

EASTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Program Report



MEETING DATE: JUNE 30, 2024

2023-2024 Program Year

Agenda for Annual Program Meeting

June 30, 2024

Call to Order, Declaration of Quorum
Opening Prayer

Rev. Kristin Stroble,
Moderator

Nominating Committee Report

Susan Smalley,
Chair

Adjournment and Closing Prayer

Rev. Kristin Stroble,
Moderator

**Note: This will be our final program report. Next year we will be combining the program report and the annual financial report into one document.



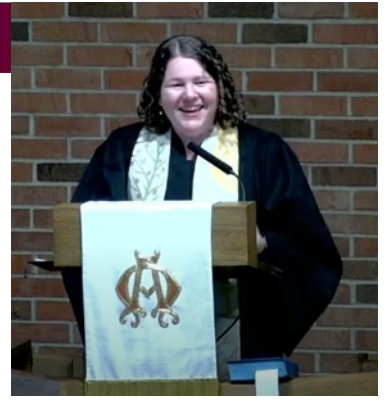
Peoples Church and Eastminster hosted a weekend women's retreat this past September.

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From Your Pastor



Reflection and Looking Ahead:

I am in the midst of my seventh year as your pastor. Seven years is an important number in scripture: seven days of creating, the Sabbath on the seventh day. I am grateful for the seven years we've had together so far; to be part of a community that is flexible and grace-filled, full of love and care. Part of the rhythm that is encouraged for pastors and congregations is a sabbatical, often after seven years. Looking ahead, I will be taking a sabbatical in 2025 and the Session has approved those dates as April 28-July 28, 2025. This will enable us both to have time for renewal and hopefully refreshed energy afterwards.

Reflecting on this past year, we continue to gather and worship, to break bread together and to serve. We have strengthened relationships with our interfaith neighbors this year, hosting an interfaith gathering, events with Rabbi Bigman and Imam Chaudhry, as well as having the joint dinner with the Islamic Center. I pray that those relationships continue to strengthen. We've welcomed new members into our midst and said farewell to others who have moved away. We've gathered most months this year for a meal after worship, strengthening our relationships with each other, and continued to provide for Advent House and the Refugee Development Center.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege to serve as your pastor. I hope you are inspired by the stories told in this report, the ministries and mission of this church. There is much joy and love in this congregation and much work to do. I am grateful to do that work together.

What's Changed This Year?

We have further lived into the increased building usage. Every day of the week our building is being used, not just by us, but the community. The Session continues to discern how we can further serve our immediate neighborhood and let others know about the wonderful things happening at Eastminster. We welcome your input. The Session has made the decision that this will be the last Annual Program Meeting that will take place in the summer. In 2025, we will move to having only one Annual Meeting that will take place in early February.

What I've Done for Continuing Education

I attended the Festival of Homiletics in May 2024 in Pittsburgh. I will be taking time in August to get away and do worship planning for the year.

Some of my favorite books I've read this year:

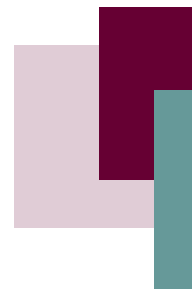
[A Psalm for the Wild-Built](#) by Becky Chambers

[Till We Have Faces](#) by C.S. Lewis

[Family, Family](#) by Laurie Frankel

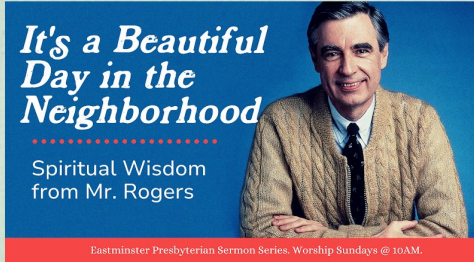
[Tom Lake](#) by Ann Patchett

[Into the Mess & Other Jesus Stories](#) by Debie Thomas



SERMON SERIES

SEPTEMBER 2023 TO SEPTEMBER 2024



SEPT. 10-OCT. 1, 2023

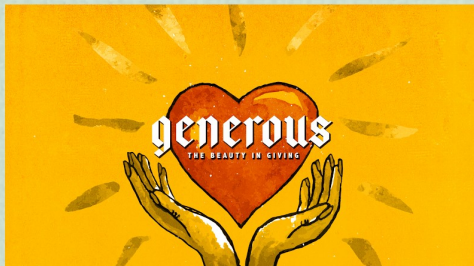
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD:

