

2023 Annual Report to  
the Congregation from Session



# ANNUAL REPORT

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## Senior Pastor, Head of Staff



Jo Forrest

The Holy Spirit continues to blow through Westminster. It may ruffle your feathers with uncomfortable change or be received as that breath of fresh air to literally lift you.

Here is an example. In the spring, the

Children's & Family Ministry Commission decided to add another fellowship event for the summer in the form of an off-site church picnic. At another meeting, someone literally blurted out "let's hold worship" and the room fell silent. We all had the same idea. Consternation ensued. Will it work? What about the weather? Can we make this accessible for all ... all people? What about those who want a traditional worship service?

Cut to the end of the story. That Sunday morning we held worship in the sanctuary at 8:30 with livestream. By mid-morning, people of all ages gathered next to a pavilion at South Park. Congregants who usually worship at the Bridge sat next to those who worship in the sanctuary. Visitors joined us. Some people met one another for the first time.

As I sat in my canvas chair, I noticed a hawk overhead, maybe one of our steeple-hawks, that glided in the clear blue for the duration of worship. As the wind carried it, I imagined this hawk blessing our work on behalf of the Holy Spirit.

What are your stories of the spirit drawing us forward? Let me spark a few memories.

In 2023, this church grew stronger with thirty-two new members and countless new visitors who continue to return to worship and serve. Each addition changes us for the better. More talents. Fresh voices. We baptized lots and lots of wiggling babies. Long-standing families brought their next generation alongside the children of new residents to the community to become part of the body of Christ.

Your Commissions and the Board of Deacons embraced the challenges to reimagine and implement programs to strengthen the faith, create service, and ensure we extend care within this community and beyond.

In 2023, you also answered the call to ensure this church doesn't stumble due to staff shortages by serving as liturgists. What a gift for everyone to hear your voices pray and preach as you led in worship. You inspired us.

Oh – and did you notice the new small groups that bubbled up? You gathered to read devotions, books, and created safe spaces to care for one another.

Please read these reports. Learn how we opened doors to these new people. Marvel at the photos. Be inspired by the Holy Spirit to be a part of this vibrant community.

In faith,

—Jo



## Worship Commission

The purpose of the Worship Commission is to plan and coordinate all aspects of our worship services. The commission has met quarterly or as needed in 2023.

Westminster has three worship services on Sunday at 8:30, 9:45, and 11:00 a.m. The 9:45 and 11:00 a.m. services are livestreamed so that those who are unable to attend in person can feel connected to our church.

The following special worship services took place this year: Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, A Quiet Christmas, and Christmas Eve.

A Quiet Christmas was well-attended and those in attendance found it to be very moving and meaningful.

We have also had several worship services called One Service Sunday, where our entire community of faith worships together at 10:00 a.m.

Communion is prepared by volunteers and served the first Sunday of each month.

People entering worship are greeted by knowledgeable and friendly ushers. Three of

our ushers attended a Presbytery-sponsored seminar about protecting our places of worship.

The Chancel Guild continues to beautify our sanctuary for the liturgical year.

The Chancel, Cherub, Junior, and Youth Choirs and the Westminster Ringers have filled our ears with their beautiful sounds and filled our hearts with their musical messages. The Cherub, Junior, and Youth Choirs sang in worship once a month and led the 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve worship service. The Westminster Ringers play the prelude on the third Sunday of every month. Two highlights of this year were the Christmas concert, which featured all choirs, and the November 12 performance of Rutter's Requiem at the 11:00 a.m. worship service.

We look forward to continuing to worship in beautiful and meaningful ways in the future.

**—Sara Locke, Chair / Jo Forrest**

## The Bridge Worship Commission

It has been a year of growth for our contemporary worship service. Attendance has been consistently strong and continues to be a service that attracts new families with children of all ages who are becoming members of our congregation.

Sunday school, a wiggle room, weekly children’s messages, and a student table for the older children all enhance the worship experience for families each Sunday.

We have been able to upgrade the lighting and the sound system, including the purchase of new microphones thanks to a grant from Westminster’s Endowment. Lauren Moore, Contemporary Worship Coordinator, is a talented addition to the staff. While the technical support is provided by staff there are many opportunities for volunteers to engage in the behind-the-scenes aspects of this worship service by helping with ushering, set-up, and coffee preparation. The overall design and decoration of the worship space

is provided by a newly formed chancel guild under the direction of Marilyn Rubino.

The Bridge Contemporary Worship Service continues to be a vital piece in the worship life of our congregation.

—Nicole Baculik, Chair / Jo Forrest



The contemporary Bridge Worship service.

## Chancel Guild

Thanks to the congregation’s generous response to the Easter and Christmas Memorial and Honoree requests, we were once again able to purchase live plants to enhance the Bridge and sanctuary services. Deacons then delivered many of these live plants to members in care.

The Worship Commission decided that communion will be served from the sanctuary floor level so that the servers will not have to climb the stairs. Chancel Guild purchased

a new, portable communion table as well as several communion tablecloths.

Both the purple and black cloth drapes for the cross were missing. New fabric was purchased and hemmed. An iron and ironing board were donated and are kept in the men’s robing room.

Pentecost was celebrated with one sanctuary service and a luncheon that followed in

*continued*

## Chancel Guild —*continued*

Fellowship Hall. Mylar flame balloons, a large dove, red communion tablecloth, and new silk flowers were purchased.

Two purple floor-length tablecloths, candles, silk leaves, and glassware were purchased for the “Quiet Christmas” evening service. Our white aisle candles were installed for that service. The table décor and candles were also used for the pet remembrance service in the Chapel.

After Christmas, the red bows on the exterior and sanctuary Christmas wreaths were removed; they will be replaced for next Christmas. Nine new Christmas wreaths will be purchased to replace those wreaths that are worn and mismatched.

Chancel Guild is responsible for the seasonal décor in the sanctuary, chapel, narthex, and other areas of the church including the exterior doors. Throughout the year, artificial flowers and greenery are purchased to create new arrangements for the sanctuary and other areas of the church. The guild also



manages certain worship related expenses, providing candles and other items for special worship services throughout the year as needed. Chancel Guild is always looking for new volunteers as we work together to enhance the worship experience.

—*Maureen Ludwig*, Interim Chair  
*Jo Forrest*



## Adult Spiritual Development Commission

The purpose of the Adult Spiritual Development Commission is to provide opportunities and resources for spiritual development. Programs and events are designed to help adults navigate their spiritual journey and develop friendship and fellowship within the groups and Westminster community.

Our commission enjoyed a year full of post-pandemic energy around gathering and connection. With multiple staff liaison transitions, 2023 took on a theme of member-led activities. We are steadily adding to the number of members sharing their gifts in small group facilitation and we are so grateful for their service.

