

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

The Messenger

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"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

2 Corinthians 5:17

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

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

VOLUME 96 ISSUE 1

A Message to the Congregation

New Year, New You?
Westminster Friends,

As we slide into 2026 off an exceptional Fall 2025 at Westminster, I want to affirm that wherever you are, whatever you're experiencing, however you feel in your journey of faith – you are enough. We all have goals and ways we can grow, change, and improve in life, but when it comes to God's grace – we all are enough and we all are beloved. Some of you may have resolutions for the year, which can be a great motivational tool for growth. For you, I hope you'll include your faith journey, discipleship, and service to neighbor as a resolution. Some of you may be "over it" when it comes to resolutions due to past resolutions fading out within a month or two. For you, I hope you'll consider how to live into your faith this year at your own pace – without lofty expectations or resolutions that bring guilt.

In the life of faith we talk about the change we experience due to knowing God's grace as sanctification. In simpler terms, I think of sanctification as our being and becoming more holy, faithful, and responsive to God in life. We believe the Holy Spirit sanctifies us in a continual way. Some days or weeks – even years! – it's easier to feel more faithful responsive to God, and some... well, it's just harder. However you journey into 2026 – galloping or liming – I want to remind you that you are enough. Being on the journey (even if you've hit a roadblock, even if you're limping) is enough.

At Westminster we have a 'new' tradition of Star Words, and we will share Star Words in-person in worship on Sunday, January 4th. That's the day we celebrate Epiphany in worship. Star Words may also be requested from the church office if you cannot attend in-person that day. Here's a little more about Star words from our friends at A Sanctified Art, a collective of artists and pastors from our tradition:

"The use of star words, also called "star gifts," is a prayer practice connected to Epiphany and the new year that has been growing in popularity in Protestant churches for nearly a decade now. The idea is that a list of intention words, or guiding words, are written or printed on paper stars. These paper stars are then arranged, most commonly face down, on the Communion Table or in a large basket. At some point during your Epiphany service, individuals are invited to draw a word from the basket or off the Table, and to use that word as a guiding word throughout the year. Typically, participants are encouraged to trust the word they have drawn, and not to replace the word. However, there is not a strong need to be the "star police" if an individual wants to trade. Individuals are often encouraged to place their star word somewhere they will see it regularly throughout the year to allow consistent reflection on how God has moved through, around, or in connection to that word."

Remember, you are enough at the start of this new year. May God's grace, peace, and love be with you in the year ahead. I can't wait to see what God has in store for us as a church in 2026 – with you as a part of our journey together!

With Gratitude,
Pastor Chris



sanctifiedart.org/creative-written-liturgy/star-words-epiphany-liturgy

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WESTMINSTER PRESCHOOL

JANUARY 2026



Look What We're Learning!

December was full of Christmas fun! Our families were invited to join us at school to make Gingerbread Houses, we had a successful Christmas program, and we finished with Pajama Day and Reindeer Games before break!

New friends are joining preschool in January and it's a great chance to relearn all the rules and procedures at school.

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

STARFISH CLASSROOM:
TRAVEL AROUND THE WORLD

BUMBLEBEE CLASSROOM:
WINTER IN THE WOODS

OWL CLASSROOM:
SNOW AND ICE



UPCOMING EVENTS

DEC. 20TH - JAN. 4TH
NO SCHOOL
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

JAN. 6TH & 7TH ---
VISION SCREENING

JAN. 19TH---
NO SCHOOL

JAN. 30TH---
WINTER FORMAL



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Upcoming Events and Important Dates

Justice & Peace Calendar – January

•National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month—polarisproject.org

06 Epiphany of the Lord; pcusa.org/about-pcusa/agencies-entities/interim-unified-agency/ministry-areas/theology-worship/worship/christian-year/epiphany

11 National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, traffickingresourcecenter.org;

presbyterianwomen.org/justice

16 National Religious Freedom Day, religiousfreedomday.com

18–25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, oikoumene.org/week-of-prayer

19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day, thekingcenter.org

27 International Holocaust Remembrance Day; unesco.org/en/days/holocaust-remembrance

Adult Ed

January 4: Rev. Ellen Davis will lead a reflection and discussion of the Bible Readings and sermon from Worship Service on this first Sunday of the new year.

January 11: Irene Hargan, Director of Marketing and PR, will tell us about Lincoln's "Center for People."

January 18: Charlie Wesche, CEO of NeighborWorks, will speak about affordable housing.

January 25: Anne Brandt, Executive Director of Lincoln Littles, "Elevating Early Childhood."

Explorers Bible Study | Library | Mondays 11:00 AM

Explorer's Bible Study will resume on January 11th. We will be continuing the study we started in September. All are welcome!

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

There will be no lunch bunch meeting for January. We will resume lunch bunch gatherings in February!

