



WHISTLER: Alison Latham 387-5711 aliemae1@outlook.com

"Death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss is what dies inside us while we live."

Norman Cousins

"Healing is a matter of time, but it is sometimes also, a matter of opportunity."

Hippocrates (460-400 B.C.)

REFLECTIONS

"THE WATER WE SWIM IN"

Pastor Susie Webster-Toleno

Greetings, dear ones,

I'm writing this reflection at just about the last minute before Alison's rather generous deadline. That's not unusual, frankly, as these reflections always require a little time to percolate. This time, though, at least part of my tardiness is due to an unexpected reality in my life: three weeks ago today, I slipped on some icy steps at my neighbor's home and broke my leg (specifically, my fibula) in two places just above my left ankle. After my first week in my lovely orthopedic boot, I learned that I would *not* be undergoing surgery, which was wonderful news. At that appointment as I was talking with my orthopedic doc., I lamented my lack of get-up-and-go, and my feeling of deep fatigue, and my frustration. I wanted to bounce back, to be super efficient, to have energy for all of the things, you know? Vulnerability is no fun, and neither is pain, whether physical or emotional/spiritual. My wise and kind doctor listened compassionately, but then put a gentle hand right over my injury. He looked me in the eye for a quiet moment and then in the kindest voice he said, "Susie, you do realize it's still broken, right?"

Honestly, it was a breathtaking moment. I paused, and said to him, "You have no idea the gift you've just given me." And now I pass it on to you, dear reader, which is the best thing one can do with an amazing gift

Are you tired of living in a world where pandemic health worries still hem you in (whether because of your own fears, or the restrictions and cautions placed on you by people more worried than you)?

Are you worn down by wars big and small – those in foreign lands, and those smaller but still painful battles within our own communities?

Are you riled up by emails that should never have included the dreaded "Reply All" but have now caused a festering buzz of anger or resentment?

Are you sick of the amount of time spent talking about topics some dismiss as being "woke" and others lift up as concerning the fundamental rights of human beings?

Do you want things to magically return to the "good old days," however you might define them?

Are you just plain weary, awakening without feeling refreshed, and ground down by bad news by bedtime?

My doctor's words are a response to all of these things: "You do realize it's still broken, right?"

In the church, we're approaching Holy Week once again, when we meditate on the horrors Jesus faced when the Empire of Rome did its level best to squash the inbreaking of the Empire of God here on earth. We sit with the idea that we are all at least partly aligned with the forces that crucify even today – with the societal forces that separate and divide, creating insiders and outsiders, and declare some folks to be more worthy than others. That is the water we swim in, and pondering our own role can be disheartening in the extreme. In our liturgical world, we go from the jubilation of Palm Sunday, to the rich promise of shared nourishment at the table and the mandate to love one another on Maundy Thursday, to the grim reality of the crucifying power of sin and hatred on Good Friday. It's a deeply vulnerable experience when we take it seriously, and a strong reminder that, yes, "it's still broken."

And yes, we *do* know that we can look forward to the jubilation of resurrection as we look to Easter Sunday, but those first disciples didn't really understand that. They were steeped in the still-broken-ness just like we are. And to me, honestly, it's refreshing to remember that.

I am a person of hope. As one of our hymns in the New Century Hymnal that I have quoted here before puts it,

"But I believe beyond believing
that life can spring from death;
that growth can flower from our grieving;
that we can catch our breath
and turn transfixed by faith."
(*"Each Winter as the Year Grows Older"*,
by William & Annabeth Gay)

Here's what, though: despite being a person of hope, I am also a realist, and I recognize the wisdom of my kind orthopedist. Yes, healing is happening in my body, but it's still broken. Or from the opposite angle, yes, crucifixion still mars our world and breaks our hearts every blessed day, but at the same time resurrection is happening all around around us all the time. We live in tension between those two realities whether the liturgical season tells us it's Easter or not.

It's still broken, my friends, and we know that healing takes time and requires gentle care. May we live and even find joy in the midst of that vulnerability.

Always, Susie

THE WHISTLE BLOWER

From Daron Tansley: On March 12th, I finished my winter hiking project of hiking all 48 4000 footers in the White Mountains in a single winter season. The winter hiking season begins with the winter solstice and ends on the spring equinox. Half of the hikes were done as sunrise hikes this winter, which meant hiking three to nine miles at night to reach the first mountain summit by sunrise.

From Nancy Calicchio: Across from my driveway at 198 Church St. there is a growing pile of horse manure mixed with shavings. All are welcome to collect some for their gardens.

Elena Dodd is grateful for the life of Mac Oglesby.

