

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER



The Messenger

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Photo courtesy of Jim Kinkennon

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”

1 Corinthians 13:13

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>



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2110 Sheridan Blvd, Lincoln, NE 68502

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FEBRUARY 2026

VOLUME 96 ISSUE 2

A Message to the Congregation

Westminster Friends,

Vision! Dreams! Controversy! Inspiration! This Lent we will hear it all as we explore several stories of women in scripture. Some, such as Eve, are well known. Others, such as the widow of Zarepheth, might be figures with which we are less well-acquainted. All stand in scripture with a story to tell that can inspire us all to better be the people God is calling us to be!

As we lean into these stories, we will start out on Ash Wednesday by asking, 'What is the Fast You Choose?', encouraging us to find the ways we will grow over this Lenten season. My prayer for this Lent is that it will be one of commitment, spiritual growth, and forward momentum for our congregation as we continue both dreaming with Ministry Architects and our celebration of the good gifts of our church campus!

Speaking of forward momentum... I believe to move forward we must know and engage our past in ways that help us to be opened up to God's inspiration and new ways of being in the future. One challenge for Westminster that Ministry Architects identified is our congregation's tendency to look to the past, which we either do with longing and nostalgia, or with grief and wounding – and often a mix of both! In the current "sprint" of work by our Implementation Team there is a particular task for me, your Senior Pastor. That task is to "Create Space for Grief and Renewal." In the words of our Consultants, "This process is not about forgetting the past—it is about naming it, grieving it, and releasing its hold on the church's future. As the congregation shifts from telling old stories of loss to new stories of transformation, it will create the space necessary to step into a renewed and hopeful vision." With that said, I invite you to join me in the sanctuary a half-hour before our Ash Wednesday service for an initial time of reflection and naming those things that have caused or continue to cause you grief or trauma from Westminster's past, knowing we will address those challenges with a goal of renewal for the future. I will host at least one follow-up conversation for those who attend. To me, it is important to value the good of our past but we must move forward with hope to be the church we can be for the next 100 years. Where we hurt, we must look inward to heal. Where we are nostalgic, we must assess our perceptions with

potential for positive redirection. Look for times in the eVine newsletter or announced in church in the coming weeks.

With Gratitude,
Pastor Chris

Stay Connected with Realm Connect

Did you know? We can communicate at Westminster Presbyterian Church through Realm Connect! Westminster Presbyterian Church uses Realm Connect to help us stay connected, informed, and engaged—wherever you are.

🌐 How communication through Realm Connect happens

1. You receive an invitation

Members are invited to join Realm Connect using the email or mobile number already on file with the church office.

2. You choose how to connect

- 📱 Realm Connect mobile app (iOS or Android)
- 💻 Realm online from your computer

3. Leaders share information in one place

Using Realm, church staff and volunteer leaders can easily:

- Send messages to individuals or groups
- Share updates, reminders, and announcements
- Post event details and schedule changes
- Communicate directly with ministry teams and committees

4. You control your notifications

You decide:

- Email, text, app notifications—or a mix
- Which groups can message you
- How often you receive updates

5. It keeps us connected as a community

Realm Connect supports Westminster's mission to expand our lives in faith, connect people deeply, and make a difference through service by making communication clear, timely, and personal.

✨ Not on Realm yet or need help?

Janice Rohwedder (janicerohw@yahoo.com) is happy to send you an invitation or help you get set up so you can stay connected with everything happening at Westminster.

WESTMINSTER PRESCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2026



Look What We're Learning!

January would be great if we could just get a little snow! We welcomed SEVEN new students to start 2026 and we kicked off our summer registration.

We're officially on the countdown until our ECERS observation in November! We are determined to maintain our Step Five, a distinction that only 38 places in the state have earned.

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

STARFISH CLASSROOM:
BABY ANIMALS

BUMBLEBEE CLASSROOM:
HEALTH & FITNESS

OWL CLASSROOM:
COMMUNITY HELPERS



UPCOMING EVENTS

JAN. 30TH---

WINTER FORMAL

JAN. 31ST---

SUMMER REGISTRATION

FEBR. 12TH/13TH---

VALENTINE PARTIES

FEBR. 16TH/17TH---

NO SCHOOL

FEBR. 26TH---

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM EVENT



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Glass Artist Returns to Westminster

The Inaugural Art Show for Westminster was May 11, 2025 with Omaha glass artist, Deb Kubik. We had beautiful garden art in the parking lot that Sunday which was enjoyed by all. We invited Deb to provide her indoor designs during the month of February. Her unique art will be in the cabinets near the parking lot entrance as well as in the Gallery Hall.

Deb is native of Nebraska and resides with her husband in Omaha. She is a full time contemporary warm glass kiln artist. Warm glass can replicate the delicacies of watercolor by using the tiniest pieces of glass frit or the boldness of Mondrian's art using solid opaque pieces of glass. It can be full fused creating a single layer of glass or tack fused in the kiln to create visible tactile layers of glass. Each piece is a "one of a kind" piece of art to be treasured.

Her glass art is enjoyed worldwide. Her Nebraska landscapes were selected by Governor Ricketts to be given to the Governor of China during their Economic Trade Mission to China in 2016, 2017 and 2018. Also in 2016, 108 pieces of her Nebraska Landscape series were presented across the world to 108 countries by ASHRAE International representing Nebraska.

Deb was selected as the feature artist at the Lauritzen Garden in 2024 and will repeat again in April-May 2026. She has shown at the Bryan East Healthcare Gallery in 2023, 2024 and 2025. Her list of solo shows is extensive in Omaha and across Nebraska.

She feels strongly that art does not provide a means of worship only to the artist. Rather, when we view, reflect upon, or enjoy the beauty of art, we have an opportunity to give God glory and to draw closer to Him. Deb feels she has been blessed to see the beauty in the world. She hopes to bring joy and hope through her work and is thankful for these gifts from God.

