

WESTMINSTER NEWS



Westminster Presbyterian Church • 1200 Marquette Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55403-2419 • 612.332.3421 • www.eWestminster.org

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Part I Fall Preview Issue

Westminster Gears Up for New Program Year!

Plans are well underway for a very full program year at Westminster! Opportunities abound for learning, spiritual growth, and being in community with others. Read on to learn more about what is coming in the ministry areas of Children, Youth & Families, Adult Education, and Faith In Action. In the next issue of the News, you'll learn more about all the coming activities offered by Evangelism, Fellowship, Women's and Men's Ministries, and Music.

The program year kicks off with Coming Together Sunday on September 11, when we move from our summer worship schedule into the rhythm of the fall season. Worship Services are held at 8:30AM in the Chapel and at 10:30AM in the Sanctuary. There is a brief communion service every Sunday at 9:30AM in the Chapel.



CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

By Meghan K. Gage-Finn, Associate Pastor; Mary Alette Davis, Children's Ministries; Dan Commerford, Middle & High School Ministries; Marie Kruskop, Early Childhood Ministries

As we unpack the coolers from summer mission trips and sort through the leftover craft supplies from Day Camp, the staff of Children, Youth & Families is also looking ahead to the start of a great program year.

Children, Youth & Families, continues on pg. 2

ADULT EDUCATION

By Katherine S. Michael, Associate Pastor

Education for Faith and Life continues our study of the Bible as Ancient Texts for New Times with an exploration of Foundations of our Faith in the Newer Testament. The Apostle Paul's letters precede the written Gospels by 20-50 years, and so with a primary focus on Paul's life and letters, we go back to the beginning of the Christian movement as it happened. Paul's mission to the Gentile world took the Gospel beyond a localized Jewish community and set it on the path to becoming a world religion.

We begin our year with a look at the world of the Newer Testament writers and the Jewish, Greek, and Roman influences that shaped it. We fast forward to the Reformation to see how Paul's influence on Luther was the spark that ignited a whole new understanding of the doc-

Adult Education, continues on pg. 8

FAITH IN ACTION: SOCIAL JUSTICE FORUM

By Cynthia Arnold, Social Justice Ministry Team

Join us to learn more about *Building and Sustaining Justice Amid Uncertainty* during this year's Social Justice Forums on Sunday mornings at 9:15AM. The 2011-2012 series addresses local, national, and global social issues. For each series, speakers will share insights into an area of social concern over two or three Sundays, followed by a final Action Sunday when attendees will learn specific ways to affect change and to turn ideas into action!

This new format was developed during a retreat designed to enable Social Justice team members to really address key issues. After much discussion, we selected the following areas: Inequalities; Native Americans in Minnesota; Peace in the Middle East; Eco-justice; Fair Trade; and Immigration. During times

Social Justice Forum, continues on pg. 8

Children, Youth & Families, cont. from pg. 1

We continue to follow God's Word for our lives as individuals and as community as we look ahead to Sunday School, Nursery Families Fellowship time, retreats and lock-ins, and service opportunities this fall. Below you will find information about everything we have to offer for families of all ages, for parents, and ways for volunteers and leaders to be involved.

Nursery

Nursery Volunteers Needed We have a need for volunteers in the Nursery – no matter your age! Please consider signing up as a regular once-a-month volunteer in the Nursery. We have a need for volunteers both during Education Hour (adults only) or the 10:30AM service (students and adults). Church School students will find sign-up sheets in their classrooms or at the Nursery. Adults are invited to sign up on the sign-up sheet outside the Nursery or may contact Marie Kruskop, 763.535.8973 or at mkruskop@wpc-mpls.org. Thank you!

