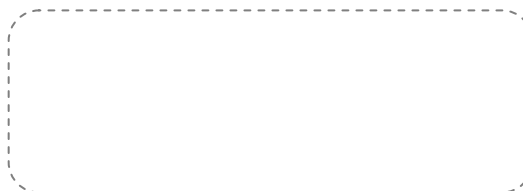


Alexandria First Presbyterian Church
141 Little York-Mount Pleasant Road
Milford, New Jersey 08848-2157
908-996-4333
www.AlexandriaFirstPresbyterian.org



January
2012

Visit us on the Web at
www.AlexandriaFirstPresbyterian.org



Worship in January

Regular worship services are held at 9:00 and 10:30 Sunday mornings.

We hope you will join us!

January 1

New Year's Day

Worship, single 10:30 a.m. service

Christian Education 10:15 a.m.

January 8

Baptism of the Lord

Worship, communion 9:00 and 10:30 a.m.

Christian Education 9:15 a.m.

Fellowship in Fellowship Hall 10:00 a.m.

January 15

Worship 9:00 and 10:30 a.m.

Christian Education 9:15 a.m.

Fellowship in Fellowship Hall 10:00 a.m.

January 22

Worship 9:00 and 10:30 a.m.

Christian Education 9:15 a.m.

Fellowship in Fellowship Hall 10:00 a.m.

Community Pot Luck & Prayer for Christian Unity, Holland Presbyterian 2-4 p.m.

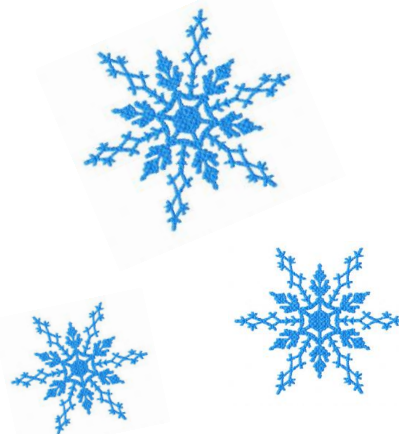
January 29

Worship 9:00 and 10:30 a.m.

Christian Education 9:15 a.m.

Fellowship in Fellowship Hall 10:00 a.m.

Congregational Lunch and Annual Meeting 11:30 a.m.





Branches

Alexandria First Presbyterian Church

"I am the vine, you are the branches."

Dear Friends,

As we prepare to turn the calendar on 2011 I'm finding myself filled with hope for the coming new year. And I wish I could say that I was hopeful that I will *actually* stick to my new year's resolutions *this* year (work out more, eat less junk food) but the fact is, my hopefulness has nothing to do with my resolutions. I'm hopeful because the season of Lent and the Christmas celebrations of the past few weeks have done their job . . . God's faithfulness is once again rejuvenated within me. After waiting through the dark days of Lent, preparing myself to welcome a savior, the joy of Christmas stood out like a beacon in the dark (as it should!).

Between our annual Christmas concert, our two services on Christmas Eve, and our Christmas Day service . . . one thing is clear; God's love has been revealed to us in a child. Not just any child, but that little baby born in Bethlehem. He was laid in a manger, and shepherds and wise men came to see him, worship him. In the birth of that child God has actively chosen to be present in both our world and our lives. The light of God came to shine in the darkness. And that is the true gift of Christmas!

I want to thank everyone who helped share that gift at Alexandria First Presbyterian Church this year—for it was truly a team effort. I want to thank our director of music, Nerva Altino, for the way in which his music enhances our worship and for the terrific concerts that were an inspiration to everyone who heard them. I want to thank all of our amazing choirs: the Junior Choir, Youth Choir, and the Chancel Choir. Once again I got goose bumps listening to you sing—the Christmas concert was beautiful and the Chancel Choir anthem on Christmas Eve stood out as the highlight of my worship experience this Christmas!

