



# St. John's Lutheran Church

## Reaching Out—December 2024 Newsletter

1804 Highland Avenue, Eau Claire WI, 54701

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:00 am—3:00 pm

Friday: 9:00 am—1:00 pm

715-834-9571

Website: [www.stjohns-ec.org](http://www.stjohns-ec.org)

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St. John's Lutheran church is a people formed in the waters of Christian baptism to be a *fountain of life* for all who gather here, overflowing into a *river of compassion* for the world.

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**Message  
from  
Pastor  
Christine**

*"But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah..."* Micah 5:2

When it comes to Christmas, I love to watch the children's excitement as they enter into the story of the baby Jesus. They have an understanding of the Christmas story that adults sometimes forget. That's why every children's pageant or program preaches the Gospel better than I ever could. For just an instant, we are caught up in innocence and then the stress or sometimes even sadness of the season takes a back seat for just a short time. Children especially ask to sing "Away in a Manger", "Little Town of Bethlehem", or "Go tell it on the Mountain" and I can see why. There is nothing more fun than practically screaming "GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN" when you are a child. How charming! (By the way, our kids will sing a program on the 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am!)

Yet, neither the town of Bethlehem nor the manger was considered very significant places for a baby who was to be king and savior! In fact, Bethlehem was considered to be a very insignificant place when the prophet Micah proclaimed this prophecy of a messiah. At that time, Bethlehem was under threat of invasion by the Assyrian empire. Even during the Roman occupation, Bethlehem was barely a dot on the map, just a trade route along the way. And, everything about the birth of Jesus seems insignificant: a stable with animals, a food trough for laying Jesus in, shepherds, who were people of very little significance at the time, and a little, tiny town known as Bethlehem. Bethlehem is a nowhere town. It hardly has an inn let alone a stable.

Perhaps that is why it is so striking and why it is important for us. God chooses plain, every day places and things to show mighty wonders. God could have come in grandeur and looked like a king with gold, robes, and servants, but instead God chose a single impoverished girl, not yet married, a little place away from the inn that might have been cold, and a food trough. And God still pops up in our lives this way today. In the simple rhythm of life, in story-time before bed, in the brushing of teeth, in the doing of chores and eating dinner with the family - that is where Christ is. He is in the mundane and the ordinary because that is where we are and it is where we are that God desires to be. So, the insignificant suddenly becomes significant, God with us, in a fleshy, real way, one that means a stable, dirt, and shepherds. Wow!

So, you teachers, parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts: when you teach the story of the baby Jesus to a new generation that needs to hear words of hope and promise, encourage your children to look for him beyond the lights, the snow, and the pretty presents and tree. Encourage them to look for Christ in the homeless man walking down the street, in the Salvation Army bell ringer, in the sharing of a toy or the smile of your neighbor, because that is where Christ is; and He is in you, too.

*Merry Christmas, Pastor Christine*

**Prayer:** *God, help us to see your significance in the most insignificant places. Amen.*

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Sabbatical Part Two

As Christmas wraps up, Pastor Christine will begin the second part of her 6 week sabbatical. As per sabbatical policies for ordained ministers, every seven years a pastor may take a three month sabbatical. Pastor Christine split her time into two, so as to avoid a three month absence as the congregation grows used to a solo pastorate. She will take her remaining vacation right after Christmas and then her sabbatical begins **December 30<sup>th</sup> and ends on February 10<sup>th</sup>**. Here are just some basics about pastoral care coverage while she is away. Guest preachers have been lined up for the Sundays of Pastor Christine's absence. For funerals and committals, a list of recommended ordained ministers is available through the church office. If a death should occur, Genny in the office can assist you and the funeral director of your choice. Other St. John's members have been commissioned to do various hospital and hospice visitation when requested. These three already do visitation since they are all on the Senior and Homebound Visitation Ministry: Dauneen Amundson, Lynn Yolitz, and Ruth Lundblad. Furthermore, we have our Executive Committee as well, who provide any support on the work of the business side or operating side of the church. Rely upon them when needed. They are wonderful assets to our ministry. Thank you, Jean Jirovec, Penny Erickson, Mike Kitzmann, and Dramus Peuse. What an amazing leadership team we have here at St. John's! Pastor Christine thanks you for your support and for your discipleship. What a Fountain of Life you all are!

