



Westminster

Presbyterian Church

ZEPHYRS

FALL 2026



BIRTHDAYS THAT END IN ZERO

Pastor Rob McClellan

This past December, I turned 50. Over the summer, the country marked its 250th birthday. Next year, Westminster will hit 70 as a church. What do these round number occasions have to offer us?

In the Older Testament, the 50th year is called the jubilee. It's when there is to be a societal reset – debts are forgiven, slaves are freed, property returns to its owner. Whether and to what degree the concept was practiced is up for debate, but it was at least a societal aspiration to recalibrate the community's life periodically, to reestablish proper balance, to provide an opportunity for new beginnings. What in your life is in need of recalibration? What about our shared lives? (cont...)

NEXT CHAPTERING

Associate Pastor Bethany Nelson

Last fall, my newsletter article was about Camie and I becoming empty nesters, and learning to navigate the “new normal” with our son off at college. Camie quickly informed me that we are NOT calling this stage of life empty nesting, because that sounds too sad. Instead, it is to be called “next chaptering.” In our next chaptering stage over the past year, we decided to try some new hobbies since we have more free time than we once did. I am here to report that they were met with limited success.

First, pickleball. I had heard that this was super easy to learn and to play. Whoever said that was lying! We took about eight weeks of classes and were not much better at the end (cont...)



BIRTHDAYS THAT END IN ZERO

Continued...

How can we participate in the necessary periodic rebalancing of the world?

Our country has long celebrated its independence with fireworks, loud and colorful displays. We have parades and parties, grill out with friends or vacation somewhere beautiful. It beckons us to consider where our joy is, how we mark important occasions, how we prioritize time with those we enjoy being around. Celebrating is a fundamental part of the human experience, from deeply held rituals to new and whimsical traditions.

Churches, like countries, change in composition over time. They shift in focus and expression, and yet they have within them a thread that runs through generations. People in the church feel the weight of being a steward of something bigger than them, something they want to pass on to future generations in good shape. How are we living in a way that will bless those younger than us? What does stewarding this world require of us right now?

These questions of looking back and assessing, looking around and celebrating, and looking ahead and planning are the potential gifts of round number celebrations. The numbers, of course, are themselves arbitrary, but they help us remember we are a part of something significant, lasting, and worth tending. We are to love our lives even as we strive to grow and be the best version of ourselves. We swim in the angst that pervades our country right now and we are to strive to be constructive participants. We have been given the treasure of this faith and faith community by those who came before us and are called to tend it for the next generation.

As the lighter pace of summer gives way to the busier clip of the fall, how will you ground yourself in reflection, celebration, and intention? If we don't do these things, the years will pass but we won't have made them count. You don't need a birthday that ends in zero to make a change.

God's Peace,
Rob

NEXT CHAPTERING

Continued...

of those eight weeks than when we began. After the classes, we tried to join in the fun on Saturdays at our local pickleball courts and got absolutely demolished. Every time. Then our son decided he wanted to play, so we gave him our paddles. Our short-lived pickleball career was over.

Second, pottery. We took a class series on wheel throwing. The first couple of classes focused solely on "centering." You have to have a perfectly centered mound of clay before you can start creating anything, or the final product will be lopsided. Our teacher warned us that centering was not easy ... and she was not lying. Who knew it would be so difficult to get a lump of clay symmetrical? Let's just say we now have several uneven bowls in our cupboard.

Third, violin. This one I am undertaking on my own, as Camie wanted to stay far away from anything musical. I decided it was time to learn a new instrument, so have been attempting to play the violin. I am a musical person, so foolishly believed it would not be a steep learning curve. Let's just say that after about 6 months, I still cannot play an entire piece in tune.

Why, you might ask, am I sharing all of this with you? Because even though it sounds like we have experienced nothing but failure in our next chaptering adventures, that is far from the truth. We met some great people, learned some fun skills (even if we weren't good at them), stretched our minds and our bodies, and got out of our comfort zones.

