

The Grapevine

December 2008

This Advent...

In his address to the 140th Convention of the Diocese of Central New York, the Rt. Rev. Gladstone B. Adams, (more fondly known as Bishop Skip) offered us the following question and challenge:

**We can choose to serve our anxiety
or
We can choose to serve Christ.**

There's no doubt about it, we live in anxious times. The Christian Church is beset by conflict and dwindling numbers, our economy is facing previously unseen challenges, and even on a smaller scale, we're headed into the holiday season – which although it is many people's favorite time of the year, it's a time marked by a certain business and stress.

We live in anxious times. We can't control much of what causes the anxiety in the world, but we can choose how we will live in this time. We can choose whether we choose to serve our anxiety or serve a much more gracious and powerful presence in the world – Christ.

I think we all know what it looks like to choose to serve anxiety. I know I make that choice more often than I'd like to! Choosing to serve anxiety is to “sweat the small stuff,” to lose our perspective and our sense of the “big picture,” and to fall into the trap of self-centeredness. Choosing to serve anxiety results in temper tantrums, holding on to anger and hurt, and being overwhelmed by fear.

Choosing to serve Christ looks a lot different. Choosing to serve Christ is about treating ourselves and others gently and showing compassion. When we serve Christ, we still may get upset – but it's over real problems like poverty, injustice, and cruelty, rather than losing our cool about losing a parking spot, or getting bent-out-of-shape by a passing comment made by a family member. Serving Christ is about seeing the beloved-ness in all of God's creatures, not just the ones we like the best and about being guided by peace, grace, and faith.

The holy season of Advent begins on Sunday, November 30th. It's the time when the Church prepares for Christ's coming. How will we greet this season? How will we live Advent? Will we choose to serve our anxiety or will we choose to serve Christ?

If we choose to serve Christ, the road isn't always easy and we must prepare ourselves for the journey. To withstand the temptation to settle into our anxiety, we must be a people rooted in God's love for us and our love for God. We must be a people of prayer, who live out our faith – not only with our lips, but in our lives.

It can be hard to find time for prayer during busy times, but the busier we are – the more we need to find time to pray! St. Matthew's is offering a “Quiet Night” every Thursday evening during Advent. Beginning at 7:00, we'll offer a service of quiet prayer and music, followed by quiet prayer time in the sanctuary. Give yourself the gift of peace, quiet, and time in the presence of God this Advent.

In Peace,

Advent, the four weeks prior to Christmas.

While looking it up in my *Merriam-Webster*, I checked out other “adven” type words. The second definition of “adventure” is “a remarkable and exciting experience.” Right on subject! It’s about Vestry service.

Lee Wheeler and her nominating committee may be asking you to become a candidate for the 2009 Vestry. We ask you to give most serious thought and prayer to serving during this remarkable and exciting time. Serving on your Vestry is most rewarding for it has evolved from the traditional dollars & cents, let’s do it the same as before, been there and done that approach to one of creativity, growth, progress and a generous dose of humor. Granted we still face the ‘blood from a turnip’ state of our finances, however, that seems to be the universal standard for every church.

“Vestry’s not for me.” That’s ok too, for there are many others forms of ministry at St. Matthew’s; Outreach, Inreach, Lay Ministry, Altar Guild, too long a list to enumerate. And there is the other ministry that we all practice; being part of St. Matthew’s faith family.

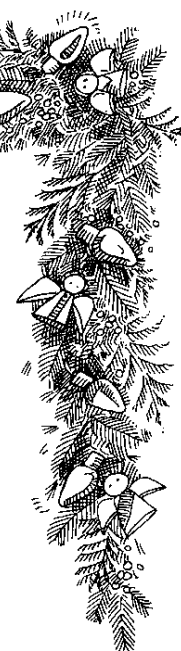
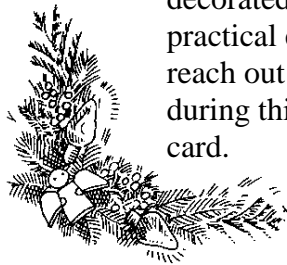
Have a most happy and holy Christmas.

