



Mountaintop Teaching

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to him. Then He began to speak...

Matthew 5:1

We are working our way through the book of Matthew, and this month our reading will center on Jesus' teaching from the mountaintop. Matthew, I think, hopes we will make a connection between this mountain and Mount Sinai, the mountain where Moses received the ten commandments.

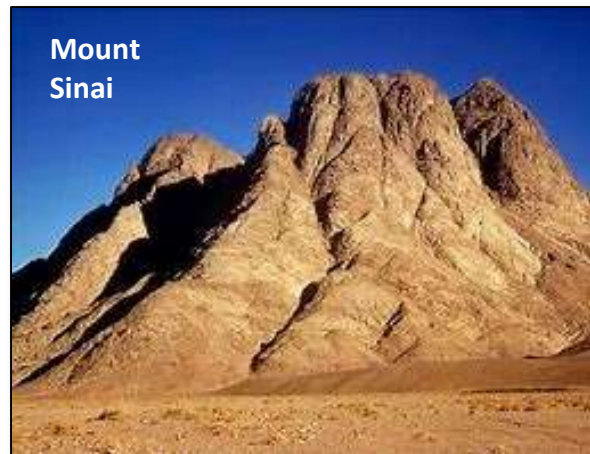
I've always liked how Jesus boiled the ten commandments down to two—"love God and love your neighbor"—when asked about the most important commandments. So easy to commit to memory... so challenging to practice. But starting with chapter five and running through chapter seven, Jesus' mountaintop teaching (more than can be contained on two tablets!) gives his disciples lots to consider, discuss, and practice.

Immediately when Jesus comes down from the mountain, chapter eight, verse one, he begins his ministry of healing.

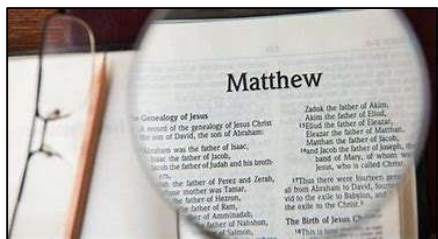
I think this is a good pattern for the church (or for us as individual disciples). First, *attend* to Jesus' teaching, then come down from the mountain and *apply* what you have learned. Use your hands, your time, your talents, your presence to mend what is broken, to ease the burdens of others. We are not called to stay on the mountain, or to spend our time discussing and debating, but to enter the world as Jesus did and be a part of its healing.

Of course, I think the converse can be true. Some of us jump right into action each morning, without spending time on the mountaintop with the teacher. It's a both/and proposition. Listen *and* act. Learn *and* practice. In this way, we grow as disciples, as hearers and enactors of the good news of Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace to you, my siblings,



One Church. One Book. (Continues!)



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.”

Rich conversations are being 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 for Sunday School (9:00 A.M. for children, youth, and adults) followed by worship at 10:00 A.M. for a time of learning and building church together. Also see page 20 for family-friendly study tips!

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ... But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Matthew 5:25, 33

One Book. One Church. Sermon and Study Series: The Gospel According to Matthew

We continue our fall sermon series following the life and teachings of Jesus as told in the Gospel of Matthew. This month we’ll see Jesus face temptation, call disciples, teach from a mountain, perform miracles and send his disciples. This gospel writer worked hard to help his audience see God’s saving work in the midst of their challenges. How is the story he tells gospel (good news) for twenty-first century disciples?

October 1: Well, *That’s* Tempting!

World Communion Sunday

† Matthew 4:1-17

October 8: Caught, Healed, Instructed

† Matthew 4:18-5:16

October 15: Message from the Mountain

Worship & Music Impact Statement

† Matthew 5:17-29

October 22: You Remind Me of Someone

Nurture & Education Impact Statement

† Matthew 8:1-9:34

October 29: Saints Sent

Mission & Outreach Impact Statement

Matthew 9:35-10:42, 28:166-20

This is Our Story

Westminster Happenings

**Sunday
October 1**

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.

