

# **EDEN ECHOES**

January/February 2014 Issue Vol. 44 No. 1



#### The People of God Pursuing the Will of God



The New Year is an opportunity to consider new things. One of the new things under discussion in MC USA right now is how we make decisions as groups of believers (committees, boards, congregations, conferences, Christian agencies, even whole denominations).

Followers of Jesus in the US have long ago adopted some practices from our culture for use in the church. These practices include but are not limited to nomination, election, voting, majority rule, conversation

and decision-making procedures of Robert's Rules. These adopted practices are so familiar to us in church that we often don't even recognize them as adopted.

Take for example voting. Voting, adopted from our democratic political system, is so familiar to many in the church that it is assumed to be the only way to make decisions as a Christian body.

Yet, upon closer inspection, many people have noticed that voting isn't always the best fit for decision-making in the church. They have noticed a very simple and very basic problem with voting: It's the wrong tool for the job. It's like using scissors when you need a screwdriver.

"The job" in the church, that is, the principle question that guides the followers of Jesus is always the same: What is *God's* will? That question is always the center of what drives the life of the congregation or other Christian group.

Voting has some good things to offer to decision-making processes. It involves as many people in the group as possible. It gives each individual an equal voice (at least theoretically). Voting can be an effective way of determining the will of *a majority of people*.

The problem with voting is simply that it isn't designed to determine *God's* will. It's the wrong tool not because it's bad but because it doesn't fit the job.

The church is supposed to do what *God* wants to do.

Now some people object: "We're just human beings. We can't possibly know what *God* wants to do!" It's certainly important to recognize that we are different from God (see for example Isaiah 55:8-9; Rom 12:1-2). Yet the Bible and the Anabaptist tradition have always been confident that the Holy Spirit will empower and guide the church to discern and to do God's will. The objection above also contains a helpful insight: Since God is different from us, we need something uniquely God-oriented to determine God's will. The Urim and Thummim of the Old Testament and the lot of the New Testament were practices which recognized that God's will is different from human will and were created in order to give the decision-making power to God.

So in the church "the tool" we need is a process designed to determine *God's* will. What does a congregational process designed to determine God's will look like? Space does not permit describing this in detail. We can note that there are a lot of people working at this today.

Last May MC USA encouraged congregational and conference leaders to participate in a resourcing event on alternative decision-making sponsored by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The Friends have a long history of developing processes for discerning God's will in a group setting.

Later this month, Eastern Mennonite Seminary will host training in new models of group discernment co-led by MC USA Executive Director Ervin Stutzman and consultant Ruth Haley-Barton, author of *Pursuing God's Will Together*. Barton's basic insight is that while people *make* decisions, discernment is *given* by God and therefore requires a whole new and spiritually-oriented approach.

Kristeen Goering has shared some aspects of alternative decision-making from her church experience in Rochester. Luann Yutzy introduced the EYF to aspects of spiritual discernment in group decision-making processes. At Pittsburgh 2011 I was privileged to participate in something called a "Samoan Circle," a method for creating healthy listening and conversation and direction in a large group on a controversial subject. Clearly, new ways to seek and act on God's will are emerging all around us.

In this Issue Anniversaries 9 3 Announcements 9 Birthdays Births 7 Deacon minutes 2 7 Deaths 7 Invitation to Share Just For Kids 8 3 Leadership minutes Thank you notes 7 Up-coming Events 10 In **1 Samuel 16**, God chooses David as Israel's new king. David is anointed as such by the prophet Samuel. At the time, David is a young shepherd boy. The message of the text is that God's decision is different from human decision. If the decision about a new king for Israel had been determined by human criteria, like age and life experience in this case, David would not have been chosen as king and the will of God would not have prevailed. God's ways and plans are higher than ours. **1 Samuel 16** encourages us to learn new ways to seek God's will together.

Like many new things, discovering Spirit-led ways to follow Jesus together as Christian groups may turn out to be rediscovering ways that are actually very old.



#### **Board of Deacons takes on new role**

For many years, the board of deacons has published monthly meeting notes in this column of the Echoes. Because of the recent restructuring, this will be the final notes from the deacons in this format. As of January 2014, the Board of Deacons became the Deacon Commission and is one of 6 Commissions within the new structure. Representatives from these 6 Commissions along with the 4 members of the Executive Committee (Moderator, Moderator Elect, Secretary and Treasurer) and 2 at large members, make up the new governing board called the Eden Leadership Team (ELT). Notes submitted to the Echoes in the future will come from the ELT.

