

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:16

News Journal

Monthly Newsletter of New Jerusalem Lutheran Church

January 2025

The Pastor's Pen

THE EPIPHANY SEASON

Welcome to Epiphany, a season of Light, Hope and Possibility!

That first Light – the star that led wise men to seek Jesus, is the same light that reveals Jesus to the nations (all of us!). In Matthew 2:32, Simeon declares, and reminds us, that Jesus is the light of the world. Our great joy and opportunity is to walk in the light that is Jesus' presence in our daily lives, and reflect that light to those in our daily lives. We find Hope in this season as we walk in that light, realizing that God is working His plan through us! We don't need to convince God to join us on our life's journey, for He has invited us to join Him! He invites us to make His priorities ours and, in doing so, opens to us purpose and peace to be found nowhere else. When we open ourselves to the possibilities that exist when we are focused on God's priorities, amazing things can happen! Have you noticed that, as you grow in your faith walk, what is important to you changes? Earthly urgencies give way to things eternally important. There's a huge difference, and we see it ever more clearly. Allow these winter days to be a time of focused spiritual discipline. Allow them, too, to be a time of reflecting the light, love and peace of Jesus to those in our daily lives.

Epiphany Blessings,
Pastor Johnson

Bible Study in January



Tuesday mornings - 10:00 am

January 7, 14, 21, and 28

Hebrews

Tuesday evenings - 6:00 pm

January 7, 14, 21, 28

The Gospel of Luke

A WORD OF THANKS

Dear NJLC,

Thank you so much for the wonderful prayers offered up for us. Thank you for all the cards we have received. They are very comforting. Also, thank you for the love offering and Christmas gift. We really appreciate them and all you have done for us. We are making good progress. Please continue to keep us in your prayers. Hope to be home soon.

Sincerely,
Pastor Cauble and Family

Thank You



Dear Church Family,

Thank you for all the cards, texts, prayers, and visits I have received recently. Your love and support mean so much to me. I am grateful to have such a loving church family.

Linda Lutz

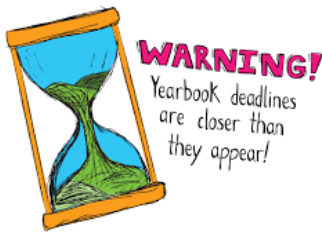


To my second church family,

I would like to thank the congregation and council for the generous Visa gift cards I received for Christmas this year. This year, most of it replaced my "fun money" budget line item that I had already spent at the Southern Christmas Show. You probably don't want to know how much I spent there! If you see me wearing some new jewelry, talking about some delicious jelly toast that I've had recently, or see me wearing a new Christmas shirt next season, you will know that you purchased it for me! As always, I would like to thank you for how loved you make me feel not only at Christmastime, but throughout the year.

With love,
Kristy Painter

2025 Yearbook Reports



The deadline for turning in reports for the 2025 yearbook is Tuesday, January 7, 2025. The deadline for treasurers' reports will be Wednesday, January 15. Please leave a copy at the church office or email them to Kristy at secretary@njlchickory.com. Thank you!



A GREAT BIG THANK YOU to everyone that has been sending cards, coming by to visit, bringing goodies, and other gifts. We truly appreciate your friendship, thoughtfulness & kindness, and support. A special thanks to the Piece Makers for our quilt and pillow. Absolutely beautiful work!

Please know that we truly miss not being able to see you all each Sunday, but we are enjoying The Berkeley, and attend the church service here.

If you find yourself in the Morganton area, please drop in. We would love to see and chat with you awhile.

Your friends in Christ,
Terry and Rebecca McNeely

Matt and Sabrina Pursley

From Matt Pursley and family, missionaries supported by NJLC Benevolence Giving. Council will be addressing Matt's request to continue payments through April, at the January 13 Council Meeting:

Dear New Jerusalem Lutheran Church, I'd like to share an update about our family.



Twelve years ago, Sabrina and I got married. We had no idea where life would take us. Many of you have known us since then. Eleven years ago we moved to New York City. We had 3 daughters there and loved every second of it. Then, Covid (remember that). We moved to North Carolina and I transitioned from our beloved international student ministry to The Jesus Film Project.

