Westminster Launches Performing Arts Series

From Cuban jazz to South African gospel, Latin American early music to ballet, contemporary choral to bluegrass, Westminster's new Performing Arts Series, launching in the fall, will offer a fascinating array of music and dance.

“The Performing Arts Series is yet another way Westminster will extend its telling presence in the city,” says Tim Hart-Andersen. “By celebrating local artists and connecting them more closely with the community, the series will invite people to experience the beauty of the arts. We believe that beauty is an avenue to the holy in our midst.”

The series will take place in Westminster Hall. “We are interested in how this space—without a stage—can break the barrier between artist and audience,” said Amanda Weber, Minister of Music and the Arts, who is spearheading the series.

The series kicks off October 11 with Westminster member and pianist Nachito Herrera, one of the leading Cuban musicians of our time. Cuban food will accompany

ARTS continued on page 5.
Advantages of Giving from Your IRA
by Duane Krohnke, Westminster Member

As you may know, once you reach age 70 1/2, federal law requires you to take Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) from your IRAs and the percentage for same increases every year thereafter. All such RMDs constitute ordinary income subject to federal and state income taxes.

Under current law, however, charitable contributions made directly from IRAs reduce the amount of the RMDs subject to income taxes, which makes it beneficial to give in this way. In addition, some members have found it advantageous, for cash-flow planning, to divide their charitable contributions into two or three contributions spaced throughout the year.

For example, let’s say your estimated income tax payments are due in January, April, June and September and your real estate tax payments are due in May and October. You could schedule your charitable contributions (i.e. pledge payments) for the other months (February, March, July, August, November or December).

Spacing out your church giving is advantageous to others, too. The church benefits by receiving your offerings in the early to middle part of the year (allowing for ongoing cash flow to ministries) and the financial institution administering your IRA benefits by not having so many distributions due at the end of the year.

In summary, giving with your RMDs helps reduce your taxable income and can be done in ways to improve your cash flow, all while helping the church fund its ministries in a timely way.

TownTalks
The Music Men:
Mark Wheat and Jeremy Messersmith

Thursday, August 15
5 pm Social Hour
6 pm Presentation

Join Mark Wheat, weeknight radio host at The Current, and singer-songwriter Jeremy Messersmith as they share stories of their journeys in music.

Unsheltered by Barbara Kingsolver
by Sandy Wolfe Wood, Chair, Eco-Justice Ministry Team

In her latest book, Unsheltered, Barbara Kingsolver gently walks us toward a new understanding of how human consumption is changing our planet in profound and irrefutable ways. But it’s not a morality play: Kingsolver’s genius is in her ability to tell a good story.

The book is set in Vineland, New Jersey, where Kingsolver grew up. Vineland was a “planned utopian community” of the 1860s, with aspirations of intellectual enrichment and temperance—aspirations never fully realized. The author develops two sets of characters separated by 150 years: In the 19th century, we meet historical figures Mary Treat, a natural scientist and a colleague of Charles Darwin, and her friend Thatcher Greenwood, a high school teacher repeatedly censored for teaching evolution. And in 2016, our fictionalized protagonists Willa and her husband Iano are precariously holding together a household of two 20-something siblings, an unexpected grandchild, and an ailing father-in-law under the collapsing roof of one of Vineland’s shabbily built homes.

Kingsolver weaves together these two eras with wildly disparate themes that underscore how immutably connected we are to each other and to the natural world; the universality of mistrust, fear, and ignorance; Cuba’s secret weapon of sustainability; a socialist millennial with unending patience for her anti-immigrant grandfather; and the astounding power of one person to change the world.

You’ll have to read the entire 500 pages to fully grasp the nuance of its title, but you won’t regret the time spent with Unsheltered.
Dear Friends,

Beth and I have arrived at Ghost Ranch in northern New Mexico. On the drive here we found ourselves enveloped by thick, churning clouds all the way. Through six different states, the beauty of America was obscured by heavy rain or threatening winds. It felt as if we were driving through our nation’s current political environment: ugly and dangerous. Resurgent nativism and racism encourage menacing tendencies that run deep in America’s soul and conceal the promise of this immigrant land made strong by the labor of people of many hues and tongues.

