



In Darkness and in Light, God is with Us

You know, one of the best things about these long, dark, winter months? They are a beautiful backdrop for all the twinkling lights of heaven and earth. It seems that they have need of one another, darkness and light, but all too often, we have divided darkness from light, naming one bad and the other good.



In her book, *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, Barbara Brown Taylor reclaims the goodness of the dark which has long been something to avoid, a place of anxiety and fear. I am reading Brown Taylor's book this Advent (along with Will Willimon's excellent Advent study, *Heaven and Earth*, that our Adult Sunday Study Group is following). It will be a good companion for our daily devotional guide, *Shadow and Light* (see page 5). I invite you to read it with me. Maybe we can meet up for a coffee or tea to

discuss what we are learning from the book and from the darkness of the night, our own life circumstances, or situations in the world.

In November, aspiring Master Gardener Beth Hammond took our children out to Westminster's prayer garden to plant daffodil bulbs. The bulbs need the dark of the earth and the cold of the winter to bring forth their colorful spring gifts. I think about words from the twenty-third Psalm, "even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me." Even when there is no light at all, God is with us, we need not be afraid. Our bodies need the dark of night so that we can rest.

The Christmas story teaches us that Christ was born on a dark night in a dark time. The stars that could be seen on that dark backdrop lit the way for the wise ones to find him. I wonder, what signs of God's love we might find if we ventured into the dark night, or even into the dark times in our own lives, knowing that there we will find Emmanuel, God with us, day or night.

Day to day pours forth
speech,
And night to night declares
knowledge.
Psalm 19:2

In joyous anticipation, I am your pastor and friend;



December Sermon Series: Follow the Light

Our new year begins with a search in the darkness for the faintest lights of hope, peace, joy, and love. We who know the story know that the light has come, and will come again. In Advent, as we wait for the light, we make ourselves ready to follow it.

December 3: Light in Broken Places

First Sunday in Advent: Hope

Communion/Hanging of the Greens

☐ Isaiah 64:1-9

☐ Mark 13:24-37

December 10: Night Lights

Second Sunday in Advent: Peace

☐ Isaiah 40:1-11

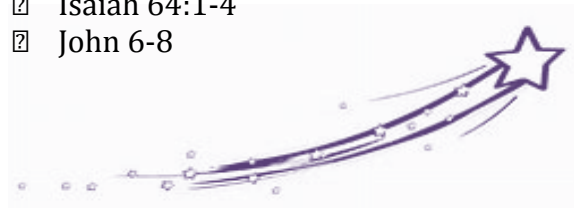
☐ Mark 1:1-11

December Street Lights

Third Sunday in Advent: Joy

☐ Isaiah 64:1-4

☐ John 6-8



December 24: Abiding Light

Morning Worship at 10:00 A.M.

Fourth Sunday in Advent: Love

☐ John 1:1-5

☐ 1 Corinthians 13:4-13

December 24: O Holy Night

Evening Worship at 5:00 P.M.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Lessons & Carols

☐ Genesis 1:1-5

☐ Luke 2:1-17:7

☐ Luke 2:8-14

☐ Luke 2:15-20

☐ Isaiah 9:2-7

☐ Titus 2:11-14

December 31: Dawning Light

First Sunday of Christmas

☐ Luke 2:22-40

Watch Out—God is on the Way!

Excerpted from AbingdonPress.com

Sunday Morning Study for Adults

9:00 A.M.

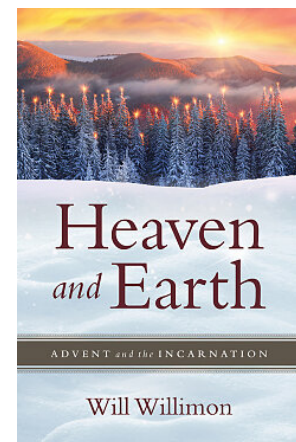
Choir Room

It's not within our own power to make a fresh start. If we're to have a future different from the past, it must come as a gift, something not of our devising. What we need is a God who refuses to be trapped in eternity, a God who not only cares about us but is willing to show up among us and do something with us, here, now.

