



Second Sunday after Christmas

Preparation for **Worship**

Everlasting God, you are the radiance of faithful souls who brought the nations to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Fill the world with your glory, and show yourself to all peoples, that your grace may disrupt our casual faith, and your light may scatter our darkness. We ask it through him who is the true light and the bright morning star, Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord. Amen.

Gathering and Preparing for **God's Word**

Welcome and Announcements

Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Prelude "Pastoral Symphony" from *Messiah* Handel

* Call to Worship Psalm 27:1, 18:28

Leader: The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

People: The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Leader: It is you who light my lamp, O God.

People: The Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.

All: Let us worship God!

* Hymn 152 "What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright" PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

* Prayer of Confession

God of glory, you sent Jesus among us as the light of the world, to reveal your love for all people.

We confess that our sin and pride hide the brightness of your light.

We turn away from the poor, we ignore cries for justice, we do not strive for peace.

In your mercy, cleanse us of our sin.

Let our faith be stronger than our fear.

Help us to see the face of Christ in the stranger, to bear the cross of Christ for our neighbor, and to share the hope of Christ with friend and enemy alike. Amen.

* Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

* Gloria Patri, Hymn 581 GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.

11:15a Children in K5 - first grade are invited to leave for Children's Church.

Hearing **God's Word**

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Lesson, *Isaiah 60:1-6* p. 602

Gospel Lesson, *Matthew 2:1-12, 16-18* p. 783

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon "Who Invited Herod to Christmas?"

Responding to **God's Word**

* Affirmation of Faith *The Apostles' Creed*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

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.

Offering

Offertory *The Coventry Carol* arr. Johnson

* Doxology Hymn 606 OLD HUNDRETH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

* Prayer of Dedication

* Hymn 744 "Arise, Your Light Is Come!" FESTAL SONG

* Charge and Benediction

* Postlude *In Dulci Jubilo* Bach

*All who are able may stand

Leading Worship **this Morning**

Ben Dorr, *preaching*

Lauren Slingerland, *liturgist*

Todd Monsell, *organist/pianist*

Kristen Blumer, Emily Sweezy, Tina Wood, *trio*

Jacob Barker, *head usher*

Lindsey Donlan, Walker Miller, Tom Vanderbloemen,

Parks Workman, Betsy Raines (9a), *greeters*

Roger Gower, Ingrid Erwin, Jordan Smith,

George McLarty, Trey Morrow (11:15a), *greeters*

Manning Dailey (9a), *acolyte*

WORSHIP NOTES

NURSERY

Childcare is available for infants through 4K. Our nurturing staff of experienced caregivers and parent volunteers offers a welcoming environment for children. The Nursery is located on the mezzanine level. The entrance is at Westminster Drive, at the columbarium or near the Westminster Weekday School offices. The Family Lounge, located down the stairs from the front office and straight down the hallway on the right, is available for any child caregiver and includes worship livestream, comfortable seating, and a changing table.

WORSHIP BAGS

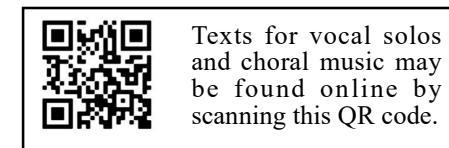
Each Sunday we offer worship bags in the Atrium for children. The worship bags are designed to include reusable items that engage children in open ended play during worship. While children attend worship with their families, they can participate in worship and play to make meaning in faith. Please return the zipper bag and its contents each Sunday.

WELCOME TO WPC!

Please fill out a name tag and find more information about WPC at the Welcome Table in the Atrium. First time visitors are also invited to take home a WPC mug.

CONNECT WITH WESTMINSTER

Looking for ways to be involved? Please complete a Connection Card from the Ritual of Friendship pad and place it in the offering plate to express interest or sign up for an opportunity.



Texts for vocal solos and choral music may be found online by scanning this QR code.

We Remember in Prayer

Terri LeGrand and her family on the death of Terri's mother, Gail Caldwell, on Tuesday, December 24, 2024, in Easley.

