

*For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace
Isaiah 9:6*

THE
**WESTMINSTER
MESSENGER**

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December 2013

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When God wants something done, God sends a person.

This is the way God has always worked. God sent Abraham and Sarah to Canaan. God sent Joseph to Egypt. God sent Moses to the bulrushes and later from Midian to Pharaoh's court. God sent Joshua across the River Jordan. God sent the prophets of old to the people of Judah and Israel to proclaim the Word.

When God wants something done, God sends a person. This is how God works today. God sends prophets anew: Martin Luther King, Jr. to Birmingham, and Desmond Tutu to Johannesburg.

God is in the sending business; and as the disciples of Jesus, we are the ones who God sends. We are apostles; for that is what the word apostle means -apostles are ones who are sent. And we are sent for a purpose.

The world is not changed by proclamations that declare whereas this and whereas that. Decrees do not change human hearts. When God wants something done, God sends a person. The incarnation, the Word made flesh, teaches us that the world changes one person at a time.

"In the fullness of time, God sent the Son, our Lord Jesus, into the world, that we might receive adoption as children of God. And because we are God's children, God sends us the Spirit." Galatians 4:4-5

- Pastor Jim Reisner

Nancy Sokil **RETIRES**

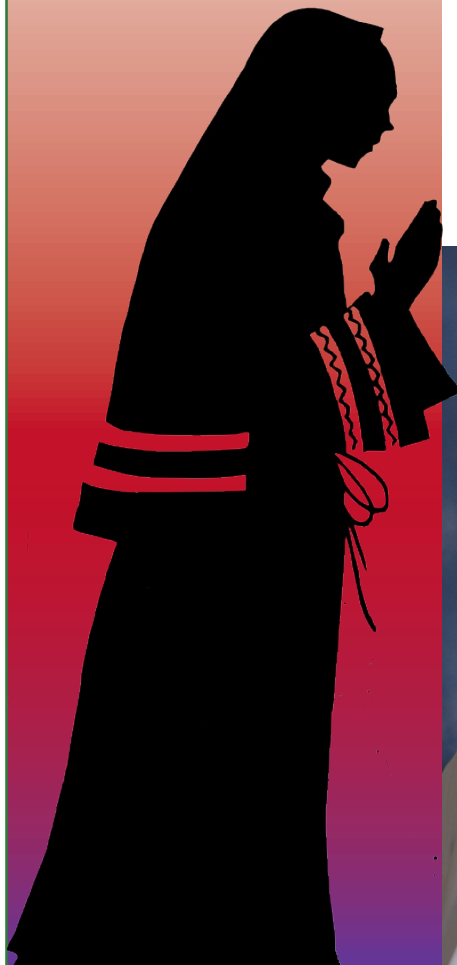
*For unto us
a Child is
born,*

Nancy Sokil has announced her retirement from Westminster after 30 years of faithful service. Nancy has managed the church office through a great many changes at Westminster. She has shown through the years a keen devotion to the ministry of Westminster to the whole of our community life. We will miss the breadth of knowledge that she has of the workings of the church and the lives of church members. In these most recent years, she has been the primary contact for the congregation to members who now live far afield.

We extend to Nancy and Mike, and their son, John, our best wishes and our prayers for health and happiness.

Westminster members and friends are welcome to participate in a cash gift that we are collecting for Nancy on the occasion of her retire-

ment. If you wish to contribute, please send a note and a check endorsed to the church. Please also mark on the envelope to the attention to our church treasurer, Anne Older. We also invite you to write personal notes of appreciation directly to Nancy and address them to the church office ●



Advent at **Westminster**

*Unto us a
Son is given;*

- **December 1:** First Sunday in Advent
Worship and Communion at 10 am
2nd Hour: Advent Festival for all Ages
- **December 7:** Praise Night: A Life Concert featuring Getty and Friends
6:30 pm in the Assembly Room
- **December 8:** Second Sunday in Advent
During Worship at 10 am, Pergolesi "Magnificat" sung by Westminster Choir and accompanied by string ensemble.
2nd Hour: Peacemaking in Albany, Pastor Reisner & Mission Committee
- **December 13:** Deck the Halls
5:00 pm Come & get the Church House ready for Christmas
- **December 15:** Third Sunday in Advent
Worship at 10 am
2nd Hour: Advent Spirituality, Pastor Reisner
- **December 21:** Christmas party for residents of Schuyler Inn, a shelter for homeless families at 1pm Volunteers welcome!
- **December 22:** Fourth Sunday in Advent
Worship at 10 am with Christmas Pageant
2nd Hour: Christmas Party in the Assembly Room
- **December 24:** Christmas Eve
Christmas music at 7:30 pm
Worship and Communion with the Catskill Brass, organ, voices and handbells at 8 pm
- **December 29:** Christmastide 1
Worship at 10 am; No 2nd Hour
- **December 31:** Watch Night in the African tradition
Worshipful Observance of New Year's at 10:30 pm
- **January 5:** Epiphany
Worship and Communion at 10 am



ADVENT

at Westminster

And the government will be upon His shoulder.

ADVENT PLAY AND PAGEANT

Rehearsals will start on Thursday, Dec. 5 from 6:30 to 7:15 pm, for an Advent play to be presented in worship on Dec. 22. All children and teens are invited to be part of this. Children/teens who wish to have a speaking part in the play must attend the 3 weeks of rehearsals. There will also be a pageant as part of the play, and any child is welcome for that. If you have any questions, please call Sue Fedak, 427-7744.

