**Southminster Presbyterian Church**

**2nd Sunday of Christmas**

**January 5, 2025**

**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: “Cuba 2025”

 Welcome and Announcements

 Congregational Prayer of Dedication for the Christmas Offerings

 **Holy God, the giver of life and all that is great and beautiful, we thank you for the gifts of talent, time, and resources, particularly for these special Christmas offerings. As we return these gifts to you, may they be used for your glory near and far. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, God with us.
Amen.**

 Prelude: *He Is Born, the Divine Christ Child*  arr. Alexander

[Please remain seated while singing the opening song.]

 Hymn: *Here I Am to Worship*  (pg. 19, gold supplement)

 Call to Worship

 Leader: This is an hour of change.

 **People**: **We stand quietly on the border of light.**

 Leader: Will you trust and move forward, or will you go back?

 **All:** **We are here to worship eternal God, the source of life, light, and love.**

 Hymn 510: *We Gather Here in Jesus’ Name*

 Prayer of Confession: (unison)

**Eternal God, you chose to visit us as a child in a manger and love us as friends. With the new year already just five days old, many of our good intentions have fallen aside. Please help us remember that each day is a resurrection through you. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.**

**Amen.**

 (Time of silence for personal prayer and confession)

 Declaration of God’s Grace/The Good News of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:16-19, edited)

 Leader: From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view.

 **People: So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:**

 Leader: Everything old has passed away;

 **People: See, everything has become new!**

 **All: We declare the good news!
 In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Alleluia!**

 Response 150: *As with Gladness Men of Old*  (verses 1, 4)

Verse 1

**As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright;
So most gracious Lord, may we
Evermore be led to thee.**

Verse 4

**Holy Jesus, every day
Keep us in the narrow way;
And when earthly things are past,
Bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide,
Where no clouds thy glory hide.**

Public domain

 The Passing of the Peace

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

As the children leave:

 *Go, Tell It on the Mountain*  Hymnal 136, refrain

**Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

Public domain

 Prayer for Illumination

 Scripture Lessons:  Luke 2:41-52 Pew Bible, p. 59 (N.T.)

 Luke 2:21-38 Pew Bible, p. 59 (N.T.)

 Sermon: “Touching and Seeing Hope”

 Saying What We Believe/Affirmation of Faith (unison)
 *The Apostles’ Creed* [Ecumenical]

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

 Hymn 507: *Come to the Table of Grace* (all verses)

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: *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day* arr. John Wasson

 Words by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Additional Words by Mark Hall and Dale Oliver

 \*Response 151: *We Three Kings of Orient Are* (verse 5)

Verse 5

**Glorious now behold him arise,**

**King and God and Sacrifice:**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Sounds through the earth and skies.**

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

**Star with royal beauty bright,**

**Westward leading, still proceeding,**

**Guide us to thy perfect light.**

Public domain

 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: *I Wonder as I Wander* arr. Yeager

For your contemplation, the lyrics to this song are included
in the Bearing Fruit at the back of your bulletin.

*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 152: *What Star Is This with Beams So Bright* (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: *Angels from the Realms of Glory* arr. Bober

**Participants and Technical Crew**

Rev. Wendy Boden
Liturgist: Steve Henkels
Greeter/Fellowship: Andrea Davidson
Elder at the Door: Sarah Allen
Musicians: Cindy Trowbridge (guest), Ron Birchall
Worship Associate: David Kozich
Tech support: Chris Kozich, Blair Nelson

The flowers today are given by the Worship team in appreciation for Southminster’s new sound system.

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. Watch here for coming opportunities to share your photos.

**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**: We continue our study of Matthew’s gospel at 11:15 a.m. today in McHenry Parlor/Library.

**Men** **of Southminster:** Let’s put Wednesday, January 15, at 7:30 p.m. on the calendar for our next get-together.

**Youth**:  Happy New Year! Be ready for the return of **Pizza & Games** on January 12 and 26, 4:00-6:00 p.m. Also be thinking of things we can plan for February and March.

**Parking Lot Reconstruction Capital Campaign: “Paving the Way”**

The parking lot reconstruction project is moving along. The plans have been approved by the Village of Glen Ellyn and Milton Township. We are in the process of soliciting bids for the project, with the actual work to probably start in the summer 2025. Early bids suggest that the project cost will be approx. $180,000.

We now have to work out how to pay for the project. An **informational congregational meeting has been called for Sunday, January 26 (immediately following worship)** to introduce a capital campaign to raise the money. Information will also be sent out to congregation members via mail or email.

We hope to see you on January 26!

**From the Worship Ministry**

**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.

Worship Ministry is looking for more people to serve as **liturgists** or on the **Worship Arts Team**. If you’d like to volunteer or want to know more about what’s involved, contact Sarah Allen, Moderator of Worship. Her email address is above, or call her at 630-988-8231.

**From the Mission Ministry:
Luminaria Sunday**, when we honor and remember those whose lives have been touched by cancer, will be observed on February 23. You may purchase luminaria bags the first 3 Sundays in February for $10 each. Details are in the January *Dialog* and will be repeated in coming publications.

