

St. Mark United Methodist Church
550 Hwy. 72 By-Pass NW
Greenwood, SC 29649
<http://www.stmarkgreenwood.com>
Church Phone: 864.229.5416
Kids' World Phone: 864.227.2776

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Bypass Campus (BPC)



Rivers Street Campus (RSC)



The Coronaca Campus (TCC)

St. Mark United Methodist Church

www.stmarkgreenwood.com

Volume 17 Issue 11

December 2023

Christmas Surprise Boxes

Create and Donate for local children!

Fill a shoebox or similar sized box with surprises and label your box middle school or elementary school, girl or boy. Drop it off at any campus the month of December.

Check social media or the newsletter for a list of suggested items.



Sunday, December 3

Hanging of the Greens service 8:45 AM and 11:15 AM - Rivers Street

Hanging of the Greens service 10:00 AM - Coronaca

Hanging of the Greens service 7:00 PM - Bypass

Saturday, December 9

Children's Christmas Pageant - 5:30 PM Rivers Street

Thursday, December 14

Blue Christmas Service of Healing and Hope from Grief - 7:00 PM Coronaca

Thursday, December 21

Outdoor Candlelight Service - 7:00 PM Coronaca

Sunday, December 24

Christmas Eve worship service - 5:00 PM Rivers Street

Christmas Eve worship service - 7:00 PM Bypass

Advent at St. Mark UMC



Jason's Journal

*“O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God
appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O
Israel.”*
O Come, O Come Emmanuel UMH #211

The Holy season of Advent, which leads us to the season of Christmas, is here. I do not know about you, but the season of Advent always fills my mind, heart, and life with great anticipation and hope. Every season of Advent, I spend time reflecting on the meaning of this holy season. I typically use this season as a time of much soul searching and intense meditation of the hopefulness this season brings.

The season of Advent is made up of four weeks, including Sundays. The word *Advent* is derived from the Latin *adventus*, which means “coming.” The entire season of Advent boldly proclaims the coming of Jesus. We spend this season anticipating our celebrating again the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day. However, until we reach Christmas Day, we are reminded that Jesus comes to us daily and continuously through the Word and the Spirit. Finally, we are reminded in this holy season of the hope and anticipation Jesus’ church has, as we await His return in final victory. With these ways that Jesus promises to come to us, we are called to a time of soul searching and preparation for Jesus’ coming and arrival to His church.

Above, is the first verse of one of my favorite Advent hymns, *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*. The powerful words of this hymn declare the plea of God’s people for rescue and hope during dark and trying times. With every refrain for every verse, the pleas turn to rejoicing of the promised hope that is on its way for God’s people - the hope we await is none other than Jesus. *Emmanuel* (God is with us) is here and is coming to us daily to our rescue. The present and anticipated hope we have in Jesus coming to us reminds me of a passage of scripture from Romans, *“What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?”*

As we journey together this Advent season, it is my hope each Sunday that we will gain a clearer realization of the hope we have in Jesus. We will hear about the hope, love, joy, and peace of Jesus as we light the candles of the Advent wreath each week. In addition at all three campuses, we will begin our Advent and Christmas sermon series, *The Thrill of Hope...A Weary World Rejoices*. I pray the anticipation and hope of Advent fills all of our minds, hearts, and lives this season.



Worship Attendance Year to Date Average	
As of November 26	
8:45 AM - BPC	81
8:45 AM - RSC	77
10:00 AM - TCC	36
11:00 AM - BPC	86
11:15 AM - RSC	109
8:45 Stream - BPC	41
10:00 Stream - TCC	16
11:15 Stream - RSC	24
Worship Attendance	460
Sunday School Attendance	111

KREW and EPIC Attendance School Year Average	
As of November 26, 2023	
KREW	68
EPIC	85
HSX	20

PLEASE NOTE! All offerings must be in the church office by December 31 or must be postmarked by December 31, 2023, to qualify for 2023 giving on your December statement.