In Heaven and Earth: Advent and the Incarnation, Will Willimon introduces you to the God who does just that, bringing heaven to earth and changing everything. In Advent we celebrate and anticipate the earth-shaking, life-transforming good news that God is coming to us.

Watch out. Get ready. God is on the way!

Author Will Willimon is a preacher and teacher of preachers. He is a United Methodist bishop (retired) and serves a Professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry and Director of the Doctor of Ministry program at Duke Divinity School, Durham, North Carolina.



Westminster Happenings

Sunday December 3	<p>Sunday School Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room. Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing. <i>See pages 2 & 5 for information about Sunday School studies during Advent.</i></p> <p>Light in Broken Places <i>First Sunday in Advent: Hope</i> <i>Communion Sunday/Hanging of the Greens</i> <i>Food Collection for Food Bank</i> Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming. Stay alert, stay awake—Christ is coming!</p> <p>Special Advent Sunday Sustenance Join Chef Rob and his team in the Fellowship Hall at 11:15 A.M. Celebrate the beginning of Advent with a steaming bowl of chili. Donations benefit the WPC safety equipment fund.</p>
Monday December 4	<p>BEMA Bible Discussion Group Meet in the Joe Gettys Classroom at 6:00 P.M. Discuss Episode 10 of the BEMA Podcast (<i>see page 6 for more info</i>).</p>
Tuesday December 5	<p>Presbyterian Women’s Brunch Come to the Hammond’s home (504 Eagles Harbor Drive) at 11:00 A.M. Enjoy fellowship and discuss “Mary and Martha Encounter Christ.”</p> <p>Note: No Mindful Greenwood meetings in December.</p>
Wednesday December 6	<p>Note: No Books & Brown Bag Discussion Group meetings in December.</p>
Thursday December 7	<p>Note: No Rainbow Fellowship meetings in December.</p> <p>Note: No Crossover Contemplatives meetings in December.</p>
Saturday December 9	<p>Wellington Green Christmas Caroling and Neighborhood Parade Gather in the Fellowship Hall at 2:45 P.M. Energize your spirits and sing praises at this popular community event</p>
Sunday December 10	<p>Sunday School Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room. Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing.</p>

Westminster Happenings, *continued*

**Sunday
December
10,
*continued*** | **Night Light**
Second Sunday in Advent: Peace
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.
Stand in awe beside the Jordan River as God affirms Christ's baptism.
Called Session Meeting
Meet at the Dennis home immediately following worship.
Conduct the business of the church, as led by the Holy Spirit

**Monday
December
11** | **BEMA Bible Discussion Group**
Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.
Discuss Episode 11 of the BEMA Podcast.

**Sunday
December
17** | **Sunday School**
Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room.
Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing.
Streetlights
Third Sunday in Advent: Joy
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.
Find the true source of all life and light—Christ Jesus.
Note: No Sunday Sustenance today

**Monday
December
18** | **BEMA Bible Discussion Group**
Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 P.M.
Discuss Episode 12 of the BEMA Podcast.

**Wednesday
December
21** | **"Blue Christmas" Worship Service**
Gather in the sanctuary at 6:00 P.M. (*see page 12*)
Find comfort and solace in the midst of holiday season challenges.

**Sunday
December
24** | **Fellowship for All Ages**
Greet each other in love and peace at 9:30 A.M. in the Narthex.
Note: No Sunday School
Abiding Light
Fourth Sunday in Advent: Love
Christmas Joy—Special Offering (see page 6)
Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.
Prepare to welcome the light that *always* shines our darkness.
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols

Worship at 5:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.
Come adore the Christ Child in the manger with prayers and songs.

Westminster Happenings, *continued*

December
25-26

Note: The church office is closed for the Christmas holiday.

Sunday
December
31

Sunday School

Adults: Gather at 9:00 A.M. in the Choir Room.
Children and Youth: Meet at 9:00 A.M. in lower-level education wing.

Dawning Light

Worship at 10:00 A.M. in person or via live streaming.
Join faithful Jews Mary and Joseph as they present Jesus at the Temple.