The Westminster Art Committee is pleased to have Deb return to Westminster to share her talents with us again. A Representative will be present on Sundays if you want to purchase her beautiful art for your home.

Blueprint Review - Ministry Architects January 11, 2026

Our Implementation Team for the Ministry Architects ministry review has been meeting and working diligently over the past three months.

Our team was recruited in November and eagerly began taking the recommendations from our consultants, Scott Pontier and Annette Safstrom, and turning them into reality.

The team meets every Wednesday morning with Scott Pontier in a video call over Zoom to check in and update each other on our progress, and every month or so we have a longer meeting to do deeper planning. We work in specific time frames we call "sprints" to help move us along. Our first sprint lasted from November 20-January 7 and now we are moving to our next sprint, which will end March 18.

Here's a quick snapshot of what we've accomplished in the first sprint:

- We received orientation and training on how to tackle the long list of recommendations.
- We recruited a team to pray regularly over this implementation process.
- We recruited a small group of people to begin the process of discerning new ways to think about and use our facility.
- We developed a strategy to regularly communicate these "Blueprint Updates" with you, the congregation.
- We've put together a strategy for clearly tracking who is volunteering and who is attending various discipleship groups. This tracking system is the starting point for our next steps in volunteerism and discipleship strategies.
- We've begun creating clarity on what goes on our Mission and Social Witness calendar for 2026.
- We've recruited some volunteers to work with Trish on our children's and youth ministry-specific recommendations.

As we step into our next sprint, here are a few things we'll be highlighting:

- Our Property Discernment Team will walk through a number of months thinking about our community,

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- our building, and what we might discern as a next step to match our facility to our mission.
- We will be reviewing and updating our communication practices throughout the church.
- We will be drafting a plan to match the annual operating budget with annual giving, so that budgeting for our next chapter of ministry is clear.
- We will design a follow-up and enfolding system so that everyone who visits our church has a way to become part of the life and leadership of the congregation.

Finally, we'll be hosting a Vision Summit to help lay out some long-term clarity on our vision, values, and goals for our next chapter as a ministry together. This will be an important event for our church and we want as many voices as we can get to join in this exploratory process. More details to come, but you are invited and we hope you bring your perspectives, ideas, and energy to this time together.

Please continue to pray for this team, this work, and our church family.

The Implementation Team & Pastor Chris
Kathy Rohwedder, Kelly Braswell, Gary Haller, Steve Hughes, Emily Killham, Phil Whitmarsh



A Sacred Expansion: Honoring 100 Years of the Sanctuary

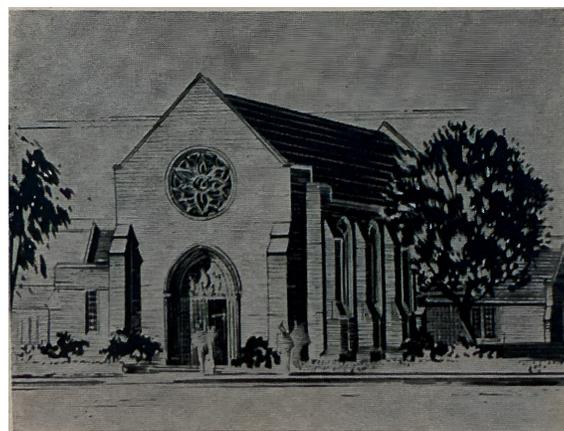
As Westminster celebrates the 100th anniversary of the Sanctuary, we pause to remember how sacred space at Westminster has grown alongside the faith of its people. In the life of the church, sacred means set part—dedicated to God, shaped by faith, and held in reverence for worship, prayer, and devotion. The first addition to the church building beautifully reflects that understanding.

In October 1948, ground was broken for the construction of a Chapel just north of the Sanctuary.

Intentionally oriented to face the Sanctuary, the Chapel was designed as a companion space—connected in both purpose and spirit to the heart of worship that had shaped Westminster for decades. This sacred project began with an anonymous gift given in memory of all the youth of Westminster who had given their lives in service to others. Additional donations soon followed, made in honor or in memory of loved ones, weaving personal stories of faith, loss, and gratitude into the Chapel's foundation. Completed by the end of March 1951 and dedicated on June 10, 1951, the air-conditioned Chapel was built with rich Christian symbolism to support the devotional life of the congregation. From the beginning, it was open daily as a sacred space for rest, meditation, and prayer—extending the worship life of the Sanctuary into everyday moments.

Because the Chapel was built on a foundation, the space below was intentionally designed to support the ministry of music at Westminster. It included new offices for the music director, a full choir rehearsal room, and a music library. A staircase connected the choir room directly to the Chapel balcony, allowing the choir to move easily into worship leadership. Today, that music library continues to be used, housing an impressive collection of sheet music gathered through the decades.

As we honor one hundred years of the Sanctuary, the Chapel stands as a testament to faithful growth—creating sacred spaces that remember the past, serve the present, and sustain worship, prayer, and music for generations yet to come.



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Calvin & Knox and the Ash Wednesday Debacle

Calvin and Knox knew something serious was happening at Westminster the moment everyone started whispering and the purple cloths appeared. Then came the ashes. From their perch on the pew rack, the mice watched as people came forward, heads bowed, and left with quiet crosses smudged on their foreheads.

Knox squinted.
"Is that dirt?"
Calvin adjusted his spectacles.
"Ashes."
Knox gasped.
"Like... fire happened?"

Before Calvin could explain, a small breeze—caused by someone turning quickly in a winter coat—sent a tiny swirl of ash drifting off the bowl. Right toward the pew. Right toward the mice. Knox sneezed.

ACHOO! 🤧

Ash floated everywhere. Calvin froze. Knox panicked. Both stared at their whiskers, now delicately dusted with ash.

"Calvin," Knox whispered,
"Are we... marked?"
Calvin examined Knox carefully.
"Technically yes. Spiritually? Also yes."
Knox looked worried.

