Building the Beloved Community: Listening, Learning and Loving
by Andrea Knoll and Jane Confer, Stewardship Ministry Co-Chairs

“Together we are the Body of Christ. While apart, we covenant to still be the Church. We are not alone. Thanks be to God!”

Our clergy remind us with this statement that, while our building is closed, our Church remains vibrant. In fact, far from retreating in these challenging times, Westminster has creatively and faithfully worked to advance God’s mission. A few examples:

- Worship attendance has grown with online and television broadcasts.
- Connections to one another have remained strong through the efforts of our prayer ministries—deacons, pastors, and lay leaders have lessened isolation by reaching out.
- Access to Bible studies, Adult Education, and Social Justice Forums has expanded through social media and livestream.
- Financial support of mission partners was accelerated and relief was provided to non-profits using our facilities.
- New funding for COVID-19 emergencies has given assistance to our community and an interfaith relief fund has provided needed support.
- Online New Member classes have enabled 30 people to join Westminster since spring.
- Children’s Day Camp, Sunday school, and youth programming have been creatively reimagined and welcome more to participate.
- Coming Together Week and Zoom coffee hours have connected us to cherished customs and fellowship.
- FEAST has continued to offer meals and hospitality to our neighbors.
- Vibrant music and arts have enhanced our worship and our ministry.

Most importantly, we have also leaned in to listen and learn, not staying silent on challenging issues. Through thought-provoking sermons and education on the Changing Church, interfaith dialogue, climate change, race and equity, policing and incarceration reforms, we listen and learn from voices long silenced or unheard. We learn from our pastors, each other, and our partners in mission to bring about hope, reconciliation, and reform. We trust God will lead us in action that will bring about love, peace, and justice.

In short, the work of the church has not stopped. We are the Church. We are Building the Beloved Community by Listening, Learning, and Loving - our Stewardship Ministry’s theme for the coming year.

Continued on page two.
Don’t Miss Fall at the Forum  
by Melanie McCall, Interim Director, Westminster Town Hall Forum

The fall season at the Westminster Town Hall Forum continues with two online events taking on two of the most important topics of our time: engaging everyone in the voting process, and stopping climate change. As always, your input matters, and I invite you to join the conversation by sending in your questions for the speakers. Call the Town Hall Forum listener line at 612-504-1606 and leave a voicemail, or email info@westminsterforum.org. Be sure to tell us your first name and where you live. More info at westminsterforum.org.

MARIÁ TERESA KUMAR
Election 2020: Securing the Vote
Tuesday, October 6, Noon

Maria-Teresa Kumar is the founding president of Voto Latino, a grassroots organization committed to engaging, educating, and empowering a new generation of Latinx voters and to creating an inclusive and accountable democracy. By leveraging youth, technology, social platforms, and influencers, Voto Latino reaches 6.5 million people monthly, and it has set a goal to register 500,000-plus voters before the 2020 election. She is vice chair of the board of EMILY’s List, a resource for women running for elective office, and she serves on the board of the World Economic Forum’s Global Shapers.

BILL MCKIBBEN
Building a Movement to Stop Climate Change
Tuesday, October 27, Noon

Bill McKibben is an environmentalist, educator, and author. He is the Schumann Distinguished Scholar in Environmental Studies at Middlebury College and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. A prolific author, his 1989 book, The End of Nature, is regarded as the first book for a general audience on climate change. McKibben is the founder of 350.org, the world’s largest grassroots campaign to counter the effects of climate change. He is the recipient of the Gandhi Prize, Thomas Merton Prize, the Right Livelihood Prize, and honorary degrees from 18 colleges and universities. Co-sponsored by Westminster’s Eco-Justice Ministry Team.

Continued from cover

We enter this season grateful for God’s abundant love and grace, evident in the work of Westminster. We ask you to prayerfully consider your financial support for ministry, as you are able, especially during these difficult times. Please join us on or before Stewardship Sunday, November 15, by faithfully committing your support. Stay tuned for thought-provoking speakers, writers and worship this fall as we learn together how to Build the Beloved Community.

Deacons Calling
by Wayne Burggraaff, Westminster member

The months-long social distancing and sheltering in place are necessary to reduce the exposure of Covid-19. However, it not only exposed the already fractured social, medical, educational, and racial realities, it also has placed many of our members in isolation exposing them to loneliness and mental health concerns.