SPIRITUAL WISDOM FROM MR. ROGERS



JAN. 4-JAN. 28, 2024

GOD IS HERE: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF ESTHER



OCT. 8-OCT. 22, 2023

GENEROUS: THE BEAUTY IN GIVING



FEB. 14-APRIL 7, 2024

WANDERING HEART: FIGURING OUT FAITH WITH PETER



NOV. 12-NOV. 26, 2023

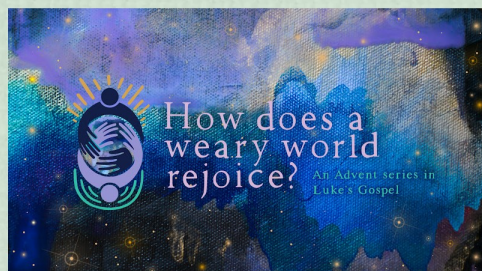
HELP THANKS WOW

THREE SIMPLE YET POWERFUL PRAYERS



APRIL 14-MAY 5, 2024

THE NEXT WORDS OF CHRIST: A SERMON SERIES FOR THE SEASON OF EASTER



DEC. 3, 2023-JAN. 7, 2024

HOW DOES A WEARY WORLD REJOICE?

AN ADVENT SERIES IN LUKE'S GOSPEL



JUNE 2-SEPT. 1, 2024

FAITH IN COLOR: A SUMMER SERMON SERIES

Interfaith Outreach

This year we explored radical hospitality by reaching out to and learning from our neighboring houses of faith. Events included:

A news conference on Nov. 7 in which local ministers expressed their support for the Jewish and Islamic communities in the wake of the Oct. 7 attacks and the following Gaza war.

An Interfaith Gathering of Solidarity and Hope on Nov. 16. The church was packed as people from all faiths around Greater Lansing gathered to support each other. The focus of this gathering was to declare that we, as a community will not tolerate anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, or any form of hate or bigotry. Eastminster facilitated the gathering of donations for Kehillat Israel, Shaarey Zedek and the Islamic Center of Greater Lansing. All donations were earmarked to help pay for their increased security costs.



A dinner and educational session with Rabbi Amy Bigman on Wednesday, Jan. 31 as we studied the Book of Esther. She shared some of the traditions surrounding the holiday and the interpretations Jewish people have of the story. Rabbi Bigman also opened the time up for any questions about Judaism and Israel.



A visit to the Islamic Center on Feb. 22 with Imam Sohail Chaudry. We were given a tour of the center, learned about the basics of Islam and observed a time of prayer.

Members of the Islamic Center came to Eastminster on May 1. We shared a meal and Imam Chaudry and Rev. Stroble talked about the role of women in each faith's Scriptures.



Above left: Eastminster joins with the Islamic Center of Greater Lansing for a meal and fellowship before a learning time about the role of women in the respective faiths.

Below left: Rabbi Amy Bigman shares a Jewish perspective on the Book of Esther.

Below right: Members of the Interfaith Clergy hold a press release in support of the Islamic and Jewish communities.

Welcome Mat



The Capital City Bell Ringers perform at Eastminster.

Eastminster partners with many groups in the community, providing building space for their events. It is an opportunity for outreach and to demonstrate hospitality to our neighbors. Organizations that have made Eastminster their ongoing home include:

- City of East Lansing polling place
- The Lansing Matinee Musicale (including the Choral Ensemble and the Michigan Opera Outreach)
- The Asbury Brass Quintet
- Dale Voelker, organist
- The Capital City Ringers (CCR)
- Capital Community Bell Ringers (a partner organization with CCR)
- AA and Al-Anon groups (6 groups currently meet in our space)
- A local string ensemble

Part of our partnership with the Lansing Matinee Musicale included them bringing their Steinway grand piano into our sanctuary that we are able to use.

Other groups that hold intermittent, annual or one-time meetings have included:

- Daughters of the American Revolution
- GildenWoods Early Care and Preschool
- Recitals for Penny Draper's students
- City of East Lansing meeting
- Renaissance Singers

From Our Guests...



Lansing Matinee Musicale, a 501(c)(3) community music organization founded in 1894, was delighted to complete its first season with Eastminster as its new home for concerts, programs, and meetings. Eastminster has been extraordinarily generous and welcoming, and our members have enjoyed the warmth and accessibility of our new venue.

Monthly public concerts last season included a variety of musical styles from Renaissance to Opera to Jazz and a holiday event with two ensembles that regularly rehearse at Eastminster — LMM's Choral Ensemble and the Asbury Brass Quintet featuring 101-year old tuba player and arranger, Henry Nelson. In addition, we hosted two post-concert luncheons for our mem-

bership in the Green Room. We thank Eastminster for its hospitality and use of its wonderful facilities and for the memories of our times there. —*Tracy Sonneborn*

Neil Myer's Sabbatical



My sabbatical was from mid-May through July 31, 2023. I can best sum it up using five P's:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. What a gift this time was to pray, reflect, and be immersed in the awe and wonder of God's creation without the daily grind of emails, texts, phone calls, and meetings. I was able to remember the sabbath and keep it holy, and embrace the entire sabbatical as holy time set apart.

