

# WESTMINSTER NEWS



Westminster Presbyterian Church • 1200 Marquette Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55403-2419 • 612.332.3421 • www.eWestminster.org

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## Israel and Bethlehem: A Pilgrimage of Faith and Partnership

By Katherine S. Michael, Associate Pastor

Pilgrimage is a journey to a holy place. The pilgrimage of 36 travelers from Westminster to Israel and Bethlehem (January 9-22) was filled with holy moments, laughter, learning, worship, singing, walking ancient streets, eating beautiful food, and joining together in community to celebrate our unity in the Body of Christ.

We visited biblical sites and learned about contemporary political tensions. We heard from Palestinians at Christmas Church, our partner congregation in Bethlehem. We heard from a rabbi from the Israeli Foreign Ministry. We visited with a rabbi who served at Beth El Synagogue in St. Louis Park until moving to Israel just a few years ago. We tried to absorb the complexities of a nation and occupied territory always on edge.

We walked where Jesus walked, breathing in the air of the Galilee and moving through the bustle of Jerusalem. We walked the *Via Dolorosa*, the Way of the Cross, carrying a small cross passed from person to person, making holy pilgrimage to the place of Jesus' crucifixion.

We encountered Christians from Korea and Nigeria and Eastern Europe, all on pilgrimage to this holy place. Members of the Westminster group share the following reflections on their experience:

"There were many moments on this extraordinary travel pilgrimage: sitting on rocks under trees on the Mt. of Beatitudes listening to Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount, reflecting silently on the Sea of Galilee boat ride, morning prayers at our daily worship services, and participating in a never-to-be-forgotten Sunday worship service where we sang 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' with our Arab Christian brothers and sisters at Christmas Church..." *Barbara Brown*

"With its layers of civilization and history and the world's three major religions converging into one holy place, a journey to Israel and Palestine enriches the mind and nourishes the soul. Our stay in Bethlehem and the hospitality and friendship extended to us by the members of Christmas Church will always be an indelible memory. Rev. Mitri Raheb's leadership and vision for the community of Bethlehem are extraordinary..." *Beth Patten*



"The two weeks in Israel—tours, holy places, learning experiences, and making new Westminster friends—exceeded our expectations. Our new prayer partners from Christmas Church, Adel and Karimeh Nasser, have a challenging life..." *Jim and Barb Bonneville*

"In thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light... In the Holy Land, I understood for the first time what an extraordinary experience in this ordinary world Jesus was." *Susan Whiteman*

"After walking the *Via Dolorosa* and experiencing the crush of pilgrims in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, I found quiet and a chance to reflect in a beautiful side chapel of the church. Only a few people were in this vast, quiet space—a big change from the pressing crowds. I sat on a side bench and nodded to a woman nearby who was reading a prayer book. She asked about my trip and if I was Orthodox. When I told her no, that I was Protestant, she smiled and said, 'It's the same God.'" *Martha Allen*

"On our first morning in Tiberias, I awoke, uncharacteristically, at 6:30AM, to the most beautiful sunrise I have ever seen, all framed by a lovely arched window at the Scot's Hotel. The bright pink sun completely covered the Sea of Galilee, the mountains in the back-

*Pilgrimage, continues on pg. 8*

## 2011 Day on the Hill

By Douglas Mitchell, Associate Pastor

**Thursday, February 17, 8:30AM to 3:00PM**  
**RiverCentre and State Capital**

The Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (JRLC) annual Day on the Hill is an opportunity to become better informed on major public policy issues facing the Minnesota Legislature and to speak with your elected officials about these issues. This year's theme, *A Stronghold in these times...* (Psalm 9:9), gives us all hope that in these troubled times, our work as faithful citizens will bring about justice for all. Join in to make your values and commitments clear to your representatives.

The day will begin at the RiverCentre in St. Paul for a continental breakfast, welcoming, the Keynote address by Father David McCauley, Interim Executive Director of the Minnesota Catholic Conference, and issue briefings on topics such as health care, housing and homelessness, poverty, budget and taxes and an impartial judiciary. Participants will be seated by their legislative districts during the morning activities so they can plan strategies for legislative visits and future organizing. Box lunches can be picked up at the RiverCenter during this time.

