

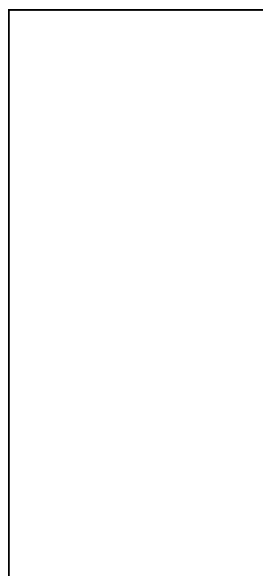
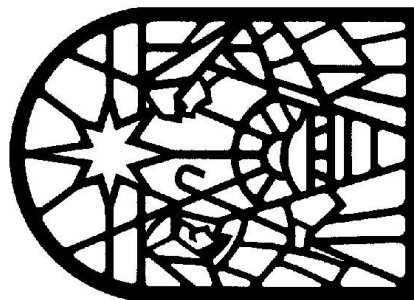
**Worship Hours: Saturday @ 5:00 pm
Sunday @ 8:00 am & 10:30 am
Sunday School @ 9:15 am**



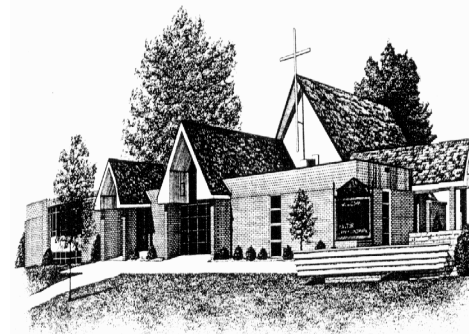
Faith Lutheran Church
500 W. LeClaire Road
Eldridge, IA 52748

Non-Profit Organization
PERMIT NO. 1
Eldridge, IA 52748

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Faith Lutheran Church



AMBASSADOR

December 2019

Rev. Dr. Carrie Lewis La Plante
Rev. Heather Geest

500 W. LeClaire Road
Eldridge, IA 52748
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Grace-Gifted Faith-Lifted
Called to share, seek, and serve Christ

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we come to the close of another church year, we head once again into the season of Advent, the season of peace, joy, love and hope. We begin to prepare ourselves once again for the celebration of Jesus being born in a manger in Bethlehem, and we look ahead to the time when Jesus will come again to bring to completion all that Jesus came into this world to do. As we make our preparations, we do so with hope and with the promise that Jesus came among us to show God's great love for us, even dying on a cross and rising again so that we might live forever in that love.

But when we look at the world around us, not everything we hear about, read about, and experience is about hope. So often, those around us, and even we, sometimes, feel like the end is coming, like the world is falling apart, like we are helpless to do anything about it. As Pastor Heather shared in her sermon last Sunday, even among those in the church, there is fear that decline in the church will lead to our demise.

However, as the body of Christ, we live in hope. We remember that our hope does not come from the institutions in which we find ourselves, including the church, or in the good that we do. Our hope comes from the One who gave everything for us, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Our hope comes in the way in which the love of Jesus is reflected in us and in those around us in the midst of the uneasiness and fear in which we live.

One of the most hopeful visions for the life of the church has come to me through the ELCA Youth Leadership Summit. This year, our congregation was privileged to have all three synod positions filled by our members, Austin Lee, Grace Kirst and Jim Schneider. As Jim shared last week in worship, in that event, he experienced much hope for the church and the world through those youth. Having heard their stories, I find much hope as well. I have asked them to share something of their stories with you, and I pray you find hope for you, for the church, and for the world in their words.

Advent and Christmas blessings to you all,

Pastor Carrie

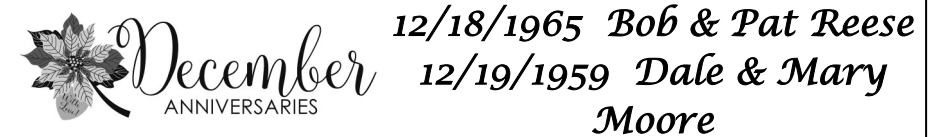
(Jim Schneider) Once again, I have been blessed by an opportunity to step up my involvement and engagement with our church and I wish to extend a hearty THANKS! What I gained from attending the 2019 ELCA Youth Leadership Summit with our Synod Youth representatives Grace Kirst and Austin Lee far exceeded any expectations I had when I first said yes. From our arrival on Thursday afternoon, until our flight FINALLY left on Sunday evening, it was clear that this gathering of youth was endowed with tremendous faith, hope, and spirit.