Parks I took the family on a 17-day trip in which we went to five different national parks: Badlands, Wind Cave, Glacier, Yellowstone, and Teddy Roosevelt. The quality time spent together to take in the majesty of God's varied creation and landscapes was incredible. We drove over 5,700 miles and enjoyed it immensely. The book *America's Holy Ground 61 Faithful Reflections on our National Parks* by Brad Lyons and Bruce Barkhauer was a good companion.

Pool (time with the family). The ability to unwind, jump in and splash in the water was a constant reminder of my baptism. There is just something about

playing in water that never gets old to me.

Putts (Played 20+ rounds) Golf has long been a way for me to be outside and spend time away from work. I don't get to do it often enough, and this is the most I've played since I was in college some 25+ years ago.

Pickleball (my new favorite thing) While we were on our national parks trip, ten new pickleball courts were completed in town. I picked up the game for the first time and found an additional community of people.

This sabbatical allowed me the time to explore this new-found workout method that is good for my mind, body and spirit.

Grateful for the privilege and gift of this time and for support from the staff and session of Eastminster Presbyterian Church East Lansing, the UKirk at Michigan State board, and 1001 New Worshipping Communities. I feel refreshed and renewed and am ready to enter the next phases of ministry in this place where Christ has called me to be.

—Neil Myer

Director of Christian Education, UKirk Campus Minister

Photos: (Above) Neil and his family travel to National Parks during his sabbatical.

(Right) Neil attended the 2023 UKirk National Conference at Massanetta Springs.



Feb. 13, 2024

Day of Remembrance for MSU Shooting

Tuesday, February 13, 2024 marked the one-year anniversary of the mass shooting that took place at MSU. The university canceled classes for the day to mark the occasion.

We remembered Arielle Anderson, Brian Fraser, and Alexandria Verner as well as the other students injured and the collective trauma the campus and wider community endured.

Eastminster opened its doors to students, faculty, staff and community members who were seeking community and a reflective space for the day. Throughout the day, Elder Robin Bell led a guided art reflection and UKirk Campus Minister Neil Myer led a worship service of remembrance. We served lunch. Some UKirk board members offered ministry of presence along with tangible and logistical support including Rev. Kristin Stroble (ex-officio).

All who participated were grateful to have a space to just be and to have the different options for observing that important day including worship and prayer. UKirk expresses deep gratitude for the ongoing and incredible hospitality and sanctuary Eastminster provides as part of its ongoing support of UKirk and the various aspects of this ministry.



Day of Remembrance - February 13, 2024

Eastminster will be open to the community on the day of the one-year anniversary of the MSU shooting from 10am-4pm with self-guided prayer stations and reflection space.

11:00am Guided Art Practice

11:30am - 1pm Lunch (please pre-register)

1pm Brief Worship Service



For questions or to register for lunch email
neil@eastminsterchurch.org

Ministry Highlights

Community Connections

The Community Connections Team worked to organize and offer meaningful activities that build relationships and foster connections within our church family and outside the church within the surrounding community. We also continued tried and true activities and initiatives the church has enthusiastically supported and participated in for many years.

We are blessed to have a generous and giving congregation who always steps up to provide meals and items that help individuals and families in our community thrive and survive.

Committee members: Heather Heitman, Estelle McGroarty, Patsy King and Charlotte Smith

Advent House



UKirk students help prepare a meal for Advent House.

We continue to support Advent House with meals. During the winter months (January through March) soup and sandwiches (at the request of Advent House because they were very popular last year) were provided, and as usual, volunteers came through with enough food to feed at least 50 people. During the remaining months of the year, we delivered a rotating assortment of casseroles on the second Saturday of the month.

We continued our support of the day shelter and revised the items list by eliminating cleaning products, adding family-size boxes of cereal, and focusing on more personal care products.

The committee received Session approval to provide Advent House via North Westminster Presbyterian Church with a \$500 one-time financial gift to assist with costs associated with cleaning the day shelter. Advent House has been experiencing financial challenges with maintaining the day shelter.

Christian Services

Thanksgiving baskets were provided to 10 families. The committee purchased turkeys and church volunteers supplied the remaining items for a Thanksgiving meal. Several church members volunteered to deliver the baskets directly to the families.

Refugee Development Center

We committed to providing five welcome kits per month containing various pantry staples and household products. The kits are now assembled by the children in attendance and a few adult volunteers after the monthly church luncheon. A representative of the RDC did a presentation after worship describing their work and the positive effect supporters like Eastminster have on the lives of the refugees that settle in the Greater Lansing area.



Mission Funding

A funding proposal was received from Water4Life to provide water filters to families in a Guatemalan village. The filters clean the local water supply for families to use for drinking and cooking. After reviewing materials and hearing a presentation, the committee submitted a request for \$7,500 to the Endowment and Investment Committee to fund this project. The request was approved and a check sent.

