



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

Epiphany • January • February 2020

Dear Friends,

Are you thinking about New Year Resolutions? New Year's Day is coming and there is always the pressure to make resolutions that will help us be better in some way during 2020. And if we fail at them? Well, Lent is coming in about 8 weeks and we can try giving up our excuses for not following our resolutions and try again.

Resolutions show both our desire to improve in some way, and an effort to take some control of our lives. It's said that nobody knows the future, and we don't like that uncertainty. No one is thrilled about uncertainty. Over time, uncertainty about the future is a cause of great stress. We can see that stress act itself out in hopeful sounding resolutions and in world-weary sighs about things that don't change; in all sides of the discussion about what the year will bring; in efforts to make plans and efforts to deal with the unexpected.

One way to ease the stress is to remember that God is still at work in creation and in our lives. We aren't in this alone. Another way to deal with uncertainty is to not just make resolutions, but then try to make plans on how to carry out the resolutions. This is true for individuals and for churches. Last year, we all did some thinking about the future of the church and challenges facing it. Priority concerns are; 1. Work toward sustainable finance; 2. Outreach and membership growth; 3. Enrich the spiritual life and vitality; 4. Encourage openness to change. There will be continuing discussion and efforts of these among committees, at Session and among the congregation.

Another way to ease stress is to remember that we abide in Christ and are guided by his teachings. In worship times coming up, we will move from the visit of the wise men, then Jesus' baptism and public arrival, then witness the calling of the disciples and hear the first part of the Sermon on the Mount. We will remember that Christ calls us to be with him. Then Christ teaches us the values by which we are to live and on which we are to shape the future. In the face of uncertainty about the future of the nation, our communities, our church and our lives, let us remember and seek to live within the values Christ teaches.

Peace,
Pastor Bill

Report from Session

Session joyfully approved the Baptism of Lily Grace Bosman, daughter of Julie (Norman) Bosman and Bruno Bosman and granddaughter of Starr and David Norman.

We have been fortunate to have a dedicated and talented Personnel Committee led by Leif Hartmark who recently presented an amendment of our Personnel Policies to assure compliance with New York State law on sexual harassment training. Session continues to focus on future fellowship opportunities for Westminster members and development of ideas for fundraising. As we say goodbye to 2019 and welcome 2020 we express sincere appreciation to elders who are finishing their terms on Session: Felicia Kollie Gambles, Leif Hartmark, and Susan Schell. Felicia has been tireless in her dedication to African mission, Leif has had a key role in Stewardship and Budget along with his work on the Personnel Committee, and Sue has served as Clerk during her two terms. We warmly welcome new Session members Arthur Fullerton and Larry Volk. We look forward to 2020 and the continued prayerful dedication of our Westminster family in this exciting time for our church.

Your Pastor Nominating Committee at Work

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) has reviewed the Personal Information Forms we have received. At this early stage, we have found several individuals who seem promising based on those reviews and who have confirmed that they are interested in going further. We are in the process of checking references before arranging initial interviews, likely after the first of the year.

Please continue to keep us in your prayers.

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

Weaving Our Future Together

Stewardship 2020 Update

Your Stewardship & Budget Committee wants to thank everyone who responded to our stewardship effort this fall. By supplying us your "Giving Goal" for 2020, you have shown your support for the church, helped our budget planning and contributed to our "Weaving Our Future Together." The Committee will be summarizing the giving information we receive and will follow up with people who have not responded. If you have been one of those who let returning your Giving Goal get lost in a shuffle, there is still time to show your support for our future. We will have a more detailed and complete report at the annual meeting of the congregation at the end of January.



