



HAPPY
NEW YEAR

"A Blessed New Year"

May the road you walk be a smooth one,

May your troubles be few - if any,

May the days and years that lie ahead

Be healthy, happy, and many.

May you have friends in abundance,

May the sun shine bright around you.

May the world be a wonderful place to live,

And may God's love always surround you.

From Rev. Michelle

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:1-3

We cannot escape it. It is the time of New Year's resolutions. If your email inbox is like mine you have been receiving the emails.

Amazon recommends these books for New Year, New You.

Your fitness app recommends these 5 steps for becoming your best self in 2018!

Even without the emails you are probably seeing segments on TV or the features on the cover of magazines: *Six Alternative New Year's Resolutions*; or *Learn what (Insert Celebrity's Name Here) is Making their Resolution for 2018*.

Wow. It's only January 2nd. I'm already exhausted.

Marketing aside, there is something helpful about a resolution (a word that comes from the Latin, *resolutio*, for *loosen, release*.) With the arrival of a new year we release what has been as we look ahead to what is possible.

Last year's calendar cannot be changed. Its wrinkled edges, fingerprints and food stains, the pen marks, red circles, and over-scheduled days are part of the year gone by.

The old calendar comes off the wall, the new one goes up—putting away the old, and putting on the new (Eph. 4:22-24). The turning of the calendar to January 1 means that twelve months of fresh potential are set out before us.

Here's an invitation. When it comes to resolutions consider the blessings that are already present in your life, not least of which is God's love for you, in abundance.

The pervasive marketing message of a "new you" says:

You can be worthy *if* you do (and buy!) this or that.

The gospel message says:

You are worthy, *therefore* lead a life worthy of the calling you have been given.

As you turn the page on the calendar consider all the potential and possibility that each day already holds out for you, beginning with today. You are loved. Lead a life worthy of *that* calling to which you have been called through Christ Jesus.

And may God be your new year, new start, and new life this year and always.

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!

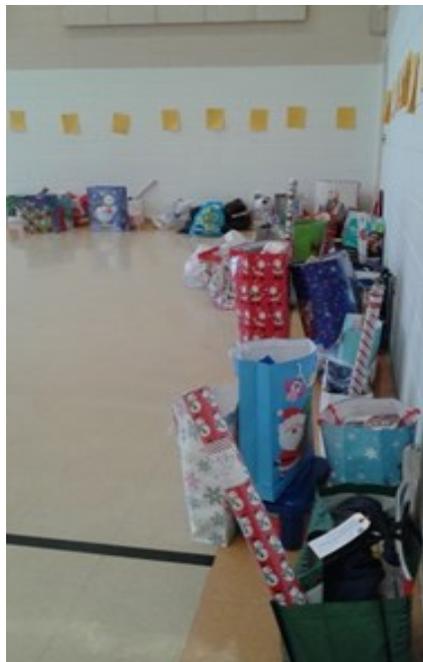
from the Outreach Committee

What else can we say? Your generosity enabled us to provide the most Christmas hampers ever. A total of 79 families were helped this year; that's 287 people, including 145 children who had a better Christmas this year. For the first time, we included a gift card for groceries instead of the box of food we have done previously. This let individuals and families pick the type of foods they would prefer as well as purchase fresh food items. The tin can money and other monetary donations provided these gift cards. The gift cards also made the hampers much easier to deliver! The recipients of the hampers were very grateful.

A huge thank to the helpers, Peter S., Kathryn F. and her daughter, Margaret M. and her granddaughter, Debbie J., Cathy C., the Just Jammin' youth class, and especially Ashley E. for all their hard work. A special thank-you to Marissa File whose school named Westminster the recipient of their food and toy drive, and also to our Office Administrator, Beth, for all her help on this project.

You've made a very Merry Christmas for so many in our community.

We'll be planning for 2018 in the New Year. Look for the tin cans coming out soon.



