



THE WESTMINSTER MESSENGER

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

September 2015

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WE BEGIN AGAIN

As Christians, we live in two worlds and follow two calendars.

With Christians in all times and places, we follow the liturgical calendar, beginning in Advent and continuing through Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and into the long season of Pentecost where we are now. In September we worship the 10th through the 14th Sundays after Pentecost or, in the arcane language of liturgical usage, the 18th through the 22nd Sundays of Ordinary Time.

But, we also live as American Christians of the 21st Century. By our calendar, September is the month of new things - of beginning again - beginning again 10:00 worship, beginning Church School - beginning. Now is the chance to start again, to start disciplines of faith, to attend worship, to pray, to read the Scriptures.

Now is the time to redeem ordinary time from insignificance! •

Pastoral Reflections

Pastor Jim Reisner



THERE IS A WIDENESS IN GOD'S MERCY

There is a church in Biddenden, England which has an inscription by its entryway that is a prayer. It reads: *“God make the door of this House wide enough to receive all who need human love, peace, and courage, and narrow enough to shut out envy, pride and hate. Make its threshold smooth enough to be inviting to children or straying feet, but rugged enough to turn back the power of evil. Make the door of this House, we pray Thee, the gateway to Thine eternal Kingdom.”*

What a great description of an entryway into sacred space! May Westminster's doors be both wide enough and narrow enough, so that we may leave behind what we need to, but bring before God all that is within us in need of God's healing and mercy.

“I choose to err on the side of God's grace.”

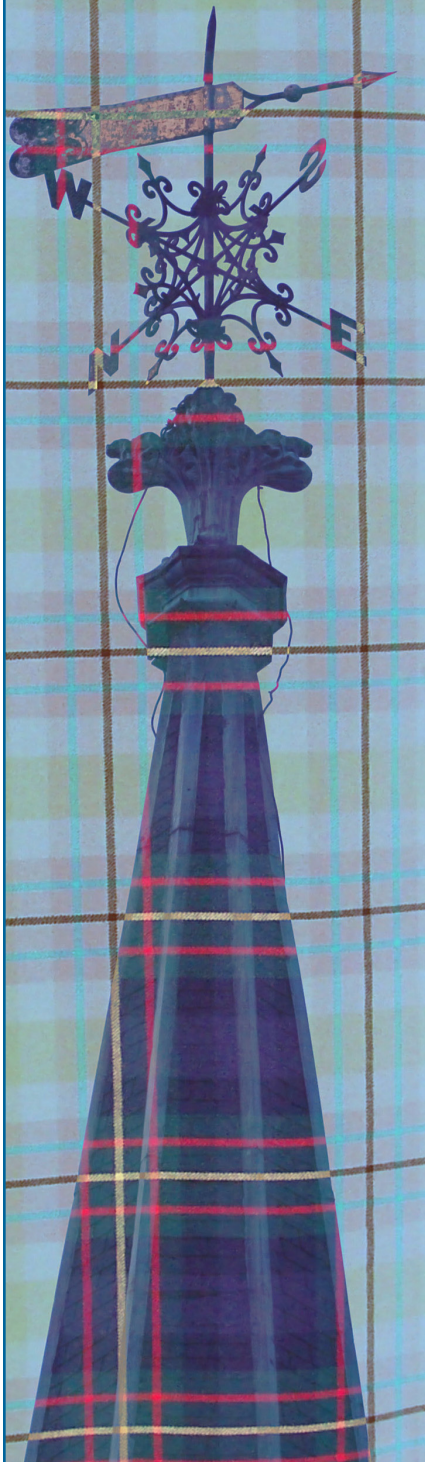
Both wideness and narrowness have positive and negative connotations, depending precisely upon what is being released or confined, kept in or kept out, loosed or bound. The theme of wideness expresses a religious orientation that accentuates the values and qualities of love of neighbor, inclusiveness, compassion, justice, and freedom. The theme of narrowness as a religious orientation values the qualities of union with God, purity, discipline, holiness and obedience.

