December 2023

Volume 33, Issue 12

THE GOOD NEWSLETTER

of New Jerusalem Lutheran Church 27 Lyons Road, Fleetwood, PA 19522 Ruth F. Doty, Pastor E-MAIL: <u>njelchurch@windstream.net</u> WEBSITE: <u>https://NewJerusalemLutheran.weebly.com</u> OFFICE PHONE: 610.682.6064 SECRETARY HOURS:

Monday 7:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m., Wednesday 7:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. (in-office hours from 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.), Thursday 2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.



THE MISSION OF NEW JERUSALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH:

We are a group of people who gather together in friendship and love to worship God, to spread God's Word, and to care for God's people.



Like a thief in the night.

Concerning the times and the season, brothers and sisters, ... you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ... Therefore let us keep awake and be sober. ... And put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ... Therefore encourage one another and build each other up. -1 Thessalonians 5:1, NRSV

But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the **night** the **thief** was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. – Matthew 24:43, English Standard Version

Friends in Jesus,

What do you think of when you hear those words, "Like a thief in the night?"

I assume you, like I, am afraid of thieves. I am afraid of what they might take – not just money but other things that are precious to me. I am also afraid of what else they might do, that they might hurt me or someone else who might be present. So, Paul, and you, too, Jesus, when you talk about coming like a thief in the night, you've got my attention!

Growing up in New York City, we always locked our cars and the doors to our houses. Despite that habit, a number of years ago when I was visiting high school friends, my overnight bag was stolen from my car. That made me mad! The clothes that were gone didn't matter that much. What I really missed was the high school yearbook and the school pendant I'd brought along. So, mention thief, even if it's not in the night, and I not only pay attention, I feel mad. Don't take my stuff, especially things that wouldn't mean a thing to you!

Yet when Paul and Jesus use this analogy, saying "the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night," they mean it as encouraging, as hopeful, for they see it as a time when God will intervene decisively for judgment and/or salvation. It's seen as a time when God will reveal that God rules over human powers and existence. When it's used in the New Testament, it usually points to Christ's final victory. With that in mind, both Paul and Jesus are saying that we don't know when Jesus will come in that final victory, and it will be crystal clear to all creation that God really does rule. This understanding *does* engender hope and encourages us to keep on keeping on following Jesus.

Take a breath.

Recently I ran across some poetry by Thom Shuman, a pastor who has a talent for making me think in different ways. You know how during Advent our prayers are filled with "come, Lord Jesus." Well in one poem Thom says in essence, "Come as a thief, Jesus, and steal from me some of things that I hold on to." Consider these words:

Come, Shoplifter of our foolishness, to steal away our arrogant pride so that we learn to trust completely in God

come Mugger of our moments, to take away our selfishness so that we may notice the strugglers around us

come Cat Burglar of our souls, to tiptoe away with our fears so that we may surround others with hope and grace

come, Pickpocket of our hearts, to relieve us of our prejudices so that we may see strangers as beloved siblings

come, Thief in the night to steal us away from death's uncrackable safe so that we may become gifts to those whose lives are empty.

Can you relate to any of Thom's thoughts?

Which leaves us with the questions: What would you/we actually hope Jesus would steal from you/us? What would be harder to give up? If Jesus actually took — *completely* took away — any of these things would you/we feel a bit lost without them, somewhat annoyed, even mad?

Even so, come Lord Jesus. Come!

May the preparations of this Advent season help us be open to the soul cleaning that will enable us to truly rejoice that God has come to us in that tiny baby, that God has come to join us and convince us that God knows what it is like to be us, that God will never leave nor forsake us, and that the day *is* coming when it will be crystal clear to everyone that God does rule, rules not only in power but in love.

Pastor Ruth

Thom M Shuman, <u>In this season of waiting</u>. Pp. 14-15. Copyright @ Thom M. Shuman 2023. First published 2023 by Wild Goose Publications, Suite 9, Fairfield, 1048 Govan Road, Glasgow G514XS. Scotland; A division of the Iona Community Trading CIC. Used with permission.

NEWS & EVENTS at New Jerusalem and in the community

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The following items were covered at our Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 12:

- Denny Beshore, Finance Committee Chairperson, presented the 2024 Proposed Budget which had been approved by Church Council at their October meeting.
- The 2024 Proposed Budget was approved by the congregation.
- The congregation voted to proceed with preparing to divest the congregation of its building and land.
- Deacon Kat Tigerman shared information about the 6261 Ministry. Council members from Trinity, Topton, New Jerusalem, St. Paul's, Mertztown, Hope, Bowers, and Grace, Topton, have already had one meeting together to consider this.

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The following discussions took place and decisions made at our council meeting on Monday, November 13:

- A vote was made to appoint Cheryl Wiltrout and Gladys Kline to serve on council until the next congregational meeting, at which time the congregation will vote on for new council members.
- Plans to hold an open house at New Jerusalem for people and organizations who might have an interest in the future of the building, including potential buyers, were discussed. Target date for this is for February. In order to prepare for this, workdays for cleaning and tidying up the building will be scheduled in January, starting on January 6. We will also conduct an inventory of all of the church's possessions.
- New Jerusalem received \$700.00 for its participation in the sale of french fries at the Oley Fair.
- Stewardship Committee will apply for a Thrivent Grant to supplement donations to the Backpack Buddies Program at the Brandywine Heights schools. Collection of these items will occur in January.

Our next council meeting will be held on **Monday**, **December 11, at 7:00 p.m.**

DECEMBER SIGN-UP SHEETS

We are in need of Altar Flower sponsors for Sunday, December 3, 10, and 31; Bulletin sponsors for Sunday, December 10, 17, and 31; a Sanctuary Candle sponsor; an Altar Guild volunteer; and a Communion Bread sponsor and Communion Set-up volunteer for Sunday, December 24. Please sign up if you are able to sponsor or volunteer for any of these items.

CHRISTMAS DECORATING

We will be decorating the church for Advent and Christmas on **Friday, December 1, at 7:00 p.m.** Many hands and creative thoughts not only get the project done but add to the fun.

CHRISTMAS AND GOSPEL CONCERT

A Christmas and Southern Gospel Concert featuring The Hyssongs at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 117 East Arch Street, Fleetwood on **Saturday, December 2 at 6:00 p.m.** (doors open at 5:00 p.m.) Tickets -\$15 in advance, \$18 at the door, Children 5-12 \$5. To purchase tickets, call 610-657-8727 or 610-944-9820.

GIFTS FOR CHILDREN THROUGH FRIEND, INC.

We will again be purchasing clothing for children through Friend, Inc.'s Christmas Cheer Program. If you would like to participate, please contact Cheryl Wiltrout by November 1st (or when you receive your newsletter). You will be given the name of a child, including the gender, age, and size. After you shop, return the gift to church along with a box, wrapping paper, and the name given to you. All clothing items must be returned to the church by **Sunday**, **December 3rd**. After church that day they will be delivered to Friend, Inc. Thank you!

ST. PAUL'S CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS

PROGRAM: Silent Night – A Christmas Eve With Martin Luther on Sunday, December 10, at 7:00 p.m.

BIBLE STUDY

Our Monday morning Bible Study will be held on Monday, December 4, 11, and 18, at 1:00 p.m. PLEASE NOTE the new time change is now 1:00 p.m. There will be no Bible Study on Monday, December 25.

COLORING GROUP

The Coloring Group will be meeting on **Thursday**, **December 7, at 10:00 a.m.** If you can't join us, pages can be sent to you. If interested, contact Phyllis Fenstermacher at 610.682.2423 or Diane Keller at 610.682.4152.

HELPING HARVEST/TOPTON MOBILE MARKET

The Helping Harvest food distribution will take place on **Tuesday, December 12, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** at the Brandywine Heights MS/IS.

COMPASSIONATE CRAFTERS

Want to crochet, knit, or sew to God's glory? Join Trinity's Compassionate Crafters. Meetings take place on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 9:30-11:00 a.m. in the Sunday School room at Trinity Lutheran Church, Topton. We are in desperate need of sewers! We are working on quilts for Lutheran World Relief. Our next meetings will be held on **Thursday, December 14 and 28**.

