

**First Sunday in Advent**

Welcome to worship on this first Sunday in Advent, as we gather around the table in remembrance of Christ and of his coming into the world! We continue our Communion Sunday sermon series by examining another life of an individual who was commended by Christ – John the Baptist. Jesus praised John because he was not a "weathervane" swaying in the wind, but a "signpost" pointing the way to God.

**December 1, 2019 8:30 & 10:45**

**WE GATHER IN GOD’S NAME …**

\*Asterisk indicates to rise in body or spirit

**Gathering Music** **Hymnal 206 I want to walk as a child of the light** *Houston* **Hymnal 204 Emmanuel, Emmanuel** *McGee*

**Greeting**

Leader: Lift up your heads, O gates!

and be lifted up, O ancient doors!

**People: that the King of glory may come in.** *Psalm 24:7*

**Announcements**

\*10:45 **Introit** Come, Lord, for in our hearts we make thee room.*Douglas E. Wagner*

**\*Call to Worship**

Leader: A voice cries in the wilderness:

**People: “Prepare the way of the Lord!”**

Leader: A challenge is uttered from on high:

**People: “Make God’s paths straight.”**

Leader: For every valley will be lifted up, and every mountain will be made low.

**People: Every crooked path will be made straight and every rough way will be made smooth.**

Leader: All will see the salvation of our God.

*Adapted from Luke 3*

**… TO GIVE PRAISE TO GOD …**

\***Hymnal 720 Wake, awake, for night is flying**  *Wachet auf*

**\*Opening Prayer (in unison)**

**God of love and renewal, enter the wilderness of our lives, and call us to prepare once more for the coming of your Son. Fill the valleys of our insecurities with hope, and bring low the mountains of our pride and conceit. Make straight the paths before us, and guide our feet in the ways of peace. Amen**.  *B. J. Beu*

**\*Silent Prayer**

**\*Response Come and find the quiet center** (stanza 1) *Beach Spring*

**Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,**

**find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:**

**clear the chaos and clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see**

**all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.**

Shirley Erena Murray ©1992 Hope Publishing Company

**TO CELEBRATE THE FAMILY OF FAITH …**

**Advent Candle Lighting** 8:30 Jane and Rob Spicher 10:45 Linda and Rick Minnotte

**Worship & Song 3047 God Almighty, we are waiting** (stanza 1) *Hyfrydol*

**God Almighty, we are waiting for a Savior to appear.**

**Meet us in our desert journey; give a sign that you are near:**

**burning bushes, parted waters, food a-plenty in the wild.**

**As we look for signs and wonders, help us see you in a child.** © 2005 Hope Publishing Company

**\*The Sign of Peace**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.  
 People: And also with you.

Gathering Song

This, this is where children belong,

welcomed as part of the worshiping throng.

Water, God’s Word, bread and cup, prayer and song:

This is where children belong. words and music: James Ritchie ©1999 Abingdon Press

**Message for Young Disciples** Rev. Thomas Q. Strandburg

All children are invited. Please sing as children come forward. After the children’s message at the 10:45 service, children ages 3 - 3rd grade may attend **Kids Praise** in the Welcome Center. Children will be escorted to and from Kids Praise by teachers. They will return to the sanctuary near the end of the service.

10:45 **Anthem** People of the Night *David Haas*

1. We are your people of the night, we long to see you newborn light,

distant glimmer; rising from afar. We await you holy morning star

2. For in our winter we are dead, lead us in hope to see ahead,

the springtime and the gift that is to come. Come and save us, be God’s only Son!

3. You wait for us, you are our choice, the living word; the saving voice.

Break the silence, listen to our call. Be our answer, new life for us all.

4. Give us new faith, give us the joy, as we await your Son the Lord.

In our presence, child born of your breath, Savior brother; life that shatters death.

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**… TO HEAR GOD’S WORD PROCLAIMED …**

Scripture Reading 8:30 Betsy Harkins 10:45 Dovey Alexander

**A Lesson from the Hebrew Scriptures**

Isaiah 2:1-5 The Lord’s Mountain

**Response**

Leader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Pastoral Prayer**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**\*Celtic Alleluia: Alleluia.** (sing 4 times) *James J. Chepponis*

**Scripture Reading**

**\*A Lesson from the Gospels**

Matthew 11:1-11 The ministry of John the Baptist

**Response**

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God**.

