

WESTMINSTER

presbyterian church | epc

June 2022



VBS RETURNS TO WESTMINSTER!!!

June 20-24, 9-11:30 a.m.

Grades K-5th

Registration is open online. Scan the QR code to register now!



It's not too late to volunteer to help! Whether your God-given gift is teaching, art, administration, photography, serving snacks, or loving on kids, you can be a part of the VBS team. Volunteer signup sheets are in the Narthex, or you can contact Mary Ellen Thornhill or the church office at (228)864-3143.

LIFEHOUSE YOUTH UPDATE BY ALICE BELLANGER



LifeHouse Youth Group met April 24, May 15 and May 22.

During our last meeting in April, we made Mother's Day crafts to give to our moms on Sunday, May 8. We colored pictures, made cards, painted flower pots, jewelry boxes and windchimes! The youth had a lot of fun as we talked about how much our moms do for us and mean to us!

On May 15, we talked about grace. Our Bible verse was Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." We discussed what is so amazing about grace that although we should be separated from God forever because of our sin, God sent us Jesus as a gift so we could be forever friends with God. Our sad human story could have ended with a period after those first seven words. "The wages of sin is death." Period. We have earned it. God, however, says, "Wait a second, the sentence isn't over." He added a comma. The story doesn't end. Instead of receiving what we deserve, separation from God forever, we are given the choice of a free gift. We know what happens if we don't take the gift, and we know what's in the gift: life forever with Jesus! Grace is the gift that says, "I know you don't deserve this, but I'm yours."

Shelby's family provided supper!



LIFEHOUSE YOUTH UPDATE (CONTINUED)

At our May 22 meeting, our topic was "Judging Others." We discussed what Jesus said about "throwing stones" and how we are born with sin; none of us is able to say that we are without sin. It is so easy to judge someone else isn't it? We see someone messing up... and we are quick to give our opinion of how it should be done. Why are we so quick to pass judgment on people? Let's see what Jesus has to say about the topic of judging others. Matthew 7:1-



5 "Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged."

Charlotte's family provided supper!

On Sunday, June 5, *The Wizard of Oz* will be playing at 3 p.m. at Cinemark, if any of the youth and their families would like to attend!

We will meet June 12, for those not going to camp that week! I'm going to try to add one more Sunday to our schedule for LifeHouse.

Our dates for July are July 3 and 24. We are planning on attending a Shuckers game on Friday, July 29.



The LifeHouse Youth now have a new youth room! The session voted to repurpose the room at the east end of the Fellowship Hall into a space to serve our growing youth group. It now includes a couch, bean bags, foosball, a ping pong table, and a giant, full-wall chalkboard. Have a gently-used couch you no longer need? Please let us know: We may be able to take it off your hands for this new, youth-filled space. *Note: Furnishings previously stored here have been preserved and are now located in the Christian Education building for future use in Westminster's ministry of music as post-pandemic singers and music volunteers become available. Interested? Please see worship committee chairman Dave Carlson or organist Bob Chism.*



The Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College's concert choir presents John Rutter's *Requiem* at Westminster.



WE NEED YOUR PICTURES

Pictures tell stories words simply cannot always convey. If you take snapshots of events in the life of Westminster, would you share them with us? Email them to office@gulfportchurch.org or include the hashtag #loveGodloveGulfport on Facebook or Instagram! You may see your photography in an upcoming newsletter.

GIRL SCOUT TROOP 3542

Girl Scout Troop 3542 celebrated its annual graduation and bridging ceremony at Westminster May 16. The evening included the presentation of new vests for girls moving up in the program, as well as a large potluck celebration. Two of Westminster's own, Lilly Congleton and Virginia Shurley, earned their bronze awards, the first of the Girl Scout's three major advancements.



CUB SCOUT PACK 209

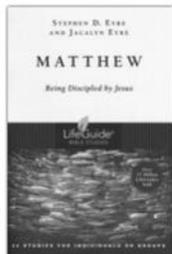
Cub Scout Pack 209 closed the 2021-2022 year with a campout and graduation at the Harrison County Sheriff's Farm May 21. The young men received their various awards, including patches they earned for completing the requirements for this year's scout program. Along with Girl Scout Troop 3542, the boys enjoyed fishing, playing games, building a campfire, eating "walking tacos," and making s'mores.