I also want to thank all of the ministry teams who helped organize/lead our worship and fellowship. A special thanks to the Worship and Music Team for organizing readers, candles, poinsettias, and much, much more. I want to thank the Christian Education/Youth Team for planning and producing our Christmas pageant, "Sleepover at the Stable"—it was so much fun and truly a blessing to all who were present! And of course, I need to thank the Fellowship Team for always having cookies ready, and the Deacons for preparing communion and for caring for our congregation through the highs and lows of Christmas. And of course I need to thank Pati Tiedeman—who helped prepare and produce lots and lots of bulletins!

Yes—we have much to be thankful for! God has indeed sent us a Savior, and working together there is little we can't do! And for that, I'm *hopeful* . . . for who knows what we will accomplish together in 2012?

Peace,

Pastor Nick

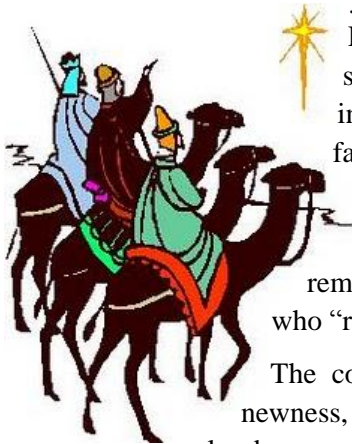
Church Family

Baptism	Birth	Wedding	Death
Nico Joseph, son of Kathleen & Corey Korpita on November 27, 2011. His big sister is Milana.	Wyatt Arthur, son of Denis & Mary Goldman on November 29, 2011. His big brother is Conor.	Megan Armstrong and Joe Hann in a civil ceremony with family present on December 3, 2011.	Christian sympathy & prayers are extended to Linda Thomas upon the death of her father Carl Monn on December 25, 2011.



The Season of Epiphany

In western Christian tradition, January 6 is celebrated as Epiphany or Three Kings' Day. Epiphany is the climax of the Advent/Christmas Season and the Twelve Days of Christmas, which are usually counted from the evening of December 25th until the morning of January 6th, which is the Twelfth Day. In traditional Christian churches Christmas, as well as Easter, is celebrated as a period of time or a season of the church year, rather than just a day. For many Protestant churches, the Season of Epiphany extends from January 6th until Ash Wednesday, which begins the season of Lent. Depending on the timing of Easter, the period of Epiphany includes between four to nine Sundays. Other traditions such as the Reformed faiths, observe Epiphany as a single day, with the Sundays following Epiphany counted as Ordinary Time.



The term *epiphany* means “to show,” “to make known,” or “to reveal.” It remembers the coming of the wise men bringing gifts to visit the Christ child, who “reveal” Jesus to the world as Lord and King.

The colors of Epiphany are usually white and gold, the colors of celebration, newness, and hope that mark the most sacred days of the church year. In traditions that only observe a single day for Epiphany, the colors are often changed after Epiphany to the color green of Ordinary Time, until Transfiguration Sunday, the last Sunday before the beginning of Lent.

The traditional liturgical symbols of Epiphany are usually associated with the Magi. The symbols include either three crowns or a single crown, various portrayals of the Magi or Wise Men, three gifts, a five pointed star, or a combination of a star and crown.

An Epiphany Prayer

Eternal God, the radiance of faithful souls, who brought the nations to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising: fill the world with your glory, and show yourself to all the nations; through him who is the true light and the bright morning star, Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Book of Common Worship 1993, Westminster/John Knox Press



Annual Congregational Luncheon and Meeting

Sunday, January 29, 2012

11:30 a.m.

Fellowship Hall



The congregation will hold its annual meeting to receive statistical and financial reports for 2011, to receive the local and mission budgets for 2011, and to address matters of the corporation. The meeting will begin with a delicious lunch and fellowship. All members and friends of the church are welcome to attend. Copies of the annual report will be distributed Sunday, January 22.

