

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, December 3, 2023 | On Demand on Facebook & YouTube | 9a & 11:15a



First Sunday of Advent

Preparation for **Worship**

"Life in a prison cell may well be compared to Advent; one waits, hopes, does this, that, or the other...the door is shut, and can only be opened *from the outside.*"

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Gathering and Preparing for **God's Word**

Welcome and Announcements

Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

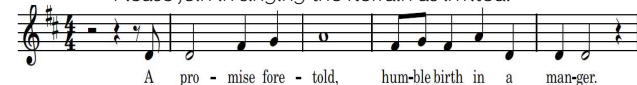
9a Skip & Carrie Gordon

11:15a Larkin Watson & Ginny Wolfe, Henry and Harrison Wolfe-Watson

Prelude Veni Emmanuel Biery

Introit Advent Haiku Monsell

Please join in singing the Refrain as invited.



A pro - mise fore - told, hum-ble birth in a man-ger.



Je - sus our Sav - ior. A

* Call to Worship Psalm 27:1, 13-14

Leader: The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?

People: **The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?**

Leader: I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.

People: **Wait for the Lord;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the Lord!**

All: **Let us worship God!**

* Hymn 88 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" VENI EMMANUEL
Stanzas 1, 2, 6, 7 only

* Prayer of Confession

**Holy God, you alone are our hope and strength,
and you are always faithful to your promises.
Yet we have placed hope in our own strength,
and our faith in you has faltered.
We live casual lives, pursuing self-centered ambitions
and seeking our own comfort.
We accept lies as truth, exploit neighbors, abuse the earth,
and refuse your justice and peace.
Forgive us, gracious God.
Grant us grace to walk with the weak, the vulnerable,
and the forgotten.
Make us an expectant and patient people,
so that we would see your face in our neighbor's face,
and share Christ's love with all. Amen.**

* Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

People: **In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.**

* Gloria Patri, Hymn 581 GLORIA PATRI

**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.**

11:15a Children in K5 - first grade are invited to leave for Children's Church.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Hearing **God's Word**

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Lesson, *Isaiah 11:1-4a*

p. 558

Gospel Lesson, *Luke 1:26-38*

p. 831

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon "Nothing Will Be Impossible with God"

Responding to **God's Word**

*Affirmation of Faith *The Nicene Creed*

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of
heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from
Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being
with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and
for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of
the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered
death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in
accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and
is seated on the right hand of the Father. He will come again
in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will
have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who
proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and
the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the
prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We
look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world
to come. Amen.**

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Invitation

The Great Thanksgiving and The Lord's Prayer

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

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.**

Words of Institution

Distribution of the Elements

Music during Communion *Comfort, Comfort*

arr. Ferguson

Prayer after Communion

Offering

Offertory 9a *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* Miller

Offertory 11:15a *Lo, How a Rose, E'er Blooming* arr. Overby

* Doxology Hymn 606 OLD HUNDRETH

**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.**

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

* Hymn 105

"People, Look East"

BESANÇON

* Charge and Benediction

* Choral Response 11:15a

Hymn 80 "You Shall Go Out with Joy" THE TREES OF THE FIELD

* Postlude

Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying

Wold

**All who are able may stand*

Leading Worship **this Morning**

Ben Dorr, *preaching*

Mary Kathleen Duncan, *liturgist*

Buz Wilcoxon, *scripture reader*

Todd Monsell, *organist/pianist*

Rosemary Hughes, *flute*

Rosemary Hughes, Kathi Hurst, Marlon Hurst, Hunter Smith, *quartet*

Youth Choir (9a)

Lillian Threatt (9a), *solo*

Lynne Robinson (9a), *pianist*

Sanctuary Choir (11:15a)

Jacob Barker, *head usher*

Zach Weaver, Walker Miller, Stan Pendergrass,

Zach Freeman, Jeff Reynolds (9a), *greeters*

Amy Hawkins, Anne Howson, George McLarty,

Emily Cole, Ingrid Erwin (11:15a), *greeters*

Worship Notes

We welcome the Rev. Dr. Buz Wilcoxon as our scripture reader today in both services. Buz is participating in our college workshop for senior high youth during the Sunday school hour and currently serves as the Marianne & E.G. Lassiter Chaplain & Dean of Spiritual Life at Presbyterian College.

