



begin



Welcome to the Westminster Life Series,

I'm excited that you have decided to learn more about who we are and the potential of calling us your home church. Westminster Chapel is a community made up of visitors, regular attendees and participating members who are all on a journey with Christ in varying degrees and sharing in that journey together.

From the very beginning, we have understood from scripture that it is not good for man to be alone. Community is a vital and necessary part of our lives. It is our intention that Westminster Chapel be a grace-filled community where transformation in Christ is celebrated and encouraged. This sentiment is expressed in our vision statement and is carried down to each of our ministries.

In this series you will learn of the values we hold dear. You will see opportunities for greater levels of commitment to God and each other. You'll understand our passion for continued growth and transformation in Christ. You'll learn about yourself and how you can have a fulfilling impact in this community or to the world beyond. At the same time we hope to increase your awareness of the many resources that become available as we join together in common purpose. In short, you'll see we are better together...

Serving together,

Pastor Gary Gulbranson

A Place to Begin.

Westminster is about Life Relationships...

with God,

What a relationship with God means-

The love of God growing us into the likeness of Jesus.

with each other.

What a relationship with each other means-

The love of God growing us into a loving community.

OUR BEGINNING POINT- 2 KEY PASSAGES

The Great Commandment

We can think of no better place to begin than that which was described for us by Jesus as the “Greatest Commandment.”

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 22:36-40 (New International Version)

Unpacking a few word meanings...

Love = the idea of duty, respect, great honor. To love and to serve with fidelity.

Heart = the place where our will is directed and our joy is found, the higher aspect of one's own nature.

Soul = the seat of the senses, desires, affections, appetites, passion, the lower aspect of one's own nature.

Mind = our intellectual faculty, or where we have thoughts and intellect.

Like = just like equal, the same with, in kind or nature in authority, dignity and power.

From the first few verses we derive our calling into loving relationships. These relationships are vertically between us and God and horizontally between each other.

We also learn from the last verse that all that we obey and all the doctrines we teach hang on this central theme of loving God and each other. It is clear from this passage that Jesus puts an incredible importance on how loving a community we are to be.

The Great Commission

Another great passage is what Jesus left as a charge for His disciples prior to His ascension, otherwise known as the "Great Commission."

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go 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 I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20 (New International Version)

More words unpacked...

Disciple = a person who learns with the idea that he will adjust his beliefs and the conduct of his life.

Nations = a multitude, people, race belonging and living together.

Baptizing = to be identified with the name of a person and what they stand for.
(Jesus, John)

Obey = keeping our eyes fixed on putting into practice what we are asked by God to do.

From the Great Commission we learn that Jesus is saying that it is imperative that as we go, we help others into the life-changing practices of doing what Jesus asked us to do. We learn that He is asking us to cross cultural boundaries with His love and opportunity for life transformation.

Adding these two passages together, we begin to see a community of love and grace that has life transformation as a goal. Westminster Chapel has crafted our vision, mission, and connecting values around these key passages.

Our Vision and Mission

Our Vision and Mission Statements help us keep on task as to where we are going as a community of love.

Our Vision:

To lead people into loving and life-changing relationships with God and each other.

Our Mission:

To reach a culturally, religiously, ethnically diverse community with the love and good news of Jesus Christ.

Our Connecting Values

Our values create a sense of shared devotion that inspires us to think and work towards a common purpose. We prefer to use the term “connecting values” because we believe these common convictions will hold us together as a body as we move forward into the future.

“From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

Ephesians 4:16 (New International Version)

Our Connecting Values

Creating sacred space where we encounter the character, wonder, and mystery of God.

Cultivating loving relationships as the primary pathway for spiritual transformation.

Communicating God's unchanging Word with our ever-changing world.

Investing in emerging leaders who will influence the world for generations that follow.

Reaching lost people and leading them to faith in Jesus Christ.

Uniting diverse peoples to glorify God through oneness of spirit and purpose.

Our Community of Grace

What is grace?

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned... to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

Ephesians 4:7,12b (New International Version)

Grace is more than unmerited favor, it is power.