The deacons met on Dec. 4 (postponed from November 21 due to the weather) and December 18. The following notes include some highlights from those meetings.

Linda began the December 4 meeting with devotions reading an excerpt entitled "God in our Midst" by Miriam Book from the book, *Setting the Agenda*, by Edgar Stoesz and Rick Stiffney. The author uses Matthew 18:21 to encourage leaders to be about the purposes of God with the congregation they lead by deliberately leaving a space at the table where God is present and an active participant. She states that when we gather in Jesus' name, we are not left to our own devices but that God gives us all that we need. Does our conversation invite God in? Do we include God in our deliberations? Is there a place for him when we gather?

A discussion was held regarding the processing of the future of Gail's position. It was noted that with Gail's absence, we will experience 3 losses: loss of Gail's giftedness, loss of a significant pastoral ministry, and loss of female representation on the pastoral staff. There is need for intentional processing in the near future about the role Gail has held with the deacons/leadership processing first and then processing with the congregation looking at this as a ministry decision. How do we best provide staffing

for ministry we want to do at Eden with consideration for time allotments, job descriptions and gender balance?

The on call schedule for January and the week-end of Feb. 1-2 was established. Because we will have only 1 pastor on staff during this time, the deacons will pick up some of the responsibility for pastoral care.

Discussion was held with Pastor Dave regarding publication of his cell phone and budget allowance for a portion of his cell phone bill.

Pastor Dave's 2014 Memo of Understanding was finalized.

Pastoral care items were shared and prayed for.



Pastoral Care

Because of the departure of Pastor Gail Graber on December 31, 2013 and Pastor Derek King beginning his term on February 1, 2014, the month of January leaves Eden with only one pastor. The deacons will pick up some of the responsibility for pastoral care and asks the congregation for patience and flexibility during this time. Although her role as deacon officially ended December 31, Linda Goering has offered to help with pastoral care during the month of January.

If you call the church office during office hours, Becky Koller, church office secretary can help direct you to whoever is on call and/or Pastor Dave. For some time, pastoral care has been a shared responsibility between the pastors, deacons and pastoral care visitors on Fridays and week-ends. If you have a pastoral care need after hours on Fridays and the week-end, you may call the church office and voicemail will give information regarding who is on call.

If Pastor Dave is needed for pastoral care after office hours, his home phone is his primary number and it is requested that you try that number first. If there is no answer, please leave a message. In the case of emergency or a critical pastoral care need, you may call Pastor Dave's cell phone and again leave a message if there is no answer.



Derek, Becky and Sarah King will be here soon!

We are very excited about our pending move and the time to finally join you all in Kansas soon. Our plan is to leave Harrisonburg on Monday morning, January 13. We would hope to arrive Tuesday night or Wednesday. The trailer with our belongings should arrive Thursday or Friday. We would love to welcome folks to come say hi and perhaps carry a box from trailer to box on Saturday morning, the 18th. We have come to terms on a house in Moundridge at 316 N. Wedel Ave. We may be doing some work on the interior, so possibly won't need a lot of help with the unloading, just moving most items in the garage. However, we would love to meet some folks, show them the house, and hand out some coffee and donuts.

Derek, Becky, & Sarah King

# Sister Helen Prejean speaker for Eden Peace Sunday

Peace Sunday will be held on February 2nd and will feature guest speaker, Helen Prejean. Helen is a member of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Medaille; the noted author of Dead Man Walking, and an



active opponent of capital punishment. Following Helen's sermon, there will be a barbecue lunch prepared by Bill Zerger and served by the Peace Committee. Proceeds from the meal will go towards purchasing church playground equipment. After the meal, Elizabeth Schrag will present her peace essay on a Christian response to immigration issues.



Parent/Child Dedication Sunday, December 8, 2014

On Sunday, December 8, Kyle and Sarah Neufeld took part in a parent/child dedication service with their daughter Elise. The service gives the opportunity to thank God publically for the gift of a child and also gives the congregation the opportunity to commit to a partnership with parents in raising their child.



## Partnership Home Project to be featured at KMDS Annual Meeting

Kansas Mennonite Disaster Service invites you to their annual meeting and program Jan 19 at 2:00 p.m. at First Mennonite Church, 429 E. 1st,

Newton. The program will feature the Partnership Home Project.

