WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

3 August 2025 + 10:00 a.m.

Welcome and Announcements

Ministry Moment Recognition of Bob and Elsie Fox

Voluntary Blessed Jesus, at Thy Word Johann Sebastian Bach

***Ringing of the Bell** *The congregation rises at the ringing of the Tower Bell.*

***Call to Worship** from Hosea 11

Leader: God says: "You are my children, and I love you."
People: **The Holy One is in our midst.**
Leader: God's Spirit gathers us in God's arms and leads us with cords of human kindness.
People: **The Holy One is in our midst.**
Leader: God's steadfast love is like those who lift infants to their cheeks, who bend down to them and feed them.
People: **The Holy One is in our midst.**
Leader: Come, let us worship God, the Holy One in our midst.

***Processional Hymn 327** From All That Dwell Below the Skies *Lasst Uns Erfreuen*

***Prayer of Confession**

O God, in your loving arms, you hold this astonishing earth, the mysterious heavens, and every day of our lives. Forgive us when we live without regard for others or reverence for you. Like children, sometimes we lose our way. Yet there you are, with open arms, seeking us out, bending down to lift us up, and welcoming us home. Remind us again of who you are and to whom we belong that we may lift one another with your generous spirit. Hear now our silent prayers of confession.

***Sung Response** Lord, Have Mercy Upon Us — Hymnal, Back Cover

***Declaration of Pardon and Passing of the Peace**

Leader: Friends, believe the good news.
People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.
Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.
People: And also with you.
Leader: Let us greet one another with the sign of peace.

***Response of Praise** Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be
world without end, Amen, Amen.

Children's Sermon

Congregational Response Listen, Listen, God is Calling — Neno Lake Mungu

Listen, listen, God is calling, through the Word inviting, offering forgiveness, comfort, and joy.

Children in Pre-K – Grade 5 will go to Summer Sunday school class following the Congregational Response.

First Scripture Reading Hosea 11:1-4 — Pew Bible, OT pages 842

Second Scripture Reading Luke 11:1-13 — Pew Bible, NT pages 72

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon Kindness — Rev. Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer

Text: "I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them." Hosea 11:4b

Solo For the Mountains Shall Depart — Felix Mendelssohn

For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but Thy kindness shall not depart from me; neither shall the covenant of Thy peace be removed

***Affirmation of Faith** Isaiah 40

**Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
God does not faint or grow weary;
God's understanding is unsearchable.
God gives power to the faint
and strengthens the powerless.
Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;
But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run
and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Amen**

The Church at Prayer

Pastor: The Lord be with you.
People: And with your spirit.
Pastor: Let us pray.

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

The Presentation of Our Gifts *At this time all worshipers are invited to sign and pass the Ministry of Friendship folders in the pew racks.*

Offertory Into the West Walsh, Shore, and Lennox

Lay down Your sweet and weary head Night is falling You have come to journey's end. Sleep now And dream of the ones who came before. They are calling from across the distant shore. Why do you weep? What are these tears upon your face? Soon you will see All of your fears will pass away Safe in my arms. You're only sleeping What can you see on the horizon. Why do the white gulls call Across the sea A pale moon rises. The ships have come to carry you home and all will turn to silver glass, A light on the water All souls pass. Hope fades into the world of night Through shadows falling Out of memory and time Don't say We have come now to the end White shores are calling, You and I will meet again And you'll be here in my arms. Just sleepin' What can you see On the horizon, Why do the white gulls call across the sea A pale moon rises
The ships have come to carry you home And all will turn
To silver glass A light on the water Grey ships pass Into the west.

***Offertory Response** Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God, all creatures here below
Praise God above, ye heavenly host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***Prayer of Dedication** **Holy One, we give you thanks for the richness of our lives because of your kindness. May these gifts lift up those who are in need, and may our lives express your steadfast love in the mercy and tenderness we show one another through Christ, our Risen Lord. Amen.**

***Hymn 341** O God, Show Mercy to Us *Thaxted*

***Charge and Benediction**

***Voluntary** Allegro Maestoso Felix Mendelssohn

(*) The congregation is invited to stand.