Wideness and narrowness both have their virtues. One needs to be tempered and balanced by the other. But when it comes down to it I place myself in the camp that values the wideness of God's mercy. If I am to err, I choose to err on the side of God's grace. I will risk the wide door of the church, for I fear more the exclusion from the community of God any one of God's children than do I fear the impurity of the church itself.

If we are to err, for goodness sake, let us err on the side of the wideness of God's mercy. ●

Kirkin' o' the Tartan

September 13th



KIRKIN' O' THE TARTAN SET FOR SEPTEMBER 13 J. BARRIE SHEPHERD TO PREACH

Come celebrate the Scottish roots of the Presbyterian heritage at Westminster's annual Kirkin' o' the Tartan worship service on Sunday, September 13th. Plan to arrive at 9:45 am to enjoy bagpipers from the award winning Capital Region Celtic Pipe Band as they sound the call to worship in front of the church. A colorful parade of tartan banners, will commence at 10:00 am.

The Kirkin' is a special time to offer thanksgiving to the Lord and renew our commitment to serve God. We encourage you to invite guests and introduce them to the Westminster family. You'll be greeted with "a hundred thousand welcomes" or, in Gaelic, "Cead Mille Failte!"

Guest Preacher

We are excited to bring back The Reverend Dr. J. Barrie Shepherd as our guest preacher. A native Scot, Dr. Shepherd is Minister Emeritus of the historic First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York. He previously served the Swarthmore Presbyterian Church for sixteen years. Dr. Shepherd has preached and lectured across the United States, United Kingdom, Europe and Africa and was named William Belden Noble Lecturer at Harvard in 1995 and Lyman Beecher Lecturer at Yale in 2002. He is the author of numerous theological works, including books of prayer and poetry. He has served as Chaplain to both New York and Philadelphia chapters of the Saint Andrew's Society and as President of the Philadelphia Society.

Reception with Book Reading and Signing

After worship, join us for a reception and book signing event where Dr. Shepherd will read from his recently published poems in Scots dialect, as well as excerpts from his newest publication, *Destination Bethlehem: Meditations, Prayers, and Poems to Light the Way to the Manger*. Refreshments, including home-baked shortbread, will be offered.

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are currently being sought to help with the Kirkin'. Anyone who would like to carry a tartan banner during the service should contact David and Sarah Hershey at (518) 462-4727. If you are able to bake shortbread (recipe provided if desired) or help with the reception, please contact Valerie Shanley at (518)366-8747 or vshanley@nycap.rr.com. ●

BIBLE STUDY AND WORSHIP PREPARATION

Beginning September 20 from 9:00 until 9:45, David McMillan will lead a weekly study of the Biblical texts for the worship service to follow at 10:00. We will also learn about the hymns to be sung and discuss prayer concerns. We will conclude each Sunday with prayer for those leading worship. We will probably meet in the Library - come when you can. ●

Children & Youth

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH BEGINS SEPTEMBER 20

Starting Sunday, September 20, children and young people will leave at the end of morning worship to participate in a time of worship and singing with Sue Fedak. They will then go to one of three classes:

- The youngest children will be taught by Christobel, Cindy, and Karen who will be using the “Godly Play” curriculum.
- Older children will be taught by Sue, Sheila, and Hannah who will be using the “Good News of Jesus” curriculum.
- Youth will be led by John, Arden, and Teresa who will be following the “Justice and Grace” curriculum. •



WPC YOUTH: SERVING ALBANY MISSION IN ALBANY'S SOUTH END

AVillage..., Inc., hosted Westminster and First Presbyterian youth and adults for a three-day mission trip to the South End June 29, 30, and July 1, working on community gardens and helping at a field day and cookout at Ezra Prentice Homes. •



Thank You

THANK YOU ANNE for 39 YEARS

Anne Older has announced her retirement as Church Treasurer, effective August 31, 2015. Anne assumed the role of treasurer in the spring of 1976. Through the years she has worked with assistants Doug Kelly, Walter Fredenburg, Arthur Leeb, Ben Fedak, Kathleen Roark, Forrest Holroyd, Ian McClumpha, and a rotation from the Board of Trustees. Anne completed her tasks with reliability, integrity and an irrepressible good spirit.

