

# WESTMINSTER Messenger

MARCH 2018 • VOLUME 46 • ISSUE 3



**Westminster**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**GLOBAL MISSIONS  
AT WESTMINSTER**



# WELCOME

MARCH 2018 • VOLUME 46 • ISSUE 3

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**Join us for  
worship on  
Sundays at  
10:00 a.m.**

*Cover Image: Sarah meeting a  
new friend during the 2017  
El Salvador Mission Trip*

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## **You are always welcome to worship with us!**

We believe that our life together centers around meeting God in worship. At Westminster, our sermons are rooted in the Bible and connected to everyday life. Here, people from all ages and varying backgrounds come together to form a community shaped by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

### **March 4**

*The Scripture readings will be Exodus 20:1-17 & John 2:13-22.*

On the 3rd Sunday of Lent, Pastor Scott will preach "Finding Sacred Amidst the Profane." We will celebrate Holy Communion together.

### **March 11**

*The Scripture readings will be Numbers 21:4-9 & John 3:14-21.*

On the 4th Sunday in Lent, Pastor Scott's sermon will be "T.U.L.I.P."

### **March 18**

*The Scripture readings will be John 12:20-33 & Jeremiah 31:31-34.*

On the 5th Sunday in Lent, Pastor Scott will preach "New Covenant = New Way."

### **March 25: Palm Sunday**

On Palm Sunday, Pastor Bill and Pastor Scott will have a special presentation.

### **March 29: Maundy Thursday**

*The Scripture readings will be Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19 & John 13:1-17, 31b-35.*

On Maundy Thursday, Pastor Scott's sermon will be "Stinky Love."

### **March 30: Good Friday**

*The Scripture readings will be John 18:1-19:42.*

On Good Friday, Pastor Scott's sermon will be "The Longest Day."

## **WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

4114 Allison Avenue • Des Moines, Iowa 50310-3398  
515-274-1534 • fax 515-274-1537 • [www.westpres.org](http://www.westpres.org)  
Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

### **PASTORAL STAFF**

Rev. Dr. Scott Paczkowski, Senior Pastor - [scott@westpres.org](mailto:scott@westpres.org)

Rev. Dr. Bill Ekhardt, Interim Associate Pastor/Chief of Staff - [bill@westpres.org](mailto:bill@westpres.org)

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Westminster is a welcoming Christian family, joined in discipleship to pray, learn and serve.

### **INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT**

We welcome all persons as participants in our congregation, regardless of age, race, gender, marital status, physical condition, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnic background, economic status, or any other human condition.

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# A Message from Pastor Scott...



## Swing for the Fences

It has been said that we humans overestimate what we can accomplish in one year and we underestimate what we can accomplish in five years. In their book, "God Dreams," Will Mancini and Warren Bird challenge us to, *"Think long because how big you think guides how much you accomplish."* I sometimes forget the true power of the Almighty. It is our task to work hard, think creatively, and pray regularly. It is not our task to force success.

When I was in college I had a friend who said, with more than a little frustration, *"You are the luckiest person I know. How do you always do it?"* First, my friend didn't see the hours of preparation I put forth. I think many of us think we're the only ones who have to work at it, and that everyone else has natural ability. Second, my friend didn't focus on all the times I didn't succeed. In high school, my middle name was "alternate." I was an alternate in almost everything. Finally, I trusted God to direct my life, and if something didn't work out, I didn't get too frustrated, but trusted God had another plan.

For every "lucky" moment in my life, I can name ten to twenty failures. The other part of thinking long-term is in trusting that God will always provide another opportunity for blessings. One of the hardest positions in all of sports is a baseball hitter. The ball comes at you at 75 to 100 miles per hour, moving in any number of ways, from a curve ball, to a slider, to a regular fastball. The knuckle ball is just too crazy to mention. And with a narrow piece of wood or metal, you swing to make contact. Contact flush enough to hit the ball forward, and with height and direction. In Major League Baseball, if you hit 200, you will be kicked out of the Majors. If you hit 300, you are in the Hall of Fame. One more hit out of every ten, a blooper into left field, or one beyond the outstretched arms of the shortstop, is the difference between watching on your sofa or playing in the All-Star game.

The difference between success and failure often isn't huge. No one would say that Hank Aaron or Babe Ruth were lucky. I believe these, and other great baseball players, had one thing in common: they were not easily deterred by failure. Everyone strikes out! These players didn't walk back into the batter's box scared and focused on the last failure, but excited for the next opportunity.