When will America finally resolve the conflict between its stated values – never perfectly implemented – and the reality in which we all live? What will people of faith do to counter the rising tide of vitriol directed at fellow human beings who bear the image of God?

Westminster has tried to shine the light of Christ when shadows have descended. We welcomed Chinese immigrants in the 1880s as hatred was directed at them. We assisted newcomers from Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries struggling to find their way. We supported Civil Rights for African-Americans in the 1960s and continue that work today in our Racial Justice Task Force. We embraced Hmong refugees in the 1970s who found themselves racially stereotyped. Today we welcome African immigrants working hard to make America their new home.

We may have been slow to do so – and done it reluctantly and not often enough – but our congregation has resisted the ingrained impulse of animosity that clouds the potential of this land. I have heard from members of our church and other friends who feel threatened or deeply wounded by rising hostility directed toward them. Especially when elected leaders use odious words toward members of our community, we will speak up in their defense. The Gospel of Jesus Christ compels us to do so.

We must not keep silent in the face of efforts to divide us further as a nation or to stoke fear and hatred of our neighbors, the very ones whom Jesus calls us to love. This is not a matter of partisan politics; we can and do disagree on particular policies. It is, rather, a question of what kind of nation we will be.

Beth and I have decided to take another road trip next year, this time to the South, to follow the Civil Rights Trail. As followers of Jesus, we want to learn more – and join others in trying to shine the light of God’s love and justice all across this beautiful land.

Grace and peace,

Tim Hart-Andersen

Tim Hart-Andersen
WPC Happenings

Ice Cream Invitational
August 11 | 4 pm | Izzy’s Ice Cream
Connect with other families at our final FYC-sponsored summertime fellowship event. Join us for ice cream at Izzy’s Ice Cream (1100 South 2nd Street, Minneapolis) which we’ll enjoy at nearby Gold Medal Park. Invite your family and friends to join us as well! RSVP to Marie at mkruskop@wpc-mpls.org by August 8.

Annual Women’s Lunch
August 21 | 11:30 am | Jax Café
Women of Westminster are invited for the Annual Women’s Lunch at Jax Café. Plan to meet there, and if driving is an issue, we can help arrange for a ride. Jax Café is at 1928 University Ave NE, Minneapolis. The cost is $20. RSVP to Deb Wagner at dwagner@wpc-mpls.org by August 16.

FEAST
August 25 | 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.

Final Summertime Daytime Playtime
August 28 | 10 am | Oak Hills Splash Pad | 3201 Rhode Island Ave S
All parents or caregivers and their children are welcome to attend this playtime hosted by members of Westminster’s Moms Group. Look for more details in the FYC e-mail on Thursday afternoons. Not getting the FYC e-mail? Contact Mahin at mhamilton@wpc-mpls.org to get signed up.

Coming Together Sunday Volunteers Needed
We are in need of help for the All-Church Picnic: setting up, taking payment and tickets, assisting with the food lines, and clean up. Please email Sarah Brouwer if you are interested in being a part of this fun, annual event! sbrouwer@wpc-mpls.org.

Arts at Westminster E-Blast
Sign up to receive emails about artistic happenings at Westminster. This new e-blast will include updates from the Westminster Performing Arts Series, announcements about gallery exhibitions and new acquisitions of art, a calendar of upcoming arts events (both inside and outside events of note), and more! Sign up by visiting https://bit.ly/2Y0N17c and choosing the emails you wish to receive.

Meet the lead staff for Eat for Equity, the catering company now working out of our main kitchen. Eat for Equity works to create community feasts, to invest in local food, and donate a portion of their proceeds to worthy causes. Jametta Raspberry (head chef), Mecca Bos (communications and marketing), and Emily Torgimson (Executive Director).
Photo by Kat Vang.

