



Saint Paul's Lutheran church

Year of Fellowship

December
2018
Newsletter



www.stpaulserie.org

Advent: *Living in Hope*

Advent is a word we rarely use outside of the church season before Christmas. We know it has something to do with the birth of Jesus, which is true. Advent means that someone of notability or importance is coming.



Be Alert, Prepare, Expect, & Believe.

In this instance, it's the arrival of the Messiah and with that arrival comes so many things; unconditional love, joy, peace, God coming to dwell with us, and so much more. This year, we are going to focus on how the coming of Jesus, the Messiah, brings hope and how we can live into that hope.

Congregational Meeting

Sunday, December 16

10 AM

Sanctuary

We will be electing members to Congregation Council, hearing preliminary financial reports for the year 2018, & adopting the congregation's budget for 2019. Abbreviated budgets will be available prior & during the meeting. If you would like a more complete budget, please contact the church office.

Our next Congregational Meeting will be on Sunday, January 13 following the worship service. 2018 Annual Reports will be available at this time.

Christmas Eve Services:

4 PM & 8 PM



JOIN US FOR THE *Sacred Story*
THIS *Christmas Eve* AT 4 PM

Child-Friendly Worship
Youth-Led Music & Scripture

Join us for the **Sacred Story this Christmas Eve at 4 PM** as we celebrate Christ's birth with our youth-led worship service.

All are welcome to join us for our **traditional candlelit Christmas Eve worship at 8 PM** featuring music by Andrew Rainbow, our Music Director.

TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE AT 8 PM

LET US BE

your home
FOR THE HOLIDAYS

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

3108 Sterrettania Road

Erie, PA 16506-2658

www.stpaulserie.org

Saturday Worship Service, 5 PM

Sunday Worship Service, 9 AM

Christian Learning Hour, 10:15 AM

(September-May)

Office hours: 9 AM - 5 PM,

Monday- Friday

814-833-1761 | Office@stpaulserie.org

Pastor Sami Pfalzgraf's Office Hours:

Mondays & Wednesdays: 9 AM-12 PM

814-833-1761, ext. 103 | Pastor@stpaulserie.org

Pastor Sami's December Greetings

The Finance Team asked St. Paul's to increase our giving and St. Paul's responded. We did it and were able to come within \$7,000 of our goal. Some might be discouraged that we didn't meet our goal, but I am not. We increased our financial support of the church by \$11,000 and made up over half of our deficit. We talked about Matthew 6:21 which says, "Where your heart is, there your treasure will be also." If God is our treasure, our hearts will be with God's people and with God's church. Wow, is that ever true. Well done, St. Paul's, and thank you so much for your generosity! Because of your generosity, no staff will be cut this year, and for the first time in a very long time, a balanced budget will be recommended to Church Council.

Though we were not able to meet our goal this year, that doesn't mean we won't meet it in the future. We continue to spend time in prayer, discerning God's call for St. Paul's, and have begun to move forward with many inspired ideas. It is because St. Paul's looks to God for direction, and shows each other and visitors God's love, that people have been inspired by the Holy Spirit to become a part of this wonderful church.



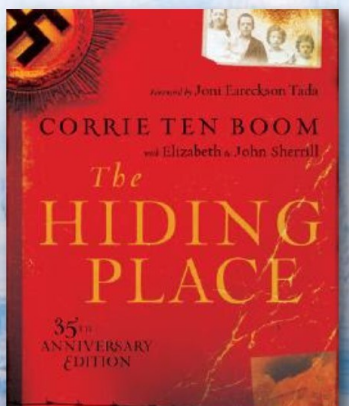
Pastor Sami

Book Club

Saturday, December 1

6 PM

Conference Room



Join us for great discussion & fellowship as we share our thoughts on "The Hiding Place."

"At one time Corrie ten Boom would have laughed at the idea that there would ever be a story to tell. For the first fifty years of her life nothing at

all out of the ordinary had ever happened to her. She was an old-maid watchmaker living contentedly with her spinster sister and their elderly father in the tiny Dutch house over their shop. Their uneventful days, as regulated as their own watches, revolved around their abiding love for one another. However, with the Nazi invasion and occupation of Holland, a story did ensue. Corrie ten Boom and her family became leaders in the Dutch Underground, hiding Jewish people in their home in a specially built room and aiding their escape from the Nazis. For their help, all but Corrie found death in a concentration camp. The Hiding Place is their story."

