

Office Hours

Mon - Thurs 9-3 Friday 9-12

1804 Highland Ave. Eau Claire, WI 54701

A Message From Pastor Christine

People are generally not very good at waiting. With the distractions of the world, we are in a constant hurry. We could be spending those extra minutes or seconds doing something else only to end up looking down at our phones scrolling and scrolling. As the saying goes "Every second counts". I recently waited 20 minutes for a doctor's appointment. It's sometimes understandable there because everyone wants their doctor to spend time with them, so hey, some waiting has to be expected. But, if you are like me, 20 minutes at the doctor's office feels longer than sitting in a coffee shop sipping something for 20 minutes.

And yet, here we are again in the time of Advent and Christmas! Where did all that time go? We have gone around the sun one more year and wow, just like that, we are back at the Advent season! The word Advent actually means 'coming' or 'arrival'. It is the season where we wait for that arrival; we wait in homage to those long ago who waited upon the coming of Christ as that baby in Bethlehem and now in our own waiting for the arrival of Christ again, at the final time of fulfilled promises from God. Advent is the season all about waiting for that coming. And, during this blue colored season prior to Christmas, we are reminded of how difficult waiting can be.

This beautiful blue liturgical season that we call Advent is a time to remember that God's promises are certain and sure but those promises are not always when we want them. In fact, our faith in the promises of God require us to wait. As a liturgical practice, we wait only for four weeks before the promises of that first Christmas are yet again revealed in wonder and joy, but the ancient people of God had to wait for centuries. Advent is the time we remember their waiting and cry with them, O Come Immanuel. And, we no doubt can also relate to their waiting, especially when something in our lives once hoped for, seem to never happen. But, before we skip to Christmas a bit too soon, let's remember why waiting is sometimes needed and indeed, even good. Here are five great reasons for why waiting is important:

- 1. Waiting reminds us that we are not the center of the universe (even though we often respond to the world like our concerns are at the center).
- 2. Waiting reminds us that we are not always in control (but God has a plan!).
- 3. Waiting reminds us that life is a gift (Every day).
- 4. Waiting reminds us that the present time matters (why skip to the end? We are so future focused but now matters, too!).
- 5. Waiting reminds us that the future is bigger than what we think (because we think smaller than God does)!

Therefore, as we all bear the "wait" of the world, let's not forget that the season of Advent is a great time to linger, to wonder, and to pause. God's promises will be revealed in the goodness of time.

Lastly, come wait with us and pause midweek at our Wednesday Advent Vespers. We will sing Holden Evening Prayer together on December 3rd, 10th and 17th at 7pm.

Thrivent Choice Dollars

Thrivent Choice Dollars allows eligible Thrivent Financial members to direct Thrivent Financial's charitable dollars to St. John's Lutheran Church. To be a benefit member with Thrivent Financial, you must own one of the following Thrivent products: life insurance, health insurance, disability insurance or annuities, and based on your premium and cash value, your Thrivent Choice dollars will be calculated. Letters or emails are sent annually to these members indicating the amount of charitable dollars available to them. If you believe that you qualify and have not received a letter, please contact your Thrivent Financial representative.

For the period September 1, 2025 to August 31, 2026, St. John's is designating the Thrivent Choice contributions to our general operations fund to help support our ministries, programs and maintain our day to day operations. When you are contacted by Thrivent Financial, please prayerfully consider directing these charitable dollars to St. John's.

The Thrivent Financial members who have directed their "Choice Dollars" to St. John's Lutheran Church for November was Valerian Ahles, Don & Diane Brott, Mary Haukeness-Mack, Cora Klawiter, Lois Mai, Mike McCarty, Mike & Rachel Torud, Rita Veitch, and Jean Yolitz.

