First Sunday of Advent
December 3, 2023

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**

8:30 – 9:15 a.m.  **Cereal Sunday** for Hanover Food Pantry in the Westminster parking lot

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
  - Confirmation Class in Ruth Christie Room
  - Small Groups in the Library (for already confirmed youth)

**Adult Education:**
- The History and Origin of Christmas Carols
  (see announcement on page 6)

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

11:15 – 12:15 p.m.  **Flying Solo brunch** at BBC Tavern and Grill
(4019 Kennett Pike, Greenville, DE)

For descriptions of our programs for children and youth, visit [wpc.org/children-youth](http://wpc.org/children-youth).

**The Music:** Today’s offertory anthem was composed by Paul and Ruth Manz in 1953 as an outpouring of their faith when their baby son was critically ill. The anthem has become a staple of the sacred choral repertory since being made famous by The King’s College Choir.

**The sanctuary flowers** are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of their parents, John and Louise Fortner and Dick Williams, by Linda and Rich Williams. 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](http://wpc.org/care-support).

**You can make a contribution** to Westminster Presbyterian Church by visiting our website at [wpc.org](http://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](http://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**

Sara Gavenonis

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PASSING OF THE PEACE**

**PRELUDE**

Savior of the Nations, Come

Paul Manz

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE**

Daniel Malzhan

The world says, “All is lost.”
God says, “All is loved.”
The darkness says, “The light is dying.”
The light says, “The fire is catching.”
Fear says, “Cover your eyes and your ears.”
Hope says, “Wait, watch, and listen.”

As we light our first Advent candle,

**we pray for the holy hope of God.**

Come now, O Child of Mary.

**Come now, O Prince of Hope.**

**HYMN NO. 88**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL

v. 1: Solo

vv. 2, 6, 7: Sung by All

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Holy One,**

Christ is coming; your kingdom is drawing near.
We cannot remain unchanged.
As we prepare to welcome the Christ Child,
help us abandon wayward wanderings
and return to faithful paths.
We have neglected to plead the case of the poor,
and ignored the needs of the afflicted.
We have denied our part in systems that oppress,
and turned a blind eye toward injustice.
Renew our minds and transform our hearts,
that our lives might bear the fruit of compassion and care.
Baptize us with your Spirit,
and claim us again for your holy work,
until you come in glory. Amen.

**ASSURANCE OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS**
Peace be to you and grace from him who freed us from our sins,
Who loved us all and shed his blood that we might saved be.
Sing holy, holy to our Lord, the Lord, Almighty God,
Who was and is and is to come; sing holy, holy, Lord!
Rejoice in heaven, all ye that dwell therein,
Rejoice on earth, ye saints below,
For Christ is coming soon!
E’en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come, and night shall be no more;
They need no light nor lamp nor sun, for Christ will be their All!
—Revelation 22, adapted by Ruth Manz

C E L E B R A T I O N O F T H E L O R D ’ S S U P P E R

I N V I T A T I O N T O T H E T A B L E

*HYMN NO. 347  
Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

P I C A R D Y

T H E G R E A T P R A Y E R O F T H A N K S G I V I N G

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Eternal God . . .

T H E L O R D ’ S P R A Y E R

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.

W O R D S O F I N S T I T U T I O N

C O M M U N I O N O F T H E P E O P L E

The Lord’s Supper is open to all who trust in Christ. To receive communion by intinction, please approach the station on either the lectern or pulpit side, take a piece of bread and dip it in the chalice. If you prefer packaged communion elements, you will find those in the bread basket. Please return to your seat to partake of the packaged elements. If you are unable to come to a station, please tell an usher so that you may be served. Those sitting in the balcony will be served in their pews.
PRAYER FOLLOWING COMMUNION

God of Grace, we give thanks that you have gathered us at your table and nourished us with the bread of life. May the meal we have shared strengthen us for service, and sustain us as we go forth to bring good news. Send us out, filled with hope but hungry for a world that resembles your Kingdom. Amen.

*Hymn No. 357

The Days Are Surely Coming

LLANGLOFFAN

*Benediction

Postlude

Toccata on Veni Emmanuel

Thurman

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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.
ADULT EDUCATION

TODAY, DECEMBER 3

The History and Origin of Christmas Carols
Presented by Dr. F. Anthony Thurman, Director of Music/Organist

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

Westminster's Director of Music/Organist Tony Thurman will discuss the history of Christmas carols in their historical context and modern-day usage using selections from the upcoming Christmas Concert to highlight specific examples of composition and style. The adult education hour will conclude with the singing of several Christmas favorites. Dr. Thurman graduated from the Manhattan School of Music with a Doctor of Musical Arts degree and from the University of Louisville with a Master of Music in Organ Performance and Church Music. He has served as Westminster's Director of Music/Organist since August 2020.

NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

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.

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.

