

WESTWOOD



WHAT IS WESTWOOD U?

Welcome to Westwood U!

Westwood U offers people of all ages the opportunity to gather for education, faith development, and mutual growth-

kids, parents, grandparents, friends...

Everyone is invited!

The purpose is to move beyond education to *formation* and *transformation*.

Westwood U is a way to nurture a whole culture – an ecosystem – of faith formation at Westwood.

We believe that *heart* and *hands* must accompany *head* in one's faith journey, so in addition to the classroom, Westwood U will create opportunities for faith mentoring, faith socializing, and even faith surfing by tapping into life *experience of multiple generations*. We operate under the conviction that the content of faith has no traction outside of faith-based relationships. Our faith flourishes in relationship.

What courses are offered?

There are 3 categories for the courses offered at Westwood U. Several courses from each category are offered throughout the year.

They are:

Know- hands on learning

Live- service to our neighbor and congregation

Grow- fellowship and faith nurturing experiences

This year will look different in the numbers of courses each student will be required to complete. We are asking that each student complete 4 electives over the course of the 2021-2022 year. So for current 7, 8 and 9th graders, their total number of electives will add up to be 12 rather than the usual 15.

3 courses in each category are required, the other 4 courses are choose your own adventure!

Example:

Year 1: 4 courses

Year 2: 4 courses

Year 3: 4 courses, mentoring and a faith statement.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

An email will be sent to you during the open registration period and you will also find the registration link in the e-news and on the Westwood homepage.

Visit the registration page , when you are there you will:

- Fill out the registration form (noting that it will auto fill, so be sure the correct “student” is being registered.
 - Double check that we have an email address where the “professor” can reach you to let you know about any details, supplies, announcements and/or costs that may accompany your elective. Please make sure it is an email you will check regularly! (Parent email, probably the best for confirmation student registrations!)
 - Choose an elective for each month, and if you are opting out of a particular month, please choose “none” so that we know you have bypassed an elective for that period, (each question in required, so you’ll need to choose an “answer” for each month!)
 - Courses can fill and we will work to repeat the elective in a future course catalog. If you notice there are no spots remaining, please choose an alternate option.
 - When you are finished choosing an elective for each month, click submit and your registration will be cataloged with us.
- Be sure to check all the dates listed for your elective, some go outside the “month” they are listed under. To receive confirmation credit you must be present for 3/4 of the class’s time commitment.

If you have any questions while you register, please email Dannica Olsen at d.olsen@westwood.church

IN A WORLD RESTARTING

Our world has been through an extraordinary period with a global pandemic at the heart of our experience. And while there are elements of the pandemic that are not over, we are now in world that contains highly effective vaccines. As a result, we are **IN A WORLD THAT'S RESTARTING**.

Given what we've been through and where we are now, what does it mean to be a person and a community that is claimed and called to be God's hands and feet in this context?



Here are some of the questions we hope to engage.

- What assumptions drove our individual lives prior to the pandemic? What did the pandemic reveal about those assumptions? Are there ways that our faith may readjust these assumptions as we move forward?
- What were the assumptions that guided our communal life at Westwood before the pandemic? Does our experience of the pandemic and the emerging new reality point to new understandings and opportunities as a congregation?

The year will be designed as a conversation between our current context and the original context in which the Gospels were written. Each Gospel writer framed that Good News of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus to a particular community that was restarting after a hard period. For instance, in the fall we will begin with a focus on the Gospel of Mark. What was the Gospel of Mark seeking to communicate to that original context and what does that mean for us **IN A WORLD THAT'S RESTARTING?**

NOVEMBER ELECTIVES

Family Dinner Project. (Grow) 10 meals over 2 weeks, you choose the dates/times.