Shadow & Light: Our 2024 Advent Devotional Guide



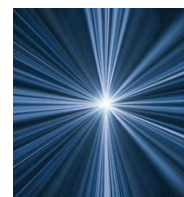
Our Advent Devotional guide this year comes to us from Vibrant Church Communications creator, Jo Nygard Owens, in partnership with Elsa Cook at cookingwithelsa.org. Jo is a PC(USA) Teaching Elder and the Pastor for Digital Ministry at the National Cathedral in Washington DC.

Each week, Jo and Elsa employ scripture, song, prayer, and practice to help us find the holy in the spectrum from light to shadow and prepare us for the coming Christ.

Copies are available in the narthex and may be downloaded digitally from the Resources page of our website.

Children's Sunday School: Sharing the Light

During Advent, the children's Sunday school class is studying scripture that mentions *light*, starting with Genesis 1:3 (Let there be light!), and continuing through Psalms and Isaiah, to the Gospels of Matthew and John. They will be reading books about light, singing songs about light, and creating crafts that feature light. If you would like to share the light with your children or grandchildren, go to page 16 to find a list of books to read together.



Be an Angel for Meg's House

Once again, Westminster is adopting a Meg's House family to ensure that they feel the love of Christ during this special season. The mission of Meg's House is to provide housing and supportive services that reduce the impact of domestic violence and chronic homelessness in the communities they serve: McCormick, Edgefield, Greenwood, and Saluda.

It's easy to be an angel! Select an ornament from the angel tree in the narthex, sign up, shop to fulfill the wish noted on the angel, and then deliver the wrapped gifts back to our narthex on December 17. Be sure to note on the package which family member should receive that gift. *Merry Christmas, indeed!*

The BEMA Bulletin

Submitted by Luke Christie

November was full of riches for BEMA Greenwood: We moved into the newly refurbished Joe Gettys Room and were gifted copies of BEMA Discipleship leader Marty Solomon's book. Best of all, we uncovered lots of textual treasures in the parallel stories found in Genesis 1-11, the prologue to the biblical narrative. In December, we will continue sojourning with Abraham as he follows God's call.



Special dates of note: On December 18, we will have a modest (but festive) Christmas party! BEMA Greenwood will **not** meet on December 25 or January 1.

A community Bible study hosted by Westminster, BEMA Greenwood meets 6:00-7:00 P.M. on Mondays. Gloria and Luke Christie facilitate discussions about the BEMA Podcast, a context-rich study of the Bible from Genesis through Revelation. All are welcome! You may join at any time, and you may come and go as your schedule permits. But please honor the group's one Cardinal Rule: Whenever you participate in discussion, you must have listened to all podcast episodes through the episode being discussed (i.e., be "caught up" with the group).

To learn more about the podcast, visit www.bemadiscipleship.com. To learn more about BEMA Greenwood, contact Gloria Christie at ggchristie716@gmail.com or 864-379-5034.

BEMA December Schedule

Discussion Date	Episode	Bible Reading	Length	Presentation
12/4	#10 - Walking the Blood Path	Genesis 15-17	50 min	Yes
12/11	#11 - Here I am	Genesis 18-22	54 min	Yes
12/18	#12 - A Mission Realized	Genesis 24 & 26	38 min	No
12/25	Christmas Sabbath - <i>No Discussion Group Meeting</i>			

Celebrating the Perfect Gift: December 24th Special Offering

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families.

Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage.

Westminster has proudly participated in this worthy work for many years. Thank you for your continued generosity

What is *Advent*?

Advent means *coming* or *arrival*. During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ's coming into the world, his coming into our hearts, and our expectant hope for his coming.

The season was first mentioned in the 4th century. Bishop Perpetuus of Tours (c. 490) established a fast before Christmas that began on November 11 (St. Martin's Day), and the Council of Tours (567) mentioned an Advent season.

The season of Advent was patterned after the season of Lent, a six-week period of penitence and preparation for Easter. Similarly, the four weeks of Advent present an opportunity for communal discernment and personal examination, as the church prepares to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord and looks with hope for Christ's return.

