

Volume 11, Number 12



December 2023 Newsletter

Estes Park's historic mainline Protestant congregation founded in 1907.

Core Value: The Presbyterian Community Church of the Rockies is a Sacred Community formed around Jesus the Christ where we experience God's presence in our lives and service together.





PCCR Directory

Office Hours: Monday through Thursday, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm; closed Fridays

Office Phone: 970-586-4404 Church Website: pccrusa.org

Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Christine Dempsey,,

pastor@pccrusa.org

Financial Manager: Carolyn Hull,

finance@pccrusa.org Office Administrator:

Meredith Ishida, office@pccrusa.org

Handbell Director: Patti Dolezal,

music@pccrusa.org

Choir Director: Rich Dixon Organist: Larry Gillum



Paper copies of the newsletter are available in the narthex.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue of the newsletter—whether it be your service in this church or providing a written article or photo.

We appreciate your input!

The January Newsletter deadline is Tuesday, December 19. Please send your pictures and stories to: office@pccrusa.org Thanks!



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Worship Schedule

Worship in the Sanctuary:

December 3 — 10:00 am: Communion, Rev. Bruce

Brackman preaching

December 10 — 10:00 am December 17 — 10:00 am

December 21 — 5:00 pm: Blue Christmas

December 24 — 10:00 am

December 24 — 5:00 pm: Christmas Eve Service

December 31 — 10:00 am

The Rev. Dr. Christine Dempsey, pastor Larry Gillum, organist

View through Livestream service on our website:

Open the website, https://pccrusa.org on the Home page. The livestream player is to the right, below the opening pictures. The player will automatically start when the service begins.

Sunday Bulletin: The current worship bulletin appears directly below the livestream and video recordings box. Simply click on "View Bulletin".

Please Look...

- ⇒ Are you in the current church directory?
- ⇒ Has your phone number changed?
- ⇒ Is your email different?
- ⇒ Any family member changes?
- ⇒ Have you moved? Is your address correct?
- ⇒ Would you like your photo updated?

Let the church office know (970-586-4404) if and when you have any changes to your contact information. Thanks!

Check us out on Facebook!

Facebook is a branch of our outreach ministry, a way we invite others to be a part of our church family as well as keep our own members informed.



Check out our page (you don't need a Facebook account) for the most recent updates and articles. https://www.facebook.com/PCCR1



December 2023

Message from Pastor Christine Dempsey . . .

Dear Friends,

The Gospel of Mark begins with "The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" and then Mark dives right into the story of John the Baptist. There is no birth story in Mark, no story about Mary and Joseph, and no story of kings or angels. Mark's version of the story falls short in our ideas about Christmas – the birth of a newborn king. In Mark, we miss the biography and the characters that play into this drama. This year, I would like to explore the human stories, the biographies of our characters. As a lover of biography, I want to learn about not only Jesus but those people who shaped his world: Joseph, Mary, John the Baptist, and God the Father. Finally, I am inviting us into the biography of Jesus which will help us explore even more deeply his humanity and his divinity.



While we have only limited knowledge of our biblical characters

from scripture itself, we can reconstruct bits and pieces of their lives based on historical and archeological record of the time in which they lived. In understanding these roles, it will help us flesh out their stories and give us context for the scripture that we do have. Also, in understanding the stories of these people, we can better relate to those entrusted with the care of Jesus. We can place ourselves within the context of that time and draw on our own emotions of motherhood, fatherhood or being childless. In a way, it causes us to dig into our own humanity to better understand this newborn baby, and yet it begs us to ask the question of God of why at this time and place did our savior come. During advent, we will focus on these characters.

December 3 – Bruce Brackman will gear us up for the advent season with Mark -- "There is Hope- It's Promised." This is the first Sunday of Advent where we celebrate hope. We will have communion and savor the beautiful advent hymns of promise.

December 10 – Pastor Christine will be looking at the character of John the Baptist in a sermon entitled "Preparing the Way." This is the Sunday of peace.