As a church, we are a family. As a family, we care and love each other, especially through challenging times.

To face this time away from each other with compassion and care, the Board of Deacons has accepted a new challenge and is embarking on a special Westminster Member-to-Member Phone Call Connection Program.

The program will involve a phone call by a deacon or other church member to each of our nearly 900 households to maintain contact with and support each other during the pandemic. The Congregational Care team is providing both the clergy and administrative support for this program. The deacons and volunteers will be the hands and feet of Christ extending support to our church. David Shinn said, “It will be like passing the Peace after the Sunday Service and visiting in the pews, except this will be by phone.”

As Jesus says, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” God will be with us in those calls. The program is expected to start in early October so look forward to your call. We look forward to being in touch with you.
From Our Pastor

Dear friends,

Shortly after the coronavirus pandemic began to shut down the nation, bible scholar Walter Brueggemann published a little book, Virus as a Summons to Faith. He wrote it a mere six weeks after Covid hit, and now it has been six months...and, of course, he wrote it before the economic downturn, before the death of George Floyd and the subsequent uprising, and before the hurricanes and floods and fires.

To state the obvious, we are experiencing multiple crises right now. On top of those already cited, we can add the cultural and political turmoil heading into the election, especially with the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

How do we live faithfully in this calamitous moment?

I find Brueggemann’s reflections helpful. He quotes from Alfred Lord Tennyson:

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, are more than they.
(In Memoriam A. H. H.)

Brueggemann notes that – like the 19th century poet – the biblical prophets understood the larger processes underway in their time. They summoned the people to relinquishment and renewal, to letting go of former things in order for a new thing to commence. It takes courage and imagination to respond to crisis by living through it, while simultaneously seeing beyond the immediate struggle to a vision of what will one day emerge.

Such a response is what we need to craft in the Church – specifically, in our congregation. In our worship and education, in our care for one another, in our reaching out and working with partners in the city, and in our continued fellowship as a community we will work to keep the larger hope before us. We will, as Job did, “reap the whirlwind.”

Brueggemann notes that at the heart of the prophets’ call was the reinvigoration of covenantal life with God and neighbor. We are not alone in any moment of crisis; our God lives with us in “tenacious solidarity,” and our neighbors need us as we need them.

So, we move together through these uncertain days...we worship, we listen, we learn, we care, we vote, we give. Most of all, we trust that even in chaos and crisis, God is at work. The present crises summon us to pay faithful attention.

See you in church – online.

Grace and peace,
**WPC Happenings**

**Quiet Worship**
*Saturday, October 17 | 9 am*

The Psalmist in Psalm 63 cries out—perhaps as many may be feeling in this day—as one living “in a dry and weary land where there is no water,” and in crying out finds “comfort and assurance in God’s presence.”

Until we can again gather in person, we all are invited to download the service from the web page at westminstermpls.org/worship/additional-worship-opportunities/. We will then gather in our own special place to read or pray these bold-face words of assurance for all times, quietly, out loud, knowing that they are being read or prayed by others at the same time . . . by a cloud of witnesses.

**Beyond Sunday Connections**
*Monday, November 16 | 6:30 pm*

Women are invited to join Beyond Sunday Connections’ first virtual event, November 16 at 6:30 pm. Rani Murdoch Zappa emcees the livestream portion of the program and Marcy Conrad Nutt is the featured speaker. Small group discussion follows with Zoom participation. Unable to share dinner together, we’ll encourage women to donate food or checks to Groveland Food Shelf. Contact Deb Wagner to sign up, dwagner@wpc-mpls.org

**WOW Women’s Bible Study**

There is still time to join our Women’s Bible Study on Wednesday mornings at 9:30 am! The church will find a way to get you a copy of your book, and will provide a Zoom link to join. Rev. Sarah Brouwer co-leads with Rev. Judy Kim, Rev. Bebe Baldwin, and Shirley McKinney. Contact Deb Wagner at dwagner@wpc-mpls.org.

