St. Mark United Methodist Church
550 Hwy. 72 By-Pass NW
Greenwood, SC 29649
http://www.stmarkgreenwood.com
Church Phone: 864.229.5416
Kids' World Phone: 864.227.2776

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The Witness

Bypass Campus (BPC)

Rivers Street Campus (RSC)

St. Mark United Methodist Church

www.stmarkgreenwood.com
Volume 20 Issue 10
November 2026

Jason's Journal

"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."
John 1:14

I don't know about you, but for me it is hard to believe we are nearing the end of 2026 as we begin the month of November. Even more so, I can't believe we begin the season of Advent at the end of this month. Where does the time go? As we prepare to begin again the season of Advent, I want to take a few minutes to remind us of the significance of this liturgical season. In the life of the church, Advent is the beginning of the new year. Advent is a season of preparation as the church looks ahead to celebrate the upcoming Christmas season; yet mixed in to the anticipation of celebrating again the birth of Jesus are often passages of Scripture and sermons pointing to the "second coming" of Jesus. If we are not careful, we can allow this mixture of Scriptures and thoughts to muddle up our minds to the point where we begin to wonder how are these two even connected?

Theologian and author, N.T. Wright wrote in one of his most recent books, *God's Homecoming*, *"Christmas and the second coming are more closely related than you might think…Both have to do with a theme that is larger even than either of them, but one that is often neglected or ignored: God's homecoming."* Wright later continued in his book by relaying to the reader, *"The point of Christianity is not that we should go to heaven. The point of Christianity is that heaven should come to us. 'To earth,' in Jesus's words. The story the early Christians told was not about how humans (or their souls) could, as it were, go upstairs into the presence of God. It was about how God had come downstairs to live with them – and would one day complete that operation, eventually suffusing all creation with his glorious presence."*

As I have considered these words from Wright in coordination with the above passage of Scripture from John's Gospel, I am beginning to have a clearer revelation of not only the season of Advent but also the life of a Christian. Yes, Scripture does talk of going to heaven when we die; but it is at the second coming of Jesus that we see in Revelation God coming to be with his followers as this is our ultimate hope. When I think about John 1:14, *"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."* I am reminded of the beautiful image of Jesus coming to this earth to take up residence with humanity, as we are all undeserving of this amazing love and grace of God revealed to the world through Jesus.

Not only do we as the church await *God's homecoming*, we also know that God is in us through the power and gift of the Holy Spirit to make earth look more like heaven. How do we do that? We return to the words of Jesus in the Gospels, we love God with all that we are and we love our neighbors as we love ourselves. These two commands from Jesus are not two different commands, but they truly go hand in hand as they cannot be separated. These words and commands from Jesus reveal the God so deeply identified with the humanity God created that the measure of our love for God is found in how we treat one another – especially the vulnerable, the stranger, and those we are tempted to overlook.

I point all of this out, because this is what Jesus did and how Jesus lived at his first advent (coming). Which then calls Jesus' church to consider; is this what Jesus will find his church doing at his second advent (coming)? St. Mark UMC, I pray this advent season while we eagerly await to celebrate again the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day that we will also prepare our minds and hearts for *God's homecoming* to this world.

Worship Attendance Year to Date Average	
As of October 25, 2026	
8:45 AM - BPC	82
8:45 AM - RSC	58
11:00 AM - BPC	85
11:15 AM - RSC	91
8:45 YouTube Stream - BPC	51
11:15 YouTube Stream - RSC	41
8:45 Facebook Stream - BPC	186
11:15 Facebook Stream - RSC	229
Facebook Stream	287
10:30 AM - One Church	228
10:30 YouTube Stream - One Church	64
10:30 Facebook Stream - One Church	236
Worship Attendance	758
Sunday School Attendance	42

KREW and EPIC Attendance School Year Average	
As of October 11, 2026	
KREW	53
EPIC	94
HSX	15

The next copy of *The Witness*, the church's monthly newsletter, will be emailed out Wednesday, November 25. ***Deadline to submit information to the church office for the newsletter is Monday, November 16.***

Copies of the November Birthdays list, November Anniversaries list, and Upper Rooms for November/ December are located at the narthex/welcome area at each campus.

The Pastors and congregation extend Christian sympathy to the following members of our church family.

- Connie Dalton and her family on the death of her mother, Karen Bell, on October 21st.
- Thomas Dalton and his family on the death of his grandmother, Karen Bell, on October 21st.
- Marie Marshall and her family on the death of her brother, Claude Edward "Junior" Gable, Jr, on October 23rd.

