WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Seventh Sunday after Epiphany
23 February 2025 + 10:00 a.m.

Welcome and Announcements

Voluntary Fugue in C — Dietrich Buxtehude

***Ringing of the Bell** *The congregation rises at the ringing of the Tower Bell.*

***Call to Worship** — Psalm 37

Leader: Take delight in the Lord,
who satisfies the desires of your heart.
People: Commit your way to the Lord and trust in God's actions.
Leader: Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for God.
People: The Lord is our salvation
and our refuge in times of trouble.
Leader: Let us praise the God of Life who reigns above.

***Processional Hymn 645** Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above *Mit Freuden Zart*

***Prayer of Confession**

Holy and loving God, too often our hearts are cold and without gratitude. Too often our hands are passive and unwilling to carry out acts of mercy. Too often our lips are pursed tightly, unwilling to speak words of love and kindness. Forgive us and give us your perspective that we may see your hand in the circumstances within our lives. Hear now our silent 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 Spirit
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be
world without end. Amen.

Children's Sermon

Congregational Response I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light — *Houston*

I want to walk as a child of the light.
I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world.
The star of my life is Jesus.

Children and Youth in Pre-K – Grade 7 go to Sunday School and Confirmation following the Congregational Response.

First Scripture Reading Genesis 45:1-11, 15 — Pew Bible, OT page 42

Second Scripture Reading Luke 6:27-38 — Pew Bible, NT pages 64-65

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

Sermon The Tapestry of Life — Rev. Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer

"And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life." Genesis 45:5

Anthem The Meditations of My Heart — Elaine Hagenberg

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord. O Lord my Rock, O Lord my strength, O lord, my God and Redeemer. Psalm 19: 14

***Affirmation of Faith** A Brief Statement of Faith (Part 3)

We trust in God the Holy Spirit
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.
The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,
sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers
in the one body of Christ, the Church.

The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles
rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,
engages us through the Word proclaimed,
claims us in the waters of baptism,
feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,
and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.

In a broken and fearful world,
the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives. 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

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

Offertory Fugue in D — William Selbey

***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**

Holy and loving God, give us grace to reflect your character and show kindness toward both friend and foe, even in the midst of waves and clouds and storm. Make us joyful in giving that we may live as your children and testify to your grace and mercy within our lives. Amen.

***Hymn 815** Give to the Winds Thy Fear — *Festal Song*

***Charge and Benediction**

Closing Response Forth in Thy Name — Orlando Gibbons

***Closing Voluntary** Prelude and Fugue in D — Dietrich Buxtehude

(*) The congregation is invited to stand.

IN MEMORIAM

Bob "Bobby" G. McCormick 12/29/1933 – 02/15/2025
United with Westminster 05/20/1990

SERVING THIS SUNDAY AT WESTMINSTER

- **Chancel flowers** are given in loving memory and with deep gratitude for the life of Heather Anne Huitt by Robert, Julie, Brian, and Sarah Blythe.
- **Sunday Liturgist**: Rev. Sarah A. Bishop
- **Worship Leader**: Liliana Kennerly
- **Acolytes:** Taryn Barnett and Kate Bryans
- **Greeters:** Joyce Matthews and Mary Maddox
- **Music:** The Westminster Choir, Dale Rogers, Organist
- **Ushers:** Sabrina Holmes (Head Usher), Ben Arnold, Michella Arnold, Linda Caupert, Kyle Duffy, Chris Hickman, Joyce King
- **Sound and Videography:** Bob Fox, Krista Steller, Bill Deemer
- **Safety Team:** Brad Steller

