



**WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH'S HISTORY**

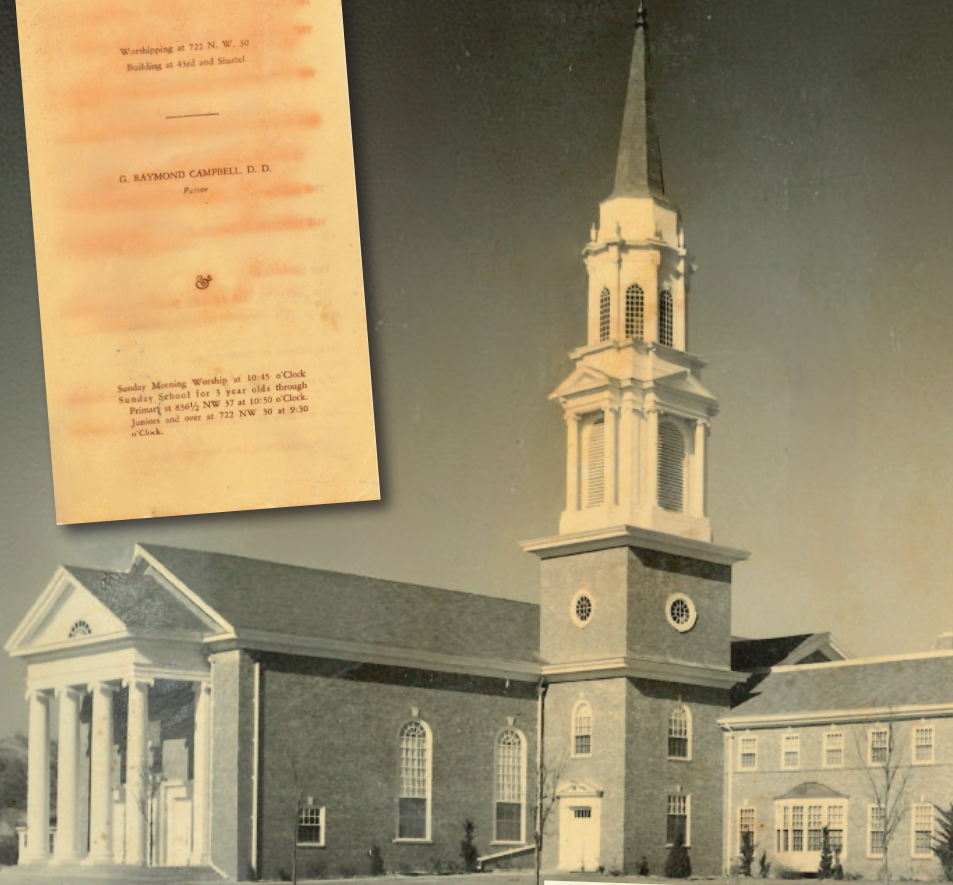
Westminster
Presbyterian Church

Worshipping at 722 N. W. 30
Building at 43rd and Shurtel

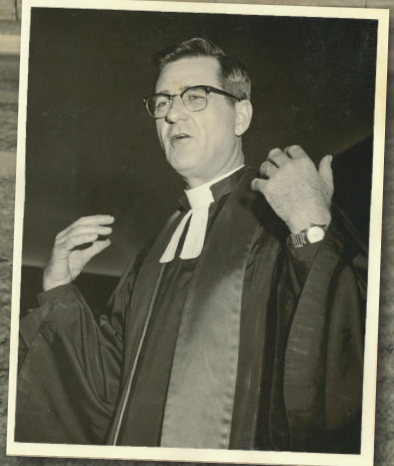
G. RAYMOND CAMPBELL, D. D.
Pastor

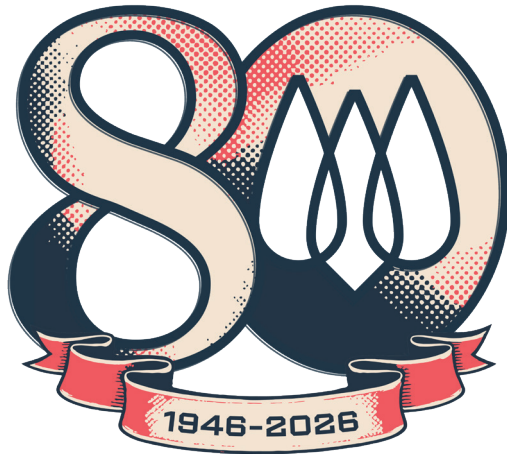
Sunday Morning Worship at 10:45 o'Clock
Sunday School for 3 year olds through
Primary at 8:56½ NW 57 at 10:30 o'Clock.
Juniors and over at 722 NW 30 at 9:30
o'Clock.

First Worship
Service Bulletin
February 10, 1946



First Pastor
G. Raymond Campbell
1946





**WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
80TH ANNIVERSARY
1946-2026**

80 Years of Faith, Service, and Community

In memory of June White
Westminster 80th anniversary history committee

*To see the historical slideshow, please visit:
wpcokc.org/80th-anniversary*

A WORD FROM THE SENIOR PASTOR

Eighty years is a long time. Long enough to bury saints and baptize children who now have grandchildren of their own. Long enough to weather loss, celebrate abundance, argue about carpet colors, and somehow still show up on Sunday mornings. Long enough, if we're honest, to forget what we're actually doing here - and to be surprised, again and again, by the grace that never forgot us.

This is the story of Westminster Presbyterian Church. But it's also a story about what happens when a community of people takes seriously the staggering claim at the heart of the Christian faith: that God's posture toward us has always been love. Not love we earned by getting things right. Not love waiting on the other side of our improvement. Love that was there before we were - love that preceded our first breath, our first failure, our first fearful prayer. Always already loved. That's what we are. That's what Westminster has been called to proclaim, embody, and live out, however imperfectly, for eighty years.

Our congregation says that we exist to love God and our neighbors by spreading Christ's Grace, Peace, Love, and Justice. Those words aren't a checklist or a curriculum, but a lens - a way of returning, season after season, to the fullness of what God is up to in the world and what God invites us to be part of. In these pages you'll find the fingerprints of those words. Grace in the way this community has received people who came here broken and left a little more whole. Peace in the hard, slow work of becoming a people who don't just talk about reconciliation but try to practice it. Love that has shown up in casseroles and hospital rooms and honest conversations. Justice that has sometimes made us uncomfortable - as it should. Eighty years. Four words. One God who was and is and is to come. Thanks be to God.

LANDON WHITSITT



THE HISTORY OF WPC

In the latter part of 1942, Oklahoma City Presbyterians awoke to the fact that their denomination was not keeping pace with the city's growth. At the urging of the Reverend S. Graham Fraser, Oklahoma Synodical Executive, the Session of the First Presbyterian Church became interested. Dr. Harold Blake Walker, pastor, pointed out that large established churches had a "Robinson Street complex". There was a cluster of big church edifices on Robinson from Fourth Street to Tenth. First Presbyterian was at Ninth and Robinson at this time. Other churches had been erected nearby.

The First Presbyterian Church, the Oklahoma Synod, and the Presbytery enlisted Dr. Jacob Long of the Board of Home Missions. He came to Oklahoma City to make a survey. The city's population was mushrooming to the North and the West. Long reported four hundred nineteen Presbyterians lived in the area north of Thirtieth Street between Pennsylvania Street and the Santa Fe railroad tracks. None belonged to any local church. Long recommended that First Presbyterian Church, which had never successfully sponsored a new church, undertake the job.

Dr. Walker and the First Church congregation accepted the challenge. The congregation decided to raise \$10,000 a year for three years, which was to be used for the new church. It also appointed a committee composed of Glenn W. Faris, chairman; Paul Washington, vice-chairman; Henry Browne, Leland Booth, Lester Craig, Earl C. Hill, Dr. John Lamb, R. W. McLaughlin, Frank J. Meyer, Howard B. Moffitt, C. E. Sharp, O. L. Simpson, C. E. Van Cleef and Robert L. Wright.

