

Westminster News - MAY 2021



You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only don't let this freedom be an opportunity to indulge your selfish impulses but serve each other through love. All the Law has been fulfilled in a single statement: Love your neighbor as yourself. But if you bite and devour each other, be careful that you don't get eaten up by each other!—Galatians 5:13-15 Common English Bible

Dear members and friends of Westminster,

In many ways it feels like we've all been in exile over the last year, with the necessity to isolate ourselves in order to protect both ourselves and the neighbors we love. The same is true for the church. The worship of God, which is central to our life as Christians, has necessarily moved into a virtual space, and many of us are missing both the in-person worship experience and the weekly fellowship of this wonderful congregation.

We are now about to embark on a new phase in our journey with COVID. Because of the ever-increasing vaccination rate in both Dane County and in our congregation, and the gradual loosening of restrictions by the CDC and the Dane County Public Health Department, the Session voted this week to return to in-person worship at 9:45am on Pentecost Sunday, May 23.

But out of our love for neighbor and the safety of our congregation, the practices of worship will be different for a time. We will all be wearing masks and physically distanced in congregational seating. Speaking and singing parts will be limited to the worship leaders. The weekly offering, prayers of the people, and monthly communion will all be handled differently. I hope these will be temporary measures as we carry out these COVID-related "best practices" for our worshipping congregation.

Ushers and communion servers will all need to be retrained. You'll find an article about this in this newsletter along with training sessions available on Zoom.

The virtual worship option will continue to be available. Those who choose not to join us on Sunday morning in person can access the live-streamed worship service on YouTube in real time at 9:45a on Sundays. A taped version will be available about an hour after the conclusion of worship on YouTube. Worship bulletins will also be available on our website each week. Links to these will be emailed to you each Sunday morning, which is our current practice.

Beginning on Pentecost Sunday we will take our usual summer break from Sunday morning Christian Education. Children's Time will not meet separately but instead special educational packets will be prepared each week for our children who participate in worship. Amy Poland or I will lead the weekly Children's Message in worship. There will be no nursery care available on Sunday mornings until further notice.

Beginning May 23, Sunday morning coffee fellowship will happen outdoors (weather permitting) at the Yuma Dr. entryway similar to the successful "drive-by" fellowship events we held over the last year. The fellowship committee will be preparing coffee and special treats for us, all served outdoors!

The Session has adopted *Churchwide COVID Guidelines and Covenant*, which you will find in this newsletter. We are asking each person who comes to church to abide by these guidelines to participate in worship and other church activities in the building in as safe a way as possible. Please read these carefully.

I hope you will join me in praying for God's guidance, wisdom, patience, and peace as we continue to find our way through the worst public health crisis in over a century.

Yours in Christ, Scott Anderson, Pastor



Westminster Presbyterian— Churchwide COVID-19 Guidelines and Covenant *

At Westminster church we strive to be a grace-filled, inclusive community of Christian believers dedicated to building disciples and sharing God's love. As a part of loving our community, we hereby covenant with one another to continue the fight against COVID-19 even as we open our buildings for public worship, learning, and use.

We will not attend any activities on the church grounds if:

- We are sick.
- We are experiencing symptoms of illness, even if we are not certain of illness.
- We believe we may have been exposed to someone who is sick, until we are certain we are not contagious with COVID-19.
- We are currently in isolation due to testing positive for COVID-19.

Immediately upon entering the church building, we will either:

- Disinfect all surfaces of our hands with hand sanitizer until the gel is dry (hand sanitizer is available at all church entryways).
- Wash our hands with soap and water for the time it takes to pray the Lord's Prayer
- We will not hug, shake hands, or engage in physical contact when we are with others in public spaces.
- We will remain at least 6 feet apart from people with whom we do not live.
- For those age 5 and above, we will wear masks that cover our nose and mouth to protect others. ** Disposable masks are available near the church office if needed.