Poinsettias



Many thanks to all who donated the poinsettias gracing our sanctuary throughout the season of Advent. All poinsettias may be taken home at this time. The Worship and Music Ministry Team will remove all Christmas adornments from the sanctuary by Epiphany Sunday, January 8.

The Winter Months Are Upon Us

With the winter months upon us, we ask that you be mindful of our senior members. If at all possible please keep the three or four parking spaces next to the handicapped spots available for our members that may have a more difficult time walking to the doors of our church. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Inclement Weather Notification

www.AlexandriaFirstPresbyterian.org

With a heart toward the well-being and care of our congregation, our elders have devised a means by which to notify you when the church closes unexpectedly due to inclement weather. An early-morning joint-decision will be made by the pastor, the leader of the Worship and Music Ministry Team, and the leader of the Building and Property Ministry Team whether or not to hold worship during an instance of bad weather. They will consider the condition of the roads in general and of our church parking lot and facility specifically. If the worship service is canceled, notification will appear on the church website above and an outgoing message will be placed on our answering machine. If you do not have access to a computer and prefer to be notified via telephone, please contact the church as soon as possible. Your name and number will be placed on a list and a volunteer will call those who request this service. But we must know who you are to do so! Please let us know you prefer notification that way.



Troop 112 Eagle Scouts in 2011

Alexandria Church has held the charter for Boy Scout Troop 112 of Alexandria Township since 1958 and provides space for their regular meetings. We enjoy seeing how their members have grown into responsible young men. Many have been in the program since their earliest days and have advanced through the ranks to the prestigious rank of the Eagle Scout, the highest rank attainable through the Boy Scouts of America. A Scout who attains this rank is called an Eagle Scout or Eagle. Since the beginning of the Scout program, on average only 2% of all members achieve this rank. Requirements include earning at least 21 merit badges and demonstrating Scout Spirit through the Boy Scout Oath, Scout Law, service, and leadership. This includes an extensive service project that the Scout plans, organizes, leads, and manages. In the year of 2011, 6 Scouts from Troop 112 have attained the rank of Eagle.

Joe Ruiz - January
 Dan Weiss - April
 Will Britt - May
 Jesse Smith - June
 Michael Kollet - September
 Nick Durdan - December



Congratulations to the Scouts and their families for their dedication and perseverance!

January Birthdays

*Count your life by smiles, not tears.
 Count your age by friends, not years.*

2 Pat Sutton	9 Alaina Fennell	22 Martha Harrison
Joe Lawson	10 Joe Bercaw	Nancy Schumann
3 Richard Erlandson	13 Isa Knapp	23 Matthew Pursell
4 Andrea Pederson	14 Lu Branson	24 Tom Jones
6 Kyle Ferdinando	Allison Lessig	25 Bob Fleck
Isabel Navarro	16 Howard Thomas	Karl Nielsen
Carol Pfefferle	17 Lisa Schneider	26 John Lentine
Tyler Unkert	18 Irene Fennell	Claire Parsons
8 Craig Bender	21 Dean Erlandson	27 Sarah Wardach
Shirley Krautwald		28 Norb Hirst
		29 Maureen Sutton
		31 Scott Schuetz

