

The Friend

December Worship Schedule

Advent Worship

Wednesdays - 6:00 pm

December 6 and 13

December 20 (Blue Christmas)

Christmas Pageant

December 10 - 9:00 am

Christmas Concert

December 17 - 4:00 pm

Refreshments will be served in the
Gathering Corner after the concert

Christmas Eve

2:00 pm - Family-friendly Service

4:00 pm - Worship Band

10:00 pm - Organ and Hymns

Christmas Day

10:30 am

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GROW & WORSHIP

Seeking a Connection With God

Matt Flom, Pastor

10 But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' Luke 2:10-12

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ Jesus,

Grace, love, and peace be to you from God, our Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Advent is upon us, so it's time to get ready for Christmas. Have you made your gift list? Some have even finished their Christmas shopping. Have you planned the menu for Christmas dinner? I saw that one grocery store was giving away a free turkey when you buy a ham! Has your family settled on who is hosting this year? Will we get our leaves up before it snows?

Getting ready for Christmas may be a lot of work, but it's also exciting. People in our community put a lot of emotional effort into the Christmas holiday. I think some of this has to do with memories of family gatherings, meals, and gifts. I also truly believe that the Holy Spirit is working in peoples' lives to bring them to faith or revitalize their faith. There are so many people seeking a connection with God. Many people, who wouldn't normally think about going to church, are quite open to attending worship during the holiday season. This makes a great opportunity to invite friends, family, and even neighbors to come and worship with you. We are trying out a beautiful new liturgy for Advent Wednesday night worship. Since Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, we will have our normal Sunday worship service and Christmas Eve services. We shouldn't forget Christmas Day worship as well. I also want to highlight our Blue Christmas service. It's a worship service for those lamenting losses in their lives and for whom the joy of Christmas can be a bit overwhelming. There are plenty of opportunities to invite folks to come with you and experience the presence of God. Of all the gifts you could give to someone, this could be the best.

GROW & SERVE

There Is Hope in the Waiting

Connie Yerigan, *Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries*

For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. Psalm 62:5-6

Happy Holidays to you and yours. This is the season of all things that glitter, and sparkle. This is the season to be generous and kind. This is the season to gather with friends and family as we await the birth of that precious baby boy who was sent to save us. We are in the season of Advent. A season that is filled with waiting, but there is a sense of peace in this waiting. Jesus was sent to give us hope. He was sent for us...so we wait.

I always love this time of year, and I will be the first to admit I had never liked waiting for things...but I have chosen to switch my point of view over the last couple of years. Life is really short, we always seem to be in a rush...but some things are worth the wait.

Currently, I am excitedly waiting for the children's pageant (*which is Sunday, December 10 at the 9:00 am service by the way!*) "The Good News Flash" will bring families together as it is sure to bring smiles to faces, and joy to your hearts. The kids are hard at work practicing their lines and the songs they will sing. I will always willingly wait in awe and wonder of all that this season brings.

I invite you to join us for worship on Sunday, December 10 at the 9:00am worship service. As we wait and prepare for the pageant, our children and youth are also preparing for the annual Holiday Market! We thank those of you who donated baked goods, trinkets, and other gifts. Stop by and check it out...you may find the perfect gift for that special person in your life at our Youth Holiday Market! The Holiday Market is a fundraiser for the summer camps and various program activities throughout the year. We would like to thank those who have made donations to the sale!

Wherever you feel you spend the majority of your time waiting, I pray that during this season of Advent, you find hope in the waiting. Many blessings to you and your family in this season of waiting, hope, and love.

Trying Something New!

Cheri Sykes, Worship Band Leader

We are trying something new at the 10:30 contemporary service: a sung liturgy! Every Sunday we sing the liturgy at the 9:00 am traditional service, including the Kyrie, Gloria, Gospel Acclamation, Offertory, Holy, Holy, and Lamb of God. This liturgy, in one musical form or another, dates back to the earliest days of Christianity. In fact, its roots are in Jewish worship.

Now, beginning November 26, the contemporary service will join this time-honored tradition, but in the contemporary sounds of blues and jazz! Some of you may remember singing, "Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God," from the days of the old red hymnal; an updated version of this is our offertory!

