

WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SEPTEMBER
2026



WESTMINSTER NEWS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GOSPEL HOSPITALITY: BUILDING A CULTURE OF WELCOME

“Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.”

Romans 15:7

One of the things we are striving to build at Westminster is a culture of gospel hospitality. We want to become a church where people are genuinely seen, warmly welcomed, thoughtfully cared for, and made to feel that there is room for them here. We want hospitality to become so deeply embedded in who we are that it is not simply something we organize on Sunday mornings, but something people experience whenever they encounter Westminster and the people who call this church home.



Of course, hospitality includes practical things. Greeters matter. Signage matters. Coffee matters. Clean and inviting spaces matter. Following up with visitors matters. Returning phone calls and emails matters. Helping someone know where to go matters. Remembering a name matters. We want to do those things thoughtfully and with excellence because details communicate something about how much we value people.

But gospel hospitality goes much deeper than any system we can create. Gospel hospitality is first a posture of the heart shaped by the way Christ has welcomed us.

Paul writes, “Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God” (Romans 15:7).

Those few words give us both the source and the pattern of Christian hospitality. Paul does not simply tell us to welcome one another because it is polite, because visitors are more likely to return, or because welcoming churches tend to grow. He tells us to welcome one another as Christ has welcomed us.

GOSPEL HOSPITALITY: BUILDING A CULTURE OF WELCOME CONT.

Our welcome begins with His welcome.

The gospel itself is the story of God moving toward people who were far from Him. We were not insiders looking for a slightly warmer church experience. Scripture describes us as strangers, outsiders, and even enemies of God—and yet God moved toward us in Christ. Jesus welcomed sinners to His table. He touched people others avoided. He noticed people others overlooked. He stopped for people others hurried past. He crossed social, ethnic, religious, and moral boundaries to move toward people with grace and truth.

Ultimately, Jesus did far more than make us feel welcome. He gave Himself for us. Through His death and resurrection, those who were far away have been brought near. Paul describes the result beautifully: “You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19). We were strangers, and God made us family.

That is the foundation of gospel hospitality. We do not welcome people because they have earned a place among us. We welcome because we ourselves have received an extravagant welcome we did not earn. And that is why hospitality is not simply something the church does. In a very real sense, it is something the church is. The church is a community of formerly estranged people who have been welcomed home by Jesus. Every time we welcome another person, make room for them, notice them, listen to them, or care for them, we are reflecting something of the heart of the One who first welcomed us.

Unreasonable Hospitality

This is what we mean when we talk about creating a culture of “unreasonable hospitality” at Westminster. We are not simply trying to become friendlier. And we are certainly not trying to turn the church into a business where people are customers we need to impress.

We are trying to become a community shaped by the extravagant generosity of Jesus. There is something unreasonable about grace. Jesus does not give us what we deserve; He gives us what we could never deserve. He does not love us because we have something to offer Him. He loves because love is at the heart of who He is.

And when that gospel begins to shape us, we become increasingly generous with our attention, our time, our resources, our patience, and our lives.



GOSPEL HOSPITALITY:

BUILDING A CULTURE OF WELCOME CONT.

Jesus described this kind of hospitality when He said, “When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind” (Luke 14:13). His point was not simply about constructing a guest list. Jesus was describing a radically different way of seeing people. The hospitality of the Kingdom moves toward those who cannot repay us. It notices people who might otherwise remain invisible. It creates room for those who are not already part of our circle.

That is the kind of culture we want to cultivate at Westminster.

It means we learn to notice people. We notice the person standing alone after a service. We notice the couple who have been coming for three weeks but still do not seem connected. We notice the longtime member who suddenly seems quieter than usual. We notice the volunteer carrying more than they should. We notice the person who walks into the office uncertain about whether they belong. We notice because Jesus noticed people.

It means we move toward people. Hospitality is rarely passive. Jesus did not simply make Himself available; He repeatedly initiated. He called Zacchaeus down from the tree. He began a conversation with a Samaritan woman. He stopped when blind Bartimaeus cried out. He welcomed children when others wanted to send them away. Gospel hospitality takes the first step.

It means we make room for people. Sometimes that means making physical room at a table or in a conversation. Sometimes it means making room in our schedules. Sometimes it means setting aside our preferences so that someone else can feel at home. Sometimes it means allowing ourselves to be interrupted.

It Begins With Us

If gospel hospitality is going to become part of Westminster’s culture, it has to begin with us. Culture is not primarily created by slogans on walls or values printed in documents. Culture is created by what we consistently model, celebrate, and practice. People will learn what hospitality means at Westminster by watching us. They will notice whether we walk past people or stop. Whether we remember names. Whether we introduce ourselves to someone we do not recognize. Whether we gravitate toward our friends or make room for the newcomer. Whether we respond to requests graciously or treat people as inconveniences. Whether we say, “That’s not my job,” or simply ask, “How can I help?”

