



THE GREAT ENDS OF THE CHURCH

Westminster Presbyterian Church

is called by God to be an inclusive community of faith,
abiding in God's love, and committed to:
Enjoying God, Following Jesus, and Growing Disciples

You Are Welcome Here:

We are glad you are worshipping with us today. We pray you experience our joyful welcome and God's peaceful presence as you worship with us today.

Questions about Westminster? Just ask! Any one of us would be glad to help.

The Sanctuary is a Place of Reverence and Worship

In order that our worship might be meaningful to all, please enter the sanctuary reverently. The narthex or courtyard are good places to visit with friends before or after worship. Use the moments before worship to prepare your heart, mind, and body for worship, centering yourself in the space and quieting your heart. It may be helpful to listen quietly to the prelude, find the hymns we will be singing, meditate on the scriptures we will be reading.

Children at Westminster:

Children are an integral part of our church family. We are glad when they come to worship God with us. In our midst, children learn our rhythms of worship, become knit into our fellowship, and teach us as surely as we are teaching them.

Please take children to the restroom before worship. If you need to leave the sanctuary during worship, please use the exits at the rear of the sanctuary. We ask that families sit together during worship and that no child move unaccompanied through the building.

Children's worship packets are available on the front pew and are given out after *The Time With All Gods Children*. Children first grade and up (by age or development) are encouraged to remain in worship.

Children in kindergarten and younger (by age or development) may depart with our caregivers and teachers for Children's Sunday School or remain with their parents for worship if they choose. If this is your first visit to Westminster, you are welcome to accompany your child to Children's Sunday School so that you can meet our caregivers and help settle your child in.

A brochure regarding our Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult protection policy is available in the narthex.

Westminster Presbyterian Church
A Service for the Worship of God
Ascension Sunday
May 17, 2026

WE GATHER IN GOD'S WORD

Chiming the Hour

Prelude

Introit

“How Great Thou Art”

Nancy Hart Wicker, viola
Elizabeth Watkins, soprano

Words of Scripture

Psalm 19:1

The heavens are telling the glory of God;
The firmament proclaims God's handiwork.

Welcome and Announcements

Richard Whiting

***Call to Worship**

Turn around! The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Awaken our senses, Lord.

Slow down. The kingdom of heaven is among you.

Open our hearts, Lord.

Take a breath. The kingdom of heaven is within you.

Inspire us, Lord.

Proclaim the good news, “The kingdom of heaven has come near!”

Open our lips, train our hands, and move our feet, Lord.

For with words spoken and sung, images invoked and rendered, song and dance performed, and service offered, we proclaim your glory and tell the good news,

“The kingdom of heaven is right here! Right now!”

***Hymn #307**

“God of Grace and God of Glory”

CWM RHONDDA

307 God of Grace and God of Glory

1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on thy peo - ple
 2 Lo! the hosts of e - vil round us scorn thy Christ, as -
 3 Cure thy chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to
 4 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils

pour thy power; crown thine an - cient chur - ch's sto - ry; bring its
 sail his ways! From the fears that long have bound us free our
 thy con - trol; shame our wan - ton, self - ish glad - ness, rich in
 we de - plore. Let the gift of thy sal - va - tion be our

bud to glo - rious flower. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 hearts to faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,

for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.
 for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.
 lest we miss thy king - dom's goal, lest we miss thy king - dom's goal.
 serv - ing thee whom we a - dore, serv - ing thee whom we a - dore.

This stirring hymn used at the opening of Riverside Church in New York in 1930 was penned by its widely-known and influential pastor, and it has gained a firm place in English-language hymnals around the world. The Welsh tune name honors the Rhondda Valley in Glamorganshire.

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Loving God, Jesus said that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” But we confess that sometimes all we can see is injustice and poverty, enmity and strife.

In your mercy forgive our blindness.

Just as you sent Jesus into the world, so you have placed his church in the world, to illuminate your kingdom. But we confess it is sometimes hard for the world to see it in us. In your mercy forgive our folly.

We pause for personal prayer.

By the power of your Spirit, help us. Help us to see and help us to show your kingdom even here, even now. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

*Response of Praise

Hymn #582

*Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me, and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,
and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.*

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen

World without end, without end. Amen. World without end, without end. Amen.

