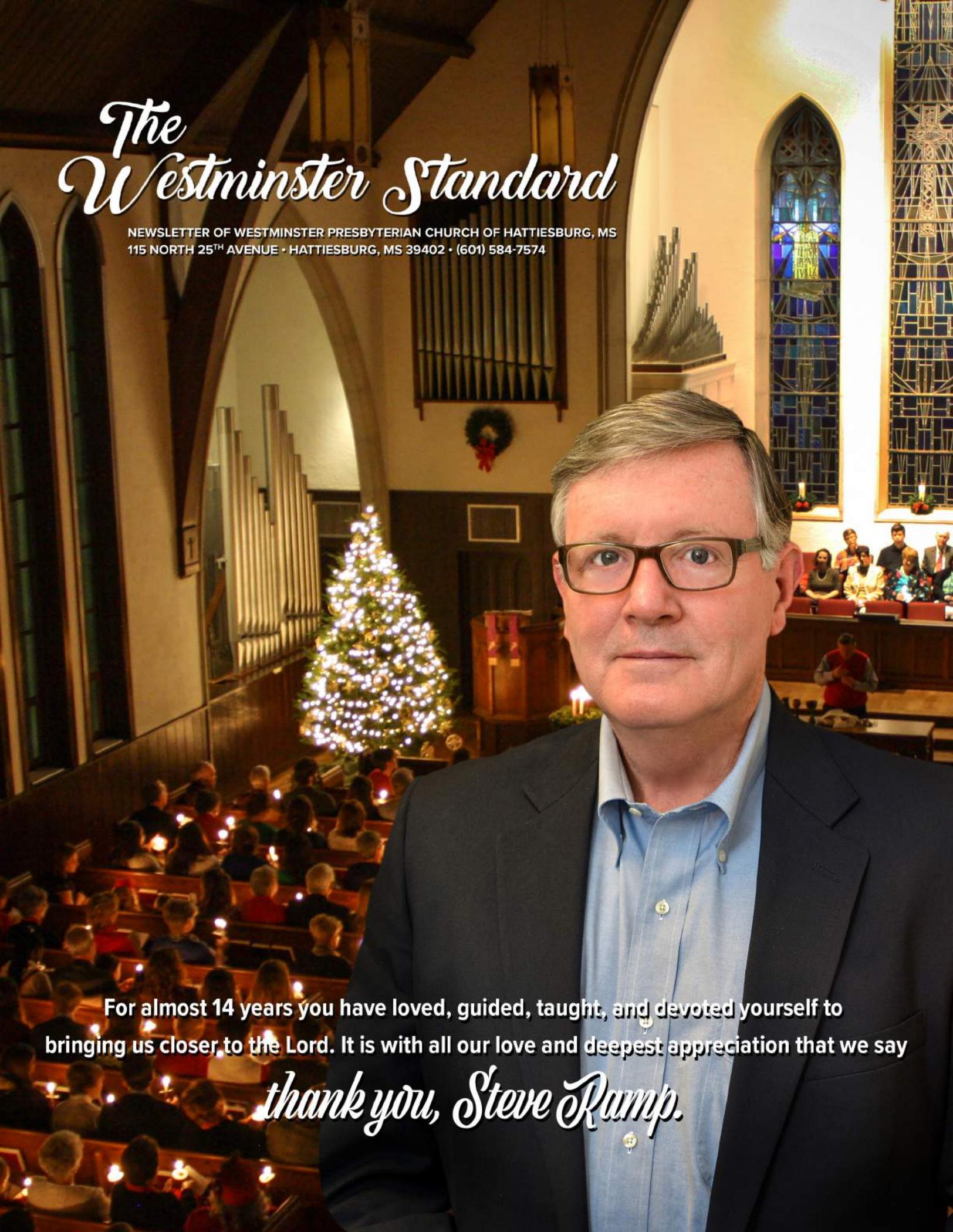


The Westminster Standard

NEWSLETTER OF WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HATTIESBURG, MS
115 NORTH 25TH AVENUE • HATTIESBURG, MS 39402 • (601) 584-7574



For almost 14 years you have loved, guided, taught, and devoted yourself to bringing us closer to the Lord. It is with all our love and deepest appreciation that we say

thank you, Steve Ramp.



