



Newsletter

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

17 William Street | Auburn, NY 13021
315.253.3331 | office@WestminsterAuburn.org

Worship with us at 9:30 AM or online
@ WestminsterAuburn.org

February, March, April 2026

Thoughts From Pastor Adam



As we settle in for another wintery season of low temperatures and high snow totals, I'm reminded of a quote that's often shared on social media this time of year, which says that "Snow is God's reminder of what grace is supposed to look like. It doesn't pick and choose where it falls, it covers everything." In central New York, we can appreciate the impact that snow has on our lives. Snow falls whether we want it to or not. It abides with us in the cold and dark. It levels uneven valleys. And it makes us notice the world around us in a new way. All of this is true of God's grace as well, which is why we call it a blessing. But lest we forget, underneath all of that snow nature is waiting to burst forth in a dramatic display of new life and celebration. So, let us embrace the grace we've been given in the cold and dark days, knowing that new life is coming and it will be a grand jubilation.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Adam

Deacons Message

The deacons wish you all a very happy new year and prayers to those who worship from home, a nursing center and/or assisted living facility. We invite all to share in the sacrament of Holy Communion by calling the church office; a deacon will then arrange a spiritual visit bringing the Lord's supper to you. We are ready to serve...

Also the deacons would love to hear of your healing and wholeness stories and how God has touched your life. If you'd like to share, we'd like to listen.

As spoken in Isaiah 35:3-4, "Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, 'Be strong, do not fear: your God will come.'"

Property News

The hiring of Jim Dunster as caretaker is proving to be a real asset to Westminster. Jim, who is a long-time member of WPC, is also a contractor himself and therefore brings a high level of skills and knowledge to



the job. In his capacity as contractor, Jim has many contacts in other contracting firms, which is very helpful for locating firms for projects that must be outsourced. Jim has ideas for improving both the maintenance and the appearance of the physical campus, and a real desire to make Westminster a welcoming and structurally sound place.

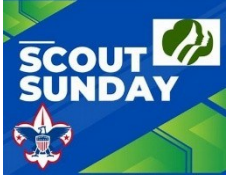
Several projects are planned for 2026. Much needed exterior repairs on the joints between the stones will be done. Interior plaster repair in both buildings will be done. The boiler system will be upgraded, making it functional for years to come. Mini splits for the social room will be installed for both air conditioning and heating purposes. The vinyl windows that were installed about 25 years ago in the social room, choir rehearsal room, and pickle ball room (next to the choir rehearsal room) have reached the end of their proper functional use and will be replaced. A railing for the choir loft will be built for safety purposes, bringing the loft up to code. Repairs to the handicap entrance roof will be done by an outside contractor.

The hard working and knowledgeable members of the committee are Thomas Fessenden, Jim Burlingame, Joe Runkle, Mike Pantoliano, George Fay and Beth Salvage, and, of course, Jim Dunster as caretaker.

WORSHIP NEWS

Worship News

Liturgically, from late winter into early spring, we move from the season of Epiphany into the seasons of Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Eastertide.



Scout Sunday is Feb. 8, the 5th Sunday after Epiphany. As we worship, we will celebrate and recognize the contributions and participation of the Scouts and Scout leaders who participate in Boy Scout and Girl Scout programs locally.

The season of Lent is a time of prayer, fasting and self-examination in preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of the Lord at Easter. It is a period of 40 days — like the flood of Genesis, Moses' sojourn at Mount Sinai, Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb, Jonah's call to Ninevah to repent and Jesus' time of testing in the wilderness.

Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday**, February 18. We will observe the day with the imposition of ashes to remind us of our human mortality and the need for repentance. We will hear and reflect upon these words of scripture: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). Pastor Adam Demetros will offer worshippers a 'drive-through' experience of the imposition of ashes in the church driveway from 6:00-6:30pm, followed by an Ash Wednesday worship service at 7:00pm, to be held in Metcalf Memorial Chapel.

