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# Christ's United Lutheran Church 437 Airport Road Ashland, PA 17921 www.christsunited.org

# **A**FEBRUARY



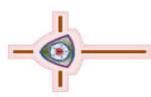
#### The CULC Messenger God's Work, Our Actions

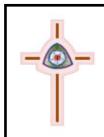


Join us for Worship - Sundays at 9:30 a.m. Sunday School - September through May 1st & 3rd Sundays @ 10:45 a.m.









#### Christ's United Lutheran Church One God. One People. One Purpose. 437 Airport Road, Ashland, PA 17921 www.christsunited.org

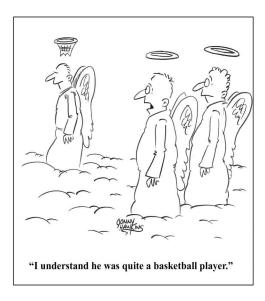
(570) 875-1591

February 2024

In This Issue:

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#### Status of Accounts as of December 31

Total amount in checking account: \$135,229.37.

Amount needed in offerings per month to meet our 2024 Annual Budget of \$203,168.00 is \$16,930.00.

Income for December was \$20,134.61.

Expenses for December were \$12,699.77,

resulting in a net income of \$7,434.84.

Benevolence for December was \$1,235.00,

bringing the total contributions for the year to \$13,057.05.



#### **CHURCH COUNCIL 2023**

Phone	<b>Term Expires</b>
570-875-1035	Feb. 2026
570-875-9085	Feb. 2024
570-682-8240	Feb. 2026
570-590-7281	Feb. 2025
570-933-5144	Feb. 2025
570-205-6241	Feb. 2024
570-875-1644	Feb. 2025
570-682-3697	Feb. 2026
570-875-2681	Feb. 2024
	570-875-1035 570-875-9085 570-682-8240 570-590-7281 570-933-5144 570-205-6241 570-875-1644 570-682-3697

Youth Representative - Vacant

#### **DESIGNATED PASTOR**

Rev. Melinda Heppe 570-205-7450

**STAFF** 

Parish Administrator Debbie Hall 570-875-1591 office@christsunited.org 570-789-9722

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 8:00 am- 4:00 pm

<b>Director of Music</b>	Jamie Johnson	570-590-1678
Treasurer	Ann Marie Dillman	570-449-2021
Indoor Custodian	Ann Ray Begis	570-590-2729
Outdoor Custodian	Dennis Wolfe	570-875-9085
Financial Secretary	Christine Brennan	570-875-0720



#### **Christ's United Ministry Teams**

Christian Education

Evangelism/Outreach

Lutheran Church Men (LCM)

Social Ministry

Stewardship

WELCA

Worship & Music

Multimedia Ministry

Safety and Security Team

#### **Christ's United Committees**

Auditing & Finance Committees

**Endowment Fund** 

Mutual Ministry

Nominating

Personnel

Property

#### Christ's United Lutheran Church Mission Statement

We the members of Christ's United Lutheran Church, Ashland, desiring to be blessed together with Word and Sacrament and to become more perfectly the Body of Christ in our world, do hereby commit ourselves to a mission which includes a creative reexamination of our worship life; a quality educational program for all ages; intentional witnessing; a serving spirit; and an integrated support system which will under gird our program and the maintenance of our facilities as it encourages improved stewardship.

#### Christian symbol



22

CROSS OF ASHES — On Ash Wednesday, as Lent begins, worshipers' foreheads are often marked with ashes in the sign of the cross. The ashes traditionally come from burning palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday. In the Old Testament, ashes were a sign of mourning and repentance. Today, some worshipers wipe off the ashes before leaving church, to symbolize being cleansed from sin by Jesus' death; others wear the ashes the rest of the day, carrying the cross of Christ into the world. Reciting Genesis 3:19 often accompanies the placement of ashes: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return."

#### Message from Designated Pastor Mindy...

Lent is not a time to beat yourself up!

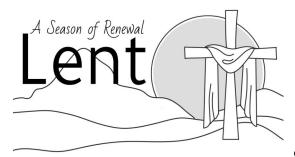
It is a time to take stock, to be honest, to make changes when necessary. It is a time to grow in grace, and the church has traditionally endorsed these 3 Lenten practices.

