Leadership for Well Being and the Common Good: A Conversation with Minnesota Senator Tina Smith

by Phil Asgian, Westminster Member

Join us Sunday, September 8, at 9:15 am in Westminster Hall for a joint Adult Education/Social Justice Forum as we begin the new program year and a series of collaborative forums. The forum will focus on Senator Smith’s legislative priorities, how she expresses her values in public service, and her sense of public service as vocation. Tim Hart-Andersen will moderate. Senator Smith serves on four committees in the U.S. Senate: 1) Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; 2) Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; 3) Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; and 4) Indian Affairs.

The theme of the new program year for Adult Education is “Invitation to Create Community in a Divided World.” Social Justice Forums theme is “Well-Being: the establishment of good living conditions and investing in human capital.” Additional collaborative forums with Adult Education and the Social Justice Ministry Team planned this program year include Martin Luther King Sunday and Earth Day.

Performing Arts Series

by Amanda Weber, Director of Music & the Arts

Westminster’s new Performing Arts Series launches in fall 2019, featuring a fascinating array of music and dance, from Cuban jazz to South African gospel, Latin American early music to ballet, contemporary choral to bluegrass. By celebrating artists and connecting them more closely with the community, the Series extends Westminster’s telling presence in the city and invites people to experience the beauty of the arts. All performances take place in Westminster Hall, named “Best New Music Venue” by the Star Tribune last year.

Tickets for the fall shows go on sale beginning September 3. Tickets are $25 and available in advance at westministermpls.org/pas. Sign up at bit.ly/2Y0N17c for email updates about the Series, and other arts events at Westminster.

Nachito Herrera October 11, 2019

29:11 November 1, 2019

James Sewell Ballet

Amahl and the Night Visitors December 13 and 14, 2019

Coming Together Sunday | Sept 8

We will go back to three services on Sunday: 8:30 Chapel Service, 10:30 Sanctuary Service, and 5 pm Gathered at Five in Westminster Hall. Education for all ages begins at 9:15 am including Church School for 3-year-olds through high school, and a joint Adult Education/Social Justice Forum with Senator Tina Smith. After worship come to the All-Church Picnic after 10:30 worship. Along with picnic fare, there will be vegan and gluten-free food options, and activities for kids. Cost is $10 for 12 and over, $5 for 4-11, free 3 and under, $40 family max. RSVP and pay on our website. Want to volunteer? Contact Sarah, sbrouwer@wpc-mpls.org.
This fall, Westminster will launch an Artist-in-Residence program, welcoming a familiar face as our first rotating artist. Westminster member Jeffrey Gram will be featured this program year, both as a performing musician and as a community builder through music.

Jeffrey is an acclaimed “composer/percussionist extraordinaire” (Pittsburg Post-Gazette) who performs regularly as a freelance percussionist, marimba soloist, chamber ensemble musician, and drum set player. Jeffrey’s particular interest in creating percussion music for worship has led to his increasing involvement at Westminster, providing music for The Clearing (Wednesday evening worship), as well as regular appearances in Sunday morning worship services and Gathered at Five.

We are delighted that Jeffrey will serve as our first artist-in-residence, and we look forward to further highlighting his gifts as we collaborate for the sake of creativity and community. Jeffrey says, “For me, music-making is a holy act, at its best enhancing the worship experience, building community, and deepening faith. I am so very grateful for the opportunity to use my gifts as a musician to serve the Westminster community as artist-in-residence.”

Faithful, Steadfast Givers
by Mary Hess, Director of Stewardship

The Stewardship Ministry team talked recently about the characteristics of those who give faithfully to Westminster. Out of curiosity, I requested a list of everyone who had contributed for 20 consecutive years, expecting to receive four or five pages. I was astounded to receive a 14-page document with 239 names! After I read it, I paused for several minutes, absorbing the blessing of all those who have steadfastly given of their resources to support God’s work year after year. Although I work daily with generous people, I was overcome with gratitude at the sheer number of those who so clearly follow Jesus’ teachings about being faithful, cheerful givers.

