

BEN SALEM UCC
PO 128
ANDREAS PA 18211-0218

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lehighton, PA
Permit #4

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED
DATED MATERIAL



BEN SALEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WHERE TO REACH US:

MAILING ADDRESS:

PO Box 128, Andreas, PA 18211

STREET ADDRESS:

1965 Church Hill Road
Lehighton, PA 18235

One in Christ

Church Phone: 570-386-3870

Social Hall Phone: 570-386-4990

E-mail: bensalemucc@verizon.net

Website: www.bensalemucc.com

Fax: 570-386-3870 [call, speak to secretary, then call back]

Pastor Michael McGowan: Home – 610-759-9126

Office e-mail: pstrbens@verizon.net



Ben Salem United Church of Christ
PO 128, Andreas, PA 18211
December 2011 - January 2012



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It's December!!!

I imagine when you read those words they probably stir up some form of emotion. For some it may be anxiety -- because you know how much time and work it takes to get ready for the holidays and you wonder -- how will I squeeze all the preparation into my already busy schedule? For others it may be a statement that brings to mind that another year has almost passed and you wonder -- where does the time go -- it seemed like just a month ago it was summer and your main concern was weeding the garden or staying cool. For still others, it may stir up a feeling of reminiscence, thinking about times past when family was near and everybody gathered together to celebrate Christmas. The month of December can stir-up many different emotions.

During this month these emotions or any number of other emotions can become our precedent; they become the main focus of our mind and overtake our hearts, becoming the only thing that seems to matter. BUT -- *there is another way*; we can let the true joy of what the month means to Christians be foremost in our hearts and minds.

December is the month in which we celebrate the Incarnation of God. A time when -- because of a love that is so immense -- God came to earth to show us the way of this love -- a time when -- we celebrate that Jesus is Emmanuel; God with us -- a time when -- because of God's love we experience through our faith in Christ, we are filled with a joy that cannot be displaced by any emotional tie to a secular tradition or hurtful memory. God loves all of creation -- which includes both you and me. What God has done to express this love should help us to see that December really can be a time of great joy.

We know there will be times of sorrow in this life, times we hurt and times we feel overwhelmed with emotions. The joy is in knowing that God also knows this, God has felt our hurts and our sorrows, our anxiety and our angst. God knows what we experience in our life in this world because of a little babe born in an ancient city known as Bethlehem. Through Christ we have a better way, a way to live with hope.

During the season of Advent we are to remember that we are waiting with hope, as we anticipate the joyous second advent of our Lord. A time when Christ will make everything right in the ways of God, when the world will become a world of love and peace and as the scripture found in the book of Revelation, chapter 21 states (I paraphrase) -- *a time when we will dwell in the presence of God and there will be no more tears, no more death or sorrow or pain*. Keeping our focus on the true Christian celebration of the holiday season hopefully brings all believers joy in the anticipation of what is to come. This hope found through Jesus Christ is what we have to keep in the forefront of our hearts.

My hope and prayer for everyone who reads this letter is that Jesus is first in your heart this holiday season. Remember those who you have lost --- celebrate with those who you still have--- find joy in knowing that Christ through the presence of the Holy Spirit is with you in all that you experience. You are all held in the bosom of God.

May this Christmas be one of great joy because Christ is your Lord and Savior. May the peace of Christ our Lord, the love of God and the hope found in the Holy Spirit bring you true joy this holiday season.

Blessings and peace to you all,
Pastor Mike



Sunday Worship Schedule for December 2011

December 4 – One Service at 10:30 A.M. –
Congregational Meeting following service

December 11 – One Service at 10:30 A.M. – Christmas Cantata

December 18 – Services at 8:15 [contemporary worship]
and 10:30 A.M. with Children's Christmas Program/ Confirmation Class leads worship.

