



**SPRING 2025**

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**"Courage is the price that life exacts  
for granting peace."**

Amelia Earhart

### **COMMUNITY NURSE SERVICES**

#### **STILL AVAILABLE IN WESTMINSTER**

The Visiting Nurse Program may be closed nationally, but Westminster Cares continues to offer this service. Kathy Shuster, RN is available for home visits and phone consultations to older adults (60+) who are residents of Westminster and their families.

The focus of the Community Nurse is on teaching, coaching, and integration of services as well as prevention of disease and promotion of health for individuals and the community. A visit from the Community Nurse does not cost anything for you and there is no need to file any insurance claim. Some examples of how the Community Nurse can serve residents:

- Checking blood pressure & vital signs
- Liaison with healthcare providers
- Referral to programs & services
- Assess support that might be needed

Please reach out to Westminster Cares to request an initial home visit from the Community Nurse. Call: (802) 722-3607 or email: [wecares @sover.net](mailto:wecares@sover.net).

**SOUPER Wednesday Lunch:** The First Congregational Church in Westminster (on route 5) provides a variety of soups and desserts from January through the end of April from 12 to 1:30. There's no set charge; it's by donation. Westminster Cares has partnered with them to do a speaker once a month. On those days WeCares volunteers make soups and desserts. On **April 23<sup>rd</sup>** the speaker will be **Elliott Greenblott** from the AARP Fraud Squad and will talk about recognizing and protecting ourselves from computer scams.

## **REFLECTIONS**

### **SEARCH AND CALL - FINDING OUR NEXT PASTOR from the Search Committee**

This January, the church and the broader community sent our beloved pastor, Susie Webster-Toleno off with love and our best wishes; even as we miss her terribly, we are glad that her own discernment process brought her to clarity about her next steps on her faith journey. In the fall, the church leadership named a search committee (Adrienne Major, chair; Sharon Easterling, Charlotte Gifford and Guy Payne) to lead the search for a new pastor. As part of our church profile, we needed to answer the question for potential candidates Who are we as a church? In today's reflection, we share some of our answer with you:

Over the past two decades, our church family has developed into a lively band of confident seekers. We practice a non-orthodox, Jesus-loving faith, and have become a community of sanctuary for people all along the continuum of faith who seek to grow in spirit. We are a mission-minded congregation leaning towards social justice and actively working on living a ministry of food and fun. Our services include levity and irreverence, and our mission outreach includes both feeding those who are experiencing food insecurity and inviting our neighbors together for community dinners & our annual Church/Community fair.

The gifts of our church are many. As a vital part of our spiritual growth and practice, we are an Open and Affirming Congregation, believing deeply in both extravagant welcome and an open communion table. Additionally, we have an ad hoc church choir which is accomplished and capable of singing classical, gospel, shape-note along with a wide range of traditional spiritual songs. We are lusty hymn singers and are blessed to be supported by talented and versatile musicians who bring skills on guitar, organ, piano and voice to our service music. That our congregation is rich with musicians and the love of music is one of the fundamental ties that bind us together.

We do constantly wonder how to serve as a community church given a population of diverse thinkers, home-bound elders hoping to remain connected to people they once knew, individuals suspicious of institutions, families struggling with the burdens of everyday life, and a public fearful of explicit expressions of faith. We try to work our way through these questions by encouraging interfaith dialogue through invitations to community members from other faith practices to address our congregation, by streaming our services online, and by hosting community activities, suppers and of course our fair. To foster our relationship with creation, we incorporate programs on earth-based spirituality and engage in Sunday meditative nature walks. Our discernment process has been both rich and robust, and has led us to renewed faith in ourselves and the gifts we have to cherish and to offer others in our small community.

The great good news is that we have had expressions of interest from candidates, and are currently preparing to hold interviews immediately after Easter.

## WHISTLE BLOWER

**Vigil for Sanity and Compassion-** Every Thurs., noon to 12:30 on the Green in Putney. Bring your own signs.

**Ben Coven**, son of Judy and Tony Coven and captain in the Norwood, MA, Fire Department, recently received his Master of Science degree in Fire Executive Leadership and Emergency Services Management from Columbia Southern University.

**Author Emily A. Weinberg** will discuss life in ancient Egypt and share readings from her debut novel, *The Feather of Truth: An Artist's Journey in Ancient Egypt*.

Tues. April 29, Putney Public Library at 6:30 pm

Wed. April 30, Westminster West Public Library at 5 pm

Come explore the evocative world of Uli and his friends in *The Feather of Truth*, a coming-of-age story based on actual events in Egypt in 1166 BCE. The story weaves art, history, and mythology into an exciting adventure. Come, travel back in time. Take a trip to the Nile Valley and the deserts. Discover the feeling of being in old Egypt—the sights, sounds, and smells

Learn more at: [thefeatheroftruthnovel.com](http://thefeatheroftruthnovel.com)



Emily A. Weinberg  
[thefeatheroftruthnovel.com](http://thefeatheroftruthnovel.com)

**Gordon and Mary Hayward's** garden will be open for The Garden Conservancy on June 21 (The only garden in Vermont to open for them this year.) The 22nd annual Westminster Cares Open Gardens Tour will be July 5th and 6th. If your charity would like to hold a fundraising event in our garden sometime in late July, August or September, email them: [gordonhayward@comcast.net](mailto:gordonhayward@comcast.net).

