

FAITH FLIGHT

December 2014



Wealthy

This last few weeks have been a good time centering and reflection of what is truly important. The loss of a loved one can do this. Add to this a season of stewardship in our church life while approaching the time of year where we traditionally go around the table sharing what we are thankful for.

My Grandpa was a mentor for me in many ways. He shared the heart of a pastor and the intellect of a theologian. Together, he was able to put in motion his knowledge of God with his love of neighbor. Grandpa's appreciation for the little things helped me as a small boy to eat my vegetables as I recall him complementing my mother at the table, "mmmm, these peas are splendid." Reflecting now, it was from gracious sacrifice (and a bad toaster) that grandpa always volunteered to eat the burnt toast, but because grandpa savored the charred bread, I too liked my toast burnt. He was a good role model indeed.

As a poet, he writes a poem that speaks as much about him as it does about my grandmother.

Love

"The more you give, the more you have,"
She said to John her son,
And spoke, her husband knew full well,
From wisdom slowly won.

He'd watched her meet the children's needs,
Mid fretful fevers, health—
Through midnight vigils, morning light—
In poverty and wealth.

He'd known her constancy to him
Despite the storms of life,
The daily batterings, the wounds
She'd dressed as loving wife.

She'd given, given, given—till
She had no more to give.
But having given all she had
She'd freed herself to live.

Continued on page 4





Cocoa and Carols

Saturday, December 13, 3:00 pm

Join in the fun and join in the singing of
Christmas Carol favorites.

Cocoa and cookies served afterward.

Children's Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 14, during morning service

(See page 4 for more details.)

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Wednesday, December 24

7:30-8:30 pm

Bring your family for this special service.

Communion will be served.



BIRTHDAYS

12/01 Lisa Smith
12/20 Michael Tisland

**Spiritcare
Prayer Team**
call **1.507.263.5975**
952.423.2212 (office)

DECEMBER CAREGIVER

Chris Sachs

Thank you for all the cards and prayers. I'm home,
recovering and feeling so much better.

~Barb Ostlund

CARD CARE LIST REMINDER :

If you had someone on Loving Community Ministry Team's Card Care List in November 2014 and wish them to remain on in December 2014, please resubmit them with an update to Ruth Shepard at: rshepard2@frontier.com or 507.263.5975 or by filling out a blue Prayer Request card during worship.

***BE SURE TO CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX(S) ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE CARD.**

***NOTE:** Each month our Card Care List starts with new and updated submissions only.

Communications Policy Statement

It is Spirit of Life's policy to...

- ▶ list names, and place photos of members associated with church events, in the newsletter and on the website.
- ▶ Spirit of Life also acknowledges birthdays (month & day) in the newsletter, during the member's birthday month.
- ▶ Finally, Spirit of Life plans to put a copy of the monthly newsletter on its website.

Any member who does not want his/her name, likeness, or birth month listed in these, or any other church publications, is requested to contact the church office with a formal request to keep their personal information confidential.

Send newsletter announcements to: spirit@spiritoflifeav.org.

