



Westminster Chimes

Volume 2009 #23

December 16, 2009

Editor: Renée Bucklin

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT 9 AM & 11 AM Preschool through 8th Grade

DECEMBER 20

9 AM "A Tree for Us"

Multigenerational service for all ages. Celebrate the Season in Unitarian Universalist style! Service led by the Religious Education Committee.

11AM "A Child's Christmas in Wales"

Rev. Barbara will tell the classic story and we will sing Christmas carols.

DECEMBER 24

4:30PM Christmas Pageant

7 PM

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, with Soloists & Sermon

"Joseph's Dream"

The story tells us that Joseph had a dream that changed him and takes him to a new place. Let us go with him this Christmas.

9 PM

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Choir & Sermon

"Joseph's Dream"

The story tells us that Joseph had a dream that changed him and takes him to a new place. Let us go with him this Christmas.

DECEMBER 27 ONE 10AM SERVICE

"The Fire Within Emerges and Nirvana"

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Can you believe it?! Two million and counting! What a day to remember! If you left Westminster last Sunday, December 6th, with an extra spring in your step and a smile on your face, you weren't alone. Everywhere you looked there were hugs and hoots and clapping, smiles, laughter and tears. What an emotional day! We feasted on a delicious cake with a rendering of our blacksmith and capital campaign logo - Forging the Future - compliments of our Home Party team. And we sampled delicious desserts selected from a Westminster cookbook created many years ago. A great blending of the past and the future.

As I wandered through Fellowship Hall, I overheard plans forming for a new Westminster cookbook in one corner while others talked of the possibilities that lay ahead. Still others paused to view the renderings of sanctuary designs found in our archives that gave a glimpse into the past – a time of choices and decisions. It was indeed a day of celebration of this congregation's generous spirit and a moment of thanksgiving for those who preceded us with courage and resolve.

There is much to be done over the next few months – purging, planning, packing and, of course, photographing and gathering memories of this Parish House. There will be many ways for each of you to help us capture our history as we build the home of our dreams. Westminster – let's get to work!

Faithfully,
Jan Searles,
President of the Board of Trustees

Dear Friends,

December 14, 2009

Wasn't it a thrilling day Dec 6th? One of you told me how you had been humming the tune we shared through the Sermon last Sunday. The song by Nick Paige.

*Somebody sang for me, had me on their mind.
Took the time and sang for me.
I'm so glad they sang. I'm so glad they sang.
I'm so glad they sang for me.*

I imagine that someone years from now will have such thoughts about us.

As we crossed out of worship, our children lined our path, blowing bubbles to guide us into the good news and celebration. We would have been blessed whatever amount we had achieved, but to be blessed by such generous contributions from so many was a miracle. Then to receive such generous matching pledges from a few families was beyond our dreaming. It felt like another birthday for Westminster, December 6, 2009!

What courage it takes to choose to build at a time when the world was contracting. What a radical act of affirmation of your faith and values in this world!

We have been greatly blessed this season. No question. Miraculously blessed. A knowing glimmer of a dream in the mind's eye grew to hope in many hearts, to drawings, strategic planning, campaigns and glad congratulations. I could hear this faint phrase grow in my heart all week. *From those who are greatly blessed much is expected.*

We need no reminding that even as we move forward to plan to build ourselves a spiritual home for learning and growing, we must not forget our neighbors. In this child-centered season, too many in our nation are homeless, and it is the children who bear the brunt of the societal choices as well as indifference that allow for hunger and homelessness. As a nation we are failing our children. Let us find ways to build on our work in the community in the seasons ahead. As we build a house, let us enlarge our capacity for love, justice and gratitude.

Think of this growth as our thanks for being given the great blessing: life. Indeed, it may be that humanity itself has lasted because of our inherent attributes of kindness, love compassion and cooperation. That we then strive to grow these qualities is our blessing.

This is a kind of birthday, another beginning. What lies ahead of us will require more humor, dreaming, believing, discovering, forgiving, caring, sitting, praying, and working.

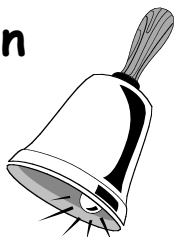
And lest we get all caught up in our human endeavors and ourselves let us make time to savor and share in some gladness. Enjoy the warm light of Hanukkah candles and lit trees. Venture out and see the stars in the night sky. Gather for Christmas Eve magic. This New Year's Eve watch for a "blue" moon rising to meet another New Year. Love & holiday hugs, and so many *thank yous!*

In good faith and with love,

Rev. Barbara

Religious Education Program

Renee Pierre
Director of Religious Education



Office hours: Tuesday 9-3 & by appt.

will be held on the weekend of January 8-10, 2010. Senior high youth from our district and neighboring districts are invited to fun, food, worship and small group discussions. Contact youth leaders at: crazyiz93@aim.com or corinnayyy@aim.com for registration information.