Capital Campaign

Reminder About Outstanding Pledges

As 2019 comes to a close, so will our 2017-2019 Capital Campaign. We thank all of you who have contributed to this significant campaign of raising \$500,000! To date, we have raised \$432,816 from the congregation, friends, neighbors, loans and grants. We have updated and stabilized our steeple, renovated the Chapel and will begin planning our next project early in 2020 with the remaining \$40,463 in our Capital Campaign designated fund. In addition, we anticipate approximately \$17,900 to be received from outstanding pledges. If you are unable to complete your pledge, we are thankful for what you could contribute. If you have simply forgotten to complete your pledge, we would appreciate your finalizing it as soon as possible. Your generosity has enabled us to maintain and preserve our beautiful building allowing us to carry out Christ's work together. Thank you!



A Well-Deserved Congratulations to Al Fedak



The winner of the Vision 2020 #PCUSA2020 & Presbyterian Association of Musicians' Anthem Competition has been announced. "Blessed Are the Saints Who Trust in the Lord," composed by Al Fedak, won first prize. The anthem will be presented at the 224th General Assembly (2020) in Baltimore and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians' Worship & Music Conferences at Montreat in June-2020.

The contest called for an anthem that embodied the 2020 Vision Statement of the Presbyterian Church USA which was adopted in 2019. The statement calls for the church to be Prayerful, Courageous, United, Serving, Alive.

The anthem is one that Al had been commissioned to compose in honor of Leif Hartmark's brother, Kjell. He also submitted it to the competition. Our choir performed it here on November 10, without knowing it would be named the winning anthem.

Anniversary Organ Recital

Sunday, February 2 - 3:00 pm

On Sunday, May 4, 1930, Westminster Church's organist, Mr. Stuart Swart, dedicated our church's landmark pipe organ by playing an afternoon organ recital.

To celebrate that instrument's 90th anniversary, Al Fedak will perform a concert on this same instrument on Sunday afternoon, February 2, at 3:00 pm. The program will include some rarely-heard but colorful selections composed by Walther, Richter, Zimmermann, Carré, Fedak, and others (including a work performed by Mr. Swart at his 1930 concert).

All are invited to attend this gala event in celebration of Westminster Church's E. M. Skinner pipe organ and its storied past. Admission is free, but donations are welcome—all proceeds will benefit the church's Music Performance Fund.

Capitol Chamber Artists' Midwinter Concert

February 23, 3:00 pm

Did you know that Westminster Church's resident instrumental ensemble, the Capitol Chamber Artists, has its own YouTube channel? You can tune in at any time to see and hear excerpts from their live performances at Westminster Church. To date, CCA's videos have received more than 50,000 views around the world!

However, if you would like to experience them in person, CCA's next Westminster concert will take place in our sanctuary on Sunday afternoon, February 23, at 3:00 pm. CCA founder and violinist Mary Lou Saetta will be joined by cellist/gambist André O'Neil and organist/harpsichordist Al Fedak in a lively midwinter program of chamber music chosen especially to keep you warm and comfortable! As always, admission is free for members and friends of Westminster Church.



Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday, January 26

The annual meeting of the congregation and the corporation of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Albany, New York, will be held following worship on Sunday, January 26, 2020. We plan to have the 2019 annual reports available on Sunday, January 19 for advance reading.

Fellowship at Westminster

Last October, church members participated in a brainstorming about possible fellowship activities at the church. We wrote the suggestions and asked the people to put post-it notes by their top 3-5 choices. If willing to be notified of planning, they were asked to put their name on the post-it note. You can see the results by going to this [link](#). Each suggestion is listed with the number of tags/post-it notes, and the names are people interested but are not the chair people of an event. Session has been looking at ways to begin facilitating some of these without overburdening already busy people. If you have ideas or are willing to help initiate one of these, let the office know.

Church School News

A Happy New Year to all our teachers, children and youth. We look forward to an exciting and fruitful year.

During the winter session, lessons will be based on the following themes: Discipleship, Belonging, Friendship and Prayer. Each week, teacher/s will prepare and lead children through the four parts of each lesson: Welcome, Hear, Respond, and Launch.

Kindergarten and first graders will move into their own space after the Children's Message for fun and age appropriate activities with Nancy.

Children who remain in the sanctuary are welcome to the Prayground for quiet activities. I encourage parents and children to check out the new and exciting storybooks we just added to the stock.

