From the Pastors

The Rev. Dr. David Holyan, Pastor

Peace and Light

Just before the announcement of the birth of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke, Zechariah ends his prophecy with this line: By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break 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 1:78-79

Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, offers us an insight into the change in direction the birth of Jesus will bring to God's people. Instead of working for the benefit of ourselves, the birth of the Christ invites us to work for the good of our neighbors by providing comfort to those who are struggling or in mourning, as well as being peacemakers. My hope is this passage can be our guiding prayer for the seasons of Advent and Christmas.

On a personal level many people struggle during the holidays. Depression, worry, mourning—the emotions of loss—fill us or our neighbors as we remember those who will not be with us or as we question our own ability to simply get through this hectic time of year. While some of us enthusiastically embrace the hope, joy, and love of the season, many of us find those emotions illusive. Be mindful of those around you who might need a little more understanding as you celebrate the season. And if that person is you, be gentle with yourself and ask for the space you need.

The prophecy concludes with the assertion that the birth of Jesus will 'guide our feet into the way of peace' or wholeness. This, too, invites us to be attentive to what we are doing in this season, to not be too busy to make room and slow down. The way of peace is a lifestyle, a quality of being, a choice for us all to make, especially at this time of year.

I pray the celebration of the birth of Jesus is peace-full and provides light to all,

Peace,

Karen

The Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard, Associate Pastor

As I was working out in the bed, I remembered the history of these seeds. They came from a garden in Pleasant Hill, Kentucky. A few years ago some of us from church went to visit a Shaker Village—a beautiful place of rolling hills where many people lived as part of a religious community from 1805-1910. Many of the original structures—dormitories, kitchens, and worship space are still there. There were also the barns and fields that had been used for crops and pasturing animals that fed the community.

As we walked through the fields Vicky Gobberdiel got permission to take some seeds from a zinnia patch. The next spring she planted them and a lovely stand of zinnias grew up in the garden bed next to the sidewalk along the Jefferson lot. For the fall she gathered up the seeds and gave some to me. The last two years I have planted them—they are simply sown on the soil, covered with a little dirt and watered. Soon they sprout and take off.

I found myself thinking of the legacy of seeds and that a harvest is not one that is always eaten—that while the crop may fade some parts are saved for the year to come. Gathering seeds is an act of hope for the future.

The scriptures are also filled with references to planting seeds. After a time of waiting we plant and tend, and new life comes forth. And so it is for us. We are entering Advent, the new church year, a time of time for preparation—and in order to prepare we must wait. We will wait in darkness that will lead to light, the Winter that leads into Spring. Once again we will await the wonder that is to come. In this, we await the coming of Emmanuel who is God-with-us and we are reminded of the importance of the gifts of love, joy, hope and peace.

Shalom,
Karen

The church office will be closed Monday, December 24th; Tuesday, December 25th; Monday, December 31st and Tuesday, January 1st.
In Luke 21 we have sound advice for living a life of faith: be on guard and be alert. The invitation is for us to be on guard and alert. To be attentive in prayer and to guard our hearts are ways we stay grounded in God's love offered to us and all people. With the eyes of faith we can see glimpses of God's goodness at work within us and around us, even as we live in the midst of the busyness of Advent.

As we continue to get ready for Christmas, we are called to examine how we might “prepare the way of the Lord.” We are invited, in Luke 3:4, to smooth the way for the coming good news. The announcement is being made. The arrival is expected soon. The preparations for peace and wholeness are at work within us.

In this season of waiting, John the Baptist’s fire and brimstone speech reminds us once again of the pangs of new birth. We await a transformation, a baptism not just of water but one of the Holy Spirit and fire. Can salvation be hidden in what may look like struggle or does it seem more like overwhelming change?

The story of the coming of Emmanuel is one of mystery and surprise—involving unexpected twists and turns. The lives of Mary and Elizabeth are upended and we see how they abound in trust in God. In the midst of all that is unexpected come words of hope and love.

Advent comes to a close, and Christmas is upon us as we come together this night to celebrate the birth of Jesus—an event that took place long ago that still speaks to us in the present. This is a season often filled with lots of activity, yet I think that for many of us something else is going on beneath the surface. We yearn, we wonder and we hope for something we cannot quite explain. In the words of O Little Town of Bethlehem, we will consider the meaning of the words of Philip Brooks “the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.”

