REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH LCMS

FORETOLD







DECEMBER 2021 PUBLICATION VOLUME 14 ISSUE 12

Redeemer <u>Reflection</u> Newsletter

Loving People To Christ

Redeemer Lutheran Church 3637 Spring Arbor Road, Jackson, MI 49201 Phone: 517-750-3100 Fax: 517-750-4590 Email: office@redeemerjackson.org Visit our website at: www.redeemerjackson.org

REDEEMER REFLECTION

FORETOLD

by Pastor Zach Holdorf

Once again we move into the Advent season. As Thanksgiving has ended, we now prepare our homes for Christmas Day. We adorn our mantles, put up the Christmas tree, and hang the lights in expectation of the Christmas celebration. Not

only do we prepare our homes, but also our hearts. We reflect once again on why our Savior was born and how He will come again.

As I have begun my prep this Advent season, I can't help but think about the beauty of that first Christmas morn. Having to deliver a baby in a stable must have been a difficult thing to do. Yet that day was no ordinary day because when Christ was born, God became flesh and dwelt among us. Thinking about that statement alone is mind-blowing. Yet there was a purpose in His birth. When Christ was born, the plan of grace and salvation was in motion.

The plan was for Jesus Christ to be born so that He may die. And die He



did. God's flesh became like ribbons, torn and pierced. His blood shed and the last breath was breathed. It was finished as our Savior hung on the tree. Yet from the cross flowed love, grace, mercy, peace, hope, and forgiveness. Death could not hold Jesus and three days later,

assuring us of the victory we have over sin and death, He rose from the dead.

The plan of grace and salvation was accomplished. Jesus became flesh, died and rose for you and me, that our sins would be forgiven and that we would have peace, hope, and salvation. So as we prepare this Advent season, let's take some time to reflect on why the Savior was born and may we be so bold to share that good news with others. What better time to share than now, as people prepare their homes for Christmas Day. Pray that they may also know the extent of the Savior's love and be prepared for His second Advent too.

In Christ Pastor Zach



Bible Study Classes: Ongoing Sunday School, Youth, and Adult Classes: Sundays at 9:15 a.m. In the Lower Level.

Thursday, December 2: Chancel meets at 4:30 p.m. We hope this new time will make it possible for anyone interested in caring for the altar area, to join us in serving as Chancel members. Come to the meeting to find out more about this rewarding service opportunity. All are welcome!

Sunday, December 5: After the Late Service, Annual Voters' Meeting.

Thursday, December 16: LWML/ Women of Redeemer will meet at 11:30 a.m. and all women are welcome! We are having a Christmas Luncheon! Come join us for a tasty luncheon with baked potatoes and oodles of toppings.

Saturday, December 18: Mobile Food Pantry at Trinity. From 10:00— 11:30 a.m. Ongoing event, usually the fourth Saturday of each month. NOTE: Because the fourth Saturday falls on Christmas Day this year, the mobile food distribution will be a week earlier, on December 18! Please mark your calendars for this change.

Redeemer partners with Trinity in this outreach to serve the community. We need and ask volunteers to **be available from 9:00 a.m. until Noon**. Hope to see you there!

CHRISTIAN CARE MINISTRY

Christian Care Ministry will be organizing food boxes for Redeemer members to express thankfulness to our Lord for all He provides in His merciful goodness. Announcements will be forthcoming for opportunities to share food for Christmas meals.

We are thankful to Claudina Kestner and Pat Eichenberg who are coordinating this effort for our Christian brothers and sisters and their families.

"Jesus said, by this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:35



Jim & Diane Siedzik celebrated an anniversary on November 4th, and we missed it! We are so sorry! Wish them a Happy Anniversary when you see them next. Happy Anniversary to the Siedziks and many more to come!

MOBILE FOOD PANTRY AND GIVEAWAY

The Mobile Food Pantry is a monthly event that takes place in front of the doors of Trinity Church in downtown Jackson. Each month Redeemer partners with Trinity to provide essential food items for those in need in our community. Non-food specialty items are also offered to help fill additional personal needs, as we become aware of them. This is one way we can help provide necessities to our community. **Please put your donated items in the provided bin in the narthex.**

NOTE: Because the fourth Saturday falls on Christmas Day this year, *the mobile food distribution will be a week earlier, on December 18!* Please mark your calendars for this change.

