

Dear Friends, June & July • 2019

As I write this, I am still receiving your suggestions/requests for sermon topics. I look forward to seeing what you come up with. I hope you are looking forward to hear what I come up with in response. Sermons on suggested topics will fill the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays of July and August. Of course, I still need to fill out the Sundays of June. The first 2 weeks will complete our look at characteristics of thriving faith communities that we can see in the book of Acts.

The last three Sundays of June will, I hope, help us reflect on what and how we learn from Scripture. I'm taking three passage of Scripture the are rarely preached on. Another way to think of it is that I'll look at scripture narratives that we don't teach children in Sunday School. Why don't we teach them? They don't meet simplistic understandings of what we're supposed to get out of Scripture.

One overly simple understanding is that if the Bible is God's word, then God must approve of what the Bible shows people doing. Really? Should we cheat our brother like Jacob did to Esau? Should we sell our youngest brother to traders? Should we encourage the head of our nation to have 1,000 wives and concubines at the same time? Some things are in the Bible because they are narratives of questionable human behavior with which and through which God still was able to work.

Another misunderstanding comes from picking a verse to support an opinion without thinking about what other parts of Scripture say. In my ministry a common example has been hearing "Jesus turned water into wine so drinking is okay." Often I've heard that from someone who is avoiding saying "I have a drinking problem." It ignores other Scripture that speaks against drunkenness from drinking too much or that urges self-control in what we do.

One other misunderstanding is that we shouldn't ask questions of scripture to get at a deeper understanding. As I approach the narratives I will use, I will be asking three questions: What does this tell us about God?; What does this tell us about people?; and What does this tell us about the relationship between God and people?

Simple assumptions based on my bias, or refusing to ask questions to aid in understanding or justifying what I am doing because someone else has done it - all these things can lead to misunderstanding, suspicion about others, and self-righteousness. It can happen in how we learn from Scripture and it can happen in daily life. Join me in exploring better ways and understandings.

Peace, Pastor Bill



Pastor Nominating Committee Elected

Albany Presbytery's Committee on Ministers and Congregations (COMAC) gave WPC permission to elect a Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) to the next steps in the process. This was after they received the results to date of our Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) Survey and discussions of its findings. The PNC was elected by the congregation on May 26 and includes: Christabel Abban, Ervin Ashburn, Beth Coombe, Lily Easton, Caleb Karkari, Lynne McKee, and Larry Volk. We give thanks for this team and ask that you pray for all throughout the search process.

The PNC's first task will be to use the CAT information and discussion results to complete the form, called an MIF, which will be circulated by the PCUSA on its list of churches seeking pastors. As the resumes of candidates are matched, these will be sent on to our PNC for follow-up.

Meanwhile, the whole church will be continuing its life of worship, mission and fellowship. We will also have time to do further work on planning future programs at the church to help answer challenges, opportunities and needs. Efforts to improve the financial status of the church and decrease the endowment draw to sustainable levels will also continue. The stronger WPC is in terms of effort and finances, the more attractive it will be to skilled candidates.

Church School News

June 9th is Church School Sunday. It is also the day of Pentecost. Children and youth will be playing some roles during worship. This is also the day we acknowledge and show appreciation for our dedicated teachers. All children and youth, including their friends, are welcome to share in this special day.

We shall be saying goodbye to our **graduating high school seniors** and wish them well as they embark on their respective college careers. David Adjei, Agnes Sowah and Henry Kopplin.

Congratulations also to Westminster **college graduates**: Andrew Wrede, Kate Gallagher and Chanelle Ndagire (class Salutatorian!).

The Presbyterian Youth Triennium is July 16th -20th. Four of our youth - Agnes Sowah, Henry Sowah, Caleb Karkari and David Adjei - will join other youth and chaperons from our Presbytery to travel to Purdue University in Indiana to be a part of this awesome experience. Thanks to all who donated to the pancake brunch to support this cause.



