

# The Westwind

Volume

Editor: Elaine Leiter

From the Pastor's Pen...

In my preparation for Advent preaching, I ran across the following quote. It set me back a bit and made for some serious pondering.

“But let's be clear that while the world's busyness may seem to be pointed toward Christmas, it is seldom pointed toward the coming Christ child.”

Lillian Daniel: *Feasting on the Word*

The truth of that statement can be seen in a very common cry to be heard over the next few weeks, “\_\_\_\_\_ shopping days till Christmas!” In fact the countdown began being heard well before Thanksgiving this year. Retailers are worried that the economic downturn will keep us from spending the big bucks needed to keep them in business...much less show a profit. Parties will start filling up our schedules very shortly. They are fun. They lift our spirits, but do they point us towards anything more than a special holiday?

I am not, by any stretch of the imagination, trying to put a damper on your holiday season. I am, however, urging you to invest at least a portion of these days before Christmas looking “toward the coming Christ child.” There are a number of daily Advent meditations to read and pray over at home. Join with your fellow Westminsterites each Sunday of Advent where I assure you the focus will always be on the coming Christ child. Join others in our annual Westminster caroling tour.

Maybe we could put up a sign that reads “\_\_\_\_\_ waiting days until the Christ child arrives.” Radical! Huh?

The commercial world has got it all wrong. The Christmas season does not end on December 25<sup>th</sup>. In

fact, it **begins** on Christmas Day and continues through Epiphany. The four weeks before Christmas mark the season of Advent. This is a season of waiting for the Christ child. It is the same for Easter. Easter Sunday marks the beginning of the Easter season, which concludes on Pentecost. The six weeks leading up to Easter are called Lent.

You'll notice the absence of Christmas carols during the Sundays of Advent. They will begin with our service of Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve and will be part of worship through Epiphany.

Do go out and enjoy the holiday season, but do make room for the Christ child who is coming.

Merry Christmas,  
Christ's Shalom,



Jim

**2008 LIVING NATIVITY**

Westminster's 2008 *Living Nativity* will be held from **6:00 pm to 8:00 pm** on Friday, **December 12th** and Saturday, **December 13th**. Set-up for this event will be on Saturday, **December 6<sup>th</sup>** at **10:00 am**.

All members and friends of Westminster – young, old, and in-between -- are invited, and indeed encouraged, to take part in this year's *Living Nativity*. **People** will be needed to serve in the various activities of this event, such as set-up and take-down, providing the living animals, helping to put on and to take off costumes, supplying and serving snacks and drinks, taking photographs, participating as costumed Nativity scene characters, etc. A person will be able to take part in more than one of these activities. There are **sign-up sheets** in the Narthex for these various activities.

Dates and Events to Remember!

***Presbyterian Women News***

Presbyterian Women will meet Tuesday December 8 at 10:00AM. Bible study lesson #4, *Captives are Released* will be presented.

Again, the women will collect paper goods (paper towels, facial tissue, toilet tissue, napkins etc.) for Hope Haven.

Please bring a small plate of cookies for fellowship after the study and business Meeting. All women of Westminster and friends are welcome to attend.

*WESTWIND DEADLINE*

+++ **December 17th** — next due date! +++

If you have anything you wish to be included in the next *Westwind*, please send the items by e-mail to the church office: office@wpcabilene.org or put them in the *Westwind*

**Happy Birthday! Happy Anniversary!**

If you are celebrating your birthday or anniversary this month, please be sure to attend the monthly potluck luncheon on December 14th. Your Westminster family will celebrate with you as part of the fellowship time!

**There will be a SPIRITUAL RENEWAL GATHERING (Cursillo Ultreya)**

**on Thursday, DECEMBER 11, 2008,**

**from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm, here at**

**WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

There will be great **fellowship**, good **food**, grand **music**, sincere **praise**, joyous **singing**, wonderful **inspiration**, thoughtful **prayer**, genuine **renewal**, and much **fun**

The hosts will be **Janice & Scott Serrault**.

**ALL** persons are **welcome** at Ultreyas, whether or **not** they have been to *Cursillo*, **or** even are Presbyterians; **so** **COME YOURSELF**, **invite a friend**, and **bring a covered dish** to share!