Nursery Families Fellowship Sundays in the Bushnell Room during Education Hour resumes September 18! Nursery Families Fellowship is an informal time for parents of young children to get to know one another and talk about topics of interest to parents of young children. Perhaps you are struggling with establishing a bedtime routine for your little one or with a toddler whose favorite word is "Mine!" and would like to get some suggestions from other parents on how they've handled similar challenges. Or maybe your little one has slept through the night for three nights in a row (finally!) or has used the potty for the first time and you want to share your joy with other parents who can really appreciate the significance of these events! The first Sunday of each month will focus on Positive Discipline ideas and activities, while the remaining Sundays will be a time to share the Joys and Concerns of parenting young children. Please join us!

Wednesday Night Parent-Child Time Together We offer Parent-Child Time Together to parents of Cherub singers each Wednesday night during the program year (beginning September 21) as a time for parents, Cherubs, and siblings of Cherubs to spend time together. Once Cherub Choir is over, the Cherubs are welcome to join their families for a bit of play time before heading home to bed. We offer a focus activity each week, though encourage you to follow your child's lead during this time together. Join us for a bit of uninterrupted time with your children on Wednesday evenings from just after announcements at dinner until about 7:00PM in the Nursery. *Note: Nursery care is available on Wednesdays, 6:00-8:00PM for children age 4 and younger.*

Church School

We are excited to welcome families and children back to Westminster's fall programming on September 11! Our teachers and leaders will be here to greet children 3-years-old through high school for church school at 9:15AM. Look for a letter in the coming weeks with detailed information, but the following offers an overview of our curriculum.

Our youngest class of three-year-olds uses a Bible story-based curriculum with lots of play and share time! Pre-K through third graders explore the Old and New Testament stories with the "Walk With Me" curriculum and fourth graders grow in familiarity with the church year in a lectionary based curriculum. Fifth graders study specifically the Old Testament and sixth graders, the New Testament.

As in previous years, fourth and fifth graders will help prepare elements for communion every first Sunday of the month beginning in October. We'll continue the fellowship events for this age group and their families on fifth Sundays of the month – the first will be following church October 30, Reformation Sunday.

Coffee Time, Sunday, August 28, all parents who are new or who are transitioning their children from the nursery into the church school program or children's church are invited for informal conversation with CYF staff at 9:15AM in the Bushnell Room. Childcare that morning will be available at 9:15AM in the nursery.

Events for all generations are planned throughout the year: **Nov. 6** Heights Theater Fundraiser for the Groveland Foodshelf; **Nov. 27** the Advent Workshop on Nov. 27; **March** Potluck 'o the Irish are among those scheduled at this time. Check out our website as these dates draw near for more information.

Middle School

In a new **pre-confirmation curriculum** designed by teachers and CYF staff especially for their age group, 7th and 8th graders will review biblical stories, explore central beliefs and practices of the Christian church and study creeds of the Presbyterian church. Their discussion will connect to contemporary culture and their day-to-day challenges of faith.

Mark your calendars! **Sept. 16** Welcome Dinner; **Sept. 25** FEAST Service Opportunity; **Oct. 14-16** Middle School Retreat; **Nov. 4** Middle School Lock-In.

Be sure to check the CYF webpage, which will have the latest info on additional fellowship and service events for the Middle School.

From Our Pastor

Dear Friends,

Thank you for a warm and winsome welcome to Westminster in mid-July!! (Remember 90 degrees and 80 dew point!) My wife, Susan, and I felt well received into the Westminster family and Twin Cities community.


Our cat, Merlot, and I have settled into an apartment near Loring Park, a 10-minute walk from the church. Susan is back in Washington, DC, continuing her work in the human rights office of The National Academies. She will return to the Twin Cities for a visit in mid-August. She will move permanently to Minneapolis when either we sell our DC townhouse or she gets job in this area. We are grateful to all those who are helping her network into this community.

I have unloaded books onto shelves in my office (ok, I could not get INTO the office until the boxes were unpacked!) and have just moved from a “dumb” phone to an iPhone. Thanks to help from Claudia Kapitan and other staff colleagues (“Ok, tell me AGAIN how to record the daily devotion”), I am learning WPC routines.

