



December 2016

From Our Pastor

'Tis the Season

Dear Church Family,

"Tis the season to be jolly!" . . . or so says one of our most familiar carols. Well, that is true, although most of the "jolliness" in this season is manufactured and somewhat fake.

'Tis really the season to be hopeful – hopeful that this world of ours can become more like the one Jesus foresaw – where the lion and the lamb lie down together and the lamb isn't afraid of being eaten.

'Tis the season to be joyful – joyfulness found by turning our lives toward those things which sustain and feed our souls, even in lands of deep darkness.

In these Advent days when the culture celebrates everything shiny and bright and good for the economy, the church celebrates the light of Christ and a bright morning star – and leans forward with Hope. Now maybe that doesn't seem like much, given the way things are. Yet it is enough – enough to bring us through the days that lie ahead.

May you know more completely the rich blessings of the Christ Child this Advent season. Consider what God has already done – for you and for this church.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it."

Judy
Judy



P.S. I just finished signing up to provide something for one of our four adopted families this Christmas [Christmas Family Gifts Project; see bulletin board by the elevator]. I notice there are still quite a few empty spaces. Would you join me in sharing Westminster generosity and the love of Christ with others less fortunate?



Advent and Christmas at Westminster

Ever consider inviting friends to share the season's inspirational services and events? Do you know the main reason people say they went to a church and stayed there? Friends! Yes, someone invited them! So that sort of puts the future of Westminster in your hands. Share the good news that is Westminster! Share the good news through Westminster! Share Westminster!



Advent Devotions

Advent: A Calendar of Devotions 2016 is available in the fellowship hall entry. The booklet contains Bible and inspirational readings and prayers for each day in Advent.



Advent Study on Sunday Mornings

Every Valley: Advent with the Scriptures of Handel's Messiah, begins Sunday, November 27. The four weekly sessions, each at 9:30 am in the fellowship hall, are led by Elizabeth Tidd and musicologist Richard LeSueur. We'll also put together a field trip to the UMS performance of Messiah on Saturday, December 3. Sign up here for the class, and take note of the important book and concert ticket purchase information.



Christmas Family Gift Baskets

Help local families provide Christmas gifts to their family members. Westminster deacons have teamed up with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to sponsor four families. Details on how to participate are on the bulletin board by the elevator. Please bring wrapped and labeled gifts to church by Wednesday, December 7.

Cash donations will be collected also, on December 4 after worship, to purchase remaining gifts and Meijer gift cards.

This is an opportunity for us to put smiles on the faces of people we may never meet, but with whom we still want to share the love of Christ.



Winter Warmth for Riverside Community Gathering

Please bring new winter hats, gloves and scarves to the collection box in the fellowship hall entry, for guests at Riverside Community Gathering.



Poinsettias Brighten the Season

Purchase flowers for the sanctuary at Christmas or for an at-home member, while honoring loved ones. Cost is \$15. Sign up and pay in the fellowship hall entry, by Monday, December 12.



PC (USA) Christmas Joy Offering

This special offering, collected during worship, November 27–December 25, assists current and retired church workers in times of need, and develops future leaders at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. Giving envelopes are in the pew racks.



All-Church Advent Dinner

Wednesday, December 7: Hors d'oeuvres begin at 5:15 pm and dinner is at 6, with a program and carol sing following.

Make your reservation in the main entry on Sunday mornings. Cost is \$10 per adult and \$5 for children ages 6–12; payment is requested with reservation. Scholarships are available; please speak with the person at the registration table or with Al Banning.

You are invited to bring an offering of nonperishable food or winter hat, gloves or scarf, for guests at Riverside Community Gathering. Consider also helping with set-up, serving, clean-up or providing cookies. All are invited – yule want to be there!



Festival of Lights

Sunday, December 11, 3–5:30 pm, local musical groups and congregations present an interfaith concert to support refugee resettlement efforts in Washtenaw County. Westminster’s choir is participating, and Shawn McDonald is music director for the event. Westminster is helping with refugee resettlement in collaboration with Jewish Family Services, the sponsoring organization for this event. The afternoon includes a Refugee Photovoice Art Exhibit and desserts by Amanda’s Kitchen. The event takes place at Genesis of Ann Arbor (2309 Packard Street, Ann Arbor); suggested donation is \$20 per person. All are welcome! Learn more here.