The next copy of *The Witness*, the church’s monthly newsletter, will be emailed out Thursday, December 28. **Deadline to submit information for the newsletter is Monday, December 18.**

Copies of the December Birthdays list, December Anniversaries list, and Upper Rooms for November/December are located at the narthex/welcome area at each campus.

The Pastors and congregation extend Christian sympathy to the following members of our church family.

- Connie Smith and her family on the death of her mother, Betty Stewart, on November 14.
- Kim Goodman and her family on the death on her mother, Betty Stewart, on November 14.
- Jeannie Price and her family on the death of her mother, Mayme Holland, on November 22.
- Jamie Price and his family on the death of his grandmother, Mayme Holland, on November 22.



Thank you to everyone who help in setting up, cleaning up, and providing food for the One Church/Three Campuses Fellowship Lunch. Everyone had a great time.

The Witness



Bypass Campus (BPC)



Rivers Street Campus (RSC)

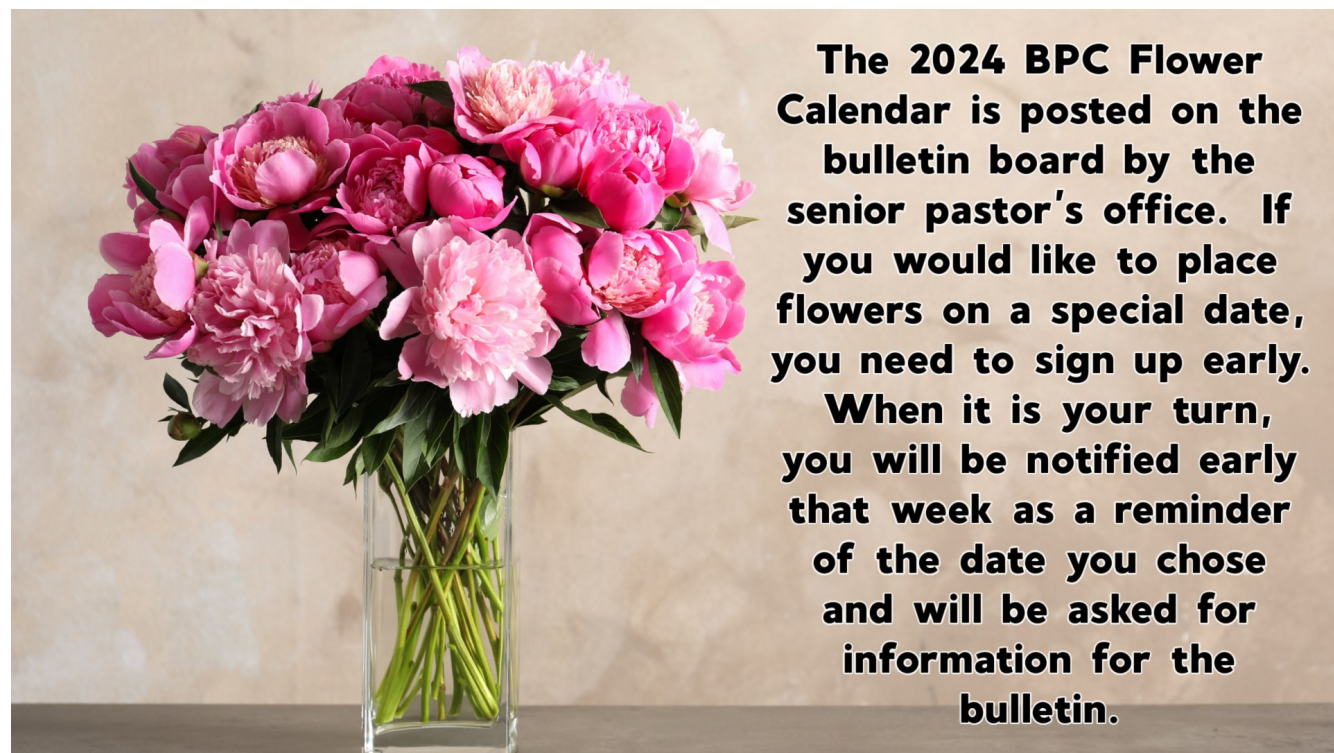


The Coronaca Campus (TCC)

Beginning with the January 2024 edition, *The Witness* will be moving to an all digital format. If you would like to continue receiving our newsletter by email, please contact stmarkgreenwood@gmail.com.

