



WESTMINSTER  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
Third Sunday of Advent  
17 December 2023 + 10:00 a.m.

Welcome and Announcements

Voluntary

Joy to the World

Phil Lehenbauer

**\*Ringing of the Bell**

*The congregation rises at the ringing of the Tower Bell.*

**\*Lighting of the Third Advent  
Candle and Call to Worship**

One: People of God, come, for the light of joy calls us together.

All: **Come, let us follow this light into Advent,  
into the wonder and heart of God's love.**

One: God's love is rain in a dry land,  
and water in the deserts of our lives.

All: **And so the desert shall rejoice,  
and be filled with beauty and abundance.  
All the wilderness will sing together in joy.**

One: People of God, come, for the light of joy calls us together.

All: **Come, let us follow this light in our worship.**

*(The third Advent candle is lit.)*

**\*Processional Hymn 129**

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

*Es Ist Ein' Ros'*

**\*Prayer of Confession**

Merciful God, you love justice. Why, then, do we persist in wrongdoing? You have sent the light into the world. Why, then, have we loved darkness rather than light? Forgive us. Till and tend us as your garden until righteousness and praise spring up, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Hear now our silent prayers of confession.

**\*Sung Response**

Lord, Have Mercy Upon Us

Hymnal, Back Cover

**\*Declaration of Pardon  
and Passing of the Peace**

Leader:

Friends, believe the good news.

**People:**

**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.**

Leader:

The peace of Christ be with you.

**People:**

**And also with you.**

Leader:

Let us greet one another with the sign of peace.

**\*Response of Praise**

Gloria Patri

Hymnal, Back Cover

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be  
world without end. Amen.

**Children's Sermon**

**Congregational Response**

**Come, Savior, quickly come; come,**

**Come Savior, quickly come.**

**Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, come, Savior, quickly come.**

*Children (preschool – Grade 5) go to Sunday School following the  
Congregational Response. Grades 6-7 remain for communion.*

**First Scripture Reading**

Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11

Pew Bible, OT pages 691-692

**Second Scripture Reading**

I Thessalonians 5:16-24

Pew Bible, NT pages 205

Leader:

This is the Word of the Lord.

**People:**

**Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**

Winter Harvest

Rev. Dr. Blythe Denham Kieffer

*Text: "For the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes  
what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause  
righteousness and praise to spring up before the nations.  
Isaiah 64:11*

**Anthem** Past Three O'Clock Traditional English, Noel Rawsthorne, arr.

Past three o'clock, and a cold frosty morning!  
Past three o'clock! Good morrow, masters all.  
Born is a baby, gentle as may be, son of th'eternal, Father supernal.  
Seraph choir singeth, angel bell ringeth: Hark, how they rhyme it,  
time it, and chime it. Mid earth rejoices hearing such voices  
ne'ertofore so well caroling Nowell. Light out of starland  
leadeth from farland, princes to meet him,

**\*Affirmation of Faith**

Psalm 126

**When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,  
we were like those who dream.  
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with shouts of joy;  
then it was said among the nations,  
"The Lord has done great things for them."  
The Lord has done great things for us,  
and we rejoiced.**

**Restore our fortunes, O Lord,  
like the watercourses in the Negeb.  
May those who sow in tears  
reap with shouts of joy.  
Those who go out weeping,  
bearing the seed for sowing,  
shall come home with shouts of joy,  
carrying their sheaves.**

**The Church at Prayer**

**Choir:** Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place,  
I can feel God's mighty power and God's grace.  
I can hear the brush of angels' wings  
I see glory on each face;  
Surely the presence of God is in this place.