The first Sunday of Lent, Feb. 22, is **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance "Wear your Blue T-Shirt Sunday"**, as a testament to one of the ways the One Great Hour



of Sharing offering makes a difference. For communities impacted by disaster, the blue t-shirt represents thousands of PDA volunteers who serve communities impacted by natural and human caused disasters.

A friendly reminder: you do NOT have to possess a PDA t-shirt to participate in Blue Shirt Sunday! We encourage everyone to **wear blue** to participate in a 'blue out' on this day.

The Sacrament of Communion will be celebrated during morning worship on Sunday March 1.

Mark your calendars and plan to adjust your clocks as we "spring ahead" into **Daylight Savings Time** which begins on Sunday, March 8!

Holy Week marks the final week of Lent, leading up to Easter Sunday, commemorating the last days of Jesus Christ's life, including His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, crucifixion, and resurrection. The week begins with our worship service on **Palm Sunday**, March 29.

The congregations of Westminster Presbyterian Church and Auburn United Methodist Church at 99 South Street – Auburn, will come together for two worship services during Holy Week. Together, the faithful followers of Jesus will meet in the sanctuary of Westminster PC on April 2 at 7:00pm for the **Maundy Thursday-Tenebrae Service**.

On **Good Friday**, April 3 at 7:00pm our churches will worship together in the sanctuary of Auburn UMC. Rev. Adam Demetros and Rev. Alan Kinney are collaborating to plan these special times of worship for our congregations.

Our Easter Sunday worshipping opportunities include an **Easter Sunrise** worship service at 6:30am, which will be held at the Emerson Park Canoe Launch. The **Easter Morning** worship service will be in our church sanctuary at 9:30am, when the **One Great Hour of Sharing** offering will be received.



Worship at Westminster Manor - Small Group Ministry

Friends and members of Westminster Presbyterian Church continue to offer a time of fellowship and worship for the residents at Auburn's Westminster



Manor located at 81 South Street - Auburn NY on the first Sunday of each month at 3:00pm. You are invited to come and worship with the Manor's residents on Feb. 1, March 1 and the second Sunday of April (April 12). Worship participants sing hymns and hear the reading of scripture. A homily is offered by the worship leader, and the Sacrament of Communion is celebrated. All are welcome to participate in this time of worship and fellowship.

MISSION NEWS

Sleep in Heavenly Peace



Volunteering with SHP provides the opportunity to meet other wonderful volunteers within the community. Rubbing shoulders with complete strangers while building or delivering a bed for a child in need can turn into lifelong friendships. The bed-build project brings people closer together as we are all focused on the same goal... helping children Sleep in Heavenly Peace!

On a bed-build day, the SHP-Auburn workshop is where service comes to life! Volunteer kids, adults, families, co-workers, and neighborhood friends work together to cut, sand & stain the wooden components which are then assembled into headboards, footboards, and bed rails. Don't be intimidated by the noise, the sawdust, or the fact that you've never touched a power tool before. SHP is simply looking for willing hearts and hands to help turn lumber into beds. You'll be taught everything you need to know.

Newly built beds serve no purpose until they're delivered. As exciting and fun as building beds can be, giving beds to kids who don't have a bed, is why we do what we do. On a bed-delivery day, SHP bed delivery & setup volunteers see first-hand the direct impact a bed has on a kid's life. For some kids, it will be a joyful, exciting moment, for it will be the first time they've ever slept in a bed of their own. Because bed deliveries can be sensitive situations, the SHP chapter coordinates the appointment times when small teams of volunteers engage in making bed-deliveries.

Not everyone can volunteer in person, but every bed still needs support. Financial donations help provide the lumber, mattresses, and supplies that make each bed possible. Donations of new bedding materials for single beds, including sheets, pillows, blankets and comforters, are needed to make each bed cozy warm and special! Your gifts ensure that more kids can get off the floor and into a safe warm bed.

Public Bed-Build Dates are on these Saturday dates: Feb. 21, March 21, April 18. An All-Women's Build Day is planned for May 9. Public Build Day hours are typically 9:30am – 1:30pm. To pre-register, or for more information visit SHP-Auburn's website: <https://shpbeds.org/chapter/ny-auburn/>

The Sleep in Heavenly Peace-Auburn workshop is located at the Fingerlakes Mall - 1579 Clark Street Road, Auburn, NY 13021. Bedding donations can be dropped off there. Financial donations can be mailed to: Sleep in Heavenly Peace-Auburn, PO BOX 7058, Auburn NY 13021.

