



Camp Chapel United Methodist Church

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Let Your Heart Swell

Before I start, you need to know a little about me. I hit a point many years ago where I no longer got much joy in receiving presents. How many sweaters and pairs of slacks did I need?

Giving gave me far more joy. I'll never forget the year my husband and I stayed up late assembling two sets of cardboard blocks. We carefully stacked them round the tree, walling off the rest of the presents. The next morning, the girls squealed with delight as they tore through the wall in just a few seconds.

Then there was the eighteen volt, dual battery, cordless, DeWalt drill that had Vernon speechless.

And the theater tickets we got for my parents.

Watching the looks on their faces, my heart swelled.

That's how I feel when I give my time, presence, and tithes.

Because of what I give my neighbors don't go hungry!

My gifts support the mission of Camp Chapel, helping to sustain a gathering place to worship.

But they go even further. Camp Chapel, like all United Methodist churches, provides a portion of those gifts to the main church. Through those gifts programs like UMCOR can be there when natural disaster or war creates at risk populations. My gifts mean someone a world away is provided with the care they need when everything seems lost.

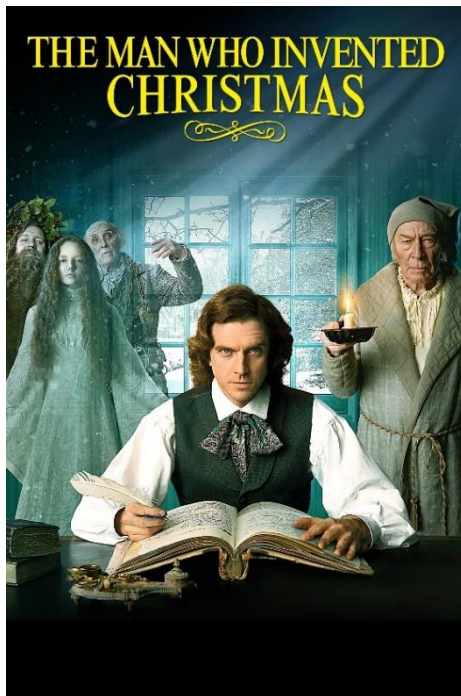
And my heart swells at the thought that I helped make that possible.

If anything, I wish I could do more.

So, take the time to prayerfully consider the annual pledge card. Consider your talents and abilities. Then fill out the card either online or place the physical card in the offering plate.

Thank you and may your heart swell.

Paula Kraft



Camp Chapel Film Seminar

The Man Who Invented Christmas

It's almost December and Charles Dickens desperately needs an idea for a book

Saturday, December 2

6:00 pm to 9:00 pm Via Zoom

Check out the flyer on our web site for details. Use this URL or scan the QR code.

<https://campchapel.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/20231202-Christmas-Flyer.pdf>



Join us for a classic movie and discussion!
(Zoom information will be sent via email)

Gingerbread Mansion **Saturday, December 9** **2-4 pm in Fellowship Hall**



This is actually a Gingerbread Mansion! Something the entire family can decorate together. This kit is the largest prebuilt house that they sell and includes everything that you need to decorate your mansion.

Join us for some holiday punch, gingerbread cookies and some great family time together.

Space is limited, reservations required. Deadline to register is **December 2, 2023**.

Cost: 1 House=\$20 -- 2+ Houses=\$18 each

Register online at

<https://campchapel.org/event/gingerbread-mansion-2023/>





Gift Cards

Once again, we are selling gift cards. You pay the face value of the card and Camp Chapel will receive a percentage of that cost.

Order forms are available at each church entrance. Completed order forms can be dropped off at the church office or in the collection plate on Sunday.

Pay by cash or check. Make check payable to Camp Chapel with "Gift Cards" in the memo section. **Credit card payments will not be accepted.**

Order forms must be received by 12 noon on Sunday, December 3.

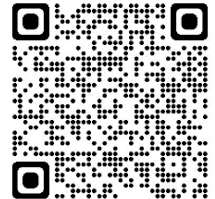
Gift cards will be available for pick up at church on
Sunday, December 10 from 8 am–12:30 pm.



