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# THE WESTMINSTER LOG

*In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,  
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.*

*What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him; give my heart.*

The Christmas carol "In the Bleak Midwinter" has been among my favorites for years. It isn't just the words, but the simple melody and rhythm that strikes me as particularly moving during the seasons of Christmas and Advent.

I've heard it described as a bit of a "downer," especially when you set it next to the bombast of "Joy to the World," or even (mostly outside the church!) "Jingle Bells!" True, this carol, from a poem written in 1872 by Christina Rossetti (who also penned "Love Came Down at Christmas"), and paired with music from Gustav Holst in 1906, paints a somewhat drearier picture of the circumstances around the birth of Christ. But, the reality is, Jesus wasn't born into the greatest situation. Rossetti isn't suggesting that it was snowing in Palestine when Christ was born; but, she uses winter imagery to underscore the forlorn circumstances of Christmas Eve.

In setting this gift of the Christ child "in the bleak midwinter," it's even more dramatic the shift to "light and life" that we experience at the birth of

Christ (and that we sing about in other hymns of the season). The Incarnate One, the Light of the World, brought warmth into a barren and sinful world, the most forlorn and seemingly hopeless of situations.

I know, for me, the "winter blues" have yet to set in. But they will. Dealing with snow on the roads, staying cooped up in the house, trees without leaves, and ice in my beard all get old pretty fast. And, I'm not alone. There's even a name for the onset of depression as it relates to the seasons, called Seasonal Affective Disorder (abbreviated, appropriately enough, SAD). There are medical reasons of course, from serotonin to melatonin to Vitamin D, but, winter can just be bleak!

I'm not saying that singing a song can cure depression, but I think the fourth stanza of the hymn offers a word of hope for the days we find ourselves in "mid-winter." In the midst of sadness, seasonal or not, we remember a few lessons learned from this old hymn. First, that Christ is not contained by heaven or earth, and that the hope and love made real in Jesus can and do break into the darkest and bleakest of places. We are never beyond the reach of a God who goes to unimaginable lengths to bring us back to him. Second, in our "mid-winter" days, it can be easy to think that we are not good enough to love Jesus properly. Like the hymn writer, we ask, "what can I give him?" We may not be rich in things, or feel very important in the eyes of the world. Yet, the answer is already there by just

reframing the question. In the bleak midwinter, it is easy to shrug my shoulders and give up, saying, "What can I do?" The answer, though, is those same words, from a new perspective: What can I give him? Give him what I can! Give a gift to Jesus, and to those around you, this Christmas: Give your heart.

## Katie Travis



After completing a successful run as lead Christine Daae in the Broadway Touring production of *Phantom of the Opera*, Bay City native Katie Travis is spending the holidays in her hometown. Join us as Katie will provide special music during worship at



Westminster on **Sunday, December 3rd!**

DECEMBER 2017 ISSUE 112

WWW.WPCBC.ORG

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Watch our sermons  
on our website!



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Office Hours:  
Monday thru Friday  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
(Closed for lunch noon - 1 p.m.)

