

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

Sunday, December 29, 2019
11:15 a.m.

First Sunday after Christmas

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Almighty God, you have shed upon us the new light of your incarnate Word. May this light, enkindled in our hearts, shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

GATHERING THE COMMUNITY

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

People: **And also with you.**

PREPARING FOR GOD'S WORD

PRELUDE "Christian, Be Joyful" J.S. Bach

* CALL TO WORSHIP *from Psalm 98*

Leader: Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;

People: **Break forth into joyous song and sing praises.**

Leader: Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who live in it.

People: **Let the floods clap their hands;
let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the Lord.**

Leader: Come, let us worship God.

* HYMN OF PRAISE No. 104 VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN

"O Lord, How Shall I Meet You"

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of grace and truth, in Jesus Christ you came among us as light shining in the darkness. We confess that we have not always welcomed the light, or trusted the news to be good. We have closed our eyes to the glory in our midst, expecting little. Forgive our doubt, and renew our hope, so that we may receive the fullness of your grace. Teach us to proclaim the birth of your son and to live in the truth of Christ the Lord, Amen.

* ASSURANCE OF PARDON

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

People: **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

* GLORIA PATRI (Hymnal, No. 581)

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.

Children in K5-first grade are invited to leave for Children's Church.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

HEARING GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON Romans 10:11-14 N.T., p. 921

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Isaiah 52:7-10 O.T., p. 596

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON Lauren Slingerland

"Trust the Messenger"

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

* HYMN No. 110 BRING A TORCH

"Love Has Come"

* 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 INTERCESSION AND THANKSGIVING

THE LORD'S PRAYER *Hymnal page 35, Traditional*

OFFERING

Offertory "The Work of Christmas" Forrest

*When the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flock, the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among brothers, to make music from the heart.*

-Howard Thurman

* Doxology (Hymnal, No. 606)

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.

* Prayer of Dedication

* HYMN No. 132 IN DULCI JUBILO

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"

* CHARGE & BENEDICTION

* POSTLUDE "Good Christians All, Rejoice" Thompson

**All who are able may stand*

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

HEAD USHER: Allen Grumbine
SPONSOR: Bob Dellert
GREETERS: Mike Hall, Brad Lucas
Freddie Williams
LITURGIST: Amos Workman
LAY READER: Bob Dellert
ACOLYTE: Budd Reynolds

PARKING

We have permission to use the parking lots at the Uniform Shop and Augusta Commons Mall.

TRAFFIC POLICE OFFICER

A Greenville city police officer will be on duty from 10:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. to help people cross the street from the other side of Augusta Road.

STREAMING

All worship services at Westminster are broadcast via live video streaming. Navigate to the home page of the church website at www.wpc-online.org and click the link "Worship via Live Streaming."

CHURCH NOTES

Musicians leading in worship this Sunday are:

*Nancy Smith, Organist
Mark Kemp, soloist*

NURSERY

Childcare is available for infants through four-year kindergarten. Our childcare program provides safe, secure nurseries for our babies and toddlers during worship services. Our nurturing staff of experienced caregivers and parent volunteers offers a welcoming environment to all children.

During worship, children in K5–1st grade follow one of our ministers out for Children's Church in Room 206.

The Session has called the annual meeting of the congregation for **Sunday, January 12, 2020**, immediately following the **11:15 a.m.** worship service. The purpose of the meeting is threefold:

- To vote on the proposed terms of call for 2020 for our pastoral staff;
- To receive the 2020 operating budget;
- To elect 12 elders (Class of 2023) to the Session, 2 trustees, and to elect an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee.

The proposed slates being presented by the Nominating Committee are as follows:

Elders: *Mary Ashmore, Tony Atkins, Jeff Beck, Emily Busby, Caroline Clark, Durden Collins, Kevin Lancaster, Lisa Mangione, Rob Morgan, Carl Muller, Mae Todd Mullins, Laura Williams Sanders*

Trustees: *Charlie Gentry (to fill an unexpired term, Class of 2021) and Rick Carpenter (Class of 2025)*

APNC: *Roger Beasley, Ted Gentry, Allen Gillespie, Charlie LeGrand, Christa Likes, Susan McLeod, Gaye Sprague, Amanda Warren*

SYMPATHY

We extend sincere sympathy to *Cris Crain* on the death of her mother, Barbara Poteat, on Wednesday, December 18, 2019, in Greenville.

BAPTISM CLASS

If you are interested in having your child or children baptized at Westminster, you are invited to attend a brief class on baptism taught by Ben Dorr. The next class will be **Sunday, January 26, at 4:00 p.m.** in the **Charter Room**. Please email Michelle in the church office at michelle@wpc-online.org if you are planning to attend.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

The church's offering envelopes are dateless and can be used until they run out. If you need more offering envelopes, please call the church office at 232-2424.

SAVE THE DATE

Women of Westminster:

Women's Retreat

February 21-23, 2020

Registration available at
www.wpc-online.org.

LET US PRAY FOR:

Jim Terry and family

Cris Crain and family

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MEN'S GROUP BOOK STUDY

The Men's Group will begin a new book study on **Monday, January 6, at 6:00 p.m.** in **Room 209-C**. We will study the book, *The Bible Jesus Read*, by Philip Yancey. All WPC men are invited to participate and newcomers are welcome. For more information, contact *Rick Carpenter* (608-1881).

WESTMINSTER BOOK CLUB

The Westminster Book Club meets on the first Tuesday night of the month, at **7:00 p.m.** in the church library. For **January 7**, the group will read and discuss *Truth and Beauty* by Ann Patchett. It is her first work of nonfiction which chronicles her decades-long friendship with the critically acclaimed and recently deceased author, Lucy Grealy. *Ellen Stevenson* will be leading this discussion. Join us!