March Loose Offering - Sleep in Heavenly Peace

Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP) is a national organization whose motto is "No Kid Sleeps on the Floor in Our Town." It provides a bed to any child who does not have one to call their own. A bed is more than just a place to sleep. It is a place to go when you are sick, happy, sad or when you just want to be alone. Our SHP chapter in Auburn has provided a bed to 1323 children since its inception in 2020, 293 beds in 2025 alone. The March Loose Change Offerings will enable SHP to continue its mission of providing children with their own special place. The next bed builds will be on February 21 and March 21 at Finger Lakes Mall. All skill levels are welcome. See Paul Dungey or Jerry Wickett for more information.

April Loose Offering - Meals on Wheels

In April, the loose offering donations will go to the Cayuga County Office of the Aging Meals on Wheels (MOW) program. In 2025, volunteer drivers delivered 65,988 hot and nutritious meals to 473 program participants. These volunteers logged 6,500 hours and 131,050 miles. Many Westminster members currently serve as drivers, either with a regular route or as a substitute. Additionally, for many of the recipients, the meal delivery may be their only social contact of the day. Your donations will be used to help offset the cost of these subsidized meals and allow this important program to continue to grow in these challenging economic times.



One Great Hour of Sharing



**ONE GREAT
HOUR OF SHARING**

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The work done in support of the causes supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) — disaster, hunger, poverty, climate change, and immigration/migration and refugees — serves individuals and communities in need. This work provides people with safety, sustenance, and hope. The One Great Hour of Sharing donations will be received on Easter Sunday. This Offering helps to improve the lives of people in these challenging situations. Please be as generous as you can.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

Adult Forums

February 1: Korea Peace Journey, "Have You Heard Our Cries?" This forum is postponed until May.

February 8: Scout Sunday

Learn about the role of Westminster Church as a Charter Organization for Cub Scout Pack 43 and the good work done through our Scouting relationships.

February 15: The Role of a Liturgist

Pastor Adam and Amanda Demetros will teach about the contributions of a liturgist to our worship services and offer training for those who might consider serving in this role.

February 22: US Imperialism Through the Lens of the PC(USA)

As Christians we are charged in the Great Commission to spread the Good News of the gospel around the world. As Presbyterians living in the US, what are we to think when our country exports systems, ideas, and weapons and takes controversial actions in other parts of the world? Brian Teucke will lead a discussion of US Imperialism through the lens of the PC(USA).

March 1: Expanded fellowship hour

March 8: Growing Healthy Soil & Nutritious Food
Erin Humphrey Konuma of Silver Tree Forest Farm will lead a forum on exploring market gardening, permaculture and regenerative agriculture. Learn how those practices are implemented at Erin and Peter's diversified micro-farm located in the Hamlet of Owasco. <http://www.silvertreeforest.com>

March 15: Who Is Jesus? – Part 1

March 22: Who Is Jesus? – Part 2

As we continue our journey through Lent and approach Holy Week, trying to answer the question "who is Jesus?" takes on great significance. Jesus himself asked "Who do people say that I am?" And then followed that by asking "who do *you* say that I am?" Join us as we explore what scripture has to say and discover how we might answer that question for ourselves.

March 29: Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast

April 5: Easter! Egg hunt/expanded fellowship hour.

April 12: The Road to Emmaus

For 20 years the Children's Worship Center has been a beloved ministry of our church serving children age three through grade 2 and their families. Although not all of us are raising small children, we still love a good story. Join Storyteller Caitlyn Clark and members of the CE committee as we experience the story of "The Road to Emmaus" (Worship Center style) and wonder together about its meaning for us today.

April 19: Earth Day

In recognition of Earth Day on April 22, this forum will help us explore what our church is doing to foster care of the earth, practices we are good at and practices we might adopt. We will also learn about our presbytery's overture to General Assembly: "On the Importance of Regenerative Farming Practices in Caring for Creation."

