

Happy December!

It is so hard to believe we have turned the page in our calendars and are beginning the holy season of Advent. As we write this email, we are holding space for you with deep gratitude. Gratitude for who you are, what you're about, and all the hope you have in the love of Jesus. We are so very blessed by you and consider it such a holy privilege to walk beside you in life and faith.

The month of November was filled with so much to be thankful for! We had our largest LTN yet with 200 neighbors joining us for lunch the first Sunday of the month. We handed out sweatshirts, played BINGO, saw patients in our medical clinic, and had a Kindermusik class for our littlest neighbors. We shopped for four little angels from our Angel Tree, walked at Stroll into Light to shine light on mental health awareness...reminding us all we are never, ever alone, our basketball team is rocking it on the court every Tuesday night with the Twin City Conference, and we gathered around the table at our annual Friendsgiving. Our hearts are so full as we begin our journey to Bethlehem and the celebration of the birth of the Savior of the world.

Here are some highlights for the month of December:

- With Christmas around the corner, we know parents are always looking for meaningful gifts to get their kiddos. Get your limited-edition Centenary Youth Ministry sweatshirt. What better way to remind them to “Be Here. Be You. Be Loved. Belong” at Centenary and with Jesus. The cost of the sweatshirt is \$60 (comfort color brand). Contact the Youth Ministry office to get yours today (by replying to this email, supply is limited!).
- Confirmation registration for the class of 2025 is well underway! Confirmation by definition is faith formation. Forming one's faith is an ongoing journey throughout life... our hope is that through our Confirmation process you will be given the opportunity, tools, support, and inspiration you will need to build your faith on a firm foundation (Matthew 7:24-25). Starting on January 8th, 2025 (through May 18), we invite all 7th graders to join us as we meet each Wednesday night from 6:00pm—7:30 p.m. to learn about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the spiritual life, and how they form us and help us to change the way we live our lives. You can register here!
- Yesterday we began a brand-new Advent study for Sunday school. Author Kate Bowler will guide us through the season of Advent in her study, “A Weary World Rejoices”, helping us to prepare to meet Jesus on Christmas Day. Come be with us at 10:00am in the Youth Commons and, as always, there will be plenty of coffee and breakfast treats to be had!

- Speaking of Sunday school...we have a ton of options for parents. Check out what's available to you here so that you can grow in your faith as well.
- December 8th, join us in the morning for Sunday school and the 11:00am worship service where our Centenary Basketball team will light the Advent wreath, and our sweet Kendal Garrity (Kevin & Jenna's daughter) will be baptized. Then come back in the evening at:
 - 5:00pm-6:00pm Middle school youth – Angel Tree wrapping party
 - 6:00pm-7:00pm All youth dinner
 - 7:00pm-8:00pm Senior high youth – Angel Tree wrapping
- Friday night, December 13th, Sixers! (our ministry to our 6th graders) will meet at the church to load the buses and head to Tanglewood for a hayride through the lights! As always, friends are welcome but must register ahead of time (space is limited). The cost is \$20 per person (which includes entrance, hayride, s'mores, & hot cocoa). You can register here!
- December 15th is our Annual Youth Christmas Party on the 4th floor following the service of Lessons & Carols at 5:00pm in the sanctuary. Come join in the games (with lots of fantastic prizes), food, fun, and ornament exchange.
- We have two brand new (& exciting) events planned just for YOU! On December 22nd, all are invited to our 1st ever 'Coffeeshouse' on the 4th floor. Do you play an instrument? Do you love to sing? How about you write poetry or reflections? Come share your gift with everyone over a cup of hot cocoa and some yummy Christmas treats at 5:00pm. And then on December 29th we will host a New Year's Eve, Eve Party at the Bowlero on Jonestown Rd at 5:00pm. Everyone is welcome to bring friends to bowl, eat at the pizza and chicken nugget bar, play in the arcade, and make some New Year's resolutions with your church friends! The cost is \$20 per person.
- Finally, we are inviting parents to read with us! Youth Ministry and Shining Light on Mental Health have partnered to read four important books to help us better understand our teenagers. Our second book in the series is "The Anxious Generation How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness" by Jonathan Haidt. Pick up a copy wherever you like to buy your books, read it as your leisure, and then join us on December 29th at 10:00am in the Senior High room for coffee and conversation around the book.

Ways parents can volunteer: *(reply to this email to let us know what you want to do!)*

- If you are a physician, physician's assistant, nurse...medical professional of any kind, we are looking for volunteers to help in our Love Thy Neighbor medical clinic. Contact Tammy to get more information about helping our most vulnerable neighbors.
- Be a table leader for Sunday school. Come be a part of the conversations we have on Sunday mornings during Sunday school. You will be amazed at how God is at work!
- Bring dinner for youth group! You can cook one or order something and bring it...we always love to have a hot meal for youth groups.
- Volunteer to chaperone our upcoming Junior/Senior retreat to Blowing Rock Conference Center in January.
- Volunteer to Shepherd a young 7th grade Confirmand through their Confirmation experience. You won't regret walking alongside someone in faith. They will help you grow as much as you help them!
- Volunteer to help coach, keep score, or wash uniforms for our Twin City Basketball Conference Centenary team. Please reply to this email to let us know if you would like to volunteer.
- Help stock our refrigerator with drinks and our pantry with goodies for our youth on the 4th floor Youth Commons. Simply ask your teenagers what they love to snack on at church, buy some extra, and bring it with you on Sunday morning!

This month is so full! But full of goodness, joy, waiting & anticipating the arrival of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He is the One who comes to us to love us, save us, and be with us always. Remember, all we do is for YOU so that you may grow in your love for one another, grow in your faith, and grow in your understanding of God's great love for you. As always, if you have questions, concerns, or just need a listening ear, we are here to help you navigate all things Centenary Youth Ministry.

Be Here! Be You! Be Loved! Belong!

Tammy & Kevin

Links:

Trust:

<https://onrealm.org/centenaryws/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=NDFhM2YzZmEtNDlmYS00NTQ0LTkyZTkYjZODAxODRkMTY0>

Confirmation:

<https://onrealm.org/centenaryws/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=MDg1ODIzYzUtMTAzMi00OGQ1LTk4MjgtYjFmZTAxMWFiMDQ4>

Sixers:

<https://onrealm.org/centenaryws/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=NmJhMjY0YjMtZjlhZS00NTFhLWFhYTctYjFlZjAxMmU3Mzg0>

Basketball:

<https://onrealm.org/centenaryws/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=NmJhMjY0YjMtZjlhZS00NTFhLWFhYTctYjFlZjAxMmU3Mzg0>

Kate:

https://katebowler.com/seasonal_devotional/the-weary-world-rejoices/#guides