

Close Encounters



This past week among the articles I read were two that stood out.

One reported the results from a CDC study of high school girls in the United States. It made for grim reading. Three of five girls reported feeling “*persistent sadness or hopelessness.*” This represents a sixty percent increase over the last decade. Thirty percent reported that they had seriously considered attempting suicide. While the numbers reported to the CDC are lower, they are still terrible for boys as well. A third of boys feel persistently sad or hopeless and fourteen percent have seriously considered suicide.

I am not writing this to give my opinion about what is going on here. I have a few opinions of course and you might as well. But the baseline facts are bad enough. Far too many people, especially young people, have nothing to hope for, and no-one to hope in.

The other article I read was also about young people, college students at Asbury University in Kentucky. Asbury is a Christian school and as part of their normal routine, have a chapel service every Wednesday. But last Wednesday something strange happened. The service ended, but the students didn't leave. They are still there as I write this almost a week later.

A college professor reported on what he saw: “*When I arrived, I saw hundreds of students singing quietly. They were praising and praying earnestly for themselves and their neighbors and our world—expressing repentance and contrition for sin and interceding for healing, wholeness, peace, and justice.*” He goes on: “*I've seen efforts to manufacture “revivals” and “movements of the Spirit” that were sometimes not only hollow but also harmful. I do not want anything to do with that. And truth be told, this is nothing like that. There is no pressure or hype. There is no manipulation. There is no high-pitched emotional fervor. To the contrary, it has so far been mostly calm and serene. The mix of hope and joy and peace is indescribably strong and indeed almost palpable—a vivid and incredibly powerful sense of shalom. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is undeniably powerful but also so gentle.*”

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Friends, for the last few months I have been talking about our need to encounter God at Epiphany. These two articles encapsulate why that is. On one hand it seems that in our increasingly Godless world the darkness is moving in, wave after wave. Without God, we may well be swept away with those waves. Many are. At the same time, I am convinced that God is here, that He wants to meet us through the power and presence of his Holy Spirit, and that the thing he will give us, that incredible mix of “*hope and joy and peace*” is exactly what we need for the days ahead of us.

God bless,

Pat



Consecration of Diocesan Bishop Saturday



We are all invited to participate in the consecration of Bishop-Elect Chris Warner at 10am on February 18 at the Falls Church Anglican. There will be a reception following.

Because seating is limited, the diocese is asking those who are planning to attend to sign up in advance. You can sign up here: <https://www.anglicandoma.org/consecration>

Epiphany is heavily involved in Bishop-Elect Chris' consecration, with our vergers, altar guild, and Fr. Peter all taking on responsibilities. It is going to be a magnificent service of worship and a joyful beginning of ministry for our new bishop.

A Young Man's Burden



It is not often that we meet at night here at Epiphany. But, it turns out that January 7, a rare Saturday night, the lights of our church streaming from the windows prompted a young man on a bus to be spontaneous. He was on the bus because his car was in a shop and he was on his way home to Reston. But he was burdened for his family. He had been having dreams about his Muslim family and their eternal destination. He felt the need to have someone else pray with him that God would reach them. As he was reflecting on this during the bus ride home, the lights from Epiphany beckoned him to get off the bus and enter.

He came inside and was able to enjoy our beautiful Evensong worship, full of Scripture and music. This was the service where we were dedicating our organ and the music was exceptionally beautiful. At the end of the service, as I turned around to greet people, I was immediately attracted by his face. Having spent years in the Middle East, I recognized the features. He was sitting alone, so I approached and we started to chat. We talked about his name, a familiar one to me, as he told me of his origins in Morocco and his former Muslim identity. He had decided to follow Jesus ten years ago but no one in his family has followed suit yet. He had gotten off the bus because he had wanted a pastor to pray with him for his family. I told him I was a pastor, while I called over my husband so we could pray together for his family. He was open, yet guarded, hopeful but a little shy too. After we prayed, we offered him a ride home. I gave him my contact information. I don't know what will come of this, but I believe that God is not done with him or his family yet.

