

Tower Times

St. John's United Church of Christ

515 East Third Street

Dayton, OH 45402

January 2020



Dear Friends,

Whew! Another Advent has come and gone and we're still standing! Actually, we're more than standing; I think it's fair to say that we had a **thriving** advent at St. John's! From a highly successful Bake Sale (Well done, WOSJ!) , to amazing music on all of our Sunday morning services, and special worship with our Blue Christmas and Christmas Eve services, we had a stellar Advent season at St. John's! Kudos to all who helped make this possible!

You may be asking yourself: "Where has Rev. Adam been? I haven't seen him as much over the last few months?!?!" I promise I've not been playing hooky! With as much excitement as we had this last year, I wound up deferring most of my vacation time until 4th quarter of 2019; I was very ready to take a few weeks away over October, November, and December. I'm grateful for the time!

As I write this, I'm preparing to leave for my final year of continuing education with The Next Generation Leadership Initiative of The United Church of Christ. Far from being an extra week of vacation, this week is a wonderful –albeit taxing– week of continued learning for me. Over the last few years at this gathering, I have learned about Family Systems Theory, Change Leadership/Management, Team Building and Organizational Communication, and this year I'm sitting a course over "Fruitful Congregations and Ministry!" Essentially, this will be a graduate-level course crammed into 5 days! (We may be at a gorgeous setting outside of Phoenix, AZ, but we're in class for 9+ hours every day!) In preparation for this program, I've had to try and cram the reading of four different books into the space of Advent. To say that wasn't exactly fun would not be an understatement! Nonetheless, in these readings, I have found myself – multiple times– saying: "Hey! St. John's already does this!" Or, " Hey, we've got a plan to start

doing this!" This tells me that all the change and all the struggle we've had over these last few years has not been in vain: we're doing exactly what we're supposed to be doing to grow into a modern, vibrant, center of faith! Sure, there are things we still need to do and I'm sure I'll come back with more than a few crazy ideas, but kudos to you, St. John's! You labor not in vain!

My Best,
ALW



NO TURNING BACK!

This is my sermon from the Sunday after Christmas. I wanted to share it with everyone.

Rev. Jeffrey Campbell, Minister of Worship

It's hard not to feel a little let down after Christmas. All the Christmas decorations in the stores have been removed. The stores are now filled with Valentine's Day stuff. Red boxes of candy, teddy bears with big hearts on them, red candles for romantic lighting. Some stores already have their Easter Candy on display! People start celebrating Christmas so early these days and then can't wait to get rid of it. I'll bet if we drove around some neighborhoods on December 26 we would have seen Christmas trees at the curb. Rooms look empty. Refrigerators ARE empty. Bank accounts are empty.

So what about our hearts? Empty? What about the hopes and inspiration, and way of living that Advent and Christmas promised us? We all have said we look forward to things getting back to normal. But if you think about it, normal isn't that great.

Was Christmas just a distraction from our burdens and problems? Do we want to go BACK to the way things were before Christmas? Did our faith not grow as we welcomed the Christ Child in to our hearts? Did our reason for living change as we heard how much God loves us and how much we can love others? We may have been nice to family members and people around us during Christmas, but what about now? Do we go back to being irritated or even worse, irritating?

I saw a list of things people tried to return to stores after Christmas. One person tried to return a used chicken coop. Another tried to get a refund on a selection of dead plants. Someone wanted their money back on a ping pong table that was falling apart after being abused with rough play. One person tried to return a dead Christmas tree the first week of January. My favorite is a lady who tried to return an empty bottle of wine because, she said, "it gave her a headache." A customer wanted return some two-year-old batteries because they had completely run out of power. (We know what that feels like, right?) A customer brought back a hamster they had purchased because it was "neither friendly nor cuddly

During Advent and Christmas, we have reflected on the gifts God has given us: Hope... Peace... Joy... and Love. Do we now energetically live with these gifts, or are we having second thoughts?