I am also beginning to meet the members of the congregation during personal visits, over coffee, and at meetings and conferences. Please feel free to stop me anytime to introduce yourself and to tell me something about who you are and what you do, both at Westminster and beyond. Or call or email (srobertson@wpc-mpls.org), and let’s get together. I enjoy our brief encounters on Sunday mornings, but really savor the opportunity to sit together and engage in more in-depth conversation.

I find Westminster to be a wonderful, well-organized, committed congregation and my staff colleagues to be a tip-top team. I am also very impressed with the lay leaders who guide committees, organize events, and plan the life of the congregation. While giving me time to settle in, the leaders of the Pastoral Care Council have begun to share their hopes, ideas, and dreams with me. We will work together to bring those dreams into reality.

I look forward to our faithful service and life together in Christ here at Westminster.



Rev. Steve Robertson, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care, may be reached at 612.332.3421, srobertson@wpc-mpls.org or on his cell phone, 612.655.7594.



Stephen Robertson

WESTMINSTER CLERGY & STAFF

The Rev. Dr. Timothy Hart-Andersen

Senior Pastor and Head of Staff

Kathy Fisher, Executive Assistant

Mary Hess, Director of Legacy Giving

ADULT ED. & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Rev. Katherine S. Michael, Associate Pastor

Kathy Fisher, Leadership Development Admin. Asst.

Claudia Kapitan, Adult Ed Admin. Assistant

Barbara Mauk, Librarian

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

The Rev. Meghan K. Gage-Finn, Associate Pastor

Mary Alette Davis, Dir. of Children's Ministries

Dan Commerford, Dir. of Middle & H.S. Ministries

Marie Kruskop, Coordinator of Early Childhood

Barbara Prince, Administrative Assistant

Madeleine Benishek, Summer Intern

EVANGELISM & FELLOWSHIP

The Rev. Annika Lister Stroope, Associate Pastor

Melanie McCall, Coord. of Fellowship/Spec. Events

Claudia Kapitan, Evangelism Admin. Assistant

Dan Franklin, Fellowship Admin. Assistant

Kristin Kieft, Publications Coordinator

FAITH IN ACTION

The Rev. Douglas Mitchell, Associate Pastor

Dan Franklin, Coord. of Discipleship Ministries

MUSIC AND THE ARTS

Dr. Melanie Ohnstad, Minister of Music and the Arts/Organist

Dr. Jere Lantz, Westminster Choir Director

Dr. Rodney Allen Schwartz, Director,

Westminster Gallery and Archive

Barbara Prince, Program Assistant,

Worship, Music and the Arts

Nancy Carter, Handbell Choir Director

Brad Ollmann, Early Childhood Music

PASTORAL CARE

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Robertson, Associate Pastor

Claudia Kapitan, Administrative Assistant

ADMINISTRATION

Samuel G. Cooke, Director of Administration

Sandy Wilson, Office Manager

Jennifer Zenanko, Accountant

Mary Dolan; J D. Shaffer, Accounting Assistants

Debbie Anderson; Sarah Kantrud, Receptionists

Amy Riesenberger, Wedding Coordinator

FACILITIES

Neale Holleschau, Facilities Manager

Todd Bushy, Brian Coyoc, Christopher Glenn,

Richard Wilder, Facilities Staff

EMERITA

The Rev. Elizabeth D. Heller, Assoc. Pastor Emerita

WESTMINSTER CAMP AJAWAH

Dave Moore, Director

Sarah Kantrud, Registrar

WESTMINSTER COUNSELING CENTER

612.332.7743

The Rev. Dr. Margaret McCray, LMFT,

Executive Director

The Rev. Ross A. Aalgaard, MSW, LGSW

The Rev. Dr. Leta J. Herrington, LPC

The Rev. Mary Keen, LMFT

Lori Churchill, Business Manager

WESTMINSTER TOWN HALL FORUM

Susan McKenna, Director

PARISH ASSOCIATES (Volunteer Clergy)

