

Eastminster Eagle

Volume 40, Issue 9

September 2023



Dear Eastminster Members and Friends,

As I write this we have just shared two Sundays together. Your worship services are beautiful, diverse in style, and inspiring. I believe God is very pleased with you. You have shown up and shown out! You know how to do church.

I hope to join you on a Saturday soon to see the ministry you are doing in the neighborhood. But I already know something. As I have been getting to know people living in the neighborhood, one of them told me this, “Eastminster is the only church that actually tries to get involved in the community.” Bravo, Eastminster! You have a good reputation in Buckner Terrace. You are doing good ministry. Keep it up!

I want to divide the ministry we are called to into two parts, though definitely not unrelated. In Matthew, Jesus gives us two missions. In Matthew 25 we learn that we are to take care of the least of these as if we are taking care of Jesus himself, “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Our Matthew 25 mission is being accomplished in The Neighborhood Breakfast and many other loving ministries for the sake of the vulnerable of our community. Eastminster is doing so very well at taking care of people.

The second mission that Jesus gives the church is found in Matthew 28. It is the Great Commission, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” We are doing the work of discipleship in our Sunday School classes and sermons. I think where we have room to grow is in the “Go therefore” part. We need to go out into the world around us and make disciples. Age, race, sexual orientation, gender, and even religion or lack of religion do not matter. All nations equals all people. Every person is valuable to God and therefore to us as well.

A church that does one mission without doing the others is like a plane trying to fly with one wing. We need to be both a Matthew 25 Church and a Matthew 28 Church. I will do my part. I am already getting to know our neighbors and will be active in the neighborhood in a number of ways. I invite you to do the same whether you live in Buckner Terrace or not. Of course, our ministry reach can go well beyond our

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neighborhood, but I want us to really focus in on Buckner Terrace. This is where God placed us to serve.

Wouldn't it be amazing if at least 50% of our membership lived in the neighborhood? Growing the church will fulfill both of our missions. As more neighbors join we will be able to join Christ in making more disciples. As more neighbors join we will have more people to do the work of caring for the most vulnerable in our community. We will be flying strong and high with both wings of the church in the air.

Perhaps not all of you are called to do both missions. Pray for discernment about how God is calling you to help Eastminster care for its neighbors and to bring more disciples into the fold. I will continue to preach and teach about how we can do this.

One more thing, God also calls his people to rest. We cannot only serve. We must allow God to serve us as well. This is what the Sabbath is about. It's not self-care. It's letting God take care of you. Whether it's Saturday or Sunday, I want you to take a day every week of rest. Get your chores and work done before that day. And then just enjoy and celebrate life with God and his people.

With much love and excitement,
Pastor Paul



East Dallas Cluster

The East Dallas Presbyterian Cluster has a new Facebook page! To join, in Facebook search for the name – “East Dallas Presbyterian Cluster” – and click. Or

you can scan the QR code. It's that easy. There we'll be able to share news and information about activities such as events that might be of interest to other Cluster congregations as well as information from Grace Presbytery and other organizations such as Gilmont and PCHAS.

Plans for upcoming events include some that Eastminster will host. First, we're looking to gather Cluster members to share Neighborhood Outreach successes, ideas, and concerns. Also, the Cluster Music Directors will be putting their heads together to see what shared worship might look like. Finally, plans are in the works for a Cluster-wide Elder training in January.

It's important that we join, check it regularly, and share the good things that are happening in our churches. God is alive and well in the Church. If we don't tell folks, nobody will know.



A New Outreach Opportunity

Charlotte Turner

The Outreach Committee is EXCITED about a new opportunity – and it’s one like we’ve never tried before. This is long, but in order to understand the full scope of our project, please make some popcorn, settle back, and read it all.

In looking to try something new for Outreach to accomplish in our immediate neighborhood, we got in touch with Dallas ISD’s “Homeless Education” program, who then put us in touch with Kenneth Hall, the Community Liaison for Skyline High School. When we contacted him with a simple question: “Do you need school supplies?” he was totally overjoyed. And thus began what promises to be an outreach opportunity worthy of the God we serve.

