



What's Inside?

- Page 2: December Calendar, Birthdays, Believe in Baltimore Podcast, Youth and Young Families Activities
- Page 3: Pastoral Ponderings
- Page 4: What's Going On @ Govans?
- Page 5: Letter from Pastor Billy
- Pages 6 and 7: Public Statement on Govans' Racial Justice Ministry
- Page 8: Church-Works - News from the Session
- Page 9: December Mission Offering - Baltimore Safe Haven and News from StARS in Cairo
- Page 10: Christmas Giving during the Advent Season
- Page 11: Govans' Choir present Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Mariner's News

DECEMBER AT GOVANS

CHRISTMAS COFFEEHOUSE



The Govans Chancel Choir presents:

VIVALDI'S "GLORIA"



Music Sunday - December 12 at 9:00 and 11:00 am
Both music teams are preparing special musical offerings for this exciting Sunday. The music will be the sermon! **In the 9:00 am service** Lea Gilmore and the band will host the Annual Holiday Coffee House. All are encouraged to share songs, poetry, instrumental solos and more. Please contact Lea Gilmore to participate: lea@govanspres.org. **In the 11:00 am service**, Debby Lewis and the Chancel Choir will present the celebrated "*Gloria*" by Antonio Vivaldi, with strings, oboes, and soloists. See page 11 for more info

Christmas Caroling - December 17 at 6:30 pm.

Join us for an evening of outdoor caroling by the "Christ, the Healer" statue in front of church.

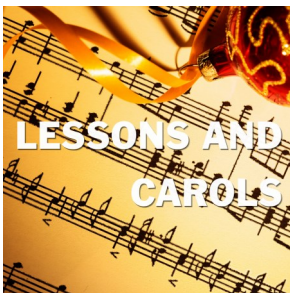
CHRISTMAS CAROL SING



Christmas Eve Pageant and Lessons and Carols - December 24 at 4:30 pm and 8:00 pm

Join us at 4:30 pm for **Masks in the Manger**, our annual Christmas Pageant. It will be a hybrid pageant with participants on Zoom and in-person. Lea and the band will provide the music and Pastor Tom will offer a brief Christmas message. Join us at 8:00 pm for our annual **Christmas Lessons and Carols**. The Chancel Choir will provide a wonderful variety of Christmas music interwoven with scripture passages telling the story of Christmas from Genesis to Revelation!

All are welcome!



December Calendar

- 5 - Online and In-Person Worship, 10:00 am
- 5 - Soul Kitchen Meal Pickup, 4:30 pm
- 6 - Music Mondays, 7:00 pm
- 8 - Bible Study with Knox Presbyterian, 12:00 pm
- 10 Church Book Club, 10:00 am
- 12 -Online and In-Person Worship, 9:00 & 11:00 am
- 12 - Soul Kitchen Meal Pickup, 4:30 pm
- 13 - Finance Committee, 7:00 pm
- 13 - Music Mondays, 7:00 pm
- 15 - Bible Study with Knox Presbyterian, 12:00 pm
- 17 - Carol Sing, 6:30 pm
- 19 - Online and In-Person Worship, 9:00 & 11:00 am
- 19 - Soul Kitchen Meal Pickup,/Young Families Night 4:30 pm
- 18 - Facilities Committee, 6:30 pm
- 21 - Session Meeting, 6:30 pm
- 22 - Bible Study with Knox Presbyterian, 12:00 pm
- 24 - In-Person and Online Christmas Pageant, 4:30 pm
- 24 - Service of Lessons and Carols, 8:00 pm
- 26 - Online and In-Person Worship, 9:00 & 11:00 am
- 26 - Soul Kitchen Meal Pickup, 4:30 pm

Youth and Young Families Activities:

- Pastor Billy on vacation until December 6.
- Friday, December 17 - December Youth Group - Christmas Caroling! - 6:30 pm at the church
- Sunday, December 19 - Young Families Night at Soul Kitchen - 3:30 pm to 6:30 pm
- Tuesday, December 21 - Preschool Chapel Services - 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
- Friday, December 24 - Christmas Pageant at 4:30 pm in-person and online

Contact Pastor Billy (billy@govanspres.org) for more information.

