



Community of Christ Lutheran Church
Third Sunday of Advent
December 15, 2024, 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.
Pastor Stephen C. Bond



THE GATHERING

Welcome

Pastor Steve Bond

Musical Prelude

“Some Children See him” by Alfred Burt

Eric Dickey

10:00 a.m.

Sarah Magoun, Violin and
Eric Dickey, Piano

WE REMEMBER OUR BAPTISM

“Confession and Forgiveness”

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the living God, who has kept the promises to our ancestors, who meets us here in our expectations, and who pulls us into the future for good. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

O God, our truest hope, **Have mercy on us. We confess the crookedness inside our hearts that leads us astray. We are fearful when the world is shaken, and we are weighed down with the worries of this life. We are complacent in the face of others’ needs. Afraid of change, we stay stuck in old ruts of sin when you tell us you are doing something new. In your compassion, forgive us. Turn us back to you. Free us from our fear. Awaken us from apathy. And draw us into your promised future, made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen**

Beloved, God forgives us and enables us to begin again. God’s messengers tell us we do not have to be afraid. In the name of Jesus Christ, who is with us and for whom we wait, your sins are forgiven, and we are free to follow in his way.

Amen.

Gathering Hymn

“Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn”

ELW 242

Greeting

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **C** **And also with you.**

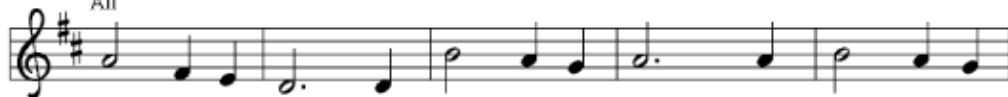
Refrain

Assisting minister

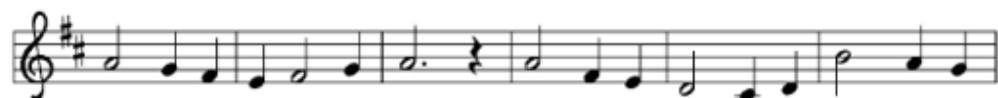


This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.

All



1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless-ing and glo - ry are his.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.



2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless-ing and hon - or and glo - ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain
has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **P Amen.**

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

(8 a.m. Wayne & Becky King, 10 a.m. Chad, Eryn, Evan, & Cole Ackerman)

Lead by Vicar Natalie Downs 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

Week Three – Love

by Lisa Alleman

Light one can - dle of love in the dark-ness. light one can - dle for me...

Love that will dry - all-the tears from our eyes. - Love to em-power us and lift us high...

Love that will feed all the world's hun-gry souls... Light one can - dle of love.

Childrens Sermon

Anthem 10:00 a.m.

Sarah Magoun, Violin
and Eric Dickey, Piano

THE READINGS

The First Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-20

¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵The LORD has taken away the judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷The LORD, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing

¹⁸as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.

And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.

²⁰At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the LORD.

L The Word of the Lord C Thanks be to God!

Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-6 (Spoken Responsively)

²Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid,
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might, and has become ¹ my
salvation.

³**With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.**

⁴And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on God's name;
make known the deeds of the LORD among the nations; proclaim that this name

¹ is exalted.

⁵**Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously;
let this be known in all the earth.**

⁶Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

The Second Reading: Philippians 4:4-7

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

L The Word of the Lord C Thanks be to God!



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

P The Gospel of the Lord! **C Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon

"With Whatever's At Hand"

Pastor Stephen Bond

Hymn

“Prepare the Royal Highway”

ELW 264

Nicene Creed

C We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him, all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven; was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day, he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

WE DEDICATE OUR HEARTS IN PRAYER

P As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God’s presence.

A brief silence.

AM God who reforms, fill your church with courage to do your will. Empower your people in taking risks that bear fruit. Raise up leaders who will proclaim the good news. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

AM God who creates, you hold in balance diverse ecosystems. Encourage efforts to protect wild lands from devastation. Care for animals and people in the path of destructive fires, storms, and other disasters. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

AM God who leads, this world cries out for true justice. Guide legislatures, judges, and lawyers in actions steeped in love and restoration. Increase the desire to advocate for all who are confronted with discrimination and oppression based on race, gender, sexuality, class, or age. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

AM God who embraces, help us notice the places where your people are hurting or sick. *We pray especially for;* **Tom Jennings, Sue & Jim Enk, Christal & Chad Pritchard, Frank O’Konski, Larry Geer, Luke Holtz, Susie Donnal, Ron Hetherwick, Martina Benton, Janet Dellinger, Jake Cope, Debbie Carman, Alexa Ayres, Cory Kaczor, Eric Lewis, Phillip Hart, Harold Shoupe Jr., Jacki Sutter, Jacquelyn Krohn, Eli & Alexis Bibler and baby to be, Jeff Baden, Tordis Brosten, Natalie Ditillo, Lauren Bradford....** and all that we remember in silence. Provide comfort and strength, and nurture sustained wholeness for the future. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

AM God who abides, you dwell among the people of this congregation. Deepen our relationships with one another and make us aware of the diverse talents and gifts present here. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

AM God who consoles, we thank you for the time we have had with loved ones who have died. Comfort us with the promise of everlasting life in you. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

P Savior of the nations, come and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

THE MEAL

All Christians are welcome to commune at our Altar. You do not have to be a member of this congregation to receive Communion. Grape juice is available in the

inner ring of glasses for those desiring it. A “gluten-free” host option is available upon request as well.

Sharing of the Peace

P The Peace of the Lord be with you all! **C** **And also with you!**

Share an expression of peace with your neighbor, please.

The congregation continues to stand during Tithes and Offerings if you are able.

Our Tithes and Offerings *Bring your gifts to the Altar or you may offer gifts in the tray located at the rear of the sanctuary. Thank you.*

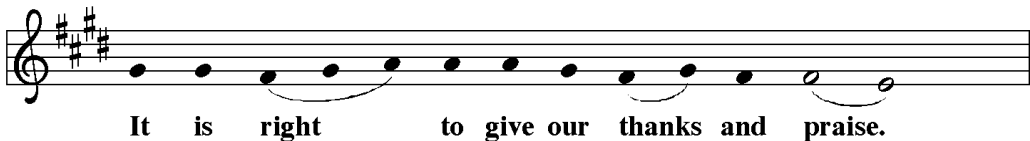
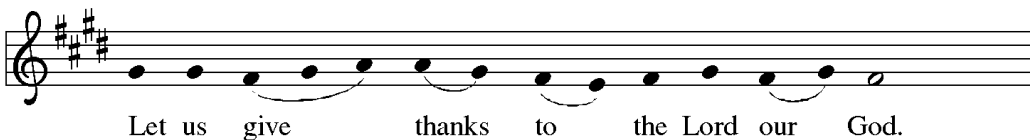
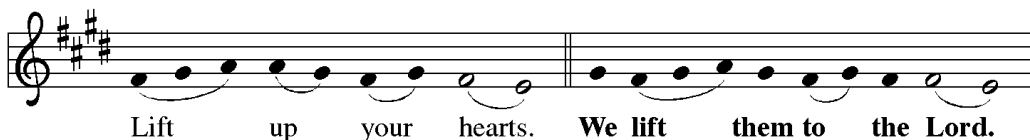
Please be seated for the 10:00 a.m. offering

Sarah Magoun, Violin, and Eric Dickey, Piano

Offering Prayer

AM Lord Jesus, our portion and our cup, you offered yourself in love for the world, and in this meal, you nourish us with your life. Fill us with your abundance, that we may feed the hungry and welcome the stranger, trusting in your name. **Amen.**

The Great Thanksgiving



***The Eucharistic Prayer Continues.....**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
 Ho - san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
 in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.

