

WESTMINSTER WITNESS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2023

"GROWING IN FAITH, REACHING OUT IN LOVE"

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR MIKE



"Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth." 1 Corinthians 13:6

What's Your Guilty Pleasure?

A *guilty pleasure* is generally a song, a meal, or an activity that someone secretly enjoys but would not want other people to find out about it. Typically, a guilty pleasure is something that is mostly done in jest but that might be viewed as embarrassing by some. These types of *pleasures* are like eating that comfort food that you know is not the healthiest or reading that novel that walks the fine line between fluff and filth or singing loudly over and over again that pop song from the '90s. For the most part, our guilty pleasures are fairly harmless in nature and don't carry with them too many dire consequences.

Our passage from 1 Corinthians 13, the Love Chapter, addresses a different kind of guilty pleasure. By definition, these aspects of life are meant to satisfy our earthly desires and wants. On a spiritual basis, they can eat away at our faiths and cause us to be led down a path that ends in darkness. As Paul wrote about the idea of love to the Church in Corinth, which was embroiled in conflict and controversy, he clearly

stated that love should always strive to overcome our sinful and evil natures. Paul came out of the Jewish religious tradition that was more concerned about the outward appearance rather than the inward condition. In fact, one of the criticisms leveled against Jesus and the early followers is recorded in Mark 7:5, "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" To this, Jesus responded by quoting from the Prophet Isaiah, "These people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." The simple truth is that without love, the words of our lips will be empty, the worship of our hearts will be in vain, and the doctrines and teachings of our minds will come from earthly commandments rather than from God.

It is love that enables us to reject our evil passions and embrace the Truth that comes from Christ. I believe it's a basic equation – the more we fill our lives with love, the less room there is for evil and sin to try to take hold of us. It is in loving our God and loving others that we turn from the lies of the world towards the Truth of our Lord. This type of love also does not slink around in the corners of our life, it joyfully takes center stage and boldly proclaims the truth. We as believers are not called to indulge in the evil desires of this world. We are called to stand firmly on the Word of God.

As we begin another year, let us allow our words, our worship, and our teachings to be centered on the

love of our God. Let us rejoice in the Heavenly Truth rather than delight in this Earthly Evil. Go ahead and enjoy those harmless guilty pleasures, but let us not find pleasure in the lies and the temptations of the world in which we live. Let us mark 2023 with a visible and a felt expression of love, a love that is Christ focused and Christ inspired.

God Bless;

Pastor Mike

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Adventurer's Club (2nd-5th graders)



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Begins again on **JANUARY 8th**

10:45—11:45 am
for age 3 - 5th grade
GOD WHO SAVES -
"El Moshah" -
Leaving Egypt



POLAR PARTY

Sunday, January 8, 2023

2:00 - 3:30 pm at Westminster

Invite a friend to join in the fun. You are welcome to wear pajamas to stay cozy and warm!



I LOVE COOKIES

Sunday, February 12, 2023

2:00 - 3:30 pm at Westminster

Invite a friend to bake & decorate.

RSVP to Laura Carlson

christianed@westminsteraustin.com

or 433-3258

FAMILY SLEDDING NIGHT

OR

FAMILY GAME NIGHT (if there is no snow!)

Wednesday, January 11th

5:30 - 7:00 pm

Dinner, hot cocoa, and cookies provided!



L.I.F.T. Youth Ministries

LIFT resumes

Join us on Wednesday nights from 6:00—7:30 for LIFT Youth Ministries. 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 11th—Family Sledding Night (5:30)

January 18th - 6-7:30pm

January 25th - 6-7:30pm

February 1st - 6-7:30pm

February 8th - 6-7:30pm

February 15th - 6-7:30pm

February 22nd—Ash Wednesday (LIFT attends—Culvers Follow Up Talk and Dessert)

Summer Mission Trip

Our mission trip this year will be in Milwaukee, WI. The dates are July 16th - 22nd



Keep an eye out for meetings and more information! Sign up now!

We are also looking for adult chaperones. Talk to Pastor Britt for more details.

We are planning a ski trip for **Sunday, February 12th**. Get ready to shred some snow after church!!! Bring a friend or two! We plan on leaving the church at 12:30.

