



# THE REPORTER

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

533 South Walnut Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62704

217-522-4415  
www.wpcspi.org

September 2025

WORSHIP &  
EDUCATION

CALENDAR

SUNDAY SCHEDULE:

10:00 a.m. In-person and  
Livestream Worship Service  
[www.wpcspi.org](http://www.wpcspi.org)

FAITH FORMATION:

9:45 a.m. Nursery  
Children Birth – Age 4  
10:15 a.m. Sunday School  
following Children’s Sermon  
Children Kindergarten - Grade 5 and  
Grade 6 -7 Confirmation  
11:15 a.m. Grade 8 Confirmation  
and Adult Ed Forum  
5:00 p.m. Sr. High Youth Group

September 7

HOME COMING SUNDAY  
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
Luke 15:1-10

The Rev. Dr. Anne Marshall  
*The Joy of Being Found*

September 14

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION  
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
Luke 14:25-33

The Rev. Dr. Anne Marshall  
*The Cost of Discipleship*

September 21

INTRODUCTION OF STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN  
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

1 Corinthians 4:1-2, John 12:1-8  
The Rev. Dr. Anne Marshall  
*Found Faithful*

September 28

MILESTONE MEMBER RECOGNITION  
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
Luke 16:19-31

The Rev. Dr. Anne Marshall  
*There’s No Day Like Today*

Sermon manuscripts are located in the West  
Narthex and online at [www.wpcspi.org](http://www.wpcspi.org).

HOME COMING SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

THEME: THE JOY OF BEING FOUND

WORSHIP AT 10:00 A.M. LUNCH RECEPTION AT 11:15 A.M.



Join your Westminster family for Homecoming Sunday on September 7. This year’s theme “The Joy of Being Found,” is based on Luke 15:1-10. This is Dr. Marshall’s first Sunday in the pulpit since accepting Westminster’s call.

We will gather for worship at 10:00 a.m., welcome 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.

NEW NAMETAGS



Simon, Anne, Gray, and Henry Marshall

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.

2026 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

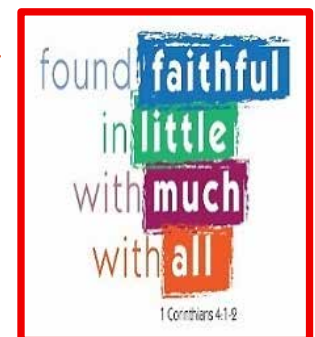
POINTRODUCED SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

*Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. 1 Corinthians 4:1-2*

**Found Faithful** is the 2026 Stewardship theme based on I Corinthians 4:1-2. God’s great love and gracious abundance are mysterious and unfathomable, but God’s guidance to us is clear. God has called us and equipped us to be faithful in our unique roles in life. Jesus desires trustworthy servants ready to do what needs to be done.

Serving on the 2026 Stewardship Campaign Committee: Julie Robbs, Chair, Linda Andrews, Adam Ekstedt, Joe Fierstos, Claudia Nash, Linda Purves, Jeanne Van Gieson, and Sarah Zerfas.

The campaign will be introduced on Sunday, September 21 and the Stewardship Dedication will be Sunday, October 26. The Stewardship letter will be mailed the week of September 22 following the Session’s approval of the 2026 budget.



## FROM THE PASTOR by Rev. Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer

*I thank God for every remembrance of you, for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Phil. 1:3,5*

Amid all the emotions I feel in this time of parting, the strongest is gratitude: gratitude for our partnership in the gospel these last twelve years (from the first day until now), gratitude for the call you extended me to be a messenger of the gospel of peace (how lovely), gratitude for the God who calls us to be kind to one another, tender hearted and forgiving (do not grieve the Holy Spirit), and gratitude for what we have accomplished together in ministry, service, and advocacy, seeking to deepen one another's faith and to bend the moral arc toward justice. What we have shared together, no one can take away!

Thank you for the celebrations and surprises planned by the Retirement Committee: Brad and Carolyn Swanson, Bill Deemer, Judy Knox, Julie McDonough, Jeanne Pittman, Mary Ray, Dale Rogers, and Diane Rutledge. The evening at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum was elegant, delightful, and so much fun from beginning to end: the delicious dinner, thoughtful toasts, special music, and dancing. Thank you for the nod to my cheerleading days. It has been my privilege to cheer the winning team of Westminster Presbyterian Church these last twelve years.

It was a joy to greet so many dear friends on Sunday following worship at the splendid reception prepared by our Hospitality Coordinator Pat Hymans. Thank you for the beautiful gifts presented to Peter and me during worship. The Shutterfly Picture Book with photos of the many varied dimensions during our life together provides



Watercolor by Becky Denham Wernlund

an opportunity for joyful reminiscing and the lovely pewter tray serves as a steadfast reminder of our affection for one another. The gift of the tandem is especially meaningful as it symbolizes the team that Peter and I are. We have been riding a tandem since we first met, and my ministry would not be possible without his loving presence and partnership. Thank you for recognizing Peter for all the ways he has enriched our life together as sermon proofer, manse keeper, earth care steward, gardener, bread baker, choir member, and best teacher ever.

The incredible generosity of so many in contributing to the BLYTHE AND PETER KIEFFER EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FUND has touched us deeply. Thank you for honoring what we have shared in the past by investing in what Westminster will do in the future.

