

Westover Reflections - September 2026

“Early the next morning, Jesus went out to an isolated place. The crowds searched everywhere for Him, and when they found Him, they begged Him not to leave them. But He replied, ‘I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other towns, too, because that is why I was sent. So, he continued to travel around, preaching in synagogues throughout Judea.’”

-Luke 4:42-44

I'm not sure what I would have done in Jesus' position. On the one hand, I understand His focus of proclaiming the **Good News**. While the needs of people are important to Him, Jesus **knew** that His primary purpose was to proclaim the reign of God, to preach **the Good News of the Kingdom**, to draw people into the Kingdom. I get that; for it has surely been my primary purpose.

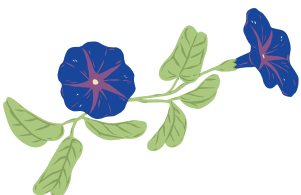
On the other hand, I see the people wanting Jesus to remain. There was, I am sure, many needs among the folk. And **I know** more than a few good Christians who would, when asked, stay and help meet the needs-heal the sick, comfort the hurting, etc. **But, again**, Jesus knew that He had a particular mission. And, frankly speaking, He understood something that we can all learn from, for even **Jesus knew that He couldn't do it all**, given the task before Him.

Look! It is, to be sure, **a great challenge** for any one of us to focus on the mission of God's love for all of creation. There are more than a few things in our living that beg for our attention: from internet ads to social media threads, from the latest gadgets to some project that we have been putting off for weeks, months, or years. (I have things that I myself have been wanting to do, **but I have put off**, and, look, it is not as if I getting extra years added to my earthly journey.)

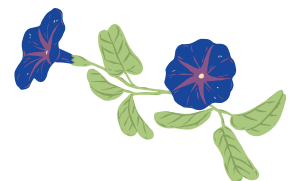
So, in my pondering, I believe that we can all take a cue from Jesus, who **“went out to an isolated place.”** (In some translations this reads that Jesus, **“left and went to a deserted place.”**) We have referenced a number of times during this past season that Jesus was **often seeking a moment of solitude**, away and alone in order **to hear that still small Voice of God** and **to reconnect**, if you will, **with His heart's truth**.

In my own life, **often times when I am on one of my walks**, for it seems that that is when my mind stops thinking of the things that I **“need to do,”** I have found repeatedly that **returning to silence and seeking God's guidance** allows me to reconnect with my **“internal compass.”** And as those day-to-day concerns, all of which are surely important to me, fall away, what arises are often surprising **“mandates”**: **“Focus on being, not doing.”** **“Trust that you are enough.”** **“Remember the suffering of the world.”**

Reminders to take a moment. Turn inward. **To rest in the desert** of your heart and ask, **“God, for what purpose have I been sent?”** (And we all have a purpose, my friends. All of us!) However, sometimes, as I have often discovered in this journey to which I was called, **it is not as important to know the answer as it is to ask the question, again and again.** The poet Rainer Marie Rilke put it this way, **“Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, one distant day live into the answer.”**

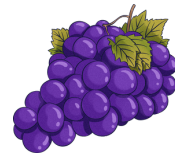


**Still in His Peace,
William**



First Fruits of Worship

by Bruce Smith
Director of Musci Ministriest



Rediscovering The “Awe” In Worship

“The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy.” Psalm 65:8

Have you ever wondered why we, in this modern, technological world have lost our sense of awe and wonder? It takes a lot to get us moved in our spirit with surprise and delight. We even scoff at magicians doing card tricks as a “pedestrian” demonstration of “magic”. Technology, advancements in medicine, and our own intellectual and educational advancement has desensitized us from standing in awe of God’s work in the world.

We have to start with appreciating the remarkable complexity of God’s wonderment in our world and in our lives as we worship. When we sing songs like “God Of Wonders”, we sing these words...

***“Early in the morning, I will celebrate the light. And as I stumble through the darkness, I will call Your name by night. God of wonders beyond our galaxy
You are holy, holy. The universe declares Your majesty. You are holy, holy”***

Just think about how God knit you together, physically. Think of how He guided your life journey, bringing people and experiences together. Remember ways He touched you, healed you, saved you – then sing the words of this hymn with all the awe and wonder you can muster...

***“And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing; Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in; That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.”***

The more we stand in awe of God’s work in our lives and in the world around us, the more meaningful our worship becomes to us. It humbles us, and as a result, we let go of our control of this world and our lives and let Him in His infinite wisdom, grace, and incomprehensible love for us guide us to a new revitalized relationship with Him. This is why the Psalms are filled with passages of awe and wonder...

***“Shout for joy to God, all the earth! Sing the glory of his name;
make his praise glorious. Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds!” Psalm 66:1-3***

***“Come and see what God has done, his awesome deeds for mankind!
He turned the sea into dry land, they passed through the waters on foot— come, let us rejoice in him.” Psalm 66:5-6***

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” Psalm 19:1

We serve a God of wonders, who knit us together in this amazing and awe inspiring world. When I walk through a series of trees, I can’t stop being amazed at how He designed those trees to be an inspiration to us. Even the trees lift up their branches in praise to God’s wonderment!

Family Fall Festival Planning

We are planning a Family Fall Festival for Saturday, November 21. The festival can be so much fun and a great way to welcome new families to Westover!



