

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER



The Messenger

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"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope"

Romans 15:13

Sunday Service

We welcome you to Worship in the Sanctuary with us on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. and/or worship virtually with us on our YouTube channel at <https://westminsterlincoln.org/youtube-videos>



(402) 475-6702



2110 Sheridan Blvd, Lincoln, NE 68502

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DECEMBER 2025

VOLUME 95 ISSUE 12

A Message to the Congregation

An Invitation to Wait this Advent!
Westminster Friends,

December is a weird time of year, isn't it? There's all the joy and jingle bells and "Jolly Old St. Nicholas". Yet we also have endless events and full calendars, stress about family or finances or the state of the world (or all three-for-the-stress-of-one), and then we feel obligated to add-in some church which can start to feel like more 'to do.'

So, here's what I want you to do – what I'm inviting you to do this December... Pause. Wait around a bit. That's right. Just wait.

Not the stressful waiting in lines for Santa or the Costco checkout or to just get up to the traffic light at 27th and Hwy 2 / Nebraska Parkway...

This Advent you're invited to some holy waiting. Wait with wonder.

Wait with anticipation.

Wait with hope, peace, joy, and love.

Wait with action – filling a truck with canned goods on December 7th or by buying a gift for a child in need through the Angel Tree that runs for just a couple more weeks!

We want you to wait with excitement for the incarnate love that meets the world at Christmas. There is no better waiting we can do this Advent.

Why wait? This year our Westminster Advent theme is "The Act of Waiting," which will serve as a cause for us to pause amidst all the December busyness.

And, don't forget that at church...

- We're in Advent, not holiday Hallmark madness. We aren't going to pressure you to get your family Christmas card done – or to do one at all!
- Advent is a season of joyful build-up to the arrival of Jesus at Christmas – the joyful world-changing goodness of that baby we trust is "God-with-us."
- You belong. We are in the midst of a very hopeful journey with Ministry Architects to envision where we go as a congregation in the future. This December is a hopeful time at WPC, and with things like the Advent Workshop on 12/7 after

church, the blended music-and-pageant service of 'Snapshots, Lessons, and Carols' on 12/14 which kids of all ages can participate in (contact Trish, Director of Children and Family Ministries at trish@westminsterlincoln.org), Caroling on Weds. 12/17, and Christmas Eve services at 5:00p and 7:00p. (5:00p will be a little more kid-oriented with Children's Chat).

At Westminster, I want us to be the "church that is welcoming" for all ages, and so whether you are a kid writing the Santa List, a parent juggling the holiday calendar, or an elder member anticipating seeing family, I hope you will join us this Advent! May your peppermint or gingerbread lattes be toasty and your family be well!

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Chris (chris@westminsterlincoln.org)

Westminster Presbyterian Church Mission and Social Witness Committee

Stuff the Truck

Join us to fight hunger
in our community by filling the
truck with non-perishable items.



December 7, 2025,
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.,
Westminster Presbyterian Church
East Parking Lot

Items will be delivered to Food Bank of Lincoln

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WESTMINSTER PRESCHOOL

DECEMBER 2025



Look What We're Learning!

We spent a lot of time learning about Community Helpers in November! Lincoln Fire and Rescue stopped by to show us the fire trucks and teach us about fire safety. We also had our classroom post office create cards for Veteran's Day and we took advantage of the beautiful weather to walk our cards to the mailbox.

Preschool is in full Christmas mode as we decorate the school, practice our program, and learn about the birth of Jesus.

Take a look at some of the themes we're learning about in November:

STARFISH CLASSROOM:
WINTER IN THE WOODS

BUMBLEBEE CLASSROOM:
SCIENCE LAB

OWL CLASSROOM:
WINTER IN THE WOODS



UPCOMING EVENTS

NOV. 26TH - DEC. 1ST

NO SCHOOL

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

DEC. 3RD/4TH ---

GINGERBREAD HOUSE DAY

DEC. 17TH---

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

DEC. 20TH - JAN. 4TH

NO SCHOOL

MERRY CHRISTMAS!



