

A long time ago, people in the Christian church divided the year into four time periods. Each segment tells a story. The first segment is Advent. The story is one of darkness moving into light. They set the Advent story in December – a time when the outside days were dark and growing darker. The reminder is of the pain and hopelessness of the world. It is realistic. Life is more than difficult; it can be overwhelmingly painful.

Then, without our having done anything, the world begins to change. The dark days begin to change at Christmas. It is a symbolic statement about the birth of Christ, the Light of the World.

Advent is realistic, acknowledging and standing in solidarity with those who are suffering and without hope. It recognizes that we cannot “do” anything to take away the darkness. What we can do is learn to trust again in God. Our hope is in God, no matter how difficult things are.

We do not believe in the myth of progress, or easy optimism, or even hard work cures all. Our hope is grounded in God alone.

What is it that God gives in Advent? A promise. A promise to be with us and for us. God is faithful to God’s promise. The promise becomes present in the birth of Jesus.

The prophet Isaiah says, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined” (Isaiah 9: 2). As Miroslav Volf puts it, “This is what Christmas is all about – something radically new that cannot be generated out of the conditions of this world. It does not emerge. It comes. We do not extrapolate it. God promises it.”

The light of one who was with God at the beginning of the world shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not overcome it.

Our family has been touched in overwhelming ways by the love of the Westminster congregation in the past month. No one can fix the pain we have experienced. But you have witnessed to the Light. The Light of Jesus is the hope for us, and for all the world. God bless you all as we move from darkness to a new awareness of the gift – the Light of Jesus Christ.

In Christ’s love,

Andrew McDonald
Pastor



A note from the Westminster Foundation:

“The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world, and those who live in it...”

~ Psalm 24:1

Your church family has been a blessing throughout your life, an integral part of your spiritual journey. But, when it comes time to completing estate plans, have you considered including the Westminster Foundation in your will?

Like many who have given to your church over the years, you’ve probably been nourished and supported by being a part of your church community. It’s a privilege to give back to the church that has been such a big part of family life. Bequest gifts have the power to impact future generations in the same way. It’s so easy to include your church in your will and still provide for loved ones.

You can touch the future with your charitable bequest. You may also want to explore other estate planning options, such as designating the Foundation as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy or an IRA account.

Make or update your will — decide to do it today. We can help you think through your options to make the optimum decision. For more information about the Westminster Foundation, click the “Foundation” link at www.westminsterlincoln.org or contact the church office at 402-475-6702.

The Messenger is a monthly publication of Westminster Presbyterian Church

2110 Sheridan Blvd. Lincoln, NE 68502
Phone: 402-475-6702 Fax: 402-475-3148

Pastor: Reverend Dr. Andrew L. McDonald.....	x 110
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4th Annual Westminster Women's Retreat

Creating Our Stories

Relax... Renew... Rejoice!

Saturday, January 11, 2014 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Women of all ages and faiths are invited to enjoy this day of renewal! Join us for keynote speaker Jody Kellas, professor of communication studies at UNL, workshops, lunch and fellowship! Want to bring a friend? Westminster members who bring a non-member guest will receive a \$5 discount on registration.

Early Bird Registration (through Dec. 22): \$25/person

Late Registration (closes Jan. 5): \$30/person

**Complete the registration form below and return with payment to
Westminster Presbyterian Church (attn: Cheryl Rennick) 2110 Sheridan Blvd. Lincoln, NE 68502**

First Name: _____ **Last Name:** _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

I am a member of Westminster: Yes No

Do you have access requirements or special dietary requirements? Yes No

If yes, please explain in detail.

Would you like Childcare for children 0-4 years? Yes No

\$10 for first child; \$5 for second child; \$15 max per family

List ages and number of children.

To facilitate room layouts **please circle one session in each session group** you are considering attending, for a total of three choices out of nine sessions.