Before I say anything else, I first want to **THANK YOU**. Our family and our ministry would never have been possible without you. Your prayers, wisdom, words of encouragement, financial support, and friendship have helped shape our family to be who we are today. You have always been with us in every step, and for that we are eternally grateful.

The time has come end our service with Cru. It's been something I've been thinking and praying about for the past 2 years. I feel like God's answer was always, "If it's time, you'll know." And now I know it's time.

My last day will be January 31st, 2025. Over this next month I'll be finishing up pending tasks. I received my **General Contracting License** in August of last year and am starting my own business in real estate construction, development and investing. (If you want to know more about that feel free to reach out to me directly). **Sabrina** will be begin as a Licensed Clinical and Mental Health Counselor.

Cru cares for its staff in a special way that allows me to receive severance pay to aid in a time of transition. It is offered to staff **in good standing**, however I am still responsible for raising it.

If you are giving monthly and are able, I ask that you please continue your giving through April. If you give on an annual basis and were able to make your annual contribution between now and April that would be a huge help as well.

How to Stop Your Giving

If you give by check...

- You can continue to send in your monthly gifts as you have been doing through May to allow for severance pay for transitions.
- You can end your giving by submitting your final gift in May (or whenever you decide)

If you give electronically using a credit card or electronic funds transfer...

- Your electronic gifts will continue to go through until you designate a change for your giving. Unfortunately, I am not able to make those changes for you, but there are a few easy ways that you can.
- The first thing you need to decide is when you would like your giving to end. If you would like to contribute to my severance as Cru Staff, then you can request your giving to continue though May. Otherwise, you can request your last gift to be whenever you'd like. Once decided, please adjust the email below and send it to egift@cru.org to change your giving:

Electronic Funds Transfer Staff,

Please make my last electronic gift of \$x.xx monthly for XXXXX (00000) on May/August x of 2017

Thank you,

Lastly, if you are looking for somewhere to redirect your giving I have two great options:

- 1) If you'd like to continue to support the ministry of Jesus Film and their work in reaching the nations through media, my team has a few amazing projects and individuals that I would love to introduce you to.
- 2) If you'd like to stay involved with our family, my friend Joshua, has started his own organization called [Living With Convictions](#) that supports men and women getting out of prison and their desperate need for housing. Your giving goes directly to providing housing for them as they focus on reentry.

AS ALWAYS, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP! WE'RE SO GRATEFUL FOR YOU!

If you have any other questions, please let me know. Thanks!

Senior Friends Highlights

Wednesday, December 4, 2024 Annual Christmas Luncheon/Meeting

- Senior Friends and guests gathered for our Annual Christmas Luncheon in the Fellowship Hall.
 - **Forty people were present** (*32 members and 8 guests*).
 - Barbara Hamrick welcomed our members and guests. Special greetings were shared with Susanne Blume, who was accompanied by her daughter.
 - "Homeplace" in Lincolnton catered the delicious meal.
 - Elaine Garner provided the devotions.
 - Free will offering was collected.
 - A brief meeting was held.
 - Thanked everyone involved in setting up, decorating, doing table favors, etc. for Christmas Luncheon.
 - Special Note: Senior Friends provided the altar flowers (the large poinsettia) this past Sunday, December 1st. They were given in appreciation of all Senior Friends members, past and present.
 - **Bake & Craft Sale: \$3,045 was raised.** Seniors Friends moved to round the total off to \$3,100, so the five groups will each receive **\$620.00**. The five recipients are the Backpack Program, Corner Table, Safe Harbor, Samaritan's Purse and Youth Mission Trip to Loris. Thanked everyone for their hard work and making this fund raiser so successful. All items not sold were taken to the Resource Warehouse. The money generated at the Resource Warehouse helps fund Safe Harbor.
 - Calendar Update was given by Elaine Garner. Her collection deadline is Wednesday, January 15. Thanks for all the support.
 - January meeting will be our BINGO meeting with a **regular covered dish meal**. BINGO: Participants were asked to bring 2-3 wrapped gifts. Asked that the value of each gift be \$5. Gifts to be labeled if it is appropriate for Male, Female or Either.
 - A playlist of Christmas music was provided throughout the meal.
 - Following the catered meal, the group enjoyed singing Christmas carols and possibly winning a door prize (donated by Evelyn Ferguson). Carolyn Miller played for us.
- The meeting closed with the singing of "*We Wish You a Merry Christmas*."



