



Volume 57
Issue 2



Pastor's Desk

Full of Grace (John 1:1-14)

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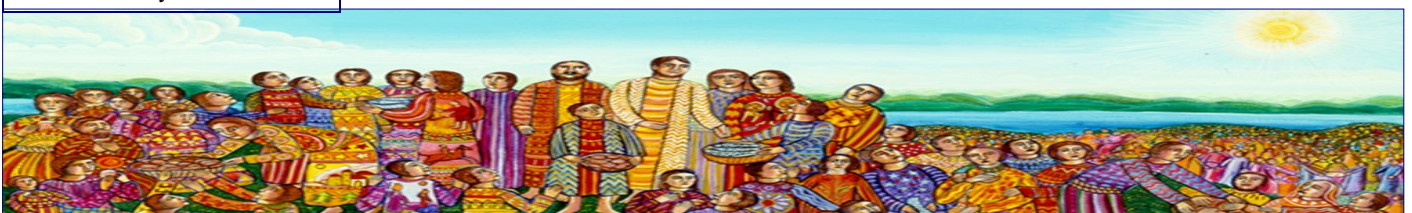
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New Year's resolutions are magical, mystical, and wonderful things that—like Christmas—only comes once a year. Well, that is what our society wants us to think! If we have seen any TV commercials, looked through the coupons in the mail, or scrolled on our phones, we have been reminded that it is New Year's resolution time. Yes, 'tis the season for getting in shape and *actually* using that gym membership. 'Tis the season to get rid of those bad habits. 'Tis the season for spending less and saving more. 'Tis the season for getting organized, making goals, and improving our lives.

But, we have been lied to because the slogan, “a new year, a new you,” is a gimmick. On New Year's Eve, when the clock chimed at midnight, it may have become a new calendar year, but we are the same people from 2025. No “2.0 version.” No fairy dust fell from heaven and magically appeared on us.

We are the old *us*, with our regular routines and same thinking. We are the old *us*, who subconsciously keep those bad habits. We are the old *us*, who would naturally choose candy over kale. Sadly, making a New Year's resolution and deciding to change is the easy part, but the actual change is hard. Change can be uncomfortable—at first—because it goes against our regular routines and old habits. Many times, we fail at our New Year's resolutions. With our best intentions, we may start on the right track, we may be rockin' our new change, but sooner or later, we will fall off “that horse.” We may get off track. Life, stress, work, and family get in the way, and suddenly, we feel like we have failed.

John 1:1-14 speaks about hope for this new year. As you read through the passage, you probably miss the word “grace.” It is normally not the part of the text that we like to focus on. On Christmas, we focus on “the Word became flesh and dwelled among us,” but we could also say that “Grace became flesh and dwelled among us.”



THE CARILLON

**St. John's
United Church of Christ**
409 North Wooster Avenue
Dover, OH 44622

Rev. Dr. Cassandra Granados
Senior Minister

Natalie Peterman
Director of Christian Education

**Emaly Smallcombe
& Karen McIlvaine**
Administrative Assistants

Sunday Morning Schedule
10:30 AM Worship

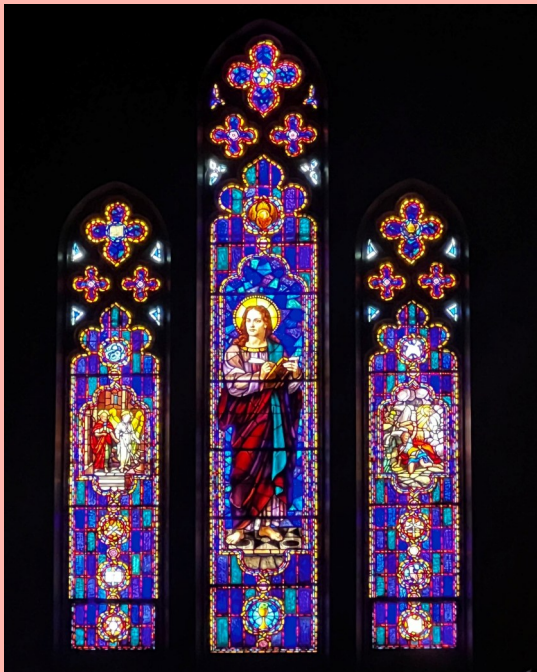
Church Office Hours
Monday through Friday
9 AM - 3 PM

Telephone answers
24 hours a day
330-364-4458

Fax: 330-364-4459

Website: <http://doverstjohns.org>

E-mail Addresses:
natalie@doverstjohns.org
office@doverstjohns.org



Jesus was the embodiment of God's grace. The text says that "he was full of grace and truth," and because of Jesus, we have all received, grace upon grace.

