

COUNTRYSIDE TRINITY CHURCH NEWSLETTER

December 2018 Edition



A Message from OUR PASTOR

*"Now the heavens start to whisper, as the veil is growing thin.
Earth from slumber wakes to listen to the stirring, faint within:
Seed of promise, deeply planted, child to spring from Jesse's stem!
Like the soil beneath the frost line, hearts grow soft to welcome him"*



Now the Heavens Start to Whisper-Glory to God Hymnal #94

Dear Sisters and Brother in Christ,

On Sunday, November 11, our new family members from the Warren Avenue Presbyterian Church gifted the congregation with 176 "Glory to God" Presbyterian hymnals. It is a wonderful hymnal, filled with many older familiar classics and some newer hymns, like the one quoted above. I think all who were in the sanctuary that day were deeply touched by this awesome offering of love. I want to say thank you to all who made this gift possible. It will be a joy to explore the hymns and theology that make "Glory to God" one of the most inclusive and enjoyable hymnals available to congregations today.

There are two aspects of this hymnal in particular that speak to my heart. The first is that the "Glory to God" hymnal is intentionally inclusive. What I mean by this is that the editors sought to be mindful of the hymns that people of all generations enjoy singing. In other words it is not a hymnal filled with only new hymns that most of us have never sung before. Yet, there are also hymns that have been written within the last forty to fifty years that speak the truths of the Bible in our current context. That is one aspect of inclusivity. The other aspect of the hymnal's inclusivity is that there are many songs of faith that come to us from other Christian communities from around the globe. The beauty of this is that we get to share our common trust in Jesus with people from Korea, Mexico, Scotland and France. It helps us to recognize that ours is not the only experience of faith that is vital and true, but that we all come to Christ in our own way, and in our own tongue, and with our own history and tradition.

The second aspect of this hymnal that goes deep to our faith is that the hymns found within this tome are rooted in the spiritual disciplines of our faith. Take for example the hymn I referenced at the beginning of this letter.

The spiritual discipline it highlights is that of hospitality. The image is that at his birth, the whole of creation comes alive with the anticipation of Jesus birth. I love the last line of the first stanza, "Like the soil beneath the frost line, hearts grow soft to welcome him." Hospitality is all about softening hearts to welcome the "other" no matter who the other is. The whole season of Advent is that time of preparation for women and men of faith. We will hear the many Advent texts about preparing the way for the Christ child. We, in our own way, have the traditions we cherish that we do as acts of preparation. We decorate, we shop, we bake cookies, we attend Advent studies, a living Nativity and many other worship and worship like services all to get ourselves ready for the great day of Christ's coming.

The hymn though speaks to the first thing we have to do which is "soften our hearts". The news since election day has over and over again asserted that we are a divided nation, that the lines of division are so hard and deep that there is no way for us to heal, no way in which mutual love and respect for those who believe or act or vote differently than we do can be found. But in Christ there is a way back. What if we put the same effort into welcoming those with whom we disagree as we do in the ways we welcome Jesus? What if we sang songs for those who make us mad and offered cookies to everyone who voted differently than we did? What if we soften our hearts enough to invite a stranger to church to share in the worship of the Christ child? Softening our hearts for the Christ child begins when, to quote a theologian from another generation, "the Christ in me seeks the Christ in you". May this be the heart of our Advent preparations!

Peace, Pastor Dave



This is a very exciting time for Countryside Trinity Church as we welcome our new family members from Warren Avenue Presbyterian Church.

The future holds many possibilities for all of us and we are looking forward to growing in faith together.

Please join us in Fellowship Hall for a "Welcome Lunch Reception" on Sunday, December 9, 2018, following worship.



Recurring EVENTS at CTC

Family Game Night

First Tuesday of the Month
6:30-8:30 pm in Manse
(Bring Snack to Share)

Book Club-Meets in the Lounge most Wednesdays @ 1:00 pm - (Bring lunch if desired)

Bible Study-Meets in the Lounge most Thursday evenings at 5:15 pm

Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall - Sunday mornings following worship @ 11:30 a.m. in CTC Fellowship Hall

All Committees Meeting
Second Tuesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. in designated areas

Session/Deacons Joint Meeting Third Tuesday of the month in the Lounge unless otherwise scheduled

Upcoming EVENTS - CTC

Private Christmas Party - in Fellowship Hall on December 1st.