Well, *That's* Tempting!

World Communion Sunday/Food Collection for Food Bank

Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.

Admire Jesus' ability to turn away from every temptation.

Congregational Meeting

Remain in the sanctuary immediately following worship.

Vote on 2024 Ruling Elders and Nominating Committee (*see page 7*).

Music & Worship Committee Meeting

Meet in the Choir Room at 11:30 A.M.

Help plan for all aspects of worship at Westminster.

Special event: Westminster hosts a concert benefiting the Penguin Project.

**Monday
October 2**

BEMA Bible Discussion Group

Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.

Broaden your biblical perspective in this new study group (*see page 7*).

**Tuesday
October 3**

Presbyterian Women

Come together in the Choir Room at 11:30 A.M.

Enjoy fellowship and learn about "The Exorcism in Gerasa."

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.

Congregational Care & Fellowship Committee Meeting

Congregate in the Choir Room at 7:00 P.M.

Consider how to keep the congregation connected.

**Wednesday
October 4**

Toddler Learning Center Ribbon Cutting

Gather in the Courtyard at 4:00 P.M.

Celebrate the successful opening of this vital community asset (*see page 8*).

Books & Brown Bags Study

Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.

Wrap up discussion of *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality*.

**Thursday
October 5**

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.

Westminster Happenings, *continued*

- 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.
- Sunday
October 8** **Caught, Healed, Instructed**
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.
Join the crowds and newly called disciples as Jesus begins teaching.
- Monday
October 9** **BEMA Bible Discussion Group**
Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.
Broaden your biblical perspective in this new study group.
- Tuesday
October 10** **Business Affairs Committee Meeting**
Gather in the Parlor at 6:00 P.M.
Lend your thoughts on the essential “back office” business of the church.
- Mindful Greenwood**
Meet in the Branches Sunday school room upstairs at 6:30 P.M.
Practice patience in your meditation discipline.
- Wednesday
October 11** **Books & Brown Bags Study**
Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.
Begin “30 Days with the Belhar Confession” (*see pages 9 and 15*).
- Saturday
October 14** **Mission Opportunity: Feed the Vikings**
Deliver a tasty meal to Emerald High School Marching Band members.
Show the love of Christ to our young musical neighbors (*see page 9*).
- 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.
- Message from the Mountain**
Children’s Sabbath
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.
Hear how Jesus reframes what “you have heard said” in the past.
- Sunday
October 15** **Sunday Sustenance with Chef Rob & Friends**
Feast in the Fellowship Hall immediately following worship.
Hear a brief presentation about bullying and how to prevent it.
Contribute to the WPC Emergency Preparedness special offering.
- Monday
October 16** **BEMA Bible Discussion Group**
Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.
Discuss “East meets West,” and how that affects our understanding.

Westminster Happenings, *continued*

- Tuesday
October 17** | **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
October 18** | **Note: No Books & Brown Bags Study Tonight**
Mission Opportunity: Empty Bowls Event
Savor local artists' work and a carry-out meal at 5:30 P.M. (*see page 10*).
Demonstrate Westminster's support for the Greenwood Soup Kitchen.
- Thursday
October 19** | **Rainbow Fellowship**
Connect with friends in the Youth Room upstairs at 6:00 P.M.
Enjoy lively Bible discussion and creative crafts.
- Sunday
October 22** | **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.
You Remind Me of Someone
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.
Stand in awe of the mighty works of God Incarnate.
Youth Group Gathering
Meet in the Fellowship Hall from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.
Engage with other middle school and high school students.
Nurture & Education Committee Meeting
Meet in the Choir Room at 4:00 P.M.
Plan for the coming season of Christian Education and spiritual growth.
- Monday
October 23** | **BEMA Bible Discussion Group**
Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.
Experience the beauty and poetry of the familiar words of Genesis.
- Tuesday
October 24** | **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
October 25** | **Books & Brown Bags Study**
Bring a sack supper to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.
Wrestle with the social injustices addressed by the Belhar Confession.
- Thursday
October 26** | **Crossover Contemplatives: Interfaith Discussion and Book Club**
Gather in the Youth Room at 6:30 P.M.
Look for what unites rather than divides in world religions.