Now it is time for us to part. We can say goodbye without regret because we have known the fullness of life together in the grace of God. When our paths cross again (after October 1, 2025) in our comings and goings or when I return for a visit, I will come not as your pastor but as your friend. Oh, we will reminisce together, no doubt, about the richness, the joy and the sorrow of the days we shared when I was your pastor; however, we will also have new beginnings to share since we parted. There will be no doubt about the affection and gratitude we feel for each other and for the God who brought us together, the God, who by sharing our humanity, taught us there are beginnings and endings, there is life after death, and for everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven. Thanks be to our beloved God.

Godspeed, my friends!

## MUSIC NOTES by Dale T. Rogers

**WESTMINSTER CHOIR** resumes its regular rehearsals on Thursday, September 4 at 7:00 p.m. and will have its annual Choir Retreat at Indian Point Presbyterian Church on Saturday, September 6 from 1:30 until 5:00 p.m. Following the retreat, the choir and spouses are invited to a potluck following the retreat at Meg and Jim Kontio's. If you have considered joining the choir, now is a great time.



**CHURCH MICE** (infants through age 4) will meet on Saturday mornings beginning Saturday, 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.

**THE WESTMINSTER CHILDREN'S CHOIR** (Kindergarten - Grade 5) will begin Wednesday, September 10 led by Meleah Berkowitz and Dale Rogers, and 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.

## WESTMINSTER'S WELCOME BROCHURE

The Welcome Brochure includes inserts offering introductory information about the history and architecture of WPC and outlining the church's ministries in Children and Youth, Adult Education, Worship and Music, Mission and Community Service and Congregational Life. It features photos of the Life of Christ stained-glass window located above the choir loft and contains a welcome letter from Dr. Marshall. Look for the updated brochures on Homecoming Sunday in our pew pockets or at the Welcome Table.



## JULY FINANCIAL REPORT by Lisa Runkle

We sent out contribution statements in early July and are thankful for the surge in giving. The financial report ending July 31 shows expenses exceeding income by \$26,009 which is a result of income being below budget by almost \$17,580 and expenses being above budget by \$8,430.

2025 Operations	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$ 650,279	\$ 667,858	\$ -17,579
Expenses	\$-676,288	\$- 667,858	\$ -8,430
Net Total	\$ -26,009	\$ 0	

## BUILDING AND PROPERTY NEWS by Gary Warnick

**A CHAMPION HIGH TEMP DISHWASHER** has been ordered from Johnson Food Service Equipment and will be installed in the next four to six weeks. Along with earnings from the Special Church Support Endowment, funds from the designated accounts of Memorial Receptions and Sue Cull's Wedding Coordinator Fund will cover the cost.

**YOUTH ROOM MAKEOVER!** Youth Room Painting Project was completed during the last week of August. Susan Day, Dave Leonatti, and youth prepped the room and Pete Van Gieson, Julie Robbs, Mike Sundquist, and Tom Owen completed the painting. New furniture will be selected by Rev. Bishop and Dale Rogers.

## 2025-2026 ADULT ED FORUM OFFERINGS

Among the many opportunities to grow in our faith at Westminster is the Adult Education Forum which meets Sunday mornings, 11:15 a.m. – 12 noon in Parish Hall. Below is a list of courses for the 2025-2026 church year.

### **Cruising the Aegean with Paul and John - September 21, 28**

Enjoy reflections on the lives and ministry of Paul and John in Istanbul, Pergamon, Ephesus, Patmos, and Athens discovered on an Aegean Sea cruise last Spring. Led by Dr. Todd Knox

### **When Jesus became God, by Richard Rubenstein - October 5**

Learn about the history of the controversy around Arianism in the early church. Led by Jim Parker

### **The Scopes Trial 100 Years Later - October 12, 19**

On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Scopes Trial, we will reflect on its meaning and insight today. Led by Dr. Aaron Berkowitz

### **Refugees and the Bible - November 2**

The Bible presents a consistent message of God's love for and expectation of God's people to care for refugees and foreigners. Led by Dr. Vena Long

### **The Innocence Project - November 9**

The Illinois Innocence Project (IIP) is a legal organization affiliated with UIS that works to free innocent people from prison. Led by Stephanie Kamel, Executive Director

### **Heartland HOUSED - November 23**

Heartland HOUSED is a Springfield nonprofit organization dedicated to ending homelessness in Springfield and Sangamon County. Led by Rev. Dr. Josh Sabo, Executive Director

### **Prisons and Prisoners in the Bible and Illinois - November 30**

We will sketch a brief history of incarceration in the western world and its development specifically in Illinois. Led by Warden and Ordained Minister Michael Long

### **Regional Ministry in Asheville - December 14**

Join Westminster youth and Rev. Bishop as they share their mission journey to Asheville in more detail.

### **The Joy of Camping - December 21**

Kristianna Eastvold will reflect on her experience at Presbyterian Camp Henry last summer.

