**Southminster Presbyterian Church**

**3rd Sunday of Advent**

**December 15, 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.

 Gathering Music/PhotoStory: “Angels”

 Welcome, Announcements, and Moment for Mission

  Prelude

[Please remain seated as we begin worship.]

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

**O Lord how shall I meet you, how welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart's delight!
O kindle, Lord most holy, a lamp within my breast,
To do in spirit lowly all that may please you best.**

**Love caused your incarnation; love brought you down to me;
Your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.
O love beyond all telling, that led You to embrace
In love, all love excelling, our lost and fallen race.**

**You come, O Lord, with gladness, in mercy and good will,**

**To bring an end to sadness and bid our fears be still.**

**In patient expectation we live for that great day**

**When your renewed creation your glory shall display.**

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 Call to Worship

 Leader: Angelic voices spreading the news.

 **People: Joyous songs on a Sunday morning.**

 Leader: Memories of carols sung and music enjoyed,

 **All:** **Still echoing in our lives and prompting us to sing.**

 Hymn 83: *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* (verses 1, 2)

**Come, though long-expected Jesus,**

**Born to set thy people free,**

**From our fears and sins release us;**

**Let us find our rest in thee.**

**Israel’s strength and consolation,**

**Hope of all the earth thou art;**

**Dear desire of every nation,**

**Joy of every longing heart.**

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 Prayer of Confession: (unison)

**Wondrous God, your love is wider than our sight; your grace is more wonderful than we can sing. You chose to visit us as a child in a manger, and love us as a friend. We admit that there is much in us that is not ready to receive you. Help us to pause in your presence, that we might hear a song that lights our hearts, that we might find you in our common tasks. Come; give us a heart of praise and a song of gladness, in Jesus Christ we pray. Now hear our personal and silent prayers. 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

 Prayers of the People and the Lord’s Prayer

 Leader: Lord, in your mercy,

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

**The Lord’s Prayer:** (unison)

**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.**

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 Anthem: *The Cherry Tree Carol*  arr. Anthony Giamanco

 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 Thanksgiving and Dedication

 **The Christmas Program:** **Lessons and Carols**

 Carol 88: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (verses 1-4)

Verse 1

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.**

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Verse 2

**O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
Who orderest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show;
And cause us in her ways to go.**

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Verse 3

**O come, O come, thou Lord of might,**

**Who to thy tribes on Sinai’s height**

**In ancient times didst give the law**

**In cloud and majesty and awe.**

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Verse 4

**O come, thou Root of Jesse, free**

**Thine own from Satan’s tyranny;**

**From depths of hell thy people save**

**And give them victory o’er the grave.**

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Public domain

  Prayer for Illumination

 First Lesson: Isaiah 11:1-6 (The Peaceful Kingdom) Grace Hammer

 Carol: *Advent Carol*  Victor King, vocal

 Second Lesson: Luke 1:26-35, 38 (Angel Gabriel and Mary)
 Gracie Sarther and Avery Hammer

 Carol: *Breath of Heaven*  Jessica Parks, vocal

 Third Lesson:  Luke 2:1-7 (The Birth of Jesus) Avery Hammer and Gracie Sarther

 Carol 115: *Away in a Manger*

Verse 1 (children only, signing and signing)

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,**

**The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.**

**The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,**

**The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

Verse 3 (All – choir, congregation, children)

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay**

**Close by me forever and love me, I pray.**

**Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,**

**And fit us for heaven to live with thee there.**

Public domain

 Fourth Lesson: Luke 2:8-20 (The Shepherds, Angels, and the Holy Family)

 Jake Falkman and Lauren Hammer

 Carol 122: *Silent Night* (verse 1)

Verse 1 (Elspeth Parks, and hand chimes)

Verse 4 (All sing)

**Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light;**

**With the angels let us sing Alleluias to our King:**

**Christ the Savior is born: Christ the Savior is born.**

Public domain

 Fifth Lesson: Matthew 2:1-12 (The Magi Visit the Messiah) Becca Storey

 Carol 151: *We Three Kings of Orient Are*

Verse 1 (All sing + children on hand chimes during chorus)

