+T+ UNITED METHODIST CHURCH HOUSTON

Newsletter Redesign Pastor's Message Advent Schedule & Events St. Paul's Stories Community Updates





Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us. Hebrews 12:1

When I hear these words from scripture I am reminded of my grandfather, his patient and kind

ways and that he taught me what it is like to be a good person. I am reminded of saints who taught me about assurance and the peace that passes all understanding. I am reminded of pastors that taught me so much about the faith and what it means to be a pastor.

In November we will celebrate All Saints' Day. We will read the names of the saints who were members of St. Paul's United Methodist Church that died in the past year. As we read their names we will remember the impact they had on their family, their friends, and their church. This is one of my favorite hymns, it reminds me of the saints who have gone before me, who have had an influence on my life.

For all the saints, who from their labors rest, Who thee by faith before the world confessed, thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Who are the saints in your life? Who are the saints that helped to form you into the Christian you are today? Remember them and give thanks to God for their impact!

After we give thanks for those Saints, we move on into the Thanksgiving season and then Advent. I'm looking forward to seeing you in worship!

Peace,

Rev. Jeff McDonald, Sr. Pastor

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Weekly Schedule

Church Offices Monday-Thursday: 9 am - 5 pm Friday: 9 am - Noon

Sunday

Worship at 8:30 & 11 am Sunday School at 9:45 am

Phone: (713) 528-0527

Newsletter Redesign

We're excited to present the redesigned St. Paul's Newsletter. Beginning this Advent, publications will be produced on a seasonal schedule six times per year: Advent, Winter, Lent, Spring, Summer, and Fall.

What is the importance of Advent?

Starting four Sundays before Christmas, the Advent season marks the beginning of the new church year. The word Advent derives from the Latin adventus, which means "coming." This expectant season prepares us for the celebration of the coming of Christ - calling us to slow down and ready for Christ's glorious coming.

This year, Advent will begin on Sunday, November 27, also referred to as Advent 1. While each week prepares us for Jesus' birth, each of the four weeks have individual themes: The first Sunday – the Second Coming; the final return of Christ in victory. The second and third Sundays – John the Baptist, his role, his words, and his teachings. The Fourth Sunday – the events immediately preceding Jesus' birth.



At. St. Paul's, Advent services will begin in darkness, with the light from the candles being held by choir members foretelling of the greater light to come. The Advent Wreath, symbolizing God's unending love and eternal life, contains four candles to be lit one-by-one on the four Sundays leading to Christmas, and the central candle, the Christ Candle, to be lit at Christmas. Each week, we draw nearer to God's glorious gift to us all.

By recognizing the season of Advent, we gain the richness and the benefit of experiencing the promise, longing, hope, and expectation of the season. This time of preparation and waiting allows us to truly celebrate Christmas.



Advent Kit & Devotionals

Pick up your kit starting Sunday, November 20.

Kits and devotionals are available near the Sanctuary Reception Desk.

Beginning with the first Sunday in Advent, this daily devotional follows the Revised Common Lectionary through Epiphany.



This year's devotional, From Generation to Generation, reminds us of the ways our lives, histories, actions, and stories are interconnected and woven together. The work of God is always unfolding—in and through us. This Advent, may you remember that you belong—to a story etched into the wrinkles of time, to generations that have come before and will come after, to a love that won't let you go.

Advent Schedule

1st Sunday - November 27



As you enter the Sanctuary for worship, the lights will be dimmed and the choir will line the side aisles with candles during which we will join to sing "O Come, O Come Emmanuel."

Members of our St. Paul's family will light the first candle on the Advent Wreath while we all proclaim "May the light sent from God shine in the darkness to show us the way of salvation."

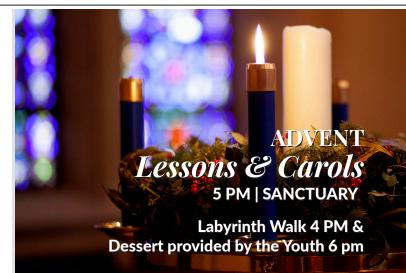
Advent Lessons & Carols

The first service of Christmas Lessons and Carols was held in 1880, at Truro Cathedral, to offer a religious celebration as an alternative to the festivities in the local pubs. The service was based on the well-known format of scripture readings interspersed with carols. We continue this tradition with Christmas Lessons and Carols services on Christmas Eve, but we precede those services with Advent Lessons and Carols.

