



WESTMINSTER

presbyterian church | epc

GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI

August 2021

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BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS & CALL FOR PICTURES
 Calling all students, teachers, and paraprofessionals at any school: Bring your backpacks or bookbags for a special time of prayer during worship on August 8. Leave them in front of the communion table, and we will pray God's blessings over you and your classmates for the 2020-2021 school year. Each time you put that backpack on, or load up that book bag, you will be able to remember God is with you and your church family is behind you. Have first day of school pictures? We'd love to include them in a slideshow. Send pictures of your children or grandchildren to office@gulfportchurch.org by noon on August 6.



LIFEHOUSE YOUTH UPDATE BY ALICE BELLANGER:

LifeHouse met Sunday, July 25 and we had a great discussion about leadership. We talked about what qualities are needed to lead: compassion, intelligence, organization, just to name a few. We then discussed how God's idea of leadership is very different from the world's idea of leadership. We read Daniel, Chapter 1, and discussed the leadership qualities that Daniel showed. Daniel belonged to God, and he knew that. He would not be led towards anyone else. Daniel had the courage to stand up and challenge the leaders. I asked the group if Daniel were alive today, would he hang out with their friends? Would he listen to the same kind of music? Would they spend time together on the weekends? Or would Daniel refuse because it would weaken him, like he did when the leaders had tried to make him do things that would weaken him. The point of this was to have the youth think about the choices they were making every day. Are they God centered?



The Shurley family provided dinner (walking tacos!!) and then we played!!

LIFEHOUSE YOUTH: EXPANDING THIS MONTH!

LifeHouse Youth will plan to meet from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on August 8, 22, and 29. Supper will be served from 5 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. New this month: Not only will we have activities and small group time for our 5-8 grade students, but we will expand by adding activities and small group time for our high school students! Friends welcome. Would you like to meet some of our young people? We'd love to have volunteers offer to bring supper for our youth. Contact Alice Bellanger for more information.

This year, the newsletter has shifted from "institutional" content to much more reader-submitted content. The story of Westminster, which we know has been written by God himself, belongs to its members and friends: Please help tell it! If you take pictures of an event or have an idea for an article, please send it to office@gulfportchurch.org or call (228) 864-3143. Please know that due to space limitations and mission focus, submissions may have to be edited or held for a future edition.

Dear Westminster Church Family:

A few months ago, I received these very insightful questions from one of our young disciples. As I looked through them, I thought others might be curious about these things, as well. I don't think she will mind me answering these in a newsletter!

Pastor Will

1.) Can only grown-ups be saints?

This is a tricky one, but the short answer is, "No, grown-ups aren't the only people who can be saints." Remember: In our church's tradition--the Reformed tradition--it is not the church or church leaders who pick the saints; God picks the saints: The Bible tells us that people can know if God has picked them if they believe in his Son Jesus Christ--even if it sometimes feels like it's only a little bit. So, if you believe in God, and if you

believe in Jesus, then you know God has picked you, and you are a saint! Cool, huh? But, here's the thing: If you know you are a saint, that means it is your job to follow Jesus. So, being a saint isn't just a status, it's a way we are supposed to live.

2.) Are there any important kids in the Bible?

Absolutely! Just as one example: Before David became the greatest king ever--second to Jesus, of course--he was the youngest and littlest of seven brothers. One day, when he was a kid, his people were attacked by the Philistines. None of David's people--not even his bigger brothers or their king--thought they could beat the Philistines, because their biggest man, the giant Goliath, seemed unbeatable. Finally, David, with only his slingshot, went out with courage, and with one stone killed Goliath and won the battle. God does great things through kids!

3.) Are there any women disciples?

Oh, yes! A disciple is someone who follows Jesus. When we talk about the 12 Disciples, they were all men, but they were by no means the only disciples! Mary, Jesus's mother, was a disciple; so were Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany and her sister Martha, Salome, and many others. Anyone who follows Jesus, lives in his way, and loves his people are disciples.

4.) Does Jesus have any sisters?

