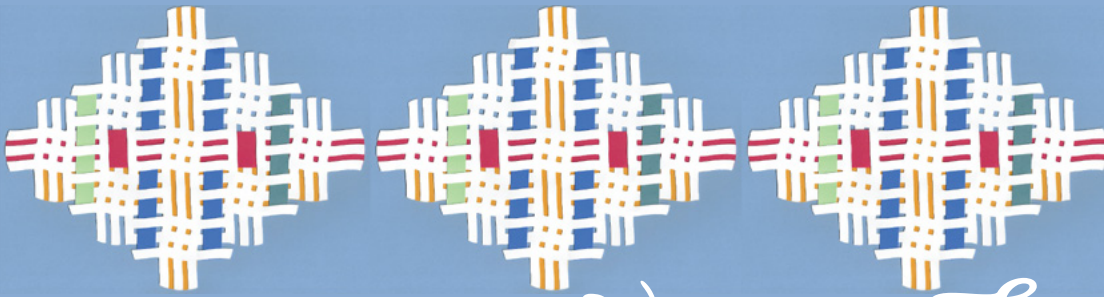


In-person services and in-person church activities are suspended until further notice due to COVID-19



Visit our website
for online offerings,
including Sunday Worship
wpcalbany.org

Woven Together

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

Dear Friends,

EASTERTIDE • 2020

The changes we are making in our lifestyles come almost faster than we can keep up with. By the time you read this we will be worshipped only by livestream worship rather than in-person for 3 weeks. And as I write this, I have no way to tell if that practice will continue for a bit or not.

Calling and pastoral care contacts by me as pastor and by the deacons will have been by phone, e-mail or other social media. We want to keep safe practices of social distancing. In person meetings, choir practice, Sunday school, second hours have all been halted.

As one person has said to me “Honestly, I hadn’t planned on giving up quite this much for Lent.”

I imagine all the closures and cancellations give people a sense of an ominous future. But what we’re doing is really an act of sacrificial love for our communities:

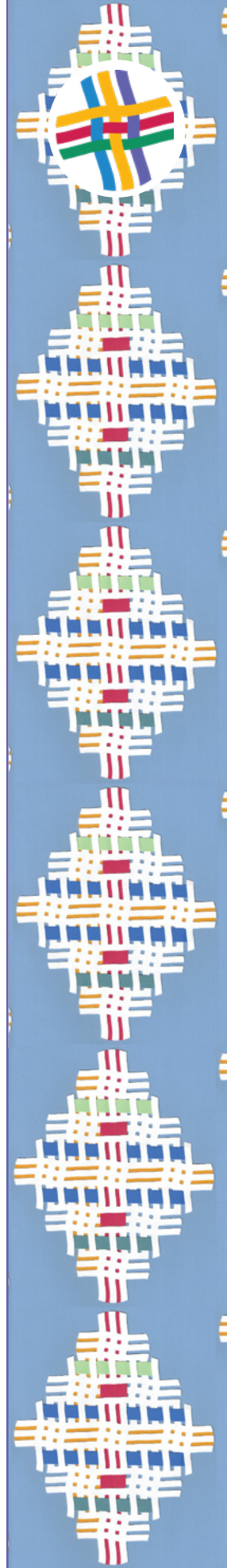
- We’re sacrificing so we can give doctors, nurses and hospitals a fighting chance as numbers of patients increase.
- We’re sacrificing so we can protect friends and family.
- We’re sacrificing as a way to protect the more vulnerable members of our communities.
- We’re sacrificing as a way to follow Jesus’ words to “Love our neighbors.”
- We’re sacrificing as a way to “Love ourselves” while loving neighbors.

Lent is a good time to reflect on sacrificial love. The heart of our faith centers sacrificial love of Jesus Christ that was so clearly seen on Good Friday and was so victorious on our behalf on Easter. That love shapes our lives as followers whether we term it sacrificial love or servant love or self-giving love. In this case, we are not just practicing healthy actions. We are practicing sacrificial love as modeled by Jesus.

