

December 2016

A Word from the Pastor

As a child one of the activities I looked forward to in the weeks leading up to Christmas were the television specials that were aired each year. The programs I anticipated the most were the animated ones such as Charlie Brown Christmas, How the Grinch Stole Christmas, Frosty the Snowman (the original version) and Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer.

As I moved into adulthood I began to pay attention to some of the live action traditions. My favorite of these was *A Christmas Carol*. Although its being a story I saw the most helped me via familiarity, there is something amazing to me about the turnaround of someone so stone hearted to someone so extraordinarily generous. It is the type of transformation we would expect from God. So much so that we have decided to make the story the centerpiece of our worship and study during Advent. Utilizing Matthew Rawle's book *The Redemption of Scrooge* and Dr. Marcia McFee's worship resources based on the book, we are going to explore the themes in the story about Ebenezer Scrooge and the visits he receives from 4 ghosts and what significance the story might have for us.

As I write this column, we have already had the first of the worship services in this series. It was interesting to hear some of the feedback about how the combination of music, bells, imagery and presentation helped make what we were trying to communicate come alive. Do join us in the Sundays ahead as we evoke the lessons from Scrooge's story. Join us for Bible Study (Sundays at 8:45 am and Tuesdays at 1 pm), even if you didn't have a chance to obtain a book. The class will explore the themes in greater depth. Use the paper chains you received in worship on November 27 (we have extras at the church) to write down and then to "break" those aspects of your life that weigh you down or burden you wish to let go. Bring the broken links with you to Christmas Eve or the next nearest Sunday for lining the manger for it is Jesus who lifts the weight of those burdens.

People often speak this time of year of trying to focus on or get back to the "true meaning of Christmas." The *A Christmas Carol* story gives us an opportunity to see how God has been at work in the past and present even while God in Christ points to a future with hope. The story reminds us that if Scrooge was not beyond redemption (you could substitute Biblical characters like Moses, Jacob and Paul), then neither are we. We do indeed cherish many traditions about the Christmas season. But, we do them not for sentimental reasons, we do them because we believe that the God who broke into the world in the form of a little baby came for us, too. We retell the stories because we believe, in the words of Tiny Tim, that God came to "bless us everyone." Receive this season the God of the past, present and future and let hope shine through you that the world might know God's promises, too.

Tamara, Friedrich, Alden, Althea and I wish you a blessed Advent and Christmas season!

--Rev. Tim

We are invited to a showing of "A Christmas Carol" on Saturday, December 3rd at 6pm at the Limestone United Methodist Church. This will be the Patrick Stewart version.



Caribou Clock

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Greetings from the Church Office!

After several months of working on it, I am pleased to announce that the new Church Directory is finally available! You may pick one up in the Narthex after Worship or in the church office during the week. Please – one per household!

Please remember to notify the Church Office if you move or change your phone numbers or other contact information. It is important to keep the membership/constituent records database updated.

There is a form on page 11 of this Newsletter for “Flowers for Christmas”. If you plan on bringing in flowers or having them delivered, please complete the form and turn it into the Church Office by Wednesday, December 14th.

Until next month.....

Bobbi Pelletier
Church Secretary



October 30th & November Prayer Concerns

Prayer Concerns: Debbie & Lu Sharp, Judi McKee, Ann Sinclair, Robert Cashman, Rob Wright, Dot Matson, Emily Stuart, DeDe Nichols, Brian Fitzpatrick, Winfield Tarbox, Maverick Bouchard, Betty Branscom, Ada Bright, Margaret Cyr, Penny Lakeskey, Phyliss Sykes, Thelma Mockler, Pat Hoff, Gwen Ellinwood, Lynn Potter

On Family Death: The family of Mona Emerson; Tom & Deneane Bentum on the loss of Deneane's mother and Tom's father; family of Birdena Cochran; Del Ramey on the loss of his mother; family of Jacob "Jay" Donovan; family of Charlotte Hanson

Other: Nations of Israel, Palestine, Syria; All who serve in harm's way; elections; safe travel for Jeff Cyr and Ryan Genz; for those with little or no food

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PROVIDE A MAILING ADDRESS FOR PEOPLE OR FAMILIES YOU PUT ON THE PRAYER LIST SO WE CAN SEND THEM A NOTE FROM REV. TIM. WE OFTEN HEAR FROM RECIPIENTS ON HOW TOUCHED THEY ARE THAT WE OFFERED PRAYERS FOR THEM!