(Cost: \$60 for lift ticket & gear or \$34 if you have gear; full & partial scholarships available; bring a sack lunch or money for food.)



Confirmation will begin again on January 8th at 11am. Here’s our schedule for the next few months!

1/8—Confirmation

1/15—Confirmation

1/22—Confirmation

1/29—Congregational Meeting
Confirmation Attends

2/5—Confirmation

2/12—No Confirmation—SKI TRIP

2/19—Confirmation

2/26—No Confirmation - Pancake Breakfast
Fundraiser

3/5—Confirmation

3/12—Confirmation

Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser

All youth are asked to help participate in our Pancake Breakfast fundraiser on February 26th. Please arrive at the church by 8:45am to help set up and cook and serve pancakes!





Tuesday Morning Bible Study

We will begin meeting again on Tuesday, January 17th at 10:00am in the Church Parlor. We will be studying the Book of Judges, so join us for great discussions and wonderful fellowship. We will also be enjoying some yummy Cinnamon Rolls.

Thursday Morning Men's Study

Join us for our annual Welcome Back Breakfast at Perkins on January 19th at 7:00am. Our regular studies will begin on the 26th.

New Officer Training

On Tuesday, January 17th at 5:30pm, there will be a training session in the Parlor for all incoming Officers, both Elders and Deacons. There will also be a reception following at 6:45pm to celebrate our new officers and for those Elders who are completing their terms. All new officers and current Elders are invited to this reception. Our regularly called Session Meeting will begin following the reception.

Strive Couples Bible Study – Monday Nights in January and February @ 7pm

Everyone in the late 20s through early 50s is invited to join us for the study – *Relat(able)* by Louie Giglio. This will be a six-week study that will meet weekly on Monday Nights beginning January 23rd as we look at all of our relationships the way God intended them to be. Beginning with how we see ourselves, we develop a view of God and others that impacts the way we relate to our parents, our children, and our siblings and how we can successfully navigate friendships, dating relationships, and marriage. We will learn together how God can give us a greater purpose in dating and marriage, bring us peace in the midst of relational conflict, and help us restore relationships that seem broken beyond repair. The *Relat(able)* Study is video based, but we will have plenty of time to reflect, discuss and interact on the material. Keep an eye out for where we will meet!

New Members Class:

February 19th, March 5th, and 12th

“In Jesus Christ, God calls people to faith and to membership in the Church, the body of Christ... A congregation shall welcome all persons who trust in God’s grace in Jesus Christ and desire to become part of the fellowship and ministry of his Church.”



As this excerpt from our Book of Order communicates, Church Membership is an important part of our ministry here at

Westminster. It is the main way in which we connect with the Body of Christ.

Through membership, we can improve and commit more fully to the fellowship, the worship, and the life of a local group of believers.

Sunday Morning Adult Education:

Beyond the Pulpit

“You have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” 2 Timothy 3:15

On January 8th we will begin our weekly Pastor’s Study again on Sunday Mornings. This is a chance for us to go “Beyond the Pulpit” as we explore and unpack the morning’s scripture and message. All are welcome to join us in the Parlor at 11:00am.



Alive! will be meeting in Fellowship Hall on January 21 for a Winter Warm-up Potluck and Game Night from 4pm - 8pm!

Alive! fellowship group is open to all over age 50.



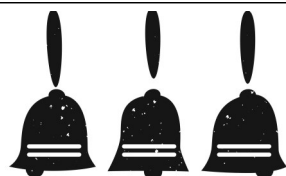
Music News



January is starting off with special music at the January 1st Service, provided by Steve Rodewald and Brooke Hamilton. The Chancel Choir will return on Jan. 8, and the Westminster Strings will be featured on Jan. 29. The first two Sundays in February will again be the Chancel Choir.

Ash Wednesday will be on Feb. 22nd, and the choir will also be singing then. If you have ever thought of joining the choir, now would be an excellent time. We especially need lady singers!

Sue Radloff, Director



Rainbow
Ringers

Rainbow Ringers is open to 3rd graders and up who want to be a part of a group.

Rainbow Ringers will rehearse on

Wednesdays at 4:45 beginning January 11. Our next goal will be playing for a Lenten service in early March.