PRAYER: It can get kind of rote, can't it? Learn a new table grace and use it for the season. Or pray spontaneously. Write your prayers, draw your prayers, dance your prayers! If you usually pray alone, find a prayer buddy. Look up the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle online, and you can pray your way around the world every year. I could go on, and if you reach out to me we'll find more meaningful ways for you to converse with the source of all good.

FASTING. Again, this is not about suffering. If there's something you shouldn't be ingesting, stop...and get support if you need it. Eating too much or in a way that hurts you? Consider how fearfully and wonderfully made you are, and treat the body you were given with love. Otherwise—do you eat thoughtlessly? Learn where your food comes from. Pray for those involved in the process of getting it to you. If you find injustices in the food chain, do your part to redress them.

WORKS OF MERCY: There is literally no end of possibilities here: just pay attention to where God is leading you. Gifts of money are nice when you have it: gifts of time and/or presence are infinitely precious. You might be led to a helpful new hobby, you might have your life turned around. Pay attention to nudges from God!

And again, if you want to talk about any of this, please do not hesitate to be in touch.



The CULC Messenger God's Work, Our Actions



#### **Member's Message** by John Towey

#### A TOUCH ON YOUR SHOULDER

I have been a member of Christ's United Lutheran Church for about 11 years now. In 2011, I was suffering spiritually. I had three very close family members pass away within a very short time. They all lived in my home and were cared for by my wife and me for many years. They all received religious funerals in a church as well as services at their grave sites. I was saddened that God let this happen to these beloved family members and it hurt so much. What hurt more, was the fact that I never received any form of comfort from the church I attended and supported, or any of its members or leaders. I felt the need to search for a more caring church where I could regain my trust and belief in God, and a church family that would support me in times of suffering and trials. We visited several churches of different denominations in order to try to find the right fit. I remember entering the narthex at CULC for the first time and being somewhat confused. There was no holy water to bless yourself, no fancy statues on the altar, no tabernacle on the altar where the holy eucharist was stored, no kneelers in the pews, and people were all standing around talking with each other. I knew no one. I had no idea where to sit or what to do. I felt like an outsider. Then, I felt a hand gently touch my shoulder and heard a warm, friendly, calming voice welcoming me to the church service. It was Jim Gruber. He introduced himself, showed me where to sign the guest book and told me I could sit anywhere I choose. We met again after the church service in the social hall. We talked, and he introduced us to several other friendly, welcoming church members. Some of these people (Beth Andrews, Darlene Stank, Melanie Bendinsky, Gail Marquardt, Terry Shilling) we had known from prior times. It felt like family. Each time we returned and attended a service, it was the same, and it has continued for years.

I was invited to attended Adult Bible studies lead by Eric Tice. I had never spent a lot of time reading the bible with my other church membership. What he was teaching in his class made sense to the other Bible readers but was often confusing to me at times. I asked a lot of questions that were always answered, but I wish I knew more about the Bible. One Sunday morning before the service had started, I received another touch on the shoulder. This time it was from Kay Berner. She asked me if I had a Study Bible. I responded no. She said, you do now. I have an extra one at home that I will give to you. Once again, a friendly touch on the shoulder and a welcoming gesture helped me along in my search for spiritual guidance and understanding.



# American Red Cross Community Blood Drive Christ's United Lutheran Church

437 Airport Road (Gordon) Ashland, PA 17921

Monday, February 5, 2024 1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Open to the public and walk-Ins are Welcome!

#### A prayer for Lent



Dear Christ, hasten to me. Release me from my sins. Free my arms from the chains of evil, that I may embrace you. Lift the scales of ignorance from my eyes that I may see you. Why do you delay? What are you waiting for? You are my God and my Lord, you are my refuge and strength, you are my glory and my hope.

In you I put my trust. Dear Christ, hasten to me.

—Aelred of Rievaulx (12<sup>th</sup> century)



#### CULC YOUTH GROUP Activities



All kids who had First Communion and their families are welcome.

Watch the Newsletter for this year's schedule of Youth Group events.







Make this heartfelt craft as a decoration or gift.

