

DECEMBER
2018

The Westminster
WINDOW

Issue 11
Volume 16

Sunday Service Times: 10 AM Worship and 4 PM Jazz Vespers

CHRISTMAS AT WESTMINSTER

Thomas Clark-Jones



FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

December 9
4 PM

FESTIVAL DINNER

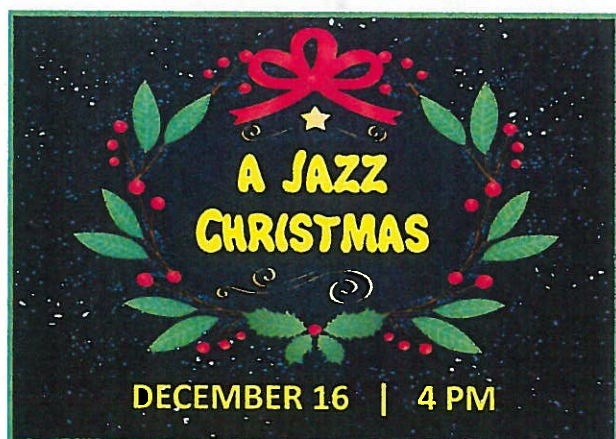
December 9
5:30 PM
R.S.V.P. Requested

The Gretchen R. Iben Arts Series is pleased to offer our two traditional events for the Advent-Christmas Season. On **December 9**, at **Four in the afternoon**, we present the historic Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. The service was first done in 1880 in the most humble of circumstances. The Bishop of Truro who presided over a small building as the Cathedral had not yet been built put this service together as a direct and beautiful service for the people of his Diocese. A few years later, he became the Dean of King's College at Cambridge University, and the service went with him. And there it was given its glory with the Choir of Kings and the great Harrison and Harrison Organ to accompany the carols. Today this service is celebrated across the entire English-speaking world in both great Cathedrals and humble parish churches ... with choirs of modest means and many of professional level singing. But the glory of the service itself comes from its direct readings of the Redemption Story from Genesis through the Birth of Christ coupled to the music of the season.

This year, our church celebrates with the wonderful readings from the King James Bible ... the congregational carols, and the choral carols and the hand bells ringing! Some of the greatest composers writing in English for the past three centuries are included ... Peter Warlock, John Rutter, Andrew Carter, William Mathias and many more make a merry and inspiring mix of great choral music.

So journey with us to Bethlehem ... and the Babe in the manger ... on **December 9, at four o'clock in the afternoon**. The Festival is

Continued on page 4 . . .



CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

12/24/18 at 4 PM





1420 W. Moss Avenue - Peoria, Illinois 61606

Phone 309-673-8501
Fax 309-673-2840
Website westminsterpeoria.org
Email wpc@westminsterpeoria.org
Office Hours Monday - Friday 8:30 to 2:30 PM

STAFF

Pastor **Rev. Denise Clark-Jones**
Phone 309-439-9737
Email pastor@westminsterpeoria.org
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Financial Secretary **Denise Wirth**
Phone 309-439-9740
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Organist/Choirmaster **Thomas Clark-Jones**
Phone 309-673-8501 Ext. 6
Hours Monday-Friday 11 to 1 PM
Email music@westminsterpeoria.org

ON-SITE MISSIONS

WestMark Food Pantry **Elizabeth Richmond**
Phone 309-673-8501 Ext. 7
Hours Weekly Monday 9 to 11 AM
Email wpc@westminsterpeoria.org

Westminster Infant Care Center
Director **Valerie Sager**
Phone 309-674-6701
Hours Monday-Friday 6:30 to 3 PM
in accordance with Peoria school calendar
Email WICC1973@gmail.com

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Editing/Proofing
Peggy Carter

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

mlc

Circle of Friends will meet December 4, at 9:00 a.m. at the home of Abbie Alexander. Our theme will be "Scotland, where Presbyterianism began."

In January, the Circle of Friends will not meet. We will begin our meetings again on February 5, 2019, at 9 a.m. Watch for more information to come. If you have any questions about Circle of Friends, please contact Anna Bussian. *

LECTIONARY BIBLE STUDY

mlc

As of this date, we are planning to meet only on the 13th of December, at 1:30 p.m. in the Parlor. Lectionary verses will be emailed to you or a copy can be picked up before class. Lectionary verses for December are listed on page 11 of this newsletter.

As for January, we will go back to meeting on the second and fourth Thursday afternoons, as weather permits. Notifications will be sent out by email, FaceBook, Twitter, Google +, and the home page of the website (the Red Box) if Bible study has been canceled.

