

West Berlin Presbyterian Church

The MESSENGER December 2023



The mission of West Berlin Presbyterian Church is to follow God's law and act in true faith by being a welcoming place where community members come to learn, take part in worship, find fellowship, and serve those in need, for the glory of God.

The Small Strong Church with a Big Heart



From the Pulpit

I am inviting you to join me starting December 3 in a daily Advent devotional entitled "Apocalyptic Advent – Embracing Hope in the Second Coming of Christ" by Rev. Teri McDowell Ott. This daily devotional is described by Reverend Ott below. She is a highly respected author and editor of *Presbyterian Outlook* magazine.

I hope you will take this on as a daily discipline or add it to your current devotional for this Advent. Full files of the devotional are attached (Full page or Half-page Formats). A limited number of printed copies (large print and 2/page print) will be available on the information table at church.

Pastor Bob

Introduction:

To describe the turbulence and the feelings of our current age, American anthropologist Jamais Cascio coined the acronym BANI: Brittle, Anxious, Non-linear, Incomprehensible.

Brittle: Systems and structures we thought were stable (our democracy, our economy, our sacred and secular institutions) feel as if they are on the verge of collapsing.

Anxious: Change is occurring rapidly, and options feel limited. We don't know what to do or which way to turn.

Non-linear: Life is not progressing as we thought it would. People are deciding not to have children, civil rights are being rolled back and environmental crises consistently disrupt rhythms of life.

Incomprehensible: Human behavior is baffling. Why do people buy into conspiracy theories? Why is science ignored? Why does injustice go unaddressed? Why can't we agree on common-sense solutions to gun violence? We don't know and can't predict what's going to happen next.

This Advent you, like me, may be wondering how to live in such a time. What does Jesus say to us in a confusing and chaotic time? How can I adapt to this BANI world and prepare for what is coming?

Advent, from the Latin *adventus*, means "coming." It is the church's season of preparation, not only for the birth of Jesus at Christmas, but for Christ's second coming. We often treat Christmas as an end, as if all we are waiting for is the birth of Christ and the opening of presents on Christmas morning. After the living room is trashed, full of ripped wrapping paper, and all Santa's cookies have mysteriously disappeared, we've successfully "done" Christmas. But Christmas is a new hope, not an end. We celebrate Jesus' first Advent, with an eye toward his second and the way God is actively at work, redeeming and renewing our world.

This devotional will highlight and reflect upon apocalyptic passages of the Hebrew Bible, as well as passages in the New Testament that refer to the second coming of Christ. Some Christians use these texts as weapons, stoking fear of end-time judgment in order to convert people to their particular flavor of faith. I'm more interested in the ways people from marginalized communities turn to end time prophecies for hope amid suffering and struggle. These voices, along with biblical scholars who rightly assert that apocalyptic texts must be read with an understanding of the historical and cultural context in which they were written, will be the ones this devotion draws on. I'll include a list of recommended study resources at the end.

When suffering looms large and we are overwhelmed by the problems of our world, what can we learn from texts that turn us to the future? What can these texts illuminate about the ways we can and should move through our current context? How can these texts prepare and inspire us for a new beginning come Christmas?

Let's get started and see where God's Spirit leads.

With faith in the One who has come and is coming,
Teri McDowell Ott

Important December 2023 Dates:

December 3
Hybrid Worship*
Communion
10:30 AM
Terry Lewis, Open Table
Food Shelf Discussion
12:00 PM

December 4
Advent Study
7:00 PM

December 5
Session Meeting
7:00 PM

December 6
Women's Society Silent
Auction
6:00 PM

December 9
Service for Marilyn
Hubbard
3:30 PM

December 10
Hybrid Worship*
Special
Congregational
Meeting

Alice Cox Class Party
All-Occasions
5:30 PM

December 11
Advent Study
7:00 PM

December 13
Deacon & Mission Bd
Meeting
12:00 PM

December 14
Christmas Party & Fantasy
of Lights
5:30 PM Pizza
6:15 PM depart for Fantasy
of Lights

December 16
Food & Hygiene Drive
Collection
10:00 Am – 2:00 PM

December 17
Hybrid Worship*

December 18
Advent Study
7:00 PM

Women's Societ Annual Auction

The WBP Women's Society Annual Silent Auction will be held on Wednesday, **December 6, at 6:00 P.M.** in the WBPC Fellowship Hall. Shop for Christmas gifts, decorations, and especially the crafts and goodies made by our congregation. Don't miss the delicious baked goodies!!!! Bidding opens at 6:00 PM; Auction results at 7:00 PM; plenty of treats in between. Bring families, friends, and neighbors to this special annual event.