The youth will continue to explore the stories in the Echo curriculum, which encourages imagining and connecting to stories through guided dialogue.

In February, some of our youth will join others in the Presbytery on a trip to Washington, D.C. for the annual youth leadership forum.

We thank our teachers and volunteers for their dedication throughout the past year.

You're welcome to visit us on the third floor during the Second Hour.

Westminster African Mission Day

Please join us for two creative events

Saturday • January 18, 2020

**January 18
African
Mission
Day**

Come to a MoonBee!

10:00 am to 12 noon

Jobs for everyone. Come join us!

African Mission Day on January 18, 2020 will be the 6th annual event Westminster has hosted to help aid children who lost parents in the devastating Ebola epidemics in Liberia and

Ebola Orphans Support Party

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm



led by Fatima aka "Mama Zumba"

Suggested Donation: \$20/person

Westminster Church • 85 Chestnut St, Albany, NY



Sierra Leone in 2014 and 2015. The Ebola epidemics were especially wretched for children. They were orphaned, left without extended family and were shunned and stigmatized by their own communities. Westminster responding quickly to the Ebola crisis in our partner countries. Since the epidemic started in 2014, the Church has supported Ebola orphans in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Eleven Ebola orphans now live with Pastor and Mrs. Diggs at the Hope Mission School in Liberia and are fully supported by Westminster (including school fees). The 11 includes Baby Princess Freeman and two of her siblings.

Baby Princess has a typical story. When she was six months old, six of her relatives died from Ebola in a single week, including her mother and grandmother. Princess is now a thriving elementary school student and calls WPC member Felicia Kollie-Gambles "Mom" in their regular phone calls. Westminster also supports Ebola orphans at the M.O.M. orphanage in Freetown, Sierra Leone, who each receive a bag of food from Westminster four times a year.

The fundraising goal for African Mission Day is to sustain the Church's current annual support commitment of \$9,550 to Ebola orphans in Liberia and Sierra Leone. You may support this need by paying at the door on January 18th, giving online at: www.wpcalbany.org/give or sending a check payable to Westminster Church; memo "Ebola Orphans." (mail check to 85 Chestnut Street, Albany NY 12210). Honorary Committee levels range from \$50 to \$500.



Save the Date: African Spring Dinner

Saturday March 21, 5:00 pm

Our invited speaker is Mayor Wilmot Collins, a Liberian immigrant who is now the mayor of Helena Montana, and who is running for the U.S. Senate in Montana in the 2020 election. We have invited Mayor Collins to discuss his experiences as a refugee, as an immigrant to the USA, and as an elected official, as well as to share his aspirations for the future including for Liberia.



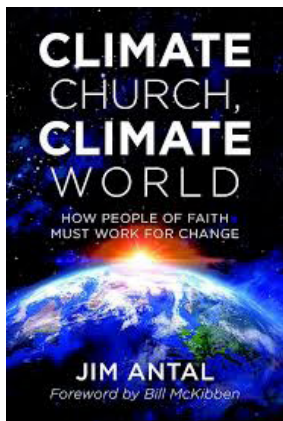
Westminster Ghana Mission Trip 2020

In October 2020, a Westminster team will have a chance to visit our Mission partners in Tema, Ghana, and also attend the Ghana Mission Network meeting in Ghana. Mission trips like this help us put a face to our mission partners and appreciate the work, energy, and efforts they devote to our collaborative projects. Long-lasting cross-cultural relationships are developed. A Westminster team last visited Ghana in 2016, and our partners visited us in 2018.

