

March  
2021



**Daylight Saving Time**  
Sunday, March 14



**WORSHIP ONLINE**  
WITH US  
ON SUNDAYS



**VIRTUAL**  
**COMMUNION**  
SUNDAY, MARCH 7

# THE MESSENGER



Westminster Family,

As Ash Wednesday neared a few weeks ago, a friend and pastor-colleague asked me, “we’ve given up so much this past year, I wonder if people will want to give anything up for Lent?” That question has stuck with me as we’ve begun this season of repentance and reflection in our church calendar. I’ve landed in the place of wanting to encourage our church family to approach this season as one of cultivating healthy spiritual practices, rather than feeling an obligation to deprive ourselves once again. Still, we are called to turn to God with prayer and fasting, so here are a few ways I think we might make this a Lent of growth and cultivation in our spiritual lives with an emphasis on prayer and drawing closer to God...

**Worship:** During Lent our worship is focusing on one simple idea each week. “Wilderness”, “Covenant”, “Overturned,” “Honor” and “Shouts” are our sermon titles for Sundays leading up to Holy Week. We’ll reflect on how scripture speaks to and about these concepts and how these ideas matter for our lives today.

**Devotional:** It’s never too late to start reading our congregational daily devotional from the PCUSA! Each day there is a focus on praying scripture, and so far, I have found it very refreshing for my own spiritual reflection time each morning. The devotional is available as a pdf on our website at <https://westminsterlincoln.org/worship-bulletins/> or by requesting a hard-copy from the office.

**Adult Education:** We are gathering each Wednesday at 7:00pm on Zoom for a pastor or Westminster member’s reflections on one scripture from the previous week’s devotional readings. It’s a wonderful and simple way for us to check-in with members of our church family while engaging scripture together.

**Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday:** On March 7, Westminster will celebrate one of my favorite services, as we recognize the value of women’s leadership in our denomination. Christy Abraham, Peace and Social Justice Coordinator for Homestead Presbyterian Women, will be our guest speaker.

**Easter:** While we don’t want to jump past Lent to the “empty tomb” too quickly, I am excited to share that we will have an outdoor worship service on Easter morning

at 9:00 a.m. at the Antelope Park Bandshell. You are invited to bring a chair or a blanket as we gather together to worship God with joy and resurrection-hope. Due to ongoing COVID guidelines, please wear your mask and practice physical distancing. The service will be weather-permitting.

I pray that this Lent may be a season of self and community reflection, as we seek to grow closer to God, who offers grace upon grace to us in Christ Jesus.

I’d also like to share a note of gratitude with our church family, as our ongoing pledges for 2021 have exceeded our planned budget amounts. Adding in a still-TBD surplus from 2020, and we have great potential for how we might serve God in 2021. From an active hiring process for a Director of Children’s and Youth Education, to a vibrant Earth Care Celebration and “Stewardship Outside Stewardship Season” series planned after Easter, to emerging ideas about how we might make a “Westminster Difference” in our Near South and Country Club neighborhoods, to conversations with sibling PCUSA churches about how to serve together in mission post-pandemic, we have much to be hopeful for as Spring begins to emerge around us! To God be the glory!

With Gratitude,  
Pastor Chris

## Lent Devotionals and Lenten Zoom Group

**Zoom Meeting ID: 820 6173 4420 | Passcode: 235613**

**March 3** | Tom Pappas, **March 10** | Rev. Jimmy Shelbourn, **March 17** | Brenda Wristen, and **March 24** | Sarah Baltensperger.

The traditional mindset is to give up something for Lent. Westminsterites are invited to add a Lenten discipline for this holy season. A Westminster ZOOM group will gather at 7 PM during the next five Wednesdays to reflect on the readings.

We have secured from the denomination a daily Lenten guide to scripture, meditation, and prayer. The digital materials are available for you to download and participate. You can also request the PDF study guide by email. There will be a few printed copies available inside the East door of the church for those without computer access.

Lent Devotionals can be found on our website at <https://westminsterlincoln.org/>. Go to the WORSHIP Dropdown Menu at the top of the page and click on the “Virtual Worship Bulletins” link to get your PDF.

