

**WEST SIDE IS A WELCOMING CHURCH,
ROOTED DEEPLY IN CHRIST,
INVITING ALL TO CONNECT,
GROW AND SERVE.**

A Story Worth Telling

Meet Angel.

He grew up in Spanish Harlem, developmentally challenged, in one of the most dangerous projects. His brother was addicted to crack and would beat him senseless—once to the point of landing him in the hospital in a coma. Angel was vulnerable.

“He’s a classic example of someone who would have fallen through the cracks and possibly ended up on the streets,” said Claudia Wittel, vice president for advancement at New York City Relief, our Advent/Christmas mission partner.

Fortunately, Angel made his way to Park Avenue between 124th and 125th Streets one day and connected with The Relief Bus. There, he received homemade soup and fresh-baked bread, socks, a toiletry kit, prayers and lots of love. Now he has a routine. “Every month, every week, every Friday and Saturday, all year round, I’m here with my family at The Relief Bus,” Angel said.



“The thing that really cements what New York City Relief has been for Angel is the consistency that we bring,” said Brett Hartford, outreach director. “It’s something he has never had in his entire life. That has changed who Angel is and restored joy in his life.”

“Angel is thriving. He looks great. He is vibrant,” said Claudia. “And he loves to speak to anyone who comes to serve to tell them about his experience with New York City Relief. I’m so grateful to have been a part of the work that goes into a life like Angel’s.”

You can be part of this important work too. To volunteer to serve on The Relief Bus, please contact Pastor Penny (phogan@westside.org), who has a list of available dates. **And please contribute to our Advent/Christmas Campaign to raise \$61,471 for New York City Relief by December 25—\$1 for every homeless person in a shelter in New York City.** You can give online at www.westside.org/giving or use an offering envelope. Thank you for your support!

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

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

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

Christmas Festival TODAY!

The festivities begin at 3:00 pm today with an intergenerational concert in the Sanctuary—children, youth and adults will be singing and bell ringing—followed by good old-fashioned cookie decorating, crafts and carol singing around the piano in DePhillips Hall. Bring your family, your friends, your friends' families. Just come! It's the start of a new Christmas tradition at West Side.



A Huge Thank You...

...to everyone who volunteered at the Holiday Marketplace. Whether you worked a shift, helped to set up, baked or sold homemade goodies, cooked or served lunch, greeted guests or handed out cards, your help went a long way toward making this another successful and fun event for West Side. Thank you also to all the members who came out to support our vendors.

...to all who participated in our Cider Sing. It was a fun evening despite the drizzle!

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*



Hands-On Service Opportunities

For many of us, Christmas is one of the busiest times of the year. But it's also one of the best times of the year to serve others. **Several homeless working families are moving into the Barn this evening for a week-long stay, and we still need volunteers to sleep overnight today and Wednesday.** If you can help, please reach out to Laura Given (givnclan@gmail.com). **We also need volunteers to serve lunch at Eva's Village on December 29 and 30.** We meet in the West Side parking lot at 10:30 am, carpool to Paterson and return by 1:30 pm. If you'd like to participate in this ministry, please email Craig Matthews (craigmatthews@aol.com).

Sunday Night Live!

Middle school and high school youth are invited to a Christmas Party next Sunday, **December 16**, at the Barn from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. Drop off your kids for 90 minutes of fun, fellowship and awesome music. Please bring a dessert to share with the group...and RSVP to Pastor Penny (phogan@westside.org).

Third Thursday Christmas Party

Guys, you're invited to a Christmas party at Ron Ledwith's home on **December 20** at 7:30 pm. Join Ron, Dave DeFeo, Gib Warren, Pastor Marc and the rest of the Third Thursday crew for a festive evening. Please RSVP to Anne Lee (alee@westside.org) by December 17.

The Gallery at West Side

We're excited to welcome the Pascack Art Association to The Gallery for the month of December. Be sure to stop by to see the wide variety of subjects and styles produced by members of the group. There's something for everyone on your gift list! No work is priced over \$250 for this special show...and 25 percent of sales goes to West Side.

Please visit www.westside.org for more information about our programs.

TODAY AT WEST SIDE

8:00 am—Little Lambs Child Care - Room 211	10:15 am— Traditional Worship - Sanctuary
8:15 am— Chapel Worship - Chapel	10:15 am—Sunday School - Rooms 202, 306, 311, 312 and Serenity Room
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—Blood Pressure Screening - Library
9:00 am—“What is the Bible?” Book Study - Conference Room	11:15 am—Prayer Circle - Chapel
9:15 am—“Interrupted by Hope” Video Series - Pulsifer Chapel	3:00 pm—Christmas Festival - Sanctuary
9:45 am—Centering Prayer - West Side Room	6:00 pm—FOCUS - Chapel
	7:00 pm—High School BARN - Barn

COMING UP AT WEST SIDE

- December 10 - Session Meeting** in DePhillips Hall, 7:30 pm
- December 15 - New Jersey Wind Symphony Concert** in the Sanctuary, 8:00 pm
- December 16 - Parlance Chamber Concert** in the Sanctuary, 3:00 pm
- December 16 - Sunday Night Live** in the Barn, 7:00 pm
- December 20 - Third Thursday Christmas Party** at Ron Ledwith's home, 7:30 pm
- December 23 - “Pop Up” Christmas Pageant** at all three services
- December 24 - Office closes at noon.**
- December 24 - 4:00 pm** - Traditional Lessons and Carols (with a chapel service for children)
6:30 pm - Contemporary Worship with a Live Band
10:00 pm - Traditional Candlelight Worship with Communion
- December 25 - Office closed for Christmas.**
- December 31 - New Year's Eve Worship** at 5:00 pm in Pulsifer Chapel