### **The Rosenwald Story - January 4, 11**

Julius Rosenwald built schools for black children across the South from 1913-1932. Led by Carole Kennerly

### **Understanding Psychological Defense Mechanisms - February 1**

We will explore defense mechanisms which are unconscious psychological strategies that protect individuals from anxiety and stress. Led by Dr. Brian Richardson

### **Potawatomi Trail of Death - February 8**

The Potawatomi Trail of Death was the forced removal of approximately 859 Potawatomi people from their ancestral lands in Indiana to a reservation in Kansas in 1838. Led by Dr. George Godfrey

### **The Underground Railroad - February 15**

Jacksonville, IL served as a prominent stop on the Underground Railroad. Led by Dale Rogers

### **Christian Traditions of Lent - February 22**

We will explore the traditions around the church season of Lent. Led by Rev. Bishop

### **Law and Faith - March 1**

This presentation will focus on jurisprudential, moral, and philosophical implications of narrative and legal passages in the Bible. Led by Jack Sherrick

### **Law and Women - March 8**

In *Equal: Women Reshape American Law*, Fred Strebeigh recounts this untold story of how women battled blatant inequities in America's legal system. Led by Rachael Hickman

### **Women and STEM - March 15**

This class will explore untold stories of women who have had an impact on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). Led by Dr. Vena Long

### **Women and Literature - March 22**

This class will explore untold stories of women who have had an impact on literature. Led by Dr. Katie Carlson-Eastvold

### **Mary Magdalene Forgotten Founder? - March 29**

Explore how Mary Magdalene may have preceded Paul in spreading the Gospel beyond Israel. Led by Richard Leary

### **The Spirituality of Gardening - April 12, 19, 26**

We will explore how gardening becomes a form of worship, meditation, and a pathway to understanding life's cycles. Led by Dr. Katie Carlson-Eastvold

### **Theology of Disability - May 10**

Traditional Christian thought and attitudes about disability are challenged by viewing disability as an ordinary aspect of life and a source of theological insight. Led by Dr. Aaron Berkowitz

## THURSDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

### BEGINS THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11



Eleanor and Lyle VanDeventer will lead the Thursday Night Bible Study beginning **Thursday, September 11, 5:45-6:45 p.m.** in the Second Floor Classroom. The book, *A is for Alabaster*, consists of fifty-two reflections on Scripture by renowned Presbyterian Minister and Professor of Preaching at Columbia Seminary, the Rev. Dr. Anna Carter Florence. Books will be available on Homecoming Sunday and in the Church Office. New members are welcome!

## APOSTLES' READ LIBRARY BOOK GROUP

### TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

The Apostles' Read Library Book Group meets Tuesday, September 23 from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. in the Ziegler Library to discuss *Everything is Tuberculosis* by John Green. New members are always welcome! Led by Dr. Aaron Berkowitz.



## THE 2025 BAY WEEKEND, NOVEMBER 15-16

The Rev. Nanette Sawyer

Associate Pastor at Fourth Presbyterian Church  
and author of

**Hospitality—The Sacred Art: Discovering the Hidden Spiritual Power of Invitation and Welcome**

### Saturday, November 15

**Welcome Reception 5:30 – 8:00 p.m.** Members are invited to the home of Drs. Todd and Judy Knox for a gathering hosted by the Adult Education Committee.

### Sunday, November 16

**Worship Service 10:00 a.m.** Rev. Sawyer will preach.

**Education Forum 11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.** Presentation

**All Church Lunch 12:30 p.m.** We will share a community meal.

**Biography: Nanette Sawyer is an Associate Pastor at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago, with responsibility for relational small group ministries, interfaith relations and racial equity concerns. She is the author of *Hospitality, The Sacred Art*, received her Master of Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School with a focus on comparative world religions. She received her Master of Divinity at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago and is ordained as a minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA).**

## FAMILY MINISTRY by the Rev. Sarah Bishop

### YOUTH MINISTRY by Mary A. Ray

#### JR. HIGH CONFIRMATION

BEGINS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Confirmation is the process through which youth affirm the vows made at their Baptism and become active members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Three-year Confirmation Class provides a comprehensive review of our faith based on the Scripture.

**GRADES SIX AND SEVEN** meet Sunday mornings 10:15 – 11:00 a.m. in the Conference Room during worship (except) Communion Sundays. They will study the Old Testament during these preparatory years and utilize “Fathom: A Deep Dive into the Story of God” curriculum. Teachers: [Cara Barnett](#), [Meridith Bryans](#), [Joe Fierstos](#), [Mary Ray](#)



**GRADE EIGHT** meets Sunday mornings from 11:15 – 12 noon in the Conference Room following worship. The curriculum, written by Dr. Peter Kieffer, will explore Church History, Presbyterian Polity and Beliefs. Teachers: [Dr. Aaron Berkowitz](#), [Rev. Sarah Bishop](#), [Dr. Anne Marshall](#), [Mary Ray](#)

#### CONFIRMATION PARENT MEETING

HOMECOMING SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

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.

#### JUNIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP

BEGINS WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 5:30-7:00 P.M.