INTROIT TEXT

The text for the Introit was written by members of the Youth Choir in a haiku-writing exercise.

NURSERY

Childcare is available for infants through 4K. Our nurturing staff of experienced caregivers and parent volunteers offers a welcoming environment for children. The Nursery is located on the mezzanine level. The entrance is at Westminster Drive, at the columbarium or near the Westminster Weekday School offices. The Women's Lounge, located down the stairs from the front office and straight down the hallway on the right, is available for any child caretaker and includes worship livestream, comfortable seating, and a changing table.

WORSHIP BAGS

Each Sunday we offer worship bags in the Atrium for children. The worship bags are designed to include reusable items that engage children in open ended play during worship. While children attend worship with their families, they can participate in worship and play to make foundational layers of meaning for faith. Please return the zipper bag and its contents each Sunday. This shift to reusable items demonstrates how we value hospitality and care for creation.

In Memoriam

Judy Lowry

1/1/1942 - 11/23/2023)

Dale Comer

(5/8/1949 - 11/24/2023)

*"I am the resurrection and the life."
- John 11:25*

With Thanksgiving We Celebrate BIRTH

The birth of a daughter, *Madelyn Reilly Houlihan*, to Shawn Houlihan & Holly Lindler Houlihan on Thursday, November 9, 2023, in Rock Hill, SC.

MARRIAGE

On Saturday, November 25, 2023, *Kathryn Hall* and *Sergio Asaro* were united in marriage in Charleston.

WESTFEST XI:

Mark your calendars for this Sunday, December 3 (5-7p) - it's WestFestXI, our annual celebration of Advent featuring Trey Duncan sings and food from Local Pie and the Spinx Cluk Truk.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE FUND

A special offering for the Congregational Care Fund is received on Communion Sundays. This fund is used to assist members of the congregation in a time of financial need. Please make checks payable to Westminster Presbyterian Church and mark for Congregational Care.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Opportunities @WPC

HIKING GROUP

The Hiking Group will meet again this Saturday, December 2, to hike in Paris Mountain State Park. Contact Hike Leader: Kathryn Algary (kaalgary@gmail.com) if interested.

MEN OF WESTMINSTER

Join the Men of Westminster on Tuesday, December 5, at 5:30p for Christmas Cocktails at SouthernSide Brewing (25 Delano Dr., Unit D). Join the men of the church for fun and fellowship. Questions? Contact Tony Threatt (tony.threatt@gmail.com).

ADVENT GIFT MARKET

Prepare your mind and heart for the coming of the Christ child while exploring Christmas traditions and fair trade gifts in the Christmas Gift Market. On December 3, 10, 17, and 24, there will be a small-scale gift market in the Sanctuary Atrium following worship.

CREATION STEWARDSHIP

Members of WPC's Creation Stewardship group will participate in winter restoration work on Natureland Trust's Green Mountain tract in Marietta, SC, on December 2 (9a-12p). Check the weekly newsletter for information and contact Frank Holleman (frankholleman@naturalandtrust.org) to participate.

WOMEN OF WESTMINSTER

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 ADVENT LUNCHEON AT 12:30P

All women of Westminster are invited to the annual Advent Luncheon on Sunday, December 10. The luncheon will be held in the Fellowship Hall immediately following the 11:15a worship service. The speaker will be Westminster's very own, Terri Price, and music provided by our Senior High Choristers. Lunch will be catered by Good to Go Catering and will include a choice of homemade chicken pot pie or vegetable quiche, salad, roll, and dessert. The cost is \$14 per person with the deadline to sign up being Tuesday, December 5.

