



# WESTMINSTER

— Presbyterian Church —

Albany, New York  
December 10, 2023  
Service of Worship 10:00 AM

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AT WORSHIP  
The Second Sunday of Advent



**Welcome to Westminster!** We're glad you're here.

- **If you're visiting us this morning, we would love to meet you and greet you!** We invite you to fill out the Welcome Card in the pew and put it in the offering plate or hand it to an usher in the back.
- **After worship, please join us downstairs as we continue our fellowship at our coffee hour.** We gather in the hall located directly under the sanctuary. Stairs are located through the doors on either side of the front of the sanctuary, followed by another stairway that leads downstairs. Additional stairs and an elevator are available at the rear of the sanctuary. We recognize that our 19th century building can be confusing to navigate! **We are here to help**—please speak to an usher if you need assistance.



**WE ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME**

*(Let the notes of our Prelude be the musical curtain through which we pass as we gather to worship together. Let the preparation we make together be prayerful.)*

**Prelude** "Comfort, Comfort Ye My People" Paul Manz (1919-2009)

**Choral Introit** (Hymn #84, "Creator of the Stars of Night")

Creator of the stars of night,  
Your people's everlasting light,  
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,  
We pray you hear us when we call.

**Advent Candle Liturgy** Daniel, Desmond and Angel Sowah

One: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth,  
And set lights in the sky—sun and moon and stars.  
By these stars, our ancestors charted their journeys.  
By these stars, they knew God was with them.

Two: Today we light two candles to bring the fire of the stars  
down from heaven to earth, to rest among us.  
We name this candle Hope. *(The first Advent candle is lit.)*  
We name this candle Peace. *(The second Advent candle is lit.)*

**Opening Hymn #88** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verses 1, 2, 6, 7)

**Call to Confession** Linore Southworth

One: We too are on a journey, and we do not always know the way.  
Let us confess our sins before God and one another.



## Prayer of Confession

**All: Loving God, we lift our reluctant hearts to you.  
We know that we hold tight to patterns of behavior  
and patterns of thought that are familiar,  
even when we know they are harmful to others and to ourselves.  
We harbor grudges.  
We hold onto resentments.  
We cultivate our fears.  
Enliven us, we pray, with your compassion,  
for others and for our own selves.  
Breathe your Holy Spirit into us  
that we may be stirred to walk in new ways  
and open ourselves to new insights.  
Let your face shine upon us.  
Teach us to love!**

## Assurance of Forgiveness

Linore Southworth

Listen now to the plea of the apostle Paul: *(Philippians 4:6-7)*  
“Do not be anxious about anything,  
but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,  
present your requests to God.  
And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,  
will guard your hearts and your minds  
in Christ Jesus.”

We chart our path by the star of peace.  
Even when violence and fear are raging  
and peace seems like a pipedream,  
we set our face steadily towards the light.

Let us pray:

**All: Lord Jesus, as we search for signs of peace this week,  
help us to *become* the signs of peace that others are searching for.  
As these candles are but a glimpse of the light of the heavens,  
help us to be a glimpse of heaven’s peace. Amen.**

## Passing The Peace

Linore Southworth

## Words of Welcome

Leah Threatte

**WE PROCLAIM GOD’S WORD**



### Prayer for Illumination

Linore Southworth

One: Holy God, our hope and strength,  
by the power of your Spirit  
prepare the way in our hearts  
for the coming of your Word,  
so that we may see the glorious signs  
of your promise fulfilled;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



### Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

### Choral Anthem

"And the Glory of the Lord"

G. F. Handel



### Scripture Lesson

Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

### Sermon

"Does God Bring Us Comfort (Or Affliction)?"

