

St. James Vísítor

-Faith, Hope and Love

Christmas 2015

Rev. Terrie's Message

I LOVE DECEMBER! It is my absolute favourite month of the year. I love the first snow falls when the world turns sparkly, white and beautiful. I love the excitement and anticipation of holiday season. I love twinkling lights and the glow they make at night creating an almost magical feeling. This December is particularly special for me as I hit a milestone birthday (the big 3-0!!) and spend my first "married" Christmas with Richard, our girls and my parents, who have recently moved back to Newfoundland from Alberta. I also feel so blessed to be spending my third Christmas with you, my St. James family!

In the middle of the sparkle and bright, I also know that for many of us the holidays are a difficult time. For some of us, we look forward to the holidays, yet our hearts ache at the first, second, or tenth Christmas without a loved one. Some are away from family at this time, and the season fills us with a sense of isolation or loneliness. Knowing this, Rev. Pam and I have planned a Blue Christmas service for anyone and everyone who might be finding Christmastime a little difficult. All are welcome to join us in this evening worship service in the sanctuary on December 20 at 7 p.m.

I recently stumbled across a beautiful little book called "The Legend of the Christmas Prayer" by Brian Morgan. Whether you are experiencing the excitement and anticipation of the season or your heart is feeling bittersweet, this prayer is my prayer for you.

On the first day of Christmas, I pray for you joy in abundance and laughter, for laughter cures our ills and joy makes our spirits soar.

On the second day of Christmas, I pray for you a sigh when you need one, for a sigh clears the heart as a cough clears the throat, and with a sigh comes acceptance of what we cannot change.

On the third day of Christmas, I pray for you tears when you need them, for tears clear the eyes to see the stars and cleanse the soul to let healing begin. On the fourth day of Christmas, I pray for you serenity, for fights and wars start in individual hearts and that is where they must end.

On the fifth day of Christmas, I pray for you wisdom, for our priceless gift is the gift of choice and we should use it well every day in word and deed.

On the sixth day of Christmas. I pray for you patience, for most troubles pass if we wait them out, and success comes with persistence.

On the seventh day of Christmas, I pray for you courage, for there may be many pitfalls and dangers ahead and problems can only be solved when they are faced.

On the eighth day of Christmas, I pray for you compassion, for we cannot help others until we understand them, and we cannot understand them until we walk in their shoes.

(continued page 2)



St. James Visitor Cl	nristmas 2015 Page 2
 (Rev. Terrie's message continued) On the ninth day of Christmas, I pray for you a willingness to work, for work turns dreams to reality whether the dreams are ours or belong to those we can help. On the tenth day of Christmas, I pray for you unwavering faith, for faith shapes our morals and our destiny and draws us closer to God. On the eleventh day of Christmas, I pray for you a mind full of hope, for hope determines our attitudes, sets our goals, and creates our ideals. On the twelfth day of Christmas, I pray for you a heart so full of love that every day you must give some away to those whose paths you cross.	ST. JAMES RESPONSE CARD ST. JAMES RESPONSE CARD NAME:
CHRISTMAS SCHEDULEDecember 20Advent 49:30 amContemporary Worship11 amChristmas with the Youth Choir7 pmBlue Christmas ServiceDecember 217 pm7 pmWinter Solstice Celebration in Susan's front yard 397 Thorburn RoadThis is an outdoor event, so dress for the weather and bring a flashlight and mug.December 24Christmas Eve	
7 pm Family Service 7:45 pm Carol Sing with Senior Choir and Communion	Remittance)Please use this form to let us know if you want to gift your time, require information, want to be contacted, or to make a financial gift.

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REV. PAMELA'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

As I write this article for the Christmas *Visitor*, I am sitting in my office at Stella's Circle planning the Alternative Christmas Service and also the Blue Christmas Service happening here on Monday.

To say that being Spiritual Co-Ordinator at Stella's Circle has opened my eyes and ears to the poverty and despair in the City of St. John's is an understatement. I had NO IDEA!! And also I did not know of the vast, critical and compassionate work of Stella's Circle, an incorporated ministry of the United Church of Canada.

Both my ministry here at Stella's Circle and my ministry to the sick and shut-in of the congregation of St. James bring with it many different expectations. Stella's Circle participants and St. James congregational members live many different realities during the season of Advent and Christmas.