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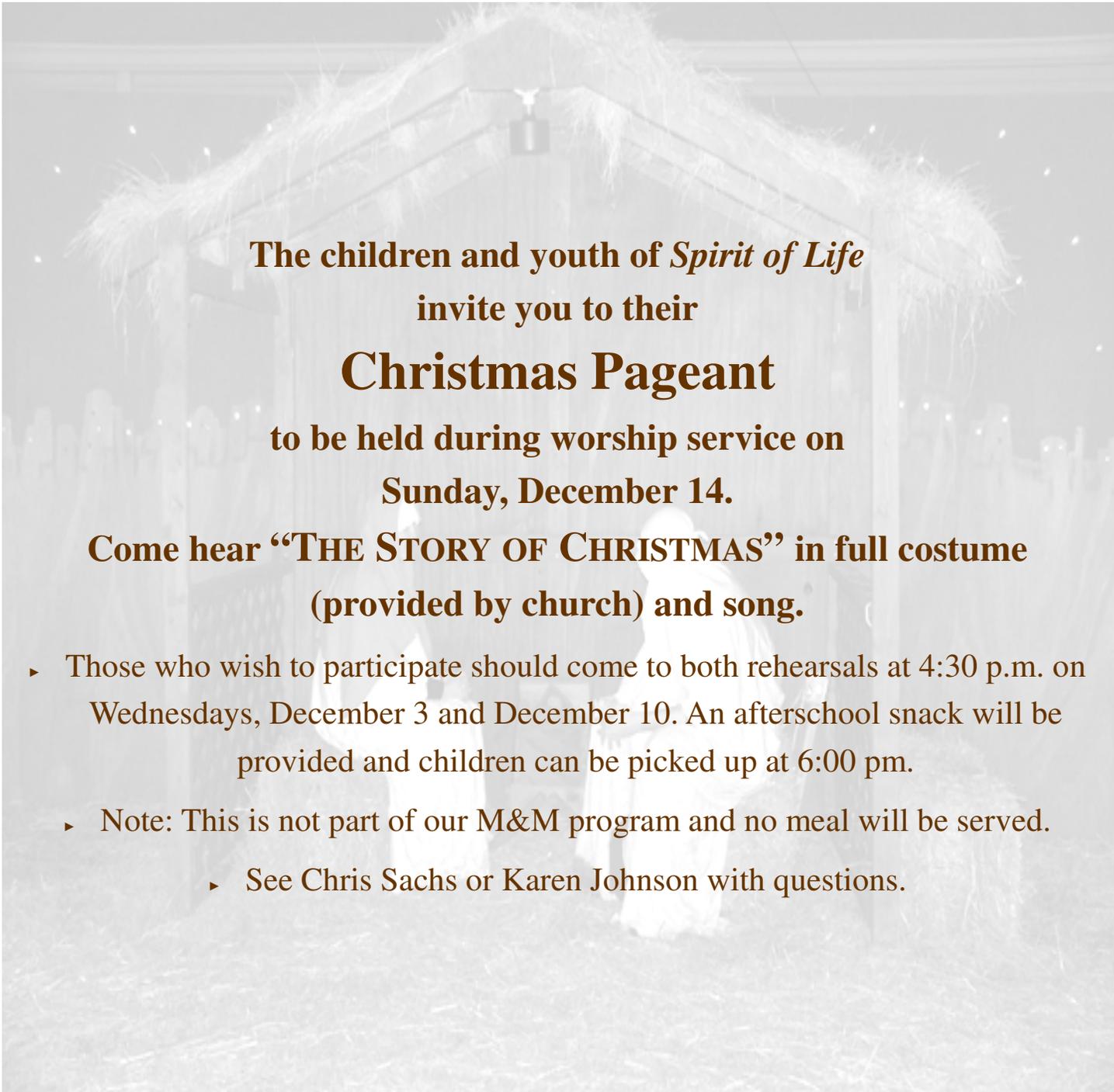
ALICE GRACEK WITH A LOT
OF HELP FROM SHARI SHAW

Wealthy... **Continued from page 4**

I have spent much time the last month with the Scripture, “*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*” Grandpa was able to live modestly and savor the simple things because his treasure was his faith in God, his love of family, and his heart in serving the other. Grandpa liked to say that he was a “wealthy man,” rich in family and friends, the things that matter most.

As we go around the table this year, I am thankful for you. Happy Thanksgiving!

~Pastor Rob



**The children and youth of *Spirit of Life*
invite you to their**

Christmas Pageant

**to be held during worship service on
Sunday, December 14.**

**Come hear “THE STORY OF CHRISTMAS” in full costume
(provided by church) and song.**

- ▶ Those who wish to participate should come to both rehearsals at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, December 3 and December 10. An afterschool snack will be provided and children can be picked up at 6:00 pm.
- ▶ Note: This is not part of our M&M program and no meal will be served.
 - ▶ See Chris Sachs or Karen Johnson with questions.



Men's Breakfast for December

Join the men of the church on Saturday, December 13, at 7:15 AM here at the church. Josh Ullom and Pastor Rob will be making pancakes using Josh's made from scratch batter recipe! We will also be discussing a topic from "The Wired Word." All men associated with *Spirit of Life Presbyterian Church* are welcome and encouraged to attend. It's a great time to share fellowship, faith and good food.

Wednesday Club

Wednesday Club will meet on Wednesday, December 10, at 12:00 noon for a pot luck buffet here at *Spirit of Life*. Kyle Unzicker will entertain us again this year and then we will sing Christmas Carols. Everyone is invited, join us.

Pecan Shortbread Cookies

from Ruth Shepard

In a mixing bowl combine:

1 c. flour, 1/2 cup powdered sugar,
and 1/2 cup cornstarch



In the bowl of your mixer, cream 3/4 cup unsalted butter

Add to creamed butter 3/4 cup finely chopped pecans

To the butter mixture, add and the flour mixture and combine well.

Roll into walnut size balls and place on ungreased cookie sheet (cookies do not spread much).

Flatten each cookie using the greased palm of your hand.

Bake in preheated oven at 325 degrees for 20-25 minutes, until just starting to get brown around the edges. Cool a couple minutes before removing to a rack to cool.