BYPASS ONE CHURCH ST. MARK UMC TWO CAMPUSES RIVERS STREET

Sunday, November 1st, we will have our annual Charge Conference at 12:30 PM in the worship center of the Rivers Street Campus.

The Kids' World Corner

Fall News & Upcoming Events

Our Kids World family has a fun-filled fall ahead! Check out our upcoming fundraisers, friendly competitions, and festive activities. We invite everyone to join, participate, and support our children and classrooms.

TEACHER OF THE QUARTER: LANEY

We are excited to recognize Laney as our Teacher of the Quarter!

Laney goes above and beyond every day to do her job and provide the very best care and learning experiences for our children. Parents adore her, and we have received so many positive comments from families, both this year and last year, about the love, dedication, and support she gives to her students. We have also heard wonderful feedback from teachers about the children who graduated from our K4 program. They are excelling in big school, and we are so proud of the strong foundation Laney helped them build! Thank you, Laney, for your hard work, dedication, and the positive impact you have on our children and families. We appreciate you!

St. Mark Pumpkin Patch

Our children recently enjoyed a fun visit to the St. Mark Pumpkin Patch! They had a wonderful time learning about pumpkin life cycles, Benny the Scarecrow's story about how God never leaves us, and exploring the pumpkin patch! It was a special day filled with learning, laughter, and God's love!

Fall Fundraisers & Friendly Competition

We have several exciting events coming up at Kids World! Thank you to our church family for your continued support of our preschool, classrooms, and community.

Charleston Wrap Fundraiser

Our Kids World Charleston Wrap fundraiser begins **October 26 and runs through November 13!** All orders are expected to arrive within four weeks, just in time for Christmas. Proceeds will go toward purchasing materials to enhance our toddler program. Thank you for helping us make learning fun and engaging for our little ones!

Clemson vs. Carolina Food Bank Challenge

It's time to show your team spirit while giving back! Join us for our Clemson vs. Carolina canned food competition. Bring your canned goods and help your favorite team win! All cans collected will be donated to the St. Mark Blessing Box to help local families in need!

Annual Door Decorating Contest

Our annual door decorating contest is back! Voting will take place **December 6th-11th**, and the winner will be announced during Family Night on December **11th**. This year we have added a little twist. Each teacher will draw for a door theme and show us how creative they can be! Be sure to check out the creative decorations and cast your vote.

Thank you for supporting Kids World and helping us make a difference in the lives of our children and families. We are grateful for our wonderful church family!

Hello St. Mark Family!

A few weeks ago, we had the incredible opportunity to welcome the Imani Milele Children's Choir to St. Mark. And WOW! What an amazing evening! If you were there, you know exactly what I am talking about. The music, the dancing, the energy, and those beautiful smiles were absolutely contagious! There was something special about watching those children sing and dance with such incredible joy. You couldn't help but smile, clap along, and maybe even move a little yourself! But as I thought about that evening, something struck me. Those children weren't simply singing songs about joy. They were living it! Their joy wasn't dependent on having everything they wanted or living a life without challenges. Their joy came from something much deeper. It was a joy rooted in their faith, their hope, and their love for Jesus Christ.

And I wonder, have we forgotten what that kind of joy looks like? As we enter November, we begin one of my favorite times of the year. Thanksgiving is just around the corner, Christmas decorations will soon be going up (if they haven't already!), and before we know it, we will enter the season of Advent. There is something about this time of year that brings a little extra excitement. We gather around tables with family and friends, enjoy traditions, exchange gifts, and celebrate the many blessings God has given us. But sometimes, in the middle of all the busyness, we lose sight of the very thing we are supposed to be celebrating. We get so caught up in preparing for the holidays that we forget to experience the joy of the season.

In Luke 2:10, the angel announces to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people." Notice what the angel didn't say. The angel didn't promise that life would suddenly become easy, that every problem would disappear, or that everything would go according to plan. The angel announced something far greater. Jesus Christ, our Savior, had been born! That is the beautiful thing about Christian joy. Happiness often depends on what is happening around us, but joy comes from knowing who is walking beside us. Joy doesn't mean that life is perfect. It doesn't mean we never experience sadness, disappointment, or difficulty. It means that even in the middle of life's challenges, we have a reason to celebrate because God is with us.

