

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

3208 Exposition Boulevard

Austin, TX 78703

512-459-5497

www.wpcaustin.org

Connections @ Westminster

January 25 – February 1, 2009

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Weekly Word

Dear Westminster Members,

The recent economic downturn has certainly had an impact our congregation over the past several months. Some members have lost jobs, while others are uncertain about their employment status for the coming year. We need to hold these members and families in our prayers during these difficult times.

Like other congregations and non-profit organizations, Westminster is feeling the effect of the slumping economy. Year end reporting shows us that a higher number of pledges than usual were unable to be fulfilled. Giving was lower than anticipated. There is obvious concern for the coming year based on the recent trends we have seen. The Westminster Session will discuss these matters at its meeting this Tuesday, and will begin working on a plan to address the challenges that are before our congregation. We will keep you informed about the Session's decisions in the coming weeks, and will be reporting to the congregation at some point in February.

While there are significant challenges that lie before us, God continues to provide at Westminster. A substantial number of members increased their pledge for the coming year. We've also seen a healthy number

of new pledges. We just ordained and installed a group of dedicated elders and deacons who are eager to serve our church. Those of you who took last Sunday's tour of the new facilities were able to catch a vision of our future- a new space where, possibly beginning in April, we might provide hospitality to many and grow in fellowship as the body of Christ. This Sunday evening the Grow Christ's Church Task Force will be meeting with officers, ministry committee members, and any who wish to come, to present their report and lead us through a visioning process for ministry over the next two years.

In the coming months we have challenges to face *and* opportunities to embrace. May the Lord grant us wisdom and grace as we seek to listen, discern and do all that we need to do to follow God's call.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Bill

Weekly Calendar

Sunday, Jan. 25	8:15 a.m.	Worship/Communion	Sanctuary
	9:30 a.m.	Church School for all ages	
	10:30 a.m.	Fellowship	
	11 a.m.	Worship	Sanctuary
	5-7 p.m.	Youth Fellowship	Annex
	6 p.m.	Grow Christ's Church Task Force and Church Officers Meeting	Sanctuary
Tuesday, Jan. 27	10 a.m.	Staff Meeting	Pastor's Study
	12 noon – 3 p.m.	WPDS Staff	10
	7 p.m.	Session	10
Wed., Jan. 28	7 p.m.	Adult Choir	Sanctuary
Thurs., Jan. 29	12:15 p.m.	Mid-day prayers	Sanctuary
	2 – 4 p.m.	Lifetime Learning	10

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Prayer Requests

Joan Johnson

Diane Frick

John Clary

Becky McDonald

Charmaine Denius

Ruby Doris Gunther (*sister of Hazel Herring*)

Austin Walker (*friend of Chris Clark*)

Wendell Linton (*cousin of MaryAnne Ater*)

Bill Whiteside (*friend of Jack and Shirley Howard and Susan Cockburn*)

Peggy Huckabay (*friend of the Somervilles*)

Charles Porter (*father of LeaAnne Porter*)

Ann Allen (*cousin of Dean Herbst*)

Ginna Franke (*friend of O.R. Schmidt and Claire Breihan*)

Anthony Almén (*father of Byron Almén*)

Exell Coon

Cordarro Guillory (*friend of the Polans*)

Joyce Stribling (*cousin of Pat Boswell*)

Billye Jean Townes (*aunt of Nancy Campbell*)

Gayle O'Brien (*extended family of the Parker, Frick, and Schriber families*)

Laura Carlson and family (*family friend of the Parker, Frick, and Schriber families*)

Thomas David Dobbs (*uncle of Ann Dobbs*)

Jim and Sarah Sullivan (*friends of O.R. Schmidt and Claire Breihan*)

George O'Dwyer (*friend of Stan Shaw*)

Virginia McCullough (*mother of Mary Somers*)

Kenneth Coffelt (*childhood friend of Katie Burns*)

Shirley Bird Perry (*friend of Sharon McGraw*)

Civilians and military in war-torn areas

Victims of oppression

Peace and peace workers

That God's peace may come

Grow Christ's Church Task Force Report this Sunday

This Sunday evening, Jan. 25, Westminster members are invited to join the officers and committee members to hear a report from the Grow Christ's Church Task Force and to participate in the visioning process for future ministries of our church. We will gather in the sanctuary from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Thanks to all who have participated in the work of the Task Force so far. We look forward to learning what God is calling us to do and be through these series of "holy conversations".

