

Voice of Westminster



August 2025

Family Reunions

I enjoy family reunions. We were able to celebrate a reunion time with Jill's side of the family down in the Ozarks during our recent vacation, and look forward to meeting with my side of the family on Saturday, August 9, 2025 in Des Moines. Even though we never have enough time to get totally caught up with everyone, we certainly enjoy the time we have with several.

I have become keenly aware in recent times that not every family has such gathering due to conflict or turmoil in relationships, or at least part of the family does not show up for these connection times. As we celebrate communion on the first Sunday of each month part of the meaning of the sacrament is that we come to the table with "Hope" believing that this is simply a foretaste of the biggest reunion to ever take place: the reunion of all who have trusted Christ's sacrifice on the cross for them.

Often, people have said to me after a time of being together; "I am not going to say goodbye, because I know I will be seeing you again either in this life, or the life beyond." What comfort that brings!

Pastor Roger



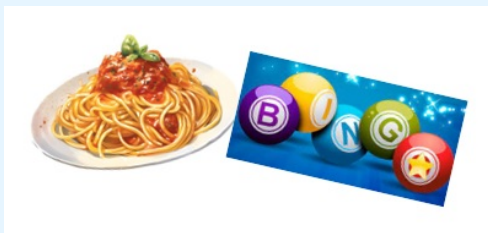
LOAVES & FISHES UPDATE

As L & F enters our second month of operation in WPC, I am happy to report that the transition has gone fairly smoothly. Our numbers are back up to 135 as word has gotten around that we are open again. We have established our basic operation methodology and there are several benefits to the building for our clientele such as more restrooms and much more space. There is a bit more set up work for the volunteers as we section off the FLC on Tuesdays. We have acquired a new cooler via a grant since we moved in. Unfortunately we have found that some foods that we used to get from HACAP are not available this summer, specifically bread and sweets and some produce. These food items have been siphoned off for the governor's food boxes for school children. We have been able to get some bread via a partnership with NFI which, while we are thankful for the resource, is also much more work for our already stretched thin volunteers. The governor's food box "program" is also dependent on the same community volunteers to pack and distribute their boxes which is yet another strain on the non-profits like L & F. Hopefully when school resumes, so will the normal flow of food stuffs. I want to encourage the members of WPC to consider volunteering to see your mission up close. Dear Val Neubauer is stepping up into a leadership role in L & F and we are so excited have her, her energy, and her creative spirit! While I often describe the hardships many of our clientele bear, you should know that nearly all of our clients are grateful, humble, friendly, kind and gracious. - Jan Kosowski

MICHIGAN PILGRIMAGE

The first weekend in May Pastor Roger attended the Michigan Pilgrimage in Sturgis, Michigan. He invited anyone who was interested to attend with him. Gale Smetana, her sister-in-law, Charlotte, Pastor Theo and Troy took an advantage of the offer and found it to be an amazing experience. At the end of this Newsletter you will find the testimonies of Gale and Pastor Theo from attending this event.

Pastor Roger invites you to join him for the Fall Michigan Pilgrimage from October 9-12, 2025 at the Amigo Centre in Sturgis, Michigan. Contact him for more information.



SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP SUPPER

Twenty fun-loving friends gathered together for Sunday Supper Fellowship on July 27. Everyone donned colorful spaghetti bibs and filled their plates with spaghetti from Zio Johno's. After eating their fill, they settled down to some serious Bingo playing. Val, who called out the numbers, used her teaching skills to control the rowdy members in the group. A variety of white elephant gifts went to the winners. The evening ended with a tour of the new Loaves and Fishes food pantry. All are welcome every 4th Sunday of the month to attend this wonderful event.



SHOW YOU CARE, SEND A CARD Westminster has started a new program to help stay in touch with the homebound or someone who is ill or just anybody! Val Neubauer introduced “Show You Care, Send a Card” at the July 13 Sunday service. The cards are available in the Large Parlor. All you need to do is write a kind message. Office Manager, Lisa Freeman, will address the envelopes. Just put the person’s name on the front of the envelopes. There is also a copy of the prayer list and a birthday list for the current month. Leave your card in the basket provided. Stop by the church anytime during office hours to fill out a card if you aren't able to on a Sunday.



FAREWELL TO THE FEERERS

Westminster gave Pam and Warren Feerer a fine sendoff at a reception in the Large Parlor on Sunday, July 13 after the worship service. Pam and Warren are moving to Geneva, IL full time to be closer to family. They will be greatly missed.

Warren sent this message after the reception: "Thanks to all at Westminster this morning for the sincere well wishes. We were humbled and honored," Warren and Pam. – Photos from Jan Perkins, Gale Smetana



Calendar: Special Events

Aug 3 - Communion Sunday/Pie in the Parlor

Aug 4 - Deacons 5pm

Aug 7 - First Lutheran Senior Lunch 11:30 am

Aug 11 - Property Meeting 1pm

Aug 11 - Mission Meets 6:30pm

Aug 14 - Foundation Meeting 5pm

Aug 18 - Finance Meets 4:30pm

Aug 19 - Session Meets 6:30pm

Aug 24 - Sunday Supper Fellowship 5pm

Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry will be every Tuesday from 2:30 - 5 p.m. at Westminster.