April 26: Christian Nationalism

Pastor Adam will lead a discussion on the meaning of Christian Nationalism and its significance in the geopolitical world we find ourselves in.

Sunday Game Day in February

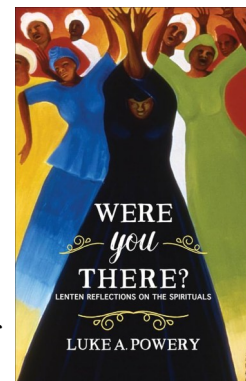


If you're recovered from your Superbowl parties (and possibly craving companionship) by mid-February, the Christian Education and Membership Committees invite you to a Game Day on Sunday afternoon,

February 22 from 3-5 PM in the Junior Room and Great Hall. Bring the kids (if you have any at home), a favorite game, and a shareable snack for some mid-winter fun and fellowship. This is intended for all ages, and we had about two dozen participants at our November game night; let's try to top that number. Beverages will be provided.

Lenten Soup & Study with a Musical Twist

Our annual (and popular) Soup & Study will be held in the Social Room for five Wednesdays during Lent, beginning on February 25 (Ash Wednesday is February 18). Our study this year is a devotional titled "Were You There? Lenten Reflections on the Spirituals" by Luke Powery. Each session will begin with a soup supper followed by the "study" session led by one of five different facilitators (Pastor Adam, Linda MacKay, Susan Marteney, Amanda Demetros, and Paul Dungey). Leaders will share scripture, song, reflection, and prayer based on one or more spirituals. Musical accompaniment will be provided by Donna Riester. (If you desire your own copy of the devotional book, it is available on Amazon for under \$10.) A sign-up sheet for donating soup and other supper items is located in the Narthex. Will you be there for "Were You There"?



NEWS AND UPDATES

Children's Worship Center and "Pray"ground News



Miss Cait and the CE Committee work hard to provide our toddlers and children with meaningful, faith-forming lessons and worship materials updated weekly to follow the flow of the liturgical year. Prior to and during Lent, the Worship Center

stories focus on the ministry of Jesus and several of the parables he told to his followers. The children there are also learning to sing (with hand motions) and play the song "God is So Good" on colored desk bells and hand bells, which they hope to share with the congregation in a future worship service.

Scouting America Troop 43 & Cub Scout Pack 43

Scouting America Troops 43 and Cub Scout Pack 43 are looking forward to an exciting few months ahead filled with fun, learning, and fellowship. February 8 is Scout Sunday, a special day when Scouts attend worship together and thank the church for its continued support. Scout Sunday highlights the values of Scouting, including respect, service, and the Scout Law's reminder that *a Scout is reverent*.

The Scouts are also excited for a Lock-In February 20–21. This favorite event gives Scouts a chance to spend time together enjoying video games, watching movies, playing hide-and-seek, and sharing fun snacks throughout the night. The Lock-In is a great opportunity for building friendships and strengthening teamwork in a safe and supervised setting.

Looking ahead, Troop 43 will go camping at Tuscarora Scout Reservation in March, where Scouts will practice outdoor skills and leadership while enjoying time in the outdoors. In April, Scouts and Cub Scouts will take part in a hike at Green Lakes State Park, exploring nature and our local area.

We are always welcoming new members! Boys and girls from kindergarten through age 17 are invited to join Scouting or simply come take a look and see if it's something they might enjoy. Scouting offers youth the chance to build friendships, learn new skills, and grow in confidence while having fun.

Thank you to our church family for your continued encouragement and support of Scouting America Troop 43 and Cub Scout Pack 43. If you have any questions or need to contact the scouts please email Aaron Creighton at aaroncreight@gmail.com

Palms and Pancakes March 29

Please join us following Palm Sunday worship for a pancake breakfast in the Great Hall provided by the Christian Education and Membership Committees with assistance from the Deacons.



Membership News

Westminster welcomed two new members to our church family on January 24.

