



WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Longing for God's Spirit

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 13, 2020

10:00 A.M.

MORNING WORSHIP AT 10:00 A.M.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Longing for God's Spirit

GATHERING: PREPARING TO HEAR THE WORD

In Preparation for Worship

"By shifting from 'waiting' to 'ready and waiting,' we become more open to God, more empowered to prepare the way for the One who has come and is coming."

—Leigh Campbell-Taylor

Opening Voluntary

(A musical prayer offered on behalf of the people of God.)

"What Child Is This"

Helen Hofmeister, Organ

arr. Richard Purvis

Welcome and Sharing the Life of Westminster

Rev. Jen Porter

Advent Candle Liturgy

Kia and Liz Weeldreyer

Response Hymn 88

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

(stanza 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.**

Veni Emmanuel

++Opening Hymn 104

"O Lord, How Shall I Meet You"

Valet will ich dir Geben

**O Lord, how shall I meet you, how welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart's delight!
O kindle, Lord most holy, a lamp within my breast,
to do in spirit lowly all that may please you best.**

**Love caused your incarnation; love brought you down to me;
your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.
O love beyond all telling, that led you to embrace
in love, all loves excelling, our lost and fallen race.**

**You come, O Lord, with gladness, in mercy and goodwill,
to bring an end to sadness and bid our fears be still.
In patient expectation we live for that great day
when your renewed creation your glory shall display.**

Prayer of Confession

John Schlafley

(Trusting that God is love, we express our lament, our brokenness, and our failings to God.)

God of good news, we confess we fail to listen to the messengers you send. We close our hearts and minds to the freshness of your Word. We fall short of your call to be agents of healing, liberation, and justice. Free us of the burdens that hold us captive, that we too may proclaim your good news to all the world. Forgive and restore us, Holy One. Loosen the chains that bind us, and set us free to live fully in the presence of your loving Spirit...

Silent Confession

The Assurance of God's Grace

++ Response Hymn 106

“Prepare the Way, O Zion”
(stanza 1)

Bereden väg för Herran

**Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley a level way appear.
Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.
O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.**

++ Passing the Peace of Christ

(A sign of forgiveness and reconciliation.)

Ministry of Music

“What Child Is This”
“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”
Karl Falb, Violin
Peter Falb, Cello

Traditional

THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination

(We pray that the words of Scripture may be encountered as God's Word.)

Scripture

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Old Testament

One: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Longing for God's Spirit

Rev. Lynette Sparks

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Affirmation of Faith

“A New Creed,” United Church of Canada

(We affirm our faith together to remind us who and whose we are.)

We are not alone, we live in God's world.

We believe in God:

**who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others by the Spirit.**

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:

**to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.**

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.

We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

The Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Offering Our Lives

Offertory

“Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming”

Es ist ein' Ros'

Karl Falb, Violin

Peter Falb, Cello

++Doxology (*means “words of glory”—they are a traditional expression of praise to God.*)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below;

Praise God above, ye heavenly host;

Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost!

++Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God, you work miracles, turning our grief into songs of joy. We give you thanks that nothing can hinder your purposes; your love shines forth in your living Word. Use these offerings to reflect your Word, and create small miracles of transformation in our own community. We pray with expectant hope and joy, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

GOING OUT TO BE THE CHURCH

++Closing Hymn 93

“Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”

Truro

**Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.**

**Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.**

**Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to thee; here, Lord, abide.
Let me thy inner presence feel; thy grace and love in me reveal.**

Charge and Benediction

Closing Voluntary

“He Is Born, the Divine Christ Child”

arr. Richard Hudson

Helen Hofmeister, Organ

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Preacher Rev. Lynette Sparks, Senior Pastor and Head of Staff
Liturgists Rev. Jen Porter, Associate Pastor for Faith Formation and Pastoral Care
..... John Schlafley, Elder for Music
Advent Candle Lighters Kia and Liz Weeldreyer

Minister of Music Helen Hofmeister
Worship Musicians Karl Falb, Violin and Peter Falb, Cello,
..... Viviana Kloostra, Soprano, John Schlafley, Tenor

Technology Team Peter Larson, and Dan Cisler

AHEAD IN WORSHIP

Recorded from the Westminster Sanctuary

Sunday, December 20 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

Longing for a Savior

Rev. Lynette Sparks preaching

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

Music: Beth Colpean, Harp

Cheri Reid, Soprano

Mark Jackson, Tenor

Christmas Eve

Thursday, December 24, 7:00pm

Intergenerational Service of Lessons and Carols

Longing for Incarnation

Rev. Lynette Sparks preaching

Music: Maria Schoon, Soprano

Michael Furman, Baritone

Sunday, December 27 – First Sunday of Christmas

Rev. Jen Porter preaching

Music: Abby Strand

We're glad you worshiped with us today! If you'd like to know about the life and ministry of Westminster, visit our website at westminstergr.org, or contact Susan Jennings at susanj@wpcgr.org.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Advent Offerings

Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday each week of Advent, experiences of prayer, music, and story will be posted on our YouTube channel and can be accessed at any time.

