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Index

Birthdays 7
 Bishop Park’s letter 15
 Book discussion 13
 Cat’s Meow churches 16
 Church family notes 18
 Clean up Day 18
 Community Nativity 18
 Editor’s Corner 19
 Endowment Committee 13
 Finance Committee 8
 Food pantry 17
 Health Care information 4
 Holly Fair 2010 9
 Hospice volunteering 6
 Mission tree 17
 Month of services 4,5,6,7
 Pastor’s Words 2,3
 Photo album 14
 Poinsettia orders 14
 Rethinking church funds 16
 St. Lucia Festival 4
 SERRV 14
 Tag sale news 8
 Thanksgiving dinner 12
 Trustee update 16

Our mission statement

We celebrate the presence
 of the Holy Spirit;
 being and making disciples of Christ
 by sharing God’s gifts
 through word and deed.

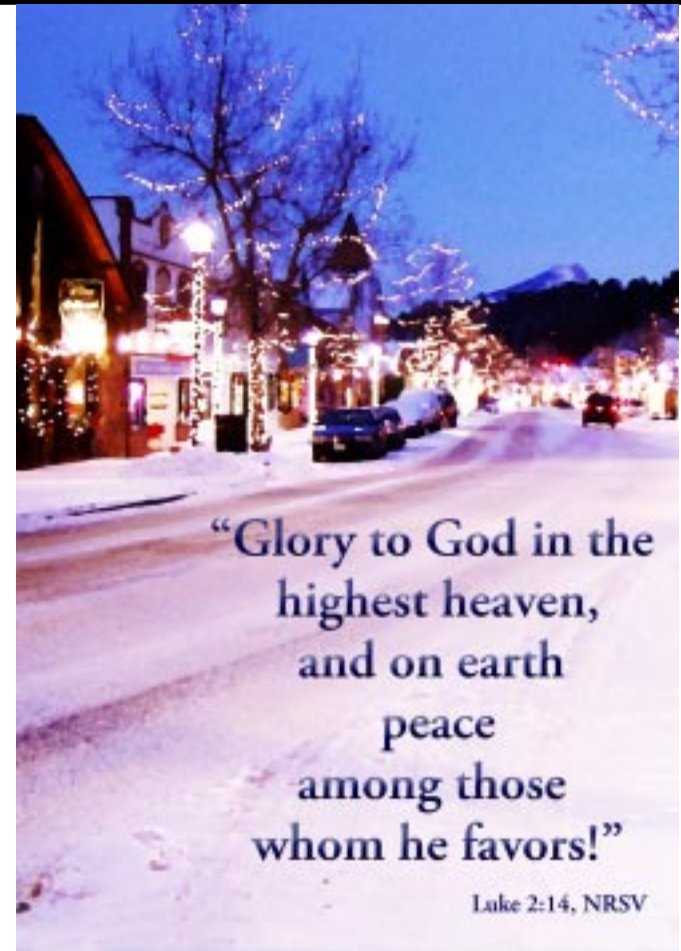
The Messenger
 THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 12 COMMERCE STREET
 CLINTON, CT 06413-2017
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

The Messenger

December 2010



The United Methodist Church, Clinton, CT
 Pastor M. Craig Fitzsimmons



“Glory to God in the
 highest heaven,
 and on earth
 peace
 among those
 whom he favors!”

Luke 2:14, NRSV



There is often a lot of confusion about what the season of Advent is all about. We all know it is a time of preparation, of getting ready. That seems to fit in nicely with our culture which banks on us shopping and spending so that the retailers can finish the year off with a profit. For many it is a time to prepare for the celebration of Jesus' birth – getting everything ready for a party in which we, not the birthday boy, get all the presents! And for many it is a time to sing the familiar Christmas carols.

But Advent has another focus which we sometimes lose and sometimes leads to bewilderment by those who worship. The season of Advent was the last liturgical season to come into being in the early church. Historical records of Advent date back to fourth-century Europe. It marks the beginning of the Christian year.

Nan Duerling gives us a concise history of Advent which I would like to share with you:

The word from which we get the English word *advent* means “coming” or “arrival.” Beginning four Sundays prior to Christmas, Advent is a time of preparation for the arrival of the Christ Child, which we celebrate on December 25. Advent and Christmas, a season of twelve days, are two different seasons. While many churches sing Christmas carols before Christmas Day, the hymns for Advent are not Christmas carols. Hymns of preparation often express our yearning for the coming of the Promised One. “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” expresses the tone of the Advent season.

