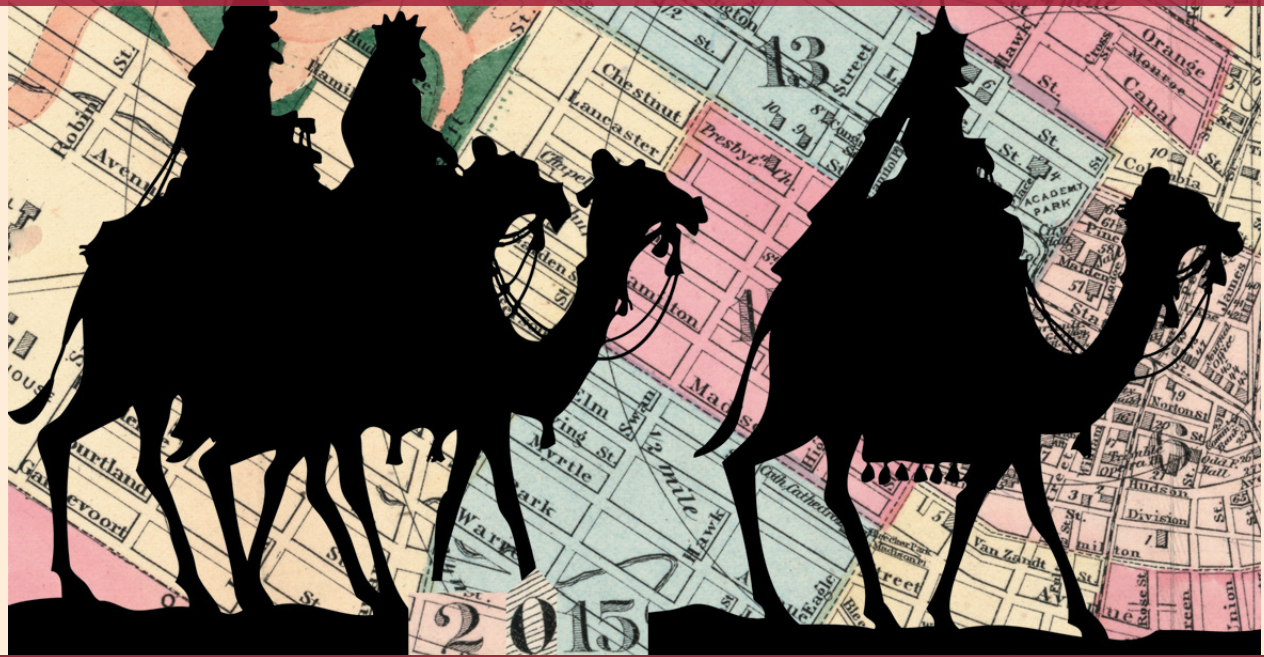


THE WESTMINSTER MESSENGER



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

Epiphany 2015

In this issue:

Pastoral Reflections
Page 2

Annual Meeting
Page 3

Youth & Children
Page 4

Schuyler & FOCUS
Page 5

Music News
Page 6

Hearing Loop
Page 7

Giving & Boards
Page 8 & 9

Sermons & 2nd Hours
Page 10

Calendar
Page 11

Epiphany

Epiphany - The showing forth of the Child to us, the Gentiles, celebrated on January 6. The Season of Epiphany extends until Ash Wednesday, this year February 18.

Now the wise ones come,
now we come to see the child of the Jews.
The wise ones return to their homes by another way,
and the family flees south away from Herod's hand.
We are left to witness the death of children,
once long ago and yesterday in Pakistan or Nigeria...
We are left between the Already of the Birth and
the Not Yet of Good Friday.
Now is the Time Being when, in the poet's words,
we must "practice our scales of rejoicing."
Come, join us here in the cold of winter - together
we will practice our rejoicing!



PASTORAL Reflections

Pastor James Reisner

MIRROR, MIRROR on the Wall...

