

Voice of Westminster



September 2026

Later this fall, I plan to attend a workshop on "Cultivating Thriving Churches." The speaker, Rev. Josh Erickson, is co-founder in 2025 of the PCUSA Church Growth Network (PCGN).

In preparation for the workshop, I decided to do some research on this new Network. I want to share what I discovered. I do so this month and next, and then in November I plan to report on my experience at the workshop itself.

The goals of the PCGN remind me of the "missional church movement" that began in the late 1990s. The congregation I was serving in the early 2000s benefited greatly from its leadership and literature. My hope is that PCGN can do the same for Westminster.

Rev. Erickson wrote an article earlier this year in which he *"reframes growth as faithful, sustainable mission rooted in vitality, not gimmicks."* He lays out four types of vitality to promote growth and be a dynamic local church.

1. Missional Vitality: Demonstrates a strong outward focus that promotes the sharing of the Gospel and the welcoming of new people into a local church.

2. Ecclesial Vitality: Embodies the marks of a faithful church devoted to the ministry of Word and Sacrament, fellowship, care for one another and administration.

3. Adaptable Vitality: Cultivates the ability to approach tasks in new ways or adapt to different situations to achieve different results.

4. Experiential Vitality: Demonstrates the ability to deliver a personally impactful experience for individuals.

In addition to this emphasis on vitality, the PCGN offers a radical plan for fostering growth in size. More about that next month!

Pastor Randy



AUGUST SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Session met on August 18 and had a relatively light agenda, which is typical in summertime. Items of special interest are included below.

Responses were shared after reading chapter 4 in *The Gift of Small*. Attention was directed to the author's story of the way his small congregation stepped up. Church members planned worship services during the Christmas season when he was at the hospital with his six months old daughter. A similar story of pastoral absence and people stepping up was shared about Westminster. Session felt that the author's assessment of his congregation is also true of ours: "*Their commitment to our community became a reflection of our faith*" (p. 91)."

Approval was given to host a Presbytery meeting in November of 2027. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday November 18 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. The lunch will be off-site. Participants will be encouraged to gather at NewBo Market before the meeting.

Finance informed Session that the Foundation draw during 2026 is not at sustainable levels and cannot be considered a long-term fix for the operating budget. Session members voiced their agreement. The congregation's upcoming mission study will need to address this.

The Session/Deacon fall picnic is set for 6:00 p.m. September 14 at the shelter in Hiawatha Park. Session members signed up to contribute a dish.

Personnel's recommendation to hire Shane Dochterman for the part-time maintenance position was approved. After Session conducted a performance review of Pastor Randy, his interim ministry contract, updated by Personnel, was approved for 2027. It now goes to Presbytery's Committee on Ministry and Vitality (COMV) for their concurrence.

Pastor Randy was given permission to attend the workshop "Cultivating Thriving Churches" in Milan, IL on October 17. He was also granted two weeks of vacation: October 21-27 and December 25-31.

Dubuque Seminary informed Pastor Randy that they have scheduled an online course, *Introduction to the New Testament*, for October-December. This is one of eight courses required by Presbytery for becoming a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE). Pastor Randy reported that Brian Read is registering for the course.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2026

DEEP ROOTS, NEW GROWTH

A Workshop on Cultivating Thriving Churches

- Date: Saturday, October 17 from 10am - 3pm
- Location: First Presbyterian Church, Milan, IL
1620 1st St. W, Milan, IL 61264
- Cost: Suggested donation up to \$20 for lunch



Keynote Speaker: Rev. Josh Erickson

Leader & Co-Founder of the PCUSA Church Growth Network, which seeks to foster growth in size, vitality, and mission impact for local congregations and new faith communities so that more people experience the life-changing love of Christ.

Jointly organized and hosted by Great Rivers Presbytery and the Presbytery of East Iowa, this event will be an opportunity to share resources and ideas related to fostering church growth. In addition to a presentation and workshop from our keynote speaker, local leaders will offer additional workshops on congregational vitality.