We will be singing this new liturgy from December-February. We hope you will find it accessible, appealing, and worshipful. Let's give it a try!

Christmas Blessings

Brian Munsterman, President

Thank you all for attending and voting on our new constitution in November! We now have one that aligns with the Synod. This was a big undertaking in getting us to this state, one that took several years. I personally want to thank the board members who put a lot of time and effort into making sure this was completed – thank you, Dianne Lundeen, Kari Davies, and LaRae Kazmierkoski!

We are now in December, my how time has flown by this year. The time just seems to go by faster and faster every year. I love December for many reasons. I like the traditions, all the beautiful lights, the decorations, the gathering of the family, and the celebration of the birth of our Savior. I love the children's pageant that is put on every year by the children here at St. Philip's. I especially love the Christmas carols and the Christmas Eve candlelight service. Enjoy all that you hold dear during this wonderful season! Merry Christmas to all and may God bless everyone in the new year.

Board of Administration Meeting Highlights



- The December meeting will be held on the 18th and not the 25th.
- 2024 budget has been approved and will be presented to the congregation for voting at the annual meeting in February.
- Treasurer reported we were almost \$1,000 ahead for YTD giving as of October, which historically has shown a decline in giving.
- Building for the Future 2 contributions allowed for a new roof that is now completed.

News From Jim & Carol Sack

Dear Friends in Christ:

Once again, greetings from Tokyo. In Matthew 25:36 we read "I was in prison and you visited me." In this newsletter, we want to share a little about the experiences we have had as volunteers at the Fuchu Prison near our house in Tokyo. Carol serves as a counselor and has volunteered there for about 17 years. I function as a chaplain and have been going for about 15 years. We both ended up there by different routes, but have found this ministry to be extremely rewarding and meaningful. Even though the men we minister to are not Japanese, both Carol and I are convinced this is an important piece of our ministries in Japan. It provides the opportunity to share the Word of God with those who are lost.

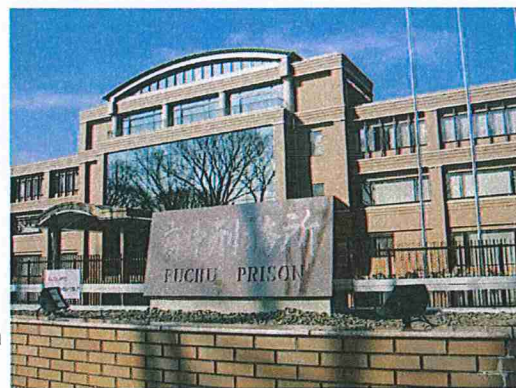
We usually go separately and on different days. It is possible that both Carol and I will see some of the same foreign male prisoners. This is helpful because we both know about that prisoner and can more easily pray for them in our own private devotions. When we meet with them one-on-one, we are in a room by ourselves. A guard is outside the room and can see inside and observe what we are doing. The men we see may be Christian (both Catholic and Protestant), Islam, Buddhist, or no religion at all.

GROW & SERVE

News From Jim & Carol Sack

In my case, during our first session, I explain in detail who I am, the purpose of our meeting, and that they are the ones who control what we talk about. They know that our conversation is private information. The purpose is not evangelism, but to be a presence that cares about them and their lives, and who is willing to pray with them and read scripture if they so desire. About 95% of the men want prayers and Scripture. However, if they do not want that, we do not force that on them. There is complete privacy and we do not need to share with the prison what we have discussed with them. If there is some medical issue or problem they are facing, we get their permission to share that with the prison.

During one visit to the prison we can see up to 10 prisoners individually, each for 15 minutes. When the time is up, the guard will ring a bell, which indicates we need to finish up, and will then usually close with prayer. The time is for the prisoner and they may freely decide what to talk about. I usually decide ahead of time a couple of Scripture verses from which to read to them, and choose one of them depending on the content of our discussion. Since their opportunities to talk to someone one-on-one are very limited, they seem to relish the chance to have these 15 minutes with a listening ear. More than once we have been told that during their month, this short time with us is the most important time they have.