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Upcoming Events and Important Dates

Justice & Peace Calendar – December

01 World AIDS Day; pcusa.org/news-storytelling/news/aids-awareness-day-observed-conjunction-with-national-hiv-testing-day-0

05 International Volunteer Day;
un.org/en/observances/volunteer-day

10 International Human Rights Day;
un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day

18 International Migrants Day;
un.org/en/observances/migrants-day

25 Christmas; pcusa.org/about-pcusa/agencies-entities/interim-unified-agency/ministry-areas/theologyworship/worship/christian-year/christmasnativity-lord

Adult Ed

December 7: Workshop and chili cook-off, no adult ed.

December 14: Rev. Jimmy Shelbourn, "Christ Emptying Himself: the Incarnation"

December 21: Rev. Jimmy, "Emmanuel: the Presence of God in Isaiah and Matthew"

December 28: Christmas break, no adult ed.

Explorers Bible Study | Library | Mondays 11:00 AM

An Advent Weekday Study

Have you ever puzzled over the different accounts of the birth of Jesus in the Gospels? Each Monday during Advent a group of explorers will be meeting to discuss the Christmas accounts in the Four Gospels. This is your opportunity to experience how Christmas is observed in each through this study written by Cynthia M. Campbell. We will compare each of the Gospels to homes that Christians visit. Together we will be challenged to see Christmas from the different perspectives offered in each house as they further reflect on the mystery of Jesus. Won't you join us in the library at 11 a.m. beginning Monday December 1?

Hearts, Hands, & Hugs | Library | Wednesdays 1–3 PM

Hearts & Hands is a fun-loving group that meets every Wednesday 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 Dorrie Gage at 402-730-9676.

Lunch Bunch | Tuesday, December 2 | 11:30 A.M. | The Garage, 5551 S 48th

Heritage League's 53rd Holiday of Trees @ Westminster

December 3: 10 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.

December 4: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Faith & Cancer Support Group | Tuesday, December 16 | 10:00 AM | Church Library

Prairie Readers | Wednesday, December 17 | 1:00 PM

Prairie Readers will meet Dec. 17 at 1 PM in the Lounge. Bring your favorite treat and celebrate Christmas season with your fellow book lovers. Everyone is welcome!



Ladies Night Out | Tuesday, December 30th | Billy's Restaurant | 5p.m. – 7 p.m.

Westminster's gift to the planet

Remember that there's an earth care-ful way to dispose of the styrofoam that shows up at this gift giving time of year. WPC has been partnering with Plastilite Corporation in Omaha. Plastilite is a creator of some of that foam, but (thank God for them) they take it back and reuse it.

The collection bin will soon appear by the east doors and will be there through February. Thanks in advance for the trouble it is to keep this material out of the landfill.

Note: Must be clean and rigid. No food containers or egg cartons.

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Calvin & Knox at the Great Groundbreaking of 1925

Calvin and Knox had never seen so many humans in one place.

The year was 1925, and the grassy lot at 2110 Sheridan Blvd was buzzing with excitement. Westminster Presbyterian Church was about to break ground, and everyone had gathered—well, everyone except the two tiny mice peeking out from behind a shovel pile.

"Calvin," Knox whispered, "why do humans need so many shovels? Are they planning to dig to the other side of the world?"

"No, Knox," Calvin said with a dramatic sigh. "This is a groundbreaking ceremony. It means they're finally starting to build our new home."

Knox gasped. "A home? With snacks?"

"With worship, Knox."

"And snacks?" he repeated, hopeful.

Calvin didn't answer.

Just then, the minister stepped forward, lifted a shiny ceremonial shovel, and the crowd leaned in.

Knox leaned in too—too far—lost his balance, and tumbled down the dirt pile, landing with a plop right at the feet of the front row.

Calvin slapped a paw over his eyes. "Oh no."

