



THE MESSENGER

One God, One-in-Christ, One Westminster – all in gratitude!



We begin with Epiphany worship on January 7th. During worship, you will be invited to take a “Star Word,” a word or phrase that symbolizes a sense of direction in our lives and in our faith for the coming year. Our hope is that the word you receive might be a word that resonates with your spirit throughout 2024.

With Gratitude for God's Grace, We Begin a New Year at WPC!

Happy New Year, Westminster Friends!

January should be a meaningful month of worship, connection, and service! We begin with Epiphany worship on January 7th. Epiphany is the celebration of the time the magi ("kings") greeting the Christ child with homage and gifts. In worship, you will receive a Star Word. Star Words serve as words to inspire or call us to a new way of being in the New Year. Our hope is that the word you receive might be a word that resonates with your spirit throughout 2024.

In your Messenger, you will find information about Community Conversations. Our focus on affordable housing starts with a wonderful learning session by a City of Lincoln representative on January 7th. That session will be followed by representatives from organizations that are responding to the situation in unique ways. On Sunday, January 14th, we will have a special Habitat for Humanity emphasis in our worship service as well, connecting to our worship theme of Seeking Shelter: How Jesus Welcomes Us.

This January, let us start a new year with the resolution of connecting with God and one another, finding inspiration in our worship, and going to serve God by making a difference for our neighbors. That's how we can make a Westminster Difference in the year ahead!

With Gratitude,
Pastor Chris



After worship on Sunday, January 14, the Children and Youth and Church Life Committees invite you to enjoy a piece of fruit pizza with your after service coffee. We start with a sugar cookie "crust," add cream cheese frosting for the sauce, and finish that special creation with a choice of fresh fruit toppings.

We welcome you to Worship in the Sanctuary with us on Sundays at 9:30 am and/or worship virtually with us on our YouTube channel at <https://westminsterlincoln.org/youtube-videos>.



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS 2024
HOUSING CONCERNS AND THE LANDSCAPE
OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN LINCOLN

JANUARY ADULT EDUCATION SERIES: LOUNGE AT 10:45 AM

January 7th: Our Local Setting:
Affordable Housing and City Support in Lincoln, Wynn Hjermstad, City of Lincoln.

January 14th: Habitat for Humanity:
Empowering and Building Anew, Rose Opbroek and Theresa Gerlach, Habitat for Humanity of Lincoln.

January 21st: Neighborworks:
Expanding Affordable Housing and Strengthening Neighborhoods, Wayne Mortensen, Neighborworks Lincoln.

January 28th: People's City Mission:
Ministry of Service and Providing Space, Tom Barber, People's City Mission.

Westminster Community Conversations 2024

Good Neighbors:

Understanding and Responding to Housing Concerns in Lincoln

The Christian scriptures, particularly the parables of Jesus, emphasize the call for people of faith to be good neighbors. This January, join Westminster Presbyterian as we seek to better understand housing concerns and the landscape of affordable housing in Lincoln.

From learning, we move to questions of service as we welcome representatives from partner organizations that seek to aid those facing critical housing concerns. Each session will take place at 10:45am in the Lounge.

January 7th: Our Local Setting – Affordable Housing and City Support in Lincoln,
Wynn Hjermstad (Community Development Manager), City of Lincoln.

January 14th: Habitat for Humanity: Empowering and Building Anew, Rose Opbroek (Special Projects Manager) and Theresa Gerlach (Program Services Director), Habitat for Humanity of Lincoln.

January 21st: Neighborworks: Expanding Affordable Housing and Strengthening Neighborhoods, Wayne Mortensen, (Chief Executive Officer), Neighborworks Lincoln.

January 28th: People's City Mission: Ministry of Service and Providing Space, Tom Barber (Chief Executive Officer), People's City Mission.

**Hearts & Hands | Church Library | Wednesdays at 1:30 - 3:00 PM**

Hearts & Hands is a fun-loving group that meets every Wed. from 1:30 – 3 PM, in the church library. All needle work folks are welcome to come visit and see what you're missing! Laughter is free. All yarn donations are welcome! Questions: Call Francy Scheele at (402) 310-4212.

Lunch Bunch | The Mettle Grill, 5500 South 56th Street | Tuesday, January 2, 11:30 A.M.

