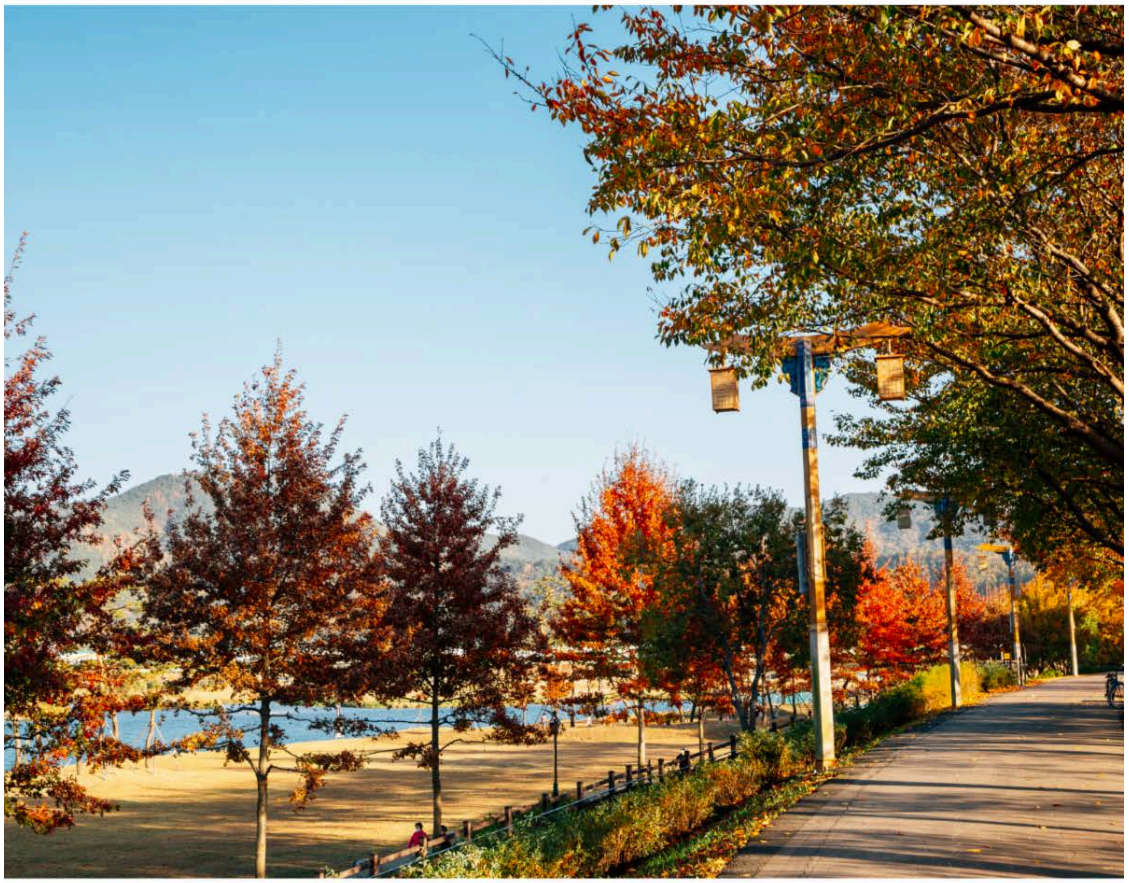
NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2026

NEWSLETTER



WESTMINSTER CHURCH NEWS

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"That my glory may sing Your praise and not be silent.
O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever!" Psalm 30:12

Welcome to November and December at Westminster!

Growing in Faith, Connecting in Fellowship, Serving with Love

November and December are wonderful times to reflect on God's faithfulness, celebrate the blessings of our church family, and look forward to the opportunities ahead.

Our vision for the Westminster newsletter is simple: to keep our church family informed, connected, encouraged, and involved.

More than just a collection of announcements and dates, we want these pages to tell the story of Westminster—our ministries, our people, and the many ways God is working in and through our congregation.

