

PRES PRESS



Spring Branch Presbyterian Church

1215 Campbell Rd | Houston, TX 77055



relationships matter
GOD • ONE ANOTHER • WORLD



Greetings, members and friends of SBPC!

Welcome to the season of Advent. The season of Advent is the first season of the Christian year. It is a time of expectation, of anticipation, of starting over. I have to admit, 2020 has been a difficult year and I am looking forward to a new year with hopefully better things to come. I know many of you are, too.

Still, I believe that the Lord has taught us during this time, just how important it is to have community one with another. I have heard from many of you that Zoom meetings, while certainly not perfect, have been a lifeline to keep in touch. I have also heard that we miss certain things. Things like actually hugging, like gathering together, like going about our daily lives without having to think about things like masks and distancing. We have learned that we can be virtually near to one another, yet still lonely and far apart. The message of Advent has much to say to us in this extraordinary time.

Though we cannot always be in proximity with one another, we share in the promise that Christ is with us. In Philippians 4:4-5 we read:

*“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!
Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.”*

I believe it is precisely in time such as this, times of distancing, that we are reminded that the Lord is indeed near. Our coming Christ is right here with us in the midst of our COVID-19 chaos. Jesus knows what we are going through. Luke tells us that Christ, having been falsely convicted, prayed in great anguish, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. I would say Christ understands about anxiety. He understands the pain of being separated from loved ones, of overstretched finances, of bare cupboards. In the midst of turbulent seas and fiery furnaces, the Lord is near! COVID-19 is unable to change that.

This Advent, my prayer is that we would each experience the closeness of the Lord, that we would each learn to rejoice, and that we would live in a new anticipation of what Christ will do in this new season. We are not alone. Christ is with us. Alleluia!

In Christ's Service,
Pastor Kevin



Spring Branch Presbyterian Church
Celebrate Advent and Christmas with Us!
Life Rebooted



Hope

Sunday, November 29, 10:50 am
1st Sunday of Advent Worship

Sunday, December 6, 10:50 am
2nd Sunday of Advent Worship



Sunday, December 13, 10:50 am
3rd Sunday of Advent Worship

Sunday, December 20, 10:50 am
4th Sunday of Advent Worship
Choir Cantata



Sunday, December 20
Blue Christmas Service

Monday, December 21
Drive-In Christmas Carols in the Parking Lot

Thursday, December 24
Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service in the Parking Lot

Monday, December 28
Drive-In Movie Night in the Parking Lot



Missions of the Month

The “Mission of the Month” for December is The Angel Tree Program and the Presbyterian Children’s Home and Services (PCHAS) Ornament Tree.



The Angel Tree Program – Every year, our church receives the names of about 20 children who live in the zip codes around our church, providing gifts to the children of incarcerated parents. Although this ministry is virtual this year, we are still serving local children! This year, each child will

receive a \$40 Walmart gift card, which you will purchase directly through the SBPC Angel Website. We chose the \$40 gift card option since that amount is comparable to the two gifts that we would typically provide. We encourage SBPC folks to join together if that amount is out of your price range. There is more information on the next page about how to access, select, and purchase the gift cards for our Angel Tree children. This program is all virtual this year through the SBPC page of the Angel Tree website, so unfortunately, you **cannot** send a check to the Church Office. If you have any additional questions, please contact Laurie Mitchell.



Presbyterian Children’s
Homes and ServicesSM

PCHAS Ornament Tree – PCHAS began in 1903 as an effort by the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas to house the orphaned children of a young mother who died of tuberculosis. Today, PCHAS serves over 5,000 children across Texas, Louisiana and Missouri. The mission for PCHAS has broadened from strictly care for orphans, to include Maternity and Adoption services, Foster Care, Care for Families in Crisis, Medical Case Management, Youth Outreach, and Mental Health Services to name just a few. This year, the PCHAS Ornament Tree is in the Narthex, just outside of the Sanctuary. Each of the ornaments has a PCHAS tag attached with a suggested donation amount. You take the ornament home with you and leave the donation in the basket provided. We will donate the entire amount to PCHAS at the end of the month. If you would like to donate money to PCHAS virtually, you can give online at www.springbranchpres.org/give and click on SUPPORT OUR MISSION OF THE MONTH.