Increasing the Sense of Worshiping Together

When asked in a Second Hour what would strengthen congregational singing, Al Fedak said "sitting closer together." That makes sense. Few of us would want to solo on "The Star Spangled Banner." However, we'll join right in when surrounded by people at a public event. Worship leaders will tell us to pray together but when we are scattered, we lose a sense of being together. Therefore, in an effort to increase our closeness together in worship, we will be roping off the last 3 rows of the pews during June. The impact will then be evaluated over the summer before continuing this in September.

Don't Stop Inviting

Easter ended our introduction of the "From Welcoming to Inviting" effort. Hopefully many of you took it seriously and practiced it. If not, you can still step up your efforts. If you did take it seriously, don't stop. The goal wasn't to be inviting for a period of time. The goal was to intentionally grow into a practice of being inviting. To make a difference, being inviting has to be an ongoing practice by as may in a church as possible. Keep it up and help make a difference.

Summer Worship Times and Places

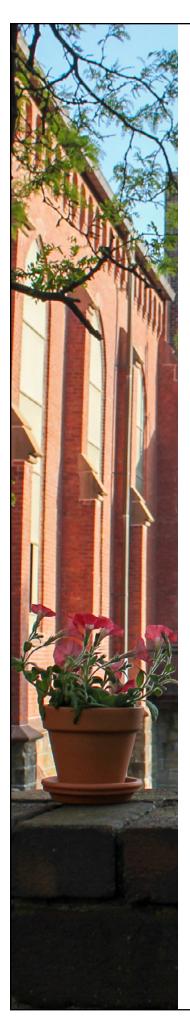
(10:00 am for FOCUS Services and WPC)

This summer, we again share worship at FOCUS church partners at 10:00 am on the first Sundays of July, August, and September. The hosts are:

- July 7: First Presbyterian Church
- August 4: Trinity United Methodist Church
- September 1: Emmanuel Baptist Church

At Westminster, worship on the other Sundays of July and August will also be at 10:00 am. As was done last year, worship for July and August will be in the Assembly Room, which remains cooler than the sanctuary in the summer.





Celebrating Westminster's Centennial!



The celebration of 100 years of Westminster continues with more special events planned by our Centennial Committee to commemorate this anniversary. We honor Westminster's history while looking to our future!

As we celebrate this year, we also join in recognizing the Centennial of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

Please mark your calendars for these coming events:

Sunday, June 2: Heritage Communion



This will be a meaningful and exciting worship service where all will receive Communion Tokens - just as many Presbyterian worshipers did in the early 20th century! Communion Tokens were given to those members of the congregation who "showed adequate knowledge of the faith and were deemed to be living upright lives." Come receive your Token and partake in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Annual Church Picnic

Join us for our Annual Church Picnic after worship at Tawasentha Park where the Centennial Celebration will continue with a special cake commemorating 100 years of Westminster.

Sunday, September 8:

The Rev. Rick Spalding, former Associate Pastor, will be our guest preacher to help celebrate the Centennial.

Sunday, Oct. 6: World Communion Sunday

Celebrating Westminster's worldwide heritage and mission.

Saturday, October 26: Heritage Potluck Supper

This will be a festive evening of entertainment and will feature foods of our membership's varied heritages. Save the date and watch for details in future communications.

Sunday, October 27: Reformation (Heritage) Worship Service We will welcome The Rev. James Reisner back to the pulpit.

Summer Music at Westminster

Open Choir Loft, June 23 & 30

The Westminster Church Choir will sing its last robed service on Trinity Sunday (Father's Day), June 16. The two Sundays after that, June 23 and 30, will be Open Choir Loft Sundays—mornings on which anyone interested can sing in the choir. If you'd like to give choir a try on either or both of those Sundays, simply come to the chancel at 9:00 am to rehearse the morning's hymns and anthems. Robes will not be worn, and there will be no weeknight rehearsals: simply come as you are, and bring your best singing voice. Singing in the Westminster Choir is a wonderful experience—ask any choir member! Why not give it a try?



