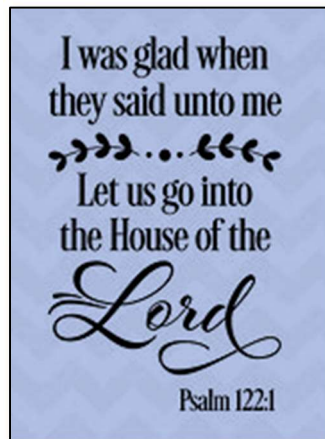


**Come! All You People!  
Come and Praise Your Maker,  
Come Now and Worship the Lord!**

Today, I am thinking about an experience of a friend while visiting a city in Africa. Early on Sunday morning, from his window he heard one man singing. And then a drum joined in. And then another voice. Soon there was a chorus of ten or twenty.



The voices began to move down the street, so he dressed quickly and followed them. At intersections, other streams of already singing people joined the throng. Mothers with babies strapped to their backs. Big brothers with siblings on their shoulders. Young ladies dancing. Until a vast crowd of young and old found themselves in the city center, praising God. Cares were forgotten. Joy was multiplied.

As one song exhausted itself, another would be offered until church bells began to ring and the gathered worshippers from every corner of the city dispersed, each to their own church, where they would hear the word of God read and preached and offer up prayers for themselves, their community, and the world.

Over this summer, we have been one church in three places, but this month, we will once again be one church in *one* place, first at Camp Fellowship on September 3, then back in our sanctuary on September 10. As we return to our sanctuary, we will notice that there are some new faces worshipping among us! Perhaps they are people who found Westminster through WOW, or Dinner Church, or who started worshipping with us in the sanctuary on Sunday morning this summer. Perhaps this new worshipper is one of our children, first grade and up (by age or development), who are now being invited to join us for the whole hour of worship (learn more about that on page 6).

In my imagination, we will be like those streams of people in my friend's story. We will come from every direction, bringing our own songs to share, glad to see one another and glad to join our voices in joyful praise to the One who has sent us out and now gathers us once again.

***Come all you people! Come now and worship the Lord!***

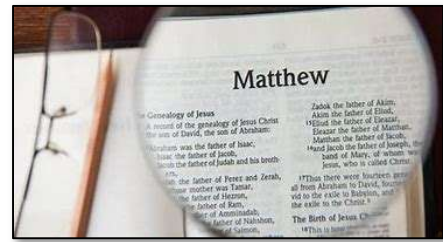


*Caroline*

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# One Church. One Book.

This fall at Westminster, we have chosen to center our worship, study, and service around the Gospel according to Matthew. The Reverend Dr. Brian Blount, now President Emeritus of Union Theological Seminary writes that “the gospel of Matthew is church-building literature, a blueprint for the establishment, sustenance and encouragement of a community of Jesus believers.”



We are excited for the conversations that will be shared in Sunday School classes and around family tables as children and adults, new-to-us friends, and long-time members, read and study this book together. It is the story of Jesus’ life, his teaching, his followers and his opponents. It is the story of Jesus’ death and resurrection and the mission of those he sent into the world. It is a story told, then and now, to a diverse people living in a divided and pluralistic world who want to walk together in the way of Jesus. It is a story with the power to build, unite, and direct the church.

If you haven’t read the Gospel according to Matthew in its entirety ever or recently, we encourage you to pick it up and read it through. Then join us each week at Sunday Study (9:00 A.M. for adults) and Sunday School (9:00 A.M. for children and youth) followed by worship at 10:00 A.M. for a time of learning and building church together.

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## One Book. One Church. Sermon and Study Series: The Gospel According to Matthew—This is *Our* Story

*Lectio Continuo* is the fancy Latin way of saying, “read the whole thing from beginning to end.” This is what we are going to be doing this fall at Westminster with the Gospel according to Matthew.

Here you will find the reading plan and the sermon topics for each Sunday in September. On page 20 is a handy chart showing the entire three-month reading plan and sermon topics. Tear it off and keep it near your Bible for easy reference.

As you read, you might ask yourself some simple questions:

- What does this text tell me about Jesus?
- What does this text tell me about God?
- How does this text intersect with my life?
- What does this text tell me about the kind of “kingdom on Earth” Jesus came to build?

**Sept 3: Worship on the Water Finale**  
*The church gathers on this day at Camp Fellowship with neighbors on the lake.*

*Plan to remain after worship to enjoy a church family picnic.*

**Note:** *There will be no Sunday school and no service at the Cokesbury Campus on this day.*

**Sept 10: Let Me Tell You About Jesus**  
*Communion*  
† Matthew 1:1-15

**Sept 17: Forgiveness and Stuff**  
† Matthew 18:21-35

**Sept 24: Every Family Has That Crazy Cousin**  
† Matthew 3:1-17

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# Westminster Happenings

**Note: NO service at Cokesbury Campus. NO Sunday school.**

**Sunday  
Sept 3** **10:00 A.M. Worship on the Water at Lake Greenwood—Finale!**  
Enjoy special music, special worship at Camp Fellowship in Waterloo, SC.  
Stay for a tasty lunch under the pavilion by the water.

