



The Westminster Messenger

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Come join us for the Lenten journey as we proclaim: *"The Lord's steadfast love endures forever."* This is our theme for the upcoming season of Lent.

"Steadfast Love" is a translation of the Hebrew word *hessed*. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks gives as good a definition of *hessed* as can be found. "What is *hessed*? It is usually translated as 'kindness' but it also means 'love' -not love as emotion or passion, but love expressed in deed. Theologians define *hessed* as covenant love...*Hessed* is the love that is loyalty, and the loyalty that is love. It is born in the generosity of faithfulness, the love that means being ever-present for the other, in hard times as well as good; love that grows stronger, not weaker over time...*Hessed* is the gift of love that begets love." (To Heal a Fractured World, pp.45,46)

At one point Jesus says to the Pharisees, "Go and learn what this means: 'I

desire mercy (*hessed*), not sacrifice, acknowledge-

ment of God, not burnt offerings.'" This Lent we will go and learn about *hessed*. For Christians, God's covenantal love is supremely expressed to us through the life and death of Jesus, and *hessed*, as our own covenantal response to God, is expressed in our deeds of love and mercy ●

"The Lord's steadfast love endures forever!"

by Pastor Jim Reisner

One of the enduring Latin phrases of the Protestant Reformation is the impressive sounding “ecclesia semper reformans, semper reformanda.” In plain English, this means “the church is always reformed and always reforming.” We are a people of a tradition, and yet we live in an ever-changing world. What new understandings can we bring to traditional concepts of Christian faith?

For five weeks in Lent, we look at traditional Christian theology and practices, and see if we can re-imagine them for our current time and place. We will do this in the belief that God still speaks to people and the world, and that God still has more truth and light to break forth from God’s Holy Word.

Wednesday Night Lenten Series: Christianity in the Present Tense

FIVE DISCUSSIONS FOR WEDNESDAYS IN LENT

Christianity in the Present Tense: Re-imagining Faith in the 21st Century

Light Dinner - 6 pm (soup and salad)

Program - 6:45

Closing Devotions - 7:30

Ash Wednesday Worship Service, March 9 at 7:30pm

- 1** Wednesday, March 16
 - Re-imagining the Psalms: Al Fedak
- 2** Wednesday, March 23
 - Re-imagining Salvation: Frances W. Rosenau
- 3** Wednesday, March 30
 - Re-imagining Missions: Cass Shaw
- 4** Wednesday, April 6
 - Re-imagining Denominations: David McMillan
- 5** Wednesday, April 13
 - Re-imagining Atonement: Jim Reisner

Journaling the Journey

How do you find peace and calm during the tumult of each day? How is your quiet time with God?

On Friday, March 4th starting at noon, all the women of Westminster are invited to a luncheon event. Lynn Sickles will be our special guest speaker, offering guidance about using a written journal productively.

Please let Jeanne Bianchine know if you will attend so she can have a journal book ready for you to compose in and take home. E-mail: wpcdce@gmail.com or phone: 436-8544 ●

“You look so at home here,” a church member recently pointed out to me. I agree; I am getting to know the congregation more and am settling in to life in Albany. As I get my feet on the ground at Westminster, my thoughts turn to my specific areas of focus: youth and reaching out to our neighborhood.

Elsewhere in the newsletter, you will read about a group that is imagining a future for our youth ministry. These are inspiring discussions, full of creativity and hope.

In the meantime, your youth continue to explore, learn and serve with enthusiasm. These are gifted young people. I encourage you to introduce yourself, get to know a few of them. You may just find a theologian in sneakers.

As you know, the particular location of our church building shapes our identity and mission. We are in the hub of activity in Albany and at the heart of need. I am beginning to prayerfully discern what a meaningful presence in our neighborhood would be like. I invite you to join me.

We have wide opportunities to engage our neighbors who live, work and shop on our doorstep. What a gift. Spend some time in our neighborhood; get to know the shops and streets. See what God is already doing in our midst.

