


CONNECTIONS

The newsletter of the Ewing - Covenant Presbyterian Church

January 2020

Connecting Thoughts

2020 is coming to an end, and good riddance. I have heard something akin to that sentiment in so many places and ways. Yes, 2020 has been unprecedented in so many ways. The year in review summaries are reminding us of just how “unprecedented” the year has been. Take a look at The New York Times, “The Year in Pictures”, for an incredible summery. Even before the Pandemic the years events began to take us down dark paths. February hunting down and killing of Ahmaud Arbery for running while black, the March shooting of Breonna Taylor, signaled the necessity for this land to address its continuing racial divides. The disproportionate impact of the Corona Virus on people of color only continued to highlight this reality. Then, there was the early beginning to the unprecedented (there is that word again) hurricane season, and the ferocity of the western fire season that provided continuing evidence of the reality of climate change; the flooding of the year that reminds us of how ill-prepared we are for climate change. I could go on to name the impact of the political upheaval of this past year that continues to play out over the funding of relief from the economic impact of the Pandemic.

We come to the end of the calendar year with its emphasis on beginning anew and the making of New Year’s resolutions. But there is a powerful message from our faith that speaks through all of the darkness of the past year, and brings us into the light of God’s presence.

Arise, shine, for your light has come,

and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
(Isaiah 60:1)

In the bright light of Christ, in the illumination it brings into our lives, what will be the resolutions that will guide your life as you live into the future God presents to you, not just in the year ahead, but through all the remaining days of your life?

God opens a future to us that is not determined by the past, nor even the present, but by the trust in the presence of God in this life and in the next.

That is the future I hope to live into. Join me.

In Christ’s service,
Pastor Paul



Ordinary Angels

Writing in this final week of December, I am reflecting upon the experience of Advent in your midst so far... I have heard many stories of your Christmas celebrations of the past. How each person has memories of family customs through the years, bringing home a tree and decorating it -- draping the lights on the boughs, getting the treasured star or angel on the very top branch.

One of you related how, in this 11th decade of your life, the rituals of unwrapping ornaments and placing them on the Christmas tree, and

decorating your home with a much-loved creche, has offered unexpected comfort in this time of isolation. Each ornament and each piece of the creche evoking memories within you of the church event where each was purchased and the dear church friend who created each one.

For myself, I have been thinking of my ceramic angel, one of the many projects I made in church youth group. Our youth group leader, Mrs. Smith, would arrive most weeks with a plain ceramic item for each of us; she placed glazes in the middle of the table and fanned out brushes of all sorts -- we could choose several for our own use. Usually, we painted the ceramic pieces as we wished, but the angel was different, it was to be completely glazed in one color, with a specified trim glaze placed on the wings. Mrs. Smith would not provide even a hint as to what the angels might look like once they were fired in a kiln. Some weeks passed, and then the time came. A finished angel was returned to each one of us. When I unwrapped the paper from mine, I gasped. My angel was a brilliant glossy white and her wings were delicately tinged with a richly burnished shade of gold.

My mother displayed the angel during Advent and Christmas -- sometimes she sat on the fireplace mantel, other years she was placed in a creche scene. Eventually the angel came to be part of our own family's Christmas tradition throughout the years when our kids were growing up. In recent years, I had forgotten all about her. But this year is different. I went in search of her, eventually finding her in the dining room buffet, stored on a low shelf. I realized I had not brought her out for Advent and Christmas for several years. And I had forgotten one detail: that she kneels on a base which is a star; a star outlined in the rich burnished shade of gold. That I had lost track of the angel's whereabouts does not really matter. What matters is the memories she stirs and the relationships she reminds me of: old childhood friends in the church, Mrs. Smith's

steadfast love and care that she gave to me, that she gave to all of us.

This year, as I suspect many of you have discovered, we have been angels to and for each other. Extraordinary angels really, showing love to each other in what appear to be ordinary ways -- snail mail and phone calls and such. But I imagine that there are many stories this year that I have yet to be told: how each one of you has been an extraordinary angel in the life of someone else. Just doing ordinary but extraordinary things, sharing frustrations and griefs, saying prayers. And unto and for each other, proclaiming God's comfort, solace and above all, hope.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
Pastor Ann



Worship at Ewing-Covenant

We will continue our virtual worship services, gathering on-line at 10:00 each Sunday morning. Due to increased security protocols, you may be placed in a waiting room when you dial in by phone or connect by computer. You will then be admitted to the worship webinar as you have joined in the past. Here are the Zoom and Phone links for our worship:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/910100569>

Or by telephone dial 1-929-205-6099, if asked, enter the Webinar ID: 910 100 569

Our recorded worship services can be viewed on YouTube at Ewing Covenant Worshipping Community.

