



WESTMINSTER

presbyterian church | epc

GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI

September 2020

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RED BEANS AND RICE FIFTH SUNDAY DRIVE-THRU



COVID-19 did not stop Westminster from celebrating its 5th Sunday fellowship meal and missions collection. The Congregational Life Committee cooked ten pounds of red beans and rice, and made buttered rosemary French bread and salad for 125 on Saturday, August 29 and Sunday, August 30. A small team of masked church members and friends packed to-go boxes, and distributed them in a drive-thru line in the concrete parking lot. Visitors and members contributed school supplies and/or a suggested donation of \$5 per plate to support students in Bayou View's neighborhood schools, which will be taken to Bayou View Elementary and Middle School in the next few weeks. The drive netted more than \$400 to help augment the school supplies collected! WLOX even made a surprise visit, and broadcast a live shot during the drive-thru. A group took the few leftovers to the Gulfport Fire Department's Station 5 as a thank you to the firemen who serve our neighborhood. Many thanks to all who made this event happen so successfully!

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

On August 30, Westminster offered its annual Blessing of the Backpacks and Teachers during worship. Like so many regularly-celebrated events, the Blessing of the Backpacks and Teachers had to be rethought in the age of COVID. Westminster's parents, grandparents, and teachers submitted back-to-school photographs for a slideshow that was presented at the beginning of worship, so that the congregation--whether in person or via virtual participation--could see first-hand the children under the care of our church. Special prayers during the Prayers of the People included a particular request for God's blessing on all students and teachers--at all level of schooling--as they discover who God has made them to be, and learn skills and acquire knowledge for their lives of Christian discipleship. To view the slideshow, visit gulfportchurch.org. Did you miss the call for photos? We will be glad to add your special students or teachers to the slideshow. Send pictures to office@gulfportchurch.org.



HURRICANE LAURA UPDATE

The missions committee will be continuing to monitor Hurricane Laura relief efforts, particularly by our presbytery and fellow congregations. Last week, our pastor and other members of the church did participate in a local effort to support a Gulfport-based team that has travelled to the Shreveport, La., area to provide hot meals to residents and relief workers. The team has sent meals to Natchitoches, DeRidder, and Ruston, La., as well as providing them at their base in Shreveport. This effort, led by the Christian "Giving BAK Foundation," included participation from the Coast Ecumenical Fellowship, Feed My Sheep, the Rotary Club of Gulfport, and other local businesses and churches.



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING RESCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 20: VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION OPTION PLANNED



The Session has called a congregational meeting on Sunday, September 20 immediately following worship for the purpose of electing elders to the Session's Class of 2022. A similar meeting was called for August 23; however, there was not a sufficient quorum to conduct business. For this meeting to proceed on September 20, per the *Book of Order*, there must be a minimum of 20 active members present in person.

Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Session does wish to make provision for electronic participation in this meeting for those who are uncomfortable with being physically present. After significant discussion about proper procedure and technological abilities, the first motion that will be presented to those who will be attending the meeting in person will

be to suspend the ordinary rules for meeting in order to provide for full participation for active members via Zoom. Assuming there is a quorum of at least 20 active members physically present in the meeting, and the motion is adopted, those who wish to participate electronically will be able to do so with all the rights and responsibilities of every other member of Westminster. This technical procedure is necessary because neither the *Book of Order* nor *Robert's Rules of Order* provide for electronic meetings, as deliberative bodies must allow for all participants to hear and speak simultaneously. Between the pandemic and the quickly-changing technological landscape, many bodies, including the Session, the Presbytery, and the General Assembly, among others inside and outside the larger church, are working creatively to provide for transparency and order. The Session believes it has done so to the best of its ability in this case.

Should the meeting proceed under the suspended rules, and a secret ballot be required, voting will be by drive through ballot for those participating via Zoom and open for one hour after the final motion is made. Those attending in person would receive a paper ballot. Unfortunately, Zoom's capabilities provide for voice votes or secret "up or down" ballots, but not for secret ballots in which one must make multiple selections, as could, in theory, be the case in a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing elders. It is assumed that this particular drive through voting procedure would only be employed should there be nominations received from the floor, either through Zoom or in person.

Zoom login information for this meeting will be emailed to all active members. If you do not have access to a computer, or are not receiving our weekly "Westminster Welcome" notes via email, please call the church office at (228) 864-3143 so we can add your email address to our database or provide you with information for accessing the meeting by telephone. For more information, please contact Pastor Will or Clerk of Session Pete Bloss.