FEBRUARY 23-25, 2024 WOMEN'S RETREAT AT MONTREAT CONFERENCE CENTER

OPEN HEARTS • Giving@WPC

2024 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

As of Monday, November 27, we have received \$2,097,751 in pledges toward our 2024 pledge goal of \$2,688,000. For your convenience, you may pledge via our website at wpc-online.org/pledge-today, you may mail in your pledge, or send your pledge by email to the Church Financial Manager, Lynn Bennett, at lbennett@wpc-online.org.

2023 GIVING

At the end of October, we were 83% through the year and had received 67% of our anticipated pledge income. If you are uncertain where you stand with your current pledge, please check with our Financial Manager, Lynn Bennett, in the church office. Thank you for your generosity to Westminster!

RETIREMENT GIVING

Make Qualified Distributions from your IRAs: Westminster members age 70.5 and older can support the church with a gift from their Individual Retirement Account. Qualified charitable distributions from IRAs may offer tax advantages while benefiting WPC's local and global ministries. Contact the church office for more information.

PROJECT HOST

Please consider signing up to volunteer with other members of Westminster Presbyterian Church at Project Host throughout 2024. There is availability for five church members to prepare, serve, and clean up a meal twice monthly at Project Host. This is a meaningful way to serve the community while getting to know other church members. The shifts are from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm every other Tuesday. Please contact Susan Clark at susanhunterclark@gmail.com with any questions. Signups can be found on the church website at <https://wpc-online.org/events-registration/>.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

[f](#) [t](#) [@](#) [v](#) [wpcgreenville](#) | wpc-online.org | 2310 Augusta St.

THE HARBINGER
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Steve Phillips
Building Supervisor
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Locate texts for all choral music online.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS December 3-10, 2023

Sunday, December 3 First Sunday of Advent

9:00a Worship Service w/communion
9:45 College Workshop
10:00 Sunday School
WestConnect - Kathleen Reynolds
WestConnect - Leigh Miller
WestConnect - George Howell
10:55 Sunday Session Meeting
11:15 Worship Service w/communion
12:45p Connections Group
2:00 APNC Meeting
4:30 First Steps Music Class
5:00 WestFestXI

Monday, December 4

8:00p Narcotics Anonymous

Tuesday, December 5

12:00p Administrative Committee Meeting
Al-Anon
5:30 Men of Westminster Christmas Cocktails

Wednesday, December 6

2:15p It's Elementary
3:30 Cherub Choir
4:00 Nursery Parents' Night Out
4:30 Junior & Senior Choristers
7:00 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, December 7

10:00a Thursday Bible Study
8:00p Narcotics Anonymous

Sunday, December 10 Second Sunday of Advent

9:00a Worship Service
Witness & Service Committee Meeting
10:00 Sunday School
WestConnect - Kathleen Reynolds
WestConnect - Leigh Miller
WestConnect - George Howell
10:55 Sunday Session Meeting
11:15 Worship Service
12:30p Women of Westminster Advent Luncheon
4:00 Cherub Choir Musical
5:00 Middler Youth Group
5:15 Senior High Choir Rehearsal
6:00 Youth Dinner
6:30 Senior High Youth Group
Middler Choir Rehearsal

Our Vision: Open Minds Open Hearts

Our Pillars:
Hospitality
Generosity
Justice
Imagination
Joy

Our Goals:
Connect
Serve
Grow

the HARBINGER

open minds open hearts

VOLUME LXXVII | December 3, 2023 | No. 32

From the Pews, Derek Pitman

The scripture today comes from Luke 1:26-38, depicting the angel Gabriel visiting Mary to tell her she has been chosen by God to carry the Christ child. I have heard many sermons on why, at one's first reading, it would seem odd Mary would be troubled by Gabriel's sudden appearance and excited announcement. "Hey! Good news! You're highly favored with God, so He's choosing you to carry the savior of the world to term. Call him Jesus."

We are conditioned by society to be distrustful of grand announcements that seem too good to be true. Princes from far-off lands want us to hold their money in our bank accounts, as long as we send enough account information for them to make the "deposit". We've all seen web browser pop-ups with YOU'VE WON THE GRAND PRIZE! CLICK HERE to have a computer virus infect and control every aspect of your online presence. As my momma always says, nothing in life is free.

