



Grace Abounds *December 2024*

Grace Lutheran Church

A Center of Mission and Ministry—Celebrating and Sharing God's Grace!



Can you believe we're in the 12th month of 2024 and racing toward Christmas? As sung by the Rolling Stones, Freddie Mercury, and others, "Time Waits for No One!" Yes, time keeps moving on regardless of how many "things" we have on our plate especially at this time of the year. So, try to find some peace and calm as your holiday schedules ramp up to a pace that is sometimes impossibly hard to keep up with.

One of the questions that's popped up in my mind for our December newsletter is a question we'll either ask someone, or we will be asked, as Christmas fast approaches. "What do you want for Christmas?" Currently, there is a myriad of stuff out there that can quickly fill anyone's list. From electronic gadgets, jewelry, clothes, to the ever-popular ca\$h, there's an almost unlimited variety of things we can ask for, or be asked for, by our loved ones.

But what if this year we ask a special someone what He wants? Instead of the routine question being asked of those we deem close to us, what if we ask this – "God, what do you want for Christmas?" This puts a different spin on this time we call a "holiday."

God obviously doesn't need anything does He? God is the all-powerful, omni-present, omniscient Being without equal – so God doesn't need anything from us. Or does He? God wants our heart to be in communion with Him and return to Him so that we can return to the image in which we've been created. The all-loving Holy God is ready to make us holy if we but give Him our heart and have faith in the Son Jesus who came to make us free. Our search of the Bible doesn't take long for us to see this. Scripture is ripe with passages where our heart is of prime importance to our Creator.

"You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:13, ESV) And, in Matthew 22:37, Jesus is reaching out telling us, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." The God who is everything, and has everything in His hands, wants our hearts to be in Him so that His kingdom may come closer to fruition.

While we prepare our Christmas "holy-day" celebrations, and are asking our loved-ones and friends, "What do you want for Christmas", don't forget to keep God on your gift-giving list too. Whether it be at church, or in the quiet of your home looking over the decorations and Christmas tree, take some time to talk with God and ask Him, "What do you want for Christmas Lord?" I believe you'll hear God say, "I only want your heart!"

After all, that's one of the many gifts God gave you to bring life into your world. Share it with God who loves you more than you can ever know.

Have a merry and blessed Christmas and a joyous New Year!

Blessings always, *Pastor Dave*

Contact Pastor Dave by cell phone at :
(219)707-9823 or by email at :
pastordaveadamsgrace@gmail.com



DECEMBER Birthdays

- 1 - Ronnie Cromer, Hannah Derrick
- 2 - Steve Bedenbaugh
- 3 - Jenny Braswell, Ron Brown
- 4 - Mollie Waters
- 8 - Helena Mewbourn
- 22 - Teresa Cooper
- 23 - Meghan H. Bryant
- 25 - Mike Hawkins
- 27 - Tara Stewart, Allie Waters
- 31 - Savannah Harmon

DECEMBER Anniversaries

- 5 - James & Nancy Derrick (55th)
- 12 - Craig and Lisa Farr (43rd)
- 21 - Cindy and Richard Amick (22nd)
- 21 - Chop and Teresa Cooper (55th)
- 21 - Mike and Andy Hawkins
- 23 - Tara and Greg Stewart (29th)
- 23 - *Faye and Charles Hartman* +
- 29 - Wayde and Sally Dominick (40th)
- + Memorial Anniversary

DECEMBER Baptisms

- 1 - Samantha Yarborough
- 6 - Kay Chandler, Bashtin Dawkins
- 10 - Deron Shealy
- 11 - Shane Bouknight, Justin Farr
- 12 - Christopher Wilson
- 15 - Kelly Shealy
- 22 - Craig Farr
- 24 - Jason Riley
- 26 - Cole Dawkins
- 27 - Jean Bedenbaugh
- 28 - Jessica Sandor
- 29 - Cindy Amick

Update Your Contact Information

In January, Grace will be printing a new *People of Grace* Directory. If your contact information or a family member's information changed in 2024, please call or email the office so our directory can be as accurate as possible.



Update your contact info!

If you have not been receiving emails from Grace, please share your email address with us as we often send last-minute details about events and other reminders by email.