God's grace is so vast. It is more than the snowflakes that fall from the sky. God's grace is so overwhelming, that it is more than the drops of water that make up the Tuscarawas River.

Through the life of Jesus, we get to see what grace looks like. Jesus shows everyone what grace **tastes** like, through changing water into wine. Jesus shows 5000 people what grace **feels** like, when they had enough food to eat and plenty to share. Jesus shows the religious leaders what grace **looks** like, by healing a man born blind, despite it being the Sabbath. Reading through the Gospel of John, we can see that Jesus showed a multitude of grace to all kinds of people. He gave grace to those of high standing and those who are on the bottom of the totem pole. He gave grace to both men and women. He gave grace to those he knew well and those he had just met. Jesus bestowed grace to everyone.

It is easy to forget all the grace that God bestows on us every day. Sometimes, we don't even realize it, such as protection from injury, healing from illness, and extensions on deadlines (despite our procrastination!). Grace. Day after day. Year after year.

If there is one thing that we need more of this year, it is grace. Let us remember, the grace that God gives us every day, which is often a grace that we take for granted. Remember, today's blessings were yesterday's prayer requests. Even more, let us also give ourselves the same grace that God gives us. This grace reminds us that today is a new day. A time for new possibilities and no matter how many times we have tried and gotten off track; there is always room to come back and start, again. Moreover, may we extend God's grace to everyone we meet. Someone we meet today may be going through something and the biggest gift that we can give them is grace. Let us give grace because they may be fighting a battle we know nothing about.

As God imparts grace on us, may we have the courage to bestow grace on ourselves and others.

Let us remember, we can do anything because God's grace is with us.

We can do anything because God gives us the strength and courage.

Every day. Day after day. Grace after grace.

Take care,
Pastor Cassandra

BIRTHDAYS

1
Shane Sexton

4
Charles Eckhardt

6
Jackie Day
Chad Frutig
Allen Lamb

7
Pam Minnis

8
Anita Craig

10
Beth Ann Engelhand
Patricia Huprich

11
Abby Gonter
Donald Mauer
Steve Specht

12
Robin Griesen
Brian Kelley

13
Ron Swegheimer

14
Roberta Ballentine
Tim McCrate

15
Deanna Baker

16
Susan Glazer
Tracy McGrath

BIRTHDAYS

17
Melanie Patterson

18
Holly Bailey
Karie McCrate

19
Connie Burrier

20
Robert Hobart

21
Michelle Delekta
Erin Peterman
John Solvey

22
Ginny Diefenbaugh
Kathy Hartzell
Tara Lengler
Travis Siegenthaler

23
Carolyn Hucek

24
Kristen Herman
Jean Paddock

26
Sheila Harmon
Linda Ladrach
Michael Wherley

27
Tillie Breitenstein
Angie Gump
Eileen Johnson
Natalie Peterman

29
Jennifer Rufener

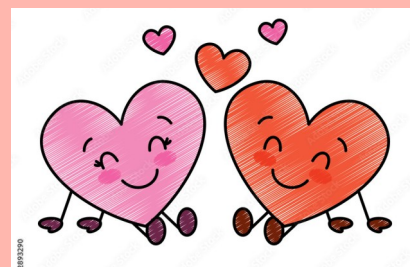
ANNIVERSARIES



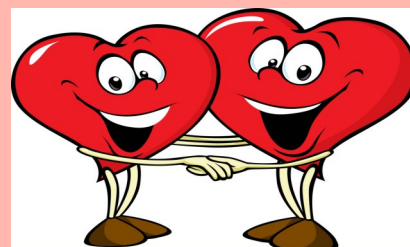
February 12th, 1994
Tim and Jen Conkle
became one.



February 14th, 1976
Terry and Judy Menges
became one.



February 18th, 1967
Howard and Linda
Ladrach became
one.