It's time for...

Theology on Tap

Thursday, February 5

@ Billy's on Burnet

(for more info. see www.billysonburnet.com)

2105 Hancock Dr.

7 p.m. 'til 9 p.m.

Low key. Topics vary. Theology. Life. Lots of questions. A few answers. Beer. Burgers. Fun and thoughtful conversation.

Loose (in terms of "preparedness" and "required knowledge = none" and not in terms of morals!).

No experts, just a facilitator to keep things sort of on track and to bring a question to get us going. Actually, we're just getting started with this idea, so bring your thoughts to share about what sort of shape and form you'd like this to take. Many of you have suggested it, or at least expressed some sort of interest in us offering something like that (or, if you haven't, I think you might enjoy this). So...come from work, come from the gym, bring a friend, get a sitter for the kids, eat dinner (they have great burgers), or just come for "liquid dessert" or the conversation and fellowship.

Important Notice! City of Austin Changes Parking Lanes on Exposition Blvd.

The City of Austin has recently changed the traffic flow on Exposition Blvd., and parking is no longer allowed on the east side of Exposition. If you come to worship and park on the street, **please park on the west side of Exposition**, which is actually safer to exit/enter your cars. Thank you.

Manos de Cristo Desperately Needs Children's Clothing

A special call has come to all churches to help restock the clothes closet at Manos. They particularly need children's clothes of all sizes. Bring them to the church at any time where we have volunteers who will transport them (as well as food) every week. This is a good way to include your children in mission.

Church Members May Apply for Fall 2009 Day School Classes

Westminster Presbyterian Day School, a cooperative preschool for children ages 1 - 4/5 years and a mission of Westminster Presbyterian Church, is registering for the 2009-2010 school year. Church members receive priority in placement if their application is in the Day School office **by January 30**. Applications are available in the narthex.

If you have previously applied and your application is on file, it is not necessary to reapply. If you are presently enrolled in the School, you will receive your application through your child's teacher. Please call Kitt Richter, Director, at the Day School office (459-5062) if you have any questions.

Because of the Day School's excellent reputation among preschools in Austin, Church Members are encouraged to call the office anytime after the birth of their child and ask for an application.

We look forward to serving you.

Manos de Cristo Clinic Needs Phone Volunteers

The clinic is in dire need of volunteers to help answer the phones at the clinic. If you or someone you know might be interested in helping, please contact Julie Ballesteros, Executive Director, at jballesteros@manosdecristo.org, or 477-7454.

Refugee Family Needs Help

There is an Iraqi refugee family that has just arrived in Austin. Last week they had \$40 and the clothes on their backs. Caritas, which Westminster supports with our mission budget, has found them an apartment and furnished them with beds and a table and some chairs to go with it. They have promised a sofa as well. The family needs other comfortable chairs, and other things like a TV, small tables including a coffee table, a place for the TV, if they get one, lamps, etc. There are three children 12, 7 and 5 years old. A toy or two would be nice.

If you have something to offer, please contact Moneta Prince at 708-8293 or myongsook@aol.com.

MidWinter Lectures at Austin Seminary

This year's February 2-4 MidWinter Lectures at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary features notable preachers and church musicians. **Thomas G. Long**, Bandy Professor of Preaching at Candler School of Theology, Emory University is a renowned Presbyterian preacher and teacher. **Scott Black Johnston**, was recently installed as the senior pastor of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City. Scott was formerly on the faculty of Austin Presbyterian Seminary and is remembered by many at Westminster. The Lectures will also feature **Mary Louise Bringle**, noted hymnologist and professor of philosophy and religion at Brevard College and **Paul Westermeyer**, professor of church music at Luther Seminary in St. Paul. For more information go to <http://www.austinseminary.edu>.

