

4th Sunday of Advent



December 19, 2021 at 10:30 a.m.

Follow us also on



or on our church website at westminsterakron.org

Welcome Reverend Tom Ulrich and the Congregation of New Covenant Community Church!

Throughout the Advent season the congregations of New Covenant Community Church and Westminster Presbyterian Church are coming together to share the gifts of New Covenant's Pastor, The Reverend Tom Ulrich, and Westminster's Music Ministry under the direction of Interim Music Director and Organist, Bob Carlyon. Members and Elders of both congregations will participate in lighting the Advent candles during Sunday worship services and the lighting of congregational candles for the traditional singing of Silent Night on Christmas Eve.

Each Sunday following worship, refreshments will be served in the Fellowship Hall. Please spread the word of Peace, Joy and Love this holiday season as these neighboring churches celebrate the birth of Christ together.

COME

At the ringing of the chimes please silence your conversations and prepare your hearts and minds for an encounter with the Living God. We also ask that you power off your cell phones to prevent interference with our live-streaming and recording equipment.

Bolded text is read or sung by all.

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

Voluntary A Carol Suite Michael Burkhardt
David Ciucevich, clarinet - Ian Wenz, flute - Vallorie Marsillo, piano

Adult Handbell Ensemble Angels Tidings Cynthia Dobrinski

*Call to Worship Ken Williams

Leader: We gather here in Hope, waiting to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child.

People: We gather here in Peace, anticipating the day when friends and foes and neighbors and strangers will be reconciled with one another.

Leader: We gather here in Joy, anticipating the dawn of God's newness.

People: We gather here in Love, so that we may be inspired to share God's love with all people.

Leader: As we worship, may we illumine the world with the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love that come from God.

People: May we forever proclaim the good news of the gospel with all people.

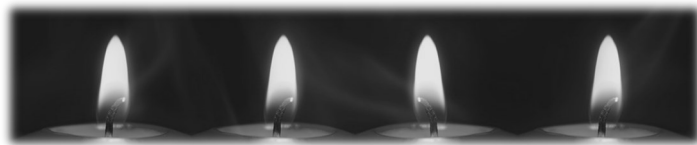
Choral Introit There Is No Rose Of Such Virtue
Stephen Caracciolo - *Choral Scholars*

**1 O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here; Until the Son of God appear.
Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**2 O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer,
Our spirits by Thine advent here; Disperse the gloomy clouds
of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. (Refrain)**

**3 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. (Refrain)**

Lighting of the Advent Candle



Rebecca and Loren Pool

Reader 1: Having lit the Advent candles of hope, peace, and joy, today we light the candle of love, as we await the One who is the incarnation of divine love. (light the candles)

Reader 2: Through God's love for the world, God becomes human, and the Christ Child overcomes the chasm between God and humanity.

Reader 1: In God's sight, all people are precious and honored and loved (Isaiah 43:4)

Reader 2: The light from the Advent candles opens our eyes so that we may truly see our fellow human beings and share God's love with them.

Reader 1: May God's love be born in our hearts so that we may embrace the foreigner, the stranger, and the immigrant with love.

Reader 2: In lighting this candle, we give thanks for every child of every age who shares the planet with us.

All: Lord of love, Your grace exceeds the limits of our understanding, and You give us more than we can think to ask. As we make our journey to the manger, grant that the One who is Love would inspire us to love this world and all people in it as You love us. God of hope, God of peace, God of joy, God of love, into our darkness come. Amen.

ENCOUNTER

Call to Confession

Although we want to draw closer to God on our Advent journey, we often wander from God's way, and we disregard God's teaching. Yet, in spite of our sin, God invites us to a path of repentance so that we can face the truth of our lives and turn toward God in hope. Let us now confess our sins to God, acknowledging our faults and failures, and trusting in God's mercy and grace. Let us pray:

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, in the midst of our Advent preparations, we often overlook the significance of the season. Rather than anticipating Your new reality, we have failed to live as Your people, and we have surrendered to the sin that infects us with fear and faithlessness. Have mercy upon us, Lord, and forgive the sin in our lives. Fill us with the grace of the Incarnate Word that awakens new hope for us, and guide us through the wisdom of the Wonderful Counselor who shares the gift of life with all people, for we ask it in the name of the One who is to come, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Silence is observed.