As always, no agenda, no program, just fun. All are welcome. Please RSVP to Jim Kinkennon at 402-290-5888 or jimkinkennon@gmail.com so we have an accurate count.

History Buffs: COLUMBUS MEETS THE NATIVES | Saturday, January 13 | Lounge at 9:00 a.m.

Title: "Momma don't make me learn that awful history. A short lesson in the history of America's indigenous people, presented by Dr. Ken Govaerts.

Faith and Cancer Support Group | Tuesday, January 16 | Library at 7 p.m.

Cancer is associated with many emotions wrapped up within. In our support group at Westminster we can share those thoughts and feelings with others who are experiencing similar concerns. This Life Group meets every third Tuesday of the month from 7-8 PM in the church library. All are welcome. Contact Bruce Sheffield at 402-783-0394 or Janice Rohwedder at 402-730-5568.

Prairie Readers | Wednesday, January 17 | Lounge at 1 p.m.

Prairie Readers will meet Wednesday, 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!

World On A Plate: World on a Plate is returning back to the United States!**Friday, January 26 at 5:30 p.m.**

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 26th at 5:30pm in her home- 3630 Pawnee Street. RSVP: kathrohwa@yahoo.com or text (402) 202-9889.

Ladies' Night Out | Tuesday, January 30th from 5:00-7:00 p.m.

You are invited to join us this month at Mi Tierra South. Their address is 5500 Old Cheney Rd. #4. Join us and bring a friend as we celebrate the New Year together.

Join PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN in 2024 if You Haven't Already!

Presbyterian Women at Westminster is for any woman who is Presbyterian and we would love to have you join us.

Are we women of a "certain age"?.....Many are, but all women are welcome. We believe that all women are better when we are together!

What do we do?We participate in monthly Bible study and fellowship within "circles", which are smaller groups. But we also create larger events at Westminster, including an annual worship service to celebrate the gifts of women. We attend regional and national events like the upcoming Churchwide Gathering in August in St. Louis. Mission is one focus with special offerings and projects that serve people near and far. Presbyterian Women at Westminster provides women with a meaningful place to be together in community. Need more information? Contact Linda Burchard at (402) 477-5572.



Advent Workshop

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to help with the Advent Workshop! Special thanks to everyone who contributed to the Youth Mission Bake Sale, by either baking, buying, or both! Because of your generosity, we raised \$916 and were able to bring the Christmas spirit of giving to twelve families in need of help. The remaining funds will be used to support other youth mission initiatives.

Thanks also to everyone who stopped by and enjoyed coffee, cocoa, chili, cookies, crafts, and fellowship. Congratulations to the 2023 Silver Ladle award winners, Fred and Susan Zander for their Black Bean Chili with Pineapple Salsa!



Youth Group Members gathered together for an evening of Angel Tree Christmas shopping with the funds they raised from the Youth Mission Bake Sale.

Wednesday Night LiNK

Wednesday nights are a wonderful opportunity for kids to get together with their friends and have fun learning about God. Kids from nursery age through high school meet from 5:30-7:30 PM.

Sunday Night Youth Group

The Youth Group meets on Sunday from 6:00 PM-7:30 PM to hang out and talk, play games, or do homework.

All information for The Messenger is due to tracy@westminsterlincoln.org by the 18th of each month. All announcements for The eVine/Vine are due to Tracy and joanne@westminsterlincoln.org by 5 pm on Monday of each week.

Committee Annual Reports need to be submitted by January 15th for the February Messenger.

Foundation Meeting Snippets, submitted by**Foundation Secretary Erika Schafer.****December 13, 2023 Meeting:**

--Pastor Chris provided a year-end financial report of the church budget. He thanked the Foundation for the support of the church budget and additional projects including the church concrete repair project and the new security system.

--The Foundation voted to approve Session's request to provide \$46,000 in funds for the end of 2023 in the following categories:

\$1,500 from Christian Education Endowment for support of the Children and Families Ministry and Church Life Ministry.

\$2,500 from the Anderson Fund to support the Worship and Music Ministry.

\$3,000 from the Bacon Music Fund and \$1,000 from the Knox Family Endowment to pay down the Sanctuary Audio Loan.

\$6,000 from the Mission Endowment to support Mission and Outreach Ministry.

\$8,000 from the Bukey Memorial Fund to support the Personnel Budget of WPC.