One of our first tasks was to try and understand the scope of what we’re dealing with, and what followed was a crash course in what the term “homeless” really means when it’s applied to students. We tend to think of homeless adults as being those living in tents, in shelters, or under a bridge – and all of that may be accurate. But “homelessness” for students is much broader. School districts’ definition of “homeless” is really better defined as “unstable, unsafe, temporary, or unreliable housing.” For a homeless student, that could mean living temporarily with a relative in a parent’s absence or bunking down on a friend’s couch for months at a time. It can also mean families – including parents – who are living in a motel setting that frequently changes.

The important thing is that for students in this situation, STABILITY IS EVERYTHING, and the school provides that. It’s at school that they get the

consistency, the nurturing, and the continuity that they need to be successful.

And that’s where Eastminster comes in.

We asked you to provide school supplies for about 50 homeless students at Skyline, and you came through like the generous Congregation that you are. We were able to deliver three large boxes filled with paper, pens, pencils, notebooks, and Kleenex. (Mr. Hall nearly wept at the amount of Kleenex – who knew that would be such a hot commodity?) Then Mr. Hall asked if Eastminster



would be interested in “sponsoring” two of his “best and brightest” students – brother and sister (Eric, who is 18 and a senior, and Zandi, who is 16 and a

sophomore) with uniforms and sundries to begin their school year. Thanks to YOUR generosity, we were able to provide three full uniforms (the school district supplies one) and a basket of toiletries for each of them.

On August 12, I attended Skyline’s “Back to School” fair to deliver the supplies and the uniforms. Eric was there to greet me and to show me around the fair. I met his JROTC Colonel and several other teachers who were excited to tell me the good things that are happening for them. I listened to the band and watched the drill team and cheerleaders show off their skills. I talked to the District Community Outreach personnel about Eastminster and our place in this neighborhood. I invited everyone to the Saturday morning Neighborhood Breakfast (Sorry, Reggie. That might mean more eggs.)

I came away with this certainty: **There are good things happening at Skyline High School, and we have an opportunity to be part of that.**

Let’s address the elephant in the room. We’ve all heard the horror stories about public education. The teachers among our Congregation are living

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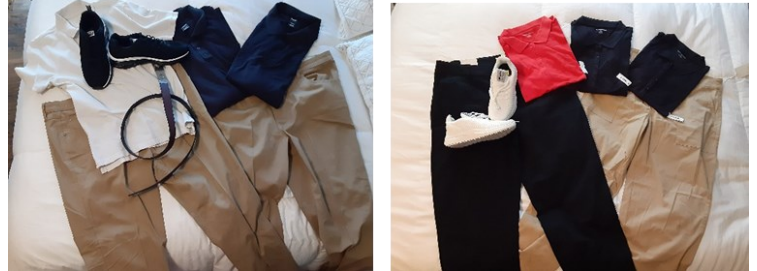
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it. And we will not change that overnight. But WE CAN water the seeds of good in this neighborhood, seeds that often get overshadowed in the media. And that's where Outreach needs EVERYONE'S participation.

What can YOU do right now? Lots of things - **- none of them are difficult; all of them are important.**

- ◆ You can find lots and LOTS of useful information on the Dallas ISD "Homeless Education" page. Google "Dallas ISD Homeless Education." It's eye-opening.
- ◆ Start right now – today – thinking of Eastminster as an integral part of the neighborhood and not just a building located in Buckner Terrace. That means that Skyline is OUR SCHOOL, just as much as the ones each of us attended individually.
- ◆ Join the Outreach Committee by sending me an email – cturner1409@gmail.com. If attending the meetings is not your thing, let me know that you want to be actively involved in this Mission anyway.
- ◆ Think of what YOU can offer to the kids at Skyline. Nothing is too small to consider: Can you run a case of water to the club sponsor who's taking students to competition? That's important. Can you tutor kids after school? That's huge. Can you help spread the word of students' success? Positive press is vital to the neighborhood. Email me **any idea** you have, no matter what.
- ◆ Be open to supplying spur-of-the-moment campaigns. Homeless students can't plan their specific needs ahead of time, and that can prove contrary to the "Presbyterian" way of doing things by committee. In fact, our first "pop-up" campaign is happening now. See box to the right. →
- ◆ PRAY for Skyline High School, regularly and often.

