



Augustana News

December 2024

Dear Friends in Christ,

Recently someone asked me, “So what is so hidden about Christmas?” “Hidden Christmas: The Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of Christ” is the book by Timothy Keller we have been using for our pre-Advent study. Actually, there is nothing hidden about Christmas but many aspects of Christmas we just don’t consider.

Think about it: Christmas is the only Christian holy day that is also a major secular holiday, and the secularness of this holy day/holiday seems to start earlier and earlier each year. Because of that, we might want to pay closer attention to our true Christian roots that in the midst of darkness comes this light (the world’s hope) which comes from outside of ourselves and is Jesus. Jesus comes as this light because by ourselves we are often too blind to find our way. Then it should follow that because Jesus gave himself to us totally, wholly in fact, we too must give ourselves to him and to each other. The author of our book says, “Jesus is a Light for us even when all other lights go out.”

Something else we may not take time to think about is that Christmas is not simply about a day or about a birth on that day in time. No, it is about God coming to us. It was a plan that was planned before the Arrival of Jesus. In fact, it was planned even before the earth was created. The author is quick to dismiss any hint that this is any “Once upon a time” story, but Matthew begins his gospel not by telling us about the star, the shepherds, or baby Jesus in the manger. He begins with that long and tedious genealogy. This is not some “Once upon a time” fairy tale. The origins of Christmas are grounded in fact, history, heritage, and real-time events with real people. The Christmas story steeped for us in traditions and emotions with a bit of sentimentality tucked in is just the beginning of the Salvation history with more that came during Holy Week and then the resurrection and ascension with more to follow at the second coming. So, we can’t just put a period after Christmas and say, “Well, that is that...time to move on.” No, Christmas is Christ breaking into human history to save us. We sing in “Silent Night” – “Christ the Savior is born. Christ the Savior is born.”

Another point we often forget is that at Christmas we celebrate Jesus being born both human and divine. The Incarnation means that when the Son of God became human, he did not give up his divinity. He was still God, and he gave up his divine characteristics to be vulnerable and ordinary just like us. The incarnation is more than Jesus being human and at the same time being God. It is also about this Jesus (Immanuel) being with us. This tells us that Jesus wanted a relationship with us. At Christmas we sing, “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” and in it the line “Jesus our Immanuel.” Is Jesus with us and are we with him? Do we know Jesus or do we simply know about Jesus? It has been said if Jesus moved heaven and earth to get close to us, what should we be doing right now in our lives to get closer to him? *(Continued on Page 2)*

**God
coming
to us**

(Dear Friends—Continued from Page 1)

For me, some of what I fail to recall during Christmas is Mary's response as she is given this unbelievable message from God. She didn't just say yes to God for a brief moment in time; faith required the commitment of her entire life. In Luke 1:33 we read Mary saying, "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled." This is a statement of obedience from which each of us can learn. The question for us is two-fold: Are we willing to trust and believe what God has said to us through the ages, through scripture, through the prophets and through God's plan of salvation in Jesus; and are we willing to trust God's plan for our life whether we like it or not and whether we understand it or not? The angel's response to Mary in Luke 1:1:37 tells us that "nothing is impossible with God." During this Christmas and Epiphany season we are reminded of joy, "glad tidings of great joy." The joy that Christmas shows us assures us of God's deep and unconditional love and care for us. A joy that will carry us through every experience of our life. This Christmas Hymn "From Heaven Above" by Martin Luther is my prayer for you: verse 4 – "The blessing that the Father planned, the Son holds in his infant hand, that in his kingdom, bright and fair, you may with us his glory share."

Peace and love,
Sister Nora

Highlights of the Approved Augustana Lutheran Church Fall Annual Congregation Meeting Minutes of November 3, 2024

Quorum was confirmed.

Order for Elections - 3 Council members and 2 Endowment/Memorial members with expired terms will all remain for another term.

2025 Proposed Budget passed pending clarification by Treasurer on two items.

Old Business - A Joint Shared Ministry Committee will be formed with Grace and Augustana to plan and share activities together per the action of the minutes of 1/21/2024.

*New Business Notes

Constitution - Augustana's Constitution was unanimously approved.