Westminster Happenings, *continued*

**Sunday
October 29**

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.

Saints Sent

Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.

Learn how Christ prepared the first Apostles for the mission field.

Youth Event/Western Cluster Fifth Sunday Gathering

Experience a unique Festiva concert at First Presbyterian at 6:00 P.M.

Hear hip-hop/spoken-word artist Nigel "Legin" Anderson (*see page 19*).

**Monday
October 30**

BEMA Bible Discussion Group

Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.

Experience the beauty and poetry of the familiar words of Genesis.

**Tuesday
October 31**

Note: no Mindful Greenwood meeting this week

World Communion Sunday

Excerpted from pcusa.org

The first Sunday in October is designated as World Communion Sunday, which celebrates our oneness in Christ with all our brothers and sisters around the world. Paul tells us (I Corinthians 11:29) that we are to "discern the body" when we partake of Holy Communion, mindful that we note our relationship to all our brothers and sisters in Christ in the celebration. One is not to go hungry while another is drunk! This is scandalous behavior opposed to the Way of Christ.

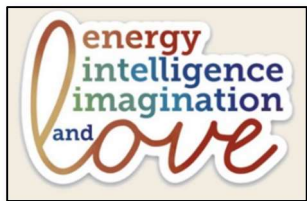


Thus it is appropriate that World Communion Sunday is also a time when we receive the annual Peace and Global Witness Offering as a way of continuing the ancient Christian practice of sharing what we have with brothers and sisters in need. [Visit pcusa.org to make a contribution.]

Celebration of World-Wide Communion Sunday began in 1933, and was adopted as a denominational practice in the Presbyterian Church (US) in 1936. Churches in other denominations were invited to celebrate with us from the beginning, but it wasn't until 1940 when the Department of Evangelism of the Federal Council of Churches (a predecessor body of the National Council of Churches) promoted extending the celebration to a number of churches around the world that the practice became widespread.

Today, World Communion Sunday is celebrated around the world, demonstrating that the church founded on Jesus Christ peacefully shares God-given goods in a broken world.

Congregational Meeting to Elect 2024 Elder Class



The 2023 Nominating Committee, made up of Claire Kuhl, David Bell, and Elizabeth Watkins, was charged with finding nominees to serve a 3-year term, replacing outgoing Elders Richard Wilson and David Hammond. The committee was also asked to nominate individuals to serve on the 2024 Nominating Committee.

After prayerful consideration and consultation with possible candidates, the Nominating Committee is pleased to report that, if so elected:

- Richard Wilson agrees to serve for another term
- Laine Horowitz agrees to seek election and ordination to become an Elder
- Bill Jacobs and Elizabeth Watkins agree to serve on the 2024 Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee believes these individuals are truly called and will, as the Book of Order requires, “pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.” We therefore recommend that the congregation approve the above list. See page 12 to learn how our Book of Order defines the Ruling Elder role.

Hearing the Word of God through New Ears



What if you could hear and understand Holy scripture as it was heard and understood by the first Christians? The BEMA Discipleship program and associated podcast are an attempt to recapture some of the deeply God-centered elements present in the early church and to infuse them into the culture of today.

Beginning Monday, October 2, Luke and Gloria Christie are hosting a new weekly study group that, after listening to a BEMA podcast, comes together to wrestle with sacred texts and ask better questions of the Bible. This study will answer questions, have you asking *more* questions, and leave you changed and challenged.