That love also leads us to new life on Easter. I don’t know all the ways we will see new life but I already can see that we will see greater control of COVID19. We will see greater appreciation of activities we may have been taking for granted. We will see new methods and attention for helping those with greater economic challenges. We will have found new ways to stay in touch that can continue. We will have found new skills in broadcasting our service which will allow new ways to reach people and new ways for shut-ins, the ill, those on vacations to connect in worship.

And if we keep our hearts and spirits open, we will look back and see how God has been with us, we will look around and see how God is with us. We will look to the future and see that God is already ahead of us to guide and encourage us as we go forward.

Peace, Pastor Bill



Pastor Nominating Committee Shares Exciting News

Your Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) want to share with you the exciting news that we have, with the Spirit's guidance, identified the person that we believe God is calling to be our shepherd and be called as Pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church. We have provided the name and background of the candidate to the Committee on Ministry and Congregations (COMAC) of Presbytery. COMAC has agreed to meet with the candidate right after Easter. Once COMAC has approved the candidate, we will write again to provide you with information about the candidate, and the next steps in the process.

~ Christabel Abban, Ervin Ashburn, Beth Coombe, Lily Mercogliano Easton, Caleb Karkari-Mensah, Lynne McKee, and Larry Volk

Woven Together

Please Continue to Support Our Ministry at WPC

As we seek ways to continue providing worship, prayers, communication, and pastoral care, we want to remind you that other aspects of church life continue. We need to continue to provide building upkeep and utilities, as well as our mission support to FOCUS, to our PC(USA), and to mission partners. We continue to support our staff who are making adjustments on how to do their work in changing ways. All of which means we need your financial support to continue. If you normally give your offering at Sunday worship, please use mail or our online giving option to continue your support. (<https://www.wpcalbany.org/give>)

Outreach Efforts by Pastor and Deacons

Pastor Bill and our Deacons have been increasing outreach to the congregation by phone and internet. Please make sure we have your email address so you can get weekly news updates and information on how to link to our worship broadcasts. ([Click here to subscribe to weekly news](#))

Share Inspirational Hymns

Music lifts our spirits. What songs give you inspiration and a spiritual boost? Let us know the titles. Send in links to recording or videos. We'll share the songs as a spiritual picker-upper. Send your suggestion to Pastor Bill at pastor@wpcalbany.org.



*We're
Online*

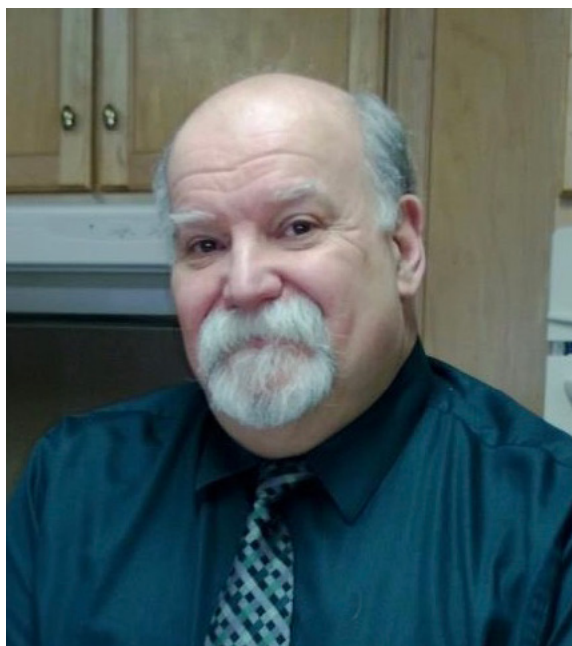
Join Us for Worship Online

While in-person worship services have been suspended, Westminster is offering Sunday worship online. You are invited and we hope you will join in! It is easier than you might think! Word on how to connect to our broadcast worship is being shared through our weekly news email, on the [website](#), and through the church [Facebook](#) page. If you are not receiving our weekly email yet, contact the church office or click [here to subscribe to weekly news](#).