December Mission Updates & Opportunities

Seafarer’s Boxes Update and Thanks – The annual packaging and wrapping of Seafarer’s Boxes was very different this year, but we still managed to exceed our yearly goal! Thank you to everyone that donated individual items, donated fully stocked boxes, wrapped filled boxes, made cards, and helped deliver. We were able to complete 107 boxes for the Seafarer’s Center at the Port of Houston! Kevin, Donald, and Miguel delivered a total of 113 boxes, including 6 from our friends at John Knox Presbyterian Church.

Calling Seniors on Thanksgiving – Thank you to those who participated in calling local seniors on Thanksgiving to share the love of Christ with one another. We had 10 members from SBPC participate in this program through *Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston!*

Mission Trip Update – Through our Presbytery and partners like Houston Responds, we have been identifying ways we can continue to help our neighbors in Louisiana who have been impacted by Hurricanes Laura and Delta. The Mission Team is partnering with Fuller Center for Disaster Recovery to plan a mission trip to go help our neighbors with rebuilding their homes. All skill levels are welcome, and we are hoping to send a team the weekend of January 15th-18th. If you are interested in attending, please let Pastor Kevin or Miguel know. The deadline to sign up is December 17th.

SBPC Hot Meals on Weekends – The current COVID-19 restrictions have made this service opportunity possibly more important than ever. The 4th Saturday of each month we look for individuals to deliver meals to shut-ins. We have 2 routes with about 14 people on each route, so we usually need a total of 4 volunteers each month. Please contact Lu Taylor if you are interested in volunteering to deliver meals one month. The Saturday for this month will be December 26th.

Dust off Your Halos – It's Time for Our Annual Angel Tree Christmas Program

SBPC has been participating in the Angel Tree Christmas Prison Ministry program for many years, providing Christmas gifts for the children of incarcerated parents. Every year, our church receives the names of about 20 children who live in the zip codes around our church.



A Program of Prison Fellowship

Although this ministry is virtual this year, we are still be serving local children. Each child will be receiving a \$40 gift card to Walmart, which you will purchase directly through the SBPC Angel Tree Website. **Unfortunately, you cannot send a check to the church. Everything will need to be done online through the SBPC Angel Tree page.** The children will receive these gift cards in the mail directly from Angel Tree.

Click [HERE](#) to access the SBPC Virtual Angel Tree Website (vat.angeltreetool.org/61b9fe72-cb77-4454-a778-fdd56e9cfe24). This is our Access Code: 8DXUI (8dxui).

Laurie Mitchell created an information video (<https://youtu.be/3n68BHkDsVU>) for how to access, select, and purchase the gift cards for our Angel Tree children. Should you have any questions, please reach out to her.

Since Angel Tree is virtual this year, we are unable to provide the families with a basket of food like we usually do. Members that usually donate food to the baskets are encouraged to do one of the following:

1. Prior to checking out on the Angel Tree website, you can choose to include a \$40 Walmart gift card for the caregiver of the children. This generous gift could help them provide food for the family, or it could be a welcomed Christmas gift for them.
2. Instead of donating food for the Angel Tree baskets, bring the food that you would've donated to Worship on Sundays, or to the Drive-In Wednesday Night Suppers for the Fair Haven Food Panty.



Presbyterian Children's
Homes and ServicesSM

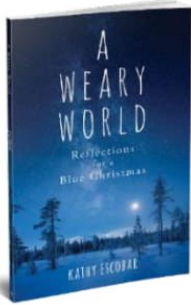


One of our long-time missions in December is the PCHAS Ornament Tree. Instead of buying toys for the needy children at Christmas time, we opt to give monetary donations. These generous gifts allow PCHAS to serve approximately 5000 children and families each year.

During Advent time, we hang ornaments on a Christmas tree. This year, the PCHAS Ornament Tree is in the Narthex, just outside of the Sanctuary. Each of the ornaments has a PCHAS tag attached with a suggested donation amount. You take the ornament home with you and leave the donation in the basket provided. We will donate the entire amount to PCHAS at the end of the month.

If you would like to donate money to PCHAS virtually, you can give online at www.springbranchpres.org/give and click on SUPPORT OUR MISSION OF THE MONTH.

(If you pay by check, please make checks payable to SBPC and put "PCHAS Ornament Tree" in the memo line.)



You are invited to join our discussion groups each Sunday of Advent. 2020 has been a tough year. *A Weary World: Reflections for a Blue Christmas*, by Kathy Escobar, includes daily scriptures and readings which will provide discussion and reflection prompts. The discussion group will be a safe place to share and express your feelings and stories as you feel called to do. *The goal of this group study will be to enact in our lives the four central themes of the book: honoring reality, practicing honesty, embracing paradox, and borrowing hope.* Beginning Sunday, November 29 we will gather by Zoom at 1:30pm for the four Sundays of Advent.

