Succasunna United Methodist Church

THE STEEPLE Jan/Feb 2024



Dear Church Family,

In the joyous moments of unwrapping gifts on Christmas morning, my son Wesley got so excited to receive a Transformer toy. This particular Transformer, much like those from the movies, holds a magical quality: it transforms into something totally different. As he engaged in play, turning the Transformer into a car required more than just physical manipulation; it demanded a vision of what it would look like when transformed.

The lesson embedded in this gift reminded me of our Christian journey: Even though we may not necessarily begin with a clear picture in our minds, the magic lies in the imagination and power of the One who holds us. Our visions, dreams, and goals inspired by God serve as powerful sparks for the transformation of our hearts and lives in this journey.

As we move forward into a new year, the year might not be something you have looked forward to. You might have all kinds of challenges to face. You might be uncertain and fearful of what the new year can bring as the future is unknown and full of uncertainties. However, God of Emmanuel assures us that even in the dark of the darkest night, in the loneliness of the loneliest day, God is with us to bring light into our darkness, companionship into our solitude, and direction into our wanderings.

Our New Year resolution should be to *level up* our trust in God, who grants us the power to transform our challenges into opportunities, our uncertainties into moments of faith, and our journey into a process of growth and transformation guided by the Holy Spirit. I pray each of you level up your trust in God's transforming love and vision, seeking to deepen your worship and service to God in 2024.

In Christ,

Rev. Myounghun Stephen Yun



Dear Church Family,

Happy New Year, church family! 2024 has arrived, and we are excited for the ministry of Christ that God has placed before us in this New Year.

Advent of 2023 ended with three beautiful Christmas Eve services. Many thanks go out to the very talented members and groups of our congregation that participated in these services. We are truly blessed in the talents that God has given to this congregation, and we thank you for sharing these gifts.

During Advent, our youth ran a very successful Home for the Holidays event. We had our 3rd Annual Gingerbread House Decorating Contest! The first place winner was Terri and Samantha Humphries, the second place winner was Tracy Wise, and our third place winner was Emma Lenox. Our youth also met to bake cookies that were distributed during Christmas Caroling. They baked for 7 homes and visited 5 homes.

As we begin this new year our youth continue to embark on their faith journey by learning in Sunday School and Confirmation Class as well as doing mission work. On January 6th all are invited to join the Social Justice Ministry Team at the Dover Faith Kitchen to hand out coats, gloves, and hats. If you have any of these items to donate, you can bring them in even after January 6th. There will be an Intergenerational Event held on January 28th. We will have our International Dinner! All are invited. Please see the sign-up in the weekly Constant Contact Email to attend and sign up for a meal that signifies your country of origin.

In February, we will hold a fundraiser to support youth attending COP (Christian Outreach Project). The Chili Cookoff will be held on February 11th during Fellowship Hour. Our youth groups will continue to meet twice a month in January and February. We will meet on January 14th for a Family Outing to Villa Roller Rink and on January 26th for a youth group meeting. In February there will be a Family Outing on February 11th (event TBD) and on February 28th for a youth group meeting.

Be blessed at the beginning of this new year and the months to come. As always, please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or suggestions regarding our youth and family life.

In Christ,

Jennifer Antoncich,

SUMC's Director of Youth and Family Life







WORSHIP - Christmas Eve Pageant

Thank you to our children, youth, and parent volunteers who participated in this year's Christmas Eve Pageant. Special recognition to Jen Sauter for being this year's pageant coordinator. Our special music for the night was selected and played Ms. Elena Dewart. Leading up to the pageant, Antionette Domonic Fifoot and Stephen Fifoot helped each Sunday to practice with the children. Thank you to Dick Preuss for handling the Music Moment slide. We appreciate all those that help with the Christmas Eve service to make this tradition memorable for our families each year.



WORSHIP & FELLOWSHIP



Sun, Jan 14, 21, 28, and Feb 4

NEW YEAR SERMON SERIES

Join us for a four-week sermon series, "What's Next," exploring what it means to start over with Christ and begin the process of spiritual transformation. Each week, we'll unpack profound themes: starting afresh with a born-again spirit, discovering the enduring nature of God's love that transcends our age and mistakes, moving forward with faith that transforms, and finding solace in the new life Christ provides. We invite you to worship with us in the New Year as we uncover the pathways to spiritual renewal and a transforming journey of faith.