The Partnership Home Project enables churches to build the walls of a home in their parking lot, making it possible for people who are unable to take a week off work to go to a site to build a home. It can be done by one church or several churches in a community creating a bonding experience with people from several congregations.

Come and learn more about the Partnership Home Project and how you can "Respond, Rebuild and Restore" the life of someone who has lost their home. Refreshments will follow the program.

A pictorial glimpse of just a few of the events of  ${\bf 2013}$ 



## Eden Leadership Team December 14

Current and past committee members and persons interested on serving on Commissions for the revised structure were invited to this meeting to work on components of the new structure with Dorothy Nickel Friesen as facilitator.

Bret Gillmore opened with a devotional by Patricia Day, entitled "Our Gifts" followed by a word of prayer. Ms. Day quoted Psalms 68:19 and noted that we all have gifts. God bestows gifts upon us and waits for us to use them. Some of our gifts we are aware of and utilize and some remain hidden. Many of us remain in our comfort zones leaving gifts unopened often giving up too easily instead of invoking those hidden gifts.

Dorothy began with giving some of the background of the Leadership Team's work so far. She noted the passage in Luke regarding Mary's annunciation and the angel's words: "Do not be afraid". Moving through events in life takes courage. Over the past year, Eden's Leadership has come together to deal with loss, figure out what that meant for our congregation and to move forward in a positive direction.

Dorothy shared that membership in a congregation means to covenant with one another. A Mission and Vision statement helps to identify how members of the congregation are connected and gives direction in discernment. She suggested that the Eden congregation will need to establish a Mission and Vision statement in the future.

Dorothy then reviewed the new structural chart. She identified members of the Gifts Discernment Committee as Bruce Stucky, Denise Stucky, Fred Goering, and Cindy Bartell and offered an overview of the role of this committee. The Gifts Discernment Committee seeks persons for the work of the church based on personal gifts to be affirmed by the congregation rather than filling slots to be voted on.

This committee is responsible for education and encouragement of calling forth gifts. Dorothy had Bruce, Denise and Fred stand and offered a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing for them and Cindy who arrived later.

Pam Schrag, Berni Kaufman and Eugene Goering were identified as serving on the Staff/Congregational Relations Committee. After sharing the role of the committee which functions similarly to a human relations committee, Dorothy had Pam, Berni and Eugene stand and offered a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing.

Dorothy reviewed leadership roles discussed in a previous leadership meeting. Drawing from *Governance and Ministry* by Dan Hotchkiss, leadership in a congregation can be organized into three main roles: 1)Vision, mission and identity; 2) Oversight-management; 3) Discernment and strategy. The congregation determines the vision, mission and identity of a church community. The congregational board and committees (Eden Leadership Team and Commissions) make up the governance component and they are responsible for oversight. Pastors and staff make up ministry teams and they are responsible for management. Discernment over strategy involves the board (Eden Leadership Team), staff and the congregation.

Dorothy also reviewed 3 strategies identified by the leadership team in previous meetings: 1) Healthy communication and relationships within the Eden congregation and community; 2) Being intentional about building relationships and responsibility; 3) Create staff/congregation relations committee with structure changes and move forward with discernment.

Other thoughts from Dorothy: Leadership will need to decide how to connect auxiliary committees to the new structure; commissions could have annual calendars with tasks designated to certain months of the year; sometimes churches get too task oriented and need to be more reflective on how pieces of their structure connect to the overall vision. Regarding this last comment, sometimes, pruning is appropriate but be mindful that it is difficult to decease something so be gentle with one another.

Dorothy had the group read together lines 15 and 16 from the proposed Eden Mennonite Church Structure Model: "15) No structure is perfect yet every structure has strengths. "16) Eden Leadership is open to change. The life cycle of a congregation calls for Redefinition, Redevelopment and then Rebirth. If that does not happen, the congregation dies." Dorothy noted that Mennonite congregations do church by discerning together. Governance is not dictated by a higher body.

At this point, the group dispersed into smaller groups of the Executive Committee, 6 Commissions, the Gifts Discernment Committee and Staff/Congregational Relations Committee to work on job descriptions, tasks, qualities needed of persons serving in various roles and to identify people to suggest to gifts discernment for open positions in the new structure.

