



Westminster Chimes

Coming in to be nurtured, going out to serve

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Advent Begins with Sights and Sounds of the Season

By Leslie Lehmann

Westminster's talented artists and musicians will begin this year's holiday season with a feast for the eyes and ears! Join our sanctuary and bell choirs, soloists, organists, and other musicians at 3 p.m. on Sunday, November 29, in the sanctuary, for a concert marking the first Sunday of Advent. Soak in the beauty of music celebrating the Angel's message to Mary and her response. Listen as voices, bells, flute, harp, clarinet, and organ help us prepare for Christ's birth.

The program will range from the classical and traditional to contemporary genres —something for everyone and every taste. Selections include the glorious trio from Saint-Saens' Christmas Oratorio, "My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord," for soprano, tenor, and bass with harp accompaniment; "Prepare Ye the Way" from the musical Godspell; and a calypso Christmas piece for choir and bells that will make us want to dance!

A reception in the Great Hall will follow the concert. This provides a perfect opportunity to take in the holiday art show in our Cloisters Gallery. The show, titled "Hark!," presents artistic impressions of the deeper meaning of what we see and hear during this season of the year.

Westminster is blessed with many wonderful musicians and first-rate music leadership, one of the finest church music programs in Portland. Our Cloisters Gallery and art program is also highly regarded and one of just a few such art centers in the city. The Advent concert presents a unique opportunity to share these blessings with our neighbors and others who aren't part of our congregation.

The concert and art show are free and open to all Westminster families, friends, and the broader community. Please plan to join us, and bring a friend!



Women's Retreat

On September 26, Westminster welcomed feminist theologian, author, and spiritual leader Claire K. McKeever-Burgett as the guest speaker of our annual Women's Retreat. We send a big thank you to Claire, to the retreat planning committee, and to all who attended, making the event a success!



Thanksgiving Food Drive



As Thanksgiving draws near, we consider what we are grateful for and how we can share our blessings with others. In that spirit, we hope you'll participate in Westminster's Thanksgiving food drive to help our neighbors experiencing hunger or food insecurity. Donations will be collected from Sunday, November 1, through Sunday, November 22, and will support the people served by the Northeast Emergency Food Program (NEFP) and Mainspring Portland. During this time frame, we will accept donations at the church entrance at the corner of NE 16th and Schuyler (the elevator entrance) during our weekday office hours. Simply push the door buzzer to let us know you have a donation, and we'll let you in. The food-collection cabinet is just inside the door. Or, if you prefer, you can bring your food donation to church on Harvest Sunday (November 22). On that day, food donations may be brought into the sanctuary before worship and added to the food display on the communion table.

When deciding what to buy, we encourage you to choose Thanksgiving-themed foods such as packaged stuffing, potatoes, instant potatoes, sweet potatoes, cornbread mix, gravy packets, packaged fried onions, boxed or canned desserts (including cake mixes, frosting, and canned pie filling), sugar, yeast, coffee, cornstarch, marshmallows, brown sugar, and these foods in canned form: yams, green beans, corn, cranberry sauce, cream of mushroom soup, olives, and broth. Everyday foods are also welcome, such as rice, canned soup, pasta, oatmeal, and so forth. Please keep in mind that we are not taking homemade items, perishable foods, expired items, or items in glass containers.

If you are unable to bring items to church for donation, you can make a financial gift to either NEFP or Mainspring online. To give, visit <https://emoregon.org/give/> and select NEFP using the dropdown menu or visit <https://mainspringpdx.org/donation-info>. Thank you!

BEHIND THE SCENES

Behind The Scenes is an occasional article in the Chimes written to highlight ways friends of the church join in activities and services that are not always apparent. Interesting historical features and happenings may show up, too.

Meet Greg Moore

By Caroline Kurtz

If you stop by the church during the week, you may run into Greg Moore. He may be in the basement, looking in on the chapel remodel. He may be in a hallway or the Great Hall. He will smile and greet you, but he will be walking quickly, as though he has an appointment. He does have an appointment. It may be with a plugged toilet or a burnt-out lightbulb. It may be a crisis with a kitchen appliance. Since he retired, Greg has invested his energy and skills in a place where he can have an impact—Westminster's building and neighborhood presence.



If you stopped by the church last year and didn't run into Greg, it was probably because he was sorting the vast accumulation of bits that accumulate in a workshop or he was waist high in an unused basement room, cleaning out many years of in-kind donations the church could not use. According to Greg, he spent 1,000 hours clearing out and painting the space we now rent to We Shine. It is a women-led nonprofit that builds and supports tiny-home villages where homeless people can find shelter and transition back into jobs and homes in Portland's neighborhoods. Greg takes special pride in our connection with We Shine, and he makes sure the staff has the logistical support they need.

