

THE ST PETER'S POST

December, 2023

St Peter's Episcopal Church, Port Royal, VA

The Rev. Catherine D. Hicks, Rector

Advent and Christmas



- Every Sunday, In person worship at St Peter's and online on YouTube, 11am. <https://www.youtube.com/@st.petersepiscopalchurchpo677/streams>
- Every Wednesday, 10AM until Noon Bible Study in the Parish House—Study the upcoming Sunday's lectionary. No Bible Study Wed. Dec. 27
- Sun. Dec. 3, God's Garden for young children at 10:15AM. Learn all about Advent
- Sun. Dec. 3, 12PM -Coffee Hour following the service, all are welcome
- Sun. Dec. 3 - -Choir rehearsal after church
- Sun. Dec. 3 - -Last day to donate to the ECM Christmas
- Tues. Dec. 5 - -ECW takes dinner to "The House" in Fredericksburg, 5PM
- Compline Thursdays in Dec. Dec. 7,14, 21 on Zoom, 7pm. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86334877905?pwd=TOFsSEpvUmRlMmkyR09DL2NBWnpnUT09> Meeting ID: 863 3487 7905 Pass 868383
- Sun., Dec 10, God's Garden for young children,10:15AM. The children will be making Christmas cards
- Sun, Dec. 10, Poinsettia forms due
- Tues, Dec. 12, Chancellor's Village Eucharist, 1PM
- Weds, Dec 13, 12:15PM right after Bible study—Come one and all to help put together Advent/Christmas arrangements for the church windows
- Thurs, Dec. 14, Vestry, 2PM
- Sat, Dec. 16, Outdoor Christmas Pageant, 5PM All Participants meet at 3:30PM to prepare.
- Sun Dec. 17 - 11AM Worship—St Peter's Youth will be offering Christmas music during this service. Last Sunday to donate for the Endowment Fund
- Wed., Dec. 20- Village Harvest, 3PM-5PM. If you'd like to help, please contact Andrea Pogue, 540-847-9002.
- Wed., Dec. 20, 5PM—Caroling in Port Royal, Portobago Bay. Meet at St. Peter's Parish House.
- **Sun, Dec. 24, No 11am service. Plan to come to the ****Christmas Eve Service at 4PM. ******
- Sun, Dec. 31, 11AM, Lesson and Carols
- Sun, Dec. 31, 5PM, New Year's Eve dinner in the Parish House. Bring a dish!

Server Schedule, Dec., 2023

Sunday, December 3, The First Sunday of Advent, 11AM Holy Eucharist

Lector: Linda Kramer

Chalice Bearer: Johnny Davis

Altar Cleanup: Jan Saylor

Sunday, December 10, The Second Sunday of Advent, 11AM, Holy Eucharist

Lector: Andrea Pogue

Chalice Bearer: Andrea Pogue

Altar Cleanup: BJ Anderson

Sunday, December 17, The Third Sunday of Advent, 11AM Holy Eucharist

Lector: Cookie Davis

Chalice Bearer: Alice Hughes

Altar Cleanup: Andrea Pogue

Sunday, December 24 Christmas Eve, 4PM, Holy Eucharist

Lector: Johnny Davis

Chalice Bearer: Elizabeth Heimbach

Altar Cleanup: Linda Kramer

Sunday, December 31 The First Sunday after Christmas Day, 11AM, Lessons and Carols

Altar Set up and Clean up: Elizabeth Heimbach

Thank you from near and far

From the Right Rev Robert L. Fitzpatrick,
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii

Aloha, I write to thank you for your gift to the Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii for the relief efforts on Maui following the devastating October fire. Your gift has made a difference in the lives of those impacted in the community and to aid the members of Holy Innocents' Church, Lahaina. The rebuilding of people's lives and homes will take time. The community is strong and God's people like you have been generous. Mahalo! Bob

From Gladys Fortune, who sent us stamps to help cover the cost of mailing her the Parish Post each month

Rev. Hicks, The stamps are my thanks for the "Post." Hope all of you have a wonderful Thanksgiving. Thanks for all the beautiful cards. "May your home be filled with grateful hearts, contentment from God, and the precious love of family Happy Thanksgiving" With love to all of you from Gladys

From Champe Corbin, who sent a donation to the Graveyard Fund (Champe provides care and maintenance for Grace Church, Corbin)



"This donation to St Peter's Church is made in appreciation for the care provided to its graveyard where my maternal ancestors rest. I know first hand how much time and devotion are required to maintain an 1834 church building and grounds! Thank you for the good work you do at St Peter's!"

