

THE NEWSLETTER OF  
GULF BEACH  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
271 S. HWY. 79  
PANAMA CITY BEACH,  
FL 32413

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Vision Statement:

**“Transforming Lives by the Love of Christ Jesus  
through Witness, Mission, and Evangelism.”**

# BEACH TIDINGS

THE NEWSLETTER OF GULF BEACH PRESBYTERIAN

## DECEMBER 2015

### Special points of interest:

- Events Calendar
- Guardian ad litem
- From the Pastor's Pen
- Ministry update
- Calendar

Articles for the Newsletter can be email to [gulfbeachpres@gamil.com](mailto:gulfbeachpres@gamil.com) or leave it in the Newsletter Box in the church office. Articles must be received by the 15th of the month.

Sunday School

9:00AM

Coffee and

Donuts

9:45AM

Sunday

Worship

Time

10:15 AM

### Congregational Meeting

There will be a congregational meeting on Sunday, December 13th following worship to approve the Pastor's Terms of Call, to present property sale proposals to the congregation, to elect Elders, and the Session will share the 2016 Budget with the congregation.

**Gulf Beach  
Presbyterian Church**

**Rev. Bonnie Wilkins**  
Pastor/Head of Staff

**STAFF**

**Amanda Matthews-**  
Accompanist/ Choir Director

**Liz Creswell -**  
Bookkeeper/  
Admin. Assistant

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**SESSION**

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Rev. Bonnie Wilkins- **Moderator**  
870-415-2082  
gbpcpastor@gmail.com

## ***Up-Coming Events in December***

**Saturday, Dec. 5th**- Shepherding Team neighborhood canvas/community outreach

**Sunday, Dec. 6th**- Church Christmas Lunch after worship

**Monday, Dec. 7th- 7:00PM** Tree lighting at Frank Brown Park

**Wednesday, Dec. 9th-7:00PM** Jazz for the Soul Jazz service. Meeting at Gulftreat

**Friday and Saturday, Dec. 11th & 12th 6-9PM**  
Grace Presbyterian Church presents A Night In Bethlehem

**Sunday, Dec. 13th After Worship**—Congregational Meeting

**Saturday, Dec. 12th**- Shepherding Team neighborhood canvas/community outreach

**Thursday, Dec. 24th**- 6:00 PM Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

**Sunday, Dec. 27th**- A worship service of Lessons and Carols

## **Pastor's Advent Sermon Series**

### **A Journey in God's Time and Place"**

Advent 1 Nov. 29th Making the Most of Our Time

Advent 2 Dec. 6th The Way Forward

Advent 3 Dec. 13th Slow and Steady in Hustle and Bustle

Advent 4 Dec. 20th Do You Hear What I Hear?

## GUARDIAN ad LITEM CHRISTMAS TOY PROJECT



Sara Circle is promoting the Guardian ad Litem Christmas project again this year. Guardian ad Litem is a volunteer based program that is appointed by the court system to advocate for kids that have been abused, abandoned and neglected.

The children that will receive the gifts may be in foster homes, group homes or with relatives. They are now in a difficult situation through no fault of their own.

We can help make a difference in the life of these children and make this a great Christmas. Simply bring new, unwrapped toys appropriate for ages 0 to 11 years old to the church. Sara Circle will provide containers to place the toys. A Guardian ad Litem program volunteer will pick up our donations during the week of December 15, wrap them and deliver them to the families.

What a great feeling it is to help bring a little joy to these children! The shopping for toys is fun too, I might add.

### **Hospitality Committee's Cranberry Chutney**

1-12oz package of fresh cranberries

2 pears cut in 1/3" cubes

3 oz package candied lemon peel

1 3/4 cup granulated sugar

1. Wash pears and cut in cubes the size of the cranberries

2. Place in a pot with all of the ingredients

3. Slowly bring to a boil, reduce and simmer for 15 minutes.

This chutney is also good with pork and wild game. Make a double batch, it will last several weeks in the refrigerator. Actually no it wont, it will be eaten up! Can be made ahead of time and is a great gift to take if you are going to a friends house for dinner.

