



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

Dear Friends,

Advent • 2019

When our children were younger, we'd go on walks, especially when visiting new places on vacation. My natural hiking tendency is to GET PLACES. What's our destination? Let's get there as quick as we can to see the view at the end. My children brought a different mindset into hiking. They were the flower noticers, the ones who noticed the unique shape of trees, or bugs or shiny rocks. I usually like beauty on the go. Sometimes we need to slow down our pace to notice what's forming around us.

We are about to enter into the 4 week season of Advent. Advent is a time of watching. It's a time of looking around, noticing things we might not normally notice. It's a time to realize that when God does something, it often takes a while to develop. In fact, we may miss it altogether because we're either in such a hurry, or we're only looking for the great view of the angelic choir in the sky.

Japanese theologian Kosuke Koyama, in his book *Three Mile An Hour God*, suggests that God moves at the speed of walking, because this is the only speed of love:

"God walks 'slowly' because He is love. If He is not love He would have gone much faster. Love has its own speed. It is an inner speed. It is a spiritual speed. . . It is the speed we walk and therefore it is the speed the love of God walks. That is the speed at which Jesus wended his way through Galilee -- touching the ill, chatting with widows, pausing in marketplaces to observe children at play, plucking grain in the fields on a sabbath day.

This world on the run needs people who are moving slowly enough to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice; people who are moving slowly enough to notice smiles of joy and tears of sorrow; People who are moving slowly enough to reach out to those in pain, to comfort those in suffering, to offer hope to those in despair."

Like every year, the coming month will have many opportunities for joy and celebration with Jesus... but also for busyness and soul-sucking stress.

Our fast-paced world needs people walking at the speed of love. We need people who are willing to walk beside Jesus, not attempt to outspurt him. Take a moment and invite God to help your spirit move at the relaxed pace of His love this month. Look through this newsletter to find second hours, music opportunities, worship times and more that can help us walk with our Lord at the speed of God's love.

Peace, Pastor Bill



Sharing the Love

Christmas is the time we celebrate God's love being born physically in our world and human lives. Jesus himself walked among us sharing acts of love and words of salvation. All churches are now part of Christ's body in a spiritual way. We still are to share acts of love and words of salvation. Christmas is a good time to share the words of Jesus' love by inviting someone to church. People's minds turn to worship at this time of year, so tell them that at WPC, all can share acts of love through our mission activities, and can share words of thanks and hope in worship.

Memorial Poinsettias:

Remember Loved Ones - Submit Names by Monday, December 9

Donations for memorial poinsettias for Christmas are now being received. Names of persons memorialized will be printed in the bulletin on Sunday, December 15. The suggested donation is \$35; please either call the church office with your request or place a request in the offering plate. Deadline for submission is Monday, December 9.

Annual Children's Christmas Program

This year, the Children's Christmas Program will take place during worship on December 22nd. This will add a wonderful element to our worship experience! Preparation for the program will start on December 1, during the Sunday School time. We want as many of the children as possible to be a part of this, so, please ensure that your children are in church. We shall also need adult volunteers so please let our Director of Christian Education, Belinda Quayle, know if you will be available to assist.

Christmas Joy Offering



CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

During this Advent Season, the Presbyterian Church USA celebrates leadership; past, present and future through the opportunity to support the Christmas Joy Offering. Church leaders greatly impact our lives of

faith, walking with us down the path to be more like Jesus. We want future leaders for the church and world, like those educated at our Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color to reflect the wideness of God's intended diversity, and we want those church leaders and their families who find themselves grappling with a critical financial need to have the resources they need. For those supported through the Christmas Joy Offering, this help is truly a gift from above. If you wish to share in this opportunity, use one of the envelopes in the pew racks during December. May the lives of those leaders who receive the support point us always to the truth of the one whose birth we celebrate, Jesus Christ – the truly perfect gift.



'TIS The Season!