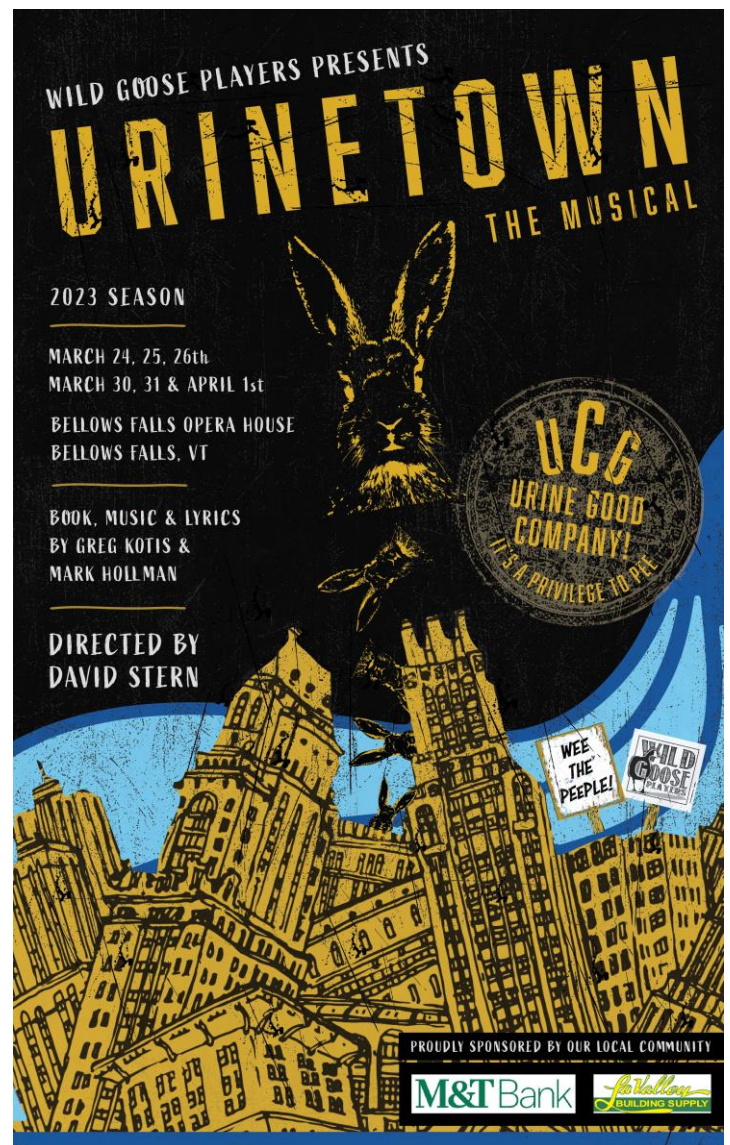
Evie Lovett spent part of the winter at an art residency in India where she tried to say away from email and the internet

From Catherine Cadieux: A long story and many adventures since September including a MRI and a craniotomy at Albany Medical Center and several moves but I believe this is my final destination for the time being that is. Learning how to use the laptop is time consuming and arduous but 2 home visits from Ken have helped a lot. I am mobile and carry a cane when walking downtown or on stairs but don't use it in the building. I also have vision and carpal tunnel issues which slow me down sometimes but am looking forward to grocery shopping. I am grateful for minifridge thanks to Mike Audrey and Vanessa and dinner chez Stern tonight and opening night of Urinetown at the opera house Friday night. I don't have time to locate all my contacts so please forward to others. ...love you all. My cell phone is 802 289 7358, my address is Sterling House, 33 Atkinson Street, Bellows Falls, VT 05101.

From Bill Ballard: In January, Jacob Ballard graduated from University of Alaska Anchorage, Magna cum Laude, with a degree in Anthropology/Linguistics (and a minor in PoliSci). Earlier this month, he did a 2-week victory lap, visiting his proud parents, Bill in Saxtons River and Betsy Rogers in Greenfield MA. While at his dad's, he helped shovel snow and ice off the deck for Spring lounging, and converted another square grand piano into a workbench. He also located his paternal grandparents' final resting place, a woodland vernal pool in Norwich, VT. A great time was had by all.



Bill Ballard and his son Jake



Wild Goose Players Presents "Urinetown"

Bellows Falls, Vermont- Wild Goose Players will present "Urinetown" at The Bellows Falls Opera House, March 24-April 1, Directed by David Stern, with Musical Direction by Michael Kelly.

A side-splitting sendup of greed, love, revolution (and musicals) in a time when water is worth its weight in gold, "Urinetown" is also the Winner of three Tony Awards, (including best book and best original score), three Outer Critics Circle Awards, two Lucille Lortel Awards, and two Obie Awards. A hilarious musical satire, "Urinetown" occurs during a devastating water shortage brought on by a 20-year drought. The government has banned private toilets, and the only legal place to pee is a public amenity, run by the Urine Good Company - which charges a hefty fee. What do people do if they can't pay??? Come see the show and find out!

Touted for stretching the boundaries of the modern musical, Urinetown is a comedic romp with its finger on the pulse of modern society. Get ready for a night of fun!

Remaining dates: Thursday, March 30, at 7:30, Friday, March 31, at 7:30, and Saturday, April 1, at 2:00 and 7:30. Tickets are available through the Bellows Falls Opera House at <https://www.bellowsfallsoperahouse.com/special-events>

WHAT GIVES ME JOY

From Rachael Shaw: being greeted by Russell, the Jack Russell terrier at Westminster Auto. That little guy gives a very enthusiastic greeting! And hearing Joe Castiglione's voice announcing the Spring Training Red Sox games after a long winter. Also, I like the question, "What gives you joy?" It gives me joy to be asked what gives me joy!

This winter it has given me great joy to observe a pair of ravens and a pair of crows who visit the yard (separately so far) to eat the leftover canned cat food I put on the snow. The ravens are only interested in the meat, are very wary, and eat some and take some away to stash. And they are almost twice as big as the crows. The crows eat some but are also interested in the unsalted unshelled peanuts that I put out for the squirrels. The crows are less wary and don't seem to notice me watching them. If I move (within my house!) the ravens take off in alarm. And of course, their voices are very different. I like the way the ravens make a call that sounds a bit like "gulp gulp". I also like that the cat food isn't going to waste. If my cat went outdoors, I would not be encouraging meat-eaters to come to the yard, but she's an indoor cat these days.

