

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

Summer 2015

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"Summertime, and the Living Is Easy!"

But, is living ever easy? Recently a friend took one of those elegant river cruises offered on "Masterpiece Theater". When she and her partner arrived on board, they were told the river was low and the boat could go nowhere.

Is living ever easy?

We gather, every summer Sunday -

the first Sundays with friends of the FOCUS churches and all other summer Sundays at Westminster -

men, women and children dreaming of the easy life while dealing with boats stuck in rivers without water!

COME, JOIN US! •

Pastoral Reflections

Pastor Jim Reisner

I WONDER

The Memorial Day Parade goes right by our house. As we watched this year, there came hundreds of soccer players, Little Leaguers in their uniforms, Brownies and Girl Scouts. A pick-up high school band belted out Sousa marches while a pipe and drum corps chased our dog into the house and behind the sofa.

We applauded them all until the fire engines signaled the end, and people went home.

Life is hard, harder than we want to admit. We need to find our affirmations wherever we can. Sometimes I think Westminster folk ought to stand on State Street and applaud people as they head for work, "Well done!"

"Does God give out standing ovations?"

Is it too fanciful to think God gives out standing ovations, that in the silence of our unacknowledged good deeds we might hear, "Well done,



Sundays at Westminster

Worship at 9:30 Communion every Sunday

Sunday, July 5

9:30 Worship

FOCUS Worship

at First Presbyterian Church

Sunday, July 12

9:30 Worship
Jim Reisner leading worship

Ecclesiastes 9:17 - 10:1 "A Fly in the Ointment"

Sunday, July 19

9:30 Worship

Matthew 7:13-23

Jim Reisner leading worship "Wolves in Sheep's Clothing"

Family outing to the State Museum following worship

Sunday, July 26

9:30 Worship

Andrea Holroyd leading worship

Sunday, August 2

9:30 Worship

FOCUS Worship at Emmanuel Baptist

Sunday, August 9

9:30 Worship

David McMillan leading worship

Sunday, August 16

9:30 Worship

Paul Randall leading worship

Sunday, August 23

9:30 Worship

Peter Durkee and Pastor Reisner leading worship

Sunday, August 30

9:30 Worship

Jeremiah 13:20-27

Pastor Reisner leading worship

"Can a Leopard Change His Spots?"

Sunday, September 6

9:30 Worship

FOCUS Worship

at Trinity United Methodist





FOGUS
CHURCHES OF ALBANY

Summer Worship Schedule

First Presbyterian in Albany Sunday, July 5 @ 9:30 am

Emmanuel Baptist Sunday, August 2 @ 9:30 am

Trinity United Methodist Sunday, Sept. 6 @ 9:30 am

Children & Youth

WE ARE GRATEFUL

At each baptism, we stand and make a promise: "We, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture those being baptized, by word and deed, with love and prayer, encouraging them to know and follow Christ and to be faithful members of his church."

Some of us are called to nurture children through teaching and leading in the educational ministries at Westminster. We are grateful for the commitment of Lynne McKee, Shirley Diven, Christabel Abban, Cindy Dwyer, Sue Fedak, Martha Reisner, Sue Schell, Hannah Ohemaa-Takyi, Martinson Owusu, Sheila Wrede, Tom Norman, David Hershey, John Bossung, Willie White, Valerie Shanley, Alex Scaptura, and Andy Scaptura.

WESTMINSTER'S GRADUATING SENIORS

We celebrate the faith and accomplishments of our high school seniors as they take the next step in their journey: Andrew Wrede, Channelle Ndagire, Kate Gallagher and James Josiah.

WPC YOUTH WIN \$3,000 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. SCHOLARSHIPS

The Capital Area Council of Churches presented two \$3,000 Martin Luther Jr. Scholarships at its June 8 Spring Assembly. Both of the winners are members of Westminster Presbyterian Church -- James Josiah and Channelle Ndagire. •



Report from Session

REPORT FROM SESSION

You are invited to read the minutes from our monthly Session meetings posted in the Chestnut Street hallway after they are approved each month.

Session received goals for 2016 from the cost centers in preparation for 2016 budget development. Session voted to decrease this year's endowment withdrawal by \$42,000 as part of a five-year plan to be good stewards of our resources and reduce our reliance on the endowment. A vibrant stewardship drive is essential to continue with our strong faith development through worship, education, music, and mission in the local community and the world.

A change from years past, we will hold two Congregational Meetings in the fall. The first, Sunday, September 27th, will include a reading of the budget and input from the congregation, as well as a report from the Nominating Committee on the slate of church officers. During the second meeting on November 1, we will present the adopted budget and hold the election of church officers.