St. John's thanks you for doing this.

| FINANCIAL SUMMARY | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------|---------|------|----------|--------------------|----------|--|--|
| OCTOBER | 2025 | | 2024 | | 2022-24 Average | | | |
| Income | \$ | 50,168 | \$ | 33,370 | \$ | 47,767 | | |
| Expense | | 45,473 | | 44,215 | _ | 45,505 | | |
| Surplus(Deficit) | \$ | 4,695 | \$ | (10,845) | \$ | 2,262 | | |
| YEAR-TO-DATE | 2025 | | 2024 | | 2022-24 Average | | | |
| Income | \$ | 403,605 | \$ | 394,487 | \$ | 381,201 | | |
| Expense | | 383,456 | | 416,871 | | 396,233 | | |
| Surplus(Deficit) | \$ | 20,149 | \$ | (22,384) | \$ | (15,032) | | |

Changes to 2026 Offering Envelopes

From St. John's Benevolence Committee

At our May 13, 2025, Benevolence Committee meeting, we had requests to change the names of two offering envelopes and one request to add an offering envelope. The Benevolence Committee approved all 3 requests.

- 1. The May 17, 2026, envelope will be renamed from Weekend Kids' Meals to Feed My People: A Brighter Childhood. It's still the same program, just a different name.
- 2. Every 2 months, starting with January 2026, the **Capital Improvement Projects** envelope will be renamed to **Capital Program**. The Capital Program funds are used to support projects and purchase equipment to maintain and improve St. John's facilities. These funds are managed by the SJ Property Committee. Examples of Capital Program projects and equipment purchases are: masonry repairs, roof repairs, floor cleaning equipment, computer equipment and sanctuary lighting repairs.
- 3. The Caring Ministry requested to have an envelope added for their ministry. **The Caring Ministry** envelope will be on November 8, 2026, and November 7, 2027. These envelope monies will be deposited into the Caring Ministry's Restricted Account, which is used exclusively for Caring Ministry needs which benefits members of St. John's in various ways.

Caring Ministry's Mission Statement
"We welcome new members into our faith family;
assist our congregation members in matters
of health (physical, mental, and spiritual); and
assist, support, and comfort those in need."

Special Offerings This Month

Christmas Eve Giving Envelope Holy Christmas Giving Envelope

Trivia Corner

Which Roman Emperor was in power during the birth of Christ?

Christmas Giving

Caring Ministry's annual Christmas Giving Project will again provide Christmas gifts for -Protect your trees from hungry critters. You help by donating a gift, please visit the tree in a 24" tree yet. the Gathering Area between November 23rd & December 7th.

their age and their wants OR items needed for 6" from the tree trunk. Locust Lane. Please keep your children's gift to no more than \$40. Children's gifts need to be -Late fall/early winter is a good time for pruning need to be in a bag (not gift bag or wrapped) with being weighed down by excess snow. the tag attached or in bag. If you prefer to donate money towards this Christmas Giving Project —This is a good time to reflect on how your yard send money to church office with a notation for pollinator/native plants. Possibly think about "Caring Ministry Christmas Giving".

If you would like more information, please feel free to contact Kathy Englebert (715-563-7470) or Shari Englebert (715-577-7969). Please look for upcoming emails/bulletin announcements regarding this project.

Thank you for helping make Christmas a little brighter for those in need!

Mutually Encouraged in our Shared Faith

A Bible Study in Romans

Join Pastor Christine as we delve deep into the book of Romans at Adult Education on the following Sundays at 10:30AM

Dec. 7th, Dec. 14th

End of Year Contributions

Contributions to St. John's received or postmarked by December 31st will be credited to 2025 contributions. However, because of the difficulty of processing these late contributions, the staff encourages contributions for 2025 to be in as soon as possible.

Caretakers of Creation

Trees and Shrubs

children/families in need within our church can wrap your trees with plastic guards or community. We will also work with Locust surround your trees with mesh/wire fencing Lane to provide miscellaneous snack items (about 6" from the trees). I mean small trees for their entire school. If you would like to because I haven't found a plastic guard to wrap

-Tree roots are more susceptible to cold damage. Protect your tree roots by adding a 3-4" On the tree, there will be tags for children with thick mulch ring or leaves around the tree about

wrapped and returned with tag to the church by your trees or shrubs if needed. Trimming Sunday, December 7th. Items for Locust Lane branches can protect the trees/shrubs from

(for gift or grocery/gas cards), please drop off/ did last summer feeding the bees and birds with how to improve or expand your yard for the coming year. (Think Spring!)

