



THE REPORTER

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

533 South Walnut Street
Springfield, Illinois 62704

217-522-4415
www.wpcspi.org

December 2023

WORSHIP & EDUCATION CALENDAR

SUNDAY SCHEDULE:

10:00 a.m. In-person and
Livestream Worship Service
www.wpcspi.org

FAITH FORMATION:

9:45 a.m. Nursery
Children Birth – Age 3

10:15 a.m. Sunday School and
Confirmation Prep
following Children's Sermon
Children Pre-K - Grade 7

11:15 a.m. Adult Education Forum

December 3

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 64:1-4; I Cor. 1:4-9

The Rev. Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer
The Art of Waiting

December 10

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 40:1-11; Mark 1:1-8

The Rev. Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer
Journey into Peace

December 17

SUNDAY SCHOOL PROCESSIONAL
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; I Thes. 5:16-24

The Rev. Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer
Winter Harvest

December 24

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
CHRISTMAS EVE

Children's Christmas Pageant:
On Our Way to Bethlehem

December 31

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Isaiah 61:10-62:3, Galatians 4:4-1

The Rev. Christian K. Choi
Precious Child

ADVENT AT WESTMINSTER

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT: DECEMBER 3

ADVENT WREATH, CHILDREN'S MUSIC during 10:00 a.m. service

We begin the Season of Advent, the time of waiting and preparing, on Sunday, December 3 with the lighting of the Advent Wreath. Thank you to the O'Reilly, Capler, and Lafrenz families for leading us in this Westminster tradition.

The 10:00 a.m. service will include special music by the Children's Choir (Grades K-5) under the direction of Katie Moore, Director for Children's Music.

ADVENT CELEBRATION at 11:15 a.m. in Parish Hall

A reception in Parish Hall will follow worship and include a festive brunch, the singing of Christmas Carols, the creating of ornaments, and the decorating of Christmas cookies. Children who were not in Sunday School on November 26 will have the opportunity to create an advent wreath for home.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT: DECEMBER 10

CHRISTMAS VESPERS at 4:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

On Sunday, December 10 at 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon, Westminster's Christmas Vespers program will include choral music and carols sung by the Westminster Choir and the St. Andrew's Sisters, with Dale Rogers, Organist. Vespers will include the seasonal music of Adelman, Friedell, Forrest, Purcell, Halls, Rawsthorne, Bach, Spirituals, and more.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT: DECEMBER 17

SUNDAY SCHOOL PROCESSION during 10:00 a.m. 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.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT: DECEMBER 24

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT during 10:00 a.m. service

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.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC AND DECORATION FUNDS

Members and friends are invited to make a suggested donation of \$25 to support Westminster's decorations funds, which includes the poinsettias. You may send a check or go online at www.wpcspi.org to donate. Donations of \$25 or more to the Special Music Fund are also accepted at this time. Please submit your donations with your desired wording and dedications by Monday, December 11. Thank you for your generosity!

FROM THE PASTOR by Rev. Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer

Dear Friend,

As we begin the Christian calendar anew, we enter this Holy Season with hope and expectation. The staff joins me in wishing you a joyous Advent and a meaningful Christmas. Sometimes it is difficult to conceive how it is that the One who created the ends of the earth would join us in our humanity and embrace us in a love beyond our understanding. Music will nourish our spirits as we contemplate the wonder of our faith, the gift of our children, and the story that never grows old.

In an intentional effort to remind us that the God who joined us in our humanity is beyond our understanding; the worship team is committed to minimizing the use of the masculine gender for God in this new Christian calendar year. When we refer to God only as He, there is a powerful suggestion in its nuance that God is male, reinforcing the traditional, patriarchal, and hierarchical structure of power that Jesus, the incarnate God challenged continually.

This Advent we also begin the eleventh year of Prayer Ministry at Westminster. Throughout the year, each member of our congregation is uplifted in prayer by their pastors. Rev. Choi and I consider it an honor and privilege to share in the discipline of this spiritual practice on your behalf.

DIRECTOR FOR YOUTH

As the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee continues its important work in searching for the Associate Pastor for Family Ministry, we are grateful for Mary Ray's leadership of our youth as the Interim Director for Youth. At their November meeting, Session approved a recommendation from the Personnel Committee to delete "interim" from this position beginning in January 2024. Mary's ongoing service will provide a partnership in youth ministry for the new associate much like Meleah and Aaron Berkowitz provide a partnership in children's ministry. Please continue to keep the APNC, chaired by Krista Steller, in your prayers.