Preparing for Christmas, our service of Advent Lessons and Carols takes us through the prophecies and God's promises of the Messiah that is coming. With readings from Isaiah, Joel and Zechariah - hearing how the Messiah will inaugurate God's kingdom of love and peace. We follow with readings from Luke and Mark- where an angel tells Mary that she will give birth to Jesus and John the Baptist reminds us that Christ is coming.

The St. Paul's Choir and St. Paul's Treble Choir lead the music, which includes Advent favorites and some lesser known hymns. We end with Charles Wesley's outstanding hymn "Lo, he comes with clouds descending". As part of the service, the Treble Choir will sing the Great Advent Antiphons, on which the hymn "O come, O come, Emmanuel" is based. (for more information, see page 7)

2nd Sunday - December 4



Journey to Bethlehem Labyrinth Walk

An Advent celebration for all ages, children particularly welcome!

In preparation for the birth of Jesus, set aside a quiet time to share in the awe and wonder of Christ coming into the world.

Don a traveler's cloak, pick up a walking stick, and follow the ancient path of the labyrinth to imagine the long journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. Help prepare the manger to receive the infant Jesus by writing a prayer on a strand of straw and place it in the manger at the center of the labyrinth.

(Put this if there's space) Take home a tiny treasure to remember your journey.

Gifts for You & Others



Handmade Tamales

Order Online Sunday, November 27 - Sunday, Dec. 11

Our annual Christmas tamales are sold by the dozen for \$20/dozen. We offer chicken tamales with green sauce, pork tamales with red sauce, and veggie tamales with green sauce. (Include QR code when available)

The Giving Tree for Rutabaga Kids & SEARCH Clients

Until Monday, December 12 Visit the Giving Tree in the Jones Lobby and select an ornament with wish-list items. Bring the unwrapped gifts to the reception area in the Sanctuary Building.

St. Paul's Choir Gingerbread & Christmas Baskets Sale

Saturday, December 10 | xxx | Jones Lobby

St. Paul's Choir popular annual fundraiser with a twist! Superb individually-crafted gingerbread houses, other baked goods, and charming Christmas gift baskets, all created by St. Paul's Choir members. With fun Christmas songs during the whole morning!



4 PM | PLAZA & JONES BLDG.

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3rd Sunday - December 11

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Advent Schedule

4th Sunday - December 18

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Christmas Eve - December 24

May you remember that you belong

While all services will have candlelight, carols, and a message from Rev. Dr. Jeff McDonald, the two types of service differ in significant ways.

Services of Holy Communion

Amongst beautiful music and candlelight, we will share in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. All are invited to be a part of Communion – all "who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin, and seek to live in peace with one another."

Services of Christmas Lessons and Carols

The scripture lessons read by our lay readers tell the story of the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus interspersed with the singing of Christmas carols, hymns, and anthems. Noon Hely Communion
4 pm Lessons and Carols
6 pm Lessons and Carols
8 pm Holy Communion
11 pm Holy Communion

Christmas Day - December 25

"Yea, Lord, we greet thee; born this happy morning"

In Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, we read of the church bells ringing on Christmas morning and calling one and all to church and chapel to worship before sharing the Christmas Dinner. This year, we are being called to worship on Christmas Day too. Maybe you will come because you come to church every Sunday, or maybe this will be your first time. Either way, we will enjoy celebrating on the day that Christ is born!



Seasonal Anthem

" O Come, O Come Emmanuel" - talked to Joel about photo

Special to us during Advent, this great hymn has a history that stretches back more than 1,200 years to the Great Advent Antiphons. An antiphon is a sentence, sung to plainchant, that comes before and after a psalm or a canticle, rather like a bookend.

In the monastic tradition as far back as the 8th Century, when the Magnificat was sung at Vespers every day, it was preceded and followed by a different Advent Antiphon for each of the seven days leading up to Christmas. Each of these antiphons highlights a characteristic of the coming Christ: "O root of Jesse", "O wisdom", "O King of the Nations", "O Emmanuel", and so on.