-from Amazon Goodreads

Worship & Music Ministry Update

Thank You

Thank you so much to Pastor Erik Young and St. John's Lutheran who lent us their projector these past few months to see how we liked technology in worship. The feedback we have received from the congregation has been very positive.

End-of-the-Year Giving Projects

As we discern places to make end-of-the-year financial contributions, we may want to think about special projects we have been working towards at St. Paul's. One of these projects is to bring technology into our worship services. A new projector will be purchased with the Becky Michalak Memorial Fund. This does not include the special lens that would allow us to project from the back of the sanctuary. The lens costs \$1,500. The wireless connection technology to the projector costs \$1,000. And finally, the screen costs \$1,799. This is one place to make a special donation to help bring technology to our worship service. As you can see in our weekly financial report in the bulletin, we are running at a deficit this year. A donation to the general budget to help with this would allow us enter 2019 in the black. Thank you for all your generosity.



New Member Class
 Sunday, Jan. 6 | 10:15 AM | Conference Room (Rm 112)

NEW MEMBERS

New Member Weekend: Jan. 12 & 13
 Affirmation at both worship services: Saturday at 5 PM & Sunday at 9 AM.

New Member Class

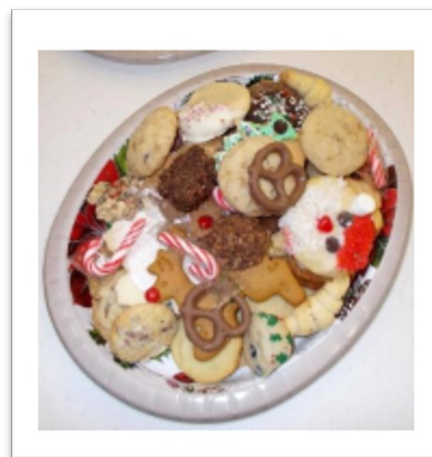
Pastor Sami will host a new member class from **11:15 AM-12:15 PM on Sunday, January 6**. New members will be welcomed into the family of St. Paul's as full members on Saturday, January 12 or Sunday, January 13, depending on the service they like to attend.

Cookie Trays for Christmas

Time to start thinking about baking all of our favorite holiday cookies! Let's bring some Christmas cheer to those in our community by sharing some of our delicious cookies. Last year, we made and delivered 32 cookie trays!

Please help us by: donating cookies, assembling the cookie trays, or delivering the cookie trays. We will be working on the cookie trays and delivering them on **Sunday, December 16 after the worship service.**

- ⇒ If you are able to donate cookies, please have the cookies in the church kitchen by Sunday, December 16 at 10 AM and have them marked "Cookie Trays."
- ⇒ If you are able to help assemble the cookie trays, we will be meeting in the Fellowship Hall at 10:15 AM.
- ⇒ If you are able to assist in the delivering of the cookie trays, they will be ready for pick up between 11:00 -11:30 AM. If you are helping with delivering the cookie trays, each tray will have a label with the recipient's name and address. If we have a phone number, that will also be included on the label.



There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex for anyone interested in donating cookies and for drivers to help with the delivering of the cookie trays. If you know of anyone who would benefit from receiving a cookie tray- it could be someone who is homebound, ill, or recovering from an illness- and/or if you are able to assist in any way, contact Terry Moyer or Ruth Moyer at CookieTrays@stpaulserie.org or 814-833-1761, ext. 336 and leave a message. Terry & Ruth can also be reached in person on Sunday mornings before or after worship.

Congregational Care Ministries

Congregational Prayers

Please keep our following brothers and sisters in Christ in your daily prayers:



Cindi Bokulich, Alice Eger, Charles Roward & Linda Isaly, & Sam Sayer & her family. Pray for members of our church family and community

who are facing illness or surgery.



Continue to pray for those who are homebound or in nursing homes: **Clara Davis, Kathryn Duran, Les Einhipple, Ken Johnson,**

Phyllis Lindahl, Emmy Loomis, Sally McIlvried, Ellie Perry, Alice Ristau, Connie Slattery, and Donna Spangler. Wrap your hearts around those who are alone, broken-hearted, grieving, or anxious.