Thank you to all who are financially supporting the church in 2024

The Vestry and I thank all of you who give faithfully to the work of St Peter's. That support from you comes in all sorts of ways

and is deeply appreciated. Thank you to all who chose to make a financial estimate of giving for the coming year, since that pledge on your part helps the Vestry plan for next year. Sixteen people/families sent in estimates of giving for the coming year for a total of \$92,280. This figure is an increase over last year. Even though our budget will still be tight, the increase will be helpful as we, like everyone else, struggle with rising costs. Thank you to all who turned in an estimate of giving.

Discretionary Fund in 2023

There have been 41 checks totaling \$3,524.58 from January through October of this year. The last year reviewed was 2021 for the same period which showed \$2,243.68 distributed. These funds help people with utilities, medical bills, rental payments, food, and car payments. The Discretionary Fund is a vital part of St. Peter's Outreach. Thanks for those who have donated to this fund!

Prayer Corner



Blindsided by Grief—2023 has been a hard year for many people in our parish. When I think of those of you who have had a loved one die, those of you who are caring for loved ones who are in their final days, those of you who have had friends or family get tough health diagnoses, those who have faced various uncertainties, I know that this year has been a challenge. The Season of Advent offers some

particularly useful ways to pray for those who are grieving and if, you are grieving, to help you with the process of grieving—for going through grief is the best way to get to the other side.

The Season of Advent invites us to take the time to reflect on the past, the present, and the future as we remember Jesus coming to us as an infant, living among us now through the power of the Holy Spirit, and awaiting his coming in glory for the future in which sorrow and sighing will be no more. The good memories we share can be a comfort in a time of grief. Being with one another, praying for one another, and looking forward to a future that is unknown but that is full of promise (both in this life and in the next) are all helpful ways to work through grief.

The Season of Advent invites us to prepare for the Lord's coming and to prepare for what lies ahead in our own lives. Part of grieving is preparing for what is ahead, based on the new circumstances we must face even when we'd rather not. Grief can open our eyes to the fact that God is always making things new and God's goodness and mercy, though seemingly hidden, follow us all the days of our lives, even when we can't feel any goodness and mercy or see what the next day holds.

So prepare by being intentionally grateful for what has been, living faithfully in the present circumstances, and being hopeful about the new life that can only grow out of what has been, including the things that have brought us grief. God's goodness, which is new every morning, never ends.

In addition to being a time of reflection and preparation, **the Season of Advent also calls us to be joyful people, a seemingly impossible challenge during the overwhelming sadness of grief. But Advent reminds us to claim joy even when we don't feel like it.** Start small. Appreciate a sunset, or the way the sun shines through a window. Maybe a cup of hot chocolate or writing a Christmas card to someone you love will bring

you joy. Small joys are scattered throughout our days like Hansel's breadcrumbs. These joys can lead us home to a better state of mind. Following little joys leads to greater joys.

Please pray for all on our prayer list this month, and especially for the Fishers and the Schnakenberg's as they grieve for Trenton.

The Village Harvest and Giving Tuesday in November



The Village Harvest celebrated its 9th anniversary and began its 10th year in November.

Over the past 9 years, we have distributed 121,795 pounds of food to 11,010 people which equates to 11.1 pounds per person. Until 2018, the distribution provided under nine pounds of food for each person each month. Since 2018, each person has received over twelve pounds of food each month.

We had the privilege of serving 110 people in November, 2023.

During the first 11 months of 2023, we fed 951 people compared to 970 in the previous year during the same period. The first quarter of this year was lower both in clients and in food distributed.

Giving Tuesday donations at the end of Nov. totaled \$955, the second largest total since 2019. Thanks to all who contributed to support the Village Harvest.

ECM Thanksgiving and Christmas donations



For Thanksgiving, the Episcopal Church Men sent \$500 off to Social Services to help those in the community in need. With this money, 10 Thanksgiving dinners at \$50 each became available to families. The remaining \$514.13 of the \$1014.13 that they raised will be sent to Social Services for their Christmas work with families. Additional funds raised will also go to support area families at Christmas. This is the second largest Thanksgiving donation since 2020 for the ECM. **ECM Christmas donations are due Dec. 3.**

Art Auction raises money for the ECM's Christmas project

Many thanks to Mary Peterman for the three works of art that she donated to help raise money for the ECM's Christmas project. After several rounds of bidding, the happy art owners are Alice Hughes, "On the Rappahannock," The Felicianos, "Autumn Still Life," and "Sundays at St Peter's," Catherine Hicks. A total of \$475 goes to the ECM! Thank you to all who bid.

St Peter's Outdoor Christmas Pageant, December 16th! 5PM



The St Peter's Christmas pageant began in the 1990's under the Rev. Karen Woodruff. Part of the fun of a Christmas Pageant at St Peter's is that all ages participate in bringing the story of Jesus' birth to life. Here is a recent history of the play, year by year,

<https://news.churchsp.org/st-peters-christmas-plays-a-history>

This year the Christmas Pageant will be outside. The audience is invited to walk to the manger as it travels with the Holy Family to Bethlehem. If you'd like to be in the play, please let Catherine know. Needed—multitudes of angels, shepherds, wisemen, an innkeeper, or any other role you'd like to take, sign up—you'll have a great time. At the end of the pageant all are welcome in the Parish House for hot chocolate and cookies.

ECW Dinner for the "House"



The ECW will be taking dinner to the "House" located on Collage Ave, Fredericksburg on Dec. 5. (This was last done

Feb.5 , 2019 for about 10 students.) . Their website is - <https://www.thehousefxbg.org/>.

The Episcopal and Lutheran churches in downtown Fredericksburg have shared ministry for years, working together to fund and staff a mission to the University of Mary Washington campus since 2011. In 2018, the leadership of the three churches dreamed up the new position of Young Adult Missioner to coordinate campus ministries.

The missioner is The Rev. Ethan Lowery. College students meet Tuesdays during the semester from 5-7pm at The House for dinner and discussion and time to hang out and check in. Our goal for our young adult ministry is to create safe spaces for fellowship, creativity, and learning and growing

Our missioner's work is supported and shared among three parishes--Christ Lutheran, Trinity Episcopal, and St. George's Episcopal, all within walking distance of UMW and The House. In addition, the Fredericksburg Region (Andrea Pogue is our regional representative) contributes money for Ethan's salary.

Caroling in Port Royal and Portobago Bay



Wednesday, December 20, 5PM—Meet at the Parish House. Let's share the joy of beautiful Christmas music for our friends and neighbors.

Sunday, December 17 Youth Music!

In addition to the beautiful music from our adult choir, the congregation will get to enjoy, for a second year, the musical offerings of our young folks. Don't miss this delightful morning of worship!

St. Peter's Endowment Fund - An end of the year gift to the Church



Consider a gift to the St. Peter's Endowment Fund this year by Dec. 17. If you have not taken your IRA minimum distribution, this would be a good fund to consider. It's tax deductible

These funds, which are invested with the Diocesan Trustees of the Funds, will help assure financial security for St Peter's for years to come. Money from the fund can be used for the future maintenance of the buildings in the future and also for outreach projects that the church may take on. On your check, just designate the "Endowment Fund" in the memo line.

Giving to the Endowment Fund also offers some tax advantages. You can donate stock which is sold by the church with the proceeds going into the Endowment Fund. There are no capital gains for you and you can get a deduction for the appreciated value of the stock. Supporting St Peter's in this way can increase your tax deduction and not your tax bill.

You can also go further and add a percentage of your estate which is taken off the total estate when computing estate tax.

For details consult one of the trustees, Johnny Davis, Ken Pogue or Ben Hicks.

Advent Compline

Online on Thursdays Dec. 7, 14, and 21 7PM



Compline is an opportunity to give thanks for the joys and graces experienced, a chance to confess sins committed throughout the day, and the perfect moment to close the day the same way it started: in prayer. As we wait for the coming of our Lord and Savior, Compline offers a time of quiet and reflection in the midst of this busy season.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86334877905?pwd=T0FsSEpvUmRlMmkyR09DL2NBWnpnUT09>
Meeting ID: 863 3487 7905 Pass 868383

Advent Season Resources

An online Advent potpourri in 6 categories of things to do in Advent - Read, Watch, Learn, Listen, Pray and Reflect and Make. There is something for everyone!