Presbyterians living in the survey area and members of the First Presbyterian Church were asked to attend a preliminary organization meeting on May 9, 1944. Very few of the Survey Prospective Members attended. But the ninety-four people who came formed the Presbyterian Progress Society.

THE SPIRIT OF DISCIPLESHIP

The spirit of discipleship motivating those who established Westminster Presbyterian Church was couched in two important factors.

First was their commitment to discipleship as members of First

Presbyterian Church, and a genuine sense of responsibility that called for a broadening of worship opportunities for other believers. Second was the imprint of World War II. If ever there was a war between good and evil, World War II was it.

Westminster was incorporated on August 8, 1945.

No one was left untouched by the horrors, the devastation, the deprivations, the separations, and the loss of loved ones brought on by this global conflict. The loss of sons and daughters, husbands and brothers, and lovers gave cruel reminders to the impermanence of human life. A heightened sense of spiritual need was the result for many people. The minds and hearts of people worldwide turned to a search for a higher power.

God and His purposes became more important to all people on journeys of discipleship. Westminster Presbyterian Church was part of this spiritual need. This was the guiding attitude of those on the Pulpit Committee as they began their search for a founding pastor. The committee investigated twenty-three prospects from ten states, including seven chaplains being released by the armed services.

THE FOUNDING PASTOR

The Pulpit Committee reported that the Reverend Ernest H. Sommerfeld, pastor of the Trinity Moravian Church of Utica, New York had been asked to come to Oklahoma City to look over plans and Westminster members. Sommerfeld was well received but could not leave his pastorate and summer commitments until early fall. All agreed the situation here urgently needed an immediate guiding hand. Among the twenty-three prospects was a tall, dark-haired young minister pastoring at First Presbyterian Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

His name was G. Raymond Campbell. The committee visited his church, heard him preach, met his wife and children, and came away favorably impressed. They went back a second time and found that two other well-established churches with no debts were wooing the Campbells. All Westminster had to offer was a group of determined people with a common dream. But that was sufficient to favorably impress G. Raymond Campbell.



“If we accept, we will be putting ourselves completely and entirely at your disposal. Our acceptance will be the evidence of our trust in you.”

G. Raymond Campbell

Church leaders decided to put their trust in Campbell. He was called as pastor on November 10, 1945. With his wife, Marjorie, and their children, John and Mary, they came to Oklahoma City. Their third child, Martha, was born shortly after the move. The mutual trust between the Campbells and the church lasted for more than 30 years, one of the longest pastor-church relationships in Oklahoma Presbyterian history. By January 1946, Westminster’s church organization was completed, and the first official service was held February 10, 1946.

FINDING A HOME

Parallel in time with the search for a pastor was a search for a place to build the new church. The Site Committee surveyed every vacant lot in the area but found that many of the locations that seemed most desirable could not be used for this purpose due to strict zoning restrictions. This included property on the east side of Classen Boulevard between 36th and 38th streets and a lot at the corner of 39th and Classen, which Ross Johnston and his brothers offered to donate to the church.



The committee settled on the site at 43rd & Shartel, where there were no plat restrictions and the lots were available at a reasonable price. At a meeting of the Progress Committee on April 7, 1945, the chairman strongly recommended that these lots be purchased. The first six lots at the corner of 43rd and Shartel were subsequently purchased on May 3, 1945, at a cost of \$2,825.26.

The very first plans had been submitted for a very small Chapel and a few extra rooms, estimated to cost about \$17,000 to \$20,000, but by the time final plans were adopted, it was to be a \$50,000 structure, and before it was finished, the onset of wartime inflation had skyrocketed the cost to about \$130,000. Ground was broken for the building on May 22nd, 1946. Prior to this, however, many of the church members had manned tractors and bulldozers and wielded axes to clear the brush from the site.

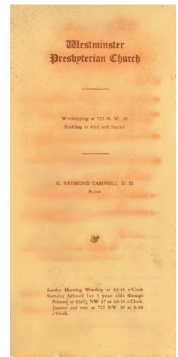
Less than two months after the land was secured, on June 28, 1945, the new congregation was organized at a meeting of the members of the Progress Society in the backyard of the H. B. Sears home. The new church needed a name and Faris appointed a Name Committee. The names of Westminster, St. Paul, St. James and Crown Heights Presbyterian were offered. Westminster was adopted by a margin of one vote over St. James.

“The vote was Westminster sixteen and St. James fifteen. I later learned that Mrs. Faris switched to Westminster on the second ballot and I’m glad she did, for I like Westminster.”

Glenn W. Faris

WESTMINSTER STANDS ON ITS OWN

On a cold, sunny day, February 10, 1946, Westminster Presbyterian Church held its first worship service in Agnes Sims’ Dance Studio located at the southeast corner of 30th and North Shartel. A congregation of two hundred people attended the first sermon. Junior and adult Sunday School classes competed for space and quiet in opposite corners of the studio. Rev G. Raymond Campbell preached his first sermon to his new congregation: “Why I came to Oklahoma City.”



The church bought chairs from the Ardmore Glider School surplus sale and stored them in the old Paseo swimming pool locker rooms. Every Saturday afternoon, Lester Craig, Scranton Nesbitt, George Avritt and Cecil Riggs picked up the 200 chairs and arranged them for Sunday services. After dinner on Sunday, they returned them to storage.

Membership grew rapidly. Agnes Sims’ Dance studio couldn’t handle the crowds. Will Rogers Theatre was made available by its owners at no cost for Sunday morning worship services. Beginning on August 5th, 1946, and for nine months thereafter, services were held in the Will Rogers Theatre at 43rd and Western. By December 31 of that same year, the chapel, under construction, had enough of its roof completed so that a midnight candlelight service could be held there. First services in the new building were held on May 11, 1947.

The Chapel had been built to seat about 140, but folding doors had been installed between the Chapel and the room now used as a parlor so that the room could be used for overflow, and it was in

use for almost every service. Even the pastor had conducted two identical services every Sunday morning in order for everyone to be accommodated. In the fall of that year, the tradition of three regular Sunday morning worship services began.

In 1950 construction was started on the Sanctuary and the second section of the Educational Building. Within two years, these projects were completed. All this physical growth had transpired within six years of the church's beginning. In 1954, a new Educational wing, facing south onto 43rd Street, was begun. It was completed in 1956.



The dedicatory sermon in the Sanctuary was preached by Dr. Edward Howell Roberts, Dean of Princeton Theological Seminary. Members of First Presbyterian were honored guests at a reception afterwards.

What is so exciting about this pattern of growth in the number of Sunday services, in membership, and in physical facilities is that it represents a continuum of spirit among the people of Westminster that is still relevant 80 years later.

"FIRSTS" IN WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

First Adult Baptisms: February 10, 1946

Mrs. N. E. MacClement, Mrs. Helen Richards

First Infant Baptisms: February 24, 1946

Marion Carroll Coke, Jr. · Mary Ann Chapell · Douglas Rawdon Knox · Sue Sanford Marshall · Mary Edith Montgomery · Susan Frances Records · Nancy Kirk Records · Ann Louise Russell · Wm. Joseph Sears

First Wedding:

Martha Fogle and William H. Morris, March 29, 1946

First Sunday School Leaders:

Mrs. Leslie Mason, Chairman · Mrs. Mary Dick, Nursery · Mrs. Irma Pfanku, Nursery · Mrs. Lester Craig, Kindergarten · Mrs. George Avritt, Primary · Mrs. Scranton Nesbitt, Junior High · Mrs. George Garrison, Senior High

First Church Staff:

Completed Chapel
1947



Completed-Sanctuary
1952



Women of Westminster — Mrs. Hardy Sears · Men of Westminster, First President — Dean A. McGee · First Assistant Minister — The Rev. George Hinshaw · First Church Hostess — Mrs. Ella Busch · First Custodian — James Stubblefield

First Church Musicians:

Quartet: Mabel Holtzschue, Claude Martin, Elpha Martin, Bob Warnick · Accompanist: Mrs. Pauline McDonald · First Minister of Music: William Lemonds

