

Matthew 25 Grant 2023 : Entry # 2293

Matthew 25 Grant Application

Church/Institution Name

Westminster Presbyterian Church

Address

1515 Helen Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002
United States
[Map It](#)

Telephone

(269) 344-3966

Email

jerryorjanet@wpcportage.org

Person responsible for administering the grant

Fred Welsh

Phone Number of Administer

(269) 313-7400

Pastor/Executive Director

Revs. Jerry and Janet Duggins

Clerk of Session/Board Chair

Kathy Stuut

Associated Presbytery

Lake Michigan

Presbytery Leader Who Will Write Letter of Endorsement

Matthew 25 Grant 2023 : Entry # 2293

Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence

Presbytery Leader's Email

flanelawrenceplm@gmail.com

Matthew 25 objective addressed

- Building congregational vitality

First Time Application?

Yes

Request for continuing grant?

No

A complete application includes the following pieces

Upload Files Here

- [2023-Matthew-25-Grant-Application.pdf](#)

eSignature

I affirm that the above information is accurate and submitted to the Synod of the Covenant for the purpose of determining my eligibility for the Matthew 25 Grant.

1Point List ID

28

Notes



Admin Notification (ID: 5f242b4655939)

added September 27, 2023 at 9:01 pm

Matthew 25 Grant Application
Westminster Presbyterian Church
1515 Helen Ave. Portage MI 49002

1. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Westminster Presbyterian Church will provide a warming center for homeless persons in the Portage/Kalamazoo community on Tuesdays and Thursdays from November 14 through March 28 from 10 am until 2 pm. Two warming centers provided shelter from the cold last winter on a temporary basis, covering four days of the week. These centers provided a place to rest, enjoy a warm drink, snacks, a warm meal, and food to take with them. Other resources including clothing and access to some services helpful to the homeless were also provided. These centers were located in different parts of the city. The one nearest to us, staffed by the volunteer Coalition for the Unhoused, served about fifty people per day. We hoped to work with them, providing shelter on alternate days. However, it appears that the organization running that center may not be able to open the center for the coming winter, increasing our conviction that there's a need we can be involved in addressing.

Homelessness is a significant and persistent problem in Kalamazoo County, including both the city of Kalamazoo and adjacent Portage. It's difficult to obtain accurate numbers. Some sources estimate approximately 700 homeless persons at any given time, in a county of 260,000, but this is widely believed to be an undercount, and doesn't include those who are sporadically unhoused. There are significant encampments throughout the area including a nearby highway underpass and a park about a mile from our church. Though we are in what might be considered a suburban area, it's become clear that homelessness is not limited to urban or inner city areas, but is increasingly visible where many did not previously believe it existed. A severe lack of affordable housing as well as systemic poverty contribute. There has been much public conversation around these concerns, but thus far, comprehensive county-wide solutions have not materialized. We certainly do not expect a warming center to solve these larger systemic issues, but we hope to be part of a safety net of support while also contributing our voices to the wider conversation.

Our task group of seven is working hard to get things in place for this new ministry of the church. We are in process and expect to have our kitchen licensed soon so that we can prepare and serve hot meals. We'll be hiring a security person to be present during the hours of operation. Our lead coordinator has extensive experience as executive director of a community ministry serving a diverse and largely unhoused population. In addition to recruiting and training volunteers from the congregation, we have assurances that congregations from our local interfaith clergy caucus will also be contributing volunteers, some of whom have experience from working at one of the warming centers last winter. The Coalition for the Unhoused, also has a network of volunteers we can tap, and have been a helpful resource in our planning process.

Our intent is to begin slowly, by providing a warm place to rest and warm food and drink. When volunteer time and resources allow, we hope to provide for other needs including showers, warm clothing and bus tokens. We also hope to partner with other

area organizations to provide or connect people with other services in the Kalamazoo area such as basic healthcare, substance abuse, treatment and assistance programs.

Our primary goal is simply to provide a warm and safe place for our homeless neighbors on a cold day. But beyond that, we see this new ministry as a way to extend our outreach to a neglected community of people. We previously engaged with the homeless by serving meals at Ministry with Community, an organization providing meals and a variety of other services in downtown Kalamazoo, about six miles from our church. The pandemic interrupted this. As a predominantly white, educated, and fairly prosperous faith community, we see the importance of engaging with those whose experience is different from our own. So we hope to raise our awareness of the problem of homelessness in our community and gain a better understanding of the issues. We also hope to begin to build bridges of relationship, to get beyond stereotypes and know our homeless neighbors as individuals. We know it's important that the "cries of the homeless" be defined not by our assumptions of what they need, but by their own voices.

