



CHRISTMAS CHILDREN'S PAGEANT  
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2023 AT 10:00 A.M.



## SERVICE OF WORSHIP

### Welcome and Announcements

Voluntary      Go Tell it on the Mountain      Spiritual

**\*Ringing of the Bell**      *The congregation rises at the ringing of the Tower bell.*

**\* Call to Worship**      Caroline Bryans

Leader:      O Come, let us adore Christ the Lord  
We have come to worship our Savior

People:      **Some of us have traveled a short distance.**

Leader:      Others have traveled many miles.

People:      **We each have made our journey to adore  
the Christ of Bethlehem, born in a manger!**

**\*Processional Hymn 133**      O Come, All Ye Faithful      *Adeste Fideles*

**\*Prayer of Confession**      On this day we remember you creeping in very quietly and very vulnerably among us in Jesus Christ, born of Mary. On this day we remember that you value us enough to join us in our humanity, that you will never leave us nor forsake us. Forgive us for forgetting all this too often and for being so caught up in our own concerns that we don't take the time to listen to yours. 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. Amen.

## **\*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.

## **Lighting of the Advent Candles**

### **The Promise and Hope of Christ's Coming**

Kate Bryans

We light the first Advent Candle of promise and hope. This candle is a symbol of our longing for God to be with us. We wait in hope for God to surprise us and break into our lives.

### **The Peace Christ Will Bring**

Taryn Barnett

We light the second candle as a reminder of our dreams for peace in the world. This candle is a symbol of God's promise of peace, and comfort, and strength.

### **Rejoice!!!**

Lucy Bassett

We light the third candle for joy on our journey. This candle is the symbol of the joy that comes from the knowledge that God is with us in Emmanuel.

### **The Gift of Love**

Charlotte Affrunti

We light the fourth candle on our journey and the circle is complete. This candle is the symbol of God's love that was born anew on Christmas Day.

## **Anthem**

### **Light One Candle**

Mark Patterson

## **On Our Way to Bethlehem**

### **Introduction**

Dr. Kieffer

## **The Journey of Mary and Joseph**

William Affrunti

In many ways it was a night like any other. The stars were shining bright, one, in particular. In other ways it was a night like no other. For the events that followed would change the world forever. There were many travelers on the road that cold winter as the census had been ordered and all were encouraged to return to their home villages to be counted. That included Joseph, the carpenter and his betrothed, the Virgin Mary, Heavy laden with child. They were on their way to Bethlehem.

*During narration Mary, Joseph, and donkey walk down the center aisle.*

Joseph Hello dear neighbors. You are a welcome sight.  
Especially this Holy night.  
To Bethlehem we all must go  
My beloved Mary with child

Donkey ...and a donkey in tow.

Joseph A simple carpenter am I.  
But God has called us from on high.  
This message came like a flash from the sun.

Donkey That she should be God's chosen one.

Mary The angel came, and I was filled with fear  
At the awesome message I was born to hear.  
God will send a Son to live on Earth.

Donkey So we all await this wondrous birth.

Mary It's true! It's true! I was filled with fright.  
It happened like this, one marvelous night.

**Hymn 121**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

*St. Louis*

O little town of Bethlehem How still we see thee lie  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight

For Christ is born of Mary And gathered all above  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wondering love  
O morning stars together, proclaim thy holy birth  
And praises sing to God the King  
And peace to men on earth

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight

## Arriving in Bethlehem

Juliet Boutelle

Imagine. You are traveling a dark road on a cold winter night unsure of any immediate plans. But you are *positive* of the momentous future that lies ahead for you and the child you carry: The child of God. Imagine the anxiety Mary and Joseph must have felt as they traveled that road on their way to Bethlehem. Imagine the frustration the innkeeper felt to be overrun with guests desperate to find shelter. from the cold winter night. Imagine. You are on the road to Bethlehem. Imagine.

*The Innkeeper & his wife enter.*

Innkeeper's wife

People were coming from everywhere to stay in our hotel.

Innkeeper

But I had no rooms available. To rent, to let, to sell.

Innkeeper's wife

We have no rooms or space at our table.

Innkeeper

All we can provide is a place in our stable.

*Innkeeper and Innkeeper's wife exit. Mary, Joseph, and donkey go to stable area.*

## Anthem

Away in the Manger

William J. Kirkpatrick

*Shepherds enter after the song and take their places.*

## The Angels Greet the Shepherds

Juliana Eastvold

Years later the child born that night in a stable would stand on a hillside and proclaim that the meek shall inherit the Earth. It was the meek who first heard the good news, the Good News of Jesus' birth. The Good News that we continue to celebrate today as we walk our own roads to Bethlehem. It was the meek that were among the first to hear the Good News of Jesus' birth as the shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks in a field, near a path, on the way to Bethlehem.

*Shepherds stand, point to a star in the distance.*

Shepherd Look! There in the east at that bright star Over the Bethlehem sky!

Shepherd What could it be? What does it tell?  
What does it signify?

*Angels enter. Shepherds fall to knees in awe and fear.*

Angel Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will come to all the people, for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord.

Angel And this will be a sign for you. You will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.

Angel Glory to God in the highest! On Earth peace to all.,  
Hurry, hurry to Bethlehem. A Savior is born in a stall.

*Baby Jesus is placed in his Mary's lap. Angels move to stable area.*

**Anthem** What Child is This English Traditional

Shepherd: Rise up, friends and gather your things  
To Bethlehem we must go.

Shepherd: Well hurry up then; we haven't all night.  
A Savior is born today.

Sheep: We're ready to go! We won't slow you down!  
Three cheers!

All Sheep Hip! Hip! Hooray!

