**Southminster Presbyterian Church**

**1st Sunday of Advent**

**December 1, 2024**

**9:30 a.m.**

Find the link for the service on one of these sites:

1) on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SouthminsterGlenEllyn/>
2) our YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPgWICngOvkmR1OXgCG_wiA/live>

3) our web site: <https://www.southminsterpc.org/>

If the video feed is interrupted during the service, we will continue to record and then post the full video on Facebook and our web site as soon as possible.

For those who are in the sanctuary, please put your phone in airplane mode.

Today we are having communion. Those at home may want to gather the elements (“bread” and “wine” or whatever you have) before the service begins.

 Gathering Music/Photo Story: “Winter is coming” (photos by Carol McHaley)

 Welcome, Announcements, and Moment for Mission

 Lighting the Advent Wreath Lighters: the Hammer family

Lighters: We light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ.

 **All:** **We wait in hope!**

 Response 85: *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* (verse 1)

**Light one candle to watch for Messiah;**

**Let the light banish darkness.**

**He shall bring salvation to Israel,**

**God fulfills the promise.**

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 Prelude: *Prepare the Way of the Lord*  Schwartz

 Call to Worship  (*Dream On, Dream On*, hymnal 383, edited)

 Leader: Dream on, dream on, children of peace.

 **People**: **Children of earth all around the world live in peace and harmony**

 **All:** **Till on earth God’s Kingdom comes. Let us worship God.**

 Hymn 106: *Prepare the Way, O Zion*

 Prayer of Confession: (unison)

**Eternal, loving God, we seek to love and trust you, but there are times when we miss your presence. We focus on the deep sadness of the world and do not notice your hand at work in the world. We shut our eyes and complain about the darkness. Help us to see your light shining in the darkness through us and around us. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.**

 (Time of silence for personal prayer and confession)

 Declaration of God’s Grace/The Good News of Jesus Christ  (Romans 13:12-13 edited)

 Leader: Wake from your sleep,

 **People: For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers;**

 Leader: The night is far gone; the day is near.

 **All: Let us walk in the light of Christ, for we are forgiven.**

 Response 314: *Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness* (verse 1)

 *(Christ, Be Our Light)*

**Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
Light for the world to see.
Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.**

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 The Passing of the Peace

 Word with Children
 Children worshiping in the sanctuary, please come forward.

As the children leave:

 *While We Are Waiting, Come*  Hymnal 92, verses 1, 2

**While we are waiting, come;
While we are waiting, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
While we are waiting, come.**

**With power and glory, come;
With power and glory, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
While we are waiting, come.**

CCLI Song # 27525

Claire Cloninger | Don Cason

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 Prayer for Illumination

 Scripture Lessons:  Luke 1:5-7 Pew Bible, p. 56 (N.T.)

 Luke 1:67-80 Pew Bible, p. 58 (N.T.)

 Sermon: “A Song for Zechariah”

 Saying What We Believe/Affirmation of Faith (unison) Romans 5:8, Galatians 3:14

**But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.**

 Hymn 104: *O Lord, How Shall I Meet You*

Offering of Ourselves and Our Gifts

[The offering plate is at the back of the sanctuary. Please leave your gift or pledge
in the plate on your way into or out of worship.]

 Offertory: *The Lord Is My Shepherd* DeCesare

 Response: *Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness*(Hymn 314, verse 5)

 (*Christ, Be Our Light)*

**Many the gifts, many the people,
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
Making your kingdom come.
Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.**

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 Prayer of Dedication

 Service of the Lord’s Supper

 Invitation

 [You do not need to wait to consume the elements – please do so as the Spirit
 leads (right away, as you pause after receiving, or back in your seats).

 We extend an invitation to the Lord’s Supper to all who have been baptized. You do
 not need to be a member of this congregation or a Presbyterian to share in this meal.
 We remember that access to the Table is not a right conferred upon the worthy, but a
 privilege given to believers who come in faith, repentance, and love.]

 Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

 Leader: The Lord be with you.

 **People**: **And also with you.**

 Leader: Lift up your hearts.

