

December 2023

# THE COURIER

A Monthly Publication of The Inter-Faith Chapel  
*A House of Prayer for All People*

From the desk of Rev. Dr. Woodie Rea



*I feel it in my fingers, I feel it in my toes,  
Christmas is all around me,  
And so the feeling grows.*

You may recognize the lyrics of this song, called “Christmas is All Around” from the classic holiday movie, *Love Actually*. From the beginning of this 2003 film, the song helps carry the characters through a frantic month before Christmas. Now, as we begin December of 2023, these words can help carry us through the upcoming season.

“Christmas is All Around” is a celebration of the spirit of Christmas. It calls us to pause and realize the gift of love and encourages us to let those that we love know that we do. It reminds us that even during the most chaotic of times, the essence of Christmas is universal and that, “on Christmas, we can depend.”

Christmas is all around. I am not just speaking of the common religious and cultural expressions of Christmas that we see everywhere. I am referring to the hope, peace, joy, and love that can be experienced wherever we are.

For the most part, Christmas is a season of celebration and joy. There are times, however, when the good cheer of the season seems absent and doesn’t resonate with one’s private experience.

But Christmas *is* all around, even when it may seem as if it is not. Christmas is all around, because Christmas is about love, and love is all around.

Throughout this season, The Inter-Faith Chapel offers a space of congruency. There are activities for you to attend and enhance your joy, there are opportunities for you to find solace and reflection, and there are occasions for sacred music and spoken Word – all offered in an atmosphere of love all around.

“Christmas is All Around” is a profound affirmation that the Christmas message is one that is vital and celebratory, timeless, and very much needed today.

Come join us at The Inter-Faith Chapel where Christmas, and that means Love, is truly all around.

*-Woodie*



### ADVENT PRAYER by Rev. Jerry Chism

Oh Immanuel, God with us, truly in this Advent season we celebrate that you are not hidden in some faraway cloud, but you chose to be with us in the blur and mystery of our lives.

In the midst of lists and rush, you are with us as a song that echoes in our minds, as the light of a candle, as a card from a friend. They are signs of your presence.

We turn to you this season and pray that you would birth joy and healing, blessing and hope in us.

Let something wonderful begin in us — something surprising and holy.

May your hand be upon us. Let your love fill us. Let your joy overwhelm us.

Let our longing for you be met on a coming holy night. Immanuel with us once again.

Amen.

### LOVE CAME A Christmas Prayer by Julie Palmer

Love came, held safely within a gentle womb  
All the truth, majesty, and creativity of a living God

Poured into a tiny heart

Making a quiet entrance in a dark and uninviting shack

Just one star shone anew as a handful of people were brought

Led by angelic voices, and open hearts

A young mother

A faith-filled father

Men of wisdom who searched for truth

And a group of humble herdsmen

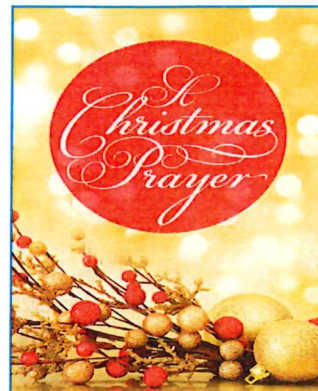
They came to bow before a new life

And acknowledge that the rescuer had arrived

That the Word of God had come alive

And that the extraordinary transformation of heaven and earth

Had begun. Amen.



*Holly, Joy, Woodie, Ramonia, Bonnie*

*We would like to take a moment to wish you a very Merry Christmas. During this season, we will be celebrating Hope, Peace, Love and Joy. We pray that all four of these would fill your life in every way this Christmas and beyond.*



<b>Financial Report</b>			
Giving Actual Month of October 2023	Giving Budget Month of October 2023	Giving Actual Year to Date 10/31/2023	Giving Budget Year to Date 10/31/2023
\$38,668	\$32,292	\$347,071	\$352,642



## The Joy and Blessing of Aging



Aging is a normal natural part of life. Growing old is accompanied by increased wisdom and experience. This wisdom grows in relation to our awareness of time and judgment. Gray hair is a crown of splendor and honor. It is attained by a righteous life. Joy is one of the most prominent themes of the Bible. From the very beginning, God's plan for mankind has been to bring us joy and peace. Joy is a gift from God to us to celebrate and share with others. Many adults struggle

with the aging process, but growing older has numerous benefits. Each day, you wake up with more knowledge than you had.