When we worship:

- We will sit six feet apart from those who are not in our immediate family and allow the ushers to direct us to our seating. Families with younger children may leave the sanctuary if necessary. There is alternate seating in the church lounge.
- We will wear our masks and remain seated throughout the worship service.
- We will reflect silently on the hymns and pray the unison prayers in silence.
- We will leave our offerings in the offering plates located at the entryways to the sanctuary.
- On Communion Sundays, we will pick up our individually sealed communion cups and wafers when entering the sanctuary, and when leaving will place them in marked containers at the sanctuary entryways to be recycled.

If you have been fully vaccinated *:**

- We will wear our masks and maintain social distancing in common spaces in the church (e.g., church office, walkways, narthex, sanctuary, bathrooms, etc.) or in a group of any size that includes unvaccinated persons (including children).

* *A covenant is a solemn promise made between at least two parties and God. In this case, it is an agreement that is being made between the staff, members, and friends of Westminster Presbyterian Church.*

** *Dane County Public Health Order #14 includes updated guidance on face coverings that aligns with CDC guidance. Face coverings must be secured with ties, ear loops, or elastic bands that must go behind the head and fit snugly against the side of the face. Cloth face masks must be made with two or more layers of tightly woven fabric. The Dane County Public Health Department suggests holding up the face mask to a light. If light does not pass through, the fabric is sufficiently "tightly woven." Bandanas, single layer neck gaiters, face shields, goggles, scarves, ski masks, balaclavas, shirt or sweater collars, and masks with slits, exhalation valves, or punctures are not face coverings under the order. (As the public health order is updated, these details will be updated.)*

*** *According to the CDC, people are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 \geq 2 weeks after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or \geq 2 weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen).*

Attention All Ushers and Communion Preppers!

Your respective job descriptions are going to change when we return to in-person worship on Sunday, May 23 as a result of new COVID guidelines. Come to a Zoom training event and find out more! Pastor Scott will host two separate training events later in May, one for ushers and the second for communion servers. He will be sharing revised job descriptions developed by the Worship Committee and recently approved by Session. If you are interested in attending either or both events, please email Katie at info@westminstermadison.org and let her know. We'll send out Zoom links a few days prior to each training.

-Pastor Scott's Zoom Training for Ushers under COVID Guidelines: **Thursday, May 20th 4:00pm**

-Pastor Scott's Zoom Training for Communion Servers under COVID Guidelines: **Thursday, May 27 4:00pm**

Education

The Education Committee has looked to guidelines and recommendations from the CDC, PHMDC, and the Wisconsin Council of Churches to inform our policies. At this time, the recommended advice is to return to programming slowly. As new information presents itself, the Committee will review it and make any necessary and advisable changes. For the children, Sunday School will conclude the school year on May 16th. Once in-person worship begins, families will be given enhanced worship bags containing both curricula related to the day's lesson and engaging activities. The nursery will remain closed at this time and all children will remain in the sanctuary with their families for the duration of the service. The lounge area will be available for parents with young children who need more space to spread out. Families that do not feel comfortable attending in-person services can request that educational materials be sent. Pastor Scott's Adult Sunday morning class will also conclude on May 16th. During the summer months, the Education Committee will be hosting several book discussion circles. Stay tuned for more details. Our hope is that we will be able to resume more regular-looking programming by fall.

We Appreciate Our Sunday School Teachers!

The Education Committee would like to recognize and give a great big shout out to the faithful, dedicated Sunday School teachers who willingly took on the challenge of teaching via Zoom this year. Betty Bush, Connie Evans, Liane Kosaki, Troy Lepien, and Erin Nass have shared their time and talents to guide our children's faith formation during this year of staying at home. Please help us share our appreciation with these wonderful teachers by thanking them next time you see them. "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me." Matthew 18:5



Session Highlights

Session met on Tuesday, April 27 and affirmed the decision to return to in person worship starting with Pentecost on May 23rd. Policies to make services safe for everyone were reviewed and adopted. These included seating arrangements, serving communion and ushering as well as determining that music will be instrumental and that there will be no singing. Only the worship leaders will be speaking.