The commission has oversight of the library and adult programs including the Westminster Seminars and adult classes.

The following activities and events were sponsored in 2023.

**Small Groups:** Long-running small groups have included the following: Bible Read Along (Jo Forrest), Fishers of Men (Doug Mitchell), Tuesday Morning Men's Group (Ed Sutter), Book Club (Nana Wilson, Sandy Conaway, George Krock), Adult Bible studies

(Jo Forrest), Women 2 Women (Sue Davis), Centering Prayer (Nana Wilson), and newly added Ladies' Night Small group (Kristy Berrott). We added short-term/intermittent small groups this year including Lenten Devotional groups (Jo Forrest, Cricket Ruppert, Laurie McMaster, and Barb Myers), *Hope: A User's Manual* book club small groups (Cricket Ruppert, Kristy Berrott), and Faith Transitions group (John Hayes). Information for all groups is available on the church website.

**Lent:** This year's Lenten theme was *Seeking*. Devotional materials by A Sanctified Art were offered in digital and print format. New this year were weekly small groups focused on discussion of these materials.

**Grief Care:** Multiple sessions of this very meaningful support group were offered throughout the year. This has become an important service to the community at-large, as many participants have been non-members. Leaders have included Sandy Conaway, Barbara and Hetz Marsh, Linda McCaig. Rev. Ann Morris also joined the leadership team this year.

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## Adult Spiritual Development Commission —*continued*

**The Artist's Way:** In the Spring, Chris Hestwood led a weekly group with *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*, by Julia Cameron. This group offered a practical approach to exploring one's personal creativity and spiritual connection with God through daily journaling and weekly activities.

**Women Belonging Retreat:** 12 participants had a meaningful and productive overnight in November at the Spiritan Center spending devotional time, fellowship, and thoughtful planning for the future. Some highlights: momentum for a spiritual women's retreat next year, solidifying a weekly evening small group with zoom option, building better communication network for prayer/support/activity opportunities, and supporting greater development of additional small groups for all members.

**Advent:** Devotional materials from A Sanctified Art were available in print and electronic formats. Several small groups used this material for their programming during the Advent season.

**Labyrinth:** Barb Myers and Mary Kay Mitchell added to their expertise in this area, attending a workshop in New Harmony, Indiana. There was increased emphasis on labyrinth use and education this year. The labyrinth made an appearance during our Ash Wednesday activities, and labyrinth education was provided to various small groups for adults and youth.

**Jewish-Christian Dialogue:** Bi-monthly discussion group held here at Westminster with Jo Forrest along with Beth El congregants and Rabbi Alex Greenbaum. These began in September and will continue into 2024.

**Adult seminars (Ted and Sara Kyle, Co-Chairs):** These programs occurred in person in Galbreath Chapel and online via Zoom. The programs are recorded and available on the Westminster Seminars page. The seminars continue to inspire and to provide a wide range of topics for study and discernment.

Also of note:

- The commission encouraged participation in community events outside of Westminster, such as Jud Newborn's lecture in January and the Tree of Life Remembrance Service.
- A day trip was organized by Deborah Waller to St. Nicolas Church to tour the Max Vanko murals in November.
- The Gallery, the Permanent Collection, and Members Showcase continue to be a source of beauty and inspiration.

—*Megan Exley, Chair / Jo Forrest*

## Children's & Family Ministry Commission

The year 2022 was lovingly referred to as the “mustard seed” year for Children's & Family Ministry. Now, 2023 has been a true testament to the work God can do with a little seed. With deep roots in the culture and community of Westminster, Children's & Family Ministry has been able to grow, flourish, and reach into new areas of ministry.

This year, we have continued to see families return to in-person activities as we step more into a “post-COVID” world. Worship, classes, and special events frequently have both new and returning visitors. Additionally, we have seen greater participation and attendance from our established families.

Throughout the year, we offered the following recurring ministry programs:

### Sunday Mornings

- **Wiggle Room** (all 3 services)
  - **9:45 a.m.**
    - Sunday School for PreK-4th Grade
    - Coloring Pages & the Student Table
    - Children's Message
  - **11:00 a.m.**
    - Sunday School for PreK-4th Grade
    - Worship Bags
- **Wednesday Evenings**
  - Little Ones & Loved Ones (0-preschool & caregivers)
  - Kids' Connection (PreK-2nd & 3rd-4th Grade)
  - Jesus & Me (JAM) (5th & 6th Grade)

All of these programs have seen steady participation and growth throughout the past year. Students, parents, and volunteers have expressed how much they enjoy being a part of the faith community at Westminster and through these programs.

Along with regular programs, Children's & Family Ministry is blessed to mark faith milestones with families through Sacrament Classes, Bible Presentation Sunday, and Baptisms. These moments were reminders that God is working through each one of us, no matter our age or experience. All of these special ceremonies included children of all ages and even some adults taking the next steps on their faith journey.



To kick off the Lenten season, we planned an evening of prayer and reflection on Ash Wednesday. In lieu of normal programming, the whole church was invited to participate in a variety of prayer stations in the WROC. Participants walked the labyrinth, contributed to a communal art project, and spent the evening in contemplative prayer

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## Children's & Family Ministry Commission —*continued*



**Family Gingerbread Night**

before journeying upstairs to the Ash Wednesday worship service together. This evening was so special, and we look forward to continuing the tradition next year.

June of course brings the week of faith and fun that is our annual Barefoot School VBS. This year's theme was "Hero Hotline: Called Together to Serve God." Over 200 children and volunteers came together to sing, dance, play, and explore as we learned about how we can work together to serve God. Super Meer led the party, sharing the message of God's abundant love with everyone at the hero headquarters. We were privileged to once again invite families to a celebration luncheon after Barefoot School which included Kona Ice and a visit from local heroes at Tri-Community South EMS and the Upper St. Clair Volunteer Fire Department. Many thanks to the wonderful and talented people who take part in planning, preparing, and executing this week of fun for the children in our community.

Families gathered throughout the year for a variety of fellowship events. We marked the end of the school year and the beginning of

summer with a family bonfire night at Gilfillan Farm. In August, we enjoyed a pool party with plenty of swimming, pizza, conversation, and play. The Fall Festival returned in October where families from Westminster, WECEP, and the community came to enjoy crafts, games, and pumpkin picking. Of course the holiday season included two beloved Westminster events: Breakfast at the Manger and Family Gingerbread Night. Breakfast at the Manger was a lovely way to celebrate the Advent season and saw a huge jump in registrations compared to previous years. After a delicious pancake breakfast, JAM students acted out the Christmas story for those in attendance. Children then made crafts to celebrate the season as parents enjoyed fellowship together. Family Gingerbread Night hosted 30 families who expressed their creativity with icing, graham



**Barefoot Vacation Bible School**

crackers, candy, and cardboard boxes. The results were delightfully festive!

