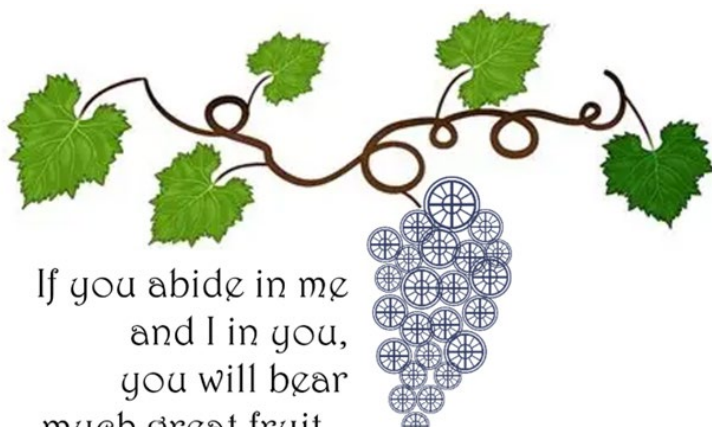
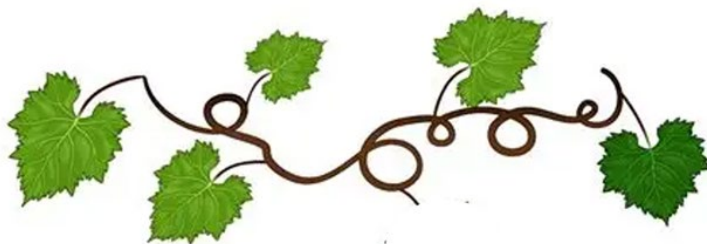




If you abide in me
and I in you,
you will bear
much great fruit...

John 15:5b



Without me, you
will accomplish
nothing.

John 15:5e

2025 Stewardship Devotionals



The Mission of Westminster Presbyterian Church PC(USA)

Called to be an inclusive community of faith,
abiding in God's love, and committed to:

Enjoying God,
Following Jesus, and
Growing Disciples



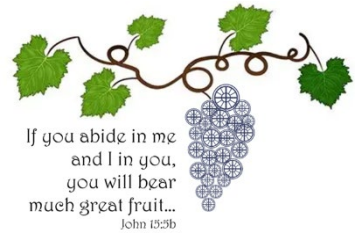
The Vision of Westminster Presbyterian Church PC(USA)

As the Body of Christ, when we abide in God's love and live into our mission, Westminster Presbyterian Church will be:

- Focused outward to hear, serve, and proclaim while turning inward to reflect, renew, and equip
 - Remarkable in our diversity while being united as the Body of Christ
 - Open to God's transforming Spirit while remaining faithful to our history and our calling
- Accessible to the un-churched and de-churched while sustaining long-time Christians in their ongoing faith journey

“I am the Vine...Abide in Me”

October 1 marks the kickoff of Westminster’s Stewardship Season. During this time, we prepare ourselves to commit our time, talent, and treasure to God’s work in and through this congregation during 2026. This book of devotionals is offered as a tool and a blessing as you discern what your participation will be.



Westminster’s mission statement emphasizes our need to abide in God’s love. The word *abide* (from the Greek *menō*) is used frequently throughout the New Testament to express the idea of a long, trusting relationship. To *abide* is to *persevere*, to *endure*, to *wait patiently*, to *dwell*. Westminster’s call to abide is grounded in Jesus’ words, recorded in John 15:5:

*“I am the vine; you are the branches.
Those who abide in me and I in them bear much great fruit,
because apart from me you can do nothing.”*

This beloved scripture passage provides the central imagery for this year’s stewardship message: God is the Vine, the source of our being, the provider of all good things. And we are the branches.

Being a Branch



If we are faithful branches—persevering, waiting patiently, dwelling in God’s love—then we will bear much good fruit. But what does a branch *do* while it’s abiding?

A physical vine branch serves as a **conduit**, carrying water and nutrients from the vine to the growing fruit. It provides **support** for the fruit while it grows. And a branch itself grows, getting **stronger** and longer, all the better to allow even more fruit to be produced.

In the same way, as metaphorical branches, we are inspired to be conduits of God’s love into all the world (Mark 16:15), to offer support for all of God’s children (Matthew 25:31-46), and to grow stronger as disciples (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Bearing Much Great Fruit



Without me, you
will accomplish
nothing.
John 15:5e

God Uses the Branches to Produce the Fruit

As the Bible insists time and time again, God longs to have a meaningful relationship with *you*.