First 5-Year Chancel Choir Members:

Cecil Abernathy · Milton Asfahl · Corinne Barnes · Jim Clayton · Virginia Fields · Susie Harrison · Bill Howard · Marjorie Howard · John Ingle · Gertrude Lewis · Ruth Marcum · Marty Moon · Isabel Pendergrass · Ross Robe · Dean Robertson · J. M. Robertson · Bob Rucker · Phyllis Rucker · Gayle Sanger · Joe Sears · George Seminoff · Tom Sorey · Lucille Stone · Jack Thomas · Ruth Ellen Tompkins · Garth Underkoffler

FIRST INSTALLATION OF CHURCH GOVERNANCE: FEBRUARY 19, 1946

Elders:

Thurston Blakeley · James C. Cheek · Dr. F. Maxey Cooper · Charles Elliott · L.M. Mason · W. H. McDonald · Scranton Nesbitt, Sr. · Ross Robe · Fred J. Robertson · Dr. Robert Trent · Paul Washington · R. L. Wright

Deacons:

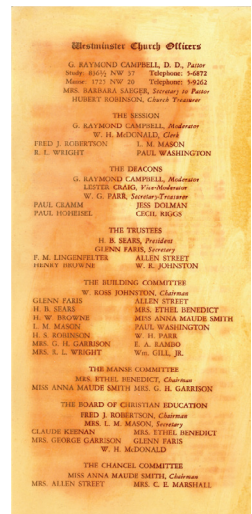
Lester Craig · Paul Cramm · Jesse Dolman · William Gill, Jr. · Paul Hoheisel · George Lipe · James McCall · Ralph Neely · William G. Parr · T. Ray Phillips, Jr. · Cecil Riggs · Stewart Robertson

Trustees:

Ethel Benedict · Henry Browne · Glenn W. Faris · W. Ross Johnston · Dr. F. M. Lingenfelter · William T. Payne · Hardy B. Sears · Anna Maude Smith · Allen Street

Original Church Officers:

Chairman: Glenn W. Faris · Vice Chairman: Paul Washington · Advisory Chair: Dr. Harold B. Walker · Temporary Meeting Place Chair: Leland Booth · Pastor Selection Chair:



Dr. John H. Lamb · Sunday School Chair: Mrs. John F. Kuhn · Permanent Site Building Chair: Robert L. Wright · Membership Chair: Hardy B. Sears · Special Events Chair: Mrs. Barrit Galloway

Session Members:

Dr. Harold Blake Walker, Moderator · Paul Washington, Vice-Moderator · W. H. McDonald, Clerk · Dr. George H. Garrison · L. M. Mason · Fred Robertson · Robert L. Wright

Board of Trustees:

H. B. Sears, President · Glenn W. Faris, Vice-President · Henry Browne · W. Ross Johnston · Dr. F. M. Lingenfelter · Mayor Allen Street

Building Committee:

Mrs. Ethel Benedict · William Gill, Jr. · Mrs. George Garrison · L. M. Mason · William G. Parr · W. T. Payne · E. A. Rambo · Anna Maude Smith · Mrs. Robert L. Wright · Hubert S. Robinson

Sanctuary Building Committee:

E. Streich · J. J. Armstrong · Carson Hickox · John Kirkpatrick · Dean A. McGee · Mrs. George Garrison · Bill Parr · Ralph Carlin · Henry Coffeen, Sr. · Ross Johnston · Howard Moffitt · Paul Washington

All of these people set to work, even though during the middle of World War II, times were not easy. Rationing of gasoline, tires, food, nylon hose, and other necessities of life made the business of raising funds and envisioning a new church a real task. Somehow, they managed. And when asked, most of them would say, "Though we know that nothing worthwhile ever comes easy, we are on a journey of discipleship."

**ATTENDEES AT THE FIRST WPC SERVICE:
FEBRUARY 10, 1946**

The following individuals were present at Westminster Presbyterian Church's first worship service, held at Agnes Sims' Dance Studio at 30th and North Shartel.

Jack Harvey Abernathy · Mary Ann Abernathy · J. Alan Appelget · Leah Appelget · J. Jasper Armstrong · Florence S. Armstrong · George F. Avrett · Julia Avrett · Asher Humphrey Bard · Marianne Bays Bard · Bertha S. Bays · Ethel Benedict · Mrs. George P. Benson · Eule G. Bewley · Arabella H. Bewley · Thurston A. Blakely · Helen E. Blakely · Thurston A. Blakely, Jr. · Thomas Thurston Blakely

· Harriette Lowre Blakely · Earl G. Bolender · Doris Bolender · Caroline Bosworth · Frederick H. Brigham · Imogene Brigham · Paul Brown · Leona Brown · William Henry Browne · Claudine Schofield Browne · Kelsey Lee Browne · Gerhardt Busch · Betty Busch · C.W. Cameron · Lenice Cameron · Marjorie Campbell · Gyda Campbell · Vivian Christine Van Dyne · Leah S. Carey · Philip O. Carey · Frederick Victor Castle · Naomi Mabel Castle · Charles Edward Chapell · Harriet Chapell · Mrs. V.J. Chastain · James C. Cheek · Haldah Cheek · John D. Cheek · Gussie Gwen Clerk · Henry F. Coffeen · Rex Coffeen · Molly Lynn Coffeen · Henry F. Coffeen, Jr. · Marion Carroll Coke · Helen Krembell Coke · Chauncey W. Cook · Ethyle S. Cook · F. Maxey Cooper · Mrs. Margaret Cooper · Margaret Cooper · Phyllis Cooper · R. Lester Craig · Ruth Ellen Craig · Dorothy Lou Craig · Paul Cramm · Gertrude Cramm · John H. Crew · Bina Crew · Robert D. Curran · Olivia A. Curran · Donnelly Brown Curran · Ralph R. Denham, Sr. · Kathleen Denham · Jesse J. Dolman · Lucy B. Dolman · Joseph C. Dolman · John T. Edwards · Ilda Edwards · Charles W. Elliott · Viola M. Elliott · Glenn W. Faris · Nettie Faris · George Fredrickson · Mary B. Fredrickson · George H. Garrison · Anna Marie Garrison · George Bolan Garrison · William Gill, Jr. · Vera Dean Gill · Harriet L. Gunn · John F. Hackler · Pauline W. Hackler · Justin Bernard Hamilton · Ida M. Hamilton · Virginia Hargrove · Virginia Mae Hargrove · Bill Hargrove · Ferrin C. Harman · Mary Harman · Creilly Harman · Barbara Harman · Elizabeth Harris · Pattye L. Hayes · Janet Love Hayes (Edwards) · Robert B. Henry · Mabel M. Henry · Robert M. Henry · Walter E. Henry · Robert Hentzen · Carson Elliott Hickox · Ann Hickox · Paul Hoheisel · Grace Hoheisel · Simon P. Hughes · Maude Etta Hughes · A.E. Humphrey · Blanche Humphrey · Belle Morton Jennings · William E. Johnston · Patricia S. Johnston · W. Ross Johnston · Nancy Kathryn Johnston · Martha Jane Johnston · Claude O. Keenan · Bessie Drummond Keenan · Rush Kelley · Mabel Ann Kelley · Geraldine K. Kerr · Thurman S. Knox · Sarah Ruth Knox · John H. Lamb · Margaret L. Lamb · Forrest Merle Lingenfelter · Edna Clark Lingenfelter · Mary Gwen Lingenfelter · Bob Lingenfelter · George P. Lipe · Kathryn L. Lipe · Carol Dana Lipe · James Henry McCall · Frances McCall · Frances Freeman McCall · Louise Adeline McCall · Norris E. MacClement · Hazel C. MacClement · Frances McCormick · Joseph C. McDonald · Hazel McDonald · Martha Ann McDonald · William Henry McDonald · Harriett McDonald · T.J. McKee, Jr. · Helen McKee · William A. Marcum · Ruth Marcum · Bess S. Marshall · Adaline Marshall · Claude J. Martin · Elpha M. Martin · Leslie M. Mason · Ethel K. Mason · Jesse S. Montgomery · Mary Montgomery · Walter M.



