

# THE WESTMINSTER MESSENGER



## PASSION FOR THE CITY; COMPASSION FOR ITS PEOPLE

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October 2012

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**The poet,** T. S. Eliot, famously wrote, “April is the cruelest month.” If so, then October must be the kindest. As we mourn the end of the warmth of Summer, and get to work with the new challenges of Fall, nature gifts us with a splendorous blaze of color. Eliot wrote in a far more obscure verse, *“Since golden October declined into somber November / And the apples were gathered and stored ...”*

We welcome golden October, and welcome you to the events in the pages that follow. Opportunities abound for worship, study, mission work, and widening our view of the world ●

**We welcome golden October.**

We welcome Asher Hudson Rosenau to the Westminster community. Asher was born on August 28, at 10:48 a.m.. We are delighted to report that mother Frances and child, (and father Zach, too) are all healthy and very happy ●



by: Pastor Jim Reisner

# PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

By Pastor Jim Reisner

There was a lovely man, a physician, in the first church I served in Syracuse who used to be a greeter at the door. He was good at it --up to a point. He took interest in the people who were visiting, greeted them with a smile and with genuine warmth. He would say, "This church is a great place," but then he would add, "but you should have seen it 20 years ago when the sanctuary was packed." Can you imagine how deflating that message is to a person seeking a new church home?

That was still better than what happened sometimes in the church I served in Elizabeth, New Jersey. The church had a storied history that went back to 1664. There you could almost hear some of the members say, "This is a good church, but you should have seen it when the sanctuary was packed in the 18th century!"

Nostalgia is a destructive force in the life of the church. When we embrace nostalgia we are rejecting God's call to us to follow and serve God in our own time and place.

Look at the apostles in the early church. Nowhere, nowhere in the book of Acts do you ever hear any of the apostles, or any of the witnesses to the resurrection ever say, "I wish Jesus were here." Now, that's nothing less than a miracle!

Wouldn't you think at least once somebody would have been caught murmuring, "Jesus would know what to say right about now."; or "Remember the good old days when our master used to take a few fish and loaves and turn it into a banquet for thousands;" Or when the Holy Spirit pushes the apostles to new changes and the inclusion of the Gentiles, you never hear the apostles say, "Jesus never did it that way."

**When we embrace nostalgia we are rejecting God's call.**

I am not saying all fond remembrances of the past are thoroughly destructive, but they become so if they cause us to decline the challenge of our present circumstances.

There are times when we are called to a new location and a new practice of our faith. That often happens in a lifetime. But we cannot be called to another time. We cannot go back in time to serve God gladly. When it comes to serving God, we only have the present tense flowing into the future ●



# FROM THE THIRD FLOOR

By Andrea Joy Holroyd

Welcome Back! We said hello to all our kids and youth and teachers in September and it is good to see everyone upstairs for Church School. Our kids, Pre-K through 2nd grade, are busy learning through Godly Play, and our Older Elementary are encountering God through We Believe, a curriculum published specifically for the Presbyterian Church. Part of the We Believe program is a take-home component with questions and activities to help facilitate your child's awareness of God in creation and outside of Sunday morning worship. Please feel free to make certain you have a copy. Each week is new and goes with the lesson your child learned that week in Sunday school. I am looking forward to this next year's journey with our youth as we all learn and rediscover what it means to be a child of God.

There are many ways you can help support the church school. Whenever a child is baptized, we all make a pledge to support and nurture that child to be open to God in her or his life. Prayers that each child, youth, or young adult learn and grow in their faith and relationship with God are always important. Other ways to assist include being available as a substitute teacher, by leading a craft project, or by supplying materials for special projects we do throughout the year.

In worship, the children's activity bags have been updated to reflect the start of the new school year. These bags can be found in the back of the sanctuary. I will be sitting every week in the Children's Pew in the front of the church. Any and all youth are welcome to join me. I have an "open pew" policy: any child may come!