Each season of the church has a significant color, and Advent is no exception. In years past, there was an emphasis on penitence during Advent. Most churches therefore used the color purple, which is the dominant color of Lent. Purple is also associated with royalty. In more recent years, the focus of Advent has shifted from penitence to expectancy, anticipation, and purposeful waiting. Therefore blue is also used as the color of the season because it speaks to us of hope. It is the color associated with Jesus' mother, Mary, as depicted by artists through the centuries.

Advent looks back to the past in Bethlehem, includes us in the present, and looks ahead to Christ's return. Each of the four weeks during Advent has a specific focus highlighted by the readings...

Think and rethink

The alumni publication that comes to our house from Case Western Reserve University is called *Think*. I am not sure it has that effect on me although I enjoy reading it.

Editor's Corner

AT&T ads command viewers to *Rethink Possibilities*. The United Methodist Communications calendar calls us to *Rethink Church*. Thinking is pretty straight forward - meaning to consider something or reason out a course of action or form an opinion. Rethinking can mean starting all over, changing direction or doing an about-turn. It seems to me that this is more difficult.

It is especially so when it comes to rethinking church. What needs to change and what should follow tradition? What needs a new direction and what is working just fine as it does? The purpose of the Church Council is to plan and coordinate our activities. Your input is desired — especially if you are a member of the council.

One new ministry is an organized effort to unite with Habitat for Humanity in New Haven. No special skills are needed as there are many types of work to be done either in the warehouse or on sites. If you are interested in this project, please call Sally Cotter or see her in Fellowship Hall. Work days will probably be weekdays.

The Education Committee has rethought the Sunday morning schedule and now we can all be in classes and not miss the church service. There still will be an opportunity for those who are too young to sit through a service to go to Junior Church after the Children's message.

The Endowment Committee is rethinking how we manage the church accounts, so that we can preserve bequest principles, earn interest, invest wisely, and yet have easy access to funds when needed.

Rethink Church and share your ideas!

SAA

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Sunday, December 19	

Church family notes

Dear Friends,

You have our sincerest gratitude for your gift of sleeping bags, clothing and bedding to St. Vincent DePaul. What a great gift for our guests. Your generosity allows us to be “People Helping People.”

Thank you for your support and the good you have done for others, especially for those at St. Vincent DePaul Middletown. We’re so happy to receive these items at this time of year!

Sincerely,

Ron Krom

Executive Director

Let’s make it a Community Living Nativity

For many years there has been a Living Nativity on the front lawn of the Congregational Church on Main Street, Clinton. Sometimes United Methodists have participated and sometimes not, but we again have the opportunity to join in on Sunday, December 5 from 2 to 5 or Wednesday, December 22 from 6 to 8.

There are live animals so you can be a nativity character - costumes are provided. Refreshments are served. Please sign up on the sheets in Fellowship Hall

A smooth fall clean up day

Ginny Burr, Dennis Dollahite, Ray Lenda, Beverly Bowen, Raegen Riley, Evelyn Scaglione, Craig Fitzsimmons, Bill Berlepsch, Bev Bowen, Sal Scurto, Dennis Scaglione, Sue Alexander, Neal Sorensen, Carolyn Berlepsch, Roy Alexander, John Pope, Beverly Jones and Rick Clare all appeared on Saturday, November 6 to make our buildings and grounds look very presentable.

Windows were washed, storm windows put in place, Fellowship chairs were cleaned and repaired, leaves were gathered, and many items were put where they belong or discarded.

Those television shows on cleaning up places have nothing on our crew of willing workers. Thank you so much.

The first week in Advent spotlights the need for preparedness/ watchfulness. Jesus teaches us that we must watch and wait for his second coming. Throughout history, people have made bold claims about when this return will be; yet Jesus makes clear in the Gospels that only God knows the time. While we continue with the ordinary business of living as we await his return, we are to be ready and alert, for his coming will be sudden, as a thief in the night (Matthew 24: 36-44).

The second week moves us back in time in relation to Jesus’ life. In the readings for the first Sunday of Advent we hear him teaching near the end of his ministry. In the readings for the second Sunday, we hear John the Baptist even before Jesus begins his earthly work. John calls people to a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins so that they will be ready for the One who is to come (Matthew 3: 1-12).

In the third week, John the Baptist takes center stage again, though he himself was in prison. By sending envoys to ask if Jesus was the One or if another was coming, he provides Jesus an opportunity to state what he has accomplished (Matthew 11: 2-11).