This is open to all. Invite a friend and introduce them to the Word. Questions? Contact Marilyn Luman

FORE

mlc

The golfing team has hung up their clubs 'fore' the weather has gotten a bit too chilly. We will meet you at the clubhouse in the spring and putt around the greens when the weather hits 50. See you next year! Questions? Contact Dick Helfrich

MEN'S COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

mlc

Coffee Fellowship is our Wednesday morning men's social gathering, but all are invited. Come and join us for a great time, coffee, food, and meaningful discussion of the sermon that was just given at Sunday morning service. We value this opportunity to connect with each other and to study God's Word together. The food and beverage is great, but connecting with each other in Christ is priceless!

We meet at Panera Bread, 2515 N. Westlake, weekly on Wednesday mornings at 7:30 a.m. Bring a friend or co-worker, there is always room. *

ATTENTION SNOWBIRDS

mlc

Are you moving out of the area for the winter? Do we know how to reach you? Please make sure you alert the church office to the date when you change addresses. Thanks. *

THE RED BOX

mlc

Get important messages from the homepage of our website (www.westminsterpeoria.org) As the weather changes and gets cold-

er, this is where you can find out if church service, meeting, or other event has been cancelled due to inclement weather. There is NO searching for the correct page. The "red box" is immediately below the sliding photos, on the homepage, IF an announcement has been posted. *

CHRISTMAS WREATH FUNDRAISER

Valerie Sager

Thank you all for supporting the Westminster Infant Care Center (WICC) through our wreath fundraiser.

We hope you enjoyed the Make It - Take It Bazaar too. The board enjoyed making some items to help the sale.

Watch for our next fundraiser, the WICC Moss Avenue Day Sale, on June 8, 2019. We have already begun collecting for this fundraiser. If you have questions or items that you would like to donate, please call or email Valerie Sager to make arrangements. (wicc1973@gmail.com or call 309.674.6701). *

CHRISTMAS DINNER

mlc

Please join us after the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 9, about 5 p.m. for a celebration in the William O'Neill Parish House. To help us prepare, please R.S.V.P. if you plan to attend and the number attending. You may R.S.V.P. by signing up in the Narthex, calling or emailing the church office 309.673.8501 / wpc@westminsterpeoria.org to be placed on the list. The ladies of Westminster have planned a meal of Beef Burgundy and all the fixings that compliment a great meal.

If you are available to help set up for the dinner, or the day of, or to help serve, or clean-up, please contact Jill Bell. The time that you give, a little or a lot, is greatly appreciated. *

PRESBYTERIANS TODAY PUBLISHES

"GOD LIFTS THE LOWLY"

BASED ON MARY'S SONG OF PRAISE

By Donna Frischknecht Jackson | *Presbyterians Today* | mlc

As a pastor, I am reminded weekly during Sunday's prayers of the people that life is not easy. I listen as those in the pew ask for comfort, guidance, healing and hope. I listen, and then I pray for our laments to turn into songs of praise.

Mary had a song of praise — one that thanked God for looking favorably upon her and the plight of her people — and so in planning this year's Advent devotional, I thought it was fitting to hear from Mary and to be reminded once again that God sees us, hears us and is with us always.

Presbyterians Today's new Advent devotional for 2018 is based on verse 52 from Mary's Song of Praise

— also known as The Magnificat — found in Luke 1: *He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly.*

After reading verse 52, I began thinking about my low moments in life and how God raised me up out of the muck. I began thinking about all those who have gifted me with their songs of praise — beautiful notes of God looking on them with mercy. I especially began thinking about the special-needs saints God has brought into my life, and how their songs of praise, sung amid adversity, made me realize God has a song for us all. It doesn't matter who we are or what our circumstances or challenges might be. Songs of praise can come from our lips.

There are still a few Advent Calendars available in the Narthex. If you are unable to get to the church to pick up your Advent calendar, but would like to have one, just contact the church office at 673-8501 and one can be sent to you. Limited copies available. *

ALL CLEAN-UP DAYS AT WESTMINSTER

Janet Kelley

Many thanks to Don Bell, Dan Callahan, Gary Dutro, Pat Flynn, Joyce & Brian Hakes, John Jackson, Janet Kelley, Susan & Roger Leighty, Gary Leonard, Michael Link, Caden Richmond, Steve Sager, and Matt Winkler for helping the Properties Committee with our church autumn grounds clean-up day effort. We couldn't have done it without you. And thanks to Gary Dutro for the delicious donuts. Gratefully, The Properties Committee (Janet Kelley) *

MAKE IT - TAKE IT FUNDRAISER

Marilyn Luman

A BIG THANK YOU to everyone for your support of the Make It - Take It fundraiser for WICC on Sunday, November 18. Your contribution in making and/or buying an item helped us raise \$659.45 and we are very grateful. Thanks again from the committee of Jerrie Ruck. *

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Abbie Alexander

I would like to thank the staff at Westminster Infant Care Center (WICC) for their assistance in clearing out my old business (AAA Antiques). The staff graciously packed and carried my inventory to the storage area at the church. They cheerfully packed and did the heavy lifting that I cannot do. All inventory will be used in the Moss Avenue sale in June. Many thanks to Val & Steve Sager, Nisa Roberts, and Caden Richmond. You are awesome!