Holy Week at Westminster

The events of **Holy Week**, through the Easter celebration are truly at the heart of our Christian faith. Here are the times of our online worship observances:

- **Palm Sunday:** April 5 at 10:00 am
Please have a branch or sprig of leaves of some kind to show and wave from your screen.
Children - have your coloring page ready to show!
- **Maundy Thursday Service:** April 9 at 7:30 pm • “Remembering the Last Supper”
We will remember the Last Supper and share communion virtually, rather than in person. Everyone is invited to have with them a piece of bread and a glass with juice, water, or wine so that we can all share at the same time in the service.
- **Good Friday Service:** April 10 at 7:30 pm
Readings will combine with music and prayer to explore the meaning of Christ’s death.
- **Easter Sunday:** April 12 at 10:00 am
We will share communion virtually, rather than in person. Everyone is invited to have with them a piece of bread and a glass with juice, water, or wine so that we can all share at the same time in the service.



Online “Pastor Chat”

Tuesdays - Beginning March 31st

12:15 - 1:30 pm (via Zoom)

We are in difficult times of isolation, anxiety and change. Here’s an opportunity to share your thoughts and concerns with Pastor Bill and one another. Starting Tuesday, March 31, you can join a Pastor Chat from 12:15 - 1:30 pm. This will be a Zoom meeting and the link information is below. This will continue on Tuesdays weekly for the foreseeable future.

Click on the link below to join the Pastor Chat through a Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/936991376>

The same link will be used in all our upcoming “Pastor Chat” gatherings.

Note: You may also call in on your phone.

Online Midweek Evening Prayer Service

Wednesdays - Beginning April 1st

7:30 pm (via Zoom)



God walks with us in our difficult times. We are in difficult times. It can be easy to lose a sense of God's closeness. Starting April 1 at 7:30 pm and continuing weekly, you are invited to join in a midweek evening prayer service. This will be a time of spoken and silent prayer and scripture.

The goal is to give us all a time to catch our spiritual breath. I hope to see you on Zoom. Click on the link below to join the Evening Prayer Service through a Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/273652947>

The same link will be used in all our upcoming "Evening Prayer Service" gatherings.

Note: You may also call in on your phone.

A Message from Belinda Quaye

Director of Christian Education



"You don't have to worry about whether your world is under control. God rules. You just have to learn to trust Him when His rule isn't evident."

-- Paul David Tripp

Many of us have no idea how to parent in a pandemic. It's interesting to see the range of emotions around us. As children and youth remain at home at this time and Sunday school is cancelled, I will be supporting parents with resources that would keep the family occupied. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me anytime at: belindaquaye@wpcalbany.org

As we walk through days of uncertainty let's focus on serving others by sharing the message of Jesus' sovereignty. Let's teach our children that even in the hardest of days, we are called to love our neighbor in our words, deeds and by praying for them.

We Encourage Donations to Support Current West African Ministries

Westminster has been blessed by its involvement with African Christians. At a time when the world is dealing with a pandemic, our partners in Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone have sent recent messages to tell us they are praying for us. And, we are praying for them.

A blog, “Your Gifts Make These West African Ministries Possible” (to read visit: wpcalbany.org/blog) demonstrates that Westminster is funding projects that transform the lives of children and families in West Africa. In 2019, Westminster raised more than \$33,890 from individual donors and grants in addition to an additional \$7,400 from the Church. As of the end of March, Westminster had raised \$8,860 to supplement the annual grant from the Church.

While the March 21 African Spring Dinner was cancelled, the Church’s work continues in West Africa. We encourage you to continue your support for the work which we hope to celebrate at a November 7 dinner, if the restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic are lifted.

To help the Church fund current projects we encourage all who celebrate the important work we have done with our partners to make donations payable to: Westminster Church, 85 Chestnut St, Albany, NY 12210 and note in the Memo Line “African Mission.” You may also give online www.wpcalbany.org/give

In 2020, Westminster hopes to explore ways of working closely with its Tema partners to keep girls in school through an expanded menstrual hygiene education program.



