ADVENT SEASON CELEBRATES 300 YEARS OF “JOY TO THE WORLD”

One of the best-loved hymns in history, “Joy to the World,” turns 300 this year. In 1719, Isaac Watts penned this beautiful song, and we have been singing it at Christmastime in faith communities all around the world for three centuries. That makes this year a special occasion!

This Advent season, Westminster will be following a worship series dedicated to the 300th anniversary of “Joy to the World”. The series, called “Heaven and Nature Sing”, developed by Worship Design Studio will take us on an Advent journey looking at several different ways that we can experience and bring joy to everyone around us, even and especially when our circumstances and current events are not so happy. When we use the word joy in modern language, we usually think of simple happiness or bliss. But true joy goes so much deeper than that. Inspired by The Book of Joy with the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu, this series expands our experience of joy and calls us to a new understanding of what it means to be peace, hope, love, and joy in a troubled world.

Worship liturgy, choral music, and children’s activities will all be reflective of this special program.

Alternative Gift Fair – Sunday, December 1

The vibrant beautiful Mayan hand-loomed scarves and felted ornaments SOLD OUT on the first Sunday! We re-ordered but the shipment went astray and had to be resent. They can be purchased on Sunday after both services inside the Patio Room.
In December, amid our joyful expectation and celebration of Christmas, we will be saying goodbye to Diana Wright, our Children’s Ministries Director for the last 16 years (also working with youth for 14 of those 16 years!). We hope that she and Don will be sticking around Westminster for worship and community, but still, Diana’s departure from the day to day and week to week activities of her ministry to children will be a challenging transition for us. She has been so loving and nurturing to our young people and so warm, calming and trustworthy in her interactions with the parents of our young people. And as a staff member, she has been creative, cheerful and kind. Shelby and I are so appreciative of her ministry to our children. Her presence and teaching has helped form them into the adults they are today. I know many parents in this church share our gratitude for her ministry.

Please join us for worship and the party on December 29, as we celebrate Diana’s work and give thanks to God for her many gifts and her faithfulness in using those gifts here at Westminster for the sake of Christ. Think about how you can best show your appreciation.

Go slow this month. Take the time to ponder the radiance of Christmas and the joy of being in community with people like Diana and Don. Here’s a poem to help you through the month:

I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl
of great price, the one field that had
treasure in it. I realize now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying

on to a receding future, nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as your youth
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

--"The Bright Field' by R.S. Thomas
Scripture readings, sermon titles & themes for December

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sunday of Advent</th>
<th>Scripture Readings</th>
<th>Sermon Title</th>
<th>Additional Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
<td>1st Sunday of Advent</td>
<td>Isaiah 2:1-5, Romans 13:11-14</td>
<td>Prepare Him Room: Hopeful Joy</td>
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<td>Dec. 15</td>
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<td>Dec. 15 at 6pm Blue Christmas Service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Psalm 30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Elusive Joy</td>
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<td>Dec. 24</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dec. 24 at 7pm Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 29</td>
<td>1st Sunday of Christmas</td>
<td>Isaiah 63:7-9, Matthew 2:13-23</td>
<td>Wonders of His Love: Compassionate Joy</td>
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Blue Christmas: Elusive Joy

For many, the holiday season is a time of pain and loneliness. For those who have suffered loss of any kind, it can feel as though they are all alone as the world moves happily along. Even if our loss occurred a long time ago, the grief can overcome us like a sneak attack from an unwanted intruder.

This year Westminster is offering a Blue Christmas service – a time to remember our losses and share in a time of prayer and reflection with others. The service will take place at 6:00 pm on Sunday, December 15 at the church.

Congregation Meeting

Please join in on a quick congregational meeting after each service, on Sunday, December 15th in which we will elect new Deacons and Elders for the church.
‘Tis the season!
The Giving Tree is up in the
lobby!

