

A Story Worth Telling

In partnership with Family Promise of Bergen County, we will be hosting homeless working families for a week-long stay in the Barn—December 9 to 16. Can you help? We need volunteers to provide grab-and-go breakfast items, prepare and share an evening meal with the families, and sleep overnight in the Barn. Laura Given will be in the Narthex after worship today to answer questions about this important ministry and sign up volunteers. Below, Laura and Sharon Bizik reflect on a Christmastime experience with Family Promise.

In December 2016, Laura and her daughter Brienne shared a chicken stir-fry dinner with two single mothers and their daughters (2, 4 and 6 years) in the Barn. Afterward, one of the moms shared her “story” with Laura. “Her world tilted when she became pregnant in grad school,” Laura said. “She was forced to drop out because she didn’t have any support and needed to raise her baby. She has worked intermittently at various places, but her challenge is that she needs to be home when her daughter is sick since there is no one else to take care of her. Also, a good portion of the money she earns goes toward child care.”



When the subject of Santa came up, Laura “decided right there and then to get gifts” for the children. She returned the next day with a Barbie van for the two older girls and an electronic doctor’s kit and stuffed polar bear for the 2-year-old. During their week-long stay, the children were treated to *three* celebrations with gifts.

The girls—and their mothers—also were excited about receiving the colorful hats, scarves and blankets made by the Feisty Ladies. “The girls wore their lap blankets like capes, around their shoulders,” said Sharon Bizik, who volunteered for an overnight shift in the Barn. “And one of the mothers loved her hat so much that she wore it from then on. They were all very thankful...and I was thankful for the experience of doing something for other people.”

Is This Your First Time Visiting West Side?

Welcome! We're so glad you're here. We look forward to helping you connect with others, grow more deeply in your faith and enrich your own life by serving others. Wherever you are on life's journey, there's a place for you at West Side.

Please stop by the visitor table located just inside the front doors, fill out a Let's Connect card and pick up a visitor bag. And please stay after the service to enjoy coffee/tea and refreshments and meet the pastors and members.

Have a question? Our staff is here to help:

Rev. Marc Oehler, pastor, moehler@westside.org

Rev. Penny Hogan, associate pastor, phogan@westside.org

Rev. Liz Junod, pastoral associate, ljunod@westside.org

Deborah Holden-Holloway, minister of music, dholden-holloway@westside.org

Pat McGlade, R.N., faith community nurse, pmcglade@westside.org

Esme Elkins, children's ministry coordinator, eelkins@westside.org

Anne Lee, executive administrative assistant, alee@westside.org

Advent Sermon Series: Prophets Then, Prophets Now

As we prepare for Christmas, we'll spend some time with prophets—both those who inspired Jesus and those who were inspired *by* him. Prophets do not necessarily predict what *will* happen as much as they reveal what *is* happening, and what we are often conditioned not to see. They criticize the dominant consciousness, which too often benefits the few at the expense of the many, and energize us toward an alternative consciousness that is more fully aligned with God's intentions. Unless we understand this, we can't fully understand Jesus, who criticizes the kingdoms and empires of this world and energizes us toward an alternative—the kingdom of God. Unless we understand this, we can't fully understand who God is calling us to be as Christians. This Advent we'll be challenged to "keep Christ in Christmas" by keeping the prophetic edge alive in the church and in all who call themselves "little Christs." — *Pastor Marc Oehler*



Join Us at the Tree Lighting in Ridgewood

Members of West Side and First Pres are getting together to sing at the Christmas Tree Lighting in Ridgewood on Friday, **November 30** from 5:30 to 7:00 pm. Join us in Van Neste Square

(by Santa's house) to sing classic carols, hand out cups of hot cider and give a warm West Side welcome to the 1,000-plus people who are expected to turn out for this annual event. No need to RSVP. Just show up!