REMINDERS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LITURGIST</u>	<u>GREETERS</u>	<u>COUNTER</u>	<u>COFFEE FELLOWSHIP</u>
December 4	David DeMerchant	Judi & Louis Greenier	Diane Fitzpatrick	Trustees
December 11	Bob Ellinwood	Diane & Bruce Fitzpatrick	Joelene Boucher	History & Records Comm.
December 18	Diane Fitzpatrick	Ruthann & John Weeks	Joelene Boucher	SPRC
December 24	Kathleen Forbes	Norma & Bob Thompson	N/A	No Coffee Fellowship
December 25	Samuela Manages	Ruth & Emmett Ross	Joelene Boucher	No Coffee Fellowship

Usher Coordinator: Dale Sharp

Evangelism Greeters: TBA

Communion Stewardess: Debbie Barnes

Acolytes: Dec 4-Alden Wilcox & Darrell Adams; Dec 11-Lauren Craig; Dec 18-Friedrich Wilcox; Dec 24-TBA; Dec 25-Alden Wilcox

Child Care Volunteers: Dec 4-Jennifer Craig; Dec 11-Diane Fitzpatrick-Dec 18-Meagan Irving; Dec 24-Diana Locke; Dec 25-Samuela Manages

Each individual or committee is responsible to make arrangements for changes to these various calendars.

Please contact the church office if any changes to these lists are made so the weekly bulletins are correct!

TBA = To Be Announced

* * December Birthdays & Anniversaries * *

Birthdays and Anniversaries are celebrated on the first Sunday during Coffee Fellowship.

Remember your birthday & anniversary by making a special offering each year.



1	Mike Ayers, Carson Doody	18	Donald Cole
7	Bonnie Ward	22	Judith Blackstone
9	Jeffrey Alden, Janet Chandler, David Doody	23	Diane Fitzpatrick, Alison Kieffer, Meghan Scott, Katherine Scott
10	Pamela Danforth, Paula Richards	24	Dylan LaForge, Carol Norsworthy
11	Elsie Doody, George Knorr	27	Dan DaCosta
12	Leslie Anderson, Steven Scott	28	Nick Pelletier
14	Libby Collier, Connie Ennis	29	Ken Albert, Jody Smith
15	Ryan Fitzpatrick, Dawn Frost, Zelma Merritt	30	Kathie Forbes
16	Leland Frost	31	Katherine Strom
17	Peter Bentum		



1	Pat & Warren Dobson	7	Gwen & Bob Ellinwood
3	Penny & Ivan Shaw	24	Jeanette & Ken Peters
	26		Ruthann & John Weeks

If your name or the name of someone in the Gray Memorial Family does not appear on this list and you would like to add it, please contact the church office, 498-2103.

Corrections are ALWAYS appreciated!!! If you know someone whose last name has changed, please let Bobbi know so she can update the database.



**STEWARDSHIP/
FINANCE
COMMITTEE**

Worship Attendance and General Fund Offerings:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Operating Fund Offering</u>
October 30	88	\$2,404.00
November 6	92	\$4,632.00
November 13	90	\$2,020.00
November 20	82	\$2,182.00
November 27	93	\$3,252.00

Needed to meet 2016 Budget: \$3,764.09 weekly

Capital Account Seed Money:

We continue to receive donations for the "Capital Account Seed Money" account and as of November 27th, our balance is \$29,625.69.

PICTURES FROM WORSHIP SERVICES!



October 30 – Handbell Choir directed by Tamara Wilcox



Nov. 27 - Sue White brings Advent Candle forward.



Rev. Tim with youth during Children's Time.