December 17 – Following tradition, we will study the character of Mary on the third Sunday of Advent. This Sunday is regarded as the Sunday of Joy, a reminder of the child to come and that his time is near. The sermon is entitled, "What to Expect When We're Expecting."

December 21 – 5:00 pm—Blue Christmas! On the shortest day of the year, we will come to the Advent season with a chance to reflect and remember. It is sometimes hard to be filled with joy when we carry heavy burdens on our heart. On this night, we can reflect and remember in a quiet, simple space.

December 24 – 10:00 am – The morning service on December 24 is our fourth Sunday of Advent, the Sunday of Love, and we will be looking at God and trying to understand who God is, the first person of the Trinity and what God is doing in our world. The sermon title "God is Doing Stuff" comes from the conversation in our Wednesday Bible Study.

December 24 – 5:00 pm – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service! This year, we are going to learn about the unique role of Joseph at the birth of Christ and celebrate with candlelight, choir, bells, organ and a new arrangement of *Joseph Lieber, Joseph Mein*. We will sing our favorite carols and meditate on our homily "Love in Daddy's Hands."

Friends, I look forward to seeing you this Christmas season! Be a part of this wonderful season and listen for Christ's story anew.

Grace and peace,

Christine

November 2023: Honoring Our Staff

November 2023 was a month to honor three of our amazing staff members! It began in the office one day when Brenda Gillum casually mentioned that she wanted to purchase a cake for Fellowship the following Sunday. Kelley Anderson, upon hearing that Larry Gillum's birthday was soon, ran with the idea and came up with a few of her signature touches, including some quite

amusing decorations.

During worship on

November 5, an unsuspecting Larry was quietly sitting at the organ while Pastor Christine went over the "Life of the Community" announcements. When Christine mentioned that there was a birthday, all eyes turned to Larry, whose innocent face lifted in surprise. Everyone soon filed into the Fellowship Hall, where Stan Osborne led us in singing "Happy Birthday," and Kelley organized a round of "Larry Trivia." For instance, did you know that Larry's childhood piano lessons cost \$1 per session? Or that Brenda and Larry began their relationship as pen pals? Apparently the birthday boy has a much more interesting past than we realize!

WOOPIE!

BIRTHDAY!





Just a week later, we officially installed the Rev. Dr. Christine Dempsey as Pastor of the Presbyterian Community Church of the Rockies. This service brought together mentors and friends from her past as well as current church members and officers. The Service of Installation reminds the congregation members of their responsibilities to serve God, as well as renewing the pastor's solemn oath to care for the church. The day culminated in the "laying on of hands," a touching symbolic representation of how we all agree to



bills. Carolyn has served as a listening ear and inspiration for 24 pastors. She has been present when many of us were in need of consolation or support. And, as the longest term PCCR employee, her dedication, wisdom and experience have been invaluable among the staff. During worship on November 19, Pastor Christine called forth a glowing Carolyn Hull so that all could



the Rockies. As a hard-working Financial

Manager, Carolyn's contributions have extended far

beyond the processing of checks and paying of

acknowledge her, an event that has rarely happened in the 25-year tenure of this humble individual.

And so, to Larry, Christine, and Carolyn, as well as all who serve as shepherds of PCCR: we celebrate you with our laughter, we welcome you with open hands, and we honor you with a deep bow of gratitude.

Worship November 2023 Heritage: Shepherding our Past

In order to move forward, one is sometimes required to look backward. To see where he or she has been.

The theme of this month was Heritage, and we looked at our past in several different ways. First, we looked at the people. November 5 kicked us off with an All Saints Day Service to remember those in our church family who have recently departed. Pastor Christine read the names of PCCR Members who passed away during the last year. Ginny Page sounded a bell to honor each one. After morning worship that day, some joined in another service at the Columbarium to remember our lost loved ones. Beneath bluebird skies and while wrapped in a gentle wind, attendees listened to sweet guitar chords and the reading of names of those who we carry closest to our hearts.









November 12 was quite a contrast! If you had wandered into the Sanctuary that day, you might have wondered if you had transcended time and space, for we were holding our very own Kirkin' o' the Tartans service as a way to honor the Presbyterian Church's Scottish roots. This Scottish-style service began in the 18th century when the British Parliament forbade the wearing of the kilt or tartan. Clan members would secretly stuff small bits of their tartan into their clothing on Sundays. During worship, at a secret signal, they would hold up the tartan and the priest would subtly speak a blessing over each clan as well as their Scottish heritage.

Here at PCCR, some wore kilts or plaid shirts while others brought pieces of bright fabric to lay upon the altar to be blessed. We enjoyed some loud, lively music including the brilliant tones of bagpiper Scott Beach.

And so, as we boldly step forward into the future, let us also grieve, honor, and remember our past.





Veterans Day

We have many in our PCCR Community who have sacrificed for something larger than themselves. Some are still among us while others have passed on. On Veterans Day, flags are placed at the entrance to the PCCR Columbarium to honor Veterans who are inurned there.

—Bill Smith, Columbarium Committee





Merry Marthas Display Creations to Donate

Merry Marthas are a group of women who knit, crochet, sew, and weave year-round for our mission projects. Materials are provided by Presbyterian Women and by donations. Finished items are distributed to Bright Christmas, Blue Santa, Estes Valley Crisis Advocates, VA hospitals, and others. This ecumenical group always invites and welcomes new members.

Assembling Bolt Bags for Estes Valley Crisis Advocates

PCCR Members stuffed 24 "Bolt Bags on November 19.
The Bolt Bags will be given through EVCA (Estes Valley Crisis Advocates) to their clients to assist them with a "new start".
EVCA clients include survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse, suicide, and other life traumas.



New Lights for the Sanctuary

A shepherd is constantly trying to ease the burden of his flock, to make life a little easier in some large or small way.

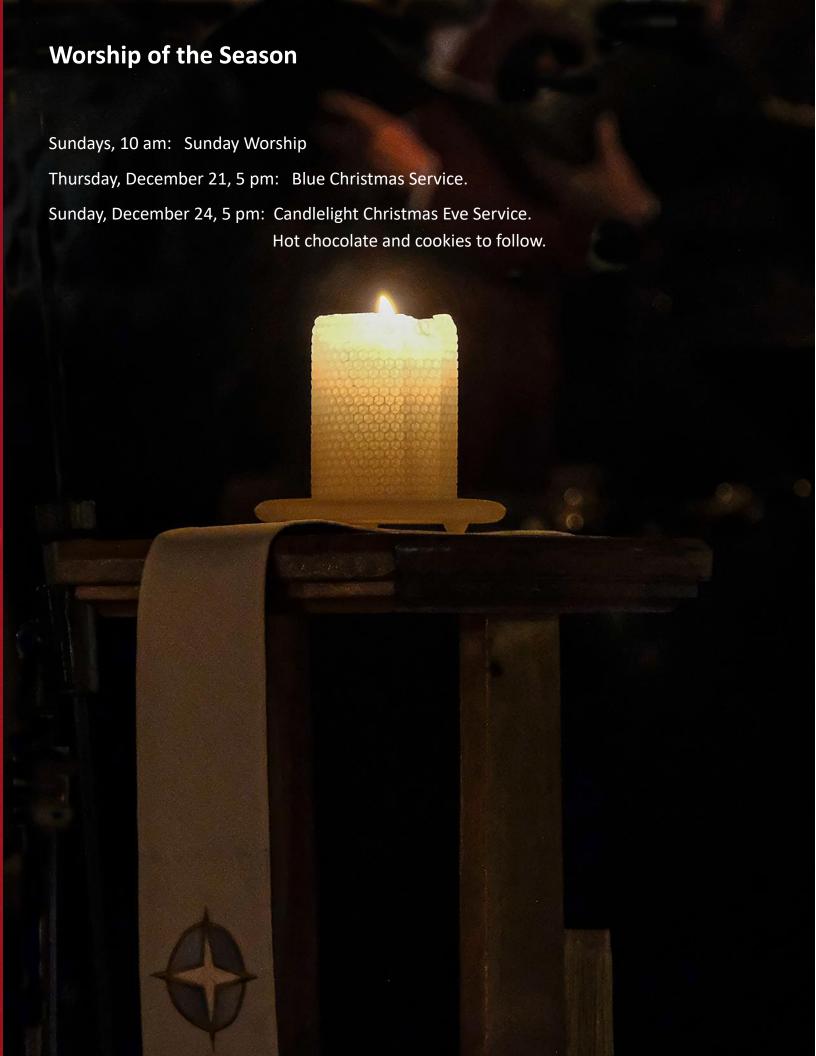
During the week of November 13, members of the Building and Grounds Committee spent several days on scaffolding and ladders replacing the LED light bulbs in the hanging fixtures in the sanctuary (including over the choir), with brighter LED bulbs.

