

WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
First Sunday in Advent
29 November 2026 + 10:00 a.m.

Welcome and Announcements

Introit An Invitation for Advent — Advent Singers

Come to us, Emmanuel, come to us Lord Jesus.
Come and set us free. We lift our longing hearts to you.
Come and bring us peace. 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.

***Ringing of the Bell**

***Lighting the First Advent Candle and Call to Worship**

Leader: In the temple, an old priest was told, "Do not be afraid" – and still, he did not believe.

People: We light this candle for everyone who has ever doubted a promise too good to be true.

Leader: His silence was not the end of the story. Something was still growing.

People: We light this candle for the waiting that feels like nothing, but hides something more.

(The First Advent Candle is lit.)

Leader: Fear did not get the final word for Zechariah. It will not get the final word for us.

People: Come, Lord Jesus. We are waiting – afraid, and yet, hoping.

***Processional Hymn 82** Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus — *Hyfrydol*

***Unison Prayer of Confession**

Emmanuel, God with us, we confess how hard it is for us to wait. Like Zechariah, we have a hard time waiting on you, and we lose hope so quickly when it seems as though you aren't answering our prayers in the ways we hope. Sometimes your timing is mysterious. Sometimes you answer our longings and our prayers in ways we have a hard time comprehending. Take away all the barriers in our lives that keep us from being able to hear you, to know you, and to love you with all our hearts. And give us ears to hear your gentle voice saying, "Be not afraid." Amen.

***Silent Confession**

During this silence, worshipers are asked to offer individual prayers of confession.

***Sung Response**

Lord Have Mercy Upon Us — Hymnal, Back Cover

***Declaration of Pardon and Passing of the Peace**

Leader: Friends, believe the good news.
People: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.
Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.
People: And also with you.
Leader: Let us greet one another with the sign of peace.

***Response of Praise**

Gloria Patri — Hymnal, Back Cover

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be
world without end, Amen, Amen.

Children's Sermon

Congregational Response

Come, Savior, quickly come; come. Come Savior, quickly come. Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, come, Savior, quickly come. *(repeat three times)*

Following the response, children in Pre-Kindergarten–Grade 5 will go to their Sunday school classes and youth in Grades 6-7 go to Confirmation Prep class.

Prayer for Illumination

First Scripture Reading Luke 1:5-12 Pew Bible, NT page 56

Second Scripture Reading Luke 1:13-25 Pew Bible, NT page 56

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon Fear Not: Risking Hope Rev. Sarah A. Bishop

Anthem Angels Are Making Their Rounds Pepper Coplin

Angels are making their rounds, O what a beautiful sound. Fear not, Zechariah, for the Lord has heard your prayer. Elizabeth with bear a son. Hail, O blessed one, you have found favor with God. Fear not, Joseph, go and take Mary to be your wife, for she carries a holy Child. Unto you is born a Savior, glory to God and peace on earth, for now the Lord is with you. Angels are making their rounds, O what a beautiful sound. Heaven's glory comes down when angels are making their rounds.

***Affirmation of Faith** The Confession of 1967

With an urgency born of this hope, the church applies itself to present tasks and strives for a better world. It does not identify limited progress with the kingdom of God on earth, nor does it despair in the face of disappointment and defeat. In steadfast hope, the church looks beyond all partial achievement to the final triumph of God. "Now to God who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

The Church at Prayer

Choir: Surely the presence of our God is in this place,
I can feel God's mighty power and God's grace.
I can hear the brush of angels' wings
I see glory on each face;
Surely the presence of our God is in this place.

Pastor: The Lord be with you.
People: And with your spirit.
Pastor: Let us pray.

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer — Hymnal, page 35

The Presentation of Our Gifts — *At this time all worshipers are asked to sign and pass the Ministry of Friendship folders in the pew racks.*

Offertory — Savior of the Nations, Come — J.S. Bach

***Offertory Response** — Doxology — Hymnal, 606

Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God, all creatures here below!
Praise God above, ye heavenly host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***Prayer of Dedication**

God who gave without holding back—a promise to Zechariah, a child to Mary, a dream to Joseph, a sky to the shepherds—we bring these gifts, small as they may seem beside such abundance. Take our fear along with our offering and make of both something we could not make alone. In the name of the one who was given first to us, Emmanuel. Amen.

***Hymn 314** — Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness *Christ, Be Our Light*

***Charge and Benediction**

***Closing Response** — Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

***Voluntary** — Savior of the Nations, Come — Kenneth Koshche

(*) The congregation is invited to stand.

THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO DONATE TO WESTMINSTER MINISTRIES ARE WELCOME TO SCAN HERE

SERVING THIS SUNDAY AT WESTMINSTER

- **Chancel Flowers** are given in honor of the birthday of The Rev. Dr. William M. Cross by his son, John Cross.
- **Sunday Liturgist:** Rev. Gerald W. Boutelle
- **Lighting the Advent Candle:** Judy and Harvey Stephens
- **Acolytes:** Caroline Bryans and Sam Berkowitz
- **Greeter:** Mary Ray
- **Safety Team:** Alan Schuermann
- **Ushers:** Joyce King (Head Usher), Andrew Affrunti, Ben Arnold, Michella Arnold, Linda Caupert, Chelsea Ekstedt, and Pete Sherman
- **Music:** The Advent Singers: Sam Berkowitz, Harper Huston, Reese Huston, Macklin Metzger, Lily Swanson; The Westminster Choir, Dale Rogers, Organist
- **Videographers and Sound**: Bill Deemer, Krista Steller, and William Affrunti

EDUCATION AND FELLOWSHIP THIS SUNDAY AT WESTMINSTER

- **9:45 a.m. – 12 noon Infants, toddlers, and two-year-olds (Nursery)** gather for play and Bible Story. *Caregivers: Erin Winn*
- **10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Children in Pre-K – Grade 5 Sunday School**
  - **PreK – Grade 2 (Third Floor Chapel)** *Teachers: Meleah Berkowitz & Cathy Brower*
  - **Grade 3 – Grade 5 (Third Floor Tower Room)** *Teacher: Aaron Berkowitz*
- **10:15 – 12:00 p.m. Confirmation Classes**
  - **Grades 6 & 7** meet from 10:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. in the Conference Room during worship (except on Communion Sundays).
  - **Grade 8** meets from 11:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in the Conf. Room following worship.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WE WELCOME VISITORS! Information about us is on our website www.wpcspi.org. Please complete the Ministry of Friendship folder located at the end of each pew. If you are interested in joining Westminster, speak with one of the pastors.

REGULAR CHURCH OFFICE HOURS AND A WARM WELCOME – We are pleased to announce that **beginning Monday, November 30, the Church Office will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

We are also delighted to welcome Christina Spa, who will be managing the Church Office while we conduct our search for a new church Administrative Assistant. We are grateful that she will be helping keep the office running smoothly during this transition.

Please stop by the Church Office, introduce yourself, and give Christina a warm Westminster welcome! We look forward to having her as part of our church community.



2027 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN – Pledges for 2027 were dedicated during our worship service on November 1 as a symbol of our faithfulness to this covenant community. As of Thursday, November 26, we have now reached 78% of our $989,770 goal. Our total pledged from 155 families is $773,092. We are still accepting 2027 pledges. Simply place a completed pledge card in the offering plate today. Pledges can also be made online using the QR code in this bulletin: click on the menu lines, choose Giving, then choose 2027 Stewardship. **The stewardship team will reach out to those who have not yet renewed their pledge next week.**

YEAR-END 2026 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 2026 pledge.

Be sure any donations for the 2026 tax year are dated December 31, 2026 or earlier and delivered to the church no later than 5:00 p.m. Monday, January 4, 2027.

If you need assistance determining the amount you have donated compared to the amount of your pledge, just call, and Lisa Runkle would be happy to help.

STOCK DONATIONS -- Please contact Lisa Runkle, Financial Administrator, for instructions to make a stock donation and to alert us to watch for the stock transfer at our brokerage firm.

CONTACT MINISTRIES CHRISTMAS GIFT SIGN-UPS are ongoing. **The deadline for signing up is Tuesday, December 1** and the deadline for financial contributions is, today, Sunday, November 29. Visit the Westminster website for instructions on how to sign up and drop off gifts. If you need help signing up, please contact the Church Office.

YOUTH CONTACT MINISTRIES SHOPPING after worship on Sunday, December 6. All Youth (6th grade through 12th grade) meet Rev. Sarah and Mary Ray in the West Narthex to head out together to shop for Contact Ministries youth. Parents are welcome to join as drivers.

THE 2026 MUSICAL ADVENT DEVOTIONAL is available on the Westminster website, or a print copy can be picked up at the Sanctuary doors. This year's daily devotional includes reflections, prayers, coloring pages and music. The Spotify music playlist is accessible by scanning the QR code to be taken directly to the Spotify app. Important information regarding Westminster's Advent and Christmas events are up front for easy access.

KNIT 2 PURL 4 MISSION AND FELLOWSHIP gathers on **Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m.** in the Second-Floor Classroom. The group is knitting colder weather items for children and adults. The Mitten Tree is located near the elevator. Members are encouraged to add gloves of all sizes. All items will be donated to Contact Ministries. Knitters of any skill level are welcome. Please contact Mary Jo Jenkins at 218-622-8657 for more information.

