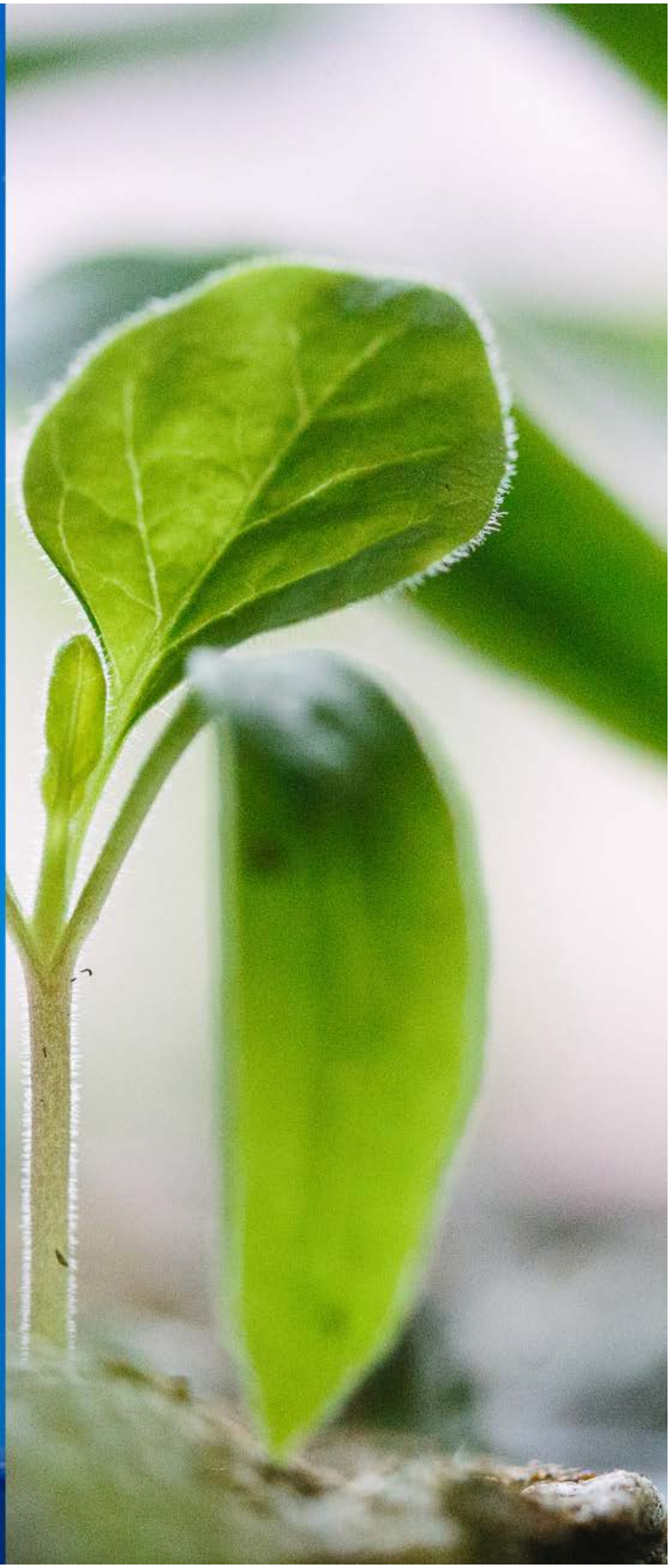
WESTMINSTER CALGARY

PROFILE DOCUMENT

GROWING IN CHRIST'S LOVE

AUGUST, 2022



Westminster Presbyterian Church, Calgary, is part of the Synod of Alberta and the Northwest, and the Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod.

290 Edgepark Blvd, Calgary, T3A 4H4
www.wpchurch.net

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that we live, work, worship, and play on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.

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Welcome, Candidate for Westminster's Minister

Thank you for opening this document and considering its contents as you prayerfully consider your future calling within the Presbyterian Church in Canada. We have designed this document to be a clear portrayal of Westminster in 2022: you will read about where we've been, the strong foundation we have built, the challenges we've faced in the past few years, and the sense of renewal and excitement the congregation now feels as it prepares for a new future.

Our Vision:

Westminster is committed to live by faith, to be known by love,

and to be a voice of hope.

By God's spirit, we serve the world God created and loves.