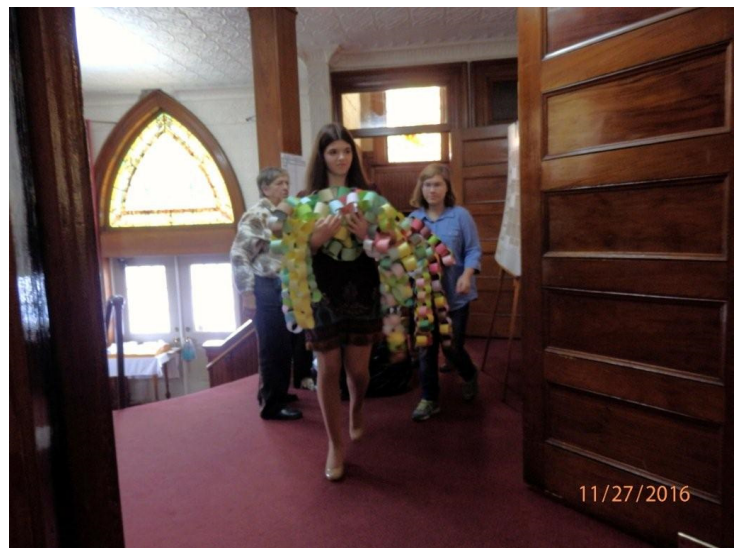
Dramatic Readers: Richard Clark, Diane Fitzpatrick, Tamara Wilcox, Diana Locke, Peter Edgecomb and Steve Cashman.



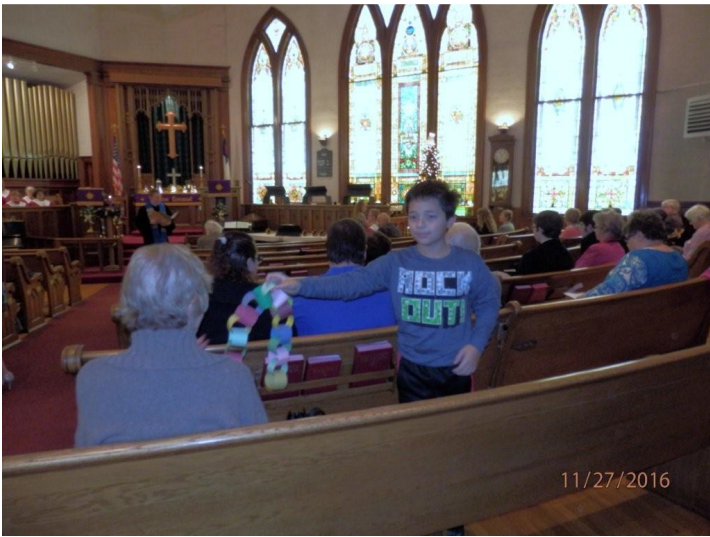
Handbells led by Tamara Wilcox



Michele Sterner prepare "chains"



Michelle Nichols helps with "chains"



Noah hands out a "chain"



Congregation members receive "chains"

OTHER "KODAK MOMENTS"



Special Cake on Sunday, November 6th.



Nov 26 - Sam Collins with Dave DeMerchant (UMM President)



Bob White and Sam Collins at UMM Breakfast & Meeting on November 26th
Sam was the guest speaker, talking about the "Friends of Caribou Schools" Project.

If you bring in a serving dish/plate for coffee fellowship or any of our suppers, PLEASE have your name on it so we know who to return it to. It would help us if you retrieve all of your articles immediately following the event as we end up collecting a lot of dishware over time and we just do not have room to store it or a need for it! Thank you!

The UMW held their third annual free Thanksgiving Dinner on November 24th. We had 47 people join us for a wonderful meal and fellowship! Thank you to everyone who helped by donating food, preparing the meal or cleaning up. We could not have done it without each of you! We look forward to next year!

Bobbi Pelletier, UMW President

The November 5th Harvest Supper proceeds totaled \$1,706.00. Bob Thompson and Del Ramey thank everyone who helped make this event another outstanding success!



Fruitful Congregations

The churches of the Aroostook Cluster of the Northern Maine District were invited to participate in the Fruitful Congregation Journey. It is a process that, among its goals, is designed to teach us about the factors that make a congregation “fruitful,” to build our skills in ministry, and to implement a plan for how to adapt and bring back to Gray Memorial UMC what we are learning. We just had our first meeting with other churches and our first meeting as a GMUMC team. We plan to have another article in next month's newsletter with more information. In the meantime, there are a couple ways you can assist us. One, please pray for the work of this group. Two, consider being part of the group. We would like to have at least a couple more people attend our learning sessions and meetings. The learning sessions meet every 3 months on average at the Grant Memorial UMC in Presque Isle on Sunday afternoons and the group from our church plans a meeting at Gray Memorial in between the learning sessions. Finally, reflect on what it is God is calling you and your church to do in the next few years. How might we address the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of central Aroostook County? How might we reach those who have no church home? How is God calling me?

