Westminster Celebrates the Legacy of Melanie Ohnstad

Winsome, forthright, deeply thoughtful, phenomenally talented.

These are just a few of the words that friends and colleagues use to describe Melanie Ohnstad, Westminster's Minister of Music and the Arts and longtime organist who will retire from her position at the end of May.

"Her spirit and integrity and depth of commitment is beyond compare," said Cathie Fischer, who served on the search committee that hired Melanie 22 years ago. "What a gift she has been to all of us."

Senior Pastor Tim Hart-Andersen agrees. "She has had an impact on so much of the life of this congregation, not only on music in worship, but on how music and the arts are core to our identity. The arts program in general didn't exist when she started; she put us on the map as a church that uses art in our ministries. Her legacy is on our walls, in the music we sing, in the organ in the chapel, in the arts programming now throughout the whole building. All of this happened on her watch."

Over the past 22 years, Melanie has crafted liturgy and played for more than 2,000 worship services. "Her deep understanding of liturgy and commitment to working with Tim means that nothing is haphazard in worship," said Kathy Fisher, who worked with Melanie for more than 15 years while serving as Tim's assistant. "Everything Melanie does is deeply thoughtful. She's a really good listener, a beautiful writer, and truly the most caring person."

Fisher also notes that Melanie's extensive knowledge of musicians throughout the community has had a tremendous impact. "By inviting people outside the congregation into the life of Westminster, she has brought a new richness to worship."

Barbara Prince and Rodney Allen Schwartz, Melanie's long-time colleagues, note that her openness to new ideas sets her apart. "Her incorporation of new worship elements and musical styles, her talent, and her support and encouragement of those around her will be her legacy."

Westminster Helps Host the Festival of Homiletics

"Preaching as Moral Imagination" is the theme of the 27th Festival of Homiletics, hosted by Central Lutheran Church, with many workshops held at Westminster from May 14-17. The event seeks to inspire and encourage preachers to embrace their identity as those called to give voice to God’s vision of goodness and mercy and to recover and re-imagine leadership in the church that seeks justice for all.

The weeklong conference brings together a wide variety of outstanding preachers and professors of homiletics for discourse about preaching, worship, and culture. Featured speakers include William Barber II, co-chair of the Poor People’s Campaign and pastor of Greenleaf Christian Church in North Carolina; Traci Blackmon, associate general minister of justice for The United Church of Christ; Amy Butler, senior pastor at Riverside Church in New York; Rachel Held Evans, New York Times best-selling author and blogger; Karoline Lewis and Matt Skinner from Luther Seminary; and musicians Peter and Brendan Mayer.
Search for Associate Pastor for Faith Formation Underway
by Sara Caugh and Tim Delmont, Co-Chairs, APNC

The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) for the Associate Pastor for Faith Formation has begun its work to identify and recommend a person to join Westminster’s pastoral team. The APNC, whose 11 members were elected by the congregation, has created and posted search materials on the websites of the national Presbytery Office and the Westminster website. The Committee placed ads in online and hard-copy publications known to church professionals and informed seminars about the position. It is reviewing application materials to select candidates for phone interviews.

The Associate Pastor will lead a collaborative, team approach to Westminster’s ministries of faith formation, bringing a passion for teaching, learning, and spiritual development to this important work. In the Families, Youth, and Children (FYC) Ministries, the person will provide support for and participate in leading mission trips, retreats, and Day Camp, and will be the lead in teaching confirmation with the Director of Youth Ministries. This person will support the work of the FYC Council, collaborate on program development and growth, and nurture lay leaders in the FYC area.

In providing support for the ministries of Adult Education, the Associate Pastor will collaborate in program development and growth, promote opportunities to engage the public in varied programs and series, and support the work of the Adult Education Council, lay leaders, and related committees. The Associate Pastor will also support church-wide events to nurture and deepen the faith of WPC members, participate in the Congregational Care Team, and regularly help lead worship services.

The Associate Pastor will supervise the Director of Educational Ministries, the Director of Youth Ministries, the Coordinator of Early Childhood and Family Ministries, and the Coordinator of the Nursery.