When you sustain a deep connection with God, the Holy Spirit can work through you to help God's will "be done on earth as it is in heaven." But if the connection is severed...you can do nothing.

By engaging in Westminster's worship and work, you are abiding in God's love. You are carrying that love throughout our church family and beyond. You are supporting our congregation and community as we share the good fruit of the Spirit. And you are surely experiencing spiritual growth by exercising your faith.

You are a faithful, fruitful branch!



Bearing Much Great Fruit

As faithful branches, we are called to manifest the good fruit of the Spirit to everyone we encounter. You have heard this list from Galatians 5:22-23 proclaimed many times: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.



In discerning how you will be a faithful branch in 2026, remember that prayer is an essential factor in sustaining your personal connection to God, to abiding in God's love. Without it, "...you will accomplish nothing." With it, you "can do all things through Christ who strengthens [you]" (Philippians 4:13).

Great Fruit of the Spirit: Love

Ask any BEMA disciple what the Bible is all about, and you will likely hear some variation on it being an invitation for humanity to enter into partnership with God to love and care for all creation—to form a Stewardship Covenant.

The Bible tells us who God is and what God expects of branches like us. These words from 1 John 4 sum it up nicely:



*Beloved, let us **love one another**, because **love is from God**; everyone who **loves** is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not **love** does not know God, **for God is love**. God's **love** was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is **love**, not that we **loved** God, but that **he loved us** and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. **Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.***

God—the True Vine—is love. As branches abiding in that love, our job is to grow within it and to embody that love to every other human and all of creation.

The Westminster congregation demonstrates our love for God every time and every where we come together for worship. Our praise, prayers, and presence are part of our grateful response to our loving God for all the ways God is active in our lives.

Our church family demonstrates its love by living into our mission of being inclusive. By following Jesus. By supporting each other in good times and in bad. By growing disciples.

As a unique branch, deeply attached to the Vine, you manifest the great fruit of love in myriad ways every day. During this season of stewardship preparation, prayerfully consider how you and Westminster can and should show God's love to all.





Prayer & Gratitude Journaling Calendar

This devotional booklet is intended to provide you with information to help you plan for what your Stewardship Covenant with God and Westminster will be in 2026. It's good to operate from a basis of facts and figures when it comes time to fund the work of an organization.

But our church isn't just *any* organization.

We are called by God individually and collectively to be inclusive, abiding, enjoying, following, and growing branches, firmly rooted in the Vine. Choosing how and how much support you will provide in the coming year should grow out of your grateful response to God's abundance. It's not a purely financial decision or scheduling detail to add to the To-Do list. It requires heartfelt thought and prayerful discernment.

This booklet provides daily prayer prompts for the seven weeks of our Stewardship season, with space to jot down your own prayers and journal your gratitude. The goal is to stimulate your thinking about how you envision renewing your covenant to worship and work with this congregation. And to give thanks to God.

Thank you for being part of Westminster and for being a faithful branch!

Wednesday, October 1

Loving God, thank you for your promise that nothing can separate me from your love. Inspire me today to find new ways of showing your love to the world.

Thursday, October 2

*Loving God, open my eyes and heart to the many ways you shower me with your love.
Help me not to miss even the smallest example of your care and provision.*

Friday, October 3

*Loving God, bless my family and friends. Strengthen and guide me so that those
relationships are overflowing with love, even on difficult days.*

Weekend, October 4-5

*Loving God, thank you for seeing me safely through another week. I am so grateful for
the many ways I experienced your love, especially...*

Bearing Much Great Fruit



Giving as a Spiritual Discipline

The purpose of any spiritual discipline is to help us grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, and to become more like Christ as we grow in godliness. Giving first to the Lord and then to others is a mark of true discipleship.

Embracing the spiritual discipline of giving will help you shift your focus from a scarcity mentality to an abundance mentality. See what God will do with your gifts!

Stewardship is “responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.” The PC(USA) website offers this explanation of what Christian stewardship entails:

- Time and Talent — volunteer to serve in leadership roles, participate and/or lead worship, teach Sunday school or volunteer for mission/outreach opportunities
- Treasure/Resources — financially support your congregation and consider your congregation in your estate plan
- Testimony — share the good news of Jesus Christ and share how your congregation is living out its call
- Ties — connect your family and friends with your congregation. This boosts membership—but more importantly, it boosts the vitality and life of the congregation, building a stronger church community.