December Birthdays

- 3 - Anne Allen Dandy
- 5 - Tanya Morrel
- 6 - Ralph Arnsdorf
- 7 - Edie Cleaves
- 8 - McKenna Traynham
- 9 - Rich Dombrowski
- 10 - Marin Harris
- 11 - Marilou Moore
- 14 - Barbara Moore
- 16 - Laila Ali
- 20 - Ralph Cook
- 20 - Anne Minkowski
- 20 - Diana Romano
- 22 - Ted Kruse
- 24 - Myra Brosius
- 31 - Jeannette Hobbs

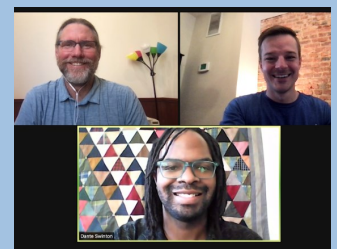


Believe in Baltimore Podcast

- **Enoch Pratt Free Library - Govans Branch - Going live on December 6:** Poonam Prasad and Gloria Bartas discuss anniversary celebrations for the Govans Branch Library and their work during the pandemic. Poonam is the Branch Manager of the Enoch Pratt Free Library - Govans Branch and Gloria is the children's librarian.
- **Clean Air Baltimore and Dante Swinton - Going live on December 20:** Dante Swinton discusses his work with Clean Air Baltimore to replace waste incineration with zero-waste jobs. Dante serves as GRASS Director; Environmental Justice Researcher & Organizer



Poonam Prasad receiving recognition from Baltimore City on the anniversary of the Govans Branch



Pastor Tom, Pastor Billy, and Dante Swinton

Listen to all episodes at:
www.govanspres.org/podcast

PASTORAL PONDERINGS

by Rev. Tom Harris

Dear Friends,

For some people, this holiday season may be feeling a little more “normal” than the same time last year. Others are still feeling cautious. Vaccination status certainly changes the benefit/risk formula, so many have been incessantly calculating in their heads and hearts since March 2020. Some have little ones at home who cannot be vaccinated or whose immune system still isn’t strong enough to protect them.

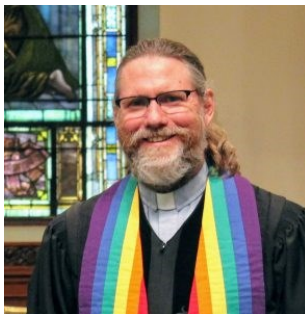
One thing this pandemic has taught us is that everyone is different. We see the world differently. We experience risk differently. We evaluate risk differently. We react to change and restrictions differently. Yet, given the communal nature of this disease, we are still all in it together. In other words, we have been forced to check our assumptions about our sameness, while learning how much we depend on one another for our common well being.

I am reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul from Philippians, “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form.”

Christmas is the time when we are reminded of the human form of God. We are reminded that Christ shows us the way to set aside our assumptions and our arrogance, and instead, serve one another; listen to each other; seek to understand people who experience the world through different eyes, and in a different body.

We are not the same. Yet, if we follow Christ's example to humbly listen to one another and serve one another, we can be one.

Peace,
Tom



Church Staff

Rev. Tom Harris, Senior Pastor

Rev. Billy Klutz, Associate Pastor

Lea Gilmore,

Minister for Racial Justice & Music

Director, 1st Service

Deborah Lewis

Interim Music Director, 2nd Service

Pam Wallace, Office Manager

Andy Wilson, Administrative Asst.

Sylvia Usher

Sexton

Pam Ferguson,

Director of Preschool

Gwen Lloyd, Program Director,

Senior Network

Govans Presbyterian Church

5828 York Road Baltimore, Maryland

21212

410-435-9188

www.govanspres.org



THE HERALD & BELLRINGER

*The deadline for
submissions for the
January 2022 newsletter
is December 15, 2021.*

*Please send to Andy
Wilson
(wilson@govanspres.org)
or call the church office.*

Call 410-220-4959
to hear our latest sermon



sermonbyphone.com

What's Going On @ Govans?



"Angel Tree" Gifts Needed

BECOME A "CHRISTMAS ANGEL AND PURCHASE GIFTS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF GEDCO'S MICAH HOUSE AND SOME OF OUR SOUL KITCHEN GUESTS WHO ARE IN NEED. DETAILS ON PAGE 10 AND IN THE WEEKLY "WHAT'S GOING ON @ GOVANS" EMAIL. SUBSCRIBE AT WWW.GOVANSPRES.ORG/CONNECT

Masks in the Manger World Premiere - December 24 at 4:30 pm at Govans

Pastor Billy has written a new hybrid Christmas pageant, Masks in the Manger. In this pageant, the Christmas story is humorously reimagined with a few additional safety precautions in the COVID era. Govans youth, kids, and families will premiere this soon-to-be holiday classic on December 24 at 4:30 pm online and in-person at Govans. If your family would like a speaking or non-speaking role, please email billy@govanspres.org.