**Izlin Weinberg** graduates from UC Santa Barbara in June with a degree in art and marketing. **Phoebe Weinberg** graduates from SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry with an associate degree in Forest Technology. She has a forestry job working for the State of Idaho this summer.

**Chard deNiord's** 9th book of poetry, *Westminster West*, will be coming out on April 24th. He has lived in Vermont since 1989 and in Westminster West for the last 31 years. From 2015-2019 deNiord was the Vermont State Poet Laureate. Stay tuned for a reading schedule. [link from google drive:](#)

**From Nancy Calicchio:** Please let everyone know that the pile of horse manure opposite our driveway on 198 Church Street is there for the taking.



Westminster Sawmill Painting by long time Westminster resident, Wally Ames 1942-2024. Sent by Virginia Wyoming and 'Stephen Belzac

### WHO AM I?

If you can sit quietly after difficult news;  
If in financial downturns you can remain perfectly calm;  
If you can see your neighbors travel to fantastic places without a twinge of jealousy;  
If you can happily eat whatever is put on your plate;  
If you can fall asleep after a day of running around without a drink or a pill;  
if you can always find contentment just where you are:  
You are probably a dog.

**From Lilli Crites Flesher:** Tim and I are settled near Grand Junction, Colorado in retirement from our home in Alaska, where we lived for 17 years. Rose is living in Vernon, Connecticut and Iris is now in Alaska, Anchorage area. Everyone is healthy and coping.

**Caitlin Adair** will be teaching a simple proven technique you can use at home to reduce stress and anxiety at the West West Library on Wednesday, April 16, 5pm It's called EFT. — **Emotional Freedom Technique** — or "Tapping". What is EFT? You gently tap on certain places on your own body corresponding to acupuncture meridians while acknowledging something that is bothering you. After a few minutes of tapping, your stress around the issue is reduced. Over 200 peer-reviewed scientific studies show amazing results. West Wester **Caitlin Adair** has completed 500+ hours of study at EFTUniverse and is excited to share this wonderful technique with our community. Affordable private sessions also available. Contact: [pcadair@sover.net](mailto:pcadair@sover.net) or text 802-289-1539



## WHISTLE BLOWER *continued* . . . . .

**From Neil Metrick (Noro):** Many years ago a fundraiser was being held probably on a Friday or Saturday evening somewhere around Malfunction Junction, a local school or something, auctioning off goodies submitted by the local populace. I love auctions so my wife Carroll and I attended. In all but a very few of these auctions, I was responsible for all of our bidding activity but after walking around all the tables I didn't see anything to catch my eye. But surprisingly, Carroll told me she was going to bid on something and I was just about shocked when she showed me what it was. A weird wood piece labeled "Funky Chicken" and funky looking it surely was. An initial bid of (I vaguely remember) \$25 or \$30 or so was required and the piece was being offered by Faith Pepe (who I hadn't seen in a very long time). When the action began, I posted myself close enough to keep a long distance watch, close enough to know where the chicken sat on the table. Carroll placed the opening bid and it soon became obvious that another woman was also interested. In fact the two women began a bidding war that was drawing some attention. I was leaning against the same watchful post with the bidding having reached \$60 or so when I noticed Faith standing next to me. It was obvious she recognized me as someone she knew but couldn't remember my name and I don't think she had ever met my wife. Anyway she said, "Look at those two crazy women, madly bidding on my chicken!!" I said "one of those crazies is my wife"! Carroll won the war; her opponent gave up when the bidding hit \$100. I nodded to Faith with a big smile on my face. That was the last time I ever came in contact with her.

Incidentally Carroll never took any interest in the piece after we brought it home. I sold it for a few bucks at a sidewalk sale a couple years ago after Carroll had passed away and I was preparing for a potential sale of my house. It was purchased by an older man with his grandchild by his side. Thank God, the piece escaped being destroyed in the fire and it lives on.

By the way, Peter Stamm, who bought the remains after the fire, has rebuilt the house (the barn was completely destroyed). I hope to pay a return visit in the not to distant future

I am now living at Bradley House in Brattleboro. I moved here in December and I am having a wonderful time. I am happily enjoying (believe it or not) a romantic relationship with an amazing woman who is 92 years young. Perhaps one day when the weather is friendlier you can come for a visit. I no longer drive.