A number of special musical events are planned for the upcoming seasons of Advent and Christmas here at Westminster Church. Here are some of the highlights:

Sunday, December 8: during the 10:00 am worship service, Westminster's fine choir will be joined by the Musicians of Ma'alwyck for a special Advent presentation of baroque music for choir and strings. The service will include the lovely Magnificat by Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707), as well as music by Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) and Melchior Rauschenbacher (early 18th century). Be sure to make this special service a part of your Advent observance this year!

Sunday, December 15, at 3:00 pm: Westminster's resident Capitol Chamber Artists (Mary Lou Saetta, André O'Neil, and Al Fedak) will perform a concert of Christmas music for violin, cello, piano, harpsichord, and organ. As always, admission is free for members and friends of Westminster.

Christmas Eve, December 24: we will once again be joined by the Catskill Brass Quartet at our Candlelight Communion Service. The 8:00 pm service will be preceded at 7:30 pm by a thirty-minute program of colorful Christmas music for organ, voices, brass, and bells.

Sunday, January 5, at 10:00 am: the wonderful duo StringWynde (Melanie Chirignan, flute, and Darhon Rees-Rohrbacher, harp), will grace our morning worship service with a selection of seasonal music arranged by Darhon. The choir will also sing an anthem composed by Iteke Prins. Come help us celebrate the work of two more Westminster composers!

Bible Study - Sundays in Advent: December 1, 8, 15 & 22

The 9:00 Sunday morning Bible Study at Westminster is open to all who would like to explore the titles which the early Christians drew from Isaiah to describe the coming of Christ:

- Wonderful Counselor
- Mighty God
- Everlasting Father
- Prince of Peace

What title speaks to us today?
Join Dave McMillan as we prepare
once again to greet our Lord.





Congregational Meeting: Sunday, December 15

A meeting of the Congregation and Corporation of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Albany, NY has been called for Sunday, December 15, 2019 following worship in the Sanctuary for the purpose of electing church officers for 2020.

Report from Session

A high level of energy has continued as we move through the fall and approach Thanksgiving. Our Pastoral Nominating Committee is hard at work in the process of reviewing candidates for our next pastor. In the meantime, Pastor Schram continues to guide us in prioritizing our future church focus based on input from the congregation provided at sessions held earlier in the year and subsequent conversations. We are grateful for the dedicated work of Linore Southworth, Dave McMillan and Sue Barwig on preparing for the Centennial Celebration held at the end of October. They are committed to documenting our church history and heritage. We are also thankful for another successful African Family Night and for winter ministries now underway. The congregation will hear more about the efforts of a new Earth Care Team that Session gladly endorsed. Session adopted the 2020 church budget of \$517,599 with thanks to the Stewardship Budget Committee for their prayerful diligence, and the Nominating Committee is enthusiastically proceeding with discerning from our congregation the talents we have to offer as we proceed into the new year.

Pastor Nominating Committee News

The PNC (Pastor Nominating Committee) is busy. Our MIF (Mission Information Form) has been submitted to the CLC (Church Leadership Connection) of the PCUSA (you know what that one is!). Parenthetically, Westminster's MIF is available on Westminster's website if you would like to review it. Ken Applegate, the PNC's Presbytery contact, arranged for the Committee to have a very helpful practice interview with a minister who is not looking for a new position. The MIF has been accepted by the CLC and the CLC has undertaken a first round of matches against the backgrounds and interests shown on PIFs (Personal Information Forms) of Teaching Elders who have indicated that they are open to a call. The PNC has begun reviewing those PIFs and expects to soon start initial conversations with potential pastors and their references.

Please continue to keep us in your prayers.

Your PNC: *Cristabel Abban, Ervin Ashburn, Beth Coombe, Caleb Karkari-Mensah, Lynne McKee, Lily Mercogliano Easton, Larry Volk*

Chapel News

Hopefully by now many of you have had a look at the renovation work in the small chapel off Chestnut Street. New flooring, paint and restored hardware have made a tremendous transformation to create a multi-purpose room. Comfortable chairs, many with arms, have been ordered to help finish the room (these will replace the chairs that are used temporarily in the space). The new chairs will be color-coordinated to complement the rest of the interior and can be easily stacked for storage. New light fixtures will be installed in early December and cellular window shades will complete the décor. We will also research and purchase audio visual electronics for this room to finish the project. Please stop by to see our progress!

“Weaving our Future Together” Stewardship at Westminster Presbyterian Church

The 2020 Stewardship Committee thanks you for your gifts of time, talent and treasure supporting long term sustainability in growing our faith and ministry!

Haven't had a chance to submit your giving card? Your giving goal may be submitted online at www.wpcalbany.org/give or find one in a pew and drop it off at the church office. This is your estimate of what you intend to give in 2020. We realize circumstances change, sometimes we can give less and sometimes more than estimated. Turning in your Giving Goal helps us plan how best to carry out God's work and to keep a place for doing so in order that all enjoy the benefits. Only with your help can we meet our goal of \$165,000 for 2020.

The 2020 Stewardship and Budget Committee:

Kelly Crisfield, Leif Hartmark, Pastor Bill Schram, Dixon Southworth and Larry Volk

Join Santa at Schuyler Inn Holiday Party: Saturday, December 14

1:30 pm to 3:30 pm



Westminster is joining with other organizations to sponsor a Christmas party with Santa and Mrs. Santa (a.k.a. Wilie and Vicki) for all Schuyler Inn residents on December 14. The Schuyler Inn Holiday party helps homeless families temporarily resident at Schuyler Inn in Menands to enjoy the spirit of Christmas. Families enjoy Santa's visit, a variety of arts and crafts, refreshments and a warm welcome. As one resident has told us, we are able to put a smile on the face of children in stressful situations.

Books will be distributed by Santa's helpers

ably directed by Gail Garrison. We hope to provide two gift cards to each resident or family that attends the party. We welcome donations of \$10 or \$10 gift cards purchased from Price Chopper or Walmart. Allan Tedrow is collecting the cards which can also be turned in to the church office. People may sign up to donate gifts via the "giving" tree on the first floor on or after November 24.

We are seeking volunteers including greeters, people to register families in the order in which they will see Santa, craft table leaders, people to serve refreshments, a clean-up committee, and photographers (including anyone with a Polaroid camera and film). Volunteers are encouraged to arrive about 12:45 pm and stay until clean-up is done.

We are sending out an email solicitation to previous volunteers hoping for your help again. Otherwise please look for a clipboard at Westminster, contact the Church office: 518-436-8544 / office@wpcalbany.org, or speak to a member of the Committee headed by Lois Wilson.



African Family Night 2019 - Called a Great Event!

The November fundraising dinner in aid of Westminster's African Mission program had raised over \$11,300 with the total still growing- well exceeding our target of \$10,000. Thanks to all our generous donors.



Deep appreciation also goes to those involved in all aspects of the dinner: it took a tremendous effort by many people. Our able Communications team of Valerie and Kim and also Jeanne did a great job of publicity and the Program. We heard supportive messages from our elected officials Congressman Paul Tonko and Major Kathy Sheehan. We listened to a compelling address by Keynote speaker Willie White. He shared his emotional reaction to visiting Africa, and to experiences shared by our own African immigrants. His talk was titled "Rebuilding a Nation." Our African mission partners Liberia and Sierra Leone have been hard hit by natural tragedies like the Ebola epidemics of the recent past, and by the human tragedies of violence, greed and misuse of power by those who were supposed to use their authority on behalf of the people. The countries need our support to help them rebuild their nations. Lyn Kucij and our Mission Chairs educated us again about the impact of our fundraising on programs in Liberia, Ghana and Sierra Leone. Felicia and Fatmata arranged for many African dishes which were supplemented by an interesting array of other donated food. Children were ably entertained and fed a splendid cake! To those working behind the scenes in the kitchen, thanks to all who stepped in unasked to handle an avalanche of food serving and cleanup tasks.