**Pastor:** The Lord be with you.

**People:** **And with your spirit.**

**Pastor:** Let us pray.

**Prayers of the People  
and The Lord's Prayer**

**The Presentation  
of our Gifts**

*At this time all worshipers are invited to sign and pass  
the Ministry of Friendship folders in the pew racks.*

**Offertory**

There is Faint Music

Dan Forrest

There is faint music in the night, and pale wings fanned by silver flight, a frosty hill with tender glow of countless stars that shine on snow. A shelter from the winter storm, a straw-lined manger, safe and warm, and Mary singing lullabies, to hush her baby's sleepy sighs. Her eyes are fixed upon his face, unheeded here in time and space; her heart is filled with blinding joy, for God's own Son, her baby boy.

**\*Offertory Response**

Doxology

Hymnal, 606

Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
Praise God, all creatures here below  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

**Gracious God, give us a heart of gratitude in all the circumstances of our lives. Thank you for the joy that grows out of the tears we sow and for the privilege of sharing what we have with others. Accept these gifts which we dedicate in the name of the One for whom we wait, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

**\* Hymn 134**

Joy to the World

*Antioch*

*Sunday school children process and conclude on Chancel.*

**\*Charge and Benediction**

**\*Choral Response**

Heaven and Earth Are Ringing

Giovanni Gastoldi

Heaven and earth are ringing; join in the angel's singing.  
Sing noel for Christ is born. Come, sing, for Christ is born.

**\*Voluntary**

On This Day, Earth Shall Ring

David Spicer

(\* ) The congregation is invited to stand.

## **2023 CHRISTMAS MUSIC FUND**

To the Glory of God and in thanks for Dale Rogers by Anonymous  
In memory of Donna Wolaver by Sandy Bellatti  
In honor of Dale Rogers for wrangling the choir, The Walnuts, and St. Andrews Sisters  
by Bob and Julie Blythe  
In loving memory of our nephew James Blythe, whom we miss every day,  
by Bob, Julie, Brian, and Sarah Blythe.  
In loving memory of Heather Huitt, whom we miss every day,  
by Julie, Bob, Brian, and Sarah Blythe  
In loving memory of Jennie Davis Moy, dear friend and sister, gone too soon,  
by Bob, Julie, Brian, and Sarah Blythe  
In honor of Nolan Young by Rance and Ellen Carpenter  
In memory of loved ones by Linda & Roland Folse  
Georgina Hudspeth  
With gratitude for our beloved WPC family by Meg and Jim Kontio  
In memory of our parents by Mary & Robert Leffler  
In loving memory of Dr. Glen D. Pittman by Jeanne Pittman and family  
In honor of Dale Thomas Rogers and the Westminster Choir by Bill Post  
In memory of our parents and siblings by Linda and Bill Schlosser  
For the glory of music and in honor of Dale Rogers by Eleanor & Lyle VanDeventer  
Prayers for peace on earth by Nell & Jay VanSice  
Gary Vitale

## **2023 CHRISTMAS DECORATION FUND**

Katrina Archer  
In memory of Robert Bellatti by Sandy Bellatti  
In loving memory of Fred and Betty Blythe by Bob, Julie, Brian, and Sarah Blythe  
In loving memory of Ken and Lois Davis and Kathy Stittsworth by Julie & Bob Blythe  
In loving memory of Aunt Viola by Julie Blythe  
In honor of Anne Beckner and Robert Sterling by Catherine Brown  
In memory of our grandparents by Meridith & James Bryans  
In honor of Riley Young by Rance and Ellen Carpenter  
In memory of loved ones by Linda & Ed Caupert  
In loving memory of Tony Leone, Jr. by Cathy Cragoe  
In memory of his parents, Rev. Dr. William & Mrs. Ruth Cross by John Cross  
Chelsea and Adam Ekstedt