You should call as soon as possible to set up an appointment with your Representative and Senator between 12:30 – 3:00pm. Identify yourself as a JRLC participant.

I have served on the Board of JRLC since 2003, representing the Minnesota Council of Churches. I am pleased to announce that earlier this month I was elected to serve as the Chair of the Board of this unique interfaith state-wide legislative advocacy coalition. This will be a rewarding opportunity to serve both the religious and civic communities of Minnesota.

More info and registrations for the 2011 Day on the Hill available online at [www.jrlc.org](http://www.jrlc.org). Registration forms also available at the church. Registration is \$45 (\$30 student/low income). Questions? Contact Doug Mitchell, [dmitchell@wpc-mpls.org](mailto:dmitchell@wpc-mpls.org).

## Social Justice Forum: From Hurt to Healing: A Call for Inclusion

By Douglas Mitchell, Associate Pastor

*A woman who is blind sits waiting for transportation. A stranger rushes to her and promises, "If you will just repent and give your life to Jesus, God will heal you."*

Encounters like this may at times be subtler, but they reflect persistent attitudes. They affect not only the lives of people with disabilities but have implications for public policy.

**On Sunday, February 27, 9:15AM,** Rev. Don Milloy and Rev. Bebe Baldwin present *From Hurt to Healing: A Call for Inclusion*. The speakers will explore the meaning of

## Town Hall Forum Spring Season

By Katherine Youngblood, Advisory Board Chair



**Larkin McPhee**  
**Thursday, March 10, Noon**  
***The Documentary Film: In Search of Truth***

Larkin McPhee is a Peabody and Emmy award-winning documentary filmmaker whose newest PBS film, *Troubled Waters: A Mississippi River*

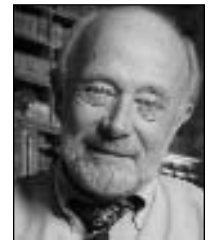
*Story*, examines the consequences of farming practices on soil loss, water pollution, and the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico. Her previous films have explored topics ranging from personal finance to nuclear power to the illness of depression. She has served on the staff of National Geographic Explorer, the PBS series NOVA, and Smithsonian World with David McCullough. She is a graduate of Middlebury College and lives in Minneapolis.

**Other speakers in the spring season are:**



**David Brooks**  
***The Social Animal***  
March 31, 7:00pm

**Marcus Borg**  
***Putting Away Childish Things***  
April 14, Noon



**Frederic Luskin**  
***The Power of Forgiveness***  
May 5, Noon

Forums are held in Westminster's sanctuary, and all events are free and open to the public. Music precedes each forum, and a public reception follows. For more info, visit [westminsterforum.org](http://westminsterforum.org) or contact Susan McKenna, 612.332.3421, [smckenna@wpc-mpls.org](mailto:smckenna@wpc-mpls.org).

# From Our Pastor

## Dear Friends,

To help prepare Westminster leaders, each year I speak to the officers' training class. I cover the history of our congregation, with an eye to themes that mark its history – trends that continue to characterize our life today.

One of our congregation's commitments since earliest days is to grow the church. Over the years we have worked hard at inviting people to become part of Westminster. For instance, in 1900 the congregation launched a five-week campaign to grow the church that resulted in 205 new members. That year Westminster's membership reached 2000.

We reached over 4000 members in the post-WWII days. At our annual meeting at the end of this month we will learn that our membership has topped 3000 again. The most recent denominational records indicate that Westminster is the 22nd largest church in the Presbyterian Church (USA) – of a total of over 10,500 congregations.

While we can rejoice in the large, active membership of Westminster, I hasten to point out that those same PC(USA) records show that our weekly worship attendance ranks 95th. There are many reasons for this gap between membership and attendance, including 300 out-of-state members and around 100 members unable to come to church due to health concerns.

No doubt there are other causes. If you're a Westminster member who has not been to church recently I encourage you to return – we miss you! I would be glad to hear from you about any concerns you may have with the church.

Over the years Westminster has also looked outward in an effort to grow the church. Since our founding in 1857 we have helped start, by my count, 16 new churches or ministries. Some of those churches still exist; others served faithfully for a time and then closed their doors.

