

The Westminster Presbyterian Church
Communicant
December 2017



Greetings WPC!

*"The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."
John 1:14*

*M*y family and I have been looking forward to joining you all for a few months now, and what better time to get to know the WPC community than Advent! We can't wait to experience existing traditions, to build new ones, and to grow together as a church family. I've had a few friends comment that I'm a bit crazy to be joining a new church during this time of the year, but Advent seemed like the perfect time for our family to begin our journey with you.

At its core, Advent is a season of waiting and expectation. We turn our hearts and our minds toward remembering what it would be like to wait for the coming Messiah, and we look forward to His triumphant return. We celebrate what God has done in the past, is doing today, and we recognize the future we are promised.



During this season, today's church is invited to be a part of the bigger picture of our faith. We join with other Christians from all over the world and across generations to focus on the hope, peace, joy and love that come with the birth of Christ. In today's world, it's so easy for daily activities and present challenges to crowd out the big picture. It's so easy to forget that we are loved and cherished by the God of the

universe — the same God we celebrate during this time of year, who was made flesh and who dwelled in our midst (John 1:14).

As we open the Christmas story in the coming weeks, we're going to look at Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love with the big picture in mind. My prayer for WPC during this season is two-fold. As my family gets to know you and you get to know us, I pray we'd celebrate Jesus' birth well (with all the music, gatherings, gift-giving, and great food that comes during this time of year). But I also pray that we'd await the renewal of all things that will come when Christ returns with an equal amount of enthusiasm. May we experience Advent and Christmas with a big picture perspective.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Dave Rohde

December Highlights...

- Family Advent Celebration
- Alternative Christmas Market
- Christmas Giving Tree
- Advent Devotionals: Season of Hope
- Plan on These Dates
- Christmas Poinsettias
- Library Lines
- Provide a Shelter Meal in 2018
- Wednesday Evensong Services:
Service of Remembrance and Hope,
Festival of Lessons and Carols
- Student Ministry, Family Ministry:
Winter Camp, SYF Christmas Party,
Children's Pageant, Kids Fellowship Club

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

Family Advent Celebration

Advent, the four weeks before Christmas, is marked by a spirit of anticipation, preparation, longing and hope, culminating on Christmas Day when we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Come and prepare your heart with songs, traditions, fellowship, food and fun!

4 pm Wreathmaking \$20 for Advent Wreath Supplies and Greens

5 pm Lively Worship in the Sanctuary – ending with the 12 Days of Christmas

Simple Family Supper to follow in the Fellowship Center

RSVP to julie@wpcwestlake.org

Alternative Christmas Market

On the Courtyard December 3

Imagine giving a gift to someone this Christmas that could be life changing for others in our community and around the world! On December 3rd you have this opportunity!

Come shop at the Alternative Christmas Market on the courtyard Sunday, December 3rd after both services. Shopping lists will be available in the pews. There are so many ways to make a difference; here are just a couple of examples:

- You can choose to purchase medications for people at the Westminster Free Clinic in Thousand Oaks, or for those in Haiti.
- You could buy goats or chickens for people around the world who will benefit not only nutritionally but financially as they can sell eggs and milk.
- There are many more missions to support; they are all listed on the order form.

You do not need to have someone in mind to give these gifts, you can think of this as a time of year where you direct your giving to WPC mission projects.

Thank you so much for being a part of this great day! Cashiers will be on the courtyard on December 10 as well in case you cannot make it to the market on December 3. Wishing you a blessed Christmas!

For further information please contact Sheryl Brownfield or Carol Spiegel.

Christmas Giving Tree

WPC has a wonderful tradition of providing gifts of love and hope for local families in need at Christmastime. Our church has partnered with Lutheran Social Services to adopt 15 families this year.

If you have taken an ornament from our Giving Tree, please purchase the item listed, and then bring the gift back wrapped with the ornament attached to the outside of the package. We ask that the gift be approximately \$25 in value. This helps ensure that siblings receive similar valued gifts. There will be two ornaments per child. Also, if you are able to provide a gift receipt with clothing, that would be appreciated in case the family needs to exchange for a better fit. Gifts are due back under the tree by Sunday, December 10th.

