

MORNING WORSHIP  
Powers of Observation

GATHERING: PREPARING TO HEAR THE WORD

In Preparation for Worship

"While I need to learn what the shepherds have to teach me about being present to the moment, I cultivate the friendship of the Magi, too, because their wisdom and poise can guide me through many an unlikely landscape toward my destination. I don't need to wait for the sky to open in front of me. On any day, I can wake up and choose to journey toward God." – Suzanne Guthrie

Sharing the Life of Westminster

Susan Jennings

As we prepare for worship, we are invited to be attentive to God's presence in our midst.

Opening Voluntary "O Hail This Brightest Day Of Days"

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

BWV 605

++Call to Worship

One: This little light of mine,

**All: I'm going to let it shine.**

One: This little light of ours,

**All: we're going to let it shine.**

One: This little light of the world

**All: has overcome the darkness.**

One: We have followed the light to this place,

**All: and the glory of God's presence is among us!**

++Hymn 151

"We Three Kings of Orient Are"

Kings of Orient

Prayer of Confession

Rev. Kyle Nolan

**God of wonder, God of night, you are holy light in dark places; you are holy darkness when all is too bright. Forgive us, O God, when we turn away from your light: when we follow our own ambitions instead of your call, when we respond to your presence with fear rather than joy. Forgive us, O God, when we do not comprehend the depth of your Christmas love, the meaning of your powerful story, or the call you place on each of our lives. Forgive us, O God, and empower us to follow the star once more...**

Silent Confession

Kyrie - Unison

"Lord, Have Mercy"

Lee J. Afdahl

Assurance of God's Grace

One: Hear the promise of God: See, your salvation has come! You are a holy people, redeemed by God, sought out, not forsaken.

**All: Thanks be to God! In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!**

++Response Hymn 134

"Joy to the World"

(stanza 2)

Antioch

**Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

++Passing the Peace of Christ

One: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

Ministry of Music

"The Shepherd's Farewell"

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

*Thou must leave thy lowly dwelling, the humble crib, the stable bare,  
Babe, all mortal babes excelling, content our earthly lot to share.  
Loving father, loving mother, shelter thee with tender care.  
Blessed Jesus, we implore thee with humble love and holy fear,  
In the land that lies before thee, forget not us who linger here!  
May the shepherd's lowly calling, ever to thy heart be dear!  
Blest are ye beyond all measure, thou happy father, mother mild!  
Guard ye well your heavenly treasure, the Prince of Peace, the Holy Child!  
God go with you, God protect you, Guide you safely through the wild!*  
Sanctuary Choir

Blessings with Younger Disciples

Nancy Greidanus

*Children three years through second grade may finish their time of worship in the Worship Centers. Children's worship leaders or parents will shepherd them from the Sanctuary to their rooms. Parents may pick them up in their worship rooms following the service.*

**Congregation: As you worship together, may God be with you.**

Children: And also with you.

**Congregation: Go in peace!**

THE WORD

Scripture

Matthew 2:1-12

New Testament p. 2

One: The Word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

"Powers of Observation"

Rev. Lynette Sparks

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

++Hymn 150

"As with Gladness Men of Old"

Dix

++Affirmation of Faith "A New Creed" United Church of Canada

**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. Amen.**

Offering Our Lives

Please take a moment to sign and pass the red friendship pad located in the pew, and take note of those worshiping next to you.

Offertory

"Come Unto Him"

G. F. Handel (1685-1759)

*Come unto Him, all ye that labor, come unto Him, ye that are heavy laden,  
and He will give you rest.*

*Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart,  
and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

Maria Schoon, Soprano

++Doxology

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost!**

The Sacrament of The Lord's Supper

We invite you to come forward to receive the communion elements and partake of them immediately as you receive them. Please take your used cups with you as you return to your seats and place them in the cupholders in the back of your pew. If you would like the elements brought to you, please raise your hand and a server will bring them to you. All bread is gluten-free. Children are welcome to participate in this sacrament.

