WESTMINSTER CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

SPRING 2023 • HOLINESS

IN THIS ISSUE:

Seeking Holiness

Where Does Our Worth Come From? Alumni Spotlight: Stephen Kruse '04





Striving for Holiness

DR. BARRETT MOSBACKER

Every school year I choose an overall theme for our school. This year, we have focused on holiness. We chose this because holiness is a central theme in the Bible that refers to God's pure, perfect, and flawless character. As followers of Christ, we are called to pursue holiness: "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy."" (1 Peter 1:14-16)

Holiness is not stodginess or ugly self-righteous judgmentalism. Holiness is the beauty of God's character reflected in lives lived in conformity with His design and purpose for us and in accord with His word. Another way of thinking of this is that holiness brings a beautiful melody to one's life. God's moral order and word are like musical notes on the pages of creation and our souls. When our lives conform to God's word, we produce beauty like a symphony playing beautiful music. When we violate God's word, our lives are discordant—there is disharmony—much like the harsh sound of an orchestra warming up before a performance.

As we progress in holiness, our lives become living testimonies to the transforming power of God's grace and draw others to Him. As a Christian school community, we seek to display the beauty of holiness to the world through thought, word, and deed. Holiness is beautiful, brings wholeness, and is eminently worth pursuing for God's glory, our benefit, and the testimony of the transforming power of the Gospel.

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chimes

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NEWS





6 Arts



8 Athletics



Admissions Why Do Families Seek Westminster?

22 Advancement The Holy Work of Giving FEATURE

CONTENTS

SPRING 2023

10 Seeking Holiness

This year, our school and community have dug deep into what it means to be holy as God is holy.



EVENTS

15 Graduation Celebrating the Class of 2023



16 Spirit Week



17 Community Events

ALUMNI NEWS

18 Alumni Spotlight Stephen Kruse '04



19 Class Notes

Academics

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES UNAFFECTED BY PANDEMIC

By Micah Gall, Head of Academic Development

This past year, we've been blessed to see that Westminster students

have bucked the nationwide trend of declining test scores as a result of the COVID pandemic. While almost every school demographic across the country has seen declining scores as a result of lost class time, the data from our standardized tests suggest that the pandemic had little to no impact on our student achievement.

In fact, a closer look at and comparison of the results between the 2019 and 2022 ERB reveals that the mean scores in almost every subject area (for grades 7-9) have either stayed the same or improved. In short, our students have maintained their level of excellent academic work through incredibly challenging circumstances.

First and foremost, this is clear and encouraging evidence of the deep commitment of our teachers to provide our students with an excellent education rooted in biblical truth regardless of circumstances. Furthermore, it's a testament to the perseverance of our students and parents and the partnership they continue to foster with our school. Most of all, it's a reminder of God's provision, care, and faithfulness.



CYBORG CATS ON THE PROWL

Westminster's robotics team, the Cyborg Cats, participated in two regional competitions this past year. In March, the Cyborg Cats competed in the St. Louis Regional and finished 6th overall after the qualification matches. Performing well, the team captained the 5th ranked alliance in the playoff matches finishing in 5th place. Each alliance was made up of three teams, and each team had to work together to advance. The Cyborg Cats received the highest engineering award: Excellence in Engineering.

In April, the team went on to compete again in the Kansas City Regional competition and did exceptionally well, finishing 2nd overall after the qualification matches. Once again, the team captained two other teams—this time for the 2nd ranked alliance. After winning the first two matches of the playoff round, the Cyborg Cats' alliance teammates had communication issues with their robots resulting in the alliance finishing 3rd. Nevertheless, the team's determination and engineering prowess impressed the judges earning the team a Judge's Choice Award. "I am so proud of the entire team," says Mike Decker, head of the STEM program at Westminster and of the Robotics team. "We competed really well and did fantastic. We all wanted a different outcome, but all your hard work, practice, and dedication showed!"



HONORING TWO OF OUR BEST

Each year, the Arlen R. Dykstra Teaching Prize is presented to faculty members for their outstanding expression of the Christian worldview and honors the recipient for his or her mastery of teaching matter, involvement in the life of the school, and creative and innovative presentation of curricula. This year, two of our esteemed teachers have been honored: upper school math teacher David Haas and middle school English teacher and English Department Co-Chair Taylor Orr. Mr. Haas has been teaching at Westminster for over 40 years. Along with teaching math, Mr. Haas has also supervised club and sports activities. Mrs. Orr has taught English at Westminster for 10 years and recently has also led the Writing Center, which provides additional support for students.

EXCELLENCE IN WRITING

In January, 8th grade honors English students participated in a writing contest through the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. The contest allows teachers to submit the seven best writing pieces from their classes. This year, more than 7,000 students from 45 schools discovered "The Great Gate of Kiev" from Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Teachers submitted 585 works of poetry and prose inspired by this music. Four of our students placed in the top 15 finalists for the Junior Prose category: Amelia Mangan, Jessica Ma, Hana Inazu, and Ellie Borage. Ellie Borage's story placed 2nd overall in the category. All four girls had their stories published in the *St. Louis Symphony Orchestra Express the Music* winners booklet and were honored at Powell Hall during the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra concert on Sunday, March 19, 2023.

In the upper school, freshman Aunika Groat submitted a written work to the Patriots of the American Revolution High School Essay Contest put on by the Daughters of the American Revolution. Each year, students in grades 9 through 12 submit an essay focusing on figures from the American Revolution and how these figures contributed to the founding of our nation. Aunika's essay was about Anna Strong—a mother and a patriot who worked with George Washington's famous Culper Spy Ring. Aunika's essay was highly honored, winning the regional competition, and

was submitted to compete at the national stage.

WESTMINSTER ////

TAKING WESTMINSTER HIGHER

WestminsterYOU launched back in August 2021, and we have seen tremendous success thus far. Students have the choice to enroll in enrichment programs or academies to suit their interests. These programs are designed to create customized learning experiences that are both experiential and community-oriented. This year, we have added three new academies, in addition to the Business Academy and the Law and Constitution Academy, students can enroll in for additional credit:

- **Fine Arts Academy:** A year-long program designed to give students with gifts in the arts an opportunity to use and explore how those gifts can be used to bring glory to God and good to people. Students explore the ways in which art—in its various forms—can be used to reflect God's truth and engage the community.
- **STUCO Leadership Academy:** A year-long course designed to equip students to lead their community by developing skills that will help them better represent the voices of their class, think critically about issues in the community, propose solutions to those issues, brainstorm ideas that will improve the student experience, and plan and implement community and service projects that will build relationships and fill needs within the community.
- **Middle School STEM Academy:** A project-based guild empowering students to change the world for Jesus Christ by using problem-solving. Through a synergy of disciplines, students learn more about God and his creation so that they can have a positive impact on our world and on others.

