

# THE TRINITY TIMES

THE NEWSLETTER OF TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

DECEMBER 2019

## From the pastor

Years ago, in another church, I gathered all the children together on the first Sunday in Advent and told them that we were going to start rehearsing for the Christmas program. One little boy—who is now a senior in high school, by the way—shot up his hand and said, “Are we going to do that same story we did last Christmas, about the manger, the shepherds and all?”

More than any other season, Christmas is the season of sameness. We get down the same old Christmas ornaments we’ve used year after year, wrapped in the same tissue paper or newspaper we’ve used year after year. We use the same set of lights until we finally have to replace a broken one. Some people drag out the same old artificial tree.

And, really, with only a few slight changes, we pretty much do the same Christmas eve service every year, always ending the Christmas Eve service with the lighting of the candles as we sing “Silent Night.” That’s not necessarily bad—one young man who lived in the neighborhood told me that while he doesn’t attend this church, he comes to the Christmas Eve service every year because he can count on hearing the same music and the same scriptures.

It’s the season of sameness, but that’s what we look forward to at Christmas--the same sights and sounds and smells and tastes. Familiarity at Christmas is what people come to expect.

But familiarity can breed contempt--or in this case, familiarity can breed indifference. Faced with the same old, same old, the Christmas season can become something that we want to survive rather than enjoy. Traditions can become repetitious and meaningless if we are just doing them just to say we did them. If we only go through the motions of our Christmas traditions, we may enter the season with a detached or jaded attitude, and miss the deeper meaning in the birth of a baby, who is God With Us, who has come to save us.

But now, honestly, did the birth of Jesus really change anything?

At least our individual birthdays move us forward one year! But year after year, away in a manger,

there’s the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay. We celebrate it but in light of what we see around us, there’s no peace on earth, no goodwill among human beings. There’s still suffering and sickness. There’s still death.

But maybe that’s because we’re looking at this life in the wrong light. Because in an earthly light, nothing changes. But in a heavenly light, everything is different. Isaiah saw it. Isaiah saw the word of the Lord.

Even though he was living in a time of great turmoil, when war was close at hand and destruction was upon the people of Israel, unrighteousness surrounded all the cities like heavy dew; when God’s law lay broken and forgotten among the ruins of the temple--even with all that darkness and despair, Isaiah saw the word of the Lord shining like a beacon, like a light to every pathway. Bright as day, Isaiah saw the nations coming together and streaming up the mountain of the Lord, eager to learn God’s ways and excited to be instructed in God’s truth. As if in the broad daylight, Isaiah saw people beating their weapons into farm tools, throwing their swords aside, refusing to study any subject but peace and goodwill.

Isaiah saw it all through the eyes of faith--faith in a God who created heaven and earth, brought order out of chaos, form out of void, light out of darkness. Faith in a God who put the bow in the clouds and parted the sea.

Still, in our result-driven world, it’s hard to see things differently. You know, we want to be made well now, not later. We want peace today, not tomorrow. We want to be relieved of our suffering this minute, we want a cure for our illness immediately if not sooner. Familiarity will breed contempt for the Christmas story if we base our faith on human results instead of in light of God’s promises. The light of the Lord requires us to look more deeply into the story of the birth of Jesus, to give the manger scene more than just a glance.

Wolfgang Pannenberg, a German theologian, wrote that even though Abraham was promised that he would have as many descendants as stars in the sky and grains of sand on the seashore, yet Abraham didn’t live to see those descendants. He  
(continued on page 4)

**Trinity Presbyterian Church**

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*The Trinity Times* is published monthly. We welcome news items and other contributions from members and friends of Trinity. Bring your articles to the church or e-mail them to the editor, Judy Schomber ([schomberstat@aol.com](mailto:schomberstat@aol.com)), by the 20th of the month for the following month's newsletter.

**TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF**

Sally Hughes, Designated Pastor  
William E. Berger, Minister of Music  
Linda Rogers, Office Manager  
Charlie Bundy, Facilities Manager

**SESSION MEMBERS**

Vira Baker (2020)            Hank Howerton (2020)  
Vera Billington (2021)    Paul Parker (2021)  
Bill Dougherty (2020),    Matt Rutherford (2019)  
Phil Elbert (2019)        Hank Schomber (2019)  
Aad Zeeuw (2021)

**POINSETTIAS FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON**

Please order a poinsettia in honor/memory/celebration of someone. Those names will be listed in the bulletin. Complete the form in the bulletin and drop it in the offering plate with check/money. You may also call/email the church office by December 4. The cost is \$10 for a 6 1/2" poinsettia. You may take your plant(s) home anytime following the Christmas Eve service.



**DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE AND LECTIONARY READINGS**

- December 1 First Sunday of Advent/Celebration of the Lord's Supper**  
Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122;  
Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44
- December 8 Second Sunday of Advent**  
Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19;  
Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12
- December 15 Third Sunday of Advent**  
Isaiah 35:1-10;  
Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46b-55;  
James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11
- December 22 Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19;  
Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25
- December 29 First Sunday of Christmas**  
Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148;  
Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23

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**CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING ON DECEMBER 22**

Christmas Joy Offering will be received during worship on Sunday, December 22. This is one of four offerings designated by the PC(USA) General Assembly and has been collected for over 70 years! By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor God's gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. God has blessed the Church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. This Offering addresses the support needed by some of our leaders, including supporting leadership development for communities of color, and providing support for Presbyterian church workers in their time of need.

## SPREAD CHRISTMAS JOY THIS SEASON!

This Christmas, Trinity is sponsoring four older adults who are served by Fifty Forward. Their wish lists can be found in East Hall, and you can sign your name beside whatever items you are purchasing. For the items you purchase, please:

- \* include receipts for the gifts in an envelope since there may be a need to exchange sizes, etc.

- \* bring the items to the church office by Sunday, December 8.

Fifty Forward welcomes donations of items for emergency meals for the "Living at Home" closet for senior adults. Copies of the list of needs are in East Hall.

## ALTERNATIVE GIVING COUNTS TWICE

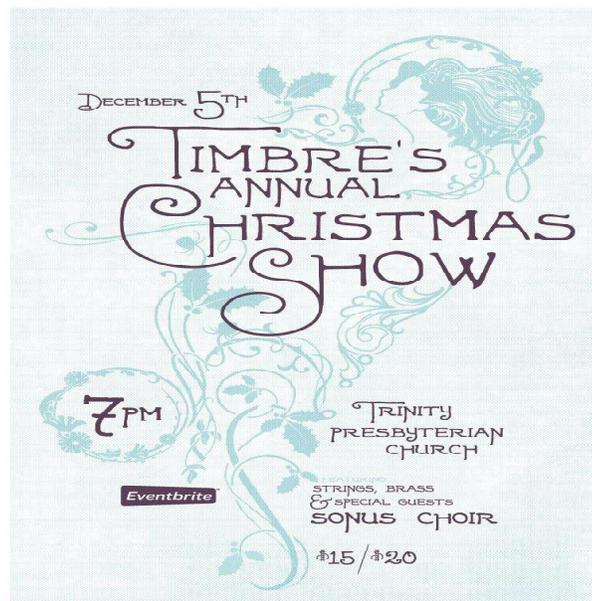
Alternative Giving for Christmas provides the opportunity to make our gifts count twice. Honor a loved one by making a gift in their name to a worthy organization working to give real assistance to those in need or to protect our precious world. A child would be thrilled to have given in their name a flock of chicks for eggs for a poor family or a cow for milk through Presbyterian Giving Catalog. A display box with catalogs is on the table in the East Hall. This is truly easy Christmas shopping that makes a world of difference!