The Rev. Denise Dunbar-Perkins

The Rev. Margaret McCray

The Rev. Dean J. Seal

WPC Happenings • • • WPC Happenings • • • WPC Happenings

WestConnection Brunch

On *Sunday, August 21* after the 10:00AM service, join others in their 20s & 30s for brunch at the Loring Park Kitchen. We'll walk over and break bread (and scones and waffles!) together. RSVP by Aug 17 at the Facebook event page or contact Melanie McCall at church, 612.332.3421

WestConnection will also break the Ramadan fast with our Muslim brothers and sisters at an upcoming Iftar on **Monday, August 22**. The breaking of the daily fast during Ramadan is now also a chance to break down stereotypes and misconceptions. All are welcome to join us. For more information, go to the WestConnection Facebook group or contact Melanie McCall at mmccall@wpc-mpls.org.

FEAST is August 28

Volunteers needed to help serve a meal to the hungry. Sign up at the Reception Desk, or contact Dan Franklin, 612.332.3421.

Go Green Westminster!

The Next Go Green Westminster! Sunday is August 28. Plan to walk, bike, or use mass transit to come to church. *Sponsored by the Eco-Justice Committee.*

Summer Movie Camp

Back by popular demand, it's Movie Camp! A week-long class for kids learning to make movies from the Parables of Jesus. Kirsten Lind Seal and Dean J. Seal, theater artists, will run classes from 9:00AM to Noon, **Monday-Friday, Aug. 29-Sept. 2**. \$100/student. Registrations available online or contact Dean Seal, 612.823.1773 *by Thursday, August 18.*

Men's Fall Retreat

Mark your calendars for an early retreat this fall! Plan on a beautiful autumn weekend at Presbyterian Clearwater Forest near Deerwood, MN, starting Friday evening, **September 30**. (For those who want to beat the traffic there'll be a golf outing earlier that day!) The main program will be Saturday, October 1. Leaning Tree Lodge is available a second night on Saturday for anyone who wants to enjoy the 1000 acres and 3 miles of lakeshore at Clearwater. Look for more details in upcoming *Westminster News* and a sign-up table in Heller Commons beginning September 11. You can also contact Bill Kruskop for more info, bkruskop@earthlink.net.

Upcoming in Fellowship

TGOF kicks off the program year with its first gathering on **Sunday, September 18 at Noon**. Register online in September or in the Heller Commons on September 4 & 11.

Sunday/Monday Connections is celebrating its 10th anniversary and invites all Westminster women to its first dinner gathering on **Tuesday, October 4**, when our speaker will be Nancy Slaughter. Register in September in the Heller Commons.

WOW is holding its annual **Birthdays Luncheon on Wednesday, October 5**. The luncheon is preceded by a wonderful program of harp music, as well as worship in the Chapel. Women and men are invited to attend this event. Presbyterian Women Honorary Life Memberships will be awarded by Women's Ministries. Register on Sept. 18 & 25 in the Heller Commons.

Daily Phone Devotions Phone 612.332.7087 for the daily lectionary	
August 12	Ps. 133
13	Rom. 11:1-2a, 29-32
14	Matt. 15:(10-20) 21-28
15	Gen. 43:1-34
16	Gen. 44:1-34
17	Gen. 45:16-28
18	Exod. 1:8-2:10
19	Ps. 124
20	Rom. 12:1-8
21	Matt. 16:13-20
22	Exod. 1:1-7
23	Rom. 11:33-36
24	Matt. 26:6-13
25	Exod. 3:1-15
26	Ps. 105:1-6, 23-26, 45c
27	Rom. 12:9-21
28	Matt. 16:21-28
29	Exod. 4:10-31
30	Exod. 5:1-6:13
31	Exod. 7:14-25

IN MEMORY OF Kenneth Templin

died July 8, 2011

Jeanne Wilkens

died July 29, 2011

Judith Nolting

died August 2, 2011



I am the Resurrection and the Life

Like us on Facebook!