Roof Repair - The contract to replace the shingled roof and gutters was unanimously approved. The money for the downpayment/half of the roof repair will be taken from the interest of the Paul Fishbaugh Fund with the balance taken from the Parsonage CD Fund.

(See full minutes on the Bulletin Board outside of the Fellowship Hall.)

Highlights of the Approved Joint Council of Augustana and Grace Churches Meeting Minutes of October 21, 2024

Joint Ministry Covenant signed by both congregations last year was reviewed.

* Talking Points -

Current Shared Activities - book studies, Blessing Bags, Worship & Music/Hymn Selection Committee, Monthly Game Night at Grace, Women's Luncheon, Soup of Success, Holden Evening Prayer, Wednesday Holy Communion

Potential Future Shared Activities - Shared services, Women's Synodical Retreat, Faith Ministries, Sack Lunches

More Interaction between both churches is needed.

Bishop Graham will be present at the next Joint Council & Call Committees Meeting on March 23, 2025. He will be preaching and presiding at both services that day prior to the meeting held at Augustana.

Fall Joint Council will be September 15, 2025, at Grace.

(See full minutes on the Bulletin Board outside of the Fellowship Hall.)



December 1 - Advent 1	December 8 - Advent 2	December 15 - Advent 3	December 22 - Advent 4	December 29 - Christmas 1
Jeremiah 33:14-16 Psalm 25:1-10 I Thessalonians 3:9-13 St. Luke 21:25-36	Malachi 3:1-4 Luke 1:68-79 Philippians 1:3-11 St. Luke 3:1-6	Zephaniah 3:14-20 Isaiah 12:2-6 Philippians 4:4-7 St. Luke 3:7-18	Micah 5:2-5a Psalm 80:1-7 Hebrews 10:5-10 St. Luke 1:39-55	I Samuel 2:18-20, 26 Psalm 148 Colossians 3:12-17 St. Luke 2:41-52

Pastoral Information

Sister Nora Frost, Interim Minister

Sister Nora's Office Hours

Monday 9AM – Noon ~ Augustana
 Tuesday, 9AM – Noon ~ Grace
 Wednesday, 9AM – Noon ~ Augustana
 Thursday, 9AM – Noon ~ Grace
 Friday, 9AM – 10:30AM ~ Grace
 10:30AM – Noon ~ Augustana

Saturday & Sunday ~ Call for an appointment.

There are meetings on some mornings, as well as Zoom meetings, so please call in advance to make sure that Sister Nora is in before coming.

Please Call the Church Office or Sister Nora Directly if You are Hospitalized or Having Surgery.

Pastoral care is a ministry of Pastors and Deacons and one of the ways healing can be offered to the body of Christ. It is important for you (or someone else if you are not able) to contact the Church office or Sister Nora directly. When we are sick, have had an accident or having surgery, we need not only physical healing but spiritual healing as well. These are times when your church family can be holding you in prayer which sometimes is the best and most important thing which we can do for each other.

PLEASE allow your Interim Minister and members of your church family be part of your healing process.



PRAYER LIST

Please contact us with updates, praises, & requests.

Health Concerns

Doris Koontz
 Jerry & Judy Duck
 Sharon Butler
 Deb Ludlow
 Zack Havens, Nichole Metz'
 cousin's son
 Ken Davis, Deb
 Rowland's son-in-law
 Jay Rice
 Mike Iavagnilio
 Ryan Drummond
 Dwight Gerber
 June, mother of
 Melanie Watson
 Ruth Anne Gray
 Jayme

Health Concerns continued

Chuck Ward
 Deb Rowland
 Priscilla Powell

Those who mourn

The family of
 Brennan Decker

Other concerns

Victims of war, violence,
 natural disasters
 Pioneer Faith Ministries
 Council & Call
 Committee
 Future Pastor

**O LORD, hear me as I pray;
 pay attention to my groaning. Listen to
 my cry for help, my King and my God, for
 I pray to no one but you. Listen to my
 voice in the morning, LORD. Each
 morning I bring my requests to you and
 wait expectantly.**

