

United Presbyterian Church

525 East Front Street • Plainfield, NJ 07060 • 908-756-2666 • http://www.upcplainfield.org/

Where God is exalted, Everyone matters, and You belong!

Worship Services: Sunday 11:00 am & Thursday 7pm

December 2021- Newsletter



"Glory to God in the highest, [and] on earth peace, [and] goodwill toward men [people]!"

Luke 2:14(NKJ)

Dear Friends.

Greetings to you in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our blessed Redeemer! I hope you are in good health, have a happy heart, and are optimistic about the future.

With the busy Thanksgiving holiday behind us, and Advent in full swing, our attention has shifted from visiting with loved ones and obsessing over buying, preparing, and eating more food in a few days than we usually eat in a week. Instead, like millions of Christians worldwide, we have immersed ourselves in spiritual activities that help prepare our hearts to celebrate December 25, the date western churches have set aside to commemorate Jesus' birth.

The Advent themes of hope, peace, love, and joy remind people that Jesus' birth assures the world things will get better despite tough times. Advent messages diminish concerns about the continuing spread and mutation of the Coronavirus, the rising cost of food and fuel, intense political divisions that threaten to topple democracy, and heightened social unrest.

During Advent, Christians think about and discuss the importance of Jesus' birth to world history and in the lives of individuals. Scripture readings, especially from the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) coupled with lessons from the prophetic books of Jeremiah and Isaiah, prompt folk to identify the links between Jesus of Nazareth and the birth of the Messiah foretold by the Hebrew prophets.

The Scriptures affirm God's love for all people, including underdogs. Bible passages also remind us that adverse circumstances are temporary, and God's love is more powerful than the social constructs humans erect to separate and isolate each other.

Thinking about the birth of Christ stirs cheer, goodwill, and friendliness. Those thoughts cause people to look forward with anxious anticipation to giving gifts on Christmas in joyful celebration of Jesus' birth- God's greatest gift to humanity. They also prompt folk to remember that a gift's true worth is measured by the spirit in which it is given and its significance to the giver, not its monetary cost or social value.

Furthermore, Advent reminds us that Christmas celebrations acknowledge God's sovereignty and faithfulness. The Christmas narrative reveals the fulfillment of God's promise to send a Savior (Isaiah 9:6 and John 1:29) to deliver humanity from the power and consequences of sin. That knowledge undergirded by the Holy Spirit enables folk to have hope despite facing personal trials and other challenges that threaten to disrupt peace on every level.

Looking to Christmas, Advent motivates us to celebrate by echoing the sentiment of Luke 2:14: "Glory to God in the highest, peace, and goodwill toward all."

Merry Christmas, and God bless!

Pastor Allegra

Sunday Worship (Traditional)

Pastor Allegra Hoots 11:00am

Live in the Sanctuary & on YouTube*

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Sunday Fellowship 12:30 - 1:30pm JOIN US

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Contemporary Worship Service Thursdays @ 7:00pm Via YouTube*



Sunday School

Sundays — 10:00am

Ages 13-17: Getting to Know Samuel the Prophet:

- ♦ introduce Listening Prayer
- highlight new forms of communication

Ages 3-12: Arts & Crafts, Movement & Games, Storytelling



Adult Education

Sundays — 10:00-10:45am (NOTE: No Class: Dec. 19, 26)

Bible Study & Noon Day Prayers

Wednesdays—12 noon to 1:00pm

Location: The Hansen Room & Zoom

Book: Bible Studies for Life: Unstoppable Gospel,

Bible Study Book Author: Greg Matte

The book is available through Christianbook.com for 9.99



Advent Study

Sundays 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm via ZOOM

Title: Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes



Upcoming Events

See calendars for more activities and events

December "There will be signs in the sun, the r			moon, and the stars." — Luke 21:25		- Luke 21:25 January	
Date	Time	Event	Date	Time	Event	
1		World AIDS day	6		Epiphany of our Lord	
10		Human Rights Day	9		Baptism of our Lord	
11	10:00am	Administrative Meeting	11	10:00am	Administrative Meeting	
12	1:00pm	Christmas Caroling—Join us!	15	7:30pm	Session Meeting	
15	7:30pm	Session Meeting	17		Martin Luther King Jr., Birthday	
19		Christmas Joy Offering			Week of Prayer for Christian Unity be-	
24	7:00pm	Christmas Eve Service			gins	
25		Nativity of the Lord—Christmas Day				