Wonderful things that happened in 2017

- ◆ Scientists found a way to successfully re-breed sections of the Great Barrier Reef.
 - ◆ The snow leopard has been taken off the Endangered Species list.
 - ◆ HIV/AIDS is no longer the leading cause of death in Africa.
 - ◆ Conservationists agreed to plant 73 million trees in the Amazon Rain Forest over the next six years.
 - ◆ In 2017, after the 1st quarter of all University of Iowa home football games, the fans stood and waved to the kids in the Children's Hospital across the street... and the kids joyfully waved back.

On December 3rd (*Advent 1*), your Christian Education Team hosted their first Family ADVENTure Day!

With sixty people signed up, there was tons of fun to go around. This special two-hour event began with lunch and was followed by making crafts and gifts for sharing. Thank you to all who participated and to all who made this time together possible!



New Year's traditions around the world?

In Canada we may drink champagne, light fireworks and link arms for a rousing rendition of Auld Lang Syne at New Years – but that's nothing compared to some parts of the world...

In Denmark
unused dishes and plates are saved
until the 31st of December
when they are affectionately shattered against the doors
of friends and family.

In Ecuador
the New Year is celebrated
by burning paper filled scarecrows at midnight.
Photographs from the last year are also burned,
all in the name of good fortune.

In the Philippines
it's all about the cash.
The belief is that everything should be round
so as to represent coins and bring wealth.
Round food, round clothes, anything round.

In some South American countries
wearing colored underwear
will determine your fate for the new year.
Red underwear means you'll find love,
Gold means wealth, and White signifies peace.

In Spain,
the New Year's tradition for good luck
revolves around grapes.
If you can manage to stuff 12 grapes
in your mouth at midnight
you'll achieve good luck for the next year.

In Japan,
all the bells are rung 108 times
in alignment with the Buddhist belief
that this brings cleanness.
It's also considered good to be smiling
going into the New Year,
as it supposedly brings good luck.

In Belgium,
livestock is taken seriously.
At least seriously enough that the farmers
wish their cows a happy new year!

In Brazil,
it is traditional to jump seven waves for luck
on the beaches of Rio de Janeiro.
If you like the idea of eating until you burst,
then head to Estonia –
it's considered good fortune to feast seven, nine or twelve times
when ringing in the New Year.

News from the Wellness Committee

In the spirit of inclusivity, the Wellness Committee joined with the Mosaic Committee and the Choir to present a lovely **Lessons and Carols** service on the evening of Dec 10th.

The theme was *"Inclusivity Around the Manger"* and together we celebrated our diversity while acknowledging the many challenges still present in our world today. Members of our church community shared memories of their Christmases past and present. Together we visited Holland, Jamaica, Quebec and Myanmar.



On Dec. 17th, we took part in a **Longest Night** service led by our ministerial team.

Because not everyone finds the Christmas season to be a joyful time of year, it can be a difficult time for some. This service provides a time for reflection and support through readings and prayer. We remembered and honoured our friends and families by lighting candles.

For the second year, our committee created and sold **Cranberry Prayer Candles**. All funds will be donated to our church General Fund.

This year our Committee of four were assisted in our candle-making by Greta Hope and Arlene Jones. A special thank-you for their help and artistry and a big thank-you to all who supported our efforts by purchasing candles.

Our thanks to everyone who helped make this a Christmas to be remembered.

Maureen Dingman
Sue Neil
Co- Chairs of the Wellness Committee



Happy 60th Anniversary Westminster United Church!



In 2018, we will be celebrating Westminster United Church's 60th Anniversary! We want to celebrate in a way that includes all church members, and highlights our rich history. To that end, we are creating a "60th Anniversary" working group to plan and lead the celebration activities and events. If you are interested in being a part of this group please let us know by providing your name and contact information to Tom McNown (tom.mcnown@gmail.com or 289-927-4666) or leave your information with our church administrator, Beth. An initial planning session will be scheduled in early January. Additionally, please forward any suggestions or ideas for this exciting event to either Tom or Beth.

It's time to change our **Mitten Tree** into a **SOCK TREE**

The Westminster Outreach Committee invites everyone to help keep people warm and dry this winter.

Please be generous and contribute socks for the Sock tree.

All kinds are needed, for both
Adults and Children

All items will be donated to
local charities.