Makes 24 cookies

From the Community Service/Mission Team:

This year, for our Christmas overseas project we will be participating in a Heifer International initiative. We will be collecting monetary donations for a Knitter's Gift Basket, which includes four fuzzy friends that are keeping Heifer partner families warm all around the world: a llama, an alpaca, a sheep and an angora rabbit—four animals that provide families with ample wool and endless opportunities to build better lives. Our target is \$480, to buy a basket for one family. Donations in any amount are welcome; make your check out to Spirit of Life, with "Heifer International" on the memo line. For more information about Heifer International and the work they do to end poverty around the world, go to www.heifer.org.

South of the River CROP Hunger Walk

The planning committee held its final meeting of the year on Nov. 3, and our final numbers were impressive! We collected 900 pounds of food that was distributed immediately to our designated local agencies: 360 Communities, the Open Door Pantry, and the CAP Agency. Total monetary donations were \$16,710, an increase of almost \$3,000 over last year! Our designated local agencies will share 25% of that total for local hunger relief efforts, and CWS will use the rest in their efforts globally, to establish consistent access to clean water, to provide education, and to provide tools and materials for communities to grow their own food—all to end hunger in a sustainable and lasting way!

Exciting news! Spirit of Life will be hosting the 2015 South of the River CROP Walk, bringing it further east in Dakota County, and hopefully making it easier for churches and groups in Apple Valley, Rosemount, Eagan, and Farmington to participate. The churches that have been a part of this CROP walk from the start have promised to continue to participate, both in planning for the Walk and in the Walk itself. Spirit of Life will be responsible for determining the Walk route, managing the logistics and safety issues of the Walk, as well as planning the activities and entertainment during registration. The date has been set for October 11, 2015; Denise Lewis will serve as the coordinator for the Walk. Many volunteers will be needed on the day of the Walk, but 2 or 3 people will be needed months in advance for dreaming and planning for the event. If you are interested in being part of this "dream team", please contact Denise.





VITAL SIGNS

...for August

WEEK	ATTENDANCE		(+/-)	CONTRIBUTIONS		(+/-)
	2013	2014		2013	2014	
Week 1	57	61	+4	\$2,145.85	\$2,251.00	\$105.15
Week 2	55	67	+12	\$1,626.00	\$2,595.00	\$969.00
Week 3	38	59	+21	\$1,882.00	\$4,447.00	\$2,565.00
Week 4	52	45	-7	\$2,815.00	\$1,718.00	(\$1,097.00)
Week 5		130			\$2,083.00	\$2,073.00
TOTAL	234	273		\$8,468.85	\$13,094.00	\$4,625.15

For questions in regard to the church finances or your personal giving statement, please contact our financial team: Barb Ostlund—Treasurer or Steve Raatz—Financial Secretary

VITAL SIGNS

...for September

WEEK	ATTENDANCE		(+/-)	CONTRIBUTIONS		(+/-)
	2013	2014		2013	2014	
Week 1	53	70	+17	\$2,721.71	\$2,349.20	(\$372.51)
Week 2	73	79	+6	\$2,423.00	\$4,373.00	\$1,950.00
Week 3	83	67	-16	\$1,817.00	\$3,324.00	\$1,507.00
Week 4	67	70	+3	\$3,153.00	\$2,881.00	(\$272.00)
Week 5	50			\$1,459.00		(\$1,459.00)
TOTAL	234	273		\$11,573.71	\$12,927.20	\$1,353.49

VITAL SIGNS

...for October

WEEK	ATTENDANCE		(+/-)	CONTRIBUTIONS		(+/-)
	2013	2014		2013	2014	
Week 1	62	66	+4	\$3,724.85	\$1,705.29	(\$2,019.56)
Week 2	55	70	+15	\$1,866.00	\$5,881.51	\$4,015.51
Week 3	48	47	-1	\$2,695.00	\$2,817.00	\$122.00
Week 4	71	52	-19	\$1,138.00	\$3,462.00	\$2,324.00
TOTAL	236	235		\$9,423.85	\$13,865.80	\$4,441.95

Spirit of Life Presbyterian Church Session Retreat Minutes—September 20, 2014

The Session was led by Bob Shepard in an exercise to identify our church's current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to identify and prioritize issues for Spirit of Life into categories. Session also developed goals for each category and suggested what committee should take responsibility for each category.