You may take a giving catalog and order from it or you may give online:

<https://presbyteriangifts.org/>

## CHRISTMAS BREADS ON DECEMBER 22

Add to the festive holiday season by bringing your favorite Christmas breads to share on December 22. Christmas Breads will begin at 10:15 in the East Hall and will continue after worship. Homemade as well as purchased goodies are welcome. The Fellowship Committee will supply coffee, cider, lemonade, orange juice, and water to accompany the delicious Christmas treats. You may bring your Christmas breads for the 10:15 start or after worship. The Fellowship Committee will be happy to cut and plate them. Enjoy a taste of the holidays with the congregation!



Timbre's Annual Christmas Show, December 5th at 7 p.m.: Join Timbre Cierpke in the Trinity Sanctuary for a beautiful night of peaceful Christmas music. The event will include: Chamber orchestra featuring strings and brass, violin and drums, special guests Molly Parden backing vocals. Special guests SONUS choir will sing with the ensemble and open the night with a lovely set of a capella music.

Presale tickets: \$15; Day-of tickets: \$20; Family: \$60.

Ticket Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/timbres-annual-christmas-show-tickets-80953208225>

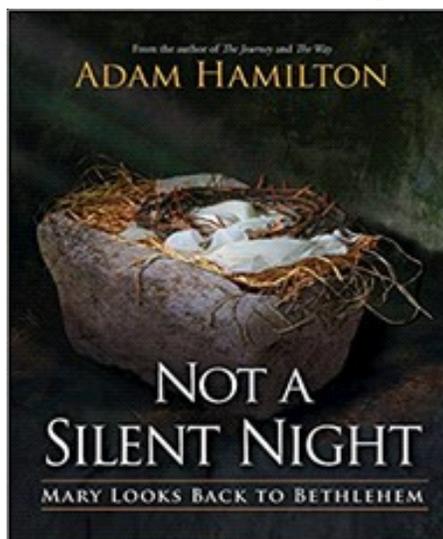
Facebook Event: <https://facebook.com/events/436919127021892/?ti=icl>



# ADULT EDUCATION IN DECEMBER

The Adult Sunday school class invites you to join it at 9:30 a.m. in the Parlor During the month of December, we there will be an Advent Bible Study: *Not a Silent Night* by Adam Hamilton.

Spend some time with Mary during this Advent season. In *Not a Silent Night*, Adam Hamilton looks at Jesus' life through the eyes of his mother. Imagine what Bethlehem must have looked like from Mary's point of view. Focus your own gaze on the Savior she knew as her beautiful child! Beginning with the crucifixion and resurrection, then backtracking through Jesus' life and ministry, Hamilton paints a life in this 5-week Advent study.



## From the pastor (continued from page 1)

lived to see the one child, Isaac, but because of Isaac, Abraham lived in the present as if the future was his reality. And Moses, who was promised a land flowing with milk and honey, died before entering that land. Yet a glimpse of the Promised Land was enough for Moses to live and work as if his feet had actually touched the sacred soil. Seeing the word of the Lord was sufficient for Isaiah to believe in that mountain of peace and unity and light.

So while the birth of Jesus didn't right all the wrongs or heal all the sicknesses or instantly deliver us from evil, the birth of Jesus illuminates the promise that in the light of the Lord, all wrongs have been righted in the cross of Christ; all sicknesses healed by his resurrected body, and that we have been delivered from evil by the righteousness of the Lord. For faith doesn't have to see a light at the end of the tunnel to believe that the light is there, and that the tunnel has an end. Faith knows that morning will follow evening, even if night is long. The dawn will break and shine the light of the Lord upon us all.

We walk into the Advent season following the same familiar path, but in the light of the Lord, our journey takes on a new look. We can walk with hopeful, not grieving hearts; we can walk in confidence, and not in despair; we walk courageously and not fearfully toward the manger of Bethlehem, and let the light of his presence flood our lives with peace. In this season of sameness, may the light of the Lord shine a sharp contrast between what is human and what is divine. Let not the familiarity of the season breed indifference, but guide us in seeing the birth of the baby Jesus in a whole new light.

