

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

3208 Exposition Boulevard

Austin, TX 78703

512-459-5497

www.wpcaustin.org

Connections @ Westminster

May July 19 – August 2, 2009

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Weekly Word

Dear Fellow Followers of the Way:

This past Sunday we, along with reformed Christians around the world, celebrated the 500th birthday of John Calvin. In the weeks leading up to the celebration, I found myself pulling out books and notes on Calvin, most from my days in seminary. One of my memories of learning about Calvin is the first seminary quiz I took, writing Calvin's definition of faith from memory for Systematic Theology I with Dr. Cynthia Rigby.

Found in Book 3 of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (3.2.7 to be exact), Calvin's definition of faith is this: "Faith is a firm and certain knowledge of God's benevolence towards us, founded upon the truth of the freely-given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit." So what does it mean?

It means that faith is a gift of God and it is nothing we can achieve by our own work or study. Faith is beyond simple comprehension, it is our assurance of God's steadfast love for us as we experience the mercy and compassion of God in the depths of pain and the heights of joy. It is our growing confidence that although we have never been promised great riches or all that we could want, as the prosperity preachers would lead us to believe, God is always with us.

Through Scripture as illumined by the Holy Spirit, we come to know Christ Jesus. We are assured of salvation because of God's overflowing love that meets us in the manger every Christmas and on the cross every Easter. We know this both in our mind, for our intellect is a gift from God, and in our hearts, the very core of who we have been created to be. Just as the Spirit gives us the gift of faith, it also leads us to increase our faith as we desire to learn more of God, more will be revealed.

I encourage everyone to spend time thinking about faith and your own journey. How did you come to faith? Have you known it all your life or was it an epiphany? When did you first truly know that you were loved by God? How has your faith shaped your life? What in your life is shaping your faith? Spend time in prayer, spend time in study. Pray for illumination and spend time with God that your faith may be firm and certain.

Grace, mercy and peace,
Karen

Calendar

Jul 19 - Sun	08:15 AM	Worship / Communion	Sanctuary
	09:30 AM	Church School (for all ages)	
	10:30 AM	Fellowship	Fellowship Hall
	11:00 AM	Worship	Sanctuary
Jul 21 - Tue	6:30 PM	Heifer Mission Trip meeting	Library
	7:15 PM	Parent Class Planning	Library
Jul 23 - Thu	12:15 PM	Mid-day Prayers	Sanctuary
	06:30 PM	WPC Book Group	Offsite
Jul 25 - Sat	10:00 AM	WPC Sewing Group	Offsite
Jul 26 - Sun		Middle School Mission Trip	Offsite
	08:15 AM	Worship / Communion	Sanctuary
	09:30 AM	Church School (for all ages)	
	10:30 AM	Fellowship	Fellowship Hall
	11:00 AM	Worship	Sanctuary
	05:30 PM	Sundae Sunday	Fellowship Hall
Jul 27 - Mon		Middle School Mission Trip	Offsite
Jul 28 - Tue		Middle School Mission Trip	Offsite
	10:00 AM	Staff Meeting	Pastor's Study
	07:00 PM	Session	Fellowship Hall
Jul 29 - Wed		Middle School Mission Trip	Offsite
Jul 30 - Thu		Middle School Mission Trip	Offsite
	12:15 PM	Mid-day Prayers	Sanctuary
Jul 31 - Fri		Middle School Mission Trip	Offsite
Aug 1 - Sat		Middle School Mission Trip Returns	Offsite

Calvin at 500!

We enjoyed a wonderful day of celebration this past Sunday as we commemorated John Calvin's 500th birthday. Thank you to all who participated in our celebration, especially to George Pryor, who acted and

played the part of Calvin so well, Josie Whitley, who provided costume, Linda Tyler and the worship committee for planning the event, the Adult Ministries Committee for inviting the Rev. Dr. David Johnson to teach our Calvin class.

Want to know more about Calvin? Books on Calvin are available in our church library. Joseph Small, Director of Theology Worship and Education for the General Assembly of the P.C.U.S.A. wrote the following article for a recent issue of *IDEAS*:

Many Presbyterians greet the news that 2009 will mark the 500th anniversary of John Calvin's birth with a yawn, a roll of the eyes, or even a derisive snort. Why are we so dismissive of our forebear in the Reformed tradition?

Lutherans adore Martin Luther. Methodist hearts are strangely warmed by John Wesley. Anglicans even have a sardonic fondness for Henry VIII. But Presbyterians are uncertain about John Calvin and his legacy. Calvin is not a Reformed idol. John Calvin would have been pleased by our reluctance to revere him. He did not want to be idolized by future generations. In order to discourage veneration, he specified that he be buried in Geneva's common cemetery in an unmarked grave. Contemporary visitors to Geneva may stumble upon Rue Calvin, but his house no longer stands, and no one even knows where it was.

We need not put Calvin on a pedestal in order to appreciate the ways in which his perspectives on Christian faith and life have shaped Reformed churches throughout the world, and continue to shape our church today.