I will continue to appraise estates since there is no one in Peoria who does this. Please remember that your contribution to WICC are tax-deductible you can use on your taxes. *

*Christmas at
Westminster continued. . .*

followed by a Holiday Dinner which is free of charge – a donation may be given on your dinner table. Please sign up in the Narthex or call the Church Office to let us know you are coming. Our thanks to Jill Bell and her crew for what promises to be a wonderful meal.

A JAZZ CHRISTMAS

THEN ON THE NEXT SUNDAY AFTER-NOON at 4 p.m., December 16, the Westminster Jazz Band presents "A Jazz Christmas". Carols of the season that swing to the beat of David Hoffman and his wonderful musicians are featured. Also readings of Scripture and contemporary poetry on the meaning of Christmas. The band will be a bit larger than usual, and we welcome Jamika Russell back this year on vocals. This is a cool, upbeat service that most definitely honors the Christ Child. Come swing a new song. *

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

mlc

DID YOU KNOW?

- ♦ The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930's.
- ♦ The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges.
- ♦ The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families.
- ♦ Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years. *

WESTMARK FOOD PANTRY

Elizabeth Richmond

During the month of October we provided food to 2,395 individuals.

The shelves are a bit bare. Any help in filling them up again would be greatly appreciated. Needed are canned fruits, vegetables, and meats. We can always use peanut butter, applesauce, macaroni and cheese, and cereal.

The partnership we have with St. Mark's Church creates an amazing opportunity to help those who might otherwise be hungry. This makes for lots of work for our volunteers but it is great to help hungry, grateful folks. *

WESTMARK FOOD PANTRY HOLIDAY HRS

Elizabeth Richmond

The WestMark Food Pantry will be closed on:

- Christmas Eve,
Monday, December 24
- New Years Eve,
Monday, December 31

to allow our wonderful volunteers time to rest, rejuvenate, and spend this special time of the year with their family and friends. *

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Elizabeth Richmond

Come help unload deliveries:

- every first and third Tuesday,
-December 4 and 18,
at 11:30 a.m.
- on Thursday, December 13
at 1 p.m.
- on fourth Thursday,
December 27, at 11 a.m.

We also can use some help filling in for our regular volunteers on Monday mornings. If you are interested in helping once-in-awhile but cannot commit to every Monday, let Elizabeth Richmond know. We

will add you to the list of volunteers to call when needed. *

MISSION REPORT

*Parish House Committee Report
By Jan Leonard*

For the last 1.5 years, the Parish House Committee and Session have considered ideas for use of the William R. O'Neill Parish House. Recently we were approached by the CEO of Quest Charter Academy, Dr. Taunya Jenkins. Dr. Jenkins is a colleague of Sharon Reed, our summer choir camp director and has helped with the camp. She asked if we would be interested in storing the Quest High School Robotics Team equipment and allowing the team's use of the building for practices and preparations for robotics competitions. Westminster said, "Yes!"

Approximately 12 students and their coach have begun to use the classrooms after school two days per week, with an additional day the week of the competitions. Robotics competitions include teams using remote controls to manipulate robots they have designed and built. The robots accomplish tasks in a designated arena typically in a high school gym. Robotics is a great way for students to learn engineering design, and utilize their math and technology skills. Welcome Quest!

The committee will look for additional uses of the Parish House, but this is a great addition to our outreach efforts. Many thanks to the Committee – Kim Mitchell, Elizabeth Richmond, John Jackson and Pastor Denise Clark-Jones - for their persistence. Additional uses for the Parish House will be reported as they are secured. Stay tuned! *

SANTA'S HELPERS NEEDED

Elizabeth Richmond

This year we will again be providing gifts to the young ones and their Moms in our WICC program in addition to some youth from Common Place. The Gift Giving Tree (Christmas tree) is up in the Narthex for you to choose your young people to shop for.

Just pick a snowman, write your name on the line at the very bottom, tear off the stub, and drop into the sack that is hanging on the tree before you leave. This just helps us keep track of each child.

Please have your wrapped gift to Church no later than **Sunday, December 16.**

You can cut the snowman along the dotted lines and use it as the tag for your gift.