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## THE GIFT THAT IS YOU! — 2024 Christmas Message

As I reflect on my time in Malawi back in early November, I had so many experiences that merit being shared. As I write this letter, perhaps the most important lesson I can offer was that of my new reality as a guest overseas.

Everywhere I turned, I truly felt like I was the most important person present. Yes, there were times where I was the honored guest as a bishop. I was granted the best seats in the church, in the van, on the stage. When I walked the grounds at the Lutheran Compound in my purple clerical, EVERYONE immediately stopped what they were doing to greet me, even if that was their first encounter with me. I was fed better than most and I never had to carry my own luggage. I had women pour water over my hands before certain meals (including communion) much like Christ did during the Last Supper in washing the disciples' feet. And despite my innermost desires to remind them that I was just another guy, I simply could not insult them in that manner. The way in which they treated me was at the core of their faith practice.

Thankfully, Deacon Laura taught me a valuable insight that helped my understanding more clearly. They didn't treat only bishops that way, they treat all guests that way! Having been to Malawi five times before she took me, Laura has experienced that generous hospitality time and time again. And now that I'm a few weeks removed from their genuine welcome, I still firmly believe that their faith has taught them to love their neighbor and lift them up no matter how far away we may come.

What if we all treated our neighbor as though they are the most important person present at that time? What if we lifted the spirits of the people God places in our lives each and every day? As we prepare for the Christmas story once again this year, we emphasize the gift that comes in the Christ child, God made flesh to live among us mortals. Just think about the lives that the Christ child touched! It started with Mary and Joseph, continued to the shepherds in the fields, and even gave the heavenly host something to praise!

Of course, Jesus went on to touch so many lives - people in need of healing, children in need of welcoming, outcasts in need of community, sinners in need of redeeming. Jesus became the gift who helped them all feel that they were the most important person present at the time, people worthy of his unconditional love, people whose spirits were uplifted.

As we march through the season of Advent toward the birth of God Emmanuel, Jesus the savior of the world, remember the gift of God's presence in your lives. Recognize that God is even present within you and that you are a gift as well! And much like my new friends in Malawi, be that gift for others. Reveal Christ's presence to others through your continued faithfulness and dedication to the God of love because that love can overcome division. You are a gift to this synod and to God's church when you let God's light shine in and through you! May this Christmas also reveal to you the light of Christ through others.

**Bishop Martin**



# st. john's christian PRESCHOOL

## Christmas Program

Preschoolers will share their songs and their excitement at our Class Christmas Programs.

**Everyone is invited!!!**

**Christmas Programs – In the Sanctuary**

**Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 11AM**

**Wednesday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at 11AM**



## Birthday Party for Jesus



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**  
*Jesus!*

We will have lots of fun celebrating Christmas at preschool with a Birthday Party for Jesus! Our day will be filled with activities that will help us remember to celebrate our savior's birth. We hope you celebrate, too!

## Preschool Openings Available

If you know of a family that may be interested in an early learning experience for their 3-5 year old, please share SJCP's information with them. We have openings and would love to have new children and families join us as we learn a lot, have some fun, and share God's love!

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## Realm

Have you seen our new online giving program, Realm? We're excited about the new things happening at St. John's through our online community. You can securely give from our church website and via text message. You can even create an account to set up recurring donations and use our free Realm app. If you have not received your personal invite link, please contact the church office. We'll then email you so you can get started today.



## Thank you Jo Rauckman!

After 14-plus years as our Accountant/Bookkeeper, Jo says it's time to spend more time with family.