This is something to get excited about. Don't sit this one out.



You provided three full uniforms for each student, including shoes. . .



. . . and toiletries for each.

Skyline High School's Homeless Students Toiletry Drive

Students are in need of these things IMMEDIATELY.

- Soap or Body Wash
- Deodorant

When you go to the store for the next couple of weeks, throw a multi-pack of bar soap (or a big bottle of body wash – kids like that – AND a couple of sticks of deodorant into your cart. Bring them with you to church, and Outreach will get them delivered.

Hunger

Tom Pappas

I wanted to start this series of articles in the newsletter with this recent print column from the Dallas Morning News about hunger.

One of the main neighborhood mission efforts Eastminster is involved in is the Pleasant Grove Food Pantry at 1331 Baywood Street, Dallas, Texas 75217. Our people have been involved for years and the Pleasant Grove Food Pantry has grown over the years to serve hundreds of families on a weekly basis. We will be providing more information about the Pleasant Grove Food Pantry in upcoming newsletters.

Hunger is a real problem. Hundreds of people face hunger right now in the neighborhoods around our church and it is getting worse. Hundreds more neighborhood people are food insecure (one financial setback away from going hungry) and it is getting worse.

As Christians, we take Christ's message to feed the hungry very seriously. Pastor Paul said it very eloquently in his *5 Loaves and 2 Fishes* sermon on August 6.

I am so humbled (and proud) to be associated with the Church that provides so many volunteers to the Pleasant Grove Food Pantry. I can get more involved and do more in little ways and big ways to join the Eastminster group already serving. So can many of you. There are a thousand ways, big and little, to help.

Hunger has not left North Texas

Inflation, end of pandemic aid programs leave more people in need

By TRISHA CUNNINGHAM

Wendi is a college-educated professional in North Texas and a single mother of three daughters. Already struggling to stretch her monthly income to cover basic living expenses, Wendi incurred an unexpected expense that threw her into a financial crisis. This led her to reach out to an area food pantry, Heart of the City in Lewisville, to help feed her family.

"I was really nervous to seek assistance because I felt it was my responsibility to take care of my own children and expenses," Wendi said. "It's awful to feel like you can't provide for your children. Heart of the City has done so much for me and my family at a time when I didn't know where to turn."

Wendi's story is not uncommon.

Because we no longer see the shocking images of people in cars lined up for miles to receive food as we did during the pandemic, it might be easy to assume that hunger is no longer an issue in North Texas. But that assumption would be wrong.

Since the end of the public health emergency for COVID-19, hunger has grown sharply in North Texas, evidenced by the 15% increase in meals the North Texas Food Bank has distributed over the past year.

In fact, North Texas now has the fourth-highest number of food-insecure people in the nation, according to Feeding America. Rising rents and a 14% jump in food prices in Dallas-Fort Worth in 2022 — the second highest nationwide after Detroit — means that more middle-class families, like Wendi's, who have never had charitable assistance are looking for help.

Working adults with full-time employment are experiencing food insecurity and struggling to feed their families. Seniors who had been

scraping by can no longer make ends meet. They continue to make difficult choices between purchasing food, paying rent, seeking medical care, or securing other household necessities.

This has become increasingly common. Over the last year, the North Texas Food Bank's feeding network of 500 local food pantries and community organizations has seen the face of hunger change in North Texas.