Also, the Wordle and the Waffle games make me smile. The guy who makes the Waffle game has a very silly sense of humor and includes goofy jokes in his "use it in a sentence" examples of each word. For example, one of the words in the Waffle solution was "femur". "A pelvis and a femur walk into a bar....'Now this is a hip joint!' Silly stuff like that :)

From the Church Trustees: We are so glad that we have all survived the pandemic and are ready to greet spring.

From David Deen: Well, Allison Deen

From Ira Wilner: Not sure I want the publicity Alison. But, being in good health at age 76 it has been a great pleasure to be both part of the tech team and be on stage to sing in the upcoming production of Urinetown being staged by Wild Goose Players at the Bellows Falls Opera House the last week in March and first week in April. David Stern is once again directing and designing a blockbuster Spring musical production that's sure to be an audience pleaser. I play a minor character, Dr. Billeaux, which in French is pronounced Dr. B.O. My boss Caldwell Cladwell is the wealthy owner of UGC (Urine Good Company). All of the character names in this show have humorous roots. There is something for all age groups to see and be entertained. And there will be plenty of eye candy with a fabulous two-story set, state of the art theatrical lighting and other technical wizardry.

A TRIBUTE TO MAC OGLESBY

From Elena Dodd

Mac had a mathematical imagination. Besides being a teacher to many youngsters, he created intricate drawings using a pendulum which swung and traced graceful lines; he created sundials in many locations. On our neighbor's (Joe Famolare). land there was a circular space designed as landing for a helicopter. On this disk Mac designed a sundial, so that a visitor could stand in the middle on a sunny day and calculate the time by observing his or her shadow. When the Westminster West Elementary School ("Claire's school") became a Resource Center, Mac brought carpentry projects to teach to kids from the Westminster Center School. Godspeed, Mac. We will miss you.

From Laura Williams: What has made me smile and given me gratitude is my interactions with my grandchildren. Also walking or skiing in the woods in various places in Westminster West. Living in what feels like a safe place.

From Alison Latham: I get so frustrated when I have to call a company and an automated voice answers the call and says tell me in a "few words" what your call is about. I try, but the automated voice doesn't understand my "few words." As my frustration rises I start yelling let me talk to a real person. Of course, this gets me nowhere. However, I am most grateful to Karen Blanchard who told me the magic word is not please, but representative. Let me talk to a representative. You cannot imagine my joy when I first uttered these words and a few seconds later I was connected to a real person



The Chimney Doctors new employee, "The Snow Sweep"
Photo by Ian Conway

From Debbie Bump: For several years I have volunteered at Greater Falls Restorative Justice Center. On the Reparative Justice Panel, we (4 volunteers) meet with an offender referred by the police or the court for a low-level offense. Such an offense might be a third drunk driving charge which could result in loss of a professional license to practice. Not violent but consequential. When over three plus monthly meetings, the client truly realizes the damage done, grasps how to prevent a recurrence and begins a path toward healthy behavior there is joy. I feel joy because I have helped another person improve his/her life.

From Guy Payne: Sue and I want to express our gratitude to our children, friends, and our dog Lucy for their support, prayers and meals during our multiple aches, viral infections. Lucy didn't cook and we don't know if she prayed, but she never left our side. Everyone's enduring love is a source of strength and joy. Thank you all.

WESTMINSTER WEST CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday worship begins at 10am

We are an Open and Affirming Church and fully accessible

Come as you are but if you are with us in person
we ask you to wear a mask

We are using Facebook Live to stream our weekly services, but you do NOT have to have a Facebook account to join us virtually. Just go on Facebook to the Church's page, Congregational Church of Westminster West.

April 2 – 10 am Palm Sunday, Susie Webster-Toleno,
music Eric Robinson

April 6 – 7pm Maundy Thursday – Holy Communion, Susie
Webster-Toleno, music Eric Robinson

April 9 – 6am Sunrise Service

April 9 - 8-9am Easter Breakfast

April 9 – 10am – Easter Service, Susie Webster-Toleno,
music Fred Gray

HOLY WEEK:

Holy Week is nearly upon us! The deacons of the church hope that people will make room in their lives for these services:

PALM SUNDAY (April 2) 10am Susie Webster-Toleno preaching with music from Eric Robinson. Come wave palm fronds and worship with us! We will receive the UCC One Great Hour of Sharing offering on this day.

MAUNDY THURSDAY (April 6): Tenebrae Service at 7pm Susie Webster-Toleno preaching with music from Eric Robinson with many readers and communion and choir. In this service of scripture and music, we recall the events of the last week of Jesus's life, and acknowledge our sorrow and our awareness of systems that continue to crucify Love.

GOOD FRIDAY (April 7): ecumenical service coordinated by a variety of Brattleboro area Christian Clergy. Exact details TBA — check our church's Facebook page for more details as they emerge.

EASTER SUNRISE (April 9): 6am — Leaders Tom Griffith and Leslie Turpin. Our in-person Sunrise Service at the big (really big) field on Milenkovich Road. Dress for the weather!

EASTER BREAKFAST: 8 to 9am in the church community room. The cooks are Stephen and Adrienne Major, but they always appreciate your contribution to the breakfast table.

EASTER MORNING (April 9): 10 AM Susie Webster-Toleno preaching with music from Fred Gray and the choir. There will be a manna collection,

EASTER FLOWERS: We invite people to bring Easter Flowers for Easter Sunday, making sure they are at the church by 9am Sunday morning. People can email Susie to have them listed as being given in honor of or in memory of somebody.

