



The Midweek

Wednesday, December 13, 2017

From the desk of our Pastors . . .

On Tuesday evening, I was blessed to have dinner with my friend Bill Salvin. If that name rings a bell it is because we have been praying for him for more than a year. Bill just returned to the United States after having spent a year on active duty in Afghanistan and this is the first time I have seen him since he returned at the end of October.

As you can imagine, he had a lot of stories. Some were funny, some sad, and a few were downright scary like when a car bomb that was 2-1/2 times bigger than the Oklahoma City bomb went off outside the gate of the building he was working in. The best part of the evening was when we prayed together to give God glory for bringing him home safely.

The major theme behind his time in country was that he recognized just how blessed he was every day that God kept him safe. As Bill put it, "It became clear very fast that I was not in control. As an officer I thought I was in some way in charge of what was happening. I quickly had to let go and place my trust in God because it was only through Him that I was coming home. It was my Father that I leaned on to get through".

Matthew 18:3 says, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Bill had the experience

of war to teach him that lesson of becoming childlike again. We need to learn that lesson also. No matter how big or how small our fears, needs, and troubles may be, God is bigger than all of them and will be there to protect us during the ups and downs of life. We make it through every day thanks to the Lord's constant presence in our lives. As we head into this season of Christmas, let us give thanks to God for the best gift of all. The gift of Jesus and His place in our lives.

And in all ways, at all times and in all places, to God be the glory forever and ever.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pastor Henry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Worship Help Needed for Christmas Eve Services.

Sign up sheets on Foyer Table



From the desk of our Conference Director.....

No Room in the (Church)

Many months ago, my son, who is 20, decided to try to go back to church. Like many young adults, he wrestles with the supernatural aspects of Jesus, although he loves the teachings, and loves the idea of the possibility of community in the church. He has started several conversations with our family when he is home, and I enjoy especially watching our daughter share her faith with him. On that particular Sunday back in the spring, he attended one of the churches which I had previously served. Upon entering the foyer, one member greeted him with these words: “What are you doing here? You do NOT belong here anymore.” Sadly, that “greeting” kept Eli from returning to church until several weeks ago. As my daughter told him: “You may be giving up on God, but God will not give up on you,” I felt grateful for the amazing prevenient grace of God who continues to reach out to us, encouraging us to accept and return that love.

Advent reminds us of the lengths to which God will go to express divine love to us. It also raises our awareness of the ways some aspects of the Christmas story continue to repeat themselves in our world today, i.e. threats from foreign powers, the need to count people, oppression in many forms, etc. Preparing my heart for the birth of Jesus anew, I heard this phrase spoken to my son in a new light: “There is no room for you in the inn.” How many ways do we communicate to people that they do not belong or that there is no room for them in our churches? Sometimes, we judge how young people dress—they wear their pants too low or show too much cleavage or wear “pajamas.” Other times, when they want to offer their gifts, we tell them: “That’s not how we do things here,” or we make them endure a byzantine approval process. Maybe we express the sentiment in terms of money: the older people or longer-term members pay for the church to survive whereas young people cannot give enough. Or we say we want young people but we fight any change necessary to serve them, or we simply “tolerate” their presence. People, both young and old, can detect inauthentic welcomes—ones which say, “You are welcome here as long as you think, dress, speak, and act like us.” Once treated in such a manner, few people will give us a second chance.

Yet, the hope of Christmas shows up in those who, like Mary, say “YES!” to the inconvenience of new life; in those who would rather celebrate new life in a stable than have their neat and tidy inns. We do not play the role of helpless or innocent by-stander in this story. Instead, we have the opportunity to make room in our hearts, in our lives, in our relationships, in our

churches, for the presence of youth and young adults, who will make your life messier, but so much fuller of joy. Will we be the inn-keeper, insisting that there is no room, or will we be Mary who makes room no matter what the cost?

Our Minister in Residence of the Young People's Ministry Network, Rev. Megan Shitama Weston, recently sent me some information and ideas she had received at the National Youth Workers Convention. She pointed to a book put out by the Fuller Youth Institute, called, *Growing Young*. The book identifies six practices that help churches retain young adults. Megan would like to bring a speaker here to help us learn some of these practices. Those practices are:

1. They exhibit keychain leadership (willing to "share keys to the church").
2. They emphasize ministry with young people.
3. They take Jesus' message seriously.
4. They fuel a warm community.
5. They prioritize young people and families everywhere.
6. They are good neighbors to their communities.