<https://news.churchsp.org/adventcollection2023>



of Silent Night .

Read includes key points of Advent.

Under **Watch** there are videos -The Art and Spirit of the Creche and The Story

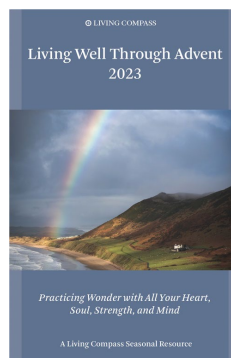
The **Learn** tab has the classes we have had at St. Peter's including Luke's Canticles, Matthew's Infancy Stories, Christmas Carols and Dickens.

Listen includes O Emmanuel, Lessons and Carols from National Cathedral , Still Forming Advent Meditations by Christianne Squires and a Spotify playlist.

Pray and Reflect features Antiphons and an adaptation of the Way of Love for Advent.

Finally **Make** has all sorts of crafts from Advent calendars, cooking and wreath creation.

Advent Meditations



Available in the back pew at St Peter's. Get your copy next time you're at church.

Living Compass has produced a book of daily meditations for Advent- "Living Well through Advent which begins Dec. 3

<https://shop.livingcompass.org/collections/advent-and-lent-resources> **The download is free.**

The Living Compass Model for Well-Being offers us guidance in four dimensions of our being: heart, soul, strength, and mind and focus on how they are interconnected. The goal is wellness and wholeness

The theme this year is "Practicing Wonder as we move toward Christmas." Each week has an example of practicing wonder as demonstrated in the lives of the authors.

Week 1 is the connection between **wonder and love**. Through time and space, adversity and divide, love remains. Love is a constant. Like love, wonder opens the heart and touches our soul.

Week 2 is the connection between **wonder and stories**. Stories so often help us remember the One whose love we are preparing to celebrate, and those who have taught us so much about wonder and love through the years.

Week 3 explores the connection between **wonder and thin places**, be they physical, spiritual, emotional, or relational. In a thin place, where heaven and earth seem to touch one another, deep transformation happens as we strengthen our personal connections to God.

Week 4 is the wonder of God as made manifest in Mary's faith and courage described in Luke, the birth of Jesus, and the reverent response of the shepherds.

references to the Bible and Dickens' religious beliefs.

2. **Handel's Messiah, Prophecy and Birth of the Messiah**. The story of the Christmas part of the Messiah together with the music.

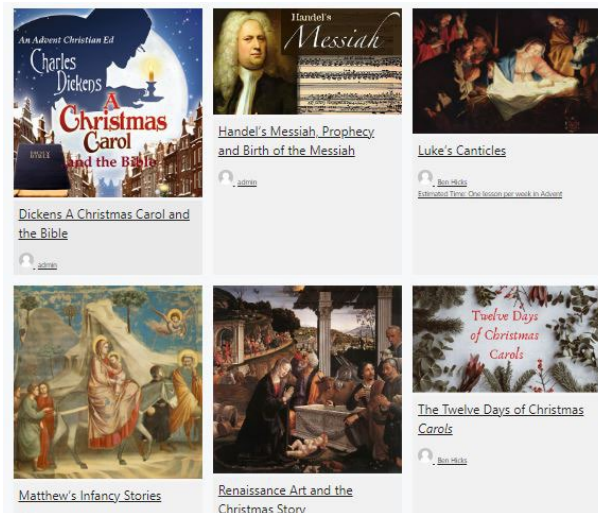
3. **Luke Canticles** – Based on a book which examines 4 canticles in the Gospel of Luke, including the infancy story. A favorite!

4. **Matthew's Infancy stories** – Comparable to Luke but with a decidedly Jewish character and an emphasis on Joseph.

5. **The Twelve Days of Christmas Carols** – 15+ carols for the days leading to Christmas. The background and musical selections are included.

6. The new one this year is **Renaissance Art and the Christmas Story**. The Renaissance was the first period where art came into its own depicting the stories we know and love. The study is divided by subject and includes about 15 art examples.