### **SUGGESTED DONATION FOR THE WHISTLE and MAILCHIMP**

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

**From Tom Griffith:** On May 17 and 18, I'm singing a world premiere with the Brattleboro Concert Choir! We commissioned local award-winning composer [Keane Southard](#) to write a piece called "Requiem for Animals" for choir and orchestra. It's a work that challenges us to reconsider our relationship with other animals, and it brilliantly and brutally confronts us with a question: what is our responsibility to speak for the voiceless, to advocate for those who are considered less than, whether they are human, or a different species? The piece is a journey through that challenge, and takes us through darkness to an empowering and hopeful place. We have a choice - we can opt for caring and benevolence, rather than dominance and exploitation, and by seizing the opportunity to give voice to the voiceless, a better world is in our grasp.

It has been a really meaningful experience for the choir to prepare this piece, and I hope you can join and be part of the first audience in the world to hear it! We're performing it at Persons Auditorium in Marlboro at 7pm on Saturday 5/17, and at 4pm on Sunday 5/18, tickets can found be found at:

<https://app.artspeople.com/index.php?ticketing=bmcvl>.

### **A POEM**

By Jenny Holan

What kind of energy does it take  
to be raised from despair  
and death?  
--to throw off the covers  
when they're made of rock  
--to support friends  
when you've been through hell?  
Who can find such strength?  
--and who would believe it?

Believe it or not,  
this world has seen an explosion.  
It mystifies us, and yet we know  
it can be used here and now—watch:

A spark received from the radiance today  
can open an eye  
or a heart.  
If it kindles a little flame,  
a breath of steam will open a hand  
to let go of wealth withheld  
or to push a pen to a stroke of mercy  
--turn a No to a Yes,  
shed a tear,  
forgive a fault,  
or speak a word for justice...  
and there's no telling what mountains will move  
when this energy gets you and me  
and the hopping hills  
up in the spring morning.



## REMEMBERING LAST WINTER



### SNOW

Jon Heydenreich, pastor at BB Trinity Lutheran Church  
Printed in the Brattleboro Reformer

Looks like this snow issue is here for a bit. Have to figure out where to put it. I realize anew why, in the late fall, there is that sense of needing to get ready for winter.

I am grateful I can shovel.

I am grateful my wife is moved to assist.

I am grateful – with storms I do not face choices. The snow sits there. No choice really. Kind of like a school day. Gotta shovel.

I am grateful I have the time to do it.

I am grateful for the beauty of the white fluff, and the serenity of the falling specks.

I am grateful for the bright sun which often follows the storms. And the snow glistens with the morning sun.

I am grateful for the snow plows and sanders who do such a marvelous job.

I am grateful for the slow down which accompanies each storm.

I am grateful for the sensation of sitting down after each shoveling session.

I am grateful for the stark contrast of hot July and snowy February.

I am grateful for the sense that this is but a moment in time. It all changes. All will be well

Be mindful of all for which we can be grateful.



Photo by Jim Paris taken from his back yard.

## IN MEMORIAL

**Margaret “Peggy” Jager**, 84, died December 28, 2024, 3 months after the passing of her husband Dirk. The relationships she cultivated at the Nature Club, with the Red Hat Ladies, and at the Senior Center gave her joy and purpose in her golden years.

**Dr. Janaki Natarajan Tschannerl**, 83, died December 27, 2024. A beloved lifelong educator and political activist, she is known for her unwavering love, energy and commitment to social justice and the struggles of poor and working class people.



**Carlene Raper**, 70, died Jan 16th from complications of MS. Known for her colorful hand dyed fabric art, she did not seek fame, her main goals were making and sharing. Her joy in living propelled her to create, play, and love. She savored every day, in everything she did. Our condolences to her family and husband Julian Gerstin.

**Geoff C. Robinson**, 44, the son of Judy “Eric” and David Robinson, passed away unexpectedly on Jan. 19th. He was a Musician, cook, and enthusiastic reader for 40+ years (that’s a lot of books!), “he was remarkable in his intensely caring nature and encyclopedic knowledge of... well, just about everything.”, according to his Fables of the Fall band-mates.



**Maragaret Bemis** 93, died peacefully on March 5th, after a short illness. She and her husband Lyle raised Morgan horses as a family for 20 years. She loved to play cards and was an avid reader.

**Tom Goldschmid**, 75, died February 28th. He loved the natural world, the woodlands and rivers, the beauty of place. Tom also had a love of music. He became an architect late in life, and he designed the West West Church after it burned. Our condolences to his family and partner, Kathy Leo.



## WESTMINSTER WEST CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday worship begins at 10am

We are an Open and Affirming Church and fully accessible. Masks are optional.

We use 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 13 – 10 am Palm Sunday, Adrienne Major, music Fred Grey

April 17 – Maundy Thursday Service at Dummerston UCC – 6pm potluck, 7pm service

April 20 – 6am Easter Sunrise Service

April 20 – 8-9am Easter Breakfast

April 20 – 10am – Easter Service, Sue Venman and Ray Huessy, music Fred Grey

### 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 13): 10am Adrienne Major preaching with music from Eric Robinson. Come wave palm fronds and worship with us!

