

# WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

3208 Exposition Boulevard

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[www.wpcaustin.org](http://www.wpcaustin.org)

## Connections @ Westminster

February 1 - 8, 2009

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## Weekly Word

Dear Westminster saints,

There are many images that can be used to describe the church, but one that is often used to talk about the gathering of God's people is "family." We speak of one another as the "family of faith," claiming that we are the "family of God." We even speak of "family ministries" and the like. Many times, people claim that their church family is closer to them and more supportive of them than their own families. In all of that, heaven knows that we sometimes overuse the word "family" and put more emphasis on it than we should, sometimes suggesting that there is only one "real" way to be family to one another. Sometimes, "family" is more of a binding or exclusive word than a liberating one. And for that we need to ask forgiveness. But in the truest sense of the word, as children of God, we are *family* to one another as Christians, regardless of whether we live in a one person household, or with many other people.

Perhaps it's because of the times in which we find ourselves living, or perhaps it's because of the many ways I witness you all being family to one another, but I have been thinking a lot about the family of faith at Westminster. And, because sometimes the best use of words is to pray, I share the following prayer with you this day. It's by Robert Louis Stevenson, and I think it speaks, of course, to our individual family lives (whatever those look like), but to the life of the family of faith.

Grace, peace and love to you this week,

Kathy

*Lord, behold our family here assembled.*

*We thank you for the place in which we dwell,  
for the love that unites us,  
for the peace given us this day,  
for the hope with which we expect the morrow;  
for the health, the work, the food, and the bright skies  
that make our lives delightful;  
for our friends in all parts of the earth.*

*Give us courage and gaiety and the quiet mind.  
Spare us to our friends, and soften us to our enemies.  
Bless us, if it may be, in all our innocent endeavors;  
if it may not, give us the strength to endure that which is to come;  
that we may be brave in peril,  
constant in tribulation,  
temperate in wrath and in all changes of fortune  
and down to the gates of death,  
loyal and loving to one another.*

*As the clay to the potter,  
as the windmill to the wind,  
as children of their parent,  
we beseech of you this help and mercy  
for Christ's sake. Amen.*

## Weekly Calendar

Sunday, Feb. 1	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/Communion	Sanctuary
	12 noon	Session Called Meeting	10
	5-7 p.m.	Youth Fellowship Super Bowl Party	
Monday, Feb. 2	12 noon	Property Committee	10
Tuesday, Feb. 3	9:30 – 11 a.m.	WPDS Church Times	Sanctuary
	10 a.m.	Staff Meeting	Pastor's Study
	12 noon	Adventures	10
	6:30 p.m.	WPDS Board Meeting	10
Wed., Feb. 4	7 p.m.	Adult Choir	Sanctuary
Thurs., Feb. 5	12:15 p.m.	Mid-day prayers	Sanctuary
	2 – 4 p.m.	Lifetime Learning	10
Friday, Feb. 6	11:45 a.m.	Friday Circle	Library
	6 – 11 p.m.	WPDS Auction and Dinner	Off-site

### How About a Week at the Coast!??

During our Minter Alternative Gift Market people were asking if we were going to organize some teams to go to the coast and work in clean-up and reconstruction after the hurricane damage. Well, we have heard from the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance folks and this spring they are starting three sites with pods or camp sites for folks to help out. They need teams of at least three to join with 70 or so others to work for a week at a time. It will cost the team members \$20 a day for room and board.

**A fabulous way to spend Spring Break or a spring vacation!**

Interested? Call Margie Johnson 452-8753 or email [margiejohnson@austin.rr.com](mailto:margiejohnson@austin.rr.com)  
Or check out the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance at [pda@pcusa.org](http://pda@pcusa.org)

**It's time for...**

**Theology on Tap**

**Thursday, February 5**

**@ Billy's on Burnet**

**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.

### **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.

### **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](mailto:jballesteros@manosdecristo.org), or 477-7454.

### **Refugee Families Need Help**

Through contacts with a network of the national denomination PCUSA, we have been made aware of the presence of Iraqi refugees in Austin. One family of five are Chaldean Christians who fled Iraq and made it to the U.S., seeking asylum. They spent almost five months in the Hutto detention facility and now have been granted asylum. Galib Philips Shaya and his wife Hind have three children: a boy 5 years old, a girl 7, and a girl 12. Another "family" are two girl cousins who came as official refugees, Sahan and Hanan. They have tragic backgrounds of family deaths. One of these women was a lawyer and the other an elementary school teacher in Iraq.