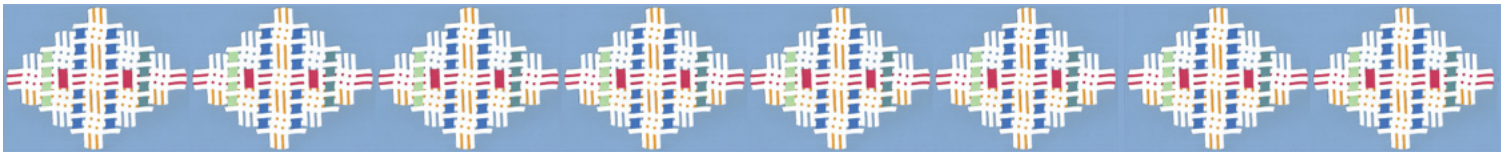
Girls in rural Ghana receive menstrual supplies from a Tema partner.

African Mission Partner Highlights

- **Working with a Tema partner to increase food security for villagers**

In 2016, one of our Tema partners -- HOCAP (Home of Care and Projection) -- initiated a relationship with Nyitawuta, an isolated rural village in the Volta region of Ghana. Farms in this community provide food for residents and are the most important source of outside income. One of the recent major goals for the HOCAP partnership with Nyitawuta has been to help the farmers increase the quality and quantity of crop yield.

In 2019 and 2020, Westminster contributed a \$2,000 grant to permit the start of a demonstration farm and also sent \$1,000 to help start the construction of large dam to irrigate 200 farms in the community. The irrigation well project was completed in February 2020 before the start of the rainy season at a total cost of \$17,000. Villagers cleared the land, and HOCAP organized the funding and construction of the well using the GlobalGiving web site, their own reserves, and the contribution from Westminster.



- **Working together to multiply resources to help girls**

Two of Westminster's Tema partners -- HOCAP and Tema Redemption Church -- joined together in 2019 to request money for menstrual hygiene education programs in rural communities: \$1,500 for Nyitawuta and \$700 for Okushibri. The partners were so impressed by the results of these programs that they replicated the training for a public school adopted last year by Redemption Church and raised about \$2,650 to give 13 teenage mothers an occupation. Most had been raped or forced into marriage. The Nyitawuta girls learned how to sew in a six-month program and later each received a sewing machine. In 2020, HOCAP will continue the vocational training program and the partners will run a Phase 2 menstrual hygiene training program.

Barbara Asempa, HOCAP Executive Director and Catechist of Tema Redemption Church, said, Westminster "brought these activities into reality by starting the menstrual hygiene education program." She added, "Our partnership with WPC is bringing joy and hope to the poor and the underprivileged."

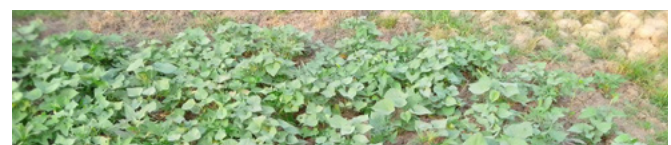


- **Hope Mission School Organizes and Funds School's New Agricultural Project**
(report from Felicia Kollie-Gambles)

Westminster has had a partnership with the Hope Mission School in Bernard Farm, Liberia since 2007 when Hope Mission was educating a few children in the pastor's home. Today, Hope Mission runs a K-12 school with more than 300 students and has had two high school graduating classes. In 2017 Westminster obtained a \$18,300 thank-offering grant from Presbyterian Women, designed to build the school's capacity. The agricultural project, started in 2019, is one of the first projects designed, funded, and run solely by Hope Mission.

Hope Mission's agriculture program at Hope mission is progressing. The kids are very involved with the project. They have planted potato greens, bitter balls, peppers, cucumbers, cassava, etc. The crops help the administrators give the teachers crops as bonuses and add to the feeding of the 11 Ebola orphans supported by Westminster. The price of foods is very high so the extra food is valued. Hope Mission administrators extend thanks and appreciation continuously to WPC for their support over the years. They also want WPC to know that if WPC had not invested in capacity building, they would have failed in operating the school and caring for the orphans. Now, they are capable of contributing to a project as there are challenges in operating schools and businesses in Liberia due to the lack of jobs. People who have jobs don't get pay monthly, but get pay every three months. Unemployment rate is still about 80 percent.