"Did we do Lent wrong already?"
The mice scrambled under the pew as Pastor Chris spoke the ancient words:
"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Knox blinked. "That feels... oddly personal."

They watched people return to their seats—some solemn, some smiling, some wiping ash off their glasses. That's when Calvin finally understood.
"Knox," he said softly, "Ash Wednesday isn't about mess-ups. It's about remembering we're human. And loved anyway."

Knox looked at his ashy paws. "So this wasn't a disaster?" Calvin smiled. "No. This was very on-theme."

The mice settled back into the pew—smudged, quiet, and oddly peaceful. "Same time next year?" Knox asked. Calvin nodded. "Next time we bring tissues."



Kid's Corner with Calvin and Knox

Calvin & Knox Ask: "What's With the Ashes?"

Knox had three big questions about Ash Wednesday:

? 1. Are ashes yucky dirt?

● Nope! They come from plants like palm leaves and are not dirty!"

Very churchy dust.

? 2. Why do people put ashes on their heads?

✝ The ashes remind us:

- We are human, not perfect
- God loves us anyway
- We want to try again with God's help

? 3. Did Calvin and Knox get in trouble for sneezing ash?

😊 Definitely not.

Because Ash Wednesday is about remembering that: Everyone messes up sometimes—and God's grace is bigger than our mistakes.

Standing Together Against Human Trafficking

On National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, members of Presbyterian Women reminded us of a hard truth—and a faithful response.

Human trafficking is not only a global issue. It happens right here in Lincoln.

Holding a simple but powerful display marked with the orange ribbon—the international symbol for human trafficking awareness—Presbyterian Women stood as witnesses, advocates, and educators. Their message was clear: awareness matters. Knowing the signs,

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paying attention to what's happening around us, and being willing to speak up can make a difference. Human trafficking often hides in plain sight. It can look like control, fear, isolation, lack of freedom, or someone answering for another person. By naming the reality and sharing resources, Presbyterian Women are helping our congregation live out Christ's call to protect the vulnerable and seek justice.

As a church, we are invited not only to care, but to learn and respond faithfully. Prayer, education, and awareness are meaningful steps we can all take. If you or someone you know may need help, the National Human Trafficking Hotline is available 24/7 at 1-888-373-7888.. Justice & Peace link: <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/JP-Links-Human-Trafficking.pdf> Thank you to Presbyterian Women for leading with courage, compassion, and faith—reminding us that even difficult conversations can be acts of love.

Presbyterian Women at Westminster - 2025 Annual Report

Let Your Light Shine: Matthew 5:14-16

Welcome the Light: Gathering Together

- September through May - Three Circles with over 30 women met monthly for fellowship and Bible study. All women at Westminster are welcome to participate.
- March - Celebrating the Gifts of Women Sunday with Rev. Lauren Peters preaching
- April - PW Presbytery Spring Gathering at Northbend (6 attended)
- Creation Sunday -presented Laurel Van Ham with a PW Honorary Life Membership.
- May - hosted a Pop-Up Baby Shower for Dylan, our Westminster receptionist
- June - Impromptu Picnic at Stransky Park to celebrate our year-long Bible Study
- PW Synod Gathering at Watertown, South Dakota (3 attended)
- August - A Gathering Tea to kick-off the Presbyterian Women's year (40+ attended)
- September - PW Presbytery Fall Gathering at Westminster

See the Light: Experiencing

- Challenged by the Horizons Bible Study on

environmental justice

- Reflected and acted on the ideas developed monthly by Laurel Van Ham on environmental justice for Westminster's congregation
 - Commissioned and sent Glenna Haller to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women for two weeks in March in New York City. Glenna presented her experience in a Westminster Bible study group, in an adult education seminar, and at PW presbytery and synod events.
- Be the Light: Giving and Serving
- Hosted a Homestead Presbytery meeting
 - Hosted the PW Presbytery Fall Gathering
 - Gave generously to the Least Coin, Presbyterian Women's Mission Pledge, and to the Birthday and Thank Offerings. PW offerings funded two projects in South Dakota.
 - Helped with funding to support Glenna Haller's representation at the UN Commission on the Status of Women
 - Coordinated the collection of personal care items for the Lincoln Hygiene Network during September and October. Westminster collected almost 2,800 items plus monetary donations for individuals in the Lincoln area. Dustin Oltman, Executive Director of the Lincoln Hygiene Network, was "blown away" by Westminster's generosity.
 - Participated in the Advent Chili Cook Off and won the annual Silver Ladle Award for the best tasting chili.
 - Communicated regularly with Honor Circle One - beloved formerly active PW's.

Respectively submitted,

Linda Burchard

Moderator of the Presbyterian Women's Coordinating Team

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts, shine through the darkness, shine in our world.

Worship, Music, and Fine Arts Committee 2025 Annual Report

The "Worship" committee added "Fine Arts" to our name at the beginning of 2025. Music is part of fine arts but we wanted to expand into visual arts. We established an Art subcommittee to manage art shows in our gallery spaces. An art hanging system is in place in what some call Memory Lane. We

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Worship, Music, and Fine Arts Committee 2025 Annual Report contd

purchased a second glass cabinet to display 3D art. The plan is to have art on display at Westminster during most months of the year.

Recently we have had donations which provide for more handbell activities. The return of handbells to our worship has been appreciated by the congregation. We hope to see more growth and activity in this area. Choir has seen changes that go beyond the scope of this committee. We said goodbye to our previous director, Dr. Mary Young, as she moved to a full-time position elsewhere. Then we greeted Wes Hansmeyer of Norris High School to join us as director.

Serving on Worship, Music, and Fine Arts are Bob Leavitt, Barb Andersen, David Anderson, April Douglas, Freda Gregg, Jim and Rita Kinkennon, Mike and Mary Tomlinson, and Diana Wild. Bob Leavitt will serve as moderator in 2026.

Serving on the Fine Art Committee are Valery Wachter, moderator, Joyce Douglas, Susie Hughes, Jim Kinkennon, and Marilyn Maude.

