

THE WESTMINSTER MESSENGER

PASSION FOR THE CITY; COMPASSION FOR ITS PEOPLE

Westminster Presbyterian Church • 262 State Street • Albany • New York • www.wpcalbany.org

JANUARY 2013
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The great filmmaker Steven Spielberg once said, "All of us every single year, we're a different person. I don't think we're the same person all our lives." How free that sounds! We can start over every year and be recreated.

I am blessed enough to be a Presbyterian who remembers the day I was baptized. I was 4 years old, and my parents had just joined a church. My brother and I were baptized together on Easter Sunday. I remember being concerned that the abundant amount of water would get all over my pretty new dress. That is the point, I suppose, that the waters of baptism splash all over our tidy worldly life and make us new in Christ's life for us.

In worship
January

Water, water, everywhere

13th we have a service of reaffirmation of baptism. Consider this your chance to splash around in the waters of new life for all of you who do not remember the day of your baptism. We can look forward to our life of faith and the path ahead as a congregation. Where is God splashing us with water? Where do we need to do some splashing of our own?

In these pages you will find new things happening in the life of this congregation. I hope that this year you will jump in the deep end and *create* many new things in the life of this church.
Pastor Frances Wattman Rosenau •



A WALK IN THE DARK

By Pastor Jim Reisner

*The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined ... (Isaiah 9:2)*

This past Advent felt like a walk in the dark. Locally, we saw the land of deep darkness in the murder of Clara Hankin's great granddaughter, Tonette Thomas, and the injury of her sister and aunt. We saw it, too, in the tragedy of Newtown, Connecticut and the appalling loss of 28 lives, including 20 kindergartners.

When we look at violence, either locally or in national tragedy, or in international conflict, we are led to ask "Why?" Why does God allow evil to wreck young lives? Why did God create a world where destruction seems to prevail? Is it too much to ask God to protect our children?

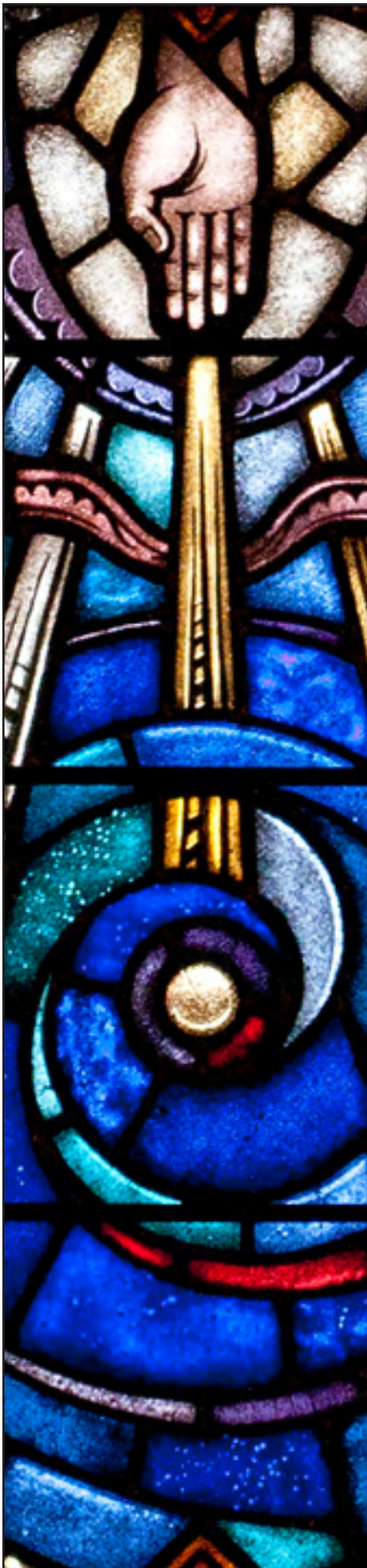
In response to Newtown, Wayne LaPierre, the President of the NRA, proposed "a plan of absolute protection" for school children. "The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun."

LaPierre gets two things wrong. First, in this fragile world God has made there is no such thing as absolute protection. Human life is at its core vulnerable. We are fragile, mortal beings; ever exposed to the troubles of the world. No amount of weaponry can ever change that. The solution is not more guns. Attempts to achieve invulnerability lead to an arms race to which there is no end.

The solution is not more guns ... only love can save us.

Secondly, the Incarnation is God's answer to how to respond to a bad man with a gun. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." God does not save us *from* our humanity; God saves us *in* our humanity. God sent Jesus into the world dependent on the love of parents and family, and the community that was around him. God sent the Eternal Word into the world as God sends every child into the world, telling us as clearly as anything possibly could that only with love can we survive; only love can save us.