If you would really like to help but can't shop for a young person, we have a solution for you. You can "adopt" a child from the tree and some of Santa's Elves will shop for you. Just take an envelope with Santa and Rudolph off of the tree, (there are also more by the table in the Narthex) complete the information, and enclose a check by **Sunday, December 9.**

You can also mail a check to church with "Gift Giving Tree" in the memo line. Questions? call Elizabeth Richmond



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

2 Abbie Alexander	6 Janet Leonard	27 Tom Clark-Jones
5 Juliet Babbitt	11 N. Lee Nugent	28 Carol Carlson
5 Robert Seelye	22 Patricia Wagner	28 Sara Meyers
6 Sandra Gebhardt	24 Elizabeth 'Beth' Alt	30 Brian Slutz

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

2 Phyllis & Bill Rafferty
17 Linda & Alan Kupper

2019 STEWARDSHIP

"Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing."

Thanks to all members and friends of Westminster who either presented their 2019 pledge commitments at the morning worship service on Stewardship Sunday, November 11, or otherwise mailed/submitted their pledge to the church. As of 11/20/2018, the church has received 42 pledges that represent a 2019 financial commitment of \$167,323. If you have not yet submitted your pledge, I encourage you to do so. You may mail it to the church or place it into the offering plate on any Sunday. If you do not have a pledge card, you may use the form below. There should also be pledge cards available in the narthex. – Gary Leonard, Finance Chair *

2019 Pledge Commitment to Westminster Presbyterian Church

With a grateful heart for God's grace and as an expression of Christian stewardship, I/we make this commitment to the ministry, missions, and operations of Westminster Presbyterian Church.

I/we pledge: \$ _____ per week or
\$ _____ per month or
\$ _____ per year

☐ Check here if you do **NOT** want to receive envelopes.

I understand that I may adjust this pledge at any time due to changes in my circumstances by contacting the financial secretary.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email (optional): _____

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ♦ 1420 W MOSS AVE ♦ PEORIA, IL 61606
www.westminsterpeoria.org ♦ 309.673.8501 ♦ wpc@westminsterpeoria.org

Please mail to the church or place into the offering plate at any worship.

DECEMBER SERVING SCHEDULE

SERVICES	LITURGISTS	GREETERS	USHERS	ACOLYTES	SOUND	COFFEE HOUR
2 Sun - AM	Jan Leonard	Dick Helfrich	Janet Kelley Gary Dutro	Alice Nash Brian Hakes	Janet Kelley	Steve Sager Abbie Alexander
2 Sun - Jazz	Pastor Denise	Janet & David Baker, Bonnie & John Jackson		Bonnie Jackson	Tom Clark-Jones	NA
9 Sun - AM	Joyce Hakes	Dick Helfrich	Alan Kupper Gary Dutro	Linda Kupper Marge Willadsen	Alan Kupper	Steve Sager Need
9 Sun - IBEN	4 PM - A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols - 4 PM / Christmas Dinner following approx 5 PM					
16 Sun - AM	Jim Burnham	Dick Helfrich	Diane Case Jeff Case	Susan Leighty Laura Van Riper	Diane Case	Steve Sager Need
16 Sun - IBEN	4 PM - A Jazz Christmas - 4 PM - A Jazz Christmas - 4 PM					
23 Sun - AM	Jordan Case	Dick Helfrich	Gary Leonard Gary Dutro	Jan Leonard Dan Callahan	Jan Leonard	Steve Sager Need
23 Sun	No Jazz Vespers / No Jazz Vespers / No Jazz Vespers / No Jazz Vespers					
24 Mon Christmas Eve	Joshua Bell	Dick Helfrich	Jill Bell John Jackson	Bonnie Jackson Dorothy Crozier	Jill Bell	Don Bell NA
30 Sun - AM	Jessica Case	Dick Helfrich	Marge Willadsen Dorothy Crozier	Gary Dutro Dan Callahan	Marge Willadsen	Steve Sager No Coffee Hour this morning
30 Sun	No Jazz Vespers / No Jazz Vespers / No Jazz Vespers / No Jazz Vespers					

If you are unable to work on your scheduled date, please try to find your replacement or switch with someone, before contacting the Ministry Elder of the changes.

