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 very 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 am.  Childrens Programming
- Snack Time for Kid’s Zone K-5th grade in Classroom 2 (10:00 – 10:10 a.m.)
- Christmas Pageant Rehearsal for ages 3 to 5th grade in Preschool Suite/Sanctuary
- Nursery Care for birth through age 2 in Preschool Suite D

Adult Education
- Attending to Our Emotions During the Holidays (see announcement on page 6)

11:00 – 12:00 p.m.  Movie Time for children ages 3 through 5th grade in Preschool Suite C

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

12:00 – 12:30 p.m.  Christmas Caroling pizza lunch and rehearsal in Walton Community Hall (see announcement on page 8)

12:30 p.m.  Leave for caroling for retirement communities

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

The Music: The Westminster Handbell Choir will be ringing five octaves of handbells in worship today: 12 players will ring 60 brass bells for the prelude, offertory, and postlude! Handbell choir rehearsals will resume in February. For information or to participate, contact TonyThurman@wpc.org.

The sanctuary flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Sandy White, Chris Waisanen, Signy Carson, and Barbara Hoover by the Book Talk group. 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
Tim Ohmart

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MINUTE FOR MISSION
Sandy King

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

PRELUDE
ADVENT CAROL
arr. Hal Hopson

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE
Sue and Jerry Spilecki

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.”
The world says, “Worry,”
but we say, “Rejoice!”
The news media says, “Fear,”
but we say, “Rejoice!”

As we light our third advent candle,
we pray for hope, peace, and joy.
Come now, O child of Mary.
Come now, O Prince of Joy.

*Hymn No. 105
People, Look East
BESANÇON

ADVENT PRAYER

Loving God, we open ourselves to you,
trusting that you will guide us to joy-filled lives.
Show us the creative power of hope.
Teach us the peace that comes from justice.
Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared.
Prepare our lives to be transformed,
so that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

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

SCRIPTURE LESSON
1 Thessalonians 5:16-22
New Testament, page 181

SERMON
Gregory Knox Jones
Sunday, December 17, 2023 – Page 4

*HYMN NO. 93

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

TRURO

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

The Four Season: Winter “Largo”

Antonio Vivaldi

arr. Martha Lynn Thompson

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. 611

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

HYMN TO JOY

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

The First Nowell

arr. Kevin McChesney

Westminster Handbell Choir:

Dave Brinkley
Craig Checkel
Charles Donaghy
Jill Getty
Kathleen Kennan
Kelly McCullough

Tim Ohmart
Wendy Perry
Kristine Qualls
Susan Rippin
Beth Singewald
Susan Spilecki

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.
Permissions and Copyrights

Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE #A-736679 and CCLI License #CSPL187609. All rights reserved.

Advent Carol, arr. Hal Hopson.
Copyright © 1994 Choristers Guild. All rights reserved.
Used by permission under ONE LICENSE #A-736679.

People, Look East, Eleanor Farjeon and Martin Shaw.
Text copyright © 1960 David Higham Associates, Ltd. All rights reserved.
Music harm. copyright © 1928 Oxford University Press. All rights reserved.
Used by permission under ONE LICENSE #A-736679.

Copyright © 2006 Choristers Guild. All rights reserved.
Used by permission under ONE LICENSE #A-736679.

The First Nowell, arr. Kevin McChesney.
Copyright © 2013 Choristers Guild. All rights reserved.
Used by permission under ONE LICENSE #A-736679.

---

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.
ADULT EDUCATION

TODAY, 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 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. We will discuss how we can have realistic expectations, healthy boundaries, and lighten the emotional load of celebration.

COMING UP

Sundays, December 24 and 31
NO ADULT EDUCATION

Sunday, January 7, 2024
Congregational Health Network

10:10 a.m. | Classroom 6 and Zoom
Zoom link: bit.ly/wpc-adult-ed-zoom

The Congregational Health Network are faith communities and service organizations in Delaware that collaborate with Nemours to meet the needs of patients with Sickle Cell Disease and their families. They are offered confidential conversations, mentors, life skills training, and a food coach.

Pastor Pat is Chaplain/Research Associate at Nemours Children's Health and has been a Chaplin there since 2016.