Fuchu Prison

Many of these men are taking the time to establish a relationship with God and try to find ways to move into healthier and a more positive direction in their life. A few men indicate they are so happy to have been caught because they had been addicted to various things and this forced them to stop. A number of men have related that if they had not been put into prison, they probably would be dead by now. About 85% of the men have been charged with trying to smuggle drugs into Japan. Of course, this is nothing to be proud of, but having to spend a various number of years in prison (about 4-12) forces them to reflect on their crimes, reconsider their lives, and strive to get into better patterns of living. I have been so impressed by the great number of men who have taken up daily reading of Scripture and praying as ways to improve themselves. Many of these prisoners know a great deal of Scripture by the time they are released.

I also have been asked by five men to baptize them. With each of these prisoners, it was on their own initiative that their request was made. The first time, it took a few months to get permission from the prison to do that. However, after that, the prison has given me permission to freely baptize during our short 15-minute sessions. Interestingly, three of these men had been believers of Islam and wanted to convert to Christianity. In that case, I take a number of sessions to discuss with them why they want to change and to look together at the implications of changing their religion. Usually, Baptism is done in a communal context. I stress to them that doing it in prison is out of the ordinary, but once they are released they should find a church community to be part of and continue receiving and giving support. We pray that these men in prison may find the grace, joy, and forgiveness of being in a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior.

GROW & SERVE

Tech Time

Connie Yerigan, *Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries*

As the new year approaches, you may find yourself, like many, thinking about resolutions. It can be easy and even exciting to set them up for the new year, but sometimes we find quickly it is easier to let them go for one reason or another. I will be the first to admit it sounds like me! Perhaps you are like me...sometimes the new things we hope to do or try don't "stick" because we go at it alone.

Technology can be intimidating, confusing, frustrating, and perhaps even cause anxiety...but if you have help, I truly believe that anyone is capable of learning. With that being said, I am excited to create and kick off a new class! Tech Time is for all ages and technology skill levels. We will spend class time going over various topics, and each class will have time for questions and one on one assistance. Classes will be offered the month of January. Each session will be offered two different days and times:

Sunday, January 7, 2024 - 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Tuesday, January 9, 2024 - 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Basic computer/tablet/phone help

Downloading the app

Accessing electronic giving

Sunday, January 14, 2024 - 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Tuesday, January 16, 2024 - 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Church website

How to navigate

How to watch live stream

Sunday, January 21, 2024 - 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Tuesday, January 23, 2024 - 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Facebook/Instagram - Social Media

How to access them

How to use them

How to see church posts

Sunday, January 28, 2024 - 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Tuesday, January 30, 2024 - 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Google (docs, sheets, forms, etc.)

How to access them (How to fill them out?)

Miscellaneous other tech questions

2024 Spring Trip

St. Philip's Disaster Relief



Western Kentucky was struck by several tornadoes in December of 2021, affecting many communities. One of the tornadoes was on the ground for over 165 miles. Overall, the 190 mph winds killed 57 people and injured over 500. In Mayfield alone, more than 4,000 structures were impacted (damaged or destroyed).

The SPDR Ministry has tentatively set April 20 – 28, 2024 to travel to Mayfield, KY for a second time to assist in the rebuild efforts in the area. Additional trip and registration will be provided via E-News and the Friend in March 2024.

Due to the wonderful continued financial support, we will not be holding the SPDR fundraiser in February. We are extremely grateful for all those who have donated to SPDR in 2023 and have enabled the journey to continue. Thank you for your support of the SPDR Ministry.

A Message From LCCN Bille

Jotham Samwashe, our correspondent from our companion congregation, The Lutheran Church of Christ in Bille, Nigeria, sent this update on activities there:

"Greetings from me and LCCN Bille to all the members of St. Philip's Lutheran Church at Fridley, Minnesota, USA. We hope you are doing well in Jesus' name. Amen."

Report on the funds we have provided:

"Catechist/Evangelist Amos Antibas, who is at our joint outreach project, is doing fine with his family. We have not visited him this year, but will do so by the end of the rainy season by God's will. The work on their church is near completion."