Over the summer, discussions began about how we could do a better job of equipping parents and caregivers to nurture their

family’s faith at home. In conjunction with youth ministry, we surveyed parents and caregivers in order to determine how to best serve them in the coming program year. In October, we began a Parent & Caregiver Group that would meet seasonally to explore different topics. The fall series focused on faith at home, providing families with resources to create and integrate achievable faith formation practices within their family life. This group was well received and will continue to meet seasonally.

As we look ahead at the new year, we will

continue to nurture our mustard tree, trusting God’s direction for our ministry. I am immensely grateful for the unending love and support this church family has provided to our staff, volunteers, children, and families. Thank you for your commitment to guiding and nurturing our children, by word and deed, with love and prayer, as you encourage them to follow Christ and be faithful members of his church.

—Rick Ralston, Chair / Faith Kemmler

## Youth Commission

The year of 2023 was a year of transition and transformation for Westminster’s Youth Ministry. Veritas was already in the midst of change as the group emerged from COVID and returned to full programming.

Here are some of the activities the youth have participated in along with our regular Veritas meetings on Wednesday nights:

### January

- Began Social Justice League (SJL) for teens interested in mission and justice
- Teen and Parent Mental Health Speaker Series
- Assembled Quickkits

### February

- SJL served a meal at Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community
- Teen and Parent Mental Health Speaker
- Participated in Rise Against Hunger



### March

- Spring retreat to Splash Lagoon

### April

- SJL played Bingo with clients from PACC
- Dyed eggs for Meals on Wheels
- Served a meal at Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community

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Youth Commission —continued



**May**

- Prepared for Youth Sunday
- Move Up Night

**June**

- Confirmation Class led worship on Pentecost
- Bonfire at Gilfillan Farm
- Participated and helped lead Barefoot School

**July**

- Mission Trip to Charlotte, NC, July 9-14
- Charlie week of fun and fellowship

**August**

- Pool party
- SJL served a meal at Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community
- Mission trip participants led worship 8/27
- First Veritas of the year 8/30

**September**

- Confirmation began
- Teen and Parent Mental Health Series
- SJL met about Haiti Pen Pals

**October**

- Bonfire at Gilfillan Farm
- Catacombs
- Teen and Parent Mental Health Speaker Series

**November**

- SHIM Food Drive
- Teen and Parent Mental Health Speaker Series

**December**

- Presbytery Youth Retreat at Camp Crestfield
- Participated in Quiet Christmas
- Said goodbye to Ed Sutter
- Christmas Party

In December, we said goodbye to our ever-faithful friend Ed Sutter as he moved on to new ventures. Ed certainly left his imprint on Westminster and so many of the youth who have gone through Veritas. But more than that, Ed shows by example what it means to be a follower of Christ in today's world.

Veritas continues to grow with new faces each week. We are ever so thankful to all the volunteers, Youth Commission, and staff who enable this essential ministry. Recently, the youth worked together to form a statement of who they are: Veritas, our Beloved community, a place to celebrate Jesus in a fun and inclusive way; striving to live through Christ.

Blessings on a New Year!

—Becky Boyer / Luke Walker / Jerry Malarkey



## Communications Commission

It has been an exciting and busy year for the Communications Commission as we strive to create content that encourages spiritual growth and engagement in ministry for our congregation and that accurately communicates our mission and values to anyone who might be looking for a church.

We continue to increase our worship attendance on Sundays by livestreaming both the 9:45 contemporary service and the 11:00 traditional service. In addition, these services are posted on YouTube to increase our reach. As always, each week bulletins are created and printed in support of our worship services.

Our *Spire* has evolved and has become a magazine full of thoughtful articles. This year, after hearing from many in our congregation, we began once again mailing physical copies to all who want one. They will also remain available electronically.

We send out weekly emails on Tuesdays and Fridays and the number of people who open those emails is something to celebrate.

We have greatly increased our presence on social media through Facebook. Please

consider “sharing” our Facebook posts to extend our reach; it does make a difference.

We look forward to launching our new database early in January. Thank you to staff Anna Hiner, Jack Kelly, and Jane Zacchero and volunteer Carol Galbreath for the work necessary to make this a smooth and successful transition.

We look forward in 2024 to begin some improvements to our website. We’d love to have you share your photos of the ministry of this church. We have begun using Google photos to make it easier to upload photos to the staff and we would be happy to help you learn that process.

—*Steve Schmitt*, Chair / *Jan Baumann*

# Community Engagement Commission

Formerly the Membership Commission, the name was updated in order to better fit the vision and mission of the group.

Congregational engagement is a primary factor in the spiritual health and growth of the church. This commission strives to provide opportunities for involvement through hands on volunteer ministry and fellowship events, while continuing to support and inform the congregation's new members. The Community Engagement Commission also includes Pet Ministry, the WROC, and Town Hall South. Below are some of the activities this commission has used to provide opportunities for people to engage in the life of our church:

## Hands On Volunteer Ministry

- Food to Go
- QuickKits
- Street Moms
- Living Stones
- Horses with Hope
- Global Links
- Rise Against Hunger
- Homeless liaisons

## Fellowship Events

- Welcome Center on Sundays
- Church Picnics and Luncheons
- Super Sunday
- Forks and Fellowship
- Ice Cream Social
- Food and Fellowship (Wednesdays)
- Church Bike Rides

## Membership

- Inquirers' Gatherings
- New Member Followup

## Pet Ministry

- Pet Remembrance Services
- Grief Support

## WROC

- Fitness Classes including Parkinson's Fitness
- Recreational Athletics including basketball, pickleball, and volleyball

—*Meghan Widmar*, Chair / *Jan Baumann*



# Outreach Commission

Westminster provides many gifts and mission opportunities to our community, our nation, and the world. The Outreach Commission, which shepherds the selection and funding of Mission Partners with a portion of your contributions, is just one of those channels.

The members of your Outreach Commission are ever diligent and prayerful about the process for choosing where your funds will be distributed. In 2023, we refined the selection criteria to prioritize those causes and partners that were most engaging for our congregation. As a result, we curated our list to a smaller number of partners.

