

# Bethesda Life-Line

Bethesda now has a YouTube channel!  
Please check out previous week's services  
(<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpUJQAIdOtq2rusQ4pY0wZg>), as well as on  
our Facebook page.



## Bethesda Mission Statement:

We will **LIVE** and **SERVE** through **FAITH**  
we will **ACT** with **LOVE** and **KINDNESS**  
we will **GIVE** hope and **SUPPORT** to all

December Sunday Worship on [YouTube](#)

## Upcoming Events

Weekly bulletins and services available at  
<http://blcmalmo.org/>

## UPCOMING DATES

Annual Congregational Meeting, which was  
scheduled for Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, is postponed.

**SNOWBIRDS** Before you leave to head to  
Warmer climates please let Mary in the office. Know  
your forwarding address and the dates you Will be  
gone (Telephone No./e-mail too?) so that we may get  
your newsletters and any other information  
to you.

## Christmas Caring and Sharing

Again this season, we are asking for names of a  
neighbor who maybe in need of a grocery gift card. If  
you know of someone in need please contact the  
church office with a name and address and we will  
make every effort to help them out. Please turn in  
these requests by December 18.

Thank You, Mission and Evangelism Committee



## 2020

## Christmas Eve Parking Lot Radio Service



We will be having  
one Christmas Eve  
worship service this  
year in the Parking  
Lot. The service will  
be broadcasted over  
your radios with  
Pastor broadcasting  
from inside the

church. At one point, we will have a candle-lite in  
person gathering in the parking lot and we will sing  
Silent Night. People will need to social distance  
themselves and wear a mask when outside their cars.  
At the end of the service, we will have a drive thru  
communion on your way out. Tentative starting time  
will be 4:00pm. Watch Facebook and our website  
([blcmalmo.org](http://blcmalmo.org)) for more details. This will be  
recorded to view later that day on YouTube.

## Christmas Hymn Sing

We are planning a Christmas Hymn Sing worship  
service with John Kozial again this year. It will look  
a bit different. Most  
likely it will be pre-  
recorded and shown  
on YouTube for our  
December 20<sup>th</sup>  
worship service at  
8:45am.

We are asking for  
parishioners to submit  
Hymn Request. Email or call the office with your  
hymn requests. Phone 320 684-2123 or email  
[blcmalmo@gmail.com](mailto:blcmalmo@gmail.com) Stay tuned to Facebook and  
our website ([blcmalmo.org](http://blcmalmo.org)) for more details.





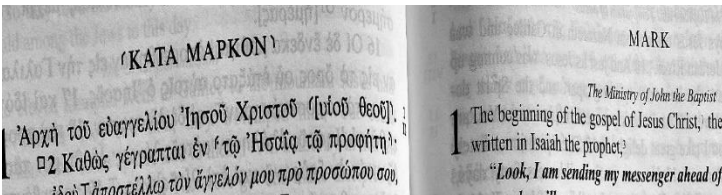
## From the Pastor

Pastor's Letter  
December 2020

When I was a kid, “RIP” always seemed like a strange way to honor those who had passed. The word “rip” always seemed to have negative connotations – my mom never seemed happy when I ripped a new pair of pants. It wasn’t until I understood what it actually stood for – Rest In Peace – that I warmed to it a bit... but only slightly.

I felt the same way with “Xmas” too. “X” usually indicated things kids shouldn’t get into. As I got older, I warmed to it a bit, but it still seemed kind of lazy. But it wasn’t until I got to seminary that I really learned what the X stood for.

A bit of trivia I remembered recently when one of our members shared with me that they don’t like how Xmas seems to take the “Christ” out of Christmas. But, you see, the X actual stands for Christ! X, or what looks like an X, is actually the first letter of Christ in Ancient Greek. Take a look from the opening passage of the Gospel of Mark:



That X-word in the first line above, that is “Christos” or Christ. The X is actually a letter called Chi. You see the “X” in the very first word too, “arche” which means “beginning” (a word you recognize from words like “archaeology”).

You might also notice a letter next to the Chi in Christos that looks like a “p”. That is the letter “Rho” in Greek. The combination, Chi Rho, is one of the most ancient symbols in Christianity. You have probably seen in many churches, including at Bethesda on our baptismal banner:

Chi Rho dates back to at least the time of Emperor Constantine in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. “Xmas” is not nearly that old, but it is still almost 500 years old.