There are some definite positives for this new stage of life. One of the biggest benefits of living many years is one that so many in our culture today overlook or dismiss. It's the wisdom that comes from so much experience in life. With age comes wisdom and understanding to pass along to our children, grands and great grands. We need to remember our Creator during our golden years when our priorities change. Our older body doesn't bounce back from an injury, illness or even a simple strain as it once did. We will need to gradually curtail heavy physical activities and will have to be more careful driving after dark. While our expectations must change, this does not mean we cannot live satisfying and beneficial lives. Each stage of life has its own challenges and benefits. It is important to keep a positive, even humorous perspective on aging, because God designed our bodies to age. It's not the act of a vengeful God, but of a loving God. A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones ( Proverbs 17:22).

The Creator designed us to experience all of the physical stages of life, including old age. It is important that we look to Him and His Bible to show us how to live and honor Him, no matter our age. Let us take care of our aging body and have a healthy and peaceful life this Christmas. Merry Christmas to all.

Andra Matthews, RN, BSN, Health Advocate

## Highlights of November activities

### Food Drive

We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped make the Thanksgiving food drive a huge success. Your generosity exceeded our expectation and we could not do this without you.



Bikers stopped by with donated items and we were able to donate 3 large bins of food to Manna Food Center, a local food bank that serves Montgomery County.

Again, thank you to everyone who helped make a difference through your kindness! We are blessed to be able to give to those in need.



### Potluck



### Christmas Eve

**Sunday December 24 @ 5:00 p.m.**

At the Christmas Eve Service, we enjoy together glad music of the season, observe lighting of the Christ Candle - the center of our Advent Wreath and the center of our faith, participate in Holy Communion, and sing the carol, *Silent Night*. This special service is an opportunity for all of us to find the peace, hope, joy, and love of Christmas.



# CHRISTMAS GIFT BAGS

## DELIVERY DRIVERS NEEDED



The Chapel's Outreach and Fellowship Committee needs help delivering gift bags to congregants.

Bags will be ready for pickup on Thursday, December 7. The gift bags will be sorted by Mutual for ease of delivery.

If you are interested in helping with this activity, please call the Chapel at 301-598-5312 or email Tyra Thompson at tyradv@yahoo.com.

The bags will be located in the Fellowship Hall and a sign out sheet will be located nearby for signing out the bags you will be delivering.

Thank you for your assistance in this endeavor.



### Deck the Halls



Thanks to our volunteers for helping to "Deck the Halls" to prepare the sanctuary for the Advent Season. A good time was had by all!

### December Birthdays



Each month we encourage our members to wish a happy birthday to our affiliates and friends who live in nursing care facilities or group homes. Please send a card.

#### December 11

Ralph Sheaffer (Bedford Court)  
15408 Bramblewood Dr  
Silver Spring, MD 20906

### SPIRITUAL PRACTICE FOR THE MONTH



*I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting station through which God speaks to us every hour, if we will only tune in.*

~George Washington Carver in *Prayers for Hope and Comfort: Reflections, Meditations, and Inspirations*

by Maggie Oman Shannon

#### To Practice This Thought:

Take a moment every hour to notice nature and listen for God's message.

### SPIRITUAL PRACTICE FOR THE MONTH

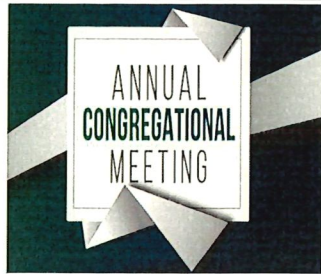


*It would be good for us to remember that one of the greatest gifts we can share with others in pain, despair, or confusion is a clear sense of our own peace and knowledge that we are loved.*

~Robert J. Wicks in *Snow Falling on Snow*  
by Robert J. Wicks

#### To Practice This Thought:

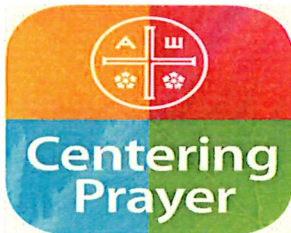
Let your assurance that God loves you be a light to others.



