



St. John's Prologue

"In the beginning was the Word..."

St. John's Episcopal Church
Williamstown, Massachusetts

December 2017

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LAS POSADAS: Welcoming the Stranger Saturday, December 2, 5:15 p.m.

**Meet on the lawn in front of St. John's at 5:15 p.m. this Saturday
to lift up the cause of immigrants, refugees, and all those
in need of shelter, safety, and welcome.**

This year St. John's is joining in the Williamstown Holiday Walk festivities with an event at our church called Las Posadas. Spanish for inns, lodgings, or shelters, Las Posadas is a Mexican/Latin American Advent tradition where communities journey in a candlelight procession from place to place seeking to find welcome as Mary and Joseph did on their journey long ago.

A song is sung each time the community requests shelter. The group of weary travelers sings a verse, and the gatekeepers sing a verse in response. The group seeking shelter is turned away again and again, but ultimately they are recognized as holy and welcomed in. When the Insiders are able to open their hearts and minds to welcome the Outsiders, and the strangers are recognized as holy and as family, the community is united, and there is a party (in the Lower Room) with food and drink for all and piñatas for the children.

Donation jars will be set out at the party for the Berkshire Immigrant Center, the Friendship Food Pantry, and Soldier On (aiding homeless veterans). Please help us spread the word by inviting friends. This event is designed for the wider community, and, as always, all are welcome!

ADVENT EVENT on Sunday, December 3rd after the 10:00 Worship Service

After the 10 a.m. service, choose your Advent devotional materials in the church, come down to the Lower Room for coffee hour, and stay to create some beautiful tools to help with your Advent observance. There will be materials to make an Advent Wreath with greens and candles. Or sew an Advent Spiral you can use to mark the progression of each day of the season. (Children can sew these, too!) Just for fun, there will be materials to create graham cracker "gingerbread" houses and decorate them. Our huge parish coloring poster for the first week of Advent will also be available. These are beautifully designed to be brought to life by the whole parish community, adults and children alike. Come enjoy cookies and good company, and enter into the spirit of Advent. Then take something home (or give a gift) to help keep your focus on light and life during this special season.



First Sunday in Advent

In our Godly Play room in November, the People of God continued their journey in the desert. They learned the 10 Best Ways to Live and created the Ark and Tent. They built the Temple in Jerusalem, but the Temple was destroyed, Jerusalem captured, and the People of God experienced both Exile and Return. Now we will leave the desert to experience the season of Advent and learn more about the Holy Family and the traditions that help us get ready for Christmas. Mary Pierson will be our storyteller with Sloane Torres as our door person. After Christmas, we'll hear the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the Second Creation: The Falling Apart, and learn about the Prophets. Sloane will be the storyteller with Erin Keiser-Clark as the door person. Our work materials are growing, and now there are sewing tools as well as the materials we've had before.

In Lift Every Voice we're developing quite a repertoire! During Advent, we'll learn "O Come All Ye Faithful" by heart, as well as the Taize song "Jesus, Your Light." After Christmas, we'll learn more of the responses used throughout the service, as well as something rousing for the New Year! As always, newcomers are welcome to both Godly Play and Lift Every Voice. Godly Play is for elementary-aged children, but Lift Every Voice is for anyone of any age who loves to start Sunday morning singing and wants to learn the music of the church by heart! **Join in on any Sunday morning at 9:40 a.m.**

-Sloane Torres and Erin Keiser-Clark

ADVENT WORSHIP AND FORMATION

Sunday, December 3rd (1st Sunday of Advent): Worship at 8 and 10 a.m.
Advent Event after 10 a.m. worship (see article above for description)

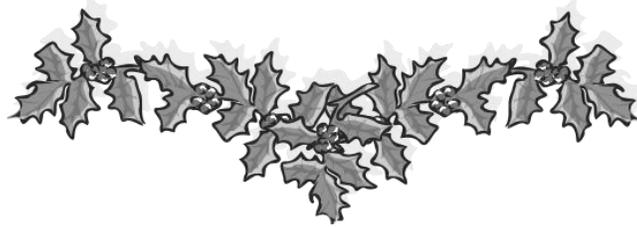
Sunday, December 10th (2nd Sunday of Advent):