A LEGACY OF MISSION AND SERVICE

“Westminster Church is a place where one person with an idea will follow it through to reality. The Day School, the Manor, Infant Crisis [Services] all started that way. Christian answers to human needs is a precept Westminster people believe in and act on.”

Dr. J. Richard Hershberger, Associate Minister

FEED MY SHEEP

Feed My Sheep began in March of 2020 with the need to empty the kitchen of food due to the pandemic. The church cooked meals for SPARK families, HopeHouseOKC families, and other community families in need. As the word spread, people began donating money, and volunteers continued to cook four meals a week until January 2021. At that time, the focus of Feed My Sheep shifted from sharing meals to providing groceries for families in need. Feed My Sheep currently serves 38 families with groceries once a month from two FMS pantry locations.



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Westminster Presbyterian Church members sponsored the building of two Habitat for Humanity homes. Many WPC classes and fellowship groups volunteered their time and shared their financial resources to build these houses. The homes built by Westminster were “blitz builds”: structures built to completion in just two weeks! The short build schedule and commitment of volunteers to finish the job quickly reinforced the church volunteers’ sense of community spirit and fellowship. Not only did the church supply the people to build these homes, but its members also donated ALL money to complete the projects.



INFANT CRISIS SERVICES

The idea for Infant Crisis Services began in 1984 when a group of young parents in a Westminster Presbyterian Church Sunday School class discussed the need to help families who could not afford necessities for their babies. Miki Farris and other class members took their discussion beyond the Sunday School classroom and helped found the mission that now serves thousands of babies and toddlers each year. Infant Crisis



Services provides families with access to diapers, formula, food, clothing, wipes, bottles, and other essentials. Families also receive guidance from a Client Services Manager who connects them with additional resources.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Westminster Presbyterian Church has partnered with Meals on Wheels Oklahoma City since the early 1970s. Originally known as Mobile Meals, this service was first funded and supported by the Women of Westminster. Meals on Wheels volunteers at WPC prepare and deliver hot and nutritious meals to homebound senior adults. Volunteers plan menus, shop for groceries, prepare meals, and deliver them to approximately 30 participants twice a week. Not only does this mission provide nutritious food to its clients, but it also provides an important opportunity for social connection for those who are homebound. Often, meal delivery times are the only social interaction clients would have in a day. Westminster Meals on Wheels serves approximately 3,100 meals per year!



MEN OF WESTMINSTER

Men of Westminster began with Dr. Campbell's implementation of a weekly breakfast and prayer session on Tuesday mornings. Open to all men of the church, attendance soared as members enjoyed weekly opportunities for faithful fellowship.



“The Men’s Club has been a vital part of Westminster over the years.”
Westminster News, February 10, 1974

Not only has the Men of Westminster provided church members with opportunities for personal growth, it has also been a resource for mission projects and service to the church and community. In the early years, group members set up chairs for worship every week at the dance studio, cleared land for construction when the Shartel lot was purchased, and maintained church grounds. The Men of Westminster financially supported the dream of Coach Don McClenan who went on to found the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and also supported student exchange programs and groups such as the Boy Scouts of America.

OKLAHOMA CITY MEDICAL CENTER

Presbyterian Hospital began around 1910 in downtown Oklahoma City. For nearly fifty years this facility operated as Wesley Hospital. In the early 1960s Wesley Hospital's ownership was transferred to the Wesley Hospital Foundation, which three years later affiliated with the Washita Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church. The institution was then renamed Presbyterian Hospital.

In the 1970s, Westminster Presbyterian Church members pledged to raise \$100,000 to help fund the building of a new, larger Presbyterian hospital in Oklahoma City. Westminster members also assumed leadership in the business affairs of the hospital. Westminster members on the Presbyterian Hospital Board of Trustees were: Dr. Campbell, Dr. R. Barton Carl, Jack T. Conn, John E. Kirkpatrick, William H. McDonald, Dean A. McGee, Don R. Nicholson, Joseph G. Rucks, and Stanton L. Young.

“The faith and practice of the Presbyterian Church is to do good unto all men. Healing brought to the body as well as peace brought to men’s souls is an essential part of the church’s concern and is a natural expression of the Gospel.”

Dr. Campbell

PRESBYTERIAN URBAN MISSION

Now known as the Urban Mission, this nonprofit was started by Reverend Dick Hershberger at Second Presbyterian Church, located in downtown Oklahoma City in the early 1970s. The Urban Mission is a client-choice food and resource center that has been fighting food insecurity in Oklahoma City for over fifty years. The Urban Mission operates a food pantry, Santa Store, SPARK program, school supply resource center, and a kids' café.



S.P.A.R.K.

The Support Program in Arts and Reading for Kids (SPARK) was an after-school tutoring and enrichment program for school-age children attending nearby Horace Mann Elementary School. SPARK originally began at First Presbyterian Church, OKC. It was so successful, that it spread to Southminster Presbyterian Church, then to Presbyterian Urban Mission and finally to Westminster Presbyterian Church. Annie Pulley and



Beverley Womack were instrumental leaders in bringing SPARK to Westminster and they ensured it ran smoothly for several years.

Volunteer tutors helped children with their reading and homework. Each day included time for physical education and art enrichment activities as well. The daily program ended with nutritious meals prepared in the Kids' Café. Children attended SPARK at Westminster four afternoons a week during the school year. This program was entirely church supported — families could send their children to SPARK at no cost.

“So many people from all parts of Westminster helped run SPARK. There was a lot of spirit that helped us be successful.”

Carolyn Russell, long-time volunteer

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Stephen Ministry (2004–2014) was a program within Westminster's congregation that equipped lay persons to provide confidential, Christian one-to-one care to those experiencing all manner of life's challenges. Trained Stephen Ministers visited with their care receiver for one hour each week and consistently offered Christian care and non-judgmental support. Stephen Ministers received over 50 hours of initial training in important caring and ministry skills, followed by monthly continuing education opportunities.

WOMEN OF WESTMINSTER

Women of Westminster was the first member-organized activity. It started in 1946 with eighty women dedicated to Christian fellowship and service to the church and community. Service and church beautification activities planned and implemented by these women over the years have supported missions, church activities, as well as furnished classrooms and communal spaces.

The concept of church circles began as the Women of Westminster organized themselves into groups. Members have taught church school classes, sung in the choir, served on the Session, the Board of Deacons, the Board of Trustees, the Education Committee, and other committees responsible for making recommendations for the welfare and growth of the church.

The Women's Team was formed several years ago, with an elder appointed to lead the team and report to Session. The group

organized many new programs, including an annual women's weekend retreat — always very well attended and offered wonderful opportunities for worship, fellowship and rest.

WOMEN WHO HAVE SERVED WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.”

Ephesians 2:10, NRSV

Dear Lord, we are filled with gratitude for the intelligent, creative, and strong women you have placed at Westminster Presbyterian Church over the last eighty years. These women have served sacrificially and lovingly, placing the well-being and growth of the church community as a priority in their lives. You blessed these women for good works, making their acts of service shine your light upon all people at Westminster.



The following is a representative list of gifted women who worked for and served at Westminster Presbyterian Church over the last eighty years. It is not an exhaustive list, and we want to express our gratitude to all the women of Westminster who have shared their time and talents over the years. No one has been intentionally left off this list; we are just astounded and overwhelmed with thankfulness for all who have cared so deeply for the well-being of our church and its members.

With much thanks and praise, Amen.

Lisa Barrowmaan · Lynne Bowers · Dianne Busby · Elaine Chard
· Linda Ferguson · Sherri Grait · Maxine Harman · Rhonda
Hefton · Lori Jirousek · Gayle Jones · Michelle Junkin · Katrina
McDonald · Joanne McFarland · Lorrie Meranda · Louise Milner
· Kim Mitchell · Ferrelyn Oakes · Melissa Plamann · Amber Ray ·
Bailey Robinson · Heather Selement · Lucille Stone · June White
· Linda Zahn

WESTMINSTER MANOR

In a gesture of celebration for Westminster Presbyterian Church's 25th anniversary, plans for a retirement home to be built near the church began. The Manor was finished in 1972, complete with thirty-one comfortably-sized rooms, a drawing room, a large foyer, an extra large dining room, a kitchen, a game room and a gift shop. The congregation supplied all the furniture, drapes, and carpets. The Men of Westminster cared for the property's landscaping.



