

December 2012

Dear Friends in Christ ~

OK! I freely admit that I was part of the crowds trying to get the best deals on Black Friday. And I was actually disappointed that I didn't find long lines at the cash registers ... simply because I love talking to the other customers waiting to purchase their great bargains!!!

Well, as I shopped, I remembered back to when my son, Kevin, would write his letter to Santa with his very detailed Christmas wish list. And, as I looked at all the tags on the Community Christmas tree and our St. Paul's 'family' tree ... and saw the boxes donated to Samaritan's Purse and the gifts needed to make a joyous Christmas for the children at Bethany's Children's Home ... I began to wonder what my letter to God might look like this holiday season. I imagine it would read something like this:

*Dear God:*

*As I prepare once again to welcome the advent of Your Son into my heart and life, I am painfully aware that I am living well this year while so many people are not. And so I thought I would send You **my** Christmas wish list. This year, O God, I would like:*

- *To share my time more freely in visiting and serving others*
- *To seek alternative gifts: instead of buying sweaters, I would like to donate a sheep ... instead of a huge turkey dinner, I would like to give a flock of hope and, thus, help communities around the globe*
- *To invite a new friend or neighbor to worship and fellowship with us at St. Paul's*
- *To inspire more creative ways to share generously of ALL of our gifts with neighbors near and far*
- *To speak a bold, new message of peace on earth for ALL. Thank You!*

As we humbly approach our celebration of the birth of God's greatest gift to the world ~ His gift of perfect love in the birth of His Son ~ I pray that we may each find new and wonderful ways to say **Thank You** to God for all that we have and all that we are.

*In Christ's peace,  
Pastor Patti and family*

*St. Paul's  
United Church of Christ  
104 Green Street  
Sellersville PA 18960*

Phone: 215-257-7268

Fax: 215-257-0902

Web: [www.stpaulsucc.net](http://www.stpaulsucc.net)

### Staff

- ◆ Rev. Patti Thomas,  
Pastor
- ◆ Nancy Ziegenfuss,  
Director of Christian  
Ed.
- ◆ Christopher Ziegenfuss,  
Choir Director
- ◆ Peter Ziegenfuss,  
Handbell Choir Director
- ◆ Ruth Schoeller,  
Organist
- ◆ James Stover,  
Assistant Organist
- ◆ Karen Weikel,  
Secretary, Newsletter  
Editor
- ◆ Cindy Bibic,  
Financial Secty.
- ◆ Dennis Hurchalla,  
Custodian

*Worship times ~ see  
schedule.*

*Sunday School ~ 9 a.m.*

## ~ *The Voice of Consistory* ~

### Giving Thanks

During the Holiday season, we are busy with the usual preparations. Our homes are illuminated with brightly colored lights, and fir trees are decorated with ornaments, garlands, and tinsel. We celebrate with family and friends. We cheerily greet everyone with a hearty "Merry Christmas!" Thoughtful pride is taken in carefully selecting the perfect gifts for those we love.

The climax of our celebration is the unwrapping of those cherished gifts. This is followed by the arduous task of writing notes to give thanks for our precious new possessions. Although these are our customary traditions, do they truly grasp the real meaning of Christmas?

During the Christmas season we celebrate the greatest gift of all... God's gift to us, *Emmanuel*, meaning *God with us* (Matt 1:23). Jesus' presence on Earth that first Christmas was evidence of God's enduring love for us. He continues to offer us the gifts of redemption, forgiveness, and a restored relationship with God. We receive this gift with joy, knowing that God wrapped it with his unconditional love and sealed it with grace.

As we celebrate this most joyous time of the year, we are continually reminded of the daily blessings God gives to each of us. In James 1:17, we learn "*Every good and perfect gift is from above and comes down to us from the Father of lights.*" God's blessings in our lives provide all that is good, satisfying, full, and complete.