Welcome Dinner Reception, on Sunday, December 9th in Fellowship Hall following worship services.

Christmas Eve Worship Service, will be on Monday, December 24th @ 7:00 p.m.

Upcoming **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Boar's Head Christmas Festival

Date: 11/29 @ 7:30 p.m.; 12/1 @ 7:30 p.m. & 12/2 @ 4:00 p.m.
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 808 Weiss St., Saginaw, MI
No Cost - Free Will Offering

Hollyday Art Fair

Date: 12/5/2018 - **Time:** 10:00 AM TO 4:00 PM
Andersen Enrichment Center, 120 Ezra Rust Dr., across from Ojibway Island, Saginaw, MI 48601; Featuring fresh holly sale, cookies, and distinctive gifts. Lunch served in Garden Room 11:00 am-1:30 pm for a cost of \$6.00. Silent auction from 10:00 am-3:00 pm

Dow Event Center - A Very Electric Christmas

Date: 12/5/2018 - **Time:** 7:30 PM
The Dow Event Center, 303 Johnson, Saginaw, MI 48607
Phone: (989) 759-1320

Event Description: Brighten your holidays with Lightwire Theater's "A Very Electric Christmas". Audiences of all ages will treasure this magical & captivating tale of family, friendship & hope set to timeless holiday hits including Nat King Cole & Tchaikovsky. In this wonderful story, Santa's helpers are putting the final touches on presents as a young bird named Max & his family head south for the winter. When Max gets blown off course during a snowstorm, he ends up alone & lost at the North Pole. As he tries to make his way home, his adventure begins when he encounters friendly caroling worms, dancing poinsettias, Nutcracker soldiers, mischievous mice & the evil Rat King. This is a delightful holiday production! On sale Oct 5 at The Dow Event Center, Ticketmaster.com or (800)745-3000 (fees may apply).

Living Nativity - A Journey Into Bethlehem

Date: 12/7/2018-12/9/2018 **Time:** 12/7 @ 7-9 pm; 12/8 & 9 @ 6-8 pm
Immanuel Lutheran Church, 8220 E. Holland Rd., (M-46) Saginaw, MI 48601 (5 Miles east of I-75, on corner of M-46 and Mueller Road).

Event Description: Travel to the ancient town of Bethlehem to pay your taxes and be counted in the Roman census. Hear the shepherds talk about the angels' proclamation. Listen to the prophet talk of signs and wonders. Enjoy the city alive with activity and no room at the inn. Avoid the anger of the Roman soldiers and tax collectors. See the babe asleep in a manger. Experience all of this and more at the "Living Nativity". This is a **FREE** activity but is outdoors involving an approximate 30 minute walk so dress appropriately for the weather.

SBSO: Magic of the Holidays

Date: 12/11/2018 - **Time:** 8:00 PM TO 10:00 PM
Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra - Temple Theatre, 201 N. Washington Ave., Saginaw, MI 48607; **Phone:** (989) 415-5596
SBSO ushers in the exciting sounds of the season with its annual holiday pops concert. This performance includes some of your favorite holiday music. Titles like Around the World at Christmas Time, Christmas at the Movies, Sleigh Ride and the traditional Christmas Sing-a-long. New this year, this performance will feature local artists Amy and Billy Petty performing traditional holiday songs and a few memorable selections from Broadway musicals.



Mission & Women's News: Last month we fed 24 adults and 24 children by providing Thanksgiving baskets for them chock full of all kinds of goodies. Thanks to all who donated and who helped shop and pack.

The Christmas Fund (UCC) and the Joy Offering (PCUSA) are the offerings for the month of December.

The Joy Offering is split 50-50 between Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color and providing assistance for current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs.