We value the interests of our students, and Westminster*YOU* is providing space for them to gain academic experiences in real-world situations in subjects they are passionate about. At the same time, we are working hard to provide our students with opportunities for academic recovery and time for help with homework.

This year, we focused on improving the Homework Center and the procedures in our Academic Advisory, ensuring students effectively utilize the time given. Our Homework Center is partnering with parents of students we have identified as academically "at risk." In addition to providing accountability, our instructor, Joel Ruprecht, coaches individual students in executive functioning, self-advocacy, and resource utilization. We offer the program after school Monday–Thursday, and an email goes out to parents each Friday with a report about the week: attendance, behavior, what was accomplished, current grades in all classes, etc. This program ensures a strong partnership between parents and Westminster when students are struggling.

We have also made vast procedural enhancements to our weekly Advisory periods to ensure students utilize the time effectively to seek out additional help, receive remediation services in math and writing, or participate in enrichment activities with like-minded peers. Our system incentivizes clear and timely student/teacher communication about what kind of help is needed, and it enables both parties to select a time frame that works well for them. As a result, we have seen great improvements in student behavior and learning outcomes and a decrease in teacher stress.



FOLLOW WESTMINSTER ON INSTAGRAM!

Make sure to follow **@wcastl** for great photos showcasing what's going on inside the classroom and around the school, community announcements, and much more.









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For access to even more photos, view full albums at **wcastl.org/photos**.

Arts CREATIVE EXCELLENCE

Westminster In Concert

The school choirs, orchestra, and band all performed this past semester at local ensemble and solo festivals. In fact, several of our talented musicians performed exceptionally well at their respective festivals receiving high honors.

Freshman Ginger Cox and sophomore Charlotte Roberts both received the highest, exemplary rating at the solo choir festival earning them both the opportunity to sing again at the state festival at the end of April.

Likewise, two concert band students—sophomore Gideon Schwamb and senior Anagi Pieris participated in both solo and ensemble performances. Gideon received a satisfactory rating for the trumpet, and Anagi received an outstanding rating for the clarinet.

Several orchestra musicians performed in solo and ensemble festivals and received honors as well. 7th grader Aloker Pieris, 8th grader Jacob Boling, freshman Elizabeth Myers, sophomore Raquel Herrera, and junior Mallory Pfeutze were all named on the All-District Orchestra. Freshmen Sam Wenger-Stickel and Enoch Wong were named on the All-State Orchestra. Raquel, Elizabeth, Mallory, and freshman Mariam Zahkary also received District Solo and Ensemble Outstanding (Silver) ratings. To round off an incredible performance from our musicians, Sam, sophomore Charlotte Roberts, and junior Anna Enger received District Solo and Ensemble Exemplary (Gold) ratings.



Showcasing Our Artistic Talents

Each year we host Art à La Carte—a showcase of the talents of Westminster students in the areas of visual, musical, and theatre arts. The evening included performances from the upper school music and theatre classes and a display by our visual art classes. This year, our concert choir, concert band, jazz band, and orchestra performed on stage while our students in spring art classes displayed their work in the halls. The AP Studio Art students also showcased their work in a special exhibit in the Hub along with the Visual Arts Academy's Capstone Projects. Along with the visual arts and music programs, the theatre students performed monologues and scenes from their previous spring performances. To round off the night, our improv students put on a fun show after the main events.

Our Students Command the Stage

At the beginning of the spring semester, the Westminster Theatre program put on *Ranked*, *A Musical. Ranked* tells the story of a dystopian world where competition reaches new heights as publicized academic excellence defines each student's worth. The musical offered our students, and our community, an opportunity to ponder what "academic excellence" means and where our worth comes from. Director Jim Butz worked tirelessly with his students—not only on the musical and their performances, but to answer these questions as well. Read more about *Ranked* on page 7.



In April, our students performed the iconic musical, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. The famous musical is a reimagining of the story of Joseph told entirely through song. With three performances, the show completely sold out each night. The students had a terrific time performing on stage. The show was later nominated by the St. Louis High School Musical Theatre Awards for Best Musical and Best Choreography.







BY JIM BUTZ, UPPER SCHOOL DRAMA TEACHER AND DIRECTOR OF "RANKED"

One of the most challenging parts of any theatre educator's job is to find good material to work on with their students. There are always issues of cast size, content, and overall artistic merit to consider. Finding a good piece can feel like searching for a needle in a haystack. A few years back, while sifting through one such haystack, I came across an obscure new musical called Ranked.

The story takes place in a high school, the characters are all teenagers, and the music is more akin to what our students listen to through their AirPods than anything written by Rodgers and Hammerstein. Given the show's obscurity, contemporary score, and controversial subject matter, the entire endeavor felt a little risky. I wasn't quite sure how to stage the piece, and I was even more unsure of how our audience would receive it. But now, with the production safely in the rearview mirror, all I can say is I am glad that our department took the risk. It was difficult but, ultimately, extremely rewarding.

The musical, *Ranked*, is a play with a mission, a message, and an implicit moral. Whether the writers intended it or not, they are using the context of an overly competitive high school as a heuristic for a more comprehensive existential quandary: Do human beings have intrinsic and immutable worth, or are we relegated to a sliding scale of value based on our assets and achievements? Does there exist an actual economy of grace that transcends the power structures erected by man? Let's make it plain and personal: Where do you derive your value?

In the world of *Ranked*, a student's value is precarious, never secure, and always conditional on their academic achievement. To make matters worse, the students are subjected to a culture of public shame and pride as their ever-vacillating place—or rank—is on display for all to see. This public display is a constant visual reminder of the two worlds within the culture of *Ranked*: students above the average and those below. If you are above, your future is bright and full of hope, and your identity is provisionally secure. If you are below the average, you might as well give up and get used to your diminished identity as a second-class citizen with a bleak future ahead of you.