Historic inflation is causing some families to quickly deplete their savings and seek assistance for the first time. But rising costs are just one reason for the increased need for food assistance.

Many government relief programs created during the pandemic have now expired. The end of the Child Tax Credit, SNAP emergency allotments, and universal school lunch programs have created more hardships for middle-income and working-class North Texans already struggling to provide for their families.

As a result, we have more neighbors coming to food pantries like Wendi who make too much money to qualify for government assistance programs, yet they struggle to stretch their budget to meet their needs.

To address these new challenges, the North Texas Food Bank is embracing bold new approaches in the fight against hunger. Last year, we provided access to more than 144 million meals, the most in our history. Yet there is more to be done. While the long lines of cars have disappeared, hunger has not.

Like Wendi, many families are one financial crisis away from needing food assistance. When families experience hunger, it not only affects their physical health, but also hinders their ability to learn, work and lead productive lives. When this happens, our entire community is diminished.

Hunger can affect any of us, and winning the fight against hunger will take all of us.

Trisha Cunningham is president and CEO of the North Texas Food Bank. She wrote this column for The Dallas Morning News.

The North Texas Food Bank is embracing bold new approaches in the fight against hunger. Last year, we provided access to more than 144 million meals, the most in our history. Yet there is more to be done.

Saturday Morning Neighborhood Breakfast

Tom Pappas

The Saturday Morning Neighborhood Breakfast continues to grow both in numbers and in terms of meaningful service.

As you can see below, we had 90 people on August 19 (78 guests and 12 servers). The brutal heat makes us a real lifesaver. For some of our guests, we provide their only meaningful break from the heat. As a result, we are seeing more and more people coming in between 7:40 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. We are also seeing more people come in and stay for a longer period of time than usual.

We are providing them the usual iced water bottles which are a big hit and we've added donuts the last 3 weeks. Clothes have been jumping off the racks. Most of the people coming in go straight to the clothes racks to pick out some before they even sit down for breakfast. We desperately need more clothes and shoes of all sizes. Saturday we had 1 person who changed in the bathroom into their clothes off the rack. We are guessing she only had the clothes on her back to wear.

Our friends at Christian Stronghold and Community Church (Greater Bethlehem) continue to help make breakfast possible.

For me, serving (and being a listener) is the best way to truly understand how blessed we are and I am. There are times when I am rendered speechless at how much loneliness and want there is all within a few blocks of my church home. I never cease to be amazed at just how much a cold glass of juice, a hot meal, a listening ear, or being served can turn around loneliness, sadness, or despair.

Come some Saturday morning, even if it's just for 20 minutes. Just see a part of what's going on. You will find it transformational.

Some numbers:

Total served (guests and servers)

July 1 - 73	July 29 - 70
July 8 - 56	August 5 - 74
July 15 - 60	August 12 - 67
July 22 - 55	August 19 - 90

(Editor's Note: this article was submitted 2 months ago.)

This is a little poem that I often include when I mail out a sympathy card to someone who has lost a loved one and I'd like to share it with each of you.

God's Gift of Time

We all need a time to grieve – quiet time for reflection to sift through memories and come to grips with what has happened.

We all need a time for tears, not for the one who is now at peace in heaven, but for ourselves as we realize that things will never be the same.

We all need a time to just “be,” when we can open ourselves to God and let the reassurance of His everlasting love start to heal our broken hearts.

Thank you dear ones – for what you did, what you said, and who you are – Mother's/Granny's Celebration of Life was perfect.

We thank you for your kind expressions of love and sympathy and deeply and sincerely appreciate your thoughts and prayers.

Love -- Vicki Lynn, Rachael, Bryan and “The Boys”, Jake and Jack

Prayer as a place for play

Writer Elizabeth Jarrett Andrew tells of attending a retreat focused on a type of meditation called centering prayer. She found it challenging to “set down [her] frantic internal voices” and “lean back into stillness.” But one day, during a stretch of sleep, she had a dream: “My dear camel, who feels a sweet attachment to me, is ready to retire. I release him into a green-enclosed pasture. He cavorts; he frolics; he races in circles. He’s gleeful and free. Poor beast of burden! I’ve been asking far too much of him.”