**WestConnect**

Young Adults in our midst are welcome to join our Wednesday evening 7 pm online gatherings and occasional in person events—weather and Covid-19 permitting! Email Sarah Brouwer at sbrouwer@wpc-mpls.org if you have questions.

**Gathered at Five Book Read**

It’s not too late to join our Gathered at Five book read! Rev. Sarah Brouwer is leading a discussion on *A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota*, written by 16 Minnesotans who tell their experiences of being black, indigenous people of color. Purchase your own copy and email Deb Wagner at dwagner@wpc-mpls.org for the Zoom link. Join us Mondays at 7 pm!

**COVID-19 Updates on the Website**

by Suzanne McInroy, Director of Communications

Westminster has added a Covid-19 Updates page to the website to provide up-to-date information regarding the church’s response to the pandemic and changes to worship and other programming. Visit the page directly at westminstermpls.org/covid-updates/. You can also read the most recent report from the Responsible Building Use Task Force, also known as the “Reboot Task Force”. The report outlines the phases for re-opening the building and protocols to follow to safely gather while also protecting everyone, especially the most vulnerable among us.

**BIRTH**

Andrew Lawrence Hartlieb
*September 4, 2020*
New Old Adventure
by Mary Anne Chalkley, Westminster member

Join the New Old Adventure on Wednesday, October 14, from 11 am until 12:30 pm for an exciting program offered by the Vital Aging Network. In response to the challenges presented by Covid-19, they have revamped their Aging with Gusto program so that it can be offered via Zoom. This is an opportunity to discuss and consider issues raised by growing older in a youth-oriented society. Guided by discussion leaders Sally Brown and Donna Comer, we will address how aging can be good for a person. Did you know that people with a more positive view of themselves in their older years will, on average, add seven-and-a-half years to their lives? In this lively, interactive experience, you will also learn how ageism might get in the way of your well-being and keep you from making meaningful contributions to your community. This program will challenge many of the pervasive stereotypes in our culture. It will allow all of us to think about aging in new and positive ways. Contact Rachel Sheild Gustafson, rgustafson@wpc-mpls.org to RSVP and receive Zoom information. Registration for this event is limited, so be sure to register early!

Sign-up for Westminster Emails
by Suzanne McInroy, Director of Communications

Have you signed up for Westminster’s weekly email? Every Friday, we send an all-church email with details about worship on Sunday and Wednesday as well as brief information on other events and announcements. You can also sign up to receive emails specifically with information on: Adult Education, Advocacy, Community in Prayer, Families, Youth, and Children (FYC), Faith in Action, Gathered at Five, Music and the Arts, Thin Places, and WestConnect. Visit the Westminster homepage and click on the “Email Sign-up” link at the top of the page. Also, if you thought you were signed up for Westminster emails, but have not been receiving them recently, please email Suzanne McInroy at smcinroy@wpc-mpls.org, who will look into the issue for you.

Women’s Retreat: October 23-24
by Sarah Brouwer, Associate Pastor

Join us for a Fall Women’s Retreat! We will come together both in person and online to explore the deeper meaning behind self-care. How can we better care for ourselves for the sake of a more healed, just, and resilient world? As Christian women we must model what it means to strengthen ourselves so we can serve with boldness and sustainability.

We will start with Friday Night Vespers, and you will choose to meet at a bonfire in person, or on Zoom. On Saturday we will meet in groups for walks or meditation online. There will be options for virtual roommates, pre-reading, care packages, and more! After our speaker, you may journal, do yoga, and end your day by mid-afternoon with online worship.

Our featured speaker, Rev. Ashley-Anne Masters, will join us via Zoom. Ashley-Anne is Director of Presbyterian Campus Ministry of Raleigh, a faith-based nonprofit serving college-aged students in the greater Raleigh, N.C., area. As of April 2020, she’s also serving as a hospital chaplain part-time during the pandemic. She holds degrees from Columbia Theological Seminary and Presbyterian College. Prior to campus ministry, she served as Interim Manager of Spiritual Care at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago. Her clinical units were oncology, palliative care, and transport. She is co-author of Bless Her Heart: Life as a Young Clergywoman, author of Grieving Pregnancy Loss During Advent, contributor to Talking Taboo: American Christian Women Get Frank About Faith, and blogs at re-vaam.org. She is passionate about hearing other’s stories, resiliency, and creating rituals to mark significant seasons of our lives.