December 24 – 2 P.M. Christmas Eve Communion & Candlelight Service

7 P.M. Special musical prelude

7:30 P.M. Christmas Eve Communion & Candlelight Service

Sunday Worship Schedule for January 2012

8:15 and 10:30 AM Services

January 1, 8, 15, 22, 29



Ben Salem Christmas Cantata

December 11, 10:30 AM

[There is no 8:15 AM Service next Sunday]

Please come out and join us as we present the
cantata: *"The Glory of Christmas"*

by Jimmy & Carol Owens

Sunday School Christmas Program

"The Legend of the Poinsettia"

Sunday, December 18

10:30 AM

Confirmation Class leads worship



Coffee Hour on December 18

Please contact Sharon Elder to volunteer and
help with Coffee Hour in 2012.



Note from our Treasurer and Financial Secretary:

The 2012 offering envelopes will be
available in the hallway during the
month of December and the last day
for contributions for 2011 will be
December 27.

**Installation of Church Board,
Cemetery Trustees and Auditor**
January 8, 10:30 AM

Communion Service:

December 24, 2011

2 PM and 7:30 PM

and

January 8, 2012

[both services]



Christmas Eve

**2 P.M. Christmas Eve Communion
Candlelight Service**

7 P.M. Special musical prelude

**7:30 P.M. Christmas Eve Communion
Candlelight Service**



Holiday Season Office Hours:

Church members be advised that during the upcoming holiday season the Church Office will be closed on:

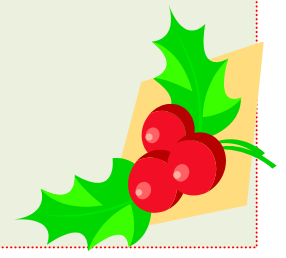
Monday, Dec. 26, Tuesday, Dec. 27, Friday, Dec. 30 and Monday, January 2

For pastoral emergencies during these days contact Pastor McGowan at:

Home: 610-759-9126 Cell: 610-739-7497

Use these numbers if necessary and leave messages
with call-back numbers accordingly.

Thank you all in advance for your cooperation.



Thursday Morning Bible Study: will meet on December 1 and 8 and then resume meeting on Thursday mornings in January beginning at 10 AM in the Church Parlor.



Ben Salem Youth Group News

The Youth Group is planning on meeting Saturday, December 3 at 4:00 PM at the social hall to go Christmas Caroling. Afterwards we will return to the social hall to have some food, warm drinks, cookies, and a little Christmas Fun. In lieu of exchanging gifts, we will be talking about the importance of giving to others in need, rather than receiving gifts ourselves. We will also be making items that will be given to members of Ben Salem that may not be able to attend church. In the spirit of giving we ask that everyone bring a gift that will be taken to Bethany's Children's Home. Gifts can be brought on the evening we go caroling or brought to the church before we leave on Saturday December 10th.

Our trip to Bethany's Children's Home and Hershey Park will take place on Saturday **December 10th**. Please be at the church no later than **9:15 AM**, we will leave from there and head to Bethany's Children's Home in Womelsdorf, Berks County. We are hoping to leave Bethany Children's around noon and then head to Hershey Park. As a result of their fundraising and recent Thanksgiving Dinner, all of the youth group members will be paid for. Other family members are welcome to attend at the group rate of \$10.95. There is also an \$8.00 per car parking fee so hopefully we can car pool. (If you cannot go with us to Bethany Children's Home, but plan on coming to Hershey Park you must call Kevin Lusch at [570-386-8222](tel:570-386-8222) to make arrangements for the tickets)

Suggested Gifts for Bethany Home: [please have them at the church no later than Dec. 9]

[Gift Cards to area malls, Wal-Mart, Target, K-Mart are always appreciated!]

Personal Care: hairbrushes, combs, picks, men's shaving kits, electric shavers, ethnic hair care products, travel hygiene kits, nail clippers, emery boards, hair dryers, straighteners, flat irons

Accessories: jewelry, wallets, watches, umbrellas, make up sets, bath & body sets, overnight travel duffel bags

Clothing: hooded sweatshirts, athletic shorts, plain white t-shirts, sneakers, snow boots, winter jackets, men's gloves, girl's bathrobes, slippers, girl's socks, women's underwear, men's boxer briefs [long]

