

A F E S T I V A L
O F N I N E
L E S S O N S
& C A R O L S

December 21, 2025

11.00 am

Westminster Presbyterian Church

Knoxville, Tennessee

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols
December 21, 2025

Gathering Music

Mary Had a Baby arr. Harry Richards
We Wish You a Merry Christmas

Opportunities and Concerns of the Congregation

Rev. Dr. Richard Coble

Prelude, The Shepherds in the Fields at Night

German Folksong, arr. Robert J. Powell

***Processional Hymn 140**, Once In Royal David's City

IRBY

Stanza 1: Marguerite MacDonald; Soloist, Stanzas 2-4: All

Bidding Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Rev. Gradye Parsons

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.

Lighting the Candle of Love

Eli Everett, Brooklyn Fox, James Gilbert, Anna Van Beke

Invitatory Carol, Hodie Christus Natus Est

David Ashley White

Today Christ is born: today the angels sing: Glory to God in the highest,
praise the Lord.

§ First Lesson

Genesis 3:8–15; 17–19

Bobby Powell

The First Sin and its Punishment

Carol, Adam Lay Ybounden

Boris Ord

Adam lay ybounden, Bounden in a bond; Four thousand winter
Thought he not too long.
And all was for an apple, An apple that he took, As clerkes finden written
In their book.
Ne had the apple taken been The apple taken been; Ne had never our lady
A-been heavene queen.
Blessed be the time That apple taken was, Therefore we moun singen
Deo gratias!

Anonymous 14th century

§ Second Lesson

Genesis 22:15–18

Cole Everett

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his descendants shall all the nations of the earth be blessed

***Congregational Carol, 94** Now the Heavens Start to Whisper

JEFFERSON

§ Third Lesson

Isaiah 9:2, 6–7
The prophet foretells the coming of a Savior

Jennifer Manrod

Carol, A Spotless Rose

Herbert Howells

A Spotless Rose is blowing, Sprung from a tender root, Of ancient seers' foreshowing, Of Jesse promis'd fruit; Its fairest bud unfolds to light Amid the cold, cold winter, And in the dark midnight.

The Rose which I am singing, Whereof Isaiah said, Is from its sweet root springing In Mary, purest Maid; For through our God's great love and might, the blessed babe she bare us in a cold, cold winter's night.

Anonymous 14th century

Kyle Foster, Soloist

§ Fourth Lesson

Isaiah 11:1–3a, 4a, 6–9
The Peaceable Kingdom

Buz Johnson

Carol, Before the Paling of the Stars

John Boda

Before the paling of the stars, Before the winter morn, Before the earliest cockcrow Jesus Christ was born. Jesus on His Mother's breast In the stable cold, Spotless Lamb of God was He, Shepherd of the fold: Let us kneel with Mary maid, With Joseph bent and hoary (white with age), With Saint and Angel, ox and ass, To hail the King of Glory.

Text by Christina Rossetti

A Time with the Children

Emily Gustafson

§ Fifth Lesson

Luke 1:26–35, 38

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Prophet Mary
Children age 4 through 5th grade are invited to go downstairs for Children's Church.

Carol, Magnificat from *King's College Service*

Joanna Forbes L'Estrange

My soul doth magnify the Lord,
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.
He hath shewed strength with his arm.
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat
and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things.
And the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel
as he promised to our forefathers Abraham, and his seed forever.
Amen.

§ Sixth Lesson

Luke 2:1, 3–7
The Gospel of Luke tells of the birth of Jesus

Amanda Fox

Carol, Nativity Tale

W.H. Belyea

There was a Childe born of a day Of fair and goodly seeming, And in an ox's stall he lay, All soft and sweetly dreaming.