Thrust into this dog-eat-dog world is the protagonist, Lily Larsen. Lily is a freshman, and like most teenagers, she's just trying to figure out who she is, where she belongs, and perhaps most importantly, what she's worth. Power, status, and academic achievement are the only metrics by which human worth is measured. There is a wholesale absence of intrinsic human dignity. Throughout the show, this cautionary tale reveals the consequences of living within such a relentlessly competitive culture and the perverse motives and ethics it engenders.

Our children are navigating a complex and often overwhelming world with increasing demands, ubiquitous access to social media, sleep deprivation, lack of meaningful connection to people and nature, fear of an uncertain future, and a constant barrage of bad news from all over the globe buttressing those fears. While not every teenager struggles with mental health issues, there has been a sharp increase in the rates of depression and anxiety in the teenage population over the past decade. It is a tough time to be a kid trying to figure out who you are, why you matter, and where to find hope amid the chaos.

Does the world of *Ranked* describe or hold a mirror to our community here at WCA? No, not entirely, and not even mostly. We did not choose this musical as a covert critique of the culture of Westminster. However, I still think we would do well to heed the message that *Ranked* is attempting to communicate. We are not immune from falling into a worldly system built upon a soul-crushing performance treadmill, ever-increasing speed and incline. The presence of the Gospel here at Westminster is the only antidote for that wicked scheme. Our worth is not performance or merit-based. We affirm all human beings are fearfully and wonderfully made in the Image of God, and it is upon that basis that we assign an inestimable worth to every person.

We live in an economy of grace and not of merit. Jesus gives us our identity, and we don't earn a thing but are given everything out of the abundance of his love for us. That is the truth and scandal of the Gospel. It is important that we know this to be the truth about who we are. It is equally important that we act out of what we know to be true. Those are not the same thing. There is always the risk that we affirm one thing with our mouths but then encourage an entirely different culture with our lives. The power of a musical like *Ranked* is that it can shine some light on that dark temptation within us and lead us back to a determination to create a culture more reflective of the Kingdom to which we have sworn allegiance. •

Athletics GENERAL NEWS AND TEAM HIGHLIGHTS



BREAKING SCHOOL RECORDS

Senior Kobi Williams had a season for the record books. Kobi ranked fourth in the area in points per game with 23.6 and scored 25 or more points in a game nine times this past season. Up until this year, the record for most points at Westminster, 1,324, was held by Westminster's Head of Advancement and 1991 graduate, Jeremy Marsh. During an away game at Whitfield in February, a third quarter layup saw Kobi score his 1,325th point and move into first place on the alltime list. At the end of the season, Kobi finished his Westminster career with an impressive 1,608 total points. He was also the first WCA boys player to be selected to the St. Louis All-Metro First Team, 2x Class 5 All State, 3x All District and District Player of the Year this season, 3x All Metro League and Player of the Year this season, and 3x District Champion.

INTRODUCING A NEW PROGRAM

This year we added girls wrestling to our list of athletic programs. It was a great inaugural season for the girls program, led by first-year coach Renee Dunn. We are proud of all four wrestlers (Katherine Shaw, Kyndal Brown, Kate Van Zee, and Denny Muehleisen) for stepping into something new and unknown and attacking it with a growth mindset.

ANOTHER STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

The girls swim and dive team brought home the school's second state championship of the 2022-23 school year

(the girls varsity volleyball team won the state championship in the fall) scoring 257 points to top Parkway West and Cape Central in the MSHSAA Class 1 Swim and Dive State Meet.

During the competition, freshman Sydney Schoeck broke the MSHSAA Class 1 record in the 100 Individual Medley with a time of 2:01.61. Sydney finished with two individual state championships and a 2nd and 3rd place finish in the relays. She was named the most outstanding swimmer of the meet for her accomplishments. Along with Sydney, freshman Hannah Renaud won the Class 1 state title in the 100-yard butterfly. An impressive showing from both freshmen!

Later, this April, Sydney and Hannah were honored with a 1st Team All-Metro recognition from the STL-Post Dispatch Winter All-Metro team.

SENIORS COMPETING AT NEXT LEVEL

Westminster's Class of 2023 is sending 18 students to compete at the collegiate level in their respective sports. As part of the Westminster athletic program, each of these students has grown in Christian character, developed a strong work ethic, and most importantly, learned how to honor Christ on and off the field. This coming fall you will find these student-athletes at the following schools:

Amelia Bendick — Field Hockey, Sewanee: The University of the South Alli Bishop — Volleyball, University of South Carolina-Aiken Sydney Bradley — Basketball, Evansville University Sydney Burdine — Track, Southeast Missouri State University Elizabeth Clawson — Soccer, Wheaton College Julia Coleman — Basketball, Texas State University Lizzy Crowe — Dance, Mississippi State University Brysan Davis — Baseball, Rockhurst University Addie Draper — Cross Country/Track, Taylor University Maegan Fleming — Dance, Texas Christian University Emily Griege — Ice Hockey, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Evan Hook — Baseball, University of Texas-Permian Basin Logan Jones — Track and Field, Morehouse College Samantha Lee — Swimming, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis Ahren Muehleisen — Clay Target Shooting, Monstreat College Jadyn Patton — Clay Target Shooting, Emmanuel College Avery Stanfill - Volleyball, Harding University Sophie Volding — Cheer, Southeast Missouri State University Kobi Williams — Basketball, Truman State University





TRACK STAR RECOGNIZED BY ST. LOUIS HS SPORTS

Junior Joseph Anderson was featured twice this past season by the staff at STL High School Sports. Joseph first appeared in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch's Boys Track Athletes to Watch this season. As part of the state championship team last year, Joseph won an individual state championship in the triple jump, finished fourth in the long jump, and qualified for the finals in the 110m hurdles. Joseph then appeared as Athlete of the Week at the end of March after his performance at the Lutheran St. Charles Bob Carter Invitational Meet where he won the triple jump, long jump, and 300m hurdle events.

EXTREME TURF MAKEOVER

With the original turf well past its expected lifespan, we made a much-needed change to our football field. The new field displays our wildcat logo proudly in bold contrast to the alternating green field pattern. The updated turf also features more prominent lines and markers to be used in other sports outside of football, such as lacrosse.