The Apostle Paul reminds us in Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" Paul wasn't writing those words from a life of comfort and ease. He understood hardship. Yet he reminded the church that our joy is found in the Lord, not in our circumstances. Maybe that is what those children from Imani Milele reminded us of that evening. Joy isn't something we have to wait for. It isn't something reserved for Christmas morning or a special occasion. Joy is something we can experience and share every single day because of the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

So, as we celebrate Thanksgiving and prepare our hearts for Advent, I want to challenge each of us to do something. Don't just celebrate the season of joy. BE JOYFUL! Look for God's blessings in the ordinary moments. Be thankful for what you have. Share a smile with someone who needs it. Extend grace to someone who is struggling. And most importantly, remember the incredible gift of Jesus Christ. Because the greatest joy of Christmas isn't found under a tree, wrapped in beautiful paper, or sitting around a dinner table. The greatest joy of Christmas is found in a manger, where God came to dwell among us.

May we carry the same contagious joy we witnessed in those children into our homes, our community, and everywhere we go. And may the people around us see something different in the way we live, something that points them straight to Jesus!

I hope you have a great November and I look forward to seeing YOU at CHURCH!! BRING A FRIEND!!

Robby

NOVEMBER PREACHING SCHEDULE AND SCRIPTURE

This month, like almost every month at St. Mark UMC there is a lot going on in the life of the church and our worship services. We hope that you will take the time to join together as we connect with God and with each other in worship. We ask that you please take note of two important details to our worship and preaching schedule. The first, is that on Sunday, November 1st we will be having a One Church worship service together, beginning at 10:30AM at our Rivers Street Campus. This is also All Saints Sunday, which carries an even greater significance as St. Mark UMC comes together as one congregation to honor and remember the saints of St. Mark who have left the church militant and joined the church triumphant over the past year. We encourage Sunday school classes to gather earlier at 9:15. The second detail I would like for us all to take note of is Sunday, November 29th is the first Sunday of Advent, which means we will be having only two services that day so that Robby and I may be able to participate in the Hanging of the Greens services at both the Bypass Campus and the Rivers Street Campus. We look forward to seeing you all this month. Invite someone to join you in worship.

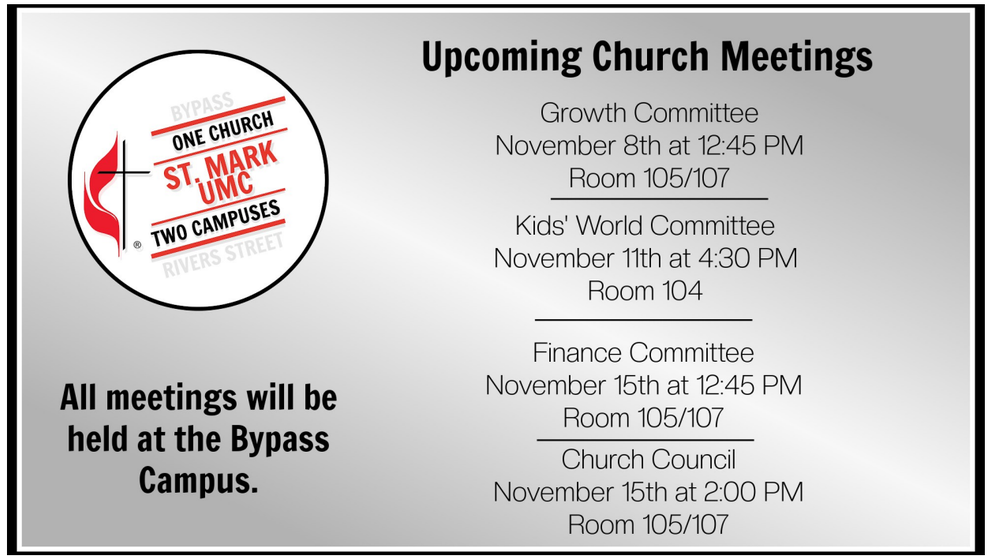
November 1 - One Church Worship - All Saints Sunday - Revelation 7:9-17
- Rev. Jason Wilson and Rev. Robby Lybrand at the Rivers Street Campus 10:30 AM.

November 8 - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
- Rev. Jason Wilson at the Bypass Campus 8:45 AM and 11:00 AM.
- Rev. Rev. Robby Lybrand at the Rivers Street Campus 8:45 AM and 11:15 AM.

November 15 - 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
- Rev. Jason Wilson at the Bypass Campus 8:45 AM and 11:00 AM.
- Rev. Robby Lybrand at the Rivers Street Campus 8:45 AM and 11:15 AM.