Christmas By Candlelight

Saturday, December 17, our teens enjoy an elegant and festive Christmas dinner. After dinner they go as a group to see the new Star Wars movie, Rogue One. Star grazing followed by star gazing. Teens, RSVP to Melissa Naveen.



A Service of Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 18, our worship service will be a festival of lessons and carols, featuring the Westminster Choir, the Alleluia Ringers, small groups of singers and instrumentalists, and dancers – a joyous anticipation of Christ’s birth.



Christmas Carols Lift Spirits

Sunday, December 18, bring joy to at-home members by joining our youth in Christmas caroling. Please contact Melissa Naveen to let her know you’re coming.



Christmas Eve Worship

Saturday, December 24, at 6 and 8:30 pm: Come celebrate the birth of the Messiah with music, scripture, candlelight.



Christmas Day Worship

Sunday, December 25, 10 am: Westminster and Trinity Lutheran Church combine for Christmas morning worship. Every few years, Christmas Day falls on Sunday . . . right after the major services on Christmas Eve. After discussions with our ecumenical partners at Trinity, the Session decided to accept their invitation to combine our services on that day. All are welcome! (Trinity Lutheran Church: 1400 W. Stadium Blvd., 48103)

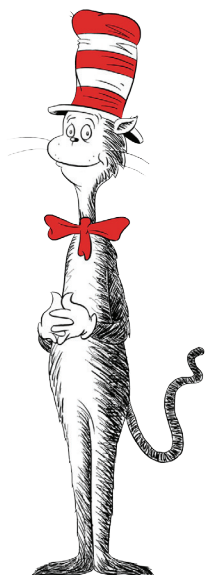
Note: Please bring Christmas donations to Westminster on Christmas Eve or place in April Wright’s mailbox in the public office.

The church office will be closed the week between Christmas and New Year’s Day. Please plan ahead if you need photocopying and other things for the first week in January. Also please keep in mind that staff members are quite busy in the days leading up to Christmas Eve and may not be able to fulfill last-minute requests. For emergencies during Christmas week, please contact Pastor Shipman (734-274-0803).

Events & Announcements

Congregational Meeting Called

Sunday, December 11, following worship, there will be a brief congregational meeting to elect ruling elders, deacons and the 2017 nominating committee.



CAT Update: What's Next?

Seventy-four percent of eligible Westminster members completed the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) by the early November deadline.

This response is exceptional, and we are pleased with how many members of our congregation utilized this valuable opportunity to provide information about who we are as a church. Westminster's leadership will use the results from this questionnaire to help plan our future.

On Sunday, December 4, a consultant from Holy Cow! Consulting, the experts with whom we are working, will share and interpret the results of CAT with the Congregational Self-Study Team, the Session and staff members. For the past 30 years, Holy Cow! has specialized in helping leaders of congregations make better decisions. They have worked with more than 2,500 congregations nationwide.

Stay tuned for more information about this project in the near future.

If you have questions, please contact any member of the Self-Study Team: Bryce Babcock, Betty Chaffee, Sharon Cloke, Cathy Daniels, Ralph Lange, Joan Piatt, Doug Tidd, Bruce Spiher and Rev. Judy Shipman

Stephen Ministry Offers Support Group for Caregivers

Westminster's Stephen Ministry leaders will launch a support group for men and women caregivers beginning in January. This will be an opportunity to share stories and concerns and to learn about community resources for caregiving.

The group will meet for about an hour and a half, as often as the group decides is right. Linda Lang and Sue Miller, Westminster Stephen Ministers, will lead the group.

Watch for more information in the coming month, and consider whether this might be of benefit to you.



Simple Ways to Support Our Life Together

Looking for ways to help at church? Look no further. Here's a list of things you can do on a regular basis that do not require large blocks of time or unlearnable skills. Your contribution is vital, and your time and talents build our community.

In worship

Lay leaders: Rev. Shipman will teach you what you need in order to confidently help lead us in worship. Please contact her to indicate your interest.

Projectionists are the hands behind the curtain, making it easy for all to follow the order of worship. Please contact Gail Arnold who will give training and support.

Sanctuary flowers: Members and friends provide flowers for the chancel on Sunday mornings. Sign up in the fellowship hall entry on the date of your choice, to commemorate an event or loved one. You may take the flowers home with you after worship or leave them for deacons to deliver to an at-home member. Cost is \$29; checks, identified in the memo line, may be placed in the offering or in April Wright's mailbox in the public office.