Each of us is blessed with chosen, special gifts and talents to be shared and used to further God's work on Earth. By using our blessings and talents wisely, a "thank you note" is delivered to God, and we begin to grasp the real meaning of Christmas. Do you reflect on the blessings you have received? Do you offer your service, talents, and gifts in service to God? How are you thanking God for the blessings you have received? You do this both in prayers of thanksgiving, and in your life of gratitude and service. By regularly thanking God for his blessings, you are less likely to ignore them or take them for granted.

Share the joy of the season with family and friends. The presence of God and those we care about makes any event special. Approach the New Year with a renewed appreciation for your unique blessings.

May you and your loved ones grasp the true meaning of Christmas and the blessings and joy of the New Year!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!  
Patricia Guth

# Sundays in December

## ◆ Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> , First Sunday of Advent / HOLY COMMUNION

**ONE SERVICE at 10:15 am.**



- Sunday School for all ages, 9 am.
- Crossroads, 9 am.
- Theme ~ Sign of Things to Come ~ God's steadfast love invites us to enter Advent by trusting and living out the realm Jesus proclaims. Prophets declare earth and Heaven are astir with songs of a new day to come. The signs of God's nearness summons us to balance our longing for God's coming day with faithful action in this day and to trust that God provides the way forward.
- Scriptures: Luke 21:25-36 / Psalm 25:1-10
- Deadline to order Christmas poinsettias.
- Coffee, Cookies and Conversation.

## ~ BETHANY CHILDREN'S HOME Offering ~ December 2 ~

Gifts to Bethany help provide quality care and treatment for youth who have suffered profound abuse, neglect and family turmoil. Bethany wants their boys and girls to know and feel they are loved and loveable in God's eyes. Many need to experience "Christmas miracles" and none of this is possible without support from the congregation.

Your offering envelope is attached to this Newsletter. Please note: do not mail to the address shown on the envelope. Please place the envelope with your name and/or envelope number in the offering plate.

**GIFT SUGGESTIONS.** . . for gift buying for the children at Bethany, flyers are located on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Please bring these items to the office no later than Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. DO NOT wrap the gifts, as the House Parents sort and wrap them at Bethany.

*~ Thank you for your gifts as they make Christmas special for the boys and girls at Bethany ~*



## ◆ Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup> , Second Sunday in Advent

**ONE SERVICE at 10:15 am.**



- Sunday School for all ages, 9 am.
- Theme ~ Make Ready! John the Baptizer implores those gathered at the banks of the Jordan river and those gathered in churches this Sunday ~ to remove any obstacles that are hindering openness to the renewed ways of peace and justice that God has promised to reveal through the child to come. John speaks a bold word in anticipation of such saving love: Prepare!
- Scriptures: Luke 3:1-6 / Phil. 1:3-11
- Deadline to return Bethany Children's Home gifts.
- Money is due to Lucille Moore for Christmas poinsettias.
- Coffee, cookies and conversation.

## **A Congregational Meeting**

will be held immediately following the service, December 9<sup>th</sup>,  
to elect candidates to Consistory and to accept the Proposed budget for 2013.

Consistory: Nominated for a 2<sup>nd</sup> term: Aaron Clark, Scott Huff, Paul Koehler  
Nominated for a 1<sup>st</sup> term: Debbie Koehler and Richard Moyer



Endowment: Nominated for a 1<sup>st</sup> term: Jeffrey Moyer  
Nominated for a 2<sup>nd</sup> term: Paul Koehler

We express our thanks and appreciation to outgoing  
Consistory member, Stew Leister; Endowment member, Cindy Fosbenner, and our  
Conference delegates, Stew Leister and Barbara Mainhart.

### ◆ **Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup> , Third Sunday in Advent**

**ONE SERVICE at 10:15 am.**

- **Sunday School for all ages, 9 am.**
- **Theme ~ Look Forward.** The scriptures invite all to find hope in relationship with God and move with God into another way of living. In our journey with God, questions lead into expectation and repentance leads into words and deeds of mercy and justice. God is near ~ today and in all the days to come. God rejoices over us ~ today and in all the days to come.
- **Scriptures: Isaiah 12:2-6 / Luke 3:7-18**
- **“Joyful Noise” loose change offering**
- **Coffee, Cookies and Conversation.**



### **Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> , Fourth Sunday in Advent CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**

**ONE SERVICE at 10:15 am.**

**9 AM ~ Sunday School classes**

**9:50 AM ~ costuming**

You are invited to share in our joyous preparation for the birth of the Christ Child  
as the members of our Sunday School classes present “*The Christmas Story.*”

Come hear the Good News about God’s greatest gift of love.

