**Southminster Presbyterian Church**

**4th Sunday of Advent**

**December 24, 2023**

**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

Our Photo Story today is “The Nativity.”

 Welcome and Announcements

  Lighting the Advent Wreath Lighters: the Bohi family

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 314: *Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness* (verses 1, 2)

 *(Christ, Be Our Light)*

**Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
Light for the world to see.
Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.**

**Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.
Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.**

Text and Music © 1993 Bernadette Farrell (Published by OCP)

Reprinted/Streamed w Improvisational Prelude: *Blest Be the God of Israel*  (hymnal 109)

 Hymn 101: *No Wind at the Window* (all 4 verses)

 Call to Worship

 Leader: Through history God’s promise has remained the same:

 **People: “I will be with you and you will be my people.”**

 Leader: Today we worship God in flesh- Emmanuel God with us.

 **All:** **We give thanks for God’s abiding presence.**

 Carol 147: *The First Nowell*  (verses 1, 6)

 Prayer of Confession: (unison)

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

 (Time of silence for personal prayer and confession)

 The Good News of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:4-7)

 Leader: What you are longing and hoping for is nearer than you know:

 **People: Jesus Christ is Emmanuel, God with us.
 We rejoice in the good news.**

 **All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven and made new.**

 Response 132: *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*  (verses 1, 2)

**Good Christian friends, rejoice
With heart and soul and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before him bow,
And he is in the manger now.****Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!**

**Good Christian friends, rejoice
With heart and soul and voice;
Now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven’s door,
And we are blessed forevermore.
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born for this!**

Public domain

 The Passing of the Peace

 Word with Children (Pastor Wendy)

 Children worshiping in the sanctuary, please come forward.

 Carol 114: *Away in the Manger* (verse 1)

**Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

Public domain

 Carol 115: *Away in the Manger* (verse 2)

**The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes,**

**But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.**

**I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,**

**And stay by my side until morning is nigh.**

Public domain

 Carol 128: *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly* (verse 1)

**Infant holy, infant lowly**

**For His bed a cattle stall;**

**Oxen lowing, little knowing**

**Christ the babe is Lord of all.**

**Swift are winging angels singing,**

**Noels ringing, tidings bringing,**

**Christ the babe is Lord of all!**

**Christ the babe is Lord of all!**

Public domain

 Prayer for Illumination

 Scripture Lessons:  Luke 1:46-56 Pew Bible, p. 57, N.T.)

 Luke 1:67-80 Pew Bible, p. 58 (N.T.)

 Sermon: “Dawning Light”

 Singing What We Believe/Affirmation of Faith (unison)

 Carol 137: *He Came Down* (all 4 verses)

**He came down that we may have love;**

**He came down that we may have love;**

**He came down that we may have love;**

**Hallelujah forever more.**

**2. He came down that we may have light…**

**3. He came down that we may have peace…**

**4. He came down that we may have joy…**

Text: Camaroon traditional

Tune: Camaroon traditional, transcribed and arr. by John L. Bell © 1990, Iona Community, GIA Publications, Inc., agent

Reprinted/Streamed with permission under OneLicense.net #A-739517. All rights reserved.

 Carol 113: *Angels We Have Heard on High* (verses 1, 3)

 Prayers of the People and the Lord’s Prayer

 Leader: Lord, in your mercy,

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

**The Lord’s Prayer:** (unison)

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into
temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Offering of Ourselves and Our Gifts

[The offering plate is at the back of the sanctuary. Please leave your gift or pledge
in the plate on your way into or out of worship.]

 Offertory: *O Come, Little Children*

 \*Response 144: *In the Bleak Midwinter* (verses 1, 4)

**In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan;
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.**

**What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what can I give him: give my heart.**

Public domain

 Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

 Carol 146: *Gentle Mary Laid Her Child* (all 3 verses)

 Charge and Benediction

 Leader: Now go and serve the Lord,

 **All: For we are blessed to be a blessing!
 Amen! Amen!**

 Postlude

**Participants and Technical Crew**

Pastor Wendy Boden
Liturgist: Blair Nelson
Greeter/Fellowship: Barb Kocinski
Music: Tom Anderson; Nick Kaskovich, accordion
Worship Associate: David Kozich
Tech support: Chris Kozich, Blair Nelson

The poinsettias were given by the following people:

Craig and Sarah Allen Caroline and Ralph Linde

Sue and Walt Briney Del Meester

Jonathan and Derek Buckley Lanny Russell

Linda Ellinghausen The Sanders family

Lynn Ferino Angela Smith

Victor King Diane Swiss

Barb and Joe Kocinski Rita Zapel

The Kozich family Barb Zink

If you are present for worship, following the service you are invited by the deacons to gather for **in-person fellowship** in the narthex. Coffee and canned beverages will be served; masks and social distancing are at your discretion.

