



DILLSBURG BIC CHURCH

GROWING DEEP

REACHING FAR



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The Doulos Monthly Newsletter

DECEMBER 2021

Closer to Christmas

By Naomi Smith

In our house, we start playing Christmas music early—often at the end of October, or as soon as the weather gets chilly enough for us to feel the seasons changing. A few weeks ago, we were enjoying the sounds of a new Christmas album (Evergreen by Pentatonix) when my son Reuben turned to me and said, “I like listening to Christmas music, because it makes Christmas seem closer.”

Reuben’s insight has lingered with me. What is it about this season that makes us yearn for what is to come? My kids count down the days until Christmas, motivated by the promise of time off school and a chance to be with their cousins from Maine. The words of Christmas songs (both secular and sacred) reveal deep desires for connection and belonging. “Christmas Eve will find me where the love light gleams,” Bing Crosby sings, adding, “I’ll be home for Christmas... if only in my dreams.”

The season of Advent is a time when we allow our longings to take a more prominent place at the table. We look forward to gathering with people we love, sharing time and food and gifts. We anticipate the birth of Jesus—and we acknowledge that we still await his second coming. We feel the sharp edges of hurt in our gatherings. We ache over the brokenness inside and around us. We long for a world where all things will be made new.

In his hymn “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus,” Charles Wesley expressed his desires this way:

Come Thou long expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel’s strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Whether or not our longing hearts realize it, Jesus is our rest, our strength, our consolation, our hope, and our joy. As Wesley beautifully explains in the next verse of his hymn, Jesus was “born Thy people to

deliver, born a child and yet a King, born to reign in us forever, now Thy gracious kingdom bring.” Jesus was born to be a King, and when we allow him to reign in our hearts and lives, we participate in bringing about his Kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven.

In the month of December, we go about the business of preparing for Christmas. We decorate our houses, make plans, and purchase gifts. We light candles, sing songs, and read Scripture. As we do so—as we take part in these tangible expressions of our hope for what is to come—we draw closer to Christmas. Our participation in getting ready for Christmas becomes an instrumental part of bringing about the reality of Christmas for those we love.

In the same way, our hope for the Kingdom to come infuses our activity in the here and now. Our participation in what God is doing in and around us becomes an instrumental part of bringing about the reality of the reign of Jesus Christ. As we share what we have, and listen to those who struggle, and forgive those who hurt us, we draw closer to the Kingdom. We bring the Kingdom close.

May it be so!



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Please send submissions for the
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or place them in Carolyn's church
mailbox by **DECEMBER 8th**.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

Join Us for These Advent Activities

December 5, During Worship
Celebration of Communion

December 8, 5:00 P.M.
Corner Life meal followed by Carols and Stories

December 12, During Worship
Children's Bell Choir

December 18, 3:00 P.M.
Christmas Caroling on the Square,
followed by snacks at the Square Bean

December 19, During Worship
Adult Bell Choir and Special Christmas Music

December 24 (Time TBD)
Christmas Eve service

Calling All Secret Pals!



WANTED – Ladies who like to have a good time but like to keep a secret! What is the secret? It's the Ladies' Secret Pal Program.

What is the Secret Pal Program? It's for all post-high school ladies of the church and provides an opportunity for ladies to make new and lasting friendships.

How does it work? We gather once a year in January for an evening of dinner, fun, and fellowship to reveal our current Secret Pal and to pick a new name for the following year.

During the year, you pray for your Secret Pal, give notes of encouragement throughout the year, give a \$5 gift on her birthday and a \$10 gift at the end of the year party when your name is revealed.

When is it happening? The dinner party will be held on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, at 6 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Your personalized invitation will be placed in your church mailbox. If you do not currently have a mailbox, see Nina Hoover or Susan Hatch and they will be happy to give you an invitation.



*Just a note to express how **thankful** I am that you folks came to my home and painted the bedroom, power washed the walk and used the chainsaw on my bushes. I feel very blessed to have had your visit and friendship.

