

A New Year's Wish

I want everyone to be loved deeply by someone...
And, I want them to know they are loved beyond any doubt.
Life is hard enough without feeling unloved.
I want the childhood lesson of sharing
To carry over into adulthood.
This would solve homelessness, hunger, and poverty in an instant.
I want the love of money and power
To be overcome with love for one another,
And a recognition of the value of every life.
I want each of us to see . . .
We are much more alike than different,
And, because of this, to always focus on our similarities.
I want there never to be another child
Who is made to feel
Forgotten, unwanted, unloved.
I want it to be impossible
To hide heartache behind a smile,
So that we can always know who to embrace.
I want those who are sick
To always be cared for,
And never have to worry about the cost of care.
I want us all to see
That life is the gift itself.
Not the stuff wrapped in pretty paper this season.

Not the money we earn.
Not the job we do.
Not the lifestyle we lead.
Not the treasures we store up.
Life.
Each minute.
Each second.
Each moment.
Is a GIFT.
I want us to spend more time celebrating LIFE,
And less time struggling through it...
Struggling because we've been taught to believe
The "real" gift is . . .
The money,
The lifestyle,
The...
STUFF.
I want Peace.
For me.
For you.
For our communities.
For the world.
I know it's unrealistic.
But it is also beautiful.
And, I happen to believe that something that beautiful is worth wishing for, working towards, believing in.

Mark Sandlins
Vandalia Presbyterian Church
Greensboro, NC

In Another's Shoes

You cannot truly understand another person's life until you have walked in their shoes.

Following worship on **Sunday, February 8th**, you are invited to a seminar presented by Meaghan Hickey, the Education Director for The Refuge. The "In Another's Shoes" program helps school, church and community groups understand the real issues behind homelessness and why there are young people who live on the streets of our community.

A soup lunch will be served before this seminar, so **registration is required**. We hope that you will join us for this incredibly enlightening experience. Please register by contacting Cathy Shaw at cshaw@westminster-uc.ca or Rev. Michelle at mrobinson@westminster-uc.ca.

We can also be reached by calling the office at 905-723-6442.

Explore Faith: Confirmation Program for Youth 2015

The benefits of faith are numerous! Everyone can renew their commitment to faith at any point along their spiritual journey. With that being said, taking that first step to make **a commitment to the adventure of faith**—doing it for yourself—can be a very moving and important experience. This is what confirmation is all about. **Confirmation is when people confirm the vows and promises made at their baptism.** Frequently in our tradition people are babies when they are baptized and their parents or guardians make faith promises on their behalf. As individuals grow they begin to make decisions about their own spiritual journeys and will seek confirmation when they are ready.

There is a process of preparation ahead of the Service of Confirmation, which is a time to share and reflect, and learn with others about what it means to live as a follower of Jesus Christ.

Explore Faith is a confirmation preparation program for **youth in high school** being offered this year at Westminster. It provides an opportunity for youth to talk about faith, ask questions, and share experiences. **Confirmation is not about having the answers; it's about being willing to engage with the questions.** Led by Rev. Michelle, the program begins on Sunday, January 25th after the church service and runs until the end of April. Highlights include field trips, guest speakers, videos, as well as fun and meaningful group discussions. The Service of Confirmation will take place on Sunday, May 3, 2015.

For a schedule, more information, or if you are interested in participating please talk to Rev. Michelle Robinson, 905-723-6442, or email her: mrobinson@westminster-uc.ca

Acts 8:14-17 The Message (MSG)

When the apostles in Jerusalem received the report that Samaria had accepted God's Message, they sent Peter and John down to pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit. Up to this point they had only been baptized in the name of Jesus; the Holy Spirit hadn't yet fallen on them. Then the apostles laid their hands on them and they did receive the Holy Spirit.

Today may there be peace within.

May you trust that you are exactly where
you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are
born of faith in yourself and others.

May you use the gifts that you have received and
pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content with yourself
just the way you are.

Let this knowledge settle into your bones,
and allow your soul the freedom to
sing, dance, praise and love.



J a M (Jesus and Me) - News

(Formally Sunday School News)

January 4, 2015 – Family Worship

– no Nursery or J a M classes

– the Nursery will be open for those parents wishing to use the room only, and there will be church activity sheets available for the primary and junior children and youth to use during worship.