Last week a Westminster Task Force began exploring possibilities for a new ministry in Uptown. The pastor and leaders of Grace-Trinity Church (Presbyterian-Baptist) have asked if Westminster would be interested in launching something new at their location (28th & Hennepin). They are looking toward the time when their church's life may conclude.

This is an exciting opportunity. It will require careful study before any decision. We will want to hear from you in the process. Please keep the Task Force in your prayers as they seek God's will.

In the meantime, see you in church!  
Grace and peace,



Timothy Hart-Andersen

## WESTMINSTER CLERGY & STAFF

### The Rev. Dr. Timothy Hart-Andersen

Senior Pastor and Head of Staff

Kathy Fisher, Executive Assistant

Mary Hess, Director of Legacy Giving

### ADULT ED. & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Rev. Katherine S. Michael, Associate Pastor

Kathy Fisher, Leadership Development Admin. Asst.

Claudia Kapitan, Adult Ed Admin. Assistant

Barbara Mauk, Librarian

### CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

The Rev. Meghan K. Gage-Finn, Associate Pastor

Mary Alette Davis, Dir. of Children's Ministries

Erin Swenson, Dir. High School and

College-Age Ministries

Marie Kruskop, Coordinator of Early Childhood

Barbara Prince, Administrative Assistant

### EVANGELISM & FELLOWSHIP

The Rev. Annika Lister Stroope, Associate Pastor

Melanie McCall, Coord. of Fellowship/Spec. Events

Claudia Kapitan, Evangelism Admin. Assistant

Dan Franklin, Fellowship Admin. Assistant

Kristin Kieft, Publications Coordinator

### FAITH IN ACTION

The Rev. Douglas Mitchell, Associate Pastor

Dan Franklin, Coord. of Discipleship Ministries

### MUSIC AND THE ARTS

Dr. Melanie Ohnstad, Minister of Music and  
the Arts/Organist

Dr. Jere Lantz, Westminster Choir Director

Dr. Rodney Allen Schwartz, Director,

Westminster Gallery and Archive

Barbara Prince, Program Assistant,

Worship, Music and the Arts

Nancy Carter, Handbell Choir Director

Brad Ollmann, Early Childhood Music

Christopher Laumann, Youth Music Director

### PASTORAL CARE

The Rev. David Liddle, Interim Associate Pastor

Claudia Kapitan, Administrative Assistant

### ADMINISTRATION

Samuel G. Cooke, Director of Administration

Sandy Wilson, Office Manager

Jennifer Zenanko, Accountant

Mary Dolan; J D. Shaffer, Accounting Assistants

Debbie Anderson; Sarah Kantrud, Receptionists

Amy Riesenberger, Wedding Coordinator

### FACILITIES

Neale Holleschau, Facilities Manager

Todd Bushy, Brian Coyoc, Christopher Glenn,

Richard Wilder, Facilities Staff

### EMERITA

The Rev. Elizabeth D. Heller, Assoc. Pastor Emerita

### WESTMINSTER CAMP AJAWAH

Dave Moore, Director

Emma Watson, Registrar

### WESTMINSTER COUNSELING CENTER

612.332.7743

The Rev. Dr. Margaret McCray, LMFT,

Executive Director

The Rev. Ross A. Aalgaard, MSW, LGSW

The Rev. Dr. Leta J. Herrington, LPC

The Rev. Mary Keen, LMFT

Lori Churchill, Business Manager

### WESTMINSTER TOWN HALL FORUM

Susan McKenna, Director

### PARISH ASSOCIATES (Volunteer Clergy)

The Rev. Denise Dunbar-Perkins

The Rev. Margaret McCray

The Rev. Dean J. Seal

# WPC Happenings • • • WPC Happenings • • • WPC Happenings

## WOW

Men and women of all ages meet on Wednesdays in the Meisel Room for 9:00AM coffee, 9:30AM men's & women's Bible studies, and a program at 11:00AM. On **Feb. 16**, Scott Peterson of Equal Exchange will discuss *Fairly Traded Coffee, Tea, and Chocolate*. On **Feb. 23** Rev. Alika Galloway on *the Northside Women's Space: A Door to Hope*. For more info, call Sharon Achor, 952.847.9117.