In a recent edition of the *Christian Century*, Michael Lindvall, Pastor at Brick Presbyterian Church in New York City, writes honestly about his spiritual practices (“Prayer on the Go” Dec. 24, 2014). He compares his own prayer life with that of his non-church-going brother-in-law who has a rigorous discipline grounded in 12 step practices. By contrast, Lindvall grabs his own opportunities for prayer haphazardly. Yes, he sets aside time for prayer in the morning and at the close of the day, but he confesses he often nods off at night before he ever gets to the Amen. Taxi cabs and the subway are two other times for prayer, but mostly because it’s too bouncy for him to control his Blackberry. He concludes, “My spiritual discipline is provisional - the best I can do, and not really very good. But it is woven into my work as a pastor and my days as a harried New Yorker.”

I can relate. As I thought about writing this New Year’s reflection I began thinking about my own reflection in the mirror which I see every morning. This is a catch-as-catch-can spiritual moment for me. I can look myself in the mirror and reflect more than an image. Coming out of unconscious sleep, I have a moment to remember who I am and to whom I belong. I don’t know about you, but I am not a morning person. I tend to be grizzly and ornery and my initial thoughts are not all that beneficent. I am in need of a conversion experience. So I look in the mirror, at my pre-shaven and bleary-eyed self, and say, “This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118). And then I ask myself the first question of the Heidelberg Catechism: “Jim, What is your only comfort in life and in death?” and I answer, “That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.” Then I am just a little more ready to face the day.

Yes, it is good to set aside a time to pray and meditate. Our days are filled also with moments when we can reflect -at the traffic light, or waiting for an elevator, or in line at the bank, or perhaps while cooking up dinner.

Where do you find time to reflect, with or without a mirror? When do you find moments when you can speak to or listen for God? ●

ANNUAL MEETING

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation of the Westminster Presbyterian Church will be held in the Assembly Hall of the church following worship on Sunday, January 25 beginning at approximately 11:30. The congregation will receive and review reports from various church staff members, committees and boards of the church. Ample time will be available for questions. All members and friends of Westminster Presbyterian are welcome. ●

BUDGET UPDATE

This fall, the Session adopted a budget which included a pledge goal of \$215,000. As of December 29, pledges for \$186,961 have been received. Thus, Westminster Church needs to receive more than \$30,000 in additional pledges to reach the goal.

The budget for 2015 includes reductions in the funding of several church programs. As noted in last month's Messenger, restoring these cuts would require pledges of \$233,000!

We have a long way to go. If you have not pledged, please do so! If you have pledged, consider increasing your support of Westminster. ●



YOUTH

UPCOMING YOUTH SERVICE PROJECTS

Youth grades 7-12 meet every other Sunday night for games, bible study and fellowship together. This year, we are also incorporating service into our regular gatherings.

The youth made fleece blankets for children at the Ronald McDonald House. Over several weeks, the youth measured, cut and lovingly knotted the blankets together as a warm gift for a sick child. We are all very proud of our youth for their service to others.

In January, they will cook a meal for the Emergency Overflow Shelter in addition to other acts of service for their communities coming up this spring. Of course, their primary act of service every year is the mission trip coming up this summer. Now is a great time to start praying for the trip, for the youth, and for the adults who will be accompanying them. You all support the youth in so many ways: through your prayers and your encouragement. Keep it up! ●

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

What a successful autumn season in the church school! We continue to have great teachers and enthusiastic students. Church School starts up again on January 11th and continues through the year. The children and their teachers leave worship during the last hymn and head upstairs to a Big Group gathering with children and youth all together. They sing songs, share a prayer and eat cookies (!) together. Then they break up into age-appropriate Small Group classes. What a great way to spend a Sunday morning.

Many great things are happening in church school. Belinda Quaye, our Assistant Coordinator, supports the children and the teachers with joy every Sunday. Parents are always welcome to come upstairs and see the classes with your own eyes. ●

SCHUYLER INN GIFTS & FOCUS

HOLIDAY PARTY AT SCHUYLER INN ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20:

Thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus (a.k.a. Leah and John), gift donors, and volunteers, there was a memorable December 20 party for Schuyler Inn residents. Volunteers distributed 87 gift cards and gifts to meet basic needs. Recipients included single adults and families.