Each month, we hope you'll discover opportunities to grow in your faith, build meaningful friendships, serve others, and perhaps even try something new! We also want to celebrate the people and ministries that make Westminster such a special place to call home.

As we enter this season of Thanksgiving and prepare our hearts for Advent, may we be reminded that the church is so much more than a building or a Sunday morning service. It's a family of believers, growing together in Christ and sharing His love with our community.

So grab a cup of tea or coffee,
enjoy the November / December newsletter,
and see what's happening around Westminster.
There's always room for YOU to be part of the story!



With grateful hearts,
we give thanks for our Westminster family!

Newsletter Staff

Putting Names to Faces...

Westminster's Digital Directory

We've been talking about our Digital Directory for several months, and many of you have already signed up! If you haven't, you're missing out on a wonderful way to stay connected with your Westminster family.

As our church grows and new faces appear, remembering everyone's name can be a challenge! Ever recognize someone but just can't remember their name?
Our Digital Directory makes it easy to put names to faces—and faces to names!

With photos, phone numbers, addresses, and email addresses right at your fingertips, staying in touch has never been easier.

Ready to join? Simply follow the instructions in your weekly bulletin or call the church office for a quick tutorial. We're happy to help!

And if your info is in the directory, but you don't have a picture yet, we are happy to help with that too!

After all, we're more than a congregation—we're a church family, and families stay connected!

BIRTHDAYS !

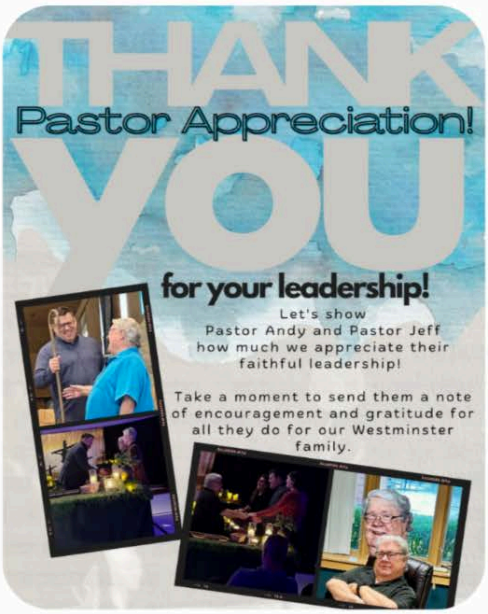
November

1 - Kendra Nohl
4 - Julianne Vickers
5 - Lindsay Dillon
7 - Sue Welsh
9- Bev Gonzalez
15 - Patricia Stange
16 - Dawn Pulgine
17 - Holly Dyer
17 - Carol Michels
19 - Anne Berry
19 - Cindy Rand
20 - Audrey Fechner
23 - Tom Annerino
26 - Anna McQuade
27 - Darlene Vickers
28 - Janice Gillono
28 - Aubrey Flamand

December

9 - Melba Stopher
9 - Amy Ervin
11 - Joel Gordon
13 - Margie Runquist
14 - Rick Lockman
14 - Nathan McQuade
15 - Lynn Tigges
18 - Mary Lou Weidner
21 - George Silfugarian
28 - Meghan Hill-Kendrick
30 - Edith Ashina
31 - Erin Frazier
31 - Phyllis Weissenborn

Events in November



Pastor Appreciation Month has Moved!

Who says October gets to have all the fun?

At Westminster, we're marching to the beat of our own drum and moving ***Pastor Appreciation Month to November!***

After all, our pastors deserve to be appreciated all year long, so we're making November a special celebration of their faithful leadership, encouragement, and service!

Let's shower Pastor Andy and Pastor Jeff with gratitude, prayers, and a little extra love this November!

Hanging of the Greens
November 22

It's hard to believe, but Christmas is just around the corner! And at Westminster, that means it's almost time to deck the halls!

Join us on Sunday, November 22, immediately following the service, as we continue our beloved tradition of decorating the church for Advent and Christmas.

There is something to do for everyone!

Whether you're a ladder climber, wreath fluffer, candle battery changer, or Christmas tree decorator, we can put your talents to good use!