January 11 & 18 – Regular J a M classes

- Jesus' Baptism

January 25 & February 1 – Regular J a M classes

- The Lord's Prayer

February 8 & 15 – Regular J a M classes

- Feeding the 5000

February 22 – Intergenerational Worship Service

It is with delight that we are announcing that we now have a dedicated class for those in Grade 9 and up. Our heartfelt appreciation to Cathy Shaw and Paul Pierson for volunteering and coordinating this class.

Please note that all children and youth attending J a M, will need a completed registration form (so that all church school staff is aware of allergies and special needs especially when there are more food related classes). The J a M registration forms are available at the J a M registration table (look for the balloons) in the narthex Sunday mornings or email Susan (auntx2@gmail.com) to request one.

COULD IT BE YOU?

Are you semi-good with computers?
(For example, do you know how to turn on the computer?)

Do you know how to use Publisher or are you willing to learn?
(It's a user-friendly computer program.)

Do you know how to use clip art?
(Really, the question is do you have fun matching pictures to words?)

Do you have 4-5 hours a month to spare?

Have you been wondering how you might be able to use these gifts to help the Ministry of Westminster?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, it could be you! You could be the next publisher of the *Westminster World!*

Not to worry...you will not be left alone and you are not automatically enrolled if you qualify! However, if you think you might have the time and talents to contribute to this important ministry, please contact Cathy Shaw for a no-pressure conversation about what is involved. She can be reached at cshaw@westminster-uc.ca.

Someone is needed to take on this responsibility as soon as possible so please give it your careful and prayerful consideration.



Does
expecting the
unexpected
make the
unexpected
expected?

We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar.
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.

O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.

We Three Kings
by Reverend John Henry Hopkins, Jr

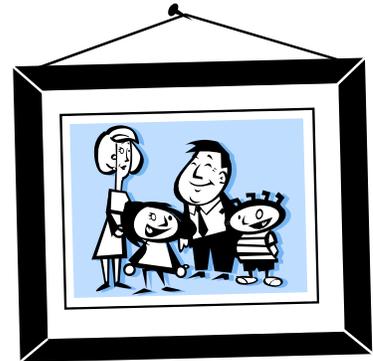
The 2015 Photo Directory

Westminster's last formal photo directory was issued in 2008. In the intervening 6+ years, there have been many changes in our population – some goings and many comings. A photo directory, which also includes an alphabetical list of names, addresses and phone numbers (to which we plan to add email addresses in this edition!) is an important tool to help us stay connected with all members of our Westminster family. We are urging **every person, every couple, every family** who worships at Westminster United Church to count yourselves in! We want the directory to be a true representation of this congregation.

If you were unable to schedule a portrait sitting during the November/December sessions, never fear! We are scheduling a few more sittings in January: Saturday the 24th and Saturday the 31st, with drop-in sessions after service on Sunday, January 25th and Sunday, February 1st. Appointments can be made in the gym after service on January 11th, January 18th and January 25th.

As this is a fundraiser, we are charging \$10.00 to cover the cost of the directory and to add a little to the WUC coffers. Your portraits are **free** and will be emailed to you after your sitting.

The Communication Committee



Monthly Financial Update

	November		YTD	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
Income	\$30,554	\$37,001	\$317,018	\$374,460
Expense	\$35,953	\$32,021	\$397,791	\$360,242
Surplus/Shortfall	(\$5,399)	\$4,980	(\$80,773)	\$14,218

Current forecast SURPLUS for 2014 is \$16,000.00

November was outstanding!

We had increased givings, a large memorial donation, and higher fundraising revenue.

Hmmm....

Why are a wise man and a wise guy opposites?

Westminster's Stained Glass Windows

In the September issue of *The Westminster World*, I mentioned that our stained glass windows were in need of some repairs and that those repairs were scheduled for October. My how time flies. Luxfer Studios is now going to undertake those repairs, during the week, in early January, so you might not have noticed that the windows were missing.

Below is an explanation of the window imagery, written by Gain Brimbecom in 2003.

Origin: Following the death in 1970 of Jean Lofthouse, a charter member and the first female elder of Westminster United Church, located on Manning Road, a committee was formed to determine an appropriate memorial to be developed using funds given to the church in her memory. Russell Goodman of West Hill, Ontario was contracted to design five panels of stained glass, two of which were installed in 1971 in memory of Jean. Memorial donations following the deaths of Peter and Mary (Polly) Lofthouse provided funds for installation of the third panel in 1972 and the final two panels were installed in April, 1974. They memorialize Victor Fudge (1973) and Alma Wood (1983).