COMMUNION SERVERS

SUNDAY | DECEMBER 2 | 10 AM
1st Sunday of Advent

SUNDAY | DECEMBER 2 | 4 PM
Jazz Vespers

MONDAY | DECEMBER 24 | 4 PM
Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion

Bread Joyce Hakes
Wine Pastor Denise
Bread Diane Case
Wine Jeff Case
Traveler Brian Hakes

Wine Pastor Denise
Bread Bonnie Jackson
Traveler John Jackson

Bread Tom Clark-Jones
Wine Pastor Denise
Bread Jill Bell
Wine Dick Helfrich
Traveler Dorothy Crozier

Ministry Elders: Coffee Hour - Jill Bell / Worship - Suellen Kirkwood (at this time, please contact the church office)

December

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2 1st Sun. of Advent Communion Sunday 10a Worship 11a Coffee Hour 4p Jazz Vespers	3 9-11a WestMark Food Pantry Open	4 9a Circle of Friends 11:30a Food Delivery	5 7:30a Men's Coffee Fellowship 10a Staff Meeting	6 6:15p Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:30p Choir Rehearsal	7	8
9 2nd Sun. of Advent No Jazz Vespers 10a Worship 11a Coffee Hour 4p Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols 5:30p Festival Dinner	10 9-11a WestMark Food Pantry Open	11 4:30p WICC Board Mtg 6:30p Session Meeting	12 7:30a Men's Coffee Fellowship 10a Staff Meeting	13 1p Food Delivery 1:30p Lectionary Bible S. 7:30p Choir Rehearsal	14 WINDOW DEADLINE	15
16 3rd Sun. of Advent 10a Worship 11a Coffee Hour 4p A Jazz Christmas	17 9-11a WestMark Food Pantry Open	18 11:30a Food Delivery	19 7:30a Men's Coffee Fellowship 10a Staff Meeting Finance Meeting 12pm	20 7:30p Choir Rehearsal	21	22.
23 4th Sun. of Advent No Jazz Vespers 10a Worship	24 Christmas Eve Closed: Food Pantry and WICC 11a Church Office Closes 4p Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service	25 Christmas Day Closed Church Office WICC	26 7:30a Men's Coffee Fellowship 10a Staff Meeting??	27 11a Food Delivery	28	29
30 10a Worship 11a Coffee Hour NO Jazz Vespers	31 New Year's Eve Closed: Food Pantry WICC 11a Church Office Closes	January 1 - New Year's Day Closed: Church Office WICC	IMPORTANT DATES IN JANUARY Annual Reports due to Mary Lee by Monday, January 7, 2019 Congregational Dinner January 27, 2019			



Poinsettia Order Form

Every year we decorate our sanctuary with poinsettias at Christmas.

The flowers are purchased by members and friends to remember special people in their lives.

The poinsettias will be displayed through the Advent season.

You may pick them up after the Christmas Eve Service, December 24, 4 p.m. Please, remove only the number of flowers you ordered.

If you would like to purchase a poinsettia in memory or in honor of a loved one, please fill out the order form below. Names will be listed in the December 23 Sunday announcements, Christmas Eve bulletin and the January *Westminster Window* newsletter.

Make check payable to Westminster Presbyterian Church or WPC with "Poinsettia" in the memo line. Bring or mail to the church (1420 W. Moss Ave. Peoria, IL 61606) *



CHOOSE what happens to your flowers:



- ☐ I will pick up after the Christmas Eve 4 PM service OR
☐ Please give to one of our Homebound Members.

Honor of	Memory of	Name flowers are for:	From (How your name(s) will be listed)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Quantity of Arrangements at

\$15 each equals \$ _____ Total Due (check payable to WPC)

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Thank you for your donation.

*"So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off
and peace to those who were near..."*

-Ephesians 2:14-17

WORSHIP

Celebrating God as a church family.

10 a.m. Sunday Morning

4 p.m. Sunday Jazz Vespers

4 p.m. Mon., Dec. 24

Christmas Eve Service

CONNECT

Engaging as a Follower of Christ

Men's Coffee Fellowship: weekly,

Wednesdays, 7:30 a.m.

Circle of Friends: monthly, (pg. 2)

DEVELOP

Growing as a Follower of Christ

Bible Study: monthly (pg. 2)

SERVE

Honoring God by Serving Others

- SHOP for missions (The Gift Giving Tree (pg. 6)
- Donate food for the WestMark Food Pantry) (pg. 6)
- VOLUNTEER to serve (run sound, usher, host coffee hour, help at food pantry)
- PLEDGE to the church (pg. 5)

PRAY

Humble Yourself before God

- Pray for WPC, our elders, deacons, and for our homebound members (Elizabeth A., Nelvie A., Bruce & Janet A., Juliet B., Hettie B., Marilyn H., Suellen K., Betty Jean O., Jean O., Michael S., Jean S., Tippy S., Gary V., Florence W., Hettie B.
- Those we serve through the food pantry and the Infant Care Center.
- Pray for needs of our family, friends, and loved ones. *