During the worship service we will observe a service of Lessons and Carols. We will join together to hear, once again in scripture and song, the birth of Jesus Christ. Come enjoy the Christmas story and sing familiar carols.
From the Director of Music Ministries

December brings us to another Advent and Christmas season, a new year in the liturgical life of the church. We will adorn our building with beautiful decorations, the music will be different to reflect the change in seasons, and we embark on 4 weeks of waiting and watching for the coming of Messiah. Amid the busy-ness of December, take time each day to have quiet moments and reflect on the meaning and beauty of the season.

Of course, December also brings to us wonderful performances! The Imaginary Theatre Company returns on Sunday, December 2nd, and will present the play “Christmas Skates” in Fellowship Hall at 2:00p.m. This performance is open to children of all ages and is free of charge. Milk and cookies will be served after the play.

Sunday, December 16th, the Chancel Choir will present their annual Christmas Concert. This year's concert is a Service of Lessons and Carols, in celebration of King's College, Cambridge, 100th anniversary of this service. Scripture readings, anthems, and carols with the audience will be led by our wonderful choir, magnificent Casavant organ, and professional orchestra. Bring a friend and join us.

May the coming weeks fill your heart, mind, and spirit with the joy of Emmanuel – God with us.

Faithfully yours,

Bill

Dr. Holyan Medical Update

I learned shortly after my return from Ghost Ranch that I will be having spinal surgery (again) on December 10 to repair a ruptured disc. The disc material is pressing against the nerves in my lower back and causing my legs to hurt and go numb. I will be at St. Luke's for 2 to 5 days, depending on how the surgery goes.

I'm working on lining up guest preachers to be in the pulpit, along with Karen, from December 16 through February 10. I plan on being back at church on February 11. Your prayers are greatly appreciated.

~ Rev. Dr. David Holyan

Con Spirito Concert Series

Holiday Performances

Both concerts are free, but a voluntary offering will be received.

December 2: 2:00PM, Fellowship Hall
“Christmas Skates” performed by the Imaginary Theatre Co.
The true spirit of the holiday season shines brightly in this new musical adaptation of Mary Griggs Van Voorhis's short story, “The Boy With the Box.” Inspired by kindness and spirit, plans are hatched to create a holiday surprise to remember.

December 16: 4:00PM, Sanctuary
The Annual Christmas Concert: A Service of Lessons and Carols
Join us as the Chancel Choir and Orchestra present a Service of Lessons and Carols, based on the traditional service from King's College, Cambridge. Enjoy scripture readings, anthems, and Christmas carols with the audience.
A Time to Give Thanks

Work Camp Anniversary Celebration!

Work Camp, our annual youth mission trip, began in the summer of 1969. We are calling on all former Work Campers to check in - even if you cannot attend on May 31-June 2, 2019.

We will be keeping a page on the website with information. You can also start sending photos to Rob in the office as soon as you start to find them - this will hopefully be the best slideshow of all!

http://www.kirkwoodpres.org/connect/wc50/

Please reach out if you have any questions!

College Parents Fellowship Gathering

Whether your child is a freshman at an in town institution of higher learning or finishing their PhD half way across the country, we have a group with which you can gather and share your worries, concerns, and joys. College Parents Fellowship meets in a social capacity to share conversation, information and support to each other. Our December gathering will be in the home of Becky and Randy Craig - 832 Bourbon Red Drive 63131.

We will gather on Thursday, December 6th starting at 6:00 for fellowship, darts, pinball, bubble hockey and shuffleboard. Appetizers and drinks, too.

RSVP to Rob Monroe (rmonroe@kirkwoodpres.org).

Questions? Contact Rob Monroe at church or Casey sixmack81@gmail.com

We are planning 3 events for the spring semester. Join us in December and you can offer ideas and help plan. Ax Throwing is in the works! Stay tuned.

Giving Tree Gifts - DUE December 9

We are so happy to be partnering with Lydia’s House for our Giving Tree project this year! Lydia’s House supports women and children that are fleeing from domestic abusive living situations.

Please have gifts back to FPC before 10:45 on Sunday, December 9th. Our Confirmation students and mentors will be delivering the gifts to the distribution center that morning.

