

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

3208 Exposition Boulevard

Austin, TX 78703

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Connections @ Westminster

February 15 – March 1, 2009

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Weekly Word

Dear Westminster Saints,

Thanks to many of you for your timely response to last week's letter expressing our congregation's financial needs. Members have chosen to increase their pledges for the year. New members and friends of the church have made first time pledges. We received a pledge from a Westminster member who recently moved to New Mexico. We even received a pledge from a member serving in the military now currently stationed in Iraq! It's been moving to see so many make a deeper commitment to the ministry and mission of Westminster. As a result of all of this we are making good progress towards our challenge goal.

Westminster is progressing in other areas of ministry. On a recent Sunday evening over fifty of our officers and members gathered in the sanctuary with members of the Grow Christ's Church Task Force. The task force presented a report that challenged us to "connect" and "serve". We are being called to grow in our connections with one another and God, and to grow in service to the community around us. That evening we spent time discussing specific ways in which that growth might take place and what it might look like two years from now.

These "holy conversations" about the need for stronger connections and specific opportunities for service have already spurred us to action. Over 70 adults and children have signed up to participate in supper groups that will be meeting throughout the spring. The "Theology on Tap" class gathered for the first time last week. They can't wait for the next gathering! Members from the Mission Committee recently met with the staff from the Interfaith Hospitality Network and are preparing our congregation to host families in transition during the first full week of September. The deacons are hard at work developing a ministry to stay in touch with our members.

Speaking of progress, our new Fellowship Hall is very near completion. Sidewalks have been poured. Windows have been installed. The exterior stone and stucco work is finished. The interior sheetrock has been hung. This week, contractors are painting the interior walls and laying tile on the floors. Fixtures will soon be installed. After many years of waiting and nine months of construction the building is nearly finished. It is highly likely that we will be enjoying Easter brunch in our new Fellowship Hall!

In the midst of all the challenges that we face in the months ahead as a congregation and as individuals, it is good to remember that good opportunities wait for us as well. We have a host of faithful members at Westminster who are deeply committed to Christ's ministry in and through this congregation. We also have a God, who dares to work in our midst, stirring things up, challenging us, empowering us to grow "deep and wide." May the Lord continue to be in our midst, and may we be open to all that God calls us to do and be in this coming year.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Bill

Bi-Monthly Calendar

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|-------------------|-------------------|--|-----------------|
| Sunday, Feb. 15 | 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 |
| Monday, Feb. 16 | 7 p.m. | Mission Committee | Library |
| Tuesday, Feb. 17 | 10 a.m. | Staff Meeting | Pastor's Study |
| | 12 noon | WPDS Staff Meeting | 9 |
| | 7 p.m. | Session | 10 |
| Wed., Feb. 18 | 7 p.m. | Adult Choir | Sanctuary |
| Thurs., Feb. 19 | 12:15 p.m. | Mid-day prayers | Sanctuary |
| | 7:30 p.m. | WPC Book Group | Off-site |
| Friday, Feb. 20 | 12:15 p.m. | Peace, Justice & the Environment Sub-Committee | Library |
| | 1 – 3 p.m. | Lifetime Learning | 10 |
| Sunday, Feb. 22 | 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 |
| Tuesday, Feb. 24 | 10 a.m. | Staff Meeting | Pastor's Study |
| Wed., Feb. 25 | 7:15 a.m. | Ash Wednesday Service | Sanctuary |
| | 6 p.m. | Lenten Soup Supper | 10 |
| | 6:45 p.m. | Ash Wednesday Service | Sanctuary |
| | 7:30 p.m. | Adult Choir | Sanctuary |
| Thursday, Feb. 26 | 12 noon-1:30 p.m. | WPDS Parenting Series | 10 |
| | 12:15 p.m. | Mid-day Prayers | Sanctuary |
| Friday, Feb. 27 | 1 – 3 p.m. | Lifetime Learning | 10 |
| Saturday, Feb. 28 | 8 a.m.-1 p.m. | WPDS Workday | 1-10, Play yard |

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Austin Marathon Runs This Sunday

Northbound Exposition Blvd. Closed

This Sunday morning, marathon runners will be traveling in the northbound lane of Exposition Blvd. from Enfield Road to 35th Street. If your usual path to church is blocked, make your way over to Balcones Drive from Mo Pac. Travel south on Balcones Dr. to 35th, turn left on 35th, then take a right on Hillview Road.

