Ten years ago this month we learned the property next to Westminster was for sale...and Open Doors Open Futures began to take shape. Looking back a decade later, we can see the impact of the $65 million raised by our congregation.

EXPANDED MISSION
Open Doors Open Futures invested $8 million in the local community and beyond. Highlights include...

Affordable Housing More than half of the mission funds supported affordable housing, working with Aeon, Inc. The goal: build 150 new units. Today, 60 are finished, and residents have moved in, at The Maryland (1346 LaSalle) and The Rose (Portland and Franklin). The remaining 90 units will be part of a development at St. Olaf Catholic Church.

Local Partnerships Westminster invested $3 million on-site with St. David’s Harman Center and the Counseling Center, and $750,000 in Grace-Trinity, in Uptown, allowing them to call a new pastor and “start over.” Our investment multiplied when Grace-Trinity recently held their own capital campaign, raising $1.8 million.

Young Adult Leadership Westminster invested more than $1 million in youth and young adult development through the 21st Century Academy based at Liberty Community Church, as well as by supporting future leaders through NEXT Church, Meisel Scholars, and seminarian scholarships.

EXPANDED FOOTPRINT
Open Doors Open Futures enlarged Westminster’s historic building with an inspiring new wing – now topped by bells! – that opens onto Nicollet Mall and Marquette Avenue.

New space for church use We launched new worship in Westminster Hall, now at 8:30 on Sundays. Classes and youth groups meet in well-lit rooms on the first floor, common areas provide gathering space, and the number of restrooms grew fivefold!

External Partnerships We now welcome many organizations for events, fulfilling a community need and providing revenue for the church. In the first two years, groups have included Cantus, Minnesota Chorale, Suzuki, Minneapolis Foundation, and YWCA.

Expanded Parking We increased parking at Westminster from 25 spaces to 300. The greatly improved access helps church community members feel welcome and adds revenue for the church.

Sustainability We are committed to being a sustainable community, good stewards of God’s creation. The innovative design recycles stormwater for re-use inside and outside; now 45% of the expanded footprint – including the green roof – is rich with vegetation from new gardens and trees.

Thanks be to God – and to all who made it possible!

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Out of Many, One Body, One Community
by Rani Murdoch Zappa and Jim Zappa, Westminster members

I (Rani) joined Westminster in the mid 1980s. Having grown up in a Presbyterian church in northern Minnesota, I missed the grounding effect of a church community. Attending church services allowed me to join (physically and in spirit) with others in one body, one community of Christ. Feeling a call to add my gifts to the Westminster community, I found my ‘place of usefulness’ with the high school youth group.

Westminster’s community has continued to be central to my life and spiritual growth: I married Jim in the sanctuary 30 years ago and our twin sons were baptized here and attended Sunday School. My grandmother is always present in the columbarium and my father’s name is etched on the memorial wall. I have been blessed with connections created through teaching Sunday School and other service opportunities. In recent years, I have been called to new communities within Westminster’s body of Christ: a traveling seminar in 2019; the Deacon Board; and most recently, the Women’s Ministry program Beyond Sunday Connections.

God has bestowed many blessings on us. We hear the call to share those blessings with Westminster, supporting the connections that are fundamental to its Open Doors. Because our time and talents go only so far, we gratefully offer our treasure to support Westminster’s commitment to meet needs outside of our reach—locally and worldwide.

Westminster’s body in Christ has many members. Each of us are called to do what we can to sustain and strengthen that body and our community. As members of our church body, we hope you will prayerfully answer that call.

November Forum Shares in a Promise of Democracy
by Tane Danger, Director, Westminster Town Hall Forum

The final Westminster Town Hall Forum the year will open with a special ceremony shining a light on the promise American democracy still offers. The Honorable John R. Tunheim is our Forum speaker for Tuesday November 16, closing out our season on democracy. He has served for 25 years as United States District Judge in the District of Minnesota and has served as Chief Judge since 2015.

Before Chief Judge Tunheim’s talk, he will preside over an immigration naturalization ceremony in the Westminster sanctuary. Approximately 25 individuals will take the oath of allegiance and be sworn in as new United States citizens. These new Americans represent the ongoing renewal of our nation and democracy.

