



FIRST

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

God is still speaking,

110 N. Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022
715-425-2052 — www.firstchurchrf.org
Rev. Chris Myers: chris@firstchurchrf.org
Office email: office@firstchurchrf.org
DECEMBER 1, 2010

TURN
THIS →



→ INTO
THIS →



Last year Americans spent 450 billion dollars on Christmas presents. Think about that number for a minute. That is \$1500 per person. Wow. For a congregation our size (550 members) that works out to be \$825,000. Double wow. Now think back on all the presents you received last year. Did you really want all of them? Did you really need all of them?

What if you were to give up buying one single present and instead use that money to buy something that was really needed? **Water** for people who have none. A **wheelbarrow** so people can take their homemade goods to market. A **sewing machine** so a single mom can start her own business. A **soccer ball** for a kid whose only toy is a stick.

This year we are again offering the Advent Marketplace at which people can buy presents that make a real difference. Each of the gifts listed above can be purchased at the Advent Marketplace booth during the four Sundays of Advent. A beautiful ornament comes with each purchase that explains the meaning of your gift. These are presents that give real presence—the love of Jesus Christ.

Advent can still change the world. This is the message of the Advent Conspiracy which was born out of a group of churches who were tired of all the commercialism of Christmas. The Advent Conspiracy is an international, interdenominational effort to help ordinary Christians change the world one present at a time. As part of Advent many of our church groups will be watching some of the amazing videos produced by the Advent Conspiracy that helps us refocus on attention on the amazing story that began two thousand years ago and by God's grace continues to this day.

This year come and enter the story...

Pastor Chris

Pancake Mix Needed—Drop off pancake mix by **Wednesday, December 8**, as our youth help feed hungry families in River Falls.

Poinsettias and Blankets—Orders are due by **December 12**. Forms are available on the sign-up table or contact the church office.

Advent Marketplace will open again this year on the First Sunday in Advent, **November 28**. Please consider these gifts as you do your Christmas shopping.

Advent Workshop will be **Sunday, December 5**, following the 10:30 service. This is a great family event, please join us!

Advent Evening Prayer Service will be held on **Wednesday, December 15**. Dinner will be served from 5:00 to 6:15 pm. Worship will be from 6:30–7:00. It will be a lovely, contemplative service. Please come.

We believe...

~The Christian faith is a life-long learning process.

~Our church family aspires to be the living presence of Christ in the world.

~Our faith in Jesus is demonstrated through our lives, actions, and commitments.

~We are striving to become a congregation of life-long givers.

~Worship is the center of our life together.

MODERATOR NOTES Submitted by Jean Smith

When my Mother passed away, I found all kinds of poems, clippings, sayings and devotionals that she had clipped over the years. I had never known that about my Mother but found it was comforting in the fact that I have done and still do the same thing! It is one of those devotionals I am going to share with you for the month of December. I hope everyone has a blessed Christmas holiday and remembers that “Jesus” is the reason for the season.

The Big News—by Richard DeHaan—(December, 2005)

In December 1903, after many attempts, the Wright brothers were successful in getting their “flying machine” off the ground. Thrilled, they telegraphed this message to their sister Katherine: “We have actually flown 120 feet. Will be home for Christmas.”

Katherine hurried to the editor of the local newspaper and showed him the message. He glanced at it and said, “How nice. The boys will be home for Christmas.” He totally missed the big news - man had flown!

Many people today make a similar mistake when they hear the word *Christmas*. They don’t think of Jesus and His miraculous birth. Instead, they think of family gatherings, festive meals, decorations and gifts. To them, Christmas brings nostalgia and memories of childhood.

Now, all this celebration isn’t wrong. But if that’s all that Christmas means to us, we are missing its true significance. The real meaning of this special day is summed up in the words of the angel to the shepherds on that night long ago: “I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10-11)

That’s the big news of Christmas!

*One day has left its mark in time
For all mankind to see;
It is the day when Christ was born—
That day made history.*



Thought: Don’t celebrate Christmas without inviting the Guest of honor.

INVITE the OLD-FASHIONED WAY

Just a reminder that there are always *Invitations* on hand for your use. (You can find them on the sign-up table, in the office and the brochure racks.) If you know someone that may enjoy coming to church, give them an invitation. Upcoming special dates and our Adult Forum topics are included, and you can add your own personal “Hope you can join me.” You never know who is just waiting to be asked!