Thanks to all these people on the work done throughout the year, especially during Easter and Advent.

Church Life Committee Ministry - 2025 Annual Report

Moderator: Marilyn Hood

Committee Members: Linda Burchard, Dorrie Gage, Glenna Haller, Cathy Hershberger, Janice Rohwedder, Kathy Rohwedder & Josh Whitfield Staff Member: Pastor Jimmy Shelbourn A&P Liaison: Joyce Douglas

A goal of Church Life is to connect the members of Westminster with our life groups & other activities throughout the year. Many enjoy the donut holes that we provide each Sunday while drinking coffee in the Garden Room. The biggest of our endeavors is Presbyterians in the Park. We help make Westminster a welcoming church by greeting our members & guests as they first enter our doors. We also support our members in time of need with prayers, meals & bereavement receptions. Without our many volunteers we would not be able to accomplish all that we do.

1. Bereavement Ministry - led by Kathy Rohwedder Church Life Committee provides support to families

experiencing a loss with a bereavement reception following funerals. Depending on family wishes, our volunteers may serve a full lunch or cookies with coffee, tea & water.

2. Cook-N-Carry Ministry - led by Dorrie Gage The Cook-N-Carry volunteers provide meals to members when needed during difficult times. This may be one meal or several over an extended period.

3. Visitor Ministry - led by Linda Burchard Linda reaches out to Sunday visitors through email, phone calls or a personal note thanking & welcoming them to Westminster. She sits near the back of the church & always has a smile & a few words of welcome to someone new.

4. New Member Ministry - led by Janice Rohwedder When an individual expresses interest in joining Westminster, Janice enters their information in Pathways to get the process started. This tracts the steps needed. The end result is approval from Session & Pastor Chris welcoming a new member.

5. Prayer Chain Ministry - led by Janice Rohwedder Prayer Chain Ministry receives many prayer requests & praises throughout the year. Our Elders, Deacons & other volunteers of this ministry give extra support for those in need.

6. Greeter Ministry - led by Janice Rohwedder Our greeters serve each Sunday to make sure there is a smile & warm welcome to all who enter our doors. This could not be possible without the volunteers for this ministry.

7. Life Groups

Church Life Committee continues to oversee various Life Groups with fun, fellowship & support to church members & guests.

The groups are: Ladies Night Out, Lunch Bunch, Hearts & Hands & Hugs, Faith & Cancer, World on a Plate, Prairie Readers, Sunday Social Hour (joint venture with Children & Youth Committee)

Marilyn Hood, Moderator
January 12, 2026

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Report of Westminster Foundation for 2025

Foundation welcomed Stan Campbell, Chip DeBuse, and Deb Schorr as new Trustees in 2025. We started the by supporting the ongoing stained-glass restoration by providing a down payment for the West window restoration to begin. Foundation's Stained-glass Endowment Fund will supplement any private donations for the stained-glass windows. Foundation voted in early 2025 to approve budgetary support for the Church in the amount of \$120,000. In consultation with the Session and Finance Committee, transfers of the \$120,000 occurred quarterly throughout 2025 to provide a more consistent stream of funding. Foundation and Session worked together on a request to hire a church consultant, and in mid-2025, a contract was signed with Ministry Architects. Foundation voted to financially support this multi-year project. Marketing Committee undertook a project to update information for the Legacy Society and letters went out in 2025 to those persons who had in the past indicated Westminster Foundation was part of their estate or legacy planning. Ongoing work continues on this project. Foundation approved a request from Session to financially support a church-wide Mission Project in 2026 for Sleep in Heavenly Peace. In summary, for 2025, Foundation provided a total of \$161,619 in financial support to Westminster, for budget or other special requests and projects. In 2025, Foundation received contributions totaling close to \$90,000, which includes the newest Endowment Fund, the Wachter Family Endowment.

We thank Jim White and David Anderson for their years of service on the Foundation as their time on Foundation comes to an end. We welcome new Trustee Jim Hlava, to start in 2026. Erika Schafer, President, Steve Hughes, Vice President, Pat Leach, Secretary, Stacy Graham, Treasurer, David Anderson, Trustee, Rob Baltensperger, Trustee, Stan Campbell, Trustee, Chip DeBuse, Trustee, Deb Schorr, Trustee, Gwen Thorpe, Trustee, Jim White, Trustee

Mission and Social Witness Committee

We strive to be grounded in Matthew 25. Our activities during the past year have involved the following:

- Advocacy- Advocated for neighbors in need by giving financial contributions to the Covenant Network, the Malone Center, and the Prescott School

playground project, and sponsored the California on a Plate dinner to support the victims of the fires.

- Angel Tree-partnered with the Salvation Army to provide Christmas gifts to children.
- Equal Exchange-Sold coffee and chocolate monthly without a profit to directly support farmers.
- Food Pantry-Collected food for the needy and maintained a stock in our pantry.
- Gathering Place-Served meals monthly for the homeless and those in need at the Gathering Place which is a function of Lincoln Community Action. Volunteers: Barb Ridder, Claire Titus, Dale Minster, David & Martha Rowe, Janell & Tom Welstead, Rachel & Karen Hoffman, Karen & Ray Stevens, Lois Katt, Paul Korslund, Russ Napier, and Carolyn Harp.
- Green at Heart Committee-Promoted the stewardship of resources, both within our building and for society, to help bring about a greener world and fulfill our mandate to care for creation.
- Matt Talbot-Prepared and served hot meals bimonthly at the kitchen which serves the poor. Volunteers: Susie & Steve Hughes, Marilyn Maude, Jeanne Atkinson, Sue Shamblin, Larry & Vicki Jurgens, Paul Korslund, David & Barbara Arunski, Carolyn & Griffin Schainest, Bill & Joan Roberts, and Gary Haller.
- SHP bed bed-began preparations for a project to build beds for children with no beds on June 13, 2026; some of our members helped with a Sleep in Heavenly Peace bed build last Feb.
- Special Collections-Organized and advertised the PCUSA special offerings and distributed proceeds.
- Stuff the Truck-sponsored gathering of food items for donation to the Lincoln Food Pantry during the time of cuts to SNAP and other programs.

