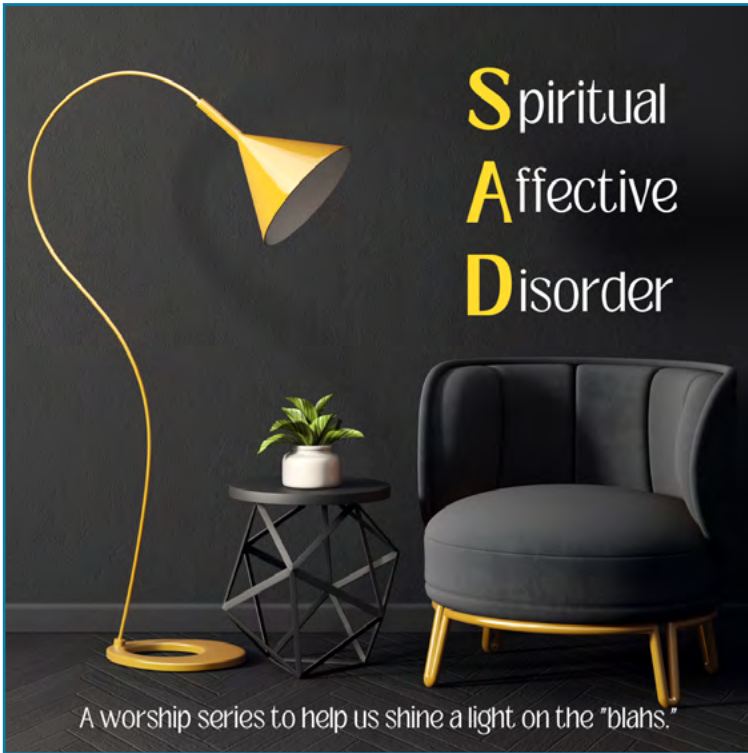




THE MESSENGER

OUR MISSION IS TO GROW IN FAITH, TO WORSHIP GOD, TO SERVE OTHERS, AND TO WELCOME ALL.



Spiritual
Affective
Disorder

A worship series to help us shine a light on the "blahs."



Become a
Prayer Partner



Messy Church

Are You Willing?

Messy Church

January 8, 4 - 6 p.m.



Kids Night Out

January 14, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Spiritual Affective Disorder



A worship series to help us shine a light on the "blahs."

ARISE, SHINE! HOW TO FACE THE WINTER BLUES

After Christmas I can feel deflated. The joy of the season evaporates. Most of the long and dreary winter is still ahead. I would like to hibernate and wake up to the fragrance of daffodils and Easter music.

During this cold season, with long dark nights and little daylight, many are struggling with Seasonal Affective Disorder, a kind of depression. It has been called "the mid-winter blues." Life can feel flat, drained, with little energy left.

The pandemic exacerbated the situation. Millions of people struggle with anxiety, depression, and chronic mental illness. If you do not, chances are you are close to someone who does.

What can we do about it? In worship, beginning with January 8, we will explore spiritual practices that help us cope and return to the light of life. Spiritual practices are everyday activities that can boost

and lighten up our mood.

This season is called Epiphany for a good reason. It is to help us gain insight and move us toward meaningful practices, things you and I can do, that make a difference in how we live and experience life.

Week by week, we focus on one specific activity connected with a scripture reading that will help you cope and lift your spirit.

As an overarching theme, we will follow the Isaiah 60 passage, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, but the Lord will arise and God's glory will shine over you."

The unique promise of our sacred scriptures is that God will carry us through, that God's light shines into the

darkness, and that the darkness cannot snuff out that light.

Each week, you will receive practical information on how you can counter the blues, help someone else, and live more fully. Also, you have the opportunity to join the conversation on which spiritual practices you find helpful and meaningful.

I hope and pray that you will join us for worship in person or online beginning January 8. The services will be moving, meaningful, and motivating to rise to the challenge. They will help you rise and shine.

Have a blessed and bright New Year with God!

Pastor Dietmar

NEWS FROM TORRI STARK, OUR YOUTH LEADER



CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

The Christmas pageant was a great success thanks to all the people who helped! Many thanks to parents for bringing their kids early to rehearse, to Joanne Lauer, Jane Berger, and Hailey Beaver for participating in the pageant, to Wendy Mull and Ellen Berger for helping herd the shepherds and sheep, and to Carolyn Fairl and Shane Sanders for helping set up and tear down the pageant set. Finally, kudos to the kiddos for a job well done!