The food items that we distribute are provided through Compassionate Ministries of Jackson County. This is a wonderful organization in the Jackson area, and more information can be found online at <u>www.cmjackson.org/</u>

If you'd like to volunteer and get involved with these **fourth-Saturday-ofthe-month** opportunities to serve our community, please contact the church office at 517-750-3100.

ATTENTION: MARRIED COUPLES!

Please take the time, if you haven't already done so, to send your anniversary information to the church office at office@redeemerjackson.org and/or bennitt49@yahoo.com for the *Reflection* newsletter. We have the anniversary information for only 17 couples in our church family. (I'm thinking we have quite a few more married couples than that!) Please contact the church office or send your anniversary information (Names and date of marriage) to the emails above, or call the church office at 517-750-3100 so that we have that information available for our records. Have a blessed month, and the year to come!



LADIES! MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

by Kathy Voss

On Thursday, December 9, there will be a Christmas luncheon for all the women of Redeemer.

Baked potatoes will be provided and we ask those attending to bring toppings for the potatoes to share such as: shredded cheeses, sour cream, bacon bits, chives, broccoli, and any others toppings that you enjoy.

Please join us for food and fellowship, and find out more about how the LWML serves Redeemer and the community. We will share some fun techniques for making Chrismons to get us in the Christmas spirit. Mark your calendars, ladies! We will be in the Connection Room on the lower level.

Please sign up for the luncheon on the sign-up sheet provided in the

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narthex/lobby on the main level. This helps us with the planning. We look forward to seeing you there!

GOOD VOLUME!

by Peggy Bennitt

I attended a parochial school for most of my elementary years. We had a softball team, a children's choir, and a good educational standing. I would love to tell you that I excelled in all areas, but I'd be lying. At best, I was mediocre. But I loved school! And through those years when I thought I was invincible and everything was possible, I wanted to be a rock star and a writer when I grew up.

I wrote poetry from about the 3rd grade on, and sang in the choir with volume and enthusiasm. I was awesome! I played a mean left field, pitched on the softball team, and was sure I would be rich and live in a mansion someday.

There were three of us in my childhood family who loved to sing. My Dad had a marvelous baritone/bass and sang in the adult choir. My older sister sang a sweet soprano, and I sang alto. We blended well. Singing together at Christmastime was always my favorite time. Silent Night still makes me tear up a bit, as the three of us sang harmony well with that hymn. Often, when I hear the old hymns sung now, I'm transported back to the training and hours of practice spent in children's choir. Bits and pieces of the music and training still sneak up on me and I'll drift into the harmonizing of times past. And miss my Dad's strong baritone, and the support of his and my sister's voices that made for a sweet blend of praise and adoration to the King!

But also, I'm reminded that we all must move forward; and we build on the wonder and mishaps of the past, and the knowledge and discernment gathered from a lifetime of ongoing experience.

Years later, married and raising a family, I would often do my housecleaning, music loud and vacuum roaring, and my boys would come home from school and shout, "Jeez, Mom!" and turn the music—*up*! Not down, mind you, but *up*! As usual, I just laughed and waved them on. It had taken me years to realize that I was never told I had a great voice; I was told I had good volume.

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praises."

Psalm 98:4 (KJV)

I am so rich in blessings—and I just know I'm going to have that mansion someday too!



... I go to prepare a place for you ... I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. John 14:1-3

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DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Emma Kestner	12/01
Sharon Rumohr	12/01
Brennen Schnebelt	12/01
Evelyne Jones	12/02
Bill Bartlett	12/02
Matthew Mogle	12/05
Robin Ellison	12/00
Debra Moyer	12/07
Russ Jean	12/07
Dorothy Thomas	12/08
•	•
Leah Heffner	12/10
Bill Mantek	12/11
Marvel Jones	12/12
Nyla Arvy	12/14
Carol Faris	12/14
Debbie Rockwell	12/14
Janie Boyle	12/17
LynnEtte Mueller	12/17
Tom Polzien	12/17
John Smith	12/17
Kaylee Hoyt	12/19
Ellie Hoyt	12/19
Juli Smith	12/22
Art Knueppel	12/23
Jim Siedzik	12/24
Jesus	12/25
Carol Rose	12/25