We continue to pray for those who are close to us who **serve in the mili-**

tary – stationed around the world – who defend and fight for freedom:

Samuel Arthur, Michael Cunningham, David Hall, Brennan Madara, Christopher Newlin, Natalie Rambish, Benjamin Sperring, Brody Swab, Christopher Tinsman, Thomas Weidle, and Zachary Zehner.

We keep our **college students** in prayer as they study and prepare for their future vocations: **Breanna Berger, Karly Bliley, Emily Collins, Ethan Cunningham, Alex Farantzios, Andrew Haverly, Justin Kuric, Alexa Kwiatkowski, Madison Maciulewicz, Matthew Parry, Eriq Schau, Aidan Sloppy, Derek Sloppy, Spencer Sorenson, Ian Stroul, Emily Thelin, Nikki Zehner, and Ryan Zimmerman.**

Visitation requests, including home communion, or congregational care questions? Contact June Kessler at CongregationalCare@stpaulserie.org or 814-833-1761, ext. 339.

December Anniversaries

Dec 7– Gary & Pam Scott Sullivan
Dec 27– Rick & Debby Sullivan

December Birthdays

Dec 1– Robert Stroul & Connor McLaughlin
Dec 2– Dylan Maciulewicz
Dec 4– Emily Collins
Dec 5– Cathy Williams & Christie Young
Dec 6– Evan Csir
Dec 7– Linda Martz
Dec 8– Ron Kaffka
Dec 9– Gretchen Hunter
Dec 11– Laurie Ann Chrostowski, Janet Csir, Leah Laska, Russ Thelin, & Debbie Farantzios
Dec 13– James Miller
Dec 14– Katae Csir & Jeffrey Ankiel
Dec 17– Betty lou Schau, Matthew Covington, Jonah Douglas, & Katrina Buchanan
Dec 19– Jim Martucci
Dec 22– Karen Nuber
Dec 23– Sherry Bechtold
Dec 24– Jacqueline Barber
Dec 26– Emily Martucci
Dec 27– Linda Mroz
Dec 29– Becky Holcomb
Dec 31– Floyd Csir

Congregational Thank You Notes

*Many thanks to **Anna Nelson's grandson, Rick Lenz, & his wife** for their donation in honor of Anna's 100th birthday in April. Their generous donation funded the LED lighting in the sanctuary. Thank you!*

I want to thank everyone for my cards, thoughts & prayers, visits during my recuperation.

I am so blessed to have my church family.

In Christian Love,

Kay Heidler

Thank you to everyone who donated greeting cards for our military members. I really appreciate all the help and have enough cards. Please keep them in your thoughts & prayers.

Thank again,

Barb Davies

Thank you so much for the wonderful blessing of my prayer shawl. It brings me great comfort in my journey through this difficult time.

Also much gratitude for all the prayers. I know they work and I am good with God!

Sincerely,

Marlene Scholtz

Pastor Sami & my St. Paul's Family,

Thank you one & all for widening your circle to surround my family with your love & care.

Thank you also to Bob & Mike Wright for driving my Dad home from Sarah Reed everyday for a week while Dan & I were on vacation. Thank you to Cheryl Till for faithfully visiting my mother every week. Thank you to Jane Ford & Connie Sloppy & Pastor Sami for their regular visits with my parents.

Thank you to Barb Davies who has supplied my Dad & Carol with meals & homemade goodies. Thank you to Peggy Fuhrman, the Barber family & Ted Firment for driving Carol to & from events as needed. Thank you to all who sent my mom cards so she knows she is not forgotten. I'm sure there are others I have excluded please forgive me!

God knows of your good works & generous hearts. As you can see the Davis & DeCoursey families have not stood alone. We thank you all for keeping us in your thoughts & prayers.

With love & gratitude,
Debbie DeCoursey & family

Sincere appreciation is extended to all members of the congregation who helped with another successful Scrapalooza fundraiser for our Student Ministry. I am grateful for your donations toward the Chinese Auction right down to the food and beverages. Your donations help to defray cost thus permitting more funds going to the youth. April Scrapalooza is being planned and I ask for your continued support.