HARMONY FOR THE HOLIDAYS – Celebrate the start of the holiday season with the Sound Celebration Chorus concert today, **Sunday, November 29 at 2:00 pm** at Grace Lutheran Church located at 714 E. Capitol Ave. There is no charge to attend, but a free-will donation will be accepted with a portion of the proceeds going to the Grace Lutheran Food Pantry. Canned goods and nonperishables are also welcome. Westminster members Sue Baker and Mary Gail Romack are members of the chorus.

RUTH & NAOMI CIRCLE meets Wednesday, December 2 at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Lucy Stafford (10626 Salisbury Rd., Pleasant Plains, IL). Vonnie Hinesley will lead the discussion of Chapter 4 of their study of *An Altar in The World*. RSVP directly to Lucy at 217-971-5673.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR – The Westminster Children's Choir will meet on **Wednesday, December 2 and 9 at 5:00 p.m.** in preparation for their presentation of *Do Not Be Afraid* during worship on Sunday, December 13.

ELIZABETH CIRCLE meets for a Christmas Lunch at Café Moxo on **Monday, December 7 at 12:00 p.m.** Circle Contact: Eleanor VanDeventer at 217-341-4032.

WESTMINSTER'S ALL WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS TEA will be on Friday, December 11 at noon. The Elizabeth Circle is hosting this festive event in Parish Hall. All women of Westminster and their guests are invited to enjoy a light luncheon with special music for the Christmas season by the St. Andrew's Sisters. The cost is five dollars at the door. **Please RSVP to the Church Office by December 4.** You may also RSVP on the website under "Congregational Life/Fellowship Opportunities."

ADVENT CELEBRATION on December 13 at 11:00 a.m. after the service. We will gather in Parish Hall to celebrate our children's Christmas Pageant and the beginning of the holiday season. Come and sing Christmas carols with us, decorate some Christmas cookies, make an ornament, and enjoy the hot chocolate bar!

WESTMINSTER CHRISTMAS VESPERS, a program of carols and choral music for Advent and Christmas will be presented by the Westminster Choir, the St. Andrew's Sisters, Linda Andrews, Organist, and Dale Rogers, Director of Music on **Sunday, December 20 at 4:00 p.m.**

CHRISTMAS EVE DINNER RESERVATIONS 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

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 $27.00, children 6-12 are $15.50 and children ages 5 and under are no charge. **Reservations and payment must be made no later than Friday, December 18.** Please send your payment and number attending to the Church Office or visit the reservation link on our website by scanning this QR code. Large families are encouraged to reserve tables.

THIS WEEK AT WESTMINSTER

Monday, November 30

Tuesday, December 1

10:30 AM Staff Meeting (2nd Floor Classroom)
1:00 PM Knit 2 Purl 4 (2nd Floor Classroom)
3:00 PM Compass for Kids
6:00 PM Stewardship Follow-Up Meeting (Library)
7:00 PM St. Andrew's Sisters (Off-Site)

Wednesday, December 2

10:30 AM Worship Planning (Pastor's Study)
3:30 PM DBSA Group (3rd Floor Classroom)
4:00 PM Property Meeting (2nd Floor Classroom)
5:00 PM Bridges (Tower Classroom)
5:30 PM Mission & Community Service Committee (2nd Floor Classroom)
6:00 PM Children's Choir (Music Room)
6:30 PM D & D Group (Library)
7:00 PM Ruth & Naomi Circle (Off-Site)

Thursday, December 3

2:30 PM Early Stage Memory Loss Group (2nd Floor Classroom)
6:30 PM Preschool Board Meeting (Library)
7:00 PM Choir (Music Room)

Friday, December 4

Saturday, December 5

Sunday, December 6

Second Sunday of Advent
10:00 AM Worship Service
10:15 AM Sunday School (Pre-K to Grade 5)
10:15 AM Confirmation Prep (Conference Room)
11:15 AM Adult Ed Forum (Parish Hall)
11:15 AM Contact Ministries Sorting – Mission Committee (Youth Room)
11:15 AM Youth Shop for Contact Ministries

WESTMINSTER STAFF

The Reverend Dr. Anne Marshall
Pastor and Head of Staff

The Reverend Sarah A. Bishop
Associate Pastor for Family Ministry

The Reverend Gerald W. Boutelle
Parish Associate

Dale T. Rogers
Director of Music and the Arts

Sue Sawers, CRE
Interim Care Coordinator

Dr. Aaron Berkowitz
Education Coordinator

Mary A. Ray
Director for Youth

Meleah Berkowitz
Director for Children's Ministry, Westminster Cooperative Preschool, and Music Assistant

Keri Tate, Becky Nika
Cooperative Preschool Teachers

Kara Milward, Erin Winn
Nursery Coordinators

Pat Hymans
Hospitality Coordinator

Lisa Runkle
Financial Administrator

Christina Spa
Interim Administrative Assistant

Gary Warnick
Building and Property Manager

Braden Barton, Terry Gietl, Lamonte Gross, Jerry McCullum
Part-time Custodians

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