On Sunday, October 4th, we will honor Anne with a reception and meal after worship. We welcome you to join us as we express our gratitude to Anne Older for her 39 years of dedicated service. ●



THANK YOU for YOUR PRAYERS

Patricia Trudeau would like to thank the congregation for their thoughts and prayers and lovely cards. Her surgery went well and she is recuperating just fine. ●



A FOND FAREWELL to KRISTEN SOUTHWORTH

Unfortunately, we must say good-bye to Kristen Southworth. In the year that Kristen has been at Westminster, she has brought the office out of the papered past and into this century. We are grateful for her significant contributions, and will miss her excellent work and good spirit. ●



... and Speaking of Music

CHOIR SEASON TO START SEPTEMBER 10

The Westminster Choir will be opening its 2015-2016 singing season on Thursday, September 10. The choir rehearses every Thursday evening (with few exceptions) from September till June, and sings every Sunday morning (with a few exceptions), as well as at FOCUS services, Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, and Holy Week services. The first service at which the choir will sing will be Westminster's annual Kirkin' o' the Tartan service, held this year on Sunday, September 13. The Westminster Choir is a talented group of accomplished singers, but new singers are also welcome, particularly experienced singers with pleasant voices and good music-reading skills. If you'd like to give choir membership a try, please speak with Al Fedak or contact him at alfred@alfredfedak.com.

The Westminster Handbell Choir will also be starting rehearsals soon: if you're interested in joining, please speak to Sue Fedak for details. ●

LOOKING AHEAD: ORGAN AND FLUTE DUO CONCERT

At 7:30 PM on Friday evening, October 23, Westminster Church will host the farewell concert of Duo MyDo, the Swiss flute-and-organ duo who last performed here in 2010. Duo MyDo, named for its members, flutist Myriam Hidber Dickinson and organist Douglas Bruce, will be making their final US tour before Douglas's retirement. Their October recital will mark Mr. Bruce's third concert appearance at Westminster Church since the restoration of our Skinner pipe organ in 2003. A Scot

by birth who trained in England, Douglas Bruce spent much of his career as an international banker in Switzerland before returning to his first love, the organ. He has been touring internationally for the past 10 years. His musical partner, Myriam Hidber Dickinson, is an internationally-renowned flutist who performs regularly with a variety of musicians in Switzerland, Brazil, Italy, Austria, the US, and France. We invite all to come and hear these two gifted artists in their final Westminster appearance together.

As always, admission is free, an offering will be received, and refreshments will follow the concert. ●



Steward- ship

STEWARDSHIP

Has your wallet been baptized?

The Rev. Mary Speers, tells a great story about the early Christian church in France. The Frankish soldiers were the most savage fighters of their day. Think of them as the special-forces or seals of the dark ages. Large numbers of Franks were baptized as Christians by walking chest deep -- or even neck deep -- through a river, but they carefully kept the hand holding their battle axes above their heads and out of the water. This let them claim that their fighting hand had never been baptized, and so it could swing the battle axe and butcher with abandon.

We seldom carry battle axes these days, but how many of us pull out our purse or wallet, and keep it from being touched by the water of baptism. How we spend our money says more about our spiritual health and spiritual priorities than all our pious promises and declarations. So as we gather together back from our summer vacations and celebrate the Kirkin', now is a great time to reflect on how we spend our money. Our church budget is working its way through a lengthy process designed to highlight our church priorities. As we in the Session work through the tough choices, here are some questions we have used to help our deliberations.

Do we tithe?

Do we give generously to those in need?

What does our spending say about our priorities?