The Christmas Offering is used to supplement health premiums and to provide emergency grants for retired clergy and their families.

We will again have the angel tree with names, ages and sizes for family members from Weiss School. Take a tag, buy an appropriate gift for that person. Wrap the gift and return it under the tree with the tag attached.

We will be packing food baskets for eight needy families from several different school districts. Items that are needed will be highlighted in the Sunday morning announcements.

If you are looking for a mission to gift this Christmas, catalogs from Presbytery, Church World Service, and Heifer are available in Fellowship Hall.

CROP - We thank those who walked in and those who donated to the CROP Walk. The weather was beautiful. We collected \$630.

2018 ADVENT SERIES

We begin our Advent Program on Wednesday, November 28, 2018, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall at Countryside Trinity Church and continuing for a total of four weeks. This year's program is *"The Gift of the Nutcracker"*.

The following is a list of the meals we will be sharing starting with the first week, on November 28th:

Week One - Appetizers/Session

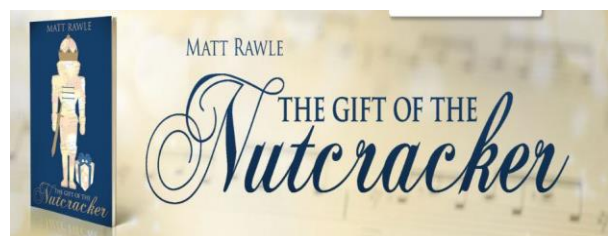
Week Two - Salads/Worship

Week Three - Soup and Bread/Choir

Week Four - Desserts - Congregation

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend what promises to be an exciting Advent program. The designated committees will provide the food for the first three weeks, and on the fourth week, if you wish to bring a dessert to share please do so. Otherwise just bring yourself as there is always more than enough to go around.

The Nutcracker was first performed in 1892, quickly becoming a holiday tradition, one that continues for many families to this day. In *The Gift of The Nutcracker*, Matt Rawle takes a look at this Christmas classic in a new way--through the lens of faith. In this four-week Advent series, Rawle uses the iconic tale to help us understand God's greatest gift of the Christ child and of the kingdom Christ came to build.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Mari McKenzie

	October				
	Beginning Balance	Receipts	Disbursements	Transfers	Ending Balance
General	7,135.43	6,576.20	9,420.99	6,500.00	10,790.64
Memorial	4,286.83			(1,500.00)	2,786.83
Special projects	2,038.79	175.00	2,250.00		(36.21)
Mission					
Hunger	636.79				636.79
Heifer proj (Church School)	14.44				14.44
UCC/PCU	179.00	60.00			239.00
Good Samaritan	2,663.28				2,663.28
Muriel Lakey Scholarship	3,778.84	310.22			4,089.06
Womens Association	-		11.20		(11.20)
Local	73.75	10.00			83.75
Bricks	1,350.40				1,350.40
	22,157.55	7,131.42	11,682.19	5,000.00	22,606.78
Endowment	157,200.60			(5,000.00)	152,200.60
	179,358.15	7,131.42	11,682.19	-	174,807.38

YOUR SESSION/COUNCIL AT WORK

There will be no report this month from the Clerk of Session as the Session meeting has not yet taken place for November.