It’s that wonderful time of year when we all have the opportunity to bring some Christmas magic to our community! The Deacon’s Giving Tree ministry is November 24 – December 15. To participate, you just pick an ornament tag from the tree (or two, or however many you’d like), purchase a gift for the person on the tag, and bring the wrapped gift with the tag affixed back to church before December 15.

This year we are collecting gifts for two local organizations:

- We will once again be partnering with Opening Doors, a local agency based in the Arden-Arcade neighborhood that assists refugees from all over the world assimilate into our community. Gifts for this organization will be for the children of the families they serve. Ornament tags for Opening Doors will have the age and gender of the child to buy for, or you can take a “diapers” tag and bring a package of diapers, any size. All gifts should be unwrapped.

- For the first time this year, we will be partnering with Next Move Homeless Services, a subsidiary of Goodwill. Gifts will be given to their Home at Last clients, who are newly-homed senior citizens. Ornament tags for Home at Last will list the gender of the recipient(s) and the item(s) that the recipient needs for their new home (like Santa’s list!). These gifts can be wrapped.

Over the years, this congregation has brought the joy of the season to thousands in our community; over 200 gifts in 2018 alone! Thank you all for your continued support of this fun, festive, and essential program.

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**Church Office Holiday Hours**

The office will be closed on December 25th & 26th

The week after Christmas, the office will have reduced hours and will be open from 9 am to 1 pm and will be closed on Wednesday, January 1st.
PWOW CIRCLE MEETINGS

All women in the church are invited to join a Circle for Bible study, fellowship, and fun. Call Roberta Franklin at 916-708-2768 for more information.

DECEMBER 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>12/5</td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>Serra Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>Searchers</td>
<td>12/10</td>
<td>11:30 pm</td>
<td>Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Esther/Ruth</td>
<td>12/15</td>
<td>1:00 pm</td>
<td>Offsite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary/Martha</td>
<td>12/16</td>
<td>1:30 pm</td>
<td>Serra Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia Circle</td>
<td>12/24</td>
<td>11:30 am</td>
<td>Observing Christmas Eve</td>
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Holidays with Equal Exchange

Still looking for a stocking stuffer or holiday gift for someone special? How about a box of Equal Exchange Peppermint or Chamomile tea? Either of these herbal teas would make a soothing hot drink during this hectic holiday season. Of course, we also have lots of yummy chocolate bars, including an extra supply of our newest flavor Dark Chocolate with Coconut Milk. Chocolate lovers who are vegan or lactose intolerant would love a bar (no milk)! For the chef in your family, consider a bottle of virgin Olive Oil from Palestine. Cold-pressed and full of antioxidants, this oil can be used for cooking, baking, and dipping. Always remember too that your fair trade purchases help struggling rural farmers in Central America and elsewhere survive and provide for their families. See you on Sunday, December 8!

Christmas Cheer

Presbyterian Women of Westminster (PWOW) invites all church members to Christmas Cheer on Sunday, December 8 in the Social Hall following the 2nd service. We will be serving an appetizer luncheon along with coffee, hot apple cider, and PWOW’s famous citrus punch. Please bring Christmas cookies to share with your church family! (Drop cookies off in the upstairs kitchen before the service.)
Children & Youth Animal Fundraiser

Westminster’s children and youth will once again be raising money to purchase livestock for a Kenyan community in need through the Presbyterian Giving Catalog. A dairy cow can provide a family in need with a reliable source of income and nourishment. Your gift also supports training in caretaking and sustainable breeding of livestock, improving the food and income security for families and villages in Kenya for years to come.

The Children and Youth are again raising money and accepting donations for farm animals and supplies that they will purchase through the Presbyterian Giving Catalog. They have set a modest goal of raising $100. That would enable them to purchase four ‘Family Sets of Chickens’. Last year, they raised enough to purchase 3 cows and even a few chickens!