Red Poinsettias - \$10 each
Christmas 2023



- 🌺 The flowers will decorate the sanctuary on Christmas Eve.
- 🌺 Take home your flowers any time on Christmas Eve.
- 🌺 The dedication booklet will be distributed on Christmas Eve.



Last day to order is Sunday, December 10.

Order online at <https://campchapel.org/poinsettias-2023/>

JOY (Just Older Youth)

Wednesday, December 6

12:00 pm in Fellowship Hall

Join us and enjoy an afternoon of lunch, games and fellowship with other Camp Chapel members. Bring a sandwich and a drink for lunch (dessert will be provided). Feel free to bring your favorite board game, cards or dominos. We meet on the first Wednesday of each month. **All Are Welcome**





Gifts of Love



Camp Chapel's Gifts of Love ministry is in full swing! Thank you so much to everyone who has already chosen a "wish tag" and/or returned an unwrapped gift. There are still tags available. Be an elf to a needy local child this Christmas by selecting a "wish tag" from one of the boards in the sanctuary and returning your gift to the church by **Sunday, December 10th**. Bins have been provided at the entrance to the main sanctuary and in the Fellowship Hall Donation Station for the returned gifts.

Please attach the original "gift tag" to the gift you return. This will ensure that each child will receive the proper gift. If you choose to purchase a store gift card, any amount is acceptable. Please mark the amount on the card or the gift tag. Cards can be given to Karen Knauer or placed in my church mailbox.

Thank you so much for supporting this important event that is being managed by the Circle of Sisters Ministry. Contact Karen Knauer at 410-440-2293 or knauerpower3@gmail.com if you have any questions.



Music of the Holidays

December 17, 2023

4:00 pm

Free Event – Everyone Welcome

Join us for an enjoyable afternoon of vocal and instrumental holiday music performed by Camp Chapel musicians.

Camp Chapel United Methodist Church

Thank you for the support that you have given to the homeless community of Eastern Baltimore County. The Camp Chapel outreach ministry support the homeless men, women and children at the East Side Family Shelter in Rosedale and the Churches for Streets of Hope Men's Shelter in Essex. The generosity of Camp Chapel has provided food, clothing and linens to these shelters. In Matthew 25 Jesus said, "What you did for the least of these, brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."



Our neighbors at **Eastern Family Resource Center** need our help. Let's make the Christmas holiday season a happier one by donating any of the following items:
New Twin bed sheets; New Twin blankets; New towels; New wash clothes
Soap bars; Lotion; Shampoo; Conditioner; Deodorant
Please contact Sharon Smith with your donations by **Sunday, December 17th**.

What Is a QR Code?

Did you notice that blob in the middle of the promotion for the film seminar? It's a QR Code. QR stands for Quick Response. On a smart phone, one can scan the code with the phone's camera or a QR Code reader app and access a web page without having to type the address. If you have an event that you wish to publicize in the *Acorn*, feel free to include a QR Code in your advertisement or event flyer if you feel that it would be appropriate. They can be particularly useful for events that: a) are open to the public, and b) require a registration form. Please be aware that the church office will **NOT** create or provide QR Codes for you.

A QR Code is nothing more than a weird looking picture. To create a QR Code:

1. The event must be included in the event calendar on the CCUMC web site.
2. Use your favorite browser to access the page for the event on the web site.
3. Right-click anywhere on the page and a pop-up menu will appear.
4. Click "Create QR Code for this page" in the menu.
5. When the QR Code image appears, click the "Download" button to save your QR Code in your Downloads folder (some browsers allow you to specify other locations or change the name of the QR Code file before saving it).
6. Insert the QR Code in your ad or flyer as you would any picture.

Sunday Hospitality Coffee Fellowship



The Hospitality committee is looking to revive the Sunday coffee fellowship and looking for volunteers to help set up and break down weekly. This requires setting the table in the hall with beverages and snacks (provided) and then break down.

If interested, please see Barbara Thompson or email barbara7916@msn.com.



Once again, a "Christmas Card box" will be available at the front entrance of the main church and chapel for those who would like to send Christmas cards to other members of Camp Chapel. Simply write the name on the envelope and place the card in the box. The cards will be sorted, alphabetized and bundled. The bundles will be placed next to the box for the recipients to pick up. The boxes will be available beginning Sunday, December 3 and going through Sunday, December 24.

