

From the Pastor's Study

A Message From Rev. Dr. Larry Hayward

Christmas



Sunday, December 16
3rd Sunday in Advent
Festival Sunday

8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

10:45 extended prelude, Special Music with the choirs and Commonwealth Brass; Dr. Larry R. Hayward preaching

9:45 a.m. Advent Lecture Series: "Seeing Salvation: Christ In Art – Passion and Resurrection"

Sunday, December 23
4th Sunday in Advent

8:30 a.m. Worship in the Chapel

11:00 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary; Dr. Larry R. Hayward preaching
No 9:45 church school

Monday, December 24
Christmas Eve

5:00 p.m. Community Christmas Eve Service; Story, Song and Candlelight

9:30 p.m. Pre-service concert

10:00 p.m. Candlelight Worship with communion; Westminster Choir with harp and woodwinds; Dr. Larry R. Hayward preaching

I write this greeting from my wife Maggie's office at Saint Mark Presbyterian Church in Rockville, on our way out of town for a two-day vacation celebrating our first wedding anniversary, postponed once because of the process in which she was recently called as Associate Pastor at Falls Church Presbyterian, writing it from her office while, she, in the church library, leads a Bible study needing completion before we leave.

Driving here, an unusually long trip due to the season's first snow, we listened as interviewees presented varying opinions and analysis about the recently revised intelligence report concerning Iran's nuclear capabilities.

Next Friday I fly to Dallas, rent a car, drive a few hours south to Waco, Texas, watch my 32-year-old son Martin receive his long-worked-for undergraduate degree – a tremendous personal triumph in his life, representing the overcoming of many obstacles – then fly back to lead worship on Sunday and subsequent Advent and Christmas services.

NPR reports the Iowa caucuses are tightening. However they turn out, the election of which they are a harbinger may impact our relationship with Iran. Or may not. It will impact the work of some who live in Alexandria, some who worship at Westminster, members for whose spiritual lives I am responsible and for whom election results are not simply matters for conversation or morning-after grousing in coffee shops, but are a matter of employment, vocation, livelihood.

The snow is beautiful.

"In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus..." we will soon hear. Jesus was born as Emmanuel "God with us" into the world. The world of empire and politics. The world of foreign policy. The world of Joseph and Mary, single both, yet wondering at the mystery of the good news promised all people through them. The world of Elizabeth and Zechariah, part of Mary's extended family. The world of night sky and stars.

There is nothing in our world to which Jesus Christ, God Incarnate, does not relate. Work. Family. Marriage. Singleness. Parenting. Elections. Foreign policy. Snowstorms. Night sky.

There is nothing in our world Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, does not come to redeem. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself."

Enjoy the world this season. Worship God in it and through it. Christ has come to redeem it. Welcome him. Again and again and again.

Larry



THANK-YOU'S & MORE

Dear Westminster Family,

Thank you for your support to Zeel and me during the recent loss of my mother. Your prayers, notes, patient listening and hugs are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Gayle and Zeel Longest

Thank you

Thank you for the tremendous outpouring of love and concern given to Gale and I during my recent emergency surgery and recovery. We were truly humbled by the cards, telephone calls, visits, and food we received. Your expressions of love sustained us as I slowly recovered. One sometimes forgets to slow down and understand and appreciate their friends. We were blessed to do that unexpectedly this year. So this Christmas season will be extra special for us due to all of you. Thank you and Merry Christmas!

Terry and Gale Grindstaff

Thank you,

Thanks to Gale Grindstaff and her company of workers, Terry Grindstaff, Carolyn Carmack, Becky Davies, Joan and Bill McCulla, Barbara and Bill Monson, Anne Pickett, Jane Ring, Molly and David Roden, Faye Woodrow, Cicely Woodrow and Fred Woods. All these folks have given greatly of the talents and their time to enhance our surroundings for this holiday season. Take a moment to say "Thanks" the next time you see them.

Many thanks

To those of you who have pledged. As of December 5 we have received 320 pledges totaling \$1,054,660. Our goal is 450 pledges totaling \$1.2 million. If you haven't pledged yet, there is still time to pledge. We will be finalizing the budget in January based on the pledges we receive, so every pledge is valuable!



Nedra Trahant Retirement

It is with sadness that we announce the pending retirement of Nedra Trahant as director of the Westminister Weekday Preschool as of June 2008. Over the past 20 years, Nedra has been a remarkable leader and voice for the preschool. Her vision, leadership, and passion for the school created an extraordinary atmosphere for children to excel and grow. We wish her all of God's blessings in her retirement and we are especially delighted that she will continue to be an active member of our congregation.

Remembrance Sunday

Spa sibo (Russian for thank you) to Choir director Paul Stetsenko, he is our creative dedicated force behind the powerfully poignant concept and direction of Westminister's latest Remembrance Sunday. This was truly an appropriate meaningful service of word and music to experience.

And (in order) to Karen for a well targeted mia culpa on the latest U.S. wars with her "forgive us" prayer. Next, to Patrick for his sensitive and so sad readings of the letters expressing the fears of the boys on all sides.

Larry moved to the important non soldier's view. Then, Karen with her banjo brought the morphine, that really did it.

Sgt. Dick Williams,
Army air corps, WW II

Presbyterian Women Sewing Ministry

Below is a "thank you" to the women who sew at home or meet the first Wednesday of the month in the Haverkamp Room at 9:30 a.m. We are all making darling stuffed animals for the children at INOVA Alexandria Hospital as well as heart shaped pillows for the Cardiac department. Our contributions are greatly needed and very much appreciated. Join us the first Wednesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. in the Haverkamp Room. You will enjoy being a helper. Thank you.

Nancy McIver
703-370-1445

Dear Nancy McIver,

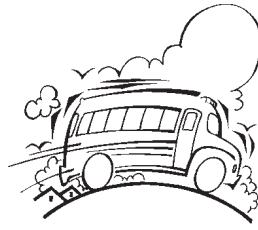
Thank you so much for your loving gift of stuffed animals for the Pediatric Patients of the Emergency Department at Inova Alexandria Hospital. The children love the brightly colored fabrics, and their parents are touched by the gesture to bring comfort to their child. Thank you for gathering your group together to give so generously of their time and talents. We appreciate the support we get from the community in our efforts to provide excellent care to all our patients. We love the fish and all the cute animals – Thank you!

Sincerely,
Deborah Gray
IAH emergency department Patient Advocate

Christmas Joy Offering

Once again this year at the Christmas Eve service, Westminster will participate in the Christmas Joy Offering of the PC (USA). The Joy Offering is one of four special offerings authorized by the General Assembly. It was originally started in the 1930's to supplement inadequate retirement income and provide supplemental medical insurance for retired ministers, missionaries, church workers and their families. In 1974 support for Presbyterian Racial and Ethnic Schools and Colleges was added, and since then receipts have been equally distributed between the Board of Pensions and support for Presbyterian Racial and Ethnic Education. Less than 3.4% of the amount collected goes for promotion and administrative expenses.

At this joyful time of year when we celebrate God's love becoming incarnate and living among us full of truth and grace let us give out of our abundance to help those who have given their lives to preaching God's word to live independently and with dignity in retirement. Let us also celebrate and support the good work Presbyterian Racial and Ethnic Schools and colleges are doing to prepare our brothers and sisters to serve God.



Westminster Travelers

- **Thursday, January 10.** 7:00 p.m. departure.
- *Little Theatre of Alexandria: Saturday, Sunday, Monday.* \$1 trip fee.
- **Thursday, January 17.** 7:00 p.m. departure.
- *Aldersgate Community Players: Pirates of Penzance.* \$1 trip fee.
- **Wednesday, January 23.** 11:00 a.m. departure.
- *Lunch at Clyde's Willow Creek Farm, near Ashburn.* \$1 plus lunch.
- *Travelers events are open to non-members of Westminster if space is available. Reserve by calling the church office at 703-549-4766. If weather is snowy or sleeting, we will cancel.*



News from
United Orphanage & Academy In Moi's Bridge, Kenya

COME ON IN 2008

As indicated in a number of prior reports, 2007 has been an extremely good year for the United Orphanage & Academy. Thanks to the generosity of members of Westminster's congregation \$32,659.50 was raised to provide for the care of all 42 orphans in residence for most of the year. In addition \$5,210 was raised to pay the salaries of five teachers (at \$900 per year each) and to provide school supplies at the Academy. Moreover a good used 14 passenger van was purchased, construction of a new kitchen and boy's dorm was completed, the premises were fenced and construction of a new \$70,000 permanent stone Academy building was commenced utilizing \$7,000 in Funds from National Capital Presbytery and \$5,000 each from Westminster and Old Presbyterian Meeting House.

However 2008 is another year. Unlike construction which can be completed when funds become available, the ongoing operations of the Orphanage and the

Academy must be funded from scratch each new year and in 2008 at a higher level than last year. We now have 48 orphans in residence, meaning we will need \$36,000 to fund operations of the Orphanage, and will need to raise at least \$7,000 for a headmaster and additional teachers and supplies at the Academy. At the first day of the Alternative Christmas Giving Bazaar, contributions and pledges to support 15 orphans and two teachers were received. More will be forthcoming, of course, but it is apparent that we have a long way to go.

If you have not already done so please consider providing support for an orphan at \$750 per year or \$62.50 per month or a teacher at \$900 per year or \$75 per month. All funds received will go to funding operations of the Orphanage and Academy in 2008. Much is dependent on your continuing generosity. May God richly bless you for looking after the least of these, His children and ours.

MEN'S RETREAT UPDATE

Registration for the annual Westminster Men's Retreat began last month and the response has been enthusiastic. Registration will continue through January 13. Sign-up forms will be available after the 11:00 am Sunday worship services at a table set up in Fellowship Hall and in the lobby of the education wing. Someone will be on hand to give you a registration form and answer any questions that you may have about the retreat.



The retreat will be held the weekend of February 1-3, 2008 at the popular Hallowood Retreat Center, located at the base of Sugarloaf Mountain, near Comus, Maryland. Our leader will be Dr. Bruce Douglass, associate professor of Government at Georgetown University and Director of the Reformed Institute of Metropolitan Washington. Dr. Douglas will be addressing the relationship between faith and reason in contemporary society. Those of you who attended last year's retreat or prior retreats know how enjoyable the program, food, and fellowship have been.

Consider not only attending yourself, but giving a personal invitation to someone who has not previously attended one of our men's retreats. Although most men attending the retreat are members of Westminster, all men are welcome.

Notes From Associate Pastor Karen Blomberg

THE COMPASSION GUILD – CARING AT THE TIME OF A DEATH

Because the Presbyterian Church does things “decently and in order, “ our denominational Form of Government articulates the importance of the church community being present to the family on the occasion of a death:

- These plans [on the occasion of a death] should provide for arrangements which are simple, which bear witness to resurrection hope, and in which the Christian community is central... W-4.1002
- Nurture and pastoral care are ways in which Christians minister to one another...Pastoral care is the support which Christians offer one another in daily living and at times of need and of crisis in personal and communal life... W-6.1003
- All Christians are called to care for one another in daily living, sharing joys and sorrows, supporting in times of stress and need... W-6.3002
- God sends the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit to exercise compassion in the world... b. comforting the grieving... W-7.3000

Westminster is fortunate to have a group of dedicated folks who rally at the time of a memorial service to minister to the family in need. The Compassion Guild provides one of many ways Westminster ministers to its members. By helping to organize the logistics around the worship service and reception, Compassion Guild members provide an important ministry to the family who has lost a loved one. The Compassion Guild sets the context and “holds a space” for the church to provide care, welcome, comfort, and nourishment on the day of a memorial service, technically called “A Service of Witness to the Resurrection.” Many thanks to Joan McCulla, who was our faithful Compassion Guild Coordinator for many years, followed by Joyce Porteous, who recently moved to Florida. It is now my delight to welcome Nancy Harper as our new Compassion Guild Coordinator. She brings her knowledge of the congregation and her organizational skills to the position of Coordinator. If you would like to help with organizing receptions and/or ushering at these worship services, please contact Nancy Harper at ngharp1@cox.net or call her at 703-360-7728. The Compassion Guild is a ministry of the Deacons. Deacon contact for the Compassion Guild is Donna Cramer. She may be reached at djcramer@aol.com. The Compassion Guild is the quiet and comforting presence behind every service of Witness to the Resurrection.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year from all of us on the Westminster staff.



