Westminster Chimes

Coming in to be nurtured, going out to serve

VOLUME 75 ISSUE 12

DECEMBER 2026

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Advent Activities, Cont.	2
February Art Show	2
Thank You, Amanda Smith	2
New Members	3
Staff Greeting	4
Neighbor-hood Vibes	4
Meet Your Elders	5
Session Action	6
Poinsettia Orders	6
Birthdays	6
Adult Ed.	7
Earthquake Safety	7

Awesome Advent Activities

It's the season of Advent, and many Westminster favorite traditions are returning! Here's a list of ways to celebrate the season with your church community:

Beginning November 29: Angel Tree

Each Christmastime, Westminster supports the families served by Albina Head Start. As part of the Angel Tree program, we provide gift cards to families so that they can choose the holiday gifts they want or need the most, and we give one gift card to each family member. In the spirit of the season, there will be an Angel Tree table in the Great Hall during fellowship time on November 29 and December 6, 13, and 20. You can give at our table (we can take credit cards), or if you'd like to give to Angel Tree and are not able to attend fellowship time after services, you can give by putting your donation in the plate when the offering is collected during church. If you pay by check, please write "Angel Tree" on your check memo line, or, if you're giving through our website (westprespdx.org), select "Angel Tree" from the fund drop-down menu. If your gift arrives after we've already ordered this year's gift cards, your donation will benefit next year's drive. Thank you.



Beginning November 29: Gifts That Build

This holiday season, you can give a friend or family member a gift while also helping Habitat for Humanity! "Gifts That Build" is a Habitat for Humanity program that gives you an opportunity to purchase a "house part" in honor of a loved one. You will get a Christmas card and a Christmas ornament that you can send to your gift recipient indicating you have made a donation to Habitat for Humanity in their honor. To participate, first decide on which "house part" you would like to buy (Box of Nails: $10, Paint: $25, Toilet: $50, Window: $75, Kitchen Sink: $100, Front Door: $150, Roof Shingles: $200, Furnace: $500, Lumber: $1000, Room: $5000). Next, purchase your house part at the "Gifts that Build" table during fellowship time in the Great Hall after worship (11:30 a.m.). Jack Robinson will be tabling on November 29 and December 6, 13, and 20. (We can take credit cards.) If you can't make it then, you can call or e-mail Jack and he can make special arrangements for your donation, cards, and ornaments. (Contact the church office if you need his contact information.) Westminster and Habitat are grateful for your support.

Continued on next page

Awesome Advent Activities (Cont.)



On December 6: ADVENT-ure!
Join us on Sunday, December 6, in the Great Hall after worship for our annual Advent festival—ADVENT-ure! We'll enjoy a light vegetarian lunch (with gluten-free and dairy-free options available), along with Christmas-themed crafts and treats for all ages. Bring an ornament—new, used, or homemade—to donate to the Christmas tree in the Great Hall as we decorate it together. The event runs from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and is free and open to everyone—a wonderful opportunity to invite a friend! Interested in volunteering? Contact Amanda Smith at amanda@westprespdx.org.

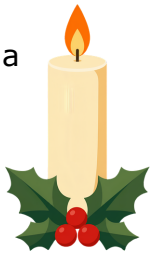


On December 13: Christmas Cookie Exchange
One of Westminster's sweetest holiday traditions is back! Please join us on Sunday, December 13, for the third annual Christmas Cookie Exchange. Participation is easy: just drop off two dozen of your favorite holiday cookies in the Great Hall before the 10:30 a.m. worship service on the 13th. Then after church, during fellowship time in the Great Hall, create your own custom variety platter of two dozen assorted cookies to take with you! We'll provide a platter and cellophane wrap to get your treats home safely. For planning purposes, please let Greg Houser know if you plan to participate. (E-mail info@westprespdx.org if you need his contact info.) We hope you'll join us for this fun holiday tradition at Westminster!



On December 13: Youth Group Christmas Party
On Sunday, December 13, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., the middle-school and high-school youth groups will meet in the youth lounge to enjoy a Christmas party together. This will be the last Sunday-night youth group of 2026. For more information about youth groups, contact the Rev. Junha Kim at jkim@westprespdx.org.

On December 24: Christmas Eve Worship
We'll offer two worship services on Christmas Eve. At 5 p.m. in the sanctuary, we'll have 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.