UPDATE ON FELLOWSHIP HOUR 2024

We will be planning to have Fellowship hour twice a month starting in 2024. And we need your support in achieving this church fellowship goal! We are looking for church committees, small groups or even families to consider hosting a fellowship hour on either the second or fourth Sunday of each month. We will be creating a sign up sheet that will be both posted in Fellowship Hall and available online. Please contact Linda Diffley if you would like to understand more or are interested in serving in this church fellowship opportunity. It is a wonderful way to spend time with your church family and welcome visitors at our church!

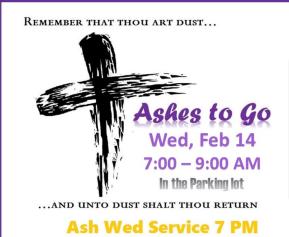


Our First Fellowship Hour in 2024 is Sunday, January 14 sponsored by SUMC Church Council.

The Lenten Season Begins Wednesday, February 14th

ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday is an important day in the church calendar. It marks the beginning of Lent, a forty—day season of spiritual preparation and renewal. Join us for Ash Wednesday service on Wed, Feb 14 at 7:00 pm.





91 Main St. Succasunna, NJ

EDUCATION

OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL IS LOOKING FOR HELP!



The Sunday School program is looking for some additional assistance in the new year with adult and parent volunteers in our classrooms to assist and teach. Be a part of an important and rewarding service within our church. It does not have to be a weekly commitment, but we are looking for at least one Sunday a month for 45 minutes. With the helps of some additional hands, we can together help grow and attract new families to our church through our Sunday School program and events. Please contact Tami Haupt, Education Committee Chairperson for more information at 973-598-5499 or education@sumcnj.org.

THANK YOU FOR HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

Thank you to our volunteers who helped in the kitchen during Home for the Holidays. Special recognition to Jennifer Antoncich and the Youth Group kids who baked breads, prepped soup and made bread pudding for the event. I would also like to thank those congregation members who were vendors on the day of the event as part of the SUMC Talent Challenge. They shared and sold their talents with our community and also helped sell other congregation members' items that day who were not able to be in attendance. Wonderful work by our dedicated volunteers!



LENT SOUP SUPPERS WILL BEGIN FEBRUARY 21st



Lent Soup suppers will begin **Feb-ruary 21st through to March 20th**.

Please consider serving as presenters, meal makers, and food organizers will be needed. More details along with the curriculum title will be provided in the new year.

For more information, contact Tami Haupt at education@sumcnj.org/973-598-5499.



COFFEE WITH THE PASTOR

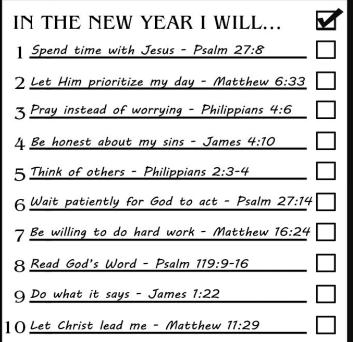
Join us for Coffee with the Pastor on January 11 and February 8th, from 11 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., at Panera in Roxbury Mall. This will be an informal gathering where we can get to know one another and share our questions and thoughts on faith, church, and Methodism. Everyone is welcome, and we'll provide the coffee.

GINGERBREAD CONTEST RESULTS

Thank you to every one who participated in our 3rd Annual Gingerbread House Decorating Contest!
This year's 1st place winner was Terri and Samantha Humphries, 2nd place winner was Tracy Wise and 3rd place winner was Emma Lenox! All entries were so creative and fun! Congratulations to all!







CHECKLIST



Fellowship Events from December

Building Better Women - Night out!

The Building Better Women Group had a wonderful evening of fellowship on November 14th by enjoying dinner at Panera and a movie, Journey to Bethlehem.

Building Better Women - Party!

The Building Better Women Group had a great time at their Ugly Christmas Sweater Party and cookie swap. Antoinette Dominicci-Fifoot won the prize for the ugliest sweater and a fun night was had by all!



Parents Night Out

The children and their parents enjoyed a night out! The children from SUMC and the community came to SUMC for a fun night of games, science & projects, Christmas caroling along with dinner and a movie and a visit from SANTA! SUMC parents enjoyed a few hours of free time during the busy time of the year!