John Tarr, Katie Benzce and Scott Anderson will attend a training on live streaming on May 7th. We will continue virtual services as we also go back to in person worship.

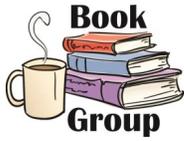
Property Committee is in the process of upgrading the church security system and getting bids on replacing the exterior doors to fellowship hall. The committee also recommended installing walk pads on the sanctuary roof to keep snow from sliding off and session approved their request with the cost coming from the building maintenance account. They have also installed MERV 13 filters to improve filtration in the air handlers.

Session approved Mission Committee's request to collect "Coins for a Cause" which in the past has supported Fund a Farm, Allied Drive programs and other benevolences.

Thank you!

Kathy Kamp delivered much needed household supplies and diapers to the Meadowood Health Partnership thanks to the generosity and donations from the members of Westminster! >





Summer Backyard Book Groups

Westminster Presbyterian has traditionally held a series of summer backyard book discussions over the years. We are looking for some volunteers to host these events over the coming summer months. The hosts would

have the choice of facilitating via Zoom, meeting outdoors in their backyards, or using the patio or lounge at the church, or using a combination of online and in-person interaction. Three books have been suggested, although hosts are also free to suggest their own choices for books. The suggestions:

- 1) The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas
- 2) Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead
- 3) Nickel Boys by Colson Whitehead

If you are interested in being a host, contact Betty Bush, email: bettybush@sbcglobal.net; phone: 608-273-0396.

MAY WORSHIP AT WESTMINSTER

- May 2** **5th Sunday of Easter/Communion Sunday (Virtual)**
 Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 22:25-31; I John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8
 Focus Text: Acts 8:26-40 Sermon: God’s Good Gift
- May 9** **6th Sunday of Easter (Virtual)**
 Acts 10:44-48; Psalm 98; I John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17
 Focus Text: Acts 10:44-48 Sermon: Blurring the Boundaries
- May 16** **7th Sunday of Easter (Virtual)**
 Acts 1:15-17, 21-26; Psalm 1; I John 5:9-13; John 17:6-19
 Focus Text: Acts 1:15-17, 21-26 Sermon: Missing the Resurrection
- May 23** **Day of Pentecost - in person worship resumes at 9:45am with coffee fellowship following outdoors**
 Psalm 104: 24-34, Acts 2:1-21
 Focus Text: Acts 2:1-21 Sermon: Gospel Speech
- May 30** **Trinity Sunday**
 Isaiah 61:1-8, Psalm 26; Romans 8:12-17, John 3:1-7
 Focus Text: John 3:1-7 Sermon: Appointment After Dark



Please keep the following members and friends in your prayers:
Betty Smith, Dianne Stevens, Seema Tahir, Carla McCann, Sara Pope, Kathy Key, Judith Rouse’s daughter-in-law (Dani), Juanita Halls, Betsy & Patrick Mullin, Kelly McCann, Julie Madden, Joyce Buseman, Lynn Chapman, Nancy Prine



LET’S KEEP IN TOUCH

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MAY BIRTHDAYS

- Dorothy Blotz 05/06
- Ed Jerome 05/06
- Linda Bishop 05/07
- Louis Yackee 05/08
- Jocelyn Mou 05/09
- Mary Allbaugh 05/11
- Bud Smith 05/11
- Cindy Kornetzke 05/13
- Pamela Wilson (Quin) 05/13
- Dick Zimmer 05/16
- Sara Hayes 05/17
- Sandy Butler 05/18
- Andrea Witt 05/18
- Gay Didriksen 05/20
- Cindy Grady 05/24
- Nansi Jo Colley 05/28