With our church, we shouldn't be upset or depressed if something we try doesn't work. We've made our preparations and sacrifices, now we must trust God to lead us to the spiritual batter's box again, and swing for the fences. We are called to swing for the fences with our care for shut-ins. We should swing for the fences in the way we reach out with social justice. We should swing for the fences with our spiritual objectives. There will be strikeouts, but remember, we just have to make a hit three out of ten times to make a tremendous difference in Christ's name. Keep stepping up to the plate.





# Seeking Vision

*by Bill Ekhardt, Interim Associate Pastor and Chief of Staff*

There is a sense in which we can describe God as constant and timeless. God is the Alpha and

Omega, existing before the beginning and after the end of time. And yet God chooses to engage with us in particular places and times. When Christ entered humanity and became one of us, he was not an abstract, timeless form. Rather he embodied and participated in the traditions, relationships and cultural structures of that unique time. God's work through the church continues this dynamic of bringing the constant into new and changing realities. Christ continues to go into the world, carrying out the kingdom mission of reconciling all things. We seek to join Christ in that ever-evolving mission.

We have a rich history as a congregation. In our 160 years, our culture, programs and staffing have taken different forms. In each era, our Elders sought to lead our church to be who God was calling us to be. In May, our Session is going to spend a day in retreat discerning Vision; looking for where God is calling us to join in Christ's work today. We are seeking clarity about who we are in this moment and where we are called to put our passions, energy and resources. Leading up to this event, the Session has asked Scott and I to lead listening sessions with different groups in the congregation. We hope to collectively hear what God has done, what we see God doing, and what God might call us to do next. We will be inviting conversation about what you have valued in the church, what drew each of us here and what kept us. We hope to seek how we might passionately make an impact in our world together.

On Palm Sunday, March 25, we are going to have a listening session open to the entire congregation after

worship in The Commons. We invite you to save the date. It is our desire to hear from as many voices as would like to share. In addition, we are planning to have listening sessions with the choir, with parents of different age groups, with members in our retirement homes and others as the opportunity arises. We invite you to please come and participate with us as we dream together.

***We are seeking clarity about who we are in this moment and where we are called to put our passions, energy and resources. It is our desire to hear from as many voices as would like to share.***





# Easter

## AT WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN



### **Easter Sunday - April 1**

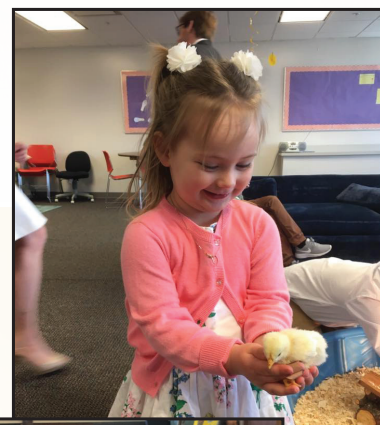
**Worship at 8:45 & 11 a.m.** - Join us as we witness the promise of the Resurrection together. We joyfully proclaim the Good News that is at the very heart of the Gospel: that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. Our Worship will be led by the Westminster Chorale, Brass, and Organ. Easter is a time of celebration, reflection, and renewal. It's a time when we can appreciate the beauty and potential of fresh starts and new beginnings.

### **Special Easter Reception -**

We welcome all as we gather before and after each worship service for a special reception in The Commons.

### **Easter Celebration** - The Christian Education department is

excited to host our 3rd annual Easter Story Celebration on Sunday, April 1! This telling of the Easter story is a full sensory immersion into the first Easter 2,000 years ago. After registration, participants will have the opportunity to try their hand at moving the boulder from in front of the tomb where Jesus was laid to rest. They will get to walk through the tomb, using their senses to experience what it may have been like inside. They will also hear the story of the crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ in an interactive storytelling station, followed by a celebration of new life with some of God's creatures. It will be a memorable experience for children and families to share together on Easter morning.



### **Jazz Sunday- April 8**

**10:00 a.m.** - The popular Jazz Sunday returns to Westminster with a swinging program complementing our worship service. Led by Westminster's own Karla Killinger the program will feature the skills of local professionals and Westminster members, and will showcase the music of the Big Band era. Jazz Sunday will surely have you toe-tapping during and after the service!