First Friday Concert, August 2

At 7:00 pm on Friday, August 2, the critically-acclaimed Decho Ensemble will return to Westminster Church to perform their second First-Friday concert here. Since its founding in 2011, the Decho Ensemble, a trio of young professional saxophonists from the Buffalo area, has performed throughout North America and Europe. Pursuing their goal of broadening the saxophone's voice in concert music, the group performs standard repertoire, adapts early music for performance on saxophones, and frequently collaborates with composers in the creation of new works. They perform on vintage Buescher saxophones built in the United States. Decho's last appearance here was in 2015, and it was breathtaking! Do plan to hear them on Friday evening, August 2. A freewill offering will be received.

Schuyler Inn Book Distribution Event: June 5

Schuyler Inn book distributions continue to be very popular with residents, both children and adults. The next event will be held on Wednesday, June 5 from 4:30 pm until 6:00 pm. Grassroot Givers continues to donate the books. Also, due to the generosity of congregation members, we are able to give out gift cards to the families, in their choice of Price Chopper or Walmart. Thank you to all who participate in this endeavor, through donations of books, gift cards, or time. Please contact Gail Garrison for more information: garrisongail1@gmail.com

Come to June 16th Second Hour

to Hear Updates about our African Mission Initiatives

Leaders of African Missions will report at the Sunday, June 16 Second Hour on initiatives to be funded in 2019 in Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone to change the lives of children.

Thanks to generous support, Westminster has raised 84 percent of the money needed for the February 2019 target budget for African Mission. Additional money raised this year will complete funding for the year.



FOCUS News

FOCUS Churches have targeted three areas for future efforts: Anti-Racism, Housing, and Immigration. Discussions on these areas will be held after the FOCUS Churches joint worship services this summer. Please plan on staying and share your thoughts.

July 7 First Presbyterian: Anti-Racism August 4 Trinity Methodist: Housing September 1 Emmanuel Baptist: Immigration



Ghana Partner Updates

Greenwich Meridian Church: With the help of the church and support from the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Albany \$3,650.00 was raised to complete the dining hall of a school the church supports. All are happy with the results which foster calm and togetherness.

An event started in 2017 allowed individuals to select clothes, household items and electronics either free or at a reduced cost. This event has been rechristened the Meridian Shower, and has expanded to feed about four hundred street children including drug addicts. The church has allocated funds and members of the congregation volunteered to distribute food to street children. The church is currently considering various ways in which this event could be made more effective and expanded to include counseling and medical outreach.

Redemption Congregation: During the visit to WPC, Redemption indicated that it was adopting a school in Tema. The church is looking into ways to make sure children can be supported for effective learning. Fans have been added to classrooms, and Redemption continues to support needy students in various institutions. A talk on menstrual hygiene was presented to junior youth of the church and menstrual supplies were distributed. This was repeated in the Redemption Valley government school which is currently being adopted. In total one hundred teenage girls were reached.

HOCAP Mission: A needs assessment was conducted on menstrual hygiene management in two peri-urban communities. Findings included that girls feel shy to talk openly about the subject; they knew about sanitary towels but most of them whose parents could not afford then used other materials instead. Only a few girls spoke to their parents when they started menstruating but rather spoke asked for help from peers. Some even went to their friends who could afford sanitary pads to ask for help. Plans therefore include continuing the research in this area and looking for sustainable ways to help girls to become more comfortable so that school is not disrupted due to menstrual challenges. Barbara Asempa, Executive Direction of HOCAP Missions is requesting that available funding from WPC will be used in this area.

Lois Wilson Gives Thanks

I am most grateful for the outpouring of support from Westminster members and friends after the health issues I experienced in March and April. Thank you for all you did -- prayers, cards and notes, calls, visits, and positive thoughts. Blessings to each of you, Lois

New Church Photo Directory - Status Update

This project has taken longer than expected while work has been underway to make necessary updates to records in our church database that will be used to create the roster that will appear in the directory.

In the meantime, we have worked with Lifetouch to complete other required directory preparation tasks. We know people are looking forward to having a new directory - your patience is appreciated!

