Westminster Presbyterian Church
Springfield, Illinois

The Reverend Dr. Blythe Denham Kieffer's
Final Sermon as Westminster's Eighteenth Pastor
Sunday, August 24, 2025

The cover watercolor of Westminster Presbyterian Church is a retirement gift to Blythe painted by her sister Becky Denham Wernlund.

SERVICE OF WORSHIP

Welcome and Announcements

Introit How Lovely Are the Messengers — Felix Mendelssoh

How lovely are the messengers that preach us the gospel of peace. To all the nations is gone forth the sound of their words. Romans 10:15-16

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

***Call to Worship**

Leader: We have gathered here this morning to lift high the cross and proclaim the love of Christ.

People: We have come with grateful hearts, seeking inspiration, community and insight.

Leader: We have come to open ourselves to the power of God's gentle presence in our midst.

People: We have come to offer up the seasons and turnings of our lives and to give thanks for the gift of this season, which we have shared together.

***Processional Hymn 826** Lift High the Cross — *Crucifer*

***Prayer of Confession** **Holy and loving God, before your splendor and glory we fall silent, aware of our human frailty and sin. Who are we to speak your word of forgiveness, only touch us with your healing hand, and humbly we will respond to your call sharing each season of our lives, through the grace of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. 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 — Hymnal, Back Cover

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.

Students in grades Pre-K – 5 will go to Summer Sunday school class during the Congregational Response.

First Scripture Reading Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 — Pew Bible, OT Page 616

Second Scripture Reading Philippians 1:1-11 — Pew Bible, NT Page 196

Sermon Gratitude — Rev. Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer

Text: "I thank my God for every remembrance of you, always in every one of my prayers for all of you." Philippians 1:3-5

Solo They Can't Take That Away from Me

The way you go to bat, and serve so faithfully. The memory of all that, no, no, they can't take that away from me. The way your mission gleams. The way you set all free. The call that met my dreams, no, no, they can't take that away from me.

We may never, never meet again on the steadfast road of love.
Still I'll always, always keep the memory of:
the way we conquered strife, and danced with joy and glee,
the way you've changed my life.
No, no, they can't take that away from me
No, they can't take that away from me
We may never, never, never, never meet again
on the steadfast road to love Still I'll always, always
keep the memory of ….

***Recognition of Dr. Kieffer's Ministry** Brad Swanson

The Church at Prayer

Choir: Surely the presence of our God is in this place,
I can feel God's mighty power and God's grace.
I can hear the brush of angels' wings
I see glory on each face;
Surely the presence of our God is in this place.

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

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

Presentation of our Gifts and Prayer of Dedication

At this time all worshipers are invited to sign and pass the Ministry of Friendship folders located at the end of each pew.

Offertory Grieve Not the Holy Spirit of God T. Tertius Noble

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby year are sealed, unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. Amen. Ephesians 4:30-32

***Offertory Response** Doxology Hymnal, 606

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.

***Litany of Parting and Thanksgiving**

Pastor: Friends in Christ, today we mark a time of change as we bid farewell to Dr. Kieffer who served from 2013 to 2025 as our eighteenth pastor.

People: **For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven. Let us give thanks for our time together in this place:**

Pastor: For friendships made, for joys celebrated, and for times of nurture and growth, let us give thanks to God.

People: **For wounds healed, expectations met, gifts given and received, let us give thanks to God.**

Pastor: For our fellowship in Jesus Christ and for the love of God which sustains us in our comings and in our goings, we give thanks to God.

People: **With grateful hearts for the service of the Rev. Dr. Blythe Denham Kieffer now complete,**

Pastor: Let us pray: Holy and loving God, the Alpha and Omega, you are both beginning and end. Our endings and our beginnings are rooted in your love. Whether near or far, we are held close by your tenderness and kept safe in your loving arms. Let our time together end with your blessing. Touch all memories with your grace and peace. Help us to live with courage and joy in the future you present us. In every time and place, may we offer you our highest and our best. through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Hymn of Parting 22** God of the Sparrow *Roeder*

***Charge and Benediction** **Let us go out into the world in peace, have courage, hold onto what is right, return no one evil for evil, strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak, help the suffering. honor everyone.**

***Choral Response** Forth in Thy Name — Orlando Gibbons

Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go,
my daily labor to pursue;
Thee, only thee, resolved to know,
in all I think or speak or do.