## TGOF, The Great Over Fifties,

Join us on **Sunday, Feb. 20, Noon**, for *Are You Game for This?* Enjoy a hearty lunch, fellowship, and a program of charades, board games, word puzzles, and fun to warm up our brains. Sign up online or in the Heller Commons on February 13 or by contacting Dan in the church office by Feb. 14. (\$14)

## Nicollet Square Tour

Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation invites you to an hour-long info session & tour on **Tuesday, Feb. 22 at 4:00PM** at Nicollet Square, 3700 Nicollet Ave. S. Learn about PCNF's work as one of the leading developers of affordable housing. RSVP to Takara Henegar, 612.871.0890 or [thenegar@plymouthfoundation.org](mailto:thenegar@plymouthfoundation.org).

## Interfaith Forum

**Thursday, February 24, Noon**  
Congressman Keith Ellison presents *The Generosity of Inclusion: Everybody Counts, Everybody Matters*. Ellison will explore the value of religious diversity, reconciliation, mutual respect, and civility. Music precedes the presentation at 11:30AM, and a public reception follows. Free and open to all. Contact Susan McKenna, 612.332.3421 or [smckenna@wpc-mpls.org](mailto:smckenna@wpc-mpls.org).

## Quiet Worship, Sat. Feb. 26

Our next Quiet Worship service will be based on Luke 6:12-19, one of Henri Nouwen's favorite passages in the Bible. There will be quiet music and a time for silence. Jim Carter will lead the worship in the Bushnell Rm.

**The Annual Meeting of the Congregation of Westminster Presbyterian Church will be held on Sunday, February 27, 2011 at 11:30AM in the church's sanctuary, 1200 Marquette Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota to receive the 2010 financial reports, review the 2011 church budgets, and to receive a report from the Ministerial Relations and Personnel Committee of Session.**

*By Order of the Session, Vincent A. Thomas, Clerk of Session*

## Sunday/Monday Connections

Join other Westminster women of all ages at the Woman's Club on **Tuesday, March 8, 6:00-8:30PM**.

Come hear Denise Dunbar-Perkins, ordained Presbyterian minister and Westminster Parish Associate. The evening begins with a social hour and dinner. After the speaker's presentation there will be small table group discussions. The cost for the evening is \$25 with reduced rates available.

For info, contact Connie Scott [conniescottmtka@msn.com](mailto:conniescottmtka@msn.com) or 952.933.4285. Register Feb. 20 or 27 in the Heller Commons, or send a check to the church, Attn: Dan Franklin.

## Help Needed in Lent

Westminster will once again welcome members and the community to a time of worship on Wednesdays during Lent. Worship will be followed by a simple lunch of soup and salad.

Volunteers are needed each **Wednesday (March 9-April 13) from about 10:30AM-1:30PM** to set tables and serve. If you can help on one or two Wednesdays, call Elizabeth McCabe, 612.379.8524 by Feb. 20.

## Men's Spring Retreat

**Saturday, April 30, 8:30AM-Noon** at Westminster. Watch for more info.

## Daily Phone Devotions Phone 612.332.7087 for the daily lectionary

February 11	.....Ps. 119:1-8
12	.....1 Cor. 3:1-9
13	.....Matt. 5:21-37
14	.....Exod. 20:1-21
15	.....Jas. 2:1-13
16	.....Prov. 2:1-15
17	.....Lev. 19:1-2, 9-18
18	.....Ps. 119:33-40
19	.....1 Cor. 3:10-11, 16-23
20	.....Matt. 5:38-48
21	.....Prov. 25:11-22
22	.....Heb. 12:14-16
23	.....Prov. 3:27-35
24	.....Isa. 49:8-16a
25	.....Ps. 131
26	.....1 Cor. 4:1-5
27	.....Matt. 6:24-34
28	.....Deut. 32:1-14

## Women's Spring Retreat

**April 29-May 1** Save the date! The Rev. Annika Lister Stroope will be the leader for the Women's Retreat at Clearwater Forest. Signups begin in March. Questions? Contact Melanie McCall, [mmccall@wpc-mpls.org](mailto:mmccall@wpc-mpls.org) or 612.332.3421.