Now that I have my feet on the ground at Westminster, let us get off the ground together ●

On the Ground

Pastor Frances W. Rosenau



Hope College Symphonette Concert

by Al Fedak

Hope College Symphonette returns to WPC! On Tuesday evening, March 22, the Hope College Symphonette from Holland, Michigan will perform a concert in Westminster's sanctuary, under the direction of its conductor Dr. Richard Piipo. The concert will take place at 7:00 pm (*not* 7:30 as originally announced). Admission is free, and an offering will be received. The Hope College Symphonette, a select 44-member chamber orchestra, has performed widely throughout North America and Europe. This will be the Symphonette's third appearance at Westminster Church—those who attended their previous concerts here will recall with great enjoyment the group's energy, virtuosity, and colorful programming. We are still in need of volunteers to help feed and house the performers. We have been asked to serve the group dinner at the church before the concert, and afterwards to provide overnight lodging for them in private homes. If you are able to assist please contact Al Fedak at the church or by email at: alfred@alfredfedak.com •

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Cello & Organ Concert

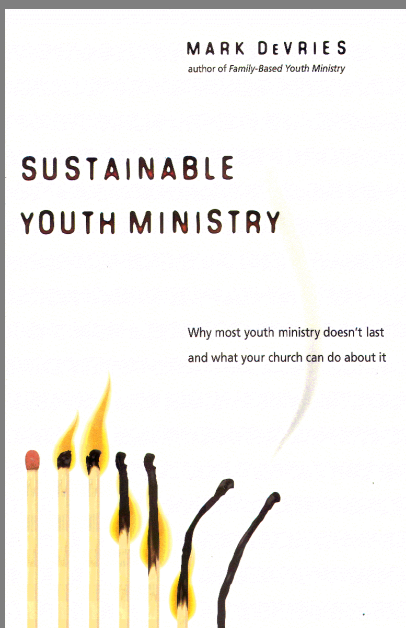
Friday evening, April 1, at 7:30 pm, the brilliant young Svyati Duo will perform an unusual concert at Westminster Church. The duo consists of the unlikely combination of Cello and Organ; both of its members, cellist Rebecca Hewes and organist Julian Collings, hail from Great Britain, where they also maintain active solo careers.

Already renowned for their precision and their passionate performances, the Svyati Duo specializes in uncovering rare and forgotten masterworks. They also commission new works, having established an outstanding international reputation for their innovative concerts. The duo's concert at Westminster is partially underwritten by a generous Community Arts Grant from the New York State Council on the Arts and the Arts Council of the Capital Region •



Children and Youth

Pastor Frances W. Rosenau



Some people call it Mardi Gras or Fat Tuesday. Others call it Shrove Tuesday. Whatever you call it, it is the day before Lent begins. For centuries Christians have celebrated with sweet, rich food just before the 40 days of austerity.

Your Westminster youth will carry on the tradition with a pancake supper. Come for sweet, rich food and fellowship with friends and family. All money raised will go to special mission projects the youth will choose.

Tuesday, March 8th from 5 to 7 pm in the Assembly Room
Cost \$5 ●

**Pancake Supper
Tuesday, March 8th**

Do you remember being 16? What was important to you? Who were the people you looked up to? Was school a good, uplifting place to be or were peer pressures too much?

What about church?

A small planning team is in the process of imagining a future for youth ministry here at Westminster. What should the youth program be about? What is most important to us? How do we help young people mature into the adult Christians they will be when they go away to college?

The book *Sustainable Youth Ministry* by Mark DeVries guides discussions, and Pastor Frances W. Rosenau convenes the group. Over the next few months, the group will meet in study and prayer considering the long-term vision and short-term details.

Please keep this group and the young people they serve in your prayers over the next few months. Look for the culmination of the group's work in May or June ●

Our Westminster Family

by Valerie Shanley

Olivia and her son, Emmanuel Tay, arrived in Albany in 2005 as refugees from the civil war in Liberia. They were sponsored to come to the U.S. by WPC through the Refugee Resettlement program and have since become active members of the our congregation. Prior to coming to the U.S., Olivia and Emmanuel were living in a refugee camp in Ghana.

Upon arriving in this country, Olivia began to work diligently with Immigration officials to gain approval needed for her daughter, Annatacha Tay, to join her here. Olivia and Annatacha were separated during the violence of the civil war in Liberia. Thankfully, Annatacha was cared for by family members in Liberia during a ten-year long period of separation from her mother. Arrangements for Annatacha to come to live in the U.S. with her mother were recently approved and she arrived in Albany (during a snow storm!) on January 12th. Annatacha, who turned 13 this past December, is now a 6th grade student at the Pine Hills Elementary School.

“You will rejoice and no one will take away your joy.” John 16:22

Emmanuel is a 5th grade student at the Brighter Choices for Boys Charter School and participates in the WPC Sunday School.

He enjoyed the WPC summer camp program.