**Monday  
Sept 4** *Church office is closed for the Labor Day holiday.*

**Tuesday  
Sept 5** **Presbyterian Women**  
Come together in the Choir Room at 11:30 A.M.  
Start the new PW year right! *See page 5 for details.*

**Mindful Greenwood**  
Meet in the Branches Sunday school room upstairs at 6:30 P.M.  
Open yourself and quiet your mind to hear the still, small voice.

**Wednesday  
Sept 6** **CommUniversity at Lander: Grier Student Center/Assembly Plaza**  
Reach out to Lander students from 11:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.  
Connect with students and let them know Westminster cares! (See page 8).

**Books & Brown Bags Study**  
Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.  
Dive into our new book selection, *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality*.  
*See page 7 for more information.*

**Thursday  
Sept 7** **Rainbow Fellowship**  
Connect with friends in the Youth Room upstairs at 6:00 P.M.  
Combine Bible discussion and creative crafts.

**Sunday School** (*see page 6*)  
Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room.  
Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing.

**Sunday  
Sept 10** **Let Me Tell You About Jesus**  
*Reunion Sunday/Communion/Food Collection for Food Bank*  
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.  
Remember Jesus' ancestors and how they relate to who He is.

**Stated Session Meeting**  
Meet in the parlor immediately following worship.  
Conduct the business of the church, as led by the Holy Spirit.

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## Westminster Happenings, *continued*

**Tuesday  
Sept 12**

### **Mindful Greenwood**

Meet in the Branches Sunday school room upstairs at 6:30 P.M.  
Practice patience in your meditation discipline

**Wednesday  
Sept 13**

### **Books & Brown Bags Study**

Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.  
Share your responses as we seek Biblical truths addressing LGBTQ+.

**Sunday  
Sept 17**

### **Sunday School**

Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room.  
Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing.

### **Forgiveness and Stuff**

*Guest Preacher Katie Henderson (see page 7)*  
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.  
Recognize that forgiveness is more than a “one and done.”

### **Sunday Sustenance with Chef Rob & Friends**

Feast in the Fellowship Hall immediately following worship.  
Learn about church disaster preparedness progress (*see page 11*).

**Tuesday  
Sept 19**

### **Mindful Greenwood**

Meet in the Branches Sunday school room upstairs at 6:30 P.M.  
Open yourself and quiet your mind to hear the still, small voice.

**Wednesday  
Sept 20**

### **Deadline for Contributions to Ukraine Relief—see page 9**

### **Books & Brown Bags Study**

Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.  
Consider the messages from our current book.

**Thursday  
Sept 21**

### **Rainbow Fellowship**

Connect with friends in the Youth Room upstairs at 6:00 P.M.  
Make a difference by making sandwiches for the Soup Kitchen.

**Sunday  
Sept 24**

### **Sunday School**

Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room.  
Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing.

### **Every Family Has That Crazy Cousin**

Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.  
Imagine being the one called to cry out in the wilderness.

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## Westminster Happenings, *continued*

**Sunday** | **Youth Group Gathering**  
**Sept 24,** Meet in the Fellowship Hall from 5:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.  
*continued* Engage with other middle school and high school students.

**Monday** | **Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Henderson Lecture and Reception**  
**Sept 25** “Hope for the Many Churches where Few are Gathered” (*see page 10*).  
Join our Western Cluster friends in this important learning opportunity.

**Tuesday** | **Healthy Learners Adult Spelling Bee**  
**Sept 26** Cheer on the Westminster Wonders team at 6:00 P.M. at Emerald High.  
Help raise money for Greenwood’s Healthy Learners program (*page 8*).

**Mindful Greenwood**  
Meet in the Branches Sunday school room upstairs at 6:30 P.M.  
Open yourself and quiet your mind to hear the still, small voice.

**Wednesday** | **Books & Brown Bags Study**  
**Sept 27** Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.  
Consider how to love all who are created in God’s image.

**Thursday** | **Crossover Contemplatives: Interfaith Discussion and Book Club**  
**Sept 28** Gather in the Youth Room at 6:30 P.M.  
Look for what unites rather than divides in world religions.

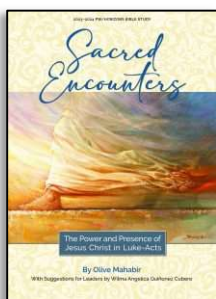
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## New Year, New Study for Presbyterian Women

Westminster’s cadre of Presbyterian Women will resume their monthly meetings on Tuesday, September 5, at 11:30 A.M. in the Choir Room. Note that the regular schedule is now the first *Tuesday* of every month.