Session 1

Stories Untold/Women of the Bible
Telling Your Story through Art
Writing Your Story

Session 2

Narrative Grieving
Reformed & Always Reforming
Book Talk

Session 3

Book Discussion: What Happy Women Know
The Law of Attraction: How We Create Our Own Lives and Realize Dreams
Tai Chi

For Office Use Only

Name(s):

Date:

Registration Fee Received: \$

celebrate ADVENT

Holiday of Trees

Once again, Westminster will host this year's Holiday of Trees, sponsored by the Heritage League. The event, December 5-6 from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., will feature 25 beautifully decorated holiday trees and other highlights including:

- Shopping opportunities from the Boutique, the Pantry and Attic Treasures
- Home-cooked food for coffee, lunch and dinner
- Multiple raffles (including an iPad, golf outing and event tickets)
- Gingerbread house station for children
- And more!

Tickets are \$1/person. Ticket sale proceeds will benefit "Andrew's Angels — iPads for Autistic Children," managed by the Lincoln Public Schools Foundation.

Holiday of Trees Donors

Applebee's
Bill Hunt
Contemporary Woods Furniture
Cupcakes & More
Donna Hilton
Dr. Janice Rogers
Frank Fox and Hoagstrom Financial Services
Hillcrest Country Club
Hughes Brothers - Seward
Jerry and Roberta Christensen
Jim Owens
Lied Center for Performing Arts
Lincoln Community Playhouse
Lincoln Midwest Ballet Company
Meier's Cork & Bottle
Michael Forsberg
Rossi Financial Services
Sue Jeffrey Physical Therapy
The Stem Gallery
Union Bank
US Bank
Venue

Giving Opportunities

Prescott Partners

With the colder weather we are asking for donations for new or GENTLY used coats, hats and mittens/gloves for the students at Prescott School. There are 60 families who are new immigrants; coats, hats, boots and gloves in new or like new condition would be appreciated as well. There is a donation box in the reception area. Thank you for supporting our relationship with our neighbors at Prescott!

Westminster Food Pantry

Did you know that Westminster's Food Pantry feeds six families each week? While this is an amazing contribution to families in need in our community, we can't maintain the pantry without your help! Recently, we've been collecting only 40 to 50 food items each week from congregation members, thus spending an average \$1,500 out-of-pocket to meet these needs.

In this Advent Season and throughout the year, please remember the spirit of giving and help us feed the hungry in our community! Your non-perishable food donations and monetary contributions are appreciated.

St. Nick!



For 25 years, Westminster's Freda and Michael Gregg have been spreading Christmas cheer to families in rural Nebraska as part of Westminster's St. Nick mission project. Here is a closer look at the project and the Gregg family's tradition of giving.

The couple, who joined the church in December of '86, have made giving to St. Nick a Christmas tradition that spans four generations. Not only does their daughter, Penny, and granddaughters, Josie, Ella and Phoebe participate, but Freda's mother, Hazel Earle, does as well; she lives in Ireland.

"I write to my mother every week, so I would mention St. Nick and the history behind the project," Freda Gregg said. "Each year she would ask how it was doing and decided she would like to contribute financially."

St. Nick has been a part of Westminster tradition for 27 years.

Gregg, along with project founder Teri Nelson, work with case workers throughout rural Nebraska to find those in need each holiday season. Once this list is compiled, participating Westminster members are matched with either a family or individual to buy gifts for.

The things individuals ask for are typically basic needs, Gregg said, about the wish lists generated by the majority of families. It isn't unusual to see gas cards, laundry detergent and shoes in place of the luxury items we're use to seeing on our own lists.

Gregg mentioned that many parents don't request anything, as long as their children receive gifts. However, Westminster participants work hard to make sure no one is left out. Brief family histories are given to each volunteer, something that is very important, Gregg said, as it provides some insight into each family's life;

stories that range from single parents trying to finish school to others dealing with severe illness.