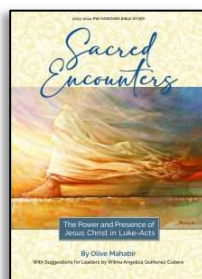
To learn more about this amazing journey through the Bible, come to the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M. on October 2 or contact Gloria Christie at 864-379-5034 or via email: ggchristie716@gmail.com. You may also want to visit the BEMA website at bemadiscipleship.com.

Presbyterian Women Meet Tuesday, October 3

Westminster’s wonderful women gather at 11:30 A.M. in the Choir Room on their new date, October 3, the first *Tuesday* of the month. Bring a snack lunch to munch. Tea and water will be provided.



Kathy Gillespie will lead lesson 2 from the *Sacred Encounters* study book, looking at “The Exorcism in Gerasa” (Luke 8:26-39).



The story of this sacred encounter reveals the ways in which Jesus is present with people who live without the support of their communities because of rejection, confusion, and fear.

Despite our society’s tendency to isolate people who are struggling, this lesson challenges us to trust that no illness—physical, spiritual, or mental—has the power to exclude anyone from the saving grace of Christ Jesus.

WPC Committees Focus on What Matters



Westminster doesn't have committees just because that's the decent and orderly way to operate. Committees exist to respond to the Holy Spirit's call to demonstrate our "faith by working through love" (Gal. 5:6b). After all, "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26).

Each committee focuses on a particular area of service that moves us toward God. And each committee invites *you* to bring your spiritual gifts to the table.

Take note of the committee meeting dates and times in the Westminster Happenings calendar and decide where *you* are being called to service and leadership. We'll see you at the meeting!

Toddler Learning Center Ribbon Cutting: You're Invited!

When: October 4, 2023 at 4:00 P.M.

Where: Westminster Courtyard

Why: Celebrate the essential and uplifting work that Community Initiatives, Inc. is now able to accomplish, thanks to our mutually beneficial relationship. Meet the TLC staff, take a peek at the well-equipped work and play spaces, and learn about this innovative, long-term approach to nurturing and caring for the youngest members of our community.



Children's Sabbath Celebration

Excerpted from pcusa.org

The National Observance of Children's Sabbath, sponsored and resourced by the Children's Defense Fund, is a time for people of all faiths to unite in shared concern for children and common commitment to improving children's lives and working for justice on their behalf. Children's Sabbath is typically observed sometime in October.

Observance of Children's Sabbath weekend unites faith communities of every religious tradition across the nation to:

- Raise awareness of problems facing children and families in our nation (such as poverty, gun violence, and lack of health care)
- Explore the texts and teachings in religious traditions that call us to nurture and protect children with love and justice
- Engage people of faith in immediate and long-term action to nurture, protect, and seek justice for children

On October 15th, Westminster welcomes a guest speaker from Meg's House who brings an important message about bullying and the negative impact it can have on children and families. Our guest will meet with both children's and adult Sunday school classes, and offer a brief presentation at our Sunday Sustenance meal. Meg's House serves McCormick, Edgefield, and Greenwood counties, providing safe emergency shelter and supportive services for victims of domestic violence. For more information, visit MegsHouse.org.



B&BB to Spend 30 Days with Belhar

How should the church respond when sin disrupts the church's unity, creates division among the children of God, and constructs unjust systems that steal life from God's creation? Members and leaders of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa faced these questions under apartheid, a system of laws that separated people by race. Their struggles eventually led to a new addition to the PC(USA) Book of Confessions in 1986: The Confession of Belhar.



Starting on October 11, the weekly Wednesday 6:00 P.M. Books & Brown Bags series will spend *Thirty Days with Belhar*. This useful companion to the Confession weaves together Scripture passages and the Confession's timely themes of unity, reconciliation, and justice. Contact the church office for more information about this lively discussion series.

Rainbow Fellowship Expanding Its Reach



The Rainbow Fellowship is experiencing growth in two dimensions. First, the group is meeting twice a month rather than just once. First Thursdays include a Soup Kitchen service project, and third Thursdays feature craft activities. Second, four new students are attending. Way to grow, team!