Children’s Sunday School

This is such a very exciting time of year for the Sunday school classrooms. Children will make Advent Chains using cards to count down the amazing Christmas story from the Bible. We will also be Christmas Caroling for Adam's Place residents on Dec.16th.

LOGOS Updates

We are so excited for our LOGOS students to be bringing the story of Christmas to the church at the 4:00p.m. service on Christmas Eve! We hope that you will come and hear their hard work come together. Psallite Hodie!

December Themes:
12/5 - Copy Rob Night
Kid Tested, Rob puts up with it...
12/12 - LEGOS at LOGOS
Creativity will soar with little blocks of fun.
12/19 - Dress Rehearsal for Christmas Eve

Family Events in Early 2019

It’s hard to believe that 2019 is so close, but it is!

January 6th - Movie Night!
Join us for a night of pizza, popcorn and a family-friendly movie! Wear your PJ’s and bring a blanket to Fellowship Hall from 5:15-7:00. Bring $5 per family to cover our pizza costs, please.

February 10 - Game DAY!
Join us for snow-cones, snacks and games galore! We will have out 9 Square, Gaga Ball and a lot of table games - and we hope you will bring your favorite game (s) too! We are going to start earlier - 3:00-5:00! There is no cost for this event.

Youth Ministry

Work Camp Location Revealed!

Our Senior High Youth will be heading to the greater Washington, DC, area for Work Camp in 2019! Details are still in the works right now, but we are looking forward to a trip that will include some some service learning along with the regular fellowship, fun and hard work to be done!

Confirmation

Confirmation students and mentors will start the month by helping to sort and deliver the Giving Tree gifts! They will also be thinking creatively about the story of Christmas - always one of our favorite classes!
From the Deacons

SPECIAL THANKS
We want to express our appreciation to those who serve as deacons and members of the congregation for the donation of your time, giving blood, cookies and your support of the Fall Blood Drive. At the October drive, 31 pints of blood were gathered from donors—providing help to nearly 100 people through the various ways in which the blood is processed. Many thanks to Peggy Collins for all her support and direction for yet another successful drive—and of course, her wonderfully enticing and delicious cookies.

SEND SOME HOLIDAY CHEER TO OUR HOMEBOUND
The Homebound Team will be setting up tables again this year to provide you with a chance to sit down and write a note and sign a Christmas card for our members who are unable to get out and join us for worship. You write the note and address it, the church will mail it—a simple way to send words of support reminding our homebound people that we are thinking of them. The tables will be set up near the welcome desk between worship services on December 2, 9 and 16. In addition, if you have a few cards leftover from previous years, or are one of those who finishes up sending cards early and have a few left to share please bring them to the Welcome Center in a bag marked Deacons Christmas Cards. Thank you.

CHRISTIAN CONCERNS LECTURE SERIES - 9:00A.M.
in Room 009 December 2, 9, and 16
George Durnell leads a series on music of the seasons of Advent and Christmas: O Magnum Mysterium: A Musical Consideration of the Wonder of the Incarnation. Beginning with Daniel Pinkham’s "Christmas Cantata" and Francis Poulenc's "Four Christmas Motets"—very different pieces that use the same texts: "O Magnum Mysterium" (O Great Mystery) and "Quem Vidistes, Pastores?" (What have you seen, shepherds?).

FIREPLACE ROOM SERIES - 10:00A.M. in ROOM 030
December 16, 23, 30: NO CLASSES

FAITH & FAMILY – 10:00A.M., Room 029
As young Americans opt out of Christianity and the church, they list attitudes and behaviors of Christians as concerns. Let’s work together to build ourselves into people who are good examples of being Christ in our world, rather than as judgmental people others want to avoid. Drop off your children in Sunday School, and join us as we follow Adam Hamilton’s, “When Christians Get it Wrong”, discussion guide. No need to buy the book or do any reading outside class. Questions? Contact Sarahlynn Lester at 314-495-4730 or Sarahlynn@LesterBoal.net. On January 6 and 13, Faith & Family will meet in the Fireplace Room (030) to participate in a series of interest to parents of children and youth.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION CLASS - 9:30a.m. in Room 028
The Spiritual Formation series will focus on deepening the stillness of the heart through prayer, meditation, study and reflection. Tom Edelstein is the convener of the group which will meet the second Sunday of the month. If you have any questions please contact Tom at tedelstein@att.net or Karen Blanchard at kblanchard@kirkwoodpres.org.
CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Poinsettias may be ordered now through Wednesday, December 12, 2018. Cost is $25 each. This a wonderful way to honor a loved one and help beautify our facilities for Christmas. Just fill out and tear off this form and place in the offering plate or mail to the church with payment made to First Pres, earmarked “Poinsettia”.