Our days were an immersion in Peer Ministry, emphasizing how to welcome and include others and promote diversity and acceptance. Large and small group discussions and activities taught us how to share God's love and



Birthday wishes are extended to the following members who are celebrating birthday number 70 or above.

Doug Olson	December 1	Richard Cole	December 16
Carol Judge	December 7	Sue McBride	December 23
Mary Moore	December 8	Sue Whitney	December 29



MISSIONARY SPONSORSHIP



Thank you to Mike and Rita Smith for sponsoring our Compassion Child Denisse Grefa as well as our missionaries, the Bencke family in Japan, during December. Thank you also to Jim & Joni Schneider for sponsoring our Compassion Child, John Chima. The cost for sponsorship is \$40/month for each John and Denisse and \$45/month for the Bencke family.

During November we welcomed to our Faith family through the waters of baptism Makenzie Marie Housenga, daughter of Mike and Megan Housenga. Her sponsors were Kim Shepherd, Jolene and Kaycee Newman. God's Blessings to all!



AMBASSADOR FOLDING TEAM: On **Monday, December 23rd, at 9:00 am, we will be folding bulletins and announcements for all Christmas Eve services and also for Lessons & Carols** the following weekend. Extra hands would make a big difference, so we invite you to share in fellowship as we ready for the celebrations! The next **Monday, December 30th, at 9:00 am, we will fold and mail the Ambassador for January.** A busy time made more special by spending time together. Thank you so much!

Joni Johnson, Office Mgr.



Saturday, December 28@ 5:00 pm

Greeters:	Donna Darnall
Ushers:	Ryan & Amy Murray
Reader:	Amy Murray
Communion	Ryan Murray
Counters:	John & Keri Suiter



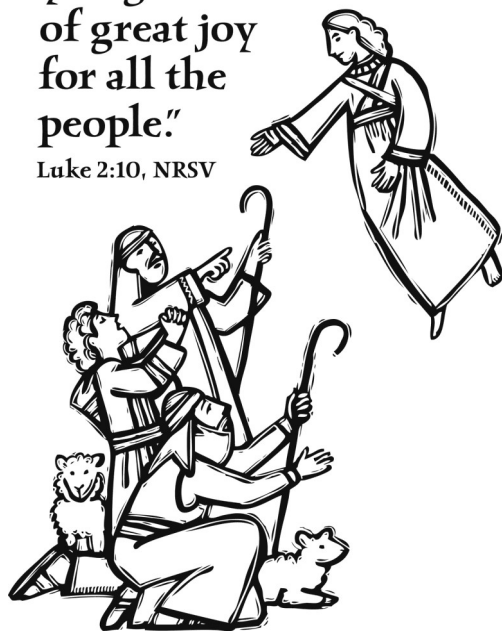
9:00 am Sunday, December 29

Greeters:	Doug & Sharie Garner
Ushers:	Sue Casel & Kirst Family
Reader:	Kirst Family
Communion:	Carol Roe
Counters:	Sherri Brundies & Cathy Diaz



**"I am bringing
you good news
of great joy
for all the
people."**

Luke 2:10, NRSV



grace through daily connections, be aware of the hurts and needs of those around them and living out the Good Samaritan story. We practiced being careful listeners, how to guide healthy and purposeful conversations; clarifying concerns and values; asking open-ended questions and make observations; knowing when a task is too large and how to ask for help. Grace and Austin were challenged to take home what they have learned and to inspire action and teach others what they learned in our youth groups and synod. The diversity of the youth in attendance was very intentionally much more reflective of our nation than ANY adult ELCA gathering I have attended. They tackled tough issues common to youth and the Holy Spirit was easy to see at work throughout the event. I now say to any naysayers, "No need to lose any sleep over the future of the ELCA, the future of our church is in the VERY caring hearts, hands, minds, and souls of our youth."