Dorothy called the group together and briefly discussed the timetable. She noted that the proposed timetable is ambitious but needed to keep things moving.

To close the meeting, Dorothy asked for reflections on the morning. Those mentioned were: excitement; all are valued; positive future; commitment; gifts; moving; encouraged. Dorothy closed with prayer.



#### We praise God for willing leaders!

With the beginning of the new calendar year, we also begin our new leadership structure. After many, many hours of planning with our planning coach, Dorothy Nickel Friesen, we have begun what we believe is a workable structure for our congregation. We have decided that it will be an "experiment" for two years. Throughout that time, we may tweak things as we go along. Below is the list of our leaders. A celebration of affirmation was held on January 5.

#### **Eden Leadership Team**

#### **Executive Committee**

Deacon Rep
\*\*Bonita Howard
Trustee Rep
\*\*Lynn Kaufman
Education/Discipleship Rep

Peace/Witness Rep

Stewardship Rep

Worship Rep

Moderator (2 yr. term)

\*Jeff Snyder (2014)

Moderator Elect

\*Bret Gillmore (2014)

Secretary (2 yr. term)

JoLene Kaufman (2015)

Treasurer (2 yr. term) Jay Goering (2014)

At Large (2 yr. term)

Brenda Dalke (2015)

Marcy Schrag (2014)

Deacon Commission 3 yr. term/2 term max

\*Don Kaufman (2014) Wanda Knight (2015) Bonita Howard (2015) Brandon Kaufman (2016) Carol Zerger (2016)

Trustee Commission 3 yr. term/2 term max

\*Jim Dalke (2014) Myron B Goering (2015) Lynn Kaufman (2015) Keith Albrecht (2016) Gary Regier (2016)

Education/Discipleship Commission 3 yr. term 2 term max

Jenny Schrag (2014) Shayna Smith (2014) Dennis Wedel (2015) Katie Gillmore (2015) Pat Stucky (2016) Peace/Witness Commission 3 yr. term 2 term max

Pat Rupp (2014) Waneta Goering (2014) Mark Stucky (2015) Jerri Kaufman (2016) Keith Schrag (2016)

Stewardship Commission 3 yr. term/2 term max

Dave Goering (2014) Kathy Neufeld (2014) Fred Schrag (2015) Perry Krehbiel (2016) Robert Joe Schrag (2016)

Worship Commission 3 yr. term/2 term max

Jerry D. Schrag (2014) Sondra Tolle (2014) Joe Lichti (2015) Linda Goering (2015) Jill Zerger (2016) We also appreciate the following people who were appointed to leadership positions.

**Staff Relations Committee** 

Eugene Goering Berni Kaufman Pam Schrag

**Gift Discernment Committee** 

Cindy Bartell E. Fred Goering Bruce Stucky Denise Stucky

Thank you to those who are willing to serve our congregation in so many ways.

<sup>\*</sup>Ineligible for another term

<sup>\*\*</sup>Appointed by Commission



I want to thank everyone for the cards, calls, visits, food and prayers after my surgeries on December 5 & 6. God bless you.

Marjean Stucky

Thank you for all your prayers, cards, and phone calls before and after my scheduled surgery. Thank you to Pastor Dave for the visit and prayer just before. It meant so much!

Blessings

Mabel Goering

Many thanks to you, dear friends, for your kind thoughts & loving prayers during my hospitalization & post-op recovery. All expressions were so very supportive & so very much appreciated, as were cards & phone calls. I'm eager to be back with you, in joy!

Ruth Kaufman

Dear friends at Eden. The words "thank you" are not adequate to express my deep appreciation for your kindness and generosity as I close my pastoral ministry at Eden. Thank you for your hugs and tears and well wishes and generous gifts. It has truly been a privilege to serve as visitation pastor these past seven and three-quarter years. I treasure the stories of your lives; the way you have been formed in faith by the experiences of life that drew you into deeper relationship with Christ. You have helped me to grow as well. Thank you for opening your lives to the work God is doing among us all. May we all continue to grow in ways unimaginable. Many blessings.

Gail Graber

Thank you for your generous contribution to PET Kansas. Each gift helps us give the Gift of Mobility to the millions in the world in need of our special wheelchair. Every dollar raised gives the Gift of Hope for those who cannot walk. With help from Health and Mobility Charities, PET wheelchairs have been sent to more than 100 countries around the world.