Let Denise Wilborn know you are interested in participating by email to faithdevelopment@springbranchpres.org. Zoom invitations will be sent each week. Personal copies of the book may be ordered from: Amazon (paperback and Kindle); Barnes and Noble (paperback and Nook); Cokesbury (paperback); The Thoughtful Christian (paperback); or Westminster John Knox Press (paperback). *If you do not have or do not want to purchase the book, you are still welcome to join us. Each Sunday we'll begin with a prompt to include all who are present.*

Let Us Light Candles

SBPC's Church wide Devotionals for 2020

This year's church wide devotional will take a bit different format. This particular year is stretching and exercising our creativity as we seek to stay connected and continue to reach out to the community at large.

“Let Us Light Candles: Matthew 25 and the Work of Advent” in an online devotional which includes Christmastide and goes through Epiphany being offered through *Presbyterian's Today*. The seasonal scriptures and daily reflections are built through the framework of Howard Thurman's poem, “I Will Light Candles This Christmas.” Thurman was a Baptist preacher and a mentor to the then student, Martin Luther King, Jr.



The devotionals will be sent by email each week. Here is the link if you would like to access the devotionals your self: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/today/advent2020/advent-and-christmas-devotional-2020-week-1/>. If you would prefer a printed copy, please contact Spring Branch Presbyterian Church secretary@springbranchpres.org.

I Will Light Candles This Christmas By Howard Thurman

I will light candles this Christmas,
Candles of joy despite all the sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all year long.

Drive-Thru Wednesday Night Supper



Dec. 2 — Hamburgers

Don & Barbara Tremble

Dec. 16 — Street Tacos

Pastor Kevin



You will drive through the main entrance, past the port-cochere to where you will see Kevin loading dinners. You do not have to get out of your vehicle, just roll down the window or unlock the passenger side door. Kevin will also be offering prayers for all who wish. Please try to arrive between 6:00-6:20 PM. All sanitary precautions will be strictly observed during preparation and delivery. *Watch your email for placing orders!*

The dinners will be free, but we are accepting donations. We are also accepting donations for the Fair Haven Food Pantry (non-perishable food items, cleaning supplies, and paper products). ***The food pantry is also in need of plastic grocery bags—they go through at least 300 a day!*** We are also continuing to accept thank you cards for our dedicated Houston healthcare workers. Please do not seal the envelopes.

Celebrate the season of Advent with us!

SBPC has resumed in-person Worship and Sunday School. If you would like to attend Worship and/or Sunday School, you will need to register each week. By registering, you are agreeing to follow the guidelines set forth for a safe return. The guidelines for Worship and Sunday School are available at www.springbranchpres.org/worship-registration.



You can register for Worship and Sunday School each week by completing the online form at www.springbranchpres.org/worship-registration. You may also register via email to secretary@springbranchpres.org. If you register via email, please include if/which in-person Sunday School Class you will attend.

Every week, the service is being streamed live to the SBPC YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCK-MbvQ1TkJiUmDq1Psswg>.



Presbyterian Women this Month

PW at a Glance

PW MODERATORS meet on 12/2 at 9:30 a.m. (via Zoom)

PW BOARD MEETING meet on 12/2 at 10:15 a.m. (via Zoom)

PW CIRCLE meeting on 12/9 at 9:30 a.m. (via Zoom)



THE HORIZONS Evening Bible Study using **ZOOM** will not meet until January.

Lesson 4: www.springbranchpres.org/adult-education/presbyterian-women/into-the-light/

Contact Carol Davis to receive a Zoom Invitation for the Day Circle.

There will be no **ZIP TRIP** or **HAPPY HANDS** in December.

PW BIBLE STUDY books are available in the Church Office, or can be picked up from Sarah Dikeman's House. The cost is \$10.

PW DIRECTORIES are available in the Church Office or for pickup from Sarah Dikeman.