Green at Heart Annual Report

Westminster has been certified by our denomination as an Earth Care Congregation for a long time—a recognition of our earth stewardship commitments and actions going back all the way to 2014! Green@Heart is a small group of people who plan and facilitate activities in support of that stewardship, BUT the commitment itself is not just that of a committee.

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Green at Heart Annual Report cntd

We are an Earth Care C O N G R E G A T I O N ! Below is a list of some of the church-wide earth care opportunities that were available to our church family in 2025. Check your participation!

- Did one or more of the actions developed in support of the Presbyterian Women's study of Environmental Justice (January-May) or suggested by Presbyterians for Earth Care (June-December)
- Contributed to the recycling collection of Styrofoam and broken string lights
- Planted native flower seeds on Palm Sunday (credit even if even yours didn't germinate)
- Showed up for the All-Church Landscape Clean Up Day in May-and ate a donut?
- Read the book and/or participated in the Jeff Chu Good Soil events at First Presbyterian Church
- Attended the City Council Candidates' Environmental Forum (which G@H helped co-sponsor)
- Flicked a switch as part of WPC's Lights Out campaign
- Shared the spirit of Creation Celebration in a WPC committee or group by starting the gathering with scripture or a prayer in praise of creation
- Paused to enjoy nature-focused artwork created by preschool students, Westminster Youth, and artists from our Westminster family and the Lincoln community
- Worshiped in our Earth Care Sunday service in April featuring a creation-focused message, and special music, chancel decor, and moment of gratitude
- Toured a native prairie and a sustainable building and learned a lot while visiting Pat Leach and Bill Oberg at their lovely earth home
- Played a rousing game of Creation Care Jeopardy-Who says Presbyterians aren't competitive?!
- Learned more about being good earth stewards in Faith Village (creation), Westminster Youth (relationship of faith and earthcare), or AdultEd importance of native plants, regenerative agriculture)
- Savored some locally-sourced foods at the Ladies Night Out visit to the Hub
- Shared stories of our various earth care efforts at a gathering with other faith-based groups Thanks to G@H members Stephan Biheng, Nancy and Bob Leavitt, Lisa and Steve McConnell, Tom Pappas, and Jimmy Shelbourn (staff liaison) for their

commitment to earth care. We would love to have you join us!

Laurel Van Ham, Moderator

Westminster Children, Youth and Families Committee 2025 Annual Report

Committee Members: Sarah Baltensperger (Moderator), Kelly Braswell, Stacy Graham, Brooke Larson, Stephanie Laux, Laurie Lofquist, Katelyn Tschetter

Staff Members: Trish Souliere, Bailey Beckman

2025 was a great year, and we are so appreciative of our staff and volunteers who make programming and our events possible! A special thank you to Fred and Susan Zander for the delicious meals they prepare for our youth and members on Wednesday nights. Thank you to Laurie Lofquist and Mallory Witt, who volunteer with our children and youth on Wednesday nights, and to Ron Souliere, who donates his time to our children and youth on Wednesdays and Sundays. Trish Souliere is starting her 6th year as the Director of Children's Ministries and continues to bring new and thoughtful ideas to engage our children and youth. Alex Souliere and Bailey Beckman serve our middle and high school youth, which has seen meaningful growth in 2025, as Co-Youth Directors.

We hosted events and activities each month in 2025, not only for our children and youth, but also for our congregation. Some of the events include:

- After-Service Intergenerational Socials (i.e. Pretzel Bar, Ice Cream Social)
- Quarterly serving at the Matt Talbot Kitchen
- Youth Group Lock-In
- Westminster at the Children's Museum
- Souper Bowl Sunday
- Youth Group "Chopped" Competition
- Lent Outreach Bags delivered to families at Westminster
- Eggstravaganza
- Marathon Welcome
- Confirmation Breakfast
- Senior Recognition
- Vacation Bible School (in collaboration with Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church)
- Youth Group "Mission and Fun" Trip to Kansas City & Branson
- Triennium (Louisville, KY)

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Westminster Children, Youth and Families Committee 2025 Annual Report contd

- Westminster Summer Pool Party Splash at Star City Shores
- Blessing of the Backpacks & Kickoff Sunday (A Place Where Kindness Grows)
- Youth Group Kiddie Pool Kickball
- Post-Church Trivia
- Youth Group Roca Scary Farm
- Spooktacular
- Youth Group Bowling
- Pie & Fellowship + Family Trivia Night
- Advent Outreach Bags delivered to children at Westminster
- Hanging of the Greens (Youth Group w/Worship & Music)
- Advent Workshop & Chili Cook-off
- Youth Group Angel Tree Shopping
- Lessons and Carols Christmas Program
- Parents Day Out
- Christmas Wrapping Fundraiser

Youth Group Mission Trip:

The Youth at Westminster took a "Mission and Fun" trip to Kansas City and Branson in June. Their trip included mission work with The Harvestors and Kansas City Parks and Rec, where they removed invasive honeysuckle to restore the environment for plants/animals/insects. They attended "David" at the Sight and Sound Theater in Branson, which was an incredible experience. They also visited Worlds of Fun, spent time swimming and playing games, and enjoyed the bonding time together.

Parents Day Out & Christmas Wrapping Fundraiser:

On December 13th, Bailey, Trish and some of the Youth ran a 'Parents Day Out' – an opportunity for parents to bring their kids for activities, games, and snacks while they did their Christmas shopping and ran errands. We look forward to providing more of these opportunities for our members and preschool families.

The following day, a Christmas Wrapping Fundraiser was held after church. Members had the opportunity to bring their gifts to wrap, and Bailey beautifully wrapped their gifts!