Karen B

NEW ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES MEET IN JANUARY

Two new adult education classes will meet on January 6, 13, 20, and 27 from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. All adults are invited; no registration is needed. For further information, contact Director of Adult Education Clara Beth Van de Water (703-549-4766 X120).

The New World Beckons: Presbyterians and the American Revolution, Haverkamp Room.

This four-week series will examine Presbyterians and their major role in the American colonies from the original settlements through the American revolution. Some historians believe that there would not have been a successful revolution without the leadership and support of colonial Americans of the Reformed tradition.

The teacher is Alan Capps, who taught a popular class on Presbyterians and the English Civil War last year. Alan is a principal analyst at the Homeland Security Institute and editor-in-chief of the Journal of Homeland



Security. He holds a masters in American history from George Washington University and is working on his doctorate at George Mason University.

Enriching a Marriage, Westminster Room.

These four sessions will focus on the best ways of relating to a spouse, whether one has been married recently or for a long time. The class will look at recent research and the principles which arise from it for enriching intimate relationships. This guidance is in service to God's intention for the creation of marriage, that we might be built up by each other and be fruitful to others. Copies of the book *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* by John Gottman and Nan Silver will be available to purchase for \$10 at the first class.

The teacher is the Rev. Jacques B. Hadler, who teaches pastoral care and directs field education at Virginia Theological Seminary. All adults are invited, whether currently married or not.

Young Adults Ministry

First Sunday Brunches: The first Sunday of each month, young adults from the congregation gather together following the 11:00 a.m. service, either in someone's home or in the church building for food and fellowship. Brunches are great opportunities to get to know other young adults. If you are interested in hosting a brunch, please contact Casey FitzGerald. Next Brunch: January 6 at the home of Paul and Kristine Treat, 100A Braddock Rd. E Alexandria, VA 22301. RSVP to Casey FitzGerald.



Join in on this powerful study concerning the meaning of covenant and how we have lost and might regain it on our current society. The curriculum warns us to be advised: **THIS PROGRAM MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR CHURCH, SOCIETY AND THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE, AND COULD POTENTIALLY HELP RESTORE THE MEANING OF COVENANT!** Created by Old Testament scholar and retired professor from Columbia Theological Seminary, the Rev.

Dr. Walter Brueggemann, this study is sure to be thought-provoking and faith inducing!

- February 12: Session One: The Way Out
- February 19: Session Two: The Decalogue
- February 26: Session Three: Countering Caesar
- March 4: Session Four: An Act of Imagination
- March 11: On Not Doing God Any Favors

The First Annual WPC Young Adults Bowling Tournament, Friday, January 25, Time and Alley TBA: Whether this message has you shining your bowling ball in anticipation or remembering the last time you bowled (1986)...everyone is invited to this fun event. Register with Casey by January 23!

Next Young Adults' Educational Opportunity: Countering Pharaoh's Consumption-Production Society. Tuesdays, February 12-March 11, 7:30 p.m. Room 103/105

"It is a journey from slavery to covenant that we keep making over and over again... [because] Pharaoh has immense power always to draw us back into slavery."

- Walter Brueggemann

Mark Your Calendars: **Young Adults Retreat:** The Stewardship of Time: April 18-20. All young adults are invited to this special event sponsored by the National Capital Presbytery. This will be an EXCELLENT opportunity to get to know other single and married young adults from the DC area. Led by Bruce Douglass, Director of the Reformed Institute and Professor of Political Theory at Georgetown University. More details to follow. Scholarship money will be available.