SEASON RECAPS

To read more about how our athletic teams finished their seasons—from varsity baseball to the dance team and more—visit wcastl.org/chimes.

Holiness in Sport

BY CORY SNYDER, ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

In his first epistle, Peter exhorted believers to live lives of holiness by reminding them, "...as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15-16). The term holy signifies something set apart from what is common. It is intertwined with the sanctification process in our lives as we grow spiritually and become more like Christ as believers. The athletic Ten Pillars create a culture within the Westminster Athletic Program that seeks to do sports differently than the secular culture, to be set apart in the way that we view and participate in sports. In encouraging athletes to "Honor Jesus Christ In All Things" (Pillar 1) and conduct themselves in a manner that "Christian Character Defines Who We Are" (Pillar 2), we hope that they see sport as an opportunity to reflect holiness to teammates, opponents, officials, and spectators.

The reflection of holiness can be seen in many different ways, some extraordinary and some mundane. It occurs during impromptu moments and through well-thought plans. It is an aspect of living and competing in a Christian community where "iron sharpens iron," and individuals hold each other accountable. While these reflections of holiness may seem normal or expected and sometimes go unnoticed in our Westminster community, they are often foreign and noticed by those outside our community.

Finding opportunities to serve others in large and small ways reflects the holiness of Christ. For the past few years, our boys basketball team has traveled to St. Louis City on a day off to serve an organization called Crisis Aid International. Often at away games, students from the Blue Crew will help opposing Athletic Directors put away folding chairs and ensure the bleacher area is clean. In serving others, our students and athletes bless others and represent our Savior, who came to earth not to be served but to serve.

Living in community with one another presents other opportunities to reflect holy living. I recently learned of a senior soccer player who found a tangible way to encourage her teammates to remember that they play the game for God's glory and approval. She had each teammate write a specific Bible verse on their wrist as a visual reminder during the game. Other times teams or teammates will pray with and for each other, and student-led devotions have become normal for many of our programs. Even in times of failure, studentathletes have held each other accountable and encouraged one another toward holiness. In these ways, student-athletes and coaches live life together in communities that encourage holy conduct.

While the sanctification process will never be complete on this side of heaven, God is using athletics at Westminster in the lives of our student-athletes for their growth in holiness and as a reflection of His holiness to others. • FEATURE

HONOR GOD IN ALL THAT WE DO

SEEKING

"As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy."" 1 PETER 1:14–16 his past year, our school has reflected on the theme of holiness. In August, Dr. Barrett Mosbacker, head of school, spoke in chapel about the importance of holiness both as a theme for the year and also as an aspiration we should all look to as disciples of the kingdom of God: "Holiness brings wholeness because living a holy life is a life functioning as it was created to function and in accord with God's moral law...it is not stodginess or ugly self-righteous judgementalism. Holiness is the beauty of God's character reflected in lives lived in harmony with His design and purpose for us." Holiness can bring up uncomfortable emotions. We often associate the word with "holier-than-thou" attitudes, legalism, and judgment. However, as our students have reflected and learned from their teachers this past year, we hope they have developed a deeper understanding of holiness and why it matters in their lives.

Jesus says multiple times in the New Testament that we are to be the salt of the earth—the city on a hill so that all may see God's love and grace reflected in us. For Sarah Loyal, upper school world languages department chair, it can be easy to focus on the behavioral aspect when thinking about holiness. However, she hopes and prays that students would "focus on loving the Lord and living holy lives because that's what the Lord wants for us, and that leads to our flourishing." Obeying God's law matters because by doing so, we live according to His desire and purpose. As upper school English teacher Kyle Roff says, "Part of holiness is conformity-not conformity to the patterns of this worldbut to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. It's that sense of recognizing that you are not your own. To be holy is the submission of your own will to God's will because, ultimately, we are His." By submitting to God's desire for us, we work towards being holy as God is holy, changing how we speak and engage one another. Naturally, this changes our behaviors and thoughts. It leads to a separation from cultural ideologies that tells us to forsake anything and anyone but ourselves with misguided views of worth and identity. At Westminster, we want our students to understand that our identity and worth do not come from ourselves—not our grades or performances—but rather from our Creator, and because of that, we are not called to be set apart to glorify ourselves but to glorify God. By conforming to the will of He who made us, we are made holy.

As Christians, we are called to follow God's law and His commandments. While we are not perfect due to our own sinful natures, our God desires us to live according to His will so that we may be part of His everlasting kingdom for we "are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). As we strive towards living in accordance with God's will, we find that we are far from perfect. Nevertheless, though imperfect, we should always seek holiness because our God is holy. "Holiness is not a standard that we can achieve, but it is a standard and state of the heart that we strive for," says 9th and 10th grade principal Kim Graham. "For me, this falls under academic integrity, where we have discussions with students and their parents. We are training the heart and trying to instill in these students, these children of God, what the standards of behavior are. We're not training compliant behavior. It's not about what you can get away with or what seems practical, but showing a higher standard of honesty and integrity." We want to set forth a standard that is higher than ourselves because we believe all of us are called to live according to God's standards. As we do so, we cultivate a community of love, care, and grace.

Over the past several months, Heather Roth, middle school principal, has been working with the faculty to develop tangible ways to cultivate a Christ-like community. One way they are doing so is through a series of videos and lessons developed by our teachers that focus on the idea of the Good Samaritan. Mrs. Roth says, "Some kids come to Westminster, and they have their faith figured out as their own. Other students are still trying to figure it out. We want to have conversations and open up the classroom to be a place where we can help them see who God is and why His holiness is so great, and why we need a holy savior." Middle and high school students are at a crucial point in their lives, and while we want to challenge them academically, we also want them to grow in their faith-to understand one another personally and build each other up as Christ calls us to do. In the upper school, Peter Barrs encourages the students in his world language classes to remember Jesus' commandments every day. He says that "the way we love others is an expression of holiness. Loving others well and treating them with kindness and dignity." However, he also acknowledges that as much as he expects



respect and kindness from his students, his first expectation is for himself. "I do my utmost to treat my students with kindness and respect as Jesus asks us to," he says. "By doing this, I hope to model for my students how they are to treat each other in my class." When we respect and show love for each other, we build a stronger community that seeks to build each other up. In an academic setting, the respect and love we see Christ model for us lead to a more engaging learning environment where students are more comfortable interacting positively with one another. "A lot of what we work on is problem-solving skills," says Allison Pautler, middle school math teacher. "How to ask for help when needed—how to stick with something until you get it. To approach that from a Biblical worldview changes everything. We are going to face hardships, so where is our hope when we do?" Our hope for our students is that as they study and learn in school, they will do so thoughtfully, because everything they study and learn is part of God's creation. "The order we see in math reflects what we see in our creator," says Ms. Pautler. "We talk a lot about how we live in a world where everything changes, so the idea that God doesn't change is hard to grasp. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and we can tell our students that we see that in math. Math doesn't change. Two plus two equals four no matter what classroom you are in."