## The Inter-Faith Chapel 56th Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, December 3, 2023 after Worship Service

The meeting will be held in the Sanctuary following our 10:00 AM worship service. After the in-person service, please plan to stay for the business meeting immediately upon the conclusion of our worship service.

If you are unable to join us in person, the meeting will be available through livestream by logging on to our web page [www.inter-faithchapel.org](http://www.inter-faithchapel.org) and clicking the button for livestream. You will be viewing the meeting as it occurs at The Chapel.

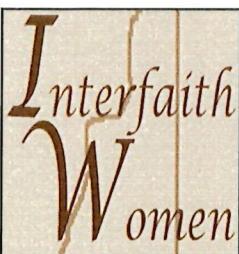


## Centering Prayer Advent Centering Prayer: “Be Still and Know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10) Wednesday, December 13, 6:00 p.m.— Fellowship Hall

Take time this Advent season to prepare your heart to receive the Christ Child through centering prayer. Allow the gentle glow of candlelight to calm your spirit as you respond to God’s invitation to “Be still and know that I am God.” Participants will devote 20 minutes of silence to centering prayer, seeking to let go of all that distracts them so that they can open themselves to Christ’s presence and work within them. Centering prayer invites us to contemplation: communion with God beyond thoughts, words, or emotions.

In addition to centering prayer, facilitator Bertie Knisely will lead participants in deepening prayer practices such as breath prayer, sacred movement, and chanting. Participants will also draw on the deep connection of prayer as they practice holy sharing and listening together.

To register call The Inter-Faith Chapel office at 301-598-5312 or email facilitator Bertie Knisely at [bertiek@moravian.edu](mailto:bertiek@moravian.edu).



## The Inter-Faith Women’s Christmas Program

Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 in the Chapel Sanctuary

You will learn about the story of the Crismons, the history of the Crèche, and the people who were there when Jesus was born. There will be caroling, bell ringing, special music and a play about the story of Jesus’s birth.



We would like ladies who can make a dozen cookies to be shared after the program in the Fellowship Hall. Punch will be served and tables will be set up so you can enjoy cookies and fellowship.

If you have Crèche figurines, please bring these to the Fellowship Hall for display during the refreshment time after the program.

Come one and all and bring a friend. Both men and women are welcome.



**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2023 @ 10:00 AM**

**Featuring:**

**The Chancel Choir**

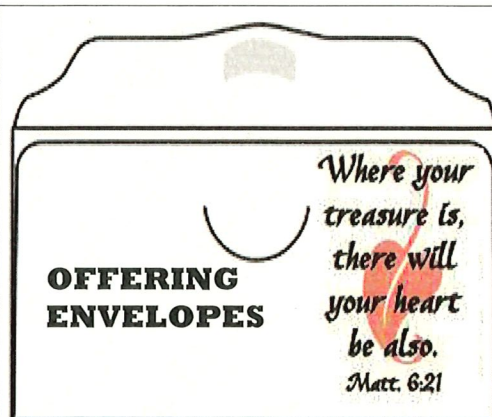
**Singers from The Baltimore Musicales**

**Dr. Holly Oberle, Director of Music**

On Sunday, December 10, at 10:00 am, The Chapel will present a worship service of Lessons and Carols, modeled after the Christmas Eve service at King's Chapel College in Cambridge, England. The service was introduced in 1918 as a gift to the city after the grief and horror of World War I.

During the worship service, there will be twelve carols for four voices and organ/piano, accompanied with Scripture readings and prayers. The Baltimore Musicales will provide the four professional vocalists. If you have heard them in the past, you will know how talented they are. The congregation will have an opportunity to join them in singing *Joy to the World!* at the end of the service.

Bring a friend!



### Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for 2024 will be available in the Meditation Chapel beginning on Sunday, December 10. You may pick up on Sundays or come from 9 am – 3 pm, Monday – Friday.

If you do not currently have offering envelopes and would like a box, please call Bonnie at 301-598-5312. Using envelopes in the offering plate makes Sunday morning counting and recording giving quicker and more accurate. Please request a box of envelopes if you regularly give in the offering plate on Sunday.