**~ Psalm 5:1-3
 NLT**

DECEMBER 2024 SERVER SCHEDULE

December 1 – Advent 1

Assisting Minister: Scott Watson

Lector: Jerry Duck

Server: Leah Moyer

Technology Server: Cayden Abner

Ushers: Ed & Janie Williams

December 8 – Advent 2

Assisting Minister: Nancy Tinder

Lector: Heidi Scupham

Server: George Scupham

Technology Server: Cayden Abner

Ushers: Scott & Melanie Watson

December 15 – Advent 3

Assisting Minister: Mark Moyer

Lector: Mark Moyer

Server: Cayden Abner

Technology Server:

Ushers: Emily, Mark, & Leah Moyer

December 22 – Advent 4

Assisting Minister: Maralee Macumber

Lector: Maralee Macumber

Server: Jack Watson

Technology Server: Mark Moyer

Ushers: Dave & Janet Ermis

December 24 – Christmas Eve

Assisting Minister: Mark Moyer

Lector: Dorothy Moyer

Server: Jill Scupham

Technology Server:

Ushers:

December 29 – Christmas 1

Assisting Minister: Maralee Macumber

Lector: Maralee Macumber

Server: Dorothy Moyer

Technology Server: Jack Watson

Ushers: Deb Rowland

December Altar Guild

Heidi Paston & Deb Rowland

Please let the office know of any changes.

December Altar Flowers



December 1 - Available

December 8 - Given by
Randy & Nancy Tinder

In Honor of Laura Tinder &
Emily Mills

December 15 - Given by Sister Nora
In Memory of Jack Frost

December 22 - Available

December 29 - Available

Soon the 2025 Altar Flower chart will be posted. Please sign up to sponsor altar flowers throughout the year. The easel is at the back of the pews. Choose your date and use the envelope provided for your \$25. Thank you.

Come out, see, & support our very own students to get into the holiday spirit!

Leah Moyer performs in the
Elkhart Holiday Band &
Orchestra Concert
Elkhart High School
2608 California Road
Tuesday, December 10 - 7:00 p.m.
Thursday, December 12 - 7:00 p.m.
Tickets: \$ 8 at the door

Cayden Abner performs in the
Concord Holiday Band Concert
Concord High School
Beickman Performing Arts Center
Saturday, December 14 - 4:00 & 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, December 15 - 2:00 p.m.
Tickets: \$ 10 online

Jill Scupham will performs in the
Edwardsburg Holiday Band Concert
Edwardsburg High School
69358 Section Street
Thursday, December 12 - 7:00 p.m.
Free/May bring donation of wrapping paper, bows or tape.
Proceeds go to Our Lady of the Lake Christmas Project.

Christmas Concerts



Questions? Contact: Emily Moyer or Heidi Moyer

Financial/ Attendance Report

[Fiscal Year Runs Feb. 1 thru Jan. 31]

**Information thru November 26, 2024

Fiscal Year-to-Date Budget Requirement	Fiscal Year-to-Date Actual Funds in General Fund
\$119,386.00	\$66,606.97
November Monthly Budget Requirement	November Actual Offering to General Fund
\$20,358.00	\$4,831.00
DECEMBER Weekly Amount Needed to meet Budget Requirement	Noisy Offering Fiscal Year-to-Date
\$2,464.20	\$283.00
November Average Sunday In-Person Attendance	November Average Sunday Facebook Attendance
31	47

Approved Augustana Lutheran Church Council Minutes Highlights Of October 21, 2024

Present: Diane Erickson, Gunnar Erickson, Dave Ermis, Chuck Miller, Mark Moyer, Nancy Tinder, Randy Tinder, Sister Nora

Minutes from the September council meeting were presented & unanimously approved.

***Financial reports** from September were presented. Reports were unanimously approved.

***Sister Nora's reports** were presented. Cultivate Food Rescue was discussed.

***Unfinished Business:**

Organist Update - We are covered through year's end.

Bank Funds Updates - Ed Williams' name was added to our account.

***New Business:**

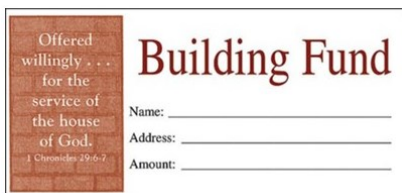
Property Insurance - Unanimous approval was given to increase the deductible which would drop the annual premium.