The Words of Institution

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Jesus said, Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Jesus said, Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray... **C** **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

Communion Hymns

“Lamb of God”



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

10:00 a.m.

Sarah Magoun, Violin and
Eric Dickey, Piano

Hymn

“What Feast of Love”
“One Bread, One Body”

ELW 487
ELW 496

Post Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

AM Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name. **Amen.**

THE SENDING

Milestones & Announcements:

The Blessing

P God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey, ✝ bless and keep you now and forever. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn

“Joy to the World”

ELW 267

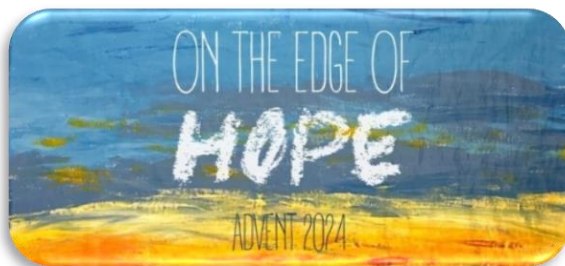
Dismissal

AM Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel. **Thanks be to God.**

AM And next week, **C Bring a friend!**

Postlude 10:00 a.m.

Sarah Magoun, Violin
and Eric Dickey, Piano



Making Jesus Known”

Welcome to Community of Christ! Our family welcomes you to the house of the Lord today! We ask God to bless His Holy Word and Sacrament today so that his people might receive strength for living out our days! If you are looking for a church home, we hope you will consider Community of Christ!

We WELCOME YOU to worship with us at one of our TWO worship services. Join us at 8:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. in person or on Facebook Live. We look forward to seeing you and as always **BRING A FRIEND!!!!**

**Altar Flowers are given by Cammie & Michael
Abraham to the Glory of God ♥**

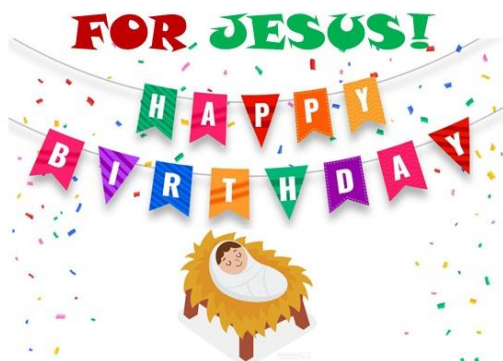
“More Than Wishful Thinking: An Exploration of Christian Hope” Advent Adult Sunday School Series: Hope is a funny word. Sometimes we use it with bold confidence in spite of impossible odds: “Even though he was wrongfully imprisoned, he held onto hope that he would be vindicated and set free.” Sometimes we use it as a polite way of expressing doubt, like when you say, “I hope it doesn’t rain today,” while the sky darkens with threatening clouds from the west. Emily Dickinson famously said that hope was “the thing with feathers that perches in the soul—and sings the tune without the words, and never stops at all…” And of course, as one hero in the Star Wars movies says about fighting against the Galactic Empire, “Rebellions are built on hope.” That’s a lot of range for one word to have to cover—and maybe it can be confusing for us as Christians to know what we are talking about when we say we are people of *hope*. This Advent season especially is one marked by both waiting and hope (which, fun fact, use the same word in Spanish!), as we hear the centuries-long hopes of prophets and exiles who waited and hoped for homecoming, for restoration, and for the arrival of the promised Anointed One (Messiah/Christ) of God. We also hear in these weeks the hope we have for God’s new creation when all things are made new. So, what does it mean for us to be people of hope, and how is it different from just “wishful thinking” or mere optimism? That’s what we want to explore in this December’s Adult Sunday School series, running on December 1, 8, 15, and 22 between services. On all of those dates except the 22nd, we’ll be in the fellowship hall, and on Dec. 22 we’ll move to the Council Room to allow the kids to have the larger space for the Birthday Party for Jesus! We *hope* you’ll join us around the table for good conversation and learning together this Advent in the Adult Class!

