

THE WITNESS

The quarterly newsletter of Westwood Christian Church



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At a Glance

This quarter we have so much to celebrate, and so much to look forward to! In this quarter's *The Witness*, you will find a look back at the last quarter, with baptisms, Love Dane, and pictures of our potluck celebrating Keith and Merrlyn, a look forward to all the opportunities to connect and serve over the coming 3 months, articles from Adam and Drew, and a look at our financial status through the first 9 months of the year.

At the end of *The Witness* you can find some books we read, along with a calendar of the next few months, and pictures throughout of the last few months!

Love Dane

This year's community service weekend was a big success! In addition to a time of fellowship with each other, we were able to clear weeds, trees, and other plants making the playground hard to use, as well as opening up the front of the building to more light, better curb appeal, and making the space more welcoming to our community's children.

We had over 15 people sign up, and I hope that next year you'll consider joining us to help out if you were unable to! Use the QR code below to see the recap video!



**That's what we call
a glow up!**



No more ragweed!

Baptisms!

One of the best parts of ministry is the opportunity to baptize people into faith. On August 25, Craig Steczynksi and Christina Wren were baptized! Craig was with our church for a few weeks while in a program in Madison, and said he wanted to be baptized before returning home, to get a fresh start. Christina grew up around the Mormon faith, but decided that she wanted to give her life to Jesus, knowing that he wanted her in the Kingdom!

If you want to talk to someone about being baptized, please reach out!



Leveraging “God Moments” in Your Family

Drew Larson

One of the challenging parts of discipling children is that life is just moving fast. By the time we notice an opportunity for a spiritual conversation with our kids, the moment feels like it's rushed past us—agh, we missed it! And even when we do notice these “God moments” in our family life as they happen, sometimes an even harder question lurks behind it: what do I do now? How am I supposed to respond?

One practical tool that might help comes from Sarah Cowan Johnson's book, *Teach Your Children Well*. She draws her model from the Biblical story of Moses “turning aside” to attend to God's presence in the burning bush in Exodus 3. It follows four basic steps (which you can learn more about in her book):

1. **Notice:** watch for when some action, emotion, or experience seems to interrupt the daily flow of life, like a “burning bush”. This can be any moment, big or small—the Spirit is always present.
2. **Facilitate Encounter:** “Turn aside” with your child/children and, in prayer, facilitate a personal interaction between them and Jesus. A personal relationship with Jesus can start anytime, so why not get started early?
3. **Clarify Belief:** Lovingly help them evaluate what they believe about God, themselves, and the world in light of Scripture—either through reinforcement, realignment, or both.
4. **Encourage Praxis:** Encourage them into a next step of age-appropriate obedience. Ask “What should we do about what God is saying?” or “What is one next step we could take?”

There are plenty of great ways to practice responsive discipleship, both in your own individual life and in your family's shared life, so if you've found one that works for you, that's great!

But if you feel like chances to talk about Jesus with your kids are just flying past you and you're not sure where to start, try this tool out and see if it helps. After all, you don't have to catch every single one to impact your kids' lives—it only took one “burning bush” moment to transform Moses' life forever.

Why Do We Do It This Way? (Part III)

Adam Tomlinson

Last year, I began writing a series of articles answering the question, “why do we do it this way?” where “it” is church, especially worship services. This quarter, I wanted to describe why we order our services the way we do.

The apostle Paul tells us that our worship should be ordered, “But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.” (1 Corinthians 14:40). But that still begs the question why we should do it one way over another. When services feel relatively similar one week to the next, our members and regulars can feel comfortable knowing what is coming and what is expected. This allows us to be more relaxed and open to bearing witness to God.

Why Do We Do It This Way? (Cont'd)

Our services include some liturgical elements, like reading Scripture according to the seasons of the Church Calendar, responsive Psalm readings, and a communal reading of a benediction every week. For some, this is more than they are used to. For others, it may be far less. “Liturgy” is a word that refers to an order of worship, generally, and therefore, nearly all churches have common elements. Whether a “shake the hand of your neighbor” time, being led in prayer, communion meditations, even expecting a sermon or songs is a form of liturgy.