Thirdly, having listened to the homeless, we hope to be better advocates for their expressed needs. Fourthly, we hope to become effective partners with others who are already engaged in this important ministry in our area.

2. MISSION, VISION AND PLANS OF CONGREGATION

Our congregational intention statement reads; "At Westminster, we live a whole life in response to God, attentively, together, engaging the world for the good of all, in response to Jesus Christ." We view "engaging the world" as a crucial part of being a vital congregation. We recognize that our faith community lacks diversity in a number of ways and that it is therefore important for us to connect with others beyond the walls of our church. Westminster is a charter member of ISAAC Kalamazoo, a multi-racial inter-faith advocacy organization that currently focuses on anti-racism, gun violence prevention, and housing concerns. Our members volunteer in various service agencies within the county, and we financially support many of these. There are many ways "to engage the world," but we feel called to fill this particular need in the community for a warming center for those without a place to go. It's a new way for us to live out one of our core values, compassionate service. Since the addition of a fellowship hall and kitchen in 1999, the congregation has felt strongly that the facility should be used for mission. For about ten years we shared this space with a Senior Adult Day Program. Since that program moved to its own dedicated space just before the pandemic, we have been looking for other ways to use our building for mission.

In January of 2023, the Session adopted a statement about racism which opens with: "As people dedicated to following Jesus Christ, it is our desire to respond to all people in the open, inclusive, and compassionate way of Jesus. We believe the church should strive to be the 'Beloved Community' in which all find welcome, respect, and hope." The statement goes on to say "that healing the wounds of racism serves the common good. This means becoming aware of the ways and places in which racism is present...." We know that people of color are overrepresented in the

unhoused population, and recognize that racism plays a role in the lives and circumstances of those who will use the warming center. We expect to learn and be challenged by a deeper awareness of the ways racism manifests itself in our society.

3. PLANS FOR EVALUATION

We will be keeping records of numbers of people served, volunteers participating, and other needs identified by those we serve, as well as expenditures. The task group planning this outreach will continue to meet and review the process and outcomes. We will consider the project a success if even a few find shelter from the cold, but we hope to be able to serve, on average, at least 25 people per day. Our goal is to have a minimum of five volunteers per day and a volunteer base of at least 25 individuals.

It will also be important for us to evaluate the sustainability of the project. Is the number of volunteers adequate? Were actual costs comparable to projections? Can ongoing funding be secured? What other support services will be possible, given the financial and other resources available? Have we been able to build working relationships with other local groups and agencies who can help?

4. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

There are no supporting documents to attach but it's worth mentioning that we've been consulting with the Kalamazoo Coalition for the Unhoused and other organizations who have done similar work in our community. We have also secured a commitment of support from Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes (regional food bank) to supply food.

5. PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTRATION OF GRANT

Revs. Jerry and Janet Duggins – Co-pastors

Fred Welch – Chair of Mission Team and Warming Center Task Force
email: fred@fredwelch.com phone: 269-313-7400

Judy Markusse Paget – Lead Coordinator
email: Pagetjudym@gmail.com phone: 269-665-0233

Leslie Ashbaugh – Treasurer
email: lesliea83@gmail.com phone: 269-599-9376

6. PROJECT SITE

The warming center will be located in the Westminster Presbyterian Church building at 1515 Helen Avenue, Portage, Michigan. The property (1515 Helen Ave) sits at the end of a cul-de-sac on thirteen acres adjacent to Interstate 94 and the border between Portage and Kalamazoo.

The area of the facility which will be used has its own entrance, lobby, a large gym/fellowship hall, two restrooms (with showers), and a kitchen with pantry. Access to the rest of the building will be restricted. The kitchen has a large commercial refrigerator, freezer, dishwasher, and stove/oven with hood (fire suppressant system attached). We are currently working with the county health department on licensing the kitchen.