Peace, Shalom, God Bless.
Gordon



GIVING GARLAND

Sunday School grades 1-3 will be posting a “Giving Garland” in the Parish Hall. The garland will be decorated with small cards. Each card suggests a practical example of small, simple ways we can reach out and show love to others. Please join us during this holiday season in taking and sharing a card.



HOLIDAY BASKETS

We are now requesting donations for holiday baskets in the shopping cart collection. Food items that are part of a traditional holiday meal such as canned corn or beans, frozen turkeys or hams, squash and potatoes are needed. If you know of anyone that is in need of a holiday basket, please let Mother Carrie or someone from the Outreach Committee know. Thank you for your generous support of the holiday baskets and the food pantry.



SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

For those who’ve lost loved ones, the holidays can be a very bitter-sweet time; many feel the losses more acutely during this festive time of year. With that in mind, the Liverpool Clergy Association, together with Maurer Funeral Home, offers a Service of Remembrance every December to help us honor and remember those we love, but see no longer. This year, the Service of Remembrance will be led by the many clergy of Liverpool and held at **Liverpool First United Methodist Church** (the one with the purple doors) on **Friday, December 5th at 7:30pm**. A reception will follow.

REMEMBER OUR VETERANS

This is the address to send a Christmas card to a veteran. Please pass it on.

A Recovering American Soldier
c/o Walter Reed Army Medical Center
6900 Georgia Avenue, NW
Washington , D.C. 20307-5001



SUNDAY HEALING SERVICE

On the second Sunday of Advent, **December 7th**, we will offer anointing (with holy oil) and healing prayers for those who desire, at **both the 8:00am and 10:15am services**. You'll be invited to ask for healing prayers either for yourself or on behalf of someone else, whatever the sickness of body, mind, spirit, may be. People are also invited to offer prayers for relationships, or a situation in the world that needs healing.

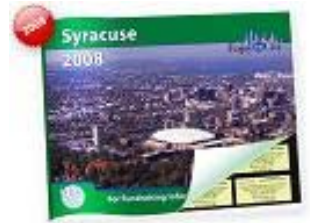
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



A reminder to all those who have signed up to participate in the Christmas Pageant on December 24th at 7:30pm. **The rehearsals are scheduled for Sunday, December 14th and Sunday, December 21st following the 10:15am service.** See you then!

ENJOY THE CITY BOOKS

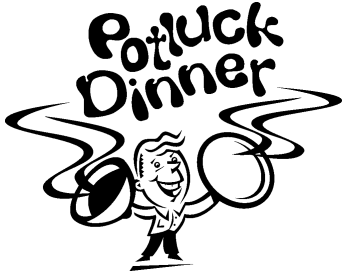
We will be selling *Enjoy the City* books again this year. If you would like to buy one or if you would be interested in selling them, please speak to Matt Stace (652-9622) for details. They are a great holiday gift, as well as a fund raiser for St. Matthew's. Books are available not only for Syracuse, but for most other cities as well. The cost of the Syracuse book is two for \$25.00. See Matt Stace for the book price on other cities. Thank you.



QUIET NIGHTS: ADVENT AT ST. MATTHEW'S

Have you ever been struck by the irony, rushing through a crowded store, trying to get holiday shopping done, when you hear "All is calm, all is bright... Sleep in heavenly peace..."? Advent, in the Church, is a time to slow down and prepare for the coming of Christ; the time before Christmas, in the rest of the world, is a time of incredible, frantic hustle and bustle. So, this Advent, St. Matthew's is offering repose from all that busyness and a quiet sanctuary of calm and peace.

Quiet Night" is the name of our Advent offering. From **7:00-8:00** on Thursday nights during Advent (**December 4, 11, 18**), the church will be open for quiet prayer and meditation. The heat will be on and the candles lit – waiting for you, to offer sanctuary. The evening will begin with quiet worship in the front of the church, for those who desire, but the whole church will be open for whatever prayer you choose to offer. Give yourself the gift of peace, quiet, and time with the Beloved this Advent season.



PARISH FUN NIGHT

Mark your calendars for **Saturday evening, December 6th, 4:30 – 7:00pm**, when St. Matthew’s will host our first (that I know of) Parish Fun Night! The evening will include a potluck dinner and lots of fun for all ages. If you have an aversion to laughter and/ or enjoying yourself, please stay home that night. But, if you’re looking for some good, clean, fun in the midst of a very hectic season, please join us on December 6th for Parish Fun Night!!!

