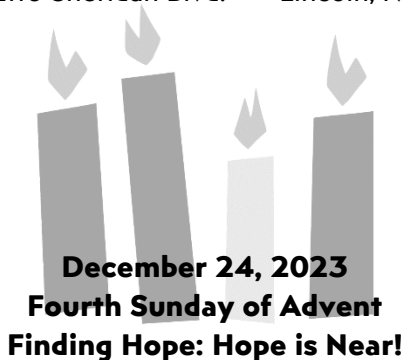


Westminster Presbyterian Church

2110 Sheridan Blvd. Lincoln, NE



Prelude "The Holy Boy" by John Ireland

Welcome Please sign and pass the friendship pad.

***Invitation to Worship (Isaiah 7:14)**

Dr. Jessica Sandmeier, Catherine Gumm

One: The Lord will give you a sign,

All: Look, the young woman is with child.

One: She shall bear a son, and name him Emmanuel,

All: Which means, "God is with us."

One: We light the candle of love as a sign of the coming arrival of God-with-us, the Emmanuel, Jesus, our Lord.

Lighting the Candle of Love

One: Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

All: Amen.

***Hymn #100 My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout
(Canticle of the Turning)**

***Call to Confession** Deacon Claire Titus

At Westminster, all are welcome by Christ's invitation to meet grace, find community, and share the love of God in word and deed. This morning we celebrate the fourth Sunday of Advent in a rare year where Advent 4 and Christmas Eve are the same day! Tonight, you are invited to join us again for our Christmas Eve services at 5:00pm and 7:00pm.

From the Glory to God Hymnal notes on #90: "The refrain comes from the ecumenical Community of Taizé in France. With repeated singing it can be used by itself as a contemplative prayer and is especially appropriate in Advent." We will sing this song as our sung response to the confessing of our sins each of the Sunday mornings in Advent.

***Prayer of Confession and Seeking the Light**
Revealing God, visit us and fill us with your Spirit. We now know that our human agendas can drown out our ability to hear and live out your will for us. Bring your good news to life within us. Give us courage to carry your light to reveal and reverse the injustices that shadow this world. Amen.

Response to the Confession #90 **Wait for the Lord**
(refrain x2)

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

***Assurance of Forgiveness** Deacon Claire Titus
...Believe and share the good news!
In Jesus Christ, we are a new creation!

***Response of Praise #143 Angels, from the Realms of Glory (verse 4)**
*All creation, join in praising
God the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising
to the eternal Three in One:
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king!*

***Passing of Christ's Peace**
Please share a sign of welcome and inclusion that is mutually comfortable (high five, handshake, fist/elbow bump) with your neighbors.

May the peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

Prayer for Illumination Rev. Dr. Jimmy Shelbourn

Scripture

Gospel Reading Luke 1:26-38, 46b-55 N.T. pg. 56

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Sermon "Hope is Near: No-Prep Christmas Pageant"
With Instructions, Narration, and Closing Reflection by Rev. Chris Peters

***Hymn #119** **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**

Moment of Gratitude
Prayer of Thanksgiving

Special Music

"Still, Still, Still"
Westminster Choir and Flute

Anthem Lyrics:
Still, Still, Still
See the child asleep so still
And Mary gently rocks her baby singing songs of love
and mercy
Still, Still, Still see the child asleep so still.
Sleep, Sleep, Sleep my tender little baby sleep.
The angels sing glad songs before you
Praising and rejoicing o'er you.
Sleep, sleep, sleep, my tender Baby sleep.

Prayers of the People Deacon Claire Titus

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 debts as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

***Hymn #110** **Love Has Come**

***Charge & Benediction** Rev. Chris Peters

Postlude "Toccata on VENI EMMANUEL" by Andrew Carter

*Please rise in body or spirit for these parts of worship.

In a day and age where all of our lives go from one to-do list item or practice or commitment to the next, and on a rare December 24th Advent 4, we've decided to try something a little different in worship - a No-Prep Christmas Pageant! This pageant is adapted from a resource by Presbyterian Minister Rev. Theresa Cho (who also adapted one from a Presbyterian Christian Education Director). Thanks to our own Director of Children and Youth Ministries, Trish Souliere, for locating this resource for our worship today!