These lights are more than twice as bright as before (3000 lumens vs 1300), allowing our choir members to sing more comfortably and for our worship attendees to read the bulletins more easily.









Groups and Events

Advent Study Groups

Advent Study groups have already begun but if you are interested in joining one, please call the office! We are reading Walter Brueggeman's <u>Names for the Messiah</u>. Each peer-led group will meet four times to discuss this thought-provoking text.

Adult Sunday School

Adult Bible Study group meets at 8:15 a.m. on Sundays in the Lounge. All are welcome to join this exploration of the Faith from a Jewish perspective.

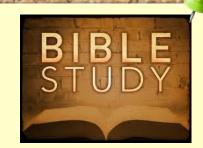
December's Classes:

December 3: Jesus in Context: Private Life to Public Ministry

December 10: Jesus in Context: Galilee

December 17: The Land Speaks! Passover and the Miracle of Loaves and Fishes

December 24: NO CLASS – MERRY CHRISTMAS! December 31: NO CLASS – HAPPY NEW YEAR!



A Bit of Sign Language

During the Christmas Season, the Sign Choir will be participating as they interpret hymns and anthems in American Sign Language. To add to your understanding, here are some basic Christian signs that you will be seeing and a bit of background on this distinct language.

American Sign Language is the most commonly used sign system in the States among the Deaf population. It has a different syntax from spoken English and generally does not include a lot of "little words" (like "a", "the", "it"...) or use markers for tenses and plurals (--ing; -s). ASL also uses the manual alphabet, also called finger spelling. Many of the signs are intuitive --- they reflect the meaning and are something you might use without thinking about it. For example, "baby" is signed with your arms folded as if you were holding a baby and gently rocking left to right.

Here are some signs you may see during the Christmas season.

- God: This is always the highest sign you make. Stretch one open hand as high up as you can. You probably will automatically lift your head and eyes as well! That is part of signing: your whole body is involved!
- Jesus: The middle finger of the right hand touches the center of the left palm then the left middle finger touches the center of the right palm. This shows the marks of the nails in Jesus' hands when He was crucified. (Now you can sign "baby Jesus"!)
- Holy Spirit: Put the index and middle fingers of the right hand on the left palm, then move the right hand in a spiral upward.
- Star: both index fingers move upward alternately brushing each other
- Angel: Put the tips of both hands on your shoulders and "flip" them outward --- like angel wings. Flap if you want!

For those who are curious, I learned Sign Language (both ASL and Signing Exact English) as part of my Master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology. I have a barely passable use of Malawian Sign Language as well.

—Carol Nussbaumer, facilitator Sign Choir



Journeys is focusing on ideas to help a person cope with loss, and the changes that result from a loss. Dr. Maya Shankar suggests asking yourself these three questions:

How might this loss and/or change ... Change what you are capable of?

How might this loss and/or change ... Change what you value?

How might this loss and/or change ... Change how you define yourself?