These are the best events in our lives, when we are doing what we normally do and others share in it. We want our lights to shine (literally in this case) so that the world may see God's holy light. It is easy to recognize God's hand at work which would prompt this young man to get off the bus and walk into a church. We see God's handiwork because I was reminded of many years of praying for Muslims to know Jesus' light and that special night I got to meet a brother in Christ. We had the privilege of praying for his family and our new friends' burden was lifted. God is so good to us and wants us to share that goodness with others. May you be encouraged to shine the light of Christ to a world that walks in the darkness.

Pamela +

Financial Update: Giving Lags Expenses, but Pledge Drive, December Giving were Strong

Over the second half of 2022, you may have noticed that Epiphany's giving was not keeping up with operating expenses. As a church, we keep a financial reserve on hand for times like this, but that reserve isn't endless. Both the finance committee and vestry knew that it would be time to take a close look at giving, expenses and the budget in January of 2023.

Financial *Update*

The finance committee has now done that. On one hand, giving to support church operations is still about 12 percent less than what we budgeted for. At the same time, after very generous giving by the congregation in December, along with a significant increase in pledged giving for 2023, the finance committee's recommendation to the vestry is continue with our current budget while encouraging the church staff to look for ways to save where we can.

Their recommendation was based on three datapoints, all of which are signs of sacrificial and generous support for our church by the congregation.

First, counting the organ project and other special projects, our total giving as a church in 2022 came to \$926,573 which is about \$20,000 more than budget for fiscal year 2022-23.

Second, during our fall pledge drive both the total amount pledged, and the average amount pledged climbed significantly. Pledges for 2023 came to \$698,502. This compares to pledges of \$613,844 in 2022.

Finally, our congregation was amazingly generous during December. Total giving for the month came to \$153,609. After December expenses were paid for, and we made our Epiphany gift, this went a long way toward closing the gap between giving and expenses.

Going forward, the finance committee and vestry will continue to monitor our financial condition. We need your continued sacrificial giving month-by-month in 2023 to keep ourselves on firm financial footing. At the same time we are so very grateful for those that give to Epiphany from what God has given each of us.

If you have questions or would like more details about Epiphany's budget, Tom Miller is the chair of the finance committee. He can be reached at wtmtgc@gmail.com.

NO, Fr. Peter Doesn't Want You to Buy him Gift Cards

Once or twice a year, some people connected to Epiphany get an email that says it is from Fr. Peter. The email text looks something like this:

"Hello! Are you less busy at the moment? I got a request for you to manage discreetly. I'm occupied to answer calls so kindly respond back via mail. Thanks

Rev. Peter Frank"

If you reply, then you will receive a response something like this:

"I need you to purchase 7 quantities of Amex Gift Card or Visa Gift card with a \$100 face value each for a total of \$700. You can purchase these at Target or any nearby retailer. I want to give it to the first group of staffs I have in mind, which includes you. Once you have them, then email me back on here, I will let you know what to do with the cards. I've already chosen their emails, so I'll take care of the distribution."

Here is the thing to know. **Fr. Peter will never, never, ever, ever ask any member of Epiphany to purchase gift cards for him for any reason.** This is an attempt to take advantage of people's desire to help the church and Fr. Peter.

If you ever receive an email that you are not sure about that is supposedly from Fr. Peter or another leader at Epiphany. Here is what to do.

1. First, look at the email address, not just the name. These scammers don't have access to Epiphany emails, instead they set up a different email on a free email service like Google's gmail and impersonate Fr. Peter.
2. Second, don't click on anything or respond to the email directly. Instead phone the church office if you have any questions.
3. Third remember once again that **Fr. Peter will never, never, ever, ever ask any member of Epiphany to purchase gift cards for him for any reason!**

These scams are sadly increasingly common, and prey on churches in particular. Be aware, and don't let people take advantage of your goodwill and desire to help the church.



HELP WANTED:

Hospitality Coordinator

Epiphany loves to gather around a meal. We also host diocesan meetings from time to time. To do this well, we need a volunteer hospitality coordinator who can estimate and order food, and organize a team to set up and serve. Most years, we have between eight and a dozen events that we would ask a hospitality coordinator to help with. Most events are known well in advance, with funeral receptions being the exception. Please pray about this need. If you think God may be giving you a desire to help Epiphany in this way, please contact Fr. Peter (pfrank@epiphanyanglican.net).

Holy Land 2023 - 20 Travelers Registered!