All stewardship should spring from your deep gratitude for God's love, provision, and presence. Christian giving is a “heart” decision much more than it is a “head” decision. There is no right answer to the question of what and how much you should give. A Biblical tithe (10% of your income) is the gold standard, not often achieved.

The Bible also stresses that God loves a cheerful giver, and that a gift of *any* amount given in love and gratitude will contribute mightily to God's work in and through the Body of Christ. Prayerfully seek God's direction on the Stewardship Covenant you are being called to enter into. Be a faithful branch, abiding in God's love and will.



Great Fruit of the Spirit: Joy

At Westminster, we are committed to enjoying God. Did you know that God also enjoys you? According to the Old Testament prophet Zephaniah (3:17), when you turn to God in love and obedience,

"The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing."



Don't you love the idea of God singing about you and the relationship you share? Imagine the heavens resonating with God's own voice singing, "Jesus loves you!"

Being deeply connected to the Vine empowers every faithful branch to receive joy and to spread joy. The joy of knowing that you are loved. The joy and relief of knowing that when you are exhausted, Jesus promises, "I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Our theme parable of the vine and branches concludes (John 15:11) with this explanation from Jesus:

"I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

James's writing (1:2) puts an unexpected spin on joy, urging us to embrace life's challenges because of the growth, character, and hope they stimulate:

"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds... ."

Throughout the coming week, look for joy, spread joy, and heed Paul's call to "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).



Bearing Much Great Fruit

Monday, October 6

*God of Joy, I am eager to see what joys you have planned for me in the coming week.
Protect my heart from fear and negativity, so that my life better reflects your joy.*

Tuesday, October 7

*God of Joy, use me today to bring joy to someone who feels lost, unloved, or unworthy.
Let me be a faithful branch that shares your joy with those who need it most.*

Wednesday, October 8

*God of Joy, I pray for my church family today, with confidence that you have a plan for
our congregation to be a source of joy offered both inward and outward.*

Thursday, October 9

God of Joy, your word says that you love “a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7c). Awaken in me a spirit of joyful giving as I prepare for the coming year.

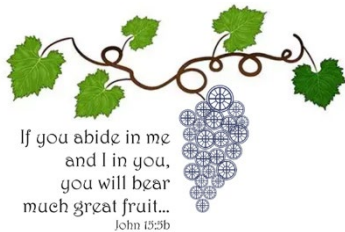
Friday, October 10

God of Joy, help me remember that every opportunity to learn and to grow should be received as a source of joy. Strengthen me to look for that joy.

Weekend, October 11-12

God of Joy, in all the ups and downs of this busy week, I am grateful for the many ways you enriched my life with joy, especially...

Bearing Much Great Fruit



By the Numbers

Here are some facts about Westminster’s 2025 financial faithfulness. They are offered to give you context as you consider what your stewardship covenant will be in 2026.

50 households were engaged in Westminster worship and work in 2024

80% of those households made a financial covenant for 2025

100% of Session members made a financial covenant

48% of the budget came from only **5%** of our households

8 households have not yet contributed toward fulfilling their 2025 covenant

\$5,000 would be needed per household, if 2025 expenses were shared equally

Each ministry team has considered the financial resources needed to move us toward fulfilling our mission, vision, and strategic goals in 2026. As a result, here is the Asking Budget. For a copy of the detailed budget, contact any Session member.

2026 Asking Budget	
Administration & Staff	\$175,000
Building & Grounds	\$51,000
Congregational Care & Fellowship	\$2,000
Mission & Outreach	\$13,500
Nurture & Education	\$10,000
Worship & Music	\$12,000
Total	\$263,500

Great Fruit of the Spirit: Peace

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."

John 14:27



We all crave peace, don't we? In this noisy world of constant negativity, relentless doomscrolling, and pointless violence, our souls are thirsty for the calm and quiet of peace.

Fortunately, we are branches firmly affixed to the Vine, abiding in God. And as John tells us in the verse above, when Jesus ascended into heaven, he assured us that the peace of God *always* remains available.

Psalms 46:10 teaches us to "Be still and know that I am God." Westminster worship is punctuated with moments of silence so that we can do exactly that. Our prayer garden offers a sacred natural space in which to refresh and restore our spirits. And while it is certainly not silent, our passing of the Peace of Christ in every service nurtures the personal connections that strengthen us.