STEADFAST NEIGHBOR OPPORTUNITY

518 SOUTH GLENWOOD



Westminster continues to invest in our neighborhood through the Steadfast Neighbor Endeavor. At their November meeting, Session approved a joint recommendation from the Strategic Planning and Property Committees to *evaluate the cost of renovating 518 S. Glenwood for the purpose of selling it. Proceeds will reimburse the Support and Endowment loan approved by the congregation in 2018.*

At the time we purchased the home in 2018, we had not yet formulated the Site and Landscape Plan to expand our parking lot. Both committees concurred we no longer have a need for the property and in keeping with our commitment to the neighborhood, improvements need to be made.

Immediate projects include removal and replacing the garage roof and removing carpet and padding throughout the home. We are calling for ministry partners to collaborate on these projects the week of December 4. Teams will work Tuesday – Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 12 noon and 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. If you are willing and able, please call Jennie Alt or use SignupGenius directly found on the home page of our website.

MUSIC NOTES by Dale T. Rogers

WESTMINSTER CHRISTMAS VESPERS will be on Sunday, December 10 at 4:00 p.m. The program will include choral music and carols sung by the Westminster Choir and the St. Andrew's Sisters, with Dale Rogers, Organist and feature the seasonal music of Adelman, Forrest, Friedell, Purcell, Bach, Halls, Rawsthorne, Spirituals, and more.

UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN - The Springfield Choral Society will perform "Unto Us a Child is Born" concert on December 9, 7:30 p.m. at Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (524 E. Lawrence Ave). Tickets are \$20.00. Jennie Alt, Jamie Greenwald, Craig Kniffin, Jim Kontio, Adam Miller, Dale Rogers, Brian Richards, Eleanor and Lyle VanDeventer of the Westminster community sing in this choral society.

WESTMINSTER CHOIR meets each Thursday evening at 7:00 p.m., an earlier time than in previous years. We continue to prepare music for Sunday services and Christmas Vespers.

CHURCH MICE (infants through age 4) meets on Saturday mornings at 11:00 a.m. Follow the pathway of cheese for a delightful musical adventure. Mr. Rogers leads Church Mice beginning on January 13.

THE WESTMINSTER CHILDREN'S CHOIR (Kindergarten - Grade 5) rehearses Wednesdays at 5:00 p.m. and is led by Katie Moore, our Director for Children's Music. They are preparing music for the Advent Celebration on December 3 and for Christmas Eve.

ADULT EDUCATION FORUM PRESENTS:

**NO ROOM AT THE INN:
HOMELESS & REFUGEE MINISTRIES
SUNDAYS, DECEMBER 10 & 17
11:15-12 NOON IN PARISH HALL**



On Sunday, December 10, the Adult Ed Forum welcomes Rev. Josh Sabo who will report on the good work of the Heartland Continuum of Care in addressing homelessness in Springfield.

On Sunday, December 17, the forum will feature Westminster's Refugee Initiative with WelcomeCorps, presented by co-chairs Rachael Hickman and Jess Weitzel. Archivist Sue Cull will introduce the session

WELCOMECORPS

with a brief history of Westminster's refugee outreach during our 188 years. We currently have 48 members who are partnering in this ministry and serving on the five teams: Benefits and Healthcare, Education and Language, Finance and Employment, Housing and Basic Necessities, and Welcome and Local Orientation. Funds from the Betty Smith Mission Fund are making this outreach possible.

APOSTLES' READ LIBRARY BOOK GROUP

The Apostles' Read Library Book Group will not meet in December and will meet on Tuesday, January 23, 2024.

THE ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING BREAKFAST 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.



YOUTH MINISTRY by Mary Ray

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

11:15 a.m. Advent Celebration: Following the 10:00 a.m. worship service, the youth are invited to Parish Hall for cookie-decorating, ornament-making, holiday brunch, and caroling!

12 noon – 1:30 p.m.

Jr. & Sr. High Youth – Shopping for Contact Ministries

Following brunch at the Advent Celebration, we will gather in the West Narthex and head out to Target to buy gifts for local youth who are a part of Contact Ministries' using the money raised at the Spud Bake! We will not meet for our regular evening program.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

11:00 a.m. – 12 noon

A Service of Lessons and Carols Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

Our Seniors, class of 2024, will gather in the the Sanctuary to rehearse for the traditional 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols.