The group ranged from well-known congregants who show up regularly to worship and volunteer, to quiet participants who are not well-known but who devotedly support Westminster’s ministries. Many contribute small amounts weekly or monthly, year after year, at similar or increasing amounts. They are the embodiment of faithfulness and examples of how to live fully and abundantly. They have something from God to which we can all aspire. Galatians 5: 22-23 says, “…the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

I expect these supporters view their giving as a way to signal their commitment to God and as a way to help the church plan. Perhaps their giving is an expression of gratitude for thought-provoking sermons, glorious music, dedicated teachers, visits when sick, support in times of darkness, and being Christ’s hands and feet in the world. These steadfast givers know that their support helps ensure God’s work will continue. They take their role seriously, personally, and thoughtfully, showing the fruit of the Spirit in all they do. By their constancy, we see the many ways God is at work through Westminster.
Dear Friends,

In a recent sermon I spoke about the Twin Cities Social Cohesion Initiative, an effort to build trust among the disparate parts of our community. My colleagues and I in the Downtown Interfaith Senior Clergy are working with leaders in this initiative. We want to move beyond the polarized paralysis in which we find ourselves and find common purpose in our life together.

Mark your calendars now for a Saturday Seminar from 9 am-12:15 pm on September 14 when the Rev. Dirk Ficca and Maia Uhrich from the Social Cohesion Initiative will join us at Westminster. Dirk is a seminary classmate of mine and one of the most passionate, intelligent, and articulate people I know. The seminar – Trust Is on the Way: the Work of Social Cohesion – will engage us in the practice of trust-building in our communities.

The Saturday Seminar is just one of the outstanding offerings at Westminster this fall. U. S. Senator Tina Smith gets us off to a good start on Coming Together Sunday, September 8, at 9:15 in Westminster Hall.

I am eager to begin the fall sermon series, Scripture Stories that Matter. Biblical narratives from long ago formed the faith we inherit, even as they inform our spiritual lives in the current difficult context.

In America today we are wandering in a spiritual wilderness, with little sense of shared direction and purpose. This plays out in hyper-polarized politics and in the cruelty and injustice, fear and violence that course through our culture. We have lost our way.

As Christians we count on our faith to provide meaning. We look to the long trajectory of God's people in biblical times and in the history of the Church to find a way through the desert. The stories that form us as a people can guide us through these challenging times.

In September sermons we will explore Foundational Stories of the Hebrew Scriptures, focusing on Creation, Covenant, Exodus, and Exile. The biblical accounts behind each of those ancient stories speak to us in our time and have fresh meaning for us today. They invite us to shape our own life-stories – both individually and collectively – around the values that arise out of biblical narratives.

This is a good time to be the Church! See you on Coming Together Sunday on September 8 – and at the Saturday Seminar on September 14.

Grace and peace,

Tim Hart-Andersen

From Our Pastor
Bluegrass Evening Prayer

**Wednesdays in September | 5:30 pm | Westminster Plaza**

Join us out on Westminster Plaza for a 5:30 pm hymn sing-a-long and 6 pm service that is participatory, kid-friendly, and joy-filled! Dinner available in Westminster Hall before and after the service—beginning at 5:15 pm, and ending at 7 pm.

Cub Scout Pack 33

**First Pack Meeting | September 7 | 10 am | Westminster**

Cub Scouts is for boys or girls K-5th grade. The group Pack meeting one Saturday a month. Individual grade level Dens meet two Mondays each month from 6-7 pm. To learn more, visit pack33.net or email cubscout-pack33@yahoo.com.

Quiet Worship: A Peacefilled Silence

**September 21 | 9 am | Bushnell Room**

This year’s Quiet Worship services begin with a time of peace and of silence, a time enriched by quiet words and music: an ancient Welsh hymn...sung prayers from Iona...familiar words from the Psalms and Philippians...and prayers by Brother Roger and Philip Newell. Kathleen Campbell as worship leader.

