Until the Dawn

ACTIONS FOR THE WORK OF ADVENT

November 29, 2026 10:30 a.m.

Welcome to Westminster! We are glad you are here! Take some time to review the announcements to see "What's Up At Westminster!" If you have any questions, our greeters and ushers are happy to help.

• **THE FLOWERS FOR TODAY'S SERVICE** were provided by Nancy Swantek in loving memory and honor of all who have passed before us, especially my beloved husband, Jerome Swantek, my husband of 54 years. Forever loved, forever remembered.

• **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY:** Please note the closest emergency exit to your seat. There are exits at all four corners of the sanctuary that will lead you safely out of the building.

For Parents, Grandparents and Caregivers:

Children of all ages are always welcome in worship! However, if you or your child need a little extra care, we offer several options for you:

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 certified in infant/child CPR.

WORSHIP BAGS are located by the back entrance to the sanctuary. These bags for children are filled with quiet activities to keep children engaged while seated in the pew with their families.

VISIT OUR PRAYGROUND located at the back of the sanctuary. This dedicated space contains activities for parents and children who need a little extra space to move but would still like to be a part of the worship service.

THE COMMUNITY GATHERS TO WORSHIP GOD

Please silence your cell phones prior to entering the sanctuary.

†*Those who feel comfortable standing may do so.*

* *Denotes hymn number in pew hymnal. Some lyrics may be different than what is projected on the screens.*

PRELUDE — SETH CUNNINGHAM

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CENTERING MOMENT

GATHERING PRAYER

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

When the nights are long and the roads are hard,
we turn our eyes to the stars.
When the work is demanding and injustice unending,
we stand together, arm in arm.
When fear looms large and grief weighs heavy,
we cry out to God without holding back.
And when the dawn of tomorrow feels far away,
we gather together to light the candle of hope.

Like the stars above, may this light shine bright.
May it guide our path.
May it inspire deeper hope.
Until God's promised day, may it be so. **Amen.**

HYMN — *"Come, Come Emmanuel"* — COME, COME EMMANUEL

Come, come Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.
Come, come Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.

†Call to Worship

In God's house,
we are free to wear our hearts on our sleeves.
In God's house,
we may come exactly as we are.
In God's house,
we dare to hope. We dream new dreams. We cry out. We call upon God.
In God's house,
all are welcome and all are heard.
So come and worship.
God is here. God is listening.
Let us worship our with-us God.

†Hymn *"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"* *No. 154

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, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.
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

Holy God,
we have been known —
to bite our tongues,
to work through a broken heart,
to don our favorite rose-colored glasses.
We have been known —
to look for the bright side,
to sweep the pain under the rug,
to choose ignorance for the benefit of bliss.
We have been known to keep the hurt in our heart to ourselves.
Forgive us for filtering our honesty.
Forgive us for ignoring the power of lament.
Forgive us for not turning to you first.
Remind us that you are a God who listens
and you are a God who restores.
With open hearts, we pray.

— Continue in silent prayer —

Kyrie

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy;
Lord, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy;
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Assurance of Forgiveness

So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:

There is nothing we could do or say that will keep God's love at bay. We are seen, forgiven, and invited — into deeper honesty and deeper relationship. Thanks be to God! Amen.

†Response to God's Grace

All glory be to God on high, and to the earth be peace:
good will to all from highest heaven begin and never cease.

†Sharing God's Peace

Let us share the hope and peace we have found in Christ with one another. The peace of Christ be with you all.
And also with you.
Let us greet our neighbors with the signs and words of peace.

The Community Listens to the Word of God

Prayer for Illumination

Psalter Reading

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Hebrew Scripture

Isaiah 64:1-9

Sermon

"Cry Out"
Rev. Jamie Milton

†Hymn

"Restore Us, God" St. Louis
See Insert

The Community Responds to the Call of God

†Affirmation of Faith

We believe even on the longest nights —
when our steps are unclear and fear takes hold —
that the sun is still rising.

We believe in that sunrise
like we believe in God's promised day.
So instead of giving in to the great unknown,
we move, in spirit, toward that light.
We summon our courage.
We carry each other.
We dance under the stars.
We listen for the angels.

And we believe the good news of the gospel,
which says that God loves God's creation so fiercely
that God took on flesh to be with us.
This is the truth that sustains our journey.
In this, we believe.

Prayers of the People and The 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

Musical Offering

WPC Chancel Choir

"Prepare the Way"
Words and Music by Brad Croushorn

†Doxology

Tune: Old Hundredth

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

Faithful God, we thank you that Christ is being revealed in every time and place until he comes again in the fullness of glory. Strengthen our testimony and spiritual gifts; increase generosity in us, we pray, as we wait for the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Community Goes to Serve God

†Hymn

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"

Hyfrydol

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

†Charge and Benediction

As we leave this place,
we will speak the truth in love,
hold fast to courage,
be quick to joy,
listen for the angels,
and build each other up,
until we reach God's promised day— when the lion will lie down with the lamb and the sun will rise over all of us.
That is what we move toward.
That is what we dream of.
So look toward the horizon, and go with hope.
Go in peace.

