



WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
First Sunday after Christmas Day
New Year's Eve Service
31 December 2023 + 10:00 a.m.

Welcome and Announcements

Voluntary

What Child is This?

John Behnke

*Ringing of the Bell

The congregation rises at the ringing of the Tower Bell.

*Call to Worship

Psalm 148

Leader:

Praise the Lord!

Praise God from the heavens; Praise God in the heights!

People:

Praise the Lord, all God's angels;

Praise the Lord, all God's host!

Leader:

Praise the Lord from the earth, old and young together!

People:

**For God's name alone is exalted and God's glory is above
earth and heaven.**

Leader:

God has raised up a horn for God's people,
for the people of Israel who are close to God.

People:

Let us worship our Lord with praise.

*Hymn 119

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Mendelssohn

***Prayer of Confession**

Almighty and compassionate God, as this year draws to a close and we look forward to a new day on this First Sunday of Christmas, we recognize our human frailty and the many ways we have faltered from your calling for us. We admit our imperfections and shortcomings. Forgive us. Through your grace, grant us the strength to be the reflection of your perfect love to others around us and to shine your eternal hope to the world. 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

Children's Sermon

Congregational Response

**Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

*Children in preschool – Grade 5 go to Sunday School class
following the Congregational Response.*

First Scripture Reading

Isaiah 61:10 – 62:3

Pew Bible, OT page 692

Second Scripture Reading

Galatians 4:4-7

Pew Bible, NT page 189

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.
People: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Precious Child

Rev. Christian K. Choi

Text: "So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir through God." "You shall be a beautiful crown in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem in the hand of your God."
Galatians 4:7, Isaiah 62:3

Solo

In the Bleak Midwinter

Gustav Holst

The text for the solo is 144 in the Hymnal

*Affirmation of Faith

Brief from A Declaration of Faith

Jesus, the long-expected Savior, came into the world as a child, descended from David, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of Mary, a virgin. He lived as a Jew among Jews. He announced to his people the coming of God's kingdom of justice and peace on earth.

We are certain that Jesus lives. He lives as God with us, touching all of human life with the presence of God. He lives as one of us with God. Because he shares our humanity and has bound us to himself in love, we have an advocate in the innermost life of God. We declare that Jesus is Lord.

The Church at Prayer

Solo: Surely the presence of our God 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 our God is in this place.

Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: **And with your spirit.**
Leader: 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

The Work of Christmas

Dan Forrest

*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.

*New Year Dedication Litany

Leader: God of our life, through all the circling years, we trust in you.
People: **We thank you, O God, for all of life, for the generosity of your creation, for the abundance of your love, for the overwhelming blessings you pour down upon our lives.**

Leader: God of the past, our times are in your hand; with us abide.
People: **Keep us mindful, O God, of the generosity of your grace in all our days gone by. As we reflect on past years, we thank you for the many ways in which your presence has been made known in our lives. And we seek your presence in this New Year coming upon us.**

Leader: God of the coming year, through paths unknown, we follow you.
People: **Dear Lord, in this coming year may we be as generous with our time, our talents, and our resources as you are with us. May we truly reflect your love in the ways in which we give of ourselves. We pray that you will bless our efforts to be your worthy disciples. Amen**

***Charge and Benediction**

***Closing Voluntary** Now Sing We, Now Rejoice

Jeffrey Blersch

(*) The congregation is invited to stand.

SERVING THIS SUNDAY AT WESTMINSTER

- **Sunday Liturgist:** Rev. Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer
- **Worship Leader:** Sidney Miller
- **Acolytes:** Juliet Boutelle and Lilly Swanson
- **Greeter:** Kathy Kenyon
- **Music:** Linda Andrews, organist, Adam Miller, tenor
- **Ushers:** George Botanga (Head Usher) Mervice Alah Abung, Terry Haynor, Melanie Humphrey, Mary King, Julie McDonough, John McNutt, Bruce Strom
- **Safety Team:** Brad Steller
- **Videographers and Sound:** Bob Fox, Krista Steller

EDUCATION AND FELLOWSHIP THIS SUNDAY AT WESTMINSTER

- **9:30 a.m. – 12 noon** **Infants, toddlers, preschoolers (Nursery)** This week's Bible Story: "Jesus is the Best Gift!" *Caregivers: Erin Winn, Linda Caupert, and Lynn McMenamin*
- **10:00 – 11:00 a.m.**
 - **Children Kindergarten – Grade 5** will begin in worship with their families & go to Sunday school following the Congregational Response. The story is "Christmas Continues" (Luke 2:22-40). Teachers: *Meleah and Aaron Berkowitz*

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. 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.

RUTH AND NAOMI CIRCLE meets **Wednesday, January 3** at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Jeanne VanGieson (3928 Rocky Falls Rd, 62711). Judy Knox will lead the devotional by Jean-Pierre de Caussade entitled "The Present Moment" (pgs. 200-206) from the book, *Devotional Classics*, edited by Richard J. Foster and James Bryan Smith. Please RSVP directly to Jeanne VanGieson (217-341-9255).

CHURCH OFFICER RETREAT on **Saturday, January 6** Members of the Session and Board of Deacons will gather from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon in Parish Hall for worship and team building.