A NOTE FROM LARRY

Among the vows all officers of the Presbyterian Church (ministers, elders, and deacons) take when ordained or installed, are a vow about service to the larger Presbyterian Church and a vow about working in the world.

- The first reads: Will you share in government and discipline, serving in governing bodies of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?
- The second follows: Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?

These are important vows that remind us of our commitment as Christians and Presbyterians to the church beyond our own congregation and to the place of our faith in the reconciliation of the world.

In the past two years, I have had the opportunity to meet this first commitment through extensive work on the Committee on Ministry of National Capital Presbytery.

Since August of 2006, I have led the effort in our presbytery to develop a new process by which ministers are approved to be considered by nominating committees of congregations and then, when called to churches or other appropriate positions, approved for membership in our presbytery. This process is more thorough and formal than existed in the past, because with the adoption of the "Peace, Unity, and Purity" report by the General Assembly in 2006, more authority and responsibility is placed on individual presbyteries for determining who is appropriate for membership in that presbytery.

At the November meeting of our presbytery, I was elected Chair of the Committee on Ministry, a responsibility which will begin in February 2008. In this capacity, I will be responsible for leading the committee that oversees the relationships between clergy and congregations, including clearing clergy to be considered by congregations (my current responsibility), overseeing visits of the COM with sessions, caring for clergy and certified educators, assisting congregations in their process of calling clergy, handling situations of conflict and crisis between congregations and clergy, interim ministry relationships, and several other items. The COM itself consists of about thirty people, ministers and elders, and is divided into several "teams" that deal with each of these areas. My new task will be to oversee the work of the committee as a whole. I will work directly with the General Presbyter Wilson Gunn, Stated Clerk Richard McFail, and Office Manager Jeannie Spargur of the presbytery. Most of this work is done electronically throughout the month, with me moderating a monthly meeting of the Coordinating

Team, reporting and presenting candidates for membership at each presbytery meeting, and serving as a member of the Presbytery's Council. In addition to my work on COM, Betsy Preston, an elder from our church, also serves on COM, as co-chair of the "crisis team."

In addition, this past year I have had the opportunity to be involved in living out the second vow through membership on the board of the Faith and Politics Institute. This institute, more than a decade old, describes its purpose in the following way: Drawing universal wisdom from a range of spiritual traditions, The Faith & Politics Institute equips members of Congress to better serve the people, by providing the space for spiritual and moral reflection and bipartisan, interfaith community. The Institute encourages civility and respect as spiritual values essential to democracy and strives to strengthen political leadership that contributes to healing the wounds that divide our nation and our world. The institute is best known for weekly reflection groups held for members of Congress, educational programs on Capitol Hill, and annual pilgrimages for members of Congress, the most long-standing of which commemorates the 1965 Civil Rights March in Selma, Alabama. For more information, I encourage you to visit their website, www.faihandpolitics.org.

As a new board member, I am still "learning my way around" the organization, but feel excited to serve as one way of relating faith to the world of politics. This is a significantly less heavy involvement than my COM work. Both Rabbi Jack Moline, of Agudas Achim, and Amey Upton, a member of our church, are longstanding board members, and Representative Fred Upton, from our congregation, is one of the congressional leaders of the group.

I have shared this with the Personnel Committee and the Session as my involvement with this has occurred over the past two years, and I have worked with them to be sure that these obligations do not detract from my service to this congregation. In fact, I think these activities have enriched my work here. I want to take this opportunity to thank and praise the congregation for the ways in which, through this service, I am able to exercise some leadership in the world beyond the four walls of our wonderful congregation. Part of the reason I am able to do this is that Westminster is both internally healthy and "mission-minded." It is a privilege to be a part of our desire to share and live out our faith in the larger community and world.

--Larry Hayward

Office Hours

The church office will close on Christmas Eve at 1:00 p.m. and will remain closed through Wednesday, December 26. Office hours on Thursday, Dec. 27 and Friday, Dec. 28 will be 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The office will again close on Monday, December 31 at 2:00 p.m. and will reopen with regular office hours on Wednesday, January 2. Merry Christmas from all the staff at Westminster.