We are searching for a dynamic leader who will work with us in creating a positive and joyful future together, a future which will see us reaching out to our community in the spirit of Jesus' teachings, to enable faith, hope and the love of God to thrive in the lives of the people we connect with.

We believe that in many ways we are like a new congregation, in that we are in an active phase of renewal, we are adding new members, are redefining our ways of being, and are very future-focused. Yet we have some of the strengths of a more established congregation: committed people, experienced leadership, a church building, and no debt. We are seeking someone who is as excited as we are about the prospects for the future, and who will bring their energy and gifts to help us realize our vision.

Westminster's (Short) History

Westminster is the youngest Presbyterian congregation in Calgary, having been erected in 1989. Even at its inception, we followed a new model of development. We were first started by Varsity Acres Presbyterian Church (VAPC), who in 1987 brought a young minister, the Rev. Kirk Summers, to fill a joint position as an associate minister at VAPC, and as the "church planter" for a new as-yet-unnamed congregation in northwest Calgary.

The people who became Westminster began worshiping together, first in the basement of the manse (which has since been sold), and then in the gymnasium of a school. On Easter Sunday, 1991, we had our first worship service in our new building, which was built with the assistance of countless hours of volunteer work by members of the church. In 1995, we were able to enlarge the church to its current size, and we have worshiped together there since then.

Over the years, we have continued to develop as we transitioned from a church in a new community with many young families, to a more established community, which included children and youth, but consisted of a largely middle-aged demographic. We also have made the transition from being largely self-focussed, as new congregations tend to be as they create their identities as a congregation, to being more outwardly focussed.

Our community and our congregation have both become more diverse, and for this we are grateful. Our immediate surroundings have evolved from being a new and distant suburb to now being considered part of the mature communities in Calgary, with many new and young communities to the north and west of us, none of whom have a Presbyterian church presence. Through it all, we have retained a strong sense of Christian community, celebrating one another's joys and sorrows and sharing our lives.

Over our 30-plus year history, we have had only three ministers at Westminster:

- The Rev. Kirk Summers, 1989 – 2002
- The Rev. Ian Gray, 2003 – 2009
- The Rev. Kobus Genis, 2007 – 2020; associate minister (2007-2010); senior minister 2010-2020)

As is the case in any organization, there are periods of time that move forward smoothly with a strong sense of direction, and others where the organization struggles to find its identity and a way forward. Because we want to be fully honest about our recent history, we must share that Westminster has recently been through a rockier phase of our life cycle. As a result of congregational difficulties, and after a long period of presbytery review, the Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod took the decision to dissolve the pastoral tie with the minister, and to also dissolve the Session, effective May of 2020. These decisions were taken just at the beginning of the COVID pandemic, which, for all churches, introduced challenges of its own. It was, indeed, a very challenging time.

With an interim moderator team and an assessor session in place, the people of Westminster gradually rebuilt congregational life and leadership from within the congregation as people stepped forward. We began with a core of active members, and our first priority was to reach out to the most vulnerable in the congregation to keep them connected during the isolating era of COVID. We also prioritized staying connected with children through a "VBS in a bag" program. Over time, with the leading of the Spirit, more people stepped forward.

Our newly elected Session was inducted in October 2021, and a single interim moderator, the Rev. Jeff Lackie, took on his role in March of 2022. We are now in the place where people who are new to Westminster and those who have not been with us for a while are finding that it is a place that can connect with them with grace and God's love. You will read more about this in the following pages.

This document will focus on the current Westminster – what we've done in the past two years, our current state, and a glimmer of what we feel the future may hold for us. We believe that the Spirit has led us through some challenging times, and that it will certainly reveal to us (and to the minister who is called to lead us) a future full of faith, hope, and love.

Westminster: Who We are Now

Westminster is now a congregation with 140 members and 150 households, and a strong base of committed members. In fact, we have added 15 new members so far in 2022, which speaks to the gentle renewal that is now underway. In August, we conducted three baptisms from three different families, two of them newer to us. We are celebrating worship with about 60 to 70 attendees on any given Sunday, an additional 30 or so on livestream, and more folks who view the abridged worship services online later in the week.

While the Vision tells of our aspiration, the Mission talks a bit more about the work we feel called to do:

> We are committed to serving all people, bringing greater love and peace to the world, as Jesus did.
>
> We are an open and accepting community.
>
> We believe that God is always with us, and we see God at work with and through others.