Julie Bailey

Chairperson Hospitality Committee

**Grace Presbyterian presents:**

## **“A Night in Bethlehem”**

December 11 & 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

(Sunday, Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> is scheduled as a rain day)

**Visit “A Night in Bethlehem”** where guests will enter the city gates of Bethlehem, while a Roman centurion stands guard. After registering with the census taker, families will enjoy strolling the streets of the ancient city on the night that the baby Jesus was born. The Marketplace will be open and there will be activities for the whole family to enjoy. Visit the bakery for a fresh piece of flat bread or make a coiled pot at the pottery shop. The Carpentry shop will be busy creating the things needed in a Bethlehem home. Experience the authentic sights, sounds and smells of this busy little city. As you leave the city, you will encounter the stable and the newborn baby. An angel watches over the Holy Family while shepherds keep watch in the fields. Look for the Kings, who will be camped for the night as they make their way to Bethlehem.

### **Grace has asked our church to participate in this “Living Christmas Card”**

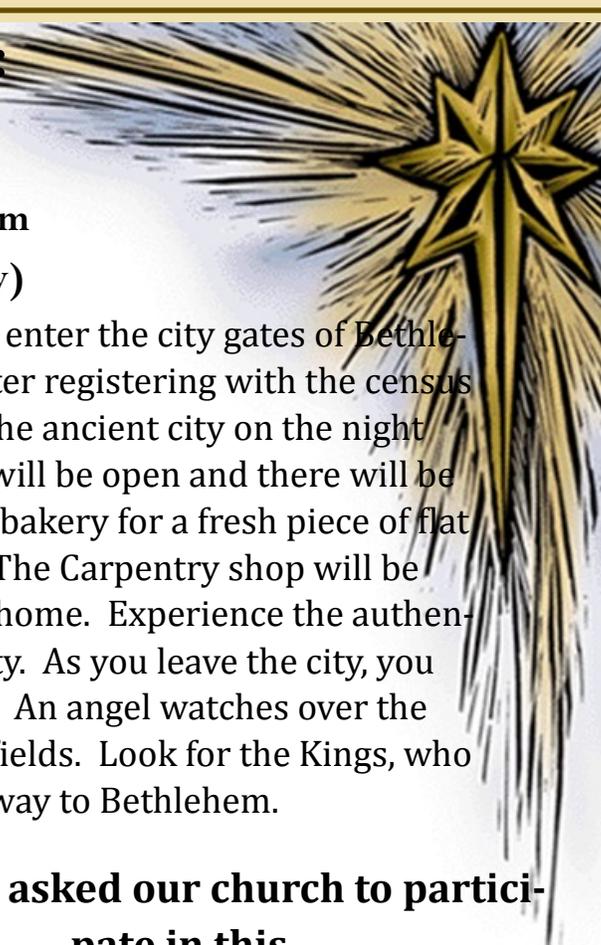
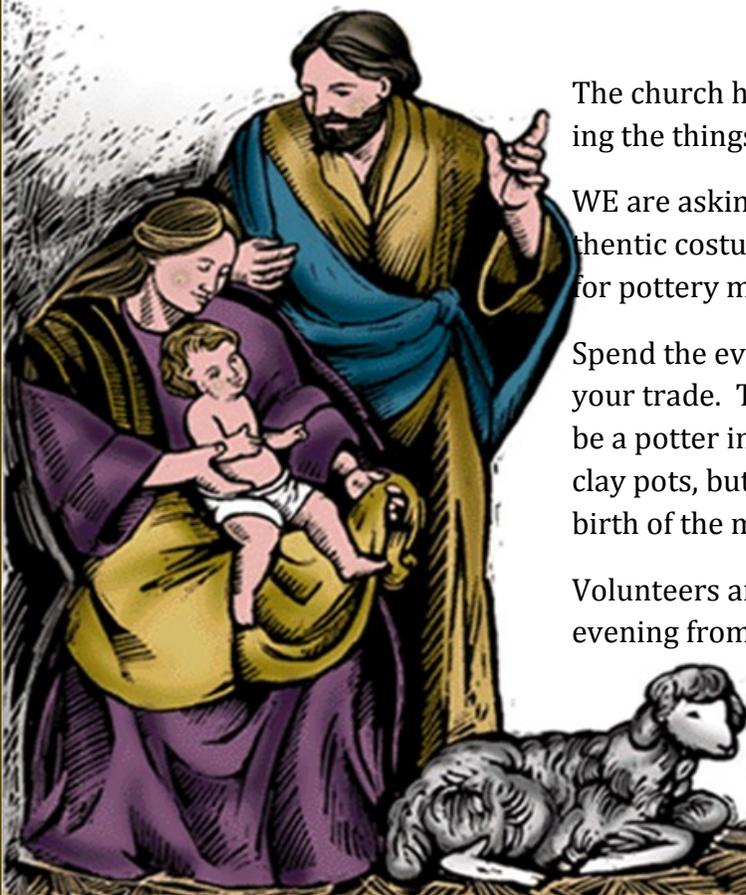
The church has agreed to operate the Pottery Shop creating the things needed in a Bethlehem home.