In the 18th Century, a Latin poetic hymn version of the Antiphons first appeared in German hymnbooks, with an added refrain "Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel" (O come, O come, Emmanuel). In 1861, an English translation of this Latin hymn by John Mason Neale appeared in "Hymns Ancient and Modern", set to the famous 15th Century French melody that we know: Veni Emmanuel. It is closely related to the hymn we sing ourselves every week in Advent. The text has been adjusted a little over the centuries, but we can still see that each verse is a prayer to the coming Christ.

Verse 1 is inspired by Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23. Look at Hymn 211 in our United Methodist Hymnal, and see if you can trace the scripture references for other verses.

Picture from last year?

Operation Turkey

Wednesday, Nov. 23 | 7 am -2 pm

Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, Nov. 24 | 6 am - Noon

All work will take place in the Jones Building, across the plaza from the Sanctuary Building. Please wear comfortable clothing and closed-toed shoes for walking safety.

Task sign ups are a suggestion. You may be asked to do a cooking, cleaning, packaging or other task; Delivery drivers may also help with other work before they leave to deliver meals. Any time and help you can offer is greatly appreciated. Kids are welcome and encouraged to come out with parents or guardians.

Contact Larry Blair at larrycharlesblair@gmail.com to sign up.

Tamaleada Party

Preparing, cooking, and eating tamales together as a community is a cherished Christmas tradition throughout Mesoamerica. Families and friends come together for *Tamaleadas*, or tamale making parties, to divide and conquer the many labor-intensive and time consuming steps required to produce the delicious, leaf wrapped packages.

Whether you are 5 years old, 105 years old, or any age in between, you are invited and welcome to join.

Assembly lines will be formed to spread the masa, add the fillings, and fold the tamales. After being filled and folded, the tamales will be steamed and *listo!* (ready) to be picked up and eaten the next day.

Take a moment this season and join in *convivio* (gathering together for fellowship) to laugh, sing, listen to music, create memories, and be present with one another around the table as we share life together.

The day is divided into 3 three-hour increments to successfully make our tamales:

9 am–Noon, 1-4 pm, 5-8 pm. Registration is available on our events webpage or by calling the reception desk.

Filling for the tamales will be prepared on Thursday, December 15, and Friday, December 16. If you can help with making the red and green salsas, tearing meat, preparing vegetables, we will be excited to see you.

Email Rev. Nataly to help make fillings at nataly@stpaulshouston.org.



Care & Hospitality

Clinic Care by Rev. Andrew Wolfe

Throughout summer and fall, the Lectionary has featured prophets like Jeremiah, Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea. The role of a prophet is to stand in the gap between God and the people. Often prophets decry the powerful who profit from exploiting the land and the poor. Prophets speak hard words of truth and turn our attention to spaces of faithfulness, justice, and equity. Their work calls us today to have a prophetic imagination that pushes against powers and principalities, upends economic systems and challenges long-held beliefs.

Houston is a tale of two cities—gifted with the world's largest medical center and yet plagued by systemic injustices: 28% of Houstonians are uninsured, 24% cannot afford to see a doctor, and a college educated black woman has nearly the same health outcome as a white woman who has not completed high school. As a result, the underserved have had a long history of mistrust toward medicine. On September 13, 2021, St. Paul's



waded into the prophetic work of addressing health inequities in Houston through a partnership with the University of Houston's College of Nursing to provide free healthcare to under/uninsured in our community.

Over the last year, the health clinic has stood in the gaps, proclaiming a vision of equity, inclusion, and dignity in healthcare. Over 175 patients have been welcomed into the clinic not as a number, but as a beloved child of God. Almost half of the clinic's patients have no access to a primary care provider and many experience a complexity of health issues such as diabetes, blood pressure, emotional health, and substance abuse. Our nurse



practitioners are intentional about the quality care they give to body, mind, and spirit. This approach has enabled the clinic to gain the trust of our clients and led to the clinic being the medical home for many.