O come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Imagine Jesus from Mary's point of view—proud of her son, in awe of his gifts and mission, guided by love for him as a person and so much more. In this book, Adam Hamilton begins at the end, with Mary at the crucifixion and resurrection; travels back in time as she witnesses his life and ministry; and ends at the beginning, with the Christ child born in a stable, Mary's beautiful baby. This year, experience Advent and Christmas with Mary.

The five sessions are:

1. Beginning with the End
2. The Piercing of Mary's Soul
3. Amazed, Astounded, and Astonished
4. Mary, Full of Grace
5. It Was Not a Silent Night

## ADVENT/CHRISTMAS DATES AT TRINITY

**DECEMBER 15** - Christmas  
Program during worship

**DECEMBER 22** - Christmas  
Breads  
Christmas joy offering  
during worship

**DECEMBER 24** - Christmas Eve  
service, 5 p.m.

# FROM OUR MISSION WORKER, KARLA KOLL

Dear companions in mission,

Greetings from Costa Rica as Advent begins.

I returned to my home on November 13th, a bit earlier than I had originally planned. I am very grateful for all the churches I was able to visit and all the people who so graciously welcomed me into their homes. Thank you for listening and for sharing this journey in mission.

Evelin and her children, the family of Nicaraguan refugees we have accompanied most closely, are emerging from the most recent crisis in their lives. Now we want to help the three kids finish the school year well. Rafael needs to pass an English exam in order to graduate from sixth grade in early December, so I am serving as his English tutor. We are committed to helping Evelin, as long as she is willing, learn to handle the stresses of living in exile in healthy ways. Evelin, Rafael, Eli and Daniela welcome your prayers. Eli (turning 10) and Daniela (turning 8) have birthdays at the end of November. Rafael will turn 14 in mid-December.

The day after I returned to Costa Rica, the Nicaraguan police detained 13 activists who had tried to take water to a group of mothers of political prisoners engaged in a hunger strike in the San Miguel church in Masaya. Among those arrested is a close friend of ours, Roberto Buschting. Roberto was in his second year of university studies in economics in Matagalpa when the protests against the Ortega government started in April of 2018. During the months he spent in exile here in Costa Rica, he was a frequent visitor to our home, where I always tried to greet him with a hug and a meal. Roberto's father, Andres, spent even more time at our house. Andres had gone back to Nicaragua on November 11th to be with his wife as she underwent surgery. Even though there is an outstanding arrest warrant out for Andres stemming from last year's protests, he has been very public in support of his son. Andres has been able to see Roberto, who reports that he has not yet suffered any physical harm in custody. The government has charged these young people with possession of firearms and planning terrorist acts. My husband, Javier Torrez, has been active in organizing the almost daily protests here in Costa Rica to demand the release of these young people. Please join me in praying for Roberto and the other 12 activists, as well as for the situation in Nicaragua that remains very tense.

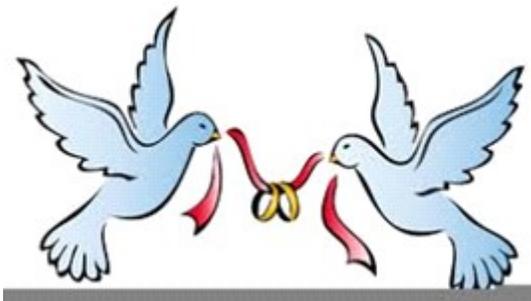
I have yet not seen Erlinda Quesada, the International Peacemaker with whom I traveled in September and October, but the efforts to stop the expansion of pineapple plantations continue. The recently released State of the Nation report for 2019 shows that by 2017 pineapple plantations had invaded 3,824 hectares of protected forest areas as well as over 16,000 hectares of wetlands. Currently, activists are calling on the government and the courts to stop Pindeco (the name Del Monte uses in Costa Rica) from establishing a new plantation close to the Terraba Sierpe National Wetlands on the southern Pacific coast. In addition to the ecological sensitivity of the wetlands, the area also has archeological significance, as several spheres carved by indigenous groups before the arrival of the Spanish have been found there. As Erlinda pointed out in her presentations, it is the communities and the environment here in Costa Rica that pay the hidden costs of pineapple production.