So, if you were ever worried that Xmas was taking the Christ out of Christmas, worry no longer! It is all part of a really old tradition to both honor Jesus and save a little space on whatever you are writing or printing.

And, of course, we know that more than the name of the holiday itself, Christ calls us to be a living example of his life and teachings in many and various ways.

As much as we try to remember this every year (and not get too lost in all the delicious food, the fun traditions, and the presents), this year our world needs the love that Christ embodied more than ever. A time for the hungry to be fed and to give the thirsty a drink. A time for the stranger to be welcomed and those without warm clothes to receive them. A time for those who are sick to be cared for and for those who care for the sick to be cared for in return. A time for those who are imprisoned or just stuck in self-quarantine, to know that they are not alone and abandoned. These are just some of the ways that Christ teaches us how to love as he loves us.

No matter if we prefer Xmas or the whole Christmas, whether we speak English or Greek, and even if we are following all the social distancing guidelines, may we all bring some of that Christmas hope and joy to one another. Blessings to you and your family this Christmas!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor James

## **Bethesda Lutheran Church of Malmo**

Minutes of November 16, 2020 Council Meeting

In attendance: In attendance: Judie Birk, Mary Braun, Cheryl Malotky, Dorothy Munding, Pastor James Muske, Dennis Hennesey, Sherry Whipple, George Smith

The meeting was called to order by council president George Smith, Dennis Hennesey gave opening Devotions.

### Secretary's Report:

Motion was made to accept the minutes of the October meeting by Mary Braun, seconded by Sherry Whipple and passed.

### Treasurer's Report:

Financial view and current month activity for October was presented by Mary Braun. Falling short of projected income. We had a large expense with the parsonage driveway and have the parsonage fund is now at zero, which is a good thing that all the monies given towards the Parsonage from the three-year fund drive was spent on the Parsonage. Now is the time that we really need donations. Mary will put in newsletter about RMDs (Required Minimum Distribution) for those 70 years or older you can get a tax break. Pastor suggested doing a stewardship temple talk online and post it on Facebook/Web site. Motion was made by Dorothy to accept the treasurer's report, seconded by Sherry Whipple and passed.

Pastor's Report: (October to November 16, 2020)  
Greetings sisters and brothers in Christ!

My weeks continue to be packed with planning, recording, and editing videos for worship. Many thanks to the Praise Band for helping provide some lovely hymn singing for our services. Did take a pause due to potential Covid exposure, but we know that people do enjoy music with singers.

Trying to figure out what would be the best option if I want to take a Sunday off, since I am not just the one that leads the services, but also handles all the technology.

The first in-person worship went well, but with rising Covid rates, my recommendation would be to not hold one in November. Council can discuss options for Christmas.

Confirmation classes have switched to online only,

due to the spike in Covid. The students seem to be getting better with online classes, so the last couple classes have gone a bit more smoothly than past online attempts.

I have been trying to call more people, as folks are feeling a bit of "Covid fatigue" and there are folks we haven't heard from in a while. However, it would be a good idea to try and enlist more help from congregation members in assisting with outreach efforts (as has been done in the past).

Also trying to brainstorm ideas for other online small group/bible study meetings.

### Old Business

- Flu Shots Update — the clinic was here earlier this month and went fine. The church service on October 25th had about 30 people and it went well.
- Next Year's Budget — Council reviewed the proposed budget. We really don't have accurate numbers because of the pandemic this year, but we will base the budget on this year's giving. Once Covid is over, hopefully donations will go up. Sherry made a motion to accept the budget as written and Cheryl seconded and carried.
- The Lions Club thanks us for the use of our kitchen. And the veterans than them!

### New Business

Cheryl Malotky brought to the council that we should consider having Zoom gatherings for bible studies, ROMEOS, fellowship, etc. Cheryl and Pastor will look into this option.