GOVANS  Music Mondays
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Gospel for the Holidays

Live on Zoom
Monday, December 13 at 7:00 p.m. ET

Join us for a special Music Mondays event to celebrate the Christmas season. Details coming soon!

 **Virtual Alternative Giving Fair**

INFORMATION ON VENDORS WILL BE IN THE WEEKLY "WHAT'S GOING ON @ GOVANS" EMAIL. SUBSCRIBE AT WWW.GOVANSPRES.ORG

 **CHRISTMAS CAROL SING**

DECEMBER 17
6:30 PM
OUTSIDE NEAR THE HEALER STATUE
5828 YORK RD
BALTIMORE MD 21211
WWW.GOVANSPRES.ORG

GOVANS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



MATTHEW 25

Govans is now a Matthew 25 Church!

Learn more at:
www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/

Letter from Pastor Billy



Hello, Govans,

“God surprises
earth with heaven,
coming here on
Christmas Day.”
That’s how John
Bell and Graham
Maule describe the

miracle of Jesus’ birth in their hymn, *Who Would Think That What Was Needed* (#138 in our hymnals). Here’s their first verse:

*Who would think that what was needed
To transform and save the earth
Might not be a plan or army
Proud in purpose, proved in worth
Who would think despite derision
That a child should lead the way?*

We’ll remember and celebrate God’s surprise in Jesus’ coming throughout the month of December at Govans. On December 24 at 4:30 pm, we’ll tell the entire surprising story of Jesus’ birth in our original Christmas pageant, *Masks in the Manger*. This fun retelling of the Christmas story, imagines Jesus’ birth amid our present social distancing and masking practices. It should be a humorous and relevant variation on the beloved story. If you or your family would like to be involved, please email me at billy@govanspres.org; we have lots of speaking and non-speaking roles. Likewise, please save the date for our December youth group and community caroling party on December 17 at 6:30 pm at the church.

Finally, I hope that you’ll notice the beautiful Advent paraments (liturgical cloths made for worship) decorating the communion table this month. The youth had so much fun making this beautiful piece of artwork. Special thanks to Carolyn Anewich for leading this art project with the youth!



Advent paraments made by Carolyn Anewich and Govans’ youth.

I hope that you’ll be on the lookout for God’s surprises throughout Advent and Christmas tide. As you do, here’s the third verse of Bell’s hymn for inspiration:

*Centuries of skills and science
Span the past from which we move
Yet experience questions whether
With such progress we improve
While the human lot, we ponder
Lest our hopes and humor fray
God surprises earth with heaven
Coming here on Christmas Day*

Peace,
Pastor Billy

PUBLIC STATEMENT ON GOVANS' RACIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

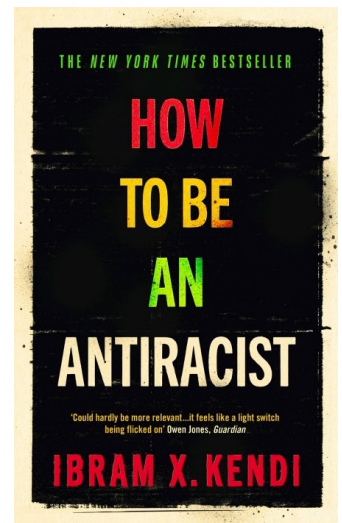
In the spirit of Christ, Govans Presbyterian Church strives to be an anti-racist church. We practice the love of Jesus in a relational ministry, and we fight for equality and equal opportunity for all people.



Racial Justice
Ministry

Definitions:

- Racism includes both prejudicial acts from people from one race to another (individual racism), but also includes ideologies within systems of power (systemic racism).¹
- Antiracism actively works against individual and systemic racism.^{2 3}
- While individuals can and do perform racist acts, systemic racism is more insidious and dangerous to Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC).
- We recognize that racism is a sin, endemic within our country and the body of the Christian church. This sin of racism causes a division between the races and marginalizes a significant portion of our population, resulting in severe and ongoing inequality between the races in education, wealth, health, income, and opportunity.⁴



Why must we become an anti-racist church? We answer this question guided by perspectives of Theological and Presbyterian faith traditions.

