- And cheese heals all things. (Except choir robes. That was an unfortunate incident.)

Until next time, Stay curious, stay kind, and if you see Albert—offer a smile, not your sandwich.

—Calvin & Knox



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A Message from Green at Heart and PEC

September Tips from Presbyterians for Earth Care and Green@Heart:

Food Waste, Food Labels, and Composting

In the U.S., Americans throw away nearly 120 million pounds of food every year, almost 40% of our country's entire food supply. That equals 325 pounds of waste per person/per year.

Food spoilage is one of the major reasons that all food is wasted. 80% of Americans misunderstand food expiration labels such as sell by, use by, and best by. These labels have no federal standards and are confusing. Rather than risk food-borne illness, people throw away perfectly good food.

Most food date labels are about quality, not safety. They indicate when a product is at its peak flavor or quality, not when it becomes unsafe to eat. If you are still unsure, you can use the "look, sniff, taste test". Does the food look OK? Does it smell right? Does it taste like it should? If you answer yes to all three questions, you can relax and enjoy eating your food. We had some jelly on the shelf that was well past its sell by date. It looked like the raspberry had lost some of its color, it smelled very bland and tasted the same. Was it bad? Probably not, but we threw it out and vowed to do better. Here is a link from the EPA about preventing food waste at home. The FDA also has tips to reduce food waste.

To shop smarter and reduce food waste, plan your meals, create a shopping list based on your plan, and buy only what you need. Prioritize buying fresh produce in smaller quantities and consider buying imperfect or ugly produce. Be mindful of bulk purchases and always check use-by dates.

The best thing that you can do to keep food waste out of the waste stream is to compost. You can compost in your backyard, use a composter, or subscribe to a composting service. Encourage municipal composting in your area!!!

FILL 'ER UP

The Green Barrel is Back Presbyterian Women at Westminster are partnering again with the Lincoln Hygiene Network to collect new and unopened essential hygiene products. These products are crucial for the dignity, well-being, and health of our Lincoln area neighbors. The barrel is located at the top of the stairs at the East Entrance during September and October. The most needed items are body soap, deodorant, and period products. A full list of items is near the barrel. The items serve all ages across our city. **Our GOAL: 3 Times Full!** Please partner with us with kindness for our neighbors

Adult Ed Speaker Regina Sullivan | Sunday, September 28th | 11:15 a.m.

Regina Sullivan is a dedicated advocate for youth mental health and community support. She currently serves as the Executive Director of Marvilee Non-Profit, a 501(c)(3) organization based in Lincoln, Nebraska. Marvilee was founded in memory of her son, Marvin Lee Sullivan, who tragically passed away from an accidental overdose. The organization's mission is to empower families affected by substance abuse, addiction, and mental health struggles by collaborating with community organizations to offer resources that empower youth and parents.

Under Regina's leadership, Marvilee offers life skills training, mentorship, job opportunities, and connects youth with community resources. The organization also promotes awareness and works to break the stigma around substance abuse. One of their notable initiatives is the annual All-School Graduation Party, which celebrates graduates and provides them with resources.

In addition to her role at Marvilee, Regina has been involved with other organizations focused on education and community support, such as the EducationQuest Foundation and the Malone Community Center. She also serves on the Board of Directors for the 1895 Project, further demonstrating her commitment to fostering inclusive environments and enhancing access to vital resources for youth.

Regina's work is deeply personal and driven by her own experiences. She actively promotes the use of Narcan, an opioid overdose reversal medication, emphasizing its availability and life-saving potential. Through her efforts, she aims to empower individuals and strengthen community connections, creating a supportive network for young people facing mental health and substance abuse challenges. Regina is also a 2025 Inspire Award nominee.

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Youth News

WPC Youth Group: Kiddie Pool Kickball | September 7, 3:00 PM–5:00 PM

The WPC Youth Group will join with the Youth Group from Good Shepherd on Sunday, September 7 for a reunion game of Kiddie Pool Kickball followed by a picnic dinner. Please let Trish know if your youth will be attending so that we have enough food and can plan activities accordingly either by email at trish@westminsterlincoln.org or text 402-570-0163.