7. PROPOSED PROGRAM BUDGET

PROJECTED EXPENSES*

SECURITY	\$ 7,000.00
CUSTODIAL SERVICES	3,000.00
SUPPLIES cleaning, restrooms	1,000.00
COFFEE etc	600.00
FOOD snacks, lunches + paper products	5,500.00
KITCHEN LICENSING	900.00
UTILITIES	<u>2,000.00</u>
	\$20,000.00

**estimated cost to serve 25 people 2 days per week for 20 weeks*

PROJECTED INCOME

CHURCH MISSION ENDOWMENT FUNDS	\$ 7,500.00
GRANTS	
PRESBYTERY OF LAKE MICHIGAN	2,000.00
SYNOD OF THE TRINITY	5,000.00
OTHER PORTAGE CHURCHES	1,250.00
MONETARY DONATIONS congregation & other individuals	1,750.00
IN-KIND DONATIONS coffee, paper products, etc	2,500.00
	<u>\$ 20,000.00</u>



Our Intention Statement:

We live a whole life
In response to God
Attentively
Together
Engaging the world
For the good of all
Following Jesus Christ

Pastors:

Rev. Jerry Duggins
Rev. Janet Duggins

Children's Ministry:
Leslie Ashbaugh

Pianist/Music Director:
Marie Kerstetter
Choir Director:
Jason Zerban

**Administrative Assistant/
Office Manager:**
Shannon Egan

Bookkeeper:
Audrey Curry

Parish Associate:
Rev. Dr. John Best

Pastor Emeritus:
Rev. Richard Jackson

Our core values:

Inspiring Worship

Compassionate Service

Mind & Spirit

Arts & Music

Earth Care

September 27, 2023

It's been my privilege to serve, along with my husband Jerry, as co-pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church for almost 24 years. We have been blessed to share ministry with the people of this faithful, creative, thoughtful, and compassionate community of faith.

Throughout their 65-year history as a congregation, mission and service have been central to their identity. This commitment has been expressed in diverse ways through the years – mission trips, financial support and volunteering with local agencies, hosting international mission partners, being part of a faith-based community organizing group, and our own Westminster Peace Prize. Each year, a portion of the earnings from the congregation's modest endowment is dedicated to mission projects.

We have been impressed by this congregation's flexibility and willingness to respond in new ways as needs within and beyond the church change. Social justice as well as service and giving has long been a part of Westminster's ethos. During and since the pandemic, the Session and congregation have made an intentional shift to a greater social justice emphasis, forming an anti-racism group and becoming a Matthew 25 congregation.

Westminster has wonderful, dedicated leadership in all areas of its ministry, and the leaders who are determined to make this warming center a reality are no exception. We have been actively working with them, but it is the passion of our Mission Team and the Warming Center Task Group, moving the planning forward, with the full support of the Session. Everyone understands that this is a big undertaking for a not-very-big church, but they are prepared to step out in faith to serve in a new way. We wholeheartedly affirm their efforts and this application for a Synod of the Covenant Matthew 25 grant.

Grace and peace,

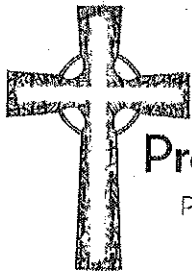
Janet

Rev. Janet Robertson Duggins

1515 Helen Avenue
Portage, MI 49002

Email:
westminsterp@wpcportage.org

Website:
www.wpcportage.org



Presbytery of Lake Michigan

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

October 5, 2023

Synod of the Covenant
Scholarship Committee
1340 W. Long Lake Road
Bloomfield Township, MI 48302

Dear Members of the Grant Committee:

I want to thank each of the members of the Committee for the time, energy, and care they take to review all the grant applications that are submitted. Thank you also for the opportunity to endorse the grant submitted by Westminster Presbyterian Church in Portage, MI.

This small but mighty congregation answers God's call to ministry in so many courageous and faithful ways. As you can see from the grant request, they are connected and in partnership with other organizations and individuals within their community to meet the needs of those they are called to serve. The ministry in which they plan to engage indeed answers the call of the Matthew 25 Initiative in every way. The Presbytery of Lake Michigan also intends to support their ministry and wholeheartedly endorses Westminster Portage's grant request.

Thank you for the opportunity to apply for the Matthew 25 Grant.

Peace in Christ,

Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence
Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk