**Southminster Presbyterian Church**

**2nd Sunday after Epiphany**

**January 19, 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.

Gathering Music/Photo Story: “Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.”

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting the Candles (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬‬

**There are varieties of gifts, services, and activities, but there is one spirit,   
one Lord, and one God.**

Prelude

[Please remain seated as we begin worship.]

Hymn: *City of God*  (all verses) Pg, 8, gold supplement

Call to Worship  (Amos 5:24; Micah 6:7-8)

Leader: With what shall we come before the Lord  
 and bow down before the exalted God?

**People: Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,  
 with ten thousand rivers of oil?**

Leader: God has shown us, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?

**People: To act justly and to love mercy  
 and to walk humbly with God.**

**All:** **But let justice roll down like waters,  
 and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.**

Hymn 339: *Lift Every Voice and Sing*  (all verses)

Prayer of Confession: (unison)

**Lord God, we sometimes lose our way. We forget your claim on our lives. We forget what pleases you. Through your Holy Spirit, help us direct our hearts and minds, intentions, and actions toward the good and faithful road you ask us to walk humbly. 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 582: *Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me*

**Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,**

**And to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,**

**And to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.**

**As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.**

**World without end, without end. Amen.**

**World without end, without end. Amen.**

**World without end, without end. Amen.**

**As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.**

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The Passing of the Peace

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

As the children leave:

*God Welcomes All*  Hymnal 399

**God welcomes all, strangers and friends;**

**God’s love is strong and it never ends.**

Text: John L. Bell, 2008

Music: South African song, transc, John L. Bell, 2008

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Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Lessons:  Luke 4:14-21  Pew Bible, p. 61 (N.T.)

Luke 4:22-30 Pew Bible, p. 61 (N.T.)

Sermon: “Moved by the Spirit” Pastor Wendy Boden

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 852: *When the Lord Redeems the Very Least*  (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: *O Give Thanks*  Hal H. Hopson

\**Doxology* Hymnal #606

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;**

**Praise Him all creatures here below;**

**Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;**

**Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Public domain

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

Hymn 301: *Let Us Build a House*  (all verses)

Charge and Benediction

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

Postlude

**Participants and Technical Crew**

Rev. Wendy Boden

Liturgist: Angela Smith  
Greeter/Fellowship: Barb Kocinski  
Elder at the Door: Chris Kozich  
Musicians: Tom Anderson, the Southminster Choir  
Worship Associate: David Kozich  
Tech support: Chris Kozich, Blair Nelson

The flowers today are given in honor of Barb Doppelt’s birthday (January 26) “from grateful elders and deacons for everything she does to make our jobs easier!”

**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 in honor of Barb Doppelt’s birthday (January 26) from grateful elders and deacons for everything she does to make their jobs easier***We give thanks to God for joys:** *- For the life and witness of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.   
  - For the celebration of the life of Linda Wolf Jeziorski last weekend***We pray for the whole world and our nation:**   
 *- The possibility of improved relationships between the United States and Cuba facilitated by Pope Francis, President Biden, and the Cuban government  
 - We pray that the ceasefire agreement in Gaza will lead to a peaceful and just solution in that region  
  - We hold up all those affected by the fires in southern California and all the people who are fighting those fires and rescuing others. We lift prayers for Altadena Baptist Church, where only the bell tower is still standing. This is where Blair Nelson served while he was in seminary.  
  - Bless President-elect Trump with wisdom and justice as he takes office on Monday.*  
 - May all our public servants lead with godly intentions. We pray for the healing and unity of our country and ask that all people model love and justice.  
   - Prayers of thanksgiving for the life and service of former President Jimmy Carter  
  - 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; for hostilities to cease  
  - We pray for an end to gun violence in our nation. *On one day (last Sunday, January 12) there were 85 shooting incidents in 31 states, leaving 30 people dead and 64 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 was held last weekend at Southminster.  
  - Jack Thorne and family after the death of his Aunt Marsh on December 31  
  - 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 for Ralph, her husband.  
  - 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**:  
 *- Meagan Severson cannot have her cancer surgery, and they are now weighing options.  
 - We lift up Kurt Parent, a member of Hope Church and a friend of this congregation, who has had a relapse of pancreatic cancer. He will see an oncologist this week to determine his course of treatment.*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., Margaret F., Tom G., Frank L., Al M., Nikki M., Rebecca M., Tim O., Ginny O., Betsey P., Laura P., Cis R., Gerry S., Marta 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, who is in nursing care with a brace for his pelvis and neck which are broken.*  - We pray for Heidi Shierry with additional health concerns.     
  - 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. *Her birthday was January 16.***   
Here is the address:   
Joan Koska  
c/o Tabor Hills Healthcare Facility  
1347 Crystal Ave.  
*Room 234* ***(note recent room change)***  
Naperville, IL 60563  
  - Jim Smith, at Brookdale, and all who are in care centers  
  - Rita Zapel asks prayers for Willy Christensen, a close family friend, who is now in hospice care.  
  - 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.  
  - 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.