People who are food-insecure, jobless, or unhoused are rarely at peace. We take our affiliation as a PC(USA) Matthew 25 church very seriously, supporting numerous groups in Greenwood helping those who struggle with poverty find peace and hope.

Some days, it seems like the whole world is awash in fear, squabbling, anger, and eroding trust. Our sense of impotence and frustration can become overwhelming. Those are precisely the days when we need "...the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" to guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7).

Prayer is our all-access pass to that peace. Pray personally anytime, anywhere. Join the Monday Upper Zoom group. Pray for Westminster at 2:02 P.M. every day. Pray that "peace on earth, good will to humanity" will come true.



Bearing Much Great Fruit

Monday, October 13

God of Peace, help me not to dread Mondays, but rather to carry the peace of Sunday worship and prayer into and through the rest of the week.

Tuesday, October 14

God of Peace, like St. Francis, I pray that today you will use me as “an instrument of your peace,” sharing love, joy, and peace with everyone I encounter.

Wednesday, October 15

God of Peace, in the midst of today’s hurry and scurry, remind me to be still, and know that you are God.

Thursday, October 16

God of Peace, hear my heartfelt prayer that all who are victims of violence will find peace, and that all weapons will be silenced.

Tonight: College of Elders

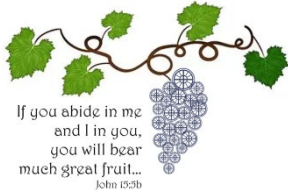
Friday, October 17

God of Peace, bring peace to my Westminster family. Let us bask in your love. Be especially present with those who are navigating difficult times.

Weekend, October 18-19

God of Peace, I am grateful for the sure knowledge that I am firmly connected to you, the only source of true peace. Thank you for the peaceful moments that you provided to me this week, especially...

Bearing Much Great Fruit



Ministry Team: Nurture & Education

The mission of the Nurture & Education Ministry Team is to provide Christian education for nurturing spiritual growth in the entire church family at every age and stage. Life-long faith formation equips God's people to share the Good News of Jesus

Christ and live according to God's will. The responsibilities of the N&E Ministry Team fall into three general categories:

- † **Christian Education**—ensuring that Westminster offers a variety of opportunities for Christian education, with careful attention to the many differences in developmental and spiritual maturity, background, experience, and interests in our diverse congregation. This includes selecting theologically sound Sunday school and other study curricula, scheduling volunteer teachers, and creating Christian education-related special events. In short, N&E works to build the Body of Christ at Westminster by providing nourishment from the Word and sharpening our minds.
- † **Child Care**—maintaining and implementing Westminster's policy and procedures relating to care of children, youth, and vulnerable adults; monitoring compliance; and reporting all infractions. N&E is responsible for educating the entire congregation and all paid staff regarding this critical policy. N&E also handles recruiting, hiring, and managing both volunteer and paid child-care workers
- † **Resources**— maintaining the Resource Center, located on the first floor in the west wing. N&E volunteers order materials for the Resource Center, with guidance from the Pastor, as appropriate to Reformed theology and tradition, the lectionary, and the specific needs of the congregation and community. They also appreciate receiving donations of appropriate materials from the congregation.

A significant portion of the Nurture & Education Ministry Team budget supports the high quality paid staff who care for our youngest family members, including many with special needs. Curriculum materials are also included in the budget—at Westminster, we don't want the cost of materials to prevent anyone from participating in educational activities. And our youth and college ministries are funded from the Nurture & Education budget.

Great Fruit of the Spirit: Patience

Are you frustrated that it takes a whole 30 seconds to heat up your breakfast burrito in the microwave? Does road rage start to simmer when the car in front of you doesn't surge

forward the instant the light turns green? Do you find yourself praying, "Lord, give me patience *now!*"?

If so, you are not alone. The pace of life today accelerates relentlessly. Instant gratification is the ideal. Fads and fashions change in the blink of an eye. Our culture does not value patience.

But God does!

The very *essence* of abiding in the Vine is to wait patiently. To persevere, to endure, to dwell. Scripture is quite clear on the importance of being patient:

"Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him"

Psalm 37:7a

"Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer."

Romans 12:12

*"You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts,
for the coming of the Lord is near."*

James 5:8

*"Wait for the Lord; be strong, and
let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!"*

Psalm 27:14

Practicing patience will make you a stronger branch. After all, it takes time for good fruit to ripen! Start studying the Bible, knowing it will be a lifelong pursuit. Take time out of your busyness to help others. Walk slowly alongside those who can't move faster. Breathe. Pray. *Abide*.