The APNC expects to recommend a candidate for selection by October 1, 2019.

A Legacy Thought: Family Plus
by Mary Hess, Director of Stewardship

A myth about planned giving is that a planned gift takes money away from one’s family. But this is not necessarily true. As your children or nieces and nephews are growing up, you manage to care for them and still contribute financially to Westminster and other charities. Once they’re on their own, they often need less financial support. You can take care of your heirs in your estate planning and still designate Westminster as recipient of a percentage of your estate. In fact, there are some tools (such as giving from an IRA) that are tax-wise and help you leave more to your heirs than you otherwise could.

Think of the valuable example of generosity you will give your heirs when you remember not only them but the spiritual home that has supported you during your life. Create your legacy of gratitude! For more information, contact Mary Hess, Director of Stewardship, mhess@wpc-mpls.org.
Dear friends,

On May 19 we will say farewell and express enormous gratitude to Dr. Melanie Ohnstad. For nearly 23 years she has served as Organist at Westminster, and for 20 of those years as the Minister of Music and the Arts.

I met Melanie in 1999 before I started at Westminster. She was the part-time Organist. At our first extended conversation we planned my installation worship service. I remember clearly the impression I brought away from that meeting—that she was a consummate church musician with excellent listening skills and a deeply collaborative spirit. The ensuing 20 years together have not altered that initial impression; I continue to be astonished at the breadth and depth of musicianship she brings to her calling to serve the church—and the delightful ways in which she works with others!

At that first conversation I had not yet heard her “on the bench.” When I experienced her extraordinary skill on the organ I knew I was working with one of the best. We conducted a national search for a Minister of Music and the Arts and many of the nation’s top church musicians applied. Melanie stood out as uniquely qualified. We knew she could provide what Westminster needed to build a broad ministry of music and the arts—and she has done that!

With her leadership Westminster has established a wide-ranging repertoire of music for worship. Melanie moves easily through European classics and global music, through contemporary compositions and contemplative music, both medieval and modern. She enlists musicians from across the spectrum to stretch our experience of the language and rhythms of the praise of God. In her years at Westminster I can remember Melanie inviting musicians from an amazing array of traditions: African American, Mexican, Native American, Chinese, Indian, Trinidadian, Peruvian, Celtic, Scandinavian, Cameroonian…and probably others!

I have tried to do the math and quickly came up with more than 2,500 services that Melanie has helped plan and lead in her nearly quarter century of making music at Westminster. As one who joined her for about 2,000 of those services, I must say it is a daunting task to imagine forging ahead without her partnership! I will miss her greatly.

I look forward to joining you on May 17 and 19 to send her off into her next chapter with thanksgiving and our blessings.

Grace and peace.

Tim
Conversations for a 21st Century Community
Finding God in the Faith of Others. Three opportunities, three distinct conversations. Join us as we delve into Barbara Brown Taylor’s new book, Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others, to discover how her narrative offers a blueprint for gracefully navigating and connecting in a fractured world. All are welcome!

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Tuesday, April 30, 1:00 – 2:00 pm | Light lunch
Thursday, May 2, 5:30 – 7:00 pm | Wine and cheese
Tuesday, May 7, 5:30 – 7:00 pm | Wine and cheese

Youth Sunday
Sunday, May 12 | Sanctuary
Westminster’s youth group will lead worship for Youth Sunday on May 12, Mother’s Day. Once a year our youth decide the morning’s scripture and liturgy and write the prayers. The high school seniors deliver sermons for this meaningful worship experience. We hope to see you in the pews!

Quiet Worship
Saturday, May 18 | 9 am | Bushnell Room
Late spring is both the time of Pentecost—the beginning of the growth of the Church on earth—and the joyful beginning of the season of green growing and flowering things. This Quiet Worship features a Gregorian chant, recorded within the roofless walls of an ancient monastic church with songbirds in the background proclaiming their freedom and two sung prayers from John Philip Newell’s Sounds of the Eternal. The Rev. Alanna Tyler leads worship.