The five panels were relocated to Westminster's new building in 2003. They were part of a tableau of 15 panels designed for the entire west wall of the church on Manning Road. The remaining 10 panels were never constructed.

Starting from the left:

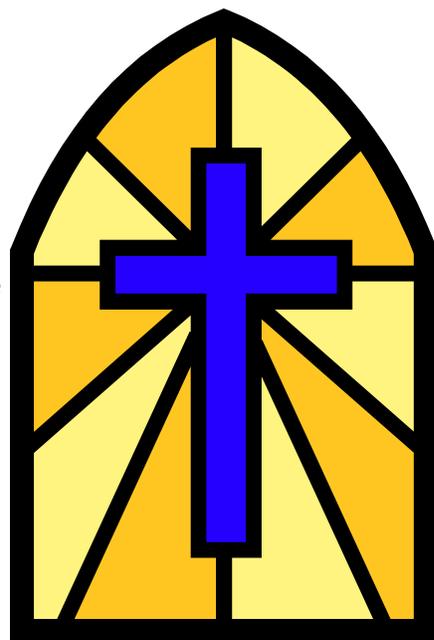
Panel #1: The Hand of God (upper section) and the intertwined Greek Letters (Chi-Rho) in the lower section are symbols for Christ. (See if you can locate these symbols the next time you are in the sanctuary.)

Panel #2: The dove symbolizes the Holy Spirit, coming from God like a beam of light. "**The Holy Spirit**" is the overall theme of the windows.

Panel #3: The flames represent Pentecost. The baptismal font represents one of the sacraments of the Christian Church and initiation into the Christian faith.

Panel #4: The triangle surrounding the circle indicates that "God is One" and "God is Three" (Creator, Redeemer and Holy Spirit). The beam of light rises upward and outward as the faithful become the "Light of Christ" in the world. The fish represent the disciples whom Jesus called "fishers of men". The sign of the fish later became a secret code among the early Christians during times of occupation and persecution. The Greek word for fish forms an acronym for "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour".

Panel #5: The orb (globe with a cross) is a sign of royalty and signifies that Jesus came from the house and lineage of King David. The anchor is a symbol of faith, and reflects the early church's understanding of the Church as a ship which carries us on our life's journey.

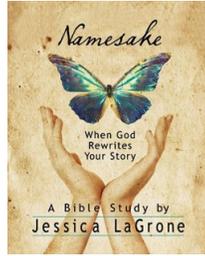


Bob Neil
Property Committee.

Lenten DVD Bible Study

Guess what finally arrived – the Namesake DVD study!

In February and March, (Wednesday February 11 to March 25) from 7 to 8:30pm, the C.E. committee is providing a 6 week bible study entitled “Namesake” where one explores the transformational power of God through the stories of: Abraham and Sarah, Jacob, Naomi, Daniel, Peter and the woman caught in adultery by using a 30 minute video presentation followed by discussion questions. All are welcome and if you have any questions or if you are interested in attending, please contact Susan Pleasance.



UCW 2015

After a busy Christmas season, we usually slow down for a few months. In January, we will have a video from our Moderator at our meeting on the first Monday of the month in the Founders' Room. All women are welcome.

We do do some regular monthly catering for Living Alone and the Probus group just to keep our hands in!

We will need your help with the **Giant Indoor Yard Sale** on April 25. It is never too soon to put excess things aside! Our **Fashion Show** has been set for May 9. We will keep you informed!



J&M Craft Supplies Needed for January

Our Sunday morning children's programming needs your help in supplying the following items:

- square tins with lids
- rectangle tins with lids
- empty shoeboxes
- the picture part of charity address labels
- charity stickers
- new and unused charity blank and birthday cards with envelopes



Please bring your donations into the office in a clearly marked bag labelled Susan Pleasance and if you have any questions, please email her at auntx2@gmail.com

Thank you so much for your assistance.

Water

The water trembles,
a steady rush.
Running farther and faster,
hitting the rocks with reckless abandon.
Yet it has a purpose.
It was placed here.
At this place, at this hour,
to portray its maker.
The beauty and the dark depths,
the strength and the frailties
are all encompassing.
Whoever or whatever placed it here left a
mark.
In the way the setting sun sparkles and
dances,
its maker is smiling.
In the force of the current,
its maker is washing away all that is wrong in
the world.
In the sounds, loud and soft,
its maker speaks to us in the way we need to
hear.
Listen, watch and you will know its maker.