LOOKING AHEAD: January devotions: Elaine Garner
January Hostesses: Janet Dameron, Libby Mauney, Teresa Vanderlinden
January Program: Bingo
Next meeting is Wednesday, January 15th at 11:30

*Start the new year off right—
Gather together with friends and enjoy some good food and fellowship.*

Church Council Meeting Minutes

DECEMBER 9, 2024

(Motions are in **BOLD** and Actions are *italicized*)

The December 2024 Church Council meeting was held December 9, 2024. All members of Church Council were in attendance. The meeting was called to order by President Ken Temple. Danny Sorrells led devotions. He will lead the devotions again in January. Rusty Lutz was council designate in November and stated that everything went well. He also mentioned his appreciation for everyone's effort putting together the Fall Fellowship event. The minutes for the council meeting held November 4, 2024, were approved with an amendment stating that Pastor Steve Johnson will be paid as a W-2 employee rather than as a 1099 employee. Treasurer Reports were received as information and show the following month end balances. To save paper, it was suggested that Alan emails the treasurer's reports prior to the council meetings beginning in January. Only the month's activity will be printed for the entire council. All reports will be printed for the president and secretary.

Allocations: \$10,517.53	Benevolence: \$21,528.80	Youth: \$734.95	Lutheran Men: \$752.50	Phillips Fund Checking: \$ 9,868.37
Available: \$51,584.96	Current CD: \$64,521.20	Women's: \$706.50	Mauser Fund CD: \$86,375.96	Phillips Fund CD: \$22,170.62
Building: \$59,777.13	Outdoor Worship Grant: \$90,733.00	Building CD: \$105,551.65	Cemetery Fund: \$9,342.33	Cemetery CD: \$16,659.03

Pastor's Report to Council:

In the four weeks since I began as your interim, we've had quite an adventure!

- Pastor Cauble's hospitalization and recovery have gone differently than anyone anticipated. As of this morning, his doctors have identified a viral lung infection which was the precipitator of his move to the ICU. He is being treated with sedation and ventilation. He is reported to be in good condition.
- Pastor and Vicki's spiritual care has been a priority. We visited at home prior to his surgery and I have made 13 calls on him and Vicki at the hospital.
- Sunday was our fourth time to worship together. Our worship team is awesome! Thanks to all our team members. Worship is planned through December. The team met with me twice to assist in the planning and coordination, and will be meeting again soon as we begin planning for Epiphany.
- Bible Study continues on Tuesdays. I am leading in the morning (Hebrews), and Candice Johnson is leading in the evening (Luke).
- I've been able to sit in on two Confirmation Classes. Megan is doing a great job. I'm blessed to be working with her.
- Life-to-Life continues as well. Our current group is every bit the blessing that the others have been. My small group has been, and continues to be, an important part of my faith walk, and my practice of discipleship.
- We are scheduling shut-in communions. They begin next week.
- I am grateful beyond words for Kristy. Her assistance and support are wonderful!

Looking ahead:

- Saturday, December 14 is our Christmas Play at 5:00.
- Christmas Eve Candlelight worship at 8:00.
- Sunday, December 29 – Service of Lessons, Carols and Communion
- Sunday, January 5 – Epiphany Sunday
- Sunday, January 12 – The Baptism of Our Lord. Candice and I will be in Ohio to join family in celebrating the life of our brother-in-law, who died three weeks ago. Pastor Tom Corbell will be our guest pastor.
- January 27-30, I will be attending the NALC's annual Pastor's Retreat in San Antonio, TX.

I am honored to serve with you while Pastor Cauble is on medical leave. Please let me know how I may assist you.

Pastor Johnson

Congregation +/-:

- A congregation member asked about the Christmas love offering for Pastor Cauble being used to pay toward the portion of Pastor Cauble's short-term disability that the church is covering. Council discussed and decided that the love offering is meant to be over and above his salary and that shouldn't change from any other year just because of his health situation.
- Karen stated that the door on the cemetery side was unlocked on Saturday when she was here. Cindy said the door was unlocked one Wednesday when they came for choir. Cindy locked it back when they left. Rusty said one Sunday during November he also found that door unlocked. Congregation members should be vigilant about locking doors.

