First Sunday of Christmas
December 31, 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

9:45 – 11:15 p.m.  Nursery Care for infants and toddlers in Preschool Suite D

10:00 – 10:55 a.m.  Worship in the Sanctuary

**Time with Our Children (approximately 10:15 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 second grade will be escorted to the Preschool Suite. Children are welcome to remain in worship.

10:20 – 11:00 a.m.  Children’s Programming
Age 2 to Grade 2 in Preschool Suite Classroom C

11:00 – 11:45 a.m.  Coffee and tea in the Meeting Room
(adjacent to Rodney Chapel)

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

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**The Music:** The Westminster Choir is enjoying a well-deserved break this morning and will return to the choir loft next Sunday. Rehearsals are on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. and Sundays at 8 a.m. For more information or to participate, contact TonyThurman@wpc.org or speak with him after the service.

**The sanctuary flowers** are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Donna Nelson, beloved grandmother, mother, and wife by Fred Nelson and 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.
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

PASSING OF THE PEACE

PRELUDE Toccatina on Angels We have Heard on High Richard Elliott

CALL TO WORSHIP

We stand at the turning of the year,
looking back on what has been
and ahead to what is to come.
Our faith is fragile because our world is plagued by suffering and evil.

Our hope is dimming as our world is torn apart by hate and violence.
Our world is but a shadow of the greatness for which God created it.

And yet we cling to the vision we discover in the Scriptures:
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will never overcome it.

*HYMN NO. 119 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing MENDELSSOHN

OPENING PRAYER

Mighty God,
who brought us through the darkness of the night
to the light of this new day,
we give you thanks:
for the light of beauty that whispers its truth in surprising ways,
for the light of compassion that washes life-battered feet,
and for the light of joy that glows even in the darkness of grief and suffering.

We pray that you will guide us through this year:
whether in dark or light,
whether in heartbreak or gladness
whether in trial or celebration,
that your light might shine in us and through us
into the dark corners of our world.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the light of the world. Amen.

TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN (See “Today at Westminster” on page 2 for more information.)
Scripture Lesson
John 1:1-9
New Testament, page 79

Sermon
Gregory Knox Jones

*Hymn No. 108
Of the Father's Love Begotten
DIVINUM MYSTERIUM

Offering

Offertory
Still, Still, Still
Paul Manz

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. 152
What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright
PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

*Benediction

Postlude
In Thee Is Gladness
J.S. Bach

Please join us for coffee, tea, and fellowship in the Meeting Room.

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.
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**SUNDAY, JANUARY 7**

**Congregational Health Network**  

**10:10 a.m. | Classroom 6 and Zoom**  

The Congregational Health Network (CHN) is a group of faith communities and service organizations in Delaware collaborating with Nemours to meet the needs of patients with Sickle Cell Disease and their families. They are offered confidential conversations with Pastor Pat, mentors, life skills training, and a food coach. No religious or church affiliation is required to take advantage of any of these offerings.

Rev. Weikart is a Minister of Word and Sacrament of the PC(USA), Chaplain/Research Associate at Nemours Children’s Health since 2016, former Client Executive with IBM Corporation.

**Let’s Talk About It**  
**10:10 a.m. | Ruth Christie Room**

We are happy to bring back this beloved series. Join us for a lively discussion of a timely topic that is current that week/month.

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**ONGOING/WEEKLY**

**Online Bible Studies**

**Midweek Manna Bible Study**  
**Wednesdays | 12 p.m. | Zoom**  
Facilitator: The Rev. Sudie Niesen Thompson  
Contact: [sniesenthompson@wpc.org](mailto:sniesenthompson@wpc.org)

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

**Peace and Justice Thursday Evening Education Event**

Westminster’s Peace & Justice Work Group wishes everyone a very Happy New Year with gratitude for the many blessings God provides.

On Thursday, January 4, 2024, at 7 p.m., we encourage you to participate in a Zoom program – *The Healing Path* – presented by contemplative practitioner and clinical psychologist James Finley, sponsored by the Community for Integrative Learning. For more details and to register, visit [cil-de.org/events](http://cil-de.org/events).