**December Birthdays**

- 2 - Nancy Brehm  
Don Hamilton
- 3 - Gail Miller  
Jim Sullivan
- 4 - Nancy Shanafelt
- 6 - Pat Hambrick
- 8 - Jim Halford
- 14 - Beverly Armstrong  
Pete Peterson  
Rodney Price
- 15 - Vicki Kerr
- 16 - Laurie Giddings
- 24 - Ruth Cranor  
Russell Brooks
- 26 - Sue Siltman
- 28 - Maggie Brehm

**December Anniversaries**

- 23 - Lloyd & Katy Presswood
- 31 - Jeff & Leona Armstrong

**REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

(1) From a post-lke letter written by Rev. David Green, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Galveston, Texas:

"The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him." (Nahum 1:7)

Dear all,

I think it's fair to summarize the state of our community by saying that we're stunned and staggering; but we're still standing. I'm guessing that you've seen news reports about the storm. On Wednesday afternoon, Hurricane Ike changed its course from northern Mexico/southern Texas and aimed directly at Galveston. My family and I packed for a routine 72 hour evacuation, boarded our house and left for Dallas. As we were leaving, our Mayor announced the mandatory evacuation. Islanders were confused and a bit angry because this was just a little Category 2 storm. But, as we would soon learn, the path of the storm (westward with a sudden turn to the north) pushed an extraordinary storm surge towards our island. It hit at high tide with a full moon. Our community had comparatively little wind damage, but there was terrible flooding. My house sits more than 16 feet above sea level. We took in 18-24 inches of water throughout. My station wagon floated into a neighbor's yard. My home fared better than many others and certainly better than the church. The church's offices, Fellowship Hall and chapel were flooded with nearly 3 feet of water. That's enough water to cover over desktops and float an 8-foot grand piano. The Sanctuary was flooded with more than 15 inches. The pews, organ, piano and pulpit are damaged, but appear to be repairable. The sight of the flood damage continues to stun me. Long-time Islanders are pretty resilient. They've done this before and are ready to do it again.....Please consider helping our community. If your congregation is so inclined, please take a love offering to support the rebuilding of our church and our community. Perhaps you want to bring a team to help with the work of cleaning up. But, whatever else you may do, please continue to keep us in your prayers. You cannot imagine how much we value your prayers. Thank you for your concern and care.

David H. Green, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Galveston, Texas.

Donations for this church can be sent to the *First Presbyterian Church, 1903 Church Street Galveston, Texas 77550*

(2) The Synod of the Sun also is collecting donations to assist four hurricane-devastated churches to refurbish and equip classrooms. These four churches are First Presbyterian, Galveston, Emmanuel Presbyterian, Galveston, West Isle Presbyterian, Galveston, and Baker Presbyterian, Baker. LA (Gustav-related damage). Checks should be made out to the *Synod of the Sun*, with a memo line of *SCRAPCE Classroom Recovery Project*. These checks should be sent to Mary Marcotte, Classroom Recovery Project, 1110 Lovett Blvd., Houston, Texas 77006.

**MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT** as of 10/31/08

<b>RECEIVED</b>	<b>OCTOBER</b>	<b>2008 YTD</b>	<b>2008 BUDGET</b>
2008 Pledges	\$9,786.00	\$100,289.00	\$111,000.00
SS Offering	\$16.00	\$248.02	\$250.00
Plate Offering	\$837.00	\$4,077.88	\$6,000.00
Endowment Transfer		\$30,000.00	\$59,039.00
Interest Income	\$0.39	\$4.76	
Other Income		\$567.00	
Utility Reimbursement		\$1,684.85	\$1,800.00
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>\$10,639.39</b>	<b>\$136,871.51</b>	<b>\$178,089.00</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$11,936.34</b>	<b>\$129,632.26</b>	<b>\$178,089.00</b>
<b>NET INCOME/LOSS</b>	<b>(\$1,296.95)</b>	<b>\$7,239.25</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