Sunday Morning Bible Study - 9:00

AM Led by Sam Bonner

<https://zoom.us/j/564813133?pwd=W XV3dk5zYlkvUGJDUUEwZEc2R3REDz09>

By phone, dial 1-646-558-8656 and enter when asked the meeting ID 564-813-133

Sunday Afternoon Adult Ed.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81923102879>

By phone, dial 1-929-205-6099 , Meeting ID: 819 2310 2879

Tuesday and Thursday Chat's with Pastor Ann

Tuesdays at 10 AM to 11 AM.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81010467123?pwd=UDNqWG5pNot3MFJUE5SFcvQnpzdzo9>

Meeting ID: 810 1046 7123 Password: 271785 By phone +1- 929- 436-2866 enter password: 271785

Thursdays at 7 PM to 8 PM.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/960150849?pwd=bTdYTVV3S1MOR2xmenZSWlc5MnhMUT09>

Meeting ID: 960 150 849 Password: 079496 By phone dial 1-929 -436-2866 Password: 079496

Wednesday Conversations with Pastor Paul 7:00 PM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86079729283>

By phone dial 1 929 205 6099

Meeting ID: 860 7972 9283



The deacons finished out 2020, a year like no other, by continuing to reach out to the congregation and the wider community. Hats, scarves, and mittens as well as lap blankets were distributed to the Head Start families. Thirty-five children were given a new book for the holidays and families with real need were given money to be used for food, rent or clothing. Thank you to all who contributed so generously.

Though there was no need to decorate the worship space, Christmas elves still set up the Nativity scene, put wreaths on the doors, arranged a few poinsettias for Zoom visuals and put the fruit display over the doors of the 1867 Sanctuary. Thanks to all those helpers.

At the December meeting, the board elected new officers for the 2021 year. They are Ken Harvey, moderator; Jarryd DeWees, vice moderator; Jane Perelli, corresponding

secretary; Liz Schofield, recording secretary and Ralph Sims, treasurer. The new officers will take over in February after installation of new deacons and the completion of the term for the deacons of the class of 2020. Thank you to all in that class who have worked so hard. They are Jane Kidder, Lisa King, Rachel Morgan, Sandy Pezzillo and Bob Schofield.

The deacons want to wish everyone a happy, healthy new year, one in which we can all join safely at some point for worship, fellowship and to carry on God's work in our church family, the community and the world.



Suzie Wentworth is seen here dropping off children's books for the Head Start kids.



Newly Listed

Diane & Frank Szachtowski, Family of Mike & Carol Hecky

Jewell Hand and Family

Floyd Roebuck, requested by Nancy Orhun

Nan Stanford, requested by Nancy Orhun

Joan Stocker, requested by Nancy Orhun

Bob Markley, Jr., requested by Nancy Orhun

Ken Hutchens, nephew of Dick Anthony

Robert Markley, Sr., father-in-law of Nancy Orhun

Berens family: Harriet Berens, her daughters

Loren Ciccone, Dr. Mari Berens, and Kristen Berens-Smart; grandchildren **Julie and Joseph Ciccone**; Harriet's sister **Doris Wiles, Diane Watson**, *niece of Harriet Berens*
Helen Birchenough
Bonnie Brandt
Michael Brezak, son of Barbara Brezak
Louise Burroughs
Steve Carter, friend of Mari Berens
Corrine Cassidy and her husband David, sister and brother in law of Dick Anthony
Janet Corbin
The DeWees Family
Maryann Eleuteri, friend of Judy Carapezza
Eleanor Everitt, sister-in-law of Pam Miller
Rita Freilinghaus, sister of Judy Carapezza
Karen Fuchs, sister of Laura Wallin
Alice Haines
Kevin Hecky
Lydia Hill, cousin of Cathy Holland
Joan Hodak – Prayers for her continued healing after surgery.
Joe Hodak
Cathy Holland
Dan Hough
Jessica Jusino, friend of the Harvey family
John Kelso, friend of Ginny Saiia
Nancy Kriegner
Charlie Magee, brother of Judy Carapezza
Paul Matyas
Maureen – Friend of Barbara Gigliello
Samuel Meservey, grandson of Lois Meservey
Gary Miller
Aaron Morgan
Rachel Morgan
Eddie Multop
Carolyn Parham – daughter of Betty Newberry
Christal Ruehule and Gerhard Zilz, sister and brother of Ingrid Pope.
Laura Ryan, niece of Sandra Gwin
Shirley Sandford
Michael Baily Schafer, grandnephew of Mary Hough
Brad Shropshire, Doug & Carol Taylor's brother-in-law
Dave Snedecker
Gwen Thomas
Travis Turner, nephew of Gay McGraw