WORK NEVER DONE

by Craig Britton, Director of Ministries

Epistle, Hebrews 7:23-28

"It is finished." For the Christian, I am not sure there are any sweeter words in the Bible. The careful Bible reader will recognize these jewels from the lips of Christ, declaring His finished and final sacrifice for the sins of the world. With these words, the domination of sin and death plaguing the human race from its debacle in the garden is ended. Forever ended.

But there is a work of Jesus that goes on, and in many ways it is just as sweet. Because in it He brings the truth

and finality of His triumph to the attention of His Father and ours. In our epistle reading, the writer is once again taking up



the issue of the superiority of Jesus in the work and history of redeeming love throughout and beyond the Old Covenant. That work is for all people. But His ongoing work is for *His* people. The issue here in Hebrews is the priesthood that Jesus holds, and the argument is that merely human priests hold their priesthood only temporarily. But this Jesus, our Jesus, holds His permanently and so is powerful and effective without limit. The Son of God is eternal and therefore so is His priesthood.

"Consequently, He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25). There it is. His ongoing work which "carries" His "It is finished" continually to the Father, is His ongoing intercession for us.

I love the finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross. It is my only hope before a holy God. But I surely love the ongoing work of the Son of God as well. This morning or this evening, whenever you are reading this meditation, know this for certain, child of God: Jesus has this day prayed for you. God be praised!

FAITH OF CHILDREN

by Kimber Walsh, CFLE

We have a little Baptism birthday tradition in our family. We dig out the candle and light it, we sing a Baptism song with the person's name inserted, sometimes we incorporate shell and water play, and we always talk about what God does in Baptism—forgives our sins, makes us part of His family, and gives us the gift of faith.

Just before the birth of our third baby, we had a Baptism birthday in the house. As we lit the candle and sang the Baptism song and talked about what God does for us in Baptism, our oldest said, "when the baby comes can it be in OUR family?!" We got lots of questions about the baby from our four-year-old that year, so I didn't think that much of it and replied, "of course, the baby will be a Walsh, too." And she said, "No, Mom, I mean can the baby be in OUR family, like GOD'S family?" As I said, "Of course! The baby will be baptized too and God will make him/her part of His family!" I stopped and thanked God for the faith He'd given to and been working in that sweet girl of ours.

God's gift of faith started in that child at her Baptism when she was less than three weeks old, and He has been growing it ever since. Sometimes, we grown-ups think in terms that are limiting of what God can do in the hearts of children. We think they cannot possibly understand who God is or the gifts that He gives. And to be sure, understanding is something we all lack. But faith and trust are gifts only God can give. They are gifts only He can grow through the work of the Holy Spirit. They are gifts that have no age requirement or limit. They are beautiful

gifts that we simply receive with open hands and hearts.

As parents and grandparents, we get a front-row seat on what God is doing in the hearts of these



children entrusted to us. From that vantage point, we get to see Him work up-close. What a privilege and blessing that is! Does that mean we sit back and do nothing while God works? No! Think of it more as an interactive experience. God also invites us to use our influence over their hearts to impress them with a love for Him. We can do that simply by talking about the things of God as we go about life; we get to pray with them and for them, and we get to show them that He is worthy of our worship, honor, and trust.

God has created just the right model to pass on faith when He made the family (in our houses AND God's family). And He's given us everything we need to seize the time we have with the children in OUR family.

TOPIC FOR JANUARY

The *Reflection* newsletter is meant to reflect Jesus through our lives, into our community, and out into the world in which we live. The writing prompt for January is *Unity*.

As a Christian church family, our faith connection adds strength and unity to all our efforts and plans, which our Lord and God has provided for us to do.

Our print media, and all other communication from and through Redeemer Lutheran Church, is designed to *reflect* His light to a searching world and encourage Unity among all people, especially those in our faith families.