\$3,000 from the Choir-Music-Radio-TV Ministry fund to support Worship and Music Ministry.

\$1,000 from the Andrew McDonald Church Growth Fund to support Communications and Media outreach.

\$17,000 from the Bukey Memorial Fund and \$3,000 from the General Purpose Endowment to support the Operating Budget of Westminster.

--The sanctuary's stained glass restoration project is on-going but received \$35,000 of financial support from an insurance policy that named the Westminster Foundation as a beneficiary. The family of Don Hamann directed the funds to be used for the stained glass restoration in his memory.

--The church received \$10,000 in additional raised funds from church members to start work on sidewalk repairs. The Foundation provided \$45,000 in funds in 2023 for the parking lot repairs.

--The Foundation thanked outgoing Trustees Mark Schorr and Greg Hershberger for their loyal service, dedication, and guidance to the Foundation.

2024 Is Exciting for the Welcoming Task Force

While in 2023 the Task Force brought to the forefront the LGBTQIA+ awareness and commitment, we feel that "Welcoming" truly involves more. Turning all into "ALL" God's children!

We are excited about 2024 and the direction God is leading us.

Our goals are: education, congregational opportunities and out reach to the community, with our focus this year on:

1st Quarter of 2024 Racial Reconciliation
2nd Quarter of 2024 LGBTQIA+ Inclusion
3rd Quarter of 2024 Disability Inclusion
4th Quarter of 2024 People Experiencing Homelessness.

Does one of these areas touch your heart? Are you looking for a place to use the gifts God has given you? Do you want to share your experiences or contacts in these areas? The Task Force would love to talk with you, share our ideas and hear your thoughts.

We are EXCITED about 2024... being a welcoming church and reaching out to our community.

Task Force Members: Janice Rohwedder, Emily Killam, Ashley Lammers, Lauren Peters, Sarah Gergen and Kathy Rohwedder.



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?

Westminster is responsible for the evening meal at Matt Talbot 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



Green@Heart Travel Challenge A Break for Our Warming Planet

Did you fly somewhere for the holidays? Or will you be flying somewhere for a vacation this year? Remember that you can help offset the carbon emissions of your flight by contributing a modest amount to a tree-planting organization. Here's how:

1. Go to: carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx and enter the "to and from" information about your travel to calculate your flight's carbon emissions
2. Go to a reputable carbon offset group such as One Tree Planted: onetreeplanted.org/products/plant-trees or the Presbyterian Tree Fund: presbyterianmission.org/eco-journey/presbyterian-carbon-tree-fund/ and make a donation. For example, one person's round trip flight from Lincoln to the West Coast and back generates 50-60 metric tons of carbon dioxide. A fair price of \$10/50 metric tons will help the organization plant trees that will clear the air of those emissions.
3. If you do this, please find the carbon offset box at Westminster's receptionist's desk and anonymously enter the metric tons of your trip and the amount of your donation. We'd like to track the difference we're making!

Lights Out!

Seems every family has one (usually dad)—the person who reminds everyone else to "Turn out the lights!" when leaving a room. But our church building doesn't have that person. When lights are left burning in empty rooms at Westminster they are quite literally "burning" the fossil fuels that contribute to global warming. They are also adding to the "Utilities" line item in our budget instead of items like "Children's Ministry" or "Associate Pastor."

So Westminster is starting a "Lights Out" campaign in 2024. Watch for small reminders at each light switch with this request, "Last person out, please turn off the lights." Last person in a classroom or meeting room, turn off the lights. Last person cleaning up the kitchen, turn off the lights. Last person hanging up a choir robe, turn off the lights. Offices, Fellowship Hall, the Garden Room—turn off the lights. Just channel your inner dad. It may take a little while to learn where the light switches are, but we can do this!



Westminster Presbyterian Church
2110 Sheridan Blvd
Lincoln, NE 68502

The church building and office will be closed January 1 for New Year's Day and on January 15 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Holiday Recycling

Once again Green@Heart will be helping you responsibly dispose of foam packaging from holiday purchases and failed light strings. There are receptacles by the east door to collect foam. (Food containers and packing peanuts not accepted.)

We take the foam to its source in Omaha, Plastilite. They make the original foam packaging and also reuse the old to make new. It's possible that we've sent foam back and forth to them five times.

