



The Westminster Messenger

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

February 2012
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I grew up in a low Presbyterian church. We observed just a little bit of Lent -no ashes or even purple trimmings. That was regarded as too Catholic.

So when I arrived at seminary I was delighted to discover the lectionary and the liturgical calendar. (I had never heard of Maundy Thursday until seminary!)

Epiphany is the season we are now in.

I remember loving the season of Epiphany. I think maybe because the word itself was fun to say: "Epiphany!" Epiphany is the season between Christmas and Easter when we observe the ways in which Jesus revealed himself to the world: the visit of the Magi, his baptism, the calling of disciples, and the teachings and healings of his early ministry.

Epiphany is the season we are now in, or at least this season used to be called Epiphany. Now, for some reason, our lectionary refers to it as "ordinary time".

What a let down! Why should any season in the church year be regarded as "ordinary"?

Read ahead about the events in the coming weeks at Westminster. I invite you to experience, not just an "ordinary" February, but may you find at Westminster an "extra-ordinary" Epiphany •

by: Pastor Jim Reisner



Pastoral Reflections:

Pastor Jim Reisner

One of my first encounters with theology was reading Paul Tillich's *The Courage to Be* during my freshman year in college. Although it was way over my head, I remember enjoying it immensely. Tillich presents us with a choice between courage and despair, and urges us to live in a meaningful way in spite of the reality that we will always be unsure of meaning.

This past month, our Second Hour adult class has been talking about values as we prepare to write a *values statement* for the congregation. What are our values? Compassion, acceptance, respect, tolerance, diversity, community, hospitality, kindness, and integrity were some of the predominant words that emanated from our discussion.

“This is not the moment to lament ... courage means taking risks.”

When Pastor Frances and I picked our four words for values, we were surprised and pleased to discover we had one value in common: courage. The church must be courageous as we face an uncertain future. The main-line denominational churches are all getting smaller, and Westminster has been a part of this trend. This has produced all kinds of anxiety and hand wringing among Presbyterians. But this is not the moment to lament.

I believe this is a moment of opportunity for Westminster if we have the courage. Courage means taking risks. Courage means embracing a spirit of experimentation. At a time when no one really knows what will work, we should be throwing everything we can at the wall to see what sticks. Courage, then, is the willingness to make mistakes, the willingness to fail.

Who knows what the church will look like in the years to come? In an age of radical change, we need to be ready to adapt and be surprised ourselves by what can and could happen. This is our venture. May we have the courage to be the faithful church today, so that we will have the courage to become the church that God intends us to be in the future.

May God grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of these days ●



Thank You
Parish
Associate
Jim Thompson

For the past twelve

years Jim Thompson has served faithfully as a Parish Associate of Westminster Presbyterian Church. Jim has conducted a compassionate visiting ministry, and he has also supported the work of our Board of Deacons. At close of last year, Jim tendered his resignation as Parish Associate in the hope that might finally attain retirement before his 80th birthday.

We have been most fortunate to have him as part of our faith community for these past twelve years. He has brought us wisdom and sensitivity to the many facets of church life that he has touched. He has been an enthusiastic supporter of our mission work, especially our outreach to Ghana, and to the many African immigrants who are now worshipping at Westminster.

Jim has given us his very best. He exemplifies the meaning of “servant leadership” that Jesus spoke when he said, “The one who would be greatest of all must be the servant of all.”

When we honored Jim at our annual meeting this January, Jim said, “Westminster is a place of courage. We are out there in the community at the Schuyler Inn and with the elderly. It has been exciting for me to be a part of an adventurous church.”

Jim also promised not to disappear. He and Carol Zepf will continue to visit hospitalized and homebound members of Westminster. So, the next time you see Jim, thank him for his many years of selfless service to Westminster ●



Pastor Jim Thompson and Carol

Update: The New Presbyterian Hymnal

by Alfred Fedak

As many of you know, since the summer of 2008, I have served as a member of the PCOCS (a.k.a. the "Peacocks"), the committee charged with developing a new hymnal for the Presbyterian Church USA. Since then, the PCOCS has gathered four times each year at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville, Kentucky, for meetings which lasted three to four days at a time. At the committee's final meeting in January, the contents of the new hymnal were finalized, and the committee sang through the entire book in order - over 800 hymns and songs - a process which took about 30 hours! To be perfectly honest, we did not sing every stanza of every hymn, but this was the first time the committee had a chance to see how all the pieces of the new hymnal fit together, and the results were both impressive and gratifying. The new hymnal will be a remarkably rich resource of congregational song. And it now has a name: *Glory to God: the Presbyterian Hymnal*.