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.
 **Sunday Morning Adult Ed. Bible Study** will not meet today but will meet next Sunday.

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, but the weeks of Christmas And New Year’s Days Heart to Heart will be Wednesday through Friday.

Even though we have returned to in-person worship, we will also 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. You can help with this one:
 **December 31: “Timekeepers”** – Clocks, watches, calendars, hourglasses, sundials…
 ways we keep time! Please send us your photos by Thursday, December 28.

**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.)

**Notes from Blair Nelson:**
**Adult Education**: Our Adult Bible Class will not meet today but will continue our study of Malachi next Sunday, December 31, at 11:15 a.m. in the Parlor/Library on online at: [<https://meet.google.com/fna-eojg-uye>](https://meet.google.com/fna-eojg-uye). See you then!

**Men of Southminster**: Two questions: what shall we eat at our **dessert fellowship on Jan. 17 at 7:30 p.m.**? And would you like to be one of our (brief!) story-of-my-life story tellers? Got answers? Send them to Blair N. See you then.

**Youth**: Stay tuned for the 2024 youth program starting in January. We will have **Pizza & Games** on Jan. 7 and 21. Stay tuned for something special in February.
 **From the Worship Ministry:
*Please return later today for the Christmas Eve service at 4:30 p.m.!*** It will be a traditional service including Scripture, carols, choir, and candle lighting.(The earlier time accommodates choir members and others who wish to gather with their families later that evening.) Christmas Eve is the beginning of the Christmas Season that lasts twelve days. Our service will be a traditional service including Scripture, carols, choir, and candle lighting.(The earlier time accommodates choir members and others who wish to gather with their families later that evening.)

**December 31 – New Year’s Eve Day** – let’s be ready to welcome 2024.
Worship at 9:30 a.m.

The Sunday services on the 24th and on December 31st will have different Christmas songs. So, “come let us adore him!”

If you ordered a **poinsettia**, please be sure we have your payment. You may take the plants home after the Christmas Eve service this afternoon or pick them up in the narthex this Tuesday, December 26, from 10-11:00 a.m. (Someone will be at church only during that hour.) If unable to pick up, please arrange for someone else to do so. There will be no home deliveries.
The **flower chart** for the first half of 2024 is posted in the Narthex. If unable to sign up at church, contact Sarah Allen (ridesrowdy@aol.com) with your requests. The cost of flower arrangements will stay at $35 for 2024. If you are donating your flowers, mark the chart with an X. Deacons deliver flowers that are donated.
The flower chart for July to December 2024 will be posted after Easter.
 **From the Mission Ministry: Christmas Offerings**As we prepare to celebrate of the birth of our Lord, our thoughts turn to helping others. **We at Southminster collect two special offerings at Christmas-time.**

The first offering is our **local mission offering**. This offering stays here at Southminster to help our Mission Ministry support our local missions with 75% going to the general mission and 25% going to one of our local missions chosen by the Mission ministry. This year that 25% will be donated to Walk-In Ministry. You can donate using the local Christmas offering envelopes with a red poinsettia design.

The second offering is a denomination wide offering. This offering is sent in its entirety to the Presbyterian Church (USA). 50% of these funds is used to support current and retired church workers with critical financial needs. The other 50% goes to make it possible for students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. You can donate using the lavender Christmas Joy envelopes.

If you choose to mail a check to Southminster without using the envelopes, be sure you indicate on your check to which offering your donation is being made or how much of your check should go for each offering.

Both these offerings should be received by today (Christmas Eve and will be dedicated at the beginning of our service next Sunday.

**The 2023 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 2023 or bills to be paid from the 2023 budget must be in the church office no later than noon on Tuesday, January 2nd. If you have any questions, please contact Treasurer Tom Frey.
 **Women’s Circle: Looking ahead!**Presbyterian Women will hold a **Purse Auction** on Sunday, February 4, 2024. We are looking for donations of purses that you do not want to keep but that are in good condition. The collection boxes will be out starting on December 31. Also needed are items that might be placed inside the purses, such as scarves or jewelry.