SUNDAY FUNDAY: Church friends can become best friends! Sunday School for children and youth happens each week at 9:15 a.m. The children's classes are studying the New Testament, beginning in the book of Matthew.

Sunday School classes are safe: Rooms are thoroughly cleaned and students are encouraged to use hand sanitizer.

CHILDREN'S Sunday School



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDY: "Matthew: Being Discipled by Jesus" by Stephen Eyre, Jacalyn Eyre

Sundays at 9:15 a.m. Adult Education Class led by Ted Hammer, in-person in the Library.

Don't miss the fellowship and deep discussion of important topics in Westminster's Adult Sunday School class each week. The class is currently studying, "Matthew: Being Discipled by Jesus."

Class description: What would it be like to be discipled by Jesus himself? What would he teach you about relationships, priorities, wealth, and his coming kingdom? What would you learn from his actions? Matthew's Gospel brings you face to face with Jesus as he calls, teaches, and prepares his disciples.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE BY TED HAMMER

The Congregational Life Committee is involved in the support and encouragement of the fellowship of believers at Westminster.

There are many opportunities for service to any who feel the call to help others. See Ted Hammer for more information.

"Based on the gift each one has received, use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God. If anyone speaks, it should be as one who speaks God's words; if anyone serves, it should be from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To Him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen." 1 Peter 4:10-11 HCSB



DELIVERY OF SANCTUARY FLOWERS TO THE HOMEBOUND

The sanctuary flowers that do not get picked up on Sunday are delivered by our prayer team to someone on the sick or homebound prayer list. On May 10, this beautiful spring bouquet that was sponsored by Susan & Stan was taken to Jeanel Pettey by Karen Barnard.

Ladies Lunch Bunch

The Westminster Ladies Lunch Bunch met at The Rack House in Gulfport on May 27. The June meeting will be on June 24. See Rachel Price, Westminster Welcome, or the bulletin for more information.



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, see Jane Bloss or use the address below: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/64-0386498>



HOME COMMUNION

Westminster is a community of faith that gathers to worship the risen Lord, to hear his Word, and to partake of his sacraments. Gathering for worship is the most basic right and responsibility of church membership: Neglecting to meet together does harm to the spiritual growth of the individual and also to the spiritual health of the church body overall.

However, the session knows well there are members of our church who by virtue of health or other condition simply cannot leave their homes or gather in a crowd; otherwise, they would joyfully be part of the worshipping body. For those members, the session has long authorized home delivery of the communion elements by the pastor and a ruling elder. This home communion service is an extension of the Lord's Table around which the congregation has gathered for worship: A ruling elder is required to join the pastor in home communion, in fact, as he or she functions as a representative of the gathered congregation.

Especially during COVID-19, the session recognizes beloved members of this church have been confined to their homes and have missed the simple joys of going to restaurants, making grocery trips, and living life as we know it. We want to make sure the experience of God's love and grace as signified by the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not something that must be missed. Providing for communion with God and one another is among the session's greatest joys and responsibilities.

If you have been unable to leave your home, and would like to receive Communion, please let Pastor Will or any elder know: We will be happy to arrange it for you.

UPCOMING IN WORSHIP

Westminster will continue in its year-long lectionary readings, which will give an overview of Jesus’s life and work through the course of one calendar year. *As previously announced in worship and monthly newsletters, the weekly celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper will conclude on Pentecost Sunday. For a theological treatment of the practice of celebrating the Lord’s Supper weekly, please see the 2022 Lenten Home Guide for Word and Prayer or the February 2022 newsletter.*

- May 29: *Westminster’s Traditional Observation of Memorial Day.* John 15:12-17. Jesus calls the disciples friends, and tells them there is no greater love than laying down one’s life for his friends. NCBC installation chaplain Lt. Cmdr. Mark Torres, preaching.
- June 5: *Pentecost.* Acts 2:1-21. Jesus’s promise is made true: The Holy Spirit descends on the disciples—now apostles—and they are empowered to complete Jesus’s mission in the world.
- June 12: *Trinity Sunday.* II Corinthians 13:11-14. This passage includes Paul’s final greetings to the Corinthian church, including the Trinitarian benediction (or congregational blessing) that concludes most services of worship at Westminster.
- June 19: *First Sunday in Ordinary Time.* TBD: Worship committee.
- June 26: *Second Sunday in Ordinary Time.* TBD: Worship committee.