1. Diversity – (Session responsible) We should educate existing membership on the value of diversity (not just racial but also generational, gender, etc.) so that church members can accept change. The church should appeal to our immediate neighbors (apartments and townhouses located nearby).
2. Aversion to Change - (Session responsible) We should acknowledge fear, educate to diminish fears and increase awareness of the value of change.
3. Facilities – (HUB responsible) We should try to catch the attention of drive-by traffic. We should better utilize the large, prime property we own.
4. Youth – (Youth and Children's Programming committee responsible) We should define leadership and focus on youth (example – hire a youth director).
5. Leadership – (Session responsible) We should cultivate strong leadership with a focused vision including new members.
6. Community – (Community Service committee responsible) We should provide further opportunities to serve our surrounding communities. We should increase visibility in the surrounding communities.
7. Participation – (Session responsible) We should create a volunteer coordination team to recognize current volunteers and help new members and others plug in (to committees or events) according to their gifts and passions.
8. Finance - (Stewardship committee responsible) We acknowledge that finances are a risk for us and we need to be good stewards but also step out in faith and strive to thrive. We should continue with faith and stewardship and our goal will be that increased finances follows growth.
9. Music - (Worship and Music committee responsible) Music is a strength in "church service music" and "adult music". Our goal is to improve and grow the music program for the youth and the children and to grow in diversity.
10. Size - (Session responsible) We acknowledge that there is momentum in our growing church service attendance and our growing children's programs attendance and we acknowledge that we are not in competition with other large churches. Growth is not about numbers but is about transforming lives.

After much discussion, it was concluded that our biggest goal is to develop a Vision Statement. Our Vision statement is "our dream for the future". Our Mission statement is "how we are going to get there".

After discussing each of the categories and the goals for those categories, Session members were asked to "prioritize what you felt was important" and "show where you would personally spend your time". The top "Priority" was Leadership. Diversity was the second priority. Size and Aversion to change were not priorities at this time. The greatest "Time spent" were Facilities, Leadership and Music.

Karen Johnson, Clerk of Session

Spirit of Life Presbyterian Church Session Minutes—October 23, 2014

A quorum was present as the Session meeting was called to order by the moderator, Reverend Rob Smith on October 23, 2014.

Pastor Smith offered an opening prayer. He led a devotion based on Matthew 28: 16-20, the Great Commissioning, and quotes from “The Unnecessary Pastor” by Eugene Peterson and Marva Dawn, in which Christianity is discussed as an alternative, parallel lifestyle.

The financial report for August and September of 2014 was sent by Barb Ostlund. The September report was not complete. It was discussed that the budget is behind by \$4375 as of August 2014. Expenses have been \$10,743 less than expected as of August 2014. Bob Shepard reported that the garage sale netted over \$5000 but this was not yet reflected in the financial report. It was noted that the primary mortgage was down to \$17,000 and that most of the payment is now principal so we should have this mortgage paid off in 18 months or so.

Pastor Rob gave his report concerning attendance, pastor visits, calendar of events, and outreach. There were no action items.

Minutes of the Stated Session meeting on September 18, 2014 and the Session retreat on September 20, 2014 were presented. Corrections were noted. Clerk of Session Karen Johnson was asked to write up the goals from the Session retreat and publish them in the next church newsletter. Attendance was discussed. Communications was the Presbytery Church Statement for the quarter ending September 30, 2014. \$674.79 is remaining on the Per capita pledge for 2014. Presbytery sent the 2015 Per Capita Apportionment, it will be \$32.77 per member.

Welcoming Guests committee had no report. Youth and Children’s Programming committee had a report from Chris Sachs but there was no action needed. Public Relations report was written by Peggy Roeske but there was no action needed. Worship and Music report was written by Karen Johnson but there was no action needed. Community Service report was discussed by guest Denise Lewis. She discussed that we would not be participating with Operation Christmas Child this year but instead would be raising funds for a \$480 Knitters gift basket for Heifer International. We would also support Armful of Love and 2 children from the Matsiko Choir which will be here March 14-19, 2015. The Community service team moved that we allow members to donate to Armful of Love, Heifer International and the Matsiko Choir. After some discussion, the motion carried. Denise Lewis discussed the South of the River Crop Walk. In 2014, over \$14,000 was raised and more churches were involved than 2013, 200 people were registered, and 600 lbs. of food was donated to 3 food shelves. Denise recommended that Spirit of Life be the host church for the Crop Walk in 2015. Denise and Peggy Roeske will be on the Crop Walk committee. They said most of the volunteers would be needed on the day of the walk which would be the second Sunday in October. At the end of the Session meeting, a motion was passed that Spirit of Life be the host church for the South of the River Crop Walk in 2015. Stewardship report was given by Bob Shepard. Bob Shepard made the motion that we approve up to \$700 from the General Fund for the Stewardship dinner. The motion carried. HUB committee report was written by Walt Ullrich. There was no action needed. Personnel committee had no action items. Adult Ed. report was submitted at the meeting by Brian Gracek. No action was needed.