REMEMBER TO PICK UP YOUR CARDS!

We ask that you donate the money you would have spent on postage to Camp Chapel's mission projects. There will be envelopes by the box for your check (make payable to Camp Chapel) or cash donation. Place the envelope in the card box.

Snow and Ice Policy



In the event of inclement winter weather (snow or ice), we may have to close the church. During the week, any time Baltimore County schools close for winter weather, all activities at the church are cancelled. Saturday events are cancelled if a snow emergency is in effect. Sunday worship will be cancelled to protect our members' safety if our parking lot and walks cannot be safely cleared. The decision about cancellations of worship are made the evening before based on the information we have at that time. Safety is always a priority. Announcements of closure will be posted on our website and on the church office answering machine.

Doing Stuff Backwards

I love trivia. I play pub trivia twice a week competitively and I generate an email almost every week for friends who enjoy esoterica as much as I do. One recent email contained photographs of celebrities. The challenge was to identify the person in each photo and tell what they all have in common. The images were tennis pro Martina Navratilova, rock star Jimi Hendrix, former president Barack Obama, Kermit the Frog, recording artist Lady Gaga, MLB Hall of Famer Sandy Koufax, Bart Simpson, singer/songwriter Paul McCartney, filmmaker Spike Lee, and golfer Phil Mickelson. The trait they all share is that they are all left-handed. At least that's what I thought. Tom Wehner, one of my oldest friends, sent me an email to inform me (gently) that one of the people on the list, Phil Mickelson, is not naturally left-handed. I thought, "How can that be? Even his nickname is 'Lefty'!" However, a little research proved that Tom was right. Lefty is a righty who for some reason chose to learn to play golf left-handed. Sure enough, here's a photo of him signing autographs, and there's no denying that he's doing it right-handed:



I try my best to do my due diligence in crafting these questions and I'm very seldom wrong, but if I'm honest, I have to admit that this wasn't the first time.

The mystery for me is, if Phil Mickelson is naturally right-handed, why on earth would he learn to play golf as a lefty? Lefty golf is really, really difficult! I'm left-handed, and let me tell you, it's awful trying to pick up the game of golf when you have to turn every single lesson available to you inside-out and backwards. Every book on golf I've ever read is written for righties. Same with every golf instructional video I've ever watched.

(continued on page 8)

I tried to deal with a horrible slice for years because I got confused translating right-to-left when I first learned how to hold a club, and until I finally figured out what I was doing wrong with my grip, I couldn't hit a ball straight if my life depended on it. On just about every long hole, I would take out my driver and smack the ball off the tee with pretty good form. My club head speed was pretty good too. The ball was destined to travel at least 250 yards if it went true (remember, I was a younger man then), but about 75 to 100 yards into its flight, it would begin a hard left turn and end up somewhere far from fairway or green, often amidst dense trees or in one of those pesky bodies of water that golf course architects love to incorporate into their designs, bless them. Anyway, Phil, my hat's off to you! You became one of the greats and you did it the hard way!

Being a Christian is kind of like learning to play golf left-handed. We have to learn to do things backwards.

When somebody does something nasty to us, our instinct is to do something nasty back to them. Worse than that, our instinct is sometimes to escalate the nastiness – to go full on berserk. It's like that scene from the movie *The Untouchables* in which Sean Connery's character is explaining things to his boss, Eliot Ness (played by Kevin Costner – and given that I mentioned Kevin Costner in my October essay, can we all agree that two references to movies starring Kevin Costner in a year is at least one too many... maybe two too many?). Connery's character, a veteran of the police force, is telling the relatively inexperienced Ness how he needs to rethink his methods for dealing with the organized criminals he has been tasked to bring to justice. "You wanna know how to get Capone? They pull a knife; you pull a gun. He sends one of yours to the hospital; you send one of his to the morgue. That's the Chicago way!"

Well, that may be the Chicago way, but that's not the Christian way. The Christian way is to do it backwards, to offer people who do you harm not vengeance and retribution, but forgiveness. The Christian way is to repay hate not with more hate, but with love. Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy," and "If someone strikes you on the cheek, offer your other cheek."