Celebrate This Day

Under the leadership of their new director, Dr Jerry Hui, The Mastersingers will present their annual holiday concerts on December 12th and 13th. On the 12th, the concert will be presented at First Congregational Church, 310 Broadway Street in Eau Claire, at 7:30 p.m. On Saturday the 13th, the program will be presented in Chippewa Falls at St Charles Boromeo Catholic Church, 810 Pearl Street, at 1:00 p.m. Tickets may be purchased at:

https://www.themastersingers.net/tickets

The concert, entitled Celebrate This Day, will feature works both familiar and new, and will include opportunities to sing along with beloved carols of the season as well. For more information, please contact Eric Nielsen at revnielsen@yahoo.com.

Blue Christmas is on Saturday, Dec 6th at 2:00 p.m. Please join us for fellowship after service!

"Together in God" Broadcast Schedule

WQOW Broadcast @ 10:30 AM

ABC Network December - 7, 21 Channel 18 January - 4, 18 Cable 9 February - 1, 15 **HD 618**

<u>Grief Share - December Holiday Sessions</u>

"Surviving the Holidays"

Find comfort for the season with support & 12/11 practical tips for facing holiday challenges after loss. A one-session event, held in person on Tuesday, December 16th from 6-8 p.m. in the St. John's conference room. Sign up is on the bulletin board in the Gathering Area.

Sponsored by St. John's Caring Ministry

Sock & Underwear Drive

Just a quick reminder that the annual adult sock & underwear drive will be held in January. More information will be given in the January Newsletter. -Barb Graham

Annual Reports

Please begin working on your Annual Reports! They are due on **January 16**th. This date gives time for any changes to be put into the February Newsletter. If you have any questions or concerns about your report, please reach out to Lydia. Thank you!

Diner's Club

December's Diner Club will meet at 11:30 am on WEDNESDAY December 17th at Johnny's Steakhouse. We are limited to 20 individuals, so respond as soon as possible.

> RSVP to Louise Alt at: altlk@charter.net or 715-834-1693

Monthly Readings

December 7 - Isaiah 11:1-10, Matthew 3:1-12 December 14 - Psalm 146:5-10, Matthew 11:2-11 December 21 - Romans 1:1-7, Matthew 1:18-25

December 28 - Hebrews 2:10-18, Matthew 2:13-23

Upcoming JONAH Events

December Meetings

12/02 @1:00 Fundraising Team Meeting

12/04 @9:00 Common Grounds: A JONAH Coffee Chat @1:00 Mental Health Task Force Meeting @5:30 Affordable Housing Task Force Meeting

12/05

@10:00 Re-Entry Task Force Meeting

12/09 **Book Club**

@9:00 Common Grounds: A JONAH Coffee Chat

@11:00 Green Bandana Project Pancake Breakfast

@9:00 Common Grounds: A JONAH Coffee Chat @4:00 Mental Health Task Force Meeting

12/19 @10:00 Re-Entry Task Force Meeting

12/21 @11:00 Common Grounds: A JONAH Coffee Chat 12/22

@5:00 Homeless Memorial Vigil

Children, Youth, & Family

Planning Ahead

There is NO Faith Meal in January.

The next Faith Meal is on Wed., Dec. 3rd. The activity will be connected to Advent.

A friendly reminder that Faith Meals have been moved to 5:00!

Advent Dress Rehearsal

Saturday, December 20th @ 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Advent Performance Program

Sunday, December 21st @ 10:30 a.m.

Cookie Walk

Sunday, December 21st after worship Grab some cookies, help out our upcoming Mission Trip, and enjoy the Advent Program!

Christmas Eve Family Worship

The ABC's of Christmas December 24th @ 3:00 p.m.

st. john's christian

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Preschoolers have been learning about caring for each other and for others in our community. We ended the month of November with Thanksgiving Feasts and making Turkey Handprint Door Hangers for the residents at St. John's Apartments.

Thank you so much for making the SJCP Sleep in Heavenly Peace Bedding Drive so successful! It was so fun to drop off all that was collected between SJCP and St. John's members. The Chippewa Valley Chapter of SHP is always accepting donations, you can donate or get more information by going to their website at https:// shpbeds.org/

Birthday Party for 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!