Gloria Vernam
Kaitlynn Webster, granddaughter of Nancy Coleman
Sam & Peace Weigh

To keep the prayer list timely, listings will remain for two editions of the Newsletter (two months' time) and then be taken off. In the event you desire a listing to run longer, or for a shorter time, please contact Pastor Ann, or otherwise let your parish leaders know.



Updates from Operations

The Operations Committee is very happy to provide an update on the capital improvement projects to be completed on the church campus. Over the summer, the contractors doing the work for the church had experienced long delays in the permit application process. One cause for the delay was due to the impacts of Covid-19 on the hours and operations at the Ewing Township Construction Office.

Following the approval of the permit

applications, work has been proceeding along at a good pace. As of the writing of this article, the following work has been completed on the porch project.

- All concrete footings for the front porch and the rear steps, and the concrete base for the exterior wheelchair lift have been poured and have passed inspection by Ewing Township.
- The front porch footings, deck framing, and roof supports are under construction and near completion.
- The rear steps and platform to the church office building are under construction and near completion.
- The power supply for the exterior lift has been installed.
- Both the interior and exterior wheelchair lifts have been shipped from Canada where they were manufactured, and are being housed at Mobility Elevator in West Caldwell, N.J. awaiting shipment to the church for installation.



In addition to the porch project, attention has been given to other areas

of the campus buildings. There was a need to repair a leak in the roof of the Education wing and another in the roof of the breezeway connecting the Red & White Building and Fellowship Hall. Both leaks were successfully repaired in November.

Plumbing repairs were needed to several areas in the Education Wing and the kitchen in Fellowship Hall. One of the sinks in the girl's restroom needed new faucets and trap. The water supply shut off valves to the boy's and girl's restrooms in the Education wing in the Custodian's closet were in need of replacement. One additional item was the need to replace the wastewater pipes that empty into the grease

trap under the triple sinks in the kitchen. All these items were leaking and malfunctioning due to their age, and all the noted repairs were completed on the same day.

The tap to the sink in the coffee room of Fellowship Hall had a substantial leak and John Damrau was able to make that repair.

Pastor Ann's office will be moved to the second floor of the church office building. In preparation for that, the office has had cosmetic work which includes spackling and sanding cracks in the plaster walls and ceiling along with a fresh coat of paint to the ceiling, walls, and trim. The old carpeting was also removed, and new flooring is being installed. We anticipate that Ann's new office will be ready for her to move into in the next several weeks.

The black wrought iron railings on three sets of steps to the Red & White Building and by the front entrance to Fellowship Hall were scraped and painted by John with a fresh coat of black Rustoleum paint. *There's more work ahead and the Operations Committee will update you with the progress as we go along.*

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Wallin

Epiphany, Our Season of Stewardship

“God so loved the world” that he gave his Son that we might know that love.

“You shall love the Lord with all your **heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **strength** and with all you **mind**.”

“Love your neighbor as yourself.”

“A new commandment I give you, Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples when you love each other.”

These familiar verses of scripture all carry an important message about the word “Love”. In the context of our faith “Love” is a word of action. “God so loved the world” that he *gave* his Son that we might know that love. Love is a

giving of the self in totality, without reserve. Over the coming month, and throughout the year, we will hear the truth that our response to God's outpouring of love is the outpouring of our being in response. Loving God with all that we are, with all that we have; with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind—this is our calling.

The marshaling of all that we are to serve the Love of God is stewardship. Each of us is to use whatever gift you have received to serve others as **faithful stewards of God's grace** in its various forms. (1 Peter 4:10) That is the challenge we will be laying before you over the next 6 weeks, to consider how you can use the fullness of your being to praise God by sharing the grace of God.