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Births & Adoptions

GRACE YOUNG

Birthdate: July 30, 2011
 Family: Sarah & Adrian Young
 Sam, Micah

Church School Teachers Needed!

Teachers are still needed for the fall for Westminster's Church School. Contact Mary Alette Davis, mdavis@wpc-mpls.org or 612.332.3421

If These Walls Could Talk...

By Douglas Mitchell, Associate Pastor

Can you hear the stories within the walls of your house of worship? Story after story is held within the buildings of downtown congregations. Gather and celebrate the history of the city of Minneapolis by touring three prominent downtown congregations. Join the Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness (DCEH) on a tour of houses of worship along Hennepin Avenue on **September 17**. The tour begins at Temple Israel at 4:30PM, moves to Hennepin Ave. United Methodist Church at 5:45PM, and ends at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral at 6:45PM. Learn about the sanctuaries, architecture, religious symbolism, and the work the congregations are doing in the city. Enjoy delicious food and beautiful music from the religious traditions of these worshipping communities.

Join others from many downtown congregations and the broader community on this tour to raise money to continue the fight to end homelessness. Hear about the innovative initiatives of downtown congregations.

Revenues from this tour support DCEH. Tickets are \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door. To purchase tickets, go to www.dceh.org. You may also purchase tickets from Doug Mitchell or Dan Franklin at Westminster, or contact Heidi Johnson McAllister, Heidi@dceh.org or 612.242.4670. See you there!

Events Commemorate the 10th Anniversary of September 11

Free Commemorative Concert at The Basilica of St. Mary, Minneapolis, Saturday, September 10, 8:00PM

A chorus of 100+ comprised of singers from many area religious and other singing groups plus orchestra will perform Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, two Stephen Paulus compositions, and Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* and other selections.

**Minnesotans Standing Together
Sunday, September 11, 2:00-4:00PM**

The Minnesota Council of Churches is encouraging congregations of faith to come together for a respectful community observance of the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. The public ceremony on Sunday, September 11, will take place on the Capitol Mall in St. Paul and feature an unprecedented coalition of religious, civic and public officials from across Minnesota.

The event will honor the ideals of freedom and democracy, lament loss, offer healing, and create hope and inspiration for greater cooperation in our diverse state and nation. Additional details available online, MinnesotansStandingTogether.com

School Supplies Collection

By Dan Franklin, Coordinator of Discipleship Ministries

Going back to school is an exciting time for children, but many families cannot afford to purchase the necessary supplies to help their children learn and succeed.

Westminster's Families in Transition program and Episcopal Community Services want these students to receive the supplies they need. Please help by contributing the new school supplies listed here for grade school through high school students. Just place the supplies in the marked boxes across from the reception desk in the Heller Commons **August 7 through September 11**.

Supplies needed include:

Backpacks, Calculators, Colored pencils, Compasses, Composition books, Crayons, Erasers, Folders, Glue, Highlighters, Markers, Spiral and three-ring notebooks, Pencil boxes, Pencil sharpeners, Pencils, Pens, Protractors, Rulers, Scissors, Staplers, Staples, Cellophane tape.

Thank you for helping these students start the school year off on the right foot! Questions? Contact Barb Person, 2persons@comcast.net, or Dan Franklin, dfranklin@wpc-mpls.org.



Camp Ajawah in All Seasons

By Meredith St. Pierre, Camp Ajawah

Another summer on Linwood Lake has wound down and campers have returned home with memories that will last a lifetime. But, Ajawah doesn't close down. Did you know you can rent Ajawah for events: reunions, retreats, bible study, or just a weekend in the woods? If you are interested in using Ajawah, contact Tim Zweg at Timothy.Zweg@allina.com. Ajawah is a great resource for all of Westminster and we encourage you to head north and enjoy it!