- **Theme ~ Moving with Mary’s Song**
- **Scriptures: Hebrews 10:5-10 / Luke 1:39-45**
- **Coffee, Cookies and Conversation**

## **UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING ~ December 23 ~**

Your gifts to the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross helps the Ministerial Assistance Board to bring a ray of light and hope in desperate life circumstances to some retired clergy and lay employees. It helps provide pension supplements, health premium subsidies, emergency assistance to active or retired clergy families, and Christmas gift checks to hundreds of retirees and to those who are disabled. This offering will be supported on December 23<sup>rd</sup> with our gifts ~ please place your name and/or envelope number on the envelope and place it in the offering plate or mail to the church.

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You are cordially invited to attend the  
Christmas Eve Family Service of Candlelight and Music  
~ 7:30 p.m. ~

As a community of faith, let us come and celebrate the birth of the Christ Child,  
through Scripture, music and the soft glow of candlelight.



### ◆ **Sunday, December 30<sup>th</sup> , First Sunday after Christmas**

**ONE SERVICE at 10:15 am.**

- **No Sunday School ~ Sunday School resumes on January 6.**
- **Theme ~ Who Is this Child?** What does it mean to grow in the ways of God? Ancient traditions live when they provide paths to explore and places to encourage searching by young and old. Jesus grows by listening and asking questions of wise ones. We cannot help but wonder who, and whose, this child is. Such wonder treasures every experience that brings growth toward God.
- **Scriptures: Luke 2:41-52 / Col. 3:12-17**
- **Final service with Ruth Schoeller as St. Paul's organist.**
- **Coffee, Cookies and Conversation.**

## Happenings & Events in December

### Christmas Tree Decorating Party

Saturday, December 1, beginning at 4 pm.

*Come decorate the Christmas tree, get into the Christmas Spirit,  
and create a Family Keepsake Ornament*



Adults can help with various stages of setting up the tree and stringing the lights and beads. While the adults work, the kids can take part in some fun crafts. Throughout the evening, the whole family can work together to create a family keepsake ornament. Once the tree is set up, we'll take a dinner break. After dinner, the kids and adults will decorate the tree together. Bring the whole family (grandparents, too!)

Dinner will be provided. Please bring a dessert to share. Email



WINTERFEST in SELLERSVILLE ~



When: Tuesday, December 4<sup>th</sup>

Time: 7-9 pm.

Where: St. Paul's Sanctuary

Who: Valley Steel Drum Ensemble ~ don't miss this!

### Christmas Pageant & Party Time!

**Sunday School families:**

Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 am.

We will gather in Fellowship Hall to select pageant costumes before heading up to the Sanctuary for rehearsal.

Following rehearsal, everyone is invited to stay for the Annual Christmas Party complete with cookies and a visit from Santa.

**Bakers Needed:** We need cookies for our Christmas Party! If you are willing to provide a dozen or more cookies, please sign up on the sheet in the Narthex. Please bring cookies to the church kitchen by Saturday, December 15 at 9:30 am. Many thanks!



### Still Time to Participate in the ADVENT BIBLE STUDY

Due to a conflict in times, our Advent Bible Study, "Christmas is Not Your Birthday", will take place on Wednesday evenings, 7 pm. in the Parlor on:

Wednesday, November 28

Wednesday, December 5

Wednesday, December 12

Wednesday, December 19, and Wednesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>.



Come out and join in the lively discussions. Sign up sheet is posted on the bulletin board in the Narthex.