##### YOUTH ROOM

NEW this year our Junior High youth will gather once a month for dinner, fellowship, games, and Bible study. Ministry Partners: [Dr. Aaron Berkowitz](#), [Rev. Sarah Bishop](#), [Mary Ray](#)

#### SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP

BEGINS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 5:00-6:30 P.M. PARISH HALL

Senior High youth will meet two Sunday evenings each month, beginning September 14. High School youth will gather in Parish Hall for fellowship/games and dinner followed by Bible Study. Parents are asked to prepare the meal on a rotation basis. Mary Ray will reach out to schedule the meals. Mentors: [Rev. Sarah Bishop](#), [Cathy Brower](#), [Susan Day](#), [Kyle Duffy](#), [Mary Ray](#), [Jack Sherrick](#)

**YOUTH WORSHIP LEADERSHIP:** The participation of youth enriches our worship service and heightens their sense of belonging. Junior High serve as acolytes each Sunday. Senior High serve as worship leader most Sundays and Bible/Cross carriers on Communion Sundays. Mary Ray will reach out to schedule youth participation.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY by Meleah Berkowitz

FALL SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS

HOMECOMING SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Flyers, emails, and registration forms outlining opportunities for the 2025-2026 ministry year were sent to families in August. The following classes begin Homecoming Sunday, September 7.

**CHILDREN BIRTH THROUGH AGE 2** will gather in the **Nursery** before or following the children's sermon. Our Nursery, located on the lower level, is staffed by [Nursery Coordinators](#), [Kara Milward](#) and [Erin Winn](#), [Nursery Worker](#), [Maria Lafrenz](#), and members of the [Nursery Guild](#).

**PRESCHOOLERS THROUGH AGE 5** will gather in the **Preschool Sunday School Room** for a lesson from the **Frolic Preschool Sunday School** curriculum, which is play-based and helps our youngest children experience Bible stories and faith-based storybooks in meaningful ways.

**KINDERGARTNERS - GRADE 5** will gather on the **Third Floor** following the Children's sermon for a lesson from the **Feasting on the Word** curriculum. This curriculum follows the Revised Common Lectionary and allows everyone to explore the same Bible passage each week, which makes it easier for families to live out their faith together. The curriculum invites learners into the rhythm of the church year.

**Children in Kindergarten through Grade 2** meet in the **Third Floor Chapel** with Meleah Berkowitz and Ministry Partners.

**Children in Grades 3-5** meet in the **Tower Classroom** with Dr. Aaron Berkowitz and Ministry Partners.

**BRIDGES MID-WEEK FELLOWSHIP**  
BEGINS WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Children in Grades 3-5 are invited to Bridges on Wednesdays beginning September 11, from 4:00 – 4:45 p.m. This fellowship bridges friendships among our children and across generations. It also includes mission projects and interfaith gatherings. Our theme this year is “Voices of Hope.” Ministry Partners: [Meleah Berkowitz](#), [Rev. Sarah Bishop](#), and [Pat Roller](#)



#### FAMILY MATTERS GATHERS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1:00 PM HENSON ROBINSON ZOO

Families of young children are invited to the first gathering of our Family Matters group on **Saturday, September 13, 1:00 p.m.** at the Henson Robinson Zoo. We would love for you to join us as we visit the zoo and make connections with other families in the congregation. If you would like to arrive early with a picnic lunch, the Berkowitz family will be at the picnic tables across from the zoo entrance.

**Mark your calendar for the quarterly Children of Abraham Gatherings:** WEDNESDAYS, OCTOBER 8 AT THE MOSQUE, NOVEMBER 12 AT WESTMINSTER, FEBRUARY 4 AT GRACE UNITED METHODIST, and MAY 6 AT SPRINGFIELD ART ASSOCIATION.

### WESTMINSTER COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL NEWS

Our new school year begins September 2nd and 3rd. We have a wonderful bunch of returning families and new families and are starting the year with a few openings in our 3-day and 4-day classes. Our teaching team of Keri Tate and Becky Nika are looking forward to a school year filled with play, community, collaboration, and learning.

Highlights for the upcoming year include a new book focus of Pete the Cat, a field trip to Pumpkin Creek Farms, and watching our local youth perform in Aristocats, Jr in March at the Hoogland Center for the Arts.

Our annual Macaroni Fest Fundraiser will be held **Monday, September 15**. Let us do the cooking for your dinner that evening and enjoy a macaroni craft and music with us, outdoors on the lawn. Hope you can join us! More information and ticket purchasing will be available on the WCP's Facebook page. All church and community families are welcome!

Meleah Berkowitz, WCP Director

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH GATHERINGS IN AUGUST



In preparation for the new school year, children and youth gathered in the chancel on August 17 to receive a blessing and carabiner with a Bible verse for their backpack and reminder to “Be Kind.”

The Youth Mission Team gathered at Sue and Scott Day’s Lake Home for a reunion in early August to enjoy a cookout and share memories and photos.

Young Families gathered at Judy and Todd Knox’s Home for a Splash into the New Year Swim Party on Sunday, August 24. The Marshall Family were among the 34 gathered.

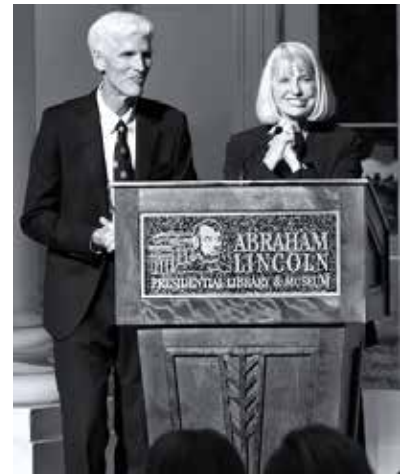
The youth helped prepare the Youth Room for the new year by priming the walls before members on a painting crew completed the space.