No person wishes to be alone at Christmas. No person wishes to be separated from family and friends, especially at Christmas. No person wishes to be sick at Christmas and in pain and suffering. No person wishes to be hungry at Christmas when the message of the holidays is one of abundance and joy. No person wishes to be without adequate housing and living on the streets in the cold, especially at Christmas. Everyone wants to be loved and cared for in meaningful and life-giving ways, even at Christmas. Yet, there are those people both in our congregation and also here at Stella's Circle for which the above will be a reality for them during Christmas and into the New Year.

What then can we say to them, our brothers and sisters, about the birth of the Prince of Peace?

Finding Jesus, the new born babe lying in a manger, for them may be the community of Stella's Circle, encouraging, nurturing, walking with, taking their hand, leading them into rebirth and new life through tea, coffee, cookies from the Hungry Heart Café, helping them develop the skills they need to find employment, helping them locate affordable housing, helping them budget and prepare a grocery shopping list, sitting in my office talking about the ways God has been present and also absent in their lives, sitting in a drumming circle, beating the tune of happiness, and the faith and love of community into a life that was once lost and ridden with suffering and grief, the physical warmth and tangible love of a coat, socks, scarves and money donated by congregational members and groups of our church....a hug at Music for the Soul, blessings and a hot turkey dinner after the Alternative Christmas Service...a hand-up not a hand out....all of these things are visible signs that Jesus Christ LIVES and is continuing to be REBORN in our lives and in the lives of participants of Stella's Circle.

For those who are sick and shut-in of our congregation.....what can we say about the birth of Jesus? Singing sweet melodies to warm the heart at the annual Christmas Caroling at the Long Term Care Facility, reading scripture and treasuring Christmas Bulletins. Pastoral phone calls and visits to say, "We are thinking about you, you are in our prayers...." gifts and Christmas Cards from the UCW and AOTS members.....listening to the beautiful singing voices

and the message of Christmas through VOWR, holding the memory of grief and loss in loving community at the Blue Christmas Service here at St. James....Guitar playing around town, the magic of the Christmas Season for Youth and Children.....holding each other in community and God's hands and heart so Christ's message of hope, peace, and love will afford the opportunity for new beginnings, care and compassion as the star of Bethlehem points to the future, not the past.

> FAITH makes all things possible, HOPE makes all things work, LOVE makes all things beautiful,

A Savior HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU; HE IS Brist THE Cord! LUKE 2:11

May you have all three of these for Christmas! Rev. Pamela

AOTS MEN'S CLUB CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

The Men's Club takes this opportunity to wish each and every member of our congregation a joyous Christmas Season and health and happiness in the New Year. We extend special thoughts to those who may be experiencing day-to-day health challenges.

We will be hosting our regular Christmas social on Wednesday, December 16, at 6:30 p.m. for 7 in the auditorium. We also hope to visit several seniors' complexes prior to Christmas, including the Christmas carol sing on December 15 at the new Pleasantville complex, co-ordinated by Rev. Pamela. The Club will also be catering for the Memorial University library staff Christmas luncheon on December 11.

At our recent monthly meeting, we made several financial commitments for 2015. We will be contributing upwards of \$3500 towards the 2015 budget, and we have also purchased additional meeting room folding tables at a cost of approximately \$600. As in past years, we will also be making a \$500 contribution to the Mission and Service Fund. The congregation's ongoing support for our various fund raising projects makes these commitments possible.

CHRISTMAS EVE IN PRE-REFORMATION ENGLAND

In pre-Reformation days in England, Christmas Eve, if one may trust the old Chroniclers, was a rare and fascinating time. All nature was believed to unite in celebrating the birth of Christ and to partake in the universal joy which the anniversary of nativity inspires. In some places it was known in old English as the Night of Song, the Great Night, the Holy Night, the Night of Mary or the Vigil of Lights from the large number of lights then kindled. It was also the custom for people to send presents of lights to one another. Source: An old Welsh magazine.

A CHRISTMAS LEGEND

Of all the Christmas legends, the loveliest is that of the French honeysuckle which won its rose colour when the Blessed Virgin laid Our Lord in the manger. This little plant was growing there in the Holy Land; and as soon as the Holy infant rested upon it, the tiny flowers blushed, recognizing in Him the Creator of the world.

HOLD HIGH THE TORCH 1915 TO 2015

On October 17 and 18, members of St. James joined over 80 former NGIT and CGIT members at Fraser Road United Church in Gander to celebrate 100 years of Newfoundland and Canadian Girls in Training.





L-R: Betty Brett, Rosemary White, Sandra Leja, Margaret Hodder, Janice Winsor



Longtime Friends, Rosemary White and Betty Burt



GREETINGS FROM THE UCW

We have had a great Fall, and our Morning Coffee and Fall Sale went really well. Our Convenors, Jean White and Marilyn Dunford, did a marvelous job organizing that event, and we thank them so much.

The UCW would like to thank the members of our congregation for generously supporting our fundraising endeavours, and we look forward to that generosity in the future. Proceeds from our Morning Coffee and Fall Sale enable us to contribute financially to the Church, the M&S Fund and other United Church sponsored projects.

New members are always welcome. The UCW is a great way to get better acquainted. We meet on the second Monday of each month until May, and then we break for the summer and resume again in September.

We would like to wish each and everyone a very Merry Christmas, which is coming really fast. It's the most exciting time in the Church year.

Advent is a time when we seek diligently to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Christ Child. Advent is the period of preparation of the Feast of the Nativity, the birth of Jesus the Christ in Bethlehem. Advent is a time of getting ready. Christmas is the first Coming. Let us prepare for the Second.

May you all have a blessed Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Betty Pilgrim, Co-President 726-6923



MEDITATION FOR SENIORS

In September I offered *Meditation for Seniors* as part of our *Spiritual Journey* program. Of course, meditation is not just for seniors, but they are the lucky ones who are most likely to be free at 11 in the morning. We had a wonderful first session, with everyone who attended wanting to continue. This we did, meeting on Mondays until the beginning of November.

We find ourselves now in the period know as Advent, a time of reflection and preparation, bringing contemplations, memories and wonderings about life - birth, death and all that joyful and messy stuff in between - to come to rest in a place of peace and joy.

I would like to invite you to continue the practice during January. Please join me Mondays at 11 in the Fellowship Room on January 11, 18, 25 and February 1. We will continue our life contemplations and wonderings, exploring meditation from the angles of peace, joy, wisdom and love. I call it *Meditation for Seniors*, but really it is for everyone. We will demystify the process of meditation, engage in the practice and acquire tools to intelligently manage and celebrate this wonderful experience we call life, with all its chaos, joy and sorrow.

My heartfelt wishes go to each and every one of us at St. James and beyond for a Merry Christmas and a Peaceful and Prosperous New Year. SuAn

THANK YOU

On behalf of the congregation, the Church Council extends a special thank you to the members of the UCW and AOTS for their support during the year. Their efforts to organize special events and make financial contributions to M&S and the life and work of the church are greatly appreciated.



SERVICE TO HONOUR OUR SENIORS

On November 9, Rev. Pamela and friends hosted a service to honour our seniors. After the service, the Men's Club and many volunteers fed over 100 of us while the St. James Guitar Group elegantly entertained us. Thank you, Rev. Pam.





CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM YOUR CHURCH COUNCIL

Though it was less than a month ago I wrote the Anniversary letter, it seems like so much has happened since then. I would like to express so much gratitude for the support of the congregation during the recent functions at the church. The Anniversary service (and subsequent coffee hour), Rev Pam's Service for Seniors, the Soup Dinner and Auction, and the Old Tyme Hymn Sing were well attended and provided some wonderful times of fellowship, fun, and reflection. A huge, huge thank you goes out to all the volunteers who put in so many hours and so much effort to make these events work – St. James would be lost without you!

In addition to the hard work of the volunteers, the staff spend many hours to maintain the "body and soul" of St. James. The deft running of a busy office, the tireless cleaning up after salty boots, the sometimes minor (but endless) property repairs, the efforts on the "Called to be the Church" program – these efforts sometimes go unnoticed or are taken for granted. I would like to recognize the work of the staff throughout the past year and thank them again for their service above and beyond the call of duty.

The past months have brought positive energy to St. James, and the results are showing. The Senior Choir is flourishing under our new directors; the always strong Junior Choir has welcomed new singers; the fundraising and outreach events have been successful. This positive energy will, no doubt, bring long-term stability to St. James; however, we are faced with some short-term challenges. This is indicated, rather starkly, in the financial report.

At the beginning of 2015, a reduction in income was anticipated. The budgeted revenue from collections was reduced for 2015 from the previous yearly amounts. Alas, we are currently running behind the lowered target amount. This, coupled with the Hillcrest Daycare repairs, leaves St. James in a financial deficit right now. We still have some weeks left to make a positive impact, so please keep St. James in mind during this season of giving.

Thank you again for your continued support and guidance. If you have any concerns, ideas, or recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of council.

On behalf of the Church Council, I sincerely wish that your Christmas season will be filled with family, friends, love, and peace.

Trevor Bartlett, Chair



FINANCIAL UPDATE

At the end of 2015, we expect to have a deficit in excess of \$50,000. This will be the first year in the past several that we will record a deficit. This deficit is primarily due to a decrease in current givings as well as incurring significant expenses that were not planned for. These increased expenses are primarily related to repayment on the bank loan for roof repairs, required repairs to the Hillcrest Daycare building and repairs to the church furnace.

Annual givings from the congregation are at the lowest they have been for the past five years. Please consider the financial position of the Church in your givings for the remainder of the year.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, we wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.

Gerry Mayo, Chair of Finance

Jean Thompson, Treasurer

Please note: The financial year end will be December 31. If you mark a contribution for 2015 by January 1, 2016, it will be recorded in 2015. We appreciate your special contribution at year end. Please call our Treasurer, Jean Thompson, if you have any questions.



WHY I GIVE TO THE CHURCH

I grew up during the last half of the Great Depression. Father worked in the Carbonear Railway Station, and mother was the one who handled his income. I still remember the knocks on our front door from poor people begging food, and mother going to the pantry to get something for them. She was heavily involved in church functions, often doing without for herself in order to help out. Church envelopes were her priority, often placing them in my hands for me to put in the collection plate. She firmly believed that it was better to give than to receive. She set an example for me to follow.

The second person who had an effect on my givings to the church was Rev. Dr. Nicholson of Pine Hill Divinity Hall, Halifax. He was regarded as one of Canada's greatest orators. The Bank of Commerce transferred me to Alberton, PEI, where my family and I attended the United Church. My wife taught in Sunday School and I sang in the choir.

Dr. Nicholson was invited to be the preacher at the Anniversary Service. He arrived on Saturday and stayed

overnight at the chief elder's house. I was invited to meet with him there. In response to his enquiries, we told him our people were not attending services and many were not giving financially. At the Service the next day, he started his remarks by saying that because he had just learned of the problems in that church he decided not to give his prepared sermon. Instead he spoke about the Alberton Church's problems. When he got to the finances, he spoke at some length, concluding with the following: standing by the side of the pulpit, this physically big man put his huge hands in front of the congregation and said: *"I could throttle a man who refuses to give to the church."* His sermon

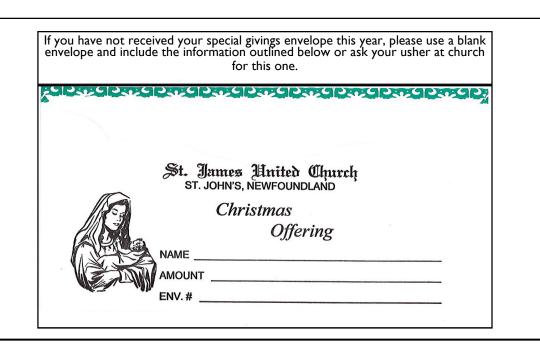


worked; attendance increased and the church's finances became sound. Also the men formed an AOTS club, the first one in that area.

Why do I give to the church? Because my mother and Rev. Dr. Nicholson taught me that that is the Christian thing to do.

When I die, my will will give to St. James.

Phil Saunders



SUNDAY SCHOOL AND YOUTH GROUP- Rebecca Pike

Season's Greetings! The Sunday School and youth group are running smoothly! The youth were very happy to decorate the church for this wonderful season again this year and were even more excited to have some new decorations. Our thanks go to Marilyn Adams and the Worship and Sacraments committee for making these new things possible.