Quantity: __________

in CELEBRATION or MEMORY of (please circle one):

____________________________________________________________________

From: ________________________________________________________________

Phone # and/or email: __________________________________________________

Poinsettias may be taken following the 11am service on January 6.
ADVENT & CHRISTMAS EVENTS

December 2: 10 AM, in the Chapel - “O Little Town of Bethlehem”
Learn the meaningful story behind the beloved carol, O Little Town of Bethlehem. Lynn Rubright (narrator), Daniel Rubright (guitarist), and Lydia Ruffin (singer), will flesh out the story of Rev. Phillips Brooks, author of “O Little Town of Bethlehem”. Brooks was the Anglican rector of Holy Trinity Church in Philadelphia during the Civil War, and ministered to both northern and southern sympathizers suffering from the ravages of that war. But Rev. Brooks also declared himself an abolitionist and supporter of Abraham Lincoln and was devastated by Lincoln’s assassination. Come hear how a visit to Bethlehem was a source for healing and hope.

December 9: 10AM, in the Chapel - “Apple Tree Christmas”
Lynn Rubright will tell her adaptation of the classic story, “Apple Tree Christmas” (1984, reprinted 2005) by Trinka Hakes Noble. This tale of a farm family living in a small community in southern Michigan in 1874 celebrates the importance of a old apple tree to each family member, until a winter storm changes everyone’s perspectives. Sandy Weltman with his harmonica, will musically illustrate the story. Grace Bradley will be vocalist.

Alternative Gift Market
We have the perfect gifts for you to give this season! The annual Alternative Gift Market, sponsored by the Mission Committee, will be held on Sundays, December 2 and 9, from 8:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. in the Gathering Space. The market provides one-stop, hassle-free shopping for a variety of unique gifts that benefit local and international charities and fair trade. Please stop by to support the following organizations. Thank you for your support!

- Beads for Life: paper bead jewelry from Uganda
- Lydia’s House: Lucinda “House” pins to support victims of domestic violence
- Pal Craftaid: olive wood products made in Palestine
- Partners for Just Trade: hand-made items from Cameroon, Haiti, and Peru
- Presby. Children’s Services: bake sale items
- Marion Medical Mission: donate to provide clean, safe drinking water in Africa
- Project Peanut Butter: purchase LOGOS cookie mixes to help fight starvation in our world
- Also included: Kwasha Kids, Bridge Bread, Heifer Project, Kirkcare, Room at the Inn

Please join us for the Annual Christmas Dinner in Fellowship Hall on December 16th at 5:30pm (following the Christmas Concert) The menu includes beef brisket w/au jus gravy, mixed greens salad with assorted dressings, party potatoes, rolls and butter, green beans, red velvet cake with cream cheese icing, coffee, tea, lemonade and water. Cost is $17.00 per adult, $5.00 per child 12 and under, children under 3 are free. Reservations are due by December 9th. Sign-up is on the table by the Lounge or email Barb Theerman at 4theerman@gmail.com. It is always a lovely evening.

Christmas Eve Services
- 4:00 p.m. Children’s Christmas Pageant: Music by the Children’s Choirs and Middle School Ringers
- 7:00 p.m. Communion Worship Service: Christmas message by Dr. Blanchard Music by the Chamber Choir
- 9:30 p.m. Christmas Prelude Music by the Rosewood Ensemble
- 10:00 p.m. Festival Worship Service: Christmas message by Dr. Blanchard Music by the Chancel Choir and Rosewood Ensemble