If you give online and no longer need envelopes, please call Bonnie at 301-598-5312 to let her know.



## A WATCH NIGHT SERVICE

**Sunday, December 31, 2023**

**10:30 p.m. - midnight**

**A Watch Night Service: What Is It?** The history of Watch Night dates back to 1733 in Moravian churches, when attendees observed a vigil to remember the previous year and to consider the upcoming one. In 1740, John Wesley instituted this custom for his Methodist followers, and the service evolved into a time for people to come together, pray, and reaffirm their devotion to God prior to the beginning of the New Year.

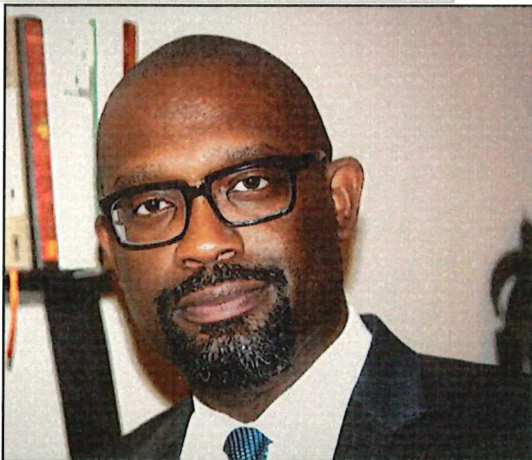
The first Watch Night service was held in the U.S. in 1770 in Philadelphia. Watch Night services also became an important part of African-American worship, because the Emancipation Proclamation would go into effect at midnight on January 1, 1863. Today many Christians from all denominations, races, and cultural origins continue to observe Watch Night. It's an opportunity to joyfully welcome in the New Year and sing and pray away the old one.

On Sunday, December 31, Watch Night services will be held at The Inter-Faith Chapel for the first time. As we pray out 2023 and get ready to welcome 2024, join us at 10:30 p.m. for a time of worship, testimony, and Holy Communion. Our service ends at midnight, and we will have refreshments and fellowship after the service. Come celebrate with us as we prepare to greet the New Year. Everyone is welcome to attend.



## The Annual Martin Luther King, Jr Observance January 15, 2024 at 10:00 A.M.

*Save the Date*



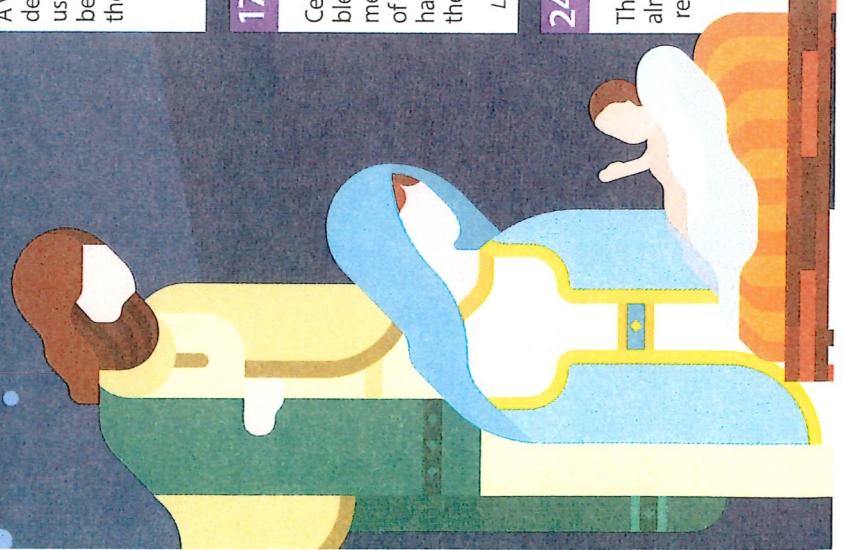
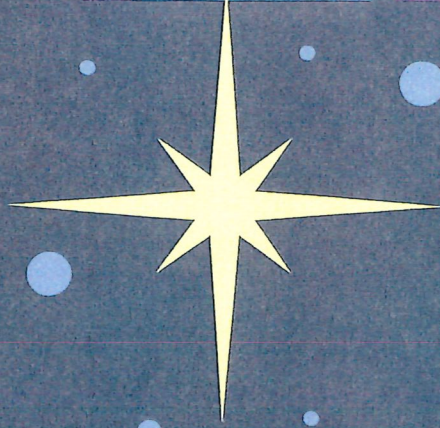
Our guest preacher for the Annual MLK Leisure World Community Service will be the Reverend William H. Lamar, IV, Pastor of Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, DC. Dr. Lamar is among the best preachers in the country and a noted scholar. He is committed to the black prophetic tradition of Nat Turner, Ida B. Wells Barnett, Fannie Lou Hamer and Rev. Dr. Martin and Coretta King. His ministry in Washington focuses on the spiritual and intellectual development of people and combatting displacement and inequality wherever these are found.