Westminster provides students with an excellent and challenging education covering multiple disciplines. But what sets us apart from other schools? It is our desire to seek God in everything we do. Whether our students are studying math, science, history,



languages, or the arts everything is viewed through a Biblical worldview. "Teaching from a Biblical worldview doesn't mean we force the Bible into every subject," says Kyle Roff. "But when I approach reading certain literature, we don't shy away if and when unholiness arises. My job is to help them to have the eyes to see that. And then how do we respond? This is the society we are going to engage, so how do we do that well?" Part of cultivating holiness in our students is giving them the opportunity to make connections between what they are learning in class and the truth of the Gospel.

Regardless of the classes our students take while at Westminster, each subject is taught from a Biblical perspective and understanding to prepare each student for living Christ-fearing lives. "It's possible to see students excel in art-making, but for it to never actually extend into Christian living," says director of visual arts John Sarra. "And it's also possible to see students excel in Christian living but never really do well in art-making. They need to connect their art and the space they are in as a metaphor for their faith. You don't inherit artistic ability because of art history, just as you don't inherit faith from your parents. You have to participate and make connections yourself." Our students spend hundreds of hours each year studying and learning new subjects, playing and practicing new sports, and rehearsing and performing on stage. We strive for excellence and academic success because it is important to do our best. Just as academic success takes study and work, holiness requires patience and dedication. However, we cannot achieve this standard of holiness we strive for on our own. We long for holiness in all of us, but as humans affected by the fall, we cannot become holy without Christ. "I hope and pray that when my students mess up, they own up to it," says Maggie Sperber, upper school math and engineering teacher. "When they make a mistake, I pray they learn from it. That they understand that not being perfect is okay. We're seeking holiness, but we need Christ."

What makes Westminster-and Christian education-unique is that we provide a rigorous academic setting while expressing Christ-like grace and love. "I want my students to see the academic disciplines as something more than a means to a utilitarian and economic end," says 11th and 12th grade principal Dan Burke. "The primary purpose of education is to encounter the mind of God and grow in humility as we discover how infinite He is. We reflect God's glory and become more human when we stand in awe of the power of his word to create, grow, restore, and heal. And we experience God's holiness when we become His servants who live out His word." Yes, we want our students to succeed academically, but just as importantly, we want to cultivate an active and authentic relationship with Jesus Christ. One way that God has equipped our school to cultivate a Christhonoring community is through our Spiritual Life team. This group of students actively engages our community and prays for other students and staff. It is a blessing to see our students share their love for God with one another through the Spiritual Life team and through daily devotions.

We believe that creating time and opportunities such as chapel and classroom devotions are imperative to cultivating a community at Westminster that actively seeks holiness. We intentionally provide our students and faculty with the opportunity to strive for academic excellence and explore and express their faith. Just as we do not sacrifice academics for the sake of the Gospel, we do not sacrifice the Gospel for the sake of academics. "This is why our faculty is at Westminster," says

"JUST AS ACADEMIC SUCCESS TAKES STUDY AND WORK, HOLINESS REQUIRES PATIENCE AND DEDICATION."

TTET MINTR

Heather Roth. "They're not just here to teach a curriculum but to disciple and walk alongside our students. God is equipping our students and our faculty each day."

The vision of Westminster is to prepare and equip students to engage and change the world for Jesus Christ, but the want and desire in our hearts to be disciples for Christ's kingdom does not exist because of ourselves. It is because of the work the Holy Spirit is doing within us. At Westminster, we are blessed to see His work every day. "The Christian faith is active," says David Lochmann, middle school history teacher. "It's a walk; it's not passive. Jesus invites us to follow him. My hope is that our students will be able to cultivate a relationship with him that will last their entire lives." The prayer for all of our students is that by the time they become seniors and look to the next stage in their lives, they will have a solid academic and spiritual foundation to be light-bearers wherever God leads them. More so, we pray that as our students encounter holiness in school and their lives, they reflect deeper on why it matters.

"I hope our students can model that for people through how they write and speak and behave and how they live their lives," says Heidi Thies, English department co-chair. "We want our students to go out into the world and change it for Jesus Christ, but we want them to do it in a winsome way—a way that loves unbelievers around them and can show them that there is a better way to live. That there is more out there than just serving themselves." As we engage our students and prepare them to change the world, we want them to realize that there are opportunities in the places and communities they are currently in to be Christ-like examples and children of His kingdom. As Paul says in Ephesians 5:1-2, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Our prayer for every student coming to Westminster is that they love one another, seek to live by God's will, and see themselves as God sees them. Peter Barrs says it best: "I pray that for our students, in the way they approach their work and their relationships with one another, that they see themselves as God's good creatures and that God loves them because He's made them as they are."

Holiness can be daunting but it brings harmony and wholeness to our lives as we begin to live according to God's will for us. It requires us to love one another and build authentic relationships with Jesus. It requires us to treat others with respect and live with integrity. This love and respect for one another is part of what makes Westminster's community so special. Our students respond to the Gospel because they see and experience their teachers speaking into their lives to shower them with prayer and love. Our teachers genuinely desire to practice holiness in their own lives, which, in turn, blesses our students. Holiness is worth pursuing, and we pray that all of our students at Westminster are willing and eager to seek Christ and live according to His word so that they may be made holy as he is holy. •



Why Do Families Seek Westminster?

BY JENNIFER SENGPIEL, HEAD OF ENROLLMENT

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" — Isaiah 6:3

ur school theme of Holiness this year came with this tremendous praise verse from Isaiah. It is hanging in our Grand Entry and is the first thing I see each morning. It is a gift to be reminded of God's earthly reign over us and specifically His school, Westminster.