I worry that in our culture, immediate success or mastery is the only acceptable outcome. But I appreciate that our next chaptering hobbies have been a challenge. Even though I decided pickleball was not for me, I love that I tried it and now know a bit more about the sport. Even though our pottery creations are lopsided, every time I use one of the bowls, I smile at the memories that were made while creating them. Even though I may never be good enough to join an orchestra, learning a new instrument has brought me so much joy.

What new thing have you put off trying because you think you might not be good enough? Or that it might be more difficult than expected? I urge you to give it a try anyway. Who cares if you're never a master? Hopefully you will be learning, growing, and finding joy.

Blessings,
Bethany



THE 4 STAGES OF DROP-OFF

Jeff Shankle | Director of Youth Ministry

You may have noticed that traffic patterns throughout the Bay Area have changed recently. Yes, you got it. School drop-off season has begun. There are few rituals in parenting as ordinary, and yet as significant, as dropping off your child... especially on the first day.

Remember preschool drop-off? Generally, it's an exercise in controlled detachment. Some of us sneak out like ninjas. Others give as long a hug as we can bear. (Or, more accurately, as long as the teacher will allow.) They cling to your leg. You pry them loose. Someone cries. Usually the child. Possibly both of you.

Middle school drop-off is different. Your child is less concerned about whether you'll come back and far more concerned about where their friends are. Generally, nobody cries. Except perhaps the child choking back tears of embarrassment because of their parents.

High school drop-off is slightly different. The school is bigger and so are the stakes. You're thinking about four years from now. They're thinking about who they'll see and what they'll do in the next four hours. Even fewer tears. *We got this!*

Until...

Drop-off at their first dorm room or apartment. You carry boxes upstairs, assemble something from IKEA, make sure they have enough towels, and suddenly the person who once needed you within sight is living somewhere you aren't. Someone cries. You know who.

I recently heard Scott Galloway, professor at NYU, say about his own child's college drop-off, "I've done my job as a parent. I've rendered myself obsolete." It sounded both profound and funny. I wonder how many 80-year-olds reading this, whose grown children still call to ask how to remove a stain, would agree.

We spend years preparing our children to walk through doors without us. So where is the Divine in these consequential moments?

If it's gratitude we seek, write down something you don't want to forget. The ridiculous thing overheard in the car. The way they looked walking through the door. Write a thank-you to someone who helped get them this far. And, if we've got it in us, confess a recent mistake to our children and simply say, "I'm sorry."

Scripture admonishes us to pray when we worry. How can we not worry, at least a little, when the most important part of who we are is separated from us? Yet when we pray, we remember that our God is there even if we aren't. In the classroom. At the lunch table. In the sandbox. In the new apartment. In every unfamiliar room our children enter without us.

"God, help them recognize Your presence and feel the power of Your Spirit there."

As parents, we spend years providing for our children. We buy food in bulk. Run five-star Uber-level carpool services. We laugh, weep, and play alongside them. We dispense advice like wise sages especially as it pertains to tough stains.

Little by little, we learn to let go. Not because they no longer need anyone, but because we trust that the One who is their Heavenly Parent continues to provide what we cannot.

What has the drop-off ritual taught you? We get to accompany our children, these precious gifts from above. But we were never meant to accompany them everywhere forever.

God can. God does. God is already there.

And then we can pull away.

At least until they call asking how to remove that pesky stain!



WPC MUSIC UPDATE

By Rita Lilly, Music Director

I hope that you all enjoyed your summer! Over the summer, I had the opportunity to sing in the Cathedrals of Norwich and Canterbury, England and then at a music festival in Bosnia! I look forward to sharing stories and some pictures with you soon.

Summer music was alive and well at WPC!

I am grateful to members of our choir, Bethany, Rebecca, and Michael B., and our resident “Trio” of Jennifer, Barbara, and Michael H. for sharing their musical gifts for a number of Sundays

this summer.

