DECEMBER 2024

THE MESSENGER

St. John's Episcopal Church, Lancaster PA



Nursery Ministry

Our nursery is such a wonderful place to be on Sunday mornings, and you can join in the fun! Please consider becoming a nursery volunteer to help out our fabulous nursery caregiver, Danielle!

If you have any questions about helping out in the nursery, please contact Karen DiPace at karen.dipace@gmail.com. Click here to sign up: Nursery Ministry!



NEWS & STORIES FOR THIS ISSUE:

- Rector's Message
- Adult Forum
- Advent Event
- Food Pantry News
- TLC Tips & Events
- Makers Market
- Musings from the Organ Bench
- Blessed to Belong Service
- Nurses Honor Guard
- Monthly Financials
- Sock Ministry
- Christmas Poinsettias
- Coffee Hour Hosts
- Christmas Schedule
- Global Partnership
- Bdays & Anniversaries

A MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR



Dear St. John's.

Happy New Year! That's right, our liturgical calendar has started again with the season of Advent. Four the next four weeks, we are invited back to the very beginning of Christ's life on earth. Advent is an all too brief season, where we ready our hearts and homes to receive once again the Christ child. It's also a time to lean into the promise of Christ's return. Advent is a liminal space overflowing with opportunities to watch, wait, and prepare for the Messiah to break into our lives over and over again.

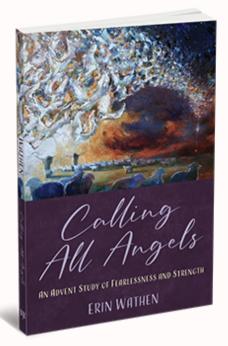
I have always loved this season. It's penitential - as we acknowledge our need for a Messiah to be born among us. It's mysterious - I mean who can really explain the Virgin birth or the dreams and visions of Joseph, Mary, Zechariah, and the Shepherds? And it's painstakingly beautiful - God took on our broken nature in order to be close to us. There is so much to unpack during these next four weeks - the music, the scripture, the Advent symbols of mangers, wreaths, and stars - each pointing us towards God's undeniable love for us and the lengths God was willing to go to show us the way.

"The Lord is coming, always coming. When you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will recognize him at any moment of your life. Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord." – Henri Nouwen

I hope you'll take advantage of the numerous opportunities to prepare your hearts to receive the greatest gift given in this holy season. Whether it's through the studying of scripture on Wednesday evenings as we unpack the angels messages to God's beloved; or in worship each week as we light one candle after another and pray for Christ to return; or by offering gifts of service only you can share - I pray you know that Christ is being born among us every single day and is just waiting for each of us to receive him.

I remain faithfully yours, Amanda+

CALLING ALL ANGELS!



Step into Advent with this captivating study and devotional, where angelic encounters come to life, echoing the timeless message of overcoming fear.

What would you do if you were not afraid?

Life can be daunting, filled with uncertainty and fears. It wasn't any different two thousand years ago when Jesus was born. An aged priest is told he is about to become a father for the first time. A young woman is told she is going to give birth - outside the protection of marriage. A simple carpenter is asked to believe the impossible. A group of shepherds' night on a hill is interrupted by a bright host of angels in the sky.

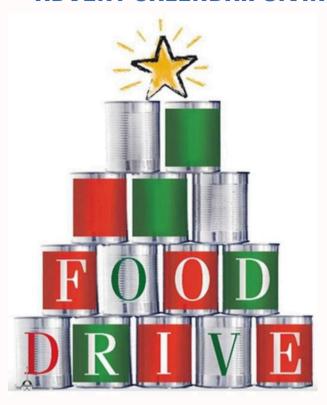
Yet, each of these encounters begins with the same refrain: do not be afraid.

Those words, though, are not just words of comfort; they are an invitation and a calling from God. In this captivating Advent study and devotional, pastor Erin Wathen challenges us to take this timeless message and apply it to our lives today. Calling All Angels asks us to contemplate what would change in our relationships, vocations, congregations, and communities if we have the courage to overcome our fears like Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, and the Shepherds in the story.

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS IN DECEMBER FROM 6:00 - 7:00 P.M.