The contents of the new hymnal will be organized in a unique fashion, outlining the narrative of salvation history from Genesis to Revelation. There will be at least one musical setting of each psalm from the revised common lectionary, with an emphasis on metrical, rather than responsorial, psalms. There will be much new musical material: traditional hymnody, contemporary praise songs, spirituals, music from Taizé, and global song. (Yes, "Da n'ase" will be in the new hymnal!) But there will also be lots of familiar music as well. In fact, fully 60% of the contents of our current hymnal will be retained. This "old" material will comprise about 40% of the new book. In addition, a number of "heart songs" from the maroon Hymnbook of 1955, which were deleted from our 1990 hymnal, are being re-introduced, in response to the many requests received by the committee. The new hymnal will also include 30 pages of prayers and liturgies, as well as new, singable service music for congregations.

The two most frequently-asked questions about any new hymnal are (1) "What color will it be?" and (2) "How big will it be?" (In other words, will the book be too big to fit into our pew racks?) I'm glad to be able to finally answer both questions: First, the book will be available in two colors: red and purple. And second, even though the new hymnal will have 200 more hymns than our current book, it will be no larger, thanks to recent advances in paper technology, which yield thinner, more opaque pages.

As word spreads that the hymnal project is nearing completion, excitement is growing around the country. A new sampler of 50 hymns from the book is being prepared for circulation throughout the denomination; this will be released in a few months, and we can look forward to singing from it soon. The hymnal's contents will be presented to General Assembly for endorsement in July, after which production work will get underway in earnest. The new hymnal will be available in the fall of 2013, but special, attractive pre-publication offers are already in place which will make the hymnal a very affordable purchase.

More later--stay tuned! Al Fedak ●

Children and Youth

Furious Flamingos!

We have all seen them- the two-foot-tall pink birds on stilts jammed in yards and gardens throughout the country. Love them or not, these bastions of Americana are recognizable wherever one is. You, too, can participate in the noble tradition of flamingo planting. Rent a flock of flamingos for a weekend and the youth of the church will plant the flock wherever you choose. Support the WPC Youth Group mission trip to Pittsburgh in the summer of this year. The youth will be working with the Pittsburgh Project rebuilding homes for people who are elderly or isolated. Join with us to help those in need in Pittsburgh.

Only two weeks left to flock your friends! Sign up after Sunday services in the Welles room, or by emailing Andrea Holroyd at andj.holroyd@gmail.com and Eugene Sit at eugene.sit@gmail.com.

PRICES: When requesting that flamingos be placed:
\$20 to rent a flock of 5 birds.

If you would like to avoid flamingos being placed on your property: \$30 Flamingo Insurance -- for the remaining two weeks ●

Do you have a recent printer or computer in good working condition that you don't use? We have a number of individuals who could put them to good use. Please contact Forrest Holroyd if you do. Thank you ●





Celebrating Westminster YOUTH SUNDAY:

Our very own Westminster youth led worship on January 22nd. What an uplifting experience it was! They chose scripture, wrote prayers and came up with creative ideas for a worshipful experience.

The youth picked the parable of the Great Banquet from Luke as their text, which they interpreted into a modern retelling of the story. You know the story: a man throws a banquet but none of the people who were invited are able to come. They are all too busy. The host sends servants out into the streets to bring the needy to enjoy his lavish feast. When the table is still not full, they invite any passersby in so that the table will be filled. The youth even invited some people from the congregation to come up front and join them at the table.

Teenagers today know a thing or two about being left out. The youth of Westminster also know about being invited into God's presence as a beloved child. Channele Ndagire, our preacher for the day, preached about these themes and about how students can show kindness for those who are left out.

"Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled" Luke 14:23 ●

CELEBRATING YOUTH SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2012



Thanks
for
Directory

February
Usher
Schedule

HAPPY
BIRTH
DAY
February

Delivery of our new pictorial Directory (our first in almost a decade!) is imminent, and we have many in our congregation to thank for making this so! First of all, without the commitment of our members and staff to schedule appointments for being photographed, this book would not be! Thank you, all!

Without the commitment of a creative, selfless team to coordinate the project, this book would not exist. Thanks go out to Nancy Burton, Jeanne Bianchine, Judy Hartley, Eve Ryan, Diane Scaptura, and Nancy Sokil for their expertise and time! Thank you, Team!