Olivia also has two young daughters, who are “Westminis.” Pamela Divine, age three, and little sister Olive, age two, both enjoy the time they spend in the WPC Nursery on Sunday mornings •



People at Westminster



"I am a firm believer in the value of public higher education as a gateway to intellectual betterment and social mobility." So writes Elder Leif Hartmark on the occasion of his retirement after 23 years of service as Vice President for Finance and Administration at SUNY Oneonta. "One of the most gratifying experiences of my vocation was the chance to work with students and witness their personal growth and success in college and beyond."

In honor of Leif's contributions to SUNY Oneonta, the college has established an endowed scholarship dedicated to non-traditional aged students who are returning to college.

"a firm believer in the value of public higher education"

At Westminster, Leif is currently serving on the Session. He is also chairperson of our personnel committee, and he sings in the choir. He and his wife, Claudia, have been members of Westminster since 1982.

We congratulate Leif on his retirement, and celebrate this most fitting honor. ●

HAPPY
March
BIRTH
TH
DAY

Westminster celebrates the following birthdays this month:

- Peter Fedak- March 9
- Robert Bojdak- March 10
- Rev. Frances W. Rosenau- March 11
- Elizabeth McMillan-March 19
- Larissa Filipp- March 21
- Anna Williams- March 21
- Lawrie Lierheimer-March 24
- Nancy McClumpa Idland- March 28
- Julie Mader- March 31

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

Thank You

The next time you see Peter Wrede, Peter Leue or John Bossung be sure to thank them for all the work they do as members of the House Committee of the Board of Trustees. Their labor behind the scenes makes it possible for Westminster to be a safe, warm, dry, and hospitable space ●

Clean Drinking Water for All

by Sue Barwig

Nearly 20% of the world's population (1.1 billion people) faces a massive public health problem - lack of clean drinking water. According to the World Health

Organization, over three million people die each year from water related illnesses such as cholera, dysentery and diarrhea. An alarming 90% of deaths are children under the age of five.

Westminster has an important con-

Hope • Help • Optimism • H₂O

nection with Liberia. We have provided funds to help build the Hope Mission School, which serves 140 students. We have also provided funds for tuition scholarships and, most recently, to erect outhouses at the school. Like much of Liberia, however, the Hope Mission School and its surrounding community do not have safe drinking water. Many of the students live with chronic intestinal problems.

A small group at Westminster named, "The Water Committee", has begun researching organizations and other possible solutions to provide safe drinking water at the Hope Mission School. We would welcome participation by others as we explore how to solve the water crisis for the Hope Mission School and its surrounding community.

Our friend and church member, Felicia Kollie-Gambles, a refugee from Liberia, provides us with direct contact to that nation and to the school. As noted in the African Spring Dinner announcement, included in this newsletter, Felicia will describe the water situation at Hope Mission School. Join us for food, fun, games, education, and fundraising on Saturday, April 2nd! ●





Bus Route & A Village

by Jim Reisner

Over the past two years, Westminster has joined with the Trinity Institute, Grant Street Community Arts and concerned citizens in the South End of Albany to advocate for a bus route to go directly up Morton Avenue to Albany Medical Hospital. Willie White, as the director of a new community group called A Village, has taken the lead in this effort. A Village states as its mission "to engage and empower our community, reclaim our neighborhoods, and improve the quality of life for residents on the South End."

In December, A Village applied to the Presbyterian Self-Development of Peoples Fund, and received a grant of \$4600. Westminster also supported A Village with a mission grant of \$1000 in 2010. These monies will support the advocacy which A Village is doing on behalf of the South End neighborhood, the rehabilitation of vacant lots into usable and attractive public space, and the creation of a PTA at Giffen Elementary School.

A mission to engage and empower the South End

A Village is a sign of hope for the South End, and for all of Albany. They have been very effective in developing allies in the city. We are anticipating hearing soon from the CDTA about a new bus route for Morton Avenue, and a victory for A Village and the residents of the South End •



Our Local Mission

Schuyler Inn Spring Party. Want to make a difference in the life of a child? Support a family in need? Volunteer at the Schuyler Inn Party.

- Contact the church office, Margaret Randall, or Lois Wilson to find out how you can make a difference
- Sunday, April 3. Set-up, 1 p.m. Party, 2 - 4 p.m.
- Coordinator: Margaret Randall.
- Theme: "Spring"

Ecumenical Advocacy Days. Two Westminster members, Felicia Kollie-Gambles and Fatmata Hilton, will attend the annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington D.C., March 25-28. The theme this year is "Development, Security and Economic Justice: What's Gender Got to Do with It?" •

Randall Zachman coming to WPC

On Sunday March 27, we will welcome Dr. Randall Zachman to our pulpit.