- Three basic tenets of the Christian faith:
 1. All people are created in the image of God.
 2. Jesus told us to do unto others as we would like them to do to us, but racist behavior does to others what we would hate done to us.
 3. Jesus said, too, to love our neighbors, but racist structures inhibit the practice of love in communities.⁵
- From the Presbyterian Church Anti-racism/Racial Justice Policy Statement: "Our identity [as Christians] compels us to oppose the forces of injustice. Antiracism, therefore, is prescriptive for what a faithful community must do in the quest to let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. The church must actively oppose the forces of racism in concrete and strategic ways."
- "We know that all people are sacred and worthy. We are made equal by God, who created humanity in God's own image. Out of our deep love of God and neighbor, when we see people being treated as less than equal we will speak out."⁶
- In 1999, the 211th General Assembly declared that we will "assume an antiracist identity, provide adequate staffing and funding for implementation of the church-wide strategy for antiracism...and urge governing bodies and congregations to assume an antiracism identity,

Racial Justice Ministry Public Statement, continued from previous page.

[making] available to the church training resources, which are essential for the implementation of the church-wide strategy.” (1999 Statement PCUSA). We grieve that these statements and initiatives from our denomination and church have not resulted in sustained action, we conclude that now is the time to act rather than analyze and in a spirit of repentance Govans Presbyterian Church seeks to become an antiracist church.

Particular Actions our church is taking to make Govans Presbyterian Church an anti-racist church:

- Showing the level of commitment in a financial and practical way, the Session established Racial Justice as a dedicated ministry of the church and Committee of Session (not simply a program); this ministry is financially supported by hiring a Minister of Racial Justice (January 2021).
- We formed a Racial Justice Ministry Working Group which includes church members as well as members from broader community
- We are educating ourselves and offering opportunities to the congregation and community to join in this education. (Book Groups, Racial Justice Speakers Series)
- We are engaging with the community around racial issues (Storytelling, Movie Nights, Open Space Conversations).
- We are currently forming antiracist policies on hiring, contracting and other employment issues, to become anti-racist and to encourage BIPOC to apply for open positions at any level within our church organization.
- We are in contact with other denominations and other PCUSA congregations that have taken on the difficult, ongoing work of pursuing racial justice to learn from their triumphs and mistakes
- We are interviewing older Govans and former Brown Memorial parishioners to learn from our past mistakes and successes within living memory, and the effects of policies and pastors from our past on the Govans’ neighborhood
- We are preparing a short questionnaire to assess church members who are not formally interviewed to learn their perspectives on racial justice, our church history and more
- We will be using Adult Options and other church forums to explain the history of Govans’ involvement in fighting for (and impeding) civil rights, so we can learn how to proceed, especially within the Presbytery’s Matthew 25 initiative.



¹Paraphrased from *So You Want to Talk about Race* by Ijeoma Oluo. 2018.

²Definition of antiracist from *How to Be An Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi: "To be antiracist is to think nothing is behaviorally wrong or right – inferior or superior – with any of the racial groups. Whenever the antiracist sees individuals behaving positively or negatively, the antiracist sees exactly that: individuals behaving positively or negatively, not representatives of whole races. To be antiracist is to deracialize behavior, to remove the tattooed stereotype from every racialized body. Behavior is something humans do, not races do."

³From the Presbyterian Church Anti-racism/Racial Justice Policy Statement: "Racism is the opposite of what God intends for humanity. It is the rejection of the other, which is entirely contrary to the Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ...Racism is the continuing legacy of white supremacy. Racism is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others. It is also a lie about God, for it falsely claims that God favors parts of creation over the entirety of creation."

⁴Paraphrased from *A Charter for Racial Justice Policies: The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church*—2016.

⁵Paraphrased from *Presbyterian Today* article titled "Antiracism work is heart work"—2021.

⁶Quoted directly from *Commit to Becoming an Antiracist Church* on The United Methodist Church Website.



The Session met for our regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, November 16th. We had a full agenda and wanted to share some highlights.