**… TO OFFER OUR GIFTS AND TO DEDICATE OUR LIVES …**

10:45 **Offertory anthem** The Yearning *text by Susan Bentall Boersma; music by Craig Courtney*

There is a yearning in hearts weighed down by ancient grief and centuries of sorrow.

There is a yearning in hearts that in the darkness hide and in the shades of death abide,

a yearning for tomorrow.

There is a yearning, a yearning for the promised One, the First-born of creation.

There is a yearning for the Lord who visited His own, and by His death for sin atoned,

to bring to us salvation.

*Refrain: Emmanuel, Emmanuel, within our hearts, the yearning.*

There is a yearning that fills the hearts of those who wait the day of His appearing.

There is a yearning when all our sorrows are erased

and we shall see the One who placed within our hearts the yearning. *Refrain*

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\***Hymnal** **94 Praise God, from whom all blessings flow** (standing) *Lasst uns erfreuen*

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;**

**Praise God, all creatures here below; Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Praise God, the source of all our gifts!**

**Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!**

**Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

adapt. © 1989 The U. Methodist Publishing House

**Prayer of Dedication**

**Sermon** “**Those Whom Christ Commended:** John the Baptist” Rev. Thomas Q. Strandburg

**Worship & Song 3167 Feed us, Lord** (stanza 1) *Greg Scheer*

**Feed us, Lord. Feed us, Lord. In the broken bread, be revealed again.**

**Come and feed our hearts, O Lord.**

© 2007 Greg Scheer

**The Banquet of Hopeful Expectation**

*Invitation*

Pastor: God’s Banquet is coming. The time we await when all will gather from North, East, West and South.  
**People:** **A banquet where the rich and powerful will sit with the weak and poverty-stricken. A table where young and old will learn from each other. A time when all will sit together in peace, “and the wolf will lie down with the lamb”.**

Pastor:Here at this table we get a foretaste of God’s banquet. This is indeed God’s table, not the church’s, and so all who seek to follow The Way are welcome to eat and drink from it.  
**People:** **Come and taste the grace eternal, come and see that God is good.**

*The Great Thanksgiving*

Pastor: God is with us  
**People:** **We are not alone**Pastor:Christ is present here  
**People: The Spirit moves within us**Pastor:Let us give thanks to God  
**People: In memory and in hope**

Pastor: Blessings be to you, Creator God, who in the beginning brought light and life to the world and who continues to bring it love and light everlasting.  
**People: Your song of wisdom echoes through the ages, your ancient promise still brings us hope.**Pastor: Over the ages you have called people to embrace your hope and share your love. But even when they have closed their ears to the song you did not stop singing. You sent prophets and messengers to your people, reminding them of the promised time of peace and justice that would surround the world.  
**People: They came in the midst of our despair and filled us with hope.**Pastor: And then you came to a young woman named Mary and laid out the promise in a new way  
**People: Promising her a son, who would be called Jesus; promising her that in her son the world would be changed**Pastor: And now as we prepare for that child to be born, we echo the ancient cry:  
**People: O come, O come Emmanuel**

Pastor:And also we lift our voices in song, singing together the praises of ages

*(All sing, tune: Kingsfold)*  
**O holy holy holy God,  
O God of time and space.  
All earth and sea and sky above  
bear witness to your Grace.  
Hosanna in the highest heav’n,  
creation sings your praise.  
And blessed is the One who comes  
and bears Your name always**

*The Story Remembered*

Pastor: Yet even now, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, we remember the life that this baby will live.  
**People: We remember how he broke the bonds of human tradition to show all what the Banquet of Hope could be as he ate openly with the despised and the outcast of his world.**Pastor: And we remember one special meal, foretaste of the banquet that is to come, that he ate with his closest friends.