ADVENT CALENDAR GIVING BOX OR BAG



Mary and Joseph were homeless, and possibly hungry, the night that Jesus was born in a stable. What better way for us to prepare for the coming of our Savior and to share the love, joy, peace, and hope of the Advent season than to feed those who are hungry NOW and waiting to be fed? Instead of an Advent Calendar that just marks the days remaining until Christmas, why not an Advent Calendar Giving Box or Bag? Each day during Advent, adding one item to the box will help a family with food insecurity enjoy a more comfortable holiday season. Attached is a calendar with some suggested items for inclusion, but you can make this box your own by adding whatever you think might help. You can drop off your box at the church on Christmas Eve or at Becker House any time between Christmas and Epiphany. God bless your generosity!

"Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

GIVE A GIFT THAT GIVES BACK!

Make a donation to the St. John's Food Pantry and Blessings Box Ministry to honor others and receive a beautiful gift card and matching envelope to mail to that special person!

Visit the Food Ministry Table in the Parish Hall on Sundays, Nov, 27, Dec. 4, Dec. 11, and Dec. 18 to donate and pick up your gift donation card.

For more information contact Marion Wear at wearall@comcast.net

Thank you for your support for the Food Pantry and Blessings Box Ministry. Have a blessed and wonderful Christmas!



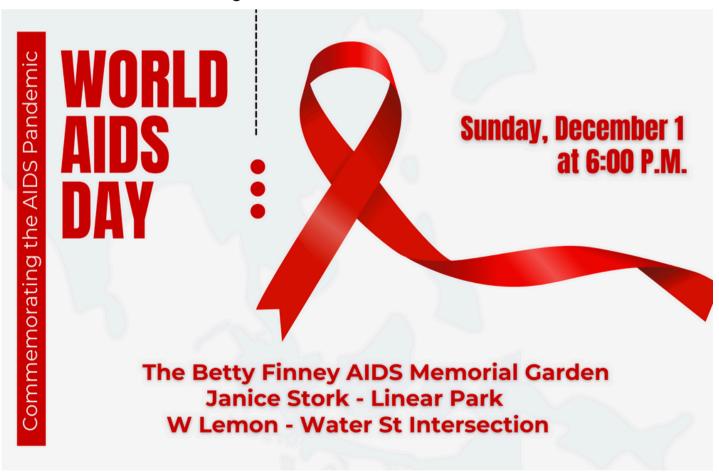
TLC TIPS

In 1988, St. John's parishioner Dr. Betty Finney noted the dramatic increase in homelessness experienced by individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS. With the help of the St. John's community, she helped found what became the non-profit Betty Finney House organization to provide housing and housing assistance in South Central PA for those living with HIV& AIDS.

More than 35 years later, the face of the AIDS pandemic has changed dramatically with the invention of anti-viral and pre-exposure medications which save lives and even prevent infections. However, HIV continues to be a major global public health issue, with equity and access to prevention and care still standing in the way of eliminating AIDS, in the US and worldwide.

On World AIDS Day, we meet in the Betty Finney AIDS Memorial Garden to honor the 42.3 million people worldwide who have died from HIV/AIDS so far, including 630,000 who died in 2023. We remember those we knew and loved here in Lancaster, some of whose names are etched on Memorial stones in our garden. And we promise the 39.9 million people who were living with HIV at the end of 2023 that the fight to end AIDS continues.

Source: World Health Organization ,who.int





December News—It's Time to Shop!

The December 7th and 8th 2024 Makers Market is almost here! With your help, we have accumulated an amazing variety and assortment of original items, fine arts and crafts available to sell at affordable prices and in gift-ready form!

Thank you to all the members of our leadership team!

- Amy Dissinger and Debbie Smith continue to manage the many gift makers in needlecrafts and baked goods along with clever fabric crafts!
- Special thanks to Beth Warren for her ideas, leadership and support in all the new crafts being undertaken this year. (Hoping to work with her to set up a new ministry of crafting in 2025 since our workshops have been so filled with fun, faith and fellowship!)
- Karen DiPace is coordinating the raffle with Sherry Qualls and so many other parts of logistics and food for the Market.
- Leaders of specific sections of our effort include Gretchen Walden, Karen Garon, Maria Weaver-Hollowniczky, and Liz West.
- Members of Martha's Ministry and Kathy Kyper for coordinating a special table to honor the late Jeannie Zeller's work.
- Mark Herr, our Minister of Music, for offering his first concert performance on the organ during the event starting at 11:00am.