World without end, without end. Amen.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

*Passing the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

WE HEAR GOD’S WORD

Time for All God’s Children

Prayer of Illumination

Gospel Reading

Matthew 13:31-33

³¹ He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

³³ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

Anthem

Oh, What a Wonderful World

David Bell, guitar
Bill Jacobs, harmonica

New Testament Reading

Ephesians 5:1-2

5 ¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, ² and walk in love, as Christ loved us^[a] and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

This is the Word of the LORD. **Thanks be to God.**

Proclamation of the Word

“The Exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the World”

*“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;
it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs
and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.*

Matthew 13:32-33

Call to Offering

*Hymn #300

THEY'LL KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS

"We Are One in the Spirit"

THE CHURCH

We Are One in the Spirit 300
They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love

Capo 1: (Em) (Bm) (Em)
Fm Cm Fm

1 We are one in the Spir - it; we are one in the Lord;
2 We will walk with each oth - er; we will walk hand in hand;
3 We will work with each oth - er; we will work side by side;
4 All praise to the Fa - ther, from whom all things come,

(Am) (Em)
B^bm Fm

we are one in the Spir - it; we are one in the Lord,
we will walk with each oth - er; we will walk hand in hand,
we will work with each oth - er; we will work side by side,
and all praise to Christ Je - sus, God's on - ly Son,

(Am) (Em)
B^bm Fm

and we pray that all u - ni - ty may one day be re - stored:
and to - geth - er we'll spread the news that God is in our land:
and we'll guard hu - man dig - ni - ty and save hu - man pride:
and all praise to the Spir - it, who makes us one:

Refrain (C) (Em)
D^b Fm

And they'll know we are Chris-tians by our love, by our

(Am) (Em) (Am) (Bm) (Em) (Am/E) (Em)
B^bm Fm B^bm Cm Fm B^bm/F Fm

love; yes, they'll know we are Chris-tians by our love.

A parish priest at St. Brendan's on the South Side of Chicago in the 1960s was very involved in the local Civil Rights movement and needed something for his youth choir to sing at ecumenical, interracial events. Finding nothing, he wrote this song in a single day.

The Exhibition of the Kingdom

Please spend this time exploring our artists' response to God's word, "The kingdom of God is like..." Talk with one another about what you see. We will be called back to our seats with the doxology.

***Doxology**

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

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Affirmation of Faith**

Confession of 1967 9.35-37

Wherever the church exists, its members are both gathered in corporate life and dispersed in society for the sake of mission in the world.

The church gathers to praise God, to hear God's word for humankind, to baptize and to join in the Lord's Supper, to pray for and present the world to God in worship, to enjoy fellowship, to receive instruction, strength, comfort, to order and organize its own corporate life, to be tested, renewed, reformed, and to speak and act in the world's affairs as may be appropriate to the needs of the time.

The church disperses to serve God wherever its members are, at work or play, in private or in the life of society. Their prayer and Bible study are part of the church's worship and theological reflection. Their witness is the church's evangelism. Their daily action in the world is the church in mission in the world. The quality of their relation with other persons is the measure of the church's fidelity.

***Hymn #700**

"I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me"

I'M GONNA LIVE

700 I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

1 I'm gon-na live so (live so)
 2 I'm gon-na work so (work so) God can use me an - y -
 3 I'm gon-na pray so (pray so)
 4 I'm gon-na sing so (sing so)

where, Lord, an - y - time!
 (an - y - time!)
 I'm gon-na
 I'm gon-na
 I'm gon-na
 I'm gon-na

live so (live so)
 work so (work so) God can use me an - y -
 pray so (pray so)
 sing so (sing so)

where, Lord, an - y - time!
 (my Lord,) (an - y - time!)

This African American spiritual has more depth than may at first appear: for people who are bound in slavery to sing about dedicating themselves to God's use shows a profound awareness of God-given self-worth despite circumstances that would deny their human or spiritual value.

*Charge and Benediction

Postlude

[*All stand as they are able.]

*The sanctuary flowers are given by Arthur & Kathy Gillespie
in honor of Nathan & Kayla Gillespie.*

Serving Today at Westminster

Organist:	Claire Kuhl
Liturgist:	Richard Whiting
Host:	Watkins Family
Sunday Study:	Brian Purcell
Welcome to Westminster:	Ginny Cartee
Children's Sunday School	Kathy Gillespie

Today at Westminster

Sunday Study	9:00 am	Joe Gettys Room (<i>Adults</i>)
Welcome to Westminster	9:00 am	Fellowship Hall
Sunday School	9:00 am	Children's Wing (<i>Children and Youth</i>)
Worship	10:00 am	Sanctuary
Children's Nursery	10:00 am	Sanctuary and Children's Wing
Art Exhibit & Reception	2:00 pm	Courtyard and Sanctuary