Dr. Eleanore Kue, a Lansing physician, did an informational presentation after fellowship time to describe her dedication to end poverty in Greater Lansing. Dr. Kue described her new venture to serve as a liaison between individuals and families in need of assistance with housing, food insecurity, health care, day care, and a host of other supportive services. The committee made a \$2,000 donation to help fund this work.

Organizations	Gifts
Christmas Joy Offering	\$660.60
One Great Hour of Sharing Offering	\$1,435
Peace & Global Witness Offering	\$671.47
Pentecost Offering	\$415.45
Advent House	\$4,350.17
Alma Chapel Renovations	\$1,000
Christian Services	\$1,000
PCUSA Shared Mission	\$8,186
UKirk at Michigan State	\$7,500
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance/Ukraine	\$1,931.45
Dr. Eleanore Kue	\$2,000
Water4Life	\$7,500
Abby Nixon's internship with Intervarsity	\$500
TOTAL	\$37,150.14

Church Life Events

Throughout the year, we gathered in fellowship with each other and with our neighbors in the community.

Events this past program year included:

- ◆ Several of us cheered on the Lugnuts for Faith Night on Aug. 19, 2023.
- ◆ The 30s and 40s group met most every Thursday for food and fellowship.
- ◆ UKirk Trivia Nights were held at the Presbyterian Church of Okemos in November 2023 and April 2024. Proceeds from the event supported UKirk.
- ◆ First Sunday of the month church lunch on-going since December 2023.
- ◆ Ukrainian egg workshop in April 2024 enjoyed and well attended by church members, college students and others from the community. Donations from participants were given to support Ukrainian Disaster Relief.
- ◆ We joined members from the Presbyterian Church of Okemos at Beaumont Tower for a carillon concert.

Upcoming events include:

- ◆ An all-church grill out after outdoor worship on July 21, 2024.
- ◆ The next Lugnuts Faith Night game is August 17, 2024. Tickets are \$13.
- ◆ Throughout the summer, Eastminster families will be holding “Open Tables” meals in their home. The host provides the main dish and the guests provide the side dishes. It will be a time for fellowship outside of the church walls.



Photos: (Above) A group of Eastminster people cheer on the Lugnuts during Faith Night 2023.

(Middle) Eastminster hosts its second Ukrainian Easter Egg workshop to raise money for Ukrainian war relief.

(Lower) Eastminster sent teams to play trivia at UKirk's biannual trivia night fundraiser.



Trivia



The team consisted of (from l to r) Robin Bell, Sue Kalvonjian, Linda Hardenbergh, Mike Brown, Mary Harvey and Heather Myer.

Eastminster's trivia team plays every week at Royal Scot at 7 pm. on Mondays.

Last July, the church team, the Merry Brood of Vipers, snatched 1st place in the Lansing area and 3rd place in the state. Prize money was donated to UKirk.

In January, the team tied for first place in the state competition, lost the tie breaker and came in second.

Could you get the answer to the tie-breaker question? It was: "How much of the universe is made up of dark matter?" See the answer on p. 17.



The January team consisted of Robin Bell, Sue Kalvonjian, Linda Hardenbergh, Ruth Hartwig, Becky Clark and Mike Brown.

Women's Retreat

On September 22 and 23, Eastminster participated in a joint Women's Retreat with The Peoples Church. It was held at St. Francis Retreat Center and led by Dr. Shannon Craig-Snello, a Professor of Theology at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. We had eight women participate and enjoyed learning and fellowshiping together.



Photos: (Above) Eastminster and Peoples Church women fellowship during a retreat at St. Francis.



(Right) Retreat attendees participate in activities together.



Infrastructure

Eastminster's Infrastructure team conducts, supports and oversees the administrative, personnel, financial, technological and property/facilities matters of the church. As our name indicates, we work to provide a structure that facilitates the church's mission. Members this year were Mary Lou Clifton, Ron Davis, Linda Hardenbergh, Mike Jones, Bob Kleine, Sam O'Neill, Susan Smalley, Office Administrator Bridgette Redman (ex officio) and Rev. Kristin Stroble (ex officio), with greatly appreciated assistance from Jeff Lapinski, Jeff O'Neill and Bob Nees.

Admin and Personnel

- Covered Eastminster office on days when office administrator was ill or on vacation
- Completed development of the Eastminster emergency policy (August)
- Arranged for a health professional to examine first-aid kit contents and recommend additions (August)
- Numbered outside doors to facilitate emergency response
- Conducted annual reviews for four staff members (September)
- Mary Lou & Sam worked with Kristin to develop a sabbatical proposal for a Lilly Foundation grant (January – March)
- Reviewed Sexual Misconduct policy as required, recommending to Session no changes (December)
- Assisted in Records Day (January 28)
- Recommended approval of Kristin's sabbatical for April 28 – July 28, 2025 (January)
- Recommended increase of Personal Dishonesty bond (part of insurance policy) to \$36,000 as part of change from two people to one person handling weekly bank deposits (February)
- Recommended change in Eastminster Corporation Officers Policy (February) to change corporate officers from being determined by committee position to annual election by the Session (March)
- Arranged CPR/AED training which filled over-capacity with 13 people (April)
- Reviewed and made recommendations for all requests by outside groups to use Eastminster facilities – Draper piano recitals (quarterly), string group (Fridays, 4-6 PM), new AA group (Saturdays, 6 PM)
- Worked with GRA Benefits Group in search of more affordable health insurance for Neil and Bridgette, learning that PHP may be a reasonable option (April)
- Began work to update Session / Committees policy (April)