Our belief in the “magic” of family dinners is grounded in research on the physical, mental and emotional benefits of regular family meals. Some of the specific benefits of family dinners are but are not limited to: Better academic performance, Higher self-esteem, Greater sense of resilience, Lower risk of substance abuse, Lower risk of depression. So for this elective, as a family, plan a menu for the week and make a grocery list. Let everyone be involved. Help prepare food or set the table and work as a family to clean up afterwards. Turn off the TV and put down the devices. It’s worth a try. More family mealtime could mean large rewards for your family. Try to do 10 meals together in a 2 week period and record what you notice.

Sing Your Faith (Know) Wednesday evenings. 5:30-6:15pm

Do you enjoy singing or playing an instrument? Join Westwood's growing youth music ensemble called Cantemus for a month of weekly rehearsals leading up to special music in worship. Rehearsals will take place in the choir room at Westwood under the direction of Elsa Lee and Phillip Schultz.

A Cosmic Adventure Through Science & Faith (Know), At your own pace

This video series is hosted by Dr. Paul Wallace, who just so happens to hold both a PhD in Astrophysics AND a Masters in Divinity (that's fancy for Pastor). Talk about the perfect qualifications! In this 4 part series, Paul leads participants through his own process of wrestling with the tension between science and faith, opening the door for honest questioning and the suggestion that the two just might be able to work together to make each more meaningful.

Westwood Reads: Stamped. (Know) At your own pace. The construct of race has always been used to gain and keep power, to create dynamics that separate and silence. This remarkable reimaging of Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's National Book Award-winning *Stamped from the Beginning* reveals the history of racist ideas in America and inspires hope for an antiracist future. It takes you on a race journey from then to now, shows you why we feel how we feel, and why the poison of racism lingers. It also proves that while racist ideas have always been easy to fabricate and distribute, they can also be discredited. To fulfill this elective, you'll need to purchase and read the book and submit your answers to the reflection questions, emailed after you register.

Westwood Watches: “White Savior: The History of Racism in the American Church” (Know)

Despite the progress many see in the US over the years, it's become increasingly clear that the deep roots of racism and white supremacy continue to run through our political, cultural, and religious institutions. White Savior explores the historic relationship between racism and American Christianity, the ongoing segregation of the church in the US, and the complexities of racial reconciliation.

DECEMBER ELECTIVES

Reverse Advent Calendar (Live) December 1-24.

*back by popular demand!

Each day in the month of December, add an item to a box or bag and donate the contents to STEP or your community's food bank on Christmas Eve. The Advent Calendar will be sent to you in late November. To complete this elective, send a photo of you/your family with your donations being dropped off!

Intercultural Development Inventory. (Know) Scheduled with Jen Mohr

Becoming anti-racist requires lifelong learning and practice. The ELCA Minneapolis Synod & Westwood offer the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) as a tool to help individual's build their personal mindset thru goal-oriented learning about culture and difference. The IDI assessment cost is \$20. It includes: a 1-hour orientation, the IDI assessment (20 minutes), and a 40-minute one-on-one debrief with an IDI Qualified Administrator.

Westwood also offers on-going support to those who take the IDI. We believe, with the IDI as personal development tool, our community will continue to grow in its capacity to dismantle systemic racism as a church and in our greater community. Ages 15 and up. Consider doing it as a family!