On the final Sunday of Advent, we hear about the child Mary is to bring into the world. This child, truly God and truly human, will soon be present as Emmanuel, God with us (Matthew 1: 18-25).

It is only then that we begin the familiar readings that have to do with Christmas. As a child (an even as adults) the hardest part is waiting. Patience is a virtue we are told, but we don’t like to wait. We want things to happen instantaneously. Perhaps that is why we don’t like Advent. We want Christmas to come right away – we don’t want to have to put up with all the preparation. We want it to happen and then be over with so we can get on our way. But the fact is that if we take Advent seriously, what we do is change our lives, change our focus to expectation, to a readiness for the coming of Christ into our lives and into our world.

Even through we go through the motions each year, I pray that this year your life will be touched in a new way making your preparation even more meaningful. Whether it be through Bible study, worship, private devotion, singing, or some other form of active waiting, may it lead to a celebration of the affirmation that Christ has come, and Christ will come again!

Shalom,

Craig

Month of Services



2ND SUNDAY OF *Advent*

December 5

Greeter	Rick Clare
Ushers	Sally Cotter, Ginny Burr, David Moore, Drew Dupre
Infant/toddler care	Linda Symmes
Acolytes	Caroline Yang, Skylar Riley
Sound coordinator	Jonas Thelin
Camera operator	Lisa Sutherland
Worship leader	Mickey Brown
Lectionary scriptures	Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72: Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12
Sermon	Rev. Dr. M. Craig Fitzsimmons
Communion steward	Gay McPhee
Fellowship host	Jeane Howard

St. Lucia Festival, the climax of Christmas in Clinton

After the Open Houses, after the carol singing, after seeing Main Street lined with luminaries, it is time to come to the United Methodist Church for the St. Lucia Festival.

Presented by the youth of the church processing, dancing, and singing in English and Swedish, this is a beautiful service not to be missed. Swedish treats are served. The festival begins at 6:00pm Sunday, December 5

Curious about Health Care?

At 6 pm on Thursday December 16, Holy Advent Church, 83 East Main St., Clinton, will host a soup and sandwich supper followed by an informational session and community forum.

A panel of knowledgeable experts will summarize the key provisions of the federal health care reform bill enacted earlier this year as well as the state reform plan (Sustinet) passed in Hartford in 2009.

To RSVP or for further information, please call United Action Connecticut at 860-882-3849.

Food pantry contributions

Our food closet looks very good thanks to your contributions and those from the T.O.P.S. group and individuals who brought many turkeys (these were sent on after a rest in our freezer). The only thing I noticed was one container of applesauce which would like company.

The Mission tree

The Mission Committee's tree is again in Fellowship Hall awaiting your donations to: the education of Jairese Calisto, our theology student in Mozambique, Habitat for Humanity, WIC (Women, Infants and Children nutrition and counseling), the Shoreline Soup Kitchens and Food Pantries, and the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

The ornaments are \$5 each and are available until December 26.

Tips for a more meaningful season

1. Slow down. Plan ahead in a family meeting.
2. If you know a single parent, offer to take their children shopping.
3. Limit your spending and share with someone who needs funds.
4. Ask older adults what the season was like in their youth.
5. Make a list of your blessings of the past year.
6. Make a CD or DVD to send to family living far away.
7. Be a courteous driver.
8. Draw names for gifts and give one really desired thing.
9. Make coupon books for services you are willing to provide.
10. Share reasons to be glad with family members.
11. Promise to teach a new skill in January. (computer skills, bike riding, sewing)
12. Force a fruit or lilac tree branch or flower bulb to blossom.
13. Send photos instead of cards.
14. Help to serve a meal at a homeless shelter.
15. Visit a nursing home with your well-behaved pet.
16. Have family work nights to bake, sing carols, do a craft project.
17. Take someone who doesn't drive to see holiday lights.
18. Ask your friends about their holiday traditions.
19. Invite others to a worship service or concert.
20. Make a few changes each year until you have a simpler, less stressful celebration that everyone can enjoy.

from Heifer Projects World Ark magazine

Rethinking church?

We made a slight change on the afternoon of November 15 when the Memorial Fund Committee met. We are changing our name to the Memorial and Honor Committee. A memorial remembers a deceased person or past event. Sometimes these gifts are made at the time of a funeral, but they are also made to remember someone who has died some time ago or on the anniversary of the birth or death of a family member or friend.