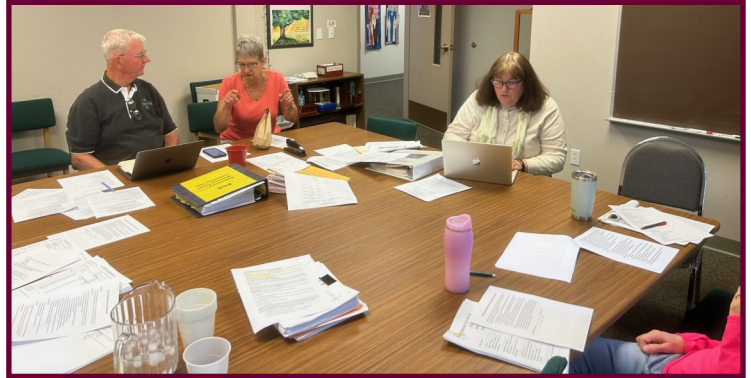
Eastminster hosted an AED and first-aid training session.

INFRASTRUCTURE OVERSAW EASTMINSTER'S STAFF OF:

- Rev. Kristin Stroble, Pastor/Head of Staff
- Neil Myer, Director of Christian Education
- Tamar Mikeladze, Pianist/Organist
- Bridgette Redman, Office Administrator

Finances

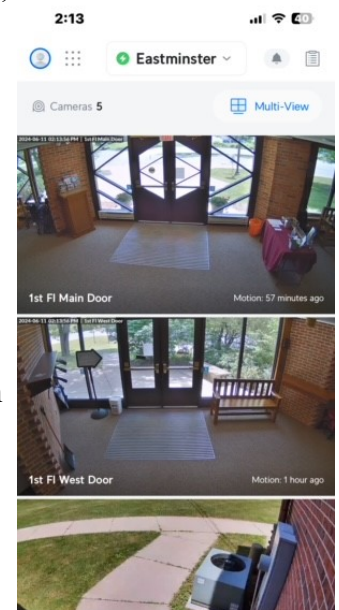
- Reviewed financials (monthly)
- Recommended shifting some funds into CDs for increased interest (November - February)
- Assisted with round-robin financial review process involving Eastminster, First Presbyterian Church of Holt and Presbyterian Church of Okemos (summer)
- Reviewed feedback from financial review, accepting its general guidelines and making some of the recommended changes to our processes (December)
- Made recommendations for use of Employee Retention Credit payment to eliminate negative balance in Capital Improvement fund and to appropriately credit the UKirk portion of Neil Myer's salary.
- Presented "Stewardship Minute" at three October worship services and provided articles for the weekly email newsletter as part of stewardship campaign.
- Developed draft 2024 budget (November/December)
- Recommended creation of five-year financial planning task force with Bob Kleine, Sam O'Neill and up to three additional members (April)



Eastminster performed round-robin financial reviews with First Presbyterian Church of Holt and Okemos Presbyterian Church.

Property/Facilities/Technology

- Scheduled and implemented Battery & Bulb Replacement Day (November 2, 2023)
- Secured bubbling carpet on chancel steps (thank you, Jeff O'Neill)
- Secured center post on west door to resolve latching problem (October)
- Arranged for cleaning pew cushions in sanctuary and carpet on main level (December/January)
- Replaced narthex fluorescent lights with LED bulbs (Thank you, Tom and Linda Hardenbergh) (February)
- Organized purchase and installation of three additional security cameras for lower lever exterior doors and requested funding from Endowment account (March)
- Increased accessibility of main floor restroom by making door easier to open and close and using commode frame to make toilet higher (March-April)
- Held Outdoor Clean-up Day on June 1, 2024
- Fixed damage on electronic sign (June) (thank you, Bob Nees)



New cameras provide greater security.



Ministry Highlights

Faith Formation

The Faith Formation Committee (FF) addresses the spiritual needs of our congregation members from Sunday morning worship to special services for holy days, from study groups on topical issues to weekly Bible Studies. We are grateful for our volunteers who come together to help Kristin realize her vision for meaningful and creative worship services and other activities, including relevant visuals to enhance sermon series.

The committee includes Robin Bell, Mike Brown, Linda Hardenbergh and Sam O'Neill, with the guidance of Pastor Kristin Stroble and Neil Myer, Director of Christian Education, and we thank all for their service to this ministry. We thank Sulin Campbell for organizing and directing a special choir for holy days, such as Easter.