Andrew’s dream was a revelation: “Turns out silent prayer is a fence within which both [my camel] and I can lay down our baggage,” she writes. “We can pause our trudge across the desert long enough to play.”

Have you ever thought of prayer — especially silent prayer — as a fenced-in space where it’s safe to lay down your burdens, pause your trudge through life, play, cavort and frolic? In God’s secure love, we can relax, rejuvenate and experience freedom, even glee. Sometimes this, too, is prayer.

—based on *Happy Camel*, Elizabeth Jarrett Andrew
<https://www.elizabethjarrettandrew.com/blognew/>

Who, me? Yes, you!

The Bible is filled with people who don’t feel up to the challenge of serving God, speaking for God or leading his people. But God always knows what he’s doing. Pastor Haviland Houston issues this challenge: “When you are hesitant to act, or feel a failure of nerve coming on, when courage lags, or even if laziness and the ‘I don’t care’ blues get you down, may the words of Mordecai to Esther burn in your hearts and minds: ‘And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?’” (See Esther 4:14.)

Max Lucado offers a similar reminder in *You Were Made for This Moment*. “God always has his person,” he writes, also citing the book of Esther. “When we feel as though everything is falling apart, God is working in our midst, causing everything to fall into place. He is the King of quiet providence, and he invites you and me to partner with him in his work.”

Lucado continues: “[God] has a Joseph for every famine and a David for every Goliath. When his people need rescuing, God calls a Rahab into service. When a baby Moses needs a mama, God prompts an Egyptian princess to have compassion. He always has his person. He had someone in the story of Esther. And in your story he has you.”

Instruments of connection

Following Jesus involves much more than attending worship, as Pastor Stan Purdum points out in a sermon titled “The Hug”:

“The spiritual life, in addition to some outwardly religious and inwardly devotional acts, also includes such mundane activities as sending thank-you notes for gifts received, returning phone calls, greeting fellow worshipers Sunday after Sunday, surprising our spouse with a spontaneous act of appreciation, helping out at funeral dinners, seeking common ground during disagreements, listening to our children, working at not being a grouch, visiting friends and relatives and, perhaps, even sending an electronic hug. All those things are instruments of connection. The spiritual aspect is the intentionality behind them.”