This Week at Westminster

Office Hours:	9:00 – 1:00	M-Th	
Zoom Prayers	12:00 NOON	Monday	
BEMA Discussion Group	6:00 pm	Monday	Joe Gettys Classroom
Bobby Jo Valetine Concert	7:00 pm	Thursday	Sanctuary
Meditation	10:00 am	Saturday	Fellowship Hall

Next Sunday, May 24

Note: No Sunday Services at the Cokesbury Campus

Worship on the Water	10:00 am	Camp Fellowship
Kickoff and Picnic		



Ecumenical Prayer Service
Sunday, May 17, at 4:30 p.m.
Immanuel Lutheran Church
501 East Creswell Avenue
Greenwood, SC 864- 223-0590

In response to the recent acts of violence in Greenwood, Immanuel Lutheran Church will be hosting a prayer service THIS Sunday, May 17, at 4:30 p.m. The service will include Holy Communion and scripture, with participating clergy for surrounding churches. Please plan to attend and bring a friend.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Study Opportunities at Westminster

Sunday Adult Study: Brian Purcell leads our discussion of *Mere Christianity*, Book 3, Chapters 11-12. This class meets in the Joe Gettys Room.

Books and Brown Bags will meet next on June 10. Stay tuned for details.

Welcome to Westminster: This class is for new members and visitors contemplating membership. Pastor Dennis will be joined by special guests for this six-week series. This class meets in Fellowship Hall. Session 6 on May 17 will focus on the topic of Moving Forward (Pt. 2). Our special guest is Ginny Cartee.

Bobby Jo Valentine Concert is This Thursday!

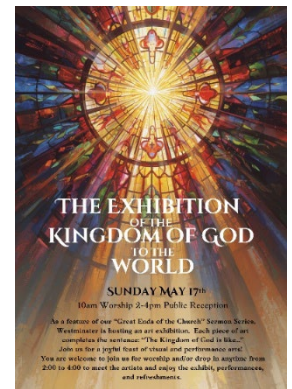
Please Invite Your Friends and Send Your RSVP to the Church Office

Singer, songwriter, Bobby Jo Valentine will be with us on Thursday evening, May 21 at 7:00 pm in our Fellowship Hall. Please plan to join us and invite your friends. The concert is free, but we are asking for a suggested \$20 freewill offering to defray some of the costs for this event. You may send your RSVP to the church office wpcgwd1@gmail.com.

“The Exhibition of the Kingdom of God” Art Exhibit

Sunday, May 17: 10:00–11:00 A.M.: Art featured during worship in the sanctuary;
2:00–4:00 P.M.: Public exhibit and courtyard reception. We look forward to seeing and celebrating your creativity! See your April newsletter for more information!

BEMA Bible Study Sister in Christ and Abbeville resident Ann Hazelwood wants to start a BEMA Bible study group. Ann is ready to organize and facilitate and seeks folks who are interested in embarking on a walk through the Bible using the teachings of the BEMA Podcast. BEMA approaches the Bible texts through the lens of its original listeners and readers, and is rich with historical context, cultural context, geography and original language study. You can find out more about BEMA at bemadiscipleship.com. You can contact Ann at annhazelwood6@gmail.com for more information.



[The Six Great Ends of the Church Worship Series](#)

For the six weeks of Eastertide, the time between Easter and Pentecost, we are centering our worship around the theme of the Great Ends of the Church, which are a set of six mission statements for the PCUSA that are the heart of who the church is and what the church is called to do. The banners on the front of the order of worship each illustrate one of the great ends.

Week 6: The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world. Today we focus on the sixth great end: *The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world* and the sixth banner of our order of worship cover art: The dove is in flight over the globe, carrying an olive branch, echoing Gen. 8:11: “And lo, in her mouth a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth.” This represents the eighth day of creation, God’s grace coming into the world, the reign of God proclaimed by Jesus Christ. The light rising behind the earth represents the dawning of God’s kingdom.



WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

is called by God to be an inclusive community of faith, abiding in God's love and committed to enjoying God, following Jesus, and growing disciples.

Office Hours: M-Th 9:00 a.m. – Noon Office Phone: 864.229.3595
www.wpcgnwd.org wpcgwd1@gmail.com

Clerk of Session

Claire Kuhl

Treasurer

David Hammond

Office Manager

Charleston Warner

RULING ELDERS

Class of 2026

Laine Horowitz
Richard Wilson

Class of 2027

Luke Christie
Bill Kimler

Class of 2028

Ginny Cartee
Rob Graves

Rev. Caroline Vinson Dennis, pastor

317.777.1487

Sunday Study 9:00 a.m. Church Service: 10:00 a.m.

CCLI License #2724601 and #20189191