CONGREGATIONAL LENTEN INTROIT

"In My Heart is The Road"

by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

*In my heart is the road, and I will not be hurried.
In my heart is the road; bless my feet on this journey
to Jerusalem, to Jerusalem.*

CHURCH CONTACTS

Our Pastor, Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno, is observing more flexible office hours, not always on-site. That said, she reserves **Thursday** afternoons for visits to people's homes or outdoor walks when requested, and appointments for other times can be made via email to: susiewt@gmail.com or phone or text: (802-579-8356). She takes Mondays as her day of Sabbath rest.

BUILDING USE: Tom Griffith 802-387-5694

tgriffith@hilltopmontessori.org

DEACONS: Charlotte Gifford 802-387-4145

gifford@languagehead.com

TRUSTEES: Guy Payne 802-869-2600

gpaynevt@gmail.com

WEB SITE: www.westminsterwest.org

DISCERNMENT:

At recent Annual Meetings, our congregation has committed to enter into a year-long process of discernment as we seek to understand what our path forward should look like in this post-2020/Covid-impacted world. We are engaging in a variety of contemplative practices, from shared silent prayer to body-prayers and earth-based practices to engagement in the work of the world, and together we will be listening for nudges from the Spirit to help us discover how our church family can best live out God's purpose for our faith community in this changing world. We encourage all congregation members to join us in the unfolding process, but also invite non-church community members to be with us in discernment, as the role and path of the church most definitely impacts the life of the community. We will be reaching out to the community in various ways throughout the year, but if you would like to be engaged in this process with us, consider reaching out through the Facebook page, the website, or via email.

WEEKLY MID-DAY PRAYER SERVICE

Pastor Susie continues to set time aside for prayers for the community, usually on Thursday afternoons from 1:30-2:00. She is not welcoming prayers in person at the church at that time due to current restrictions on gathering beyond household groups, but most weeks during that time she offers prayers and a brief reflection time via live stream on our church's Facebook page. This can be accessed even by people who don't have Facebook accounts! Join her at that time (or later, as it remains available online) to light a candle and raise the joys and concerns of our community in prayer. If you have prayer concerns that you'd like to include on her list (to be said aloud or held in confidentiality), call or email her and let her know. (See info in Church Contacts.)

GIVING MADE EASY

Did you know how easy it is to support the work of our church? There is a "button" on the home page of our website (www.westminsterwest.org), where a one-time or repeating donation can easily be made, either using your favorite credit/debit card or using PayPal. We just ask that you **leave us a note** telling us what the payment is for. We certainly thank you for helping us keep the building in good condition and helping to build a strong community.

OUR ANNUAL APPEAL LETTER

Help us paint the church

November 10, 2022

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Thank you so much for your support in past years for the maintenance and upkeep of the Westminster West Church. This building is a community space enjoyed throughout the year by many people of many faith backgrounds. We have many differences amongst us in our community, yet in general we do have more things in common.

Most of us live in this community because we share some common values that are at the heart of rural life. The church presents a hub for the Westminster West Community. The church building provides a space for meetings, community suppers, weddings and civil unions, Chanukah Celebrations, informational presentations and concerts. Our children will remember the special events this building provided in their lives. It is truly a community building. Many people support the upkeep of this building because they realize that it is not solely a place to use on Sunday morning. However, many of us appreciate the open and progressive nature of the service that welcomes all who wish to honor the spirit and the teachings of Christ.

Because of your support, we have a beautiful and magical pipe organ. Because of your support, the exterior of the building has been painted and sadly needs painting again. Because of your support, we have a new standing seam roof. Because of your support, the elevator is kept in working order. Because of your support, our boiler was repaired and keeps chugging out heat. And because of your support during the Covid pandemic, we are still here and very grateful.

This church building can only be maintained if those of us in the community acknowledge the value it provides to all of us throughout the year. This is the time of year when we ask for your financial support so that together we can keep our community strong and whole.

Please send a tax-deductible donation to the Congregational Church of Westminster West (or CCWW) at 44 Church Street, Westminster West, VT 05346, in the amount of \$25, \$50, \$100, \$240, \$500 or whatever other figure you feel moved to donate.

Thank you,

Laura Bryant Williams and Alison Latham

The Trustees of the Congregational Church of Westminster West: Guy Payne, Chair, Mary Ceglarski, Tom Griffith, Alison Latham, Stephen Major, Laura Williams

*Your tax-deductible donation to the Congregational Church of Westminster West (or CCWW) can be sent to 44 Church Street, Putney, VT 05346,
Thank you again*

BLACK LIVES MATTER COMMISSIONING PROJECT WORKSHOP - CELEBRATING BLACK COMPOSERS

The Racial Justice Task Force of the Vermont UCC is hosting two workshops featuring new choral music by contemporary black composers commissioned by the BLM Commissioning Project. Renowned choral leader Kathy Bullock, Professor Emerita of Music from Berea College and UK Choral Directors Sian Croose and Fran Andrew will lead the workshops, introducing the eight award-winning songs from black composers and teaching selected songs over the course of the day. In addition, she will host a panel discussion of the issue of appropriation of black music.

The southern Vermont workshop will be at the Guilford Community Church, UCC, on April 15 from 9am to 4 pm.

Registration fee: \$30.00 per participant

[Register here for April 15](#)

Guilford Church is wheelchair accessible with free parking. Snacks will be provided, please bring a bagged lunch. *Note that there is a small licensing fee to perform the music to appropriately compensate and honor the black composers.