NATIVITY OF JESUS

The nativity of Jesus, nativity of Christ, birth of Christ or birth of Jesus is described in the biblical gospels of Luke and Matthew. The two accounts agree that Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, his mother Mary was betrothed to a man named Joseph, who was descended from King David and was not his biological father, and that his birth was caused by divine intervention.

The nativity is the basis for the Christian holiday of Christmas on December 25, and plays a major role in the Christian liturgical year. Many Christians traditionally display small manger scenes depicting the nativity in their homes, or attend Nativity Plays or Christmas pageants focusing on the nativity cycle in the Bible. Elaborate nativity displays called "creche scenes", featuring life-sized statues, are a tradition in many continental European countries during the Christmas season.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nativity_of_Jesus











Christmas ~ What is Christmas?

A ANTONOMY AND ANTONOMY

Christians celebrate Christmas Day on December 25th as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, a spiritual leader whose teachings form the basis of their religion. Popular customs include exchanging gifts, decorating Christmas trees, attending church and sharing meals with family and friends.

Is Christmas Really the Day Jesus Was Born?

In the early years of Christianity, Easter was the main holiday; the birth of Jesus was not celebrated. In the fourth century, church officials decided to institute the birth of Jesus as a holiday. Unfortunately, the Bible does not mention a date for his birth.

For centuries, Christmas was celebrated not as a single day, but as a whole season in parts of the world, beginning with December 24, Christmas Eve. Perhaps the practice of celebrating the evening before the big day is an echo from ancient Jewish reckoning. Among earlier Jews, a day began at six in the evening and ran until six the following evening. Had not Moses written: "An evening and a morning were the first day"?

Christmas means "Christ-mass." Although the date is a guess, the tradition of observing it goes back to at least the fourth century. Under the influence of the church, Christian traditions replaced pagan solstice festivals throughout Europe. Often the more innocent pagan practices (such as bringing in a Yule log, decorating with holly and the like) were carried over into the Christmas observance, transfigured with new meaning.



Yule Log

Gifts

Make your gift meaningful and from the heart.



Most gifts are free.

The Christian Meaning Behind Ancient Traditions

Evergreen Trees were the symbol of eternal life. Martin Luther introduced them to the Reformation Church as a picture of our endless life in Christ, by bringing in a tree to his family on Christmas Eve lit with candles (Isaiah 60:13).

Candles are a picture that Christ is the Light of the world (John 8).

Holly speaks of the thorns in His crown (Matthew 27:29).

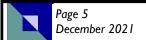
Red is a color of Christmas that speaks of Christ's blood and death.

Gifts are a reminder of the gifts of the Magi to baby Jesus. Each of them speak to a component of His incarnation: Majesty in life, Bitterest Agony in Death and He as God's Perfect gift to us (Matthew 2).

 $\underline{https://www.history.com/topics/christmas/history-of-christmas}$

Christmas Tree

 $\underline{https://www.crosswalk.com/special-coverage/christmas-and-advent/what-is-christmas-understanding-the-history-and-origin.html}$



Responding to HIV/AIDS

As Presbyterians, we are called to stand with our brothers and sisters living with HIV/AIDS and offer them compassion and sup-



port. Medical advances have been made and people are able to manage their HIV infection through antiretroviral therapy, but social stigma still exists, making life difficult for the 36.9 million people worldwide currently living with HIV/AIDS.

World AIDS Day takes place on 1 December each year. It's an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, to show support for people living with HIV, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness. Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day.

Why is World AIDS Day Important?