Which of these steps do you think your church could take? How might God be calling you this season to open wide the doors of the “inn” and shout: “Welcome, Jesus! Welcome, all!” throughout your whole neighborhood? Where in your community do people feel overlooked? In what ways do people in your community feel pushed out to the margin, the stables and mangers? How are you living our mission of Cultivating [your community] through our CALL—Connecting (with the community), Acting (to demonstrate God's prevenient love), Leading (people to the stable to meet Jesus), and Loving (growing in grace)? May the babe of Bethlehem make us uncomfortable enough to change our ways!

Blessings on the journey,

Rev. Dr. Vicki Gordy-Stith

Director of Connectional Ministries



The Milford Community Band

Southern Delaware's Premier Music Organization

2017 Christmas Concert Schedule

3:00 PM, Sunday, December 10

Milford Senior Center, 111 Park Ave., Milford, DE

7:00 PM, Saturday, December 16

Goshen U.M. Church, 103 Mulberry St., Milton, DE

3:00 PM, Sunday, December 17

First Baptist Church, 301 Walker Road, Dover, DE

FREE ADMITTANCE, DONATIONS WELCOME



This organization is supported, in part, by a grant from the Delaware Division of the Arts, a state agency, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts. The Division promotes Delaware arts events on www.DelawareScene.com.



302-398-9394

www.milfordcommunityband.org



Benvenuto!

A tasting of Christmas Brunch

Sunday, December 17th
9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Sunset Cove
3 Haven Lake Avenue | Milford, DE 19963
(302) 422-1086

Everyone is invited to this special Brunch Tasting that will benefit the Milford Police Department's Christmas Toy Drive. The Brunch is a "Free Blessing to You." Please help us be a blessing to the children & youth of the Milford Area by bringing a wrapped and tagged (gender & age) Christmas Gift for a girl/boy valued at \$20 plus; or a \$20 plus gift card to Wal-Mart or Toys-R-Us.