Refrain: Low in His cradle lay Jesus, our King, And I love my sweet Saviour above anything. And this the myst'ry of that birth, Both kings and shepherds knowing He was the Lord sent down to earth, the love of God o'er flowing. *Refrain*

Then let us all, with one accord, Sing praises to our Heav'nly Lord, Who came to earth from heav'n this day, And all our sin has washed away. *Refrain*

Text by A.C. Darke

Cassidy Mackay, Soloist

§ Seventh Lesson

Luke 2:8–16
The shepherds go to the manger

Mary Sophia Hawks

Carol, Angels We Have Heard on High

René Clausen

Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain: Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?

What the gladsome tidings be

Which inspire your heav'nly song? *Refrain*

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing.

Come, adore on bended knee

Christ the Lord, the newborn King. *Refrain*

See him in a manger laid, Whom the choirs of angels praise.

Mary, Joseph, lend your aid

While our hearts in love we raise. *Refrain*

§ Eighth Lesson

Matthew 2:1–12
The Magi are led by the star to Jesus

Rev. Gradye Parsons

*Congregational Carol, The First Noel

THE FIRST NOWELL, arr. Robert Hobby

All: The first Noel the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay, in fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

***Refrain:* Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.**

Choir: They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. *Refrain*

**All: And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went. *Refrain***

Choir: This star drew nigh to the northwest;
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay,
right over the place where Jesus lay. *Refrain*

**All: Then entered in those wise men three,
full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. *Refrain***

§ Ninth Lesson

John 1:1-14

Rev. Dr. Richard Coble

The Gospel of John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation

The Offering

Please sign and pass the Friendship Register found on the pew nearest the center aisle. Your holding and passing the offering plate is an act of blessing and dedication to our life together in Jesus Christ.

Offertory Anthem, O Magnum Mysterium

Morten Lauridsen

O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament, that animals should see the newborn Lord, lying in a manger! Blessed is the virgin whose womb worthy to bear the Lord, Jesus Christ.
Alleluia!

***At the Presentation Doxology**

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all people here below; praise Holy Spirit evermore; Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Hymn 119, Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**

MENDELSSOHN

***Charge and Benediction**

Postlude, Gloria from *Christmas Cantata*

Daniel Pinkham

*Please stand in Body or Spirit

NOW THE SERVICE BEGINS

Musicians
Chancel Choir

Sopranos - Jean Alexander, Ruth Ann Bendy, Carrie Hardy, Leslie Hull, Meredith Mackay, Ibbie Muntz, Pam Potocik

Altos - Jan Barber, Gloria Borum, Lisa Ellis, Peggy Faerber, Bettie Mason, Cindy Serbin, Jennifer Shilling, Laura Stockdale, Rachel Stokes, Sharon Youngs

Tenors - Phil Barnett, John Johnson, John Harrison, Casey Page, Pam Schneller

Basses - Kyle Foster, Jason Hardy, Bruce Henschen, Steve Hoadley, Jim Mason, Roland Schneller, Richard Ward

Treble Choir

Grant Birdwell, Jason Birdwell, Ward Birdwell, Lila Brewington, Isla Burdette, Adelina Lewis, Dorothy Hardy, Evelyn Heatherly, Blakely Hicks, Brooklyn Hicks, Heidi Hicks, Marguerite MacDonald, Cassidy Mackay

Brass Choir

Andrew Layne, Trumpet; Micah Purvis, Trumpet; Carl Whipple, Trombone; Robert Ingram, Trombone; Clark Harrel, Timpani
Margaret Harrison, Piano