TREASURER’S REPORT FOR APRIL, 2022

Budgeted Income: \$17,245.44
 Budgeted Expenses: \$21,002.18
 Difference: -\$ 3,756.74

Other Expenses not in budget, but for which we have funds set aside:

- New HVAC unit for offices \$5,564.00 – from Building Fund
- Youth Camp fees for 11 campers \$4,685.00 – from Youth Fund

We are still operating under a deficit budget of a little over \$40,000.00, or ~25% of our operating budget. With previous years’ projected shortfalls, we have been able to correct this with unexpected increased giving and help from the SBA Payroll Protection Loan/Grant. The SBA Loans aren’t an option anymore, and instead of increasing as we had hoped, giving is coming in below our projections. The stewardship committee is actively working on ideas to address the shortfall—we so appreciate those of you who have pledged and those who are giving! We will be reaching out to the congregation as the year progresses for help with closing this gap!

Alcoholics Anonymous meets weekly on Thursdays at 6 p.m. in the C.E. Building. For more information, call the church office at (228) 864-3143.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

The sign up sheet for Sanctuary flowers is posted on the bulletin board next to the nursery. *A link to an online sign up chart is also 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.

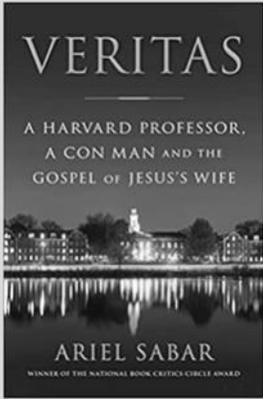
In Memoriam

The family of Dorothy Cunningham invites members and friends of Westminster to a celebration of life reception in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday, June 18 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dorothy entered the church triumphant on December 18, 2021. Due to COVID-19 and family travel arrangements, no visitation with the family was possible at the time.

CHECK IN & GIVE QR

Have you seen our “Check-in and Give” QR code in the Sanctuary? Each week you can check in - and give - via your smart phone. Simply scan the QR code in the bulletin or on the pew. Paper registry of fellowship forms will still be available. Check it out here.

CHECK IN & GIVE



LOOKING FOR A GOOD BOOK?

Occasionally, people will ask me for a good book recommendation. In this, and future, newsletters, I'll pass along a few titles I have read recently and think our church members might like. —Pastor Will

Sabar, Ariel. Veritas: A Harvard Professor, a Con Man and the Gospel of Jesus's Wife. Anchor

Press; New York. 2020.

One of the more pervasive questions asked of the modern Christian faith is, "How do we know the Bible has any degree of textual integrity?" This is different from, "How do we know the Bible is true?" The former seeks to understand how we can know that the Bible we have today bears any resemblance to the original manuscripts written in antiquity: It is not, primarily,

a question of how to interpret the text as we have it. Part of this question is rooted in the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Collection, which were two different and significant discoveries of ancient Jewish and early Christian texts in the mid-20th century. The Dead Sea Scrolls in large part affirm the integrity of the Old Testament, particularly its overarching theological content, while the Nag Hammadi Collection contained among other documents a trove of so-called "Gnostic" literature written after—in some cases just after—the canonical books of the New Testament. The existence of the Gnostic sects of Christianity was not unknown before the Nag Hammadi discovery; in other words, Gnosticism was not scandalous surprise. However, the documents that were rediscovered in the collection at Nag Hammadi gave scholars, in several cases, the first or earliest primary sources of these writings, which had before only been known through secondary references.

The discovery of these Gnostic texts has led some to speculate that one cannot be sure the canonical scriptures—the Bible we have today—has textual or theological integrity. This position has been refuted numerous times: The number, antiquity, and geographical spread of manuscripts of the canonical scriptures, and the lack of major theological divergences among them, suggests the Bible we have today contains remarkable consistency and coherence. Further, these numerous and ancient manuscripts paint a decidedly different portrait of Jesus and his disciples than do the later Gnostic texts, which tend toward much more fanciful detail, internal spirituality, and secret knowledge available only to a select few.

There is far more that can, and probably should, be said about such a major scholarly field: this brief book recommendation contains but a broad brushstroke. However, while serious Christians should examine their faith, including the integrity of the sacred text, since we claim it as the very Word of God, we should also just as seriously examine the claims made by scholars.

