



The Westmorelander

Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Volume 57, No. 11

December 2010

Getting Acquainted

I'm now a few months into my two-year pastoral internship at Westmoreland. Already, the experience has exceeded my expectations in many ways. I hope it will be useful here to share some of my early impressions.

From my first Sunday at Westmoreland, when Jean Lutterman filled in spectacularly for Alejandro at the piano, and then in subsequent weeks with Alejandro back in charge, I have been flabbergasted by the wonderful quality and depth of the musical offerings here. Long-time members of Westmoreland, being used to the caliber of music at Westmoreland, might possibly be under the impression that such world-class music is par for the course. But as one who in recent years has attended services in a large number of churches, I can testify without hesitation that Westmoreland's music program is unusual, and truly world-class. Although one rarely encounters fanaticism within the UCC, the commitment to music at Westmoreland can be described in no other terms – and long may this particular kind of fanaticism continue!

Another outstanding feature of Westmoreland has been the deep joy in being together that the community displays in a number of settings. I have seen this commitment to one another in an informal setting at the retreat by the Bay; in collaborating in teaching Church School; in get-togethers of the Prime Timers; in Sunday morning Bible Study; and in conversations during Coffee Hour. Even in the Coffee Hour discussion several weeks ago about transition planning, during the airing of heartfelt and sometimes differing views, the overwhelming sense has been one love before God: love for this Church as a body, and love for one another as individuals.

I look forward, in the months ahead, to continuing to learn how to “be church” in this wonderful and welcoming environment.

Mike Dunst

Worship Themes & Topics

Sunday, December 5

Second Sunday in Advent

The Candle of Love

Isaiah 11:1-10; Matthew 3:1-12

“Listen! Voices in the Wilderness”

Rev. Dr. Fowler

Advent Chancel Communion

Sunday, December 12

Third Sunday in Advent

The Candle of Joy

Luke 1:47-55

“Bear the Child, Sing the Song:
A Meditation on the **Magnificat**”

Rev. Dr. Fowler

Advent Chancel Communion

Sunday, December 19

Fourth Sunday in Advent

The Candle of Peace

Matthew 1:18-25

“God’s ‘Just When...’”

Rev. Dr. Maddox

Advent Chancel Communion

Friday, December 24

Intergenerational Service - 5 pm

The Christmas Story

Candlelight Service - 11 pm

Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 26

Westmoreland Family Service

Lessons, Carols and Stories for Christmas

Acting Senior Pastor...Rev. Dr. Robert L. Maddox
Interim Senior Minister.....Rev. Dr. Sidney Fowler
Minister for Children, Youth & Families...Rev. Jessica Petersen
Director of Music/Piano and Organ Master...
...Dr. Alejandro Hernandez Valdez
Newsletter Editor.....Janet Moyer
Office Hours: 9 AM - 5PM

Poinsettia Sunday, December 19

Poinsettia Sunday is the day we decorate the Sanctuary with these lovely seasonal flowers. You may order pink, white or red poinsettias in memory of loved ones or to celebrate your blessings. Plants are \$8 each.

Complete the form in the Sunday bulletin insert, attach a check and place it in the designated boxes in the narthex, Social Hall or office hallway. Alternatively, you may mail your check to the office with the name(s) of the person(s) you wish to memorialize or honor. **Deadline: December 13.**

Blue Christmas

If all the conversations, decorations, commercials, and general merriment about the upcoming Christmas holidays has you feeling "blue" due to the recent death or anniversary of the death of a loved one or estrangement from family, you are invited to attend the Blue Christmas service at Rockville United Church Sunday, **December 12, 7 pm.**

Parish Notes

Our prayers and sympathy are extended to **Mary Staley** and her family, Keller, Eliza and Jordan, on the death of Mary's mother, Anne Tuck, in Bethesda on November 16. A memorial service will be held at a time to be announced.

Earlier this year, the Penn State alumni magazine published a tribute to Westmorelander **Kathryn "Katy" Mahaffey**, who died on June 2, 2009. A distinguished scientist, Katy was instrumental in bringing national attention to the problem of lead poisoning in children. The full tribute is posted on the Membership & Fellowship bulletin board in the Social Hall.