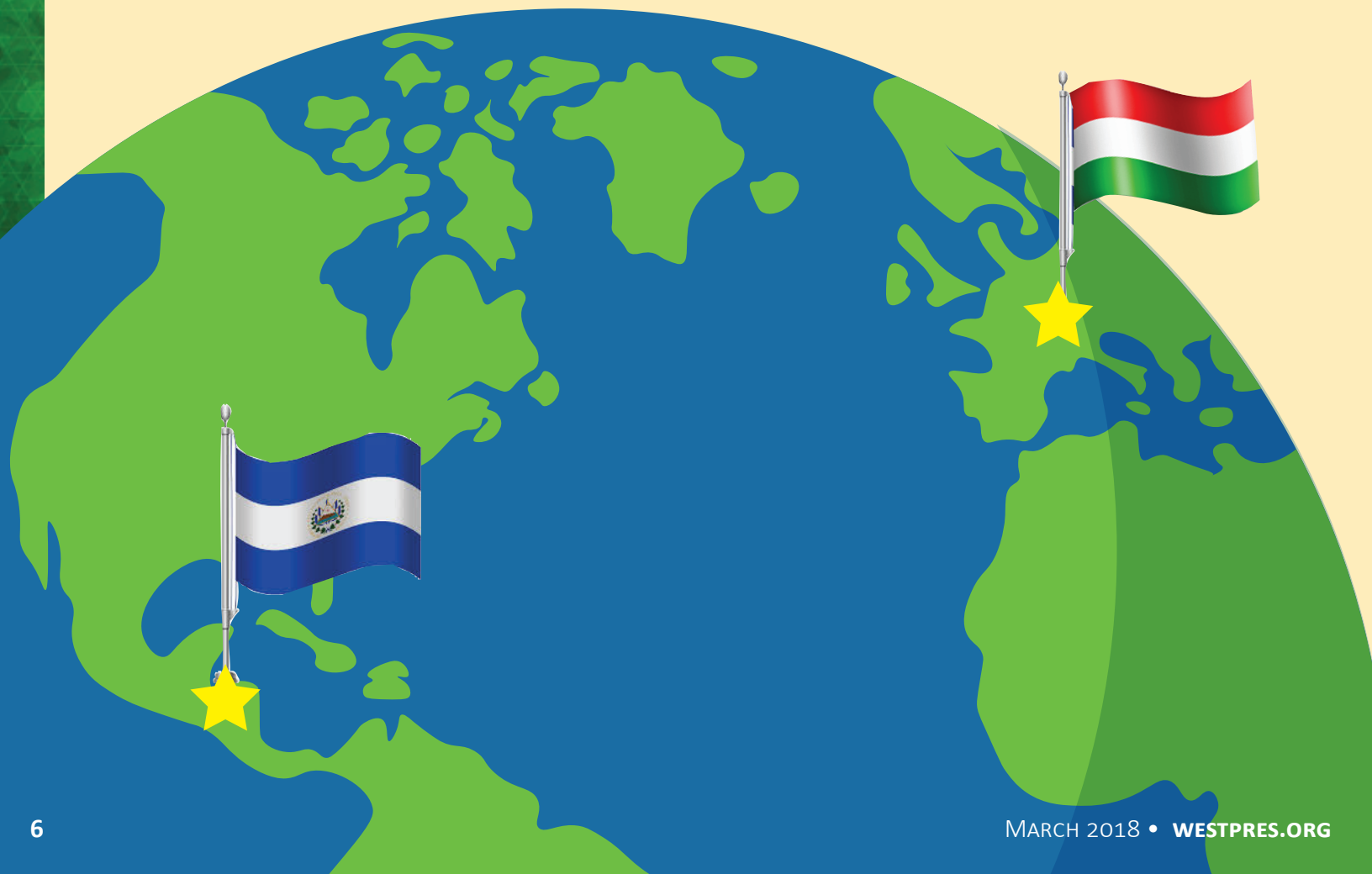


# Westminster's Global Missions

## **Mission is at the heart of who we are at Westminster Presbyterian Church.**

Our volunteers devote countless hours of service to our neighbors both near and far. Westminster Presbyterian Church invites you to participate in its missions locally and globally. In this issue of *The Messenger* we're highlighting our world missions.

Westminster has formed partnerships with sister communities in El Salvador and Hungary. These relationships provide the opportunity for life-changing mission trips to both countries, as well as long-term mission projects focusing on sustainable development, such as providing solar power, potable water, education, and building renovations.