We have so much to be grateful for and to celebrate as we reflect on this past year and look to next school year. As Head

of Enrollment, I often reside in the future—planning for hundreds of families visiting, students shadowing, and tours given for the upcoming year. I get a privileged glimpse into whom God leads to Westminster and the many wonderful reasons they walk through our doors. As you can imagine, the reasons have been wide and varied in recent years. Overwhelmingly, I hear families yearn for an education rooted in a Biblical worldview. Students have come to tours and shadow visits anxious for something different than what they're experiencing in their schools. They want to live out their faith in an environment that nurtures and grows their relationship with Jesus. Yes, this search is largely led by parents, but I've seen some students take that lead this year. That is so exciting! As a covenantal school, we are here for Christian families, and that practically means that at least one parent must know Jesus and accept Him as their Lord and Savior. What is not required is for their son or daughter to be there yet. We know that each of our students is on a journey, and we hope to aid in that discovery and ultimate destination that knows and lives for Jesus.

Parents are pursuing Westminster for many reasons. They want a Christian education for their children, a supportive Christian community with shared values, and Biblical worldviews. Some are fleeing schools and school systems teaching things contrary to their values. Regardless, we are grateful for the opportunity to share the love of Christ and Westminster's mission with so many families. We are also very diligent in our admissions process and acceptance criteria. We are transparent and firm about who we are and what we believe. We have not compromised our application requirements and have truly leaned into our process as an opportunity for each family to profess their faith in Jesus, ensuring Westminster is the right school for them.

We've had a record-breaking season of inquiries, tours, and student shadow visits. This incredible activity drives applications and ensures we have a healthy and vibrant school. But, the most critical component is our shared love of Jesus and finding families truly meant for Westminster. God will handle the quantity and lead those to us that He feels should be here. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." Westminster is absolutely basking in that glory! •

Jennifer Sengpiel serves as the Head of Enrollment at Westminster. If you have questions about admissions or know someone interested in enrolling, please contact her at jsengpiel@wcastl.org.

RELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2023





CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2023! We celebrate your

achievements, perseverance, hard work, and your love for the Lord and for one another. A special congratulations to valedictorian Kate Harper and salutatorian Elizabeth Clawson. This graduating class has devoted many hours serving their underclassmates, their school, and their communities. From their first day to the moment they walked across the stage to receive their diplomas, we have been blessed to see each student grow and mature. Please join us in praying for our graduates as they leave Westminster for what the Lord has planned for them. We pray that each of our graduates will stand firm in their faith and be agents of the Kingdom and change the world for Jesus Christ. 99% ATTENDING COLLEGE

\$21.7M TOTAL SCHOLARSHIPS EARNED 8,100 HOURS SERVING THE COMMUNITY

18 BRIGHT FLIGHT RECIPIENTS WITH ACT 32+









tradition SINCE 1989

SPIRIT WEEK

THIS YEAR'S COMPETITION WAS A NAIL-BITER. Each grade

performed extremely well, and it all came down to the final day and the lip sync ranks to determine the winner. In the end, the senior class of 2023 won the Florence Johnson Lewis Memorial Cup. The art board competition was an impressive showing of creativity as students from all grades were required to create a representation of an assigned board game. The 8th grade class came away with a big upset, winning first place with their depiction of Battleship. In the boys poms competition, the junior class took first place with a James Bond-inspired choreography. Ultimately, the seniors took first place in both the film project and lip sync. It was a great week of competition and community!

To view more photos from these events and others, check out wcastl.org/photos.





Community Events

AROUND CAMPUS

SPECIAL OLYMPICS AT WESTMINSTER

The sophomore class welcomed athletes from six special school district schools for a Special Olympics Basketball Challenge day this past March. The day began with buddy training followed by Opening Ceremonies and competitions. Each sophomore was partnered with a special school district athlete and had the privilege of cheering and assisting them throughout the day, including eating lunch together. Hosting the Special Olympics was a great opportunity for the sophomore class to engage our local community and practice our core value of leading with service.



GRANDPARENTS DAY

Over 250 grandparents joined us this past spring for our annual Grandparents Day program. They were treated to a fun morning of breakfast and entertainment as the middle school fine arts classes performed and students and grandparents competed in a game of trivia with an interactive program presented by faculty.





FOOD TRUCK NIGHT

One of the best ways to gather together is by sharing a meal. This past April, we invited local food truck vendors to park on our plaza after school. The moment the final bell of the day rang, students, parents, and staff rushed outside to enjoy tacos, funnel cakes, pizza, and more.



WE ARE ONE

On Thursday, February 16, we hosted our annual Black History Month Celebration. The theme for this year's celebration was African American fashion from the '60s through the 2000s.

As part of the celebration, guests were treated to a fashion show with Westminster students posing as fashion models before moving into the Theatre for the We Are One program featuring fashion entrepreneur and 2016 Westminster graduate, Caira Butler. Caira guided the audience through a fun trivia game highlighting many African American fashion icons and pioneers. After the program, several fashion items from the trivia game were on display in the Hub. Not only was the evening a beautiful representation of creativity, but it was a time for worship together as brothers and sisters of the kingdom of God. Led by the Westside Baptist choir, everyone sang and worshiped Christ together. We are blessed to be able to worship our God together and praise Him for the diversity and wonder of His creation.



Growing in Faith

STEPHEN KRUSE '04

tephen Kruse '04 is the Vice President, Finance & Controller for the St. Louis Blues, Enterprise Center, and Stifel Theatre. After graduating from Mizzou in 2009, and working in public accounting for two years at Price Waterhouse Coopers, Stephen helped to open the Stifel Theatre in 2011 and added the responsibilities of managing the accounting and finances for the Blues and Enterprise Center in 2014. Stephen is married to his high-school sweetheart, Becca Keffer '04. They have four wonderful children: Elena (8), Miles (6), and twins Brayden and Tessa (3).

What are some of your favorite Westminster memories?

Where do I begin?! I truly enjoyed my time at Westminster. Some of my favorite memories include performing in *The Music Man*, playing for the state championship in volleyball, singing in Touring Choir, playing soccer from grade 7-12, and boys poms during Spirit Week. I made some life-long friends, was mentored by some incredible faculty members, met my spouse, and have memories that I will never forget.