Making that space available to benefit the church, the neighborhood, and people on the margins was part of a strategic decision that also made our kitchen available for young Native American entrepreneurs in the Future Generations Collective to start food-service businesses. Greg helped madly handy people like Burt Reif and others upgrade our kitchen and bring it up to code with the city. "That was fun," Greg said. "Burt has a great sense of humor and we became friends, working together."

In fact, even though Greg says he's motivated to take care of simple repairs so the church can spend its money on work that's important, he let slip that he really does it because it enlarges his life. "I bounce into people," he says. "There are so many people to meet!" The kitchen project led him to the nonprofit Stone Soup Cafe, for example. Now he volunteers there every week, helping teach homeless people employable culinary skills.

You won't be surprised to hear that Greg says he can fall asleep in 22 seconds! He is an example of someone in the go-go stage of retirement, still making his life and energy matter. Say hi and thank you to Greg if you do run into him in some hallway in the church!

Pastor's Column

October 29, 2026

Dear Members and Friends of Westminster,

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your pastor for more than 15 years. When Beth and I arrived as Co-Pastors in July 2011, I thought, "I don't want to retire from Westminster. I have at least one more call ahead of me." I was 50 and did not yet understand, as I do now, what a privilege we had been given. Westminster is a faithful, kind, creative, and generous congregation.

God has been nudging me with, "It is time." It is time for me to retire from active ministry and leave Westminster. I am asking the Session to place a motion on the agenda at Westminster's annual meeting on January 31, 2027, requesting that the Presbytery of the Cascades dissolve our relationship. My final Sunday leading worship will be February 7. It will bring me great joy to say that I retired from one of the finest congregations in our denomination.

Westminster's talented staff is a remarkable gift to both the congregation and me, and I will always be grateful for the many staff members with whom I have had the privilege of serving in ministry. I give thanks for them and recognize that their work and ministry have blessed—and continue to bless—us all.

A brief note about the two years since Beth left Westminster: I have greatly enjoyed preaching regularly. In all my years of ministry, I had never served as staff with a Worship and Music Committee. The congregation's response to the committee's work and to my preaching has honored God and brought me great joy. Thank you.

Why now? Fifteen years has been a great run, and I believe it is time for a new era at Westminster. A new Session will begin after the annual meeting. The Session's goal is to have a balanced budget in place. There will be new configuration for a staffing pattern. Financially, Westminster is in a place of strength. Westminster is well prepared, ready for what the future holds.

Our daughter, Sarah, who was five when we arrived, will continue to be a member of Westminster. Beth and I have decided to retire in Portland. We will find a new place to worship, and (per PCUSA polity) we will no longer be part of this congregation. I am retiring, confident that Westminster will grow into creative working relationships with the pastor(s) that follow Beth and me.

It is always time to rejoice as co-creators with God and to celebrate our relationship with Christ.

Thanks, and blessings,



Meet Your Elders - Tracy Miller, Class of 2027



In this column, we'll introduce you to the elders who serve on Westminster's Session. If you're a Westminster member who might be interested in being an elder, contact the Reverend Gregg Neel for more information (gneel@westprespdx.org).

Which committee do you serve on, and what do you do with them?

I am honored to serve on the Personnel Committee as Co-Chair with Fred Locke. Our work focuses on supporting the staff of Westminster.

How long have you been active at Westminster?

I joined Westminster in 2019 after moving here with my husband from New York City, where I was a member of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. Louise Jones and the Westminster quilting group welcomed me with open arms when I arrived.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I try to take a "mind, body, soul" approach to how I spend my time. This means throughout a day you could find me reading, hiking, and working in the garden. Sometimes it means a day of volunteering my time as a board member for Xcelerate Women, going to the gym, and stretching myself creatively with fabric. You just never know how the day will unfold.

Do you have pets?

No. We travel a lot to see family so the best I can manage is a couple of cacti. 😊

What's something people probably don't know about you?

Friday Fundays. My husband and I try to do something new to us every Friday as a way to get out of our routines and learn more about this beautiful place we now call home. It could be a walk in a neighborhood, an art exhibit, a trip to a food cart, a visit to a wildlife refuge, and so on. It's been fun to explore and learn.

What's one thing you enjoy about serving on Westminster's Session?

I appreciate the variety of gifts, perspectives, and experiences that each person brings—it is an amazing wealth of resources!