Some of the nuts and bolts the FF committee does includes recruiting worship leaders for every Sunday, candle lighters for Advent; substituting for Children's Sermons as needed, and decorating the church for holy days and liturgical seasons. We thank Robin Bell, Mike Brown, Linda Hardenbergh, Heather Myer and Susan Smalley for performing operating the livestream for the church and our members and others who may not be able to make it to church.

We are grateful for our volunteers who come together to help Kristin realize her vision for meaningful and creative worship services and other activities.



PageTurners
Eastminster's book club met in person and over Zoom at 10 am the second Saturdays of most months. Books are listed on the website and all are welcome.

An important element of worship is communion, typically the first Sunday of the month. Gathering over a meal is Christ-like and we have adopted the practice of eating together after worship the first Sunday of the month. We share the monthly meal preparation sometimes with the Community Connections Committee.

Using the projector and screen, we celebrated All Saints Day on October 29, displaying pictures of members, friends and loved ones who had died during the previous year, accompanied by a single bell tone.

In 2023, Christmas Eve was on a Sunday, so there were two services. The morning service was an audience participation telling of the Nativity story in Matthew and the evening service was a more traditional service, which included an East-minster handbell ensemble, led by Heather Myer.

Sulin Campbell led members in singing special anthems twice throughout the year—at Christmas and at Easter.

We celebrated a baptism and welcomed nine new members to our worshipping fellowship.



Photos: (Above) All generations joined together to hang the greens for Christmas.

(Left) Nine new members joined the church on Pentecost Sunday. Pictured from left to right are Nancy and Tom Hunter, Frank Boster, Bonnie Eckhardt, Shannon Vermaas, Astrid Vermaas, Josh Vermaas, Rebecca Dean, Scott Hosimer, Elizabeth Evangelista and Rev. Kristin Stroble.

(Below) Josh and Shannon Vermaas bring newborn Astrid to be baptized.

Trivia answer from p. 13: About 85%



Life in the Church

1 Baptism

9 New Members

5 Funerals/Committals



Christian Education



Photo: Intergenerational faith formation saw people gather to create tangrams on Pentecost Sunday.

Throughout the year, Eastminster engaged in creative forms of faith formation on many different topics:

Mr. Rogers series

Our early fall education series was centered on the ministry and life's work of Fred Rogers to go along with the sermon series. An intergenerational group gathered for several Sundays and examined different ways that he lived out his calling: "the broadcasting of grace throughout the land."

Visio Divina

How does a weary world rejoice? Incredible insights by Eastminster people of all ages were offered as part of the exploration.

We engaged in the practice of Visio Divina, exploring the artwork that accompanied our scriptures and theme of the Advent series:

How does a weary world rejoice?

Bible Studies

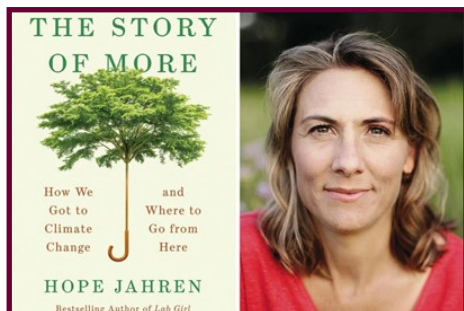
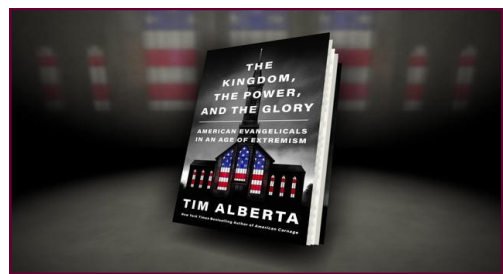
Two bible studies met weekly throughout the year. Each week Rev. Kristin Stroble and Rev. Jeff O'Neill led the groups through the upcoming Sunday scripture readings as participants explored, learned and discussed together.

Pentecost

We held an intergenerational gathering that told the story of Pentecost through shapes.

Book Discussions

A book discussion group on *The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory* by Tim Alberta met after worship on Sundays in February and March. The book is concerned with how the evangelical wing of Christianity has become poisonously entangled with politics, but it has lessons for us persons of faith. The Rev. Dr. Jeff O'Neill led the discussion.



In the spring, a book discussion group formed around *The Story of More: How We Got to Climate Change and Where We Go from Here*, by Hope Jahren. Called "the essential primer on climate change that will leave an indelible impact on anyone who reads it," Jahren asks "the essential question of our time: how can we learn to live on a finite planet?" There are serious ethical and faith issues raised in the book, and people met to discuss what's at stake. Jeff O'Neill led most of the discussion with Josh Vermaas leading one session.