This section starts with the activities and immediate plans of the ministries at Westminster (what we do and hope to do), moves on to an overview of our context and finance (how we support our work) and concludes with some congregational assessments of ourselves and our leadership needs (who we are).

1. What We Do and Hope to Do

In 2021, Session organized the activities of the congregation into four ministries and one team. The ministries are the Care and Connection, Faith Formation, Mission and Outreach, and Music and Worship Ministries. We also have a Finance and Infrastructure Team that reports directly to Session. In the pages that follow, we will describe the current focus and activities of each of these ministries/team, and their priorities for the near future.

1. Care and Connection Ministry

The Care and Connection Ministry consists of several programs and activities whose purpose it is to care for the Westminster family, and to give them an opportunity to create those "family ties" through communication and opportunities for fellowship. It includes an active "inreach team" that regularly connects with people in the congregation who are not able to attend church in person. The prayer group meets weekly to answer the prayer requests of the congregation. The fellowship and communications groups also fall within this ministry, and there is more detail on their activities below.

When COVID limited our ability to meet, we looked for ways for the congregation to stay connected either virtually or in person. This was even more important for us than most congregations, as we had quite a bit of work to do together to determine who we were as a congregation after the dissolution. Initially, informal online gatherings were scheduled around Sunday services, and we held *Coffee Alfrescos* weekly through the summer. Many people who were uncomfortable about coming to worship indoors were happy to visit outdoors and to maintain connection with Westminster that way.

The Well.Being group was developed in the fall of 2021 to provide resources to help people feel resilient and connected during what seemed to be an interminable COVID epidemic. We focused on skills such as gratitude practices, mindfulness, and communication, and had discussions based on The Book of Joy by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama. People were able to attend in person or online via Zoom.

The congregational responses to the questionnaire expressed profound gratitude for the energy, resilience, and compassion of the congregation in dealing with the challenges of 2020 and forward. In response to the question about our greatest strength, the people and community of Westminster were cited again and again.

Fellowship

Despite the realities of COVID, Westminster found ways to reach out to the community and to fundraise safely. We have had two Christmas markets, the first of which occurred largely online. By 2021, we were able to have an in-person market while still following all COVID guidelines of the day. We've hosted Yard Sales in July of 2021 and 2022; both delivered great opportunities to connect with our community.

In early 2022, we formed a fellowship team, and in February of 2022, we held a Mardi Gras event in our parking lot, despite the winter weather. Kids joined in on car racing, games, and piñata bashing. Our Stampede breakfast resumed this year, and we hosted dozens of community people (and one St. Bernard!). Many volunteers work together to make these events happen, and we cherish the fellowship and camaraderie in the days leading up to the events.

Communications

Especially when we can't be together as much as we'd like, communication is key. And as we move forward, external communication will be vital in creating connections with our community.

Our website was updated in 2020 and has been kept current since (www.wpchurch.net). In mid-2020, we re-imagined the Westminster newsletter as a lifeline for those within the congregation. It is now a weekly e-publication, carrying information about any number of congregational activities, including worship services. It also includes news of the Westminster family, and more broadly, the Presbyterian church outside Westminster, and it usually includes links to music or videos that relate to the sermon or Sunday school curriculum. Our recent congregational survey underlined the importance of this source of connection in the congregation. About 180 people are frequent readers of the newsletter, many of them "friends of Westminster" in addition to our own congregants.

Finally, the recent addition of an LED sign gives us a new way to communicate with our community. In the month that it has been in place, our website has seen a 45% increase in activity, indicating an interest in us on the part of the community.

Westminster Presbyterian Church
www.wpchurch.net
403-241-1443
VBS for kids age 4 to Gr
Mornings, August 8 to 12
Go to wpchurch.net for deta

Westminster Now!
Westminster Presbyterian Church Calgary

The Immediate Future for the Care and Connection Ministry

There are many plans for fellowship, and the inreach team will continue, even as Session develops its role in congregational care/districts. In communications, we are currently forming a larger team to drive our presence forward and to optimize the impact of our existing and new platforms.

Finally, one of the questions on our congregational questionnaire asked whether the respondent would be supportive of Westminster journeying towards being a fully affirming congregation, given the General Assembly's recognition of a broader definition of marriage and eligibility for ordination. Over 90% of respondents answered positively. Session would be keen to work with the new minister to move this forward.