## Holy Week Worship Schedule

Throughout Lent, our services have focused on one main idea within the scripture, and we will continue this practice during Holy Week. Please join us for thoughtful, focused, traditional services in the week where we engage Christ’s Jerusalem journey – from acclaim to death to resurrection.

**Palm Sunday Virtual Worship | Sunday, March 28** | “Shouts” Rev. Chris Peters Preaching

**Maundy Thursday Virtual Worship | Thursday, April 1** | Premiering at 7:00pm on our YouTube Channel | “Washed” Rev. Chris Peters Preaching

**Good Friday Virtual Worship | Friday, April 2** | Premiering at 7:00pm on our YouTube Channel | “Words” Members Reading Passion Narrative

**Easter Virtual Worship | Sunday, April 4** | “Announced” Rev. Chris Peters Preaching

**Easter Outdoor Service at Antelope Park Bandshell | Sunday, April 4, 9:00am** | “Announced” Rev. Chris Peters Preaching



## Sanctuary Flowers for Virtual Services

Even though we are not worshiping together in person yet, you can still sign up to provide flowers in the sanctuary to honor a loved one or to celebrate a birthday or anniversary.

### **The process is simple:**

- 1)** Sign up for your choice of Sundays by contacting April Douglas at 402.429.8881 (call or text) and include the event or person you are honoring so the information can be listed in the virtual worship bulletin.
- 2)** Choose your own florist, then order and make payment for the arrangement of your choice. Arrange for the flowers to be delivered to the church by Friday during regular church hours. It's that simple!

If, for any reason, the flowers need to be picked up and delivered to the church, let April Douglas know and arrangements can be made. Contact April by email at [ajdouglas7929@gmail.com](mailto:ajdouglas7929@gmail.com) or 402.429.8881 (call or text).

## SWANSON SCHOLARSHIP

Full-time undergraduate students and high school seniors are encouraged to apply for Westminster's Swanson Scholarship. Established in 1999 by the Swanson Family, this scholarship provides \$500 financial support per recipient per academic school year. Applications are available on the church website or in the church office. The scholarship is open to individuals in all courses of study; however, preference will be given to applicants demonstrating an interest in Education and Community Service. Website address: <https://westminsterlincoln.org/swanson-scholarship-fund-westminster-presbyterian-church-foundation/>



***“So be sure when you step, step with care and great tact. And remember that life’s A Great Balancing Act. And will you succeed? Yes! You will, indeed (98 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  percent guaranteed)! Kid, you’ll move mountains.”*** Theodor Seuss Geisel, aka Dr. Seuss.

Oh, how we love Dr. Seuss! We begin the month of March with Dr. Seuss week and all of its trappings: Many Colored Monday, Terrific Hat Tuesday, Wacky Wednesday, Thing 1 and Thing 2 Thursday and Fun Socks Friday! Dr. Seuss had the special gift of writing many (46 published pieces, in fact!) books that are enjoyed by both children and their parents.

Reading to young children is not only an incredible bonding device, but crucial to brain development! Check out these statistics from the Literacy Project Foundation:

### On Literacy Development and Early Application

1. By age 2, a child’s brain is as active as an adult’s and [by age 3 the brain is more than twice as active as an adult’s](#) – and stays that way for the first 10 years of life.
2. [Cognitive processes](#) develop rapidly in the first few years of life. In fact, by age 3, [roughly 85% of the brain is developed](#). However, traditional education takes places in grades K-12, which begin at age five.
3. [According to the Department of Education](#), the more students read or are read to for fun on their own time and at home, the higher their reading scores, generally.
4. [Reading and being read aloud](#) to has an impact that extends beyond just hearing stories.
5. [65% of America’s fourth graders do not read at a proficient level](#).
6. [In a study of nearly 100,000 U.S. school children](#), access to printed materials was the key variable affecting reading acquisition.
7. [Children’s academic successes at ages 9 and 10](#) can be attributed to the amount of talk they hear from birth through age 3. Young children who are exposed to certain early language and literacy experiences also [prove to be good readers later on](#) in life.
8. Books contain many words that children are unlikely to encounter frequently in spoken language. [Books for kids actually contain 50%](#) more words that children are unlikely to encounter frequently than regular conversation, TV or radio.
9. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) [found that children who were read to frequently](#) are also more likely to: count to 20, or higher than those who were not (60% vs. 44%), write their own names (54% vs. 40%), read or pretend to read (77% vs. 57%).