We reviewed the first draft of a budget for 2022. We won't be able to make any meaningful decisions about the budget until the 2022 pledges are in. So if you have not sent in your pledge please do so online at govanspres.org/pledge, or place your pledge card in the offering plate, or mail it to the church office. Blank pledge cards are available in the back of the church.

We are moving into the second year of our new staffing initiative, we are giving the Presbytery recommended 4% COLA increase in 2022, and we have new expenses as we commit to continue a live interactive broadcast of Sunday Worship services. So every dollar of support makes a difference.

We approved a re-organization of the church office staff. Pam Wallace will be decreasing her hours and focusing only on the financial duties, while Andy Wilson will become the full time Office Manager taking over Facilities management and Human Resources duties. Both Andy and Pam participated in planning the re-organization and are looking forward to the change at the beginning of 2022.

We approved a request from the Facilities Committee to hire an Owner Representative to guide us in a major needed renovation of the East and South facing window walls of the Preschool building. We hope this will help us keep costs down for what will be a complex project.

The Second Service Music Director Search Committee is working hard on developing an updated job description to begin a search as soon as possible. The Session granted them a budget to include advertising, possible travel costs for candidates, and funding to meet with a consultant to help write a job description that clearly articulates our needs.

Finally, we considered two proposals from the Racial Justice Working Group. The first proposal was a public statement about our racial justice ministry. The document defines what we mean by anti-racism and racial justice, explains why these issues are so important to us as a church, and defines the actions we are taking as a result. You can read the on pages 6 and 7 and you will soon be able to find it on the church website.

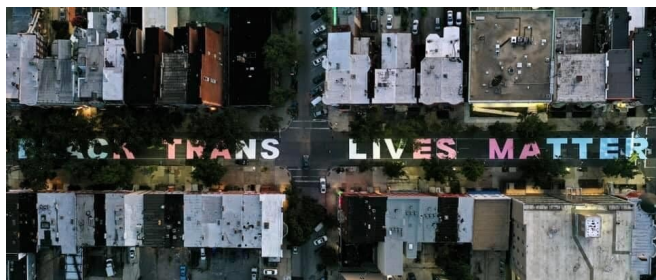
We also discussed a policy document defining anti-racist hiring practices we will commit to in the future. After considerable discussion, this document was referred back to the Racial Justice Ministry Working Group for clarification and possible revision.

Finally, we established a merit-based raise system for the staff of Govans Presbyterian Church. Every two years, each staff member will be eligible for 0-3% merit based raises. The Personnel Committee and Pastor Tom will recommend the raises to Session. These raises will be in addition to any COLA increases which attempt to provide every year based on Presbytery recommendations. This will allow us to be transparent with staff regarding what to expect in regard to raises.

If you have any questions about these or other issues, please reach out to any member of Session or Pastor Tom.

DECEMBER MISSION OFFERING: BALTIMORE SAFE HAVEN

Baltimore Safe Haven seeks to provide opportunities for a higher quality of life for TLGBQ people in Baltimore City living in survival mode. They provide compassionate harm reduction and upward mobility services, advocacy, and community engagement that is respectful, non-judgmental, and affirms and honors individual power and agency.



They distribute food through their mobile outreach and at their Greenmount Ave location, providing food staples as well as hot meals. Their transitional housing provides a safe home base for people to figure out their next steps without having the burden of worrying about their daily safety. Learn more about their work at: www.baltimoresafehaven.org.

****All donations marked "Mission Offering" during December will be given to Baltimore Safe Haven.****



Baltimore Safe Haven

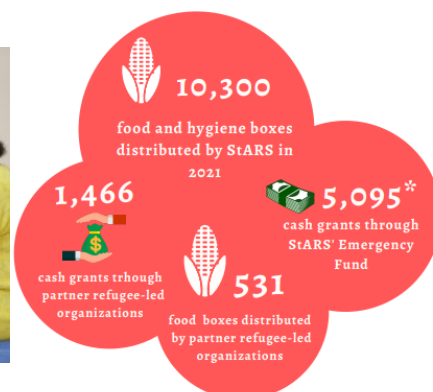
STaRS IN TRANSFORMATION

Highlights from the Official E- Newsletter of Govans' Mission Partner, St. Andrew's Refugee Services in Cairo.



27,000

More than 27,000 refugees and forced migrants were supported yearly with psychosocial, legal, medical, psychological, educational, capacity building support, and specialized programming for unaccompanied children and youth.