Our Season of Stewardship will begin Sunday, January 10th. You will receive a letter inviting you to plan how you will be a steward of God's grace through the coming year. With that

letter will come a commitment card that will provide you with the opportunity to establish your financial commitment for the year, but also encouraging you to make resolutions about how you will grow as a steward of your own being. Will you commit to reading scripture, service in the community, working to end racism and poverty, making our congregation more vital and relevant in our community?

Each week you will hear from people of faith how they understand this call to be faithful stewards of God's grace. On Sunday, February 14th, we will dedicate the commitments made by the people of the church, consecrating them for the work of sharing God's grace.

We look forward to working with you to strengthen the stewardship of this congregation and each of its members. May God continue to be gracious to us through this time. *Grace and Peace be with you,* Elder Sandra Austin and Pastor Paul



PRESBYTERIAN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
The National Archives of the PC(USA)

December 8, 2020

The Rev. Paul L. Rhebergen
Ewing-Governor Presbyterian Church
100 Scotch Rd
Ewing, NJ 08628-2507

Dear Sisters & Brothers in Christ,

On behalf of the Presbyterian Historical Society, thank you for your gift of \$200.00 received on 12/04/2020. We are so grateful for your support, especially during this time of great uncertainty when it is more important than ever. This is a period of profound change unlike any PHS has experienced since our founding in 1852.

As Presbyterians continue to engage with communities around the world, PHS has sustained its work intensely with the same care and attention that is our trademark. We have remained a beacon of hope, inspiration and connection at a time when we are all feeling anxious and isolated from family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors. We have shared stories about Presbyterian innovation in medicine and evangelism, featured new oral histories and videos from our collection, increased public awareness of our digital archives, *Pivot*, and continued to respond to researchers remotely.

In keeping with our core mission to collect, preserve and share the stories of the American Presbyterian experience, we've launched a new initiative collecting 2020 Easter sermons and materials from our churches so we are able to capture this historical moment in time for future use—and inspiration.

None of this work would be possible without the support of people like you. Your gift will help us emerge from this challenging time resilient and strong.

We are truly grateful for your gift and we thank you.

Faithfully,

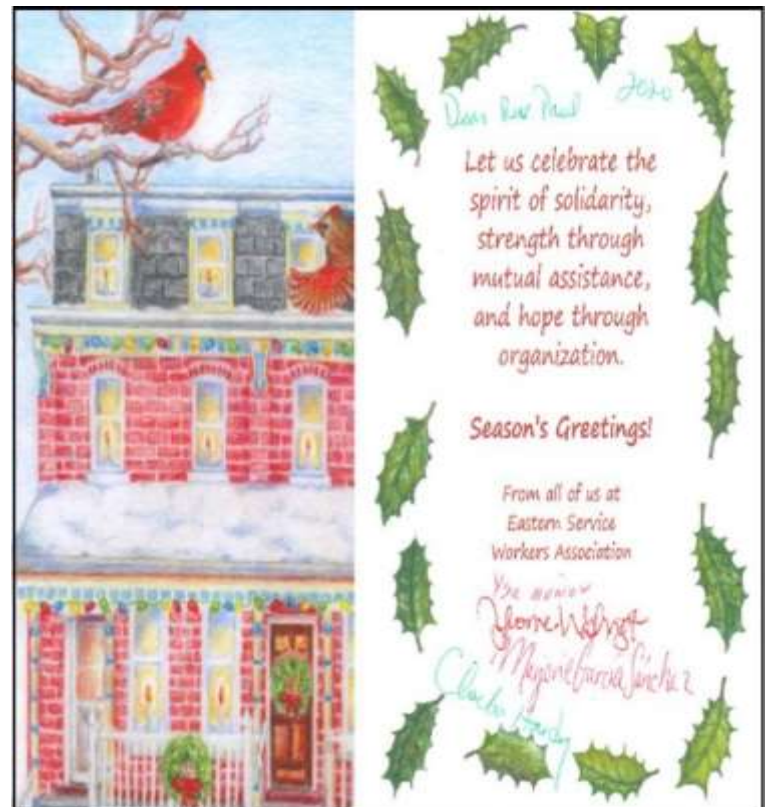
 Nancy J. Taylor
 Executive Director

We are very appreciative of your congregation's continuing support of PHS.

Your gift to the Presbyterian Historical Society is tax-deductible to the extent that current law permits. No goods or services were received in exchange for this contribution.