New Thursday Bible Study Series: “Things Seen and Unseen”

Starting this December, we’ll begin a new series in our Thursday Afternoon Bible Study, co-led between Pastor Steve and Vicar Natalie, exploring angels and other spiritual beings in the Bible, what we do (and don’t!) know about them, and what difference their existence makes in our lives. Have you ever been curious about what angels look like, or where some people get the idea of “guardian” angels from? Don’t know your “cherubim” from your “seraphim”? Wonder why the first words out of the angels’ mouths in the Bible are so often, “Do not be afraid!”? Join us on Thursdays beginning in December and running into the new year as we

explore Things Seen and Unseen: An Introduction to Angels in our Thursday Afternoon Bible Study, at 1:00 p.m. in the Council Room, starting Dec. 5 after our series on Galatians concludes! We'd love to have you around the table!

A BIRTHDAY PARTY



Sunday School “Birthday Party for Jesus” on Dec. 22 at 9:00 a.m.! While our Sunday School classes for kids have been meeting every Sunday throughout the fall, we’re doing something special on the Sunday before Christmas—our annual “Birthday Party for Jesus” event at 9:00 a.m. (between services) on Sunday, Dec. 22 in the fellowship hall! (Grown-ups, you’ll find the Adult Sunday School class

in the Council room on that day!) Join us and kids of all ages for songs, fun, food, and a chance to celebrate together as we say, “Happy birthday, Jesus!”



Advent Midweek Worship with Holden Evening Prayer

We call Jesus the “Prince of Peace,” and we sing that on the night of his birth “all is calm, all is bright.”

But quite often our lives are especially hectic and stressful in the weeks before Christmas, aren’t they?

From gift-buying and cookie baking to parties and concerts, from decorating our houses and family gatherings, we can feel flustered and frazzled during the “most wonderful time of the year” rather than at peace. So, we want to invite you to a weekly chance to hit the pause button on the craziness and be re-centered on the Good News of God’s coming to us in Christ, with our three Advent midweek services using Holden Evening Prayer.

On Dec. 18 at 7:00 p.m., join us for a beautiful and contemplative sung setting of Evening Prayer and reflections on the Word that will ground us in our hope for Jesus’ coming. If you’ve never experienced this setting for evening worship, you’ll definitely want to try it, and this is a fantastic event to invite friends and neighbors to, as well! Join us this Advent!



Blue Christmas Service Offers Comfort and Hope — Dec. 22 at 3:00 p.m. The holidays can be a difficult time for people, especially if they're dealing with grief and loss. Whether still working through a recent death, feeling renewed sadness over a long-time loss, or just struggling while others seem full of Christmas-time cheer, this can be a heavy season of

the year. So, we'll continue a tradition we've done for the last several years here at Community of Christ by hosting a Blue Christmas service—a time of worship that offers comfort for those who need it, particularly at this time of year, and that connects our faith in God-with-Us who came among us in Bethlehem with our lived experience of loss and grief. This year's service will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 22, and is open to any and all who would find it helpful. You are welcome to invite friends, relatives, neighbors, or community members who might need a moment this season for grief to be named and comfort to be given, here at Community of Christ.

A Cherished Tradition - The Annual Covenant Renewal: Community of Christ

From the very beginning, the founding pastor and leaders of our congregation established a tradition of annually affirming our commitment to the work God is doing through this community. All who gather in worship, whether in person or online, will have the opportunity to renew this covenant. More details will be shared during the Sunday morning services. We encourage you to reflect on this covenant and recommit to your participation in the life and ministry of Community of Christ.



Christmas Eve Services

Community of Christ will host three worship services on Christmas Eve: 4:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m., & 11:00 p.m. Each worship service will include Christmas carols, candlelight (and glow sticks for the kids), and Holy Communion. Invite a friend to worship with you this season!