Save the Date! African Spring Dinner - March 21, 2020

Please hold the date of March 21, 2020 for the African Spring Dinner. The dinner will be held from 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm. The event will include a dish-to-pass dinner, activities for children, and a keynote address. We are excited to announce that our speaker, Wilmot Collins, originally from Liberia, is currently Mayor of Helena Montana, and is running for the US Senate in 2020.

Center Doors on State Street Refurbished - Be Sure to Look!



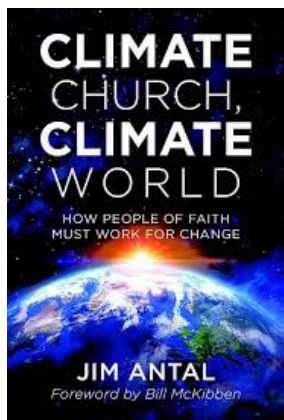
After years of abuse from the elements, the center church doors on State Street have been beautifully refurbished. Following the advice of WPC member Peter Leue, a fine wood craftsman, David Vadney, was employed to do the job. The doors were removed to David's shop in Troy where he carefully rebuilt the rotted out bottoms, applied five coats of marine grade varnish and refinished the metal work. We have the side doors to address next, with discussion underway. Please take the time to have a look at our magnificent front doors!



History Committee Forms

As a result of the Centennial Celebration, the archives of Westminster now rest in the small dining room of the church. Before being returned to storage, they need to be examined and organized, a work begun in recent years by Ruthanne Brod.

A History Committee is now being formed to get on with the work. Ruthanne will serve as advisor. If you would like to take part, contact Dave McMillan at edmcmillan@hotmail.com or 518-269-4326.



Hold the Dates for Book Discussion: Climate Change and the Church

Four-week book discussion of "Climate Church, Climate World: How People of Faith Must Work for Change" by Jim Antal. Wednesdays, 7:15, January 22, 29, Feb. 5, 12. Led by Paul Randall, Parish Associate. Book price is \$25 or whatever you choose to contribute. Contact randallpaul@ymail.com.



African Mission Day at Westminster

January 18, 2020

10:00 am - 3:30 pm

Come to a MoonBee from 10:00 am to noon. Participants will help prepare menstrual hygiene supplies for partners in Africa. There are jobs for everyone as we create reusable and durable menstrual hygiene kits to help girls stay in school at two Westminster mission sites. This event is sponsored by Westminster's African Mission Committee

The Zumba Party for Ebola Orphans Support starts at 1:00 pm and will run to 3:30 pm. Support is still very important to our orphans in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Suggested donation is \$20 per person. This event is sponsored by Capital District Citizens against Ebola. Event co-chairs are Fatmata Hilton and Felicia Kollie-Gambles.

Westminster African Mission Day

Please join us for two creative events

Saturday • January 18, 2020

Come to a MoonBee!

10:00 am to 12 noon

Jobs for everyone. Come join us!

Ebola Orphans Support Party

1:00 pm - 3:30 pm



led by Fatima aka "Mama Zumba"

Suggested Donation: \$20/person

Westminster Church • 85 Chestnut St, Albany, NY



Important! Stock Transfer Process Change for Westminster Members

In November, Westminster completed the transfer of its Endowment Fund management to James Coker at Merrill Lynch located in Clifton Park. Jim is now in the process of converting our present assets to a portfolio outlined in a presentation he made to Westminster's Investment Committee consisting of Dixon Southworth (Chair), Sue Schell and Kelly Crisfield.

At this time of year, several members submit donations via stock transfers from their investment house to our investment manager. This process has now changed due to having a new investment manager. Before making any stock transfers to Westminster, please contact Dixon Southworth at desouthworth@hotmail.com or by telephone- 518-944-4829 (c), or 518-279-9544 (h).

