

CROSSBEAMS December

Celebrating the Incarnation

Over the last year, the Men's Breakfast has been exploring spirituality by viewing and discussing videos of talks by Father Richard Rohr. Richard Rohr is a Franciscan monk and is the director of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He is one of my spiritual mentors and find his depth of insight into God and relationship with God very life giving. His particular calling is to take these insights and to "translate" them into the modern, scientific, secular context in which we are living. In other words, he tries to say very religious and spiritual with non-religious and secular words.



2017

He has an email daily meditations which I subscribe to (www.cac.org). In the one for Nov. 5, 2017, he talks about us having *"divine DNA."* As we begin our Advent journey toward celebrating the birth of Jesus, it seemed like an appropriate thought to ponder and to carry with us. Peace,

Paster Hul

"God as Us" is the title for the next two weeks of meditations. Perhaps you might think this daring or presumptuous. Yet the union between God and creation, and most specifically humanity, has always been the precise goal of Christianity. Hear St. John of Damascus (c. 676-749), who is called the last of the Early Fathers of the Church: "I do not venerate matter, I venerate the fashioner of matter who became matter for my sake . . . and through matter worked my salvation. . . . [I] hold in respect that through which my salvation came because it is filled with divine energy and grace." [1]

Over time we have forgotten this foundational reality. Christians worship Jesus because he did not forget but fully lived the union of human and divine. We, too, are both human and divine—at the same time. We

dare to believe that God has become one of us, fully one with us—and in Jesus reveals God's self even as us! Henceforth we speak of both humanity and the very elements (summarized in bread and wine) as "The Body of Christ." Our vocation is to incarnate God as alter Christus, which means "another Christ." As the familiar saying goes, "Christ has no body now but yours; no hands, no feet, but yours." This is why the celebrant of the Eucharist must speak in the first person. He or she does not say "This is his body," but representing Jesus; she or he must always say "This is my body."



We've got to get the who right or the mystery is not communicated or celebrated. I am not saying that I am the exact same as God, but I am saying God's Spirit objectively resides in me and in you! The divine DNA is in everyone and everything God has created "from the beginning" (read Ephesians 1:3-6 as if for the first time). As humans, we are graced with the capacity to realize this, fully enjoy it, and draw mightily from it. You might say this is what characterizes an authentic Christian.

> If we continue to focus on our unworthiness and original sin as our foundation, we will continue to act accordingly. If Christians emphasize retribution and judgment, we will only contribute to more violence and division. We become what we believe ourselves to be. Yes, I know I am weak and objectively unworthy of God's mercy.

But I simultaneously know that I am totally worthy—and my worthiness has nothing to do with me! When looking at me, the Creator sees God's beloved child. God cannot not see Christ in me . . . as the unique incarnation called "me."

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Note that it does not just say "Jesus," but "flesh." Let's make it quite specific and practical: When you get up in the morning, ask yourself, "What aspect of God, what aspect of Love, am I being called to incarnate in the world today? How can I be Jesus today?"

A glance at December Ministry Happenings....



Dec. 1 - Youth Advent party—6—10 pm

- Dec. 2 Cantare Workshop—all day
- Dec. 3 Young Families Gathering-during BLAST
- Dec. 3 Town Hall Meeting-following worship
- Dec. 5 Women's Joint Advent Service-7 pm
- Dec. 6 Sandwich Making-7:30 am
- Dec. 7 Advent Mid-week Worship-7 pm
- Dec. 9 Men's Breakfast—8 am
- Dec. 12 Prayer & Care Potluck Mtg. -- 11:30 am
- Dec. 14 Advent Midweek Worship-7 pm
- Dec. 16 Women's Advent Tea-noon-2 pm
- Dec. 17 -BLAST showcase—following worship
- Dec. 21 -Longest Night (Blue Christmas) Service-7 pm
- Dec. 24 -NO MORNING WORSHIP
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve worship—4 & 6 pm
- Dec. 25 Christmas Day worship- 10 am
- Dec. 31 -Service of Lessons & Carols—10 am—FOOD BANK SUNDAY

Any reports for the Annual Report are due into Dianne by **January 2nd**.

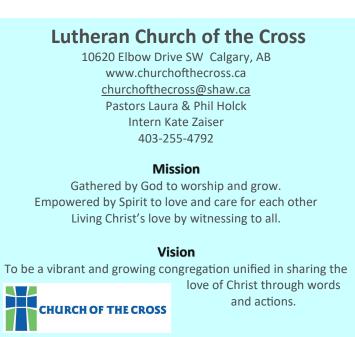
Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, **January 28, 2018**



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Love the Lord your God

with.....