 **People: We lift them to the Lord.**

 Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

 **People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

 *The minister gives thanks…*

 The congregation responds by singing together:

****

****

 *The minister continues the Thanksgiving…*
 “*Together we proclaim the great mystery of faith:”*

 **According to Christ’s commandment**

 **We remember his death,**

 **We proclaim his resurrection,**

 **We await his coming in glory.**

*The minister continues with Intercessions for the Church and the World
and Prayers of the People…*

 Leader: Lord, in your mercy,

 **People**: **hear our prayers.**

 Our 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.**

 Words of Institution

 Communion

 Communion Music: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

*We all will receive communion by coming to the Lord’s Table. Our usher will invite you to come forward by pew, beginning from the back. If you are unable to come forward, a server will come to you after everyone else has received. Choir members will remain seated and receive after the congregation.
Please consume the elements when you are comfortable doing so. You do not need to wait – please do so as the Spirit leads (right away, as you pause after receiving, or back in your seats).
With Christian love we serve gluten-free communion bread and alcohol-free grape juice.
Also with Christian love the elements were prepared with strict attention to health concerns.
You are invited to partake of the prepackaged communion juice and wafer if you choose; the wafer is not gluten free.*

 Prayer after Communion

 Hymn 100: *My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout* (all 4 verses)

 Charge and Benediction

 Leader: Now go and serve the Lord,
 **People: For we are blessed to be a blessing! Alleluia, amen!**

 Postlude: *Allegretto* R. Stanley

**Participants and Technical Crew**

Rev. Wendy Boden
Liturgist: Jessica Parks
Greeter/Fellowship: Barb Kocinski
Musicians: Cindy Trowbridge (guest), David Kozich; Blair Nelson and Wendy Boden
Worship Associate: David Kozich
Tech support: Chris Kozich, Blair Nelson

The flowers today are given by Lanny Russell to celebrate Joey’s birthday.

If you are online, we’re glad to have you! Using the comments section on Facebook, you can say hello, ask for words of peace, or request prayers.
If you are present for worship, please wear a name tag; they are on the Mission shelf in the Narthex and on the shelf across from the church offices. Following the service, you are invited by the deacons to gather for a time offellowship in the narthex.

**Sunday Morning Adult Ed. Bible Study,** **11:15 a.m.:** If you’re at church and wish to join us, get your coffee at fellowship time and then find Blair in the parlor/library.

You are invited to join us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/SouthminsterGlenEllyn/>), where we have a live sharing of “**Heart to Heart**” with Pastor Wendy Boden at 4:20 p.m. most weeks Tuesday through Friday.

We continue to be live on **Sunday morning for worship** at 9:30 a.m. (slideshow beginning at 9:15) on YouTube at
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPgWICngOvkmR1OXgCG_wiA/live>

or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/SouthminsterGlenEllyn/>

If you are watching from home on Facebook, please check in and say hello so we can see that you have joined us. This is one way to make worship less “remote” and strengthen community at Southminster.

*The live video will appear about 15 minutes before the scheduled start time.*

*If for any reason the feed falters, rest assured that a recording will be posted to Facebook and You Tube as soon as possible.*

You can also find links to recordings of the weekday sessions, special services, and Sunday worship posted on our web site: <https://www.southminsterpc.org/> or by going to our YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPgWICngOvkmR1OXgCG_wiA/videos>

**Photo Stories/PowerPoints help us feel connected!**Photo Stories/PowerPoints help us prepare for worship, connect with one another, and make sure that our at-home people get both sound and sight. In December you are invited to share Christmas-related photos:
 **December 8: “Candles**” – Please send by this Thursday, December 5.

 **December 15: “Angels**” – Please send by Thursday, December 12.

 **December 22: “Christmas Trees**” – Please send by Thursday, December 19.

 **December 29: “Christmas PJs**” – Please send by Thursday, December 26.
***Or, you may send them all at the same time, if you like.*

Send photos to our dedicated email address, used just for photos:**PhotoStory@Southminsterpc.org**.** (If you only have hard copies of your photos, please leave
them in the photo box on Pastor Wendy’s desk, labeled with your name and the date they are to be used.)

**Calling all musicians, vocal or instrumental!** If you would like to offer your musical gifts in worship, please talk to Tom Anderson on a Sunday when he is here, by text at 651-246-5029, or by emailing the office (admin@southminsterpc.org) and we’ll forward your message.

**Notes from Blair Nelson:**
**Adult Education**: Join us at 11:15 a.m. for our study of Matthew’s gospel. The story is profound, the conversation is edifying, and the company is good.

**Men** **of Southminster:** We aren’t meeting in December (busy month), but watch for an email or text from Blair about setting a January date.