Thank you for all the mitten donations!

Pray, Praise, Ponder

Bless to me, my God,
everything my eyes see.

Bless to me, my God,
every sound I hear.

Bless to me, my God,
every scent in my nostrils.

Bless to me, my God,
everything I taste,
every note I sing,
every word I say.

Everything that guides me.

Each dream I pursue.

Amen

Westminster on December 24th - A wonderfully joy-filled day!

On this 4th Sunday of Advent, we gathered for five multi-generational services, preparing ourselves for the birth of the Christ child.

In addition to our regular morning service, members and visitors alike gathered to share God's love with one another.

In true Westminster tradition, the youth (and the requisite live animals) delighted three packed 'houses' with a moving play about the true meaning of Christmas. And at 10:00pm, in a beautiful, candlelit sanctuary, magically transformed by our amazing sanctuary committee, we heard the familiar story of Jesus' birth, of Mary and Joseph, of the shepherds and angels, of the Wise Men and their gifts and together we celebrated Holy Communion.

It was indeed a glorious day!





Memory Lane

Westminster United Church will be celebrating our 60th anniversary next November. Wanting to document our past, Gail Brimbecom and Paul Kneebone have devoted their time and effort over the past several years to creating a pictorial memento of our past Ministers.

The results of their hard work and dedication are now on display in the Founders' Room – our Ministers Gallery!

In addition to the photos of all of our past Ministers, there is also a plaque documenting the dates of their service and also that of our Ministers of Music. Drop by the Founders' Room and take a stroll down memory lane.

Thank you Gail and Paul for recognizing the importance of this project, for doing the research, for tracking down the photos and for seeing the project through to completion.

Westminster's

GOT TALENT

Back by popular demand!

Westminster's Got Talent - SEASON 3 (60th Anniversary Edition)

Saturday, February 3, 2018 at 7:00 pm

Singers, dancers, instrumental performers, comedians, people of all ages - what a show!

Be sure to mark this date on your calendar. You don't want to miss seeing and hearing the wonderful hidden talents of our church family.

Performers - in order to register, please see Margaret in the gym after church on January 7, 14 and 21 or email her at: ron.motum@sympatico.ca

Tickets are \$10.00 each and will be available for sale on January 21 and 28 and at the door.



Advent, Christmas and New Years were all celebrated in J.a.M, with a variety of activities: Card making for the Christmas Hampers, a Birthday Party for Jesus, Singing Christmas songs and making festive New Years party hats!



Property Committee

The Property Committee is charged with ensuring that Church property is maintained, and is safe and secure.

Key responsibilities include: maintaining the insurance policy on the property; maintaining the Fire Safety Plan; managing contracted work; overseeing the work of the church's custodian; and organizing volunteers to help maintain the church.

The committee pro-actively manages a budget of approximately \$100,000 in discretionary and non-discretionary expenses related to the church property. Generally, the volunteers deal with about thirty issues of varying complexity a year. A list of projects may be obtained from the committee. Contractors are used for systems such as electrical, HVAC, fire alarms, security and gas. Over the last two years, we have focused on energy conservation as we consume about 100,000kw per year. We have made changes to the HVAC compress controls and implemented LED lighting in selected areas. Building temperatures are maintained by programmable thermostats.

The Property Committee relies heavily on volunteers from the congregation and organizes their time and talents to keep our house in good order. The jobs are similar to maintaining your own house, except scaled up a bit. Examples include: painting rooms, repairing cupboards, installing storage shelves, some custom woodworking, coordinating volunteers to maintain the flower gardens, exterior clean-up in the spring and fall, and assisting the custodian with larger jobs. Three years ago, Westminster took on the responsibility of cutting its own lawn. Not only is this an activity that many can help with but we save the congregation about \$3,000 per year. Several crews of volunteer "Weed Whackers" are organized by the Property Committee to handle this weekly activity. The committee also organizes a group of Volunteer Custodians who help keep the church clean after Sunday services and secure the church after all have left. New volunteers are always needed for these activities.

