

news

WEST END COLLEGIATE CHURCH

368 West End Avenue
(at Seventy-seventh Street)
New York, New York
10024

Telephone (212) 787-1566

NEWSLETTER

for December, A.D. 2008

QUOTE FOR THE MONTH

“All I have seen teaches me to trust the creator for all I have not seen.”
- *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

If the past Church Year ends proclaiming the sovereignty of God's anointed, the New Year invites us to enter the holy mystery of the ineffable one becoming human. Look at the circumstances: so many unlikelihoods and unexpected outcomes. Skeptics of yore were just as scornful and dismissive as today's. Indeed, the narratives of the Apocalypse of Love show the disciples of Jesus then had no greater understanding of the Christ than multitudes of claimants do now. We want a confident conqueror of the evils we deplore. Instead the Prince of Peace brings the sword of true humanity to cut away the masks of domination, even (especially) those wearing religious vestments and spouting shibboleths. The Christmas culture of commercialization drives us toward sentimentality. We love it! This is also a time to find the deeply satisfying love here in this world that God loves so much. Let us give children the kind of life that matures into service so that our ageless proclivities for fun do not end up dominating and deluding our vision of right relationships, justice, and peace. We will not cease to call upon God's blessings. Let us also gather together to be blessings to God. It is a joy to walk this season with you into a hopeful future made bright by cooperation and collegiality. O God, illumine the light of your presence among all of us. Carol and I wish all of you joy and peace now and always.

*Together in ministry,
Pastor Robert*

FIVE VERY SPECIAL EVENTS in DECEMBER

(All Events are FREE)

Decorating Party

Friday, December 5 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

A Concert of Advent & Christmas Music

Sunday, December 14 at 3:00pm

Community Christmas Carol-Sing

Thursday, December 18, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Congregational Christmas Open House

Saturday, December 20, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

at *The Gorsuch House*

and

A Christmas Eve Pageant of Lessons and Carols –

Wednesday, December 24 at 6:30 p.m.

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE THEMES

- December 7 THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT
THE LORD'S SUPPER
Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13;
2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8
Message: “John's New Plan for Bathing”
- December 14 THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; John
1:6-8, 19-28; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
Message: “John Sees the Final Cut”
- December 21 THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT
2 Samuels 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:47-55;
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1: 26-38
Message: “Approaching Birth”
- December 28 THE SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS
Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians
4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40
Message: “And It Came To Pass...”

SERVICE PROGRAMS

- Tuesdays - SUPPER CENTER for the hungry and homeless
4:00 p.m. – Bible Study
4:30 p.m. – Supper
- Saturdays - SATURDAY CENTER for the mentally and emotionally healing
12 Noon to 3:00 p.m.

CONSISTORY

Local Consistory will meet on Tuesday, December 9, at 6:45 pm.

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Advent begins Sunday, November 30. It is both the beginning of our church year and our season of preparing for Christ's incarnation. He comes to us in this season as a baby. A sense of miracle attends every new life that joins the human family, but this particular child represents God entering the world. The Advent scriptures promise extremes of power; in some cases, they beg for it. How do we reconcile such power with the infant we will celebrate at our Christmas Eve pageant? Is the child just a promise of love and power to be realized in some later day, or is God breaking in on the created world now, again, in total, loving, and immediate authority? Given the state of our world, how is that possible? And if it is possible, how do we hope and fear it will change the world? More particularly, how will it change us? Just what is it we are waiting for? Come explore with us in Room 25, at 9:45 to 10:45 Sunday mornings, November 30 through December 21.

LOOKING AHEAD...

The WEST END LECTURE SERIES continues on Thursday, January 8, 2009, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. IMMACULEE ILIBAGIZA is a Tutsi woman who survived the Rwandan Genocide of nearly three million people by the Hutus in 1994. Immaculee's life was transformed dramatically during the 91 days spent silently huddled together with seven other women in the cramped bathroom of a local pastor's house. With perhaps the most horrific event in history as a backdrop, her autobiography, *Left To Tell*, teaches us about human compassion, how to surrender to the power of love, and how to welcome understanding and find comfort in reconciliation. This free lecture series is held at West End Collegiate Church. For more information, visit www.intersectionsinternational.org or contact Scott Thompson at 646-723-7823

CHRISTMAS DECORATING PARTY

The **Christmas Decorating Party** will be on Friday, December 5 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Supper will be available from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Come join in the fun !

A CONCERT OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

The West End Octet and Volunteer Choir will present **A Concert of Advent and Christmas Music** on Sunday afternoon, December 14 at 3:00 in the sanctuary. Singing classic seasonal choral works, the choir and soloists will be accompanied by members of the New York Philharmonic. A special treat includes a congregational sing-along of majestic Advent hymns. Admission is free, and a reception with refreshments will follow. Please invite all of your friends, relatives and colleagues!

