

WESTMINSTER WITNESS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021

"GROWING IN FAITH, REACHING OUT IN LOVE"

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR MIKE



A Message from Pastor Mike

"Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Matthew 4:19-20

Taking the First Step...Again!

My Brother-in-Law Dennis recently shared with me this story. One evening, he attended an award ceremony at a nearby martial arts studio. During the evening, newly-achieved belts were handed out to students who had demonstrated the technical ability and discipline to move from the white belt, which represents the first step of their journey, to their ultimate goal of earning a black belt. As the ceremony wrapped up, one of the students asked the chief instructor "Sir, what belt is the most difficult to earn?" All of those gathered assumed that his answer would be the black belt, but much to their surprise, he replied confidently, "the white belt." They were confused as the white belt is not really earned. It is simply given, along with other gear, to all students when they step into the studio for their first initial karate session. The instructor went on to explain that over coming fear and anxiety by simply opening the door and taking that first step into

the karate studio kept countless potential students from beginning their journey. It is the first step of any journey that is the most important.

As we begin a new calendar year, both as individuals and as a church, we will in many ways be taking first steps on our journeys forward. This past year has been filled with a plethora of unexpected and devastating challenges. It is easy to feel as if we have been completely knocked off the path that we had been walking. We have been derailed by the pandemic, racial unrest, political divisions, and economic and cultural hardships. But like any good fighter, when you get knocked down, you get up, dust yourself off, and start pushing ahead again. That is what we will do as a congregation and a body of believers. We will move ahead again.

Jesus Christ is calling all of us, day after day, to 'follow him.' We are called just like the early disciples to leave our past journeys and step out onto a new path with Christ. As we do, Christ gives us a promise – that we will be transformed into gospel spreaders. We will be soul-harvesters and light sharers! The new year will bring with it its own challenges, but as followers of Christ, we are called to step out boldly and confidently. Christ is asking us to share his love and grace with others. Our community, our country, our world needs this more now than ever before. Let

us all step out faithfully with our Lord into new joys, new relationships, new experiences. We know the first step is always the hardest, and so we will take it together as a community of faith. We are unsure of what our journey will look like but one thing we do realize is that God knows the way we are to go and he will walk it with us. Let's step out with him in faith and humility again on this journey of healing, strength and growth! Amen!



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Youth News</i>	2
<i>Deacons & Session News</i>	3
<i>Bible Study, Festival of the Nativities</i>	4
<i>Music News</i>	5
<i>Birthdays, Births, Serving Our Country</i>	6
<i>PWC</i>	7-9
<i>Office News, Annual Meet.</i>	10-11
<i>Jan./Feb Calendars</i>	



'The Crossing' Youth Ministries



It's time for our confirmation class to start up again! Here's the schedule for the next few months. Please note that we will need to be flexible for zoom/in person meetings. Make sure Pastor Britt has your email to receive links.:

- 1/3—Confirmation (Zoom)
- 1/10—Confirmation (Zoom)
- 1/17—Confirmation (Zoom)
- 1/24—Confirmation
- 1/31—Confirmation Attends
Congregational Meeting
- 2/7—Confirmation
- 2/14—Confirmation
- 2/21—Confirmation
- 2/28—Confirmation
- 3/7—Confirmation

Our January event is postponed since we are still not meeting in person. Keep an eye out for upcoming events though!

Hopefully, in February, we will still have our cookie decorating event!



Adventurer's Club

Youth Group

We are planning a ski trip for February 14th. Get ready to shred some snow after church!!! Bring a friend or two! We plan on leaving the church at 12.



Youth Group Resumes

Join us on alternating Sunday nights from 5:00-6:30 for Youth Group. This is an opportunity for us to have fellowship, play games, and study God's word. We can't wait to have you there.

- January 3rd (Zoom)
- January 17th (Zoom)
- January 31st—Afterglow
- February 14th—Ski Trip Day
- February 28—Afterglow

Unfortunately, we have had to cancel our pancake breakfast this year. We look forward to new and fun opportunities to raise funds for our mission trip.