#### What you need:

- Yarn
- Scissors
- Parchment paper
- Baking sheet
- Heart-shaped cookie cutters
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- Adult help



#### What you do:

- 1. Cut yarn into 12-inch pieces.
- 2. Place cookie cutters atop a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
- 3. Combine cornstarch and water in a saucepan. Heat mixture over medium heat, stirring until thick and smooth. Remove from heat and cool to form a "glue."
- 4. Dip each piece of yarn into the mixture to coat completely. Squeeze off any excess.
- 5. Place yarn in the cookie cutters, allowing pieces to cross and loop within the heart. Add more until the cookie cutter is filled and the yarn looks like a heart.
- 6. Remove cookie cutters and bake the sheet for two hours at 150°F. or until hearts are dry and hard.

In my time at Christ's United I have enjoyed the many opportunities that are available to help other people. I have helped with Vacation Bible School, the Easter Egg Hunt, Trunk or Treat, the Live Nativity, the Food Pantry. I have served on Church Council, helped by being a Pastor's Assistant, Lector, Communion Assistant, and Lay Pastor, Eucharistic Minister, and member of the Men's Group. These opportunities helped me grow spiritually and brought me great joy and happiness by not only being a member of the church, but by becoming an active member and contributing my time and talents where they were needed. This all may never have happened without that first touch on my shoulder and someone I never met welcoming me as a friend when I first entered the church.

We can all learn from my journey that helped me regain my spiritual strength by becoming an active member here at CULC. A small soft touch on the shoulder can go a long way. Try becoming more involved. It will certainly help you grow in your spiritual journey through life as it did me.

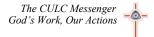
Your friend in Christ, John Towey





#### **Church Council Highlights** From January

- Stewardship Committee reported that there were 22 Time & Talent sheets returned.
- Nominating Committee: (Deb Price, Dennis Wolfe, Jacob Tice, along with representatives selected at the last Congregational Meeting) is looking for persons to run for nomination to replace outgoing Church Council members.
- New signs are needed for the entrance to the parking lot as the current ones were run over.
- Committee reports are due to the office by Wednesday January 24, 2024.



#### **February Council Contact of the month** is Morgen Sweitzer.

The Council Contact of the Month is the "on call" member of council, the person to contact if you have any concerns (other than pastoral concerns), or need access to the building. If you need to contact Morgen, she can be reached at 570-682-8240.



of the Month

#### PRAYER CHAIN

Each day members of Christ's United bow their heads and lift their hearts in prayer for the ministries of this congregation and people in need.



A copy of the Prayer List is available at worship services each Sunday. You also have an email sent to you each week with a list of those in need of your prayers. A phone chain notifies you of immediate needs. If there is an immediate need of prayer, please call the church office. In the event the office is closed, Gail Marquardt (570-554-1075 or 570-933-1737) should be called to begin the prayer chain. Please call the church office for more information or to become a Prayer Chain Participant.

#### **Praying Through the Directory**

Each month we will be listing three of our church faith families. We ask that you take the time and uplift them in prayer for their needs and spiritual journey. This month we pray for:

> The Berger Family - Nelson H, Angie, Nathan & Nelson R. The Pennypacker Family - Robert & Rose The Werner Family - Erin, Kaitlyn & Kayla



#### Invaluable!

"The kingdom of heaven," said Jesus, "is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:45-46, NRSV).

In 2021, the Good News Network reported that a crab fisherman in Thailand stumbled upon a valuable Melo pearl while cutting up a snail for lunch. In wonder, he brought it to his brother to verify the discovery. "My family had been fishing for generations," said Prasarnphon Phunwan, "but I believe our fate is about to change because of my lunch." Several months prior, another fisherman had been offered \$351,000 for a similar pearl.

Likewise, God's priceless love immeasurably alters our eternal fate. If we fully comprehended the value of that love, we'd give up everything to obtain it. But the greater wonder is that we don't have to buy it. God gives it to us as a gift! Whether we seemed to encounter Jesus by chance or someone joyfully shared the Gospel with us, our Savior is the merchant who "sold all that he had" even his life. So priceless is salvation! So valuable are we!