November 22 - Christ the King Sunday - Matthew 25:31-46
- Rev. Jason Wilson at the Bypass Campus 8:45 AM and 11:00 AM.
- Rev. Robby Lybrand at the Rivers Street Campus 8:45 AM and 11:15 AM.

November 29 - First Sunday of Advent and Hanging of the Greens - Mark 13:24-37
- Rev. Jason Wilson and Rev. Robby Lybrand at the Bypass Campus 8:45 AM.
- Rev. Jason Wilson and Rev. Robby Lybrand at the Rivers Street Campus 11:15 AM.



Blessing Box items needed:
Canned tuna, chicken, or salmon, Peanut butter and jelly, Meals in a can (chunky soups, stew, chili), Canned fruits in its own juice or water, Canned food with pop-top lids, Dried beans (pinto, blackeyed, kidney, lima, etc), Pasta (including whole grain), Rice (brown, white, yellow), Low-sugar whole grain cereals, Grits and Oatmeal (bag or box), Powder or shelf-stable milk Bottled water and fruit drinks, Healthy snacks (granola bars, nuts, dried fruit), laundry detergent, and toiletries.

ST. MARK BRIDGE KIDS

People are wonderful, not because of anything we have done, but because of Who made us - because of Whose image we were made in. God is wonderful! And we were made in God's wonderful image, by our wonderful God! So every person we see, including you and me, is someone God made wonderful!

The quest for God's kingdom begins with knowing the King, Jesus. When we choose to follow Jesus and learn to know Him more, we are given the amazing mission of helping to grow God's kingdom through the power of the Holy Spirit. It can start with the smallest thing—one choice, a kind word, an offer of help—and grow into something far bigger and more amazing than we can imagine.

2026 Children's Christmas Pageant

Auditions will be done by video submissions. Guidelines will be released November 3, and the video submission deadline will be November 9. All children ages two through 5th grade are encouraged to participate.

Each year, the children of St. Mark UMC present the story of the birth of Jesus in the most heartwarming way. Contact julie@stmarkgreenwood.com to make sure your child is a part of this special tradition. All children K2-5th grade are encouraged to particiapte. Our pageant directors are Alyson Perrin and Casey Tompkins.

www.stmarkbridgekids.com

EPIC
STUDENT MINISTRY

WWW.STMARKEPIC.COM

EPIC IS A CHRIST-CENTERED MINISTRY FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 6-12. EPIC MEETS FROM 6:30-8:00. ALL YOUTH ARE INVITED! BRING A FRIEND! WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU AT EPIC!

EPIC will meet at the Bypass Campus November 1st from 6:15-8:00 for pizza and a PUMPKIN CHUNKING good time!

A 4-week youth ministry series diving into the incredible stories of Bible heroes who trusted God and followed His lead.

Lesson 3
Nov. 8

When life feels uncertain or the world pulls us in different directions, it can be hard to know who or what to follow. But the Bible shows us real people who chose to trust God – even when it was risky, unpopular, or uncomfortable.

In this series, we're checking out the wild and inspiring lives of some bold Bible heroes who didn't just talk about faith—they actually lived it out.

Lesson 4
Nov. 15

Each week, we'll challenge students to follow God with faith that's active and real:

Lesson 5
Nov. 22

Lesson 1: We can trust God even when we face uncertainty or fear. (Oct.25)
Lesson 2: When we follow God, He uses us to make a difference.
Lesson 3: God sticks with us when we face challenges for our faith.
Lesson 4: Following God may not be easy, but it's always worth it.

EPIC will not meet November 29th! Happy Thanksgiving!

Passion Camp is centered around the glory of Jesus. Middle and high school students gathered together for four days of worship, teaching and community. Not to mention, four fun days on the shores of Daytona Beach! We want middle schoolers and high schoolers to leverage their lives for what matters most — the fame and glory of Jesus!

Register today at www.stmarkepic.com/passion-camp

We would like to offer a sincere THANK YOU to everyone who supported our youth pumpkin patch!

Prayers of the Church

Prayer requests will remain on this list for three weeks unless we are notified differently.