†Sending Hymn

May God Ever Present
See Insert

†Postlude — Seth Cunningham

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This Week

• **HOLIDAY DECOR RAFFLE:** We're raffling off **two Christmas wreaths and two Christmas lanterns** with all proceeds going to support our own Westminster Community Pantry! Raffle tickets may be purchased before or after worship on November 29, or by calling the church office. Tickets are $5 each or 5 tickets for $20. We'll draw the winning ticket at the Advent Dinner on November 29!

• **ADVENT DINNER AND HOLIDAY CRAFTS:** Join us for one of Westminster's favorite traditions! Next **Sunday, November 29,** at 5 p.m., we'll gather in the Fellowship Hall for dinner and holiday themed crafts for all ages. The main dish will be provided, but you're invited to bring a salad, side dish, or dessert to round out our holiday meal.

• **FALL BOOK GROUP:** We will be reading and discussing *One Simple Act* by Debbie Macomber on **Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. in the Lounge**. For more information, speak to Rev. Linda or call the church office. Our next meeting will be **Tuesday, December 1.**

• **BUNCO PARTY:** Everyone is invited to join the fun! We meet monthly in the Fellowship Hall and our next gathering is **Tuesday, December 1**. Bring a bag lunch and come **at noon** if you'd like to eat and visit together. The dice start rolling at 12:30 p.m.

• **CARING CONNECTIONS:** Our Caring Connections Group is open to the Bay City community, so if you have a friend or neighbor who is dealing with grief, they are welcome to join! **Our next meeting is planned for Thursday, December 3 at 1:30 p.m.**

MINISTERS	All the People
PASTOR	Rev. Jamie Milton
PARISH ASSOCIATE	Rev. Linda Williams
LITURGIST	Mary Rose Davis
DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY	Leah Sneller
NURSERY SUPERVISOR	Elaine Edwards
CHOIR DIRECTOR	Dawn Auger
ORGANIST	Seth Cunningham
YOUTH BELLS AND CHIME CHOIR DIRECTOR	Judy Harrelson
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Lisa Carelli
FINANCIAL ASSISTANT	Martha Tapley
SECRETARY	Bill Petzold
FACILITIES MANAGER	Harold Miller

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Monthly

• **ANGEL TREE:** The Mission Partnership Committee and The Salvation Army invite you to brighten Christmas for local children ages 0–17. Take an Angel Tag from the tree, write your name and contact number on the bottom portion, and leave that section at the Angel Tree table in the Wenona Lobby. Purchase one toy or "fun" item and one clothing or textile item (suggested limit $50 per child) and return the gift with the information tag in a bag (no tissue paper) to the church by **Noon on Sunday, December 13**. Prefer to donate? We'll shop for you! Questions? Contact Darlene Kusterer or the church office.

• **CHRISTMAS PAGEANT:** This year's pageant, **The ABCs of Christmas,** helps us rehearse the Good News of Jesus' birth in a simple, festive way! Join our children and youth as they share this beloved story **during worship on Sunday, December 13**. A rehearsal is planned for 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 12.

• **HOLIDAY MOVIE: Tuesday, December 15 at 1:30 p.m.** we will be showing the Oscar-winning short *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse* AND Debbie Macomber's movie, *Mrs. Miracle*. **Movie treats:** popcorn and candy will be provided!

• **OUT-TO-LUNCH BUNCH:** The Out-to-Lunch Bunch's December destination is Mango's Tequila Bar, 2795 Wilder Rd. We will gather at 1 p.m. on **Wednesday, December 16**. Please RSVP by Monday, December 14 by calling Dave Crook at 847-624-5798.

• **LIVING NATIVITY: Thursday, December 17 from 5 to 7 p.m.**, help us welcome the community with cider, hot chocolate and cookies as we tell the story of Jesus' birth. This is the same night as the Sage Library will be having a reindeer on their lawn, so we're hoping for a big crowd!

• **CHORAL CANTATA:** WPC's musicians will perform the cantata, The Winter Rose, during worship on **Sunday, December 20**. The rose remains a vital expression of love and peace both inside the Church and the outside world. No flower holds our dreams of love more beautifully than the rose. It is in that same spirit that this cantata was conceived and written. Let the words and music remind you that even in the deepest winter, we are people of joy and life...children of the garden.

• **THE LONGEST NIGHT: Monday, December 21, 7:00 p.m.** This Service for the Longest Night is a special time set aside for prayer, reflection, comfort, and hope. All are welcome. A brief time of fellowship and light refreshments will follow the service.

• **CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP:** Two worship services are planned for **Thursday, December 24, a 4 p.m. service and a 7 p.m. service.** Special music is planned for both services as we rejoice at the birth of Jesus Christ.

