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# WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## December

Volume 8 Issue 12

# Highlights



## Advent - Remembering to Remember

Trevor  
Smith

### The Advent Season is not the same as the Christmas Season

I don't make a habit of visiting shopping malls except under extreme pressure, but I can't stop the shopping catalogues from arriving in the mail. So I do know that the Christmas (shopping) season is upon us.

In the church year, the *Christmas season* doesn't even begin until after the four weeks of Advent and then lasts for just 12 days. Clearly, that is not enough time for us to do our shopping.

### Advent Reminds us that Jesus has already come.

Four weeks is enough time, however, to remind ourselves that Jesus, "God with us" (the meaning of the word *Emmanuel*) has come. Two thousand years ago in that out-of-the-way village of Bethlehem, God himself put on human flesh, was born of the virgin Mary and lived among us. To spend a few weeks every year pondering the wonder of such a thing is surely a good use of our time.

### Advent reminds us that Jesus is coming again.

However, the Advent season has also been that time in the church's year when we look forward to Jesus' return. There is a sense in which none of us can prepare for Jesus' first coming, his birth; but all of us can prepare for his second coming.

There is an important sense in which Jesus comes to us now and regularly - by his Spirit. But in terms of his physical return, that, according to the Bible, will happen only once. And when Jesus comes back it will be to establish the new heavens and earth in their final form.

### Advent reminds us that there is plenty of work to do.

How then do we 'prepare' for Jesus' return?

N.T. Wright has suggested that we do so by "learning now the habits of heart, and mind, and soul, and strength which will form us", that is, make us think, speak and act more like Jesus. This way we will be able to "share in God's wise rule over his world by making the judgments now that will work to put to right those things that sin has broken." (To listen to Bishop Wright's one hour lecture on this topic go to [http://](http://www.trueanglican.org/?p=5262)

[www.trueanglican.org/?p=5262](http://www.trueanglican.org/?p=5262).)

We will be using Advent well when we use this season of the year to go deeper in our understanding and practice of the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and love, and the practice of God's Law as Jesus taught us in the Sermon on the Mount. Seems fairly simple, but not easy as you who have spent your lives trying, know! But such is the high calling of God to each one of us. And for this we can all be eternally grateful.





The seasons of the church year are meant to teach us something about the spiritual life. But beyond teaching and mere information *about* the spiritual life they also form us as we observe and participate in the practices and themes of the season. Advent, which literally means arrival, is a “training in waiting” as we prepare for the coming of Christ to the world.

So what are we doing at Westminster to train us and prepare our hearts, our community of faith, and our homes for the coming of Jesus?

**Advent Devotional**

**November 29**—Pick up your family Advent devotional after church this Sunday. They will be

labeled and on the table in the gathering area of Beard Hall.

**Advent Wreath Making**

**December 2;** 6:00 pm -Advent fellowship “Wednesday night” in Beard Hall for a special evening to make an advent wreath for your home with friends at church.

**Advent Weekday Service**

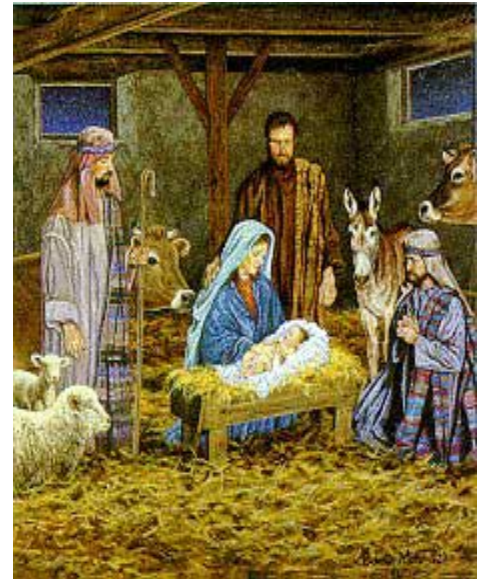
**December 3, 10, 17;** 12:15-12:45- Advent worship services in our Narthex. Join us for a brief service of worship and a provided sandwich lunch afterwards. Bring a friend!