## Thin Places

The latest *Thin Places* offers a meditation by Rev. Ward Bauman, a memorable thin place experience in the Boundary Waters wildness area, a remembering of Dr. Meisel, and recipes from the House of Prayer Kitchen. Copies are available on the information tables at the church or online, [ewestminster.org/thin\\_places](http://ewestminster.org/thin_places).

## IN MEMORY OF Helen Whitney

died January 29, 2011

*I am the Resurrection and the Life*



## Upcoming Opportunities for Adult Education

By Katherine S. Michael, Associate Pastor



### *Jeremiah: Upside Down Prophet for an Upside Down World*

Wednesdays, February 16, 23, March 2  
6:30pm, Meisel Room

To his contemporaries, Jeremiah's theological perspective would have seemed completely upside down from anything that resembled a proper understanding

of God such as we find in the core texts of the Older Testament. Some literally thought him a "crazy man." But when Jerusalem was destroyed, the Temple burned, and the Davidic king deported and imprisoned, it was exactly Jeremiah's upside-down theology that made sense of a world turned upside down, and so, as the book of Jeremiah, his "crazy" words became treasures to pass on to succeeding generations. Join Jeremiah scholar, Dr. Richard Weis, Dean of United Theological Seminary, as he explores this radical theology that spoke both to the blinkered and misguided reliance on power and to situations of complete loss of power and meaning.



### *How Do the Psalms Work?*

Sundays, February 20, 27, March 6  
9:15AM, Great Hall

The psalms are God's way of hearing our prayers in the sad songs or laments, and hearing our praise in the glad songs or hymns. The thanksgiving psalms help us move between these two poles by

praising God and telling others what God has done for us. In addition to seeing how these three modes of response work together, we will also see how Hebrew poetry gets its message across by rhyming the meaning of words rather than their sound. Dr. Mark Throntveit of Luther Seminary returns to lead us through the most beloved book in the Bible.

### *Movie of the Month: The Secret Garden*

February 27, 11:45AM, Meisel Room

This lush film opens in India during the early 1900s when young Mary Lennox is orphaned and sent to England to live in Misselthwaite Manor, the gloomy estate of her brooding and melancholy uncle. Because the uncle is almost always away on travels and struggling to forget the death of his beloved wife, Mary is left mostly alone to explore the estate. Eventually she befriends the young brother of a staff maid and her uncle's apparently crippled son who has been needlessly bedridden for years. Together the three children restore a neglected garden on the estate grounds, and in doing so they set the stage for a moving reaffirmation of life and love. Prophetic themes of hope and renewal are beautifully reflected in this touching story of rebirth.

A light lunch is available. Suggested donation: \$10 adults, \$2 children. *Families are encouraged to attend!*

## Lenten Covenant Groups Face The Hard Questions

By Katherine S. Michael, Associate Pastor

**E**vil, Sin, Forgiveness, Suffering, Death—these are just a few of the difficult issues that trip us up on our journey of faith. They are also issues that must be addressed as we seek to grow and mature in our faith.

In this *Westminster News*, you will find a registration card for Lenten Covenant Groups that meet weekly during Lent to ask these hard questions of faith. Topics and texts will follow the sermons in worship. Plan now to join with a small group to grapple with the deep and sometimes painful questions of faith.

Sunday groups begin March 13, 9:15AM; Tuesday groups begin March 15, 7:15PM; Wednesday groups begin March 16, 7:10PM, following the weekly 6:30PM Taizé service. Please fill out your card and leave it in one of the boxes on literature tables at the church, or contact Claudia at [ckapitan@wpc-mpls.org](mailto:ckapitan@wpc-mpls.org). **Please return your card by March 1.** If you are in your 20s or 30s and would like to be part of the WestConnection Lenten group, please mark that space on the enclosed card.

Contact Rev. Kathy Michael with questions, [kmichael@wpc-mpls.org](mailto:kmichael@wpc-mpls.org).

### Boy Scout Troop 100



Troop 100 seeks prizes for the scouts who sell the most at the annual fruit sale.

If you have athletic equipment, electronics, musical instruments, bicycles, etc. to donate, contact

Dave Moore, 612.922.4988.

Order fruit at the church on Sundays Feb. 13, 20, 27.