Beth Hammond has graciously volunteered to moderate the group. Beth says, “Bring a bag lunch to enjoy while we chat; tea and water will be provided. Our first lesson will be taught by our pastor, Caroline Dennis. The study book is *Sacred Encounters* and is available for purchase (\$10) in the church office. We are looking forward to a great year!”



According to the PW website ([presbyterianwomen.org](http://presbyterianwomen.org)), “Within the pages of this study, Olive Mahabir invites you to consider Jesus and Jesus’ disciples who shared the Good News through sacred encounters with everyday people.

The Gospel According to Luke and the book of the Acts of the Apostles, or Luke-Acts, “one story in two parts,” demonstrate the unfolding of God’s redemptive purposes in human history and present a distinctive perspective on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Written by Luke, a physician and traveling companion of Paul, the message to the early Christian community (and to us) is radical, inclusive, and hope-filled.”



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## “Allow the Children to Come to Me” Children and the Gospel According to Matthew

Some people brought children to Jesus so that he would place his hands on them and pray. But the disciples scolded them. “Allow the children to come to me,” Jesus said. “Don’t forbid them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people like these children.”

Matthew 19:13-14 CEB



As stated in PCUSA Book of Order (F-1.0304) the Great Ends of the Church are:

- The proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;
- The shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
- The maintenance of divine worship;
- The preservation of the truth;
- The promotion of social righteousness;
- The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

Welcoming and nurturing children is central to our identity and calling at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Sometimes children (and adults) need spaces and lessons that are made just for them, like Sunday School. Very often, children also need spaces where they mix and mingle with trusted adults, like in worship or at fellowship meals. When children are among us, they both learn from us and teach us. They need to both receive assistance and offer assistance to others.

This fall, our children, will have an opportunity to be engaged in “children only” Christian nurture and also in multi-generational worship, nurture, fellowship, and service. Families are invited to start their Sunday morning with us at 9:00 A.M. when there will be Children’s Sunday School in the Education Wing and Adult Sunday School in the Choir Room. At 9:45 A.M., parents can gather children after Sunday School for Fellowship Time in the Courtyard or Narthex and then bring the whole family to worship at 10:00 A.M.. Infants, toddlers and preschoolers will remain in worship through The Time for All God’s Children, while children ages first grade and up (by age or development) will remain in worship with their church family.

We anticipate that this fall to be a season of transition while parents and the congregation learn how to welcome children into worship with us, and the children become accustomed to this new milestone. We adults will make space for the natural wiggles and questions of our little ones. They will make space for our need for stillness and quiet. Together we will grow into one joyful, welcoming, worshipping body, showing forth the kingdom of heaven to the world!

- 9:00 Sunday School:**  
Children and Youth: Lower-Level Education Wing  
Adults: Choir Room
- 9:45 Fellowship:** Narthex, Sanctuary, Hallways
- 10:00 Worship:** Sanctuary



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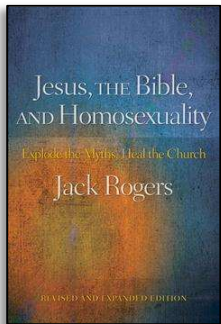
# Books & Brown Bags Group Tackles Tough Topic

**Wednesday Nights**  
**Fellowship Hall @ 6:00 P.M.**  
**Bring your own light supper or snack**



How are Christians called to deal with sex- and gender-related issues? This is a perennially controversial topic for the church. PC(USA) notably takes a “big tent” stance, welcoming all people, because we are all created in the image of God.

The Wednesday night Books & Brown Bags discussion group will consider the biblical basis for that position as they explore *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church*. In this revised and expanded best-seller, evangelical theologian and former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Jack Rogers makes a biblical case for equal rights for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT).



Throughout history, he observes, Christianity has moved towards ever-greater openness and inclusiveness. Today's church is led by many of those who were once excluded: people of color, women, and divorced and remarried people. He argues that when we interpret the Bible through the lens of Jesus' redemptive life and ministry, we see that the church is called to grant equal rights to all people.

*Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality* describes Rogers' own change of mind and heart on the issue, charts the church's history of using biblical passages to oppress marginalized groups, argues for a Christ-centered reading of Scripture, debunks stereotypes about people who are LGBT, refutes the conventional wisdom about the texts that are often used against people who are LGBT, and presents ideas for how the church can heal itself and move forward again. A fascinating combination of personal narrative, theology, and church history, this book is essential reading for all concerned with the future of the church and the health of the nation.

Copies of the book are available from your favorite online bookseller. Plan to join us on Wednesday, September 6 as we begin delving into this tough topic.