We invite you to join us for both the immigration ceremony and Chief Judge Tunheim’s talk. There will be live music in the Westminster sanctuary beginning at approximately 11:20 am. The immigration ceremony will begin at 11:45 a.m. Chief Judge Tunheim’s talk will start immediately after, at approximately noon.

You are welcome to join us in-person at Westminster for this special program.

You can also watch via a livestream on the Town Hall Forum website, WestminsterForum.org.

All four of our Forums on democracy will be broadcast on Minnesota Public Radio as a special week of programming this fall. One Forum will air each day at 11 am on MPR starting November 29, the week after Thanksgiving. You will be able to hear our Forums with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist José Antonio Vargas, Director of the Digital Democracies Institute Dr. Wendy Chun, Black Voters Matter Co-Founder LaTosha Brown, as well as Chief Judge John R. Tunheim.
Dear friends,

Some years ago, we made a shift in our fall stewardship program. Rather than simply asking church members to support a budget, or report where dollars were needed to fund certain ministry areas, we invited people to speak about why Westminster mattered to them. And we asked local mission partners to describe how the church’s support had made a difference.

It was a good change. We moved from talking about items in an annual budget to understanding the impact of our giving on real lives and in the world around us. We began to focus on telling “true stories” during stewardship season, to give the congregation a sense of the actual difference their financial support makes. In former times, such storytelling in the church would have been called “being a witness for the Lord!”

This fall’s Moments for Stewardship in worship have been especially moving. We have heard from – or will hear from – church members who are immigrants, high school youth, asylum seekers, long-distance-livestream-only members, and community leaders serving on a Westminster board. They are a remarkable, diverse group, committed to being part of this exciting congregation. Each of them has spoken – or will speak – of what it means to them to belong to this beloved community.

One church member sharing with us is Ayuk Fedinard Ayuk, a Cameroonian seeking asylum in the U.S. after fleeing his home country that is in the midst of a violent political crisis. Ayuk describes his incredible journey of many months, which included a long walk from Ecuador to Mexico. When he arrived at the U.S. border, he was helped by lawyers working for the St. Paul-based Advocates for Human Rights, an organization supported in Westminster’s mission budget.

Ayuk grew up a Presbyterian and worked for the national church in Cameroon. I met him on his first Sunday at Westminster. It happened that there was a new member class that day; it was November 2019, and he joined the church.

Like many of us, Ayuk supports the church’s annual budget with a pledge. His story offers living testimony to the sustaining power of belonging to the beloved community.

Thanks be to God for Ayuk and everyone else whose lives have been transformed by being part of, and giving to, this thriving, diverse congregation.

See you in church.

Grace and peace,

Tim
WPC Happenings

New Member Classes
November 7 | 11:45 am | In person and online
Westminster welcomes those seeking an active, engaged church that shares the good news with a world in need of God’s peace, love, and justice. A New Member Class will be held on November 7, with options to attend in person or online; contact Rev. Dr. Meghan Gage-Finn, mgage-finn@wpc-mpls.org, to register.

Beyond Sunday Connections
November 15 | 6:30 pm | Westminster Hall and Livestream
Beyond Sunday Connections invites Westminster women to come together in fellowship and share personal reflections about their faith, work, and daily life. Andrea Knoll is the featured speaker Monday, November 15, at 6:30 pm. Andrea will talk about how her faith has supported her and how her faith has deepened throughout life’s many transitions. Register to attend through Realm.

Support Westminster’s Scout Troop 33
Throughout October, Scout Troop 33 will sell holiday wreaths before and after worship on Sundays as well as online this year. Order online (scoutsales.org/?1393.0.1300) or in person by October 31; pick up at the church on November 14 and 21. Questions? Contact Jenn Newman at 218-349-5282.

Call for Entries: Lenten Devotional Book
Westminster has developed a tradition of compiling reflections, poems, and prayers written by our community to read during Lent. If you are interested in submitting a creative piece about belonging for the 2022 Lenten Devotional Book, please contact Heather Heefner at hheefner@gmail.com.