Guest Preacher at 8 and 10 a.m. will be Ben Williams, who will graduate from Williams College at the end of this semester. After the 10 a.m. service, Ben will give a talk about Myanmar/Burma, based on his senior thesis and time spent in that country. While a student, Ben has been a faithful “every Sunday” part of this congregation, serving as a lector and as a member of the RenewalWorks Team. Ben has also been one of the student leaders of The Feast, the student group that meets at St. John’s on Sunday evenings. He was a finalist for the 2017 William Sloane Coffin Prize for Passionate Public Speaking. His future plans include law school. We have been blessed by Ben’s presence among us and now offer him our blessings as he goes forth from this community to continue making a difference in the world.

Saturday, December 16th: Advent Retreat/Quiet Day at St. John’s (full info in Sunday leaflet)

Sunday, December 17th (3rd Sunday of Advent): Worship at 8 and 10 a.m.,
Christmas Caroling at Williamstown Commons in the early afternoon (Time to be announced)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 (4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT):
ONE SERVICE IN THE MORNING AT 9:00 A.M.
HOLY EUCHARIST RITE II WITH MUSIC TO END THE SEASON OF ADVENT.



CHRISTMAS AT ST. JOHN’S

Sunday, December 24th, Christmas Eve

4:00 p. m. The Family Service with Holy Eucharist

Prelude begins at 3:50 p.m.

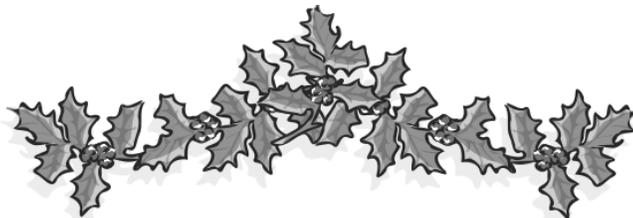
The Children’s Chorus will sing at this service and all children will have an opportunity to help place the figures in the creche.

9:00 p.m. Festival Choral Eucharist with Choir

Prelude begins at 8:45 p.m.

Monday, December 25th, Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist with Carols and Organ



MUSICAL TRANSITIONS

Thank You Note from Bob Hansler:

Dear Friends, Thank you so much for the festive farewell on Sunday, November 5th. I was grateful for the chance to talk with so many of you at the reception and in the days and weeks before. The children from the chorister program surprised me on Sunday with their gift, and you, adults, caught me completely off guard with yours. Thank you for showing me such generosity. I was moved by all who had a hand in sending me off with love. With thanks, Bob Hansler



From Libby:

Thank you to all who gave towards the “purse” presented to Bob on November 5th or prepared food for the reception and special music for the day. In case you missed it, the last verse of “Bob’s Farewell Song” (words by Celia Twomey, tune: *St. Botolph*) said: “We will not see his face every week, nor hear his music play, but Robert Hansler will live in our hearts just as he does today.” Bishop Fisher reports that Bob is already winning the hearts of choir and people at Christ Church Cathedral, just as we knew he would!

I’m extremely grateful to Jacquie Metsma for filling in at the organ for two Sundays, to Jane Jenkins for playing the piano for the Thanksgiving Day Service, to Ellen Beebe and Celia Twomey for leading adult choir rehearsals, and to Will Kirby and Margot Sanger for leading the Children’s Chorus in November. The children and adults sang together on November 26th. What a treat to hear those lovely young voices and see their enthusiasm! Finally, I am thankful for those who helped with auditions and interviews for the Interim Organist/Choir Director position. We had several qualified candidates, and it is my pleasure to announce that St. John’s new musician (one-year part-time Interim Organist/Choir Director) is Mark Johnson.

Mark’s experience as a musician in the Episcopal Church spans four decades from a beginning in Andover, MA through positions in New York, Kentucky, Rhode Island, Maine, and Connecticut. Twenty-four of those years were in one congregation. He has both training and experience with the RSCM Voice for Life program that is the curriculum for our new Children’s Chorus, and he has been instrumental in founding and developing several children’s choirs. Mark’s references described him as communicating “inspired joy” and a love of music, and noted that he is good at exploring new ideas while honoring tradition, able to build community, and has a wide range of musical ability with instruments and genres. As he and I have begun planning hymns and liturgy for the Advent and Christmas seasons, I have been impressed by his sensitivity, knowledge, and desire to get to know the people and practices of St. John’s.