AN EVENING OF PRAISE MUSIC DEC. 7: Westminster hosts Praise Night on Saturday, Dec. 7, with doors opening at 6:30 p.m. Organized by Elder Gabriel Ofori-Okai, this evening of African and African-American praise music features Getty & Friends with the Nakomi Band (heard last at African Family Night Nov. 9) and will include the United Albany Choir of the Church of Pentecost, Ruth Cab, the Black Catholic Apostolic Choir, Patric & Les Amie de Jesus, and much more. Admission is free and a freewill offering will be accepted.

DECEMBER 8: MAGNIFICAT (by PERGOLESI? by DURANTE?)
On Sunday morning, December 8, at our 10 AM worship service, the Westminster Choir will present a special Advent performance of the Pergolesi Magnificat, accompanied by string quartet and organ. This lovely 15-minute work is a setting of the song of praise sung by Mary the mother of Jesus, as recorded in the first chapter of Luke's gospel: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior..."

Next to Vivaldi's Gloria and the Pergolesi Stabat Mater (which have both been sung here at Westminster Church), Pergolesi's Magnificat is among the most well-known pieces of sacred choral music from 18th-century Italy. BUT... it was most likely not written by Pergolesi! Giovanni Battista Pergolesi was a brilliant and beloved Neapolitan composer who in 1736 died tragically at the age of 26, a victim of tuberculosis. After his untimely demise, many compositions were falsely attributed to him, including this Magnificat, which was probably written several years after his death. The work's true composer was almost certainly Pergolesi's teacher, Francesco Durante. Despite the fact that numerous manuscripts from the period name Durante as the composer, popular opinion has continued to hold sway, and the piece is still commonly referred to as the "Pergolesi Magnificat."

But regardless of who actually composed it, this Magnificat is a genuine masterpiece in miniature: a delight to sing and an inspiration to hear. Do plan to attend Westminster's worship service on Sunday morning, December 8, and experience this heavenly music!



ADVENT

at Westminster

And His name will be called:

Wonderful,

Counselor,

Mighty God,



CENTERING PRAYER IN CENTER SQUARE

Centering Prayer is back December 9th - 13th. Wouldn't it be nice to take a few minutes in the middle of your day to take a deep breath and listen for God's Spirit? The second week of December, we will do just that.

For five days in a row, we will have centering prayer in our Sanctuary beginning at 12:05. People who work in the neighborhood or have a short lunch hour can come and experience a spiritual connection with music, prayer and scripture.

If you cannot come yourself, pray for this service and for all who need a center in their lives.

TIME TO DECK THE HALL

Come, and "Deck the Hall" on Friday, December 13, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm! We'll start with a potluck supper in the Assembly Room and proceed upstairs to the sanctuary to hang wreaths, build Christmas trees, and prepare our space to celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas Eve. The 5 pm start time is intended to help families with younger children attend. Hope to see you here!

YOUNG ADULT BOOK GROUP

The 20s and 30s group has been meeting monthly for years. Now, we are branching out and reading a book together: The New Jim Crow Michelle Alexander. By reading this book, we hope to become more invested in our community and also join with other groups who are interested in a holistic approach to the justice system.

YOUTH GROUP TRIP TO NYC!

In New Jersey this past summer, the youth of Westminster worked on Sandy Relief alongside other young people. They hit it off so well (no surprise there) that we are having a reunion in Manhattan on December 14th.

We meet at the Greyhound bus station in Albany at 7 am and return at 9:30 pm. With hours like that, we are bound to have a roaring good time.

YOUTH PROVIDE EMERGENCY OVERFLOW SHELTER MEAL

We at Westminster have provided food for the Emergency Overflow Shelter for years. This year the youth group will be putting their cooking skills to the test once again to provide a meal for the shelter.

Sunday, January 12th the youth will meet at Westminster to cook the meal together. Before the food is delivered, all the young people will circle around to bless the meal and pray for all who will receive it that night. Our young people are committed to serving the city and reaching out to those most in need. They have learned well from Westminster's legacy of dedication to the community.

DECEMBER
2013

Worship Services & Second Hours

*And His
name will
be called:*

Mighty God,

*Everlasting
Father,*



December 1

Isaiah 2:1-5
2nd Hour:

Advent 1 Communion

"Let us Walk in the Way of the Lord!" *Pastor Reisner*
Advent Festival for All Ages

December 8

2nd Hour:

Advent 2

The choir presents The Pergolesi Magnificat
Peacemaking in Albany, Pastor Reisner
and the Mission Committee

December 15

James 5:7-10
2nd Hour:

Advent 3

"The Waiting Room" *Pastor Rosenau*
Advent Spirituality, Pastor Reisner

December 22

Isaiah 7:10-16
2nd Hour:

Advent 4

The Christmas Pageant
Christmas Reception

December 24

Luke 2:1-20

Christmas Eve Communion

"From Bedlam to Bethlehem" *Pastor Reisner*

December 29

Psalm 148

Christmastide

"Sweet Butter Cream Frosting" *Pastor Rosenau*

December 31

10:30 pm

New Year's Eve Watchnight

Worship in the African Way

January 5

Ephesians 3:10
2nd Hour:

Epiphany Communion

"The Technicolor Dream Church" *Pastor Reisner*
A New Day for Albany

January 12

Isaiah 42:1-9

"de Profundis" *Pastor Rosenau*
Installation and Ordination of Church Officers



Westminster Presbyterian Church

85 Chestnut Street
Albany, New York 12210

Westminster Presbyterian Church

CHURCH OFFICE- Hours

9 am- 3 pm Monday-Friday

Phone: 518.436.8544

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Associate Pastor: Frances Wattman Rosenau

Parish Associate: Paul Randall

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

Associate Minister of Music and Arts: Susan Hermance Fedak

Church School Assistant Coordinator: Belinda Quaye

Administrative Secretary: Nancy J. Sokil

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**Newsletter submissions are due by Noon on December 15.
Send submissions to: westminsternewsletter@gmail.com**