2. Faith Formation Ministry

Children and Family Ministry

We, like many other congregations, have strived to be innovative in offering online opportunities to engage the children in this period when they can't get together. We developed online puppet shows, virtual parties for Pancake Tuesday and other occasions, and we provided newsletter links to access special online ministries like Tori Smit's Interactive Advent Calendar.

In the first summer VBS in a Bag was born, which lasted throughout the summer and involved about 30 children. In 2021, we held an in-person VBS with 30 children and 20 volunteers, and we had another successful event with 23 children in 2022.

Sunday School has also grown since we started offering in-person classes in the fall of 2021. In the early weeks, we frequently had only one or two children attending. We now have about a dozen children involved on a regular basis. We are delighted with the curriculum *Follow Me* from PCUSA, as it allows us to be flexible in providing a good experience for multiple age groups.

Adult Faith Formation

We are also carrying out adult Faith Formation through book studies. Some of these used resources from Presbyterian Reads, and some used other resources. In general, we've held these twice a year, involving about 15 adults. We are eager to expand Adult Faith Formation further, and are looking at ideas such as in-person discussions of videos and presentations zoomed into the church.

The Immediate Future of the Faith Formation Ministry

The congregation has indicated support for the current small group studies for adults, and they look forward to the opportunity for more of these in future. We will be moving towards two age groups for the Sunday School in the fall, have greatly increased the number of volunteers working with them, and we look forward to building the children's and youth program further.

3. Worship and Music Ministry

Worship Evolution, 2020 through 2022

Early in the pandemic, we developed a COVID Team, including a physician, two nurses, and our volunteer administrator. This allowed us to be open, with a few pauses for outbreaks, for most Sundays beginning in October, 2020. We livestream the services for those who cannot attend. As attendance in person is now increasing, fewer are attending by livestream, but we have a cadre of people who cannot attend in person for whom we plan to continue this option. We have a dedicated volunteer AV team that supports this fully.

Until March 2022, worship was led primarily by the ordained members of the Assessor Session/Interim Moderator Team. Over the summer of 2021, 6 services were led from teams within Westminster, as we presented the SAM series (see Appendix 2); these introduced missional concepts to the congregation.

Since March 2022, we have had a single interim moderator, who has been responsible for ensuring pulpit supply. Our Easter 2022 service, despite masks and social distancing, was a celebratory service, and we were able to welcome new members and express our joy in the resurrection, and in our ability to fully worship together.

Our music is a blend of contemporary and traditional. Along with the grand piano, we have people in the congregation who often accompany music with the flute, guitar or brass instruments.

Dr. Elizabeth Clarke joined us as our music leader in September 2021. After our COVID hiatus, Elizabeth quickly took on the leadership of the Celebration Choir, and they have been sharing in worship leadership since then. Two additional choirs, our kids' choir (Joyful Noise) and the men's group (Hims of Praise) started at the same time. The congregational questionnaires indicated great appreciation of the music program and its role in the worship services.

'I can see God working in the way the choir members love and care for each other (and me!) and hope the choir will continue to be a place where all can feel they belong. We will always have a place for anyone who is interested in being part of this community. '

Elizabeth Clarke, Director of Music

A key to worship is the people who come to worship together (in-person and online), and the support of our worshipping community. That, too, has grown over the year. In January 2021, we were averaging about 25 people at an in-person worship service; since December 2021, not including Christmas Eve, there are generally 60 to 70 people in the pews.

The Immediate Future for the Worship and Music Ministry

As noted, the music ministry is enthusiastically supported by the congregation, and it will be able to move forward differently now that the COVID restrictions are easing. But the commonest response to the question on the greatest need at Westminster was consistent leadership by a minister/pastor, and that this person had the ability to bring life to the proclamation of the gospel and to help others bring the Gospel to life. Are you this person?

4. Mission and Outreach Ministry

This ministry brings together our local and global outreach activities, and our missional efforts.

Local Outreach

During the summer, Westminster organizes and funds the Lunch Club, which serves lunch to between 100 and 120 individuals every Wednesday during July and August. We also participate in The Breakfast Club, which supplies a packed breakfast to approximately 100 children every week during the school year and provides the local schools with breakfast items to be used as needed. There is a community Christmas hamper initiative every Christmas; Westminster sponsored five of the families and provided volunteers and storage space for the project in 2021.

