

December 7, 2025



Peaceable Kingdom by Edward Hicks

Worship With Us On Sunday!

2nd Sunday of Advent

Scripture
Isaiah 11:1-10

Sermon
Tending the Seeds of Peace
The Rev. Julie Emery

Bulletin

Bulletin Insert

10:00 a.m. Sunday Hybrid Worship Link

Zoom Meeting ID: 822 3301 6989

Any questions, contact Becky Kimberly in the office
at office@westpresby.org.



In this e-newsletter, you'll find details about:

Westminster News and Events

- *Opportunities to Give*
 - *Food Donations on Communion Sunday*
 - *Angel Tree Gifts for Children in Need*
 - *Magi Gifts for South Park Inn Homeless Shelter*
- *The Season of Advent at Westminster*
 - *Advent Worship and Events*
 - *Christmas Choir*
 - *Advent Study, Mondays at 6:30 p.m.*
 - *Our Front Porch (Connection Hour) Sundays at 9:00 a.m.*
- *Session Update*

Events in Our Community

- *Talcott Singers Hold Winter Concert at Westminster, this Sunday at 4:00 p.m.*

Prayers for Our Community and Our World

- *Community Prayer Time: Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m.*

Westminster News and Events

Food Collection Every Communion Sunday 1st Sunday of the Month



This Sunday (and every Communion Sunday) the Serve Team is asking people to bring in a non-perishable food item for our local food pantries. And of course, you can bring in food items on non-Communion Sundays, too! Any questions, please contact Bill Starkowski, Deacon, Serve Team at starman5889@comcast.net.



Angel Gifts for Children in Need

Westminster works closely with our Covenant to Care social worker

Nadia at the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to provide gifts to children at Christmas.

Each child is listed with their name, gender and age. Please choose a gift or gifts for the child of your choice appropriate for their age. The total cost per child should not exceed \$50. Please wrap gifts with a label securely attached with the child's name on the tag. Click the button below to sign up!

Angel Tree Gifts Sign Up

If you would prefer to make a monetary donation, checks can be made out to "Westminster Presbyterian Church" with a note in the memo line "Covenant to Care/Angel Gifts".

Gifts can be dropped off at the church Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 2 PM or on Sundays during worship. There will be a box outside the church office. **Donations must be received no later than Sunday, December 14.** Questions? Please contact Lesley Morrey at 860-778-5948 (call or text) or lpmorrey@gmail.com.

On behalf of the Serve Team, we are very grateful for all contributions throughout the year and wish to thank everyone at Westminster for their commitment, support and love.



Support South Park Inn Homeless Shelter Through Magi Gifts Collection

Each Christmas season, Westminster collects Magi Gifts (formerly known as white gifts) to support the mission of South Park Inn homeless shelter in Hartford, CT. South Park Inn provides safe, temporary sleeping space for the unhoused, along with other services supporting mental health, veterans and people in transition.

South Park Inn shelter is in need for the following items:

Men's and women's hoodies (large, XL, XXL)
Gaiters

Men's and women's thermal fleece shirts (large, XL, XXL)
Thermal gloves (large)
Men's and women's sweat pants (large, XL)
Scarves
Women's toiletries
Heavy socks
Gift cards (local grocery/big retail store)

Please note, all donations should be new and left unwrapped. Gifts can be dropped off at the church - there will be a box outside the church office and one in the back of the sanctuary. Magi Gifts will be collected through January 5.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact Bill Starkowski at starman5889@comcast.net.



The Season of Advent at Westminster

Dear Westminster Family,

This Sunday marks the first Sunday of Advent, which is the first Sunday in the new liturgical year. As we turn our eyes towards Bethlehem and begin preparations to welcome God's presence in our hearts and lives again, I invite you to consider ways you will make space in your busy schedules for God.

Perhaps you can take five minutes at the start of every morning for prayer? Or perhaps you can set aside time either daily or even weekly to read an advent devotion or listen to a podcast? What about a walk around the neighborhood with a friend or family member while you share what is your favorite thing about this time of year? Or, for what are you most grateful today?

There are many wonderful opportunities to connect with God and with your church family during this season. Both celebratory and solemn. May your season be one of peace in the presence of God, Emmanuel.

Rev. Julie Emery

Advent Worship Series: "A Prophet Fortold"

The words of Isaiah make up a beloved refrain during the Advent and Christmas season, in part due to Handel's beautiful oratorio. But do we really understand what they meant to the people who first heard them? And how do these prophetic words speak to us today?

Richard Rohr writes, "There was a deep need, then and now, for someone who would call the people to return to God and to justice. Someone who would warn them, critique them, and reveal God's heart to them. These people are called prophets, and every religion needs them."

Join us each Sunday during Advent as we hear the words of the prophet Isaiah, calling us to know and seek the heart of God.