FEAST

**September 22 | 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.

2019 Habitat for Humanity Build Week

**September 30-October 4**

Alongside other volunteers, we will help build quality, affordable shelter for a local family. Our goal this year is to have intergenerational participation. Previous construction experience is not required. We have non-construction service opportunities, too. All are welcome! Please consider serving for one of more of the days. Contact Alanna Simone Tyler for more information, atyler@wpc-mpls.org.

Coming Together Sunday Volunteers

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. Email Sarah Brouwer, sbrouwer@wpc-mpls.org, if you are interested in being a part of this fun, annual event!

Arts at Westminster E-Blast

Sign up to receive emails about artistic happenings at Westminster including updates from the Westminster Performing Arts Series, gallery exhibitions, a calendar of upcoming arts events, and more! Sign up by visiting https://bit.ly/2Y0N17c.
New Old Adventure
September 11 | 11 am | **Aging through the Lens of Scripture**

Tim Hart-Andersen will follow up on the conversation we started on aging and scripture last fall. A lot has happened since we last visited this topic. The 2019 Lenten sermon dialogues were on the subject of death and dying. The Lenten booklet and small group discussions focused on the topic of death and transcendence. In the forward to the booklet, Tim said: “The Bible never really puts to rest the question of what happens to us when we die. It offers metaphors and images—The light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it...And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever...The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time and forevermore—but it never precisely defines life beyond this life. I am fine with that. In fact, I am skeptical of attempts to nail everything down. I can live with, and die into, a holy mystery that will be revealed.”

There will be time for discussion in small groups and a break for a light lunch of soup, bread, and salad. Tim will wrap up the time together with a Q & A.

**October 9: Making Housing Decisions**

For many of us, making housing decisions can be painstaking. Buying or renting takes careful consideration, especially as plans are made to establish a “forever home.” With aging comes a series of new issues and questions: Is our current home accessible to support evolving physical needs? Is our home the right size to accommodate our older lifestyle? Is our home close to needed resources such as shopping and medical care? And most importantly, as we get older, can we stay in our home?

Cynthia Johnson, LSW, will guide us through the broad array of choices available and understanding how housing options can fulfill individual needs. Cynthia has spent her career working in various settings, including assisted living, nursing homes, and hospitals. Her expertise will be used to talk about the concept of aging in place and how to plan for housing needs in advance of crisis situations. Such planning is helpful in knowing if it’s time to move to a different housing setting, as well as selecting the most appropriate option.

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Town Hall Forum

**Kathleen Belew | White Power and Paramilitary America**

**Tuesday, September 24, Noon**

Kathleen Belew is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Chicago where her research and teaching focus on militarization, violence, racism, and identity in 20th-century America. Her recent book, *Bring the War Home*, explores white power activism from its roots in the Vietnam War to its collaboration with Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazi, skinhead, and militia movements. A graduate of the University of Washington with a degree in the history of ideas, she earned an MPhil and PhD in American studies from Yale University. She is currently a research fellow at the Center for the Advanced Study of the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University.

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Fall Men’s Retreat

by David Shinn, Associate Pastor

When the sun is bright and the day is long, it may be hard to think about autumn. Fall is a marvelous time to be in God’s beautiful creation. Wendell Berry connects God’s grace to autumn in his “A Poem for Autumn.” The woods are adorned with “red, gold and green, the leaves lie on the group, or fall, or hang full of light in their air still.”

The men’s retreat committee invites men of the church to our annual fall retreat in the midst of the grace-filled woods, at Clearwater Forest. Retreat dates are October 4-5 with the option to stay one more night. Peter Bruhn, currently one of our Westminster Counseling Center therapists, is our featured speaker. Peter, and his family have been active in our Westminster community.

On the Counseling Center’s website, Peter writes, “My goal when working with clients is to help them identify and strengthen inner resources based upon personal values that can become powerful, permanent allies as they navigate their journey through life. As a counselor, playing a role in this journey is a pleasure and honor.”