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SOCIAL MINISTRY Cause of the month for December Families in Need

During December we are looking for donations to enable us to purchase food/gift cards for Families who are struggling to meet their needs during the Christmas season. Your continued support is much appreciated.

Christmas project: We are collecting socks and items to **'stuff a pair of socks'** for the Mustard Seed. Items needed are: personal hygiene (soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, lip balm, skin cream, shampoo, comb, tissues) mitts/gloves, toques/scarves, chocolate bars or candy treats, pen and writing pad, band-aids, bus tickets, gift card to a fast food restaurants, sewing kit, etc. No alcohol based products please.

Our Next Meeting: January 22, 2018 at 7:00 pm.

December Toy Drive

As we work toward sending We Care Living and Learning kits to help students around the world, please TOYS as your December offerings. We have everything we need for 75 Living and Learning Kits....everything

except the toys that will accompany them. Your toy offering should be small and simple, new and not requiring batteries.



Our We Care kits will be assembled in February, when we celebrate CLWR as our Cause of the Month.

 Are you interested in connecting with other young adults and families at the church?

 Do you wondering how your faith can give you new life in the midst of the busyness of work and family?

The Families and Friends group is a chance for families with young children and young adults at the church to gather to build relationships, eat lunch and have meaningful conversations together. This year we will be meeting the first Sunday of the month after church (During Blast) in the small classroom next to the fellowship hall. Each time it will be a new conversation about life and faith. No prep work is expected, and we know life is full, so come when you can and bring simply yourself (and your little ones). You are simply welcome. If you have any questions feel free contact Ryan Andersen at <u>ryancandersen@yahoo.com</u> or (403)993 -7123.

Next meeting is Sunday, December 3rd —following worship



LEAD ... love God with all your soul

Praying for Young People

A special thanks to those of you who are praying for a young person connected to the congregation. If you are not



praying for a young person by name every day, you are still invited to pray. Pick someone! Find a Daily Prayer with Proverbs guide by the mailboxes and pray the intentions expressed there. Pray as often as you like, as many days as you like, for our young people, the young people close to you, and all the young people of the world.

Advent is a great time to make a connection with the one (s) for whom you are praying. Do you have a special prayer or wish for that young person? What might you do or say to make your prayers "real" in their life?

It is common for Advent to become a preparation time for

Christmas Day (the planning and buying of gifts, preparation of menus, decorating your living space, etc. Can you make room for the coming Christ child by expressing care for one of Christ's beloved young people in a particularly special way?



The twelfth day of Christmas is a time for joyous reflection and merry-making. January 5 closes the Christmas season, not with a whimper but a hearty bang!

This is the day to look back and see the gifts and miracles of the season that have unfolded with each day. It is a time to celebrate the newness of life, the joy of the presence of God in our everyday lives, and the freedom to live, love, share and celebrate. Invite friends and family to help you clean up your Christmas decorations, set your tree near your recycling bin, sing together and share a hot beverage.



Attend the Twelfth Night Celebration at Church of the Cross January 5, 7-9 pm

Hot drinks, games, good eats, and lots of merry-making This event is sponsored by the Outdoor Group



LEAD ... love God with all your soul

Are you sad, grieving, or dreading Christmas?

Blue Christmas Worship

The Advent and Christmas seasons are seasons of hope, joy, and excitement. They are often marked by merriment and happiness as the church celebrates the promise of the coming Christ child. But what about the pain and hurt people may be experiencing because of what's going on in the world or in their individual lives? What about people who are grieving, in pain, or simply not feeling "the Christmas spirit"?

On **Thursday December 21**, Church of the Cross will host a "Blue Christmas" service. On the evening of the winter solstice (the longest night of the year), we will gather with our concerns, worries, pain, and grief, acknowledge our struggles before God, share the sacraments and a time of healing, and look to the coming Christ child for our hope.

Amid the hustle and bustle of the season, this is tremendous witness to those who are struggling in our community. This service is a witness to everyone that the Christ child comes as a sign of hope in the face of despair. And it's a witness that we are intentional about upholding members of our community in whatever season of life they may find themselves. This service is part of the ministry of Church of the Cross Prayer and Care.

The Longest Night of the Year Service: Thursday, December 21 at 7 pm



Hors d'oeuvres will be served following the service.