**Lessons & Carols**

**December 13-** Lessons and Carol Service on Sunday morning at the 11:00 service. Come sing with us!

**Christmas Eve**

**December 24-**Christmas Eve Services. 5:30 PM Pageant  
10:00 PM Candlelight and Communion



Carl and Debbie Peklenk have served in the former Soviet Union since 1992. From 1996-2008 they were in Russia with TEAM (The Evangelical Alliance Mission) involved in church planting, leadership training, and discipleship.

They returned from the field in November 2008 with significant need of stability for their children and family.

They are now mobilizing new workers for missions and representing TEAM in Southeastern USA. They especially focus on developing students in their own area at Columbia International University

— challenging and mentoring this next generation of missionaries.

On campus they have been able to connect with students both on campus, off campus and in their home. The goal is cultivating long-term relationships and helping students along as they seek God’s direction in their lives.

Carl is also responsible to follow up online inquiries made to TEAM from the Southeastern part of the States. He is ready to be involved in church relations and assisting any churches with their missions vision, plan or implementation.

Carl and Debbie have two adopted children, Stevie and Julianne. Carl is

the brother of member, Steve Peklenk.

Carl’s email address is [carlpeklenk@gmail.com](mailto:carlpeklenk@gmail.com)





In December of 2006 I had officially completed my first semester of college at Elon University. I had amazing new friends from all over the country and was looking forward to spending Christmas break and New Year's Eve with some of them who lived close by. Never had I imagined spending 5 of those days, including New Year's Eve, in Saint Louis, MO at the Urbana Missions Conference. Being an Accounting major, mission work had never been something I had considered pursuing and the thought of being surrounded by thousands of people who were passionate about becoming missionaries was a bit intimidating. However, I went and was amazed by the entire experience - from the number of students there, the number of schools represented, the number of countries represented, and the number of mission organizations who were there. I still wasn't completely convinced about the whole idea of mission work though and felt like more of an observer than a participant of the conference. But when it came time to decide whether I was going to attend Urbana 2009, there was no hesitation. Having been fortunate enough to spend the past two summers working at Westminster with our youth and with this past summer being focused on Missions, I believe that the Lord has called me once again to attend.

This May I will graduate from college with my Accounting degree and I truly feel that I will be able to use what I've learned in school these past few years to work with a mission organization. My hope and my prayer is that I will be able to be a full participant of Urbana

this year, not just an observer. I know the Lord has a plan for my life and I want nothing more than to do as Ephesians 4 says and live a life worthy of the calling I have received.

This year on New Year's Eve, I will get to once again experience one of the neatest things you can imagine. With 20,000 other students from around the world all gathered in the Saint Louis Rams football stadium, we will have a different way to welcome in the new year - by all taking communion together and praising Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

## YEARN

Laura  
Robinson

There are so many ways that Westminster teaches us to yearn for more of Christ in our lives. It amazes me how the church continues to support and watch as college students desire more of God.

It has been a JOY to watch Kathleen yearn for more of Christ in college and watch her heart change and grow in the way of missions. Please be in prayer for Kathleen as she travels to Urbana.

### Yearn by Shane and Shane

Holy design  
this place in time  
that I might seek and find my God  
my God.

Lord I want to yearn for You  
I want to burn with passion  
over You and only You  
Lord I want to yearn.

Your joy is mine  
yet why am I fine  
with all my singing and bringing grain  
in light of Him.

Oh, You give life and breath  
through Him You give all things  
in Him we live and move  
that's why I sing.



Christmas Eve Services

5:30 PM

Christmas Pageant

10:00 PM

Candlelight Communion

*Westminster Presbyterian Church*

*Lessons and Carols*

*Sunday, December 13th*

*During the 11:00 AM Service*

The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols is a format for a service of Christian worship celebrating the birth of Jesus which is followed by Christmas.

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
101 Colville Road  
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