For the last year she has graciously guided Marlee as she settles into the Accountant/Bookkeeper roll.

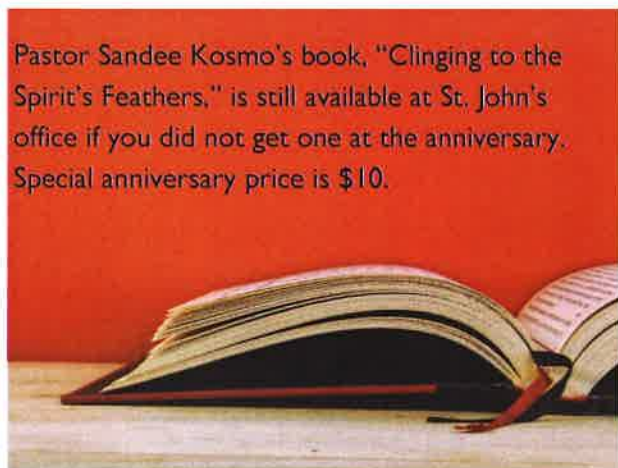
Thank you, Jo for your attention to accuracy, expertise and kind heart in processing our payroll and financial records.

**We will miss you!**

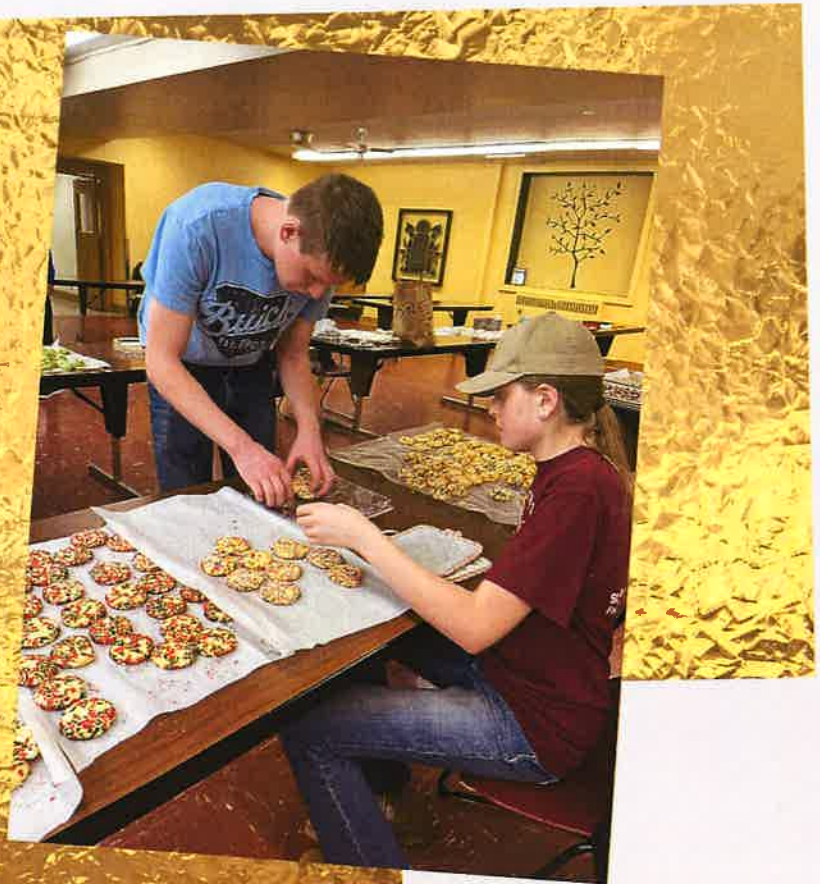
## Quilters' Needs

The quilters are in need of sheets full size, queen or king. No silky material. Prefer percale and cotton.