Traveling to the Holy Land and walking where Jesus walked is a life-changing and faith building experience. Epiphany will be going on pilgrimage October 30 - November 9 in 2023. We have 20 travelers signed-up. That means our trip is moving ahead. It also means we only have a few open spots left. If you are thinking of visiting Israel with us, now is the time to register!

During our ten-day trip, we will be spending time in Galilee, the mountains of Judea, the Negev, Samaria, and of course the Old City of Jerusalem. When we are in Jerusalem, we will be staying at the Christ Church guest house. Christ church is Jerusalem's Anglican church and also the oldest protestant church in the city. It is also just inside the Jaffa Gate of the Old City, just a few minutes-walk from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (Jesus' tomb) and Golgotha, the Western Wall, the Via Dola Rosa and countless other amazing locations.

While inflation and increased travel costs are a reality, the trip is reasonably priced, at \$3,099 assuming 20 travelers. To this, we will need to add the cost of plane tickets. Right now, we are set to fly on United Airlines from Dulles.

If you would like to be on Epiphany's information list for this pilgrimage, send Fr. Peter an email:

(pfrank@epiphanyanglican.net).



Boys on their way to Sabbath Prayers, Old City Jerusalem.

Shrove Tuesday Pancakes – An Update!

Shrove Tuesday (sometimes known as “Fat Tuesday,” the day before Ash Wednesday) is coming up on February 21.

Thank you to everyone who has already signed up! There’s still time to sign up in the fellowship of Epiphany. This is a great time to invite friends, neighbors, and co-workers to an Epiphany event. Suggested donation on the night of this event will be \$5 per person to defray the cost of food.

And -- we’re excited to announce that Live Oak, a band featuring Epiphany’s very own Bob Schulenberg and Fr Robin, will be playing live music to go along with our pancakes! So this promises to be a fun family evening before we move into the season of Lent.

If you’d like to help with the dinner, there’s still plenty of opportunity to help out with set up, clean up, or cooking. Please contact Joyce Schmalz at matzocat@msn.com if you want to join the fun of Pancake Palooza. Thanks!



Fr. Peter shows off his pancake flipping skills.



Ash Wednesday Services

We will be gathering for worship and the imposition of ashes on Wednesday, February 22 at Church of the Epiphany. We will offer two services, at noon, and also at 7pm. The

Epiphany's Women Ministry



Epiphany's Women Ministry invites you to a Winter/Spring gathering with Guest Speaker Irene Pruitt. This event will be in the church fellowship hall on Saturday, March 25th at 10:30 am.

Irene is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Registered Supervisor in Virginia, and has over fifteen years of experience in providing counseling in a variety of settings. She received a Bachelors in Science from Georgetown University, and a Master's of Science from Virginia Tech, where she studied Marriage and Family Therapy.

In counseling, she combines a compassionate presence, proven psychotherapeutic methods and the timeless wisdom of Christian teaching to help clients heal wounds from the past, reshape present patterns and relationships, and discover a new path into a healthy and joyful future.

Irene will be speaking on parenting styles. This is applicable to people who have not yet started parenting, those currently parenting, and those grand-parenting.



Returning to Arbor Terrace

It is time to move back to offering communion at Arbor Terrace. We need help to make this change. Right now, we will be celebrating communion twice a month at 2pm on the second and fourth Sundays. If you would be willing to join an Epiphany clergy person and musician in supporting these services, please contact Fr. Peter (pfrank@epiphanyanglican.net). Ideally, we would have a team of two lay people at each service who would pass out bulletins, participate in the singing and worship, and then assist the clergy in distributing communion.



A Protestant Encounters Four Icons

by Gary Hall

At the request of a member of our fellowship I was asked to write an impression of my encounter with Elizabeth Hudgins' "Adding Light." A bit of back story might help. I was perusing the array of Icons in the sanctuary . I'm drawn to them in a mysterious way that is hard to explain, perhaps, I thought, its because every time I encounter them...they...in turn, encounter me.