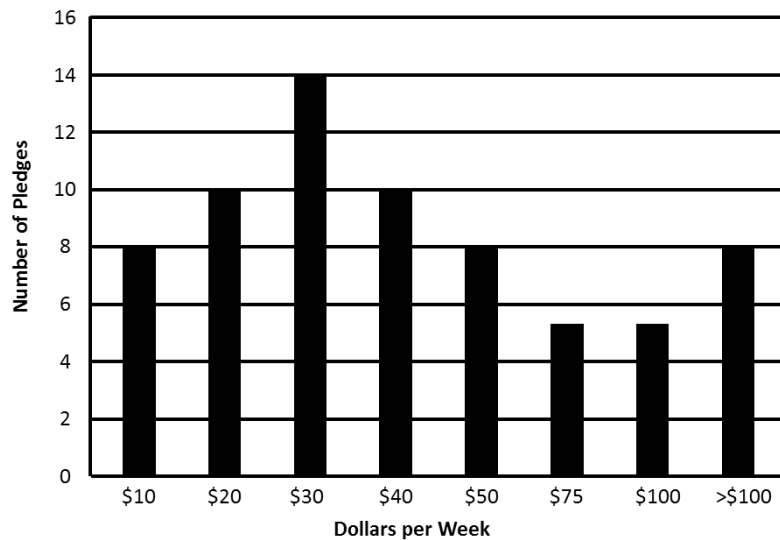


2012 Stewardship Campaign Results

On November 20, 2011, Alexandria Church celebrated Consecration Sunday with one 10:00 a.m. service where everyone was invited to come forward with their gifts to God. Families and individuals brought their pledges of financial support to our ministries during worship in a beautiful display of generosity and love of our church. The results of the Stewardship campaign are presented in the table below.

2012 Stewardship Campaign Results		
	2012	2011
Total Amount Pledged	\$168,629	\$184,221
Total # of Pledges	68	84
Pledges Increased	25	
Pledges unchanged	35	
Pledges decreased	8	

To summarize, this year we received \$15,592 less in pledges than in 2011 and 16 fewer pledges. Some 25 families/individuals were moved to increase their pledge while 35 offered the same as last year and 8 had to lower their pledge. While still trusting in a benevolent and loving God, it is clear that our financial future needs to be addressed while we continue to fund our ministries from savings. The table below represents the details of our church's giving. Across the bottom is the weekly pledge rate and the size of the column represents the number of people giving at that amount (ex. 14 pledges give at \$30 per week). During our Session's study period we are currently discussing Michael Durall's book, *Creating Congregations of Generous People*. The aim in this study is to reach a deeper level of understanding of the spiritual nature of our financial support to Alexandria First Presbyterian Church.



contributed by the Stewardship and Finance Ministry Team

Your 2012 Pledge and Giving Envelopes



If you haven't yet pledged to support our church in 2012, it's not too late! *Pledge cards* are available in the narthex or you can call the church and one will be mailed to you. You can return your completed pledge card to the church or leave it in the offering plate at any of our upcoming services of worship. With God's love and support, we can make the new year very special in the life of our church.

Offering envelopes for 2012 are available in Fellowship Hall arranged by name and envelope number. If you haven't stopped by to pick up your box, please do so. Don't see your name? Can't get to the church to pick up your box? Please call the church office and we will quickly make arrangements for you.

Your Contributions to Branches

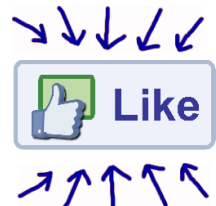
Items for our monthly newsletter, *Branches*, are due on the third Thursday of each month. The deadline for the February issue is January 19. Thank you for your contributions.

Like Us on Facebook

Do you use Facebook?

Did you know that Alexandria First Presbyterian Church has a Facebook page?

Many people understand the basic idea behind Facebook . . . but the most simple is that sites like Facebook help us stay better connected through the internet. And because it is becoming more and more utilized, churches are now getting involved. The Presbytery of New Brunswick has its own Facebook page—as do almost all of our presbytery's churches. Facebook has become yet another way that we can stay connected as Presbyterians and as a family of faith.



So please "Like" our church page to stay up to date on all of the events and happening at Alexandria First!

Nursery Staff for the 9:00 a.m. Service

Additional volunteers are needed and welcomed. If you love to give love and care to our youngest Christians who are from newborn to 2 years-old, please call Evelyn Cameron who will gladly find a time slot for you!



January 1	Mary Schuetz	January 15	Evelyn Cameron
January 8	Carol Moran	January 22	Evelyn Cameron
		January 29	Evelyn Cameron

Small Study Groups

Join us. The door's always open for you!