The core trip dates for the 2020 trip will be approximately October 8 -18, with the addition of travel days and any independent travel that participants want to undertake. The visit would start in Tema, near Accra, Ghana's capital, with visits to our partners and some of our collaborative projects. Our partners include Greenwich Meridian and Redemption Church, and the NGO affiliated with Redemption - the Home of Care and Protection (HOCAP). The team will then travel to the north of the country to the annual Ghana Mission Network meeting where teams from the USA and Ghana meet to reflect on how to develop their partnerships. Belinda Quaye and Gabriel Ofori-Okai of WPC are current members of the Ghana Mission Network Steering Committee. Please let Belinda Quaye (belindaquaye@wpcalbany.org) know by January 24 if you are interested in joining the trip so we can set up a planning meeting. The trip will also be discussed during the January 5th African Mission second hour. A partial stipend and fundraising opportunities will be available to Westminster members.



Climate Care at Westminster (by Paul Randall)



How can people of faith respond to the climate change crisis that we hear and read about almost every day? Here are four opportunities for learning and action at Westminster Church in the New Year:

- **ATTEND** two Second Hours: On January 12th, Judy Hartley, along with Margaret and Paul Randall will share their experience at a PCUSA conference in Stony Pt., NY “Peace for the Earth: from the Bible to the Front Lines.” On January 19th, Laura Falk will report on the nation-wide Climate Reality Project founded by former Vice President Al Gore.

- **JOIN US** for a 4-week book discussion of Climate Church, Climate World by Jim Antal. 7:15 pm 4 Wednesdays at the church, January 22 & 29 and February 5 & 12.

How can we apply the Golden Rule to future generations? How can we shift from personal salvation to collective salvation? Books are \$25. Contact Rev. Paul Randall (randallpaul@ymail.com.)

- **VISIT AND DOWNLOAD** the “Climate Care Challenge - an Eco-Justice Journey.” An overview of personal and outward steps. www.pcusa.org/climatecarechallenge.

- **WATCH FOR** the Lenten Devotional “Tread Lightly” Creation Care calendar for 2020. Available in January.

FOCUS Worship Service

February 2 at Trinity United Methodist: 10:00 am

The Winter Worship and Annual Meeting of the FOCUS Churches will be Sunday, February 2, 2020. The service is hosted by Trinity United Methodist Church at 10:00 am. The church is located at 235 Lark Street in Albany.

FOCUS Empty Bowls Fundraiser

Sunday, February 2 at Delmar Reformed Church: 12 noon - 2:30 pm

Proceeds go to help fight hunger in our community and beyond

FOLLOWING THE FOCUS COMBINED SERVICE @ TRINITY UNITED METHODIST

2020
EMPTY BOWLS

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 2ND

12:00-2:30

**Delmar Reformed Church
386 Delaware Ave, Delmar, NY**

AN EVENT OF FOCUS CHURCHES OF ALBANY

A festive family event to support our shared efforts to end hunger and promote food justice. Choose a locally made soup bowl & enjoy gourmet soups, bread & baked goodies. The bowl is yours to keep as a reminder of the many empty bowls in the world. Your attendance supports the service and advocacy work of FOCUS Churches of Albany.

save the date!

\$25 for a beautiful handmade bowl, homemade soups & desserts





Westminster Sends \$10,000+ for African Projects “to Change the Lives of Children”

Thanks to a successful African Family Night fundraiser on November 9, Westminster is able to send end-of-year grants valued at more than \$10,000 to its five partners in West Africa, completing execution of the African Mission Budget announced in February 2019-

-- \$5,000 in end of year grants is going to our three partners in Tema, Ghana to support projects for which they submitted detailed requests:

- Greenwich Meridian Church in Tema is refurbishing a room in an empty building of the school they operate. Their request said, “This library will benefit not only the school children but also the children in the Tema Community.” Greenwich Meridian is also raising money for the Library.
- Tema’s Redemption Church has a newly negotiated partnership agreement with a poorly funded public school located on land adjacent to Church property. Redemption asked for Westminster help to help construct a computer lab for the school, starting with computers sent by WPC earlier this year.
- HOCAP (Home of Care and Projection) has been raising money on Global Giving’s website in the last three months for a well to irrigate the community garden started earlier this year in Nyitawuta (eastern Ghana). HOCAP asked for assistance to get them close to their \$10,000 goal by December 31. Once HOCAP has \$10,000 it will complete the specifics on constructing the well next year. The goal: enable farmers “to keep any growing crops irrigated throughout the season.”