Registration Link: <https://forms.gle/zWeK9r4TunJZkK3L9>

DEEP ROOTS, NEW GROWTH WORKSHOP

Saturday, October 17th from 10am-3pm:

Deep Roots, New Growth - a workshop on cultivating thriving churches. Similar to the event in Amana last spring, this will be an opportunity to share resources and ideas for fostering church growth and vitality. In addition to a presentation and workshop from our keynote speaker, local leaders will offer additional workshops on congregational vitality. Click here for registration and more information:

<https://forms.gle/zWeK9r4TunJZkK3L9>

Deadlines: Registration ends October 10th

Schedule:

- 9:45am: Informal Gathering
- 10:00am: Worship
- 10:30am: Presentation from Our Keynote Speaker
- 11:45am: Lunch and Tabletop Conversations
- 1:00pm: Workshops
- 2:00pm: Workshops

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Josh Erickson

Rev. Josh Erickson is a leader and co-founder of the PCUSA Church Growth Network, which seeks to foster growth in size, vitality, and mission impact for local congregations and new faith communities so that more people experience the life-changing love of Christ. He has served in full-time ministry for 17 years, and currently as the senior pastor of Park Ridge Presbyterian Church (Park Ridge, IL).

NEW WESTMINSTER STAFF MEMBER!

Westminster hired a new part-time maintenance person in August. His name is Shane and he is a Kennedy High School graduate. Shane worked for Top Tier Gutters from 2023-2026. Most recently he has been a self-employed handyman with an impressive background. He begins work on September 1. Pictured is Shane with his Son Nasyas. Welcome him to our staff if you see him!



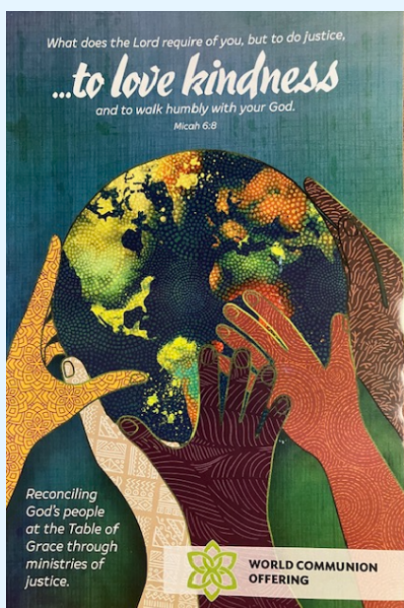
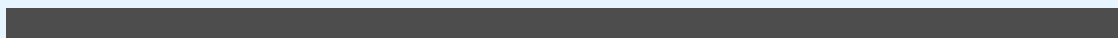


MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

September's Sunday Fellowship will be an outing instead of a supper at the church. We are going miniature golfing! On Sunday, September 13th you are invited to practice your skills or just have some plain old fun at Twin Pines miniature golf course. We will meet at noon for a light lunch from their snack bar

followed by T-time at the course.

There is a \$12.00 cost to cover your hotdog, chips, drink and game. You will pay the fee at Twin Pines when you arrive. Just tell them you are with Westminster. If you do plan to go please sign up at the designated table in the parlor with your name and number of people in your party. We want to give Twin Pines a heads up on the number attending. Everyone is welcome!

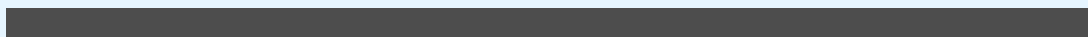


PCUSA WORLD COMMUNION SPECIAL OFFERING

Sunday, September 6 marks the beginning of this special offering. Donations will be collected until World Communion Sunday, October 4th.

This offering represents togetherness. It is a time for everyone to come together as ONE! World Communion Sunday is a time when Christians everywhere partake of the Lord's Supper. The month leading up to this is considered "A Season of Preparation". This is a way for Presbyterians to "love kindness" expressed in action, often involving mercy, faithfulness and steadfast commitment.

Envelopes will be outside the sanctuary doors on the table the month of September. If you would prefer to mail a donation please put a note in the envelope letting us know it is for this special offering. Thank you!





ABOUT WESTMINSTER

Property Information: Last month we told you about the continuing problem we've had in the basement with drainage in the room known as the dungeon. The work has been completed and luckily we did not have to do phase 2 which was external drainage on the 3rd Avenue side of the building. Pictured above is what the room now looks like with the new vapor barrier and sump pump. We are now going to call this the white room. It is much drier and a lot brighter!