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>WHERE</u>	<u>LEADER</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
Sundays	9:00 a.m.	Church library	Steve Cameron/ Charlie Tiedeman	<i>Becoming a Contagious Christian</i>
Tuesdays	9:30 a.m.	Sunday school room #7	Jeri Bone/ Julie Wiehl	The Book of Exodus
Wednesdays	6:00 a.m. for men	Fellowship Hall	Steve Cameron/John Maier/ Charlie Tiedeman	The Book of Judges
Wednesdays	9:30 a.m. for women	Yellow room	Nancy Schumann	<i>Women of the Old Testament</i>



Wednesday Women's Bible Study Group

Our next Bible study session will start on January 5, 2012 at 9:30 in the yellow room. We'll focus on the text *Women of the New Testament* by Phyllis J. LePeau (*A LifeGuide Bible Study*). Please contact Nancy Schumann to let her know you're interested in participating.



"Every night, in Hunterdon County, a child is homeless..."

Dear Alexandria Church,

On behalf of Family Promise/Interfaith Hospitality Network of Hunterdon County, I would like to thank you for your support during the past year. We have so much to be thankful for during this season of remembering those who care about us. For those of us who lost power during the last storm, we know what it is like to feel "powerless." This is how our homeless families feel. We lost power—they lost everything.

We can help homeless families because you support us.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Sincerely yours,

Geleen G. Donovan

Executive Director

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Hunterdon County

A Winter Prayer

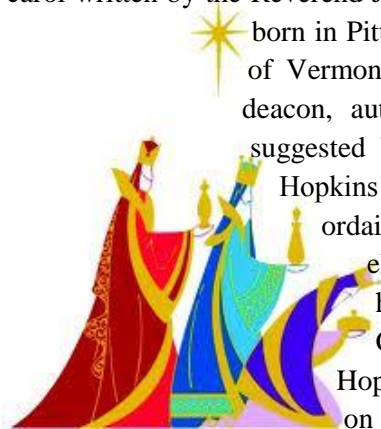
Just help me keep my life
 as pure and white as snow,
 that like a clear cold day,
 brings beauty here below.
 Just let me seek the light,
 your warmth, your love, your grace;
 as here below we seek
 the warmth of winter's fireplace.
 Just help me strive to do
 the things You need of me.
 I thank you - Lord - for in this way,
 our souls, like flakes, are free.



The History Behind the Hymn

We Three Kings

We Three Kings, also known as *We Three Kings of Orient Are* or *The Quest of the Magi*, is a Christmas carol written by the Reverend John Henry Hopkins, Jr., who wrote both the lyrics and the music. He was born in Pittsburgh, the son of an Episcopal bishop, and graduated from the University of Vermont. After a stint as a journalist, he graduated from seminary, became a deacon, author, illustrator, and designer while composing several hymns. It is suggested *We Three Kings* was written in 1857 but it did not appear in print until Hopkins' *Carols, Hymns and Song* was published in 1863. Hopkins, then an ordained deacon in the Episcopal Church, was instrumental in organizing an elaborate holiday pageant for his nieces and nephews which featured this hymn for the students of the General Theological Seminary in New York City in 1857 while serving as the seminary's music director. Eventually Hopkins became an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church in 1872 and went on to follow in his father's footsteps to become the Episcopal Bishop of Vermont. He delivered the eulogy at the funeral of President Ulysses S. Grant in 1885, and died in Hudson, New York in 1891.



Our Flower Ministry

The beautiful flower arrangements that enhance our worship experience are provided as a service of the Worship and Music ministry team. If you would like to donate arrangements in celebration of a precious event or in memory or in honor of a loved one, please:

- ✿ fill out the flower request form located in the envelope on the Fellowship Hall bulletin board
- ✿ write a check payable to the church for \$20.00 with "flowers" in the memo section
- ✿ fill out the flower chart on the bulletin board to reserve your date
- ✿ leave your completed form and check in the envelope

It's that simple! Thank you for your generous support of our flower ministry here at Alexandria Church.