Globally, there are an estimated 38 million people who are living with HIV/AIDS. Despite the virus only being identified in 1984, more than 35 million people have died of HIV or AIDS related illnesses, making it one of the most destructive pandemics in history.

Today, scientific advances have been made in HIV treatment, there are laws to protect people living with HIV and we understand so much more about the condition. Despite this, people do not know the facts about how to protect themselves and others, and stigma and discrimination remain a reality for many people living with the condition.

World AIDS Day is important because it reminds the public and government that HIV has not gone away – there is still a vital need to raise money, increase awareness, fight prejudice and improve education.

"My kingdom is not from this world." — John 18:36

Human Rights Day 2021 Theme:

EQUALITY - Reducing inequalities, advancing human rights

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home -- so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. [...] Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

Eleanor Roosevelt

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, a milestone document, proclaims the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

The principles of equality and non-discrimination are at the heart of human rights. Equality is aligned with the UN approach framework on Leaving No One Behind: Equality and Non-Discrimination at the Heart of Sustainable Development. This includes addressing and finding solutions for deep-rooted forms of discrimination that have affected the most vulnerable people in societies, including women and girls, indigenous peoples, people of African descent, LGBTI people, migrants and people with disabilities, among others.

The Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations has a long history in the global community. Active in the United Nations since its formation in 1945, the church has held special consultative status through the UN Economic and Social Council since 1998. This allows the Presbyterian voice to be heard by the global audience and contribute to its agenda by attending conferences, making statements and taking part in advocacy and networking.

Amid the restless spirits and often-tough diplomacy of the United Nations, the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations helps inspire, equip and connect Presbyterians for ministry as faithful disciples of Jesus in the global community. We educate with the hope of helping individuals live out God's call in Christ to live with compassion, seek peace, and pursue justice wherever they go.

Rebuild better, fairer, greener

- A Human Rights-Based Economy Can Break Cycles Of Poverty
- Rebuilding Fairer: A New Social Contract
- Equal Opportunities for Youth
- Reversing Vaccine Inequality and Injustice
- Advancing The Right to A Healthy Environment and Climate Justice
- Preventing Conflict and Building Resilience Through Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights

https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/un/ https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day

Transcending Challenges

Haitians receive food donated in September by the United Presbyterian Church and others to the victims of the August 14th earthquake that destroyed parts of Haiti.





A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Eternal God, the hope of all humankind, you gave us the greatest gift of all in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Son of God, you came as God's Light to shine brightly in the darkness of minds and hearts; bathe our world in your Light.

Jesus Christ, Word made flesh, make a way for the Good News of your Kingdom to reach every home, every heart, everywhere.

Protect and preserve the labourers who courageously declare the glory of your Gospel throughout the world. Provide for their every need and be their strength and joy.

Be the comforter, defender and provider of the poor, the helpless, the cold, the hungry, the orphaned, the weary, the oppressed, those persecuted for their faith in you, the sick, those who mourn, the aged and the little children.

Reveal yourself to those who do not know your immense love.

Bless those who rejoice at your coming!

Glorious Lord, we join our voices to the heavenly host and say: "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests!"

Amen.

tithes & offering

Worship the Lord in Giving



Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7

To bless the Church with your tithes and offering you may:

- 1. Drop it off at the church office
- 2. Mail your check (not cash) to the church
- 3. Log in to https://bit.ly/3oyj1J6 or
- 4. Go to the UPC website homepage and click on the "Give Now" button

~ Thank you ~

Christmas Joy

November 28 - December 19, 2021

By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor God's gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

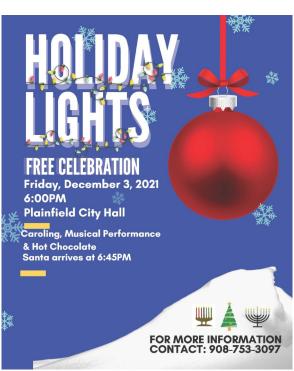
developing & sustaining our leaders

Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

God has blessed the Church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. This Offering addresses the support needed by some of our leaders, including supporting leadership development for communities of color, and providing support for Presbyterian church workers in their time of need.

https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/make-a-gift/gift-info/christmas-joy/





* NEED HELP BUYING GROCERIES? *

Check to see if you are eligible for food assistance (SNAP), cash assistance (WFNJ/TANF or WFNJ/GA), and health Insurance (NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid). From here you can apply for services or learn about additional resources.