## Outreach: In the Community

### ~ St. Paul's CHRISTMAS TREE for a LOCAL FAMILY ~

We have received a local family through Pennridge FISH to sponsor a family this year. The family consists of 5 children: 23 yr. old girl, 14 yr. old boy, 12 yr. old girl, 9 yr. old boy, 3 yr. old girl and 18 mo. old girl. Mom works full time and Dad is a farmer for Rodale who is having some heart health issues and is on some disability. He is in need of a pacemaker in the near future. Please do whatever you can in helping this worthy family.

#### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- ◆ Take a tag or two from the tree in the Narthex, purchase the item, wrap it and return it to church with the tag attached. You may leave it on the floor or table near the tree.
- ◆ Please purchase the item as requested. If you have any questions about the item, see Brenda Clark.
- ◆ If you wish to make a monetary donation, please feel free to place your donation in the box on the bulletin board or see that Brenda receives it.
- ◆ The gifts **MUST** be back to church absolutely no later than Sunday, December 23.



If you can have them back to church by December 16, that would be appreciated. More information will be found in your weekly bulletin. If you wish to participate and have any questions, please call Brenda at 215-257-7268 or contact the church office. Thank you so much for your continued support for this worthy project!



**TURKEYS / HAMS for FISH** ~ If you wish to donate a ham or turkey for FISH holiday meal giveaway, you may do so by:

- ◆ Purchasing the item and bring it to St. Paul's.
- ◆ Place in the freezers in the green room, the green room hallway or the dishwasher side of the kitchen. Please mark them for FISH.
- ◆ They will be taken to FISH the week of December 16<sup>th</sup> so please have them to church by December 16.
- ◆ Please let Brenda Clark know if you have left a turkey or ham, 215-257-2584.



**COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS TREE** . . . is up by the Sellersville Museum.



- ✓ Tags list an item, gift card, or hat/gloves.
- ✓ Return the gifts to the box outside the church office at St. Paul's by Wed., December 12<sup>th</sup>.
- ✓ Remember, they are **NOT** to be wrapped.
- ✓ Wrapping supplies needed: paper, gift bags, tissue paper, bows, gift tags, tape, and can be placed in the same box.

## LOOKING AHEAD to January . . . . .

- ◆ **Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, Epiphany Sunday**
    - **Worship, 8 am. in Parlor; 10:15 in Sanctuary**
    - **HOLY COMMUNION**
    - **Sunday School for all ages, 9 am.**
    - **Crossroads, 9 am.**
    - **Scriptures: Eph. 3:1-12 / Matt. 2:1-12**
    - **ORDINATION and INSTALLATION of CONSISTORY MEMBERS** – our newly-elected members of Consistory and other committees, will be ordained and installed during late worship ~ a meeting of all Consistory members will take place immediately following this service, at which time the officers for 2013 will be elected.
    - **CREW Meeting, 7 pm.**
    - **Deadline for Committee Year-end reports.**
    - **Coffee, Cookies, Conversation.**
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- ◆ **Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, Baptism of Christ Sunday**
    - **Worship, 8 am. in Parlor; 10:15 in Sanctuary**
    - **Sunday School for all ages, 9 am.**
    - **Scriptures: Acts 8:14-17 / Luke 3:15, 21-22**
    - **Youth Group, 7 pm.**
    - **Coffee, Cookies, Conversation.**
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- ◆ **Sunday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, Second Sunday after Epiphany**
    - **Worship, 8 am. in Parlor; 10:15 in Sanctuary**
    - **Sunday School for all ages, 9 am.**
    - **Scriptures: 1 Cor. 12:1-11 / John 2:1-11**
    - **“Joyful Noise” loose change offering.**
    - **Confirmation, 5 pm.**
    - **Coffee, Cookies, Conversation.**
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- ◆ **Sunday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, Third Sunday after Epiphany**
  - **Worship, 8 am. in Parlor; 10:15 in Sanctuary**
  - **Sunday School for all ages, 9 am.**
  - **Scriptures: 1 Cor. 12:12-31a / Luke 4:14-21**
  - **Coffee, Cookies, Conversation.**



## Help victims of Hurricane Sandy!

St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Sellersville has been designated by Lutheran Disaster Response and Lutheran Congregational Services as a collection point for donated items for storm victims.