St. John's UCC Church Council Meeting January 13, 2026 at 7:30 pm

Opening Prayer: Dave Gingrich opened the meeting and Reverend Cassandra Granados gave the opening prayer. There were 12 members present.

Discussion with Music Staff: Jeanne Baker reported that with the choir singing on the steps, there's not enough room for bells. She suggested taking out one row of pews as a permanent change. Council discussion brought up perhaps some should be cut out for wheelchairs as well. Bell choir next plays in February and at Easter. It was discussed we'll need to consider carpeting for a finishing strip too. Trustees will review and plan.

Minutes of Last Meeting: Minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Holly Gonter reported:

Month of December 2025

General fund income for the month of \$49,689 is \$4,923 less than budget.

Expenses for the month of \$33,151 were under the budget by \$14,226.

December had 3 pay dates, adding an additional \$7k expense (included in the budget)

Resulting gain for the month of \$16,538 is \$9,303 better than the budget.

December 2025 YTD

General fund income year-to-date of \$270,166 is \$55,934 less than the budget.

Compared to last year, through the same month (center column) income is lower by \$46,863.

Expenses year-to-date of \$367,958 were less than budget by \$59,233.

Resulting shortfall year-to-date of \$97,792 is \$3,299 better than the budget.

Cash

Beginning cash balance for the year was \$25,146 and ending cash is \$25,462.

We have transferred \$97,855 from investments to cover general fund expenses.

M/S/C by Dan Dummermuth and Sue Ferbrache

Senior Minister's Report

Reverend Cassandra's report stated:

PAST EVENTS:

Cassandra taught the St. John's Pre-school (4- and 5-year-olds) on December 17th. The children learned about the true meaning of Christmas.

Christmas Candlelight services were held on December 24th at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. In lieu of a sermon, we offered the play, "The Perfect Present!" Our Christmas Eve services were beautiful and meaningful. Thank you to all who made them possible; it took a village!

For January 4th, Cassandra made a special bulletin design for Marge's 70th anniversary as St. John's organist.

For January 6th, Cassandra attended the Search Committee meeting with our Association General Minister, Rev. Dr. Elena Larssen.

On January 11th, Cassandra co-taught the Confirmation class, with an introductory lesson on how one's social location impacts their faith.

PASTORAL CARE:

Church members: 2 attempted phone call check-ins; 1 nursing home visit

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Teaching for the Confirmation class on January 25th.

Teaching the Pre-school on January 26th.

Director of CE Report

Natalie Peterman's submitted report showed:

- December was a full and meaningful month for our youth. We held our two-night **Live Nativity** which included 18 youth and friends who brought the Christmas story to life on our front lawn. We also completed our **Advent Lantern Lightings**, connecting eleven youth with four members and two special groups at St. John's for visits that shared light, stories, and gratitude throughout the season.
- Our 2026 **Confirmation** program is also off to a strong start. Fourteen youths have been matched with 12 mentors, and a full four-month class schedule and curriculum has been created. Pastor Cassandra and Natalie kicked off the program this past weekend. This is an exciting time for St. John's as we celebrate a large and active group of youth. While we will graduate six seniors this spring, we will still have eleven youth over 8th grade returning next fall, including five who have not been active since 2020 and are eager to be involved again.
- Looking ahead, our next major youth event will be the **Homeless Awareness Lock-Out** on February 14-15. Throughout the month of February, we will collect items for the homeless shelter and hope to fill the steps of the sanctuary with donations for those in need.
- Now that confirmation has begun, Natalie will be shifting some focus to two additional areas at St. John's: **Bible Study** and the **Parish Visitor Ministry**. I look forward to learning alongside our members as I facilitate our Bible Study classes. These classes will be open to high school youth as well, and we will make accommodation as needed so people of all ages can participate and grow in faith.
- Our Parish Visitor Ministry will regroup soon to continue our important connections with homebound members and those in nursing homes or assisted living. I also hope to expand our care to include spouses of those who are ill and members who are widowed. We have a wonderful group of volunteers who have served faithfully, and we will continue to support them and strengthen this ministry however we can.

Reports of the Boards

Elders/Dan Hurst reported:

* Upcoming schedules:

- January 18th: all church meeting
- January 25th: Confirmation Class #2
- February 1st: Communion/Family Sunday
- February 8th: Scout Sunday; spaghetti lunch
- February 15th: Sunday prior to Ash Wednesday; Homeless awareness February 14-15
- February 18th: Ashes-to-Go 7 a.m. – 10 a.m.; Ash Wednesday services at 7 p.m.
- February 22nd: Confirmation Class #3
- March 8th: Confirmation class #4

* Ben Hughes has been working in the Narthex, patching and painting.