Sign up in church Sundays, September 15, 22, or 29. Come soak up the grace of God in the autumn woods and, led by God’s power, grow in inner strength.
Family Matters - A Parent Fellowship Group

by Marie Kruskop, Coordinator of Early Childhood & Family Ministries

As a parent, do you sometimes wish you could connect with other parents about the joys and challenges of being a parent? If so, join our Family Matters group, where parents with children of all ages gather to come alongside one another on the parenting journey. Join us when you can—you are always welcome.

Family Matters is a place of welcome and connection for Westminster parents with children of all ages, providing both support and information about parenting in a faith-based setting. We discuss a variety of parenting topics and consider them through the lens of our faith. About once a month we break into two groups to discuss age-specific topics. We meet Sundays in the Bates Room during 9:15 am Education Hour.

This fall, we will discuss ideas presented in God’s Big Table – Nurturing Children in a Diverse World by Elizabeth F. Caldwell, retired Professor of Pastoral Theology at McCormick Theological Seminary. This book “uses the imagery of the table as a metaphor for the ways our churches engage differences and diversity through a biblical background of welcoming all God’s children.”

Come; join us at the table. Contact Marie Kruskop, mkruskop@wpcmpls.org for more information.

Westminster Joins Community Solar Garden

by Doug Van Valkenburg, Eco-Justice Committee

Westminster recently entered into a 25-year contract that requires Xcel to acquire electricity in an amount similar to what Westminster uses each year from a community solar garden run by ReneSola Power. A community solar garden contains solar panels that convert the sun’s rays into electrical energy. The advantage of a solar garden is that it allows the cost of solar panels to be distributed among the community of subscribers so they can be built less expensively than by individual subscribers on their own. Another advantage is the size of a solar garden.

Westminster’s city block is not large enough to provide all of Westminster’s electrical needs. In addition, portions of the block are shaded by neighboring buildings. Westminster consumes 1 million kilowatt hours of electricity per year. It takes an area of more than nine city blocks of solar panels to generate Westminster’s electrical needs. ReneSola Power’s solar garden is 20 acres in size and is located near St. Cloud. The area had been farmland, growing a monoculture of corn. The farmer still owns the land, but leases it to ReneSola Power, which planted the land around the solar panels with native habitat for pollinators.

By subscribing to a community solar garden, Westminster is supporting solar development in Minnesota. Westminster will pay a flat rate for its electricity over the next 25 years and will save an estimated $1 million over that time as fossil fuel based utility rates continue to rise.

Subscribing to a solar garden can be more difficult for individuals because the average homeowner moves every seven years. The most environmentally friendly kilowatt hour is the one you don’t use! Energy efficiency and smart energy use can make a big impact. Check out Xcel’s Windsourse or Renewable Connect programs for clean energy options.

Operations Manager P.J. Eichten took Westminster’s Eco-Justice Team on a tour of Westminster’s Green Roof during its July meeting. We braved steep stairs and vertical ladders to get a look at the sedum-covered roof—very impressive!
WestConnect Bible Study
Out with the Old, In with the Old
by Sarah Brouwer, Associate Pastor

Starts September 11
On the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month this year, at 7 pm, our young adults will continue our tradition of working through a text that will be preached on the following Sunday.

This will be my fifth fall with our young adults, and my fifth year of dreaming up the things we could do to make this year’s Bible study “the best!” Year after year, it seems, I find myself in this place, trying to think of something revolutionary to share with them in order to be relevant or cool.

The thing is, I’ve learned along the way that what our young adults—the beloved, so-called hard-to-please millennials—really need is just a good old fashioned Bible, along with connection in community. Oh, yeah, and food. You see, our bible studies aren’t wild and crazy, but, they are meaningful, deep, and provoking.

Particularly in this last year, I’ve explained to our young adults what a wonderful season of faith formation they are in, leaving behind Sunday School versions of Bible stories, and memories of working out their beliefs in faith statements for confirmation. They are moving into a more nuanced phase of theological understanding that can hold multiple truths and questions, at the same time. Add to that questions about vocation, and major life decisions regarding romantic relationships, moving away from home, graduate school, etc, and it makes for conversations I am truly grateful for, and I think they are, too.