Also, please let us know if you no longer have a home telephone number so we can delete it from your listing. Let us know if you would like your cell phone number included in the directory.

Thank you for helping us to stay in touch!



New Devotional Books

Christ in Our Home

Devotional books for January-March (regular and large print) are available on the table in the narthex near the

Ministry Center entrance. Pick up one for your household.

Women's Bible Study

Our Wednesday Night Bible Study will continue to meet through December 18. Then we will take a break in January due to the Heartland Conference School of Religion classes and resume again in February. We meet each Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.

IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

Grace Family: Cissie & Bob Dibble; Marysue Rivers; Evelyn Harmon; Pastor Al Potter; Glenda & Everett Crafts; Heather & Bob Harris.

Residential Care: Allene Dawkins (*Springfield Place, Unit 4 Rm.207*); Wendy and Michael Riley (*J.F. Hawkins, Rm. 221*).

College Students: Bryce Medlock (*Bluefield University*); Lexi Medlock (*SE Esthetics Institute*); Payton Metts (*Piedmont*); Taylor Metz (*MUSC*); Bailey Stewart (*USC-Union*).

Extended Family: Amanda Holt (*Andrea Lewis' daughter*); Heyward Adams (*Anna K. Singley's son*); Stephanie Martin (*Robert's daughter-in-law*); Jim Sealey (*Lori Derrick's father*); Libby & Billy Bedenbaugh; Michael Torrence (*Jeanna Hall's brother*).

Military: Staff SGT. Anderson Dibble (*Marines/Stone Bay, NC- The Dibble's granddaughter*); Everett Crafts, V (*Air Force - Glenda/Everett Craft's grandson*); Walker Eldridge (*USCG/Seattle, WA*).

Community: Bobby Chandler, Families who received Thanksgiving Meal Bags

God's World: Hurricane Victims & Recovery Efforts; Victims of gun violence; Haiti, Ukraine, Israel, Palestine, and neighboring countries; those affected by wildfires, flooding, hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, and other natural disasters; military families; homeless; jobless/underemployed; refugees; those suffering due to unrest

To add or remove a name from the Prayer List, please contact the office at 803-364-3331, leave us a note, or email us at: gracelutherenprosperity@gmail.com.

**GOD
HEARS
YOUR
PRAYERS**

Memorials and Honorariums

To the Current Fund

In memory of Bobby Byers
by Lynn & Larry Wessinger

In memory of Billy George
by Bud & Marlene Koon

In honor of Emmett Wicker
by Phil & Deborah Ruff

To the Thanksgiving Meal Bag Fund

In honor of Judy Bedenbaugh
by Kim & John Uhas

To the Campership Fund

In memory of Bobby Byers
by Chop & Teresa Cooper

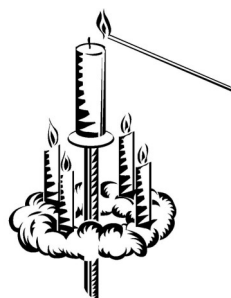
To the Disaster Response Fund

In memory of Bobby Byers
by Judy Bedenbaugh

In memory of Bobby Byers by Edna Riley

In memory of Bobby Byers
by the Women's Bible Study

In memory of Bobby Byers
by Phil & Deborah Ruff



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Grace will offer Christmas Eve worship services at 4:00 and 10:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 24th.

Both services will have similar liturgy and will include Holy Communion and candle lighting.

Come worship with us and invite your family and friends to join you.

Serving in December

Assisting Ministers

1	Deborah Ruff
8	Judy Bedenbaugh
15	Jessica Shealy
22	Susan Dawkins
24 4pm–	Emmett Wicker
10:30 pm–	Allie Waters
29	Ronnie Cromer

Altar Greenery/Flowers

1	Chrismon Trees
8	Poinsettias/Trees
15	Poinsettias/Trees
22	Poinsettias/Trees
29	Poinsettias/Trees

Livestream Operators

1	Brad Waters
8	David Luther
15	Mike Whitlock
22	Jessica Shealy
29	Johnny Merck

Acolyte Zoe Frick

Communion Assistant Sally Dominick

Communion Preparation Mike Whitlock

Communion Clean up Emmett Wicker

Crucifer Dec. 24 Christmas Eve 10:30pm
Camryn Shealy

Torchbearers

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve 10:30pm
Jonathan Shealy, Mollie Waters