Have our wallets been baptized? ●



YOUR EVANGELISM, COMMUNICATIONS, HOSPITALITY AND OUTREACH (ECHO) NEWS:

Katherine Wilson, Westminster's Social Media Specialist, is excited to serve the church this year as we work toward connecting our congregation to

the wider community! Katherine has over 20 years of combined experience in social media and publishing, and she's passionate about helping churches realize their online potential to express who they are and what they believe to an increasingly plugged-in world. Because many visitors' first touch with Westminster will be an online visit, we've already designed a new logo for the church, and over the next months we will be rolling out a brand new website that highlights our diversity, radical hospitality, global and local mission, thriving music and arts ministries, and more. So stay tuned for these exciting changes ahead!

If you are interested in learning more, please feel free to contact Valerie Shanley, Chair of the WPC ECHO Committee. ●



Keeping Seniors Connected

WESTMINSTER CO-SPONSOR FOR JULY 22 FORUM, FAITH COMMUNITIES KEEPING SENIORS CONNECTED AND ENGAGED!

On July 22, 2015, Westminster joined 12 faith communities to co-sponsor “Faith Communities Keeping Seniors Connected and Engaged!”. The program was produced by the Albany Guardian Society and organized by the Capital District Senior Issues Forum.

CDSIF was founded at Westminster in 1998.

Belinda Quaye was the first U.S. resident born in West Africa to speak at a program sponsored by the Capital District Senior Issues Forum. Belinda Quaye and Lois Wilson were on the Connecting Seniors panel.

In 2007 Rev. Alice Kyei-Anti (Mama Alice) was the first person born in Ghana to speak at a CDSIF program. Belinda is the second!

CDSIF was delighted to have her speak as a representative of FOCUS.●



Fall Mission Events

Help support children who need safe water, food, shelter, health care & basic education



- **Read Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis** by Robert Putnam. Then join the community and representatives from the University at Albany's School of Public Health in Rensselaer, NY on September 9 and September 16 (5 to 6:30 pm, with light refreshments) to discuss critical issues facing U.S. youth. Dr. Putnam will be the speaker on September 16. Details on www.albany.edu/sph/allread.php.

- **Schuyler Inn Party on Sunday, September 27, 2 pm - 4:30 pm.** Schuyler Inn projects have been one way Westminster has reached out to local kids in crisis since 2005. The September party features crafts and Bingo. Contact Lois Wilson to help at the party or to donate Bingo prizes. Unused prizes will go to the Kid's Club Supplies Corner open three times a week to serve Schuyler residents.

- **September 17, 12 noon open meeting of Hope Mission School Committee** to discuss Spring 2016 Mission Trip and Container. John and Lyn Kucij, Returned Peace Corps Volunteers in Liberia, are organizing Westminster's Spring 2016 trip to Liberia, aided by Elder Felicia Kollie-Gambles, head of Westminster Hope Mission project since 2007. The 2016 team will engage directly with Hope Mission's 300 students and the 11 Ebola orphans living at the Mission.

- The Liberia Trip Support Team will seek community donations for a container to be shipped early in 2016. School supplies, gently used books, dental supplies, cloth bags, solar lights for the Hope Mission School, T-shirts for individual children, reading glasses, basic medical supplies, and Hand Turbine AM/FM Weather Radios (with solar panel, cell phone charger, flashlight) will be among the items in the container.