JAMES MEN'S MINISTRY (JMM)

Breakfast gatherings start at 8:00 a.m. on the third Saturday of each month. Their next meeting will be held **Saturday, December 16**, at Trinity Lutheran Church, Topton.

JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

The deadline for the January newsletter is **Sunday, December 17**. Please have all articles and announcements submitted to the church office by this date. Thank you!

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES

Our Christmas Eve morning worship service will be held on Sunday, December 24, at 10:15 a.m. and our Christmas Eve Candlelight worship service will be held at 5:00 p.m. Holy Communion will be celebrated during the evening service.

COME, EMMANUEL: Devotions for Advent and Christmas 2023-2024



This devotional is now available for pick up on the table in the narthex. Explore the Advent season and celebrate the joy of the twelve days of Christmas and the day of Epiphany. *Come*, *Emmanuel* includes daily devotions for the first Sunday of Advent (December 3, 2023)

through Epiphany (January 6, 2024). In addition to devotions, the book offers household blessings and prayers to enrich your preparations and celebrations. In *Come, Emmanuel* we join Christians around the world, past and present, in the Advent tradition of reflecting on brief prayers known as the "O Antiphons." Christians have used the O Antiphons since the eighth century or perhaps even longer. Emmanuel came that first Christmas. Emmanuel comes to us today. Emmanuel will come again. Rejoice and share the good news! If you would like one sent to you, please call the church office.

ELCA GOOD GIFTS

Once again members of New Jerusalem will be decorating the tree in our narthex with pigs and goats, cows and chicks, honeybees, fish, seedlings, mosquito nets and vaccinations. Yes, it's time to pick things out of the ELCA GOOD GIFTS catalogue and donate items for our siblings around the world. One thing is for certain, whatever you pick out will be just the right gift for the ones who receive it.

Catalogues are available on the table in the narthex. Once you've chosen an item, choose an ornament representing it, fill out your own name or the name of the person you are honoring on the back and hang it on the tree. You can also call or email us with the information, and we will fill it out for you. Cards are available to send to whomever you want to honor.

Bee sure to check out the tree and see what *good gifts* are on it.





- 3 Sheila Gehman
- 5 Sarah Bailey
- 6 Pastor Ruth Doty
- 6 Amanda Herman
- 6 Vikie Seyfert
- 10 Dawn Wengert
- 11 Jennifer Musser
- 15 Randall Cleaver
- 15 Jared Keiser
- 16 Elwood Cleaver, Jr.
- 21 Clinton Allen
- 22 David Moyer
- 26 Marleise Matz
- 31 David Wartzenluft



2 Rodney and Diane Keller (51 years)

while we sleep, you tiptoe in, gathering up all our foolish frailties, taking them back to your workshop, where you transform them into gifts of grace, returning them before we awake.

Thom M. Shuman. <u>In this season of waiting</u>. Pp. 14-15. Copyright @ Thom M. Shuman 2023. First published 2023 by Wild Goose Publications, Suite 9, Fairfield, 1048 Govan Road, Glasgow G51 4XS. Scotland; a division of the Iona Community Trading CIC. Used with permission.

New Jerusalem Lutheran Church Statement of Accounts

October 31, 2023

Asset Accounts		Balance			
Memorial		\$ 18,778.88			
Thrivent		10,749.32			
Checking		5,329.71			
Youth		412.85			
Fidelity		19,547.41			
Cash Reserve		13,428.42			
Mission Investment Fund		11,701.67			
Local Care		2,231.27			
	Total:	<u>\$82,179.53</u>			
Total Balance of Asset Accounts					
from October 31, 2022	9	5 121,564.94			

October 2023 – 'Actual' vs. 'Required' Income

Octobel	<u>2023</u> Actu	iai vs. Kcy	incu meome
	Income		
Income	Required	Actual	
Used For:	Per Month	Income	Difference
Operating	\$ 9,860.00	\$ 5,094.75	\$ (4,765.25)
Expenses			
_			

Income Required per Month — Based on 2023 Budget Passed by Congregation Less Budgeted Benevolence Contribution

ADVENT MEANINGS

During Advent, which begins this year on December 3, many churches and families use wreaths to symbolize watchfulness and increasing joy as Christmas approaches. Colors for the candles vary, with some traditions using blue (for hope or creation) and others preferring purple (for royalty, humility or penitence).