Watch the newsletter for ways you can help us with this process in the new year.



CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES
11-17-16

ATTENDEES: Diane McDonough (Chair), Claire Hodgkins, Stephen Cashman, Shirley Bowman, Bobbi Pelletier, Margaret Cyr, Debbie Barnes, Leland Frost.

The meeting came to order at 6:40 pm in the Chapel room. Diane McDonough said a brief prayer before the minutes of the last meeting were approved as published and printed. Diane called for the following Committee reports:

CLUSTER: The Cluster has not received any nominees for the Social Action Award this year and is requesting that members consider nominating someone for 2017. Advanced Lay Servant classes are available on line. Pastor Stephen will offer the United Methodist Beliefs class on Nov. 12 & 19 from 10 am to 3 pm. Fort Fairfield will host the Thanksgiving Cluster service on Sunday, Nov. 20th at 4 PM with a pot luck supper afterwards. Fort Fairfield will provide hot dishes and others are asked to bring rolls, dessert, and salads. Fiddle music and skits will be provided by Fort Fairfield and children will be asked to participate in the skits as well. Among the current needs of the homeless shelter are: black sharpies, paper plates, silverware, copy paper, toilet paper, coffee creamer, coffee filters, coffee, Pam cooking spray, (HE) laundry detergent, spaghetti sauce, disinfectant spray, and baby monitors. Email Meg if you or someone in your congregation is willing to participate. Laity is encouraged to attend the Cluster meetings. The next meeting will be Jan. 5, 2017 at 10 am (snow date on Jan.12th). Chris is trying to connect with Rev. Tim Stohlberg (UCC pastor in PI) to discuss the future of Portage. Chris dare conducted the first Fruitful Congregation class on Sunday, Nov. 6th. Future meetings will be Feb., April, Sept, & Nov. 2017, and Feb. and April of 2018 from 2 pm to 5 pm on the first Sunday of the month. Meeting materials were emailed out in PDF form for participants to print and bring to meetings. Stephen reported that the Melody Roller Rink in Caribou has approached him about having a "church night" for families and Michele is still planning a skating event and service there. More information will be issued soon. Leona will devise a Pulpit exchange list for pastors for Christian Unity Sunday, Jan. 22, 2017.

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY: No Report

EDUCATION: Stephen Cashman reported his Committee's concerns about the lack of active committee membership with a growing workload. The Committee is unable to implement new ideas without more help. Christmas tree sales will go on and his Committee has found additional trees to augment the 200 that Del Ramey is able to contribute to bring the number to 300. Bobbi stated that Roy had handled the collection money in the past, providing daily reports with the money, and he would be a good resource to contact. Bobbi will need a report on the sales figures in order to pay the appropriate people, once all sales are done.

Neal asked Bobbi if the women will furnish refreshments for the tree workers. Youth Sunday school has transformed into Youth Small Group Studies, and will meet at 2 pm on Sundays instead of 8:45 am. Some of the activities we would like to start are a Youth Fellowship Night and special small group studies geared to teens.

A movie night is planned and we hope to have childcare. Michele will get a license to show movies.

EVANGELISM AND PUBLICITY: No Report

FINANCE & STEWARDSHIP: Shirley Bowman reported that regular offerings for October were \$15,470.30, other sources of operating income was \$100 for a wedding. Reimbursements totaled \$42. Special funds for church use amounted to \$1,402.65, and Special Funds NOT for church use amounted to \$403 bringing the total Tithes and Offering for October to \$17,417.95.

Bobbi Pelletier reported the following Checkbook figures for October:

Beginning Balance	\$4,319.16
2016 Operating Income	15,570.30
Interest	.71
Less EFT fee	(33.97)
Less Expenses	(14,622.98)
Ending Balance	5,233.22

Bobbi reported there is a total of \$347.51 in the Special funds NOT for church use. The Capital Account Seed Money had a previous balance of \$27,848.45. October Deposits were \$430.21 and \$24.97 was spent on sand mix for the foundation. Ending Balance for October was \$28,253.69.

November Mission Shares were paid. She reported the October Expenditures were as follows:

Programs	\$915.52
Trustees	2,664.68
SPRC	7,993.39
New England Conference	3,049.39
Total Operating Expenditures for the month	\$14,622.98.