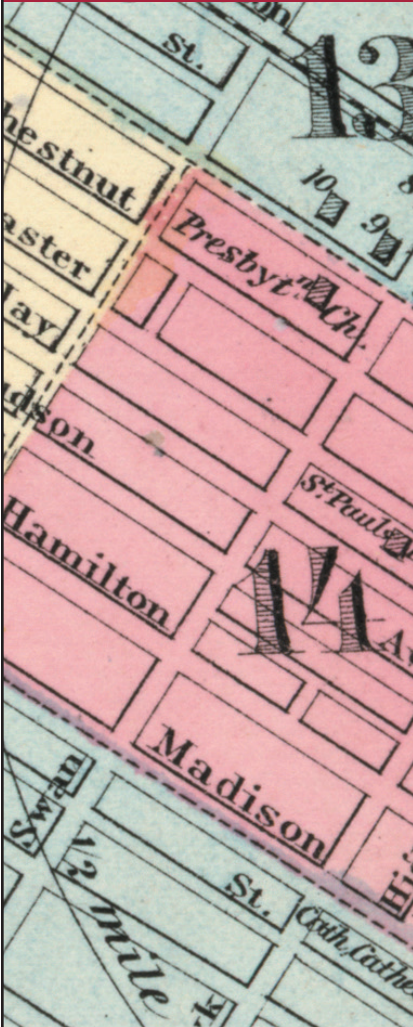
The next events will be:

-- On a week-day in January, 4:45 pm - 5:30 pm, lobby event to distribute hats, gloves, socks, dental supplies, and school supplies.

-- A Sunday in late February, 1:30 to 3 pm, combination craft and Bingo party. To help with either event, contact Margaret Randall, Mary Jean Tedrow or Lois Wilson or call the Church office. ●

FOCUS: EMPTY BOWLS

Hold the date: January 25, 2015. FOCUS and the Hunger Action Network of New York will hold their annual joint benefit **EMPTY BOWLS** at the Elks Club, 25 South Allen Street, Albany from 1 pm -3 pm (just after the Westminster Congregational Meeting). Each participant will receive a handcrafted bowl and will be able to fill it with soup from the Chef's Consortium of the Hudson Valley, and have, on the side, some artisan bread from the Rock Hill Bake House of Glens Falls. ●