Our human instinct is to amass as much wealth and worldly goods as we can. We want to be able to live, if not in obscene luxury, at least in financial comfort, and the more comfort, the better. We envy lottery winners. We envy people like Oprah or Bill Gates or Elon Musk because they will never have to worry about taxes or grocery bills or mortgages or tuition or healthcare expenses or anything related to the high cost of living ever again. They can do just about anything they can think of. Skiing in the Alps? Would you like to fly there in my blue Gulfstream or the silver one? A day at the beach? Shall we take the yacht to Bermuda or fly to my private island in the South Pacific?

But that's not the Christian way. The Christian way is to do it backwards, to share things we have with those who need them more. The Christian way is to feed, clothe, and house those who are hungry and naked and homeless, to provide for the widows and orphans. Jesus said, "go and sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven."

Our human nature is to take intense pride in the things that we do, to seek power and influence over others, and to spend as much as we need to and to do whatever it takes to place ourselves above everyone else. "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing!"¹ "Nice guys finish last."² "Winning isn't a matter of life and death; it's more important than that."³ "The measure of a man is what he does with power."⁴ "Mastering others is strength."⁵ "No one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it."⁶

But that's not the Christian way. The Christian way is to do it backwards, to act with humility. In the words of the hymn, "We are called to act with justice. We are called to love tenderly. We are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God." Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek," and "If anyone would be first among you, they must be the least and be a servant to all."

The answer to the question, "What would Jesus do?" is, "He would do it backwards!" So here's to everybody out there who is doing their best to do things backwards! And just to be very clear, I'm not talking about hitting golf balls.

Bill Smith

¹ Henry Russel "Red" Sanders, American football coach

² Leo Durocher, American baseball manager

³ Bill Shankley, Scottish football (soccer) manager

⁴ Plato, ancient Greek philosopher

⁵ Lao Tsu, ancient Chinese philosopher

⁶ George Orwell, British novelist



Camp Chapel Green Team

Wednesday, December 20, 6-7 pm

Join Frank Long and Kathy Martin for reflections on our 2023 green activities and help create plans for 2024. Bring a lawn chair and a coffee cup and we'll celebrate together with hot drinks to keep us warm. RSVP to Kathy or Frank.

Leave the Leaves!! - perhaps you have been hearing this more this year - Save Insects and Birds, Save Landfill Space, Save Your Tax Dollars - Leave your Leaves. Fallen leaves can provide critical wildlife habitat and benefit soil health.

- **Don't relentlessly remove and discard all leaf litter in autumn or spring.** Such disposal reduces moth emergence from winter hibernation by almost half. In areas where leaf litter was removed,
- **Do keep some leaves on the ground in spots you're willing to sacrifice a little neatness.** While many insects make their winter homes in leaf litter, which can be both their food source and blanket, others burrow themselves deeper into the soil under leaves.
- **Don't shred or mulch your leaves.** This causes as much damage as gathering leaves up and disposing of them in leaf bags. Placing leaves in compost bags kills the insects on the leaves. Putting leaves and compost through a mulcher or woodchipper also destroys the insects clinging to the leaves.
- **Do make some leaf piles, and then leave them.** Creating small, shallow pockets of leaves in safe spaces is a great alternative if you can't bear to just leave them where they fall. Homeowners can select places for piles based on their own preferences or, even better, their knowledge of areas where beneficial insects like to flock.

A large portion of the 35 million tons of yard waste generated each year is leaf litter that is bagged. Leaf litter could be an important habitat for hibernating insects or for conserving the nutrients in the soil. More details from a local entomologist, who advises homeowners to leave some leaves to help yard ecosystems thrive at <https://today.umd.edu/4-dos-and-donts-of-raking>



[4 Do's and Don'ts of Raking](https://today.umd.edu/4-dos-and-donts-of-raking)

Leave Some Leaves to Help Yard Ecosystems Thrive,
Entomologist Advises Homeowners
today.umd.edu



Happy Birthday

December Birthdays

Karen Knauer	12/12
Ruth Diggs	12/13
Dan Pazdersky	12/13
Jerry Welsh	12/14
Wayne Herbert	12/19
Mason Dziuk	12/21
Ryan Beveridge	12/22
Robin Craven	12/26
Gary Brown	12/27