Thank You Notes

To our WPC Family,

Thanks to each of you for your many prayers, cards, calls, visits, food ... for all those wonderful ways you have supported us through my recent knee replacement surgery. I can't tell you how much it means to feel surrounded by the love of our church family as we move forward day by day. Both Jim and I do truly appreciate the many ways you walk with us every day!

Peace,

Joan and Jim Johnson

Westminster Presbyterian Church,

Thank you for all of your prayers and very generous support of Austin Walker and our family during his hospitalization in Houston. We are now back home (Jan. 17) and working through recovery from surgery. Again, thank you!

Sincerely,

Allen, Sandra, Bekah, and Austin Walker

Financial Update from the WPC Session

2009 Stewardship Pledging

In a February 1 letter to the congregation, the Session outlined the financial challenges facing Westminster. We asked families to reconsider their gifts of time, talent and treasures so that we might continue to Grow Christ's Church Deep and Wide. Thus far, we are encouraged by the love you express for Westminster and your belief in her mission and ministry. We have heard from New Mexico, from Iraq, from former members who have moved away, and we certainly have heard from those faithful members who have supported our congregation over many, many years. Many new members are pledging. – going through this process gives us deeper and unique insights into the life of our congregation. We have had the opportunity to engage in many conversations, some difficult, that focus on our work together and remind us of our common mission. On February 17, the session will adopt a budget for 2009 that will be a prudent acknowledgement of the resources we have been given. We believe that a substantial portion of our "gap" can be filled. – Updates to your 2009 pledge, or new 2009 pledges, can be made to the church office. Please contact Jimmie Grossman at 459-5497 or wpcadmin@wpcaustin.com.

There is still time

Many thanks to those who have contributed approximately \$13,500 in 2009 to satisfy their 2008 pledge. At the end of 2008, our expenditures exceeded our receipts for the year by about \$22,000. Completing your 2008 pledge payments gives the church the financial cushion it needs to prudently operate the general fund. Of course, deductible payments to the church are written-off in the year paid for federal tax purposes. If you are unsure of the status of your 2008 pledging and giving, call or email Jimmie in the church office.

Lenten Spiritual Formation Group to Meet During Lent

A Lenten Spiritual Formation Group will meet each Sunday of Lent, March 1-April 5, in the church library at 5 p.m. Please contact Linda Tyler (452-8623 or lmtyler@austin.rr.com) if you are interested in being a part of this group. The group will be limited to 8 participants.

From Previous Newsletters

Caritas needs clothing, household items and furniture for two Iraqi refugee families. Anyone who can help these folks, please contact Moneta Prince at 708-8293 or myongsook@aol.com.

How About a Week at the Coast!?? Presbyterian Disaster Assistance needs volunteers to help along Texas gulf coast during **Spring Break**. Interested? Call Margie Johnson 452-8753 or email margiejohnson@austin.rr.com. Or check out the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance at pda@pcusa.org

Westminster Presbyterian Women Spring Retreat "Spirituality and Stress" **Saturday, April 4**, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 100 East 27 Street. **Sharyn Reynolds** will explore the issue of stress and how it affects our spirituality. Contact Susan Somerville, ssomerville@austin.rr.com, for carpooling. All parking spaces at the Seminary are available on the week-end except the space reserved for Dr. David Johnson or the Curry Dormitory Residence Parking. Registration below.

**WPC WOMEN'S SPRING RETREAT
REGISTRATION FORM (Turn in to Church Office by April 1.)**

NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Registration Fee - \$15.00 (includes lunch). Make check to WPC and write PW Spring Retreat in the memo section.

Manos needs food. Bring non-perishable food Sunday, **March 1**. And as we are fed at our Lord's table, we remember to feed others in need!