CUB SCOUT PACK 209

Westminster's Cub Scout Pack 209 will host its first meeting in Westminster's courtyard Friday, September 11, at 6 p.m. for an outdoor, socially-distanced, masked-up ice cream social. If you have a boy in kindergarten through fifth grade who would like to participate this year, come enjoy a fun time, and learn more!

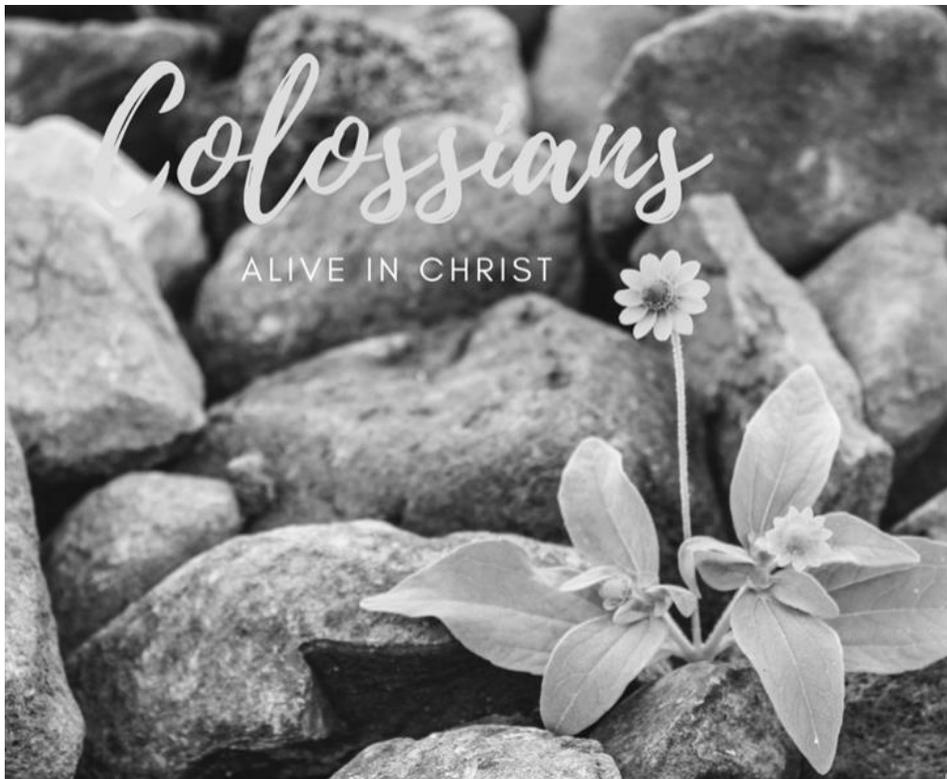


THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Session has again authorized the drive-through distribution of the elements of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper for Sunday, September 6. For those who are uncomfortable attending worship in person, please make sure to participate in virtual worship, either at Westminster's Facebook page or website, gulfportchurch.org. A drive through distribution site will be set up in the Lawson Avenue gravel lot, and will be open from the end of worship until 12:15 p.m. for those who have worshipped virtually.



UPCOMING SERMON TEXTS



“FINDING SABBATH: A RHYTHM FOR LIFE”

- September 6: Romans 14:5-9; Hebrews 10:19-25; I Corinthians 14:40
- September 13: Colossians 2:16-17; I Corinthians 15:20-28; Psalm 46:10a

“COLOSSIANS: ALIVE IN CHRIST”

- September 20: Colossians 1:1-14
- September 27: Colossians 1:15-23
- October 4: Break in Series--Pastor Will preaching at pastor's installation in presbytery
- October 11: Colossians 1:24-2:5
- October 18: Colossians 2:6-15
- October 25: Colossians 2:16-23
- November 1: Colossians 3:1-17
- November 8: Colossians 3:18-4:1
- November 15: Colossians 4:2-5
- November 22: Colossians 4:7-18

“ADVENT: THE WORD MADE FLESH”

- November 29: John 1:1-5
- December 6: John 1:6-8
- December 13: John 1:9-13
- December 20: John 1:14-18

