



Dear Partners in Ministry,

Christmas is nearer. Advent waiting is almost over. The New Year looms ahead. St. Philip's will say "God be with you" to Kit and Gina as they begin a new ministry in a different place. A Search Committee for a new Youth Director has been **assembled**. No matter how hard we work to keep things as they were, as we liked them best, time rolls on. God's time and our time move along at different paces, but move along no matter what.

Our scripture for Sunday December 21st offers words of consolation and hope in troubled and frantic times. In the first chapter of Luke, the angel appears to Mary and said, "*Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. Do not be afraid.*" When Mary is skeptical about the promise, the angel says, "*Nothing is impossible with God.*" Her response is, "*I am the Lord's servant, may it be with me according to your word.*"

So – hold fast to this message.

You are highly favored. God is with you. Do not be afraid. Nothing is impossible with God.

That is the message of promise and comfort of the season. Let us also respond, "I am the Lord's servant."

Merry Christmas,

Pastor Sue

Dear Sunday School Children:



Thank you for underwriting the cost of Alexis's allowance with your recent gift of \$25.00. Your gift and encouragement is a great support for Alexis in her efforts to overcome her troubles.

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(signed) Michael P. Brennan, Exec. Dir.

Evangelical Children's Home

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Greetings in Christ,

Thanks for all of the St. Nicholas bags. All of our people enjoyed receiving them. You put a lot of smiles on faces this week.

May our Lord hold each one of you in his arms of grace and mercy while you walk with our Savior. Happy holidays and peace always.

(signed) Johnniest B. Henry, St. John's Comm. Serv. Ministries

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Dear Friends of Feed My People:

We certainly appreciate your donation of \$150.00 to help us continue our programs as we celebrate this wonderful season of the year.

You give us the means to assist our clients in many ways which is especially important during this time. Others may have forgotten that not all people in this area are financially blessed, but you did not. God bless you for that.

(signed) Carol and John DeGuire, Executive Co-Directors

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Thank you for all those who donated cookies for the reception at the children's Christmas program after church. We appreciate your thoughtfulness.

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Thank you to Ruth Ann Nuelle for the donation of desserts for the 50+ group Christmas party. A donation will be made to Feed My People.

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From St. John's Community Services Ministry

Once more I'm asking for your help. Like all the food pantries around the country, we are feeling the economic pressures of the current times.



I'm used to our numbers going up and food supplies going down in the summer months, but this started in the spring and hasn't gotten back to where our supply could come close to meeting the needs of our people.

We're spending between \$400 through \$500 a month trying to meet the needs of our fellow brothers and sisters. We know we can't help everyone, which is why we have reduced the amount of food distributed. The Boy Scouts will help, but we're considering reducing the days we're open for servicing due to the shortage of supplies.

If you could find it in your heart to help just a little through prayers, food, and/or financial, it would be greatly appreciated.

In God's grace and mercy,

(signed) Johnniest B Henry and Walter V. Fraction, Jr.

CHRISTMAS PLAY

A big thank you to Dawn Schillinger for organizing our Christmas Play, for all those who helped from organizing to getting the costumes on the children (Cindy, Allison, and Beth) and everyone else. Santa was a big surprise. Thanks to his helpers, Shirley, Charles and Dolores. The cookies were delicious and thanks to all who did the baking and to Joyce, Hilda, and Dottie for getting it all set up.

Christian Education

HANGING OF THE GREENS

What a fun time – Andrea and Lisa set up the crafts. So many enjoyed working on these. The Christmas picture quilt was a great idea. Fellowship and Service had a good lunch with sloppy joes, chips, and cookies. Thanks to all.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP PLANNING MEETING

The Women's Fellowship will meet on Tuesday, January 20th at 11 am. to plan their events for the coming year. We will go out to eat lunch. There will be a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

50+ PLANNING MEETING

This group will meet on Saturday, January 17th at 10 am to discuss the agenda for the coming year. Bring your ideas. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Please note that there will not be any Sunday School on December 28th.

EPIPHANY SUNDAY



Don't put away your nativity scene after Christmas, church! As we celebrate the Epiphany on Sunday, we will display our mangers on the altar. Bring in yours on December 28th or January 4th, and we'll enjoy looking at all the different depictions of the birth of our Lord.