Advent and Christmas at Westminster

Christmas Pageant
December 12
Noon | Viewing Party

Christmas Festival Sunday
December 19
8:30 am and 10:30 am Worship

Christmas Eve
December 24
4 pm Family Service
8 pm and 10 pm Candlelight Services

Sunday Worship
December 26
10:30 am

Additional events may be added. Look for more information about Advent at Westminster in the December Westminster News!

IN MEMORY
Stephen Hunter
September 24, 2021

BIRTH
Henry Dale Keith
September 7, 2021

IN MEMORY
Stephen Hunter
September 24, 2021

BIRTH
Henry Dale Keith
September 7, 2021
November’s Third Age Forum Tackles Grief and the Holidays
by Susan Dray, Westminster member

While the COVID-19 pandemic confronted hospital chaplains with distressing realities that sometimes pushed them beyond the limits of training and ability to cope, it also highlighted their unique contributions in providing end of life care, supporting staff, and enhancing an organization’s capacity to mitigate the impact of trauma and health inequities. When hospitals began to prohibit the presence of family members, chaplains (along with other health care personnel) became the “surrogate family” for critically ill patients.

In his experience as the leader of Spiritual Care at Hennepin Healthcare, a level one trauma hospital in downtown Minneapolis, the pandemic presented our guest, Rev. David Hottinger and his team with challenges and opportunities. Rev. Hottinger will join the Third Age to discuss these challenges, including:

• dealing with an extended mass casualty event with war zone-like conditions and devastation;
• dealing with burnout, moral injury, and staff support;
• providing care through a trauma-informed, culturally humble, equity lens.

Third Age will meet on November 10 at 11 am, in-person (Meisel Room) and via Livestream. As we approach the holidays, he will also share ways we can be present for our own grief in healthy ways. Register on Realm to attend the event in-person.

Building Emotional Resiliency
by Michelle Lavelle-Henry, APRN,

COVID-19 and the new delta variant added to the upcoming flu season have raised new concerns for many people. These changes can create a sense of uncertainty and increase stress, resulting for some in mood changes ranging from depression, anxiety, or sleeplessness. Building emotional resiliency is one way to successfully navigate changes you may be experiencing. Here are some suggestions:

1. Have a daily routine with sleep, regular meals, exercise, and relaxation practices.
2. Exercise every day. This is especially important with the weather turning colder.
3. Stay in touch and connected with others through daily phone calls. We all do better when we feel a sense of belonging.
4. Practice daily calming activities, such as deep breathing, music, and taking a break midday.
5. Write a daily gratitude list. Remind yourself, “You are loved, you are worthy, you are enough, and are ok in the present moment.”
6. Keep on track with health maintenance. Get the flu vaccine and, if eligible, consider the COVID-19 booster.

Some stress is normal and gives you a rush of energy when you need it most. However, prolonged stress is linked to other medical problems. Consider seeking help from your health care provider if you’re experiencing prolonged stress.

Learning more about healthy ways to cope with stress can also boost your resiliency in stress management.

Service of Remembrance
by David Tsai Shinn, Associate Pastor for Congregational Care

Grief is the natural outcome of a loss of a loved one, loss of cognitive or physical ability, loss of a way of life, and simply, loss. Grief is universal and deeply personal. Recently, I received a beautifully written Facebook post by a son of one of our church members. Two years ago, he received the shocking news of the death of a family member. The person writes: “Grief is like a creeping, low fog...or at least it is in my case. When you know your way around the lake of Depression by heart, sometimes you don’t notice when grief rolls in and hides a channel being dug to release some of the waters you’ve so painfully moved mountains to hold back.”

We invite you to join us in a service to process our grief together. The Congregational Care and Grief Support ministry will host the annual Service of Remembrance in the sanctuary and on livestream. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the comforting ritual of memorial services was not always an option for families and loved ones. The Service of Remembrance will offer an opportunity to express our grief and to celebrate our loved ones’ lives together.

Service of Remembrance
Tuesday, December 7 | 6 pm
Sanctuary and Livestream
Do you have the sewing gene like so many Minnesotans? Or do you enjoy fixing small appliances or troubleshooting electronic gadgets? Perhaps you have woodworking or soldering skills? All of these talents are exactly what we need for Westminster’s Fix-It Clinic on February 12, 2022—hosted in conjunction with Hennepin County and held in Westminster Hall.