Renee

UPCOMING RE CALENDAR:

December 20th:

9 am: Multigenerational Service led by the RE Committee & Renee Pierre; NO RE CLASSES
11 am: Service in the sanctuary with Rev. Barbara; NO RE CLASSES

6:30 pm: Senior Youth Group Meets

December 27th: 10 am Fire Communion
Multigenerational Service led by Natalie Aubin; NO RE CLASSES

OUR FAMILIES KNOW HOW TO PARTY!

What a terrific time we had with families and children on Sunday! The rain kept us from caroling in our neighborhood, but it didn't dampen our spirits! Many, many, many thanks to the folks on the RE Committee who organized everything to run smoothly and efficiently. It was a wonderful night! Please thank our hosts when you see them next: Vikki & Stephen Paull, Patti Cousineau, Deb & Jamie LaSalle, Natalie & Dan Aubin (and family) and Grandma Rosie! It could not have been done without you!

HOLIDAY PAGEANT REMINDERS:

Greetings families! We're so excited about the upcoming Christmas Pageant on Christmas Eve at 4:30 pm. Here are the last few dates of rehearsals:

December 20th:

10:15 am: Soloists rehearse with Nonetta & Shepherds and Angels rehearse with Lauren.
Backstage helpers meet with Renee
12:15 pm: Rehearsal for everyone in the Sanctuary
December 24th:

2 pm: Soloists arrive for dress rehearsal
2:30 pm: Chorus arrives for dress rehearsal
3 pm: Backstage helpers arrive for dress rehearsal

SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP HOSTS

UPCOMING CON: Our Senior High Youth Group is once again hosting a CON (youth conference). This years CON is called CONival. It

WOMEN OF WESTMINSTER ALL WOMEN WELCOME

We meet every Thursday evening.

Setup/Meeting: 7:00 to 7:15 PM
Announcements: 7:15 to 7:30PM
Program: 7:30 to 8:45 PM
Place: Fellowship Hall

Our Mission/Statement of Purpose is to enhance and encourage:

* Spirituality * Support of each other

Dec 17 – Winter Solstice

Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve (no meeting)

Dec. 31 – New Year's Eve (no meeting)



JUNIOR CHOIR NEWS

I want to thank my Junior choir members: Phebe Hawes, Jane Addington-May, Soleil Pierre, Rylie Paull, and Madison Lewis for their hard work and dedication. I am very proud of all of you. I also want to thank their families for their support and enthusiasm. I wish you all a beautiful and blessed holiday season!

Junior Choir will start rehearsals after the holidays in January. If your child was unable to participate, but would like to do so now, please contact. Thank you!!

Lauren Kalian

CHARITY OF THE MONTH – WESTMINSTER SHARING LOCKER

Westminster shares unrestricted cash placed in our collection basket 50/50 with a different charity each month. With approval from our minister and Board of Trustees, the Share the Plate Committee has selected *Westminster Sharing Locker* for the month of December.

In February 2010, the Caring Circle's Sharing Locker opens to the East Greenwich community. Needy individuals can obtain food from the East Greenwich food pantry. But personal care items, laundry detergent, cleaning solutions, paper products and pet food, etc. are not available from food pantries. The Sharing Locker helps fill a need for these items, and most of the items provided are not covered by food stamps.

The mission of a "Corner Cupboard" is "to assist members of the community by providing non-food essentials in a dignified and a non-discriminatory manner." A UU congregation in Maine opened their Corner Cupboard in February 2006 on the 3rd Saturday of the month from 10am-2pm. The end of the month is when people begin to run out of money for necessities. About 34 people lined up on that Saturday to receive 4 items/person.

For questions about Sharing the Plate, please contact a member of the Committee: Kristen Morelli, Bill Stone, Celia Humphreys or Nathan DeSisto. To make a charitable organization suggestion, please fill out a Nomination Form located in our mailbox, and available on our website.

NAME TAGS

Name Tags have returned to the racks in Fellowship Hall. If you are unable to find your name tag please sign up for a new white name tag on the board next to the rack. If you would like an individually designed wood name tag, see Laurie Tyce. The \$5.00 cost on one wood name tag will be donated to the Building Fund.