THE CHRISMON TREE

THE CHRISMON TREE outside the Library is decorated with Chrismons (CHRIS + MONogram) which were made by women of Westminster. The Chrismons of white, gold and silver proclaim the Name, the Life, and the Acts of Jesus the Christ. The evergreen tree symbolizes the eternal life our Savior secured for us. The lights represent Jesus, the Light of the World. The Chrismon Tree originated in Danville, Virginia, in 1957; and a Chrismon Tree has graced our church each Christmas since 1971. This new tree was a gift from Jackie Borthwick.



On Gratitude

At Christmas time we are grateful to God for sending his Son to us, a wondrous gift. The Stewardship Committee would like to share with the congregation Elder Don Fowler's devotional at a recent session meeting.

My wife Betsy's grandfather was the first Presbyterian minister authorized by the Royal Governor in the Virginia Colony. Tonight I wish to introduce you all to excerpts from one of his sermons delivered sometime in the 1750's.

As is the custom yet today, if you are successful in raising money for a college, you have the prospect of becoming its president. Samuel went to England, Scotland and Wales and through a series of sermons raised enough money to build a library for Princeton, then called the College of New Jersey. Thereafter, he became its fourth president, following such as Jonathan Dickenson, Aaron Burr Sr. and Jonathan Edwards. So much for background.

The title of this sermon is "*Ingratitude to God. A Heinous but General Iniquity.*" The Biblical reference, 2 Chronicles, 32nd verse: "Hezekiah rendered not again, according to the benefit done unto him."

"Among the many vices that are at once universally decried, and universally practiced in the world, there is none more base or more common than ingratitude; ingratitude toward the supreme Benefactor. Ingratitude is the sin of individuals, of families, of churches, of kingdoms, and even of all mankind. The guilt of ingratitude lies heavy upon the whole race of men, though, alas! but few of them feel and lament it. I have felt it of late with unusual weight, and it is the weight of it that now extorts a discourse from me upon this subject."

"In order to make you the more sensible to your ingratitude towards your divine Benefactor, I shall give you a brief view of his mercies towards you... The blessing of a body wonderfully and fearfully made, complete in all its

parts, the blessing of a rational, immortal soul, preserved in the exercise of sound reason, capable of the exalted pleasure of religion, the blessings of a large and spacious world, prepared and furnished for our accommodation, the earth enriched and adorned with trees, vegetables, grains and animals for our support or convenience, and the sea... the blessing of being born in the adult age of the world, when the improvements of art are carried to such a high degree of perfection, of being born, not among savages in a wilderness, but in a humanized, civilized country, in a land of unusual plenty, the blessing of not being a race of slaves, under the tyranny of an arbitrary government, but free born Britons and Virginians in a land of liberty: these birthright blessings almost peculiar to us and to our nation. Let me enumerate the blessing of a good education" – and he went on and on from there with blessing after blessing. In a burst of literary profusion, he says: "What is all the profession of Kings to their favorites, what of all the benefactions of creatures, nay, what are all the bounties of the divine hand itself within the compass of time, when compared to these astonishing, unparalleled, immortal, infinite, God-like favors? They all dwindle into obscurity, like the stars of the night in the blaze of noon."

"And now I am almost afraid," after a good hour of text, he concludes: "afraid to turn your thoughts to inquire, what returns you have made for all these favors, lest you should not be able to bear the shock. You know you have a thousand times repeated Hezekiah's offense... Your conscience accuses you, and points out the particulars, and I shall only join the cry of conscience against you, O! the ingratitude! O! the base, vile, unnatural, horrid, unprecedented ingratitude!"

Finally, as a farewell, he says: "One prayer and I have done. May our divine Benefactor, among his other blessings, bestow upon us that of a thankful heart, and enable us to give sincere, fervent and perpetual praise to his name, though Jesus Christ, his unspeakable gift. Amen."