Submitted for your information,
Mary Ann Parker, Clerk of Session



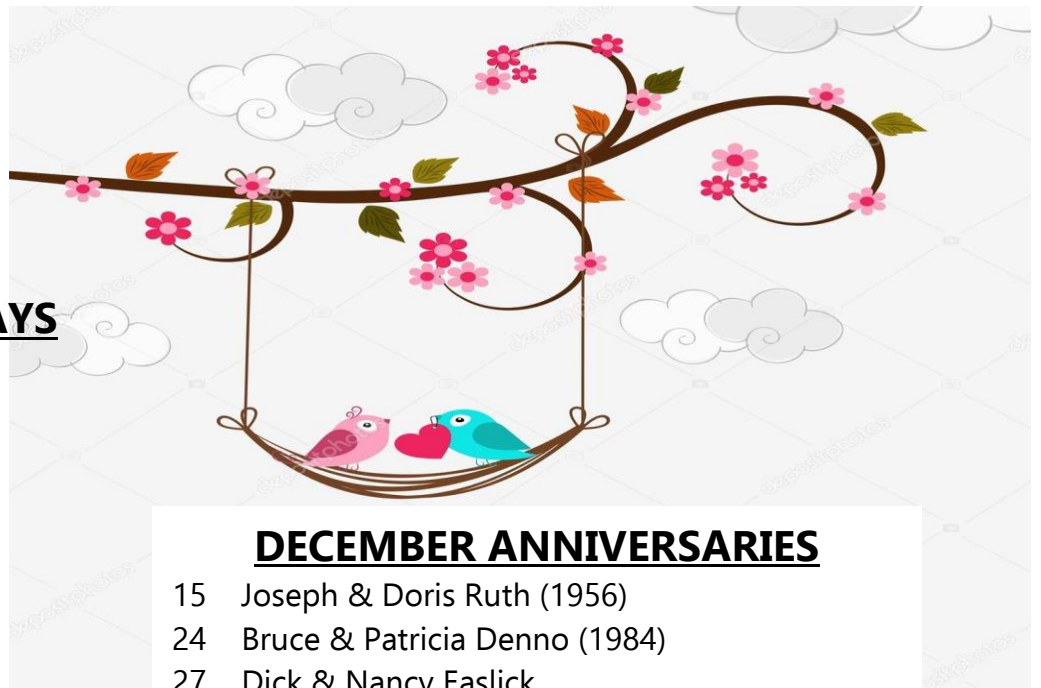
TIDBIT: Hugging is healthy. It helps the body's immune system. It cures depression. It reduces stress. It's rejuvenating. It has no unpleasant side effects. It is God's miracle drug! It is all natural, it contains no chemicals, artificial ingredients, no pesticides and no preservatives. Hugging is practically perfect. There are no parts to break down, no monthly payments, non-taxable, non-polluting, and of course, it's fully returnable! Here is your hug for the day!





DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Rhashell Hunter (1958)
- 8 Garth Westendorf
- 16 Alexa Mahan (1992)
- 17 Nancy Easlick
- 18 Paula Plater (1970)
- 22 Ed Halase (1945)
- 25 Brecque Woodke



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 15 Joseph & Doris Ruth (1956)
- 24 Bruce & Patricia Denno (1984)
- 27 Dick & Nancy Easlick

HEALTH & SAFETY - IN SAGINAW

Mondays: Blood pressure clinic meets from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at Zauel Memorial Library, 3100 N. Center Road.

Monday-Friday: Aquatic exercises at the Sherwood Pool are held weekly. Classes are at 7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. and 11:35 a.m. The ability to swim is not required. Lap swimming is at 11:35 a.m. There is a charge for exercises and lap swimming. For more information visit the Community Education page at www.stcs.org or call (989) 797-1847.

Tuesdays: Weight Watchers meets at 9:30 a.m. at Swanhaven Manor, 300 Kennely Road in Thomas Township.

Tuesdays and Fridays: Adult senior exercise will be held Tuesdays at 2:00 p.m. and Fridays at 11:00 a.m. at the Second Presbyterian Church, 2665 Midland Road. The instructor is Anne Dietzel.

Thursdays: Chair Yoga for senior citizens, those unable to do floor yoga, and those recovering from an injury, will be held at 11:00 a.m. at First Congregational Church, 403 S. Jefferson Ave., Saginaw, led by Chantelle Rivett Hosner, certified chair yoga instructor.

Ongoing: Senior Fitness/Health Club, 4032 Bay Road, offers yoga, dance and tai-chi classes. The facility now accepts Silver Sneakers. Ages 18 and over are welcome. For more information call (989) 790-5788.