**This week at Southminster:**  **Sunday, January 19**  
 **Worship** at 9:30 a.m. - in person and also live on Facebook **Fellowship** in the Narthex following worship  
 **PW Book Sale** (continues through January 26)  
 **Staff meeting** at 11:00 a.m. in the Pastor’s office  
 **Adult Ed.** at 11:15 a.m. in McHenry Parlor/Library  
**Monday, January 20 – Pastor’s Sabbath  
Tuesday-Friday –** **Pastor Wendy’s Heart to Heart** on Facebook live at 5:04 p.m.   
 **(Note the new time!)   
Tuesday, January 21  
 Staff calendar meeting** at 12:30 p.m. in McHenry Parlor/Library  **Session** at 7:30 p.m. in McHenry Parlor/Library  
 A.A. meets at 7:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall   
**Thursday, January 23**  
 **Choir rehearsal** at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary  
 **Young Adults Video Club** meets at 8:30 p.m. **Friday, January 24**  
 **Staff luncheon** at 1:00 p.m.  
 A.A.at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall  
**Next** **Sunday,** **January 26**  
 **Worship, Sacrament of Baptism** at 9:30 a.m. - in person   
 and also live on Facebook **Fellowship** in the Narthex following worship  
 **PW Book Sale** (last day)  
 **Staff meeting** at 11:00 a.m. in the Pastor’s office  
 **Adult Ed.** at 11:15 a.m. in McHenry Parlor/Library  
 **Youth: Pizza & Games** from 4:00-6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall  
  
  
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.

**Our “Comfort Zone”** – 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.  
  
**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 5:04 p.m. most weeks Tuesday through Friday. **Note the new time – 5:04 p.m.!**

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](mailto:admin@southminsterpc.org)) and we’ll forward your message.

**Notes from Blair Nelson:**    
**Adult Education**: Our after-worship Bible study is nearing the end of Matthew’s gospel, and the story is getting exciting as the political tensions build. OK, so you know how it turns out, but it is still a story well worth studying. Join us today at 11:15 in the Parlor/Library.   
  
**Youth**:  No event this weekend but join us for **Pizza & Games** on the 26th. Maybe we will have more snowy fun! February events will be on 2nd, 16th, and 23rd. One of those dates I would like to have a photo scavenger hunt meeting at Yorktown Mall rather than the church —gotta have indoor fun in February! Please let me know if you have a preferred date for that. Remember that **Chili Cook-Off** is coming Mar. 2nd, so start recipe testing now!  
  
**The Chili Cook Off!** Southminster’s annual Chili/Soup Cook-Off is on the calendar for Sunday, March 2. That means you have a scant 6 ½ weeks to perfect your chili or soup recipe. Just wanted to give you a heads-up.  
  
  
**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 will present the project plan, timeline, and how to pay for the project. An **informational congregational meeting has been called for next 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 next Sunday, 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](mailto: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

**Presbyterian Women (PW): Shop the Book Sale today and next Sunday!**  
Winter is a good time to curl up with a good book. Stock up on reading materials during fellowship time by shopping PW’s **Used Book Sale** today through January 26. Suggested donations: $2.00 for hardbacks, $1.00 for paperbacks. The money generated will benefit projects and missions supported by Presbyterian Women. Go home, settle in with a new (used) book, add a cozy blanket and a mug of something warm, and you’re all set.

**Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)** has been in communication with faith leaders in the affected communities in the fire regions in southern California. In addition to providing emotional and spiritual care, PDA has already released emergency grants to meet the urgent needs of the communities and to provide immediate assistance.   
  