Dear Connections Reader:

If you've been a regular reader of our Connections @ Westminster newsletter, you've probably discovered that many stories run 2, 3 or even 4 times in a given month. With our communication, we strive to reach a balance between frequency and repetition. But, this comes at a cost: time to produce the newsletter and, for those who receive a hard copy, the out-of-pocket expense to send the same information multiple times each month. We know not everyone has the capability to receive this communication electronically so we don't plan to abandon all printed communication. But, we want to be wise stewards of our resources so we will begin sending the newsletter bi-weekly. Ultimately, we hope to move more content to our website with a weekly electronic communication that will allow readers to "click through" for more details. And, we hope to produce a *monthly newsletter* with feature stories and a monthly calendar which can be mailed to those who need a hard copy. Change is never easy; we are still working with volunteers and staff to create communications that can both inform and inspire. Please be patient with us as we convert our communications format.

Worship

Sunday, Feb. 15

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Preacher: Bill Clark **Liturgists:** Kathy Anderson, Melissa Koerner

Scriptures: Mark 1:40-45; Psalm 30; I Cor. 9:24-27

Those Serving as After-Church Elders, Greeters, Cookie Hosts, Acolytes

After Church Elders: Cindy Sullivan, Linda Tyler, David Rose

Greeters: South Door, Amy & Louisa Ehrlich; North Door, Mary Anne Ater & Miss Jane Smoot

Cookie Hosts: George Pryor and Lesley Saunders

Acolytes: Grace Scoggin, Todd Schriber, Julia Schriber

Sunday, Feb. 22

Transfiguration Sunday

Preacher: Bill Clark **Liturgists:** Kathy Anderson, Melissa Koerner

Scriptures: 2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; Mark 9:2-9

Those Serving as After-Church Elders, Greeters, Cookie Hosts, Acolytes

After Church Elders: Grover Campbell, Todd Davidson, Liz Jones

Greeters: South Door, Marilyn and John Clary; North Door, Wadene Harrison

Cookie Hosts: Julie Schriber and Laura Slaughter

Acolytes: Elizabeth Slaughter, Sara Shaw, Ben Slaughter

Adult Ministries

Adult church school 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Forum Class – Room 10, Feb. 15 *A Theological Understanding of Ordination* – The Rev. Dr. Ted Wardlaw.

Foundations of Faith – Library *Voices of Experience* Bill & Jill Clark, facilitators.

Bible Study – Room 6, *The Gospel of Luke (Chapters 9-10)*.

The Thoughtful Christian Class will join the Forum Class in February.

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Children's Ministries

Children's Church School 9:30 – 10:30

Preschoolers: Meet 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.

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 8 – Feb 22 – Psalm 23

March 1 – Camp Emphasis Sunday

March 8 – April 15 – review and Journey through Lent – a focus on Spirituality

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Youth Ministries

We are looking for Sunday Church School teachers and Youth Leaders for both Senior High and Middle School. 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 by 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

Feb 15 – Youth Fellowship in the Annex

Feb 22 – Youth Fellowship in the Annex

March 1 – Youth Fellowship in the Annex

March 7 – (SATURDAY) – Service project – park clean-up – more info to follow

March 8 – CROP Walk – 1:45 p.m. (NOTE DIFFERENT TIME)

March 15 – No Fellowship – Spring Break

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 22nd – 26th – 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

Chili Cook-off Update and Celebrations!

Thanks to all who contributed some fabulous chili for the **Chili Cook-off last Sunday!** We had 12 pots of chili, plus lots of great desserts and fun times – and lots of hungry people. **Brewster McCracken**, Austin City Councilperson and member of Covenant Presbyterian Church, served as our judge. **Leslie, Josie, and Allison Pettijohn** took **Best All Around Chili** with their creation *Daniel's Vegetarian Chili*; **Brian Moore** won **Hottest Chili** with *Holy Moly Weizen-Bock Venison Chili*; **Liz, Katherine, and Madeline Jones** won **Best Presentation** with *Jeff's Frito Chili Pie*; **Rick and Catherine Colvin** won **Weirdest/Most Unusual Chili** with their *Famous Faux White Chili*; and **Robert Ehrlich** won the **Best Effort/Thanks for Coming Out** award with his *Anonymous Chili*. **Frank and Mary Lea Baker** won the **People's Choice Award** with their *White Lightnin' Chili*.

Theology on Tap – Next Gathering is March 5

Theology on Tap is off to a great start! An enthusiastic group gathered last Thursday, and is already looking forward to our next gathering. Mark your calendars now!

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