To raise the money, the Children and Youth are again taking orders for See’s candy. They will take orders and payment until Sunday December 6 at noon. The candy will be available for pickup starting on December 8. They will have a table set up after each service for orders of the candy or you can also make a monetary donation to the “Youth Animal Project”.

Parent’s Night Out

On Dec. 6 drop the kids off at 6 p.m. and pick them up at 8:30 p.m. Enjoy a night out on the town while we provide yummy snacks, play games, and do crafts! RSVP to diana@westminsac.org

Carolining at Pioneer House

People of all ages are invited to gather at Pioneer House (415 P St.) at 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 11 to sing Christmas carols for the residents.

Afterwards, we’ll return to Westminster for a delicious dinner. Please RSVP to mark@westminsac.org so that we can plan ahead for food!
**Youth Care Packages**

The Youth of Westminster are making more care packages for Sacramento’s homeless Community. We have, so far, received enough donations and money to allow us to have gone out in November and go out in December, January, and February. We’re hoping to also go out in March. So, they still need your help, Westminster!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel sized toothpaste &amp; toothbrushes</th>
<th>Socks</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feminine hygiene products</td>
<td>Snacks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hand Sanitizer</td>
<td>Deodorant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gallon Ziploc bags</td>
<td>Lip Balm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toilet paper</td>
<td>Wet wipes</td>
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</tbody>
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Bring your items to the church office anytime during any day of the week, or bring the items to services on Sunday and one of the Youth will collect it from you. The Youth of Westminster and more importantly, Sacramento’s homeless Community are extremely grateful for your generosity.

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**THE 37TH SANTA PARADE**

**DECEMBER 14 @ 10:00 AM**

Enjoy free parking, front-row seats, popcorn, and hot cocoa as we gather in front of the church to watch the annual Santa Parade. The parade starts at 10 a.m. and the Youth and Children will be there to hand out popcorn, hot chocolate, and coffee to anyone who would like it.

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**WELCOME!**

The Christian Education Department is pleased to announce that Jenna Mirtle has been hired to work in our Infant and Pre-school Rooms on Sunday mornings. Jenna is a graduate from McClatchy High School and grew up in Sacramento. She is the youngest of three girls in her family and lives locally. Jenna loves to sing and has been singing since she was seven years old. Besides working at WPC, Jenna is employed as a nanny during the week and helps her parents at home. Jenna is excited to work with the children here at Westminster and we are excited to have her as part of our team. Stop in and meet her on Sunday mornings in the preschool Room and give her a warm Westminster Welcome!
Christmas Comes Early to Westminster Children’s Ministry

On Sunday, November 17, 2019, our Children’s Ministry was the lucky recipient of seven wonderful bucket loads of Legos. Delighted Sunday School children were wide-eyed with joy and immediately became engrossed in building a variety of Lego structures. Legos are those little plastic bricks that fit together to make an infinite number of innovative creations. They are FUN! FUN! FUN! (unless you happen to step on one barefoot). These Legos were a gift from the children of one of our former youth members, who decided they would like to share some of their Lego collection with Westminster. Those children, 8 year-old Aidan Attaway and 11 year-old Ian Attaway (pictured), live in Alameda with their parents, Dr. Christy Hobza and Matthew Attaway. Grandma and Gramps are Westminster members Bob and Michele Hobza. Christy grew up in Westminster, and was a dedicated member of our youth group, went on several youth mission trips and participated in many of the Westminster theater productions. Thank you Attaways for this fantastic gift!

It's the WRIGHT time of year to celebrate DIANA’S retirement!

Hang onto your black Sharpies and get out your calendars. Mark the date with 16 golden stars, one for each year that our remarkable Diana Wright devoted her love and enthusiasm to our children and youth at Westminster Presbyterian Church. It’s hard to believe, but Diana is retiring. We won’t let her go until we celebrate and show her our appreciation and affection for all she has given of herself for our children. You don’t want to miss this spectacular party!