This observance will be Monday, January 15, at 10:00 a.m. It is co-sponsored by The Inter-Faith Chapel and the Leisure World Association for African American Culture. All are invited to attend.



# Advent 2023

## Daily Scripture and Reflections for the Sacred Season



**Sunday**

**3 Keep Watch**  
Always be on the lookout for the coming of Christ into your life. He enters in his time.  
*Mark 13:33-37*

**10 Repent**  
A voice in the wilderness beckons us to repent and be prepared for the Mighty One.  
*Mark 1:1-8*

**17 Rejoice**  
Celebrate the blessing, the mercy, the might of our God, who has brought joy to the world.  
*Luke 1:46-50, 53-54*

**24 Revelations**  
The mystery of almighty God is revealed in the kicking feet and outstretched arms of a baby.  
*Romans 16:25-27*

**Monday**

**4 Grow with God**  
Only implements of planting and growth are welcome in the kingdom of God.  
*Isaiah 2:1-5*

**11 Replenished**  
Like waters that refresh the dry ground, our Lord renews the barren wastelands ravaged by sin.  
*Isaiah 35:1-10*

**18 Jesus' Name**  
We live, work and sleep in the name of Jesus, who saves us from our sins.  
*Matthew 1:18-25*

**25 Good News**  
The good news is heard by the shepherds, sung by the angels and seen by Mary and Joseph: a child is born.  
*Luke 2:1-14*

**Tuesday**

**5 Led to Peace**  
Enemies become friends when a little child of God enters the picture. Let him lead.  
*Isaiah 11:1-10*

**12 A New Song**  
Lift up your voice and sing. New beginnings are afoot and we are the Lord's delight.  
*Psalms 149*

**19 Silenced**  
The angel Gabriel silenced the voice of doubting Zechariah. May all our doubts be silenced.  
*Luke 1:5-25*

**Wednesday**

**6 Fed with More**  
Jesus makes a lot from a little and gives us more than enough of what we need.  
*Matthew 15:29-37*

**13 Take Notice**  
Know, hear and see. The Lord is wise. The Lord is powerful. The Lord is glorious.  
*Isaiah 40:25-31*

**20 A Lullaby**  
Our God quietly serenades us to sleep with songs of his love for us in Jesus.  
*Zephaniah 3:14-18*

**Thursday**

**7 Strong and Firm**  
Our God is like a wall that surrounds us with strength and protection, keeping our faith firm.  
*Isaiah 26:1-6*

**14 A Prophet Comes**  
John the Baptist paves the way for Jesus to arrive and settle within each one of us.  
*Matthew 11:11-15*

**21 Greetings**  
Greet one another with the joy of Mary and Elizabeth, full of expectant hope in God's plan.  
*Luke 1:39-45*

**Friday**

**8 Servant Hearts**  
With a servant heart, Mary accepted the role of the mother of our Lord. Our hearts serve him still.  
*Luke 1:26-38*

**15 Look Up**  
We are often quick to judge and discredit. But we should always honor the people of God.  
*Matthew 11:16-19*

**22 To the Lord**  
Give yourself to the Lord, as a thank-offering to him for his goodness to you in Jesus' birth.  
*1 Samuel 1:24-28*