Happy Hands Keeping Busy

The distribution of the Heart-shaped pillows is beginning to flow again. Several of the Happy Hands group have gotten busy to help put the pillows and other hand-made items into the hands of those in need of a "lovey." Catherine Daley had

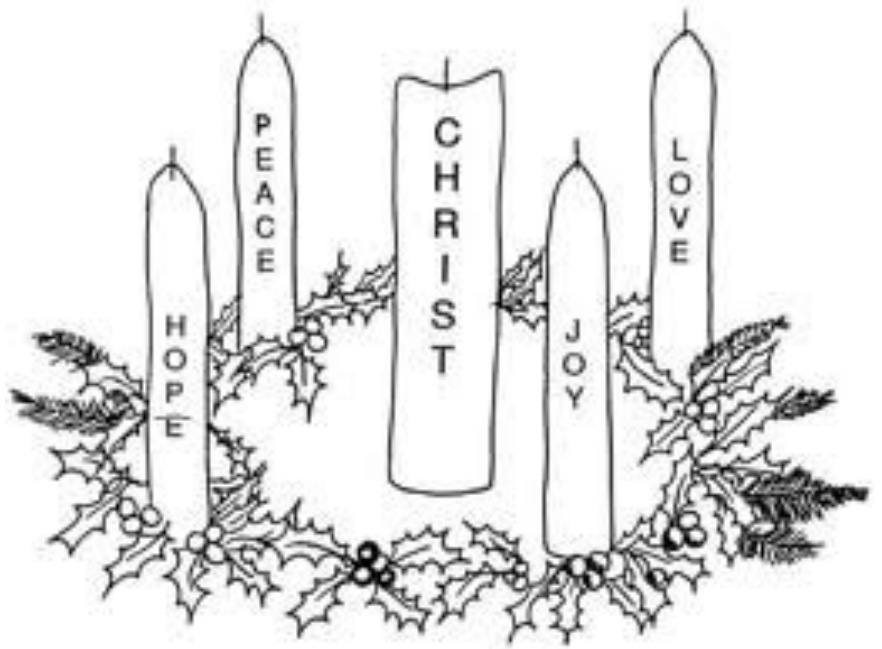


stuffed pillows stored in her closet. Betty Magnuson, Anne Brewin, and Silvia Argyriou, closed the pillows. Margaret Ford, Silvia, Anne, and Betty also made lap robes and Baby hats. Carol Davis has pillows ready to stuff. The pandemic has not stopped our Happy Hands group from sharing their love. Several others have offered to help. As soon as we get notice that the hospitals are able to accept more handmade items, we'll be ready.

Advent is here!!

Advent is the four weeks before Christmas!

During Advent we wait for the birth of Christ and celebrate what it brings —hope, peace, joy, and love. Each Sunday we light a candle on the advent wreath as part of this anticipation...



Family Movie Night *Monday, December 28, 2020*

Among the seasonal and outreach events planned for this time of year, we will be having another drive-in movie night between Christmas Day and New Year's Day. We want to gather as safely as possible during this time. We will show a traditional classic film which family members of all ages will enjoy. Save the date and watch for additional information on the church website and other communications.





Poinsettias!

We will have poinsettias for purchase again this year! You can place your order in the Church Office, online at this [form](https://forms.gle/jRhQFBorzzQ32nW7) (<https://forms.gle/jRhQFBorzzQ32nW7>), or by emailing secretary@springbranchpres.org, today through Monday, December 21st! They are a beautiful way to bring color and brightness to the Church throughout the Advent Season! What a lovely way to honor your loved ones, or to have a beautiful remembrance of those who are no longer with us. Don't forget to bring your poinsettia home after the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Please remember to indicate who you are honoring, and/or remembering, with your payment of \$10.00 to SBPC. You can mail your payment to the Church Office or place it in the offering box on Sunday mornings. Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy for you and your family this coming Advent Season.



The Christmas Joy Offering reflects that God is with us, through the generous gifts that support church leaders among us, retired, present and future, who have pointed us to God. Even as we support our current and former church leaders through the Assistance Program through the Board of Pensions, God is calling new leaders for our church and world, through the ministry of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color—offering students the means for a brighter future and enhanced opportunities to use their talents and skills to serve God, the Church and the world for years to come. This offering will be collected on December 20th and 24th.

Ways to Give:

- Through your congregation
- Text JOY to 56512 to learn more or donate
- Donate by credit card online at pcusa.org/christmasjoy

"God is with us." -Matthew 1:23



REIMBURSEMENTS DEADLINE APPROACHING...

Please turn in your personal reimbursements no later than December 15th. Contact Jorida at jorida.vakiari@springbranchpres.org if you have any questions.