We have welcomed Jesus once again into our lives. Are we people of **hope**? Or do we return that gift and go back to being negative and worrying about everything? Are we people of **peace**? Or do we take that gift back and let every little thing upset us to the point of not being able to function? Are we people of **joy**? Thanking God for all our blessings? Seeing good in the world around us, and having fun and filling our lives and the lives of others with joy? You really want to return that gift? And what about **love**? Some may say, *I don't have love in my life. Nobody loves me... And I don't seem to be able to love anyone.* Well, the biggest gift of Christmas is receiving God's love. Jesus coming into our world and into our hearts is to show us God's love and fill us with God's love. This is a gift that is sadly one of the most returned and unopened gifts. As we accept God's love, we learn to love ourselves. That is hard for many people. But to accept God's love, and to love ourselves, is the key to loving others, and that is the key to receiving love from others.

Let's not go BACK to normal, back to our old normal. Let's go forward into the new life, being the new person that God has promised we can be. Let's stop existing and start living. We have a new way of making decisions. We ask ourselves questions like *"Is this being hopeful and helpful?" "Is this making the world a better and peaceful place?" "Will this help me bring joy and laughter and beauty into my world and the world of those around me?"*

We are called to practice our faith. It means taking our life with God seriously and living according to what we know is God's way. We walk our talk. **And if we are not walking – stop talking!** God promises us the Holy Spirit to inspire us and make us brave and help us think clearly. God had given us the Word and the Church fellow believers to help us. There are twelve days of Christmas to celebrate our gifts and to get us moving out of the normal way of thinking and living. After the twelve days we will be in a new year. Don't return the wonderful gifts from God you have been given. And don't stuff them in a drawer or in the attic. Use the gifts, live the gifts. And you will see that they keep on giving.

Merry Christmas and DON'T BE NORMAL! **Amen.**



WOW! Amazing! The year 2019 is now about to come to an end. And I can't help but to look back and ponder how God marvelously blessed our year with his amazing grace. We normally think that God is blessing us when things are going well (when our marriage are thriving, when we received job promotions, or maybe we are healed from sickness or experiencing good things). But the truth is God blesses us even in our darkest moments of our lives, in the unknown, unpredictable, and uncomfortable. You might have the feeling that God is so remote in time of difficulties. But we have to understand, God doesn't remove us out of the dark places of our lives, He usually comes alongside us, offering us faith, hope, joy and love as we journey onward. Truly, we can't thank God enough for his sustaining grace all throughout the year.

Let me encourage everyone then to remain faithful to our Almighty God. Let's always have a teachable heart, eager to be changed. Let's not cling to the old ways as we step into the new year. A close walk with God is a life of continual newness knowing that journeying with God involves being transformed by his grace.

Let's welcome the new year 2020 with a grateful heart believing that God will never leave us or forsake us. "So we can say with confidence, the Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" (Hebrews 13:6). Amen!

A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR TO ALL!

Blessings,

Hector



Tower Times – Jan., 2020

Picture – Christmas (if we don't already have one).

Please mark your calendar:

Thursday, Jan. 9 – Council/Team Leaders Meeting – 6:00 PM

Sunday, Jan. 12:

Steve Boggs – 25 Year Anniversary as our Custodian & “Haus Meister”

Come celebrate with us! Covered dish after the service. Please bring something to share.

Meat & dessert will be provided.

Sun., Jan. 19:

Installation of 2020 Council & Team Leaders

Dayton Foundation – “Scholarship Connect” HS Seniors/College Students can now complete their applications. Students must provide FAFSA info & other requirements, but Dayton Foundation is generous to MANY young people.

We extend our sympathies to the families of Helen Rex & Mary Fessler.

Both ladies were very long time St. John's members.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris van Breukelen, VP



[GOOD GRIEF meets the third Saturday, January 18 at Christopher's Restaurant. At our last meeting, the group decided to try Saturday mornings for our get together. We will remain with the third Saturday and starting time will probably be between ten and eleven o'clock. The time is to be confirmed. Please call me 435-5515 with your reservation if you plan to attend. I know several of you attended Pastor Adam's very meaningful 'Blue Christmas' service during Advent. Grief comes in different ways and at different times and for various reasons; and maybe not at all for you this Christmas. The group welcomes anyone who would like to join us for a nice meal and an hour or two of fellowship.