WESTMINSTER SESSION

Clerk of Session	Brian Hakes Class of 2018
Christian Education	Bonnie Jackson Class of 2019
Church Life	Jill Bell Class of 2019
Finance	Gary Leonard Class of 2019
Membership	Vacant
Missions/Outreach	Jan Leonard Class of 2019
Personnel	Vacant
Properties	Don Bell Class of 2018
Worship	Suellen Kirkwood Class of 2017

**SESSION MEETS ON THE
SECOND TUESDAY, MONTHLY,
6:30 PM, IN THE PARLOR!**

DEACONS

Moderator	Jeanie Olson Class of 2019
Anna Bussian	Class of 2017
Sue Burnham	Class of 2017
Mary Dill	Class of 2018
Kim Mitchell	Class of 2019
Alice Nash	Class of 2019
Edna Nugent	Class of 2019
Phyllis Rafferty	Class of 2017
Marge Willadsen	Class of 2017

SESSION NOTES

From the November 13 Meeting

Respectfully,
Brian Hakes, Clerk of Session

- * Rev. Clark-Jones will serve as the Presbytery liaison to the PNC at United Presbyterian Church.
- * The food pantry served 1,061 people in September and 2,395 people in October.
- * The Session approved space in the O'Neill Parish House for use by the Quest Robotics Team.
- * The Session approved removing from the rolls Ann Belke Nerad, Marcus Foster and Chris Hovey.
- * Cambridge Construction will repair a roof leak in the church roof next to the flashing by the bell tower. The leak has caused damage to the ceiling in Rev. Clark-Jones office above her bookcase.
- * The Session approved allocating the balance of the Pentecost offering, \$847. The Crittenton Center will receive \$500 and the remainder will go the Presbyterian child care agency Kemmerer Village.
- * The Session approved hiring Dorothy Crozier as temporary help working part-time in the church office.
- * In preparation of the 2019 budget, a review of service agreement contracts will be initiated. *

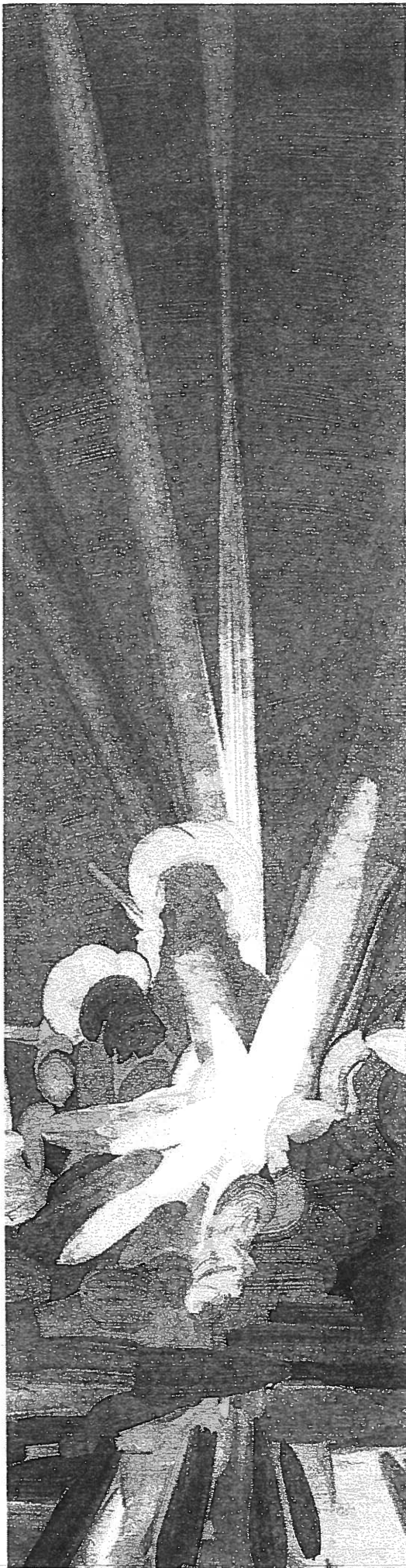
OUR COUNTERCULTURAL ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Rev. Denise Clark-Jones

We are now in that unsettling time -- living in juxtaposition between our secular society's celebration of Christmas and our observance of Advent, the four-week period leading to the Christian celebration of Christmas. Christmas began in the consumer-market world three months ago. I have been receiving e-mail alerts about Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales as if they were national holidays. On the Internet, Black Friday deals extend to a week. Street decorations went up in early November. Yet, we wait until Christmas Eve to hear our "reason for the season."

In a totally counter-cultural approach, our appointed readings from the lectionary begin with a gospel writer's focus on the "end times," from the last chapters -- not twinkly lights and party-time kind of material. The second week of Advent, John the Baptist, whose wild, unkempt appearance is far from that of the "jolly old elf," Santa Claus.