Monday, 7am: a weekly prayer experience will be posted related to the week's theme. This time of prayer will begin by lighting a series of Advent candles.

Wednesday, noon: you can see a short program of organ music on the Westminster YouTube Channel, performed by Helen Hofmeister. The program consists of spoken program notes about music, plus the actual music itself! You will enjoy hearing the music of the season played on the Westminster organ!

Fridays: Westminster children and adults are creating videos to enrich our spiritual lives and bring some Christmas cheer, and our children's ministry team will post a member reading a Christmas story for all ages.

May we find a sacred rhythm as we step through **Advent 2020**

CHRISTMAS CONCERT: Please join us for Westminster's virtual Christmas Concert this **Sunday at 7:00pm** on Westminster's YouTube channel. A link will be available on the website. The concert will include a string quintet, harp, marimba, percussion, and two vocal soloists. The harp music has already been recorded in our sanctuary and that music is STUNNING! You won't want to miss a note of this entire program!

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE:

Thank you to the 297 people who have pledged \$1,048,017 so far in this year's Stewardship Campaign! Though the formal season is over, it is not too late to turn in your 2021 pledge. You can do that by accessing the link [here](#). We give thanks to God for abundance—even in the wilderness!

ONLINE CONTRIBUTIONS: Even before the COVID-19 pandemic struck, Kathy Cisler had been working on expanding ways for people to make donations digitally. We recognize that many are facing new and unforeseen financial implications in the wake of this pandemic and this message is not meant to put any pressure on people. However, we are also aware that many are able to continue, or increase, their offerings to help us pay our bills, our staff, and continue our ministry that brings justice, peace, and hope into a world God loves. Please [click here](#) for a document that provides information on new ways you can give digitally to the church. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kathy through her phone number at the church, (616) 717-5533.



Using Engage Giving by Scanning the QR Code: Scan the code using a QR code reader app or the camera on your phone or mobile device. It will take you to the Engage Giving log-in window where you can follow the directions above for giving using the website.

THE LONGEST SEASON SERVICE: Join us on **Wednesday, December 16, at 7pm** for the Longest Season service on **our Westminster YouTube channel**. How do we honor our weary hearts in what has been a very weary 2020? Traveling the road of Advent this year is different than any other. Much has changed and much has been lost. While naming our pain or loss, we can also remember the hope that is promised to us through Jesus Christ. Please join us for a service of reflection and paying attention to God's word for us this Advent season.

BUILDING USE AND WORSHIP CHANGES FROM THE WAY FORWARD COMMITTEE:

In light of the rapidly rising number of COVID cases in our area, yesterday's Governor's orders, and a deep concern for the well-being of our community, we are implementing the following changes for at least the next three weeks (and potentially longer, depending on public health developments):

- There will be no in-person group meetings (both indoor and outdoor) at the church, including youth groups.
- Sunday morning worship will be pre-recorded; it will still be aired at its usual 10am time via our YouTube channel on Sunday mornings.
- Staff are encouraged to work remotely as much as possible.
- The Food Pantry will continue to operate as it has throughout the pandemic, as will WCDC.

One thing will not change: we will continue to live in faith and hope. Please continue to pray for and support all who are laboring tirelessly to develop effective responses to COVID, as well as for those who are affected physically, emotionally, spiritually, and economically by this pandemic.

ZOOM MEETING FOR YOUTH AND THEIR PARENTS to receive an update on youth ministry leadership will be held at on **Sunday, December 13 at 4 p.m.** Youth and parents are invited to attend on separate screens as there will be breakout rooms available for youth and parents later in the meeting. [Click here](#) for Zoom link. Contact Laurie Hartzell at laurieh@wpcgr.org for any questions.

A HUGE THANK YOU to our Westminster congregation and our local partner churches for supporting us and participating in the Thanksgiving Ingathering/\$16.65 Challenge this year. To date, we have received roughly an amazing \$31,000 in cash donations and roughly \$5,000 in kind food donations. Thank you so much, Angie Kelley, Westminster Food Pantry Director.

THE PC(USA) CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING will be collected **Sunday, December 20**. God has blessed the Church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. This Offering helps address that need by supporting leadership development at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges for communities of color, and providing support for Presbyterian church workers in their time of need. To donate to the Christmas Joy offering [click here](#).