Faith & Cancer Support Group | Tuesday, January 20 | 10:00 AM | Church Library

Prairie Readers | Wednesday, January 21 | 1:00 PM

Prairie Readers will begin the new reading year on Wednesday, January 21. We will meet in the lounge at 1 PM. Kathryn Govaerts will lead the discussion of *The Women* by Kristin Hannah. Everyone is welcome.

Ladies Night Out | Tuesday, January 27th | Sakura Japanese Restaurant | 5p.m. – 7 p.m.

sakuralincoln.com (located where Tavern 180 was previously, by Tanners).

Stuff the Truck

Stuff the truck was a huge success!

Our Westminster family donated 473 pounds of non-perishable food and contributed \$115.00 in monetary gifts to support the Food Bank of Lincoln.

Thank you for helping nourish our neighbors during this season of giving!



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A Star Word Reflection from Calvin & Knox

This Epiphany, our resident church mice finally received their very own Star Words a little early. Star Words are a "new" tradition at Westminster added to Epiphany worship a few years ago. In our Epiphany service we receive Star Words to bring inspiration and hope into the year! Star Words may also be requested via the church office if you cannot attend in-person. Epiphany will be recognized in worship on Sunday, January 4th, 2026. Calvin drew Courage—which he immediately decided meant he should confront his greatest fear: the vacuum cleaner. (He made it within six feet before turning around, which we're counting as progress.)

Knox picked Wonder—and has since wondered:

- why communion bread can't be weekly,
- why the choir robes look like tiny parachutes, and
- whether the star on the pulpit grants wishes. (No, Knox... probably.)

Their words suit them perfectly. Calvin needs a little extra push to be brave. Knox needs... well, Knox needs to stay curious and out of the baptismal font. But their Star Words remind us of something much bigger: Sometimes the word we get is exactly the nudge we need. Sometimes it's a challenge. Sometimes it's a cosmic joke. And sometimes—even for mice—it's God's quiet way of saying, "I'm still guiding you." So whether your Star Word this year feels profound, puzzling, or like God handed you a homework assignment... take heart. If Calvin can face a vacuum and Knox can refrain (mostly) from chewing his Star Word, we can follow ours, too. May your word lead you into a year full of growth, laughter, and holy surprises— one small card, one big God, and maybe one or two mice cheering you on from under pew seven on the north side.



A Message from PEC and Green at Heart

Winter is a season of gathering and joyous celebrations, but it can also be a season of energy waste. Did you know 61-86% of home energy use is wasted, with the winter months being the worst? Small changes can make a big difference for the planet (and your utility bill!) Here are a few easy, eco-friendly tips:

Layer up: Bundle up in sweaters, scarves, and base layers so you can turn the thermostat down a few degrees. Choose natural fibers to help reduce microplastic pollution.

Seal the leaks: Check doors, windows, outlets, and corners for drafts. Weather stripping and expanding foam can help keep warm air in and cold air out.

Turn down your water heater: Heating water uses about 18% of home energy. Lowering the setting to around 120°F saves energy without sacrificing comfort.

Switch your bulbs: With shorter days, lighting matters. LED or CFL bulbs use 25–80% less energy, last longer, and are better for the environment.

Skip the street salt: Traditional salt harms waterways. Try safer alternatives like beet juice, cheese brine, or even pickle juice for icy walkways.

Choose public transportation: Leaving the car at home when possible helps cut greenhouse gas emissions all winter long.

Small steps can create a big impact on our environment. Join us this winter in caring for creation.



Because of YOU, Westminster is **green@heart**

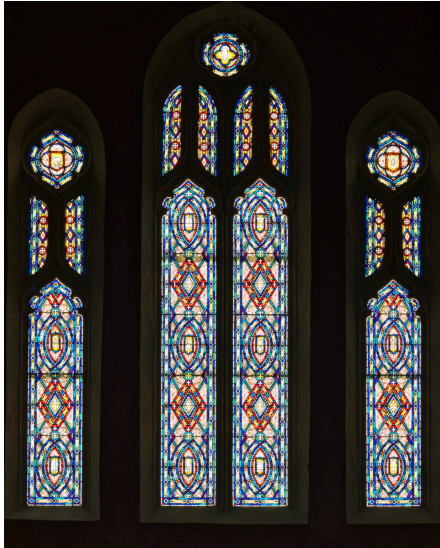
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Windows in our 99 year old Sanctuary