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- Parish Associate Rev. Linda Williams (ext. 203)
- Church Secretary Judy Harrelson (ext. 201)
- Treasurer Heather Heidman (ext. 206)
- Christian Education Nikelle Johnson (ext. 208)
- Custodian Harold Miller (ext. 205)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
December		
<b>3</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Adult Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Time / Giving Tree 10:30 a.m. Worship Service 11:45 a.m. Fellowship Time	<b>4</b> 7:00 p.m. Deacon Meeting	<b>5</b> 9:30 a.m. Presbytery Meeting 10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands 12:00 p.m. Bay ISD 6:00 p.m. Personnel Meeting 7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts
<b>10</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Adult Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Time / Giving Tree 10:30 a.m. Worship Service 11:45 a.m. Fellowship Time	<b>11</b> 6:00 p.m. Finance Meeting 6:30 p.m. Small Group 7:00 p.m. Family & Fellowship 7:00 p.m. Stewardship	<b>12</b> 10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands 12:00 p.m. Bay ISD 1:00 p.m. Lions Sight & Hearing 6:00 p.m. Spiritual Growth 7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts
<b>17</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Adult Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Time 10:30 a.m. Children's Christmas Program 11:45 a.m. Fellowship Time  Giving Tree gifts due. Please place all gifts in gift bags unwrapped. Attach the gift tag to the handle of the bag.	<b>18</b> Salvation Army to pick up Giving Tree gifts.	<b>19</b> 10:00 a.m. Hearts & Hands 12:00 p.m. Bay ISD 7:00 p.m. Session Meeting 7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts
<b>24/31</b> 9:00 a.m. Sunday School/ Pajama party on 12/31 9:15 a.m. Adult Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Time 10:30 a.m. Worship Service 11:45 a.m. Fellowship Time 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service	<b>25</b> <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 24px; font-family: cursive;">Merry Christmas</div>	<b>26</b>

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Happy Birthday to...		<b>1</b> 10:00 a.m. My Tempo	<b>2</b>
<b>6</b> 10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting 5:00 p.m. Disability Network 5:30 p.m. W @ W 6:00 p.m. Choir Practice 6:00 p.m. Property 7:00 p.m. Mission	<b>7</b> 8:30 a.m. TOPS 12:00 p.m. Bay ISD 3:30 p.m. My Tempo 3:30 p.m. Women of Westminster Board 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith	<b>8</b> 10:00 a.m. My Tempo	<b>9</b>
<b>13</b> 5:30 p.m. W @ W 5:45 p.m. Bay City Fireworks 6:00 p.m. Choir Practice 7:00 p.m. Worship	<b>14</b> 8:30 a.m. TOPS 12:00 p.m. Bay ISD 3:30 p.m. My Tempo 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith 7:00 p.m. Green Tree Celebration	<b>15</b> 10:00 a.m. My Tempo	<b>16</b>
<b>20</b> 12:00 a.m. Staff Christmas Party 6:00 p.m. Choir Practice 7:00 p.m. Christmas Concert	<b>21</b> 8:30 a.m. TOPS 12:00 p.m. Bay ISD 12:00 p.m. Lydia Circle 5:00 p.m. Food of Faith	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>27</b> 1:00 p.m. Log Crew 6:00 p.m. Choir Practice	<b>28</b> 8:30 a.m. TOPS 3:30 p.m. My Tempo	<b>29</b> 10:00 a.m. My Tempo	<b>30</b>



**CONGRATULATIONS!**

Congratulations to Zachary Daniel Landry, grandson of Donna Horn, who achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank in Boy Scouts, on October 9, 2017.

**COMMUNION SERVERS**



*December*

- Candy Green
- Bill Shelt
- Pam Monville
- Jack Gustafson
- Russ Marvin
- Chris Thurman
- Tiffany Frontjes
- Brian Graves
- John Hegenauer
- Joyce Hegenauer

**MOMS DEMAND ACTION**  
FOR GUN SENSE IN AMERICA

Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America is holding a #EndGunViolence Vigil at **St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Essexville on Thursday, December 14 at 7:00 p.m.** Join in prayer, song, and a call to action as we remember and lift up all lives impacted by gun violence. Since the Sandy Hook tragedy five years ago, over 500,000 Americans have been killed or injured by guns. The Great Lakes Bay chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense is committed to promoting gun safety in our communities. The hour-long vigil will be at St. Luke's UMC at 206 Scheurmann St. in Essexville. Call 989-893-8031 with any questions.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

**Building Improvement Fund**

September Balance: \$9,105.96  
 October Income: \$396.00  
 October Expense: \$0.00  
 October Balance: \$9,501.96

**Operating Fund**

October Income: \$31,222.50  
 October Expense: \$31,063.77

**Major Repairs Fund**

\$9,098.00

Donate online at [www.wpcbc.org](http://www.wpcbc.org)

The 4th - 6th graders enjoyed a weekend retreat at SpringHill in Evert, Michigan November 3 - 5.



# CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

CANTATA  
10:30 A.M.

LESSONS & CAROLS  
7:00 & 11:00 P.M.



*Christmas Joy gifts help bring about happy endings after tragedies strike*

In 2014, Elisabeth Scotland's college graduation day turned from joy and celebration to trauma and heartache in an instant.

After receiving her diploma from Boston University, Elisabeth, along with family and friends, went to a baseball game at Fenway Park. While waiting for an elevator, Elisabeth casually leaned against the elevator doors. The doors opened at the wrong time, and Elisabeth fell 20 feet down the elevator shaft. Her multiple injuries included a brain injury that put her in a coma for a week.

Her parents, Rev. John and Anne Scotland, spent two months in Boston by Elisabeth's side during her hospitalization and rehabilitation. The congregation John serves, Community Presbyterian in Brigantine, New Jersey, graciously granted John leave, but there were living expenses in Boston to be paid, and someone had to fulfill John's pastoral duties while he was away.

Thanks to a Shared Grant from the Presbytery of West Jersey and the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, the Scotlands' expenses in Boston were covered, and a newly ordained pastor from Community Presbyterian handled the congregations' pastoral duties during John's absence.

Caring Presbyterians in West Jersey Presbytery rallied around the Scotlands with prayers and financial gifts. Another crucial component of their support came from Presbyterians across the country who had given to the Christmas Joy Offering, which supports the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions.

The Christmas Joy Offering gifts also helped the Scotlands two years earlier when Superstorm Sandy damaged thousands of homes in their island community. Four feet of water flooded their

**DECEMBER 3 - 24**

*Thanks be to God for this indescribable gift. — 2 Corinthians 9:15*

basement, ruining the heating system, electrical panels, appliances, and other possessions. They received an Emergency Assistance Grant from the Board of Pensions to help with replacement costs.

"I think the emotional support was more important than the financial support," John says. He explains that it was comforting to "know that somebody outside the community knew we were hurting and wanted to help."

Thankfully, life is much better these days for the Scotlands and their community. In early 2017, Elisabeth, now an accountant in Philadelphia, passed her CPA exam. Also this year, John and Anne made a gift to the Assistance Program to help others get the kind of help they received.

"Having a Presbyterian family was a big blessing to us and helped us come through tragedy," he says.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s.
- The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges.
- The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families.
- Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years.

WEDNESDAY @ WESTMINSTER  
DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

- December 6 Make Christmas Presents
- December 13 Christmas Party
- December 20 No Regular W@W  
Christmas Concert at 7:00 p.m.
- December 27 No W@W - Christmas Break
- January 3 W@W Resumes  
Confirmation Class 6th-8th grades

2018 SCHEDULE

	3rd - 4th Grades	5th Grade	6th - 8th Grades
5:30-6:00	Youth Choir for all who are interested		
6:00-6:30	Supervised "Hangout"	Junior Bells or Supervised "Hangout"	
6:30-7:30	Youth Group with Nikelle		Confirmation with Pastor Matt

CONFIRMATION CLASS

Starting in the new year, a group for Middle School students to learn about our faith and what it means to be a Christian, will meet on Wednesday evenings. This is for 6th - 8th graders, with different content spread over three years, and may lead to 8th graders being confirmed as church members near the end of the school year. More information will be mailed home this month, but please contact the church to be sure your student is on the list!



Women of Westminster (WOW) invites all women of the congregation to attend the **Annual Green Tree Celebration on Thursday, December 14 at 7 - 8:30 p.m.** There will be refreshments, choir, and an informational program by Emmaus House. We will also recognize and honor three special women who have provided faithful service to the church. Donations will be collected for the Green Tree Celebration, and special envelopes will be available in the back of the sanctuary in December to pick up and use for that purpose.