RESIDENTIAL LIVING

Ansley Glen
(1408 Parkway, Greenwood, SC)
Faye Adams

Emerald Gardens
201 Overland Drive,
Greenwood, SC)
W.O. and Sandra Scott

Wesley Commons
(1110 Marshall Road,
Greenwood, SC)
Ruth Clark
Dodie Conley
George and Betty Crane
Skip Heintzelman
Betty Moss McGuirt
Gene Zittrouer

Shut-In/Homebound
Mary Ellen Anderson
(864.223.5275)
1830 Alexander Road W
Greenwood, SC 29649

Tom and Beth Dowtin
122 Hemlock Ct
Greenwood, SC 29649

Mary Anna Evans
5800 Old Providence Road
Apt 4310
Charlotte, NC 28226

Evelyn Fennell
308 Marietta Drive
Greenwood, SC 29646

Evelyn Fooshe
1062 West Mills St.
Apt. 118
Columbus, NC 28722

Charlie Helms (704.535.7848)
c/o Teena Williams
4600 Crofton Ct.
Charlotte, NC 28205

Miriam Laswell
122 Leslie Drive
Greenwood, SC 29649

Bob and Jean Lax
801 Musgrove St
Unit 84
Clinton, SC 29325

Julie McCaffrey
101 Wendover Road
Greenwood, SC 29649

Wilma McCall
106 Cessna Avenue
Greenwood, SC 29646

MEMBERS AND REGULAR ATTENDEES CONT'D
Traci Pruitt,
Connie Dalton and Family
TJ Strawn
John Boerger
Ted Long
Dodie Conley
Betty Moss McGuirt

MEMBERS' FAMILY
Sumer
Daughter
The Family of Dolores Chapman
The Family of Karen Bell
Heather Simmons
Ricky Duff
George Morrow
Wanda Shealy
Our Family
Daughter
Craig Clark
Tom Brewer
Chris Littlefield

MEMBERS' FRIENDS
Tracy Amico
Renee Griswold
Heather King
Janice DeVore
Bernie Edmunds
Madonna Ferguson
Christa Hall and Family
Troy Ellis
Paxton Jenkins
Corey
Jeannie Ware
Susan Knight
Ted Green
Kyrsten Spurrier
John-Mark Scruggs
Dee Dee Setzler
Rebecca Hall
Valerie Hazlett

MILITARY
Sgt. Jack Boyd - Army
Cory Cheshire - Army National Guard
Sean Cornelsen - Army National Guard
Christian Furman - Army
Audrey Garver - Army
Ethan Garver - Army
Randall Geddings
Joshua Goff - Marines
Kos Kerhoulas - Navy
Mackenzie Latham - Air Force
Braeden McDonald - Army
Matthew Owen - Army National Guard
Will Peeler - Army National Guard
Banner Peksa - Army

COLLEGE STUDENTS
Anderson University:
Luke Godwin and Eric Philcox

Citadel:
Olivia Murray and Owen Whittington

Clemson:
Adam Prince, Bentley Setzler, Brady Wilson, Charlee Layland, Chloe Ison, Dawson Hudson, Ellie Whittington, Emma Arnold, Jackson Hamm, Jake Moore, Josh Godwin, Julia Creswell, Lexi Layland, Liam Tompkins, Lily Lambert, Liza Justesen, Mary Peden Light, Matthew Dalton, and Thomas Goff

Erskine College:
Hampton Ashley

Guilford College:
Jillian Mapes

Hunter College
Kynslea Philcox

Kenneth Shuler:
Rylee McManus

Lander:
Evan Lawrence, Kylie Camp, Meghan Philcox, and Rhianna Philcox

MUSC Charleston:
Wyatt Prince

Mississippi State University:
Walker Self

Piedmont Technical College:
McCutchen Geoly and Savannah Mallon

Presbyterian College:
Beatty Murray and Noah Perrin

Southern Wesleyan University:
Cameron Addis

University of Georgia:
Haley McLaughlin and Kathryn Goff

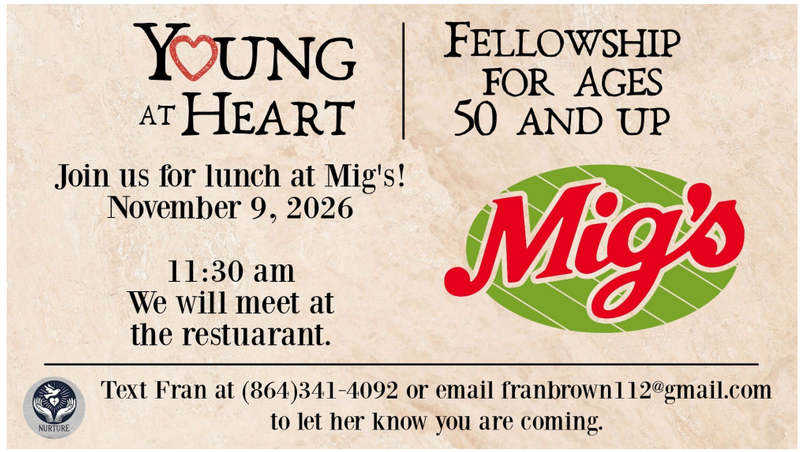
University of South Carolina:
Caroline Bell and Grace Lollis,