**Youth**:  No event this weekend. Enjoy Thanksgiving! We have **practice for the Christmas Program** after church next Sunday, December 8, and also **Pizza and Games** at 4:00 p.m. that day. The **Charlie Brown Christmas Party and Lock-In** is coming on Friday, Dec. 20th. You won't want to miss that!

**From the Mission Ministry:
Share the Spirit**It is that wonderful time of year when we support People’s Resource Center’s Share the Spirit program to provide gift cards and some small presents to brighten the Christmas season for those they serve – families in DuPage County that need assistance with their living expenses.

People’s Resource Center (PRC) is requesting donations of gift cards, specifically $25 cards for Jewel, Mariano’s, Target, or Walmart. In a win-win for PRC and Southminster, you can order cards through our Jubilee Bucks sales! ***Today is your only chance to order***. There is a special green Share the Spirit order form available on the nametag shelf at church and on the table outside the Sanctuary that lists the Jubilee Bucks cards supporting this program. ***Note: if you order cards for yourself as well as for Share the Spirit, be sure to let Bobbi know which are which!***

If you would rather purchase an actual gift, PRC is requesting the following:
 NEW books (ages 0-17)
 NEW family games
 NEW stuffed animals for children under age 1 (12” or smaller )
 NEW with tags blankets (no hand-made blankets)
 ***Gifts must be at church no later than next Sunday, December 8, at 11:00 a.m.***Thank you for supporting this program and helping those families in need.

**OTC Medicines for our Cuba sister church. Bring donations by December 15.**

**Over-the-counter medicines – large bottles if possible (will be doled out in small bags). Save money by buying generic. Best prices: Target, Walmart, Amazon**

Ibuprofen (eg. Advil, Motrin) 200 mg tablets (*containers of 200 pills or more)*
Naproxen Sodium (eg. Aleve) 220 mg tablets (*containers of 300 pills or more)*Antifungal creams (eg. Clotrimazol) 2 oz. or 60 gm tube
Triple antibiotic ointment 1 oz. or 28 gm tube
Hydrocortisone cream 1 oz. 28 gm tube or 2 oz. 60 gm tube
Medicines for stomach (eg Omeprazol, Famotidine ) 20 mg. tablets
Benadryl Adult 25mg tablets 100 count (Generic Equate ok)
Children’s Complete CHEWABLE Vitamins (**not gummies**)
Children’s Tylenol CHEWABLE 160 mg tablets (Generic EQUATE 160 mg tablets)
Children’s Benadryl CHEWABLE 12.5mg tablets (Generic ok)
Children’s Ibuprofen CHEWABLE 100 mg tablets (Generic Equate 48 count ok)
Antibacterial EQUATE Fabric Band-Aid- various sizes

**From the Worship Ministry**
**Christmas poinsettias!** In anticipation and celebration of Christmas, poinsettias will grace the sanctuary on Christmas Eve – Tuesday, December 24. They may be taken home after the Christmas Eve service.
We are ordering 12 red 2-stem 6.5” plants and 4 white (slightly larger) 2-stem 7.5” plants. Order yours by signing up in the narthex by Sunday, December 15. Thank you to everyone who orders, helping keep this beautiful tradition of poinsettias adorning the sanctuary on Christmas Eve.

Please note: ***The Flower fund is getting low.*** There are many unpaid flower orders on the narthex chart. If you ordered flowers this year, please pay as soon as you are able. You might consider bundling your check for a past arrangement as well as one coming up before the end of the year. (If you’re not sure whether you paid for a flower arrangement, check with Sarah Allen or look at the chart in the Narthex – paid orders are marked PD in red marker.) Thank you for your support of the Flower Ministry.

**From the Stewardship Ministry**We will begin our budget process for 2025 at the December 17 Session meeting. It would be helpful to have all our pledges in by then. By pledging, you help us plan for the year ahead, ensuring that we can continue to share God’s love in meaningful ways. Every gift, no matter the size, makes a difference.

Thank you for being a faithful steward of the blessings God has entrusted to you.

Stewardship Moderator,
Jay Lerch
jaylerch@sbcglobal.net

**From the Endowment Funds Ministry: Composing a Legacy
*“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord!”***

Throughout Scripture, music is shown to be one of the great expressions of faith. During our lives we are called in many different ways to sing along and harmonize with Jesus. Composing a legacy can be one of those ways.

Planning for the future can be a means of keeping the song of God's praise flowing. That's true even though estate planning, to some, is a jarring subject. As Christians, however, we are called to look to the next world, and to prepare to leave this one. Proper planning – orchestrating your wishes – brings peace of mind. You can provide for those you love and support charitable mission causes in a way that becomes your own personal song to God.