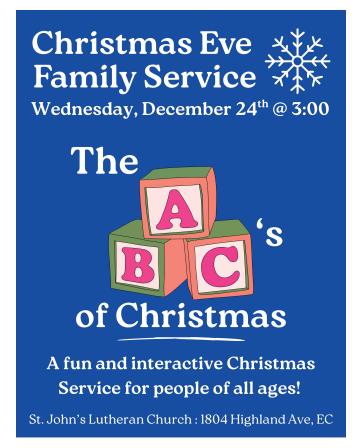


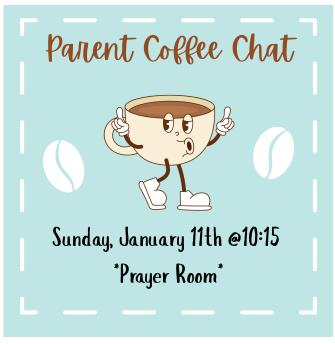
Christmas Program

Preschoolers will share their songs and their excitement at our Class Christmas Programs. Everyone is invited!!!

Christmas Programs - In the Sanctuary Tuesday, December 16th @ 11AM Wednesday, December 17th @ 11AM

Children, Youth, & Family







We Welcome Our New Members!

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Jeff Anderson

I grew up in the Glenwood City and Boyceville area. I spent many years as a P.C. Technician, attended CVTC and received a degree as a Radiographer. I currently work for Mayo Clinic doing I.T.

I married Lynn Klomstad on 10/18/25. My hobbies include collecting vinyl records, repairing vintage cassette decks and building computers. I also enjoy cooking and grilling.



Kathy & John Colvin

My husband drove truck for 30 years. I too learned how to drive so we trucked together for 6 years, until I became sick and had to give up driving. I then became a professional tourist. We volunteer for "Sofas for Service."



Samantha Kocherer

I was baptized and confirmed at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Glenwood City. I have lived in Eau Claire since 2011 and have worked in medical billing for 15 years. I like spending time with my family and I like painting and doing special craft projects with my boys.







Poinsettia Honorariums

In Memory of My Parents Bill & Joanne Emerson by Pastor Christine

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In Memory of Tom & Barb Sorebo by Pam Sorebo

In Honor of JuBellation by Pam Sorebo

In Memory of my mother, Velma Alt by Louise Alt

In Memory of Richard Stage (husband) by Cheryl Stage

In Memory of Howard & Lois Klavetter (parents) by Cheryl Stage

In Memory of Duane Stage (stepson) by Cheryl Stage

In Memory of Mom & Dad: Erv & Virginia Lawin, Brother: Tom, Husband: Jim by Barb Graham

In Memory of my husband, Darrel Mattison by Cheryl Mattison

In Memory of my sister, Patricia Holstein by Cheryl Mattison

In Memory of loved ones by Kathy Schellfeffer

In Memory of David Brimmer by Eric Nielsen

In Honor of the altar care team by Eric Nielsen

In Honor of our Youth Group members by Eric Nielsen

In Memory of parents Harold Krause, Arnold & Betty Hass by Larry & LaVonne Krause

In Memory of Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Droivold and Mr. & Mrs. Max Lorenz by Steve Droivold

In Honor of Dr. & Mrs. Al Droivold by Steve Droivold

In Memory of sisters Christine Hogenson, Kathleen Kurshinsky by Diana Hogenson

In Memory of Robert Childers by Diana Hogenson

In Memory of Esther Backstrom by Fred Backstrom

In Memory of our daughter, Ashley Schultz by Jim & Verna Farwell

In Memory of parents - Shirley & Paul Johnson; Laurence Fenske by Paulette & David Fenske

In Honor of mother - Arlene Fenske by Paulette & David Fenske

In Memory of Don, Corinne, and David Brimmer by Carole Veness

In Memory of Ernest, Selma, and Richard Otto by Carole Veness

In Memory of many dear, beloved friends by Carole Veness

In Memory of Douglas Lee Arkin, miss you forever by Mary Arkin

In Memory of Evan James Dziuk; Mom loves you! By Mary Arkin

In Memory of James Andrew Kruschke & Ruth Loraine Kruschke.