Janet Ziegler (a neighbor helped during service day project)

*Your support directly helps your neighbors in need! From our food pantry to youth programs to budget classes, your donation ensures that every guest has their need met in a given day. **Thank you!**

Eric Saunders, Executive Director, New Hope Ministries

***Thank you** for your recent gift to Messiah University Collaboratory operations.

Jon Stuckey, Associate Vice President for Development, Messiah University

*"My mom was worried about what would happen to me when she died," remembers one of our residents. This concern has been shared by many loved ones of people with mental illness and intellectual disabilities. "Who will look after my son, my daughter, my friend, when I can't?"

That's where you come in! As a supporter of Paxton Ministries, you are making sure that there's a loving, safe home for adults who need some extra help in life. **Thank you!** The gifts from your church are such a blessing to us.

Jodie Smiley, Executive Director, Paxton Ministries

*I **appreciate** your generosity to Family Promise, and I hope we can meet sometime soon! Your consistent, generous support of our families is what makes a difference in the lives of the people we serve.

Matt Wagner, Executive Director, Family Promise of Harrisburg Capital Region

*Spotted lanterns flies... what was God thinking when he created them, not to mention stink bugs and mosquitoes! I had never heard of spotted lantern flies until recently. One day, nothing... the next, they're here – everywhere! Despite the public warnings, I didn't kill the first one I saw. It seemed harmless enough, interesting and kind of pretty. But now, we and our grandson have bug hunts, trying to kill as many possible. What changed? I understand and believe the warnings of their potential damage and squish them! Kind of sounds like sin... God, why do you allow it? Initially it seems harmless enough, interesting or kind of pretty or enjoyable. God's admonition – SQUISH IT!

Our ministry is mainly to individuals who did not take sin seriously. They probably knew the warnings; their behavior seemed harmless enough, interesting and definitely pretty and enjoyable. Now they're enmeshed and many times overwhelmed. God's word has the answers, and we have the privilege of sharing God's love and answers. You are a valued partner in this ministry, and I am very **grateful** to stand with you for life!

The Rev. John Shaffer, Executive Director, Capital Area Pregnancy Center

***Thank you** for your gift to Friends in Action International. Your prayers and support of our missionaries and ministries meet critical spiritual and physical needs in seven remote locations around the world.

Tim Johnston, Executive Director, Friends in Action



Stop Traffic

By Marj Strayer

It has been several months since I last wrote an article for the Doulos. Since then good things have been happening at Peace Promise and I wanted to share those with you.

There are only 12 women now dancing in the club, which is half of pre-COVID numbers. They are a whole new group of women with whom Peace Promise is building relationships. They also are maintaining relationships with 12 women who are no longer dancing. Nine of them are definitely progressing and in fact several are worlds away from where they were two years ago. Perhaps this is one of the good outcomes of COVID.

One woman has been clean from drugs for a year, the first time since entering her teen years. Another woman has been a year free from prostitution. One woman has been welcomed into her boyfriend's very stable family situation with her two small children. She is loved and embraced for the first time in her life and is able to live her dream of being a stay-at-home mom. Six women who were in residential treatment are getting ready to move toward placement outside in jobs or have already moved on to the workforce.

Our speaker from last year's fundraiser, Nikki, is managing her own salon in Hanover and lives here in Dillsburg in her own apartment. She is skilled in her trade and is a wonderful communicator. One more woman has had many obstacles to overcome in moving into the workforce. This past year, she lost an eye when her boyfriend shot her. This world can be a very dark and dangerous one. We can only imagine the trauma she has had to deal with. She has a young son and mother who depend on her. She has managed to find a job which she loves even while dealing with the healing of very deep wounds.

This woman and others we have mentioned are constantly under the loving care of Patty Seamans and others. Patty takes them for walks in the countryside, for cups of coffee, to counseling appointments, courtroom appearances, visits to rehabs, rescues them from dangerous situations and has even traveled across country to get them to a safe house far from predators. Patty has worked closely with the police and the FBI to place predators behind bars and protect these women from further abuse. Peace Promise helps keep the electricity on, makes rent payments when necessary and assists with furthering education. Their labor for Lord is bearing fruit in the lives of these precious women who once had no hope and may not be here today if it had not been for Patty, Susan, the many volunteers and prayer warriors and those who have sacrificed financially to do this kingdom work. This has been a very encouraging year in so many ways. DBIC, you continue to be a generous and caring partner and we thank you. You have really been an invaluable means in helping to "set the captives free."