- ✓ Non-perishable food items, and 'clean-up buckets' are needed.
- ✓ A listing is posted in the Narthex for you to take which describes items needed for the 'clean up' buckets.
- ✓ You may drop off items at St. Michael's, Church Street, Sellersville between 8:30 am. and 3 pm. Monday through Friday and Wednesday evenings, until 8 pm. Phone 215-257-6040 with any questions.
- ✓ Items will be delivered to New York and New Jersey areas.

## **FAMILY FUN NIGHT IN 2013!**

Beginning in January, 2013, Family Fun Night will not take place every month. We will still continue to have Family Fun Night, just a little less frequently. Stay tuned for information on the next Family Fun Night!



*Opportunities to serve...*



### **~ Nursery Volunteers for December ~**

Dec. 2 - Nancy Ziegenfuss & Lucille Moore  
Dec. 9 - Terri Hawkins & Breanna Barndt  
Dec. 16 - Marty Milkowich & Jeremy Mask  
Dec. 23- Christmas Program - No nursery  
Dec. 25- No Staffed nursery

### **~ Nursery Volunteers for January ~**

Jan. 6 - Donna Huff and Nancy Moyer  
Jan. 13- Lori Milkowich & Jacqueline Kemmerer  
Jan. 20- Donna Tomlinson and Sam Clark  
Jan. 27- Lucy Chrastina and Kristen Tomlinson



### **SIGN UP TO USHER!**

The sheet is posted in the Narthex ~ if you and your family/spouse, etc. would like to usher, please sign your name behind the dates you want.

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### **YOUR PICTURES ARE WANTED ~**

Pictures are needed for St. Paul's website. Please contact Karen Weaver at [karenlweaver@juno.com](mailto:karenlweaver@juno.com) with any submissions or questions about the website. Be sure to visit [www.stpaulsucc.net](http://www.stpaulsucc.net) and check it out!!

### **COFFEE, COOKIES & CONVERSATION**

follows late church each Sunday. .

Consider signing up for a Sunday – ask a friend or relative to join you in preparing a small assortment of goodies with drinks. The sign up clipboard sheet is located in Fretz Hall!





## Stewardship of the Earth: "Honor and Preserve All of God's Creation"

### The Eagles Go Green

The Philadelphia Eagles along with over 100 other teams are going green.

By the end of the year, 100% of the electricity consumed at the stadium will be created by the use of 11,000 solar panels and 14 wind turbines. Other teams have also reduced their environmental impact.

The Seattle Mariners have saved \$1 million over 3 years by reducing natural gas use and electricity consumption. Replacing the incandescent bulb scoreboard with a new LED version has saved \$50,000 per year.



Fifteen other teams, including NBA's Atlanta Hawks and baseball's Washington Nationals have achieved some form of LED certification – the gold standard for rating green buildings.

At least eight MLB ballparks, Boston's Fenway Park and St. Louis Busch Stadium, and five NBA arenas now have high-tech solar electric systems.

**So all of you sports fans and environmentalists, join in a rousing Hurrah!**



"It is a joy to see the long-term effects of parents investing in *The Fold's* program not only for transformation in the lives of their teens but in their own lives and marriages. During a Fall Parent Seminar, *The Fold* staff invest in the lives of parents through teaching, equipping an support to help them through the hard times. Your generosity of a check for \$1,000 assures us that we can continue this incredible need"

~ *Emily Larkin, Dir. Of Dev.*  
*The Fold Family Ministries*

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"What a blessing to see people from different faiths and denominations coming together to build a home. Thank you for being a part of this campaign. Your donation of \$1,400 will help this vision become a reality."