From the Interim Organist/Choir Director:

My name is Mark Johnson. I am so grateful for the opportunity to shepherd St. John’s music program while it is in the process of searching for a new Rector. It is a real privilege to succeed Bob Hansler and will be my “care and delight” to follow his lead and work to develop the music program as he and Peter and Libby envisioned it. Last week I visited St. John’s. All those I’ve met in person or spoken with by phone have demonstrated a wonderful collaborative spirit and freely shared their ideas and hopes for the various parts of the music ministry. This is very helpful. I am eager to hear about any aspect of the music program. Communication can help ensure that our congregational singing continues to be vibrant and varied and that the choral and instrumental offerings enhance and feel well integrated into the liturgies. It would also be wonderful to hear from anyone who would like to explore the possibility of joining either of our choirs or playing an instrument during a service.

Waiting, watching, and preparing makes Advent one of the most exciting times of the year. Meeting and beginning to get to know the members and staff of St. John’s, particularly the adult choristers, the young choristers, and their parents will make it even more exciting this year. I can hardly wait to begin singing some new and some familiar songs to the Lord together.

SERVICE OF CHRISTMAS LESSONS AND CAROLS

Williams College invites the community to this beautiful service featuring carols performed by the Williams Concert and Chamber Choirs, under the direction of Brad Wells, assisted by harpist Anna Deloi ’18, the Williams Handbell Choir, and organist Ed Lawrence. The Rev. Rick Spalding, Chaplain to the College, will deliver a meditation, & Fr. Gary Caster, Catholic Chaplain, will serve at liturgist. Two identical services are offered at **4 p.m. on Saturday, December 9th and again at 4 p.m. on Sunday, December 10th**. A free-will offering will be received in support of the students’ initiatives for hurricane relief in the Caribbean region. Please consider bringing a gift of non-perishable food for local food pantries.



2017 Christmas Memorial Flowers

The Christmas plants and flowers at St. John’s Church are customarily given by parishioners who wish to offer a gift in memory of a relative or friend or in thanksgiving for some blessing received by God.

If it is your wish to make such a contribution, please fill in the form below with the full name of the person or persons in whose memory the offering is being made. Or if the gift is in thanksgiving then please provide the wording for this.

MEMORIAL NAMES:

IN THANKSGIVING

Donation: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to “St. John’s Church” and in the memo section “Christmas flowers”.

Deadline for requests is: December 18th

Thank you!

RECTOR SEARCH UPDATE

The Search Team completed Skype interviews with each of our candidates and now the Vestry and Search Team are meeting face-to-face with our three finalists. We are blessed—each of our prospects brings impressive talents and spiritual depth to the table. After we have met the candidates, the Vestry and Search Team will meet to share our thoughts before the Vestry begins the important task of discerning who will be called as our next rector. As we enter into this time of focused discernment, we invite all the St. John’s community to join us in praying for

- our new rector,
- the work of the vestry and Search Team,
- Libby, as she continues to nurture our community through transition,
- all our candidates,
- and our parish family, that we may be made ready and open to these next steps in our life together.

-Laurie Glover, Search Team Chair

-Claudia Ellet & Margot Sanger, Co-Wardens

MEDICAL MISSION TO CAMBODIA

Bart Saxbe wrote to St. John’s: “The medical mission to Baray, Cambodia, November 4-17, was both fascinating and successful. Our team, sponsored by Medical Ministries International, Canada, performed 63 major and 23 Minor operations over the two weeks. The gifts you sent were a great success, too; a hit with patients big and small.” We sent Bart off on Sunday, October 29 with a “holy hug” and a suitcase full of toiletries and small stuffed animals.

BERKSHIRE INTERFAITH ORGANIZING RESEARCH HELP

BIO representatives are eager to talk with residents who use the para-transit services of Berkshire Regional Transit Authority. This is a service for those who, for physical reasons, cannot use the regular bus service. We’ve heard stories of frustration with the service and want to learn whether they’re widespread or not. If you or someone you know uses this service, please let Jim Kolesar know at jkolesar@williams.edu or 281-0477.