HUNGER ACTION NETWORK OF NEW YORK STATE
& FOCUS CHURCHES OF ALBANY

WORKING TOGETHER TO END HUNGER

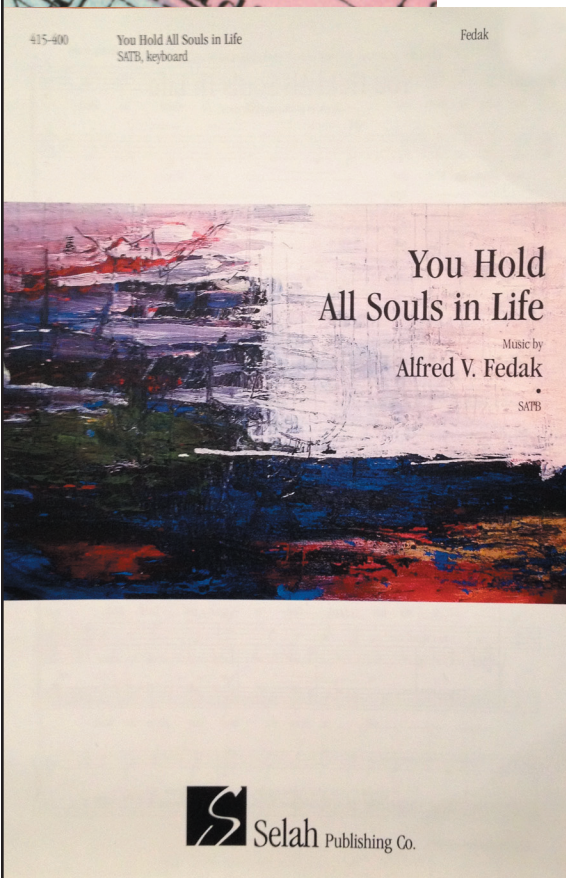
MUSIC

CAPITOL CHAMBER ARTISTS CONCERT, JANUARY 24

Our church's resident chamber ensemble, the Capitol Chamber Artists, will make its first performance of the new year in Westminster's sanctuary on Saturday evening, January 24. Their program has a provocative theme, "Devils and Angels," and will feature selections such as Gluck's Dance of the Blessed Spirits, the Devil's Trill Sonata by Tartini, La Folia (madness) by Corelli, and Charlie Daniels' The Devil Went Down to Georgia. Performers will include Mary Lou Saetta, violin; André O'Neil, cello and piano; and Al Fedak, harpsichord and organ. Their 8:00 PM concert will be preceded by a 7:00 PM recital, and refreshments (devil's food?) will be served at intermission. Admission is free for members and friends of Westminster. This will be an especially entertaining program, and a sure remedy for those midwinter "blahs!"

FEDAK COMPOSITION HONORED

A recently-published choral work by Al Fedak, "You Hold All Souls in Life," was awarded Honorable Mention by the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians in its 2015 Raabe Prize Competition for Excellence in Sacred Composition. Only three pieces were selected - one winner and two honorable mentions - from a field of over a hundred works reviewed. According to the committee, Al's anthem "display[s] compositional excellence, creativity, [and] care for the assembly." The piece was submitted by Al's publisher; it was commissioned in 2007 by St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Albany, in memory of Kay Shaffer, a singer in St. Paul's choir and close friend of Al and Sue. ●



HEARING LOOP SYSTEM

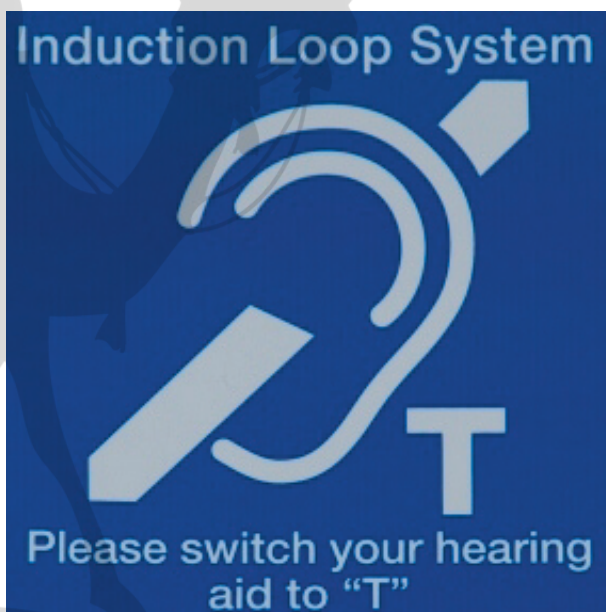
THE WESTMINSTER HEARING LOOP SOUND SYSTEM

The Sunday order of service contains a small notice that we have an Inductive Loop Assistance Listening System. Actually, we have two systems - one in the sanctuary and the other in the Assembly Room.

Each is attached to our regular sound systems. The ministers have lapel microphones with belt-pack transmitters. There are also hand-held microphones and microphones on the pulpit and lectern. All of these are wired into the main controls. Those in the Assembly Room work the same way. After mixing and amplification, the sound is sent to speakers, either high in the sanctuary or mounted on both sides of the stage.

The Hearing Loop simply acts as another set of speakers, but instead of speakers, it has a loop surrounding the room. This loop acts as a transmitter, broadcasting to one's hearing aid. The signal is weakest from the source, that wire loop at the edge of the room. If you sit near the edge, you get a strong signal.