So it's understandable that teenage Mary would 1) be suspicious of the Annunciation, 2) would need a moment to wrap her head around the gravity of the responsibility, and 3) I hear angels are actually terrifying in person. But Mary asked a pointed question in the text ("How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"), gathered her composure as Gabriel answered, and she showed an incredibly resolute faith and obedience to God's plan. "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Let us all strive in this Advent season to have the faith, composure, and grace of Mary. Amen.



As he lay swaddled in the manger, Jesus received three gifts from the wise men. To mark the surprise, delight, and joy of that morning two millennia ago, it has been the practice of Christians to exchange gifts with one another on Christmas morning, a tradition that connects us to our past and to generations and communities who have gone ahead of us.

This year, Westminster is proud to sponsor the first ever Pleasant Valley Magi Market. Members of Westminster are asked to help provide gifts for families at the Pleasant Valley Connection. Children from each family will receive three gifts from lists (one small, one medium, one large). We will also need volunteers to help set up the store, provide hospitality as families shop for gifts, and break down after all the shopping has ended. Find out more about the Market here or contact Carrie Marguet (carriemarguet@gmail.com).



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ADULT EDUCATION ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

We at Westminster believe that education is essential for discipleship and hope that what you learn in this place will transform your living beyond our doors. This quarter kicks off this Sunday, December 3, and will run each Sunday through January 14 - NOTE: *there will not be Sunday School on December 24 or December 31.* You are welcome to join any class at any point!

1. The Flock Reads
Facilitated by Trey Morrow

Room 212

Join the Flock (an age-and-stage group at Westminster with folks ranging from mid-40s through late 50s) for an in-depth study of a book of the Bible. Each week the group will read and explore a text from the Gospels. This discussion-style class is facilitated by Trey Morrow and other members of the Flock.

2. Characters of Christmas
Taught by Leigh Stuckey

Room 209 and Streaming

Join Associate Pastor Leigh Stuckey for this lecture-style class exploring oft-forgotten characters in the Christmas story: Mary & Joseph, the angels, Zechariah and Elizabeth, the Magi, and Simeon. Each Sunday we will explore the text and its context, and consider how the faith of each character can inspire our own.

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Advent & Christmas at Westminster

December 3 *First Sunday of Advent*
 Advent Market opens in the Sanctuary Atrium
 (open every Sunday in Advent)
 WestFest XI (live music, food trucks)
 5-7p in the Green Lot

December 9 Magi Market at the Pleasant Valley Connection

December 10 *Second Sunday of Advent*
 Women of Westminster Advent Luncheon
 12:30p in the Fellowship Hall
 Cherub Choir Christmas
 4p in the Sanctuary

December 17 *Third Sunday of Advent*
 9a Worship in the Sanctuary
 Children's Musical
 11:15a in the Sanctuary

December 24 *Fourth Sunday of Advent*
 The 63rd Annual Service of Lessons & Carols
 10a in the Sanctuary
 reception following service in Sanctuary Atrium
 Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship
 4p and 6p in the Sanctuary
 (overflow in the Sanctuary Atrium)

December 31 One Worship Service
 10a in the Sanctuary
 reception following service in Sanctuary Atrium

POINSETTIA/ENDOWMENT/HERITAGE LECTURE MEMORIALS

Those who wish to remember loved ones during the Christmas Season may do so in three ways. Poinsettias for the sanctuary may be purchased for \$15.00 or you may give to either the Endowment or Heritage Lecture Funds. Poinsettias will decorate the sanctuary at the Lessons & Carols and Christmas Eve Services. Please fill out the slip below or contact the church office, 232-2424. Donors may pick up their poinsettias after the Christmas Eve Service you choose to attend. Orders must be placed by Sunday, December 17.

Donor _____

In Memory of _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

In Honor of _____

Poinsettias x \$15.00 = \$_____ Endowment:_____ Heritage Lecture: _____



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