# Sister Church: Szeged, Hungary

The bonds of Christian friendship are far-reaching, connecting two congregations thousands of miles apart... the Szeged Honved Ter Reformed Church in Szeged, Hungary, and Westminster Presbyterian Church in Des Moines, Iowa, U.S.A.

The relationship between our two congregations began in 2001 when the Rev. Dr. Sándor Kereskényi came to the United States with a group of Reformed Church of Hungary pastors, hosted by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Part of the group's learning experience included spending time with local parishes. Sándor was assigned to Westminster and stayed with church members while visiting Des Moines. During that time, the bonds of friendship began to grow. Sándor expressed interest in hosting Westminster members at his church, and the Westminster folks were excited to continue the relationship as well.

Since then, five delegations from Westminster have been warmly welcomed into the homes of our Szeged friends, and three teams from Szeged have been hosted at Westminster. We have learned much about each other, our cultures, and our history. We have worked, worshipped, enjoyed meals and shared fellowship side by side. Those who have made the trips or have participated in hosting feel strongly that our lives have been enriched by the opportunity to open our hearts, share our lives, and most importantly, share our faith. We look to the future with hope and expectation that our friendship across the miles will continue for many years to come!

November 26, 2016, the Szeged congregation celebrated the 70th anniversary of the church's first worship service. This was just a few years after WWII (some of which was fought in Hungary) ended, and at the beginning of communist rule of the country.





# El Salvador Partnership



Our Sister Parish in El Salvador is a faith-based ecumenical effort through the Des Moines Presbytery to support community development and improve the lives of the people living in the neighborhoods of Berlin, El Salvador.

Westminster typically sends a delegation to El Salvador every other year. This mission is not one of charity—simply giving away money or resources to people who do not have them—but rather of mutual love, solidarity, and friendship with the goal being to help impoverished, oppressed, and forgotten people build power in their own communities.

Delegates educate themselves about the history and culture of the country by visiting sites of historical and cultural significance. Traveling to these important places helps our delegates to gain a better understanding of how this nation's past has affected its current conditions, and particularly how past socio-economic and political injustices have contributed to a continuing state of poverty and disempowerment for most Salvadorans.

Delegates also work to build real, sustainable relationships with the people of El Salvador. The hope is that delegates' newfound knowledge and love for the people of Berlin will inspire them to act, pray, and live differently when they return home, to inspire our congregation to further action.



## Scholarships for Salvadoran Students

By Kathy Bassett, Mission Co-Worker in Berlin, El Salvador

Without some kind of accompaniment and financial assistance, many Salvadoran students would not be able to afford the pens, paper, markers, uniforms, and other materials that they need to continue their education. For many children, the greatest obstacle is simply reaching the nearest middle school or high school, as they are several hours away from the closest educational institution. These scholarships help to provide many students with the opportunity to travel to school by car, or to rent a room in downtown Berlín during the school week.



At the local high school – “El Instituto” – the students have two choices: A two-year “General” education program for those that want to finish their education more quickly or have hopes to go to university; or a three-year “Vocational” program, which provides a more-specific education with a certificate in a trade of some sort: secretarial work, computation, accounting, etc.

Westminster's support is investment in the future not just for the student, but also potentially for the community, as these young people develop the confidence and skills to become leaders.

This year, Westminster provided five scholarships. You are helping these students to realize their dreams, better their future, and learn the skills they need to help their community thrive, and they are grateful for your faith in them.



# How Westminster supports families in El Salvador:

**Agriculture:** Because the soil of El Salvador has been abused and overworked for centuries, it will not yield a good crop without the help of chemical fertilizer. Without it, families face poor nutrition or even starvation. Fertilizer, at its cheapest, costs somewhere between \$50-\$60 a bag, making these essential fertilizers impossible for many families to afford (pictured to the right). Westminster helps families purchase a bag of fertilizer that increases their harvest yield dramatically.

**Education:** Westminster provides scholarships for students who are trying to finish their middle school or high school education. (See page 8 for more information.)

**Health:** Westminster helps to provide basic medications and medical supplies. Many families here barely have enough to eat, so when someone becomes sick with parasites, infections, pneumonia, or even just a headache, they often do not have money for the medicines that they need. Even basic medications such as acetaminophen for pain or tetracycline for infections are beyond what many families can afford. Much of this medicine and support for medical appointments comes from proceeds from the Don Justo Coffee project. (Read more about it on page 12.)