—Heidi Hyland Mann





#### **2024 Sponsorships**



The new sponsorship sign up sheets are now posted on the bulletin board. Sign up for:

Altar Flowers \$35.00\*
Worship Bulletins \$15.00
Special service bulletins \$10.00
Sanctuary Candle \$10.00
Children's Bulletins \$10.00
Monthly Newsletters \$40.00
Palms for Palm Sunday Worship \$15.00

#### For Altar Flowers:

Please sign up by the bulletin board for week(s) you would like to sponsor Altar Flowers and call "Flowers From the Heart" 570-339-2519 to place order. **Cost is \$35.00.** 

Please place order and make payment directly to the florist.

All other sponsorships, please make payable to CULC and give to Debbie in the Church Office.

#### Give Electronically

Checking/Savings Credit/Debit Card Christ's United accepts electronic donations

Electronic Giving is a convenient way to provide consistent financial support to our church. Go to www.christsunited.org or scan the QR code to learn how you can participate.





#### We Offer our Prayers to...

Please note that those experiencing a traumatic event are placed onto the Prayer List and will be **kept on for one month and then taken off.** If you would like someone added, please call the office or write their name on the Prayer Request sheet found on the Prayer Podium. **Please provide updates to the office in order that the list is always current.** 

January 28 – Elaine (A. Berger)

Bob Keys (T. Ambrose)

Angie Balicki (A Friend)

Loretta Berner (K. Berner)

Family of Kenny Schaffer (P. Dziczek)

January 21 - Irene Morgan (B Andrews)

January 14 - Family & Friends of Betty Bader & Mary Heverling

January 7 - Darlene Heath (D. Calhoun)

Jenny Kosmisky

Bob Kinlin (D. Price)

Andrew Schronick (D. Zaharick)

Grant Marlow (S. Marlow)

Gail Levengood (E. Werner)

Dan Werner (E. Werner)

Families of Brian Hepler (B. Andrews), Grace Shankweileer, Bruce Lord (K. Berner) Ladeen Lucas (D. Zaharick) & Larry Joe Kaufman (C. Varndell)

Please continue to pray for: Corrine & Josh Coward, Jim Gruber, Annette Houser, Jack Houser, James Houser Sr., Barbara Liem, Gail Lorady, Pearl & Carl Lute, Dianna Monaghan, Jane Pennypacker, Cheryl Varndell, Heidi Walsh

Remember our Home-bound: Leroy Berner, Diane Heidlebaugh, Jim Hepler, Nancy Kessler, Marlene Lucas, Gail Marquardt, Anna Neumeister, Richard Shoup, Karen Smith, Dot Zangari, Linda Zerby

And Friends: Michele & Amber Adams, Michelle Ambrose, Robert Beecher, Mark Bennyhoff, Donald Bulla, Joe Ferraro Jr., Harry Fishburn, Bob Griffiths, Dan Grow, Ann Helwig, Minah Horan, Tracy Maurer, Lisa Metzinger, Angie Romberger, Elizabeth Smith & family, Elaine Stone, Pastor Sunny, Joe Towey, Rose Varndell, Karyssa Wenrich



#### Sunday, February 19 10:30 a.m.

Immediately after worship, on February 19 we will hold our Annual Congregational Meeting. Please plan to attend and support our ministries here at Christ's United.



- 1 Ross Sterling Kim Walacavage Shelby Weikel
- 3 Stephen McGrath
- 4 Dennis Wolfe
- 5 Richard Weikel Kenneth Zweizig
- 6 Brian Bolich
- 8 Kevin Clark, Sr. Charlotte Schmidt
- 9 Kevin Clark, Jr. Terry Kessler Allison Rusinko Kayla Werner
- 10 Rebecca Houser Jason Miller Mark Varndell
- 11 Vanessa Pirie Tanner Wilson Leo Young II
- 12 Chantelle Klinger Edward Stepulitis
- 13 Rhonda Carl Barb Habowski Deana Lesher
- 14 Bobbi-Jo Hummel

- 15 Alaina Lindenmuth Melissa Sisko
- 16 Daniel Sisko Lois Sterling
- 17 Crystal Huber
- 18 Cyrus Clark Jacob Tice
- 19 Dean Lesher Pearl Lute Shaun McNally
- 20 Jim Chappell Cheryl Denchak Mina Pennypacker Bill Price Jax Miller
- 21 Kylei Long
- 22 Teresa Ambrose Gavin Dwane Kolton Fetterolf Brielle Smith
- 23 Ricky Williard
- 24 Zalen Williard
- 25 Charlie Klauger
- 26 Geoffrey Dudick
- 27 Denise Hepler
- 28 Ann Welker Wyatt Miller





## Puzzle!

After solving the equations, write the words on the correct numbered lines below. Complete Ephesians 1:3 (NIV) to discover how God shows his great love for us.