“Liturgy” comes from the Greek word, *leiturgia* which is a combination of two words: *leitōs*, which means “people” (where we get the word laity) and *ergon*, which means “work.” This etymological lesson is only important because the origin of the word for worship, means “the work of/by/for the people. This is why we include things like communal scripture readings, communal sayings, and prayers that invite congregational involvement.

One of the beautiful things about a worship service that involves more “liturgical” elements is that it reminds us that the congregation has a bigger role in worship than simply singing—which can happen when the congregation only opens its mouth to sing and eat communion. It’s no wonder we have a “consumerism” problem in the church, when many service simply serve people, rather than involving them. It is our desire for everyone who is a part of our service to feel like they are contributing.

For many Christian Churches, this feels foreign, much like a mainline or Roman Catholic church service, and, perhaps, unlike a service that is based on the New Testament. But in 1835, Alexander Campbell published his book *The Christian System*, which included a description of a communion service that he attended, which he describes as normal. You may notice some liturgical elements in this service.

This service included a call to worship, a collecting prayer, singing of a Psalm, a reading from the Gospels, here the history of the crucifixion, followed by prayer for the community and those outside it, the reading of an Epistle, some singing, Communion with a meditation offered—it’s hard to know if this was the same every time not. After which, they were led in a prayer, before members of the community were invited to bring readings from the Old and New Testaments with short remarks made on each, before dismissing at the agreed upon hour.

We can see that worship order has changed much and that even in our own tradition, it has not always been the same. And even though many churches have opted away from traditional liturgical elements, even our own tradition has used them. Therefore, we should feel free to worship in an order and form that serves our community the best, so long as we cling to fellowship, the Apostles teaching, the Breaking of Bread, and to prayer (Acts 2:42).

Looking Forward

We have so much to look forward to this coming quarter! I hope you'll join us for the special opportunities for evangelism, service, discipleship, fellowship, and church unity!

Trunk or Treat!

On October 26, at 1pm, Westwood is joining together with Good Shepherd Lutheran, once again, to host a Trunk or Treat for our community. Trunk or Treat is an alternative method of candy collection where families can bring their children to a central location (in this case, GLCC) and go from car to car receiving candy from people who have dressed up and/or decorated their trunk with a theme. We'd love to have 10 cars participate in this year's Trunk or Treat! If you can help, please sign up! I hear that Hy-Vee has kits for decorating your car for \$8!

ICOM

It is not too late to sign up to ride the bus with Westwood to the International Conference on Missions! We are going to Lexington, KY to be encouraged, equipped, and enlisted in the work of growing the Kingdom. Dates are November 14-17, and we would love to have you join us. It's one of Adam's favorite events of the year, and this year we already have 20 people signed up to go! You should come too!

Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service

For the last few years, Westwood has participated in a Dane County Ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship service. This service takes place the Monday night before Thanksgiving and is a splendid opportunity for us to worship with people from different congregations, denominations, and traditions to be grateful to God. One of our core values is working for the unity of the Church, and events like this are great at both being around other Christians while stretching us out of our comfort zones, as well helping us learn to listen to our brothers and sisters in other congregations. The service this year is being hosted at Bethel Lutheran on November 25. Please plan to join us!

Advent Devotional

One of my favorite things we do as a church is put together a devotional booklet that helps walk us through the season of Advent, that is a collection of thoughtful meditations written by the people of Westwood. We will begin planning this year's booklet soon, so be on the lookout for communication regarding writing a devotional. If you want to write something for us, email Adam! We love to have artwork from our children fill our pages as well, so Drew will be in touch with parents soon as well.

Hanging the Greens

Join us on November 24 in the evening to decorate the church for Advent and Christmas! We'll start around 4, and get our decorations out of the basement, enjoy some Christmas music while we decorate and then we'll order some food for everyone who helped. Come have fun getting the church ready!

Thanksgiving Lunch!

Last year, about 20 of us gathered to eat Thanksgiving lunch together, and we will again this year! Join us at noon on November 28 to eat Thanksgiving lunch together! The church will buy the turkey, so bring your favorite Thanksgiving side and/or dessert to share!

Congregational Meeting

Our annual meeting is scheduled for December 8 after church. If you are a member of the church, please plan to attend that day, and to stick around after church, so that you can help us plan our next year by voting on the officers, including elders, and our budget. We'll present the budget at a meeting in November, so please be on the lookout for that information.

Christmas Eve Service

It is our tradition to hold a Christmas Eve Service at 5pm on December 24. Please plan to join us for a candlelight service!

Financial Snapshot

Thank you for your faithful support of Westwood as we continue to look toward the future and what God has in front of us to do! If you would like to set up regular monthly giving, you can do so at westwoodchristian.com/give.

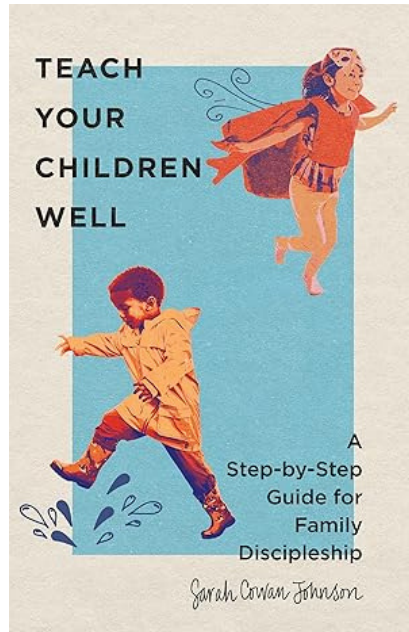
Through September, we are doing well financially as a church. While we are negative on our cash flow by the year by \$5,565, remember that we planned a deficit for the year as we invest in our ministry, especially to children, youth, and families through the hiring of a Family Minister. The deficit we planned was nearly \$50,000, and so you can see that we are doing better than we had initially planned.

One reason we are able to make this investment is due to your consistent giving, years of below-budget spending, and wise financial decisions by our elder team. Our investment portfolio through Church Development Fund and Christian Financial Resources is over \$250,000.

However, our giving for the year is almost \$4,000 behind where we expected it to be, so if you are not supporting Westwood financially, but are a part of the community and are able, please consider doing so. Your support allows us to minister all over the world, including contributions to Hurricane Helene relief efforts. Westwood sent \$700 from our missions budget to IDES, and if you are interested, you can do so too, at ides.org.

Book Ends

Leaders should be readers. Below you can find the best books that Drew and Adam read this last quarter!



Teach Your Children Well: A Step-by-Step Guide for Family Discipleship by Sarah Cowan Johnson

Research has found that, if you're pursuing a goal, the most important thing isn't having a perfect plan—it's simply having a plan, any plan. So if you're starting a journey of discipling your children and building a family culture of faith, I have good news. You don't have to stress about trying to find or create some perfect template or blueprint right off the bat. You can just pick something and get started.

Sarah Cowan Johnson's 'Teach Children Well: A Step-by-Step Guide for Family Discipleship' is such a helpful resource for that "getting started" phase. This book equips parents with everything they need to help their

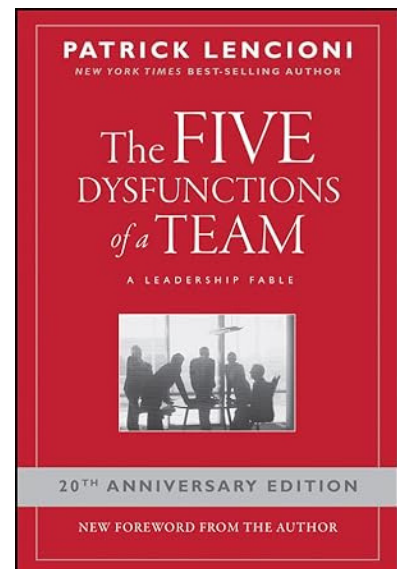
children follow Jesus: a basic framework for guiding their children's faith through every developmental stage, suggestions for family spiritual activities, tools for modeling prayer and Bible study, and insights and strategies for navigating tricky conversations. "Parents have always been part of God's redemptive plan for humanity," she says in an early chapter, and this book gives you simple, effective first steps into that redemption.