Both the youth and children are starting something new this year. We have a new friend joining us all on our journey through Advent. Like Flat Stanley, the boy who made himself flat and went around the world by mail, our flat St. James is going

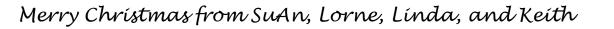
home with people for Advent. Take him to your events and take his picture so we can see how St. James families prepare for Christmas. Pictures will be posted on the Church Facebook page along with being posted in the church. If you would like a Flat St. James, please contact Susan. She can email you one or give you one. This is a wonderful way to keep our community connected during this busy time of year. Our annual Christmas party will be on Sunday, December 20th.

I want to take a moment to thank all the people that make these groups possible. To the Sunday School teachers, Susan, Denise, Sarah and Katie, you are all so amazing! Sunday School would be nowhere near as successful without each of you and your brilliant minds. To the young ladies that give their time each Sunday to help with the Sunday School, Katelyn, Kennedy and Allison, it is an honor to be your leader! Each one of you has so many talents and gifts and offers so much to the Sunday School children and they love you so much! To the parents of both the Sunday school children and the youth, your support is unending and I appreciate every one of you. To Susan, you are the rock of the programming for children and youth. You are an amazing resource that we are lucky to have. Finally, to my parents and my boyfriend, thank you for dealing with my crazy schedule and for being endless support to me. More then anything, thank you to all these people and the congregation for believing in not only me but the Sunday school and the Youth groups!

Have a joyful Christmas and a blessed New Year!

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CHELSEA SKANES

on being chosen to be part of the United Church *Explorer's Project 2016*, a new initiative for eight young adults from across the country who have proven leadership skills and interest in United Church ministry. Chelsea will have an opportunity to experience ministry in another part of the country over the summer months. Way to go Chelsea.











2015



CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS

Christmas is a time of contradictions. It is a time of reflection and review and, conversely, of anticipation and change. We remember what has been and we anticipate what will be. We mourn our past and we dream of our future. But, most importantly, we live in the now.

Not that long ago I was reading through 1 Maccabees about the revolt in Judea against the Greeks under Alexander the Great around the period 175 – 134 BC. In our Protestant tradition that book doesn't get read much or often because it's one of the seven books we relegate to the apocrypha, giving them a 'hidden' status. In the Roman Catholic and Orthodox tradition they were held by the early church to be sacred and inspired, and are thus fully included in the Old Testament. The formal definition of this was made at the Council of Trent in 1546, for trivia buffs.

What jumped out for me was the description in 1 Maccabees 14, verses 9 and 14, of a time of peace in the land. Those verses read, in part, as follows:

v. 9: "Old men sat in the streets; they all talked together of good things."

v. 14: "All the people sat under their own vines and fig trees, and there was none to make them afraid."

If there is a feeling we associate with Christmas, or perhaps a goal for the season, might this be it? There is an essential humanness about those descriptions which resonate deeply with us today. We want to grow old with dignity and respect. We want to have others around us. We want to be able to go out in public when we choose and to have our own places to return to when we choose.

We want to deal with the fears that naturally occur in our lives, whether it is the fears we create for ourselves – of not being good enough – or the fears that others have created for us – you can't do that – that we have had imposed on us. We talk about peace coming to pass. It's not a new concept or a uniquely Christian one. It is a very human one. Christmas, perhaps, reminds us of this and of how we want to live our lives. Do we want to live in peace with others, unafraid, under our own vines and fig trees? Are we? Can we? Should we? What do we need to change to achieve this? We can't control the behavior of others, but we can control how we react to them.

As we work our way through the Christmas season, let us hold this image before us – of living in peace and unafraid in our own space. Perhaps that is a message we could take this season and always. For what it's worth, my own fig tree has several cats gently sleeping underneath it in the warm Middle Eastern sun.

Michael Ralph, member of St. James United Church

PAR Program (Pre-Authorized Remittance)

It's time to take note! At the end of the year it is always interesting to note the number of unused church envelopes in your box. Statistics have shown that, on average, most people have at least 10-12 left on December 31 each year. However, families using PAR have their contribution "on the plate" every month. This is much appreciated for carrying on the day-to-day business of the Church during times of low attendance. Please consider using PAR if you are not already doing so.

PAR is a program administered by the United Church of Canada. Many people use it for their offering, finding it a convenient way to take care of their regular commitments to the church whether they are at home or traveling. You decide the amount you wish to donate to the church, and your bank account will be debited on or about the 20th of the month. We will give you small cards to put in the offering plate in place of envelopes.

Visa/Master Card. If you prefer, use your Visa or Master Card for PAR.