Trustees Corner

The Westminster Trustees have accomplished many projects during the past few years and our Board would like to communicate these to the congregation:

- With the guidance of Glenda, we decluttered the church basement and other areas of storage.
- A crew of talented folks freshly painted the main office, the inner office, the small meeting room and the library.
- Ceiling lights on the main floor and on the second floor were replaced with more attractive LED fixtures that are more efficient.
- •To prepare for a required financial audit in the future, a dedicated finance committee was formed and spent many hours re-sorting the budgetary line items, finding the patterns of income and expenses to educate the congregation of our monetary situation, and performing a long-over due balancing of our checkbook.
- •The former "flower room" which is being used for storage by the FOCUS breakfast program was cleaned, painted, repaired and de-moused.
- •In the kitchen, new refrigerators/freezers were bought to replace the ones that had died after forty years of use. Months later a warming oven was purchased to replace the pizza ovens that no longer worked.
- The leaking faucets and toilets in the main floor restrooms and in the kitchen were refurbished to save us water expense.
- Fallen ceiling tiles in the Assembly Room were re-glued. And a new automatic closer was installed on the door leading to the alleyway.
- A dying tree in the corner of the parking lot was removed and a perennial garden was planted there. All the gardens around the church are routinely weeded, replanted when needed and mulched.
- Peeling paint in the Welles Room was repaired and re-painted.
- An updated contract was created for the parking lot rental spaces.
- The blown light bulbs in the sanctuary were recently replaced with LEDs where possible.
- A survey of some members of the congregation was given to help us prioritize the many projects that are ahead for Westminster.
- A new sump-pump was bought and installed.
- A new snow blower was purchased.
- New hot water heaters were recently installed. As soon as the weather warms up enough, a plumber has been contracted to repair a steam leak in the cellar.
- A new security system was installed.
- And, of course, the church steeple and roof were repaired!



How Many Trustees Does It Take to Change a Lightbulb?

Normally only one, using a long pole to reach the chandeliers. But when there are dozens of lights that the pole cannot reach, it takes a crew of volunteers to assemble a tall scaffold, so that one brave sole can climb up to examine every light. It also takes an entire day to do all of the 8 chandeliers above the main floor (each with 14 lights) plus the 4 chandeliers above the choir (each with 9 lights). That's not counting the 2 chandeliers above the balcony, or the row of lights lining the arch, or the flood lights high on the side walls pointing toward the chancel. Those require long ladders, or rental of a special lift to reach the top of the arch, as even scaffolding is inadequate. And don't forget the special blocking that the scaffolding needs to handle uneven floors. It's amazing how simple jobs are magnified by height!

Basic Witness Support - you can help our budget by contributing toward this cost What is Basic Witness Support, also known as per capita? It is an amount we pay per member to the Albany Presbytery, the Synod of the Northeast and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA. This year that amount is \$43.00 per active member.

The per capita is an expression of our belief that our church is connectional, that working together from the local level up to the national level, can do more together than any single part can do.

It is a way of sharing the costs that equitably belong to the whole Presbyterian community. It has been said that per capita apportionment is like a utility bill. Just as we pay for heat, light, water and telephone in order to remain connected to the utility systems and benefit from the services provided, we also pay per capita so that the Presbyterian system can function on behalf of all of us. It is the necessary linkage in our connectional system.

And more. Its benefits touch Westminster Presbyterian Church directly.

What churches in the Presbytery give in Basic Witness Support helps provide the resources for the COMAC committee which helped WPC in the interim search and will be helping in the Pastoral Search. It provides resources for the Immigration Task Force that in turn have been shared here. It supports the Grant/Loan program that provided help for our steeple repair.

What is given to the Synod provides training programs and grant opportunities for churches like ours. What is given to the General Assembly helps provide the computerized matching process we'll use for the pastoral search. It partly supports the work of World Mission that includes Mission Partners like Josh Heikilla in West Africa. Josh has been a resource for our African Mission.