CONNECTIONS GROUP

Connections will meet **Sunday, January 12, at 12:45 p.m.** at the **Iron Hill Brewery** (741 Haywood Rd.). Make your reservation **by Friday, January 10** with *Carole Tinsley* (430-2142 or caroletinsley@yahoo.com). Newcomers are welcome!

RETIREMENT GIVING

For those 70 and 1/2 years of age or older, you can make a direct transfer of up to \$100,000 from your IRA to Westminster Presbyterian Church. Though you will not get a charitable deduction, the withdrawal can serve as your required minimum distribution. The money will not be taxed and will not count toward your adjusted gross income. If you have any questions, please contact Sherri Owens, the church's Financial Secretary.

ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

We at Westminster believe that education is essential for discipleship and hope that what you learn in this place will transform your living beyond our doors. This quarter kicks off **Sunday, January 5**, and will run each Sunday **through February 23**. We will introduce a new peer-led discussion-based-class exploring Luke and Acts on February 2. You are welcome to join any class at any point!

1. God Save This Honorable Court:

What Christians Should Know About the Supreme Court.

The United States Supreme Court is deeply entwined with the religious and moral lives of Americans. For some Christians, judicial appointments have become the most important factor in deciding for whom to vote. By studying how the Court operates and, equally importantly, delving into the stories and the "real people" behind contentious court decisions, we will endeavor to reach conclusions about how we as Christians ought to think about "the least dangerous branch" of government.

Teacher: *Ted Gentry*, a member of Westminster since 1992, has extensive appellate experience, including cases before the South Carolina Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, and the United States Supreme Court. Ted is of Counsel at Wyche, P. A. and serves as an Elder and Chair of Finance at Westminster.

Room 209

2. Bible Stories We Almost Remember

Who was that character that defeated the Philistines with just a rock and a slingshot? And who exactly is Mary Magdalene? Join this small-group, discussion-based class to delve deeply into some of Scripture's most memorable — and least understood! — texts.

Teacher: *Judith Chandler*, a member of Westminster, has taught at Furman's Lifelong Learning Institute since its inception. She is also a recognized local artist.

Room 210

3. Riddles from Long Ago: Unpacking Jesus' Parables in the 21st Century

Jesus' most evocative and visceral stories often come in the form of parables — and are as often misunderstood as they are repeated. A skilled teacher, Jesus used images that would be familiar to hearers in first century Palestine as a way to evoke curiosity about the character of God's kingdom. But life in the first century middle east and life in Greenville today are rather different. How can we understand these stories, and how can they provoke us to deeper seeking?

Teacher: Leigh Stuckey is the Associate Pastor for Adult Education at Westminster.

Room 211

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 29, 2019 - January 4, 2020

SUNDAY

11:15 a.m. Worship Service
8:00 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous

MONDAY

Weekday School Closed

6:15 p.m. NAMI

8:00 p.m. Narcotics Anonymous

TUESDAY

Weekday School Closed

12:00 p.m. Al-Anon Meeting

WEDNESDAY

Weekday School Closed

Church Office Closed

THURSDAY

Weekday School Closed

8:00 p.m. Narcotics Anonymous

FRIDAY

Weekday School Closed



The three wise men were always my favorite characters in the Christmas story. As a child, I am sure this was born out of my strong affinity for royalty and because, in my young mind, the wise men were the justification for gifts at Christmas. As an adult, I do still have an affinity for anything to do with the royal family, but I guess I have not given the wise men much thought until recently. I see now that the actions of the wise men were profound and came at great personal expense – far beyond the monetary value of the gifts they brought.

Scripture gives us a horrifying glimpse into the political climate following the birth of Jesus. Herod was so paranoid about losing power and authority that he resorted to mass-infanticide and the holy family became refugees overnight. Things must have been bad if the safest place for asylum was Egypt: historically not the most welcoming place for Jews. And yet, what seems like a barbaric bit of ancient history is still uncomfortably relevant.

How have I become numb to the refugee crisis happening all over the world? It's easy to rush to the aid of someone in an acute crisis, one that has a clear cause and is limited in time and scope. However, I get weary in the face of widespread, systemic crisis. I use the complexity of the geopolitical situation to justify my apathy and the concerns of my family's safety to mask my fear of people that do not look like me.

As much as this part of the Christmas story is divine, it is also political. There is an inherent risk that comes with being a follower of Christ. The wise men knew it, and they probably died for it. At the very least, they lost their power, fortune, and prestige in Herod's court. I must ask myself, who would I let take refuge in my home, if I thought it could save their life? Our hope of freedom and our salvation from sin came at a tremendous loss of life; a cost I have never given thought to until now. I pray that I might be as brave and as strong as the wise men.

Jordan O. Smith

THE CHURCH'S FINANCES

2019 BUDGET UPDATE

2019 Pledges \$2,428,933
Amount Received \$2,136,473
Pledges Outstanding (\$292,460)

Our auditing firm has informed us that we must close our books on December 31. Please have any contributions you wish to show on your 2019 statement in by December 31, 2019. By fulfilling your pledge, you enable us to keep faith with our mission partners. Thank you.

2020 STEWARDSHIP

CAMPAIGN

As of Monday, December 23, we have received \$2,283,456 in pledges toward our 2020 budget goal of \$2,513,715.

For your convenience, pledge cards are in the pews, or you may mail in your pledge or send it by email to the Church Financial Secretary, Sherri Owens, at sherri@wpc-online.org.