SERVING THIS SUNDAY AT WESTMINSTER

- **Sunday Liturgist**: Rev. Gerald W. Boutelle
- **Worship Leader**: Abigail Eldridge
- **Acolytes**: Taryn Barnett and Charlotte Affrunti
- **Greeters:** The Pound Family
- **Ushers:** Sabrina Holmes (Head Usher), Ben Arnold, Michella Arnold, Kyle Duffy, Chris Hickman, Joyce King, Claudia Nash, Erin Winn
- **Safety Team:** Brad Steller
- **Music:** Brian Richardson, Soloist, Linda Andrews, Organ
- **Videographers:** Bill Deemer and Krista Steller

EDUCATION AND FELLOWSHIP THIS SUNDAY AT WESTMINSTER

- **9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. New Members Class (Pastor's Study)** Those interested in joining Westminster are invited to learn more about the PC(USA) and Westminster. Led by Dr. Keiffer.
- **9:45 a.m. – 12 noon Infants, toddlers, and two-year-olds (Nursery)** gather for play and Bible Story. This week's story: "Families Can Forgive Each Other" (Joseph and his Brothers) *Caregiver: Erin Winn*
- **10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Children begin in worship & go to Sunday school following the Congregational Response.**
  - **Preschool – Grade 5 (Third Floor Chapel)** The story will be "Rich Toward God" (Luke 12:13-21) *Teachers: Meleah and Aaron Berkowitz, Julie Robbs*
- **11:00 a.m. (Church Office) Parish Nurse Ministry** Marilyn Rigney will be available for consultation and blood pressure checks.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WE WELCOME VISITORS! Information about who we are is in our Welcome Brochure located in the pew pockets and on our website www.wpcspi.org. Please complete the Ministry of Friendship folder located on the end of each pew. If you are interested in joining, a New Member Class will be held August 3 and 10.

CORN PICKING AT GRIGSBY FARMS WAS TUESDAY, JULY 29 Thank you to *Rev. Sarah Bishop, George Botanga, Jim Bryans, Erin Ekstedt, Scott Day, Melanie and Bud Green, Harold Hale, Dr. Kieffer, Charlie King, Val Leonatti, Richard Leary, Christian, Liliana, and Nora Kennerly, Jay Kennerly, Josh Pinke, Christy and Avery Pound, Mary Ray, Krista Steller, Brad Swanson, Mike Sundquist, Jeanne and Pete Van Gieson, Jess Weitzel, and Sarah Zerfas* who picked. This corn is planted each year by Grigsby Farms (thanks to the Hale and Pound families). Following the harvest, sweet corn is delivered to Central Illinois Food Bank.

ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 1, Meleah Berkowitz began her new full-time role as *Director for Children's Ministry, Westminster Cooperative Preschool and Music Assistant* and Dr. Aaron Berkowitz began his new role as *Education Coordinator.*

NEW MEMBER CLASS met today and will gather again on Sunday, August 10 at 9:00 a.m. in Dr. Kieffer's Study. Anyone who has been visiting and would like to learn more about the church, its mission, and becoming a member is invited. The class will be led by the pastors. New members will be recognized on Sunday, August 17, following a Special Session meeting.

TODAY WE RECOGNIZE BOB AND ELSIE FOX. In March of 2020, the silver lining of the COVID-19 cloud was the dedication and collaboration of Bob and Elsie in taping worship services which were made available on our website on Sunday mornings. Our last in-person worship was March 15, 2020 and our first recorded worship service was March 22, 2020. By June of 2020, we began live streaming our Sunday worship services. None of this would have been possible without Bob and Elsie. We will forever be grateful for the gifts of filming, editing, graphic arts, and photography they have shared so generously. Over the years, Bob has also shared his gift of woodworking in the Children's Sermon bench in the Chancel and the Communion Table in the Ziegler Library. The hospitality of Bob and Elsie is unsurpassed as they have provided Lake Springfield boat rides for numerous children, youth and adults within our congregation. Last Sunday, July 27, was Bob's final Sunday behind the camera; however, he will continue to serve as Westminster's photographer.

CONTACT MINISTRIES BACKPACK COLLECTION through **today**. This year's backpacks will be filled with school supplies and distributed to the children served by Contact Ministries in August. We have already received 160 backpacks!