**People: Gathering them together in an upper room to share the story of liberation, he prepared them for liberation.**Pastor: And at the end of the meal he took bread, blessed and broke it, then passed it to them saying:  
**People: Take and eat. This bread is the body of Life, broken by the world. Eat it in remembrance and in hope.**  
Pastor: After that he took the cup, blessed it, and passed it to them saying:  
**People: This cup is the sign of the New Covenant. Whenever you drink it remember me, for I shall not eat or drink again until the time of the heavenly banquet.**Pastor: Remembering the birth of the child in the stable, we remember also his life, his death and his resurrection.  
**People:** **We remember how he poured his love out all he met and look forward to his return and the coming reign of peace, love, and justice.**

Pastor: And in our remembering we sing the mystery of faith

*(All sing, tune: Kingsfold)*  
**Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,  
Christ will come again!  
Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,  
Christ will come again!**

*The Spirit Transforms*

Pastor: God, you poured your Spirit on Mary and she sang words of defiance and hope.  
Pour out your Spirit upon us gathered here. As we eat and drink may we know your presence.  
As we eat and drink may we be opened to the possibilities of your hope and power  
And may we be strengthened in our time of waiting for peace and justice so that we will have the courage to make the Christmas promise a reality. And the people all sang:

*(All sing, tune: Kingsfold)*  
**Amen, amen, O Holy One!  
Hosanna and amen!  
Amen, amen, O Holy One!  
Hosanna and amen!**

*The Pouring and Breaking and Serving*

Pastor: The Bread we break is the Bread of Life. The Cup we share is the Cup of Promise.  
These are the gifts of God for the people of God.  
**People: Thanks be to God.**  
Pastor: Come and eat, the banquet awaits.

*Prayer Following Communion*

**ALL:****God of pregnant expectations, God of Christmas promise, God of child-like hope, we have eaten and drunk from your table. May the eating and the drinking fill us with hope in a world of despair. May we be beacons of hope as we wait for the day when the world will be changed. Grant that this taste of your banquet which is to come would give us the hunger for peace and justice in our community and around the world. Amen**

**TO GO REJOICING IN GOD’S NAME!**

\***Hymnal 726 O holy city, seen of John** (stanzas 1-4) *Morning Song*

\***Benediction**

\***Hymnal 726 O holy city, seen of John** (stanza 5) *Morning Song*

**Today’s Services**

**The flowers on the altar** are given by William Timmons in loving memory of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Wilbert G. Timmons.

**The flowers in the chancel** are given in loving memory of Dale E. Boyer by Jean and family.

**Acolytes** Anna Rhoton and Grace Giles

**Greeters** 8:30 Kathy Karnes 10:45 Lesley Troy

**Special Music at 8:30** is provided by Robert Richards, a member of our Chancel Choir.

**Special Music at 10:45** is provided by the Youth Choir with cellist Frieda Lasch; and the Chancel Choir, conducted by Ryan Keeling. Frieda is an exchange student from Germany living with our church family, the Slaters, while attending Mt. Lebanon High School this year.

**Worship options for children** We encourage children to participate in the **Children’s Sermon** at both services, and in **Kids Praise** during the 10:45 service. **Nursery services** are offered in Room 204 of the Education Building. Ask ushers or greeters and follow signs for direction.

**Honor or remember a loved one with a flower donation.** The flowers that grace the sanctuary each week are generously donated by our church family members. This is a great way to honor or memorialize a special person, event, or milestone in your personal life or in the life of the church. If you are interested in donating flowers on a particular Sunday, contact Lizzie Diller , 412-860-3614. The cost is $33 for the altar, narthex, or columbarium arrangements, and $66 for the chancel flowers.

**Podcasts of Sunday Sermons**  Catch up on messages from MLUMC with a podcast of Pastor Tom’s and others’ Sunday sermons. Sermons can be found at http://mlumc.buzzsprout.com or navigate to the site from the link on our webpage, [www.mlumc.org](http://www.mlumc.org). Sermons also will be posted to iTunes. Full recordings of the service are available upon request.