Merry Christmas

The Worship Team needs your help as we plan our Christmas activities. We are putting together a special Christmas message to the congregation that will be shared on Christmas Day. In order to make this project a success, we need members and friends to send a brief video message saying "Merry Christmas" to the SBPC family.

We will be accepting messages through December 20, 2020. We ask that the messages be sent to this link: <https://www.dropbox.com/request/ZHzb91hCypx1eyRM3fA>.

If you have any questions, or would like to help us record messages, please contact the church office. Thank you for helping us build relationships with each other during this holiday season!!

Advent 2020

If ever there was year to think outside the box, this is the year! So, what did we at Spring Branch Presbyterian Church do? – We put Advent in a box together! As the Worship and Faith Development Teams talked about what we could *not* do this year, others began to tell stories of what we *might* do. The

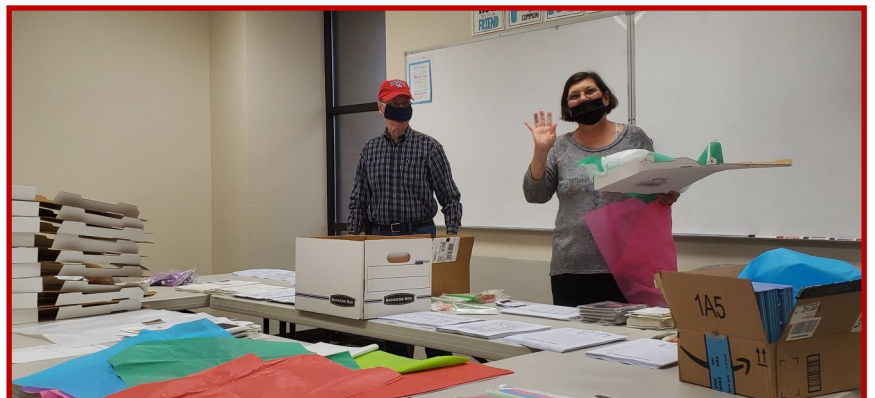


result was a group comprised of members of all the Ministry Teams that worked together to put Advent in a Box or Package together for the Families, Youth, Shut-Ins and those who live too far to travel this year. The results were amazing, fun, delicious and overflowing! We will deliver 19 boxes to families, 29 boxes or packages to shut ins, 6 boxes to Youth, and mail 6 packages to members who are unable to travel to Houston.



May the sure and certain hope of the promises of God bring you joy and peace as we celebrate in faith and love together this Advent and Christmas season.

The Advent Group





The Pastor's Bible Study with Kevin is continuing to meet online at 11:00 AM on Tuesday mornings. Here is the information to join the study:

Meeting ID: 897 7951 2452 | Password: 754888 | Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89779512452?pwd=VU1VZVByeFI1MEwxNmxrR090S0JVQT09>

December 6, 2020; 2nd Sunday of Advent; Communion

First Reading: Mark 1:1-8

Text: Isaiah 40:1-11

Title: Life Rebooted 2: That Which Lasts

Focus: Only God's love lasts

December 13, 2020; 3rd Sunday of Advent

First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Text: Luke 1:46-55

Title: Life Rebooted 3: Expecting Better

Bible Study Using Zoom: January 19th at 7:00 p.m.

Lesson 4 & 5 of *Into the Light* will be discussed by the group of women using Zoom on Tuesday, January 19th, at 7 p.m. All SBPC women are welcomed in this Bible study group through videoconference! Contact Carol Davis at caroldavis@entouch.net to receive the Zoom invitation to join the meeting.



Although the **Explorers Sunday School Class** is meeting in-person on Sunday mornings, you can still join virtually via Zoom! The group gathers at 9:30 AM, both virtually and in-person. If you would like to participate via Zoom, please contact Linda Crawford.



AUSTIN PRESBYTERIAN
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



There are a variety of gifts, but they are all from the same Spirit. There are a variety of ways to serve, but the same Lord is served. And there are different ways that God works through people, but it is the same God. God works through each one of us in a variety of ways. A gift of the Spirit can be seen in each person, working for the common good.

I Corinthians 12: 4-7

Save The Date

Christmas at the Manse

Virtual Holiday Gathering
Hosted By Ted Wardlaw and Kay Bryant
Thursday, December 10, 2020
6:00 p.m. Central Time
RSVP@austinseminary.edu



*Affirming
Our Gifts*

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
100 E. 27th Street, Austin, Texas 78705

Carol Davis is assisting Rev. Rose Niles (*the SBPC 2021 Women's Retreat Leader*) with recruitment for this event. If you are interested in attending, please contact Carol at caroldavis@entouch.net.

