

Westminster Presbyterian Church

2110 Sheridan Blvd. Lincoln, NE

December 1, 2024

First Sunday of Advent

Words for the Beginning: You Are a Blessing



Lisle

Inspired by Isaiah 43 by Lisle Gwynn Garrity
Ink dyes and gold resist on silk, with digital collage

Prelude

“Emmanuel/O Come O Come Emmanuel” arr. Joel Raney

Welcome

Please sign and pass the friendship pad.

Why Westminster: A Stewardship Moment

Jim White

Invitation to Worship and Lighting of the Advent Candle Hoffman/Harp Family

One: God says,

Many: “Do not be afraid.”

One: God says,

Many: “I have called you by name.”

One: God says,

Many: “I will be with you.”

One: God says,

Many: “You are precious and honored in my sight.”

One: At the beginning of this season,

Many: at the start of this week,

One: At 9:30am in Lincoln and on our own time online,

Many: may we wrap ourselves in these words. May we begin again.

***Hymn #82**

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

***Call to Confession**

Rev. Dr. Jimmy Shelbourn

***Prayer of Confession**

Affirming God, your first words to creation were words of love. You looked at this earth and said, “It is good.” You spoke affirmations through the prophets. You spoke blessings over Mary. You spoke belonging through Christ. At every turn, you have reiterated that we are a blessing, made in your image, held in your love. Forgive us for forgetting this truth. Forgive us for measuring our worth by society’s measuring stick instead of yours. We believe. Help our unbelief. In Christ’s name we pray, Amen.

***Time of Silent Confession**

Lord, hear our prayer. *Amen.*

***Response to Confession #105**

People, Look East (verse 5)

*Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming
with the word, the Lord is coming.*

***People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Lord, is on the way.***

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

Rev. Dr. Jimmy Shelbourn

We pour water into the baptismal font at this time as a sign of our renewal in baptism and in confession. It is a visual reminder of the Nicene Creed's affirmation, "I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins," and Romans 5:5 that promises, "God's love is being poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit."

Believe and share the good news! ***In Jesus Christ, we are a new creation!***

***Response of Praise #113**

Angels We Have Heard on High (verse 1)

***Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply
echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!***

***Passing of the Peace**

Rev. Dr. Jimmy Shelbourn

Please share a sign of welcome and inclusion (high five, handshake, fist/elbow bump) with your neighbors. Children in grades 1-5 may go to Faith Village, our children's Sunday School opportunity, at this time. Leaders will meet the children at the front / pulpit end of the sanctuary.

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

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Hebrew Scripture

Isaiah 43:1-7

O.T. pg. 672

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:26-38

N.T. pg. 56

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

Sermon

"You Are a Blessing"

Rev. Chris Peters

***Hymn #129**

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Moment of Gratitude

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Special Music

"Veni Veni Emmanuel"
Lincoln Continentals

Prayers of the People

Rachel Hoffman

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 #102

Savior of the Nations, Come

*Charge & Benediction

Rev. Chris Peters

Postlude

“Ave Maria” arr. Franz Biebl (Lincoln Continentals)

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

Today's words for worship are adapted from *A Sanctified Art: Words for the Beginning Week 1 Words for Worship* by Rev. Sarah Are Speed / A Sanctified Art LLC / sanctifiedart.org

Westminster welcomes and values children in worship. All kids and their families are welcome to pick up a blue Children's Worship Bag in the narthex (Sheridan Blvd. foyer). If a parent feels a break is needed for their child during the service, our **Infant Room** is available. This is at the north end of the Narthex.

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: Rachel Hoffman

Music Director: Dr. Mary Young

Organist: John Ross

Director of Children & Youth: Trish Souliere

Advent Candle Lighting: Hoffman/Harp Family

Greeters: Kathy and David Anderson

Ushers: Diana Wild, David Anderson, Debra Schleining, April Douglas

Dishwashers: Kelly Braswell-Burbach and Dorrie Gage

Sanctuary Audio and Livestream: Stephan Biheng



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

The week of Dec. 1, 2024

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

Angel Tree

Once again Westminster is partnering with the Salvation Army Angel Tree Project. Christmas and holiday gifts from the Angel Tree are given to children from low-income families. Gifts, toys, clothing, and much more are provided for children from infants to age 12.

Look for the Angel Tree at the top of the stairs across from the receptionist’s desk. Pick a tag from the tree, shop. Return the unwrapped gifts, with the tag attached to the bag, placing them under the tree.

Gifts must be returned to the church by Dec. 12. Most people, especially children, look forward to receiving clothing and gifts over the holidays. Will you be someone’s angel?

Thank you, Mission & Outreach

Lunch Bunch | Tues., Dec. 3 | 11:30 AM

The Eatery Restaurant, 2548 S. 48th Street

This restaurant is finally open on Tuesdays and we are excited to return. We have the private room. Please RSVP to jimkinkennon@gmail.com or text 402-290-5888.