Thank you for supporting this wonderful mission. Every year the families are so grateful for your love and generosity. Please pray for these families this Christmas and throughout the year.

WPC ADVENT DEVOTIONALS AVAILABLE!

Season of Hope

Please feel free to take as many copies of the Advent Devotional booklet as you would like. All entries are written by WPC members and friends. Booklets may be used for personal or family devotion times, or to give away to family and friends. Devotionals are available in the church office and narthex.



Sunday Worship Services

- 9:30 Traditional Service
- 11:15 Contemporary Service

For Children on Sundays

• 9:30 & 11:15 am
Children age 3 through 8th grade begin in worship with their families and are dismissed to Sunday School after the Children's Message.

Childcare is available for children from birth to 3 years from 9:30 to 12:30 each Sunday morning.

Adult Christian Formation

Sundays, 10:45 am, Fellowship Center

Weekly Bible Studies:

- ❖ **Monday Bible Study**, Mondays, 1 pm, WPC Library, contact Aubrey Grey
- ❖ **Wednesday Study**, 2:30 pm, WPC Library, contact Jim Mulick
- ❖ **Women on Wednesday**, Wednesdays, 7 pm, Library, contact Sue Minihan

Student Ministries

Junior High Ministry, Grades 6-8

Contact Matt Pardee

Matt@wpcwestlake.org

Sunday School, 9:30 am, Youth Lounge

JYF (Middle School Youth Group),

Tuesdays, 6 – 7:30 pm, Youth Center

Girls4God, (Jr. High girls), Sundays, 4:30

pm, Youth Lounge. Contact Lisa Rush:

Lisarush3@gmail.com

Senior High Ministry, Grades 9-12

Contact John (JR) Robertson

JR@wpcwestlake.org

SYF (High School Youth Group): Sundays, 6:00 pm, Youth Center

CNA (Christians Non-Anonymous Midweek Bible Study) Wednesdays, 7:30 pm, off site

Chancel Choir

Thursdays, 7:30 pm
Everyone is invited!

Weekly Wednesday Koffee Klatch

For adults 50+, Oakside Room, 9:30 am, conversation & sermon text preview

Weekly Community Outreach

❖ WPC Winter Shelter, Wednesdays in the Community Outreach Center: overnight shelter (December–March), year-round dinner, showers, health care

❖ **Westminster Free Clinic**: Wednesdays, 5-10 pm, United Methodist Church, TO, contact Cindy Vinson

Upcoming Events

Alternative Christmas Market

Sunday, December 3, all morning

Family Advent Celebration

Sunday, December 3
4 pm wreath-making, 5 pm service
(full details on page 2)

Service of Hope and Remembrance

Wednesday, December 6, 7 pm

Giving Tree Gifts Returned

Sunday, December 10

Adult Christian Formation

New series: Rise Up, Shepherds!
Sundays, December 10 and 17, 10:45 am

Session

Wednesday, December 11, 7 pm

Christmas Dinner

Everyone welcome to a festive Christmas dinner before the Festival of Lessons
Wednesday, December 13, 6 pm

Festival of Lessons and Carols

Wednesday, December 13, 7 pm

Pathfinders

Saturday, December 16, 9 am

SYF Christmas Party

High School Fellowship
Sunday, December 17, 6 pm

Evensong Service

Wednesday, December 20, 7 pm

Schedule for Sunday, December 24

Services at:

- 10 am—traditional
- 5:30 pm—family service, features the children's pageant
- 8 pm—candlelight service, music by Praise Team
- 10 pm—candlelight service, music by Chancel Choir, communion served

Schedule for Sunday, December 31

One service, 10 am (music by Praise Team)

Kids Fellowship Club

"Stand Up—Stand Out"

January 16 – February 13

Middle School Winter Camp

January 26—28 (more on page 8)

Confirmation Class Begins

High School Students plan ahead!

January 28

Please see SYF News on page 8.