New Roof will be discussed at the Annual Congregation Meeting.

Rombke Fund - Unanimous approval was given to use \$4,000.00 from this fund to pay for the flat roof installation.

1st Sunday Meal-a-Month was approved. Deb Rowland will head this through May.

(See full minutes on the Bulletin Board outside of the Fellowship Hall.)



Building Fund Envelopes

Name: _____
Address: _____
Amount: _____

The Council approved the decision to use Building Fund

Envelopes for persons to use to help reimburse the Parsonage CD and the Paul Fishbaugh Funds for Augustana's roof repair costs. Anyone wishing to donate to the roof fund should use these envelopes found in the narthex and in the pews. Thank you.

Did you know???

- As of November, our new Council Officers are:
 - ⇒ President - Mark Moyer
 - ⇒ Vice President - Maralee Macumber
 - ⇒ Secretary - Dave Ermis
 - ⇒ Treasurer, non-member - Randy Tinder



We are preparing the 2025 Giving Envelopes for pick up on **Sunday, December 8.**

Do you use your envelopes? If not, let the office know so that they can be saved for another.

Do you want giving envelopes? If so, let the office know as there are extras.

Thank you for your faithful service to Augustana.



The Salvation Army of Elkhart has reached out to area churches for donations as more and more families are needing assistance. The Council has decided to place The Salvation Army bucket in the church for anyone wishing to contribute now through Christmas Eve. Checks may be written to **The Salvation Army Elkhart**. Or, you may choose to donate online at centralusa.salvationarmy.org/elkhart and click on the Donate to This Community tab.

**Giving Christmas Tree
December 1 - January 6**



December through January 6 we will again be collecting hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, and socks. Please place these items on the tree inside the far west front door of the sanctuary.

Your donations are appreciated.



**Piano Recital
Please come!
Sunday, December 1 ~
2:00 PM at Grace**

There will be a piano recital at Grace Lutheran Church featuring the students of Amy Shelley.

As you may know, Amy has so graciously agreed to be one of our substitute musicians while we continue looking for an organist. Come and bring a friend or two to this special recital and support the hard, diligent work of not only Amy but her students as well.

**Bread Baking ~ 9 AM
Monday, December 2 &
Thursday, December 5**

Mark your calendar and plan to come and help with Swedish Rye Bread baking at Augustana. Or, you may take loaves home to bake.

Get orders in soon!

Cost per loaf and purchase dates are yet to be determined. Be watching for details.

Scholarships

**Scholarship Deadline
Thursday
December 12, 2024**

Calling all college-bound persons. Submit your scholarship requests to be considered for a Spring Scholarship. Forms are available in the church office.

**25¢ Sale
Saturday, December 14
10 - 11 AM**

Please bring nearly-new items that a child may buy for a parent, grandparent, or sibling or that a parent may buy for their child and place them in Augustana's library by **Friday, December 13.**



2025 Augustana Lutheran Church Directory

The process to update Augustana's Directory will begin in December. Please let the office know of your contact changes as soon as possible. Changes submitted throughout the past year have already been added. Thank you for your help!

**Advent Devotionals &
Calendars**

are available on the table in the narthex. Pick up your free copies today!

Blessing Bags Coordinator Needed

Were you a person who indicated on your Time and Talent Card that you would be interested in helping with the Blessing Bags Mission? There is a need for a volunteer to coordinate the Blessing Bags outreach. Please prayerfully consider whether God is calling you to be the coordinator then let the office know. A list of the process and responsibilities is available. Thank you.

December Fellowship Opportunities



Sunday, December 1 **1st Sunday Meal-a-Month Kickoff**

The Council approved 1st Sunday Meal-a-Month from now through May 4 for anyone in the church who would like to stay for food and fellowship after worship. The main course will be provided, and persons should sign up in the narthex to bring a side dish or dessert to share.

This is an opportunity for much-needed fellowship with one another as well as an opportunity to bring family, friends, and neighbors to worship with a delicious meal afterwards.

Please let the office or Deb Rowland know your intentions of coming in order to prepare enough food.