5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Party at the Home of Harper and Reese Huston

Jr. & Sr. High are invited to Huston Home (3504 Bluff Road, 62711) to enjoy a festive dinner and exchange white elephant gifts (max \$15).

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

11:00 a.m. – 12 noon

Children's Christmas Pageant Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

The Confirmand readers will gather with children after worship for the Children's Christmas Pageant Rehearsal.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

9:30 a.m. Confirmation Participants meet early for Children's Christmas Pageant (Sanctuary)

Junior High Youth with speaking parts in the Children's Christmas Pageant meet early for the 10:00 a.m. service.

7:00 p.m. A Service of Lessons and Carols (Sanctuary)

Westminster's high school senior class provide leadership in the Service of Lessons and Carols.

ADULT EDUCATION FORUM FEATURES 2024 MISSION TRIP

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14



On Sunday, January 14, from 11:15 a.m. – 12 noon in Parish Hall, the 2023 Youth Mission Trip participants will present the Adult Education Forum. They will share personal testimony highlighting their experiences in Selma, Alabama rebuilding homes and visiting civil rights museums and monuments.

2024 YOUTH MISSION TRIP

SATURDAY, JUNE 15 –

SATURDAY, JUNE 22.



Westminster youth and leadership team will serve at the St. Charles Presbyterian Church Camp Rhino in New Orleans, LA the week of June 15-22. Rhino stands for Rebuilding Hope In New Orleans.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY by Meleah & Aaron Berkowitz

ADVENT CELEBRATION IS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

10:00 a.m. Worship

Children's Choir (Grades K-5)
will present Special Music.

11:15 a.m. Fellowship in Parish Hall

Following worship we will gather in Parish Hall for a delicious brunch, cookie-decorating, ornament-making, and carol-singing. There will also be materials to make an advent wreath for those who missed out on November 26.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROCESSIONAL

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17: 10:00 A.M.

The Sunday School children will experience the Christmas Story and Nativity in the Third Floor Chapel, 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.

11:00 a.m. Christmas Pageant Rehearsal in the Sanctuary. Children participating in the Christmas Pageant on December 24 are invited to a rehearsal.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

9:30 A.M. ARRIVAL TIME, 10:00 A.M. CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

All our children are invited to arrive on Sunday, December 24 at 9:30 a.m. in the Second Floor Classroom, where they will receive a costume and be given instructions for the 10:00 a.m. Christmas Pageant as the Confirmation Youth and Bridges Children narrate and present the Christmas story. Children will participate as shepherds and angels. Children ages three and under are invited to be lambs.

Please complete and return the postcard included in the Advent mailing to Meleah and Aaron Berkowitz no later than Sunday, December 10 to let us know if your children are joining us and their preferred parts. We hope you and your family will join us in celebrating this Holy Season! If you have questions, contact Meleah Berkowitz (berkowitz@wpdpi.org).

WESTMINSTER COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL NEWS

Each year in November at our Friendship Feast, we act out the story of Stone Soup for our parents because it contains an important lesson exemplified by our preschool. "When everyone works together, wonderful things happen!" It is always great when we gather together and celebrate our friendships.
Emily Rowley, Director



BRIDGES CHILDREN MET WITH THEIR ADVOCATES ON ALL SAINTS DAY, NOVEMBER 1



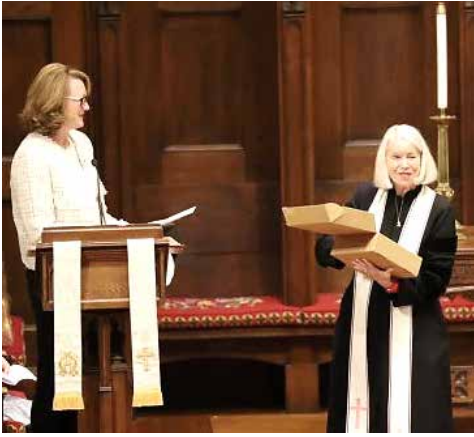
CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM INTERFAITH FRIENDSHIPS STRENGTHEN AT NOVEMBER 15 GATHERING