Christine Goering

Thank you for your contribution to Mennonite Disaster Service. Thank you for your partnership in bringing hope to those whose lives have been forever altered by natural disasters.

After a disaster, survivors just want to go home; to pick up where they left off with the normal activities of life. But going home may be postponed for months for those who live in flooded cities, or in towns blown apart by the force of tornadoes like the recent tornadoes that devastated parts of Illinois and Indiana.

It has been a busy year for our hardworking volunteers. As they repair, rebuild and restore homes, they also listen to the stories of those who just want to go home. At the dedication of her MDS rebuilt home, Ms. Suzie, from Hattiesburg, MS, exclaimed, "This is the happiest day of my life!"

I am grateful for your partnership in restoring hope. Thank you for your compassion as you stand alongside those who just want to go home. Sincerely,

Kevin King Executive Director



Congratulations to Nathan and Krista Graber on the birth of a son, Daniel Reed Graber on December 28. He is welcomed home by his sister, Elaina, his brother Peter, paternal grandparents Ardy and Gail Graber and greatgrandparents Maynard and Marlene Krehbiel and Ruby Graber.



# **Invitation to Share**

The "invitation to share" project for the month of January is New flat twin sheets. The project for

February is Towels—New bath and hand towels (medium weight, dark or bright colored). If you want to support this project financially you may write a check to Eden with "invitation to share" in the memo line. Please mail checks to the church office, P.O. Box 406, Moundridge, KS 67107.



Gene Graber (83) passed away on Friday, December 20 at Newton Medical Center. Services were held at Eden on Tuesday, December 24. We extend our sympathy to his wife June, son Keith and wife Connie, and all of Gene's extended family.



Erna Stucky (86) passed away on Tuesday, Dec 31. A memorial and graveside service were held at Eden on Saturday, Jan 4. We extend our sympathy to her husband, Harvey, sons Jon (Marianne) and Kelly (Donna) and all of Erna's extended family.

# Creation [MI]

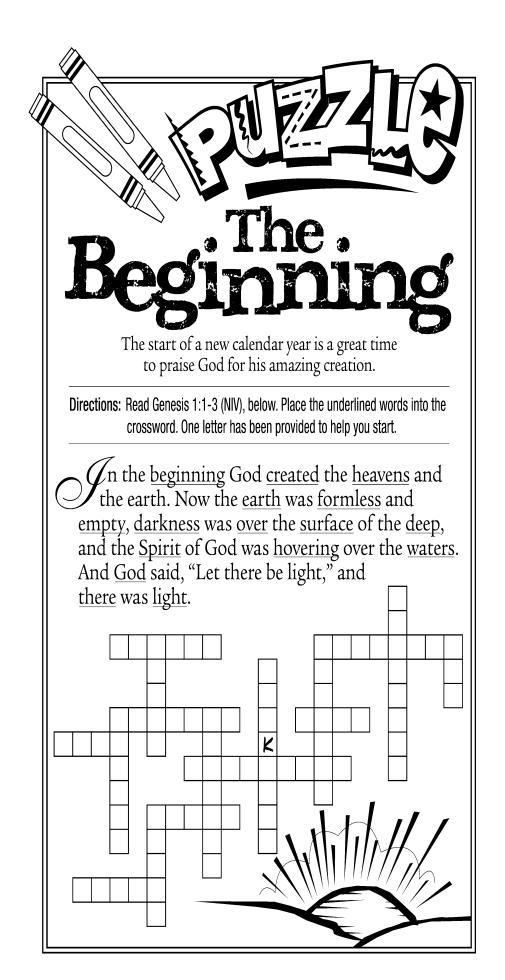
Make this fun craft to remember what our heavenly Creator made.  $\bigwedge \circ \bigwedge$ 

# What you need:

- Adult help
- Tall chip can with lid
- Hammer and nail
- Acrylic paint; paintbrush
- Water, glitter, white glue 。
- Colored tissue paper
- Stronger craft glue (not hot glue)
- Star stickers or sequins
- Two 4" x 5" pieces of clear Con-Tact paper
- Scissors; pencil; permanent marker

# What you do:

- In bottom center of can, hammer a hole with a nail. Paint outside of can. Let dry.
- 2. Add glitter and a little water to white glue. With a clean paintbrush, glue tissue paper to bottom outside of lid.
- 3. Add stars to sticky side of Con-Tact paper. Place a matching piece on top, sticky sides together.
- 4. Put craft glue along edge of can opening. Glue Con-Tact paper square over opening. Let dry.
- 5. Place lid on can, over Con-Tact paper. Turn lid to get kaleidoscope effect.
- 6. With marker, write "In the beginning ..." on can.