Pat Kern

Stivers Students

Have you enjoyed the duets and solo pieces by Jaelynn Mack and Brandan Jeffries during our services in Advent and Christmas? The students' lovely voices provide us much enjoyment and our choir with much support each Sunday morning. You may be a bit confused as we have been referring to our student fund supported by the congregation's contributions as the Stivers Fund. The official name of this fund as listed on the new offering envelope is 'Percy Jones Sacred Choral Leadership Scholars'. We are very grateful to all those supporting the fund over the last several months. Additional support has come from the Conference in the form of a grant of \$900 for this program.

Pat Kern



Budget & Finance Committee Report to Council

December 9, 2019

The Budget & Finance Committee met on Monday, December 9, 2019. The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. Present at the meeting were Patty Staley, Chair, Ron Duckson, Vice Chair, Nicholas Shumacher, Secretary, Isaiah Ashba, Treasurer, Norm Neubauer, Debbie Watts, Reverend Wirrig and Nathan Compton, Guest.

Minutes for the November meeting were reviewed and approved with two corrections noted as adding the recommendation from the committee that Cornerstone Loan Repayment updates be placed in the Bulletin and Tower Times as well as envelopes placed in the pews and the December Meeting date was noted as December 8 and should have been December 9.

Reverend Wirrig presented the Treasurer's Report for the period ending November 30, 2019. The available funds in the checking account are \$9,500. It was noted that there is actually only one Vanguard Wellesley account so it is recommended that the funds in Account 001019 – Memorial Endowment VW be moved to 001017 Gen Fund Vanguard Wellesly to be accurately reflective of our holdings. The Pastor's Discretionary Mission Holding fund is down to \$1.43 but Christian Nurture is currently under budget and has agreed to make \$300 available from their funds should they be needed between now and the end of the year. Account 001002 is the Memorial Endowment Holding account where funds are input when received through giving. At the end of each year, these funds should be moved to the Memorial Endowment Fund or the General Fund Vanguard Wellesly or whatever Fund we have available to us at the time. Parking income for the month was less than expected and is currently being reviewed at our request by ABM Management. Utilities were down considerably. It was noted that when looking at the accounts if you take out the Cornerstone / Construction costs and a few other unexpected one-time expenses, we are well within the budget for the year with the projected deficit. The current balance of funds available from the Cornerstone Loan is \$7,028.46 and it is anticipated that there are invoices totaling \$13,000+/- still to come before everything is completed. This means that we will definitely have to pull funds from the Endowment most likely depleting the GBU account. The committee discussed moving the \$13,627 escrow funds being held to an interest-bearing savings vehicle until such time as Cornerstone requires its payment or the 2-year period is up and the funds can then be either applied to the Loan balance or used elsewhere if needed. Rev. Wirrig and Patty Staley will review various vehicles and make a recommendation to the Finance Team and/or Council. The Treasurers report was approved unanimously.

In Old Business, with respect to the Credit Card Kiosk and On-line Giving, it is now available. A stand with the tablet will be placed in the narthex with instructions on giving. Giving is available directly through the individual Realm accounts and can be set up to be one-time or multiple times and directed to the various funds/accounts. It can be accessed through our Website – Patty is doing a more detailed write up to be included with the current brief access information. And Text Giving is also now available. The only issue we need to work out is a credit card reader as the one we were provided through Vanco does not directly interact with Realm but that is being discussed. Credit cards can be input manually and is very easy to do.

Wrapping up 2019, Patty thanked the Committee for a lot of really great work. We had a lot on our plate and handled it very well. As Patty moves from Chair of Budget and Finance Committee, she has set goals to get the Form 1023 completed, put in place a solid paper trail/foundation for all accounting functions/requests, a complete summary of all contracts and guidelines for all accounting processes.

These items are also items that the new Finance Team will be overseeing as well as their duties to monitor and maintain the financial status of the Church.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Staley, Chair,
Budget & Finance Committee



WOMEN OF ST. JOHN'S

Bake Sale

The Women of St. John's want to thank all who participated in our "Holiday Bake Sale". The donations of all kinds of sweets was very much appreciated. A special thanks to those who contributed gift baskets to be raffled off which netted approximately \$78. Sales from all other items totaled \$425 for a total profit of \$505. Our thanks to everyone who participated in many ways for the success of the "Holiday Bake Sale."

Dishwasher Project

Two commercial dishwashers have been purchased and have been installed. Final installation of cabinetry and shelving are in the process of being completed. Our thanks to Bill Smith and his Building and Property Committee for all of the work they have accomplished to complete this project. Stop by and see these new dishwashers and well as the newly painted dishwasher room. It looks terrific!!