Christian estate planning involves your faith and ensures that your good intentions will be carried out even after you are gone. You may be surprised how even a small asset can be transformed into a gift that will support the programs of Southminster Church in perpetuity. Proper planning can also minimize taxes allowing you to leave more to the people closest to you.

For more information about Southminster’s Endowment Program, contact Pastor Wendy Boden or Ron Birchall, Moderator of the Endowment Funds Ministry.

**First Wednesday Women’s Breakfast:** Our next monthly women’s breakfast will be this Wednesday, December 4, at Danby’s Station at 8:30 a.m. All women are invited to join us! Call, text, or email Gretchen Fleming—(630) 517-0926 or gretchen\_fleming@yahoo.com—if you have any questions. Danby’s Station is at 750 Roosevelt Road, Glen Ellyn.

 **Presbyterian Women (PW)**
**The next PW meeting is our Christmas Salad Luncheon on Friday, December 13, at 11:30 a.m.** (note this is the second Friday of December and not the third Friday). Bring a salad to share and a serving utensil. We will gather in the Narthex for a time of food, fellowship, and fun. Following the luncheon, we will move to the Sanctuary where Derek Buckley will entertain us with beautiful songs of the season. A sign-up sheet for attending the Salad Luncheon is on the PW bulletin board (near the coat room); all women are invited, but please let us know you are coming.

Remember that December 13 is the first day we will begin collecting books for the **Annual Book Sale** in January. So, bring your books with you and after the luncheon drop them off for the book sale. A little red wagon will be available in the entryway for book drop off. The books will be stored and sorted in Fellowship Hall. The book sale will be held in the Narthex starting Friday, January 19.

**Notes from Barb:**
**You’re invited!** Get into the Christmas spirit tomorrow evening (Monday, December 2) with the joyful music of the Village Vocal Chords, a women’s barbershop chorus. They will perform at First United Methodist Church, 424 Forest Avenue, Glen Ellyn, at 7:30; tickets will be available at the door for $10 apiece.

**The puzzles are back – have fun and help SCARCE**!
A friend from my church volunteers at SCARCE and often has boxes of donated jigsaw puzzles that need to be assembled so they’ll know whether all the pieces are there. I have several puzzles in the church office (under the front edge of the desk). Take one home, assemble it, and then put a note on the box: “All pieces here” or “Pieces missing.” Then bring it back so I can return it to SCARCE. (They have other things they can do with puzzles that are missing pieces – using pieces for art projects, for instance, or simply recycling the cardboard.)

**Jubilee Bucks: Order today, December 1!**
Today is your only chance before Christmas to order Jubilee Bucks gift cards—order for yourself and for Christmas giving! You can use the special green form to **order gift cards for PRC’s Share the Spirit (STS) project** through our Jubilee Bucks sales! PRC is requesting $25 cards for Jewel, Mariano’s, Target, or Walmart. You can give your order directly to Bobbi Frey, leave it in the church office (the mailbox in the lower left corner of the mailbox grid) or email it to her (bobbifrey@aol.com) by 9:00 p.m. today. Note that Bobbi will need to know which cards are for you and which are for STS. The donated cards for STS will remain at church when they arrive.

For more information about Share the Spirit, scroll up to see the Mission Ministry notes.

And thanks to all who order Jubilee Bucks—our year-to-date total of “free” money earned now stands at $1,841.68!
Your next chance to order will be January 5, 2025.

**Donations for PRC (People’s Resource Center)**:
Our weekly donations are greatly appreciated! Every bit helps! Each client receives between 70-100 pounds of food per visit! PRC receives, rescues, sorts and distributes about 40,000 pounds of food per week. Thanks to all! If you’d like suggestions for the most needed items for the PRC food pantry, there are lists of suggested donations in one of the literature stands on the shelf in the main hallway that is across from the church offices.

**Care Notes:** “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” -Philippians 4:6
Even though we aren’t all together for worship, we are still collecting prayer requests! Please email or leave a message on our answering machine at 630-469-9149 if you won’t be present to fill out a prayer request slip.