Hello, my name is **Austin Lee**. I am a sophomore at North Scott High School, and I am involved in the Youth Group here at Faith. My Youth Leadership Summit (YLS) experience was awesome. I met and talked to many awesome new people. In fact, my favorite part of YLS was talking to people. I felt so open to talk to someone new because everyone was so nice and eager to meet new people as well. The event hosted many interactive learning sessions (for lack of a better word) that were lead by a man named Lyle Griner who started Peer Ministry. The curriculum he was teaching was about being a better listener. And to practice listening, someone has to talk. I expected this to be the fun part, but I was pleasantly surprised that listening can be just as much fun at times. We would move around the room to meet and converse with someone new. With each interaction, we would practice the skills Lyle had previously introduced. One would talk about the randomly generated topic for that round, the other would practice the new listening skills. Some of them were as obvious as having good eye contact and others were a little more challenging like asking open ended questions that furthered the conversation. Although sounding easy, it was a little bit of a challenge at first. Asking advanced, open ended questions with only the information about that person that was told in the last few minutes was also a challenge. These skills were a major takeaway that I brought back home and into my community. But before I even made it home, I was too eager to wait. In the airport on the way home, I found myself in a conversation with an FFA student coming home from The National FFA Convention. I was not all that new to FFA, but my Iowa interpretation was much different than the student that I met in the airport. He lived in Florida, and he could not drive five minutes to a local farm like I could back home. That 15-20 minute conversation in the airport showed me how impactful Lyle and his Peer Ministry had been on me. And it would not have been possible without the 2019 Youth Leadership Summit. This is an account of my YLS experience, where I learned a lot, and grew as a person.

(Continued on the next page)

I am **Grace Kirst**, a 16-year-old junior at North Scott High School. I was blessed with the amazing opportunity to strengthen my faith by joining many youth leaders at the 2019 ELCA Youth Leadership Summit in Arden, North Carolina. The Youth Summit trip was a weekend I will never forget. I was very nervous the night prior, worried I would not make any friends and thinking I was not qualified to even take part in such an amazing organization. Getting to Charlotte after a long day of traveling, I was getting more and more anxious seeing all the people who had already seemed to make their friends. After a little while of standing, I saw two girls and walked up and introduced myself. I found out their names were Skye and Ellie. Those two girls will forever be lifelong friends because of one second of courage I took to walk up and meet new people. I learned so many things about how asking a question or the smallest of things, like smiling or waving, can completely change someone's day. We spent a lot of time getting to know people and were told, "You'll remember these people forever." I thought, "Yeah, yeah, I'm sure." But looking back, I still contact those people every day, and I am hoping to go visit some of my closer friends over summer break. I could go on and on about how much this trip impacted me, but in short, this trip opened my eyes, helped me realize there is more to faith than just my church, youth CAN have a voice, and lastly, you can make some extremely close friends in four days if you take a chance.

Children's News



**Family Breakfast &
Children's Christmas Program
Sunday, December 15
Breakfast— 9:15 a.m.
Christmas Program—10:30 a.m.**

There's something special about a Christmas pageant. Sure, kids are adorable, but there is something more that's happening when we participate in God's story. As a congregation, we remember again that first blessed Christmas morning of Jesus birth. As our children are decked out with crowns, wings, fancy gem boxes and bathrobes, we are reminded once again that God comes to live with us, to be like us. Emmanuel (God with us) happens. And there's a sense of God's presence.

On the morning of December 15th, our Sunday school children will be leading the story telling and song for the 10:30 a.m. family worship service as they present *Just a Little Christmas*. Song sheets have been sent home, and we are working on our songs during Sunday School.

Invite your family and friends to join us for our congregational breakfast at 9:15, followed by the program at 10:30.

A sign-up with the coordinated potluck breakfast items is posted in the gathering area.