All services are in the sanctuary
## DECEMBER 2018

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event description</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Advent 8:15 AM Communion Worship 8:45 AM Alternative Gift Market 8:45 AM First Pres Cafe 9:00 AM Lecture Series 9:05 AM Arise! Contemporary Worship 10:00 AM Education for All Ages 10:00 AM Fireplace Room Series 10:00 AM New Member/Visitor Gathering 11:00 AM Traditional Worship 2:00 PM Imaginary Theater 7:00 PM Sr. High Fellowship</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9:00 AM Preschool/KDO 1:15 PM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM Bible Study 7:00 PM Carillon Ringers</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>9:00 AM Book Group 9:00 AM Preschool/KDO 5:00 PM Music Instr. 7:00 PM Worship, Music, and Arts 7:00 PM Youth Committee</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>9:00 AM Preschool/KDO 9:15 AM Musikgarten I 10:00 AM Musikgarten II 4:00 PM LOGOS 4:45 PM Choristers 5:30 PM Middle School Ringers 6:15 PM Chancel Ringers 6:30 PM Arise! Praise Band</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>8:00 AM Breakfast Club 9:00 AM Preschool/KDO 3:00 PM Music Instr. 4:00 PM Music Instr. 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>9:00 AM Preschool/KDO 9:00 AM Boom Group 9:00 AM Cookie Exchange 3:00 PM Music Instr. 4:00 PM Music Instr. 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>10:45 AM Men's Bible Study 4:00 PM Room at the Inn</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>8:15 AM Communion Worship 8:45 AM Alternative Gift Market 8:45 AM First Pres Cafe 9:00 AM Lecture Series 9:05 AM Arise! Contemporary Worship 9:30 AM Spiritual Formation 10:00 AM Education for All Ages 10:00 AM Fireplace Room Series 10:00 AM New Member/Visitor Gathering 11:00 AM Traditional Worship 7:00 PM Sr. High Fellowship</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>9:00 AM Preschool/KDO 1:15 PM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM Carillon Ringers</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>9:00 AM Preschool/KDO 11:00 AM PS Fire Drill 5:00 PM Music Instr.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>9:00 AM Preschool/KDO 9:15 AM Musikgarten I 10:00 AM Musikgarten II 4:00 PM LOGOS 4:45 PM Choristers 5:30 PM Middle School Ringers 6:15 PM Chancel Ringers 7:00 PM Arise! Praise Band 7:15 PM Board of Deacons</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>9:00 AM Preschool/KDO 11:00 AM Esther Circle 4:00 PM Music Instr. 6:00 PM Girl Scouts 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>9:00 AM Preschool/KDO 11:45 AM Preschool Teacher Luncheon</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>9:30 AM Christmas Concert Dress Rehearsal 10:00 AM Dementia Discussion Group 10:45 AM Men's Bible Study</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>8:15 AM Communion Worship 8:45 AM First Pres Cafe 9:00 AM Lecture Series 9:05 AM Arise! Contemporary Worship 9:30 AM Stephen Ministry 10:00 AM Education for All Ages 11:00 AM Traditional Worship 4:00 PM Christmas Concert 5:30 PM Christmas Dinner 7:00 PM Sr. High Fellowship</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>9:00 AM Preschool/KDO 1:15 PM Staff Meeting 5:00 PM Finance &amp; Operations 7:00 PM Carillon Ringers</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>9:00 AM Preschool/KDO 5:00 PM Music Instr.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>9:00 AM Preschool/KDO 9:15 AM Musikgarten I 10:00 AM Musikgarten II 10:00 AM Preschool Christmas Program 4:00 PM LOGOS 4:45 PM Choristers 5:30 PM Middle School Ringers 6:15 PM Chancel Ringers 7:00 PM Arise! Praise Band 7:00 PM STL Chamber Chorus Board</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>9:00 AM Preschool/KDO 10:00 AM Preschool Christmas Program 4:00 PM Music Instr. 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>First Day of Winter</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>10:45 AM Men's Bible Study</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>8:15 AM Communion Worship 8:45 AM First Pres Cafe 9:05 AM Arise! Contemporary Worship 10:00 AM Education for All Ages 11:00 AM Traditional Worship</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED 4:00 PM Family Service 7:00 PM Festival Service 10:00 PM Candlelight Service</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Christmas Day FACILITIES CLOSED</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>8:30 AM Mailing Team</td>
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<td>8:30 AM Mailing Team</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Church Office open 9-2 8:30 AM Mailing Team 7:00 PM Grief Support Group</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Church Office open 9-2 8:30 AM Mailing Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>8:45 AM First Pres Cafe 10:00 AM Worship Service: Festival of Lessons and Carols</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>FACILITIES CLOSED NEW YEARS EVE</td>
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