FAITHFUL READERS BOOK CLUB

Our next book is The Shack by William Young. This book has been a surprise best seller, 2 million copies sold, and has spread in popularity mostly by word of mouth. It is a very readable novel in which the Trinity, Creator, Savior, and Holy Spirit, is presented in a community of mutual love with three distinct persons. It involves a father's quest to find meaning and peace after the tragic death of his daughter. I encourage anyone who is interested to read it and join us for conversation. We will gather for a pot luck lunch and discussion on January 18th after worship. The next book will be Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim by David Sedaris which we will discuss on February 15th.

BIBLE STUDY



Bible Study in January and February. This is the year of the Gospel of Mark in the lectionary. We will be reading straight through Mark, one chapter a week for 16 weeks, which will take us from January 4 to Easter. We will not have Monday morning Bible Study class during January.

Meet on January 4th after worship for a crash course on the Gospel of Mark. We will be finished by noon.

LYDIA'S HOUSE COMMUNITY MEAL

Thanks to the generous support of many, we were able to provide a wonderful meal for the residents at Lydia's House on December 3rd. They had ham and turkey and all the trimmings with plenty for all and leftovers to take back to their own apartments. Thanks for the money and food goes to Janet Remmers, Ardelle Dischinger, Dottie Vinyard, Jan Freese, Pat Siewing, Lois Decker, Kathy Shelton, Joan Schumacher, JoAnn Leber, Sue Leary, Frances Kalbfleish, Hilda Leonard, Joyce Brand, and Nancy Krenning. The Fellowship and Service Committee also contributed the excess cookies from the Hanging of the Greens and that also was appreciated. Others may have also contributed money but didn't put their names on the envelope, so we thank you all so much for a terrific holiday meal for the ladies of Lydia's House and their children.

BATTLE OF THE AISLES

We collected 452 food items for Feed My People and, by official count of the auditors (even though I regret to admit it), the winner was the left side of the church. Thanks to those who counted, boxed up the food, and carried it to the car and a special thank you to all who brought the much needed food. As usual, pre-school was a big part of the collection and they also deserve much appreciation. St. Philip's never fails to come through when there is a need. You're great!

GREETING TEAM TRAINING

If you would like to be a part of the welcoming team, come to a short training session on January 11th after church. Everyone who greets/ushers needs to take this training, including youth. There will be a new sign-up sheet on the bulletin board following this session and those trained on January 11 and those who previously received training are invited to volunteer their time as part of this important function of hospitality.

COOKIE SALE

A huge thank you to all who brought and bought the delicious Christmas cookies. 450 pounds of cookies gave the general fund a total of \$270 dollars. Special thanks go to elves Ardelle Dischinger, Pat Siewing, Betty Moore and Sharon Jackman for weighing and packaging the cookies with nary a nibble.

KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

John Schuette at Green Park, Melba Schulz at Orchard House, Walt Miller at Orchid Terrace, Tammy Knoll and family on the death of her mother, June Cato, Alex Balzer who will have surgery on his hand this week, Paul ShROUT who will have knee replacement surgery on January 9th. Dana Faerber who is in the Des Peres Hospital for tests (found out she has a fractured pelvis) – Ken's not too sure how long she'll be there.

COMING EVENTS

January 1	Office closed – Happy New Year
January 3	Engaging Youth Discussion Group – 2 pm at Wired Coffee
January 4	Communion Sunday Epiphany Party
January 5	Church Council 7 pm
January 6	Bell Choir 7 pm
January 7	Choir 7 pm
January 8	Yoga Class 6:30 pm
January 11	Birthday Sunday
January 13	Bell Choir 7 pm

January 14 Free Lunch Day 12 noon
Choir 7 pm
January 15 Yoga Class 6:30 pm
January 17 50+ Group Planning Meeting 10 am
January 18 Book Club after Worship (pot luck lunch)
January 19 Office Closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
January 20 Crier articles due
January 21 Choir 7 pm
January 27 Bell Choir 7 pm
January 28 Choir 7 pm