The four candles that each represent a week in Advent also signify hope, peace, joy and love. (The third candle is often pink.) In the center is the white Christ candle, representing Jesus as the light of the world. That candle is lit on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

The round, green Advent wreath has special meaning of its own. It symbolizes eternal life and the unending love of God, who sent his only Son to earth to die in our place.



Altar Flower Sponsors:

December 3 – sponsor needed December 10 – sponsor needed December 17 – Dale Schwoyer December 24 – Kenneth Keck December 31 – sponsor needed

Bulletin Sponsors:

December 3 – Gladys Kline December 10 – *sponsor needed* December 17 – *sponsor needed* December 24 – Cheryl Wiltrout December 31 – *sponsor needed*

Sanctuary Candle Sponsor: sponsor needed

<u>Altar Guild Volunteer(s)</u>: Sara Jane Beshore (w/help from others)

Communion Bread Sponsor:

December 3 – Faye Dey December 24 – Sara Jane Beshore

Communion Set-up Volunteer:

December 3 – Faye Dey December 24 – Sara Jane Beshore

Readers:

December 3 – Kenneth Keck December 10 – Dale Schwoyer December 17 – Cindy Rissmiller December 24 – Sara Jane Beshore December 31 – Kenneth Keck

<u>Councilperson(s) for the Month</u>: Kenneth Keck





PRAYERS FOR AWARENESS OF GOD'S PRESENCE for Those with Limited Mobility or in Care Facilities: Anna Angstadt, Myles Angstadt, Erma Guinther, Shirley Hertzog, Gabriele Sanders, and Dorothy Turner.

PRAYERS FOR HEALING AND SUPPORT: Members: Holly Allen, Virginia Guinther, Lucille Jones, Brian Keller, Diane Keller, Forrest Merkel, Grace Miller, Linda Moyer, Lloyd Moyer, and Horace Rothermel.

Friends of the congregation: Charlie Ackerman, Brad Auge, Sr., Brad Auge, Jr., Steve Beck, Sharon Bennett, Jason Beshore, Darlene Bogert, Earl Derr, John Drumheller, Jennifer Engle, Alice Epler, Dawson Freed (military), Karen Gossert, Shirley Hahn, Nancy Harnish, Debra Kenny, Kelly Kline, The Koontz Family, Cayden Kresge, Catherine Lenio, Julia Lombardo, Emma Loose, Joe M., Vivian Reist, Arlan Schwoyer, Patricia Sigfried, Jean Smith, Shawn Spatz, Carol Spiegelmeyer, Michael Stevens, Robert Taylor, Johnathan Wagner, Tim Walck, Kirsten Warmkessel, Leticia Weaver, Richard Weller, Althea Young, Becky, Dawn, Jason, Kim, Lynn, Pat, Sam, and Tim.

OTHER PRAYER CONCERNS: We pray for: peace in the world, and particularly in the Ukraine and eastern Europe; all seeking to respond responsibly to COVID-19, especially healthcare workers; those recovering from and responding to disasters, especially those in Puerto Rico; migrants and refugees; for our nation, including our president, congress, judicial system, and leaders of our communities; an end to the many ways prejudice and racism maintain inequality between people and injustice; an end to threats between nations; peace in the world; our military personnel serving around the world.

LONG-TERM PRAYER LIST: Gary DeWees, Don Gajewski, Erma Gajewski, Lorelai Gold, Amanda Herman, Johnson-Agiri Family, Mary Kring, Leilani Rodriquez, Andrew S., Otis Spiegelmeyer, Tierney Schmeer, Donna Schwoyer, Lesley Wegman, and Linda Wegman.