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them up to the Lord.**

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

**All: It is right to give 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 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.**

The Words of Institution

Communion of the People

Communion Music

"Aria"

Andrew Carter (b. 1939)

Prayer of Response

**We give you thanks, O God, for the gifts of this table—precious, prayerful, and poignant—like gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Lead us forth by your light to share the gifts of your grace with all people everywhere, giving glory, honor, and praise to Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

GOING OUT TO BE THE CHURCH

++Closing Hymn 152 "What Star is This, with Beams So Bright" Puer Nobis Nascitur

++Charge and Benediction

Closing Voluntary "Lord God Now Be Praised" J. S. Bach BWV 601

CONGREGATIONAL CHARGE

Go into the world in peace. Have courage. Hold on to all that is good. Return no one evil for evil. Do justice. Walk with those who are fainthearted. Help those who suffer. Honor all people. Love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Liturgies adapted from Call to Worship Journal. Bulletin Cover Art: Journey of the Magi, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. "Aria" used by permission under ONE LICENSE, License #724668-A. All rights reserved. Kyrie used by permission of composer.

AHEAD IN WORSHIP

January 14 Baptism Matters Rev. Lynette Sparks Mark 1:4-11 Sanctuary Choir

January 21 Get Going! Rev. Lynette Sparks Mark 1:14-20 Sanctuary Choir

Ahead in Adult Faith Formation:

Adult Faith Formation meets in the Chapel after the worship service.

Reformed Roots: Confessions of the 20th Century: Our Presbyterian confessions offer us anchors in the midst of competing claims about what is true and faithful. We begin this year with three weeks exploring our 20th Century Confessions and how they speak directly into issues of our current times. Why do confessions matter? How do they root us together and inform our call and identity?

January 7: Rev. Kyle Nolan The confessional nature of our Reformed tradition.

January 14: Rev. Kyle Kooyers The Belhar Confession (1986), from the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa.

January 21: Rev. Lynette Sparks The Confession of 1967 and The Declaration of Barmen (1934).

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Preacher.....Rev. Lynette Sparks, Senior Pastor
Liturgists.....Susan Jennings, Minister for Pastoral Care & Mission
.....Rev. Kyle Nolan, Presbyterian Foundation
..... Nancy Greidanus, Minister for Children & Families

Musicians..... Janlee Richter, Organ & Piano
.....Sanctuary Choir, Director Ellen Pool
..... Maria Schoon, Soprano

Welcome to Westminster

MEMBERSHIP

If you have questions about the life of the church or becoming a member, please email Nicole Koetje at nicolek@wpcgr.org. More information about worship and updates from the church can be found at westminstergr.org. You are welcome and celebrated here!

ACCESSIBILITY

If you'd like a large-print bulletin please ask one of the ushers at a Sanctuary entrance. For T-loop hearing assistance, set your hearing aid to T.

We have accessible, all-gender, companion bathrooms available off of the Dining Room.

CHILDREN

The nursery (babies through two-year-olds) is available during the service.

YOUTH

If you would like more information about youth ministry, please contact our Minister with Youth and Young Adults Kat Jonker at katj@wpcgr.org.



Journey of the Magi, James Tissot

Powers of Observation

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

JANUARY 7, 2024
10:00 A.M.



# Announcements

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**IN THE IMAGE DONATION DRIVE:** We are collecting diapers sizes 1-7, baby wipes, pull-ups, and newborn essentials! Bring your items to the Children's Check-in Tables. Questions? Contact Nancy Greidanus (nancyg@wpcgr.org).

**MEN'S SMALL GROUP:** 5:00 p.m. twice monthly during January, February, and March To learn more, contact Rev. Jen Porter (jenp@wpcgr.org) or Larry Slager (slagerla5@gmail.com).

**YOUNG ADULT PUB NIGHT:** January 10, HopCat downtown, 7:00 p.m. Join us!

**CAMP HENRY VOLUNTEER DAYS:** January 11, 20, 25 & February 2, 8, 17, 22 Help take care of the camp and get involved in the community—no experience required. More info can be found at [camphenry.org/get-involved/volunteer](http://camphenry.org/get-involved/volunteer).

**JANUARY CHURCH SCHOOL UPDATE:** Our church school classes in grades 2-5 are studying the stories of Jesus' baptism and temptation in the wilderness. We will participate in stories, learn about our baptisms, create gifts for newly baptized children, play games, and make cards to take to our partner church in Cuba. The memory verse is Mark 1:11, "And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'"

**CHILDREN'S WORSHIP CENTER SEMINAR:** January 21, 11:15 a.m. All teachers and helpers of Worship Centers for children ages 5 to 2nd grade are invited! We'll experience the worship routine and share insights and ideas. If you plan to attend or have any questions, contact Nancy Greidanus (nancyg@wpcgr.org).