Children and Family Ministry

An Introduction: Families as Small Groups For Parents, Grandparents, and Caretakers Sunday, January 20, 5-7 p.m., Fellowship Hall Childcare Provided

Many people in churches near and far have found small-group ministry to be important in their journeys of faith. For children, the family itself is the "small group" where faith formation begins.

"I want to pray, but I'm not sure how."

"We're having a baby, and we're concerned about being the best parents we can."

"We want to pass our faith onto our grandchildren, but we're just not sure how to do it."

"We really want our kids to grow in their faith. We're already so busy trying to help them with school work, sports, and other activities. How can we make time for their spiritual development?"

If you have found yourself making comments such as these, exploring the concept of a family as a small-group ministry may prove to be helpful and life-giving. Our congregation will soon be engaging in a short workshop to delve into this concept where you will have an opportunity for enriching conversation and will leave with helpful resources to continue the journey in your own families. We'll explore how families make promises to each other and how family members nurture one another as a part of day-to-day



living. We'll explore how to enhance the spiritual formation of our children through the simple rituals and routines we all experience at home. And in the process, we'll see how we can be partners with the Holy Spirit in growing in our life of faith.

If this sounds like a journey you wish to join, please plan to attend this special event! To register, email (Ospatz@wpc-alex.org) or call the office (703) 549-4766. Questions? Contact Casey FitzGerald!

REMINDER: December 23, 9:45 childcare and classes for 1-Pre-K will be held. Creation Station is off that week. December 30, there is no education hour (only an 11 o'clock service), all classes that regularly meet at that time are on!

JOB OPPORTUNITY: Westminster Weekday Preschool has begun its search process for a new Preschool Director. If you or someone you know might be interested in applying for this wonderful opportunity, please see our job description on the church's website!

Preschool Registration

Registration for Westminster Weekday Preschool's 2008-09 school year will begin for in-house (church members) on January 16. Further information will be in next month's Chronicle and January's Bulletins. You may also call Nedra Trahant, Director, at 703-549-5267 between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon for information.



WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP NEWS

All women readers are invited to discuss *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini on Monday, January 28. The morning discussion will meet at 11:00 a.m. at Goodwin House Bailey's Crossroads. The evening group will meet at 7:30 p.m. in the church's Johnson Parlor.

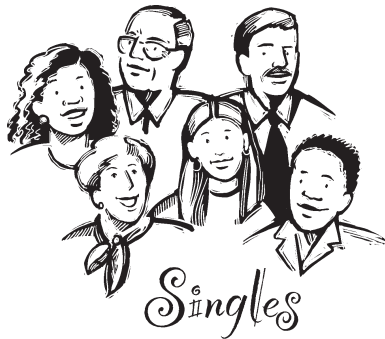
Call Clara Beth Van de Water (703-549-4766 X 120) if you have questions.



Mornings for Moms: A New Ministry of Westminster!!!

Starting Wednesday, January 9, from 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. in Creation Station. All moms are welcome to bring their young children each Wednesday morning for fellowship, service, and fun with kids! As this ministry is just beginning, I will be looking for your input in terms of the kind of activities in which we will engage. Feel free to invite others!

Flying Solo (Singles) Events



Monday, January 14: Dine-Out at Taqueria Poblano, 2400-B Mt. Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, VA. Take the opportunity to try some moderately-priced local restaurants while enjoying good conversation. Those

who want to carpool should meet in the church parking lot by 7:00 p.m. If you prefer, just meet us at the restaurant about 7:15. Reminder notices are sent via email to those already on the list and details are also provided in the church bulletin about 2 weeks in advance. Contact FlyingSolo@wpc-alex.org or call the church office at 703.549.4766 and ask to have your name added to the email notification list.

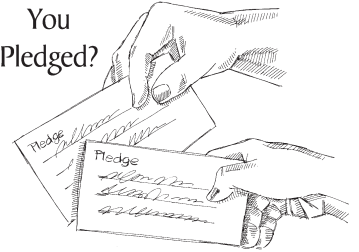
Tuesday, January 22: Potluck. We gather each month for a casual potluck dinner and to participate in a mission project such as making sandwiches for the Bag Lunch outreach program. We meet at 7:00 p.m. in the Johnson Parlor at Westminster. Bring a side, entrée or dessert to share!