-- \$5,500 is for Westminster partners in Liberia and Sierra Leone:

- For the Hope Mission School, the December monthly payment will include: \$1,750 for January scholarship funds for 41 students (needed in January; \$600 for the traditional end of year stipends for teachers and staff, and \$1,400 budgeted for bunk beds for Hope Mission Ebola orphans now sleeping on a dirt floor.
- For the M.O.M. orphanage in Freetown, supplies and donations will be sent this year to support a large M.O.M. Mission day in January. On Mission Day 17 computers and donated Bibles will be presented; both were requested during Fatmata Hilton’s last visit. In addition, WPC’s two representatives in Sierra Leone will give bags of food to every orphan and deliver 40 menstrual hygiene kits to be presented to girls who take a menstrual hygiene class.



Second Hour - February 9: “Love Your Neighbor”

Join your church family for a Valentine themed mixer! We will get to know each other a little better through directed conversations. Delicious Valentine refreshments will be served. ♥ ♥ ♥

Join Us for Ash Wednesday Service

February 26 at 7:30 pm

Join us for readings, time for reflection, hymns and imposition of ashes.

Cookies and More...

Volunteers Needed to Bring Fellowship Time Refreshments

New and returning volunteers are needed to bring refreshments to be enjoyed during our fellowship time following worship. We invite and encourage new participants to join in - our 2020 sign-up calendar is wide open. A whole range of refreshments, from homemade to store bought, are welcome: cookies, cheese & crackers, grapes and other goodies are all enjoyed!

We use Meal Train - an online calendar sign-up system to help us coordinate coverage for each Sunday and plan ahead. There are several easy ways you can volunteer to bring refreshments:

1. Do you already have an account for Westminster's Meal Train site? If so, just log into the site and sign-up! Need a refresher? No problem - just ask!
2. This is new to you and you haven't joined Westminster's Meal Train yet, but would like to? Just let us know, and we will send you an email invitation to join.
3. Don't want to do this online? We can enter your information into the Meal Train calendar for you.

Please contact Fatmata Hilton (hiltonfatmata@yahoo.com) or Valerie Shanley (vshanley@nycap.rr.com) and they will be happy to help you with any of these options. We hope to hear from you!

Worship & Second Hours

Sunday, January 5
10:00 am Worship
"Being Wise in Herod's World"
Second Hour: African Mission Update

Sunday, January 12
10:00 am Worship
"A Good Introduction" Isaiah 42:1-9
Second Hour: The Global Warming Crisis I

Sunday, January 19
10:00 am Worship
"The Danger of Certainty"
Second Hour: Global Warming Crisis II

Sunday, January 26
10:00 am Worship
"Giving It All for the Team"
Annual Meeting of the Congregation- following worship

Sunday, February 2
10:00 am FOCUS Churches Worship and Annual Meeting
Trinity United Methodist Church- 235 Lark Street, Albany
(followed by Empty Bowls fundraiser at Delmar Reformed Church: 12 noon-2:30 pm)

Sunday, February 9
10:00 am Worship
"Prescriptions and Descriptions"
Second Hour: "Love Your Neighbor" Fellowship Mixer

Sunday, February 16
10:00 am Worship
"Salt and Light"
Second Hour: My Brother's and Sister's Keeper Program-led by Willie White

Sunday, February 23
10:00 am Worship
"Which One Are You?"
Second Hour: A WPC Mardi Gras

Wednesday, February 26
7:30 pm Worship

Epiphany Sunday
Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
Isaiah 60:1-6, Matthew 2:1-12

Epiphany Season
Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
Matthew 3:13-17

Epiphany Season
Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
Isaiah 49:1-7 John 1:29-42

Epiphany Season
Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
Isaiah 9:1-4 Matthew 4:12-23