Deacon meeting minutes for October 14th was submitted by Loretta Hunt.

The usher/greeter assignments were updated. Deon Ford will be the lead for November. Walt Ullrich will be the lead for December. Deon Ford led the Session in a Visioning exercise. First we discussed “not just survive but thrive”. Thrive means do what you do and do it well. Thrive means to bear fruit. We developed the vision “to be a dynamic community modeling Jesus”. The visual that Deon drew on the white board showed a tree. The roots were love, grace, nurture, support, study/educate. The trunk of the tree is Jesus. The branches of the tree are community, warm and welcoming, thought provoking, show Jesus love, service/minister to those in need, follow Jesus, model Jesus. The canopy of leaves over all the branches is the Family of Believers. Next month we will finalize the Vision statement. Each committee should bring a list of activities for the year so that we can do a calendar of activities. Pastor Rob Smith is still working on a speaker on the General Assembly’s divestment of stocks. Pastor Rob will e-mail options for dates for the speaker.

There was no New Business.

Concerns and joys of individuals were expressed and prayers were offered. The meeting was closed with a prayer.

Karen Johnson, Clerk of Session

2014-2015

Officers

Session

Rebecca Brandt
Deon Ford
Brian Gracek
Karen Johnson
Julie Raatz
Peggy Roeske
Chris Sachs
Bob Shepard
Walt Ullrich

Board of Deacons

Alice Gracek
Loretta Hunt
Jerry Johnson
Sayra Maberry
Don Roeske

Treasurer

Barb Ostlund

Financial Secretary

Steve Raatz

Please contact the
**Clerk of
Session,
Karen Johnson,**
in regard to
membership
changes and any
Session member
with questions or
concerns.

NEXT LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

DEACON MEETING

7:00 p.m. on Tuesday,
December 16, 2014 (NOTE: 3rd week)

SESSION MEETING

6:30 p.m. on Tuesday,
December 9, 2014



10 PM ~December 21
For the January Newsletter.

Office Hours

10:00 AM—3:00 PM M
10:00 AM—3:00 PM TU
10:00 AM—3:00 PM W
10:00 AM—3:00 PM TH
FOR PASTORAL EMERGENICES
PLEASE CALL 952.807.4413

SPIRIT OF LIFE STAFF

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NURSERY CAREGIVER Trista Hansen
spirit@spiritoflifeav.org - 952.423.2212

OFFICE spirit@spiritoflifeav.org
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14401 Pilot Knob Road / Apple Valley, MN 55124
952.423.2212

Sunday Texts and Service Highlights

Sunday, December 7
Luke 1: 5-55, Isaiah 7:14 , 9: 2-7
Romans 12: 1-2

Sunday, December 21
Psalm 34: 1-18
Matthew 1: 1-17, Luke 2: 8-20

Sunday, December 14
Jeremiah 32:31-35, Micah 5:2-5a
Matthew 1:18-2:15

Wednesday, December 24
Isaiah 60: 1-3, John 1: 1-5, 9-10;
3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5; 12: 35-36, 46

Sunday, December 28
Psalm 117, Matthew 2: 1-12, Luke 2: 25-32



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Apple Valley, MN 55124

Office 952.423.2212

www.spiritoflifeav.org
spirit@spiritoflifeav.org

Mission Statement

Spirit of Life Presbyterian Church, created by the Holy Spirit, seeks to be a loving community where all can grow in faith while serving and worshipping the God made known in Jesus Christ.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- DECEMBER 9** **SESSION MEETING 6:30 PM**
- DECEMBER 10** **WEDNESDAY CLUB 12:00 PM**
- DECEMBER 13** **MEN'S BREAKFAST 7:15 AM**
- DECEMBER 13** **COCOA AND CAROLS 3:00 PM**
- DECEMBER 14** **CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT DURING MORNING SERVICES**
- DECEMBER 16** **DEACON MEETING 7:00**
- DECEMBER 24** **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 7:30 PM**
- DECEMBER 24** **CHRISTMAS DAY**

Weekly Events

- | | | | |
|------------|----------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| MON | Cubs @ 6pm | TUES | Scouts @ 6:30pm |
| WED | 6:30pm BELLS, Scouts | THURS | Cubs @ 6pm |
| | 7:30pm CHOIR | | |

Sunday Worship 10:00 AM

Sunday School/Youth Group/Adult Ed 11:10 AM (September thru May)
* Nursery provided during Worship & Education time

14401 Pilot Knob Road
Apple Valley, MN 55124-6610