We make the world safer for our children and ourselves through the power of nothing less than love ●



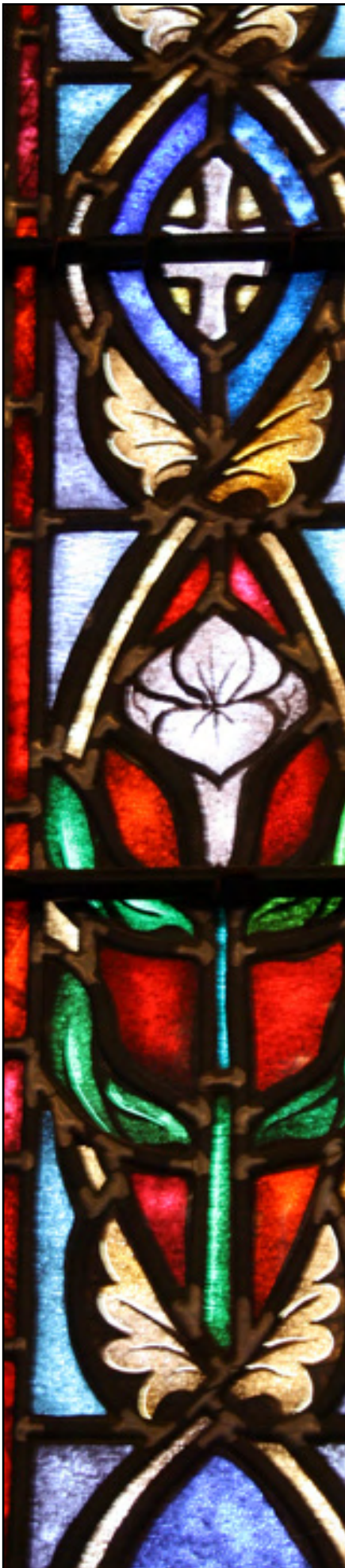
FROM THE THIRD FLOOR

By Andrea Joy Holroyd

Christmas is past, the lights have been taken down, trees removed to the dumpsters or chopped up to use as firewood. We have seen the shepherds and wise men bring gifts to worship the baby in the manger. Our own presents have been opened and scattered throughout our homes. We have been awash in feasting, family, and friends; it is almost a relief to return to the daily routine. The same is true for our Sunday school classes. While we did meet for classes in December, the excitement of Christmas thrummed through our interactions. It is difficult to focus on a story we have heard so many times before when the excitement of the season threatens to overwhelm us all. With the advent of the New Year, we can begin relaxed, washed clean of this season just past.

The *We Believe* class (grades 3-6) is talking about baptism through the month of January, what does it mean, how it affects us, when we can be baptized, and how many times (answer: once). Every time we participate in another person's baptism, even as witnesses, we can remember our baptism or the vows another person made on our behalf. Talk with your children about their baptism this month. If your child has not been baptized yet, ask them what they think baptism is. You may be surprised!

One of the vows made in baptism is a vow by the community towards the raising and care of the child being baptized. One good way to help out is by volunteering as a classroom teacher or aide. Please contact Andrea Joy (wpcdce@wpcalbany.org) if you would like to be involved in this ministry ●



THANK YOU

As I was returning from Florida on Saturday, I was thinking of so many things about my trip to be at my daughter-in-law's side after her horrible accident. And I was, of course, praying. I have been praying for the past three weeks as I have never done before. Whenever a spare moment came by, into my head came a prayer. Sometimes it was a prayer for help, sometimes a prayer of relenting, turning everything over to God, and sometimes it was a prayer of beseeching hope that all would turn out well. All the prayers were for Nicole, for her recovery, and her family.

Then, as I sat in church on Sunday more thoughts came to me and I knew I needed to pray for a way to say thanks. Saying thank you to God seems so inadequate, so insufficient, almost to the point of being inappropriate. But I continue my prayer of thanks to God, who provided all I asked and more. But also my gratitude goes out to everyone else who prayed for Nicole.

I am reminded by this event that the power of prayer is so immense as to be incomprehensible, truly awesome. A prayer is such a simple thing, yet so potent, so forceful, and so complete. And I know it works. I was there. I saw it. I felt it.

For those who prayed for God to give Nicole strength and grant her the might to reach beyond her pain and fear so she would survive, she received it all.

For those who prayed for God to bless and guide and help those who were caring for Nicole in the operating room, in the ICU, in trauma care, they received it all.

For those who prayed for God to place His healing touch on Nicole that she would begin the curing process, get well, and be at peace, she received it all.

For those who prayed that God would hold Nicole and her family close and give them love and grace and guide them through this ordeal, they received it all.

For all those who prayed, thank you, thank you, thank you. May God bless you beyond all that you need with all that you have requested for Nicole and all others known and unknown by you.

Thank you.

Tim Dodman ●



CRTC CLASSES

Introduction to New Testament: Part II, Dr. Peter Bedford, Grace Lutheran Ch., Niskayuna, Tuesdays, Jan. 8-Mar. 12, 2013, 7-9pm, A Lay Theological Education Program core course, open to all. \$275, \$250 to Audit. Call 518-462-2470 to register.

Matthew Fox is coming April 19-21, 2013! **Occupy Christianity: A New Reformation**, Apr. 19, 7-8:30 pm, First Unitarian Society, Sch'dy, Apr. 20, 9am-3pm, St. George's Episcopal Ch., Sch'dy, \$105 by Mar. 22; \$125 thereafter. Registration deadline: Apr. 3.