LEAD :... love God with all your soul

Christmas Eve worship



A few times in our lives, Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday. This shortens the season of Advent considerably, as the 4th week of Advent is only one day, Christmas Eve.

For us at Church of the Cross, it will shorten Advent even further. Our rental contract with Southwood Church of God necessitates sharing our sanctuary, narthex, and fellowship space with them. On the fourth Sunday of the month, Southwood United ordinarily hosts worship and a potluck meal from 1-4

pm. On Christmas Eve, that means we would not be able to hold our 4 pm Christmas Eve service, which is our most popular service of the year.

In order to honor our rental agreement and keep continuity with our Christmas Eve services, we have negotiated the following schedule:

- 10 am Church of the Cross: Sunday morning service cancelled
- 11 am- 2 pm Southwood Church of God: Worship service and potluck
- 4 & 6 pm Church of the Cross: Christmas Eve Services

Our staff and worshipping planning team thank you for your understanding.

Here is a list of December 24 Sunday morning worship services, should you like to attend:

- Highwood Lutheran Church 10:30 am
- Hope Lutheran Church 10 am
- Prince of Faith (Joint service with the Anglican Church) 10 am
- Emmanuel Community Church Children's Christmas Program 10:30 am



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Acolytes for December

Dec. 3—Isak Larsen & Leo Rettie

Dec. 10—Jamie Risse & Leo Rettie

Dec. 17—Max Thomson & Kim Reath



Morning Prayer—9 am—Monday—Thursday

Fellowship & Coffee at Tim Hortons—every Tuesday morning at 10 am. 11472 Braeside Dr. SW.



December 7th

12:00 noon to 1:30 pm

We would like to welcome you to Church of the Cross for

the PHD program.

PHD means – **POTLUCK/HYMN/DEVOTION**

There will be a potluck lunch, a presentation regarding the contemplation and reflections of the composer of a hymn (*chosen by the presenter*), then a devotion followed by a short hymn sing.

Please join us for:

GOOD FOOD/ GOOD COMPANY/ FUN/ KNOWLEDGE

LEAD* ... love God with all your mind

Waiting for the Birth of Jesus

It is now after Remembrance Day so the gates have opened with regard to Christmas carols, Christmas decorations, and Christmas commercials. Children—being quite observant—no doubt pick up on these cues and begin hoping, wishing and begging for toys and gifts! This can be a trying marathon for parents with a month of **not yet's** to their children. On the other hand, it is a great opportunity to develop rituals which create anticipation and, at the same time, develop the character trait of waiting and *delayed gratification*. In your family of origin, there may be traditions that you can pass on to your children.

An **Advent Calendar** is a great example of one that I grew up with. An Advent Calendar is a wall hanging that has a "door" for each day of Advent. Every day, the family gets to find and open another door and see what is hidden behind the door. It may be a Bible verse, a biblical image, or some other surprise (like candy, a toy, etc.). It is a tangible and visual counting down toward Christmas.



Developing rituals and traditions around putting up stock-

ings, decorating Christmas trees, making Christian ornaments, baking cookies and other goodies to share with others, and making candles give opportunities to talk about the love of God and the significance of the birth of Jesus.



FOT

Women of Lutheran Church of the Cross & Southwood United Church will gather together on **Tuesday, December 5th at 7:00 p.m**. at Lutheran Church of the Cross for the **45th year** for the Annual Advent Celebration

Please join us at this special joint gathering where Lutheran Church of the Cross will lead the Advent meditation service and Southwood United will provide entertainment in the fellowship time to follow. Special recognition will be given to those women who have been members of our churches since the first event took

place in December 1972.

(Church of the Cross women please bring sandwiches or an appetizer to share)

Don't miss it! Take time to pause and focus on the meaning of the season.



LEAD ... love God with all your mind

TELL ME YOUR STORY

Saturday, January 27, 2018 9:00 am- 1:00 pm

Register at 403-255-4792 Facilitator Betty Jane Hegerat <u>https://bettyjanehegerat.com/</u>



Memoir, life writing, family history; too many of us ponder but never write the story within us. Come explore the motivation, the obstacles, the cautions, and the pleasure of life writing. We will be using the freefall method of writing to get past inhibitions and let your words pour onto the page.

You will need only pen and paper. This will be a safe place, where you can share as much, as little, or none of the writing you do.

My goal for the morning is that you go away having laughed, perhaps cried, and with the strong sense that you own your story but there is a time when you can make it a gift to your family or the entire universe.