CHRISTMAS SERVICE SCHEDULE

December 24th – Christmas Eve

7:15pm – Carol Sing

7:30pm Christmas Pageant & Holy Eucharist

10:45pm – Carol Sing

11:00pm – Holy Eucharist



December 25th – Christmas Day

No Services



**CHRISTMAS FLOWERS & GREENS
(Deadline: 12-21-08)**

I wish to contribute \$_____ as a memorial in memory of (Please use given names):

Or in thanksgiving for: _____

By: _____

Please make check payable to St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church and mark “Christmas Flowers”

SUNDAY SCHOOL PARENTS AND FRIENDS

A sign up sheet will be posted outside the Sunday School rooms if you would like to join us on occasion as a guest/volunteer in our classrooms. If you have any questions, contact the Sunday School teachers or Stacey Balduf.



ALTAR FLOWERS

The Altar Flower Book for 2009 is in the coatroom at the front of the church. If you would like to give flowers in memory of a loved one or as a thank offering, please sign up. The cost of flowers is \$25.00. Please note that flowers are not given during Lent.

ANNUAL GREENING OF THE CHURCH

Join us in the greening of St. Matthew's for the Christmas Season which will take place on **Sunday, December 21st at 1:00pm**. I know that this is a busy time of year for all of us, but please take a little time out of your hectic holiday schedule to make our church a beautiful place to worship during the Nativity. The Greening consists of hanging garland and wreaths, stringing lights on a pair of small fir trees, arranging the Nativity scene, and the placement of poinsettias. Most of the work is not very physical, but we will need someone who doesn't mind climbing a ladder. We can also use of people who like to vacuum - yes, I know you are out there. Many hands make light work and the joy you will experience in helping to create the lovely sanctuary will make the holiday that more memorable.



As with all things, what goes up, must come down. **The de-greening will be done on Sunday, January 4th at 4:00pm**. This is usually a quick process of basically taking down everything we put up during the greening and vacuuming carpets (another chance from those closet vacuumers).

Please put both of these dates - 12/21 at 1:00pm for greening and 1/4 at 4:00pm for the de-greening - on your calendar and join us for the fun. Please see me at the 8:00am service, during coffee hour between the services or leave me a message at 453-5618. Thank you - you won't regret it.

ANGELTREE



It's hard to believe, but once again, it is time for our annual Angel Tree Christmas program. As most of you know, each year we are supplied names of children who have a parent in prison. These children are often forgotten, but are in just as much need as any other child. This year we have 30 names with two tags each; one for clothing and one for a toy or other age appropriate gift. Gift cards from stores like Sears, Best Buy, Circuit City, Toys R Us, and KayBee Toys are most welcome. With the exception of one family who lives in Cicero, all the others are in Baldwinsville and Liverpool. The names will be put on a tree in the Parish Hall the Sunday after Thanksgiving. **The wrapped gifts should be returned to the church no later than Sunday, December 14th.**

I know that as always, we can count on the generosity of this parish. Thank you so very much for all the support you have given in the past and I know will give again this year. I wish you all the happiest holiday!

Cathy Labucki
Angel Tree Coordinator

GRACE CHURCH, BALDWINVILLE is hosting their 3rd Annual **Cookie Walk on Saturday, December 6th, 10:00 – 3:00pm**. Purchase homemade Christmas cookies, while enjoying live holiday music and a sweet treat in the morning and soups and breads in the afternoon. They even have old-fashioned Plum Pudding from the Cookie Walk Café.

Also, on **Saturday, January 31st, at 7:00pm**, Grace will be hosting a U.S.S. Grace Cruise Night featuring a Hawaiian Luau. Tickets are \$20.00 in December and \$25.00 if you wait until January. Call 635-3214 for further information on these two events.

S.M.I.L.E.S. PRE-NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

SMILES everyone, because it is almost time for our 2nd Annual "Pre-New Year's Eve Party."

When: Sunday, December 28th, beginning at 3:00pm. (Would this be a Pre-Pre-Pre New Year's Eve party?)

Where: The Davis' Home – 315 Viking Place, Liverpool, NY.



