



To Be Known

Pastor Chris

One of the church's great God-given gifts is the capacity to create belonging. But having the capacity doesn't mean we're always good at it. I know that personally.

I struggled with loneliness for most of my childhood, as many who are shy and socially awkward do. But ironically, some of the worst moments came during the year I attended a small Christian middle school. I had expected a Christian school to be welcoming and kind, but often experienced the opposite. It was a year of loneliness, isolation, feeling picked on and put down. That season became painfully dark and, at times, dangerously unbearable.

Fortunately, I had loving and engaged parents and family who carried me through. But I still remember thinking, Christians are supposed to be better than this!

Sadly, what I experienced as an awkward middle schooler has become increasingly familiar to people of every age. America is in the midst of a relational crisis. People have fewer close friends and spend less time with them than they did a few decades ago. Significant numbers of people say they don't have anyone they could turn to in a crisis. In 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General went so far as to call loneliness and isolation an epidemic, pointing to serious consequences for our health and well-being.

But mere statistics can't quite capture the ache of walking into a room full of people and wondering if anyone would notice if you weren't there, or the quieter ache of being surrounded by people but feeling like nobody really knows you or genuinely cares.

But scripture gives us a much better vision for life. There is not a single book in the bible in which community isn't a major theme. God is constantly forming a people who belong to him and therefore belong to one another.

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Fall Focus

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COMING SOON

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To Be Known

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We are called to love one another and care for one another. We are expected to encourage, forgive, serve, carry, teach, confess to, pray for, and bear with one another. “One-anothering” is one of the great gifts and callings of the church.

But while the church can provide worship services, small groups, classes, ministries, service opportunities, and fellowship events, it can't actually manufacture belonging.

People create belonging.

We create belonging when we:

- Notice someone standing alone;
- Remember someone's name;
- Invite someone to join us for lunch;
- Ask a deeper question and then stick around for the answer;
- Share something vulnerable about ourselves;
- Pray with someone, rather than merely promising to pray;
- Invite someone into our home;
- Notice an absence, or call when someone is sick or recovering;
- Make room in an existing friendship for someone new;
- Or just keep showing up.

These may seem like small things, but much of Christian community is built through small moments of genuine connection.

It's not that somehow Christians are better at doing relationships. But Jesus is constantly forming us into people who are learning how to love well.



When it is functioning well, the church offers something our increasingly disconnected and distracted culture desperately needs: a people gathered face-to-face around a shared story and purpose, learning to love, serve, forgive, encourage and carry one another. At our best, we can offer the gift of being known and loved.

So, before you jump into the fall edition of *Pathways*, focused on belonging, consider your own relationships:

- Who knows you well?
- Who do you know well?
- Who might be living at the edges of your life, waiting for someone to make room for them?
- Whose absence would you notice? Who would notice yours?

In the pages that follow, you'll find opportunities to worship, learn, serve, connect, grow, and celebrate. But I hope you'll also see more than simply another list of things to do. I pray these pages will become an invitation to practice belonging. I pray you'll hear the call to know and be known, to make room for others, and to become more fully the people God has always intended us to be.

Pastor Chris



Acts 2 - Prayer Groups

Pastor Lori

Jesus' followers humbly listening to God as we pray for our families, our communities, and our world.

When God's people get together to pray, the Holy Spirit moves in powerful ways! We see it throughout the history of Christianity beginning with the early church. We learn in Acts 2:42 that after Pentecost, Jesus' followers, "...devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Later, when local authorities tried to silence them, these early Christians didn't panic. Instead, they got together and humbly asked God for courage to continue speaking about Jesus! Luke tells us that after they prayed, "the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly." (Acts 4:31) By prayerfully relying on the Holy Spirit and living out their faith daily, the church grew from a few hundred followers to as many as 20 million by AD 310!

Simple, humble prayer can still spark revival, transform lives, and reshape communities. In these challenging times, we are inviting our church family to align our hearts with Jesus' heart in this fresh yet ancient way. Our God-sized goal is to see 120 WPC folks meeting weekly to pray in small groups, listening for God's voice in community.

- We invite existing small groups to dedicate more of your usual meeting time to prayer, listening to the Holy Spirit in community.