Hanging of the Greens

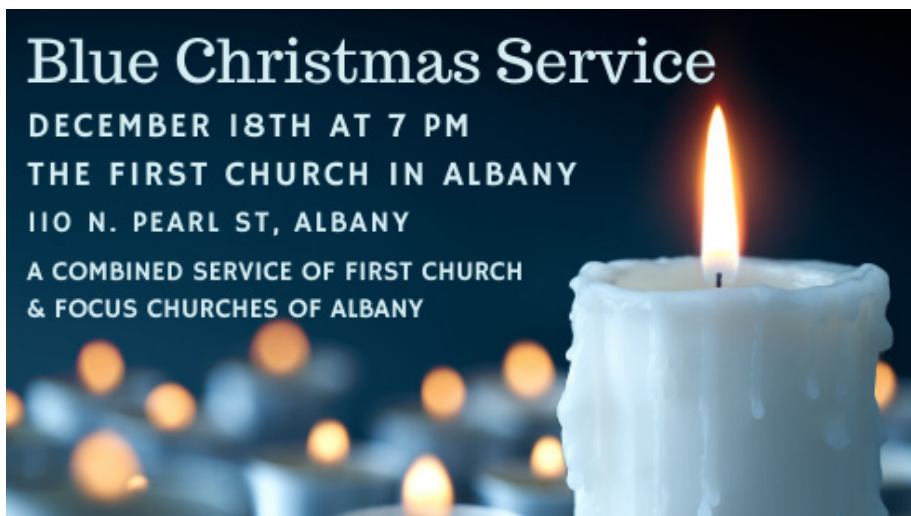
Sunday, December 1, After Worship



Join other WPC members on Sunday, December 1st after worship for our traditional "Hanging of the Greens" when we decorate the church for Advent and Christmas. All are welcome to join in -- your hands will make light the work and add to the merriment!

Blue Christmas Service

Wednesday, December 18



FOCUS Churches of Albany will hold a Blue Christmas Service on Wednesday, December 18, 7:00 pm at The First Church Albany. Be it from stress, loss of a loved one, illness, or daily struggle, there are people who feel separated from the joy we assume Christmas season brings. This service is designed to acknowledge that separation, and reaffirm the promise, presence and support of God. Join us and invite anyone you know who is struggling.

Watch Night Service

Tuesday, December 31



Join us for the opportunity to give thanks to God for the blessings of 2019 and our confidence that God will be with us in 2020. The Chestnut Street doors will open at 10:00 pm for a time of fellowship, with the worship service starting at 10:30 pm. Prayer, worship and dancing will mark the turning of the year.



Worship & Second Hours

Sermons during Advent will be presented as recollections by people from the times of Jesus' birth and early life. December 1 features a shepherd who is still waiting for life to improve; December 8 will be John the Baptist who had to prepare the way for Jesus; December 15 will be the innkeeper who is caught in routine and cynicism; December 24 will be Mary and Joseph; January 5 will be one of the wisemen. On December 22, the children will share their Christmas program with us.



Sunday, December 1

10:00 am Worship
"A Shepherd Still Waits"
Second Hour: Hanging of the Greens - Come decorate our church!

Advent 1

Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
Isaiah 2:1-5, Matthew 24:36-44

Sunday, December 8

10:00 am Worship
"John the Baptist Prepares for the Light" Isaiah 11:1-10 Matthew 3:1-12
Second Hour: Christmas Traditions in Other Countries

Advent 2

Rev. Bill Schram leading worship

Sunday, December 15

10:00 am Worship
"An Innkeeper's Routine"
Congregational Meeting directly following worship (in sanctuary)
Second Hour: Tom McPheeters: South End Program Update