Thanks again and God bless you all. Remember our living is not in vain when we served God's children.





Westminster's October 2020 Trip to Ghana Postponed

Westminster will not be sending a delegation to Ghana this year, as had been planned, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 20, the Ghana Mission Network (GMN) Steering Committee voted to postpone for one year the GMN meeting scheduled for October 2020 in Tamale, Ghana. Belinda Quaye and Gabriel Ofori-Okai both serve on the Steering Committee GMN.

Our three Tema partners were preparing to host attendees from Westminster during the week prior to the GMN meeting. Efforts will now be made to set up a one or more remote meetings using Zoom technology with our Tema partners to exchange information.

The moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana has encouraged member congregations to adopt communities in impoverished parts of the country. Westminster's two Church partners are both responding. The Redemption Church is exploring the possibility of adopting a community in northern Ghana. The Greenwich Meridian Church has already started building relationships with a deprived community, Dedenyah, in a rural area of the Greater Accra Region.

The Pandemic Will Pass. Will the Climate Crisis Pass?

For four weeks in February a group of 10-12 Westminster members and friends met to discuss "Climate Church, Climate World." It's a book that challenges people of faith to take action that will save God's earth from heating to temperatures too dangerous to sustain life. The class decided to create an "Earth Care" team to plan further steps everyone can take at church and in our homes.

Little did we know one month later that our first team meeting would be by phone conference instead of in person. Little did we know that the Corona virus outbreak on the far side of the globe would suddenly turn life upside down in Albany, NY.

Yet in spite of home confinement, our discussion was as lively long distance as it was in class. We've got hundreds of ideas to share with you to make our homes, neighborhoods, and the world a cooler, greener, less polluted place. Recycle. Re-use. Reduce. Walk, cycle, don't drive. Compost. Eat vegetarian. Divest from fossil fuels. Live simply that others may simply live. We want to know what you have to say!

When will we be together again in church to celebrate Christ's abundant life? Easter is April 12. Earth Sunday is April 19. Earth Day is April 22. When the pandemic is over God's creation will still need healing. Let us pray for the energy, intelligence, imagination, and love to join God's mission for the earth.

-- Paul Randall



Thank You for Estate Gifts

Westminster Presbyterian Church is grateful to the foresight of Chet Burch and Marjorie Ketchum. Their forward-looking generosity has resulted in our church receiving gifts from their estates.

Chet Burch's bequest is one last expression of his love and support for the church he loved.

The Ketchum bequest was left by Marjorie in loving memory of her parents, who were longtime members of the church.

From Pastor Bill ~ In Faith, Hope, and Love

Remember - God's Love for Us Cannot be Cancelled

In the face of cancellations, remember: God's love for us cannot be cancelled. Prayer cannot be cancelled. Conversations need not be cancelled. Relationships need not be cancelled. Our love need not be cancelled. Our empathy and care for one another need not be cancelled. Songs can still be sung. Laughter can still be lifted. Self-care will not be cancelled. Hope will not be cancelled. Again, in Paul's words: "Hold fast to what is good." (My thanks to author Jamie Tworkowski who shared a version of my closing words.)

Easter Doesn't Require a Crowd

I think all can agree that Easter worship online just won't be the same as being in a congregation, with in-person special music and instrumentation, fuller pews, Easter lilies taunting those with allergies, and smiling faces. The lack of all these things won't stop Easter. Jesus has already left the tomb. We will miss the familiar trappings of Easter, but we still have the essentials.

In scripture, the first Easter is a fairly private affair. The small group of women come to the tomb, Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved come to the tomb. That's about it. Later in scripture two disciples are seeking to distance themselves from Jerusalem. While on the road they see Jesus. Jesus also appears to the gathered followers, a fairly small group, as they maintain social distancing in a locked room. A bit later a few go fishing and Jesus pops up. Even by Pentecost, 50 days later, the followers of Jesus were maintaining social distancing. Only once filled with the Spirit did they surge forth into public. Then they packed the speaking venue.