Honor giving however is to honor a living person or celebrate a special occasion any time you choose.

We will be creating guidelines for contributions so that when money is given it can be used expediently. We have funds that are sufficient to their purpose; i.e. a bible fund and a music fund so gifts to those are not needed. The Memorial and Honor Committee will be preparing a list of possible uses for other funding. Please let us know of other possibilities to consider.

You are all familiar with giving plants and flower arrangements in memory or honor of someone - now you may express your feelings for special people in many ways. You will be making a special ministry possible.

Trustee update

Thanks to all who helped with the Fall Cleanup Day.

Mark Russell has repaired the architectural features over the front door. The replaced parts were probably original and quite rotted.

In the near future we expect to have improved outdoor lighting in the parking lots. The old heavy eight-foot tables have been sold.



Cat's Meow United Methodist Church

My World designs are two-dimensional wooden keepsakes of our special places and times made by The Cat's Meow of Wooster, Ohio. We are beginning "our world" with a 7 by 3 3/8 inch United Methodist Church of Clinton. It has the front of the church on one side and some brief information on the reverse. They can be purchased through the church office for \$10 each.



December 12

Greeter
Ushers

Infant/toddler care
Acolytes
Sound coordinator
Camera operator
Worship leader
Lectionary scriptures

Sermon
Fellowship host

3RD SUNDAY OF *Advent*

Barbara Hendricks
Dennis Scaglione, Bob McLeod,
John Pope, Gerald Cotter, David Wahl
Linda Symmes
Eliot Yang, Gabby Dollahite
Tammy Drena
Mickey Brown
Tammy Drena
Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 1:47-55;
James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11
Rev. Dr. M. Craig Fitzsimmons
Jackie Blomberg



December 19

Greeter
Ushers

Infant/toddler care
Acolytes
Sound coordinator
Camera operator
Worship leader
Lectionary scriptures

Sermon
Fellowship hosts

4TH SUNDAY OF *Advent*

Tammy Drena
Rachel Benisvy, Haley Parent,
Justin Hauser, Alex Attanasio,
Megan Lohutko
Linda Symmes
Raegen Riley, Rebecca Dollahite
Ally Gates
Dan Attanasio
Fern Pope
Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80;
Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25
Rev. Dr. M. Craig Fitzsimmons
Tommie Peterson



**December 24, 5 PM
The Family Service**

Greeters
Ushers Evelyn Scaglione, Sharon Minick,
Gay McPhee, Allison McKinnon,
Lynda Larson
Worship leader Carolyn Hale
Lectionary scriptures Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96;
Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20
Sermon Rev. Dr. M. Craig Fitzsimmons



**December 24, 11 PM
Holy Communion by
Candlelight**

Greeters Kim Parker and Lynn Sellers
Ushers Sally Cotter, Ginny Burr, David Moore,
Lyle Cubberly, Drew Dupre
Worship leader Jill Hale
Lectionary scriptures Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96;
Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20
Sermon Rev. Dr. M. Craig Fitzsimmons

Connecticut Hospice looking for help

If you or someone you know is looking for an opportunity to serve others in your community, Connecticut Hospice of Branford would like to hear from you. You can give direct care or assist in an administrative capacity or meet transportation needs to patients and families in need of your support.

For more information please call Pat Corradino, Director of Volunteer Services at 203-315-7510.

November 18, 2010

Dear United Methodists of the New York Annual Conference,
Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior and Redeemer, the Prince of shalom, Healer of our brokenness and Hope of the world!

In response to the escalation of acts of violence around the world and in the United States, the Council of Bishops, at its meeting in early November in Panama City, Panama adopted a statement which contains these words: *“We as people of faith are charged to build the beloved community because Christ has broken down the dividing walls and ended the hostilities between us. Yet we continue to build walls in the church and in the world, which separate us and cause our hearts to grieve... In the United States, there has been an escalation of violence, related to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and religious preference. This has included personal attacks, bullying and vicious and criminal acts of violence to the mind, body and spirit of persons. These actions diminish life for the victims, the perpetrators and the total community. They are ultimately insidious and irreverent attacks on the sacredness of God given life.”*

Sadly, there’s a trickle down of hate in our land. Our sharply divided political, cultural and religious landscape, where hate-filled diatribes often substitute for civil and intelligent discussion of our differences, only encourages intolerance and contributes to the spread of hate-driven acts. The news reports of bullying gay persons leading to suicides and the torturing of three gay men in the Bronx are only a few examples of the countless tragic consequences of hate and intolerance.