***Voluntary** Symphony II: Finale — Charles Marie Widor

(*) The congregation is invited to stand.

SERVING THIS SUNDAY AT WESTMINSTER

- **Chancel Flowers** are given in honor of the Reverend Dr. Blythe Denham Kieffer's forty-four years of serving God and honoring everyone with special thanks for her twelve years at Westminster Presbyterian Church.
- **Sunday Liturgists:** Rev. Sarah Bishop, Rev. Gerald Boutelle
- **Worship Leader**: Paul Denham Kieffer
- **Acolytes:** Connor Hill and Lily Swanson
- **Cross and Bible Carriers:** Sam Batterman and Macklin Metzger
- **Greeters:** Kelly Robertson and Lucy and Ben Bassett
- **Ushers:** Sabrina Holmes (Head Usher), Ben Arnold, Michella Arnold, Linda Caupert, Kyle Duffy, Chris Hickman, Joyce King, Erin Winn
- **Music: The** Westminster Choir, Jay Kennerly, Tenor, Donald Tallman, Tenor, Dale Rogers, Organist
- **Safety Team:** Alan Schuermann
- **Videographers and Sound:** Bill Deemer, Krista Steller

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION THIS SUNDAY AT WESTMINSTER

- **9:00 a.m. Youth Ministry Partner Orientation (Second Floor Classroom)**
- **9:45 a.m. – 12 noon Infants, toddlers, and two-year-olds (Nursery)** gather for play and Bible Story. This week's story: "Children Can Serve God" Caregiver: Kara Milward
- **10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Children in Pre-K – Grade 5 (Third Floor Chapel)** begin in worship & go to Sunday school following the Congregational Response. This week's story is "Set Free." (Luke 13:10-17) Teachers: Meleah and Aaron Berkowitz
- **11:15 a.m. Dr. Kieffer's Farewell Reception (Parish Hall)** The congregation is invited to a reception to wish Blythe and Peter well. A PowerPoint Presentation of her twelve years at Westminster will be presented as we enjoy fellowship and an hors d'oeuvres reception prepared by Hospitality Coordinator Pat Hymans and her team.
- **4:00 – 6:00 p.m. Splash into the new year Young Family Gathering (Knox Home)** 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!

BLYTHE AND PETER KIEFFER EDUCATION ENDOWMENT OF THE WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

RESTRICTED ENDOWMENT INFORMATION FORM

1. Blythe and Peter Kieffer Education Endowment amount: currently $57,750.

2. This endowment was established in 2025 with donations celebrating the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer who served as pastor/head of staff from 2013-2025. During her tenure, she and her husband, Dr. Peter S. Kieffer, taught numerous adult education courses enriching the lives of members.

3. Purpose of Endowment: The Fund is established to support and enhance the educational ministries of Westminster Presbyterian Church, funding educational resources for all ages (including the Westminster libraries), and enabling the congregation *to teach the children, to lead and inspire the young, and to call everyone to life-long learning in the church.* (Westminster Mission Statement)

4. Earnings Distribution: Earnings are recorded quarterly and held for use in the Blythe and Peter Kieffer Education account. Additionally, the corpus of the endowment, or portions thereof, may be disbursed to further the endowment's purpose if recommended by the Support and Endowment Committee and approved by Session.

5. Annual budget recommendations from this endowment's earnings can be made by the following:
   a. Pastor
   b. Associate Pastors
   c. Adult Education and Family Ministry Committees

6. Budget recommendations need Session approval as a part of the Support and Endowment Fund budgeting process.

GIFTS FROM THE KIEFFERS - Blythe and Peter presented two gifts to Westminster which were officially received by the Personnel Committee. They are a Psalm 150 Relief Series created by Peter's father, sculptor William T. Kieffer, Jr. (located outside the Pastor's Study) and a framed quote of the benediction from the Apostle Paul's Epistles (located across from the Ziegler Library).