Post-Dated Cheques. OR, you may leave your post-dated cheques at the office and we will deposit them accordingly.

Presently, we have almost 100 families participating in the PAR program. Please call the church office, and SuAn will help get you started. Thank you.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

Senior Choir (weekly)	January 5
Guitar Group (weekly)	January 7
UCW monthly meeting	January 11
Meditation for Seniors (weekly)	January 11—February 1
Friendship Group (bi-weekly)	January 13
AOTS monthly meeting	January 20
Fellowship Coffee Hour	February 2
Spiritual Journey with Rev. Pamela	February 3
Yoga Stay tuned for yoga in January announced in the bulletins.	. Dates and times will be

CHRISTMAS OFFICE SCHEDULE

The office will be open at the following times: December 21, 22, 23, 24: open 9.30 am – 1 pm and 1.30 – 5 pm December 25: Closed December 28: Closed December 29, 30, 31: open 10 am—3 pm

The financial year end is December 31st, so if you do make a contribution outside of regular hours, please use the lock box and ensure that your contribution is clearly marked for 2015.

Please remember NOT to keep any valuables in your car, especially over the Christmas holiday period.



BRIDGES TO HOPE



Food insecurity is an important issue today. Contributing to organizations like Bridges to Hope helps people just like us, our neighbors, our families and our friends. St. James, as

a United Church congregation, has been contributing to Bridges to Hope for many years. The food bank once again needs our generosity. In particular, they need canned beans in sauce, canned milk, dry pasta, canned soup and protein sources such as tuna, canned ham and turkey. The food bank is not just for "other people." It is a resource for anyone who falls on hard times and needs a helping hand. Please give. Any help is a wonderful contribution.

Non-perishables can be placed in the Food Chest located in the foyer of the church.



Memory Tree Form

At this time of the year thoughts of our loved ones are never far from our minds. One of the ways we acknowledge this is through the Memory Tree. For a donation of \$5 a colored bulb will be changed to a white one in memory of your loved one.

The changing of the lights is a beautiful seasonal visible symbol. Even when the tree comes down, the gift continues in the ongoing projects at St. James. This year donations to the Memory Tree will be used towards our operating expenses.



Name of person donating: _____

In Memory of: _____

Address: _____

_____ Deadline: Env #: _____ Thursday,

Thursday, December 17, at 10 am

Accessibility at St. James United Church

Hearing devices

Wheel Chairs

Enlarged Bulletins

If you wish to use one of the above services, please check with one of our ushers and they will be happy to assist you.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE - January to March 2016

Date	Time	Details	Music
	9:30am	Contemporary Worship	
January 3	11:00 am	Celebrate Epiphany (Baptism)	Senior
	9:30am	Contemporary Worship	Sight Restored
January 10	11:00am	Baptism of the Lord (Communion)	AOTS/UCW/Youth
9:30a	9:30am	Contemporary Worship	
January 17 11:00 ar		2 nd Sunday after Epiphany	
	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Coffee Hour - Congregation	Senior	
	9:30am	Contemporary Worship	Sight Restored
January 24	11:00am	3 rd Sunday after Epiphany	AOTS/UCW/Youth
	9:30am	Contemporary Worship	
January 31	11:00am	4 th Sunday after Epiphany	Senior
	9:30 am	Contemporary Worship	Sight Restored
February 7	11:00 am	Transfiguration Sunday (Baptism)	AOTS/UCW/Youth
February 10	7:00 pm	Ash Wednesday	
	9:30 am	Contemporary Worship	
February 14	11:00 am	Lent 1 (Communion) Coffee Hour - Senior Choir	Senior
	9:30 am	Contemporary Worship	Sight Restored
February 21	11:00 am	Lent 2 GO PROJECT	AOTS/UCW/Youth
	9:30 am	Contemporary Worship	
February 28	11:00am	Lent 3	Senior
March 6	9:30am	Contemporary Worship	Sight Restored
	11:00am	Lent 4 (Baptism)	AOTS/UCW/Youth
	9:30 am	Contemporary Worship	
March 13	11:00 am	Lent 5 (Communion)	Senior
		International Women's Day	
	9:30am	Contemporary Worship	Sight Restored
March 20	11:00am	Palm Sunday Coffee Hour – Property/M&P/Finance	AOTS/UCW/Youth

TO CONTACT US:

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