Two Saturday Night Dinner Programs at WPC

(more details on wpcalbany.org)

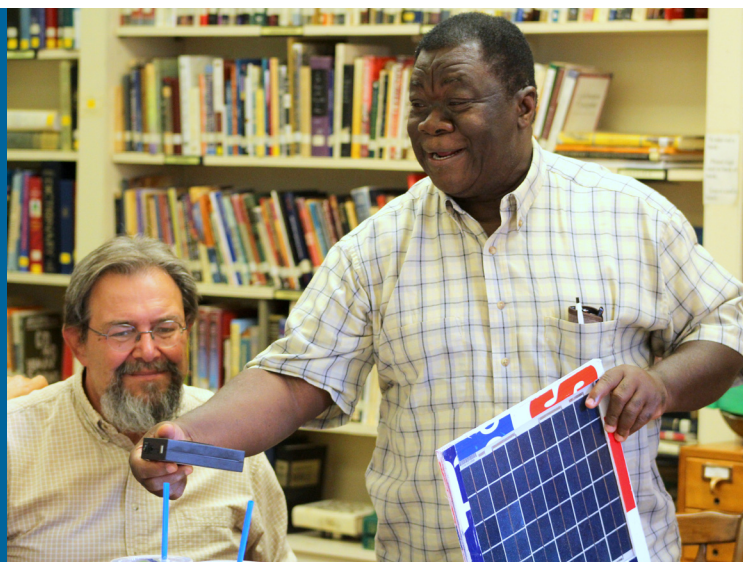
- **October 17:** "International Mission: Benefits and Lessons Learned." Meal and multi-sponsored program highlighting local mission projects in developing countries.

- **November 7:** Annual African Family Night program sponsored by Westminster and its mission partners (free fundraiser). Keynote speaker: Mayor Kathy Sheehan of Albany. ●



(l) Felicia Kollie-Gambles described travel within Liberia at August's Hope Mission School Committee meeting.

(r) Gabriel Ofori-Okai shows John Kucij how to use a \$100 solar light slated for Liberia's Hope Mission School.



SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

2015

SEPTEMBER

1

7:30 am FOCUS Express
6:30 pm Tai Chi

2

7:30 am FOCUS Express
6:30 pm Tai Chi

SUNDAY September 6

9:30 am FOCUS Worship
at Trinity United Methodist

7 Labor day

Office Closed

8

7:30 am FOCUS Express
6:30 pm Tai Chi

9

7:30 am FOCUS Express
6:30 pm Tai Chi

10

7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

SUNDAY September 13

9:45 am Bagpipes on State Street
10:00 am Kirkin' Worship
11:15 am Kirkin' Reception with
Book Reading and Signing
7:00 pm Youth Group

15

7:30 am FOCUS Express
6:30 pm Tai Chi
7:00 pm Compassionate Friends
7:00 pm Deacons Meeting
7:00 pm Trustees Meeting

16

7:30 am FOCUS Express
6:00 pm Pine Bush Dinner
6:30 pm Tai Chi

17

12:00 pm Hope Mission School
Meeting

7:00 pm Center Square Association

7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

SUNDAY September 20

9:00 am Pre-Service Bible Study

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Church School Begins

11:15 am Second Hour:

22

7:30 am FOCUS Express
4:00 pm Personnel Committee
6:30 pm Tai Chi

23

7:30 am FOCUS Express
6:30 pm Tai Chi
7:00 pm Mission Committee

24

7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

25

10:00 am Community LAB Event

SUNDAY September 27

9:00 am Pre-Service Bible Study
10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Church School

11:15 am Second Hour:

12:30 pm Prayer
in the African Way

2:00 pm Schuyler Inn Party

28

9:00 am Hunger Action
Membership Meeting
5:00 pm Albany Soul Cafe

29

7:30 am FOCUS Express
6:30 pm Tai Chi

30

7:30 am FOCUS Express
6:30 pm Tai Chi

OCTOBER

1

7:30 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal

SUNDAY October 4

9:00 am Pre-Service Bible Study

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Church School

11:15 am Second Hour:
Reception for Anne Older

Save the Date:

October 17

Local Mission Projects in
Developing Countries

October 23

Duo MyDo Concert

November 7th

African Family Night



Westminster Presbyterian Church

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Albany, New York 12210

Westminster Presbyterian Church

CHURCH OFFICE- Hours

9 am- 4 pm Monday-Friday

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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

Office Administrator: TBA

Church School Assistant Coordinator: Belinda Quaye

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