I was especially happy to arrange for Daniel Berkman to play his Kora for us in August! It is such a beautiful, meditative instrument. I hope to have him grace us with his playing again sometime during the new year.

The full choir will start up again on Thursday, September 3 at 7:00pm. If you enjoy singing or just wish to “check us out”, please come! There is no audition, just a love of singing and that you can sing in tune. If you cannot “read” music, no worries...you will learn!

LEGACY FUND UPDATE

By Ginny Quick, Legacy Committee Chair

When is the best time to donate to Legacy Fund? Any time!

While a planned gift from your estate may best meet your financial goals, Legacy Fund accepts memorial and other gifts in any amount throughout the year. Generous donations and estate gifts in the last year have increased the assets in Legacy Fund to nearly \$2 million.

The Legacy Fund is invested for long-term growth with 4% of the assets made available each year for church programs. While nearly \$24,000 of unrestricted funds were allocated to the 2026 budget, “buckets” for specific purposes have been used in recent years for new wireless microphones, emergency building repairs, Sacred Stories curriculum, guest musicians, speakers and youth programs.

Please consider Westminster and the Legacy Fund when updating your estate plans! If you will let Rob or Bethany know, we will honor you in our Legacy Circle or keep your plans anonymous, if you prefer.

Westminster is deeply grateful for your generosity!



CALLED TO SERVE: HOW WE LEAD THE CHURCH TOGETHER

By Lucy Carrico, Nominating Committee Chair

One of the strengths of the Presbyterian tradition is that leadership is shared. Pastors, Elders, and Deacons bring different gifts and responsibilities, working together to nurture a faithful, caring, and vibrant congregation.

PASTORS provide spiritual and pastoral leadership. They preach and teach, administer the sacraments, provide pastoral care and help the congregation discern where God is calling us. But Presbyterian churches are intentionally not led by pastors alone.

ELDERS, elected by the congregation, serve with the pastors on the Session, the governing body of the church. Together, they provide oversight, help shape priorities, steward our resources and ministries, and make important decisions about the life and mission of the church. Elders are more than administrators—they are called to listen, discern, lead and serve.

DEACONS, also elected by the congregation, lead our ministry of care and compassion. They help us respond to the needs of people within our congregation and beyond it—particularly those who may be ill, grieving, isolated, or facing difficult circumstances. Through their service, Deacons help ensure that our commitment to care for one another is put into action.

A healthy church needs all three: Pastors provide spiritual and pastoral leadership; Elders provide discernment, governance and direction; and Deacons provide care, compassion and service. At their best, they communicate closely, support one another and engage the gifts of the entire congregation.

Serving as an Elder or Deacon is both a responsibility and an opportunity. You don't need to be a theologian, understand every aspect of church governance or have all the answers. What matters is a willingness to listen, learn, contribute your gifts and serve alongside others.

A vibrant congregation grows from shared leadership, shared responsibility and shared commitment to our life and mission together.

As we consider our next class of Elders and Deacons, we invite you to think about where your own gifts might be needed. **Perhaps this is your time to serve** - again or for the first time!

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW CAN COST YOU: PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FRAUD & SCAMS

Sunday, October 18, 11:30 am

Online scams are getting harder to spot—and the ones you've never heard of are the most dangerous. By popular request, AARP returns to Westminster for a 90-minute Fraud & Scam Prevention Workshop, focused on internet fraud.

Scammers are using AI-generated voices to impersonate family members, fake texts and emails that mimic banks and delivery services, romance scams that build trust over months, and phony tech-support alerts to steal your money and identity. Learn how these tactics work, how to spot the warning signs before it's too late, and what to do if you or a loved one becomes a target.

Don't wait until it happens to you. Mark your calendar and invite your friends, family and neighbors to join us for an informative time together. Stay tuned for more details.



THE SOBER SPIRIT: OUR PODCAST LAUNCHES JANUARY 2027

By Karen Halsey

Exciting news: this January, our Sober Spirituality discussion group is branching into podcasting.

