



Merry Christmas

from First Westminster Presbyterian Church

Christmas is a wonderful time of year. The beautiful music, glistening decorations, and delicious cuisine help usher in the celebration of Jesus' birth. Christmas is so special. Christmas reminds us about what is so truly important in our lives. We are invited to celebrate our faith, honor our holiday traditions, and create new wonderful memories. Christmas allows us remember our loved ones who have passed away and find ways to continually celebrate their memory. Christmas is a season of hope and joy, love and grace—Christmas is a season of light.

There is something so encouraging and mesmerizing about light in general. The light of the sun breaking through the clouds, the light of a crackling fire, or the glow of a strand of Christmas lights can lift our spirits. When you begin to think about the concept of light, it is truly remarkable. In the physical sense, we need light to see and move to accomplish our daily tasks. “Hey, can somebody turn on the lights, I can’t see.” And yet at the same time, light has this unbelievable power to lift our spirits and bolster our esteem. “Wow, the sunshine makes me feel so good.” Light is a gift from God. Light brings form and function to our world. Light brings hope and joy to our world.

The gospel of John reminds us that Jesus is coming into the world to share the gift of light:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” John 1:1-5

May your spirits be renewed this Christmas season. God has provided the Light for our celebration —“a babe-wrapped in swaddling clothes”—His Son and our Lord, Jesus Christ. The light Christ shares is a blessing—a blessing of hope and encouragement—for He has established a new covenant with us. Christ has come to bring the light of salvation into the world. And just as Christ has shared the light with us—we are called to share His light with others!

Are you willing to share the light of Christ with others this Advent Season? Are you willing to take someone by the hand and encourage them with your presence? God has equipped you and created you to share the message of hope! Let your light shine!

As you read the newsletter, we hope you will discover many opportunities to celebrate the light of Christ this Advent Season!

Keep going for the Lord,

Rev. Jason Elliott



2024 FIRST WEST ADVENT EVENTS

November 24th—Hanging of the Greens

On November 24, 2024 after Sunday Morning worship, we will be preparing the church for the Christmas Season! The Advent season allows us to prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus. Please join us to help decorate the sanctuary!

November 29th—Light Up Night

Please join us at 6pm on November 29th at the Historic Fort Steuben for “Light Up Night.” Rev. Elliott will be offering an opening prayer and presenting the Fort with a life-size German Christmas Pyramid designed and constructed by members of our congregation.

December 1—First Sunday of Advent

During our 10:45am, worship service, we will be lighting the first candle of the Advent Season. As a part of our spiritual reflection and growth, Advent Devotionals for adults and children will be given away. The “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” devotionals for adults and interactive Advent calendar “O, Holy Night!” (with pop-up windows) for the kids will strengthen our faith and welcome Jesus into our hearts.

December 8th—Christmas Cantata/ Christmas Party Celebration

Please join us for the 2024 First West Christmas Cantata on December 8, 2024, at 10:45am. The kids will bless us with an awesome program which will bring a bunch of Christmas cheer! Please plan on staying after the cantata for our First West Christmas Party. We will enjoy great food, games and maybe even a visit from ole’ St. Nick.

December 14—Homes for Hope Tour 2024

The 7th annual Homes for Hope holiday home tour will benefit the Tony Teramana cancer center TEAR fund. Enjoy beautiful Christmas decorations at a number of area homes/businesses. First West is excited to participate in this year’s tour! Tickets can be purchased by contacting organizer, Joel John at Exquisite Creations: 735 Main St., Monday through Friday 10 AM to 5 PM and Saturday 10 AM to 2 PM.

December 15—Community Chorale Christmas Concert

The Ohio Valley Chorale will present their 2024 Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 15, 2024, 3:00pm at First Westminster Presbyterian Church. The program features a collection of familiar Christmas favorites, performed by 80 singers, under the direction of Erik Lucas.

December 19—“Our Place” Christmas Dinner/Dance at First West

Our Place of Jefferson County (the 55 years+ senior activity center that meets at the church on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) will host its annual Christmas Dinner/Dance on December 19th from 4pm-8pm at the church. Tickets cost \$20.00 per person for members and \$25.00 for non-members. Come and enjoy great food, door prizes, gifts, and awesome entertainment by the Ron Retzer Trio. If you have questions or would like to RSVP (by December 13th) please call 740-520-0120.

December 24—Christmas Eve

Our candlelight Christmas Eve service will begin at 7pm on December 24th. Beautiful Music and an uplifting message will inspire your faith as we celebrate Jesus’ birth. We look forward to celebrating with you and your family.

New Beginnings for the New Year!

Over the years, God has certainly brought many outstanding people together at First West. We can all agree, we are blessed to have a loving church family. Our congregation and staff have continually worked to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Together, we have embarked on many community outreach projects and witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit transform many lives. There are so many integral members of our First West team.

During this Christmas season, we want to thank a very important member of our team—Cathy Cipriani, our part-time Financial Secretary at First West. Cathy has been a Godsend to our church. For 12 years, Cathy has shared her love of the Lord and her commitment to impeccable financial stewardship. Cathy's kind heart, integrity and professionalism has helped propel the mission of First West forward. And now, as she retires, we want to thank Cathy for her faithful, faithful service. Cathy, we appreciate you so much... we love you and wish you and Bill a happy, healthy, and joyful retirement!

And at the same time, we are praising God for sending us Andrea Benner, our new part-time Financial Secretary. Andrea brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to our First West team. Andrea worked as the General Manager at JC Wine Cellars for 18 years. We welcome Andrea and look forward to working together to grow our mission to "Love God and Love Others." Cathy and Andrea have been working together over the last several weeks to ensure a smooth transition. May God bless both of you! We appreciate you!

January Reminders

January 5—Happy New Year

Begin your new year the right way—celebrate the Sacrament of Communion with us at the 10:45 am service on January 5th. What's your New Year's resolution?

First West says: "Fear not, Jesus is Alive in 2025!"

January 26—First Westminster Presbyterian Church Annual Congregational Meeting after worship.



First Westminster Presbyterian Church
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First Westminster is excited to present a beautiful Christmas gift to our community in celebration of the birth of Jesus!

The Historic Fort Steuben Christmas Committee has diligently worked to rekindle the energy and excitement of Christmas at the Fort. The Christmas Committee, along with a team of volunteers, has envisioned new creative Christmas displays, lights, live music performances, food, and vendors. The new additions to the Christmas celebration will continue to inspire members of our community and especially our children.

First Westminster is excited to be a part of the Christmas celebration! Several months ago, four members of our congregation gathered to discuss plans to build and present a life-sized Christmas Pyramid at the Fort. Christmas Pyramids were born out of German tradition dating back to the 18th century. This 12-foot, three-tiered Christmas Pyramid will showcase the Nativity scene—Mary, Joseph, Jesus, Wise Men, Shepherds, Sheep and Angels. Two of the tiers will spin along with the 12-foot windmill atop the lighted pyramid. This is a one-of-a-kind, artisan designed piece meant to reflect the light of Jesus Christ.

We hope you will consider donating to offset the material construction of the project. A donation box is located in front of the church near a small replica of the Christmas Pyramid or donations can be mailed to First Westminster Presbyterian Church, 235 North 4th Street, Steubenville, OH 43952.

The Christmas Pyramid will be unveiled during light up night at the Fort on November 29, 2024 at 6:00pm.

