



Welcome  
TO  
Westminster  
**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**WHO WE ARE:**

*Westminster is a community where people of all ages are transformed by God's love to serve and grow as disciples of Jesus.*



**Sunday, December 31, 2023**

**Pastor: Rev. Angela Ryo**

**Music Director & Organist: Verdeen Strain**

**Contemporary Worship Music Leader: Chris Gloff**

**Lay Leader: Patty Dawes**

**8955 COLUMBIA AVENUE, MUNSTER, IN • 219.838.3131 • WPCMUNSTER.ORG**

Sunday, December 31, 2023 - 9:30 a.m. Service

*\*Please stand in body or spirit. - BOLD text is sung or spoken in unison.*

Guest Organist, Don Hill

## GATHERING SONG

*Go Tell It On the Mountain* by Tenth Avenue Worship  
Worship Band

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Welcome! The 4-week Season of Advent is over!

**The season of waiting is over!**

Jesus, Emmanuel--"God with Us"—is born!

**Born into this world! Born into our hearts!**

He has been brought here to change this world with God's love forever!

**He has been brought here to change our hearts forever!**

Wake up, everyone! The long-awaited Emmanuel is here with us!

**God in Jesus Christ really IS with us! Forever! Hallelujah! Joy to the world!**

## \*HYMN #134

*Joy to the World* by The Gray Havens (verses 1, 2, & 3)

## \*CALL TO CONFESSION

It is said that to sing is to pray twice. That hymn is quite a prayer we just sang: "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!" But do we really believe it? The problem is we think Christmas is over now. So we'll just pack up our Christmas ornaments and put them away for another year, as if nothing had really happened. Let us pray together our Prayer of Confession.

### *\*Prayer of Confession*

**O God, help us to open our hearts and confess that too often we believe nothing really has happened. Too often we believe the "illusion" (which the "world" wants us to believe) that the world has not really changed, and that (now that Christmas is over) we are once again separated from You, and that we live as victims alone in a hopelessly fear-filled and violent world.**

O God, this is why we are praying this prayer of confession today--to cleanse our hearts of anything that makes us think we can ever be separated from Your Love in Jesus Christ.

**O Loving Lord Jesus Christ, in this challenging and painful world, we yearn to believe that we are not alone. We yearn to believe that You, Emmanuel, really are with us! That you live in our hearts. But we confess that too often our hearts break and we are exhausted and forget who we really are.**

O Lord Jesus, thank you for never giving up being God's unconditional love for this world.

**Help us to never give up turning to you. Cleanse our hearts from all that tries to separate us from trusting You and God's Love. Help us to remember that, in the mystery of God's love, You came to be born in each of us. And that you have been born in us! Thank You. We enter silent prayer, opening our hearts to You.**

### *\*Silent Prayer*

## \*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, believe the Good News. Christ IS born in you. You ARE forgiven! You ARE loved! You ARE freed! As Paul wrote in Romans 8:38:

## \*ASSURANCE OF PARDON *(Continued)*

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." You are loved by God forever! Christ is born in you!

**Glory be to God!**

## \*Response

*Glory Be to the Father (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.**

## \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

### HYMN #132

*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

## WORD THROUGH MUSIC

*Brightest and Best*

The Reasoners and Solis' Family

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.**

## INVITATION TO OFFERING AND PRAYER

Gracious and giving God, we give thanks to you for you are good. Your steadfast love endures forever. We thank you for the blessings of the past year and for how you have stood with us and guided us in difficult times. Bless these offerings that they may be used to your glory and in service to others in the name of your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Help us to have grateful hearts and to live as the joyful people of God; through Jesus Christ, the greatest gift of all. Amen.

## Offertory

*Advent Medley: In the Bleak Midwinter, Suo Gan & Baloo Loo Lammy*

The Reasoners

*(Children and youth are invited to stay through the duration of the service this morning.)*

## \*Doxology #606

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Gracious God, for generations, your Word has brought love and life to your people. Speak to us now; we pray that we may hear, and in hearing, we may be transformed. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:22-40

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

## SERMON

*Be Born in Us Today*  
Guest Preacher, Marcia Smith-Wood

Introduction (Part I)  
**ALL SING "O Little Town of Bethlehem" verses 1-2**

Sermon (Part II)  
**ALL SING "O Little Town of Bethlehem" verse 3**

Sermon (Part III Opening ourselves to a Prayer/Practice called S.I.P. "Sitting in Presence": Sitting in silence and then prayerfully asking "What do I need to know today, God?")

**ALL SING "O Little Town of Bethlehem" verse 4**

## \*HYMN #157

*I Danced in the Morning*

## \*BENEDICTION AND INVITATION

Simeon and Anna praised God for Jesus being born. May YOU praise God for the blessing of Jesus being born in you today and everyday more and more!

**On this New Year's Eve, as we begin a new year, may we keep opening ourselves to God who is born in us and who is doing NEW THINGS IN US, everyday!**

You are loved by God. You are God's love in this world! Thank you!