Caritas, which WPC helps to support through its mission budget, has given these people apartment rent and a few basic needs. They still need coffee tables, chests for clothing, microwaves, table lamps, coffee makers, book shelves and computers. The Shaya family would like to have bicycles for the father and the children; children's books would be very helpful. The cousins want a desk, a phone, a TV, bed frames and two twin box springs (they have only mattresses).

Anyone who can help these folks, please contact Moneta Prince at 708-8293 or [myongsook@aol.com](mailto: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 4<sup>th</sup>**

**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.**

### **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 203 pledges for a total of \$591,280. 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@wpcaustin.org](mailto:wpcadmin@wpcaustin.org).

## Worship

**Sunday, Jan. 25**

*Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

Preacher: Bill Clark

Liturgists: Kathy Anderson, Melissa Koerner

Scriptures: Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; Mark 1:21-28

### **Those Serving as Ushers, After-Church Elders, Greeters, Cookie Hosts, Acolytes Sunday, Feb. 1**

**Ushers:** Jim Cochran, Frank Denius, Gail Morriss, Suzanne Plummer, James Raab, Pieter Sybesma, Captain

**After Church Elders:** David Vanden Bout, Kim Edwards, Carolyn Long

**Greeters:** South Door, Ann and Howard Humphreys; North Door, Sharon and James Raab

**Cookie Hosts:** Ada McElhenney and Debbie Mincher

**Acolytes:** Kate Nuelle, Carolyn Nuelle, Allison Pettijohn

## What's Coming Up

### Sunday Morning Church School Offerings

February 8, 2009

9:30-10:30 a.m.

#### Forum Class – Room 10

#### *What the Bible Has to Say about Homosexuality – Part II*

Rev. Dr. Lewis R. Donelson

Faithful committed people read Scripture in different ways, many times arriving at very different conclusions from one another – regarding some very important topics in faith and life. Over the span of many years, faithful people have wrestled with what the Bible says about homosexuality, and what the Bible calls God's people to believe, say and do in light of that. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is not exempt from that discussion and dialogue. Year after year, faithful people in the PC(USA) both agree and disagree about what the church's response ought to be regarding homosexuality – specifically whether or not gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered persons can or should be called to serve as ordained officers in the church (as ministers, elders and deacons).

Dr. Donelson is a minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); since 1983, he has served as the Ruth A. Campbell Professor of New Testament Studies at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Lewie will be with us for two weeks to help us explore what the Bible says about this topic, and to offer various approaches and interpretations of what Scripture calls us to believe and do as the people of God. Rather than offering the final answer to the question, or proclaiming one "side" right or wrong, he will help us wrestle with our own questions, and to learn some of the tools and questions to ask in reading and interpreting Scripture (regardless of the topic or issue).

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#### Parenting Class– Library

#### *Voices of Experience*

Bill & Jill Clark, facilitators

During February we will be hearing from some Westminster parents whose children are now young adults. They will be sharing their reflections on parenting. What did they do that was helpful for their children? What would they have done differently? What were some of the joys and challenges that came their way? Parents of children of any age are welcome to join us for this enlightening series.

#### Bible Study – Room 6

#### *The Gospel of Luke*

Interested in reading and studying the Bible? We will consider **Luke 8** this Sunday. No prior knowledge is needed, just your willingness to read the Bible and reflect on it with others! Join us!

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#### The Thoughtful Christian Class

*Will join the Forum Class in February.*

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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.

Feb 1st - Who are We? Presbyterians!

Feb 8<sup>th</sup> - Feb 22 - Psalm 23

March 1- April 5<sup>th</sup> - review and Journey through Lent

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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 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto: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

Feb 1<sup>st</sup> - Super Bowl party at the Shaw's

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

Feb 15<sup>th</sup> - Youth Fellowship in the Annex

Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> Youth Fellowship in the Annex

### 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 5 of them have been spoken for, so let Karen know as early as possible if you want to go)

High School - Stewpot - June 22<sup>nd</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> - THIS IS A CHANGE based on information from Stewpot. Still trying to get all this settled.

### **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!** (See related article in this newsletter)

### **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](mailto:kathy@wpcaustin.org)) or talk to **Mike Rush** or **Terry Allbright** at church.

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## Mission

### **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!

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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 \(U.S.A.\)](#).