There will be a sign up sheet near the Parish Hall, so you can see what everyone is bringing. If you need a ride please call Sandy at 451-3199, as early as possible.

Dress for comfort. Feel free to bring a friend. If the weather should turn bad, feel free to call us, (451-3199) to see if it is still on.

Last year's party was our best function yet! HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE! Any ideas? I would love to hear from you. Please feel free to call me. Thanks.

Sandy Davis

WANTED – FILING CABINET

We have acquired many documents, pictures, etc. on the history of St. Matthew's but currently is being stored in cardboard boxes. We would love to be able to get it organized and available to all. If you have a gently used filing cabinet that you would like to donate, please call Lois Fleming 453-7985 or the church office.

FAMILY RETREAT

Another Family Retreat is being planning for **Saturday morning, January 10th**. In the past years, we've offered a retreat on Holy Communion and one on the sacrament of baptism. The retreat is planned for **9:00-12:00 noon** that day, and geared toward participation by youth and their grown-ups as well. (The details are still being worked out, but this year, we may focus our retreat on The Lord's Prayer.) Look for more information to come.

ST. MATTHEW'S WISH LIST

Recently, St. Matthew's has received several extraordinary gifts from generous parishioners: the refurbishing of the processional cross, new candle lighters, storm windows for the sanctuary, a sanctuary lamp, an Advent wreath and candle stand, new stained glass for the windows, and other wonderful gifts.

If you've ever felt inclined to give a special gift to St. Matthew's, here are a few ideas:

- Nice hand soaps and lotions for the restrooms (Hospitality!)
- Exhaust fans for both restrooms (approximately \$55.00 each)
- Altar Linens (cost varies)
- Boxes of votive candles in plastic holders (\$36.00/gross)
- A nice table for the votive candle stand (cost varies)
- Home Communion Kits (approximately \$150.00 each)

If you are interested in giving any of these items, **please see Mother Carrie for more details.** Thanks!

ASHBY CALENDARS

Again this year, Maurer Funeral Home, Inc. has generously underwritten the cost of the 2009 Ashby Calendars for St. Matthew's. You will find them on the tables in the hall and in the coatroom.



Please take one home and enjoy it throughout the year. Give one to a friend!

Many thanks to Maurer Funeral Home for their continued support.



THE HOUSE AT 807 is looking for a Live-In House Manager to provide evening/overnight presence in gracious Village of Liverpool home, housing eight well, relatively independent elders. Medical background not necessary, but sensitivity to, and affinity for elders essential. Compensation: private room and bath, all utilities, basic cable access and home-cooked meals. Call Liverpool Village Housing Authority members Jim at 559-4444 or Norm at 559-9413. Background check and The House at 807 is a non-smoking facility.

MAKING SPACE FOR CHRISTMAS

An Advent Quiet Day Retreat Saturday, **December 6, 2008, from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm at Trinity Episcopal Church, 106 Chapel Street, Fayetteville.** The cost for this workshop is \$35. For registration, please call 637-9872.

Advent is the "season of the seed" (Caryll Houselander). It is the time when things grow in secret, in the darkness, in the quiet, in the emptiness. In whatever form or shape our emptiness takes, the Christ- seed is growing in us. We are being formed into a unique and one-of-a-kind Christ-Bearer. With the support of poetry, music, and silence as well as shared reflection we will ponder how God is forming and calling the Christ-seed in us to emerge. Our labyrinth will be available for use during the periods of silent prayer and reflection.

Our facilitator for the day is Emily Wilmer, director of The Julian Group and a spiritual director at Wisdom House in Fayetteville, NY. She completed the individual spiritual direction course at the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in Bethesda, MD, and has over fifteen years' experience in retreat leadership and spiritual direction.



HOLIDAY SHOPPING EXTRAVAGANZA
Home Party and Craft Fundraiser

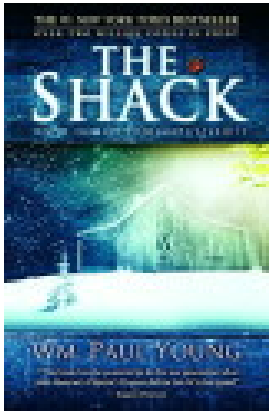
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6
10AM - 3PM

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ST. MATTHEW'S BOOK CLUB



On Tuesday, February 10th at 7:00pm, we'll gather to discuss the best-selling book, *The Shack* by William P. Young. The book is available almost everywhere. If you've ever wondered, where's God in the midst of suffering? this book is for you. Feel free to invite your friends!