Annual Meeting? (Online, In Person or Postpone) — Council discussed postponing our Annual Meeting until possibly April, when we may have a COVID-19 vaccine. Pastor said it might be possible to do a Online meeting. However, we need to ask our congregation if they agree with postponing the annual meeting and would need a 10% quorum. George Smith will contact the NE Synod to see if they have anything in place for delaying annual meetings. If we can do, Mary will send out a letter to the voting members of the congregation to acquire the 10% quorum signatures. We don't have much time as the meeting is otherwise scheduled for Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>. So members please respond if you get a letter. Make a recommendation that we've revise the budget

under current circumstance and want to delay meeting until April. The budget will be contingent. We need to elect new officers. George will ask the synod and ask how we need to handle this. Another option is to have a parking lot meeting using the radio transmission equipment.

Annual Giving — Contributions are a down during this pandemic. Money is being dropped off or sent via mail. Some are coming in through automatic payments. A Simply Given form was in the November newsletter and we did not receive any. A reminder is needed to explain to our congregation about giving. Mary will check with Stewardship and post a online video on giving.

Should We Have in Person Service in December? With COVID-19 rates going up, it was decided not to do any service in December. Other options were discussed, such as having music videos online.

Concern about people not getting information was discussed. Possibly calling older members to see if they are able to view the services, getting the newsletter and their well-being. Dorothy said she would help with this.

#### Committee Reports:

#### Stewardship & Finance:

Notes from Stewardship meeting on Tuesday, November 10, 2020:

The current members of the Stewardship Committee, Barb Forrester, Mary Braun, and Donna Ansell met to discuss the Proposed Budget for 2021 which will be presented to the Church Council at their next meeting on November 16, 2020.

The budget will cover the months of Jan–Dec of 2021. Revisions were made to income and expenses based on last year’s budget and current year’s abridged budget figures. Our Proposed Budget for 2021 will be:

Income Budget:	\$149,350
Expenses Budget:	\$150,027
Over/Short:	(677)

Once the Council has approved the 2021 Budget it will be presented at the Congregational Annual meeting which may or may not be on December 6, 2020, due to Covid-19 meeting protocols for Aitkin/Mille Lacs Counties.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Braun

Motion was made to adjourn by Dorothy, seconded

by Mary, and passed.

The council closed with the Lord's Prayer.

The next council meeting will be December 21 at 10:00 am.

Respectfully submitted by Judie Birk, council secretary.

### 2020 TREASURER'S REPORT

General Fund	<u>OCTOBER</u>	<u>YTD*</u>
Income Actual	\$10,850	\$20,952
Income Budgeted	\$12,942	\$25,884
Expense Actual	\$11,164	\$22,948
Expense Budgeted	\$13,234	\$26,468
Over/(Short)	(\$314)	(\$1,995)

\*Abridged Year (From Sept-Dec 2020)



We would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, food, and phone calls. Patti and I really appreciated it. George & Patti Smith

### Annual Congregational Meeting



The Church council decided unanimously to *cancel the in-person annual meeting* due to growing worldwide health

concerns from the COVID-19 virus, and in accordance with State and Local guidelines for public meetings.

Our Annual Congregational Meeting was scheduled to be held on **Sunday, December 6, 2020 at 10:00am**. We had two options on how to rearrange this meeting but chose to postpone it. Options were:

1. Have the meeting on the scheduled day and time via a Parking Lot meeting. The meeting would be broadcasted over the radio and voting on items and asking questions would be very limited. Questions and voting would have to be submitted prior to the meeting.

#### **OR**

2. Postpone the meeting until a later date and time when we can meet safely in person inside the church.

We will have the annual written meeting report available before the meeting. The report will be posted on our church's website ([blcmalmo.com](http://blcmalmo.com)), or it can be emailed to you, or you can stop by office and pick up a copy when available.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the church office at 320 684-2123 or drop us an email ([blcmalmo@gmail.com](mailto:blcmalmo@gmail.com)).

**BETHESDA QUILTERS** need donations of clean used mattress pads and blankets to make Lutheran World Relief quilts. Please leave in the Fellowship Hall by the Quilter's Door. Many Thanks.

**ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BOOKLETS** are available. We can either email or mail them out to you. Call the office to request a copy.

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### **TIRED OF ISOLATING? LET'S BEAT THE COVID CABIN FEVER!**

Join me on Tuesday, December 8th at 10:00 am for a virtual "Zoom" coffee and conversation hour. Zoom is a very user-friendly computer application and I can provide technical assistance.