If you would like to contribute to PDA’s efforts, gifts can be made online by going to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance website and scrolling to “Currently Responding – Southern California Wildfires,” by phone at 800-728-7228, ext. 5885, or by check made payable to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with “PDA-CF25-E” written on the memo line and mailed to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700. Or pick up one of the flyers on the prayer table at the entrance to the sanctuary and follow the donation information there.

**A note from Barb:** **Another thing to do while you’re hibernating during the winter…The puzzles are back**!   
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:**   
Our Jubilee Bucks sales are off to a good start for 2025 – Southminster made $151.39 in “free” money through the January sale.  
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.

**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 until February 11, call Deacon Elise Henkels (630-740-0473). 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](mailto: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.

**Bearing Fruit – January 19, 2025  
Our Worshiping Home**

Walking into a person’s home can reveal a lot about the person. What colors are prominent, bright or neutral? There may be pictures, a dining table, or a TV. These days, some people have converted their dining rooms to computer workstations. Some people have a TV in every room, while some have no TV. Some homes have one shelf of books, while others have bookcase after bookcase overflowing with books.   
  
What might your home say about you?  
  
A member had a family visit, and the visiting children were shocked that the home only had one TV. The children pitied their aunt. What is included or not included in a room can tell us a lot about our hosts.   
  
What might our church home say about us?  
  
What is included or not included, what colors are present, where furniture is placed… what do those things speak about a place of worship?   
  
When we enter our church home at Southminster, a sign says welcome in various languages. We also have artwork from our sister church in Cuba. As we continue down the hall, we may notice a large donation sign. The sign reminds us of how we reach out to our community, not just to the People’s Resource Center, a ministry for people in need, but with places to recycle various items. This says that we are a caring congregation. We love our neighbors and love our planet.  
  
The next stop is our narthex, where we gather before worship and continue as a faith community after worship. Not all worshiping communities have a tradition of visiting over beverages after worship, but we do. It is one way to share God’s love with one another.   
  
In the narthex, we welcome guests, ask after one another’s concerns, consider the church's work, and even visit with our children. If you don’t know someone, please be prepared to get to know them during coffee hour.  
  
Right now, our narthex is full of books from the Presbyterian Women’s book sale. In February, we will be selling luminaria that benefit the American Cancer Society and inspire our prayers of support for people fighting cancer. Soon, we will start stuffing eggs in the narthex for our Easter Party on April 19, an event that welcomes the community around us to our home. Our narthex is a place for fellowship and activity—like any family room.  
  
We may stop at the prayer table on the way to the sanctuary. A bowl on the table outlines the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The bowl is where we place our prayer requests, which we may write on the blue notes available on the table. This says that we are a people who pray. We also have hand sanitizer and reading glasses; no profound spiritual meaning there, except to say that we are a helpful and practical people.   
  
As you enter the sanctuary you will see the baptismal font. When we worship, we remember our baptismal promises and that we belong to God and one another.  
  
A new arrangements at Southminster – next to the baptismal font you will see an offering plate. We do not “pass the plate” for the offering. Worship is a free gift from God, but those who desire to support our mission and ministry may leave their gift in the plate.   
  
Our national flag and the Christian flag are in the back of the sanctuary. We pray for both our nation and for God’s church worldwide. On weekends when there is a national holiday, like today, we bring the flags forward. Below the flags in the back is our children's “Pray Ground,” a rug with the words “Jesus loves me,” and a rocking chair – a place to nurture our youngest children. This says we take our children seriously and our baptismal vows to one another earnestly.   
  
The pews face forward toward the cross, the Lord’s Table, and the pulpit. Our cross is empty. An empty cross is called a Resurrection cross – the tomb is empty because Christ is resurrected. We call the table at the front “the Lord’s Table” rather than an altar. In that sense, we don’t simply remember Christ’s sacrifice when we have communion; we remember his resurrection as well as we wait for his return. We gather as Christ’s disciples when we share communion, the Lord’s Supper, and when we share in the prayers of the people. On the Lord’s Table, there are two candles. They represent the Holy Spirit’s presence as well as the burning bush. They also represent the Old and New Testaments. The pulpit is essential because it represents the Word of God, proclaimed and heard. The pipe organ is in the shape of a dove. This, too, reminds us of the Holy Spirit.   
  
What might this tell you about our life together as a faith community?  
  
Worship is designed to restore us so that we may more effectively bear the fruit of God’s love in our daily lives.