KIDS NIGHT OUT

The December Kids Night Out was a great success - many thanks to Peggy Peeler for helping with the little ones! The January KNO will be on Saturday, January 14 from 5:30 - 7:30, and our focus will be on baptism. Please sign up [here](#) by Friday, January 13. Hope to see you there!



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School will resume on January 8, and our focus will now shift to the New Testament as we learn about Jesus and the wisdom He shares. We will also be learning about communion and start participating in that part of the service in February.



TEEN GROUP

Teen Group resumes on January 22 with a movie night! We'll watch Disney's Onward and talk about how God provides what we need even when we feel like we've lost something important. Please sign up [here](#) if you plan to attend.

JANUARY



BIRTHDAYS

- 1/01 Jaime Namminga
- 1/02 Hailey Beaver
- 1/05 Ryan Bolig
Peggy Doak
Allen Wetzel
- 1/06 Jim Forster
Kay Moffatt
- 1/07 Shelly Wolfe
- 1/09 Barry Hayhurst
- 1/10 Charles Dahlmann
- 1/11 Derrick Mercer
- 1/12 Raymond Adams
Andrew (Andy) Snyder
- 1/13 Rachael Kelly
Herbert Vankirk
- 1/14 Nancy Litzel
- 1/15 Charles Ruhl
- 1/16 Isabel Proger
- 1/17 Felix Plajer
- 1/18 Kaley Long
Judith Lyon
- 1/19 Cerene Dubaskas
- 1/20 Debra Martello
William Proger
- 1/21 Theodore (Teddy) Derk
Michelle Siegel
- 1/22 David Hannah
Zachary Stark
- 1/23 Victoria Stark
- 1/24 Melissa Bingaman
Leon Fetterolf
- 1/25 June Straub
- 1/26 Maddison Burd
Morgan Lewis, Jr.
Nancy Wagner
- 1/27 Sue Minier
Jenelle Moyer
- 1/28 Marley Showers
- 1/29 Lon Deitrick
Cheryl Reddinger
- 1/30 Christine Beaver
David Imhoof
Caroline Kissinger
- 1/31 Charlotte Barben
Terry Beaver
Dakota Brosius
Ella Hanes
Jan Riegel
Pat Snook

PRAYER LIST

Vivian and Terry Beaver
 Bob Engel
 Tammy Gessner and Family
 Brent King
 The Family of Bill Saulsbury
 The Family of Richard Savidge
 Rev. Jack & Pat Snook
 Buddy & Lela Strawser
 Bill Tesno
 All who keep working in critical

situations, especially the health care workers
 All who are grieving
 Those in leadership positions
 Our country - for peace, respect, understanding
 Those who are dear and close to our hearts and those not named above
 The people of Ukraine and all those suffering from the raging war

THANK YOU NOTES



To Pastor & group members,
 I just want to say big thanks to all of you for all the things that you have supported us with. Thank God for people like the members and friends from St. Paul's.

A Big Thank You from the Thomas Family (Linda and Daisy)

"We shall always remember with deep gratitude your comforting expression of sympathy. Thank you for your kindness. God Bless."

The Scartelli-Strube Family



On behalf of St. Paul's Senior Choir, I'd like to extend a big thank you to Nancy Litzel for her anthem donation, "Embrace the Day". We will kick off 2023 with music of gratitude and optimism. As a former music educator, Nancy's insights and musical input are invaluable to us! We are enjoying preparing this anthem to share with the congregation on January 8th.

Thank you, Nancy!
 Amy Caron, Senior Choir Director

THANK YOU NOTE

Thank You from Bethany Children's Home

"Thank you for your gift of \$170 to Our Church's Wider Mission through the Penn Central Conference. Through your special gifts, we can provide each youth an opportunity to receive educational support/enrichment, music therapy, arts and recreation, therapeutic services, and a caring, structured environment to live within. In addition, you will provide many

first memorable moments including birthday parties, visits to the local ice cream shop, shopping for new shoes or clothes, and going to an amusement park. These experiences help our youth to begin setting a new course for their life. Thank you for helping our youth heal from the past, live in the present, and dream for the future! Together, we are providing each youth the opportunity to become the person they really want to be and have the life they so desperately deserve."