**From the Endowment Funds Ministry:
How can I give to Southminster's *Living Legacy Fund*?**

We hear wonderful news about how the annual distributions from Southminster's endowment fund are being used. But how do funds get into the *Living Legacy Fund* in the first place?

Here are the easiest ways that people can give:

* + - * Put a check (made payable to Southminster Presbyterian Church) or cash in an envelope marked either *Living Legacy Fund,* or *Endowment,* and drop it in the offering plate or send it to the church
			* Consider remembering the *Living Legacy Fund* on your birthday, for your Secret Pal's birthday, or for any other occasion or no occasion at all
			* No gift is too small... or too large!
			* Name Southminster in your Will or Trust to inherit
			* Bequests of more than $5,000 to Southminster Presbyterian Church of Glen Ellyn automatically go into the *Living Legacy Fund* unless you say otherwise
			* Or, you may designate a bequest either to:

*Living Legacy Fund of Southminster Presbyterian Church of Glen Ellyn,* or

*Endowment Fund of Southminster Presbyterian Church of Glen Ellyn*

Here are some other ways that people can give to the *Living Legacy Fund* - we suggest that you talk with your tax advisor, or with your estate planning attorney, to learn about the benefits that you or your loved ones may receive with these ideas:

* + Have your IRA make a Qualified Charitable Distribution ("QCD") directly to Southminster (if you are at least 70-1/2) - talk to your IRA company for instructions, and let Ron Birchall or Tom Frey know that the QCD is for the *Living Legacy Fund*
	+ Donate your appreciated securities to Southminster, instead of cash - talk to Ron Birchall or Tom Frey to coordinate such a gift, and to make sure that Southminster can accept it
	+ Name the *Living Legacy Fund* as a beneficiary of an IRA or a life insurance policy - be sure to seek tax or estate planning advice if you are naming any other non-charitable beneficiaries of the same IRA account
	+ Establish a charitable trust, which can provide income or deferred benefits to you or to designated individuals, and also benefit Southminster's *Living Legacy Fund -* speak with Ron Birchall for more information

**First Wednesday Women’s Breakfast will meet on the second Wednesday this month!**

Our January monthly women’s breakfast (is being pushed back one week because New Year’s Day was the first Wednesday of the month. So Women’s Breakfast will meet this Wednesday, January 8, 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; gretchen\_fleming@yahoo.com—if you have any questions. Danby’s Station is at 750 Roosevelt Road, Glen Ellyn.

 **Presbyterian Women (PW): Accepting Book Donations Now!**
PW is collecting used books for a Book Sale January 17-26. Clear off your bookshelves and bring used books now: ***please, no textbooks, CDs, or DVDs***. You may drop them off in Fellowship Hall, but if you cannot take your books to Fellowship Hall, leave them in the red Book Wagon in the vestibule. Then plan to stock up for winter reading by shopping our sale Jan. 17-26.

The next **PW meeting** will be on Friday, January 17. We will meet in the Parlor at 9:30 a.m. for refreshments and a short meeting before adjourning to the Narthex to browse the books available for the Biennial PW Book Sale.

**Presbyterian Readers** will meet Wednesday, January 15, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. January’s chosen book is ***The Mystery Guest*** by Nita Prose. This is the second book in a three-book series by the author. It is suggested to read the first book, *The Maid*, but is not required to understand the second book.

Join our Cloud HD Video Meeting through this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86861724721?pwd=TE0yYXZGZUtUNkdvYWh4UEhaTFc0dz09>
Meeting ID: 868 6172 4721 Passcode: 600865

For more information about the Readers, contact Rita Zapel at rboserup@sbcglobal.net.

**Community News**

**An open invitation to pray for the new year**

Hope Presbyterian Church is hosting an interfaith prayer time to pray for our nation in the new year. All are invited to attend on Sunday, January 12, 3:30 p.m. at Hope Presbyterian Church, 1771 S. Wiesbrook Rd., Wheaton, IL 60189 (630-668-7750).

**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: Order today, January 5!**
Your only chance to order Jubilee Bucks gift cards is today, January 5! Remember that gift cards can be used for your own personal use (groceries, gas, restaurants, etc.) as well as for gifts. Get your order to Bobbi Frey at church or by email to bobbifrey@aol.com no later than 9:00 p.m. on January 5.

Your next chance to order will be February 2.