**Water:** The rural families of Berlín often do not have enough water to drink, cook, clean, or bathe, and the water that they do have access to is often unsafe, causing them to suffer from parasites, stomach and intestinal maladies, and other more serious conditions.

During their dry period from November to May, many of the people in Berlín rely on a rural water project for all their water needs. Unfortunately, the water only runs for an hour or two every 8 to 15 days—when the system is working. (see picture to the right) Families have no choice but to obtain highly contaminated water by walking for miles to a far-away river, or to purchase this vital resource at an extremely high price.

Westminster has worked to provide water tanks to families in our communities, who use them to collect and save water. We have also provided funds for slow-sand filters that provide families with safe, clean drinking water.

**Sanitation:** Westminster has provided funds for construction of clean, safe latrines for rural families.

## Westminster has also funded:

- Gift baskets for the elderly during the holiday season.
- Sponsorship of community events and celebrations.
- Construction materials for community buildings (church/building for neighborhood meeting).







# Upcoming Events and Activities at Westminster

## Adults

### Community Events:

#### Senior College - "Jam on Jazz"

Tuesdays, March 6, 13, & 20, 1:30 p.m.  
Westminster Hall. For more information  
or to register online, go to  
[myseniorcollege.org](http://myseniorcollege.org).

### Education:

#### Westminster Wednesday

Every Wednesday (except March 14 &  
28), Westminster Hall. Dinner at 5:45 p.m.,  
worship at 6:15, Faith Formation classes  
at 6:30 pm.

#### Pastor Scott's Lectionary Study

Wednesdays (except March 14 & 28)  
6:30 p.m., Multipurpose Room

#### Discipleship Group - Good Samaritan

Sundays, March 4 and 18, 9:00 a.m.  
Simmerman Lounge

#### Discipleship Group - #screentime

Sundays, 11:00 a.m., Classroom 304-E

#### "All Things Considered "

##### Current Issues Forum

Sundays (except March 11), 11:00 a.m.  
See [westpres.org/atc](http://westpres.org/atc) for upcoming  
speakers. Meets in the Chapel.

#### Pastor's Reception for Visitors

Sunday, March 11, 11:00 a.m.,  
Simmerman Lounge

### Groups:

#### Men's Basketball Small Group

Every Monday, 6:30 p.m., The Commons

#### Men's Group

First Wednesday morning each month,  
6:30 a.m., Waveland Cafe; and, every  
Wednesday evening (except March 14 &  
28), 6:30 p.m., Seminary Center

#### Presbyterian Women: Hope Circle

Meets first Thursday of the month  
Thursday, March 1, 10:00 a.m.,  
Simmerman Lounge

#### Restaurant Group I meets the first

**Saturday of each month.** They will  
meet March 3, at Urban Grill at 5:15 p.m.

#### Cooking for the Homeless

Monday, March 5, 8:30 a.m., Kitchen

#### Westminster Book Club

Wednesday, March 7, 6:30 p.m.,  
Simmerman Lounge - "The Circle" by  
Dave Eggers.

#### Pizza Lovers' Small Group

Tuesday, March 13, 5:15 p.m.,  
Godfather's Pizza

#### Gay Lesbian Straight Affirmation (GLSA) Group

Sunday, March 18, 9:00 a.m.,  
Seminary Center. All welcome, go to  
[westpres.org/glga](http://westpres.org/glga) for more information.

#### Stitchin' Time

Tuesday, March 22, 1:00 p.m.,  
Hope Alcove

#### Afternoon Bridge

Friday, March 23, at 1:00 p.m.,  
Simmerman Lounge

#### Presbyterian Women: Eve Circle

Meets fourth Tuesday of the month  
Tuesday, March 27, 7:00 p.m.,  
Simmerman Lounge

### Music:

#### Westminster Chorale

Rehearsals on most Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.,  
Music Room, September through May.

#### Anchor Coffee House

##### Beth Wood

Saturday, March 3, 7:00 p.m.  
Westminster Hall  
Purchase tickets in the church office dur-  
ing the week, The Commons on Sunday,  
or on-line at [www.westpres.org](http://www.westpres.org).



### Get your Teams Ready!

CROSS Trivia Night  
will be April 14



## Kid's Education & Other Activities: (From Babies to 5th Grade)

### Nursery Faith Formation

Every Sunday (except March 11), 9:15 a.m. in the Nursery  
(Nursery childcare begins at 8:45 a.m. every Sunday)

### Sunday School - Preschool to 5th Grade

Every Sunday (except March 11), 9:00 a.m.  
in Children's Classrooms

### Westminster Wednesday

Every Wednesday (except March 14 & 28), in The Commons.  
Dinner at 5:45 p.m., Worship at 6:15,  
Faith Formation classes at 6:30 pm.