Funds raised for both of these events will be used for youth mission work and future mission trips.

Lessons and Carols Christmas Program:

On December 14th, Children, Youth, and Families

partnered with Worship and Music to hold our first annual Lessons and Carols Christmas Program. Some of our Youth read the Christmas story, while others along with the children acted out the story itself. It has been a goal to bring back the Christmas program, and it was done in a beautiful and heartwarming way. A special thank you to Trish Souliere and Katelyn Tschetter for their work to make this Christmas program so special. Thank you also to the Children and Youth who participated in the program! Building on the foundation of 2025, we expect to have a great 2026!

Adult Education Committee 2025 Report Westminster Presbyterian Church

Members: David Arunski, Kathy Phillip, Tom Pappas, Martha Brown, and the Rev. Jimmy Shelbourn

The Adult Education Committee works to provide Sunday morning programs that nurture Christian spiritual growth and knowledge and reflect the vision of Westminster Presbyterian Church. Our mission focuses on the Bible, theology, and living the Faith. We have continued our tradition of seeking programs that teach, encourage discussion, share our Christian hopes and responsibilities, and address serious issues facing our community and world.

In January Sunday Adult Ed programs began with our annual Community Conversations,

- January 5: program postponed due to weather advisory.
- January 12: Jim Bennett, Coordinator, and Mick Hale, educator, spoke about the activities of TeamMates mentoring.
- January 19: Laurie McCubbin, director, spoke about the excellent Westminster Preschool.
- January 26: Tyrina Webster, COO of Malone Community center, provided an informative presentation on their mission, history, achievements, and current programs.
- February 2: "Thinking Ahead--Reflections on Memorial Services." Pastor Chris discussed aspects of memorial services from theological and practical points of view, helping to prepare us to reflect on preferences for our own service or to consider aspects of planning for loved ones.

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Adult Education Committee 2025 Report Westminster Presbyterian Church contd

- February 9: "The Top Ten Mistakes Made in Estate Planning and how you can avoid them," presented by Andrew Loudon, JD
 - February 23: Rhonda Obermeier informed and inspired us about "Sleep in Heavenly Peace," an organization that builds and delivers beds to children in need of a bed and a safe place to sleep, as well as quilts. Rhonda is Co-chairman of the Lincoln Chapter.
 - March 9 through April 13: Rev. Jimmy Shelbourne led readings and discussion "Jumping Off from Hebrew Scriptures Into Lent."
 - LENT 1- Deuteronomy 26:1-11 An exploration of how this proto-creed in Deuteronomy is a precursor for kerygmatic proto-creeds in the New Testament (e.g. I Cor. 15:3-7)
 - LENT 2 - Genesis 12:1-9, 15:1-12 Exploring how a "broad" understanding of the Abrahamic covenant is reflected in both the O.T. and the N.T.
 - LENT 3 - Isaiah 55:1-9 The Abundant Life: What Truly Satisfies (John 4, Phil. 4:10-13)
 - LENT 4 - Psalm 32 A look at how freedom is engendered in the act of confession (I John 1:9)
 - LENT 5 - Isaiah 43:15-28 Are people to accuse God? (Micah 6:1-5)
 - LENT 6 - (Palm Sunday) Isaiah 50:4-7, 53:1-7 Trying to understand how suffering can be redemptive.
- Our focus following Easter was again on Earth Care with our "Creation Celebration" (between Mother's, Marathon, and Memorial Days)
- April 27: "Creation Care Jeopardy" Q & A game with special guest Edison McDonald returning as emcee.
 - May 18: "What's the Buzz about Native Plants," Bob Hendrickson, Horticultural Program Director of the Nebraska State Arboretum.
 - June 1: Glenna Haller shared her delegate experience with and information about the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, including how it relates to all people.
 - June 15 (Father's Day): Rev. Jimmy Shelbourn led discussion and performed "Immigrant's Songs" from Scotland reflecting on emigration from one's home, often a lonely and sad event...

- June 22 - 29: Tom Pappas led a lively discussion based on Presbyterian pastor Timothy Keller's book, *Forgive - Why should I and how can I?* a Biblical and systematic look at a

simple yet difficult faith practice. Historical and current events were discussed in the book and in our classes with opportunities to reflect on personal and societal experiences.

July

- July 13: "Let's Discuss Adult Ed" was a productive exchange between congregation and committee and included overwhelming opinion that Adult Education should follow the service, rather than precede.
 - July 20: A report on their "Kansas City Mission Trip" by Westminster youth was well done.
 - July 27: Edison McDonald, Executive Director of National Disability Action, spoke of his mission and "Faithful Care: A Presbyterian Reflection on Medicaid and SNAP in Today's Policy Landscape"
- August found good attendance at the new 11:15 Adult Education time.
- August 3, 17, and 24: Rev. Jimmy Shelbourn's "Reading the Gospel through Jewish Eyes" explored the themes of John Shelby Spong's book *Liberating the Gospels*.
 - September 7: WPC held a fun event, Intergenerational Celebration Trivia, in place of Adult Ed.
 - Sept 12, a Friday evening special event: Rev. Jeff Chu spoke at First Presbyterian Church about his life, his faith, and his new book, *Good Soil*.
 - Sept 14: Many took the "road trip" to First Presbyterian Church to share a potluck lunch and hear Jeff Chu talk about his book, *Good Soil*.
 - Sept 21, more on Creation Care: Edison McDonald spoke on "Regenerative Agriculture: Caring for the Land—Because the Land Cares for Us"
 - Sept 28: Regina Sullivan gave a heartfelt review of the mission and successes of Marvilee, "created in honor of my son and to share my lived experience of losing a child to addiction. The mission is to collaborate or complement other non-profit businesses to create programs/ training that help groom our youth for greatness."
- October once again had a Church History theme:

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Adult Education Committee 2025 Report contd