Westminster’s Eco-Justice Ministry Team invites you to volunteer your skills to help extend the life of small appliances, lamps, clothing, or other easily-fixable items. It keeps useful items out of landfills and in the hands of people who value them. Please join us in what we hope will become an annual effort.

It’s not too early to sign up!

The Fix-It Clinic
Westminster Hall
Saturday, February 12, 2022
12-4 pm

Email Nancy Lo or call 612-348-9195 if you are interested in volunteering.

Curious about the Fix-It Clinic? More information is located here: https://www.hennepin.us/residents/recycling-hazardous-waste/fix-it-clinics.

Calling All Fix-It Volunteers
by Sarah Keisling, Member of Westminster’s Eco-Justice Ministry Team

January’s All-Church Book Read: The Night Watchman
by Julie Wicklund, Westminster member

This year’s All-Church Book Read will be the 2021 winner of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, Louise Erdrich’s The Night Watchman. Based on the life of her own grandfather, the book tells the story of a Chippewa council member fighting against Native dispossession. We meet several other characters from the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa in the 1950s and discover their struggles for life and love. As we continue to learn about honoring the land and people whom have historically called this area home, The Night Watchman provides more food for thought and action. The story gives us the opportunity to explore inequities of land ownership and the injustice of human trafficking, both in the past and today. Join us to read and discuss the book together in January. We will have copies of the book for sale at church.

Save the dates: January 9, 23, and 30 for small group discussions and a guest speaker.

“Tribal history that brings her power of witness to every page.” —Lisa Roberts, The New York Times Book Review
Did you know that giving for Stewardship has never been easier at Westminster thanks to Realm? Log into your account and you can easily review your giving history, set up recurring gifts paid by credit or debit cards, make online donations, print a contribution statement, and more. Find out more about Realm on the Westminster website.

**Fair Trade Gift Fair Returns**

by Alanna Simone Tyler, Associate Pastor for Justice and Mission

Westminster’s 2021 Fair Trade Gift Fair on **November 21** will feature sustainably sourced and fairly-exchanged goods from more than one dozen vendors. Through fair-trade arrangements, craftspeople and farmers are empowered to preserve their traditions and create better lives for their families and their communities. Global Mamas, founded in 2003 by six Ghanaian women, is one of the 2021 participating vendors. Their mission is to “create a life of prosperity for women across Ghana by creating and selling handmade fair-trade products.” Currently more than 300 Ghanaian women earn a livable wage through Global Mamas. When the pandemic disrupted their business, the talented women, affectionately referred to as “the mamas” produced close to 20,000 protective masks. This fall their Minneapolis-based staff generously donated colorful child-sized masks to St. David’s Harman Center. Westminster did not host the fair in 2020. We are excited to again provide the opportunity for the Westminster community to purchase beautifully crafted goods. Each time we buy fair-trade goods, we help promote livable wages, skills training, and sustainable business development in support of our siblings around the world. The fair is free and open to the public so please invite your family and friends. To learn more email act@wpc-mpls.org.

**Our Sojourners Have Arrived**

by Ann Schulze, Kathleen Campbell, and Duane Krohnke, Westminster members

On September 29, Westminster stepped into co-sponsorship with the Minnesota Council of Churches to host an Afghan family, comprised of a mother and four teenage boys. Our team of 25 outstandingly competent members of the Westminster community are working to clean and furnish the family’s apartment in St. Paul, help the boys enroll and register in school, supply food for the first month, familiarize them with the transportation system, and drive them to appointments as needed. When the family qualifies, team members will help them apply for support programs and community resources.