To learn more about these workshops click here: [BLM Choir Workshop Press Release](#)

For more information on the Black Lives Matter Commissioning Project: <https://blmcommissioning.com/>

For help with registration contact Elise Foster at Vermont Conference email: fostere@vtucc.org



Barred owl outside Sojourns window taken by Guy Payne

REMEMBERING LIBBY MILLS AND HER CONTRIBUTION TO CONSERVATION

From the Windmill Hill Pinnacle's Spring Newsletter

Longtime WHPA board member Libby Mills, a driving force in so much of what we have accomplished, died on Jan. 12, 2023 after a brief illness. Libby, who had recently turned 94, returned to her native Maine for her final days and was in a beloved spot near the water, surrounded by loving friends and family. She was a board member for almost 30 years and did it all—working with landowners to expand the Pinnacle's network of conserved land; lining up funding with state officials and other donors; rooting out invasive species on work crews; leading wildflower walks; hiking the entire trail system in sections at age 91; and inspiring other board members with her passion and delight in the land. Libby served as a long-time board member of the Putney Mountain Association, as well. Libby was also the co-author, with Rosalyn Shaoul, of the invaluable history book, *The Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association's Story: How did they get all that land?* Hundreds of people attended a celebration of life service for Libby on Saturday, March 18, at The Putney School, where she and her first husband, Bob Mills, taught for decades. Speakers ranged from her son Matt to former students to WHPA board member Camilla Roberts. We take solace in knowing that Libby lives on in the miles and miles of woods she helped protect and in the hearts of people across northern New England who cherish her memory.



Libby Mills standing in front of a glacial erratic in a patch of skunk currant (*Ribes glandulosum*) and holding a leaf in her hand. Photo by Andrew Toepfer

CABIN FEVER SUPPER REDUX

SUNDAY, April 23rd at 5PM

As a community potluck

We've all missed this fun night of local stories and great food. Now after 3 years of pandemic isolation the Congregational Church of Westminster West wants to bring it back, well, sort of, maybe different, maybe better, maybe not better, but here it is. Our wonderful chef of past Cabin Fever Suppers, Tristan Toleno, is unable to continue the tradition for a number of reasons. But he continues to represent us well in Montpelier. So, what do we do? Here is the REDUX part. We have decided to continue it as a POT LUCK! The Church members will provide beverages, butter and mac and cheese, continuing Tristan's tradition of mac and cheese using his recipe. We hope that you, our faithful friends, will bring a salad, a side dish, or a dessert. There will not be an admission charge but we will accept donations. Hopefully the stories will continue to flow, and we are looking forward to hearing Tom Griffith's barred owl howl. Do you have an animal or bird call you can imitate to try and unseat Tom from his champion perch? Wine will be available also by donation. Please come even if you are unable to bring something for the pot luck table. Who cooks for you? Says the wise owl.

PINNACLE ANNUAL MEETING:

SATURDAY, APRIL 22 AT 4pm

All WHPA members and supporters are invited to attend our annual meeting on Saturday, April 22 at 4 p.m., held in person at the Congregational Church of Westminster West (44 Church Street). Board president Jennifer Latham will share news and updates on our conservation work and announce the Volunteer of the Year award. Come hear the good news and partake of the provided refreshments.

Our featured speaker will be Daron Tansley, presenting his photos of wildlife and scenery from Pinnacle land and elsewhere in northern New England. We will also screen a short documentary about the late Libby Mills.

Sunday, May 7, 2023: Wildflower Walk, 11 a.m. Westminster West.

Sarah Waldo and Lisa Chase will lead a spring wildflower walk, which is limited to 12 people. To RSVP, please email Sarah Waldo at sarah_waldo@hotmail.com or call her at 802-387-6036. The event will be held rain or shine. Please wear sturdy footwear and meet outside the Congregational Church of Westminster West. No prior knowledge is needed, but if you'd like to learn about Vermont wildflowers before or after the walk, check out the Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association's online spring wildflower guide.

FROM LAST YEARS GRATITUDE ISSUE:

Libby Mills - I like Oliver Sack's quote on the back of his little book entitled "Gratitude", written just before he died in 2015. 'My predominant feeling is one of gratitude. I have loved and been loved. I have been given much and I have given something in return. Above all, I have been a sentient being, a thinking animal, on this beautiful planet, and that in itself has been an enormous privilege and adventure.'

WEST WEST LIBRARY APRIL PROGRAMS

There is a lot to look forward to in April, the month of the child, at the Westminster West Public Library with 5 events and 3 programs on the calendar.

On April 7 from 5-5:30pm Lauren Wolk and her son Moses will perform a hilarious reading from all children's favorite books by Mo Williams. See Elephant and Piggie come alive and come ready to laugh at their unusual antics.

Musical Mornings is a class for toddler-preschool age children; however, babies and older kids can join. Professional musicians Stuart Fuchs and Sarah Carlisle invite the young ones to sing and play music together. Classes will be held on Apr 13, 20, 27 from 10:30-11:30am. Sarah in 2 photos below.



Story Yoga is a program where children can act out the journey of characters in a story while moving and stretching their bodies. This program will be offered on April 21 at 4:00pm.

Dungeons and Dragons is a fantasy role playing game where players take on the role of a fictional characters to fight off monsters, solve mysteries, and explore fantastical worlds. There are 2 programs led by Ben Boyarko who has been leading D & D games for many years. The tweens and teens group meets every other Monday from 6:30-8:30pm. The group of 10-14 year olds meets every Wed from 9-11am. Please call the library at 802-387-4682 if you are interested. These programs continue through May.