ONGOING/WEEKLY

Online Bible Studies
Midweek Manna Bible Study
Wednesdays | 12 p.m. | Zoom
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
“Originalism” in Interpreting the United States Constitution
With Garrett Moritz, Attorney, Ross Aronstam & Moritz
December 21 | 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.
Christmas Offering 2023

Thank you for your generous support of Christ’s work!

Our Christmas Offering bolsters the work of Christ as we empower our brothers and sisters worldwide, shelter and support individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and work for justice and peace. Every dollar you give goes beyond our walls to ministries that share the love of God with those in need. See the [letter we mailed](#) for more information on how your gifts will be distributed.

Please mail your check to the church or place it in the offering plate on a Sunday in December. Or, use our online giving option on the Westminster website – visit [wpc.org/donate](http://wpc.org/donate) and click the DONATE NOW button. Please choose “Sign In” if you have a login with our Realm system or “Give Online” to continue as a guest; then select Christmas Offering from the fund drop-down list.

If you have questions, please contact Colleen Falasco at [cfalasco@wpc.org](mailto:cfalasco@wpc.org) or (302) 654-5214 ext. 131.
Experience Christmas at Westminster

Please join us in celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior!

CHRISTMAS CAROLING: HOME DELIVERY

Sunday, December 17 • 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! For more information about this caroling opportunity, contact TonyThurman@wpc.org or (302) 654-5214, ext. 121.

THE LONGEST NIGHT: A SERVICE OF WHOLENESS AND HEALING

Wednesday, December 20 • 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 • 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 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 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 Christmas Eve worship services will be livestreamed at WPC.ORG/WATCH and on Westminster's YouTube channel. If you missed our two Christmas concerts, check out the recordings on YouTube!
1 People, look east. The time is near of the
crowning of the year. Make your house fair as you are
able; trim the hearth and set the table.

2 Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more
seed is planted there. Give up your strength the seed to
nourish, that in course the flower may flourish.

3 Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the
nest that must be filled. Even the hour when wings are
frozen God for fledging time has chosen.

4 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more
light the bowl shall brim, shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together.

5 Angels, announce with shouts of mirth Christ who
brings new life to earth. Set every peak and valley
humaing with the word, the Lord is coming.

This text was written to provide a new Advent text for an existing carol tune, here named for the city in eastern France where it originated. The author has imaginatively expressed the cosmic implications of Christ's coming by addressing each stanza to a part of creation.

TEXT: Eleanor Farjeon, 1928, alt.
MUSIC: French folk melody; harm. Martin Shaw, 1926
Text © 1960 David Higham Associates, Ltd.
Music Harm. © 1928 Oxford University Press
east and sing to-day:

People, look east:

Love, the Guest, is on the way.
Love, the Rose, is on the way.
Love, the Bird, is on the way.
Love, the Star, is on the way.
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

People, look east: (Love is on the way.)
Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

1 Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold the
2 Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a
3 Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to

King of glory waits; the King of kings is
temple, set apart from earthly use for
thee; here, Lord, abide. Let me thy inner

drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.
heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.
presence feel; thy grace and love in me reveal.

Beginning as a paraphrase of Psalm 24:7-10, this text then applies the door imagery to the singer's heart, and concludes with the individual's welcome of the approaching Savior. It is set to a very effective anonymous 18th-century English tune that has served many texts.

TEXT: Georg Weisss, 1642; trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1855, 1863
MUSIC: Musica Sacra, c. 1778
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

1. Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love!
2. All thy works with joy surround thee; earth and heaven reflect thy rays;
3. Mortals, join the happy chorus which the morning stars began.

Hearts unfold like flowers before thee, opening to the sun above.
Stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise.
Love divine is reigning over us, joining all in heaven's plan.

Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Everbearing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife.

Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.
Chanting bird and flowing fountain, call us to rejoice in thee.
Joyful music leads us sunward in the triumph song of life.

This well-known melody was created to provide a choral setting for J. C. F. von Schiller's poem, "An die Freude" (To joy), as the final movement of the composer's Ninth Symphony. The author, a prominent Presbyterian pastor and author, wrote the words with this tune in mind.

TEXT: Henry van Dyke, 1907, alt.
MUSIC: Ludwig van Beethoven, 1824; adapt. Edward Hodges, 1842, alt.