**MAUNDY THURSDAY** (April 17): We are joining the Dummerston UCC this year, starting with a potluck supper at 6:00 pm, immediately followed by a Tenebrae Service led by the Rev. Shawn Bracebridge.

**GOOD FRIDAY** (April 18): There will be an ecumenical Good Friday service following the Stations of the Cross that will be held at the Guilford Community Church starting at noon and lasting 60 to 90 minutes. In addition, we are invited to join the Rev. Bracebridge for a prayer service on Zoom at 7 pm, also following the Stations of the Cross. (Zoom link to follow, shortly before Good Friday.)

**EASTER SUNRISE** (April 20): 5:45 am — Service 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:** (April 20): 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 20): 10 am Ray Huessy and Sue Venman preaching, with music from Fred Grey and the choir.

**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 Sue and Ray to have them listed as being given in honor of or in memory of somebody.

## 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](http://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.

### CHURCH CONTACTS

Our pastor for more than twenty years, the Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno, has moved on to follow another call in her faith journey. As we seek a settled pastor through our search and call process, we will not be able to offer office hours as usual, but the Deacons (Karen Blanchard, Charlotte Gifford, Ray Huessy, Adrienne Major and Sue Venman) are available to support the congregation. You can leave a message on the church number (802-387-1175) or you can contact a deacon directly.

BUILDING USE: Tom Griffith 802-387-5694

[tgriffith@hilltopmontessori.org](mailto:tgriffith@hilltopmontessori.org)

DEACONS: Charlotte Gifford 802-387-4145

[gifford@languagehead.com](mailto:gifford@languagehead.com)

TRUSTEES: Guy Payne 802-869-2600

[gpaynevt@gmail.com](mailto:gpaynevt@gmail.com)

WEB SITE: [www.westminsterwest.org](http://www.westminsterwest.org)

CHURCH PHONE: 802 387-1175

### HOPE IN HARD TIMES

#### COMMUNITY SING & MEDITATION

7 - 8pm date to be announced

The church opens its doors for an evening of song, silence, and reflection. Please come to sing with your neighbors and share what gives you hope these days.





## PINNACLE ANNUAL MEETING APRIL 26TH

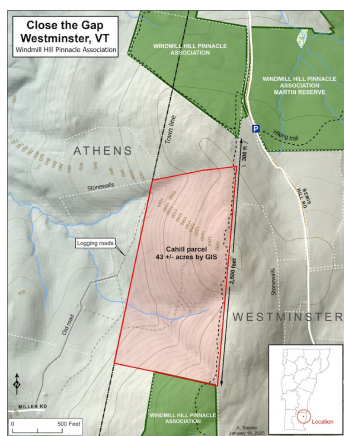


Jim Shallow, featured speaker

Join us on Saturday, April 26, at 4 p.m. for our annual meeting at Main Street Arts in Saxtons River (35 Main Street). Light refreshments will be served, and all are welcome to attend. Our featured speaker will be Jim Shallow, the director of resilient and connected lands protection for The Nature Conservancy's Vermont chapter. Jim will talk about "Protecting Biodiversity: Keeping Southeast Vermont Connected." We'll also share news on our conservation work and present the annual Volunteer of the Year award to recognize one of our many dedicated volunteers.

## NEW ACQUISITION HELPS CLOSE THE GAP

In early February, the Pinnacle closed on the 35.5-acre Cahill parcel off Bemis Hill Road near the Westminster/Athens town line. The parcel adjoins Pinnacle land to the south and is helping to close a gap on the ridge leading to the Stephen Martin Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary in Rockingham. An 8-acre triangle is all that remains before we can close the gap entirely. The Nature Conservancy, the Fields Pond Foundation, and WHPA members helped the Pinnacle with the Cahill purchase. We thank all for their generosity.



Map by Andrew Toepfer.

## FREE EVENTS THIS SPRING

**SPRING WILDFLOWER WALK** Sat, May 3, 1-3 p.m.  
Lisa Merton and Sarah Waldo will lead a spring wildflower walk on Saturday, May 3. Sign up by emailing [coordinator@windmillhillpinnacle.org](mailto:coordinator@windmillhillpinnacle.org). Don't miss this delightful trip into the woods! Participants will meet at 1 p.m. at the Congregational Church of Westminster West, located at 44 Church Street in Westminster West.

**HERRICKS COVE WILDLIFE FESTIVAL** Sun, May 4.,  
This is a fun family event.

## PARKING LOT OPEN AT LILY POND HIGHLANDS

The Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association has opened a new parking lot off Brookline Road in Athens for access to Lily Pond. In addition, the old woods road leading up to Lily Pond is now open to the general public for hiking, snowshoeing, and other non-motorized uses.