For Church Council purposes, the Chairman Group and the Tech Booth report to the Property Committee. The former handles the set-up of tables and chairs for both church and rental purposes. The Tech Booth provides AV support for our Sunday services.

The busy, hard-working members of the Property Committee are Bruce C., Jack D., Bob D., Bill F., Larry L., Dean M., Bob N., Dave S., King W., Jim W. (Chairman Group) and William VZ. (Tech Booth).

The Committee meets about six times a year to determine and coordinate what work needs to be done. All are welcome to sit in on these meetings or join the committee. For any additional information, please contact: Bob Neil at robertneil@rogers.com





Volunteer Custodians
are needed
for Sunday morning
after worship.

If you can help
with this important ministry,
please speak to Bob Neil,
Chair of the Property Committee.

Thanks for giving this your
prayerful consideration.

Grocery Cards

We all buy groceries,
so why not support Westminster
at the same time?

These cards make great Year-round gifts,
especially for those away at school!

Grocery gift cards are available
for purchase at face value during
coffee time after service on Sunday
or from the church office during the week.

**5% of the proceeds go to
Westminster United Church.**



Join Us For Tea, Coffee and Fellowship



*Please stop by the gym after worship on Sunday
and join us for a cup of coffee or tea.*

*Our beverages are on the house, but if you'd like some
to take home with you, we sell organic coffee, tea,
and Fair Trade yummy chocolate bars every Sunday.*

*Purchases enable us to continue providing the organic
coffee and tea during our Fellowship time after church.*



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 21st after the worship service with an information session for interested teens and their parents.

The program will proceed on various dates after that culminating in the Service of Confirmation on Sunday, May 6, 2018.

Highlights include a possible overnight retreat, field trips, guest speakers, videos, as well as fun and meaningful group discussions.

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

Wine, Women and the Word

The next meeting of this monthly Bible Study will be on
Wednesday, January 17th
(please note the change of day),
from
7:00pm - 9:00pm

Topic:
"New Year's Resolutions and the Bible"

Please bring your bible, if you have one.

PANCAKE SUPPER

The tradition continues!

Westminster's annual Shrove Tuesday PANCAKE SUPPER is on **February 13th, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.**

Bring your family and friends for a pancake feast (with sausages and fruit) ... smothered in syrup!

A free-will offering will be gratefully received at the door.

If you would like to help out with this fellowship event, please contact Bev Crumb.



Bridge To A New Home



Bridge To A New Home committee members are looking forward to 2018 and the privilege of supporting our new Canadians as we share their enthusiasm and life experiences. Without question, this has been an incredible journey that could only have been realized through the joint efforts of the five churches who have come together. It is marvellous how we have blended and created wonderful new friendships in this compassionate project.

We are already seeing delightful successes which we would like to share with you. These are pictures of Tmnit and Frtuna receiving awards at the fall assembly at Bobby Orr Elementary school. Freweyni, a very proud mom, and friends were there to celebrate with each other.



Bridge To A New Home (continued)

Freweyni and Sut are both actively attending their English classes full time. Sut is able to take a single bus from North Oshawa to the Ajax Welcome Centre for his classes. He is in level 2 in the morning and level 3 in the afternoon. Freweyni was attending afternoon classes at EA Lovell, but in January she will also be a full time English language student.

Bridge To A New Home has worked closed with Freweyni to create schedules that work for everyone. A minimum of 2 volunteers are needed each weekday morning and afternoon to walk the children to and from school. There is also homework for one and all and there are volunteers to help with this. Volunteers are also helping with grocery shopping, recreational activities, medical appointments and going to church.

Church life is important to Sut and also to Freweyni. Freweyni's family are Eritrean Christian Orthodox members. A congregation has been found in Toronto and we started taking the family to the four hour services 2 to 3 times a month. Jiom was a deacon in their church prior to coming to Canada, a very important role for him, and one that his mother strongly supports, which is why we make the trips to Toronto with their family. Sut enjoys attending church services with members of each of **Bridge To A New Home's** supporting congregations.