- We invite you to consider meeting every week in someone's living room or around a backyard fire pit just to pray, listening to God *together*.
- We invite you to meet weekly at your workplace with other Christians to pray for coworkers who are not yet followers of Jesus.
- Some of you may want to form a group that meets outside the Juvenile Detention Center, a local fire station, the closest school, or a favorite non-profit that is doing important work in the name of Jesus.

Whatever the format and whatever your passion, we invite you to join with at least *one other person* to humbly listen to God, seeking *God's direction* for our families, our church, our community, and our world.

Imagine what God might do in us, through us, and around us if we commit ourselves to praying in this way, humbly aligning our hearts with God's heart and listening for His voice!

We call them Acts 2 Prayer Groups and it's easy to be part of one! Just invite a friend or two (or more!) to pray with you once a week – wherever, whenever, and however works best for you. Once you've got a group, let us know! Contact the church office or reach out to Pastor Lori at: lori@wpcmedford.com or text her at 541-326-1870. We're also starting a private Facebook group so everyone can share updates, encourage each other, and celebrate how God is working among us.

Growing to be More Like Jesus

Some Ways to Organize Your Group Prayer Time

Classic Style *(Include time to silently listen to God between each step.)*

- A - Adoration (praise God for Who God is)
- C - Confession (confess our individual and communal sins, silently or out loud)
- T - Thanksgiving (thank God for His many blessings)
- S - Supplication (ask God for His healing power in our lives, our communities, our nation and our world)

Or, from Lectio365 *(Include time to silently listen to God between each step.)*

- P - Pause. Breathe s l o w l y. Refocus our scattered senses on God.
- R - Rejoice using a psalm or reflect on other Scripture.
- A - Ask for God's help
- Y - Yield to God's will in our lives, come what may.

Or, by Praying Around a Topic *(Include time to silently listen to God between each person's prayer.)*

- The next generation - our children or grandchildren, nieces or nephews
- Family members or friends who do not yet know Jesus
- The singles, families, elders, and youngers who live in our neighborhood
- Our local community - its strengths and its challenges
- Social justice issues - poverty, racism, unemployment, homelessness, etc.
- National news or national events not making the headlines
- World events, countries or groups at war, famine, genocide, natural disasters

Any topic or theme which is a passion for your group. The length of your prayer time should be whatever works for your group! We just invite you to commit to a regular (ideally, weekly) time of prayer with others.

The Key: Keep Your Prayer Time Simple

Complicating prayer makes consistency in prayer more challenging than it needs to be. Prayer is not a ritual we have to get right; it's a relationship we get to enjoy!



Fall Session begins Sept. 8, 2026

Are you grieving the death of a loved one? The journey through grief can be difficult and, at times, very lonely. GriefShare is a weekly small group and safe place where those who are grieving can find support, community, and hope. This fall, our GriefShare Small Group will meet on **Tuesdays from 10:00am - noon, September 8 through November 17**. Register online at griefshare.org and click on "Find-a-group." Your advance registration helps us greatly in the planning process. If you prefer to email or speak with someone in person, contact our office at 541-773-8274.

Surviving the Holidays

Encouragement, support, and valuable tools to navigate the challenges of the season.

Join us for this holiday seminar

Location

Westminster Presbyterian Church
2000 Oakwood Drive
Medford, 97504

Date & time

Sunday
October 25, 2026
2:00 – 4:00pm

Pre-registration is helpful, but not required on the GriefShare website or with Patti Pendergast

griefshare.org/holidays

Patti Pendergast 541-890-4985 or
pattipendergast@outlook.com

Growing to be More Like Jesus



Intergenerational Belonging

Pastor Dereck

When we think of ways to deepen our walk with Jesus, we tend to think of the classic spiritual practices. And with good reason! However, we often forget that church community can be a spiritual practice.

It is where we are shaped and formed to be more like Christ through relational learning. The way we are treated. The culture that's in the air. And more.

So how do we cultivate a church community to where it is most impactful?

There are probably several ways to go about this. But one important aspect is that the church community does not have demographic barriers. One of which is age. When we look at the body of Christ, Scripture gives us a picture of all types of people of all ages together in Christ. This spiritual reality is meant to be a spiritual practice embodied.

Here's a few facts to illustrate Scripture's exhortation of all ages to be connected beyond biological family... and into spiritual family.