Continued on page 10



Instead of a cheerful, "Merry Christmas," John the Baptist rails against sinners and threatens dire consequences if sinners do not repent. The third week of Advent we get to celebrate a little, but the joy is bitter-sweet. Mary is told she will bear God's Son – what an honor! And, everyone loves babies, right? Well, if you are an unmarried, young teenager, in a society that makes outcasts of unwed mothers or worse, kills them by stoning, to find out you are going to give birth is a frightening proposition.

All in all, Advent is a challenge to dare to hope in the darkest of times. Non-believers scoff at the time designated for the birth of Christ because it was set on the day of the Winter Solstice, celebrated by the pagan Roman society. This choice of date was done deliberately by Christians. It was both an act of theological instruction and an act of rebellion against the values of their secular society. At the darkest time, Christ came and keeps coming. Christ is "the light of the world." The Roman Empire promoted military power and political control whereas Jesus came as "the Prince of Peace." In Roman society the wealthy controlled nearly every aspect of the peasants' lives. People deemed weak and vulnerable – the widows, the orphans, immigrants, the sick and disabled – were pushed to the margins to fend for themselves. Jesus came to "lift up the lowly" and "send the rich empty away."

This poem, by Dana Gioia, former chairman of the National Endowment of the Arts and poet laureate of the state of California, speaks to the fitting paradox between the Winter Solstice and the birth of Christ:

Prayer at Winter Solstice

Blessed is the road that keeps us homeless.
Blessed is the mountain that blocks our way.
Blessed are hunger and thirst, loneliness and all forms of desire.
Blessed is the labor that exhausts us without end.
Blessed are the night and the darkness that blinds us.
Blessed is the cold that teaches us to feel.
Blessed are the cat, the child, the cricket, and the crow.
Blessed is the hawk devouring the hare.
Blessed are the saint and the sinner who redeem each other.
Blessed are the dead, calm in their perfection.
Blessed is the pain that humbles us.
Blessed is the distance that bars our joy.
Blessed is this shortest day that makes us long for light.
Blessed is the love that in losing we discover.

Dana Gioia, "Prayer at Winter Solstice" from book
99 Poems: New & Selected, 2016

May you experience the joyful hope of Advent!

Pastor Denise *

ADVENT

Presbyterian Mission

"Advent" means "coming" or "arrival." During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ's coming into the world and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. In its historical origins, the season of Advent was patterned after the season of Lent, a six-week period of penitence and preparation for Easter. Similarly, the four weeks of Advent present an opportunity for communal discernment and personal examination, as the church prepares to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord and looks with hope for Christ's return.

Between memory and hope

An excerpt from the *Companion to the Book of Common Worship* (Geneva Press, 2003, 96)

In Advent we expectantly wait for the One who has already come. We anticipate the promised justice of God's new world, yet we praise God who raised the "righteous branch" to rule with justice and righteousness. We hope for the restoration of the afflicted, the tormented, and the grieving, yet we delight that healing has come in Christ. We long for the beating of swords into plowshares, yet we rejoice that the Prince of Peace has appeared. We yearn for the barren deserts of our inner cities to flourish, yet we laud the desert Rose that has bloomed. We dream of the land where lions and lambs live in harmony, yet we acclaim the child born to lead us into the promised land.

Christ has come! Christ is risen! Christ will come again! In Advent, we are living between the first and the second coming of the Lord. The dialectical tension of *maranatha* [alternately translated "Come, our Lord!" or "Our Lord has come"] — placing us between memory and hope, past and future — may strengthen our Advent liturgies. Perhaps we need to cling to the ancient cry of *maranatha*! and its paradoxical meanings so we may freely embrace "the new thing" prophesied by Isaiah (Isaiah 43:19) that God is doing among us right now. The tension and paradox we find in Advent shapes our celebrations during the season. *

Lectionary readings for Advent

DECEMBER 2 - 1st Sunday of Advent

Jeremiah 33:14–16 Psalm 25:1–10
1 Thessalonians 3:9–13 Luke 21:25–36

DECEMBER 9 - 2nd Sunday of Advent

Malachi 3:1–4 Luke 1:68–79
Philippians 1:3–11 Luke 3:1–6

DECEMBER 16 - 3rd Sunday of Advent

Zephaniah 3:14–20 Isaiah 12:2–6
Philippians 4:4–7 Luke 3:7–18

DECEMBER 23 - 4th Sunday of Advent

Micah 5:2–5a Luke 1:46–55 or Psalm 80:1–7 Hebrews 10:5–10 Luke 1:39–45 (46–55)