ONGOING/WEEKLY

Online Bible Studies
Midweek Manna Bible Study
Wednesdays | 12 p.m. | Zoom
Not meeting 12/6
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
The Power of the Gettysburg Address
With Westminster member David McBride and Wilmington attorney Martin Lessner
December 7 | 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.
**It’s Time for the Christmas Box Project!**

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.

- **Wrap Toys and Pack Bags**
  
  Join the joy of our Christmas Fellowship Dinner in Walton Community Hall on **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8**. Westminster will provide baked ham. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share for 6-8 people. Prior to dinner, your hands will be needed to wrap coffee cans for Christmas Box cookies, wrap and sort gifts for infants to 12-year-olds, and pack wrapped children’s gifts in shopping bags. Please bring your children!

- **Bake and Pack Cookies**
  
  Be an elf on the baking team to make and pack cookies for the Christmas bags. Join Master Cookie Sergeant Jim Carter in the church kitchen on **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9**, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Volunteers are needed! If interested, email pylecarter@comcast.net.

- **Distribution Day**
  
  You are needed on **MONDAY, DECEMBER 10**, 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!

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**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 around the world. Gifts of any size are welcome and 100% of dollars donated go directly to the mission organization you select.


and can be found at the information table in Community Hall.

You can request gift cards to notify recipients that a gift was made by you in their name.
Experience Christmas at Westminster
Please join us in celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior!

CHRISTMAS CHORAL CONCERT
Sunday, December 10, 2023 • 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.
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile until the Son of God appear.
   Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

2. O come, thou Wisdom from on high, who orderest all things mightily; to us the path of knowledge may show; and teach us in her ways to go. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

3. O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy people save and give them victory o'er the grave.

4. O come, thou Root of Jesse, free thine own from Satan's tyranny; from depths of hell thy people here until the Son of God appear.

5. O come, thou Key of David, come and open wide our heavenly home; make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

6. O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here; disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

7. O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind; bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

One stanza of this paraphrase of the great O Antiphons may be sung on each of the last days of Advent as follows:


These titles of the coming Christ appeared in daily Vesper antiphons sung during the week before Christmas; their roots date at least to the reign of Charlemagne. Both text and tune are the fruit of 19th-century efforts to reclaim Christian treasures from pre-Reformation sources.

TEXT: Latin prose, pre-9th cent.; trans. composite
MUSIC: Plainsong; adapt. Thomas Helmore, 1852; arr. John Weaver, 1988
Music Arr. © 1990 John Weaver
Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence 347

1. Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand; ponder nothing earthly minded, for with blessing in his hand;
   earth he stood, Lord of lords, in human nature, in the body and the blood,
sleepless eye, veil their faces to the mind, for with blessing in his hand;
   way, as the Light of light despatched from the realms of endless day, presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry,

2. King of kings, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth he stood, Lord of lords, in human nature, in the body and the blood,
sleepless eye, veil their faces to the mind, for with blessing in his hand;
   way, as the Light of light despatched from the realms of endless day, presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry,

3. Rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its van-guard at his feet the six-winged seraph, cherubim, with minded, for with blessing in his hand;
   way, as the Light of light despatched from the realms of endless day, presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry,

4. At his feet the six-winged seraph, cherubim, with minded, for with blessing in his hand;
   way, as the Light of light despatched from the realms of endless day, presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry,

Christ our God to earth descendeth, he will give to all the faithful that the powers of hell may vanish
"alleluia, alleluia,

our full homage to demand; his own self for heavenly food;
   as the shadows clear a way, alleluia, Lord most high!"

The flowering of English hymnody in the 19th century included the rediscovery, translation, and versification of ancient Christian hymns, such as this text from one of the earliest existing Christian liturgies. It is set here to an adaptation of a 17th-century French melody.

MUSIC: French melody; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906
PICARDY

8.7.7.8.7
(alternate harmonization, 274)
The Days Are Surely Coming

1 The days are surely coming, says God to all the earth,
when you will see my promise: salvation come to birth.

2 The days are surely coming, says Christ, the promised one,
when you will read my warning in moon and stars and sun.
the fullness of God's presence, God's promise, come to pass.

3 The days are surely coming when we will know at last
My righteousness and justice will spread throughout the land
Though earth and heaven tremble, stand up and do not fear,
Then righteousness and justice will spread throughout the land

and you will be delivered by my almighty hand.
for I am your redeemer, and I am drawing near.
and we will be delivered by God's almighty hand.

This text uses imagery from Jeremiah 33:14–16 and Matthew 24:29–36/Mark 13:24–32/Luke 21:25–36. These passages are especially associated with the beginning of Advent, a season that looks forward to Christ's second coming while also preparing us to remember his first coming.

TEXT: David Gambrell, 2009
MUSIC: Welsh folk melody; Llywbra Moliant, 1872; harm. The English Hymnal, 1906
Text © 2011 David Gambrell (admin. Presbyterian Publishing Corp.)

LLANGOLFFAN
7.6.7.6.D