The Witness will also continue to be available on our website, www.stmarkgreenwood.com.

If you are receiving this newsletter by mail, you have not submitted an email address to stmarkgreenwood@gmail.com. The newsletter will only be sent by email starting December 28, 2023. Printed copies of the newsletter will be available at each campus.



The 2024 BPC Flower Calendar is posted on the bulletin board by the senior pastor's office. If you would like to place flowers on a special date, you need to sign up early. When it is your turn, you will be notified early that week as a reminder of the date you chose and will be asked for information for the bulletin.



Peace,
Pastor Joey

Greeting St. Mark Family,

Blue? Yes, blue as in the blues. As in "I am feeling blue." Not everyone is up and cheery for the Christmas holidays. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, living with cancer or some other dis-ease that puts a question mark over the future, and a number of other human situations make parties and joviality painful for many people in our congregations and communities. If you or someone you know feels blue this Christmas, I invite you to join me at The Coronaca Campus of St. Mark on Thursday, December 14, at 7:00 PM for a Blue Christmas Service of sharing, remembering, healing, and hope.





Hello St. Mark Family!

It is one of my favorite times of the year. Lights are up on the houses, Christmas music is playing in the stores, the air is crisp and cool - it's just a great time! As all the decorations go up and the plans are made for what is sure to be a busy time of the year, I can't help but stop and think that we need to remember to slow down this Advent season. We need to make sure we are taking time to rest, to remember what this season is all about. We have just finished a sermon series on how we prepare for the return of Christ. I think part of that preparation is making sure that we observe the season - that we see what is happening this season, that we see how God is moving. We must make sure that we don't get so tied up in the busyness of the season that we miss out on what God is doing. I am reminded of the Christmas story in Luke's gospel. After the birth of Jesus, the shepherds came to see him, and it says:

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Even the shepherds were busy this time of year. They were excited for the birth of Christ, but they were in a hurry, much like we are most of the time. Now, one part that always reminds me to slow down is verse 19. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. Mary took time to stop and reflect on what was being said to her, what had just happened, how what the angels had said to her had come true, everything. She took time to pause. After everything she had been through, traveling all that way, not having a room for them to stay in, sleeping in a barn, everything...she took time to pause.

So, are you taking time to pause? Are you taking time to slow down this Advent season and remember the reason for the season? I know it's easy to get caught up in the fast pace of the holidays. Earlier this week, the three pastors were sitting down looking over the calendar for December and everything we have going on in the church, and we realized very quickly that it's going to be a busy month. In all of that busyness, let's make sure we take time to pause and reflect. Let's make sure we take time to worship and praise. Let's make sure we take time to know how important this season is and how this season helps us to start new, fresh, refreshed, and ready for what the New Year will hold.

I hope you have a wonderful Christmas season filled with time of relaxation and time spent with family. Most of all I hope it's a season of renewal for yourself. From Jennifer, Jack, and myself, we hope you and your family have the Merriest of Christmases and the Happiest of New Years! We hope to see YOU at CHURCH! BRING A FRIEND!

Robby



Poinsettia Donations

Make a special donation
"In Honor Of" or "In
Memory Of" loved ones
or friends.

All donations will go to the
"Good Samaritan Fund" to
help those in need.

Order forms are available at
all campuses. The deadline is
December 18.



The St. Mark Women will be selling angels for the Angel Tree!

The sale will begin at the Bypass Campus
Hanging of the Greens reception and will
continue December 10th and 17th at all three
campuses.



All proceeds will help
to fund church needs.



The Church Office is
closed Monday,
December 25 and
Tuesday, December 26.