Small Groups at Westminster – Just for You!

Senior Fitness – This **NEW** group is open to Seniors and will take place in the gym at Westminster on **Thursday mornings from 9:30am – 10:30am**. This group will run weekly from **January 15th – March 5th** and as with all our Small Groups, there is **no cost** for this activity. **Registration is required** and spaces are limited, so please contact **Katie Bonikowsky** at ktcraigb@rogers.com as soon as possible to register or to obtain more information.

Wine, Women and the Word – This ongoing Bible Study is open to all women and meets in the community on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. January's meeting will take place on **Tuesday, January 20th from 7:00pm – 9:00pm**, either in the Party Room at **East Side Mario's Restaurant** (Baldwin St/ Taunton Road location) or at the church, depending on numbers. The series of study for 2015 will be "How the Great Religions Began", with a guest speaker on Buddhism in January. **For the January meeting, please contact Garth in the office (905-723-6442) to sign up.** For further information, please contact **Carol O'Neil** at nss@overwhelming.ca.

Westminster Walkers – Keep fit through the winter by joining us at **9:30 on Thursday mornings** at the Whitby Abilities Centre, 55 Gordon Street (just off Victoria). With a Whitby Seniors Membership and a one-time only lifetime card fee of \$15 from the Abilities Centre, seniors may walk any day up until 10:30 a.m. Come on a Thursday, and you will see familiar faces from your Westminster family to walk and chat with. When the weather turns warmer in the spring, we will resume our Thursday walks outside.

Book Club – The Book Club meets 5 times a year (January, March, May, September, November) on the **4th Wednesday of the month from 1:00pm - 3:00pm** at WUC. The books to be discussed will be those chosen by those present at the January meeting. The next meeting of the Book Club is on Wednesday, January 28th.

DURHAM REGION IS HOSTING WORLD RELIGION DAY

WHEN: Sunday, January 18th, from 12 to 5 pm.
(Free Admission)

WHAT: World Religion Day Celebration: The Evolution of Faith, Diversity and Culture in Durham Region. World Religion Day is celebrated worldwide annually, with the intention of developing interfaith understanding and harmony. Individuals from 10 different faith groups will be represented, with exhibits and demonstrations of music, spirituality, cultural foods and arts shared in a respectful manner.

WHERE: Room LL-C, Regional Headquarters,
605 Rossland Rd. E., Whitby.

Westminster's Food Bank

Did you know that the people of Westminster were very generous over the holidays regarding the Food Bank? Many people's lives were made easier because of your gifts.

The Food Bank is looked after by a group of caring people, some of whom come each week, some who stock and know exactly what is available, and some who shop for certain items that are not donated.



We give a huge thank-you to the person in charge, Suzanne Renkiewicz, and to the following elves who work along with her: Elaine Johnstone, Tara McClure, Margaret Merela, Sue Neil, Stephen Newton, Jocelyn Renkiewicz, Joan Sanderson and Corinne Smith.

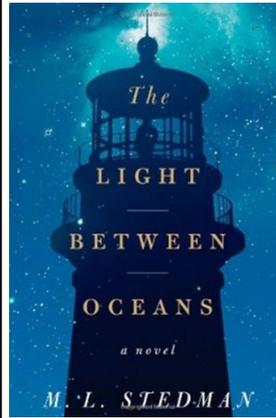
Thank You, Janelle!

It is with very mixed feelings that we say a fond farewell to *The Westminster World's* publisher, Janelle Shaw. She has so ably and so willingly worked so hard to produce our monthly newsletter and we are so appreciative of her efforts. Janelle begins her ministry in January and we wish her every blessing as she shares her gifts with the congregations of South Bay United Church and Cherry Valley United Church in Prince Edward South Pastoral Charge. Thank you, Janelle, from the grateful Communications Committee and the appreciative readers of *The Westminster World*.

If corn oil comes from corn ,
and olive oil comes from
olives,
where the heck does baby oil
come from?

Book Club

Our next meeting of the Book Club is Wednesday January 28th, 2015 from 1 to 3 pm at the church. For this meeting, we are asking people to read the book: *The Light Between Oceans* by M.L. Steadman.