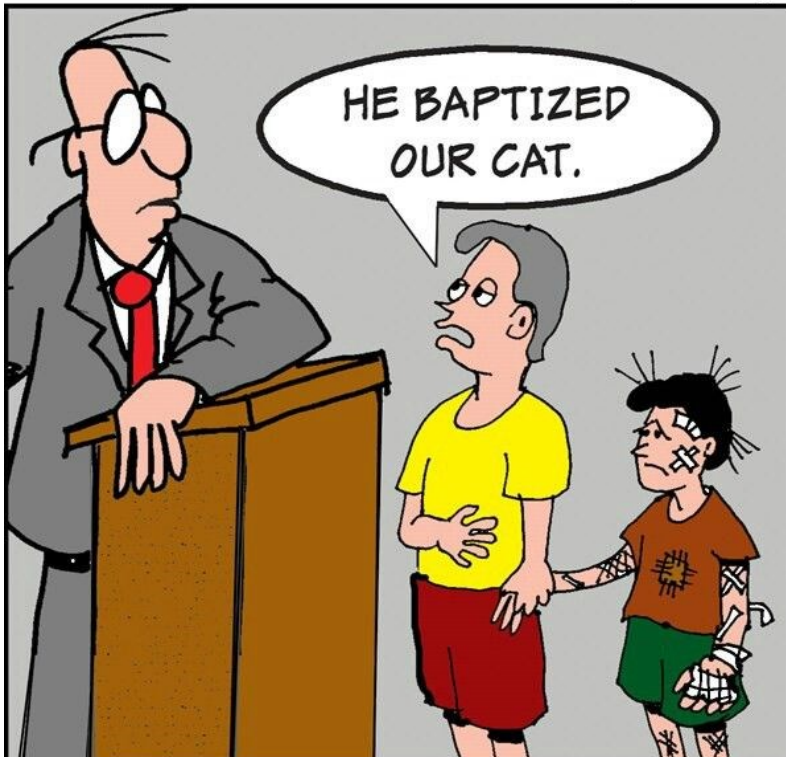


After Elijah was taken up to heaven, his newly commissioned successor, Elisha, performed two miracles. The first was making a poisonous stream's water safe to drink. What did Elisha toss into the water that made it wholesome?

- A. a stick
B. a new bowl
C. bread
D. salt

Answer: D (See 2 Kings 2:19-22.)

CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp



The Rule

A man who had climbed up a chestnut tree had by carelessness missed his hold of one of the boughs and fell to the ground with such violence as to break one of his ribs. A neighbor coming to his assistance remarked to him dryly that had he followed "the rule" in such cases, he would have avoided this accident.

What rule do you mean?"

"This," replied the philosopher. "Never come down a place faster than you can go up."

Scripture Readings for September

1 Pss. 88; 148	11 Pss. 5; 145	21 Pss. 36; 147:12-20
2 Pss. 122; 149	12 Pss. 42; 146	22 Pss. 130; 148
3 Pss. 108; 150	13 Pss. 89:1-18; 147:1-11	23 Pss. 56; 149
4 Pss. 62; 145	14 Pss. 97; 147:12-20	24 Pss. 67; 150
5 Pss. 12; 146	15 Pss. 51; 148	25 Pss. 57; 145
6 Pss. 96; 147:1-11	16 Pss. 104; 149	26 Pss. 54; 146
7 Pss. 116; 147:12-20	17 Pss. 19; 150	27 Pss. 65; 147:1-11
8 Pss. 84; 148	18 Pss. 135; 145	28 Pss. 143; 147:12-20
9 Pss. 63; 149	19 Pss. 123; 146	29 Pss. 88; 148
10 Pss. 103; 150	20 Pss. 15; 147:1-11	30 Pss. 122; 149

Summer Dining

We enjoyed our last stop on our summer dining tour at El Vecino. We had fun visiting and eating some yummy Mexican food. We were so happy to see Harry and Shirley and Jan and David. Others that were there Tim, Kathy, Darlene, Christine, Michele, and Judy. We look forward to next summer and trying some new restaurants.



Blessed with work

In the movie *Return to Me*, Grace works for her grandfather, Marty, in his restaurant, and the two live upstairs. After closing time one night, Grace looks through the apartment window and sees Marty cleaning tables. She yells down to ask if he wants help, and he replies, “No, dear, that’s okay. I’m blessed with work.”

Here’s a man well past retirement age laboring extra hours after his staff has clocked out. Marty simply continues to delight in his work, despite the late hour.

Although this snippet had little to do with the movie’s plot, I’ve always remembered Marty’s words. But I don’t think I’ve ever claimed to be “blessed with work.” By contrast, I often sigh as I’m dealing with messes or long to-do lists. I can get so caught up in tasks that I overlook the incredible people around me. I miss out on the blessing — the joy — of work.

Ecclesiastes 5:19 (NLT) says, “To enjoy your work ... is indeed a gift from God.” In what ways are you “blessed with work”?

—Janna Firestone

Listen to the loving voice

Figurative thieves are all around: Illness steals time and energy. Inflation robs many of financial stability. The bandit of social media chips away at our productivity, self-esteem, quality time with loved ones. Prejudice and oppression prey on certain groups of people. Doubtless, you can think of other thieves and bandits.