Response 574

Lord, Have Mercy

Kyrie

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

Assurance of Forgiveness

(adapted from Malachi 4:2 and Psalm 103:17)

Leader: For all who revere God's name, the sun of righteousness shall dawn,
risen with healing in His wings.

**People: The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.
Holy is God's name.**

Leader: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

**People: Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we
are forgiven!**

*Response #23, Refrain**

GLORIA

Gloria in Excelsis Deo

*Passing the Peace

Greet both friends and strangers saying,

The peace of Christ be with you.

*During this time of pandemic, a nod of the head and wave of the hand will
suffice.*

Time for Church Life and Call for the Offering

God's love for us was expressed in the person of Jesus Christ — the One who can
bring Joy to the World. And we can convey the joy of God's love for all people by
sharing our material possessions and offering our lives to God. Let us therefore
use this opportunity to respond to the joy we receive through Jesus Christ by the
sharing of our gifts, our talents, and our lives.

Offering plates may be found as you exit the sanctuary.

Offertory

People, Look East

Besancon - Carol Tune

Setting by Eugene Butler - Text may be found at hymn #12

*Response 592

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

Doxology

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures
here below; Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son,
and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Time with Young Disciples

Lisa Bansen-Harp

*Following the Time with Young Disciples, children are invited
to remain with their families or to visit with our childcare staff
in the nursery.*

GROW

Prayer for Illumination

Gracious God, as we await the dawn of the Sun of righteousness, shine the light of Your truth upon us as we read and hear Your Word. Through these Scriptures, illumine us with Your wisdom, and open our eyes to all that You yearn to teach us and reveal to us, through the One who is the Light of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The First Lesson

Micah 5:2-5

Old Testament

2 But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

3 Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labour has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

4 And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;

5 and he shall be the one of peace.
If the Assyrians come into our land
and tread upon our soil,
we will raise against them seven shepherds
and eight installed as rulers.

Carol #44 O Little Town of Bethlehem ST.LOUIS

**1 O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.**

**2 For Christ is born of Mary, And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of
wondering love.
O morning stars together Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, And peace to all on earth!**

**3 How silently, how silently, The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming, But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still, The dear Christ
enters in.**

**4 O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!**

Choir	O Nata Lux	Patti Drennan
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The Second Lesson	Isaiah 9:2-7	Old Testament
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2 The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.

3 You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

4 For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
5 For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
6 For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onwards and for evermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Carol #53

What Child is This

GREENSLEEVES

**1 What Child is this who, laid to rest On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet While shepherds
watch are keeping?**

**Refrain: This, this is Christ the King, Whom shepherds guard
and angels sing;
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud, The Babe, the Son of Mary!**

**2 Why lies He in such mean estate, Where ox and ass are
feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here The silent Word is
pleading.**

3 So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh, Come one and all, to own Him.

The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

Choir Twas in the Moon of Wintertime *Arr. Robert A. Hobby*

The Third Lesson Luke 2:1-7 New Testament

1 In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.

2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

3 All went to their own towns to be registered.

4 Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

5 He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

6 While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

Carol #27 Gentle Mary Laid Her Child

**1 Gentle Mary laid her Child Lowly in a manger;
There He lay, the undefiled, To the world a stranger.
Such a Babe in such a place, Can He be the Savior?
Ask the saved of all the race Who have found His favor.**

**2 Angels sang about His birth; Wise men sought and found Him;
Heaven's star shone brightly forth, Glory all around Him.**

**Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, Heard the angels singing;
All the plains were lit that night, All the hills were ringing.**

**3 Gentle Mary laid her Child Lowly in a manger;
He is still the undefiled, But no more a stranger.
Son of God, of humble birth, Beautiful the story;
Praise His Name in all the earth, Hail the King of glory!**

Choir The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy *Arr. Don Besig*

Sermon Rudolph and Bethlehem The Reverend Tom Ulrich

SERVE

*Affirmation of Faith

from The Confession of 1967, 9.53-55

God's redeeming work in Jesus Christ embraces the whole of human life: social and cultural, economic and political, scientific and technological, individual and corporate. It includes the natural environment as exploited and despoiled by sin. It is the will of God that the divine purpose for human life shall be fulfilled under the rule of Christ and all evil be banished from creation.