Thankfully, Knox was small and blended in with the dust. Humans thought it was just a leaf. (A leaf that squeaked and ran back to Calvin.)

The moment everyone had been waiting for arrived.

The minister pressed the shovel into the soil. The crowd cheered.

Calvin stood tall. "Knox, you are witnessing history.

The first scoop of dirt for the future Westminster."

Knox nodded solemnly. "It's beautiful."

Then he frowned.

"That scoop was way too small. They're never going to finish at that rate."

Before Calvin could stop him, Knox scurried forward and grabbed a tiny acorn shell shovel he'd been saving for "important business." He marched right up beside the big ceremonial shovel, puffed out his chest, and started

digging with all his might.

A few children in the crowd noticed the dirt flicking out from a mysterious mouse-sized hole.

"Look! A helper!" one laughed.

Knox dug faster, flinging dirt everywhere—onto Calvin, onto passing shoes, nearly onto the minister's pant leg.

"Knox!" Calvin squeaked in horror. "Stop digging!"

But Knox was in the zone.

Finally, Calvin grabbed him by the tail and dragged him back just in time.

"Hey!" Knox protested. "I was being productive."

Calvin sighed, brushing soil off his whiskers. "You nearly dug your way into the dedication photo."

The ceremony ended with applause, prayers, and a promise: a beautiful new church would rise right there on Sheridan.

As the humans left, Calvin and Knox sat together on the edge of the freshly turned soil.

"Calvin?" Knox asked softly. "Do you think this place will feel like home?"

Calvin smiled. "I think it already does."

"And," Knox added proudly, holding up his acorn shovel, "I helped."

Calvin shook his head. "Knox... you dug a hole the size of a walnut."

"A very important walnut," Knox insisted.



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Reflections from the National Queer Presbyterian Gathering

By Kathy Rohwedder, Elder at Westminster
Presbyterian Church

In November I had the privilege of attending the very first National Queer Presbyterian Gathering at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville. As a Westminster member and elder, and as someone who cares deeply about belonging, justice, and the future of the church, this gathering was both a personal blessing and a profound learning experience.

Nearly 80 LGBTQIA+ Presbyterians from across the country came together for three days of worship, workshops, storytelling, and community-building. From the moment we arrived, the atmosphere was one of radical welcome — a place where joy, healing, and honest conversation were all encouraged.

A Space of Courage and Joy

The opening session set the tone: we named our hopes, laughed together, and made commitments to honor vulnerability and protect one another's stories. For many of us, being in a church space where our whole selves were affirmed — without hesitation or conditions — was deeply moving.

Workshops ranged from Queering Worship and Spiritual Direction for Queer Christians to Intersectionality and Liberation. Each session invited us to imagine what the church can look like when LGBTQIA+ people are not merely included, but centered and celebrated.

What the Church Needs to Hear

One of the most important moments for me was a conversation around what queer people want the church to understand. Themes that emerged included:

- Belonging is more than acceptance — it is being woven into the life and leadership of the church.
- Safety depends on courage, visibility, and clear support.
- Queer joy is sacred — an act of resistance and hope.

These were not complaints; they were invitations. Invitations for the church to grow, to listen, and to embody Christ's welcome more fully.

A Call to Action

Before the gathering ended, participants created a "to-do list" for the wider denomination — practical

steps to strengthen welcome, improve equity, and ensure that congregations have resources to support LGBTQIA+ members and leaders. It was energizing to see so much commitment and creativity in one room.

Coming Home to Westminster

I returned home grateful — grateful for Westminster's commitment to hospitality, grateful for the ways our congregation continues to stretch and grow, and grateful for the chance to witness what the Spirit is doing within the wider church.

This gathering reminded me that the work of inclusion is ongoing, and that we are called not only to open our doors but to open our hearts. As an elder, I look forward to bringing what I learned back to Westminster, helping us deepen our welcome and continue embodying Christ's love for all of God's people.