Contact Sarah Brouwer at sbrouwer@wpc-mpls.org with questions, or Deb Wagner at dwagner@wpc-mpls.org if you’d like to sign up.
Social Justice Forums in October
by Phil Asgian, Westminster member

Join us each Sunday morning during the Learning Hour at 9:15 am, or later in the archived presentations. Our theme for the Social Justice Forums this year is *Wade in the Water: Becoming Anti-Racist*. Forums provide an opportunity to listen, learn, and respond to the diverse voices in our community.

- **Oct 4 Infant Mortality among African Americans** — Helen Jackson-Lockett, Minnesota Department of Health
- **Oct 11 Indigenous Peoples and Water** — Sharon Day, Ojibwe Water Walker
- **Oct 18 Systemic Racism: Intersection with Health Iniquities** — Melanie Ferris, Wilder Research
- **Oct 25 Health Care Disparities** — Dr. Miguel Ruiz, Health Partners

Get Involved Now!
by Ann Schulze and Jo Beld, Westminster members

*Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.* Hebrews 10:24

How can we get involved in working for justice during this time of Covid-19? Our Westminster community remains active and invites you to consider current opportunities to learn, engage with our neighbors, and advocate with public officials. Please visit the website under the "ACT" tab (westministermpls.org/fia/) and look for information on how to "Get Involved Now" for specific ways to share your time and energy. If you are interested in becoming a part of one of our Ministry Teams, you can find information about each team and opportunities as well. There is a place for you to ACT with us and grow your faith at Westminster.

If you have any questions, email act@wpc-mpls.org.

Meisel Scholar Update
by Meghan Gage-Finn, Executive Associate Pastor

The Meisel Scholar Committee is pleased to share that Luther College student Anna Northenscold will extend her summer Meisel experience into the fall semester. During the past few months, Anna has served as a communications intern, focusing her work at Westminster. She has supported and expanded Westminster’s social media presence, developed new communications tools, and learned a great deal about the inner workings and potential of the church’s communications ministries.

With the addition of Suzanne McInroy, Director of Communications, to the staff at the end of the summer, Anna realized she had more still to learn and offer. As the church migrates to using new tools and platforms this program year, and furthers the conversation around *Building the Beloved Community*, Anna felt a continuation of her internship would fit well with her learning goals. We will be able to hear from Anna, and the two other 2020 Meisel Scholars, on Meisel Sunday in early January!

Collective Trauma
by Sherri Dunham, MA, LPCC, Westminster Counseling Center

If you were to do a quick survey of 10 people and ask how they feel about the year 2020, responses would likely include such phrases as, "Worst year ever," or, "Total chaos," or, "It needs to end." We’re all being stretched beyond our limits. Many are struggling to survive and others are waking up to painful realities. This pandemic is a collective trauma: an event by which we are all being impacted.

Any time there is a new trauma introduced in an individual or collective body, it most certainly will stir up or intensify any pre-existing, unhealed, or even healed, trauma. Yep. That’s happening for a lot of people. It is no coincidence that the long-term traumas of oppression and discrimination of Black Americans, Indigenous peoples, and people of color is intensely activated at this time of extreme distress. The layers of past and continued harm done by white people is extensive and expansive, and it hurts us all. A collective trauma will further expose and exacerbate any wounds or weaknesses within our individual and collective systems.

I have a challenge for you: keep showing up to your grief, guilt, exhaustion, anger, fear, sadness, etc. with more compassion and grace than you think you can muster. Keep meeting your experience with open and loving arms. Keep seeing your suffering with loving eyes. When you genuinely and whole-heartedly show up for yourself in a loving way, you will more effortlessly extend it to others, helping to end the cycles of violence (internally and externally). Your pain and fear can be transformed into healing and restorative action. That inner work touches all lives. You can do this. Together we have an opportunity to experience a collective transformation and post-traumatic growth.
Introducing the Reverend Alexandra Mauney
by Suzanne McInroy, Director of Communications

With a background in music, including a Bachelor of Music in Church Music and Organ Performance from St. Olaf College, the Rev. Alexandra Mauney (pronounced Mooney) first felt a call toward music ministry early in her life. However, an opportunity to lead liturgy in college put her on a different path and she began to feel a call toward congregational ministry.