Call for Baked Goods | December 8

Advent is coming up fast and the Youth Group will be sponsoring a baked goods auction at the Advent Workshop again this year to support various mission initiatives throughout the year. We are calling for our talented and creative bakers to donate something special to the cause. Cakes, pies, brownies, bars, breads, or anything you would like to make is welcome.

Contact Trish at trish@westminsterlincoln.org or complete this form <https://shorturl.at/h8tmd>. Please indicate ingredients if possible. Master creations

can be delivered between 10-Noon on Friday or on Sunday morning the week before the Advent Workshop.

Advent Workshop | December 8

10:45 AM - 12:00 PM

The Advent Workshop is just around the corner! We invite you to dive into the holiday season with your Westminster family at the Advent Workshop. We will gather after the service to renew friendships, enjoy food together, and make lasting memories.

At the craft tables, we will be making Baby Jesus in a Nutshell ornaments, A Kiss a Day Advent Calendars, Baby Jesus in a Manger Fingerprint pictures. After you make a craft, you can enjoy the hot chocolate and coffee bar and then taste the various chili offerings and select the winner of the coveted Silver Ladle. Be sure to check out the Youth Group Mission Baked Goods Auction for a selection of delicious items from the Youth Group and your favorite Westminster bakers to stock up on Christmas treats. We look forward to seeing you there!

What would Goldilocks say about water?

That you want to get it “just right!” Too much or too little water can be dangerous for all living beings, and climate change is just pushing the consequences to new extremes. Both floods and droughts cause disruption and hardship, especially for those with limited resources. Your Environmental Justice action for December is to check out Presbyterian Disaster Relief <https://pda.pcusa.org/> to learn about ways that our church responds—and see how you can help!



Mission/Outreach is pleased to bring Equal Exchange Coffee and Equal Exchange Organic Chocolate to Westminster friends. The coffee you enjoy during the fellowship hour is also Equal Exchange. By choosing the Equal Exchange brand, we are making a strong statement about our values as a community.

Available for Purchase: We give the opportunity to purchase Equal Exchange products during Fellowship Hour after services on the first Sunday of each month. Coffee and chocolate make great Christmas/holiday gifts. Thank you for supporting our ongoing commitment to making these products available.

Youth Room Renovation

Many thanks to those who have visited our wish list and sent us items for our new space! We are still looking for assistance in adding new games, storage options, and other kitchen appliances/accessories. Please check out our Amazon wish list (<https://shorturl.at/3LHqL>) for items that would enhance the experience for our youth. Items can be delivered directly to the church (c/o Trish Souliere) or dropped off at the front desk.

This project was made possible through the Nissen Fund (Westminster Foundation) and we are so grateful to everyone who supports the Foundation for their incredible generosity.

Artist Lisle Gwynn Garrity Comments on Bulletin Image

This piece is meant to be a visual prayer, inviting you to internalize and personalize the words of blessing from Isaiah 43. And so, I invite you to take a deep breath in, then let it out, and pray with me: *“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.”* (Is. 43:2a) Rest your gaze on the art, following all the shapes with water imagery. Notice the textures and the colors. Offer a prayer for all the ways you feel as if you are drowning or being overcome by forces beyond your control. Now pray for God’s waters to nourish you. Ask for a raft. Imagine you are floating gently down a river. *“When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.”* (Is. 43:2b) Look again at the art. With your eyes, trace all the areas you see fire imagery. Offer a prayer for all the people and places in the world experiencing devastation and destruction. Now ask God to renew all the earth. Ask for healing. Ask for protection for those who are hurting. Lastly, inhale deeply, and release. You are precious in God’s sight. Imagine God gazing upon you, delighting in all that you are. You are a blessing. Let that truth buoy you as you breathe each new breath. —**Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity**

Week Beginning Dec. 1

<p><u>Sun. (Dec. 1) Advent 1</u> 9:30 AM Worship, Faith Village 1 PM Laux Baby Shower, Fellowship Hall 12 Noon Sudanese Worship</p> <p><u>Mon. (Dec. 2)</u> 11 AM Explorers Bible Study, Library 6:30 PM Circle 4 6:30 PM Scouts</p> <p><u>Tues. (Dec. 3)</u> 9 AM Set up for Holiday of Trees 9:45 AM Staff Meeting 11:30 AM Lunch Bunch 5 PM Adult Ed., Conference Room</p>	<p>7:30 PM UNL Senior Recital— Faith Polivanov</p> <p><u>Wed. (Dec. 4)</u> 9 AM Holiday of Trees 10 AM PW Circle #3 1:30 PM Hearts and Hands 6 PM Wed. Night Children & Youth 6:30 PM Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary</p> <p><u>Thurs. (Dec. 5)</u> 9 AM Holiday of Trees</p> <p><u>Sun. (Dec. 8) Advent 2</u> 9:30 AM Worship, Faith Village 10:45 AM Advent Workshop, Fellowship Hall 12 Noon Sudanese Worship</p>
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Worship services are available on-line at this link:

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