The WHPA received an Act 250 permit for the parking lot and a loop trail leading back from Lily Pond to the trailhead. The parking lot was constructed in November. A formal dedication of the old woods road, to be known as the "Edwin J. Massey Trail" leading to Lily Pond, is planned for May 31, 2025, and work on the loop trail will begin this year.

We are delighted that residents of Athens and surrounding towns have a place to park and can enjoy this beautiful area, which includes a beaver pond and important habitat for wildlife," said Athens resident Jay Maciejowski, a retired forester who serves on the Pinnacle board and has helped oversee the Lily Pond project.

The WHPA signed a conservation easement with the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board in May 2022 to protect the ecologically diverse 615-acre parcel in perpetuity, and Athens residents Kate and Bob Bova have been serving as stewards of the property. An [ecological study](#) of Lily Pond Highlands is also available.

Join us at Lily Pond Highlands to celebrate the completion of the parking lot **Saturday, May 31, 2025, from 1-3 p.m.** and for the official dedication of the Edwin J. Massey Trail. We will hold a brief ceremony and invite participants to hike the trail, which is a former logging road running for about a mile up to Lily Pond. Please email [coordinator@windmillhillpinnacle.org](mailto:coordinator@windmillhillpinnacle.org) to sign up.

The dedication will be held at 466 Brookline Road in Athens, where the new parking area and trailhead are located. The 615-acre Lily Pond Highlands is in the towns of Athens, Brookline, and Townshend.



Winning photo in Pinnacle 2024 photo contest  
Juniper Kozlowski\

November 14, 2024

Dear friends of the Westminster West community:

Community is a word we're hearing a lot these days, how knowing you're part of something, that you feel you belong somewhere, is so important for wellbeing. I've lived 27 years in Westminster West, longer than I've lived anywhere in my life. When I think of what is at the heart of the community, what contributes most to my feeling a part of this community, I think of the Congregational Church of Westminster West. Even though I'm not religious, I have felt only welcome and openness from the West West Church community. I know others feel this way, too.

I see the church being home to the River Singers, hosting an important conversation about indigeneity in Vermont, people gathering there for community suppers, friends coming back to celebrate and honor those who have left us. The church community keeps an eye out for who in the community could use a hand and lets us know through the *Whistler* who in the community has had a baby or graduated.

I love the West West Fair. I return every year to memories of our kids riding bikes in the parade, of the running races, of celebrating my neighbors' art and wonky outsized vegetables, to the anticipation of a win in the silent auction, to, year after year after year, connecting with friends outside at long tables over chicken, corn and salad.

Mostly, I love how the West West church community welcomes us as we are, believers and nonbelievers. It is a place that doesn't ask us to be anything other than who we are and invites us unconditionally to be a part of a community with a heart.

It needs us, too. Please join me in making a contribution to the Congregational Church of Westminster West so it can continue to be there when we need it.

Evie Lovett



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

## THANKS!

To all the Westminster voters for approving the 2026 Westminster School District budget.  
Your Westminster School Board Members:  
Christine Biolsi, Karen Blanchard, Cheryl Charles, Margie Ferry, and Charlie Hutchison.

## SHINLEAF NATIVE PLANTS OPENS FOR THE SEASON MAY 17

Here at the nursery tiny green shoots are announcing the start of the new season! Outside, where we overwintered last year's pots, several species are already putting up leaves, and we are anxiously awaiting the germination of the seeds that will become this year's plants. We have added 20 new species this year for a total of 46, a third of which are "threatened," "endangered," or "extremely rare" in at least one New England state. As we did last year, we will be discounting one or two of the endangered species every month through the season. For a complete list of the plants we are hoping to have available this year, check out the "Plants" page on our website: [shinleafnativeplants.com](https://shinleafnativeplants.com)

As the songbirds start to return to our region, it's easy to take it for granted that they will reliably return year after year. Recent data shows US bird populations in almost all habitat types continuing to decline drastically. Over a third of US bird species are of high to moderate conservation concern. One of the main contributors to this decline is habitat loss, which is also a major cause of the decline in native plants that birds rely on for survival. The American Bird Conservancy lists 7 things individuals can do right now to help bird populations and one of them is *plant native plants*.

<https://abcbirds.org/3-billion-birds/>

The nursery, located at 110 Arnof Way, will open for the season on Saturday, May 17. This year we will be open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday at the nursery site, from 9 to 5. We will not be selling at any farmers markets. To be notified about sales, events, featured and new plants, sign up for our newsletter on our website:

[shinleafnativeplants.com](https://shinleafnativeplants.com)



Photo of bloodroot on the right by Rachael Shaw



## GOD-MOMENT

By Janet Langdon

O Wind, if Winter comes,  
Can Spring be far behind?

Every year in this season of transition from bleak mid-winter to the promise of spring, these words of Shelley's poem, *Ode to the West Wind*, come to mind and I begin to let my shoulders relax a bit, loosen the knot in my stomach, and look ahead in hope to a brighter time.

