**Southminster Presbyterian Church**

**4th Sunday of Advent**

**December 22, 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/Photo Story: “Christmas Trees”

 Welcome, Announcements, and Moment for Mission

 Lighting the Advent Wreath Lighters: Choir members

Lighters: We light this candle in hope.

 We light this candle for peace.
 We light this candle of joy.
 We light this candle of love.
 We light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love
 as a sign of the coming light of Christ.

 **All:** **Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!**

Response 82: *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

**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.**

**Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,**

**Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.**

**By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;**

**By thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.**

Public domain

  Prelude

[Please remain seated as we begin worship.]

 Call to Worship

 Leader: O, that our voices sounded like the heavenly choir,

 **People:** **O, that our knees were strong enough to kneel forever in wonder,**

Leader: And our hearts could forever ponder the joy and share the love.

 **All:** **Holy God, take who we are and what we have to offer.**

 Hymn 93: *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*

 Prayer of Confession (unison) (2 Corinthians 3:18)

**Lord God, in admitting the truth of our lives, we make the first step toward wholeness and healing. Forgive the wrongs we have done, and bless the good we have accomplished. Thank you for loving, helping, and molding us more and more into the image of Jesus Christ, who is both Savior and Lord. 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 83: *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*(all verses)

**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.**

**Born thy people to deliver,**

**Born a child and yet a king,**

**Born to reign in us forever,**

**Now thy gracious kingdom bring.**

**By thine own eternal Spirit**

**Rule in all our hearts alone;**

**By thine all sufficient merit**

**Raise us to thy glorious throne.**

Public domain

 The Passing of the Peace

 Word with Children Blair Baldwin
 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:  Psalm 24  Pew Bible, p. 502 (O.T.)

 Luke 2:13-14 Pew Bible, p. 58 (N.T.)

 Sermon: “Glory to God” Pastor Wendy Boden

 Singing What We Believe

 Hymn 84: *Creator of the Stars of Night* (all verses)

Prayers of the People and the Lord’s Prayer

 Leader: Lord, in your mercy,

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

**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.**

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: *God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen*

 Response: *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*(Hymn 119, verse 1)

**Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn king
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise;
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th’angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn king!”**

Public domain

 Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

 Advent Medley
 Hymn 87: *Comfort. Comfort Now My People* (verse 1)

 Hymn 102: *Savior of the Nations, Come* (verse 1)

 Charge and Benediction

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

 Postlude

**Participants and Technical Crew**

Rev. Wendy Boden

Liturgist: Terry Kline
Greeter/Fellowship: Kathy Sanders
Musicians: Tom Anderson, Lynn Ferino, Elise Henkels
Worship Associate: David Kozich
Tech support: Chris Kozich, Blair Nelson

The flowers today celebrate Rita Zapel’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 29: “Christmas PJs**” – Please send by Thursday, December 26.
 **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 in the Parlor for our study of Matthew’s gospel. We are in the middle of Passion Week in Matthew’s story. (I know that it is really Advent.) The study is edifying, the conversation is entertaining, and the fellowship is satisfying.

**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.

**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* was very early: this past Thursday, December 19! If you still have something you want in that issue, please send it asap.
(**Other communication notes**: We will not send eNotes on Wednesday this week – IT’s Christmas Day! – but we will send the Christmas Eve bulletin with some notes attached. You will receive the usual Friday email on December 27 with the December 29 bulletin. The week of December 29 there will be no eNotes but there will be the January Dialog – we hope to have that ready to send out on January 2.)

**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! If there isn’t a box or envelopes for you and you would like one, contact Rita Zapel at rboserup@sbcglobal.net.

**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.)

Thanks to everyone who ordered **poinsettias** to beautify the sanctuary for Christmas. 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.