Summer Mission Trip

We are still planning to go on a mission trip this year. Our trip location will be Lorraine County, Ohio and will be from 7/10 - 7/18/21. Keep an eye out for meetings and more information!





Deacon News

Our deacons are a wonderful group of people who care deeply about the connectedness and community of this congregation.

As part of their ministry, they are diligent in reaching out to those in our church. Whether it is through phone calls, sending cards, hand-written notes, or in-person visits, they love to connect. This is a major part of their ministry.

We know that as the body of Christ, we are called into a deeper community with one another. Although Covid has disrupted a certain aspect of that, our deacons have broken past that obstacle and have continued to reach out. It is important that we reach out and that we are seen and included.

We hope that you have been blessed to hear from our deacons in at least one of these ways over the past year.



Session News

Session News and Happenings from November and December

Your Session met via Zoom on November 17th and December 15th. Much of our time for these months was spent on how to adapt our ministries as we returned to On-Line Worship and Programming. Also, Session worked on finalizing our Stewardship Campaign and Budgeting Process for the year. Below are actions that Session has taken over the past two months:

Items Approved in our Clerk's Report:

Removal from Membership: Tanner Farrand and Zach Farrand. Report of Individual Communion being served on October 29th and Corporate Communion being served on November 1st and December 6th.

Items of Discussion coming from our Committees and any actions that were taken:

Personnel/Finance discussed and approved Budget for 2021 and formally approved raises for our staff and terms of Call for Rev. Olmsted and Rev. Wundermachen. Staff Annual Reviews will take place in January. Our Annual Meeting will be held in-person on January 31st following our Sunday Service.

Facilities/Grounds reported that electrical work for our front lawn area has been completed and that the Christmas Lights were hung by the committee. The KC Lawn bid for snow removal was approved.

Worship/Outreach reported on how On-Line Only Worship has been going. They also talked on how the preparation for our Advent Services and ministries is going. The Search for the Nativity experience went well and the donated canned goods were delivered to the Salvation Army. *The Committee made the motion to return to In-Person Worship beginning Jan. 24th, and it was approved by Session.*

Mission/Fellowship allocated the rest of their monies to the following: \$1000 to NOROC; \$1000 to PDA; \$1000 to Hy-Vee Feed a Family; \$1500 to Salvation Army; \$1445.03 to Salvation Army Giving Tree.

Nurture/Discipleship reported on the success of the Drive Thru Halloween Candy Caravan Outreach for Oct. 31st. They also worked hard on transitioning the Christmas Pageant to a virtual experience as individually filmed parts of children and families were compiled together and presented on December 20th. The Gathering has been cancelled through May while there may be a few stand-alone events throughout the winter and the Spring. In-person Sunday School and Confirmation will begin again on January 24th.

The 4th Quarter Special Accounts Report from SA treasurer, Cindy Jayes, was approved.

The November Treasurer's Report from Church Treasurer, Phil Masse, was approved.

Our meeting was closed with prayer.



Tuesday Morning Bible Study

We are hoping to be able to return to our Bible Study some time this Winter/Spring. However, we currently believe that it is the safest course of actions to hold off on this for the time being. Please be looking for more information on when we can start meeting again.

Thursday Morning Men's Study

Join us for our annual Welcome Back Breakfast (we hope) at Perkins on January 28th at 6:30am. Be watching for confirmation of the date and time.

New Officer ZOOM Training

On Tuesday, January 19th at 5:30pm, there will be a ZOOM training session for all incoming Officers, both Elders and Deacons. All new officers will be notified through email of this meeting as we gather together virtually.

The Gathering

Due to the unknown and changing nature of Covid-19, we are suspending our Wednesday night gathering series for the rest of the school year. However, we will still plan on having standalone events as we are able, so keep an eye out for possible future events. Thank you so much and stay safe!

FESTIVAL OF THE NATIVITIES 2021

Save the Dates:

Friday, December 3

Saturday, December 4



Lenten Ministries

This year, like most everything else, our Lenten Ministries will look a little different. We will not be having our wonderful Lenten Suppers as we feel it is still not appropriate for large groups to gather around communal meals. However, we will be having, either virtually or in person, our Lenten Vespers Services on Wednesday Evenings during the Lenten Season. Please be watching for further details and announcements as they become available.