### Kids' Leadership Sunday

Palm Sunday, March 25, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary  
Once a month, our kids serve as leaders in Worship.

## Youth Education & Other Activities: (6th through 12th Grade)

### Faith Formation Sunday - 6th to 12th Grade

Every Sunday (except March 11), 9:00 a.m.  
in Youth's Classrooms

### Confirmation

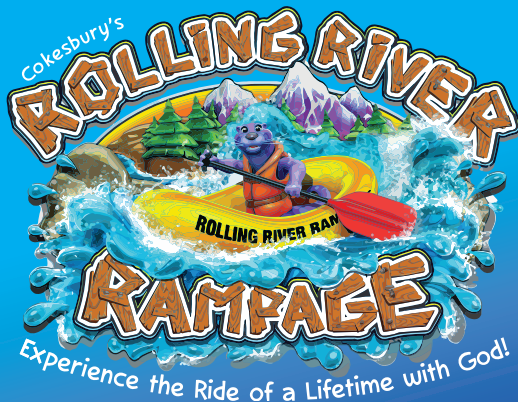
Every Sunday (except March 11), 9:00 a.m.,  
Tower Classroom

### Westminster Wednesday

Every Wednesday (except March 14 & 28), in The Commons.  
Dinner at 5:45 p.m., Worship at 6:15 p.m.,  
Faith Formation classes at 6:30 pm.

### Youth Leadership Sunday

Sunday, March 18, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary  
Once a month, our youth serve as leaders in Worship.



# REGISTRATION OPEN!

**VBS 2018 is JULY 16-20 & 22**

**ROLLING RIVER RAMPAGE: EXPERIENCE THE  
RIDE OF A LIFETIME WITH GOD!**

**REGISTER AT [WESTPRES.ORG/VBS](http://WESTPRES.ORG/VBS)**

## Committee Meetings

### Deacons

Sunday, March 4, 11:00 a.m.  
Seminary Center

### CE Children's Committee

Sunday, March 4, 11:10 a.m.  
Room 303-E

### CE Youth Committee

Monday, March 5, 5:30 p.m.  
Library

### CE Adult Committee

Monday, March 5, 6:00 p.m.  
Simmerman Lounge

### Worship, Music and Arts

Monday, March 6, 6:30 p.m.  
Seminary Center

### Human Resources

Monday, March 12, 5:30 p.m.  
Seminary Center

### Finance & Administration

Monday, March 12, 6:30 p.m.  
Seminary Center

### Church & World

Tuesday, March 13, 5:30 p.m.  
Library

### Outreach Unit

Tuesday, March 13, 6:00 p.m.  
Westminster Hall

### Social Justice

Tuesday, March 13, 6:30 p.m.  
Hope Alcove

### Church & Community

Tuesday, March 13, 6:30 p.m.  
Westminster Hall

### Session

Monday, March 19, 6:30 p.m.  
Seminary Center

### Building and Grounds

Wednesday, March 21, 5:00 p.m.  
Seminary Center



# WESTMINSTER Messenger

PERIODICALS

4114 Allison Avenue

Des Moines, Iowa 50310-3398

**Address Service Requested**

## Coffee From El Salvador

By combining a strong work ethic with near perfect coffee growing conditions, El Salvador's farms have supported their communities while growing excellent coffee. But current coffee trading practices can come between farmers and you. Each year exporters, brokers, creditors, and processors take a larger share of coffee proceeds, leaving farmers and El Salvador's communities with less than 10¢ of every dollar. But there is an alternative.

### Fairly Traded

Coffee sold through Don Justo meets and exceeds internationally recognized fair trade standards. These standards more than triple the income of Salvadoran farmers who grow, harvest, and process this exceptional coffee. This additional income provides access to a host of social services such as education, medical care, public transportation, and recreation facilities. Farm families are also guaranteed adequate housing and access to clean water.

### Purchase the Coffee

Don Justo Coffee is on sale the third Sunday of every month, in The Commons after worship. Choose from Regular Roast, Dark Roast, French Roast, Snickeroo or Mocha, for just \$10 per one-pound bag. Thank you for your support of this mission.