425 Lombard Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147-2566
215.627.1852

Office of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
www.history.pcusa.org





Brothers and sisters of the Ewing -Covenant Presbyterian Church,

It is with great sadness that we share this news with you. We are reminded by the Apostle Paul that when one among us suffers, we all suffer. May the day come when we shall also celebrate with all. May our prayers be with the people of the Martin Luther King Presbyterian Church, and may our determination be that our history of racism, and all the darkness it brings surrender to the light of Christ's love.

Pastor Paul _____

Dear Friends,

I write with a deeply troubled heart to let you know that early this morning fire caused heavy damage to the Martin Luther King Community Presbyterian Church in Springfield MA, the only African American church within the Presbytery of Southern New England. No one was hurt, but the church is unusable. The Springfield Arson and Bomb Squad, the State Police Arson and Bomb Squad, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, and the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms are investigating the fire. Clearly, there is a question of arson. When a reporter asked why the FBI was involved, an official said that the church fire happened at night and therefore has to be treated as a hate crime.

Lisa Baker, Synod Commission member representing the Presbytery of Southern New England, is a member of this church. She is grateful that given the pandemic the church has been worshipping and doing its community work online and will continue to do so. Her voice was filled with resilience and with faith that the church community will pull through this. General Presbyter, Rev. Shannan

Vance Ocampo, left her home in Albany to drive to the church and be with the church community. She reported that Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has already been contacted. Shannan promised to stay in touch with information about the investigation and about the church.

The mere fact that there is even a question of arson reminds us of a long history of racism that drives angry White people to burn Black churches that are sanctuaries and sacred spaces where Black people have gathered to worship God and to hold together as a community. It compels us as Christians to profess and live into the fundamental requirement to be our sisters' and brothers' keepers in this time of sorrow and their time of need. It compels us to search our souls to determine what we can do to help bring about racial justice within our church and within the land.

In closing, let me say to the Pastor and members of Martin Luther King Community Presbyterian Church, stand resolute. Isaiah 41:10 tells us, "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Blessings on you,

Rev. Nancy Talbot
Acting Synod Leader
Synod Stated Clerk



Late afternoon Friday, December 18th –members of the congregation drove to the homes of seven families to sing with their hearts and their voices the Carols of Christmas.



Deacon's Christmas Flower Donations

Gifts were offered in memory of the following:

Jane & Larry Kidder – **for Bill & Peggy Micklewright and Bill & Beverly Kidder**

Edith Multop – **for Graham Wilson & Lynn Multop Caruso**

The Perelli & Walsh Families – **for Our loved Ones**

Thank you for your thoughtfulness

Loving God with all your mind



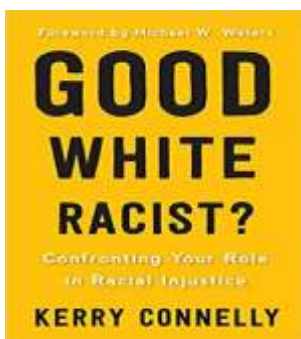
“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all you mind” and “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ~Luke 10:27

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” ~Micah 6:8

How are you loving God with your whole mind? How are you acting justly and loving mercy as a means of worship?

One way would be to join your church family in seeking to understand how we can be faithful stewards and witnesses of God's love for all people. In recent months, we have become increasingly aware of the injustice and oppression experienced by many of our brothers and sisters. Let's learn together!



Please join the Adult Ed discussions each **Sunday afternoon at 1:00 pm** via Zoom. We will meet weekly beginning January 4. Please prepare for the first session by reading the introduction and the first three chapters. If you need a copy of the book, please contact the church office or Pam Hoffman at 609-883-3772. A donation of \$10 is suggested (not required).

- What is our role in dismantling these evil practices?
- How can we work together so that we, and our society, act justly and with mercy as we walk with our God as we bring forth the epiphany light into our world?
- How is God calling you (and us) to respond?

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81923102879>

Meeting ID: 819 2310 2879 +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

STAR GIFTS - STAR WORDS

It has been a tradition to mark Epiphany with the giving out of Star Gifts to the whole congregation. This simple Bethlehem star reminds us of the gift all have received through the Christ's coming into the world. The word that was printed on the Star was a gift to be received for the coming year, a gift for you to think about, or ponder as Mary did, of what significance this word might have for your life. Many of you have found that the Star Word you randomly picked has had particular meaning in the year that followed. Some joked that the word picked would have been appropriate for their spouse, and then they realized why it was theirs.