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## Welcome Katie Henderson to Our Pulpit

On September 17, Katie Henderson, Assistant Director for Programs at Camp Fellowship, will provide the morning message. Katie grew up on the South Texas coast in Rockport, TX. She is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and earned her Master of Divinity at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

At age 16, Katie began to discern God's call in her life to serve in camping and retreat ministry. Over the past decade, God has provided her with endless opportunities to love creation and explore faith with the young and the young at heart.



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## M&O Spearheading Presence at Lander CommUniversity Event

Every Fall, Lander University invites businesses and organizations throughout our community to welcome students and make them aware of all that Greenwood has to offer. This event is called *CommUniversity*, and it takes place this year on Wednesday, September 6 from 11:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. The Mission & Outreach Committee sees this as a terrific opportunity to introduce Lander students to Westminster and let them know that we care about them.



M&O cochairs Richard Wilson and Laine Horowitz are planning to give interested students information about church and our programs, along with notepads and pens emblazoned with our logo to help them remember us. Volunteers are needed to help set up and take down the table display, as well as to man the table and greet students during the event. If you are interested in being part of the fun, contact the church office (864.229.3595).

## Return of the Rainbow Fellowship

Summer is over, students are returning to school, and it's time for the Rainbow Fellowship to reconvene. Building on last year's success, the group is expanding both its schedule and its vision.

Starting on Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, the Rainbow Fellowship will meet on the first *and* third Thursdays of the month, gathering with friends in the Youth Room upstairs at 6:00 P.M. Each get-together will include time for connecting with friends and learning about the Bible.



On the first Thursday of the month, the session will also include time for crafting and art creation. The third-Thursday meetings will feature a service project. Building on the success of Dinner Church, Rainbow Fellowship members will make a difference by making sandwiches for our neighbors who rely on the Greenwood Soup Kitchen for some of their meals. What a great way to spread the Good News while having a good time!

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## Good Spellers Wanted for Westminster Wonders Bee Team

On Tuesday, September 26, dozens of good spellers from all around Greenwood will gather at Emerald High School to put their abilities to the test for a good cause: the annual Healthy Learners Adult Spelling Bee.

Spectators will cheer on 4-person teams vying for bragging rights about their spelling prowess while raising money for Healthy Learners, a local nonprofit. If you'd like to be on the Westminster Wonders spelling team, contact the church office. And to cheer them on, come to Emerald High School at 6:00 P.M. on the September 26<sup>th</sup>.



Healthy Learners is on a mission to transform the futures of children in poverty in South Carolina by keeping them healthy so they can learn. Working with teachers and healthcare providers, Healthy Learners identifies children with medical or dental needs, and provides both transportation and access to top professional care.



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## Help for the Ukraine: Our Family Connection



By now, you have probably connected with Nigel and Christy Irons and their beautiful family (see below). You may not know, however, that their children were adopted from Ukraine. Christy will be visiting the Ukraine at the end of September on a mission of mercy, taking supplies directly to people who need them. Here's a message from Christy:

“Since adopting from Ukraine in 2014, 2015, and 2018, we have maintained relationships with many wonderful people that we met there. One of our sweetest friends was killed the second day after Russia invaded in a firefight in Kyiv. I have come in contact with a group that will be providing wheelchairs to hospitals in Ukraine for injured military.

“I will be going to Ukraine at the end of September to take medical supplies and formula that we have been collecting over the last months. Upon speaking to one of our friends in Bucha (right outside of Kyiv), she asked for ibuprofen/acetaminophen (standard dosing), tourniquets, manual BP cuffs, and low-dose aspirin.”

The Mission & Outreach Committee is mobilizing to help Christy Irons gather much-needed infant formula and basic medical supplies to take with her when she travels there at the end of the month. **On Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, a special collection receptacle will be available in the narthex to collect your donations.**

September 20<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for all contributions. Contact Christy for more information. And please pray for her safety as she journeys into this war-torn part of the world.



*The Irons family children: TC (age 24), Celee (23), Judsen (2), Joseph (21), Mia (18), Corban (17), Atticus (20), Asher (13), Adam (11), and Auggie (passed away in 2017 at 6 years old)*

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## Cluster Meeting at WPC on September 25

What is the future of small congregations—the fastest growing segment of North American Christianity? Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is tackling that burning question in their 2023 Henderson Leadership Conference. And Westminster is hosting our Trinity Presbytery Western Cluster colleagues for a shared viewing of the keynote presentation from that conference, entitled “Hope for the Many Churches Where Few Are Gathered.” The event takes place Monday, September 25



from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall, and includes the lecture and a dessert reception.

The Henderson Conference keynote speaker, Will Willimon, has been listening to pastors

and congregations in hundreds of American churches and has a hopeful, Christ-centered word for small churches and their leaders.