How have you seen God's work in your life?

There have been countless ways that I have seen God work in my life. From growing up in a wonderful Christian home that put Christ at the center to the blessing of my wife and our four children, God has been and continues to be constantly at work. It certainly hasn't always been an easy road, as my immediate family has encountered various health struggles over the years, but these circumstances remind me that I am not in control and that there is a God who loves me and is faithful. I sin every day and the more I understand the depth of my sin, the more I am in awe of God's holiness and love for us. His grace is enough and there is nothing that I can do to earn it. What a gift that we can trust and rest in Him.

How did your experiences at Westminster impact your relationship with Christ?

God used Westminster in incredible ways during some of the most formative years of my life. Looking back on it today, it was such a great school that enhanced what was being taught under the roof of my home. The faculty truly cared about me as a person and genuinely cared about my personal relationship with the Lord. I was constantly challenged and matured in my faith during my six years at Westminster, preparing me well for the next stage of my life in college and beyond.

What are your hopes and prayers for Westminster students?

I pray that the students will continue to grow in their relationship with the Lord and others. I pray that the students will reflect the light of Christ both on and off campus and that their walk with the Lord will grow deep so that when they graduate, they will know and love the Lord and also share about Him with others. •



REFLECTIONS

A Note from Your Alumni Relations Coordinator

A unique feature of our alumni programming is the variety of events we offer throughout the school year. There are class reunions held each fall over Homecoming Weekend along with our alumni athletic events this spring.

Our alumni are invited to participate in many school events such as Spirit Week. Did you know we also offer complimentary alumni tickets to our fine arts productions? Also in April, Westminster was thrilled to partner with Promise Christian Academy for the first annual Alumni Day of Service.

Your involvement on campus is important to the alumni community and to our current student body. Even though you are no longer walking these halls on a daily basis, we want to remain a part of your lives. Seeing how God has continued working in your lives provides a powerful testimony.

It is our prayer that you will continue to join us on campus, support our faculty and students, and keep us active in your lives. We love to hear about what you have done since graduation! Westminster is grateful for you; we continue to walk beside you and are proud of you.

Blessings, Hannah Wallace Murray '93



CLASS NOTES -

ALUMNI NEWS

Carol (Denckhoff) LaGue and her brothers, Robert Denckhoff '91 and Michael Denckhoff '93, recently celebrated the wedding of Carol's son Mitchell.



Gabe Kea headlined at The Funny Bone back in February, 2023. Among those in the audience were several of his WCA classmates from the Class of 1997, including Jordan Reinwald, Tony Culella, Josh Hendricks, Lyssa Martels Laurent, Kelly Beckemeier Johnston, and Shauna Kruse Collison. Ben Muehlheisen and Natalie Hines Leonard '98 were also in attendance.

'00

Dustin Reppell presented an exciting night of improv at Westminster this past January as a fundraising benefit towards medical care for his mother. The show featured multiple alumni including Tim Dollarhide '01, Tony DiPietri '01, Mallory Alpert Stull '10, Ryan Kelly '13, Sarah Yousef '13, Cole Hintz '19, Kyle Farrell '19, and Tyson Jones '19. Aman Daniel Sage '99 performed the pre-show music, and Mike Rohlfing '05 announced and ran sound during the show.



Matthew Pannkuk married Jessica Symes on June 11, 2022. Matt's brother Jonathan Pannkuk '13 was best man and his sister Rebekah Pannkuk Tice 'oo read Scripture. They were married in St. Louis at Twin Oaks Presbyterian Church, where Matthew has been a chaplain and Bible teacher at Twin Oaks Christian School the past nine years. After graduating from Covenant College in 2007, Matt earned his Master of Arts in Teaching at Lindenwood in 2008 and then his Master of Divinity degree from Covenant Theological Seminary in 2013. After one year teaching high school Bible and history in Huntsville, AL, he returned to St. Louis to work at Twin Oaks. Though saddened by the loss of his father in January of 2021 and his mother in September of 2022, Matthew is excited for this new chapter of life with his wife Jess.



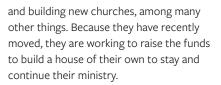
Lauren (Morris) Thorp was recently highlighted in Ladue News for opening her new shop, Bonboni Interior Design, in St. Louis. Lauren previously ran Bonboni Mercantiles Co. before closing the business to run her new boutique. Bonboni Interior Design specializes in everything from consultation to complete interior design work.

vor

Christine (Yu) Thomson and husband Colin had their second baby ller Kennedy Thomson in October 2022. Big brother Carson (1.5) is adjusting well to his new role and loves his baby sister! The Thomson's currently reside in Los Angeles and work in podcasting.



Nathan Terschak and his wife Kelsey welcomed twin boys Noah Elliot & Judah Edward on January 31. The twins join big sister Elaina. The Terschaks currently reside in Illinois where Nathan works as an engineer.





Grace Linton and John Madey were recently engaged. Grace is currently a teacher at Kirk Day School and John works for Brightstar Capital Partners. A 2023 wedding is planned.

'14

Catherine Bakewell published a new novel, *Flowerheart*, on March 14, 2023. *Flowerheart* is a fantasy novel for ages 13 and up and received a starred review from *Publisher's Weekly*: "An uplifting and meaningful tale bursting with floral imagery and cottagecore aesthetics."



– — Melissa (Knappenberger) Shehan

and her family are missionaries in Africa. Recently, they moved to a safer city and are helping to pioneer a new location in a predominantly Muslim area, where most do not believe in Jesus. Their job includes sharing the gospel, discipling new believers,



Caleb Miller completed a 26.2 mile marathon this past February in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Cheering him on was his mom and former Westminster employee Diane Mitchell Miller.



Klarissa (Sheffield) Grissom released her debut single "War Cry" on Spotify and Apple Music in March of 2023. Within the past year, she has also been blessed to sing background vocals for Stellar award-winning artist, Christina Bell and Myron Butler, whose credits include a Grammy award and 8 Stellar Awards.

'21

Luke Coco was recently featured on *CanvasRebel*, an online magazine that highlights storytellers and entrepreneurs, for his work with Grand Canyon University's outdoor recreation team as a media guide.