Fred Boehrer

## WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD



Prayer Hymn #90

Wait for the Lord (sung twice)

Gathering Celebrations and Concerns

John Bossung

Prayer Hymn #90

Wait for the Lord (sung twice)

Prayers of the People

John Bossung

The Lord's Prayer

All: 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 the Offering

Linore Southworth

Hymn #607

Doxology

## WE ARE SENT IN GOD'S NAME



Hymn #77

Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old

Charge and Benediction

Fred Boehrer

Hymn #92 (verse 1)

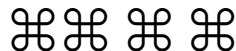
While We are Waiting Come

While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come.  
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

Postlude

"Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying"

Johann G. Walther (1684-1748)



We welcome Margaret Randall as this week's accompanist. Thank you Margaret!

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## **2023 CHURCH OFFICERS**

### **Session**

Leah Threatte, Clerk of Session  
Ephraim Adjei, John Bossung, Nancy Holroyd, Felicia Kollie-Gambles,  
Peter McKee, Hannah Ohemaa-Takyi, Susan Schell, Linore Southworth

### **Deacons**

Mary Bullis and Dodie Seagle, Co-moderators  
Ruthanne Brod, Kelly Crisfield, Cynthia Dwyer,  
Mabel McGraw, Elizabeth McMillan, Carolyn Smith

### **Trustees**

John Bossung and Leif Hartmark, Co-chairs  
David Adjei, Marie McClumpha, Laura Moody, David Norman,  
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# 84 Creator of the Stars of Night



1 Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, your peo - ple's ev - er -  
 2 When this old world drew on toward night, you came; but not in  
 3 At your great name, O Je - sus, now all knees must bend, all  
 4 To God the Fa - ther, God the Son, and God the Spir - it,

The Latin original of this text for Advent dates from at least the 9th century, and the English version was created a millennium later as part of the 19th-century recovery of early Christian hymns. It is provided here with its traditional plainchant setting.

TEXT: Latin hymn, 9th cent.; trans. John Mason Neale, 1851; as in *The Hymnal 1940*, alt. CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM  
 MUSIC: Sarum plainsong, Mode IV, 9th cent.; harm. Alfred V. Fedak, 2011 LM  
 Text Alt. © 1940 Church Pension Fund (alternate tune: PUER NOBIS NASCITUR)  
 Music Harm. © 2011 Alfred V. Fedak

## JESUS CHRIST: ADVENT



last - ing light, O Christ, re - deem - er of us all,  
 splen - dor bright, not as a mon - arch, but the child  
 hearts must bow: all things on earth with one ac - cord,  
 Three in One, praise, hon - or, might, and glo - ry be



we pray you, hear us when we call.  
 of Mar - y, blame - less moth - er mild.  
 like those in heaven, shall call you Lord.  
 from age to age e - ter - nal - ly. A - men.

# 88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som  
 2 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, who or - derest  
 3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy  
 4 O come, thou Root of Jes - se, free thine own from



cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile  
 all things might - i - ly: to us the path of knowl - edge  
 tribes on Si - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the  
 Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple



here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 show; and teach us in her ways to go. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!  
 law in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.  
 save and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>5 O come, thou Key of David, come,<br/>             and open wide our heavenly home;<br/>             make safe the way that leads on high,<br/>             and close the path to misery.<br/>             Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel<br/>             shall come to thee, O Israel.</p> | <p>6 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer<br/>             our spirits by thine advent here;<br/>             disperse the gloomy clouds of night,<br/>             and death's dark shadows put to flight.<br/>             Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel<br/>             shall come to thee, O Israel.</p> |
|--|--|

7 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.

One stanza of this paraphrase of the great O Antiphons may be sung on each of the last days of Advent as follows:

Dec. 17: O Wisdom (2)	Dec. 20: O Key of David (5)	Dec. 23: O Emmanuel (1)
Dec. 18: O Lord of might (3)	Dec. 21: O Dayspring (6)	
Dec. 19: O Root of Jesse (4)	Dec. 22: O Desire of Nations (7)	

These titles of the coming Christ appeared in daily Vesper antiphons sung during the week before Christmas; their roots date at least to the reign of Charlemagne. Both text and tune are the fruit of 19th-century efforts to reclaim Christian treasures from pre-Reformation sources.