BECOME A PRAYER PARTNER

Everyone is invited to participate in this thoughtful exercise of faith and love. We encourage every household to become a part of the beautiful exchange of loving thoughts. Here's how it works:

Fill out the form either [online](#) or in the foyer by Sunday, January 15, 2023. Each person who submits this form will be assigned a name. This person is your Prayer Partner for 2023.

Please remember that it only requires a card or note every now and then and on special occasions (especially the person's birthday) to let them know they are being thought of in prayer. You simply sign your card or note to whoever it is with the words "Your Prayer Partner" and St. Paul's return address. Then, next Christmastime make known to that person your identity with a small gift.

THANKSGIVING FOOD MINISTRY

St Paul's UCC, along with SACC, provided 6 families including 27 people with food to make Thanksgiving dinner. The boxes

of food were distributed from the street behind the church on Saturday, November 12. -Donnell Kelly



JANUARY



ANNIVERSARIES

- 1/01 Michele DeMary & Lee Fortier
Michael & Jeanette Dressler
- 1/07 Carol & Bob Drumheiser
- 1/08 Susan & Michael Bolig
- 1/11 Michael & Melissa Bingaman
- 1/12 Ellen & Nick Berger
- 1/15 Craig & Shelly Myers
- 1/25 Norm & Jean Golden

ST. PAUL'S COUNCIL MEETING - DECEMBER 13, 2022

Because of the timing of the newsletter publication, these newsletter minutes are not the official, approved minutes. After the minutes have been approved at the next meeting, the final minutes are available upon request.

In Attendance: Pastor Dietmar Plajer, Peggy Peeler, Sara Adams, Sigrid Plajer as guest, Allen Wetzal, Josh Wenrich, Randy Tanner, Linda Turner, Bev Heinemann, Kathy Ulrich, Shane Sanders, Kim Burkhart, John Fischer (2023), Malcolm Derk (2023), Mary Dahlmann (2023).

Excused: Michael Zettlemyer, Bob Engel, Amy Caron. The new Council members for 2023 joined the meeting and were welcomed by Peggy Peeler.

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call joined as guest, via Zoom, to provide information on mission statements, vision statements, and strategic plans.

1. The Mission Statement is what we focus on and should be specific rather than general.
2. The Vision Statement is how we enact our Mission - our values.
3. The Strategic Plan is a living document and is not about what we are doing now. Objectives should be new or what we want to expand on. The number of objectives should match our capacity to reach our goals (i.e., number of members, volunteers, resources, etc.). A Strategic Plan should be for 3 years and needs buy-in by lay leaders and the congregation.

Rev. Dr. Call will continue to work with us on our Strategic Plan and she suggested a meeting solely dedicated to the Plan. Rev. Dr. Call then left the meeting.

Minutes of October Meeting: A motion was made by Bev Heinemann, seconded by Randy Tanner, and approved by Council to accept the minutes as submitted.

Financial Report: The Financial Report was reviewed by Linda Turner. We had net income for November of \$2,183.59. A motion was made by Randy Tanner, seconded by Kathy Ulrich, and approved by Council, to accept the Financial Report.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Dietmar highlighted items from his report, including the positive feedback from attendees at the All Saints Service, the Loving is Giving Stewardship program, and our youth programs under the direction of Torri Stark. His complete report is included each month in the newsletter.

Stewardship: Stewardship Sunday was November 13th and giving cards are still being received. The Stewardship and Fi-

nance Committee will have results from Bill Hockenbrock for our January meeting.

Communion: There are two services on Christmas Eve, 4pm and 7pm, and all Council members will be needed to serve. For the 4pm service: Linda Turner, Bev Heinemann, Malcolm Derk, and Kathy Ulrich; for the 7pm service: Kim Burkhart, Allen Wetzal, Randy Tanner, and Peggy Peeler. Pastor Dietmar advised we will need 7 people to serve at each service and recommended one person from each of the above be the contact person for that service. Linda will send out an email reminding everyone.