Merry
Christmas!





Thursday, December 7th
5:00 pm

All are invited to meet at the Coronaca Campus to carpool to Cold Springs Mennonite Church for **Walk Through Bethlehem**. We will gather at the Village Grill to eat and fellowship after.

Contact Matt Huntsberger
(matt.huntsberger@gmail.com)
if you plan to attend.



UNITED METHODIST MEN
LOW COUNTRY BOIL SUPPER

WED, DEC 13TH, 6:00 PM
RIVERS STREET CAMPUS

RSVP TO 229-5416 OR
OFFICE@STMARKGREENWOOD.COM
THERE IS NO COST TO ATTEND!

SPECIAL GUEST
SPEAKER: PASTOR
JOSHUA CHILES

CHILDCARE PROVIDED
UPON REQUEST



**Men's Community
Prayer Breakfast**

Friday, December 15, 6:30am
Rivers Street Campus of St. Mark UMC



Our guest speaker will be Frank Ebert. Frank is a member of St. Mark, and he has served for years in the youth ministry of our church, including Avodah and Salkehatchie.



DECEMBER PREACHING SCHEDULE AND SCRIPTURE

The Advent and Christmas Seasons are here. As we prepare our minds and hearts to begin these holy seasons in the life of the church, there are many opportunities for us to worship and celebrate together the hope of Jesus coming to all the world. During this season of Advent and Christmas, all three campuses will hear of the hope of Advent and Christmas in our upcoming sermon series, *The Thrill of Hope... A Weary World Rejoices*. It is my prayer that we all experience the amazing hope, love, joy, and peace of Jesus this month.

Rev. Jason Wilson

December 3 - First Sunday of Advent - Isaiah 64:1-9 The Thrill of Hope...A Weary World Rejoices: A Cry for Hope

- Rev. Jason Wilson at the Bypass campus 8:45 AM and 11:00 AM
- Rev. Joey Gambrell at the Coronaca campus 10:00 AM with a Hanging of the Greens service
- Rev. Robby Lybrand at the Rivers Street campus 8:45 AM and 11:15 AM a Hanging of the Greens service
- Hanging of the Greens service at the Bypass campus 7:00 PM

December 10 - Second Sunday of Advent - Mark 1:1-8 The Thrill of Hope...A Weary World Rejoices: John's Song of Hope

- Rev. Joey Gambrell at the Bypass campus 8:45 AM and 11:00 AM
- Rev. Robby Lybrand at the Coronaca campus 10:00 AM
- Rev. Jason Wilson at the Rivers Street campus 8:45 AM and 11:15 AM

December 17 - Blue Christmas Service of Healing and Hope from Grief

- Rev. Joey Gambrell at the Coronaca campus 7:00 PM

December 17 - Third Sunday of Advent - Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 The Thrill of Hope...A Weary World Rejoices: Hope Is On The

- Rev. Jason Wilson at the Bypass campus 8:45 AM and 11:00 AM
- Rev. Joey Gambrell at the Coronaca campus 10:00 AM
- Rev. Robby Lybrand at the Rivers Street campus 8:45 AM and 11:15 AM

December 21 - Candlelight Christmas Service at the Coronaca Campus

- Fellowship begins at 6:00 PM with the service beginning at 7:00 PM and a Christmas mediation given by Rev. Joey Gambrell

December 24 - Fourth Sunday of Advent - Luke 1:26-39 The Thrill of Hope...A Weary World Rejoices: The Angel's Hopeful Song

- Rev. Jason Wilson at the Bypass campus 8:45 AM and 11:00 AM
- Rev. Joey Gambrell at the Coronaca campus 10:00 AM
- Rev. Robby Lybrand at the Rivers Street campus 8:45 AM and 11:15 AM

