

Westminster Presbyterian Church

2110 Sheridan Blvd. Lincoln, NE

December 8, 2024

Second Sunday of Advent

Words for the Beginning: We Can't Go Alone



Inspired by Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 by Hannah Garrity
Acrylic painting with mixed media on canvas

Prelude

“Pastoral Symphony” from *Messiah* by G.F. Handel

Welcome

Please sign and pass the friendship pad.

Invitation to Worship and Lighting of the Advent Candle Anderzhon Family

One: In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?

All: Let us begin together. Let us begin arm in arm. Let us begin by holding each other up, instead of tearing each other down. Let us begin with words of peace.

One: Yes, let us begin with peace. Today we light the candles of hope and peace. (Leader lights the candles of hope and peace.)

All: May these lights remind us of what could be. May these lights mark a new beginning. May peace flow like a river, and may it start with us.

One: Arm in arm, hand in hand, side by side. May we begin again. Amen. Please rise in body or spirit, and let us sing with hope and for peace!

***Hymn #88**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verses 1-2, 6-7)

***Call to Confession**

Rev. Dr. Jimmy Shelbourn

Our Prayers of Confession during Advent invite “corporate” (or “together”) prayer before personal prayer. This came as a suggestion from a reading group of WPC members after discussing the section on confession from Everything Good about God is True by Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow. That includes this quote, “Confession, when done well, does not produce shame or guilt; it releases us to the possibilities of reconciliation and healing that can only come after we understand our need to be healed and be reconciled.” (p.57) Confessing together first brings us understanding of the breadth of sin before we contemplate our own need for grace.

***Prayer of Confession**

God of Peace, we have tried to make our own way rather than following your way. The days are long, schedules busy, and at times we simply forget to keep you first. We need your help. Will you remind us? Remind us that we are not alone. Remind us that where we go, you go. Remind us that we are held in your grace. As your grace meets us, let our hearts be filled with your peace. Amen.

***Time of Silent Confession**

Lord, hear our prayer. **Amen.**

***Response to Confession #105**

People, Look East (verse 1)

People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year.

Make your house fair as you are able; trim the hearth and set the table.

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

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

Rev. Dr. Jimmy Shelbourn

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!*

Sacrament of Baptism

Corrie Tripp Perkins

Apostles' Creed (Modern Version)

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Question of the Congregation

**Elder: Do you, the members of Westminster, promise to love and nurture Tripp, to provide for his Christian Education, and to set an example of faithfulness, to the end that he might come to confess Jesus Christ as Lord?
All: We do. Tripp, we welcome you with joy and hope, energy and enthusiasm, laughter and communion, nurture and faith, love and acceptance.**

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Wisdom Reading

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

O.T. pg. 616

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

Anthem

“Ososo: Come Now, O Prince of Peace” arr. Joel Navarro. Flautist - Jaeden Uroski

Congregation will join the choir anthem on the last verse, using the blue insert.

Hebrew Scripture

Ruth 1:1-19

O.T. pg. 241

Today's reading from Ruth comes from the Common English Bible translation and has a few adaptations for the purpose of reading.

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

Sermon

“We Can't Go Alone”

Rev. Chris Peters

***Passing of the Peace and Sharing of Our Commitment**

Rev. Chris Peters

This Sunday, as we light the candle of peace, you are invited to share Christ's peace with one another. During this time, you are invited to place your signs of commitment – your pledge commitment forms for 2025 – in the designated baskets around the sanctuary. Please share a sign of welcome and inclusion (high five, handshake, fist/elbow bump) with your neighbors.

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

***Doxology (Hymn #607)**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all people here below; praise Holy Spirit evermore; praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.

***Prayer of Dedication**

Rev. Dr. Jimmy Shelbourn

***The Lord's Prayer**

***Hymn #93**

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

***Charge & Benediction**

Rev. Chris Peters

Postlude

“God, Through Your Goodness” by J.S. Bach

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

Today's flowers are provided by Helen Hayes and Janet McCall.

Today's words for worship are adapted from *A Sanctified Art: Words for the Beginning Week 2 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: Hadley Anderzhon & Revan McCune **Music Director:** Dr. Mary Young

Organist: John Ross **Director of Children & Youth:** Trish Souliere

Advent Candle Lighting: Kris, Beth, Holden, Hadley and Phoebe Anderzhon

Greeters: Stephan Biheng & Paul Korslund **Dishwashers:** Lisa & Steve McConnell

Ushers: Marybell Avery, Joan Roberts, Marilyn Hood, Marijane England

Sanctuary Audio and Livestream: Stephan Biheng



*"I am the vine,
you are the branches . . ."*
The week of Dec. 8, 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

Advent Workshop Today after Worship

The Advent Workshop is today! 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!