I am so proud of our young adults, their involvement in worship, Bible study, service, and leadership at Westminster. They are our present, not just our future. And it is a privilege to minister alongside them.

An Invitation to Create Community in a Divided World
by Kathy Michael, Consultant to Education

Adult Education classes at Westminster this year will explore ways to create community in spite of the deep divisions that permeate our community, our nation, and our world.

Our Saturday Seminar on September 14, will feature Dirk Ficca and Maia Uhrich from the Social Cohesion Initiative. They will help guide us in new ways to envision community through trust, goodwill, and resilience in the midst of the many divisions in our city. Please contact Mahin Hamilton to make a reservation for this free seminar in the Meisel Room.

Classes on Sundays, 9:15 am, and Wednesdays, 6:30 pm, will look to prayer, the early church, communities of trust, theologians, spiritual practices, music, racial challenges, forgiveness, and more, as we seek to find our way through the polarized climate of these times.

Wednesday Parent Support Opportunities
by Marie Kruskop, Coordinator of Early Childhood & Family Ministries

Wednesday Morning Mom’s Group
This fall, Westminster’s Moms Group will discuss selections from This is Motherhood: A Motherly Collection of Reflections + Practices by Jill Koziol and Liz Tenety, cofounders of the Motherly online community. The book is available through a variety of online sources as well as the Hennepin County Library system.

Moms with children of any age are invited to be a part of our Moms Group. Our intent is to provide a time and space for conversation and fellowship as well as a place to be mindful of our own spirituality. We meet Wednesdays 10:30 am—noon in the Nursery; child care is provided.

Wednesday Evenings
Parent-Child Time Together is a time for parents and their young children to spend time together on Wednesday evenings. The fun begins at about 6:00 pm — just after announcements at dinner — in the Founders’ Room, right next door to the Children’s Music Room. We offer a different focus activity each week though encourage you to follow your child’s lead during this time together.

For more information contact Marie Kruskop at mkruskop@wpcmpls.org.
Introducing Matt Lewellyn-Otten, Director of Youth Ministries

by Meghan K. Gage-Finn, Executive Associate Pastor

I am pleased to report that the Director of Youth Ministries Search Team has concluded its work and soon we will welcome Matt Lewellyn-Otten to our staff!

Matt holds a Master of Divinity degree from Boston University School of Theology and a Master’s degree in Public Administration. He was raised in the Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina, (so we might hear the occasional “y’all!”) and has served churches large and small directing youth ministries. At one time, he pursued the idea of ordination, but his discernment process has led him to feel strongly called to serving in youth ministries in a non-ordained capacity.

The search team was impressed with Matt’s long-range vision for a youth ministry program based in developing strong relationships, fostering a safe and open community, and promoting team-based ministry. He understands this moment in the life of Westminster and looks forward to serving in the context of a growing and thriving congregation, committed to nurturing the faith lives of youth and their families. In his own words, Matt says, “The idea of being part of this ministry team excites me because I know I have the opportunity to learn from and work alongside a dynamic team seeking to spread the loving Gospel of Christ in a city I have grown to love.”

We feel confident Matt has the unique gifts and skills to build on the strong foundation that exists in our youth ministries, and to work with lay leaders to add depth and breadth to Westminster’s youth program. Matt began his time on staff on August 19.

Women Gathered in the Garden Room

by Sarah Brouwer, Associate Pastor

WOW (Westminster on Wednesday) is moving! That’s right. Our regular Bible Study on Wednesdays at 9:30 am will start up again in the fall, but this year we will be meeting in the Garden Room. In addition, we will use the Horizon’s Bible Study this fall and do one chapter per week, meeting for nine consecutive weeks. The hope is that, by having a regular schedule, resource, and space, we will be able to welcome participants who may not be able to come every week. We will begin on September 18 with a social gathering, including breakfast, and a chance to pick up your Bible Study booklet (they will be available at the reception desk beforehand if you’d like to pick up earlier). Sarah Brouwer will teach the first chapter on September 25 and other lessons, along with a group of other teachers including Sally Stinson, Shirley McKinney, and Rev. Bebe Baldwin.