Christmas Decorations

We will be removing the Christmas decorations in the Social Hall on January 5th after the Fellowship Hour. All members of the Women of St. John's are encouraged to stay and help.

Other donations:

We are still collecting can tabs for Ronald McDonald House, used eyeglasses for the Lion's Club to distribute to those in need, postage stamps for the Philatelic Clubs. You can bring these donations to the office or give them to any member of the Women of St. John's. If you have not signed up for the Kroger's Community Rewards Program, please see Dottie Norton to sign up. This program designates a certain percent of all purchases to the Women of St. John's. We currently are receiving approximately \$100 per quarter from this project.

Once again thanks for all of your support for these projects and especially for the very successful "Holiday Bake Sale".

Janet Neubauer, President
Women of St. John's



Council Minutes
St. John's United Church of Christ
December 11, 2019
(Rescheduled from December 12, 2019)

This meeting was rescheduled as a result of a concert by Stivers High School students which had been scheduled in our church for the evening of our regularly scheduled meeting night of December 12, 2019.

Present: Adam Wirrig, Douglas Goudy, Chris van Breukelen, Ballard Yates, Patty Staley, Bill Smith, and Pat Kern.

Guest(s): Kim Kindred (Council Secretary elected effective January 1, 2020).

The meeting was called to order by President Doug Goudy at 06:02 p.m.

Prior to the Devotions, Rev. Adam Wirrig expressed his appreciation for all of the work which the Church Council had accomplished this year. After conversations with staff members of other churches, he commented that we are way ahead of what some churches have accomplished, particularly in the area of financial ministry, including financial accounting, financial reporting and accounting procedures. We also have addressed our deferred maintenance issues in a very significant and highly efficient manner, as well advancing St. John's Internal and external ministries.

Devotions: Rev. Adam Wirrig presented the opening devotions and prayer.

Secretary's Report: Ballard Yates had e-mailed and distributed the minutes of the regular council meeting of November 14, 2019. Several minor corrections had been reported and these were made prior to the printing of the final church file copies, and the forwarding of the corrected electronic file for the purpose of inclusion in the December Tower Times. As there were no other additions or corrections requested for the November Minutes he asked they be approved. President Doug Goudy declared them approved.

Financial and Treasurer's Report:

In the absence of Isaiah Ashba, Rev. Wirrig, with the assistance of Patty Staley, presented the Treasurer's Report. Some of the comments follow:

St. John's actually has only one Vanguard Wellesley investment account, and the Memorial Endowment VW account balance (001019) will be moved to the General Fund Vanguard Wellesley account (001017) in order to more accurately reflect our holdings.

Account 001002 is the Memorial Endowment Holding account where funds are input when received through giving. At the end of each year, these funds should be moved to the Memorial Endowment Fund or the General Fund Vanguard Wellesley or whatever Fund we have available to us at the time.

Parking income for November was less than expected and we have requested ABM parking management to review their information used for the payment to St. John's.

For purposes of analysis, if we remove Cornerstone, Construction, and one-time costs we are within our projected budget for 2019.

With the balance of approximately \$7,000 remaining from the Cornerstone loan, and approximately \$13,000 in anticipated invoices, we will have to deplete the GBU account.

Account 001020 for the Cornerstone Escrow account contains \$13,627. As we have not been instructed as to when or how this is to be paid, the Budget and Finance Committee is considering transferring this to a high yield savings account until payment is requested. This will generate some income, yet segregate the funds and facilitate making the payment when requested. The committee is requesting council's opinion and guidance considering which bank to use. Hard copies of details surrounding offerings were given to the council. Bill Smith indicated that he would be more comfortable with authorizing this action based on a recommendation from the Budget and Finance Committee. In accordance with this comment, Patty Staley made a motion to have the Budget and Finance Committee review the information in the packet, and advise the council of their recommendation. The council will then consider approval for moving the funds, and the bank selected. The motion was seconded by Bill Smith and approved by vote of the church council.

As 2019 had been a difficult year financially with many in our community, the Pastor's Discretionary Budget is exhausted. He has assisted some on a one time basis, and requested that they contact our partner agencies if more assistance is required. Christian Nurture is under budget, and will make \$300 available from their budget if required by year end.