Ann Flisrand, Director

Music Directors:

Sue Radloff - Chancel Choir
fiddlesue@yahoo.com

Lorene Strobel - Ascending Truth
lorenestrobel@gmail.com

Emma Evans-Peck - Sunshine Singers
e.evanspeck@westminsteraustin.com

Ann Flisrand - Bell Choirs
annflis44@charter.net

Spirit Ringers Spirit Ringers will rehearse on Wednesday's at 6:15. New ringers are always needed. If you read music and would like to participate, please contact Ann Flisrand (507-438-4079 or ann44flis@charter.net).

Spirit Ringers play for church on the fourth Sunday of the month.



Ann Flisrand, Director



First of all, thank you all for helping with the Pageant this year! All who participated were wonderful and all who helped with rehearsals and costumes and tech are so appreciated!


Sunshine Singers continues to meet on Sundays during worship, and Wednesday rehearsals will be starting up again on January 18 at 5:30 in the Music Room. We will be continuing to learn music to perform each month and looking forward to Wednesday Night Lenten Services!

Ms. Emma



- 1 Ethiopia Gilo
- 1 Nanc Lenz
- 1 Martha Oman
- 3 Cameron Olsen
- 6 Gary Dickman
- 7 Gordon Briggs
- 7 JoAnne Clark
- 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
- 15 Stephanie Wilkinson
- 17 Sean Coffey
- 17 Patty Rayman
- 18 Eileen Lysne
- 18 Makenna Tapp
- 20 Zachary Bridgeman
- 20 Renant Hubbard
- 20 Olive Jones
- 20 Jack Langer
- 20 Henry Langer
- 20 Cindy Momsen
- 21 Ann Flisrand
- 23 Jamie Ponopart
- 23 Michael Sydenstricker
- 24 Avnielle Kpelevi
- 26 Sidney Brown
- 27 Laura Carlson
- 27 Matt Clennon
- 27 Camille Osmonson
- 29 Harold Boverhuis
- 29 Rev. Britt Wundermachen

- 1 Toren Bires
- 2 Roland Hanson
- 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
- 8 Katherine Pacovsky
- 10 Virginia Dunlap
- 10 Andrew Sayles
- 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
- 24 Jeff Sayles
- 25 Audrey Carroll
- 26 Kasey Baker
- 26 Micah Vortherms
- 28 Vollie Stiebler



Serving Our Country

Alex Charlson
(Jacky Dietz's great-nephew) -

Bryce Gerber -
Marines

Christine Hiegel
- National Guard

Paul Mueller - National Guard


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

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.



Judy Ann Reul
November 29, 2022

In Memory of...



Weddings

Andrew & Amanda Bridgeman
October 1, 2022

Nathan & Emily Grace Toland
October 16, 2022



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



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

LUNCH TRAY PROGRAM

Thankfully and with great humility, PWC, with your help, was able to match the coins in the money jar to donate to Austin Public Schools to ensure every child is able to eat lunch. The total collected was \$447.58 and with the PWC match, we sent \$895.16. An anonymous donor gifted another \$300.00 for a total of \$1195.16!

Please continue to drop your loose change in the Penny Jar located in Fellowship Hall. A small amount turns into huge rewards. THANK YOU!





PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



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

*Witnessing to the Promise of God's kingdom, Nurturing
Faith and Engaging in Mission,*

*Working for Justice and Peace, and building an inclusive,
caring community of women.*

On December 14th, the PWC Gathering welcomed guests with beautiful Christmas music performed on the harp by Kris Nunez. Delicious hot cider was served by Shirley Hinrichs and Darlene Berhow. Rebekah and Pot Pourri Bible Study groups served the noon salad luncheon. The Annual meeting followed with a time of Remembrance for the women who passed away in 2022. A brief business meeting was held to approve the 2023 budget, install the 2023 Coordinating Team, and give back through the Thank Offering.

December 18 was an exciting time for the "Secret Sisters" to reveal their identity. Participants all expressed delight in the opportunity to give messages of support and inspiration along with small gifts during the 6-week program. What FUN it was and knowing a sister was keeping you in her prayers developed a special bond.