Ajawah also needs your support throughout the year and there are many ways you can help. Do you have interest in the outdoors, marketing, fundraising, maintenance? If so we could use you. We are looking for a few more people to help fill out our committees. If you are interested, contact Jeff Hill, jeffhill@hillwater.com. Thank you for your continued support of Camp Ajawah. Because of you over 350 girls and boys got to experience two wonderful weeks in a unique and rustic environment, as thousands have before them.

A Message from Our Generation to the Next

By Nancy and Jim Carter, Westminster members



This year marked our 45th wedding anniversary, giving us yet another opportunity to reflect on the many blessings we've received during our lives together; what those years have brought to us, and what to hope for in the years to come. We've raised two really great children and delight in our almost 6-year-old grandson. Like many couples, we have had transitions over the years—jobs, moves around all regions of the country and Canada—which expanded our horizons and offered extensive travel opportunities.

Through all of these transitions, the one constant for us was to establish a church home. In the 1980s we landed in Minneapolis and started attending Westminster in the fall of '82, joining in fall '83. We immediately became active at WPC with FEAST, the kids in Youth Fellowship (we as youth sponsors), Nancy in choir and directing the Handbell program, Jim with Deacons and ushering, and whatever other things we might find as volunteers.

We skipped town again in the 90s with career moves to Toronto, Atlanta, and Allentown, Penn., returning in 2001. Westminster again became a focal point for us. We were welcomed—this time as empty nesters. Westminster was, and is, our family away from home.

We've been very active in Westminster's programs with Global and Local mission outreach, ushering, trustees, various special campaigns, and of course the music programming. So, when the Legacy program began, we felt it a natural next step to discern how we could become part of that as well. Talking with Mary Hess, Westminster's Director of Legacy Giving, we learned how easy the process can be using an IRA beneficiary designation. And, we are now part of the more than 100 people who have made Legacy Gifts to Westminster.

We find great joy in knowing our values will endure beyond our lifetime. One of our favorite Bible verses is from Galatians 6:9 (NRSV), "Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time if we do not give up." As Nancy has said many times, "Westminster demonstrates caring and acceptance of all who walk through these doors; this combination of heritage and social outreach is what we want to see continue.

Through our Legacy Gifts, we are planting seeds for the future."

We are so mindful of Westminster's open doors and the blessings which have been bestowed on us.

It is very important to us that those doors remain open for the future as well. You see, we are—you are—the messages from our generation to the next. Thanks be to God!



Nancy & Jim Carter

To learn more about creating a Legacy Gift, contact Mary Hess, Director of Legacy Giving, 612.332.3421 or mhess@wpcmpls.org or visit ewestminster.org/Legacy. Please let Mary know if you have already made arrangements for a gift.

Youth and Adults...Ringers Needed!

By Nancy Carter, Director, Westminster Handbell Choirs

Four octaves of bells were refurbished this summer. They are ready to be played along with a fifth octave of bells and five octaves of choir chimes. We only need you in order to make the music happen!!!

It is time to begin planning the handbell program year (September 2011 - May 2012).

The handbells rang 21 times last season for services and activities at Westminster with response being very affirming of their offerings of music.

The Westminster Handbell choir meets on Tuesday evenings from 5:50—7:00PM and plays in services regularly. Rehearsals begin Tuesday, September 6. Music reading skills are required.

Registration for the Youth Handbell Choir will be on Wednesday, September 14. The choir is open to youth 6th grade and up. Rehearsals begin on Wednesday, September 21 in Room 206 from 6:00—6:45PM. Music reading skills are helpful but not required.

Playing in a handbell choir is a unique musical experience since each ringer is vital to play the instrument. Regular attendance is important...and we have fun learning to make more than a "joyful noise" with the bells!

Contact Nancy Carter, ndscart@aol.com or 952.226.2105 for more information about how you can be a part of the handbell program at Westminster.