The Bible Study we will be using this fall is Love Carved in Stone: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments by Eugenia Anne Gamble. About the Bible Study:

What would it mean to consider the Ten Commandments, not as a harsh list of what not to do but, instead, as a “love letter” from a loving God? A fresh embrace of the Ten Commandments (or Words), author Eugenia Gamble suggests, may ultimately contribute to the restoration of ourselves and our communities and the furthering of the gospel in the world. "Moral behavior matters, not
Gathered at Five 2.0
by Sarah Brouwer, Associate Pastor

Gathered at Five had a great summer. Our attendance held steady, and we experimented with worshipping outside, pizza parties, PRIDE celebrations, and bike blessings—we even made the Star Tribune! It was truly a season of joy as we reached our one year anniversary, and we topped it off with a giant potluck.

(As an aside, there is always good food at Gathered.)

Now we are moving into our second year of Gathered at Five. We are no longer the new service, although newness is relative when you’re comparing it to over 160 years of Sunday morning worship services. And for that matter, success is relative, too. Our planning team had to adjust our expectations, routines, and traditions constantly, based on what was working, what didn’t feel quite right, who was attending, and what was happening in the world. We had to get the word out into the community, promoting ourselves, and being invitational in ways we hadn’t before. Gathered at Five helped us dream about what was possible for worship outside the sanctuary, without an organ, pews, carpet, stained glass, hundreds of regular worshippers and volunteers, coffee hour, and Church School. We created this service from the ground up, and God showed us how to give glory in ways that felt unfamiliar and exciting.

The privilege it is to have the space and resources to do something as wonderful as Gathered at Five is not lost on me or anyone who has attended or helped plan this worship service. The music, art, liturgy, preaching, and people are a huge gift to our community, and to our city. Every week we get to create beauty, speak truth, and worship in a way that speaks differently to our ears and hearts. We worship conversationally, in a world and a time when it feels like no one can talk to each other without discord. We gather to speak the good news of the Gospel in contemporary ways, to listeners who feel the church is antiquated or hypocritical. We come together, week after week, and trust that this casual, friendly, folky, curated, justice-loving, somewhat sacred somewhat secular service for believers and questioners alike, will be pleasing to God and will stir up the Spirit in all who come.

So, with thanksgiving we enter a new year, a new season, trusting that God will be gathered with us week after week...Gathered at Five.
Small Hands, Big Hearts
by Meghan Gage-Finn, Executive Associate Pastor

Last year we had the first offerings of Small Hands, Big Hearts (SHBH), an initiative led by Gene Davis and other faithful volunteers. Gene was looking for a way for children who have aged out of Children’s Church to find meaningful, hands-on experiences in the context of worship. In her words, “The mission of Small Hands, Big Hearts is to provide children the opportunity to be a telling presence in their community and beyond.” It is another way we can live out our baptismal promise—to share the good news of the gospel and to serve that gospel alongside Westminster’s children.

We are pleased to offer SHBH again starting this fall on October 13 and November 10. Children in grades 2-5 are invited on the second Sunday of each month to move to the Garden Room when the younger ones leave for Children’s Church. Through story and activities, they will make connections with others in the church and community, and will put into practice what they hear in worship each week.

If you are interested in volunteering with this program, please contact Gene Davis, gigidavis2009@gmail.com.

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Confirmation
by Meghan Gage-Finn, Executive Associate Pastor

Rising 10th grade students are nearing the completion of Confirmation, after a good year of study, listening, and discernment. We are grateful for teachers, parents, and mentors who have walked alongside our Confirmation students in their preparation over this last year. As a congregation, we celebrate the decisions our young people make at this stage in their faith journey, recognizing that Confirmation does not always culminate with joining the church.

We will mark the close of the current Confirmation year as a community with Confirmation Sunday on September 22. Students will participate in worship and be received by the congregation in the 10:30 service, and will participate in leading worship at Gathered at Five that evening.