The Coldest Night of the Year Walk is a national fundraiser for organizations serving homeless and struggling individuals and families that takes place every February.
In 2022, Westminster hosted a friendly challenge/collaboration among the presbytery churches. Westminster was the second highest fundraiser of any team in Calgary (Presbyterian or not!) and together, Presbyterian churches in Calgary raised a quarter of all funds generated in Calgary.

Property & Community

In March 2021, members of Westminster attended a presentation by Knox Presbyterian Church on how they were able to use their property to invite in, support, and encourage their neighbours. We engaged the congregation in this concept at one of the SAM talks during the summer and several ideas flowed in.

We have placed two signs in our parking lot to welcome the Tom Baines students and their families who come into our parking lot every day to drop off or pick up the students. We are in the process of developing a proposal with Tom Baines School, our neighbour, and the Edgemont Community Association to design and paint a mural on a fence around Westminster's parking lot over the next year.

Global Outreach

Every year we participate in Operation Christmas Child. In 2021, over 100 shoeboxes, filled with clothing, toys, books and a $10 fee, were delivered to the Processing Center in Calgary on behalf of Westminster. This is one of the largest donations organized by Westminster to date.

Westminster has supported a mission called "The Bridge" in Bogota, Colombia for many years. This mission supports approximately 200 children in high-risk situations by providing educational support and spiritual guidance for children who are either struggling in school or who aren't enrolled in school at all.

Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation

Westminster includes a Land Acknowledgement at the beginning of worship services and on our website landing page. In June 2022, we had two Westminster gatherings reflecting on the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and including the leadership of indigenous cultural ambassadors. Information on the steps being taken by the national church toward truth and reconciliation are regularly shared with the congregation via the newsletter.

Missional Leadership Course

The Missional Leadership Course is offered by the Centre for Missional Leadership at St. Andrew's Hall in Vancouver. Five members of Westminster participated in the course. Over the next few months, we plan to engage in community conversations to better understand the needs, wishes, and dreams of our neighbours.

The Immediate Future for the Mission and Outreach Ministry

Responses to our recent congregational questionnaire expressed support for the current activities. There is a desire to be connected to the community, and to partner more intentionally with the community to respond to local needs. There is also a desire to be engaged with justice projects especially around reconciliation, refugees and poverty.

2. How we Support Our Work

The Finance and Infrastructure Team

Westminster has a Finance and Infrastructure Team, whose work it is to look after our financial health, the building and property, and our core policies, such as our newly revised Human Resources and Leading with Care Policies. The F&I Team regularly attends a portion of the Session meetings, so that we can ensure strong collaboration and good communication. This section provides a brief overview of those elements.

Financial Health

With all the events of 2020, it was, not surprisingly, a challenging financial year for us. When the pastoral tie was dissolved, we continued to be responsible for transitional support for a year, and thus our financial obligations did not decrease. Presbytery offered us some short-term loan assistance to help us through, and we ended the year solvent but at a $66K deficit for the year. We were encouraged, however, by the fact that givings increased steadily month over month, beginning in July of 2020.

In 2021, we were able to solidify our financial situation considerably. Givings increased by 15% over 2020 to nearly $200K and exceeded the projected givings in the budget. Including rental and other income, our total revenue for the year was over $243 K. We ended the year with a surplus of $74K to carry into 2022. We have since repaid our Presbytery loans and as of April of 2022, Westminster is now debt-free. (We have no mortgage.)

We have budgeted for a minister in the fall of 2022 and have projected forward through upcoming years. We are confident in our ability to support this additional commitment going forward.

While Westminster now has a solid financial footing, we have recently engaged in long-term sustainability planning. Prior to 2022, we had not had any initiatives in planned giving or development of a legacy fund. And while we have two regular renters of space, we are working on becoming more proactive about space use. This will move us toward a more diversified revenue base to strengthen our sustainability.

Our Building

Our building was built in 1991, with an enlargement in 1995. While all buildings require maintenance, the age of our building means that this is not as big a concern as for some older congregations.