The price remains the same as last year ($35 per arrangement). 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 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): Accepting Book Donations Now!**
We are now collecting books for the **Annual Book Sale** in January, so you can start bringing in your book donations. ***Please, no textbooks, CDs or DVDs.*** 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*** *celebrate Rita Zapel’s birthday.***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.
 *- Cyclone Chido on December 14 in Mayotte, an archipelago in the Indian Ocean, a territory of France*  - Peace for Syria – the removal of former ruler Assad and prayers for the new leadership of the country, even amid the hostilities of neighbors
 - 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 15) there were 78 shooting incidents in 28 states, leaving 33 people dead and 65 people injured.* To see current statistics for shootings in this country, go to <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org>.
 *- We lift up the teacher and student who were killed and the others who were injured (two critically) on Monday in the shooting at a Madison, Wisconsin, school. 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
 - 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**:
 *- We pray for former member Margaret Fournier, who has lung cancer. The treatments are difficult.*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**:
 *- We lift up Linda Wolf Jeziorski and her husband, Paul. She has returned to CDH.
 - Louanne Jourdan asks prayers for her brother, Tim Mueller, who had a heart attack last week
 - Joan Koska has been rehabbing at Tabor Hills, and it seems she may be there indefinitely. Cards are welcome but no visitors. Here is the address:
Joan Koska
c/o Tabor Hills Healthcare Facility
1347 Crystal Ave.
Room 119
Naperville, IL 60563* - 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.
  - Pastor Wendy’s bonus dad, Frank, has been progressing after experiencing severe back pain; he is now able to move slowly.
  - Kim Gosney’s sister, Amy, is out of a coma but still cannot speak
  - 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).

**Pastor Wendy Boden and Minister of Youth and Adult Discipleship Blair Nelson will be away December 27-January 3**. For **pastoral care** during that week, you may contact the Rev. Stephen Williams at 630-862-8386 or stephenwilliams515@gmail.com. You may always contact your deacon or Helping Hands.

**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 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
**Monday, December 23 – Pastor’s Sabbath
Tuesday-Friday –** **Pastor Wendy’s Heart to Heart** on Facebook live at 4:20 p.m.
 Watch for H2H at the usual times but it may be patchy while she is in Cuba Dec. 27-Jan. 3. **Tuesday, December 24 – *Christmas Eve*
Christmas Eve bulletin and abbreviated eNotes will be sent out.
 Choir and staff** should arrive by 3:30 p.m.
 **Christmas Eve service** at 4:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary ***“O come, all ye faithful!”*** A.A. meets at 7:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall
**Wednesday, December 25 – *Christmas Day*
*“Joy to the world, the Lord is come!”* Church office will be closed.
Thursday, December 26**
 **Poinsettias**: If you didn’t take your poinsettia home after the Christmas Eve service, pick it up from 10:00-11:00 a.m. or have someone pick it up for you. No home deliveries.
 **No Young Adults Video Club** until January 9. **Friday, December 27**
 A.A.at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall
**Next** **Sunday,** **December 29**
 **Worship** at 9:30 a.m. - in person and also live on Facebook **Fellowship** in the Narthex following worship
 **No Staff meeting, Adult Ed., or Youth activity**

**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 22, 2024**

**Christmas Offerings and Sharing the Good News of the Christ Child**

There is no correct way to feel about Christmas. We are all in different places in our life’s journey. How do we share the song the angels sang on the night of our Lord and Savior's birth? That is the question.

Imagine being one of those shepherds. They had their own stories and circumstances, but after hearing the angels sing and praise God, they were moved to share the story and go and see.

One way for us to share the story is through our two Christmas Offerings.

During the season of Advent, we collect our special Christmas offerings and dedicate them on the first Sunday of the new year, which this year is January 5.

The **Christmas Joy Offering** is a gift to the larger PCUSA Church. God has blessed the Church with incredible leadership every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities. This offering addresses the support required by some of our leaders, including supporting leadership development for communities of color and providing support for Presbyterian Church workers in their time of need.

The **Local Mission Christmas Offering** funds Southminster’s local missions. Our local missions are Bridge Communities, Cuba Sister Church, DuPage PADS, Metropolitan Family Services (formerly Family Shelter Service), People’s Resource Center, Walk-in-Ministries, World Relief, and our Youth Mission Trip. On January 5, we will dedicate the two offerings as we begin to worship.

Welcome to Christmas! Whether you are done with your preparations or not, Christmas will arrive! Remember, it is much like the Grinch said about Christmas…

*“It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags…. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more.”*

Let us bear the fruit of God’s love this Christmas by remembering our Christmas offerings.