



First Presbyterian Church

"We love because God first loved us."

• 1 John 4:19

WESTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1684 IOWA ST. | DUBUQUE, IA

2155 UNIVERSITY AVE | DUBUQUE, IA



December 22, 2024 | Morning Worship 9:30 am

Welcome! If you are a guest, please fill out a visitor's card in the pew rack and place it in the offering plate. We would love to greet you by name.

Nursery care is located in the basement, provided for children through age three.

Please feel free to use the pillow cushions placed above the coat racks at the back of the church if it is difficult for you to sit in our hard pews.

Prayer Requests – Each week, we encourage folks to share their joys and concerns with one another using the *Prayer Cards* in the pews. Please complete a *Prayer Card* and place it in the Offering Plate during worship. This will ensure your prayers are lifted up to God in worship and/or in private.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Of The Father's Love Begotten

arr. Mark Hayes

FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

In this weary world, we sing of joy.

In this fragile world, we lift each other up.

In this beautiful world, we look for God.

In this tender world, we hold onto hope.

This is the invitation of faith.

*CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY

The Biechler Family

ONE: In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again?

Where do we start?

ALL: Let us begin with tenderness.

Let us begin with our hearts on our sleeve.

Let us begin from a place of vulnerability and hope.

Let us begin with love.

ONE: Yes, let us start with love.

Today we light the candles of hope, peace, joy and love.

4 candles are lit.

ALL: May the warmth of these lights be our cornerstone. May the truth in these lights help us begin again as we worship our loving God

ONE: May it be so!

CALL TO CONFESSION

RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, You paint pictures of what could be,

but we declare those visions impossible.

You speak of the lion lying down with the lamb,

but we spout skepticism and uncertainty.

You dream of a more just day,

but we poke holes in the plan, unable to fathom that horizon.

Forgive us for losing sight of hope.

Forgive us for assuming that what we see is all there is.

SILENT CONFESSION

Open up our hearts to see the world as you see it.

**Open up our hearts to risk hope, to dream dreams,
and to not be afraid of either.**

With gratitude we pray, amen.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

***SUNG RESPONSE** from *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n. No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.

**PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Please take a moment to extend the peace of Christ to one another by greeting those around you. Say "hello", wave, learn each other's names – whatever feels most comfortable to you.

ANTHEM - Choir

Away in a Manger

arr. David Willcocks

TIME WITH YOUNGER DISCIPLES

Following the "Time with Younger Disciples," Our youngest disciples, ages 3-grade 3, are encouraged to join our Faith Formation leaders for Children's Church. They will encounter God at a developmentally-appropriate level with safe adults. The child(ren) can be picked up at the conclusion of worship down the hall. Then, enjoy treats and fellowship together!

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:46-55

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

SERMON Words for the Beginning: “Hope is Worth the Risk”

***HYMN OF RESPONSE #169** *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came*

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:** *A reason to hope*

**We believe in a God who gives us reason to hope,
a God who fills our nights with stars,
who follows winter with spring,
who dwells with and among us.**

**We believe that this God has dreams for creation,
dreams of justice like a mighty stream
and swords that will be beaten into plowshares.**

Therefore, we push cynicism aside. We risk vulnerability.

We hold onto hope, and we declare:

“My soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”

THE OFFERING

***OFFERTORY** *In the Bleak Midwinter* arr. Hayes

***DOXOLOGY #34**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND PETITION**

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

***SENDING HYMN #163** *All Earth is Hopeful*

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE** *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* arr. Craig Curry

* You are welcome to stand in body or spirit.

WE ARE GLAD YOU ARE HERE! Interested in learning more about these congregations? Wondering how to get connected on a deeper level? Thinking about what becoming a member of the church may look like? Pastor Stephanie would love to talk with you. Simply contact her at fpcdbq.pastor@gmail.com or (507) 227-8537.