4

8:00 am		Sunday, December 15		10:30 am	
Greeters:	Carol Roe	Greeters:	Ron & Jane Bainter		
Ushers:	Diane Krebs & Kim Wilkins	Ushers:	Myron & Carolyn Scheibe		
Reader:	Sue Strazewski	Reader:	Children’s Christmas Program		
Communion:	Kevin Krebs	Communion:	Carolyn Scheibe		
Counters:	Ken & Sue Oetzmman	Counters:	Dan & Deanna Nielsen		

Saturday, December 21@ 5:00 pm

Greeters:	Mary Jo McVey
Ushers:	Ryan & Amy Murray
Reader:	Amy Murray
Communion	Ryan Murray
Counters:	Ryan & Amy Murray



8:00 am		Sunday, December 22		10:30 am	
Greeters:	Becky Stutt	Greeters:	Ron & Jane Bainter		
Ushers:	Sue Casel & Diane Krebs	Ushers:	LaPlante Family		
Reader:	Sue Strazewski	Reader:	Neal Becker		
Communion:	Nancy Meyer	Communion	Mary Ann Anderson		
Counters:	Carol Judge & Michelle Reimler	Counters:	Dan & Mary Ann Anderson		

2:00 pm		Tuesday, December 24		4:00 pm	
Greeters:		Greeters:			
Ushers:	Mike & Rita Smith	Ushers:			
Reader:		Reader:			
Communion		Communion			
Counters:	Mike & Rita Smith	Counters:			

Tuesday, December 24@ 9:00 pm

Greeters:	
Ushers:	
Reader:	
Communion	
Counters:	



Please call the church office if you can fill any of these spots. Thanks! 285-4501



DECEMBER FAITH FAMILY: Group 10
Family Head: Amy Murray
January Family Group - Barb Parmenter



Sunday, December 1

8:00 am

Greeters:	Dave & Linda Golinghorst	Greeters:	Kelly Direks
Ushers:	Duane & Lynda Miller	Ushers:	Diane Krebs & Scott LaPlante
Reader:	Kim Wilkins	Reader:	Amy Murray
Communion:	Joni Kuehl-Schneider	Communion:	Linda Szemkus
Counters:	Dave & Ruth Knoer	Counters:	Mike & Gayle Staples

Saturday, December 7 @ 5:00 pm

Greeters:	Brad & Janet Merrick
Ushers:	Gary & Joni King
Reader:	Joni King
Communion:	Gary King
Counters:	Curt & Carolyn Hulsen



Sunday, December 8

8:00 am

Greeters:	Bob & Ann Bainter	Greeters:	Allen & Carolyn Lewis
Ushers:	Carol Roe & Lynda Miller	Ushers:	Kent & Michelle Weibel
Reader:	Kim Wilkins	Reader:	Cantata
Communion:	Nancy Meyer	Communion:	Joni Kuehl-Schneider
Counters:	Carol Roe & Ruth Staudt	Counters:	Allen & Carolyn Lewis

Saturday, December 14 @ 5:00 pm

Greeters:	Bill Wittkowski
Ushers:	Mike & Rita Smith
Reader:	Joni King
Communion:	Rita Smith
Counters:	Mike & Rita Smith



Jr. High Youth



Wednesday nights are busy! Food, fun and learning are happening here!.



High School Youth



CINNAMON ROLL SUNDAY December 7 and 8



The 30 youth (and their parents) and the six adults who are going on the mission trip to West Virginia will be busy making cinnamon rolls for the weekend of December 7 and 8 to raise money for the trip. Rolls will be available after each worship service that weekend. There will be some that will be baked and some that will be take-and-bake.

Cinnamon rolls will be sold for \$1 per roll or 6 for \$5. The take-and-bakes will be sold by the dozen for \$10. If you would like to place an order ahead for take-and-bakes, please contact Pastor Carrie by Thursday, December 5.

Thank you for your support!

December High School Event Christmas Cookie Decorating



On **Sunday, December 15**, the High School Youth Group will hold their monthly event immediately following the 10:30 pm worship service (approximately 11:45 am). We will order lunch in and then Joni King will help us decorate Christmas cookies. Please bring \$5 to help cover costs. As always, friends are welcome!!

Let Pastor Carrie know if you are planning to attend by Wednesday, December 11, so that we can be sure that we have enough cookies for everyone.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS



If you wish to contribute toward Christmas poinsettias that will decorate the altar area this year, please list your name and the name(s) of those you wish to honor on the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the narthex area. We are asking for a contribution of \$8.00 to help offset the cost of the plants. **Please indicate 'flowers' on your envelope so we know how to allocate the funds.** Names will be published in the Christmas Eve worship bulletin.



Thank you for your generous giving to Faith Lutheran Church throughout 2019. You have helped make all the ministry in and through this place possible. As you consider your end of year gifts, please note that all contributions that you wish to have counted for 2019 must be received by noon on December 31st. Thank you...