FIRST WEDNESDAY **BREAKFAST CLUB**

Wednesday, December 4 ~ 9 AM
(Always the first Wednesday)

Meet at Perkins on Cassopolis Street.
Call Deb Rowland for reservations.

LAST THURSDAY LUNCH BUNCH **Thursday, December 26 ~ Noon**

Come and join your Augustana friends for lunch at the **Golden Egg Pancake House** on Nappanee Street across from the Drive and Shine Car wash. Bring a friend or neighbor with you. *Phone your reservation and the number coming to the church office by Tuesday, December 24.*

Augustana & Grace **Shared Fellowship & Ministry Opportunity**



Nursing Home Caroling **Sunday, December 8 ~ 2 PM**

Please join us as we carol together with Grace to nursing home residents. Three nursing homes will be selected. It is hoped that any of our members who reside at these homes will come to listen. They will be contacted prior to our coming. Please meet at Augustana's parking lot for instructions. Children, youth, and adults who enjoy Christmas carols are welcome to join!

NOTE:

There will be
no Game
Night at
Grace in
December.

December Worship Opportunities

Sunday, December 15 ~ 11 AM - Santa Lucia Service at Augustana



Sunday, December 15 ~ 3 PM - Longest Night worship at Grace - For some of us, the Christmas season is not all joy and happiness, especially if you have lost a loved one. The service is for everyone in our community who is feeling grief and sorrow during this season. Come and worship with others who are experiencing your deep sadness.

Wednesday, December 18 ~ 6:30 PM - Holden Evening Prayer - A quiet and reflective service with scripture, music, and a brief homily. It is a wonderful way to bring a hectic day to a close and quiet our hearts during this holiday season. Guests are welcome.



Tuesday, December 24 ~ Christmas Eve Services

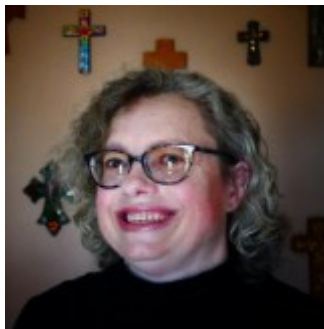


4:30 PM - Family Service at Augustana
7:00 PM - Candlelight Service at Grace
10:30 PM - Candlelight Service at Augustana

Sunday, December 29 ~ 11 AM - Service of Lessons and Carols at Augustana

ELCA News

Meet the new assistant to the Bishop



Priscilla Geerdes will join the IK Synod as the Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry Transition in December 2024. Her ministry is to assist both congregations and rostered leaders in leavings and callings, to arrange for interim ministries, and to work with Synodically Authorized Ministers. She will also work in collaboration with the future Director of Evangelical Mission, and the Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP) Companion Church in Indonesia.

Michigander by birth, she spent most of her formative years here in the IK Synod being a member of Our Savior's in Winchester, Bethany in Indianapolis, and St. Paul's in Vincennes. She is a graduate of Valparaiso University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary, and spent six summers serving on either the staff of Lake Luther or Lutheran Hills. She is a proud second generation female pastor, and her mother, Pastor Barbara Hunter, did her internship at Trinity in Union City and served in the I-K Synod from 1987-1999.

Her husband, Pastor Matthew Geerdes, is wrapping up his service in Illinois and engaging in the discernment and call process in this synod. They have two amazing children, Lily and Isaiah, who are both University of Iowa Hawkeyes.

Most importantly, she is a beloved child of God! She is passionate about sharing the love of Christ, working toward peace and justice, and educating herself on the injustices facing those of various races, genders, ages, identities, and abilities. She looks forward to working with leaders and congregations to creatively imagine ways to be the church now and in the future.



Looking Ahead

ONE OF THESE DAYS...

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

— LUKE 2:8-9 NIV

Wednesday, January 1 -

Breakfast Club at Perkins

Sunday, January 5 - After worship

1st Sunday Meal a Month

Thursday, January 9 -

God's Gifts Pantry

Wednesday, January 18 -

Holden Evening Prayer

Thursday, January 23 -

God's Gifts Pantry

Thursday, January 30 -

Lunch Bunch at The Golden Egg

All Wednesdays in January:

4 PM - Service of Holy

Communion at Grace

Join us each Sunday morning
for Fellowship in the Narthex
before & after Worship.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday ~ 8AM-Noon
Tuesday ~ 10:30AM-1:30PM
Wednesday ~ 8AM-Noon
Thursday ~ 8AM-Noon
Friday ~ OFFICE CLOSED

GOD'S GIFTS PANTRY

Sack of food & personal items
distribution every 2nd & 4th
Thursday of the month.