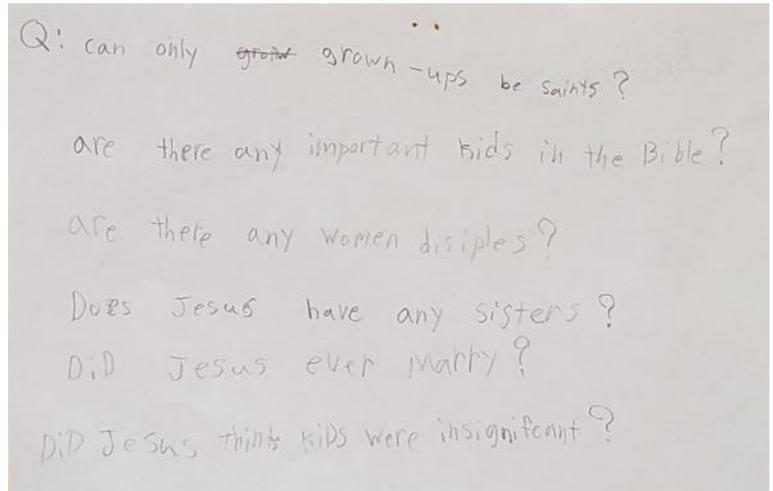
Again, this is a tricky one. Some Christian traditions believe Jesus was an only child, and that the boys listed as Jesus's brothers in the Bible were really more like cousins. Other Christian traditions believe those boys were actually Jesus's younger brothers--the sons of Mary and Joseph. In either case, the Bible does not list any sisters, though.

5.) Did Jesus ever marry?

No. Some fictional books have said he did, and some people have forged documents to claim that he did, but there is no evidence for it.

6.) Did Jesus think kids were insignificant?

Absolutely not. In fact, the Bible tells us that one day, people kept bringing their children to see Jesus, and some of his disciples tried to send them away--because *they* thought kids were insignificant. Jesus told those disciples to leave the kids alone, and, in fact, "Let the children come to me." Kids and grown-ups may have different roles and responsibilities--remember, kids are still learning! But, no, Jesus did not think children were insignificant by any means.



FEED MY SHEEP VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Westminster sponsors a home delivery route for Feed My Sheep each week Monday through Friday. One of six such routes, these home deliveries ensure that those who are homebound and cannot find transportation to Feed My Sheep's main facility can still receive a hot, balanced meal each week day. *We are in great need of volunteers to help with this vital ministry.* Volunteers can serve on any regular schedule: Once a week or even once a month. Responsibilities include going to Feed My Sheep's facility by 9:30 a.m., and delivering meals in the area of Soria City: There are well-marked maps that make the delivery stops easy to find. They can be made in as little as an hour. If you would like more information, or would like to explore volunteering by riding along with another Westminster member to see the route, please call the church office or make a note in the upcoming bulletin registries.

FROM YOUR STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE, BY ROBERT BRUCE:

Many times, two words are used interchangeably, causing confusion. Those two words are “pledging” and “tithing.”

“Pledging” is simply a decision and a commitment by a member or worshiper to provide a portion of her/his assets over a period of time to be used in the work of church. The session uses those pledges to formulate an annual budget for the many program’s of your church. Those programs directly affect you, your family, and the future of the Westminster Presbyterian Church,

From our Ministry Partner and Benevolence:

Gulfport. Providing a pledge allows planning for the future, while both sustaining and growing those programs and efforts of your church. Without pledging, the work of formulating an annual budget and planning for a future of both sustaining & growth is exceedingly difficult. One very important fact: making a pledge does not “obligate” anyone in a way like a commercial contract can. If a person makes a pledge and personal circumstances make it difficult or impossible to fulfill that pledge, no one will berate, badger, or embarrass anyone about changing or circumstances. And, also, if circumstances allow a person to go over and above a pledged amount, the session will work to be good stewards of that unexpected gift. In short, pledging is a good thing - something that each of us should undertake each year to fulfill our covenant membership while worshipping at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Gulfport.

“Tithing” is simply a special pledge made by those who are led to commit 10% of their overall annual income to the work of your church. Again, this commitment is certainly a large commitment, but if circumstances make it necessary for someone to modify their pledge, that is completely understood.

If you have questions about giving and how you might become a more active giver, please contact the Treasurer, a member of your Stewardship Committee, or a member of your Session.