- High school **students who are involved in all-church activities** are more consistently linked with mature faith beyond graduating high school (Kara Powell, "Sticky Faith", pg. 74 e-book)
- The more that high school **students are involved in serving children younger than them**, the more likely their faith will stick (Kara Powell, "Sticky Faith, pg. 75 e-book)

- Teens with 5 or more safe adult relationships from church who invested in them during the ages of 15 - 18 years old were less likely to leave the church after high school ("LifeWay Research Uncovers Reasons 18 to 22 Year Olds Drop Out of Church")
- Mentoring relationships between older adults and youth results in improved physical activity, cognitive function, and reduced isolation and depressive symptoms for seniors (a randomized control study "Experience Corps" by LP Friend, 2013)

So, the spiritual formation practice of inter-generational belonging is linked to enduring faith for the next generation, and improved health for older adults. Here are some practical steps.

1. Take a moment to introduce yourself and welcome people different from you.
2. Find who you (somewhat) naturally connect with
3. Show them that you care and are interested in them (in a non-stalker way) by briefly checking-in, remembering their interests/activities, and asking how you can pray for them
4. Ask if you and their parents can get food every so often
5. Ask them if they want to join you in serving in the area of church you serve
6. Give them training, mentoring, and space to use their gifts in the whole church
7. Share your own stories of how you learned something about Jesus or following Jesus
8. Reach out to those of different ages that you have gotten to know (e.g. card, call, text)
9. Consider a pen pal relationship (yes... you read that correctly!) with parent approval
10. Don't be discouraged if any of these don't work out. Look for those who you can connect with and are somewhat responsive.

CONNECT



Connect... In Spite of Yourself

Pastor Chris

It's Tuesday night, and small group starts in twenty minutes. But you've had a long day, and you're already in your comfortable clothes. You ask yourself, "Will people really care that much if I don't go? Do I really want to fight gravity to get off this couch and put my shoes on?"

Sometimes the biggest barrier keeping us from meaningful connection is found within.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm an introvert. I fully recognize that we sometimes have limited bandwidth. Rest, solitude, and healthy boundaries matter. But sometimes what feels like a need to withdraw is actually the result of having withdrawn too much, or of just feeling insecure. We don't always feel like connecting, and we may assume others don't particularly want us around. Those feelings are real—but they aren't always reliable guides.

So let's do a quick overview of a few ways we can seek connection in spite of ourselves.

Notice: Be self-aware

Before we obey a feeling, we should start by just noticing it. Then we can interrogate where it's coming from and how accurate it may be. What are you actually feeling?

- "I don't want to go."
- "I feel awkward."
- "I feel like they won't really want me there."
- "I can already imagine the conversation going badly."

This isn't about shaming ourselves for those reactions, but simply recognizing that while our feelings are sources of information, they don't have to become instructions. Just because something feels true doesn't mean it accurately reflects what is happening.

Neuroscientists have noted that sometimes our brain can operate from perceived threats, or can even manufacture those threats itself, as we anticipate a negative or adversarial outcome in advance. "They probably don't really want me there. I'm not going to have fun."

The trouble is that withdrawal can reinforce the very feelings that made us withdraw in the first place. We feel disconnected, so we pull back; then pulling back leaves us feeling even more disconnected.

Simple self-awareness gives us enough distance to ask: Is my brain communicating a genuine need—or offering me an excuse? Sometimes that question is enough to help us get off the couch and put on our shoes.

Question: Gain perspective

Researchers have identified what they call the "liking gap." After conversations, people tend to underestimate how much the other person liked them and enjoyed talking with them. We can be so busy reviewing our own performance—I sounded awkward; I shouldn't have said that; I wasn't very interesting—that we fail to recognize that the other person may have experienced the conversation much more positively than we did. In study after study, people have tended to be more liked than they realized.

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Ways to Engage with Others

Connect... In Spite of Yourself

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I say you've been invited out by friends, but you aren't sure you're really good company today. Your mind might tell you, They invited me, but they probably don't really want me there. What would happen if you acted on the invitation rather than the assumption?

Or if someone says, "We should get coffee," maybe follow up instead of immediately assuming they were only being polite. If your friends invite you along, consider taking their invitation at face value. Trust the invitation more than the insecurity.