**Friends,****You are all invited to offer prayer for people whether they are members or not. It would be a joy and very helpful to know how people are doing. If you have submitted a person to be prayed for, please send an update to the office once in a while. Thank you! Pastor Wendy**

***New requests and updates are italicized in our prayer list.***

**Joys and Concerns** ***The flowers today*** *are from Lanny Russell celebrating Joey’s birthday.***We give thanks to God for joys.** *- We give thanks for all who were able to be with loved ones for Thanksgiving.*  - Susie Salins is doing well following back surgery. She thanks everyone for their prayers and well wishes.
**We pray for the whole world and our nation:**
  - We lift up the President, the president-elect, and all elected officials. We pray for God's hand to direct their hearts and minds. May they lead our nation with godly intentions. We pray for the healing and unity of our country and ask that all people model love and justice.
  - Peace for Haiti and Sudan; Hamas, Israel, the people of Palestine, Iran, and the tangle of interests in the Middle East; Ukraine and Russia, Korea – both North and South
 *- We pray that the Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire holds.*
  - We pray for an end to gun violence in our nation. *In one day (last Sunday, November 24) there were 99 shooting incidents in 32 states plus the District of Columbia, leaving 41 people dead and 78 people injured.* To see current statistics for shootings in this country, go to <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org>.
  - We continue to pray for peace in the world
**Blessed are those who mourn**:
  - Andrea Schmidt and all her family on the death of her mother, Gail Johnston, on November 1
  - Angela Smith and her family on the passing of her father, Franklin Keith Beeler, on October 30
  - Prayers for the family and friends of Caroline Linde, and especially for Ralph
  - For those we name in our hearts and hold dear
**We lift up those who are affected by cancer, as well as their support systems**:
 *- Barb Doppelt’s friend Ginny, undergoing treatment for leukemia*
Please help us pray for your family and friends by updating your loved ones’ information with the church office. We support them and you in their journey.
  - We continue to pray for: Kim, Mark, Frank B., Katie B., Tom G., Frank L., Jean K., Al M., Jan M., Nikki M., Rebecca M., Tim O., Betsey P., Laura P., Cis R., Gerry S., Marta S., Meagan S., Mary T., Shelayne, and others we name in our hearts.
**We pray for all who are recovering or dealing with mental or physical health or other challenges**:
 *- We pray for Heidi Shierry with additional health concerns.
 - We lift up Linda Wolf Jeziorski and her husband, Paul. Linda fell and has been hospitalized at CDH.*  - Pete Petersen asks prayer for his cousin, James Marohn, who has entered hospice care.
  - Pastor Wendy’s bonus dad, Frank, who is in severe back pain with no cause yet diagnosed
  - Kim Gosney’s sister, Amy, is not out of a coma
  - Joan Koska has moved; her new address is 14800 S. Van Dyke Rd., Apt. 1215, Plainfield, IL 60544. Cards are welcome, but no visitors, please.  - Donna Marton’s family asks prayers for Mark’s housing options, that he would be able to transition easily to the next room or facility.
  - Jim Smith, at Brookdale, and all who are in care centers
  - Those trying to conceive and struggling with infertility
  - Prayers for all who are looking for meaningful employment
  - All those who have medical concerns, upcoming medical procedures, or chronic pain
  - For those who are depressed
  - Difficult marriages
  - We continue to pray for: Barb (Deb’s cousin), Brandon, Joe M., Felice T., Isabella, Kathy, Linda T., Mya, Oaklen, Phyllis L. Phyllis is grateful for prayers and is doing better.
**We pray for the Jeremiah 29 discernment task force** and all of us as we seek God’s will for Southminster in the 21st century. May we all be attentive to the Holy Spirit’s leading.
**Prayers for our worshiping community** as we discern together God’s call on SPC for the 21st century.

**Caring for you!**Our **Congregational Care Committee** is ready to assist in time of need. If you need assistance from the Congregational Care Ministry or Helping Hands in December, call Deacon Sue Knisely (630-776-7998). You may call Pastor Wendy Boden on her cell or home phone (if she has shared the numbers with you) or leave a message for her at the church office: 630-469-9149. Email Wendy at wendy@southminsterpc.org. (Please note that she can only read email when she is in the office.) You may also call your deacon if you need help from the church.

**Regular Office Schedule: The church office is closed on Mondays and Wednesdays.**Barb’s regular schedule is to be in the office Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from approximately 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. while her son attends his day program on those days. Mondays and Wednesdays she works from home.

Grace and peace to you! Remember that we love God, neighbor, and one another. Our address is 680 South Park Blvd., Glen Ellyn, IL 60137 if you would like to set up an online account with your bank or mail in your pledge. Online giving through Vanco is also now an option –for details contact Ron Birchall.