UPCOMING EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL DINNER

Sun, January 28, 4:30pm – 6:30pm in Fellowship Hall

SUMC's International Dinner is an evening where each family brings a dish that represents their heritage. Bring an appetizer, entree, or dessert to share with your church family. Aside from eating together, we will share in fellowship, fun and games! Come with your family, come with your kids or just come by yourself. We encourage you to bring a dish that has significance to you that represents a different country or region. This year we ask that each person who attends bring a "warm donation," such as hats, gloves, blankets, sweaters, coats, etc.! They will be donated to the patrons of the Dover Faith Kitchen on 2/3/24.



Please Sign Up Today!

We invite you to sign up to attend and let us know what dish you will be bringing to share! You can sign up online, using the link provided in the Friday weekly email. Also, on Sundays 1/7, 1/14, and 1/21 you can sign up after each service in person with Marge Peletier.

When signing up we ask you to please indicate the following:

- 1. Which country you wish to represent.
- 2. How many will be attending in your party.
- 3. What dish you will bring.

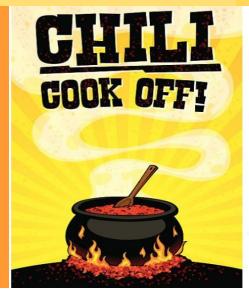
Bring your family and friends! All are welcome!



Building Better Women—Ceramic & Craft Fun! January 29th & February 24th

All women are invited to the home of Margarita Valdes on Monday, January 29th at 7pm where she will share her love of ceramics. Please contact Peggy Groh at pjgroh57@gmail.com if interested in attend- Please see their website for more information at ing.

All women are invited to attend an afternoon of fun & fellowship on Saturday, February 24th at 2pm. We will work on a craft together at Hammer & Stain located at 274 Rt. 10 W in Roxbury. www.hammer&stain.com. Please contact Peggy Groh at pjgroh57@gmail.com if you would like to attend.



CHILI COOK OFF IS COMING!!

SUMC'S CHILI COOK OFF

FEBRUARY 11TH AT 10AM IN FELLOWSHIP HALL

COME SAMPLE SOME CHILI MADE BY MEMBERS OF SUMC AND VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITE ONE!

PURCHASE PINT SIZE CONTAINERS OF CHILI FOR \$6 EACH OR 2 FOR \$10. BREAD AND ROLLS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE.

ALL PROCEEDS WILL BE SUPPORTING THOSE ATTENDING COP! SIGN UP TO ENTER WITH JEN - JANTONCICH@SUMCNJ.ORG

MISSIONS UPDATE

There are so many things to be thankful for, especially during the last few months of 2023!

<u>Thrift Shop Miracle Workers</u> – While we are always grateful for the work that our Thrift Shop volunteers provide for our community outreach, their work in 2023 also contributed over \$30,000 to our church's' general fund, which was over \$8000 than the budget estimate. This was one of the largest contributors to helping us reduce our 2023 budget gap between our expected donations versus expenses. We are so grateful for their weekly dedication to managing and selling a lot of donations from the community that support so many local families. We give many thanks and blessings to our volunteers – Pauline Hoover, Stacey Migneault, Elena Case, Joyce Sciacca and Tina (*** note to Caryn – can you find out Tina's last name please?) We also thank all of you that have shared and continue to share donations with our Thrift Shop!

<u>CUMAC and City Relief update</u> – Our thanks to everyone that donated to our personal hygiene drive for CUMAC and our blankets, coats and sleeping bag drive for City Relief during the months of November and December. Both of these critical non-profit agencies are always appreciative and grateful for the support that Succasunna UMC continues to provide. If you are interested in also serving in either of these mission opportunities, please contact Linda Diffley for more information. Here are their websites where you can also find out more information on both agencies – <u>www.cumac.org</u> and <u>www.cityrelief.org</u>

<u>Christian Outreach Project (COP) 2024</u> – We are already preparing for this coming year's week of COP which will begin on Sunday, June 23rd and will be the 42nd year of our missions outreach in Sussex and Warren Counties. COP is a week long program where teams of youth and adult do home repairs for clients who have major financial and physical limitations. It is also a wonderful week of fellowship and worship for the COP participants who stay at Camp Henry Hoover near Swartswood Lake. This is a great opportunity for youth that are 14 or older as well as adults to serve in this amazing outreach in northern New Jersey. For more information, please take a look at the COP website – www.christianoutreachproject.org or contact Linda Diffley.