"The Shack is a one of a kind invitation to journey to the very heart of God. Through my tears and cheers, I have been indeed transformed by the tender mercy with which William Paul Young opened the veil that too often separated me from God and from myself. With every page, the complicated do's and don't that distort a relationship into a religion were washed away as I understood Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the first time in my life." -- Patrick M. Roddy, ABC News Emmy Award winning producer.

"Finally! A guy-meets-God Novel that has literary integrity and spiritual daring. The Shack cuts through the clichés of both religion and bad writing to reveal something compelling and beautiful about life's integral dance with the Divine. This story reads like a prayer--like the best kind of prayer, filled with sweat and wonder and transparency and surprise. When I read it, I felt like I was fellowshipping with God. If you read one work of fiction this year, let this be it". --Mike Morrell, zoecarnate.com

SAVE THE DATE FOR.....

**A Two-Day Workshop with Diana Butler Bass
April 27-28, 2009**

Downtown United Presbyterian Church
121 N. Fitzhugh Street
Rochester, New York

Dr. Diana Butler Bass An expert in American religion who works as an author, speaker and independent scholar, Bass adopted the title of her recent book -- Christianity for the Rest of Us -- as the theme of her lectures.

Theologian Marcus Borg referred to her work as "the most important book of the decade about emerging Christianity and the renewal of mainline congregations."

The author of six books on American religious practice, including *The Practicing Congregation: Imagining a New Old Church*, Bass earned the Ph.D. degree in religious studies from Duke University. She was project director of a national Lilly Endowment-funded study of mainline Protestant vitality from 2002 to 2006. Senior fellow at the Cathedral College of Washington National Cathedral,

Bass is currently working on a new book – *Episcopalians in America* -- slated for publication in late 2008. Part of Sojourner's Progressive Religious Communicators Group, she is a regular contributor to the group's God's Politics blog.

Sponsored by:

The Gene Bennett Program for Life Long Learning @ CRCDS
American Baptist Churches of the Rochester/Genesee Region
Episcopal Dioceses of Rochester and Central New York
Presbytery of Geneva

More details to follow shortly.

If you would like to get on our mailing list for this event, please send your request to the Rev. Dr. Denise Yarbrough @ dyarbrough@crcds.edu or LLL@CRCDS.EDU

SOUND BITES



ADVENT WREATH: The evergreens of Christmastide are prefigured by a wreath of boughs surrounding four or five candles during the season of Advent. The Advent wreath probably came into popular Christian usage in the northern hemisphere from the Scandinavian Lutheran church. Whatever its source, it has found a place not only in most American Episcopal churches but in the homes of many Episcopalians as well. The American *Book of Common Prayer* assumes that an Advent wreath is present in the church by giving instructions for its lighting during the Order of Worship for the Evening (p. 143). Forward Movement publishes a tract containing prayers and instructions for home Advent wreaths.

Advent wreaths are constructed with four candles arranged around a square or circle, each representing one of the Sundays in Advent. Sometimes a fifth candle — the Christ candle — is added to the center of the Advent wreath. Three of the four Advent candles are violet or purple. The liturgical color of Advent, and the fourth is sometimes rose. The Christ candle is always white.

One candle is lit on each Sunday of Advent, until all four candles are burning. The rose candle is lit on the Third Sunday of Advent. The Christ candle is lit on Christmas Eve. The number of candles burning thus tracks the progress of the season. Advent has long been observed with much of the penitential flavor of Lent — the use of purple vestments, omitting the Gloria in excelsis at Sunday celebrations of the Holy Eucharist. The Third Sunday of Advent — Gaudete Sunday — has been observed as a respite from the rigors of penitence, hence the use of rose-colored vestments and a rose candle in the Advent wreath. This is similar to the Fourth Sunday in Lent — Laetare Sunday — when again rose vestments are worn and the penitential observances of Lent are somewhat relaxed.