Messy Church: Sigrid Plajer reported a very successful event for December with 65 people in attendance.

Video Upgrade: Sigrid Plajer reported that the new screens are scheduled to be installed between December 19-21 so there is a possibility the upgrade may be completed by Christmas.

PFLAG: Randy Tanner reported that meetings are going well and there is another meeting on Thursday, December 15. He also reported that PFLAG will be part of Raise the Region in 2023.

Kids Night Out: KNO continues to be very successful. Peggy Peeler volunteered on December 3rd and thought it went very well. The next KNO is January 14th.

Church Safety Plan: Linda Turner and Randy Tanner worked on the plan and submitted a second draft to Council.

Adult Sunday School: Adult Sunday School is over as of December 4th. Options are being researched for continuing the program.

Visitation Ministry Coordinator: Position remains open. Pastor Dietmar discussed avenues to explore to fill this position. Kathy Ulrich, Randy Tanner, Allen Wetzal, Kim Burkhart, and Linda Turner have volunteered to visit homebound people. More volunteers are needed.

Associate Pastor: Pastor Dietmar reported that, so far, he has a commitment of \$50,000 to help fund this position and he hopes to have a part-time position fully funded by the end of 2023. There is no target date for hiring; however, Pastor Dietmar stated we would need to put a search committee together for the position.

Council Members: The By-Laws state that Council consists of 12-15 members and, as of January 1, 2023, we will have 12 members. It would be helpful to have an additional member and we may want to look at changing the number required. This will be tabled until 2023.

Bridal Shop: Marv Rudnitsky responded to our concern about liability to the church if we should approve, once the current

owner sells her business to an employee, continuing the current arrangement with the new owner. Marv stated that the church's risk is small, covered by our insurance, and should be covered as well by the current owner's insurance. A motion was made by Allen Wetzel, seconded by Sara Adams, and approved by Council that we allow the current arrangement to remain with the new owner. This in no way negates the 30-day notice to vacate by either the church or by the new owner. Linda Turner will ask Marv Rudnitsky to send a letter to the current owner advising of our decision.

January Council Meeting: Peggy Peeler will begin the meeting and facilitate election of officers for 2023. Once officers are approved, the new President will preside, and Peggy will leave the meeting.

Pastor Vacation Days: Pastor Dietmar requested December 26, 2022-January 1, 2023 as vacation days. A motion was made by Randy Tanner, seconded by Josh Wenrich, and approved by Council, to approve the vacation.

Christmas Eve Service: Who will you invite to one of the Christmas Eve services? Pastor Dietmar handed out paper angels with cards announcing the services (and a piece of chocolate too!) and asked that we give them to someone and invite them to one of the services.

Personnel: Bev Heinemann reported that she had interviewed a candidate for treasurer; however, the person was not comfortable that he had the necessary qualifications. The search continues.

Finance Other: Pastor Dietmar and Sigrid Plajer left the meeting so Council could discuss a proposal to purchase a desktop computer for the Media Coordinator. Currently, Sigrid carries her personal laptop back and forth to the church. The cost of the new Mac mini is approximately \$1,270. A motion was made by Linda Turner, seconded by Kathy Ulrich, and approved by Council to purchase the computer. After the approval, Pastor Dietmar and Sigrid rejoined the meeting. Linda Turner reported that S&F recommended increasing the rate for Treasurer from \$19 to \$25 per hour; however, stated that both she and Bill Hockenbrock, after more thought after the meeting, did not concur. Council did not act on the recommendation and tabled

it pending further research. Linda Turner made a motion to approve recommendations from Stewardship and Finance regarding financial reporting: (1) establish a new designated fund called Technology, (2) move the remaining balance of the Garage Door Opener fund to Technology, (3) move the remaining balance of the TV and TV Cart funds to Technology, (4) move the Pool Table Repair balance to Major Repair, (5) rename Kitchen Cupboard to Food Outreach Ministry, and (6) invest money from Major Repair (approximately \$12,400) and Memorial Fund (approximately \$7,800) into our UCC investment funds. Allen Wetzel seconded the motion, and these recommendations were approved by Council.