The systems have been operational for two years. Many have commented on how they can now hear what's going on. After the Trustees purchased the components for about \$5,000, volunteers installed them. Since then voluntary contributions have been received, though not covering the full cost. If you wish to contribute, you can do so by designating your check for the Hearing Loop Sound System. ●



GIVING and CARING

GIVING AFTER THE HOLIDAYS ARE OVER

The holidays are over. The ornaments have been put away, the trees removed, the stockings returned to storage and the Christmas spirit has faded into the January cold. As the bills pile up and the long nights conjure dreams of warmer climates who wants to think about stewardship? Yet it is during these winter months that cheerful giving can make such a difference in our own attitudes.

Did you know that scientists have discovered that generosity, the act of giving, has an immediate and dramatic effect in the reward centers of our brains? We literally feel good when we give. So if those Christmas cheers have faded into January tears consider giving as your cure for the wintertime blues. We are soon to begin our capital campaign drive to support the ministry and mission of Westminster. Think about giving till it feels good! ●

CAPITAL DISTRICT CITIZENS AGAINST EBOLA FUNDRAISER

For WPC members born in Liberia and Sierra Leone, Ebola is a personal tragedy. Families and friends tell them about Ebola orphans with no means of support and people unable to get food.

Westminster has asked our partners in Tema to pray that the Ebola epidemic never reaches Ghana. To response to the Ebola crisis and to raise money for the Westminster-sponsored Hope Mission School in Liberia, Westminster is working with Capital District Citizens Against Ebola and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

Two events will raise money for WPC mission in West Africa; all are invited: -- Saturday, January 17, 10 am - 12 noon. Capital District Citizens Against Ebola, \$15. Zumba class led by Fatmata Horne. Proceeds to WPC for projects to combat Ebola.

-- Saturday, March 21, African Spring Dinner, 5 pm - 9 pm. Fund-raising event with free dinner. Proceeds to go to the Hope Mission School and Ebola-related mission. Checks for honorary committees for each event are payable to Westminster Presbyterian Church. For more information, contact Fatmata Hilton or Felicia Kollie-Gambles. ●

EPIPHANY into LENT 2015

SERMONS & SECOND HOURS

Sunday, January 11

10:00 Worship
Pastor Rosenau Preaching "First Things First"
The Ordination and Installation of Church Officers
Second Hour

The Baptism of our Lord

Mark 1:4-11

Sunday, January 18

10:00 Worship
Pastor Reisner Preaching "What Would Dr. King Say About Ferguson?"
Second Hour: Open Discussion with Pastor Reisner on
Race in America.

Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday

I Samuel 3

Sunday, January 25

10:00 Worship
Pastor Reisner Preaching "Live as Children of Light"
Second Hour: Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Third Sunday in Epiphany

Matthew 5:16

Sunday, February 1

10:00 Worship
Executive Director of the New York State Council of Churches

FOCUS Worship at the First Reformed Church

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Rev. Paula Gravelle, Guest Preacher

Sunday, February 8

10:00 Worship
Pastor Reisner Preaching "Let Us Go from Here"
Second Hour

The Fifth Sunday in Epiphany

Mark 1:29-39

Sunday, February 15

10:00 Worship
Pastor Reisner Preaching "Elijah's Mantle"
Second Hour

Transfiguration Sunday

II Kings 2:1-14

Wednesday, February 18

7:30 pm Worship
Pastor Reisner Meditation "Habits of the Heart"

Ash Wednesday

JANUARY into FEBRUARY CALENDAR

SUNDAY January 11

10:00 am Worship - Sanctuary
11:15 am Church School
11:30 am 20s and 30s Brunch
11:30 am Second Hour
7:00 pm Youth Group

13

7:00 pm Session

15

7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

17

10:00 am Zumba Fundraiser

SUNDAY January 18

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Church School
11:30 am Second Hour