Second Sunday in Advent, December 7

Isaiah 11:1-10: Tending the Seeds of Peace

Special Music offered this Sunday: *by the Talcott Singers; Sam Warshauer, baritone; Joan Prokopowicz and Ellen LaMora, violins and Danielle O'Neil, piano.*

Third Sunday in Advent, December 14

Isaiah 35:1-10: Liberating Praise

Care Team Project After Worship: *Join the Care Team as we create fun and comforting gifts for our church family!*

Fourth Sunday in Advent, December 21

Paper-Bag Christmas Pageant at 10:00 a.m.

Everyone can join in telling the story of Christ's birth and celebrating God's presence among us! Come! Invite friends! Sing and celebrate together!

Longest Night Ecumenical Service at 5:00 p.m.

In this festive season, many feel heaviness, worry and grief. This service provides an opportunity to come together to hear words and music of comfort, to sit in silence and to pray.

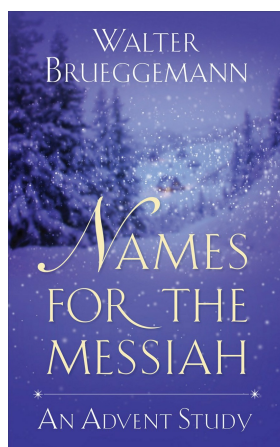
Christmas Eve - Communion and Candlelight

Worship at 8:00 p.m.

Musical Prelude begins at 7:30 p.m. All are invited to take part in the Christmas Eve Choir, just arrive at 7:00 p.m. to rehearse and join in the chorus!



Opportunities for Connection, Devotion and Discussion During Advent



Advent Study: "Names of the Messiah"
Mondays at 6:30 p.m.
In-Person and Online
Led by Rev. Julie Emery

Join the Rev. Julie Emery for an Advent Study: "Names for the Messiah" on Mondays at 6:30 p.m., in-person or on Zoom

Christians have claimed from their beginnings that Jesus was the Messiah foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures. What were these expectations, and did Jesus fulfill them?

The prophet Isaiah shared a well-known and beloved oracle that uses four titles to describe the Messiah: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Our study will look at the ways people understood these royal titles and how Jesus did or did not fulfill these titles.

Using [this study by Walter Bruggeman](#), and delving into other prophetic sources such as Richard Rohr's new ["The Tears of Things,"](#) as well as Dietrich Bonhoeffer's words from the Nazi prison camp, we will ponder the way these prophetic words and titles speak to our lives even now.

[Click here](#) for the Zoom link.

Connect Every Sunday at 9:00 a.m. at Our Front Porch
(See details below)

Our Front Porch

Adult Fellowship & Discussion Group



**Sundays 9:00 - 9:50 a.m.
in the Covenant Room**

Join Us for an Hour of Connection!

Gather before worship for conversation and connection.
No preparation or commitment is required.

Contact Peter Benner (pbenner16@gmail.com) or
Larry Carr (larrycarr@gmail.com) for more information

Additional Advent Resources

Looking for an advent devotional to guide you through the season??
Here are some great options!

Devotional Books:

God is in the Manger, Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Low, an Honest Advent Devotional, by Jon Pavlovitz
All Creation Waits: The Advent Mystery of New Beginnings, by Gayle
Boss. (There is also a children's book version [HERE](#))

Podcasts:

The Poetry of Christmas, by Strange New World
found wherever you get your podcasts, or [here](#)

There are some lovely, downloadable devotionals here:

<https://www.saltproject.org/progressive-church-print-resources>
<https://sanctifiedart.org/what-do-you-fear-advent-devotional-booklet>

Westminster Session Highlights November 19, 2025 Meeting

The Session met with joy and thanksgiving as we continue to see signs of growth, stewardship, and community connection at Westminster, particularly reflecting on our successful and impactful 75th anniversary

celebration.

Highlights from the Session Meeting include:

1. Housing/Rental Update

The Housing Development team has applied for a grant from the New England Housing Ministry to fund two proposals to further our fact finding for potential alternative use of the church property. The proposals are from a consultant group that specializes in affordable housing as well as an architect who will look specifically at the possibilities for our property. The goal is to keep all options open and continue to learn and explore possibilities while we actively pursue rental options.

Meanwhile, the opportunity with the YMCA continues to advance. Following approval of the Memorandum of Understanding for the YMCA to rent space at Westminster for its 2026 summer camp, the Rental Partner Group is now confirming zoning with the Town of West Hartford.

2. Financial Update

Treasurer Kevin Morrison, after eight years of service, will be stepping out of this role. Session will be seeking a new Treasurer. A job description will be defined shortly and shared with the congregation. We are deeply grateful for Kevin's faithful service to the Westminster community.

Greg Hammond, working with Westminster's bookkeeper, is continuing his fiscal oversight by revising the expense submission process to improve tracking to budget and facilitate reimbursements.