Please email me if you are interested so I can email you a Zoom invite. If you have additional questions, please let me know.

Cheryl Malotky

[clmalotky@gmail.com](mailto:clmalotky@gmail.com).

952 412-6108

### **Congratulations to our 2020 Bethesda No-Bazaar Bazaar Raffle Winners**

**Quilt** - Mary Beth Forester

**Hardanger** - Joni Mehlhop

**Old World Santa** – LeeAnn Konieczry

**Crochet Baby Blanket** - Sherri Holmes

**Microwave Bowl Holders** - Judy Seifert

**Birchbark Flowers & Vase** – Sue Hagen

**Single Stem Pottery Vase** - Lynda Carlson

**Round Lidded Pottery Vase** - Lori Hartmann

**Lace Inlay Pottery Plate** – Trish VanHorn

**Les Kouba Lutefisk Print** – Shirley Gosselin

**Butterfly House** – Judy Seifert

**Pinecone Wreath** - Lynn Hansen

**Tote Bag** - Bonnie Mickelson

### **Jars of Jelly and a Jell Cookbook**

(4 winners)

Glenice Peterson, Joni Mehlhop

Lynne & Denny Meidlinger, Winnie Zahradka

### **Jars of Crispy Pickles & Pickle Relish**

(2 winners)

Diane Neumeister

Kelly Anderson

You can view the items and winners on our website:

<http://blcmalmo.org/2020/10/31/welca-affle-winners/>

We are still accepting donations to WELCA's fundraising efforts for their many worth causes. You can send your donations to the church and make the checks out to "Bethesda WELCA".

### **Benevolence Plans**

The past years our benevolence dollars were divided into 5 local and 5 global charities with stewardship sending out those dollars at the end of the fiscal year. This September 20% of our Global dollars went to:

Dara in Mozambique  
Village of Hope , Zambia  
Lutheran Global Partners  
Feed My Starving Children  
Russian Ingren Church

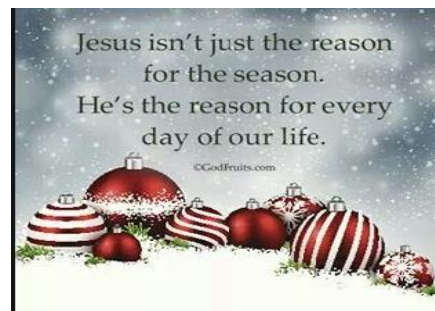
20% of Local dollars went to:

Aitkin Co Human Services  
Camp Onamia  
Emergency Cards for Office  
Christmas Caring Sharing  
Pearl Crisis Center

Since the church fiscal calendar is changing to start a new year Jan 2021, this maybe a good time to see if we should make changes to this list.

I know most committees are not meeting, but if a committee or any church member has a suggestion for a change, please let the church office know of your suggestion.

Thank You, Mission and Evangelism



## Alternate Opportunities to Give

Usually there would be 3 different displays in fellowship hall with opportunities to give to loved ones while helping our charities.

You can go online and buy gifts from:

ELCA Good Gifts: [goodgifts.elca.org/christmas](http://goodgifts.elca.org/christmas)

Heifer International: [Heifer.org](http://Heifer.org)

[Lutheranpartners.org](http://Lutheranpartners.org)



In the first-ever event of its kind, [ELCA World Hunger](#) presents an online Christmas benefit concert featuring [Peter Mayer](#), a longtime Lutheran and the lead guitarist for Jimmy Buffett.

Although we are in the midst of a difficult winter due to COVID-19, we know that, through God's abundance, you have shown incredible generosity by supporting the necessary work of the church. This concert is a gift to you this Advent season. It is a way for us to say thank you and provide a place for you to gather online with the church community as we prepare for the birth of our Savior.

The concert is free and will premiere on the [ELCA Facebook page](#), with a live chat so you can engage with the audience, ELCA staff and Peter Mayer himself. Donations to ELCA World Hunger are encouraged and will support our church's work to respond to hunger and poverty in more than 60 countries around the world.

## Keeping Christmas

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world — stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death — and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem [two thousand] years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love?

Then you can keep Christmas. And if you can keep it for a day, why not always? But you can never keep it alone.