Lunch will be provided for everyone who signs up to help. With many hands making light work, we're usually finished by 2:00 p.m.

Best of all, it's always a wonderful afternoon of fun, fellowship, and Christmas cheer!
Watch for the sign-up sheet in the narthex beginning November 1st.

Come help us make Westminster merry and bright!

Events in November

Thursday, November 19



Prayer & Thanksgiving Gathering
6:30 PM | Family Life Center/Gym

There is something powerful about coming together in prayer and lifting our voices in thanksgiving!

Join us for a special evening of worship, prayer, and gratitude as we reflect on God's abundant blessings, His unfailing goodness, and His faithfulness in our lives.

Westminster and Stone Table Fellowship will gather as one family in Christ, led by Lee Rieck, our Prayer Deacon, and Pastor Jeff.

Together, we'll experience the encouragement and unity that come from praying with one another and giving thanks to the One from whom all blessings flow.

Come with a grateful heart and leave encouraged by the power of prayer and fellowship!

Sunday, November 29



Child Dedication Sunday – November 29

Children are a precious gift from God!

On Sunday, November 29, during our morning worship service, Westminster will celebrate Child Dedication Sunday—a special opportunity for parents to publicly commit to raising their children in the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ, with the prayerful support of our church family.

If you are interested in having your child dedicated, please contact Joanna in the church office or speak with Pastor Jeff or Pastor Andy.

Events in December

Tuesday, December 1st



Thursday, December 3rd



Saturday, December 5th



Sunday, December 20



Thursday, Christmas Eve, December 24



"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together...but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:25 ESV)

The Giving Tree

A Westminster Tradition of Giving

Since the 1980s, Westminster's Giving Tree has been a cherished Christmas tradition, reminding us that "It is more blessed to give than to receive" – Acts 20:35.

During Hanging of the Greens, our Giving Tree will once again be decorated with Christmas card ornaments, each representing an opportunity to bless others through five mission organizations.

International Missions: ***Habitat for Humanity and Heifer International*** welcome monetary donations, which may be placed in the offering plates through December 24. Both organizations help families build better futures through education, responsibility, and self-sufficiency.

Local Missions: ***Hesed House (PADS), Wayside Cross, and the Ruth Project*** are requesting specific gifts. Simply select an ornament from the tree, follow the gift instructions on the back, and *return your unwrapped gift with the ornament attached by December 13.*

Through the Giving Tree, we continue a beautiful Westminster tradition of sharing Christ's love with those in need.Thank you for your generosity! May you be blessed this Christmas and always.

The Benevolence Team

Church Corner

A Home Run for the German Family! ⚾



Westminster has a reason to celebrate! Longtime member **Arnell German's grandson, Matt,** who grew up right here at Westminster, was inducted into the **Northern Illinois University Baseball Hall of Fame** in October! What a wonderful achievement and a proud moment for the German family and our Westminster family, too!
Congratulations, Matt, and the entire German family!

Celebrating New Life in Christ!



What a joyful day at Westminster! On Sunday, October 4, **four individuals publicly declared their faith in Jesus Christ through baptism!** We rejoice with them as they take this meaningful step in their walk with the Lord. May God continue to guide and bless each of them as they grow in faith.
What a blessing to celebrate new life in Christ with our church family!

Can You Hear Us Now?

Exciting things are happening in our sanctuary! New sound equipment is being installed to enhance the worship experience and help everyone hear the message loud and clear. We're grateful for these improvements as we continue making Westminster a welcoming place to worship and grow in faith!



Mary Knew. We Can Too.

by Dawn Pulgine

There seems to be no shortage of uncertainty in our world today. Amid political tensions, cultural divisions, troubling headlines, and the everyday challenges of life, it's easy to feel as though the ground beneath us is constantly shifting.

We're surrounded by competing voices, each claiming to have the answers.

Politicians promise solutions.
Cultural voices insist they know what's best..

And somewhere in the noise, we find ourselves asking a question that feels more relevant than ever: Who can we really trust?

Scripture has something to say about that.