WORSHIP LOCATION & OFFERING: For the months of January through March we will hold worship at Westminster Presbyterian Church every Sunday. The Sessions of both congregations have approved this in order to provide for optimal safety and ease during the coldest weather months. We will continue to distribute the offering to **FPC** on the *2nd & 4th Sunday* of each month, and to **WPC** on the *1st, 3rd, & 5th Sundays*; and will have reminders in the bulletin each week for your convenience. **Today**, the offering collected in today's service will be contributed to the general fund of **First Presbyterian Church**.

WEATHER BAD? IS CHURCH CANCELED? If inclement weather exists, **Sunday morning worship may be canceled**. Such a decision will be made no later than 7am Sunday morning and will be posted on the WPC and FPC website and emailed to both congregations. If Sunday morning worship is canceled, there will be **no** Sunday evening activities. **During the week**, we will follow the Dubuque Community Schools closings and/or delays. *Please be diligent in planning for winter weather circumstances.*

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our Candlelight Lessons & Carols **CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP** will be held at First Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, December 24th at 7:00pm. Come and celebrate our newborn king, Jesus the Christ! ***Because of tight parking at First Presbyterian Church we will have the Trolley available at 6:30 p.m. & we will also offer carpooling for those who find it hard to get up the stairs of the Trolley. We are asking you to sign up for carpooling at the information table so we can arrange to have cars available.***

The FPC-WPC PARTNERSHIP TASKFORCE meets biweekly as we navigate the needs of our new congregation moving forward. There are four working groups: **Worship** - Roger Ebertz (FPC) & Sue Taylor (WPC); **Care & Culture** - Deb Stant (FPC) & Tom Stovall (WPC); **Communication and Technology** – Chris Daniels (FPC) & Kim David (WPC); **Legal & Assets** - Lindsey Ward (FPC) & Rich Henderson (WPC). We encourage you to address these folks when you have questions and/or input regarding the process of joining; and we appreciate your patience as we purposefully and carefully make appropriate shifts together.

CHURCH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - Your help is needed for 2025

Looking for Liturgists – one per Sunday

Need two greeters and two ushers per service

Need two families to serve snacks after the church service.

Suggested – 3 dozen cookies or mini muffins and water or juice for the youth.

Sign up at the Information Table. **Thanks for your help!**

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Reminder: There will be no Faith, Food, and Fellowship activities at 5:30pm tonight or next week, December 29th. The program will resume on Sunday, January 5th.

Members of First Presbyterian and Westminster Presbyterian Churches in Dubuque teamed up to provide food and hygiene items for the Dubuque Food Pantry to provide **Christmas Baskets** to needy neighbors in the community. Each family was asked to take a tote bag and return it back on December 15th with needed items. **The results** were 114 bags returned containing 1,242 lbs. of food and other items. Thanks be to God for this food and hunger ministry of the Mission Team.

The Memorial Service for long time Westminster member Ann McCaw will be at Westminster on December 23rd. Visitation will begin at 12 Noon with the Memorial Service at 2 P.M. Following the service Westminster will be offering hospitality in Fellowship Hall.

Stewardship Update: Thank you for your faithful stewardship to the ministry of Westminster Presbyterian Church. With your pledges we are able to operate our church & support our ministries and staff. Additionally, your financial contributions enable our quarterly food give away, provide seeds to grow food in our church gardens so we can donate produce to the Dubuque Food Pantry, and for us to host meals for the seminary students at UDTs eight times during the year. Giving is key to ministries like the Trunk or Treat for kids, the Mom's on Fire group, the Sunday night meals, and the Youth Group. Through your generosity, we are making a difference in our community!

To date we have received 75 pledge cards totaling \$291,904.00. We had 30 pledges increase by \$25,902.00. 23 pledges stayed the same. 19 pledges decreased by \$42,886.00. We had 3 new pledges. Last year we received 92 pledge cards totaling \$310,249.00. If you have not yet returned your pledge card, we encourage you to do so, as we utilize these numbers to plan a faithful and responsible budget for 2025.

Still need some gift ideas...consider purchasing gift cards at Westminster. Office is only open Monday until 2:00.



Green Team Tip – Merry Christmas!