Ushers Ronnie & Linda Cromer, Candace,
Chad, & Zach Frick

Greeters Beverly Merck, Lynn Wessinger

Offering Tabulators Candace & Chad Frick,
Ronnie & Linda Cromer

Altar Guild Emmett Wicker

Pew Helpers Dale & Julie Shealy

Front Sign Dale & Julie Shealy

Sanctuary Lamp Sponsor



During the month of December the Sanctuary Lamp burns to the glory of God and in loving memory of Bidie and Lewis Hawkins by Beverly Hawkins.



The 2025 Altar Flower and Sanctuary Lamp charts are posted on the narthex board. Sign up now to reserve your special dates.

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

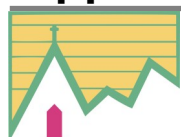
Sunday Date	Sanctuary	* Online	Total
11/03	66	8	74
11/10	55	8	63
11/17	58	8	66
11/24	64	6	70



11/03	33
11/10	29
11/17	26
11/24	30



Please have your articles and announcements for the January Newsletter in by Dec. 19th.



Church
FINANCES

Our Offerings for October Through November 24

(Does not include November EFTs)

MINISTRY BUDGET Our Monthly Need: \$13,634

Given during month.....	14,463.73
Given year-to-date.....	122,543.04
Goal through Nov. 24	149,978.51

MAINTENANCE/UPKEEP FUND

Given during month	985.65
Given year-to-date.....	22,318.98

PARSONAGE FUND

Given during month.....	0.00
Given year-to-date	0.00
Fund Balance, Nov. 24.....	4,640.38

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Given during month	110.20
Given year-to-date	1,157.15

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Given during month	0.00
Given year-to-date	345.00

CAMPERSHIP FUND

Given during month	25.00
Given year-to-date	175.69

COMMUNITY SERVICE FUND

Community Assistance.....	0.00
Given year-to-date	180.00
Bookbag Food Ministry	0.00
Given year-to-date	896.74
Thanksgiving Meal	310.00
Given year-to-date	360.00
Total year-to-date	1,436.74

SPECIAL 2024 OFFERINGS YTD

Scholarship Fund Match 2023	386.38
Lenten Offering	698.12
Youth	115.79
Disaster Response	1,335.00
Souper Bowl (Feed Thy Neighbor)	326.51
Easter Lilies	231.00
Bereavement Meal Fund	978.62
Christian Schools	0.00
Love Offering (Henricks Family)	960.00
Love Offering (Torrence Family)	1,817.00
Love Offering (Newberry College— Pantry)	167.00
MCH Football Meal	285.55
VBS Love Offering	20.00
VBS	464.00
POINSETTIAS	350.00



MINISTRY BUDGET

Needed thru November 24:	\$ 149,978.51
Given thru November 24:	\$ 122,543.04
Amount Behind Goal:	\$ 27,435.47

Year End Contributions Due

Year-end contributions should be received in the church office no later than December 31st to be included on your 2024 giving statement.

Thank you—your offerings make a difference!

2025 Offering Envelopes



2025 offering envelopes will be ready for you to pick up on the table outside the church office soon. If you don't see a box with your name on it, please contact the church office and Valerie will be happy to get a box to you.

Alternative Designation

Alternative Designation Forms are included in the envelope boxes and on the envelope table for those who would prefer a portion of their offering not be forwarded to the ELCA. **A new form must be completed every year. Turn in completed forms with your first gift of 2025.**

Electronic Giving

Electronic giving is an option at Grace through Vanco. Scan the QR Code at right or go to our Online Giving page on our website: graceluth.org to get started.



Manna House Needs

December— 1 or 2 lb. bags of Rice
January— Canned Fruit

Backpack Ministry



We encourage everyone continue to give. **We try to include extra items in their bags over the holidays** while they are out of school. We are currently helping 10 needy children at Prosperity—Rikard Elementary School.