Click on this link: https://www.njhelps.org/

FEEDINGTHE HUNGRY

STAR FISH IS OPEN

To provide food for the hungry

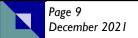
Place your unexpired, non-perishable food items in the bin in the Narthex or

Call 732-742-8762 if pick up is needed.

For monetary donations: Make the check payable to **Star Fish**

HELP SOMEONE IN NEED-GIVE!

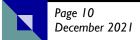




Thanksgiving Dinner at United Presbyterian Church

Thanksgiving to our Lord for everything we have, for who we are and for those we are blessed to be among. We missed those who could not be there but we are in each others hearts. A warm thank you to Liz Mangan and Jean Scott for coordinating the event and to Sue Terry, our resident photographer.





Prayers for Healing

Remember our sisters and brothers listed below and call them if you are able to. Let us know if there are members who are not on this list.

Emory Dawson Karen Edmonds Helen Foerster O'Harold Hoots BJ Klikus Frank Klikus Vilvurn Marsh



Bobett Neil Marianna Perry Pat Perry Gail Stokes Izaiyah Stokes Jamie Sweeney

Please send your Prayer requests to the Church Office— You will be placed on the prayer list



December

- 10 Macy Robinson
- 13 Javin Scott
- 16 Yetunde Falowo
- 18 Avril Lecky
- 22 Patricia Dawson
- 24 Pat Perry
- 26 Crystal Awobue
- 27 Gabrielle Greene
- 28 Ginni Hansen
- 29 Jennifer Youngsam

January

- 6 Bola Falowo
- 15 Izaiyah Stokes
- 17 Christopher Lecky
- 19 Jessica Dawson Stanley Awobue
- 21 Madison Darius

Flower Ministry

With your donation of \$25 or more to the Flower Fund, the Deacons will provide a beautiful floral arrangement for the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings. After worship, the arrangement will also brighten the day of a member or friend of UPC who is unable to join us for worship.

Flowers may be made in honor or memory of a loved one. Honoree names will be listed in the church bulletin.

You may complete the form below or add your information to the flower chart in the Narthex.

Blessings, Zorina Bowers

Name:	 	
Email:		
Telephone:		
Address:		
Amount:	 	
In Memory of:		

Thank you for your generous support of UPC's Flower Ministry

 $Board\ of\ Deacons$



"Those who are gracious to the poor lend to the Lord, and the Lord will fully repay them."

Proverbs 19:17

The Good News: In many ways, the mere act of being charitable is its own reward. But as this verse notes, being compassionate to people who are less fortunate is also something that God will reward.





CHILDREN'S CORNER

Parents, please read this to your younger child(ren)

Jesus Is Coming Again

Theme: We look forward to Jesus' return

Object: Christmas decorations

Scripture: Luke 21:25-36



Christmas is coming soon. It's easy to tell. We see the signs all around us. (Point to Christmas decorations.) What signs have you seen? (Allow kids to answer.) We see Christmas decorations on houses; we hear Christmas songs on the radio; we see commercials on TV, and more. If we didn't have all of these things to remind us, how could we tell that Christmas is coming? (Pause for responses.)

Two thousand years ago, there was no TV or radio announcing that a child would be born and that He would be the Savior of the world. When Jesus was born, very few people even knew about it. But it was an event that God had promised, and it was foretold by prophets many years before. Many people had been looking forward to the coming of the Savior, but they didn't know exactly when He was coming.

We're entering the season of Advent. Advent means "the coming of something very important." It is a period of time when we look forward to the celebration of Jesus' birth at Christmas--and we also look forward to Jesus' return.

Jesus promised to come again, and we look forward to it, just as people 2,000 years ago looked forward to the Savior being born. No one knows exactly when Jesus will come back. It isn't marked on the calendar, but we're watching and waiting, expectantly.