Miss you both, Mom & Dad. by Mary Arkin

In Memory of Karen Jorgensen; with love, Jerry Jorgensen

In Memory of Vernon & Loretta Mueller; love, Susan ODonnell & Randy Mueller

In Memory of deceased loved ones by Ray & Sharon Gizewski

In Memory of Grandma Lou & Grandma Betty by Mary Haukeness-Mack

In Memory of Marion & Chet Hahn by Mark & Beth Schultz

In Memory of my husband, Thomas by Violet Miland

In Memory of loved ones by Alan & Deb Hempel

In Honor of our kids & grandkids by Alan & Deb Hempel

In Memory of Tim Wolter by Vicki Wolter

In Memory of Ed & Mickey Olson by Vicki Wolter

Memorials & Honorariums

General Operations: IMO David Brimmer by Marlo & Bev Orth General Operations: IMO son Alan & husband Roger by Janet Dahl

General Operations: IHO great grandsons Wyatt, Lucas & Hunter Hedlund by Janet Dahl

TV Ministry: IMO Shirley Bengtson by Carol & Gary Gehler TV Ministry: IMO Christine O'Donnell by Eric Nielsen

Capital Improvements: IMO David Cramer by Cynthia Cramer Capital Improvements: IMO Patricia Holstein by Joe & Joy Motto

Mission Trip: IMO David Brimmer by St. John's Choir

Landscaping: IMO sister Shirley (Frase) Bengtson by Sharon & Ray Gizewski

Tanzania Tuition: IMO Rachel Inman by Neil & Ruth Kruschke

We Celebrated the Baptism of

Hailey Jo Birtzer, child of Christopher & Ana Birtzer Dominic Jakob Schwabe, child of Phoebe & Nathan Schwabe We Mourned the Death of

Christine O'Donnell, 73 Rebecca Welke, 76

Bishop Halom's Christmas Message: When God Shows Up

As we approach the season of Christmas that so many of us adore, I'd like to address a few churchy words that theologians like to use and sound impressive when using them. The first word is incarnation and the second is Emmanuel.

If your church uses the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), you will again hear the passage from the first chapter of John on Christmas Day. The passage famously concludes in verse 14 with the words, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us..." This verse speaks directly to the concept of incarnation. In other words, it speaks to a God who literally takes on human flesh and enters this world in the form of baby Jesus. It's in stark contrast to what some believe and experience - a God who exists far away, only to look down on us from God's heavenly throne. Instead, the incarnate God speaks to a God who is willing to take on the human experience with all the joys and sorrows that come with it. One can readily see that Jesus did indeed make his way through the human experience. He felt joy. He felt pain. His eyes teared up. And even if I can't recall a story when he laughed, I gotta believe that he really did!

Another passage found in the Christmas season comes from the gospel of Matthew, which references Isaiah 7:14: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us." One of the most important lessons I ever learned in seminary was in a pastoral care class. I had hoped to learn what to say, especially to someone hurting or grieving. What I learned was much more important. Instead of learning what to say, I was taught to show up to be present. As time passes, few will remember what I say, but will remember that I was there. That's precisely why the name Emmanuel means so much to me. It's a constant reminder that God is always with us. Consider the final words in the gospel of Matthew: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20b) Presence matters because God embodies it and teaches it.

Christmas is known for its gift giving nature. We share gifts with one another to reveal our love for them. This year, I hope that regardless of the quantity or quality of the wrapped presents that lay under the tree, you will recognize the gift of presence. Not only the presence of your loved ones, but particularly the presence of God. So many of you will grieve as you experience the lack of presence from a loved one due to death or distance. My heart grieves with you. My hope lies in a God who provides and will gift you all with someone who will be present with you in some way at some time. If nothing else, remember God's presence as you receive the body and blood of Christ in the worship services that you attend, for that's yet another way in which God shows up.

Fellow disciples, Merry Christmas to you all and may the presence of God incarnate, Emmanuel, embrace you in such a way that brings warmth to your heart!