The credit card kiosk and on line giving is now available.

Ballard Yates made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report which was seconded by Chris van Breukelen and approved by vote of the Church Council.

Old Business

Building of Committees and Personnel

Rev. Adam Wirrig spoke about the development of a program for youth. This is an area that requires attention. He indicated that while the number of children in our neighborhood is limited, there are some children in the area currently. There are about 10 children now in the new Brownstone units, and with the rapid development in this area, there will likely be more. He has spoken to pastors from other churches as to their approach to this issue. Some have gone to partnering with other churches. Any youth attending St. John's would retain their relationship with us, but would also have more activities and events available through the partner(s) church. As we would be a partner with another church, we would be sharing the costs of having a dedicated staff person for this function. While no decision has been made, the council, by consensus, authorized Rev. Wirrig to investigate this issue and return with further information to the church council.

President Doug Goudy thought we might consider retaining an administrative assistant in the future to assist our pastoral staff and allow them more time for their duties by freeing them from some administrative tasks. Rev. Adam indicated that we were o.k. for now, but if we continue to grow this might be advisable. It was decided to consider this when we are doing the budgeting for 2021.

New Business

Social Hour (Committee), who/how to proceed

We don't have, and never have actually had, an actual social hour committee.

The congregation approves and desires this function, but we have had only minimal participation in providing them. We have even agreed to use the offering given at the table toward paying the costs, but this still has been unsuccessful.

Apparently the only approach is to continue to have our carry-in dinners, and on the other Sundays, have a very simple fare and publicize it as "coffee and donuts."

The above would not preclude anyone who would like to help sponsor one, or to celebrate a birthday, anniversary, or special event, if they would like to do so.

2020 Staffing Evaluations and Contracts

Jeff Campbell and Hector Guzman's have been completed but not forwarded to staff.

Bill Smith was asked to review Steve Boggs, and Pat Kern was asked to review Jeff Campbell's. All employees should have a chance to respond to these items. When completed these evaluations and contracts should be forwarded to the Personnel Chair and the President.

It was noted that we really need to work on having good job descriptions for employees. They are often so vague, it becomes difficult to do a thorough evaluation.

Steve Boggs 1/12/2020

We will be celebrating Steve Boggs' 25th Anniversary with St. John's Church on January 12th, 2020. It will be in conjunction with a carry-in dinner. As we will be having a cake, we should indicate that the congregation should not be providing dessert dishes. We will attempt to really publicize this event as we would like to have a great attendance for this event.

Ice (In Case of Emergency) List

Chris van Breukelen would like to update this list for 2020. It contains information with officers and other council members' names, e-mail addresses, phone numbers, etc. should they need to be contacted in an emergency. It was noted while this is a good document to have, we may also be able include this information in the new Realm software package.

Reviews/Contracts - responsibility

See 2020 Staffing Evaluations section above.

Building Damage (update)

Bill Smith reported that he is working with Midwest Maintenance to replace the damaged eastern front spire. The one on the western front has been removed to be used as a model to replicate one for the east side. When the work is complete they will be installed. This project might be completed in as little as one week or as long as two months. Evans Electric is working on replacing damaged lighting.

Side Parking Lot Lighting

Some council members inquired whether this was related to the problems with some of the lighting damage which occurred with the above referenced painting contractor accident. Bill Smith responded that some might be, and some might be repair or maintenance under our control. One major element is that the City of Dayton is making changes to the lighting in the area, and this is affecting some of the reflected light in the parking lot. While he will continue to monitor the situation, we may have to wait until the city finishes the project before we know what action might need to be taken. A question arose whether we might be able to use additional solar lighting to help alleviate the problem.

On an unrelated item, Bill reported that the dishwasher project is in process, with equipment having been purchased, and contractors scheduled for the plumbing and electrical wiring issues.

Committee Reports Received

The following Individuals and Committees submitted written reports: Vice President, Budget and Finance, Building and Property, Christian Nurture, Worship, and the Lead Minister.

Items for the Good of the Order:

AED Defibrillator/Security. Doug Goudy reported that he has contacted Steve Carroll. Steve is able to do the training, but he needs to be advised whether we just desire training for some of our members, or whether we wish to have these individuals certified. The cost would be \$30 each.

