Belonging in the Silence

by Amanda Weber, Director of Worship and the Arts

This Lent, as we mark the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert, we have the opportunity to explore our own faith practices. How might daily, intentional practices draw us into a deeper sense of belonging to God? On each of the five Sundays in the season, we will examine the broad theme of “Belonging in the Silence,” with an emphasis on five Lenten disciplines: prayer, study, self-examination, focus, and letting go.

While this season invites us to individual reflection, there will be many opportunities to come together with others – in-person or online – to encourage and support one another as we grow in our faith and take on new spiritual practices. Through Lenten devotions, Covenant Groups, worship services, Arts Month, and so much more, Westminster continues to provide diverse and unique spaces to interact with God’s word and act in love toward our neighbor.

Wednesdays at Westminster are not to be missed in this season! At noon each week, you are invited to attend a Lenten Organ Series in the Chapel for 30 minutes of musical meditation, featuring Westminster organists Joseph Trucano and Kenneth Vigne, as well as Organist Emerita Melanie Ohnstad duetting with Cathie Fischer, and other guest organists. Wednesday evenings bring the return of Westminster’s beloved Taizé-style worship at 6 pm in Westminster Hall. These services center around silence and song, with a hand-painted cross from Taizé as our visual focus. With dim lights and abundant candles, this service is a welcome reprieve from mid-week chaos.

The music from Taizé will permeate our Sunday services as well, both at 8:30 am and 10:30 am, as we use communal singing as a form of spiritual practice.

We are given many tools in worship each week as we sing, pray, confess, affirm, and learn through the liturgy. As we return to this year’s question, To whom do we belong?, let us practice using these tools toward deeper introspection and a renewed commitment to our faith in action.

Lenten Opportunities

**Lenten Devotional Booklet:** Practice daily devotions, including written reflections, scripture quotes, and art, available in print and digital copies. To sign up for the daily e-mail option, visit Westminster’s email sign-up page and select “Lenten Devotional.”

**Wednesday Lenten Organ Series:** Join us for a Lenten Organ Series in Westminster’s chapel. These 30-minute noon concerts will be held Wednesdays during Lent with opportunities to listen in person and over livestream.

**Wednesday Evening Worship:** Attend Wednesday Worship at 6 pm online or in person for a service centered around silence and song in the Taizé-style worship.

**Lenten Covenant Groups:** Join a Lenten Covenant Group to deepen your spiritual journey during five weeks of Lent. Learn more on Realm and register by March 3.

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**Third Age Forum: Serving, Advocating, Growing**

by Lucy Quaintance, ministry team member

A joy of the third age—that period after retirement—is having the time to explore the rich new ways we can use our acquired wisdom, talent, and voices to serve our community, to build up and repair our corner of the world. This is the fourth year of our program, formerly called The New Old Adventure (NOA) and now The Third Age, and this will be the first—but not the last—forum on the deep satisfactions gained from serving our neighbors.

To begin the conversation on service and advocacy opportunities we have invited our own Associate Pastor for Justice and Mission, the Rev. Alanna Simone Tyler. Rev. Tyler will describe how we can live into our commitment to be a Matthew 25 congregation; Westminster is just one of the 941 congregations in the Presbyterian Church (USA) that all work to eradicate poverty and dismantle structural racism. She will help us discern how we might connect with our neighbors through service and advocacy in one of the Faith in Action ministries.

Register on Realm to join us **Wednesday, March 16, from 11 am-noon** on Livestream or in person in the Meisel Room.

*Editor’s Note: The February Westminster News Third Age article included the wrong byline. We’re grateful for Bonnie Carlson for writing the article about Love & Relationships.*

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**The Bible Then and Now: Old Wisdom for New Life: Insights from the Book of James**

by Matthew Skinner, Scholar for Adult Education

The Bible has a way of setting the stage for our lives together as the church. When we read it with others it reminds us of the issues that ought to concern us, and it gets us talking about what a life of faith should look like. Gathering around the Letter of James can help us consider the importance of living out Christian faith in our attitudes and actions. James expresses urgent concern about communities that embrace the wrong values and neglect people who are vulnerable. With its attention to friendship, hospitality, integrity, and openheartedness, James urges us to consider where we chase after the wrong things. It’s a good book to read during Lent, as we take stock and commit ourselves to renewal.