FEAST
Sunday, May 28 | 4-7 pm
Help serve a meal to the hungry in the church neighborhood. Sign up at the reception desk or contact Angelique Kingsbury, akingsbury@wpc-mpls.org.

Moms Group
Parents or other caregivers with infants through pre-school age children, are invited to Moms Group—hosted playtimes in the Nursery—Wednesdays during the month of May from 10:30-noon. These are opportunities to meet other families with young children, get to know one another better, and play! Drop in if you are able to! Questions? Contact Marie at mkruskop@wpc-mpls.org.

Traveling Seminar
Join Rev. Tim Hart-Andersen and Rev. Kathy Michael to explore the Cathedrals of Spain and Portugal, April 20–May 3, 2020. Registration begins in late June, with an information meeting early fall. Contact Kathy at kmich4@aol.com to put your name on the list, even if you’ve already expressed interest. This trip will fill up quickly!

Welcome Guests to Westminster
All former Open Door guides and those wishing to learn about this opportunity to serve are invited to a gathering Sunday, May 19, at 11:35 am in the Trinity Conference Room. We will have a sign-up sheet to pick dates you are available. Coffee and treats served. Questions? Contact Nancy Morin, nmorin1999@usfamily.net.
Celebrating Westminster’s 50+ Year Members
by Nancy Slaughter, Chair, Heritage Sunday Committee

Westminster will celebrate and honor members who joined the church in 1969 or earlier on Heritage Sunday, June 9. Remarkably, we have nearly 250 people who have been members for at least 50 years!

After 10 am worship, we’ll gather in the Recreation Room for brunch and a brief program, which will start with a musical selection by Westminster members and conclude with Tim Hart-Andersen sharing insights and plans about Westminster’s future. Come hear about plans to be a “telling presence in the city.” There will be plenty of time to greet other long-time members, catch up, and reminisce about the many wonderful times you’ve had in church together.

Invitations will be mailed soon but please mark your calendars now for June 9. We strongly encourage all 50+ year members to attend. We want to celebrate your years of service, loyalty, and dedication to the life of Westminster!

Questions? Contact Deb Wagner, dwagner@westminstermpls.org.

Windows into Palestine: Looking Ahead
by Diana Warner, Bethlehem Partnership Committee

We have a stimulating program, we have tasty desserts, we have a beautiful space, we have parking. Join us Friday, May 10, 6:30 to 8 pm, in Westminster Hall when the Bethlehem Partnership Committee hosts “Windows into Palestine: Looking Ahead.”

In May 2018, Westminster and other local churches and organizations presented a three-day festival celebrating elements of Palestinian music, art, film, cuisine, and sport. Windows into Palestine expanded awareness and outreach beyond our walls and supported our partners at Christmas Church and Dar al-Kalima University College in Bethlehem. We were privileged to hear from 20 Palestinian friends.

Colorful, rich videos have now been distilled from extensive footage taken last May, including highlights of festival events, dialogue with filmmakers, and thoughtful interviews with key participants like Mitri Raheb and Micah Hendler. Online links for all this material will be shared and excerpts will be shown on May 10, along with a new message from Mitri Raheb. Given recent political developments, it seems more important than ever to come together, hear voices from Israel/Palestine, and envision next steps to support our partnerships.

Many Westminster members have traveled to Israel/Palestine, worshipped at Christmas Church, and met our friends in Bethlehem. We are sure that you can bring perspective to the May event and to ongoing opportunities. Or perhaps you moved to the music, marveled at the art, engaged with a film, or otherwise enjoyed the May 2018 events. We need you, too, and anyone else who has an interest or an idea to share.

Questions? Contact Deb Wagner, dwagner@westminstermpls.org.

Befriender Ministry
by David Shinn, Associate Pastor

Jacqueline and Kelly have never met in church. Their downtown congregation in Seattle was large enough that their paths never crossed. Jacqueline, a retired teacher, attended the women’s group for seniors that met in the fellowship hall. Kelly, a young mother, was part of the mom’s group that met in the parents’ lounge. Yet, the two were brought together through the BeFriender Ministry. Jacqueline felt “holy nudges” from the Spirit to serve the church; Kelly was recently divorced and had become a single mother of a young child.

