Westminster Presbyterian Church extends an enthusiastic welcome, in Christ's name, to all who worship here or join us in fellowship. Our church family seeks to embody God's boundless love by embracing, liberating and empowering people – whoever they are and wherever they may be on their faith journeys – to realize the transforming power of Christ in our congregation, community, and the world beyond.

A Covenant Network Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
An Earth Care Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
A Matthew 25 Church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
A Stephen Ministry Congregation
TODAY AT WESTMINSTER

8:45 – 12:15 p.m.  Nursery Care for infants and toddlers in Preschool Suite D

9:00 – 9:55 a.m.  Worship in the Sanctuary

Time with Our Children (approximately 9:15 a.m.)
The young and young-at-heart are invited to join the worship leader at the front of the sanctuary. Following the Time with Our Children, young ones through grade 5 may be escorted to Children’s Programming or they are welcome to remain in worship.

Children’s Programming (9:20 – 10:00 a.m.)
- Preschool Sunday School: Ages 3 and 4 in the Preschool Suite Room C
- Joyful Noise Choir: Kindergarten–Grade 5 in the Youth Music Room

10:00 – 10:45 a.m.  Holy Toast Café in Walton Community Hall
Enjoy free coffee, tea, and fellowship. Breakfast items are available for one dollar.

10:10 – 11:00 a.m.  Children and Youth Programming
- Nursery Care: Age 4 and under in Preschool Suite D
- Kids Zone Sunday School: Kindergarten–Grade 5 in Classroom 1
- Middle School Zone: Grades 6–8 in Classroom 3
- High School: Grades 9–12
  o Confirmation Class in Ruth Christie Room
  o Small Groups in the Library (for already confirmed youth)

Adult Education:
- Experience the Pacific Crest Trail in Classroom 6
  (see announcement on page 6)
- Holiday Traditions in Classroom 3
  (see announcement on page 6)

11:15 – 12:00 p.m.  Living Mosaics worship in Rodney Chapel

3:00 – 4:00 p.m.  WPC Christmas Concert in the Sanctuary

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.  Concert Reception in Rodney Chapel and the Meeting Room

For descriptions of our programs for children and youth, visit wpc.org/children-youth.

The Music: Today’s offertory anthem is a timely arrangement of C.H.H. Parry’s classic hymn tune and offers a new perspective to the poignant prayer for peace written by Carl P. Daw Jr. The Isaiah prophecy echoes through the text with a longing for Christ’s promised reign of peace when all the earth shall know the Lord. Please join us for our Christmas Choral Concert this afternoon at 3 p.m. A reception follows. More information can be found on p. 8.

The sanctuary flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of her brother, Kenny Budd, by Linda Watson and her family. Consider giving the flowers for Sunday worship to remember or honor loved ones or to celebrate an event. Please contact Linda Watson at (302) 571-6719 or lwatson@ycst.com.

Westminster’s Prayer Team prays for the needs of our community. Please submit your prayer request to wpcprayerlist@gmail.com or online at wpc.org/care-support.

You can make a contribution to Westminster Presbyterian Church by visiting our website at wpc.org and clicking the “Donate” button or scan this QR code on your smart phone. We accept donations by bank withdrawal, credit card, and debit card.

Visit wpc.org/staff-leadership for a full listing of Westminster’s staff and leadership.
ORDER OF WORSHIP

~ Passages in bold print may be spoken by all. At the asterisk (*) please stand in body or rise in spirit. ~

TOWER CHIME
Susan Spilecki

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

PRELUDE
Meditation on GREENSLEEVE
Joel Raney
Ted Barr and Tony Thurman, four-hand piano

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE
Rich and Linda Williams

A voice cries out in the wilderness:
“Prepare the way of the Lord.”
A choir sings in the silence,
“Come, Emmanuel.”
Every valley shall be filled.
Every heart shall be made whole,
for peace is stronger than turmoil,
and peace will prevail.

As we light our second Advent candle,
we pray for the holy peace of God.
Come now, O Child of Mary.
Come now, O Prince of Peace.

*HYMN NO. 87
Comfort, Comfort Now My People
GENEVA 42

ADVENT PRAYER

Loving God, in this time of preparation and planning,
we thank you for the hope and peace you continuously offer us.
Show us the creative power of hope.
Teach us the peace that comes from justice.
Prepare our hearts to be transformed
and reveal your vision of peace
that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN
(See “Today at Westminster” on page 2 for more information.)