## Closing thoughts

As the new liturgical year begins, the lectionary offers us texts from Isaiah. Twenty-eight centuries ago, the prophet and his community longed for the coming of one upon whom the Spirit of God would rest. The coming one "shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth." (Isaiah 11: 3b – 4a) This Advent, I look around Latin America and the Caribbean to places where people who have taken to the streets to protest corrupt governments and economic exclusion have been met with brutal repression. As we wait for Christ's coming among us, I pray God's Spirit will move each of us to see beyond the media images and to hear beyond the polarizing political rhetoric to stand with the poor and the meek who are demanding justice and equity.

In Advent hope,  
Karla





**The Trinity congregation is invited to the wedding of Jackie Brawner and Phil Elbert in the Trinity sanctuary on Saturday, December 28th at 3:00 p.m.**



## **DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

Marceline Bates – 9  
Daniel Brawner – 10  
George Ward – 12  
Gil Veda – 13  
Sally Hughes – 17  
Gennette Norman – 22  
Hank Howerton – 23  
Barbara McClure - 24

## **SPECIAL GROUP ACTIVITY MEETINGS**

**\*\*\*Wandering Presbyterians** On Thursday, December 12, those with tickets to the Christmas Banquet at Scarritt Bennett will enjoy a 4-course luncheon prepared by Executive Chef Jennifer Threadgill. Following the luncheon, everyone who wishes is welcome to attend the free Christmas concert in Wightman Chapel at 1 p.m. It will feature vocalist Terrell Hunt, who has roots in gospel, jazz and classical music. For those who purchased tickets for the luncheon, we will meet at the church at 10:30 a.m. to carpool to Scarritt Bennett and return to the church around 2/2:30 p.m.

**\*\*\*Presbyterian Women** will meet Tuesday, December 3 at 11 a.m. at the home of Sally Hughes. Luncheon will follow the lesson. We will cover Lesson 4 "Words of Love: Honor the Life Givers" from *Love Carved in Stone: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments*. Anyone who needs transportation should contact Sally.

**\*\*\*Trinity Book Club's** next meeting will be Wednesday, December 11th. We will meet at 5:30 p.m. for light supper followed by book club discussion from 6 - 7:00 p.m. in the parlor. The book we will be reading/discussing is *Educated* by Tara Westover. (Sneak preview: the book for January is *Caleb's Crossing* by Geraldine Brooks.) If you have questions, contact Katy Wilson ([katywilson@gmail.com](mailto:katywilson@gmail.com)) or Carla McDonough ([carla\\_mcdonough@bellsouth.net](mailto:carla_mcdonough@bellsouth.net)).

## **DIRECTORY UPDATES**

Directory Update: Please notify the office if you have a new postal address or e-mail address. We plan to publish an updated directory in December. In January, there will be opportunities for photos after worship, and then an updated picture directory will be published.

If you would like to write to Claude (Spence) Spencer, please call or email the church office for his address.

# THE ONLINE CALENDAR

For a complete list of activities, visit [www.trinitypresnashville.org](http://www.trinitypresnashville.org) and click on “church calendar”. The calendar is updated regularly as activities are added, deleted, or changed. If your committee or group schedules a meeting using the church’s facilities, please contact Linda (297-6513 or [office@trinitypresnashville.org](mailto:office@trinitypresnashville.org)) so your meeting can be placed on the calendar, or if there is a facilities conflict, it can be resolved before scheduling.