Check Out a New Addition to the Website

Thanks to our webmaster, Tim Waidmann, Westmoreland's website has a nifty new section: **Forums**. This section will allow Westmorelanders to post items for sale/purchase and services offered/needed in **Classifieds**; announcements of outside events in **Community Announcements**; and a place to hold online discussions about topics of interest in **Discussion Forums**. If you missed the Westmorelandnet announcement, go to <http://westmorelanducc.org/forums/> for information and instructions to access the site. Once you have registered, visit this section frequently for all it has to offer. Questions: Contact Tim at twaidmann@westmorelanducc.org.

Interim Working Group Update

I want to share with you, members and friends of Westmoreland, the work and progress of the Interim Working Team. David Bennett, Liz Fritsch, Leon Goodson, Mary Grossnick, Paul Leistra and I are serving together under the spiritual guidance of Sid Fowler, Interim Senior Minister, and Bob Maddox, Acting Senior Pastor. David Batson, moderator, and Pierre Toureille, moderator-elect have also joined us. I used the word "work," but that is not really accurate. I do not feel like it is "work" to gather with fellow members as we seek to listen to the congregation's hopes and prayers for the church. For me, this is a time of reconnecting with the church and reflecting upon what I, and the church, am called to be and do.

After church on November 7, we held congregational round table conversations in which members of the team led the table groups in prayer and recorded hopes for the church and suggestions of people to whom we need to listen. (Visit the www.westmorelanducc.org in the coming days to view the prayer and table notes.) Sid Fowler and Pierre Toureille also answered questions about the interim process itself. Please come to any one of us on the Interim Working Team with your hopes, prayers and suggestions.

Jeanine Derr

Looking for a "Few Good People"

This is the time of year when Westmoreland's nominating committee recruits members for the five boards that govern our church programs and business. If you receive an invitation to serve, please give it prayerful and careful consideration. If you have not been called, and would like to serve, please contact committee chair Pierre Toureille at prtoureille@sprint.blackberry.net or 301-907-8260.

Annual Reports and Nomination Materials

All church officers, board chairs and committee chairs are reminded that annual reports are due in the church office **on or before January 3**. They should be brief and emailed to ssutton@westmorelanducc.org. Reports received before Christmas are a real "gift!"

Please try to have biographical sketches for new board members to Sanelma by **December 20** for everyone who has agreed, by that date, to serve. New board members and officers will receive a form emailed to you from Sanelma.

Advent and Christmas at Westmoreland

The Sounds, Sights and Spirit of the Season

Month of December

The Christmas Quilt Project

Beautiful, handmade Christmas quilts made by the late Margaret Fable, a long-time member of Westmoreland, will be on display in the Social Hall. Take some time to enjoy these detailed, hand-crafted works of art.

Sunday, December 5, 11:30 am

Wreath-making

It's time to pull out your shears and your gloves and get creative with some greens! All are invited to join together for this wonderful intergenerational event in the Social Hall after worship on Sunday, December 5. The Board of Christian Education will supply the greens, the frames, and the decorations. Suggested donation: \$12 per wreath. There will also be a table dedicated to cookie decorating.

Sunday, December 12, 10 am

Music Sunday

The "**Magnificat**," a musical depiction of Mary's reaction to the news that she would one day give birth to the Messiah, is one of the most thrilling, beautiful, and spectacular works of the Baroque era. It is filled with gems - arias, ensembles, choruses, and brilliant orchestral passages -- that speak directly and powerfully to the listener. Please join us as Westmoreland's soloists, Chancel Choir, and full orchestra present this glorious piece under the direction of Dr. Alejandro Hernandez-Valdez. Duration: approximately 30 minutes. A recommended recording: John Eliot Gardiner, the English Baroque Soloists, and the Monteverdi Choir. (Philips)

Sunday, December 19, 11:30 am

Chili Lunch

Join fellow Westmorelanders for a pre-Christmas Chili Lunch following the worship service. We need 15 pots of already-cooked chili in several varieties - mild, spicy, beef, turkey, and vegetarian - for the expected crowd. Keep it warm in your crockpot or slow cooker. We will have the accompaniments: pasta, rice, sour cream, grated cheese and robust jalapeno peppers. To cap off the afternoon, we are hoping for a visit from the big guy in the red suit... Ho! Ho! Ho!