Already God's reign is present as a ferment in the world, stirring hope in all people and preparing the world to receive its ultimate judgment and redemption. With an urgency born of this hope, the church applies itself to present tasks and strives for a better world.

Prayers of the People

God of light and life, as we await the day when the Coming One will illumine all humanity with Your light, we look for signs of how Your new world is appearing on the horizon. Through Your grace, enlighten all of us who sit in darkness, and illumine us with Your radiance, so that we may receive light for our way, and we may grasp Your vision for all humanity.

O Emmanuel, God-with-us, You are the hope of all humankind, and we pray that You would open our eyes, and broaden our understanding, so that we may discern how You are at work in the world.

O Prince of Peace, soften all of our hearts, and remove from us every element of contention and conflict, and instead grant that all Your people, in every land and nation, may work to promote peace and harmony across the globe.

Wonderful Counselor, whose wisdom enriches all humankind, be especially present to the members of our congregation and community who, because of illness or hardship or circumstance, are experiencing difficulty at this time. Surround them with Your comfort and compassion, and enable them to feel Your love supporting them and Your hand holding them. Make Yourself even more real to us as well, and fill our hearts with Your love, so that we may seek to reconcile differences, to heal hurts, and to embody the righteousness that You desire for all Your people. Reveal to us how we can become workers for peace and good will, and equip us to live as the faithful disciples You have called us to be, for we ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught His disciples, when praying, to say together:

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.

*Hymn #49

Once in Royal David's City

IRBY

**1 Once in royal David's city Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby In a manger for His bed.
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.**

**2 He came down to earth from heaven Who is God and Lord of
all, And His shelter was a stable, And His cradle was a stall.
With the poor, oppressed, and lowly, Lived on earth our
Savior holy.**

**3 Jesus is our childhood's pattern; Day by day, like us He
grew; He was little, weak and helpless, Tears and smiles like
us He knew;
And He feels for all our sadness, And He shares in all our
gladness.**

**4 And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His own
redeeming love,
For that Child so dear and gentle Is our Lord in heaven above;
And He leads His children on To the place where He is gone.**

*Charge and Benediction

Let hope live in your heart and guide your steps.
Let peace live in your heart, being motivated by compassion rather than fear.
Let joy live in your heart by seeing the good in everyone we meet.
Let love live in your heart by loving all people as Christ has loved us.
But, most of all, let Christ live in your heart, so that we may become the people God has called us to be.
And may God our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, forever keep you in His care.

Voluntary

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen
Traditional English Melody
Arr. Gail Leven Pollock
Vallorie Marsillo, piano - Bob Carlyon, organ

**** This response takes the place of the *Gloria Patri* during Advent**

*Funding for today's musicians was provided by the
Brideweser Music Endowment Fund.*

Our USHERS Today are Donna Gorrington, Dan Gorrington, Bob Leonard, Don Rearick and Dave Stobbs (head usher).

Greeters from New Covenant Community Church Today
are Hal Horton and Jackie Horton.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In order to accommodate the anticipated large number of worshipers for the Christmas Eve service, all pews will be open for seating and all worshipers will be required to wear masks.

Stewardship Seventy two households have pledged \$237,458 towards our 2022 operating budget. There are still many people whose pledges have not reached our church office. We encourage you to bring your pledge to church, mail it to the office or pledge online. We urge everyone to be part of this year's Stewardship Program. Please make your commitment to our church and ministries today. Thank You to all who participate.

Let's Talk Taxes Just a reminder that your year-end gifts must be physically delivered to the Finance Office or postmarked on or before December 31, 2021 to be included on your 2021 giving statement. We follow this policy to be in compliance with IRS regulations regarding tax deductions allowable in a specific year. The church offices will be closed Friday, December 31 and Monday, January 3. Contributions received during worship on January 2 will be included on your 2022 giving statement. Thank you for your generous support of Westminster Presbyterian Church during 2021.