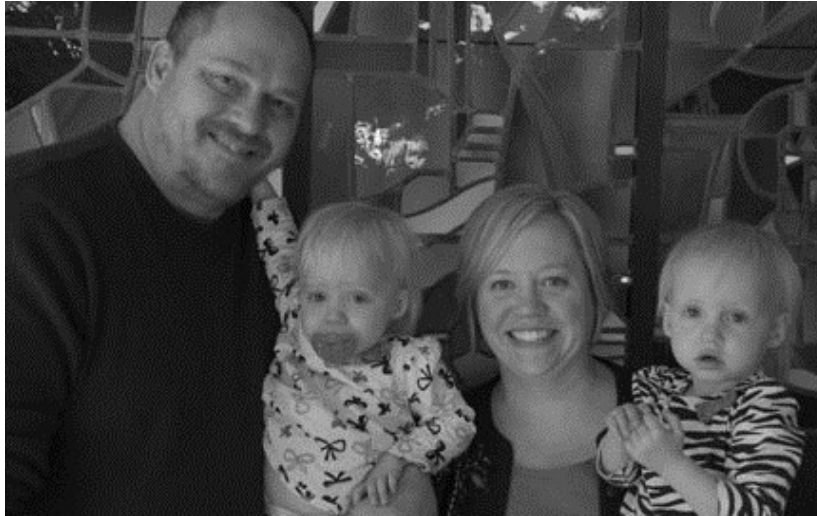
"I'm astounded by how some of the families get by day to day or week to week," Gregg said. "In most cases, these are the only gifts they're getting." The majority of giving opportunities don't stretch outside of city limits, so it's nice to be reaching families that wouldn't normally have access to community agencies and programming, she said.

As Gregg's family demonstrates, St. Nick is designed so children and adults of all ages can give in different ways. In 2012, Gregg's granddaughter Josie celebrated her 13th birthday by taking her friends out shopping to buy gifts for St. Nick. In the past, the family has also donated gently used bicycles that the girls had outgrown.

"It brings you up to realize how much you really have," she said.

You can still give the gift of Christmas cheer this season with St. Nick through gifts of money or time! Save the date for our Gift Wrapping Party on Tuesday, December 17 at 6:00 p.m. Bring your friends and a pair of scissors and wear comfy clothes! Treats provided.

Have any extra stocking stuffers, gift wrap or boxes? Drop them off in the church office by December 17!



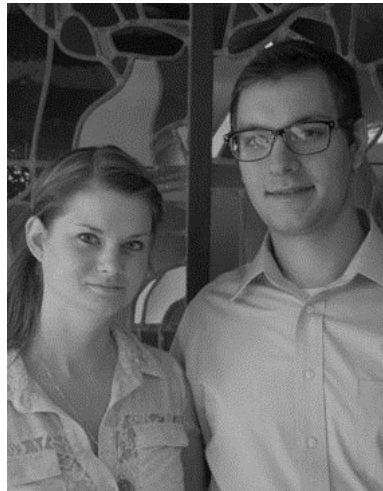
New Members

Westminster is happy to introduce our newest members! Clockwise from top left: Sean Schulz and Corrie Stohlman (Keira and Avery); Dylan Mason and Amanda Deckert; and Susan Kehrli Moore. Not pictured are Ryan Lewis, Andrew Diehl, Matthew Marquardt and Lisa Gaede.

Foundation Birthday Club

The following members celebrated birthdays during November and renewed or became members of the Foundation Birthday Club:

Sam Baird
Lynn & Ellen Davis — Memorial for Jim Stone
Tim Gergen
Sonia Harford
Marilyn Palmer
Amy Peterson
Bill Roper
Barbara Schliesser
Tami Wellmann
Maddie Whitehead
Vicki Vopalensky



Rennick Receives Outstanding Homesteader Award

Cheryl Rennick, Westminster's Business Administrator, was named recipient of the Robert Giles Outstanding Homesteader Award for 2013 at the Homestead Presbytery meeting on November 21. The award honors clergy and laity in the Presbytery who have made outstanding contributions to the church and community life.

Cheryl has served as Chair of Business and Finance for eight years, has been a Member of Presbytery Council for nine years, and served as Presbytery Treasurer for two years, among other roles with numerous commissions and committees. She has also served other churches of the Presbytery through assistance with financial organization. We are grateful for her continuing ministry with Homestead Presbytery and Westminster. Congratulations Cheryl!





Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch will meet at Buzzard Billy's (247 N 8th Street in the Haymarket) on Tuesday, December 3, at 11:30 a.m. Join us for some friendly conversation and fellowship over lunch!

Prairie Readers

Prairie Readers will meet on Wednesday, December 18, at 1:00 p.m. in the Parlor for tea and Christmas goodies. There is no book for this month, but members who wish may bring a favorite piece that connects with the holidays. All are welcome!

Presbyterian Women

Circle 1

Wednesday, Dec. 4 at 9:30 a.m.
Westminster Lounge
Ramona Riley (402-466-5715)

Circle 3

Wednesday, Dec. 4 at 10:00 a.m.
3025 Sheridan Boulevard
Wendi Coffman (402-477-8987)

Circle 4

Monday, Dec. 2 at 6:00 p.m.
2650 Calvert Street
Faye Moulton (402-423-7608)

Circle 5

Tuesday, Dec. 10 at 10:00 a.m.
Westminster Lounge
Jane Grabenstein-Chandler (402-483-6533)



Circle 6

No December Meeting
Jane Hines (402-488-8302)

Mission Sewers

No December Meeting
Jane Grabenstein-Chandler
(402-483-6533)

Men's Tuesday Morning Breakfast

December 3

The History of Christmas Carols
..... Dr. Bud Tenney
11th Annual Bob Rohrbaugh
Memorial singing of "White
Christmas." Jean Patoka, piano.

December 10

How Wise are We?
..... Dr. Steve Carveth

December 17

13th Annual Reading of Dickens'
"A Christmas Carol"
..... Keith Ghormley,
Associate Pastor at Zion
Presbyterian Church

December 24

No Meeting
..... A time to celebrate
the miracle of Christmas.

December 31

No Meeting
..... Pray that God will
guide our Leaders in 2014!

All Westminster women are invited to visit or join one of the following circles. Just call the number listed for monthly details. The 2013-2014 Bible Study, AN ABIDING HOPE: The presence of God in Exodus and Deuteronomy, and a Circle Directory will be available through the circle leaders.

Westminster Bible Class

Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

Dec. 1

Jesus' Birth Foretold

..... Luke 1:26-40
..... Kent Wolfe, leading

Dec. 8

Mary's Song of Praise

..... Luke 1:46-56
..... Rev. Ellen Davis, leading

Dec. 15

Zechariah Prophecies About His Son John

..... Luke 1:57-58, 67-79
..... Greg Hershberger, leading

Dec. 22

Jesus is Born

..... Luke 2:1-17
..... Steve Carveth, leading

Dec. 29

..... No Class

All In The Family:

Dylan Thomas Mason baptized on November 10.

Best wishes to Hannah Wiles and Chuck Heikes, who were married on October 19.

Comfort for the family and friends of Ray Mitchell who died on October 26 and Trinity McDonald who died on October 27.

Faith FOUNDATIONS



Our new Adult Education class Faith Foundations

will continue into December! Join Pastor Jen and

other Westminster members Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

for this discussion-based class that allows Christians

to come together and talk about faith one topic at a time. We ask difficult questions and offer genuine, candid answers about this complex and thrilling faith journey we're on together. If you want to re-examine what it means to be a follower of Christ, join us!

Christianity in America

Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

Dr. Ken Moore will introduce participants to the personalities and movements that have shaped Christianity in the United States. Topics for December include:

Dec. 1 Preparing for His Coming: An Introduction to Advent

Dec. 8 African American Churches

Dec. 15 Missions & Ecumenism

Dec. 22 Unique American Movements

Dec. 29 Influence of the Churches

Exodus

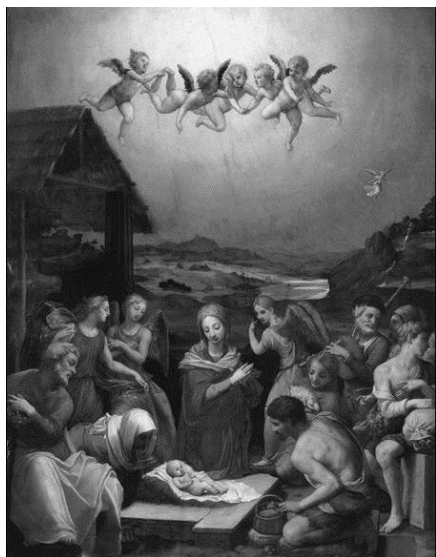
Mondays at 11:00 a.m.