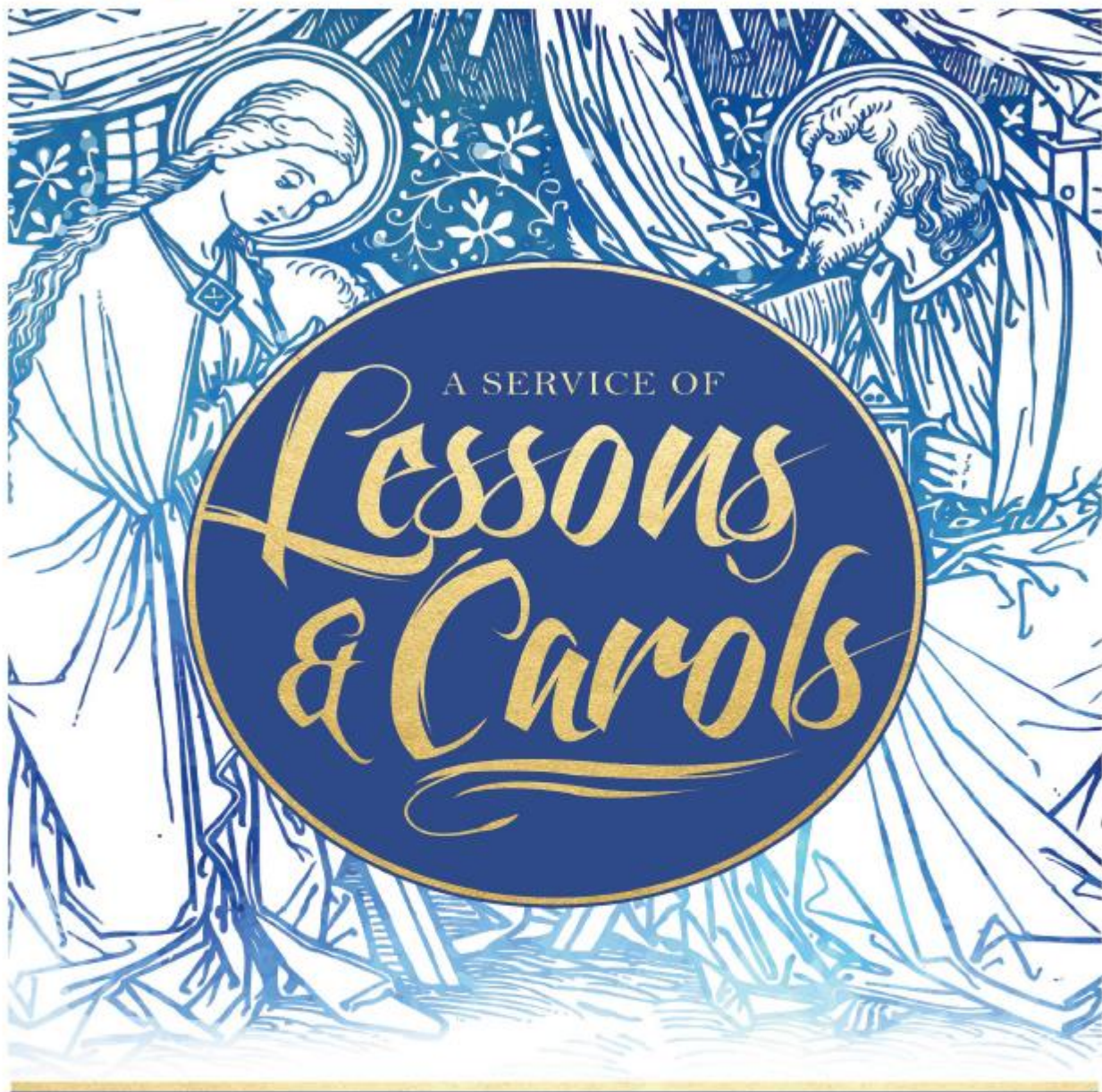
Join us in celebrating the true Spirit of Christmas with fabulous foods, fellowship, live music, and the special gift of loving our neighbors the way our Savior Loves us.

Please, call us with the number of guests that will be attending in your party.

Buon Natale!!!



AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



FEATURING THE FESTIVAL CHOIR AND STRINGS
SUNDAY DECEMBER 24TH AT 10:30AM

20 N. CHURCH STREET | CHILDCARE WILL BE PROVIDED
PLEASE JOIN US | FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

At the first Christmas, angels proclaimed good news of great joy for all people. We invite you to join us at Avenue United Methodist Church to celebrate that joy with others in the community.

Sunday, December 24th

- 9:30 AM Children's Christmas Pageant
- 10:00 AM Refreshments and Fellowship
- 10:30 AM Festival of Lessons and Carols
- 3:00 PM Family Service with a Children's Message, Organ and Carols
- 5:00 PM Family Service with a Children's Message, Organ and Carols
- 7:00 PM Contemporary Service with Praise and Worship Team
- 9:00 PM Contemporary Service with Praise and Worship Team
- 11:00 PM Traditional Service with Choir, Organ and Carols

All evening services will include candlelight and Holy Communion. Child Care provided for the 3:00, 5:00 and 7:00 Services.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOSPITAL VISITS: Please help the pastors by calling the church office at (302) 422-8111 when someone from the church is hospitalized.

ELECTRONIC GIVING is being offered at Avenue Church. An *Information Sheet with Authorization Agreement* is available on the table in Fellowship Foyer. Simply fill out the authorization agreement and return it to the church office.

ALTAR FLOWERS: If you want to reserve a Sunday please call the church office then call Milford Plant, Flower and Garden Shop at (302) 422-4961. Flowers are placed in the altar vases up by the cross.