Youth gathered at Tanya DeSanto and Craig Batterman’s home for their Kickoff Swim Party on Sunday, August 31.

We anticipate a year filled with opportunities to deepen friendships, grow in our faith, and share in mission and service together.



## DR. KIEFFER'S CELEBRATION AT THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN MUSEUM



"Cheers to Blythe!" was the theme of the evening created by the Retirement Committee: Brad and Carolyn Swanson, Bill Deemer, Judy Knox, Julie McDonough, Jeanne Pittman, Mary Ray, Dale Rogers, and Diane Rutledge, which included drinks, special music, dinner, cheers, toasts, a five-piece Jazz Band, and dancing.

Thank you to Dale Rogers, Julie McDonough and Sarah Zervas for the cheers, and to Brad Swanson, Marilyn Rigney, Todd Knox, Krista Steller, Mary Ray, and Paul Denham Kieffer for the toasts.

## DR. KIEFFER'S FINAL SERMON AND RECEPTION



Dr. Kieffer's final Sunday leading worship included special music by the Westminster Chancel Choir, the presentation of a gift by the Sunday School children with advice for retirement, a Litany of Thanksgiving and Parting, and the presentation of gifts by the Retirement Committee including a Shutterfly Picture Book of photos through the years, a lovely pewter tray, and a tandem bicycle as a symbol of the partnership between Blythe and Peter throughout her tenure.

Following worship, Pat Hymans and her team provided an elegant reception with a variety of hors d'oeuvres in Parish Hall. After two hours of greeting members and friends (no time to take photos), Blythe enjoyed some of that delicious food in an empty Parish Hall. She was well nourished and exhausted, with a heart overflowing with gratitude and joy for the incredible partnership through the years - something no one can take away from us!

## NEW MEMBERS RECEIVED SUNDAY, AUGUST 17



**Maude Essel and John Olive Addo-Yobo by Reaffirmation of Faith** – Maude is a Registered Nurse with Memorial Hospital and a graduate of a Nursing and Midwifery College in Ghana. John holds a degree in Business Administration and Marketing Management from Central University College in Ghana and has a working background in marketing, sales, banking, finance, and logistics. He is currently working at Bunn. Maude and John have two sons, Francis and Madysen. They come to us from the Church of Christ. Their son Madysen received the Sacrament of Baptism and began at Jefferson Middle School last week. Maude's sponsor is Mervice Alah Abung and John's sponsor is George Botanga.

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**Francis Gyebi by Profession of Faith and the Sacrament of Baptism** – Francis is the son of Maude and John and senior brother of Madysen. He received his high school diploma in Ghana and will begin his college journey at the Lincoln Land Community College with plans to study engineering. *Francis' sponsor is Braden Barton.*



**Liam Kiszely by Profession of Faith and the Sacrament of Baptism** – Liam is an honor student at New Berlin High School and has attended the last three mission trips at Westminster. He presented the sermon on Youth Sunday this spring and is a leader among his peers in youth group. Liam's sponsor is his father, Tad Allen.



**Willow Cordelia Stallings by Reaffirmation of Faith** Willow moved to Springfield this summer to begin work at the Attorney General's Office after graduating from Washington University Law School. She grew up in Columbia, South Carolina where she attended a Presbyterian Church. She is a graduate of the University of South Carolina. *Willow's sponsor is Rachael Hickman.*



## BAPTISMS CELEBRATED SUNDAYS, AUGUST 10 AND 17



Benjamin Louis Arnold, Davis Scott Durco, and Charlotte Kathleen Wise were presented by their parents to receive the Sacrament of Baptism during August.

Additionally, new members Madysen Addo-Yobo, Francis Gyebi, and Liam Kiszely received the Sacrament of Baptism as a part of their Profession of Faith.



## WESTMINSTER ENDOWMENT UPDATE

As of June 30, 2025, the Market Value of the Westminster endowment fund is \$9,755,030.35. We received \$241,270.10 in two distributions from the Robyn Newton Estate and a \$15,000 gift from the A. Dale Huston Estate.

Additionally, gifts from 98 members and friends totaling \$66,995 in honor of Dr. Kieffer's ministry have been received. At the August Session meeting, the following restricted endowment was approved.

### BLYTHE AND PETER KIEFFER EDUCATION ENDOWMENT OF THE WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Blythe and Peter Kieffer Education Endowment amount: currently \$66,995.

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.

**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)

**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.

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

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

### GIFTS FROM BLYTHE AND PETER KIEFFER

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).



## PARISH LIFE NEWS by Dr. Kieffer

### MISSION AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

#### ENDOWMENT MISSION GRANTS

The Mission and Community Service Committee met Wednesday, August 6 to review grant applications for funding from Westminster's Mission Endowment. The following grants were approved:

**ILLINOIS PRESBYTERIAN HOME** received \$5,000 toward renovating their Activity Room with new paint, flooring, lighting, and cabinets.



**YMCA** received \$1,500 for their **RYSE AND SHINE PROGRAM** which will provide STEM materials for creative LEGO building and Dabble Art Lessons.