Advent online learning



Most of these classes were developed by Ben Hicks for Sunday School at St Peter's before Covid. Now they are online

<https://www.news.churchsp.org/courses/>

No login or password is needed. You can start and stop the courses as desired.

1. **Dickens A Christmas Carol and the Bible**
A deep read into the Christmas classic for

The Gospel in December

The new church year (Year B) begins on the 1st Sunday in Advent. Year B focuses on the Gospel according to Mark. In Advent, we hear not only from Mark's gospel, but also from the Gospels according to John and to Luke.

Advent 1 Mark 13:24-37

Advent speaks not only of the present and past but also of the future. This passage is taken from Mark's version Jesus' final discourse – Jesus' last extended talk with his followers before his arrest and execution.

The reading is apocalyptic. In Mark we are instructed to watch for the violent, earthshaking coming of the Son of Man and his kingdom. If we are not watchful, we might be caught unaware and unprepared.

In Mark, Jesus doesn't return to judge; but to bring freedom for the believers from the sinful generation. He comes as a completely different kind of king to bring in a new and different kingdom, challenging those who admire him and who are impressed by what He says and does to follow the way of discipleship.

Our responsibility is to stay awake to what is happening in the world - even when others seem to be sleeping - so that we are ready to welcome Christ into the world when He comes. This awareness sees life as God desires us to see it, full of its hopes and possibilities; as well it's suffering and longing for completeness.

Watchful living is about carrying out our trust, as Mark illustrates it, in a way that finally makes the date of the end a matter of irrelevance. Readiness has as much to do with being ready for life as it has to do with its end.

Advent 2 Mark 1:1-8

The Second Sunday of Advent in Year B focuses on John the Baptist. In the text from the gospel of Mark, we learn that the rather eccentric John lives in the wilderness near the river Jordan where Jesus is baptized. The baptism John offers is "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (1:4).

John's primary intention was not to draw attention to himself, but to the one of whom he is the forerunner: "'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me, I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals'" (1:7). John's role is that of a servant to the one he is called to serve. John preached a change of spirit and lifestyle, a metanoia, to make straight the way of the Lord. His words had an effect, for many from far and near went to hear his message. Those he baptized confessed their faults, in the hope that their repentance would lead to forgiveness of their sins. [1:4-5]

The baptism of this one who is to come is radically different from that of John's baptism: "'I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit'" (1:8). This is the role that John plays out in a significant way, calling attention to Jesus, the one who ushers in God's kingdom.

The Messiah's baptism would be liberation and judgment. Those who received the Messiah would be freed from sin, sickness, and death.

The Messiah is the one who has come, who is present, and who is to come again. We too are called to announce and make known God's Son in this season of Advent. Like the witness of John, we too are witnesses to the one who incarnates "the beginning of the good news, the gospel"

Advent 3 John 1:6-8,19-28

The gospel according to John is spread throughout Years A, B, and C. Advent 3 is the first time we hear from John's gospel in Year B.

In John's gospel, John the Baptist appears in the John's famous prologue. John the Baptist "came as a witness to the light...he himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

John's gospel goes from its cosmic introduction to the reality of the world, with the Jewish authorities showing up to question John about Jesus. As Eugene Peterson says in his paraphrase of the Bible, The Message, John is the opening act (or as Peterson says a stagehand). "I'm baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. The real action comes next: The main character in this drama—compared to him I'm a mere stagehand—will ignite the kingdom life within you, a fire within you, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He's going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He'll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he'll put out with the trash to be burned."

Advent 4 Luke 1:26-38

Because Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, read the Advent 4 lessons at home and plan to come to church for the Christmas Eve service.

The Gospel according to Luke sets the stage for the birth of Christ. Luke is the only gospel that links the lives of John and Jesus in such an intimate way, identifying Elizabeth and Mary as relatives (1:36). Elizabeth gives birth to John in her old age; Mary gives birth to Jesus in her youth. Elizabeth gives birth to John six months before the birth of Jesus to Mary.