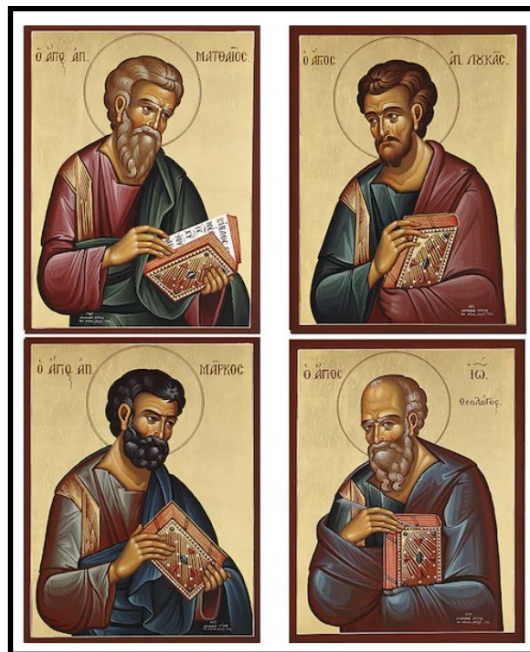
Encounter #1

In 1991 I was supervising a group of men that were hired to launch weather balloons for a Gypsy Moth Eradication program in Fairfax County. Some of you might remember the assault on trees that resulted in massive tree defoliation all along the north eastern regions of the U.S. I was an Agricultural Extension Agent out of Virginia Tech and my team consisted of six balloon hangers, all military, recruited by my chief, Colonel Kirshenbaur. We used former Viet Nam era pilots and helicopters, so this was going to be fun! These six men (one a retired Bull Colonel) happened to belong to a Lebanese Orthodox Christian Church located on River Road just across the Potomac river. I was invited by this group to their Church. Intrigued, Judy and I accepted the invitation. And what an amazing adventure it was. We entered the Church and were immediately struck by the incredible complexity of statuary, candles in sand (prayer offerings), incense and, of course, icons. Many, many, icons. Being the neophyte Christian that I was, I was

mesmerized. I had a warm feeling that I was not in Kansas anymore, wherever we were. The impression it made on me is with me to this day. I fell in love with the ancient church and the icon of this epiphany was the image of Christ. Judy and I were almost converted to this fellowship by the sheer weight of graciousness and hospitality of the wives and men of my team. After mass we dined with several priests who told stories of Episcopalians coming home to the Orthodox faith. Well, we were already members of Epiphany and so we told them about another very special fellowship that we already were a part of and departed (they kissed us on both cheeks!) What an incredible experience!

Encounter #2

Fast forward 30 year. It was after church, not long ago (maybe a few months ago) Merle Stromberg and I were discussing the 'writing' of icons. He said "Come with me", he reached out his hand and pulled me towards the Library. I thought hmmm, Merle is animated about something; maybe he wants to show me the "secret icon" forbidden by the magisterium! I followed and he took from the library shelves a precious thing that he obviously treasured and handed me "Adding Light: What's a good evangelical like you doing painting icons?" The thought that crossed my mind was "a pearl of great price." I took possession of this object not knowing if I should read it or genuflect. I was genuinely



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interested and I said to him “you have given this to the right person”. Again, I was thinking; (why did I say that?). We parted company and I headed home, my precious pearl in my grasp. What just happened? Well, once again, the Holy Spirit had me by the coat-tails.

Encounter#3

Having to resist the promptings of the Holy Spirit is for some, not really a problem, but for me it has become a dilemma. Jesus delivered me from my inner demons (another story) and I feel obligated to respond. So, when I discovered that our small group leader painted ‘wrote’ Icons, I was, again, intrigued. Judy and I were at small group one night when Catherine invited me to view her collection of Elizabeth Hudgins’ artwork, the artist responsible for “Adding Light”. What is going on I thought, I’m being herded, like a sheep to the pen. I was both excited and cautiously curious, my over developed imagination telling me to just be cool, these are just images. We entered the basement floor rounded a corner and I was struck by this beautiful home altar. All I could think was “I’m in the presence of Holiness” . The Icons hung in neat array forming a cross and a table set neatly at its base. Catherine was explaining the technical aspects of ‘writing’ Icons and I was once again in another world, not hearing, but experiencing God’s presence. Do others feel this way ?

Encounter#4

Judy and I compare notes and we both feel the Lord is leading us, but where? It’s been a tough time these last four years, and we have a few scars and one deep wounding (another story) that is still in the process of healing. So, when we learned the church offered up a chance to fellowship and enjoy some deep intellectual feasting with Fr. Joel and his interpretation of J.R. Tolkien’s “Lord of the Rings” we signed up.