Council Meeting Minutes for November 12, 2024

Meeting called to order with reading of the mission statement.

Deborah Ruff presented devotions from 1st Thessalonians entitled "Gratitude Changes Everything."

Robert Martin made a motion to accept reports as presented with second by Mike Whitlock.

Deborah made a motion to approve the 2025 Budget as presented by Finance Team with second from Lynn Wessinger.

Lynn made a motion to approve cutting down tree on Highway 76 to prepare for handicap parking plan with second by Sue Mitchell.

George Dawkins, Robert Martin, and Johnny Merck will be heading up the Constitutional By-Laws Committee and they will get started after first of the year.

Update given on *Building a Culture of Generosity*. One more Zoom meeting to attend and they will get started with a stewardship plan after the first of the year.

Sunday School breakfast coordinators discussed. Mike Shealy will be stepping down from his breakfast duties but will continue to stock the kitchen. Peggy Thomas will be taking over, but we need 4 assistants from the congregation to take one Sunday.

Ministry Updates given. Keep an eye on the bulletin for many events happening soon.

Shepherding concerns discussed.

Next meeting will be Monday, December 9th at 6:30 due to Preschool program on December 10th .

Pastor Dave ended the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Candace Frick, Council Secretary



December 9 at 6:30 p.m.
Newly elected council members
should attend this meeting as
officers will be elected for 2025.

New Council Members and Congregational Officers Elected

Church Council elections and election for Congregation VP and Secretary were held Sunday, Nov. 17. The four nominees elected to church council were Chop Cooper, Chad Frick, Len Fulmer and Andy Metz. Zoe Frick was elected for a 1 year youth term on the council. Johnny Merck was elected as 2025 Congregation VP and Sally Dominick was elected as 2025 Secretary.

October Financial Reports

Current Fund Balance does not include designated monies for the LED Bulb Fund (\$534.37); Bereavement Meal Fund (\$1,575.61); Choir Fund (\$325) or Sydney Shealy Memorial Gift (\$307.74) contained within the Current Fund Checking Account.

	<u>Balance 10/1</u>	<u>Received</u>	<u>Disbursed</u>	<u>Balance 10/31</u>	<u>Additional Information</u>
Current/Budget Fund	\$ 54,250.92	\$ 17,972.40	\$ 14,344.96	\$ 57,878.36	\$ 11,304.13 CD
Maintenance Fund	\$ 27,402.65	\$ 1,297.49	\$ 945.50	\$ 27,754.64	n/a
Sunday School Account	\$ 3,119.14	\$ 137.00	\$ 537.43	\$ 2,718.71	n/a
Christian Schools Acct.	\$ 17,178.20	\$ 9,288.99	\$ 8,816.04	\$ 17,711.15	n/a
CS Educational Fund	\$ 7,761.59	\$ 7,757.00	\$ 5,803.36	\$ 9,715.23	n/a

December 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 1st Sunday of Advent 9:15 Breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Advent Kick-off Walk Through	2 Deadline for Christmas Gifts 	3	4 6:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study 7:30 pm Choir	5 9:30 a.m. Chrismon Tree Decorating 	6	7  Christmas Parade 2pm Youth decorating parade float
8 2nd Sunday of Advent 9:15 Breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Congregational Meeting 3:00 Prosperity Christmas Parade	9  Council Meeting 6:30 p.m.	10  6:30 pm	11 6:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	12	13	14
15 3rd Sunday of Advent 9:15 Breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 6:00 Youth Christmas Program	16 	17	18 6:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	19  For January Newsletter	20  5pm Youth Caroling	21
22 4th Sunday of Advent 9:15 Breakfast 9:30 Birthday Party for Jesus 10:30 Worship 	23 Preschool out until 1/7/25	24 Christmas Eve Church office Closed Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Services 4 & 10:30 pm	25  CHRISTMAS DAY	26 Church office Closed	27	28
29 9:15 Breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	30	31	January 1  Church office Closed on New Years Day	January 2 9:30 Newsletter Team		