Families interested in knowing more about Confirmation for the coming year, typically for those in 9th grade, are invited to an informational meeting on Wednesday, September 25, at 6:30 pm. They can meet with me, our new Youth Director, Matt Lewellyn-Otten, and hear about the plan for the year ahead. Regular Confirmation classes begin on Wednesday, October 2 from 6:15-7:45 pm.

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Mingle with Your FYC Ministry Team on Coming Together Sunday
by Katrina Heinze, Families, Youth & Children Council Co-Chair

Kick off the program year, reconnect with friends, meet new friends, and mingle with your ministry Teams during Education Hour on Coming Together Sunday, September 8, 9:15-10:15 am. Grab coffee and join your Ministry Team lay leaders for Early Childhood, Children’s and Youth programs. We’ll be located near the nursery (1st floor), in the parent lounge (2nd floor) and near the youth room (1st floor). This is an informal time to connect; feel free to roam and collect info for all ages of interest to you. Treats, program year event calendars, and contact information will be available.

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Fall Youth Gatherings
by Meghan Gage-Finn, Executive Associate Pastor

We have an exciting fall ahead with activities for middle and high school youth. We look forward to time to connect and grow in faith together, through service, fellowship, study, and play. Contact Meghan Gage-Finn at mgage-finn@wpc-mpls.org or Matt Lewellyn-Otten at mlewellyn-otten@wpc-mpls.org with questions. To sign up for weekly Youth emails, email Mahin Hamilton, mhamilton@wpc-mpls.org.

**September**

6: 6:30 pm: High school spaghetti dinner at Westminster
8: Coming Together Sunday; Education Hour resumes, All-Church Picnic
11: First Wednesday night of the program year
15: High school worships with Gathered at Five, dinner and games to follow
19: 5-7pm, Confirmation conversations with Session, dinner and worship
19: 5:15pm, Parent conversation
22: Confirmation Sunday
22: 4-7pm, Middle and high school students volunteer at FEAST
Beyond Sunday Connections Meets on Monday Evenings
by Paula Fox, Westminster Member

Beyond Sunday Connections launches a new season and switches to Monday evenings at Westminster, beginning October 7. Women of every age are invited to gather to meet new people and reconnect with old friends while sharing a meal and discussion about the way faith influences our daily lives.

Amanda Weber is the featured speaker on October 7. Nancy Moehle speaks on November 18, followed by Vivian Jenkins Nelsen on February 10, and Marcy Conrad Nutt on March 30.

Amanda has a degree in music and art from Luther College, earned her Master’s in choral conducting at Yale, and has a Doctorate in Musical Arts from the University of Minnesota. She joined the Westminster staff in July 2018 and recently was named Minister of Music and Arts. Asked about instruments she plays, she said, “My first and best is piano, followed by voice. I have manageable skills on violin and guitar, and I play very basic mandolin.”

Passionate about music as a tool for social change, Amanda founded a homeless women’s choir and, most recently, a choir at the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Shakopee. She specializes in working with women to empower them to find their voice. Her own self-discovery has come through visual art, traveling, and spending time outdoors.

Beyond Sunday Connections begins at 6 pm with an informal social hour, followed by dinner at 6:45, the speaker’s presentation and table talk. The evening ends at 8:30.

Reservations and payment ($28) are due by October 1. Register in the Westminster Commons or contact Deb Wagner, dwagner@wpc-mpls.org. If cost is a concern, ask about the New Connections Fund created to enlarge our circle of friends. Questions? Contact Lynne Thompson, 612.339.3971.

It’s Great to Be Here!
by Sonja Dziekciowski, Director of Children’s Ministries

It is with great joy and thanksgiving that I have started as Director of Children’s Ministries.

Stepping into this role gives me an opportunity to combine my favorite elements from my experiences in teaching and camping ministries, all while serving in my own church community.

My intent is to continue building up this loving community in a way that supports all children, caretakers, Church School teachers, and volunteers involved in Children’s Ministries activities.

