



RESPONSE

The Presbyterian Church of White Plains **Newsletter**

39 North Broadway, White Plains, NY 10601

(914) 761-8585

Website: wppresby.org

E-mail: wppresby.church@optonline.net

DECEMBER 2011

Mission

HEIFER Project

Make this a meaningful holiday - give the Gift of Life

During this Christmas season, take part in a growing holiday tradition by giving gifts that help those in need.

Honor a friend or loved one by purchasing the life-changing gift of a Heifer Project International animal.

It's a gift that brings promise to hungry families around the world and opportunity for a better life. For more than sixty years, HPI has inspired hope in communities where the gift of one animal can bring **health, prosperity** and **peace**. And the shopping is easy. There will be baked goods, gifts, bric-a-brac and so on at the church house on the Heifer table during fellowship hour on three Sundays, December 4, 11, and 18.



There is also another way to help raise money for HPI and that would be to:

- *Donate baked goods, gifts or "white elephants" to the Fundraiser*
- *Purchase baked goods, gifts or "white elephants" at the Fundraiser*
- *Purchase an earth friendly bag in which to carry your baked goods and treasures.*
- *Tell all your friends about the Gift of Life and encourage them to participate also.*

Music

Tyrell Lundman, Director of Music

This will be my first Christmas in White Plains, and the romantic setting of the Hudson Valley, along with the lights of New York City, is sure to make it memorable. While we, along with the shoppers and the tourists, make magic out of this season in the greatest metropolitan area in the world, I am proud to be a part of the original fire and reason. I know, as you all do, that our worship, the decorations we make, and the music and candles we share make up a light that the TV and the stores only dimly reflect.

On the First Sunday of Advent we saw a flame brought forth and placed in our midst. We sang as that happened, as we always sing in worship, asking that our hearts be opened to hope. This Sunday by another candle's light we will explore the epistles and the love present in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. On the third and fourth Sundays, singing and praying for joy and peace, we fill our Advent wreath, leaving only one candle unlit.

When Christmas finally arrives, we will bring in all the light we have, and sing, and sing, and sing. At the end of the service, as midnight approaches, we will boldly shut off everything else that makes noise and glitters, and remain in the light passed one to another across the entire congregation. We will greet hope, peace, joy and love, and seeing a world lit solely by the light of Christ, we will sing.



Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas

Ty

from the *pastor*

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

Kneeling beside the cool water on the banks of the Euphrates River, staring across the nearly six hundred miles of harsh desert sand that lay between Babylon and Jerusalem, an unknown musician gave voice to Israel's longing for home: "How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" (Psalm 137) How can we sing of God's abundance in a land of scarcity? How to sing of hope when we are oppressed daily by our Babylonian overlords? Turning from the river, this musician looked into the eyes and faces of his neighbors, wasted by hope that never came. Gazing again at the river he sings, "There we lay down our harps and wept." Israel-in-exile longed for home, and God seemed very far away indeed.

Advent is a melancholy season. In the midst of the festive lights and holiday cheer, we in the church are invited to acknowledge that we still share with ancient Israel a longing to experience the fullness of life that God has promised us. We are not yet the people God created us to be; we do not live the way God intends to us to live; and no amount of holiday parties or consumer spending will change that. Our families experience increased pressures on time and budget, we struggle to maintain gospel values in a market saturated with violent entertainment, we recoil at invitations to gorge ourselves on food, products and even relationships. All the while many of us are grieving, as the holidays approach, and we remember loved ones who will not be with us for the first time (or the thirtieth time).

Emmanuel means God-with-us, or stated as a promise, "God-is-with-us." And that makes all the difference. The promise of Emmanuel means that we do not need to travel to go home, but that our God has come to be at home with us and among us. God-is-with-us means that we don't have to stuff ourselves with things that do not satisfy. Emmanuel reminds us that, in Christ, the loved ones who have gone before us are embraced by the same one who comforts and guides us.

During the coming weeks, our congregation is a place where we may come together and be honest about our needs and longings, even as we trust that God is with us and goes with us today, tomorrow and tomorrow.

visit us online!

at our website wppresby.org,
E-mail: wppresby.church@optonline.net,
for the up-to-date news.



Rev. Jeffery A. Geary, Pastor
Tyrell Lundman, Director of Music
Lynn Dunn, Director of Christian Education
Stella M. Aviles, Executive Assistant.
Vicente Velasco, Sexton
Doug Astarita, Night Custodian
Gina Cerillo, Nursery School Director
Noel Warner, Business Mgr.
Elizabeth Peene, Church Treasurer
Olga Daniels, Asst. Treasurer
Wanda Van Woert, President of Trustees
John Timmons, Financial Secretary

Worship Time: Sunday, 10:00 a.m.

Office Hours: 9:00-a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday

Website: wppresby.org

Telephone: (914) 761-8585

E-mail: wppresby.church@optonline.net,

View the up-to-date calendar on website

Where to Find Us Online



[facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/wppresby.org)



[twitter.com](https://twitter.com/wppresby)

Pastor Jeffrey Geary, Editor-in-Chief
Agnes Scheu, Editor, Layout Designer
Articles for coming months must be submitted as e-mails sent to pastorgeary@optonline.net by the **12th** of the month. The articles should be no longer than approximately **200** words.



Congregational Life

Elder Nancy Re, Chair



The Congregational Life Commission is looking for new fellowship ideas for 2012. Please share any concepts and/or volunteer to help at the upcoming events by calling Nancy Re, emailing her at nancyre@optonline.net, or by putting a note in her folder.

Make time to share with others at the church. We need all the special talents of our church family as we continue to grow and reach others.

Upcoming Events – mark your calendars

The Mission Commission is sponsoring alternative giving through the **Heifer Project International** during fellowship hour in the advent season. Gift items and baked goods and animals will be for sale. Feel free to donate a baked item or shop.

Boy Scout Troop #10, who have met a long time in our church house, will be selling Christmas wreaths after worship on Sunday, November 27th. If you are planning to buy a wreath, please support our Boy Scout Troop.

Come join us for worship on December 18th, as our children share the Christmas story during worship. Jesus told us to bring the little children to him. Our children



learn and develop through our love and teaching but they also share God’s love with us – come share with them that love.

Christmas Party! Come join together for a Christmas celebration. Share a time of fellowship with dinner and carols on December 17th. at 5:00 p.m. in the church house. We will have a catered meal, songs, fun, and share together as the family of Christ. Kingsley house residents will be invited to join are celebration as well. We are looking for fellowship ideas for this event, please speak with Nancy if you have any ideas or would like to help lead the festivities or are willing to help serve or clean up that evening. RSVP requested – watch your bulletin sign up or touch base with the office so we can order correctly.



We will be decorating the Sanctuary with **Poinsettias** and then share them with our homebound members. Please assist with this ministry financially and/or with your time to deliver the flowers. Please watch your bulletin and notices for the details.

Nancy Re,

The Stewardship Team

The Stewardship Team would like to welcome the twenty-three individuals and families who made a new or first-time financial commitment to the ministry and mission of the White Plains Presbyterian Church. In addition, we would like to thank the twenty-one members who increased their commitment for 2012. Seven people shared with us that their gift next year represents a tithe of their income, while others expressed interest in moving

toward a tithe. May we continue to grow in relationship and service, through the practice of generosity and hospitality.

Members are encouraged to complete their financial commitments for 2011 as early as possible. The Christmas Joy Offering will be collected on Sunday, December 18th. The final Sunday this year is Christmas Day, December 25th.



Mission Commission

Elder Mike Doehring, Chair



ANGEL TREE

Angel Tree is a program of Prison Fellowship which seeks to reconcile prisoners and their families to God, to each other, and to their communities through the transforming love and grace of Jesus Christ. Through your support of Angel Tree, prisoners have the opportunity to send their children a Christmas gift and the Good News of Jesus Christ!



There will be a cardboard Christmas tree on the bulletin board on the landing between the office/sanctuary level and the church house on Sunday November 27 and December 4 during coffee hour. On that tree will be names of children (with gender, age, clothing size, etc.) Take a name and bring back a wrapped present (clothing or a toy).

The presents are to be from the parents so that the children know that the parents care, even if in prison. On Saturday, December 10 from 2:00 – 4:30 p.m. we will have a party in the church with light refreshments and hopefully a Santa! If you'd like to help contact Kelly Gough 993-9741 or Catherine Clarke 948-9828 or any member of the Mission Commission – we'll need drivers, elves, photographers, etc.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING Christmas!?! I just got finished with Halloween (still have some candy left). We know you are looking forward to the great stuff available to support HEIFER at coffee hour.

Another way to help others at this special time of the year is the PC(USA) Special Christmas Joy Offering. The 2011 theme is "Good News of Great Joy" (Luke 2:10)

The offering is split between:

- Assistance programs of the Board of Pensions (retired clergy, missionaries, and their families are definitely not part of the rich 1%); and
- Racial ethnic schools and colleges of the PC(USA)

These special offerings make a difference in the lives of young and old alike. Information and offering envelopes will be in the worship bulletin on Sundays December 4, 11 and 18 with the offering received on the 18th.

WANGARI MAATHAI – We hope to celebrate the life and work of Dr. Wangari Maathai on Sunday, April 22, 2012 – Earth Day. We've had a brainstorming meeting and intend to plant trees at WPPC and across White Plains. We are getting the local schools involved.



A core committee has been formed. If you'd like to help in planning, etc. get in touch with Mike Doehring. Stay tuned for more details! It should be an exciting event.

Remember – Mission is Possible!

Book Club



The WPPC Book Club meets each month to discuss contemporary books (fiction and non-fiction) through which we engage with the issues, struggles and joys of life and faith. Each selection is announced weeks in advance in so that participants have an opportunity to acquire and read the book. Meetings are open to all and guests are always welcome. On December 27th we

will be discussing *Stones for Ibarra* by Harriet Doerr. This novel, the first by Doerr, won the National Book Award in 1985. The New York Times described it as "A very good book indeed, with echoes of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Katherine Anne Porter, and even Graham Greene." The Book Club meets in the Conference Room at 10:00 a.m. on the fourth Tuesday each month. Watch the bulletin for more details.



Christian Education

Lynn Dunn, Director of Christian Education



We have just entered the period known as Advent. Advent marks the four weeks leading up to Christmas, during which we turn our attention, and our hearts, toward the coming of Christ, both incarnate once as the babe laid in the manger, and also promised in the new creation. Advent is also the beginning of the liturgical year, the annual cycle of seasonal remembrances that we mark in weekly worship. While the secular calendar winds down towards the close of yet another weary year, the church has just celebrated the beginning of a new year. This is just one more way, although a minor one, in which the church stands as counter-cultural.

Sunday, November 27, was the first Sunday in Advent. During coffee hour following worship, all our families had the opportunity to create Advent wreaths to take home to use during the next four weeks. The tradition of lighting a candle at home each Sunday, accompanied by a short reading, gives everyone the opportunity to pause, ponder and teach children the true meaning of

Christmas, which is sometimes lost in our busy season of holiday preparations and celebrations. In this way, we are able to link worship, education and home, thereby handing our faith on to the younger generation.

Christian Education Calendar for this Month



Sundays, December 4 and December 11 -- **Christmas Pageant Rehearsals** will be after worship in the Choir Room with Ty Lundman.

Saturday, December 17 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. -- **Pageant Dress Rehearsal** will be in the Sanctuary.

Sunday, December 18 -- **The 2011 Christmas Pageant.**

Sundays, December 25 and January 1 -- **No Church School.**

January 1, New Years' Day - **College Student Sunday.**

INTRODUCING SARAH HENKEL

Cross-Cultural Ministry Coordinator for the Hudson River Presbytery

I grew up in Secaucus, NJ where my father served as pastor of the First Reformed Church and my mother served as School Administrator for the Mustard Seed School in Hoboken, NJ. Our house was and is a place of hospitality; it was a rare night that our guest bedroom was not filled. My call to ministry can be traced back to our dining room table where people from all over the world, from all walks of life broke bread together.

It is the challenges and joys of community life that led me into the PC(USA) as an adult. Through my work at *Manos de Cristo*, a Presbyterian ministry in Austin, TX, I found a home in the PC(USA) and a call to be in the places where faith, community, and service meet. I attended Princeton Theological Seminary and, post-graduation, I moved to McAllen, TX where I worked at the South Texas Civil Rights Project and worshipped with *Iglesia Menonita Buenas Nuevas*, a bilingual and multicultural church on the border. On 1/1/11 I married my life partner, Will Summers, at *Iglesia Menonita* in a Presby-Mennonite service featuring hundreds of tamales and joyful accordion music.