19

Office Closed

20

7:00 pm Trustees
7:00 pm Deacons

22

7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

25

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Church School
11:30 am Second Hour
1:00 pm FOCUS & Hunger Action
Network Empty Bowls
@ Elks Club
1:00 pm Prayer Meeting
4:00 pm Youth Group

29

7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

SUNDAY February 1

10:00 am FOCUS Worship
@ First Church in Albany

4

7:00 pm Christian Life and Learning

5

7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

SUNDAY February 8

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Church School
11:30 am Second Hour
7:00 pm Youth Group

10

7:00 pm Session

12

7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

SUNDAY February 15

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Church School
11:30 am Second Hour

16

Office Closed

17

5:30 pm Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
7:00 pm Trustees
7:00 pm Deacons

18

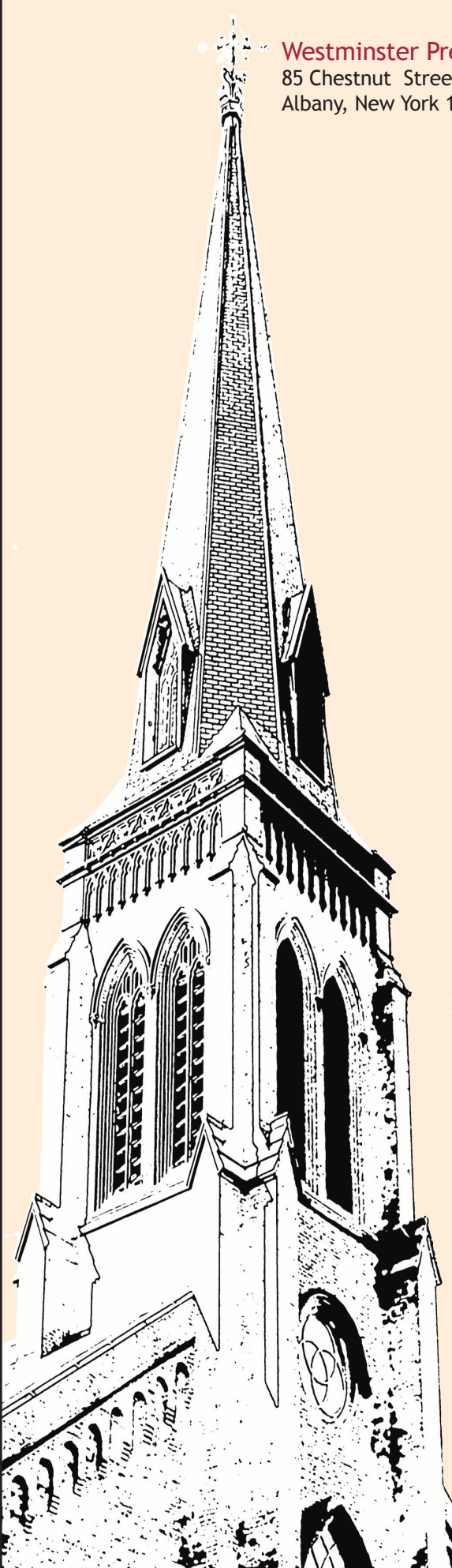
7:30 pm Ash Wednesday Service

19

7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

SUNDAY February 22

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Church School
11:30 am Second Hour
1:00 pm Prayer Meeting



Westminster Presbyterian Church

85 Chestnut Street
Albany, New York 12210

Westminster Presbyterian Church

CHURCH OFFICE- Hours

9 am- 4 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

Office Administrator: Kristen L. Southworth

Church School Assistant Coordinator: Belinda Quaye

Sextons: Glenda Bennett, Joy Tallmadge

E-Mail: info@wpcalbany.org

Web: www.wpcalbany.org

Facebook: Westminster Presbyterian Church Albany

Twitter: WPCAlbanyNY

The Messenger is published 10 times a year.

Graphic Design: Jeanne Bianchine

Newsletter submissions are due by Noon on February 1.
Send submissions to: westminsternewsletter@gmail.com