Many Finding Meaningful Meditation at WPC

Over the past several months, many community members have learned to be more mindful and centered through the practice of meditation. The group meets every Tuesday evening at 6:30 P.M. Leader Ricky McCarson says that everyone is welcome, from beginner to expert. So come and experience the power of meditation.



Feed My Sheep—Even the Noisy Ones?

Jesus never missed an opportunity to offer food, both physical and spiritual, to His flock. Westminster has been offered a unique outreach activity to feed a flock—in this case, a flock of tired and hungry marching band members.

The Mission & Outreach Committee has accepted an invitation from Emerald High School to provide dinner for the 60-member musical ensemble at the Laurens Marching Band Competition on October 14th. It's a great way to extend God's love directly to young people in our

neighborhood, and to visibly support their efforts toward excellence.

Pastor Caroline noted, "In my four years as an Emerald Band mom, I was impressed with the healthy (and teen-welcomed) meals that parent volunteers prepared and served to the kids. It is important to remember that *all* of our students in Greenwood District 50 receive free lunch because 80% of the students in our district qualify for it. Also, some of these kids don't have folks smiling at them, cheering them on. What would it be like if 6-10 folks from WPC came in their WPC tee-shirts and fed these music-making kids and the instructors and volunteers who support them?" Contact any member of the Mission & Outreach Committee if you are interested in supporting this great hands-on outreach.

Westminster Continues Tradition of Filling Empty Bowls



As well-fed as most of us are, it's easy to lose sight (literally) of the many people in Greenwood living with food-insecurity. The Greenwood Soup Kitchen served more than 20,000 meals last year at a cost of ~\$80,000. The Empty Bowls project raises much-needed funds to help the Greenwood Soup Kitchen address this critical issue. So far this year, the event raised \$32,000.

So—what exactly is Empty Bowls? It is an international grassroots movement that marries local artists with organizations that fight hunger in their own communities.

Artists create and donate unique pottery bowls. Those who buy tickets and attend the event select their favorite bowl and enjoy a meal of gourmet soup, accompanied by homemade rolls and desserts. They then get to take home the chosen bowl to serve as a reminder of all the “empty bowls” in their community and in the world.

Because of our Gold Ladle sponsorship and donations from the Souper Bowl of Caring special offering in January, **Westminster has 14 tickets available at no charge for anyone who would like to participate in this year's event.** Contact the church office to request your ticket. After selecting your one-of-a-kind bowl and picking up your meal from the Soup Kitchen at 5:30 P.M., join the other Westminster diners at Grace Street Park to enjoy food and fellowship. Wear your WPC tee-shirt to share the Good News of Christ Jesus!

“...He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.”

Luke 1:53

Thank You for Your Input and Insights

The Worship & Music Committee extends sincere thanks to everyone who took time to complete the 2023 Summer Worship Feedback survey. The responses have been tabulated, and the committee is working to understand what the diverse findings suggest about future worship planning.

Don't feel like you have to wait for a special survey to share your ideas and concerns.



The bright pink Suggestion Box in the narthex window is always available to receive your comments!

Church Family Special Days

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

- ❖ 6th – Hamp Watkins
- ❖ 9th – Tracy Rainey
- ❖ 10th – Rey Wicker
- ❖ 14th – Susan Pope
- ❖ 24th – Arthur Gillespie
- ❖ 31st – Spears Alexander
Michie Bacot



And Happy Anniversary to Joyce and Spears Alexander!

Send your family's special dates to the church office (wpcgwd1@gmail.com) or call 864.229.3595.

What matters is faith
working through love.

Galatians 5:6b (GNT)



Fall is the perfect time to celebrate the faithful good worship and good work that this congregation has supported so far this year through contributions of your energy, your imagination, your spiritual gifts, and yes, your money. It is also the season to begin prayerfully considering *now* what you will commit to Christ and His church in 2024.