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HONORED BLYTHE'S MINISTRY WITH A GIFT

Norma Adams-Johnson
Beth & Tad Allen
Linda Andrews & Claudia Nash
Anonymous
Sandy Bellatti
Rev. Dr. Julie & Bill Berger
Rev. Sarah A. Bishop
Catherine D. Brown
George Botanga
Cathy Brower
Caroline Bryans
Donna & Robert Clark
Marilyn Cohen
Deborah Coontz
Virginia H. Cooper
Linda Cox
Cathy Cragoe
Sue Cull
Judy & Dan Dees
Barry Denham
Leah Duling
Chelsea & Adam Ekstedt
Chris & Butch Elzea
Joseph Fierstos
Dr. Roland & Linda Folse
Elsie & Bob Fox
Kathy and Randy Germeraad
Sally Godbey
Dr. Anita R. Hancock
Pat Hildebrand-Culler
Terry & Ron Hodel
Elaine Hoff
Christy & Robyn Hovey
Dorothy Hutchinson-Gross
Pat & Al Hymans
Mary Jo & David Jenkins
Paul Denham Kieffer
Dr. Peter S. Kieffer
Sarah Abbott Kieffer
Dr. Duk & Mrs. Seon Kim
Mary & Charlie King
Priscilla & Tim Kluge
Drs. Todd & Judy Knox
Karen Kraft
Marilyn Kushak
Eleanor & Richard Leary
Rev. Dr. Lonnie H. & Barbara Lee
Dr. Vena Long
Naomi Lynn
Joyce Matthews
Julie & Jim McDonough
Lynn & Joe McMenamin
Kathy Culver Nickell
Lynne & Paul O'Shea
Gaynell Peters
Mary & Morley Peura
Carmen Chapman Pfeiffer
Jeanne Pittman
Kathy & Arlon Rahn
Mary Ray
Sharon Reynolds
Ellen & Jan Richter
Marilyn & Jim Rigney
Dale T. Rogers
Betsy Ruklick
Lisa Demaree Runkle
Dr. Diane Rutledge
Sue & Steve Scaife
Dr. Susan R. Shea
Henry Dale Smith, Jr.
Lucy & John Stafford
Krista & Brad Steller
Judy & Harvey Stephens
Dr. Alan and Marty Stutz
Marty Sumner
Julie & Mike Sundquist
Carolyn & Brad Swanson
Megan, Greg, & Lily Swanson
Eleanor & Lyle VanDeventer
Jeanne & Pete Van Gieson
Gary Warnick & Linda Klein
Rev. Paul and Becky Denham Wernlund
Marty & Jeff Wilday
Todd Wise
Dr. Will Wright
Sharon Zook

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 and speak to a pastor about membership.

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.

THE APOSTLES' READ LIBRARY BOOK GROUP meets Tuesday, August 26 from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. in the Ziegler Library to discuss Ancient Christianity by Paula Frederickson. The group is led by Dr. Aaron Berkowitz and new members are always welcome!

COMPASS FOR KIDS TRAINING - Westminster hosts a weekly afterschool tutoring program for the Graham Elementary School. Compass for Kids is looking for ministry partners at Westminster to help assisting students from Graham Elementary. The orientation for volunteers will be Tuesday, August 26, 4:00 p.m. in the Third floor Classroom. Compass for Kids begins Tuesday, September 2 from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. We welcome Michael Natty as our new Site Director.

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 Freshmen-Sophomores bring a side dish; Juniors-Seniors a dessert to share! Friends are welcome!

RUTH AND NAOMI CIRCLE will resume on Wednesday, September 3, 7:00 p.m. at the home of Christy Pound (100 Pinehurst Dr, 62704). Judy Knox will lead the discussion of Chapter 1 in Becoming Spiritually Intelligent: Nine Paths toward Your Most Loving Self by Paul M. Burns. RSVP directly to Christy Pound at 217-971-3082.

WESTMINSTER CHOIR resumes its regular rehearsals on Thursday, September 4. Choir from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. and will have its annual Choir Retreat at Indian Point Presbyterian Church on Saturday, September 7 from 1:30 until 5:00 p.m. where we look at music for the months ahead as well as Christmas. A choir potluck dinner will follow the retreat at the Kontio's.

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!

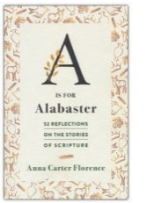
WESTMINSTER NAMETAGS The Membership Committee, chaired by Dr. Judy Knox, is encouraging members to wear their nametags as we welcome Dr. Marshall. If you have misplaced your nametag or just want a new one, there will be a sign up on Homecoming Sunday and each Sunday during the month of September. In addition to the clip, members will receive a magnetic back for attaching nametags with more ease. Thank you for helping Anne get to know us better by identifying a name with a face.