“The Manor has truly developed into a home where retirement can be enjoyed in Christian love and fellowship.”

Don Holt, Chairman of the Manor Committee

The Women of Westminster operated the Manor's gift shop. Westminster volunteers greeted visitors and family, celebrated birthdays once a month, read books to the residents, and celebrated holidays. Westminster School students visited the Manor, and the fifth grade class sold popcorn to the residents each week and occasionally performed for the residents. The Manor ceased operation around 2005, and the facility was razed. The property where the Manor stood has become a green space enjoyed by church members and neighborhood residents.

WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

Westminster Presbyterian Church members, led by C.B. Cameron, proposed that the church open a preschool open to all in the community. Cameron, along with other young parents, attended a presentation about the Montessori method of teaching. After hearing about how children could be cared for and educated through this method, the group requested that Westminster Day School be established.



The church approved this request, and Westminster Day School was founded in 1963, governed by an independent Board of Trustees and operating financially by tuition from participating students and a scholarship program. Westminster School opened on September 3, 1963 with ten preschool students. The school

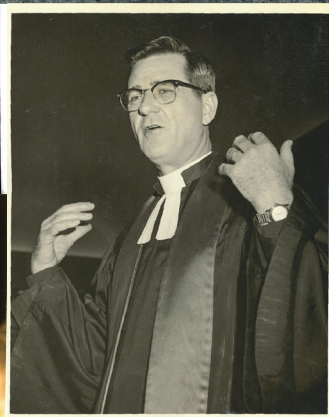
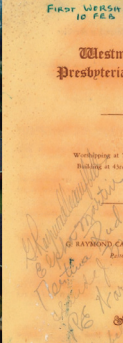
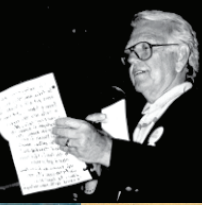
established its first grade class in 1970 with the goal of expanding one year at a time. Westminster now educates approximately six hundred children yearly, pre-school through eighth grade.

“I think we had a very positive effect as a school on the neighborhood, and in turn, also on the church, because a lot of those young families who were attracted to the school became attracted to the church.”

Jim Davis, former Board of Directors member

“Beyond education, awareness of and participation in other types of missions has always been important to the people of Westminster. They have been, and still are, active in the community, Presbyterian, Synodical, foreign, and non-denominational aspects of church life.”

A Journey of Discipleship: The First 50 Years



MEMBER REFLECTIONS

The following reflections were shared by members of Westminster Presbyterian Church — longtime pillars, newer voices, and cherished friends — all united by a common love for this community of faith.

MAXINE DYSON

The past has a way of affecting all our futures, whether it is our family life, our vocation, our personality, or our actions. The church is no exception, and certainly Westminster's past has had an extremely active influence on its present, and this influence, it is hoped, will continue into the future.

That small band of members who were just emerging from the experience of a depression, topped by a world war, in which most served, had a peculiar opportunity to reevaluate priorities. To them, the spiritual development of their children was very important. So they sacrificed out of their very small incomes to build a church which they hoped would encourage that spirituality. Many of them centered all their activities and their lives around the church. They did without new cars or fine homes, or many conveniences to build this beautiful place of worship.

So the present membership (their children, newer members, grandchildren) are recipients of their sacrifices. Perhaps the future will depend upon how much of that spirit of love and sacrifice "rubbed off" on the children and grandchildren, who also must evaluate priorities in a day when it is more difficult to say the church, and Christ's Kingdom, "will be first in our family." By such similar dedication, the future will be shaped by the past.

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NAN BUXTON

Since my parents were charter members, I assume they were involved at the very beginning. I know my dad was an elder, and we went to Sunday School on 37th street and then to Mrs. Sims' Studio on 30th and Shartel for worship. (I spent lots of hours at her studio because I took dancing, and going to church there was always unusual.)

I have so many church memories: baptisms, weddings, especially mine and Fred's 67 years ago. The Youth Club was a very large part of my life. Dr. Campbell appointed me to organize and chair

the Youth Club for Westminster. We just hired a youth minister, Roger Harp, and together we put together a very successful weekly dinner, which lasted for several years.

I had the privilege of being the ‘wedding hostess’ for our church for many years. It was fun, tiring, but delightful to ‘help’ so many young people get married. I wish I had written down all the ‘happenings’ I experienced in that job.

The sweetest ‘job’ for Westminster was 23 years of teaching 3-year-olds every Sunday. I don’t know how much they learned other than “Head and shoulders, knees and toes”, but seeing those little faces every week was a blessing for me.

I gave a lot of my time to the Urban Mission. There are many such organizations that I would hope our members could share their time and resources with, such as Feed My Sheep, Dinner with Love, and outreach to the City Rescue Mission and others.

BILL HICKMAN

I go back to 1952 at Westminster when the main sanctuary was opened. My dad knew Dr. Campbell, probably through Rotary. My dad, mom, brother and I were here when the doors opened. I was 4 years old and marveled at the sanctuary, with two questions. 1) What was depicted in the marble design behind the choir loft? It had to be a tree. 2) How do they change the light bulbs in the ceiling? I never found out. Marble designs and ceiling lights were a fascination.

I next came back to Westminster in the 1980s during the Mike Anderson years while I was attending law school at Oklahoma City University. In the 1990s, I heard that my Norman High School friend, Marilee Downing, was attending Westminster where her husband Kerry Barnett was Musical Director. She served for 16 years as the Coordinator of Worship and Music. I visited and got to hear Marilee’s superb voice.

In 2010, Marilee passed away suddenly while traveling out west. Several of us who sang with her in the Norman High School mixed chorus came to Westminster for the services.

As a performer, Marilee was blessed with an expressive and versatile voice and was able to sing almost any style of music beautifully. Beyond the music, Marilee was a gifted mentor. Many of her students and friends recall how she could help them build their confidence and

find, not just their singing voice, but their inner voice.

I returned to Westminster two years ago after retiring from the University of Central Oklahoma. It seemed the natural progression. I have had the absolute blessing of serving as one of the liturgists during services. Never would I imagine I'd be moving from the back rows as a 4-year-old kid to be looking out over this cavernous sanctuary.

GAYLE JONES

I believe Mom and Dad, Dorothy and Dr J.M. Robertson, told me that they were nearly charter members and did go to church at the dance studio at 30th and Shartel before Westminster had a chapel.



I have dozens of good church memories. One would be sitting with my mom and dad in church throughout my childhood and high school (about 4 or 5 rows in front of the minister), and that was kind of their spot during the 11 am service. Sometimes as junior high kids, we would sit in the balcony section. I remember weekly Wednesday night dinners in the Social Hall where we all ate together. We had a program or speaker each evening.

I loved the summer parish dinners at each other's homes in our zip code area for fellowship. I remember singing in the youth choir directed by Mr. Ben Manning. I loved our Sunday night junior high and high school youth fellowship time. We had dinner at 5:30, and then we all gathered together for a speaker downstairs in what used to be the old youth room in the basement. We had some great youth retreats over the weekend, or in the summer, and also had lock-ins.

In the future, I would like to see Westminster continue with an educational program for the young and the old. I'd like to see the adult community education classes resurface that were once called Omnibus that brought in people from around the city and the neighborhood. I'd like to see Westminster still involved in community events, particularly helping those that need help the most. I'd love to see a growing active youth group that meets weekly and I would like to see more intergenerational activities. I hope the message that "you are always already loved" becomes a well known motto for Westminster not only in our church but in our community at large.