As part of the presentation Fr. Joel projected the image of an icon of Christ. We were asked to meditate on the icon. I thought once again “don’t make a fool out of yourself Gary, just meditate and follow the instructions on the paper; what could go wrong ?” Well, for one thing, I could not take my eyes off the image, and, for another...why is water streaming down my cheek, where is my napkin?, Thank God I’m in the front row and no one can see my face’. All these thoughts and more juggling for attention in my head. I actually stood up, walked to within a foot of fr Joel and whispered “why am I reacting this way ?” without blinking an eye and with precise composure he smiled and said “Because you are hard-wired that way”.

Later, at the end of the presentation, I spoke briefly with Fr. Joel and told him I too had been a Youth Pastor (a Baptist church) I also shared with him my seminary experience at a Mennonite College, my dive into Pentecostal Holiness and other such extremely protestant exercises, he nodded and I said “I think I’ve been converted.”

Authors note: *Whether it was an emotional response or not, I don’t presume to know the ways of God. I’m just thankful the Lord is a personal savior who’s not above interacting with his beloved creation. Amen.*

Addendum: The Lebanese group laid claim to the remarkable position of being the descendants of the original Antioch Christian Church!



Missions Update: George Mason CRU

The Missions Committee views missionary work at universities as a key part of our program. For many people, it is during their college years that faith is gained—or lost. In keeping with that perspective, we are proud to support George Mason CRU. Here are excerpts from a recent report from the leaders of GMU CRU, detailing their work at the school:



As we took the initiative to share the gospel on campus, we prayed that God would open students' hearts to the truth of the gospel. It is a joy and privilege to sow seeds of the truth; especially at Mason where many students have not heard the name of Jesus or know nothing about who he is.

Many of the students that we spoke with this past semester were willing to open up to us about their personal beliefs and spiritual backgrounds. More than 50 students engaged in spiritual conversations with us and we were able to share the gospel with an additional 62 students! Best of all, Alban, Diego, Eric and Peter placed their faith in Jesus!

Our annual Winter Conference was a significant time of growth and life change for our students! We were thrilled to bring 28 students with us this year - the most we have had in years! One of our new student leaders, Abe, was deeply impacted by his experience.

Late one night, Abe was reading his Bible and praying when the word "Go" started ringing in his mind. He wasn't sure what it meant or what to do so he put his slippers on and started walking around the hotel. After a while he thought, "This is silly, what am I doing?" and he went back to his room. The next day, he kept thinking of "Go."

That evening, the session focused on global missions. Abe had volunteered to be part of a sketch that showed the number of unreached people in various countries in the world. As he sat down after the sketch to watch the video that followed, he was shocked when the opening frame said the word "Go!" At that moment Abe knew this is what the Lord was speaking to him the previous night and he almost leapt out of his chair with excitement!



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After the session he attended a breakout to learn about serving in our partnership country of Colombia. While there, he learned about a different location; a country that is closed to the gospel and where the vast majority of people live and die without ever having an opportunity to learn about Jesus. Immediately, he felt a tug in his heart that he recognized as the Lord's leading. He also found out that Malin, a Mason Cru staff member, is leading a summer mission to that location this year and felt like this was further confirmation that he should go!

Thank you for investing in the Gospel!



At Epiphany we emphasize:

Encountering God through beautiful worship and believing prayer

**Building a multigenerational congregation that loves
children and families.**

**Equipping every member to publicly proclaim
the Good News of Jesus Christ.**

Intercessory Prayer Letter

Requests can now be submitted by email at a secure site,

prayer-request@epiphanyanglican.net

or written and left in the prayer request box in the Fellowship Area.

All prayer requests are collected after the Sunday morning services and prepared for Monday morning distribution. For more information or questions, contact Faith Fisler by email at mizfiz34@gmail.com.