Welcomers Wanted

Time to check your calendars and chose a Sunday to take your turn being that smiling Welcomer we all love to see at the church door on Sunday morning. It is an easy and very rewarding job. Please see the new November through April sign-up list. Prime dates will disappear soon so don’t delay!

Upcoming Dates

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Advent Marketplace | November 28, December 5, 12, 19 |
| Family Advent Workshop | December 5 |
| Advent Event Prayer Service & Family Meal | December 15 |
| Children’s Dress Rehearsal for Advent Musical | December 18—10:00 am to 12:00 noon |
| Children’s Advent Musical | December 19 |
| Christmas Eve Worship | December 24—4:00, 6:00 and 11:00 pm |

Youth to Pack Backpacks

On **Wednesday, December 8 and 15**, the Confirmands and Pre-Confirmands will be packing backpacks with food as part of the Kinnickinnic Backpack Program in conjunction with the River Falls Food Pantry and the school district. 60 backpacks will be sent home with food. We are collecting pancake mix to be included in the packs. **Please drop off any donations by Wednesday, December 8 in the bins at church.**



Hot Chocolate Bar is Open!

With the coming of the colder months, we invite you to try out the new Hot Chocolate Bar during the 10:00 to 10:30 Coffee Fellowship Hour held each Sunday in the Fellowship Hall. In addition to regular and decaf coffee and a fine selection of teas, hot chocolate will be available. Come, warm up and bring the whole family for a tasty treat!

TREASURER'S NOTE\$

Missy Luedtke

Financial Information for October and YTD:

| | <u>October</u> | <u>2010 YTD</u> |
|----------|----------------|-----------------|
| Income | \$ 28,324.25 | \$ 264,796.24 |
| Expenses | \$ 30,369.19 | \$ 270,441.46 |
| Net | \$ -2,044.94 | \$ -5,645.22 |

A full accounting of all income and expenses is always posted outside the church office door on the bulletin board.

We are slowly making headway at reducing our 2010 deficit. Please consider catching up on your pledge or giving an extra gift.

Sunday School Teacher Needed

We have an urgent need for a 2 & 3 grade Sunday School teacher. The new teacher will join a strong team of two other teachers. Please consider volunteering. Sunday School is one of the congregation's most critical ministries. Please contact Stacy Myers.

Thursday Morning Bible Study

The First Thursday Bible Study will be held on **December 2, 10:00–10:30 am**, led by Stacy Myers. The focus will be a comparison of stories related to Jesus' nativity. All are welcome!

Yoga Classes

Yoga is held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:00 am. They meet in the Sunday School area. Please bring a yoga mat and a large bath towel. Any questions, call Jan Hansen at 425-5211.

Recycling Sweaters: An Evening for Women

Come for an evening of fun, creativity, and dessert as we turn old wool sweaters into new mittens. Bring a sewing machine and make a pair of mittens, or hand sew an ornamental mitten, and then add buttons, braid, or embroidery. Your creation will be one-of-a-kind and the companionship will be great. Bring what you have: felted wool sweaters, fleece, embellishments, and sewing supplies, to use and to share. **Thursday, December 9, starting at 6:30.** Please register so we have enough dessert! For more information, contact Stacy Myers.

Help Wanted

A helper or helpers are need to refresh the Church Mouse Bags for children during January, February and March (once a month). I will prepare all materials needed—you will just need to take out the old and put in the new. Please call Jan Hansen at 715-425-5211 or email at gghansen@presenter.com. Thank you!

Christmas Musical: *The Christmas Guest*

The dress rehearsal for children in kindergarten through grades 5 will be on **Saturday, December 18, 10:00 am to 12:00 noon**. It is critically important for all students to be present for rehearsals. The musical will be presented on December 19 during the 10:30 worship service.

All children in Pre-School through Grade 5 are asked to dress in black for the musical on December 19.

Van Driver Needed (or your own auto)

There are getting to be more people that are asking for a ride to church on Sunday mornings. Hal Ohlsen has been our constant volunteer but he can't be here every Sunday and we only have 3 subs to draw from. If you could possibly sub, please call Lu in the church office.