But there is another dimension of this that may be even more important. Gospel hospitality cannot only describe the way we treat visitors and newcomers, it must describe the way we treat one another.

GOSPEL HOSPITALITY: BUILDING A CULTURE OF WELCOME CONT.

In other words, we practice among ourselves the culture we hope will characterize the entire church. Because hospitality is ultimately not about impressing people. It is about seeing people. Jesus said, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35). There is something deeply challenging about those words. Jesus identifies Himself with the stranger—the person we do not know, the person who does not naturally fit, the person who might be easy to overlook.

Imagine what could happen if this increasingly became the culture of Westminster. Not merely a church with a few well-trained greeters, but a whole congregation of greeters. Not merely a church that says, “You are welcome here,” but a church whose actions communicate, “We see you. We are glad you are here. There is room for you.”

That is gospel hospitality and it is what unreasonable hospitality ultimately looks like: people who have been so deeply affected by the extravagant welcome of Jesus that they begin extending that welcome almost instinctively to others. We make room because He made room for us. We move toward people because He moved toward us. We welcome imperfect people because He welcomed us in all our imperfection.

“Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.”

That is more than a hospitality strategy. It is a gospel vision for the kind of church we are striving to become together.

PASTOR JEFF



NATIONAL NIGHT OUT



FIND YOUR PLACE

WESTMINSTER MINISTRY FAIR

DISCOVER • CONNECT • SERVE



WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING WORSHIP
DURING THE CHURCH PICNIC • GYM



EXPLORE

Our ministries
and what we do.



MEET

The people
behind the ministry.



DISCOVER

Ways your gifts,
interests, and talents
can make a difference.



CONNECT

Find a place to
serve and belong.



AND WHILE
YOU'RE THERE...

**ENJOY THE
CHURCH PICNIC!**

LUNCH IS PROVIDED - JUST BRING
A DESSERT TO SHARE FOR OUR

Famous Dessert Bar!



*There's a place
for **YOU** at
Westminster.*



EQUIPPED FOR THE CLIMB

Several years ago, my son Nick and I traveled to Norway for the adventure of a lifetime. One morning, after an overnight stay in the mountain village of Lom, we laced up our hiking shoes and headed out to climb a mountain.

I had all the right gear. The right shoes. The right clothes. Everything I needed for the weather and terrain. There was just one problem. My body wasn't nearly as equipped as the rest of me. At several points during that climb, I wondered whether my son was trying to kill me on the side of a Norwegian mountain. Ha! But I learned something that day: **you can have all the right gear, but if you aren't equipped for the climb, the climb will quickly reveal it.**

The same is true of our Christian lives. We don't know what terrain lies ahead or when something unexpected will require more faith, wisdom, endurance, or courage than we think we have. That is why we need to be equipped.

And that makes this an especially fitting word for an exciting new season at Westminster as we relaunch Women's Ministry. But we are not starting from scratch. For generations, faithful women at Westminster have opened their Bibles together, prayed for one another, served the church, walked through suffering, raised families, disciplined younger believers, and followed Jesus. We stand on their shoulders. Their faithfulness matters, their wisdom is needed, and their place among us is as important as ever.

A relaunch does not mean leaving the past behind. It means taking what has been faithfully handed to us and carrying it forward together. Younger women need the wisdom of women who have walked with Jesus for decades, and older women need the joy of seeing another generation embrace the faith they have faithfully lived before us. **There is room at the table for every generation.** So, for the first time, Westminster Women's Ministry has chosen a word to help shape and guide us throughout the year:

EQUIPPED

Scripture tells us that God has given us His Word so that we may be "complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:17).

Following Jesus is a lifelong journey. There will always be more of God to know, more of His Word to understand, and more opportunities to put what we believe into practice. And God has not left us unprepared for the journey. **He has given us His Word.** That is why Bible study will remain at the heart of what we do together as women at Westminster. We aren't gathering simply to accumulate more information about God. We open His Word because we want to know Him, grow in Him, and become women equipped to live faithfully wherever He places us.

EQUIPPED FOR THE CLIMB CONT.

Getting Equipped

Two weeks ago, we had a beautiful glimpse of this kind of community at our Women's Night Out. What a joy to see women of different ages and stages gathered around the same tables, sharing a meal, laughing, talking, and getting to know one another. Thank you to everyone who helped make the evening such a wonderful beginning to this new season. But it was just the beginning.