Psalm 118:8 reminds us,
"It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man."

What a powerful reminder for the times we're living in!

People change.
Opinions shift.
Leaders come and go.

But God is not like us.

His character doesn't shift with the latest headlines.

His promises aren't dependent on public opinion, and His faithfulness isn't determined by our circumstances.

Throughout Scripture, we see people learning this extraordinary truth.

- Abraham trusted God when he was called to leave everything familiar behind.
- Moses trusted Him when the obstacles seemed impossible.
- And Mary? She trusted God when His plans upended everything she thought her future would hold.

More than 2,000 years ago, Mary faced a future she couldn't have imagined. She didn't know how everything would unfold, and she certainly didn't have all the answers.

But she knew the One she could trust.

And that's the beautiful truth we're celebrating this Christmas!

On December 3,
from 8:30 a.m. to noon,
Westminster Women
will join hands with Getting Real Ministries
for a special Christmas brunch,
"Mary Knew, We Can Too."

Mary Knew. We Can Too, con't.

We're planning a wonderful morning filled with Christmas festivities, friendship, and the love of Christ!

Imagine a beautiful brunch, wonderful fellowship, a touch of Christmas sparkle, and the chance to slow down and enjoy the season together.

We'll have music from our talented Carolyn Hansen and Julianne Vickers, along with vendors offering Christmas shopping opportunities.

We're delighted to welcome Michelle Miller as our guest speaker. Michelle will explore what Mary knew about God amid uncertainty and fear, and why that same truth matters just as much for us today.

And this morning is about more than celebrating Christmas. It's also an opportunity to share Christ's love with others. Proceeds from the event will help sponsor a family in need this Christmas, enabling us to make a tangible difference in our community.

It's also a perfect opportunity to invite someone who might not otherwise walk through the doors of a church!

Maybe it's a neighbor, a coworker or a friend who has been hesitant to attend a worship service.

A festive, welcoming morning can be a wonderful first introduction to Christian fellowship and the hope we have in Jesus.

I love that Westminster Women and Getting Real Ministries are uniting with a shared purpose:

- to encourage women,
- build friendships, and
- extend the love of Christ beyond our church's walls.

Ready to join us?

Tickets are $30 per person, or you can reserve a table for eight for $200—a wonderful opportunity to gather a group of friends!

Registration is available online at gettingrealministries.com or at the Westminster church office.

Mark your calendars, invite a friend(or two!) and join us on December 3. In a season that can become so busy, let's take a morning to celebrate the greatest gift we've ever received and to remember a truth that is just as reassuring today as it was for Mary: **We may not know what tomorrow holds, but we can know and trust the God who holds tomorrow**.

Mary knew. We can too.

In Christ's Love,

Dawn

MARY KNEW WE CAN TOO

Getting to Know Our Westminster Family

Exalted Word Ministries

Exalted Word Ministries is part of Westminster's broader church community.

Meet Dr. Peggy Hicks
Pastor of
Exalted Word Ministries



For more than 29 years, *Exalted Word Ministries* has been a place of faith, encouragement, and spiritual growth.

Founded by Overseer/Pastor Dolores Hicks, the ministry has been faithfully led for the past 14 years by her daughter, **Dr. Peggy Hicks**, a licensed and ordained pastor, who previously served for many years as Assistant Pastor. Together, these two devoted women of God have formed a dynamic partnership, sharing a deep commitment to serving Christ and their community.

Exalted Word Ministries is firmly rooted in Scripture, drawing inspiration from Psalm 138:2: "For You have exalted Your word above all Your names."

This foundation guides the ministry's mission of helping individuals and families grow in faith, find hope, and discover their God-given purpose.

Exalted Word Ministry emphasizes biblical teaching, prayer, counseling, and spiritual growth, with a desire to see lives transformed, relationships restored, and individuals strengthened through faith in Jesus Christ.

Beyond the church, Dr. Peggy Hicks has devoted more than 40 years to community service and advocacy, particularly in education, social justice, and community equity. She is passionate about helping those in need, advocating for children, supporting families, and connecting people with resources that encourage personal and spiritual well-being.