<u>Thanksgiving & Christmas Food donations and Giving Tree Gifts</u> – On behalf of the Missions Committee, we would like to extend a BIG THANK YOU to everyone who supported this year's Thanksgiving & Christmas Food Baskets and generous gifts for the Giving Tree. Due to your generosity, we were able to feed 12 Roxbury families in need and provide Christmas gifts to those families. Thank you to the Sunday School classes for their support in this program and to the children for their help in packing the boxes. We would also like to thank Ron Case for his help in delivering these boxes and gifts to Social Services.

Wishing everyone a Joyous New Year. God Bless, Stay safe and healthy. Elena Case & Janet Fischlein

Thank you to SUMC from Family Promise of Morris County

Homebound Hustle—Thank you to all the runners, walkers, teams, volunteers and sponsors who made out third annual Steve Hammond Homebound Hustle 5K & 1 mile walk a big success! The community event provided fun, exercise, fresh air, and community spirit, while supporting these experiencing homelessness in Morris County. We are incredibly grateful for your dedication and your participation in our largest turnout of approximately 300 participants!

Family Promise Donations—A big than you to Succasunna United Methodist Church for providing men's underwear, socks, hats and gloves for visitors of Our Promise outreach drop-in center! With lower temps upon us, these items will help keep our guests extra warm in the coming months!

OPEN DOORS SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY—Tree of Warmth

The Open Doors have launched several Trees of Warmth which will be left up throughout the entire winter. They are collecting socks, hats, gloves, and scarves. They also decorated the trees in Dover JFK Commons with hats, gloves, and scarves before Christmas! They will also be going to Faith Kitchen in Dover to be the hands and feet of Christ handing out socks, hats, gloves, scarves, and blankets the first week in January.

Blessings to all of the people in The Open Doors and those who support us



FINANCE UPDATE

Q3 2023 Finance Committee Update

I hope everyone is staying dry during what has been a wet start to Winter, as discussed, the Finance Committee is committed to maintaining open communication and transparency. With that in mind, I would like to share the current state of SUMC.

We have always had an extremely generous congregation that is spiritually, and financially, committed to the wellbeing of our church, as evidenced by contributions continuing to surpass targets through September 2023. Contributions continued to exceed the ministry plan by over 12% and we have managed to keep expenses in check, only 10K over the original budget in a time of high inflation and increasing costs!

As mentioned in our prior distribution, our original 2023 Ministry plan included a negative Net Plan position, primarily driven by the ministry initiatives placed into service over the last couple years. These exciting initiatives are long-term investments intended to grow and expand on our ministry commitments and offerings.

We continue to ask our flock to keep their ears and eyes open to opportunities for our congregation to get out into the community at new and exciting events to engage, show our support, and remind everyone that our doors are always open!

I want to thank everyone for their continued support of our beloved SUMC and ask you to keep sharing your gifts with our family as we continue our journey building toward our future!

				Total	Q3	
		Q3 Actuals		Q3 Actuals	Ministry Plan	Fav/(Unfav)
Total Contibutions	17,760	16,696	15,093	49,549	44,987	4,562
Other Receipts	8,197	3,832	10,059	22,088	9,885	12,203
Total Recipts	25,957	20,527	25,152	71,637	54,872	16,765
Budgeted Disbursements	27,828	21,686	23,054	72,568	68,822	(3,746)
Unbudgeted Disbursements	1,155	485	211	1,851	-	(1,851)
Total Disbursements	28,983	22,171	23,264	74,419	68,822	(5,596)
Net Plan Result	(3,026)	(1,644)	1,888	(2,782)	(13,950)	11,168

Sincerely,

Santo S. Gramando III

SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

SIGN UP FOR OUR FINANCIAL PEACE SMALL GROUP

Do you feel the need to change your relationship with money? How does financial peace look across life's different stages? Join us as we explore the profound connection between our life stages and our relationship with money. As we journey through Dave Ramsey's book "The Total Money Makeover," we'll uncover practical steps and biblical principles to achieve financial peace. Sign up today for Financial Peace Small Group Study beginning Tuesdays, January 9, 23, February 6 & 20.





PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

We are a group that gets together to create prayer shawls or baby blankets or fidget aprons for people in need. If you don't know how, we are very willing to teach. We want to extend the church's caring to our congregants and others in need and we send prayers to those in need. Come and join us on Monday afternoon at 2 pm. We meet in the Wesley room and do have a lot of chat time and sending of prayers and thankfulness.

Stephanie Reidinger, Roberta Haag, Julie Marin, Marge Peletier and Ruth Ann Trowbridge

TABS (Tuesday Adult Bible Study)

TABS has bi-monthly gatherings on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. The group meets at the church in the Wesley Room. There will be an hour of fellowship, sharing and prayer starting at 1:00 pm. Please contact Audrey Schultz if you have any questions at schultzaudrey0@gmail.com, or call 973-927-0657.



MEN'S STUDY—Saturdays, 7:00 am to 9:00 am via Zoom

The Men's Study Group meets early Saturday morning via Zoom meetings, where they study a variety of relevant Christian topics. Right now, the group is on break until Saturday, January 7th. Please contact Lee Pitea at pitea.1@osu.edu with any questions or thoughts concerning what you would prefer as a program for these meetings.

HOSPITALITY MINISTRY

"Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it." - Hebrews 13:2

"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me." - Mark 9:37



Hospitality grows from earnest witness and invitation to those outside the church's walls. It means demonstrating Christ-like love to the community around the church. SUMC is a loving church community, and we look to welcome newcomers as well as our established church family each Sunday.

This is an important ministry for our church and the Hospitality Team encourages all to consider serving in this ministry role. As a Greeter, you are the first impression that a newcomer has of our church. All that is required is a warm smile to extend the love of Christ to all who enter our sanctuary. The message we would like to send to all who join us at

worship service is:

UMM Prayer & Positive Thought

"Pray for Peace on Earth in 2024."

Positive Message for Youth

Let's Commit 2024 to Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control

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Thrift Shop is OPEN!

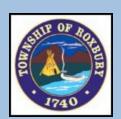
Twp. Of Roxbury Thanks SUMC

Dear SUMC,

Sending you all a HUGE THANK YOU for all your help with Home for the Holidays! Your church did a fantastic job as usual, offering so many great vendors, good food and entertainment.

It was a great day and I'm still thanking God for the wonderful weather. Thank you again. I wish you all a blessed, peaceful holiday season.

Appreciatively,
Michele
Michele S. O'Halloran
Executive Assistant to Township Manager
Township of Roxbury



Thanks you from Stan Melvin

Thank you to everyone for your prayers, your calls, cards, visits, and the wonderful meals you made for us. Thank you to the carolers and their beautiful voices as they came and sang to me before Christmas. I am coming along and feeling better each day! The doctor said it will take a few weeks. Happy New Year to everyone! See you in the New Year. Love, Stan Melvin



Wednesday, February 14, 2024



SUMC THRIFT SHOP

The Thrift Shop is open on Tuesday's from 8am-11am for donations only and Wednesday's from 9:30 am—11:30 am for shopping. We accept clothing, household items, glassware, jewelry, linens, etc. And particularly welcome seasonal items. Your donations can make a difference in the community!

Please contact Linda Diffley, Missions Chair or Stacy Migneault if you have any questions.



GIVING

CHURCH OFFERINGS

Thank you for your financial commitment to SUMC. We ask that you continue to support our ministries with your generous offerings. We also appreciate the ministry of our Finance Team to manage and guide the financial resources and health of our church!









ONLINE GIVING

SUMC offers an electronic option for making regular offerings through Vanco, our eGiving processor. If you are interested in joining this program go to the SUMC web page at sumcnj.org and click the "Give" tab at the top. Questions? Contact Jocelyn Hughes, Finance Chairperson at jocelynohughes@yahoo.com or Stephanie Rheinhardt, Financial Secretary at

SHOPRITE AND SUSSEX MARKET GIFT CARDS

stephanie.rheinhardt@gmail.com.

Please consider purchasing Shop Rite and Sussex Market gift cards in preparation for your holiday feast. Please contact Bruce Hopper at mainstchiro@gmail.com if you would like to purchase. For each gift card purchased the church receives a donation. We receive 5% for Shop Rite cards and 10% for Sussex Market cards. We thank you for your support of this program.