**Women’s Breakfast** meets the first Wednesday of the month, which will be Wednesday, January 3, at 8:30 a.m. at Danby’s Station, 750 Roosevelt Road, Glen Ellyn.All women are invited to join the group – no reservations needed, just come!

**Jubilee Bucks:**
We finished the year with a large order in time for the holiday season! Our total of “free” money for this year was $1,969.86! Our first order for 2024 will be on January 7.
 **Donations for PRC (People’s Resource Center)**:
Southminster has been faithfully providing donations of food items and personal care products for PRC for many years. If you would like suggestions for what to give, PRC has provided a list of the items that are most needed. Copies are printed on bright green paper and are in the stand on the nametag shelf (main hallway – across from the offices). You can view the list online at the PRC website: <https://www.peoplesrc.org/give-food-or-goods/>.
Many thanks to all who continue to support PRC’s mission to meet our communities’ needs, neighbor to neighbor.

**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, can you send an update to the office, please, once in a while? Thank you! Pastor Wendy**

**Joys and Concerns**     **The poinsettias today** are given by all those listed.
**We give thanks to God for joys:**
 - Elise Henkels’ brother, Curt, is continuing his recuperation at home. He was originally told he would remain hospitalized through Christmas.
  - Linda Wolf Jeziorski, as she continues to heal
**We pray for the whole world and our nation:**
  - We pray for an end to gun violence in our nation. In just one day – this past Sunday, December 17 – there were 59 shootings, leaving 18 people dead and 54 injured. Those one-day totals, extrapolated to 365 days (one full year) would mean 21,535 incidences of gun violence, 6,570 people killed, and 19,710 people injured. Go to the [Gun Violence Archive](https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/) to see current statistics for shootings in this country.
 - We remember the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, which was 11 years ago on December 14, and we pray for safety in our schools and any place where people gather.
 - Pray for our President and our legislative and judicial bodies
  - We pray for our nation as we continue to wrestle with race relations.
 - All throughout the world who are recovering from earthquakes, floods, and other natural disasters
  - We continue to pray for peace in the world, especially Ukraine/Russia, Israel/Gaza, and the Sudan
**Blessed are those who mourn:** - The family and friends of Tom Henderson, adoptive father of Silentor Henderson and friend of the Boden-Nelsons
 - The family of Don Bice (Paul Jeziorski’s uncle), who passed away at age 90
 - The Schmidt family on the sudden death of Parin’s Aunt Ruth
 - We continue to pray for the Baldwin family in the death of Blair’s uncle.
 - The family of Nancy Eberhardt, a former Southminster member, who died November 7. Her Service of Witness to the Resurrection was held at Southminster on December 16.
  - We continue to pray for the family of Grace Van Beveren
  - We pray for Joan and for the Koska sons and their families, mourning the loss of Ed.
  - The family and many friends of Dan Bohi, and especially Deb, Jessica, and Megan and their families
**We lift up those who are affected by cancer, as well as their support systems:
*Please help us pray for your family and friends by updating your loved ones’ information with the church office. We support them and you in their journey.***
 - Traci Lemay, who was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer
 - We continue to pray for: Bobby B., Frank B., Rod B., Annette C., Tom G., Dean L., Frank L., Jan M., Nikki M., Rebecca M., Tim O., Helen S., Marta S., Gerry S., Beverly W., and others we name in our hearts. **We pray for all who are recovering or dealing with mental or physical health or other challenges:**
 - Barb’s grandson Clark, who has RSV
 - Faith and others who are depressed
 - Floyd Rogers, recovering from an infection
 - Ann Anderson asks prayers for Dan, who is facing a heart transplant
 - Heidi Shierry’s cousin, Bailey, recovering from 3rd degree burns; it is a long journey!
 - Derek Buckley asks prayers for healing and speedy recovery for Ruth Ewing, who is hospitalized with MERSA.
 - Prayers for all who have Covid
  - Pain relief for Paul Anderson
  - Jim Smith, recovering at Brookdale
  - We pray for those who are in hospice care: Gail Johnston at Du Page Convalescent Center (If you send a card to Gail, please mail it to Andrea Schmidt, whose address is in the directory.); former President Jimmy Carter.
 - We continue to pray for Viola’s family, Miles, Mary, Maykel, Edem, and others we name in our hearts.
**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.

 **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 Angela Smith (630-235-1376); in January, call 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. 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.