The church pays this from the income toward our overall budget. Members can help WPC by contributing toward their per capita in addition to your regular giving. If you can donate your per capita cost of \$43 per member in your household, it will allow more of your regular giving to be used for the work we do here while supporting work that touches Presbyterians from the Capital District and around the world. You can pledge and give donations online at http://www.wpcalbany.org/give or drop in the collection plate anytime.

Wizard's Wardrobe Is Looking for Tutors

Wizard's Wardrobe is a tutoring program in the South End of Albany. They begin with First and Second graders from the South End to help them read and write proficiently by the time they finish Third grade.

The program now has 15 students and 31 tutors. Students come twice a week for 1 1/2 hours. Roughly 1/3 see the same tutor both days. Others see 2 different tutors. The volunteer tutors are vetted, trained for 13 hours on two consecutive Saturdays; monthly supplemental trainings are also offered; a variety of reference materials are available. The on-site library has over 1,800 books, many graded for reading levels, all can be found in the program's database.

The program is held at 20 Rensselaer St., a block east of Giffen Elementary, in space that has been transformed into a learning area that resembles a castle. Students enter through a freshly painted wardrobe.

Nancy Ost from Westminster has tutored there and is glad to speak about her experience. For more information, contact info@wizardswardrobe.org, or see www.wizardswardrobe.org.

Upcoming tutor training dates are September 14 and 21; November 9 and 16; and January 11 and 18.

Some Notes of Thanks

Fellowship Time Refreshments Volunteers: Many thanks to those who have so generously and faithfully provided the refreshments enjoyed during our fellowship time following worship to date in 2019: Sue Barwig, Kelly Crisfield, Fatmata Hilton, Margie Mayer, Marie McClumpha, Lynne McKee, Anne Older, Nancy Ost, Margaret Randall, Eve Ryan, Valerie Shanley, Carolyn Smith, and Linore & Dixon Southworth. We are seeking new volunteers! Keep it as simple as you want - no pressure at all to provide home-baked goods. Please touch base with Fatmata Hilton if you would like to sign-up - she will be happy to help you.

Emergency Overflow Homeless Shelter Volunteers: We are thankful for Westminster volunteers who provided on-site hospitality and nourishing meals for Shelter guests and staff each Sunday night throughout the 2018-19 season (November 2018 - April 2019.) On-Site Hospitality: John Bossung, Fatmata Hilton, Valerie Shanley, Allan & Mary Jean Tedrow, and Ned Trudeau. Meal Preparation: Sue & Floyd Barwig, Diane Bossung, Ruthanne Brod, Kelly Crisfield, Cindy & Tom Dwyer, Shirley Diven, Gail Garrison, Nancy Ost, Sue Schell, Valerie Shanley, Larry Volk, Kris & George Wilhelm and Sheila Wrede.

Congratulations:

Allan and Mary Jean Tedrow Recognized for Dedicated Service to the Emergency Overflow Shelter: Allan and Mary Jean Tedrow were honored by the Capital Area Council of Churches for seventeen years of devoted volunteer service at the Emergency Overflow Shelter. The presentation took place at the end of season dinner for Shelter guests, staff, volunteers and supporters held on Tuesday, April 23 at First Lutheran Church. Thank you, Mary Jean and Allan!

Felicia Kollie-Gambles Receives Community Leader Award: Congratulations to Felicia Kollie-Gambles who received a Community Leader Award from the Cuttington University Alumni Association in The Americas. The award was given in recognition of Felicia's leadership and dedication to mission work both here and in West Africa. A particularly notable fundraising project in Liberia has been the Hope Mission School in Bernard Farm. The award was presented at the Alumni Awards Ceremony in Crofton Maryland on April 27th. Friends and family, including Fatmata Hilton along with Jim and Martha Reisner, joined in the celebration

Congratulations to Emmanuel Tay: We salute Emmanuel Tay, son of Olivia Quiah, who recently completed U.S. Marine Corps Basic Training at Parris Island, SC. His proud family traveled to attend the graduation ceremony. Emmanuel has moved on to his next duty assignment in North Carolina.









