WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
First Sunday of Christmas
December 28, 2025 + 10:00 a.m.

Welcome and Announcements

Voluntary Good Christian Friends, Rejoice — Jacques Bertier

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

***Call to Worship**

Leader: God of all times and yet beyond time,
People: **you call us into this new year still to be named.**
Leader: Help us travel light in faith and expectation.
People: **Guide us in this new venture of imagination.**
Leader: Make us bold witnesses to the in-breaking of your future.
People: **Let us rest our times in yours, confident that we do not enter this new year alone.**

***Processional Hymn 145** What Child is This — *Greensleeves*

***Unison Prayer of Confession**

Holy and loving God, we confess the times we have tried to silence questions and been afraid of the consequences of asking. Often our fear prevents us from providing space for wonder, and exploration and discovery. Forgive us and empower us to trust you enough to dare to wonder, to question, to change, and to grow. As the Babe of Bethlehem's hope has entered our world, may such hope continue to dwell in us. 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

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 **Go, Tell It On The Mountain** — Go Tell It

Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born.

Children in Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 5 will go to their Sunday school classes. Youth in Grades 6-7 go to Confirmation Prep following the congregational response.

Prayer for Illumination

First Scripture Reading Psalm 98 — Pew Bible, OT page 551-552

Second Scripture Reading John 1:1-14 — Pew Bible, NT page 91-92

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

Sermon Work of Christmas Begins — Rev. Sarah A. Bishop

Solo Where Is the Child? Beck and Courtney

Where is the child? When I was a child, He seemed much closer to me. I've wandered afar with no guiding star from the Child of Galilee. Where is the joy of that tiny boy? And where's the laughter and glee? And where's the delight of this holy night? And where's the child in me?

Why should we lose all the happiness of caroling? And who should refuse all the joy the season's love can bring? When did I grow too old to remember all of the glow of home in December? Where is the child, the innocent child? Can I be beguiled to let him find me?

What do I hear -a sound faint but clear? Do angels still sing their song? I know I can find that child's peace of mind. Make me a child again for tonight and all my life long.

***Affirmation of Faith** Excerpt from *The Confession of Belhar*

We believe in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects and cares for the church through Word and Spirit. This, God has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end. We believe that Christ's work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another; that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God's Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain. Amen

The Church at Prayer

Solo: 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 The Work of Christmas — Dan Forrest

When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flock,

The work of Christmas begins: To find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the pris'ner, to rebuild the nations: To bring peace among brothers, to make music from the heart. When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flock, the work of Christmas begins.

***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, we are a part of a rich tapestry of tradition and yet the world is ever changing. Open our ears to new voices around us and open our eyes to new perspectives as we mark the turning points on our life's journeys. Accept these gifts of gratitude for the privilege of belonging to you. This we pray in the name of the Christ Child. Amen.

***Hymn 119** Hark! The Herald Angels Sing — *Mendelssohn*

***Charge and Benediction**

***Voluntary** Joy to the World — Albert Travis

(*) 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

- **Sunday Liturgist**: Lyle VanDeventer
- **Worship Leader:** Braden Barton
- **Acolytes**: Brooke and Juliet Boutelle
- **Greeters:** Judy and Harvey Stephens
- **Ushers:** Greg Boutelle (Head Usher), Todd Lafrenz, Claudia Nash, Bill Schlosser, Bernie Wiseman, Randy Wiseman, Cathy Yokley
- **Safety Team:** John Stafford
- **Music:** Brian Richardson, Baritone, and Linda Andrews, Guest Organist
- **Videographers:** Bill Deemer, Krista 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. *Caregiver: Erin Winn*
- **10:15 – 11:00 a.m. Children in Pre-K – Grade 5** The Sunday School children will gather in third floor chapel for a combined lesson. *Teachers: Meleah and Aaron Berkowitz*

Church Offices will be closed at Noon on New Year's Eve and all day on January 1, 2026.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WE WELCOME VISITORS! Information about us 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. If you are interested in joining Westminster, speak with one of the pastors.