September 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
Children's Sunday School <i>via Zoom</i> , 8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School <i>via Zoom</i> , 9:30 a.m. Worship, 10:30 a.m. Drive-Thru Red Beans & Rice, 4:30 p.m.		Prayer Group, 10 a.m.				
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Children's Sunday School <i>via Zoom</i> , 8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School <i>via Zoom</i> , 9:30 a.m. Worship/Communion, 10:30 a.m. Drive-thru Communion, 11:30 a.m.- 12:15 p.m. Hymn Sing <i>via Facebook</i> , 5 p.m.		Prayer Group, 10 a.m.			Cub Scouts meeting, 6 p.m.	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Children's Sunday School <i>via Zoom</i> , 8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School <i>via Zoom</i> , 9:30 a.m. Worship, 10:30 a.m. Hymn Sing <i>via Facebook</i> , 5 p.m.		Prayer Group, 10 a.m.	Session, 7 p.m.	Eagle Scout ceremony		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Children's Sunday School <i>via Zoom</i> , 8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School <i>via Zoom</i> , 9:30 a.m. Worship, 10:30 a.m. Congregational Meeting, after morning Worship. Lifehouse Youth Group, 5 p.m. Hymn Sing <i>via Facebook</i> , 5 p.m.		Prayer Group, 10 a.m.				
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
Children's Sunday School <i>via Zoom</i> , 8:30 a.m. Adult Sunday School <i>via Zoom</i> , 9:30 a.m. Worship, 10:30 a.m. Hymn Sing <i>via Facebook</i> , 5 p.m.		Prayer Group, 10 a.m.				



TUESDAY CHATS: MOST TUESDAYS AT 3 P.M.

Pastor Will conducts a live, online chat on his Facebook page most Tuesday afternoons at 3 p.m. with a varied line-up of participants. The interviews generally rotate between a theological topic in the life of the Christian church or a mission organization supported by, or of potential interest to, Westminster members and friends. Past guests have included the Rev. Dr. Jim Goodloe of the Foundation for Reformed Theology on the importance of the Reformed faith today; the Rev. Dr. Nancy Lammers Gross of Princeton Theological Seminary on the role and worth of preaching in churches today; Andy Mayo of Medical Benevolence Foundation on medical mission; Chad Riemann of Riemann Family Funeral Homes on funeral customs and planning, especially

during COVID-19; and David Lion of Feed My Sheep on the coronavirus's impact on the homeless. Guests are scheduled week to week: Check the church's Facebook page for upcoming chats.



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. led by Pete Bloss via Zoom.

The Adult Sunday School class led by Elder Pete Bloss. *The Zoom*

meeting ID number is 817 0590 9102, contact Pete at 228-861-0817 if you have issues or are prompted to give a password.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sundays at 8:30 a.m. led by Anna Kate Shurley via Zoom. *The Zoom*

meeting ID number is 857 8149 6597, contact Anna Kate at 228-224-3420 if you have issues or are prompted to give a password.

LIFEHOUSE YOUTH GROUP STARTING SEPTEMBER 20



Welcome to Westminster's brand new Lifehouse Youth Group! Created especially for 5th graders, and interested middle-schoolers, Lifehouse will begin as a monthly time for fun, food, and fellowship. Under the direction of Westminster member Alice Bellanger, participants will gather the third Sunday of each month—September 20, October 18, November 15, and December 20—from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. for supper, a time of sharing in each other's lives, games, and a scripturally-based life lesson. Of course, masks will be required until the pandemic threat passes. Please keep this new ministry in your prayers—and make sure to encourage your youth to participate and bring friends! For more information, contact Alice Bellanger at (228) 229-9629.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: FALL ADVENT CHRISMONS

COVID-19 has caused everyone to have to rethink how to go about celebrating some favorite traditions. This is certainly true at Westminster!

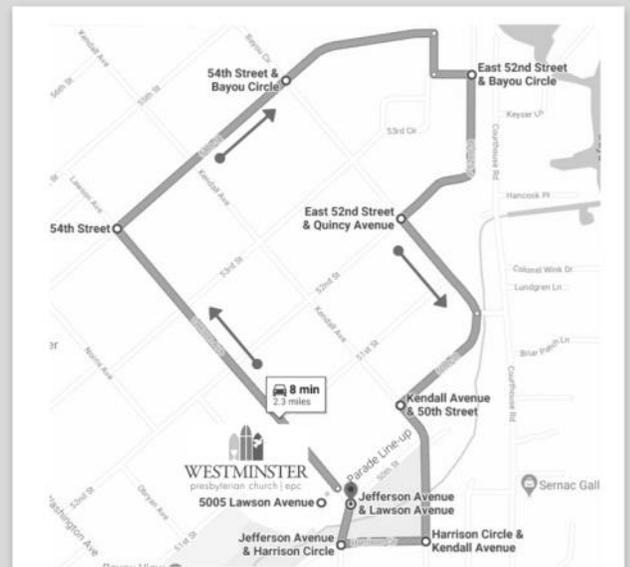
The Advent Festival, scheduled for November 15, will move to a virtual format, assuming COVID-19 is still around. The church will supply kits for children and families to make chrismons, special Christian-themed ornaments for Christmas trees, and will host a crafting demonstration online. Look for more information in the coming months.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

FALL FESTIVAL PARADE OCT. 10

COVID-19 will prevent Westminster from hosting its traditional Fall Festival in Bayou View Park, but the church will still be able to provide a time of fun for the community. The Discipleship Formation committee is currently working with the Gulfport Police Department to host a small, family-friendly, socially-distanced parade through the Bayou View neighborhood on October 10. It will roll from the church at 11 a.m. See the map below for tentative route information. We will encourage residents to watch from their yards, and others to watch, with masks and socially-distanced, from the perimeter of Serenity Park, or the east end of Bayou View Park. See the October newsletter for final details—and for how you can participate!