Our Brandywine Food Pantry is always in need of monetary donations as well as non-perishable food items, personal care items, paper products, and/or household supplies, including the following:

Breakfast: cereal, oatmeal (regular and instant), pancake mix, pancake syrup

Canned items: (especially those with meat) Beef stew, chicken a la king, chicken breast, chili, ham, Spam, soups (all kinds), tuna

Meals (meat/tuna needed): Hamburger Helper, Tuna Helper, sloppy joe sauce

Microwave/Canned meals: Chef Boyardee meals (beefaroni, beef ravioli, lasagna, spaghetti)

Canned vegetables: beans (all kinds), carrots, tomatoes (diced and stewed)

Canned fruit: applesauce, fruit cup, mandarin oranges, sliced peaches, pears, pi, inclneapples, etc.

Dry Goods: rice (preferably in boxes), noodles, pasta (all kinds), Ramen noodles, potatoes (mashed), potatoes (scalloped)

Condiments: ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard, salad dressing

Beverages: apple juice, grape juice, cranberry raspberry juice, coffee (regular), hot chocolate, tea, dry milk

Extras: jelly, marshmallow creme, peanut butter

Baking items: brownie mix, cake mixes (boxes), cooking oil, evaporated milk, flour, sugar

Snacks: cookies, crackers, snacks (individual packs)

Gluten free and/or sugar free items

Paper products: paper towels, tissues, toilet tissue

Personal care items: bar soap, hand soap, shampoo, shower gel, hairbrushes, combs, individually-wrapped toothbrushes, toothpaste, etc.

Cleaning and disinfecting products: dish soap, laundry detergent, disinfectant products, etc.)

Donations can be brought to church or directly to the food pantry at St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 122 W. Franklin Street, Topton, PA 19562. Drop off hours are: the last three Mondays of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.; the first three Tuesdays of each month, and the third Thursday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (Come to the back door of St. Peter's) Please feel free to contact the pantry at 484-861-7117 or <u>brandywinefoodpantry@gmail.com</u>. Checks made out to Brandywine Food Pantry can be mailed to the above address.

Come,

God of our memories, to remind us of who we are and what we are called to be in this life

come

God who whispers in our souls, to sing over and over that we are still your Beloved

come

God of our mountaintops, that your grace warms us in the winter of our lives

come

God who sends mentors so we can find our way back to your heart

come

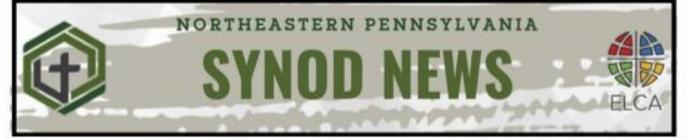
God of stumblers to pick us up when we trip over our untied laces of faith

come

God of the journey, so we may help others to remember what this season of holiness truly means.

Come. . . .

Thom M Shuman. <u>In this season of waiting</u>. Pp. 14-15. Copyright @ Thom M. Shuman 2023. First published 2023 by Wild Goose Publications, Suite 9, Fairfield, 1048 Govan Road Glasgow G51 4XS. Scotland; a division of the Iona Community Trading CIC. Used with permission.



Young Adult in Global Mission : A Year in Senegal Asalaa maalekum. May God's peace be upon you.

My name is Quentin Bernhard. I recently served with the ELCA program Young Adults in Global Mission—YAGM—in Senegal. My time with YAGM came to an end in July, and Senegal country cohort peers and I returned to the United States. We are among the 23 young adults from the 2022-2023 year who served in accompaniment in four different country programs.

I live in New Tripoli in Lehigh County, and I'm a member of New Life Lutheran Church in New Tripoli. Many individuals and congregations from our synod supported me in my YAGM year. Thank you for your support of my time in Senegal and for the opportunity to be in continuing relationship after my time abroad.

My coming to the United States, to the communities I grew up in in Pennsylvania, was also my leaving a community I grew in—a community I grew in as a Lutheran and as a young person, one I have good friends in. I lived in Yeumbeul Bene Baraque, in western Senegal, for ten months. I lived with a host family in a community. I saw friends every day, many when at my placement site. Connected with our partner organization Senegalese Lutheran Development Services—SLDS—I worked in a community center that serves the community in numerous ways, splitting my time between the library and the mutual fund credit union.