Electronics: DVDs [no R rating] CDs [no parental advisories] Wii, PS2, Xbox games & accessories, MP3 players [no built in cameras], digital alarm clocks

School Supplies: backpacks/gym bags, spiral notebooks, folders, mechanical pencils, binders, book sox – asst sizes, poster boards

Hobbies/Games/Toys: teen books, jewelry making supplies, scrapbooking supplies, model cars, art supplies, journals

Sports Equipment: exercise equip., exercise training DVDs, adult bike helmets, swimming goggles, snow tubes, sleds & boards, pool cues, tips, chalk, football gloves, fish rods, reels and tackle boxes, baseball gloves, outdoor games

Cottage Needs: smart mops & refills, bed pillows, body pillows & covers, kitchen dish towels, bath towels & wash cloths, oven mitts, wall clocks, toasters, swiffer cleaners, electric griddles

*****Bethany Home cannot accept used clothing, toys or personal products. We do not have infants or toddlers in our care.*****

PNEC ANNUAL WINTER YOUTH RETREAT

Glimpses of God.....

Now and in the Future

Join other PNEC youth and youth leaders.....

Explore how God is revealed now and into the future through photography, art, music, technology and more.

WHEN: February 17th, 2012, 7PM – February 19th, 2012 after lunch
All youth currently in grades 7 thru 12

COST: \$110 per youth and/or adult advisor/chaperone

WHERE: Blue Mountain Christian Retreat Center, New Ringgold, PA.

Registration Deadline: Your \$40.00 per person non-refundable deposit before January 6th, 2012 ensures you a spot at PNEC Annual Winter Youth Retreat.

To all the youth of Ben Salem UCC who are 13 and older,

This event will be a fun time for anyone who attends. There is a cost involved but the cost includes two nights stay at the retreat center along with 5 meals. From my previous experience attending this retreat, the youth I chaperoned found it to be a meaningful weekend where they experienced God in a new way and found new friends who also experienced God.

There will be activities you will be required to attend like the opening worship and closing worship along with small group projects on Saturday. But there is always time built into the weekend as free time to play basketball, go hiking or sledding (if there is snow) or to just hang out with your new friends.

Please see me so I can answer any questions you may have about the retreat or if the cost is prohibitive so we can work on getting you there. I hope you all will consider attending this event, I think you will enjoy it!!

p.s. To the parents - depending on how many youth would like to attend, a few chaperones would be appreciated for the weekend.



Church Business

How to Contribute to Our Operating Budget: to pay Ben Salem's bills]
+ Use your weekly envelope [in your envelope packet]
+ Designate "Current Expenses": [Benevolence is only for Missions - OCWM]
+ Place in offering plate or send to the Church:
Ben Salem UCC, PO 128, Andreas, PA 18211

2011 Church Board Members:

Officers: Sharon Elder, President

Ken Scherer, Vice President

LaVaun Shanton, Secretary

Elders: Brian Beidleman, Sharon Elder, Ken Scherer, LaVaun Shanton

Deacons:, Barry Fink, Amy Frantz, Denise Gerber, Walter Keeck,

Terry Lusch, Judy Pope, Bernice Steigerwalt, Ron Steigerwalt,

Pastor: Rev. Michael McGowan

Church Secretary: Dollie Behr

Treasurer: Dawne Beidleman

Financial Secretary's Address: Susan Messina, 66 River Road,
Tamaqua, PA 18252

Upcoming Church Board Meetings: Dec. 19 and Jan. 16, 7 PM

Ben Salem History Books

are still available / \$60

Contact the Church Office [570-386-3870]

Cemetery Association Officers: Next meetings on Dec. 1, 7 PM and Jan. 5, 7 PM.

[Meetings held on first Thursday of each month at 7 P.M.]

President: Dennis Frantz

Secretary: Walter Keeck

Vice-President: Christopher Galloway

Treasurer: Doris Lusch

Caretaker: David Fritz

Trustee: Richard Bealer

Hospitalization ? If you or someone you know is going to be in the hospital for surgery, please let the church office know a day or two before the surgery. This way the Pastor will make every effort to be there to visit and pray with the patient before the surgery.