Westminster Presbyterian Women

Save This Date for Our Spring Retreat

Saturday, April 4th

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Sharyn Reynolds will lead us as we explore the issue of stress
and how it affects our spirituality.

Registration forms and additional information
will be provided later.

Mark your calendars now!

WPC Chili Cook-off

Sunday, February 8

5 – 7 p.m.

At church.

The main goal is good food and good fellowship...but there will be prizes for the Best All Around, the Hottest, the Weirdest, and the Most Creative.

Team with a friend, or get your family involved, have a theme, dress up, whatever. Bring your best stuff!

Let Kathy Anderson know if you want her to count you in for a pot of chili – and what you're going to call it.

An Opportunity to Help in Mission

For Amateur Photographers Who Need Help or Want to Improve Their Skills!

Light Of Congo Project

History:

In 2008 Randy Kerr and missionary Don Bobb traveled to Congo and filmed a documentary film and write the last chapter of a book called Light of Congo. The Congo Game of Light was created from Randy's Westway Method of photography. Randy Kerr has joined the University Presbytery Congo Mission Group and will be hosting photographic education programs in churches and other organizations.

Fund raising:

All profits from the Earth Light and Lens lecture series and Congo Game of Light will be given to University Presbytery church Congo Mission outreach services for the Leubo Partnership. For more information regarding the efforts of University Presbytery outreach in Luebo Congo. www.luebopartnership.com

Earth Light and Lens photographic lecture

Free 45 min introduction classes

Where: On the porch at Precision Camera and Video

When: 2:00PM January 24th, 31st

Earth Light and lens lecture series

100% of all profits benefit Luebo Congo Africa.

Dates Feb 18th Mar 19th Apr 24th

Price: 49.00 per class, on sale at Precision camera

Time: 3 to 5PM

Location: Precision Camera and Video, 3810 N. Lamar

Description: The Earth, Light and Lens lectures series covers wide gamma photographic information. You will learn how to achieve quality light in an image. Topics each month will include landscape, macro floral, travel and portraits in nature. Instructor Randy Kerr will be teaching from travel images taken from around the world with a special focus on Texas landscapes. Each class starts out in front of Precision camera then moved across the street to Central Park for a portrait study period. The class will walk around the corner to Waterloo Icehouse for a light and distance lecture for landscape and portraits. Images will be shown in HD in a reserved space for the class. A Waterloo sandwich and drink are provided for each class participant.

Discussion topics include:

Mapping the path of the sun

Scouting for Locations

Planning for light quality

Capturing human emotions

Reflector fill light

Depth of field assignments

The Moving shade exercise

See more at www.lightcamp.tv or Contact Randy Kerr at 512-947-4979

Stewardship Update

We continue to draw closer to our \$620,000 goal for 2009. Thanks to all of you who have made 2009 pledges. To date we have received 171 pledges for a total of \$580,334. Last year we received \$592,000 in pledges.

If you have not yet made a pledge for 2009, we ask that you prayerfully consider participating this year. Help us Grow Christ's Church at Westminster in 2009. Pledges can be made by filling out a pledge card (available in the narthex), calling the church office, or sending an email to Jimmie Grossman, the financial secretary, at wpcadmin@wpcastin.org.

Worship

Sunday, Jan. 25

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Preacher: Bill Clark

Liturgists: Kathy Anderson, Melissa Koerner

Scriptures: I Corinthians 7:29-31; Psalm 62:5-12; Mark 1:14-20

**Those Serving as Ushers, After-Church Elders, Greeters, Cookie Hosts, Acolytes
Sunday, January 25**

Ushers: Tom Cockburn, Captain; Sam Cockburn, Barney Cockburn, Brent Hill, Patrick Hill, Hayden Bowers, Don Smith, Jimmie Smith, Louisa Ehrlich, Adelaide Ehrlich

After Church Elders: Linda Tyler, Russ Somers, Kim Edwards

Greeters: South Door, Ryan McGinn and Sharon McGraw; North Door, O. R. Schmidt and Connie Moore

Cookie Hosts: Kathy Lockart and Marlene Magierski

Acolytes: Justina Lange, Adam Litch, Katherine Jones

What's Coming Up

Sunday Morning Church School Offerings

January 25, 2009

9:30-10:30 a.m.