My friends and family in Senegal continue to send me voice messages, reminding me that I am also Maguette Ndiaye, my Senegalese name, and reminding me that we are still connected, even if connected in a different way now. Our relationships and our future—all of our future—is unknown to us. Our faith—and our trust in one another—can allow us to take steps and leaps in that future.

Quentin Bernhard

**FOR ALL ROSTERED LEADERS AND SYNOD AUTHORIZED LAY MINISTERS

FINDING HOLY FOC

FEBRUARY 6-7, 2024

PRESENTED BY:

www.elca.church/gathering

UNGER

God of Goodness, We give you praise for the ordinariness of Christmas - that the day comes the same as any other day. We give you praise that there is no sign in the heavens, and no bright star but the light of your presence in the ordinary birth of the child. We give you praise that

unobtrusively you are in the center of human affairs, involved in the struggle of life, and sharing human experience.

We give you praise that out of compassion you take our part, and open to us a new way of life. We pray that this day we shall be able to see its

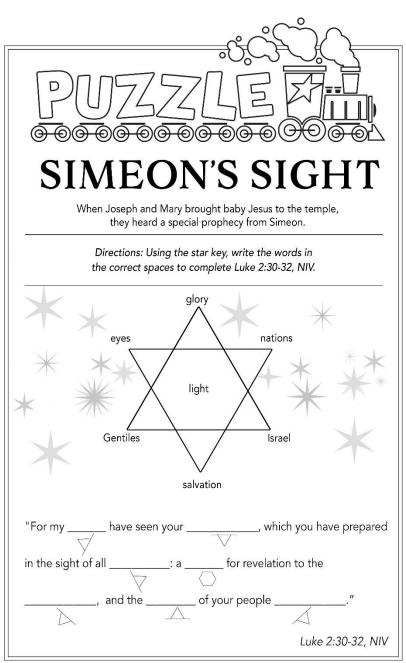
> true glory." – Caryl Micklem





DECEMBER 2023 ACTIVITIES





Answers: eyes, salvation, nations, light, Gentiles, glory, Israel

DECEMBER 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 7:00pm-Christmas Decorating for Advent 7:00pm-Celebrate Recovery, Redeemer BFC, Topton	2
3 <u>First Sunday of Advent</u> 10:15am-Worship with Holy Communion -Fellowship	4 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 1:00pm-Bible Study	5	6 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	7 10:00am-Coloring Group	8 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 7:00pm-Celebrate Recovery, Redeemer BFC, Topton	9
10 <u>Second Sunday of Advent</u> 10:15am-Worship 7:00pm-Children's Christmas Program, St. Paul's, Mertztown	11 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 1:00pm-Bible Study 7:00pm-Council Mtg.	12 11:00am-1:00pm-Helping Harvest Food Distribution at Brandywine Heights IS/MS	13 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	14 9:30-11:00am- Compassionate Crafters, Trinity Lutheran, Topton	15 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 7:00pm-Celebrate Recovery, Redeemer BFC, Topton	16 8:00am-James Men's Ministry Breakfast, Trinity Lutheran, Topton 5:00pm-A Christmas Party
17 <u>Third Sunday of Advent</u> 10:15am -Worship -Fellowship -Change decorations from Advent to Christmas	18 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 1:00pm-Bible Study	19	20 12:00pm-Fellowship Luncheon 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	21	22 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg. 7:00pm-Celebrate Recovery, Redeemer BFC, Topton	23
24 <u>Fourth Sunday of Advent</u> 10:15am -Worship <u>Nativity of Our Lord</u> 5:00pm -Christmas Eve Worship with Holy Communion <u>-Fellowship</u> 31 <u>First Sunday of Christmas</u> 10:15am -Worship	25 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	26	27 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	28 9:30-11:00am- Compassionate Crafters, Trinity Lutheran, Topton	29 12:45pm-1:45pm-AA Mtg.	30
NEW YEAR'S EVE	OFFICE CLOSED		d DA 10522 - Dhan			

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