#### **January Birthdays**

1- Vonn Durst

Lia-Jing Groves (Jan & Anne)

Dale Knoll

Lori Vontz

2- Emily Regier

4- Sam Goering

Wanda Knight

5- Dorothy Krehbiel

Josh Regier

Sondra Tolle

Andrew Huxman

6- SandyArnold

Judy Goering

Steven L. Goering

7- Joseph Krehbiel

Mason Krehbiel

8- Ashley Stucky

Joyce Stucky

9- Meroe Graber

Denise Stucky

Camden Stewart (Kimberley Kaschke)

10- Kenneth Preheim

Lisa Schrag

11- Penny Graber

12- Elaine Krehbiel

Emily Perkins (Greg & Kathy)

13- Nicholas Anderson (Neal & Cindy)

Harold Kaufman

Bridger Thiesen (Dale Ray & Shelley)

14- Brenda Schrag

Doris Stucky

- 15- Jacob Schrag, Jr.
- 16- Don R. Gehring
- 17- Paula Goering

Brieanna Zerger (Greg & Jackie)

19- Lisa Hochstetler

20- Wendell Kaufman

Harold Schrag

21- Kenneth Schrag

22- Elle Goering (Theron & Jennifer)

Larry Kaufman

Joel Krehbiel

Perry Krehbiel

Jacob Westfall

23- Cheri Kaufman

Darrell Schrag

Glenn Waltner

24- Brad Goering

MaKayla Stucky (Kevin & Gayle)

25- Mary Albrecht

Benjamin Schrag (Steve & Maggie)

Troy Stucky

26- Bill Juhnke, Jr.

Tim Schrag

27- Mary Graber (Mrs. Harvey)

James Griffin

Bryce Krehbiel

Tori Starks

Sonya Wedel

28- Kelly Thomas

Katy Schrag

Larry Temple

29- DeLonna Barnett

Sheryl Plenert

Linda Graber

Isabelle Durst (Vonn & Casey)

30- Jeileen Cruz (Ron & Juanita Goering)

Juanita Graber

Lexus Stewart (Kimberley)

31- Dorothy Goering

Hayley Koontz (Stephen & Sandra)

# **January Anniversaries**

1- Gene and Germaine Bird Murray & Melody Stucky

3- Jan Craig Goering & Abigail Hubbard
Eugene & Carolyn Goering

4- Kevin & Sandi Schrag

5- Rob & Lori Parsons
Bruce & Kelly Schrag

9- Larry & Carol Goering

14- Terry & Colleen Schrag

23- Randall & Marilyn Schrag

If there has been an omission or mistaken date please contact the church office.

## **Up-Coming Events**

- New Year's Day (Church Office Closed) Jan 1
- Jan 6 **Epiphany**
- Jan 7 Mary Martha all day meeting
- All new Commissions meet following a sack lunch meal Jan 12
- Jan 13 End of year reports due in church office
- Help Derek and Becky King unload moving van (time to be announced) On Wednesday Nights! Jan 18
- Jan 19 Kansas MDS annual meeting at First Mennonite, Newton
- Jan 23 4:00 p.m. Eden provides worship at Pine Village
- Jan 26 6:30 p.m. Eden Game Night @ Pine Village Wellness Center
- Feb 1 Derek King begins as Associate Pastor 6:00 p.m. Agri-Urban Supper at Eden
- Eden Peace Sunday with Sister Helen Prejean speaking Feb 2 Noon Barbeque fundraiser meal prepared by Bill Zerger Deadline for turning in MCC Fellowship Meal registrations
- 8:30 a.m. Pastoral Care Group mtg. Feb 4
- Feb 9 Installation of Derek King as Associate Pastor
- Potluck followed by Congregational Meeting **Feb 16**



6:00	p.m.	Supper
6.15	n m	EVE

6:45 p.m. EYF
6:45 p.m. Bible Study
7:30 p.m. Ladies Chorus
8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir
8:45 p.m. Men's Chorus

January 2014									
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February 2014								
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