WE are asking for volunteers to man the Pottery shop. Authentic costumes will be provided as well as instructions for pottery making.

Spend the evening welcoming guests to come and learn your trade. Teach children and adults what it was like to be a potter in ancient Bethlehem. Guide them in making clay pots, buttons, and jewelry. Share the news for the birth of the messiah.

Volunteers are needed for Friday evening or Saturday evening from 5-9 pm.

Please contact Pastor Bonnie if  
you would like to help.





## Advent: Pondering God's Love and Word in Life

"...Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart." (Luke 2)

To ponder: to consider; to muse; to brood over; to think about something carefully over a period of time; to wonder about; to mull-over a thing or notion.

When was the last time you paused and pondered something? Advent is a wonderful time to renew or to begin the spiritual practice of "pondering." Advent invites us to intentionally un-busy ourselves

and slow-down the pace of life. It encourages us through signs and words and silence to deliberately look for and listen to what God is busy with in the world around us.

As trees and lights and Santa and snowmen begin to appear on lawns and living rooms and in store front windows, the wonder of Christmas starts to show through. Well, at least one version of Christmas, anyway. I found that I became a little annoyed again this year as those signs of the season seemed to appear even earlier than last year, almost eclipsing the celebration of Thanksgiving. The retailers moved us right from Halloween (a holiday I wouldn't mind skipping anymore) to Christmas. Hum....no time or need for thanks? What does that say to us? Thanksgiving doesn't make much of a "showing" as it is crowded out by the early arrival of the (politically correct) "Happy Holiday" season. Okay, give thanks. But do it quickly. Christmas is in a hurry this year.

Did you notice how some stores had their after-Thanksgiving sales before we even sat down to eat our turkey and pumpkin pie? They had special sales the morning of Thanksgiving so we would be enticed to come early; to save time and get those Christmas bargains before we even start stuffing our turkeys. The bonus offered was that we'd avoid the hassle of "Black Friday" shopping. Now wait a minute. When did remembering each other, expressing our love, and giving gifts become a hassle? I wonder, will after-Christmas sales get pushed forward too? Will it be business as usual on Christmas day? Hum...we could ponder on this awhile too.

As disciples, we have better things to ponder and wonder about don't we? Remember that "good news of great joy for all the people" that the angel of the Lord shared with those frightened shepherds? Now there's something worth marking on our calendar for consideration. Of course, we have a lot which can distract us from this sacred practice of pondering the good news: long shopping lists, one too many parties to host or attend, extra hours of cooking and cleaning, trips to the post office where we stand impatiently in line, and stacks of packages to wrap and boxes of cards to address. These aren't un-Christian things to be busy with. But, they can distract us from the real gifts and meaning of the Christmas season if they become all-inclusive of our waking hours and our nighttime dreams.

We all could benefit from some divine intervention into our waking and sleeping hours about this time in our lives. Let's start looking for and expecting "angels and messengers" in our midst who will give us direction and news to share with each other. Pondering will help us to keep it all in perspective: to be more thankful; to see the wonder in the ordinary and routine; to hear holy words spoken; to see the unimaginable taking place among us; to be awed

by the sacred in one another; to be bearers of good news and great joy to the world; to love each other. Let's ponder these things.

One of my favorite Christmas texts to mull-over is Luke's account of Mary's "pondering." In the exhaustion and the jubilation of journeying and child-birth, she takes time to ponder. Mary ponders the words of shepherds and strangers as they come calling on the new born Jesus. She listens to them tell their amazing story of bright lights and a multitude of praise-filled angels in the dead silence of night. This is something she wants to remember forever. Something she would want to tell Jesus about when he grows older. She knows this is God's love made real and visible. But why? Why her? Why now? She ponders.