Dec. 2 Exodus, final session

Dec. 9 The Birth of the Messiah
(An in-depth study of recent scholarship on the infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke)

Dec. 16 The Birth of the Messiah (cont.)

Dec. 23 TBD



WOW

Westminster on Wednesdays

Advent in Art

Advent in Art is a 3-week journey seeing the Nativity Story through the eyes and paintbrushes of Master artists such as Da Vinci, Rembrandt, Caravaggio, Botticelli and more. From the angel's visit to Christ's birth in the manger, we'll hear and see the amazing Christmas story anew, as well as receive a mini lesson in art history. Led by Pastor Jen Strickland, the group will meet Wednesday nights at 6:30 p.m. December 4 to 18.

Poinsettia 2013 Order Form

Share the joy of Christmas! Order a poinsettia in memory or honor of a loved one to be displayed in the chancel on Christmas Eve. Please return to:

Westminster Presbyterian Church, attn: Marge Tomlinson
2110 Sheridan Boulevard Lincoln, NE 68502

Cost of each poinsettia is **\$15**; make checks payable to Westminster and write POINSETTIA on the memo line. **Orders must be received by December 18** to be included in the order of worship.

___ I would like to purchase ___ poinsettia(s)

and/or

___ I would like to make a cash donation to the Westminster Library

Given by: _____

In memory of: _____

or

In honor of: _____

Amount enclose: \$_____

___ I will take my poinsettia home following the 9:00 p.m. service

___ The Deacons may deliver my poinsettia to the elderly or homebound

Regular WOW Events

5:00 Youth Bells

5:45 Dinner

6:20 Westminster Carillon

6:30 Alleluia! Amen!,
Cherub Choir, Knit N Sit, WOW XL,
Art in Advent, Narrative Grieving
7:30 Westminster Choir

There will be **no Wednesday rehearsals** on Dec. 25 and Jan. 1 and **no Jr. String Ensemble rehearsal** on Dec. 29 and Jan. 5. Have a blessed 12 days of Christmas with your family! All rehearsals resume on Jan. 8.

WOW Menu for December

Served Wednesdays from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. Served with salad, fruit and desert. \$5/adults; \$3/children; \$15 max per family

Dec. 4: Brisket and roasted potatoes

Dec. 11: Spaghetti casserole and garlic bread

Dec. 18: Nachos

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see-I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people." ~ Luke 2:10

YOUTH

Faith Village (K to 5th Grade)

Sundays 9:00 and 10:45 a.m.

Christmas is really about God's great gift to us in Jesus. We can share this wonderful story with others by our words and actions. In Faith Village during December children will experience the Christmas story from Luke's Gospel. Children will create and re-create the story through a variety of activities that will incorporate all their intelligences and discover ways they can share this good news as a gift to others.

Kindergarten of Eden (Preschool)

Sundays 10:45 a.m.

Using the Wee Believe curriculum, nurturing adults will help children build a foundational understanding of God's love for them. In December, the children will be exploring stories of Jesus being born. An offering for the Food Pantry will be collected each week and children are encouraged to bring non-perishable items.

Hat and Mitten Tree

Many children here in Lincoln are not able to enjoy a crisp winter day, or new fallen snow because they don't have hats and mittens to keep them warm. Again this year, children are being asked to bring NEW hats, gloves, scarves and mittens to decorate the small tree in the east stairwell. These hats and gloves will be donated before Christmas. Please make a contribution by December 18.



Don't Forget!

There will be no Faith Village or Kindergarten of Eden on December 15 and 29. Please enjoy the Children's Musical together with your family during 10:30 a.m. worship on December 15!

Save the Date

Treasure Island!, our 3rd Annual Drama Camp with the Missoula Children's Theater, will be March 10 to 14. Performance on March 15.