10. [Higher reading exposure was 95% positively correlated](#) with a growing region supporting semantic language processing in the brain.
11. The most important aspect of parent talk is its amount. Mothers who frequently speak to their infants have their children learn [almost 300 more words by age 2](#) than did children whose mothers rarely spoke to them. Simultaneously, [children learn grammatical syntax and the social nuances](#) around communication in their community.
12. Children exposed to fewer colors, less touch, little interaction with adults, fewer sights and sounds, and less language, [actually have smaller brains](#).
13. [The number of books in the home](#) correlates significantly with higher reading scores for children.
14. Students who [choose what they read and have an informal environment](#) in which to read tend to be more motivated, read more and show greater language and literacy development.

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

As the weather improves, we will be sprucing up our playground. We are in need of some tree stumps and tree cookies! If, as you are beginning yard maintenance, you are cutting trees, consider donating some of your extra pieces for use on our playground!



### Messenger Articles Reminder:

All information for The Messenger is due to Tracy Hoffman at [tracy@westminsterlincoln.org](mailto:tracy@westminsterlincoln.org) by the 18th of each month. And all announcements for The eVine are due to Tracy and Joanne Gabriel at [joanne@westminsterlincoln.org](mailto:joanne@westminsterlincoln.org) by 5 pm on Monday of each week.

## Gifts of Women

### Sunday, March 7

Westminster acknowledges and celebrates this service to honor all women who answer God's call to leadership and service.

Women who nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study. Women who support the mission of the church worldwide.

Women who strive for justice and peace. Women who work to build an inclusive, caring community.

On this Gifts of Women Sunday we honor Susie Hughes and Glenna Haller with the PW Honorary Life Membership. They now belong to an honored community of folks recognized for their leadership, service, and faith. **Congratulations Susie and Glenna!**



## GREEN is the color for March's Virtual Social Hour!

**Sunday, March 21 | 7 PM**  
**Zoom Meeting ID: 6745456286**  
**Password: Welcome**

Come to the camera in your best dressed **GREEN**.

Don't forget...your wee dram or pint to wet your whistle.

Did you know...**BINGO** is loved by the **IRISH!**

Join your Westminster family for a fun night of **BINGO**.

Young and Old, Near and Far can play this game. Invite a friend.

### **PRIZES! PRIZES! PRIZES!**

Special **BINGO** Cards will be located at the table as you enter the East doors of the church. If you need a drop off or are far away, contact Kathy Rohwedder. at [kathrohw@yahoo.com](mailto:kathrohw@yahoo.com) for your BINGO card. Please one card per person.



Westminster Presbyterian Church

2110 Sheridan Blvd

Lincoln, NE 68502

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## 2021 Easter Lily Donation Form

Share the joy of Easter! This year we will be ordering a reduced number of Easter lilies to place in the sanctuary for the recording of the Easter Sunday service. You can make a donation in memory or in honor of a loved one, to be displayed in the online bulletin for Easter Sunday. Or you may donate money to one of the Westminster Endowment Funds.

The donation level is \$16. Please make checks payable to Westminster and write **EASTER LILY** on the memo line. Donations must be received by **March 24** to be included in the order of worship.

Mail your check and the information specified below to:

**Westminster Presbyterian Church**

**Attn: Joanne**

**2110 Sheridan Blvd., Lincoln, NE 68502**

\_\_\_\_ I/We would like to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ toward the purchase of an Easter lily/lilies.

\_\_\_\_ I/We would like to make a gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for one of the following Westminster Endowment Funds. Endowments may be any amount.

Please check one:

\_\_\_\_ **Mission and Outreach Endowment**

\_\_\_\_ **Music and Worship Endowment**

\_\_\_\_ **General Purpose Endowment**

\_\_\_\_ **The Great Commission Endowment**

\_\_\_\_ **Facilities Endowment**

\_\_\_\_ **Education Endowment**

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Watch the eVine for information about picking up your lily, when the recording for the Easter Worship service is complete. The lilies that are left will be delivered to our church community.