Scheduling Events at Ben Salem Church:

To prevent scheduling problems...prior to calling meetings or events, please check with the Church Secretary at 386-3870 to make sure that the date you have planned is available.

Have you moved recently? Each time we send out our newsletter our secretary receives changes of address from the Post Office through newsletters that have been returned. When this happens we incur added postal expenses because the Post Office charges for these returned letter. Each member can help by updating the church office with their new address prior to moving. It is also helpful to provide the church office with your home phone numbers, cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses if you wish. By doing this we can keep in touch with you and also provide you with important information regarding the church . Thank you in advance for your help.

Altar Flower Sponsors: [Checks payable to Ben Salem UCC]

A sign up sheet is located in the narthex. Cost of flower sponsorship is \$20.00. If you would like to sponsor flowers call Cindy Smith at 570-386-4248. ***Payment should be sent directly to: Cindy Smith, 707 Hoffman Rd., Lehighton, PA 18235.

Bulletin Sponsorship: [Checks payable to Ben Salem UCC] Please call Sue Messina at 570-386-2880 with your sponsorship information or e-mail Sue at suemess@ptd.net. Cost of Bulletin Sponsorship is \$7 per week. *** Payment should be sent directly to: Susan Messina, 66 River Road, Tamaqua, PA 18252.

Please do not call the church office with sponsorships!

Note from Church Office & Financial Secretary:

Remember, it is important to keep us informed of any address changes. Please give changes of address to either Dollie Behr or Sue Messina.

Have you remembered the church in your will?

Property Committee

The Property Committee is looking for a substitute sexton to fill in for times when our permanent sexton takes family time/vacations. Contact Ken Scherer at 570-386-4907 if interested.



Upcoming Committee Meetings

Membership & Growth – Dec. 5, 7 PM

Fundraisers – December 12, 7 PM

Missions Committee –Dec. 13, 9 AM

Property Committee – Dec. 15, 7 PM

Worship Committee – Jan. 9, 7 PM

Phase II Bldg. Program –Jan. 15, 1:30 PM

Called to Care –Feb. 10, 10 AM



Recycle...save your soda cans...

Larry Nothstein and Herlin Haberman will take aluminum cans to Zaprazny's. To help with this project... bring your **aluminum soda cans** [crushed or uncrushed] to the Old Social Hall and drop them off at the lower basement entrance. Benefits the Phase II Building Fund.

Please do not throw any other garbage items in with the aluminum soda cans.



Phase II – Building Program



Next Planning Meeting- January 15, 2012, 1:30 PM Anyone interested in helping should attend this meeting. The Board has decided that any money donated will stay in the Building Account until such time as a building program is approved by the congregation. To contribute to Phase II, please use the gold envelopes included in your offering packets - checks payable to Ben Salem UCC.

As of the end of October, 2011 the total in the Phase II Building Account is \$20,386.86



**WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN HELPING BEN SALEM CHURCH
SAVE PAPER, MONEY AND TIME?**

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER VIA E-MAIL?

If so, please fill out the following form and place it in the box located in the narthex or mail it to Ben Salem UCC, PO 128, Andreas, PA 18211.



Name/s _____

e-mail: _____

Blanket Makers/Quilters

The Blanket Makers and Quilters meet on Thursday mornings. Contacts for the group are Dollie Frantz [570-386-4034] and Betty Nothstein [570-386-5644]. Helpers are always welcome! Come out and join them. If you know of someone who is in need of a knotted blanket, please let the group know. The new quilt is a multi-colored log cabin design. Raffle Tickets will be available at fundraisers until Dec. 17 when the winner will be drawn.

Help needed: If you have new or used blankets or sheets, the group could use them...drop them off at the upper entrance to the social hall on Thursday morning between 9 and Noon or call Dollie or Betty.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: The Prayer Shawl Committee is in need of helpers to make the prayer shawls. If you can knit or crochet and would like to help, please contact Betty Nothstein at 570-386-5644 for more information.