**Members of WESTMINSTER --**

**GAIN A PERSONAL, LIVING AWARENESS OF THE JOYS AND RESPONSIBILITIES THAT FAITH BRINGS;**

**BE BETTER PREPARED TO INFLUENCE ALL ENVIRONMENTS OF LIFE IN A CHRISTIAN MANNER;**

**BE GUIDED INTO AN EVER CLOSER AND MORE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST; and**

**BE INSPIRED, CHALLENGED, AND EQUIPPED FOR CHRISTIAN ACTION IN THE CHURCH, AT HOME, AT WORK, AND IN THE COMMUNITY --**

**at Palo Duro Presbyterian *CURSILLO* #23 on November 5-8, 2009, at Camp Butman, near Merkel, Texas.**

***A SHORT COURSE IN CHRISTIANITY***  
**Application Forms are available in the NARTHEX.**

**A Hymn Story**

As Thanksgiving approaches, I think of another favorite hymn, *Now Thank We All Our God*, which was written during the Thirty Years War of 1618-48. This was described as the most devastating war in all history, when the population was reduced from sixteen million to six million. Germany was the battleground of this conflict between Catholic and Protestant forces.

Martin Rinkart was called to pastor the Lutheran church in his hometown of Eilenberg, a walled city, which became an over-crowded refuge for fugitives from far and near. Waves of diseases and famines swept the city, leaving death and destruction in their wake. At its height Rinkart was the only minister remaining to care for the sick and dying. Yet at this time, this great hymn was born, confirming his confidence in God despite all the suffering around him.

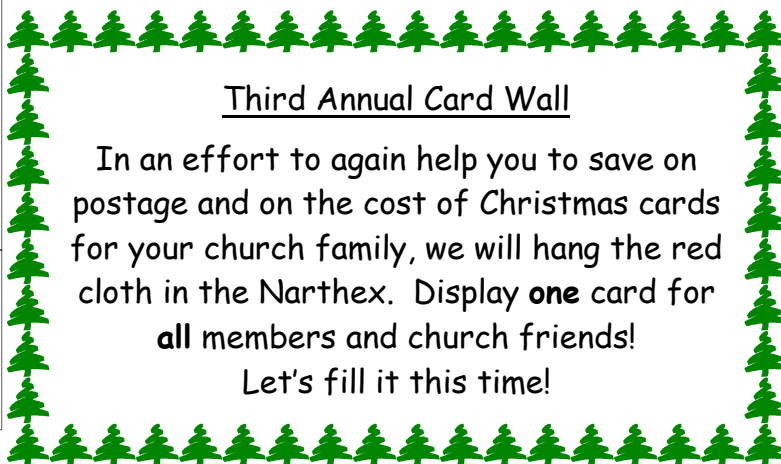
*Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;  
Who, from our mothers' arms has blessed us on our way,  
With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.*

*All praise and thanks to God, the Father now be given.  
The Son, and Him who reigns with then in highest heaven,  
The Son eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore  
For thus it was, is now, and shall be ever more.*

Martha King

*The Shack* Written by Wm. Paul Young  
*The Shack* is one of the new books in the Westminster library. It involves God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. It gives you a new view to think on.

**YES – YOU – CAN --  
invite someone to COME and WORSHIP  
with YOU at Westminster!**



Third Annual Card Wall

In an effort to again help you to save on postage and on the cost of Christmas cards for your church family, we will hang the red cloth in the Narthex. Display **one** card for **all** members and church friends!  
Let's fill it this time!

**Budget Financial Summary**  
10/31/08

Budget Monthly: \$9,770.83	Budget to Date: \$97,708.30
Collected: \$10,639.00	Actual Giving: \$104,614.90
Difference: \$868.17	Difference: \$6,906.60

**SPECIAL GIFTS DONATIONS**  
for  
**OCTOBER 2008**

In honor of  
**JIM WALLACE**  
by Gary and Nelda Soben

### ADVENT FACTS

In our secular culture we wish each other “Merry Christmas” throughout December. In reality, however, the season of Christmas doesn’t begin until December 25<sup>th</sup>. It then continues through Epiphany on January 6<sup>th</sup>. (Remember the *Twelve Days of Christmas*?)

The four weeks before Christmas are more accurately referred to as Advent, a season all its own. Advent is the time to anticipate the Christ child’s birth...as well as Christ’s second coming.