The lives of each of these women point us to our Father God, who is all powerful, all merciful, all forgiving and all loving. To him be the glory!

Merry Christmas! There is much to celebrate.



CHRIST'S BIRTHDAY OFFERING

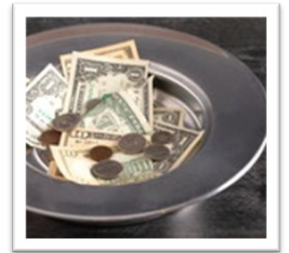
Join us for our annual offering in honor of Jesus' birthday, to be gathered during December, and specifically December 19th if you will be in that service.

Loving the least of these among us by helping to secure a more firm foundation for life:

The Local Outreach Commission is looking to provide a scholarship to a special needs student who is currently in their senior year of high school in the Northern York County School District.

This would include any non-traditional, learning support, life skills, or emotional support student who desires to attend post high school trade school, two-year community college, or other training program and is unlikely to be eligible for traditional academic scholarships. These are students who often have limited or no access to grants or scholarships and whose families often are unable to provide assistance, which means our gift could potentially be transformational for them.

Our desire is to create a positive path forward to someone whose options may be limited due to their educational challenges but who is motivated to take positive steps by offering them financial support along with whatever personal and even spiritual encouragement they are willing to allow. It is our hope that the student or students chosen would allow the DBIC congregation to stay in contact with them as they begin their post-secondary academic endeavors.



Depending on the amount we have to work with and the cost of the applicants' academic goals, we may be able to offer assistance to more than one student, but we want to offer substantial assistance that will cover tuition and living expenses rather than a token gift.

Religious background (or lack of such) is not being used as selection criteria. Priority will be shown to those who have financial need or have overcome significant obstacles in their life such as family issues, health issues, or learning challenges. We have asked the district staff to encourage students who fit this description to complete applications with information that would facilitate the choosing of such a student or students. As part of the application process we are also requesting at least one letter of recommendation from a teacher, counselor, employer or other source who knows the candidate well and is not a family member.



Holiday stress, anyone? Self-care is important!

By Kathy Bennett

The holidays can bring stress in many ways. Family gatherings, especially involving family members with whom you may have a strained or difficult relationship, financial worries, grieving losses that have occurred this past year or even earlier, added responsibilities and extra activities can all take a toll. Even good changes in our lives cause stress. How can you care for yourself while adding holiday events and stresses to your regular day-to-day stresses?

First of all, recognize that you are not alone and feeling stressed is a normal reaction to the things you are dealing with. Avoid comparing yourself to others, because you don't know their whole story—and no two people are alike in their situation or their reactions!

Try to do something for yourself each day. It doesn't have to be anything expensive or time-consuming. It can be as simple as spending five minutes listening to your favorite music or reading a chapter in a book you enjoy. Start a gratitude journal where you write down three things you are thankful for each day, or keep a list of things you've accomplished—either of these habits will help you remember the good in your day even if you are feeling overwhelmed. Make time for your normal quiet time or devotional time and remember that God is with you no matter what you are feeling.

Don't have unreasonable expectations of yourself or of others. Give yourself some grace when things don't turn out exactly the way you expected! Try not to overschedule your days to allow space for the unexpected. Remember that not every invitation has to be accepted, and consider praying about which things God is asking you to participate in! Exercise, adequate rest and healthy eating habits are also part of self-care and support our emotional well-being as well as our physical health.