Next meeting: Tuesday, December 13 at 9 AM in the parlor

Hunger Relief Project for December

Heifer Project:

Heifers Equal Hope

When a family has a cow, every morning there's a glass of rich milk for the children to drink before heading off to school. Classes are paid with the income from the sale of milk, and there's even enough to share with the neighbors.

A good dairy cow can produce four gallons of milk a day - enough for a family to drink and share with neighbors. Milk protein transforms sick, malnourished children into healthy boys and girls. The sale of surplus milk earns money for school fees, medicine, clothing and home improvements.

Better still, every gift multiplies, as the animal's first offspring is passed on to another family-then they also agree to pass on an animal, and so on.

And because a healthy cow can produce a calf every year, every gift will be passed on and eventually help an entire community move from poverty to self reliance. Now that's a gift worth giving!



Christmas Fund Offering

This offering is an expression of joy and gratitude for those who serve the church. Gifts to the Christmas Fund help provide pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retirees, emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay employees and Christmas Gift Checks to hundreds of annuitants. Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low-income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. This is your opportunity to participate in God's promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care. We will be accepting donations until the end of the year.



Bethany Children's Home
Bow Project

Food Bank Distribution
will take place on December 17

We will once again be selling bows for \$5 each to help decorate our Christmas Tree in the narthex. Once all the bows have been sponsored (60), a big gold bow will be placed on top of the tree. Please stop by and pick out your bow today!! Our goal is to have the bows sold before Christmas Eve services.

All money raised from the sale of the bows will be donated to Bethany Children's Home.

The Leighton Furniture Bank is in need of beds, dressers and sofas. They also could use volunteers to help pick up donations. Contact: Shirley Radler 610-377-4278

Family Promise → coming in January

Ben Salem will be hosting families from January 8 through 14th.

Please see Lonnie Christoff if you are interested in helping with this project in any way.

Volunteers: Volunteers are needed to fill dinner, fellowship & overnight shifts.

Please contact Lonnie Christoff to schedule your shift!!

Items still needed:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 8 blankets | 1 Bible | 1 box 13-gallon garbage bags |
| 6 hand towels | 4 alarm clocks | 2 cans spray women’s deodorant |
| 9 twin sheet & pillow case set | DVDs (no R-rated) | 2 cans spray men’s deodorant |
| 2 small fans | 1 box 100 plastic sandwich bags | |

Please donate items in the Family Promise box in the narthex. Thanks so much for you support!

Other Mission News

Samaritan’s Purse Christmas Child Shoebox donations dedicated on Nov. 13

85 Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes were donated...

The Mission Committee thanks everyone who helped support these projects.

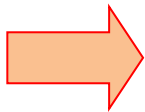
Donations from Free Will Offerings:

Strockoz Family - \$815
 Wehr Family - \$1200
 Creveling Family - \$768

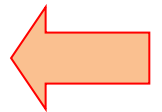
Mission thank you note:

Friends, Your contribution to the ministry of Operation Christmas Child is very greatly appreciated. The 85 amazing boxes that you donated are on their way to blessing a child. Thanks again! Sincerely, Operation Christmas Child Relay Center at Salem Bible Fellowship Church. Elizabeth Fritz

FUNDRAISER NEWS



HELP NEEDED: December 5, 6 and 12 to make Christmas Candy.



Profit from Roast Beef Dinner - \$486.77
 Profit from October Hoagie Sale - \$906.88
 AVON Fundraiser - \$770.19 – proceeds to Phase II Fund
 Thanks to everyone who helped with these fundraisers.



**Christmas Cookie and Homemade Candy Sale,
and Quilt Raffle Fundraiser...**

December 17, 9 AM to 1 PM

Your help is needed!

**Bake your favorite Christmas cookies
and bring them to the Social Hall by 8:30 AM.**



Special Prayers

Prayer Chain: The Prayer Chain is a way for anyone to request prayer for a specific need....[or thanksgiving or joy]. To have our Prayer Chain pray for you: Contact Betty Nothstein at 570-386-5644. Please call Betty if you would like to be called with others' prayer requests as part of the Prayer Chain.