Session voted that Westminster is a Jubilee Congregation to support the movement against vulture funds buying debts of poor countries and then attempting to collect on the debts. NYS is one of three places where it is legal to buy these funds. Session also had a Skype conversation with our Social Media Specialist Katherine Wilson about messaging. We approved curriculum for the 2015-2016 school year and voted to recognize birthdays once per month starting in July. Representatives from Session and Trustees are attending each other's meetings to keep communication flowing between the two boards. •

REPORT ON: WESTMINSTER DREAMS A NEW FUTURE

Elder Arthur Fullerton led the fourth and final session in this series following worship Sunday, May 31. In his words, the programs "sought to improve communication, generate new ideas, and offer a way for the people in the pews to have their voices heard."

The fourth meeting continued voting on a variety of suggestions gathered in the first two sessions. The question asked of all proposals was the same, "Would you personally be willing to make a financial contribution or volunteer your time to support and implement the recommendation?"

Much discussion focused on the condition of the steeple and the north wall of the church. The group also agreed a new church directory is badly needed. Improving the facade of the church on State Street and many other ideas were explored and voted upon. •



... and Speaking of Music

FIRST FRIDAY SAX APPEAL!

On Friday evening, August 7, at 7:00 PM, Westminster Church will host a very special (and unusual) concert by the Decho Ensemble, a quartet of professional saxophonists who perform classical music on historic instruments. The group plays saxophones which are replicas of instruments built in the 1800s—instruments which project a uniquely warm and homogenous sound.

Founded in 2011 by saxophonists Sarah Marchitelli and Jacob Swanson, the Decho Ensemble has performed throughout the Northeast, and has been heard on television and radio throughout North America and Europe. Critics have praised the group's "blend and precision," and hailed them as a "winning combination in every way!" Their Westminster program will include music by Bach, Singelée, Philip Glass, Daniel Knorr, and Saratoga Springs composer Michael Lanci, who will be in attendance that evening. You can hear a sample of their outstanding music-making on YouTube at:



https://www. youtube.com/ watch?v=W9EAvo17MjQ

We are indeed fortunate to be able to host this outstanding ensemble. Admission to the concert is free, and a freewill offering will be received.

August 7 is a First Friday in downtown Albany—an evening full of special events at various nearby galleries, restaurants, and concert venues. Why not take it all in? Art, dinner and a concert: the makings of a perfect midsummer evening!



"to everything there is a season. A time and place for everything under heaven..."

Ecclesiastes 3

To the FOCUS Congregations

Dear Friends,

Today I share with you my intention to bring my work with FOCUS Churches of Albany to a close. With God's help, I have determined it is now time for me to move on to the next step in my journey.

Since 1999 I have been blessed with the most meaningful and challenging work of my career so far. It has been a calling, my life's work in this time and place, and I have been honored and privileged to have walked with you in this shared life called FOCUS.

I will leave fulfilled in the knowledge that together we have accomplished a significant piece in our common ministries. We received the mantle from ecumenical visionaries and created a faith based nonprofit organization that lives out of a mission of hospitality, mercy, advocacy and justice. It is a hybrid ministry that continues to be an ongoing experiment of living God's reign together.

There are many FOCUS chapters ahead and I truly believe God is with you and blesses you with all good things as you continue this gift called FOCUS.

I will be transitioning from FOCUS at the end of the year. The specifics of next steps are both nebulous and clear—I look forward to what God has for me next. I hope to see you around as I plan to stay put and work and play in the Capital Area.

We are on the journey together. Know that you have blessed me and have been to me a great community of support, challenge and care.

Sincerely, with gratitude and love,

Rev. Debra Jameson •

... to the FOCUS Congregations



Stewarship

LOVINGKINDNESS VS. FEAR

The Hebrew word Hesed (sometimes rendered as Chesed) is most often translated as loving-kindness, sometimes as charity, and most often with the sense of God's love for humanity. What does Hesed have to do with stewardship? Simply this: in our tradition we give in response to God's love. Our giving is not meant to somehow earn God's love and protection - this is already freely given to us by God's grace. Our giving represents our response. It is for this reason that one's generosity is often the best measure of one's spiritual health. Giving comes from faith. Withholding generosity comes from fear.