Senior Center Activities: There are many centers in the Saginaw area offering continuing weekly activities from dancing and exercise to cards. A list will be posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. You can also go online to view a list of each month's activities. Go to www.saginawcounty.com and hover on the tab "Community & Services" and then click on the drop down item "Commission on Aging". Look for upcoming events and there will be a link for Senior Center Events & Activities. **Check it out** - there are some fun activities that continue throughout the year.

CARDS AND GAMES

First and Third Wednesdays - Euchre night is at 6:30 p.m. at the Creek Side Bar & Grille at Crooked Creek, 9387 Gratiot Road, Saginaw. Call (989) 781-0050 for more information.

Thursdays: Bingo will be played at 10 a.m. at the Moose Family Center, 2218 Midland Rd., Saginaw Township 989 793-9735.

Fridays: **Eleanor Frank Senior Center**, 2355 Schust Road (at the entrance to Haithco Park) has an open euchre tournament starting at 9:30 a.m. for senior citizens ages 60 and older. Call Bob at (989) 525-4400 for details.

The **Eagles Club**, 7078 Gratiot Road, will hold Jack of Spades at 9:00 p.m. The public is welcome.

UCC clergy, congregants stand with young plaintiffs in climate justice case

October 30, 2018

Written by **Connie Larkman**



Twenty one young people suing the federal government to secure a legal right to a stable climate for future generations are still waiting for their day in court. The Supreme Court's [temporary stay](#), issued October 21, has yet to be lifted, keeping *Juliana v. The United States* from beginning as scheduled in Eugene, Ore., Monday, October 29. Instead, youth around the country, at scores of Federal Courthouses across the U.S., raised their voices in local rallies, demanding the young plaintiffs get their right to be heard.

Along with people of different faiths, three UCC ministers participated in the opening prayers of the rally at the Federal Courthouse in Eugene on Monday

morning. The Rev. Melanie Oommen, mother of one of the plaintiffs and associate minister of First Congregational United Church of Christ of Eugene, was joined by the Rev. Curran Reichert, pastor of First Congregational Church of Sonoma (California) UCC, and the Rev. Brooks Berndt, minister of Environmental Justice for the UCC.

"I want to speak this morning as a person of faith and as a parent," Berndt said. "What I have come to realize in our society is that unfortunately a lot parents have not yet connected the daily spirituality of their lives with the reality of climate change. I can tell you nothing mobilizes and moves a parent to act like getting a child out of harm's way. Yet, it is as if our society is stampeding toward the cliff's edge, and we are not realizing the danger our children and youth are in. The cliff's edge is now in sight, and we are still struggling to make the connection. This is why I believe the voices of the plaintiffs are so critically important."

The young people are interested in climate justice, but *Juliana v. The United States* is about [civil rights](#). The plaintiffs contend that a safe environment is their Constitutional right — one that has been violated. They want a court-ordered mandate that phases out the use of fossil fuels nationwide.

[Our Children's Trust](#) is the non-profit organization that has been working with the young people to get justice since 2015 as the case has worked its way the courts. The people of First Congregational Church of Sonoma UCC became interested in the case over a year ago through a relationship with Our Children's Trust.

"One of the co-founders of Our Children's Trust, Sharon Duggan, is a personal friend of mine," said Virginia Bertelsen, a member of the First Congregational Church Earth Care Committee. "We decided we wanted to support them in this effort." In the last year, the Sonoma church has held a town forum with a few of the plaintiffs, invited youth to talk about environment and creation care, and participated in the UCC's 1,000 sermon program on the plaintiffs' behalf.

So when the *Juliana v. The United States* got a court date, a trip up from Sonoma to Eugene to support the young people during the first day of the trial was planned. On Saturday, Rev. Curran and 14 members of First Congregational Church drove to Oregon, bearing gifts.

"A sister of one of the Earth Care Committee members is also one of the Sisters of Charity in Dubuque, Iowa," Bertelsen said. "The Sisters have a group, called the 'Knit Wits' which made some hats for the 21 plaintiffs."