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. This week's story: "Give Thanks to God for Your Food" (Jesus Feeds a Crowd) *Caregivers: Erin Winn, Julie and Mike Sundquist*
- **10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Children in Pre-K – Grade 5 and youth in Grades 6 - 7** begin in worship & go to Sunday school and Confirmation Prep following the Congregational Response.
    - **Preschool - Ages 3-5 (Preschool Classroom lower level)** Story: "Jesus Thinks Children are Important" (Jesus Blesses Children II) *Teachers: Chelsea Ekstedt, Katrina Opperman*
    - **Kindergarten - Grade 2 (Third Floor Chapel)** Story: "Love in Action" (Luke 6:27-38) *Teachers: Meleah Berkowitz*
    - **Grades 3-5 (Third Floor Classroom)** Story: "How Should We Live?" (Luke 6:27-38) *Teachers: Aaron Berkowitz, Adam Ekstedt*
    - **Grades 6-7 (Conference Room)** Lesson 33: "Persecution and Growth" from the Echo curriculum. *Teachers: Mary Ray and Joe Fierstos*
- **11:15 a.m. – Noon**
    - **Grade 8 Confirmation Class (Conference Room)** Lesson Thirteen, "Divide and Reconcile" *Teachers: Dr. Aaron Berkowitz, Mary Ray*
    - **Adult Ed Forum: The Bible and Homosexuality (Parish Hall)** This class will focus on the eight biblical passages which address homosexuality. *Led by: Dr. Peter and Rev. Dr. Blythe Kieffer*
- **1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. The National Federation of Music Clubs, Inc. Piano Festival (Church-wide)** Westminster has hosted this festival for many years.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WE WELCOME VISITORS! Information about who we are is in our Welcome Brochure located in the pew pockets and on our website www.wpcspi.org. Please complete the Ministry of Friendship folder located on the end of each pew. The next New Member Class will meet Sundays, March 2 and 9 with new members received Sunday, March 16. If you are interested, speak to a pastor.

ADULT ED FORUM PRESENTS: "THE BIBLE AND HOMOSEXUALITY" today. The historical perspective and biblical passages misused to influence discrimination based on race, gender, and sexual orientation will be presented. The primary source for this presentation is Jack Rogers' book Jesus, the Bible and Homosexuality. Led by Dr. Peter and Rev. Dr. Blythe Kieffer.

SING BY HEART CHOIR CONTINUES WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26 The Springfield Choral Society, in partnership with the Dale and Deborah Smith Alzheimer's Center at SIU School of Medicine and Westminster Presbyterian Church, will continue this joyful musical experience for individuals with dementia and their caregiver.. The final session on Wednesday, April 9 will feature a small performance at 11:00 a.m. for family, friends, and the public.

APOSTLES' READ LIBRARY BOOK GROUP will meet on **Tuesday, February 25, 6:00 p.m.** in the Ziegler Library. The book for February is *The Night Watchman* by Louise Erdrich.

A SPECIAL SESSION MEETING will take place Wednesday, February 26 at 5:30 p.m. to approve the Ministry Discernment Profile presented by the PNC. Once approved, the document will go to the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of Great Rivers for approval on Thursday, March 6. We anticipate posting the Co-Pastor opening on the Church Leadership Connection on Friday, March 7.

NEW MEMBER CLASS will be held **Sundays, March 2 and 9,** 9:00 – 9:45 a.m. in the Pastor's Study. Anyone who has been visiting and would like to learn more about the church, its mission, and becoming a member is invited. New members will be received at the 10:00 a.m. service on March 16 following a Special Session meeting at 9:30 a.m.

ADULT ED FORUM PRESENTS: WOMEN IN SPACE MARCH 2 AND 9 This course illuminates the ways female astronauts overcame gender oppression to transform American space exploration. Led by Dr. Katie Carlson-Eastvold

FINE ARTS DISPLAY ON SUNDAY, MARCH 23 -The Worship, Music and Arts Committee will host a Fine Arts Display at 11:15 a.m. in Parish Hall. This event is in celebration of Westminster's 190th anniversary and will provide an opportunity to highlight the work of Westminster's gifted artists. If you would like to participate, contact Dale Rogers.

TRIVIA NIGHT SUNDAY, MARCH 30 Each year, members support our youth mission trip during a fun evening of trivia. Once again, we welcome Aaron Berkowitz and Mark Luttrell who will create and present the questions. **Tickets are $20.00** and can be purchased on our website. **Sponsorship is $100** - You or your business can sponsor a round and will be featured on the screen between rounds. Contact Jennie Alt (jalt@wpcspi.org).

190TH ANNIVERSARY PERE MARQUETTE RETREAT – Join Dr. Kieffer and Dale Rogers May 1-3 in an exploration of our founding abolitionists and the sacrificial role of Elijah Parrish Lovejoy during the early nineteenth century as we celebrate Westminster's enduring legacy of faith, art, and advocacy. The cost of the two-day retreat is $275 per person (double) and $300 per person (single). This includes two nights of lodging and four meals. Registration forms are in the West Narthex.

