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

September, October and November 2026

Auracast Hearing System Available Now!

The Bettear Auracast hearing assistance system is up and running! The system is very flexible and works with all types of hearing aides (bluetooth and T -coil) and can also be used by people without hearing aides but who can benefit from assistance. Instructions for using the system are available in the narthex as we all learn to use this new system. Thanks to the Hearing Loss Association of America, the Cayuga Community Fund, and the Westminster members who made individual donations to purchase and install this system which advances our goal of full participation for everyone.

Contemplative Hikes

Join Brian Teucke and other "lovers of the trail" for monthly contemplative hikes with Westminster friends this fall. These hikes, at a variety of area parks and trails, provide an opportunity to commune with God in nature while nurturing your body and soul. Upcoming hikes include Treman Park in Ithaca on September 19 at 9am, and and Fort Hill on October 17 at 11am for our annual "All Saints Hike." Details of each hike are emailed the week prior. If you'd like to be added to the hiking email group, talk to Brian or let the church office know.

Calling All Plant Lovers! Our Plant Swap is Back!

Ready to grow your plant family? We are thrilled to invite you to our upcoming Plant Swap! We welcome plant enthusiasts of all ages and gardening abilities to come refresh your collection for free.

How it Works: Bring healthy cuttings, rooted plants, or any clean plant-related items like decorative pots, macrame hangers, or small nursery pots that you would like to trade with other gardeners for something new-to-you! Both houseplants and seasonal garden plants are welcome. If you are able to pre-label your plants, please do. If not, we will have folks able to help identify and label your plants upon arrival. No sales.

When: Sunday, September 13, 2026, from 12 - 2 PM

Where: Westminster Presbyterian Church (Social Room in the Sanctuary Building)

Everyone from novice sprout-starters to seasoned green thumbs is welcome! You can stop in for a quick trade or stay the whole time to chat.

NEWS AND UPDATES

A message from Pastor Adam

As the sunny summer draws to an end and our youth and young families prepare for another academic year, the church also prepares for another programmatic year full of gatherings, worship services, educational forums, and faith filled comradery. We kickoff the new programmatic year with a time-honored church tradition called Rally Day. Some churches might call it Homecoming Sunday, or Fall Kickoff, or even Opening Day, but the sentiment remains the same; God's people are called back together for another season of worship and faith formation. But the interesting part is that we never really left each other. Sure, some folks might have gone on vacation, visited relatives, or spent Sunday mornings on the golf course, but we never left the faith community of Westminster. And more importantly, we never left the body of Christ. So, I suppose it's more accurate to say welcome back. Welcome back from your travels and adventures. Welcome back from your warm weather sports and hobbies. Welcome back to Westminster. We're so glad you're here.

Theology on Tap

Theology on Tap will meet Tuesday, September 29, at 6pm and Tuesday, October 27, at 6pm at Prison City North, and will switch to daytime meetings in the winter months.

Stewardship

Stewardship takes many forms, including giving of our time, talents, and resources to further God's work in our church and our community. In the fall, we ask that our members and friends consider how they can support the church financially through a Stewardship appeal asking for pledges of financial support in the coming year. Although no one likes to talk about money, it is a fact of life that doing God's work requires resources, including paying our pastor and staff, maintaining our house of worship and sharing it with the community, and helping those who need help. Watch for more information about this year's stewardship appeal, and please support the church as generously as you possibly can so that Westminster can continue to be a Matthew 25 church, spreading God's love and helping those who need it most.

Blessing of the Backpacks

We invite the children of Westminster to bring their backpacks to church on Sunday **September 6**, when we will mark the new school year with a **Blessing of the Backpacks** during the Children's Message in worship. We will offer a blessing of the children to remind them of God's love and presence wherever they go. Adults are also invited to bring their briefcases, laptop sleeves, lunch boxes, diaper bags, or whatever "baggage" they carry to be blessed as well.

First Day Jitters September 10

Parents have first day of school jitters, even more than their kids do! On Thursday, September 10 from 8am-9:30am, Westminster will have a table set up by the YMCA driveway with refreshments for parents to chat with each other and unwind for a few minutes on the first day of preschool.

Church Family Photo

We'll be taking the annual church family photo on the church's front steps following worship on Sunday, September 13. This is the 20th year of this annual tradition. Join us on September 13, which is also "Rally Sunday," and be a part of the 2026 family photo! All are welcome—members, friends, and guests!

WORSHIP NEWS

Sabbath Day Worship – Our Seventh Day Blessing

At Westminster, it is our congregation's custom to gather for corporate worship on Sunday mornings. The Sabbath Day, the seventh day of the week, is the day established by God, the creator of all things, on the day in which He rested from all His creation work.

Genesis 2: 1-3. "Thus, the heavens and the earth were finished and all their multitude. 2 On the sixth day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation."