-Michelle Fuller

Congregational Congratulations

(see shaded box on the next page)

Faith Formation Ministries

Hope Circle Women's Bible Study

Hope Circle will meet again on **Monday, December 10** at 10 AM in the Conference Room. Ruth May will lead the Bible study (Fear Not - God is at work beyond our ability to imagine), and Pastor Sami will be hostess. Questions? Contact Barb Toy at HopeCircle@stpaulserie.org or 814-833-1761, ext. 354.



Congregational Congratulations

(continued from Congregational Care Ministries on previous page)

Congratulations to **Keri & Darryl Schmidt & family** for being honored with the Ambassador Award by March of Dimes.



Church Council Highlights

From the November 2018 meeting:

- Approved of the 2019 Ministry Spending Plan, will present it to the congregation on December 16, 2018.
- Approved a new pulley system for the curtains in the sanctuary.
- Approved the purchase of a new projector for worship services.
- Looking for volunteers to fill the seats of the outgoing class of council members.

Thank You, Ron Till

There are not words for how much Ron Till's ministry as the chair of the Property Team has helped every ministry in the life of the church. He has been working on the Property Team for about ten years and has spent many days, nights, and weekends doing an array of jobs. We are so thankful for all of Ron's hard work, attention to detail, never ending smiles, encouragement, & endless generosity. Thank you, Ron.

Next meeting: Monday, December 17, 2018 at 7 PM in the Conference Room.

Stephen Ministries

The ACTIVE LISTENING FORUM, to be presented by Sandra Hall, has been rescheduled for Saturday, January 5, at 4 PM and Sunday, January 6, at 10:15AM. We're hoping the weather will cooperate this time around. Looking forward to seeing everyone interested in this important topic in January!

Our 8 Stephen Ministers and 3 Stephen Leaders are busy with their Care Receivers, continuing education, and supervision. What a great feeling it is of faith, hope, and love to know that Stephen Ministry is making a difference here at St. Paul's and out in our community.

Sometimes you just need someone to walk alongside you for a while



As the holiday season approaches, please be aware of anyone who is having a hard time

and may need some encouragement, somebody to talk to, or somebody to walk with them. Contact June Kessler, Sandra Hall or Becky Holcomb at StephenMinistries@stpaulserie.org or 814-833-1761, ext. 387.

St. Paul's Stephen Leaders and Stephen Ministers wish everyone a blessed Christmas & holiday season.

Church Attendance & Finances



By The Numbers: Oct 2018

Avg. Attendance: Saturday	32
Avg. Attendance: Sunday	103
October Offering	\$27,924
October Expenses	\$26,373
October Difference	\$1,551
Offering Year-to-Date	\$262,003
Expenses Year-to-Date	\$275,466
Difference Year-to-Date	-\$13,463

Pre-School Ministries



December is a very exciting month for all of us. We have lots of projects & activities planned. We will look forward to a visit from Santa on our Christmas party day. We will invite pre-school parents to the church to visit with Santa & enjoy a few songs that the children will sing for them. We will have fun making our parent gifts from the children to give for Christmas.

We will begin practice on our list of songs for the end of the school year. Time goes so fast! We continue to offer Scholastic Books to all of our families. This is very helpful for classroom supplies. We also spend time helping the children learn how to get coats on and zipped, buttoned, or snapped all by themselves. We remind parents to please label all outerwear.

We would like to wish all of our St. Paul's families a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Questions? Contact Tammi Ferrante at PSDirector@stpaulserie.org or 814-833-1761, ext. 114.

Sunday School Ministries

December 2: 10:15 AM-12:30 PM

Please note extended hours! The entire **congregation is welcome & encouraged to stay and paint** 2 ornaments– one for our shut-ins to put with cookie trays & one to take home.

December 9: 10:15 AM-12:30 PM

Please note extended hours for pageant rehearsal.