KNIT 2 PURL 4 MISSION AND FELLOWSHIP gathers on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. in the Second Floor Classroom. Contact Mary Jo Jenkins at 217-622-8657.

MEALS ON WHEELS DELIVERIES Thank you to the following ministry partners who delivered food to eligible senior citizens as part of the Specialty Daily Bread - Meals on Wheels program: the last week in July and first week in August. *Ann and Keith Hamilton, Vonnie Hinesley & Roy Wehrle, Mary Caroline Mitchell and Sam Simonson, Mary Ray and Gayle Wilson, Krista Steller and Mary Ray, and Eleanor and Lyle VanDeventer.*

2025 NATIONAL NIGHT OUT will be **Tuesday, August 5, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.** in Parish Hall. Westminster will once again collaborate with the Historic Westside Neighborhood Association to host the 2025 National Night Out. Join us for subs from Head West, chips, drinks, and sweets, as we meet with our local public officials. RSVP to the *Historic West Side National Night Out 2025 Facebook page* for food count if you are able, but it is not required. All are welcome to enjoy fellowship and strengthen our neighborhood bond the night of the event.

ALL COLLEGE-AGE YOUTH are invited to brunch with Rev. Bishop and Mary Ray on **Sunday, August 10 at 11:30 a.m.** Plan to meet Mary in the West Narthex following worship and catch up with friends over brunch.

YOUTH MISSION TEAM REUNION will be **Sunday, August 10 at 5:00 p.m.** at the lake home of Susan and Scott Day. All are invited to bring photos and memories to celebrate a week to remember serving Christ.

A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING on **Sunday, August 10** immediately following worship has been called by Session to dissolve the pastoral relationship between Dr. Kieffer and Westminster effective October 1, 2025, the date of her retirement.

DR. KIEFFER'S RETIREMENT PARTY will be **Friday, August 22, 6:30 – 10:00 p.m.** at Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum (212 North Sixth Street, Springfield, Illinois) Join us for dinner, drinks, toasts, and dancing. Reservations are being received through Sunday, August 10. The cost is $35 per person. Make checks payable to Westminster with "Retirement Party" in the memo line. Payments may be made on the church website Ways to Give page. Select "Special Meals" fund.

DR. KIEFFER'S FINAL SERMON will be **Sunday, August 24**, with a reception following in Parish Hall.

DONATIONS TO WESTMINSTER'S ENDOWMENT in honor of Blythe's ministry continue to be welcome. To date, over $30,000 has been received. An endowment fund will be established to support education at Westminster.

WESTMINSTER GATHERING AT CONCORDIA Members and friends of Westminster will gather **Thursday, August 14, at 11:30 a.m.** with the pastors and the director of music and the arts, for communion followed by lunch.

DMA (DON'T MENTION AGE) will meet **Friday, August 15 at 5:30 p.m.** for a potluck and program at 6:15 p.m. Dr. Scott Day will speak about "The Art of Bonsai." RSVP with weekly email link, website, or by calling the church. While RSVPs are helpful, please come if you find you are able to attend.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER AND NURSERY GUILD ORIENTATION for Sunday school teachers for Pre-K through Grade 5 and members of the Nursery Guild will meet **Sunday, August 17, from 9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.** in Parish Hall for orientation and mandatory reporter training.

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS – On **Sunday, August 17**, the children, and youth of Westminster are invited to bring their backpacks to the 10:00 a.m. worship service for the blessing of backpacks as they begin a new school year. Along with a blessing, each will receive a monogrammed carabiner with a Bible verse for their backpack as a reminder of God's loving presence on their journey throughout this school year.

YOUTH MINISTRY PARTNER ORIENTATION (Junior and Senior High) will be **Sunday, August 24, from 9:00 – 9:45 a.m.** in the Second Floor Classroom.

SPLASH INTO THE NEW YEAR YOUNG FAMILY GATHERING - On Sunday, August 24, from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m., young families (parents and children ages birth through grade five) are invited to a swim party at the Knox home (2004 Maryknoll Place) as we splash into a new year together. Please bring a towel and a dish to share! Details to follow. Friends are always welcome and encouraged

ANNUAL YOUTH KICK OFF SWIM PARTY On Sunday, August 31, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m., incoming Junior and Senior High Youth are invited to a swim party at the Batterman Home (1620 Outer Park Dr.) as we kick off a new year together. Please bring a towel and dish to share! Details to follow. Friends are always welcome and encouraged.