Submitted by Susie Hughes



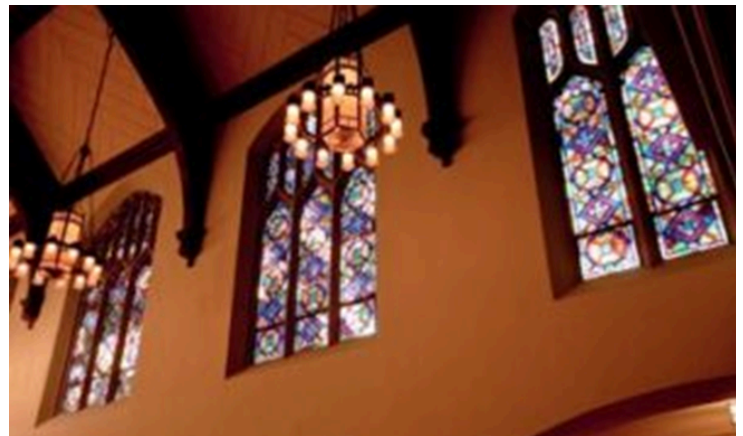
Great East Window

The Westminster congregation had vision and knew they wanted stained-glass windows throughout the Sanctuary, known as an auditorium in those days. When church services were first held, we did not know for certain if the beautiful East stain-glass window was in place or not. An archive search found many references to it in early 1927 but no definitive information can be found of exactly when it was placed into the Sanctuary. In June 1927, we have documentation of the full explanation of the various symbols shown in the stained-glass by the maker Thomas J. Gaytee Studios of Minneapolis MN. The East Window is at the head of the church and at the top of the window is shown the symbols of the Holy Trinity. The quatrefoil design is placed within the circle – the quatrefoil design being symbolic of the four evangelists. The circle is used as a symbol of the Eternal Father as having one beginning and ending and is considered the sign of perfection. On the left is the symbol of the Lamb, representing Jesus Christ the second person of the Holy Trinity, and on the right is the Dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity. In the lancet openings are medallions and shields whereon are placed the symbols of the Twelve Apostles and the Four Evangelists. The Apostles and Evangelists appear in this order (from top to bottom and from left to right).

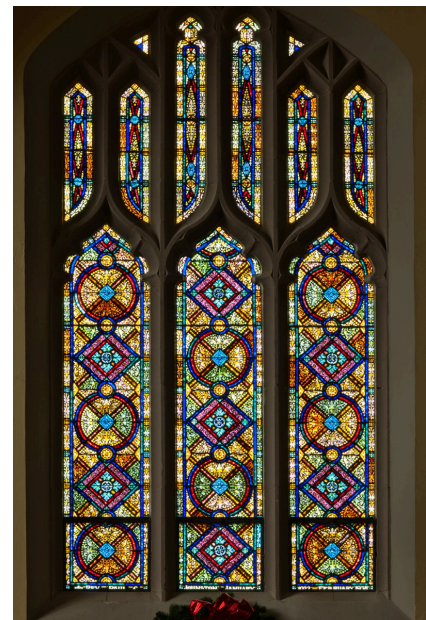
They are St. Andrew, St. James; St. Bartholomew; St. Paul; St. Matthew; St. James; St. Luke; St. Matthias; St. Peter; St. Mark; St. John the Apostle; St. John the Evangelist; St. Peter; St. Simon; St. Jude; St. John the Evangelist; St. Thomas; St. Phillip.

The great east window was given by Mrs. Julius C. Harpham and Children in loving memory of their Husband and Father, Mr. Julius C. Harpham.

Clerestory Windows



The side windows of our Sanctuary were commissioned at the same time as the West Window. The congregation thought it important to surround the church with stained glass and honor past Ministers whose names appear at the bottom of the windows. From the archives, it appears the Teeter family also donated the funds for these windows.