When an unexpected change happens **to us**, focusing on these questions can inspire lasting change **within us**. It's a difficult path, made easier with a connection to the Divine and the support of loving Christians around you.

Journeys meets Sunday mornings in the Church library. Gathering begins at 8:15 a.m., with the program starting at 8:30.

For those who are unable to attend in person, there is an opportunity to join the gathering remotely. Since Journeys is primarily a discussion group, the Zoom platform is used for remote access. The Zoom link is:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8457412756?pwd=UG50Wk5yV1R2b1lCVmtENnUxTCtlUT09

Meeting ID: 845 741 2756 and Passcode: 80517 (only if necessary)

The program topics for December are:

December 3 Buddhism and Coping with Change
December 10 Christmas Past, Present and Future

December 17 Marcus Borg and Christmas

December 24 No class
December 31 No class

Journeys also hosts a once a month in-person gathering called Soulful Stories. It takes place on the second Thursday of the month at 4 p.m. in the library. These gatherings consist of sharing of stories and casual conversation related to one's individual spiritual practices and spiritual growth.

Journeys sends out a weekly email with details about the plans for each week. If you would like to be on this email list, let the Church office know or contact Jim Daugherty at: jk@daughertys.us.

PW Bible Study – December 18, 2023 Sacred Encounters – Lesson Four

In lesson four of the PW Horizons Bible Study for December 18, we will be challenged to read with imagination and fresh eyes the story of Mary and Martha's encounter with Jesus. Betty Meyer will lead us in this study, with the main idea being that Jesus calls us to value the role of each person in the community of faith. We will gather at 11:30 a.m. in the church library for a brief social time, with the lesson beginning at 12 noon. Because the meeting occurs during the lunch hour, you are welcome to bring a sack lunch to eat during the meeting. The study books are available either from the church office or at the meeting for \$10. The meeting will also be available via Zoom. All women of the church are invited to participate in this study. We hope you can join us!

Wolcum Yole

Presbyterian Community Church of the Rockies is proud to sponsor Estes Park's first Christmas program of 2023 on Saturday, December 2nd at 2:00pm in the Sanctuary. Featured in this program will be the Estes Valley Chamber Singers (conducted by Rich Dixon), PCCR's Bell Choir (directed by Patti Dolezal), and Larry Gillum at the organ.

Half of the singers in the Chamber group are not only members of our Sanctuary Choir, but members of this church. This will be the nineteenth year that the Chamber Singers have given a Christmas Concert as a gift to the Estes community. The program opens with Benjamin Britten's "Wolcum Yole" from his *Ceremony of Carols*. This followed by the congregation, bell and organ doing the wonderful carol "O Come All Ye Faithful." The Singers also perform Mendelsohn's beautiful "Ave Maria" featuring Jeff Lindberg and the tenors and altos. Kathye Osborne will be

accompanying the Singers on three numbers; "Run to the Stable," "Coventry Carol," and "A Celtic French Carol."

The Bell Choir will play wonderful arrangements of "Adeste Fidelis," Angel Song," and "The First Noel." And Larry Gillum will add that final ingredient by doing what this congregation anticipates every season of Advent, his improvisation on carols.

The program next gives the audience a chance to sing a few much-loved carols, and the program comes to an end with the Chamber Singers singing F. Melius Christiansen's "Beautiful Savior."

Come to the church on Saturday, December 2nd at 2:00 in the afternoon and join these wonderful musicians to "Wolcum Yole" or <u>Welcome Christmas!</u>



PCCR Church Closures: Monday, December 25 Monday, January 1st

The Church Office will be closed on Monday, December 25 and Monday, January 1st, in observance of federal holidays Christmas and New Years' Day.

On December 26, 27, and 28, church staff will be working from home. The church will be locked and office phone calls will not be answered. Please contact us via email or cell phone during this time.

Grace and Grub Christmas Brunch

On December 9 in the Fellowship Hall at 10 am, Grace and Grub will be holding their annual Christmas Brunch. Bring a brunch dish to share and gather to pause and reconnect with your church community during this busy season. All are welcome, even if you have not participated in Grace and Grub in the past.