In Memoriam

Bright Anderson Lowry, III (4/6/1936 - 12/30/2024)

"I am the resurrection and the life."
- John 11:25

BAPTISM CLASS

If you would like to have your child baptized at Westminster, our next Baptism class is scheduled for Sunday, January 12, at 4:30p. Please notify the church office if you would like to attend, and we will be glad to send you the information for this class.

HERITAGE LECTURE - 2025

Announcing the 2025 Heritage Lecturer, the Reverend Dr. Hunter Farrell. Join us on Sunday, February 23, to hear Dr. Farrell preach at both 9a and 11:15a. He will also lead the adult Sunday School class. Farrell previously served the PCUSA as Director of World Mission, and is presently the Leader of World Mission Initiative at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. He is also the author of several books including *Freeing Congregational Mission: A Practical Vision for Companionship, Cultural Humility, and Co-Development*.

WESTMINSTER BOOK CLUB

The Westminster Book Club will meet Tuesday, January 7, at 6:30p in the church library. Beth Edwards will review *Send Down the Rain* by Charles Martin. This book raises the question of how two individuals, each with their own losses and difficult circumstances, randomly meet. Together are they able to find a way to move on from their current situations? All are welcome to attend.

THEOLOGY READING GROUP

The Theology Reading Group will meet in the Charter Room on Monday, January 20 at 7p. Bill Holt will lead the discussion of *The Planet You Inherit: Letters to My Grandchildren When Uncertainty's a Sure Thing*, by Larry Rasmussen. Read the book and join us for an interesting and informative evening. All are welcome.

WOMEN OF WESTMINSTER

CIRCLE MEETING

Wednesday, January 8

- Circle 6, at the home of Liz Einstein (223 Camille Ave) at 9a. Circle Co-Chairs: Liz Einstein (liz.ard.einstein@gmail.com) and Sherry Tate (sherrytate63@gmail.com).

VOLUNTEER FOR PROJECT HOST

Please consider signing up to volunteer at Project Host in 2025. This is a great opportunity to serve our community with other members of Westminster. Four volunteers are needed every other Tuesday from 9a-1p. During this time, you will prepare a nutritious lunch, serve the patrons, and clean up after lunch service. Please sign up at <https://wpc-online.org/events-registration>. Contact Susan Clark at 864-982-4130 or susanhunterclark@gmail.com for more information.

**WINTER SUNDAY SCHOOL TERM
JANUARY 5 - FEBRUARY 9, 2025**

***I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting:
A Brief Tour of Heaven and Hell***

Ted Gentry
Room 209 and Streaming

Drawing on scripture, history, theology, and the occasional first-hand account, this course will consider what Presbyterians believe about the afterlife, some of the reasons for those beliefs, and the many questions that remain unanswered.

The Text This Week

Room 212

Join us for an in-depth exploration of the texts being preached each week. We will consider the story of the Wise Men and then explore the Gospel of Luke. The class is lecture-style and will be recorded.

Sunday School for children in Kindergarten through 5th grade meet on the 100 hall in the following classrooms:

- K-1st Grade Room 109
- 2nd-3rd Grade Movie Room
- 4th-5th Grade Room 112

Nursery is available for infants through 4K on the Mezzanine level. During Nursery, children in 4K explore the Bible story through play.

**SUPPERS WITH SEVEN
JANUARY - MARCH 2025**




Sharing a meal is one of the best ways to establish and renew relationships with members of the Westminster church community. "Suppers With Seven" is seven (or so) persons - some couples, some singles, some older and some younger - gathering for a series of two or three meals at a time convenient to the group. To sign up, return this form to the church office, or fill out the online form on the church website by navigating to the Suppers With Seven page. The deadline to sign up is Monday, January 6.