NEW OFFICER ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION will be **Sunday, January 7** during the 10:00 a.m. worship service. Members being ordained or installed in the **Session Class of 2026** include: John Cross, Tara Fritsch, Rachael Hickman, David Jenkins, Dr. Vena Long, Julie Robbs, Greg Swanson, and Brinton Wilkey. **Youth Elder:** Kristianna Eastvold. Members being ordained or installed in the **Board of Deacons Class of 2026** include: Julie Barton, Greg Boutelle, Kyle Duffy, Deb Fritsch, Joyce King, Dr. Todd Lafrenz, Kate Morthland, and Bernie Wiseman, **Deacon Class of 2025:** Bill Schlosser.

BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS & CONSULTATION will be available on **Sunday, January 7** by Parish Nurse, Ellen Carpenter.

ELIZABETH CIRCLE meets **Monday, January 8** at 1:00 p.m. in the second-floor classroom. Lynne O' Shea will lead Lesson 5 titled "A Person with Leprosy Encounters Jesus".

BRIDGES MID-WEEK FELLOWSHIP will start the new year on **Wednesday, January 10**. Children in Grades 3-5 are invited to Bridges on Wednesdays from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. in the Third Floor Tower Classroom. This year's theme is "Created in God's Image".

WESTMINSTER CHILDREN'S CHOIR will resume rehearsals in the new year on **Wednesday, January 10** at 5:00 p.m. in the Music Room.

MEN'S BREAKFAST meets **Thursday, January 11** at 8:00 a.m. in Parish Hall. Harl Ray will speak about the ongoing construction at the State Capitol Complex. Thanks to Bud Green for providing breakfast.

CHURCH MICE, our musical experience for infants through age four, will begin its new year on **Saturday, January 13** at 11 a.m.

NURSERY GUILD will meet on **Sunday, January 14** for current and new guild members.

HOME COMMUNION is being delivered on **Sunday, January 14**. If you are unable to attend worship and would like to receive Communion at home, please contact Jennie Alt at the church office.

ADULT EDUCATION FORUM: Road to Selma on **Sunday, January 14** at 11:15 a.m. in Parish Hall, our youth will report on their 2023 Mission Trip to Selma, Alabama.

LYDIA CIRCLE meets **Tuesday, January 16** at 9:30 a.m. in the Ziegler Library. Sandy Bellatti will lead the lesson titled “Mary and Martha Encounter Jesus”.



ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING BREAKFAST ON MONDAY, JANUARY 15

The 49th Annual MLK Breakfast will be held Monday, January 15, 8:30 a.m. at the Wyndam Hotel. Westminster will be a Gold Sponsor, donating \$1,500 (\$1,000 from the Endowment Scholarship Fund and \$500 from the Peace and Global Witness collection for local ministry.) 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.

SUNDAY SCHOOL EXPANDS IN JANUARY Westminster has been blessed this year with very strong attendance in our children’s Sunday School classes each week. So strong, in fact, that we are hoping to divide our current class into two smaller groups starting January 28! Our younger children, from Grades Kindergarten through Grade 2 will continue to meet in the Sunday School classroom with Meleah Berkowitz and ministry partners, while children Grades 3 through 5 will meet with Aaron Berkowitz and ministry partners in the Third Floor Tower room. Because of this expansion, we are looking for more ministry partners who are interested in helping to teach Sunday School. If you are interested, please contact Meleah or Aaron at berkowitz@wpcspi.org.

SUNDAY SCHOOL MINISTRY PARTNER MEETING ON SUNDAY JANUARY 21 To help prepare for the new expanded Sunday School classes, to provide orientation to new and returning Sunday School teachers, and to provide an opportunity for ministry partners to sign-up on a schedule of Sundays, we will have a special Sunday School Ministry Partner meeting on Sunday, January 21 at 9:00 AM in the Parish Hall. New Sunday School teachers are welcome!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28

ANNUAL MEETING

8:30 – 9:45 A.M. EGG-TASTIC BREAKFAST FUNDRAISER

Members are invited to an egg-tastic breakfast that will be served by youth attending the 2024 Youth Mission Trip. Come support the Mission and be well-nourished for the work of the church at the annual meeting following worship!

10:00 A.M. WORSHIP

11:00 – 11:30 A.M. ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

2023 ANNUAL REPORTS from the Session and Deacon Committee chairs are **due Thursday, January 11, 2024 by noon**. Please submit your reports to Jennie Alt at jalt@wpcspi.org. They will be included in the 2023 Annual Report.

THIS WEEK AT WESTMINSTER

Monday, January 1

Church Offices are closed.

Tuesday, January 2

10:30 AM Staff Meeting (Pastor's Study)

Wednesday, January 3

10:00 AM Pastors Pray in Chancel (Sanctuary)
10:30 AM Worship Planning (Pastor's Study)
12:30 PM Reporter Mailing (2nd Floor Classroom)
4:00 PM Depression and Bi-Polar Support Group
(Conference Room)
7:00 PM Ruth & Naomi Circle (Off-Site)

Thursday, January 4

2:00 PM Memory Loss Graduate Group
(2nd Floor Classroom)

Friday, January 5

Saturday, January 6

9:00 AM Church Officer Retreat (Parish Hall)

Sunday, January 7

10:00AM Worship Service – Installation/Ordination
of Officers (Sanctuary)
10:15 AM Sunday School PreK-5 (Sanctuary)
10:15 AM Confirmation Prep (Conference Room)
11:15 AM Adult Ed Forum (Parish Hall)
11:15 AM Confirmation Class (2nd Floor Classroom)
5:00 PM Sr. High Youth Group (Parish Hall)

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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,**
Part-time Custodians