Yes, you could say we are "breaking an old rule" by singing two Christmas hymns the last Sunday service of Advent. "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" includes images from Luke 1 and points us to our celebration tonight. Love Has Come can serve as a precursor to the love that enters into our world this week. As Advent draws to a close, we hope you have a Merry Christmas with Christ your hope and guide!

Our Advent Candle Lighting and Confessional Liturgies are adapted from those found in the PCUSA Book of Common Worship, Feasting on the Word Liturgies for Year B: Volume 1 (Editor: Rev. Dr. Kimberly Bracken Long), and UCC Worship Ways.

Westminster welcomes and values children in worship. If a parent feels a break is needed for their child during the service, our **Infant Room** is available. This is located off the entry foyer through the Sheridan Blvd./West-end sanctuary doors. When you enter the foyer, turn to your right, where the door will be open.

Giving to Westminster's Mission and Ministry

At Church: An offering to support Westminster may be placed in our Giving Baskets following the service. These are located by the Sheridan Blvd. doors in the narthex and near the top of the stairs in the sanctuary on the Garden Room / South side. Look for the baskets and signs that read "Giving Basket." Ushers monitor the baskets and collect the offerings following the service.

For online giving, scan the QR code.



Ministers: The whole congregation

Pastors: Rev. Chris Peters & Rev. Dr. Jimmy Shelbourn

Liturgist: Deacon Claire Titus

Advent Candle Lighters: Dr. Jessica Sandmeier, Catherine Gumm

Interim Music Director: Mary Young

Organist: John Ross

Director of Children & Youth: Trish Souliere

Ushers: Suzanne Bartlett, Martha Kingsbury, Becky Bockrath

Greeters: Joyce Douglas, Marilyn Hood

Dishwashers: Megan & Jason Woita



*“I am the vine,
you are the branches . . .”*

The week of Dec. 24, 2023

Westminster Presbyterian Church is an inclusive faith family, inspired by Jesus Christ, to call, nurture, and empower disciples.

Advent/Christmas Happenings

Dec. 24 Advent 4

9:30 AM—Finding Hope—Hope is Near

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve

5 & 7 PM—Finding Hope—Hope is Here, Christmas Eve Worship with Candle Lighting
(Both services will be livestreamed.)

Dec. 25 Christmas Day—Office Closed

Dec. 26 Office Closed

Dec. 31—New Year’s Eve

9:30 AM—Worship Service

Jan. 1—New Year’s Day—Office Closed

Faith Village

We will not meet in Faith Village on Dec. 24 and will not meet on Wed., Dec. 27 or Jan. 3. On Dec. 31, we will have a New Year Pajama and Pancake party after we have been dismissed from the service. Be sure to wear your pajamas and be ready to enjoy food and fun!

Youth Group Lock-In

We will not meet for Youth Group from Dec. 24 - Jan. 3.

On Jan. 5, we will have our annual winter lock-in. Plan to play games, eat pizza, and hang out with friends all night at church. We start at 8 PM on Jan. 5 and finish at 8 AM on Sat., Jan. 6. All youth who plan on attending must register here <https://forms.gle/HW114pPN9Je7NueS7>.



January Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch will meet on Tuesday, January 2, 11:30 AM, at The Mettle Grill, 5500 South 56th Street. All are welcome. Please RSVP to Jim Kinkennon at 402-290-5888 or jimkinkennon@gmail.com so we have an accurate count.

Recycling Styrofoam

Once again Green@Heart will be helping you responsibly dispose of foam packaging from holiday purchases. Beginning December 3 there will be a receptacle by the east door to collect foam. (Food containers and packing peanuts not accepted.) Failed light strings will also be collected. So you know, we take the foam to its source in Omaha, Plastilite. They make the original foam packaging and also reuse the old to make new. So, it's possible that we've sent foam back and forth to them five times.