On five Monday evenings through the Lenten season we will explore the book of James and consider where it leads us. Join me for this new installment of the “The Bible Then and Now” program. For the time being, this series will be conducted digitally, entirely via Zoom; if Covid conditions improve then we will switch to a hybrid format (both live in the Garden Room and via Zoom). Please register in advance on Realm. For more information, visit the Adult Education page of Westminster’s website and read about “The Bible Then and Now.”

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**Current Staff Member Named Communications Coordinator**

by Suzanne McInroy, Director of Communications

Westminster is excited to announce that Mahin Hamilton has been named as the new communications coordinator. Mahin currently works as an administrative assistant at Westminster, assisting three ministry areas—Adult Education, Families, Youth, and Children, and Justice and Mission. Before starting at Westminster in 2018, Mahin worked as a project manager and designer of interior spaces, especially for events, exhibits, and residential spaces. She has worked at Urban Homeworks, Ethan Allen in Edina, and Enviro Design Studio in St. Paul.

Mahin has a bachelor’s degree from the University of Minnesota in interior design with minors in architecture and art history, and is currently completing a Master of Environmental Education at Hamline University.

Mahin will begin working in the communications coordinator role on March 1. Her primary responsibilities will be project managing and designing the weekly bulletin, assisting with the monthly newsletter, and updating the website. In addition, Mahin will assist me in continuing to build on and advance overall communications efforts for the church.
Dear friends,

Growing up in the Presbyterian church we paid no attention to Lent — that season was for Roman Catholics. But we Protestants have learned from our Catholic siblings the value in marking these 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter.

Other traditions, as well, have taught us the power of a season of sustained spiritual discipline. Lent is our Ramadan, our Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

It begins on Ash Wednesday, with a visible reminder of our own mortality marked on our foreheads. Ash Wednesday is the first step in our journey with Jesus toward the cross. It begins with an awareness of the temporary, fragile nature of human life and a longing to know the One to whom we ultimately belong. Westminster’s Lenten Booklet offers daily reflections on what it means to belong.

In Lenten worship at Westminster this year we will explore five traditional spiritual practices designed to take us back to the heart of our faith: our relationship with God, the One to whom we belong. They are Prayer, Study, Self-examination, Focus, and Letting Go. My sermons each Sunday will delve into these Christian disciplines. Lenten Covenant Groups will discuss them, as well. Let us know if you would like to participate in a small group for Lent.

In a burst of pastoral aspiration, I was planning to propose that we all make a commitment to take a few minutes each day to practice all five disciplines — much like those living in monastic communities do. I worked out a full daily schedule — prayer early in the morning, then study mid-morning...and so on. Maybe a few ambitious souls will try this for 40 days. Let me know if you do!

A more realistic Lenten challenge would be to choose from among the five spiritual practices we will explore on Sundays one that will become your daily practice. Try it every day. Set aside at least five minutes; keeping a regular daily schedule will help.

Will it be self-examination — entering into a few minutes each day to reflect on who we are and if our living reflects our deepest values? Or will it be on focus — taking a few minutes to quiet ourselves in meditation simply to center our complete attention on the presence of God?

Let us make these 40 days matter for us spiritually.

See you in church — in person or online!

Grace and peace,
Lenten Covenant Groups
Beginning Sunday, March 6 | 9:15 am
Various Locations
During Lent, Westminster hosts Covenant Groups in person and online as a way for our community to deepen our spiritual journey during the six weeks of Lent. This year’s theme this Lenten season is: “Belonging in the Silence of Lent: Prayer, Study, Self-examination, Focus, Letting Go”. These disciplines are traditionally what the church has said should be practiced especially in this season. They also are how we nourish and strengthen our sense of belonging to One who is beyond, beside, and within. Register on Realm by March 3 to co-facilitate or participate in a group, whether your group is pre-existing or you would like to join a new group.

2022 Easter Flowers Program
We invite you to participate in Westminster’s 2022 Easter Flower Program by filling out the online form in Realm by Monday, March 28. An offering of $40 per designated name is suggested. Your gift will help to decorate the sanctuary and provide flowers that will be delivered to Westminster members and friends who are sick or home-bound. Designated names (not donor names) will appear in the worship bulletin on Easter, April 17. Thank you!

Last Chance to Apply to Be a 2022 Meisel Scholar
Applications are currently being received for college-age students interested in pursuing a Meisel Scholar experience in the summer of 2022. Young people are encouraged to extend their learning outside the traditional classroom setting through internship, travel, and research opportunities. Westminster endowed resources support individuals financially, and each young person is partnered with a mentor in the congregation who provide vocational reflection and guidance. The Meisel Scholar application is available online and completed applications are due by March 15. Interested students are encouraged to contact me with any questions, mgage-finn@wpc-mpls.org.