Augustana Lutheran Church

1133 Kilbourn Street
Elkhart IN 46514

Phone: 574-294-3823

E-mail: secretary@augustana.comcastbiz.net

Website: www.augustanaelkhart.org

Augustana Mission Statement:

As the Body of Christ,
we are called to Love All, Serve All, Welcome All.



Take-Along Page

Take this page with you to the grocery store
to help Augustana serve those in need.

155 People
Served in November

God's Gifts Pantry Needs Your Help

Thursday, December 12, and Thursday, December 26, will be our next sack distributions. Thank you to all who have brought items! We continue to serve more people each week, so your contributions are very much needed and appreciated! Please bring items to the church Sunday mornings or any time during the week during office hours, placing them in the barrels by the office. The following items are needed:

Canned chicken or tuna
Canned fruits & vegetables
Cereal & Oatmeal
Ritz or other crackers in sleeves
Pork and Beans
Boxes or bags of rice
Boxed potatoes
Peanut Butter & Jelly
Spaghetti or other pasta
Canned spaghetti sauce (red) - no glass jars
Cake mixes and frosting
Pudding - jello
Cookies (individually wrapped)
Juice - no glass jars
Non-dairy milk
Cooking oil - butter

Toothpaste & toothbrushes
Shampoo
Toilet Paper & Kleenex
Dish Soap & Laundry Detergent (not pods)
Cleaning supplies

*The following items are found at Dollar Tree:

*Mac & Cheese with foil pack
*Boxed cereals (any size or kind)
*Spaghetti-O's – pull top
*Pork n' Beans & Dogs – pull top
*canned Kid meals
*Bags or boxes of rice
*Dinty Moore Stew
*Bags of beans
*Tuna

Cans with pop-tops are preferred though we know many cans do not come that way.

NO GLASS JARS and NO EXPIRED FOOD

December 2024

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>11 AM-Worship</p> <p>12:15 PM - 1st Sunday Meal-a-Month</p> <p>2 PM - Piano Recital at Grace</p>	<p>9 AM-Bread Baking</p>		<p>9 AM-Breakfast Club at Perkins</p> <p>4 PM-Holy Communion at Grace</p>	<p>9 AM-Bread Baking</p>		
<p>8</p> <p>11 AM-Worship</p> <p>2 PM-Nursing Home Caroling</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>*Band Concert <i>See article, page 4</i></p> <p>6:30 PM- Augustana Council Meeting</p>	<p>11</p> <p>4 PM-Holy Communion at Grace</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Winter Scholarship Deadline</p> <p>10-11 AM-God's Gifts Pantry</p> <p>*Band Concert <i>See article, page 4</i></p>	<p>13</p> <p>6-8 PM-Pioneer Faith Youth Group</p>	<p>14</p> <p>10-11 AM - 25¢ Sale at Augustana</p> <p>*Band Concert <i>See article, page 4</i></p>
<p>15</p> <p>11 AM-Worship Santa Lucia Service</p> <p>3 PM-Longest Night at Grace</p> <p>*Band Concert <i>See article, page 4</i></p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>8:45 AM - Noon Ministerium Meeting</p>	<p>18</p> <p>4 PM-Holy Communion at Grace</p> <p>6:30 PM-Holden Evening Prayer</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Newsletter Articles Deadline</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22</p> <p>11 AM-Worship</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Christmas Eve Services:</p> <p>4:30 PM - Augustana</p> <p>7:00 PM - Grace</p> <p>10:30 PM - Augustana</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Office Closed</p> 	<p>26</p> <p>10-11 AM-God's Gifts Pantry</p>	<p>27</p> <p>6-8 PM-Pioneer Faith Youth Group</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>11 AM-Worship Service of Lessons & Carols</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Secretary Out of Office</p>	<p>Join us each Sunday morning for Fellowship in the Narthex before & after worship.</p>			