Please pray for this family in this difficult time of life transition. We are grateful for offers of money and gift cards, but your gifts to Westminster have funded sufficient financial resources designated for ministry to refugees and immigrants through our Faith in Action Council. Though our co-sponsorship commitment does not require financial contribution, these funds will allow us to meet the family’s initial needs. We are hoping Westminster will host more families in the future, so stay tuned. In the meantime, to serve refugee and immigrants in Minnesota please consider joining Westminster’s Immigration Court Observer team.
Finding a Rhythm
by Alexandra Mauney, Associate Pastor

As I approach month eleven (!) of my ministry at Westminster, I find myself settling into a rhythm. Some of my rhythms take place on Zoom, especially as we await Covid vaccine availability for our youngest ones; others take place in person. I am settling in, finding joy and beauty in the patterns that order our life together in the Families, Youth, & Children ministry area. And one of my favorite rhythms is the rhythm of shared space use at Westminster. I love smiling at young ones from St. David’s Harman Center as they wave out the window while I eat my lunch in the Meditation Garden. I tend to slow down and listen as I pass the Garden Room during weekdays when Cantus is rehearsing, and I always stop to smell the herbs and flowers that the Magnet Center members are growing on a cart in the Courtyard. These are rhythms that happen outside of my regular FYC ministry work, but they inform and enrich the life of our ministry area.

The presence of this deep and wide net of ministries and community partnerships helps us to remember that we belong to one another. We know that we are formed as faithful disciples in community with one another, and not just our own FYC community, but the community of the whole congregation and all those whom we partner with. I give thanks for the wide nets of community and mutual love that I see all across Westminster!

Small Groups Continue to Form this Fall
by Rachel Sheild, Director of Congregational and Community Engagement

Through the Adult Education ministry, Westminster is initiating a new batch of small groups this fall. Consider joining one to grow deeper in your faith and in relationship with others in our community. Here is a sampling of new small groups that are forming now along with existing groups that are open to new members:

- **Third Age (monthly)** - explore the joys and challenges of life’s third age with opportunities to read and share together about your experiences.
- **Sunday Sermon Discussion (weekly)** – discuss the Sunday sermon, possibly over a shared meal.
- **Couples Small Group (weekly or bi-monthly)** - couples will fellowship together and offer support and prayer for the many seasons of a long-term relationship.
- **LGBTQ (weekly)** - an LGBTQ small group continues to meet weekly and is open to new participants.
- **Women’s Ministry Small Groups** – potential groups are in the beginning stages with suggested topics including nurturing the faith of children and grandchildren, welcoming new women and women-identifying people into the community, and creating together, including arts, crafts, and other making opportunities.
- **Men’s Ministry Small Groups** – potential groups are in the beginning stages with the existing men’s small groups offering guidance and suggestions for activities.
- **Moms Group (weekly)** - join moms with children of all ages for guided conversation and fellowship.
- **Family Matters (weekly)** - open to parents and caregivers with children of any age.

If any of these appeal to you, contact me (rsheild@wpc-mpls.org) to discern meeting times and modalities (online, in-person, or hybrid), train facilitators, and identify resources for study or exploration.
Back By Pandemic Demand - A Virtual Christmas Pageant
by Sonja Dziekciowski, Director of Children’s Ministries

In case you missed out on last year’s virtual pageant, mark your calendars for December 12 at Noon for a hybrid viewing of the pageant shown on the Livestream and in Westminster Hall!

We are starting a new tradition for the pageant by having it take place after a service in the middle of December instead of on Christmas Eve. There will still be a 4 pm family-friendly service taking place on Christmas Eve so families can attend and enjoy worship together.

While Children’s Ministries continue to meet over Zoom, children are going to “Zoom” in for pageant rehearsals and to record group scenes. Just like last year, you will catch your favorite sheep, shepherds, and angels telling the Christmas story to help us prepare for the birth of Jesus.

If you are unable to view the pageant on December 12, do not be afraid for I bring great news! The pageant will be up on our Livestream to watch at a time that works better for you.

Continuing Creativity with the Youth through Covid
by Matt Lewellyn-Otten, Director of Youth Ministries

As the program year begins, the Youth Group has found creative ways to gather, build community, and have lots of fun along the way. Every Sunday evening, we begin our gatherings in the Courtyard and inevitably we move the fun to Westminster Green to run around and have some big laughs. We have learned that your standard pool noodles make for the ideal social-distancing tool for games! We have played hockey, made human foosball games, and even pool noodle jousting. We are thankful that we have this space to run around, connect with one another, and have a little bit of healthy competition. Our play and fun on Sunday evenings helps us to build deeper connections with one another, bringing our community closer even in the midst of this pandemic. The Open Doors, Open Futures campaign and the addition of the Westminster Green has allowed our Youth Group to grow during the pandemic; welcoming young people with fun, laughter, and connection.