**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.

**Note holiday schedule changes!**
Both Christmas Day and New Year’s Day are on Mondays, so Pastor Wendy Boden
 will take the Tuesdays of those weeks (December 26 and January 2) as her
 Sabbath days.
Barb plans to be out of the office December 26-29. She will return to the office Tuesday,
 January 2.
There will be no eNotes on Wednesday, December 27.
BUT, December 27 will still be the deadline for the January *Dialog*!
Let’s plan to have the January *Dialog* go out a day later than usual, on Thursday,
 January 4.

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:**    **December 24 – *4th Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve***
 **Worship** at 9:30 a.m. in person and also live on Facebook
 **In-person Fellowship** in the Narthex following the service
 **No staff meeting or Adult Ed. Bible Study
 Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols** at 4:30 p.m.
**Monday, December 25 – *Christmas Day*
*“Joy to the World! The Lord is come!”*** Bhutan Church Christmas Celebration from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall **Barb away Tuesday-Friday
Tuesday, December 26 – Pastor’s Sabbath** (because Monday was a holiday) **Pick up poinsettias** (if you didn’t take yours home on Sunday) at church between
 10:00 and 11:00 a.m.
 A.A. meets at 7:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall
**Wednesday-Friday – Pastor Wendy’s Heart to Heart** on Facebook live at 4:20 p.m.
**Wednesday, December 27 No eNotes** **but it is still the deadline for the January *Dialog*!**
 **No Pastor’s Prelude Bible Study** (It will resume next Wednesday.)
**Friday, December 29**
 A.A. meets at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall
**Next Sunday, December 31**
 **Worship** at 9:30 a.m. in person and also live on Facebook
 **In-person Fellowship** in the Narthex following the service
 **No staff meeting
 Adult Ed.** at 11:15 a.m. either online via Google Meet or by joining Blair
 in person in the McHenry Parlor/Library

**Bearing Fruit – December 24 and 31
Twelve Days of Christmas**
Because our administrative assistance is celebrating Christmas and New Year’s with her family there is only one Bearing Fruit for all three of the end-of-December services - Christmas Eve services both morning and evening, along with our end-of-the-year worship on December 31. Each service is different and has different hymns and Christmas carols, as well as different biblical texts.

Sunday morning December 24 is the fourth Sunday of Advent. We shift from anticipation to astonishment and joy as we celebrate God’s promised future breaking into our lives. In the morning we will sing both Advent songs and Christmas songs. We will hear both Mary’s and Zechariah’s songs found in the Gospel of Luke. The Bohi family will light the last candle of Advent.

Sunday evening December 24, Christmas Eve, is the beginning of the Christmas season that will last twelve days. At our Christmas Eve service, which is at 4:30 p.m., the Koska family will light the Christ Candle.

This is time of year people often use as a moment to resolve to do something or be something different. We at Southminster Presbyterian Church are doing something a little different. Everyone who attends worship on December 31st will receive a star. The stars are Epiphany gifts. No two stars were alike. Each star has a single word written on it, representing something evocative, such as forgiveness, blessing, inheritance, or perspective. The star may represent a quality that is clearly evident in a person’s life or the star may suggest a facet for development. The hope is that the word on the star will help each of us focus on our relationship with God and that it will take us through the coming year. Receive the star as a gift. Your response to the gift then becomes your own gift to the Christ Child for the year.

We welcome Cindy Trowbridge on December 31! Cindy is subbing for our music director and helping us worship with joy on this special Sunday, a Sunday in which Christmas, New Year’s, and Epiphany are combined. Thank you, Cindy!

Cindy performs as a collaborative pianist in recitals and competitions throughout the Chicago area. A member of the piano faculty at the College of DuPage, she teaches private and class piano and serves as staff accompanist. Cindy also does extensive work as an accompanist for vocal and instrumental studios and recitals at Wheaton College. She is the principal pianist for the Credo Flute Summer Festival and has been the pianist for DuPage Opera Theater and music director for Wheaton College’s Opera Music Theater program.

These last three services this year will have different hymns and carols. It is still Christmas, in fact, till January 6th! Christmas embodies, literally, all our stories, the good and the bad, joy and sorrow, the gift of and the work of the incarnation of the Christ. Come and let us adore him! And as we enter the new year, let us recommit ourselves to bearing the fruit of God’s love in our daily lives and as a church family.

The next Bearing Fruit/Welcome letter will be for January 7, sent on January 5.