From the Pastor's Desk

I'm no expert on Buddhism, but I admire the Dalai Lama's cheerful outlook on life. The other day, while visiting Mongolia, he told reporters that he looks forward to meeting Donald Trump and that he isn't worried about the harsh rhetoric used during the campaign. "Sometimes I feel during the election, the candidate has more freedom to express," adding that once in power all Presidents are forced to work with "reality." "Reality" is the operative word. The Dalai Lama is a wise soul. As Christians, we know that God does not hold everything we say against us, that God is merciful and willing to forgive us. We, too, are called to cut others some slack and treat them with mercy and love. When we do this, we are aligned with God's values and God's methods. I'm hopeful that the nation will move past the campaign rhetoric, find common ground, and begin to heal. One way to do this is to observe valued rituals and traditions. December is a rich with such traditions here at Westminster. I encourage you to pitch in when we clean up the church December 3, decorate the church December 4, celebrate my retirement December 11, enjoy Randall's recital and go caroling December 18, and welcome the Christ child on December 24 and 25. Meanwhile, let's remember Boswell, the Salvation Army, the Shoe Box ministry, and other expressions of God's love for us this Christmas season. It is a privilege to be your pastor.

THANK YOU, TOM SIKES!

This year we entered a covenant relationship with MissionScape, led by Rev. Tom Sikes. Tom returned to

the PC(USA) from the Disciples of Christ and needed a way to plug in. We needed to learn more about evangelism and sharing our story. We have been blessed by Tom's sparkling personality, his passion for the gospel, his love of golf, and his desire to help us grow in our relationship with Jesus. Tom will preach on December 4 and be with us for Steve's retirement party. Please let Tom know how much you've enjoyed his ministry here at Westminster, as we wish him and Paige Godspeed in 2017.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Our budget for 2017 is \$490,000. To meet our goal, we need all hands on deck. If you have not yet turned in a pledge card for next year, please pray about it and turn one in. We need your support to accomplish the things God is asking us to do.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The good news is that we spent \$5 million on our recovery and expansion. We have a wonderful facility. Our total debt is \$220,000. Our monthly note is \$1,000. That's an outstanding achievement. More good news: if we receive everything that was pledged, we could retire the debt completely. If there is a balance on your capital campaign pledge, please consider paying it in 2016. If that's not feasible, pay it over the next year or two. We sequester these funds and use them for debt reduction.

RULES OF DISENGAGEMENT

In our Presbyterian system of government, pastors are not members of churches. We are members of the Presbytery, and

we're bound by the rules and policies of our Presbytery. In 2004 the Presbytery of Mississippi adopted rules that apply when a pastor leaves a church or retires. These rules are designed to help churches navigate changes in pastoral leadership. Basically, the ship does not need two captains. The rules may seem a bit harsh, but the intent is to make it crystal clear: the retired pastor is no longer active. The rules state: "The former pastor and (if married) spouse normally shall not attend meetings or services of worship at their former parish except by invitation of the Moderator of Session." The rules also require retiring ministers "to send clear and unambiguous signals that the word "retired" basically means "withdrawn from active service" in that location. My pastoral duties at Westminster will end December 31, 2016. Ellen and I will still love and care for the people of Westminster, but the relationship will change. I am ethically bound to maintain a respectful distance and to refuse to provide pastoral care "except by specific invitation of the Moderator of the Session, guided by the Session of the church." With your help, I intend to honor these guidelines. We plan to remain in Hattiesburg and we want to maintain the bonds of friendship. God will show us how to do this well. It has been a great privilege for me to serve as your pastor for nearly 14 years. I'm looking forward to cheering on the next pastor of this amazing congregation.

Steve

MUSIC NOTES FROM CONNIE



Advent is one of the seasons I look forward to most, because we all get to sing those wonderful carols and Christmas songs. This Advent is no exception. The Choir started the Advent season last week with *Come, Thou Almighty King*. We will continue in a festive mood on December 4 with a lovely setting of *Three French Carols* by Stan Pethel (sung in English, don't worry!). These are fun carols you know but don't get to sing much in church. December 11 is a special Sunday, as we all know. We are honoring Steve that afternoon, celebrating his time as our pastor, and both the children's choir and the chancel choir will be a part of the service. We have chosen to sing *The Call*, a

beautiful setting of a George Herbert poem by the English composer Ralph Vaughan-Williams. This anthem holds special significance, deeper than the obvious reference to being called into God's service. It's the piece Steve himself selected for us to sing when he was installed as Westminster's pastor. We are coming full circle, and no one can argue that it has been a full circle, indeed!

We will continue to bring you lovely anthems throughout Advent and Christmas, which we hope will deepen your spiritual experience in this wonderful season.

I also have something fun to announce: the congregation is going to pick the hymns for Christmas Day! You will be receiving a list of Christmas hymns via email, and you get to choose your favorites for Christmas Day. We will tally the results and include those hymns (up to ten for the morning service) which have been selected by you. So be sure to vote for your most beloved Christmas hymns. I'll see you there!