**Dates to remember this week:** **Sunday, December 1 – *First Sunday of Advent*
 Order Jubilee Bucks** for yourself and Share the Spirit by emailing
 bobbifrey@aol.com by 9:00 p.m.
 **Worship** at 9:30 a.m. - in person and also live on Facebook **Fellowship** in the Narthex following worship
 **Staff meeting** at 11:00 in the Pastor’s office
 **Adult Ed. Bible Study** at 11:15 a.m. in the Parlor/Library
 **No Youth Pizza & Games**
**Monday, December 2 – Pastor’s Sabbath
 Jeremiah Task Force** at 6:30 p.m. **Tuesday-Friday –** **Pastor Wendy’s Heart to Heart** on Facebook live at 4:20 p.m. **Tuesday, December 3
 Staff** calendar meeting at 12;30 p.m. in McHenry Parlor/Library
 **Mission** meets at 7:30 p.m. in McHenry Parlor/Library A.A. meets at 7:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall
**Wednesday, December 4
 Women’s Breakfast** at 8:30 a.m. at Danby’s Station **the December *Dialog* goes out**
**Thursday, December 5** **Choir rehearsal** at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary
 **Finance meeting: Parking lot financing** 7:00 p.m. in McHenry Parlor/Library
 **Young Adults Video Club** 8:30 p.m. **Friday, December 6**
 A.A.at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall
**Next** **Sunday, December 8 – *Second Sunday of Advent***
 **Worship** at 9:30 a.m. - in person and also live on Facebook **Fellowship** in the Narthex following worship
 **Rehearsal for the Christmas Program** 11:00 in the Sanctuary
 **No Staff meeting or Adult Ed.**
 **Youth: Pizza & Games** at 4:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

**Covid – where are we now?**Covid spiked in recent months, so we have continued having a “comfort zone” toward the back of the sanctuary. You may, of course, continue to wear a mask, if you so choose.

**Bearing Fruit – December 1, 2024**

**Christmas Is Coming**

How do we bear the fruit of God’s love and prepare for Advent and Christmas?

Our pastor has some trouble with the Christmas spirit. It has nothing to do with the message of Christmas, but stores and the media start pushing Christmas, sometimes as early as Labor Day. She resists so much that Christmas tends to sneak up on her. This happens to other people, as well.

Many of us, including our pastor, find the “Longest Night” service a great way to usher in Christmas. In years past, we have had a “Longest Night” service, held in the evening on the longest night of the year – December 21. This year, that date falls on a Saturday. The session decided not to hold the service this year and to hold the 2025 Longest Night service on December 22, a Monday. May we be tender and caring toward those who are feeling “blue” at this time of year.

Today is the first Sunday of Advent. Many people were able to obtain the supplies for an Advent wreath at our Advent workshop last Sunday. Advent wreaths are a beautiful way to prepare for Christmas. If you don’t have an Advent wreath, it is easy to create one. The color of the candles doesn’t matter, but you may want to use three blue or purple candles, one pink candle, and one white candle for the Christ candle; the color is not that important.

Our worship services during Advent will open with the lighting of the Advent wreath. Those who watch worship from home may want to light their own candles as we light those in our sanctuary.

This year, we will examine four “songs” from the Gospel of Luke. You may want to use one per week as we light our Advent candle. In the coming weeks, we will post the songs of Advent and Christmas in our eNotes.

**“Share the Spirit” is another way to bear the fruit of God’s love to those who may not have much this Christmas.**

People’s Resource Center (PRC) is requesting donations of gift cards, specifically $25 cards for Jewel, Mariano’s, Target, or Walmart. In a win-win for PRC and Southminster, you can order cards today through our Jubilee Bucks sales!

**Today is the last order day in 2024 for gift cards, whether you buy them for Share the Spirit or for your own gift-giving.**If you would rather purchase an actual gift to donate to Share the Spirit, PRC is requesting the following:
NEW books (ages 0-17)
NEW family games
NEW stuffed animals for children under age 1 (12” or smaller)
NEW with tags blankets (no hand-made blankets)

**Gifts must be at church no later than Sunday, December 8, at 11:00 a.m.**
We bear the fruit of God’s love when we pause in Advent and remember the true meaning of Christmas, God with us, and when we support “Share the Spirit” and help our neighbors in need.

**We thank God for Cindy Trowbridge**, who is subbing today for our Music Director, Tom Anderson, while he celebrates Thanksgiving with family.