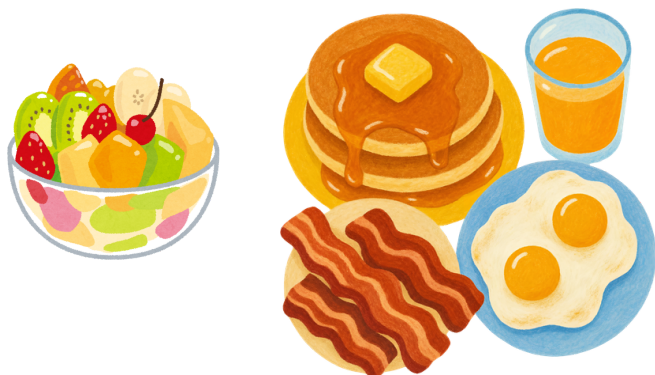
There will be a brief planning meeting before movie night on Friday, September 11, at 6:00 PM. *We will need LOTS of help and lots of ideas. If you are willing to be a part of the festival, it is important that you be at the planning meeting.* We need to make sure we have enough volunteers to pull this off! If you have questions, please reach out to Sharron Gibson.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

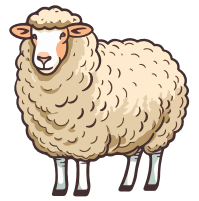
United Methodist Men

What better way to start your Saturday than breakfast with friends? The UMM and UWF will be sharing breakfast at 9:00 AM on Saturday, September 12. Breakfast is provided and everyone is welcome!

Following breakfast, the UMM will have a meeting in the Fellowship Hall.



Movie Night



This month's movie is set for Friday, September 11 in the Fellowship Hall. Join us for a hotdog & fixings dinner at 6:30, followed by the movie *The Sheep Detectives*. A murder mystery with talking sheep, hilarious moments, a plot twist and a message? Yes, this one has all of those! Join us to see for yourself.

Please note, due to parking for the Sate Fair and other commitments, there will be no game night in October.



Craft circle & UWF

Diamond art was a huge hit at our last craft circle! We enjoyed it so much that we plan on making diamond art Christmas ornaments at a meeting soon.

Sharing breakfast with the UMM was also a big hit! So, we'll be having breakfast together again on September 12 at 9:00 AM. Breakfast is provided and everyone is welcome!

For our September craft, we will be making blankets for our blanket ministry for Interact. This is an easy craft and everyone is welcome! If you're not feeling crafty, come join us for fellowship and fun. As usual, crafting fun will start at 10:00 AM.

Bring your lunch and we'll eat together about 12:00. The UWF will continue their book study following lunch.

Adult Sunday School

Do you want to know more about the Acts of the Apostles? Do you want to have great fellowship time with others? Then, there's a seat for you in the Adult Sunday School Class which meets in the Builder's Classroom in the Education Building on Sunday mornings!

Folks start arriving around 9:45 for a time to chat and catch up on what's going on in our lives, as well as many other topics; the lesson starts at 10:10 (giving plenty of time for anyone attending the 9:00 Arise and Shine service to join in). We try to finish up no later than 10:40 (giving plenty of time for anyone attending the 11:00 worship service to get to that).

We've finished our study of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and are ready to see where the Book of Acts takes us – come join us on this journey when we begin our study of the Acts of the Apostles on Sunday, September 6!



Happy Birthday to:

- 1 Ayden Ray Lucas
- 2 Kim Adams
- 2 Melissa Crowder
- 3 Maggie Sargent
- 6 John Carter III
- 6 John Mitchell
- 6 Kent Gibson
- 10 Amanda Daniels
- 11 Kenneth Medlin
- 12 Margie Liggins
- 14 Kelly Broadhurst
- 18 Jasmine Ksor
- 20 Miles Medlin
- 25 Diane Ray Culpepper
- 26 Mason Chin
- 26 Wayne Miller
- 29 Kim Giannattasio
- 30 Vicki Anderson
- 30 Evan Price



Mark your calendar:

Friday, Sept 11 **Fall Family Festival planning meeting** 6:00 PM Fellowship Hall

Friday, Sept 11 **Dinner & movie night** 6:30 PM Fellowship Hall

Saturday, Sept 12 **UMM & UWF breakfast** 9:00 AM Wesley Hall

Saturday, Sept 12 **UMM meeting following breakfast** Fellowship Hall

Saturday, Sept 12 **Craft Circle** 10:00 AM Wesley Hall

Saturday, Sept 12 **lunch (bring your own)** 12:00 PM Wesley Hall

Saturday, Sept 12 **UWF** 12:30 PM Wesley Hall

Sunday, Sept 13 **Nominations Committee** 2:30 PM Adult Sunday School Room

Sunday, Sept 20 **One Board Meeting** 1:30 PM Adult Sunday School Room

Saturday, Oct 2 **Craft Circle & UWF**

Friday & Saturday, Oct 16 & 17 **Fair Parking**

Friday & Saturday, Oct 23 & 24 **Fair Parking**

Sunday, Oct 25 **Gibson baby shower** 2:00 PM Fellowship Hall

Saturday, Nov 14 **Set up for Homecoming/Thanksgiving celebration** 10:00 AM-3:00 PM

Sunday, Nov 15 **Homecoming/Thanksgiving Celebration**

Saturday, Nov 21 **Family Fall Festival**

Saturday, Nov 28 **Decorate for Advent & Christmas** 10:00 AM-3:00 PM

Saturday, Jan 9 **Undecorate Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall** 10:00 AM-3:00 PM