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DINER'S CLUB

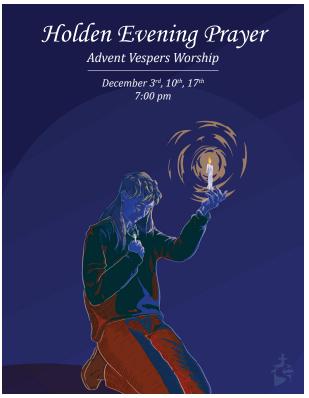
WEDNESDAY December 17th 11:30 AM



THERE IS A 20 PERSON CAP, SO RSVP TO LOUISE ALT ASAP!

ALTLK@CHARTER.NET OR 715-834-1693







This is a delicious opportunity to support our 2026 Youth Mission Trip to West Virginia

If you would like to donate baked cookies, please drop them off on Friday, Dec 19th. Office hours are 9am-12pm.



Church Council

At-Large: Jeff Putnam At-Large: Greg Johnson Secretary: Karla Spies Treasurer: Norb Kirk

Caring Ministry: Mary Spryer Community & World: Louise Alt Education Ministry: Stacy Kelly Faith Family: Nancy Putnam **President:** Richard Freitag

Seniors & Home Visitation: Larry Schaefer

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Vice President: Dramus Peuse Worship & Music: Richard Spryer Youth Ministry: Becky Cater

Your Church Staff

Administrative Assistant: Genny Gorton

Bookkeeper: Marlee Agner

Communications Coordinator: Lydia Elko

Custodian: Tyeanna Segura CYF Director: Amanda Burkart

Facility & Grounds Manager: David LaRose

Ministers: All the Congregation Music Director: Mark Lundin **Organist:** Linda Ranney

Pastor: Pr. Christine Emerson St. John's Christian Preschool: Nancy Hanson, Amanda Schroeder, Amanda Downing, Bria Lindstrom









Trivia Corner

A: Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus. If you remember Pax Romana, your history teachers will be proud. (Luke:2:1)

December Calendar

Weekend Events

Saturday Dec. 6th - Blue Christmas @ 2:00 p.m.

| 30 9:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday School | 1 6:30 JuBellation | 2 1:00 Staff Meeting 6:30 Grief Share 7:00 STEP Group | 3 9:00 Quilting 3:00 Men's Bible Study 5:15 First Wednesdays 5:30 Choir 6:00 CREW 6:00 6&7th Grade Confirmation 7:00 Worship | 4 6:00 Youth |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| 7 9:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday School 10:30 Adult Ed | 8 5:15 Education 6:30 JuBellation | 9 9:30 Staff Meeting 1:00 Worship & Music 6:30 Preschool Board 6:30 Grief Share 7:00 STEP Group | 3:00 Men's Bible Study 5:30 Choir 6:00 6&7th Grade Confirmation 7:00 Worship | 9:30 Rostered Leaders @Trinity - Boyceville 7:00 Property |
| 9:00 Worship 10:15 Sunday School 10:30 Adult Ed 11:30 Caretakers of Creation | 15 12:15 Staff Christmas Lunch 3:00 Bible Study @ The Classics 5:30 Faith Family 6:30 JuBellation | 9:30 Staff Meeting 11:00 SJCP Christmas Program 6:00 Holiday Grief Share 7:00 STEP Group | 9:30 Women's Circle 11:00 SJCP Christmas Program 11:30 Diner's Club @ Johnny's Steakhouse 3:00 Men's Bible Study 5:30 Choir 6:00 6-9 th Grade Confirmation 7:00 Worship | 18 9:00 Volunteer @ The Community Table 1:30 St. John's Apartment Services |
| 9:00 Worship 10:15 Cookie Walk 10:30 Advent Program 3:00 Longest Night - COTW | 22 No Preschool 6:30 JuBellation | 23 No Preschool 9:30 Staff Meeting 7:00 STEP Group | 24 No Preschool Office Closes @ Noon 3:00 Christmas Eve Family Worship 5:00 Candelight Service | 25 No Preschool Office Closed 9:00 Lessons & Carols Worship Service |
| 28 9:00 Worship - Carols by Request 10:15 Sunday School | 29 No Preschool 6:30 JuBellation | 30 No Preschool 9:30 Staff Meeting 7:00 STEP Group | 31 No Preschool 9:00 Quilting 3:00 Men's Bible Study 5:30 Choir | 1 No Preschool Office Closed |

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:16