You are encouraged to wear your name tag so visitors and new members can get to know you.

Cele Mark, Membership co-coordinator



CHURCH INCLEMENT WEATHER/CLOSING POLICY

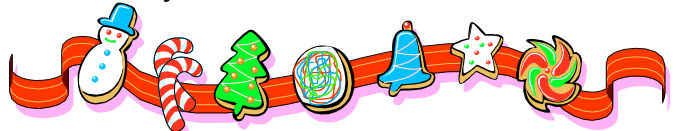
Your safety is our greatest concern. When snow or other conditions make it likely that travel will be difficult and unsafe, Rev. Barbara and Janet Searles, our Board Chair will consult to decide if it is in the best interests of the congregation to cancel Sunday Services. When services are cancelled we will notify you no later than 7AM in these ways:

1. CHIMES e mail list serve.
2. Local RI Radio and TV stations.
3. On the office answering machine.

HOW WESTMINSTER SAVED CHRISTMAS EVE FELLOWSHIP

Traditionally after the 7pm and 9pm services on Christmas Eve we share refreshments. Eggnog and non-alcoholic punch have been provided by the Worship Committee and congregants bring cookies to share. In order to continue this festive fellowship time, we need volunteers to coordinate set-up and clean-up. (The Worship Committee will purchase beverage supplies.) We have detailed instructions on what needs doing. It is a short list, which consists of ensuring tables are set-up, votive candles are lit and extinguished in the fireplace (we will not have a fire in the fireplace), punch is made, beverages are replenished and Fellowship Hall is tidied.

If you / your group can take on this task please contact Mary-Ann Connor.



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, December 20

10:15 a.m. between services

Order of business:

To vote on the Board's recommendation
to not erect a monopole on the property.

Providence Singers/RI Philharmonic

Messiah G.F. Handel

December 19, 2009, 8:00 pm
Veterans Memorial Auditorium

Hear the dramatic continuity and musical intensity in this year's collaboration between two of Rhode Island's finest performing ensembles, this year supported by Metropolitan Opera soloists.

Ticket prices: \$22, \$32, \$42, \$52, \$62, and \$12 for kids/students. Ticket prices include the \$2 VMA facilities fee.

Group discounts: same \$6/ticket for groups of 6+ (not available in Mezzanine, which are the \$62 tickets)

Order through Providence Singers website (www.providencesingers.org) or Veterans Memorial Auditorium box office, but handling fees will apply to credit card orders.

UNITARIAN HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

December 20, 2009 from 2 - 7PM

133 Duke Street; East Greenwich
(house will be smoke free)

Host: Kayla Doherty

Please bring something you like to eat at Christmas
& something for a child to wear to keep warm.
Example: Hat, Mittens, Scarf, or Socks.

NEW BUILDING COMMITTEE GEARS UP FOR ACTION

What an amazing and wonderful result from our Capital Campaign!! We are all so grateful to Abby and Bev for their inspired leadership and to the whole congregation for responding with such loving generosity to the call to build Westminster a new home.

Now that we have raised the funds to credibly move forward with our plans to build, your New Building Committee is gearing up to take the next steps and to move us forward to that incredible day when we walk into our brand new Parish House.

Next steps include: working with the architects to turn our plans into detailed building documents; developing a financial plan, based on timing of campaign contribution receipts and anticipated cash flow for the project; beginning the permitting process; and preparing ourselves to put the construction plans out to bid. The next design phase will be very important and will take us a few months to complete. During the Capital Campaign we heard many good ideas and feedback, which will inform our work with the architects. We will continue to solicit your feedback as we move forward with the design development and you will have opportunities to comment on the design before it is final and before the plans are put out to bid.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for your big vote of confidence in the work of this Committee and in our great Church. The coming weeks and months will be so exciting; we look forward to continuing this inspiring journey with you.

Bill Stone, New Building Committee Chair

CANVASS CAMPAIGN FOR “2010 OPERATIONAL BUDGET” WELL UNDER WAY!

At the Congregational Meeting held Sunday, September 20, 2009, the Board presented and the congregation approved a proposed “2010 Operational Budget” supporting the financial requests necessary for the smooth, responsible, and successful operation of our Westminster community’s ministry, RE program, property maintenance, BCD and UUA involvement, programs and services, and other financial commitments for the coming 2010 fiscal year. The Board determined that the Canvass Campaign would have to have a \$200,000 goal with an 18% increase in individual pledging in order to meet the proposed financial requests.