MISSION UPDATE - Thank you to all who followed their heart and responded to the 2022 letter related to mission needs. We received communication from Reiser Relief for Haiti (a longtime Minnesota based mission) we have supported for several years. Due to Haiti's natural disasters, severe pandemic issues, poverty, and horrific, overwhelming crime rate, it has been difficult to ensure that any donations would reach the intended children's orphanages. The recent communication described banks are now able to open a few hours a week as they have restored electrical power. Funds can safely be sent and reach the intended mission. Donations were being accepted to provide the children with Christmas gifts of toothpaste and toiletries along with a small toy. Because of your donations \$500 was sent in December so the children would receive gifts THIS Christmas. YAAAY GOD!!

Looking forward to 2023

PWC Coordinating Team:
Betsy Wuebker, Moderator;
Gloria Aanonson, Vice Moderator;
Nanc Lenz, Secretary;
Selene Schulz, Treasurer;
Cyrene Berthiaume, Jacky Dietz, Helen Hecimovich,
Shirley Hinrichs, Millie Masse, Peggy and Queensland

2023 Yearbook is available on the Stewardship Table in the Narthex for all women of the congregation. Pick one up to find out details about the morning and evening Bible Study groups, the Symbolic Supper, PWC Committees, Gatherings, and the Annual Rummage Sale.

The **Circle of Compassion** Committee has resumed services to families by coordinating lunches at Celebration of Life and memorial services. Meridee Ofstedahl will chair this committee. Watch for a sign up list on how you can assist-- it takes a lot of "guys & gals."

Throughout the year watch for Newsletter, Bulletin, and Bulletin board announcements of other programs open to all women of the congregation – more *Summer Sister* and *Secret Sister* opportunities, outings, mission giving and more.

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy
and peace as you trust in him, so that you may
overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."
Romans 15:13*

Mid October, we are hosting the Lakes and Prairies Synod PW Coordinating Team. These women from MN and surrounding states will meet to plan their year and work on a mission project. Some of them will be joining us in worship on October 17. Please make them feel welcome.

As we de-clutter our homes, garages, and closets of good usable items to recycle in our community, let us find a parallel in the words of Jesus in the feeding of the five thousand: *When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples: "Gather pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted."* Gather your good, used-a-bit items in good repair. Fill up our Rummage Sale tables and let nothing be wasted.

Gloria Aanonson
PWC Moderator



Church Directory UPDATE

New Address

Stephanie & Dewayne Wilkinson:
1701 22nd St SW, Apt 119
Austin, MN 55912

Darlene Perry
310 2nd Ave NE, Apt 325
Austin, MN 55912

Emma Evans-Peck & Jonah Fisher
308 3rd Ave NW
Austin, MN 55912

Erna Dalen
8501 Flying Cloud Dr, IL109
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

New Phone Numbers/Corrections

Bonnie & Greg Gerber:
No more landline
Greg - 507-438-2864
Bonnie - 507-606-5273

Karen & Lanny Krachmer:
Landline should be 507-433-3813

Jodi & Greg Vortherms
No more landline
Greg - 507-481-4033
Jodi - 507-208-3523

Gordy & Terry Briggs
No more landline
Gordy - 507-438-6119
Terry - 507-993-0011

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 canceled 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 canceled.

*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** or the church
answering machine for
church closings.



*She opens her arms to the poor and
extends her hands to the needy.*

Proverbs 31:20

SALVATION ARMY CEREAL CART Thanks everyone for being so generous and keeping our commitment to furnish cereal for the Salvation Army cereal shelf. Please remember to continue bringing cereal when you can as the winter months can be very hard. The Austin community needs our help. Again, thank you from the Mission Committee and the Salvation Army.

2022 Deliveries

January - 82 pounds
February - 62 pounds
March - 40 pounds
June/July - 64 pounds
August/September - 47 pounds
October - 64 pounds
November - 57 pounds
December - 96 pounds



*Ash
Wednesday*

February 22, 2022

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.

Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser

It's that time of year!



You are invited on Sunday, February 26th to the Pancake Breakfast at 10:45am, following the Sunday worship. The proceeds from the breakfast will support the high school summer Mission Trip to Milwaukee, WI, from July 16-22. We look forward to seeing you. Come hungry!

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday, January 29, 2023, at 10:30 am

Snow Date is February 5, 2023

Please plan to attend

Annual Reports will be in the Narthex on Sunday, January 22nd. Please take one if you would like to review it before the Annual Meeting. Remember to bring it back to the Annual Meeting.