* Meghan McCrate will be our office assistant during Emaly Smallcombe's maternity leave (Feb-Apr)

Trustees

Rob Gump reported:

Spouting off 4th St: Jeff Wallick will put it back up the week of the 19th.

Parking lots haven't been salted due to Owen's equipment being bad and will not be replaced. Trustees are discussing looking at an attachment for the Cub Cadet along with salt so salt can be handled by the church.

Snow blower has been fixed.

Deacons

Bev Smith reported:

Ushers and communion servers are filled for January/February.

Usher and communion server training will be held after worship service on February 8th. We need more volunteers, including substitute ushers.

Reports of Committees

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: Dave Gingrich reported:
Nominations annual meeting this Sunday following worship service.

SEARCH COMMITTEE: Dave Gingrich reported:
Committee met with Rev. Dr. Elana Larssen on Tuesday.
The first task will be to update the church profile.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE: Sue Ferbrache reported:
The committee consists of: Sue Ferbrache, Jean Paddock, Beth Showers, Sally McCombs, Jen Conkle, Laura Brown.

Congregational Activities

Card Party at Fourth & Faith – Jan 14 (2nd Wed monthly) – benefit Cancer Bags
Family Sunday – 1st Sunday each month with seasonal theme Sunday School lesson; Fellowship;
Attend worship together
Confirmation Classes – Jan – May
Needles and Hooker—Mondays at 2 PM
Boy Scout Annual Spaghetti Dinner: February 8th
Adult Contemporary Sunday School – Sundays at 9am
Bad Girls Book Club – 2nd Monday monthly
Chair Yoga – Mon & Thurs at Fourth & Faith

Unfinished Business

Dave Gingrich reported:
Annual Congregational Meeting – January 18th following worship.
Temporary Administrative Position for Emaly's maternity leave will be Meghan McCrate.

New Business – N/A

Comments for the Good of St Johns – N/A

Closing with the Lord's Prayer

December Financial Report

Actual Income	\$49,689
Actual Expenses	\$33,151
Average Worship Attendance	62



THE CARILLON

Family Members in Nursing Homes

Park Village - Linda Schilling
Park Village Independent Living - Jim Cotton
Park Village New Phila - Don Page
Park Village New Phila - Carol Sue Keener
Inn at Northwood - Norma Haglock
New Dawn Assisted Living - Clara Struhar
Canton Christian Home - Dotty Hartzell

To better serve our congregation, we now provide the contact information for the **Elder of the Month.**

This gives you an extra person to reach out to, alongside Rev. Cassandra, if you ever have a personal or family emergency.

Jean Paddock—330-987-8608
9728 Konrad Kohl Rd NW Bolivar

SO MANY ACTIVITIES TO GET INVOLVED IN!

Chair Yoga
Mondays &
Thursdays at
10 AM at
Fourth & Faith!
Contact Rod
Showers for any
questions!

Needles &
Hookers
Mondays at
2 PM at the
church!
Contact Kay
Whitlach for
any questions!

Chancel Choir
Wednesdays at 7
PM
at the church!
Contact Jeanne
Baker
for any questions!

Adult
Contemporary
Sunday School
9 AM at the
church!
Contact Sue
Ferbrache for any
questions!

Handbell Choir
Sundays at 11:30
AM at the
church!
Contact Nancy
Smith for any
questions!

Bible Study
Tuesdays at
11:30 AM at
Fourth & Faith!
Contact Natalie
Peterman for
any questions!

Bad Girls
Book Club
Monday
February 9th
at 6:30 PM!
Contact Sue
Ferbrache for
any questions!

Card Party
February 11th
1-4 PM at
Fourth & Faith!
Contact Bev
Smith for any
questions!

LIVING THE CALL TO LOVE

February reminds us of Jesus' call to "Love your neighbor" (Luke 10:25-37). In this familiar parable, we're challenged to look beyond what is convenient or comfortable and to see one another with compassion, mercy and care. Loving our neighbor isn't just a feeling, it's something we live out through our actions, presence and willingness to show up for others.