JOHN KENNEY

For many years, one day a few weeks before Christmas, the Deacons and some volunteers would locate, cut, transport to church, and set in place in the corner of the sanctuary a large cedar Christmas tree. One year, I had a leadership role as a Deacon on the project. It may soon be clear why that was my only assignment related to the sanctuary tree.



On the appointed cool, but sunny, morning, we left early for a farm one of our members owned near Guthrie. We had a couple of chainsaws, some trimmers, and a winch “come-along” to be used to wrap cables around the tree and pull and secure the branches tightly to the trunk. One of us drove a truck pulling a long trailer to haul the tree to the church. Finally, we had several carefully selected energetic and strong members to help lift the tree on the trailer and carry it in the front doors and up the center aisle to its place in the sanctuary.

The first problem we encountered was caused by the location of the farm. This was before maps and GPS, and we had verbal directions to the field where we could select and cut any cedar tree. Fortunately, as we assembled in the field and were about to cut a beautiful tree that seemed just right, we were advised by a farmer in the area that we were not in our member’s pasture! This caused a bit of confusion and necessitated apologies for the intrusion of our band of workers.

Shortly thereafter, we found the right field and soon selected a beautiful cedar. We cut it down, winched the limbs tight, and managed to get it on the trailer. Our merry band processed to the church, where we parked the truck and trailer on Shartel in front of the Church.

The first problem we encountered there was when it was observed that the long-time tree stand, retrieved from the church basement storage, was too small for the base of the tree. Yes, the tree that seemed, maybe, not large enough in the big open field was, in fact, huge. The chain saws were used again, this time to cut and shape the base to the size of the tree holder. As we got the bottom limbs through the sanctuary doors, the jostling of the tree getting it through the doors loosened a couple of lower limbs, and they sprang loose with a great expansion-like sound accompanied by a crack when the limbs hit one of

the back pews. That pew was knocked loose from the floor and settled into a new location as we passed by. We did not slow down, made our way to the front corner, placed the tree in the stand, and, when the cables were slowly released, the remaining bundled branches opened into the beautiful Christmas tree we hoped for.

The pew was repaired and bolted back in place over the next few days. Christmas services were enjoyed by all! Not too many years after that, a large and beautiful artificial tree was purchased, and we have not had to repair any more damaged pews.

KATRINA WOLLENBERG

We moved from Dallas to Oklahoma City in October of 2022. My partner, Michelle Musallam, seamlessly returned to St Elijah Christian Orthodox Church, her church from infancy until age 40. I faced the need to find a permanent faith home. Friend and Westminster choir angel, Patsy Homsey, heard that I was seeking a church that offered outstanding spiritual support to feed my soul and beautiful music to spark the notes in my heart. She invited me to attend Westminster. I did in December 2022. Members extended a unique warmth and welcome those early Sunday mornings, and friendships emerged. I never looked for any other church doors to pass through.

I joined Westminster in September 2023 and met with Rev. Landon Whitsitt that fall. I told him that I had devoted my life's work to non-profit fund development and public relations and asked if he "needed help raising money". He burst out laughing and said, "I have never been asked that question, and to my knowledge, neither has any of my pastoral colleagues." He invited me to join the Westminster Foundation Board in 2024, and the rest is the beginning of beautiful memories.

My life is full of joy, spiritual support, and pure happiness due in large part to Westminster Presbyterian Church.

SALLY TOWNLEY

I first started attending WPC for the children's programs. My girls were 7 and 3. Pete came along shortly after, so my children grew up at Westminster.

My very favorite memory was Easter Sunday when Jenny was an Acolyte. The acolytes were given minimal direction and none after the first training. After helping her put on her robe, I found

a seat in the very last row. Church was packed. This would have been about 1985 or 86. There were risers in front of the choir for the children's choir to use. When it was time for Jenny to come forward to receive the offering, everyone started laughing. I couldn't see why until I saw the top of Jenny's head climbing up the back of the risers. She calmly received the offering, went up the risers and jumped off the back. Put the offering on the altar. No one had told her what to do about the riser. The congregation was in hysterics at this point!

I have enjoyed small group studies over the years. Besides learning, it has been a significant way to make friends.

MARTHA CAMPBELL KEITH

Stories were told to me about meeting at Mrs. Sims' Dance Studio at N.W. Shartel beginning Feb. 10, 1946 and the men of the church who set up & took down chairs each Sunday for services. Then church moved to Will Rogers Theatre at N.W. 43 & Western and it acquired 6 lots at N.W. 43 & Shartel for just under \$3,000.00. The Chapel was built first right on top of an asparagus patch. The very first service ever held in the Chapel was a midnight candlelight gathering on Dec. 31, 1946 in a building I was told barely had a roof over it!

While my father, Dr. Campbell, was the senior minister, we lived in the manse next door to the church from when I was about two years old through high school and college years. We played in the open yard between the manse and the church, and practiced hitting balls off the back wall of the sanctuary. I knew all the cubby holes in the church for hide & seek.

The groundbreaking for the sanctuary occurred in November 1950, and the delivery of the steeple was part of that building process. It was placed horizontally on the ground, and I remember touching the tip of the steeple many times, even climbing on it! I watched it being put in place, and later the addition of the bells. I played the carillon. It had 35 bronze hand-cast bells and was lifted in place in 1954. At that time, Westminster had the only carillon in the state of Oklahoma.

There were so many influential people during the early years of the church. I do remember with fondness several people:

- Bill Lemonds came to WPC in 1950 and became the first full-time Minister of Music when there had been just a quartet previously. He developed a choir program of 400 strong in

1954.

- Gary Skinner was involved with the youth of the church during my formative years.
- Charlie Dowell and Cal Ukena were ministers alongside my father.
- Maxine Dyson began working at the church in 1955 as Dad's temporary secretary and stayed for decades, even after Dad retired.
- James Stubblefield served as the friendly, necessary, and helpful janitor.
- Irma Pfanfu was always present with love in the nursery for 25 years.
- Emma Stealey was a poet with a beautiful rose garden on 45th Street.
- Buck Sanger had a great sense of humor and spoke pig Latin.
- Velma Riordon loved children, and we gave her rides to church each Sunday in her later years.
- Mary Dick served the church in so many ways.
- Dr. & Mrs. George Garrison were charter members who provided such great direction as well as his skills as a pediatrician.
- Dick & Nelda Hershburger: I remember when Dad brought Hersh to Westminster in 1968, and the loving, caring support he showed every day.
- Aunt Bessie & Uncle Fred Robertson lived on N.W. 43 across the street from the church and always welcomed me into their home.
- Lina Steele Reynolds has known me all my life, even babysat my siblings and me, and then babysat my own children. She has been with me during the many ups & downs of my life and continues to this day to offer her support.

Parish meetings and new member classes were held weekly at the manse. I remember setting the table for the refreshments later and studying during the meetings. In the summer, cook-outs were held in our backyard for all the different parishes. Also in summer months, the annual picnic at Sportsman's Country Club for the entire congregation was anticipated.

I participated in the Living Nativity for several years held 5 days before Christmas. Animals, including camels, were brought in and I remember playing Mary for several of those years, anxious to drink hot chocolate on breaks during the cold winters. In 1955, over 11,000 people visited it.

I remember the generosity of Joe Sears and his family to provide cedar trees for years of enjoyment at Christmastime and then traveling to his farm and helping transport and set up the Christmas trees in the sanctuary.

Dad was instrumental in the success of WPC, but the main basis of that success lies in the direction and dedication of the members. I do remember Dad being nominated and running for the Moderator of the General Assembly. I remember his annual Sermon on the Mount from memory for over 30 years. His sermons were spiritually based and quite in-depth, and often included current events. I remember his Prayer for Today in the newspaper here and in Colorado Springs. I remember being delighted to go to Channel 4 to watch Dad and three other local religious leaders debate topics weekly. I remember hearing about his involvement and direction in the early stages of developing the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and how he laid the groundwork of that organization here. The Men of Westminster voted to subsidize it for one year. From that involvement, FCA has grown to help thousands of young men and women all across the nation.