Ongoing

• **WINGS OF PRAYER:** If you have someone you would like to add to our Wings of Prayer list, please contact Patti Wesenick at 989-737-6844.

Opportunities to Serve your Community

• **SUNDAY MORNING FELLOWSHIP GATHERINGS:** Join us for Fellowship Time! Before worship (9:30 to 10:15 a.m.), stop by the Fellowship Hall for coffee and a sweet treat. After the service, we continue in the chapel with cookies, coffee, and lemonade — a relaxed chance to reconnect with old friends and meet new ones. Sign up on the volunteer board near the Wenona Street entrance or contact Joyce Hegenauer. Everything you need will be ready in the kitchen.

•**MATTHEW 25 CAFÉ** at The Salvation Army (322 Adams Street) serves free meals six days a week to the Bay City community, feeding about 100 people daily. They need help with food prep and service. On the **second Tuesday of each month**, **5–7 volunteers help cook and serve**. Extra help is needed. If you can spare two hours a month—either preparing food (9 to 11 a.m.) or serving and cleaning up (11 a.m. to 1 p.m.)—please sign up on the Wenona Lobby board or call the church office with your name, date, and time. **Westminster's next opportunity to serve is Tuesday, December 8** If you have any questions, please contact Darlene Kusterer at 989-385-4062 or call the church office.

• **WESTMINSTER COMMUNITY PANTRY:** There are a number of ways that you can support our weekly food pantry. Volunteers help assist our clients in choosing food items, work together to unload shipments of food and help to organize donations received from the congregation and community. If you would like to volunteer, contact volunteer coordinator Karen Brown-Fackler. You may also support the pantry's efforts with a monetary donation, either by writing "food pantry" in the memo area of your check made payable to Westminster Presbyterian Church, or online through the donations page on the church website, wpcbc.org. Contact pantry chair Janet Smylie with questions.

• **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN** will be collecting coats, hats, socks, gloves and other **warm clothing for guests that come to the food pantry**. You may leave any donated items on the cart outside the pantry door.

• **CARING MEAL PROGRAM RETURNS TO WESTMINSTER:** We're excited to share that a beloved ministry is returning to Westminster — the Caring Meal Program. Sponsored by the Board of Deacons, this ministry provides short-term meals to individuals and families experiencing a recent life event or temporary hardship. A pilot team of Meal Preparers is serving as we fine-tune the process. Once the pilot wraps up, we'll invite the congregation to join us in making this meaningful ministry flourish.

• **FOOD OF FAITH:** Help provide a free warm meal for our neighbors in need! Our next opportunity to serve is **Thursday, December 10.** We will need **two volunteers to help prepare the meal** from 2 to 4 p.m. and **four volunteers to help serve** from 4 to 6 p.m. The meal begins at 5 p.m. Thursday evenings at Messiah Lutheran Church, 501 S. Catherine St. in Bay City at the western end of Veterans Memorial Bridge. Those with questions may contact Pam Johnston at 989-392-1958.

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. 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!

GENERAL FUND	Nov 24 2026	Year to Date
Pledges	30,280	360,863
General Gifts/Donations	4,440	37,227
Investment Interest	8	20,569
Loose Collection	140	1,582
One-time Gifts	0	0
Other Cash Received	372	3,950.17
Total Income	35,240	424,191.17
Expenses/Payroll	31,651	414,716
Excess(Loss)	3,589	9,475.17

Budgeted expense total for 2026 is $467,000.

Please remember your per Capita for 2026. It is $35 per member.

Double Match Day at Meijer's is December 12: Meijer's on Wilder Road will *double match* all Simply Give donations on Saturday, December 12. When you donate $10, Meijer will match it with $20, for a total of $30. If you give $100, that turns into a total of $300 for our pantry. Simply Give cards are available at the church and at the store checkout lanes. All donations will come directly to our pantry in the form of Meijer gift cards we can use to purchase food. And remember, the Simply Give program continues at the Wilder Road location through December 26, so any donations made during this time still come to our pantry. Please share the news with your family and friends. Last year's campaign raised $15,000, a huge gift to our pantry! Questions? Talk to Janet Smylie or email pantry@wpcbc.org.

Westminster COMMUNITY PANTRY

Holiday Boxes: Thanks to a grant from the Bay Area Community Foundation, we will provide prepacked boxes of food for 200 families during the month of December. These boxes come from the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan and contain a holiday meal plus several days of food for just $27 per box. We still offer bread and fresh produce from Hidden Harvest, so our guests go home with more than they would normally receive. These boxes are too heavy for most of our women volunteers, so we would like to have 3 men for each pantry shift to lift them onto carts and take them out to cars. If you can help, please sign up on the sheets in the Wenona St. lobby or talk to Karen Brown-Fackler.

Plastic Grocery Bags Needed: If you have clean plastic grocery bags, we can use them in the pantry. We go through a lot of bags each week and always appreciate any you can bring to us. Please leave them on the cart outside the pantry door. Thanks!