Without the commitment of friendly, organized greeters during the three photo days, this book would not have happened. Thanks go out to Ruthanne Brod, Nancy Burton, Cindy Dwyer, Judy Hartley, Margie Mayer, Marie McClumpha, Eve Ryan, Joy Tallmadge, Eileen Van Oort, and Lois Wilson. Thank you, Greeters!

Thanks go out to members whose business ads we'll see in the new directory. These ads offer very special support of Westminster. Thank you, friends! Watch for delivery of Westminster's new and colorful pictorial directory in a few weeks! With appreciation, Sue Barwig ●

The following have graciously given Westminster their gift of service. Please be sure to thank them!

- February 12: **Ushers:** Ben & Belinda Quaye, Marie McClumpha, Gabriel Ofori-Okai
Acolyte: Joseph R. **Church Bell Ringers:** Charlie R.
- February 19: **Ushers:** John & Diane Bossung, Arden Leach, Tony Mason
Acolyte: Sheila H. **Church Bell Ringers:** Robert Q.
- February 22: Ash Wednesday
Ushers: Marie McClumpha, Peter McKee, Tim & Lisa Dodman
- February 26: **Ushers:** Eileen Van Oort, Louis Besch, Eve Ryan, David Hershey
Acolyte: Robert Q. **Church Bell Ringers:** Maxine Q.

Celebrating the following birthdays in February:

● Matt Brown	Feb 1	● Lisa Dodman	Feb 14
● Leif Hartmark	Feb 6	● Margaret Randall	Feb 17
● Taylor J.	Feb 7	● Joan Lewis	Feb 21
● Alexandra H.	Feb 9	● Alexandra Frye	Feb 23
● Michael Asamoah	Feb 13	● Kyle Bossung	Feb 24

Sorry if we missed your birthday. Please send your birth date into the church office so we may have it on record ●



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Get some great food and support the youth mission trip to Pittsburgh.

Bring the whole family and enjoy this Westminster tradition •

FEBRUARY 21 5:30-7 PM

\$8 for adults

\$5 for children

Schuyler Inn Valentine's

Party at Schuyler Inn, Sunday, Feb. 12. To help, contact Margaret Randall, Mary Jean Tedrow, or Lois Wilson, or Westminster Presbyterian Church (436-8544) to volunteer to help at the party. Party set-up is at 1 p.m. Party runs from 2-4 p.m. •

Save the Date March 31st

AFRICAN SPRING DINNER

Saturday, March 31, 2012, 5 to 8:30 p.m. Dinner at 6 p.m.

Co-chairs:

Felicia Kollie-Gambles & Fatmata Hilton

Dinner is free.

Honorary Committee, \$50 per person.

Checks to: Westminster Presbyterian Church

Memo: African Dinner ~ March 31

Program will include reports on successful 2011 mission projects, including:

- In Liberia: clean drinking water and sanitation facilities for about 200 school children + 1,300 more from surrounding communities.
- For Sierra Leone: November 15 shipment to support families still suffering from the country's civil war.

Money raised at dinner will be used to fund Church projects in West and East Africa.

RSVP by March 29 to 436-8544 or info@wpcalbany.org •

FACE and Hope Mission School Update

FACE Africa's fourth project implemented at the Hope Mission School in the Bernard's farm community in partnership with the Westminster Presbyterian Church and the Voss Foundation was dedicated on Monday, December 12, 2011 and keys turned over to the school and community.

The goal of the project was to bring improved access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and hygiene practices to students at HMS and residents of surrounding communities in Bernard Farm.

Items funded and completed include:

- 40 ft hand-dug well + construction of a handpump
- Construction of a 6-compartment latrine + handwashing station and storage rooms
- Formation of a school health club
- Pump mechanic training
- WASH Service Management Committee

Pastor Boniface Diggs, founder and principal at the school opened the dedication ceremony by stating, "This project is life-saving for the school and community, and we are so thankful to all of our

" Water is life, water is life. "

partners and the individuals who made it possible". Dr. Brahim D. Kaba, commissioner at the Liberia Land Commission and a FACE Africa Advisory Board Member who was also in attendance stressed the need for government to join its partners in providing clean water for communities throughout Liberia. He also said that Liberia has more water resources per capital than any other country in West Africa,

but expressed regret that only 30% of Liberians or less have access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation. An elderly woman responsible for cooking and taking care of younger students at the school was ecstatic about the project. She said even more important than food, was water and kept repeating the phrase "water is life, water is life".