Jesus spoke to this fear in Matthew (6:26-34) when he told us:

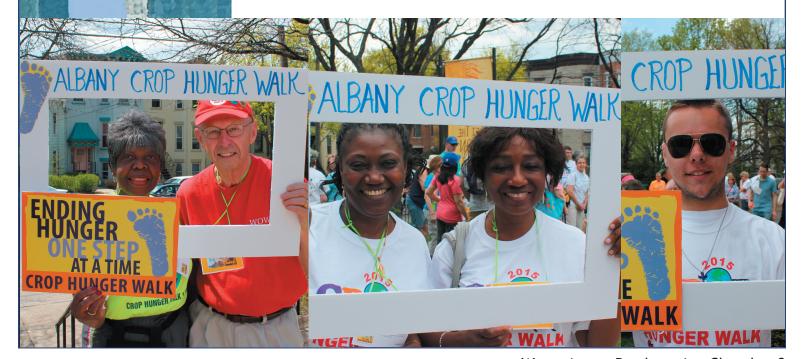
26 Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 34 "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Be not afraid, Give! •

CROP WALK 2015

Once again, Westminster members and friends showed the way in the annual Albany CROP Walk, Sunday afternoon, May 3rd.

Led by Allan and Mary Jean Tedrow who raised \$3,225, twenty one walkers raised \$4,958 which was matched by a Mission Match of \$2,479, resulting in a total contribution of \$7,437! Well done, good and faithful walkers.





Join the Shower of Cards for the Rosenau family as we welcome the newest member of the Westminster family...he's due in early July! Cards may be sent to the Rosenau's new address. Those who wish may include a gift card to any Target or Naturally Grown (518-274-2229 or www.naturalgrownbaby.com).

SCHUYLER INN VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Schuyler Inn, a Menands shelter at which WPC has sponsored programs since 2015, had, as of June 16, had more than 160 residents -- 35 seniors plus 55 families, with 75 children. Activities at Schuyler for interested summer volunteers:

Tuesday, July 28 Summer Bingo

(Coordinators Paul and Margaret Randall; Allan and Mary Jean Tedrow): 4:30 - 5:15 pm Set-up. Bring your own snack, if you want to eat. 5:30 pm - 7 pm Bingo

Contact the church office if you are willing to shop for prizes or be a volunteer that evening

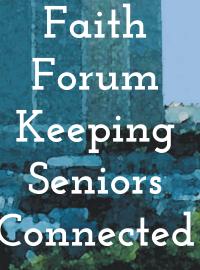
Volunteer to Run an Afternoon Recreation Program on a Monday or a Friday in July or August from 1 to 3:30 pm. Call Schuyler Inn Manager Peter Kelsey (518 463-1121, ext. 123) if you are would like to organize programs for a week or for a longer period of time.

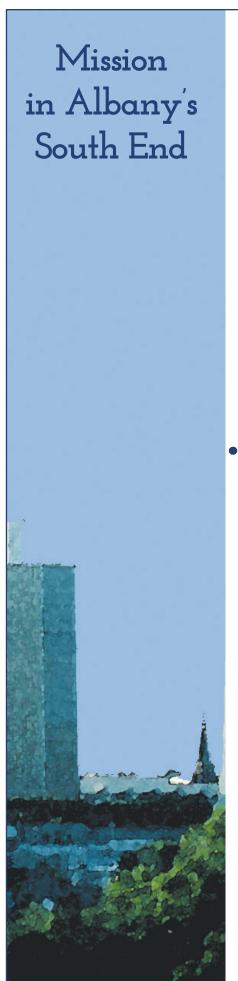
WESTMINSTER CO-SPONSOR FOR JULY 22 FORUM, FAITH COMMUNITIES KEEPING SENIORS CONNECTED AND ENGAGED!

Westminster has joined 12 faith communities to co-sponsor a July 22, 2015, 8 am - 2:30 pm forum at the Carondelet Hospitality Center in Latham, "Faith Communities Keeping Seniors Connected and Engaged!" The program is produced by the Albany Guardian Society and organized by the Capital District Senior Issues Forum.

The keynote speaker is The Reverend Susan Vincent-Cox. The Rev. Deb Jameson and Belinda Quaye are both members of one of the two panels. Contact Lois Wilson for more information.

The complete registration packet, including a program description, will be posted on www.cdsif.org.





MISSION IN ALBANY'S SOUTH END

AVillage..., Inc., is hosting Westminster 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. But there are plenty of opportunities year-round for volunteers who want to get involved in the South End community.

Creating new gardens and recreation spaces in a neighborhood that has more than its share of vacant lots is an on-going activity that requires a range of skills. Ezra Prentice, the public housing project on the far southern edge of the city that is best known these days because of the oil trains in its backyard, has 150 children under the age of 14, and AVillage has started a new literacy and youth activity program with residents. Volunteers can help with homework and reading programs or participate in games and sports activities.

AVillage members meet every Thursday at 5:30 and all are welcome. This is where we discuss the issues of the day and make our plans, and visitors are always welcome.

For information, contact Elder Willie White ((518) 859-4305), or Tom McPheeters ((518) 433-0679) or Tim Dodman, or see any of us at church. ●

AFRICAN MINISTRIES COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Volunteers are needed to help with planning and promoting three activities. Contact the church office or Lois Wilson if you willing to distribute "Save the Date Flyers" or assist with planning.