As we move into 2026, we are already seeing wonderful things taking shape in the life of our church. Confirmation classes are underway, youth group activities will be back in full swing and a new Bible study will be beginning soon. These moments of learning, connection and growth remind us that God is at work among us in both quiet and visible ways.

This month, our youth will be living out that call to love our neighbor during our Annual Homeless Awareness Lock-Out on February 14th-15th. In preparation, we will begin collecting items on Fellowship Sunday, February 1st, with donations gathered throughout the month on the front steps of the sanctuary. During the lock-out, youth will spend the night outside to help raise awareness about homelessness in our community, we will host speakers from Friends of the Homeless and will be collecting much-needed items dropped off in our parking lot throughout the evening. It is a powerful reminder that even small acts, listening, learning and giving, can make a meaningful difference.

February can sometimes feel heavy, but it is also a month filled with hope. Every act of kindness, every shared moment of care and every effort to understand another's story brings light into the world. As we move through this month, may we be encouraged to look for ways, big and small, to love our neighbors as Christ calls us to do.

Our next Fellowship Sunday will be March 1. Fellowship Sundays are a time for everyone in our church to take a few moments, once a month, to come together as a church family. We invite you to join us in the Fellowship Center prior to worship for light breakfast snacks and refreshments.

Blessings,
Natalie Peterman

Youth & Family NEWS February



FOLLOW ME:

February is all about loving our neighbor, and our Follow Me kids will be putting that love into action! This month, children will make cards for those at the homeless shelter, create small gifts for homebound members and others in need of support, and even share Valentine's love with animals at the humane society. It's a fun, hands-on way for kids to learn compassion, kindness, and how faith connects to everyday life. Families are encouraged to send their children and be part of this meaningful month together!

CONFIRMATION:

February continues our confirmation journey with opportunities for learning, service, and connection. Confirmands are encouraged to attend **Youth Group on February 1st** from 5:00-6:30 PM as we prepare together for Homeless Awareness.

- February 8: Make-up day
- **No class February 15** (Homeless Awareness/Presidents Day weekend)
- **February 22:** Our Church Story – exploring the history of Dover St. John's, a short building tour, and conversation about what it means to be part of this church family

Each gathering helps confirmands grow in faith and connection as they continue this meaningful journey together.

SAVE THE DATE:

- **FEBRUARY 18th** – Ashes to Go & Ash Wednesday Service
- **APRIL 5th** – Easter Sunday
- **APRIL 12th** – Youth Sunday
- **MAY 3rd** – Confirmation Sunday

YOUTH GROUP:

Here are the upcoming Youth Group dates!

- **February 1**
- **February 14- 15 (Homeless Awareness)**
- **March 1**
- **March 15**

February will focus on Homeless Awareness, with youth collecting items throughout the month and participating in the lock-out event. In March, youth group will shift its focus to preparing for Youth Sunday on April 12th, giving students an active role in worship planning and leadership.

PARENTS & FAMILIES:

Each month, we offer take-home materials for parents and caregivers to continue faith conversations at home. These resources connect with our monthly Bible verse and children and youth activities, offering simple discussion prompts and ideas to extend learning beyond Sunday. Materials can be picked up in the Fellowship Center on Fellowship Sundays. Upcoming dates include **February 1st, March 1st, April 12th, and May 3rd.**

We hope these resources help support meaningful faith conversations at home.

Feb. Bible Focus: **Love Your Neighbor** (Luke 10:25-37)

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

February Community Outreach

This February, our youth are supporting the **Friends of the Homeless of Tuscarawas County** to support our neighbors in need in our community.

You can help in a few simple ways:

- **Donate items**- We will be collecting items every Sunday throughout February. Donations will be given to the shelter at the end of the month.
- **Give financially**- Monetary donations are welcome and can be designated on your offering envelope.
- **Support Homeless Awareness Weekend, Feb. 14th-15th**- Our youth will be participating in their annual Homeless Awareness Lock-Out to raise awareness and support for those experiencing homelessness. Drive through the Wooster Ave. parking lot starting at 7PM to drop off donations!

Every donation, whether items, financial support or prayer, helps make a difference.

Thank you for helping us care for those in need in our area and for supporting our youth as they live out their faith in action.