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN OF WESTMINSTER

By ALTHEA JEROME

During Advent Christians anticipate the birth of our Savior, whom we greet as an innocent and holy child. In the monthly Bible study, *Who is Jesus?*, our circles are looking at scripture to discover how to answer that question in a deeply personal way. *Horizons Magazine* contributor, Mihee Kim-Kort, reflected on Jesus' welcoming the children during his ministry. She writes, "The Gospel of Mark regularly leads us to the margins—not only as a place in which to offer hospitality in our ministries, but as a space where we discover the Christ and, in turn, receive compassion in surprising and immeasurable ways." In this season of Advent, Presbyterian Women will offer tangible and spiritual hospitality by giving gifts to women and children residing at the Domestic Abuse Family Shelter. If you are not currently attending one of our circles and you would like to donate money for gifts to the families residing there, please see Ann Johnson or Alicia Westbrook.

Next month our Presbytery will host a women's retreat at St. Mary of the Pines in Chatawa. We drive there on Friday afternoon, January 13, stay overnight and return home after lunch on Saturday, January 14. This is a great time to enjoy fellowship with our sisters in Christ from across the Presbytery, and to study God's word as we begin a new year. If you would like to attend, please let Althea Jerome or Mary Dayne Gregg know. Reservations are to be submitted by December 28.

FROM TOM SIKES

Dear Westminster,

Thank you for inviting MissionScape into the life of your loving congregation. Together we have heard God's call to *Get Up and Go* with Christ into our mission fields at home, work and beyond. We have offered spring and fall Bible studies. What a delight to hear your stories of your ministries!

On December 4 after I preach, we will offer a 45-minute Greeter Orientation to help us focus on being an Inviting Church. It will be an interactive experience!

Thank you Steve and your staff for including me into your weekly staff prayer time and planning.

May you be blessed in your transition with hope, peace, joy and love!

Mission on!

Tom Sikes
MissionScape



A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR OF DISCIPLESHIP

The season of Advent is upon us at Westminster, and there are many things for you to anticipate. There will be a church-wide work day on Saturday, December 3, to spruce up the church. Everyone is invited to attend and pitch in at 9:00 a.m. The next day, Sunday, December 4, marks the day of our Advent workshop. Join us at the church at 5:00 p.m. for craft making, tree trimming, sanctuary decorating followed by a great supper and a Christmas program performed by our children's choir. Sunday, December 11, is a big day in the life of Westminster as we will celebrate the ministry of Steve and Ellen Ramp. Come and honor the Ramps at 3:00 p.m. We will gather in the sanctuary for a brief worship service, and then we will go to Montague Hall for a big reception. Randall Harris will be in concert on Sunday, December 18, at 2:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. A reception will follow. That evening at 5:00 p.m. we will all gather to go caroling to our friends at home, and then we will reconvene at the church for hot cocoa, chili dogs, and dessert. And don't forget the Candle Light Christmas Eve service at 5 p.m. on the 24! Remember, Christmas Day falls on a Sunday this year! There will be no Sunday school on December 25, but we will gather as usual for

worship at 10:30 a.m. Advent is a busy time for Westminster, but it is also a very special time for our congregation to spend time together, sing together, celebrate together, and worship together!

NEW BEGINNINGS

New Beginnings is the name of our Older Adult Ministry at Westminster. On Monday, December 19, at noon, the New Beginnings group will meet in Montague Hall for BBQ sandwiches, and then the group will pack the Christmas Boxes for the Bread Basket. This is an annual event for New Beginnings, and it is always a lot of fun, and it is for a great cause. Please join us if you are able!



FROM THE CLERK OF THE SESSION

November's session meeting tackled a number of issues that I think the congregation will be interested in knowing about. On property improvements, we have approved the purchase and installation of both a new camera DVR system to cover the exterior of our facility and a permanent projector and screen system for use in Montague Hall. We hope both will be installed quickly for our use and safety in the coming months.

Following up on last month's news concerning our new interim pastor, Mike Anderson, the session approved a plan for church members to assist in moving Mike and Monnie to Hattiesburg on Friday, December 2. If you are interested in helping, please contact Jeff Haydel. Mike and Monnie plan to spend December getting settled in Hattiesburg.

Finally, we heard a number of reports from both the Growing Spiritually and Belonging committees about events that have been successful recently as well as about all the planning for the holiday to come. Please don't forget the church work day at 9:00 a.m. on December 3.

MISSION OPPORTUNITY TO HELP IN DISASTER RELIEF

This fall the Session voted to establish a Disaster Relief Team at Westminster. The team made 2 trips to Baton Rouge and 8 trips to Crosby, MS to help flood victims. These were fruitful experiences. The Team believes we should focus our efforts on projects that are in Forrest or Jones counties. We are working with R3SM, a long-term recovery agency supported by Westminster, to see how we can partner with others to help people in our area. Stay tuned as we work out the details of this mission opportunity.

CHILDREN & YOUTH IN DECEMBER

4 Advent Workshop. The Children and Youth will present *The Christmas Story* for the congregation. We will probably have a quick run through that night. The children will sing and the youth will narrate. I need 6 or 7 youth who are willing to be readers for me that night to let me know if they want to participate. No prep needed. It will all be written out for you.