Access the updated WPC calendar at
crwpc.org/calendar



This Month's Birthdays

Lee Anne Hataway	August 3
Connie Hayes	August 7
Flora Kitzman	August 13
Don Hoeppner	August 19
David Cosgrove	August 20
Suzanne Huebsch	August 22
Larry Cooper	August 24
Marjorie Bjornsen	August 24
Jim Patterson	August 25
Jan Perkins	August 27
Bob Warner	August 30

Calendar: Regular Events

Sundays

Worship 10am - Sanctuary
Beacon of Light 11:30am - Chapel
EGPC-1:30pm - Old Dining
NA (Face Anything/Fear Nothing) 5pm - Atrium

Mondays

Bridge 11 a.m.-4pm - FLC
Marion Gospel Hall Youth Group 7pm - Atrium

Tuesdays

L&F Pantry 2:30 - 5pm - Downstairs
Beacon of Light (100 in 24) 6pm

Wednesdays

Men's Breakfast 7:30 a.m. - Atrium
Prayer Shawl Ministry-1 & 3 Wednesdays
9:30 a.m. - Small Parlor

Thursdays

First Lutheran Bible Study 9:30am every Thur.
thru Sept. 11, 2025
NA (Face Anything/Fear Nothing) 5pm - Atrium

Fridays

Office Closed

Saturdays

Office Closed
EGPC 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Old Dining
NA (Steps in the Right Direction) 11am - Atrium
NA (Sister & Brothers of Serenity) 5:30pm Atrium



This Month's Anniversaries

Tom & Barb Read	August 16
Bob & Kathy Moore	August 21
Ed & Jan Kosowski	August 23

ATTENTION - If your birthday or anniversary does not appear in the specific month please contact the office so we can get your information updated.

Liturgist Schedule for August

August 3 - David Basler
August 10 - Jan Kosowski
August 17 - Ben Fashimpaur
August 24 - Ann Buckheister
August 31 - Jan Walton

Greeters

1st Sunday - Jim Fine
2nd Sunday - Terry Perkins
3rd Sunday - Brian Read
4th & 5th Sunday - Kupka's or Neubauers

**Greeters please be in foyer between 9:30
- 9:45 a.m.**

GALE SMETANA'S TESTIMONIAL

“Tornadoes tear through parts of the United States destroying lives and dreams. People are rounded up in the United States and imprisoned in other countries without due process. Bombs drop on residential neighborhoods in the Ukraine. “The headlines go on and on. Having spent 20-plus years in the TV news business, I am no stranger to horrifying headlines. But there is no question that these are extraordinarily challenging times. A friend asked me a while back, “Why do you care? Does this really affect you? For me, the answer is yes, if we are Christians, suffering and cruelty anywhere in the world matters.

That led me to accept Pastor Roger’s invitation to attend the Michigan Pilgrimage. For some, a pilgrimage is life-changing. For me, it was **life-affirming**. The pilgrimage is designed in a way that makes it easy to communicate with others who are strengthening their faith in Christ. Group work, music and frankly too much food are all a part of it.

The pilgrimage also reaffirmed activities I have taken on since retiring, including helping immigrants who made it to Cedar Rapids before refugee programs were shut down. They need and want to learn English and they need help applying for jobs. Amazingly, they are willing to work hard and take on work that you and I wouldn’t want to do. It still hurts to see news stories showing our inhumanity to those who are different from us, however a renewal of faith helps me to move in the directions I believe Christ would command.

But the pilgrimage encouraged me to seek out other ways to help others in a way Christ might. This is an ongoing process.

Like many of you, I grew up in the Presbyterian Church, although I later joined the Episcopal Church. But regardless of your faith background, the Michigan Pilgrimage provided me the opportunity to renew my faith and focus more on what God might want in my daily life.

PASTOR THEO'S TESTIMONIAL

This pilgrimage started on Friday May 2 to Sunday May 4. The main topic was about “building Christian Character”, with reference Biblical verses in 2Peter 1: 5-7.

Everyday we had different teachers and preachers who shared the word of God, and we had time to discuss different topics in small groups and pray together for one another.

I learned from different people how we can live our life in grace, in the response to God’s gracious presence, and how to recognize our talents as gifts to be shared with the world.

I was touched by people who shared their testimonies, how they had spent many years astray from God, but when they were invited to attend this pilgrimage they returned to God and their lives changed. I saw people with passion and love to serve God without boundaries of denominations or religious differences. They serve God and His people in need as the way of choosing to be with Jesus, holding on faith and the reality of grace in the world where darkness blinds us of this grace. The way they serve God reflect to the call to bring the world to Christ. Through the teachings and testimonies from different people, I learned that I am called to transform the environment by transforming myself first, and applying the qualities of Christian leadership and implementing Christian values in everything I do.

I would recommend all Christian leaders, Christians to attend this pilgrimage to better understand their responsibilities as leaders and believers how to fulfill the great commission of continuing the mission begun by Christ to reveal Christ to the broken world. At this pilgrimage I learned the difference between Christian study as the process of learning to love, to know and to respond to God’s truth as the meaning of life itself versus the study of Christianity. I learned how to overcome the obstacles of Christian study that are attitude, attachments or addictions. To overcome these we need to commit our time, and make a plan to form our mind, transform our heart and conform our lives to live the Christian ideal in order to grow our relationship with God and our discipleship with Christ, know the truth and be able to share that truth.

This journey changed my mindset and thoughts, I feel I am a new leader, new father, and a new husband. I came feeling I am a new community member and new called to serve God and His people in need. I increased my faith, knowing that I cannot fix anything but only God can; at His right time and to right people. The only thing I am able to do is to tell Him, “I am here Lord! I am ready to serve! Use me! Let me be your hands!” The pilgrimage is a great place to make connection with people. It is a family. The last day was full of tears of joy! People didn’t want to leave each other. Until now I feel happy when I see emails from MP showing there are people who are praying for others. Even when we were there, I was happy to know there were people who were praying for us.

I thank my wife and children and the entire congregation of EGPC for letting me go and kept me in their prayers! I recognize and appreciate their messages of encouragement and love. I thank Pastor Roger and the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Cedar Rapids for inviting me to this MP #73 and sponsoring me. May God bless you all!



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