Reminding us that *all* things come from God, the Bible challenges all God’s people to give the first 10% back to the church as a grateful response to God’s infinite generosity. This is called a *tithe*. It’s a high bar for most of us, but it is a worthy target to which to aspire!

You undoubtedly have a lot of different responsibilities and interests clamoring for your attention and your financial support. By prioritizing Christ Jesus and the work of His church, you are choosing to focus on what matters most. Because as Paul reminded the contentious Christians in Galatia, “...what matters is faith working through love.”

As a beloved Child of God (an essential COG in God’s mighty works), *you* are the hands and feet that your Heavenly Father uses to do good in the world, working in loving relationship with your church family. As the year comes to a close, please fulfill the commitment you made to God this time last year. And seek God’s guidance on how you will participate in Christ’s redemptive plan next year through your time, talent, and treasure.

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.



August 2023

	August Actual	Monthly Budget	Year-to-Date Actual	Year-to-Date Budget
Total Income	\$13,463	\$15,531	\$142,933	\$141,44
Total Expenses	\$17,931	\$17,207	\$134,777	\$140,006
Net Gain/Loss	-\$4,468		-\$7,108	

In August, the Nurture & Education Committee expenditure exceeded its budgeted monthly expense to cover background checks for nursery workers and a Montreat Conference registration. Worship & Music had an \$800 for preaching honoraria for WOW and 11:15 worship. We also paid half of our annual pledge to Trinity Presbytery; \$1,100.

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

Insights from the PC(USA) Book of Order: Ruling Elder Defined



Most of us don't spend much time studying our denomination's Book of Order, but it is a rich resource. As you prepare to elect elders, here is an excerpt that defines their role.

G-2.0301 As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in discernment of God's Spirit and governance of God's people.

Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit.

Ruling elders are so named not because they "lord it over" the congregation (Matthew 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life.

Ruling elders, together with ministers of the Word and Sacrament, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships.

When elected by the congregation, they shall serve faithfully as members of the session. When elected as commissioners to higher councils, ruling elders participate and vote with the same authority as ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and they are eligible for any office.

“Tend my sheep.”

John 21:16b

Pastor Appreciation Month: Much More Than Just One Hour a Week

October is Pastor Appreciation Month. The call to honor church leaders can be traced back to Paul, who advised giving “double honor” to the elders of the church, “especially those whose work is preaching and teaching” (1 Timothy 5:17). In 1994, the Focus on the Family organization began promoting Pastor Appreciation Month at a national level to encourage the faithful to outwardly show gratitude for their clergy.

It is tempting to imagine that the life of a pastor is an easy one—just show up for an hour on Sunday morning. The reality, of course, is quite bit more challenging.

The PC(USA) Book of Order sets six expectations for all teaching elders:

- Encourage people in the worship and service of God (worship development and leadership; preaching)
- Equip and enable the people for their tasks within the church and their mission in the world (education, teaching, and mentoring; professional and spiritual development)
- Exercise pastoral care, devoting special attention to the poor, the sick, the troubled, and the dying
- Reach out in concern and service to the life of the human community as a whole (evangelism and new member outreach; mission leadership and involvement)
- Participate in governance
- Share in the ministry of church councils higher than the Session

Make time this month to let Pastor Caroline know that you appreciate the *many* ways she cares for us all. A note, a bouquet, an affirming word all make a difference.

Why Westminster? Yesterday, Today, & Tomorrow

Submitted by John Funke

Westminster Church is not unique and is similar to most traditional churches that struggle to remain germane to this self-assured, technology-obsessed, establishment-rejecting millennial world that is dedicated to social revolution.

Westminster initially attracted my family with specific members' characteristics. For example, my personal historical journey with some; the individual charm of others; their performance in the Greenwood community; and their performance in their profession.