Adjournment

Rev. Adam Wirrig made a motion that the meeting be adjourned which was seconded by Patty Staley and approved by vote of the council.

Closing

The meeting was closed with all praying the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

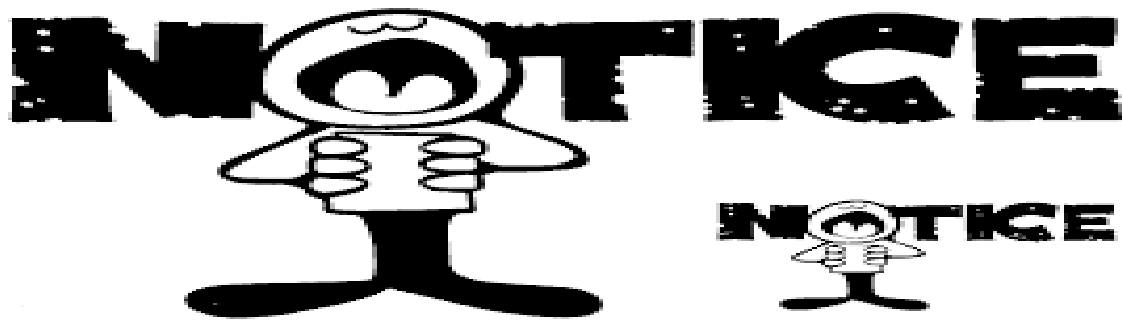
Ballard Yates, Council Secretary

Next regular meeting Wednesday, January 9th,
2020 at 6:00 P.M.





New Team Leads!!!! Please make sure you are planning to be present at the council meeting on 01/10/20! Also, please schedule your first meetings of 2020 and contact your team members as soon as you can!
Any ?'s, see Rev. Adam or Doug Goudy!



With the upcoming season of snow and ice, please remember to check Chanel 7 for any church closings during inclement weather! We'll do our best to contact everyone directly, but will also have information on the TV!



You are cordially invited to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Mr. Steve Boggs' service with St. John's United Church of Christ.

En lieu of gifts, Steve has asked members to invite as many people as possible and pack the church!

We will be recognizing Steve as part of the service and also enjoying a carry-in dinner (meat provided) afterwards in Steve's honor!

Thank you, Steve, for all you do!!!



***Christmas at St.
John's!***

***Welcome
Steve Laskos!***



COOKIE PALOOZA

Thanks to all who baked and brought in cookies! This year we were able to visit almost all the businesses in Webster Station, the brownstones on 2nd Street, 5 different apartment complexes and 3 different local bars! Thanks especially to all of those who came out to help deliver plates! We're called to spread hope, love, joy, and cheer—and we certainly did this year! Thanks, St. John's!



In loving Memory

Memorial Contributions Were Made in Memory of:

Helen Rex and Mary Fessler by Norm and Janet Neubauer

December Birthdays

Rev. Hector Guzman—08

Nolan Carroll—12

Linda Triplett—16

Ruth Stephens—18

Steve Boggs—28

Ron Duckson—28



Flowers & Fellowship

Flowers

01/05: Kim Kindred

01/12: Open

01/19: Open

01/26: Open

Fellowship Hours

01/05: Open


01/12: Carry-In (Council) In Honor of Steve Boggs!

01/19: Open

01/26: Open

*** A NEW flower chart is available on the wall outside Rev. Adam's office. Please sign-up as you wish. A new fellowship chart is available downstairs and we thank Anne Pepiot for, yet again, making a new one for us! ***

January 2020

SUN 29	MON 30	TUE 31	WED Jan 1	THU 2	FRI 3	SAT 4
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:30am Worship Service 					Rev. A to NGLI	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Rev. A to NGLI						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:30am Worship Service 12pm De-Decorating! 4pm Spirit(s) Bar Church 	Council Reports Due			6pm Church Council		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steve Boggs' 25th Anniversary 10:30am Worship Service 				3:30pm Prayer Group	11am Staff Meeting	4:30pm Good Grief
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of Church Council 10:30am Worship Service 			Tower Times Articles Due		11am Staff Meeting	
26	27	28	29	30	31	Feb 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10:30am Worship Service 					11am Staff Meeting	