- Jim Kolesar, BIO Vice-President



OUTREACH LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

There have been several recent meetings on Criminal Justice Reform, including one with Sen. Hinds on a reform bill (SB174) that is currently pending in the State Legislature. These meetings have been attended by a few people from St. John's and First Congregational Church, and at least one more meeting is expected. Since discussions touched all of us that attended, we are hoping someone from this parish would like to serve as "point person" in exploring how we might assist with the legislation, as well as how we might support those that have been adversely affected by the criminal justice system, such as juveniles that are, or have been, incarcerated (e.g., tutoring, mentoring). If getting involved in this issue interests you, please contact Van Ellet (vellet1@roadrunner.com) or Libby Wade (libby_wade@roadrunner.com). We would love to talk with you. --Van Ellet, Outreach Chair

ANGELS WALKING THIS EARTH

We are grateful to so many people for sharing their gifts of time and talent: all the instrumentalists and vocalists and CIAO! Director, Jimmy Bergin, who made the delightful Messiah Sing-a-Long possible; all who deliver meals and groceries to parishioners; all who quietly minister to those in need; Charles Bonenti and Robin Lenz for closing up the Garden of Eating until the Spring; Jeanne and Richard Blake, Kathy and Phil McKnight, and Dan Campbell for tending the flowers; all those who replenish the St. John's Food Pantry; Margot Sanger, Michele Ridgeway, Libby Wade, Claudia Ellet, and Madeline Burdick for working with the choristers in the after-rehearsal program; those who deliver flowers to parishioners every Sunday; those who polish silver and brass and prepare the altar for communion; those who welcome us with food and drink after the 10 a.m. worship service: Aodhán and Ella Murphy and Sarah Nix, Margot Sanger and Claudia Ellet, Lisa Bernard and Dan Campbell, Polly Macpherson, Ruby, Claire, Pete, and Rachaele Morin, Cynthia Tykot and Libby and Jim Wade, Richard and Jeanne Blake, Robin Lenz and the Nicholson family, Ben Lovell and Amanda Wilcox; John Ladd and his assistant Judy Ladd, who created our new Advent Wreath holder, as well as the wooden holders in the pews for pencils and welcome cards. Wood for these items came from an old room divider used in our Sunday School room many years ago – creating something new while honoring the past!

PARISH LIFE COMMITTEE

The mission of the Parish Life Committee is to plan, promote, and facilitate engagement of St. John's parishioners and visitors in various activities that create community and ensure that all are supported in their spiritual journey and feel welcomed and sustained as part of the parish community.

The Vestry and Parish Life Committee entertained newcomers to St. John's Church (those who arrived at St. John's within the last year) on October 20th. The gathering was held in the Lower Room and catered by Robin Lenz. Children painted pumpkins and everyone enjoyed conversation and great food.

Dates to Remember

Saturday, December 16th – Advent Retreat Day, led by The Rev. Libby Wade and Michele Ridgeway

Sunday, December 17th – Parish-Wide Caroling at Williamstown Commons. Members of the Choristers and



Adult Choir will join parishioners as we sing carols to the residents at Williamstown Commons. Sign-up will be at the back of the church starting on Sunday, December 3. Margot Sanger will lead us with her flute. If you would like to play your instrument, please bring it. Music booklets will be handed out at the Commons, and we will move through the building singing in various units. Time will be announced on the 3rd.

Sunday, January 7, ~11:15 a.m. – Parish History/Storytelling Event with Lunch in the Lower Room

Please let us know if you have any questions or ideas.

Blessings, Claudia Ellet, Jane Jenkins, Margot Sanger, Lisa Bernard, Josephine Nicholson, Pete Morin, Carl Jenkins, Grace Breckinridge, Drew Gibson, Ildy Boder, Jim Wade

COFFEE CONVERSATIONS 2018

Sundays, January 14 & 21 – 11:30 a. m. -- library
Sam Coughlin will lead a study of the Letter of James. This group is known for its lively dialogue and welcomes all who wish to participate. Give it a try!

FAITH AND FILM SERIES 2018

Fridays, 1/12/18 – 2/9/18, 5:30 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.

1/12: *Of Gods and Men*

1/19: *Life for Life*

1/26: Discussion

(*The Story of Maximilian Kolbe*)

2/2: *The Apostle*

2/9: Discussion of all 3 films, or a showing of the *Life of Mother Teresa*

Reservations aren't necessary, but it will help supper planning if you let Madeline know you are coming.

STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION

For those of you that might not know me, I am Pete Morin. My wife Rachaele, daughters Claire and Ruby, and I sit in the 2nd row during the 10 a.m. Sunday service. We have been members of the church for the last 3 years. We were blessed to have Peter baptize our girls and again to have Libby preside over our 10-year wedding vow renewal this past June.

I was asked several months ago to speak today about stewardship. Those that know me well, for that matter even those that just met me, know that I am a man of very few words. When asked a particularly deep or challenging question, I prefer time to process it before responding. I have spent a considerable amount of time reflecting on this topic. However, it was not until last Sunday while sitting in front of the generosity sign that I was truly inspired.

I considered the first time that I would have associated generosity with church. I was a very young boy when I began to wonder about the envelopes my mother placed in the weekly collection plate. My parents had 4 children. My mother stayed at home raising us and my father had a decent job, but there never seemed to be excess. I thought then that it was very generous of my mother to give what she did. It was years later when I understood that her generosity was a symbol of her gratitude to God.

That lesson encouraged me to continue the same tithing practice over the years. It was not until I came to St. John's, however, that I was inspired to contribute in other ways. Not just me, but my entire family: my wife Rachaele is a member of the vestry, I am the assistant treasurer, our family finds great joy in packing meals one Sunday morning a month, we enjoy helping at church gatherings and hosting coffee hour, and I was recently inspired to volunteer to read the lessons and the prayers at church. These are all things that I was not comfortable doing before finding St. John's. I know that you all understand what a special church this is. It is filled with a wonderful congregation, staff, clergy, and the list goes on. I only hope that during this giving season our gratitude to God inspires each and every one of us to be generous in a way that might not be common or comfortable to us. *Given by Pete Morin 10/22/17*

REMINDERS!

Am I caught up on my 2017 pledge to St. John's?
Have I returned my 2018 Pledge Card?

Let us all make sure we are up-to-date on our gifts to God's work in and through St. John's.

STEWARDSHIP 2017-18: Our Journey to Generosity continues. Many thanks to all who have turned in pledge cards and to all who will turn one in soon! As of 11/29, we have received 91 pledges for a total of \$219,746. Our goals are 120 pledges and \$270,000. Thank you for your generosity to St. John's.

Elaine Anderson	Wendy Gibbons	Dave & Rosemary Mangun	John & Kathy Pritchard
David & Mary Kate Barnes	Drew Gibson	Jamie & Wendy Martin	Dorothy Reinke
Ellen Beebe	Dianne Glick	Sarah McFarland	Bart Saxbe
James Bergin & Debbie Monahan	Pim & Pandy Goodbody	Ed & Sherry McGowan	Margot Sanger
Steve & Polly Birrell	Paul & Brianna Heggeseth	Tim & Amy McKenna	Gay Scarborough
Charlie & Judy Blaisdell	Ghetta Hirsch	Phil & Kathy McKnight	Sandy Schryver
Dick & Jeanne Blake	Dave & Wendy Horton	Sigrid McWilliams	Jan Schutzman
Ildi Bodor	Betsy Howcroft	Carla Meehan & Jack Cook	Rich Shotwell & Mary Lovvorn
Roger & Julia Bolton	Dorothy Howcroft	Eleanor Montgomery	Eugenia Smith
Charles Bonenti & Stephanie Johnson	Jim & Joan Hunter	Peter & Rachaele Morin	Paula Stambaugh
Edward Briggs	John Hyde	Jean Russell-Morris	Celia Twomey
Carol Burgess	Steve & Sally Hyde	Tom & Josephine Nicholson	Michael Twomey
Dan Campbell & Lisa Bernard	Carl & Jane Jenkins	Sarah Nix	Rev. Libby & Jim Wade
Janice Cook	Curt Johnson	Rosalie Noyes	Bob Ware
Dave & Sam Coughlin	Young Ja Yoon Kim	Rev. Charles O'Brien	Alleson White
Tom & Melissa Cragg	Mary King	Scott & Kathy Park	Rev. Steve & Andrea White
David Cupery	Jim & Alison Kolesar	Roberta Patten	Amanda Wilcox & Chris Lovell
Rev. Gary & Jean Dickson	Ann Kremers	Ed Pelz	Laura Williams
Rev. Bruce & Ruth Duncan Van & Claudia Ellet	John & Judy Ladd	Carol Perkins	Richard & Elizabeth Williams
Sarah Foehl	Mary Ann Lambert	Vincent & Leah Pesce	Katey Winant
Jim & Judy Gibbons	Robin Lenz	Pat Picard	Bud Wobus
	Dave & Polly Macpherson	Mary Pierson	Bill & Adrienne Wootters
	Leslie Orton-Mahar	Bob & Lucie Polk	
	Jim Mahon & Paula Consolini		