**Anthem** Happy Birthday, Jesus! Lynn Maalberg

*Sheep and Shepherds go to stable. The three kings take their places during the narration.*

## The Journey of the Three Kings

Ned Moore

On this night it is not just the meek that are on their way to Bethlehem. Indeed, the road is lined by shepherds and their flocks, carpenters and innkeepers, strangers and friends, paupers and even kings.

*During narration the three kings walk down the center aisle.*

King 1 We are three kings. We come from the East  
We'll journey fast and far.  
By camel back, we'll travel for years,  
following yonder star.

King 2 Some might say and be quite right  
We're not in the Christmas story.  
But look at our costumes, and give us a break!  
Allow us and you won't be sorry

King 3 We are Gaspar and Melchior, and also Balthasar,  
we are here to bow to the King  
We bring gold and myrrh, And frankincense too,  
So now we will sing!

**Anthem** Star of Wonder

Mark Patterson

## Introduction to Offering and Prayer of Dedication

**Offertory** Celtic Noel

French Carol

## Our Journey to the Christ Child

Lily Swanson

As Christians, we travel a well-worn path that leads us toward life everlasting. Our path began with the sandaled feet of a humble carpenter and the hooves of the gentle donkey that carried the mother of Jesus. Our path was paved by the eager steps of all who have come to worship Christ and all who believe that in a lowly stable in a tiny village the Savior of all was born.

## Lighting of the Christ Candle

Harper Huston

Today we light the Christ Candle, the candle that represents Emanuel, "God with us," the one for whom we have journeyed tonight. It is at the center of the wreath, just as Jesus is at the center of our lives.

*Light the Christ Candle.*

Reese Huston

As it was for these travelers who have journeyed to the Christ Child, the light of Christ is brought into the world through our lives on this Holy day. This is the message we have heard from Christ and proclaim, that "God is light and in God is no darkness at all!"

**\*Hymn 134**

Joy to the World

*Antioch*

## \*Charge and Benediction

**\*Voluntary**

O Holy Night

*Adolphe Adam*

(\*) The congregation is invited to stand.

## SERVING THIS SUNDAY AT WESTMINSTER

- **Sunday Liturgists:** Rev. Dr. Blythe Denham Kieffer, Rev. Christian K. Choi
- **Pageant Directors:** Meleah and Aaron Berkowitz
- **Acolytes:** Taryn Barnett and Kate Bryans
- **Greeters:** Paul Kieffer and Mary Ray
- **Music:** Westminster Children's Choir, Katie Moore, director, Eleanor VanDeventer, soprano, Lyle VanDeventer, clarinet, Dale Rogers, pianist
- **Ushers:** Julie McDonough, Mervice Alah Abung, Sophia Choi, Terry Haynor, Melanie Humphrey, Kathy Kenyon, Bruce Strom, Susan Shaw
- **Safety Team:** Alan Schuermann
- **Videographers:** Bob Fox and Krista Steller

## CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT PARTICIPANTS

<b>Advent Candles</b>	Kate Bryans, Taryn Barnett, Lucy Bassett, Charlotte Affrunti,
<b>Narrators</b>	William Affrunti, Juliet Boutelle, Juliana Eastvold, Ned Moore
<b>Holy Family</b>	Millie, John and James McNutt
<b>Donkey</b>	Luke McNutt
<b>Innkeeper &amp; wife</b>	August Ekstedt and Lilly Hill
<b>Shepherds</b>	Sam Berkowitz, Caroline Bryans, Brice Knoedler, Charlotte Moore
<b>Lead Sheep</b>	Roscoe Ekstedt
<b>Roaming Sheep</b>	Benji Berkowitz, Biz Black, Zachariah Choi, Teddy Eckstedt, Madelyn Hickman, Amelia Moore, Walter Morthland, Chandler Reich
<b>Angels</b>	Diana Choi, Juniper Berkowitz, Eva Volle, Paisley Reicht, Lucy Black, Camille Knoedler, Daisy McClendon, Hazel McClendon, Mae Volle
<b>Kings</b>	Brooke Boutelle, Connor Hill, Sadie Mitchell.
<b>Star Carrier</b>	Nathan Affrunti
<b>Children's Choir</b>	Juniper Berkowitz, Sam Berkowitz, Diana Choi, Lilly Hill, Luke McNutt, Charlotte Moore, Chandler Reicht, Paisley Reicht, Eva Volle
<b>Christ Candle:</b>	Lily Swanson, Harper Huston, Reese Huston

**WELCOME OUR VISITORS AND MERRY CHRISTMAS!** We are delighted you have joined us on this Fourth Sunday of Advent! 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.

**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.

**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. We are grateful for Bill's good work this past decade and wish Bill and Mary well! Bill's final day of work is today, December 24.

**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.

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

**5:15 – 5:30 P.M. SEATING**

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

**HOSTED BY THE BOARD OF DEACONS**

Members and friends who have made reservations will enjoy a delicious meal of roast turkey, baked ham, vegetable, garden salad, cheesy potatoes, rolls, and fresh fruit pies.

**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 entitled “The Work of Christmas.” 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.

## THIS WEEK AT WESTMINSTER

### Monday, December 25

All Day Church Offices Closed

### Tuesday, December 26

All Day Church Offices Closed

### Wednesday, December 27

10:30 AM Worship Planning (Pastor's Study)  
1:00 PM Warming/Cooling Center Meal (Kitchen)  
4:00 PM Depression and Bi-Polar  
(Conference Room)

### Thursday, December 28

No scheduled events

### Friday, December 29

No scheduled events

### Saturday, December 30

No scheduled events

### Sunday, December 31

New Years' Eve  
10:00 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary)  
10:15 AM Sunday School K – Grade 5 (Chapel)

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
533 S Walnut St.  
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<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