Community Pot-Luck and Week of Prayer






On Sunday, January 22, 2012 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. a pot-puck dinner will be held to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The event is sponsored by the Delaware Valley Interfaith Fellowship and will be held at the Holland Presbyterian Church Christian Center, 535 Riegelsville Road, Holland Township, Milford. The guest speaker will be Chip Paillex, President and founder of *America's Grow A Row*. Learn how local farmers and multitudes of volunteers help supply local food banks and feed the hungry in our area with fresh, healthy produce.

All members of the community are invited to attend. Bring a favorite dish (if possible) to share with your neighbors and celebrate together. For further information contact Pastor John Potter at 303-6657 or johnfpotter@comcast.net.



Heating Season!

With the return of cold weather, it's more important than ever that we continue to be good stewards of the resources God has blessed us with. When your ministry team, meeting, or group has finished for the day or night, please remember to take a quick tour of the whole building and all its rooms on both floors to be certain that all . . .

-  thermostats are returned to 60 degrees,
-  lights are off,
-  bathroom exhaust fans and lights are off,
-  interior doors are closed,
-  and exterior doors are pulled tight and locked



If any condition of our facility causes you concern, please call the church office to report it along with your name and phone number.

We're Touched by Your Generosity

The deacons would like to thank the congregation for their overwhelming support towards the Thanksgiving food boxes. We were able to assemble 17 delicious dinners with all the trimmings and 20 turkeys. The Frenchtown Food Pantry distributed the boxes to families in the community that are in need. Thank you so much for your generosity.

Spring Clothing Drive



Alexandria Church will host a clothing drive in March to benefit the Trenton Rescue Mission. So why not clean out a closet or two during these quiet winter days? Hold your bags at home and watch upcoming issues of Branches for the date, time, and details on the spring clothing drive!

Board of Deacons Highlights

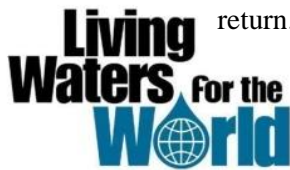
Regular Meeting of December 5, 2011

- Care and concerns of the congregation and the prayer ministry were shared.
- Highlights from the various ministry teams were heard.
- The Thanksgiving Food Drive yielded 17 complete boxes and 20 turkeys. Extra bags of loose food were given to the Frenchtown Food Pantry. Our own food pantry was recently checked for expired items and a load was taken to Frenchtown.
- Holiday Toy Drive collection boxes will be on site until December 14th.
- Shut-Ins at Christmas will be visited by the deacons
- Approved giving a \$100 Target gift card to a church family in need. Noted that care should be used in buying gift cards. Cards through major banks tend to depreciate, expire early, and have hidden costs. The best bets are cards from big stores.
- On motion, approved purchasing five \$20 ShopRite gift cards with the money remaining in the deacons' budget and presenting them to the Frenchtown Food Pantry so they can purchase perishables for their shelves.
- Military boxes will be assembled in February.
- Communion supplies were checked to be sure we're ready for Christmas Eve.
- Pamphlets on Robert's Rules of Order were distributed as a follow up to Nick's October training class.

Living Waters for the World Update

Mission Trip January 2012

Our mission work in Haiti is on its way! Howard Jones and I will be visiting the village of Fond Pierre, Haiti on January 6, 2012 (returning January 9, 2012) to survey their needs for clean water. Alexandria First is assembling a team to install a water filter system and educate the village on the use of clean water on our



return. We are still in need of members to help assemble the system, plan the education, and raise funds. We will also reach out to other churches and organizations for help. Our next meeting will be on January 17, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. at the church.

If you would like to contribute to this mission you can make out a check payable to Alexandria First Presbyterian Church, noting LWW in the memo line. Please

contact either Howard Jones or me with questions or to join the team.