There are **2 movies** being shown the week of spring vacation. Come in and enjoy Peter Rabbit on April 11 and Peter Rabbit 2; The Runaway on April 12 at 3:00pm. All programs are free and all are welcome.

The library is here for you and your support attending these events is appreciated. Also, your input and suggestions enhance how the library serves our community. Please stop by or browse for books on our website.



From Becca Dill, Director of Energize Vermont

I have some inspiring news for Vermont's wildlife from the State house. The Vt House of Representatives has passed H.126, also known as the "30x30" bill. The bill sets goals to conserve 30% of State land by 2023 and 50% by 2050. This bill recognizes that we face a global biodiversity crisis driven by habitat degradation and climate change. It also acknowledges that Vermont's most effective and efficient contribution to conserving biological diversity and maintaining a landscape resilient to climate change is to conserve an intact and connected landscape.

H 126 calls on the Secretary of Vermont's Natural Resources to use the Vermont Conservation Design as a blueprint to create a conservation plan to achieve its goals. The plan requires public engagement and input from diverse stakeholders, including private landowners, environmental organizations, indigenous groups and regional planning commissions. The bill is on its way to the Senate. Stay tuned for updates!

SMALL KINDNESS

By Danusha Laméris

-September 19, 2019, New York Times Magazine

I've been thinking about the way, when you walk down a crowded aisle, people pull in their legs let you by. Or how strangers still say "bless you" when someone sneezes, a leftover from the Bubonic plague. "Don't die," we are saying. And sometimes, when you spill lemons from your grocery bag, someone else will help you pick them up. Mostly, we don't want to harm each other. We want to be handed our cup of coffee hot, and to say thank you to the person handing it. To smile at them and for them to smile back. For the waitress to call us honey when she sets down the bowl of clam chowder, and for the driver in the red pick-up truck who let us pass. We have so little of each other, now. So far from tribe and fire. Only these brief moments of exchange. What if they are the true dwelling of the holy, these fleeting temples we make together when we say, "Here, have my seat," "Go ahead — you first," "I like your hat."

20TH ANNIVERSARY GARDEN TOUR

Mark your calendars for this summer's **Westminster Garden Tour** scheduled for the weekend of **July 8th & 9th 2023**.

Plans are underway to make this year's Garden Tour extra-special in celebration of the 20th Anniversary. The Garden Tour is the largest fundraising event for Westminster Cares. Are you interested in supporting the event? Individuals can support the event by purchasing tour tickets, raffle tickets or by volunteering to work a shift during the weekend. Businesses can support the event by becoming a sponsor, purchasing an ad in the event program booklet, or donating a raffle prize. For more information contact Donna Dawson in the office at: 722.3607. Don't forget to **SAVE THIS DATE!**

The Connecticut River Valley Chapter of

TROUT UNLIMITED

Invites the public to

"The State of the State's Fisheries"

April 3rd 6:00 pm (pizza and soda at 5:30 pm)

At Brattleboro's Brooks Memorial Library,

"Meeting Room A- Community Meeting Room"

This program will be presented by Lael Will, Vermont Fish and Wildlife biologist for southeast Vermont. Lael has been a fisheries biologist in Vermont since 2012 after working in fisheries in California, Arkansas, and Georgia. She has a B.S. in Marine Resource Development from University of Rhode Island and an M.S. in Fisheries Science from University of Arkansas. She works primarily on trout fisheries in rivers and streams and bass fisheries in lakes and ponds. Lael also works on improving habitat and fish passage for diadromous species as chair of the Science Committee of the four state CT River Atlantic Salmon Commission such as American eel, sea lamprey and American shad. She conducts environmental review of development project proposals for potential impacts to Vermont's fish populations. Photo of Lael at work.



TREE AND SHRUB SALE 2023

Tired of snow? Think Spring! Chester Townscape's annual Tree and Shrub Sale offers landowners good-size, proven trees and shrubs at below regular retail prices to help people beautify their properties. The five selections offered in 2023 are a clump of River Birch trees and four shrubs: Miss Kim Lilac, Rosebay Rhododendron, Oakleaf Hydrangea, and Carolina Allspice (Sweetshrub). All specimens are low maintenance, hardy, and feature multi-season interest. Most are native and sport beautiful blossoms. All appeal to pollinators and/or birds. Any one of these plants would make a wonderful present for Mother's or Father's Day, birthdays, anniversaries, housewarming celebrations or other special event. Proceeds from the sale support Chester Townscape's charitable, civic beautification projects.

Buyers do not have to be Chester residents; but they do have to preorder and pay before April 5 and then pick up the plants, likely in the first week of May, from Main Street in central Chester. To be emailed or sent an informative, colorful order form that gives details about the plants, their prices, and where to send the check and order form, contact Lillian Willis at 802-875-1340 or lbwillisct@comcast.net.



ANNOUNCING OUR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS!

Eagles, oaks, and ferns, oh my! We've been hard at work coordinating with regional experts to bring you workshops and programs throughout 2023 and are excited to announce that registration is OPEN for events through the end of June. Our July-December schedule will open in the next newsletter.

We're thrilled to welcome Dr. Douglas Tallamy and Bridget Butler, The Bird Diva, back to our program line-up. Whether you're looking for nature hikes, hands-on workshops, opportunities for birding, or info on invasive pests -- we've got you covered!