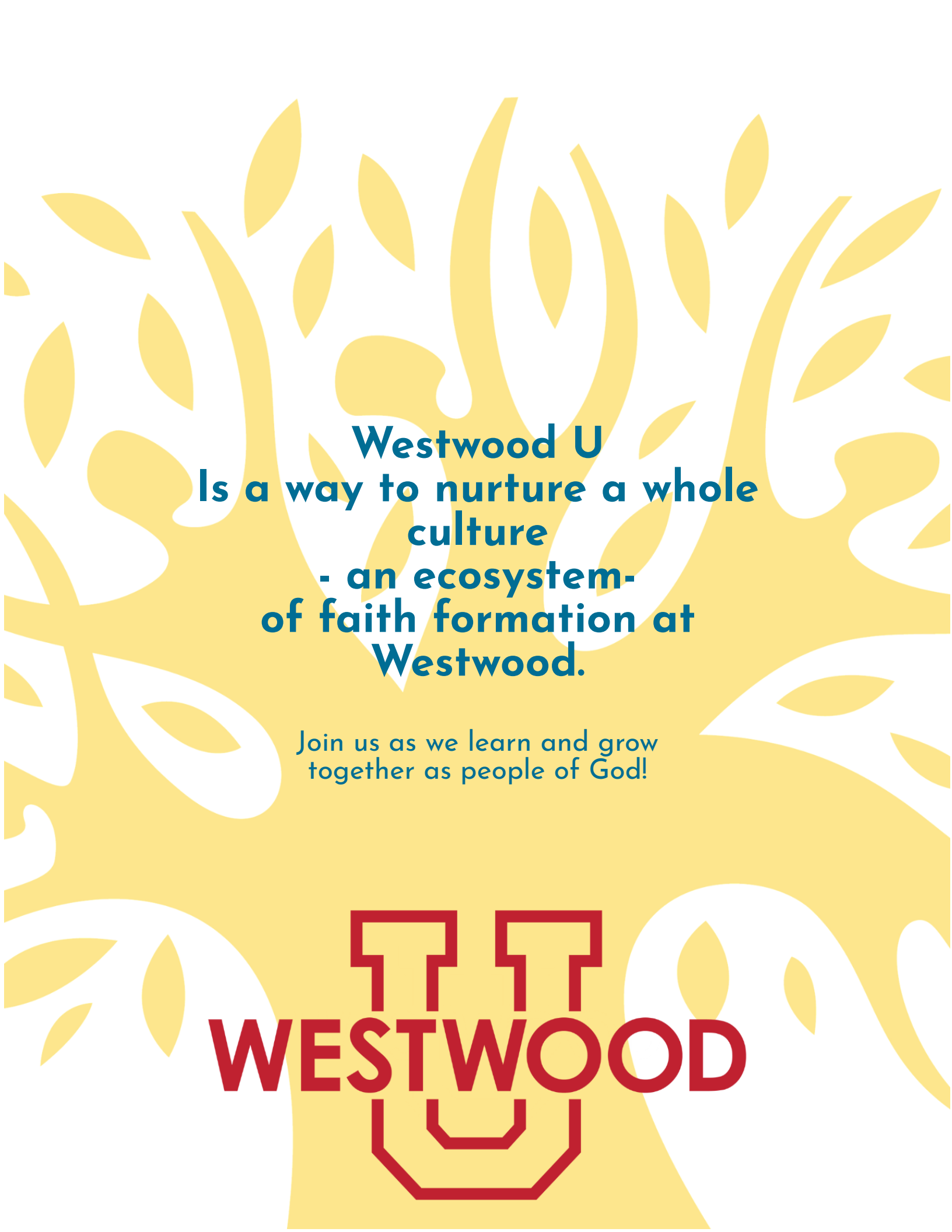
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Advent Worship (Grow)

Wednesdays, December 1, 8, 15, 22 at 6:30 in the sanctuary.

We invite you on this Advent journey in reflecting both on the stories of God-bearers while also reflecting on our own stories as God-bearers. Our confession is that God's story continues to break into our stories as we both experience and bear witness to the redemption and new life found in Jesus. These worship services will center around a character from the biblical narrative sharing about their life as a God-Bearer. If you choose this elective, there is an online option for the PSL you'll miss.

A large, stylized tree graphic in shades of yellow and white, with many leaves, serves as the background for the text.

Westwood U
Is a way to nurture a whole
culture
- an ecosystem-
of faith formation at
Westwood.

Join us as we learn and grow
together as people of God!

The logo for Westwood University, featuring a stylized 'W' and 'U' in red, positioned above the word 'WESTWOOD' in red, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

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