Build on Grace

We need to allow ourselves to be imperfect, and for others to be imperfect too. So you're not feeling great today... connect anyway! You aren't dressed perfectly, the house isn't clean, you're feeling a little wiped. Don't sweat the small stuff, connect anyway. Real connection doesn't require us to be impressive; it just asks us to be present. You don't need enough energy to carry the whole conversation. Ask one good question. Stay thirty minutes instead of two hours. Invite someone into the house even if the dishes are still on the counter. Healthy connection can survive imperfection.

And grace works both ways. Other people will be awkward too. They'll forget things, say something clumsy, fail to ask the perfect question, or be distracted by their own difficult day. Extend grace. Connection grows when we stop requiring ourselves—and everyone else—to get it exactly right.

Turn Outward

If you don't feel like you have high capacity right now, that's ok. Go and be curious about others. Give your attention as a gift to someone else. When we walk into a room asking, "Will they like me?", every interaction becomes a referendum on me. But if we walk into a room asking, "Who can I notice, and what can I learn?" the entire experience changes.

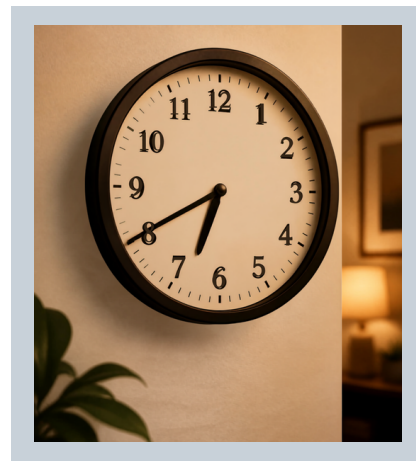
Connect in Christ

The reality is that we are seen, known and valued in Christ. We don't need to go into social situations looking for someone to establish our worth, because we are already precious in the eyes of God. We can

notice our insecurity without being ruled by it because our identity is secure. We can risk an awkward conversation because rejection does not determine our worth. We can offer grace because we have received grace. We can turn outward because we don't need every person in the room to validate us.

This frees us to be grace-givers. The others in the room might also feel awkward and imperfect, but we are free in Christ to value them just as Christ has valued us. We can risk being known because we are already fully known. We can risk loving because we are already fully loved.

Sometimes we genuinely need rest, solitude, or a healthy boundary. But sometimes "I don't have the bandwidth" really means, "I'm feeling uncomfortable, uncertain, or insecure." Let's learn to tell the difference.



So it's Tuesday night, and small group starts in twenty minutes:

Notice: "I don't really want to go."

Question: "Nobody cares whether I'm there or not—is that actually true?"

Grace: "I don't have to arrive energetic or perfectly put together."

Turn outward: "I'll find Sally and ask how she's doing."

Christ: "I am already known, loved, and secure in Christ. I don't need anyone in that room to establish my worth. I am free simply to love them."

Then put your shoes on.

Ways to Engage with Others

Growing Together: Finding Connection through God's Word

Sherry Ettlich

The Bible is an amazing gift. While written thousand of years ago, it is still relevant and impactful in our lives today. God has used these inspired words through the ages to speak to His people in times of joy and crisis, to provide guidance and comfort, and to deepen and enrich our relationship with Jesus Christ. Whether through sermons, personal reading and study, or structured Bible Studies, the Holy Spirit brings alive passages that speak to our hearts just when we need it most.

Past Studies - Now Available in the Resource Center - Westminster has offered Women's Bible studies for years to provide opportunities for women to gather and study the Word and to fellowship and support each other in prayer. The collection of past Bible studies were recently relocated to the Resource Room (Library) so they can be checked out for personal Bible study or in small groups. Most include the DVDs and at least one workbook that will walk you through that study. You are welcome to check out the rubber banded packet of materials for as many weeks as you need to go through the study. When done, return the DVDs, one unmarked workbook, and any other supporting materials from that packet.

Additional workbooks can be ordered online or through Evangel if you want to take notes in the workbook. It is our hope that these studies may bless you as you seek to know and follow Jesus more closely.

2026-27 Studies: Women are invited to participate in one or more of three quarterly studies planned for our 2026 -27 program year. Groups meet Monday evenings at 7:00 PM in the Charter Room and Thursday mornings at 9:30 AM in the Gathering Place. Studies are open to women in the community, so invite a friend!

Fall: We will be going through *Gospel on the Ground*, Kristi McLelland's study of the Early Church in Acts. We will discuss the initial spread of the gospel, Jesus' message of hope and reconciliation, as well as how we can play a role in continuing that spread in our world today. Kristi's experience in the Holy Lands make this past fall's study of Luke in the Land come alive and should make this study particularly impactful. The Monday group will start September 21 and the Thursday groups will start September 24.

Winter: *When We Pray*; Jan. 28 - March 11, 2027

Spring: *Amos: An Invitation to the Good Life* by Jenifer Rothschild; April 8 - May 27, 2027

For more information on our Women's Bible Study ministry, reach out to:

Sherry Ettlich (541)292-4847
Pam Huber (510)512-2744 or
Maryann Mason (541)324-0922



Ways to Engage with Others



MS + HS Night of Worship

Pastor Dereck

Middle and high school students, are you hungry to connect with God? Consider coming with a friend to the Rogue Valley Night of Worship. Worship and prayer is one great way to interact with God. Wherever you are at -- seeking, questioning, or don't really know -- you are welcome to come see for yourself. This is a great way to seek God and prepare our heart for this next year.

There will be roughly an hour of worship and prayer, and then just under an hour of snacks, games, and fellowship. Our goal is that students can be encouraged by God, and by connecting with others at their schools.

Where: We get to host this worship night! Meet at Westminster Presbyterian Church (2000 Oakwood Dr. Medford, OR 97504) Sign up on the google form for how you and a friend would like to help host our friends from around the Rogue Valley.

When: Sun. Sept. 20th @ 6-8pm

To do: do you have a friend who is spiritually seeking? Or who might be open to just checking it out? Feel free to invite a friend, or just to have a wingman for the evening. Please have them sign up here also. You can share this sign up with others by texting this link:

<https://bit.ly/worship-night-sept-20>



The Family Connection and Westminster Cooperative Preschool present:

Strong Parents, Strong Kids

Monthly gatherings for parents to explore evidence-based tools to help your family thrive.
For families with kids of all ages!

- Emotional regulation, finding & sharing your calm.
- Intentional connection in challenging moments
- Problem solving, using empathy when conflict arises

Join us monthly at Westminster Pres. Church, 2000 Oakwood Drive, Medford from 9:00-11:00 am

10/3/26
11/14/26
12/12/26

Sign up today for a better tomorrow

Free childcare program! Register with julie@wpcmedford.com

A logo for "The Family Connection" with a stylized tree made of colorful dots. Below it, in smaller text, it says "SOUTHERN OREGON HEAD START".

MOBILIZE

24 Hours of Prayer

Pastor Lori

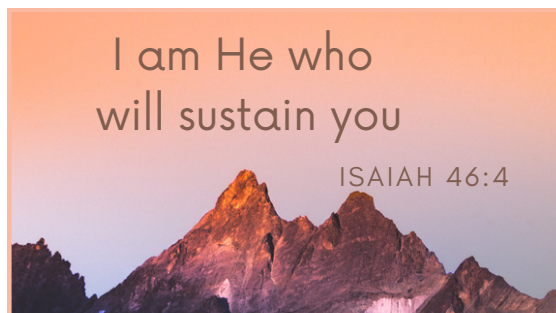
Individuals, couples, families, and small groups are invited to participate in 24 hours of non-stop prayer. It begins at **8:00 AM on Wednesday, September 9**, and will continue until **8:00 AM on Thursday, September 10** in our new Prayer Room located in **The Cottage**. Our God-sized goal is to have at least two people praying during every hour of this 24-hour period.

Here are four powerful reasons to participate in prayer at WPC:

- **Community:** Pray with others who sign up for the same time slot, or book the room for exclusive use by you or your group
- **Resources:** Enrich your prayer time with the helpful prayer tools we'll have available for you on-site.
- **Inspiration:** Draw encouragement from prayers written by previous Prayer Room participants.
- **Presence:** Experience the increasing sense of God's presence from the cumulative effect of the unending chain of prayer in one place.

"Too often we treat prayer as the preparation for the work of the church. Do you not see? Prayer IS the work of the church."

(OSWALD CHAMBERS)



Sign up today to help us keep this continuous chain of prayer unbroken! For more information and to sign up for 30 or 60-minute time slots, please click on the following link:

<https://signup.24-7prayer.com/signup/7ca0f1>

or click on the **24/7 Prayer Sign up button** on our **wpcmedford.com** website.

Please note: You can sign in as a "guest." Scroll down to see the Wednesday time slots available. Notice that all times are military time. Ex: 22:00 is 10:00pm; 00:00 is midnight.

Friend: If you have mobility issues or cannot come to our church campus, you can still participate in our 24 Hours of Prayer from home. Please reach out to me directly at 541-773-8274 or lori@wpcmedford.com.



Our 24-hour prayer experience takes place during the Global Week of Prayer, September 6 – 13, when Christians all around the world will be praying 24 hours a day. To learn more about this exciting movement, go to:

<https://www.24-7prayer.com/>

and click on Global Week of 24-7 Prayer.



Partnering with God to Change Our World

Peer-to-Peer Parent & Family Ministry

Pastor Dereck

- 41% of parents say that most days they are so stressed they cannot function (American Psychological Association. (2024, July 12). Parental burnout and stress.)
- 48% say that most days their stress is completely overwhelming compared to other adults. (American Psychological Association (2023, November). Infographic: Stress of parents compared to other adults.)

Many parents are feeling alone in life's demands, like there is never enough time, can't keep up with, worried about protecting their kid, and wondering if they will be ok. This is a need that we have a community that can make a difference by God's grace. How can we best go about this? How can you join in helping?

This last year, we have begun a more thorough peer-to-peer support style ministry for parents, moms, and dads. The biggest way we do this is through an organic community intentionally protecting time to connect with other parents to share how we are doing. The joys, sorrows, and stories that make you both laugh and cry at the same time. And pray for one another.

One protected space for our people to minister to parents is Family Co-Op.

Family Co-Op is a protected time each Sunday 12:15-12:45 in the Barn and playground area. (We do take the 1st Sunday off in order to join the Share the Table gathering for Communion Sundays). This organic, grass-roots led ministry is where parents show up for each other, while their kids (18 and younger) get the chance to play in the Barn, playground, or on the lawn. This is a dad's group or mom's group model where they watch the kids play while parents connect. While this group is for parents and kids, we welcome volunteers of all ages to serve potluck, and to minister to parents. On the last Sunday of each month, Mom's Group gathers, while dads and others can watch the kids while at Family Co-Op. Join us for a potluck meal. Better yet, invite a family. You can sign up for bringing an item to the potluck here:



Beyond Family Co-Op and Mom's Group, there are various activities throughout the church life that afford space for intentional family and parent connections – Jed Smith Camping in September, Men's and Women's Ministry activities throughout the year, Parents' Night Out, Family Boardgames & Brunch in winter, and Joy community service projects that are generally kid-friendly.

One upcoming opportunity for parents of teens is the Parent's Open House at Youth Group. Parents of teens in youth groups are invited on Wed. Sept. 30th @ 6:39-8:30 to be a part of the ministry. This is a time of food, parents (vs) student volleyball, joining for a lesson, and breaking out for a Q+A with the Youth and Young Adult Pastor. This is a great opportunity to connect with other parents who have teens, and to partner in ministering to teens. **Save the date, invite a family, and text Dereck at (972)213-6932 to reserve your food.**



CELEBRATE



Mexico Impact Trip

Pastor Dereck

First, I want to thank you all for your support. There's a saying, you're either a "go-er" or a "send-er" on these types of service trips. You all sent us well, with committed times of prayer and ongoing financial support. Your giving made this type of impact possible.

Here are just a few brief reflections. I think we saw God working through people and relationships. Much like in Acts 2:42-47, the fruit of Pentecost, if you will. It says, **"42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."**

On this trip, the students and leaders participated in prayer, devotions on the spiritual formation of Jesus' way of service, having much in common, breaking lots of bread, and distributing the financial resources into a home and service. I can attest that there were glad and generous hearts, and favor with people.

I want to recognize the Medina family especially. We saw God working through them to join us in the ministry of reconciliation between cultures, centered around Jesus. The Medina family worked with us, sweated with us, hung around the water cooler with us, laughed, swapped English and Spanish, and talked World Cup soccer with us. They welcomed us sincerely, and even took the extra step to watch out for us, saying, "Don't go there. There are snakes there." Which was much appreciated!