**Today’s Scripture**

**Isaiah 2:1-5**

2The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 2In days to come the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. 3Many peoples shall come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. 5O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

**Matthew 11:1-11**

11Now when Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and proclaim his message in their cities. 2When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples 3and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” 4Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. 6And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

7As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 8What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. 9What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10This is the one about whom it is written, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ 11Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

**Keep in Prayer**

**Convalescing in Care Facilities**

Bonnie Amos, Providence Point

Ed Clarke, Asbury Heights

John Katshir, Asbury Heights

Pat Seitz, Concordia

Doris Trimble, Providence Point

Olivia Woods, Baptist Manor

Woody Kimmel, Providence Point

**Convalescing at Home**

Bishop George Bashore,

Jean Boyer, Mary Caldwell,

John Dean, Joseph Festor,

Ezra Gibson, Leon Grant, Jr.,

Steve Howard, Dave Lewis,

Susan Lichtenfels, George Lindow,

Bob Mallery, Jinny Sheppard,

Carol Van Sickle, Arlene Stewart,

Peyton Wisterman

**In the Military**

Matt Lewis, USMC,

Jason Boyer, SPC Natalie Brown,

**Maj. Zachary Allen Finch, USMC,**James Iantelli, 1st Lt. Jaskiewicz,   
S. Sgt. Keith Kimmell,

Sgt. Brendan Lamport,   
Sgt. Matthew McConahan, Thomas Orda,  
David Poncel, Sgt. Steven Reitz,   
Capt. Scott B. Rushe, Pastor Rick Townes,   
Maj. Azizi Wesmiller,

Maj. Matthew C. Wesmiller,  
Sgt. Keith Scott Winkowski,

Sgt Michael Zimmerman

**Hospitalized**

Rev. Paul Taylor

May Frederick

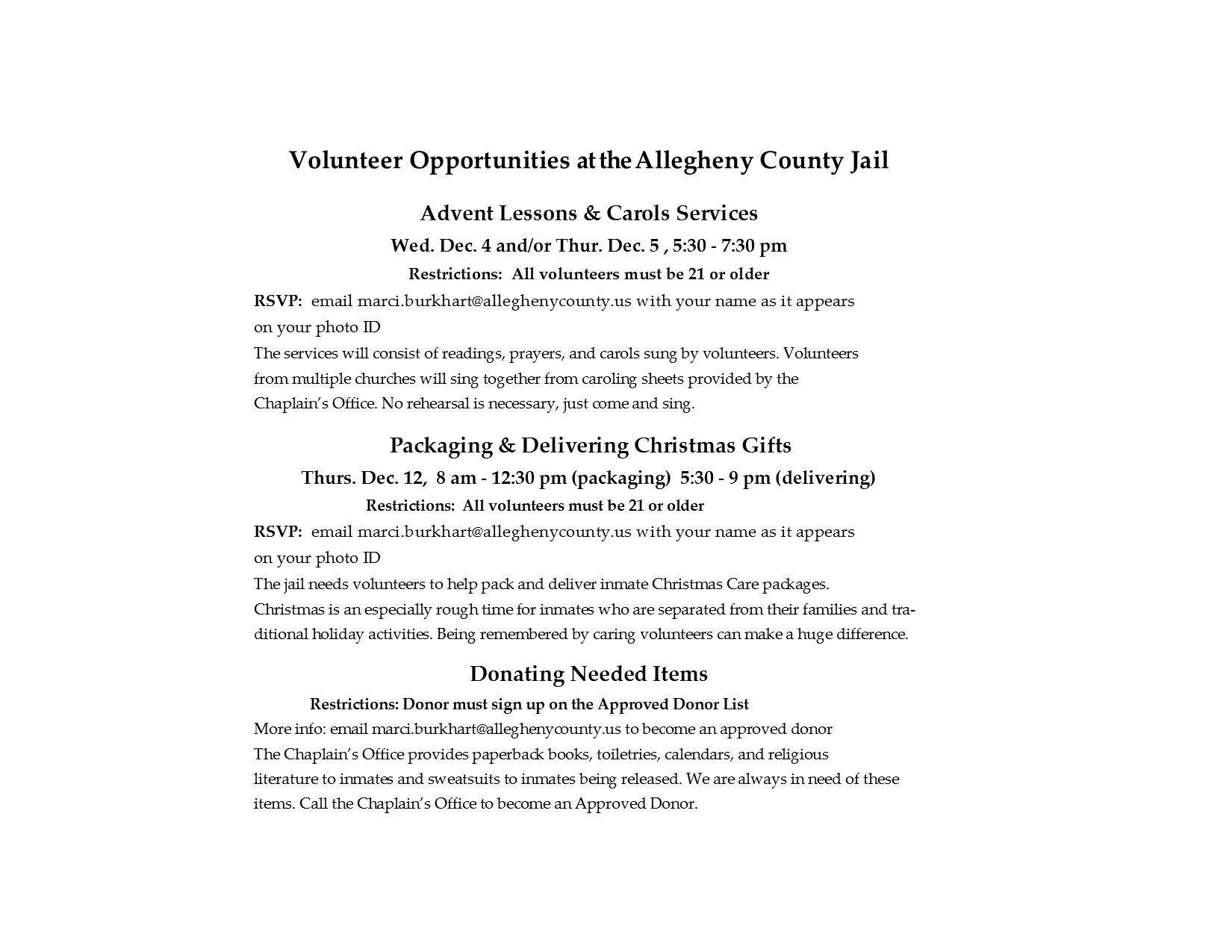
*Each year the W PA Conference and Eastern German Conference create daily Advent and Christmas devotionals for use in our homes and churches. We have chosen devotionals from each week.*