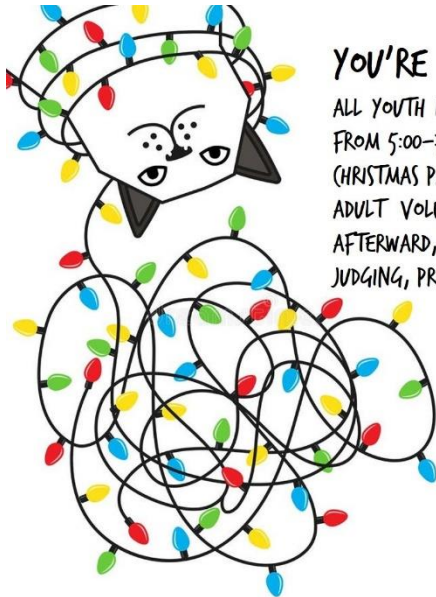
Salem Gifts for Children

They are due **TODAY, Sunday, December 15th, 2024**, please have them under the tree **no later than 11:30 a.m.** Ken and I will be transferring your gifts to Salem today! Thanks for helping to bless these children at Christmas! Shelly & Ken Hayes

Looking for a meaningful Christmas gift while supporting our church? We've got the perfect solution! Get your copies of *A Wondrous Night* and *Tiny Candle* at the kiosk. Chad will have books available **TODAY** in the fellowship hall. These heartwarming children's books, sharing the Christmas story, are written by Sandy Ackerman and illustrated by Todd Ackerman—mother and brother of Chad Ackerman. After covering costs, all proceeds will be donated to Community of Christ.

Prices:

- *A Wondrous Night** – \$14.95
- *Tiny Candle** – \$16.95



YOU'RE INVITED... TO A CHRISTMAS SCAVENGER HUNT!

ALL YOUTH IN 5TH-12TH GRADES ARE INVITED TO JOIN US SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15TH FROM 5:00-7:00 P.M. FOR A FUN YOUTH EVENT INCLUDING A SCAVENGER HUNT AND CHRISTMAS PARTY. WE WILL MEET AT HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AT 5 P.M. AND ADULT VOLUNTEERS WILL DRIVE GROUPS AROUND FOR THE SCAVENGER HUNT. AFTERWARD, WE WILL MEET BACK AT COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH FOR JUDGING, PRIZES, PIZZA, AND THE MAKING OF A GIANT ANDY SALAD!

What: Christmas Scavenger Hunt

Who: all youth in grades 5-12
friends are welcome!

When: Sunday, Dec. 15 5:00-7:00pm

Where: **start** at Hope United Methodist
(10610 Waterville St., Whitehouse)
end at Community of Christ Lutheran
(6517 Finzel Road, Whitehouse)

How do I sign up? Use this QR code to RSVP
by Friday, Dec. 13!



Fellowship invites you to join us for a **Toledo Walleye Hockey** game on January 5th, 2025 @ 5:15 p.m.! Tickets are just \$17 per person. (No online sign-up this time.) To reserve your spot, please sign up at the kiosk and submit your payment by December 22nd. Cash is the easiest option, but if you need alternatives, see Chad Ackerman. You can also drop the exact amount in a marked envelope with Michelle in the office. Don't miss out—sign up today!



Worship Services

Available on the net

at www.commofchrist.org

OR you can use your cell phone camera to access our website with our QR code!

**What's Happening
This Week?**



Confirmation Class at Zion Waterville
TODAY! Sunday, December 15, 12:30 p.m.
Youth Christmas Scavenger Hunt
TODAY! Sunday, December 15, 5:00 p.m.
LWR Quilt ministry
Tuesday, December 17, 10:00 a.m.
Holden Evening Prayer
Wednesday, December 18, 7:00 p.m.
Choir Practice
Wednesday, December 18, 7:45 p.m.
Pastor's Bible Study
Thursday, December 19, 1:00 p.m.
Blue Christmas Service
Sunday, December 22, 3:00 p.m.
Church Office Closed
December 24, 25
December 31 and January 1