Joseph and Mary have walked a long road to Bethlehem to get to where they now find themselves. And Mary wasn't in a hurry to leave it all behind. It would be the beginning of a life-time journey with God in their midst. I imagine both of them pondered much in their hearts with each step they took and each wonder and word they encountered. In Advent, we too, are invited to walk this wonder and Word filled road to Bethlehem. We have a friend and a savior who walks with us as we take deliberate steps in prayer and worship and in our daily reading of the Bible. We too, are to ponder as we work for and serve God's kingdom day to day. Be present with God and full of expectation. Consider the blessings of today and be in no hurry to leave behind the sights and sounds of the season; of Emmanuel -of God with us. Pondering will slow your pace and even-out your breathing.

Let it give you the time and energy and clarity to focus on: why the good news is good news; why now; why us. Don't let Advent hurry-by in the busyness of the season. Celebrate it. Like the Shepherds, seek Christ. Give thanks. Glorify and praise God for what we have seen and been told. Ponder. Pray. Treasure all these things in your heart.

May your pondering begin with these age old words: "Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel." May great joy fill your journey to Bethlehem and beyond. Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace...Christ's way of peace...to all God's children, I pray. Amen.

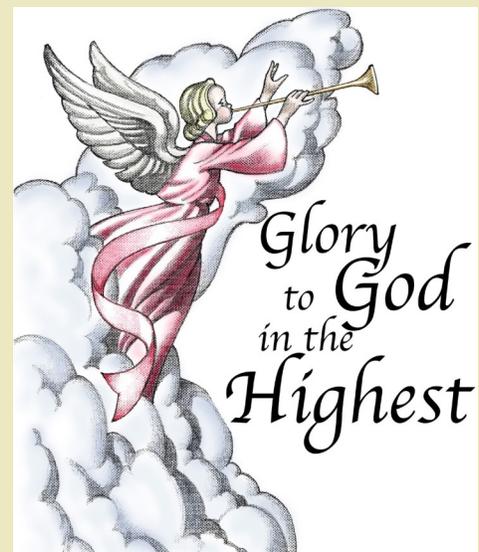
*"By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high has broken upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."* (Luke 1)

Merry Christmas and the peace of Christ be with you ,

*Pastor Bonnie Wilkins*

870-415-2082

gbpcpastor@gmail.com





## Following the Star- Moving while we are waiting.

*When they saw the star had stopped they were overwhelmed with joy!* — Matthew 2:10

By Pastor Bonnie

Advent is upon us. This is a season of moving toward the future while we also wait patiently for that promised future to come. Being still and being busy at the same time is a spiritual act to be sure. Everything and everyone around us in our culture this time of the year says, "Hurry up...the days are counting down...the shopping days are running out...get busy, buy it now, don't delay, do more!"

But as Christians, we know that it is possible, though not always easy, to live another way. We know the future we hope for is coming closer and so we prepare ourselves through worship, prayer, fulfilling our call, service, and ground ourselves in God's Word. We also wait. We cultivate patience. We take time to be still and quiet. We listen to the voices we hear. We think about the things we see through the disciplines of prayer and contemplation and giving. These require discernment, waiting, and patience. As we listen and wait, we need to ask, "Is it God's voice or our own that we hear? Are these things of God and God's purposes or are they ours?"

"Hurry up and wait" is a common mantra for this season of Advent. Watching and following as God's people will take us on journey of grace; a journey marked by covenants, dreams, promises, waiting and fulfillment. We are moving while we are waiting when we are led by God's Light. What a mystery!

There is a wonderful website that I encourage you to visit each week during Advent for a time of prayer, scripture, devotion, and contemplation ([www.followthestar.org](http://www.followthestar.org)). It will keep you spiritually moving and growing while you wait. May the Light of Christ continue to lead you through this holy season of waiting.

## A Change in Offering Envelopes

Numbered offering envelopes: In an effort to cut pennies, we will not be using the Numbered offering envelopes this coming year. However, we will continue using the numbers for data entry in the computer. If you remember your current number you can write it on the blank envelopes found in the back of the church chairs. We will maintain blank envelopes for your convenience.

Beve Lutz, Treasurer

*Thank you... Thanks to all of the volunteers who helped with the Art and Music Faire. We raised \$725.00.*

# Ministry News



**The Men's group** will meet Monday, Dec. 14th at 9:00AM. Join together for bible study, fellowship and projects.



## **To all the women of the church**

Sara Circle, a revelry of sisterhood, will meet Tuesday, Dec. 8th at 12:30. There will be a short business meeting followed by our continued study of Moses by Beve Lutz.