Friday, December 24, Christmas Eve

5 pm – Intergenerational Service: The Christmas story reenacted and read from the Bible. The Holy Family, shepherds, magi and angels herald the arrival of the baby Jesus at this service for all ages.

11 pm – Candlelight Service. Lessons and carols tell the story of Jesus' birth.

Sunday, December 26, 10 am

A Westmoreland Family Worship Service

Following the excitement of Christmas, the Westmoreland family will gather for Lessons, Carols and Stories for Christmas in a relaxed worship service for all ages. Bring the whole family, neighbors and friends.

Coffee Hour: Westmorelanders are invited to bring their left-over Christmas goodies to share.

Christmas Eve Service Rehearsals

Rehearsals at a glance:

Saturday, December 4, 4:30-6 pm

Saturday, December 11, 4:30-6 pm

Saturday, December 18, 4:30-6 pm

Thursday, December 23, 6-7:30 pm

Following the Saturday rehearsals, all are invited to stay for a communal dinner (provided); and the Thursday, December 23 rehearsal will be followed by an ice cream social.

Shepherds (grades 3-6) and **Magi** (grades 7-12) will begin rehearsing at 4:30 pm; **Angels** (preK-grade 2) will begin rehearsing at 5:30 pm. Younger children are welcome to come earlier as we will have exciting and engaging holiday activities available.

We hope to see you there! For more information or questions, contact Rev. Jessica Petersen (jpetersen@westmorelanducc.org).

Greetings for Christ Church

Westmorelanders are invited to extend holiday greetings to our sister church, Christ Church in Nazareth, Israel by bringing Christmas Cards to church no later than **December 12**. Just drop the cards into a basket in the narthex. The Middle East Committee will mail them in a single package. Preparing and signing the cards, perhaps with a personal note, offers us an opportunity to assure our Christian brothers and sisters that we are indeed 'One Church.'

Advent and Christmas at Westmoreland

More Sights, Sounds and Spirit of the Season

Reaching Out at Christmas

Gifts for Shaw Community Ministry

Each year Shaw Community Ministry sponsors a Secret Santa gift drive to provide as many as one hundred children in the disadvantaged Shaw neighborhood of DC with a Christmas present. Our church has supported this effort generously in the past, with many members choosing the name of a girl or boy to get a gift for from the tree in the Social Hall. Each child's name is followed by that child's preferred gift. There is also a need for all-purpose gift cards in any amount from \$25-50. In some cases the suggested gift for a child is a gift card. This year the names on our tree include some of the children's parents or grandparents for whom a \$25 all-purpose gift certificate such as VISA would be most welcome and appreciated. Those names will be identified as adults.

Please bring your gift or gift card **wrapped and labeled** with the child's name on it by Sunday, **December 12**, and place it in the labeled box on the stage on Sundays or bring it to the main office during the week. The party when gifts will be distributed will be held on December 18, so please be sure to bring your gift by the deadline.

Once again, the children and families supported by SCM thank you in advance for your care and concern.

Christmas Gifts for Very Young Children

As in past years, we will be collecting Christmas gifts for the Children's Christmas Party at the Anacostia Health Clinic, which serves a very poor community. We have been asked to collect gifts for babies as well as one- and two-year-olds. Gifts (**unwrapped**) may be placed in the box in the Narthex on Sundays and brought to the main office during the week. All donations should be at church by Sunday, **December 19**, as we will be delivering everything that afternoon.

People in Need Around the World

A llama, a sheep, a flock of chicks or ducks under your Christmas tree? Not likely. But you can give one of these unique, living gifts through **Heifer International** in honor of family, friends and neighbors. In doing so you will help struggling families around the world become self-reliant by giving them a hand up.

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Give a gift that keeps on giving: an alpaca, bees, rabbits, tree seedlings or a share in any of them. (You can bet these gifts won't be returned!) This is a wonderful opportunity for children to learn about responsible gift giving. Gifts are available starting at \$10. Check out the catalog on the What's Happening Table or visit www.heifer.org. And take the kids with you!

Holiday Gatherings

Middle and High School Youth Groups

Westmoreland middle- and high school youth, and their friends and visitors will have their annual Christmas parties with snacks and fun on Fridays, **December 3 and 17**, 7 pm respectively. Bring a gift, not to exceed \$5, for the gift exchange. Let Rev. Jessica Petersen know you are attending: jpetersen@westmorelanducc.org.