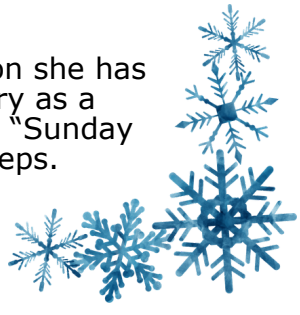


Save the Date for the February Art Show

Westminster's Cloisters Biennial Art Show is coming February 19-28, 2027. Visit the Westminster website westprespdx.org for more information under Connect\Cloisters or click: https://westprespdx.org/cloisters-a-center-for-creative-spirit/.

Thank you, Amanda Smith!

We greatly appreciate Amanda's service and commitment to the interim position she has held for the past year for our Children's Ministry program. Amanda's prior history as a teacher was invaluable as she took on the program and engaged the children – "Sunday School is still fun!" We wish her well as Children's Ministry moves on to next steps.



Welcome, New Members!

Christina Mata, who was born in Las Vegas, has lived in Oregon now for five years. She has a master's degree in voice, which she now uses to perform and teach singing. She is passionate about worship music and using her gifts to further God's kin-dom.



Dave Munsey attended Oregon State University and Lewis & Clark Law School. He worked as a corporate lawyer at Tektronix and Intel Corp. and retired in 2022. He's married to Anna and has two daughters, Gwen and Clariece, both married. He enjoys old European cars and traveling.



Allison and Bill Ranson relocated from South Carolina to Portland in 2025 to be near their three daughters and their families. They previously lived on a 24-acre farm and are now adjusting to an urban lifestyle. Longtime Presbyterians, they've both served as youth advisors, elders, and on various committees. Both are retired and enjoy traveling, hiking, camping, cross-country skiing, gardening, cooking, and spending time with their children and grandchildren.



James and Laurel Tangen-Foster have two adult children, Wendy and James. Laurel is a retired educator who has taught all ages (preschool through graduate school), while James works remotely as a psychotherapist. Laurel loves all music, especially jazz, while James enjoys playing guitar and outdoor activities like hiking, climbing, and bicycling—and they both love spending time with family.



Wendy Tangen-Foster, daughter of Laurel and James, is a Suzuki violin teacher and professional violinist living in North Portland. She lives with her partner, Django, who is also a musician and handyman, and their 3-year-old son, Maceo. At Grace University Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Wendy served on the Music and Worship Committee and played violin for services. Later, she partnered with Zion Lutheran Church in St. Paul, where she held Suzuki classes and recitals, involved students in worship services, and helped with Arts on Lafond, a community arts and music program. Now in Portland, Wendy teaches Suzuki violin at Westminster on Mondays with Suzuki Stumptown and Maceo attends Hancock Street Preschool.



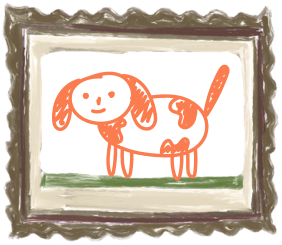
Neighborhood Vibes – A Call To Youth Artists Ages 10-18

Information for adults submitting their art will follow separately.

The Biannual Westminster Presbyterian Church Cloisters Art Show is taking place this February 19 – 28, 2027. Youth artists ages 10-18 are invited to submit an art piece that depicts something special about the neighborhood they live in or participate in. What do you like about your neighborhood? Is there a pet that greets you often as you walk by? Maybe your best friend lives nearby? Is there street baseball or soccer going on routinely? Is there a big incredible tree that has fabulous fall colors? Ask yourself, "What makes this neighborhood special to me?" then share it through the artistic expression of your choice: painting, photography, sculpture, collage, etc.

Important dates:

- Intent to show by 12/15/26: Notify Sally Woolley via email that you intend to show; spots cap out at 40 participants, so notify early. (Contact info@westprespdx.org if you need Sally's email address.)
- Catalog information due by 1/15/27: Submit your art piece title, short description, media, and size. Receive guidelines for art to be display ready.
- Deliver art piece, 2/16/27: Drop off in the Cloisters Art Gallery, Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1624 NE Hancock, Portland, Oregon.