University of Tennessee
Trevor Brewington

Wofford College
Hannah Crooks

St. Mark gratefully acknowledges the following gifts:

– To *The Tinsel and Treasures Fund* in loving honor of **Carol Poat** by Tony Poat.



November 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 1:45 Lay Servant Class 4:30 KREW at BPC 6:00 Greenwood Hope and Healing AFG Al-Anon Meeting 6:15 EPIC at BPC 8:00 HSX at BPC 6:00 Greenwood Hope and Healing AFG Al-Anon Meeting	**2** Tinsel and Treasures set-up in Wayne Goff Hall 5:30 West Side AA	**3** Tinsel and Treasures set-up in Wayne Goff Hall 7:00 Men's Bible Study 6:00 Teen Journey 6:00 Women on My Journey AA	4 Tinsel and Treasures set-up in Wayne Goff Hall 6:30 Men's Bible Study 6:30 Band Rehearsal 6:30 Chancel Choir Practice	**5** Tinsel and Treasures in Wayne Goff Hall 5:30 Girl Scouts using Founders Hall 5:30 Al-Anon Meeting 5:30 West Side AA	6 Tinsel and Treasures in Wayne Goff Hall	7 Tinsel and Treasures in Wayne Goff Hall 8:00 Founders Hall, kitchen, The Gathering Place and picnic area in use
8 12:45 Growth Committee Meeting 4:30 KREW 6:00 Greenwood Hope and Healing AFG Al-Anon Meeting 6:15 EPIC 8:00 HSX	**9** 5:30 West Side AA	**10** 7:00 Men's Bible Study 6:00 Teen Journey 6:00 Women on My Journey AA	**11** 6:30 Men's Bible Study 4:30 Kids' World Committee Meeting 6:30 Band Rehearsal 6:30 Chancel Choir Practice	**12** WGH and Kitchen unavailable 9:30 Founders Hall in use 5:30 Al-Anon Meeting 5:30 West Side AA	**13**	**14**
15 12:45 Finance Committee Meeting 2:00 Church Council Meeting 4:30 KREW 6:00 Greenwood Hope and Healing AFG Al-Anon Meeting 6:15 EPIC 8:00 HSX	**16** Founders Hall and Wayne Goff Hall being used for Advent decorations stage area Information is due for church newsletter 12:00 Staff Meeting 5:30 West Side AA	**17** Founders Hall and Wayne Goff Hall being used for Advent decorations stage area 7:00 Men's Bible Study 5:15 Christmas Pageant Re-hearsal 6:00 Teen Journey 6:00 Women on My Journey AA	**18** Founders Hall and Wayne Goff Hall being used for Advent decorations stage area 6:30 Men's Bible Study 5:15 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 6:30 Band Rehearsal 6:30 Chancel Choir Practice	**19** Founders Hall and Wayne Goff Hall being used for Advent decorations stage area 5:30 Al-Anon Meeting 5:30 West Side AA	**20** Founders Hall and Wayne Goff Hall being used for Advent decorations stage 6:30 Men's Prayer Breakfast	**21**
22 6:00 Greenwood Hope and Healing AFG Al-Anon Meeting 6:15 EPIC 8:00 HSX	**23** 5:30 West Side AA	**24** 7:00 Men's Bible Study 6:00 Teen Journey 6:00 Women on My Journey AA	**25** Kids' World is closed 6:30 Men's Bible Study 12:00 Church Offices closes 6:30 Chancel Choir Practice	**26** Church and Kids' World are closed 11:00 Founders Hall and kitchen are in use 5:30 Al-Anon Meeting 5:30 West Side AA	**27** Church and Kids' World are closed	**28**
29 6:00 Greenwood Hope and Healing AFG Al-Anon Meeting 6:15 EPIC 8:00 HSX	**30** 5:30 West Side AA					Worship Services are: Bypass Campus:8:45 am & 11:00 am Rivers Street Campus: 8:45 am & 11:15 am Sunday School 10:00 am