**YOUTH FIRST** received \$1,000. This faith based non-profit reaches out to inner city teens from south central Los Angeles with the love of Christ by providing positive role model mentors who have grown up in the same tough neighborhoods as the students they mentor. We will sponsor their indigenous leadership development weekend in January of 2026. Dawn Slusser Finch, one of Dr. Kieffer's mentors, is the Executive Director.



**ROOTED IN SPRINGFIELD** received \$1,000 to fight food insecurity in Springfield by establishing an east side grocery store. This newly formed non-profit was established in memory of Emma Shafer. Her parents are Westminster members Cathy Schwartz and John Shafer.

**MARIAN MEDICAL MISSION** received \$1,500 from the Betty Smith Fund. This charity provides safe drinking water to villages in Africa by building wells.



**HEARTLAND HOUSED** received a grant from the Betty Smith Mission Fund in the amount of \$30,000 to fight homelessness in Springfield. (\$20,000 to support a homeless family for one year and \$10,000 for their Risk Mitigations Fund). Rev. Dr. Josh Sabo of Heartland HOUSED met with Mission and Community Service members in July to explain the long-range plan to eliminate homelessness in Springfield.

Josh will present an Adult Education Forum on Sunday, November 23. During October, an intergenerational service project led by Maria Lafrenz and Jeanne Van Gieson will invite members to contribute to the Heartland HOUSED Welcome Home Basket Initiative. A laundry basket filled with household items is presented to each new resident.



## ANNUAL CHURCH WORLD SERVICE CROP HUNGER WALK WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5



Join the Springfield community addressing hunger in our world and community. The walk begins at Third Presbyterian (1030 N. Seventh) at 1:30 p.m. Krista Steller is an event coordinator, with Becky Martin organizing the Westminster walkers. Bill Deemer serves as the Walk Treasurer.

### HUNGER MINISTRIES AT WESTMINSTER

**HELPING HANDS** - Westminster members prepare sandwich bags for 70 community members served by Helping Hands on the Second Friday and a hot meal for 70 on the Fourth Wednesday.

Thank you to Kris Gates, Becky Martin, Julie Robbs, and Sue Scaife who prepared the August 8 bagged lunches for 70.



The August 27 hot meal for 70 was prepared by the Men's Breakfast Group. Thanks to Bill Schlosser, Pete Van Gieson, Brad Swanson, Todd Knox, Marc Anderson, and Kieth Hamilton for preparing and delivering the meal.

**WESTMINSTER'S LITTLE PANTRY** - Thanks to those who continue stocking our neighborhood micro pantry on the grounds of Graham Elementary.

### GIVE-A-MEAL-A-MONTH SEPTEMBER MENU

**Spaghetti sauce, pasta, canned or bottled 100% juice, and 100% juice or water canned fruit. High-Demand Items:** personal hygiene products, shampoo, conditioner, diapers & wipes size 3 & up, granola / nutri-grain / breakfast bars, individual cereal packs, soap.

### FAIR TRADE MINISTRY SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Equal Exchange coffee, chocolate and tea are sold to support just, environmentally sound products, and small producers. This month's sales will be **Sunday, September 21** following the 10:00 a.m. worship.

### CONTACT MINISTRIES BACKPACK DRIVE

The Westminster family donated **175** backpacks to Contact Ministries and the Berkowitz Family added a Blessing to each backpack, thank you.



### PEACE AND GLOBAL WITNESS OFFERING

*Sowing the Seeds of Peace. Zach. 8:12.*



Each September and October WPC receives the Peace & Global Witness Offering which enables the church to promote the peace of Christ by addressing systems of injustice. Our gifts are helping our neighbors in need – those who live next door, down the street, and across the globe.

25% of the offering stays with Westminster.

## COMPASS FOR KIDS BEGINS SEPTEMBER 2



Compass for Kids begins Tuesday, September 2 from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. Westminster hosts this weekly tutoring after-school program for the Graham Elementary School site. We welcome Michael Natty as our new Site Director. Michael previously worked with Camp Compass over the Summer months.

**Compass for Kids Needs Volunteers on Tuesday's 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. Compass was unable to start in August, due to the lack of ministry partners.** If you would like to be a part of this meaningful outreach, please contact site director, Michael Natty or call 217-801-1432.

### EARTH CARE AT WESTMINSTER SEPTEMBER EARTH CARE TIP



As we downsized the Kieffer library prior to our move, we discovered a few ways to divert books from the landfill. Bring children's books to the "Little Library" beside Westminster's food pantry at Graham School. Books on the Square by the Old State Capitol will buy more valuable books. The Lincoln Library accepts book donations for reuse or resale. Recycle books of little value with other paper at the curb (tear off hardback covers first).

Thank you to Keith Hamilton who has agreed to succeed me as chair of the Earth Care Team. Charlie King, Dr. Todd Lafrenz, Lynn McMenamin, Maribeth Norton, Susan Shaw, Brad Steller will continue to serve on the team. It has been my privilege to serve.

-Dr. Peter Kieffer

### REFUGEE MINISTRY UPDATE



The green card applications for the Velasquez and Alonso families have been received by the Department of Homeland Security. The families have complied with requests for photographs for Abi and Jonathan Velasquez Alonso and Luciana Alonso Artola. Both Velasquez

children are in new schools this year; Abi began sixth grade at Franklin and Jonathan started kindergarten at Graham Elementary. Thanks to twice weekly English tutoring lessons, the parents continue to progress in their language skills.