- 1. **Saturday, October 17 dinner program**, 5 to 9 pm, "International Mission: Benefits and Lessons Learned". Special invitations will be sent to Presbyterian congregations that have sponsored Mission Trips and to Westminster's African partners.
- 2. **Sunday, November 7, African Family Night**, 5 pm to 9 pm. Chair, Gabriel Ofori-Okai. We are seeking volunteers to promote the program and to highlight ongoing committee mission projects in Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.
- 3. **2016 Mission Trip to West Africa**, led by Pastor Jim Reisner. The goal is to announce specific trip details in Fall 2015, including the estimated per person cost. Preliminary details will be discussed with those interested.

A number of Westminster families have expressed interest in learning more about State Museum activities. After the coffee hour on July 19, Ruthanne Brod will talk about the State Museum and answer questions about exhibits and activities of particular interest to children and youth. A simple meal (make-a-sandwich or bring your own food) will follow. Interested families, who are asked to arrange for their transportation, will head for the Museum (which is free) about 12:15 pm. •

JULY into AUGUST CALENDAR

2015

JULI I	SUNDAY JULY ZO	SUNDAY August 23
7:30 am FOCUS Express	9:30 am Worship	9:30 am Worship
Serving Albany- Youth Mission	1:00 pm Prayer	24
3	in the African Way	5:00 pm Albany Soul Cafe
Office Closed	28	25
4	7:30 am FOCUS Express	6:30 pm Tai Chi
Fourth of July	6:30 pm Tai Chi	7:00 pm Session
-	29	26
SUNDAY July 5	7:30 am FOCUS Express	6:30 pm Tai Chi
9:30 am FOCUS Worship	6:30 pm Tai Chi	7:00 pm Mission
at First Presbyterian Church	•	7:00 pm Christian Life & Learnir
6	SUNDAY August 2	·
7:30 am FOCUS Express	9:30 am FOCUS Worship	SUNDAY August 30
8	at Emmanuel Baptist	9:30 am Worship
7:30 am FOCUS Express	4	1:00 pm Prayer
	7:30 am FOCUS Express	in the African Way
SUNDAY July12	5	·
9:30 am Worship	7:30 am FOCUS Express	SEPTEMBER
14	6:30 pm Tai Chi	1
7:30 am FOCUS Express	7:00 pm Christian Life & Learning	7:30 am FOCUS Express
7:00 pm Session	7	6:30 pm Tai Chi
15	7:00 pm First Friday	2
7:30 am FOCUS Express	Saxophone Quartet	7:30 am FOCUS Express
16	•	6:30 pm Tai Chi
7:00 pm Center Square Assoc.	AUGUST	
	SUNDAY August 9	

SUNDAY July 19

9:30 am Worship

JULY 1

7:30 am FOCUS Express

6:30 pm Tai Chi

7:00 pm Compassionate Friends

22

7:30 am FOCUS Express

6:30 pm Tai Chi

7:00 pm Mission

SLINDAY July 26

SUNDAY August 9

9:30 am Worship

6:30 pm Tai Chi

12

6:30 pm Tai Chi

7:00 pm Pine Bush Dinner

SUNDAY August 16

9:30 am Worship

17-19

Building Closed

for floor maintenance

STINDAY August 23

ing

SUNDAY September 6

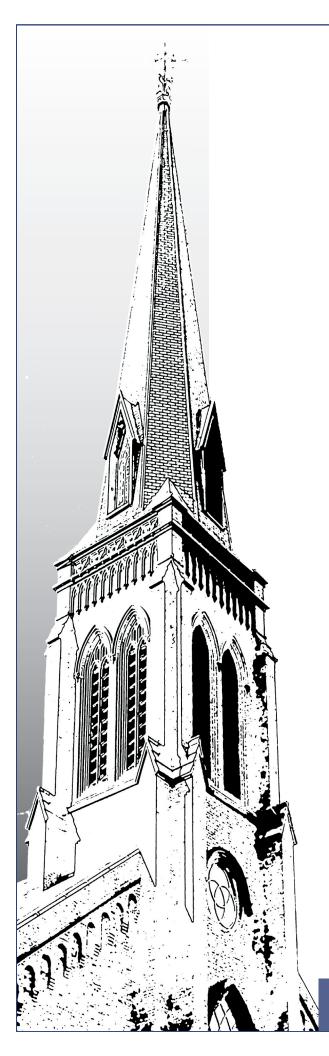
9:30 am FOCUS Worship at Trinity United Methodist

September 7- Labor day

Office Closed

Save the Date:

September 13th- Kirkin'



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

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