January Birthdays

Barbara Thompson	1/03
John Olcott	1/04
Debbie Kalendek	1/08
Winston Bain	1/13
Anita Obinger	1/15
Hannah Warren	1/15
Betty Day	1/21
John Amador	1/22
Ryan Gaskin	1/25
Joyce Williams-Joiner	1/25
Angela Gaskin	1/26
Elly Delkhon	1/28
Kellie Smith	1/28
Jackie Brawn	1/30
David Dziuk	1/31
David Whitson	1/31

A Blessing for You

May your day be blessed with
Happiness and Peace of Mind.
May you be free of all burdens,
and know that you are
completely cared for. Let Angels
light your way with grace, and
have a beautiful, awesome day!



Advent

The season of Advent, which comes from the Latin word *adventus* meaning "coming" or "visit," begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. Advent is the beginning of the church year for Christians.

During Advent, we prepare for and anticipate the coming of Christ. We remember the longing of Jews for a Messiah and our own longing for and need of forgiveness, salvation and a new beginning. Even as we look back and celebrate the birth of Jesus in a humble stable in Bethlehem, we also look forward anticipating the second coming of Christ as the fulfillment of all that was promised by his first coming.

Although we are accustomed to celebrating Christmas on a single day, in both Christian tradition and on the church calendar, the Christmas season lasts from sundown on December 24 (Christmas Eve) through Epiphany of the Lord (January 6). This is sometimes referred to as "the 12 days of Christmas."

The color for Advent has traditionally been purple, although some churches have adopted blue. In practice, however, as churches increasingly incorporate the symbols and decorations of Christmas during Advent, more and more red, green and gold are appearing. *The United Methodist Book of Worship* upholds the traditional color of purple for Advent, signifying penitence and royalty, but also allows blue, the color of hope."

The three Advent candle colors, purple, pink, and white, are representative of the faithful anticipation that believers partake to ready their hearts and minds for the birth or second coming of Jesus Christ.

Three purple candles (Hope, Peace, Love), a pink candle (Joy), and a white candle (Christ) represent the five elements of the Christmas story.





CANDLE OF HOPE (Purple) - The first Advent candle, known as the Prophecy Candle, or Candle of Hope. Like the prophets in the Old Testament, we hope for a Messiah to save us from the sin in the world (Isaiah 9:6-7). We anticipate our Savior's arrival.

Also known as the "prophecy candle," this candle assures us we can have hope that God will fulfill the prophecies declared in the Old Testament about Jesus. Hope doesn't disappoint us (Romans 5:5).

CANDLE OF PEACE (Purple) - The second Advent candle called the Bethlehem candle or the Candle of Peace. We have peace with others. We put aside our differences (Galatians 3:28), especially with other believers, because we belong to the same family. We have the same purpose: to let others know about the peace of Christ.

CANDLE OF JOY (Pink) The third Advent candle is called the Candle of Joy. This week celebrates the joy of Christ's coming to earth. Otherwise known as the Shepherd Candle, this candle reflects the joy that comes through Jesus' arrival, and through the salvation he has gifted us.

CANDLE OF LOVE (Purple) The fourth Advent candle called the angel candle or the Candle of Love. Love is the greatest of all the virtues on the Advent wreath and encompasses Jesus' entire purpose for being on earth (1 Corinthians 13:13).

CHRIST CANDLE (White) - On Christmas Eve the Christ Candle is lighted along with all four Advent candles. The Christ Candle represents the light that the Son brought into the world when he was born a little baby, God in the flesh.

December Lectionary Readings



December 3 – 1st Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64:1-9
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 (UMH 801)
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:24-37



December 10 – 2nd Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 (UMH 806)
2 Peter 3:8-15a
Mark 1:1-8

December 17 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Psalm 126 (UMH 847)
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24 – 4th Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:47-55 (UMH 199)
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

December 24 - Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96 (UMH 815)
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-20

December 25 – Christmas Day

Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98 (UMH 818)
Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12)
John 1:1-14



December 31 – New Year's Eve

Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Psalm 148 (UMH 861)
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:22-40