OUR MISSION

Succasunna United Methodist Church is a caring fellowship called to love and serve according to Jesus' example, welcome all people, worship God and grow as Christian disciples.



2024 BOXED OFFERING ENVELOPES

Your 2024 offering envelopes are in the entrance to the sanctuary and are available for pick up . If you would like numbered envelopes or if you would like to arrange for your box to be mailed or delivered, please contact Stephanie Rheinhardt at rheindardtx4@gmail.com

Church Staff

Rev. Myounghun Stephen Yun, Pastor pastorstephen@sumcnj.org
Jennifer Antoncich, Director of Youth & Family Life jantoncich@sumcnj.org
Audrey Schultz, Director of Music Angie Stierch, Praise Band Leader
Caryn Porter, Administrative Assistant Aura Smith, Sexton

Church Information

Office Hours: 9am—2pm Tuesday—Friday Phone: 973.584.7349 Email: office@sumcnj.org

January 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!	2 Thrift Shop OPEN for donations	3 Thrift Shop OPEN for shopping	4 Scouts 7:00—9pm Choir Rehearsal 7pm	5 Scouts Den Meeting 6:30—8pm	6 Men's Study 7-9am Social Justice & Youth— Dover Faith Kitchen
7	8 Prayer Shawl Ministry Wesley Room 2 pm	9 Thrift Shop OPEN for donations TABS—Wesley Room 1pm Financial Peace Study 7pm	10 Thrift Shop Open For shopping	11 Coffee with Pastor Scouts 7:00 –9pm Choir Rehearsal 7pm	12	13 Men's Study 7-9am Taking the Christmas decorations down 10am
14 Family Outing to Villa Roller Rink	15 Prayer Shawl Ministry Wesley Room 2 pm Martin Luther King Jr. Day	16 Thrift Shop OPEN for donations	17 Thrift Shop OPEN for shopping	18 Scouts 7:00—9pm Choir Rehearsal 7pm	19 Martin Luther King Jr. Interfaith Service at Temple Shalom 7pm	20 Men's Study 7-9am
21	22 Prayer Shawl Ministry Wesley Room 2 pm	23 Thrift Shop OPEN for donations TABS—Wesley Room 1pm Financial Peace Study 7pm	24 Thrift Shop OPEN for shopping	25 Scouts 7::00—9pm	26 Youth Group Meeting	27 Men's Study 7-9am
28 International Dinner	29 Prayer Shawl Ministry Wesley Room 2 pm Building Better Wom- en—Ceramic Fun 7pm at Margarita Valdes's home	30 Thrift Shop OPEN for donations	31 Thrift Shop OPEN for shopping			

February 2024

15	NON	1115	WED	1111	FRI	SAT
					2	3
				Scouts 7:30—9pm	7	S Men's Study
				Choir Rehearsal 7pm		7-9am
4	22	6	7	8 Coffee with Pastor	6	10
	Prayer Shawl Ministry Wesley Room 2 pm	for donations	Thrift Shop OPEN for shopping	Scouts 7:30—9pm		Men's Study 7-9am
		Financial Peace Study 7pm		Choir Rehearsal 7pm		
11	12	13 Thrift Shop OPEN	14 Thrift Shop OPEN for shopping	15 Scouts 7:30—9pm	16	17
Chile Cook-off during Fellowship Hour		for donations		Choir Behearcal 7nm		Men's Study 7-9am
Family outing—TBD		TABS—Wesley Room 1pm	ıe's			
)			Ash			
			Wednesday			
18	19 Praver Shawl Ministry	20 Thrift Shop OPEN	21 Thrift Shop OPEN	22 Scouts 7:30—9pm	23	24 Men's Study
	Wesley Room 2 pm	for donations		Choir Behearsal 7pm		7-9am
	President's Day	Financial Peace Study 7pm				Building Better Women at Hammer & Stain 2pm
25	26 Prayer Shawl Ministry Wesley Room 2 pm	27 Thrift Shop OPEN for donations	28 Thrift Shop OPEN for shopping	29 Scouts 7:30—9pm		
		TABS—Wesley Room 1pm	Youth Group Meeting	Choir Rehearsal 7pm		