Called to Care: Trained volunteers from our church are available to assist the Pastor in visiting people. If you would like a "Called to Care" volunteer to visit you, please contact the Pastor at the Church Office [570] 386-3870. We are looking for more volunteers for this Committee...Please call the Church Office or speak to the Pastor if interested. **The next "Called to Care" Meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2012, 10 AM.**



Support Our Troops - All military personnel
Brettany Smith – Ramstein Air Force Base – Germany
Matt Mitchell – Marines - Afghanistan

Birth – Congratulations to
Jim and Julie [Fehnel] Diehl
on the birth of their daughter,
Kirsten Margaret Diehl.
Kirsten was born on
Sunday, November 27, 2011.



Our sympathy is extended:

to the Family of Norman Kramer, grandfather of Marie and Josh Kramer. He passed away Nov. 16.
to the Family of Howard Steigerwalt, grandfather of Jenna Turner. He passed away Nov. 23.
to the Family of Curtis F. Eberts. He passed away on Nov. 21.

Congratulations to Mary Mower and Ken Frantz.

Ken and Mary were married on Nov. 12.



Baptism - Adrianna Joelle Hine, daughter of Megan Hoppes and John Hine
received the Sacrament of Baptism on Nov. 20.

December 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 9 AM Blanket Makers/Quilters 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bell Choir 7 PM Cemetery Assn.	2	3 4 PM Youth Group Christmas Caroling and Party at the Social Hall
4 Advent II <u>No 8:15 AM Worship</u> 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship/Cherub Choir Congregational Meeting 2:30 PM Hand Bell & "Lost & Found" Christmas Concert	5 7 PM Membership & Growth <i>Candy Making at Social Hall</i>	6	7 6:30 PM Cherub Choir 7:30 PM Senior Choir <i>Candy Making at Social Hall</i>	8 9 AM Blanket Makers/Quilters 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bell Choir	9	10 9:15 AM Youth Group & Confirmation Class go to Bethany Children's Home Make Up Photography for Pictorial Directory at the Church
11 Advent III <u>No 8:15 AM Worship</u> 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship /Christmas Cantata	12 7 PM Fundraisers <i>Candy Making at Social Hall</i>	13 9 AM Mission Comm. Meeting	14 5-7 PM Pick up candy orders 6:30 PM Cherub Choir 7:30 PM Senior Choir	15 9 AM Blanket Makers/Quilters 6:30 PM Hand Bells 7 PM Property Comm.	16	17 Food Bank Distribution 9 AM to 1 PM Homemade Christmas Cookie & Candy Sale Quilt Raffle
18 Advent IV 8:15 AM Worship /Handbells 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship /Christmas Program /Cherub Choir 2 PM "Lights of Remembrance" / Blue Christmas Service	19 7 PM Church Board Meeting	20	21 6:30 PM Cherub Choir 7:30 PM Senior Choir		23	24 Communion at both services 2 PM Christmas Eve 7:00 PM Prelude 7:30 PM Christmas Eve
25 Christmas Day <u>No 8:15 AM Worship</u> <u>No Sunday School</u> 10:30 AM Worship	26 Church Office closed	27 Church Office closed	28	29	30 Church Office closed	

~ January 2012 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:15 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship	2 Church Office Closed	3	4 6:30 PM Cherub Choir 7:30 PM Senior Choir	5 9 AM Blanket Makers 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells 7 PM Cemetery Assn	6	7
8 Communion both services 8:15 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Installation of Officers	9 7 PM Worship Committee	10	11 6:30 PM Cherub Choir 7:30 PM Senior Choir	12 9 AM Blanket Makers 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells	13	14
Family Promise Week						
15 8:15 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship 1:30 PM Phase II Meeting	16 7 PM Church Board Meeting	17	18 6:30 PM Cherub Choir 7:30 PM Senior Choir	19 9 AM Blanket Makers 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells 7 PM Property Committee	20	21
22 8:15 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship	23	24	25 6 PM Newsletter Assembly 6:30 PM Cherub Choir 7:30 PM Senior Choir	26 9 AM Blanket Makers 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells	27	28
29 8:15 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship	30	31				