Dr. Zachman is one of the premier Calvin scholars in the world. His area of interest is the history of Christian thought from the Reformation period to the present. He is currently a Professor of Reformation Studies at the University of Notre Dame and a member of the Calvin Studies Society. He is a noted speaker, and is the author of "Image and Word in the Theology of John Calvin" (University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), "John Calvin as Teacher, Pastor, and Theologian: The Shape of his Writing and Thought" (Baker Academic, 2006)

Dr. Zachman will also lead the second hour adult forum on the topic of "John Calvin on Civil Authority: Are Rulers the Guardians of Freedom? Or of the Church?"●



Sermons & Second Hours:

MARCH 6

II Peter 1:16-21

Pastor Jim Reisner preaching, "This Little Light of Mine"

2nd Hour: Beginning of Lenten Study: Psalm 32, Pastor Jim Reisner

MARCH 9 Ash Wednesday

Psalm 51

Pastor Jim Reisner preaching, "Create in Me a Clean Heart"

MARCH 13 Lent 1

Psalm 32

Pastor Jim Reisner preaching, "Surrounded"

2nd Hour: Psalm 121, Pastor Jim Reisner

MARCH 20 Lent 2

Psalm 121

Pastor Jim Reisner preaching, "The Keeper"

2nd Hour: Psalm 89, Pastor Frances W. Rosenau

MARCH 27 Lent 3

Dr. Randall Zachman preaching

2nd Hour: "John Calvin on Civil Authority: Are Rulers the

Guardians of Freedom? or of the Church?", Dr. Randall Zachman

Church Calendar

This Month's Events:

MARCH

1
7-9 am Breakfast Program

2
7-9 am Breakfast Program
6:30 pm CL&L

3
7-9 am Breakfast Program
7:30 pm Adult Choir

4
12 Noon Ladies Luncheon

6 SUNDAY
10 am Worship
11:15 am Church School
11:15 am Adult Education
11:15 am Prayer Group

8
7-9 am Breakfast Program
5-7 pm Shrove Tuesday
Pancake Supper
7-9 pm Session

9
7-9 am Breakfast Program
7:30 pm Ash Wednesday
Service

10
7-9 am Breakfast Program
6:30 pm Children's Choir
7:30 pm Adult Choir

13 SUNDAY
10 am Worship
10:30 am Worship Plus for Kids
11:15 am Church School
11:15 am Adult Education
11:15 am Prayer Group
11:15 am Bell Choir

14
7:30-9 pm Parable Study

15
7-9 am Breakfast Program
7 pm Trustees, Deacons

16
7-9 am Breakfast Program
6 pm Light Dinner
6:45pm Lenten Study

17
7-9 am Breakfast Program
6:30 pm Children's Choir
7:30 pm Adult Choir

20 SUNDAY

10 am Worship
11:15 am Church School
11:15 am Adult Education
11:15 am Bell Choir

21
7:30-9 pm Parable Study

22
7-9 am Breakfast Program
7:00 pm Hope College
Symphonette Concert

23
7-9 am Breakfast Program
6 pm Light Dinner
6:45pm Lenten Study

24
7-9 am Breakfast Program
6:30 pm Children's Choir
7:30 pm Adult Choir

26
Randall Zachman at Siena

27 SUNDAY
10 am Worship
11:15 am Church School
11:15 am Adult Education
11:15 am Prayer Group
11:15 am Bell Choir

28
7-9 am Breakfast Program

30
6 pm Light Dinner
6:45pm Lenten Study

31
7-9 am Breakfast Program
6:30 pm Children's Choir
7:30 pm Adult Choir

Upcoming Events:

APRIL

1 **FRIDAY** 7:30 pm
Concert: The Svyati Duo
Cello and Organ from England

2 **SATURDAY** 5-9 pm
African Spring Dinner

10 **SUNDAY**
Congregational Bunch

29 **FRIDAY** 5-7pm
Fundraiser for
Ghana Travel Team
Mission Projects

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Westminster Presbyterian Church

CHURCH OFFICE

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Associate Pastor: Frances Wattman Rosenau

Parish Associate: Paul Randall

Parish Associate: James R. Thompson

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

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