



WESTMINSTER

— Presbyterian Church —

Albany, New York
December 15, 2024
Service of Worship 10:00 AM

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AT WORSHIP
The Third 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

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Roger C. Wilson

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 Theresa Oware, Nana Akwesi Agyemang-Bio, Maame Akosua Agyemang-Bio and Mina Obeng

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 three candles to bring the fire of the stars
down from heaven to earth, to nestle rest among the greens

Three: We name this candle Hope. (The first Advent candle is lit.) We name this candle Peace. (The second Advent candle is lit.) We name this candle Joy. (The third Advent candle is lit.)

Opening Hymn #93

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

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

Susan Schell

**All: God of Love, we confess to you that sometimes
we let the flame of joy in our hearts burn out.
We forget all of the blessings of our lives,
the love we have been able to give and to receive.
Instead, we focus on the things that haven't gone the way we wanted
and the problems we haven't been able to fix.
We are critical of others and critical of ourselves.
We are much more willing to share our complaints
than to share our hope with each other.
Forgive us God. Renew us with your strength and light.**

(Time of Silence)

Assurance of Forgiveness

Listen now to the prophecy of Isaiah:
"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit."

(Isaiah 61:1-3)

Even when despair is all around us
and apathy seems the order of the day,
we chart our path by the star of joy
and set our face steadily towards the light.

Let us pray together:

**Lord Jesus, as we search for signs of joy this week,
help us to become the signs of joy 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 joy. Amen.**

Passing The Peace

Susan Schell

Words of Welcome

Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff

WE PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD**Prayer for Illumination**

Susan Schell

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**

Luke 1:39-56

read by Susan Schell

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said,
 "My soul magnifies the Lord,
 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
 for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.
 Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,
 for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
 and holy is his name;
 indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him
 from generation to generation.
 He has shown strength with his arm;
 he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
 and lifted up the lowly;
 he has filled the hungry with good things
 and sent the rich away empty.
 He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
 in remembrance of his mercy,
 according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
 to Abraham and to his descendants forever."
 And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

Sermon

"Evidence"

Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Prayer Hymn #101

No Wind at the Window

Gathering Celebrations and Concerns

Prayers from State Street

Ned Trudeau

Prayers of the People

Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff

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

Susan Schell

Offertory Music

Winds of a Holy Night

David Paxton

Hymn #607

Doxology

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all people here below;
praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

WE ARE SENT IN GOD'S NAME



Hymn #100

My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

Benediction

Rev. Heather Kirk-Davidoff

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

The Desert Shall Rejoice

Lani Smith



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2025: Ephraim Adjei, Peter McKee, Linore Southworth

2026: John Bossung, Kate Gallagher, Felicia Kollie-Gambles, Nathan Powers

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2025: Kelly Crisfield, Carolyn Smith

2026: Mary Bullis, Marie McClumpha, Dodie Seagle

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John Bossung, President

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2025: John Bossung

2026: Pete Seagle, Joy L. Tallmadge, Peter Wrede

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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.

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates 93

1 Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates; be - hold the
 2 Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a
 3 Re - deem - er, come! I o - pen wide my heart to

King of glo - ry waits; the King of kings is
 tem - ple, set a - part from earth - ly use for
 thee; here, Lord, a - bide. Let me thy in - ner

draw - ing near; the Sav - ior of the world is here.
 heaven's em - ploy, a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.
 pres - ence feel; thy grace and love in me re - veal.

Beginning as a paraphrase of Psalm 24:7-10, this text then applies the door imagery to the singer's heart, and concludes with the individual's welcome of the approaching Savior. It is set to a very effective anonymous 18th-century English tune that has served many texts.

101 No Wind at the Window

1 No wind at the win - dow, no knock on the door;
 2 "O Mar - y, O Mar - y, don't hide from my face.
 3 "This child must be born that the king - dom might come:
 4 No pay - ment was prom - ised, no prom - is - es made;

no light from the lamp - stand, no foot on the floor;
 Be glad that you're fa - vored and filled with God's grace.
 sal - va - tion for man - y, de - struc - tion for some;
 no wed - ding was dat - ed, no blue - print dis - played.

no dream born of tired - ness, no ghost raised by fear:
 The time for re - deem - ing the world has be - gun,
 both end and be - gin - ning, both mes - sage and sign;
 Yet Mar - y, con - sent - ing to what none could guess,

just an an - gel and a wom - an and a voice in her ear.
 and you are re - quest - ed to moth - er God's Son."
 both vic - tor and vic - tim, both yours and di - vine."
 re - plied with con - vic - tion, "Tell God I say, Yes."

This 20th-century retelling of the Annunciation (Luke 1:26–38) effectively incorporates characteristic features of the folksong style its Irish tune requires, especially in the lists of “no” and “both.” The tune is named for a many-talented Irish saint of the 6th century.

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.

100 My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

Canticle of the Turning

1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
 2 Though I am small, my God, my all, you
 3 From the halls of power to the for - tress tower, not a
 4 Though the na - tions rage from age to age, we re -

God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
 work great things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
 mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -

won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
 jus - tice tears ev - ery ty - rant from his throne.
 liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.

You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
 Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
 The hun - gry poor shall weep no more, for the
 This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the

weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
 those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
 food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread; ev - ery
 prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be

By employing an energetic Irish folk song for its melody, this ballad-like paraphrase of the *Magnificat*, Mary's song at her meeting with her relative Elizabeth (Luke 1:46-55), recaptures both the wonder and the faith of the young woman who first recognized what God was doing.

JESUS CHRIST: ADVENT



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.

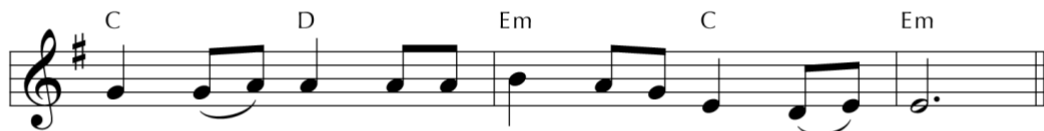
Refrain



My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the



fires of your jus - tice burn. Wipe a - way all tears, for the



dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

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.