Nothing done out of hate and intolerance has any place in our society, let alone in our church. The gospel of Jesus Christ cannot accept or condone either the thought or the deed. Long before the thoughts become deeds, the church must shout from the mountain tops: *“Our God says ‘no!’”*

Sisters and brothers in Christ, I ask you to offer prayers for all who have been victimized by hateful actions. Do whatever you can to give witness to the vision of the beloved community of hope, where all people are embraced as persons of sacred worth, affirmed for who they are and treated with respect and dignity.

It is my personal hope, my personal prayer and my personal commitment to do whatever I can today to hasten the day of a just world with peace. I repeat the famous words of Martin Luther, *“Here I stand, I can do no other. God help me.”* Will you?

Jeremiah J. Park

SERRV

Sales Exchange for Refugee Rehabilitation & Vocation

We had a wonderful day at the Holly Fair on Saturday selling the products from thirty-two different countries! All the monies received from this table will go directly back to the artisan, with benefits as basic and life-changing as helping to purchase uniforms and school books for children in the family.

If you saw something that caught your eye, or would like to order from the SERRV catalogue, I can accept orders until December 10th, and have been assured we will have it in time for Christmas. We will set up the table in the Fellowship Hall after church on Sunday morning to display the items we have left.

Thank you for your support on Saturday, and thank you from those who will benefit the most...the artisans.

*Fern Pope/Bev Jones
Chmn. Missions Committee*

Photo album

A color album of friends and members of the church is available any Sunday in Fellowship Hall or from the church office weekdays.

ORDER FORM



I wish to order _____ red poinsettia/s

I wish to order _____ white poinsettias

Enclosed is \$8 for each poinsettia.

I would like the following dedication in honor ___ or in memory ___

Givenby: _____

Please check one:

I will pick up my plant/s after the late Christmas Eve service.

My poinsettia/s may be given to a shut-in.



December 26

First Sunday after Christmas Day

Greeters
Ushers

The Hales
Dennis Scaglione, Bob McLeod,
John Pope, Gerald Cotter, David Wahl

Infant/toddler care
Acolytes
Sound coordinator
Camera operator
Worship leader
Lectionary scriptures

Linda Symmes
Nicholas Dollahite, Jessie Ryan
Jonas Thelin
Lisa Sutherland
Fern Pope
Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148;
Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23

Sermon
Fellowship hosts

Rev. Dr. M. Craig Fitzsimmons
The Hales

December Birthdays

Gail Whitney	7	Priscilla Clark	16
Jeffrey McKinnon	5	Terri Hauser	20
James Martino	7	Jude Houpert	21
Richard Bell	8	Margaret Sabo	22
Carolyn Berlepsch	9	Carol Bell	23
Mark Sullivan	9	Robert Hawes	25
Randy Symmes	10	Allison McKinnon	26
Alaina Attanasio	10	George Sprague	26
Alan Anderson	11	Laura Attanasio	27
Kenneth Archer	11	Evelyn Scaglione	28
Christina Martens	11		

Finance Committee

This is the time of year when Finance Committee is most active, scrambling to get next year's budget ready and approved by Church Council in December, then getting the annual financial summary ready for the Annual Report and Church Conference in February. I'd like to take this time to thank everyone that is involved in safeguarding the operational finances of our church. Thank you to Carol Bell, our Treasurer, who this year also took on the role of Trustee's Treasurer. The amount of work that she does for these positions is equal to at least a part-time job. Thank you to the Finance Committee members: Carol Bell, Don Shogren, Betsy Cole, Sue Alexander, and Pastor Craig. A big thank you to our teams of counters, who spend at least half an hour (sometimes more when things don't add up) after church each Sunday sorting, counting, double-counting, logging and depositing our church offerings and sale proceeds: Don and Ginny Hauser, Dottie Capece, Sally Cotter, Betsy Cole, Don Shogren and our newest counter Fern Pope. Also, a very warm thank you to Auditor Tom Symmes, who spends a lot of time scrutinizing the accounts to make sure all the i's are dotted and the t's crossed. We have an incredible team of dedicated people that diligently handle the finances of the church to ensure that all the bills are paid on time. But we wouldn't have a job to do if it weren't for all of the people who contribute their resources to our church in order to enable our missions in this community and elsewhere in the world. Thank you for your generous support.

Sincerely,

Dennis Dollahite
Finance Committee Chair

Late breaking news!