**Saturday**

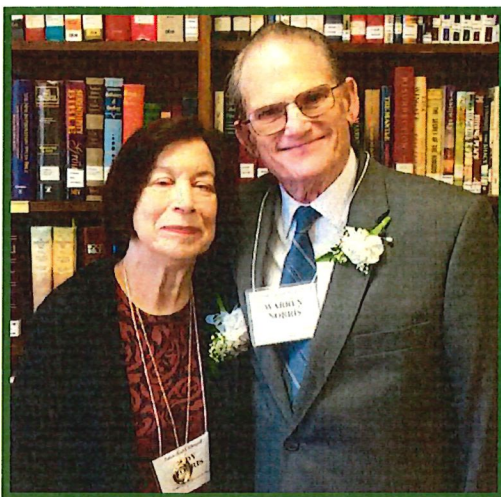
**9 Sent Out**  
We are sent by our Savior to declare that the kingdom of God is near. Be ready to share.  
*Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5-8*

**16 Recognize**  
Recognize the presence of those who point to Jesus when others may not be paying attention.  
*Matthew 17:9-13*

**23 Blessings**  
We announce blessings to God for the birth of all children, especially the Son of God.  
*Luke 1:57-66*

**Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**  
— **Philippians 2:11**

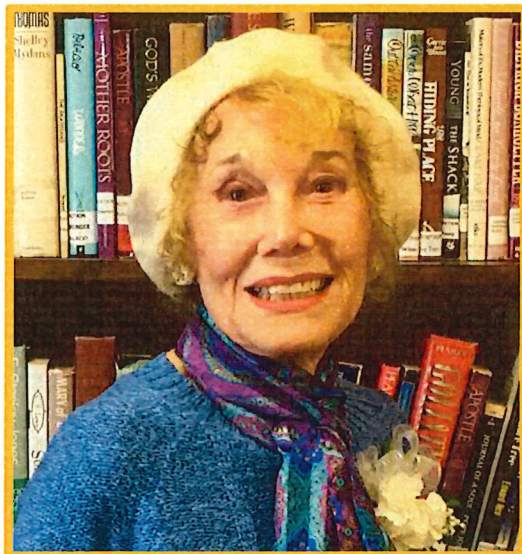
## WE WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS AND AFFILIATES



### WARREN AND JUDY NORRIS

Warren and Judy Norris moved to Leisure World from New Jersey in September 2020 during the pandemic. They began attending The Chapel as the congregation was returning to in-person worship services and have been consistent participants ever since. Warren worked for 40 years with DuPont as an electrician. He served 20 years in the Naval Reserve. Warren was a Volunteer Firefighter/EMT, is trained by the Red Cross as a fire/disaster crisis volunteer and now is active with the Leisure World Woodshop and Railroad Club. Judy is a retired teacher having taught elementary school for 33 years. She enjoys gardening, reading, and walking.

Both Warren and Judy now volunteer with Furever friends - a pet fostering rescue. They come to The IFC on transfer of membership from Fellowship Bible Church in Mullica Hill, New Jersey. We are glad to welcome Warren and Judy to the IFC!



### MARILYN WOOD

Marilyn Wood has lived in Leisure World for six years and just recently became connected with The Chapel. Born in Wisconsin and raised in Washington DC, she has lived most of her life in the greater DC/Maryland area. Marilyn had an accomplished career working as an Administrative Assistant with several departments of the federal government (Treasury, Justice, NIH). She currently enjoys ballroom dancing, yoga, and being a great-grandmother. Her faith journey has been enriched through connections with Presbyterian, Baptist, and Lutheran traditions, and we are pleased to now welcome her into the family of faith here at The Inter-Faith Chapel.

## ZOOM YOGA

The holidays can be some of the happiest and yet most stressful times of every year. We think it should be all fun and games but creating perfect celebrations with our family friends and loved ones is not easy. You may be coping with loss or grief or illness while the world around is telling you "It's the most wonderful time of the year". This makes it even more important to take care of yourself while you're so busy giving to others. Why don't you schedule in some me time? Give yourself the gift of self-care and you will be happier, healthier and more peaceful as during this busy time. You don't need to be physically fit to benefit from a little mindful movement and meditation. Come, take a breath, and join us in the IFC Chair Yoga Class on Thursday afternoons.