'17–'222 A group of alumni joined a mission trip to Harmons, Jamaica in January through Veritas at The Crossing church. The group included **Christina Mason '17, Keenan Miller '19,**

Will Mason '20, Danny Sacco '20, Josie Christen '20, Alyssa Pritchett '20, and Hailey Pritchett '22.

Alumni:

If you would like to be included in the next issue of Chimes, please send your update, graduation year, and a recent photo to alumninews@wcastl.org.

SPIRIT WEEK ALUMNI JUDGES



Boys Poms

L to R: Carter Hickel '21, Josh Hendricks '97, Whitney Mooney Allen '04, John Pottebaum '16, Belle St. John '22, Eric Bratch '95, Emily Bratch '20 (with Kingsley), Nate Hoenig '99



Lip Sync

Back Row: Katherine Hickman '11, Alena Vermilion '17, Brooke Lang '18, Jessica Kunkel '19, Cori Becker '09, Haley Woolbright Horina '14 *Front Row*: Sara-Taylor Sharpe Reed '09, Shelly Russell Ballard '09

ALUMNI SPORTS



Alumni Football Game

On November 23, a great group of football alumni gathered at Westminster to play a game and reconnect with Coach Greg Schoenberg.

L to R: Levi Alldredge '18, Chad Briden '18, Charles McCracken '18, Juan Mundo-Sifuentes '08, Coach Greg Schoenberg '08, Jake Broyles '20, Hayden Engel '20





Alumni Basketball Night

On December 16, we hosted our annual Alumni Basketball Night. This year, we honored the late women's coach Sue Tameling. Sue was a mentor and friend to so many WCA alumni. Sue's family (pictured) joined us for a special memorial at halftime.

Alumni Hockey Game

Back in November, several alumni athletes gathered together at the Centene Ice Rink for a fun and spirited game of hockey.

Back Row: Jimmy Munson '08, Nick Pieber '06, Aidan Penberthy '20, Chad Kim '03, Nate Hoenig '99, Andrew Bateman '04, Michael Bianca '08, Levi Wright '18, Blake Swenson '19, Andrew Tipton '18, junior Logan Swenson, senior Drew Gingerich *Front Row*: Tim Appelbaum '09, Daniel Kim '08, Jason Kelly '17, Nate Brown '03, Matt Brown '01, Zack Kilgore '22, Brandon Swenson '21, Joe Schroeder '19, Daniel Kaufman '08, Jeff Kaufman '06

The Holy Work of Giving

BY JEREMY MARSH '91, HEAD OF INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

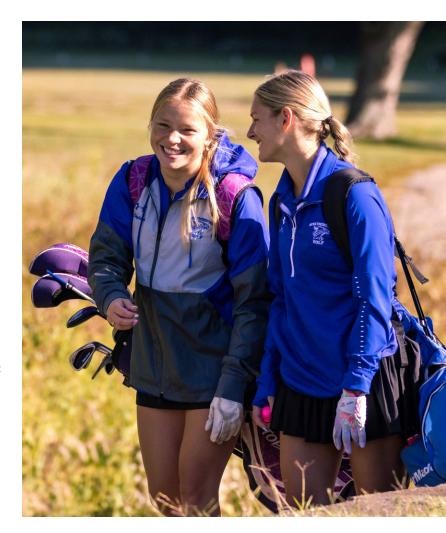
hile money may not be our first thought when we think about holy living, the life and teachings of Jesus demonstrate that holiness can be displayed powerfully through our financial choices. Consider the good Samaritan who showed compassion for the man left for dead along the road. The Samaritan man physically cared for the injured man but also paid for his expenses and any extra needs at the inn. (Luke 10:35-37)

I'm reminded of the poor widow who came to the temple treasury surrounded by individuals with greater means. As wealthy people contributed large amounts, the widow gave all she had to live on. Jesus elevated her expression of generosity because of the sacrifice that accompanied it. (Mark 12:41-44)

The early church shows us many examples of integrating faith and possessions, from the believers selling property to give to anyone who had need to the Macedonian churches pleading with Paul for the "privilege" of sharing with the Lord's people. (Acts 2:45; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4)

Generations later, the holy work of stewarding God's gifts to bless others continues at Westminster.

In the Advancement Office, we are honored to witness the quiet acts of generosity and sacrifice of countless members of our community. God is extravagantly generous to Westminster through the people He's called here—current parents, alumni families, school founders, and more.



I think of a Westminster grandfather who loves to play golf but also understands its expense. On his own accord, he confidentially provided a gift to bless the girls golf team. He didn't want recognition. He simply followed the Holy Spirit's leading and gave.

Throughout the school year, needs surface that would be difficult to share, from empty lunch accounts to insufficient school supplies to an inability to afford Spirit Week shirts. In such cases, a member of our community learns of the need and quietly steps up to meet it, enabling students to learn and participate in our community.

I'm always touched by donors who give above and beyond to help more families in the St. Louis area access a Westminster education. Last year alone, generous supporters enabled Westminster to extend \$3.2 million in tuition grants to 32% of the student body. The impact is best summarized by an anonymous, grateful family:



From the bottom of my family's heart, thank you ... for your willingness to share your blessings to help families like ours to afford the opportunity to be at Westminster. My family has been attending Westminster for the past five years. As a result, God has done great things for our children and family. We are very fortunate and blessed to be a part of the Westminster community. Without your donations, this would not be possible. Thank you for your thoughtfulness and generosity. You are making a Godly difference in our lives!

Sharing our gifts, whatever they may be, truly makes an eternal impact. As Paul tells us in Romans 12, we all have different gifts according to the grace given to us. He also urges us to use them! "If it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is contributing to the needs of others; then give generously."

If you feel called to contribute to the needs at Westminster, we would be honored to steward your gifts in a way that serves our students and brings God glory. We also hope that as you give to bless others, you are drawn into a closer relationship with Christ, grow in faith, and recognize the holy work the Lord is doing in you.

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work." — 2 Corinthians 9:8 •

Jeremy Marsh '91 serves as Head of Institutional Advancement at Westminster. He enjoys meeting with parents, alumni, and community members to hear their Westminster stories and share how God is working in students' lives. You can contact Jeremy at jeremymarsh@wcastl.org or 314.997.2901 ext. 6160.