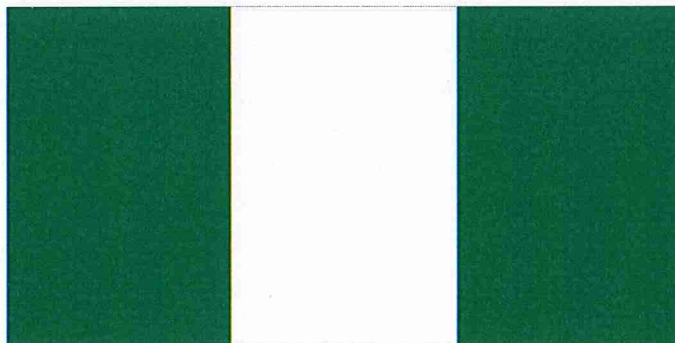
"Nursery and primary school teachers, head teacher and nanny are paid regularly, likewise Catechist Amos Antibas at our joint outreach project. Nine students got scholarships for secondary school. "

Other activities:

"We are working with Nigeria Bible Translation Trust (nbtt) in Jos, Nigeria, to translate the Holy Bible into Bille language, both written and oral. The women's fellowship hosted the women of Todi Diocese at their convention in Bille. The choir, gospel choir, boys brigade, the end 1, and Sunday School had their week-long annual activities at various times." [See pictures on the Global Missions Bulletin Board.]

Personal note and prayer request:

"Generally, we have a lot of hardship in Nigeria; change of bank notes during election, famine and removal of oil subsidy by the government, and late onset of rainfall couple with insecurities are making life difficult. Mr. Dah [our original contact] is doing well. My wife, Agnes, is battling with ulcer, pile, eye sight, BP and diabetes. Please pray for us and our country. We appreciate you all for your congregational support fund. May God bless you all. Amen."

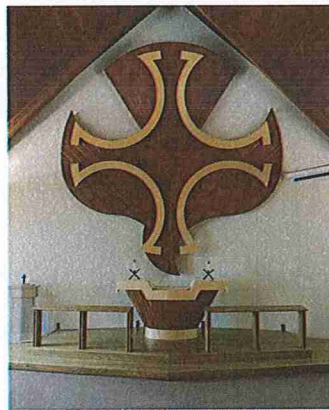


GROW & SERVE

The Legacy of Art at St. Philip's

December's Legacy of Art will focus on the woodworking skills of Ralph Petersen. On the wall outside Room 1 is a plaque containing an ellipse made from a variety of different types of wood. Donor's names and those for whom memorials have been given appear on brass plaques within the ellipse. Beneath the plaque is a table. Both pieces were made for the Endowment Committee. For more information about the St. Philip's Endowment Fund, go to the church website at [www.splcmn.org], under Give, Endowment Fund.

We would also like to draw your attention to the Chapel Dove and Altar. Both were designed by Ralph Petersen and assembled by a team led by Ralph. For more information on the Chapel Dove, go to the church website at [www.splcmn.org], under About, History.



Food & Clothing Shelf

With each month passing we continue to see unprecedented increases in visitors to the Food & Clothing Shelf. You may be asking why so many people are need of food assistance.

1.) Costs of Essentials Remain at Elevated Levels, and Wages are not Keeping Up.

Gas, groceries, and rent continue to be high and while not too much of a problem for the wealthy it is unbearable for those with lower or no income.

2.) Another Round of COVID-Era Programs Has Ended

Following the end of Emergency SNAP (E-SNAP) benefits this spring, families are continuing to feel the strain of increased food costs. Research has come out quantifying the devastating impact of losing these essential grocery benefits. Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania estimated that the end of E-SNAP was connected with a 21% increase in the experience of food insufficiency among SNAP-participating households. In Minnesota, over 235,000 households saw a cut to their SNAP benefits.

3.) More Debt and Less Savings

What you can do to support those facing food insecurity as we continue to navigate historic levels of hunger:

- Advocate for policies and programs that will bring meaningful solutions.
- Volunteer to fight hunger in your local community.
- Donate financially to causes addressing barriers and inequities, including our work of feeding and clothing those in need together.

Endowment Fund

The St. Philip's Endowment Fund

Be a Blessing to Future Generations!