Send articles, information, and/or photos by the 15th of each month to <u>bennitt49@yahoo.com</u>, to be included in the following month's newsletter. All submissions are appreciated and prayerfully considered.

THOUGHTS ON AN ADVENT HYMN

by Craig Britton, Director of Ministries

It seems that I have been opening my hymnal a lot lately. It is a practice I would recommend. Hymnals are not just for Sunday mornings, nor are they to be ignored simply because words find their way to screens in every conceivable setting. For lack of a better designation, hymnals are tools. And if we fail to use the tools God has entrusted to us, well, the challenging



work of letting Him build our souls suffers. We're in Advent as this article comes to you, and I wanted to share, much more than my words, the artistry of Paul Gerhardt. No disrespect to Martin Luther, but Paul Gerhardt wins my vote and my heart as the prince of Lutheran hymn writers.

On page 334 of the Lutheran Service Book, you will find Gerhardt's stunning Advent offering, "O Lord, How Shall I Meet You." The first stanza speaks of a heart yearning to find the Savior. Shall we listen in?

> "O Lord how shall I meet You, How welcome You aright? Your people long to greet You, My hope, my heart's delight!"

So, let's stop there. The questions are perhaps a bit odd. What is Gerhardt asking? "How welcome You aright?" That is a strange construction. But this is art-music. And the canvas allows shades and shapes that are extraordinary. And that last bit: "My hope, my heart's delight!" Ask yourself, oh singer of hymns, when was the last time I truly thought of Jesus as my delight? It's a heavy and loaded concept to say Jesus is our delight. And Gerhardt means it. And better, he wants all who sing these words to mean it, too. So, ask yourself.

He continues,

"O kindle, Lord most holy, Your lamp within my breast To do in spirit lowly All that may please You best."

There is reason to love and treasure the Savior and to seek Him with such ardor. The fire or "the lamp" kindled within is that we would live our lives in a way pleasing to our Friend. Love has its object and love has its intended end. Gerhardt in the very first verse captures both.

Now let's briefly look at verse four:

"Love caused Your incarnation; Love brought You down to me. Your thirst for my salvation Procured my liberty. Oh, love beyond all telling, That led You to embrace In love, all love excelling, Our lost and fallen race."

Wow! Wow, wow! Do you get the gist here? God yearns *for us.* Verse one displays the heart of the worshiper longing for his God. Here in verse four, we are made aware of the treasured truth that God was well on His way to us long before we had even thought of Him. Once again, the canvas is made home to extraordinary truths. And we are the better for not only singing them, but going beyond the singing to the pondering and embracing.

This Advent season, will you consider with me that there are "right ways" to meet the Savior? Will you, with me, take that time to once again

consider that God yearns for His children? If we do that, we will find a sweetness in the Advent season, and the welcoming of the Christ Child this Christmas



will be a marker of hope fulfilled. By the way, you do not need my permission to avail yourself of Gerhardt's complete Advent text. Read it. Ponder it. Sing it in a joyful noise. Blessed Advent!



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CHRISMONS

by Peggy Bennitt

Redeemer's Christmas tree is a true Chrismon Tree. decorated only with traditional Chrismon ornaments. The tree is usually put up the first or second Sunday after Thanksgiving. Chrismons are white with



gold decorations of beads, ribbon, glitter, etc. It is common, however, to see these ancient Christian designs in other colors than white and gold. These would not be *Chrismons*, however, but simply Christian symbols—and there's nothing wrong with that.

Chrismons are now used in many churches and in many Christian homes. These ornaments symbolize Biblical and theological concepts that are well

known among most believers. If the ornaments on a Christmas tree are comprised mostly of Christian symbols, the tree is known as a Chrismon Tree.



A great way to get children interested in the ornaments and their symbolic meaning is to take them up to the tree and let them point out ones

they may already know, such as crosses, the manger scene, angels, etc. What a great way to introduce the Advent season to everyone. These photos are of a few of the



Chrismons you will find on the church Chrismon Tree. Feel free to let your children go up to the tree and see if they recognize the symbols they see there. We have coloring sheets available for children who want to know what the different symbols mean.