Every 5 years, we try and do a **New Pictorial Directory** which is being planned for
June 22, 23, & 24, 2023

We have invited back Universal Church Directory to do a new directory for us. We will have signups later in the Spring of 2023 for the dates above. Please plan on participating! More information will be coming in the next Witness!

*Congratulations to our
2022 Chili Cook-Off Winners:
Pastor Mike & Jacey Baron*





Did you know 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

Detailed instructions on how to give online are available on the welcome table. Any questions, stop in the church office.

Happy
New Year!

Office Hours

Monday-Thursday

8:30am-4pm

Friday

8:30am - 12:30pm

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 2023 is \$37.50 per member**

Staff Email Addresses

Rev. Michael Olmsted
molmsted@westminsteraustin.com

Rev. Brittany Wundermachen
b.wundermachen@westminsteraustin.com

Director of Children's Ministries - Laura Carlson
christianed@westminsteraustin.com

Office Administrator-Cindy Jayes
secretary1@westminsteraustin.com

Assistant Administrator/Media Specialist/Co-Treasurer
-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.





Session News

Deacon News

Session News and Happenings from November and December

Your Session met in person on 11/15 and 12/20. The meetings were opened with devotions and prayers from Pastor Olmsted. Below are actions that Session took over the past two months:

Items Approved in our Clerk's Report:

Baptisms Performed: Kayden Levai (11/13/22); Deaths: Judy Reul (11/29/22); Membership: Brooke Hamilton (ROF); Lord's Supper was served collectively on 9/4/22 & 10/2/22 and individually on 12/1 by Rev. Olmsted and Rev. Wundermachen to four members.

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

Personnel/Finance discussed the 2022 Stewardship Campaign results and began working on the 2023 Budget. Staff Annual Reviews will take place the first two weeks of January. Our Annual Meeting will be held in-person on January 29th following our Sunday Service. *Session approved the formation of the Financial Vision Team to provide direction on the usage and oversight of the Hocker Fund. This task force consists of the following members: Nanc Lenz, Richard Carlson, Leanne Clasen, Jason Baron, Greg Vortherms, and Pastor Olmsted. Session also approved changing Committee Meetings and Session Meetings to 6:30pm for the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month respectively beginning in Feb., 2023.*

Facilities/Grounds continued moving forward with plans for building a two -stall garage to replace our current shed. They are working on getting drawings and specifications from Arrow Building Center, and they requested that the P/F Committee begin looking at funding options for the project. *Session approved renewing our Snow Removal Contract with KC Lawn and Snow and the approved the bid from Harty Mechanical to fix a backflow problem in our water pipes.*

Worship/Outreach oversaw The Festival of the Nativities on 12/2-12/3 and the Blue Christmas Service on 12/18. The Chili Cook-Off was a great success. There was discussion regarding having a 'Movie Under the Stars' Outreach in Jan. or Feb. *Session approved the facility usage for a Talent Show Fundraiser in March. The church will provide assistance as needed.*

Mission/Fellowship reported that all of the allocated mission monies have been distributed for the year. They helped serve at the Chili Cook-Off on 11/13 and the Potluck on 12/18. *Session approved an increase in the Mission Budget up to \$40,000 in 2023 and they approved our Unified Mission Support Pledge to PC(USA) of \$10,000.*

Nurture/Discipleship oversaw the Christmas Pageant "Cookin' Up Christmas" and the Potluck following. Discussed the Adult Ed. options be offered and a New Members Class in Feb.

The 4th Quarter Special Accounts Report from SA treasurer, Cindy Jayes, was approved. The October and November Treasurer's Report presented by Co-Treasurer, Bill Momsen, were approved. A Board of Deacons size change from 15 members to 12 was approved.

Both meetings were closed with prayer and the singing of the Doxology.

November

We opened our meeting with a Devotional from *You are the Beloved* by Henri Nouwen. We read about how *God is Mercy*. We see that we have to turn our hearts toward God to remember his mercy for us and sharing that with others. We need to let God love others through us.

We continued our meeting with a teaching moment from Betsy as she gave guidance on how to write cards with tips and guidance for what to say.