Description: Tom Sherbourne is a lighthouse keeper on Janus Rock, a tiny island a half day's boat journey from the coast of Western Australia. When a baby washes up in a rowboat, he and his young wife Isabel decide to raise the child as their own. The baby seems like a gift from God, and the couple's reasoning for keeping her seduces the reader into entering the waters of treacherous morality even as Tom--whose moral code withstood the horrors of World War I--begins to waver. M. L. Steadman's vivid characters and gorgeous descriptions of the solitude of

Janus Rock and of the unpredictable Australian frontier create a perfect backdrop for the tale of longing, loss, and the overwhelming love for a child that is *The Light Between Oceans*.

For the last half of our meeting, we will be voting on and choosing the books to read for the rest of the year. Each person is asked to submit no more than 3 books for each of the 3 categories:

General – the book suggested can be fiction or non-fiction

Book and movie – we are asking for a book suggestion that has been turned into a movie so that we can read the book and watch the movie

Classic – A book that you may have read as a youth or in the past that you would like to re-visit

For more information, contact Susan Pleasance.

Always Give Thanks

Thanksgiving is over, but the time to say thank you never ends. Long after the turkey is finished off and all the dishes are put away, there is still reason to say thank you.

Saying thank you is a very simple act, but it can put a smile on someone's face and make the whole day seem a little brighter for that person and for you. So whether it is saying thank you to the bus driver as you get off the bus, to the teller at the bank or to the person who holds the door for you, try to remember to say thank you as you go through your busy lives.

And don't forget God in all of this. For everything God has given us we need to try to remember to say thank you. For the beauty, the love and all that surrounds us, God deserves a whole chorus of thanks.

Library Report for January

For many people, the New Year brings about a few New Year's Resolutions ... to become more physically fit, to eat healthier, to start a new hobby, to spend more time with loved ones and/or to develop better spiritual practices. Our Westminster library offers a variety of daily devotional books that could help you build your spiritual muscles:

- A Time to be Renewed by Warren W. Wiersbe
- A Year of Spirituality (a seasonal guide to new awareness) by Ingrid Collins
- Day by Day by Charles Swindoll
- Everyday Discipleship for Ordinary People by Stuart Briscoe
- God's Little Devotional Book
- Grace for the Moment by Max Lucado
- Greater than Riches by John White
- My Utmost for His Highest (updated) by Oswald Chambers
- Quiet Times (devotional worship and bible study) by Max E. Anders
- Rise and Shine by Liz Curtis Higgs
- Strength for Today (Devotions for the Chronically Ill) by Sharon Broyles
- The Green Bible Devotional by Carla Barnhill
- The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren (40 day spiritual journey)
- What the Psalmist Is Saying to You Today by Peter Wallace
- Wisdom for the Way (For Busy People) by Charles R. Swindoll

If you need further assistance or have any questions, please contact Susan at auntx2@gmail.com

Courage is not the absence of fear,
but rather the judgement that
something else is
more important than fear

Coldest Night of the Year

We're walking again...and YOU are invited to join us! Last year, Westminster United Church registered a Team for the **Coldest Night of the Year Walk** in Oshawa...and what a wonderful walk it was! Sixteen people signed up for our team and with their donations and those of our congregation, **we raised \$3,358 for the Refuge** and the good works they do for the homeless youth in our community!



Friends, Jesus was an advocate for those who were hurting, alone, hungry, lost and dealing with tough circumstances in life...so that is what we are called to be as well...lending a hand to lift someone up

and letting this world know that they are not alone and not forgotten...that God cares...and that we do too! So, come join us! Walk with us! Donate to our team! Pray for those who use the Refuge and for those who offer support...and pray for our team! Any way you wish to help will be greatly appreciated!

To join the Westminster Team or to make an online donation, please go to www.coldestnightoftheyear.org, search for our team (Westminster United Church) and follow the appropriate prompts. If you run into a problem trying to register, please contact Cathy Shaw (Team Captain). If you would like to donate, but would prefer not to do so online, please stay tuned for a few designated "donation dates" being planned for after worship services.

The Coldest Night of the Year is a fun, family-friendly walking event.

So, come for a walk, make a difference, make new friends and help the Refuge keep their doors open to those who need them the most! You'll be glad you did!

Hope to see you on Saturday, February 21st!