Property & Grounds, Other: S.J. Eaton submitted an estimate to replace a part on the boiler; however, Allen Wetzel reported he had no further information on the outcome. Randy Tanner, after taking inventory of fire extinguishers in the building, reported that we needed 2 more - one for each entrance. A motion was made by Allen Wetzel, seconded by Randy Tanner, and approved by Council to purchase 2 extinguishers through Susquehanna Fire Equipment.

Personnel Committee, Other: Pastor Dietmar recommended that, even though Bev Heinemann is going off Council as of the end of the year, that she remain on the Personnel Committee until further notice. A motion was made by Linda Turner, seconded by Randy Tanner, and approved by Council to accept Pastor Dietmar's recommendation.

Right Relations: Shane Sanders reported the committee is developing a plan for 2023, whether it be Hot Topics or other events connected with certain times of the year (Earth Day, MLK Day, etc.). Battery boxes were purchased and charged to the Green Team (Right Relations) and one box has already been filled and is ready to be mailed.

Next Council Meeting: January 10, 2022 - in person and Zoom. Devotions for next Meeting: Kim Burkhart
The meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Turner
Council Secretary



PASTOR'S REPORT - NOVEMBER 2022

Our St. Paul's Mission is to grow in faith, to worship God, to serve others, and to welcome all.

We celebrated, honored, and gave thanks for our personal saints in worship on All Saints Sunday, November 6. We reflected on the people who touched our lives with their love, who instilled faith in our hearts, and who brought out the best in us, people who pointed us to God. Heather Britton, Gail Fischer, Shane Sanders, and Anna Ogunnaiké participated in the lighting of the candles and the dedication of the white roses in memory of those from our own midst who passed away during the last year. We continue to live into the legacy of our loved ones whose lives we celebrated.

I am deeply grateful to all who participated in our "Loving Is Giving – Giving Is Loving" stewardship program and who made a giving commitment for God's work through St. Paul's for 2023. On "Love Sunday," November 13, we dedicated ourselves and our giving to God. My heartfelt gratitude goes to all who inspired us with their personal sharing in writing and in worship: Peggy Peeler, Malcolm Derk and Erin Goedegebuure, and Michael Zettlemoyer. God's love is tangible in and through you. God is at work among us through your generous loving and giving.

St. Paul's Children, Youth, and Family ministries are amazing. The monthly Kids Night Out on Saturday from 5:30-7:30 PM is a highlight for children and parents from St. Paul's and from the community. Youth Leader, Torri Stark, is creative, determined, and committed in organizing, planning, and making a wonderful experience for children and youth possible. Messy Church on the second

Sundays at 4 PM continues to flourish. Our Children's Sunday school and Teen Group continue to instill faith, hope, love, and Christian values. I am very grateful to all who help, share themselves, and serve in this area of ministry.

Our Congregation's Visitation Ministry needs to be re-established. Since Pastor Penny Dollar left in May 2020, and through the pandemic, we have not had an established visitation ministry functioning with Visitation Pastor or with a lay Visitation Ministry Coordinator. At any given time, we have about 25 members and friends of St. Paul's who are homebound or living in care facilities. These persons are longing for a meaningful personal visit from and through St. Paul's. We need your help to re-establish St. Paul's Visitation Ministry. Are you willing and able to visit one of our homebound persons once a month? We will have an organizational and training meeting in January.

I participated in a strategic planning workshop with my UCC Central Association colleagues on Saturday, Nov. 5, facilitated by Dr. Michael Gibbs from the Congregational Empowerment Team of our UCC Penn Central Conference. Mike Gibbs is a very skilled and experienced coach for congregations and clergy. I have been meeting with him about our congregational ministries.

On November 1 we hosted the Selinsgrove Ministerium at St. Paul's. Together with our area sister congregations, SACC (the Selinsgrove Area Christian Council) packed and distributed Thanksgiving food baskets (banana boxes full of food, including a turkey) to about 110 local families in need. Without these boxes, many would not be able to celebrate

Thanksgiving. I continue to participate in our Selinsgrove PFLAG support group, which is vital for our area. It is the best place for any and all persons who have questions, struggle with, and need support in regard to LGBTQ+ matters.

Our Thanksgiving Worship Service on November 20 was deeply moving and meaningful. I am so very grateful to all from our Worship Team who help make our services memorable through creative contributions. The "Thanksgiving Tree" which you created during the services reminds us that gratitude is at the heart of who we are meant to be.