What is it about the Sabbath Day and worship that blesses you, restores you, and fills your cup to overflowing? Let me ask you to take a moment to reflect on your worship experiences. In what ways does your participation in Sabbath Day worship help you to find rest and restorative blessings?

It may help you to think and reflect upon these words from Psalm 23: The Lord is my Shepherd; He leads me; I fear no evil; His rod and staff comfort me; He anoints my head and my cup overflows; and I will dwell in the Lord's house my whole life long.

So, having given it some thought, what is it about worship that blesses you, and fills your cup? Perhaps it is the fellowship you share with other worshippers; or the reading and hearing of the Word spoken. It may be the joyful singing of the hymns and the significance of the hymns' lyrics. You may find comfort, correction, or a call to serve, or an encouragement in the message of the sermon. You may be reminded of God's redeeming love in the celebration and observation of the Sacraments – Holy Communion and Holy Baptism.

Worship is indeed a time to step away from the cares of the world and find rest for your soul! "I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!" Psalm 122: 1.

Singers Wanted to Make a Joyful Noise

After a summer hiatus, beginning September 9th. the Westminster Choir, led by Music Director Lori Rhodes-Pettit, will resume their weekly rehearsals on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM. Anyone who enjoys singing praises to the Lord is invited to join the choir. The only prerequisite is a desire to "make a joyful noise to the Lord!" Come enjoy the choir's camaraderie and share your love of singing with the Westminster Choir.

An Auracast™ hearing assistance system is now available in the church sanctuary for anyone who would like to hear the worship service more clearly. Please ask an usher for help learning how to use this technology for yourself or a loved one.

Upcoming Worship Highlights:

- On Sept. 6th we will celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and there will be a Blessing of the Backpacks.
- Rally Sunday - Sept. 13th: Following worship, people will gather for the annual church family photograph. There will be Rally Day scavenger hunt, a plant swap, and a picnic lunch will be served.
- World Communion Sunday - Oct. 4th: We will observe the Sacrament in unity with Christians worldwide.
- Reformation Sunday - Oct. 25th, We focus on themes of reform, faith, and scripture. During worship, bagpiper Doug Havens will play the prelude: Highland Cathedral, the anthem: Amazing Grace, and the postlude: Scotland the Brave.
- All Saints Sunday - Nov.1st is a day for Christians to honor the lives and contributions of saints, both the known and unknown, who lived their lives faithfully serving their Lord and Savior. (Daylight Savings Time Ends).

MISSION NEWS

Calvary Food Pantry Thanksgiving Baskets

Summer is but a memory, and fall will soon arrive with crisp air, brilliant fall leaves, and pumpkins on the vine ready for harvest. While it may seem a bit early to be thinking of Thanksgiving, the Calvary Food Pantry is gearing up to provide Thanksgiving baskets for those in need in the Auburn community. Calvary Food Pantry offers those facing food insecurity and hunger access to nutritious food. With the approaching holidays, Calvary Food Pantry welcomes donations for the many food baskets they offer to those who may be struggling to afford the items for a hearty and delicious Thanksgiving dinner. The Loose Change Offering for September 2026 will be the Calvary Food Pantry and your donations will be instrumental in providing Thanksgiving baskets for those in our community who are financially struggling. One Thanksgiving basket costs approximately $50, and donations of actual food are discouraged. Please give generously and may your Thanksgiving be day full of blessings!

Warm the Children

The Loose Change Offering in October is designated for Warm the Children of Cayuga County. This important initiative provides warm winter coats to 1,200 children throughout the county who would otherwise have difficulty acquiring coats as winter approaches. Distribution this year is tentatively scheduled for early November.

Westminster Presbyterian Church has assisted this local program since 2021 when The Rotary Club of Auburn needed space to store coats until distribution in October of that year. WPC donated storage space in the education building and lets the group use the Great Hall to sort and pack coats for delivery to the families served. In addition, Westminster has supported the program with Mission Committee donations and Loose Change Offerings. In 2025, loose change totaled $850 and purchased approximately 35 coats.

Warm the Children is a joint venture of the Rotary Club of Auburn NY, CAP of Cayuga/Seneca, and the Citizen. The Auburn Rotary Community Foundation accepts donations and purchases the coats each year. This undertaking is largely volunteer-driven and 100% of contributions are used to purchase winter clothing for Cayuga County children in need.

Fall Rummage Sale 2026

The Rummage Sale is scheduled for October 2 from 5 – 8 pm during Auburn's First Friday and October 3 from 9 – 1 pm. Our own Scout Troop will be selling hot dogs, drinks and other goodies on Saturday from 11am – 1 pm.