THE MALAWI CHRISTIAN MEDICAL NETWORK

MBF
5 Hospitals
3 Nursing Schools
24 Clinics
Surgical Residency
Specialty Medicine Residency
Nursing Leadership Program
Critical Care Program
Spiritual Ministry Program

Christian mission hospitals, clinics and nursing schools built in the past 100+ years in Malawi are looking at an uncertain future. The gap between the medical needs of their communities and their ability to serve those needs is growing wider year after year.

The church and medical leaders in Malawi have embarked on a plan to create a network supported and enabled by MBF and a group of six medical mission organizations. The vision is to create a Christian medical network that is ready for the 21st century.

Readiness will mean upgraded and expanded facilities and equipment; medical staff trained in surgery, specialty medicine, and spiritual ministry; additional nurses and vastly improved clinical practices; and updated operational and business systems.

The planned transformation of people, places and programs is extensive and will grow and develop over the next 5-10 years.

By acting now to bring medical missions in Malawi and other countries into the 21st century, we ensure the sick and wounded who otherwise have no hope will receive more sustainable access to the medical care they need and exposure to the Gospel of Christ.



MBF MEDICAL BENEVOLENCE FOUNDATION

www.mbf.net | 281-201-2043 | hello@mbf.net
The Medical Benevolence Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Houston, TX.

amazonsmile
You Shop. Amazon Gives.

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.

Coast Ecumenical Fellowship

BLESSING OF THE BADGES & BOOTS

A Service of Prayer and Celebration for all First Responders, Providers, & Active Duty Military in Harrison County

CO-HOSTED BY

- City of Gulfport
- Gulfport Main Street
- Feed My Sheep
- Rotary Club of Gulfport
- Daddy's BBQ
- Borguezan BBQ
- Gulfport Kiwanis Club

Children's Activities by Lynn Meadows Discovery Center

SEPTEMBER 11, 2021
10 AM

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
15TH ST. AND 22ND AVE., GULFPORT

Pre-service concert by
Gulf Coast Wind Ensemble
Doors open 9:30 a.m.

Barbecue and Live Music
by Casual and the Uptights
immediately following



SCOUT ME IN! SPECIAL CUB SCOUT GATHERING FOR

WPC MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Do you have a boy in grades K-5? He can be a part of Westminster's very own Cub Scout Pack 209! Pastor and den leader Will Shurley and Pack Master Rohn Edwards will host a information and registration session just for Westminster members and friends on August 8 at 4 p.m. Come learn about the life skills, campouts, trips, and other fun waiting to be had. Can't make it? Come to the Pack's annual bonfire kick-off August 13 at the Jones Park beach fire pits: You can meet other Pack members and enjoy a fun cookout! Please note: Scout information will be distributed in local schools in the next few weeks. If your boy would like to participate in Westminster's program, please make note that we are Pack 209.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE FROM CHAIRMAN TED HAMMER

If you would like to be more involved in the life of the church, please call me about the opportunities available through our Congregational Life Committee.

We also need volunteers not on the committee to help out with various events and activities.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration. Contact Ted Hammer at (228) 313-2167 if you'd like to volunteer.

TROOP 209 KEEPS

PRODUCING EAGLE SCOUTS

Brennan Shekart, member of Westminster's Boy Scout Troop 209, earned his Eagle Scout honor on July 20 during his Court of Honor ceremony in the Fellowship Hall. Brennan, so far, is the fourth member of Westminster's troop to reach the rank of Eagle this year--and there are more to come. Way to go! Please keep the young men of our scout programs--and their leaders--in your prayers.



Looks who's been hanging around.
#everychurchneedsarooster

SERMON SERIES FOR SUMMER 2021



8 PRAYERS EVERY CHRISTIAN NEEDS TO KNOW

Late Summer Sermon Series: 2021

If prayer doesn't come naturally, or if your prayer life feels a bit stuck, don't worry! Prayer, like human speech, is a learned skill. In August and September, we'll take a look at eight prayers from the Psalms that every Christian can use to build up a vibrant prayer life.