Bring Your Shopping List to West Side

Our 9th Annual Holiday Marketplace is taking place Saturday, **December 1** from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. It's your chance to pick up unique handmade gifts for everyone on your list. Bring your friends and spend the morning or afternoon shopping in a "civilized" environment while enjoying a cup of coffee, homemade treats or perhaps a light lunch. It takes a lot of work to make the Marketplace happen. If you can help by donating and/or selling homemade baked goods, signing in guests, decorating or breaking down tables at the end of the day, please contact Sharon Ruger (sruppert920@aol.com).



We're Hammering for Habitat

West Side and First Pres have scheduled one last build before winter sets in. We will be working in Paterson on Saturday, **December 1**. We'll meet in the West Side parking lot at 7:30 am and return by 4:15 pm. No construction experience or special skills are necessary! If you would like to join the team, please email Eric Koskinen (exk150@yahoo.com).

Service of Healing and Wholeness

The focus of December's Healing and Wholeness Service will be "remembrance." We invite you to join us during the season of Advent as we remember and reconnect with our loved ones, our community, our country, our world and, ultimately, our savior, Jesus Christ, the light of the world. We'll meet in the Pulsifer Chapel on **December 5** at 7:30 pm and gather in the Library afterward to continue to share, connect, pray...and enjoy light refreshments.

Christmas in Hackensack

We're celebrating Christmas at the Drug Rehabilitation Center at the Bergen County Jail on Saturday, **December 15**, carpooling from West Side at 4:30 pm. If you feel called to this ministry, please reach out to Genevieve Lowry (gml9001@gmail.com). All you need to do is bring a two-liter bottle of soda, a dessert, and an open mind and heart.

We're also providing Christmas gifts for children whose mothers or fathers are in the rehab center. If you'd like to purchase a present—or make a monetary donation to help cover shipping costs—please contact Terry Erzmoneit (terryerzmoneit@hotmail.com). Simply wrap and drop the gift at the church...Terry will take care of the rest. All gifts are needed by **December 9** so they will arrive on time for Christmas. Thank you!

TODAY AT WEST SIDE

8:00 am—Little Lambs Child Care - Room 211	10:15 am—Sunday School - Rooms 202, 306, 311, 312 and Serenity Room
8:15 am— Chapel Worship - Chapel	
9:00 am— Contemporary Worship - DePhillips Hall	11:15 am—Sermon Talk Back - Chapel
9:00 am—Sunday School - Rooms 202, 306, 311, 312 and Serenity Room	11:15 am—Prayer Circle - Pastor Marc's Office
9:00 am—What's in the Bible? - Conference Room	11:30 am—West Side Concert Series Meeting - Conference Room
9:45 am—Centering Prayer - West Side Room	6:00 pm—FOCUS - Chapel
10:15 am— Traditional Worship - Sanctuary	6:00 pm—Men's Council - Various Locations
	7:00 pm—High School BARN - Barn

COMING UP AT WEST SIDE

- November 30** - Members of West Side and First Pres will be singing carols at the **Christmas Tree Lighting** in Ridgewood, 5:30 to 7:00 pm.
- December 1** - It's our 9th annual **Holiday Marketplace**—your chance to pick up art and unique handcrafted items for everyone on your list, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.
- December 2** - First Sunday of **Advent**: Juan Galloway, president and CEO of New York City Relief, preaching
- December 4** - **New Jersey Choral Concert** in the Sanctuary, 7:30 pm
- December 5** - Healing and Wholeness **"Service of Remembrance"** in Pulsifer Chapel, 7:30 pm, followed by light refreshments in the Library
- December 9** - Second Sunday of **Advent**: Pastor Marc preaching
- December 9** - Our **Family Promise** guests move into the Barn for a week-long stay.
- December 9** - Come hear the music of the season—and enjoy cookies, crafts and carols too—at our first-annual **Christmas Festival** at 3:00 pm.
- December 15** - **New Jersey Wind Symphony Concert** in the Sanctuary, 8:00 pm
- December 16** - Third Sunday of **Advent**: Pastor Marc preaching