Announcements/Petitions and Communications:

- Reminder: Please submit End-of-Year reports for the yearbook by Tuesday, January 7 (Treasurer's Reports by Wednesday, January 15).
- We received a really nice thank you note from one of the families who received a Thanksgiving box meal.
- Carolina Caring – Thanksgiving greetings and appreciation for our congregation's support this year.

Old Business:

- Outdoor Worship Area Update
 - The only money spent so far has been for road work and permits.
 - Ken spoke with Mr. Shabeldeen and signed the contract for work. Council asked Ken to be sure Mr. Shabeldeen is aware of the amount of money already spent so that he knows how much money he has remaining. We don't want to go over budget if possible.
 - We are unsure of the timeline for completion. We still have to order materials, etc. Ken or Robert will ask for an itemized list of needed materials.
 - Council will be notified when work begins. At that point, the project should be done in three weeks.

New Business:

- Loose Offering
 - January 5 – Youth and Family Ministry of NJLC
 - January 12 – St. Jude Children's Hospital

- January 19 – St. Jude Children’s Hospital
- January 26 – St. Jude Children’s Hospital
- Elect 2025 Officers
 - President – Ken Temple
 - Vice President – Robert Hoyle
 - Secretary – Lisa Cook
 - Current Treasurer – Alan Bolch
 - Building Fund Treasurer – Billy Young
 - Benevolence Fund Treasurer – Danny Black
 - **Robert Hoyle made a motion to keep all treasurers in place.** Cindy Coulter seconded the motion. *The motion carried unanimously.*

Council Designates by Month (2025):

- January – Danny Sorrells; February – Lisa Cook; March – Karen Teague; April – Robert Hoyle; May – Deron Bumgarner; June – Callie Southers; July – Thad Scronce; August – BJ Morgan; September – Jack Robinson; October – Rusty Lutz; November – Ken Temple; December – Cindy Coulter

Committee assignments:

- Church property - Thad Scronce; Cemetery – Rusty Lutz; Fellowship – Karen Teague; Finance – Deron Bumgarner; Learning, Youth, and Family – Callie Southers & Lisa Cook; Long Range Planning – Danny Sorrells & Rusty Lutz; Service – BJ Morgan & Karen Teague; Witness – Ken Temple & Robert Hoyle; Worship – Cindy Coulter & Jack Robinson
- Storage for Learning, Youth & Family Committee.
 - Lisa Cook stated the Learning, Youth & Family Committee would like to be able to store all their supplies in one place. The committee has many games, props, and other supplies that are used for various events. Now they are stored in different locations all through the church buildings and Scout Hut. This makes it hard to keep up with all of them and locate them when needed. Also, items have gone missing. The committee would like to have a small storage building purchased in which to store all those items.
 - John Lutz said the Property Committee had discussed this issue and will be moving the storage building currently located by the old tennis courts to a spot beside the bus cover. Moving the Learning, Youth, and Family items out from underneath the Scout Hut will make room there to lock up the Christmas Figurines and help keep dust/dirt off them.
 - **The Property Committee made a motion to take the existing storage building and give it to the Learning, Youth & Family Committee for their use.** Rusty Lutz seconded the motion. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Ministries: (Pastor is a member of all committees):

After the reading of the mission statement, Pastor Johnson said we need to pray about how to grow Christian education at New Jerusalem. Most church members do not participate in this, either through Sunday School or Bible Study. He feels we should make this a special emphasis.

Cemetery Committee (John Lutz and Rusty Lutz): No meeting.

Property Committee (Danny Black and John Lutz):

- Met to discuss the moving of the storage building.

Fellowship Committee (Karen Teague): No meeting.