CONFIRMATION PARENT MEETING - Parents and youth are invited to a brief organizational meeting on **Homecoming Sunday, September 7 at 9:30 a.m.** in the Second-Floor classroom with Rev. Sarah Bishop. The purpose of the meeting is to meet one another, the Confirmation Teaching Teams, and to review the 2025-2026 schedule and expectations.

CHURCH MICE (INFANTS THROUGH AGE 4) will meet on Saturday mornings beginning September 13 at 11:00 a.m. Follow the pathway of cheese for a delightful musical adventure. Open to members and friends. Mr. Rogers leads Church Mice.

BRIDGES MID-WEEK FELLOWSHIP - Children in Grades 3-5 are invited to Bridges on Wednesdays beginning September 10, from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. in the Third Floor Tower Classroom. This fellowship bridges friendships among our children and across generations. It also includes mission and service projects and time together at Children of Abraham. The 2025-2026 theme is "Voices of Hope." Together with their Advocates, children will explore Biblical stories of faith and hope.

THE WESTMINSTER CHILDREN'S CHOIR (Kindergarten - Grade 5) will begin Wednesday, September 10. Led by Meleah Berkowitz and Dale Rogers, children will meet weekly from 5:00 until 5:45 p.m. This is a choir combining the full range of singers from Kindergarten through Fifth Grade and welcomes all young singers to join in the fun.



THURSDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY - Eleanor and Lyle VanDeventer have graciously offered to continue the Thursday Night Bible Study tradition (led by Dr. Kieffer since September 2014) beginning **Thursday, September 11,** 5:45 to 6:45 p.m. in the Second Floor Classroom. The source for the class will be **"A is for Alabaster,"** a book of fifty-two reflections on the stories of Scripture by renowned Presbyterian Minister and Professor of Preaching at Columbia Theological Seminary, the Rev. Dr. Anna Carter Florence. Books will be available on Homecoming Sunday and in the Church Office. New members are welcome!

TENTH BIENNIAL HEALTH FAIR - Members are welcome to visit the Health Fair in Parish Hall on **Sunday, September 14** following Sunday's service. Health professionals will have interactive stations with information on health topics. Participants include Memorial Health physicians, Springfield Mass Transit District, Illinois Assistive Technology Program, Dale and Deborah Smith SIU Alzheimer Center, Senior Services of Central IL, Sangamon County Department of Public Health, Reiki Works, Age Linc, Advanced Health Care, Prairie Dental Group, and Power of Attorney assistance. We are grateful to Parish Nurse, Ellen Carpenter, who is coordinating the fair and to the many other health professionals from our congregation and elsewhere for contributing their time and expertise.

BREAD GUILD - Thank you to Susan Day who has agreed to succeed Dr. Peter Kieffer as chair of the Bread Guild. Emily Brower, Priscilla Kluge, Mary Leffler, Mary Maddox, Steve Scaife, and Brad Swanson will continue to serve on the guild. If you are a bread baker and would like to be a part of this meaningful ministry, please contact Susan Day at **susanday@excitingwindows.com.**

THIS WEEK AT WESTMINSTER

Monday, August 25

9:30 AM King's Daughter's Board Meeting (3rd Floor Classroom)

Tuesday, August 26

10:30 AM Staff Meeting (Pastor's Study)
12:00 PM Staff lunch (Kitchen)
1:00 PM Knit 2 Purl 4 (2rd Floor Classroom)
4:00 PM Compass for Kids Training (3rd Floor Classroom)
6:00 PM Apostles Read Book Club (Library)
6:30 PM WCP Family Orientation (Parish Hall)
7:30 PM St. Andrews Sisters rehearsal (Off site)

Wednesday, August 27

3:30 PM Depression and Bi-Polar Support (3rd Floor Classroom)
4:00 PM Property Meeting (2nd Floor Classroom)
5:00 PM Deliver Meal to Helping Hands Shelt

Thursday, August 28

2:30 PM Early Stage Memory Loss Group (2nd Floor Classroom)

Friday, August 29

10:00 AM WCP Classroom Open House/ Popsicles on the Playground (Preschool)

Saturday, August 30

Sunday, August 31

10:00 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary)
10:15 AM Summer Sunday School Pre-K to Grade 5 (Third Floor Classroom)
5:00 PM Youth Swim Party (Off site)

Monday, September 1

Church Office Closed in honor of Labor Day

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