DONATION ITEMS:

Food: 8-16 oz cans of fruit, Fresh Fruits and Veggies, Peanut Butter/Jelly, Mac and Cheese/Boxed Dinners, Ramen Noodles, Pasta Noodles/Sauce, Frozen/Canned Meats, Milk, Juice, Eggs, Cheese, Bottled Water, Butter, Sugar, Coffee

Household Items: Cleaning Products/Supplies (kitchen, bathroom, etc.), Brooms/Mops, Powdered/Liquid Laundry Detergent, Bleach, Dish Soap, 13 & 30 Gallon Trash Bags, Paper Towels, Toilet Paper, Tissues, Ziploc Bags, Plastic Food Storage Containers, Can Openers, Pillows, Towels, Bed Linens, Swiffers for Mop

Bible Study Group

Join us for Bible study every Tuesday at 11:30 AM at Fourth & Faith. This study is for beginners and those wanting to dive deeper, with content designed for all levels. We'll study in monthly units, so you're welcome to attend regularly or simply join when you're able.

Our first meeting will be **Tuesday, February 3 at 11:30 AM at Missions Cafe** (128 W 2nd Street, Dover). We'll enjoy lunch (each person covers their own meal) and talk about the plans for our time together.

Reach out to Natalie or the church office for more information!

All are welcome!



FELLOWSHIP SUNDAYS

Fellowship Sundays are a chance for our church family to come together, connect and enjoy one another's company before worship.

Everyone is welcome to stop by the Fellowship Center for light breakfast snacks and refreshments, along with time to visit and catch up!

Join us on **February 1, March 1, April 12 (Youth Sunday), and May 3 (Confirmation Sunday)**.

Whether you come every time or just once in a while, we hope you'll come early, grab a bite and share in this time of fellowship.

LOVE IN ACTION

Week 1 - Love God

Read your favorite scripture
Spend 5 quiet minutes in
prayer each day

Week 2 - Love Others

Reach out to someone you
haven't spoke to in
awhile
Do one intentional
act of
kindness

Week 3 - Love Your Church

Pray for church leadership
Encourage a volunteer
or staff member

Week 4 - Love Your Community

Support a local cause
Pray for your neighbors
and first
responders

FEBRUARY

<u>Sun</u>	<u>Mon</u>	<u>Tue</u>	<u>Wed</u>	<u>Thu</u>	<u>Fri</u>	<u>Sat</u>
1 9:00 Adult Contemporary Class 10 AM Fellowship Sunday 10:30 Worship / Communion 11:30 Hand Bells 11:30 Confirmation Class 5-6:30 PM Youth Group	2 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F 2 PM Needles & Hookers 7 PM Boy Scouts 7 PM Al-Anon & Alateen	3 11:30 AM Bible Study @ Missions Café 6:30 PM Cub Scouts/Webelos	4 7 PM Choir	5 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F	6	7
8 9:00 Adult Contemporary Class 10:30 Worship 11:30 Hand Bells Scout's Sunday; Spaghetti Lunch Usher training following worship	9 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F 2 PM Needles & Hookers 6:30 PM Bad Girls Book Club 7 PM Boy Scouts 7 PM Al-Anon & Alateen	10 11:30 AM Bible Study @ F&F 6:30 PM Cub Scouts/Webelos 6:30 PM Elders / Trustees / Deacons—7:30 PM Council Mtg	11 1-4 PM Card Party @ F&F 7 PM Choir	12 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F	13	14 Youth Homeless Awareness Lock-Out runs until 2/15
15 9:00 Adult Contemporary Class Fellowship Sunday 10:30 Worship	16 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F 2 PM Needles & Hookers 7 PM Boy Scouts 7 PM Al-Anon & Alateen	17 11:30 AM Bible Study @ F&F 6:30 PM Cub Scouts/Webelos	18 7 AM—10 AM Ashes to Go 7 PM Ash Wednesday Service	19 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F	20	21
22 9:00 Adult Contemporary Class 10:30 Worship 11:30 Hand Bells 11:30 Confirmation Class	23 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F 2 PM Needles & Hookers 7 PM Boy Scouts 7 PM Al-Anon & Alateen	24 11:30 AM Bible Study @ F&F 6:30 PM Cub Scouts/Webelos	25 7 PM Choir	26 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F	27	28 <i>20 DAYS UNTIL SPRING!</i>