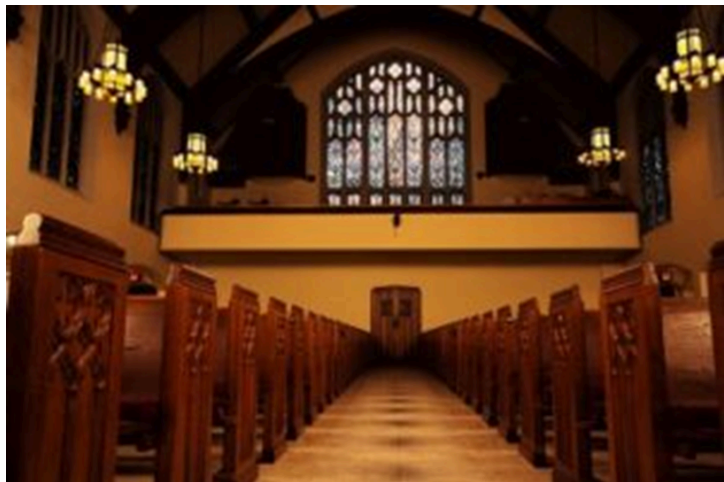


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Great West Window



This window was dedicated in 1937 and given by J. L. Teeter, a Lincoln jeweler, in memory of his wife Sophy H. Teeter. The West window is a reproduction of a window in the Shakespeare Memorial Church at Stratford-on-Avon, England. There are five symbols across the top of the window as follows (from left to right): The flagon or goblet; the dove; the crown, the fish, and the lamp. The location of the above symbols in the window are in the order given, reading from left to right, which places the Symbols of the Trinity in the center, with the crown as the Godhead idea as the central motif. The two tokens of the Passion and the Gospel flank these three symbols. In the case of the lamp symbol, the flame points inward toward the symbols of the Trinity. In the lancet openings below are placed ten medallions, each with a figure thereon. The top three are figures portraying the three high priests, Moses, Christ, and David. The central figure of Christ includes the symbol of the cross and the orb which signifies the triumph of our Saviors. The three medallions directly below are the great prophets who have spoken about the Incarnation of Christ. They are from left to right Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. The two medallions to the left portray the Gospel writers Matthew, Mark, and on the right is Luke and John. The West window is currently being restored by Architecture Glassart. This company was given a directive to do an exceptional job to the restoration; therefore, the repairs are not being rushed to completion. Plans are to backlight the window once it is in place. We will all rejoice when the west window is placed again at its home facing Sheridan Boulevard.

Youth News

W3 (Welcome to Westminster) Wednesdays

Wednesday nights are a wonderful opportunity for kids to get together with their friends and have fun learning about God. Kids from kindergarten through high school meet from 5:30 PM-8:00 PM.

5:30 PM-6:00 PM Open gym time

6:00 PM-6:30 PM Dinner in Cole Hall

6:30 PM-8:00 PM Activities in Faith Village and Youth Group.

If you have children younger than elementary age, please let me know--trish@westminsterlincoln.org or 402-570-0163--if you are interested in having them join us on Wednesdays -- we will have special activities available just for them.

Wednesday activities resume January 7.

Youth Group Lock-In | January 2-3

Are you ready for the new year? We are starting the year off with a Lockin, January 2-3. Plan to play games, eat pizza, and hang out with friends all night at church. We start at 8:00 PM on January 2 and finish at 8:00 AM on Saturday, January 3. We can't wait to get the fun started!

Youth Group meets Wednesday evenings, 5:30 PM-8:00 PM.

Please let Trish know if you plan to attend by text 402-570-0163 or email trish@westminsterlincoln.org

Infused Donut Holes | January 25, 11:15 AM

Join us after worship on January 25 to enjoy infused donut holes in the Garden Room

Spring Break VBS: Puzzling Pyramids, the Ultimate Escape | March 9-11 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Need a great way for your kids to spend part of their Spring Break? Join us for our special Spring Break Vacation Bible School: Puzzling Pyramids, the Ultimate Escape! We're bringing three mornings packed with high-energy fun, engaging lessons, creative crafts, and awesome music that will help kids explore faith in a dynamic and memorable way.

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Westminster
Presbyterian Church
2110 Sheridan Blvd
Lincoln, NE 68502

Youth News Continued from Page 7

Event Details:

- When? Monday, March 9 – Wednesday, March 11
- Time? 9:00 AM-12:00 PM (Daily)
- Who? Children 4 years-5th grade
- Cost? \$10 per child, maximum \$30 per family

Don't let your kids miss out on this fantastic opportunity to make new friends and grow closer to God this spring!

Registration:

Register here <https://vbspro.events/p/wpcspring26> and keep an eye on the weekly bulletin or visit the church website for updates.

Summer VBS: Roadtrip! | July 14-18

VBS is Back and Hitting the Road! Get ready to buckle up for an incredible journey! This summer, kids are invited to join us for Roadtrip!, our fun-filled Vacation Bible School adventure from July 14-18. We're taking off for a week packed with high-octane excitement as we explore the amazing destinations God has planned for our lives. Embark on an exciting journey with Road Trip VBS, based on Joshua 1:9 – "The LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Discover God's presence

everywhere as we explore new places, make new friends, and experience God's goodness together. Every day will be a new stop on our journey, featuring engaging Bible stories, spirited worship music, hands-on crafts, hilarious games, and tasty treats, all designed to help children from 4 years through 5th Grade discover that following Jesus is the greatest adventure of all!

Event Details:

- When? Monday, July 14 – Friday, July 18
- Time? 9:00 AM-12:00 PM (Daily)
- Who? Children 4 years-5th grade
- Cost? \$15 per child, maximum \$45 per family

Registration:

Don't let your child miss the trip of a lifetime; register here <https://westminster-goodshepherd.mycokesburyvbs.com/register-child>. Keep an eye on our church website and weekly bulletin for the direct link to sign up. Space is limited, so reserve your seat on the Roadtrip! early! We're also looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help navigate this epic journey! If you're interested in serving as a crew chief, station leader, or passenger (helper), please contact Trish at trish@westminsterlincoln.org.