SCRIPTURE LESSON
Mark 1:1-8
New Testament, page 30
The People Who Walked in Darkness
ISAIAH 9
v. 1: Choir
vv. 2, 3, & 5: Sung by All

OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM
O Day of Peace that Dimly Shines
C.H.H. Parry
arr. Jantz A. Black

O day of peace that dimly shines
through all our hopes and prayers and dreams,
guide us to justice, truth, and love,
delivered from our selfish schemes.
May swords of hate fall from our hands,
our hearts from envy find release,
till by God's grace our warring world
shall see Christ's promised reign of peace.

Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb,
nor shall the fierce devour the small;
as beasts and cattle calmly graze,
a little child shall lead them all.
Then enemies shall learn to love,
all creatures find their true accord;
the hope of peace shall be fulfilled,
for all the earth shall know the Lord.
—Carl P. Daw Jr., 1982

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever. Amen.

*HYMN No. 107
Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn
REJOICE, REJOICE

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE
Westminster Carillon
Carson Cooman

New to Westminster? Welcome! We're so glad you're here. If you are joining us for the first time, please introduce yourself via our contact form on the I’m New page of our website or scan this QR code to get there from your mobile device. We look forward to getting to know you.
2023 Christmas Poinsettias

Deadline: Wednesday, December 13

You are welcome to make a contribution toward the beauty of the church for the Christmas season in memory of, or in honor of, loved ones. The deadline is December 13 for memorial/honoree names to be listed in the Christmas Eve worship bulletins. For any form received after that date, the names will be listed in the December 31 bulletin. Please complete a paper form (available on the credenza in the guest seating area near the reception desk) or complete it online at bit.ly/WPC-Poinsettias-2023. PAYMENT AND FORM MUST BOTH BE RECEIVED. Please remit payment in one of two ways:

Online (Preferred) – Go to wpc.org/donate and click the “Donate Now” button. If you have a login/password to our Realm system, please select “Sign In” to sign in to your profile first. If you do not have a login/password with our system, please select “Give Online” to make a donation as a guest. Choose Poinsettias from the Fund drop-down list.

Check – Make check payable to Westminster Presbyterian Church (memo: Poinsettias) and mail or drop off to Susan Alexander at the church address by December 13.
ADULT EDUCATION

TODAY, DECEMBER 10

Experience the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT)
Presented by Baden Saathoff
10:10 a.m. | Classroom 6 and Zoom
Zoom link: bit.ly/wpc-adult-ed-zoom
Baden just hiked the entire 2,653 miles of the PCT and will share his photos and stories. His five-month “walk” took him from the US-Mexico border to Canada, through three states, seven national parks, and 25 national forests. He faced intense weather conditions and long days. Come hear about who he met, what he ate, and how he felt along the way.

Holiday Traditions
Presented by Bob Cox
10:10 a.m. | Classroom 5
Part of the joy of the holidays is the traditions, many of which have been with us since childhood or our parents’ or grandparents’ childhoods. Other countries and cultures have different traditions. Join Bob Cox as we explore the many different Christmas traditions within the Christian faith. Of course, Dickens will be discussed.

NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

Attending to our Emotions During the Holidays
Facilitated by Janet Steinwedel, Ph.D.
10:10 a.m. | Classroom 6 and Zoom
Zoom link: bit.ly/wpc-adult-ed-zoom
While there is much joy to be had at holiday time, some of us also experience some lows. Memories of lost loved ones and difficult gatherings in the past and the current news can overtake us and depress or deplete our overall energy. Attending to our emotions means allowing for them, paying attention to their message, and finding a healthy way to respond. In this session, we will discuss how we can have realistic expectations, healthy boundaries, and lighten the emotional load of celebration.

ONGOING/WEEKLY

Online Bible Studies
Midweek Manna Bible Study
Wednesdays | 12 p.m. | Zoom
NO MEETING ON DECEMBER 13
Facilitator: The Rev. Sudie Niesen Thompson
Contact: sniesenthompson@wpc.org

Thursday Evening Bible Study
Thursdays | 6–7 p.m. | Zoom
Facilitators: Randy Williamson and Mary Anne Peters
Contact: randywilliamson1@comcast.net

Peace and Justice Thursday Evening Education Event
Learnings from 12 Years of the Creative Vision Factory
With Director Michael Kalmbach
December 14 | 7 p.m. | Zoom
Zoom link: bit.ly/peace-justice-zoom
Hosted by our Peace & Justice Work Group.

For full descriptions of our programs and more adult education and small group opportunities, visit WPC.ORG/ADULTS or check our events calendar at WPC.ORG/EVENTS. Select adult education programs are available as a livestream/recording on our YouTube channel.
**ECHO Giving for Advent**

*ECHO Giving* provides the opportunity to honor someone by making an *ECHO* gift in their name, while supporting the nine local and three global mission partners of Westminster. Your *ECHO* gift made during this season of giving produces life-sustaining reverberations of kindness and goodwill throughout Wilmington and across the world. Gifts of any size are welcome and 100% of dollars donated go directly to the mission organization you select.