If possible, please bring items for the auction to the church on Sunday, December 3. For more details, please contact Amy Martindale (martindaleaj@hotmail.com)

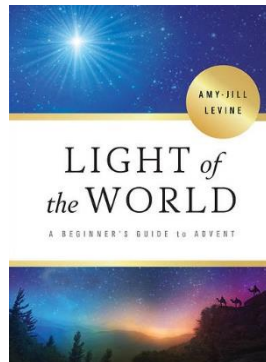


Adult Education Opportunities

Our Monday evening (7:00 PM) Adult Education opportunities for December will focus on an Advent study entitled "Light of the World – A beginner's Guide for Advent" authored by Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, author, professor, and biblical scholar. She explores the biblical texts surrounding the story of the birth of Jesus. She traces the Christmas narrative through the stories of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary, the journey to Bethlehem, and the visit of the Magi.

No classes will be held weeks of December 24 and 31.

For all classes 7 PM, come to church or through Zoom
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6145951009> Or Voice only Dial 929 436 2866 or 312 626 6799 Meeting ID: 614 595 1009



Important December 2023 Dates: (Continued)

December 19
Education Committee
7:00 PM

December 24
No Morning Service
Christmas Eve
Service
3:00 PM

December 25
No Adult Class

December 31
Special Recorded Service
from Senate of Covenant

*See email invite for
Zoom link and bulletin.
A copy of the bulletin
and Sermon can be
mailed to you. Let Bob
know.

Thanks to the Church Elves!!!!

Special thanks to the following members of the congregation that spent the day after Thanksgiving making our church sanctuary a beautiful place for the Advent/Christmas Season!!! Julia and Tom Roll, Becky Donovan, Amy Martindale, Bob, and Yvonne Gustafson!!!



Upcoming Special Services

Christmas Eve Service – December 24, 2022 (3:00 PM) It will be a traditional service of lessons and carols to be held at 3:00 PM. Join us as we celebrate the birth of Christ! Since Christmas Eve falls on Sunday, we will not have a morning service that day.

News Year's Eve (December 31) also falls on a Sunday this year. We will have a service at our usual time (10:30 AM). However, we will be using a special service pre-recorded by the Synod of the Covenant for this day. You may come and watch at church or through Zoom at home.

Christmas Joy Offering

As we enter the Advent Season, we prepare for the final of the four special offerings of the Presbyterian Church: Christmas Joy. Through this offering we celebrate the gift of church leaders---past and present---who have impacted our lives.

Half of the Christmas Joy offering provides critical financial assistance for current and retired Presbyterian church workers who are in need, especially during this trying time. Half of the offering provides opportunities of communities of color through Presbyterian-related school and college programs and through leadership development efforts provided by the Church's Racial Equity Office.

We thank the members of our church for their participation the One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, and Peace and Global Wellness offerings conducted earlier this year. We invite you to participate in the Christmas Joy Offering during this Advent Season. Checks can be made out to WBPC with the memo: Christmas Joy Offering and placed in offering plate at church or mailed to C/O Ed Cox, 257 Pennsylvania Ave, Delaware, OH 43015. Thank you for your support

Congregational Meeting for Election of Officers

A special congregational meeting will be held on December 10, 2022, for the election of officers for 2023. This meeting will be immediately after the church service that day. The nominating Committee will be bringing forward Jerry Stein for a 2nd term as Elder, David Howell for 1st Term as Elder, Mary Ann Johnson and Barb Schanck for a continuation of one year as Deacons.

Church Christmas Party and Fantasy of Lights Trip, Thursday, December 14

Meet in the church at 5:30 PM Thursday, December 14 for pizza. At 6:00 PM we will have our traditional singing of the 12 Days of Christmas. At 6:15 PM we will caravan to the Fantasy of Lights site as groups in cars, trucks, and vans. The Women's Society will cover the cost. Look for coupons in Val Pak Mail for the Fantasy of Lights.

The is the 23rd Annual Fantasy of Lights is a Drive Thru Light Show (like 2 miles) and Santa House. Partial gate proceeds benefit Recreation Unlimited. The physical address is: 3190 South Old State Rd. Delaware. OH 43015.

Advent Daily Devotional

If you are looking for a way to do a simple daily practice to acknowledge the Season of Advent, a daily devotional is a separate attachment to this newsletter. The devotional is described in the From the Pastor piece above. If you need a printed copy, please check the information table at church or contact Pastor Bob.