How Can You Help?

We still need helpers on Saturday, Dec. 7, from 8:30am-2:30pm to staff a number of special positions helping shoppers, restocking items on the display tables, etc. in 2 or 3 hour shifts. Interested, contact Marion Wear at mwear2016@outlook.com.

We have postcards at our table in the Parish Hall available for you to take to invite friends, neighbors and family to join us in this special event. Please help us reach out to the community.

We have a final Workshop on Saturday, November 30, from 9:30-12:30pm. Come help us create some amazing "edible crafts" with Beth Warren that morning.

Please note that we will continue the Market on Sunday, Dec. 8, between the services and after the 10:15am service for those who cannot join us on Saturday.

Don't Miss a Minute of the Fun!

Contact Marion Wear at <u>mwear2016@outlook.com</u> to RSVP or with questions.

MUSINGS FROM THE ORGAN BENCH

Let Candles burn, both warm and bright, Which to our darkness thou hast brought And, if that can be, bring us together in the light, Thy light shines in the night unsought.

The Prison Poems of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, translated by Edwin Robertson, Zondervan Press, 1999

I am writing this after two experiences during the last two days. The first was a Transgender Memorial service held in our courtyard when we concluded with the worshippers circling a center piece of our individual candles burning in memory, in prayer, in hope…in unity out of love. The second was attending the premiere of the movie Bonhoeffer: Pastor. Spy. Assassin.

My first exposure to the message of Bonhoeffer was in college, when I encountered his book, The Cost of Discipleship. It has remained a significant part of my spiritual life and philosophy for the past 50 years. When I was last dean of the Lancaster Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, I was instrumental in inviting Felix Hell, an outstanding organist from Germany, to perform for an overflow audience at Lititz Church of the Brethren. He envisioned and crafted a concert of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and the poems of Dietrich Bonhoeffer when Bonhoeffer was in prison for attempting to assassinate Adolf Hitler in order to free his country from the tyranny and idolatry of the dictator who took Christ out of the German churches.

Until I saw the movie recently, I didn't have any knowledge of the importance of music in the life of Bonhoeffer, but Felix did after he spent time with the writings of this great "saint" of the WW II era. It was as a theological student in New York that Dietrich (a lover of and performer of music, mostly classical, on the piano) fell in love with the power, the joy, the message of the African American expression of Jazz music and its spiritual depth, in spite of persecution. I would strongly!! encourage all to make the effort to see this movie.

The opening verse of the last poem of Bonhoeffer, written just before his hanging, has been turned into a hymn that has been learned by many German children. It resonates with the Christmas theme of light in the darkness. The Prologue to St. John, often a part of Christmas readings, tells us that the "Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." That is...the light of Christ shines into the darkness of the world's hate, through us, who have come to understand Bonhoeffer's desire for a 'religionless Christianity'. This is evidenced by love for all in the name of Christ. The words of Bonhoeffer and the example of a life ended when he was 39 years old reminds that even in our own time, the struggle to keep our candles burning (as the wind kept blowing out our candles when we held them individually) only stays bright when we pray, we rejoice, we minister, we sing, we worship as many becoming one. That is the message of the Christ child at Christmas and the Star in the Sky. Blessings!

BLESSED TO BELONG - A "BLUE CHRISTMAS" SERVICE

Covenant United Methodist Church, Groff Family Funeral Home, and. St. John's invites you to:

Blessed to Belong

A SERVICE OF HEALING & HOPE FOR THOSE WHO ARE HURTING THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON

MONDAY, DECEMBER 16 AT 6:00 P.M.

St. John's Episcopal Church 321 W. Chestnut St., Lancaster

LANCASTER COUNTY NURSE HONOR GUARD

The Lancaster County Nurse Honor Guard is a nonprofit organization of LPNs, RNs, and CRNPs from Lancaster County that volunteer to perform a Nightingale Tribute at the funeral or memorial service of a former nurse. Our services are free and sponsored by donation only.

We were founded in 2019 by two local nurses, Joni Sweigart and Jean de Groot Banzhof. Joni and Jean are passionate nurses who found inspiration from other honor guards to bring this wonderful service to Lancaster County. By flyers and word of mouth, they brought this organization together.