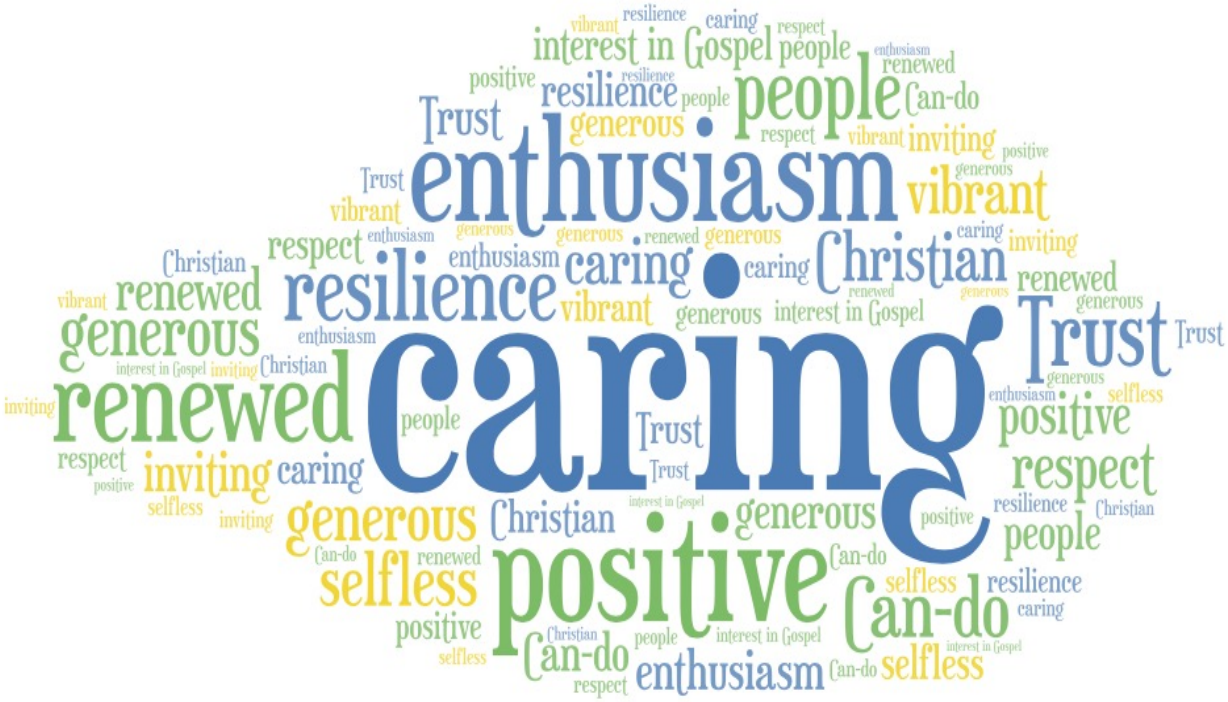
Our building is light-filled, with large windows in the sanctuary and in most rooms. The narthex is our entry foyer and is a bright space for people to visit before and after services. The sanctuary seats about 360 people and has a Yamaha 2G grand piano and simple golden oak chancel furniture.

We have two other frequent users of the building. The Tamil Christian Community uses our sanctuary every Sunday afternoon. Unique Kids, a preschool program, uses our lower level in the mornings during the school term.

3. Who we are

What has the congregation told us about itself?

It is always difficult to describe oneself as an individual, and it is equally difficult for a congregation to accurately describe itself. But in the congregational questionnaires returned to us, we asked people to describe some of the things they have experienced at Westminster over the past couple of years, and some of its important strengths. Here are some of the words commonly used in the answers:


caring
enthusiasm
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Trust
resilience
people
generous
Christian
renewed
vibrant
respect
inviting
Can-do
selfless
interest in Gospel
caring
Trust
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people
generous
Christian
Can-do
selfless
resilience
enthusiasm
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inviting
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caring
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Trust
positive
respect
people

In order to provide a view from another set of eyes, we have excerpted below part of the recent Congregational Visitation Report that was generated by our most recent regular Presbytery visitation in the first quarter of 2022. In this first section, they describe the feedback they received from their visitation questionnaires:

"The (visitation) questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive about the growing strength of congregational life that people are experiencing at WPC. Along with gratitude for the commitment to in-person worship with appropriate precautions, there were many comments about the quality and availability of on-line options. Respondents described a sense of energy and hopefulness within the congregation. People felt their pastoral needs were being met and that they knew who to call if they had concerns. All who responded were able to say how they are currently contributing to the present and future of Westminster, expressing a high level of engagement in congregational life. People shared good news experiences of a growing sense of community, and the need for strong relationships within the congregation. There were many positive comments about the quality of music in worship and the outstanding gifts of Dr. Elizabeth Clarke, Music Director. Those who responded in the questionnaire expressed gratitude for the lay leaders who have stepped up to "keep Westminster going", and confidence in the Session's ability to continue to lead through the transition to the induction of a new minister."