December Events



Christmas Parade

Christmas Parade Float Plans Prosperity Christmas Parade—Dec. 8

Our Youth Ministry is sponsoring a float in the Prosperity Christmas Parade. Everyone in the congregation is invited to ride the float—wearing Christmas colors is encouraged. We are also planning to need several people walking alongside the float to hand out flyers promoting Grace's Christmas activities and services. There will be a pizza lunch after church (12/8) for Youth and all who plan to ride/walk with Grace's float. A sign-up sheet is on the narthex board. **(Please sign up by December 1.)**

Youth will be decorating their Christmas Parade float beginning at 2pm on Saturday, 12/7. All youth are encouraged to attend, as well as friends and adults who wish to help. For more information on ways you can help, please see Lynn Wessinger, Mike Shealy or Jessica Shealy.

Sunday, December 15

Youth Christmas Program 6pm

Grace Youth will present their Christmas program this Sunday evening. Everyone is encouraged to come out and support our youth. Let us know if you'd like to help too.



CAROLING

Friday, December 20

Youth Christmas Caroling 5pm

The Youth will be traveling to visit our home-bound members, sing carols, and wish them a Merry Christmas. This always brings lots of smiles to the kids, as well as the adults. Join us and experience the true magic of Christ's love. We'll meet in the Ministry Center at 5:00 p.m. Everyone is asked to bring a finger food or dessert to share when we get back to the church. **If you would like a visit from the carolers, please call the church office.**



There will be no GYM time on the 4th Sunday in December. Our next GYM Time will be **January 26 Noon- 1:30 p.m.**



Grace Youth Ministry represented at Grace's Trunk or Treat on Halloween.



Grace Youth Ministry got to better know Pastor Dave and he got to better know Grace Youth at our November GYM Time!

Thanks for supporting our youth!

Thank you to Andrea Lewis & Timothea Sharpe for contributing spaghetti sauce; Cayce Moates & Deborah Ruff for contributing spaghetti noodles; Deborah Ruff & Lynn Wessinger for contributing salad mix; Judy Bedenbaugh, Julie Shealy, & Lynn Wessinger for contributing salad toppings; and Timothea Sharpe for contributing homemade cookies for our delicious November GYM Time meal!

Delicious!



Advent Kick off—December 1st

The Care and Fellowship Team will sponsor an Advent Kickoff walk-through on Sunday, Dec. 1st after worship. We invite you to bring a favorite Christmas item to display. We will have tables set up in the ministry center for displays and a form for you to complete telling why the item is special. Someone will be in the ministry center during Sunday School to help set up displays and during the worship service to watch over items. Please plan to walk through the ministry center after church on Dec. 1st and view everyone's favorite Christmas items. We will not have a meal this year since that is Thanksgiving weekend.

The team will also sponsor an Advent service project for the Newberry College Wolves' Pantry. We will be collecting bars of soap, shampoo, and conditioner. (Multipacks are fine. College student volunteers will be separate them.) You may bring items to the kickoff on December 1st or bring them on December 8th or anytime during that week.



Special Christmas Gifts

If you would like to make a special Christmas gift to Grace in memory or in honor of someone, please place your donation in the offering plate or bring it to the church office no later than **Sunday, Dec. 1**. Christmas gifts will be listed in the special poinsettia bulletin insert on **Sunday, Dec. 8**. Mark your envelope "Christmas Gift" if you would like it to be included in the insert.

Advent/Christmas Offering

The Congregational Council has designated the Advent/Christmas Offering to go to Lutheran Disaster Response this year. We are receiving your donations already and will forward those as they come in.



The annual *Prosperity Christmas Parade* is Sunday, December 8 at 3pm. Our youth will be decorating the float the Saturday before at 2pm. If you'd like to help decorate or ride on the float please contact Lynn Wessinger. 'Tis the season! Come join the fun!

More details on page 8.



Preschool Christmas Program

You don't want to miss our Preschool's Christmas program this year. It's sure to bring a smile to your face! Join us on **Tuesday, December 10th at 6:30 p.m.** in our sanctuary.



2024 Christmas Cantata

Sunday, December 22, 10:30 a.m.