WHEN: Sunday, December 29, 2019
TIME: Immediately following the 11:00 Worship Service
WHERE: The WPC Club Room
WHO: All members and friends and their children are invited
WHAT: A party to celebrate Diana's contributions to Westminster

There will be a basket available to hold your cards and any expressions of appreciation you may want to share with Diana.

Questions contact: Michelle Mosnier (michelleym1@yahoo.com)
Michele Hobza (m hobza@aol.com)
Where did I leave my __________??? You fill in the blank. With those of us who have mobility issues it is usually “Where is my cane or my walker”. I know from first hand experience since whenever I am on a level surface and in an open area, I can easily walk off and leave my cane behind. Then comes the realization that I'll need it as I walk down the long hall or am ready to go home. Then the frantic backtrack ing to see where I left it. Often my family or friends find it for me since they can move more quickly from one possible location to another than I can. Usually we locate my purple cane and I go on my way. Often our fabulous WPC staff find a “lost cane waiting for its owner” and put it in lost and found in the church office. Sound familiar? A happy reunion with its owner is easier if the cane or walker has your name on it. I use one of my return address labels to enable an easier reunion.

You and I are very wise when we move about with our assistive devices. Falling is not a good idea for any of us. Actually, it’s the landing that causes the problems – bruising, fractures or other problems. Most falls occur at home. If you fell and no one could hear you yelling for help what would you do? If you are able to move about and haven’t broken any bones, do you know how to crawl to a chair or a bench and carefully get yourself up? If not, hopefully you have your cell phone or a portable phone with you so you can call for help. Or you may already have your own LIFELINE pendant or bracelet. Then you push the button and a Lifeline operator talks to you to find out what you need. This works in your home and immediate yard/area.

If you have the optional auto alert service, a Lifeline operator is alerted if you fall and can’t get up or are unconscious. Then the operator can call the person(s) you have listed as your contact people to check on you or calls an emergency provider to check on you.

There is even a go safe option that uses GPS to locate you when you need help and are away from your home. When I start walking around my new neighborhood by myself, I will use this level of service. This plus my Medic alert bracelet will let whoever finds me to help me know where I am and who I am.

Last year I wrote about these safety devices. I mentioned them as potential gifts from your families or yourself to keep you safer. All too often our families look for Christmas gifts that we can really use. Brochures are available in the WPC Health Resource Center on the first floor next to Wes’s office. Check them out yourself or talk to me about them. I’m available to help you.

Love and Blessings and a joyous Christmas to you and yours – Jean Harlow, MSN, RN Faith Community Nurse
Teacher Appreciation Sunday

by Diana Wright

A delightful celebration was held on Sunday, Nov. 17, for our amazing and talented volunteer teachers and staff who spend endless hours preparing their lessons on Sunday mornings for the children and youth.

Each one of them was presented with a certificate of appreciate and a pin, along with a box of shortbread cookies, after all... it was Scottish Sunday! A delicious cake was served in their honor at coffee hour and served by the youth. Westminster is blessed to have such dedicated volunteers and staff. If you would like to add your name to our volunteer list, please let Michele Hobza, our Christian Education Moderator know how you can become part of next year’s Teacher Appreciation Sunday!

Our heartfelt appreciation to each of the following volunteers and staff:

Infant-Preschool Staff: Michelle Mosnier, Breanna Ramirez, and Jenna Mirtle.

Elementary Grade Volunteer Teachers: Patty Bonnsetter, Ben Nichelson, Shelby Nordman, Erika Nordman, Blakely Nordman, Phillip Reese, Sandy Sharp, and Tricia Morris.

Children’s Music Leader: Chris Borton

Youth Staff: Mark Hargreaves and Connor Sisterson and Don Wright, volunteer.

These fine folks have enriched my life in ways they’ll never know...as well as the lives of the children and youth they have come to know in their Sunday school classes. All of the these folks are amazingly creative, artistic, energetic, positive, and enjoy spending quality time with children. They are wonderfully wise and witty and never tire of asking the children, ‘I wonder questions.’ Additionally, they enjoy teaching the Old Testament (you know who you are) and most importantly, they love God and delight in that love with the children.