"A deeply moving moment happened when the members of the Sonoma UCC church met with the plaintiffs at the house at which they are staying," Berndt said. "The Sonoma folks brought each of them a green knitted hat, personal letters of support from congregation members, and books of poetry. The Sonoma folks shared why they were so supportive. The Sonoma pastor asked the youth to reflect on how they were feeling in that moment and what they were thinking. The responses were powerful. The Our Children's Trust staff were deeply appreciative that the Sonoma folks had created a space for that."



"The reception here has been unbelievable," Bertelsen said. "The time with the kids was the most magical, sacred time. The children have been so strong for the last three years waiting for this trial. I saw in their faces.. there was circle made Saturday between them and our members and there was this lovely energy and trust. When Curran asked, 'how are you feeling?' they took time and listened to themselves. Seemed like such a relief for them to be heard and held."

Berndt said he still hopes the trial will begin this week. *Juliana v. The United States* has already survived several legal challenges and motions to dismiss, with lower federal courts allowing it to proceed.

The UCC sermon campaign, Justice for #EachGeneration, which urges clergy across the country, and young people of all faith traditions to preach a sermon for the plaintiffs, will continue for the duration of the case.

And though the members of Sonoma UCC will be heading back to California Tuesday, before the trial begins, the young plaintiffs remain in their hearts and in their prayers.

"It's been a phenomenal journey," Bertelsen said. "We were so honored to be here in support of the youth."

Four PDA spiritual care providers now serving in fire, shooting affected California

Disaster Response November 13, 2018

More help will materialize once deadly fires are out

by Mike Ferguson | Presbyterian News Service



A firefighter sprays water as part of efforts to put out fire in Southern California. (Courtesy of Los Angeles County)

LOUISVILLE – While the deadliest fires ever to strike California continue to burn, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has deployed four National Response Team members to Southern California, where residents are enduring both a mass shooting and the Woolsey and Hill fires.

They're serving as Disaster Spiritual Care Providers, working in American Red Cross shelters in Pacific Palisades and the San Fernando Valley. In the wake of the Camp Fire, PDA has approved an initial \$7,500 grant to the Presbytery of Sacramento; grant requests are also anticipated from Santa Barbara and Pacific presbyteries, said Jim Kirk, associate for PDA's National Disaster Response.

Together with the Rev. Jim Kitchens, transitional executive presbyter for the Presbytery of Sacramento, Kirk worshiped Sunday at Bidwell Presbyterian Church in Chico, Calif., a half-hour west of the nearly destroyed community of Paradise, Calif.

"Chico didn't lose any property, but a number of members who lived in Paradise lost their homes," Kitchens said.

Kitchens is perhaps uniquely qualified to help fire-affected people of faith: He's been pastor at two separate churches that suffered fires.

"I deeply understand the kind of trauma that living through a fire brings to a congregation," he said Tuesday. "There is some pastoral sensitivity I try to take with me, knowing what old traumas can trigger in people. Clearly this was a church in shock."

"The Camp Fire is truly historic," PDA's Kirk said. "Everybody is going to know somebody" impacted by the fire, which had as of Tuesday killed 42 people and led to 53,000 people being evacuated, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

With fires still raging in both Northern and Southern California, it's unsafe for PDA personnel to travel currently in the impacted areas. "We are early responders, but not first responders," Kirk said. "Our goal is to stay out of the way. Once it is safe and appropriate, PDA can come in to work with presbyteries and congregations to develop response plans."

In the Presbytery of Santa Barbara, fires ignited Nov. 8, a day after a gunman killed 12 people in a country music bar in nearby Thousand Oaks. "The fires are a way of life, unfortunately, but shooting is not," said Sandy Thoits, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Santa Barbara. "People who are grieving had to be evacuated." To date, 84,000 people have been evacuated because of the Woolsey Fire, which as of Tuesday was responsible for two deaths and three injuries, according to FEMA.

PDA expects to approve a grant in support of people affected by the violence.

The Rev. Dr. Kate Wiebe, a pastor at large in the Presbytery of Santa Barbara and the executive director of the Institute for Collective Trauma and Growth, is working with people hurt by tragedies of both fire and violence.