I am quite optimistic about the concern and strength within our church community, whether in staffing & leadership or in the educational development of our youth. I am hopeful that those strong roots and the foundation of our church will continue to be vibrant with the enthusiasm of dedicated church members who strive to do their very best in providing for the spiritual and religious needs and growth of the church community.

HELEN WALTER BLAKELY

There is something wonderful about being associated with the forming of a new church. It is like a love affair that begins with slight interest and mushrooms into a caring that lasts a lifetime....I have belonged to four churches, and this one is the most precious.

MILLIE RICHARDS

I remember how thrilled we were when meeting in the tiny chapel. The congregation became so large that we had to open the folding partition between the Chapel and the Lounge to accommodate the crowd.

Each new member brings new ideas and individual talents. Share that talent to help improve Westminster even more!

Westminster has been called such a ‘friendly church’ that we need to keep it that way.

MARGARET BERRY BLAIR

“I was truly dismayed when Gretchen Cool and I were asked if we would serve if elected to the Session of Westminster. No woman had ever served in that capacity... Gretchen and I did neighborhood calling, helped serve communion to the ill and home-bound. We served on the ubiquitous committees of the church, just as do today’s Elders.

And so the years passed quickly. They were good years filled with a sense of purpose. They were truly years when trying to find God’s will for my life, and doing it gave me an inner poise that made me feel that I was in the right place at the right time. Gretchen and I agreed that being one of the two first women Elders enriched and guided our lives in a direction they could not have taken otherwise.

I’ve been told that wisdom comes with years. I do hope so. I have learned gradually that Westminster is not my church — rather, I am a Christian wayfarer traveling under Westminster’s loving, expanding banner. I have found it a good place to be. God has blessed me through Westminster as He has blessed so many others.

JIM ROBINSON

“Through the years, there have been so many projects that the congregation of Westminster has started or supported individually or collectively with time, effort, and money to detail here. Suffice it to say that Westminster has started and/or nurtured many aspects of GOD’s work. ‘Well done, my good and faithful servants. Well done.’

The projects and accomplishments of Westminster are nice memories. However, they are not the most important memories that I have of Westminster over the last sixty-odd years. The most important memory is the PEOPLE. The warm smiles, the laughter, and the genuine affection that we display toward each other are what I remember most fondly. Most of my long-lasting memories are of the people and how they have accepted, supported, befriended, and yes, loved each other through thick and thin over the years. The road of Westminster is long and littered with wonderful people who have done their best to discern God’s will for their lives and do it. Westminster has

created so many opportunities for us to grow in our faith. I remember with a grateful heart, I remember. Thank you.

NANCY PAYNE ELLIS

Nancy Ellis's first important memory of Westminster is her wedding to Stephen Payne in 1961. They were married in the lounge by G. Raymond Campbell. Steve's parents, William T. Payne and Kathryn B. Payne were charter members at Westminster. Early in their marriage, Steve, Nancy and their family lived in Quail Creek, so they belonged to Covenant Presbyterian but later rejoined Westminster. All four of their children, Kathy, Nan, Bond and Angela were baptized at Westminster. Three of her children, Kathy, Bond and Angela, were all married at Westminster as well. One of her granddaughters, Anna Payne, will be married at Westminster in May.

Nancy has been a member for over 60 years. During that time, she served as a Trustee twice, a Deacon twice, as a Ruling Elder twice and served as chair of the Worship Committee. She has several fond memories of Westminster. When Westminster began planning an expansion of its building, she approached her mother-in-law, Kathryn, for a donation to help with construction. She was joyfully stunned that Mrs. Payne agreed to fund the construction of the Garden Court. And she is also particularly pleased that it honors the memory of her father-in-law, Bill Payne. Westminster was an important part of his life.

Travelling to Santa Fe to shop for art for the addition is another great memory! She also fondly remembers looking for a Music Minister with Randall Spindle. They heard the choir at a Methodist Church in Moore that was particularly good, so they hired the music minister there, Josh Phelps.

KATIE DAVIS

Katie Davis grew up a member of First Presbyterian Church in Alva, where her father was a wheat farmer. After graduating from the University of Oklahoma, she taught school in Oklahoma City. She joined Westminster because it is where her parents' friends, Callie and Thornton Scott (Nan Buxton's parents) attended. She met a young lawyer from Muskogee, Jim Davis, who lived near her apartment on Shartel. She wanted to get to know him better, so she asked Thornton Scott to invite Jim to the lake with Fred and Nan Buxton. Jim grew up Methodist but agreed to join Westminster. They were married by G. Raymond Campbell. Over the years, Jim and Dr. Campbell became very

close, and Jim looked at Campbell as a second father.

Katie worked with kindergarteners for several years, babysat infants while their mothers attended Women's Bible Study with Jim for several more years. Mike Anderson officiated the weddings of all three of her daughters. She particularly enjoyed Randall Spindle's Sunday School class, which she attended for many years. She also was appointed Trustee in 1986. Katie's favorite part of Westminster after over 65 years membership is the people, both members and staff. She likes to say: "It's just my home!"

RHONDA HEFTON

Rhonda joined Westminster in 1988. When she started dating Dick Hefton, neither knew the other was a member at Westminster. She and Dick were married by Mike Anderson in 1992. Rhonda taught Sunday School for 20 years. Rhonda has enjoyed cooking all her life and started working with Westminster's food needs in 2009. She feels great satisfaction in serving others and is grateful for the help and support members have given over the years. She also feels great fellowship doing this work with other members, but knows that there is always something else that can be done. She says of Westminster that "it feels like home here." Rhonda is excited about Westminster's newest mission, SISU, a shelter for homeless teens, for which Westminster will provide meals.

ROB ABERNATHY

Westminster has provided many of my happiest childhood memories. Most of the time when I attended services, I did so with my grandfather, Jack Abernathy. It's a rare service that I don't think of my time at church with him.

I have attended Westminster since I was a small child. I was baptised later when my sister Kelsey, who is 7 ½ years younger than me, was baptised. I remember being the biggest kid I had ever seen baptised, and I was embarrassed to be so big. I was a member of the Confirmation Class of 1981. The other kids were all younger than I was, and I was the only member of the class who could drive. This was not helpful for the confirmation process or for the youth minister. I've felt a need to atone for my time in confirmation class by serving as a Confirmation Mentor. I've now had the privilege of mentoring three confirmands. Kids are much better behaved now than we were!

I particularly enjoy working with our youth. I also served as a Den Leader for Westminster's Cub Scout Pack for five years and from 2013 to 2018 as the Scoutmaster of Westminster's Boy Scout Troop. Both of my children, Kate and Jack, were confirmed at Westminster. I even used some of the same arguments on Kate and Jack that my grandfather used to "sell" me on attending confirmation. My wife, Autumn, and I were married by Randall Spindle.

I am currently serving my third term as a WPC Deacon. Serving as a Deacon is enormously satisfying. I'll keep serving as long as I'm asked. I particularly enjoy serving homebound communion with Dick Thompson and Don Davis. The people I serve have all become friends. I also help manage the Deacons' usher team. Carolyn Howell held this role when I first served as a Deacon, and she was a stickler for proper ushering. Every time I usher, I remember Carolyn and try to honor her by making sure my usher duties are performed responsibly and well.

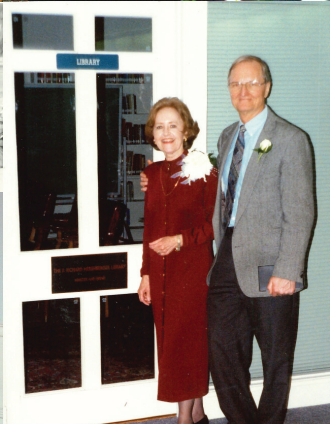
The people at Westminster are my favorite part of being a member, but the church's music program is a close second. Whether it is the choir, the handbells, the carillon, the organs, Bruce Robertson's piping or Westminster brass, the music is always inspirational.