Worship & Second Hours

Sunday, June 2 Eastertide

10:00 Worship Rev. Bill Schram leading worship "Thriving Communities: Networking" Acts 15:23,30-36, Luke 9:1-6

Second Hour: Annual Church Picnic

Sunday, June 9 Pentecost Sunday, Church School Sunday
10:00 Worship Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
"Thriving Communities: Articulating Beliefs" Acts 2:1-14, John 17:14-21
Second Hour: Reception with cake to celebrate Church School Sunday

Sunday, June 16 Trinity Sunday

10:00 Worship Rev. Bill Schram leading worship

"Scripture Rarely Preached On: Near Your House"

Nehemiah 3:29-32, Hebrews 12:1,2

Second Hour: Updates About African Mission Initiatives

Sunday, June 23 Second Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 Worship Rev. Bill Schram leading worship

"Scripture Rarely Preached On: Despair or Share"

2 Kings 6;24-7:10, 1 John 4:7-21

Sunday, June 30 Third Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 Worship Rev. Bill Schram leading worship

"Scripture Rarely Preached On: Vengeance and Forgiveness"

Genesis 34:14-18, 25-31, Luke 6:27-36

Sunday, July 7 FOCUS Sunday 10:00 Sunday Worship at First Presbyterian Church

Sunday, July 14 Fifth Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 Worship Rev. Bill Schram leading worship

Topic requested by members

Sunday, July 21 Sixth Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 Worship Rev. Bill Schram leading worship

Topic requested by members

Sunday, July 28 Seventh Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 Worship Rev. Bill Schram leading worship

Topic requested by members

Sunday, August 4 FOCUS Sunday 10:00 Sunday Worship at Trinity United Methodist Church



JUNE SUNDAY June 2
10:00 am Worship 11:30 am Annual Westminster Church Picnic
3 12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class 4
7:30 am FOCUS Breakfast Express 6:30 pm Tai Chi
7:30 am FOCUS Breakfast 4:30 pm Schuyler Book Distribution
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal
7 12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
SUNDAY June 9 10:00 am Worship 11:30 am Church School Reception
10 12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class 11
7:30 am FOCUS Breakfast Express 6:30 pm Tai Chi 7:00 pm Session Meeting
7:30 am FOCUS Breakfast Express
13 12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
14 12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
SUNDAY June 16, Father's Day 10:00 am Worship 11:30 am Second Hour 17
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class 7:00 pm AGO Program Committee 18
7:30 am FOCUS Breakfast Express 6:30 pm Tai Chi 7:00 pm Compassionate Friends 7:00 pm Trustees Meeting
7:30 am FOCUS Breakfast Express6:00 pm Pine Bush Dinner

21
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
SUNDAY June 23
9:00 am Open Choir Loft
10:00 am Worship 24
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
25
7:30 am FOCUS Breakfast Express 6:30 pm Tai Chi
26
7:30 am FOCUS Breakfast Express
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
28
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
SUNDAY June 30
9:00 am Open Choir Loft
10:00 am Worship
JULY
1 12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
2
7:30 am FOCUS Breakfast Express
6:30 pm Tai Chi
7:30 am FOCUS Breakfast Express
4 Independence Day
Office Closed 5
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
SUNDAY July 7
10:00 am Joint FOCUS Worship
at First Presbyterian Church
8 12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
9
7:30 am FOCUS Breakfast Express
6:30 pm Tai Chi 7:00 pm Session Meeting
10
7:30 am FOCUS Breakfast Express 11
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
12
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

SUNDAY August 4
10:00 am Joint FOCUS Worship
at Trinity United Methodist Church

7:00 pm First Friday Concert: Decho Ensemble



Change Service Requested

PLEASE NOTE:

The Messenger is available for pick-up at the church or by email only, unless requested otherwise.

Please contact us with a current email if you do not already receive our online communications.

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

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