Monthly Financial Report

November 2021	Actual	Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
<u>Total Revenues</u>	\$23,919.87	\$39,147.66	\$501,425.95	\$474,549.26
<u>Total Expenses</u>	\$53,372.09	\$47,018.30	\$430,408.83	\$521,365.24
Net	(\$29,452.22)	(\$7,870.64)	\$71,017.12	(\$46,815.98)

Please contact the Finance Office if you would like a copy of the detailed financial report for the period ending November 30, 2021.

**Church Offices will be Closed Friday, December 24
& Monday, December 27 for Christmas.**

Attention to the Congregation! Please dispose of your used masks in the trash receptacles located in the narthex and Wright-Herberich Hall.

Church Events week of December 19—25, 2021

Sunday, 12/19

- 8:30 am Nursery Opens
- 8:45 am Choir Rehearsal in Choir Room
- 9:30 am Sunday School
- 9:30 am Parenting Group
- 10:30 am Worship Service in Sanctuary
& on YouTube Livestream
- 4:00 pm Jazz Vespers Service

Thursday, 12/23

- 9:30 am WPC Staff Meeting in the Library

Friday, 12/24 Church Offices Closed

- 3:30 pm Choir & Brass Rehearsal in Sanctuary
- 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (Masks Required)

Advent CALENDAR

Month of December

Friday, December 24
5:00 pm Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service

Paragon Brass & Choir
Pastor Tom Ulrich preaching
Church Offices Closed

Saturday, December 25
Merry Christmas!

Sunday, December 26
10:30 am Lessons & carols
Pastor Tom Ulrich preaching

For the most recent CDC guidance, we encourage you to visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>

Westminster's policy presently includes the following:

- Masks are now optional for all vaccinated adults. Unvaccinated adults are asked to continue masking.
- Masks are also optional for children and youth of every age, whether they have been vaccinated or not. This is at the discretion of the parent or guardian of the child or youth.
- For the protection of our children, all nursery workers are fully vaccinated and wearing masks.
- Solos and congregational singing will continue both with and without masks.
- We will continue to observe social distancing measures, and the ushers will assist worshippers with seating in the sanctuary. The pews where worshippers are asked to sit are marked with a green sticker. If you would prefer to sit at a greater distance from others, please inform an usher who can guide you to a place where you will feel more comfortable.
- We have returned hymnals, Bibles, and giving envelopes to pews with green stickers. Offering trays and fellowship pads will not be passed at this time. Offering trays may be found at the entrance to the worship space.
- Livestreaming services will continue on YouTube.

Giving Online During these difficult times, the church remains grateful for your faithful support. To give electronically on the WPC website click under the tab "online giving" and use this QR Code.



Staff Schedule in the Office:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Claudine Schooley		Claudine Schooley	Claudine Schooley	Claudine Schooley
WPC Church Office wpcoffice1250@gmail.com				
	Margo Works	Margo Works	Margo Works	
Director of Children, Family, and Youth wpccchildren1250@gmail.com				
	Bob Carlyon	Bob Carlyon	Bob Carlyon	
Music Director/Organist wpcmusicdir1250@gmail.com				
Denise Hochevar	Denise Hochevar	Denise Hochevar	Denise Hochevar	
WPC Church Finance wpcfinance1250@gmail.com				
Dave Bodnar	Dave Bodnar	Dave Bodnar	Dave Bodnar	
Daytime Custodian wpcbuilding@gmail.com				

Other Staff:

Val Stewart, Director of Children's Choir wpccchildrenschoir1250@gmail.com

Bruce Klucharich, Audio-Visual Technician

Traci Range, Director of Childcare wpccchildcare1250@gmail.com

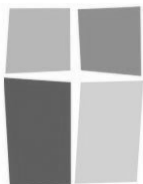
Laurel Labbe, Youth Music llabbe@roadrunner.com

Volunteers:

Kristy Yates, Director of Adult Bell Choir

Shelley Koutnik, Head of Staff

The Church Office is open from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday - Friday.



Westminster Presbyterian Church

come encounter grow serve

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