Forum Class – Room 10

Meet John Calvin – An Introduction 500 Years in the Making

Kathy Anderson

John Calvin (1509–1564) was a major Protestant reformer whose influence continues to the present day. This year marks the 500th anniversary of his birth! He was a leader of what became known as the Reformed branch of the Protestant Reformation. Calvin was deeply involved in the life of Geneva, where he preached and lectured and was concerned with many facets of everyday life. His theological writings put him in the front ranks of Protestant leaders, and his various types of writings—biblical commentaries, sermons, and theological and polemical works—were viewed as key resources for those who adopted his views. Later followers (Calvinists) developed his thought into even more systematic expressions. But Calvin's theological genius is still looked to in the present time as a clear articulation of his understanding of the Christian gospel. In the Presbyterian tradition, Calvin's work is highly regarded as formative for understanding Christian faith and life.

There is much to be said of Calvin, and much to learn from/about him...so as the Reformed church around the world celebrates his 500th birthday in 2009, Westminster saints will have several opportunities to get to know him better as well. **This week, we will reflect on the major themes of Calvin's theology.** Then, in future months, we will continue to explore his teaching and writing(s). This is just the beginning. Join us!

Foundations of Faith – Library

Parenting: The Early Years

Bill & Jill Clark, facilitators

What would you as a parent like to discuss and study? What would be helpful? This Sunday, the parenting class will be exploring possibilities for study in the coming months. Join us in the library with your ideas. Your input is valuable to the class.

Bible Study – Room 6

The Gospel of Luke

Interested in reading and studying the Bible? We will consider **Luke 6:12-49** this Sunday (**Jesus' Instructions to Disciples**). No prior knowledge is needed, just your willingness to read the Bible and reflect on it with others! Join us!

The Thoughtful Christian Class
Will join the Forum Class on January 25.

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Children's Ministries

*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."
Matthew 19:14*

Preschoolers:

LAMBS is our preschool program at Westminster for children ages birth through Kindergarten. As we begin summer, our church school classes will be broadly graded. Church School starts at 9:30 with a time for singing in Room 14. Teachers will pick the children up and move to room 4 (4's-5's) and Room 5 (2's-3's). Children can be picked up following church school at 10:30 a.m. in their respective rooms.

A **NURSERY** for our littlest members is in Room 2, staffed by a caring and trained team of child care workers.

Children of all ages are welcome in worship at Westminster. The nursery, located in Room 2 of the Education Wing is available for infants and beginning at 11:15, preschool children may join in Godly Play in Room 13 if they grow restless.

*"In my Father's house, there are many dwelling places."
John 14:2*

Elementary Age Children:

Dwelling Places meets in Room 13. We'll start with singing and our story for the week. After a brief time together we will be dismissed to our activities.

Jan 18-Feb 1st - Who are We? Presbyterians!

Feb 8th - Feb 22 - Psalm 23

3rd Grade Bibles will be given this Sunday. This is part of the Passages program. If you have a 3rd grader, please contact Karen if you haven't already been contacted.

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Youth Ministries

Super Bowl Sunday is also Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday

A simple prayer: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat" is inspiring a youth-led movement to help hungry and hurting people around the world. This prayer, delivered by Brad Smith, then a seminary intern serving at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC, gave birth to an idea. Why not use Super Bowl weekend, a time when people come together for football and fun, to also unify the nation for a higher good: collecting dollars and canned food for the needy? Youth could collect

donations at their schools and churches in soup pots, and then send every dollar DIRECTLY to a local charity of THEIR choice.