Pastor Sandee Kosmo's book, "Clinging to the Spirit's Feathers," is still available at St. John's office if you did not get one at the anniversary. Special anniversary price is \$10.



# Cookie Walk & Christmas Tree Removal



## Mission Trip Fundraisers

The winter is a fun, fun time for Youth Trip fundraisers! Keep an eye on Facebook/E-news for these events:

December 15th: Cookie Walk (Small Assembly)

Late December/January: Value Cards

January 4th: Christmas Tree Pickup

If you would like to have your natural Christmas tree picked up from your home on that January date, please reach out to the church office or use the form in this newsletter.

**There will be no CREW or Confirmation December 25th or January 1st. There will be no Sunday School December 29th.**



*Cookie Walk*



*Tree Pickup*

# EDUCATION, FAITH FAMILY & YOUTH



*Advent  
Children's  
Program*



## Advent Program

Our Sunday School youth are incredibly excited to put on an Advent program at 10:30 AM on December 15th. Join us downstairs in the large assembly as our children share their love of the baby Jesus!

Do you have a child aged 3-10 (up to 4th grade) that wants to participate? Join us for rehearsals during Sunday School on December 1st, 8th, and a dress rehearsal December 14th at 9:00 AM and sing! Contact Pastor Christine or Stacey Kelly for more info.

## Advent Activity Night

Families are invited to come to St. John's Wednesday, December 4th at 5:15pm, for our annual advent activity night! We will have pizza at 5:15pm followed by several fun several stations for crafting ornaments, frosting cookies, and other awesome activities to celebrate and commemorate the season of Advent!

*Advent  
Family  
Activity*

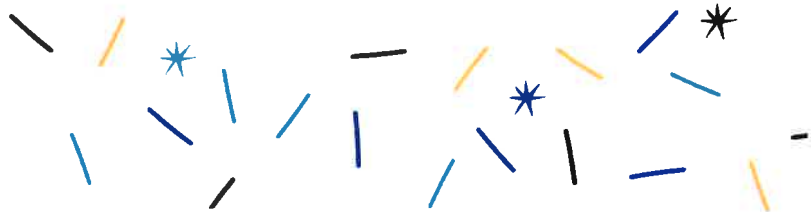




JOIN ST. JOHNS FAITH + FAMILY FOR OUR

# Advent Activity Night

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4TH  
5:15 PM ~ 6:15 PM  
LARGE ASSEMBLY ROOM  
ALL AGES WELCOME!



# Cookie Walk

High School Trip Fundraiser



Sunday, December 15th

10:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Variety of options pre-priced per plate downstairs in Small Assembly

## Join us for Advent Wednesday Worship!

7 pm on Wednesdays December 4th, 11th & 18th

ADVENT 2024

# THE WEARY WORLD *Rejoices*

Journey together towards the promise of Christmas.



# Memorials/Honorariums

General Operations: IMO Karen Jorgensen by Jerry Jorgensen  
 Tanzania Tuition: IMO Rachel Inman by Ruth & Neil Kruschke  
 Bell Tower Repair: IMO Bob Munden by Don & Sandy Huebscher  
 Weekend Kids Meals: IMO Bob Munden by Don & Sandy Huebscher  
 Television Ministry: IMO Robert Munden by Lynn & Jean Yolitz  
 General Operations: IMO my husband, Roger & son, Alan.  
 IHO 3 great grandsons Wyatt, Lucas & Hunter Hedlund by Janet Dahl  
 General Operations: IMO Jean Schumacher by Carie Schumacher  
 General Operations: IMO Bob Munden by Gary & Suzanne Wulff  
 General Operations: IMO Bob Munden by Gary & Cora Klawiter  
 General Operations: IMO Robert Munden by Scott Olsen  
 Caring Ministry Giving Tree: IMO Robert Munden by Lois Mai  
 Television Ministry: IHO St. John's Family by Harvey Baumbach & Carol Baumbach  
 Good Samaritan: IMO Bob Munden by John & Judy Staszczuk  
 Television Ministry: IMO my mother, Marguerite Branham-Miller by Bonnie Branham  
 General Operations: IMO Bob Munden by Marlo & Bev Orth  
 General Operations: IMO Robert Munden by Dick & Kathy Freitag  
 General Operations: IMO Robert Munden by Family & Friends of Robert Munden  
 General Operations: IMO Robert Munden by Carole S. Brimmer Veness  
 General Operations: IMO Robert Munden by Cheryl Watson  
 General Operations: IMO Bob Munden by Judy Haugen  
 Good Samaritan: IMO my husband, John and loved ones by Rita Veitch