Pick-ups on March 20.



## Girl Scout Cookies for FEAST

By Marie Kruskop, Girl Scout Mom, CYF Council

Girl Scout cookies will soon be here! The theme for this year's cookie sale is *Cookies Now!* as cookies will be available for pick up at the point of purchase. As in the past few years, Girl Scouts who attend Westminster are hoping to treat each March 27 FEAST guest to a box of cookies and they need your help to do so!

This year Girl Scouts will host a cookie booth in the Heller Commons on February 20, 27 & March 6, before and after the 10:30 service. The cost of cookies purchased for FEAST is tax-deductible, and receipts will be available. You are also welcome to purchase cookies for personal consumption.

The Girl Scouts will keep track of the boxes purchased for FEAST and distribute them to our guests on March 27. Because of your generosity in years past we have been able to provide, on average, 200 boxes of cookies for FEAST guests. Any extras are donated to the Groveland Food Shelf.

## Wills Seminar, March 19

By Mary Hess, Director of Legacy Giving

**Do You Prefer Your Will... or the State's Will?**

**Workshop Saturday, March 19, 9:30-11:30AM**

Too busy with work and family to think about creating a will? Children getting ready to leave the nest? Many people put off the important task of creating or updating a will, even though they know it's one of the innumerable things they should do. Among the basic questions you may have are: What if we can't decide about a guardian? What if we have few assets? What does the terminology mean? What happens if I don't have a will? Can I prepare a will online? What should it cost? How to prepare? How often should a will be updated and why?

Join us for coffee and refreshments to learn more from attorney Robert McLeod, from Lindquist & Venum, about this topic and why it matters. Childcare is available for \$5/child. For childcare and to reserve your spot, RSVP by March 13 to Sara Caugh at scaugh@comcast.net or 763.404.0972. Rest easier at night knowing you've planned ahead!

## Register for Day Camp!

By Mary Alette Davis, Dir. of Children's Ministries

Cool or hot...Baker's the spot from July 25-29! Children who have completed kindergarten through fifth grade (ages 5-12) are encouraged to sign up for Day Camp at Baker Park in Plymouth. Campers and counselors bus from WPC to Baker Park each day. Older children have the option of an overnight stay on the 28th. Campers enjoy art activities, music, stories, nature exploration, games, swimming and making friends at Day Camp. This year there is a special leadership program for children who have completed 5th grade. This fun week is a treasured memory for campers who make new friends, learn new skills, and discover God in the great outdoors. Register early! Forms available online or at the Reception Desk. Contact Meghan Gage-Finn or Mary Alette Davis, 612.332.3421.

## Middle & High School News

By Meghan K. Gage-Finn, Associate Pastor

Mark your calendars for these exciting upcoming fellowship and service opportunities!

### Ajawah Winter Fun Day, Saturday, February 19

Spend a winter day at Camp Ajawah with all of your friends. There will be sledding, skating, skiing, snowshoeing, broomball, and more. The Scouts will prepare a big pot of chili for our group; please bring a potluck lunch item to share. Hot cocoa and cider provided. Please bring your skates, sled, or any other winter equipment you may want to use along with \$5 to help cover the cost of the use of Ajawah. If Middle School parents are not able to attend, but youth would like to, please let Meghan know and we'll try to arrange rides. We hope to see you there!

### Middle School Book Read, *The Knife of Never Letting Go*

A reminder that the Middle School will meet with Elsa Kendig, Sundays Feb. 20 & 27, Youth Rm., Noon—2:00PM to eat, chat, and discuss this high intensity book! Come to one or both meetings! Please bring \$5 for pizza.

### Interfaith Youth Day of Service Feb. 21, 9:00AM-4:00PM

Join over 500 middle & high school youth of many different cultural and religious backgrounds from across the Twin Cities in this annual day of community service. This is an event that is entirely planned and led by youth from the Interfaith Youth Leadership Council. Let this day off from school be a day of service and of learning and building bridges with other youth of different faith traditions. For more information visit [spacc.org/interfaith](http://spacc.org/interfaith). Meet here at Westminster at 8:30am to carpool or meet us at Blake School, 511 Kenwood Parkway, Mpls. Sign up with Meghan K. Gage-Finn, [mgage-finn@wpc-mpls.org](mailto:mgage-finn@wpc-mpls.org).

