

Westminster At Worship

A Celebration of Worship We Can't Go Alone

December 8, 2024

10:30 a.m.

Please silence your cell phones prior to entering the sanctuary.
†Those who feel comfortable standing may do so.



GATHERING AROUND GOD'S WORD

PRELUDE

SETH CUNNINGHAM

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING PRAYER

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES - DEACONS

Reader: May these lights mark a new beginning.
May peace flow like a river, and may it start with us.

**CONGREGATION: Arm in arm, hand in hand, side by side.
May we begin again. Amen.**

INTROIT

"While We Are Waiting, Come"

WAITING

*While we are waiting, come;
while we are waiting, come.*

Refrain:

*Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
while we are waiting, come.*

†CALL TO WORSHIP

In a world that is lonely,
we will save a seat for you.

In a world that is anxious,
we will light candles against the gloom.

In a world that is weary,
we will sing songs of joy and truth.

I am not alone.

We are not alone.

For here in this place, God is weaving us together.

Light the candles! Sing with joy!

We are a three-cord strand, not easily broken.

†HYMN

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

VENI EMMANUEL

*O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
who orderest all things mightily:
to us the path of knowledge show;
and teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

I have tried to make my own way.

I have tried to lace my own shoes, to build my own house, to
kindle my own faith.

I have said a thousand times, "turn back," as if I am fine on my
own.

But the days are long and I am forgetful.

I need your help. Can you remind me?

We will remind you of this everlasting truth:

You are not alone.

Where you go, God goes.

You are held in grace.

Trust in this good news.

Thanks be to God! I remember. I believe.

Now we need your help.

We, too, have tried to make our own way.

**We have tried to lace our own shoes, to build our own houses,
to kindle our own faiths.**

**We have said a thousand times, "turn back," as if we are fine on
our own.**

But the days are long and we are forgetful.

We need your help. Can you remind us?

I will remind you of this everlasting truth:

You are not alone.

Where you go, God goes.

You are held in grace.

Trust in this good news.

Thanks be to God! We remember. We believe.

Alleluia! Amen.

†RESPONSE TO GOD’S GRACE

All glo - ry be to God on high, and to the earth be peace: good
will to all from high - est heav'n be - gin and nev - er cease!

†SHARING GOD’S PEACE

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.
And also with you.

TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES

SPECIAL MUSIC

BELL CHOIR

“Let There Be Peace on Earth”

PROCLAIMING GOD’S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

READINGS FROM THE SCRIPTURES

First Reading **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their hard work. If either should fall, one can pick up the other. But how miserable are those who fall and don’t have a companion to help them up! Also, if two lie down together, they can stay warm. But how can anyone stay warm alone? Also, one can be overpowered, but two together can put up resistance. A three-ply cord doesn’t easily snap.

Second Reading
Ruth 1 (selected verses)

SERMON

"We Can't Go Alone"

Rev. Jamie Milton

†AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in a with-us God: a God who walks with us in the valley, dances with us on the mountaintop, sings with us through the night and rejoices in the morning.

We believe that this with-us God wired us for relationship, saying to creation on the very first week, "Humans should not be alone."

Therefore, in an effort to be who God called us to be, we strive to live like the Trinity—connected, united, and centered.

We believe in the power of community.

We commit to learning each other's names.

We choose to journey with each other, like Ruth with Naomi.

And we remember that no one can go through life alone.

Thanks be to God, for lighting our way.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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; 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

SPECIAL MUSIC

BELL CHOIR

“Carol of the Bells”

~ Please record your presence on the “Friendship Pad”

†DOXOLOGY

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

†UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Holy God, by your Spirit, open our eyes to the generosity of your hand, and nurture our souls in all spiritual gifts. Fill us with gratitude overflowing that we may share life and love in praise to you. Bless and multiply these gifts that we offer to lift up the lowly and fill the hungry in your coming reign of justice and peace; in Christ’s name. Amen.

†HYMN

“Savior of the Nations, Come”

NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND

*Savior of the nations, come;
virgin’s son, make here your home.
Marvel now, O heaven and earth,
that the Lord chose such a birth.*

*From God’s heart the Savior speeds;
back to God his pathway leads;
out to vanquish death’s command,
back to reign at God’s right hand.*

*Now your manger, shining bright,
hallows night with newborn light.
Night cannot this light subdue;
let our faith shine ever new.*

*Praise we sing to Christ the Lord,
virgin's son, incarnate Word!
To the holy Trinity
praise we sing eternally.*

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

SETH CUNNINGHAM



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Seth Cunningham

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ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR DECEMBER 8, 2024

- **ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED** to help with the **MATTHEW 25 CAFE** this Tuesday, December 10, from 9 to 11 a.m. We have enough volunteers to cover the 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. shift, but a few more are needed for the morning shift. Please see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board outside the sanctuary to volunteer. A new sign-up sheet for the Matthew 25 volunteers will be posted on the bulletin board next week.

- **NURSERY CARE** is available for infants and toddlers during the worship service. Our nursery is equipped with a paging system. Quality childcare is provided by Elaine Edwards who is infant/CPR trained.

- **RIDES TO CHURCH NEEDED:** we have a few church members that need rides to church. If you are able to help, please call the church office. Thank you!

- **CHRISTMAS CAROLING:** Join us after worship on **December 15** as we spread the joy of the holidays with a CHRISTMAS CAROLING outing. We will be visiting a number of places, beginning about 1 p.m. and wrapping up before the Detroit Lions game later that afternoon. If you are interested, please sign up on the Volunteer Board outside the sanctuary.