**November 2024**  
**We Mourned the**  
**Death of:**  
 Robert Munden, 93  
 Darlene Swanson, 87

**November 2024**  
**We Celebrated the**  
**Baptism of:**  
 Grace Lee,  
 daughter of Hayden &  
 Nicole Frey



## St. John's Information

### Church Council

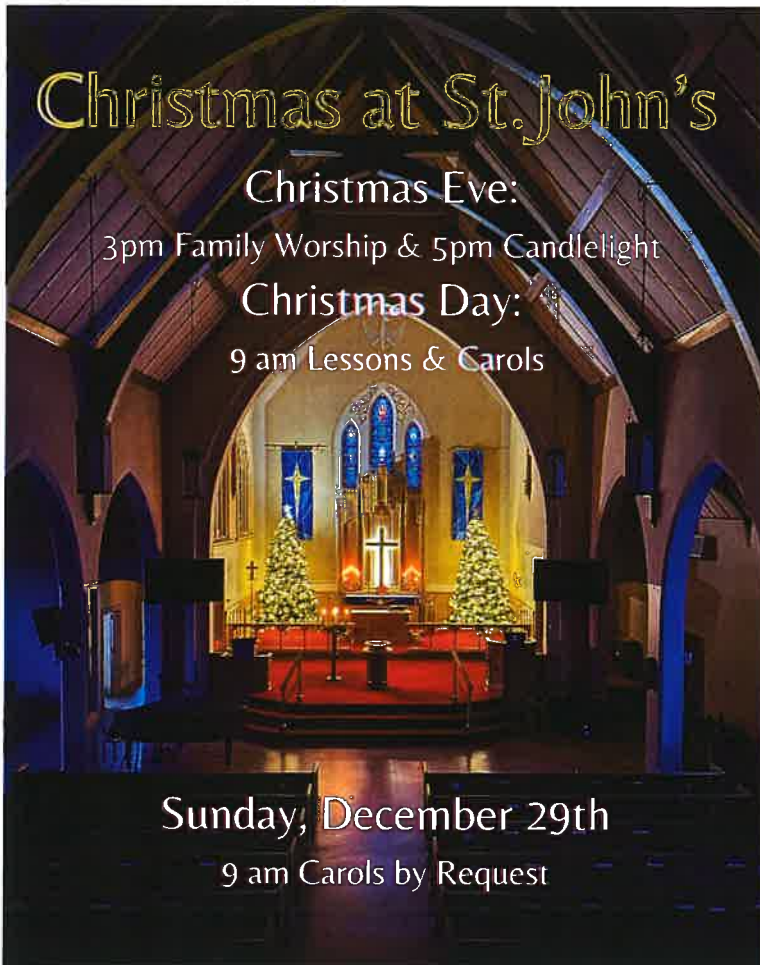
Jean Jirovec ..... President  
 Dramus Peuse ..... Vice President  
 Penny Erickson ..... Secretary  
 Mike Kitzman ..... Treasurer  
 Mary Spryer ..... Caring  
 Louise Alt ..... Community & Word  
 Stacy Kelly ..... Education  
 OPEN ..... Faith Family  
 Ruth Lundblad ..... Seniors & Home Visitation  
 Richard Spryer ..... Worship & Music  
 Emily Ernster ..... Youth  
 Teresa Burrows ..... At-Large  
 Greg Johnson ..... At-Large