Grow in Faith and Friendship

The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World

Sixty Plus Club, Friday, December 9, noon

Join us for lunch, followed by a DVD documentary on the seven wonders of the ancient world: awe-inspiring pyramids, hanging gardens, colossal statues and more. Sign up in the fellowship hall entry. All are welcome!

Adult Classes and Small Groups

Advent Study: *Every Valley: Advent with the Scriptures of Handel's Messiah*, meets on the four Sundays in Advent at 9:30 am in the fellowship hall. Elizabeth Tidd and musicologist Richard LeSueur lead the class.

Old Testament Bible Study: Dem bones gonna rise again! Join us any Sunday for our study of Ezekiel, followed by subsequent books in the Old Testament, at 9:30 am in room 34 on the lower level.

Scripture and Contemporary Issues begins January 8, at 9:30 am each Sunday.

Mary Martha Group meets the first and third Mondays of the month, 7–8:30 pm. New members are welcome; please contact Sharon Flynn.

Through the week

Meal set-up and clean-up, for First Sunday Dinners and for Wednesday Night Live! This is a tremendous service to us all, and a wonderful time of fellowship and friendship-building for the kitchen crews. Please especially consider helping January through March, when many in our regular crew enjoy sun and fun in the South. Please contact Al Banning or Phoebe Vance.

Building lock-up: Do you know how the church building is secured each night? Evening building users are expected to turn out lights and lock up – but a member of the “lock-up crew” stops by around 9 pm to double-check lights and doors. Each crew member works one week, in rotation with the other (about 6) crew members. Please contact Jim Thomson for more information and to volunteer.

Plan for Life

Eat, Learn, Live, Saturday, December 10, 8 am

Join us for breakfast with guest speaker Jim Carlson, sharing thoughts on life choices and plans. Sign up in the fellowship hall entry. All are welcome!

Sarah Circle meets the second Tuesday of each month, at noon. All are welcome! Contact Sue Flynn or Phoebe Vance.

Women's Bible Study Group meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, 1–2:30 pm. Please join us – contact Alice Chambers.

Thursday Book Group meets weekly, 1–2:30 pm, in room 118. Now through December 22 we're discussing *Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas*, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. No meetings on December 29 or January 5. Beginning January 12, we'll discuss *POX: An American History*. Please contact Sue Flynn for more information. All are welcome.

Engaging Neighbors

One Human Family

Westminster is joining the One Human Family campaign. You've seen banners in front of other Washtenaw County houses of worship and soon Westminster will also declare solidarity with and God's love for all our neighbors, including refugees and Muslims. The Westminster family has generously donated both items and service to help welcome refugees to our community. At its November meeting, the Session approved the purchase of a banner for Westminster – and then passed the hat, so elders truly put their money where their mouths and votes were, to pay for our banner.

Our donations and efforts support Jewish Family Services and Samaritas, the two authorized Washtenaw County refugee resettlement agencies and with Washtenaw Refugee Welcome, which develops and deploys resources to JFS, Samaritas and refugees already in the county.

Find ways to help welcome local refugees by contacting Gordon Beeman. Possibilities include hands-on service, donations of furniture and other items, networking to uncover employment opportunities, offering leads on affordable housing, teaching classes, financial donations, and much more!



A Project of the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice and the Interfaith Round Table of Washtenaw County

Habitat for Humanity Demolition Days

Friday and Saturday, February 5 and 6, release tension and help lay the groundwork for this year's House of Faith renovation. Watch for more information, or contact Ron Fairchild.

HEART Rotating Shelter

February 13–20, Westminster hosts 25 homeless men, showing them the heart and hands of Christ. Watch for more information, or contact Jim Thomson or Brian Myers.

2017 Mission Travel

Detroit Mission Trip returns! Bill Sharp, Jennifer Young and Alison Collicott are in planning stages for this week of service in Detroit. Likely date: July 17–20 or July 24–27.

Create your own trip, or join another group's trip, or request Westminster financial support. Follow your instincts and the guidance of the Spirit into the mission field. Please contact a member of the Mission Outreach Ministry Team for information (current elders: Katherine Simpson and Earl Begg).



Westminster Presbyterian Church

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