Ash Wednesday, March 5

Theme: The Sanctuary for Lent

5:30 p.m. Simple Dinner in Parish Hall
6:30 p.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

We begin our Lenten Journey with dinner followed by a family centered worship service including:

- Liturgy and music presented by Bridges children and Children's Choir
- Meditation by Rev. Bishop
- The Imposition of Ashes
- Holy Communion by Intinction

Small votive candles will be given to each worshipper as a tangible reminder for the sanctuary we have in Christ as we journey during this Holy Season.

The Sanctuary for Lent

Meditations from this devotional book, written by Justin LaRose, an ordained deacon in The United Methodist Church, a licensed clinical social worker, will be emailed daily to members during Lent beginning on Ash Wednesday.

Family Lenten Devotional Calendars

Westminster families received a Lenten Devotional Calendar which includes a word and scripture for each day of Lent. Families are invited to discuss each word, take a photo of its meaning for them, and post on the "Westminster Young Families" Facebook Group. Youth are encouraged to share their photo of the day on Instagram by tagging the "Westminyouth_spi" page.

Lenten Candle Service

During Lent, Westminster's Sunday worship service will begin with a Lenten Candle Service woven into the Call to Worship. Rather than light a candle each Sunday as we do in Advent, a candle will be extinguished each Sunday of Lent leading to Easter to commemorate Christ's journey to the cross. The symbolism of these liturgies will add meaning to our worship as we prepare for Holy Week and Easter.

Lenten Giving

The One Great Hour of Sharing denominational offering will be received during Lent. This is an opportunity to provide relief to those affected by natural disasters, provide food to the hungry, and empower the poor and oppressed.

Lenten Coat Drive – Once again we will collect coats in the West Narthex. These coats will line the center pews of our Sanctuary on Palm Sunday and be donated to Contact Ministries.

THIS WEEK AT WESTMINSTER

Monday, February 24

9:30 AM King's Daughters Board Meeting (3rd Floor Classroom)
12:00 PM Refugee Subcommittee (Library)

Tuesday, February 25

10:30 AM Staff Meeting (Pastor's Study)
1:00 PM Knit 2 Purl 4 (2nd Floor Classroom)
3:00 PM Compass for Kids
5:00 PM Membership Comittee (Pastor's Study)
5:30 PM PNC (Conference Room)
6:00 PM Adult Ed Committee (Pastor's Study)
6:00 PM Apostles Read Book Club (Library)
7:00 PM St. Andrew's Sisters (Off site)

Wednesday, February 26

10:00 AM Pastors Pray in Chancel
10:00 AM Sing by Heart Dementia Choir (Parish Hall)
10:30 AM Worship Planning (Pastor's Study)
12:30 PM Reporter Mailing (2nd Floor Classroom)
3:30 PM Depression & Bi-Polar Support (Youth Room)
4:00 PM Bridges (Tower Classroom)
5:00 PM Children's Choir (Music Room)
5:30 PM Helping Hands Meal Delivered
5:30 PM Special Session Meeting (Parish Hall)
6:00 PM Mission and Community Service (2nd Flr Classroom)

Thursday, February 27

5:30 PM Dr. Kieffer's Bible Study (2nd Floor Classroom)
7:00 PM Choir (Music Room)

Friday, February 28

Saturday, March 1

11:00 AM Church Mice (2nd Floor Classroom)
6:30 PM WCP Trivia Night (Off site)

Sunday, March 2

Parish Nurse Ministries (Church Office)

9:00 AM New Members Class (Pastor's Study)
10:00 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary)
10:15 AM Sunday School Pre K-5 (Chapel Classroom)
10:15 AM Confirmation Prep (Conference Room)
11:15 AM Confirmation Class (Conference Room)
11:15 AM Adult Ed Forum (Parish Hall)
5:00 PM Sr. High Youth Group (Parish Hall)

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WESTMINSTER STAFF

The Rev. Dr. Blythe D. Kieffer
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

Mary Ray
Director for Youth

Meleah and Aaron Berkowitz
Co-Directors for Children's Ministry

Kara Milward, Erin Winn
Nursery Coordinators

Emily Rowley, Keri Tate
Cooperative Preschool Staff

Ellen Carpenter
Parish Nurse

Pat Hymans
Hospitality Coordinator

Lisa Runkle
Financial Administrator

Jennie Alt
Church Administrative Assistant

Krista Steller
Communications Coordinator

Gary Warnick
Building and Property Manager

Braden Barton, James Capler, Terry Gietl, Javier Velásquez
Part-time Custodians