



The Westmorelander

Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ

Volume XLVII, No. 20

An Open and Affirming Congregation

December 1, 2005

Christmas Day Service at 1pm

Ever since the July Deacons Meetings when they determined that on **Christmas Day -- a Sunday -- our worship service will be held at 1 pm.** and not 10 am, I have been pondering how best to get the word out! My fear is that in spite of constant announcements in *The Westmorelander* and reminders in the Sunday insert, redundant recitals from the pulpit, last minute proddings on the Westmorelandnet, and proclamation in large letters on our sign, there will still be some faithful pillar of the church who shows up at ten in the morning having not gotten the message. Of course I am comforted a bit when I realize that God often has the same problem in getting something important across. Even on the first Christmas, there were angels singing at the top of their lungs, a star in the East so bright you couldn't help but notice, centuries of prophecy there for the reading.....and still the great good news was missed by almost everyone! In the end, people will know that Christ is born not through the Internet or signs in the sky, but by how we live our lives. They will know about the Good News of God's presence and love because it comes through us. And that's even more important to remember than the time of our December 25 worship service.

I'll see you in Church! —*Rich*

Parking Lot Security

Recently several cars were broken into and damaged in the church parking lot on a weekday. Please do not leave any bags, packages or other valuables inside and visible in the passenger compartment of your car.

Soup's On!

On November 6, a group of eight Westmorelanders including three relatively new members of Westmoreland -- **Amy Dunbar, Ted Hester, Peggy Alphonso**, their children, **Emily** and **Zachary** -- and members of the Board of Membership and Fellowship volunteered at Martha's Table, an agency that prepares two meals daily for hungry and homeless people in DC. They all talked companionably while chopping many, many pounds of vegetables for soup.



Worship Topics and Themes

Sunday, December 4
 Second Sunday in Advent
 "On Being Creatively Maladjusted"
 Isaiah 40:1-11, 2 Peter 3:8-15,
 Mark 1:1-8
 Holy Communion
 Rich Smith, preaching

Sunday, December 11
 Third Sunday in Advent
 "I'm Dreaming of a Blue Christmas"
 Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11,
 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
 Reception of New Members
 Rich Smith preaching

Sundown Service at 6
 Carols, Contemplation and Communion



Advent and Christmas Celebrations

Fellowship Breakfast

Sunday, December 4, 8:30 am - You may bring a dish to share (perhaps something reminiscent of Christmas breakfast) or a donation for S.O.M.E. or the Capital Food Bank. If you like, bring in one of your special Christmas ornaments or decorations to share with the group. Room 35.

Intergenerational Wreath-making Workshop

Sunday, December 4, 11:30 am - Make a wreath for yourself or to give. All materials will be provided. Bring your own pruning shears and gloves to protect your hands. Donations of \$10 will be appreciated. Join us for this festive and fun tradition!

Hanging of the Greens

Saturday, December 10, 9:30 - 12:00 - All are invited to meet in the Social Hall to decorate wreaths for hanging in the Sanctuary. Bring gloves and pruning shears. Greens (balsam, boxwood, magnolia, pine, Leland cypress, holly with berries) are needed. Please bring them to the kitchen door before 9 am Saturday, December 10.

Music Sunday

Sunday, December 18, 10 am - Worship featuring instrumentalists and special music of the season.

Christmas Eve

5 pm - The Christmas story reenacted and read from the Bible. Join the Holy Family, shepherds, angels and magi at this service for all ages. All youth choirs will participate.

11 pm - Lessons and carols tell the story at this candlelight service.

Christmas Day

1 pm - Enjoy a relaxed Christmas morning and join your fellow Westmorelanders for Sunday worship in the afternoon.

Bring Joy to Little Children

You can help make this a merrier Christmas for needy children in our area. Please take a tag from the "gift tree" on the social hall stage identifying a young person served by Shaw Community Ministry. Return a wrapped gift of a toy, game, books (or, for the older children, a gift card) of \$20 to \$25 in value, with nametag attached, by December 15. Check the gift tree for more Christmas giving opportunities.