Dr. Hicks holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Community Psychology, master's degrees in Human Services Counseling and Biblical Studies & Theology, and a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. She has received numerous awards recognizing her contributions to ministry and community service.

Her professional experience includes organizational and leadership development, research, policy analysis, advocacy, and community development. She has served as a consultant to educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, political campaigns, and government agencies.

Through her leadership, professional expertise, and unwavering faith, Dr. Peggy Hicks continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. Alongside Pastor Dolores, she exemplifies a life dedicated to serving God, strengthening families, and bringing hope to the community.

***Exalted Word Ministries* meets every Sunday at 12:30 p.m. in Westminster's Lounge.**

We are delighted to have Pastor Peggy, Pastor Dolores, and the Exalted Word congregation as part of our Westminster community. Their dedication to sharing God's Word and serving others is a blessing, and we look forward to continuing to grow together in faith, fellowship, and Christian love.

Getting to know our Westminster Community Ministries

West Aurora School District 129

Partnering with West Aurora School District 129

Westminster is making a difference in the lives of local students through several meaningful partnerships with West Aurora School District 129.

Our Washington Middle School Prayer Team gathers on Monday afternoons to pray for students, teachers, and staff, while volunteers at McCleery Elementary School encourage young learners through reading.



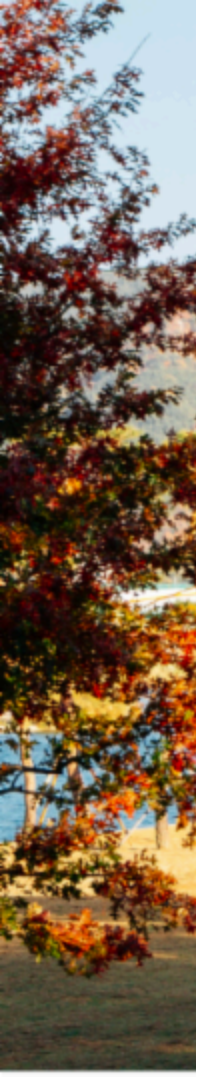
Westminster also partners with LifeWise Academy, a program that teaches children about Jesus during their school lunch periods. Students from Jefferson and Washington Middle Schools participate in the program at Westminster.

In addition, we've opened our facilities to the Blackhawk School Sports Program, which provides athletic opportunities for at-risk youth. After using our lawn for flag football, the program will now use our gym for volleyball and basketball, giving students access to sports they might not otherwise have.

Through prayer, education, faith, and recreation, Westminster is actively serving the neighborhood, building relationships and sharing Christ's love with the next generation—right here in our community!

If you would like to get involved, please contact the church office!

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth." – 1 John 3:16-18



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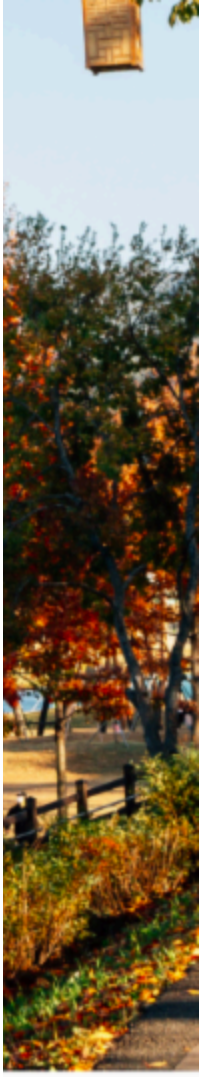
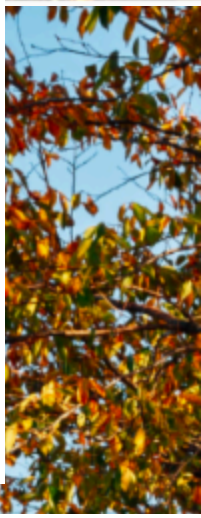
10 NORTH EDGELAWN DRIVE
AURORA, IL 60506







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