## POSTLUDE

*Rejoice and Be Merry*



### Guest Preacher: Rev. Marcia Smith-Wood

Rev. Marcia Smith-Wood is a retired Presbyterian Pastor, living in Rensselaer. She continues her calling as a Spiritual Director and a Certified Healing Touch Practitioner. She is married to Ote Wood. Their family includes 3 adult children, their 3 beloved spouses, and 6 grandchildren.

# WPC PRAYER REQUESTS

## Heartfelt Sympathy

The Cafmeyer family in the passing of Stephen.

## Weekly Concerns

Linda Bishop (friend of Chuck Weier)  
The Borbely family in the passing of Wendy's husband, Buddy.  
The family of Barbara Cook  
Cheryl Clement (Alan Carlson's niece)  
Charlotte (niece of Barb McKinney)  
Mary Lou Crowley (leader of The 3 BBBs)  
Patty Dawes  
Dave Ferguson  
Grace Delcano (friend of Amy Carter)  
LuAnn Franklin  
Sharon Flinspach (Alan Carlson's daughter and Bruce Carlson's sister)  
Diane Golden (neighbor of Chuck Weier)  
Julie (niece of Zora Ludwig)  
Paul Hoekstra  
Zora Ludwig and family  
Judith Mills (niece of Sandy Walsh)  
Susie Nastos (cousin of Cindy Siergey)  
Dawn Nielsen (niece of Sandy Walsh)  
Sharon Orr and family  
Sonja Ross  
Donna Sharp  
John Shields  
The family of Carl Strain  
Stacy Pierce (relative of Sandy Walsh)  
Pat Snyder (mother of Christine Cangiano)  
The Strand family in the passing of Paul Jim Vliek  
Kimmy Walker (friend of Nora Alfonsi)  
Sandy Walsh in the passing of her cousin Roland Tapper Jr.

Russ Terpstra  
Wendy Wilke-Sola

## Continuing Care & Prayers

Ron Allen  
David Cafmeyer  
Jennifer Dye Foreit (friend/Michelle Pedrick)  
David Dal Santo (Husband of Dawn)  
Jack Estill (father of Gene Estill)  
Bruce Elliot (cousin of Chuck Weier)  
Mike Feege  
Ed Harrison  
Don Hill  
Pat Jaracz  
Kim Karlen  
John & Carole Keener (family of Ron Robbins)  
Joe McDaniel  
Betty Morris  
Pedrick family  
Morgan Borbely Orrick  
Jan Quintelier (cousin of Barb McKinney)  
Family of Keith Robbins (brother of Ron Robbins)  
Richard Simkins  
Elaine Schnider and her friend Debbie (friends of Robin Webber)  
Colleen Splant (friend of Chuck Weier)  
Susan Geri Snider (Zora Ludwig/sister)  
Shelly Walsh (friend of Chuck Weier)  
Natalie & Jeff Ziemendorf (daughter & son-in-law/Sonja Ross)

Dec, 24, 2023

---

# Westminster Connection Point

## HOW CAN WE HELP?

A PASTOR       A DEACON       NEW MEMBER  
 STEPHEN MINISTER       PRAYER REQUEST       OTHER  
 PHONE CALL       HOME COMMUNION

## CONTACT INFORMATION

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE RETURN THIS PORTION TO THE OFFERING BOX OR EMAIL THIS INFORMATION TO  
GNIDA@WPCMUNSTER.ORG

# Today's Events



## **Nursery, Sunday School and Disciples & Donuts -No Meeting Today**

These groups will not meet today to give our teachers a holiday break. However, the nursery is open for parents to use if need arises.

# Upcoming Events



## **Youth Group Tuesday Activities**

Will resume January 9 with afterschool study time from 3 - 4:30 p.m. and activity from 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.



## **Youth Group Volleyball**

Practice will resume January 4 at regular times. Then the players will kick off their season with a scramble tournament on January 6 from 9 - Noon at Westminster.



## **Westminster Forum - Rescheduled for January 7 at 10:30 a.m.**

Join us as Rev. Dr. Robert Cathey, professor emeritus from McCormick Theological Seminary, discusses the *"Parliament of the World's Religions: Chicago, August, 2023."*



## **Pickleball - Starts January**

Interested in playing pickleball? Join us on Saturday, January 6 from 4-6 p.m. and/or Sunday, January 7 from 2-4 p.m. Contact Dave Radovich at [dsmrad@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dsmrad@sbcglobal.net) or register through the app.



## **College Student Reunion Night - Tuesday, January 2 from 6:30-9:00 p.m.**

Students home from college on break are invited for an evening of food, fellowship and volleyball.



## **WPC Blood Drive - January 5 from 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

Visit the upcoming events section at [www.wpcmunster.org](http://www.wpcmunster.org) to schedule your appointment!



## **Sunday Discussions - January 14 and 21 at 10:30 a.m.**

Greg Stephan's sunday discussions are starting back up! Stay tuned for more details.



## **New Member Meet and Greet - January 21 at Noon**

Are you interested in becoming a new member? Join our meet and greet to get to know Pastor Angela and more about our church. R.S.V.P. to Gina by calling the church office or emailing her at [gnida@wpcmunster.org](mailto:gnida@wpcmunster.org)



## **Youth Group Ski Trip - January 27**

Youth 6-12th grade are invited to the annual ski trip to Bittersweet on January 27, 2023.