THE "W" IN CHRISTMAS

Author Unknown

Each December, I vowed to make Christmas a calm and peaceful experience. I had cut back on nonessential obligations—extensive card writing, endless baking, decorating, and even over-spending. Yet still, I found myself exhausted, unable to appreciate the precious family moments, and of course, the true meaning of Christmas.

My son, Nicholas, was in kindergarten that year. It was an exciting season for a six-year-old. For weeks he'd been memorizing songs for his school's "Winter Pageant."

I didn't have the heart to tell him I'd be working the night of the production.

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Unwilling to miss his shining moment, I spoke to his teacher. She assured me there'd be a dress rehearsal the morning of the presentation. All parents unable to attend that evening were welcome to come then. Fortunately, Nicholas seemed happy with the compromise.

So, the morning of the dress rehearsal, I filed in 10 minutes early, found a spot on the cafeteria floor, and sat down. Around the room, I saw several other parents quietly scampering to their seats. As I waited, the students were led into the room. Each class, accompanied by their teacher, sat cross-legged on the floor. Then, one by one, rose to perform their song.

Because the public school system had long stopped referring to the holiday as "Christmas," I didn't expect anything other than fun, commercial entertainment—songs of reindeer, Santa Claus, snowflakes, and good cheer. So, when my son's class rose to sing "Christmas Love," I was slightly taken aback by its bold title. Nicholas was aglow as were all of his classmates, adorned in fuzzy mittens, red sweaters, and bright snowcaps upon their heads. Those in the front row-center stage held up large letters one by one, to spell out the title of the song. As the class would sing "C is for Christmas," a child would hold up the letter C. Then, "H" is for happy, and on and on until each child holding up his portion had presented the complete message. "Christmas Love."

The performance was going smoothly, until suddenly, we noticed her; a small, quiet little girl in the front row holding the letter "M" upside down—totally unaware her letter "M" appeared as a "W." The audience of 1st through 6th graders snickered at this little one's mistake. But she had no idea they were laughing at her. So she stood tall, proudly and holding her "W." Although many teachers tried to shush the children, the laughter continued until the last letter was raised, and we all saw it together. A hush came over the audience and eyes began to widen. In that instant, we understood the reason we were there, why we celebrated the holiday in the first place, why even in the chaos, there was a reason for our festivities.

For when the last letter was held high, the message read loud and clear:

"CHRISTWASLOVE"

And I believe He still is!

Amazed in His presence, Humbled by His love!

May each of you have a Merry Christmas as you reflect on His Amazing Love for us...

Have a Blessed Day! Happy Birthday, Jesus!

FORETOLD

by Peggy Bennitt

Have you ever wondered what thoughts may have crowded the mind of Mary as she rode steadily toward Bethlehem? Did she and Joseph talk about the coming birth of their Son? And what about Joseph? What a wonderful, godly and loving man he must have been to accept and cherish

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his young wife and the baby who was to be the Savior long spoken of in Scripture. What an amazing and daunting assignment God gave him. Talk about a journey! His life promised to be a journey never experienced by anyone before him, or anyone to come after.

Most journeys are adventures cloaked in the veil of mystery as we move forward into them. Sometimes we're afraid. Sometimes we're excited. Often we experience a combination of the two extremes, or stumble along somewhere in-between. Can you identify with Joseph or Mary, as they plodded forward toward a census and probably the birth of their first child— God's Son? No pressure there, eh?

And what about *their* parents? What kind of a life-journey would this turn into for them? Never planned to be the grandma or grandpa of the Lord and Messiah, I'll bet. Try to put yourself in the sandals of the two pairs of grandparents-to-be. Take a minute or two just to close your eyes and go there. Imagine your daughter Mary telling you this incredible news! Certainly not something you'd expect to hear from your young teenage daughter.

MARY'S JOY

by Peggy Bennitt

Sit, my mother, let me tell thee Of this happening within me. 'Tis a miracle most holy Come upon myself most lowly.

A light shown down and covered me. The angel said, "Thou shalt conceive," And I replied, "How can that be? I've known no man, no man's known me."

"That's why you're chosen for this feat. The Lord rewards such piety. The gift of life you give His Son Shall win new life for everyone."