3/11: Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Forest Pest Workshop
with Jim Esden

4/22: Earth Day Open House at TNM

4/27: Webinar, Common Invasive Pests
with Ginger Nickerson

4/29: Guided Hike and Intro to iNaturalist
with Steven Lamonde

5/7: Herricks Cove Wildlife Festival

5/13: Eagle Walk and Photography with Dara Carelton

6/9: Birding and Wellness with The Bird Diva, Bridget Butler

6/10: Guided Bird Walk with The Bird Diva, Bridget Butler

6/17: Pride Outside Hike

Learn More and Register for Events Through June

Registration Opens Soon:

7/15: Fern ID with Lynn Levine

8/19: Wild Medicinals Extract Making with Dr. Allison Turner

9/7: Nature Walk with Rich Holschuh of the Atowi Project

10/10: Webinar, Dr. Doug Tallamy - Let It Be an Oak

11/4: Growth of Trees with Michael Wojtech

Please Note: We have updated our event registration system with new features, including multiple registrations on one form and automatic reminder emails. We're excited and also expect a few bumps along the way. If you experience any glitches with the new system, please let us know at info@nature-museum.org and we'll do our best to fix the issue. Thanks!

MAIL CHIMP IS TAKING OVER

From Alison Latham: My email provider has decided I am a scammer because I send out the Whistler to large groups. Their response is to block my email for days or weeks at a time. So, with help from my daughter, Jennifer, we have hired MailChimp to send out the newsletter and other announcements. It is an additional cost for the Whistler so if you want to send aid, it would be appreciated.

SUGGESTED DONATION FOR THE WHISTLE

Basic \$25 Neighborly \$50 Angelic \$100
CCWW, 44 Church St, Putney, VT 05346

From Jenny Eddy: Hi to you all! Ronnie (Friedman) asked for some photos of flowers, but it's been unusually cold in AZ for this time of here, so not much in bloom yet. However, I've no doubt it's warmer here than in VT! We've been hearing about your storms. I finally found fairly strong cell service in a Walmart parking lot, so I hope this gets to you. These little treasures come with love to all of you. I really do miss you all.



PERENNIAL SWAPPERS MEET EVERY WEDNESDAY

At 6pm at different locations, sometimes the Fire Station in Saxtons River. After the swap they visit a local garden. To get on mailing list contact Sandra at sbbinnio@gmail.com



HIS LOVE POURS DOWN LIKE RAIN

By Pia Rabin

As I stretch out upon my couch,
watching the fire dance in the woodstove,
I settle into God's good hands
and offer up to Jesus
my thanks and praise
for His Goodness and His Mercy.
The kittens snuggle to sleep on my chest.
I would like to get up and do
things that need doing, but no,
I submit to the gentleness
calling me into His Arms of Love
the angels sing softly.

From Janet Langdon: When my original sheep dog (border collie), Arlo, died last June, I was lucky to have his son, Bill, all trained and ready to work sheep. Bill took over Arlo's jobs at various farms. After six months of missing Arlo, I decided it was time for an up-and-coming sheep dog to assist Bill and, eventually, move in to the world of sheep herding. I found Liz in a litter of 10 pups in Kentucky. Her father is from Wales originally and is currently winning all sorts of herding trials. She and Bill love each other and play bitey-face nonstop until it gets too wild and I have to enforce a rest period. Liz will start her herding training next Fall. For now, she is happy to do Puppy Kindergarten, basic obedience and a bit of dog agility! She, along with Bill and Roy (my agility border collie) will continue to keep me young, active and on my toes!



Janet with her new puppy Liz

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

By Dorothy Law Nolte

In Abby (Abigail Van Buren) Keeper's booklet

If a child lives with criticism, he/she learns to condemn
 If a child lives with hostility, he/she learns to fight
 If a child lives with ridicule, he/she learns to be shy
 If a child lives with shame, he/she learns to feel guilty
 If a child lives with tolerance, he/she learns to be patient
 If a child lives with encouragement, he/she learns confidence
 If a child lives with praise, he/she learns to appreciate
 If a child lives with fairness, he/she learns justice
 If a child lives with security, he/she learns to have faith
 If a child lives with approval, he/she learns to like their self
 If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he/she learns
 to find love in the world

TWO CHANCES TO SHARE OUR BLESSINGS

In April we have two good opportunities to put our communal strength behind our wish to be a force for compassion in our world. On Palm Sunday, April 2nd, we'll participate in the annual "One Great Hour of Sharing" collection, a national interdenominational offering that supports justice missions throughout our country. On Easter Sunday we will have our monthly local outreach effort with our Manna Offering for Our Place in Bellows Falls. One dollar of a Manna Offering buys \$10 worth of food from the Vermont Food Bank.

PIA'S PAINTING: to the right It is the Spirit of God breaking through our flesh to let God rule and bless us to make loving choices.



AVAILABLE NOW AT THE WEST WEST LIBRARY

WHAT IS THE PALACE PROJECT APP? A new way to download eBooks and eAudiobooks through your public library! It's free for patrons and libraries and includes a wide range of titles. **HOW DO I GET IT?** The app is available on iPhones, iPads, and Android phones and tablets. Find it in the app store under "Palace Project." (Unfortunately, Palace doesn't work with Kindle Fire tablets, black & white eReaders (like Kindle and Kobo). on the web, or on computers.)

WHAT'S IN THE COLLECTION? The Department of Libraries collection serves as a core collection for Vermont, by having something for everyone, but not trying to have everything for everyone. There are eBooks and eAudiobooks for every age and taste - adult mysteries, kids' picture books, YS dystopian tales, cookbooks, histories, and more, with a focus on diversity and Vermont stories.