We are currently in the thick of preparing for Coming Together Sunday. Our education wing is missing its most vibrant members, the children. I am eager to witness the strengths, abilities, and life your children add to our church community.

Wednesday nights, I invite you and your children to come as you are. Getting to church can be a challenge for many on an evening night, but we hope it feels like an exhale from your busy week. Join us for a meal with your church family, fellowship, and unstructured playtime in the Rec Room, and choir rehearsals for those who are so inclined.

I look forward to connecting with you.

Kicks and Cummerbunds!
October 5, 4:30-8:30 pm
Come join us for a night of extravagant fun—affectionately known as the Family, Youth & Children PROM—in Westminster Hall. We have planned a buffet-style dinner with chicken nuggets, tots, fruits and veggies, and some special dessert. Vegetarian options available. There will be dancing, board games, yard games, and other activities to keep the little ones engaged. All are welcome—nursery age, school-age and middle and high school youth. Fancy, formal dress is encouraged and any type of footwear will be accepted! $8 per person and $35 family maximum. RSVP to Kasey Collver (kcollver@wpc-mpls.org) by September 28.
When you were young, were you told that you shouldn’t want something because you couldn’t have it, or because it was bad, or that desire was bad? I have good news: desire is okay. Desire is endless, and a natural part of the human condition. To desire is to be alive. However, you don’t get to have everything you want—that’s okay! Just because you can’t have something doesn’t mean you can’t desire it. Desire tells you about your priorities, needs, values...You. Your desires are very important to living a full life that embodies your whole self.

Sometimes I want something and I’m able to acquire it, sometimes not. Often there’s a part of me that believes when I have the object of my desire, I will experience ultimate happiness and fulfillment and I will never want again! That never happens. Sometimes I become fixated on a desire that cannot be fulfilled and I experience pain. Sometimes I experience pain or regret when I do acquire the object of my desire. It’s all okay, it’s a learning process.

Several years ago I wanted a dog; now I have one. Some days I don’t want her (she can be a real stinker!), but there were some needs wrapped inside that desire: companionship, to love and to be loved. Did my dog make me happy? Nope. But I choose to take care of her because she depends on me and, in a way, we take care of each other (and she’s pretty sweet!). Practice letting yourself become familiar and honest about what you want, why you want it, and the need underneath the want. It’s okay—you don’t even need to act on it. Just let it be, like a pretty bird flying in and out of your yard.

Desire
by Sherri Dunham, MA, LPCC

Prayer & Belief
by Rodney Allen Schwartz, Director, Westminster Gallery and Archive

A special exhibition featuring two artists opens in the Westminster Gallery with a reception on September 22. Artist Georgette Sosin created two series of paintings illuminating the Aramaic Lord’s Prayer. Her representations of this important newer testament text are based on her meditation as a Jewish woman with a particular interest in language and translation. Her depiction of text as cosmos provides us with a delightful insight into her meditative state and artistic process. A triptych of the Mourner’s Kaddish #3 presents for us the significant older testament Jewish prayer for the dead. These paintings were part of a larger exhibition of her work in the Westminster Gallery in 2008, and are now a gift of the Sosin family to Westminster.

Rabbi Marcia Zimmerman will present the Adult Ed Class on September 22, speaking on the Hebrew roots of the Lord’s Prayer at 9:15 am. The 10:30 am sanctuary worship service that day will feature the theme of prayer, and a reception to meet the Sosin family will be held in the Westminster Gallery following worship.

The photographer Wing Young Huie is the other artist featured in the fall exhibition. As an American-born Chinese man, he has explored the meaning of being Chinese. His photographs are well known in the Twin Cities through series of works featuring Lake Street in Minneapolis and University Avenue in St. Paul. A new body of his work debuts at Westminster on the topic of belief. His work will be exhibited in the Corner Gallery and throughout the main floor to the Westminster Gallery. An artist event and reception will be announced soon. Prayer and Belief runs September 15 through November 17.

Hallowed Be Thy Name, Georgette Sosin, mixed media, 2005