Craft Day and Bake Sales

The First Thursday Fellowship/Bible Study Group will be hosting the first of two Craft/Bake Sales **Sunday, November 28**, after both services. It will be set up downstairs in the Fellowship Hall.

The second Craft/Bake Sale will be on **December 12th** – please keep this date in mind while you are baking, and donate some of your goodies to this sale. If you have unfinished crafts – this is the time to get them done and pass them on for the sale. The baked goods/crafts will need to be delivered to the church by noon on the Saturday before the two sale.



COFFEE MATTERS

This holiday season please consider *Cloudforest coffee* as a stocking stuffer or hostess gift. *Cloudforest coffee*, offered for sale in the church lobby, is grown by small, independent farmers in the highlands of Chiapas, Mexico. Decendents of the ancient Maya, they are among the poorest people in this hemisphere and being able to sell their coffee at *Fair Trade* prices is extremely important to them. The coffee is also *organic* and *shade grown*, and delicious!

First Thursday Fellowship

The First Thursday Fellowship will meet at **9:15 am on December 2nd in the Fellowship Hall**. This is earlier than usual because there will be a light holiday brunch served—so come hungry. Stay for the Bible Study following the fellowship time at 10:00 am.

H4H Volunteers Needed

Habitat for Humanity is looking for groups or individuals to work on a new home in Spring Valley beginning **Saturday, December 4th**. Work will continue most Saturdays until finished. Groups or individuals may work any portion of the day up to 8 hours. No building experience is required. On-site crew leaders will help get people started on something within their capacity to do.

If interested, please call the Habitat office at 715-425-5623 to get on the schedule.



Christmas Trees and Wreaths

Turningpoint for Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault will be selling Christmas trees and wreaths/swags for the holidays. The balsam trees are locally grown and priced at \$35 at the sale site. Order blanks can be found at the back of the sanctuary.

Some wreaths and swags and the balsam trees will be available at the sale to be held Saturday, December 11th (noon–5:00 pm) and Sunday December 12th (10:00 am–3:00 pm) at Dave's Automotive and Transmission, near Sears and Shopko on the north end of town. Proceeds will benefit Turningpoint.

Jesus Core: Youth Retreat for Senior High Schoolers

The Wisconsin Conference Youth Ministry Team is sponsoring a winter retreat at the Pilgrim Center Camp in Green Lake, WI. Dates are January 7-9 and cost is \$135 with scholarship available. See bulletin board or Pastor Chris for more information.

Youth Opportunity: Travel to General Synod

The General Synod meets every second year. It is a gathering of UCC folks from across the country and the globe. This year's Synod is in Tampa, Florida from June 29 to July 5. The Wisconsin Conference is organizing a youth delegation from UCC churches across Wisconsin. Cost is \$480 inclusive. Please see bulletin board or Pastor Chris for more details.

Adult Forum

November 28: *Advent Texts and Art*, Stacy Johnson Myers—The Adult Forum will focus on viewing and discussing a video created by preacher and teacher Thomas Long.

December 5: *Mary's Song: The Magnificat*, Stacy Johnson Myers—Mary's Song has direct roots to Old Testament scripture. It also makes radical claims about the world's future and the identity of God's son.

December 12: *Waiting for the Messiah*—The forum will consider ancient expectations of a Messiah and wonder how and why Jesus came to be recognized as the leader for whom the world waited.

December 19: *Advent Texts and Images*, Ruth Reilly—Scripture texts during Advent are filled with powerful ideas and images. The forum will invite thought and reflection grounded in Advent texts, an image from the St. John's Bible, and realities of our world today.

Sunday Volunteers Needed

Liturgists: Dec 26—9:00 am

Welcomers: Dec 12—9:00 am

Acolytes: Dec 19, 26

Bell Ringers (grades 7 & 8)
for 10:30 service

The sign-up sheets are on the back table.
Thank you for your help!