### Your Church Staff

Ministers ..... All the Congregation  
 Pastor ..... Pr. Christine Emerson  
 Music Director ..... Mark Lundin  
 CYF Director ..... OPEN  
 Nursery Attendant ..... Tyeanna Segura  
 Communication/Ministry Coordinator ... OPEN  
 Organist ..... Linda Ranney  
 Administrative Assistant ..... Genevieve Gorton  
 Bookkeeper ..... Marlee Agner  
 Facility & Grounds Manager ..... David LaRose  
 Custodian ..... Tyeanna Segura  
 St. John's Website ..... [www.stjohns-ec.org](http://www.stjohns-ec.org)  
 St. John's General Email ..... [stjohns@stjohns-ec.org](mailto:stjohns@stjohns-ec.org)  
 St. John's Christian Preschool :

Nancy Hanson, Sarah Wergeland, Amanda Schroeder, Amanda Downing  
 Preschool Website: ..... [www.stjohns-ec.org/grow/preschool](http://www.stjohns-ec.org/grow/preschool)

## Upcoming Opportunities



**Christmas at St. John's**

**Christmas Eve:**  
3pm Family Worship & 5pm Candlelight

**Christmas Day:**  
9 am Lessons & Carols

**Sunday, December 29th**  
9 am Carols by Request



**We Love to Tell the Story**

An Interactive Family Friendly Worship Service  
**3pm Christmas Eve**

St. John's Lutheran Church, Eau Claire

### Diner's Club

The Diner's Club will meet Tuesday, December 17th at 11:45am at Johnny's Steakhouse. Please RSVP to Louise Alt at 715-834-1693 or email [altlk@charter.net](mailto:altlk@charter.net) by Monday, December 16th at 2:00pm.

**\*\*Maximum 20 people**

## Poinsettia Memorials and Honorariums

Genny Gorton: IMO my Dad, John P. Buxton & Brother, John T. Buxton

Eric Nielsen: IMO Aylen Bain

Eric Nielsen: IHO Mark Lundin & Linda Ranney

Barb Graham: IMO Mom & Dad, Erv & Virginia Lawin; Brother, Tom; Husband, Jim

Pastor Christine: IHO Glory to God

Charlotte Nelson: IMO my Mother, Eva Dorn

Louise Alt: IMO my Mother, Velma Alt

Carole Veness: IMO Don & Corinne Brimmer; Ernest, Selma, & Richard Otto

Carole Veness: IMO many beloved, cherished friends

Kathy Schellfeffer: IMO J.B. & Gladys Turney, Maxine Forcier, James Schellfeffer

Rev. Christine E. Iverson & Rev. Valerian J. Ahles: IMO Aaron P. Ahles-Iverson & Rev. Benjamin J. Ahles-Iverson

Ray & Sharon Gizewski: IMO Fred & Hazel Frase & Connie Matz

Schulte & Schwieters Families: IMO Roger "Rock" Schulte

Dick & Cheryl Stage: IMO Howard & Lois Klavetter

Dick & Cheryl Stage: IMO Duane Stage

Paulette & David Fenske: IMO our Parents, Shirley & Paul Johnson & Laurence Fenske

Kristine Nelson: IMO my Parents, Nan & Jim Lewis

Richard Schultz Family: IMO Marion & Chester Hahn

Mark & Patti Sontag: IMO Dave & Lucy Sontag, John & Jean Tighe, Cathy Olson-Patti's sister