For Sut, we are delighted to announce that he is available for part time work after school and on weekends. He has already done some painting in a couple of homes, worked in a restaurant, and has some background in carpentry and other skills. He is very handy and eager to work, and is tireless in his efforts. If you are aware of opportunities we would welcome your input. Sut has a delightfully positive personality as you can see in the big smile he shares readily with everyone.

With all of these responsibilities the matter of finances is ever present for **Bridge To A New Home**. The November County Town Singer's Concert raised approximately \$4,800 and we were thrilled with the sum raised, the talented musical presentation and positive feedback we received. Currently "Golf and Leisure" discount coupon books are being sold. Specific to Westminster, Joanne MacPherson can be contacted.

We are so thankful for your support and empathy.

God Bless one and all.



NEWS FROM THE PEWS...

Did you know...

...that our UCW and some of their dedicated helpers catered a hot turkey dinner for 42 members of the Stroke Recovery Group on December 12th and a formal 'Mess Dinner' of spaghetti, meatballs and salad for 80 Sea Cadets on December 20th? And that's in addition to the regular monthly luncheon they prepare for the Living Alone group who were treated to a full turkey feast on Wednesday December 6th. Many thanks to all involved!

...that Harry Sanderson has for years single-handedly taken on the task of tidying and replenishing the pew pockets? He makes sure there are prayer request cards, offering envelopes and info cards for newcomers. It took 3 people over an hour to do the job this month! Thanks, Harry. Your efforts are much appreciated!

...that Robert Motum's play, *A Community Target*, had a staged reading in Hamilton on December 3rd? Adding to his impressive resume, he is now Assistant Director for *King Charles III*, a Mirvish production coming to the CAA Theatre this winter.

...that the Foodman Group generously offered to prepare dinner for the cast and crew of the Christmas Eve play (23 people) during the Friday, Dec. 22nd dress rehearsal? They were treated to a gourmet feast including mixed green salad with cranberries, deep dish macaroni casserole with various cheeses and chicken, and apple crepes for dessert with berries and whipped cream! Weren't they lucky! Many thanks!

It's Time to Celebrate the Scouts and Girl Guides of Westminster United Church

Did you know that Westminster has a long-standing partnership with these groups? Well, we do, and it's time for us to recognize these incredible programs for what they are...opportunities for fun, friendship, leadership development and personal growth.

During worship on **Sunday, February 4th**, you are invited to a Celebration, honouring all those who have ever been involved in these organizations. This celebration will be for all ages and will be integrated into our time of worship. All are invited!

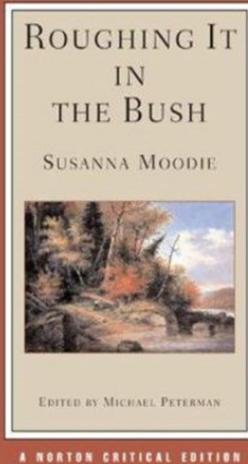
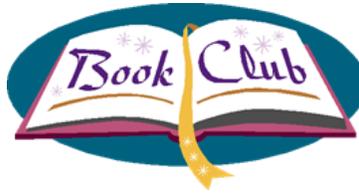
If you or someone you know is a proud owner of a uniform, please feel free to wear it to this service.

Refreshments will be available in the gym following the service, as will historical displays presented by both of these groups.

We look forward to seeing you and hearing how the Scouting/Guiding programs have impacted your life!



Girl Guides
of Canada
Guides
du Canada



The next gathering of the Book Club is Wednesday **January 24, 2018** from 1:30-3:00 pm at the church to discuss the book entitled **Roughing It In the Bush** by *Susanna Moodie*.

All are invited and welcomed to join us.

When *Roughing It in the Bush* was published in 1852, it created an international sensation, not only for Susanna Moodie's "glowing narrative of personal incident," but also for her firm determination to puncture the illusions European land-agents were circulating about life in Canada. This frank and fascinating chronicle details her harsh – and humorous – experiences in homesteading with her family in the woods of Upper Canada. Part documentary, part psychological parable, *Roughing It in the Bush* is, above all, an honest account of how one woman coped not only in a new world, but, more importantly, with herself.

To borrow the book or for more information, please call Susan at 905-493-3122.