We start running low on wood, the roads are hopelessly muddy and the next day frozen in ruts, I beg kindling from kind neighbors, the dogs start running off, smelling the delicious promise of life in the woods around the house, and on top of that the rich and powerful who have taken over Washington are quickly and cruelly dismantling our precious democracy.

Things are rough all around. I'm looking for God - waiting for God - wondering if, in fact, She, He, They, are somewhere in the wings, about to swoop in and save the day - but nothing seems to happen.

Then my perennial question arises inside me - Who, Where, What IS God, anyway. And I seek answers from others - people I respect, who seem centered and spiritually aware. I get various responses -

God is: The Ground of our Being; God is: Mystery, Awe, Wonder; God is Great Compassionate Being; God is: Good Old Dog (one of my favorites); God is: Love. God is within all, beyond all...

Well, you get the idea. There are as many definitions of God, who cannot be defined, as there are responses to my query. It is what AA members call "the God of my understanding."

I am dissatisfied with these responses. Each one has its merits, yet none makes me feel closer to an understanding of God, but maybe that's the point - God is not to be understood.

I was describing an experience I had to a friend of mine. I told her about a glorious sunny day, the May-green fields, the hundred plus sheep that my sheepdog, Bill, and I were moving from pasture to pasture. The young farmer was in front of the procession with his sheepdog, Mike (Bill's brother) leading the way. Bill and I were bringing up the rear, Bill racing back and forth in a semi-circle, tucking in stragglers, keeping the whole operation moving forward at a nice pace, and I felt like this must be what Heaven is.

My friend said simply - "That sounds like a God-moment."

That was it. I understood. What, or who, or where God is doesn't matter. It's an intellectual exercise. The God-moment is enough - it comes to us like Grace - unbidden, in the midst of living our lives. It is fleeting and powerful.

As we enter this in-between season - as we trudge through the mud - as we endure the chaos of political carnage - I am on the lookout for a God-moment - around the corner, in the next room, in the dark, through the fog... I remain confident one will come, when least expected and when most needed.



## WHAT THE HEART WANTS

By Richard Ewald'

"Questing is a host-seeking behavior in which ticks ascend plants, extend their front legs, and wait poised for a chance to attach to a passing host."

-Annals of the Entomological Society (online)

As if each *Ixodes scapularis* sets off  
alone, on a journey of self-discovery.  
It creeps through leaf litter

between the lines of nature poems,  
moving its mouthpart barbs as it reads.  
Waiting on a path for an epiphany,

it meditates and writes in its journal,  
strikes yoga poses, front leg raises,  
has fantasies about speed-dating mammals.

Be slow to judge. This is a worthy spirit totem,  
searching for life's meaning and heart's desire  
in attachments to others.

Have you heard **the peepers** yet?  
When you do, it's time to watch out for critters  
crossing the road, especially at night.

If you prefer a print copy of the Whistler, even  
though the pictures in black & white are blah,  
go ahead and print it.



## AN INVITATION FROM PUTNEY QUAKERS

Soup Supper and Shining a Light on Christian Nationalism will be the menu on Friday May 2nd starting at 6pm at the Friends Meeting House in Putney. (Just north of the village center) Putney Quakers in conjunction with Vermont Interfaith Action will host the event that starts with a soup supper, followed by a Power Point Presentation on Christian Nationalism followed by a discussion

As Christian Nationalism blurs the boundaries of Separation of Church and State, more and more Faith Communities are challenged with how to respond. This has been amplified with the election of the Trump administration, that includes huge support from Christian Nationalists, including Vice President Vance, Speaker Johnson and others.

How can we respond to their attempts to implement Project 2025 and impose their beliefs on the nation and grab power over both marginalized communities and anyone who disagrees with them? Please join us as diverse faith communities gather to affirm their belief in the separation of church & state; practicing compassion and working for Justice, putting our Faith into Action

### GREEN UP DAY IS MAY 3RD

Join us on Green Up Day, Saturday, May 3rd, and help clean up a Westminster road or street. Green Up bags will be available at the Town Hall in Westminster and the Westminster West Library. Please do not use them until the week of April 26 (so the bags aren't left along the road for long periods of time). You may also pick up bags in front of Town Hall on Green Up Day, Saturday, May 3, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

On Monday and Tuesday, May 5 and 6, the Westminster Town road crew will pick up bags, including any of your own trash bags used for Green Up. Please do not leave them on private roads. As a safety reminder: Do not remove dead animals or suspected toxic/hazardous waste. Don't disturb needles or questionable debris. If you have a safety concern, please inform the proper local authorities. Or contact VT State Road maintenance personnel (<http://vtrans.vermont.gov>) or the State Police <http://vsp.vermont.gov/>

### WESTMINSTER WEST LIBRARY PLANT SALE



**May 17th from 9am to 1 pm.** Come down for our annual plant sale. Please donate plants if you have them. Repotted plants take a week or so to recover, so time it well. If there

is a risk of jumping worms, plant roots must be washed and potted in sterilized soil. You can contact Emily Weinberg for any questions or advice, [emilyweinberg3@gmail.com](mailto:emilyweinberg3@gmail.com). We always have a bunch of fun and interesting things available and there will be a bake sale too, so join us!