The Vision of Mary is the second of six episodes covering the dawn of the messianic

age, 1:5-2:40. The central element of the vision is the announcement that the child to be conceived in Mary will be no normal child. He is the heir to David's throne and will take the royal title, "Son of the Most High", cf. Ps.2:7, 89:26f, and "Son of God." These titles describe his unique messianic authority.

Luke sets the story amid the cries of the Jewish people for liberation from Rome's oppression, Rome's forced 'peace'. In Isaiah 7:14, 'A young woman shall conceive and bear a son and you shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us', The Prophet Isaiah offered a sign of deliverance for Judah from the threatening alliance of its northern compatriots of Israel with the Syrians. Here the sign has been recycled to point to coming liberation from the Romans.

Luke's infancy narrative show that the meaning of Jesus' life, death and resurrection was already implicit in the events of Jesus' conception and birth. The divine origin of Jesus earthly history is confirmed.

In Jesus, the fulfillment of the ages has come. The Messiah, so longed for in the history of God's people, brings together the reign of David and the promise of life to the family of Jacob/Israel. Thus it is no wonder that Mary responds: "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" (1:34).

The Apple Tree - and Cake!

There is a Christmas Carol called "The Apple Tree" that goes back to 1784. The song may be an allusion to both the apple tree in Song of Solomon 2:3 which has been interpreted as a metaphor representing Jesus, and to his description of his life as a tree of life in Luke 13:18-19. The first verse"

"The tree of life my soul hath seen,
Laden with fruit and always green;
The trees of nature fruitless be,
Compared with Christ the Apple Tree.

Which leads us to consider an Apple Cake for Christmas! Catherine loves this apple cake recipe and has periodically made it. The recipe

comes from **The Heritage Cookbook**, Sylvia Stone, Editor.

Recipe

Mix together: 3 cups raw apples, peeled, cored and diced

1 cup each golden raisins and chopped walnuts

Dust with: ½ cup flour

Sift together: 2-1/2 cups flour

1 t. each cinnamon, salt, and baking soda

½ t. cloves

Beat slightly: 3 eggs (or use ¾ cup egg substitute)

Add to eggs and beat until well blended:

1 cup canola oil

2 cups sugar

Combine: Flour and egg mixtures

Add: 1 teas vanilla

Pour into a greased and floured 10" tube pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 1 ¾ hours.

Meanwhile, to prepare optional sauce, combine and boil on medium heat for 2 minutes:

1 cup sugar

½ teas each soda and vanilla

½ cup buttermilk

1 stick butter or margarine

Pour hot sauce over cake. Leave in pan for 2 hours.

New Year's Eve at St. Peter's, Sunday, December 31, 5PM



The New Year's Eve Gathering has taken place for many years. This year, bring a dish to share and enjoy closing out 2023 and looking forward to 2024 with friends around the table.

(2018)

December, 2023

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
					1	2
3 God's Garden 10:15am Eucharist, Rite II 11am Donations to the ECM Christmas due Choir rehearsal after Church Coffee Hour 12pm	4	5 ECW takes dinner to the "House" ,5pm	6 HBD, Charles McGuire, Carolyn Duke Bible Study 10am	7 Compline, Online,7PM	8 HBD Linneth Feliciano, Laura Long, Terry Collins	9 HBD Bill Lauck
10 God's Garden 10:15am Eucharist, Rite II 11am Poinsettia forms due	11 HBD Talia Feliciano	12 HBD Nancy Long Chancellors Village Eucharist, 1pm	13 Bible Study 10am Make arrangements for Church Windows, led by Alice Hughes 12:15pm	14 HBD Cherry Everett 2PM Vestry meeting in the Parish House Compline, Online, 7PM	15	16 Outdoor Christmas Pageant, 5PM
17 Eucharist, Rite II 11am Youth music at 11am Last Sunday to donate for the Endowment Fund	18	19	20 Bible Study 10am Village Harvest food distribution 3:00-5pm Caroling 5pm, Meet at church	21 Happy Anniversary – Johnny, Cookie Davis Compline Online 7PM	22	23
24 NO 11AM Service Christmas Eve service 4:00pm.	25 Christmas Day	26 HBD Rob Dobson	27 No Bible Study	28	29 HBD Alice Hughes	30 HBD Linda Upshaw Vivian McDonald
31 Lessons and Carols 11am New Year's Eve Gala, 5pm Parish House						