Come! All are welcome in this place.

You own everything that happened to you. Tell your stories. If people wanted you to write warmly about them, they should have behaved better. ~Anne Lamott



LEAD* ... love God with all your mind

Mental Illness:

Coping with the Holidays

The holidays are meant to be a time of meaning. For Christians, it is a time to consider what the birth of Jesus means to you. But the holidays can be a stressful time even under the best of conditions. The commercialization of the holiday season bombards us with unrealistic expectations. The brochure, **Mental Illness: Coping with the Holidays**, provides helpful self care tips for persons living with a mental illness, tips for families, friends and tips for communities of faith. You can download this resource from the Mental Health Ministries website in English. Here is the link

http://www.mentalhealthministries.net/resources/ brochures/holiday_coping/holidays.pdf

OR for the complete brochure, please look for it on the table below the mailboxes at church.

The holiday season is supposed to be a time full of joy, parties and gatherings with friends and families. But the holidays can be a difficult time for many persons dealing with

- personal grief,
 - loneliness,
- illnesses of all kinds,
- economic concerns,
- separation from family members and
- relationship issues like separation or divorce.

We talk about peace on earth but live with the threat of terrorism and the reality that our country is at war.

The commercialization of the holiday season bombards us with unrealistic expectations. And many of us feel overwhelmed when our "to-do" list goes on forever!

While some people experience temporary periods of depression like the "*holiday blues*" or Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), many of us live with mental illness every day.

The holidays are especially difficult when our own feelings of sadness, loneliness, depression and anxiety are the opposite of the "Hallmark" images we see all around us.



Plant Sale coming soon!

ALL proceeds will go toward getting our youth to CLAY 2018

Keep posted

LEAD* ... love God with all your mind



Merry almost Advent!

Welcome to the holiday season as it is created by advertisers and retailers for us to enjoy! I just wanted to touch base with everyone to make sure you know the plans for the coming month and thank you for participating in BLAST this year - I cannot believe we have completed 3 stories already with our Esther showcase completed today.

Here is the plan for Advent and Christmas (and beyond):

November 26 - **Advent Festival** - pick up an advent devotion, create a wreath, help bake and take some yummy treats

December 3 - **Mary visits Elizabeth -Family** - bake some muffins, create a welcome banner for advent, begin a family tree (children would benefit from knowing who is in their family add names if possible), start planning the drama of shadow story telling

December 10 - **Mary visits Elizabeth** - visiting & waiting - bake some cookies, work on your banner, create a card or wrapping paper or finish your family tree

December 17 - Mary is going to visit her cousin Elizabeth in December. They are going to enjoy a visit with family and wait and wait. Save the date for our show-case on **December 17**- we will bring some light into the dark days of winter.



We are waiting as well in December as we work our way through Advent. We anticipate having family visits and sharing the joy of being together at Christmas. In **BLAST** we are not waiting- we are doing! We have great plans to bake muffins and cookies, to make family trees and banners, to create cards and wrapping paper.

If you can help out please contact Kathy Bishop.

December 24 - No morning service and no BLAST programming

December 31 - Festival - decorate some cookies

Please have a look at the plan and see where you can help out: We need people to bake muffins and cookies, help create banners, family trees, cards and wrapping paper. If you are going to be present on December 31 and you are willing to set up and clean up the activity that would be great as I have it planned but I may not be present.

Here are the stories we will be presenting after the holiday:

- January 7-28 Raising of Lazarus
- February 4-25 Feeding of the 5000
- March 4-25 The day Jesus died
- April 2 Easter festival

LEAD* ... love God with all your heart



God Moments

About once a month BLAST puts on a drama showcasing the bible story that the children have been learning for the past few weeks. This past Sunday, November 19, was my first opportunity watch

the showcase. Sunday morning at nine o'clock Pastor Laura met with the young people putting on the play. Some the kids who were supposed to be in the drama were sick, so some of the actors had only been recruited the previous day and the script was new to them. I don't know about you, but I like to have more than an hour to prepare for a performance. It's scary to enter into something feeling unprepared and not knowing how – or even if – it will turn out. That morning at nine o'clock we started with a prayer, and then they plowed ahead and somehow, with God's help, they put on a melodrama about Queen Esther.

In the melodrama we heard how, when the Jewish people in Persia faced death they prayed and fasted for three days. Only after that did Esther, who was scared for her own life, approach the king and God created the possibility that the king would hear Esther's request that the Jewish people's lives be saved.