Communion

December 3, December 24 (at the 10 pm service), January 7

Library Lines

End of year but beginning big with our new pastor! Can you believe it? As long as I've been with WPC we've seen several pastors come and go if you count each one who occupied an office. I remember Bob Bos leaving us several shelves of books to filter for the library collection and, of course, snapped up those I wanted to share. Then it was Dale's turn, then Dick's, then Steve's, and then even Charles wanted to let a few titles go before he headed south to Costa Mesa.

Each time I went through boxes or shelves and pulled those that seemed appropriate for us. This time, among others, it was a Hebrew Bible that caught my eye and a new to me version of an older hymnal with some favorites that are not in our present pew version. You sense what that person really loves and cares about and learn that we all come from different places yet have so much to offer. May we learn to appreciate each member of our church community for what they can do best and then pass that along.

You are welcome to browse the church library anytime. Contact Ruth Grey for further information.

Christmas Poinsettias

The tradition of using poinsettias as a Christmas decoration began in the 1800's when the plant was brought to North America by Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first Ambassador from the USA to Mexico in 1825. The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves are sometimes thought of as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red colored leaves symbolize the blood of Christ. The white leaves represent his purity.

WPC continues the tradition of filling our chancel with poinsettias purchased by the members and friends of the congregation. Folks may purchase and dedicate a plant in memory of a loved one or for blessings received (\$10/plant). The dedication will appear on Christmas Eve in our worship bulletins.

Please visit the POINSETTIA TABLE on the courtyard to help beautify our sanctuary for Advent and Christmas. Dedications must be received by Tuesday, December 19.



Pathfinders

Angels are messengers of hope in many parts of the Bible story, so we are glad to be using this theme during this season of Advent. Being in community with God's Messengers takes us to Genesis, Daniel, Matthew, Luke, and also Hebrews which is the main source for this current women's study. Our author has put together a series of stories for us to consider the part God has for us when he shares his message. Let's take time to think about what we can share as we discuss yet another facet of being in community together as people of God.

The Pathfinders meet every third Saturday of each month from 9 to 10:30 am in the WPC Library. Join us December 16 for that special message you might need to hear. Contact Ruth Grey for further information.

Opportunity for Your Community Group To Contribute

Provide a WPC Shelter Meal in 2108

WPC is responsible for the Shelter Meal the first Wednesday of each month. We are looking for groups to sign up for next year starting January 3. It involves bringing in a meal for 40 - 60 folks for our dinner that starts at 6:30 pm. We have one Girl Scout Troop signed up for March 7th, but no other groups have come forward for 2018.

Several of WPC's small groups have participated in the past but we need new folks to get involved with this *local mission* that is right here in our back yard.

Please contact Katie Menees at 805.495-6681 to learn more about providing a meal for our low-income neighbors of the Conejo Valley. Thank you.

Service of Hope and Remembrance

Invite a friend and prepare your heart to welcome the Christ child as we gather Wednesday, December 6th at 7 pm for our Hope and Remembrance Service. For many people the Christmas season is not the most wonderful time of year, but the most difficult time. Some are missing a loved one who is no longer here. A recent divorce or illness can make one long for a Christmas of long ago. Others feel financial stress. The busyness of this season can add tension to even the healthiest of relationships. It was into this world of grief and struggle that Christ was born. In fact, it was because of our pain that God came among us.

Our Stephen Ministers invite you to bring your friends and family and stay afterwards for conversation and refreshments. Together we will leave with hope!

Festival of Lessons & Carols

The Chancel Choir cordially invites you to a very special celebration on Wednesday, December 13th, at 7pm as we lead a Festival of Lessons and Carols in the Sanctuary! Accompanied by a variety of instrumentalists, including our organist, Ae-Kyong Kim, the choir will be presenting renditions of carols from a variety of traditions, interspersed with scripture readings and many opportunities for everyone to sing. It's part of WPC's Evensong series that will be occurring every Wednesday during Advent.