Food Insecurity, Homelessness, Youth and Education, Community Development, Humanitarian Aid, Disaster Relief, and Peace & Justice are the causes that you have supported through your time and gifts and have made a meaningful impact on individuals in our community and beyond through these partners:

## LOCAL & NATIONAL

- SHIM
- Bread for the World
- Washington City Mission
- Baby Bundles
- Rebuilding Homewood
- Bair Foundation
- Grow Living Stones
- Street Moms
- Meals on Wheels @ The Crossroads
- Equal Justice Initiative
- Westminster Peace & Justice Initiative
- Refugee Resettlement

## INTERNATIONAL

- Haiti La Croix New Testament Mission
- World Mission Initiative
- LaCoupe School Construction
- Presbyterian Disaster Relief
- LaCoupe Teachers
- Syria/Turkey Earthquake
- Medical Benevolence Fund  
Israel/Gaza Humanitarian Aid
- Strategic Investment
- Haiti Hospital Cleanup (post flooding)

New in 2023, we allocated \$10,000 of funds to be directed by the youth of Westminster to align with causes across generations. They wanted to address their biggest concerns: homelessness, hunger, LGBTQ+ issues, disaster assistance, and mental health. We intend to continue this practice of enabling our youth to direct a portion of our mission funding in ways that are meaningful to them.

Highlights from work with our Outreach Mission Partners this year:

## Refugee Resettlement

With funding support through the Outreach Commission, the Refugee Resettlement team welcomed a refugee family in September 2022. Our team consisted of roughly 25 Westminster members who spent the following 12 months welcoming the family to America. This is a family of seven, two parents and five kids ranging in age from 2 to 12. None of them spoke a word of English upon arrival. During 2022-23 we: secured housing and furnishings, helped both father and mother secure employment, got three kids enrolled in school and two in Head Start,

*continued*

## Outreach Commission —continued

and dealt with numerous dental issues. Today the family is thriving. The father has received a promotion and a raise at work, the eldest child is #1 in his class in middle school, and their teeth are in good shape! Our formal commitment has concluded, but we maintain warm and close relationships with the family.

Another Refugee Resettlement team has been convened and Outreach funding has budgeted to welcome a new family in 2024.

### Haiti LaCoupe School

For the past six years Westminster has supported the building of multiple classroom buildings in the remote region of LaCoupe, Haiti. Retired architect and Westminster member Tom Hartman designed the buildings which have been constructed as funding has been made available. In a final push to put roofs on the last two buildings, and doors on all the classrooms, funding was secured through Westminster's Outreach Commission and Friends of Haiti. We praise God that the project can now be completed!



Plans have been in the works for a new initiative – 2024 Haiti Pen Pal Project - which kicks off in January 2024. Westminster families or individuals sign up to correspond with La Croix high school students each



month. The goal is to help participants learn about a different culture through the exchange of letters. The Outreach funds pay for several students to administrate the program.

### City Mission

Westminster has long partnered with City Mission, has been instrumental to its success and growth, and has been a key contributor.

City Mission is a long established, highly effective, and successful community mission serving the homeless. It has a 68% success rate in helping their graduates achieve essential life needs such as housing, jobs, recovery from drug, alcohol & medical issues, and spiritual growth.

The impact of our partnership with City Mission can be seen and felt as you walk the halls of the facilities and meet the residents.



In 2023, our Outreach funds were directed to the plans for building a new 50 bed women's shelter to meet additional

needs. They have a long waiting list and more requests every day. The existing women's facilities serve not only women, but also women with children, keeping family units together.

Sixteen members of Westminster attended their Celebrate Success event in November to hear from the graduates on what the City Mission has enabled them to accomplish in their lives and readiness to return to independent living.

In 2024, City Mission has asked Westminster to partner further with them on an important pilot project to support graduates once they leave the mission. Volunteers in this hands-on mission program will have an opportunity to have a deeply meaningful role in a person's life. More will be shared in the spring.

**Meals on Wheels @ The Crossroads**

Seniors in our own community are vulnerable to food insecurity. Meals on Wheels provides warm, nourishing meals and often a bit of joy into their day. Many are unable to pay the small daily fee. Our funds cover the cost for these individuals.



In April, more than 50 Westminster volunteers of all ages dyed and decorated 300 Easter eggs for the Easter holiday meal delivery. And this summer, 13 volunteers baked and frosted 435 cupcakes in a little less than two hours in the Fellowship Hall kitchen. Westminster members also help with food preparation at the Donaldson's Crossroads location and serve as drivers throughout the year.

—Allison McGee, Chair



## Peace and Justice

Peace and Justice has been part of Westminster since 1983 when Ruth Rylander led our congregation in joining over 4,500 other Presbyterian churches in the PC(USA) Commitment to Peacemaking. Recently we have begun to include social justice issues such as hunger, economic inequality, racism, incarceration, and environmental concerns. In 2023 we focused on working to end hunger.

The Peace and Justice Initiative, sponsored and funded by the Outreach Commission, hosted these activities and events:

Grace-Westminster Book Club: Beginning in 2016, members of Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church and Westminster have met weekly for ongoing discussion. This racially mixed group, over the last 7½ years, has explored 38 books that address topics such as mass incarceration, the death penalty, poverty, inadequate schools, limited job opportunities, and other racial justice issues. This year we highlighted Isabel Wilkerson's *Caste*. This year we also added readings from Howard Thurman's *Meditations of the Heart*.

Bread for the World Farm Bill Workshop at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

Westminster members participated in the *Southwestern Pennsylvania Bread for the World* farm Bill/SNAP workshop on April 22.

Offering of Letters: On May 21 we led the congregation workshop in writing to Congress in support of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Westminster members sent 122 letters. This year instead of mailing the letters, Bread for the World members carried the letters to congresspeople in Washington, D.C.

Summer Discussions: In July, Peace and Justice sponsored a three-part series: *Sowing Seeds of Justice Food Security for All: Equity and Food Security*, July 9, Karen Ehrens, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, July 16, *Sustainability and Food Security*, Dan Dalton, *Pasa Sustainable Agriculture*, July 23, *Home Grown Endeavors: Seed to Supper*, Community Kitchens, and *412 Food Rescue*.

For more information about peace and justice work at Westminster, contact Barbara Myers at [barbwmyers@gmail.com](mailto:barbwmyers@gmail.com) or Bobbie Hartman at [hartman1967@verizon.net](mailto:hartman1967@verizon.net).

—**Bobbie Hartman**

# WECEP (Westminster Early Childhood Education Programs)



WECEP (Westminster Early Childhood Education Programs) operates two outstanding education programs that offer full or half-day programs for children ages six months to six years. The staff is made up of 42 highly experienced and dedicated individuals. A board of eight committed volunteers assist in making sure that WECEP remains one of the most respected programs in the Pittsburgh area. The love for and commitment to teaching children based on Christian values is one that holds true for all of the staff and families served.



**Lori Feldmann,**  
*WNSK Education Director*

The Nursery School (WNSK) offers classes for children aged two through kindergarten. This includes comprehensive Transition, Pre-K, Pre-School, Twos, Enrichment, Spanish, and STEAM classes.