Name(s): _____ (include both names, if a couple)
Phone: _____ (will be shared with your group)
Email Address: _____ (will be shared with your group)

Preferred Method of Contact: ___ email ___ phone call ___ text

Please check as many as apply:

- _____ I/We can host and lead the first gathering of Suppers with Seven.
- _____ I/We cannot host the first gathering but would consider a subsequent one.
- _____ I/We cannot host but would like to be part of a group.

   [wpcgreenville](http://wpcgreenville.com) | wpc-online.org | 2310 Augusta St.

THE HARBINGER

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 5-12, 2025

Sunday, January 5

Second Sunday after Christmas

- 9:00a Membership Committee Meeting
- Worship Service
- Sunday School
- 10:00 Sunday Session Meeting
- 10:55 Worship Service
- 5:00p Middler Youth Group
- 5:15 Senior High Choir Rehearsal
- 6:00 Youth Group Dinners
- 6:30 Senior High Youth Group
- Middler Choir Rehearsal

Monday, January 6

Weekday School Closed

- 8:00p Narcotics Anonymous

Tuesday, January 7

- 12:00p Al-Anon Meeting
- Administrative Committee Meeting
- 5:00 Personnel Committee Meeting
- 6:00 Connect, Serve, Grow Task Force Meeting
- 6:30 Westminster Book Club Meeting

Wednesday, January 8

- 9:00a Circle 6
- 2:15p It's Elementary
- 4:30 Junior & Senior Choristers
- 7:00 Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, January 9

- 10:00a Bible Study
- 8:00 Narcotics Anonymous

Sunday, January 12

Baptism of the Lord

- 9:00a Witness & Service Committee Meeting
- Worship Service w/communion
- 10:00 Sunday School
- Confirmation Class Meeting
- 10:55 Sunday Session Meeting
- 11:15 Worship Service w/communion
- 4:30p Baptism Class
- 5:00 Middler Youth Group
- 5:15 Senior High Choir Rehearsal
- 6:00 Youth Group Dinners
- 6:30 Senior High Youth Group
- Middler Choir Rehearsal

Our Vision:
*Open Minds
Open Hearts*

Our Pillars:
*Hospitality
Generosity
Justice
Imagination
Joy*

Our Goals:
*Connect
Serve
Grow*

the
HARBINGER
open minds open hearts

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From the Pews, Parks Workman

God has blessed me richly this year, even in the face of many difficulties. As 2024 draws to a close, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for undeserved gifts—a loving family, a safe home, health, and so much more. These blessings, though they may be fragile, remind me of God’s enduring goodness.

Indeed, I was fortunate enough to take my family to New York the weekend before Christmas. One evening, we decided to see the Rockettes' Christmas Spectacular. It was quite an event, and the only word to truly describe it is “spectacular.” During the show, I was surprised when it shifted from a classic secular celebration of Christmas—with dozens of Santas—to the familiar story of the three magi coming to worship Jesus. It was beautiful to witness. In the midst of all the commercialism NYC has to offer, the applause for the birth and worship of Jesus at Radio City Music Hall was a fitting celebration of our King. It served as a gut check, prompting me to ask the question: in the midst of these blessings, how am I responding to Jesus?

The familiar story of the magi’s visit with Jesus illustrates different responses from those with much. First, there is Herod. Herod sees Jesus as a threat to his success, wealth, and power. His response is to try to control the situation and stop Jesus—even resorting to violence. This response is the path of destruction.

Second, there is the response of the magi. The magi come and immediately fall down to worship Jesus, offering Him their gifts. They trust that their greatest wealth lies in worshiping Jesus.

As 2025 begins, we should reflect on our response to Jesus. Will we protect our secular comforts, live selfishly, and chase fleeting pleasures? Or will we trust Jesus to provide what we truly need? Will we, like the magi, offer our gifts back to him, submitting to his plans?

I know I will falter in 2025 and, at times, try to control my own path. However, I hope to grow in my trust in Jesus, offering him my gifts and following his plan. The blessings of this world may be fragile and fleeting, but the blessings of Jesus are lasting and eternal. Hopefully, in the midst of the secularism of the world, we can pause and take time to be with Jesus, basking in his grace and love.