Gifts were received in memory and honor of

Elaine Knutson

Thelma Nash

Gifts in memory of someone, to celebrate a special occasion, or in simple gratitude should be specified for, "Endowment Fund".

For more information on the St. Philip's Endowment Fund, visit [www.splcmn.org] and select, 'Ministries' and then 'Endowment'.



Financials

St. Philip's 2023	Actual October	Actual YTD
Income	\$49,230.17	\$610,047.62
Expense	(\$59,237.91)	(\$609,049.70)
TOTALS	(\$10,007.74)	\$997.92

SERVE

Thanksgiving Gift Cards

Thank you for your support of our Thanksgiving gift cards. Cards were distributed on Thursday, November 16 to families who registered ahead of time. The change from canned and boxed goods to gift cards was well received and gave our families the opportunity to purchase items of their choosing.



St. Philip's Christmas Shop



This year, the Benevolence Committee is sponsoring a Christmas Shop for parents in need. Parents will be able to shop on Saturday, December 9 between 10:00 am - 2:00 pm for two gifts for each of their children. Gift wrapping will be available. Our Christmas in July donations provided many gifts, but if you would like to purchase additional toys or gifts they will be put to good use! Some useful items include: makeup kits and organizers, nail polish, jewelry, basketballs, footballs, air pumps, wireless earbuds, Legos, Fisher Price toys, Barbie dolls, and art kits. If you are interested in helping at the event, we can use help registering our guests as they come in, helping with refreshments, or helping our families shop. Contact LaRae Kazmierkoski [763-571-4266 or laraekaz@aol.com] for more information.

Meals on Wheels

The week before Thanksgiving was a pretty nice week to deliver Meals on Wheels. So thankful for the giving hearts of our volunteer drivers: Dave & Shirley Hogan, Ron & Jennifer Prasek, Chuck & Kathy Eichelberger, Larry & Phyllis Ehlers, Rob & Mary Shimanski, Eldy & Sandy Nelson, Mike & Deb Carroll, Richard & Dawn Young.



Offering Envelopes



Beginning in January, you will receive your offering envelopes in the mail every two months (instead of quarterly). If you would like to use online giving in lieu of offering envelopes, please contact Jenni [JenniA@splcmn.org] or Katie [KatieS@splcmn.org].

Life Events



Nila & Bud Carpenter on 12/7/1952 for 71 years

Burton & Judith Ferrier on 12/30/1961 for 62 years

Mary & Ray Kukowski on 12/4/1965 for 58 years

Douglas & Miriam Haugland on 12/21/1974 for 49 years



The friends and family of:

Rollie Enkhaus

Earl Hatten

Welcome

Courtney, Jacob, Ben, and Theo Sponsel

Rita Schwieters, Brian and Noah Leyendecker

Sasi Vardhan



Thank you, thank you, thank you to our church family as we struggled along the past months. We so greatly appreciated your support in bringing us delicious meals and treats, sending encouraging cards, texts, and phone calls. Most of all we thank you for your prayers.

With grateful hearts,
Marsha and Lonnie LeClair

Friendly Takeaway

Merry Christmas from the St. Philip's Staff!

* **Dr. Matt**

* **Dr. Eric**

* **Dr. Margie**

* **Katie**

* **Jenni**

* **Jerry**

* **Connie**

* **Cheri**

* **Julie**

* **Ryan**

* **Curt**

* **Everett**

* **Rianna**

* **Paden**

St. Philip's Lutheran Church

A member of the ELCA

www.splcmn.org ~ info@splcmn.org

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Pastoral Emergency Phone: 612-930-1588

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CurtM@splcmn.org

Julie Lueck, Organist

Julie@splcmn.org

Dawn Hansen, Bells of Praise Handbell Director

Dawng48@hotmail.com

Rianna Swenstad, Nursery Ministry Worker

Ryan Gorka, A/V Technician

Paden Swenstad, Part-Time Custodian

Everett Washington, Part-Time Custodian

Worship Schedule

9:00 am Traditional

10:30 am Contemporary

- Access worship livestreams on our website [www.splcmn.org]
- Past worship links can be found on our website, E-News, and app
- Nursery is available Sundays: 9:00 - 11:30 am for children 3 months - 3 years