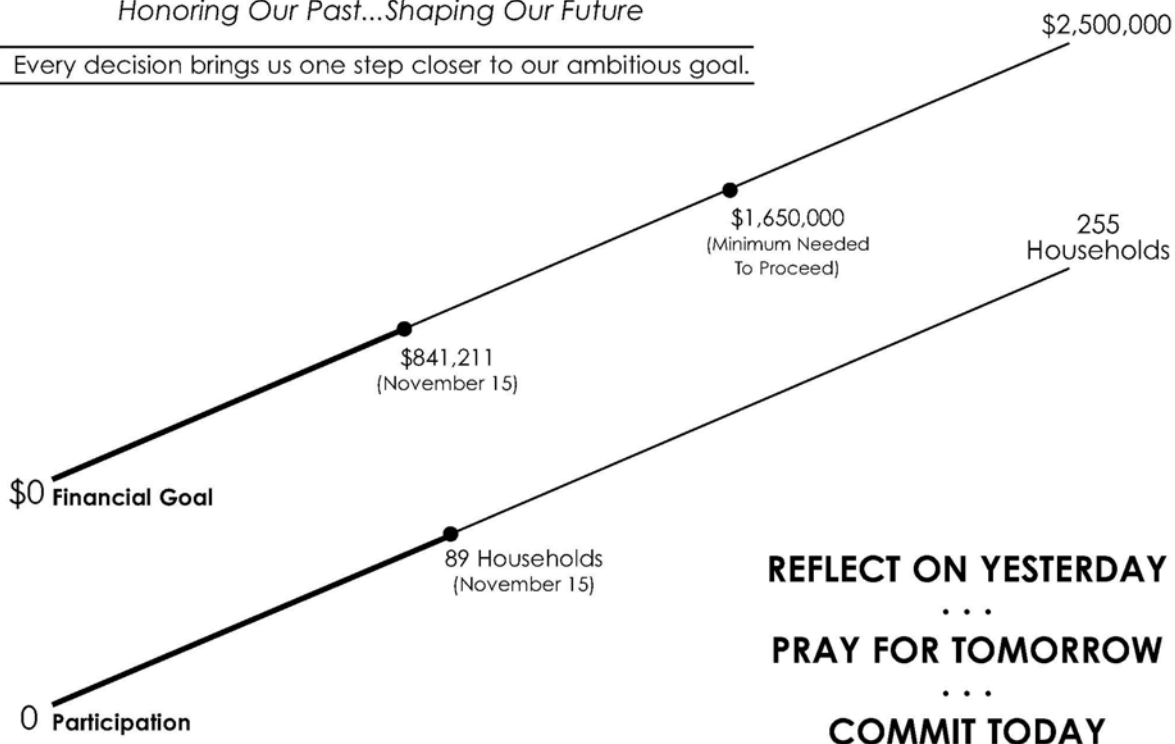
First Congregational United Church of Christ

Growing in Faith

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Honoring Our Past...Shaping Our Future

Every decision brings us one step closer to our ambitious goal.



We are half way toward our goal of renovating and expanding our church facilities.

Do we have your commitment form yet? Please turn them in to the church office as soon as possible.

REFLECT ON YESTERDAY

...

PRAY FOR TOMORROW

...

COMMIT TODAY

Advent Marketplace

“The Marketplace” will open again this year on the First Sunday in Advent, **November 28**. At the Marketplace people will be able to buy Christmas gifts in a loved one’s honor that will benefit vulnerable people around the world. Gifts this year include: clean water and well technology, sewing machines, wheelbarrows, and soccer balls. The monetary gifts will be sent to Church World Service who will in turn provide the tangible gifts to communities around the world. Shoppers at First’s Advent Marketplace will receive a card, information regarding the selected gift, and a small Christmas ornament. Please consider the Advent Marketplace gifts as you make your 2010 shopping lists.



Advent Workshop

December 5, following the 10:30 service, is the date for our annual Advent Workshop. The event will begin with a family-friendly meal followed by a chance to make a wide variety of Christmas ornaments. This is a great family event. It is also a perfect opportunity to invite friends and neighbors to come to First Congregational Church. Please consider issuing an invitation or two!

Advent Evening Prayer Service

We will be offering an Advent Evening Prayer Service in the sanctuary on **Wednesday, December 15, at 6:30 pm**. Much like the Lenten Evening Prayer Services from the past few years, we will be using the Holden Evening Prayer service by UCC composer Marty Haugen. A simple dinner will be served before the service. Please sign up for the meal and come for the worship service. May our worship help prepare room in each of us for the coming of Christ at Christmas.