Many of these ideas are also applicable during other times of the year. If you'd like to compare notes with others who are struggling with similar concerns, consider joining us at Fresh Hope any Thursday evening from 6:30-8:00 pm. Fresh Hope is a peer-to-peer support group, which means we are all people who either struggle with mental health challenges or have family members in that struggle, who seek to help each other by listening to each other and by sharing parts of our own stories that may help others. It is a judgment-free, safe place to share your struggles. "[God] comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us." 2 Corinthians 1:4 (NLT)

If stress is interfering with your normal activities (i.e. causing you to miss work, making you physically ill, etc.), you may want to consider seeing a counselor or speaking with your physician. Sometimes an objective observer can help you identify ways to decrease your stress simply because they aren't feeling the same emotions you are.

Most importantly, remember that self-care is not selfish. Self-care is necessary for a healthy, well-balanced life and gives you the strength you need to do the tasks God has asked of you.

Exodus 18:18-19 "But Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. Surely you and these people with you will wear yourselves out, because the task is too heavy for you. You cannot handle it alone."



MENTAL

HEALTH





*Compiled by John and Esther Spurrier,
DBIC Global Outreach Commission*

THIS MONTH'S SPOTLIGHT:

This month we check in with:

*Chris Book
Macha, Zambia*

We've written from time to time about our friend and gardener, Misheck, how he gets full credit for the beauty of our yard and the abundance of fresh veggies we enjoy. What we have not often mentioned is his deep faith and gentle spirit. Well, the other week he told me a story that illustrates just the man he is.



Misheck

He said he was walking through his fields, trying to decide which ones he would plant this year while leaving others to lay fallow for another year. He was surprised to see that some unknown person had begun to prepare one of his more-distant fields for planting when the rains begin.

Disturbed, he returned home and sat down under his favorite shade tree. He prayed, "Mwami wangu, nda cita buti?" (My God, what am I going to do? Show me the way through this situation")

Almost immediately he fell into a deep, trance-like sleep. When he awoke sometime later, he saw three men approaching. One was his step-brother, one a teacher at the local school and one a neighbor that he didn't know well. After greeting each other, he learned that his brother thought that he no longer needed the field, so had sold it to the neighbor, who, in turn, had sold it to the teacher. (Here, most villagers have no title to their land; it has simply been passed down from generation to generation. The system works and any disputes are usually settled by the village headman.)

When the teacher learned that the field he had bought belonged to his friend, he initiated the

process of reconciliation. Misheck sat in amazement as he listened to these men agree between themselves that the field rightfully belonged to Misheck and they should each return the money they had received for the sale. They then apologized for the misunderstanding. The entire incident could have resulted in a family feud and broken friendships, but Misheck recognized that his Mwami wangu (literally, My God) had intervened and answered his prayer. He has his field back and friendships intact!

And, it appears that Misheck's issue was reconciled just in time. When we awoke yesterday, we never imagined that the day would end with our first true rainfall of the season. Most years, the first rain doesn't come until November. So unexpected it was that I hadn't even put out our rain gauge yet, so we don't know how much we got, but certainly enough to soak me and the three nursing students that had joined me on a long run around the mountains. In Tonga, this rain is called, "civuna n'gombe" (The rain that saves the cattle.) It will provide a boost to the grass and provide some needed nourishment to the livestock. The dust is washed off the tree leaves, revealing their true colors. And, the smell of that first rain! Eric Thuma said that he wished he could capture that smell and bottle it. We agree!

Last weekend, Marlys served as co-matron for the wedding of our friends and hospital co-workers, Amanda and George. Amanda is Canadian and George is Zambian, so their wedding was a big deal in the area. As co-matron's, Marlys and Vera had responsibility to see that no detail was forgotten and that the wedding party was all in the correct place at the correct time. Marlys and Bina Beauty also made the wedding cakes and Marlys made herself a new dress for the occasion. (Just the top,

Continued from Page 7

Vera's trusted tailor made the skirt.) Not knowing how the cakes would have held up on the bumpy Macha road, Marlys waited to decorate the cakes until the morning of. But, as she started icing the first cake, the guesthouse hostess asked if she could help, and a short time later Amanda's three brothers, who had just arrived from Canada for their only sister's wedding, also offered to help out. The cakes turned out beautifully! The brothers also accepted, on behalf of the bride's family, the cake that the bridal couple presented to them. Word is that the cake safely made it all the way back to Canada and was presented to Amanda's parents, who could not be there in person. The family did gather and watch a live stream of the event. Unfortunately, I (Chris) could not attend due to the annual MRT board meeting being held at the same time. I serve as secretary. (See wedding photo above.)