CELEBRATE THE “JOY OF CHRISTMAS”

’Tis the time of year when we gather to celebrate the birth of Christ and the real “Joy” that this time of year holds for us all. On Sunday, December 8, during both our 9:00 am and 11:00 service the preschoolers, children, and youth will present a short, but powerful, presentation on the real meaning of Joy. They have been rehearsing their narrations and songs dutifully and they hope to impress and inspire you about the importance of Joyfulness during this time of year. Hope you can make it!
**Stewardship Update**

Sunday, November 3, 2019 was dedication Sunday which included a potluck brunch and the dedication of the estimates of giving. That means the Stewardship campaign for this year is over... well not quite. As of last week we have received estimates of giving totaling $452,847. This represents 118 families or individuals. Of the estimates received, 32.1% increased their estimate, 31.5% stayed the same and 6.3% decreased. There are still 22.6 where an estimate has not yet been submitted. We ask those that have not yet completed an estimate to please pray fully consider making that estimate. You may contact the office for the estimate materials and return to the office in person, by mail or by placing it in the offering plate on Sunday. It is important to have as many pledges as possible so that the Session can put together the 2020 church budget.

On behalf of the Stewardship ministry team we thank you for putting your Faith In Action.

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**Habitat for Humanity Unity Build Work Day**

Saturday, January 25, 2020

In 2016 Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento came up with the idea of the Unity Build to counter the rhetoric in our country by bringing together members of the various Faith Communities to build two houses. Habitat has just started on their second Unity Build. Once again the faith community has come together and has just started construction on two more Unity houses. Westminster has contributed monetarily to this project and on **Saturday, January 25, 2020** we will have the opportunity for 12 volunteers to work on these houses. The workday begins at 7:30 and ends at 1:30 with a lunch break. Anyone over the age of 16 is welcome. No construction experience is necessary and all the tools and materials will be provided. If you are interested you may sign up in the office or contact Peter Tiedemann at 916-956-0095 or petetiedemann@gmail.com with any questions.

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**El Camino Madrigal Dinner**

On Saturday, December 7, 2019 the Madrigals will once again have their dinner in the Social Hall. There will be two seating opportunities at 1:00 pm and 6:00 pm. Reservations are accepted through Monday, December 2, 2019. Tickets are $30 per person. Signups are in the office.

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**Sacramento Master Singer’s**

The Master Singers are back at Westminster! On Saturday, December 14, 2019 they will delight with their *A Master Singers Christmas* program, beginning at 3 pm, that will include a candlelight processional and a wide range of traditional melodies, timeless carols, and the latest multicultural songs. Purchase tickets at www.mastersingers.org
Career Opportunity: Westminster's Director of Children's Ministries

- Do you long to help shape the faith of our children in Westminster Presbyterian Church?
- Do children energize you?
- Are you looking for rewarding half time, flexible work that can be the 'best of two worlds?'
- Are you a responsible, sensitive and enthusiastic adult who is ready to undertake a thrilling task?

Do you view guiding and nurturing children and young people making their important journey of faith through pre-school and elementary years to be a gratifying career?

Might this be your calling or a calling for someone you know? This position is 20 flexible hours/week with benefits. Please visit westminsac.org to learn more about all this position has to offer.

Order Poinsettias

*(please return by Dec. 8)*

Once again, the church will be adorned with poinsettias this Christmas season.

We invite you to sponsor a plant (or even a few) in honor of friends and loved ones. All honorees will be included in a Dec. 16 special listing.

**Cost:** $15/plant (proceeds go to the Deacon’s ministry)

Name: _______________________________________

Phone/e-mail: _______________________________________

In honor of: _______________________________________

or

In memory of: _______________________________________

**Office use only**

Amount received __________

P/D/C ______________________