We will not be able to pass the baskets for you to randomly pick your Star Gift this year, but we still want to continue to provide you with a Star Gift to ponder. With this newsletter you will receive a page of Bethlehem stars. We encourage you to use them to make stars on the brightest colored paper you can find, perhaps some of that unused Christmas wrapping paper. Make enough stars for each of the words listed below and write or paste one of the words to each star. Perhaps think about which Star Word you would like to receive, and which you would wish not to pick. Make sure you have made enough for your whole household. Then place them in a basket, a hat, a pot, whatever is available for you to use for a blind draw.

Once you have drawn your star, we invite you post it somewhere that you will encounter it each day. Hold it before you and let it speak to you over the months ahead. Share with one another what your word is, and what it has taught you. As we celebrate Christmas at the end of 2021, and look forward to Epiphany in 2022, Pastor Paul will invite us to share with the whole congregation how your Star Gift affected your life. Make as many stars as you wish to share with others, expanding the brightness of the Light that has come into the world.

Here are the Words and the Stars!

INSPIRE

BELIEF

NURTURE

LOVE

JOY

PEACE

FORBEARANCE

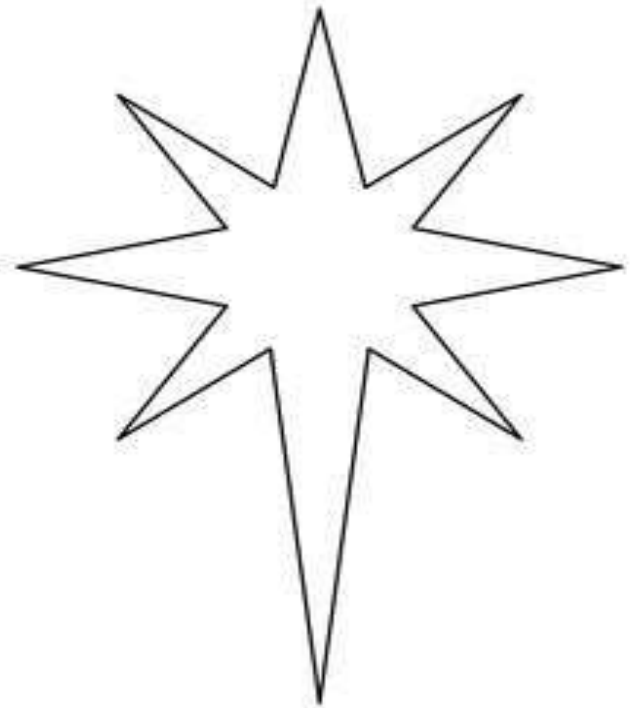
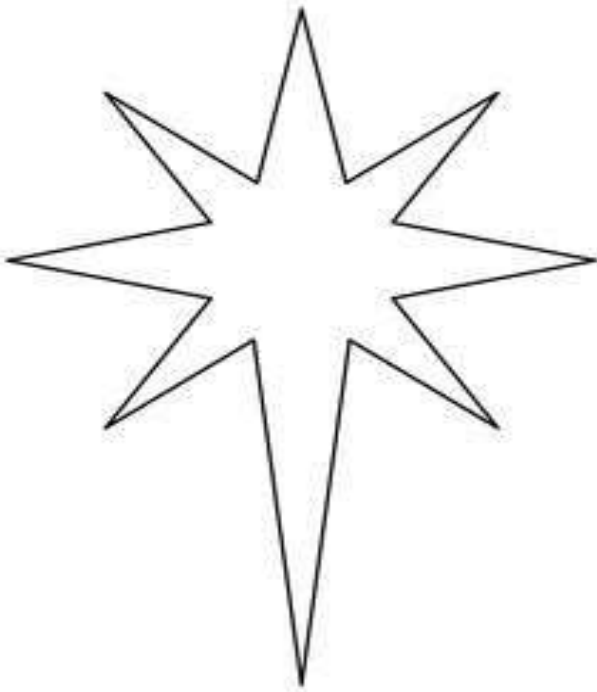
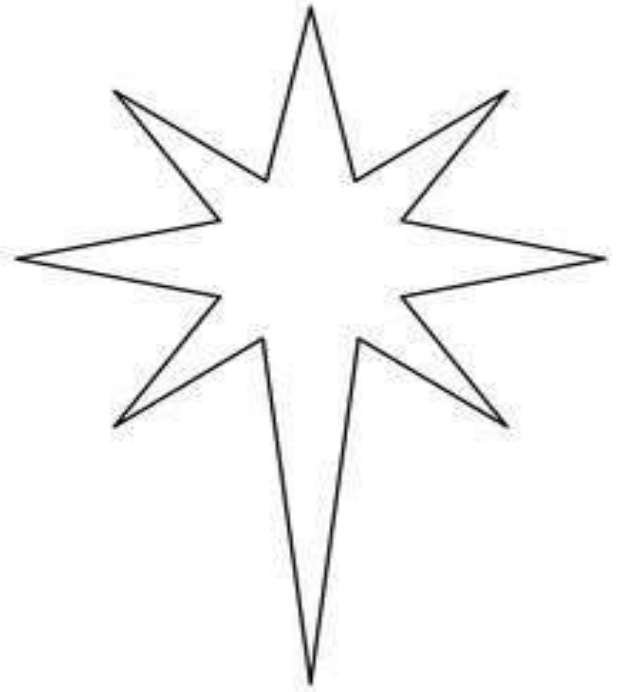
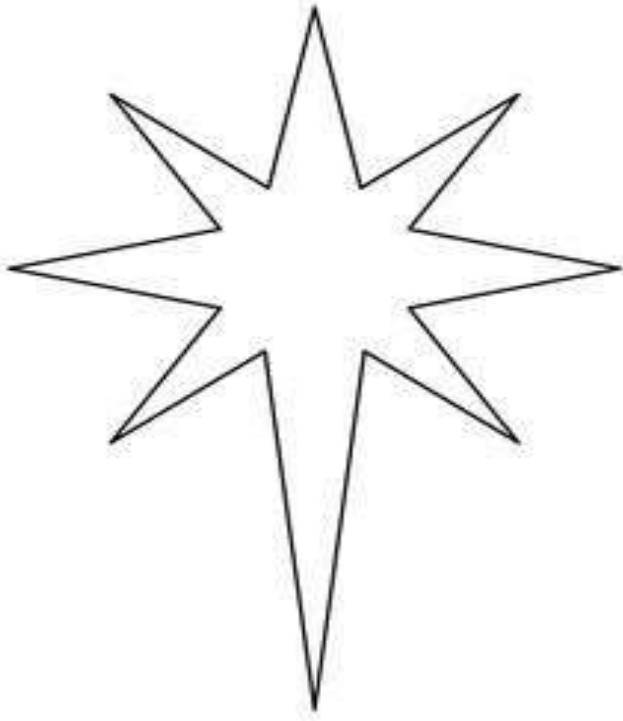
KINDNESS