Board of Administration

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Missionaries: Jim & Carol Sack

Companion Congregation:

Bille Lutheran in Nigeria

Ministers: All members of the Parish

December 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 10:00 am Food & Clothing Shelf 7:00 pm AA	2 12:00 pm 55 and Under Work Crew
3 9:00 am Worship 9:20 am Children & Youth Discipleship 10:30 am Worship	4 1:00 pm Joy Circle 7:00 pm Gambler Anonymous Mtg.	5 10:00 am Staff Mtg.; Food & Clothing Shelf 1:00 pm Tuesdays Together 7:30 pm Worship Band Rehearsal	6 8:30 am Men's Work Crew 9:00 am Quilters 10:00 am EA Mtg. 5:00 pm Food & Clothing Shelf 5:15pm Community Supper 6:00 pm Advent Worship 6:30 pm Bells of Praise Rehearsal 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal	7 9:00 am Men's Book Discussion 7:30 pm AA Mtg.	8 10:00 am Food & Clothing Shelf 7:00 pm AA	9 9:30 am Pageant Rehearsal 10:00 am The Christmas Shop
10 9:00 am Worship and Christmas Pageant 10:00 am Youth Holiday Market 10:30 am Worship	11 10:00 am Parish Fellowship Mtg - Cancelled; Walking Alone Together Cookie Baking 1:00 pm Global Health Ministries 6:30 pm Executive Mtg. 7:00 pm Gambler Anonymous Mtg.; Gam-Anon Mtg.	12 7:00 am This is Most Certainly Brew 10:00 am Staff Mtg.; Food & Clothing Shelf 1:00 pm Tuesdays Together 2:00 pm Heritage Group Mtg.; Benevolence Committee Mtg. 7:30 pm Worship Band Rehearsal	13 8:30 am Men's Work Crew; WOW 10:00 am EA Mtg.; Women's Book Club 1:00 pm Walking Alone Together 5:00 pm Food & Clothing Shelf 5:15pm Community Supper 6:00 pm Advent Worship 6:30 pm Bells of Praise Rehearsal 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal	14 7:30 pm AA Mtg.	15 10:00 am Food & Clothing Shelf 7:00 pm AA	16 9:30 am Worship Band Rehearsal
17 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Worship 4:00 pm Christmas Concert	18 Friend Articles Due 9:30 am Glory Circle 6:30 pm Board of Administration Mtg. 7:00 pm Gambler Anonymous Mtg.	19 9:00 am Library Mtg 10:00 am Staff Mtg.; Food & Clothing Shelf 1:00 pm Tuesdays Together 7:00 pm This is Most Certainly Brew 7:30 pm Worship Band Rehearsal	20 8:30 am Men's Work Crew 9:00 am Quilters 10:00 am EA Mtg. 10:30 am P&G Mtg. 5:00 pm Food & Clothing Shelf 5:15pm Community Supper 6:00 pm Blue Christmas Worship 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal	21 9:00 am Men's Book Discussion 7:30 pm AA Mtg.	22 10:00 am Food & Clothing Shelf 7:00 pm AA	23
24 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Worship 2:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship 4:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship 10:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship	25 Merry Christmas! Office Closed 10:30 am Christmas Day Worship 7:00 pm Gambler Anonymous Mtg.; Gam-Anon Mtg.	26 Office Closed Food & Clothing Shelf Closed 1:00 pm Tuesdays Together - Cancelled 7:30 pm Worship Band Rehearsal	27 8:30 am Men's Work Crew; WOW 10:00 am EA Mtg. 5:00 pm Food & Clothing Shelf 5:15 pm Community Supper 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal	28 7:30 pm AA Mtg.	29 10:00 am Food & Clothing Shelf 7:00 pm AA	30
31 New Year's Eve 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Worship						



6180 Highway 65 NE
Fridley, MN 55432-5158

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUEST



Mission:

God calls us to receive and share God's
love and grace with all people.

Vision:

With God's help, we will be joyful,
compassionate and generous as we worship,
grow and serve in community.

We invite and welcome those of every spiritual background, ethnicity,
gender orientation, or economic situation. We are committed to our place
within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).