**WOMEN OF WESTMINSTER BOARD**  
Meet at church  
Thurs., December 7 at 3:30 p.m.

**GREEN TREE CELEBRATION**  
Meet at church  
Thurs., December 14 at 7:00 p.m.

**LYDIA CIRCLE**  
Meet at Uno Pizzeria & Grill  
Thurs., December 21 at 12:00 p.m.

**DEBORAH, ESTHER, AND HANNAH CIRCLES**  
Will not meet in December





Winter Teen Retreat  
6th - 12th Grades  
January 12 - 14, 2018  
\$65.00

The Winter Teen Retreat at SpringHill takes 6th – 12th grade students out of their everyday routines, giving them freedom to experience God in profound ways through fun activities, challenging moments, inspiring speakers, and awesome bands!

This year's theme is Escape. That is why this weekend we will focus on being astonished and amazed by how big our God is in simple and complex ways.

Join us for a weekend filled with fast-paced fun, incredible speakers, and bands! The total cost of the retreat is \$139, but the fee for students is only \$65. Westminster will cover the remainder of the cost. Please register with Nikelle and make checks payable to Westminster Presbyterian Church by December 1 to ensure your spot!



*2017 Giving Tree*



Please give support to the Crisis Committee with this year's Giving Tree Project. Gift tags will be available on two Sundays: **December 3 and December 10.**

Each tag provides age, gender, and suggested gift items. Please spend no more than \$25 - \$30. If you spend more, especially with a child's tag, someone may get more than another.

Please place all gifts in gift bags unwrapped. Attach the gift tag to the handle of the bag. Please return all gifts to the church no later than **Sunday, December 17.**



**Thank you for your continued and generous support of this project!**



*Christmas Around the World*



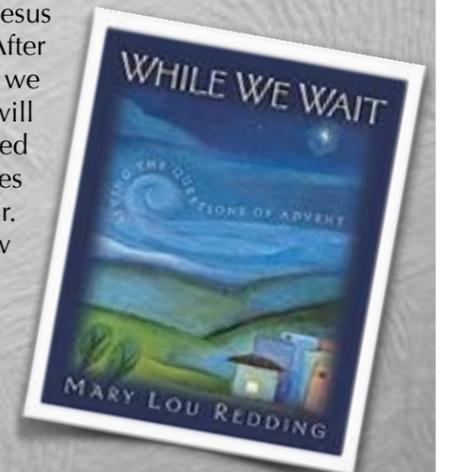
**CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM  
DECEMBER 17 @ 10:30 A.M.**



*Advent Bible Study*

Advent is about preparing ourselves to give attention to God's great gift, Jesus Christ. Sometimes we have difficulty believing we will see anything new. After all, we know the story—we've heard it year after year. What could we possibly see or hear that we have not seen and heard before? Our focus will approach the Christmas story from perspectives we may not have considered before, and we will look at the questions of people in the Christmas stories as well as other Bible passages we typically don't explore this time of year. And as always, when we come to scripture, God will speak if we allow ourselves to hear.

Being part of a special group during Advent presents an opportunity to come to God in gratitude for God's coming to us. So we invite you to join us and these questioners. Pastor Linda will be facilitating our group discussion.



**Sundays, December 3, 10, 17, and 24  
9:15 a.m. in the Session Room  
Coffee and Christmas cookies provided**

### *A Short History of the Handbell Choir*

In October 1972, Lefa Snelling, a member of Westminster, donated money to purchase two octaves of handbells. She had a great love of music and wanted Westminster to have a handbell choir. A choir was started soon after under the direction of Neil Everson.

In November 1979, a third octave, as well as tables, were purchased by Ilau Dean, in memory of her husband, Philip C. Dean.