FAMILY MATTERS – A NEW INITIATIVE FOR FAMILIES TO GATHER MET ON NOVEMBER 18



DR. KIEFFER'S 40TH ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5



BAY WEEKEND WELCOMES THE REV. DR. DEBORAH KRAUSE NOVEMBER 11-12



ST. ANDREW'S SUNDAY CELEBRATES OUR PRESBYTERIAN HERITAGE



PARISH LIFE NEWS by Rev. Christian K. Choi

MISSION AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

CHRISTMAS GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

ADOPT-A-FAMILY: There are 4 days left to purchase gifts for the nine transitional families. Each family has a Wishlist online and a link can be found on www.wpcspi.org. Check to see if there are any remaining items to purchase. All Contact Ministries gifts need to be at the church by December 3 and can be placed under the Christmas tree in the elevator lobby or ordered for direct delivery to Westminster (make sure to notify Jennie Alt to expect a package). The Refugee Family signup will go through December, so look for after Christmas markdowns!



TOYS FOR TOTS box is in the West Narthex. Place unwrapped gifts in it for children of any age through January 1. This is a program of the Marine Corps Reserve.

THE MITTEN TREE for Contact Ministries is in the West Narthex. In addition to children's items, adult gloves, hats, and scarves are needed and collected through January 1.

HUNGER MINISTRIES

HELPING HANDS - Thank you to Cathy Allen and Nancy Canady who provided a meal to 50 Helping Hands clients on November 10. Our December 8 meal will be prepared by Brad and Carolyn Swanson.



SALVATION ARMY MONTHLY MEAL



Thank you to the Hunger Action Team who prepared the November 22 bagged meals. We will gather again on Wednesday, December 27.

STEADFAST NEIGHBOR LITTLE PANTRY

In this season of Advent, let us share the love of Christ by giving people hope, a peace to not worry about empty plates, joy knowing other people care for them, and most importantly, that they are beloved people and children of God. Please sign up to fill the pantry using/clicking the QR code.



GIVE-A-MEAL-A-MONTH DECEMBER MENU

Pancake Mix and Syrup, Canned Hash, Oatmeal Packets, Canned Fruit in 100% juice/water. High-Demand Items: personal hygiene products, shampoo, conditioner, diapers & wipes size 3 & up, granola / nutri-grain / breakfast bars, individual cereal packs, soap.

FAIR TRADE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

Equal Exchange coffee, chocolate, tea, olive oil, nuts and other items will be sold in West Narthex on Sunday, December 3 for stocking stuffers!

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

THE CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING is an annual special collection of the PC(USA). It supports church workers and families in times of need, and funds scholarships for racial/ethnic students. Please give toward this special fund.

BREADLESS BREADLINE SUNDAY raised \$1,098 for the St. John's Breadline which serves hot meals 365 days a year to the underserved. Thank you to all who contributed.

DECEMBER EARTH CARE TIP

With Christmas just around the corner, we can care for creation as we shop! Minimize fuel consumption and emissions by buying local, favoring American-made gifts, reducing redundant shopping trips, and planning ahead to avoid airmail delivery. Prefer smaller and quality gifts over larger plastic ones. Consider natural materials in clothing, which once discarded will return to Mother Earth without plastic residue. Creative reuse can find new life for an unopened gift, a collector's item, a precious antique, or a family heirloom. Dr. Peter Kieffer

2023 ENDOWMENT GRANTS AWARDED

COMPASS FOR KIDS is an afterschool tutoring program for Graham Elementary students on Tuesdays. This year is our 12th year hosting them (Tuesdays), and we are excited that they have 21 students and are still growing. Compass for Kids received \$2,500.

HELPING THE HOMELESS is a one-person operation meeting the needs of the homeless run by Julie Benson. Julie recently won the Service to Mankind Award from Sertoma, Inc. It is the group's highest recognition for a community volunteer. Helping the Homeless received \$2,330.

ILLINOIS PRESBYTERIAN HOME continues to serve the elderly in our community by providing an affordable housing. IPH received \$1,500.

KEMMERER VILLAGE is a Presbyterian Childcare facility which provides residential treatment for the youth, equestrian and recreational therapy, oversight of foster care & adoption services. Kemmerer received \$1,500.

THE OUTLET AND THE COPPER POT STUDIOS have partnered up to mentor young men to become food handler licensed to have work opportunities, and to make a dehydrated bagged meals comparable to Meals-Ready-to-Eat (MREs). The Outlet received \$7,000.