Handel's Messiah

The final two classes of the course on Handel's Messiah will be held **December 7 and 14**. Since each class stands alone, you may participate even now. Classes are 12 noon and 7 pm on Wednesdays. Bring a "brown bag" meal. Call Sanelma to register and purchase the study guide (\$17).

Stewardship Update

As of November 17, 2005, Westmoreland received 122 pledges totaling \$355,950. Of those, 5 were new pledges (\$4,000); 47 increased their pledge an average of 11% (\$16,503); 22 reduced their pledge an average of 15% (-\$6,650); and 48 pledged the same amount (\$145,790). We have yet to hear from 71 who pledged \$200,065 last year. Last year we had 193 pledges totaling \$544,862.

Parish Notes

Congratulations to **Melinda Reed** and **Ancilma Peters** on their Holy Union at Westmoreland on November 26.

My family and I have been lifted up by the outpouring of support and love from our church friends following Tillman's sudden death on November 7. I have had a sense of peace ever since Tillman's memorial service. Rev. Melinda Reed helped so much in making the service what we wanted - one of celebration and thanksgiving. I will be forever grateful.

-Alice Saylor

Ralph and Amy Wooden and family wish to thank everyone at Westmoreland for their prayers and support following the sudden death of Amy's father and the illness and death of Ralph's aunt. We are beginning to realize we may never adequately thank you in person, but be assured your prayers, cards, emails, and words of support meant the world to us.

A memorial service for **Bob Boynton** will be held at Westmoreland on **Saturday, December 3 at 2 pm**.

Holiday Gatherings

Janis and Hank Savage invite you to a Christmas gathering of the **Parents Group** at their home, 4403 Walsh St. in Chevy Chase, on **Friday, December 16, 7:30 pm**. RSVP to Janis at Janislong@comcast.net to let her know what you will be bringing to the potluck dinner. Parents Group is primarily composed of parents with youth in middle school and high school

The **Empty Nesters** will have their Christmas gathering on **Saturday, December 17, 7 pm** at **Linda and Ed Shelton's** home, 8570 Brickyard Road, Potomac. Contact Linda at lkshelton@comcast.net to let her know what you will bring to the potluck dinner to serve 12: appetizer, side dish, salad, dessert or wine. All Empty Nesters - parents of young adults who have left home for school or work - are welcome.

Poinsettias

The poinsettias that decorate the sanctuary for Christmas are given in memory of loved ones or to celebrate our special blessings. Red, white and pink plants will be available for \$9. Refer to forms in the bulletin on December 4 and 12 for ordering. Send a check to the church by **December 12**, along with the name of the person(s) you wish to honor or memorialize. You may take your poinsettias home or leave them for distribution to shut-ins.

Thank You!

Donations from the benefit Halloween Concert and Poetry Reading amounted to \$745 for the Marie Reed Learning Center. These funds were sent to the school to purchase food for Thanksgiving baskets for families in need.

Book Group News

The Wednesday Evening Book Group will meet on **December 14, 7:30 pm** to discuss **Skipping Christmas** by John Grisham.

Stillspeaking Ads Receive Award

Gotham (ad agency) and the United Church of Christ have won the prestigious Association of National Advertisers 5th Annual Award for Multicultural Excellence for "the Bouncers" ad and The Stillspeaking Initiative campaign. The award, given for outstanding advertising in the General Market category, considers all corporate advertisers around the world. Other finalists were Microsoft and MasterCard. According to a spokesperson at national headquarters "The church has been given this Multicultural Excellence Award because we didn't take a brand and make it multicultural, we took multicultural and made it a brand. This is the essence of non-conformity with the world. Of course the real winners are ...the members and friends of the United Church of Christ. "

Christian Education

Thanks to all the Westmorelanders, especially the youth, who participated in the DC Help the Homeless Walkathon! We raised almost \$600 in sponsorships from generous Westmorelanders and had a great time at the walk. Check the Christian Ed bulletin board for pictures from the day.