From the Treasurer November Stats:

Attendance

November 5
39 - 24 On-site
15 On-line

November 12
37 - 23 On-site
14 On-line

November 19
35 - 23 On-site
12 On-line

November 21
Thanksgiving Eve
12- 12 On-site
0 On-line

November 26
33- 21 On-site
12 On-line

Giving

Nov 5 - \$1,401
Nov 12 - \$911
Nov 19 - \$1,420
Nov 26 - \$396
\$4,128

Please make your contributions via mail to Church Treasurer Edmund Cox, 257 Pennsylvania Av, Delaware, OH 43015. On-line giving through westberlinpc.info

Special Mission Opportunities for Advent, "The Reverse Advent Calendar" and More

It is now an Advent tradition that we put special focus on collecting food items for the Open Table Food Pantry at Grace Point Church (2393 Peachblow Rd., Delaware) and now the Hygiene Connection Project through Overbrook PC (Clintonville). Our efforts for these two causes are organized by the Deacon and Mission Board. We will have two opportunities for drop off.

One alternative is to make this an Advent practice by starting the first Sunday of Advent (December 3), each day add at least one item to your "Advent Box". Items listed below are suggestions. Shelf stable food that are easy to prepare are preferred. Hygiene items like toothpaste, bar soap, and famine care products are sought. Please no perishable items. Cash donations will also be welcomed. Bring your "Advent Box" to the church either Christmas Eve or in January.

A second alternative is to bring donations of same type of items, but do so on Saturday December 16 between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM. Deacons will be available to help unload cars during this time. Just pull up to the east door.

If these drop offs do not work for you, the Red Wagon in the Annex can be used for drop offs at any time (all year long).

Suggested Items for Open Table Food Shelve:

December 3	Box of cereal	December 14	Canned beans
December 4	Peanut butter	December 15	Box of crackers
December 6	Jelly	December 16	Package of rice
December 6	Boxed potatoes	December 17	Package of oatmeal
December 7	Macaroni and cheese	December 18	Canned green beans
December 8	Jar of applesauce	December 19	Spaghetti sauce
December 9	Canned tomatoes	December 21	Chicken noodle soup
December 10	Canned tuna	December 22	Canned sweet potatoes
December 11	Dessert mix	December 23	Canned corn
December 12	Tomato soup	December 24	Canned Spam
December 13	Canned sweet potatoes		

Suggested Items for Hygiene Connection: deodorant, shampoo and conditioner, soaps, feminine hygiene items, and toothpaste.

From Presbytery

1,492 Children Are Warmer Because of You!

More churches in our Presbytery (including WBPC) donated coats than ever before, and with special help from a Synod of the Covenant grant and The Harmony Project, our Presbytery was able to give away 1,492 coats to seventy-seven schools this year!! One of the social workers who emailed us put it this way: "I was able to pick up some bags of coats for the two Columbus schools I work in today. Even had an assortment of hats, gloves, and scarves added which was unexpected. Both schools are incredibly grateful.

I also want to express my gratitude for the coats, we will put them to good use and the timing couldn't be better. Thank you very much, this was awesome." YOU are REMARKABLE and Cap City Helping Hands (CCHH), thanks to the many people who contributed their time and talents to this amazing ministry this year!

December Birthdays



- 1- Janet Thompson
- 3 - Roy Cottrill,
- 26 - Ed Cox



Anniversaries

- 6 – John and Jennifer Jordan
- 21 – Bob and Yvonne Gustafson

Prayer List:

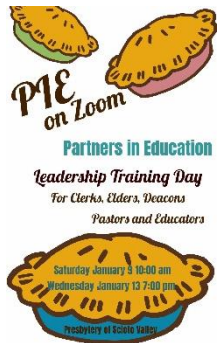
- Rodger Glenn,
- Dan Cottrill,
- Linda Fisher,
- Joanne Ford,
- Gene & Penny Ford,
- Marshall & April Hardt,
- John & Debbie Rucker,
- Raymond & Glinda Poonan,
- Hyssong Family,
- Jerome Donovan

New Trees Planted

Most will remember last Spring when one of our large maple trees fell into the parking lot and we made the decision for safety reasons to remove the other two trees from the boulevard. Those trees have now been replaced by four very attractive European Upright Hornbeam trees.



Partner's In Education (PIE) Conference



The Presbytery of Scioto Valley Partners in Education (PIE) Conference is set for Saturday, January 20, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 2070 Ridgecliff Road, Columbus, OH 43221
Program includes Leadership Training for: Clerks, Elders, Deacons, Educators, Earth Care and more!!

Keynote will be: Reaching Outside of Ourselves – As Synod Executive, Chip has the wonderful opportunity to observe, worship and engage with 1000's of PCUSA churches in Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Indiana. Chip will share what he is learning, what he is noticing and help churches in our Presbytery partner with others in engaging in our local communities. Led by the Rev. Charles "Chip" Hardwick, Executive for the Synod of the Covenant.

Please register and pay online for Saturday by Jan. 13th at the link on www.psvonline.org (search PIE 2024) OR by calling the presbytery office at 614-847-0565 Toll Free in Ohio 800-244-7207