It happens all the time in our church and in our individual lives that we do not know how things are going to turn out, or we have no idea how we will get where God is calling us to be. It takes a lot of faith and trust in God to admit that we do not know and that we are scared. When we confess that in prayer, we open ourselves to the possibilities that God is offering us to help us get there. We can throw ourselves at the situation and trust that something will happen. Maybe it will not be what we hope for, but whatever the result, we can count on God to work with it and work with us.

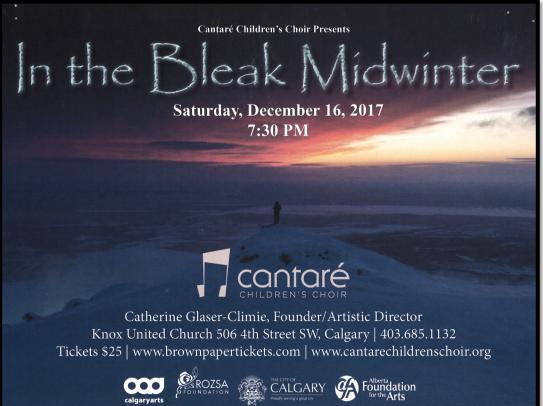
At the Esther showcase the lines weren't memorized and the actor's got lost a few times, but we laughed together, built community, learned a story about how God works through people who are scared, and saw God do that in our lives that morning.

Intern Kate

Intern Kate is in the office Monday to Wednesday. Please stop by and meet her if you haven't already met her.

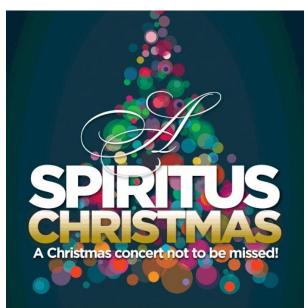


LEAD* ... love God with all your heart





with guest Cheryl Emery-Karapita, piano Sunday, December 31, 2017 at 8pm The Bella Concert Hall



A SPIRITUS CHRISTMAS

Saturday 09 Dec 2017 • 8:00pm Cathedral Chuch of the Redeemer 604, 1st Street SE, Calgary

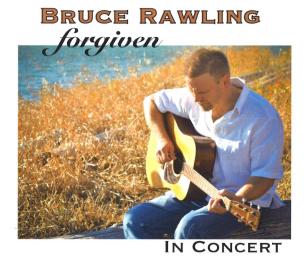
Tickets: Adults \$30 Seniors/Students \$25

2017-18 SEASON

LEAD* ... love God with all your heart

Scandinavian Centre Choir Christmas Concert 2017 Friday December 1, 7 PM Scandinavian Centre 739 20 Ave NW, Calgary Tickets \$10.00. Advanced purchase call Donna 403 -284-2610 or Arne 403-615-1988





TIME: 7:00 p.m.

DATE: Sunday, December 3rd, 2017

PLACE: Prince of Faith Lutheran Church 2523 - 56 St. NE, Calgary

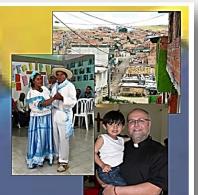
Admission: \$2.00 (at the door, to go toward church boiler repairs)

A <u>Free-Will Offering</u> will also be gathered in support of Bruce's Ministry in Song

Experience Embrace Engage

...the contexts and ministries of our Synod's Companion Partner (The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia) ...build relationships with our sisters and brothers in Christ

Maximum of 12 participants – must be 18 years of age Journey Cost - \$1600 (flight not included) Journey facilitator – Bishop Larry Kochendorfer



Daunting Challenges – Wellsprings of Hope A SYNOD JOURNEY TO COLOMBIA - JULY 26 - AUGUST 6, 2018

Applications must be completed and submitted by December 31, 2017 Further information and application forms are available from the Synod Office info@albertasynod.ca



... Bishop's Messege

Dear Beloved of God -

As we enter the season of Advent I have been thinking of Joseph and Mary journeying to Bethlehem. The gospel writer tells us that as the hour of birth drew near they tried to secure lodging and they found no room in the inn (Luke 2:7).

Founded in this verse Las Posadas (literally "the inns") developed as a tradition based on the unavailability of shelter. For nine days (usually occurring nine days before Christmas) los peregrines (the pilgrims) walk through darkened streets carrying candles to accompany the Holy Family. They travel from house to house requesting lodging and singing carols. The procession is invited inside to enjoy food and drink before they are turned away by someone posing as los mesoneros (the innkeepers).