Connecting To Faith through Art. Amber Neuroth and Bob Maddox are co-teaching a class for 3rd – 6th graders **3:30 - 5:00 pm on Wednesdays at Briggs Church.** The last two classes will be **December 7 and 14.** We are exploring faith concepts in different works of art. The class is free!

Youth Events: December 9, 7pm: High School Youth Group Christmas Party and service project. We'll be playing games and preparing cards/gifts for needy families. Please bring your favorite holiday snack to share. RSVP with Amber. **December 11, after church - 3pm:** Painting the Youth Room. This activity is open to all youth from 6th-12th grade. We'll mainly be working on the "splatter wall" at the far end of the room. Bring or wear clothes that can get paint on them!

Angels, Shepherds and Wise Men, Oh My!

If you would like your child to participate in the annual **5 pm Christmas Eve family service** as an angel, shepherd, magi or reader, please sign up on the Christian Education bulletin board in the Social Hall or contact Amber. All the youth choirs will participate. If you are not in a choir, we welcome you to join us for this event. We will then contact you about choir rehearsal schedules and costumes.

AIM Works for Affordable Housing

At the Action In Montgomery (AIM) meeting on November 2, AIM made real progress on our twin goals of affordable housing and immigrant rights, because of the interfaith support of our member congregations like Westmoreland. Over 380 folks turned out, including 14 from Westmoreland. Look for an upcoming meeting at church to discuss and prioritize possible future issues for AIM. AIM will hold a larger follow-up countywide meeting on March 9 to establish our broader issue agenda for 2006 and a non-partisan get out the vote campaign. Thanks for all your help and support, especially the folks who attended last week.

Jeff Eagan and Sue Kirk, AIM Coordinators

Welcome to our Foreign Exchange Student

Maximilian Kunzelmann is a 16 year old foreign exchange student who is spending the school year here in the U.S. His host family, the Batsons, are delighted to have him live with them for the year. His hometown is Coberg, Germany in Bavaria. Max is among a small group of German teenagers that were selected through a very rigorous process to receive a German Parliament scholarship to attend an American high school. He attends BCC High School as an 11th grader. Among Max's interests are kayaking, swimming, running, tennis, languages, and music. He plays the trombone in BCC's symphonic band and also plays the piano. In his home country he studied Latin, English and French. This year he is tackling yet another new language, Chinese, at BCC. You may have seen him around Westmoreland as a new member of the Youth Group, the high school Church School class and the Passing Tones. A warm welcome to Max from Westmoreland!



December 1-15, 2005

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|-----------|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | | | | 1 Treble Choir 6:45 pm Chancel Choir 8:00 pm | 2 Alanon 12 pm AA 8 pm | 3 Boynton Memorial Service 2 pm |
| 4 Fellowship B'fast 8:30 am Worship 10 am Wreathmaking 11:30 | 5 | 6 Staff 10 am and 11 am | 7 Alanon 12 pm Messiah Study 12 noon and 7 pm | 8 Treble Choir 6:45 pm Chancel Choir 8:00 pm | 9 Alanon 12 pm AA 8 pm | 10 |
| 11 Worship 10 am Worship 6 pm | 12 | 13 Staff 10 am and 11 am | 14 Alanon 12 pm Messiah Study 12 noon and 7 pm | 15 Treble Choir 6:45 pm Chancel Choir 8:00 pm | | |

Senior Minister.....Richard L. Smith
Associate Minister
for Parish Life.....Melinda Reed
Director of Christian
EducationAmber Henry Neuroth
Newsletter Editor.....Janet Moyer

Office Hours: M-F 9am - 4pm

Newsletter Deadlines

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Issue Date | Deadline |
| December 15 | December 5 |
| January 1 | December 18 |

Articles should be emailed to:
jmoyer@westmorelanducc.org

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