What has the congregation told us about what they are seeking in you?

The congregation participated in answering the questions, most standard and some new, in discerning the future needs of the congregation and the qualities of the person we need to lead us. The following is a capsule summary.

Top 4 Priorities for Leadership in Congregational Growth and Development

- Lead worship and preach
- Equip church members to integrate Christian faith and life
- Encourage development of a dynamic, mutually respectful, nurturing community
- Provide resources and guidance for personal and congregational spiritual growth

Top 5 Characteristics for a New Minister

- ***Inspirational*** - the ability to bring life to the proclamation of the gospel and to help people bring the Gospel to life
- ***Compassionate*** - expresses understanding of situations and conditions
- ***Motivational*** - knows how to create enthusiasm, momentum, consensus
- ***Empathetic*** - resonates with the joys and challenges of the community
- ***Collaborative*** - values input from others, leads from within rather than from beyond

Finally, in the congregational search questionnaire, we also asked the question as to what was felt to be Westminster's greatest need. The most common answer is summed up in one individual's response:

"Seeking God's will for the person to shepherd Westminster"

If, after reading our congregational story, you think you may be that person, we hope you read and consider the position profile that follows.

Position Profile

After more than 30 years' experience, we continue to adapt our witness to the needs and circumstances of the world around us and have --collectively -- a will to be present for our neighbours here in NW Calgary. We have proven to be a congregation that is agile, resilient, creative and most of all, hopeful.

A minister is an important part of any congregation, but we have learned that the minister is only one part of a vibrant and dynamic community of faith.

We are looking for a partner;

a 'searcher among searchers';

a teacher who can also be taught;

a leader who is not afraid to follow.

Guided by the wisdom of the congregation as relayed through responses to the questionnaire, Westminster is looking for a minister who:

i. Has experience working with diverse communities and all ages.

ii. Inspires others in our mission and vision and supports and encourages the congregation to join in God's mission in the world.

iii. Brings life and inspiration to the proclamation of the gospel

iv. Would willingly collaborate with an energetic and enthusiastic congregation and the surrounding community to bring love, hope and faith to the world.

v. Has a deep desire to be part of a faithful, compassionate, Christ-centered community that is welcoming and cares for each other and their neighbours.

We are inviting a minister to work with us (not 'for' us). We generate a lot of ideas and as followers of Jesus, we try to engage the world around us with compassion and grace. We need someone to help us marshal our enthusiasm - to be a shepherd and guide to our various gifts and skills. We are inviting you to come and journey with us along the path of faith that we are trying to walk.

Appendix 1
The Context: Calgary, Edgemont, and the Presbytery

Calgary

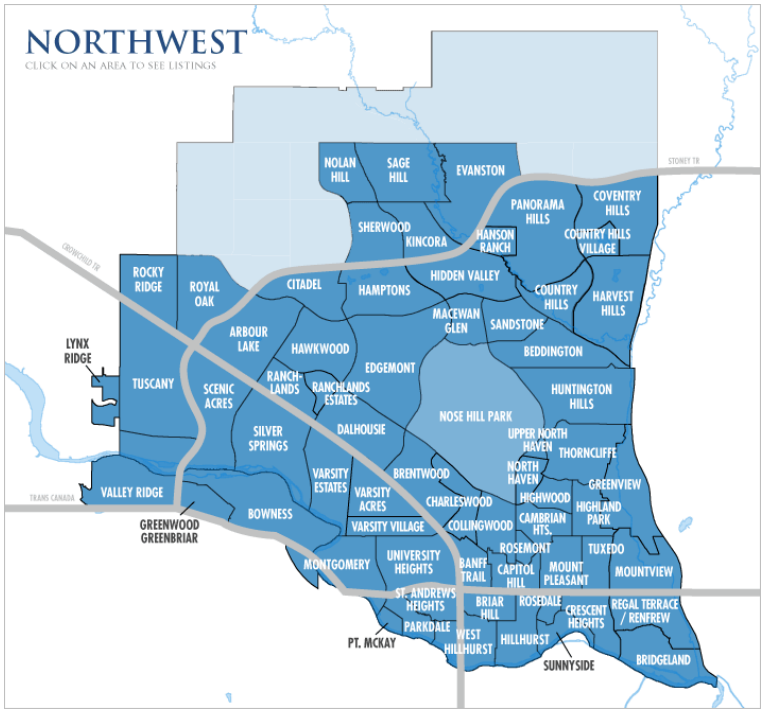
Calgary is Alberta's most populous city, with a metropolitan population of 1.3 million. It is a city that values the outdoors, being situated on the Bow River and less than an hour away from the Rocky Mountains. It generally rates as one of the most livable cities in the world, having recently been ranked third in the world (behind Vienna and Copenhagen) in the 2022 Economist Intelligence Unit report. It has a relatively high median income, and a younger population, with a median age of 38 years.