PRAYER CONCERNS PAST WEEK: The family of Marian Dickerson who passed away last Sunday, The family of Marion Jarrell who passed away on Saturday, The family of Albert Wright, Ray Wright's brother, who passed away on Friday, The family of Carl "Rudy" List, Marti Brereton's nephew, who passed away last week, The family of Patsy Sullivan, Sharon Starling's mother, who passed away last week, The family of Wendell Combs who passed away this week, Joe and Grace Irish, Diane, Dave, Jack Simon, Holly, Brenda Beissel, Linda Brittingham, Lillie Brittingham, Leon Tschantre, Jean Stevenson, David Knowles, Julia, Neil Parker, Alan Parker, Janice Abbott, Collen Dunham, Marilyn Bowe, April McIntyre, Bill & Jill Gustin, Kirsten Pearce, Bonnie Shea, The people of Puerto Rico still without electricity and dealing food shortages, Arthur, Beth Judy, Bobby Walls, Dot Sophos, The family and friends of John Dougherty, Sr. on the anniversary of his death, The Hannah family, Craig, Beverly Auckland, Chuck & Sandy Culotta's daughter-in-law, Babbie, Chuck & Sandy Culotta's daughter-in-law, Kalle, Holly, Diane Gehlert's daughter, Bill Gaskill, Ryan Hurka and All of our Code Purple guests and volunteers.

Recently hospitalized: Faye Schnell, David Knowles, Brenda Beissel and Jack Simon.

Rejoice with: Us, as we give thanks for the ultimate gift of Jesus and Bill McComb.

PRAYER CONCERNS CURRENT WEEK: The family of Neil Parker, Alan & Beth Parker's brother, who passed away on Saturday, The family and friends of April McIntyre who passed away on November 30, Joe and Grace Irish, Tom Price, Ron Payne, Elizabeth Frampton, David Sockrider, Holly, Charles, Brian Reph, Brenda Beissel, Linda Brittingham, Lillie Brittingham, Jean Stevenson, Julia, Alan Parker, Janice Abbott, Collen Dunham, Marilyn Bowe, Bill & Jill Gustin, Kirsten Pearce, Bonnie Shea, Arthur, Beth Judy, Bobby Walls, Dot Sophos, Andrew and Sylvia Tuttle, Matt Lewis's mom, Mary Jane Tester, The Hannah family, Diana Hopkins, Craig, Beverly Auckland, Chuck & Sandy Culotta's daughter-in-law, Babbie, Chuck & Sandy Culotta's daughter-in-law, Kalle, Ryan Hurka, All of our Code Purple guests and volunteers

Recently hospitalized: Howard Sipple, David Sockrider and Brenda Beissel.

Rejoice with: Us, as we give thanks for the ultimate gift of Jesus, For the beauty of snow, For blessings in unexpected places and for cell phones that ring at the right time.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Russ and Harriett Davies who will celebrate their **57th** anniversary on **December 24th**.

WEEKLY MUSIC REHEARSALS:

♪Handbells

Mondays, at 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary

♪MomentUM Praise Team

Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m., Sanctuary

♪Mispillion Children's Chorus

Tuesdays at 6:15 p.m., Music Room

♪Praise Team

Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary

♪Sanctuary Choir

Wednesdays, at 3:00 p.m., Music Room

♪AveNotes

Wednesdays, at 6:00 p.m., Sanctuary

Do you like to sing? Do you play an instrument? If you are interested in using your musical gifts here at Avenue Church please contact Kevin Chamberlain, kbchamberlain@avenueumc.com or (302) 236-1276.

UPCOMING

A WORD ABOUT THE NEW BLUE PARAMENTS

Why blue?

These beautiful paraments are blue, a color increasingly used for Advent in Protestant churches. Blue is the color of royalty to welcome the coming of a King. Blue symbolizes the night sky where the star appeared to announce the birth of Jesus. Blue can also signify the waters of Genesis 1 and the beginning of a new creation.

What do the symbols represent?

The symbol embroidered in the center of the altar parament is the Chi Rho (X). It is composed of the first two letters in the Greek word Christos. The Greek letters, Alpha (first) and Omega (last) which flank the Chi Rho, symbolize Jesus as the Christ who has come and will come again, as well as the continuity of God's presence in human history.



(Adapted from The meaning of Church Colors by Dennis Bratcher)
excellent breakfast and fellowship.