The confusion over the role of Advent has been around for along time. The earliest observances of Advent were in northern and western Europe near the end of the fourth century. The season was marked by reverent penitence and solemnity in preparation for the annual baptism of new converts to Christianity on Epiphany. At that time, Advent marked the conclusion of the church year rather than it’s beginnings as it does today and focused not on Christ’s birth but on His second coming.

Advent was not observed in Rome, then the seat of western Christianity, until the sixth century where the focus was on the joyful anticipation of Christ’s birth on Christmas Day.

Over the centuries the mood of Advent swung back and forth. In the early twelfth century, Rome’s joyful attitude prevailed. By the end of the century Advent was a time of somber repentance. Today we generally follow Rome’s early lead and celebrate, but a remnant of the earlier somber observance is reflected in our use of royal purple or sacrum blue as the liturgical colors for Advent. These deep colors express the penitential theme of the season..

Theologically Advent centers on Christian hope. A hope we experience in the gift of Jesus Christ. In Advent we experience again the story of Christ’s coming as an infant, which helps prepare us for the many other times when he confronts us in our daily lives.

Advent literally means “coming.” Today the Advent season marks the beginning of the church year. The Lectionary texts for the four weeks leading up Christmas march steadily toward Christ’s birth. The first two weeks focus on Christ’s second coming, the need to prepare for his return, and the necessity of a life of Godly conduct. With the third week of Advent, we begin to experience the joy of the season. The focus turns to what Christ will do in his coming. The fourth Sunday in Advent signals the imminent birth of Christ and so the emphasis in worship is on the Incarnation: God with us.

### **November 9 Session Meeting...**

There was a discussion of the fact that Palo Duro Presbytery receives no funds from local churches, unless so designated. The Per Capita assessment, determined by the General Assembly for our church, goes to the General Assembly and the Synod, not to the Presbytery. This has come as a surprise to some in our church.. The Session voted not to send a proposed \$500 to Palo Duro Presbytery at this time. This will be discussed again later.

In this year’s budget Westminster included proposed gifts to local ministries, but we have been financially unable to do so. In order to indicate out continued support of missions, we will be having a special emphasis each month on the different ministries. The people of Westminster will be encouraged to give to these worthy causes.

Your Session is dealing with many challenges. Please pray for the Session.

*Martha King, Clerk of the Session*

Westminster Prayer List for December 2008

Each week we will be praying specifically for several of our WPC families. We invite you to join us as we ask God's blessings upon our sisters and brothers in Christ.

Nov. 30th - Dec. 6th: Pam Veltkamp; Holley Moysenko and Chanuis; and Hyunshun Shin.

Dec. 7th - 13th: Burl & Pat Hambrick. Wanda Garson; and Ed & Vivian Shelly.

Dec. 14th - 20th: Betsy Brehm and Ashley, Shelby, and Maggie; and Pete & JoAnn Peterson.

Dec. 21st - 27th: John Headstream; and James & Rebekah Chenevert and David.

Dec. 28th - Jan. 3rd: Bob & Sue Siltman; Ed Sartain; and Gordon & Valerie Obert.

Have you never seen your name here? Remember that this list is open to members and regulars.

Contact the church office or the Shepherd's Committee and we'll get you on the list!

News from the Stewardship Committee...

The stewardship campaign is in full swing. Sunday, November 9, was Dedication Sunday, when a number of pledges were received. However, our pledge secretary, Marie Snelgrove, reported that not everyone had yet responded. If you have not yet returned a pledge card—whether with a pledged amount or that you cannot make a pledge—the committee urges you to return your pledge card in a sealed envelope so that the committee can complete its work on the 2009 budget.

The committee has decided that the Christmas tree donation this year will be the Christmas Joy Offering. The Joy Offering envelopes will be hung on the tree and you are invited to take an envelope and return it with your gift in a December Sunday offering. More information about the Joy Offering will be given in December Sunday bulletins and the Minute for Mission during December worship services.



**WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**4515 SOUTH 14TH STREET**

**ABILENE, TX 79605-4736**

**ADDRESS CORRECTIONS REQUESTED**

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