The Sober Spirit, hosted by Rev. Brook Scott, brings books and conversations about the journey beyond sobriety to the Westminster community and a wider audience online. The podcast fills a gap between traditional 12-step recovery programs and spirituality that exists in the podcast world. Parish Associate Rev. Brook Scott will engage authors, recovery experts and theologians to ponder questions about the deeper, more authentic longing for the Divine that can undergird addictive behaviors and idolatry of all forms. We invite you to journey with us and explore new ways to be the best self that God created you to be. Be on the lookout for our inaugural podcast discussion soon when our own Rob McClellan interviews Brook about the pod!

To accompany our podcast, we've opened an affiliate storefront on Bookshop.org. At our bookshop, you'll find the books and authors featured on the podcast, along with books that the discussion group has read. Every purchase does double good. Bookshop.org exists to support local, independent bookstores, so a portion of each sale helps keep those shops thrive. And a portion comes back to The Sober Spirit, supporting the conversations we're creating. It's a simple way to grow your reading list and support two good causes at once, whether you're shopping for yourself or looking for a thoughtful gift. Visit our shop at <https://bookshop.org/shop/thesoberspiritpodcast>, and look for our pre-season interview in late summer before our full launch in January wherever you listen to podcasts.



What's Your WHY?

WPC'S 2027 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

Why did you join Westminster? Why do you attend worship services? Why do you volunteer at Westminster? Why do you give to Westminster? Our collective "Why" is part of WPC's mission statement - to be a vibrant community of faith, where we grow spiritually, are grounded in Christianity, and value interfaith relationships and diversity.

Our collective "Why" motivates us to ensure that our staff and their families are supported, that we take care of one another, the community and the world around us. Our "Why"

built and maintains this beautiful and welcoming space for worship. A place where we also serve one another and our community.

As we begin this year's Stewardship Campaign, we ask that you make a pledge to support this sacred place, one another, and our community.

Thank you for your continued support,

*The Westminster Stewardship Committee
Katie Smith (Chair), Erin Elliott, Chris Foskett,
Marcy Hinand, Greg Kennett, Lauren Van Dusen*

COMING THIS FALL

These are just a few more of the many activities and events happening in the next couple months. Be sure to check your eNews and worship bulletin for the most up-to-date information.

IN-GATHERING BRUNCH

September 13, 11:00 am

Our Congregational Life Committee invites you to this tasty meal. Main dishes are provided; you are invited to bring a side to share. This is a wonderful Sunday to invite friends to introduce them to the vibrant Westminster community.

YOUTH PANCAKE BREAKFAST

October 25, 11:00 am

Our middle and high school youth prepare a tasty breakfast and raise money for their summer mission trip.

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

October 11, 11:30 am

New to the church and interested in learning more about Westminster? Join us. Know someone who is thinking about membership? Invite them to join Rob and Bethany for an information session.

Don't forget the return of **Ageless Café** (first Tuesdays at 11:30 am), **Women Connecting** (fourth Tuesdays at 7:00 pm), and **Choir Rehearsal** (Thursdays at 7:00 pm) after their summer break!

Additionally, many of our regular gatherings continue this fall, including our Sunday Bible Study, Monday Sober Spirituality gathering, Wednesday morning class, Friday Men's Connection, and more!

FALL RETREAT: NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Saturday, October 3, 10:00 am -12:00 pm, at Westminster

Would you like to refresh your body, mind, and soul?

Please join us for a Saturday morning retreat where we will experience the power of listening to classical music in a relaxed state to help us take a long, loving look within. Music can evoke feelings, memories, and images which may bring new insights, new self-awareness, and a deeper experience of the Divine.

All are welcome, and there will be an optional lunch after the retreat.

Suggested program donation, \$20 (with or without lunch).

Please contact Bethany (bethany@wptiburon.org) by September 30 if you would like to attend.




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