*The wedding party*

That's the latest from Macha on this quiet, peaceful Sunday!



Ready to expand your worldview?

Sign up for "Perspectives on the World Christian Movement"

Where: West Shore Free Church, Williams Grove Road, Mechanicsburg

When: January 13, 2022 through April 28, 2022

Sign up for the class at [Perspectives.org](https://www.perspectives.org)



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In case of inclement weather, the policy of DBIC is to cancel any in-person morning activities if Northern York School District is on a 2-hour delay. This would not impact afternoon and evening activities. All in-person activities will be canceled if the district is closed for the day or dismisses early due to the weather. If there are activities on the weekends or days when school is not in session, please check for radio and TV (ABC27) announcements or our website (www.dillsburgbic.org) for information regarding closures.



Meeting Your Enemy's Deepest Needs

The final principle for responding to a stubborn opponent is described in Romans 12:20-21: "On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Here is the ultimate weapon: deliberate, focused love (cf. Luke 6:27-28; 1 Cor. 13:4-7). Instead of reacting spitefully to those who mistreat you, Jesus wants you to discern their deepest needs and do all you can to meet those needs. Sometimes this will require going to them to show them their faults. At other times there may be a need for mercy and compassion, patience, and words of encouragement. You may even have opportunities to provide material and financial assistance to those who least deserve it or expect it from you.

Taken from [The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict](#) by Ken Sande, Updated Edition (Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 2003) p. 253-254.

Food for Thought

TV, radio, newspapers--all are overflowing this week with advertisements for "the perfect gift for the one you love this holiday season." But according to Jesus, Christmas is only truly Christmas if our hearts are yearning to give the perfect gift... to our enemies:

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked" (Lk. 6:32-35).

After all, at Christmas, God gave the perfect gift--his son, Jesus--to his enemies--namely, us! So make it a point this Christmas to imitate God by meeting your enemy's deepest need.

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Be the “I am” you were created to be!

By Joyce Jones

Maybe like me, you have enjoyed playing “Who Am I?” a guessing game where players use yes or no questions to guess the identity of a famous person.

Questions are based upon the traits and characteristics of a person everyone will be able to identify. Zechariah was a famous biblical character with his own traits and characteristics.

He was one of a few people who had an angel of the Lord appear to him. His immediate response was to be “startled and gripped with fear.” The angel reassured him and gave him the good news that his prayers had been answered. His wife was to bear him a son and he was to call the boy “John.”

Zechariah went on and asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.” The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.”

Now if you are like me, you may have read this account from the Bible many times. But as I read this again, I was captured by the apparent contrast between Zechariah and the angel. Both Zechariah and the angel respond with an “*I am*.” Zechariah says, “*I am* an old man and my wife is along in years.” The angel says, “*I am* Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.”

So, who *am I*? Who are you? Do we say, *I am* too old? *I am* too young? *I am* not able? *I am* weighed down by others? Do we fill our hearts with doubts and see things as impossible? Are we full of excuses? There are plenty of “*I am*” things that we could say about ourselves that would keep us from being and doing all that God wants for us and for others. Are we like Zechariah?

Or, are we like Gabriel? Do we see ourselves named and called by God? The angel says, “*I am* Gabriel”—literally “God is my strength.” Who is our strength? The angel stands in the presence of God. And, where do we stand? Are we people who actually take the time to “stand in the presence of God?” Do we see ourselves as being sent from the very throne room of God to speak to others and to tell them good news?

As we go through different events and stages of our lives, each of us may need to “play the game” and ask the question, “Who *am I*?” How are we going to define ourselves? The way Zechariah answered the question or the way the angel answered the question? Zechariah’s answer was certainly true but not seen through the eyes of faith.