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



Jan. 1 Joel Knoll	Jan. 18 Jeff Stevenson
Jan. 2 Charles Zikes	Jan. 19 Jane Eason
Jan. 3 Walter Knoll	Jan. 22 Dan Kammerer
John Mikusch	Jeremy Decker
Jan. 4 Carl Schillinger	Jan. 23 Marilyn Eason
Jamie Jackson	Mackenzie Wodicker
Jan. 5 Chassidy Wodicker	Jan. 24 Nick Harvey
Jan. 8 Gary York	Jan. 28 Lois Decker
Jan. 12 Andrew Knoll	Jan. 29 Beth Hickman
Jan. 14 Jordan Gross	Jan. 30 Harold Adams
Jan. 17 Hannah Schillinger	Lester Krenning
Lynn Bippin	Jan. 31 Joyce Brand
Robin Knoll	Andria Brym

LITURGISTS, USHERS, ACOLYTES AND CHILDREN'S TIME FOR JANUARY

Liturgists



January 4 Michelle Torigian
January 11 Harry Jennings
January 18 Gary Karcher
January 25 Lois Decker

Welcoming Teams

December 28 and January 4

January 11 and January 18

Jim Caldwell Lynn Bippin
Connie Caldwell

Acolytes



January 4 Haylee Thibodeaux
January 11 Carley Nickel
January 18 Scott Karcher
January 25 Alex Balzer

Children's Time

January 4 Terri Karcher
January 11 Michelle Torigian
January 18
January 25 April Schillinger



THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Since we just had our Christmas Pageant here I thought this was a good article to read so that we can give thanks for all our children's efforts – good or sometime otherwise !

My husband and I had been happily married (most of the time) for five years but hadn't been blessed with a baby. I decided to do some serious praying and promised God that if he would give us a child, I would be a perfect mother, love it with all my heart and raise it with His word as my guide.

God answered my prayers and blessed us with a son. The next year God blessed us with another son. The following year, He blessed us with yet another son. The year after that we were blessed with a daughter. My husband thought we'd been blessed right into poverty. We now had four children, and the oldest was only four years old.

I learned never to ask God for anything unless I meant it. As a minister once told me, "If you pray for rain, make sure you carry an umbrella."

I began reading a few verses of the Bible to the children each day as they lay in their cribs. I was off to a good start. God had entrusted me with four children, and I didn't want to disappoint Him. I tried to be patient the day the children smashed two dozen eggs on the kitchen floor searching for baby chicks. I tried to be understanding when they started a hotel for homeless frogs in the spare bedroom, although it took me nearly two hours to catch all twenty-three frogs. When my daughter poured ketchup all over herself and rolled up in a blanket to see how it felt to be a hot dog, I tried to see the human rather than the mess.

In spite of changing over twenty-five thousand diapers, never eating a hot meal and never sleeping for more than thirty minutes at a time, I still thank God daily for my children. While I couldn't keep my promise to be a perfect mother – I didn't even come close – I did keep my promise to raise them in the Word of God. I knew I was missing the mark just a little when I told my daughter we were going to church to worship God, and she wanted to bring a bar of soap along to "wash up" Jesus, too. Something was lost in the translation when I explained that God gave us everlasting

life, and my son thought it was generous of God to give us his "last wife."

My proudest moment came during the children's Christmas pageant. My daughter was playing Mary, two of my sons were shepherds and my youngest son was a wise man. This was their moment to shine. My five-year-old shepherd had practiced his line, "We found the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes." But he was nervous and said, "The baby was wrapped in wrinkled clothes." My four-year-old "Mary" said, "That's not wrinkled clothes, silly. That's dirty, rotten clothes."

A wrestling match broke out between Mary and the shepherd and was stopped by an angel, who bent her halo and lost her left wing. I slouched a little lower in my seat when Mary dropped the doll representing Baby Jesus, and it bounced down the aisle crying, "Mama-mama." Mary grabbed the doll, wrapped it back up and held it tightly as the wise men arrived.

My other son stepped forward wearing a bathrobe and a paper crown, knelt at the manger and announced, "We are the wise men, and we are bringing gifts of gold, common sense, and fur."

The congregation dissolved into laughter, and the pageant got a standing ovation. "I've never enjoyed a Christmas program as much as this one," laughed the pastor, wiping tears from his eyes. "For the rest of my life, I'll never hear the Christmas story without thinking of gold, common sense and fur."

"My children are my pride and my greatest blessing," I said as I dug through my purse for an aspirin.

Aren't children wonderful?