~ *Debbie Lynch, Res. Director,*  
*Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County*

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(Above gifts were dispersed through St. Paul's Endowment Fund)

"The Borough of Sellersville would like to thank you and your congregation for allowing the use of St. Paul's as a shelter during Hurricane Sandy. Fortunately, no one had to be evacuated, but it is appreciated that you and the congregation were prepared to assist if needed."

~ *David Rivert, Borough Mgr.*  
*Sellersville Borough*

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To all St. Paul's members:

"I wish to extend my heartfelt appreciation for the wonderful service of music yesterday (Nov. 18) and your expression of friendship shown to me.

I have enjoyed these 7+ years serving you and now I feel I have reached a time in my life to make a change and perhaps slow down a bit.

It has been my pleasure to work with Chris and the choir members, with Nancy and the Sunday School children, and a real plus playing trumpet with Pete Ziegenfuss. My wish is for St. Paul's to grow in the Music Department.

So now I say, not 'Good Bye', but 'So Long', and hope to see you along the way in the future every now and then."

~ *Ruth Schoeller*



★ Thank You! ★  
★ Thank you! ★

“Many thanks to Debbie Koehler and Bux Mont Awards for laminating the tags for the Community Christmas Tree at the Sellersville Museum. I am able to reuse many of these tags from one year to the next and is much appreciated.” ~ Brenda Clark



**...BULLETIN and FLOWER CHARTS!**

These charts will be posted on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. If you wish to place FLOWERS in the Altar

vases or the standing vases, and/or sponsor the BULLETIN for a Sunday, please place your name after the date or dates you wish to sponsor. (Bulletins cost \$10 per Sunday). Close to the date you are sponsoring, you will be contacted. Many thanks to *Shirley Wolfe* and *Loyce Frankenfield* for chairing these charts each year and making contacts ~

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**...OPERATION SHOEBOX UPDATE** ~ We are excited to say that a total of 21 shoeboxes were compiled by members, combining with the 20 shoeboxes from Vacation Bible School makes the grand total of 41! Well Done! Thank you, everyone!

~ *Janet Dunlap*

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**....CROP WALK, 2012, UPDATE** ~ There hasn't been a final tally of walkers and funds raised, but we do know that St. Paul's had more walkers this year and are certain we exceeded our goal of \$150 per walker raised. And it was wonderful to see the family groups walking. Our thanks to one and all, walkers and sponsors.

~ *Nancy Lyons*

**... Your ENVELOPES for 2013** will be located on a table in Fretz Hall in December. Please remember to take your envelopes as well as envelopes of your family and friends with you. If you cannot pick them up on a Sunday or at any of the additional services, please call the office to make other arrangements.

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**... LOOK FOR your next GOOD NEWS Newsletter** to be published in January covering February events. (Deadline for articles is Tuesday, January 15.) Please refer to the January worship schedule and calendar in this newsletter and on-line at [www.stpaulsucc.net](http://www.stpaulsucc.net).

**...YEAR END REPORTS are due January 6.**

All committee chairpersons should have their annual reports turned into the church office no later than Monday, January 6.

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**...ENDOWMENT REQUEST FORMS.** Forms are located in the Narthex in the black wall bracket and are also available in the office. Please fill out as indicated, and return to Scott Huff's mailbox. Forms are also located on-line at [www.stpaulsucc.net](http://www.stpaulsucc.net).

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**...LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW.**

Winter is upon us! In case of inclement weather, the Pastor and Consistory President will make a decision regarding delays or cancellations by 7 am. All Consistory members will be notified by phone chain. Our Consistory President will then notify WNPV Lansdale (1440 am ), KYW (1060am) and newline (channel 69 on TV) with our cancellation information. In addition, cancellation information will be on St. Paul's office answering machine, 215-257-7268 and on the website.

\*\*In order to be credited for this fiscal year of 2012, all contributions must be received in the church office or placed in the offering plate by Sunday, December 30, 2012. Any contributions received after this date will be credited to the year 2013.

According to tax regulations, checks that are placed in the church offering during the first worship service in 2013 will not qualify for a charitable contribution deduction in 2012, even if the check is predated to 2012 or was actually written in 2012.