We discussed our Care List and Hospitalization Sheet to make sure we reached out to those who had surgeries or procedures done and that we had reached out with a followup or meal offer.

In Committee discussions, we assigned Deacons to find greeters through December. Our Meal Ministry was able to bring 2 meals to people.

We closed our meeting in prayer.

December

We opened our meeting with reading from our Advent Devotional *Love Reaches Down*. The Devotion talked about how God's love reaches down to us, we are forgiven and saved through God's mercy, and don't have to rely on our own attempts because God has fulfilled it for us.

We continued our meeting by reviewing our care list and hospitalization sheet. We discussed each of the people on our list, when they were reached out to, what other needs they might have, and to see if there was anybody we needed to follow up with.

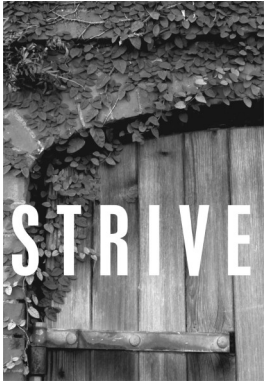
We continued as we looked into our committee business, Karen Johnson volunteered to find greeters for January and February. Our Meal Ministry Team is doing well and were able to deliver 1 meal this month.

Our Communion Preparation and Westminster Witness Committee continue to plan and organize and set up for their respective ministries. We're so thankful that with their help, Communion and the Witness are always assembled and ready for us to receive.

We closed our meeting in prayer.



Different Groups you can be a part of!



**Strive Ministries (For Young
Singles, Couples, and
Families in their late 20s to
early 50s). This group
focuses on a study with
fellowship & fun! Meets on
Monday nights.**



Alive! Ministries

(For people ages 55 and beyond)

**Meets monthly on a Saturday evening doing
potlucks, games, bonfires, you name it!**

Great fun & fellowship!

**Find your age group and
join in the fun!**



2022 FESTIVAL OF THE NATIVITIES

The December 2nd & 3rd Festival of the Nativities was a **BRIGHT STAR** again in our community - offering a Christian Celebration of the Birth of Jesus. There were over 700 guests attending.....

.....to view 250 images of that Holy Night through lighted displays of nativities, ornaments, and wall art;

.....to enjoy the message of Jesus' birth through scripture and music;

.....to fellowship with cookies and punch; and

.....for youth to create ornaments and a nativity scene.

Comments were *"beautiful, magical, wonderful, amazing, the one event I always attend each year, the only totally Christian event in our area, brings tears of joy to my eyes."* Plus many questions about *"how long does it take to set up?"*

Thank you to everyone who helped spread the information, loaned nativities, helped move furniture, set up displays and trees, donated food during set-up, baked cookies, greeted, worked with the youth, provided music, helped clean up, and attended!!! Special thanks to Rev. Olmsted, Rev. Wundermachen, Cindy Jayes, and Eric Potter for all the publicity, printing, and administrative assistance.

We have successfully completed the 5-year commitment made when we entered into this Community Outreach event. **THANKS TO ALL WHO HELPED MAKE IT A BRIGHT ADVENT STAR** in our Community. Plans for 2023 to be determined.

Grace & Peace,
Gloria & Leland Aanonson, Coordinators
Ann Flisrand & Sue Radloff, Music
Jacky Dietz & Amanda Gilbert, Refreshments
Laura Carlson, Youth Crafts



THE PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY UPDATE

God has been so good to our group of dedicated Christian women who come together to knit, crochet, or use looms to make prayer shawls and scarfs. Since June of 2019, we have gathered in this common goal. People come and go according to their schedules, and there is always a welcoming smile and a genuine greeting of appreciation that you have joined us.

Our accumulative total for the shawls given in the last three and a half years is 339. Each shawl is made with love, and in prayer, and intended to be given away to not only our church members, but to anyone who would benefit from the soft warm hug from a shawl. A cross is sewn on one of the corners, and a prayer card is attached with this verse: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled And do not be afraid." John 14:27. On the flip side of the card it reads: "This prayer shawl was made for you in prayer by the Presbyterian Women of the Congregation of Austin, MN. As you embrace it, may you feel God's love and peace."