Diane Cadwallander has lived in Auburn since the age of two. For 36 years she worked for the Auburn School District as secretary to 11 different principals, two years at the former Thornton elementary school followed by 34 years at Genesee elementary school. Diane and "Rusty" Cadwallander are the parents of Emily Cameron, and grandparents of Lily. Diane has been retired for 15 years and enjoys reading (a lot), knitting, walking, and solving word searches. But she says that "what I love the most is spending time with our Lily!"

Emily Cameron was born and raised in Auburn, graduated from Auburn High School and has degrees from Cayuga Community College, SUNY-Potsdam and SUNY-Oswego. She has worked for Cayuga Community College for 15 years and currently serves CCC as the Director of Community Education and Workforce Development. Emily and husband Mike Cameron are the proud parents of daughter Lily (age 10), and together the three provide a loving family for Cutie, their little Bichon Shih Tsu "teddy bear" dog. The Camerons especially enjoy family time in the Adirondacks. When she is not working, Emily enjoys spending time with family and friends and supporting Lily in her dancing, basketball, softball, and theater activities

Please extend a warm Westminster welcome to Emily and Diane where they are "already home!"



NEWS AND UPDATES

Session News

In January, Session welcomed Eli Hernandez, Karyn Mazzeo, and Linda Russell to the Session class of 2028. They join class of 2026 members Alice Hoatland, Ted O'Hara, and Mike Pantoliano; and class of 2027 members Bruce Blodgett, Susan Marteney, and Joe Runkle. Session meetings are ordinarily held on the third Monday of the month (except for January and February, and no meeting in August).

There are currently nine Session committees which are ordinarily chaired by a member of the Session; or if not, a member of Session serves as a liaison to that committee. In 2026 they are: Christian Education (Audrey McNally chair, Karyn Mazzeo liaison); Finance (Rob Schemerhorn chair, Alice Hoatland liaison); Membership (Linda Russell, Diane Lehner co-chairs); Mission (Susan Marteney, chair); Personnel (Brian Teucke chair, Eli Hernandez liaison); Property (Beth Salvage chair, Joe Runkle liaison); Scholarship (Monta Faye Tuxill chair, Bruce Blodgett liaison); Stewardship (Rob Schemerhorn, temporary chair, Mike Pantoliano liaison); and Worship (Paul Dungey chair, Ted O'Hara liaison). Bruce Blodgett serves as Session representative and Chair of the congregational Nominating Committee.

In addition to committees, Session currently has two active Working Groups: the Building Use Working Group (Susan Marteney, convener) which is tasked with seeking appropriate clients who could make use of the empty spaces in our administration/education building; and the Bylaws and Policies Working Group (Linda Russell, convener) which is tasked with reviewing, updating, and/or writing the bylaws and all policies held by Westminster Church. Revised bylaws were approved by the congregation at its meeting on February 1st. Several policies mandated by PC(USA) are currently being worked on with help from the Personnel committee.

At its retreat on January 24 at the PERC, led by Pastor Adam and assisted by Amanda Demetros, Session composed a Covenant for the scheduling of docket items for meetings and considered suggestions for a possible focus for 2026. Focus ideas included 1) what to do with the administration/education building; 2) defining mission and aligning efforts and budget; 3) identifying and equipping emerging church leadership; and 4) creative thinking about our worship and music experiences. Session will keep these focus ideas in mind as they continue to discern the will of God for Westminster.

Questions about the work of the Session may be directed to Pastor Adam or any member of Session. Once approved, Session minutes are available on request to the Clerk of Session or church office.

In Other Membership News:



Thank you to everyone who continues to wear a nametag for Sunday services. These are proving helpful to both long-time members (some of us with shorter memories these days) and

visitors. And we have been blessed with a variety of visitors recently. Speaking of which, be sure to invite the visitors you greet to sign our guest book in the narthex. (Perhaps we should call it our “visitor’s book.”) This is a way for us to say that “we value your presence with us today.” It is a choice for someone to join us for worship and a blessing for God and our church when they do. Look for the guest book on the lighted podium near the chapel.