Fall Festival Parade
Saturday, October 10
11 a.m.



Westminster has an Amazon Smile account. To learn how to earn money for Westminster while shopping on Amazon (at no extra cost to you), call the church office or see Jane Bloss.



TITHE.LY

ONLINE AND APP-BASED GIVING

Westminster is now set up for online and app-based giving.

Visit gulfportchurch.org to give online,

or download the secure Tithely app from Android or Apple to your phone and search for Westminster to give via app. Gifts can be made through credit card, debit card or bank transfer, and can be set up on a recurring basis. Tithely does charge a small fee for each transaction: You will have the option to add to your gift to cover these fees. Westminster is grateful to everyone who has pledged and/or given his or her financial support to keep this Christian ministry alive and robust for generations to come. For more information about Westminster's financial health, please see Stewardship chairman Wayne Tisdale or Treasurer Jane Bloss.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE DURING COVID

Christian fellowship and care is predicated on in-person visits and presence. Unfortunately, the current pandemic has necessitated for many virtual worship participation, and various regulations at hospitals and nursing homes have prevented in-person visits. Westminster's members and friends simply are not able to see each other as often as they ordinarily would. During this time, please feel free to call the church office if you need to talk to Pastor Will or any member of the Congregational Life and Care committee. Until recently, Pastor Will has not made routine visits to homes out of an abundance of caution; however, he is planning to begin making scheduled, socially-distanced visits on porches for those who would be comfortable meeting with him that way. The pastor, elders, as well as a newly-formed team of "congregational callers," will continue to make phone calls to members. Please let the church know how we can better care for each other. Printed pictorial directories are available, and can be mailed to you --just give the church a call at (228) 864-3143.

VIRTUAL HYMN SINGS MOST SUNDAYS AT 5 P.M.

Do you love old hymns? Join Pastor Will and Anna Kate for a virtual hymn sing most Sunday afternoons at 5 p.m. on Facebook Live or on the church's website, gulfportchurch.org. During the live stream, you can send your favorite hymns, and if they have them in a hymnal at their home, Will and Anna Kate will do their level best to play and sing one for you!



September

October

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 2 Stan Hoogerwerf | 2 Jerrye Tisdale |
| 2 Charlotte Underhill | 2 Chip Westbrook |
| 6 Robert Bruce | 4 Nancy Harris |
| 8 Ed Shumski, Jr. | 9 Ben Taylor |
| 9 Dena Blaylock | 12 Carl Parker Jr. |
| 9 Bart Heath | 15 Justin Cuevas |
| 10 Ron Barnard | 15 Thomas Graves |
| 12 Lily Mahand | 17 Cindy Taylor |
| 12 Cindy Sams | 19 Louis Congleton |
| 15 Denise Nault | 20 Millie Pittman |
| 15 Jose Sanchez | 27 Ernie McCabe |
| 16 Eli Underhill | 28 Wayne Tisdale |
| 20 Susan Bourne | 29 Donna Smith |
| 21 Lance Barnard | |
| 21 Lilly Grace Horne | |
| 28 Marilyn Hammett | |



WELCOME INTERIM ORGANIST DR. DEBRA ATKINSON

Westminster extends a warm welcome to our new interim organist, Dr. Debra Atkinson. Debra is the Director of Choral Activities at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, and earned a doctorate in music education from the University of Mississippi in 2006. She has served as organist and music director in multiple churches in multiple Christian traditions across Mississippi. Welcome, Dr. Atkinson!



NEW YARD SIGNS ARE HERE

One of the providential "silver linings" to moving so much of Westminster's worship life online is that church members now have an easy way of inviting people to visit the church. Through the Missions committee, the church has ordered 50 yard signs for members and friends to put in their yards so that people can learn more about how to join us for worship. Signs will be available for pick up on Sundays, or, please call the office at (228) 864-3143 for more information.





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ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED



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COMING SEPTEMBER 20, 5 P.M.



A new youth group for 5th-8th Graders.
See inside for more details.