While the clinic offers a prophetic word and innovates the healthcare landscape through nurse managed care and telemedicine technology, the greatest strength of the clinic is the faith and faithfulness of its staff. From receptionist to provider, compassion, dignity, and respect

Y'all are family. This place is family to me.'"

are at the forefront of patient-centered care. As simple as it seems, these values enable the clinic to make a difference in the lives of the under/uninsured community. That care is reflected in patient satisfaction surveys and anecdotally: One Monday morning the clinic staff were gathering for staff prayer when a patient, on his way out, stopped to say thank you and asked to join. The team circled together and after 'amen' said, 'Y'all are family. This place is family to me.'"

These are prophetic words. Compassionate healthcare is prophetic work. A partnership between a church and university proclaims a more powerful way



to care for the community. There is still a great deal of work to be done; more strangers to welcome, more friendships to build, and more gaps to stand in. Prophetic work is risky and exhausting, but it never stops.

Source: Health Insurance Coverage: Early Release of estimates from National Interview Survey, 2020. County Health Rankings, 2020 Harris County (July 2021) CDC National Centers for Health Statistics (2020). Methodist Hospital Social Determinants of Health CME Dec. 2, 2021

 $https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/2022/oct/understanding-addressing-medical-mistrust-interview-laura-bogart?utm_source=alert&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Advancing+Health+Equity$



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Rutabaga Christmas Memories

Through the annual tradition of the giving tree, our kids experience a magical part of Christmas by receiving gifts. Last year, many children came back to Rutabaga excited to show off their new shoes and jackets. One young boy received a science book and still proclaimed it as his favorite book this September, while another young girl excitedly shared how she used her bracelet making kit to make gifts for others.







Wonderfully Made provides kids ages 10–12 the opportunity to not only ask questions about growing up, but to get faith-based answers as well.



Christmas UM ARMY



St. Paul's Youth (SPY) are big fans of mission work and often give up a week of their summer or holiday time to participate. For the past 22 years, we have attended UM ARMY, a week-long summer work camp. We have been to multiple cities throughout Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

This year will be the first time that we will participate at Christmas UM ARMY, although we did host it back in 2008. Camp will take place December 27 through January 1 in Tyler, Texas, where hopefully 100 youth from across the Methodist connection will attend.

We are excited that Rev. Trey will join us in all of the painting, deck-building, and landscaping that is bound to take place. Hear why UM ARMY is important to our youth:



"It is always really fun and is a good chance to meet new people who aren't from Houston." –Kathleen Molineu

"I go to UMAMRY because it is like a giant sleepover with all of your friends and JESUS where you get to help others." –Grace Wilsford

"It's a good way to get out of your comfort zone and learn new skills that one might not learn in their daily lives. It is a good way to meet people you might not meet otherwise. It looks good on a resume as service hours."

—Logan Peterman





Finding Connection through Artistic Expression

The Art Tent is in its second year - creating a space for people experiencing homelessness to express themselves through visual art. The artists work has been displayed at various St. Paul's gatherings throughout the year, most recently as World Homelessness weekend. While the tent is a safe space for the artists to gather, it also impacts those who volunteer.

"I chose to volunteer at The Art Tent because my son had spent time on the streets," says Jenny. "There are so many blessings from our artists.. The talent and creativity, the amazing attitude of gratitude from these folks... listening to the artists sing out loudly: "Our God is an awesome God!" The Art Tent is a place of compassion and hope and inspiration."

The Art Tent is open to attend on Wednesdays from 10 am to 1 pm in the Emergency Aid Coalition (EAC) parking lot. As clients arrive for lunches at the EAC, they are invited to create art with volunteers in this welcoming tent studio. Due to Houston's hot summers, The Art Tent season runs from October through April, ending with an art show to exhibit the pieces made throughout the season. For those warmer months, summer Art Kits are available from May through August.

If you would like to volunteer or donate for art supplies, contact Helen Spaw, MPS at *hspaw@stpaulshouston.org*.

Find Hope, Peace, Joy, & Love this Season Walking the Labyrinth

To walk the labyrinth, enter near the statue of Jesus and follow the stone pathway to the center of the labyrinth and back out. Take whatever pace you would like.