The Western Cluster is one of the most active in Trinity Presbytery. Churches in our cluster: Abbeville, First Presbyterian-Greenwood, Hodges, Little Mountain, Lowndes, New Faith, Ninety Six, Upper Long Cane, Ware Shoals, and Westminster.

## Church Family Special Days

Best wishes and sincere prayers for these members and friends with birthdays in September:

- ❖ 15<sup>th</sup> – Josh Wicker
- ❖ 16<sup>th</sup> – Willow Wicker
- ❖ 19<sup>th</sup> – John Sholar
- ❖ 24<sup>th</sup> – Larry Dozier
- ❖ 27<sup>th</sup> – Elizabeth Watkins



*If you haven't already done so, please send your family's special dates to the church office (wpcgwd1@gmail.com) or call 864.229.3595.*

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## Be On the Lookout



The Worship & Music Committee is looking forward to getting your feedback about our worship experiments and experience through the summer. Be on the lookout for an email from the church office inviting you to click on a survey link to let us know what you think.

Not fond of online stuff? Good news! Paper copies of the survey will be available in the narthex on Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup>. You can fill those out and slip them into the drop box by the office door.

Survey responses will be anonymous. Results will be helpful to the W&M Committee in future planning. Thank you!

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## Suicide Prevention a Priority in September

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the United States. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) recognizes the entire month of September as National Suicide Prevention Month. Their hope is to rally the public to create awareness of this leading cause of death, and inspire more and more people to learn how they can play a role in their communities in helping to save lives.



If you or someone you know is experiencing a crisis, help is available! Dial 988 for the suicide and crisis lifeline, 24 hours a day, every day.

# September is National Disaster Preparedness Month

## WPC Progress Report September 17

What should you do if an emergency occurs while you are worshipping? Or gathered in the Fellowship Hall? Or just happen to be on campus? The Business Affairs Committee has put together an ad hoc task force to address exactly these questions.



As part of the September 17 Sunday Sustenance lunch and fellowship, team member Arthur Gillespie will provide an update on the group’s progress on equipping us so that we are prepared for appropriate response for the emergencies that are most likely to affect our church. He will also offer information on some key basic response options. You don’t want to miss this vital update!

Cast all your anxiety on God, because God cares for you.

1 Peter 5:7

### Stewardship Snapshot

The Stewardship Snapshot is a regular report from the Session to the *Westminster Times* newsletter. Please note that because of the newsletter publication schedule vs. timing of month-end close, these reports will typically be about six weeks behind.



#### July 2023

|                       | July Actual | Monthly Budget | Year-to-Date Actual | Year-to-Date Budget |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Total Income</b>   | \$34,500    | \$18,030       | \$129,373           | \$123,713           |
| <b>Total Expenses</b> | \$16,146    | \$20,732       | \$132,110           | \$142,500           |
| <b>Net Gain/Loss</b>  | \$18,353    |                | -\$2,737            |                     |

Of special note this month was the transfer of \$15,000 from the investment account to our banking checking account. This was done early in July to cover the \$15k+ check we wrote to Dixie Communications for replacement, monitoring, and reprogramming of the fire alarm system; booked as a major capital expense on this report. Having not done this on a timely basis would have created a negative balance in our checking account.

Please keep in mind that earlier in the year we had received a common stock donation of \$27,000 for a member annual pledge that went directly into the investment account. If you consider the current \$11,500 cash transfer to our checking as coming from the stock donation intent, then the remaining balance in the investment account that is available to transfer for operating revenue (as Cash) is \$15,500.

*Please direct any questions about church financial matters to our treasurer, Len Bornemann, or any member of the Business Affairs Committee.*





## Vibrant VBS Reaps Big Harvest

Throughout the week of August 6<sup>th</sup>, the Fellowship wing echoed with our children's voices as they learned, laughed, sang, and danced their way through the first Westminster VBS since 2016! The theme was "Planting Seeds of Faith: Little Things That Turned Out Big." And our *little* VBS definitely yielded *big* results!

Kids age 3 to 12 were invited, and we enjoyed good participation. The evenings were designed to be both fun and educational, with a lot of great stories shared and hands-on activities completed. Our children especially enjoyed:

- "Parable of the Sower" Story Walks to the prayer garden, to weed the path and to the raised bed garden to pick cucumbers and tomatoes (see the cross in the tomato at right)
- Making and eating dirt cups with Ms. Kathleen (snack leader)
- Picking up quarters with their toes with Mr. Rob (recreation leader)
- Painting T-Shirts with Ms. Kathy (art leader)
- Singing "Faith as Small as a Mustard Seed" with Pastor Dennis (worship leader and storyteller)



Several of the young participants had never before experienced VBS, and they definitely found it exciting and inviting. One child even said, "Can we do this again next week?"

Sincere thanks to all the leaders who invested many hours in preparing for and leading this blessed event. And to all the parents who supported the initiative by involving their children and themselves.