La comunidad is invited to partake in the pilgrimage and await the birth of the child; but for many walking in solidarity with the Holy Family means more than simply reenacting the familiar biblical story. The re-enactment reminds participants of the challenge of providing a home for all and of the millions who have journeyed from home and land to refugee camps or to other countries. The reenactment remembers a God who calls us to hospitality, lest we, too, leave Jesus out in the cold.

To remember involves more than abstract thought; it involves praxis. Re-enacting Las Posadas signifies the risktaking and life-seeking migrations of millions. Participating in Las Posadas reveals the most basic understanding of who God is and what acts we are called to enact. Dr. Ana María Pineda reminds us that when we participate in this annual Advent practice, we "ritually participate in being rejected and being welcomed, in slamming the door on the needy and opening it wide. [We] are in this way renewed in the Christian practice of hospitality, the practice of providing a space where the stranger is taken in and known as one who bears gifts" (Ana María Pineda, "Hospitality," in Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People, ed. Dorothy C. Bass [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997], 29-42 [31]).

This Advent, though we may not ourselves participate in Las Posadas, I invite you to ponder with me and then to move to action as we consider the Christian practice of hospitality. Who is that stranger for whom we are called to provide a space? How might we share and receive, and learn from, the gift of hospitality? How might we experience the stranger as gift...les we, too, leave Jesus out in the cold?

In Christ Jesus – Shalom, +Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13







December





| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Cause of the Month Families in Need | | | | 1 Office Closed Youth Advent Party— 6—10 pm SWCG—7 pm | 2 Cantare workshop— all day | | |
| 3 Adult Study—9 am Worship—10 am BLAST—following worship Young Families Gathering— following worship Town Hall Mtg. SWCG—1—3 pm | 4 Morning Prayer—9 am Kodaly—9:15 am Staff Mtg.—10:15 am Cantare—6—10 | 5 Morning Prayer—9 am Coffee @ Tim Hortons' - 10 am Faith Formation—6:30-8 Women's Advent Ser- vice—7 pm | 6 Sandwich Making—7:30 am Morning Prayer—9 am AHS Caregiver's Group – 1 pm SWCG—7 pm Cantare—6—10 | 7 Morning Prayer—9 am PHD—12—1:15 pm E.A.—7 pm Advent Worship—7 pm Choir—7:30 pm | 8 Office Closed SWCG—7 pm | 9 Men's Breakfast—8 am Dutch Canadian Choir—rehearsal 12—5 pm | |
| 10 Adult Study—9 am Worship—10 am BLAST—following worship Youth Faith Lens SWCG—1—3 pm | 11 Morning Prayer—9 am Kodaly—9:15 am Staff Mtg.—10:15 am Cantare—6—10 Internship Lay Comm. Mtg.—7 pm | 12 Morning Prayer—9 am Coffee @ Tim Hortons' - 10 am Prayer & Care—11:30 am Faith Formation—6:30-8 | 13 Morning Prayer—9 am Bible Study—9:30 am Cantare—6—10 SWCG—7 pm | 14 Morning Prayer—9 am Kodaly—1:15 pm E.A.—7 pm Advent Worship—7 pm Choir—7:30 pm | 15 Office Closed SWCG—7 pm | 16 Women's Advent Tea— noon—2 pm | |
| 17 Worship—10 am— BLAST SHOWCASE— following worship Youth Faith Lens SWCG—1—3 pm | 18 Morning Prayer—9 am Kodaly—9:15 am Cantare—6—10 | 19 Morning Prayer—9 am Coffee @ Tim Hortons' - 10 am Faith Formation— 6:30-8 | 20 Morning Prayer—9 am Bible Study—9:30 am Cantare—6—10 SWCG—7 pm | 21 Morning Prayer—9 am Kodaly—1:15 Longest Night Service— 7 pm E.A.—7 pm | 22 Office Closed SWCG-7 pm | 23 | |
| 24 SWCG-11 am NO MORNING SERVICE Christmas Eve-4 & 6 pm | 25 Worship—10 am OFFICE CLOSED | 26 office closed * STMAS | 27 swcg-7 pm | 28 E.A.—7 pm | 29 Office Closed SWCG-7 pm | 30 | |
| 31 Worship—10 am BLAST—following wor- ship SWCG—1—4 pm FOOD BANK SUN- DAY | Bech CH | VIS C | COMMUNION DURING DECEMBER Dec. 3, 10, 17, 24, 25. | | | | |