God's peace to you all,

Charlie Tiedeman

Sleepover at the Stable

The CE/Youth Ministry team hopes you enjoyed the *Sleepover at the Stable* Christmas Eve performance. We wish to thank the parents and friends who created a beautiful set with great costumes, the church members and staff who cheered us on from the early stages of production, and the children who brought life to the pageant. The heartfelt performance transformed our sanctuary into that simple manger on the blessed night Jesus Christ was born. It was a beautiful night and set the tone for a wonderful Christmas, reminding us all what Christmas is about. May we continue to recognize what His life means and imagine all the possibilities! We wish you all the hope, peace, joy and love this season brings.

contributed by Shari Norgard

LEAVE YOUR MARK MLK 2012

January 16th-22nd

National Martin Luther King Day of Service

**“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is:
What are you doing for others?”**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Each year, Americans across the country answer that question by coming together on the King holiday to serve their neighbors and communities. The MLK Day of Service is a part of the President’s national call to service initiative. It calls for Americans from all walks of life to work together to provide solutions to our most pressing national problems.



So just what are you doing for others the week of January 16th? Your Mission Interpretation Ministry Team recommends you page through our Mission Yearbook—located in the narthex brochure rack—for suggestions on how to put your faith into action. You can also contact your town’s municipal services or schools to see where you can help. Local veterans’ groups, county disaster services, and environmental agencies are also great places to contact. For more information, please see any member of the Mission Interpretation Team: Tom Jones, Johanna Schooff, Charlie Tiedeman, or Pati Tiedeman.

Falling Snow




Anonymous

See the pretty snowflakes
Falling from the sky;
On the wall and housetops
Soft and thick they lie.

On the window ledges,
On the branches bare;
Now how fast they gather,
Filling all the air.



Alexandria Church January Activities

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 New Year's Day 10:30 Worship	2 Office Closed	3 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Study group 7:00 Boy Scouts	4 6:00 Study group, men 9:00 Session materials due 9:30 Study group, women	5 3:30 Girl Scouts 6:30 Youth Choir 7:30 BSA leaders 7:30 Chancel Choir	6 Epiphany of the Lord 6:00 Girl Scouts	7
8 Baptism of the Lord 9:00 Worship, communion 9:15 Christian Education 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship, communion 6:00 Girl Scouts 	9 9:00 contributions to annual congregational report due	10 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Study group 5:45 Presbytery, Hamilton Square 7:00 Boy Scouts	11 6:00 Study group, men 9:30 Study group, women 7:00 Session 7:00 GSA leaders	12 2:00 Staff 3:30 Worship and Music 4:30 Girl Scouts 6:30 Junior Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	13 3:30 Girl Scouts	14
15 9:00 Worship 9:15 Christian Education 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship	16 	17 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Study group 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:00 <i>Living Waters</i> for the World meeting	18 6:00 Study group, men 9:30 Study group, women	19 9:00 Deadline for Branches articles 3:30 Girl Scouts 6:30 Youth Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	20 7:30 Pack meeting	21 EQUIPPING THE SAINTS LEADER TRAINING see p. 12 SNOW DATE 2-11-12
22 9:00 Worship 9:15 Christian Education 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship 2-4 pm Community pot-luck and prayer, Holland Church	23	24 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Study group 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:00 Building and Property	25 Ministry Team Night 6:00 Study group, men 9:30 Study group, women	26 2:00 Staff 4:30 Girl Scouts 6:30 Youth Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	27 3:30 Girl Scouts	28
29 9:00 Worship 9:15 Christian Education 10:00 Fellowship 10:30 Worship 11:30 Congregational Lunch and Meeting 	30	31 9:00 Bulletin deadline 9:30 Study group 7:00 Boy Scouts			Deacon of the Week Jan 1 Pat K. Jan 8 Ed M. Jan 15 Tammy S. Jan 22 Robin S. Jan 29 Pati T.	