Readers

Richard Coble

Cole Everett

Amanda Fox

Mary Sophia Hawks

Buz Johnson

Jennifer Manrod

Gradye Parsons

Bobby Powell

Time with Children

Emily Gustafson

Advent Candle

Eli Everett, Brooklyn Fox, James Gilbert, Anna Van Beke

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR TODAY

PASTORAL CARE ELDERS FOR THE WEEK: Amanda Fox and Tim Ryan

CARE TEAM COORDINATOR FOR DECEMBER: CARE Team

ACOLYTES: McKenzie Beeler and Adelina Lewis

GREETERS: Tom and Georgann Byerley

TIME WITH CHILDREN: Emily Gustafson

SHEPHERD'S TEAM: Larry Tragesser

SENIOR USHER: Bill Wiesehuegel

USHERS: Josh and Elizabeth Birdwell, Ken Hughes, Lo Ann Price, Donnie Graham

MUSIC NOTES Although the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols has been popularized over the past century by the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, the first service of Lessons and Carols took place in Truro Cathedral in 1880. The Bishop of Truro at that time was concerned about the number of people spending Christmas Eve in public houses and sought to offer a sacred alternative. Today's service follows the traditional nine lessons that recount the story of our salvation and features music primarily by composers from the United States, alongside works by English and Canadian composers.

We begin the service with an arrangement of the spiritual *Mary Had a Baby* for brass. The program highlights several American composers, including David Ashley White, John Boda, René Clausen, Morten Lauridsen, and Daniel Pinkham. The prelude is a setting of a German folk song by Robert Powell, who spent much of his career in South Carolina. We will also sing *Now the Heavens Start to Whisper*, with a text by Mary Louise Bringle of North Carolina; her hymn text is set to a tune originally published in the shape-note collection *Tennessee Harmony*.

English composers represented this evening include Boris Ord, Herbert Howells, and Joanna Forbes L'Estrange. *Nativity Tale* was written by the Canadian composer, conductor, music educator, and poet W. H. Belyea, who penned the text under his pseudonym A. C. Darke. Of special note in today's service, Belyea was the father of pianist Margaret Harrison, the grandfather of soprano Meredith Mackay, and the great-grandfather of today's soloist, Cassidy Mackay.

PRAYER LIST (Please keep the following names in your prayers this week)

Juanita Campbell, Sonja Jones, Judy and Joseph Moon, Lalla Phillips, Kitty Rasa, Doris Solomon, Vicki Chapman, Barbara McNew, Breeze Blankenship, Lucinda Albiston, Cile Mathews, Betty Collins, Joann Cowan (the mother in law of Tom Byerley Jr. and mother to Jennifer), Dean Aldridge (Allison Aldridge's father), Debbie Pio (the mother of one of Jacqui Whittemore's nurses) and her daughter, Gabby Pio, Norman McRae (for the loss of his mother), Pat Guthrie.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING The Christmas Joy Offering opens doors of opportunity for the leaders who are shaped and supported through our gifts - doors that lead to hopeful futures for young people at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Our gifts open doors that lead to relief for church workers and their families when emergency needs arise. You will find offertory envelopes in the Narthex for cash donations. If you donate by check, please note "Joy Offering" on memo the line. Thank you!!

STEWARDSHIP As we continue with Stewardship season, thanks to all of who have pledged your financial support for 2026. So far we have had 159 pledges from our 265 households with a total of \$967,306. The Financial goal is \$1,180,800. Together, we can reach our goal. We appreciate all of you & your many gifts!



WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Rev. Dr. Richard Coble, Pastor/Head of Staff

Rev. Gradye Parsons, Parish Associate

Rev. John Linton Muntz, Parish Associate Emeritus

Amanda Fox, Interim Youth Director

Dr. Edie Johnson, Music Director/Organist

Jennifer Manrod, Assistant Children's Director

OUR WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sunday, December 21

8:30am - Brass Rehearsal

10:00am - Christmas Breakfast

11:00am - Sanctuary Worship

5:00pm - Youth Christmas Party

Monday, December 22

4:00pm - Treble Christmas Eve Rehearsal

Tuesday, December 23

10:00am - Staff Meeting

11:00am - Program Staff

6:30pm - Choir and Strings Christmas Eve Rehearsal

Wednesday, December 24

5:00pm - Christmas Eve Service

7:30pm - Christmas Eve Service

Thursday & Friday, December 25-26

Church office closed

Saturday, December 27

10:00am - Yoga with Gail Corey

10:00am - Flowerguild (Sanctuary)

December 29 - January 2

Church Office Closed

CHILDREN'S OFFERINGS AT WESTMINSTER

During 11:00 Hour - Nursery available for children 0-3 years old

Children's Church for children Preschool through 5th grade

Children will be walked to Children's Church classes following the Time with Children during the 11:00 worship service

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

There is no Sunday school this Sunday because of the Christmas Breakfast at 10:00am.