## LIBRARY TEMPORARILY CLOSED

**From Librarian Lisa Cavanaugh:** The Westminster West Library is undergoing its last phase of weatherization. We would like to thank Chair City Blueboard for putting in the new ceiling, Toussaint Electric for putting up the new lights, Billy Woods for painting the main room, Farnum Insulators for insulating both crawl spaces and insulating the ceiling in the main room, as well as the many local volunteers who have helped during this process. This would not have been possible without grants from the American Rural & Small Libraries, a Cultural Facilities Grant, through the Vermont Arts Council, and a grant from Efficiency Vermont. I will let you know when we will be open again and snug as a bug! If you need a book, you can text me (802-380-7703) and I can sneak in and hang it outside for you.

### RIVER SINGERS SPRING CONCERTS

#### "BE THE LIGHT"

The 60-voice River Singers Community Chorus will perform an eclectic concert of world music on Saturday and Sunday, **April 12 and 13**, both at 4pm at the Westminster West Church. The River Singers, in its 34th year, is a multi-generational community choir led by Mary Cay Brass. The choir sings a thrilling variety of community-based music from many diverse cultural and musical traditions.

Mary Cay will be joined by Dr. Kathy Bullock, Professor Emerita from Berea College, who is a workshop clinician, choral conductor, arranger and scholar in the field of African American music. This is the 14th time Dr. Bullock has worked with the River Singers sharing the joy of gospel, spirituals, freedom songs and West African praise songs.

The River Singers Choir is dedicated to musical diplomacy, using music as a bridge for learning about and enjoying other cultures while, at the same time, using their concerts to benefit peace building projects. This concert features love songs from the Balkans, South African church hymns, a marching song from the Republic of Georgia, Lithuanian sutartinas, as well as traditional and contemporary shape note music. The choir also features the song "*Hope Lingers On*" by local fiddler, singer/songwriter, Lissa Schneckeburger - a classic song for our times celebrating peace, hope, love and justice.

The River Singers have some wonderful instrumentalists as singers in the choir. Laurie Rabut will accompany songs on her wonderful violin and viola and Stefan Amidon will be joining us on percussion with dumbek, djembe and cajon. Every River Singer concert is a benefit for a local or global peace initiative. This year's concerts will support refugee resettlement in southern Vermont. Admission to the concerts is \$15-\$25 by check or cash at the door only. For more information contact [mcbass@vermontel.net](mailto:mcbass@vermontel.net)



We pray for a fair and just solution to this invasive war,  
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## SPRING 2025 CALENDAR

### WEEKLY EVENTS:

#### **CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH of WEST WEST**

Church Service – Sunday 10am

#### **TAI CHI**

Intermediate Class Tues 11-noon at the Westminster Inst with Leslie Lassetter. Call West Cares if interested in a beginners class Thur evenings @ (802) 722-3607

#### **ACCESSIBLE YOGA**

Mon 10 to 11:15 at the Westminster Inst with Lisa Nigro

#### **STRONG LIVING is happening by ZOOM**

Karen Walter and Ronnie Friedman lead online weight classes 9:30 - 10:30am on Mondays and Thursdays. There is room for more folks and a donation to Westminster Cares is appreciated. To get on Karen and Ronnies 's list email them [Karensww7@gmail.com](mailto:Karensww7@gmail.com)  
[veronicafriedman24@gmail.com](mailto:veronicafriedman24@gmail.com)

#### **WESTMINSTER WEST LIBRARY**

Tuesday, Wed and Fri 1-6pm, Sat 10am to 2pm  
Coffee Morning Sat 10am -2pm

[LiseHCavanaugh@aol.com](mailto:LiseHCavanaugh@aol.com)

[WestminsterWestLibrary@gmail.com](mailto:WestminsterWestLibrary@gmail.com)

#### **BUTTERFIELD LIBRARY**

Mon 10am-3pm, Tues 3-8pm and Thurs 1-6pm,  
Saturday 10:30am-12:30pm

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

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

#### **RECYCLING**

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

#### **LIVING EARTH ACTION GROUP (LEAG)**

Most Fridays from 5 – 6:30 at the Cong Church of West West. Info: Caitlin Adair [pcadair@sover.net](mailto:pcadair@sover.net)

## STORY CORPS COMES TO WESTMINSTER TO TEACH "TAKE ONE SMALL STEP" PROGRAM

The Story Corps Team is coming to town on Tues. April 29th from 5:30-7pm. You may have heard stories on public radio of family, neighbors or friends sharing a story of how they met or shared a common experience.