Sorting and Pricing Days are September 23 from 10 – 2; September 24 from 5 – 8; September 28 from 10 – 2; September 30 from 4 – 7; and October 1 from 12 – 3. After packing up on Saturday, workers will enjoy lunch together at a local spot. On Monday morning, The Rescue Mission picks up all remainders.

If you are cleaning out over the summer, feel free to bring items to church. Do not leave in the downstairs hallway, but transport up to the stage behind the curtain. Accepted items are kitchen wares, dishes, pots and pans, seasonal decorations, books, small furniture, records, craft supplies, linens, antiques, framed art, various tchotchkes and such. No old text books! If you need help schlepping stuff up to the stage, there will be help on Sunday September 13 and 20 right after church. Look for strong eager men and women.

All proceeds will go to the Personal Care Pantry; the only face-to-face mission Westminster supports. From January – July, we greeted over 475 guests. Each guest may select 5 items such as toilet paper, cleaner, dish detergent, laundry detergent, soap, deodorant, razors and tooth brush/paste along with "freebies" which are donated by congregation members. We also offer Bibles and other literature. There will be a Minute for Mission and Special Offering for the PCP on October 11. This is an opportunity for folks who could not donate/shop/help at the Rummage Sale to make a donation. There will be special envelopes for the offering or you can process on-line. If you would like to help out sorting & pricing or during the Rummage Sale, just show up. It's fun!

LOOKING AHEAD

Loose Change Offering for Local Veterans

The November Loose Change Offering will purchase gas and gifts cards to be distributed by staff at the local VA Clinic on Genesee Street. For the last ten or more years, Westminster has been very generous; it is acknowledged by the staff when the cards are dropped off. You may also donate socks which will be taken to the VA Clinic. There will be a designated box in the narthex.

As American celebrates our 250th, you might consider honoring a veteran from your family who fought in the American Revolution, Civil War, WWI, WWII or any other conflict by making a donation in their memory. There will be a memory board in the narthex for you to name the honoree.

Harvest Potluck

The Mission Committee invites one and all to join us at a Harvest Potluck on Saturday, October 17 at 12:30 in the Junior Room. This is an opportunity to celebrate the success of the Rummage Sale and to just break bread together. Visit with folks you have always wanted to get to know better in a casual setting.

We aren't assigning what you should bring, but no soups or chili or crock pots. RSVP – let us know you are coming – by October 9 calling Shelley at 315.515.7397.

The committee is also reviving the Coat Tree for our Personal Care Pantry friends. You may begin to drop of coats, hats & scarves, boots and other winter items beginning at the Harvest Potluck. Do not leave items in the office hall way. If you come at other times, place goods in the Fireside Room at the end of the nursery school hall.

Opportunities to Serve

The Church Nominating Committee will be making calls this fall to invite church members into ministry as ruling elders and deacons. Elders and deacons serve three-year terms and are ordained and installed to their offices. Elders serve on the Session, and are ordained to a ministry of spiritual guidance, visioning, and governance. The Deacons are ordained to a ministry of compassion, hospitality, and service to those in need within and outside the church. Please give these opportunities for service prayerful consideration if you feel called to these ministries. The congregation will elect new officers at a congregational meeting to be held Sunday October 11.

Refresh Women's Group

The Refresh Women's Spirituality Group will resume its study of "Who is Jesus?" on the third Saturday of each month in the fall in the church social room. The September meeting is September 19 at 10am, with Carolyn Hiza leading discussion. All women of the church and community are welcome.

Parking Lot

The church and YMCA have a 6-month agreement to allow YMCA members to park in 10 spaces marked along the fence. Church members are asked to use the spaces in the middle of the lot. This agreement will be re-evaluated this fall. If you have feedback, please talk to Clerk of Session Linda Russell.

NEWS AND UPDATES

Good Futures Report: The Start of the Process

A small group of six members (Susan Marteney, Ashley Teucke, Audrey McNally, Bob Davenport, Eli Herhandez, and Jill Fandrich), appointed by Session, is working through the Good Futures Accelerator program to help us think carefully and faithfully about the future of our church property. They meet monthly, and do "homework" in between meetings—reading, watching videos, considering guided questions, gathering data, and interviewing church and community members.

Church buildings are resources entrusted to us. They can be places of worship, fellowship, service, community gathering, ministry, and even sources of financial support for the congregation's mission.

The Good Futures process encourages us to approach our property with new ideas and positive energy. That does not mean ignoring the realities we face. We know that maintaining historic buildings is expensive. We know that some spaces are being used less frequently than they once were. We also know that the needs of our congregation and our community are changing.

The question, therefore, is not simply, "What should we do with the Education Building?" The larger question is, "How can we faithfully steward what we have so that it can continue to support Westminster's mission into the future?"