Bearing Much Great Fruit

Monday, October 20

O Patient God, help me resist my inclination to rush headlong into the day and the week. Remind me to pause and savor my connection with you multiple times a day.

Tuesday, October 21

O Patient God, make me sensitive to the needs of those whose pace is not as fast as mine, for whatever reasons. Grant me patience to make helping others my priority.

Wednesday, October 22

O Patient God, I realize that your thoughts are not my thoughts, your ways are not my ways. Keep me alert to the movement of the Holy Spirit as your perfect plan unfolds in your perfect timing.

Thursday, October 23

O Patient God, you know my worries, my fears, the pressures I face. Grant me patience and perspective to trust in you, no matter what happens.

Friday, October 24

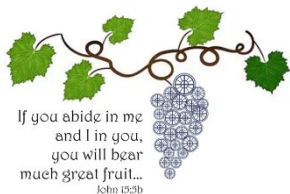
O Patient God, when I become impatient with my imperfect self, remind me of your love and the sure knowledge that my shortcomings will never separate me from that love.

Weekend, October 25-26

O Patient God, by your grace, I have experienced love, joy, peace, and patience this week. I am especially grateful for...

After Worship: Budget Brainstorming with Snack Lunch

Bearing Much Great Fruit



Ministry Team: Mission & Outreach

The Mission & Outreach Ministry Team is charged with supporting the Westminster congregation in witnessing to the world about God's love, which we know through Jesus Christ, and in ministering to our neighbors, our community, and the world with imagination and courage.

The M&O Ministry Team provides leadership to the congregation in relying on *faith* as the foundation and energy source for our good works, which we offer to God's glory in grateful response to God's abundant love and provision. M&O responsibilities fall into three areas:

- † **Evangelism**—being visible as the hands and feet of Christ in the community, glorifying God and demonstrating our faith through good works. M&O strives to invite every unchurched person in our community to connect with the Westminster family and find out more about the God who created them and loves them. As part of that effort, M&O works with the Nurture & Education Ministry Team and Pastor to equip Westminster members and friends to effectively share the gospel with conviction and courage.
- † **Social Justice & Philanthropy**—educating Westminster members and friends on the importance of supporting social justice and philanthropy as essential aspects of Christian life. M&O promotes and coordinates Session-approved special offerings throughout the year. M&O is Westminster's liaison to local mission agencies and coordinates special projects to support them. Finally, M&O takes the lead in encouraging and supporting individuals who feel called to participate actively in efforts to dismantle structural poverty and eradicate systemic racism, in alignment with PC(USA)'s Matthew 25 mission priorities.
- † **Communication**—establishing positive connections with the local community and the region, supporting the Session and other teams in developing and executing communications plans, and monitoring their effectiveness. M&O coordinates our website, as well as our newsletter, yard signs, flyers, mailing, and social media.

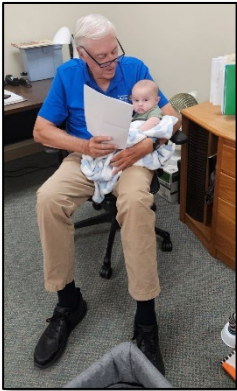
The Mission & Outreach Ministry Team budget covers WOW expenses, benevolent gifts to other ministries, and the cost of communication-related materials.

Great Fruit of the Spirit: Kindness

When it comes to following Jesus, spreading kindness to everyone you encounter is pretty much the minimum daily requirement. The instruction to “be kind” sounds easy enough. Just follow the Golden Rule:

*“So whatever you wish that others would do to you,
do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”*

Matthew 7:12



In practice, though, it’s easy to let impatience and irritation creep into our treatment of others. We may let unkind, snarky remarks creep into conversation. We may be prone to unkind thoughts as kneejerk judgements of people and behaviors spring to mind.

As followers of Christ, we are called, like Simon Peter, to take care of God’s flock:

“Feed my lambs. ... Tend my sheep. ... Feed my sheep.”

John 21:

All of them. Not just the pretty fluffy ones. Not just the sweet cuddly ones. *All of them.* Even the unkind ones.

It is truly a challenge to be kind to the unkind. We are called to extend *grace*—goodness that is undeserved—and *mercy*—being spared from accountability that *is* deserved.