The Lancaster County Nurse Honor Guard seeks to recognize and remember Lancaster County nurses at their funeral, memorial or viewing services, or with a Remembrance Table. The organization has a mission to honor those who have dedicated their lives to the nursing profession and given of themselves to enhance the lives of others. The entire tribute takes only several minutes and can be placed anywhere within the service appropriate to the traditions and beliefs of the recipient's faith.

All of the nurses involved feel privileged to honor their nursing colleagues in this way. They also recognize that they are sharing the unique history of each individual in a way that has profound meaning for all who participate and which serves as a legacy for the profession itself.

The Lancaster County Nurse Honor Guard was honored to pay tribute to our fellow nurse honor guard member, Glenda Broad, at St. John's on October 26, 2024.

The tribute can be requested by family, funeral home or clergy by the link on our website. For more information visit www.lancastercountynursehonorguard.org. We welcome current or retired nurses to join us.



FINANCIALS BY CHARLES WEAR, TREASURER

October resulted in a small deficit of \$3.3k with YTD surplus of \$19k. More realistically, however, we are close to YTD budgeted income and expenses based on pending pass-through accounting adjustments to reconcile year-end restricted accounts. Key to the remaining year's financial performance is closing the \$26k income gap in YTD non-pledged contributions. This is the typical pattern and strong year-end giving usually covers the deficit.

Capital gifts of \$186.1k were received in October, mainly consisting of two large stock transfers, one of which specifically earmarked to cover the \$125k refurbishment of the Mary window. Cash reserves allowed full repayment of the \$150k Orrstown loan taken in August. In addition, another \$150k was spent on the last monthly billing from J&G, a 25% deposit on the Mary window and a 50% deposit on wood flooring. A total of \$778.9k in campaign funds have been received to date and \$316k in pledged money outstanding. That leaves a gap of about \$100k to fully fund the original project estimate.

St. John's Episcopal Church Church Operating Income Statement

Oct 2024 vs 2023 Cash Basis in \$000's

		2023	
	Actual	Actual	Budget
	Oct	YTD	Full Yr
Income			
Pledge Income	\$25.6	\$347.5	\$415.0
Other Contributions	\$2.5	\$47.0	\$50.5
Investment Draws	\$21.5	\$51.5	\$63.6
Other Income	\$2.3	\$41.3	\$20.7
Income to Transfer	\$2.1	\$2.1	\$0.0
Jubilee	\$8.5	\$20.4	\$23.9
Total Income	\$62.5	\$509.9	\$573.7
Expenses			4
Clergy	\$19.3	\$199.2	\$247.0
Lay Staff	\$8.2	\$81.6	\$116.5
Vestry/Finance/Comm	\$7.1	\$27.7	\$27.6
Utilities	\$5.5	\$42.1	\$39.2
Building Repairs & Supplies	\$6.9	\$33.3	\$33.6
Other Property	\$2.6	\$24.7	\$28.9
Worship/Ed/Community	\$3.0	\$31.2	\$17.2
Outreach	\$5.5	\$55.0	\$64.6
Jubilee	\$1.9	\$26.0	\$34.2
Total Expenses	\$60.1	\$520.9	\$608.7
Net Total	\$2.4	(\$11.0)	(\$35.0)

WARMING HEARTS BY WARMING FEET!



Be A Sock Santa

One of the many reasons to love the Christmas season is the decorations. Millions of people around the world will hang stockings for Santa in the weeks to come. Our decorations are symbols of this season and yet, many of our neighbors lack the real thing.

One of the most requested items from our unsheltered friends are socks. I don't know about you, but every morning I put on a pair of fresh clean socks without ever thinking twice. We have an opportunity to warm the hearts of those in greatest need with the simple gift of a pair of dry, clean socks.

The Community Breakfast takes place on the 21st of December and having served over 100 people in November, we would love to gift them with some socks to stay warm for the holiday season and beyond. Please help us by bringing some socks to church, drop them off in the basket in the atrium, and we will deliver them at breakfast. Any size, any color, will do! Thank you for helping us love our neighbors!

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Help us decorate the church for the Christmas Season. To donate a poinsettia in thanksgiving for or in memory of a loved one, please email the church office at office@stjohns-lancaster.org or fill out a form in the pews and place in the offertory plates. Requests must be made by December 16. Donations can be made our to St. John's with "Christmas Flowers" in the memo line!