Recycle Styrofoam and Christmas Lights

It's time to organize your **Styrofoam** packaging to keep it out of the landfill. The big collection bag will be in place this Sunday just inside the east doors. Reminder: Rigid packing foam only. (If it bends it can't be recycled.) No food containers or packing peanuts. **Christmas lights** that no longer function are also being collected.

Youth Group: Christmas Party | December 15 | 6 PM

The Youth Group Christmas Party will take place on Sunday, December 15 at 6:00 PM. Please plan on bringing a wrapped gift valued at under \$5 for the gift exchange and your favorite snack to share.

December Prairie Readers | December 18 | 1 PM

Prairie Readers will have their Holly Jolly Christmas party on December 18 at 1 PM in the lounge. There will be sweet treats, a favorite film, *A Christmas Memory*, and lots of lively conversation.

All Church Christmas Caroling | December 18 | 5:30 PM

Join us for caroling through the neighborhood! We will leave church at 5:30 pm and finish up with hot cocoa and a meal in Cole Hall. Help us to share with our neighbors the HOPE, LOVE, JOY and PEACE of Advent.

Adult Ed | 10:45 AM | Lounge

Dec. 15: Foster Care is a prominent need in Nebraska with over 3500 youth involved in the child welfare system placed in foster care. Providing a loving and caring home for Nebraska's most vulnerable population is a rewarding endeavor. But what does fostering entail? What struggles do foster parents face? How do those who foster cope with the internal, external, and relationship conflict they can face in parenting a youth that is not their own? Monica DeMent, Program Director at Better Living Foster Care and Family Services, will provide a brief overview of the foster care system, common struggles foster parents face, how foster families can support youth through trauma and grief, and how agencies in the community support foster parents towards successful fostering experiences.

Dec. 22: Join us for an exploration – starting with the response of Joseph of Nazareth to a dream – to find how hope can emerge from despair when we take the risk of faith. The session will be led by Pastor Jimmy Shelbourn.

Artist Hannah Garrity Comments on Bulletin Image

At the end of this Ecclesiastes text, we read that the threefold cord is not easily broken. I had a piece of twine, which when I pulled it apart, broke into four sections, sistered two into one,

making three. I filmed myself pulling apart and reweaving the twine. Then I drew this quilt square design from the still images in my video.

I dislike the final energy in the central motif of this artwork. It feels discordant. Perhaps that’s the point. When I read this scripture, it seems to focus on strength—but in the rope itself, I find weakness. It was so easy to unravel the cord and create weakness. Its strength lies in the weave, in the interwoven fibers coming together. Without that interweaving, the fibers are weak.

As I continue to watch our communities come together and splinter apart, it is always through the aspirational and the altruistic that the re-weaving begins. In Ecclesiastes, our practical God emphasizes that two are better than one and three are stronger than two. A three-ply cord isn’t easily broken. This offers a very trinitarian way forward in the messy, interwoven, beautiful, and powerful collective. —Hannah Garrity

Week Beginning Dec. 8

<p><u>Sun. (Dec. 8) Advent 2</u> 9:30 AM Worship, Faith Village, Baptism, Commitment Sunday 10:45 AM Advent Workshop, Fellowship Hall 12 Noon Sudanese Worship</p>	<p>6:30 PM WCY Children & Youth, Zoom</p>
<p><u>Mon. (Dec. 9)</u> 11 AM Explorers Bible Study, Library 6 PM Session</p>	<p><u>Wed. (Dec. 11)</u> 1:30 PM Hearts and Hands 4:30 PM Foundation Marketing, Library 4:30 PM Foundation Finance, Lounge 5 PM Foundation Board, Lounge 6 PM Wed. Night Children & Youth 6:30 PM Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary</p>
<p><u>Tues. (Dec. 10)</u> 10 AM PW Circle 5, Lounge 4 PM Stewardship & Finance, Library 5 PM Preschool Christmas Program, Sanctuary 5 PM Personnel, Zoom 5 PM Building and Grounds, Lounge 5 PM Church Life, Library 5:30 PM Worship & Music, Cole Hall</p>	<p><u>Thurs. (Dec. 12)</u> 6:30 PM Scout Committee Meetings—Youth Café 7 PM Lincoln Continentals Rehearsal, Sanctuary</p> <p><u>Sun. (Dec. 15) Advent 3</u> 9:30 AM Worship, Faith Village, Lessons & Carols</p>

6 PM A & P, Conference Room 6 PM Mission & Outreach, Lounge	10:45 AM Adult Education 12 Noon Sudanese Worship
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Worship services are available on-line at this link:

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