The Westminster Gallery: Looking Ahead

By Rodney Allen Schwartz, Director, The Westminster Gallery and Archive

The Westminster Gallery enters its ninth year with the opening of the exhibition: *I Am*. The exhibition theme evolves from some of the many statements recorded in scripture where Jesus describes himself with a phrase beginning with "I am." These proclamations include: I am the alpha and the omega, I am the gate for the sheep, I am the light of the world, I am the resurrection and the life, and many more identifiers. Art work from the Westminster Collection and a variety of other collectors and artists will give us visual clues for contemplating these characteristics of the divine. This exhibition opens on Sunday, September 18, and closes on Sunday, November 20.

The Advent and Christmas exhibition looks ahead to Epiphany and the journey of the wise men to Bethlehem. Westminster member Susan McKinley built a diverse collection of the wise men which consists of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic representations made from many varying materials. She gifted this collection to Westminster in 2006, and this exhibition will be the debut for many of these interesting pieces.

The *Palestinian Arts Festival* will bring performers and art from Bethlehem to Minneapolis in a celebration of the Palestinian culture in May of 2012.

Next fall, the Westminster Gallery will present an exhibition titled *God Loves Everyone*. The focus of the exhibition is to demonstrate the diversity of God's creation and the inclusiveness of God's love. This exploration of love is scheduled to coincide with the political season when much debate and political posturing will center on the proposed constitutional amendment banning gay and lesbian marriage.

Spring 2013 brings the *Jewish Women Prayer Circle* back to the Westminster Gallery with work that will result from their year-long study of creation. Their insight will provide us with new ways to think about the creation of and nature of the universe.



An illustration for I am the resurrection and the life. A stone literally rolled away revealing an open cave; taken on the road from Caesarea to Megiddo.

Photograph, by Steven Warner, January 2011

For further information or to arrange a tour of the current exhibitions, the building, or the archive contact Rodney Allen Schwartz, rschwartz@wpc-mpls.org or 612.332.3421.

Children, Youth & Families, cont. from pg. 2

High School

On **September 11**, the High School youth group will resume Sunday morning Education Hour in the Youth Lounge. During Education Hour this fall, we will discuss how our faith impacts our view of what is going on in the world around us. Students will explore and discuss how their faith interacts not only with current events, but also how they feel God fits in their daily life.

Another important program resuming this fall is **House Groups!** House Groups provide an opportunity for fellowship and deeper connections during small group discussions. Be sure to come to Education Hour on September 11 to learn more about House Groups and how you can be plugged in! If you are interested in being a leader or participant in Education Hour or House Groups, contact Dan Commerford, dcommerford@wpc-mpls.org.

Here are some other important dates for the fall:
Sept. 10 Welcome Dinner; **Oct. 7** High School Lock-In;
Oct. 28-30 High School Retreat.

Be sure to keep checking the CYF webpage for the latest info on upcoming events and service opportunities!

Confirmation

The 2010-2011 class of Confirmation is nearing completion as students and mentors work on last details for students' Statements of Faith. Confirmation Sunday is **September 25** when the current class will be received into membership by the congregation during the 10:30AM service. Please continue to pray for students, mentors, and parents as students complete this portion of their journey of faith.

There will be an orientation meeting for Confirmation 2011-2012 on Wednesday, **October 5** in the Great Hall from 6:45 – 8:00PM. Regularly scheduled Wednesday classes begin the following week from 6:45 – 8:00PM.

Please don't hesitate to contact Associate Pastor Meghan K. Gage-Finn, mgage-finn@wpc-mpls.org or 612.332.3421 if you have questions about Children, Youth & Families programming or would like to serve in any of the CYF ministries.

Counselor's Corner, The Benefit of Sin

by Ross A. Aalgaard, MSW, LGSW, Westminster Counseling Center

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www.westminstercounseling.org

I grew up in a revivalist tradition where “hell fire and brimstone” sermons and altar calls were commonplace. Tent meetings, campfires, and week-long evangelistic crusades were definitely normal in my cultural background. I still remember the revival songs like “There’s Power in the Blood” and “Revive Us Again.” I have to admit, there are times I miss the robust congregational singing and the emotion of the choir and soloists that preceded the clarion calls to “Repent and be saved!”