North Scott Food Pantry

The North Scott Food Pantry needs volunteers to help with Christmas food baskets and angel tree gifts.

Thursday, December 12, 3:30 PM - Set up the food assembly line and organize gifts

Friday, December 13,	11:45 AM	Unload perishable food
	12:30 PM	Assemble Food baskets
	1:00-3:00 PM	Clients pick up food and gifts

If you have questions, contact Deanna Nielsen 285-6194 or 370-7444.

Also the North Scott Food Pantry thanks Faith Lutheran Church for all of its support. Not only has the congregation faithfully supported us by food collections and monetary donations, but the volunteer hours provided by members make this outreach program such a success. Also a big thanks for allowing us to use space as needed. The food pantry motto says it all, **Neighbors Helping Neighbors.** Thank you from the North Scott Food Pantry.

Women of Faith News

ALL WOMEN OF FAITH...

**ARE INVITED TO JOIN A GROUP OR
CALL A LEADER FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

For the month of December, there will be no Board Meetings, Serving Sticks, Quilting or Hannah/Lydia meetings. The focus for December is the Advent Brunch on Saturday, December 14th at 9:30 am.



Everyone is invited to an **Advent Brunch on Saturday, December 14, 2019, starting at 9:30 am**, for fellowship and service. We will be serving breakfast casseroles, pastries, fruit, coffee and tea. After the brunch we will prepare over 30 plates of cookies for our shut-ins and those needing some TLC. If you would like to donate cookies for this project, bring them with you to the brunch or leave them in the kitchen prior to December 14. After preparing the cookie plates, there will be a make-it and take-it Christmas crafts available for all ages. For planning purposes there is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board.

Women of WELCA Stamp Project

As we move into the Christmas season, we thought you might want to begin thinking about the stamp collection project we are working on.

The Southeastern Iowa Synodical Women's Organization is working with other Women of the ELCA groups to donate cancelled stamps to the ministry of Lutheran World Relief. The cancelled stamps are sent to a group that sorts and sells used stamps to collectors around the world. Thus far, 65 million stamps have been collected by this group in Kyle, Texas, and they have donated \$42,000 to the shipping fund of Lutheran World Relief to ship quilts and kits around the world. To help you participate, we provide the following information:

- All stamps are welcome.
- Commemorative and seasonal stamps are most valued.
- Cut the stamps from the envelope leaving 1/4 inch around the stamps so as not to damage the stamps.
- Save the stamps and bring them (or send them) to our Gathering at the Hotel Kirkwood in Cedar Rapids on June 26 and 27, 2020.

Start now -- we often get the most mail with stamps during the Christmas season!

DECEMBER ALTAR GUILD

Chairperson: Nancy Meyer

Nadine Schwarz
Myra Kreiter

Sherri Brundies
Carol Roe

Koralee Patzer
Barb Paustian

MISSION STATEMENT TEAM

In an effort to ensure that the Faith Lutheran Church's vision and its mission statement are still relevant and aligned with the passions of the congregation, a Centering Committee has been formed whose primary goal is to develop a refined vision and mission statement. The committee is leveraging proven tools and methods to work through this process and looks forward to input from the congregation. Those wishing to share ideas or input on where they see Faith's vision and mission statement taking the church are encouraged to share those thoughts with any of the following team members: Amanda Strom, Annette Tomlinson, Linda Golvinghorst, Brea Harms, Brianna Rogers, Katie Garner, Kim Wilkins, Linda Szemkus, Pam Carlson, Tim Broberg, or either of the pastors.

What's been happening...



High School Youth Group at Helium Trampoline getting their bounce on!



Treat Bags for Food Pantry families made at November Congregational Breakfast.



Pics from our indoor Trunk or Treat! The snow didn't stop us!



THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

CHRISTMAS CANTATA



Christmas Cantata

Sunday, December 8 - 10:30 am worship service

Light is essential for life here on Earth. For centuries, it has been used as a metaphorical theme in art and literature, and it is mentioned more than 230 times in the Bible. **"The Promise of Light"**, this year's Christmas cantata, is a musical celebration of God's gift of eternal light to mankind. With a unique blend of traditional Christmas carols and original music, composer Joel Raney has put together an outstanding musical which tells the timeless story of the birth of Christ--the Light of the World. Come hear the Senior Choir and friends as they present this beautiful Christmas cantata on Sunday, December 8, at the 10:30 worship service.