A Message from Green at Heart and PEC

Presbyterians for Earth Care has developed an Advent Daily Devotional featuring reflections rooted in the Revised Common Lectionary and written from a Creation Care perspective. We hope these devotions offer fresh insight for you as we enter this upcoming advent season. May these writings inspire all of us to care more deeply for God's creation in these challenging times. We graciously thank everyone who has contributed to this year's devotional.

For a full copy of this season's daily devotionals, please visit www.presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-aids/

Want others to join in on this year's devotionals? Here are a few ways to help share the Creation Care Advent Devotional:

- Share the online link with friends and family.
- Read a devotion during worship or invite the preacher to reference one.
- Provide printed weekly copies for those without
- Deliver printed or emailed copies to homebound members.
- Send copies to college students.
- Read selections at Bible study or PW groups.
- Encourage your church's prayer chain to use the devotionals.

A new devotional from the series will be highlighted in the eVine each week.

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Youth News

Call for Baked Goods | December 7

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 if you are interested in helping us out. Please indicate ingredients if possible. Master creations can be delivered between 10-2 on Friday or on Sunday morning the week before the Advent Workshop.

Advent Workshop/Baked Goods Auction/Chili Cookoff/Christmas Decoration Swap | December 7 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

As we prepare to move into the season of expectation and preparation, we invite you to join us at the Advent Workshop in Fellowship Hall on December 7. We will gather immediately after church to renew friendships, enjoy food together, and make lasting memories. At the craft tables, we will be making paper angels and Hershey kiss Advent calendars. After you make a craft, enjoy the hot chocolate and coffee bar and decorate cookies.

The WPC Youth Group will again sponsor a baked goods auction to raise money for mission projects throughout the year. Part of the auction will be silent and part will be emceed. In addition to the auction, there will be items available for immediate purchase.

The annual chili cookoff will take place on December 7 as well with the coveted Silver Ladle award on the line. You are invited to check out this year's entries and select the best entry. In keeping with Nebraska tradition, we will also have cinnamon rolls available for you to enjoy with your chili.

This year we are introducing a new activity, a Christmas Decoration Swap. Bring in your old Christmas decorations and swap them for someone

Holiday Helper | December 13

1:00 PM-4:00 PM

Need some time to buy gifts, kid-free? Need a few hours to yourself? Drop your kid(s) off for a few hours while you go and do what you need to do - Kiddos will get to enjoy some gym time, a planned holiday activity, and enjoy a little snack. \$10 per child or \$25 per family.

Preregister here <https://forms.gle/uvUEdpdjZYVILFfV6>.

Questions? Contact Trish at

trish@westminsterlincoln.org or 402-570-0163.

Gift Wrapping Fundraiser | December 14

10:00 AM-12:00 PM

No time to wrap gifts? No problem — we have you covered. Bring your presents to church on Sunday, December 14 and let our talented gift-wrapping specialists make your holidays easier. Drop off your unwrapped, clearly labeled gifts in the Garden Room before the service and pick up your beautifully wrapped packages after the service. \$3 to \$7 per gift, depending on shape and size. Proceeds will help the WPC Youth Group's mission work and travel.



Photos from
last year's
Advent
Workshop +
Chili
Cookoff

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Westminster
Presbyterian Church
2110 Sheridan Blvd
Lincoln, NE 68502

2025 Poinsettia Donation Form

Share the joy of Christmas! This year we will be ordering poinsettias to place in the sanctuary for the Christmas Eve services. You can make a donation in memory or in honor of a loved one, to be included in the bulletin for Christmas Eve.

The donation level is \$15. Please make checks payable to Westminster and write POINSETTIA on the memo line. Donations must be received by Dec. 10 to be included in the order of worship. There is also an option to donate to the Westminster Library.

Mail your check and the information specified below to:

Westminster Presbyterian Church
Attn: Joanne
2110 Sheridan Blvd., Lincoln, NE 68502

_____ I would like to donate \$ _____ toward the purchase of poinsettias.

_____ I would like to donate \$ _____ to the Westminster Library.

Given by:

In memory of:

In honor of:

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____