Young Professionals

Westmoreland's young adults (singles and couples in their twenties and thirties) will gather for a potluck dinner at the home of Lisa and Trey Holloway on Saturday, **December 11** at 7 pm. RSVP to holloww2001@yahoo.com to let them know you are attending and what you will bring.

Parents' Group

Jan and Geoff Lilja invite you to a Swedish Smorgasbord on Saturday, **December 18** at 7:30 pm. Appetizers and entrees are provided. Please email Jan at jlilja5885@aol.com or call 301-229-6846 to RSVP and let her know if you will bring a side dish, salad, or dessert. Join us in Christmas celebration!

The Sixties Generation

The Sixties Generation, Westmorelanders in their sixties, who grew out of and were shaped by the 1960's, will have their holiday potluck dinner at Mary and Roy Grossnick's home on **December 11**, 7 pm. RSVP to grossnick@verizon.net to let them know if you will bring an appetizer, side dish, dessert or two bottles of wine.



Olive Oil Sales & News



The Middle East Committee will sell Palestinian olive oil after church on

December 12. Olive oil is an essential ingredient for the considerable cooking that takes place during the holidays as well as a perfect hostess present, gift or stocking stuffer.

Thanks to the olive oil customers of Westmoreland and last year's Palestinian Embroidery Sale, the Middle East Committee was able to send \$700 to the Friends of Tent of Nations (FOTONNA). FOTONNA will forward the funds to Tent of Nations - a family farm and peace project led by a Palestinian Christian family on the West Bank, outside Bethlehem.

Remember! When you buy a bottle you are doing several things:

- Keeping your family (or the people to whom you give the oil) healthy.
- Supporting organic farming.
- Supporting fair trade.
- Helping Palestinian families survive and maintain their connection to their land and their ancient olive trees.
- Participating in Westmoreland's Middle East Committee's support of a special Palestinian project

Want to know more about the peace project you have helped support? Visit www.tentofnations.org or www.fotonna.org

Middle East Committee

December 2010

Monday, Dec. 27: Church Office Closed

Wednesday, December 1

Deacons 7:30 pm

Thursdays, December 2, 9, 16, 23 8 pm

Saturday, December 4 10 am

Sunday, December 5 2 pm

Chancel Choir rehearsals

Friday, December 3

Middle School Youth 7 pm

Saturday, December 4, 11, 18 4:30 pm

Thursday, December 23 6 pm

Children's Rehearsal

Sunday, December 5

Fellowship Breakfast 8:30 am

Bd. of Membership & Fellowship 8:45 am

Bible Study, Nursery care 9 am

Worship, Church School 10 am

Advent Chancel Communion 11:15

Wreath Making 11:30 am

Middle East Committee 11:45 am

Volunteer Corps Board 11:45 am

Chancel Choir Rehearsal 2 pm

Wednesday, December 8

Website Working Group 6:30 pm

Saturday, December 11

Young Professionals Christmas party 7 pm

Sixties Generation Christmas potluck 7 pm

Sunday, December 12

Bible Study, Nursery care 9 am

Worship, Church School - The "Magnificat" 10 am

Advent Chancel Communion 11:15 am

Friday, December 17

High School Youth Night 7 pm

Saturday, December 18

Parents' Group Christmas Potluck 7:30 pm

Sunday, December 19

Poinsettia Sunday

Tech Committee, Outreach Ministries 8:30 am

Bible Study, Nursery 9 am

Worship, Church School 10 am

Advent Chancel Communion 11:15 am

Chili Lunch 11:30 am

Monday, December 20

Bd. of Christian Education 7:30 pm

Bd. of Trustees 7:30 pm

Tuesday, December 22

Executive Committee 7:30 pm

Friday, December 24

Intergenerational Service 5 pm

Candlelight Service 11 pm

Sunday, December 26

Bible Study, Nursery Care 9 am

Worship: Family Service - Lessons, Carols, and Stories 10 am

Tuesday, December 28

Sandwich making 10:30 am

LOOKING AHEAD...

January 16

Budget hearing 11:30 am

January 23

Annual Meeting 11:30 am

The Westmorelander
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**December Westmorelander
deadline: December 15**

Email articles to:
jmoyer@westmorelanducc.org