Congregational Meeting: Sunday, December 17

On Sunday, December 17, directly following worship, a Congregational Meeting will be held in the Sanctuary. A service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving will be held during this meeting for those who passed away during 2023. The budget for 2024 will be presented for congregational information and Church Officers will be elected. Please plan to attend this brief but important meeting. Livestream will be available for those who cannot attend in person.

PW Thank Offering

It is with grateful hearts that the Presbyterian Women thank the members and friends of the Presbyterian Community Church of the Rockies for their generous donations to support this year's Thank Offering. Our congregation has so far donated \$965.40 to this offering. Because of the generosity of our congregation, women and children both in the United States and internationally will receive the care, support and sustenance they need to move forward with their lives. If you were unable to participate in the service on November 5, you can still contribute to the offering by writing a check to "PW of PCCR" and marking it for Thank Offering, or by going online and making a one-time donation, indicating it is for the Thank Offering. You are truly making a positive difference in the lives of those who will receive the benefits from this annual offering.



Christmas Joy Offering

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930's. This special offering distributes gifts equally to two programs:

#1 The Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions which provides critical financial support to church workers and their families and

#2 Presbyterian-related schools equipping communities of color.

Each year during the Advent and Christmas season we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ our Savior.

By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering we honor God's gift twofold...... providing assistance to current and retired church workers and supporting Presbyterian-related schools and colleges which provide students education and leadership development while nurturing their racial and ethnic heritage.

Envelopes for the Joy Offering will be available during worship on December 10, 17, and 24th. Or give online: click here for direct access to the website page, or go to https://pccrusa.org/contribute/contribute-to-the-church/



Session Highlights ~ November 2023

- Extended thanks to Carolyn Hull who is celebrating 25 years of serving as the Finance Secretary here at PCCR.
- Noted that Building and Grounds has installed brighter lighting in the Sanctuary.
- Voted to add the following new regulation to the Columbarium policy:
 - "Flags, sticks or posts are not allowed in the Columbarium area, except those placed by or with the permission of the Columbarium committee." This is to protect the plastic barrier placed under the rocks to hamper weed growth.
- ♦ Heard a report from Finance committee that we are within \$7000 of last year's budget, including the 3% increase for staff.
- Received a report from Mission and Outreach committee that they have invited new members to join the committee. They have decided to wait a bit to send any monies to help with the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.
- Work continues by Worship and Music committee to formulate a new funeral policy regarding fees charged. They will address the wedding policy next.
- Voted to divide the current Membership and Hospitality committee into two separate groups, one for Membership and the other for Hospitality. The work load for the single committee was becoming too much for one group.
- Voted to utilize several small memorial accounts to refurbish the Narthex furniture and decor.
- Scheduled the Session and Deacons retreat for February 28-29 at Highlands Camp.

Financial Information October 2023					
	October	Jan-Oct	Year to Date—Budget		
Total Revenues	\$30,103	\$305,465	\$301,358		
Total Expenses	\$30,364	\$312,954	\$386,108		
Net Total	\$261	-\$7,489	-\$84,750		
*Revenue includes \$16,011 Employee Retention Tax Credit					

Year-End Giving

Please plan for your December year end giving. Charitable contributions may be claimed in the year that they are delivered to our church, including checks mailed in the appropriate year. Donations made on our website are deductible in the year the donor makes the donation. Our office will be closed Friday, December 22. We will be working from home the week of December 25-29. We will check mail and make any deposits during this time.