March Arts Month
This year, FYC is celebrating Arts Month during the month of March! Beginning March 6, children and youth will gather during Sunday morning Education Hour (9:15 am) in various spaces across the church building to create art projects together. Each age level will work on a communal art project over the course of the month, culminating in an April 10 showcase in the Recreation Room. There will be painting, film, puppetry, photography, and more!

We are grateful to this year’s Arts Month facilitators for their creativity and dedication: Tim Hoogland, Megan MacFarlane, Tom Northenscold, James Nutt, and Katherine Parent.
Faith Nixon Symposium
Creativity, Wholeness, and Calling
by Margaret McVay, Westminster member

“Created in the image of the Divine Artist, every person contains the capacity for creativity and imagination.” This is one of the core values of A Sanctified Art, a collaborative arts organization founded by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity. She will be our speaker at this year’s Faith Nixon Symposium held on Zoom on Saturday, March 12, from 10 am-noon. We’ll explore what creativity is, why it’s important and how we can weave it into our spiritual lives, connecting with God and community.

Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity is an artist, ordained Presbyterian pastor, retreat leader, and creative entrepreneur. She believes in the prophetic and freeing power of art to connect us more deeply to God and one another. Based in the beautiful rolling hills of Black Mountain, North Carolina, with her husband Paul, Lisle can often be found running with her dogs, or tending to her ever-growing indoor and outdoor gardens.

This online event is open to both men and women, and we’ll also offer a yoga/gentle movement session beforehand from 8:45-9:45 am. This symposium is made possible each year by the Faith Nixon Endowment Fund, which honors the memory of Faith Nixon, one of the first women elders at Westminster. The fund enables us to continue her commitment to provide programming and resources that enrich the communal life of the women of Westminster.

Register for the Faith Nixon Symposium on Realm by March 7. Questions? Contact Deb Wagner (dwagner@wpc-mpls.org)

Beyond Sunday Connections
Alexandra Jacob
by Lynne Thompson, Westminster Member

Beyond Sunday Connections invites women to come together in fellowship to share personal reflections about their faith, work, and daily life. Alexandra Jacob, Associate Pastor for Families, Youth, & Children, is the featured speaker on Monday, March 28, at 6:30 pm.

On staff at Westminster since December 2020, Alexandra married Andy, her college sweetheart, this past October, and they are putting down roots in Minneapolis. She enjoys running, biking, and hiking and is learning to cross-country ski.

Alexandra is passionate about the music of the Christian Church. She says her entrance to ministry was the door to the choir loft at her childhood congregation, Westminster Presbyterian Church in Greenville, South Carolina. She was a music major at St. Olaf College (undergraduate studies in pipe organ), and she sang for three years in the college choir. Alexandra will talk about Presbyterians’ Glory to God hymnal and her call to ministry.

Register by March 21 on Realm. Indicate whether you will attend in person in Westminster Hall or via Westminster’s livestream channel. Questions? Contact Rani Murdoch Zappa, 952.927.8311.

Arts Month...for Adults!
by Amanda Weber, Director of Worship and the Arts

Arts Month has long been a practice for the children at Westminster, often featuring teaching artists who are part of the Westminster community. This year, the adults are invited to join in the fun! Each week in March, we will offer one arts workshop geared toward adults. We are excited to feature the following teaching artists:

- **Rodney Allen Schwartz | March 2** (gallery and archives)
- **Tom Northenscold | March 10** (scanning your film photographs)
- **Joey Rockenstein | March 12** (how to bake Communion bread)
- **James Nutt and Katherine Parent | March 20** (watercolor painting)
- **Joseph Trucano | March 27** (hands-on handbell experience)

Stay tuned for further details, including how to register for each workshop via Realm. For more questions, email me at aweber@wpc-mpls.org.
Youth Ministry Updates
by Alexandra Jacob, Associate Pastor

Rain or shine (Omicron or Delta?!), Westminster youth groups continue to meet for fellowship, fun, and formation. We shifted to Zoom and outdoor gatherings during January, working on Cabaret scripts and meeting for a sledding day and a winter hike. There is more fun on the horizon for the months ahead, with Arts Month, a Spring Retreat, Youth Sunday, and summer mission trips. If you are discerning a call to get involved in the life of youth programming in any way, please let me know!