At the conclusion of his admiring biography of Calvin, Theodore Beza, his successor in Geneva, wrote, "Since it has pleased God that Calvin should continue to speak to us through his writings, which are so scholarly and full of godliness, it is up to future generations to go on listening to him ..." Future generations have continued to listen, not passively, but with a lively engagement that sometimes learns from Calvin, sometimes argues with him, and sometimes discovers that contemporary questions and answers are revised by their contact with his questions and answers.

Calvin placed the highest value on education in the church. He thought, "doubly fools" those "who do not deign to learn, because they think they are wise enough." Thus, Calvin established schools for Geneva's children and youth, and he taught Scripture and theology daily. His understanding of Christian education was not confined to the classroom, however, or limited to the most talented students. Many poor ignorant people today, he wrote, "though ignorant and unskilled in the use of language, make known Christ more faithfully than all the theologians ... with their lofty speculations."

Scripture was central to Calvin's understanding of Christian education. We may mistakenly think of Institutes of the Christian Religion as a scholastic work of systematic theology, but Calvin saw as its purpose, "to prepare and instruct candidates in sacred theology for the reading of the divine Word, in order that they may be able both to have easy access to it and to advance in it without stumbling." Calvin's teaching and writing shared a thorough, lively engagement with Scripture as God's present, living word to the church.

John Calvin did not view the Bible as a collection of facts to be learned or propositions to be mastered. In one of his delightful images, he likens Scripture to a pair of eyeglasses: "Just as eyes, when dimmed with age or weakness or by some other defect, unless aided by spectacles, discern nothing distinctly; so such is our feebleness, unless Scripture guides us in seeking God, we are immediately confused." We study the Bible, not for its own sake, but because Scripture helps us to see God truthfully, ourselves honestly, and God's Way in the world clearly.

God's new Way in the world was central to Calvin's teaching. He did not see matters of social and economic life as footnotes to the gospel or addenda to the nature of the church, but integral to knowledge and service of God who is Creator and Redeemer of all of life. He would have been puzzled by the contemporary distinction between compassion and justice. Any separation of theology and ethics would have been foreign to his comprehensive thinking about Christian faith and life.

Christmas in July!

During the hot months of summer we can celebrate Christmas at Westminster. Remembering God's great gift of Jesus Christ, we are motivated to give gifts in gratitude. Like Christians in Australia and South America, we can celebrate Christmas while the thermometer soars.

Members of Westminster are blessed with the means to fulfill needs of people around us. Money has been contributed to our church anonymously for members to use to minister to people they run into who need assistance. The contact must be personal - the members must see this person face-to-face and communicate the fact that we are giving this gift in the name of Christ or through the Church.

You may use up to \$300. This can be all or a part of what you give to whoever needs it. You give and the church reimburses you up to \$300.

Celebrate a **July Christmas**. Give gifts of love. Forms are available in the church office.

Don't know anyone who is needy? Call Manos de Cristo and ask if they can put you in touch with someone (477-7454).

From Previous Connections

Sundae Sunday is coming – July 26!

Join us at **5:30 p.m.** for a summer Sunday evening family worship service and ice cream sundaes! **Bring your favorite kind of ice cream to share - toppings and other goodies provided!**

Mark your calendars now – The All Church Retreat at Mo-Ranch is September 11-13

Registration forms are available in the church office or email Rosemary at wpc@wpcaustin.org and she will email to you. Registration will also be available online.

NEW Church Photo Directory!

It's time to take your picture! Every three years, Westminster produces a professionally photographed membership directory. All photos will be taken in the comfort of our own church, and with no sitting fee. The first settings are August 14-17. Sign up online any Tuesday -Friday beginning July 6th by going to our church website or by going directly to:

<https://www.Appointment-plus3.com/ap/westminster/index.php?page=10>

If you prefer, there will be signup sheets available in the narthex and you can sign up after church. After-church signups for August photography sittings will take place beginning on July 19th. *Please note: Signups for October photography sittings will take place in September & October only.*

Manos de Cristo BACK TO SCHOOL Event

Once again Westminster is supporting this wonderful event! There are two ways you can participate:

1. **VOLUNTEER** for the actual event by calling Manos @ 477-7454 and ask for Karen, Julie or Judy.
2. **DONATE large PINK bar erasers: by July 15th.**
2000 Needed from us! Please place them in the peach colored tub in the narthex ASAP.

So let's get shopping and volunteering to help make the event another great success for the families of Austin!

Celtic Chaski Performs at Central Presbyterian Church August 6

Shana Norton and Adrienne Inglis of Chaski present a program of Celtic music on Thursday August 6 from 12:05-12:30 PM at Central Presbyterian Church as part of the Thursday Noon Concert Series. Central Presbyterian is located at Eighth and Brazos Streets in downtown Austin. The concert is free. For more information visit <http://www.chaskimusic.com/>.