Finance and Stewardship Committee (Deron Bumgarner)

- Retirement Plan for Megan
 - **The Finance Committee made a motion to begin a retirement plan for Megan Gwaltney.** An amount equal to 3% of her income would be deposited in a 403b retirement account. She would not be required to contribute. The investments will be based on her risk level choices, etc. \$700 has already been budgeted for December for this purpose (half coming from St. Martin's). Rusty Lutz seconded the motion. *After further discussion/clarification, motion passes.*
- Interim Pastor Status
 - **Robert Hoyle made a motion to continue current agreement with Pastor Steve Johnson through March with option of change if Pastor Cauble comes back earlier.** Danny Sorrells seconded the motion. *The motion passed.*
- Pastor Cauble is on short term disability until mid-February. It will change to long term disability after that.

Learning, Youth, and Family Committee (Lisa Cook, Robert Hoyle, and Jan Sorrells)

- Megan Gwaltney submitted her report.
- A phone tree will be sent out asking for people to bring soups and sandwiches to serve following the Christmas play on December 14th. Thanks to Jan Sorrells for heading up the play.
- Sunday school rotations
 - We have 2 rotations each Sunday lasting 20 minutes for each.
 - All lessons are prepared. We just need volunteers to teach. We encourage members to volunteer for 20 minutes to get to know the kids.
- Shoes boxes were a success.
- We would like to have family fellowship between churches, not just youth events.

Long Range Planning Committee (Rusty Lutz and Danny Sorrells) –

- Strategic plan
 - It is the responsibility of the Long-Range Planning Committee to maintain.
 - The Long-Term Planning Committee distributed copies of the previous Strategic Plan with proposed additions to be considered for the 2026 plan.
 - **Rusty Lutz (Long Range Planning) made a motion to appoint a new Strategic Planning Committee to begin the strategic plan for 2026 (begin in 2025) and take from Long Range Planning.** They would create an updated five-year plan. This would give more people the opportunity to make suggestions for planning for the future. John Lutz suggested that all committees should be thinking long range, not just the one committee. John Lutz seconded the motion. *The motion carried.*
- **The Long-Range Planning Committee made a motion to establish a committee to investigate/explore tv type monitors to be used in worship.** The motion was seconded by Lisa Cook.
 - Discussion
 - Robert Hoyle will ask a person he knows who does that type of work to come and look at the sanctuary. The committee may also consider visiting other Lutheran churches to see what they have and ask about the pros and cons of their systems.

- We want to make it clear to the congregation that no one is suggesting to take away hymnals or change our worship - it would be used to enhance our worship experience.
- *After discussion, the motion carried.*
- Lisa Cook will write something to put in the bulletin and newsletter asking for help from those who are interested in helping or have a background in this area (remembering that this is to enhance worship, not take away from service or church).

Service Committee (BJ Morgan and Karen Teague)

- We boxed 25 Thanksgiving box meals this year. Twenty-two were delivered to Sweetwater and 3 to other families. Donna Bunton submitted another name and the Elks Lodges picked it up.
- We packed 150 boxes for Operation Christmas Child. We delivered them to Discovery along with \$1500.00 for processing.
- As of December 8th, there are only 4-5 angels left on the angel tree. Local angels will be delivered by December 13th. Loris angels will be delivered on December 21st.

Witness Committee (Betty Scipione and Ken Temple) – No meeting.

Worship Committee (Pastor Cauble and Betty Scipione) –

- The committee has met and has been planning through Christmas and beyond.

P.R.O.M. (Please Remember Outreach Ministry

- Total Prom Contacts (174) including:
 - Visitations 29; Greeting cards 82; Phone contacts 12; E-sign messages 12; Facebook Group page 22; Tuesday night Prayer Vigils 4; NALC Outreach (St. Martin's Bonfire)

Next Council Meeting: Monday, January 13, at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Ken Temple, President

Lisa Cook, Secretary

New Committee – Members Needed

A committee is being established to investigate/explore the installation and use of tv type or screen monitors during worship services. Anyone who has an interest in helping with this process or has a background in this type work is encouraged to volunteer. The committee may also visit and speak with other Lutheran churches to see how and what they use. Please understand that no one is suggesting removing the hymnals or changing our worship, they would be used to enhance our worship. If you are interested, please let a church council member know. Thank you!