I can't wait to see what the year has in store for us up on the Third Floor ●



# MUSIC at WESTMINSTER

By Sue and Al Fedak

## CALLING ALL KIDS!

Our Westminster Children's Choir, directed by Sue Fedak, will resume weekly rehearsals on Thursday evening, October 11, at 6:30 PM. Each rehearsal will last 45 minutes, and children of all ages are encouraged to participate. As members of the Children's Choir, youngsters are not only taught how to sing properly, they acquire a broad range of musical skills and enjoy a variety of musical experiences. The group also renders an important service to our congregation by providing musical leadership at a number of our worship services throughout the year, beginning with All Saints' Sunday, November 4. The more, the merrier--it's fun to sing in the Children's Choir ●

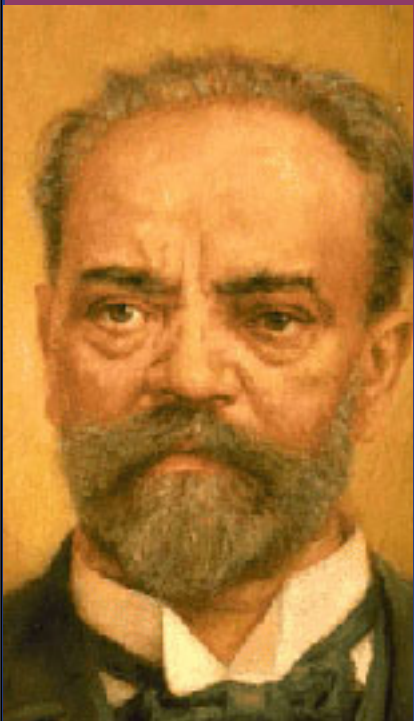
## WESTMINSTRELS HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSALS START OCTOBER 7

On Sunday October 7, the Westminstrels Handbell Choir will hold its first rehearsal at 11:15 AM in the church sanctuary, right after that morning's worship service. Teenagers and adults who can read music are welcome to join the group: contact Sue Fedak if you are interested. A long-term commitment to the group is not strictly necessary: the Westminstrels ring at worship services about once every four to six weeks; so if you're unable to join for the entire season, consider coming on board for one of those shorter blocks of time. If you're new to handbell-ringing, or if you've had some experience in the past and want to pick up the bells again, this is a great time to give it a try ●

## WESTMINSTER CHURCH CHOIR IN CONCERT - OCTOBER 28

On Sunday, October 28, at 3:00 PM, the choir of Westminster Church will present a performance of Antonin Dvorak's Mass in D Major, as part of an all-Dvorak afternoon concert. Although rarely performed these days, Dvorak's D-Major Mass is one of the composer's loveliest compositions. First composed for the dedication of a private chapel in Bohemia, Dvorak's Mass overflows with charming, folk-like melodies and harmonic progressions which are both colorful and surprising. Although Dvorak later scored the work for large orchestra, it was first performed with organ accompaniment, and it is this original version which will be heard at Westminster. The program will also include a rare organ Prelude and Fugue by Dvorak, as well as his Four Romantic Pieces, with Ann-Marie Barker Schwartz as the featured violin soloist. The event is free and open to the public.

Do plan to attend and enjoy this relaxing hour of beautiful music. These are tunes you'll be able to go home humming ●



# NEWSWORTHY NEWS



## MORE MUSIC TO LOOK AHEAD FOR IN NOVEMBER

Another music event to add to your “must-do” calendar: at 7:30 PM on Friday, November 2, organist/composer Carson Cooman will perform a concert on Westminster Church’s E.M. Skinner pipe organ. At just 30 years of age, Carson Cooman already enjoys an enviable reputation as both an accomplished organist and a prominent and prolific composer of music in all forms and genres. His program at Westminster will consist of music written since 1980 by a variety of composers. An offering will be received, and refreshments will follow ●

## WE ARE NOT OUR OWN: JOHN CALVIN SPEAKS TO US TODAY

The CRTC is sponsoring a day with Dennis Tamburello, Professor of Religion at Siena College. On October 30th, from 9 to 4 at Siena, come and consider the story of John Calvin and his conviction that the gospel is a transformative social power. Pastor Reisner will be attending this course and welcomes Westminster members and friends to join him. The cost is \$90. Scholarships are available ●

**RUMMAGE SALE:** (noun) “Informal sale of miscellaneous goods; sale of donated articles conducted by a non-profit organization (as a church or charity) to help support its programs”.