But above their noise, listen for another sound: A warm voice whose loving tone calls us by name. A voice that puts us at ease because it’s familiar as a favorite blanket, a path we can walk in the dark, a song we know by heart. That voice rising above any force that would steal and kill and destroy is, according to John 10, the loving voice of God made known in Jesus, caring for us as a good shepherd does his sheep. And lest you get confused, thinking God is angry and judgmental, think again. That is the sound of thieves and bandits; don’t listen to them, don’t follow them, don’t give them your heart!

“I came,” says Jesus the Shepherd-Gate-Messiah-Savior, “that [you] may have life and have it abundantly” (v. 10, NRSV).

—Heidi Hyland Mann



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Shirley Dry	9/3
Frank Karlen, Jr.	9/11
Bettye Clark	9/12
Alex Pappas	9/17
Michele Pappas	9/22
Linda Stamport	9/26
Henry Owen	9/28



SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Rhonda & Kevin Kraft	9/5
Jan & David Anderson	9/10
Chandra & Frank Karlen	9/17
Shirley & Harry Karlen	9/18
Lorna & Javed Almas	9/28

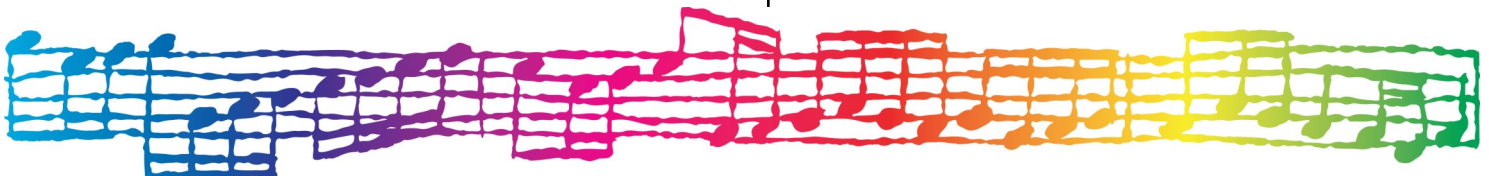


Eastminster Session

Chandra Anderson
 Betty Crabtree
 Blair Garrett
 Philis Knox
 Dick Knox
 Jim Lee
 Tom Pappas
 Charlotte Turner
 Sean Turner
 Fred Watkins



Pastor	Rev. Dr. Paul Burns
Director of Music	Fred P. Watkins
Organist	Melody S. Davis
Administrative Assistant	Chandra Anderson
Hostess/Housekeeper	Minerva Hernandez
Child Care Provider	Betty Crabtree



HIGHLIGHTS from the STATED SESSION MEETING

August 20, 2023

- ◆ Enjoyed a meal provided by Bruce Turner.
- ◆ Rejoiced at the addition of new member Bill Watson.
- ◆ Heard a report from the Treasurer that Eastminster's financial position for June and July is still good.
- ◆ Heard a report from the Stewardship Committee regarding Text Giving.
- ◆ Approved December 16, 2023, for the Annual Wilkinson Center Toy Distribution.
- ◆ Approved a request from St. Peter's Episcopal to use the Sanctuary on 21 October and the Fellowship Hall on 29 October.
- ◆ Heard reports on the East Dallas Cluster of Churches meeting on 26 July.
- ◆ Heard reports from the Outreach Committee on plans for "partnerships" with Skyline High School as well as plans for Cluster events centering on Outreach/Mission.

Eastminster Online Giving: Use your smartphone or tablet for online giving. Scan the QR code to take you directly to our Online Giving site.

Text Giving: Text "EPCDALLAS" to 73256 to give using your mobile device. This number will never send unsolicited texts to you. Messages and data rates may apply. Message frequency varies. Text HELP to 73256 for help. Text STOP to 73256 to cancel.



Special dates

- ◆ Labor Day, September 4
- ◆ National Grandparents Day, September 10
- ◆ Patriot Day, September 11
- ◆ Hispanic Heritage Month, Sep. 15–Oct. 15
- ◆ First day of autumn, September 23