**We three kings of Orient are**

**Bearing gifts we traverse afar,**

**Field and fountain, moor and mountain,**

**Following yonder star.**

Chorus

**O star of wonder, star of night,**

**Star with royal beauty bright,**

**Westward leading, still proceeding,**

**Guide us to thy perfect light.**

Verse 5 (All sing + children on hand chimes during chorus)

**Glorious now behold him arise,**

**King and God and Sacrifice:**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Sounds through the earth and skies.**

Chorus

**O star of wonder, star of night,**

**Star with royal beauty bright,**

**Westward leading, still proceeding,**

**Guide us to thy perfect light.**

Public domain

 Lighting the Advent Wreath

Lighters: 1. We light these candles as a sign of the coming of Christ. Grace Hammer

 2. Advent means coming. Joe Parks

 3. We are preparing ourselves for the days Elspeth Parks

 4. when the wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,

 the desert shall rejoice and blossom; Grace Hammer

 5. like the rose it shall blossom abundantly, Elspeth Parks

 6. and rejoice with joy and singing. Joe Parks

 Pastor: Jesus is the light of the world.

 **All:** **Let us walk in the light of the Lord!**

 Response:

 *Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness*(Hymn 314, verse 2)

 (*Christ, Be Our Light)*

**Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.****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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 Sixth Lesson: John 1:1-14 (The Word Became Flesh) Victor King

 Carol 134: *Joy to the World*

Introduction (children, hand chimes)

Verse 1 (choir, children on chimes)

**Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
Let earth receive her king;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

Verse 2 (choir, congregation, chimes)

**Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

Verse 4 (choir, congregation, chimes, trumpet)

**He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.**

Public domain

 Charge and Benediction

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

 **All: Alleluia! Amen!**

 Postlude

**Participants and Technical Crew**

Rev. Wendy Boden
Greeter/Fellowship: Beth Bonde
Musicians: Tom Anderson, the Southminster Choir, David Kozich (trumpet),
 others as listed
Worship Associate: David Kozich
Tech support: Chris Kozich, Blair Nelson

The flowers today are from Sue Knisely in memory of her parents,
Howie and Evelyn Duell.

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. Rumor has it that the deacons will have a special fellowship following this service.

**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 22: “Christmas Trees**” – Please send by this 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**: Our class will not meet today because of the rehearsal for next Sunday’s Christmas program.

**Men** **of Southminster:** Please look at the email from Blair (it goes to a list, so check your spam folder!) about possible dates for January.

**Youth**:  **Coming soon - the Charlie Brown Christmas Party and Lock-In**! This Friday, Dec. 20, at 7:30 p.m. we meet in the Narthex with whatever it takes to get us through the night: sleeping bag, pillow, air mattress, toothbrush, etc. Bring snacks to share and games to play. We will watch “A Charlie Brown Christmas”, make and decorate a Frankentree, and do some serious hanging out.

**Session elders**: Remember that we meet this Tuesday, December 17, at 7:30 p.m. in McHenry Parlor/Library.

**From our Deacons**:
**A gift for you**! Please help yourselves to the Christmas season bookmarks that are available in the Narthex on the Deacon shelf (closest to the coatroom).

**Also, please take a look in the kitchen if you have brought food to any event at the church.** You may have dishes or containers waiting for you to reclaim and take home!

**Coming deadlines!**

**The January Dialog**: Christmas is coming, and right after that Pastor Wendy Boden is leaving for a mission trip to our sister church in Cuba. Therefore, the deadline for the January *Dialog* will be very early: Thursday, December 19! (**Other communication notes**: We will send eNotes on December 18; no eNotes the week of Christmas but we will send the Christmas Eve bulletin and the Friday, December 27, email with the December 29 bulletin; the week of December 29 there will be no eNotes but there will be the January Dialog – see above for that issue’s deadline.)