ADVENT WREATH

Lighting the Advent Wreath in worship is a cherished tradition at Avenue. We are recruiting 16 families to light the wreath this year. We use 'families' as a broad sense to include single

parents, step families, multiple generations, and even traditional families. We are looking for volunteers - two families for Christmas Eve (10:30 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.).

To volunteer to light the Advent Wreath, please contact Pastor Wendy Owen at wendyowen@avenueumc.com. You will receive back from Pastor Wendy, simple instructions for lighting, as well as the reading that accompanies the lighting. Thank you.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM will be practicing on **December 23rd** from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Pizza will be served for kids after practice.

SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES/MINISTRIES

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP: The Alzheimer's Caregiver's Support Group will meet the **2nd Monday of each month**. The next meeting will be **January 8th** at 4:00 p.m. in the Grier Room.

TUESDAY MORNING SISTERS' BIBLE STUDY: On **December 19th** we will finish our Advent study: Because of Bethlehem by Max Lucado. Please join us at any time. Contact Ginny Van Tine (302) 422-4282, Brenda Powers (302) 422-8821 or leave a message in the church office if you would like to join us. We will meet in the Grier Room at 10:00 a.m.

WEDNESDAY DISCIPLE CLASS meets at 7:00 p.m. in the Holzmueller Room. On **December 20th** we will continue exploring the Bible. To register, please call Josh Willey at (302) 422-8952.

SUNSHINE ADULT BIBLE STUDY: The Sunshine Bible Class will be studying "The Early Church Proclaims Faith in Christ" for the month of December. December 17th, "Faith to Persevere," based on Acts 14:8-11, 19-23; December 24th, "Faithful Seekers of the King," based on Matthew 2:1-12; and December 31st, "Faith to Unite" based on Ephesians 4:1-16. The Sunshine Class meets each Sunday at 9:30 a.m. in the Grier Room and all adults are welcome.

EXPLORING FAITH BOOK CLUB meets on the third Sunday of the Month at 12:15 p.m. in the Grier Room. Our next meeting is **December 17th**. We shall continue our study of the "Screwtape Letters" by C.S. Lewis by looking at letters 10 through 18.

VBS: Vacation Bible School is looking for a Kitchen Coordinator. Please be praying about this role. If you are interested please contact Sarah Pasmore. We would also like to thank Carol Evans who has been our VBS Kitchen Coordinator for many years. We appreciate all that she has done to make VBS such a success for our children.

SAFE SANCTUARY TRAINING: Interested in helping out with our children's ministries? Already volunteering with our youth? Please plan to attend ONE of the following trainings for Safe Sanctuary: **Wednesday, January 17th** from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. or **Thursday, January 25th** from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Both meetings will be held in the Grier Room. Anyone is invited to attend (even if you aren't sure you want to volunteer). If you have questions or want to know more – please contact Sarah Pasmore at (302) 841-3143.

OUTREACH

MILFORD COMMUNITY PANTRY: We will not be collecting in December so we can focus on collecting for the Chrismon Tree.

AVENUE PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION FOR THE 2017-18 SCHOOL YEAR. Registration is ongoing for a limited number of spots for the 2017-18 school year, which is the preschool's **50th** year providing early education services in the community. To be eligible, a child must be at least 36-months old on or before August 31st, unless entering our new "Young Beginners" program--see next section for those details. Registration must be done in person. Contact the Preschool Director, Paula Yeich, and at (302) 422-8775 for information or send an email to: office@avenuepreschool.org. Be sure to visit our Facebook page and website at: www.avenuepreschool.org.

AVENUE PRESCHOOL NEW-OFFER: Children who will turn 3 after August 31st but before December 31, 2017 are now able to register for our beginners program. They will be in our 2 day program that is on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Children must be potty-trained before the first day of school. Children in our preschool program are actively involved in a curriculum that stresses the social, emotional, physical and academic aspects of their development. For further information please see the contact details in the Avenue Preschool section above.