A **BIG thank you** to Spooktacular sponsors, trunk and candy donors and volunteers who participated in our October event!

Augstums Printing
Duteau
UNICO/Scott Nelson

Burton/Tyrrells
Latschs
Walgreens

Campbell's Nurseries
Subway

Dancewares
Sunmart

***Faith* BUILDING BLOCKS**

Faith Building Blocks helps children build a firm foundation of faith and strong sense of God's love and gives families opportunities to learn and grow in faith together. Our upcoming Faith Building Blocks events are:

Wednesday, January 8 at 6:30 p.m.

2 By 2: God Makes a Promise to You!

A Faith Building Block experience for second graders and a parent. The Bible story of a faithful man named Noah reminds us that God loves all creation and that God made a special covenant with Noah and all living things. Participants will explore God's love, Noah's obedience and how faithful people make choices that honor God.

Looking Ahead:

The Lord's Prayer Wednesday, February 19 at 6:30 p.m.

A Faith Building Block Experience for Fifth Grade

The Sacraments: Wednesday, April 16 at 6:30 p.m.

A Faith Building Block Experience for Fourth Grade

A Butcher, A Baker, A Candlestick Maker?

In Faith Village, kids learn about God's amazing love for us through all five of their senses. There are currently openings for loving adults to lead workshops in January, February and March. Please consider a spirited response to this call to use your God gifted talents to help our children build the blocks on their faith.

Westminster High School Youth announce:

TGIS!

Join us Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. for "Thank God I'm Saved!" Not a morning person? We meet every 2nd and 4th Sunday night as well! Join us for "Thank God It's Sunday!" from 6:00 to 8:00.

Caroling and Lock-in

On Friday, December 20, High School Youth will meet for caroling with congregation members from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Help spread some Christmas cheer in the Sheridan neighborhood!

The Lock-in will begin at 7:30 p.m. SHARP! Youth are welcome to invite friends, and the church will provide pizza and games (ugly sweater contest, dodgeball tournament, etc.). Cost is \$10 in advance; \$15 day of.

Want to help? Adult chaperones are needed! Contact Rachel at 402-475-6702 if interested.



SPIRITUALLY ALIVE
BROADLY INCLUSIVE
GROWING IN MISSION

2110 Sheridan Blvd.
Lincoln, NE 68502
402.475.6702
westminsterlincoln.org

celebrate ADVENT

Open your hearts and celebrate Advent with the gift of music!

Each Sunday in December features special music during both our 8 and 10:30 a.m. worship services. Westminster also offers four Christmas Eve services throughout the afternoon and evening of December 24. Join us in this celebration of Christ's birth!

Christmas Eve Candle Light Services: December 24

3:00 p.m. Daytime Family Service

(Annemarie Schubert, violin, and Tyler Minter, viola)

5:00 p.m. Family Service

(Nebraska Brass, All Children's Choir, Jr. String Ensemble)

7:00 p.m. Contemporary Service

(Westminster Band)

9:00 p.m. Traditional Service

(Nebraska Brass, Westminster Carillon, Westminster Choir)

Advent I: December 1 "Preparing for God's Love Descending"

8:00 "En Priere" Cao Nguyen

10:30 Double Handbell Choir and Westminster Choir

Advent II: December 8 "Great Expectation"

8:00 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" Kaitlin Phillips

10:30 "Hodie" by Randall Stroope, Westminster Choir

Advent III: December 15 "I Love to Tell the Story of the Greatest Gift"

8:00 "Love Came Down at Christmas" Reader's Theater

10:30 "Were You There" Children's Christmas Pageant,
"Hallelujah Chorus" Reunion Chorus**, "Breath of Heaven"
Liturgical Dance

Advent IV: December 22 "Rejoice, the Lord Is Near"

8:00 "Il est ne" Max Pearson

10:30 Baroque Christmas by Westminster Choir

**If you'd like to sing in the "Hallelujah Chorus" meet in the sanctuary at 10:10 a.m. before worship. Music will be provided. No steps required. Rejoice in the Lord with this Handel's timeless praise!