***Look for VBS 2024 coming next June!  
We are currently surveying parents for best days and times.***

## Insights from the PC(USA) Book of Order



*Most of us don't spend much time studying our denomination's Book of Order, but it is a rich resource. Here is an excerpt that offers insight into the meaning and ministry of being a church member.*

Membership in the Church of Jesus Christ is a **joy** and a **privilege**. It is also a **commitment** to participate in Christ's mission. A faithful member bears witness to God's love and grace and promises to be involved responsibly in the ministry of Christ's Church. Such involvement includes:

- Proclaiming the good news in word and deed,
- Taking part in the common life and worship of a congregation,
- Lifting one another up in prayer, mutual concern, and active support,
- Studying Scripture and the issues of Christian faith and life,
- Supporting the ministry of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents,
- Demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church,
- Responding to God's activity in the world through service to others,
- Living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships of life,
- Working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment,
- Caring for God's creation,
- Participating in the governing responsibilities of the church, and
- Reviewing and evaluating regularly the integrity of one's membership, and considering ways in which one's participation in the worship and service of the church may be increased and made more meaningful.

## Westminster—Still Sailing, by the Grace of God

At Trinity Presbytery's August Stated Meeting, two more congregations departed. One closed because it simply died out. The other exited PC(USA) to enter a more conservative fellowship.

It is sobering to consider how many churches are struggling to exist across all of Christendom. The good news—Westminster is still sailing!

The work we did in Project Regeneration confirmed that we are better equipped than most congregations to not merely survive, but to have a future filled with growth and joy. We have the potential to be a spirit-driven, Christ-centered, inclusive community of faith for many years to come.

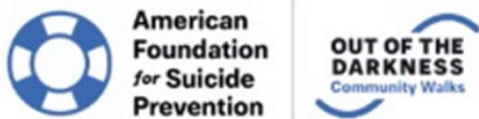
This tapestry graces the sanctuary of Lake Murray Presbyterian, which hosted the Presbytery meeting. It is a vivid reminder to put down our oars, hoist high our sails, and pray without ceasing for the Holy Spirit to set the course and push us where we are meant to go.





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Save the Date: October 15<sup>th</sup>



The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) is organizing an awareness even on Sunday, October 15 at 1:30 p.m. This Out of the Darkness Community Walk is a journey of remembrance, hope, and support. It unites our communities and provides an opportunity to acknowledge the ways in which suicide and mental health conditions have affected our lives and the lives of those we love and care about. Visit [afsp.org/greenwood](http://afsp.org/greenwood) for more information.

## His Tithes and Our Offerings

Giving of your time, talent, and treasure shows your gratitude for God's many gifts to you. The Bible tells us that tithing (giving 10%) is expected, *and* that offerings of *any* size are welcomed and celebrated in heaven.

You can share your pledges and contributions by scanning the QR code below, by using the offering plate in the narthex, or by mailing to us at:

2330 Cokesbury Road,  
Greenwood, SC 29649.



Thank you!!

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## PC(USA) and the Matthew 25 Movement

The Matthew 25 invitation focuses on Matthew 25: 31-46, the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, in which Jesus makes clear that what we do matters to God and how we treat others is important to God. To date, 1,139 PC(USA) Congregations have joined the movement, committing to focus on one or more of these three initiatives within the PCUSA's Matthew 25 Movement:

- † Building Congregational Vitality
- † Dismantling Structural Racism
- † Eradicating Systemic Poverty



Although Westminster has not yet signed up to join the movement, as a congregation, we are already at work in each of these areas. As we focus our worship, study, and service this fall on the Gospel of Matthew, we will be learning more about the three initiatives of the Matthew 25 movement.

This month, we will be thinking together about the first initiative, "Congregational Vitality."

From the PCUSA Website: [Presbyterian Mission Agency Building Congregational Vitality / Matthew 25 in the PC\(USA\): Join the Movement / Presbyterian Mission Agency](#)

Congregational vitality is evident in a worshipping community when its structural systems, finances and discipleship practices are aligned in such a way that the community is actively engaged in the mission of God in their local community and the world, and they are powerfully focused on growing as disciples in the way of Jesus Christ.

See page 15 to learn about the seven marks that help you determine your current level of vitality and the related processes for self-assessment, discernment and renewed commitment to habits that foster energetic engagement with the Spirit's work in the world.