PARADE OF TREES - AVENUE PRESCHOOL: Avenue Preschool is sponsoring a **“Purr-Fect” Haven Rescue tree** in the Milford Grotto Pizza restaurant's Parade of Trees to benefit Purr-Fect Haven Rescue. The event runs now until January 1, 2018. The tree that collects the most charitable contributions will win an additional \$250 for their charity at the end of the event. Check out the beautiful tree Avenue Preschool decorated

CHRISMON TREE: It's Chrismon Tree time again! We have made a few changes this year. ALL gifts are to be **new and unwrapped, or in gift bags**. This will make the sorting and distribution process more efficient. Please remember when you take a tag that item is one of 2 to 3 gifts for the person, so if you get a tag with socks that is not all the child receives. Our “Christ-centered tree” is decorated with need tag/ornaments in the Sanctuary. We will receive items anytime **December 3rd—16th**. Items may be brought in early. On December 16th at 9:00 a.m. we will be setting up tables in Fellowship Hall and marked with a family number. Items that have been returned to the church will be sorted and placed in bags for the families. **All tags/gifts must be returned by Sunday, December 17th**. We will be sorting/bagging items received this day after the 11:00 service. On **December 18th** all items will be given to families. If you would like to help with any of these activities, please contact Teresa Jarrell (422-1074) or Karen Williams (424-1294). Thanks for all your help.

COMMUNITY

PARADE OF TREES - CODE PURPLE: Downes Insurance Associates, INC. is sponsoring a tree in the Milford Grotto Pizza restaurant's Parade of Trees to benefit Code Purple Sussex County. The event runs now until January 1, 2018. The tree that collects the most charitable contributions will win an additional \$250 for their charity at the end of the event. Check out the beautiful tree Downes Insurance Associates, INC decorated on our behalf last night, and let's see if we can win that additional \$250!

Thank you to Gary Downes and his team for all their support of Code Purple and thank you to Grotto Pizza for this fun event!

LAST WEEK AT AVENUE

Attendance:	2016	2017
8:00	81	31
9:30	198	132
Sunday School	108	69
11:00	89	70
FUSION	93	45
Total	569	347

CALENDAR

SUNDAY 12/17

8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
 9:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship
 9:30 a.m. Sunday School
 10:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Music Room
 11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
 12:15 p.m. Exploring Faith Book Club, Grier Room
 4:30 p.m. Confirmation Class, Grier Room
 6:00 p.m. FUSION, Wesley Room
 6:30 p.m. DD Pilgrimage Meeting, Grier Room

MONDAY 12/18

11:00 a.m. AA, Wesley Room
 6:30 p.m. Wolf Den Meeting, Holzmuehler Room
 7:00 p.m. 1st State Harmonizers,
 Fellowship Hall
 7:00 p.m. AA, Room 206
 7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts, Wesley Room

TUESDAY 12/19

10:00 a.m. Sisters Bible Study, Grier Room
 6:30 p.m. Pack Meeting, Fellowship Hall
 7:00 p.m. Central Delaware Chess Club,
 Room 206
 7:00 p.m. Praise Team Rehearsal,
 Sanctuary

WEDNESDAY 12/20

3:00 p.m. Sanctuary Choir, Music Room
 5:00 p.m. Women's Emmaus Reunion,
 Room 202
 6:00 p.m. AveNotes, Sanctuary
 6:00 p.m. Civil Air Patrol, Grier Room
 6:30 p.m. Arrow of Light Den, Wesley Room
 7:00 p.m. Disciple 1 Class,
 Holzmuehler Room

THURSDAY 12/21

8:30 a.m. Men's Reunion Group,
 11:00 a.m. AA, Wesley Room
 2:30 p.m. Women's Emmaus Reunion,
 Room 202
 6:30 p.m. Bear Den Meeting, Wesley Room

FRIDAY 12/22

11:00 a.m. Wrap Around DE, Holzmuehler Room
 8:00 p.m. AA, Wesley Room

SATURDAY 12/23

10:00 a.m. Sunday School Christmas Program
 Practice, Fellowship Hall
 7:00 p.m. AA, Wesley Room

SUNDAY 12/24~ Christmas Eve

9:30 a.m. Sunday School Christmas Program,
 Fellowship Hall
 10:30 a.m. Lessons & Carols
 3:00 p.m. Traditional Worship
 5:00 p.m. Traditional Worship
 7:00 p.m. Contemporary Worship
 9:00 p.m. Contemporary Worship
 11:00 p.m. Traditional Worship