Scott Olsen: IMO Family and Loved Ones

Scott Olsen: IMO Pastor Langhough & Bill Watson

Janet Andrews: IMO Karey Johnson & Ken Paulson

Cheryl Mattison: IMO my Parents LaMoine & Alvina Bunce

Cheryl Mattison: IMO my Husband, Darrel Mattison



## Upcoming Opportunities

# WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

Isaiah 9:6

## Blue Christmas St. John's Lutheran Church

**For: those in need of comfort and/or support &  
those who wish to provide comfort and show support**

**Where: St. John's Lutheran Church, 1804 Highland Ave., E.C.**

**When: 2:00 P.M. on Sat., Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**(Childcare available for those 4 & younger. Fellowship to follow.)**

### Financial Summary

	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Surplus(Deficit)</u>
<b>October</b>			
2024	33,370	46,461	(13,091)
2023	66,904	45,216	21,688
<b>Year-To-Date</b>			
2024	394,487	419,299	(24,812)
2023	388,174	349,286	38,888
2021-23 Average	377,834	398,449	(20,615)

### Contributions

Contributions to St. John's received or postmarked by Dec. 31, will be credited to 2024 contributions. However, because of the difficulty of processing these late contributions, the staff encourages contributions for 2024 to be in as soon as possible.



# December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 New Member Sunday 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am TV Broadcast- WQOW 3:30 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>2 5:00 pm Stewardship 6:30 pm Jubilation</p>	<p>3 *Christmas Giving Gifts Due 1:00 pm Staff Meeting 7:00 pm Step Group</p>	<p>4 *Preschool Pop Up 9:00 am Quilting 3:00 pm Master Builders 5:30 pm Advent Activity Night 5:45 pm Choir rehearsal 7:00 pm Worship 7:30 pm CREW</p>	<p>5 *Preschool Pop Up 9:00 am Rostered Leaders Coffee 1:30 pm SJ Apt Service 6:00 pm Youth Ministry @ Monks</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7 2:00 pm Blue Christmas</p>
<p>8 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15am Adult Faith Formation 11:30 am Caretakers of Creation</p>	<p>9 5:15 pm Education 6:30 pm Jubilation 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>10 9:30 am Staff Meeting 1:00 pm Worship &amp; Music 1:00 pm Staff Christmas Decorating 2:00pm Senior &amp; Home Visitation 6:00pm Preschool Board @ Houligans</p>	<p>11 3:00 pm Master Builders 5:45 pm Choir rehearsal 7:00 pm Worship 7:30pm CREW</p>	<p>12 9:30 am Rostered Leaders Conf. @ Trinity-Boycerville 7:00 pm Property</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 7:30 am Cookie baking 9:00 am Advent Program rehearsal</p>
<p>15 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Cookie Walk 10:30 am Advent Program 10:30 am TV Broadcast- WQOW</p>	<p>16 4:00 pm Finance 6:30 pm Jubilation 7:00 pm Boy Scouts</p>	<p>17 9:30 am Staff Meeting 11:00 am Preschool Christmas Program 11:45 am Diners Club @ Johnny's Steakhouse 12:00 pm Staff Christmas Lunch 7:00 pm Step Group</p>	<p>18 9:30 am Women's Circle Bible study 11:00 am Preschool Christmas Program 3:00 pm Master Builders 5:45 pm Choir Rehearsal 6:15 pm 8th grade w/mentors 7:00 pm Worship 7:30 pm CREW</p>	<p>19 9:00 am Volunteer @ Community Table 6:00 pm Council</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15am Adult Faith Formation</p>	<p>23 *No Preschool 6:30 pm Jubilation</p>	<p>24 *Office closes @ Noon *No Preschool 9:30 am Staff Meeting 3:00 pm Family Worship 5:00 pm Candlelight Worship 7:00 pm Step Group</p>	<p>25 *Office Closed 9:00 am Worship</p>	<p>26 *No Preschool</p>	<p>27 *No Preschool</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Community &amp; World</p>	<p>30 *Pr. Christine begins Sab- batical through February 9 *No Preschool 6:30 pm Jubilation</p>	<p>31 *No Preschool 9:30 am Staff meeting 7:00 pm Step Group</p>				<p>30</p>