The handbells were silent for many years, but in 1995, a new handbell choir formed under the direction of Peggy Hanson. The choir eventually purchased two more octaves (Westminster has a total of five octaves) by holding bake sales, selling coffee mugs, receiving MANY quarters from David Kelly, and by Peggy Hanson returning her salary to go toward the purchase of the octaves.

Many hands helped make the handbell choir what it is today. The choir once wore vests sewed by Helen Lange. Music stands were made and painted in Tom

and Linda Kennedy's garage. Nancy Shier and Hazel Kish led a team of sewers to make the heavyweight table cloths used during performances during the worship services. Peggy Hanson and Jan Witucki sewed the table cloths used on the practice table. The fabric used, along with foam padding for the tables, were purchased from the old Mill End store. Dick Hebner bought the tables. A Memorial Gift, from Keith Paul, provided our current robes.

Currently, there are about 18 members in the handbell choir. Our future dreams include new handbell tables and covers, as well as another large bell. The handbell choir members enjoy making music and hope the handbells will be a part of Westminster's music ministry for a long time to come.

— Jan Witucki



### *Notes from the Treasurer*

- Envelopes for 2018 will be set out in the main hallway during the first or second week of December. If you do not see a box of envelopes with your name, but would like a set, please let me know.
- Contributions that you would like credited for 2017 MUST reach me or be postmarked by **December 31, 2017**. Anything I receive or postmarked after December 31, regardless of the date on your check or envelope, will be credited to 2018.
- Year-end statements will be mailed or emailed out around the second week of January. Look over your statement carefully. If I've made an error, please let me know immediately, so I can make the correction and begin closing the books on 2017.

- Heading to a warmer climate this winter? Have you moved recently? Obtained a new email address? Please call the Church office to let us know of these changes so your statement and other Church correspondence reaches you.
- Per capita for 2018 is \$26.94. This is per active, confirmed member. Please do not pay your 2018 per capita until January 1 or after. If you have not paid your 2017 per capita (\$26.17), you can still get that in this month.

It is a pleasure to serve as your Church Treasurer. As always, if you have questions or concerns, do not hesitate to give me a call or send me an email.

*Heather Heidtman*

989-659-2641  
[hheidtman@tds.net](mailto:hheidtman@tds.net)



Earn up to \$2,000 for your faith organization.

Call 989-607-2168  
[HomeAnalysis-ConsumersEnergy.com](http://HomeAnalysis-ConsumersEnergy.com)

Westminster's promo code: WPCBC17

All people of faith are called to care for God's creation. Conserving energy is one important way for us, as Christians, to protect our planet and love our neighbors.

For the next two weeks, your participation in Consumers' FREE Home Energy Analysis program can help Westminster Presbyterian earn up to \$2,000 cash!

The Home Energy Analysis Program offers Michigan residents a 90-minute initial in-home assessment performed by a trained analyst. He or she will perform a visual inspection of your home, install high-efficiency measures where needed, and share a customized summary report with energy-saving tips and recommendations for your home. On average, a customer participating in the Home Energy Analysis Program receives about \$50 worth of energy-saving measures, which provides an estimated savings of up to \$100 – \$150 after the first year. These \$50 worth of improvements may include LED bulbs, kitchen and bathroom faucet aerators, high efficiency shower heads, water heater pipe wrap, LED nightlight, and programmable thermostat.

To help Westminster receive the \$2,000 reward, please sign up before December 17, 2017. To qualify for the reward, Westminster must complete 100 scheduled Home Energy Analysis appointments. At this time, Westminster has over 70 appointments scheduled!

Sign up by calling Consumers Energy at 989-607-2168  
 or visit [HomeAnalysis-ConsumersEnergy.com](http://HomeAnalysis-ConsumersEnergy.com)

The Home Energy Analysis promo code for Westminster is:  
**WPCBC17**

This number is important for tracking the number of appointments credited to Westminster. To help boost Westminster's enrollment numbers, share this code with family, friends, and neighbors who are within Consumer Energy's gas territories.