Bible Study - Prayer Room - will meet on December 28;

The Advent Class will resume on January 4.

Advent Opportunities

December 24 Christmas Eve Service 5:00pm: Everyone is invited to our impromptu Christmas Pageant, no preparation necessary! Kids and their families can come early around 4:30 to begin dressing up as Angels, Shepherds, Magi and animals. Costumes will be provided by the church. Teenagers, please come a bit earlier around 4:15 to help set up stations. Then, beginning at 5:00 we will tell the Christmas story together. We will end in the courtyard by candlelight.

Christmas Eve Service 7:30pm: This service will feature a string quartet, the Chancel Choir, and Treble Choir singers, and will include communion and candlelight. The choir, accompanied by strings and organ, will present a thirty-minute prelude beginning at 7:30pm, featuring settings of beloved carols such as *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*, *Silent Night*, *Still, Still, Still*, and *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*. Communion will be served around the tables, followed by the lighting of candles as we sing *Silent Night*. We will then carry our lights into the courtyard to join together in *Joy to the World*.

December 28 - 11:00am Service only; Mary Boyd, Preacher; Ruth Ann Bendy, Soloist; Nicholas Stigall, Guest Organist. Music of Dietrich Buxtehude, an Appalachian Carol arranged by John Jacob Niles, and a festive French Noel by Louis-Claude D'Aquin.

FINAL 2025 CONTRIBUTIONS 2025 contributions as well as any 2026 prepaid offerings received in the church office through December 31 will be included in your final 2025 contribution statement. If you have any questions regarding your contributions, please contact Renee Wiesehuegel (renee@wpcknox.org or 865-584-3957 ext 100.) Thank you!!!

ALL-CHURCH RETREAT REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN! April 17–19, 2026 at Tremont Lodge, Townsend. Plans are underway for a meaningful and joy-filled weekend as we gather for our 2026 All-Church Retreat. With the theme Come Closer: Curiosity. Courage. Community., the retreat team is crafting an intergenerational experience designed to help us grow in faith and in connection with one another. Tremont Lodge, freshly renovated and ready to welcome us, will again serve as our home for the weekend. Registration is open now through March 15, 2026. Register online or submit a hard-copy form to the church office along with your fee. Online form: wpcknox.org/retreat-registration.

Printable form: wpcknox.org/wp-content/uploads/WPC-Retreat-Registration.pdf.

Room reservations open January 1–March 15, 2026 through Jan Barber or Renee Wiesehuegel.

A block of 70 rooms has been set aside for our group at a reduced rate.

Need assistance?

Registration questions: Jaclyn Beeler — 615-568-3929; Room reservations: Jan Barber — 865-765-0437.

December 21st: Youth Holiday Party and White Elephant Challenge 5 - 7 PM!

Only rule: YOU CAN'T SPEND MONEY ON THE GIFT!

That's right - No spending money. No buying. No ordering. Zero dollars.

You CAN:

- Bake something
- Make a craft
- Bring something you don't use
- Offer a service
- Anything free and creative
- Your gift can be funny, serious, or full skibidi-sigma-brain-rot energy.

Be creative. Be chaotic. Have fun.

*****We still need someone to host the youth for this! You wouldn't have to worry about dinner, we have that part covered! If you are willing to host, please let Amanda know

December 24th: Christmas Eve!! We need the youth to come at 4:15 help the littles with their costumes and help usher as well!

December 28th: NO YOUTH! Christmas Break!