**The 2024 Church Financial Records** must be closed promptly at the end of this month. Any deposits, donations or pledges that need to be recorded in calendar year 2024 or bills to be paid from the 2024 budget must be in the church office no later than Friday, January 3, at noon. If you have any questions, please contact Treasurer Tom Frey.

The Finance Ministry also reminds you to **pick up your 2025 offering envelopes** – they are available in the Narthex. Picking them up saves Southminster the cost of mailing them!

**From the Mission Ministry: Special Christmas Offerings**It is Advent, and as we look forward to celebrating our Savior’s birth during this season, we have two additional opportunities to help our brothers and sisters in Christ.

First, there is the **Christmas Joy Offering**. The theme this year is “Prepare the Way”. This offering all goes to PCUSA to honor and celebrate leaders like retired pastors, church workers, and their families who now find themselves in financial need. The envelopes for this offering are blue and white with a manger scene printed on them.

Second is our **Local Mission Offering**. The total amount collected will go to help the missions that we support as a church. These envelopes have assorted designs on them.

You can donate without using one of the special envelopes, but please clearly indicate to which offering you want your donation to go.

At this special holy time of year please consider helping those in need. These special collections will be dedicated on Sunday, January 5.

**From the Worship Ministry**
*Because the longest day/night of the year (December 21) is a Saturday, we will not hold a* ***Longest Night Service*** *this year. Please remember those who**are not feeling merry this holiday season.*

The **Christmas Eve service** (Tuesday, December 24) will again be at 4:30 p.m.! It will be a traditional service including Scripture, carols, choir, and concluding with the traditional *Silent Night* candlelight singing.(The earlier time accommodates choir members and others who wish to gather with their families later that evening.)

**Poinsettia orders are due today**! Thanks to everyone who ordered **poinsettias** to beautify the sanctuary for Christmas – *the orders are due today*. Please take your plants home after the Christmas Eve service on Tuesday afternoon, December 24, or pick them up in the narthex on Thursday, December 26, from 10-11:00 a.m. If unable to pick up, please arrange for someone else to do so. There will be no home deliveries.

**Sign up for Flowers:** The 2025 flower chart is posted – you are invited to sign up for arrangements for the first half of the year. If you are unable to sign up at church, contact Sarah Allen (sarah.cleland.allen@gmail.com) with your requests.

We hope to keep the same price as last year ($35 per arrangement), but to be sure, check the information on the flower chart when you sign up to see what the 2025 actually will be. If you are donating your flowers, mark the chart with an X. Deacons deliver flowers that are donated. If you are not donating the flowers, please be sure to take them home after Sunday worship or designate someone to pick them up for you.

Thank you for your support of Southminster’s Flower Ministry. Questions: call or text Sarah Allen (630-988-8231).

**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.

 **Presbyterian Women (PW)**
We are now collecting books for the **Annual Book Sale** in January. So, start bringing in your books. 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:**
**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**
Thanks to all who ordered Jubilee Bucks gift cards in December – this month’s sale was our biggest order yet, with a total order of $9,675.00 (273 cards) — 101 cards worth $2,525.00 were ordered for Share the Spirit! Southminster’s 2024 total in “free money” generated from the sale of Jubilee Bucks is $2,224.94.