For some overview info on Calgary, please click on the link below:

https://canadianimmigrant.ca/settlement/living-in-calgary-alberta

Northwest Calgary and Edgemont

Edgemont is situated in northwest Calgary, immediately west of Nose Hill Park, as shown in the map below:



The fastest growing areas in the NW are those on the northern edge of the city. There are three Presbyterian churches in the northwest Calgary, including Westminster. Varsity Acres Presbyterian Church is in Varsity Acres, south of us, and St. Giles Presbyterian is in Mount Pleasant, SE of us. Thus, Westminster is the closest Presbyterian church to the faster growing areas of the quadrant.

Edgemont has a higher median income than many areas of Calgary, and quite a diverse

community – 42% of Edgemont residents are immigrants, compared to 31% in the city overall. Just over half of Edgemont residents consider English to be their mother tongue, with the next two languages being Mandarin (11%) and Cantonese (10%). About half of Edgemont residents consider themselves to be a visible minority.

For more info on Edgemont, please click on the link below:
https://www.calgary.ca/csps/cns/social-research-policy-and-resources/community-profiles/edgemont.html

The Synod and Presbytery

Westminster is part of the Calgary-Macleod presbytery, and the Synod of Alberta and the Northwest.

As part of the Presbytery of Calgary-Macleod, you will be part of a wider community of 13 Presbyterian pastoral charges in Southern Alberta - ranging from Banff to Lethbridge to Medicine Hat to Bassano, as well as Calgary proper. The Presbytery has existed for over a hundred years and is well-established, and now is continuing to reform and renew with an examination of its culture and working practices.

Presbytery meetings are currently held on zoom (a shift prompted by the pandemic that has resulted in more consistent attendance due to some of the distances involved) for all but two intentional in-person gatherings - one in June around the Presbytery retreat, the other in September, for the installation of the Moderator. For the presbytery website, please click on the link below:

https://calgarymacleod.ca

Appendix2
A Special Worship Series: The SAM Series

Facing the future, Westminster will have several decisions to make about the path we will take with a new minister and leadership. To prepare, several congregants enrolled in opportunities provided by the PCC in an effort to look outside of ourselves and to find new potential paths forward: some enrolled in the Certificate Course on Missional Leadership, and others participated in conferences or in opportunities provided by the Cyclical initiative. When Westminster elders were eventually added into the Assessor Session in 2021, they came up with a plan to share some of this information from the broader Presbyterian church with the congregation so that everyone could begin to look at the future with fresh eyes.

And so the SAM initiative was born. The name was a shameless "borrow" from the TED lecture series. TED is an acronym for Technology, Entertainment and Design; we named our series SAM as an acronym for Spirituality And Mission. Over the summer of 2021, we held six SAM sessions, which were embedded into our worship services. Each Sunday, following the

call to worship, prayer and scripture reading, the sermon was replaced with video clips, used with permission of the presenters, that we hoped would introduce some of the same kind of innovative thinking that is the hallmark of the TED talk series. After the videos, we moved into the narthex for small group discussion, all held within the COVID-19 guidelines in Alberta. This was a chance to explore the day's ideas, and to brainstorm how and whether they could fit into our future congregational life.

The topics presented included ways to approach multigenerational faith formation, the missional church, new ways of gathering, and using the church property for neighborhood mission. The discussions and learning around these topics stimulated a few ideas that altered the way we approached things in 2021 and they will help us to address the future with fresh eyes.