WOODEN IT BE HELPFUL led by Coleman Moore, make and supply furniture that women at WIBL will paint and sell to support their initiative. WIBH received \$1,500.

WOODEN IT BE LOVELY offers hope and employment to women healing from lives of poverty, addiction, and abuse by providing support, education, and employment. WIBL received \$7,000.

MOTHERLAND GARDENS is a dream-became-reality project of Yves Doumen, who envisioned an urban community garden being a produce oasis in East Springfield, which lacks access to fresh produce and education about nutrition. Motherland Gardens received \$1,000.

WESTERN ILLINOIS DREAMERS seeks to empower immigrant and refugee communities by informing them of their rights and securing resources that will foster their successful integration into society. They received \$1,750.

WILL HOVEY'S EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT included the installation of two recycled benches and a Little Library to accompany the Little Pantry at Graham Elementary School. Will received \$770 toward his Eagle Scout Project.

YOUTH FIRST is a ministry to inner-city youth in Los Angeles which meets weekly to share the gospel, provide a meal, and build meaningful relationships. Dr. Kieffer's friend, Dawn Finch, is the Executive Director. Youth First received \$1,500.



YMCA continues to find ways to help the underserved children of the community. Their afterschool program, The Rise & Shine Initiative (formerly The Matthew Project), and summer programs allows for a safe, empowering place to get additional help and receive care. The Rise and Shine Initiative received \$1,500.

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

KNIT 2 PURL 4 MISSION & FELLOWSHIP gathers every Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. in the Second Floor Classroom. A Christmas Dessert gathering will be held on Tuesday, December 19 in the second floor classroom. Knitters will knit at home December 26 and January 2. Contact Mary Jo Jenkins at 217-622-8657.

LYDIA CIRCLE HOSTS A WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS GATHERING FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1 FROM 12:00 - 2:00 P.M.

All women of Westminster and their guests are invited to the Village at 3301 Robbins Rd. We will enjoy an afternoon of tea sandwiches, salads, and desserts with a musical program by the St. Andrews Sisters, accompanied by Dale Rogers.

RUTH AND NAOMI CIRCLE meets on Wednesday, December 7 7:00 p.m. at the home of Judy Knox (2004 Maryknoll PL, 62704). Diane Rutledge will lead the devotional by Teresa of Avila: Striving to Make Progress (pp. 163-169) from the book, Devotional Classics, edited by Richard J. Foster and James Bryan Smith. RSVP to Judy at 217-691-1057.

ELIZABETH CIRCLE meets on Monday, December 11, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. at the Illinois Presbyterian Home for their annual Christmas luncheon, which will be catered by Qdoba for \$17.00 per person (Checks payable to Eleanor VanDeventer). Please bring your own beverage. RSVP by December 4 to Eleanor (217-341-4032).

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

DMA (DON'T MENTION AGE) will resume in March 2024.

PRESBYTERIAN MEN'S BREAKFAST will be Thursday, December 14 at 8:00 a.m. in Parish Hall. Pete VanGieson will present an overview of Westminster's 2023 Mission Giving. Charlie King will provide breakfast. Please RSVP on our website or by contacting the church office.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE AT WESTMINSTER

HOME COMMUNION If you are unable to attend worship and would like to receive Communion at home on December 10, please contact Jennie Alt at the church office. Thank you to the four teams of elders and deacons who made visits to ten members on Sunday, November 12.

BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS & CONSULTATION will be available on Sunday, December 3 by Parish Nurse, Ellen Carpenter.

POINSETTIA DELIVERIES will be made on Sunday, December 17 by the Deacons. Recipients are those who have lost a beloved family member since Easter.

THANK YOU BILL HIBBERT

We are grateful to Bill Hibbert who has served our congregation 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-room DeCastro Senior Living Complex in Jacksonville. It has been Bill's 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 will miss Bill, Mary, and their delicious homegrown tomatoes which they lovingly share with us.



Bill was confirmed at Westminster. He and his wife, Mary, are members of St. Paul Lutheran in Bethel, outside of Jacksonville. They promise to visit and bring Bill's father, Al Hibbert, to worship. We wish Bill and Mary well!

WESTMINSTER NEWS

MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Louise Cragoe celebrates 99 years on December 5.
Dorothy Wire celebrates 94 years on December 11.
Elsie & Bob Fox celebrate 62 years on December 23.
Sharon & James Turner celebrate 55 years on December 27.
Marilyn & Jerry Davis celebrate 61 years on December 30.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

James Arnav McNutt, son of Millie and John McNutt and brother of Luke and Jennifer, will be baptized on December 3.