Mauney completed her Master of Divinity from Columbia Theological Seminary in Georgia and then began a pastoral resident position that allowed her to experience many different areas of ministry. As she began working with young people, she felt the Spirit pulling her again, this time toward faith formation and working with families, youth, and children.

After numerous Zoom interviews and socially-distanced in-person interviews, Westminster’s Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) has selected Mauney as the nominee for Westminister’s Associate Pastor for Families, Youth, and Children. In her own words, Mauney answers what has stood out to her about Westminster Presbyterian Church during the search process and her ideas for FYC ministries at Westminster.

Why Westminster?
From the first time I opened the APNC Ministry Information Form and searched for Westminster online, I knew it was the kind of place where I would likely fit in as a pastor. The home page displays the congregation’s commitment to the vital Christian acts of worship, learning, fellowship, and service, and I was encouraged to see that all of those things continue to animate the life of the congregation even during this pandemic. But the home page also lets visitors know that Westminster is a congregation that cares about the wellbeing of its neighborhood and wider community, and that this is a congregation committed to doing the hard work of dismantling systems of oppression and marginalization.

What are your ideas for FYC ministries at Westminster?
In a Zoom conversation with Westminster’s brilliant FYC staff members, I was grateful to hear that Westminster frames its call to ministry with families and young people through the promises we make every time a child of the church is baptized. In these vows, the community promises to nurture and uphold children in the faith, and these promises spur us to create safe and loving spaces for our young people to grow in their formation as Christian disciples in a world that continues to change before our eyes. I feel so excited about the possibility of working with the FYC staff and committees at Westminster to discern how the Spirit might be leading us to continue in this work.

Continued from cover: resident experience, Rev. Mauney has completed rotations in Christian formation, pastoral care, discipleship, outreach, worship and music, stewardship and finance, and pastoral leadership. In addition, she has led worship, preached, and taught regularly on Sunday mornings as well as assisted with the young adult ministry program.

Rev. Mauney holds a Master of Divinity degree from Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, and has a Bachelor of Music in Church Music and Organ Performance from St. Olaf College. She is originally from South Carolina, but fell in love with Minnesota during her college years in Northfield. She looks forward to relocating to Minneapolis with her fiancé, who is from Edina and is also a St. Olaf graduate.

Please plan to attend the Congregational Meeting following the 10:30 am worship service on Sunday, October 18, when we will formally introduce Rev. Alexandra Mauney and act upon the recommendation of the APNC to call her to Westminster.

“The first time I watched her conduct children’s programs on Zoom, it felt natural with no struggles, and she seemed to enjoy what she was doing. After meeting with Alexandra in person, my 16-year-old son had this to say: ‘Alexandra is open minded, great social skills, and easy to talk to. I think I like her and I can see her as my pastor.’”
-Kay Gabelmann, Sunday School Teacher

“Alexandra has a wonderful presence with children and youth. She is well-equipped to guide and nurture our children, youth, and their families. As we endeavor to better serve children and youth with differing abilities, Alexandra is committed to developing specialized training and supports for lay leaders and staff.”
-David Wicklund, parent

“As a parent at Westminster, I am so impressed with Alexandra’s passion for faith formation. Leading our programming in families, youth, and children, and the amazing team, I am excited to see her impact on the ways we raise and care for our children in our community.”

Early Childhood Family Fellowship
by Marie Kruskop, Coordinator of Early Childhood and Family Ministries

Our Early Childhood Ministries team invites families with little ones (birth-age 5) to gather virtually for a time of fun and fellowship! We’ll “meet” one another, listen to a reading of the Nursery book of the month, and join in some singing—perhaps with a special guest! Join us via Zoom on the first Saturday of each month now through December from 8:30-9 am. We are committed to finding ways to build community and to connect, even when apart! Our first gathering is October 3 followed by November 7 and December 5. RSVP to Marie for Zoom information at mkruskop@wpc-mpls.org.

Join us via Zoom on the first Saturday of each month now through December from 8:30-9 am. We are committed to finding ways to build community and to connect, even when apart! Our first gathering is October 3 followed by November 7 and December 5. RSVP to Marie for Zoom information at mkruskop@wpc-mpls.org.