**Tuesday, 3 December; Isaiah 60: 1-14**

**Rev. John Logan, Acme**

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. “Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are carried on the hip. Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the Lord. All Kedar’s flocks will be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth will serve you; they will be accepted as offerings on my altar, and I will adorn my glorious temple. “Who are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their nests? Surely the islands look to me; in the lead are the ships of Tarshish, bringing your children from afar, with their silver and gold, to the honour of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendour. “Foreigners will rebuild your walls, and their kings will serve you. Though in anger I struck you, in favour I will show you compassion. Your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night, so that people may bring you the wealth of the nations— their kings led in triumphal procession. For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; it will be utterly ruined. “The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the juniper, the fir and the cypress together, to adorn my sanctuary; and I will glorify the place for my feet. The children of your oppressors will come bowing before you; all who despise you will bow down at your feet and will call you the City of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

When things are really dark even the faintest light makes a difference. Several years ago while riding in the woods my motorcycle got stuck and I had to walk in total darkness trying to make my way home. I knew the direction, I just couldn't see what was in front of me or under me. I could have fallen, twisted an ankle, or broken a leg. Walking with my hands extended I regretted removing my watch before riding. It lights up when I push a button, very dimly but it would have been a great help. Isaiah foretells the coming of the Messiah in light and glory. This is not the watch glowing or a single candle trying to push back the darkness type of light. This light is bright enough to be seen from the other side of the world. It's also a light that not only reveals, attracts, but bathes the watcher in God's glory.

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**CALENDAR – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1 THRU SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7**

**SUNDAY 12/1**

8:30 am Worship Sanner Chapel

8:30 am The Gathering Asbury

9:30 am Sunday School Various

10:45 am Worship Sanctuary

10:45 am Kids Praise Welcome Center

11:45 am Youth Choir Choir Room

12 pm Blood Pressure Screening Brookline Parlor

NO YOUTH GROUP

**MONDAY 12/2**

7 pm Chapel Bells Bell Room

7 pm Church Council Meeting Wesley

**TUESDAY 12/3**

11 am Staff Meeting Welcome Center

6 pm Terrific Tuesday Asbury

6:30 pm Scout Merit Badge Network

7 pm Boy Scout Meeting Wesley

**THURSDAY 12/5**

8:30 am Northside Lunch Prep Asbury Kitchen

9 am Hearts and Hands Epworth

12 pm TNT Asbury Heights

6:30 pm Promise Bells Bell Room

7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal Choir Room

**SATURDAY 12/7**

10 am Food Distribution Food Pantry