December 12, 2011
Paynesville, Liberia ●



5 Wednesdays "Old Testament Personalities" in Lent Lunch & Bible Discussion

will be explored 12:00-1:00 pm at the church on five Wednesdays during the Lenten season. The schedule is Feb. 29 - Abraham; March 7 - Jacob; March 14 - Moses; March 21 - Ruth; March 28 - David.

Leadership will be shared among the several ministers (now called "teaching elders") who are on staff or part of the Westminster family.

Resources are available from "The Thoughtful Christian" study materials and can be sent to you by contacting the church office or via e-mail through Paul Randall at randallpaul@gmail.com. Bring a bag lunch. Coffee and tea fixings will be available •

Sermons & Second Hours:

FEBRUARY 5 FOCUS Service at Delmar Reformed
No service at Westminster
2nd hour: FOCUS Annual Meeting - an informational report

FEBRUARY 12 I KINGS 3: 5-15
Pastor Reisner, preaching, "The Wisdom of Solomon"
2nd Hour: What Are Our Values? - led by Pastor Reisner

FEBRUARY 19 MARK 9:2-9
Pastor Rosenau, preaching, "A Glimmer of Something More"
2nd Hour: Appreciative Inquiry - led by Elder Arthur Fullerton

FEBRUARY 22 Ash Wednesday II COR. 5:20-6:10
Pastor Reisner, preaching, "Ambassadors of Reconciliation"

FEBRUARY 26 Lent 1 LUKE 9:51-62
Pastor Reisner, preaching, "The Set of His Face"
2nd Hour: The Lenten Journey - led by Pastor Reisner

MARCH 4 Lent 2 MARK 9:17-39
Pastor Reisner, preaching, "I believe, Help my Unbelief"

MARCH 11 Lent 3 JOHN 2:13-25
Pastor Reisner, preaching, "Spring Cleaning"

MARCH 18 Lent 4 LUKE 13:31-35
Pastor Rosenau, preaching, "The Lament over Jerusalem"

MARCH 25 Lent 5 LUKE 19:41-47
Pastor Reisner, preaching, "When Jesus Wept"

Church Calendar

02
20
12

This Month's Events:

Note: The FOCUS Breakfast Program is held at Westminster every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 7-9am

FEBRUARY

1

7:00 pm
Christian Life and Learning

2

7:30 pm
Adult Choir Rehearsal

4 SUNDAY

10:00 am FOCUS Service at
Delmar Reformed Church
5:00 pm MOSAIC-Arts Concert

9

7:30 pm
Adult Choir Rehearsal

12 SUNDAY

10:00 am Worship
10:30 am Worship Plus for Kids
11:15 am Church School
11:15 am Second Hour
11:15 am Bell Choir
1:00 pm Schuyler Inn Party-set up
2:00-4:00 pm Schuyler Inn Party
7:00 pm Youth Group

14

7 pm Session

15

Noon
Editorial Deadline
for March Newsletter

16

7:30 pm
Adult Choir Rehearsal

18

Session Retreat

19 SUNDAY

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Church School
11:15 am Second Hour
11:15 am Bell Choir

21

5:00 pm Youth Lock-In
5:30 pm Pancake Dinner
7:00 pm Board of Trustees

22 ASH WEDNESDAY

7:30 pm Service

23

7:30 pm
Adult Choir Rehearsal

26 SUNDAY

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Church School
11:15 am Second Hour
11:15 am Bell Choir
11:30 am Young Adult Brunch
7:00 pm Youth Group

27

7:00 pm Mission Committee

28

7:00 pm Board of Deacons

Upcoming Events:

MARCH

2, 9, 16, 23, 30 FRIDAY

7:00-8:00 pm Night Church

7, 14, 21, 28 WEDNESDAY

12 Noon Lunch & Bible Discussion

31

5:00-8:30 pm
Spring African Dinner



Westminster Presbyterian Church

85 Chestnut Street
Albany, New York 12210

Change Service Requested

Westminster Presbyterian Church

CHURCH OFFICE- Winter Hours

9 am-3 pm Monday-Friday

Phone: 518.436.8544

Pastor: James L. Reisner

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

Director of Christian Education: Jeanne Bianchine

Administrative Secretary: Nancy J. Sokil

Sextons: Glenda Bennett, Joy Tallmadge

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**March newsletter submissions are due by Noon on February 15.
Please send submissions to: westminsternewsletter@gmail.com**