- October 5 (World Communion Sunday): "St. Francis of Assisi – the Proto-reformer" by Rev. Jimmy Shelbourn
 - October 12: "Joan of Arc: Her Life and Afterlife" by Dr. Carole Levin, University of Nebraska Willa Cather Professor of History Emerita.
 - October 19: "The Swiss Reformation" led by Rev. Jimmy Shelbourn
 - October 26 (Reformation Sunday): "Hus and Luther" led by Rev. Jimmy November
 - November 2 (All Saints) and Nov. 9: Rev. Ellen Davis led reflection and discussion on each Sunday's sermon and scripture lesson.
 - November 23: Rev. Lauren Peters led "Values and Vocabulary," a well received, interactive workshop on how we speak about our Church.
 - November 30: Rev. Liz Kocher of the UNL Lutheran Center preached in worship and shared a time of "Getting to Know the Lutheran Center" at Adult Ed.
 - December Advent reflections led by Rev. Jimmy Shelbourn
 - December 14: "Christ Emptying Himself: the Incarnation"
 - December 21: "Emmanuel: the Presence of God in Isaiah and Matthew"
- In 2025 WPC Adult Ed began recording our programs for those who cannot attend in person. These can be accessed under "ADULT ED" at westminsterlincoln.org
Respectfully submitted,
David Arunski, Moderator

Finance & Stewardship Committee ~ 2025 Annual Report

Committee Members: Jaime Hemmerling, Jim Hlava, Gwen Thorpe, Ray Stevens, Ross McCown
Staff Liaison: Rev. Chris Peters
As the committee was working through the budget process for 2025, it became quickly apparent that it was going to be very difficult to be able to present a balanced budget to the congregation. A review of many years of church financial budgets indicated that had actually been the case for many years, but at the end of the year the reserves of the church or the

foundation has been utilized to fully fund the work of the church. It was decided to take a different approach and to give the members of the congregation an opportunity to be a part of the solution. For the first time in recent history, an unbalanced budget was presented to the congregation and a request for new ideas and additional financial support was made. The committee worked very hard throughout the year to review all aspects of the monthly financial statements. This included a review of various balance sheet items to determine if and how those funds might be able to be used to support the work of the church. The session was kept informed throughout the year and the committees reviewed financial transactions relating to their committee each month. Regular reports were given to the congregation with updates on the situation.

The financial relationship between the church and the preschool was also in need of being solidified. Many discussions were held throughout the year to discuss how best the church might support the preschool while also being fiscally responsible for its own financial situation. Those discussions are still ongoing, and it is anticipated that a new contract will be in place in early 2026 to provide clarity and assurance to both the preschool and the church.

The finance committee and the Westminster Foundation worked together to find ways for the foundation to be of greatest support to the church while still maintaining its independence as a separate entity. Careful planning at the beginning of the year and collaborative conversations throughout the year benefited both the church and the foundation. A stewardship campaign committee was formed and a robust campaign with clear goals was held during the year. Thank you to those who served on that committee.

On behalf of the committee, we thank the Session, the committees, the staff and the congregation for placing a focus on the church finances this year. Everyone should be very proud, grateful and inspired by how everyone worked together to work through a very difficult situation. The finance committee is very pleased to report that the church ended the year positively. Not only did we overcome the budget deficit, but a small surplus was recognized.

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Communications & Outreach Committee Annual Report Summary

This past year marked the first year of the Communications & Outreach Committee, with a focus on strengthening and clarifying how Westminster Presbyterian Church shares its story. Committee members Rachel Hoffman, Phil Whitmarsh, Dale Minter, and Co-Moderators Stephan Behing and Kathy Rohwedder reviewed, refined, and enhanced WPC's overall messaging to better serve the congregation and support ministry life.

Key accomplishments included the replacement of the sanctuary projector, improving visibility and communication during worship, and the development of enhanced articles in the Messenger to provide clearer, more engaging updates for the congregation. The committee also planned and hosted the church-wide event Brainstorming or Barnstorming: 100 Years and Beyond, a gathering that honored Westminster's past while inviting the congregation to envision the future together as we look toward the church's centennial.

The Communications & Outreach Committee looks forward to continuing this work—ensuring communication remains clear, welcoming, and aligned with Westminster's mission.

Building and Grounds Committee 2025 Annual Report

The committee acted on many maintenance and operations issues, renegotiated contracts for cost control. Took on additional repairs by the committee as a cost control mechanism. Many thanks to the members of the committee Marijane England, Gary Haller, Steve Hughes, Steve Larson, Tom Pappas, Bill Roberts, Ron Souliere, Tom Welstead. And to the many other volunteers who work on weeding, plantings, leaf clean up etc. Couldn't do it without you.

Partial Summary of 2025 projects

- Kitchen – BnG fixed ice maker. Located tech to repair commercial refrigerator.
- Review FMA maintenance contract for cost purposes. Non-emergency repairs are now mostly done by committee volunteers.

Preschool issues – Basement flood, fixed, replace flooring and moulding. Carpet repairs. Other sink repairs, replaced defective art room grease trap

with maintainable unit. Preschool main entrance doors, various repairs, door closer mechanism, repair crash bar, resecure, door mechanisms. A/C repairs. Follow up on issues noted during inspection. Review preschool contract. Repair dishwasher. Tom W and others.

- Security system, replace batteries, fix loose sensors, replace defective magnetic sensors. Reboot system.
- Large Tree limb down on west side. Tom P, Tom W, Marijane E, Steve H cut it down and removed it
- Garden room TVs, reboot as needed, buy new remote.
- Flagpole, rope restrung and lighting fixed – Bill R
- Leaking Sanctuary A/C floor unit cleaned
- Worked on yet another insurance policy, current policy was going to drop us.
- East side outside lights replaced with identical units from inside. – Bill R
- Grounds and gardens, weeding, plantings, trimming, leaf pickup, many volunteers.
- Ceiling tiles structure coming down in Cole hall, ceiling grid resecured.
- Various water issues including water in gym, west basement, Mens room across from parlor that derived from backed up gutters, missing roof slates, or roofing that needed repaired. Some of this included running new drainage by Thrasher. Tom R and Bill R
- Assorted internal faucet repairs in maintenance spaces, or routing of drainage hoses. Including Columbarium faucet work.
- Replace broken ladies room seat, repair tissue dispensers. Fix/lube door hinges and closers.
- Wall paper repair south wall stairs up to sanctuary. Bill R.
- Research on reactivating Carillon bells. Steve H and others
- Ongoing light replacement in sanctuary by Fred Z and others, also replacing other fixtures with LEDs in other spaces.
- Winterize sprinkler systems by Whitmore, and prayer garden fountain.
- And many other smaller projects and repairs.