Caramel Apple Bar | October 5, 11:15 AM

Join us after the worship service in the Garden Room to enjoy a timeless treat, caramel apples!

WPC Youth Group: Roca Scary | October 12, 7:00 PM

We will meet at the Roca Berry Farm around 7 PM.

WPC Youth Group Service at Matt Talbot | October 19, 3:30 PM–7:00 PM

On October 19, the WPC Youth Group and their families are invited to help serve at Matt Talbot. We will need volunteers to assist with cooking, serving, and clean-up for dinner for 130–150 people.

Cooks should arrive around 3:30 p.m., those who are serving arrive around 4:45 p.m. After dinner, volunteers clean the kitchen, wash dishes, and sweep the floor, usually finishing around 7 p.m. If you are willing to help with this service, please sign-up at <https://forms.gle/9ZUgJ4Nu2fJYGx2u7>. We will also be looking for assistance in gathering ingredients for the meal. Please watch the evine for more information on how to help.

Spooktacular | October 29, 5:30 PM–7:30 PM

We are moving Spooktacular inside!

On Wednesday, October 29 from 5:30–7:00, put on your best costume and come to Fellowship Hall at WPC to play games, trick or treat, and have a frightfully fun evening.

Here are some of the activities you can look forward to:

- Trick-or-treating
- Photo Booth
- Food
- Giant Games – Spikeball, Pong, Connect 4, Jenga

And more!

You can help us make this event possible in a couple of ways:

1. Please consider donation bags of candy, packaged snacks, pencils, and/or any small handouts for the children. Look for collection buckets at the top of the steps by the East entrance.
2. Decorate your car trunk or table with a fun theme then pass out treats to the children.

Plan 5:00 PM to claim your table and decorate your space. Contact Sarah Baltensperger sarah.baltensperger@gmail.com or Stacy Graham babyruth19@hotmail.com with any questions. Sign up online here <https://forms.gle/zywWi4NeFDnpRmTMA>, in the Garden Room, or call the church at 402-475-6702.

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Westminster
Presbyterian Church
2110 Sheridan Blvd
Lincoln, NE 68502

In keeping with Westminster's upcoming September Creation Celebration, the Westminster Art Gallery will be displaying photographs by one of its members, John Janovy, Jr. John's show will be a collection of photographs taken around Holmes Lake here in Lincoln. The show will be on display from September 4 - 28. Framed images are available for purchase.

John Janovy, Jr. is a successful author, a respected scientist, an artist, and an award-winning teacher. He retired from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2011, where he was the Paula and D. B. Varner Distinguished Professor of Biological Sciences. John has authored over 20 books, both fiction and non-fiction and published over 100 scientific papers. His latest book, "Life Lessons from a Parasite", published in 2024, is available at major book sellers. Janovy has won the Distinguished Teaching Award and was the past president of the American Society of Parasitologists.

Enjoy John's photographic perspective of Holmes Lake as you wander down the Westminster corridor.



Pet Picture Contest

Let's celebrate our beloved pets - Who has the cutest, funniest or best costume?

Bring a photo (8x10 or smaller) of your entry in the contest with your name and the name of your pet written on the back to the church to be displayed in the art gallery. Winners will be chosen by ballot. First, second and third place prizes will be awarded to Dogs, Cats and Others. All pets are eligible. Photos of pets who have crossed the Rainbow Bridge are welcomed to be displayed, but will not be in the contest.

Entries are accepted September 5th through September 25th. Place your photos in the Paw Box in the Garden Room. No frames please.

Winners will be announced and prizes awarded on October 26th after the service in the Fellowship Hall. Don't have a pet? Join us at the awards ceremony for special human treats, anyway. You won't have to do a trick, roll over or beg.