**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 given by the Worship team in appreciation for Southminster’s new sound system.***We give thanks to God for joys:**
 - For Wendy and Blair being able to spend time with our brothers and sisters in Guanabacoa
 - For all who were able to celebrate Christmas with loved ones and friends
 - For Barb’s friend Jan M., who has been on the prayer list with cancer for many months. She has been able to be out socially (cautiously!) and can eat real food after months on a feeding tube!**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.
 - We pray for the people of New Orleans and all those who were victims on New Year’s Eve when a truck plowed into a crowd of people celebrating, killing 14 and injuring many more.
  - 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. *On New Year’s Day (January 1, 2025) there were 173 shooting incidents in 35 states, leaving 66 people dead and 146 people injured.* To see current statistics for shootings in this country, go to <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org>. We lift up the families of all gun violence victims.
 - We continue to pray for peace in the world
**Blessed are those who mourn**:
 *- Prayers of comfort and hope for Paul Jeziorski, extended family, and friends in the death of Linda Wolf Jeziorski on December 24.* ***Her service will be on Saturday, January 11, at 11:00 a.m. at Southminster Presbyterian Church. There will be a visitation at Southminster on Friday, January 10, from 5 to 8:00 p.m. and on Saturday, January 11, from 10:00 to 11:00 before the service, with a fellowship reception following the service.***
  - 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., 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**: - Pastor Wendy’s bonus dad, Frank, was hospitalized with pneumonia.
 - Louanne Jourdan asks prayers for her brother, Tim Mueller, who had a heart attack
 - Joan Koska is at Tabor Hills Healthcare Facility. 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.
  - 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
  - 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 through January 14, call Deacon Sue Knisely (630-776-7998). Watch eNotes and bulletins for coverage after January 14. 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. You may 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, January 5**
 **Worship with communion** 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 **No Youth activity**
**Monday, January 6 – Pastor’s Sabbath
Tuesday-Friday –** **Pastor Wendy’s Heart to Heart** on Facebook live at 4:20 p.m.  **Tuesday, January 7
 Mission** at 7:30 p.m. in McHenry Parlo/Library A.A. meets at 7:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall
**Wednesday, January 8** **Women’s Breakfast** 8:30 a.m. at Danby’s Station
 **Property** at 7:00 p.m. in McHenry Parlor/Library **Thursday, January 9**
 Hawthorn Garden Club at 11:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall
 **Finance:** Parking Lot meeting at 7:00 p.m. in McHenry Parlor/Library
 **Young Adults Video Club** resumes meeting at 8:30 p.m. **Friday, January 10**
 **Visitation for Linda Wolf Jeziorski** in the Narthex/Parlor from 5:00-8:00 p.m.
 A.A.at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall
**Saturday, January 11** **Visitation for Linda Wolf Jeziorski** in the Narthex/Parlor from 10:00-11:00 a.m.
 Service of Witness to the Resurrection at 11:00 a.m., followed by a reception
 in the Narthex/Parlor
**Next** **Sunday,** **January 12**
 **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
 **Child Protection Policy meeting** at 11:15 a.m. in McHenry Parlor/Library **No Adult Ed.**  **Youth: Pizza & Games** from 4:00-6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

**Covid – where are we now?**It is cold, 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 – January 5, 2025
Looking for Light and Shining in the New Year**
Though we have already celebrated a new year, and some of us may already have dropped our New Year’s resolutions, it is still Christmas!

Today is a Sunday that pivots from Christmas to Epiphany – the revelation of the Glory of God in the world as we maintain focus on the gift of God coming to us in Jesus Christ.

One of the ways we bear the fruit of God’s love is to maintain a deep connection with our sister church in Cuba. Last Sunday, while in Cuba, our pastor and minister of youth and adult discipleship gave the gift of felt stars with words of hope and inspiration in Spanish and English to those in worship on December 29th. Giving stars with words of hope and inspiration has become a tradition at Southminster on the Sunday closest to Epiphany, January 6th., the day when the arrival of the Magi, the wise men from the east, worshiped Christ as king. It is meant to remind us that we do not become new by our own efforts but by the light of Christ shining in and around us.

As we move into the new year, may we be inspired to grow in our discipline as a way to bear the fruit of God’s love.

***First Coming*** by Madeleine L’Engle

He did not wait till the world was ready,
till men and nations were at peace.
He came when the Heavens were unsteady,
and prisoners cried out for release.

He did not wait for the perfect time.
He came when the need was deep and great.
He dined with sinners in all their grime,
turned water into wine.

He did not wait till hearts were pure.
In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame
he came, and his Light would not go out.

He came to a world which did not mesh,
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
the Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is sane
to raise our songs with joyful voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

**Thank you, Cindy Trowbridge!**We once again welcome Cindy Trowbridge to our worship service today; she is subbing for our Music Director, Tom Anderson, while he and Blair Baldwin celebrate the holidays with family.

Cindy wondered if the congregation was familiar with the piece she is playing during communion: *I Wonder as I Wander*. She thought the words would be meaningful, so here they are for your contemplation:

 ***I Wonder as I Wander***

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,
how Jesus the Savior did come for to die
for poor ornery people like you and like I;
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

When Mary birthed Jesus, ‘twas in a cow’s stall
with wise men and farmers and shepherd and all.
but high from God’s heaven a star's light did fall,
and the promise of ages it did then recall.

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
a star in the sky, or a bird on the wing,
or all of God’s angels in heaven for to sing,
he surely could have it, ‘cause he was the King.

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,
how Jesus the Savior did come for to die
for poor ornery people like you and like I;
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

Public domain