The great I AM wants us to see ourselves as he sees us—made in his very image. We should see the unique abilities and characteristics God has given each one of us. We should understand that he has equipped us for the mission he has given to us, to speak and to tell the good news in the communities where God has placed us.

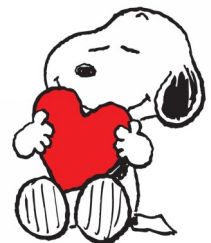
Maybe, just maybe, the real question isn’t just who *am I*? but who *am I* before the great I AM?





WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

| | |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Ray & Peggy Knepper | December 16 |
| Matt & Julie Walsh | December 18 |
| Jim & Faithe Spurrier | December 22 |
| Stan & Sherry Eyster | December 23 |
| Nathan & Rachel Pease | December 23 |
| Tim & Arlene VanDyke | December 24 |
| Paul & Kimberly Tucker | December 27 |
| Jay & Judy Smith | December 30 |




| | | | |
|---------------|-------------|--|-------------|
| Andrew Miller | December 1 | Jason Smith (<i>Naomi's husband</i>) | December 14 |
| Lincoln Horst | December 4 | Peggy Knepper | December 16 |
| Ron Shannon | December 4 | Tony Beers | December 19 |
| Julie Walsh | December 5 | Jane Tucker | December 19 |
| Reuben Smith | December 5 | John Spurrier | December 19 |
| Avis Whitesel | December 7 | Jordyn Moyer | December 20 |
| Susan Hatch | December 9 | Wendell Hoover | December 20 |
| Angelina Delp | December 11 | Daniel Gabikiny | December 22 |
| Julie Cook | December 12 | Clarence Brubaker | December 23 |
| Nicole Rank | December 12 | Walter Sharp | December 26 |
| Randy Fish | December 13 | Lauren Renard | December 28 |
| Tanya Moesch | December 14 | Abner Sell | December 29 |



December 2021



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
|  | | | 1 9:00 am ZOOM Women's Study 3:45 pm Encircle 6:30 pm ZOOM Gathering | 2 6:30 pm Fresh Hope meeting (Orange Room) 7:30 pm ZOOM Prayer | 3 | 4 2:00 pm Bell Choir rehearsal |
| 5 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship | 6 3:45 pm Encircle | 7 7:00 pm ZOOM Women's Study | 8 Doulos Deadline 9:00 am ZOOM Women's Study 3:45 pm Encircle 5:00 pm Corner Life (Stories and Carols) | 9 6:30 pm Fresh Hope meeting (Orange Room) 6:30 pm ZOOM Human Trafficking Meeting 7:30 pm ZOOM Prayer | 10 | 11 7:30 am Pastor Rob's Prayer Team 2:00 pm Bell Choir rehearsal |
| 12 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship | 13 3:45 pm Encircle | 14 7:00 pm ZOOM Deacon Meeting | 15 9:00 am ZOOM Women's Study 3:45 pm Encircle 6:30 pm ZOOM Gathering | 16 6:30 pm Fresh Hope meeting (Orange Room) 6:30 pm Leadership Council 7:30 pm ZOOM Prayer | 17 | 18 9:00 am Pastor Naomi's Prayer Team 2:00 pm Bell Choir rehearsal 3:00 pm Christmas Caroling on the Square |
| 19 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship | 20 3:45 pm Encircle | 21 7:00 pm ZOOM Women's Study | 22 9:00 am ZOOM Women's Study 3:45 pm Encircle 6:30 pm ZOOM Gathering | 23 6:30 pm Fresh Hope meeting (Orange Room) 7:30 pm ZOOM Prayer | 24 Christmas Eve Service (Time TBD) | 25 Christmas Day |
| 26 9:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am Worship | 27 | 28 | 29 6:30 pm ZOOM Gathering | 30 6:30 pm Fresh Hope meeting (Orange Room) 7:30 pm ZOOM Prayer | 31 | |
| CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED | | | | | | |

These events subject to change. Stay tuned for information from DBIC on any canceled or rescheduled events.