When they met for the first time, Jacqueline offered nonjudgmental listening and compassion to Kelly, and Kelly felt accepted and loved. Jacqueline felt the deep honor to hold Kelly’s story in her heart and Kelly’s hands in her hands as they wept together. They met once or twice every month for more than a year. Kelly could bring her daughter if she needed. No matter what life threw at them, they met regularly. It was the support Kelly needed to grieve her loss, express her anger, and in time, prepare for the future.

This story illustrates the value of a BeFriender Ministry. Here at Westminster, we have just launched our own such ministry, with trained and commissioned BeFriends. If you would like a member to offer a listening ear and compassionate heart for whatever you may be going through, please contact David Shinn, dshinn@wpc-mpls.org.
Good news! Gathered at Five will continue to worship through July. We’ll meet Memorial Day weekend until July 28. Then, we will take the month of August off, as well as Labor Day weekend. Gathered at Five will restart on Coming Together Sunday, September 8.

We are so grateful for the worship and community forming at this service. The Holy Spirit has created momentum and energy, and we don’t want to miss out on the possibilities for worship during the summer. In fact, you can expect opportunities to worship outside, eat at food trucks, and share in art projects. We will use the plaza and the lawn areas to engage the city. Worship will be family friendly. And, if you’re heading back from a weekend at the cabin, you won’t have to miss church before entering back into your work week!

We are confident a warm Minneapolis summer, meaningful music, casual worship, and engaging activities will bring new faces into our midst at Gathered at Five. Folks of all ages, young and old, are finding community and space to be themselves in our non-traditional worship offerings. It is a gift to invest in God’s life and the lives of God’s people as we are Gathered at Five.

Baccalaureate Sunday
by Meghan Gage-Finn, Executive Associate Pastor

Graduates will be recognized in worship on Baccalaureate Sunday, June 2. We will celebrate and honor their years of hard work and study, thank those who have supported them along the way, and bless them for the journey ahead. Letters have been sent to the homes of graduating high school, college, and graduate students, but please contact Meghan Gage-Finn, at mgage-finn@wpc-mpls.org, or Director of Youth Ministries Jim Cochrane, at jcochrane@wpc-mpls.org, if you find we have missed this important transition in your life or the life of a loved one. Baccalaureate Sunday also celebrates those completing other professional or certificate programs. If you would like to be included in Baccalaureate Sunday, please send information to the church to Janice Teliczan, jteliczan@wpc-mpls.org, including a recent photograph, by Sunday, May 12.

Women Gathered: A Summer Bible Study

This summer Sarah Brouwer will lead a Wednesday morning Bible Study for women. The curriculum will take us through the Bible, learning about female characters and their impact on our understanding of who God is.

We will meet in the beauty of Garden Room Wednesdays at 9:30 am. Some days we might go into the courtyard to enjoy the sunshine! This would be a wonderful opportunity to bring a friend or someone you know who might be interested in Westminster.

While we are using a curriculum for this study, it won’t matter if you just drop in on a few classes. No need to sign up or pay. Just come!

Chair Yoga Accompanies by Devotion

Experience the gentle movement of chair yoga, accompanied by a devotion. This 6-week series is appropriate for people of all ages and abilities and is especially appropriate for those with limited mobility. Move at your own pace during a guided devotion by an experienced instructor.

Classes will take place every Wednesday at 11 am for 6 weeks, from May 1 to June 5. The first class will be held in the Meisel Room, with all following classes taking place in Heller Commons. Contact Mahin Hamilton, mhamilton@wpc-mpls.org.
The Body of Christ is Global

by Alanna Simone Tyler, Associate Pastor

For many years, Westminster has maintained partnerships with faith communities and nonprofit organizations in Cameroon, Cuba and Palestine. Our partners inspire us as they continue to witness and serve in circumstances of scarcity and conflict.

In Cameroon our primary partners are the Kumba Town Presbyterian Church and AIDSCARE Link—which funds micro-loans to help persons living with HIV/AIDS build small businesses and become financially independent, and provides resources to individuals displaced in the wake of continuing violence. Through our relationship with the National Synod of the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba, home-based churches are thriving, lay leaders are being trained and the hurricane damage to the national camp is nearing completion. Our partner congregation in Bethlehem, Christmas Evangelical Lutheran Church, hosted seminarian Madeline Hart-Andersen in January 2019 for an internship, and our travelers delivered suitcases of Christian education material.

Gifts to the annual Global Partnership offering support these relationships and travel scholarships for Westminster members to visit our partners. We will receive the offering on Sunday, May 19.

At the end of May Rev. Alanna Simone Tyler will join a group representing the PC(USA) to visit the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan. The travelers will see firsthand the work of SSEPP (South Sudan Education and Peace-building Project) as well as the ministries of PCUSA mission co-workers and mission partners.

Ohnstad continued from page 1.

says Barbara. Rodney says that Melanie “introduced us to new and exciting music reflecting the world in which we live. Her ministry reached beyond music to include the arts, and she was a significant member of the team that brought the Westminster Gallery to life. Her impact on the community will continue to be realized long after she leaves the Westminster staff.”

The congregation will honor and celebrate Melanie this month, beginning with an Evensong service on Friday, May 17, at 7:30 pm. The service will feature numerous guest organists as well as the Westminster Choir (including many alumni!) collaborating with Melanie on a setting of Herbert Howells’ Magnificat. “This service is totally Melanie,” says Amanda Weber, Interim Director of Choral Ministries. “She wanted a liturgical event and a celebration of music. It’s going to be a special night.” A reception in Westminster Hall follows the service.

On Sunday, May 19, worship will begin at 10 am with an extended prelude, offering music by Melanie and many of her frequent collaborators. The service will include a new commission by composer Tom Trenney. At a light lunch and reception afterwards, the congregation can offer gratitude and well wishes to Melanie as she begins her next chapter.

“She is a beautiful person because of the care she gives to others,” says Cathie Fischer. “It’s time for us to celebrate all she has given to us.”
Upcoming Mission Trips
by Jim Cochrane, Director of Youth Ministries

Summer is just around the corner and that means that it’s almost Mission Trip season! As in years past, both middle school and high school students will travel to see how God calls us to serve one another. From June 24-28, our middle school youth group will travel to Duluth and Grand Marais to learn about stewardship of creation. We will be working with state parks, gardens, and the Superior Hiking Trail organization to rebuild old trails and control the growth of invasive species.

Our high school youth group departs July 13 for Greensboro, NC. For a week we will live with one another, discussing how we can be a community of inclusion for all people, and how others’ life experiences can influence our own thoughts and opinions. We will visit Greensboro’s Civil Rights Museum, discuss bathroom laws, and explore the historic city. If you have any questions about summer mission trips, please contact Jim at jcochrane@wpc-mpls.org.

Early Childhood Parents Meet and Greet

Parents and caregivers of children birth to age 5 are invited for coffee, treats, and fellowship on Sunday, May 5, during education hour in the Bushnell Room. Meet the adults who go along with your children’s Nursery and Church School friends as well as members of the Early Childhood Ministries Team.

Contact Eliza Conrad, Early Childhood Ministries Chair, with questions or for more information at Conrad.ee@gmail.com.

2019 Day Camp: Seeking God’s Shalom

This year, Day Camp will center on peacemaking, with a wide range of Christ-centered activities, field trips, art, music, and fun! Counselor applications are due by May 1 for youth group students. Camper registration forms are due by May 15, for students age 4 (and in Pre-K) through 5th grade. Links to all forms are available in the FYC weekly emails, as well as the FYC calendar, under the Day Camp entries for June 17-21. Printed forms are also available at the information desk next to reception.

Please contact Mahin Hamilton at mhamilton@wpc-mpls.org with questions.