This ongoing class is free to members of the IFC. Classes start promptly at 3pm but the room opens at 2:45 so everyone can arrange their cameras and chairs and be ready to start at 3pm. No previous experience is necessary to join our warm and friendly group as we improve our physical, mental, and spiritual health through mindful movement. To join, email Christine Tetrault at [ctetra11@aol.com](mailto:ctetra11@aol.com) to get the information you need to attend.

# December CALENDAR

Sunday, December 3 after Worship Service — Annual Congregational Meeting  
 Tuesday, December 5 @ 1:30 PM—Advent Bible Study—*Heaven and Earth: and the Incarnation*  
 Thursday, December 7 @ 1:30 PM — Inter-Faith Women’s Program The Crèche  
 Sunday, December 10 @ 10:00 AM — Lessons and Carols Service  
 Tuesday, December 12 @ 1:30 PM—Advent Bible Study—*Heaven and Earth: and the Incarnation*  
 Wednesday, December 13 @ 6:00 PM—Centering Prayer  
 Tuesday, December 19 @ 1:30 PM—Advent Bible Study—*Heaven and Earth: and the Incarnation*  
 Sunday, December 24 @ 10:00 AM — Worship Service  
 @ 5:00 PM — Christmas Eve Service  
 Monday, December 25 — Christmas Day - OFFICE CLOSED  
 Sunday, December 31 @ 10:00 AM—Worship Service  
 @ 10:30 PM—Watch Night





## Christmas



### WORD SEARCH

SANTA	E	D	F	R	D	E	M	T	U	R	P	L	Y	T	R
GINGERBREAD	Q	P	A	Z	E	V	T	I	H	N	K	T	J	E	A
ELF	A	A	E	E	K	E	X	U	R	O	S	J	T	O	G
FROSTY	Q	S	B	D	R	F	D	U	R	O	Z	N	D	I	Y
HOLIDAY	I	E	C	C	N	B	W	N	R	K	I	L	F	G	X
BELL	P	L	T	R	H	I	R	F	I	W	E	T	A	R	O
CAROLS	E	D	Q	C	O	R	T	E	G	E	S	Y	R	D	O
WINTER	X	N	M	H	I	O	I	R	G	N	R	C	X	S	N
TREE	Q	A	K	T	O	F	G	S	E	N	G	O	Q	C	U
FAMILY	B	C	X	S	V	L	A	E	T	E	I	F	S	A	F
REINDEER	T	X	C	A	T	G	I	M	A	M	H	G	L	R	L
JOY	R	L	U	H	R	O	A	D	I	O	A	Y	E	O	E
SCROOGE	K	X	H	I	T	L	C	F	A	L	Z	S	I	L	G
CHRISTMAS	H	D	N	Z	G	A	L	K	L	Y	Y	D	G	S	N
ANGEL	B	C	E	W	Q	J	E	E	I	P	O	F	H	A	A
CANDLES	H	L	F	F	J	F	T	R	B	N	A	E	G	N	V
STOCKINGS	V	Z	L	Y	R	I	A	P	W	D	G	V	Z	T	E
WREATH	E	E	Z	R	G	G	N	Q	G	Z	B	S	U	A	Y
GRINCH															
SLEIGH															
TURKEY															
GIFTS															



**Did you know?**  
 The custom of bringing evergreens into the home began in the 16th century among northern and eastern Europeans, primarily Germans, as a means of cleaning up the Christmas tree and making it more uniform. Instead of throwing out cut-off greens, people wove the excess into wreaths.  
 However, the religious significance is that the circular shape and evergreen material of the wreath represent eternal life. The circle, which has no beginning or end, "symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul and the everlasting life we find in Christ."

**THE INTER-FAITH CHAPEL  
3680 S. LEISURE WORLD BLVD  
SILVER SPRING MD 20906**

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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

phone 301-598-5312  
www.inter-faithchapel.org

Rev. Dr. Woodie Rea, Senior Minister

Rev. Dr. Ramonia L. Lee,  
Minister of Congregational Life

Rev. Dr. Robert W. Perry  
Minister Emeritus

Dr. Holly Oberle, Director of Music

Bonnie B. Bonner, Administrator

Joy M. Dufour, Administrative Assistant

Steve Buck, Gary Carpenter  
Video Technicians and Chapel Sextons