Secondly we had the west parking lot worked on by Pate Asphalt. They repaired cracks and redid all the lines in the parking lot. What a change! Picture below are the before (top) and after (bottom) photos.

Lastly, but also a very important project is some electrical work that needs to be done. We are still waiting to get a schedule confirmation for the date this work will begin. As a result of an inspection of our building by Church Mutual Insurance, multiple electrical distribution panels were identified as prone to failure and pose a significant hazard. Replacement panels have been ordered, and work will begin when our electrical contractor receives the material.





BEAR CREEK

AN OVERNIGHT RETREAT AT CAMP BEAR CREEK

Join us for an overnight opportunity at Camp Bear Creek! Folks will gather as early as 1pm on Friday, September 18th for a time of prayer, camp activities, fellowship, and restful solitude.



EVENT DETAILS

Date: Sept 18th at 1:00pm
- Sept 19th at 10:00am



LOCATION

Camp Bear Creek
(9106 42nd Ave, Wyoming,
IA 52362)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Cost: \$45 per person

Space is limited to 15 private rooms
(which may be reserved for individuals or couples).

Registration Deadline: September 11th

REGISTER ONLINE NOW:

<https://forms.gle/npK1HBMDqx6AJe256>





Calendar: Special Events

Sept. 2 - CR Presbyterian Pastors Meeting
Sept. 6 - Communion Sunday
Sept. 7 - Labor Day - WPC Ofc. Closed No Bridge
Sept. 12 - Big AA Meeting 3:30 - 9pm
Sept. 14 - Finance Meets 4:30pm / Deacons & Session Yearly Picnic 6pm
Sept. 15 - Session Meets 6:30pm
Sept. 16 - Property Meeting Noon, Personnel Meeting 1:30pm
Sept. 19 - Anniversary Open House
Sept. 21 - Worship Meets 10am

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

Access the updated WPC calendar at crwpc.org/calendar

Calendar: Regular Events

Sundays

Natural Swedish Pentecostal Church 9am - Classroom
 Westminster Worship 10 am - Sanctuary
 Beacon of Light 11:30 am - Chapel
 EGPC 11:3 am - Old Dining
 NA (Face Anything/Fear Nothing) 5 pm - Atrium

Mondays

Staff Meeting 11 am - Pastor's Office
 Bridge 11 am-4 pm - FLC
 Marion Gospel Hall Youth Group 7 pm - Atrium

Tuesdays

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

Wednesdays

Men's Breakfast 7:30 am - Atrium
 Prayer Shawl - 1 & 3 Wednesdays 9:30 am
 WPC Chancel Choir Practice 7 pm - Choir Rm.



This Month's Birthdays

James Ngombwa	September 5
Becky Ranck	September 6
Kathie Lane	September 6
Barb Mumford	September 8
Jan Kosowski	September 9
Gary Teig	September 14
Bob Moore	September 27



This Month's Anniversaries

Jim & Jennie Shanklin Jr.	Sept. 8
Tim & Susan Winegarden	Sept. 15
Dick & Sherry Cornish	Sept. 27

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 September

September 6 - Jan Kosowski
September 13 - Ann Buckheister
September 20 - Jan Walton
September 27 - Val Neubauer

Thursdays

NA (Face Anything/Fear Nothing) 5 pm - Atrium
Beacon of Light Life Groups 6 pm - Chapel

Fridays

Office Closed
EGPC 8 pm First Fri. of mth. Women's overnight
prayer

Saturdays

Office Closed
EGPC 10 am to 3 pm - Old Dining
Natural Swedish Pentecostal Church 10 am to 4
pm
NA (Steps in the Right Direction) 11 am - Atrium
EGPC 7 pm last Sat. of mth. Men's overnight
prayer

Greeters

1st Sunday - Jim Fine
2nd Sunday - Terry Perkins
3rd Sunday - Jim Patterson
4th Sunday - Neubauers
5th Sunday -

**If you would like to greet any Sunday
please be in the foyer between
9:30 - 9:45 a.m.
Everyone is encouraged to greet
anytime.**



Westminster Presbyterian Church | 1285 3rd Ave SE-Cedar Rapids, IA | 319.366.7185 | crwpc.org

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