Meet Your Elders - Sue 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(s) do you serve on, and what do you do with them?
I chair the Mission & Service Committee that collaborates with community nonprofit organizations that align with the priorities set by our congregation: food insecurity, racial justice, houselessness, and poverty. We support these nonprofits financially, thanks to the generosity of our congregation through annual pledges, and we encourage our congregation to volunteer in their programs and activities. We also initiate projects like the upcoming Day of Service on MLK Day (January 18, 2027). We will be recruiting volunteers for projects identified by our partners as being needed to serve their clients.
I also chair the Robertson Mutual Learning Subcommittee of the M&S Committee. This team is implementing Dr. Joe Robertson's generous bequest that will provide funding for young adults to participate in "faith-based mutual learning experiences" internationally, domestically, and with indigenous people. If anyone is interested in learning more about either of these exciting and fulfilling ministry opportunities, please contact either me or Pastor Junha, who provides our ongoing pastoral support.

How long have you been active at Westminster?
I am a relative newcomer to Westminster. I began attending in 2019, which was interrupted by COVID, and then I joined in 2022. I would encourage other newer members to also get active at the church because it's a great way to meet wonderful, committed people of faith. I volunteer with a few of our church partners such as the Northeast Emergency Food Program, where my husband, Andy Harris, and I are most recently delivering food boxes to families who are afraid to leave their homes due to ICE. I also participate in the church's food drive, adult education, women's retreat, and women's Bible study.

How do you like to spend your free time?
My primary passion is spending time with Andy and our four children and seven grandchildren. We are fortunate that two of our children live within walking (one block away) and driving distance. Andy and I walk every day, hike when time allows, travel to visit family in the Midwest and East Coast, and love to explore other countries. We also attend political rallies and write postcards to encourage voters to participate in our democracy. I serve on two foundation boards that provide financial support to organizations committed to social justice. While it is a privilege to distribute money, it is also difficult because the needs are always so much greater than the resources.

Do you have pets?
We have a loving, 8-year-old Cavapoo named Bella. She greets us with great enthusiasm (i.e., jumping and barking) as she does with all people who come to our home. Ball chasing and retrieving are her favorite activities, other than napping!

What's something people probably don't know about you?
I was elected as the first woman mayor of Salem (OR) in 1983. The most lasting accomplishment of my six years was moving Boise Cascade's paper-making plant off the riverfront to an industrial park so that a beautiful city park could be created along the Willamette. Back then, being in politics was fun, collegial, respectful, and collaborative. In this respect, I long for the "good old days"! I also founded and directed a child-abuse prevention program (a Relief Nursery) in Salem for twelve years. Supporting early childhood programs has been my primary vocation.

What's one thing you enjoy about serving on Westminster's Session?
Serving with a group of dedicated Chrisitans is a privilege and a learning experience. The Session is a microcosm of the committed and loving congregation that we try to represent in our decision-making process. Pastor Gregg adroitly provides leadership while leaving decision-making in the hands of Session members.

Session Action in November

In its November 2026 meeting, the Session:

- Approved a new ministry funded by Joe Robertson legacy gift. It will be called the Robertson Young Adult Mutual Learning Fund. This is a ministry opportunity for 18 – 35 year olds to have a mutual learning experience with indigenous folks or folks from other countries. This will be a ministry of Mission and Service.
- The Mission Statement Task Force presented a first reading of new mission statement. Session will work on this more at its December meeting.
- Heard the Interim Search Committee is beginning its work.
- Approved a request from Jonathan Dyer, Dir. Of Church Operations, to place access control keypads at the entrances of the hallway that houses the Hancock Pre-School and Northeast Community Child Development Center. (NCCDC). Cost is a little less than $7,000.



Want to order a poinsettia for the sanctuary in honor or in memory of a loved one? Visit our website to download the order form: \ https://westprespdx.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/11/Poinsettia-order-form.pdf.pdf