The enrichment classes place emphasis on academic and creative areas such as literacy, art, cooking, and STEM. WNSK has a theme based curriculum aligned with PA State standards that is specifically designed to meet the needs of each age group. There is a focus on six developmental areas including social, emotional, cognitive,

language, physical, and spiritual. There are currently 202 children enrolled from September through June. Registration takes place in February. The director is Lori Feldmann.



**Megan Baumgartner,**  
*WCDC Program Director*

The Child Development Center (CDC) currently has 77 children enrolled and is considered a year-round childcare program. The CDC philosophy is based on educational research that children learn best through play, so the curriculum is play

based. The classrooms available for both full-time and part-time care are Infant, Toddler Prep, Toddler, Preschool Prep, Preschool, and Pre-K. The director is Megan Baumgartner. Liz Heslin supports both programs. Enrollment is rolling admission and is open all year. There is currently a waitlist for openings.

WECEP is licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, and maintains a certification through the Keystone STARS program.

WECEP had been run under the direction of Denise Burke, a much loved Executive Director, who unfortunately passed away very suddenly in November. While everyone involved with WECEP was devastated, the program continues to function very well under the leadership of the directors. The staff continue to work very hard to

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## WECEP —continued



Liz Heslin, WECEP  
Office Manager

create and maintain an educational community which provides the highest quality early childhood learning experiences in a safe, nurturing, and creative environment that is based on a Christian

foundation. The board is continuing to evaluate the program and to determine how to go forward, both immediately and in the long term.

—Karen Williams and Tim Cox,  
Board Co-Chairs



# WROC (Westminster Recreation & Outreach Center)

This year the WROC looked closely at its operation and financial processes. Are we being good stewards of not only our finances but also of all the resources we have been so generously provided? This audit gave us the opportunity to assure the church that the WROC can cover expenses and that instructors are compensated fairly. Our insurance needs were reviewed and adjusted to assure the WROC has adequate coverage.



year. We now have eight fitness classes specifically focused on Parkinson's disease with approximately 42 participants in each eight-week session.

In September, we kicked off the Pickleball for Parkinson's program. Pickleball is a great sport for those living with Parkinson's. It's a low-impact sport that helps with mobility and improves balance and hand-eye coordination and is just plain fun! With a committed group of eight players and plans to continue to grow, we look forward to a thriving program!

The WROC continues to offer a variety of aerobic, strength and conditioning, balance, and yoga classes throughout the week. Approximately 314 individuals pass through the WROC doors weekly to participate in any of the 26 fitness or athletic (basketball, pickleball, volleyball) offerings. An additional instructor was added to fill an increased need for strength classes. This new Burn and Sculpt class continues to gain momentum.

*continued*

In April the WROC was represented at the Parkinson's Foundation Living Well Conference. This enabled us to promote our Parkinson's Fitness classes and the Parkinson's Pickleball program. The conference offers inspiring speakers and connects participants with local resources like the WROC! The WROC continues to work closely with the Parkinson's Foundation of Western PA for outreach and program support.

As a result of promotional efforts, the Parkinson's Fitness program continues to grow with two more classes added this



## WROC —continued

WROC Talks (a free speaker series) continued with local resident and author Jay Lynch sharing humorous stories from his book *The Lighter Side of Upper St. Clair*. These talks continue to be a great source of outreach for the community.

The Westminster Single Women’s Group is open to both members and non-members of Westminster Presbyterian Church. The group enjoyed many outings throughout the year and monthly dinners at the Galleria. The year-end event was at the Little Lake Theater Company for the showing of Irving Berlin’s *White Christmas*. Run by volunteers, this ministry continues to foster friendships and Christian fellowship.

The WROC is so much more than the programs it offers. The WROC is part of something bigger. It is part of a family – first the church family and then our extended community. We are blessed with fitness instructors and program volunteers who create an atmosphere of Christian Fellowship, a place to be known and to know others.

—Kathy Long, WROC Director

## Town Hall South

**THS** TOWN HALL  
*South*  
SPEAKER SERIES  
*Est. 1969*

The 2023-2024 daytime lecture season began in November of 2023 with Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Lynsey Addario, followed by James Beard Award-winning writer and culinary icon Ruth Reichl. The season continues with NASA Lead Principal Engineer Kobie Boykins in February, followed by actor, producer, director, and best-selling author Henry Winkler, and American historian and CNN presidential historian Douglas Brinkley.

THS is a subscription-only series including five lectures held at the USC High School

Theater on Tuesdays during the months of October, November, December, February, and March. The cost of the series is \$185 for general admission or \$210 for reserved seating. A subscription-only luncheon series at St. Clair Country Club immediately follows each lecture for those who attended the lecture. The speaker is available to answer questions submitted by the luncheon audience. The cost is \$200 for all five luncheons.

THS also provides service to the community through philanthropic gifts to a wide range of local organizations. Some of the charities supported by THS donations in the past



include Blankets Over Pittsburgh, Homeless Outreach, CASA for Kids, Inc. (Washington Co.); CASA of Allegheny County, City Mission with Children’s Shelter, Family Hospice; Boys Hope Girls Hope of Pittsburgh, Inc., Light in my City, Literacy Pittsburgh, Outreach Teen and Family Services, Inc., Prime Time Adult Care, Inc.; Street Symphony, Spencer Family YMCA/Camp AIM, The Early Learning Institute, and Zonta Club of Washington County.

After months of careful and thoughtful consideration, the THS board has determined that the 2023-2024 season will be the final season for the speaker series. With continuing increases in speaker fees and related expenses, as well as a persistent trend of decreased ticket sales that was apparent long before and accelerated by the pandemic, it seemed to be the only decision. The THS board is committed to ensuring that THS

closes the curtain in a manner that celebrates the THS mission, as well as the generosity our supporters and subscribers have exhibited for over 50 years.

Members currently serving on the THS Board are Janette Clements (Chair), Vicki Strain (Logistics), Katy Jopperi-Davis (Logistics), Daryl Criss (Treasurer), Tricia Eccher (Graphics/Print), Melissa Epler (Secretary/Membership), Laura Lisien (Philanthropy/Luncheons), Kathy Teresi (Speakers), Rachel Lowden (Corporate Sponsorships), Nancy Rex (Membership), Susan Nixon (Membership), and Laura Jones (Marketing/Communications).

—*Janette Simmons Clements*, Chair

## 2023-2024 Town Hall South Speakers Series



**Lynsey Addario**  
November 7, 2023



**Ruth Reichl**  
December 5, 2023



**Kobie Boykins**  
February 6, 2024



**Henry Winkler**  
March 19, 2024



**Douglas Brinkley**  
April 9, 2024



## Board of Deacons

The Board of Deacons serves the congregation with acts of care and compassion. The Deacons met through the year, some meetings through Zoom, on the fourth Monday of every month, except June and July.