**WHERE:** Westminster Presbyterian Church  
85 Chestnut St. Albany

**WHEN:** October 5th & 6th 2012, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

**WANT:** Good, clean, gently used items - Household, Clothing, Dishes, Glassware, etc.

No outdated electronics, No large appliances,  
No large furniture accepted.

All proceeds will benefit the Pew Cushion Fund, so give generously.

**Questions:** Mary Jean Tedrow 371-8765 (actedrow@earthlink.net)  
or Glenda Bennett ●

During Second Hour, Sundays November 4, 11 and 18, David McMillan will present a study of the three congregations that formed Westminster: Second, Third and State Street Presbyterian. He will focus on the pastorates of:

- Hooper Cumming - Pastor of Third Church - 1817 - 1823
- William Buell Sprague - Pastor of Second Church - 1829 - 1869
- Ezra Abel Huntington - Pastor of Third Church - 1836 - 1854
- Kenneth Brakeley Welles - Pastor of Westminster - 1928 - 1953

David would appreciate any personal memories of Dr. Welles and his ministry. David can be reached at edmcmillan@hotmail.com or at 1590 Route 9J, Stuyvesant, NY 12173 ●



# MISSION WESTMINSTER

By Sheila Wrede

## OCTOBER 7TH - PEACEMAKING OFFERING

On World Communion Sunday, we will participate in the Peacemaking Offering. As in the past, we are able to use 25% of the gifts for peacemaking efforts important to Westminster. This year, we are pleased to support the two organizations associated with our visiting African missionaries, Rev. Alice Kyei-Anti and Elder Barbara Asempa. Look for information on the Donkorkrom Hospital and mission work in Tema in this newsletter •



## FOCUS COMES THROUGH

Deb Jameson reports that in 2011, the FOCUS food pantry, and the breakfast club, combined to provide over 150,000 meals for people in need.

That averages to more than 400 meals a day! Thanks to the FOCUS staff and the many volunteers who make this vital ministry possible. Also, this Summer FOCUS volunteers filled 240 backpacks with school supplies and distributed them to homeless children living at the Schuyler Inn, Marillac Family Shelter, the FOCUS Pantry, and also to Albany city schools •

Our youth group reports on their Summer Mission Trip to Pittsburgh.



# TRUSTEE ACTIVITIES

By Forrest Holroyd

The Board of Trustees has been busy this year, both visibly and behind the scenes. Have you noticed the newly-painted second floor hallway? Or the brick re-pointing now completed in the east-side alleyway? Can you identify everything in our new garden, also in the alley? Have you wondered what that black box is at the Chestnut Street entrance? (It contains a key to the church, so firefighters do not have to knock down the door in an emergency.) On a subtler note, have you noticed that the State Street sign-board is missing something? The service times have been updated and corrected. How about the basement door to the furnace room? It was heavily deteriorated and has been replaced.

Have you noticed that the parking lot has been resurfaced and repainted, and that some of the parking places are now numbered? After a great deal of discussion and preparation, Session and Trustees have decided to lease out ten spaces. That was prompted mostly by Albany's new parking policy, but it will also help our budget bottom line. (Please refrain from parking in the numbered spaces during business hours!)

**We are leasing out ten parking spaces**

Those are some of the things you may have noticed. But equally important, we are reviewing our entire security system; we have commissioned studies of the condition of our steeple; and we are well on our way to installing a vastly improved hearing assistance system in the sanctuary, allowing people to use their own hearing aides as receivers directly from our sound system. We also have plans in preparation for completely refurbishing the handicapped bath, as well as upgrading other bathrooms. And we are considering extending that hearing system to the Assembly Room.

We are still looking for a suitable fence at the State Street end of the alley, and we have a long list of items in various planning stages for next year and beyond. If you would like to be part of that, we can use lots of volunteers. Or if you can, consider making a special donation for your favorite part of these plans. That could make a difference in priorities ●

**Forrest Holroyd**  
*President, Board of Trustees*

# STEWARDSHIP AND BUDGET UPDATE

By Susan Schell

Last month we shared our Stewardship Theme for this year: Abundant JOY—Overflowing Generosity. What has happened behind the scene over the past eight months to lead us to this time when we are preparing to pledge our time, talents, and dollars to Westminster’s ministry in 2013?