So this year, let's have a scriptural Easter, rather than a packed, crowded, public Easter. Recognize the risen Lord as he comes to us in the midst of social distancing. Look for signs of hope, renewal, and new life around you. Meditate on what the promise of resurrection means for you. Feel the presence of the Spirit of our Risen Lord with you and within you. And when the time is right, and the Spirit of Wisdom and Truth speaks through health authorities, we will be swept back into gatherings of believers.



Worship During Eastertide

Word on how to connect to our broadcast worship is being shared through our weekly news email, on the [website](#), and through the church [Facebook](#) page. If you are not receiving our weekly email yet, contact the church office or click [here to subscribe to weekly news](#). You will also find any updates about the status of suspension of in-person worship via these same resources.

Sunday, April 5

10:00 am Worship
“Giving Up Popularity”

Thursday, April 9

7:30 pm Worship

Friday, April 10

7:30 pm Worship

Sunday, April 12

10:00 am Worship
“Easter as Earthquake”

Sunday, April 19

10:00 am Worship
“Fingerprints of the Creator:
It’s Chaos Out There”

Sunday, April 26

10:00 am Worship
“Fingerprints of the Creator: It’s in the Genes” Mark 5:1-20, 1 Corinthians 12:20-26

Sunday, May 3

10:00 am Worship
“Not Out But In”

Sunday, May 10

10:00 am Worship
“At Home With a Good Mystery”

Sunday, May 17

10:00 am Worship
“Bigger Than Both of Us”

Sunday, May 24

10:00 am
“Facing Giants”

Palm Sunday

Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29, Matthew 21:1-21

Maundy Thursday

Rev. Bill Schram leading worship

Good Friday

Rev. Bill Schram leading worship

Easter Sunday

Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
Matthew 27:45-54, Matthew 28:1-10

Creation Care Celebration

Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
Genesis 45:3-11, Matthew 20:20-28

Eastertide

Rev. Bill Schram leading worship

Eastertide

Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
1 Corinthians 12:20-26, Mark 5:1-20

Eastertide

Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
Psalm 8, Mark 5:1-20

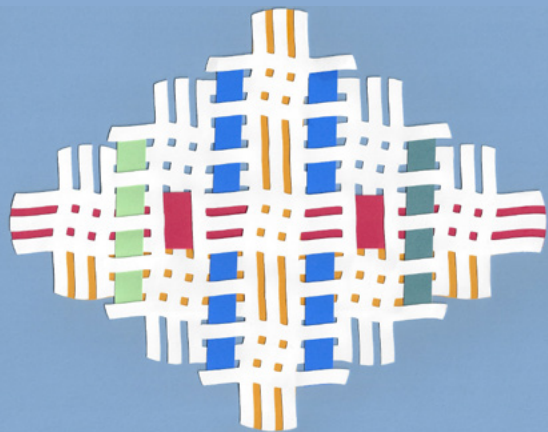
Eastertide

Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
Jeremiah 14:13-22, Mark 5:1-20

Eastertide

Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
Matthew 28:16-20, 1 Samuel 17 selected verses

In-person services and in-person church activities are suspended until further notice due to COVID-19



Regular in-person church activities are not listed, but will resume when possible (e.g. Bible Study, Choir practice, Church School, meetings of groups who use WPC space)

Visit the church website for updates: wpcalbany.org

Woven Together

APRIL into MAY • 2020

SUNDAY April 5, PALM SUNDAY

10:00 am Worship (online)

6

7:00 pm “Inspired” Book Study (online)

7

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm Pastor Chat (online)

8

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
7:30 pm Midweek Prayer Service (online)

9

7:30 pm Maundy Thursday Worship (online)

10

7:30 pm Good Friday Service (online)

SUNDAY April 12 Easter Sunday

10:00 am Worship (online)

14

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm Pastor Chat (online)
7:00 pm Session Meeting (online)

15

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
7:30 pm Midweek Prayer Service (online)

SUNDAY April 19

10:00 am Worship (online)

11:15 am Deacons Meeting (online)

21

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program

22

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program

7:30 pm Midweek Prayer Service (online)

SUNDAY April 26

10:00 am Worship (online)