The Dead River Balance for the Church is \$3,979.69 and the Parsonage is \$1,197.86. Debbie reported the Budget figures for the month of October. The Target is \$163,110.42. Tithes & Offerings amounted to \$149,237.62. Total Expenses YTD were \$152,031.63. All bills are paid and the average attendance for October was 81. The Average attendance to date is 94.

Debbie asks Chairs to get their 2017 Budgets to her ASAP. Also, Stewardship materials have gone out.

HISTORY & RECORDS: No Report

MEMORIALS: Diane McDonough attended the Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry meeting and reported that there are no specific food needs at this time. Claire Hodgkins reported that she has been recruiting church members to work at the Pantry on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the month of November.

SPRC: Due to scheduling conflicts the SPRC was unable to meet on Nov. 10th. In lieu of a meeting members of the SPRC will meet with their employee liaisons to review their job descriptions and report out at the December 8, 2016 meeting. Revisions will be made and then brought to the Council in January, 2017.

TRUSTEES: No Report

UMM: No Report

UMW: Bobbi Pelletier reported that there are only about 20 Cookbooks left and when they are all sold the proceeds will be given to the Capital Account Seed account to help defray costs for the new flooring in the basement. UMW received a total of \$337.75 from its Soup and Sandwich Luncheon, which included cutlery and cookbook sales, held Saturday, Nov.12th, which was fairly well attended. An additional \$9 was received on Sunday. The Jennie Lyon

Circle earned \$150 for its bake sale. More items were sold on Sunday (amount unknown). The remaining baked goods were donated to Cary Medical Center (very appreciated!).

UMW currently has 33 reservations for the Thanksgiving dinner and one request for meal delivery.

Sunday, Dec. 11th, UMW will award Mission pins, announce the 2017 slate of officers for UMW & Jennie Lyon Circle, and have a Prayer Shawl Dedication.

WORSHIP: Margaret Cyr announced that Limestone UMC will be showing a movie, "A Christmas Carol" on Nov. 27th. She did not know the time but all are invited because of the book study, "The Redemptions of Scrooge". The Worship Committee's annual "Tree of Lights" will be put up before Nov. 27th by the UMM for which we thank the men and Dave DeMerchant for their help. Proceeds will go to Youth activities. New decorations to match this year's Advent theme are being purchased, but they will definitely be usable another year. Christmas Eve service is at 4 pm on Dec. 24th, and Christmas Day service will take place at the usual time on Sunday. Details are still in the planning stage.

The following Special Sundays in November and December are:

- Nov. 20 Christ the King/Stewardship/Thanksgiving Sunday
(Bring vegetables and Canned Good for the Food Pantry)
- Nov. 27 1st Sunday in Advent – Theme is Peace
(Advent services will go along with the book study on Scrooge using materials developed by Marcia McFee. Order of worship will be somewhat the same and will include music, children's time, Advent Candle liturgy, usual scripture, sermon, etc.)
- Dec. 4 2nd Sunday in Advent Theme is Hope
- Dec. 11 3rd Sunday in Advent Theme is Love
- Dec. 18 4th Sunday in Advent Theme is Joy

PASTOR'S TIME: No Report

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm. Next meeting – Thursday, December 22nd at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted by Claire Hodgkins, Secretary.

FLOWERS FOR CHRISTMAS

Rather than taking orders again this year, the Worship Committee is offering people the opportunity to purchase their own plants/flowers from other places and bring them to the church for display during the Christmas Season.

Flowers are to be brought in or delivered during office hours (9am – 12pm) on **Thursday, December 15th** (Church Office is CLOSED Friday, December 16th) or at **1:00pm on Saturday, December 17th**, when Worship Committee members are here to arrange them for the December 18th Service the next day. If the following information is provided by **Wednesday, December 14th**, it will be listed in the December 18th and Christmas Day bulletins:

IN MEMORY OF: _____

IN HONOR OF: _____

BY: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN TO THE CHURCH OFFICE BY WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14TH!

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING IN DECEMBER!!!