Over the past year, the 20/20

**“ a goal-based approach to...the budget”**

Vision Committee worked alongside the Stewardship Budget Committee to facilitate long term planning and goal development for Westminster, resulting in a new budget process for 2013. This year, led by Kelly Crisfield, we took a goal-based approach to developing the budget. Each cost center (Mission, Christian Life and Learning, Music, Building Operations, Church Office) was asked to formulate goals including dollar amounts for 2013 programming. A representative of each center attended the May Session meeting to describe the center’s goals and answer questions. The Session met twice in June, first receiving the compilation of all of the goals from the cost centers. During the second meeting, each Session member was charged with voting for his or her top priority choices. Using the vote tallies, the Stewardship Budget Committee composed a draft budget which has been presented to Session twice so far at its August and September meetings. The final budget will be approved at the October meeting. The congregation will have the opportunity to review the 2013 budget at the October 21 Congregational Meeting ●



## PEW CUSHIONS TO BE DEDICATED

Please note another important date: The Pew Cushions will be dedicated and donors recognized on Sunday, November 4th. Many have already pledged (please honor those pledges by November 4). If you have yet to pledge, you still have time to do so! Please send your donation to the church office or bring it to church.

Thank you for your support!!

Susan Schell, *Co-Chair Stewardship Budget Committee* ●



# USHERS for OCTOBER

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

Date:	Ushers:
October 7	Tom and Anne Older, Ruthanne Brod, Tom McPheeters
October 14	John & Diane Bossung, Eve Ryan, Gabriel Ofori-Okai
October 21	Ben, Belinda & Robert Quaye, Sue Schell
October 28	Louise Besch, Margie Mayer

## ECHO THANKS:

The ECHO committee wants to give a big thank you to the many people who helped make our second season of 1st Fridays be another big success. From May through September we opened our doors for hundreds of guests to come through and experience Westminster. We are grateful for your support and donations of time, food, and welcoming smiles ●

## Celebrating the following birthdays in October:

● Pacia Ferrell Vamvas	Oct. 1	● Laura Hartmark	Oct. 12
● Reed G.	Oct. 2	● Susan Elbow	Oct. 15
● Forrest Holroyd	Oct. 2	● Ben Fedak	Oct. 16
● Amy McPheeters	Oct. 2	● Ruth Russell	Oct. 19
● Grant H.	Oct. 6	● Caleb K.	Oct. 20
● Harvey Prins	Oct. 6	● Ann Fraser	Oct. 22
● Matthew Scaptura	Oct. 6	● Andrew Scaptura	Oct. 26
● Carol Johnson	Oct. 7	● Alex Scaptura	Oct. 26
● Bill Mayer	Oct. 7	● Dr. Robert Faust	Oct. 29
● Spencer Ryan	Oct. 7	● Ken Moore	Oct. 30
● Tim Gordon	Oct. 9		
● Sue Schell	Oct. 9		

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

OCTOBER  
HAPPY  
BIRTH  
TH  
DAY

# THOUGHTFUL CHRISTIAN STUDY

By Pastor Paul Randall

"Romney hates poor people!" "Obama is a socialist!" Accusations like these are nothing new in American politics. John Adams' supporters called Thomas Jefferson an infidel and an atheist. Jefferson's supporters said Adams was a warmonger and a little nutty. But character assassination is not limited to the political realm. Even in church circles today good Christians have called each other "gay bashers" or "baby killers."

Many of us believe there are better ways for people to discuss and debate passionately held opinions towards life, morals, and politics. Westminster Church will sponsor a three-week discussion of the topic "***Reclaiming Civility: a look at principles of civility in Christianity and how they can be used in public discourse.***" The discussion will be on Thursday evenings, October 11, 18, and 25, 7:15-9:00, at the home of Arden Leach, 18 Pollock Rd., Latham (785-3366). Lisa Petter will be facilitator.