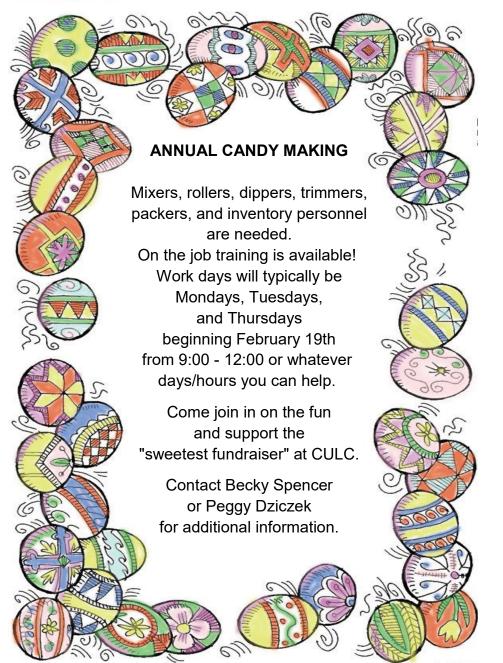
10 + 15 = _	in
10 – 5 =	God
6 – 3 =	to
12 -6 =	_ and
6 + 6 =	_ Christ
18 – 9 =	our
22 – 11 =	Jesus
1 + 1 =	_ be
7 + 6 =	_ who
2 + 2 =	_ the
10 + 5 =	blessed
4 + 4 =	_ of
10 + 13 = _	spiritual

 $10 \pm 15 -$ 

1		2	3	4	5	i –	6
7	7	8	9	10		11	12
13	1	4	15		16	17	18
	19		20		21		22
	23		24		25	26	·
		E	phesian	s 1:3,	NIV		



The next meeting will be on February 7th at 6:00 p.m. All women are invited to join us.





02/13/93	Ron & Donna Wallace
02/14/10	Nelson & Angie Berger
02/16/95	Traci & Donald Smith Jr.
02/21/53	Cy & Joan Clark
02/23/85	David & Denise Hepler
02/28/70	William & Corrine Coward

#### ASH WEDNESDAY

Remember....

That you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Such are the words of blessing offered on Ash Wednesday, as we remember our humanity and God's immortal love, shown to us in Jesus Christ. It is a time of somberness in recognition of the love so strong that death could not break its grasp on us. Join us for Worship with Holy Communion and the imposition of ashes on Wednesday, February 14 at 7:00 P.M.



Lent is a season when we take a look at our lives in view of God's mercy toward us in the sacrifice of his Son for us on the cross. We, in turn, are called by God, especially during this time of repentance and reflection, to be living sacrifices for him, displaying our devotion to him in word and deed. Jesus helps us to see the richness of God's mercy in his life, death

and resurrection. Join us each Wednesday in Lent for our worship services using Holden Evening Prayer and as we explore the Lenten series "In View of God's Mercy" by theology professor David Peter. We will focus our eyes of faith on the meaning behind God's mercy made manifest in Christ.

#### Arts Sunday

On January 7th we held CULC's first Arts Sunday, asking anyone who does crafts to bring something for our display. Our theme was stars.

Here are pictures of the creative items brought in by our talented members.





Serving Our Community of Faith in February





In 1990, Souper Bowl of Caring began with a simple prayer from a single youth group:

"Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat."

Since then, more than \$170 million has been generated for local charities across the country through Souper Bowl of Caring. It has become a powerful movement that transforms the time around the Big Game into the nation's largest celebration of giving and caring for those in need.

Through this mission, people learn they can make a positive difference in the world as they collect food, raise money and serve at hunger-relief charities and show caring and compassion in local communities across the country.