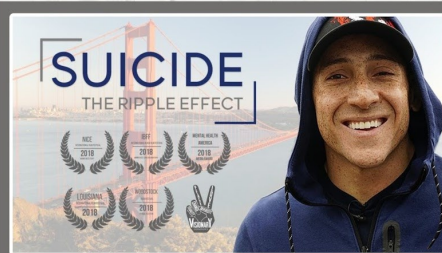
Christmas Eve Candlelight and Communion Services - Luke 2:1-20 The Thrill of Hope A Wear World Rejoices: Hope is Here

- Rev. Robby Lybrand will be preaching with Rev. Joey Gambrell and Rev. Jason Wilson at the Rivers Street campus 5:00 PM
- Rev. Jason Wilson will be preaching with Rev. Joey Gambrell and Rev. Robby Lybrand at the Bypass campus 7:00 PM

December 31 - Luke 2:22-40 The Thrill of Hope...A Weary World Rejoices: Simeon's Hopeful Song

- Rev. Jason Wilson at the Bypass campus 8:45 AM and 11:00 AM
- Rev. Joey Gambrell at the Coronaca campus 10:00 AM
- Rev. Robby Lybrand at the Rivers Street campus 8:45 AM and 11:15 AM

Students in Grade 6-12:
Join us for an EPIC
CHRISTMAS
CELEBRATION!
6:00-8:00
Bring an unwrapped toy!



6:30 pm
January 7,
2024



KREW
KIDS REALLY EXCITED ABOUT WORSHIP
KREW WILL RESUME IN JANUARY!
WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU!

*Merry Christmas
to all of our
children, students,
and families!*

Join us for the
21st Annual
Christmas
Pageant!



Prayers of the Church

Prayer requests will remain on this list for three weeks unless we are notified differently.

RESIDENTIAL LIVING

Emerald Gardens
(201 Overland Drive,
Greenwood, SC)
Charlotte Koone

National Healthcare
(437 E Cambridge Ave,
Greenwood, SC)
Betty Lightsey

Shut-In/Homebound
Mary Ellen Anderson
(864.223.5275)
1830 Alexander Road W
Greenwood, SC 29649

Danny Bearden
c/o Khristy Lee
2419 Lafayette Street
Winterville, NC 28590

Jean Bedenbaugh
Lexington Medical Center
Extended Care
815 Old Cherokee Road
Lexington, SC 29072

Mary Anna Evans
5800 Old Providence Road
Apt 4310
Charlotte, NC 28226

Charlie Helms (704.535.7848)
c/o Teena Williams
4600 Crofton Ct.
Charlotte, NC 28205

Annell McManus (864.229.1596)
110 Northgate
Greenwood, SC 29649

Gary Roper
301 Fairway Lakes Road
Greenwood, SC 29649

Jenny Valkenburg
(864-223-0987)
119 Creek Road East
Greenwood, SC 29646

**MEMBERS AND REGULAR
ATTENDEES**

TR Arnold
Barbara Jean Smith
Amanda Seymour and children
Mary Frances Anderson
Jim Conley
Dodie Conley

**MEMBERS AND REGULAR
ATTENDEES CONT'D**

Rev. and Mrs. Milton and Betty
Moss McGuirt

MEMBERS' FAMILY

Sunni Sheppard
Sandy Gray
Beverlee Simmons
Kimberly Hale
Brooke Lunceford
Steve
Ken Talley
Mike Bartley
David Burton
Brad Burton

MEMBERS' FRIENDS

Ciara White
Will Coleman
The family of Steven Fooshe
Randy and Denise Dennin
Rosbury Family
Kathy Bernard
Walker Family
The Frost family (Will, Carrie,
and Alex)
Donna Keck
Pat Vickers
Johnny Vickers
Tegan Fairey
Tyler Ryan
Jim Herbert and family
Shannon Peeler and her deployed
military unit
Tyler Hellams
Dr. Max Parrott

MILITARY

Jack Boyd - Army
Dr. JC Elmore - Army
Brycen Fleming - Army
Randall Geddings
Joshua Goff - Marines
Dr. Caity Jarrio—Army
Mackenzie Latham - Air Force
Shannon Peeler
Banner Peksa - Army
Parker White - Army