In the ancient world, various peoples lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter's season and to pray for the return of the light. The church has Christianized that practice in the lighting of the Advent wreath.

To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of our world. Until the dawning of that Great Day, we watch and wait in Holy Spirit for Christ's coming into the darkness of our world, lighting candles of **hope, peace, joy, and love**; and



The Hanging of the Greens

One of the most striking and most universal features of Christmas is the use of evergreens in our churches and



homes. This year, we are incorporating this festive practice into our worship on December 3, the first Sunday in Advent.

Holly and ivy, along with pine and fir are called evergreens because they never change color. They are ever-green, ever-alive, even in the midst of winter. They symbolize the unchanging nature of our God, and they remind us of the everlasting life that is ours through Christ Jesus.

Evergreen trees, garlands and wreaths are symbols of the eternal life available when Jesus comes into our lives. The wreath

itself, a never-ending circle, also reminds us of the endless love of God. We hang the greens to reflect our joy in the abundant life we find through Christ Jesus.

Christmas Cheer

Plan to support these festive activities involving WPC family and friends!

Greenwood Christmas Parade

Main Street
December 3 from 2:30 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.
Arabella and McKenna McCarson will be performing.

Junie B. Jones Jingle Bells Batman Smells

Greenwood Community Theater
December 9 at 2:00 P.M. -or-

remembering the promises of God with prayer.

December 10 at 5:00 P.M.
Rey and Josh Wicker are part of the Jingle Cast for this production.

Greenwood Festival Choral “Gloria”

First Presbyterian Church
December 10 at 7:00 P.M.
Lucia Horowitz sings with the Chorale.

New Member Spotlight: Luke Christie

With great joy, the Westminster family has welcomed several new members over the last few weeks. This month, we shine the spotlight on Luke Christie. Luke has jumped right into church life—he and his mother, Gloria, are the driving force behind our new study group—see the BEMA Bulletin on page 6 for details.

Be sure to introduce yourself to Luke when you see him! To give you conversation fodder, here’s a brief biography from Luke, along with his answers to our traditional silly questions.

I grew up in Due West, but have been an active member of the Greenwood community since high school. I achieved the rank Eagle Scout in Troop 270, which is chartered to First Baptist Church, and I was a member of First Presbyterian Church for many years. I earned a BA from Furman University and an MA from University of Georgia, both in Communication Studies. I now work in Development & Community Relations at Bobby Dodd Institute, an Atlanta nonprofit that provides employment opportunities and support services for people with disabilities. While living in Athens, Georgia, for graduate school, I was a member of First Presbyterian Church of Athens. I enjoy reading, writing, theater, and spending time with family and friends.



of

1. What gives you joy? BOOKS! I inherited my dad’s love of books and reading. I embrace all reading media (audiobooks, e-books, etc.), but nothing beats the aesthetic experience of a physical book. One-on-one time with family and friends also gives me immense joy. “Quality time” is my love language (quality time...and books, of course).

2. What drives you crazy? Broken or inefficient processes and systems—or pretty much anything that isn’t working the way it is *supposed* to work. For example, when I have to orchestrate a phone relay with my wheelchair provider, insurance company, doctor, and employer because they all have to be consulted before my wheelchair can be repaired and none understands what the others want from them and it goes on for weeks—THAT drives me crazy!



3. What's your favorite piece of music? Goodness, this is tough. I have kind of an eclectic taste in music, and I will admit that I am much more of a literature buff than I am a music aficionado. But the piece that kept coming to mind was *Les Miserables*. There was a moment a few years ago when our culture was over-saturated with *Les Mis*, but it is a truly stunning composition. I also love a lot of other musical scores, in a variety of different styles.

4. What's your favorite thing to do when you have spare time? Read. Browse the shelves of a bookstore. Spend time with friends. See answer to question one.

5. What's your favorite meal? Fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, and steamed broccoli. This has been my favorite meal for as long as I can remember. I thought I would “grow out of it,” and I do love a lot of other foods. But it’s hard to beat fried chicken!