On **Monday, September 14**, we will gather around God's Word as we begin our fall study of **James**. And this year, to make Bible study more accessible, we are offering two options on Mondays:

Morning Bible Study: 9:30–11:30 a.m.

Evening Bible Study: 6:30–8:00 p.m.

James is the perfect place to begin a year centered on being *Equipped*. It is an intensely practical book that refuses to separate what we believe from how we live. James speaks to our trials and temptations, our words and relationships, the wisdom we seek, the prayers we pray, and what genuine faith looks like in everyday life.

In other words, James helps equip us for the climb.

Whether you have studied the Bible for decades or have never participated in a Bible study before, we want you there. We need the woman who has walked with Jesus for fifty years sitting beside the woman who is just beginning to discover who He is. We need your questions, experiences, wisdom, and story.

Registration is now open, and study materials will be available for pickup in the church office once you have registered. My prayer for Westminster Women this year is that we will become a community of women who are deeply rooted in the Word of God, connected to one another, and continually being equipped for whatever path God places before us. Women who **understand God's Word, live in its truth, and share it with others**, encouraging one another to faithfully follow Jesus wherever He leads.

The mountain is ahead of us.

Let's make sure we're equipped for the climb.

The Women's Ministry team and I cannot wait to see you on September 14!

Your Sister in Christ,

Dawn

A MINUTE FOR MISSIONS

Our mission minute takes us first to Ann Arbor, Michigan at Knox Presbyterian Church where a group of friends, including Jason and Heather Fader, dreamed of providing medical care and evangelizing for Jesus in a developing country in Africa. In time, with much prayer, the dream became a reality as the Faders and two other families, with help from the post-residency program of Samaritan's Purse (Franklin Graham's ministry) landed in Kenya as doctors and teachers, Jason being a surgeon and Heather a teacher. The first step was to learn French, so that step in this odyssey was France for 10 months, and then finally to their destination, in 2013, arriving in Kibuye, Burundi.

Burundi is a country of 11 million, among the neediest in Africa. The group would be stationed at Kibuye Hope Hospital under the auspices of SERGE International Missions. At this time, the hospital was having trouble keeping its door open. But the infusion of the Faders and their friends, transformed Kibuye into a center of excellence for medical, surgical and obstetric care. Kibuye Hope Hospital became a site for training hundreds of Burundian physicians, medical students and other learners at Hope Africa University as well as providing care for the poorest of the poor at the hospital.

What started as two buildings at Hope Hospital has turned into an over 300 bed hospital including intensive care, expanded surgical ward, dedicated emergency department, and pediatric wing. In addition, the families live on the compound, so buildings include family living quarters. The pictures online are tremendous, showing the great expansion. (Go to *Kibuye Hope Hospital*).

Heather Fader is currently helping teach missionary children on the compound, allowing them to remain with their families through eighth grade rather than being sent away to school or homeschooled by their parents. This valuable ministry enables missionary parents to continue their medical and other ministry responsibilities while keeping their families together. The group also offers Vacation Bible Schools, English language camps, and short-term mission trips to Burundi.

Please pray for the Faders and their children: Etta in junior college in Kenya, Abbi in high school in Kenya, and Keza still at home in Kibuye in elementary school, as they continue the work that they have begun. We have welcomed the family here in the past and it is just exciting to hear the strides being made for the Gospel as they work together to care for the "least of these."

Your Mission Committee



Come, Connect, and Find Your Place to Serve

Join us September 13 after church for our All-Church Lunch and Ministry Fair. Come together in fellowship, enjoy a meal, and discover the many ways we can use our gifts to serve one another. Enjoy lunch, learn more, and find a ministry that's right for you!

Bring a dessert, your appetite, and your pen!

We look forward to sharing this special time of fellowship with you.



Greetings to All Ladies of Westminster!



I bet some of you have been wondering about Martha Circle. It is a once-a-month fellowship, study, and mission group for all women of the church, and this is an invitation to join us. We meet in the lounge on the **fourth Tuesday of the month from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m.** Please come in the west entrance.

The room is reserved from 12:30 – 3:30 for set up before and pick up after the meeting. We begin with fellowship enjoying special treats brought by Co-Hostesses. Then we continue with a devotional, prayer, and a lesson from the book we are studying facilitated by one of us. We are studying Women of the Old Testament at this time.

We meet in Sept. Oct. Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr. and May. Our first meeting this year will be on Tuesday, September 22nd. If you have questions or if you plan to come and join us, you can call me at 708-650-8272. I will have a book for you, and we like to have a number count for the Co-Hostesses to know how much to prepare. We hope to see you!

Susan Heeg
Leader of Martha Circle

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

SEPTEMBER