See the complete newsletter and learn more at: www.stars-egypt.org



CHRISTMAS GIVING DURING THE ADVENT SEASON



VIRTUAL "ALTERNATIVE GIVING FAIR"

As a result of COVID 19 and the continued health risks related to gathering, you will not be able to shop in Sharp Hall like past years. Look in the weekly "What's Going On @ Govans?" email for a list of non-profit organizations that have participated in the last few years and consider purchasing gifts or making contributions in honor of friends and family. The Mission Committee thanks you for your continued support of these organizations during this very difficult time.

BECOME A "CHRISTMAS ANGEL" FOR RESIDENTS OF GEDCO'S MICAH HOUSE AND OUR SOUL KITCHEN GUESTS

The residents of GEDCO's Micah House and some of our Soul Kitchen Guests need Christmas Angels during the pandemic. We will have wish lists for over 25 individuals. We won't have the ability to pick a list from our "Angel Board", but you will be able to sign up for a resident online. Specific items will be included in the signup sheet and a list of items to purchase and wrap. The December 3 "What's Happening at Govans" will include a link to a "Signupgenius" to become a "Christmas Angel". Here is the schedule for this year:



- December 5 – use "Signupgenius" to become a "Christmas Angel"
- December 18 – deliver wrapped gifts to the church between 1 pm and 3 pm

If you have questions about the process or using the online signup, give me a call and we will get you signed up.
Kaye Gooch, Mission Committee Chair, 214-709-8848



CHRISTMAS FOR THOSE DEALING WITH HOMELESSNESS – WARM HATS AND SOCKS

Some of our guests at Soul Kitchen and others in our community are dealing with homelessness. A very essential need for all of us is warm dry feet and a warm hat. While spending time outside in the cold and wet winter, many persons dealing with homelessness find themselves without warm socks or hats. During the Christmas season we will be collecting adult warm durable socks and hats to provide a little warmth to our neighbors in need. Drop them off at the church on Sunday or between 10 am and 4 pm Monday-Friday.

GOVANS CHOIR PRESENT'S VIVALDI'S "GLORIA"-DECEMBER 12

Antonio Vivaldi, (1678-1741) was a gifted and prolific composer of the Baroque Era and a contemporary of Bach and Handel. He lived in Venice where he was both an ordained priest as well as the Master of Concerts and teacher of violin at the "Ospedale della Pietà." This school was an orphanage for poor and orphaned girls in the city. Vivaldi taught his students to play string instruments in order to raise money for the orphanage and also, to train his female students to be better candidates for marriage. The "red-haired priest" conducted concerts of memorable beauty with an all female orchestra!

Although Vivaldi is best known for his instrumental works, his vocal works are also exciting and well-loved. **The Govans Chancel Choir will perform the "Gloria" on December 12 at the 11:00 am service,** and I urge you to attend. The

choir will be accompanied by guest musicians: string quartet, all-female a la Vivaldi, as well as oboe and guest organist. We will fill the chancel with glorious sounds of "Glory to God in the Highest, and peace to God's people on earth." This service will be an excellent way to prepare your hearts and minds for the coming Christmas season.

P.s. On Sunday, December 19, the very-talented Govans Bell Choir will present several Christmas selections. One will include the lovely flute playing of our own Myra Brosius, in "Celtic Noel." Christmas Eve (8:00 pm) will be a Lessons and Carols service with many beautiful arrangements of our favorite Christmas favorites. "O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord."

-Deborah Lewis, Interim 2nd Service Director



MARINERS NEWS:

The Mariners have been meeting in person for several months, we hope you will join us on December 18 at Lee and Bobbi Seabolt's home. This is always a wonderful Holiday dinner with ham and lots of delicious sides. We will be making plates of cookies for our shut-in members so please consider making some home made cookies (or store bought) and bring them to the dinner. We will be making 10 plates of cookies.

Give me a call if you have any questions. Kit Clark 410-493-3987




PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
5828 York Road
Baltimore, MD 21212
410-435-9188
www.govanspres.org

*"Govans Presbyterian Church is a theologically progressive community
empowering people to make the world better."*



CHRISTMAS EVE AT GOVANS

In-Person and Online

**4:30 pm - *Masks in the Manger* -
Christmas Pageant**



**8:00 pm - Service of Lesson and
Carols**



5828 YORK RD- BALTIMORE MD 21211 - WWW.GOVANSPRES.ORG