“Let Us Extol God Music and Song”



Thanks to God’s great generosity, beauty permeates Creation.

And music is one of God’s most beautiful gifts. Mindful of the advice of many psalmists (including the author of Psalm 95), Denise Waldrep has boldly instigated formation of the Westminster Irregulars, an ad hoc assortment of music-lovers who are eager to use music to enhance our worship.

You are invited to join the fun! No training or experience required. No audition necessary. No formal rehearsals—just “jam sessions” and joyful noise.

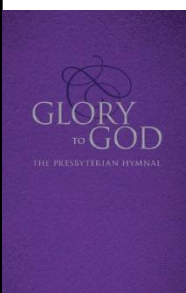
According to Denise, “We don’t have a preconceived concept for the final configuration of the ensemble and the arrangement— that’s why we’re “Irregulars”! But we know that God will mold and shape those of us who can participate into an ensemble that will be just right for that moment and that service. Our hope is to bring an interesting musical offering on the second Sunday of every month.”

Want to be part of this merry band? Jam sessions are scheduled for the first Sunday of each month immediately following worship. Denise provides an idea for the selection to prepare, and the group wings it from there! Bring your voice, harmonica, tuba, guitar, violin, bongos or washboard and spoons. Anything goes!

Building on the “Irregulars” successful debut (“I’ll Fly Away” and “Down By the

What to Buy for the Person Who Has Everything?

Rather than spend money on a useless trinket that has to be dusted or yet another tie or t-shirt, instead, give a gift that honors both the recipient *and* God: sponsor a copy of The Glory to God hymnal in honor or in memory of someone special.



For \$30, your sponsorship will place a new hymnal in our sanctuary, complete with an attractive bookplate recognizing you and the individual you are honoring or remembering. If you so choose, the church will also

send an acknowledge note to the appropriate person or family.

You can order and dedicate new hymnals by using the **purple** order form in the narthex or order online from the Westminster website: wpcgnwd.org

Psalm 95

- ¹ Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
- ² Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song.
- ³ For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods.
- ⁴ In His hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to Him.
- ⁵ The sea is His, for He made it, and His hands formed the dry land.

River”), the next jam session will take on Sunday, December 3rd. We’ll be singing “Beautiful Star of Bethlehem. If you are interested in giving this a whirl, contact Denise at dforthearts@gmail.com.

⁶ Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;
⁷ for He is our God and we are the people of His pasture, the flock under His care.

Verses 1-7 NIV



What Really Matters: Commitment Update

The 2023-2024 stewardship season culminated on Dedication Sunday, November 19th. After several weeks of presentations and testimony on why giving matters, the congregation was invited to bring forward completed Commitment Statements during worship. As of November 28th, about one-third of our families have sent in completed forms and committing to putting their faith to work in love through participation at Westminster.

Lots of faithful friends have expressed interest in fulfilling the many roles needed to support our work and worship. In terms of financial support, the commitments received thus far cover not quite half of the asking budget.

Pray for God to continue guiding Westminster and providing for us abundantly. If you have not yet made your commitment, please do so as soon as possible, so that the budget can be finalized before year-end. Remember that your offering is your thank-you note to God, your grateful response to God’s many blessings in your life.

“For when we are in union with Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor the lack of it makes any difference at all; what matters is faith that works through love.”

Galatians 5:6b (NIV)

Stewardship Snapshot

The Stewardship Snapshot is a regular report from the Session to the *Westminster Times* newsletter. Please note that because of the newsletter publication schedule vs. timing of month-end close, these reports will typically be about six weeks behind.



October 2023

	October Actual	Monthly Budget	Year-to-Date Actual	Year-to-Date Budget
Total Income	\$26,755	\$17,530	\$188,080	\$176,304
Total Expenses	\$21,145	\$21,352	\$188,592	\$206,194
Net Gain/Loss	\$5,610		-\$512	

- Revenue from member pledges includes a \$10,488 transfer of funds from the investment account to the checking account (see page 11). This completes the common stock contribution that was pledged for operations earlier in the year and held in the investment account until needed to cover expenses.
- We received a \$1,000 grant Trinity Presbytery to cover WOW preaching honoraria

Please direct questions about church financial matters to our treasurer, Len Bornemann, or any member of the Business Affairs Committee.