Share in God's love for our neighbors in need and give generously on Souper Bowl Sunday - Feb. 11. All of the donations collected will go directly to our Souper Bowl of Caring Charity of Christ's Cupboard Food Pantry Choice:

#### **Pastor Mindy's Media Moment**

This one is just for fun! (Well, and Christian education...) Search Lent Madness—they're on Facebook, also.

It's a takeoff on March Madness, but the brackets are full of not teams, but saints! During the first round, you are presented each day with biographies of two Saints (individuals who are on the calendar of commemorations of some church body—slightly heavy on Episcopalians, because that's who runs this). In the next round, you learn more about the "winners" and so on through the elite eight and the faithful four and finally to the Golden Halo.

I know it sounds strange. Trust me in this one. You'll laugh a lot, learn a fair bit of Christian history, and be inspired. Not a bad deal for free.







Fellowship Hour will be held after worship on only the first Sunday of each month September through May. See schedule below for your committee's turn to serve. Please sign up on the bulletin board to help.

~ 2024 ~

February - Church Council March - Social Ministry April - Evangelism/ Endowment/Stewardship May - WELCA

June/July/August -No Social Hour



We will be collecting the following items for February:

## Pasta Sauce & Peanut Butter

Please place your donations in the shopping cart.

Thank You!

The next food distribution date is Thursday
February 8, 2024

### Lenten SUPPERS

#### **Lenten Soup Suppers**

The Social Ministry Team will be hosting "Soup Suppers" during the Lenten season.
Our first "Soup Supper" is Wednesday, February 21.
Please join us Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. before worship for a meal of soup and bread.

We are in need of 3 - 4 different soup varieties each week. Please sign up on the bulletin board to make soup. A free will offering collected will go to World Hunger.

Date	Supply Pastor/ Worship Leader	Congrega- tional Rep/ Announce- ments	Lector	Ushers		Communion Assistants	Acolyte	Acolyte
February 4	Erik Tice	Jacob Tice	Becky Spencer	Kay Berner <b>b</b> Allen Johnson <b>c/d</b> John Towey <b>so</b>	er b c/d so	Vivian Brown Barb Anczarski Angie Berger	Mason Buhay	Dylan Buhay
February 11 Transfigura- tion	Pastor Mindy Heppe		Erik Tice			Erik Tice AM Deb Price Becky Spencer	Remington Stehr	Sawyer Smith
February 14 Ash Wednesday	Pastor Mindy Heppe		Jacob Tice			John Towey AM Beth Andrews Dennis Wolfe	Nelson Berger	Logan Walacavage
February 18	Pastor Ben Scott		Sally Tice				Maura Sweitzer	John Wagner Tag-a-long
February 21 Mid-Week	Erik Tice		Barb Stepanchick					
February 25	Pastor Mindy Heppe		Mark Varndell				Marisa Seritsky	
February 28 Mid-Week	Erik Tice		Beth Andrews	<b>→</b>				

### February 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				6:30 Choir Practice 6:30 Easter Egg Hunt planning meeting		
4 Scout Sunday	5	6	7	8	9	10
9:30 Worship w/Holy Communion 10:30 Fellowship Hour 10:45 Sunday School	1:00 – 6:00 P.M. Red Cross Blood Drive 7:00 Church Council		10:30 Seniors 6:00 WELCA	10 – 11:30 Christ's Cupboard	's upboard	
				6:30 Choir Practice		
11 Souper Bowl Sunday	12	13	14 Ash Wednesday	15	16	17
<b>Transfiguration Sunday</b> 9:30 Worship			Valentine's Day  9:45 Lenten Service 10:30 Seniors  7:00 Ash Wednesday Worship	Newsletter Deadline 6:30 Choir Practice		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9:30 Worship 10:30 Annual Congregational Mtg.	Washington's Birthday 9:00 Candy making begins		9:45 Lenten Service 10:30 Seniors 6:00 Soup Supper 7:00 Mid-Week Lenten Worship	6:30 Choir Practice		
25	26	27	28	29		
9:30 Worship			8:30 Newsletter Assembly 9:45 Lenten Service 10:30 Seniors 6:00 Soup Supper 7:00 Mid-Week Lenten Worship	6:30 Choir Practice	The C God's W	ULC Messenger ork, Our Actions