The Prayer Shawl team extends a warm welcome for you to join us for a cup of coffee and conversation. If you want to knit, crochet, or use a loom, we would be happy to help you get started. We have the supplies, so bring a friend and join us in the Youth Room on Thursday Mornings at 9:30.

Respectively Submitted, Jacky Dietz

Come for knitting.
Come for crocheting.
Come for coffee or tea.
Just come and join in
the fun and great
conversation!
Every Thursday at 9:30
(or whenever you can).
We will be meeting in
the "Teen Room" (how
appropriate!) in the
Education Wing.

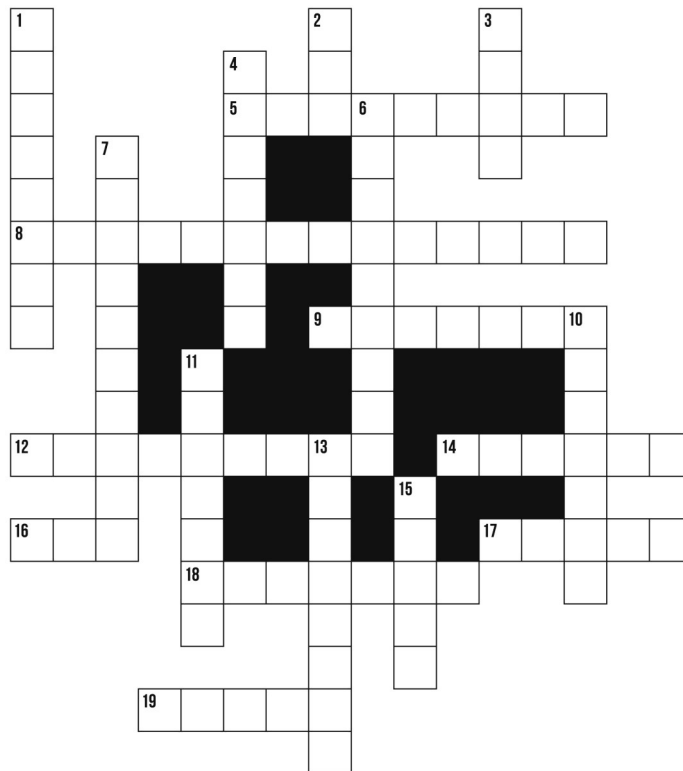


Prayer Shawl Ministry



Puzzle!

Psalm 19:1 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God.” Complete this crossword that emphasizes the natural phenomena of God’s created world.



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| 1. windy snowstorm | 12. mass of snow, earth or rocks sliding down a mountain |
| 2. thick, obscuring mist | 13. the degree of moisture in the air |
| 3. frozen rain pellets | 14. a spring that spews boiling water and steam |
| 4. an area’s normal weather conditions | 15. condensed water vapor in the atmosphere |
| 5. sudden electrostatic discharge in the sky | 16. frozen water |
| 6. violent tropical storm | 17. deluge |
| 7. shaking of the earth’s crust | 18. when day and night are of equal length |
| 8. northern lights | 19. frozen dew or vapor |
| 9. partial or full blockage of the sun or moon | |
| 10. wearing away of the soil | |
| 11. large mass of snow and ice | |

Answers: 1. blizzard, 2. fog, 3. hail, 4. climate, 5. lightning, 6. hurricane, 7. earthquake, 8. Aurora Borealis, 9. eclipse, 10. erosion, 11. glacier, 12. avalanche, 13. humidity, 14. geyser, 15. cloud, 16. ice, 17. flood, 18. equinox, 19. frost

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUEST

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January/February 2023



New Members Class to start February 19th, 2023

“In Jesus Christ, God calls people to faith and to membership in the Church, the body of Christ... A congregation shall welcome all persons who trust in God’s grace in Jesus Christ and desire to become part of the fellowship and ministry of his Church.” As this excerpt from our Book of Order communicates, Church Membership is an important part of our ministry here at Westminster. It is the main way in which we connect with the Body of Christ. Through membership, we can improve and commit more fully to the fellowship, the worship, and the life of a local group of believers.

On Sunday, February 19th, we are beginning a three-week New Members Class for anyone interested in joining our church. If you are interested in learning more about who we are and what we do as Presbyterians, then come and join us. All are welcome!