Judy and Dale Huston

In memory of Bill Irvine and The Rev. Mr. and Mrs. F.C. Volzke by Marci Irvine

In loving memory of Clyde and Neva Keith and Byron Jones by Sheila Ann Jones

Mary & Charlie King

Mary Maddox

In memory of Muriel Tippet for a lifetime of faith and service by Pat McNutt

In memory of the Papp Family by Barbara Papp

In loving memory of loved ones by Jeanne Pittman and family

In memory of a dear friend, Thelma Tate by Sharon and Larry Reynolds

In memory of our loved ones by the Robbs family

In memory of loved ones by Pat Roller

In loving memory of Heather Huitt, Dan VanDeventer, Dave, Marilyn, and LeRoy Tungett  
by the Manning, Tungett and VanDeventer families

### **2023 CHRISTMAS MUSIC AND DECORATION FUND**

With thanks to Dale Rogers for sharing his many talents and his love of music  
and in loving memory of my parents, Barbara and Lowell Anderson, for introducing me  
to the joys of fellowship and music at Westminster by Brownie Anderson

In memory of Mrs. Elizabeth Harrison and Jeanette and L.B. Beatty  
by Carolyn and Keith Beatty

Carolyn and Richard Berning

In memory of Benjamin Black and Maggie Moore by Katie Moore Black

George Botanga

In memory of Mary Lou Cochran by the Art Cochran Family

In memory of David Coontz, David Matthew Coontz, Ada Rule, and Earl Ray  
by Deb & Drew Coontz

In memory of Morris D. Cooper, Sr. by Virginia Cooper & Family

In memory of Cho Ja Jung with love by Sophia & Christian Choi

With appreciation and thanks to Dale Rogers for his expertise in music by Sue Cull

Bill Deemer

Sharon and Matt Gilmour

In loving memory of Gerry Hale by her family

Ann and Keith Hamilton

In memory of Faye Hildebrand and Cynthia Culler by Pat Hildebrand-Culler

In memory of Scott Hoff by Elaine Hoff

In memory of loved ones by Kathy Kenyon

In loving memory of Ann Feeley Kieffer by Blythe & Peter Kieffer  
In honor of my mom's ordination anniversary by Paul Denham Kieffer  
In memory of our parents by Priscilla & Tim Kluge  
Eleanor & Richard Leary  
In loving memory of John McNutt by Pat McNutt  
In memory of Bill Meriwether, Charley & Nellie Bale, Lyman & Glenna Meriwether  
by Kathy Meriwether  
In memory of Austin Opperman and William Butikofer by Katrina and Doug Opperman  
In memory of our families by Marilyn & Jim Rigney  
In memory of Harold and Rosella Rogers by Dale Rogers  
In memory of loved ones by Mary Gail & Steve Romack and family  
In memory of loved ones by Betsy Ruklick  
In memory of our parents by Nancy & Lon Scott  
Susan & Michael Shaw  
In loving memory of our parents by Krista and Brad Steller and family  
In honor of our family by Judy & Harvey Stephens  
In memory of our parents by Marty and Alan Stutz  
In memory of our parents by Jeanne and Pete VanGieson  
In memory of Martha Havey from her loving family Meredith, Darren, Eva and Mae Volle  
In memory of Bernard and Grace Reeder from their great-granddaughters Eva and Mae Volle  
In memory of JoAnn Wehrle and Walter & Luanna Hinesley  
by Vonnie Hinesley and Dr. Roy Wehrle  
In memory of Dr. Elvin Zook by Sharon Zook

## SERVING THIS SUNDAY AT WESTMINSTER

- **Sunday Liturgist:** Rev. Christian K. Choi
- **Acolytes:** Charlie Graham and Ned Moore
- **Greeter:** Jess Weitzel
- **Advent Candle Lighters:** New Members Paris and James Capler and their family
- **Music:** The Westminster Choir; Dale Rogers, organist
- **Ushers:** George Botanga (Head Usher) Mervice Alah Abung, Terry Haynor, Melanie Humphrey, Camille Massey, Julie McDonough, John McNutt, Bruce Strom
- **Safety Team:** Jim Dolan
- **Videographers:** Bob Fox and Krista Steller