28

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm Pastor Chat (online)

29

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
7:30 pm Midweek Prayer Service (online)

MAY

SUNDAY May 3

10:00 am Worship (online)

5

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm Pastor Chat (online)

6

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
7:30 pm Midweek Prayer Service (online)

SUNDAY May 10 Mother's Day

10:00 am Worship (online)

12

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm Pastor Chat (online)
7:00 pm Session Meeting (online)

13

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program

7:30 pm Midweek Prayer Service (online)

SUNDAY May 17

10:00 am Worship (online)

11:15 am Deacons Meeting (online)

19

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm Pastor Chat (online)
7:00 pm Trustees Meeting (online)

20

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
7:30 pm Midweek Prayer Service (online)

SUNDAY May 24

10:00 am Worship (online)

26

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm Pastor Chat (online)

27

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
7:30 pm Midweek Prayer Service (online)

SUNDAY May 31

10:00 am Worship (online)

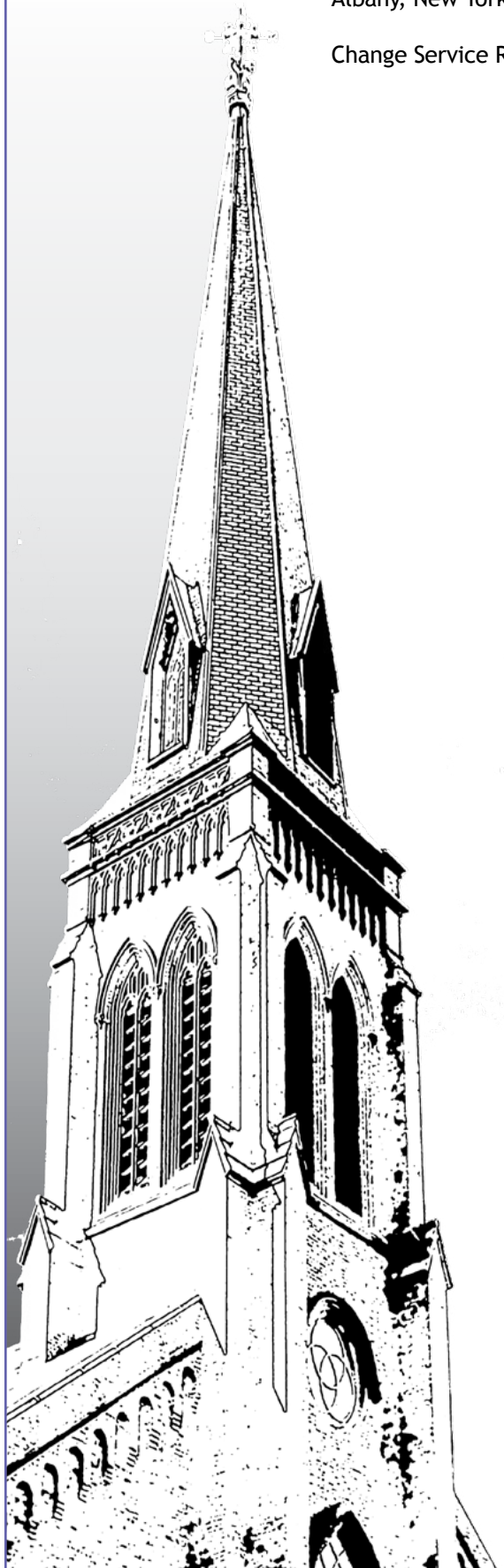


WESTMINSTER

— Presbyterian Church —

85 Chestnut Street
Albany, New York 12210

Change Service Requested



Westminster Presbyterian Church

CHURCH OFFICE- Hours

9:00 am-5:00 pm Tuesday & Thursday; Friday 9:00 am-12:00 noon

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Director of Christian Education: Belinda Quaye

Minister of Music and Arts: Alfred V. Fedak, FAGO, ChM

Parish Associate: Rev. Paul Randall

Sextons: Glenda Bennett, Joy Tallmadge, John Fox

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Send submissions to: newsletter@wpcalbany.org