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 Sue Knisely in memory of her parents,* *Howie and Evelyn Duell .***We give thanks to God for joys.****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 Syria – the removal of former ruler Assad and prayers for the new leadership of the country* - 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 for an end to gun violence in our nation. *In one day (last Sunday, December 18) there were 89 shooting incidents in 29 states, leaving 35 people dead and 69 people injured.* To see current statistics for shootings in this country, go to <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org>.
 - We lift up the kindergarten children who were shot in their school in California and are hospitalized in critical condition. We lift up the families of all gun violence victims.
 - We continue to pray for peace in the world
**Blessed are those who mourn**:
 *- Pete Petersen and family on the death of his cousin, James Marohn, last Saturday
 - The Kozich family on the death of Mary Lou Weber, mother of Steve and Chris’s sister-in-law
 - Lanny Russell asks prayers for the family of his longtime friend, Bob Welsh, who died after a long battle with lymphoma.*
  - 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**:
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., Al M., Jan M., Nikki M., Rebecca M., Tim O., Ginny 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**:
 *- Rita Zapel asks prayers for Willy Christensen, a close family friend, who is now in hospice care.*
 - We pray for Heidi Shierry with additional health concerns.
 - We lift up Linda Wolf Jeziorski and her husband, Paul. Linda fell and was hospitalized but is now recovering at Wynscape.
  - 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 15 – *Third Sunday of Advent***
 **Participants in the Christmas program and tech team**
 **Children**, meet in Fellowship Hall at 8:00 a.m.
 **Tech team**, be in the Sanctuary ready to start at 8:00 a.m.

 **Readers** (who are not also doing music), be in the Sanctuary by 8:30 a.m.
 **Worship/Christmas Program** at 9:30 a.m. - in person and also live on Facebook **Fellowship** in the Narthex following worship
 **Clean up after the Christmas program** at 11:00 a.m.  **Adult Ed.** at 11:15 a.m. in McHenry Parlor/Library
**Monday, December 16 – Pastor’s Sabbath
Tuesday-Friday –** **Pastor Wendy’s Heart to Heart** on Facebook live at 4:20 p.m. **Tuesday, December 17
 Staff** calendar meeting at 12;30 p.m. in McHenry Parlor/Library
 **Session** meets at 7:30 p.m. in McHenry Parlor/Library A.A. meets at 7:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall
**Wednesday, December 18** **eNotesgo out** (Note that **Presbyterian Readers** are not meeting.)
**Thursday, December 19
 Deadline for the January *Dialog* – yes, it’s early!** **Choir rehearsal** at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary
 **Young Adults Video Club** 8:30 p.m. **Friday, December 20**
 A.A.at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall
 **Youth: Charlie Brown Christmas Party and Lock In** in the Narthex
 and other places. The lock in will end by 11:00 a.m. Saturday.
**Next** **Sunday,** **December 22 – *Fourth Sunday of Advent***
 **Worship** at 9:30 a.m. - in person and also live on Facebook **Fellowship** in the Narthex following worship
 **Staff meeting** at 11:00 a.m. in the pastor’s office **Adult Ed.** at 11:15 a.m. in McHenry Parlor/Library

**Covid – where are we now?**It is flu and Covid season, so we continue to have a “comfort zone” toward the back of the sanctuary. You may wear a mask, of course, if you so choose.

**Bearing Fruit – December 15, 2024**

**Carols and Lessons**

During Advent we offer several ways to meet the Christ Child. Today, the third Sunday of Advent, we have the “Christmas Program.”

Our Christmas Program is multigenerational. In preparation, the children practiced hand chimes and songs. There will be sign language and one verse of Silent Night in German. The adult choir joins the children in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and a variety of singers and readers of all ages from our church family. We take a cue from the traditional lessons and carols service held at King’s College in Cambridge in 1918, where the scripture reading begins with the youngest and concludes with the oldest. The choir will be robed in beautiful advent blue.

Today we ask you to remember the story of Christ’s Advent by participating in our Christmas Program or Pageant. You will participate by preparing your heart as we join in the call to worship, the prayer of confession, the prayers of the people, the offering, and congregational singing.

Do you remember ever being in a Christmas program? How does that memory influence your understanding of the story of Christ? How does the hearing and singing of familiar scripture and hymns ignite your memory? We best live as God’s people by remembering where we have been and trusting God with our future as we aim to live faithfully.

(By the way… Rumor has it that the deacons will have a special fellowship following worship today!)

We praise God for our worship arts team – Sarah Allen, Sue Knisely, Lynn Ferino, and, until recently due to a move, Linda Ellinghausen – for their talent and efforts in 2024! We bear the fruit of God’s love as we worship together.