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Tate Kuster
- 2 Juan Nicholson
- 3 Jasmine Anderson
- 4 The Rev. David Mangun, Laura Williams
- 5 Jared Hammill
- 6 John Akers, Catherine Kolesar
- 8 Grace (Pritchard) Burson
- 10 Martha Montgomery, Dorothy Reinke,
Mary Ann Lambert
- 11 Wendy Horton, Margaret Putman,
Charlotte Sanford
- 14 James Mahon
- 16 Libby Wade, Sara (Millard) Wilhelm,
Jean Budrow, Jack Campbell
- 19 Nicole Wobus, Sophie MacDonald
- 21 Ryan & Haley Mahar
- 25 James Fissel
- 28 Katrina Klaus, Sarah Campbell, Alan Horton
- 29 Josephine Nicholson
- 30 Sylvia McKenna, Suzanne Lenhoff
- 31 Judy Buhner, Charlotte McKenna,
Matthew Neely

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

- 13 Dianne & Ben Glick
- 10 Kirk & Paola (Peacock-Villada) Friedrich
- 27 James & Wendy Martin
- 28 Bob & Margie Ware
- 29 Stuart & Susan Crampton

Anniversary of Ordination

- 2 The Rev. Dr. Stephen White (his 17th)

We rejoice with...

Sirianna Santacrose, daughter of Karen McWilliams & granddaughter of Sigrid McWilliams, who received here MSc in Sociology and Global Change, with distinction, from the University of Edinburgh (2016-2017)

Spencer & Michaela (Lane) Foucher on the birth of their son, Nathan, who was born on November 20th

We extend condolences to...

To the family of...

Robert Rothacker, husband of Ginger Rothacker, who died on November 4th

Rev. Neale Secor, father of Jonathan & Tom who died on November 16th

Anna Malootian, Diana Elvin's mother, who died on November 16th

FROM THE PARISH CALENDAR

This month:

- LAS POSADAS: Welcoming the Stranger, p.1
- Advent Event, p.1
- Advent & Christmas happenings, p.2
- Lessons & Carols, p.3
- Parish Life events, see p. 5
- New year Coffee Conversations, p. 5
- New year Faith & Film, p. 5

ONGOING:

Tuesdays

- 9:30 a.m., Holy Eucharist, church (*not 11/7 or 11/14*)
- 3:45 p.m., Evening Prayer, Sweetbrook
(third Tuesday only)

7:00 p.m., ACOA, upper room

7:30 p.m., AA, library

Wednesdays

- 9:30 a.m., Early Intervention Playgroup, sunroom
- 10:00 a.m., AA, upper room

Thursdays

9:00 a.m., Cancer Support Group, upper room
(1st and 3rd weeks only)

1:00 p.m., Affin-KNIT-ty Group, library

3:30 p.m., Children's Chorus

7:00 p.m., AA, library

7:30 p.m., Adult Choir rehearsal

Fridays

Noon, AA, upper room

12:00 p.m., Bible Study, room 3

Sundays

9:40 a.m., Lift Every Voice, lower room

7:30 p.m., AA, library

5:30 p.m., The Feast (college students), upper room

MONTHLY MEETINGS:

Thursday, December 7th & 21st

9:00 a.m., Cancer Support Group, upper room

Wednesday, December 13th

7:00 p.m., VESTRY, library

Thursday, December 14th,

5:30 p.m., Vespers, church

Sunday, December 17th

11:30 a.m., Home Delivered Meals

1:00 p.m., Friendship Knot Quilters, lower room

Thursday, December 21st

5:30 p.m., Centering Prayer, church