Quarterly Update on Westminster’s Investment Funds

The newsletter’s monthly Stewardship Snapshot is just a brief, high-level report that reflects only a “checkbook” view of our finances, not the total financial picture.

We also have a separate account where some of our resources are invested in stocks, bonds, and mutual funds so that the money is working for us until we need to access it. The Treasurer and Session receive and review quarterly reports of investment fund activity.

The investment fund is home to three different types of reserves (see report at right):

- **Emergency Reserves** – to be used for extraordinary or unexpected expenses, such as major capital repairs. You’ll see that the balance has increased over the last quarter

Total Balance: June 30, 2023	\$	283,749
Emergency Reserve Fund	\$	237,727
+ Quarterly dividends and interest	\$	2,245
+ Quarterly change in investment value	\$	(1,672)
+ Accruals	\$	2,822
+ Management Feeds	\$	(251)
Emergency Reserve Fund Balance: 3Q23	\$	240,871
Memorials Fund	\$	15,375
+ Deposits	\$	-
+ Withdrawals	\$	-
Memorials Fund Balance: 3Q23	\$	15,375
Current Operations Fund	\$	30,448
+ Deposits	\$	-
+ Withdrawals:		
- 7/23	\$	(15,000)
- 9/23	\$	(5,000)
Current Operations Fund Balance: 3Q23	\$	10,448
Total Balance: September 30, 2023	\$	266,694

- **Memorials** – to be used at the direction of families for whom gifts have been giving to the church in memory of a loved one. No memorial funds were used this past quarter.
- **Current Operations** – to be used as needed during the year to cover regular monthly expenses. Typically, the monies held here come from families that choose to pay their entire annual pledge at the beginning of the year. By keeping the money here, instead of in our checking account, the money grows until such time it is needed.

The primary takeaway here is to reassure you that when we report that money was moved from the Investment Account into the checking account, it typically **does not mean** that we are in dire straits and are tapping our emergency fund to stay afloat. We are just being prudent stewards of the gifts God provides, and accessing funds just when they are needed.

If at any time you have questions or concerns about Westminster's financial status, please contact our treasurer, Len Bornemann, or any member of the Business Affairs Committee. Financial matters are complex, and it's important to get the facts from those in the know.

And God is able to provide you with every blessingⁱⁿ in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8

End-of-Year Giving

As you hustle out the door for Christmas travels and holiday excursions, remember that it's to your advantage to catch up on



your 2023 pledges before you go.

The year-end tax deadline is just around the corner. Your giving generously to the church

helps your bottom line as well as Westminster's. Every gift, large or small, makes a positive difference for all. *Thank you always for your support!*



Time to Celebrate!

Best wishes and sincere prayers for these members

and friends with December birthdays:

- ❖ 7th – Kathy Gillespie
- ❖ 16th – Bill Jacobs
- ❖ 26th – Licia Duncan

Congratulations are also in order for these loving couples celebrating their wedding anniversary:

- ❖ 28th – Larry & Nancy Dozier

If you haven't already done so, please send your family's special dates to the church office (wpcgwd1@gmail.com) or call 864.229.3595.

Blue Christmas—When You Don't Feel Merry & Bright

For many of us, Christmas and the season leading up to it are full of mixed emotions. There is the joy and expectation, wonder and hope that linger from childhood. But there is also weight of responsibility, fear of the unknown, and grief over losses of one kind or another.

Sometimes Christmas celebrations leave little room for the “less bright” emotions of fear, anxiety, anger, and sadness. It is good to know that there is someone with a keen view into our hearts and that there is a place where we can share this part of our hearts.

