

Speaking of Loss

**"Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted"
(Matthew 5:4)**

This fall I have been really enjoying Sara Bareilles' latest album, Good Grief. Across fourteen songs, Bareilles explores a number of different forms of grief, from the deaths of loved ones, to lost or deferred dreams, to the complicated emotions of feeling deeply misunderstood, even while navigating the kinds of losses that should bind us together in shared humanity. I highly recommend taking a listen. The opening song, "Home," includes these lines I particularly love:

"I never asked hard questions,
Thought they'd cause more pain.
I hadn't yet learned life's holiest lesson:
That what is broken cannot heal
Until it's known and loved by name."

Bareilles goes on to sing about how sharing stories and naming our losses in community can be transformative. It reminds me of Fred Rogers, who argued for the value of talking about hard things with children, saying, "Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable."

As Christians, our faith can be a balm for grief and a source of hope and strength. But sometimes Christianity is used to rush past loss. We may worry that naming how deep or frightening our grief is will make us seem less trusting of God. In truth, I find that some of the most faithful conversations with God are the ones where we can be fully ourselves, naming the weight of our disappointment, and even our distrust or anger with God at the way things are going. What is mentionable can be more manageable. So this month, we're going to talk more about grief together.

Held by the love of God, we are called to come alongside one another with gentleness and attention, in the valley of the shadow of death and in the bright light of Easter morning. As we share our stories, pray for one another, and check in over time, we weave a web of care and hope that can lift us through the harder days.



This year, we have experienced the deaths of many beloved members of this community, not to mention the grief we each carry across time; the strange little moments that shoot us right back to the depths of longing for someone (or something) that we have lost. Beginning with All Saints Sunday on November 1 and continuing on through the Service of Remembrance on November 15, three Sunday services will explore grief, lament, and finding hope in God alongside our pain.

I promise it won't be all about sadness. Grief, whether over a death or any other loss, is rooted in love. We'll celebrate the love that shapes and holds us, and look at how faith can help us find meaning, peace, and even joy alongside our grief. I hope you'll join us as we honor those tender parts of ourselves and our stories together.

Peace,
Rev. Hannah Lundberg

Engaging Our Neighbors



Thanksgiving Basket Food Drive

Westminster is once again partnering with Pattengill Elementary School to help provide Thanksgiving meals for families in need. We are collecting donations to support 7 families this year!

You can sign up to provide needed items by visiting our website. Or you may choose to make a cash donation online or by mailing a check to Westminster.

Pattengill has also requested donations of paper grocery bags with handles for the collection and distribution of these Thanksgiving meals.

All donations may be dropped off in the bins located next to the church library. Please have all donations to the church by Monday, November 9.

Thank you so much for considering this opportunity to bless these families!



Football Parking

Two football Saturdays left for this season! Join us on November 7 and 21 for the Michigan State and UCLA games. We'll start parking cars by 7am, but feel free to stop by any time before kickoff. Bring a comfortable chair for outdoor seating and a dish to pass (if you are able). All are welcome!



Service of Remembrance

Sunday, November 15, at 5pm. This service will be a peaceful and meditative time to remember those we loved and still love. Those from the wider community and those from all faith traditions are welcome. You are invited to bring a small framed photo of your loved one and light a candle in their memory.

Our Life Together



Thanksgiving Eve Service and Bread Exchange

It's time for our annual Thanksgiving Eve Bread Exchange event. Our celebration will be on Wednesday, November 25th, 7:00pm, at Westminster. Everyone is invited to participate by bringing a loaf of bread, homemade or from a bakery, to exchange during the service.

Please attach a note if your bread contains nuts or is gluten-free. If you would like to attach a personal Thanksgiving note on the loaf, please feel free to do so. During the Thanksgiving service, each individual or family will be invited to come up and take a loaf of bread from the baskets for their Thanksgiving table. All the bread that is left over will be given to FedUp Ministries and at-home members. Additionally, a special offering will be collected to support the work FedUp Ministries does to support our neighbors in need with dignity and love.

If you are unable to attend on Thanksgiving Eve and would like a loaf of bread, please contact your Deacon or Suzanne Lange. We look forward to welcoming all of you to Thanksgiving Eve!







Chili and Cookies Cook-Off: Results!

More than 40 Westminster friends gathered on Friday, October 23rd for WPC's first annual Chili and Cookie Cook-Off! We had 9 chili entries and over a dozen cookie entries. After the votes were tallied, the winning chili was "Moroccan Chili" by the Polikoff family! The favorite cookie was "Oatmeal, Cherry, Chocolate-chip, Pecan Cookies" by Suzanne Lange! Several participants arrived in costume to add to our fun. We're already looking forward to our next competition in October of 2027.



Deck the Halls Together!

Come join the choir and celebrate the start of Advent by decorating our church for the holiday season.

Following worship on Sunday, November 29, the choir invites everyone to stay for a light sandwich lunch. Then we'll roll up our sleeves and deck the halls—hanging garlands, wreaths, and ribbons, decorating trees, and setting up our brand-new outdoor nativity. If you enjoy crafts, there's also an opportunity to make an ornament honoring past members for our new Memorial Tree or to take home.

Around 2:30, we'll gather in the sanctuary to light the tree and sing a few carols together.

Everyone is welcome—whether you want to climb a ladder, sit and craft, or simply keep company while the work gets done!

Lunch is provided; please let us know your sandwich preference when you sign up on the bulletin board.



Looking Ahead: Deacon Christmas Baskets

This year, we will once again have the opportunity to serve families in need through our Deacon Christmas Basket program. When family information becomes available from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, a signup form with requested gifts will be made available to the congregation. More info coming soon!



This Month's Preaching Schedule:

November 1: Rev. Hannah Lundberg (communion)

November 8: Rev. Hannah Lundberg

November 15: Rev. Hannah Lundberg

November 22: Nate Veldhoff

November 29: Rev. Hannah Lundberg

Learn and Grow Together

Reading Through the Bible Group meets Sundays at 9:30am in Room 34 and via Zoom. Contact Marcia Anderson (hilden.anderson@gmail.com; 734-757-4305) for more information.

Sunday Morning Adult Ed meets in the fellowship hall at 9:30am.

Children and Youth Faith Formation meets on the second and fourth Sundays of each month at 9:30am. Contact Cathy Daniels (catld1121@gmail.com) for more info.

Monday Conversations are weekly at 2:30pm online: an opportunity to discuss Sunday's sermon in a small group. The Zoom invitation is in the Friday *Good Things* and Sunday podcast emails.

Mary Martha Group meets the first and third Mondays at 7pm via Zoom. Contact Margaret Klammer (mklammer@comcast.net) for more information.

Matthew 25 Study Group meets at 7pm on the second and fourth Mondays of each month. For meeting information, please contact Elizabeth Tidd (lizbeth0405@yahoo.com) or Carol Hufnagel (carol.hufnagel@tetratech.com).

Thursday Book Club meets weekly at 1pm at Westminster and over Zoom. Contact Linda Harnisch for more information (rlharnisch@gmail.com).

We thank you for continuing to fulfill your pledges and financial commitments (online or by mailing checks) in support of the mission and ministry of Westminster Presbyterian Church.