Please include:

- your name
- the name of your loved one
- in memory of or in thanksgiving for your loved one

THE GIFT OF HOSPITALITY AND WELCOME

We are looking to fill our coffee hour rotation for the winter and would love to see some new faces in the kitchen, as well as our usual favorites! You can choose to do one or both on any given Sunday. Please click on the Sign up Genius to see availability and details. If you have any questions feel free to contact Karen DiPace at karen.dipace@gmail.com. Thank you!!!

Click here to sign up:

Coffee Hour!



CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Calling all Sunday School and Youth group members! This year's pageant will take place on Christmas Eve at the 3:30 p.m. Family Service. We will have rehearsals on Sundays during the Sunday school hour. Please let Sue Dodge know if you are able to participate this year. We'll need narrators, wise people, shepherds, animals, Mary & Joseph, and angels!



CHRISTMAS AT ST. JOHN'S!



GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGE

It's December and so a focus on "gift giving". What if we thought and acted on our larger family and what we "really" need. Friendship, peace, caring - imagine if someone had not "loaned" their stable to Mary and Joseph. Imagine that someone brought them food, blankets, etc., allowing them to be as comfortable as possible in a stable. Remember the joy you feel when you share, when you gift someone else and so consider and act on what you can do for any of our brothers and sisters this Christmas season and beyond.

GPC Challenge for December 1st

"Maybe Christmas, the Grinch thought, doesn't come from a store." Dr. Seuss Please remember our Food Bank and bring something to gift our larger family. More food is wasted in the USA than any other country. Don't forget to check your closets for shoes wanting to move on or a pair of socks for gifting at Community Breakfast.

GPC Challenge for December 8th - World Choral Day

Nothing can unify the world like music can. Think of the smiles and memories you experience when you hear a song sung or played. Music breaks barriers between cultures and differences. Give thanks to those whose musical talents are in our midst.

GPC Challenge for December 15th

December is a month of religious celebrations in addition to Christmas with Bodhi Day - Buddhism; Our Lady of Guadalupe Day and Las Posadas - Catholicism in Mexico; Hanukkah for Jewish community. Let us give thanks and kindness of those of varied beliefs as we are ALL God's children.

GPC Challenge for December 22nd

Let us come together in peace and thankfulness for the gift of the incredible community we share both at St. John's and in the Lancaster area, the friends we have made and the possibilities ahead. We are very blessed.

GPC Challenge for December 29th

Hm...a new year, new adventures, new possibilities to do what you can to be a carrier of love into our community. The smallest positive act can be important to a child of God whose name you may not even know. Make a resolution to take on one kindness to share....the smallest pledge could make a huge difference. Blessings to ALL Everywhere!



BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Marcia Meikrantz
- 2 Charles Wear
- 6 Lynn Hayford
- 7 Julia Hale
- 8 Charley Braught, Jr.
- 9 Gretchen Walden
- 12 Bradley Moyer
- 15 Shirley Parmer
- 16 Fred Honaman
- 17 Faith D'Urbano
- 18 Kendall Stonerook
- 19 Polly Ann Brown
- 19 Len Jackson
- 19 Randy Krueger
- 21 Ed Summers
- 24 Jenny Kintner
- 24 Steve Latshaw
- 25 Jim Crothers
- 25 David Rutledge
- 26 Rich Brenton
- 30 Adam Kilp
- 31 Ned Grove

ANNIVERSARIES

David & Amy Dissinger Steve & Karen Latshaw Tom & Christine Shevock

OUR FRIENDS AT HOME

Ellen Keller, Nancy Nemith, Ricky Smith, Joanna Sweeney, Al Kuser, Mary Sue Farmer, Ellen Sellers, Edith Kane, Merle Schnee, Carol Greenfield, Sandy Grove, Darlene Bentley, Peggy Zuke

SERVING IN THE MILITARY

Alex Kelly, Brooks Morgan, Brian Hobbins, Joshua Watkins, Kirby Kinderwater, Kyle Kinderwater, David Wolfe

CHURCH PRAYER LIST

Pat Pankey, Nancy Strasburg, Ella, Kevin, Judy Modene, Andrew Gilpin, Cheryl & Rhoda, Ted Griswold, Richard Anderson, Collin, Liz Kryder Reid, Eileen Waite, Andrew Wright, Debbie Carter, Ann Marie, Marshall, Dwayne, Sandy Patrone, Carol Sigelman, Peggy Castle, Chrissy