Session approved the monthly financial statements for September 2025. As of September 30, 2025, Westminster received \$201,330 in pledged contributions (YTD budget \$204,900) and \$43,211 in rental income (YTD budget \$33,750), contributing to a total operating income of \$291,879 (YTD budget \$278,025).

Total disbursements were \$402,267 (YTD budget \$392,312), slightly but not significantly higher than budget. We remain confident in the congregation's faithful giving, increased rental income, and the prudent management of church resources. Copies of the September 30, 2025 financial statements will be available in the back of the sanctuary.

3. Celebrating 75 Years of Westminster

Session reflected on the recent joyous anniversary celebration by walking the Westminster timeline as a group. We saw common themes carry through our history: social justice, women in ministry, immigrant rights and support, value of music in our ministry, and value of community and connection.

We offered thanks to Barbara Riihimaki and Linda Geisler, and the over 30 other individuals who assisted in one or more elements of the celebration.

If you have not visited the timeline, the photographic history, and important Westminster artifacts, or taken the scavenger hunt - make sure to take time after an upcoming service. An official history of Westminster will be ready soon!

Linda Geisler reported that the dedicated 75th Anniversary Campaign raised \$51,000! 20% of funds will support our mission partners and 80% will strengthen Westminster's endowment for future generations. You can still make your donation here: [Westminster 75th Anniversary Campaign](#)

With gratitude and thanksgiving, we celebrate God's faithfulness and look forward to the many ways Westminster will continue to serve, grow, and inspire our members.

Events in Our Community



Talcott Singers Hold Winter Concert at Westminster This Sunday, December 7 at 4:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Join the Talcott Singers for an afternoon of holiday cheer as they present their annual Winter Concert! They are a 10-member vocal ensemble based in Farmington who share a passion for performing contemporary choral works and timeless classical pieces.

This year's program features a sparkling mix of seasonal classics, festive holiday favorites, and beautifully crafted choral works that celebrate the spirit of the season. The afternoon will conclude with a joyful community sing-along featuring beloved carols, including *Joy to the World* and *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*.

The concert is free and open to all, so bring your family, your friends, and your voices! We will welcome donations (cash, check, or Venmo) to support Hands on Hartford, a nonprofit that helps our neighbors in the city with food, housing, and healthcare.

Prayers for our Community and Our World

Praying by Mary Oliver

It doesn't have to be
the blue iris, it could be
weeds in a vacant lot, or a few
small stones; just
pay attention, then patch

a few words together and don't try
to make them elaborate, this isn't
a contest but the doorway

into thanks, and a silence in which
another voice may speak.

Prayer is a wonderful gift that we can offer each other, as we share and listen to another's concerns and joys. Prayer is also a wonderful gift to receive, in knowing that our church community is holding us and our stories with care and love. Please text or call Rev. Julie Emery at 603-748-1130 with any prayer requests or pastoral concerns.

We pray for those near and far:

We offer prayers of celebration to the members of Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Presbyterian Church on their reopening after an arsonist set fire to their church in December 2020.

We continue to pray for peace, and for a just and safe world for all. We pray for a stable and lasting peace in Gaza, comfort for those who are grieving, and sustaining help for those rebuilding lives and communities.

May there be mercy and protection for those who are most vulnerable. Those most affected by the injustices happening in our country at this time: Immigrants and refugees; the LBGTQIA+ community; those standing up against injustice in all its forms.

May God's love and grace be the guiding force in our lives, our homes and our communities in the days ahead.

We pray for those in need for health and wholeness:

May those who are struggling receive God's love and encouragement including: Eric Ouellette's mother Penny who is undergoing medical tests; Abbey Downing's father Jack Neller, who is facing serious health challenges; Yvonne Smith; Doug Levine, friend of Marilyn Pikor, who suffered a stroke; Callie Boone's Aunt Cyndi who is facing health challenges; Susie Scoville's brother Jon who is home recovering from a fall; Jane Sebolt; Joan and Jim Lin; Bob Gillis; Becky Kimberly's father John; Barbara Aronson; Karen Wagner's friend Rich; Ross and Ginger Ludeman; Muriel Sherman and Betty Stokes.

We ask God to comfort those who grieve:

Janet Wade-Utay on the death of her brother George Wade; Sandy Fry, on the death of her mother Marion; Karen Wagner's son-in-law Billy Calzada and family on the death of his mother Herlinda; Karen Hammond on the death of her mother Carol Hamilton and prayers of

comfort for her father Bruce; the family and friends of Elsie Harp; the family of Rachel Lloyd's Aunt Katie; the family of Shirley Sabin; the family of Cliff Moss; Karen Sprout and family; David Hall and family; Jim and Vivian Carlson; David MacMeekin and family; Russ Smiley and family; Laura Berman and family.



Session Members

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