Looking *FORE* Golfing Folks

(or anyone interested in having a fun day outside)

Are you a golfer? Are you a "fun" golfer? Are you looking *FORE* a few hours outdoors with some friends? Would you be interested in a "fun" golf outing in mid-June?

Westminster United Church and Pickering Village United Church are considering organizing a fun golf tournament at a local, executive style golf course. We would like to know the level of interest at Westminster to determine if we should proceed. Some of the initial details include: mid-June date, cost of approximately \$100 which would include lunch, dinner and golf fees.

If you are not a golfer, no reason *FORE* any worries! Tickets for dinner only will be available. This will be an opportunity to interact and share time with another United Church. This fundraiser will help both churches and half of the net proceeds will go to a charity of our choice.

If you are interested in participating in our fun tournament and/or assisting with the organizing of this golf event, please advise either Bob Neil (robertneil@rogers.com) or Tom McNown (tom.mcnown@gmail.com) by January 15th, 2018 or leave a note with Beth Navarro, our church administrator.

BRRR...It's Cold out there!

We're walking again...for the 5th year...and YOU are invited to join us on February 24th!

We're all registered and we're beginning to put our team together for this year's **Coldest Night of the Year Walk** in support of the Refuge in Oshawa...

The Refuge does such wonderful things for the homeless, hurting and hungry youth in our community...and we're going to do our best to help them again this year!

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!

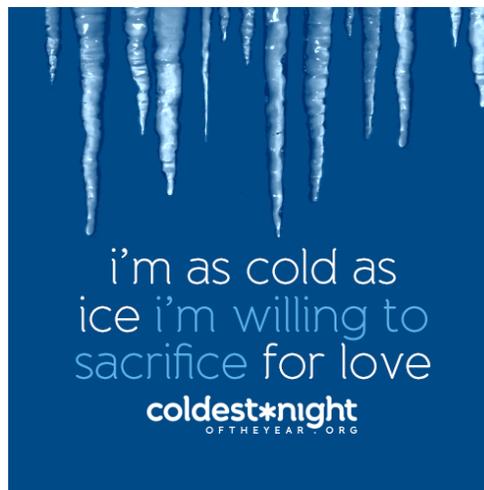
To join our Team or to make an online donation, go to www.coldestnightoftheyear.org, search for our team (**Westminster United Church**) and follow the prompts. If you have issues while trying to register, contact Cathy Shaw (Team Captain).

You can donate online or visit our display and our team members in the gym following worship on February 10th and 17th. They will be thrilled to share their experience with you and gratefully receive any and all donations for this worthy cause.

The Coldest Night of the Year is a fun, family-friendly walking event and you can choose how far you wish to walk...2km or 5km.

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 24th!



You're invited...

Worship Service 10:30am Sign-up for Westminster's Got Talent Gym - Following Worship	Sunday, January 7
UCW Meeting 7:00pm	Monday, January 8
Worship Service - Baptism 10:30am Sign-up for Westminster's Got Talent Gym - Following Worship	Sunday, January 14
Wine, Women and the Word Bible Study 7:00pm – 9:00pm	Wednesday, January 17
Worship Service - Communion 10:30am Confirmation Information Session After Worship - For interested Teens and Parents Sign-up for Westminster's Got Talent Gym - Following Worship	Sunday, January 21
WUC Council Meeting 7:00pm	Tuesday, January 23
Book Club 1:30pm - 3:00pm	Wednesday, January 24
Worship Service– Membership Transfer 10:30am	Sunday, January 28
Westminster's Got Talent - Season 3! 7:00pm <i>Don't miss this awesome fundraising event!</i>	Saturday, February 3
Worship Service Scouting/Guiding Celebration Service 10:30am Blood Pressure Screening Clinic 11:45am - 12:15pm (Founder's Room)	Sunday, February 4
Living Alone Luncheon 12:00pm – 2:00pm	Wednesday, February 7
Worship Service 10:30am	Sunday, February 11
Shrove Tuesday...Pancake Supper! 5:30pm-7:00pm <i>Free-will offering</i>	Tuesday, February 13