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS VISUAL AND AUDITORY TREATS ARE LINED UP FOR WESTMINSTER THIS YEAR: Tune in any day this season to our church website (westminstergr.org) and the Children's Ministries section. Westminster children and adults are creating videos to enrich our spiritual lives and bring some Christmas cheer. We have a few special guests as well. We have lessons, dramas, stories, and songs coming your way!

GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FROM CAMP HENRY FOR THE FALL:

We recently had our Virtual Annual Luncheon on November 20th, and are extremely thankful to report that we have already raised close to \$90,000! We know that many of you have already made a recent contribution to Camp Henry - thank you! If you would still like to consider making a contribution to help us reach or exceed our goal of raising \$100,000, we would be so grateful. Click [here](#) to donate. Thank you for your consideration and support! If you would like to view the Virtual Annual Luncheon video - you can do so now by clicking [here](#).

Cabins and Lodges now on VRBO

Looking for a warm and safe place to stay with your family? Look no further because you can now rent a cabin or lodge! The cabins and lodges are heated and have bathrooms. The lodges are two cabins connect with a middle common sitting area. Check out the VRBO postings for more info! Contact Jordan for reservations at jordanb@camphenry.org or (616) 717-5571

Camp Store Bundles | Bundles are still available at our online store! There's a bundle for every occasion! Back to School • Birthday • Camp Henry Starter Pack • Cozy • Holiday • Mystery (\$30, \$45, & \$60 options) Wow your friends and family with these popular Camp Henry items! Order yours [here](#).

Also, Summer Camp 2021 registrations are open and ready to reserve a spot for your child. Go to the Camp Henry website to register for Summer Camp 2021 at camphenry.org or call 616-459-2267 for more information. Has the cold weather made you think about summer? Below are the dates & rates for next summer.

Day Camp | Ages 5-8 | \$245-285
Regular Camp | Ages 8-17 | \$650
Wakeboarding Camp | Ages 10-17 | \$775
Service Crew | Ages 13-17 | \$525

Mini Camp | Ages 7-11 | \$425-450
Frontier Camp | Ages 10-17 | \$750
Climbing Camp | Ages 10-17 | \$725
Teen Adventure | Ages 13-17 | \$725-775

FROM THE FOOD PANTRY: A COUPLE OF REQUESTS... MASKS! The pantry is open on each Thursday and practices COVID masking and social distancing. Our clients really appreciate washable masks, and we are having a hard time keeping up. This will greatly enhance our ability to continue to serve safely. Also donations of **winter gloves and hats** would be appreciated for our pantry clients. New or gently used would be welcomed and may be dropped off on Thursdays when the Pantry is open (10:30a-2:30p). **RECEIPTS:** the pantry is still participating in the *SpartanNash Direct Your Dollars* program. Please remember to mail in your D & W and Family Fare receipts to the pantry. The entire receipt. For each \$150,000 in receipts, the pantry receives \$1,000! This is a great revenue source for us. Keep praying for this ministry - It is vital to our purpose to help those in need.

SPECIAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 12 - Each week, take a look at the Children's Ministry Resources on our church website. There are various videos, songs and prayers, and also different levels of Children's Bulletins. If you download a bulletin, you will find a game code printed on the bulletin that you can use to play games that fit with the worship text each week.

SUPPORT FOR HEARTSIDE NEIGHBORS: COVID-19 has been tough for most of us, especially the most vulnerable. Even as our Open Door Ministry is closed, we have been able to partner with Heartside Ministries in supporting our neighbors. Each Monday, the Westminster "Sandwich Brigade" brings prepackaged sandwiches to Heartside Ministries for our neighbors' lunch! During December, the Westminster Choir will be adding homemade Christmas cookies to those lunches the first two weeks. WPC Youth and their families are making cookies for the last two weeks.

Hats, mittens and books are needed by Heartside Ministries. If you are able to make a donation, please be in touch with Lexy McCullough at lexymcc@sbcglobal.net.

WESTMINSTER'S BUILDING IS STILL CLOSED
ALL MEETINGS TAKE PLACE VIRTUALLY
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE FOOD PANTRY

SUN. DEC. 13 - ADVENT 3

10:00 amWorship Online
4:00 pmZoom Youth Group
7:00 pm Virtual Christmas Concert

MON. DEC. 14

7:00 amWeekly Advent Prayers posted on YouTube

TUES. DEC. 15

5:00 pmZoom Communication Committee

WED. DEC. 16

12:00 pmAdvent Music posted on YouTube
4:00 pmPersonnel Committee Online
7:00 pmLongest Season Service Online

THURS. DEC. 17

10:30 amFood Pantry

SAT. DEC. 19

10:00 am Youth Group Cookie Drop Off (parking lot)

SUN. DEC. 20

10:00 amWorship Online