HOMECOMING SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 Join your Westminster family for Homecoming Sunday on September 7. We will gather for worship at 10:00 a.m., welcome the Rev. Dr. Anne Marshall, the Westminster Choir, and commission the Education Leadership Team. A brunch reception in Parish Hall will follow worship and include ministry displays, children's activities, a PowerPoint Presentation of the 2024-2025 ministry year, and the opportunity to sign up for Education, Fellowship, Music, Mission, and Service. Do not miss this new beginning at Westminster!

NOMINATIONS FOR CHURCH OFFICERS

The 2025 Nominating Committee is now receiving nominations the following positions of leadership at Westminster.

ELDER, DEACON, AND STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE (CLASS OF 2028),

NOMINATING COMMITTEE (CLASS OF 2026)

Nominations may be placed in the offering plate, emailed to the committee chair, Dr. Michael Nenaber, at m.nenaber@comcast.net or placed in the Nominating Committee's mailbox on the wall in the West Narthex by the Edwards Street doors. Please complete it by August 10, 2025. Nominees will be presented for election at a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, October 12, 2025.

2025 Nominating Committee members: *Dr. Michael Nenaber (Chair), Sam Batterman, Mal Hildebrand, Brad Steller, Carolyn Swanson, Julie Sundquist, and Bernie Wiseman*

THIS WEEK AT WESTMINSTER

Monday, August 4
9:00 AM Meals on Wheels (Senior Center)
5:00 PM Garden Club of Springfield (Parish Hall)

Tuesday, August 5
10:30 AM Staff Meeting (Pastor's Study)
1:00 PM Knit 2 Purl 4 (2nd Floor Classroom)
4:30 PM MicroPantry food distribution (Parking Lot)
5:30 PM National Night Out (Parish Hall)

Wednesday, August 6
10:30 AM Worship Planning (Pastor's Study)
3:30 PM DBSA Group (Youth Room)
4:45 PM Fiscal Committee (Pastor's Study)
5:30 PM Mission & Com. Service (2nd Floor Classrm)
6:30 PM D & D Group (Library)

Thursday, August 7
4:30 PM Personnel Committee (Pastor's Study)

Friday, August 8
9:00 AM Meals on Wheels (Senior Center)
1:00 PM Helping Hands Lunch Prep (Kitchen)

Saturday, August 9

Sunday, August 10
Holy Communion
9:00 AM New Member Class (Pastor's Study)
10:00 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary)
10:15 AM Summer Sunday School (Pre-K- Grade 5) (3rd Floor Chapel and Classroom)
11:00 AM Congregational Meeting (Sanctuary)
11:30 AM Summer Adult Ed Forum (Parish Hall)
11:30 AM College Age Brunch (Boone's)
5:00 PM Mission Trip Reunion (Day Home)

THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO DONATE TO WESTMINSTER MINISTRIES ARE WELCOME TO SCAN HERE.

Westminster Presbyterian Church
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Phone (217) 522-4415 http://www.wpcspi.org

WESTMINSTER STAFF

The Reverend Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer
Pastor and Head of Staff

The Reverend Sarah A. Bishop
Associate Pastor for Family Ministry

The Reverend Gerald W. Boutelle
Parish Associate

Dale T. Rogers
Director of Music and the Arts

Dr. Aaron Berkowitz
Education Coordinator

Mary A. Ray
Director for Youth

Meleah Berkowitz
Director for Children's Ministry, Westminster Cooperative Preschool and Music Assistant

Keri Tate, Becky Nika
Cooperative Preschool Teachers

Kara Milward, Erin Winn
Nursery Coordinators

Ellen Carpenter
Parish Nurse

Pat Hymans
Hospitality Coordinator

Lisa Runkle
Financial Administrator

Jennie Alt
Church Administrative Assistant

Krista Steller
Communications Coordinator

Gary Warnick
Building and Property Manager

Braden Barton, James Capler, Terry Gietl, Jerry McCullum
Part-time Custodians