- 1 Lyn Adams
- 2 Doug Greenwood
Tim Stromberg
- 3 Brody Hanger
- 7 James Derrick
- 9 Larry Pantzer
Laurie Rash
- 10 Thomas Cummings
Liliauna Whitlock
- 11 Jeffrey Rhoads
- 17 Nancy Knight
- 20 Alex Peake
- 22 Jim Wolfe
- 23 Gary Hall
- 24 Pat Schreiner
- 26 Sam Phillips
- 27 Molly Frost
Jonathan Meeks

- 3 Andrew Long
Charlie Monroe
- 4 CJ Easton
Don Monaghan
- 6 Ross Cummings
Colin Zimmerman
- 8 Gary Efaw
Robin Rauh
Jake Trout
- 9 Tress Navarrete
- 10 Faith Fisler
Christian Navarrete
- 12 Walt Kobos
- 14 Melanie Kobos
- 15 Gail Haddock
Hailey Merrill
- 17 David Schreiner
- 20 Scott Boncher
- 22 Brad Johnson
- 23 Mega Rhoads
- 27 Haiyan Croft
- 29 Gary Lawson



Happy Anniversary



February

- 3 Gail Haddock & Don Holt
- 14 Maggie & Ran Cottingham
Molly & Christopher Frost
- 18 Beth & Charlie Monroe
Debby & Ralph Morris

March

- 6 Pamela & David Meeks
- 22 Margaret & Merle Stromberg

Resources

Epiphany Staff	Email
The Rev. Peter Frank, Rector	pfrank@epiphanyanglican.net
The Rev. Pamela Meeks, Associate Rector	pmeeks@epiphanyanglican.net
The Rev. Sally Hoover, Parish Deacon	shoover@epiphanyanglican.net
Jimmy Crawford, Music Director	jcrawford@epiphanyanglican.net
Petrina Teoh, Office Administrator	pteoh@epiphanyanglican.net

Vestry Officers/Committee Chairs for 2022

Vestry Members

Jane Burkett
 Jon Crane
 Christina Cummings
 Don Holt
 Sally Eckard
 Ted Hanger
 Leslie Johnson
 Joyce Schmalz
 Geoffrey Seroka
 Maria Torabi

Senior WardenLeslie Johnson
 Junior Warden.....Geoffrey Seroka
 Registrar..... Christina Cummings
 Home Group Ministry Coordinator.....Jane Burkett
 Vestry Liaison to Mission Committee..... Don Holt
 Chairman of the Benevolence Committee Ted Hanger
 Vestry Liaison to Finance Committee.....Jon Crane
 Finance Committee ChairmanTom Miller*
 Treasurer.....Charlie Monroe*
 ChancellorDavid Reed*

*Non-vestry members

Publishing Information

The ***Epiphany STAR*** is published bi-monthly and contains articles and information about what God has and is doing in us and through us as the Epiphany Family. It is intended to encourage each of us in our ministry and discipleship by relating how God is working in the midst of us.

The ***Epiphany Candle*** is published weekly by email, highlighting what is coming in the days ahead at Epiphany and other information that the staff and vestry feel is important to emphasize.

Articles and Subscription requests: **star@epiphanyanglican.net**
candle@epiphanyanglican.net

jcrawford@epiphanyanglican.net (for weekly bulletin)

Deadlines: STAR: 21st of the January, March, May, July, September & November.

Bulletin: Monday, 8 AM • Candle: Wednesday, 8 AM



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Visit our website at www.epiphanyanglican.net

Encountering God, Building a multigenerational congregation, Equipping every member.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

FEBRUARY

7	7:00 PM	Vestry Meeting
1, 8, 15, 22	12:00 PM	Simple Eucharist
5, 12, 19, 26	8:00 AM	Holy Eucharist In-Person
5, 12, 19, 26	10:15 AM	Holy Eucharist - Livestream & In-Person
5, 19	6:00 PM	Youth Connections
18	10:00 AM	Consecration of DOMA Bishop at The Falls Church Anglican
21	6:30 PM	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner
22	12:00 PM & 7:00 PM	Ash Wednesday Service
12, 26	1:15 PM & 2:00 PM	Worship at Arbor Terrace

MARCH

14	7:00 PM	Vestry Meeting
1, 8, 15, 22, 29	12:00 PM	Simple Eucharist
5, 12, 19, 26	8:00 AM	Holy Eucharist In-Person
5, 12, 19, 26	10:15 AM	Holy Eucharist - Livestream & In-Person
11	09:00 AM	Church Quiet Day
5, 19	6:00 PM	Youth Connections
25	9:00 AM	Women's Ministry
12, 26	1:15 PM & 2:00 PM	Worship at Arbor Terrace