Advent 3

Rev. Bill Schram leading worship
Luke 1:45-55, Matthew 11:2-6

Sunday, December 22

10:00 am Worship
Children's Christmas Program
Reception following worship

Advent 4

Rev. Bill Schram leading worship

December 24

7:30 pm Catskill Brass Quartet
8:00 pm Candlelight Communion Service Rev. Bill Schram leading worship

Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 29

10:00 am Worship
"The Poetry of Christmas"
Fellowship & refreshments following worship

Guest Preacher Rev. David McMillan
Luke 1:46-55

December 31

10:30 pm

Watch Night Worship

Rev. Bill Schram leading worship

Sunday, January 5

10:00 am Worship
"A Wiseman Looks Back"
Fellowship & refreshments following worship

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

Communion Schedule:

December 1:

Intinction

December 24:

Intinction

January 5:

(Epiphany)

in the pews



Woven Together

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DECEMBER

SUNDAY December 1

9:00 am Sunday Bible Study
10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Church School
11:15 am Hanging of the Greens

2

12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

3

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program

4

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class
7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal
rescheduled from 12/5

5

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

6

12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

SUNDAY December 8

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

9

12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

10

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

11

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

12

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

13

12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

SUNDAY December 15

9:00 am Sunday Bible Study
10:00 am Worship
Congregational Meeting after Worship
11:15 am Church School
11:15 am Second Hour
11:15 am Deacons meeting
11:15 am 20s and 30s Brunch
3:00 pm Capital Chamber Artists Concert

16

12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

17

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

18

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

19

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

20

12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

SUNDAY December 22

9:00 am Sunday Bible Study
10:00 am Worship
Annual Children's Christmas Program
11:15 am Reception
23
12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

24 Christmas Eve

Office Closed
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
7:30 pm Catskill Brass
8:00 pm Candlelight Communion
Christmas Eve Service

25 Christmas Day

Office Closed
7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program

26

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

27

12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

SUNDAY December 29

9:00 am Sunday Bible Study
10:00 am Worship

30

12:15 pm EBA Seniors Class

31 New Year's Eve

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
10:30 pm Watch Night Service
(doors open 10:00 pm)

1

7:00 am FOCUS Breakfast Program
Office Closed

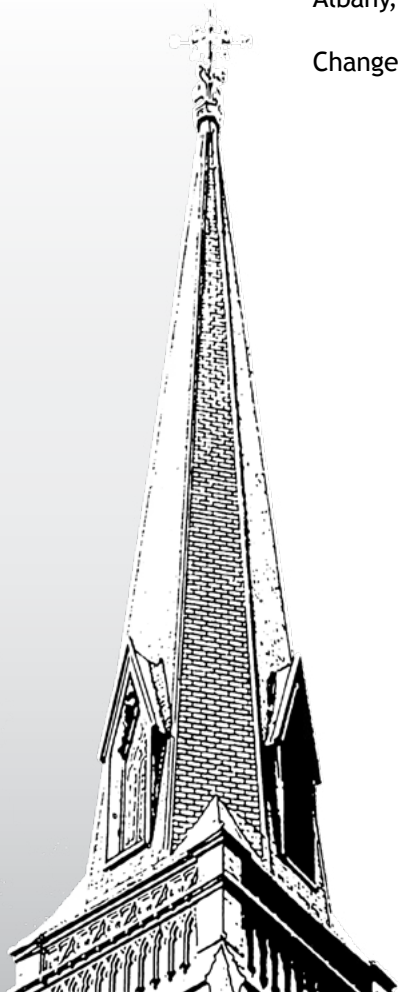


WESTMINSTER

— Presbyterian Church —

85 Chestnut Street
Albany, New York 12210

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

Phone: 518.436.8544

Interim Pastor: Rev. William Schram

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

Communications: Kim Deal

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Graphic Design: Jeanne Bianchine

Newsletter submissions are due by: December 10
Send submissions to: newsletter@wpcalbany.org