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## The Seven Marks of Church Vitality

- 1. Lifelong Discipleship Formation—*followers growing in Christ***  
A commitment to forming disciples over every member's lifetime. This leads first to personal transformation, as people put on the heart of Christ, and then to social transformation, as people joyfully go forth into the community and tackle the issues facing today's culture.
- 2. Intentional Authentic Evangelism—*Sharing the Good News of Christ***  
Embracing the call to evangelism. We show forth the love of Christ by our actions and our lives even more than by our words. Our relationships are genuine and caring. People know we are Christians by our love.
- 3. Outward Incarnational Focus—*hands-on missional focus***  
Our church is not a place to escape from the world, but rather our gateway to our community where we may be the hands, feet, heart and mouth of Jesus Christ for people who are suffering or marginalized.
- 4. Empowered Servant Leadership—*gift-based service***  
Helping every member to discover their individual calling and the gifts God has given them so they can go forth and serve.
- 5. Spirit-inspired Worship—*God-encountered worship***  
Worship that challenges, teaches, transforms, convicts and energizes us so when we are sent out, we have experienced the wonder of God and are changed for the better from when we arrived.
- 6. Caring relationships modeled on God's love—*genuine relationships***  
We open our doors and hearts to all people, and we build relationships modeled on God's love, which leads to genuine reconciliation and peace.
- 7. Ecclesial Health—*healthy church family/infrastructure***  
Congregations with healthy systems. Our mission focuses are clear. There is fiscal responsibility and accountability. We have thoughtful decision-making structures. Our leaders and staff enjoy a sustainable balance of work/rest time.

***Where do you see Westminster's congregation demonstrating one or more of these marks?***

***What areas might need our attention as we seek even greater congregational vitality?***

***Please share your responses and ideas with your Pastor and Session.***



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## Let Us Pray...



### For Those in Our Church

*We share one another's joys and concerns:*

- Joyce & Spears  
Alexander and friends
- John & Mishie Bacot
- Autumn Brown
- Larry & Nancy Dozier
- Mary Corley
- Tina Corley's  
daughter, Christine
- Kathy Felder
- Oliver Gouldsmith
- Mac & Holly Hubbard  
and daughter Lori
- Kelli Lott and  
daughters Savanah  
and Gabby
- Tim Mossman
- Ed Watkins
- Denise Waldrep
- Gail & Glenn Yonce,  
and Georgiana
- Our pastor and  
her family
- Your Session

*"And this is the confidence that we have toward God, that if we ask anything according to God's will, it will be heard."*

*1 John 5:14*

*We pray daily for our prayer partners and their special concerns. We pray for our sister churches: New Faith, Ware Shoals, First Presbyterian, Abbeville Presbyterian, and others.*

*We pray for the ministries of our church, especially:*

- Presbyterian  
Communities of SC
- Prison Ministry
- Thornwell Home
- Presbyterian College
- NAMI
- Pathway House
- Food Bank
- Soup Kitchen
- Meg's House
- Beyond Abuse
- GG United Ministries
- Camp Fellowship
- Community Initiatives
- TLC staffers Carolyn Allen, Tiara Brown, Wanda Stewart, and Amelia Sheard



### For Those in Our Hearts

*We pray for these members of our wider community:*

- Betsey Blimline
- Judy Buck
- Ted Colcolough
- Nancy Cooper
- Asher & Sumir Din
- Dean & Albert Fadden
- David Gillespie
- Lois Grice
- Beverly Grier
- Joan Herin
- Michael Knight
- The McClendon family
- Bobby R.
- Terence Reese
- Trae Steelmon
- Dave Watson
- Kathy & Mike
- Savannah
- Oscar



### For the World

*We pray for our neighbors everywhere who we are called to love:*

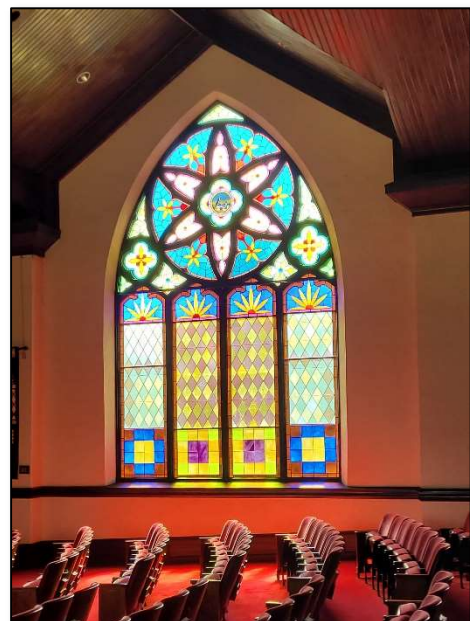
- For justice and mercy to prevail throughout the world—*thy* will be done
- For wise leadership at every level in our community, country, and world
- For those living with mental, emotional, and/or physical illnesses
- For all who experience exclusion, or who struggle to meet basic needs
- For unity among Christians in every congregation, country, and corner of the world
- For those serving in the American armed services, especially those in harm's way
- For voters in democracies around the world to discern wisely how to use their vote
- For our enemies, that their hearts may be transformed by Your love and truth



## And God Saw That It Was Good...



A fine flock of art enthusiasts journeyed to First Presbyterian-Laurens to take in an exhibit of nature photos taken by the Rev. Dr. Cliff Cain (far right). Cliff has lived abroad and traveled widely during his ministry, and has a gift for capturing exquisite scenes from God's creation through his lens. Laurens' Pastor, Rev. Dr. Mike McCracken (far left) welcomed the group and provided a tour of their beautiful and historic sanctuary (below right). We were joined by Tim Mossman's sister, Joyanna Hancock, and her three lovely children, Evie, the eldest, and twins Emma and Lilly. The trip concluded with a festive meal at Roma's in Laurens.





