

The December Link

December 2017

From Our Pastor

Advent is a little late this year – which makes Christmas seem a little soon! Yes, in case you haven't yet looked at the December calendar in any depth, the fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve are smashed up against each other on the very same day. Two different celebrations on one Sunday . . .

So in the interest of providing two different worship experiences for a wide variety of members as well as visitors, adjustments have been made to our normal Sunday schedule on December 24:

- 9:30–10:15 AM, fourth Sunday of Advent: carol sing, Advent message, and prayers
- 7:30 PM, Festive Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (hoping for a really full sanctuary!)
- New Year's Eve Day we go back to an 11 AM service, with an evening gathering to bring in 2018.

If you're like me, you love the Christmas season. I love the lights and the smells and the anticipation of it all! Yet it's a hard season for people who have experienced loss or are undergoing other difficulties – and we all live in those places from time to time. So the Christian church has Advent to remind us that Christmas is not just about the birth of a baby. It's about hope. It's about God's Light coming into a world of darkness.

We long for Light this Advent and Christmas season. Ironically, the Light isn't visible to folks who make Christmas nothing more than a movable feast of parties, or the ones who try to purchase their way to joy.

The Light is seen by those who hear the words:

"Comfort, comfort, my people" – and embrace the sacred possibility.

May your Advent and Christmas season be filled with love and joy – and Hope!

Judy



Celebrate the Season

Morning and evening worship on December 24:

Worship at 9:30 AM celebrates the fourth Sunday in Advent with carols, Advent message and prayers. Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship is at 7:30 PM.



Westminster Advent Dinner, Wednesday, December 6, a festive start to the Advent season: a delicious meal, an evening with friends, and the play *Take 2017*.



A Civil War Christmas: Women's Christmas Tea is Saturday, December 9, 2–4 PM. Take a break from the holiday rush to spend time with friends, sharing good food, (harp) music, a Christmas story, and Debbie Ash's presentation on Civil War period clothing.



Christmas by Candlelight on Saturday, December 16, is a Westminster youth ministry tradition of dinner, semi formal attire and a gag gift exchange, for all youths and their guests, and any Westminster youth alumni in town. RSVP: Look for your formal invitation in the mail or please contact Linda Tyler Brown.



Christmas Cantata, Tapestry of Light, is presented in worship Sunday, December 17, by Westminster choirs and orchestra. Bring a friend to this uplifting musical celebration of the season.



Considering Christmas Carols: Sundays, December 3–17, learn the history and message of four carols. Meets at 9:30 AM in the fellowship hall.



Poinsettias adorn our sanctuary and bring cheer to many at home. Sign up in the fellowship hall entry by Wednesday, December 6.



Family Christmas Gift Project, sponsored by the deacons, brings help and hope to four local families. See the display in the fellowship hall entry to choose gifts to purchase and to learn more.



Winter Clothing Drive for Riverside Community Gathering: Donate winter gloves, scarves, socks and long underwear (please no hats) for guests at this weekly dinner. Place donations in the collection bin in the fellowship hall entry.



Christmas Joy Offering, a special PC (USA) offering received in Advent, gives assistance to current and retired church workers in need and develops future leaders at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges.

Our Life Together

Ring in the New Year at Westminster

Sunday, December 31, 6–10 PM, we'll enjoy a fun-filled evening together, welcoming the new year. We'll have a simple dinner, games and conversation, and a video. Please sign up in the fellowship hall entry and plan to

bring a game to play with a group and a snack to share. Hoping to see you there!



The Bob Hope Story: A Long Life of Entertainment and Encouragement

Sixty Plus Club meets Friday, December 15. Following lunch at noon, John Hauger of the Antique Phonograph Society tells the story of Bob Hope with words as well as with contemporary recordings

and memorabilia. RSVP: Phoebe Vance, or in the fellowship hall entry. All are welcome, no matter your age!