Sunday, January 27: Roundtable Discussion following the 11:00 a.m. service in the Haverkamp Room. Light lunch and lively discussion are on the menu! More details to follow.

2007 Giving

Giving Envelopes for 2007 are available in Fellowship Hall. Please pick up your envelopes so you are ready to use them in January. Your use of these envelopes for your contributions helps the office staff maintain accurate records.

Have You Pledged?



2007 Year-end Giving: If you are using a stock transaction to the operating fund or Capital Campaign, remember that stock transactions take several days to process. It would be most helpful for donors to initiate these transactions not later than December 20 to help insure timely completion of each transaction. Stock must be transferred before December 31 for it to be credited to you in 2007. Checks to the church must be postmarked or received before the end of the year to be considered tax deductions for the year 2007 or be credited to you for 2007. The check date is irrelevant if the check is not received or postmarked by December 31.

January Statements for 2007 will reflect all church donations postmarked and received by December 31. You have received an interim year-end statement. Please review it and notify Nancy Bea in the church office of any questions or corrections to be made. In mid-January you will receive your final 2007 contribution record for tax purposes.

Youth Matters:

MISSION TRIPS!

Now's the time to start (or finish!) making your summer plans. When you do, include youth mission trips. We have two great trips planned. **The Senior Highs** will be joining youth from churches across the country to provide Katrina relief work in Pass Christian, MS (with a day trip to New Orleans) from June 22-28.

The Middle Schoolers will travel to Panther, West Virginia from July 7-12 and join other youth to help with light construction for impoverished citizens and work with local children.

We will hold informational meetings on Sunday, January 20 during normal fellowship times. We will need to make commitments very soon after that meeting, so please start planning your summer, hopefully around these great trips!

HEY YOUTH!

Ponder this: Who is this little child, lying in the manger for you?

- A reason to get out of school for a week
- A loyal "friend" whose "profile" is divine, unlike any other.
- A vulnerable, little child that you can think about when you feel little and vulnerable myself
- A future carpenter not so worried about where he's going to college, because he has a God and neighbors to love to the point of death on a wooden cross
- A gift that's even better than getting your license
- Someone who gives us life, in spite of death (Chuck Norris can't even do that)
- Any others? Send 'em to Patrick (phunnicut@wpc-alex.org) and we'll post them in the next newsletter!



CHURCH STAFF

Larry Hayward	Pastor
Karen Blomberg	Associate Pastor
Patrick Hunnicutt	Associate Pastor
Casey FitzGerald	Associate Pastor
Paul Stetsenko	Director of Music Ministries
Nancy Hall Berens	Interim Dir. of Children's Ministries
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Vacant	Coordinator for Local Missions
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Time Sensitive



It's Christmas time again; that wonderful time of year when we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. There are concerts and parties; buying, giving, and receiving gifts; travel to family gatherings or preparing our home for guests. It's a wonderful time of year but, it's also a hectic time of year. In all of the hubbub leading up to the celebration of our Lord's birth it is important to remember what the hubbub is all about.

Christmas is about giving and the most important gift is the one we get from God. No other gift compares. As Christians we are filled with awe with the magnitude of the gift of the Holy Child who came to earth to save us from our own nature. In response, we are called upon to give back and to pass on the gift. We do this by serving the Lord in helping our church family and others throughout the local community and the world.

Westminster has a large array of opportunities for service. Our congregation couldn't function without the service of many scores of volunteers. Our local, national, and international mission programs likewise depend on the service of many volunteers. When you finish exchanging gifts with family and friends and settle back to relax after the Christmas meal, please consider how you will give back through your time and talents in response to the wonderful gift you have received from God at Christmas.

Have a wonderful Christmas,

Art Sauer

Coordinator of Volunteer Ministries
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