Evelyn Scaglione and Gay McPhee, Chairs of the July 17th Tag Sale, want to thank all those who helped with the sale and/or purchased items to give our income a hefty boost of \$1100.

When you move

There are costs to the church (\$5 on Nov. 22) whenever our mail to you is undeliverable, so please let the church office (860-669-8396) know if you are having your mail held or transferred. We will not publicize that you are traveling, but it is very helpful to the church if you keep us informed.

Wishin' and Hopin'

What a great title for the December book discussion! Read Wally Lamb's story of Christmas in 1964 Three Rivers (Norwich, CT.) *Wishin' and Hopin'* is a hilarious tale to round out a good year of discussions.

Seasonal refreshments will be served on 7 pm. December 27.

A December bonus is the discussion of *Sailing Alone Around the World* by Slocum, postponed to the 6th when our leader Dennis Scaglione returns to us.

The Endowment Committee's second meeting

The Committee met with the Rev. Dr. Keith Muhleman, the President of the United Methodist Frontier Foundation on November 16. He explained the different types of accounts and services that the Foundation manages. He gave us all the information about the account we have had with them for about twenty years.

The UM Frontier Foundation has 51 regional groups (ours covers Mid to Eastern New York and Western Connecticut) that collectively manage over \$2 billion.

During the second half of our meeting, we decided to consolidate some of our accounts and open one new one. We will be meeting next with a representative from Merrill Lynch, where we also have an account.



Please order poinsettias by December 13!
Thank you.

Thanksgiving dinner and ecumenical service



The United Methodist Thanksgiving dinner



Ecumenical Choir led by Robert Hale



Revs. Craig Fitzsimmons, Bruce Shipman, Steven Hosking, Deacon Joe Coyne, First Selectman William Fritz and Rev. Christopher Horvath

Thank you Laurie Bell and Holly Fair workers!



Ginny, Jeane, Ellen and Dot picking chicken



Roy and Gary in the kitchen

The UM Youth Group table





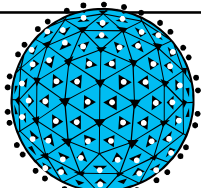
Amy and Mickey enjoying lunch

Bob Wood with seasonal music for dining



December 2010



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
NOVEMBER S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30		JANUARY S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 9:00 T. O. P. S. 12:00 Shoreline Clergy 5:00 Soup Kitchen hosts St. Alexis Orthodox 7:00 Trustees	2 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:30 Adult Choir	3 5:30 A.A. Meeting	4
5 9:00 Church School 10:00 Worship 11:00 Fellowship time St. Lucia rehearsal Christmas in Clinton 6:00 St. Lucia Festival	6 11:00 Clever Crafters 7:00 Pack Committee 7:00 Book discussion	7 9:00 Women, Infants & Children 7:00 Advent Study	8 9:00 T. O. P. S. 5:00 Soup Kitchen hosts St. Mary's Catholic 7:00 Church Council & Charge Conference	9 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:30 Adult Choir	10 5:30 A.A. Meeting	11
12 9:00 Church School 10:00 Worship Pageant rehearsal 11:00 Fellowship time 7:00 Confirmation class	13 11:00 Clever Crafters 5:30 Second Homes	14 7:00 Advent Study	15 9:00 T. O. P. S. 5:00 Soup Kitchen hosts Congregational Ch. 6:30 Piano recital	16 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:30 Adult Choir 6:00 Soup & sandwich supper with Health Care Updates (Sustinet) @ Holy Advent Episcopal	17 5:30 A.A. Meeting	18 7:30 KidzKonnection 8:00 Performance
19 9:00 Church School 10:00 Worship/Pageant 11:00 Fellowship time Youth caroling	20 11:00 Clever Crafters 6:45 Cub Pack Party	21 7:00 Advent Study	22 9:00 T. O. P. S. 5:00 Soup Kitchen hosts United Methodists	23 9:00 Women, Infants & Children 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:30 Adult Choir	24 Christmas Eve 5:30 A.A. Meeting 5:00 Family service 11:00 Candlelight Service	25 
26 9:00 Church School 10:00 Lessons and Carols 11:15 Parsonage Open House	27 6:45 Cub Committee 7:00 Book discussion	28 9:00 Women, Infants & Children	29 9:00 T. O. P. S. 5:00 Soup Kitchen hosts Christ Chapel	30 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:30 Adult Choir	31  <i>New Year's Eve</i>	