CHRISMON BOOKLETS which outline the history and meaning of the ornaments displayed on Westminster's Chrismon Tree in the Chancel can be found in the pew pockets.

YEAR-END 2025 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 2025 pledge. Be sure any donations for the 2025 tax year are dated December 31, 2025 or earlier and delivered to the church no later than 5:00 p.m. Friday, January 2, 2026.

2026 STEWARDSHIP GOAL SURPASSED As of Tuesday, December 23, we have received 208 pledges totaling $890,405 which is 102% of the 2026 Found Faithful Stewardship Campaign goal of $871,000 goal. Thank you to all who pledged and to the 2026 Stewardship Committee: Julie Robbs, Chair, Linda Andrews, Adam Ekstedt, Joe Fierstos, Claudia Nash, Linda Purves, Jeanne Van Gieson, Sarah Zerfas

EMERGENCY PASTORAL CARE Commissioned Ruling Elder and congregation member, Sue Sawers, will be on-call for emergency pastoral care needs from Monday, December 29th through Friday, January 2nd. If you are in need of an emergency pastoral care visit during that time, please contact Sue at 217-299-4022 or the church office.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE Aaron Berkowitz heads a committee that has catalogued over 200 books using the Library of Congress system. Members are also reorganizing the Children's Library as well as the Ziegler Library and have prepared a cart in the West Narthex with topics from both libraries which are available for check-out. Please stop by to view the cart and select a book.

TOYS FOR TOTS box is in the West Narthex. Place unwrapped gifts in it for children of any age through Tuesday, December 30. This is a program of the Marine Corps Reserve.

THE MITTEN TREE for Contact Ministries is in the West Narthex near the elevator. In addition to children's items, adult gloves, hats, and scarves are also needed and will be collected through Sunday, January 4, 2026.

KNIT 2 PURL 4 MISSION AND FELLOWSHIP gathers on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. in the Second Floor Classroom. **Knitters will knit at home December 30 and resume knitting at church January 4**. Additional hats and mittens are welcome on the Mitten Tree.

ADULT ED FORUM: HOPE IN DARK TIMES (Parish Hall) On January 4, a class led by Carole Kennerly will explore the history of WWII prisoners of war who were imprisioned around the US, including Carol's father's cotton farm in rual Arkansas.

PROGRAMS RESUME ON EPIPHANY ON JANUARY 4 We will join the Wise people in following the star of Epiphany as it commemorates their arrival in Bethlehem to honor baby Jesus. Nursery, Sunday School (preschool -fifth grade) and Confirmation Prep (sixth-eight grade) and Confirmation classes resume. Our Adult Education Forum following worship in Parish Hall returns as well.

CHURCH OFFICER RETREAT AND JANUARY BOARD MEETING DATES On **Saturday, January 10, 9:00 a.m. – 12 noon,** Elders and Deacons will gather for the Annual Church Officer Retreat. The Board of Deacons will meet Wednesday, January 14 and Session will meet Wednesday, January 21.

NEW OFFICER ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION SUNDAY, JANUARY 11 Westminster Church Officers who were elected on October 12 will be ordained and installed during the 10:00 a.m. service. During this special service, we will renew our baptisms and consider how at baptism we are united with Christ and sent to serve.

SESSION CLASS OF 2028: Sandy Bellatti, George Botanga, Nathaniel Brower, Deb Coontz, Cress Maddox, Sr., Lucy Stafford, Brad Swanson, and Jess Weitzel. *Youth Elder* – Sam Batterman

BOARD OF DEACONS CLASS OF 2028: John Addo-Yobo, Maud Essel Addo-Yobo, Andrew Affrunti, Chelsea Ekstedt, Cameron Hudgins, Lisa Metzger, Joyce Matthews, Pete Sherman. *Youth Deacon* – Macklin Metzger

THANK YOU TO CHURCH OFFICERS CLASS OF 2025 We are grateful to the following Elders and Deacons who have served our congregation faithfully:

SESSION: Scott Day, Jim Dolan, Gregg Humprey, Judy Knox, Amanda Maddox-Wenthe, Pat McNutt, Mike Nenaber, Jeanne VanGieson

BOARD OF DEACONS: George Botanga, Chris Hickman, Sabrina Holmes, Melanie Humphrey, Kathy Kenyon, Debra Parker, Bill Schlosser, Erin Winn and Maria Lafrenz (Youth)

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS TAKE DOWN will be Tuesday, January 6 beginning at 10:00 a.m. Many thanks to those who assisted in decorating the church. We have enjoyed these adornments through the seasons of Advent and Christmas. Come help store things away for another year.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S LUNCH will not meet in January.

RUTH AND NAOMI CIRCLE meets on Wednesday, January 7, 7:00 p.m. at the home of Judy Knox (2004 Maryknoll, 62704). Kathy Germeraad will lead the discussion of Chapter 4 in Becoming Spiritually Intelligent by Paul M. Burns. RSVP directly to Judy at 217-691-1057

PRESBYTERIAN MEN'S BREAKFAST will be Thursday, January 8 at 8:00 a.m. in Parish Hall. Bob Bunn will speak about the history of the Bunn and Lincoln family friendship. Please RSVP on our website or by contacting the church office.

ELIZABETH CIRCLE meets on Monday, January 12, at 1:00 p.m. in the Second Floor Classroom. Sue Baker will lead Lesson 5 in *Finding Resilience , Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ* by The Rev. Dr. Rhashell D. Hunter.

ANNUAL REPORT DUE FRIDAY, JANUARY 16 AT NOON It is time to compile the 2025 Elder and Deacon chair reports. Committee chairs have received copies of the 2024 reports to help them prepare reports to be assembled into the Annual Report for the Congregational Meeting on January 25. Please email completed reports to Jennie Alt (Jalt@wpcspi.org) by Friday, January 16. If you should have questions, please contact the pastor overseeing your committee.

BACK TO THE START SERMON SERIES BEGINS SUNDAY, JANUARY 18 Many of us remember the Bible stories we learned as children: Creation, the Garden of Eden, Noah's Ark, Abraham and Sarah. But as adults, these stories invite us to look again, to wrestle with their questions, and to discover deeper truths about God, humanity, and hope. In this series, we return to the book of Genesis to hear these familiar stories with fresh ears; finding that even in our chaos, doubt, and longing, God is still creating, still calling, and still bringing forth new beginnings.

LYDIA CIRCLE meets on Tuesday, January 20, at 1:00 p.m. in the Ziegler Library. Randy Wiseman will lead Lesson 4 in *Finding Resilience , Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ* by The Rev. Dr. Rhashell D. Hunter.

EXPLORATION CLASS JANUARY 25 AND FEBRUARY 1 AT 9:00 A.M. Visitors and friends who are interested in membership are welcome to join us prior to worship on January 25th and February 1st to learn more about the mission and ministry of Westminster Presbyterian Church. We will meet in the Zeigler Library at 9:00 a.m. for conversation, connection, and exploration about how you might get more involved in the church.

Church Offices will be closed at Noon on New Year's Eve and all day on January 1, 2026.

THIS WEEK AT WESTMINSTER

Monday, December 29
12:30 PM Reporter mailing
3:30 PM DBSA Group (3rd Floor Classroom)

Tuesday, December 30
10:30 AM Staff Meeting (Pastor's Study)

Wednesday, December 31
12:00 PM: Church Office Closes at Noon

Thursday, January 1
Church Office is Closed

Friday, January 2
Church Office is Open

Saturday, January 3

Sunday, January 4
10:00 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary)
10:15 AM Sunday School (Pre-K- Grade 5)
(3rd Floor Chapel and Classroom)
10:15 AM Confirmation Prep (Conference Room)
11:15 AM Confirmation (Conference Room)

Westminster Presbyterian Church
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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

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

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, Francis Gyebi, Jerry McCullum
Part-time Custodians