Psalm 8 - Praise: Recovering awe and wonder

Psalm 51 - Confession: Living with amazing grace

Psalm 3 - Lament: Taking every care to God

Psalm 135 - Remembrance: Going with hope because God is faithful always

Psalm 121 - Trust: Finding freedom in faith

Psalm 65 - Thanksgiving: Turning mere happiness to joy

Psalm 67 - Hope: Praying for God's work in the world

Psalm 150 - Doxology: Ending in praise

TREASURER'S REPORT FROM JANE BLOSS:

Treasurer's Report for June:

Budgeted Income: \$17,064.08

Budgeted Expenses: \$19,582.29

Loss for month \$ 2,518.21

Yes, we had a loss for June. That's not too unusual. While expenses were somewhat normal, the income was down a bit. Often the giving during the summer months is less than normal. But we have built up somewhat of a surplus, and things are looking good for halfway through the year.

What is the Unified Budget?? (yes, you've seen this before, but it bears repeating)

Westminster has implemented the unified budget since 1982.

Each November, the Session committees decide on their plans for the following year, submitting a budget for the funds they need to carry out the various missions and ministries of our church. Then, one budget is prepared. We don't have separate accounts to raise funding for Missions, Sunday School, or any operational expenses. We operate under **this one unified budget** and we ask you for pledges toward that budget. We also promise not to ask for special offerings during the year, as many churches do. All donations to the church should be applied toward meeting this budget.

September

2 Charlotte Underhill

2 Stan Hoogerwerf

6 Robert Bruce

8 Ed Shumski, Jr.

9 Dena Blaylock

9 Bart Heath

10 Ron Barnard

12 Lily Mahand

12 Cindy Sams

15 Jose Sanchez

15 Denise Nault

16 Eli Underhill

20 Susan Bourne

21 Lance Barnard

21 Lilly Grace Horne

28 Marilyn Hammett

August

1 Lily Congleton

2 Tricia Graves

5 Butch Williams

6 Debbie Walker

9 Dave Carlson

14 Mimi Lineberger

14 Myra Bruce

17 Garnie Dubuisson

20 Jennifer Busby

25 Anne Cole

27 Brenda Pace

31 Ric Williams



SANCTUARY FLOWERS

The sign up sheet for Sanctuary flowers is posted on the bulletin board next to the nursery. *A link to an online signup chart is now available at gulfportchurch.org.*

ONLINE AND APP-BASED GIVING



TITHE.LY

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

Visit gulfportchurch.org to

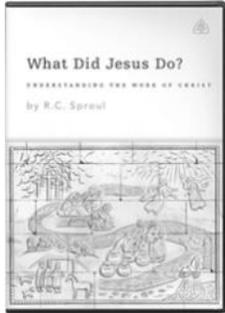
give online, or download the secure Tithely app from Android or Apple to your phone and search for Westminster to give via app. For additional information, please call the church office at (228) 864-3143.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Westminster will begin hosting an Alcoholics Anonymous weekly meeting on Thursdays at 6 p.m. in the CE building, starting August 5. Per AA guidelines, this new meeting will be held on a trial basis for six months, and, if it continues beyond that, will be granted an official charter. Advertising of this new ministry will be by this announcement, the bulletin, and word of mouth, in order to maintain the group's privacy. If you have any questions, or are interested in the meeting, or know someone who is, please call Pastor Will at the office.

SUNDAY FUNDAY: Church friends can become best friends! Sunday School for children and youth happens each week at 9:15 a.m. Students have been working through the foundation of the Christian faith by studying the Exodus and the 10 plagues. Sunday School classes are safe: Rooms are thoroughly cleaned, students are encouraged to use hand sanitizer, and masks are provided for any participants that does not have one.

CHILDREN'S Sunday School



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL: Sundays at 9:30 a.m. led by Ted Hammer in person and via Zoom.

The Adult Sunday School class led by Elder Ted Hammer is studying the video-based study by R. C. Sproul, "What Did Jesus Do?: Understanding the Work of Christ." *The class is in-person only at this time. If you would like to join via Zoom, please contact Pete Bloss at (228) 861-0817.*

Class description: When Jesus approached John the Baptist to be baptized, John initially objected. But Jesus responded by saying that it was necessary "to fulfill all righteousness." (Matt. 3:15) Why was this act—and others like it—so important? Most Christians understand the importance of Christ's atoning sacrifice and the significance of his resurrection. But how many comprehend the significance of the life Jesus led prior to the crowning weeks of the passion? In this teaching series, R.C. Sproul uncovers what it means for Christ to be the "second Adam"—and what this means for believers today.