Chancel Coordinator



Have you ever wondered what happens before the worship service on Sunday mornings? Who makes sure the paraments are the correct color and that the pastor has water during the service? Who checks the flowers and cleans up after the service? I bet you thought that the Pastor did all that? Nope, that is the responsibility of the Chancel Coordinator (CC). Nor do the duties stop there. The CC ensures that the candle lighters acolytes use have a wick and the oil candles have enough oil to light. The CC is a member of the

Faith Formation Committee.

I took over for Darlene Bullerdick in July of 2020. She did such a wonderful job for many, many years. I have enjoyed the past four years as Chancel Coordinator and would be happy to “train” anyone else interested.

—Linda Hardenbergh



Chancel table on World Communion Sunday.



Children during worship.

Have you noticed the front of the sanctuary where the children gather during the service? There is a very nice rug that they can sit on.

But what do they do to occupy themselves during the service? There are books on the pews they may use and a container with magnetic *Order of Service* words. Under the pews are some bins with

quiet activities in them: paper, crayons, markers and stencils, pipe cleaners, magnet “people,” stickers, modeling clay, etc.

It is the responsibility of the Faith Formation Committee to see that after Sunday services these boxes are cleaned and straightened and refilled if necessary to be ready for the next Sunday.



Children

Kids Lead Worship Peace

The children of Eastminster led worship in November on the theme of peace. Children spent several weeks preparing for the service, exploring the theme, writing prayers and liturgy, and choosing songs that were included in the service.



Children & Faith

- ◆ Elder Heather Heitman led children in a Wandering Hearts activity during the season of Lent
- ◆ There was a special Easter activity
- ◆ We held a book dedication in honor of Beverly Bonning



SCHOOL BREAK ADVENTURES

On the Friday and Monday off school during a four day weekend in February, thirteen different kids took part in School Break Adventures. These full days included story, crafts, singing, playing, prayer stations, cooking and more. One day this time included a special guest, Tracy Sonneborn, demonstrating an Alpine Horn for the kids to learn about and play.

Deacons

The Deacons continue to serve the Lord and our church family faithfully and creatively in many different and meaningful ways. Some Deacon activities include:

- Ongoing contact with the congregation by making telephone calls or sending text messages/emails to those who are in need of personal contact or are homebound;
- Preparing and delivering meals to our many members for various reasons such as illness, family birth, hospital or physical rehab recovery;
- Continuing our long-standing tradition of mailing cards to all members of our church for birthdays, anniversaries, get well, or just thinking of you and sending holiday cards to members who cannot attend church in person. In 2023-2024, approximately 260 cards were sent to church members;
- Staying connected with our younger congregation members who attend college by sending gift cards to local food establishments during mid-terms and final exams;
- Meeting monthly in person and on Zoom;
- Serving as head ushers and coordinating additional ushers and front door greeters for Sunday worship services, memorial services and special church events;
- Increasing the engagement of children to serve as acolytes and providing nametags so that they feel included and acknowledged for their service;
- Preparing and serving communion on the first Sunday of the month and for special worship services;
- Updating our plate collection practices for handling cash offerings;
- Hosting a housewarming shower for Alex and Tamar Mikeladze on behalf of the congregation in gratitude for their involvement in our church life;
- Hosting Fellowship Hour every Sunday after worship, and for special events, interfaith gatherings, birthdays, funerals, and other church activities (approximately 70);
- Coordinating and/or providing transportation for individuals who are unable to drive to church functions;
- Coordinating memorial services and luncheons; and
- Providing indirect support for other committees' activities as requested.



Beverly J. Bonning, Moderator

*Share with the Lord's
people who are in need.
Practice hospitality.
Romans 12:13*



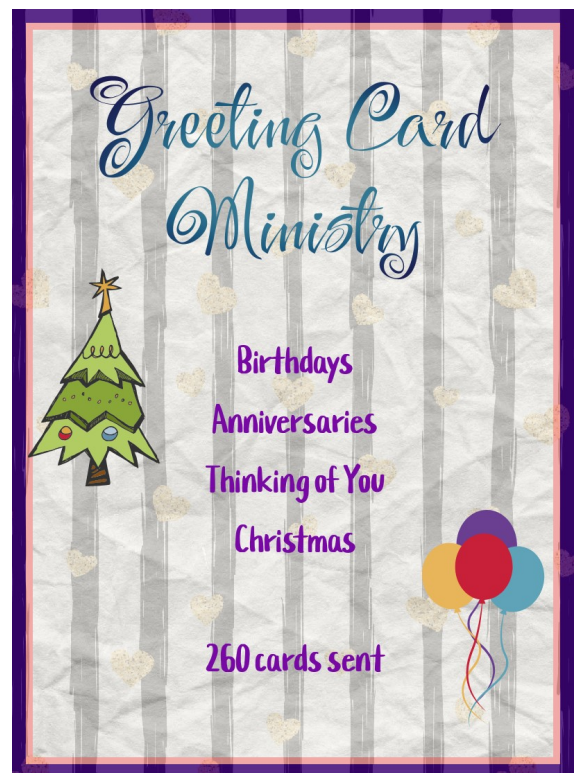
**Deacons: 1st row (from l to r): Sulin Campbell, Barb Dalzell, Suzanne Hunt, Sue Kalvonjian
2nd row: Jeff Lapinski, Cindy Nixon, Brenda Ramsby, Estelle McGroarty**



Photo: Estelle McGroarty helps set up refreshments before the Interfaith Gathering.