**SANCTUARY CHOIR:** Thursdays, 7:00 p.m., Choir Room Singers who are considering serving Westminster by participating in the Sanctuary Choir are welcome to attend a couple of rehearsals before making a commitment. This is an ideal time to join as we prepare music for Lent and Easter.

**WESTMINSTER MEN'S CHORUS:** January 18 & 25, 7:15 p.m., Choir Room The Westminster Men's Chorus will provide music for worship on January 28. Guests are enthusiastically invited to join the Sanctuary Choir men for this opportunity to sing without making a long-term commitment. For more information, please contact Ellen Pool at [ellenpool@comcast.net](mailto:ellenpool@comcast.net).


**SIMPLY GIVE:** December 31 - March 30 You can buy a Meijer Simply Give food donation card at the Meijer store on Kalamazoo and 28th Street to benefit Westminster's Downtown Food Pantry.

**FOOD PANTRY:** The food pantry is in need of clean plastic grocery bags!

**ALL-CHURCH VALENTINE'S EVENT:** February 4, 11:15 a.m., Dining Room Everyone is invited! We will have food, make valentines, and fill bags with toiletries and valentines for our food pantry patrons. Bring individual-sized toiletries between now and the event to fill the bags.

**2023 STEWARDSHIP UPDATE:** As we wrap up 2023, we gratefully acknowledge every gift given to sustain our ministry together. We are very close to our goal. If you have not yet completed your 2023 Giving Intention, please complete that this week.

We are finalizing the budget for 2024. It is projected that we will need \$1,225,000 in Giving Intentions. We are still \$130,000 short of that goal. If you have not already submitted your Giving Intention for 2024, please help us reach our goal this week. God calls us to Live Generously as we have been blessed.

 **DONATIONS:** Donations can be made by scanning the QR code, through our secure online giving site, or by check sent to the church office. Email [angiek@wpcgr.org](mailto:angiek@wpcgr.org) or call (616) 717-5533 with questions.

# This Week's Calendar

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## SUN. JANUARY 7

- 10:00 a.m. Worship Service.....Sanctuary
- 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour ..... Gathering Place
- 11:15 a.m. Church School & Choirs ..... Various Locations
- 11:15 a.m. Youth Group & Choirs..... Various Locations
- 11:15 a.m. Adult Faith Formation..... Chapel
- 3:30 p.m. Communion Service..... Porter Hills
- 4:00 p.m. Fiction Book Group.....Library
- 4:00 p.m. Game On Board Game Group ..... Conference Room

## MON. JANUARY 8

- 11:00 a.m. Quilting Group.....Multipurpose Room
- 6:30 p.m. Connecting Deacons ..... Parlor
- 6:30 p.m. Supporting Deacons ..... Pastoral Suite
- 7:00 p.m. Facilities Committee ..... Online

## TUES. JANUARY 9

- 12:30 p.m. WPA Committee ..... Conference Room
- 6:00 p.m. Trustees ..... Conference Room
- 6:30 p.m. FASD Support Group..... Various Locations

## WED. JANUARY 10

- 6:30 a.m. Youth Prayer Breakfast ..... Wolfgang's
- 6:00 p.m. Communications Committee..... Conference Room
- 6:30 p.m. West Michigan Gay Men's Chorus..... Choir Room
- 7:00 p.m. Young Adult Pub Night ..... HopCat

## THURS. JANUARY 11

- 10:30 a.m. Food Pantry ..... Front Lobby
- 5:00 p.m. Tech Committee..... Online
- 5:30 p.m. MGD Committee.....Library
- 7:00 p.m. Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal..... Choir Room

## SUN. JANUARY 14

- 9:30 a.m. Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal..... Choir Room
- 10:00 a.m. Worship Service.....Sanctuary
- 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour ..... Gathering Place
- 11:15 a.m. Church School & Choirs ..... Various Locations
- 11:15 a.m. Adult Faith Formation..... Chapel