COMMUNITY CAROL-SING

The West End Collegiate Church invites neighbors to join in singing Christmas Carols at a **Community Carol-Sing** on December 18. From 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., we will gather in the sanctuary to sing everyone's favorite carols, led by Wendy Realmuto and Cynthia Powell. This outreach to our community is sponsored by the Hospitality and Worship committees in an effort to make ourselves and our celebration of the season more visible and welcoming to the neighborhood. Please join us — come when you can — stay as long as you like.

CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

The West End Collegiate Church Hospitality Committee invites members and adherents to our Congregational Christmas Open House to be held at *The Gorsuch House* (306 West 77th Street) on Saturday, December 20 from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. This will be a pot-luck party, and a sign up sheet will be in the back of the sanctuary starting on December 7.

CHRISTMAS COMMUNITY OUTREACH

We have a great opportunity to provide small gifts for the senior residents at the West End Intergenerational Residence, to be given out at their Christmas party on December 16. New gloves, both men's and women's are needed. If you can provide new gloves, please put them in the box at the back of the sanctuary. We will also include a container of jam or jelly for each senior resident. If you can't provide a pair of gloves but would like to contribute in some way, you can put a small donation in the jar in the box, and we will buy gloves or jam on your behalf. Be sure to bring them in by Sunday, December 14. And many thanks. Your help is very much appreciated.

OUR ARTISTS AT WORK

Christa Scott-Reed will perform in an off-Broadway Christmas play called "Beasley's Christmas Party". This lovely family-friendly, turn of the century, holiday play runs December 2 through January 4 at The Clurman Theatre on 42nd Street. More information is posted at the back of the sanctuary.

Judith and Ken Gorsuch, Julia Turner, and Albert Watson will sing in Handel's "Messiah" on December 15 in Carnegie Hall with the Oratorio Society of New York. If interested in tickets, speak to Julia or Albert, or go to the website www.oratoriosocietyofny.org to buy them online.

2009 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

Stewardship Sunday, November 16, 2008, marked the beginning of the 2009 pledge campaign. We offer thanks to everyone who has already pledged. It is much appreciated. If you have not yet returned your pledge, please do so at your first convenience. Pledge forms and envelopes are available every Sunday at the back of the sanctuary. As Paul said, "You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God." [2 Corinthians 9:11]

CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

The Children's Church School, Young Disciples, God Squad, and Children & Worship will not meet on December 28 and January 4. The Church School and the Worship Programs for the children will resume on January 11. The Church School for Children is from 9:45 to 11:00 a.m. The Worship Programs commence immediately after the Children's Message during worship. We are seeking volunteers to serve as special greeters for our three worship programs. If you feel called to be a special greeter, please sign up at the back of the sanctuary.

PAGEANT REHEARSALS

Rehearsals for all children participating in this year's Christmas Eve Pageant of Lessons and Carols will take place during the Church School hour, 9:45 to 11:00 a.m., on the three Advent Sundays beginning December 7 and during Club for Kids, 6:00 to 8:30 p.m., on the two Friday evenings that begin on December 12. Jim Sterner will lead the boys and girls through their parts of the Pageant, while Tim Mathis, our Youth Choir Director, will lead the music rehearsals for the Pageant during the Worship Programs from 11:15 to 12:15. Bring your child to Arlene's room on Sunday mornings for exact instructions on where to go for costume fittings, scene study and regular class with their teachers. There will be a *REQUIRED DRESS REHEARSAL* for all Pageant participants on Monday, December 22 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. (Parents are most welcome to stay and shepherd our incredibly well-behaved children.) If your child doesn't attend Church School at 9:45 a.m. but would like to be in the Pageant, call Jim Sterner at the church office. If your child will be out of town Christmas Eve, come anyway to enjoy our regular Church School class with our great teachers.

CLUB FOR KIDS

Club meets each Friday evening from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Church Parlor. Club is for kids from second grade through eighth grade who like pizza and play, fellowship and fun. In December we will devote part of our precious time to rehearsing our Christmas Pageant. Club will not meet on Friday, December 26, nor on Friday, January 2, because of the Christmas holidays. In January we look forward to a long-awaited overnight and another fun Ice Skating Party in Central Park. If you would like to chaperone any of our Club events, please call Jim Sterner at the church office. Club will continue to meet every Friday through the end of June, except Good Friday.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR ORGANIST/CHOIR

DIRECTOR:

It's a great privilege for the Octet and Choir to present Bach's immortal *Magnificat* on Sunday, December 14, at 3:00 p.m. accompanied by a chamber orchestra of members of the NY Philharmonic.

All through Advent we prepare for the birth of Jesus and all that attends his coming: light, hope, joy and the true possibility for peace on earth. Hope and joy is personified in Mary, a poor young girl of low social standing, who learns that she will bear a child, and that she and this child will become extraordinary figures in the history of humanity. At this news Mary says, "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. ...he has scattered the proud, filled the hungry with good things, cast down the mighty from their positions of power and lifted up the lowly."