Throughout the year, our Deacons quietly and diligently support our congregation in many different ways. May we continue to be the hands and feet of our Lord in the future.

—*Beverly Bonning, Moderator*



Ministry Highlights

UKirk Campus Ministry



UKirkers spent quality time together at Montreat in January.

UKirk at Michigan State feeds hungry college students in body, mind, soul and spirit with the radically inclusive love of Jesus Christ so that they may embody that love in the Church and the world.

UKirk continues to be a transformative faith community and a vital part of the college experience for our students. This past year we had UKirkers from Pennsylvania, Illinois, Georgia, Virginia, Texas, California, and many places in Michigan. We are grateful for the mission support of Eastminster and all the ways this congregation engages and supports this ministry.

Some highlights from 2023-24 year included:

- ◆ UKirk Book Project exceeding the 5,300 mark of gently used and new children's books distributed to kids living in local book deserts. The Project partnered with Greater Lansing Food Bank, Tri-County Mental Health Initiatives, NorthWest Initiative and other community partners.
- ◆ Engaging in several interfaith opportunities with Muslim and Jewish siblings
- ◆ Attending Montreat College Conference in January which included a powerful and healing workshop time of transforming guns into gardening tools
- ◆ Hosting robust weekly gatherings filled with worship, meals, scripture, prayer, discussions, asking questions, and growing in faith together
- ◆ Observing the Feb. 13 Day of Remembrance with worship, art reflection, lunch and open hospitality space



UKirkers work with a blacksmith to turn guns into garden tools.



UKirkers gathered for weekly meals at Eastminster Church.

- ◆ Providing pastoral care and spiritual support throughout the year
- ◆ Welcoming a wonderful class of first-year students
- ◆ Recognizing several graduates who leave indelible and lasting fingerprints on our ministry
- ◆ Holding two team trivia night fun(d)raisers
- ◆ Establishing a new student leadership team for 2024-25
- ◆ Hosting final exam study and hospitality hours
- ◆ Campus Minister Neil Myer being elected by his colleagues as President of the MSU Religious Advisors Association for the 2024-25 school year

Become a
10 for 10
Church

10 People
Give
\$10
Every Month

10 for 10!

UKirk launched a giving campaign this year called 10 for 10. An invitation was extended to all local Presbyterian congregations to become a “10 for 10 church” where at least 10 people would give at least \$10 every month.

As of June 2024, ten Eastminster members and friends had made the commitment.

Please consider a one time or recurring gift to UKirk

The ministry and mission of UKirk at MSU depends on support from our partner churches and the Presbytery of Lake Michigan, and gifts from individuals like you. We invite you to set up a recurring monthly (or annual) gift. When you contribute to UKirk you support transformational faith experiences for students. Our ministry encourages them to share and be the love of Jesus Christ in the world. Thank you for your support of UKirk!

Photos: (Right top) Ukirkers help unload trucks with NorthWest Initiative for food distribution.

(Right lower) UKirkers help children pick out books from the Book Project.

(Left top) UKirkers assemble meals for Advent House lunches.

(Left bottom) Students build relationships at College Conference.



“UKirk continues to be a transformative faith community and a vital part of the college experience for our students.”

Slate of Nominees

Nominating Committee



Robin Bell
3-year term



Linda
Hardenbergh
3-year term



Norm Mackay
3-year term

Elders

Deacons



Elaine Cable
3-year term



Jason Giddings
3-year term



Sacha
Roennecke
3-year term

This committee nominates persons to serve the church as elders on the Session and deacons on the Board of Deacons. It is composed of two elders, designated by the Session, one deacon, designated by the Board of Deacons and four active members of the congregation, elected by the congregation. The pastor advises the committee as an ex-officio member. All members of the committee are elected annually for a one-year term. They may serve up to three consecutive terms. The committee chair is an elder currently serving on Eastminster's Session.

The committee met on June 2, 2024, to consider members for three open deacon positions and three open elder positions. Subsequent activity was via telephone and email.

Members of the Nominating Committee

Susan Smalley, (Chairperson)

Charlotte Smith, Elder

Beverly Bonning, Deacon

Rick Johnston, at-large

Irv Nichols, at-large

Mary Harvey, at-large

Elaine Cable, at-large

Rev. Kristin Stroble, pastor (ex-officio)





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WITH EASTMINSTER**

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