FOCUS Combined Worship

Epiphany Season
Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
Micah 6:1-8 Matthew 5:1-12

Epiphany Season
Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
1 Corinthians 2:1-16 Matthew 5:13-20

Epiphany Season
Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
Exodus 24:12-18 Matthew 17:1-9

Ash Wednesday
Rev. Bill Schram leading worship





JANUARY • 2020

1
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
Office Closed

2
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

3
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

SUNDAY January 5
9:00 am Sunday Bible Study
10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Church School/Second Hour

6
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

7
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program

8
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
7:00 pm Urban Gardening Series

9
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

10
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

SUNDAY January 12
9:00 am Sunday Bible Study
10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Church School/Second Hour

13
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

14
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
7:00 pm Session Meeting

15
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
6:00 pm Pine Bush Dinner

16
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

17
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

18
10:00 am African Mission Day

SUNDAY January 19

9:00 am Sunday Bible Study
10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Church School/Second Hour
11:15 am Deacons Meeting

20 MLK Jr. Day
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

21
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
7:00 pm Compassionate Friends
7:00 pm Trustees Meeting

22
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program

23
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

24
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

SUNDAY January 26
9:00 am Sunday Bible Study
10:00 am Worship
Annual Meeting of the Congregation
11:15 am Church School

27
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

28
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program

29
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program

30
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

31
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

FEBRUARY

SUNDAY February 2

10:00 am FOCUS Worship
at Trinity UMC
3:00 pm Centennial Organ Recital

3
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

4
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program

5
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program

6
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

7
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

SUNDAY February 9

9:00 am Sunday Bible Study
10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Church School/Second Hour

10
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

11
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
7:00 pm Session Meeting

12
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
7:00 pm Urban Gardening Series

13
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

14
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

SUNDAY February 16
9:00 am Sunday Bible Study
10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Church School/Second Hour
11:15 am Deacons Meeting

17
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

18
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
7:00 pm Compassionate Friends
7:00 pm Trustees Meeting

19
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
6:00 pm Pine Bush Dinner

20
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

21
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

SUNDAY February 23

9:00 am Sunday Bible Study
10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Church School/Second Hour
3:00 pm Capital Chamber Artists
Concert

24
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

25
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program

26
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program

27
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

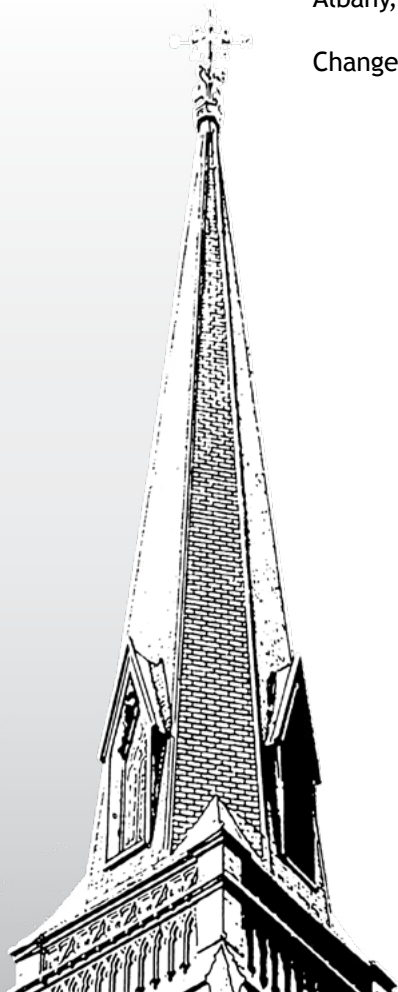


WESTMINSTER

— Presbyterian Church —

85 Chestnut Street
Albany, New York 12210

Change Service Requested



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Westminster Presbyterian Church

CHURCH OFFICE- Hours

9:00 am-5:00 pm Tuesday & Thursday; Friday 9:00 am-12:00 noon
Phone: 518.436.8544

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Office Administrator: Jennifer Schoenfisch

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