And finally, in an effort to be as supportive as possible of our membership, this committee (with help from the Deacons) will be reaching out to invite you to share emergency contact information with us. This is information we hope we will not need to use, but we will rest easier knowing that we have it if we do.

Rummage Sale Plans

The Rummage Sale is scheduled for Friday, October 2 from 5 – 8 during First Friday and Saturday, October 3 from 9 am – 1 pm in the Great Hall of Westminster Presbyterian Church, 17 William Street.

Accepted items are kitchen wares, dishes, pots and pans, seasonal decorations, books, small furniture, records, craft supplies, linens, antiques, framed art, various tchotchkes and so much more. No old text books! Sorting and pricing days will be scheduled in late September/TBD.

If you are cleaning out things now, you may place items behind the curtain on the stage in the Great Hall. Do not leave items in the hallway downstairs.

The proceeds will be divided between church mission projects of the Ugandan Family Education Fund and Auburn Community Soup Kitchen.



NEWS AND UPDATES

Gilchrist Scholarship



The Gilchrist Scholarship Committee has set the date of Wednesday, April 1, 2026 as the deadline for Westminster students to submit an application to receive a new or continuing scholarship from the Douglas J.

Gilchrist Memorial Scholarship Fund. The applications and guidelines can be found on the Westminster Church website (Education page) or they may be picked up in the church office. Please note that first year applicants need to submit letters of recommendation with their applications and will be interviewed by the committee.

Per Capita

It's that time of year again. "Per Capita" is the amount (\$40) Westminster sends to Presbytery for every member on its rolls. This contribution supports the work of the larger church at Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly levels. Members are asked to make a special contribution of \$40 for each person in your family who is a member of the church in order to offset this expense in the church's budget. Remember that the church is assessed for all members on the rolls, including confirmed youth, college students, young adults, out-of-towners, and shut-ins. Those of you with envelopes will find a special envelope for "Per Capita."



Farewell, Rich and Janet!

Rich and Janet Newman have relocated to Ithaca. They will be close enough to stay in touch, but will no longer be a weekly presence at Westminster. In their time here, Rich has been a choir member, Elder and Treasurer, and Janet, a retired PC(USA) pastor, has participated in the bell choir as a ringer as well as led worship and educational programs regularly. Both are beloved friends of us all and will be missed!



Upcoming Office Schedules



Pastor Adam will be away February 10 through February 12 for a planning retreat and away for continuing education March 23 through March 26.

Presidents' Day is observed on February 16, so the church offices will be closed.

Melanie will be out of the office from March 30 through April 3 while she takes a vacation from the cold with her family. Arrangements have been made for a volunteer to open the office and answer phones from 11am - 1 pm during Melanie's time away.

Refresh

Refresh Women's Spirituality Group will meet in the **social room on March 21 at 10**. All women are invited to participate in the study *Who is Jesus?*, a Presbyterian Women's Horizons Bible Study. See Ann Wiley for a copy of the study guide, which is generally considered one of the best produced by Presbyterian Women.

Community Calendar

In the Education Building hallway there is a large calendar posted on the bulletin board. We encourage committees, groups and individuals to use this calendar for noting meetings and events so that others can see what is happening at Westminster. Please use the attached pen to write down the time and space being used on any given day. With so many activities happening at Westminster - this calendar will be a quick way to check and see if a space is free to use.



Social Justice

The SJSJG will have a different meeting schedule in 2026 to ensure maximum participation. During even number months, they will meet on the 2nd Wednesday at 4:30. During odd number months, they will meet on the second Saturday at 10am. They are also hosting two adult forums over the next few months. One will be in February on the topic of US Imperialism and one in April on the topic of Christian nationalism.



Westminster

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
AUBURN, NEW YORK

where you're already home

Westminster welcomes everyone, no matter where you are on your faith journey or your life journey. In faithfulness to our understanding of Christ, Westminster affirms the full inclusion of all God's people in the life and ministry of the church. We welcome persons of every race, gender, age, sexual orientation, family status, ability and economic status into full participation in our faith community. We value questions as much as answers. We encourage curiosity, discovery, and honest struggling with questions of faith.

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