Worship

[Sunday, July 19](#)

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Preacher: Karen Wagner

Liturgist: Charlotte Trafton

Scriptures: 2 Samuel 7:1-16; Psalm 89: 20-37; Ephesians 2:11-22

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

After Church Elders: Corrinne Bowers, Kim Edwards, Carolyn Long

Greeters: South Door, Hazel Herring and Marsha Hunt; North Door, Corrinne Bowers and Tom Cockburn

Cookie Hosts: Corrinne Bowers and Marian Robertson

Acolytes: Elenor Griffith, Kim Griffith, Balie Griffith

Sunday, July 26

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Preacher: Kathy Anderson

Scriptures: 2 Sam. 11:1-15; Ps. 14; Eph. 3:14-21; John 6:1-21

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

After Church Elders: Jack Prince, Ann Scott, Bob Schriber

Greeters: South Door, Kathy Taylor and Marcia Kiger; North Door, Steve and Nancy Westmoreland

Cookie Hosts: Kathy Taylor and Nancy Westmoreland

Acolytes: Annie Clark, Sam Clark, Allison Pettijohn

Adult Ministries

Adult church school 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. *For more detailed descriptions, please visit the WPC website!*

Forum Class – Fellowship Hall

July 19: Roe v. Wade: The Law, Not the Morality

Westminster's own Steve Bowers helps us grapple with understanding the history and nuances of this landmark case.

July 26: Roe v. Wade: The Law, Not the Morality, cont'd.

Bible Study – Room 6

July 19: John 15-16 (cont'd.)

July 26: John 17 (Farewell Discourse, cont'd.)

Children's Ministries

We are excited to have almost all of our LAMBS teachers returning this fall but there are still opportunities to be involved in children's ministries at Westminster Presbyterian Church. If you are interested in working with our preschool and elementary children please let Karen know. We would love to have you join us!

Children's Church School 9:30 – 10:30

Preschoolers: Meet in room 4 (4's-5's). Children can be picked up following church school at 10:30 a.m. in their room. This summer the LAMBS will be using a curriculum entitled "Stepping Stones of Faith" by Anita Edlund.

July 19th - God Likes to Be Praised (2 Samuel 22:1-4; Psalms 148, 150)

July 26th - God Wants me to help Other People (John 6:1-14)

Aug 2nd - God Keeps Promises (Matthew 1:18-2:11)

Aug 9th - God Made the World and God Made Me (Genesis 1:1-2:22) Psalm 119:73)

Aug 16th - God is Good (1 Samuel 1:6-20; 2:18-21)

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 through 5 years old.

Elementary Age Children: Dwelling Places meets in Room 13. This summer we will be learning about Samuel, David and Elijah. There are a few spots left if you are interested in teaching our elementary age group.

July 19th - David Becomes King/God's Covenant with David (2 Samuel 2:1-4; 6:1-5; 17-19; 7:1-9,16)

July 26th - Elijah - The Drought and the Widow (1 Kings 17:1-16)

Aug 2nd - Elijah - The Contest (Kings 18:1-39)

Aug 9th - Elijah meets God (1 Kings 19: 11-18)

Aug 16th - Elijah Ascends to Heaven (1 Kings 19:19-21; 2 Kings 2:1-14)

COME EXPERIENCE THE E.D.G.E!!!!

VBS Registration is online!

You can still sign your kids up to be part of the fun!!

August 10 – 14. [Register Online](#)

Youth Ministries

Thank you to the Fellowship and Worship committees for the gracious donation of food for our July 12th swim party. Hot dogs, chips, watermelon and chocolate cake hit the spot on a July evening by the pool!!!

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.

The month of July we will be having an ipod share. What is it about the music that inspires you?

SUMMER MISSION TRIPS

Middle School - Heifer Ranch July 26-31 – Cost \$250

Roger, John, Martin, Justina, Jessica, Annie, Madison, Todd - Bill, Layla

Opportunities to Serve:

July 23rd - Organizing the Children's Library

Week of July 27th - Manos needs help sorting school supplies and getting ready for Back-to-School

Thursday, Aug 6th - work at Manos (8-12 then have lunch together)

Week of Aug 10-14 - VBS 9-12 everyday - sign up for the days you can come.

Save the Date

August 16th Pool party following the All church back-to-school event

August 23rd Rally Day and Fellowship Kickoff (we welcome the new 6th Graders)

August 29-30 - Overnight at John Knox Ranch

Week of Sept 6th - IHN hosts - would like 3-4 youth to come up each evening to read/play with kids, help with homework, interact with the families we host.

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

Theology on Tap – Thursday, August 6 @ 7 p.m., B. B. Rover’s Café and Pub, 12101 Research Blvd., in the North Brook Center. Join us for conversation, drink (your choice), food and fellowship!

Topic: TBA.

Mission

Bring Food for Manos de Cristo on Sunday, August 2 – Always the 1st Sunday of the Month!

Manos always needs food. Bring non-perishable food Sunday, **August 2.** And as we are fed at our Lord’s table, we remember to feed others in need! Please remember to give for those who have less than we do.

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