## **Rummage Sale Reminder**

When you are cleaning out your garage, closets, etc. remember the Sara Circle Rummage Sale. Sara Circle will be happy take those old items of yours any time. We have a special storage room designed for that purpose. All monies generated at our Rummage sale goes to help finance major Church building repairs and upkeep, send our children to Church camp, and support the Thornwell Children's home. We appreciate all the rummage you give us.

## **Evening Women's Circle**

The circle meets for a shared meal and bible study the 4th Monday of each month at 6:00PM. Lead by Betsy Balmer



## **Heart and Hands CAREGIVER SUPPORT**

The Caregiver Support Group will continue to meet on Thursday, 1:00 - 2:00. Our general participation has been a group of four to five individuals, men and women, that care for one another and share their experiences in hopes that their solutions may in some way be of benefit to others.



## **Empty Cup Bible Study with Thaddeus Wilkins**

### **Every Wed. from 10:30AM—noon**

Come out and meet with Thad every Wed. from 10:30am to noon for fellowship and Bible Study at the Pour Coffee House. 12902 Front Beach Road next to the ARK.

# Caring for Each Other



*The SHEPHERDING TEAM is available to you at anytime for member care. Please feel free to call on them.*

John Skelton 706-436-4288 [ratpack219@gmail.com](mailto:ratpack219@gmail.com)

Lenny Zacher 850-867-3770 [tennis850@ail.com](mailto:tennis850@ail.com)

Wanda Pflugfelder 850-249-3396 [reinholdwanda@misn.com](mailto:reinholdwanda@misn.com)

Edna Adams 850-230-2540 [ednaadams@comcast.net](mailto:ednaadams@comcast.net)

Beve Lutz 850-35-7349 [meinschaatz406@aol.com](mailto:meinschaatz406@aol.com)

Adrian Wynter 850-691-7529 [yoitsadrian@me.com](mailto:yoitsadrian@me.com)

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Ron Coleman 850-890-1172 [dirtft.coleman@gmail.com](mailto:dirtft.coleman@gmail.com)

Suzanne Burke 850-867-5371 [suzannegilmoreburke@gmail.com](mailto:suzannegilmoreburke@gmail.com)

Lorraine Gilmore 850-867-5370 [lorrainegilmore46@gmail.com](mailto:lorrainegilmore46@gmail.com)

## First Together-



A ministry at Gulf Beach Pres. dedicated to building relationships, fostering spiritual growth, and providing assistance through socializing, visiting, resource building, loving and caring. Our activities together will seek to deepen our relationship with Christ, each other, and our community. Activities throughout the year will include day trips, concerts, movies, service projects, forum discussions, "Food, Fun, & Fellowship" (10 a.m. every Friday in the Fellowship Hall) and "First Tuesday" (monthly meals at area restaurants-dutch treat). We are having our monthly fellowship at **Boondocks at 4:30pm**. We have had a great time talking, laughing, eating, and getting to know one another. Usually about a dozen or so of us each month. Come join the fellowship! Boondocks, 14854 Bayview Circle



The "Love Line" is available for your prayer needs, announcements and celebrations. Just email your requests to Mary Foist at [myseaclusion@gmail.com](mailto:myseaclusion@gmail.com)

## FOOD

## PANTRY

The Food Pantry's mission is to increase access to food for hungry people, and empower them to help each other.

Karen Ferguson will be putting together Christmas Baskets for needy families. Donations are needed for boxed stuffing mix, cranberry sauce, canned green beans, canned gravy.

She also needs turkeys or cash donation to purchase the necessary items.

## Jazz for the Soul

A new Worship service on the 2nd Wed. of the month at 7:00pm in Gulfstream. Gulf Beach Presbyterian Church offers a monthly jazz service with music by the accomplished jazz pianist, **Amanda Matthews**. Communion is celebrated at this service each month. A Jazz for the Soul email with information about each jazz service is sent out monthly. To subscribe to this email, send email addresses to GulfBeachPres@gmail.com with "Jazz" in the subject line.

For more information,

Contact:

Lenny Zacher, Worship Team (850.867.3770)

Rev. Bonnie Wilkins (850.234.3161)



## Angels are for Real

Is the true and inspiring story of an eight year old boy's encounter with Angels while enduring a rigorous two year battle with Leukemia. Gabriel William Stuart visualized, spoke with, and shared emotional moment of reassurance, strength, and comfort with Angels. His Angels were sent from Heaven according to God's purpose. They delivered a gift of peace to Gabriel, his family, and to all who were a part of his life while coping with cancer.