As we prepare to celebrate the birthday of our Savior, let's also be sure we prepare for His exciting return.

Dear God, we thank You for this special time of year and its important meaning to us. We praise You for keeping your promise to send a Savior who will come back again. In Jesus' name, amen.

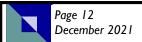
Memory Verse:

She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21

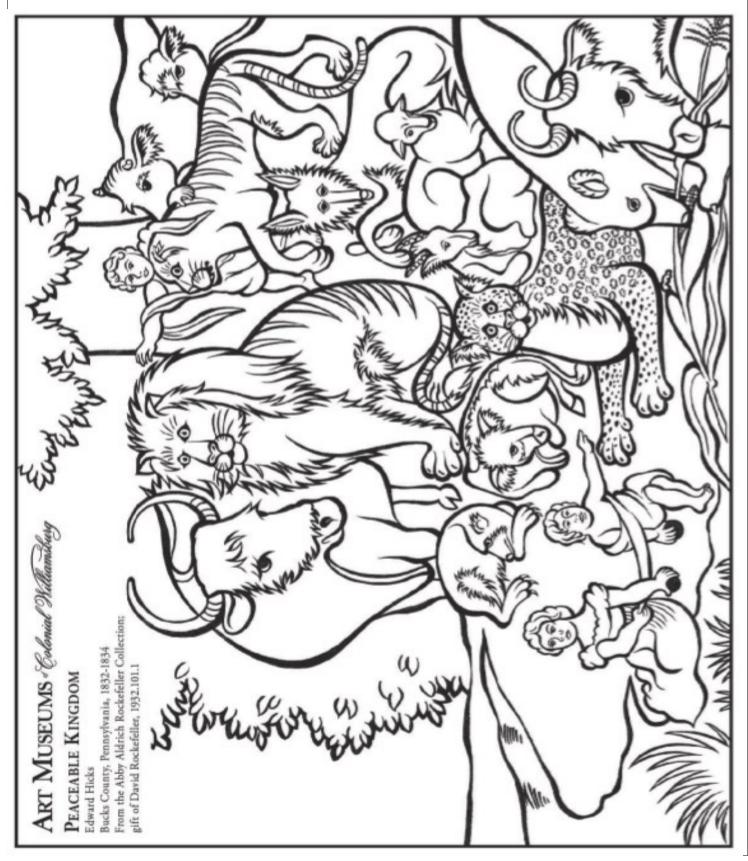
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CHILDREN'S CORNER

Peaceable Kingdom Coloring





2021 PER CAPITA APPORTIONMENT Never too Late!

Your annual Per Capita is \$45.00 and is shared as follows: General Assembly \$8.98, The Synod of the Northeast \$4.10, The Presbytery of Elizabeth \$31.92. Per Capita is a member assessment used to fund the operating expenses of governing bodies. (Book of Order; G-9.0404 d).

Consider paying more than your share to help cover the cost of others who are unable to pay

Important:

Deadline is the 20th of each month for the Newsletter. Leave your news in the Church Office or email it to upcnews525@gmail.com

Church Office Hours: Mon-Fri 9am-3pm

Schedule of Pastor's Office Hours

Monday to Friday 9:00am to 1:00pm

Please call the Church Office for an Appointment or to contact the Pastor

Session Members

Al Tate (Clerk) Emory Dawson Patricia Dawson Avril Lecky Marcia Marsh-Hinds

Newsletter

Newsletter Editors

Avril Lecky George Hansen Hugh Lecky James Plummer

Desirae Hemans (Youth)

Contributors

Pastor Allegra Hoots
Davaughn Hoots
Al Tate
Sue Terry

If you have information that you would like to share, send them to upcnews525@gmail.com

Church Administrators

Pastor Allegra Hoots

Director of Music: Mr. Ronn Daniels
Administrative Assistant: Ms. Pat Perry &
Mr. DaVaughn Hoots
Custodian: Mr. Charles Rivers