The Gathering Place offers a nightly dinner seven days a week to anyone who needs a meal, no questions asked. This holiday season, the Gathering Place will stay open on Christmas Eve offering individuals and families a welcoming and warm environment to share a holiday meal. You can be a part of this blessing by donating. Gifts to Community Action's Gathering Place will be matched \$1 for \$1 until December 31. Please consider sending a check to Community Action, 210 O Street, Lincoln, NE 68508. -Your Mission and Outreach Team

Prairie Readers January Meeting

Prairie Readers will meet January 17 at 1 PM in the Lounge. We will have the privilege of hearing author Joy Castro discuss her 2023 novel *One Brilliant Flame*. All are welcome!

Volunteers Wanted: Cooks and Servers

The Mission and Outreach committee supports meals at the Gathering Place and Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach monthly. We would like to grow our number of servers especially at Matt Talbot and we also would like to have a helper for Chef Susie in preparing the monthly meal. Would YOU like to help???

Matt Talbot is responsible for the evening meal on the first Sunday of odd numbered months and the first Friday evening meal of the even numbered months. If interested in learning more about being a prep cook, contact Susie Hughes at 402-440-9165 or skh@eskayscom and if interested in learning more about serving at the Friday evening meal contact Gary Haller at 817-757-2980 or garyhaller70@att.net

Give our warming planet a break!

Will you be among the 55 million people flying for the Christmas holidays? Or for a vacation next year? Here's to a wonderful trip! But give this a thought, too. One passenger's round trip flight from Nebraska to Denver or Chicago will generate about 20 metric tons of carbon dioxide. East or west coast, 50-60 metric tons. And multiply that by the number of travelers.



You might want to give our warming planet a break by purchasing carbon offsets. A fair price of about \$10 per 50 metric tons will counteract that CO₂, for instance by planting trees. It's easy to calculate the carbon footprint of your trip at <https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx> Then make your donation. There are many carbon credit programs online, and some are guilty of greenwashing. But a couple we know are good are One Tree Planted <https://onetreeplanted.org/products/plant-trees> and the Presbyterian Tree Fund <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/eco-journey/presbyterian-carbon-tree-fund/>.

If you choose to do this, would you let the church know (anonymously)? It would be fun to tabulate the difference we make. Just write down two numbers—your trip's metric ton total and the amount you decided to donate—and put your slip in the box on the front desk. We'll announce the total in January.

World on a Plate—USA, Fri., Jan. 26

World on a Plate is returning to the United States!

Our January dinner will be a potluck of our U.S. favorites... From the East to West, North to South... there are so many choices to prepare.

Ellen Davis will be hosting World on a Plate on Friday, January 26 at 5:30 PM in her home at 3630 Pawnee Street.

RSVP: Email kathrohw@yahoo.com or text (402) 202-9889

Acolytes

We are looking for children and youth of all ages to serve as acolytes during our worship service. Please add your name to the schedule here <https://shorturl.at/jJOX7>. If you have any questions, please contact Trish, trish@westminsterlincoln.org or 402-570-0163.

Staff Schedules

Pastor Chris will be out of the office from Dec. 27 until Jan. 2.

Joanne will be out of the office on Dec. 27.

Week Beginning December 24

<p><u>Sun. (Dec. 24) Advent 4</u> 9:30 AM Worship 12 Noon Sudanese Worship</p> <p><u>Christmas Eve Worship Services</u> 5 PM Worship 7 PM Worship Both services will be livestreamed.</p> <p><u>Mon. (Dec. 25) Christmas Day</u> Office Closed</p>	<p><u>Tues. (Dec. 26)</u> Office Closed</p> <p><u>Sun. (Dec. 31)</u> 9:30 AM Worship 9:40 AM Faith Village PJ & Pancake Party 12 Noon Sudanese Worship</p>
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Worship services are available on-line at this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/@WestminsterLincoln/streams>

Televised Worship

Thurs. at 12:30 pm/Sat. at 1 pm.

Channel 1302/Spectrum & Channel 13/Windstream.

joanne@westminsterlincoln.org

402-475-6702