During the 2023 calendar year the Deacons served Westminster through the following committees:

### BLOOD DRIVE

Blood drives in February (47 donors), May (25 donors), September (31 donors). These donations will enable the saving of up to 307 lives!

### CARE CALLS

Deacons called members of the church mid 2023 to connect with the congregation and to let them know that we were thinking of them and to ask if they needed further assistance from the church. Conversation continues between the Deacons on how best to structure care calls moving forward.

### CARE CALENDAR

The team has continued to provide meals through volunteering throughout 2023 to members of the congregation needing help at the time.

### EXTENDED COMMUNION

The Deacons delivered communion to house bound church members in March, May and December, fellowship which is much appreciated by the recipients and attending Deacons.

### FLOWER DELIVERY

75 people received Easter flowers delivered by the Deacons. 85 Poinsettias were distributed to shut-ins following the Christmas services. Many cards of thanks were received by the Deacons.





### DEACON “SPECIAL EVENTS”

The Deacons participated in the outdoor service that took place in South Park, by coordinating games for the kids. The challenge course was very well received by both young and old. The Deacons also provided cookies for the event. The Deacons also participated at Super Sunday.

### SNAPPY SPIRITUAL TEAM

The Deacons continued to send cards to church members in need throughout 2023.

### STAYING CONNECTED (previously Surprise & Delight)

A social gathering was arranged by the team at Friendship Village with 25 residents attending. A similar event occurred at Providence Point in June. Deacons started mailing out packs to some homebound members containing activity pages, scripture readings, crosswords, etc. The Deacons will be reaching out to these individuals in the new year to add a personal connection.

—*Ian Thomas*, Deacon Moderator / *Jo Forrest*

## Caring Ministries

Identifying those who might need care is easier now that members and visitors are returning to church to worship after the pandemic. We can “see” who is missing. However, our “**homebound**” ministry has become more widespread as new senior living communities and short and long-term care facilities increased. A similar percentage of our membership to previous years now reside in more locations. Still, individuals prefer to remain in their own homes when faced with health and aging challenges and Western PA’s characteristic “live and die” in our same communities often enables intergenerational caregiving. The high costs of professional care as well as balancing work and family care responsibilities bring additional stress and new challenges to design effective caring ministry and engaging these members within the life of the church.

Celebrating the lives of the Saints and thankfully affirming the Resurrection is still one of the cornerstones of a caring community. Our physical plant which includes the sanctuary, chapel, columbarium, and Memorial Parlor provides a beautiful setting that uplifts one’s spirit in a somber occasion.

**Grief Care** supports those experiencing the loss of a loved one. Offered in the fall and spring, groups meet weekly for six sessions

and are open to the public. Led by a team of experienced and caring individuals, this program has been an Ebenezer for grief support for many years.

Westminster’s **Prayer group** meets bi-weekly to offer intercessory prayer for those who have requested prayer or for individuals and community concerns that have become known to a member of the group. While this small, intentional group maintains confidentiality, their ministry reaches a wide range of the church membership and the community.

Westminster is one of seven satellite locations of **The Samaritan Counseling Center** of Western PA, headquartered in Sewickley. Covid-19 left a legacy of mental health damage. Poised to address this need, the Center believes in the power of hope and healing and helps their clients to apply that power to their lives. Their licensed staff meet with individuals, families, and groups.

—Ann Morris

# 2023 Church Statistical Report



**Church** Westminster PIN 8236  
**Presbytery** Pittsburgh  
**Address** 2040 Washington Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15241  
**Phone** 412-835-6630 **Fax**  
**Email** [office@westminster-church.org](mailto:office@westminster-church.org)  
**Web Site** [www.westminster-church.org](http://www.westminster-church.org)

## Membership

Prior Active Members	1308	Adjusted membership	1308
<b>Gains</b>		<b>Losses</b>	
Certificate	13	Certificate	3
Youth Professions		Deaths	23
Professions & Reaffirmations	19	Deleted for any Other Reason	16
<b>Total Gains</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>Total Losses</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Total Ending Active Members</b>	<b>1298</b>		

## Baptisms

Presented by Others	19	Average Weekly Worship Attendance	425
At Confirmation		Friends of the Congregation	46
All Other		Ruling Elders on Session	22
		Do you have Deacons?	Yes

## Age Distribution of Active Members

17 & Under	29
18 - 25	142
26 - 40	186
41 - 55	299
56 - 70	288
Over 70	354
<b>Total Age Distribution</b>	<b>1298</b>

## People with Disabilities

Hearing impairment	54
Sight impairment	29
Mobility impairment	31
Other impairment	

## Gender Distribution

Women	742
Men	556
Non-Binary	

## Youth in Congregation

Age 4 and under	20	Middle School (6th – 8th grade)	17
Elementary School (K-5th grade)	70	High School (9th – 12th grade)	19
		<b>Total Youth</b>	<b>126</b>

## Racial Ethnic

Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian	5	Native American/Alaska Native/Indigenous	
Black/African American/African	3	White	1288
Middle Eastern/North African		Multiracial	
Hispanic/Latino-a	2		
		<b>Total Racial Ethnic</b>	<b>1298</b>

**Budgeted Income** 2,021,300

**Budgeted Expense** 2,070,400

## Receipts

Regular Contributions	1,664,187	Bequests	411,810
Capital Building Fund	253,612	Other Income	234,102
Investment Income	44,400	Subsidy or Aid	0

## Expenditures

Local Program	1,728,396	Investment Expenditures	0
Local Mission	113,108	Per Capita Apprt	46,297
Capital Expenditures	202,782	Other Mission	53,377



## Finance Commission

As stewards of the financial resources of the church, the Finance Commission is pleased to provide both the fiscal highlights and key accomplishments for 2023.

From a financial perspective, 2023 reflected many of the same trends the church experienced during 2022. These themes included:

- General Fund receipts experienced a marginal increase of ~\$33,000 but fell short of our budget by ~\$38,000. Similar to last year the gap was driven by a lower pledge fulfillment rate of 92% versus historical rates as high as 97%. Given this trend the General Fund budget was kept unchanged for 2024.
- The positive variance for our Total Revenue was the result of several large bequests and special donations. The church received nearly \$330,000 more than budgeted with a large portion going to pay down the endowment loan and bolster the property fund. As always, the nature of these meaningful gifts makes them unpredictable year-over-year.
- From an expense perspective the biggest challenge we continue to face is the on-going upkeep of our property. Property

is the largest expense category outside of Personnel and one where a \$1,000+ problem can pop-up any day. With the exhaustion of the Forward-In-Faith funds this year, ensuring adequate funding and planning for Property improvements remains a top priority.