Congregational Meeting is December 10

Sunday, December 10, after worship, a congregational meeting will be held for the purpose of electing the 2018 Nominating Committee and to review and approve two changes to Westminster bylaws.

Nominees for the 2018 Nominating Committee are Patsy Gregory, Bob Hufnagel, Richard LeSueur and Marcie Teppo, with Betsey Ready and Barb Greschaw nominated as alternates.

It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like . . .

The cups at Starbucks have turned red, the mailbox is filling up with LL Bean catalogs and chestnuts are roasting over open fires everywhere you look! That must mean it's . . . almost . . . time to plan your 2017 year-end charitable contributions for income tax deductions!

As the end of the calendar year approaches, please remember that contributions must be either delivered to the church or postmarked on or before December 31 to appear on your 2017 contribution statement and be considered a donation for the current tax year. Electronic giving may also be a convenient means for you to make end-of-year donations to either the general operating budget or any one of several designations available on the electronic giving website. For more information on electronic giving visit our church website or contact either Dave or April Wright.

Many members like to avail themselves of the tax advantages of donating appreciated investment securities toward the end of the year. If you are

anticipating making a donation of this type, please contact Dave Wright, Financial Secretary, by December 20th to discuss specific procedures for making stock or mutual fund transfers. It often takes up to a week for such transfers to take place between your broker and ours.

All "non-designated" donations go into the general operating fund to support the regular, ongoing budget of the church. Designated donations include the Endowment Fund or specific mission outreach programs such as the Christmas Joy offering. If you choose to make a designated donation, either clearly indicate it on the memo line of your check or through written instructions to the Financial Secretary.

Westminster is an exceedingly generous congregation and your steadfast, gracious support of our many ministries is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding year-end donations, please contact Dave Wright, Financial Secretary.

Engaging Our Neighbors

Calling All Bakers

On the first Wednesday of every month, someone from Westminster bakes a sheet cake for the Riverside Community meal. It serves as a birthday cake for all who have a birthday that month, and it is very much appreciated. A pan, utensils, and clear instructions, along with a box in which to carry the cake, are all provided. The baker may choose to deliver the cake to Westminster or to the church in Ypsilanti where Riverside meets. Please consider participating in this rewarding ministry. You may use the new sign-up sheet near the church library or contact Alice Chambers.

Support Hope Clinic and Bring Light

Join our young people in supporting Hope Clinic by bringing needed items to the fellowship hall entry: laundry detergent and spices for the food pantry; HE detergent for the clients' laundry area (powder or pods); and board games for 10- to 17-year-olds.

Recycle, reuse and help our youths shine the light of Christ! We need clean glass jars for making new candles from partially-used tapers in the craft supplies room. Glass canning jars are preferred; please place jars in the collection bin near the library.

Kitchen crew flees to Florida

January–April, many of our usual kitchen crew enjoy the warmth of the south. We need extra help to prepare and clean up at First Sunday Dinners (January 7, February 4 and March 4), and at weekly Wednesday Dinners. Please contact Phoebe Vance (734-971-4870) to volunteer.

Stephen Ministers Care

Westminster's Stephen Ministers offer a listening ministry to any member of the congregation as well as those outside our church. We come as guests in the care receiver's home, for about an hour a week, for as long as the need continues. Our job is to listen, offer support, and to help individuals arrive at decisions on their own, all in complete confidentiality. We do not judge or impose our ideas and direction.

Stephen Ministers meet as a group twice a month, and also attend continuing education classes.

To ask for Stephen Ministry care or to refer a friend, please contact Margaret Compton.



Christmas Joy Offering Benefits Many

Your donations during Advent to the Presbyterian Church (USA) Christmas Joy Offering support two causes: current and retired church workers and their families in times of need, and students at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. The offering goes to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, as well as to Menaul School, Presbyterian Pan American School, Stillman College and two secondary schools. Please designate "Christmas Joy" on your check to Westminster.



Westminster Presbyterian Church

1500 Scio Church Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

734-761-9320 | www.westpresa2.org