January Birthdays

1 – Matthew Barger, Charlie Hoyle
 3 – Diane Lutz
 4 – Cindy Lutz, Wade Mauser
 5 – Alex Hayman
 7 – Richard Arrowood
 8 – Barbara Lael
 11 – Kirsten Lutz
 12 – Beth Brittain
 13 – Chad Kanipe, Ronnie McGee
 14 – Holli Abernethy
 15 – Danny Black
 16 – Gene Mauser, Bryan Poovey
 17 – Dale Hefner, Richard Dameron
 18 – Randy Bumgarner, Amy Mauser,
 Brandy (Bumgarner) Cline
 19 – Steve Johnson
 21 – Pat Bell
 23 – Elaine Garner
 24 – Chance Carden, Memphis Elliott Wilson
 25 – Matthew Martin
 26 – Carolyn Robinson
 27 – Angela Kanipe
 30 – Rachel Hoyle
 31 – Jonah Temple

Thank You for Serving in January...

New Jerusalem Lutheran Women

Group 1 Tuesday, January 7 – 6:30 pm
 Fellowship Hall
 Group 3 Monday, January 6 – 2:00 pm
 Gathering Room
 Leader – Carolyn Robinson
 Group 4 Monday, January 6 – 7:00 pm
 Gathering Room
 Hostess/Leader – Trish Scronce

Council Designate Danny Sorrells

Teller Committee *Danny Sorrells
 John Lutz
 Billy Young

Altar Committee

Betty Scipione, Chm.
 Glenda Shook
 Mike Scipione
 Julie Temple

Read Lessons

Rusty Lutz

Help with Communion

James Morgan

Acolyte

Sandra Bollinger

Flowers in the Church

Jan. 5 Rusty Lutz
 Jan. 12 Women's Group #3
 Jan. 19 Open
 Jan. 26 Carolyn Robinson

Ushers

Dennis Bollinger, Chm.
 John Lutz
 Garret Turbyfill
 Thad Scronce

Tape Ministry

Jan. 5 Connie Bumgarner
 Jan. 12 Robert Hoyle
 Jan. 19 Robert Hoyle
 Jan. 26 BJ Morgan

Looking Ahead

Shrove Tuesday Tuesday, March 4
 Ash Wednesday Wednesday, March 5
 Easter Sunday Sunday, April 20

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.
Colossians 3:16

January 2025

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
Paraments 5 – White 12 – White 19 – Green 26 – Green			1 New Year's Day * Church Office Closed *	2 6:00 pm - AHG	3	4
5 9:30 am – Sunday school 10:30 am – Service of Holy Communion 1:30 pm – Life-to-Life Discipleship 1:30 pm – Confirmation Class	6 2:00 pm – Women's Group #3 6:00 pm – AHG 6:30 pm – Church Council Meeting 7:00 pm – Women's Group #4	7 10:00 am – Bible Study 1:00 pm – Piece Makers 5:00 pm – Prayer Vigil 6:00 pm – Bible Study 6:30 pm – Women's Group #1 Deadline for Yearbook Reports	8 6:00 pm – Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm – Hand bell Choir Rehearsal	9	10	11
12 9:30 am – Sunday school 10:30 am – Service of Worship 1:30 pm – Confirmation Class	13 Deadline for Treasurers' Reports	14 10:00 am – Bible Study 1:00 pm – Piece Makers 5:00 pm – Prayer Vigil 6:00 pm – Bible Study	15 11:30 am – Senior Friends 6:00 pm – Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm – Hand bell Choir Rehearsal Deadline for Treasurers' Reports	16 6:00 pm - AHG	17	18
19 9:30 am – Sunday school 10:30 am – Service of Holy Communion	20 6:00 pm – American Heritage Girls Awards Ceremony (Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall)	21 10:00 am – Bible Study 1:00 pm – Piece Makers 5:00 pm – Prayer Vigil 6:00 pm – Bible Study	22 6:00 pm – Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm – Hand bell Choir Rehearsal	23	24	25
26 9:30 am – Sunday school 10:30 am – Service of Worship 1:30 pm – Life-to-Life Discipleship	27	28 10:00 am – Bible Study 1:00 pm – Piece Makers 5:00 pm – Prayer Vigil 6:00 pm – Bible Study	29 6:00 pm – Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm – Hand bell Choir Rehearsal	30 6:00 pm – AHG (Awards – Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall)	31	