- Through the generosity of loan payment sponsors combined with the designation of special donations the principal balance of the endowment loan was reduced 30% to \$615,821. This decrease was a significant step to lessening the burden of this loan.
- Finally, our cash balance increased by ~\$473,000 changing the downward trajectory over the past few years. This increase was due to the collection of Employer Retention Tax Credit funds and a large donation to the church.

In addition to the monthly monitoring of the church financials, the commission is also pleased to report the completion of both the 2021 and 2022 external audits. Great strides were made to establish the process and cadence to complete the annual audit in a timely manner.

Another key project begun in 2023 is the upgrade of our church management

software. The new cloud-based Realm software will increase our capabilities across the board from membership to giving to financial management. In addition, the move to the cloud will reduce on-going IT costs while providing access to new functionality. This project is being executed by a cross-functional team and will be complete in 2024.

We thank you for your continued financial support which allows the church to transform our priorities into a reality that impact lives.

Respectfully submitted,

—**Brian Eccher**, Impacts Chair /  
**Jack Kelly / Jo Forrest**

## Personnel Commission

Westminster Church continues to be blessed with a talented and committed staff that have been called to support the ministries of the church as well as manage the business side of the church entity.

The Personnel Commission is responsible to support the staff, address staffing needs and concerns, developing and administering Westminster’s personnel policies, and ensuring that Westminster has the people resources needed.

In 2023, the Personnel Commission:

1. Transitioned the temporary role of Director of Finance, hiring John (Jack) Kelly as the Director of Finance and Operations
2. Hired Lauren Moore as Contemporary Worship Coordinator
3. Welcomed the Rev. Ann Morris to the part-time position of Parish Associate
4. Approved the role of Interim Communications Director; Christine Hestwood accepted the role
5. Joined with our members to celebrate the faithful service of Property Manager, Charley Richardson, upon his retirement
6. Elevated Walt Geroda to the position of Property Supervisor and Head Custodian

7. Celebrated Ed Sutter, as he pursues dreams in higher education
8. Elevated Becky Boyer to Director of Youth Ministry
9. Updated the title of Anna Hiner to correctly reflect her role as Membership and Communications Coordinator
10. Addressed staffing needs for both the Custodial and Audio Visual team
11. Appointed Associate Pastor Nominating Committee
12. Partnered with other commissions in determining staffing needs
13. Recommended 2024 Personnel budget to the Finance Commission

The work of Westminster Presbyterian Church and the many lives impacted would not be possible without the talented individuals called to be the church’s staff. The Personnel Commission represents this church with gratitude for the faithful work done throughout the year. This commission is committed to support the staff and continue its efforts in evaluating the ongoing needs of Westminster.

—**Denise Rost**, Chair / **Jo Forrest**

# Financial Summary

REVENUES	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	Variance	2024 Budget
General Fund	\$1,634,322	\$1,668,003	\$1,706,000	\$(37,997)	\$1,706,000
Bequests & Donations	\$181,444	\$477,538	\$148,300	\$329,238	\$148,300
Program and Other	\$212,927	\$212,814	\$167,000	\$45,814	\$222,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,028,693</b>	<b>\$2,358,355</b>	<b>\$2,021,300</b>	<b>\$337,055</b>	<b>\$2,076,300</b>

EXPENSES	2022 Actual*	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	Variance	2024 Budget
Ministries/Programs	\$167,725	\$212,375	\$197,255	\$(15,120)	\$209,500
Outreach & Per Capita	\$216,337	\$212,783	\$194,000	\$(18,783)	\$154,000
Personnel	\$834,276	\$1,172,409	\$1,200,800	\$28,391	\$1,222,000
Property	\$284,748	\$342,265	\$279,250	\$(63,015)	\$357,000
Administration & Communication	\$224,910	\$207,924	\$199,100	\$(8,824)	\$172,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,727,996</b>	<b>\$2,147,756</b>	<b>\$2,070,405</b>	<b>\$(77,351)</b>	<b>\$2,114,500</b>

\*Expenses include \$290,294 reduction of Personnel Expenses for Employer Retention Tax Credit

Net Surplus/Deficit	\$300,697	\$210,599	\$(49,105)	\$259,704	\$(38,200)
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Endowment loan (principal payment)	\$142,404	\$273,543	\$85,500	\$188,043	\$85,000
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Preliminary financial results subject to final audit

BALANCE SHEET	12/31/2022	12/31/2023
Operating Cash	\$863,958	\$1,337,415
Endowment Note Balance	\$889,364	\$615,821

# Stewardship Summary | 2024 Campaign

The theme of the 2024 Stewardship Campaign was **The Heart of Generosity**. There were a series of communications to the congregation via sermons, emails, and the *Spire* that discussed why we give and the way our giving is used in furthering the ministries of our church and God’s work in our communities. In town hall meetings we described the giving trends in our church and the implications on planning by the leadership of the church. The campaign formally ran for three weeks concluding November 19. Stewardship is a year-round activity. We will continue to receive additional pledges throughout January and well into 2024.

The campaign has resulted in 273 pledges to date totaling \$1,312,750 with an average pledge of \$4,808 and an average of \$1,772 for each of the 741 families in the congregation. The total amount pledged is slightly below the 2023 campaign, with only slightly over 80% of the families that pledged for 2023 having pledged for 2024 and only 37% of the church families having pledged. Of those who pledged in 2023 and have also pledged for 2024, 34% increased their pledge. We are grateful for your generosity and continuing commitment to Westminster! The following table reflects the distribution of annual pledges made by our congregation.

In 2023 we conducted an interim fund-raising campaign for the specific project of sealing the parking lot with a goal of raising \$35,000. The Seal the Parking Lot campaign ran for 4 weeks in the summer and relied on announcements, digital marketing, and signage in the parking lots. The campaign was successful, receiving over \$34,000 in the four-week period from 137 donors, including 24 who were not church members! We will continue to hold project related fund-raising campaigns in 2024 and into the future.



Pledge Amount	No. of Pledges
\$0 - \$500	20
\$501 - \$1,000	27
\$1,001 - \$1,500	40
\$1,501 - \$2,000	22
\$2,001 - \$3,000	44
\$3,001 - \$4,000	19
\$4,001 - \$5,000	16
\$5,001 - \$7,500	21
\$7,501 - \$10,000	24
\$10,001 - \$20,000	19
\$20,001 & above	9

Over 60% of our family units have yet to pledge for 2024. The stewardship team is exploring new ways to reach the sizable portion of our membership that does not make a commitment to periodic recurring donations.

A pledge is a response given in joy as an expression of gratitude for what God has given to us by his grace. It is a promise between you and God that is shared with his church. We encourage all of you to reflect on the gifts God has given to you, and if you have not already done so, consider making a pledge to return a portion of those gifts to further his work in the world through Westminster.