GOODNESS

FAITHFULNESS

GENTLENESS

SELF-CONTROL





2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 <u>Zoom Webinars</u> Worship 10am Bible Study 9am	4 Adult Ed. 1:00PM	5 Pastor Ann's 10am Fellowship/ Prayers Zoom Webinar	6 Supper Conversation with Pastor Paul 7:00PM Zoom Webinar	7 Pastor Ann's Evening Conversation 7pm Zoom Webinar	8	9
10 <u>Zoom Webinars</u> Worship 10am Bible Study 9am Baptism of the Lord	11 Adult Ed. 1:00PM	12 Pastor Ann's 10am Prayers/ Fellowship Zoom Webinar Deacons Meeting	13 Supper Conversation with Pastor Paul 7:00PM Zoom Webinar	14 Pastor Ann's Evening Conversation 7pm Zoom Webinar	15	16
17 <u>Zoom Webinars</u> Worship 10am Bible Study 9am	18 Adult Ed. 1:00PM Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.	19 Pastor Ann's 10am Prayers/ Fellowship Zoom Webinar Session Meeting	20 Supper Conversation with Pastor Paul 7:00PM Zoom Webinar	21 Pastor Ann's Evening Conversation 7pm Zoom Webinar	22	23
24 <u>Zoom Webinars</u> Worship 10am Bible Study 9am	25 Adult Ed. 1:00PM	26 Pastor Ann's 10am Fellowship/ Prayers Zoom Webinar	27 Supper Conversation with Pastor Paul 7:00PM Zoom Webinar	28 Pastor Ann's Evening Conversation 7pm Zoom Webinar	29	30
31 <u>Zoom Webinars</u> Worship 10am Bible Study 9am						

Please refer to the Worshiping schedule portion of this Newsletter in the above pages for all zoom and phone in connections.