Max Leitzel (88) passed away on October 28. We extend our sympathy to his dear wife, Ann and their family. The celebration of life for Max took place on November 4. Pastor Penny Dollar's husband, the Rev. Archie Passmore, died on November 5 and a service celebrating Archie's life and ministry was held on Nov. 10 at the Church of the Nazarene.

Thank you for your prayers, your witness, your giving, your service, and your faithfulness to God and to God's work through St. Paul's. I can see God at work in and through you!

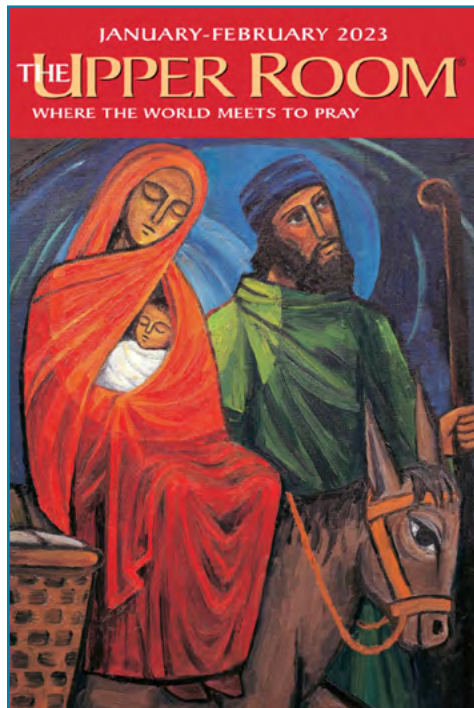
November 1-30, 2022

Days worked	18
Days off	06
Continuing Education	01
Vacation days	04
Holidays	01
Total Days	30

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Dietmar Plajer

UPPER ROOM JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2023

You can pick up the January-February Upper Room devotional at the church on Sunday morning or Tuesday to Thursday, 9-2, right inside the Mill St. door. If you cannot pick up your copy, please call the church office at 570-374-8749.



MESSY CHURCH JANUARY 8 AT 4 PM



We invite you to Messy Church on January 8 at 4 p.m. Our Bible story is the story in Luke 5:12-16, Jesus heals a man with leprosy. This month, we are looking into acceptance and willingness. How can we love and value all people? We will do activities together, sing and play and craft, and at the end we will share a family meal together. Come join us! Sign up [here](#) so we know you're coming and can be well prepared for you!

PRAYER SHAWL TUESDAYS 1 - 3 PM

We invite you to participate in St. Paul's Prayer Shawl group every Tuesday from 1 - 3 pm. We meet in the Parlor at church and keep each other company while we knit prayer shawls, do cross stitch or crochet, or just simply sit with each other. You can come as you are; while we do have a goal of making prayer shawls, we are very relaxed and handiwork is by no means a requirement. Come and visit and see if you would like to hang out with us. By the way, we do have both men and women in our group. Everyone is welcome.



VISITATION MINISTRY KICK OFF MEETING THURSDAY, JANUARY 12 AT 5 PM

We need your help! St. Paul's has about 24 homebound members. We would love to brighten their days by making sure they all get a visit from someone from St. Paul's. Are you willing to visit one of the homebound persons once per month? If so, please let Linda in the church office know of your interest: office@saintpauls-ucc.org or (570) 374-8749. You can also contact her with questions about what it entails.

We will kick off our Visitation Ministry with an organizational meeting on Thursday, January 12 at 5 pm. We invite you to join us for that meeting in our fellowship hall whether you are ready to participate or whether you want to check out what it entails.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your willingness to help with this vital ministry!

Yours, Pastor Dietmar



We will kick off our Visitation Ministry with an organizational meeting on Thursday, January 12 at 5 pm.

DECEMBER 2022 PICTURES







St. Paul's United Church of Christ

400 North Market Street, Selinsgrove, PA 17870

Tel 570-374-8749

office@saintpauls-ucc.org

saintpauls-ucc.org

Worship Sunday at 10:30 AM

also on Facebook, YouTube, and our website

"God is Still Speaking"

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

We thank God for...



Enjoy snapshots from the Christmas Eve services.