### Cuba Summer Vacation Bible School

This summer Westminster young people again have the opportunity to travel to our partner church in Matanzas, Cuba to lead a Vacation Bible School of music, arts & crafts, activities, stories, and worship for the children and youth of Versalles Presbyterian Church. We will strengthen the relationships between our congregations by strengthening the relationships among our members and theirs, while sharing our faith and teaching of God's love. The dates of the trip are July 4 to the 14th and students who are interested in applying may find an application on the church's website or contact Meghan K. Gage-Finn, [mgage-finn@wpc-mpls.org](mailto:mgage-finn@wpc-mpls.org). Participants must be members of Westminster, at least 16 years old, and have completed at least Spanish Level III.

## 2011 Downtown Choral Festival

By Jere Lantz, Director, Westminster Choir

On Sunday, February 27, at 2:00PM, the choirs of seven downtown Minneapolis churches will present an interfaith concert of American masterpieces in the sanctuary of Westminster Presbyterian Church. Westminster's circular balcony will be filled with more than 350 choristers whose "surround sound" will envelop listeners with choral highlights from the colonial era to a world premiere commissioned for the event. "Honoring the Sacred: A Festival of American Music" marks the seventh time these churches have collaborated in a Downtown Churches Choral Festival, which has been held biennially since 1999.

Each church choir (the Basilica of St. Mary, Central Lutheran, Hennepin Avenue Methodist, Plymouth Congregational, St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, St. Olaf Catholic, Westminster) will offer an anthem. The seven choirs will join to sing five masterworks from the American tradition, climaxing in the first performance of *In These Times (Sing La La)* by Ysaye Barnwell. A native New Yorker and resident of Washington DC, Dr. Barnwell holds a PhD in Speech Pathology and has sung since 1979 with the Grammy award-winning African-American female a cappella ensemble Sweet Honey in the Rock. Composed in a style that reflects her Sweet Honey years, *In These Times* offers singing as "a healing balm" when

"hard times push us down so hard" and "coercion trumps conversing."

Concertgoers will be invited to sing with the massed choirs in hymns, including *America the Beautiful* and Stephen Paulus' rousing arrangement of *When in Our Music God Is Glorified*. Besides Paulus, the program will feature works by Minnesota composers Dominic Argento, David Evan Thomas, and Rene Clausen. The massed choir will offer Revolution era composer William Billings in his meditative *When Jesus Wept* and his triumphant *Easter Anthem*, as well as works by 19th-century romantic Horatio Parker and 20th-century legends Randall Thompson and Aaron Copland. Prelude, postlude and accompaniments will feature, in addition to Westminster's pipe organ, the Copper Street Brass Quintet from the Twin Cities.

Admission is free. Patrons will be invited to participate in a free-will offering to support the 2013 festival.



## Befriending Bethlehem

By Rodney Allen Schwartz, Director, The Westminster Gallery and Archive

In the January 21 issue of *Westminster News*, I wrote about the Westminster travel group departing for Israel and Palestine. I am now writing from the other side of that adventure and will briefly report on our experiences. A special four-week exhibition in the Westminster Gallery documents this pilgrimage. It runs through March 6.

The group of 36 travelers was led by the Revs. Tim Hart-Andersen and Kathy Michael. We arrived in Tel Aviv, and also stayed in Tiberius, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem, and embarked on an ambitious two week schedule to visit many of the significant archeological and historical Biblical sites.

We followed the life of Jesus from the annunciation (Nazareth), nativity (Bethlehem), baptism (River Jordan), his early adult years in Galilee, the Mount of the Beatitudes (Sermon on the Mount), and Capernaum (the synagogue where Jesus taught). In Jerusalem, we visited the Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, and walked the *Via Dolorosa* (the way of the cross,) to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (Golgotha and the tomb). We also explored the old city and the Dome of the Rock and Western Wall, and took day trips to Masada, Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls discovered here), and the Dead Sea.