READY TO RALLY

How will you feed your soul--and your children's souls--this year? Let's get ready to rally for a great year of Sunday School, adult education, LifeHouse Youth, and meaningful learning and relationship-building. Meet all of our Discipleship Formation leaders during worship September 12, and stay for a hamburger cook-out afterward. Are you a grill master? We're looking for a few good cooks and extra hands. Dads: We're looking at you! Contact Mary Ellen Thornhill or Pastor Will for more information.

SEPTEMBER 12

GULFPORT HIGH YEARBOOK RETREAT

The 2020-2021 Gulfport High School yearbook staff held their annual pre-school year retreat at Westminster on July 17. Twenty high school students and their advisor met to plan for their year together and how they would tell the story of this school year. Please keep them, and the students at all of our local schools, in your prayers as they go back to the classroom this month.



SAVE-THE-DATES:

VBS AND FALL FESTIVAL

Westminster's annual vacation bible school will look quite different this year! It will be Wednesday, October 6 through Friday, October 8, culminating with the Fall Festival on Saturday, October 9. Why October? The Gulfport School District began a new "flexible schedule" academic year this fall, which features shorter summer breaks and new "intersession" breaks in the Fall and Spring. Instead of packing more into a shorter summer, the Discipleship Formation committee has decided to take advantage of these new breaks to make sure children have faith-forming activities throughout the year. October, also, might be a bit cooler for our VBS faculty and students! Contact Mary Ellen Thornhill for more information at (228) 868-3605.



SESSION CONTACT INFORMATION

CLERK: Buddy Weir (228) 493-4270; bweir-gulfport@msn.com

ASSISTANT CLERK: Chip Westbrook (228) 861-1122;
cwestbrook@pmp.org

PROPERTY: Karen Barnard (228) 669-0317;
kebarnard55@gmail.com

WORSHIP: Dave Carlson (770) 312-4581;
carlson7457@bellsouth.net

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE: Ted Hammer (228) 313-2167;
coasthoosier@gmail.com

MISSION: Brenda Pace (228) 861-7017; brendapace@yahoo.com
DISCIPLESHIP FORMATION: Mary Ellen Thornhill (228) 868-3605

STEWARDSHIP: Amy Underhill (907) 738-8753;
amygravesunderhill@gmail.com

August 2021

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Children's Sunday School <i>in-person</i> , 9:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School <i>in-person</i> , 9:15 a.m. Communion Sunday / Worship, 10:30 a.m. <i>No LifeHouse Youth</i> | Missions Committee Meeting, 6:30 p.m. | Prayer Group, 10 a.m. | | AA Meeting, 6 p.m. | | |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| Children's Sunday School <i>in-person</i> , 9:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School <i>in-person</i> , 9:15 a.m. Worship/Blessing of the Backpacks, 10:30 a.m. Scout Me In, Cub Scouts, 4 p.m. Lifehouse & Senior High Youth, 5-7 p.m. | | Prayer Group, 10 a.m. Eagle Scout Court of Honor, 6 p.m. | | AA Meeting, 6 p.m. | Cub Scouts Bonfire, 6-8 p.m. | |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| Children's Sunday School <i>in-person</i> , 9:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School <i>in-person</i> , 9:15 a.m. Worship, 10:30 a.m. <i>No LifeHouse Youth</i> | | Prayer Group, 10 a.m. | Session Meeting, 7 p.m. | AA Meeting, 6 p.m. | | |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| Children's Sunday School <i>in-person</i> , 9:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School <i>in-person</i> , 9:15 a.m. Worship, 10:30 a.m. Lifehouse & Senior High Youth, 5-7 p.m. | | Prayer Group, 10 a.m. | | AA Meeting, 6 p.m. | | |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Children's Sunday School <i>in-person</i> , 9:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School <i>in-person</i> , 9:15 a.m. Worship, 10:30 a.m. Lifehouse & Senior High Youth, 5-7 p.m. | | Prayer Group, 10 a.m. | | AA Meeting, 6 p.m. | | |



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#loveGodloveGulfport