The *Magnificat* text is a revolutionary statement that has significant social and political ramifications: humility is a godly trait to be developed and cultivated, earthly power and wealth are ephemeral, and serving human need is what really matters. It is such a powerful prayer that it was banned in many Latin American churches. In Nicaragua, for instance, the *Magnificat* is a favorite among *campesinos* (farm workers) and is often carried as an amulet. During Somoza's dictatorship, they were required to carry proof of having voted for Somoza, and this document was mockingly referred to as the "Magnificat".

Bach's choruses are full of joy and laughter, dancing off the page! The solos and duets are virtuosic, heart-wrenchingly beautiful, and the women's solo trio is a stunner. Our fabulous soloists from the Octet will be on board for these, and along with our volunteers, will be joined by members of the Stonewall Chorale of NYC, the nation's first gay and lesbian choir.

The concert will also feature the Youth Choir in festive music, and will close with a rousing sing-along medley of great Advent hymns by NYC composer Allison Sniffin, for choir, orchestra AND audience! The Advent carols include "Lo, he comes with clouds descending", "Come, thou long-expected Jesus", "Sleepers, Wake!" and "O come, O come, Emmanuel".

As always, this free concert is West End's gift to the community and includes refreshments after the concert! Bring friends and neighbors to introduce them to the warmth and welcome that is West End Collegiate Church."
~Cynthia Powell, Minister of Music

CHOIR

The Volunteer Choir will continue to meet Wednesday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00. In preparation for the Concert of Advent and Christmas Music, volunteer rehearsals have been added on Monday, December 1 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.; Sunday, December 7 from 12:45 to 2:45 p.m.; and Saturday, December 13 (Dress Rehearsal) from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

OUR NEW WEBSITE

Our new local website www.westendchurch.org will move into Phase II of development.

The Communications Committee would like everyone to review the pages, and send any suggestions to Pat Whitsett pas20@columbia.edu. The suggestions will be incorporated into the whole discussion for Phase II.

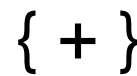
You are welcome to purchase umbrellas for \$5.00 as Christmas gifts. Please see Pat Whitsett at the end of church services. Please bring exact change.

CONSISTORY

Our Elders are Clarice Graham, Chair of Elders; Madie Ivy Head, Chair of Consistory; Doug Mastin; Craig Russell; Patricia Whitsett. Our Deacons are Stephen Cambor; David Coulson; Julia Turner; Susan Xenarios, Chair of Deacons.

Our Committee Chairs are:

BENEVOLENCE	Karen Blank
BUILDING & GROUNDS	John Russo
COMMUNICATIONS	Patricia Whitsett
EDUCATION	Jane Russo
SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES	Kim Yancey Moore
FINANCE	Clarice Graham
HOSPITALITY	Katherine Charapko
MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	Andrea Niedziela Daniel Niedziela
PLAYSCHOOL ADVISORY	Steve Cambor
SERVICE	Susan Xenarios
WORSHIP	Ken Chase.



Positive and Inclusive

Please see below for a postscript

postscript

**WEST END COLLEGIATE AMATEUR RADIO
SOCIETY (“WECARS”) Disbanded**

For more than eight years, there has been an operating Amateur Radio Station within the walls of West End Collegiate Church. What, you may ask, is Amateur Radio?

The Amateur Radio Service has been around for more than a century. Radio Amateurs, or “hams”, take Federal Communication Commission (FCC) exams to earn licenses that allow them access to the radio spectrum for scientific experimentation, emergency uses, public service and promoting international good will. WECARS was established by four hams in the West End Collegiate community. The President was Ken Gorsuch. Other founding members included Zane Wruble (currently President of the Harvard Wireless Club) and Kathleen Bratton. Serving as the station’s trustee was Zane’s dad, Brian Wruble. Brian contributed all of the equipment to build a fully-functional station in a small room that had previously served as a largely-unused photo darkroom. Brian and Ken assembled the station and mounted a twenty-eight foot tall antenna on the roof of the church (you have to know where to look to see it).

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, and for several weeks thereafter, normal radio, telephone and cell phone services in New York City were unable to handle the load placed upon them by emergency services and support organizations like the Red Cross. Hundreds of hams flooded into New York to fill the gap. Brian Wruble served many hours as a radio operator and sole communications link for a Red Cross shelter in lower Manhattan.

In response to the need for more “home-grown” licensed radio operators, Ken and Brian organized a series of licensing courses which were held in one of the church classrooms. These courses, six weekly three hour evening classes, culminated in an FCC sanctioned testing session. Over a period of several years, approximately thirty people earned their licenses, ranging from doctors to teachers to New York Police Department officers to building superintendents. Within the church community, Dr. Leon Chattah, Jeanne Lane and Betty Brummett all earned licenses in classes taught by Brian and Ken.

The station, using the FCC issued call sign of W2WEC, made its first contact with an Italian ham on September 15, 2000. Over the next eight years, hundreds of conversations took place with hams located on every continent and in about eighty foreign countries. In October, 2000, as Belize was being pummeled by Hurricane Keith, the station was used to carry “health and welfare” messages to relatives of Americans trapped on Ambergris Caye.

The station was dismantled on November 24, 2008 to allow use of the space for other church program needs.

November 25, 2008
Brian F. Wruble