Music News



Members of Chancel Choir and the Westminster Strings have stepped up admirably to participate in Sunday and Christmas Eve services. January begins without a clear path of when the congregation will be able to return to worship in person, but the virtual services have been a joy thanks to Eric and Dominic's hard work at the camera and all those that have participated in the music. Thank you all so much! If any of you at home who are not members of the choir would like to be included, please feel free to contact Sue Radloff, 507-437-4940, and I know we can find a spot for you!



Rainbow Ringers will not meet until the pandemic has passed. Stay tuned as we hope that it won't be too long until we can resume rehearsals.

Spirit Ringers will meet every Wednesday at 6:15. We will play for church on the 4th Sunday of the month.



The children and youth worked together this year to still present our Christmas Pageant, "Signs of Christmas", virtually. Families learned

the songs at home with some recorded help and then came to the church to record their songs and scenes. Thank you to all of the families involved, as well as the staff members, for being flexible and helping us bring the joy of the holiday season in a new and creative way! I cannot wait to start up Sunshine Singers rehearsals again and share the love of God through song! Happy New Year, all.

Emma Evans-Peck

Music Directors:

Sue Radloff - Chancel Choir
 fiddlesue@yahoo.com
Lorene Strobel - Ascending Truth/Exalted!
 lorenestrobel@gmail.com
Emma Evans-Peck - Sunshine Singers
 e.evanspeck@westminsteraustin.com
Ann Flisrand - Bell Choirs
 annflis44@charter.net



- 1 Ethiopia Gilo
- 1 Martha Oman
- 3 Cameron Olsen
- 4 Lisa Darling
- 6 Gary Dickman
- 7 Bradley Guy
- 8 Teri Wermager
- 9 Lauren Nelson
- 9 Nicole Wyatt
- 10 Megan Dickman
- 11 Zachary Coffey
- 11 Apoajok Obang
- 11 Rev. Michael Olmsted
- 15 Shirley Guy
- 17 Sean Coffey
- 17 Patty Rayman
- 18 Makenna Tapp
- 20 Zachary Bridgeman
- 20 Renant Hubbard
- 20 Olive Jones
- 20 Cindy Momsen
- 21 Ann Flisrand
- 23 Michael Sydenstricker
- 24 Avnielle Kpelevi
- 26 Sidney Brown
- 27 Laura Carlson
- 27 Matt Clennon
- 27 Camille Osmonson
- 29 Rev. Britt Wundermachen

- 1 Toren Bires
- 4 Nikki Nelson
- 6 Lilly Nystel
- 6 Lynda Paxton
- 6 Keith Sayles
- 6 Thomas Walker
- 7 London Watson
- 8 Leland Aanonson
- 8 Hannah Hecimovich
- 8 Meridee Ofstedahl
- 10 Virginia Dunlap
- 10 Georgiann Simonson
- 11 Tammy Coffey
- 11 Helen Hecimovich
- 12 David Rasmussen
- 14 Lily Hiegel
- 14 Jeanne Wangen
- 15 Carol Hamilton
- 16 Ron Colling
- 18 Patricia Hansen
- 20 Doris Schneider
- 20 Theo Sundal
- 22 Lindsey Davidson
- 23 David Dickman
- 25 Audrey Carroll
- 26 Kasey Baker
- 26 Micah Vortherms
- 28 Vollie Stiebler

Bryce Gerber -
Marines

Seth Clasen -
Army

Garrett Smith
(Pastor Mike's
nephew) -
Air Force

Paul Mueller -
National Guard (Africa)



If you or a family member are actively serving in the military, please contact the church office, and we will include them in future Witnesses.



Emily & Bobby Braaten welcomed Harper Anne into the world on

November 6, 2020, at 7 pounds, 4 ounces, and 20.5" long!

Proud grandparents: Scott and Teri Wermager, great grandparents: Selene & Lonnie Schulz!