The discernment process for a new Director of Youth Ministries continues. A small team made up of myself and several personnel committee members (Jacque Debuse, Ann Rainhart, Brent Hall) recently hosted a learning and listening session, where we heard feedback from congregation members. Taking into account the information from that session and from conversations with parents and youth, we finalized a position description for a Director of Youth Ministries. We hope to form a search committee and launch the search early in the spring!

Girl Scout Cookies on Sale for a Limited Time!
by Megan MacFarlane, Westminster Member and Girl Scout Mom

Girl Scout Cookies can be purchased as donations for FEAST and the Groveland Food Shelf – or for yourself!—through March 15. Scouts will be selling cookies at church on Sundays February 27, March 6, and March 13. Online orders can be placed until March 15. Information about online ordering will be in upcoming FYC weekly emails, the All-Church email, and in the FYC Families Facebook Group.

This year’s choices include Lemonades, Shortbreads, Thin Mints, Peanut Butter Patties, Caramel deLites, Toast-yays, Peanut Butter Sandwiches, Caramel Chocolate Chip (gluten free), and the new Adventurefuls.

Questions regarding Girl Scout cookies can be sent to me at wpcgscookies@gmail.com. Thank you for supporting our neighbors in need and our Scouts!

2nd Annual FYC Bake Off
by Emily Vigne, Westminster Member and Parent

Join us via Zoom for our 2nd Annual FYC Bake Off! We’ll gather March 19 at 9 am for introductions and instructions and then give you a couple of hours to bake. We’ll gather again at 11:30 am for a virtual taste test.

This year’s common ingredient is... lemon! Sweet and savory bakes are both welcome. Lemon zest, juice, extract, pudding, yogurt, or lemonade all make excellent ingredients. From focaccia to cookies, scones, muffins, or cake — any recipe or invention that can be baked in two hours or less is fair game.

RSVP to Marie by Friday, March 18 at noon for the Zoom link and more information.

Lenten Practices for Families
by Marie Kruskop, Coordinator of Early Childhood and Family Ministries

Traditionally, the three pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Traci Smith, author of Faithful Families for Lent, Easter, and Resurrection: Simple Ways to Create Meaning for the Season, has reimagined these pillars for families as praying, simplifying, and giving. Journey with us on Wednesday nights during our Family Fellowship Time as we explore these ideas and some ways in which we might practice them in our daily lives. We gather over Zoom at 5:45 pm followed by children’s choirs at 6 pm.

Some of Smith’s ideas will be posted in our Westminster FYC Families Facebook group throughout the season of Lent as well.
This spring, the Westminster Town Hall Forum is focusing on one of the most pressing issues facing humanity: climate change. Five women on the forefront of science and policy will speak to how climate change is already affecting people and the planet. Each presenter will talk about tangible solutions to mitigate climate change’s impacts.

In January, we hosted a virtual Forum with Dr. Katharine Hayhoe of the Nature Conservancy. Her talk is available now at WestminsterForum.org. The rest of our Forums will be in-person at Westminster. A livestream of each will also be available on the Town Hall Forum’s website and Facebook page.

**Friday, March 11 – 7 pm**
*Using Space Technology to Improve Life*
Danielle Wood directs M.I.T.’s Space Enabled Research Group. She’ll discuss ways space-age breakthroughs in science and engineering can be used to combat climate change.

**Friday, March 25 – Noon**
*Climate Solutions Rooted in the Soil*
Lisa Schulte Moore directs the Landscape Ecology and Sustainable Ecosystem Management Lab at Iowa State University. She’ll discuss how agriculture can actually help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect biodiversity.

**Wednesday, April 6 – Noon**
*The Nature of the Future*
Pulitzer prize-winner Elizabeth Kolbert is out with a new book, *Under the White Sky*. She explores whether human intervention in the climate is ironically our best hope for surviving the crisis we’ve created. She’ll speak at the Forum about the scientists she’s met looking for ways to avert catastrophe.

**Wednesday, April 27 – Noon**
*Advancing Equity through Ethical Climate Adaptations*
Colette Pinchon Battle is the founder of the Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy where she advocates for climate change mitigation with racial justice and equity at its core. In her talk for the Forum, she will discuss the ways we can tackle climate change and advance equity.