IN MEMORIAM

The Celebration of Life Service for Gale Jones Fixmer will be Saturday, December 16 at 12 noon with a lunch reception following in Parish Hall.

PRAYERS AND SYMPATHY EXTENDED TO

Norma Adams-Johnson and her husband Frank Johnson on the death of Norma's sister, and to Elisabeth Adams, Aletha Jerome, and Jonathan Adams on the death of their aunt, Judy Woodard on November 4, in Lincoln, IL

Angela and Kevin Simonson, Jen and Jonathan Mitchell on the death of Angela and Jonathan's mother, and to Sam Simonson and Sadie Mitchell on the death of their grandmother, Pat M. Etchill, who died November 18 in Springfield.

NEW ADDRESS

Linda Dillard, 93 Emmett, East Rockaway, NY 11518
Joyce Olson, 207 E. Park St., Arlington Hts, IL 60005

2024 STEWARDSHIP NEWS

Growing in Generosity - Rooted in Faith is the 2024 Stewardship theme. Our church family is made resilient through the faith and generosity of our members.

As of Tuesday, November 28, we received 218 pledges totaling \$839,518 which is 99% of the \$850,000 goal.

Thank you to all who pledged. If you have not made a pledge, please do so before the end of the year. Pledges can also be made online at www.wpcspi.org.

Thank you to the 2024 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.

OCTOBER FINANCIAL REPORT by Lisa Runkle

At the end of October, income continues to be strong and is above budget by \$25,798 and expenses are above budget by only \$1,814. Our net total is \$23,984 income over expenses year-to-date.

2023 Operations	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$ 913,469	\$ 887,671	\$ 25,798
Expenses	\$- 889,485	\$- 887,671	\$ - 1,814
Net Total	\$ 23,984	\$ 0	

YEAR-END 2023 CONTRIBUTIONS

As the end of the year approaches, we want to thank all of those who have made donations to the church, and especially to those who have already fulfilled their 2023 pledge. If you need assistance determining the amount you have donated compared to the amount of your pledge, just call the office, and Lisa Runkle would be happy to help. *Be sure any donations for the 2023 tax year are dated 2023 and received no later than 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 2, 2024.*



**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. Reservation forms will be in the bulletins on December 3, 10 and 17.

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.

**PASTORS BEGIN ELEVENTH YEAR
OF PRAYER MINISTRY**

As Advent approaches and we enter a new cycle of the Christian year, we are delighted to begin the eleventh year of Prayer Ministry at Westminster Presbyterian Church. It is a privilege and honor, as your pastors, to gather each week in our Chancel for prayer. Throughout the year, each member of our congregation is lifted in prayer.

A letter is mailed three weeks prior to the week members are being lifted in prayer to provide an opportunity to share prayer requests.

Westminster Staff

The Reverend Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer
Pastor and Head of Staff
bkieffer@wpcspi.org

The Reverend Christian K. Choi
Associate Pastor for Parish Life
cchoi@wpcspi.org

The Reverend Gerald W. Boutelle
Parish Associate

Dale T. Rogers
Director of Music and the Arts
drogers@wpcspi.org

Mary A. Ray
Interim Director for Youth
zkarmar.mr@gmail.com

Meleah and Aaron Berkowitz
Co-Directors for Children's Ministry
berkowitz@wpcspi.org

Katie L. Moore
Director for Children's Music
kkilduski@gmail.com

Millie McNutt, Erin Winn
Nursery Coordinators

Emily Rowley, Keri Tate
Cooperative Preschool Teachers
emily@westminster-preschool.org
keri@westminster-preschool.org

Ellen Carpenter
Parish Nurse
ranell@comcast.net

Pat Hymans
Hospitality Coordinator
alnpat5@yahoo.com

Lisa Runkle
Financial Administrator
lrunkle@wpcspi.org

Jennie Alt
Church Administrative Assistant
jalt@wpcspi.org

Krista Steller
Communications Coordinator
ksteller@wpcspi.org

Gary Warnick
Building and Property Manager
gwarnick@wpcspi.org

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

Church Offices will be closed on December 25, 26 & January 1.
The Reporter folding and mailing will be Wednesday, January 3.