After initially connecting with Westminster, it became most important because of:

- The wisdom of its clergy
- Its dedication to a nurturing environment for our children
- Its social inclusiveness
- Its choir comradery
- Its propagation of God's grace

Today, many years later, Westminster *stays* important to me because of:

- Its individual members
- My personal history with Westminster
- Its traditional religious services
- Its traditional physical structure
- Its reliance on tradition as a competent guide
- My need for God's grace

Here is a caveat of my opinion: my personal and scholastic experience with expanding and/or contemporary churches is very limited; therefore, the identifiers that attract new members today elude me. It does seem that my personal demographic is not joining new or different churches, and therefore, I can only make assumptions.

My logical progression is that Westminster either perseveres with our traditions or changes dramatically to attract an emerging, dominant social environment. I perceive the dominant generation's new and differing characteristics are rooted in high value of teamwork, stronger self-awareness, each individual's innate internal compass, insistence on technologic progressiveness, desire for recognized personal achievements in the triumph over injustice and irrelevance of tradition in favor of an exchange of current global ideas and peer pressure as a competent guide in life.

Dr. Funke shared his thoughts in response to the invitation for the congregation to describe Westminster in three words, and to identify the values that are core to Westminster's culture.

Greenwood Walk October 15 Supports Suicide Prevention—Volunteers Welcome

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is organizing an awareness event on Sunday, October 15. If you are interested in walking, gather at the old Greenwood Civic Center location at



American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention



1:30 P.M. to check in. The walk begins at 2:00 P.M. There is no registration fee for participants.



The 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 for more information.

PC(USA) and the Matthew 25 Movement: Part II

As part of our One Church. One Book Series, this fall we are thinking together about the three initiatives of the PC(USA) Matthew 25 Movement, based on the parable of the sheep and goats that Jesus tells in Matthew 25:31-46. In the parable, Jesus makes clear, that what we do matters to God and how we treat others is important to God.



In September we focused on the first initiative, “Congregational Vitality.” This month we highlight the second initiative, “Dismantling Structural Racism,” and in November we will focus on the third initiative, “Eradicating Systemic Poverty.”

From the PC(USA) Website: Presbyterian Mission Agency Dismantling structural racism | Matthew 25 in the PC(USA): Join the Movement | Presbyterian Mission Agency

What are We Talking About?

Race is a socially constructed concept that purports to use characteristics such as skin color, facial features, and body structure as a basis for classifying people. It has no scientific or biological basis. It was introduced during the period of European colonial expansion.

Prejudice is pre-judgment in the absence of evidence and held even when evidence contradicts it.

Social power is the capacity of individuals and groups to determine what happens in society. Their decisions and actions then shape society’s values, beliefs, institutions, and systems.

Racism is the combination of social power and racial prejudice to create systems that treat people differently, based on their defined racial group. Privileges are provided for some while dehumanizing, excluding, or oppressing others.

Racism = Racial hierarchy + Prejudice + Social power

What is *structural racism*?

Structural racism is the normalizing of racism within institutions and structures. Once racism is structural and institutional (as it is in the United States), it creates ongoing, persistent inequality. Inequality occurs in accessing money, land, housing, education, health, information, and social power. Because inequality is a part of the structures and institutions that we interact with every day, it often goes unquestioned and unchallenged by most of society or the dominant culture. In the United States, structural racism particularly advantages white people while producing negative impacts for people of color.

Important notes:

- Racism is measured not by intent, but by its impact on those who are oppressed.
- Racism can be overt or covert, individual or systemic, intentional or unintentional.
- Racism grants privilege to some and sustains the dominant group.
- Racism exists everywhere in our society, and in all institutions, including our church.

What Does Our Faith Require?

“We will not passively accept unjust systems for the sake of a false peace; We will take on the hard work of dismantling, stone by stone, the systems of oppression that divide and subjugate our siblings. We will build, living stone by living stone, societies marked by justice and love. God calls us to reconciliation. Let us repair that which we’ve broken.”