SAVE THE DATE FOR WOMEN'S RETREAT

The SBPC women's retreat, sponsored by the Faith Development Team, will be **Saturday, February 27, 2021**, depending on status of covid/flu at that time. **Rev. Rose Niles** will be retreat leader. Details and registration information to follow --put this date on your calendar!

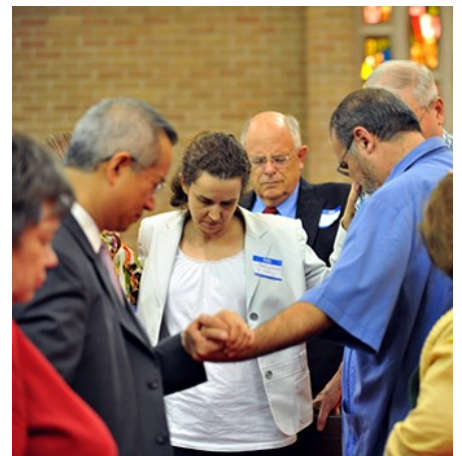
Women's
Retreat



Spring Branch Presbyterian Church is excited to announce the date of our 2021 Men's Retreat! The retreat will be held on **Sunday February 28th, 2021** after worship at the church. Lunch will be provided, and we encourage you to invite a friend! To sign up to attend and for more information, please contact Donald McDaniel at dmcdan77007@sbcglobal.net.

Save the Date!

Spring Branch Presbyterian Church will host the Saturday, March 20th, 2021 Presbytery of New Covenant meeting. The session approved our hosting the meeting earlier this year and the Presbytery staff is thrilled to have us serve as the host church. All team leaders have been provided a plan of the tasks which need to be addressed and completed for the day of the meeting. Session members and pastors from across our presbytery will attend. This will be an all hands on deck effort as we open our doors in hospitality to those who will discern, conduct, and address the matters of the church. Presbytery of New Covenant and Spring Branch Presbyterian Church are planning for the meeting to be in person at this time. COVID-19 data and trends in the spring of 2021 will be closely monitored in case the meeting needs to be shifted to virtual.





happy
birthday


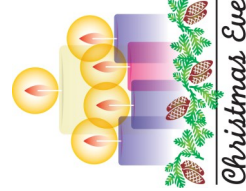


Lin Sabala	12/3	Maurice Fayard II	12/14
Meredith Qualls	12/4	Janis Inbody	12/14
Robert Bear	12/5	Laurie Mitchell	12/14
Kay Nichols	12/5	Bryan Evenson	12/15
Jeremy Cross	12/11	Glenn Lanan	12/20
Christian Humphrey	12/11	Jerry Bigelow	12/26
Christopher Powell	12/11	Yetime Bain	12/29
Anna Belle Anderson	12/12	Scott Lassiter	12/29
Kathryn Dethloff-Carr	12/12	Anna Farley	12/30
Sonya Bear	12/14		



Happy Anniversary!



Anna and Zach Farley	12/1
Joel and Rebeca Alegria	12/15
Lisa Merritt and Ron Fake	12/16
Rev. Dr. Kevin and Carlette Boyd	12/30

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
		9:15am - Cong. Care Mtg. 11am - Pastor's Bible Study 7pm - Session	9:30am - PW Moderator 10:15am - PW Board 6pm - Drive-Thru WNS			
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2nd Sunday in Advent 9:30am - Sunday school 10:50am - Worship 1:30pm - A Weary World		11am - Pastor's Bible Study	9:30am - PW Circle			
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
3rd Sunday in Advent 9:30am - Sunday school 10:50am - Worship 1:30pm - A Weary World	5pm - Academy Board 7pm - Mission Team	11am - Pastor's Bible Study	6pm - Drive-Thru WNS			
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
4th Sunday in Advent Blue Christmas Service Choir Cantata PresPress Articles DUE 9:30am - Sunday school 10:50am - Worship 1:30pm - A Weary World	Drive-in Caroling 	11am - Pastor's Bible Study		Christmas Eve Service 	Christmas Day 	11am - Hot Meals
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
9:30am - Sunday school 10:50am - Worship	Drive-in Movie Night 	11am - Pastor's Bible Study		New Year's Eve		



Sponsored By:

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~Philippians 4:4-5