Our Peace & Justice Work Group education series via Zoom resumes on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 7 p.m. We look forward to seeing you!

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For full descriptions of our programs and more adult education and small group opportunities, visit [WPC.ORG/ADULTS](http://WPC.ORG/ADULTS) or check our events calendar at [WPC.ORG/EVENTS](http://WPC.ORG/EVENTS). Select adult education programs are available as a livestream/recording on our YouTube channel.
GUEST PREACHER ON JANUARY 7

The Rev. Dr. Silvester Beaman

The Reverend Dr. Silvester Beaman was the pastor of Bethel AME Church in Wilmington for 28 years. He delivered the Benediction at the inauguration of President Joe Biden in 2021, and later that year was consecrated as a Bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church serving a district that includes South Africa, Namibia, and Angola.

In September, 2023, he was appointed chair of the President’s Advisory Council on African Diaspora Engagement. We are honored to have him preach at Westminster on Sunday, January 7.

Music at Westminster

JOHN S. DIXON, ORGAN

Sunday, January 14, 2024 | 3 p.m.

Experience the gift of music in our beautiful sanctuary as the 2023-2024 Westminster Concert Series continues on Sundays at 3 p.m. On January 14, John Dixon, the organist and composer-in-residence at Providence Presbyterian Church in Virginia Beach, will present a solo recital featuring his original compositions. All are invited. A free-will offering is requested.

Please join us in person or livestream over WPC’s YouTube channel!
PASTORAL STAFF
The Rev. Dr. Gregory Knox Jones, Head of Staff
The Rev. Sudie Niesen Thompson, Associate Pastor
The Rev. Jill Getty, Pastoral Care Assistant

MUSIC STAFF
Dr. F. Anthony Thurman, Director of Music/Organist
Rebecca Hughes; Margaret Mezzacappa; Teddy Austin; Jerry Polman, Section Leaders
Emily Haas, Director of Music for Children and Youth
Cole Walker, Choral Assistant for Children and Youth

VIDEOGRAPHERS
Tanner Freeman (lead videographer), Rich Albert, Drew Holmes, Chip Pfleegor,
Roger Reinicker, Aaron Wemhoff, Sophia Wolff and Deanna Sparling

COMMUNION STEWARDS
Dan Weintraub and Jenn Barrington

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES STAFF
Kathleen Kennan, Director of Christian Education and Youth Ministry
Sydney Walker, Associate Director of Youth Ministry
Stephanie Burris-White, Director of Preschool Ministries, and Beatrice Taylor, Nursery

SUPPORT STAFF
Susan Alexander, Reception Area Supervisor
Mary Clark, Administrative Assistant
Paul Crothamel, Director of Facilities and Security
Colleen Falasco, Director of Financial Operations
Doug Gerdts, Manager of Accounting and Reporting
Nicole Hughes, Director of Marketing and Communications
Cathy Lang, Administrative Assistant
Robert King; Daniel Steele; Joan Truitt; John Young, Sextons

SESSION
Taryn Albert, Adam Blackford, Michelle Butler, Clark Collins, Bob Cox, Sara Dubberly, Rob Gooderham,
Laura Holmes, Dick Jolly, Carla Krupanski, KC Morrison, Dave McBride,
Susan McPheeters, Jan Patrick, Chip Pfleegor, Todd Piercy, Carrie Saathoff, Laura Scanlan,
Kent Smith, Janet Steinwedel, Karissa Thacker, Gill Timon, Dan Weintraub

BOARD OF DEACONS
Liz Bacon, Lisa Bianchi, Jennifer Blackford, Heather Brooks, Russ Butler, Kyle Carrick,
Beatty Chadwick, Diane Chandler, Jack Coleman, Joe Daley, Tammy Daley, Kendra Gallagher,
Sara Gavenonis, Jamie Hickey, Drew Holmes, Barbara Jobe, Sheran Kegerise, Elaine Lunardi,
Sarah Mentzer, Robert Moore, Gathoni Murugi-Jenkins, Dan McAllister, Debbie McCullough, Lynne Perkins,
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Lois Underhill, Ginger Ward, Sandie Reinicker, Sue Weissinger, Sandra Wermus, Kathy Wissner