The senior high youth of Spring Valley Presbyterian liked the idea so much they decided to invite other area churches to join the team. Twenty-two Columbia churches participated that first year, reporting their results so a total could be determined, and then sending all \$5,700 they had raised to area non-profits. That was 1990. Since then, ordinary young people have generated an extraordinary \$50 million for soup kitchens, food banks and other charities in communities across the country. In addition, hundreds of thousands of youth have experienced for themselves the joy and satisfaction of giving and serving, inspiring people of all ages to follow their generous example.

The donations, both canned food and monetary that are collected on Feb 1st will be given to Manos de Cristo. The hope is that our youth can deliver the food and money to them and stay to help stock and clean the food pantry and anything else that we can do to help Manos.

We are looking for Sunday School teachers and Youth Leaders for both Senior High and Middle School for the upcoming year. Prayerfully consider if you can spend 6 weeks with our youth either on Sunday morning or Sunday evenings. They are great kids. All we ask is that you come and be present with them and get to know them as they get to know you. You will be enriched by their presences as they will be yours. Let Karen know if you are interested. Karen@wpcaustin.org

Church School classes for all youth meet each Sunday morning, 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. in the Annex, located at the corner of Carlton and Hillview, just beyond the church parking lot.

Upcoming Fellowship dates

Jan 25th - Annex 5-7 - group games and we will begin to discuss youth Sunday and split up the tasks.

Feb 1st - Super Bowl party at the Shaw's

Feb 8th - All Church Chili cook-off (anyone got a killer recipes for the youth to enter?)

Need a Power Outlet? Plug into Jesus!!

This is the MidWinter Youth conference theme this year. It is based on Romans 12:1-8.

What the kids are saying:

High School:

- ✦ I enjoyed the personal stories about finding God from the MPTs (MidWinter Planning Team) because they were more personal. I loved just being around the nature of Mo ranch and the nature oriented meditation activity.
- ✦ My favorite part of Midwinters was, like most youth trips we take, getting to know the other Westminster youth better. I also enjoyed the chance to take time off from real life, from school and friends and activities and just take time to sit and let my mind go blank. Guided meditation in small groups and the time to pray after the dance were times that I could just think.
- ✦ I liked getting to know new people and the guided meditation. I also liked hearing personal stories and having fun.

Middle School

- ✦ "Mo Ranch was a different experience than I Expected, but still fun. I learned a lot about myself and others and I got meet a bunch of interesting new people."
- ✦ "For me Mo Ranch is a very spiritual risk taking camp. I feel much closer to God now, especially after the speeches by the high school students (Leadership team)."
- ✦ "It was fun. I got to meet new friends and get closer to my old friends."
- ✦ "I loved meeting all the people in my small group. When you get to know a lot of new people, you can be anyone you want."
- ✦ "The scripture taught me that in hard times I can just let God guide me through it. I also learned tat there are other people who are going through tough times as well. We were taught to work together and we're all one in God."
- ✦ "It helped me connect with God. I prayed for myself and for my teacher. I learned about togetherness. It was deep."
- ✦ "I learned not to conform into what people around me are telling me to be, but to transform into someone different from everyone and to be close to Him. The experience taught me to hand all my burdens to Jesus and trust him with everything that he is constantly with me on my journey through life with him."
- ✦ "I love coming to Mo Ranch MidWinters. This year I enjoyed that new kids came with WPC. I think we should talk about inviting more to come with us."
- ✦ "I learned that everybody is equal and just as important as everyone else; that we are dependent on one another and can't function without the help of others. Everybody must work in unison to accomplish things."
- ✦ "Mo=Fun! I find this camp to be very enjoyable from small groups, to sports, to karaoke, to worship."
- ✦ "I enjoyed meeting new friends. Mo Ranch is fun. I want to come back next year."

SUMMER MISSION TRIPS

Middle School - Heifer Ranch ? July 26-31 (there are 12 spots and 4 of them have been spoken for, so let Karen know as early as possible if you want to go)

High School - Stewpot - June 28-July 3 (this seemed to work better for most, but it will depend if we can get that week in Dallas)

Middle School (Grades 6 - 7)

Meets in the Annex Living Room

Topic: Christian Practices

Grade 8: Confirmation Class

Senior High (Grades 9 - 12)

Meets in the Annex Red Room

Topic: A variety of resources focusing on our lives, current events, questions, and the role of faith in our lives.