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Patrick Lencioni

Patrick Lencioni has been one of the leading voices of teamwork, organizations, and leadership. This book is 20 years old and has stood the test of time as a testament to the things that matter the most to a team.

Many of Lencioni's books begin with a sort of parable or story to set the stage for his main points, so readers learn the points in a fictional setting before being challenged to apply them to their setting.

The 5 Dysfunctions (that is, the 5 things that will destroy a team) are: Absence of Trust, Fear of Conflict, Lack of Commitment, Avoidance of Accountability, and Inattention to results. As I embark on a new role as a supervisor, this book has already become a valuable resource for me to think through building a staff team, working with our volunteer teams, and helping us move forward together.

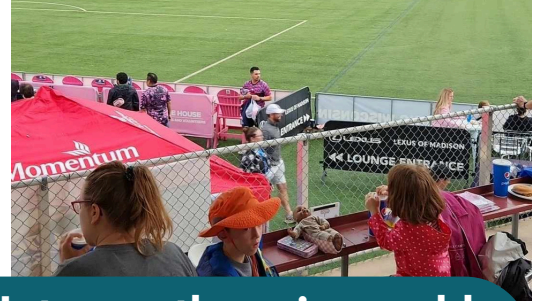


Church Life Pictures!

Have pictures of life around church? Send them to Adam!



We had a fun, but rainy, night out as a church to watch some soccer!



Move Up Sunday with gifts for our children



Not even the rain would stop the mariachi band!



Aren't you grateful for our Worship Team?



It was so much fun celebrating Keith and Merrlyn's 75th anniversary!



Don't worry, we are fixing the cross and it will be back!



Sneak peak at the lobby renovation

Next Quarter Calendar
Please note: some events may change

OCTOBER

/ 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29	30	1	2	3	4	5 Men's Breakfast
6 Linda Auer Birthday	7	8 Ed and Jerri Mooberry Anniversary	9	10	11	12 Mug 'n' Muffin
13 Gloria Jean Ehlers Birthday	14	15	16	17 Sharon Staniforth Birthday	18	19 Church Work Day
20	21	22	23	24 Grace Odoi Birthday	25	26 Trunk or Treat with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
27	28 Wayne Shockley Birthday	29	30	31	1	2

Next Quarter Calendar

Please note: some events may change

NOVEMBER

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 Men's Breakfast Mug 'n' Muffin Steven and Jessica Mooberry Anniversary
10 Budget Presentation	11	12	13	14	15	16 Todd Morra Birthday
17 Ann Sippy Birthday	18	19 Sue Ratcliff Birthday	20	21 Amaya Hagens Birthday	22	23
(ICOM)	25 Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service	26	27 Mike Younglove Birthday	28 Thanksgiving	29	30 Eric Quarm Birthday
24 Decorate Church for Christmas!						

Next Quarter Calendar

Please note: some events may change

DECEMBER

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Annual Congregational Meeting	9	10	11	12 Robert Odoi Birthday	13	14 Men's Breakfast Mug 'n' Muffin
15	16	17	18 Dennis and Kathi Seman Anniversary	19	20	21 Brianna and Jeremiah Lee Anniversary
22	23	24 Christmas Eve Service	25	26	27 John and Carolyn Cash Anniversary Martin and Arlyn Shields Anniversary	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

JANUARY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			Tom Sippy Birthday 1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	Junia Tomlinson Birthday 13	14	15	Janet Anderson Birthday 16	17	18
19	20	21 Nathanael Tomlinson Birthday Lue Sturdevant Birthday	22 Jolene Hagens Birthday	23	MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL WINTER RETREAT	
MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL WINTER RETREAT	26	27 Rob Ehlers Birthday	28	29	30	31 Roy Ratcliff Birthday Robert and Grace Odoi Anniversary
					Ginger Rogers Birthday	



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