"I am the handmaid of the Lord. His will be done with my accord." Then I looked up, I was alone Filled with a peace I've never known.

"God promised this in days of old He'll give it now as was foretold Mother! The Lord has need of me! I'll bear His Son, Grandson to thee!"

What happened next?

We never hear anything about Mary's parents, or Joseph's either. How did Jesus' birth and His life journey affect their lives? Did they believe? I feel certain that they did. How else could they have raised such godly children as Mary and Joseph and not believed? But I can also imagine the turmoil this must have caused.

It was a stoning offense for a woman to have a child out-of-wedlock back then. And the gossip and whispers must have been brutal for the whole family.



Too often we take our Bible, God's Word, and its many life accounts as just "stories." We forget that these were *real* people just like us, trudging along their own path in life, struggling to make sense of God's plan for them, and probably wondering if they understood what God really wanted them to do. *Do I really know for sure that God wants me to do this? Did He really say...?*

Satan is very good at derailing us with that very question asked of Eve in the Garden, "Did God really say...?"

We are in the last month of our journey through 2021. And many of us are thanking God for that reason alone, right? So, what is God telling you and me He wants us to do in 2022?

Let's pray that through, and then, move forward with peace and the expectation of another Grand Adventure as the Lord challenges us to trust Him one more time—and then, maybe—just one more.

May the joy of His presence in our lives fill us with peace and excitement as we move on to this new journey, the new adventure of 2022!



ADVENT SERVICES

December 1

6:30 p.m.

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"Wait Upon the Lord with Faith" Children's Christmas Program

December 8 6:30 p.m. "Wait Upon the Lord with Hope"

December 15 6:30 p.m. "Wait Upon the Lord with Rejoicing"

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

6:30 p.m. & 8:30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS DAY, DECEMBER 25



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		2 0 2 1	1 Craig's Bible Study Lloyd Ganton-S. A. 2:00 p.m. Advent Service 6:30 p.m. Civent	2 <mark>Chancel</mark> 4:30 p.m.	3	4
5 Divine Service 8:00 a.m. Bible Classes 9:20—10:20 a.m. Praise Service 10:30 a.m. Annual Voters' Meeting—After Late Service	6 Craig's Bible Study Countryside 1:30 p.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	7 Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m. Adult Choir 6:30 p.m. Handbells 7:30 p.m.	8 Quilters 9:00 a.m12:00 p.m. Craig's Bible Study Lloyd Ganton-S. A. 2:00 p.m. Advent Service 6:30 p.m. Advent	9	10	11
12 Divine Service-C 8:00 a.m. Adult & Children's Bible Classes 9:20—10:20 a.m. Praise Service-C 10:30 a.m.	13 Craig's Countryside Bible Study 1:30 p.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	14 Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m. Adult Choir 6:30 p.m. Handbells 7:30 p.m.	15 Craig's Bible Study Lloyd Ganton-S. A. 2:00 p.m. Advent Service 6:30 p.m. Reflection NL Deadline	16 LWML—Women of Redeemer Christmas Luncheon 11:30 a.m.	17	18 Mobile Food Pantry @ Trinity 10:00-11:30 a.m.
19 Divine Service 8:00 a.m. Adult & Children's Bible Classes 9:20—10:20 a.m. Praise Service 10:30 a.m.	20 Craig's Countryside Bible Study 1:30 p.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	21 Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m. Adult Choir 6:30 p.m. Handbells 7:30 p.m.	22 Quilters 9:00 a.m12:00 p.m. Craig's Bible Study Lloyd Ganton-S. A. 2:00 p.m.	23	24 Christmas Eve Services: 6:30 p.m. 8:30 p.m.	25 HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS!
26 Divine Service-C 8:00 a.m. Praise Service-C 10:30 a.m.	27 Craig's Countryside Bible Study 1:30 p.m. Praise Team 7:00 p.m.	28 Hour of Prayer 7:15 a.m. Adult Choir 6:30 p.m. Handbells 7:30 p.m.	29 Craig's Bible Study Lloyd Ganton-S. A. 2:00 p.m.	30	31 HAVE A BLESSED NEW YEAR!	C—Denotes Communion Services