- **NEW YEAR, NEW BOOK!** After wrapping up our reading of Savannah Guthrie's book – *Mostly What God Does* (Love Us), our 2025 Book Club Winter Book Study series **begins on Tuesday, January 7th at 1:30 p.m.** in the Lounge.

- **ADULT BIBLE STUDY** classes are offered at two different times to accommodate various schedules. Join us **Sundays at 9:00 a.m.** in the Session Room or **Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.**

via Zoom. The same study materials will be used at both gatherings. Please visit our Adult Bible Study page on our website at www.wpcbc.org or see Rev. Linda or Pastor Jamie with any questions.

- **Only TWO tags** remain on this year's **ANGEL TREE!** Please consider signing up to purchase a gift for a family in need, as this is the last week to participate. Purchase the gifts and return them in a gift bag (no tissue paper) or any type of bag to the church by **Noon on Sunday, December 15.**

- Next Sunday, please join us for the **CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**, "The Colors of Christmas" during Worship beginning at 10:30 a.m.

- **THE LONGEST NIGHT: A CONTEMPLATIVE CHRISTMAS SERVICE:** The constant refrain on the radio and television, from shopping malls to churches, about the happiness of the season, about getting together with family and friends, reminds many people of what they have lost or have never had. During the holiday season, sometimes we simply need a quiet place to sit with our thoughts, to be, and to worship. For these reasons, we are offering a special contemplative Christmas service on **Thursday, December 19 at 6 p.m.** Join with us as we worship together through prayer, scripture, and music that acknowledge that God's presence is forever with us — and that God's Word comes to shine light into our darkness. Everyone, regardless of church background (or lack of it) is welcome. If you can think of anyone who might benefit from this time of reflection and prayer, please invite them to join you! Refreshments will be served following the service.

PER CAPITA 2024 Per capita for 2024 is \$29.50. Remember that Per Capita goes to fund the greater church including our Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly, which in turn, provides great support to Westminster. **Look for the blue envelopes in the pew backs or in your box of envelopes.**

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK: Westminster Presbyterian Church-Bay City

BULLETIN BOARDS: Check out the Church bulletin board just outside the sanctuary for upcoming church events and happenings, **plus sign-up sheets for volunteer opportunities for:**

- **Westminster Community Pantry**
- **Food Bank of Eastern Michigan**
- **Food of Faith**
- **Matthew 25 Cafe**
- **Fellowship Time Host**

In addition, the Community bulletin board in Fellowship Hall has information on health screenings, grief groups and other events in the area.

TV AND SOUNDBOARD: We're looking for individuals who can run the soundboard and help in the TV room on Sunday mornings. If you are interested in helping, please call the church office. Thank you!

OFFERING ENVELOPES for 2025 are arranged in alphabetical order on tables in the hall outside the sanctuary. Pick yours up when you can!

Giving to Westminster

There are many ways to share your gifts with Westminster.

Cash and checks are welcome. Please use your offering envelopes or the envelopes found in pew backs and place your gift in the offering plate when it is passed.

Visit our website www.wpcbc.org and click on the "Give Now" button at the top of the page. This will direct you to our Online Giving Portal or simply scan the QR Code below.

Contributions can also be sent through the mail to the attention of the Church Treasurer.

We're grateful for your gifts, however you choose to give.
THANK YOU!



Westminster Presbyterian Church

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989-686-1360

email: office@wpcbc.org
website: wpcbc.org

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Westminster Community Pantry Update

- **WAYS TO SUPPORT THE WESTMINSTER COMMUNITY PANTRY:** If you would like to sign up to work our **Westminster Community Pantry**, Wednesday evenings, 4 to 7 p.m. or Thursday mornings, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., please see the sign-up sheets on the bulletin board outside the sanctuary. Beginning Wednesday, December 26th, the pantry's winter hours will go into effect, with the pantry open 4 to 6 p.m. on Wednesdays and 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thursdays.
- **Our December ITEM OF THE MONTH** is flour to help with holiday baking. We will need 2 or 5-pound bags which can be left on the cart outside the pantry door.
- When you are out and about in Bay City, stop by **Cops and Doughnuts** at 710 E. Midland St and **River Rock** at 614 Midland St., along with **other Midland Street businesses**. These neighborhood businesses are helping raise money for our Westminster Community Pantry. While there for a delicious warm doughnut or a juicy burger, you can donate a dollar and place a Christmas "ornament" on the wall. **All proceeds will go to OUR Food Pantry**, helping us provide food to those in need in Bay County. One dollar donated provides 6 meals.
- **Thank you to Mary Rose Davis** for the festive **Christmas wreaths** she made and donated for the **wreath raffle** at last Sunday's Advent Dinner. All donations for a chance at winning one of the wreaths were gifted to the Westminster Community Pantry, and thanks to our entrants, **\$500 was raised to support the pantry!** Winners of the wreaths were Carol Campbell, Joy Thompson and Karen Russell.

This Thursday, December 12 in the lounge: Continuing Conversations around Grief and Loss

Whether it's your first day or 1,000th day following a loss, grief shows up in different ways that we may or may not expect, especially this time of year. Bereavement takes us into an often unknown and uncharted world, which can be bewildering and scary, and which puts a strain on any inner resources we believed we had to cope with life's tragedies and traumas. All of us, in our grief and loss needs not only to find some way of making sense of what bereavement does to us, but to find someone, anyone, who can be our companion in this confusing new world, to wait with us with understanding, tolerance and empathy, till clarity emerges and we are able to take tentative steps towards a new beginning. Using some stories from Tom Gordon's book Whispers of Wisdom: Reassurance for those living with loss, join us as seek to support one another in our journeys with grief and loss. We'll gather in the lounge (the old CE office) for coffee, cookies, and conversation on **Thursday, December 12 at 1:30 p.m.**