In addition to my role as Cross-Cultural Network Coordinator with the Hudson River Presbytery, I am excited to join White Plains Presbyterian in outreach efforts as we seek to extend the welcome to more people in the White Plains community. I am in awe of the diversity that God has created and is creating in our world and I am excited by the work that we will do together to honor and celebrate that diversity. As a middle-class, Euro-American woman, I bring my particular experiences and voice to the table as we are about the work of reconciliation and hope. I am looking forward to meeting many of you at the table, to hearing your stories, and to together setting places for many more. Will and I are beyond grateful for the hospitality this congregation has shown us already in opening 46 Rockledge to us as a home. It is that same spirit of hospitality and generosity that will continue to transform and grow the life of your church. I am looking forward to witnessing and walking with you on the journey.

Sarah

Session/Council Snippets

Deirdre Lewin, Clerk of Session

There was much to be grateful for at the Session meeting on October 25th. Great appreciation was expressed for the many members and friends of the church who give so much time and energy to our mission causes, with the spotlight being on the Nifty Thrifties (Barbara Barnes, Beryl Dilworth, Carmen Grey, Milme and Russell Hoag, Edna Shaw) and all the work they do to make the tag sale so successful. As we also looked at the fund raising efforts for SHORE Thor Andersen automatically came to mind with his twenty plus years of devotion to this cause. Truly all are the “hands of Christ” right here in our own community.

The major issue of the night was discussion about the house the church has owned for many years at 46 Rockledge Ave. At this time of transition as tenants have or are reaching the end of their leases a committee had been named at a previous session meeting to look at the issue in detail. We consulted our own finance commission as well as the relevant committee of Presbytery, obtained legal advice, and consulted with the White Plains tax assessor. These are the recommendations that session then approved at the meeting in October. We will be offering the downstairs apartment to Sara Henkel, who is serving on the Cross-Cultural Ministry of Presbytery. The apartment will be rent free and in return Sarah, as our Parish Associate, will give us 10 hours weekly focusing her work on community outreach. (Sarah introduced herself elsewhere in this issue of Response.) There will be a fee for utilities and for maintenance costs and she will be responsible for general day-to-day homeowner’s property care. (You will have heard Sara speaking from the pulpit on November 13th). The use of the upstairs apartment is being reviewed and currently the expected plan is to rent it early in the New Year. Jeff will be facilitating the implementation of these steps, with appropriate legal advice and formal agreements in place as soon as possible.

Session will meet again the week after Thanksgiving. On behalf of us all on Session, we hope you had a blessed Thanksgiving. As for myself I know our church, its staff, our minister and volunteers are very high on my “Thank You” list of blessings.

Peace and blessings to all,
Deirdre Lewin (Clerk)

Who's Having A Birthday?

DECEMBER

- 3 Carol Dold
- 8 Bianca Boshkov
- 13 Nancy Re
- 14 William Vrooman
- 21 Angel Taubner-Lyman
- 22 Margaret Bland
- 23 Kristene Burton
- 23 Rebecca Buring
- 27 Sandra Barran
- 31 Charles Anyidoho

Best Wishes from your church family



Donations for Christmas Poinsettias

I wish to give flowers for Christmas Sunday, December 18 in loving memory/honor of:

Donor's Name: _____

Address: _____

Suggested Amount of Gift: \$25.00

All checks for donations must be received by
Sunday, December 11, 2011

Please make checks payable to The Presbyterian Church
(memo your check "Flower Fund") and send to:

Mrs. Julene Goode, Chairperson
Flower Committee
39 North Broadway
White Plains, NY 10601
Phone: (914) 761-8585





The Presbyterian Church
39 North Broadway, White Plains, NY 10601

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**Christmas Eve
Services
December 24
Family Service
7:00 p.m.
Candlelight Service
11:00 p.m.**



What's Coming Up at White Plains Presbyterian Church

- Christian Education
Lynn Dunn, Dir. of Christian Education
- Music
Adult Choir & Children's Choir
Tyrell Lundman, Dir. of Music
- Mission
Elder Michael Doehring
- Session Happenings
Session Clerk
- Stewardship
Stewardship Team
- Congregational Life
Elder Nancy Re

Schedule of Worship Events

Lessons and Carols: December 4th at 10:00 a.m.

The Christmas Pageant: December 18th at 10:00 a.m.

Christmas Eve Family Service: December 24th at 7:00 p.m.
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: 11:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Worship with a celebration of baptism and communion: December 25th at 10:00 a.m.

January Special Service

“It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”: A Very Special New Year’s Day Service, January 1, at 10:00 a.m.