DECEMBER 24 - Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2–7 Psalm 96:1–13
Titus 2:11–14 Luke 2:1–14 (15–20)

DECEMBER 25 - Nativity of the Lord / Christmas Christmas Dawn

Isaiah 62:6–12 Psalm 97:1–12
Titus 3:4–7 Luke 2:(1–7) 8–20

Christmas Day

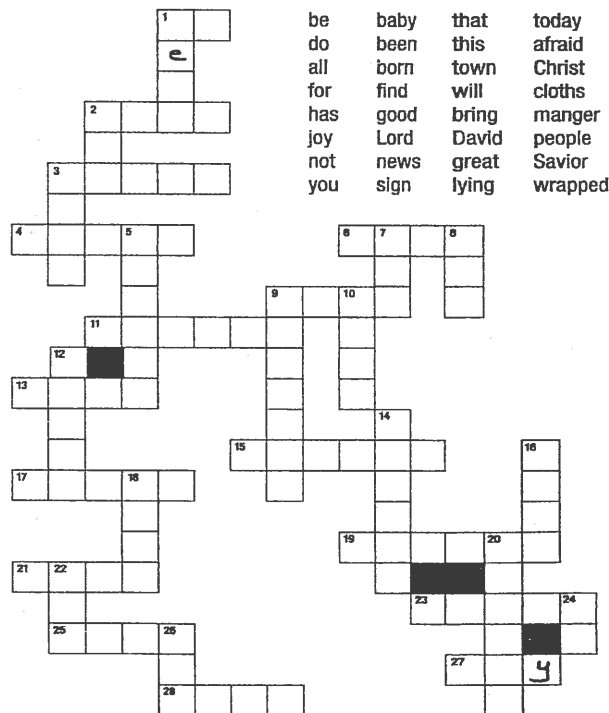
Isaiah 52:7–10 Psalm 98:1–9
Hebrews 1:1–4 (5–12) John 1:1–14

DECEMBER 30 - 1st Sunday after Christmas Day

1 Samuel 2:18–20, 26 Psalm 148
Colossians 3:12–17 Luke 2:41–52

Puzzle!

The word list contains the angel's Christmas message to the shepherds. Fit those words into the crossword squares. Then write them on the correct lines below to complete Luke 2:10–11, NIV.



" _____ 24 _____ 26 _____ 1A _____ 5 _____ 3A _____ 8 _____ 13 _____ 18
of _____ 4 _____ 27 _____ 16 _____ 9A _____ 1A _____ 2D _____ 7 _____ the _____ 15
_____ 12 _____ in the _____ 28 _____ of _____ 23 _____ a _____ 20 _____ 22 _____ 1D
_____ to _____ 8 _____; he is _____ 19 _____ the _____ 10 _____" Luke 2:10–11, NIV

Answer: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10–11, NIV.

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Rev. Denise Clark-Jones

JOIN US SUNDAYS

10 AM Traditional Worship

4 PM Jazz Vespers

*Jazz Vespers Service with
David Hoffman and Friends.*

*Our mission is to Serve God
and Others with Open Mind,
Open Hands and Open Heart.*



The purpose of Westminster
Presbyterian Church is to serve God
by providing worship, education,
fellowship, and service opportunities
for our members and our community.

Please Deliver to our Friends at

All are Welcome at the Manger



May the spirit of Christmas bring you peace...

The gladness of Christmas give you hope...

The warmth of Christmas grant you Love...

Merry Christmas!

Westminster Presbyterian Church

**The Church Office will be closed on Tuesday, December 25,
Christmas Day in observance of Christmas.**

Also, Tuesday, January 1, in observance of New Year's Day.

**MEMBERS BEING
HONORED ARE:**

Hettie Beers
Don Bell
Jim Burnham
Sue Burnham
Diane Case
Jeff Case
Gary Dutro
Nancee Dykstra
Kim Fisher
Dewey Fitch
Sally Fitch
Susan Leighty
Gary Leonard
Linda McDaniel
Dorothy Meyers
Sara Meyers
Rosemary McCurdy
Ruby Picl
Don Shay
Amy Streibich
Linda Webb

*Member
Recognition
Sunday*

**We will be
Honoring member
anniversaries of
15, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45,
55, 60 and 65 years
in worship on
Sunday, December 2
10 AM Service
for various years
as members of
Westminster
Presbyterian Church.**

**We want to take this
opportunity to let you
know that we appreciate
your membership,
your service,
and your prayers.**

**We hope that you can
be with us on this day,
as we honor your
commitment to service
at Westminster.**

**If you can not be with us,
please continue to hold us
in your prayers and know
that we will do the same for
you. We are happy that you
are part of the
Westminster Family!**