## TRINITY TRACKINGS

*If you have any news or announcements to share with the congregation, please pass them along to Sally via e-mail or word-of-mouth or drop a note in the offering plate on Sunday so they may be shared in the next Trinity Trackings column. Any and all tidbits of news are welcome!*



Welcome to the world, Joni Ford Baker-Leonard, daughter of Melinda and Doug Baker-Leonard, sister to Evan, and granddaughter of Vira Baker. Born November 25th, 2019 at 12:37 PM, 9 lbs, 18.5



Claude Spencer (Spence) has been released from prison and has a job and is living in Memphis.

Jackie Brawner and Phil Elbert will be married in the Sanctuary at 3 p.m. on Saturday, December 28.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Trinity Contributions Recap – as of October 2019

September	Year to Date	Budget YTD	Difference	Annual Budget
\$13,542	\$129,183	\$124,334	+\$4,849	\$149,200
Building Use (Rent) Recap				
\$14,885	\$149,670	\$151,120	-\$1,450	\$191,154

# DAN McGEACHY'S MEMORIAL SERVICE



## **ENTERED THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT DANIEL PATRICK McGEACHY IV**

**June 1, 1953 - November 6, 2019**

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, blessed indeed; says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds do follow them

## DUTCH CHRISTMAS TRADITION CELEBRATED AT TRINITY

The local group of friends of the Netherlands, which meets once a month at Trinity and is organized by Aad Zeeuw, celebrated a Dutch Christmas tradition on November 23. The celebration featured a visit by Sinterklaas (St. Nicholas), who distributed

presents to the children. Traditional treats were served. In the Netherlands, Sinterklaas Eve is celebrated on December 5. About 25 adults and children attended.



# ANNUAL THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON

We enjoyed on of our largest Thanksgiving Luncheons, with 64 persons in attendance. Everyone dined on turkey and dressing, various cranberry options, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn casserole, macaroni and cheese, green beans, rolls and butter. A salad bar was provided and the congregation supplied many scrumptious desserts.





## December 2019

A calendar that includes all building use, including LWS, can be found on the church website: [www.trinitypre-mashville.org](http://www.trinitypre-mashville.org)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:30 am - Choir Rehearsal 11:00 am - Worship/Communion After Worship - Fellowship Time	<b>2</b> 8 pm - AA Meeting	<b>3</b> 10 am - Synod Permanent Administrative Committee Meeting	<b>4</b> 11 am - Presbyterian Women Christmas Luncheon	<b>5</b> 7 pm - Timbre Clergyle Christmas Concert 8 pm - AA Meeting	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 9 am - Woodmont ALAmen Group
<b>8 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:30 am - Choir Rehearsal 11:00 am - Worship After Worship - Fellowship Time 3:00 pm - Girl Scouts	<b>9</b> 8 pm - AA Meeting	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 11 am - Small Churches Pastor gathering 7 pm - Choir Rehearsal	<b>12</b> 10:20 am - Wandering Presbyterians leave for <b>Scotts Bennett</b> lunch & concert 6 pm - LWS Concert 8 pm - AA Meeting	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:30 am - Choir Rehearsal 11:00 am - Worship After Worship - Fellowship Time Newspaper Articles Due	<b>16</b> 8 pm - AA Meeting	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent</b> 9:30 am - Sunday School 10:15 am - Christmas Breeds 10:30 am - Choir Rehearsal 11:00 am - Worship After Worship - Fellowship Time	<b>23</b> 8 pm - AA Meeting	<b>24</b> 5:00 pm - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	<b>25</b> <b>Christmas Day!</b> Church office closed through January 1	<b>26</b> 8 pm - AA Meeting	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 3:00 pm - Brawley/Eibert Wedding
<b>29</b> 11:00 am - Worship After Worship - Fellowship Time	<b>30</b> 8 pm - AA Meeting	<b>31</b>				

Note: Church office is closed on Mondays