Board of Deacons

Helen Foerster - Moderator
Daniel Bofah
Thelma Fleming
Virginia Hansen
Desirae Hemans (in training)
Tania Hemans (in training)
Maggie Anglin (Volunteer)
Zorina Bowers (Volunteer)

To contact the deacons for assistance Call the church office at 908-756-2666

CONTACT INFORMATION

Church Email: upcchurch@aol.com
Newsletter: upcnews525@gmail.com
Church website: http://upcplainfield.org
Telephone No.: (908) 756-2666

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December 2021							
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
A) TO			1	2	3	4	
¥ C	MERRY HRISTMAS		Noon Day Prayer & Bible Study	7:00pm Contemporary Worship Service			
World Aids Day							
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
10:00am Sunday Sch. Adult Educ. 11am Worship Service In-person & Livestream			Noon Day Prayer & Bible Study	7:00pm Contemporary Worship Service	Human Rights Day	10:00am Administra- tive Mtg	
7:00pm Advent Study							
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
10:00am Sunday Sch. Adult Educ. 11am Worship Service In-person & Livestream - Youth Sunday - 1:00pm Caroling 7pm Advent Study			Noon Day Prayer & Bible Study 7:30pm Session Mtg	7:00pm Contemporary Worship Service			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
10:00am Sunday Sch. 11am Worship Service In-person & Livestream 7pm Advent Study Christmas Joy Offering			Noon Day Prayer & Bible Study		7:00PM CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE	NATIVITY OF THE LORD / CHRISTMAS DAY	
26	27	28	29	30	31		
10:00am Sunday Sch. 11am Worship Service In-person & Livestream Dedication Sunday			Noon Day Prayer & Bible Study	7:00pm Contemporary Worship Service			

NOTE:

CALENDAR EVENTS MAY CHANGE BASED ON THE STATES POLICY ON GROUP MEETING. THE CALENDAR REFLECTS REGULARLY OCCURRING

Communion & Deacon Sunday — Ist Sunday Monthly
Youth Sunday—2nd Sunday monthly
Dedication Sunday—4th Sunday Monthly

Committee Meetings (unless stated otherwise): 2nd Saturday @ 10:00am: Administration Meeting

3rd Wednesday @ 7:30pm: Session Meeting

If you would like to be a member on any committee or help with any project, call the Church Office at 908-756-2666.

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January 2022							
JU NI Y	ICHDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
HAPI	\					1	
NEWY	HAPPY NEW YEAR!						
2	3	4	5	6	12	13	
10:00am Sunday Sch. Adult Educ. 11am Worship Service In-person & Livestream Communion Service			Noon Day Prayer & Bible Study	7:00pm Contemporary Worship Service Epiphany of the Lord		10am Administra- tion Mtg	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
10:00am Sunday Sch. Adult Educ. 11am Worship Service In-person & Livestream Youth Sunday Baptism of the Lord			Noon Day Prayer & Bible Study	7:00pm Contemporary Worship Service			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
10:00am Sunday Sch. Adult Educ. 11am Worship Service In-person & Livestream	Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday	Week of Prayer for Christian unity begins	Noon Day Prayer & Bible Study 7:30pm Session Mtg	7:00pm Contemporary Worship Service			
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
11am Worship Service In-person & Livestream Dedication Sunday			Noon Day Prayer & Bible Study	7:00pm Contemporary Worship Service			
30 11am Worship Service In-person & Livestream Dedication Sunday	31						

NOTE:

CALENDAR EVENTS MAY CHANGE BASED ON THE STATES POLICY ON GROUP MEETING. THE CALENDAR REFLECTS REGULARLY OCCURRING EVENTS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE. CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR UPDATES.

Communion & Deacon Sunday — Ist Sunday Monthly Youth Sunday—2nd Sunday monthly Dedication Sunday—4th Sunday Monthly Committee Meetings (unless stated otherwise):
2nd Saturday @ 10:00am: Administration Meeting
3rd Wednesday @ 7:30pm: Session Meeting

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