I also want to recognize our leaders and students. In line with the passage from Pentecost, I believe we experienced a sense of *communitas* – which is community that is bound together around a common purpose, instead of around personalities. Our common purpose was Jesus, to learn through this experience, and the joy of blessing a sweet family with a house. I saw our students and leaders persevere on several occasions – from the preparation in choosing to invest their summer calendar and energy to this cause, and then the long car rides of motion sickness, and long days of working in the heat. These were moments where you saw why they were here. God was working through them to build this house, and be blessed by the Medina family. While we haven't fully decided yet, we do hope to return in a couple years, to continue our long term mission with Amor established in the 1990's. Thank you!



God's Work In and Through Us

Westminster on Mission! Harvest Party, October 18, 2026.

We invite everyone to participate in our Harvest Party this year!

In a culture rampant with feelings of distrust and division regarding churches, this event is an oasis of fun, laughter, and creativity. In a world where parents fear dangers are lurking everywhere, the Harvest Party provides a safe, caring environment for families to play together. The Harvest Party is an opportunity for us to offer the radical hospitality and love of Jesus, sharing glimpses of God's joy in every smile and conversation.

There is a way for everyone to be involved in our Harvest Party, no matter your age. And, we need everyone to be involved! The Harvest Party requires 150-180 volunteers to participate in order to make it successful. If you are not busy raising children right now, you are exactly the person we need to help us at this event! (Parents with young children will be busy supervising young ones that afternoon.)

On October 18, we will have one single worship service at 10 am, then we will mobilize together to prepare the campus to welcome our community from 2-4 pm.



- For all who are physically able, join us in setting up the game/activity booths at 11 am.
- Drive your car in and decorate it as a trunk-or-treat.
- Sign up to help at one of the activities during the Harvest Party! There's a spot for you, whether you need to sit or stand.
- Invite neighbors, friends, or family members with children to come to the event, and use the time to connect with them as children play games or enjoy a sno-cone.
- Dress up and participate in our costume scavenger hunt.
- Prior to the event, please donate bags of individually wrapped candy (avoiding chocolate, which tends to melt!) for us to give as prizes at each activity station.
- Use your organizational skills to prepare and plan for the event.
- Pray that God would use this day to draw people closer to His heart.

Not sure where you might fit in? **Talk to Dereck Woodcock or Julie Ward** and we'll gladly direct you to a way to serve and be involved in this fun afternoon!



God's Work In and Through Us

He Took the Children in His Arms....

Julie Ward, Early Childhood and Preschool Director

"Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them." Mark 10:14-16



How many people walk into an early childhood classroom and realize that they are standing on holy ground? The toys strewn about might make it look like a messy play room. But actually, Jesus says, we are witnessing our hearts' pathway to the kingdom of God. The children, in their wonder and enthusiasm, are modeling how to approach God.

But that peek into the kingdom of God is not one-directional. Left alone, children will run amuck. The health of children's hearts, minds, and bodies are dependent upon the quality of nurture and care they receive. Research affirms that the first 1000 days of life are the most significant time period for developing the neurological, biological, emotional, and spiritual foundations that will impact children for the rest of their lives. To a great degree, how well an individual learns, relates, and trusts is determined by experiences and relationships before turning two years old.

This is a significant window of opportunity for the people of Jesus to invest in the next generation! Every consistent, nurturing interaction with a baby or toddler builds the neural foundations that enable lifelong trust in God and strong attachments with others.

During the preschool years, children continue to learn and develop at a rapid rate, assimilating and internalizing vast amounts of information. They are thrilled at discovery and excited to understand how God sees them and loves them. Preschoolers begin to form their sense of identity as unique and capable, created by God to love Him forever.

The early childhood window is developmentally crucial for children. But currently here at Westminster, we have a shortfall of adults who are willing to step into this vital ministry. Children need us to provide the love and nurture that will shape their hearts and minds for years to come. And we, as adults, need to step in close to catch a glimpse of the glory of God's kingdom in a child's trusting, whole-hearted joy so that we can approach our Lord in the same way.