Respectfully Submitted, Ron Souliere, Moderator
Building and Grounds Committee

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Administration and Planning 2025 Annual Report

Administration and Planning (A&P) serves as an implementation/follow-through committee for the Session. The major duties are to provide support for the Session and other committees in long-range planning; review policy procedures and organizational structure and updates the Session Handbook. The committee supports officer training at the annual Elder and Deacon Retreat, researches and makes recommendations for any necessary Bylaw changes.

The committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month.

In 2025 the committee's major work was as follows:

- Provided an updated Training Manual for 2025 and again for 2026 Session members.
- Assisted in the 2025 Session and Deacon Retreat for January 24 and 25
- Began work on a handbook to address issues within the building for safety, weather, and medical concerns
- Identified and recommended changes to the Church Bylaws regarding modernizing language; update wording to follow the new structure of Homestead Presbytery; change the date required for the two Congregational meetings (February and November); and addressed committee membership. These recommendations were passed by the Congregation at the November 2025 Annual meeting.
- Session requested a Survey be created to provide feedback from organizations that rent space in our church. A&P was responsible for this task and is now in use.
- A&P compiled the results of the churchwide Brainstorm/Barn Storm event and provided results to Session for further consideration

I want to thank the committee members for all their hard work. Members on the committee are Megan Waita, Joyce Douglas, Jim Laux, Marybell Avery, Margo Gamet, Mark Davis, with Pastor Chris Peters representing staff.

Respectfully Submitted
Susie Hughes, Moderator

Personnel Committee 2025 Annual Report

Moderator: Karen Hoffman

Members: Sarah Baltensperger, Cyndy Maddux, Bob Michaud, Harry Seward III

Your personnel committee met monthly, supporting Westminster staff with ongoing gratitude for all its collective service to the church community.

A reception was hosted to celebrate former nursery caregiver, Julie Fowler, for her years of loving care for Westminster's babies and toddlers. Her dedication and gentle spirit will be fondly remembered by many children and families.

We thanked longtime custodian, Richard Grunemeyer, for his many years of serving Westminster, and wished him well in his retirement adventures to come. We welcomed Araseli Gonzalez into a part-time custodial position. A contracted cleaning service that is also used by the Preschool began in early March and continues to keep our worship and meeting spaces clean and inviting. Music Director, Wes Hansmeyer, joined the staff, bringing a wealth of knowledge and fun energy to this position. Moving anthems, heightened comradery, and laughter can be found at Wednesday evening practices.

Wes is quick with a smile and will invite you to "come and give choir a try!"

The committee worked to assemble and post a job description for a new, full-time Finance Manager, that will return all bookkeeping and payroll practices to Westminster. This process is ongoing and it is hoped the position will be filled in early 2026. We are also most grateful to Westminster Bookkeeper, Dennis Rohren, for his dedication and willingness to train a new hire, ahead of his upcoming April retirement. Preschool Director, Laurie McCubbin, in her second year, and with her capable and dedicated staff, continued to help nurture the faith and development of the children they serve. Families can count on the Westminster Preschool to provide this foundational care and guidance.

The Committee was excited to learn about consultants, Ministry Architects, and will be prayerful and supportive as Westminster continues to explore its future in 2026.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Hoffman

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Westminster
Presbyterian Church
2110 Sheridan Blvd
Lincoln, NE 68502

Youth News

Westminster at the Children's Museum | February 26, 5:30-7:30

The Westminster Children and Youth Committee and the Westminster Preschool invite you to join your friends for a night of fun at the Lincoln Children's Museum on February 26, 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM; we will have the whole facility reserved just for us. Space is limited so if you plan to attend, please RSVP to Trish at trish@westminsterlincoln.org or Laurie at laurie@westminsterlincoln.org. You can also register online at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScdhvc5kEfTjUwT4Yf1x_ox7RawU2_rT8poa3DeCb_Z-YLXSA/viewform

Spring Break VBS: Puzzling Pyramids, the Ultimate Escape | March 9-11 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Event Details:

- When? Monday, March 9 – Wednesday, March 11
 - Time? 9:00 AM-12:00 PM (Daily)
 - Who? Children 4 years-5th grade
 - Cost? \$10 per child, maximum \$30 per family
- Don't miss this fantastic opportunity for your kids to make new friends and grow closer to God this spring! Register here <https://vbspro.events/p/wpcspring26>

Summer VBS: Roadtrip! | July 13-18

Event Details

- When? Monday, July 13 – Friday, July 18
- Time? 9:00 AM-12:00 PM (Daily)
- Who? Children 4 years-5th grade
- Cost? \$15 per child, maximum \$45 per family

What to Expect on Our Roadtrip:

- Fueling Up: Energetic opening and closing rallies complete with singing and cheers.
 - Pit Stops: Small group time where kids connect with leaders and friends.
 - Scenic Routes: Creative Bible lessons that teach kids about God's love.
 - Roadside Attractions: Fun-filled games and crafts!
- Register here <https://westminster-goodshepherd.mycokesburyvbs.com/register-child>.

Please Note:

Due to the number and length of annual reports included in this edition of the Messenger, some information was omitted due to space constraints. All relevant information will be shared in the eVine, Vine, social media and/or sermon slides and CCTV slides during this month.