A three-part study paper is available from Nancy Sokil in the church office (436-8544 or info@wpcalbany.org.) The study is based on the book, ***In Defense of Civility: How Religion Can Unite Americans on Seven Moral Issues that Divide Us***, by James Calvin Davis. Davis is a professor of ethics and American religious history at Middlebury College, and a member of Albany Presbytery. For further information contact Paul Randall (374-6310 or randallpaul@gmail.com.) ●

## Worship and Second Hours:

### OCTOBER 7 World Communion

Ephesians 4:11-15

Guest preacher: Alice Kyei-Anti

*Unity: How We Combine to Build Christ's Church*

2nd Hour: Partners in World-Wide Mission Alice Kyei-Anti and Paul Randall

### OCTOBER 14 Celebration of City Ministry

Matthew 22:1-14 *Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life*

2nd Hour: Willie White from AVillage & Partnerships in Albany

### OCTOBER 21

Luke 14:25-35 *Worth One's Salt*

2nd Hour: Congregational Meeting

### OCTOBER 28 Reformation Sunday

Mark 10:46-52 *The Squeaky Wheel*

2nd Hour: A Conversation about the Election convened by Pastor Reisner

# OCTOBER CHURCH CALENDAR

## OCTOBER

### 30 SUNDAY

10:00 am Worship  
11:15 am Church School  
11:15 am Adult Ed  
6:15 pm Youth Group

2

7:30 am- 8:30 am Breakfast Express

3

7:30 am- 8:30 am Breakfast Express  
7:00 pm Christian Life & Learning

4

7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

5

9:00 am-3:00 pm Rummage Sale

6

9:00 am-3:00 pm Rummage Sale

### 7 SUNDAY

10:00 am Worship  
11:15 am Bell Choir  
11:15 am Church School  
11:15 am Adult Ed

8

Office Closed

9

7:30 am- 8:30 am Breakfast Express  
7:00 pm Session

10

7:30 am- 8:30 am Breakfast Express

11

6:30 -7:15 pm Children's Choir  
7:00 - 8:00 pm Reclaiming Civility

13 5:30 pm

Safe Water Needs in Africa

13

### 14 SUNDAY

10:00 am Worship  
11:15 am Bell Choir  
11:15 am Church School  
11:15 am Adult Ed  
6:15 pm Youth Group

15

6:00 pm FOCUS Board

16

7:30 am- 8:30 am Breakfast Express  
7:00 pm Deacons' Meeting  
7:00 pm Trustees' Meeting

17

7:30 am- 8:30 am Breakfast Express

18

6:30 -7:15 pm Children's Choir  
7:30 - 9:30 pm Adult Choir  
7:00 - 8:00 pm Reclaiming Civility

### 21 SUNDAY

10:00 am Worship  
11:15 am Bell Choir  
11:15 am Church School  
11:15 am Congregational Meeting

23

7:30 am- 8:30 am Breakfast Express  
7:00 pm- 8:00 pm  
Women: The Way Forward

24

7:30 am- 8:30 am Breakfast Express

25

6:30 -7:15 pm Children's Choir  
7:00 - 8:00 pm Reclaiming Civility  
7:30 - 9:30 pm Adult Choir

### 28 SUNDAY

10:00 am Worship  
11:15 am Bell Choir  
11:15 am Church School  
11:15 am Adult Ed  
3:00 pm Mass in D Major, Dvorak  
6:15 pm Youth Group

29

7:00 pm Mission Committee

30

7:30 am- 8:30 am Breakfast Express

31

7:30 am- 8:30 am Breakfast Express

### UPCOMING EVENTS in NOVEMBER:

2

7:30 pm Carson Cooman Concert

3

5:00 pm African Family Night

10

Confirmation Retreat

20

7:00 pm Interfaith Thanksgiving

10  
20  
12





**Westminster Presbyterian Church**

85 Chestnut Street  
Albany, New York 12210

## **Westminster Presbyterian Church**

### **CHURCH OFFICE- Fall 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:** Andrea Joy Holroyd

**Administrative Secretary:** Nancy J. Sokil

**Sextons:** Glenda Bennett, Joy Tallmadge

**E-Mail:** [info@wpcalbany.org](mailto:info@wpcalbany.org)

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**November newsletter submissions are due by Noon on Oct. 15.  
Send submissions to: [westminsternewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:westminsternewsletter@gmail.com)**