## EDUCATION AND FELLOWSHIP THIS SUNDAY AT WESTMINSTER

- **9:30 a.m. – 12 noon Infants, toddlers, preschoolers (Nursery)** This week's Bible Story: "Baby Jesus is Here!" Caregivers: *Millie McNutt, Maria Lafrenz, Dee Dee Duffy*
- **10:00 – 11:00 a.m.**
  - **Children Kindergarten – Grade 5** will begin in worship with their families & go to Sunday school in the Second Floor Classroom following the Congregational Response. The story is "God Gives Hope" (Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11). The children will experience the Christmas Story and Nativity and then process through the Sanctuary during the final hymn in costume and conclude in the Chancel. Teachers: *Kathy Bacon, Cathy Brower, Chelsea and Adam Ekstedt, Kate Morthland, Julie Robbs, Meleah and Aaron Berkowitz*
  - **Grades 6-7 Confirmation Prep (Conference Room)** meet following the Children's Sermon for Lesson Nine: "Wandering" *Teachers: Joe Fierstos and Meridith Bryans*
- **11:15 a.m. – 12 noon**
  - **ADULT EDUCATION FORUM (Parish Hall)** presents **No Room at the Inn** Today's presentation will feature Westminster's Refugee Initiative with WelcomeCorps, presented by co-chairs Rachael Hickman and Jess Weitzel. Archivist Sue Cull will introduce the session with a history of Westminster's refugee outreach during our 188 years.
  - **Children's Christmas Pageant Rehearsal (Sanctuary)** The Confirmation youth, Bridges children and siblings, Holy Family and Children's Choir will gather for a rehearsal.

**WI-FI Hearing Assistance System** is available in our Sanctuary. A basket is located at each Sanctuary entrance with instructions to install the app for those with Bluetooth enabled hearing aids, lanyards, and hearing amplifier packets for those with regular hearing aids, hearing amplifier packets and disposable earbuds for those without hearing aids. Please return the lanyards and hearing amplifier packets at the end of worship. For assistance, ask an usher.

**The Library Committee** has prepared a cart of books for checkout from both of our libraries in the West Narthex containing philosophy, psychology, and other research books and a wide variety of Christmas books. Please plan to stop and peruse the books and resources.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**WE WELCOME VISITORS!** Information about who we are is in our Welcome Brochure located in the pew pockets and on our website [www.wpcspi.org](http://www.wpcspi.org). Please complete the Ministry of Friendship folder located on the end of each pew. If you are interested in joining, please speak to a pastor.

**CHRISMON BOOKLETS** outline the history and meaning of the ornaments displayed on Westminster's Chrismon Tree located in the Chancel and can be found in the pew pockets.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL PROCESSION** during today's worship service. The Sunday School children will recreate the Nativity in the Third Floor Chapel and process in their costumes during the closing hymn "Joy to the World" and conclude in the Chancel with the pastors for the Charge and Benediction.



**POINSETTIA DELIVERIES** - The Board of Deacons coordinated by the Congregational Care Committee will deliver Christmas poinsettias **today** to members who are shut-in and who have lost loved ones since Easter. Deacons may pick up their assignments in the West Narthex either before or following worship.

**2024 STEWARDSHIP GOAL SURPASSED!** As of Monday, December 11 we received 224 pledges totaling \$860,846 which is 101% of the \$850,000 goal. Thank you to all who made a pledge and to the Stewardship Committee Jay Kennerly, Chair. Susan and Scott Day, Bill Deemer, Jim Dolan, Becky Huston, Becky Martin, Jeanne Pittman, Steve Scaife, Bill Schlosser, and Brad Steller.

**THE CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING** assists current and retired church workers and their families who are in financial need, also makes it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Please look for the offering envelopes and nurture the promise of future leaders and those who serve the church.

**CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT PRACTICE** is **today** at 11:00 a.m. in the chancel. The Confirmation youth, Bridges children and siblings, Holy Family and Children's Choir will gather after worship for a rehearsal for the Children's Christmas Pageant at the 10:00 service on December 24.

**LYDIA CIRCLE** meets Tuesday, December 20 at 12:00 Noon for a Christmas luncheon in Parish Hall. Please RSVP to Nancy Canady at 217-899-9890.

**18<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL HOLIDAY INTERFAITH BREAKFAST** is Monday, December 25 at 8:30 a.m. in Temple B'rith Sholom (1008 S. 4<sup>th</sup> St.) Bring your family & friends and enjoy a hot breakfast in a comfortable and cordial atmosphere! \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 5-10. All proceeds go to St. Martin de Porres. Please contact Mark Rabin at Temple B'rith Sholom at 217 836-8500

**THANK YOU TO BILL HIBBERT** who has served as a part-time custodian since June, 2013. Bill recently was hired by the Illinois Presbyterian Home to serve as property manager for the 10-unit DeCastro Senior Living Complex in Jacksonville. Bill stated that it has been his pleasure to work for Westminster this past decade. He will miss the interesting and friendly people he has come to know; however, the drive back and forth is becoming more difficult. His last day will be Christmas Eve. We are grateful for Bill's good work this past decade and wish Bill and Mary well! Bill's final day of work will be Sunday, December 24.

**ANNUAL CHURCH OFFICER RETREAT AND INSTALLATION** - On Saturday, January 6, 9:00 a.m. – 12 noon, all Elders and Deacons will gather for the Annual Church Officer Retreat. On Sunday, January 7, our newly elected Church Officers will be ordained and/or installed during the 10:00 a.m. service of worship.

**ADULT EDUCATION FORUM FEATURES 2024 MISSION TRIP** - On Sunday, January 14, from 11:15 a.m. – 12 noon in Parish Hall, the 2023 Youth Mission Trip participants will share personal testimony highlighting their experiences in Selma, Alabama rebuilding homes and visiting civil rights museums.

**THE 49<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MLK BREAKFAST** is Monday, January 15, 8:30 a.m. at the Wyndam Hotel. Westminster will be a Gold Sponsor, donating \$1,500. It is symbolic and meaningful for us to have a presence at this community celebration, especially in light of our rich history as advocates for racial justice and equality. If you would like to join the pastors and attend, please contact Jennie Alt at [jalt@wpcspi.org](mailto:jalt@wpcspi.org).

## **CHRISTMAS EVE AT WESTMINSTER SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24**

### **10:00 A.M. CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT**

#### **ON OUR WAY TO BETHLEHEM**

The Confirmation youth and Bridges children will narrate the Christmas story in a more elaborate pageant with special music by the Children's Choir and Eleanor VanDeventer. We welcome Millie and John McNutt with newborn son James as our Holy Family. All children are invited to participate as shepherds, angels, and lambs.

### **5:30 – 7:00 P.M. ANNUAL CHRISTMAS EVE DINNER**

#### **HOSTED BY THE BOARD OF DEACONS**

Don't miss this special event which includes a delicious meal of roast turkey, baked ham, vegetable, garden salad, cheesy potatoes, rolls, and fresh fruit pies. Adults are \$24.00, children 6-12 are \$14.00 and children ages 5 and under are at no charge. **Reservations and payment must be made no later than Tuesday, December 19.** Please send your payment and number attending to the Church Office or use our website [www.wpcspi.org](http://www.wpcspi.org). Reservation form is included in today's bulletin.

### **7:00 P.M. SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS**

The Westminster Choir will provide the choral music and our High School seniors will read the Christmas Story in this Annual Service of Lessons and Carols. Dr. Kieffer will give the meditation. In ancient times, the bells of churches were silenced during the season of Advent. Yet, at the singing of the angel's song, "Gloria in Excelsis Deo" (Glory to God in the Highest) the bells were rung. We follow that tradition by ringing bells during the singing of the closing carol.