Thursday	01	6:30pm	Worship Committee Meeting at Church
		6:30-7:30pm	Girl Scout Troop in Fellowship Hall & Kitchen
Friday	02	1:00pm	Disciple II Bible Study at Church
Saturday	03	8:30-9:30am	Moms in Prayer Meeting in the Library
		6:00pm	Showing of "A Christmas Carol" at the Limestone UMC

Sunday	04	8:30am	Adult Study in Library-"The Redemption of Scrooge" (second session)
		8:45am	Sunday School
		10:00am	Worship - Second Sunday of Advent
		2:00pm	Youth Sunday School (grades 6-12)
		3:00pm	Caribou Choral Society Concert - St. Thomas Church, Madawaska
Tuesday	06	9:30am	UMW Meeting at Church (note date change)
		1-2pm	"The Redemption of Scrooge" Study at Church (second session)
		6:30pm	Prayer Shawl Ministry Meeting at Church
		6:30pm	"Terrific Tuesdays Ministry" with Michele
Wednesday	07	6:00pm	Handbell Choir Practice
		6:30pm	Senior Choir Practice
Thursday	08	6:30pm	SPRC Meeting at Church
		6:30-7:30pm	Girl Scout Troop in Fellowship Hall & Kitchen
Friday	09	1:00pm	Disciple II Bible Study at Church
		7:00pm	Caribou Choral Society Concert - St. Mary's Church, Presque Isle
		7:00pm	"The Light of Christmas" - Family Christian Center, Presque Isle
Saturday	10	8:30-9:30am	Moms in Prayer Meeting in the Library
		7:00pm	Caribou Choral Society Concert - Holy Rosary Church, Caribou

Sunday	11	8:30am	Adult Session in Library-"The Redemption of Scrooge" (third session)
		8:45am	Sunday School
		10:00am	Worship - Third Sunday of Advent; UMW Sunday Prayer Shawl Dedication
		11:30am	Education Committee Meeting in Library
		2:00pm	Youth Sunday School (grades 6-12)
		6:00pm	"The Light of Christmas" - Family Christian Center, Presque Isle
Tuesday	13	10:30am	Evangelism Committee Meeting at Church
		1-2pm	"The Redemption of Scrooge" Study at Church (third session)
		6:30pm	"Terrific Tuesdays Ministry" with Michele
Wednesday	14	12:00pm	Jennie Lyon Circle Potluck Luncheon and Christmas Party
		6:00pm	Handbell Choir Practice
		6:30pm	Senior Choir Practice
Thursday	15	6:30-7:30pm	Girl Scout Troop in Fellowship Hall & Kitchen
Friday			CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED
		7:00pm	"Heart of Christmas" Benefit Concert for Homeless Services of Aroostook at CPAC
Saturday	17	8:30-9:30am	Moms in Prayer Meeting in the Library

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING IN DECEMBER!!! (continued)

Sunday	18	8:30am 8:45am 10:00am 2:00pm	Adult Session in Library-"The Redemption of Scrooge" (final session) Sunday School Worship - Fourth Sunday of Advent Youth Sunday School (grades 6-12)
Monday	19		CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED
Tuesday	20	1-2pm 1:00pm 6:00pm 6:30pm	"The Redemption of Scrooge" Study at Church (final session) Alzheimer's Support Group in Fellowship Hall Trustee Meeting at Church "Terrific Tuesdays Ministry" with Michele
Wednesday	21		FIRST DAY OF WINTER!!!!
		6:00pm 6:30pm 6:30pm	Handbell Choir Practice Senior Choir Practice Northern Maine Quilters at Gray Memorial UMC, Caribou
Thursday	22	6:00pm 6:30pm 6:30-7:30pm	Finance/Stewardship Committee Meeting at Church Church Council Meeting at Church Girl Scout Troop in Fellowship Hall & Kitchen
Friday	23		DEADLINE FOR <u>ALL</u> NEWSLETTER INPUT!!!!
Saturday	24	8:00am 8:30-9:30am 4:00pm	UMM Breakfast & Meeting in Fellowship Hall Moms in Prayer Meeting in the Library Christmas Eve Family Worship Service

Sunday	25	10:00am	Worship - Christmas Day (No Coffee Fellowship following service)
Monday	26		FEDERAL HOLIDAY - CHRISTMAS - CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED
Wednesday	28	6:00pm 6:30pm	Handbell Practice Senior Choir Practice
Thursday	29	6:30-7:30pm	Girl Scout Troop in Fellowship Hall & Kitchen
Saturday	31	8:30-9:30am	Moms in Prayer Meeting in the Library