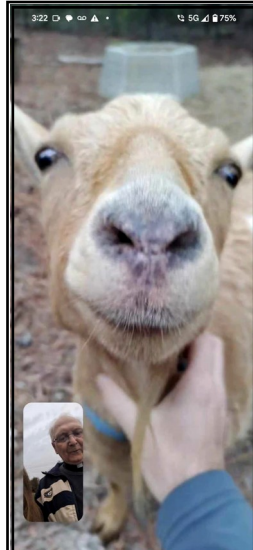
Hope Awakes in Bethlehem

The cantata choir, made up of Grace and Wightman church members, have been preparing, since August, to share with you this beautiful Christmas music.

Come, gather together with our congregation and community for a time of joy, celebration, and worship, as these songs recount the miraculous story of the birth of the Christ Child.

Blessing of the Animals

On Sunday, November 10, Grace had a special service to bless the Animals. People brought their pets and pictures of their pets. It was a wonderful afternoon!



Life

Long Education Team News

Watch for more information on the following:

December 22—You are invited to a **Happy Birthday Jesus Party** during the Sunday School hour.

January 7, 14, 21 & 28—Heartland Conference School of Religion hosted by Grace.

Coming Soon—Conversational Spanish Classes for the community sponsored by Newberry Adult Ed. Center. Tentative plans are for 8 classes, one each week in the evenings. Cost \$25/ person. More details coming soon.

Lifelong
Education
Team



Heartland Conference School of Religion

January 7, 14, 21 and 28 from 7 pm to 9 pm at Grace

Cost is \$20

Rev. Bobby Morris will be teaching a class on the Psalms

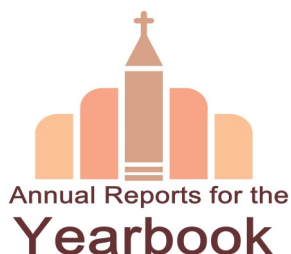
Rev. Melissa Chappell will be offering a class on poetry

She is a southern author who enjoys writing poetry about nature, spirituality, and romance. She has been published in literary journals and has published five books of her own. Rev. Chappell currently serves as music director at Colony.

Rev. Ruth Ann and Ray Sipe will offer a disaster preparation class.

There will be conversations about the work of LDR Carolinas, where we see God at work in times of disaster, how you and your congregation can be prepared before the next disaster, and what to expect when a disaster happens. Pastor's Ruth Ann and Ray currently serve as the coordinators of Lutheran Disaster Response in the Carolinas.

Congregation Meeting Our annual Congregation Meeting is set for Sunday, Dec. 8 at the end of our 10:30 a.m. service. We will consider a 2025 ministry budget to provide financial support for the ministries that go on at Grace and beyond our doors. A copy of the proposed budget is included in this newsletter.



Attention: Ministry Team Chairs & Group Leaders

Please don't forget that Annual Reports are due Jan. 15, 2025. It is important that you meet this deadline so that the 2025 Yearbook can be produced in a timely manner. Thank you!!

Thanksgiving Bag Thank You

Thanks to everyone who donated food for our Thanksgiving meal bags, made monetary donations towards the purchase of food, helped assemble bags on Saturday, and distributed or delivered bags on Sunday. With your help, we were able to give a special Thanksgiving blessing to our community for the 16th year—over 150 bags of Thanksgiving meal fixings for grateful individuals and families.



155 bags





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803-364-3331

Gracelutheranprosperity@gmail.com

Ministers: The People of Grace
Pastor: The Rev. David Adams
pastordaveadamsgrace@gmail.com

Online Giving
Scan this symbol
with your smartphone
to be connected to our
online giving page.



NONPROFIT
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Coming Up at Grace



**Advent
Kick-Off
Walk-Through
December 1st**



**Annual
Congregational
Meeting Dec. 8**



**Tuesday
December 10
6:30 p.m.**



**Youth
Christmas
Program
Sunday, 12/15
6pm**



**Christmas
Cantata
December 22 at
10:30 a.m.**



**Candlelight Communion
Christmas Eve Services
4 and 10:30 p.m.**



**Heartland School
of Religion**

January 7, 14, 21 and 28

Reminder:

Year-end reports from Ministry Teams and other leaders are due by **January 15th**. Also make sure to update the church office if you have had a change in address, phone #, or email address.