**BRING YOUR SILVER BELLS, BRASS BELLS,  
JINGLE BELLS, AND EVEN COW BELLS  
TO THIS SERVICE AND BE PREPARED TO RING OUT IN PEALS OF JOY!**

### **10:00 A.M. SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31**

#### **FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS**

We will continue the celebration of Christmas and mark the conclusion of 2023 in a special New Year's Eve litany.

# CHRISTMAS EVE, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 AT WESTMINSTER

**PRIOR TO THE 7:00 P.M. SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS**

Join us for the  
**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS EVE DINNER**  
**IN PARISH HALL**  
**SEATING 5:15 – 5:30 P.M.**  
**DINNER IS SERVED AT 5:30 P.M.**



A traditional meal will be served including roast turkey, gravy, baked ham, cheese potatoes, green beans, a garden salad with choice of dressing, rolls w/butter, and fruit pies for dessert.

**PRICE:** Adults \$24.00  
Children (6-12) \$14.00  
Age 5 and under, no charge

**Christmas Eve Dinner Reservation:** This year we are limiting the gathering to 100. You may return this completed form or go to our website front page at [www.wpcspi.org](http://www.wpcspi.org) for the link to submit the online form. Payment can be made by check or online. Reservations and payment must be delivered to the church **by Tuesday, December 19.** *Sorry, no refunds if cancelled.*

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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Adults: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (ea. \$24.00) Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children ages 6-12: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (ea. \$14.00) Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children ages 5 and under \_\_\_\_\_ (free)

**Total Due: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Payment: Check # \_\_\_\_\_ (Online convenience fees: \$1.00/adult, \$0.50/child)

## THIS WEEK AT WESTMINSTER

### Monday, December 18

### Tuesday, December 19

- 10:30 AM Staff Meeting (Pastor's Study)  
12:00 PM Lydia Circle Christmas Luncheon  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Classroom)

### Wednesday, December 20

- 10:00 AM Pastors Pray in Chancel (Sanctuary)  
10:30 AM Worship Planning (Pastor's Study)  
4:00 PM Depression and Bi-Polar Support Group  
(Conference Room)  
4:00 PM Bridges (Tower Classroom)

### Thursday, December 21

- 1:00 PM Staff Lunch for Bill and Mary Hibbert  
7:00 PM Choir (Music Room)

### Friday, December 22

### Saturday, December 23

### Sunday, December 24

#### **Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve**

- 10:00 AM Children's Christmas Pageant (Sanctuary)  
5:30 PM Christmas Eve Dinner (Parish Hall)  
7:00 PM Lessons and Carols Candlelighting Service

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
533 S. Walnut St.  
Springfield, Illinois 62704  
Phone (217) 522-4415 Fax (217) 522-4465  
<http://www.wpcspi.org>

### **WESTMINSTER STAFF**

**The Rev. Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer**  
Pastor and Head of Staff

**The Reverend Christian K. Choi**  
Associate Pastor for Parish Life

**The Reverend Gerald W. Boutelle**  
Parish Associate

**Dale T. Rogers**  
Director of Music and the Arts

**Mary Ray**  
Interim Director for Youth

**Meleah and Aaron Berkowitz**  
Co-Directors for Children's Ministry

**Katie Moore**  
Director for Children's Music

**Millie McNutt, Erin Winn**  
Nursery Coordinators

**Emily Rowley, Keri Tate**  
Cooperative Preschool Staff

**Ellen Carpenter**  
Parish Nurse

**Pat Hymans**  
Hospitality Coordinator

**Lisa Runkle**  
Financial Administrator

**Jennie Alt**  
Church Administrative Assistant

**Krista Steller**  
Communications Coordinator

**Gary Warnick**  
Building and Property Manager

**Peter Bysko, James Capler,  
Terry Gietl, Bill Hibbert**  
Part-time Custodians