Your Green Team wishes you and yours a Merry Christmas! As we celebrate the birth of the Christ Child, we would like to encourage you to take some time to give thanks and reflect with your family on God's wonderful gift of creation and ways you can better care of that creation in the year ahead. Please share your thoughts with us. We would love to hear them!

The Daily Devotional, **THESE DAYS**, for January, February & March are in the Narthex at Westminster.

Year End Giving

December is traditionally a generous month at Westminster & First Presbyterian. Many people complete their pledges before the end of the year, and many people give extra so we finish the year in the black.

Thank you for your financial support of First and Westminster Presbyterian Churches.

In order to have your contribution included on your **2024 Contribution Statement**, please make sure it arrives at the office **by December 29th.**

Becky Jenkins, Financial Secretary

HAVE A PRAYER CONCERN OR JOY TO SHARE? Folks on the **FPC Prayer Chain** would be honored to pray for you. Simply email Pastor Stephanie at fpcdbq.pastor@gmail.com, and she will distribute your request. You may also join the FPC Prayer Chain this way!

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER LIST FOR WESTMINSTER

- For **Josiah Otting** who continues to deal with seizures caused by epilepsy. Pray for next steps to be determined and for healing.
- For prayers of Thanksgiving. **Joyce Veach**, Mary Kay's sister in-law's, cancer treatment resulted in a "near complete response" in eliminating her stage 4 cancer. Your prayers are being answered! Thank you! But we ask to keep the prayers coming...
- For **HannaRose Otting's** brain health concerns.
- For **Janet Porter's** recovery & healing from hip surgery. She is home now!
- For **Doug & Lois Pearce's** ongoing health issues. Doug is at rehab at Grand Meadows.
- For all those on the **Deacons Care List**.

For Pastoral Care please call the **pastoral care # 563-279-4545** with your pastoral needs or call the office at 563-583-1729.

Sunday, December 22

9:30am – **Worship & Children’s Church at FPC**

Coffee, treats and fellowship following worship.

1:30pm – FPC Hosts Worship at Bethany Home

NO Food, Faith and Fellowship Tonight (Resumes 1-5-2025)

Monday, December 23

Noon-2pm – McCaw Visitation, WPC, SA

2pm – McCaw Memorial Service, WPC, SA

2:45pm – McCaw Cookies & Punch, WPC, FH

Tuesday, December 24

BOTH OFFICES CLOSED

7:00pm – Lessons & Carols Service at FPC

Wednesday, December 25

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Thursday, December 26

BOTH OFFICES CLOSED

Sunday, December 29

9:30am – **Worship & Children’s Church at WPC**

Rev. Marsha Wilfong, preaching

Coffee, treats and fellowship following worship.

NO Food, Faith and Fellowship Tonight

(Resumes 1-5-2025)

December 25 to December 31

Pastor Ells on vacation. For emergency Pastoral Care needs, you may contact the Rev. Marsha Wilfong at (563)583-6571.

PASTOR STEPHANIE’S SERMONS are available in print form. If you are interested in receiving a copy of her sermon via email or mail, please contact her directly at fpcdbq.pastor@gmail.com or 507.227.8537

CHURCH STAFF

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Preacher: Rev. Stephanie Ells

Liturgist: Roger Ebertz

Director of Music and Choir Director: Kristen Eby

Musician: Luke Tyler

Musical Ensemble: Choir

Streaming Team: Mark Stant and Tom Boelk

Coffee Hour Host: Annalee Ward

[507-227-8537](tel:507-227-8537) | firstpresdbq@gmail.com | www.firstpresdbq.org

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Collaborating Pastor: Rev. Stephanie Ells

Care Coordinator: Sam Wu #563-279-4545

Director of Music: Dr. Luke Tyler

Handbell Director: Kristen Eby

Choir Director: Steve Peake

Timbrel & Lyre Director: Dr. Luke Tyler

Band Director: Sally Stulken

Organist/Pianist: Dr. Luke Tyler

Church Administrator: Mary Kay Pancratz

Financial Secretary: Becky Jenkins

Custodian: Josh Henry

Worship Tech: Deb Seiffert, Marsha Wilfong, Bruce Hallahan

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**WORSHIP
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