# 90 Wait for the Lord

(Psalm 27)

*Refrain*



Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.



Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

PSALM 27

*Refrain*

- 1 The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom then shall I fear?  
the LORD is the strength of my life;  
of whom then shall I be afraid?
- 2 **When evildoers came upon me to eat up my flesh,  
it was they, my foes and my adversaries, who stumbled and fell.**
- 3 Though an army should encamp against me,  
yet my heart shall not be afraid;  
**and though war should rise up against me,  
yet will I put my trust in the LORD.**
- 4 One thing have I asked of the LORD;  
one thing I seek;  
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life;  
**to behold the fair beauty of the LORD,  
to seek God in the temple. Refrain**
- 5 For on the day of trouble the LORD shall shelter me in safety;  
the LORD shall hide me in the secrecy of the holy place  
and set me high upon a rock.
- 6 **Even now the LORD lifts up my head  
above my enemies round about me.**  
Therefore I will offer in the holy place an oblation  
with sounds of great gladness;  
I will sing and make music to the LORD. *Refrain*

The refrain for this psalm, drawn from Psalm 27:14, comes from the ecumenical Community of Taizé in France and is most effective when sung in parts. With repeated singing, it can also be used by itself as a contemplative prayer and is especially appropriate in Advent.

# 607 Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all people

TEXT: Neil Weatherhogg, 1988  
MUSIC: Genevan Psalter, 1551  
Text © 1990 Neil Weatherhogg

OLD HUNDREDTH  
LM

SERVICE MUSIC

here below; praise Holy Spirit ever more;

praise Tri-une God, whom we adore. Amen.

# 77 Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old

1 I - sa - iah the proph - et has writ - ten of old how  
2 Yet na - tions still prey on the meek of the world, and

God's new cre - a - tion shall come. In - stead of the thorn tree, the  
con - flict turns par - ent from child. Your peo - ple de - spoil all the

fir tree shall grow; the wolf shall lie down with the lamb. The  
sweet - ness of earth; the briar and the thorn tree grow wild. God,

moun - tains and hills shall burst forth in - to song, the  
bring to fru - i - tion your will for the earth, that

This 20th-century paraphrase of Isaiah 11:6-9 and 55:11-13 was created specifically for this anonymous shape note tune (whose name is Hebrew for "listener"). The movement from near rhymes in stanza one to exact rhymes in stanza two reinforces the theme of fulfilled prophecy.

TEXT: Joy F. Patterson, 1982  
MUSIC: American folk melody; arr. Robert Shaw and Alice Parker, 1961  
Text © 1982 The Hymn Society (admin. Hope Publishing Company)  
Music Arr. © 1961, ren. Lawson-Gould Music Publishers, Inc. (admin. Alfred Music Publishing)

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

peo-ples be led forth in peace, for the earth shall be filled  
no one shall hurt or de - stroy, that wis - dom and jus -

with the knowl-edge of God as the wa-ters cov - er the sea.  
tice shall reign in the land and your peo-ple shall go forth in joy.

The musical score is written in a key with three flats (E-flat major or C minor) and a 4/4 time signature. It consists of four systems of music. The first system contains the first two lines of lyrics. The second system contains the next two lines of lyrics. The piano accompaniment is written in a bass clef and provides harmonic support for the vocal lines. The score concludes with a double bar line.

# 92 While We Are Waiting, Come

1 While we are wait - ing, come;  
 2 With power and glo - ry, come;  
 3 Come, Sav - ior, quick - ly come;

while we are wait - ing, come.  
 with power and glo - ry, come.  
 come, Sav - ior, quick - ly come.

Je - sus, our Lord, Em - man - u - el,

while we are wait - ing, come.

This simple and meditative Advent hymn is so uncomplicated in both text and tune that it can be learned quickly and sung without reference to a book, which might make it effective as a prayer response. It would also lend itself to improvised stanzas on appropriate occasions.