### What is an RMD?

Once you hit age 70½, the IRS requires you to start withdrawing from—and paying taxes on—most types of tax-advantaged retirement accounts, this is known as “Required Minimum Distribution”. You will also need to take RMDs from any retirement accounts you inherit. In most cases, RMDs are treated as ordinary income for tax purposes.

### Can I donate my RMD to charity and avoid the taxes?

YES. These "Qualified Charitable Distributions" (QCDs) will not be added to your taxable income for the year. A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA, payable directly to a qualified charity, as described in the QCD provision in the Internal Revenue Code. Amounts distributed as a QCD can be counted toward satisfying your RMD for the year, up to \$100,000. The QCD is excluded from your taxable income. This is not the case with a regular withdrawal from an IRA, even if you use the money to make a charitable contribution later. If you take a withdrawal, the funds would be counted as taxable income even if you later offset that income with the charitable contribution deduction.

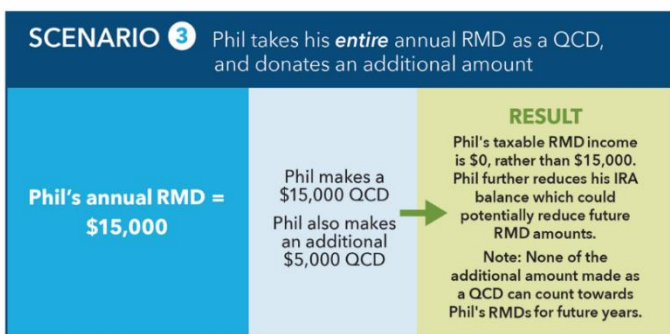
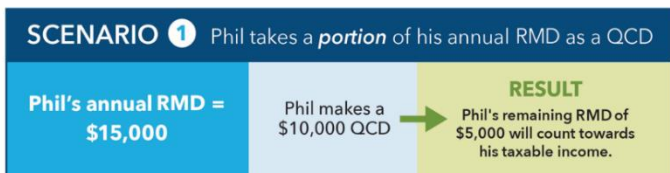
Making a QCD as opposed to a normal charitable gift has two main advantages. First, a QCD counts toward satisfying the individual's required minimum distribution for that year. Second, the distribution is excluded from the taxpayer's income. (Information taken from the website:

<https://www.fidelity.com/learning-center/personal-finance/retirement/qcds-the-basics>)

## Is Bethesda Lutheran Church a QCD?

**YES!** A charity must be a 501(c)(3) organization in order to receive tax-free IRA charitable contributions. Bethesda is a 501(c)(3) organization.

If you are 72, own an IRA, and donate to charity, QCDs may make sense for you; as *always, consult your tax advisor or accountant to see if this is to your advantage.*



**“How can I give if I’m not attending services in person?”**

The shift to virtual ministry has changed how we pray; interact with the church – and how we fulfill our offerings.

Bethesda continues to support many local and world benevolences even though we are not attending in person. Here are a few ways to continue with your offerings while being away from church:

1. We have a “Donate” button on our Facebook page so you can donate online.
2. You can sign up for auto deductions from your saving or checking account; you can even sign up using a credit card (so you can rack up points!). The Simply Giving forms are available [HERE](#) on our

webpage, in the office, or contact the office and we can mail or email the form to you.

You can designate where you want your dollars to go (you can choose more than one area of giving).

Just some of the areas you can choose

- General Funds
- Local Benevolence
- World benevolence
- Food Shelves
- Facility Funds
- Lutheran Partners in Global Ministry
- Feed My Starving Children
- Dara Palliative Care in Mozambique
- Village of Hope Zambia

3. Mail your offering to the church or drop it by the office. Office hours are Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 11:00am-3:00pm. Wear a mask and we would love a quick visit.

### 2 Corinthians 9:7

*Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

## Outreach Ministry Christmas Calling List

This holiday season we would like to reach out to our members with phone calls and are developing a Christmas call list. We need people who can connect with a list of members just to say hi or to see if they have any special needs around the holidays. If you are willing to be a caller, contact the office, Pastor James or Darlene Christensen.