COLLEGE STUDENTS

Clemson:
Adam Prince, Caleb McLaughlin,
Caroline Addis, Clary Pederson,
Conner Pederson, Dawson
Hudson, Emma Arnold, Jasmine
Creswell, Josh Godwin, Julia
Creswell, Laila Monda, Lexi
Layland, Rebecca Bell,
Savannah Farmer, Taylor Case,
Trevor Brewington, Will
Godwin, Wyatt Prince, and Zach
Robinson

College of Charleston:
Olivia Murray

Lander:
Caroline Alexander, Caroline
Rhodes, Dylan DeLoach,
Jeremiah Holmes, Rhianna
Philcox, and Ryan Latham.

Mars Hill University:
Sarah Ellen Johnson

Midlands Technical College:
Parker Boggs and TJ Freeman

Piedmont Technical College:
Andrew Tripp, Dylan Gambrell,
Evan Boggs, and Savannah
Mallon

Presbyterian College:
Beatty Murray

The Medical University of South
Carolina:
Mae Furman

University of Georgia:
Haley McLaughlin

University of Kentucky:
Julia Goff

University of South Carolina:
Caroline Bell, Carter Rhodes,
Jordan Mapes, Meg McGovern,
Olivia DeTreville, and Sadie
McCrea.

University of South Carolina,
Sumter:
Braeden McDonald

Winthrop:
Carlie Pundt



Prayers & Squares is an interfaith outreach organization that combines the gift of prayer with the gift of a hand-tied quilt. The motto "It's not about the quilt; it's all about the prayers" says it all.

Two years ago St. Mark had the good fortune of having **Sunni Bond** introduce **The Prayer Quilt Ministry** to our church and community. During those two years 102 prayer quilts and hundreds of prayer squares were sewn by volunteers and distributed. These quilts truly can be called "comforters"! We salute and sincerely appreciate Sunni Bond for introducing this valuable ministry to St Mark.

What a blessing these quilts have been to recipients, friends and families as they are brought before the congregation and dedicated to individuals with serious illness or traumatic situations. Likewise, being able to come forward to actually see the name of someone needing healing and prayer, and pray for them by name while tying knots has personalized our opportunities to show love and support.

No form of payment is ever asked or expected for quilts! Donations to the local St. Mark chapter are much appreciated however, and help insure that the ministry continues. Likewise, volunteers who enjoy sharing their love of sewing are needed to keep producing quilts and squares.

To request a prayer quilt for a friend or family member or to volunteer to join the team contact **StMarkPrayerQuilts@gmail.com** or program coordinators: Patricia Rickenbaker at **par@nctv.com** or Kay Gregory at **kgreg@nctv.com**.

YOUNG

AT HEART

FELLOWSHIP FOR AGES 60 AND UP

JOIN US FOR A CHRISTMAS PARTY!

Monday, Dec. 11th, 11:30

Founders Hall

Bypass Campus

Please bring a finger food to share and a \$10 gift to exchange.



Kids' World News

Kids' World will host our annual Christmas family night on December 21st! We are so excited to invite our families in for this fun time.

Other festive news: Our teachers are participating in a decorating contest for Christmas this year! We need the help of our St Mark family with voting on who is the most creative. We will have a voting box along with score cards posted near our water fountain. All of our teachers are working so hard and can not wait to share their creations with you all!

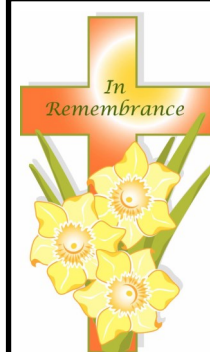
Voting will be open December 1st-15th! We will announce the winners on December 18th.

Merry Christmas to all, and HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Offering Envelopes

If you would like offering envelopes for 2024, please contact Debra at 864.229.5416 or email debra@stmarkgreenwood.com to let her know. Let Debra know at which campus you will pick up your envelopes.