Advent comes at a time in the secular year when the days grow ever shorter and darkness falls a little earlier each day. Against this metaphor for the sinfulness of the world, the collect for the First Sunday of Advent prays “give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armor of light.” These words are based on Romans 13:12. The flames of the Advent wreath can be for us a symbol of the coming of light into our lives which occurs when we “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 13:14). The lighting of the Christ candle on Christmas Eve can then be doubly celebrated as a symbol of Christ’s Incarnation and as symbol of Christ’s Incarnation and as a symbol of his illumination of our lives.

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DECEMBER

Table with 4 columns: Name, Date, Name, Date. Lists birthdays for December including Bradshaw, Rance (22), Jones, Kayleigh (03), Brown, Collin (16), Kobo, Jordan (24), etc.

(If anyone has been omitted from this list, please call the office)

In Our Thoughts and Prayers...

- Isabel Alamond, Dawn Arnold, Tony Balestra, Melanie Clay, Eleanor Duke, Dylan, Jennifer, Jodi and Amelia, Bobby Kayne, Samuel Kovac, Virginia Marks, Carol Murdock, Bob McClellan, Joan Oksa, Blaine Pelkey, Charles Roach, Victoria Roach, Shelly, Herb Smith, Jennifer Sullivan, Janet Taylor, Margaret Zaccanelli, Don Zemenz

SHOPPING CART SUNDAY
December 21



THANK YOU!

January Grapevine
Deadline



December 21

DECEMBER 2008

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| | 1 *6:45am-AA 5:00-7:00pm Weight Watchers | 2 7:00pm-Choir Rehearsal | 3 12:00 Noon HE+ | 4 5:00-7:00pm Weight Watchers 6:30pm Outreach Commission Meeting 7:00-8:00pm Quiet Night | 5 Parish Office Closed 7:30pm Service of Remembrance at Liverpool First United Methodist Church | 6 9:30-3:30pm Advent Quiet Day Retreat at Trinity Episcopal Church, Fayetteville 4:30-7:00pm Parish Fun Night Potluck Dinner |
| 7 <u>Healing Service</u> 8:00am-HE+ 9:15am – Adult Forum & Sunday School 10:10am - Nursery 10:15am-HE+ | 8 *6:45am-AA 5:00-7:00pm Weight Watchers | 9 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal & Budget Meeting | 10 12:00 Noon HE+ | 11 5:00-7:00pm Weight Watchers 7:00-8:00pm Quiet Night | 12 Parish Office Closed | 13 |
| 14 8:00am-HE+ 9:15am- Adult Forum & Sunday School 10:10am-Nursery 10:15am-HE+ 12:00 Noon Christmas Pageant Rehearsal | 15 *6:45am-AA 5:00-7:00pm Weight Watchers | 16 7:00pm-Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm Vestry | 17 12:00 Noon HE+ | 18 5:00-7:00pm Weight Watchers 7:00-8:00pm Quiet Night | 19 Parish Office Closed | 20 |
| 21 8:00am-HE+ 9:15am – Adult Forum & Sunday School 10:10am - Nursery 10:15am-HE+ 12:00 Noon Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 1:00pm Greening of the Church Shopping Cart Sunday Grapevine Deadline | 22 *6:45am-AA 5:00-7:00pm Weight Watchers | 23 7:00pm-Choir Rehearsal | 24 12:00 Noon HE+ 7:15pm-Carol Sing 7:30pm-Christmas Pageant & Holy Eucharist 10:45pm-Carol Sing 11:00pm-Holy Eucharist School Holiday Recess | 25 <u>Christmas Day</u> No Services | 26 Parish Office Closed | 27 |
| 28 8:00am-HE+ 9:15am- Adult Forum No Sunday School 10:10am-Nursery 10:15am- HE+ 3:00pm S.M.I.L.L.E.S. Pre-New Year's Eve Party School Holiday Recess | 29 *6:45am-AA 5:00-7:00pm Weight Watchers | 30 7:00pm-Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm Vestry Meeting | 31 <u>New Year's Eve</u> 12:00 Noon HE+ | *A.A. Meets Monday – Friday – 6:45 – 7:45am in the Conference Room °HB: Holy Baptism +HE: Holy Eucharist ^MP: Morning Prayer | | |