Student Ministries (grades 7-12)

Our Student Ministry has been busy this last month! We had over 10 teens and families volunteer on November 10 at Scrapalooza to raise money for upcoming mission trips. From setting up and breaking down the gym, to serving the participants, they helped the event run smoothly from beginning to end. On November 19, our Confirmation group visited the Anshe Hessed Temple to meet with some of our Jewish brothers and sisters to look closer into the Jewish Faith. They have been studying the first 5 books of the Bible in Sunday classes, so this was a great way to summarize all that they had already learned and to look more closely into other religious cultures.

Student Ministry Christmas Party!

Are you already jamming to Christmas music and putting out all the decorations? Come join us and celebrate at the Student Ministry Christmas Party! Open to all students, grades 7-12, we will begin our festivities in the Clare-Wolfe Lounge on Sunday, **December 9 from 10:15 AM-12:30 PM**. Wear your tackiest Christmas outfit for a chance at a Moe's gift card.

Looking for more information? Check us out on Instagram at [@stpaulsstudent](https://www.instagram.com/stpaulsstudent) or contact Rachel Burkey at StudentDirector@stpaulserie.org or 814-833-1761, ext. 104.



Community Care Ministries

Winter Sock Drive for the Homeless

We are launching a Winter Sock Drive for Erie County's homeless. Please donate new pairs of socks in the bin located in the narthex at St. Paul's. Warm & dry socks are a much-needed clothing item for the homeless, especially with our harsh winter conditions. Thank you, in advance, for your generosity!



Grief Support Group Meeting

The Grief Support Group will meet again on **Thursday, December 13 at 5:30 PM** in the Conference Room. RSVPs are appreciated, but not necessary. Questions? Contact Heather McLaughlin at GriefSupportGroup@stpaulserie.org or 814-877-6527.

Fair Trade Handcraft Sale Recap

Thanks to all who supported the Fair Trade Handcraft Sale! We earned **\$117.80!** That is a record. That includes the profit from the actual sale & also the SERRV & EARN sale. Thank you, again, for your support!!! And, thanks to Jane Ford & Peggy Fuhrman for helping out with the sale.

Holy Trinity's Pasta & Soup Kitchen's Food-of-the-Week

Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen is requesting **Cream of Mushroom Soup & Baked Beans** for December. All items are collected in a basket near the main entrance of St. Paul's sanctuary. Questions? Contact Larry Kessler at FoodOfTheWeek@stpaulserie.org or 814-833-1761, ext. 303.



ELCA Good Gift Ornaments

During December, you will find Good Gift ornaments for sale in the narthex. Pick an ornament, write a check to St. Paul's, & leave the check in the church office. Gift cards are also available. Happy shopping!

Worship Assistants' Schedule for December

Date	Time	Altar Care	Ushers	Assistant Minister	Communion Assistant	Acolyte	Cross-bearer
Dec 1	5:00 PM	Sullivan/Moore Team					
Dec 2	9:00 AM	TBA	Kaffka/Firment Team	Karen McKenna	Ron Till	Nicole Metzler	Stella Beilharz
Dec 8	5:00 PM	Elmer/Moore Team					
Dec 9	9:00 AM	TBA	Chiapa/Firment Team	Cindy Dohanic	Debbie DeCoursey	Jonah Douglas	Jacob Gross
Dec 15	5:00 PM	Lang Team					
Dec 16	9:00 AM	TBA	Wright Team	Larry Kessler	Steve Thelin	Hannah Schmidt	Xavier Jones
Dec 22	5:00 PM	Tonjes/Fuhrman Team					
Dec 23	9:00 AM	TBA	Kessler/Chiapa Team	Joanne Erikson	Karen Marzka	Rylie Carr	Sam Forehand
Dec 24	4:00 PM	TBA	TBA	Erich Zech	Katy Zech	TBA	TBA
	8:00 PM	TBA	TBA	Wayne Gardner	Karen Marzka	TBA	TBA
Dec 29	5:00 PM	Zimmerman/ Bax Team					
Dec 30	9:00 AM	TBA	Carr/Firment Team	Len Toy	Jack Martin	TBA	TBA

For scheduling information, contact one of the following individuals via email or call 814-833-1761 and use the appropriate extension:

Saturday Altar Care– Cheryl Moore at SatAltarCare@stpaulserie.org | ext. 352








Altar Care, 9 AM – Karen Marzka at AltarCare@stpaulserie.org | ext. 322

Worship Assistants – Erich & Pam Zech at WorshipAssistants@stpaulserie.org | ext. 348