Simpson Women’s Shelter Shoebox Gifts

As a Christmas project, the First Thursday Fellowship will again be giving shoebox gifts for Simpson Women. We welcome any one who would like to participate in this effort. Just fill a shoebox with items that would be appreciated by a woman who uses the Simpson Shelter. Some suggestions:

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Mittens/gloves | Lotion | Card games |
| Warm hat and scarf | Shampoo | Candy, nuts, gum |
| Warm socks | Lipstick/chapstick | Nail clippers, emery boards |
| Foot or hand warmers | Paperback book | Hair clips/accessories |
| Gift cards for Burger King or McDonalds | (no cash please) | |

If interested, please bring gift wrapped in non-religious Christmas paper to the church **by December 5**. Thank you!

Praises **Prayer Group**

Reflection **It’s wonderful to be part of this group. We**
Action **welcome each of you to join us. As our**
Yes **foundation, we have gotten prayer requests on**
Effective **the internet. In order to be available to more**
Realistic **people, we are adding prayer request lists**
being mailed out. Please supply your current
address to the office.

Pastor Chris and I would like to begin a time of being together for idea and information exchange leading to prayer. At **10:00 am each Tuesday**, all folks interested please meet in our Sanctuary. Contact Pastor Chris or Annette Petersen (425-5710) with questions.

Prayer Request Cards

Prayer is one of the great gifts of the Christian life. There is something powerful in both turning your prayers over to God, and knowing that there is a group of people who are together praying for the same thing.

Prayer request cards and a prayer box are on the back sign-up table. Simply complete the sheet and put it in the box. You may choose to have your prayers shared publically in the weekly worship bulletin, or privately simply among those in the Prayer Group. You may be very specific in your prayer details or simply choose to be anonymous. Prayers of thanksgiving, concern, health, justice, are all valued!

YoUthCC Corner

Poinsettias and Blankets: Again this year the youth will have poinsettias and blankets available for sale "in honor of" or "in memory of" someone special. The order form for blankets or plants will be available through December 12th. The poinsettias will be displayed on the altar on Christmas Eve and available for pick up after the 11:00 pm Christmas Eve service. A bow or similar type ornament will be placed on the Christmas tree to represent the blanket you donated in memory or honor of someone special. The blankets will be donated to the Church World Service. The cost of either item is \$12.00 and all proceeds will go toward the youth funds. Order blanks will be available in the church bulletin and in the back of the church. If you have any questions, please call Deb Hoffman @ 425-5633.



Thank you to all who so generously support our youth. Your kindness is sincerely appreciated. God Bless, Deb Hoffman

Church Directory—There have been many inquiries about having a new directory. We need 2 good leaders to head up this project. If you are interested in helping to coordinate this effort, please contact Lu in the church office.

Important Sunday School Dates

| | |
|--|--|
| Christmas Musical Sunday Rehearsals: | Sundays, November 28, December 5, 12: During Class |
| Christmas Musical Wednesday Rehearsal: | Wednesday, December 15, 3:30 to 5:00 PM |
| Christmas Musical Dress Rehearsal: | Saturday, December 18, 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon |
| Christmas Musical: | Sunday, December 19, 10:30 AM Worship Service |

Nominating Committee Information and Appeal

Over the months of November and December the Nominating Committee would like to feature our different church committees in our appeal for volunteers. Where possible we will also be listing some of the many accomplishments of these committees over the past years. If there is a committee that catches your eye and you are interested in serving in one of these positions please feel free to contact Jean Smith, Suzanne Hagen, Sheila Peterson, Virginia Hilden or Lu Lueck in the church office. Thanks.

Trustees: 2 positions needed

Responsible for business and financial affairs of the church and the church building and property.

Programs monitored: Develops and oversees budget, maintains church building and parsonage, organizes spring and fall clean up days. This committee consists of 9 members for a 3 year term meeting the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

Personnel: Appointed position, 2 needed

Responsible for all church staff. Develops job descriptions, conducts reviews and evaluations, hire and release church staff.

This committee consists of 6 members appointed by the Moderator meeting as needed 3 to 4 times annually.