Mass Mass





Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 3:30pm-Ballet Class-FH 3:30pm-Girl Scout Daisies*	2 9:00am-Card- Making Group-FH 2:00pm-Chamber Singers Concert-S
8	4	5	9	7	8	6
8:15am-Adult Sunday School-Lounge 8:30am-Journeys-L 10:00am-Worship 5:00pm-Oratorio-FH	9:00am-Worship and Music Committee-L 6:15pm-Girl Scout Cadettes*	11:45am-AA Group* 2:00pm-Advent Study Group #1 – L 4:00pm-Learning Place Family Café-FH 6:30pm-Chamber Singers- Music Rm 6:45pm-EVICS Group	10:00am-Advent Group 2-L 3:00pm-Girl Scout Brownies* 4:00pm-Joyful Bells-FH 6:30pm-Estes Park Chorale-FH 6:30pm-Advent Group 3-L	10:00am-Mission and Outreach-L 11:00am-Staff Meeting-Ofc 11:45am-AA Group* 4:00pm-Chancel Bells-FH 6:30pm-Chancel Choir- Music Rm	2:00pm-Setup for Christmas Brunch- FH	10:00am-Grace&Grub Christmas Brunch-FH 1:00pm-Girl Scout Tea*
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
8:15am-Adult Sunday School-Lounge 8:30am-Journeys-L 10:00am-Worship 5:00pm-Oratorio-FH	9:00am-Finance-L 11:00am-Communications-L 3:30pm-Ballet Class-FH 4:00pm-Sign Choir-L	10:00am-Bldg &Grounds-L 11:45am-AA Group* 1:00pm-Personnel-L 2:00pm-Advent Group #1 –L 4:30pm-Stephen Ministers-L 5:00pm-EVICS Dinner-FH 6:30pm-Chamber Singers- 6:45pm-EVICS Group* 7:00pm-Deacons-L	10:00am-Advent Group 2-L 3:00pm-Girl Scout Brownies* 4:00pm-Joyful Bells-FH 6:30pm-Estes Park Chorale-FH 6:30pm-Advent Group 3-L	8:30am-EPNRC Board* 11:45am-AA Group* 3:00pm-Journeys: Soul Work Group-L 4:00pm-Chancel Bells-FH 5:00pm-EVICS Family Night* 6:30pm-Chancel Choir- Music Rm	3:30pm-Ballet Class-FH 3:30pm-Girl Scout Daisies* 6:00pm-Estes Park Chorale Dress Rehearsal-S	2:00pm-Estes Park Chorale Concert-S
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
8:15am-Adult Sunday School-Lounge 8:30am-Journeys-L 10:00am-Worship 11:00am-Congregational Meeting-S 5:00pm-Oratorio-FH	11:30am-PW-L 3:30pm-Ballet Class-FH 4:00pm-Sign Choir-L 6:15pm-Girl Scout Cadettes* 6:30pm-Session-L	Newsletter Deadline 11:45am-AA Group* 2:00pm-Advent Group #1 –L 5:00pm-EVICS Mom's* 6:30pm-Chamber Singers- Music Rm 6:45pm-EVICS Group*	10:00am-Advent Group 2-L 3:00pm-Girl Scout Brownies* 4:00pm-Joyful Bells-FH 6:30pm-Estes Park Chorale-FH 6:30pm-Advent Group 3-L	10:00am-Staff Meeting 11:45am-AA Group* 3:00pm-Columbarium-L 4:00pm-Chancel Bells-FH 5:00pm-Blue Christmas-S 6:30pm-Chancel Choir- Music Rm	9:30am-Merry Marthas-FH 3:30pm-Ballet Class-FH	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
10:00am-Worship 5:00pm-Xmas Eve Service 5:00pm-Oratorio-FH 31 10:00am-Worship 5:00pm-Oratorio-FH	CHRISTMAS DAY – OFFICE CLOSED 4:00pm-Sign Choir-L	11:45am-AA Group* 6:30pm-Chamber Singers- Music Rm 6:45pm-EVICS Group*	3:00pm-Girl Scout Brownies* 4:00pm-Joyful Bells-FH	11:45am-AA Group* 4:00pm-Chancel Bells-FH 6:30pm-Chancel Choir- Music Rm	Carpet Cleaning	
		y				

Note: Calendar events subject to change

*Downstairs Room 6