Supporting Family Promise

Westminster supports Family Promise, helping children and their families experiencing homelessness. It's a community response, something we are proud to be part of. We team up with Central Christian, and our next turn to participate is December sixth through the thirteenth. We would welcome your participation—either cooking a meal, hanging out in the evening, or staying overnight. Get involved now to go through training and be ready to dive in to the effort. Contact Mark Niemann-Ross for details (contact the church office if you need Mark's e-mail address). If you can't participate in person, consider a donation. You'll find more information about in-kind giving at <https://www.pdxfp.org/in-kind-giving.html>. Family Promise will gladly accept your donations from a long list of supplies.

Presentation on the Proposed Budget

You're invited to a presentation on Sunday, November 15, after worship (about 11:45 a.m.) in the Great Hall, where the Finance and Administration Committee will present information on Westminster's proposed 2027 budget. All are welcome.



Session Action in October

In its October 2026 meeting, the Session:

- Heard Gregg Neel's request for the congregation to ask the Presbytery of the Cascades to dissolve his pastoral relationship with Westminster effective February 15, 2027. The congregation will vote on the request at the annual meeting on January 31, 2027. Gregg's final Sunday leading worship will be February 7, 2027.
- Accepted a bid of just under \$30,000 to install a fire alarm system in the sanctuary, funded by the Building Maintenance Fund.
- Heard Sue Miller, Chair of Mission and Service, share exciting ideas for using Joe Robertson's bequest to support learning, service, and faith-based experiences for adults ages 18–35. More details will follow in 2027.
- Learned that the Personnel Committee is working with Children's Ministry and Junha Kim to advance the ministry. Personnel is also planning to recognize and thank Amanda Smith for serving under a one-year contract as Interim Director of Children's Ministry. Her last day is December 31, 2026.

November Birthdays



We rejoice with those members, friends of our congregation, and staff who celebrate birthdays in November:

11/1 Andrew Mackay
 11/2 Peter Lehmann, Jamie Friedman
 11/3 Joanne Engels, Gail Gillespie
 11/4 Lois McIntosh
 11/5 Fiona Lillard
 11/7 Carole Myers
 11/8 Trevor Boyce, Nancy Barney,
 Kelly Coyne
 11/9 Jeff Strickler, Steph Erth
 11/10 Rebecca Lacey
 11/11 Maureen Morasch
 11/12 Laura Wilson
 11/13 Kate Thompson

11/14 Jennifer Birt, Laurie Birt,
 Paul Higgins
 11/15 Carolyn Lindsey
 11/16 Dan Vetter, Elizabeth Hills
 11/17 Michal Haller, Rick Simpson
 11/20 Karen Metcalf, Margo Salisbury,
 Debi Stabler
 11/21 Clark Worth, Judy Lyons,
 Jan Stover
 11/23 Janet Goetze, Karen Karn
 11/25 Ron Atwood
 11/26 Martha Wilson
 11/27 Dan Clark
 11/29 Marcia Bolliger, Bess Olmsted

Save the Date: Two Worship Services on December 24

Celebrate Christmas Eve with us at 5 p.m. in the sanctuary at a family-friendly worship service filled with carols and the Christmas story told in a fun and engaging way. People of all ages are warmly welcome! Later, at 9 p.m., we will have our traditional Christmas Eve service, which includes singing "Silent Night" by (electric) candlelight and celebrating Christmas with hymns, beautiful music, and a poignant message.

Westminster's Columbarium

Westminster has its own columbarium in the courtyard. We offer niche spaces for loved ones' ashes as well as the opportunity to engrave names on our memorial wall. For purchase information, contact Jonathan at office@westprespdx.org.

Youth-Led Clothing Drive

Westminster youth are running a clothing drive for donations of new and used clothing items to donate to PDX Saints Love, an organization that supports underserved communities, especially those living unsheltered or housing insecure. If you'd like to make a clothing donation, please consider giving warm clothing such as winter coats, sweatpants, thermal shirts, and wool socks. You can drop off your clothing donations to the youth lounge on the lower level of the church. If you'd like to make a financial gift, please make your check payable to Westminster Presbyterian Church and specify in the check memo line (or the memo line of your online gift), "youth clothing drive." This drive will run through December 31.

Adult Education Programming in November

Classes are held at 9:15 a.m. on Sundays in the chapel and on Zoom. To get on the Adult Education Program's e-mail list, contact Jonathan at office@westprespdx.org. For detailed descriptions of classes, visit <https://westprespdx.org/connect/adult-education/>.

November 1, 8, and 15: History of the Presbyterian Church in America

The Rev. Dr. Donald K. McKim, Honorably Retired Minister of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

- November 1: Colonial Presbyterianism
- November 8: Presbyterianism in the 18th and 19th Centuries
- November 15: Presbyterianism in the 20th and 21st Centuries

November 22: What Thanksgiving Looks Like Through a Native Lens Christopher Cox, MS

November 29: No class



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- November 4 for December 1-31
- December 9 for January 1-31

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