Come for the Festive Dinner

There will also be a Christmas dinner prior to the Festival at 6 pm to enjoy with friends and family, everyone is invited. Dinner cost is \$12 for adults and \$8 for children. RSVP to the church office (818.889-1491).



ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Spirituals of Hope

December 10 and December 17

The December Sunday School sessions of Adult Christian Formation will spend two brief sessions (December 10 and 17 at 10:45) looking at what may seem like odd Christmas music. Our hope is that we will discover hope afresh through the words of African American spirituals as they are explored for us in *Rise Up Shepherd!* by Luke A Powery, Dean of Duke University Chapel and an Associate Professor at the Divinity School. Come hear the voices of the enslaved, the unlettered, the forgotten, the illiterate, and learn from those whose voices are not often heard in society, church, or academy. Learn from these marginalized voices, in a liturgical season where hope is found in a humble baby Jesus born in poverty. Bring your singing voices and hearts and confront the mystery of incarnation and redemption throughout the season of Advent in what may be a new and different way for many of us.

In addition, January will be a potpourri of surprises. Stay tuned for ACF announcements in the *Communicant*, bulletin and the weekly warmup.

Support us when you shop this holiday season

Buy your gifts and holiday essentials
at smile.amazon.com.
You shop. Amazon donates.

amazonsmile



Click on the above image in the web version of the *Communicant* or go to smile.amazon.com and choose WPC from the available groups to support WPC Student Ministry.

Thanksgiving Boxes





Trunk or Treat



Middle School Winter Camp

January 26 - 28

This January, our middle school students will be enjoying three fun-filled days in the San Bernardino Mountains at Forest Home for Winter Camp. Junior High Camp is the place for 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade students to get away from the academic and social pressures of middle school and instead focus on their identity in Christ and place in God's family of believers. At camp, students will engage in deep conversations and times of prayer and worship. They'll be challenged with sound biblical teaching, honest questions, and authentic relationships.

Of course, no winter camp is complete without the fun! Creative games and interactive team challenges ensure there is never a dull moment. Campers have the freedom to explore the many recreation options at Forest Home. (And there are MANY winter recreation options!)

To register your child, please contact Paula Kissell at 818.889-1491 extension 150
Dates: January 26 - 28, 2018

Cost: \$280 (financial aid available)

High School Youth Group (SYF) News

The SYF Christmas party will be held on Sunday, December 17, at 6 pm. Bring a white elephant gift and \$10 for dinner.

An SYF parent meeting will be held Sunday, January 7, at 4:30 pm, upstairs in the Youth Center.

Senior High Confirmation Class will take place starting Sunday, January 28, from 9:30 - 11 am. Those wanting to join the church will be received into membership on Palm Sunday, March 25.

Please contact J. R. Robertson, JR@wpcwestlake.org or 818.889-1491 extension 129, with questions and for details on any of the above events.



Children's Christmas Pageant

Children ages 4 years through 5th grade are encouraged to be a part of the Christmas Eve Pageant. Children will bring the Gospel story of Christ's birth to life in our 5:30 Christmas Eve worship.

We will have Tuesday afternoon rehearsals, 4:30 - 5:30 pm, on December 5, 12, and 19, and a dress rehearsal on Saturday, December 23.

Please contact Julie Martin, Director of Children's & Family Ministries, for more information (julie@wpcwestlake.org or 818.889-1491 ext 128)

If you would like to assist with staging, costumes, directing, and/or fun control, please contact Julie.

KIDS FELLOWSHIP CLUB

Stand Up—Stand Out

January 16 - February 13
Tuesdays, 4:30 - 6 pm

Join us for our first session of KFC as we Stand up and Stand out to serve, to love and to care for our neighbors and our world. Engaging service projects, creative art, non-competitive games, great food, fun and friends.

Cost is \$50 (save \$10 if you register by January 9). Register with Julie or Valerie in Children's & Family Ministries. All elementary-age children welcome!



The
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A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS
OF WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Material for the January/February 2018 issue needs to be in the WPC office or sent by December 31 to Kathy@wpcwestlake.org
To submit late photos call Kathy Dahms.