# Busy and Happy at VBS



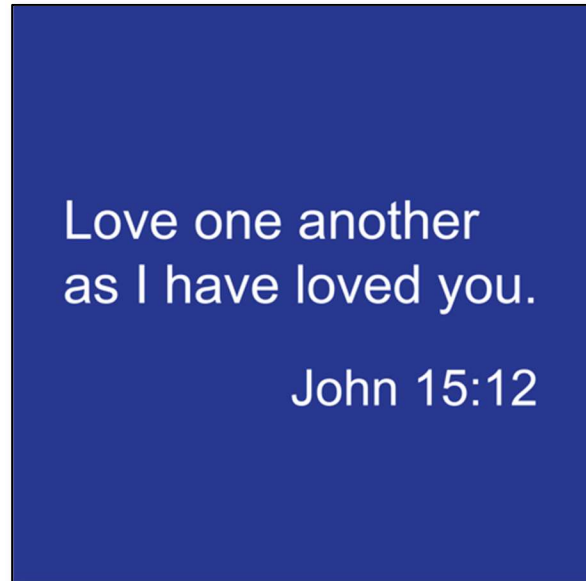


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## Wearable Witness for God's Love and Your Church

The Mission & Outreach Committee is making some terrific t-shirts available for church members and friends who are ready to proudly and visibly show their commitment to demonstrating God's love as they serve as God's hands and feet, making a difference in our community.

The shirt design features the PC(USA) seal and our name on the front, and a quote from scripture on the back (see below). Each shirt is \$15, and sizes from small to 3X large are available. Contact the church office to order one for each member of your family.



## The Secrets of the Seal

The seal of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) comprises many sacred systems that reflect the essence of our beliefs as reformed Christians. At first glance, you clearly see a cross, the most important and familiar symbol of our faith. When you look more closely you will also find this cross is made up of other significant icons:

- Cross—the universal and most ecumenical symbol of the Christian church. The cross represents the incarnate love of God in Jesus Christ and his passion and resurrection.
- Descending Dove—the top section of the cross symbolizes the Holy Spirit appearing in the shape of a dove at Christ's baptism by John, and the peace and wholeness that his death and resurrection bring to a broken world.
- Holy Scripture—immediately below the dove, a curved line invokes the shape of a book, representing the Word of God as made manifest to us in the Bible.
- Pulpit—the book image rests on a lectern, which captures the essential role of preaching in the Presbyterian tradition.
- Flames—the flames appearing on either side of the cross remind us both of the Holy Spirit coming down at Pentecost and also of God in the burning bush, calling Moses.

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# One Book. One Church. Three-Month Study Plan

Keep this three-month study plan near your Bible for easy reference. As you read, ask yourself these questions:

- What does this text tell me about Jesus?
- What does this text tell me about God?
- How does this text intersect with my life?
- What does this text tell me about the kind of “kingdom on Earth” Jesus came to build?

## September

|  |  |
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| <b>Sept 3: Worship on the Water</b>                            | <b>Sept 10: Let Me Tell You About Jesus</b><br>† Matthew 1:1-25        |
| <b>Sept 17: This Story Sounds Familiar</b><br>† Matthew 2:1-23 | <b>Sept 24: Every Family Has That Crazy Cousin</b><br>† Matthew 3:1-17 |

## October

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Oct 1: Well, That's Tempting</b><br>† Matthew 4:1-17           | <b>Oct 8: Caught, Healed, Instructed</b><br>† Matthew 4:18 – 5:16 |
| <b>Oct 15: Message from the Mountain</b><br>† Matthew 5:17-29     | <b>Oct 22: You Remind Me of Someone</b><br>† Matthew 8:1 – 9:34   |
| <b>Oct 29: Saints Sent</b><br>† Matthew 9:35 – 10:42 and 28:16-20 |   |

## November

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Nov 5: Encountering Opposition</b><br>† Matthew 10:43 – 15:20     | <b>Nov 12: Lessons for a New Community</b><br>† Matthew 15:21 – 20:16 |
| <b>Nov 19: (Not) The End of the Story</b><br>† Matthew 20:17 – 28:20 | <i>Advent study begins November 26</i>                                |