Walking a labyrinth is a meditative practice observed across world religions. Archeologists have discovered labyrinths created by ancient societies that date back millennia. Unlike a maze, a labyrinth guides the traveler through a predetermined, circuitous path to its center point and back out. There are no diverging pathways where the traveler makes a conscious choice to turn right or left. In this way, the mind can relax as the body simply puts one foot in front of the other. This practice promotes contemplation and prayer.



Labyrinth Society

All are invited to join monthly meetings on 2nd Tuesdays from 1 to 2 pm in the Parlor, to plan labyrinth walks, events, workshops and develop the labyrinth community.

Would you like to be invited to labyrinth events or join the Labyrinth Society? Contact Helen Spaw at hspaw@stpaulshouston.org.



Your Christmas Gift to St. Paul's

This time of year, we begin to think about buying Christmas gifts for those we love. Some of those gifts are extravagant, others are thoughtful, some are necessities. As you consider your holiday giving, we hope you remember St. Paul's and its financial well-being.

Your Christmas offering will help support our wonderful ministries including our choirs, children's programs and mission efforts. Gifts may be made online at www.stpaulshouston.org/give.

If you are 70½ years old or older, you can make a gift directly from your IRA to St. Paul's and pay no income taxes on the gift.

For more information about making a charitable contribution from your IRA, contact Veronica Pearce at *vpearce@stpaulshouston.org*.



Cornerstone Society Votes for Grant Recipients

Annually, Cornerstone Society Members support the Foundation's Building and Maintenance Fund and cast votes to support mission partners. Recipients of the 2022 Cornerstone Grants - Meals on Wheels and Neighbors in Action - visited St. Paul's recently to accept grants from the Cornerstone Society.

More information about the Cornerstone Society and how to join is available at **www.stpaulshouston.org/cornerstone.**

Life Takes a Turn: How a Foundation Scholarship Made a Difference

Melissa Garza was an award-winning graphic designer for a Houston non profit until a layoff due to COVID in 2020.

Timing is everything though, and the layoff gave her the opportunity to pursue a Masters of Divinity at Perkins School of Theology. Helping to support her new goals is a scholarship from the **Edith**



Jo Dissinger Fund of the St. Paul's Methodist Foundation.

"My call to ministry was not a dramatic one," said Melissa. "It's been part of who I am for a long time. I just hadn't been ready to step out. But I have always had a great love for The United Methodist Church."

Melissa was a former member of St. Paul's for a period of years and now, as part of the Perkins Houston/Galveston extension program, she has returned for periodic face-to-face meetings of extension students. "It was a special moment the first time I stepped into St. Paul's as a seminarian after being away so long. It felt like a homecoming.

So much has changed, but one thing remains. St. Paul's has been a beacon of hope to those in the community and continues to serve well."

Melissa also looks forward to her opportunity to serve, as she approaches completion of her degree. "I feel like that is what I'm led to do – to offer hope, to spread the word of God in a way that is just loving and supporting."

St. Paul's Foundation scholarships are available for students graduating high school or continuing their college education. The application process for 2023 scholarships will open January 2, 2023.

Celebrating Connection

New Members - February, May, & August 2022



Grayson Lattimer



Ryan and Caroline Levins



Thomas Mays III



Ken and Debbie Walley



Josh Miller



Kayla and James Golemon



Andi Atkinson



Kathy Zhang-Rutledge



Matthew Andrews



Robert and Stephanie Anderson



Justine Weber

In our Community

Baptisms

Emilia Robin Anderson, daughter of Stephanie and Robert Anderson, was baptized on October 16, 2022.

Weddings

Mack Wilson and Kathy Zhang-Rutledge were married on August 26, 2022 at St. Pauls.

Deaths

Betty Sue Peabody passed on July 9; Marilyn Chapman passed on July 26, Bonnie Brookshire Watson passed on July 23, Yuly Reeves' Father (in China) passed on August 14, Ann Anderson (mother of Darrell Anderson) passed on August 17, Joe Young (Judy Young) passed on August 28.

St. Paul's Day

Sunday, Jan. 29 | 4 pm Concert & 5 pm Dinner

Save the date to celebrate our St. Paul's community with a special concert and dinner!