It was Gabriel's Angels that gave his father an authentic belief in the life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was also his Angels that gave Gabriel the words to a song that was written for his mother, carrying a message of understand to what will happen "Someday".

Oh, someday I know we'll be together forever.

Come to me and I know we won't be apart,

But someday I know we'll be together forever.

Oh come to me from the sky and let our spirits be in harmony.

I know we won't be apart,

Oh come with me and see the moon and stars.

Oh come with me into the sky; I know we won't be apart.

Oh someday, I know we'll be together forever.

-Gabriel Stuart 2004

The complete story of Gabriel and his families experiences, is contained in a book titled "Angels Are for Real" by Scott Stuart. Scott is Mary Foist's son and Gabriel was her Grandson.

## **What if This Was Your Last Holiday Season?** by Josh Daffern

What would you do? How would you live? With whom would you reconcile? How much extra time would you spend with your family? Would you prioritize making memories over giving gifts?

It's always a bit morbid to consider your own mortality, but it should always be in the background of our mind. Here's what the Bible says, 'Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.' -James 4:14

As depressing as it is to write this, for someone reading this post, this might be your last holiday season. The zinger is, we just don't know who. So if we all treated this as our last holiday season, what would you do differently?

- I bet you would work to bury the hatchet with a family member and make things right.
- I guarantee you would savor every moment with your family.
- I know that you wouldn't get as consumed with the distractions of football games, holiday sales and television specials. Instead, you would soak up every moment with the ones you love.
- I bet that you would be bolder to say things like "I love you" to those who need to hear it.

If this holiday season was your last, my guess is that your life would move off of you to those around you. You would focus less on distractions and more on what's significant. You would take less opportunities to be lazy and turn them into opportunities to leave a legacy.

Hopefully you know where I'm going with this. Why don't we all do that this holiday season? *Let's find ways to live beyond ourselves, to bless others, to pour into our families and live for something more than football games, holiday sales and television sales.* Who knows, this may be your last chance.

**We Want YOU!** Beginning in December, we are looking for volunteers to answer the phone and help fold bulletins each week-no computer work required. If you have a couple of hours to give, we need you. In response to our current financial outlook, the Session had to reduce our Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper, Liz Creswell's working week from three days to one day/week in the office. The Session has also suspended our cleaning service and we will now do the cleaning of the church ourselves. The Elders are taking charge of this task and will need volunteers to work with them each week. We need you to help filling in the gap.

# December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
		4:30 PM First Together Supper @ Boondocks	10:30am-12:00 Empty Cup Bible Study	10:00am-12:00 Bible Study 1:00 PM Caregiver Support Group	10:00 AM Food, Fun, Fellowship	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9:00 am Sun- day School 9:45am Coffee and Donuts 10:15 Worship Christmas Lunch	7:00 PM Frank Brown Park Tree Lighting	12:30pm Sara Circle	10:30am-12:00 Empty Cup Bible Study 7:00PM Jazz for Soul Service in Gulftreat	10:00am-12:00 Bible Study 1:00 PM Caregiver Support Group	10:00 AM Food, Fun, Fellowship 6-9Pm A Night in Bethlehem @Grace Pres	6-9Pm A Night in Bethlehem @Grace Pres
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
9:00 am Sun- day School 9:45am Coffee and Donuts 10:15 Worship Congregational meeting			10:30am-12:00 Empty Cup Bible Study	10:00am-12:00 Bible Study 1:00 PM Caregiver Support Group	10:00 AM Food, Fun, Fellowship	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
9:00 am Sun- day School 9:45am Coffee and Donuts 10:15 Worship				6:00pm Candle Light Christmas Eve Service	Christmas Day 	
27	28	29	30	31		
9:00 am Sun- day School 9:45am Coffee and Donuts 10:15 Worship				New Year's Eve		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9



Dec. Anniversaries  
24 Joe and Julie Bailey

Dec. Birthdays  
6-Jim Dilmarter  
8-Dick Jossart  
9-Linda Coleman

10-Jimmie Culpepper IV  
14-Mavis Zumstein  
15-Bev Lutz  
18-Bob Thiede  
24-Nez Hall  
27-Sonny Doherty