Watch over your children, O Lord, as their days increase; bless and guide them wherever they may be. Strengthen them when they stand; comfort them when discouraged or sorrowful; raise them up if they fall; and in their hearts, may your peace which passes understanding abide all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Birthdays & Anniversaries Coffee hour after each service 8:00am Holy Eucharist Rite I 9:15am Sunday School 10:15am Holy Eucharist Rite II 6:00pm World AIDS Day Service	2 12:00pm NA 4:30pm Trans Loving Community 6:00pm Ministries Council 7:00pm SLAA	3 1:30pm Martha's Ministry 1:2:00pm Hol 2:30pm Food Pantry 5:00pm Executive Committee 12:00pm NA 5:30pm Advent Event 6:00pm AA (AP) 6:00pm AA (AP) Rehearsal	4 12:00pm Holy Eucharist with Healing 12:00pm NA 2:00pm Men's Bible Study 6:00pm Advent Forum 7:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	5 9:00am Morning Prayer 9:00am Staff Meeting 10:00am Worship Committee 1:00pm AA 2:30pm Food Pantry 7:00pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	6 Rector's Day Off 12:00pm NA	7 9:00am - 2:00pm Makers Market 1:00pm AA
R Coffee hour after each service Makers Market 8:00am Holy Eucharist Rite I 9:15am Sunday School 10:15am Holy Eucharist Rite II	9 12:00pm NA 6:00pm Caring Ministry Meeting 7:00pm SLAA	10 1:30pm Martha's Ministry 2:30pm Food Pantry 4:00pm Finance Committee 6:00pm AA (AP)	11 12:00pm Holy Eucharist with Healing 12:00pm NA 2:00pm Men's Bible Study 6:00pm Advent Forum 7:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	12 9:00am Morning Prayer 9:00am Staff Meeting 1:00pm AA 2:30pm Food Pantry 7:00pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	13 Rector's Day Off 12:00pm NA	14 10:00sm Voyager's Meeting 12:30pm Citizen's Climate Lobby Group 1:00pm AA
15 Coffee hour after each service 8:00am Holy Eucharist Rite I 9:15am Sunday School 10:15am Holy Eucharist Rite II 12:00pm Vestry Meeting	16 12:00pm NA 7:00pm SLAA	17 1:30pm Martha's Ministry 2:30pm Food Pantry 6:00pm AA (AP)	18 12:00pm Holy Eucharist with Healing 12:00pm NA 2:00pm Men's Bible Study 6:00pm Advent Forum 7:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	19 9:00am Morning Prayer 9:00am Staff Meeting 1:00pm AA 2:30pm Food Pantry 7:00pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	20 Rector's Day Off 12:00pm NA	21 9:00am Community Breakfast (First Reformed) 1:00pm AA
22 Coffee hour after each service 8:00am Holy Eucharist Rite I 9:15am Sunday School 10:15am Holy Eucharist Rite II	23 12:00pm NA 5:00pm Stewardship Committee Meeting 7:00pm SLAA	24 Christmas Eve! Christmas Eve! 2:30pm Food Pantry 3:30pm Christmas Eve: Family Service 6:00pm AA (AP) 9:30pm Christmas Eve: Candlelft Service	25 Christmas Day! 12:00pm NA 2:00pm Men's Bible Study	26 9:00am Morning Prayer 9:00am Staff Meeting 1:00pm AA 2:30pm Food Pantry 7:00pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	27 Rector's Day Off 12:00pm NA	28 1:00pm AA
29 Coffee hour after each service St. John's Day! 8:00am Lessons & Carols with Holy Eucharist Rite I 9:15am Sunday School 10:15am Lessons and Carols with Holy Eucharist. Rite II	30 12:00pm NA 7:00pm SLAA	31 1:30pm Martha's Ministry 2:30pm Food Pantry 6:00pm AA (AP)	1 12:00pm Holy Eucharist with Healing 12:00pm NA 7:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	2 9:00am Staff Meeting 10:00am Worship Committee 1:00pm AA 2:30pm Food Pantry 7:00pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	3 Rector's Day Off 12:00pm NA	4 1:00pm AA