HOW DO I LOGIN? You'll need to have a card with your local library, and have the app on your phone or tablet. Open the app, find your local library on the list, and then enter your library card number and password. If your library isn't listed, or if you're not sure of your card number or password, reach out to your library.

HOW DO I FIND BOOKS? Click the Catalog tab on the bottom, and then scroll down to see the categories of books, like children's, fiction or adult non-fiction. Click a category (like fiction) to see subcategories (like adventure and mystery). You can limit by eBooks or Audiobooks at the top. Or click the magnifying glass to search for a specific title or author. **HOW DO I CHECK OUT A BOOK?** Once you find a book, click the GET button, or place a hold if the books are checked out. The app will start downloading the item immediately. You can find your checked out items by clicking the MY BOOKS tab on the bottom. It shows when items are due, and lets you read/listen or return items early.

HOW DO I READ OR LISTEN? While reading an eBook, swipe left or right to turn the page forward or back. You can also click the three lines with dots to move between chapters, the gear icon to change the font size or background color, and the rightmost icon to make a bookmark. For Audiobooks, the play/pause button starts and stops, and rewind and fast forward move by 15 seconds. You can also change the playback speed, set a sleep timer, and move between chapters.



Painting by Pia Rabin Title: SPIRIT BREAKS THRU

Congregational Church of Westminster West
44 Church Street
Putney, VT 05346-9098



May God bless the peacemakers and the defenders of
democracy and freedom

SPRING 2023 CALENDAR

WEEKLY EVENTS:

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH of WEST WEST

Church Service – Sunday 10am

HEALTH AND FITNESS:

For new comers to exercise classes, Westminster Cares needs to determine if the person is appropriate for that class first so they need to call Donna Dawson at Westminster Cares 722- 3607 and she will put them in touch with the instructor.

STRONG LIVING is happening by ZOOM

Karen Walter and Ronnie Friedman lead online weight classes 10:30am on Mondays and Thursdays. There is room for more folks and a donation to Westminster Cares is appreciated. To get on Karen's list email her

Karensww7@gmail.com However the Zoom host is Karen Blanchard, ren.blanchardreddog@gmail.com

To get on Ronnie's list email her –

veronicafriedman24@gmail.com

YOGA is happening by ZOOM

Lisa Nigro leads a class Monday mornings from 10 to 11:15.

Email Lisa at lisa.nigro.yoga@gmail.com

WESTMINSTER WEST LIBRARY

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 1-6pm,
Saturday 10am to noon

Questions: email Lise Cavanaugh

Masks and social distancing are required

LiseHCavanaugh@aol.com

BUTTERFIELD LIBRARY

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 1-6pm,
Saturday 10:30 – 12:30

The Institute & Library share a website and a Facebook page.

website: <https://butterfieldlibraryvt.wordpress.com/>

SENIOR ACTIVITIES

Secrets of Healthy Aging is temporarily on hold

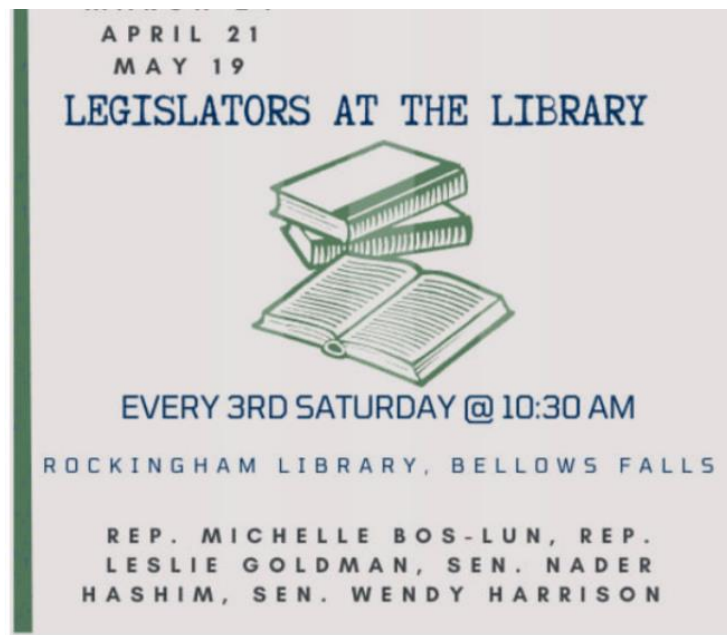
RECYCLING

Recycling Center on Rte 5 - Wed & Sat - 9am - 1pm

MESSAGE FROM WESTMINSTER SCHOOL BOARD

From Cheryl Charles

Thank you to the voters of Westminster who unanimously approved the 2023-24 school budget, and nearly unanimously approved all of the additional articles, including those to direct the spending of surplus funds. Your support makes a difference! Join the monthly school board meetings held in person on the first Thursday of each month at the Westminster Center School at 6pm, or via Zoom if you cannot attend in person. Most meetings are also recorded by FACT TV and can be found at the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union website at www.wnesu.org under Boards, Westminster. The third Thursday of each month is reserved for special meetings as needed. A special meeting will be held on Thursday, April 20, to discuss plans for capital improvements and enhancements, including energy efficiencies, as approved by the voters at Town Meeting. We hope to see you there!



Making Laws, Making Change

Learning About Legislation

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

April 8TH VIA ZOOM

Learn how:

Bills get introduced

The timing of Legislation

When will it be passed?

When will it go to the Governor?

To contact the correct person for effective advocacy

This session will be led on zoom by Rep. Michelle Box-Lun

Register by contacting: ccurrey@uvm.edu

For other questions contact: mboslun@leg.state.vt.us