REVEREND RANDALL SPINDLE

Randall Spindle grew up in Ranger, Texas. His father died when Randall was 20 months old. Randall has no memories of him. His father's early passing gave Randall "an awareness of the fragility of life" that has remained with him all his life. Randall and his mother moved to Oklahoma City in 1962. They lived in a garage. At an early age Randall determined that he would "make knowledge his stock in trade." He read voraciously, even reading the entire World Book Encyclopedia when he was very young.

Randall started helping his mother when he was in junior high school, when he worked 30 hours a week. Randall received a Doctorate in Education from Oklahoma State in 1981. Randall pastored a church in Shattuck for a while, and after his wife was hired by Bethany Nazarene College, (now SNU), he was a "dorm dad" for the men's dorm. He later taught history at SNU and was a tenured professor. Randall then earned a Law degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1993. After graduating from OU law school, Randall had three job offers in one day. Sandy Garrett

offered him a job at the Oklahoma Department of Education, Robert Henry offered him a job at OCU Law School, counseling students, and Mike Anderson offered him a job at Westminster. Randall had already taught a Sunday School class at Westminster and felt that it would be the best fit for him.



PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

The pastors and staff of Westminster Presbyterian Church were asked: “What has had the most effect upon your life during your ministry at Westminster Presbyterian Church?”

REV. MICHAEL D. ANDERSON, PH.D.

These thoughts come to mind:

Celebrating the major passages of life with individuals in a community of faith: birth, marriage, crises, death and resurrection.

Witnessing the transformation of individuals at turning points: the discovery of God’s grace for forgiveness and renewal through Christ.

Beholding the generosity in the core members of the church who enable all we do in Christ’s name.



REVEREND TOM PFIZENMAIER

“When the clay is wet, the impression is deeper. I was ordained in the sanctuary of Westminster on August 26, 1984. I was wet clay that day.”

Let me mention several things from my time at Westminster that have marked my life and ministry.

The pastors I served with — Mike Anderson and Dick Hershberger — were not only men who loved Christ, but they were “pros.” The ability to watch them work for five years taught me about leadership, about pastoral care, and working on a team.

When I first came to WPC Mike took me aside and said, “Tom, I will tell you two things about ministry. Number one is that you will never have so much freedom with your time as you do as a pastor. Number two is that you will never have so many demands on it. You will have to figure that out. No one else can do it for you.” I never forgot those words and after 32 years of pastoral ministry, they still ring true.

I also learned that pastors were to have a wide range of competencies, perhaps more than any other profession — Biblical and Theological knowledge, pastoral wisdom, visionary

leadership, budgeting, counseling, long-range planning, evangelism, teaching, and leading building campaigns. I ended up learning that I was to be “A jack of all trades, and a master of some.”

We love WPC. The congregation was remarkably kind and loving and generous to us. You never forget that.

REVEREND DR. STEVEN M. MARSH

My 29 months with the Westminster family continue to shape me into the person and pastor I am today. The power of mercy, grace, determination, faithfulness, and authenticity were so impactful. Having the opportunity to speak with Michelle and encourage her to look seriously at our Associate Pastor position, learning from her about perseverance and pastoral care, learning how to be a more effective communicator, and a lover of people were all incredible lessons learned at Westminster.

The gift of hospitality from the facilities and support staff captivated me. The passion for Jesus from the program staff was energizing, and the love displayed and demonstrated by the congregants for the church family, city, and others was contagious.

Congratulations Westminster Presbyterian Church on your 80th Anniversary. Janet and I are grateful for you and this place in our lives.

**REV. DR. MICHELLE JUNKIN,
PASTOR OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

Since 2012 and each year after, I have never quite gotten over the fact that I get to be part of this community. I do not take it for granted. There is something deeply humbling about being called to serve a congregation like this and at the same time, realizing how much I am being shaped, cared for, and carried by you in return. Because the truth is, ministry here has never felt one-sided. Yes, I have been called to serve, but I have been served right back in more ways than I can count.



In your kindness, your honesty, your faith, and your willingness to show up for one another, I have experienced God’s presence through you. It is often in the small, everyday moments —

conversations in the hallway, shared laughter, prayers offered quietly, meals delivered, hands held — that I have felt it most. Those things might seem ordinary, but they have meant everything to me. They deepen my faith.

So, when I think about what has had the greatest impact on my life here, it always comes back to this: the people of WPC and being part of this community.

“The great gift of community is that it offers us a place where we can be known and loved.”

Henri Nouwen

Yes, certainly one of the marvelous things about Westminster Presbyterian Church is the gift of this Christian community which I am deeply grateful to walk alongside you, to serve with you, and to share in this life of faith together as we give all glory and honor to God.

REVEREND LANDON WHITSITT, SENIOR PASTOR

After being a part of this community for five years, the thing that has the most profound effect on me is the genuine love and care with which this congregation holds their staff. This is actually a rarity. The support we receive and feel ensures we know that our work is appreciated and that we are not taken for granted. Many other congregations tend to treat their staff as “less than” but this community treats us with a high degree of respect. The result is each of our staff members deeply want to offer their best not only to God, but to the membership. The gratitude and joy among the staff is palpable.



GLENN DUNN, PARISH ASSOCIATE

Although there have been many wonderful experiences while serving at Westminster, I chose the following as perhaps the one that has influenced my life the most.

I began volunteering one day a week in congregational care. One day became two, and two became several days a week. I was then asked to inquire about attending seminary,



which I did, and completed the Certificate in Ministry program in Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

I joined the Westminster Staff full-time and worked primarily in congregational care. While working in that capacity, I learned more about the congregation each day, and it changed my life. I learned and appreciated that the WPC congregation is a group of people who love God, love their church, and they love each other.

WPC has made it possible for me to be part of many other people's lives, and they in turn, have been part of mine. I am hopeful and prayerful that Westminster will continue to be a place of hope, service, and love long into the future.

Happy 80th Anniversary!

REV. DR. RANDALL SPINDLE

In this secularized, digitized, and existentially adrift world, it is no small thing to call a place—any place—*home*.

Home is not merely where we dwell.
Home is where **truth**, **goodness**, and **beauty** abide.

You recognize these as the transcendental virtues—the deep grammar of reality itself.

And yet, ours is an age skeptical—if not openly hostile—to claims about truth and goodness. We question truth. We redefine goodness.

But **beauty**...Beauty still has power.

Beauty disarms us. Beauty draws us in. Beauty invites us—quietly, persistently—to reconsider the truth and goodness of that which first appeared beautiful.

That is the calling of this place.

Westminster Presbyterian Church does not lead with beauty *instead* of truth and goodness, but **for the sake of** truth and goodness.

It was beauty, after all, that first drew me here in 1992.

And even now—with paint peeling in the most inaccessible places—the deeper reality remains untouched: an inner sanctum of love and holiness, of mercy and faith, of peace and grace, that has lost none of its luster.

A generation ago, when all the pews were removed—sent away for restoration through the generosity of Dortha and Harry Marbery—the sanctuary stood empty.

And in that emptiness, something was revealed.

The floor pattern emerged, echoing its namesake, Westminster Abbey.

But to me, it suggested something more.

It looked like a ballroom—an ornate dance floor.

Which is fitting, really, for a church that began in a dance studio.

This is a place we call Home, and it continues to be a place of **truth**, and **goodness**, and **beauty**.

The Incarnate Word still speaks in and through this sacred space. Can you hear it? Can you hear him? Can you hear the music? And so, on this first Sunday after Easter, in our 80th year we dare to say it again:

*“I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black;
It’s hard to dance with the devil on your back.
They buried my body and they thought I’d gone;
But I am the dance, and I still go.*

*They cut me down and I leapt up high;
I am the life that’ll never, never die.
I’ll live in you if you’ll live in me:
I am the Lord of the dance, said he.*

*Dance, then, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
And I’ll lead you all, wherever you may be,
And I’ll lead you all in the dance, said he.”*



From a dance studio and a dream, Westminster Presbyterian Church has grown into a lasting home for generations of faithful people. We are grateful for every hand that built this place, every voice that filled it with song, and every heart that has called it home.

Here's to the next 80 years.

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
Jeremiah 29:11*



WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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