Parents/Caregivers Fellowship Opportunities
by Marie Kruskop, Coordinator of Early Childhood & Family Ministries

Fellowship opportunities provide us with a chance to connect, to be together. And while we have to do this virtually now, we can build community, even over Zoom! Contact Marie at mkruskop@wpc-mpls.org with questions and for Zoom information for the following opportunities:

**Family Matters** is a place of welcome and connection for parents/caregivers with children of any age. We meet Sundays at a new time—from 8-8:45 am. We’ll do a brief check-in and then discuss a parenting topic. All will then be encouraged to attend the Family Education Hour beginning at 9 am.

**Moms Group** for moms with children of all ages begins Wednesday, October 7. We’ll meet for an hour and spend our time checking in with one another and then discussing a devotional. Contact Marie for more information.

**Moms “Off the Clock”** is a time for moms to gather once children are in or on their way to bed. Join us for cozy, casual conversations. We meet Thursdays at 9 pm: October 29, November 19, and December 17.

**NEW! Dads Group**—Men’s Ministries invites dads to a time of fellowship and conversation centered around the book *Martin & Malcolm & America* on Friday, October 9, at 8:30 pm. Contact Brandon Tourtelotte at btourtelotte20@gmail.com with questions and Zoom information.

Fall Festival & Small Hands, Big Hearts
By Sonja Dziekciowski,
Director of Children’s Ministries

On **Saturday, October 24**, FYC will host a costumed fall event in the parking garage with activities for children of all ages. The Youth Group will put on a socially-distanced Trunk or Treat. During the event, families will have an opportunity to pick up the next round of fall curriculum materials, the Littles Lending Library will be available, and 3rd grade students will receive their Bibles. Watch FYC weekly emails for more information.

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Small Hands, Big Hearts provides a chance for 2nd through 5th grade students to connect with one another through a service project. Gene Davis will continue to lead students through learning about service through acts of kindness. On **Sunday, October 11** at 1 pm, 2nd through 5th grade students will meet on Zoom to learn more details about a supply drive they will complete for the Groveland Food Shelf.

Youth Fall Programming
by Matt Lewellyn-Otten,
Director of Youth Ministries

With schools moving to online learning or a hybrid format, athletics delaying starts, and arts programs brought to a halt, I have found that our youth are longing for connection and community. In order to meet the needs of our young people, the Youth Ministry team has pivoted its programming. A typical week in Youth Ministry at Westminster will now look a bit different.

**Sunday mornings**—Youth are invited to be a part of the Zoom Family Education Hour at 9 am to connect across generations. They will then be invited to check out our Youth Ministry Blog [WPCYouthGroup.wordpress.com], where they will find reflections, prayers, and challenges related to the topic discussed each week.

**Sunday evenings**—As long as weather permits, we will hold in-person meetings with social distancing and other safety practices enforced. Junior High will meet from 4–5:15 pm and Senior High meeting 5:30–6:45 pm. When the weather shifts, we will switch to Zoom.

**Tuesday afternoons** from 4–5:30 pm, youth will have “coffee shops” in parks for an unstructured time of connection.

**Friday evenings** will offer games and movies nights via Zoom as a way to have fun from the comfort of our homes.

**Service opportunities**—Our Junior High Youth Group serves at Feed My Starving Children on Saturday, October 24, and Senior High on Saturday, November 7.

**Confirmation** will continue to meet via Zoom on Wednesday evenings, from 6:15–7:30 pm with a new crew of 9th graders. This year, we have nine students who have chosen to embark on this Confirmation journey together.

Be sure to check the FYC Calendar as well as our weekly emails for regular updates about events, as well as our Youth Group blog to view the full calendar for the Fall.

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Choir during Covid-19: Process over Product
by Amanda Weber, Minister of Music and the Arts

Perhaps more than any other choir, church choirs are forced to lean toward product more than process. We are given the challenge—and opportunity!—to enliven worship with music week after week. What we offer is intended to reinforce the Word that is read and preached, making it particularly difficult to experiment or to present something underprepared. On top of that, the quick turnaround of anthems means that rehearsal time is limited, often directing our focus to accurate notes and rhythms over text and meaning.