The Good Futures Team strives to involve input from the congregation and pledges to keep you informed of the process and progress. An initial report was shared via email and copies are online and in the narthex. The Team will hold an informational forum on Sunday, September 27, following worship.

Our church has a long history in Auburn, and our buildings are an important part of that history. But our greatest responsibility is not simply to preserve a building—it is to faithfully steward what we have been given so that Westminster can continue to worship, serve, welcome, and make a difference in our community for generations to come.

Deacons News

Staying in touch with those around us is meaningful way to build a spiritual circle of faith. The deacons with the help of our church family and friends, would like to provide a joys and concern page on the weekly Westminstergram. This page would share prayer requests reflecting joys and concerns for our Westminster church family and community. The prayers may be followed up with cards, calls, emails, conversations and /or visits.

Examples of Joys might include, celebrating new baby, an engagement or a wedding anniversary, a milestone birthday, major achievements, college completion, sporting event win/loss or celebrating the completion of a cancer treatment.

Concerns may be focused on comfort during hard times such as job loss, loneliness, sick in hospital, waiting for test results or a specific struggle.

- We are a busy church with many joys and concerns so here are a few details for an effective prayer request list:
- Share things about yourself and not about others.
- Share only things that are not confidential or private.
- Expect the prayer request go to a deacon unless directed to the Pastor.

All members, friends and online viewers may submit a prayer request to Deacon Linda Mackay at linda.mackay28@gmail.com or call the church office.

Social Justice Small Group

The Social Justice Small Group is gearing up for another year of ministering to community member's material needs, offering educational opportunities for the congregation and Auburn area residents, and looking for ways to peacefully protest injustice. We meet monthly- even numbered months on Wednesdays at 430pm via zoom, and odd numbered months on Saturdays at 10am via zoom. We encourage those looking to get more involved in social justice work to join us. We also are inviting folks who want to be linked into our secure signal chats, one for rapidly helping those in need and one for holding elected officials accountable, to reach out so you can get added. Finally, if you have social justice themed topics you would like to explore further, please reach out so we can plan educational opportunities to address them. Contact Ashley Teucke (amteucke@gmail.com) or Brian Teucke (brian.d.teucke@gmail.com) for more information.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

Christian Ed News!

We had a fun summer exploring Old Testament stories in Summer Sabbath, meeting Joseph, Moses, Ruth, Esther, Samuel, David, Samson, Daniel, and Jonah. We had between 4-12 kids every Sunday, and had a great time learning how God calls all kinds of people—men, women, children, old folks— and continues to call us too.

And now, Miss Cait and the Christian Ed Committee are planning a busy fall for Westminster's children, youth, and families!

The Children's Worship Center reopens on Rally Day, September 13. The Worship Center is an age-appropriate worship space for young children (geared for ages 3 through 2nd grade) to hear scripture, pray, sing, and worship at their own level. Miss Cait is the Storyteller, and is accompanied by "greeter," who is a trained and screened adult, in keeping with the church's Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. The Worship Center is off the narthex right outside the sanctuary doors. This year, we are telling some old favorite stories and also some brand new ones as we expand the children's knowledge of God's word.

Our Prayground is open every Sunday! Check out this family friendly space in the sanctuary, offering child-size tables and chairs with a variety of age-appropriate, quiet resources which help children engage in worship. The Prayground welcomes kids (and their adults) of all ages.

New this fall is a "Sunday School type" program called "Faith & Fun," which will meet during the Education Hour on the Sundays when Adult Forums are offered. Faith & Fun will be held in the Worship Center room, and fall lessons will focus on worship and living our faith. Miss Cait and CE volunteers will lead sessions on "Getting to Know Your Bible" on September 20, "Praising God with Music" on September 27, "How to Pray" on October 18, and "Mission and Service" on October 25. Classes are geared for elementary age children, but all are welcome.

Some additional gatherings (game nights, Lego Club, cake decorating, etc) are being planned with details to be shared as we have them. Please join the "Westminster Youth" Facebook page (a safe, closed group page for youth and families), and watch for details in Sunday bulletins and in "westminstergrams" which are sent every Thursday.

Adult Forums

Adults are invited to gather for a variety of forums during the Education Hour following worship this fall. Throughout the year, the Christian Ed Committee plans to offer some "101" sessions on a variety of topics, two of which are offered in the next two months.

September 20: Bible 101

We'll explore how the Bible is organized, what kinds of books and literature are included, how it came to be, and what it means to us.

September 27: Good Futures Update

The Good Futures Team will present a report on its process so far and solicit input from the congregation.

October 18: Being a Good Neighbor

Who are our neighbors? What does it mean to be a good neighbor? Members of the Social Justice Small Group will lead a discussion on these questions.

October 25: Presbyterians 101

On Reformation Sunday, we'll explore Presbyterian history and polity.

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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