The Westminster Inclusion Committee (as part of their One Wonderful Westminster campaign) and the Westminster Institute are working to make it happen. Vermont Public is hoping to build story-telling and listening skills through a program they are calling "Take One Small Step." This program brings people with different views together to record a conversation – not to debate politics – but simply to get to know each other as people. The initiative hopes to combat the polarizing effects of news and social media just by talking to each other one-on-one again. Because when we approach each other with curiosity, we realize we have a lot more in common than we think.

The evening will begin with pizza and non-alcoholic drinks; then following the One Small Step training we will pair up attendees for short conversations to practice what they've learned. We hope you will walk away with the skills to have more productive conversations.

You need to either call (802) 540-6882 or sign up on the website at [www.eventbrite.com/e/one-small-step-in-westminster-skills-to-bridge-the-political-divide-tickets-1264294401589?aff=iddtcreator](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/one-small-step-in-westminster-skills-to-bridge-the-political-divide-tickets-1264294401589?aff=iddtcreator).

## HANGING BASKETS AND WOODEN PLANTERS

Those who want flowers and wooden planters to beautify their personal properties should pre-order a Chester Townscapes hanging basket or a special large wooden planter before April 24TH. The baskets are designed for either sun or shade locations and in either hot or cool colors to suit your environment and will be ready for pickup on May 10 (10-4) at the Information Booth on Main Street, Chester. For the order form for both the baskets and large wooden planters, and all necessary details, download the form <https://www.chestervt.gov/chester-townscape.html>. All proceeds help fund Chester Townscapes seasonal displays and its landscaping projects around town.

## APRIL 26 EPHEMERAL WILDFLOWER WALK

Join the Westminster Conservation Commission in search of woodland wildflowers on Saturday, April 26 from 10 a.m. until 12 noon, rain date April 27. We will meet at Westminster West School and carpool to a local deciduous forest where these short-lived blooms are plentiful and varied. Registration is required, and maximum number of participants is 12. To register, please email [westminstervtconservation@gmail.com](mailto:westminstervtconservation@gmail.com). For more information, call Rachael Shaw at (802) 869-3184.



## UPCOMING EVENTS AT WEST WEST LIBRARY

### **DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS GROUP:** April 21st

We will be starting a Dungeons and Dragons group for high school age kids. We will be meeting at the library from 6pm to 8pm. Ben Weiner who has many years of experience as a Dungeon Master will be leading this group. Please contact me if you are interested.

**EMILY WEINBERG'S BOOK LAUNCH** April 30th at 5pm, we will be hosting a book launch with our very own local author Emily Weinberg. She recently published a kids chapter book about Ancient Egypt called "The Feather of Truth" It is a work of historical fiction and a very gripping read.

**CAITLIN ADAIRS EMT DEMONSTRATION:** May 13th at 5pm, Caitlin Adair will be at the library doing a free demonstration of Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), also known as tapping. She will teach us why this technique is so powerful and show us how it is done.

**PLANT SALE:** May 17th from 9am to 1 pm come down for our annual plant sale. Please donate plants if you have them. Repotted plants take a week or so to recover, so time it well. We always have a bunch of fun and interesting things available and there will be a bake sale too, so join us!

**BOOK GROUP;** We also have a monthly book group. At the beginning of the fall we sat down and created a list of books that we were going to read throughout the year. If you are interested in joining please contact me at the library and I can give you the book list and all the details.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:** We are looking for volunteers at the library. If you are interested in volunteering please stop by the library. Among other things, we are looking for volunteers to run the library during Saturday coffee hours. Contact me and I can elaborate and train you in what you are interested in doing.

## CHESTER'S TREE AND SHRUB SALE

ORDER BY APRIL 14TH

Spring is officially here, and Chester Townscape's 2025 Tree and Shrub Sale has begun! This annual event offers good-size, proven trees and shrubs at below regular, nursery retail prices to help people beautify their properties; but hurry, because orders must be made and paid for before April 9. These are the six selections offered this year: Snow Showers Weeping Cherry Tree; Firelight Tidbit Hydrangea; Spice Baby *Viburnum carlesii*; Oso Easy Ice Bay White Rose; Sunny Boulevard St. John's-wort; and Potentilla Happy Face Orange.

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 also make a wonderful present for Mother's or Father's Day, birthdays, anniversaries, housewarming celebrations or other special events. Proceeds from the sale support Chester Townscape's charitable civic projects, such as the floral pots and bridge boxes that beautify the town for residents and visitors.

Buyers do not have to be Chester residents; but they do have to preorder and pay before April 9 and then pick up the plants, likely in early to mid May, from Main Street in central Chester. To be emailed the informative order form that gives details about the plants, their prices, and where to send the check, contact Lillian Willis at 802-875-1340 or [lbwillisct@comcast.net](mailto:lbwillisct@comcast.net).

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