The way I worship and what I believe has changed over the years. I no longer think much of life in the hereafter or end times. I no longer am concerned in being saved from damnation or reserving a mansion in heaven for my sweet-by-and-by. Rather, I view my faith journey as being a daily path, and salvation as living fully at peace within God’s ever-present spirit. This has reduced my contemplation on and conversation about sin. In my spiritual journey, sin just doesn’t seem as pertinent as it once was.

Still, sin is not something I have completely eliminated from my thoughts or beliefs. In fact, I come across evidence of sin every day as I live my life and do my work. However, rather than trying to find ways to avoid sin, or view it as the antithesis of salvation, I instead understand sin as a helpful piece to experiencing wellness and wholeness. I think this perspective has been influenced through my reading Richard Rohr’s *Falling Upward: A Spirituality*

for the *Two Halves of Life* (Jossey-Bass, 2011).

Rohr says Jesus is never upset with sinners (check it out!); he is only upset with people who do not think they are sinners! Jesus was fully at home with this tragic sense of life. He lived and rose inside it.

Rohr further explains: Sin and salvation are correlative terms. Salvation is not sin perfectly avoided, as the ego would prefer; but in fact, salvation is sin turned on its head and used in our favor. That is how transformative divine love is. If this is not the pattern, what hope is there for 99.9 percent of the world? We eventually discover that the same passion which leads us away from God can also lead us back to God and to our true selves (p.59-60).

I have come to understand sin as a gift; not something to lament over, but the device to use in our favor to “lead us back to God and to our true selves.” Instead of viewing oneself as blemished due to sin, use that which is viewed as a shameful offense as a positive opportunity to motivate you toward better emotional and spiritual health. If you can’t do it on your own, come visit one of the pastoral counselors at Westminster Counseling Center and we’ll do what we can to help you along the road to transforming your mind and spirit. Peace be with you!



Ross A. Aalgaard

Social Justice Forum, cont. from pg. 1

such as this, we must remember to:

- Be attentive to social justice, lest it erode away quickly. This can happen through neglect, greed, personal ambition, or political advantage. Social justice is very easy to lose, but much more difficult to maintain.
- Not become distracted by false arguments, such as “we cannot afford it.” If we can’t afford to care for the weakest members of our own population, then what can we afford?
- Speak up for social justice. There are far too few articulate advocates for social justice. We selected speakers who have the courage to give testimony, to speak up at a meeting, to challenge the status quo.
- Get involved!

On **September 11, Coming Together Sunday**, Patrick Atkinson, founder and international executive director of The GOD’S CHILD Project and the Institute for Trafficked, Exploited, & Missing Persons, offers insights on *Creating Hope and Futures for Victims of War, Violence and Human Trafficking: A Personal Journey*.



Patrick Atkinson

Travel with Atkinson as he shares his journey of combating inequalities that keep people in poverty. His personal story of courage and desire for others’ freedom tracks Atkinson’s travels around the world. He will provide insights into ways each of us can transform the lives of people living in poverty.

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trines of the church and produced the theological and intellectual legacy that is part of who we are as Presbyterians.

We will explore Paul as a passionate, controversial figure whose commitment to the Gospel consumed his life, made him enemies, and eventually got him killed. As we look at Paul’s letters, Luke’s account of Paul’s life in Acts, and other letters in the New Testament, we will examine how this material has shaped our own thinking and presumptions, and even how it has caused splits in the church from the very beginning.

Movies of the Month are back, with a focus on Paul’s themes of redemption, transformation, forgiveness, and hope.

This year’s adult education classes invite us into the energy and urgency of the 1st Century church, and challenge us to claim both of those qualities for our own time.