"The shootings and the fire occurred within 24 hours. For those folks, they are very entwined, so you can't separate it out," Wiebe said. "People are overwhelmed and distraught. They're experiencing a wide range of emotions and reactions."

Mass shootings "bring out issues of blame and anger in a way that natural disasters don't always do," she said.

Like firefighters who are increasingly called upon year-round to battle fires in the wildland urban interface, second responders like Wiebe are seeing less and less down time.

"In terms of groups being stretched thin, many disaster response groups find it difficult to find mental health and spiritual care providers," she said. "They are needed in so many places right now."

Indeed, Kirk said, presbytery staff in parts of fire-affected California "say that they are starting to have conversations about this may be the new normal" because of factors including climate change and drought. "This is raising a lot of concern for people who have to live in areas where fire is possible."

"I hope the denomination will be prayerful and generous," Kirk said, "in their support of our Presbyterian family who are still in harm's way."

To donate, visit <https://pma.pcusa.org/donate/make-a-gift/gift-info/DR000165>. To give by phone, call 800-872-3283. To send a check, designate where you want your gift to go on the memo line and mail to: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.

2018

CALENDAR YEAR

DECEMBER

CALENDAR MONTH

FIRST DAY OF
WEEK



Countryside Trinity Church

4690 Weiss St. Saginaw, MI 48603

Email: Countryside@ctcsaginaw.com

Phone: 989-793-0125



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25	26	27	28	29	30	01 Private Party
02 10:25 am-Announcements in Sanctuary; 10:30 am - Worship Service W/ Communion; 11:30 am- Coffee Hour	03	04 6:30 pm Family Game Night @ Manse. Bring a snack to share	05 1:00 pm Book Study	06 5:15 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm Choir Practice	07	08
09 10:25 am-Announcements in Sanctuary; 10:30 am - Worship Service; 11:30 am - Welcome Reception	10	11 6:00 p.m. All Committees Meeting	12 10:30 am Pack Backpacks- Weiss School; 1:00 pm Book Study	13 5:15 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm Choir Practice	14	15
16 10:25 am-Announcements in Sanctuary; 10:30 am - Worship Service; 11:30 am - Cookie Walk	17	18 6:00 p.m. Joint Deacon & Session Council Meeting	19 1:00 pm Book Study Deadline for January Newsletter	20 5:15 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm Choir Practice	21	22
23 10:25 am-Announcements in Sanctuary; 10:30 am- Worship Service 11:30 am - Coffee Hour:	24 OFFICE CLOSED 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service	25 OFFICE CLOSED 	26 NO PACKING BACKPACKS AND NO BOOK STUDY	27 NO BIBLE STUDY; NO CHOIR PRACTICE	28	29
30 10:25 am-Announcements in Sanctuary; 10:30 am - Worship Service; 11:30 am - Coffee Hour:	31 OFFICE CLOSED NEW YEAR'S EVE	01 OFFICE CLOSED HAPPY NEW YEAR!	02	03 Office Hours: Mon-Fri 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Worship Services on Sundays at 10:30 a.m.	04	05 

Countryside Trinity Church
4690 Weiss Street
Saginaw, MI 48603



The Magic of Christmas - "The Magic of Christmas" is an original Christian poem about the true spirit of Christmas, which can't be bought or wrapped up in a box; it comes from the inside as we share good will with those around us:

"*Joy to the World*," the carolers sang out as last minute shoppers scurried about, desperately seeking that one special gift that would give Christmas morning a magical lift.

As an old man stood standing, listening to the song, midst all the madness of the bustling throng, in a shaky, hoarse voice he began to join in singing the words of the famous old hymn.

One by one people stopped with their madness to join with the old man for a moment of gladness.

By the time the carolers finished with singing the song, the whole throng was united as they all sang along.

As if by magic from out of the sky Church bells rang out from a chapel nearby. And when it was over the people greeted each other with messages of good will they shared with one another.

You see, that magical lift the shoppers sought for so long, was not in the buying or scurrying along. That magical gift so desperately sought was the *Spirit of Christmas*—which could never be bought. --
Tom Krause