There are so many ways to be involved in early childhood ministry! We need volunteers in our Seedlings (babies/toddlers) and Sprouts (preschool/pre-k) classrooms on Sunday mornings at 10:45. We need volunteers who are willing to develop supportive relationships with young families, perhaps making a meal occasionally, praying regularly, checking in with them to offer encouragement. We need people to come play with kids during our Parents' Night Out events. We would value volunteers' help in our Preschool Program and in the "Read, Play, Talk" playgroup hosted at Westminster. Could you consider sharing one hour a week? One hour a month? One hour every quarter? Early childhood speeds by, and our window of opportunity is now.

Jesus took the children in His arms, and he blessed them. Consider how you might follow His example. Could you open your arms to our young children and give them the opportunity to develop the capacity to love Jesus and others for their whole lives? Will you step into the wonder of a child's heart and understand more fully how God wants us to posture ourselves in response to Him? We would love to welcome you into this holy space to wrap these children in our care and practice with us receiving the kingdom of God like a little child. **Please call Julie Ward at (541)414-8558 to talk more!**

God's Work In and Through Us

Moving Mountains...of Clothing

Dear Westminster Clothing Sale Team:

I heard that this year might have been the biggest financial success in the history of the clothing sale! **(The sale raised \$7172.33!)** Wow—that is amazing, as is the global impact your service and faithfulness are having. I wanted to send you a quick note to let you know that you are also having a substantial impact locally. As a ministry partner that gets to invite local community members to the free "sale" ahead of the official start, I am so grateful for your generosity.

Here are a few examples of those in the Rogue Valley who were beneficiaries of your love:

- Sophia and Noah: A single mom of a high schooler; she loves the Lord and is involved in the Lions Club in Medford.
- Rick and Lenny: A disabled father and son who have faced housing instability. They are kind, generous, and love to serve—especially with their cooking talents!
- Jasmine, Annias, Mireah, Miguel, and Azalea: A single mom of four who also takes care of her blind father. The whole family was baptized last year.

- Nichole: A mother of three who worked for years to get her two oldest children out of the foster system and finally brought them home last year. She also had another baby boy a year ago.
- Julie: A 70-year-old widow who has lost her husband, son, daughter, and dog. She lives on a fixed income and volunteers three days a week at the laundromat. She gave her life to Christ two years ago and is a gifted evangelist.
- Miranda and Angela: A mother who has struggled with addiction and a daughter with a disability. Both were baptized last year. Miranda is currently working on her GED and is becoming an incredible Bible study leader.
- Mariah: A new mom whose husband recently lost his job. Her mother passed away when she was in her teens, and she is now learning how to be an amazing parent from her own wonderful grandmother.

All this is to say: **THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU Westminster Clothing Sale Team!** I feel so lucky to be serving our community and the Lord alongside you!

Love, Missy

Missy Getsinger - *Pastor, The Fold*



These numbers just give a glimpse of the wonders God was working in the lives of kids, families, and volunteers alike! There were opportunities for middle school volunteers to share their testimonies, stories of campers from outside church praying to accept Christ, and parents saying they couldn't wait to come back next year. Many thanks to all who were involved and all who prayed for camp. Above all, praise God for His wonderful works!

Coming Soon...

24 hours of Prayer, Sept 9-10
Choir - First Sunday back, Sept 13
Global Prayer Event, Sept 6-13
Men's Campout, Sept 26-27



Strong Parents, Strong Kids, Oct 3,
Nov 14, & Dec. 12
Single Service Sunday, Oct 18; 10am
Harvest Party, Oct 18; 2-4pm,
Parent's Night Out, Nov 6

Office Closed, Staff Planning Nov 4
OCC Shoeboxes Nov 16-23
Greening Day, Nov 22
St Andrew's Day, Nov 29
Story in Lights, Dec 17-20
Youth Retreat, Jan 15
Marriage Retreat, Jan 22-24



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office@wpcmedford.com



OFFICE HOURS

Mon, Tue, Thu

9am - noon
and 1pm - 4pm

Wed

9am - 11:30am
and 1pm - 4pm



In Person Worship Services
9am & 10:45am



To view our weekly
message go online to
wpcmedford.com

Westminster Cooperative Prechool



8:30am – 11:30am

Tue. & Thu. for 3yr olds
Tue, Wed, Thu. for 4yr olds
(541)773-8274

FIND, FOLLOW, AND LIKE US ON THESE PLATFORMS



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