Sunday, December 24, 2023

4th Sunday of Advent

10:00 am Service

Christmas Eve Services

4:00 pm - Family Service

8:30 pm – Prelude Chapel Bells

9:00 pm – Candlelight Service



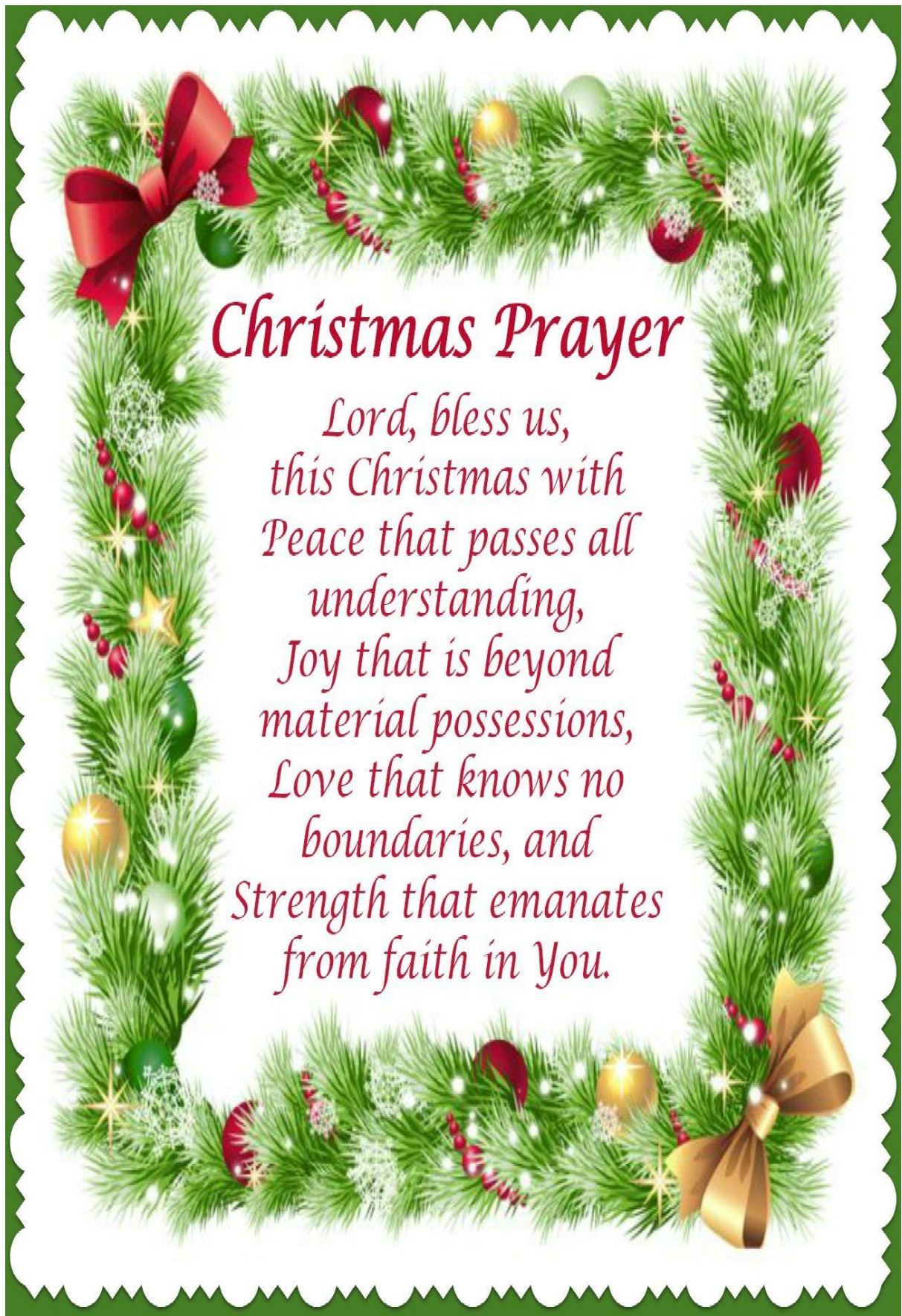
Church office closed

Friday, December 22, 2023

through

Tuesday, January 2, 2024





Christmas Prayer

*Lord, bless us,
this Christmas with
Peace that passes all
understanding,
Joy that is beyond
material possessions,
Love that knows no
boundaries, and
Strength that emanates
from faith in You.*