Author Brant Hansen, in his book, *Unoffendable*, urges us all to let go of judgements and frustrations, and offer preemptive forgiveness to everyone. Forgive others even *before* their unkindness emerges. Why? Because of the incomprehensible level of grace, mercy, forgiveness, and kindness that God has, does, and will always extend to us.

*“Be kind and compassionate to one another,
forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

Ephesians 4:32

Be a faithful, fruitful branch, spreading the grace and mercy of God to *all* the sheep.

Bearing Much Great Fruit

Monday, October 27

God of Kindness, help me be attuned to my own unkind thoughts and actions, so that I can replace them with a more Christlike response.

Tuesday, October 28

God of Kindness, create in me a clean heart, spilling over with mercy and grace for all of the people in my life.

Wednesday, October 29

God of Kindness, point me to someone who is wrestling through a tough time and needs a little kindness today. Use me to deliver your mercy and grace to them.

Thursday, October 30

God of Kindness, sometimes the people we love the most are the very ones we treat the most unkindly. Please forgive my thoughtlessness and equip me to do better.

Friday, October 31

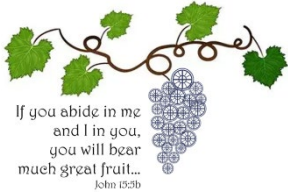
God of Kindness, remind me to be kind to myself. Help me tune out the harsh, judgmental voice of my internal critic, and turn to you to be forgiven and refreshed.

Weekend, November 1-2

God of Kindness, fill my mind and heart with happy memories of the saints I have known. I am so grateful for your kindness and theirs through the years, especially...

Saturday: All Saints Day

Bearing Much Great Fruit



Ministry Teams: Worship & Music, Business Affairs

Westminster is blessed with a strong **Worship & Music Ministry Team (W&M)** that works to ensure you have access to Christ-centered worship services every Sunday and on other special occasions, as well.



A meaningful worship experience has *many* behind-the-scenes moving parts, such as weekly scheduling of hosts to welcome worshipers, liturgists to read scripture, musicians to lead singing, and building stewards to open and close the facility. On Sundays when the Pastor is away, W&M makes sure that an appropriate substitute preacher is present. And don't forget responsibility for preparing communion every first Sunday.

The W&M Ministry Team budget covers honoraria for some musicians and for substitute preachers, along with worship-related consumables, such as communion elements. W&M is also responsible for maintaining our pianos and organ.

Our **Business Affairs Ministry Team (BAMT)** is charged with the important but unglamorous “back office” tasks of the church, especially attending to our beautiful facilities, supporting our gifted staff, and managing the generous financial support of our donors. Its subcommittees are Administration, Finance, Personnel, and Building & Grounds

First and foremost, the BA ministry team makes sure Westminster has a safe and beautiful building in which to worship, and a pastor to teach and nurture this church family. BAMT oversees budget and accounting tasks, office operations, risk management, and employment. CPA payroll support, office supplies, postage, copier, telephone, internet, website, IT, and other administrative costs are in the BA budget, as well as our church property, liability, and workers comp insurance. Salary and benefits for our Pastor and our Office Manager are also included in this budget.

Great Fruit of the Spirit: Generosity & Faithfulness



You are surrounded on all sides and at all times by God's generosity and faithfulness. All that you have and all that you are come from God. The book of James sums it up:

*"Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above,
coming down from the Father of lights,
with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."
James 1:17*

Everything we have comes from eternal God, who is both giving and unchanging. Because you are God's beloved child, made in God's own image, you are called to also be generous and faithful.



On Westminster's Dedication Sunday, you are invited to enter into a new Stewardship Covenant with God and this congregation. How will you invest the resources that God has given you—your energy, your prayers, and your money—in this mission and vision to which God has called us?

The Apostle Paul gives this advice to you just as he gave it to the church in Corinth:

*"The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly,
and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.
Each of you must give as you have made up your mind,
not regretfully or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance,
so that by always having enough of everything,
you may share abundantly in every good work."
2 Corinthians 9:6-8*

How will you share your resources with Westminster in worship and work in the coming year? Consider what brings you joy. Give thanks for your many blessings. Ask your family what our church family means to them. Ask God for guidance. Then decide what your grateful response to God will be for all of God's generosity and faithfulness to you. Be a faithful, fruitful branch.