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Fellowship

Want to stay connected to your WPC friends and family? What better way to do that than to share food, fellowship, and fun together. Throughout the year, there are many fellowship opportunities, many of which you have read about--either in this issue of Connections or in past announcements. Keep an eye out for upcoming events led by various Westminster groups.

Adventures

"An Encore from the Memoirs Class" is the Adventures program for February 3. What we would really like to know from our ancestors is their stories. The Memoirs Class is an opportunity for us to tell our stories to future generations of family. Come and hear some of the current stories from class members. Three of the readers are WPC'ers, Joan Smith, Marian and Richard Robertson.

Adventures meets the first Tuesday of each month at 12 noon in Room 10. Bring your brown bag lunch and enjoy visiting with friends and a hearing a good program.

Annual Chili Cook-off Coming!

Fellowship Dinners coming in 2009!

Are you interested in widening your friendship circle at WPC?

Are you interested in deepening your relationships at WPC?

If you are, check out the spring program of fellowship dinner groups that will meet three times -- in **January, March and May** ? to share a meal, get to know each other and have fun. You will have the opportunity to meet three different groups of WPC members who are diverse in experience, age and address. Each group will gather informally to share a meal, which could be a potluck in someone's home, a picnic in a park or an outing to a restaurant. At the conclusion of the three dinners, we will ask: Where do we want to go from here in small group fellowship? For more information and to sign up to be a dinner participant and/or host, **contact Kathy Anderson** (459-5497 or kathy@wpcaustin.org) or talk to **Mike Rush or Terry Allbright at church.**

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Mission

From the Peace, Justice and the Environment Sub-Committee

From Mark Koenig, Presbyterian Peacemaking Office: re Presbyterian Disaster Assistance/GAZA. The following are several ways we can help in this critical, heartbreaking situation. PDA is attempting to raise \$1,000,000 for humanitarian relief in Gaza.

Mary Jansen

Support humanitarian efforts through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

<http://www.pcusa.org/pda/response/middleeast/gazawestbank-index.htm>

Call the White House comments line (202-456-1111).

Email President Obama and our Senators and Representative through Churches for Middle East Peace.

<http://org2.democracyinaction.org/dia/track.jsp?v=2&c=4MkjHuKds3e8rZzcVyrO7UYWZggnaccv>
<<http://org2.democracyinaction.org/dia/track.jsp?v=2&c=4MkjHuKds3e8rZzcVyrO7UYWZggnaccv>>

Write a letter to the editor of your paper.

<http://capwiz.com/pcusa/dbq/media/>

Sign the ecumenical Christian letter to President Obama urging him to make Israeli-Palestinian peace an immediate priority during his first year in office.

<http://org2.democracyinaction.org/dia/track.jsp?v=2&c=aT4G3SwhpgvmMiEBcxCSQUYWZggnaccv>
<<http://org2.democracyinaction.org/dia/track.jsp?v=2&c=aT4G3SwhpgvmMiEBcxCSQUYWZggnaccv>>

HELP FEED HUNGRY PEOPLE!!

Sunday, Feb. 1 we have a chance to help the many in our community who do not have enough to eat!
Some of them are evacuees from Ike,
some have lost their jobs,
but **Manos de Cristo Food Pantry** does not have enough food to help those who need it most.

Teach your children! When you go to the store this week-end, take your children with you. As you pick out food for your own family, teach them about the needs of others and ways we can share to meet those needs.

Bring the food Sunday, **Feb. 1**. And as we are fed at our Lord's table we remember to feed others in need!

Check out the many ways WPC is active in our congregational, local, national, and world community, <http://www.wpcaustin.org>.

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[Westminster Presbyterian Church](#), organized in 1947, is a congregation of [Mission Presbytery](#), the [Synod of the Sun](#), and the [Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)](#).