(Adapted from *30 Days with the Confession of Belhar* devotion and prayer by Rev. Robina Marie Winbush, and from the 2016 General Assembly policy “Facing Racism.”)

Our Books & Brown Bags study in October will be Thirty Days with the Belhar Confession, a devotional guide that focuses on the most recently added confession to our book of confessions, “The Belhar Confession.” written by the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa during Apartheid.

Prayer for Racial Reconciliation and Healing

Dear God,

In the effort to dismantle racism, I understand that I struggle not merely against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities—those institutions and systems that keep racism alive by perpetuating the lie that some members of our family are inferior and others superior.

Create in me a new mind and heart that will enable me to see brothers and sisters in the faces of those divided by racial categories.

Give me the grace and strength to rid myself of racial stereotypes that oppress some in my family while providing entitlements to others.

Help me to create a nation that embraces the hopes and fears of oppressed people of color where we live, as well as those around the world.

Help me to heal your family, making me one with you and empowered by your Holy Spirit.



Adapted by Debra Mooney, PhD from Pax Christi

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
- Tiffany Wilkins
- 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



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 all those recovering from fires, earthquakes, floods, and famine
- 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 first responders running into danger rather than away from it, for our sakes
- 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...



On Sunday, September 24, Tiffany Wilkins became a member of Westminster by profession of faith. She brings with her two sons, Chase and Isaac. Tiffany received a new study Bible, embellished by members of her church family with highlighted Bible verses to study,



The intrepid Westminster Wonders spelling bee team enjoyed a good time and some success as competitors against 33 other teams. They handily survived the easy and intermediate rounds. Westminster donated \$300 to support Healthy Learners programs.

Special People Doing Special Things



The healing words of Peace, Love, and Courage are now always visible to inspire everyone in the Self Regional Healthcare Cancer Center, thanks to a generous memorial gift from the Bornemann family in remembrance of Lynn Bornemann. In a moving presentation at the unveiling, Len Bornemann thanked the healthcare professionals at Self for all their skill and kindness during Lynn's treatments, as well as his own. Many Westminster members were present to celebrate Lynn's life, including John and Mishie Bacot (below left).



Smiles from some of the WPC PW group

Legin



Nigel "Legin" Anderson is a spoken word artist, gospel hip hop artist, podcaster and preacher/speaker who uses transparency to connect and art to communicate with his listeners.

Sunday, October 29, 2023 6:00 PM

Event is free and open to the public

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
108 East Cambridge Avenue
Greenwood, SC 29646 864-229-5814
www.firstgreenwood.com

Presented by



This project is funded in part by the South Carolina Arts Commission which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the John and Susan Bennett Memorial Arts Fund

One Book. One Church. Family Study Plan & Tips

Keep this study plan near your Bible for easy reference.

October

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

November

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

Christian Nurture at Home: Faith 5 Practice

From Faith Inkubators

How might you bring our “One Church. One Book” conversation into your home? Try this Faith 5 practice with your family or a special friend.

1. **SHARE:** Tell your partner (a parent, child, spouse, friend) about your high (best thing) and your low (worst or hardest thing) from your day. Listen as your partner tells you about their highs and lows.
2. **READ:** Read a Bible verse or story. *Choose something from our Matthew reading for the week.*
3. **TALK:** Talk about how the Bible reading might relate to the highs and lows you shared today, or to something in the news or happening in your community or family.
4. **PRAY:** Simply talk to God. Thank Jesus for the good and ask the Holy Spirit’s help for guidance with the lows and difficulties.
5. **BLESS:** Close the conversation by looking your partner in the eye, perhaps making the sign of the cross on their brow or holding their hand, while speaking a blessing such as “May the Lord bless you and keep you.” or “You are a beloved child of God,” or “Jesus loves you and so do I.”