TRUSTEES
Rich Albert, Tom Brooks, Nancy Fleming, John Gavenonis, Lou Hering,
Bobbe Hoy, Brock Jobe, Sue Linderman, Robert Love, Tom Preston, Kris Qualls, Stan Stevenson

PARTNERS IN WORLDWIDE MINISTRY
DR Congo – PC(USA) Mission Co-workers: Jeff and Christi Boyd, Larry and Inge Sthreshley;
Kananga Presbytery and Members of Kamulumba-Ditalala Parish Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon
Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches, Israel/Palestine – Peace Drums Steel Band
Guatemala - CEDEPCA, AJPU, the Association of Mam Christian Women for Development,
PC(USA) Mission Co-workers Betsey and Eric Moe
1 Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born king.
2 Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the ever-lasting Lord,
3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righ-teousness!

Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!
late in time behold him come, offspring of the virgin's womb.
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.

Joyful, all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail the incarnate deity,
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,

with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!
pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.

Brought together in the mid-19th century, the text and tune of this familiar carol began in quite different forms. The text had ten stanzas and began, "Hark, how all the welkin rings." The tune was created for a festival celebrating Gutenberg's introduction of moveable type.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born king!"
Of the Father's Love Begotten

1 Of the Father's love be-got-ten, ere the worlds began
2 By his Word was all cre-at-ed; he com-mand-ed; it
3 O, that birth for-ev-er bless-ed when the Vir-gin, full
4 This is he whom seers in old time chant-ed of with one
5 O ye heights of heaven, adore him. An-gel hosts, his prais-
6 Christ, to thee with God the Fa-ther, and, O Ho-ly Ghost,

to be, he is Al-pha and O-me-ga; he the
was done: heaven and earth and depths of o-cean, uni-
of grace, by the Ho-ly Ghost con-ceiv-ing, bore the
ac-cord, whom the voic-es of the proph-ets prom-is-
es sing. Powers, do-min-ions, bow be-fore him, and ex-
to thee, hymn and chant and high thanks-giv-ing and un-

source, the end-ing he, of the things that are, that
verse of three in one, all that sees the moon's soft
Sav-iour of our race, and the babe, the world's Re-
in their faith-ful word. Now he shines, the long ex-
tol our God and King. Let no tongue on earth be
wea-ried prais-es be. Hon-or, glo-ry, and do-

have been, and that fu-ture years shall see,
shin-ing, all that breathes be-neath the sun,
dee-m, first re-vealed his sa-cred face,
pect-ed. Let cre-a-tion praise its Lord,
si-lent; ev-ery voice in con-cert ring,
min-ion, and e-ter-nal vic-to-ry,

(after stanza 6)

ev-er-more and ev-er-more! A-men.

Seldom has the wonder of the Incarnation been expressed so beautifully as in this text, created in the era when the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds were being codified and mindful of similar theological affirmations. It is set here to a plainchant melody from the late Middle Ages.

TEXT: Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 5th cent.;
MUSIC: Plain song. Mode V; harm. C. Winfred Douglas, 1940
Music Harm. © 1943, 1961, 1985 Church Pension Fund
What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright

1 What star is this, with beams so bright, more
2 'Tis now ful - filled what God de - creed, "From
3 While out - ward signs the star dis - plays, an
4 O Je - sus, while the star of grace im -

love - ly than the noon - day light? 'Tis
Ja - cob shall a star pro - ceed"; and
in - ward light the Lord con - veys and
pels us on to seek your face, let

sent to an - nounce a new - born king, glad
lo! the east - em sa - ges stand to
urg - es them, with ten - der might, to
not our sloth - ful hearts re - fuse the

read in heaven the Lord's com - mand.
seek the giv - er of the light.
guid - ance of your light to use.

This 18th-century Latin text calls attention to three kinds of light: the light of the star leading the Magi to the Christ-child, the inward light inspiring their journey, and Christ who is the Light of the world. The simple unison melody unites everything in a gentle arc.