Our time with our newest global partners in Bethlehem was the inspirational and emotional highlight of our visit, as we met members of Christmas Lutheran Church in worship and across the dinner table. Singing *O Little Town of Bethlehem*—with an added verse reflecting the current social and political reality—had a significant impact on our understanding of modern life in the Holy Land. The exhibition *Befriending Bethlehem* features art and artifacts acquired for the Westminster Collection and photo essays documenting the sites visited and our new partner congregation and friends.



*The Wise Men and the Wall*,  
by Zaki Baboun,  
oil on paper

## Counselor's Corner: What About that Weather

by Mary Keen, M.Div., LMFT, Westminster Counseling Center

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mkeen@wpc-mpls.org

www.westminstercounseling.org

A common, almost mandatory topic of conversation in my family is the weather.

"How much snow you got?" "20 below here last night." "Sounds like the spring floods will be record-breaking this spring."

The summer banter of questions, answers, and predictions sound similar but less ice-driven.

My family isn't unique in this pattern. For us, it may be tied to the agrarian culture that permeated our family for generations, going back to Germany. Living on and working the land was our life blood. Weather is the farmer's gambit. Weather makes, breaks, or devastates a living. So, we talk about the weather to honor our ancestors. Out of habit we warn, educate, or acknowledge our powerlessness in the upcoming storm or the promise of sunshine.

Weather is one common reality of every human being. What falls from the sky, what blows from the north, what seeps from the south, comes into our reality and then moves on, 20 miles away. In some way, weather grounds us in shared experiences. The precipitation, the sunshine, the fog, the flurries—all provide a common touch point, uniting us in our joys, complaints, and pre-

dictions. And about this bond, we converse.

Too often our weather talk is competitive. Crowing our experience is more amazing, more outlandish, more destructive than theirs. Perhaps our conversations could embody compassion, moving from "ain't it awful" to "how can I help?" For in listening with compassion, we are brought to the core reason we are even talking about anything, that being connection.

Weather does not pass judgment. Its impact, positive or negative, is where you and I interact. The outside whims of temperature, wind and moisture influence our day to day moments. In these common experiences we are linked to a deeper level of humanity's purpose, that of connection and compassion. Conversations that appear shallow are in truth, flooded with depth and longing.

"Snow there today?"

"How much?"

"Maybe two inches, may be two feet. Got a shovel?"



Mary Keen

### Lent at Westminster

#### *The Hard Questions*

**Ash Wednesday, March 9**

Worship at Noon and 6:30PM

#### **Wednesdays in Lent**

March 16, 23, 30, April 6, 13

Worship at Noon followed by lunch

Taizé Service at 6:30PM

#### **Palm Sunday, April 17**

Worship at 8:30 & 10:30AM

#### **Maundy Thursday, April 21**

Worship at Noon & 7:00PM

#### **Good Friday, April 22**

Worship at Noon

#### **Easter Quiet Worship, April 23**

Worship at 9:00AM

#### **Easter, April 24**

Worship at 7:00, 9:00 & 11:00AM

Covenant Groups begin the week of March 13 and meet on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays during Lent. See the sign-up card in this issue.

*Pilgrimage*, continued from pg. 1

ground, the sky and the cumulus clouds, and a boat moored a little way out into the sea, as if it was waiting patiently for Simon Peter. Everything on the horizon was awash with bright pink, a heavenly sight. The unremarkable sunrises of the next two mornings convinced me that I had seen a miracle on that one day, never to be seen again!"

*Sally Blood*

"For some time I had been absorbing history and current affairs of Israel and Palestine. Once our pre-trip study sessions began, my reading escalated. Curiosity and ambiguities mounted. Kathy and Tim, experienced travel leaders, stretched our learning capacity, encouraging questioning and diversity of viewpoints, continually recommending additional resources. The actual travel was the rich, abundant frosting on the cake. More questions and uncertainties abound, but I intend to pursue the endless spiritual and intellectual quest. Foremost, the Scriptures have come alive in a way that I will never forget. Another Westminster trip? Wow, would I!

*Carol Frisch*

Come and join our group as we share pictures and many more stories of this life-changing pilgrimage on Sunday, March 13, 11:30AM, Meisel Room.

Read Tim Hart-Andersen's daily journal from this trip online, [ewestminster.org/israel\\_bethlehem2011](http://ewestminster.org/israel_bethlehem2011).