Bearing Much Great Fruit

Monday, November 3

Generous and Faithful God, this week, remind me of all the ways that my relationship with you brings fulfillment, joy, and peace into my life. Show me what my grateful response ought to be to your generosity and faithfulness.

This Week: Stewardship packets arrive

Tuesday, November 4

Generous and Faithful God, you know how busy I am, and how often time seems to slip away from me. Show me how I can dedicate more of my time to you and the work to which you call me.

Wednesday, November 5

Generous and Faithful God, some days, I feel like I don't have much to offer when it comes to talents and spiritual gifts. Help me recognize what work you have equipped me to do and give me courage to commit to actually tackling it.

Thursday, November 6

Generous and Faithful God, grant me wisdom to remember that you have provided, you are providing, and you will provide. Release me from financial fears. I put my trust in you.

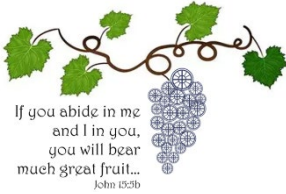
Friday, November 7

Generous and Faithful God, according to your Word, your beloved children are called to bring you offerings of time, talent, and treasure to show our deep and abiding gratitude for all of your generosity and faithful provision for us. Show me what offerings I can bring that will please you and sustain my church, the Body of Christ.

Weekend, November 8-9

Generous and Faithful God, it is so easy to take for granted the staggering abundance of blessings that you constantly shower on me and my family. I want you to know just how grateful I truly am for them, especially...

Bearing Much Great Fruit



Ministry Team: Congregational Care & Fellowship

The purpose of the Congregational Care & Fellowship Ministry Team is to “tend [Jesus’] sheep” at Westminster by encouraging and nourishing fellowship and compassion for the congregation as a whole and as individuals. In addition to general administration tasks, responsibilities for this committee fall into three general focus areas:

- † **Connecting**—building and sustaining connections among church members and friends through praying for each other, contacting and supporting folks with special needs (e.g., illness, loneliness, bereavement), and welcoming new members and friends into active participation in the life of the congregation. CC&F reaches out frequently via telephone calls, visits, notes, and cards.
- † **Gathering**—hosting periodic whole-church fellowship and educational activities, in partnership with other ministries and committees, to maintain connections throughout the entire congregation (see also Feeding, below); e.g., for a Family Night Supper, Congregational Care & Fellowship Ministry Team provides the meal and another committee provides the program.
- † **Feeding**—planning for and providing meals or refreshments for periodic church-sponsored large- and small-group gatherings, such as Family Night Suppers, receptions, and parties. CC&F often prepares and delivers meals to individuals with special needs, such as illness, mobility limitations, and bereavement. While it’s far from glamorous, CC&F also ensures that their areas of the building, including the kitchen and Fellowship Hall, are kept clean, supplied, and ready for use.



The Congregational Care & Fellowship Ministry Team budget is one of the smallest, in large part because so many generous members of that team quietly make in-kind donations to replenish the kitchen pantry. Our Sunday Sustenance meals are also provided by one individual’s loving gift to the congregation.

Great Fruit of the Spirit: Gentleness & Self-Control



Two of the most stunning characteristics of Jesus are his gentleness and his self-control. It was hard for Jews (and Gentiles) of his day to recognize him as Messiah because he violated all expectations. Not a conquering king, but a suffering servant. Not a wrathful punisher, but a compassionate healer.

Being fully God and fully human, Jesus experienced the same full range of emotions that we do. But even when he may have felt frustrated or angry, Jesus exhibited gentleness and never lost control of himself. His life is our perfect model, not just for gentleness and self-control, but for all the good fruit of the Spirit.



In his letter to the Ephesians (4:1-3), Paul points out how high the bar is set for those of us who would follow Jesus:

"I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Anyone who has ever served on a church ministry team can vouch for the fact that "maintaining unity" and

"bearing with one another in love" are easier some days than others... and with some people more than others.

Regardless, as faithful branches, our job is to carry the love of the Vine to all, to support the church—collectively and individually—and to strengthen ourselves and each other to "walk in a manner worthy of our calling" with gentleness and self-control.

During this week of preparation for Westminster's 45th year, remember the great fruit of the Spirit that this congregation has manifested. Dream big dreams about the new, powerful work God intends to pursue. And discern what your commitment will be.

Bearing Much Great Fruit

Monday, November 10

O God of Gentleness and Self-Control, the Westminster church family can be a conduit of love and a source of joy. Reveal to me the ways in which you want me be part of that.