## Advent Colors

One of the season’s symbolic colors is blue, representing hope. During Advent, we wait in hope to celebrate again God’s coming in human form, and we look forward in hope to Christ’s coming in glory at the end of the age. Purple symbolizes the royalty of Jesus, the coming Prince of Peace, and the penitence with which we receive him. Some congregations also use pink or white candles in Advent wreaths, with pink symbolizing joy and white symbolizing the Christ child.



Bethesda Lutheran Church of Malmo  
21590 State Highway 47  
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



### **The *Lifeline* Mission**

We will **LIVE** and **SERVE** through **FAITH**  
we will **ACT** with **LOVE** and **KINDNESS**  
we will **GIVE** hope and **SUPPORT** to all



#### Bethesda Telephone Directory

Church	<a href="mailto:blcmalmo@gmail.com">blcmalmo@gmail.com</a>	(320) 684-2123
Fax		(320)-684-2836
Toll Free		(877) 684-2123
Church Web site		<a href="http://blcmalmo.org">blcmalmo.org</a>
Facebook page		Bethesda Lutheran Church of Malmo
Pastor	James A. Muske	(320) 684-2123
Council President	George Smith	(320) 537-1020
Vice President	Dennis Hennessy	(651) 247-2283
Parish Nurse	Darlene Christensen	(320) 279-0097
Parish Nurse	Kathy Berland	(218) 838-6181

**To share articles and/or information, mail to:**

**Sue Stebbins, *Lifeline* Editor**

**c/o Bethesda Lutheran Church**

**Email address: [blnews@juno.com](mailto:blnews@juno.com)**

All articles due on or before the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month



# Activities & Events

December 2020

If anyone is unable to fulfill an assignment below, please find your own substitute or notify the coordinator

Ushers by Skip & Lynn Hansen



Check list in office for when to light the Christ Candle\*

**Don't forget the blessing boxes the first Sunday of every month!!**

Altar Care by Dianne Jones  
December... Barb Forrester and Dianne Jones

Recycling – Lee & Barb Forrester

Greeters  Lynne Meidlinger

- Dec 4 Judie Birk
- Dec 5 Elsa Carlson
- Dec 6 Anna Westerlund
- Dec 8 Maynard Berland
- Dec 11 Larry Darmer
- Dec 13 Joseph Timmers
- Dec 17 Dean Hanson
- Dec 18 Dennis Liljenquist
- Dec 18 Irene Manning
- Dec 18 Sam Samuelson
- Dec 19 Roy Berry
- Dec 21 Kevin Skow
- Dec 21 George Smith
- Dec 23 Rollie Halvorson
- Dec 23 Ronesha Keil
- Dec 24 Carol Raymond
- Dec 25 Laury Nyberg
- Dec 26 Ruth Hamman
- Dec 26 Edmund Simonson
- Dec 28 Hanna Gordon
- Dec 28 Neil Honl
- Dec 30 Cole Trotter
- Dec 31 Eve Christensen



## ANNINVERSARY

- Dec 4 Penny & Ken Sjoquist
- Dec 9 Lucille & Dennis Liljenquist
- Dec 18 Kelly & Larry Liljenquist
- Dec 27 Barbara & Michael Macioch

*LUKE 2:10*

*"BUT THE ANGEL SAID TO THEM, "DO NOT BE AFRAID. I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS THAT WILL CAUSE GREAT JOY FOR ALL THE PEOPLE."*





# December 2020

## Bethesda Calendar of Events



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6 <i>Facebook or YouTube service</i>	7 <i>9:00 Women's Devotional Bible study</i>  <i>7:00 p.m AA &amp; Alanon mg</i>	8 <i>10:00 Zoom coffee hour</i>	9	10	11	12
13 <i>Facebook or YouTube service</i>	14 <i>7:00 p.m AA &amp; Alanon mg</i>	15	16	17	18	19
20 <i>Facebook or YouTube service</i>  <i>Newline Deadline</i>	21 <i>10:00 Council meeting</i> <i>7:00 p.m AA &amp; Alanon mg</i>	22	23 <i>9-12 WIC</i>	24 <i>4:00 Parking lot service</i> <b>Christmas Eve</b>	25 <b>Merry Christmas</b>	26
27 <i>Facebook or YouTube service</i>	28 <i>7:00 p.m AA &amp; Alanon mg</i>	29	30	31 <b>New Years Eve</b>		