If you or someone in your family has a birthday in January or February and it is NOT listed, that means the church office doesn't have your birth date. If it is incorrectly listed or missing, please contact the church office so we can update our church records.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



Nurture Faith, Support Mission, Work for Justice and Peace & Build Community

PWC Service Committees

An English proverb dating way back to the 1300's says, "*Many hands make light work.*" We all know that the meaning of this idiom is teamwork and cooperation make a task go faster and easier. And that's how the Presbyterian Women of the Congregation (PWC) service committees operate. With faith in returning to our normal way of meeting as a church family, the following committees have been put into place:

The **Rummage Sale** scheduled for October 2021 will be chaired by Gloria Aanonson, Dayle Wedeking, Millie Masse, and Ann Sundal. **Rummage Sale Lunch** is chaired by Shirley Hinrichs, Mary Ann Rasmussen, and Selene Schulz.

The **Symbolic Supper**, scheduled for late March, is chaired by Cindy Jayes, meal preparation; Millie Masse and Ann Sundal, program.

Kitchen Supplies are managed by Ann Sundal.

Circle of Compassion, which is appropriately named for the service it provides for funerals, will be called into service again. The committee members are Gloria Aanonson, Mary Ann Rasmussen, Helen Hecimovich, and Joan Schwab.

PWC Bulletin Board, which has been and will continue to be a message center, is designed and put into place by Jacky Dietz.

Flowers and Décor is responsible for church decorating throughout the year and has continued through the pandemic. **Outdoor Planters** are designed and planted by Peggy Queensland; **Seasonal Decorating** is organized and managed by Carolyn Meier with volunteers. **Sunday Communion Table and Fellowship Hall Table Decorations** is organized and managed by Shirley Hinrichs with a committee of volunteers.

Pot Pourri Circle/Study Group

Pot Pourri Circle/Study Group will *meet the fourth Tuesday of the month*, which in **January is Tuesday the 26th at 5:30, p.m.** and in **February, on Tuesday the 23rd at 5:30, p.m.** in the church parlor for a light supper. This evening of good food and conversation is sometimes called "girl's night out." The centerpiece of study is a DVD, Women of the Bible, produced and performed by actress Anita Gutschick who portrays Biblical women. After watching and listening to the DVD, there is a lively exchange of ideas as to how these women's lives might reflect on current-day women's lives. All are welcome to join Pot Pourri for an evening of good fellowship.

Rebekah Circle/Study Group

Rebekah Circle/Study Group meets the *fourth Wednesday of the month*, which in **January is Wednesday the 27th at 9:30 a.m.**; and in **February, on Wednesday the 24th at 9:30 a.m.** Jacky Dietz is the program leader for Rebekah Circle/Study Group and is enthusiastic to introduce a new study, A Hop Skip and Jump Through the Psalms by The Rev. Dr. Sean Forde, formerly of Albert Lea. The book revolves around twelve Psalms with the themes of Trust, Hope, Character, Goodness, Judgement, Truth, Intimacy and several other topics. The emphasis of the study is on God's creation of humanity. "This is a book of reflection using Psalms to connect us with Biblical times and looking for it's relevance in our lives today." Jacky says, "I am looking forward to this new Bible Study. Once we can safely meet again, you are all welcome to join us."





PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



Nurture Faith, Support Mission, Work for Justice and Peace & Build Community

Coins are still being collected. PWC will continue to match all coins received. Please continue to give to provide food for those in need.



Lunch Angel

Lunch Tray Program – Austin Public Schools - Be a Guardian Lunch Angel

During distance learning, all school children are being provided lunches for free. Children are scheduled to return to in-person learning on January 4th, but no one knows for certain. When they return, lunches will not be free.

Austin Public Schools has recognized there is a segment of the parent population who doesn't qualify for any help and just misses the eligibility for free and reduced lunches. These are the kids who are lost in the shuffle, they're the children whose families are working hard but just don't make enough to pay for a hot lunch. It takes about \$450 per child per year to provide hot lunches.

Please make an extra effort to support this project by bringing in your coins – we accept all coins. For 2020, the Penny Jar did not have many coins. Consequently, the coins were not taken to the bank, and the amount was not matched by PWC. PWC did, however, donate \$600.00 to the Lunch Tray Program.



We strongly feel NO CHILD SHOULD GO HUNGRY!