Watch for details!

Register online at www.crtc.org or by phone at 518-462-2470 ●

AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Did you know that Center Square is moving to a parking permit system? Starting Tuesday, January 15th parking on the street is limited to two hours from 8 am - 6 pm. Spread the word to your friends and neighbors ●

Worship and Second Hours:

JANUARY 6 Epiphany Communion
Isaiah 60:1-6 *Richer by Far is the Heart's Adoration*
2nd Hour: Epiphany Festival

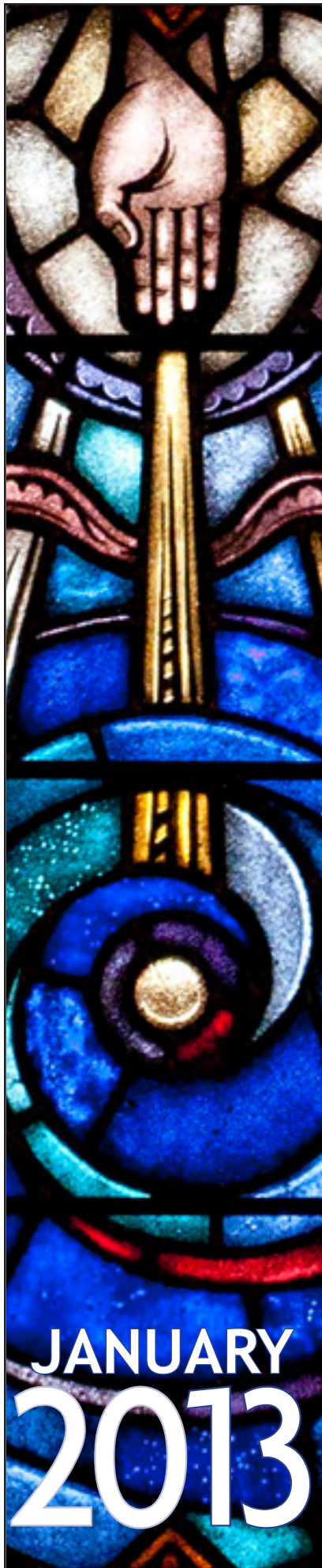
JANUARY 13 Baptism of our Lord
Galatians 3:23-29 *Wash and Wear*
2nd Hour: But Not a Drop to Drink?
Led by Fatmata Hilton, Lois Wilson and Felicia Gambles

JANUARY 20 Epiphany 3
Youth Sunday
2nd Hour: TBA

JANUARY 27 Epiphany 4
Luke 4:14-21 *A Promise Fulfilled*
2nd Hour: Annual Meeting and Pot Luck Meal

FEBRUARY 3 FOCUS Service
Emmanuel Baptist 275 State St (across the street from Westminster)
2nd Hour: Presentation of FOCUS Ministries

FEBRUARY 10 Epiphany 6
Exodus 33:12-23 *God is Great, God is Good*
2nd Hour: TBA



EPIPHANY CHURCH CALENDAR

JANUARY

6 SUNDAY

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Adult Education

8

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast
7:00 pm Session Meeting

9

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast

10

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast
7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

13 SUNDAY

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Adult Education
11:15 am Church School
11:30 am Young Adult Brunch
7:00 pm Youth Group

15

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast
7:00 pm Deacons Meeting
7:00 pm Trustees Meeting

16

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast

17

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast
7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

20 SUNDAY

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Adult Education
11:15 am Church School

21 MLK DAY

Office Closed

22

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast

23

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast

24

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast
7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

27 SUNDAY

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Adult Education
11:15 am Church School
7:00 pm Youth Group

29

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast
7:00 pm Mission Committee

30

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast

31

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast
7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

FEBRUARY

2

2:30 pm Bowling for Beds

3 SUNDAY

10:00 am FOCUS Service
@ Emmanuel Baptist

5

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast

6

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast
7:00 pm Christian Life and Learning

7

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast
7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

10 SUNDAY

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Bell Choir
11:15 am Adult Education
11:15 am Church School
7:00 pm Youth Group

12

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast
5:30 pm Pancake Supper
7:00 pm Session Meeting

13 ASH WEDNESDAY

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast
7:30 pm Ash Wednesday Service



Westminster Presbyterian Church

85 Chestnut Street
Albany, New York 12210

Westminster Presbyterian Church

CHURCH OFFICE- January Hours

9 am- 3 pm Monday-Friday

Phone: 518.436.8544

Pastor: James L. Reisner

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Parish Associate: Paul Randall

Minister of Music and Arts: Alfred V. Fedak, FAGO, ChM

Associate Minister of Music and Arts: Susan Hermance Fedak

Director of Christian Education: Andrea Joy Holroyd

Administrative Secretary: Nancy J. Sokil

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**Lent newsletter submissions are due by Noon on Jan. 14.
Send submissions to: westminsternewsletter@gmail.com**