Daily Phone
DEVOTIONS
612.332.7087

August

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IN MEMORY
Richard Murphy
July 4, 2019

BIRTHS
Avalynn Ann Bellos
June 18, 2019
Sascha Hendrix Sames
July 4, 2019
Alma Kenny Highes
July 13, 2019
Hospitality Lessons Learned

Our Westminster guests bring opportunities for learning. Recently, three community groups demonstrated radical hospitality utilizing creative approaches:

**Marnita’s Table:** Marnita’s Table exists to increase equality and decrease disparities across difference. At Westminster, Marnita’s Table hosted a dialogue with people impacted by the Hennepin County probation system and probation staff. Marnita’s Table staff and volunteers created a space with the intent of promoting mutuality among participants. They described their efforts as “decolonizing space,” with stations around Westminster Hall providing information for guests to discuss together, interacting on equal footing.

**City House:** City House inspires hope, trust, and healing through spiritual listening with people on the margins—including those experiencing poverty, addiction, and imprisonment. At the event in Westminster Hall, City House’s volunteers actively engaged and included Westminster staff as equal team members. One Westminster staff person remarked that “the volunteers seemed be having a blast doing the dishes and we all had fun assisting them. They made us feel part of their event.”

**Minnesota Sakya Center:** Sakya is one of the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The most poignant moment during this event in Westminster Hall was a demonstration of radical and humble service. Several people on the Upper Plaza appeared to be experiencing homelessness. The Sakya community put together a fruit and water platter and to-go boxes, bowing and offering it to them as honored guests.

**Arts continued from cover.**

the performance, which falls just one day after Cuban Independence Day.

On November 1, 29:11, a gospel ensemble, offers a joyous concert of South African music. The group, performing as part of its iForgive tour, also leads the adult forum and sings in worship on October 6, World Communion Sunday.

James Sewell Ballet brings the well-loved classic Amahl and the Night Visitors to Westminster December 13 and 14. The Westminster congregation will have more opportunities to interact with and learn from James Sewell; stay tuned for the details of this blossoming relationship.

The series continues February 1, 2020, with Border CrosSing, whose mission is to integrate historically segregated audiences and musicians through choral music. The group plans to share rarely performed sacred early music from Latin America from the last 500 years.

In March (dates TBD), a Westminster house ensemble, accompanied by a string orchestra, performs James MacMillan’s Seven Last Words, and on May 31 (Pentecost), Monroe Crossing Bluegrass Band dazzles audiences with its electrifying blend of classic bluegrass, bluegrass gospel, and original bluegrass. The group also joins us in worship that day.

Tickets for the fall shows will go on sale September 3 at westminstermpls.org. Mark your calendars and plan to join us for the exciting launch of this wonderful Performing Arts Series!
Great River Landing Opening Soon
by Alanna Simone Tyler, Associate Pastor

In 2013, a task force that included members from Westminster Presbyterian Church and Plymouth Congregational Church, working together with Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative and Better Futures Minnesota, enthusiastically and optimistically announced that it would undertake the challenge of creating homes for a chronically underserved group: men returning to the community after incarceration. Westminster contributed $250,000 for the project from the Open Doors Open Futures campaign.

This month, Great River Landing (GRL) will open, realizing Westminster and Plymouth’s dream of previously incarcerated men having a fresh start in a safe home and a supportive community. Better Futures, the organization that will provide service at GRL, has successfully accompanied previously incarcerated men on their paths to transforming their lives. Better Futures, one of Westminster’s Faith in Action Council’s 2019 Community Partners, provides health services, training and employment counseling, and coaching.

Research suggests stable housing combined with effective supportive services leads to reduced recidivism, stronger family dynamics, and successful reintegration into the community. GRL is the first dedicated and supported affordable housing project in Minnesota for previously incarcerated men.

While only a fraction of the men returning to the community from incarceration will be housed at GRL, it is expected GRL will serve as a model for future projects.

A special thank-you to Westminster members and the Faith in Action Council for approving special mission funding to provide welcome kits for the new residents of GRL. Each GRL welcome kit will include sheets, pillows, towels, underwear, T-shirts, and socks. With Plymouth, Westminster will ensure that each man who moves into GRL feels welcomed and supported.

Church School Welcome & Orientation
by Marie Kruskop, Coordinator of Early Childhood & Family Ministries

If your child will be 3 years old before September 1, join us for a special 3-Year-Old Orientation on Sunday, August 25, following 10 am worship.

3-year-olds in the Nursery that day will have snack before going to the Church School Room (#201). When the service is over, parents will gather with their child (after picking up any other young children in the Nursery) for a meet-and-greet and orientation. Those children attending worship with their parents, meet us in room 201 after worship.

Get your little ones excited for Coming Together Sunday, September 8, and the start of their Church School career! Questions? Marie Kruskop, mkruskop@wpc-mpls.org.

Source Song Festival Returns to Westminster
by Barbara Prince, Program Facilitator for Music and the Arts

The halls throughout the church will be alive with the sound of glorious singing during the week of August 5-9 as the Source Song Festival returns for a second season at Westminster (the Festival’s fifth season). The Festival’s mission is “Cultivating excellence in Art Song for artists and audiences.” If a room at the church has an acoustic piano, you can guarantee it will be in use all week for practice sessions, composition lessons, workshops, and performances. Many of the events are open to the public, either ticketed or free of charge. The com-

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by Barbara Prince, Program Facilitator for Music and the Arts

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Our high school youth and leaders traveled this summer to Greensboro, NC to work with Tiny Houses Greensboro, an organization that offers homes of approximately 300 square feet to those in the Greensboro area who are experiencing homelessness.
Creating Community in a Divided World
by Kathy Michael, Associate Pastor Emerita

Where can we look for hope in a world that is polarized, broken, and often in despair? Education for Faith and Life, 2019-2020, addresses this question from several directions. We seek ways to create community where each person is valued and respected. We seek to deepen our faith in ways that create community and bring healing and wholeness to our lives, our communities, our nation, and our world.

The year begins with a Saturday Seminar, September 14. Rev. Dirk Ficca from the Twin Cities Social Cohesion team will be with us along with his colleagues to help us with a vision for community.

As our Wednesday classes focus on Deepening Faith for Community, we’ll talk about prayer and possibilities for growing in faith and putting that faith into practice for the sake of the Gospel and for the common good.

On November 15, Parker Palmer with be with us along with Carrie Newcomer for an evening presentation on What We Need is Here: Hope, Hard Times & Human Possibility. Leading up to that weekend, Dr. Mary Hess will facilitate a conversation on Palmer’s book, Healing the Heart of Democracy – The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit.

The All-Church Book Read will join the conversation on community with Virgil Wander, by Leif Enger. Enger will be with us to talk about his book. And, through Arts Month we will explore ways to find community through various art forms and expressions.

This year of education will be spectacular. Watch for the Education for Faith and Life Catalog in September. I hope you will take advantage of every opportunity as we seek to Create Community in a Divided World.

The New Old Adventure

The New Old Adventure kicked off its inaugural season in June 2018, and it’s been a fabulous year of learning, growing, and connecting. Even in the midst of a polar vortex and record snowstorms, we met and learned from our speakers and from each other. After this excellent start, the planning team, with three new members, has another invigorating program year planned. We invite you to join us again to learn about aging, vitality, and life. Join us as we kick off the 2019 curriculum on September 11 with Tim Hart-Andersen.

- Aging Through the Lens of Scripture
  September 11
- Housing Decisions
  October 9 & 16
- Who Gets Grandma’s Yellow Pie Plate
  November 13
- Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body
  January 8
- Health Care Directives
  February 12
- Aging with Gusto
  April 8
- Memorial Service Planning
  May 13 & 20

We invite all our church members to come and join us. The reality of aging transcends generations. We all know someone who is facing the joys and challenges of aging.