BibleWise

Jesus' Baptism

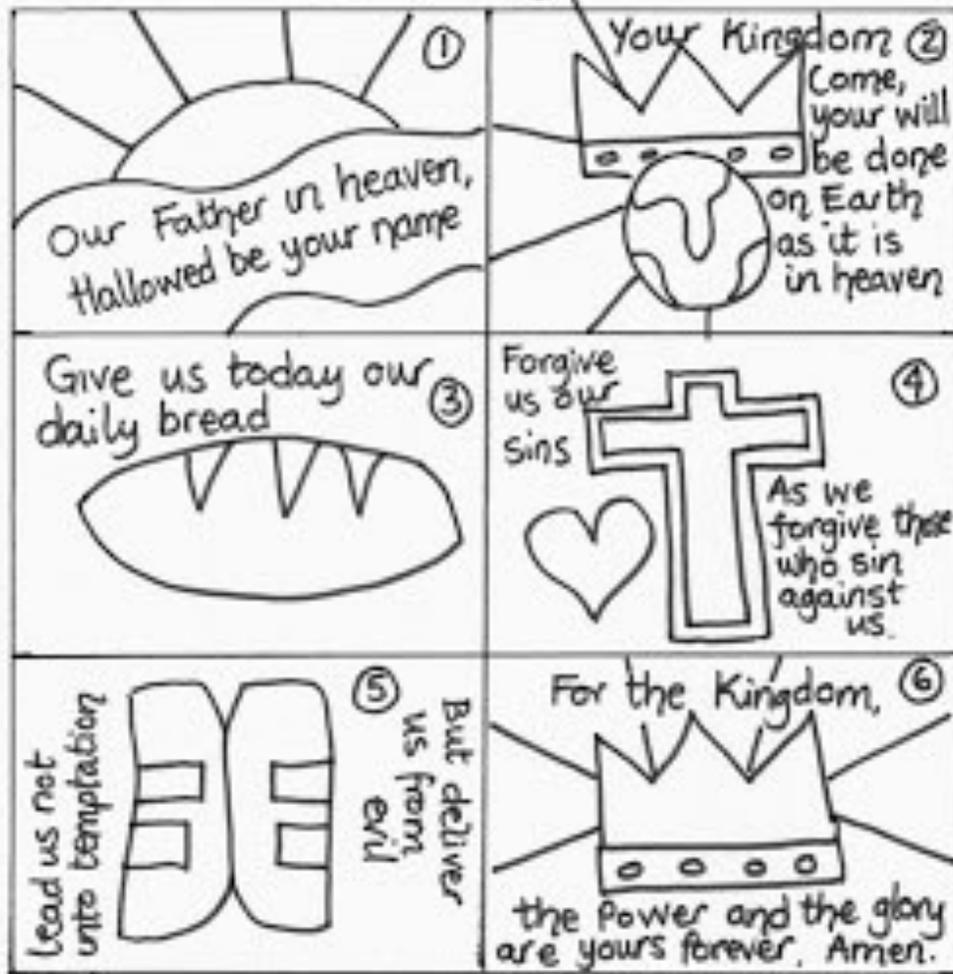
Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. God spoke from heaven and said he was well pleased with his beloved Son. The Spirit of God descended upon Jesus. Color in all the areas marked with an x to find out what form God's Spirit took as it descended.



The Gospels Activity Book by Mary Currier. Baker Book House, 1973.



Lord's Prayer cards



- * Colour
- * cut out
- * order
- * play matching games
- * discuss the pictures

Picture 5 is a high visibility jacket to put across the idea of God Keeping us safe!

A Call for Submissions

This newsletter is yours!

It is made up of stories, articles and submissions by the people of Westminster United Church. It is a place to share what is on your mind and let people know about upcoming events. It is a tool of connection between members of this church so that we may continue to be the church in this world. It is a collection of articles that bring together all of the many facets of this church in one place. It is written by and for the people of this congregation, writer and non-writer alike, in order that all in the world of Westminster might know what is happening in the Westminster world!



Anyone is welcome to submit something for this newsletter and we look forward to hearing all of your stories, about the groups of this church and the exciting things that your lives bring.

The deadline for submissions to *The Westminster World* is the 21st of each month.
If you have an article, please send it to Bev Crumb at bcrumb@sympatico.ca.

You're invited...

UCW Meeting - viewing a video from Moderator Gary Paterson	Monday, January 5
Blood Donor Clinic 3pm-7pm	Tuesday, January 6
Wellness Committee Presentation Topic: Mental Health and Depression 12pm-2pm	Sunday, January 18
Explore Faith: Confirmation Program 2015	Sunday January 25
Photo Directory Portraits	Saturday, January 24 and 31 Sunday, January 25 and Feb. 1
In Another's Shoes - a presentation by The Refuge	Sunday, February 8 (following worship)
Wellness Fair 10am-2pm	Saturday, February 28