Baptism – a Joyful Sacrament
by Marie Kruskop, Coordinator of Early Childhood and Family Ministries

Like so many things during this season of Covid, baptisms were put on hold for many months. Then, they were adapted – you may remember Alexandra Mauney, Associate Pastor for Families, Youth, and Children, delivering small vials of water to be used during livestreamed worship in the homes of families wishing to have their children baptized, despite Covid! And now, baptism is once again happening in person. Baptism is a joyful event no matter how it happens; baptism in person simply adds another layer of joy to this already joyful sacrament!

Baptism at Westminster usually happens the third Sunday of each month (though sometimes this date is changed to accommodate family schedules). The week before the baptism, families are invited to a Baptism Conversation led by Alexandra and myself. Families are welcomed to the community and reminded of the meaning and significance of this sacrament at Westminster, both in the life of their family and in the life of the church. Parents learn about the programs and opportunities we offer for faith and fellowship, both for their children and for themselves. And, of course, we review the logistics of just how a baptism happens at Westminster!

One key part of those logistics involves each of us. When we welcome these children of God into our midst, we promise to love, encourage, and support them, to share the good news of the gospel with them, to serve that gospel alongside them, and to help them know and follow Christ. May it be so!
Art Depicts Life
by Dr. Rodney Allen Schwartz, Director, Westminster Gallery and Archive

The current Westminster Gallery exhibition The Art of Belonging proposes that we belong to God, to the creation, and to one another. The linocut print Hold Fast made by the artist Benjamin Watson appears in the “belonging to the creation” section of the exhibition and portrays two sailors caught in a storm at sea. They are hanging on for dear life. In the context of the exhibition’s story line this image provides the natural progression from the creation of the heavens and the earth to the eventual rainbow.

The phrase hold fast also references a line in Tim Hart-Andersen’s charge to the congregation at the end of worship to “hold fast to that which is good.” I suggest that we have all been doing a lot of holding fast in the past year and a half. Art in the form of this linocut print certainly represents the struggles of life during Covid time.

I acquired this print in 2015 while attending a biennial CIVA (Christians in the Visual Arts) conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan. It is interesting that when I find a work of art headed for the Westminster Collection, I don’t always know how or when it will be useful. Collecting is a process that yields eventual surprises. I will be attending the next CIVA conference in Austin, Texas, in early November. Many of the several hundred artists attending will have their work in conference exhibitions and also available for acquisition. I wonder what will catch my eye.

A Time of Pause and Reflection for Westminster Counseling Center
by Paul A. Arbisi, Ph.D. L.P., Chair Westminster Counseling Center Task Force

Last month, after over 28 years of service on the staff of the Westminster Counseling Center (WCC), the Rev. Dr. Margaret McCray D.MIN, LMFT, announced her retirement effective the end of 2021. Margaret served first as a therapist and later for 16 years as the Clinical Director of WCC.

During her time on staff, Margaret has provided compassionate care for the mental health needs of countless members of the community. Margaret became a sought-after consultant and counselor for churches and pastors facing institutional and personal challenges. Her dedication and talented service will be sorely missed by all whose lives she touched.

Plans are in the works to celebrate Margaret’s service and commitment to the WCC. Watch for information about how you can support and honor Margaret’s legacy at WCC.

Last spring, prior to Margaret’s announcement, the WCC Board formed a Task Force to consider how best to provide counseling services in a post-COVID world. The group was comprised of the WCC Board, members from partner congregations, and Westminster Church leaders. Over the course of several meetings and informational sessions with church affiliated counseling centers around the country, the Task Force concluded that WCC was meeting a growing need for spiritually informed counseling services. Meeting this need falls squarely within WPC’s mission of being a telling presence in the city.

Considering the WCC’s current staffing levels and business model, the Task Force recommended a pause in WCC operations. During the pause over the next year, a new, more robust, organizational structure and sustainable business model will be developed. The goal is to assure WCC remains viable as it provides mental health services to members of the community who may otherwise not have access to them. The WCC Board will provide support to the remaining therapists while individual practices wind down by the end of 2021.