All of our choirs (St. Paul's Choir, Choral Scholars, Treble Choir, Choristers, and Wesley Singers) will be joined by members of the Mercury Chamber Orchestra for a festival concert, directed by Chris Betts and Antoine Plante, Mercury artistic director and St. Paul's member. Music will include George Frederic Handel's "Zadok the Priest", Andrew Carter's "Benedicite", an organ solo: Herbert Brewer's "Marche Heroique", and an opportunity for all to join in singing the hymn "All creatures of our God and King" with all of our choirs and orchestra.

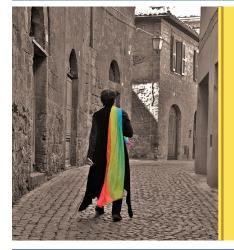
Following the concert, all are invited for a dinner in Fondren Hall. Admission to the concert is free of charge thanks to the St. Paul's Chamber Music Society, and dinner will be XXX

Fun Facts about the music you will hear at the concert:

Handel's anthem, "Zadok the Priest" was written for the coronation of British King George II in 1727 at Westminster Abbey, and has been sung at every British coronation since then.

Andrew Carter's "Benedicite" is a setting of the traditional canticle, The Song of Creation (in Latin: Benedicite omnia opera Domini), in which all of creation praises God: angels, heavens, sun and moon, trees of the forest, ice and snow, and many more. In his setting, Carter also includes three movements for children's choirs: Badgers and Hedgehogs, Butterflies and Moths, and Grannies and Grandads, who also praise God. It was first performed in 1989 by the British Federation of Young Choirs, in Edinburgh Scotland. It was inspired by the restoration of the ceiling of the south transept of York Minster, which was destroyed by fire in 1984 and restored to include images of all of creation.

Brewer's "Marche Heroique" can easily be confused for another of Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance marches, and will be played by Joel Trekell at the concert.



Still on Fire: A Talk with Jan Phillips

Saturday, January 7 | 9 am - 4 pm | Fondren Hall Register Online | Cost: \$20, with lunch included

Come enjoy a talk with Jan Phillips - a visionary thought leader, award-winning author and dynamic speaker who provokes thought and inspires action. She creates a unique multi-sensory experience, weaving together humor, storytelling, video and music to inspire and ignite insights for life changing action. Jan shows people how to access their wisdom and activate their creativity.

We are grateful to the Kerley Endowment for helping make this event possible. If you are unable to join us on Saturday, Jan will speak at Ordinary Life on Sunday, Jan. 8, from 9:45 am to 11 am, which is free to attend and open to all.

Fine Arts Academy Registration begins Monday, Dec. 12

Classes and individual lessons in Art, Musikgarten, Piano, & Voice begin Tuesday, January 17, for the spring semester. Registration is available online at stpaulshouston.org/fine-arts-academy.

Advent at a Glance

Advent Begins | Sunday, Nov. 27 Journey to Bethlehem Labyrinth Walk | Sunday, Dec. 4 at 4 pm Advent Lessons & Carols with Dessert Reception | Sunday, Dec. 4 at 5 pm Primetimers' Christmas Party | Thursday, Dec. 8 at XXX (may take out) St. Paul's Choir Bake Sale | Saturday, Dec. 10 at XXX Tea & Cookies | Sunday, Dec. 18 at 9:45 am Carols at Methodist Hospital | Sunday, Dec. 18 at 10:30 am (nay take out) Journey to the Manger | Sunday, Dec. 18 at 5 pm Service of the Longest Night | Wednesday, Dec. 21 at 7 pm *Christmas Eve Services* | Saturday, Dec. 24 Noon | Holy Communion 4 pm | Lessons & Carols 6 pm | Lessons & Carols 8 pm | Holy Communion

Christmas Day Worship | Sunday, Dec. 25 at 10 am

Save the Date 2023

St. Paul's Day Sunday, January 29	Lenten Recitals Thursdays, Feb XX-April XX	Easter Sunday Sunday, April 9	UM ARMY June 11-17
JUMMP June 26-30	VBS July 10-14	Bolivia Mission Trip July 19-August 1	Holy Land Trip with Rev. Jeff October 23