*ECHO Giving* Order Forms are available online at [bit.ly/ECHO-Giving-Advent2023](http://bit.ly/ECHO-Giving-Advent2023) and can also be found at the information table in Walton Community Hall during Advent.

You can request gift cards to notify recipients that a gift was made by you in their name.

---

**Christmas Boxes Are Wrapping Up!**

We continue this joyful *Christmas Box Project* tradition at Westminster, although “boxes” will be shopping “bags” again this year. Our mission is to provide food for Christmas dinner and the means to buy gifts for the children in the families. Help bring holiday cheer to families in our community – be a part of this wonderful project!

- **Check and Online Donations**
  Your donations are used to buy ShopRite and Walmart gift cards for the families. Make a financial donation by **DECEMBER 15** for 2023 year-end giving by writing and mailing a **CHECK** to *Westminster Presbyterian Church* (memo: Christmas Box) and either place it in a Sunday offering plate or mail to the church **or** by making an **ONLINE** donation at [wpc.org/donate](http://wpc.org/donate) (preferred method); click the blue “DONATE NOW” button, click “Give Online” (or “Sign In” if you already have a Realm login), enter the amount, and choose “Christmas Box Project” from the fund drop-down list.

- **Distribution Day**
  You are needed on **MONDAY, DECEMBER 11**, between 8 a.m. and 12 noon, for Distribution Day. It’s a joyous time when the Christmas spirit flows with smiles and hugs!

Thank you for your generosity and for sharing the love of Christ!
Experience Christmas at Westminster
Please join us in celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior!

CHRISTMAS CHORAL CONCERT
Today • 3 p.m. • Sanctuary
Starlight and candlelight will enhance this concert of Christmas carols by Jantz Black, Craig Courtney, Dan Forrest, John Rutter, and Mack Wilberg. The Westminster Choir will be joined by Ted W. Barr at our Steinway & Sons concert grand piano, and Dr. F. Anthony Thurman at the organ. A pre-concert Tower Chime recital by Timothy Ohmart begins at 2:30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS HANDBELL CONCERT
Saturday, December 16, 2023 • 4 p.m. • Sanctuary
Experience the joy and wonder of the season across cultures and continents with the Wilmington Handbell Ensemble, Kerry Dietz, artistic director, as they present Carols Around the World. A pre-concert Tower Chime recital by Susan Spilecki begins at 3:30 p.m.

WESTMINSTER CHRISTMAS CAROLING: HOME DELIVERY
Sunday, December 17, 2023 • 12–2:30 p.m. • Walton Community Hall
Team up with the Westminster Choir and our Board of Deacons to share the joy of Christmas at four local retirement communities: Cokesbury, Country House, Maris Grove, and Stonegates. Lunch is provided at 12 noon followed by a 30-minute rehearsal and departure to each caroling site. All ages are welcome – especially children! Contact TonyThurman@wpc.org or (302) 654-5214, ext. 121.

THE LONGEST NIGHT: A SERVICE OF WHOLENESS AND HEALING
Wednesday, December 20, 2023 • 6 p.m. • Rodney Chapel
For many, the holidays bring fresh waves of grief. This contemplative worship service will offer a space for both heartache and hope as we wait in darkness for the Light of the World. On the eve of the longest night of the calendar year, we invite you to join us in this candlelight service of healing and wholeness, with music by the Westminster Choir.

CHRISTMAS EVE
Sunday, December 24, 2023 • Sanctuary
Morning Worship, 10 a.m. – The Fourth Sunday of Advent will be celebrated with joyful music and the lighting of the fourth candle in our Advent wreath. The Rev. Sudie Niesen Thompson will offer an inspired sermon to bring the season of Advent to a close while we wait in anticipation of our Savior's birth.

Children's Pageant, 4:00 p.m. – O come, little children, O come, one and all. This lively service featuring a living crèche and our children's choir will be no silent night! All children are invited to participate in the pageant. Gather for costumes in the Preschool Suite at 3:30 p.m.

Service of Story and Song, 5:30 p.m. – O come, all ye faithful. The Westminster-by-Heart Storytellers will bring new life to ancient scriptures. Westminster's professional soloists, brass, and percussion will trumpet the joy of Jesus' birth! We will celebrate communion (offered to all) and sing by candlelight.