Many churches and even secular groups of friends celebrate a “Blue Christmas.” A Blue Christmas is a service where people are invited to bring these blue emotions and to rest in comfort of the one who put these words into the prophet's mouth, “Comfort, comfort my people.” Usually such a service falls on or near the shortest day of the year and the longest night, December 21. What is wonderful about this night, is that it is a turning point. The point where the darkness is the greatest, is the point at which the light begins to grow.



If you are experiencing any of these blue emotions, please know that you do not do it alone. Please reach out to your pastor or another friend. And check on folks you know who are isolated or who have experienced a particular loss this year. Give them the gift of your time and your listening ear.

If you personally need support or know someone who does, beyond the care of a friend or pastor, reach out to professional hotlines and resources including, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (#988) or the National Alliance on Mental Illness (800.273.8255).

We Hear You!

Many thanks to everyone who took time to complete the survey on 2023 Summer Worship

Opportunities. The entire Worship & Music Committee and the Session have reviewed all of your responses. Not surprisingly, opinions vary, and that's good sign that God is at work as we explore new ideas!

Remember, you don't need to wait for a church-wide survey to share your thoughts—drop us a line in the bright pink Suggestion Box in the narthex window any time. Your voice matters!



Benchmarking Results

As part of the stewardship and planning process, the Business Affairs Committee investigated benchmarks relating to budgets and staff salaries.

One startling fact—most of the churches in our presbytery that have roughly the same numbers of members as Westminster are currently *not* able to call a full-time pastor. Many offer only worship, and no other programming (compare with the Westminster Happenings list). We also learned that the salary we offer our pastor falls squarely in the median range for this geography and church size. Your offerings and participation make all this possible.

Managing the Holiday Blues

Part of a series on mental health issues; excerpted from <https://www.healthline.com/health/depression/holiday-blues#management>

Many things can contribute to the holiday blues. Whether it's something as simple as overscheduling yourself or a deeper emotional need, it's possible to work through your feelings and start anew. Here are some tips for dealing with the holiday blues:

1. **Limit overindulging** – Resist the temptation to consume too much alcohol or food. Drinking or eating to excess can affect your mood and amplify any negative feelings that you may have.
2. **Get plenty of sleep** – Try to go to bed at a specific time each night. Being well-rested can improve your mood and help you feel ready to take on the day.
3. **Learn to say “no”** – Overscheduling and not making time for yourself can lead to emotional breakdowns. Learn how to say “no,” and stay firm on your decision.
4. **Be open to new traditions** – You may have an image of what you think the holiday should consist of, and this may not be what's actually happening. Instead of holding on to what the holiday *should* have been, allow new traditions to unfold.



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5. **Get support when mourning a loved one** – If you’ve experienced the loss of a loved one, the holidays can be especially tough. Although it can be tempting to isolate yourself and grieve, it can be beneficial to spend time with your friends and family. They can support you through this difficult time.
 6. **Exercise regularly** – Plug in your headphones and pop out for a walk around the block a couple of times a day. A quick 10-minute walk will get your heart rate up and release mood-boosting endorphins.

Let Us Pray...

*“Pray without ceasing”
1 Thessalonians 5:17*



For Those in Our Church

We share one another’s joys and concerns:

- John & Mishie Bacot
- Mary Corley
- Tina Corley’s daughter, Christina
- Kathy Felder
- Oliver Gouldsmith
- Mac & Holly Hubbard
- Kelli Lott and Gabby
- Savannah, Dakota, and Briar Rose
- Ed Watkins
- Gail & Glenn Yonce, and Georgiana
- Our pastor and her family
- Your Session

We pray daily for our prayer partners and their special concerns. We pray for our sister churches: New Faith, Ware Shoals, First Presbyterian, Abbeville Presbyterian, and others.