### CONGREGATIONAL CARE AT WESTMINSTER

**BREAD GUILD** Thank you to Susan Day who has agreed to succeed Dr. Peter Kieffer as chair of the Bread 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](mailto:susanday@excitingwindows.com).

**PASTORS RESUME PRAYER MINISTRY** following the summer break. The pastors gather weekly in our Chancel for prayer. Throughout the year, each member of our congregation is lifted in prayer.

**HOME COMMUNION** – If you are unable to attend worship and would like to receive communion at home on September 14, please contact Jennie Alt at the church office. Thank you to the Berkowitz family, Melanie and Bud Green, Val and Dave Leonatti, Marilyn Rigney, and Krista Steller who served communion to six members on August 10.

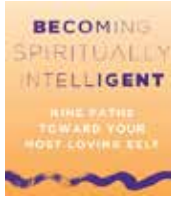
**BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS & CONSULTATION** will be available on the second Sunday of the month, September 14 during the Health Fair.

## FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

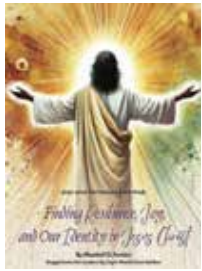
**KNIT 2 PURL 4 MISSION AND FELLOWSHIP** gathers on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. in the Second Floor Classroom. Knitters are encouraged to knit cold weather items (warm hats, mittens, and scarves) for our fall and winter donations. Contact Mary Jo Jenkins at 217-622-8657.

**PW HANDBOOKS** will be available at the Salad Supper on Wednesday, September 24. They will be available in the church if you are unable to attend.

**RUTH AND NAOMI** 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.



**ELIZABETH CIRCLE** resumes on Monday, September 14 at 1:00 p.m. in the Second Floor Classroom and will study Lesson 1, "Mary Magdelene, the Tower" from the PW Horizons Bible Study Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ by Rhashell D. Hunter. Call Eleanor VanDeventer (217-341-4032).



**LYDIA CIRCLE** resumes on Tuesday, September 16 at 9:30 a.m. in the library and will study Lesson 1, "Mary Magdelene, the Tower" from the PW Horizons Bible Study Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ by Rhashell D. Hunter. Call Nancy Canady (217-899-9890).

**DMA (DON'T MENTION AGE)**  
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 AT 5:30 P.M.

DMA (Don't Mention Age) will meet Friday, September 18 at 5:30 p.m. for a potluck and program at 6:15 p.m. Jim Kontio will speak about "Sing by Heart," which is a dementia choir hosted by WPC that was created in conjunction with SIU School of Medicine, the Dale and Debra Smith Center for Alzheimer's Research, and the Springfield Chorale Society. RSVP using the weekly email link, on the website, or by contacting the church office.

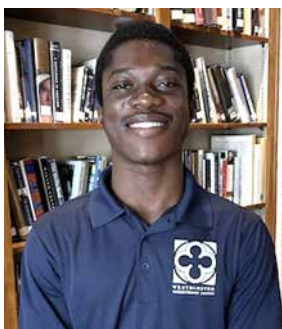


**PRESBYTERIAN MEN'S BREAKFAST** resumes on Thursday, **September 11 at 8:00 a.m.** in Parish Hall. Dr. Bryne Willey, AlignLife chiropractor, will speak about their full-body, holistic approach to good health. Please RSVP on our website or contact the church office. All ages of friends and church goers are welcome to join us.



## ILLINOIS PRESBYTERIAN HOME

The Westminster pastors will lead worship each Thursday in September, 4:00 p.m. at the Illinois Presbyterian Home.



### FRANCIS GYEBI JOINS CUSTODIAL STAFF

We are happy to welcome Francis Gyebi (pronounced, jay-bee) to our part-time custodian staff. Francis recently moved to Springfield from Ghana, Africa with his family and is attending Lincoln Land Community College.

## WESTMINSTER NEWS

### MELESTONE BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Lon Scott celebrates 91 years on September 1.

Diana and Dale Hedrick celebrate 62 years on September 7.

Judy & Harvey Stephens celebrate 66 years on September 12.

Judy & Dan Dees celebrate 70 years on September 15.

Sharon & Larry Reynolds celebrate 64 years on September 24.

Ann Lienemann celebrates 91 years on September 26.

### WEDDINGS

Jacob Schlosser and Kristen Johnson were united in marriage on Saturday, July 26 in Springfield. Jacob is the grandson of Linda and Bill Schlosser.

Kristina Hemberger and Hayden Moellers were united in marriage on Saturday, August 2 in Edgerton, KS. Kristina is the daughter of Tricia and Tim Hemberger.

Nate Fierstos and Kelly Kiel were united in marriage, Saturday, August 8 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Nate is the son of Anneliese and Joe Fierstos.

Mark Allen and Becky Kim were united in marriage on August 30 in Le Grande, OR. Mark is the son of Cathy and Bill Allen, and the grandson of Nancy and Rich Canady.

Jill Stafford and Adam Lee will be united in marriage on Saturday, September 13 in Westminster's Sanctuary. Jill is the daughter of Lucy and John Stafford.

### NEW ARRIVALS

Congratulations to Linda and Tom Purves on the birth of their grandson, William Kirkland Arsenault June 9, 2025 to The Rev. Allison and Matt Arsenault. William's big sister is Coralie.