*Ash
Wednesday*

February 17, 2021

6:30pm in our Sanctuary and also streamed live on Facebook. This is a contemplative and reflective service as we gather together to start the Lenten Season and Jesus' journey to the cross.

Exalted! Worship Service

*Last Sunday of every Month –
5:00pm*

Reflective and Interactive Worship
Powerful Contemporary Music
Opportunities for Prayer and Praise

All ages are welcome

Live Streamed on Facebook

Upcoming Services:
January 31st & February 28th

The Annual Meeting
of the Congregation

Sunday, January 31st at 10:30 am

Snow Date is February 7th

Please plan to attend

Annual Reports will be in the narthex on Sunday, January 24th. Please take one if you would like to review it before the annual meeting. Remember to bring it back to the Annual Meeting.

**SEVERE WINTER WEATHER CHURCH OFFICE
CLOSING POLICY**

*If schools are closed due to severe weather, the church office will open, if able, at 12:30p.m. All church activities are cancelled for the day.

*When schools are on a two hour or more delay, the church office will open, if able, at 10:00 a.m. All morning activities are cancelled.

*If in doubt, please call the church office before venturing out. This policy has been set for the safety of all.

**IN CASE OF SEVERE
WEATHER, PLEASE REFER
TO KAAL TV, KTTC TV or
the church answering
machine for church closings.**



The Salvation Army Cereal Cart

It is just as important to bring your donations of cereal during the winter months as it is the rest of the year. Please help keep our commitment to the cereal shelf. Westminster, you do a wonderful job of supporting this mission. Keep it up!

Even though the church is closed until sometime in January, cereal is still being collected and delivered to the Salvation Army. Please continue to contribute.

Thank you from the Salvation Army and the Mission & Fellowship Committee.





Now you can give via text or online



Give easily and securely from
anywhere, anytime.

Via Text Message

Text givewpc to 73256

On our website



www.westminsteraustin.com

There are blue cards in the pews if you give online but would still like to put something in the offering plate.

Detailed instructions on how to give online are available on the welcome table.

Any questions, stop in the church office.



Office Hours
Monday-Friday
8:30am-12:30 pm



Church Phone
507-433-3258

PER CAPITA

Per Capita is money each church is asked to pay to cover the administrative costs of the PCUSA General Assembly, our synod and our local Presbytery. **The payment due for 2021 is \$36.50 per member (no change from 2020).**

Staff Email Addresses

Rev. Michael Olmsted
molmsted@westminsteraustin.com

Rev. Brittany Wundermachen
b.wundermachen@westminsteraustin.com

CE Director-Cinde Goskeson
christianed@westminsteraustin.com

Office Administrator-Cindy Jayes
secretary1@westminsteraustin.com

Assistant Administrator/Media Specialist-Eric Potter
secretary2@westminsteraustin.com



Westminster Website
www.westminsteraustin.com
www.facebook.com/westminsteraustinmn

CHURCH WEBSITE

Do you want to see a **colored** copy of the current or a past copy of the Witness? Do you want to see a **colored** current or past copy of the church bulletin? Did you miss a sermon or want to hear one again? All sermons and bulletins are under the new **Worship Service tab**. Are you looking for information on an upcoming event? Do you need a registration form? Do you wish to give online? Then **check out the church's renovated website**. Click the **Give Now** button and follow the prompts for online giving.



If you have church activities or pictures you would like posted on the church website, please email the information to Eric at secretary2@westminsteraustin.com or drop it off in the church office. Eric updates the church website every Wednesday.



WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

802 4TH ST SW
AUSTIN, MN 55912
(507) 433-3258

Non-Profit
POSTAGE PAID
Permit # 330
Austin, MN 55912

CHANGE SERVICE REQUEST

+

+

January/February 2021

Worship In Person January 24th

the LORD in Holy Splendor

PSALM 29:2, NRSV



We are returning to In-Person Worship starting on January 24th.

We are excited to come together again! We will also resume In-Person Sunday Education including Confirmation on January 24th. We will also continue to wear our masks and keep to social distancing. Please sit in your family groups in the Sanctuary.

WELCOME BACK WESTMINSTER!!