

# *Westminster Presbyterian Church*

222 Schoolhouse Lane ~ Columbus, OH 43228 ~ 614-878-4623 ~ westminstercolumbus.org

Disciples – Everyone here!

**December 22, 2024**

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**As we prepare to worship** - God will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love. God will sing joyfully because of you, as on festival days. —Zephaniah 3:17-18

+ + +

**Ringing the church bell calls us to worship**

**Welcome & Prayer Cards**

**Announcements**

**Prelude**

**Congregational Introit for Advent Candlelighting**

“Wait for the Lord” (Psalm 27) # 90 (refrain only)



**Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle of LOVE**

Reading from Psalm 27:11-14 and words of Love

**\*Call to Worship**

Liturgist Karen Flowers

We come to glorify God, to rejoice in the One who saves us.

**God comes, so we might believe, so we might be blessed.**

Our hearts leap for joy! For God is coming to us in a child.

**God comes for those who hunger for hope,  
for those who thirst for grace.**

Holy is the One who comes in God's name,  
who fulfills every promise of God.

**God comes to walk with those who follow in faith,  
to bring peace to a shattered world.**

Let us worship God with hope, peace, joy and love!

**\*Hymn** “Prepare the Way, O Zion” # 106

**Call to Confession** (Please be seated)

Parts of our liturgy this morning were written by Rev. Thom M. Shuman, Pastor of Galloway Presbyterian Church.

Every notion we have about power, success, wealth and achievement, God takes and tosses out the window. More importantly, God comes to us,

to upset our idea that we must save ourselves. In Jesus, God comes to us, removing our sin, our failures, our expectations, so we might have life. Please join me as we pray together.

### **Unison Prayer of Confession**

**We confess we are not the people you hope us to be, Advent God. The very ones you favor? All too often, we ignore them, or worse fill them with ridicule. The ones you knock off their pedestals? We continue to admire them, seeking to emulate their ways. The drumbeat for more and more? We give into the rhythm so easily, we risk being sent away empty.**

**Forgive us, Mighty God who comes in the weakness of a baby. Look with grace upon us, so we might see your love shining down. We could live secure in your hope, we could be the ones of peace for our world, we could learn to do your will, if we but welcome Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, into our hearts and into our lives.**

...a time of silent prayer...

### **Declaration of Forgiveness**

God passes the heirloom of mercy down from generation to generation, always loving, always forgiving, always calling us to new life.

**As we open our hearts to God, we are filled with the joy that was sung at the Birth, with the Hope that walked among us, with the Grace which is always with us. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Amen.**

**\*Joyful Response** from "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" # 88

Singing the **refrain:**

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

**\*Pass the Peace of Christ**

The Peace of the Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

### **Prayer for Illumination**

However, nostalgia distorts our vision by painting everything with a romantic filter. Quite frankly, the Gospel story of Christmas is not nostalgic at all (even if we tell the story that way.) The setting is the same world we inhabit, where people are hungry, displaced because of wars, and political

leaders find significant portions of the populace disapproving of them and their policies.

Let us pray. Lord, open our hearts. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Old Testament Lesson**     Isaiah 7:10-16

When you pray, you're talking to God. When you read the Bible, God is talking to you.

The Word of God for the People of God.     **Thanks be to God.**

**Christmas poem**

"Wondering About the First Christmas" by Thomas John Carlisle

**Gospel Lesson**     Matthew 1:18-25

The Gospel of the Lord.     **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**     "God Is Nowhere"

"Her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man . . . ." (Matthew 1:19)

The story of Joseph and his love for Mary and his love for God  
and God's love for them both!

Rev. Jonathan T. Carlisle, Gap Pastor



Left: La Tour, Georges du Mesnil de (1593-1652): *The Angel Visiting Joseph in a Dream* Musée d'Arts de Nante

**\*Hymn**     "Love Has Come" # 110

**Focus on Mission** – We will continue to receive your gifts for the Christmas Joy Offering as we lift up past, present and future leaders of the church who need support in their times of need; and for the development and education for communities of color at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges.

**Invitation to Our Joyful and Generous Stewardship Together**

"Born a king on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again,  
King forever, ceasing never over us all to reign. O star of wonder, star of night,  
star with royal beauty bright, westward leading still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light." Let God receive our gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

## Offertory

**\*Doxology** "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"

# 606

## \*Prayer of Dedication

**In these moments, God, remind us of those who are yearning to be lifted to their feet, those who hunger for hope, those who look for peace. Use our gifts to serve them. We dedicate our Christmas Joy Offering gifts. You are Emmanuel, God-with-us. May these gifts help those who have served the church so you can be God-with-them. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

**A Time of Silence** "Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10

## Sharing of Joys and Concerns

**Prayer Chorus** "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying" # 469

Lord, listen to your children praying. Lord, send your Spirit in this place.

Lord, listen to your children praying. Send us love; send us power; send us grace.

## Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

**\*Hymn** "Angels We Have Heard on High" # 113

## \*Benediction

## \*Postlude



Westminster Presbyterian Church was founded December 4, 1955  
We are one of eighty-three member congregations  
of the Presbytery of Scioto Valley; and the  
Synod of the Covenant – 11 presbyteries and nearly 700 congregations  
mainly in Ohio and Michigan

### Our Mission - our purpose

To bring God's word to everyone, that God loves **everyone**, including you. The Gospel calls us not to just preach, but also to practice Christ's compassion for all by serving others and leaving no one out.

### Vision – our roadmap

The vision of Westminster Presbyterian Church is to build our community of Christ with love and care. We are committed to reaching across the street, and around the world to proclaim the Gospel.

### **Serving Westminster Presbyterian Church**

Our Session - Elders – Linda Crumley, Trent Rowe, Karen Flowers & Lynne Kelly (Clerk)

Our Deacons - Jim Benney, Carol Jones, Marsha Ross & Joyce Sizemore

Church staff – Karen Flowers, Sexton      Rene Miller, Treasurer

Rev. Jonathan T. Carlisle, Gap Pastor      Olivia Mitchem, Pianist

## **Announcements**

**Christmas Eve a 2:30pm Fellowship/Cookie** time before the Christmas Eve service, with cookies provided by Don and Linda

**Christmas Eve 3:00pm Candlelight Service** – a shorter service with carols, Christmas poetry and a Christmas story (in place of a sermon) and our traditional candle lighting.

In preparation for worship next Sunday, bring a Nativity set to share with others, or your favorite Christmas card you have received, Christmas letter, or your favorite gift you gave or received! This will be "show and tell" for fun.

The sermon "God the Giant or God the Child?" will be the story of Jesus "lost" in the temple at age 12. Can we rejoice in God as Child? Read Matthew 18:2-24 and Luke 2:41-52.