December Birthdays



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

12/1 Tyler Harvey
12/2 Coleen Jondahl, Gloria Tuma
12/3 Allan Johnson
12/4 Leslie Lehmann, Pedro Bastida-Gomez
12/5 Leila Hudson, Robert Strong, Ted Keys, Emma Reasoner
12/7 Gil Lissy
12/8 Carol Hawley, Peter Haub
12/10 Kristin Haydon
12/11 Karen Nettler
12/12 Dick Rorbaugh, Leila Macdonald, Lulu Barker
12/14 Jack Stephens, Dennis Hodge
12/15 Fiona Earle, Polly Holbrook
12/16 Matthew Fedota, Tom Dyke
12/17 Devon Carrico, Mark Niemann-Ross
12/18 Lee Harker
12/19 Greg Mettler
12/20 Diane Rynerson, Mary Ann Wish, Leslie Carver
12/23 Ken Cleveland
12/25 Sarah Kiefel, Jack Frewing
12/26 Wayne Staley, John Barker
12/27 Brenda Smith, Margie Lohr, Ethan Reviere
12/28 Christian Richmond, Charlotta Schreuder, Eliz Roser
12/29 Karen Gerber
12/30 Rufus Timberlake
12/31 Andy Payne

Adult Education Programming in December

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.

December 6 and 13: Women of Advent
Claire K. McKeever-Burgett, author and spiritual leader and contemplative
As the Advent lectionary turns our attention to John the Baptist and Mary's Magnificat, we'll listen closely to the stories of Elizabeth and Mary – two women whose faithful witness made the gospel story possible. Together, we'll rediscover how their courage, wisdom, and prophetic voices reveal a God who works through unexpected people to bring hope, justice, and new life into the world.

December 20: Sharing Christmas Crèches
Jesus was born in Bethlehem, but also in our own hearts and our own lives. Years ago (too many) we made space in Adult Ed for Westminster members to present their own families' Christmas nativity scenes (aka crèches). Let's do this again! This will be a "y'all come" type deal–we need an audience! After brief opening remarks, attendees will mingle and marvel and chat, or have a seat and enjoy the vibe. Please consider being a presenter! Presenters come a few minutes early and are not expected to speak. **This event will be held in our Great Hall.**

December 27: No class

Earthquake Safety

We live in a beautiful state, but it's one of the most earthquake-prone spots in the continental United States. Our Westminster Safety Task Force is now working on earthquake safety during Sunday services. What to do the other six days of the week? Many of you may be in group living facilities like Holladay Park Plaza, which will have policies and procedures specific for earthquake safety. There are many resources online at www.oregon.gov. For those of you living in individual homes, here are some general guidelines:

- **Drop, Cover, and Hold On** — Drop to your hands and knees, cover your head and neck, and hold on until the shaking stops.
- **Stay Indoors** — If you are inside, remain there; do not run outside during shaking.
- **Exit Safely** — If safe to do so, exit the building after the shaking stops.
- **Wear Sturdy Shoes** — Anticipate broken glass; put on sturdy shoes as soon as possible.
- **Evacuate if Necessary** — If severe shaking lasts 20 seconds or more, evacuate to high ground to avoid potential tsunamis if you are in a tsunami hazard zone.

The task force wants to strongly encourage our church community members to sign up for public safety alerts. There is a website that provides alerts for multiple counties and will direct you to your county-specific site when you click on the "SIGN UP" button: https://www.publicalerts.org.

Be watching for further information about earthquake safety; sign up for alerts. Read this "Living on Shaky Ground" guide to get more detailed information on disaster preparedness: https://www.oregon.gov/oem/Documents/15022_OEM_Shaky%20Ground_2018%20v4.pdf.

Westminster Presbyterian Church
1624 N.E. Hancock Street
Portland, OR 97212-4443
Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE PAID
PORTLAND, OR
PERMIT NO. 878

WESTMINSTER CHIMES (68D-360)
is published monthly
by Westminster Presbyterian Church
Phone (503) 287-1289
Fax (503) 287-1280
E-mail: office@westprespdx.org
www.westprespdx.org
Office Hours: M-Th, 9-4:30; Fri 9-12
The Rev. Gregg Neel
Pastor
The Rev. Junha Kim
Associate Pastor for Youth, Mission & Community Engagement

Publications

Jonathan Dyer: office@westprespdx.org
503-287-1289, ext. 111

Chimes articles are due by 5 p.m. on the dates listed below.

- December 9 for January 1-31
- January 13 for February 1-28

If you want to receive the monthly Chimes newsletter electronically, you can sign up for an e-subscription at this website: http://eepurl.com/cCazsL.

If you want to end your postal-mail subscription, please e-mail Jonathan at office@westprespdx.org.