### CONGRATULATIONS TO

New member Francis Gyebi who received a \$1,000 Scholarship from Westminster to attend Lincoln Land Community College.

### THANK YOU TO

Linda and Tom Purves for the donation and delivery of the solid wood desk for the Financial Administrator's office.

Karen and Andy Sherrick for the donation of three white round tables and seventeen chairs. The chairs are located in the Second Floor Classroom.

Carolyn and Brad Swanson for the yard waste grinder.

Blythe and Peter Kieffer for the garden tools and leaf blower.

### NEW ADDRESSES

Blythe and Peter Kieffer, 1040 North Lake Shore Drive, Unit 30A, Chicago, IL 60611

Anne and Gray, Henry and Simon Marshall 2106 Briarcliff, Springfield, IL 62704

Joyce Olson, 1071 S. Moorings Dr. Apt 5125, Arlington Heights, IL 60005

Linda and Bill Schlosser, 2307 Silverstone Ct, Springfield, IL 62704 \*Starting on 9/15/25

Betsy and Rick Shephard primary address will be: 1696 Nichols Road, P.O. Box 252, Beulah, MI 49617

Jay & Nell VanSice, Verena at the Reserve, 119 Reserve Way #408, Williamsburg, VA 23185

### COMMUNITY EVENT

Join the Sound Celebration Chorus on Saturday, September 13, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m., at the Hoogland Center for the Arts. Join the chorus for an afternoon of adventure for their program "Sweet Adeline on Safari." Tickets can be purchased at [www.hcfta.org/tickets](http://www.hcfta.org/tickets).



## TENTH BIENNIAL HEALTH FAIR

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Come learn about good health practices at interactive stations on Sunday, September 14 in Parish Hall following worship. Information on many topics will be presented, and several personal screenings and assessments will be available.



**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.

## MILESTONE MEMBERSHIP RECOGNITION

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

On Sunday, September 28 we will honor members who joined Westminster Presbyterian Church in 1975, 1970, 1965, 1960, 1955 during worship.

Fifty-Year Members:	Eric Schmidt	
Fifty-Five-Year Members:	Nancy Canady	Rich Canady
	Ed Caupert	Linda Caupert
	Sue Cull	James Hajek
	Judy Huston	Tom Janeway
	Don Myers	Louise Myers
	Jeanne Pittman	Fred Prillaman
	Judy Prillaman	Mary Ray
	Dr. Will Wright	
Sixty-Year Members:	John Blythe	Gregory Case
	Sheila Jones	Vivian Keithley
	Ruth Schmidt	H. Dale Smith, Jr.
	Becky Stirrett	Bob Wire
Sixty-Five Year Members:	Mary Alice Davis	John Thompson
Seventy-Year Members:	Dee Tozer	

We are grateful for all the ways these members have enriched the life of our congregation over the years. The congregation is invited to a reception in the West Narthex following worship to express our congratulations and appreciation.

THE WOMEN OF WESTMINSTER ARE INVITED TO  
THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL WESTMINSTER WOMEN'S SALAD SUPPER  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24  
6:00 - 8:00 P.M. IN PARISH HALL

MUSICAL PRESENTATION:  
"GOD WHO SEES"  
BY  
TESTAMENT TREBLES

Enjoy an evening with your Westminster sisters and bring your favorite salad.

Sign up on 9/7 Homecoming Sunday and 9/14 in the West Narthex  
or RSVP to Jennie Alt 217-522-4415 or jalt@wpcspi.org.

### Westminster Staff

**The Reverend Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer**  
Pastor and Head of Staff  
bkieffer@wpcspi.org

**The Reverend Dr. Anne Marshall**  
Co-Pastor  
amarshall@wpcspi.org

**The Reverend Sarah A. Bishop**  
Associate Pastor for Family Ministry  
sbishop@wpcspi.org

**The Reverend Gerald W. Boutelle**  
Parish Associate

**Dale T. Rogers**  
Director of Music and the Arts  
drogers@wpcspi.org

**Dr. Aaron Berkowitz**  
Education Coordinator  
berkowitz@wpcspi.org

**Mary A. Ray**  
Director for Youth  
zkarmar.mr@gmail.com

**Meleah Berkowitz**  
Director for Children's Ministry,  
Westminster Cooperative Preschool  
and Music Assistant  
mberkowitz@wpcspi.org  
director@westminster-preschool.org

**Keri Tate, Becky Nika**  
Cooperative Preschool Teachers  
keri@westminster-preschool.org  
becky@westminster-preschool.org

**Kara Milward, Erin Winn**  
Nursery Coordinators

**Ellen Carpenter**  
Parish Nurse  
ranell@comcast.net

**Pat Hymans**  
Hospitality Coordinator  
alnpat5@yahoo.com

**Lisa Runkle**  
Financial Administrator  
lrunkle@wpcspi.org

**Jennie Alt**  
Church Administrative Assistant  
jalt@wpcspi.org

**Krista Steller**  
Communications Coordinator  
ksteller@wpcspi.org

**Gary Warnick**  
Building and Property Manager  
gwarnick@wpcspi.org

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

*Reporter folding and mailing will be on Wednesday, October 1 at 12:30 p.m.*