St. Mark gratefully acknowledges the following gifts:

- To *The Backpack Meal Fund* in loving memory of **Billy Hoole** by His children and grandchildren.
- To *The Quilt Fund* in loving honor of **Ester Cameron** by Donna Hazel.
- To *The Quilt Fund* in loving honor of **Faye Reighley** by The Fellowship Sunday School Class.

December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 8:45 and 11:15 Hanging of the Greens services at RSC 10:00 Hanging of the Greens service at Coronaca 7:00 Hanging of the Greens service at BPC	4 10:00 Fit 4 Ever Exercise Class 5:15 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 5:30 West Side AA	5 4:30 Stroke Support Group 6:00 Women on My Journey AA	6 6:30 Men’s Bible Study 10:00 Fit 4 Ever Exercise Class 6:00 Girls Scouts 6:30 Blend Band Rehearsal 6:30 Chancel Choir Practice 6:30 Men’s Bible Study	7 7:00 Men’s Bible Study 4:00 Christmas Fellowship Gathering 5:15 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 5:30 West Side AA	1 10:00 Fit 4 Ever Exercise Class 6:00 Girl Scout lock in begins	2 10:00 Girl Scout lock in ends
					8 10:00 Exercise	9 1:00 Founders Hall in use 5:30 Christmas Pageant at RSC
10 6:00 EPIC 8:00 HSX	11 10:00 Fit 4 Ever Exercise Class 11:30 Young at Heart 5:30 West Side AA 6:00 WGH in use for Volleyball	12 11:00 WGH in use 11:30 Staff Christmas Gathering 6:00 Women on My Journey AA 6:00 WGH in use for Volleyball	13 6:30 Men’s Bible Study 10:00 Fit 4 Ever Exercise Class 6:00 UMM Dinner 6:30 Blend Band Rehearsal 6:30 Chancel Choir Practice 6:30 Men’s Bible Study	14 7:00 Men’s Bible Study 9:30 Founders Hall in use 10:00 WGH in use 5:30 West Side AA 7:00 Blue Christmas Service	15 6:30 Men’s Prayer Breakfast 9:00 Founders Hall in use 10:00 Fit 4 Ever Exercise Class	16 9:00 Fellowship Hall in use 1:00 WGH in use 1:00 Founders Hall in use
17 10:00 WGH, Puppet Theater, Playground, and kitchen in use 12:30 Founders Hall in use	18 Information due for the church newsletter 10:00 Fit 4 Ever Exercise Class 5:30 West Side AA 6:00 WGH in use for Volleyball	19 Founders Hall in use by Kids’ World all day 6:00 Women on My Journey AA 6:00 WGH in use for Volleyball	20 6:30 Men’s Bible Study 10:00 Fit 4 Ever Exercise Class 6:00 Girl Scouts 6:30 Blend Band Rehearsal 6:30 Chancel Choir Practice 6:30 Men’s Bible Study	21 7:00 Men’s Bible Study 8:00 Founders Hall in use 5:30 West Side AA 6:30 Girl Scouts 7:00 Candlelight Christmas service at Coronaca	22 Kids’ World is closed 10:00 Fit 4 Ever Exercise Class	23 4:30 Founders Hall in use
24 Christmas Eve 5:00 Christmas Eve Service at RSC 7:00 Christmas Eve Service at BPC	25 Christmas Day Church office closed Kids’ World closed WGH in use all day 5:30 West Side AA	26 Church office closed Kids’ World closed WGH in use all day 6:00 Women on My Journey AA	27 6:30 Men’s Bible Study 10:00 Fit 4 Ever Exercise Class 6:30 Blend Band Rehearsal 6:30 Chancel Choir Practice 6:30 Men’s Bible Study	28 7:00 Men’s Bible Study 5:30 West Side AA	29 Kids’ World closed 10:00 Fit 4 Ever Exercise Class	30
31						Worship Services are: Bypass Campus:8:45 am & 11:00 am Rivers Street Campus: 8:45 am & 11:15 am Coronaca Campus: 10:00 am Sunday School 10:00 am