—*Dave Heilman*, Chair / *Jo Forrest*

# Endowment & Special Gifts Committee

God has blessed Westminster with this fund which has helped us in so many ways including property, programs, mission related projects, and the loan to the church. Please consider donating to the fund through a current contribution, a will, an IRA, or charitable gift annuity/trust. Members can also set up a special gift fund in their name with a minimum contribution of \$10,000. More information on the Endowment can be found in the Member Resources section of our website.

**Assets** as of 12-31-23 (all preliminary)

- Undesignated Fund Balance \$3,400,000 (appr.)
- Balance of Loan to Westminster \$615,821 (appr.) - all payments made on time
- Special Gifts Funds \$263,000 (appr.)

**Highlights:** Our committee met 5 times in 2023 with the following highlights:

- The Endowment committee and Westminster lost a great friend, Linda Serene, in 2023. Linda will be truly missed as a valuable contributor to the work of the Endowment, the Church, and the Upper St. Clair community.
- The Endowment received approximately \$60,000 in donations in 2023 including a generous \$40,000 from one family.
- The Church used \$125,000 from a generous \$250,000 donation to pay down its loan with the Endowment. This reduced the term of the loan by about one year and scheduled payoff is now August 2028.

- Communication to the congregation included multiple requests for applications and two Tuesday congregation emails.
- Dormant small special gifts funds (Archives and Kitchen Maintenance) were terminated with proceeds of about \$10,000 moving to Special Property Needs and \$5,000 to Digital Ministries.
- Requests for \$144,000 in grants from the corpus were reviewed and approved.
- Financial statements were created and will be part of the consolidated audited financial statements.
- We held information sessions with both of our investment advisers.

**Investments:** We continue to use two investment advisers with one concentrating on equities and the other balancing our portfolio with a mix of equities and fixed income. The blended return for 2023 was 13.8%.

Grants were recommended and approved by Session in the amount of \$144,000 (4% of corpus) for the following:

- Bridge Service - Microphones, Music - \$12,500
- Bridge Service-Lighting - \$10,500
- Youth/JAM Ministry - Asst. Director and Classroom Updates - \$64,500
- Communications - Paper Cutter - \$3,000
- Chancel Guild - \$2,000
- Transfer to Special Property Needs Fund \$20,000

- City Mission - Women’s Shelter Capital Campaign - \$19,000
- Bible Center Church (Homewood) - Classroom Furnishings for “Own Our Own” Entrepreneur Training Center - \$12,500

Total: \$144,000

**Special Gifts Funds:** Several special funds donated by families are also administered by the Endowment Committee. A current balance of all of these funds are as follows. All numbers are approximate.

- McClintock Library Fund - \$20,000
- Special Property Needs - \$117,000
- Music and Arts - \$ 50,000

- Digital Ministries - \$ 55,000
- Chapel Organ Fund - \$18,000

Thank you to a great committee in 2023. We look forward to funding another interesting set of projects in 2024. Please feel free to contact us any time with questions.

Blessings,

**Rob Wagner**, Chair

**2023 Endowment & Special Gifts Fund Committee**

Michelle Burgess, Deborah Waller, Broc Sleek, Emily Hammel, John Wehn, George Pitcairn, Jeff Rex, Jo Forrest, Lois Singleton, Ken Rapko, Linda Serene, and Rob Wagner

## Property Commission

This was the final year of The Forward In Faith fund spending. FIF has truly made a difference in the building’s presentation and longevity. We believe that your gifts were utilized with respect and judicious use. Exterior wood replacement and painting was the last major use of the FIF funds. This past September we had our masonry contractor here for a week doing multiple projects. The result of that effort will prevent any further deterioration of all the parapet walls and the sanctuary’s main entry stairs, breezeway deck sealing, sidewalk tripping hazards remedied, and the south courtyard drainage improvements. Quite a list of tasks that will take us into the future in good condition.

There are several improvements that need to be made soon. First and most costly is the replacement of the 66-year-old antiquated

main electrical power feed into the building. The engineering work will be complete when you read this. Second is the sanctuary air handler. The panels have rusted out and it needs to be rebuilt. Third is the replacement of the 2 Chancel windows. During my time on the roof recently I found large areas of deterioration which can only be seen from the outside. None of those projects currently have a designated funding source. The parking lot sealing and restriping is scheduled for this spring as weather permits. That is a fully funded project due to the generosity of so many people.

This year we celebrated the retirement of Charley Richardson who led us in all these efforts to make the building what it is

*continued*

**Property Commission** —*continued*

today. Many thanks again. Walt Geroda will now be taking on many of Charley’s past responsibilities. He and his maintenance staff have shown pride in their work with their care for Westminster’s vast property. The Thursday crew of volunteers continues to do multiple tasks which help make the building look neat and well cared for saving a great deal of money from their efforts.

Due to increased costs for maintenance, an audit was done on Westminster’s columbarium, resulting in a price increase from \$1,750 per niche to \$3,000 per niche. The congregation was notified of this increase two months prior to the increase. During those two months, 50 niches were sold at the \$1,750 price. Of the 1040 niches in our columbarium, 546 are interred, 337 are sold, and 177 are available for sale.

On a personal note: I’ve finished my 6 years as the Chair and I’m now rolling off the Commission. It has been a blessing to utilize your gifts in the care of the Westminster Church’s structure. I’m humbled to be a supportive part of the past and present parishioners love in that effort. Let’s continue to have this church be a lovely visible beacon of God’s love in our world.

Peace,

**Jay Galbreath**, Chair / **Jo Forrest**



This document was produced by the staff and many members of our congregation.  
Please excuse any misspellings or omissions.

# Our Priorities

The great command issued from the ancient of days to love God and built upon by Jesus to **love God and neighbor** echoes throughout our faith and calls us forward. Westminster embraced Jesus' twofold command at her inception and each successive generation brings these lofty ideals to life through concrete ministries. Westminster has and will continue to thrive when focused on spiritual growth in this community. We look to the future with these clear priorities:

## Accept **EVERYONE WITH LOVE**

Witness the deep affection among members and the sense of belonging to one another and God through Westminster.

## Inspire **WONDER AND MEANING**

This soul-stirring ranges from the vibrant music offered in worship, hearing Jesus' stories with an open heart, the tender children's message during the Bridge, to packing food bags and working together on behalf of someone who is hungry.

## Seek **JUSTICE, WITHOUT EXCEPTION**

Our work in mission and outreach is motivated by the desire to salve the wounds where people hurt and driven to courageously seek the change that will make our community stronger.

## Energize **THE NEXT GENERATION**

Honest conversations, silly games, and constant care encourage a little one's imagination feel Jesus' love.



**WESTMINSTER**  
PRESBYTERIAN  
**CHURCH**

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