We will begin each of our sessions at 11 am, have a light lunch at 12 pm (soup, salad, and bread), and conclude by 1 pm. The intention of this program is to combine fellowship, connection, and learning with nourishment for our mind, body, and spirit.

TOWN HALL FORUM continued from cover.

André Thomas
Tuesday, November 12, Noon
The Impact of African American Spirituals

André Thomas is Professor of Choral Education, Director of Choral Activities, and the Owen F. Sellers Professor of Music at Florida State University. He is the artistic director for the Tallahassee Community Chorus and the conductor of a variety of choral organizations throughout the country. He is in demand as a choral adjudicator and clinician and has conducted 48 Honor and All-State Choirs, as well as the World Youth Choir. As a composer, his works have been published by seven publishing companies, and he is the author of the book Way Over in Beulah Land: Understanding and Performing the Negro Spiritual.

Parker Palmer
Saturday, November 16 | Noon
We the People: A Call to Action

Parker Palmer is a writer, teacher, activist, and founder of the Center for Courage & Renewal, a nonprofit committed to creating a just, compassionate, and healthy world by nurturing personal and professional integrity. He holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of California at Berkeley and is the recipient of 13 honorary doctorates and numerous awards for achievement and excellence.

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Proactive Mental Health Care: Does Your Marriage or Family Need a Tune-up?
by Carol Hornbeck, MA, LMFT

Recently, I received a call from a mother who had moved to the Twin Cities requesting an appointment for her family. There was, she explained, no problem that qualified as a crisis, but she wanted to make sure she and her spouse were doing everything possible to help their family adjust to the move—and especially to help their children transition to new schools. Because she had had a previous positive experience, this mom viewed professional counseling as a resource that could help family members navigate through a predictable life cycle change and provide extra support as they adjusted to their new routines.

Couples, families, and individuals do not need to be in crisis to benefit from a mental health consultation. A family therapist can work with adults, adolescents, and children to identify strengths, assess risk factors, and develop new skills for communication, stress management, and problem solving.

Many people find it easier to be proactive when it comes to physical health than mental and emotional well-being. According to the Center for Disease Control, 62 million Americans have mood disorders or mental illness, but only a third have consulted a professional within the past year. Research shows that poor mental health increases the risk for chronic physical conditions like heart disease, stroke, and cancer. Becoming proactive about mental health can help us heal from past hurts and live life in accordance with our most deeply held values.

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

The recent gift of Paul T. Granlund’s 3D Life Tree Model brings Westminster’s growing collection of his sculptures to 11. He was artist-in-residence at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN, and is considered to be Minnesota’s premier sculptor. His work is featured prominently in many public and private collections. Westminster was first introduced to his work when he was selected to create the Birth of Freedom in 1976.

Soon after the opening of the Westminster Gallery in 2002, we began to intentionally build an art collection. Acquiring the first and second models of the Birth of Freedom became milestone moments in those collecting efforts. Additional pieces have been gifted by members and acquired through the art market over the years.

The history of art is well populated with the image of the tree of life. A general fascination with the stages of life from birth to death, and perhaps mortality in particular, has prompted many artists to illustrate that journey. It is interesting that the two dimensional version of Life Tree had been previously given in memory of Eleanor Meisel and is installed in the Cloister Hallway. This three dimensional model was created in 1997, was gifted by Liz Heller and Rodney Allen Schwartz, and is on view in the hallway connecting the sanctuary and chapel on the south side of the Great Hall.

SONG continued from page 6.

The complete list of offerings is found at sourcesongfestival.org.

Minnesota composers and musicians will be highlighted frequently, from a celebration of six decades of Minnesota songs on Monday evening to Minnesota singer/pianist duos performing music by composers (many locally-based) on Friday evening. A masterclass on comedic songs, led by American music specialist Paul Sperry on Thursday (this one is free!) should set a fun tone for the rest of your day. And the rest of the day offers the talents of soprano Tamara Wilson and pianist Warren Jones.