We pray for the ministries of our church, especially:

- Presbyterian Communities of SC
- Prison Ministry
- Thornwell Home
- Presbyterian College
- NAMI
- Pathway House
- Food Bank
- Soup Kitchen
- Meg’s House
- Beyond Abuse
- GG United Ministries
- Camp Fellowship
- Community Initiatives
- TLC staffers Carolyn Allen, Tiara Brown, Wanda Stewart, and Amelia Sheard



For Those in Our Hearts

We pray for these members of our wider community:

- Judy Buck
- Ted Colcolough
- Asher & Sumir Din
- Dean & Albert Fadden
- David Gillespie
- Lois Grice
- Beverly Grier
- Joan Herin
- Michael Knight
- The McClendon family
- Terence Reese
- Trae Steelmon
- Dave Watson
- Kathy & Mike



For the World

We pray for our neighbors everywhere who we are called to love:

- For strength, comfort, and courage to victims of war and mass killings
- For those whose lives have been affected by natural disasters around the world

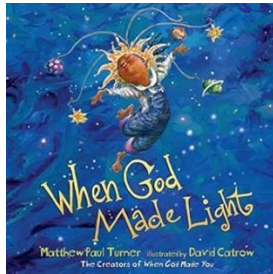
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- For justice and mercy to prevail throughout the world—*thy* will be done
 - For wise leadership at every level in our community, country, and world
 - For those living with mental, emotional, and/or physical illnesses
 - For all who experience exclusion, or who struggle to meet basic needs
 - For unity among Christians in every congregation, country, and corner of the world
 - For those serving in the American armed services, especially those in harm's way
 - For voters in democracies around the world to discern wisely how to use their vote
 - For our enemies, that their hearts may be transformed by Your love and truth

And God Saw (and Heard) That It Was Good...



Sharing the Light at Home with the Whole Family

During Advent, the children's Sunday school class is studying scripture that mentions light. If you would like to share the light with your children or grandchildren at home, you might consider reading one of these books together. You may need to copy the link into your browser to access the material.



When God Made Light, by Matthew Turner

<https://www.amazon.com/When-Made-Light-Matthew-Turner/dp/1601429207>

Season of Light, by Jess Redmon

https://www.amazon.com/Season-Light-Christmas-Picture-Book-ebook/dp/B0BH2F9K17/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3VK2UWTULYE8K&keywords=season+of+light&qid=1701127721&s=books&sprefix=season+of+light%2Cstripbooks%2C292&sr=1-1

This Little Light of Mine, by Darcy Pattison

https://www.amazon.com/This-Little-Light-Darcy-Pattison/dp/1684086302/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2479CF0S9MD64&keywords=this+little+light+of+mine&qid=1701127934&s=books&prefix=this+little+light+of+mine%2Cstripbooks%2C251&sr=1-1

Light Bringers, by Cassy O'Reilly

https://www.amazon.com/Light-Bringers-Let-Shine-Our/dp/1662844476/ref=sr_1_1?crid=27VBGS1ZWU040&keywords=light+bringers%3A+let+us+shine&qid=1701128064&s=books&sprefix=light+bringers+let+us+shine%2Cstripbooks%2C216&sr=1-1

The Lights in the Church, by Marilee Joy Mayfield

https://www.amazon.com/Lights-Church-Marilee-Joy-Mayfield/dp/1953177352/ref=asc_df_1953177352/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=475750951675&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrand=6056142829139733899&hvpon=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmld=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9010630&hvtargid=pla-1188010442312&psc=1&mcid=51d05264977538248f90f7c95908afec&gclid=CjwKCAiAmZGrBhAnEiwAo9qHiXA_qwyYsrjhVuCVgJz8NwCrB3HiyPTBV7J-eV5_txn1S0Utymi_IBoCgpkQAvD_BwE

Go Be the Light, by Robin Bennett

https://www.amazon.com/Go-Be-Light-Robin-Bennett/dp/1645437361/ref=sr_1_1?crid=4531G3LP6ZZ&keywords=go+be+the+light&qid=1701128260&s=books&sprefix=go+be+the+light%2Cstripbooks%2C275&sr=1-1

Share Some Kindness, Bring Some Light, by Apryl Stott

https://www.amazon.com/Share-Some-Kindness-Bring-Light/dp/1534462384/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1WNE4KROGJP7F&keywords=share+some+kindness%2C+bring+some+light+by+apryl+stott&qid=1701128375&s=books&sprefix=share+some+kindness%2Cstripbooks%2C327&sr=1-1