Candlelight Communion Service, 8:00 p.m. – On Christmas night all Christians sing to hear the news the angels bring: news of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful Savior's birth. Our traditional candlelight communion (offered to all) service will include a stirring sermon by the Rev. Dr. Gregory Knox Jones and anthems by the Westminster Choir accompanied by organ, piano, and percussion.

Join us in person or online! All concerts and services held in the sanctuary will be livestreamed/recorded at WPC.ORG/WATCH and on Westminster's YouTube channel.
Comfort, Comfort Now My People

1 "Comfort, comfort now my people; tell of peace!" So says our God.
2 For the herald's voice is crying in the desert far and near,
3 Straight shall be what long was crooked, and the rougher places plain.

"Comfort those who sit in darkness mourning under sorrow's load,
calling us to true repentance, since the reign of God is here.
Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits God's holy reign.

To my people now proclaim that my pardon waits for them!
O, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way.
For the glory of the Lord now on earth is shed abroad,

Tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over.
Let the valleys rise in meeting and the hills bow down in greeting,
and all flesh shall see the token that God's word is never broken.

This 17th-century German paraphrase of Isaiah 40:1-5 was one of the texts translated as part of the 19th-century British interest in German religious poetry. It is set here to one of the most popular Genevan Psalter tunes, probably derived from an earlier French folksong.

TEXT: Johannes Olearius, 1671; trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt.
MUSIC: Genevan Psalms, 1551
86 The People Who Walked in Darkness

Capo 3: (Em) (C/E) (Em) (C/E) (Em)

Gm      Eb/G      Gm      Eb/G      Gm

1. The people who walked in darkness awakened to
2. For God has enlarged the nation, and prospered the
3. The yoke of despair and bondage, the chains of the
4. For us now a child is given, for all the de-
5. How vast is our God's dominion! How far truth and

(D) (G) (B) (Em) (C/E)
F      Bb      D      Gm      Eb/G

see a great light. The people who dwelt in the
fruit of its land. God's people are blest with the
slave master's rod are shattered and scattered like
spised and forlorn. The rule of compassion shall
mercy extend. The zeal of the Lord will ac-

(Em) (Bm) (Cmaj7) (Am7) (Bsus) (B)
Gm      Dm      Ebmaj7    Cm7      Dsus      D

land of the shadow rise to a star shining bright.
harvest of victory, gift from a bountiful hand.
dust in a windstorm, loosed by the justice of God.
rest on his shoulder. God's own Messiah is born!
complish its purpose: justice shall reign with out end.

Refrain

G      (Am7) (D) (G) (C) (F#dim7) (B) (Em)
Cm7      F      Bb      Eb      Adim7      D      Gm

His name is Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God,

(Cmaj7) (G) (Am7) (D) [1|G]
Ebmaj7      Bb      Cm7      F      Bb

Father forever, Prince of Peace.

Peace. (to stanzas) Peace.

One of the great virtues of scriptural paraphrases is that they bring fresh understanding and appreciation to familiar passages. This adaptation of a customary Advent text, Isaiah 9:2-7, provides an effective example of how revisited verses can take on new life when recast.

TEXT: Mary Louise Bringle, 2008
MUSIC: Sally Ann Morris, 2008
Text and Music © 2009 GIA Publications, Inc.

ISAIAH 9
8.8.12.7 with refrain
Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

1 Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn, for angels
2 To us, to all in sorrow and fear, Emmanuel
3 In darkest night his coming shall be, when all the
4 Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night. Though dark the
herald its dawn-ing. Sing out your joy, for soon he is
el comes a-singing; his humble song is quiet and
world is despairing, as morning light so quiet and
winter and cheerless, the rising sun shall crown you with

born, behold! the Child of our longing. Come as a baby
near, yet fills the earth with its ring-ing; music to heal the
free, so warm and gentle and caring. Then shall the mute break
light; be strong and loving and fearless. Love be our song and

weak and poor, to bring all hearts to-gether, he opens
broken soul and hymns of loving-kindness. The thunder
forth in song, the lame shall leap in wonder, the weak be
love our prayer and love our endless story; may God fill

wide the heavenly door and lives now inside us forever.
of his anthems rolls to shatter all hatred and violence.
raised above the strong, and weapons be broken a-sunder.
every day we share and bring us at last into glory.

After attending a carol concert, the author and composer of this hymn was moved to create a contemporary, accessible carol that drew on the familiar images in a new way. There are echoes here of passages such as Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 7:14/ Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 35:5-6, Isaiah 2:4.

TEXT: Marty Haugen, 1983, alt.
MUSIC: Marty Haugen, 1983
Text and Music © 1983 GIA Publications, Inc.