Nominating: 3 positions needed

Solicits and suggests people to fill ministry positions on church boards and committees.

This committee consists of 5 members appointed by the Moderator meeting as needed 2 or 3 times in December and January.

Journey House Campus Ministry: All positions filled

Ecumenical ministry to students and staff on the campus of the University of Wisconsin at River Falls.

Works with the Campus Minister and our partner churches-the United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to provide bible studies, worship and programming on the campus of UWRF

This committee consists of 3 UCC members plus 9 other ecumenical members for a 3 year term meeting on the 4th Monday of the month.

Pastoral Relations: All positions filled

Provides support to pastor and feedback from the congregation. Works with Personnel and Church Council to ensure prompt, frank communication between pastor and congregation. This consists of 4 members appointed by the Moderator meeting 3 times a year.

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

STAFF



Chris Myers - Pastor
 Lu Lueck - Parish Coordinator
 Missy Luedtke - Office Assistant
 Stacy Johnson - CE Coordinator
 Scott Perau - Music Coordinator
 Organists - Marsha Pearson,
 Barb Wall
 Tim Bylander - Building Supervisor
 Dave Mountain - Custodian
 Jean Smith - Moderator

Office Phone: 715-425-2052
 Office E-mail: office@firstchurchrf.org
 Website: www.firstchurchrf.org

PASTOR'S HOME PHONE NUMBER

Chris Myers 715-426-2075
 chris@firstchurchrf.org

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

110 N. Third Street
 River Falls, Wisconsin 54022

STANDARD PRESORT
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 PERMIT #53
 RIVER FALLS, WI 54022

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

December 1, 2010



| 2010 DECEMBER 2010 | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
| | | | 1 3:30 pm Wednesday School 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Confirmation Year 1 (7th & 8th Grades) 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 7:30 pm Confirmation Year 3 (9th Grade) | 2 Yoga 9-10:00 am First Thursday Fellowship 9:30-10:00 am Bible Study 10-10:30 am | 3 | 4 |
| 5 9:00 am Worship Service 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Sunday School 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast 11:30 am Advent Workshop Advent Marketplace Open | 6 Endowment Grant Meeting 6:30 pm | 7 Yoga 9-10:00 am Prayer Group 10:00 am | 8 3:30 pm Wednesday School 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Pre-Confirmation (6th Grade) 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 7:30 pm Church Interns NEWSLETTER DEADLINE | 9 Yoga 9-10:00 am Mitten Night 6:30 pm | 10 | 11 |
| 12 8:00 am Chancel Choir and Jubilee Ringers 9:00 am Worship Service 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:00 am Craft/Bake Sale 10:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Sunday School 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast Advent Marketplace Open | 13 | 14 Yoga 9-10:00 am Prayer Group 10:00 am 2nd Tuesday Banquet 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's Trustees Meeting 6:00 pm Boards & Committees Meetings 6:30 pm Church Council Mtg 7:30 pm | 15 3:30 pm Wednesday School 5:30 pm Advent Meal 6:00 pm Jubilee Ringers 6:30 pm Advent Evening Prayer Service 7:00 pm Chancel Choir 7:00 pm Confirmation Years 1 & 3 (7th, 8th & 9th Grades) | 16 Last Yoga 9-10:00 am | 17 | 18 Children's Christmas Program Rehearsal 10:00 am-12:00 noon |
| 19 All Worship Sunday 9:00 am Worship Service 9:00 am Adult Forum 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:30 am Worship Service - Children's Christmas Program 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast Advent Marketplace Open Christmas Fund Offering Rec'd | 20 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE | 21 Prayer Group 10:00 am 3rd Tuesday Soup 'n Sandwich 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's | 22 No Wednesday Activities | 23 | 24 Christmas Eve Worship Services at 4:00 pm, 6:00 pm and 11:00 pm | 25 Christmas Day |
| 26 9:00 am Worship Service 10:00 am Coffee Fellowship 10:30 am Worship Service 11:00 am WEVR Broadcast Advent Marketplace Opens Endowment Grant Requests Due | 27 Church Office Closed | 28 Prayer Group 10:00 am 4th Tuesday Banquet 5:00 pm at St. Bridget's | 29 No Wednesday Activities | 30 | 31 Church Office Closed | |