Tuesday, November 11

O God of Gentleness and Self-Control, you offer peace and patience to all who abide in you. What do you need for me to do and for Westminster to do to be more effective branches?

Wednesday, November 12

O God of Gentleness and Self-Control, strengthen me to show kindness to everyone in my church family, in my personal life, and in my professional life. Show me how to join with Westminster in spreading kindness throughout our community and world.

Thursday, November 13

O God of Gentleness and Self-Control, I want to be a fruitful, faithful branch! Please direct me in all the ways I can use my energy, intelligence, imagination, and love to serve you.

Friday, November 14

O God of Gentleness and Self-Control, I want my church to truly include, abide, enjoy, follow, and grow according to your will. Grant me and the entire congregation insight into your plans for using us and our gifts, and energize us for the work ahead.

Weekend, November 15-16

O God of Gentleness and Self-Control, as I prepare my household's Stewardship Covenant, awaken in me the confidence, strength, and courage I need to step out in faith to pursue the path you have chosen for me, for us.

Dedication Sunday

Bearing Much Great Fruit



Without me, you
will accomplish
nothing.
John 15:5e

Being a Good Steward of Your Resources

From the Presbyterian Foundation

The IRA charitable transfer is a great way to make a gift to a mission or ministry that you care about. Consider making the most of your IRA as you plan your required annual minimum distribution.

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) are gifts to charities made directly from an individual retirement account. This is an easy, tax-advantaged way for Presbyterians to support their favorite mission or ministry.

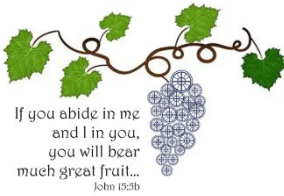


Requirements

- Donor must be 70½ or older at the time the distribution is made
 - The distribution must be otherwise taxable distribution from an IRA (other than an ongoing SEP or SIMPLE IRA)
 - Distributions must be made **directly to an organization** eligible to receive tax deductible contributions (certain exclusions apply)
 - \$105,000 annual limit
- Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) are reported on your Form 1040 tax return in the section for IRA distribution

Benefits

- Can satisfy Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) in year QCD is made
- QCD amount is not included in the donor's adjusted gross income, helping to potentially avoid increased taxes or higher Medicare premiums
- Provides donors that use the standard deduction with a tax efficient way to make a charitable gift
- May help to avoid capital gains taxes on appreciated assets.



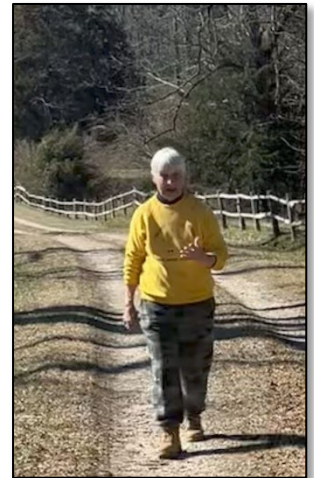
Planned Giving is an Act of Faith and Good Stewardship

Excepted from pcusa.org

In the United States, the majority of a typical household's assets are not in cash. They are in homes, retirement accounts and investments. One day we will all be finished with these things. We have the opportunity to decide who uses these resources to continue our story on our behalf.

Here are common ways to make a planned gift to your church or other ministries:

- **Bequest:** A gift made through your will. It can be a specific amount or a percentage. If tithing is your practice, leaving 10% of your estate is a powerful final tithe.
- **Retirement plan beneficiary:** Naming your church as a beneficiary of your IRA can be highly tax-efficient. Heirs pay income tax on IRA distributions, but churches do not.
- **Other beneficiary designations:** Bank accounts, investment accounts and life insurance policies can all have a charity named as a beneficiary, bypassing probate.
- **Charitable Trusts:** For those with higher net worth, a trust can provide you with income for life, offer significant tax benefits and leave a large future gift to ministry.
- **Donor-advised funds:** This tool simplifies all your giving. You make a tax-deductible gift of cash or securities to a fund, and then advise the fund to make grants to your favorite charities over time.



For the complete article, go to: <https://pcusa.org/news-storytelling/news/2025/8/6/planned-giving-act-faith-and-good-stewardship>

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God, and
the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with all of you,
now and forever.
Amen!*

Bearing Much Great Fruit



Westminster Presbyterian Church Family Portrait—Pentecost Sunday 2025

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