What we miss in this traditional structure is the chance to really dig in, to spend time listening and learning and stretching ourselves. This has been an unexpected gift of our current pandemic time. There is much to grieve in the way of music during Covid-19, such as the loss of singing together in large groups. We certainly miss having the choir in worship each week!

And yet, beyond the initial disappointment, there is still so much we can learn and do.

This fall, the Westminster Choir is gathering on Zoom every other week from 7-8:30 pm for “rehearsal,” and you are invited. This time together now focuses on process rather than product. Each singer is receiving a packet of choral music, all written by African-American composers, and together, we are studying this music—its history, its text, and the remarkable ways composers create meaning through their musical choices. It’s a new approach to choir that puts the focus on listening rather than being so quick to use our voices. Anyone is welcome to join at any point through the fall, regardless of musical background.

Music can teach us so many things if we open our ears to listen!

For more information, contact Amanda at aweber@wpc-mpls.org.

Wednesday Worship: A Place to Breathe

With the change of seasons upon us, many seem to be reflecting on a summer that came and went without providing its usual respite. The global pandemic and racial inequities continue to weigh upon us as the climate crisis worsens and the election season draws near. In the midst of this churn, we often forget to come back to our bodies, to breathe, and to draw on the deep well of our faith to create space for hope.

These are themes we will explore this fall as we return to a more contemplative style of worship. **Wednesdays at 6 pm on livestream.** Dancer Eve Schulte and Westminster Artist-in-Residence Joe Davis will guide us artistically through this service, inviting simple movements to draw awareness to our bodies and our breath. Rev. Tim Hart-Andersen will offer biblical texts that evoke the movement of the Spirit within and among us, and Westminster musicians will teach simple songs of reflection. Join us for this participatory service each week; it will be a place to breathe, to re-center, and to pray.

Introducing Westminster’s New Artist-in-Residence!
by Amanda Weber, Minister of Music and the Arts

We are delighted to welcome Joe Davis as the Artist-in-Residence for the 2020-2021 program year at Westminster. Joe is a nationally-touring artist, educator, and speaker based here in Minneapolis. His work employs poetry, music, theater, and dance to shape culture. He is the Founder and Director of multimedia production company, The New Renaissance, the frontman of emerging soul funk band, The Poetic Diaspora, and qualified administrator of the Intercultural Development Inventory. He has keynoted, facilitated conversation, and served as teaching artist at hundreds of high schools and universities including New York, Boston, and most recently as the Artist-in-Residence at Luther Seminary where he earned a Master’s degree in Theology of the Arts.

We are looking forward to connecting Joe’s many gifts with Westminster’s various program areas. About this collaboration, Joe says, “My primary goal is to show up in community in a way that’s intentional and relational. I’d love to contribute art, conversation, tools, and practices that can deepen relationships and further healing. We all got the spark, I just came to fan the flame!”

To connect or learn more, visit JoeDavisPoetry.com.
Introducing New Liturgical Art

by Rodney Allen Schwartz, Director, Westminster Gallery and Archive

In 1995 the liturgical textile artist Phyllis Lehmberg created the paraments and vestments that we use during worship in the sanctuary each season of the church year. Paraments are the textiles that hang on the pulpit and vestments are the stoles that the clergy wear around their necks. Some of these fragile textiles have suffered from use over the course of these 25 years. She made a new set of white ones several years ago, and has just delivered new green ones. They are made of silk and hand-sewn incorporating both appliqué and embroidery techniques. This project was made possible with funds given in memory of David Michael, and they will make their worship debut when we are able to resume worshipping in the sanctuary.

We associate each of the liturgical seasons with a particular color. Advent is blue, Lent is purple, Reformation and ordinations are red, Christmas, Easter, and several other special days are white, and green represents Ordinary Time. We use green for the majority of the year. The first set of green paraments and vestments featured a globe with vines and branches. The new design retains the globe, but with its orientation not focused on North America. The birds of the air and the fish of the sea in Peter Lupori’s ceramic sculptures of the Seven Days of Creation (installed in the hallway just behind the sanctuary) represent creation, a theme inspired by Tim Hart-Andersen’s addition of “steward the creation” in his familiar charge to the congregation following worship.