This is what Ariel Sabar does in "Veritas: A Harvard Professor, a Con Man and the Gospel of Jesus's Wife." In 2012, a Harvard professor made a splashy announcement just steps from the Vatican: That a newly discovered text provided proof that Jesus had been married. However, the fragment was proved, ultimately, a forgery.

Sabar in "Veritas" is not an apologist for the Christian faith or the integrity of the canonical scriptures that make up the Bible. He is, though, a well-respected journalist who followed a bizarre trail of evidence that had been overlooked or ignored, and not necessarily with nefarious intent, by scholars with confirmation bias operating under the name of one of the world's most august research institutions.

For those who wonder about, or would like to study, the Bible and ancient Christianity, "Veritas" is an accessible read that reminds us that good scholarship must be open: Even to the possibility—I would suggest high probability—that the text and faith imparted to the church over the centuries, including us, has great integrity and worth as we know it.



June

- 1 Connie McCabe
- 8 Sarah Gregory
- 8 Haynes Nault
- 8 Hudson Williams
- 12 Sophia Batson
- 13 Karen Barnard
- 19 Linda Necaise
- 21 Analeise Williams
- 23 Eliza Williams
- 24 Eddie Wilson
- 25 Jeannie Congleton
- 27 Summer Hewes
- 29 Walter Dukes

July

- 4 Rylan Cuevas
- 5 Marc Hopkins
- 10 Dot Houtz
- 11 Sarah Ellzey
- 12 Charlotte Scott
- 13 Thomas Batson
- 15 Philip Shaw
- 15 Nancy Stone
- 20 Jake Ellzey
- 21 Shanna Batson
- 27 Carolyn Cadenhead
- 28 Alice Bellanger
- 30 Vicky Heath
- 31 Philip Hopkins



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

This year, the Sunday School children are participating in their very own service project through Operation Christmas Child. In early December, the children will pack boxes of toys, school supplies, and other needed items for children around the world. In each box will also be a short message about the meaning of Jesus's birth. The children hope to be able to contribute 50 or more of these boxes this year. Will you help them? This month, the children are collecting "flip flops" of any child or youth's sizes, which can be found online or at stores like Walmart, Target, Old Navy, etc. All items for Operation Christmas Child can be left in the red Mission Cart in the narthex.

June 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
Children's Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. Communion / Worship, 10:30 a.m. <i>No LifeHouse Youth</i>	Cub Scouts, 6 p.m. <div style="text-align: center;">  MEMORIAL DAY </div> Church office closed	Prayer Group, 10 a.m.		AA Meeting, 6 p.m.		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Children's Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. Communion /Worship, 10:30 a.m. LifeHouse at the Movies, 3 p.m. at Cinemark	Missions Committee, 6:30 p.m.	Prayer Group, 10 a.m. Gulfport Schools- Last Day of School	Stewardship Meeting, 1 p.m.	AA Meeting, 6 p.m. Highlands & Islands Meeting, 6:30 p.m.		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Children's Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. Worship, 10:30 a.m. LifeHouse & Senior High Youth, 5 p.m.		Prayer Group, 10 a.m. Discipleship Formation, 6 p.m.	Session Meeting, 7 p.m.	AA Meeting, 6 p.m.		Dot Cunningham's Memorial, 11 a.m.
Youth at French Camp (group 1)						
 19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Children's Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. Worship, 10:30 a.m.		Prayer Group, 10 a.m.		AA Meeting, 6 p.m.	Lunch Bunch at 11:30 a.m.	
Vacation Bible School 9-11:30 a.m. daily						
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
Children's Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. Worship, 10:30 a.m.		Prayer Group, 10 a.m.		AA Meeting, 6 p.m.		
Youth at French Camp (group 2)						



WESTMINSTER
presbyterian church | epc
5005 Lawson Avenue
Gulfport, Mississippi 39507

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
GULFPORT, MS 39507
PERMIT NO. 138

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED



VBS RETURNS TO WESTMINSTER!!!

June 20-24, 9-11:30 a.m.

Grades K-5th

Registration is open online.

Scan the QR code to register now!



WESTMINSTER
presbyterian church | epc
phone 228.864.3143
gulfportchurch.org