Since the most urgent financial priority this fall has been the absolute necessity for a successful Capital Campaign for the rebuilding of our Church House (AND HOW JOYFULLY SUCCESSFUL THAT HAS PROVED TO BE!), the Board additionally asked the Canvass Committee for the “2010 Operational Budget” to run a campaign that was more “behind the scenes”, which we were happy to do, under the circumstances. This meant your Canvass Outreach team contacted as many as we could “one-on-one” - by phone, e-mail, meetings at church or in your homes, and this contact proved to be one of the most heart-warming experiences we have had as this gave us the opportunity to speak with so many of you “up close and personal”, and in the process, get to know each other a little better (ALWAYS a “good thing” in any extended family!).

As of this date, we are happy to report that **88%** of the \$200,000 goal, or **\$175,176**, has been pledged by 137 of our Westminster households!

“BUT WAIT... (As Bev & Abby would say!)! We do have a few more weeks left to us to see how much of a dent we can make in that 12% needed to reach the goal before January 1, 2010, and before our Congregational Meeting scheduled for January 31, 2010, when we are asked to approve a revised “2010 Operational Budget”. If you have not had the opportunity yet to pledge for our “2010 Operational Budget”, the following members of your Canvass Outreach team stand “ready, willing, and able”, and downright EAGER, to answer your questions and to discuss with you what pledge would be most comfortable for you at this time as we look ahead to the New Year: Maureen Souza (Canvass Chair), Patricia Vinci (Asst. Canvass Chair), Julia Archer, Al Jeffries, Joe Souza, Laurie Tyce.

While our Canvass Campaign this year has had to be “under the radar” and more than a bit “sotto voce”, at this Holiday Season, let the “good news go forth” that our response to date has been anything but! With 88% of our goal having been reached in these stressful and demanding economic times for so many of us individually and for our community in general as we also looked ahead to a significant capital need, we have spoken loudly and clearly that Westminster is a community we hold dear in our hearts!



WESTMINSTER CALENDAR

12/17 2:00 PM Wiseman Memorial
 12/17 7:00 PM Men's Group (W)
 12/17 7:00 PM WOW (FH)
 12/20 9:00 AM Multigenerational Worship
 12/20 10:15 AM Congregational Meeting
 12/20 10:15 AM Pageant Rehearsal (H)
 12/20 11:00 AM Worship
 12/20 12:15 PM Pageant Rehearsal (H)(FH)
 12/20 6:30 PM RE Youth Group (FH)
 12/22 6:30 PM Yoga (FH)
 12/23 6:00 PM Buddhist Meditation (FH)
 12/23 7:15 PM Sr. Choir (CH)
 12/24 No WOW
 12/24 Chimes Deadline
 12/25 Merry Christmas
 12/27 10:00 AM Worship
 12/27 10:00 AM RE
 12/29 6:30 PM Yoga (FH)
 12/29 7:00 PM RE Committee (W)
 12/30 9:30 AM Chimes Mailing (RR)
 12/30 7:15 PM Sr. Choir (CH)



The Caring Circle is Here to Help You

If you have experienced a setback that has left you or a family member ill, or in need of meals, visits, rides or other help, please contact Nancy Rieser or Rev. Barbara Fast (phone 401-884-3561).

CHIMES DEADLINES



DEADLINE: December 24th
 MAILING: December 30th

WESTMINSTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Westminster Unitarian Church welcomes all individuals without regard to race, color, physical challenge, sexual orientation, age, or national origin.

Church Office: 401-884-5933
 Fax Number: 401-885-2710
 Minister: Barbara Fast
 minister's study: 401-884-3561
 Religious Ed Coordinator: Renee Pierre
 Music Director: Nonetta Shatakhtsian
 Office Administrator: Judy Brown
 E-mail: westminsteruu@verizon.net
 Website: www.westminsteruu.org
 Office Hours: 9AM to 1 PM Monday - Friday

WESTMINSTER WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS

December 20

Ushers: 9:00 AM Amy & Jeff Crawford
 11:00 AM Donna Poland

December 24

Ushers: 4:30 PM Vicky & Stephen Paull
 7:00 PM Picard/Pugh Family
 7:00 PM Tom Townsend
 Ruth McIntosh

December 27

Ushers: 10:00 AM Mary-Ann Connor
 Flowers: **Volunteer needed**

To volunteer, write your name on the schedule in Fellowship Hall, or contact Judy Brown, the Office Administrator.

If you prefer to have the Chimes e-mailed to you, please contact Judy Brown in the Church office weekdays between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.