CHRISTMAS BRASS



SPECIAL MUSIC

Sunday, December 22 - 8:00 & 10:30 am

A brass quartet will play many of your favorite Christmas carols before, during and after each service. Come and enjoy the sounds of Christmas!

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Tuesday, December 24 4:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.



Candlelight Service

Worship services will be held at 2:00, 4:00 and 9:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve. The 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. candlelight services will be particularly appropriate for children. The 9:00 p.m. service will be a traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. **If you plan on attending worship here at Faith and would be able to help usher, read lessons, be a greeter an offering counter or a communion assistant, please let us know by signing up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board in the narthex area or calling the church office.**

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS OFFERING



Our special Christmas offering has been designated to the following two organizations. Half our gifts will be given to Lutheran Lakeside Camp and half to the North Scott Food Pantry. **If you wish to contribute to this special offering, please use the 'Special Christmas Offering' envelope in your packets or use a pew envelope and indicate that your gift is for the Christmas offering.**

CHRISTMAS LESSONS AND CAROLS

Saturday, December 28, 5:00 pm and







Sunday, December 29, 9:00 am

Join us as we hear the full story of Jesus' birth from prophecy to the Epiphany and sing our favorite Christmas carols together.



DECEMBER 2019

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:00 am Jubilation Worship 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 1-3:00 pm NSYCO Girls-FH	2	3 5:30 pm Food Pantry	4 1:30 pm Bible Study 5-6:45 pm Conf. Meal followed by Conversations 5:15-6:00 pm Child. Choir 6:30-7:15 pm Cantata Rehearsal-Sanctuary 7:00 pm HS Youth Group 7:15-8:00 pm Senior Choir Rehearsal	5 6:30 pm Team Night	6 9:30 am Food Pantry	7 Cinnamon Roll Weekend 9:00 am Cantata Dress Rehearsal 5:00 pm Worship
8 Cinnamon Roll Weekend 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship & Cantata 12:30-3:00 pm Friends of Eldridge Library 1-3:00 pm NSYCO Boys FH 5:00 pm Sheridan Sluggers	9 6:30 pm Lincoln Sheridan	10 5:30 pm Food Pantry	11 1:30 pm Bible Study 5-6:45 pm Conf. Meal followed by Conversations 5:15-6:00 pm Child. Choir 7:00 pm HS Youth Group 6:30 pm Senior Choir Rehearsal	12 3:30 pm Set Up for CHRISTMAS BASKETS	13 11:00 am - 4:00 pm CHRISTMAS BASKETS No Food Pantry	14 5:00 pm Worship
15 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am Congregational Breakfast 10:30 am Worship & Sunday School Christmas Program 11:45 am High School Youth Group Cookie Decorating 6:00 pm Mission Statement Team	16	17 5:30 pm Food Pantry 6:30 pm Church Council	18 10:00 am Worship at GH 1:30 pm Bible Study 5-6:45 Confirmation Meal followed by Conversations 5:15-6 pm Child. Choir 7:00 pm HS Youth Group 6:30 pm Senior Choir Rehearsal	19 6:30 pm Women of Faith Board Meeting	20 9:00 am Ambassador Deadline 9:30 am Food Pantry 1:30-3:00 pm NSYCO boys in FH	21 5:00 pm Worship
22 Brass Quartet @ All Services 8:00 am Worship 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship 	23 9:00 am Folding Party for Christmas Bulletins	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 2:00 pm Family Service 4:00 pm Family Service 9:00 pm Traditional Svc. All services-Candlelight 	25 OFFICE CLOSED 	26	27 9:30 am Food Pantry	28 5:00 pm Worship 
29 9:00 am Worship 	30 9:00 am AMBASSADOR FOLDING	31 New Year's Eve Office Closed at Noon No Food Pantry	1 OFFICE CLOSED NEW YEAR'S DAY 	2 6:30 pm Team Night	3 9:30 am Food Pantry	4 5:00 pm Jubilation Worship (J) JUBILATION (FH) FELLOWSHIP HALL (YR) YOUTH ROOM (MP) MULTI PURPOSE