Acolytes & Ushers– Larry Kessler at Worship@stpaulserie.org | ext. 315

December Calendar

December 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25 Food of the Week: Little Debbie Snacks 9:00 AM Worship	26 6:00 PM Basketball Practice 7:00 PM Mother's Group	27 9:00 AM Patchwork of Love Quilting Ministry 5:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen	28 9:00 AM Scripture Study 12:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen 4:00 PM Youth Karate 6:30 PM Softball Practice	29 6:30 PM Men's Basketball League	30 4:00 PM Youth Karate Class 7:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous Marble Group	1 12:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen 3:45 PM Scripture Study 4:00 PM Paul's Table 5:00 PM Worship 6:00 PM Book Club
2 Advent Food of the Week: Cream of Mushroom Soup 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Paul's Table 10:15 AM Sunday School 11:30 AM Hand Bell Rehearsal 11:30 AM Sunday School Ceramics Project	3 6:00 PM Basketball Practice 7:00 PM Property Team Meeting 7:00 PM Women's Group	4 9:00 AM Patchwork of Love Quilting Ministry 10:00 AM Staff Meeting 5:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen	5 9:00 AM Scripture Study 12:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen 4:00 PM Youth Karate 6:30 PM Softball Practice 8:00 PM Men's Basketball League	6  6:00 PM Erie Krush Meeting 6:30 PM Men's Basketball League	7 4:00 PM Youth Karate Class 7:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous Marble Group	8 12:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen 3:45 PM Scripture Study 4:00 PM Paul's Table 4:00 PM Private Event 5:00 PM Worship
9 Food of the Week: Baked Beans 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Worship 10:15 AM Paul's Table 10:15 AM Sunday School 11:30 AM Christmas Program Rehearsal 11:30 AM Hand Bell Rehearsal	10  10:00 AM Hope Circle Women's Bible Study 6:00 PM Basketball Practice 7:00 PM Mother's Group	11 9:00 AM Patchwork of Love Quilting Ministry 5:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen	12 9:00 AM Scripture Study 12:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen 4:00 PM Youth Karate 6:30 PM Down Syndrome Group Meeting 6:30 PM Softball Practice 8:00 PM Men's Basketball League	13 12:30 PM Ladies Lunch 5:30 PM Grief Support Group Meeting 6:30 PM Men's Basketball League	14 4:00 PM Youth Karate Class 7:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous Marble Group	15 Newsletter Articles Due 11:00 AM HERD Christmas Party 12:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen 3:45 PM Scripture Study 4:00 PM Paul's Table 5:00 PM Worship
16  8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Christmas Program 9:00 AM Worship 10:00 AM Congregation Meeting 10:15 AM Cookie Trays 10:15 AM Paul's Table 10:15 AM Sunday School 11:30 AM Hand Bell Rehearsal	17 6:00 PM Basketball Practice 7:00 PM Church Council Meeting 7:00 PM Women's Group	18 9:00 AM Patchwork of Love Quilting Ministry 5:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen	19 9:00 AM Scripture Study 12:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen 4:00 PM Youth Karate 6:30 PM Softball Practice 8:00 PM Men's Basketball League	20 6:30 PM Men's Basketball League	21  First Day of Winter 4:00 PM Youth Karate Class 7:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous Marble Group	22 12:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen 3:45 PM Scripture Study 4:00 PM Paul's Table 5:00 PM Worship
23 9:00 AM Worship	24  4:30 PM Christmas Eve Service 8:00 PM Christmas Eve Service	25  Christmas Day Office Closed	26 12:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen	27 Office Closed	28 Office Closed 7:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous Marble Group	29 12:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen 5:00 PM Worship
30 9:00 AM Worship	31  Office Closed	1 New Year's Day Office Closed 5:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen	2 9:00 AM Scripture Study 12:00 PM Holy Trinity Pasta & Soup Kitchen	3 6:00 PM Erie Krush Meeting 6:30 PM Men's Basketball League	4 4:00 PM Youth Karate Class 7:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous Marble Group	5 4:00 PM Paul's Table 5:00 PM Worship 6:00 PM Book Club