(Top) The followers in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Bottom) “Hosanna!” Nursery families waved palms and paraded through the Heller Commons after hearing the story of Palm Sunday and working together on a palm leaves leaf rubbing during Education Hour on April 14.
Mindy Meier, a Presbyterian pastor and North Dakota farmer has been selected as director of Girls Camp for 2019. David Moore has been the director since 1970 so Mindy’s appointment marks a transition for Camp Ajawah. At age 83, Dave has begun to step back from his long-time commitment to Ajawah.

Mindy has deep roots at Ajawah and Westminster. Her family was introduced to Ajawah in the summer of 1983. As a youth, she brought her family to membership at Westminster. At Ajawah Mindy has been a counselor, assistant camp director, camp nurse, head cook, and boys camp athletic director.

Mindy’s time at Ajawah and the influence of Westminster was pivotal in her call to ministry in the PCUSA. Under care of First Presbyterian Church in Fargo, ND, Mindy continued her education in 2000 at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, earning a Master of Divinity in 2003. She was ordained as a pastor in the Northern Plains Presbytery in 2005 to B’decan Presbyterian Church on the Spirit Lake Indian Reservation, where she served for four years. Since then, she’s been doing pulpit supply, coaching, and is deeply involved in suicide prevention, education, and awareness in rural communities.

Mindy will be visiting Westminster in the near future and can be reached at pastormindymeier@gmail.com

The Gift of Art
by Rodney Allen Schwartz, Director, Westminster Gallery and Archive

Two stoneware plates made by Joan Mondale have recently been gifted to the Westminster Collection by former Vice President Walter Mondale. Joan studied pottery extensively with important Minnesota potter Warren Mackenzie, and their work is exhibited side-by-side in a display case outside of the Children’s Library.

Mrs. Mondale was affectionately known as “Joan of Art” because of her activism in promoting the arts. She gave tours at the National Gallery when her husband was in the U.S. Senate, and was honorary chair of the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities when he served as Vice President under Jimmy Carter. She wrote Politics in Art for children and young adults in 1972. She used the vice president’s official residence as a showcase for American art, and later the ambassador’s residence in Japan, when as the U.S. Ambassador’s wife she promoted inter-cultural understanding through art.

After they returned to Minnesota, she played key roles bringing the American Craft Council fairs to the Twin Cities, and in establishing the Northern Clay Center in 1990 and the Textile Center in 1994.

The current Westminster Gallery exhibition, Richard Bresnahan and Artists of the Saint John’s Pottery, continues through May 12. The National Council on Education in the Ceramic Arts held its annual conference in Minneapolis in March and approximately 3,500 of those attending came to Westminster to view this exhibition.
The Meisel Committee is pleased to introduce the 2019 Meisel Scholars. They come from a variety of backgrounds and have a wide range of interests, but all share in a desire to further their learning outside the traditional classroom setting while furthering the mission of the church. Each student has exhibited leadership within the church and a dedication to service and the common good. They will continue to honor the legacy of Rev. Donald and Ellie Meisel and mark the beginning of the next 30 years of this program, which is the cornerstone of Westminster’s vocational ministries.

Marissa Moss will be a senior psychology and Spanish major at St. Olaf in the fall and will have a summer internship with the Washburn Center for Children as a day treatment staff member. She will help provide early intervention for children as they develop critical social and emotional skills.

Linnea Champ is pursuing a Master’s in Public Health at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, with a focus on sustainability, health, and the global environment. Linnea will work with the City of Minneapolis Environmental Services department on a project that offers a climate change mitigation strategy. With a focus on soil health in the city, Linnea will evaluate the city’s potential to capture carbon by evaluating green space. She hopes to partner with Westminster’s Eco-Justice Ministry Team and to share what she learns with the congregation.

Kurt Krautmann is a rising junior at the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities and a native of St. Louis where he is a Ruling Elder in his home congregation. Kurt is connected to Westminster through his aunt and uncle. As an engineering major, he has the opportunity to travel to Guatemala this spring with the student organization Engineers Without Borders. Kurt will be part of a team designing and installing a water distribution system for the community in Paraxj, Guatemala, which will eventually serve 150 homes in the area.

These summer experiences, through the support of the Meisel Program, will allow students to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God and God’s people. They will be commissioned in worship on Sunday, June 9.