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**Save-the-Date for Day Camp!**

Mark your calendars! We are in full planning mode for an in-person, all-day Day Camp the week of June 15-17. Families with students who have completed kindergarten through fifth grade are invited to register this month for our 8:30 am to 5 pm Day Camp, with middle school and high school counselors leading the fun. We are kicking off our “Llove Your Neighbor” Day Camp with a trip to the llama farm in Waconia on Monday afternoon. We will also be learning more about our Westminster neighbors by having a joint craft and games session with the Magnet Senior Center.
Fix-It Clinic at Westminster – New Date!
by Sarah Keisling,
Eco-Justice Ministry Team

Pandemic permitting, the Fix-It Clinic has been rescheduled for **Saturday April 9, 2022**, at Westminster. Westminster members handy with tools, or sewing machines are welcome to volunteer. If you enjoy troubleshooting electronic devices we can use you! Woodworking or soldering skills? Bring it on! All of these talents are exactly what we need for Westminster’s Fix-It Clinic hosted in conjunction with Hennepin County and held in Westminster Hall.

Westminster’s Eco-Justice Ministry Team invites you to share your skills with our neighbors, and help extend the life of small appliances, lamps, clothing, or other easily-fixable items. Help keep 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 | Noon to 4 pm  
Saturday, April 9, 2022  
Please email nancy.lo@hennepin.us or call 612-348-9195 if you are interested in volunteering.

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Update on the Afghan Family Westminster is Co-Sponsoring
by Kathleen Campbell, Ann Schulze and Duane Krohnke

The past four months have been a whirlwind of activity for the Afghan mother and four sons Westminster is co-sponsoring through the Minnesota Council of Churches. Westminster’s co-sponsorship team has been accompanying the family since they arrived in October 2021. Two weeks after our family arrived, we drove the family to their St. Paul apartment, cleaned and furnished by the team. There the family found a delicious Afghan meal and a supply of familiar foods. Soon we enrolled the three youngest sons (ages 15-18) at LEAP High School and the oldest son (19) in ESL classes. The sons’ use of English is improving rapidly, and they are bright, eager, and appreciative. The oldest son is thrilled about being hired recently for his first job in the U.S.

Westminster’s co-sponsorship team members are insightful, hard-working, and empathetic as we continue to show our family that they are not alone. Team members’ activities with the family include assisting with health exams, driving to appointments, introducing public transit, gifting handmade quilts, arranging cell phone and Internet service, purchasing winter clothes, and attending a holiday festival and a kite-flying event. Team members are teaching the family the financial concepts they will need for eventual economic independence. Thank you for your gifts to Westminster that have allowed us to generously support this family as they build a new life.

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Handmade quilt for the Afghan family Westminster is co-sponsoring.
Legacy Sunday: May 1

The Legacy Circle is comprised of those who have remembered Westminster in their will or financial plan and informed the church of their intention.

We recognize these individuals annually with a springtime appreciation. This year Legacy Sunday is May 1.

If you have included Westminster in your bequest or have questions about how you can make a legacy gift, please contact Kelsey Crouch-Dodson, Director of Stewardship.

Upcoming Westminster Gallery Exhibitions

by Rodney Allen Schwartz, Director, Westminster Gallery and Archive

Hope and Healing in Pandemic Times, art created by the Interfaith Artist Circle, continues through February 27.

This year’s Lent and Easter exhibition, To the Cross and Beyond, opens March 6. This exhibition features art from the Westminster Collection and follows the progression of experiences in Jesus’ life from Palm Sunday to the Ascension. Bold and dramatic art created by a great diversity of artists from around the world illuminate these powerful and emotional events. You will want to incorporate an encounter with this exhibition as part of your personal Lenten journey.

The death of the artist John August Swanson last fall seemed an appropriate prompt for the Westminster Gallery to mount an exhibition of our extensive collection of his art. His elaborate and magical interpretation of Biblical stories is a delight to behold.

Watch for this spring exhibition.

Announcing a call for art: The summer exhibition will feature art created by Westminster members and friends. The theme is: The Joy of Being.

Submissions are due in mid-June and the exhibition opens on July 3.

Late-breaking news

At its February meeting, Westminster’s Session approved the members of the Capital Campaign Committee. Joan Dayton and Pete Cochrane are Co-Chairs, and Alice Mortenson and Jim and Carmen Campbell are Honorary Co-Chairs. Several sub-committees were named; their work will begin later this month. Watch for ways to participate as we prepare to complete the bold vision for our church’s future!