11 Grades 3-5 & Youth will go Angel Tree Shopping. I will go to Taco Bell and get us some lunch for after church and then we will shop. Do not bring a change of clothes. After shopping we will return to the church for Steve's retirement celebration. Extra adult hands are always welcome to help shop.

18 Children and Youth will participate with the rest of the church and go caroling.

20 Grades 3-5 & Youth Christmas Party 5:00-6:30 p.m. at the home of Erik & Ginny Graham. Bring a party food to share and a Dirty Santa Gift.

Just a reminder that all summer trip deposits are due on Sunday, January 8, 2017. I will accept money at any time before.

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US
AS WE HONOR

The Reverend Dr. Steve Ramp

UPON THE OCCASION
OF HIS RETIREMENT AS
PASTOR OF WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

INFORMAL PROGRAM IN THE SANCTUARY
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2016
3:00 P.M.

*With reception to follow
in Montague Hall.*

PLEASE SHARE THIS INVITATION WITH FRIENDS AND
COLLEAGUES IN YOUR CHURCH, AGENCY, OR
ORGANIZATION SO THAT THEY MAY

HELP US CELEBRATE
STEVE'S 15 YEARS
OF LOVE, LAUGHTER, AND SERVICE
TO THIS CONGREGATION AND TO OUR COMMUNITY!

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
115 NO. 25TH AVENUE
HATTIESBURG MISSISSIPPI 39401
WWW.WESTMINSTER-HATTIESBURG.COM
(601) 584-7574

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS	
1	Kathy Cain
4	Bryan Hernandez
7	Cassie Reid
8	Olivia Turner
9	David Arnold
12	Ray Steingraber
20	Bonnie Revicki
20	Dan Davis
21	Bob Lochhead
21	Cala Raborn
21	Meredith Suttle
23	Sam Haydel
25	Robert Cummings
26	Karen Reidenbach
27	Ben Ruff
28	Tami Dossett
29	Ryan Reid

DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>ATTENDANCE IN NOVEMBER</p> <p>November 6 — 122 November 13 — 128 November 20 — 125 November 27 — 116</p>				<p>1 6:30 AM Men of the Church Weekly Breakfast, Shoney's 12:00 PM ShareCare</p>	<p>2 6:30 AM Men of the Church Weekly Breakfast, Shoney's 12:00 PM ShareCare</p>	<p>3 9:00 AM CHURCH-WIDE WORK DAY</p>
				<p>BREADBASKET WEEK</p>		
<p>4 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 11:30 PM Youth Session/Diaconate Meeting 4:30 PM Advent Workshop</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6 9:30 AM PW Coordinating Team 12:00 PM Brown Bag Bible Study</p>	<p>7 7:00 PM Chancel Choir rehearsal CIRCLE 3</p>	<p>8 6:30 AM Men of the Church Weekly Breakfast, Shoney's</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 8:00 AM Men of the Church Breakfast</p>
				<p>ANGEL TREE 12/9-11</p>		
<p>11 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 12:30 Angel Tree Shopping 3:00 PM Ramp Retirement Celebration</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13 9:30 AM CIRCLE 1 @ Ann Johnson's 12:00 PM Brown Bag Bible Study 7:00 PM CIRCLE 2 @ Martha Davis' home</p>	<p>14 7:00 PM Chancel Choir rehearsal</p>	<p>15 6:30 AM Men of the Church Weekly Breakfast, Shoney's</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>
<p>18 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 2:30 PM Randall Harris Organ Recital 5:00 PM Caroling</p>	<p>19 12:00 PM New Beginnings Breadbasket Packing</p>	<p>20 11:00 AM PW Prayer Ministry 12:00 PM Brown Bag Bible Study 5:00-6:30 Children & Youth Christmas Party at Graham Residence</p>	<p>21 1:00 PM Breadbasket Deliveries 7:00 PM Chancel Choir</p>	<p>22 6:30 AM Men of the Church Weekly Breakfast, Shoney's</p>	<p>23 NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE</p>	<p>24 CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE</p>
<p>25 COMMUNION SUNDAY 9:30 AM NO SUNDAY SCHOOL TODAY 10:30 AM Worship</p>	<p>26 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>27 12:00 PM Brown Bag Bible Study</p>	<p>28 7:00 PM Chancel Choir</p>	<p>29 6:30 AM Men of the Church Weekly Breakfast, Shoney's</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>

MAKE NOTE!

DECEMBER 3

9:00 a.m. until noon. Preparing the church for the Advent season. Bring your cleaning supplies.

DECEMBER 4

Men put up Nativity at 4:00 p.m. Advent Workshop begins at 4:30 p.m. with singing and activities. Supper at 6:00 and children's program at 6:30.