Grace has attached to its deeper meaning the idea of power. This power given to one undeserving, has the ability to save us and transform us. A Community of Grace is a community whereby the power for salvation or the power for sanctification is allowed to flow from God to us and from us to others. It is a community that understands that we are all undeserving of such a gift and therefore does not assign value from person to person.

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

James 2:8 -9 (New International Version)

Value Illustration: Would you refuse a dirty Rembrandt? How about a torn \$1,000 dollar bill?

Principle: Sin masks the value of the individual but does not diminish the value.

Grace requires humility.

But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

James 4:6 (New International Version)

Superman has his Kryptonite and grace has pride as its opposing force. The kind of container that the grace of God is carried in is a humble individual.

Without an environment of grace, everything else we do is compromised, weakened.

The challenge of becoming Grace Givers... your first ministry here at the Chapel.

Grace Giving vs. Friendliness

Being available for God to use as a vessel for the life-saving and life-transforming power of grace to be given to others undeserving.

The pause factor... listening for your next step. Being a grace giver is not a selfish endeavor, but instead a selfless expression. This expression can have many looks from the simple to the complex.

Our Process of Growth



Our Process of Growth helps us envision the various pathways of growth available to us as a community. As we come together in purpose and unity, we enter into a process that continues us on a path of becoming more like Jesus, as well as loving others towards the same through service. It is meant to be descriptive versus prescriptive.

Our Journey with Jesus-

Begin “Come and see.”

A time for investigation and exploration.

Belong “Follow Me.”

Entering into relationship and deeper participation.

Become “I will make you fishers of men...”

Developing the mindset, habits, and balanced lifestyle of a disciple.

Beyond “Therefore go, make disciples...”

We learn by doing as we reach beyond ourselves.

With each level of involvement comes a greater level of commitment.

Ways to Begin

“Come and see...” John 1:39

- Westminster Life: Begin - Explore Journeying with us.
- Alpha - Helping people explore the Christian faith.
- Special Events - Special concerts during Christmas and Easter, Lunar New Year Party and other activities.
- Celebrate Recovery - Helping people change and recover from hurts, habits and hang-ups.
- Talk Time - Helping non-native speakers develop and practice their English skills.
- Worship Services - Gathering the entire Westminster Chapel family in a variety of services to honor and celebrate our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Will you consider committing with us to the following?

- To agree to attend our Sunday services as a beginning point.
- To welcome others as you would like to be received.
- Investigate the barriers to your faith.

Removing the Barriers Illustration

So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe it.”

A week later His disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see My hands. Reach out your hand and put it into My side. Stop doubting and believe.”

Thomas said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

John 20:25-29 (New International Version)

Principle: Jesus wants to help us remove those barriers to faith in Him.

Our commitment to you

Accept and Encourage

- We will strive as a staff to love and receive you exactly where you are at and to encourage you forward in your journey.
- We will also come in partnership with you to lead Westminster into the kind of loving environment where people feel safe to grow through meaningful relationships and are taught biblical principles to live by so that we might be imitators of Jesus.
- We will empower you with tools that will help facilitate your involvement.

Signs that I'm ready for more -

“I need a church that I can call home...”

“I am ready to investigate and remove the barriers to my faith.”

“Others seem to have a relationship with God that I long for.”

“Attending is not enough for me, I want to be a part of what happens here!”

“I want to know what it means to be a Christian.”

“I want to understand how to become more involved.”

My Next Step

- Be a Grace-Giver.
- Sign up for Westminster Life: Belong.
- Be open to why God might have for you here in this place of your spiritual journey.
- Explore the different communities within Westminster.
- Consider serving or being part of one of those communities.
- Call one of the Westminster staff with regards to the areas they serve.

Questions and Answers

Thank you for beginning your journey with us. One of our desires is to come alongside the Holy Spirit in equipping folks as they begin to follow Jesus. We hope that you can help us remove the barriers that interfere with this journey. Will you take a moment to fill out one of the comment cards? Your insights may help increase the quality of our communication.

We hope this class will continue to help connect others to life-changing relationships with each other and the many and varied ministries here at Westminster Chapel. Thanks for attending and we hope to see you in the next class, Westminster Life: Belong!

God Bless!

Pastor Steve

Pastor of Connecting Ministries . stevep@westminster.org