

Community United Methodist Church of Kenilworth  
455 Boulevard, Kenilworth, New Jersey 07033  
Church phone: 908-276-1956  
Pastor Roeline Ramirez 973-282-6237  
Rev. Heme Ares, Pastor Emeritus  
Pastor Don Knott, Retired Elder  
Rev. Dr. Baktha Kumar, Counseling Pastor



**The Circuit Rider**  
**December 2023 Newsletter**  
**Community United Methodist Church of Kenilworth**  
*A Faith Community Ignited by God's Love*

**DECEMBER 2023 EVENTS**

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES, 10:30 a.m.

Pastor Don's Bible Study on Facebook Live, Fridays at 9:00 a.m.

Treasure Shop open Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Prayer Meetings via Zoom and Facebook every Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.

ESL Class Mondays at 6:30 p.m.

Advent Book Study, Tuesdays, 8:00-9:00 p.m., in person and on zoom

December 3, 2023 Ignite UMC Council Meeting after worship

December 3, 2023 Tree Lighting at Borough Hall, 5:30 p.m.

December 13, 2023 UMW Fellowship, 11:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

December 17, 2023 Ignite UMC Resurrection Choir Cantata, 10:30 a.m.;  
Church group picture after worship

December 17, 2023 "Simbang Gabi" Christmas Worship Service,  
4:00 - 6:00 p.m., sponsored by NJ Filipino-American Caucas

December 21, 2023 Community Care Food Pantry, 4:00 p.m. at Fellowship Hall

December 24, 2023 Christmas Eve Worship, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

# Pastor's Page

## In all circumstances, give THANKS

(1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Dear Church Family and Friends,

How is your Thanksgiving Celebration? I hope you uttered words of appreciation to one another and God. According to Strong's definitions, the Hebrew word for thanksgiving is תודה **todah** from the root word **yadah**. It is a noun meaning **confession, praise, and thanks** made toward God. It is more than saying thank you. It is an act of worship.

Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica to give thanks in all circumstances (5:18). However, how do we give thanks or worship God amidst difficulties or sorrow? How do we express our gratitude when it seems all things are failing? How do we give thanks in all circumstances? I think the answer is in the two preceding verses: Pray continually (Confession) and rejoice always (Praise).

**Confession** is acknowledging one's own sins against God. It is being honest, genuine, and vulnerable toward someone (toward God). For me, it is being intimate with God in all seasons, like what Paul wrote: pray continually (5:17). In any situation, we are taught to be intimate with God. To have a word with Him, to listen to God's whispers, and be in His presence. I know that being in God's presence, even if we start with complaints about life, eventually, we will end up giving thanks to the one who forgives our sins and shortcomings. We will end up giving thanks to the ONE who is always ready to listen to our confession and plea.

**Praise** is acknowledging and recounting the wonderful, righteous, and amazing things that God has done for us. Our hearts will be filled with joy as we think of all God has done and is doing. Paul urged the early believers to always rejoice (5:16) because he knew nothing could stop joyful people from praising and worshiping God. The joy that comes from God makes one see things in a bright light even when the world is in darkness. It is the joy of the Lord that makes one strong, even if he or she is weak. I firmly believe the joy of the Lord leads us to be thankful in all circumstances.

Like Paul, I am encouraging and challenging all of us to have confession directly to God. Let us be intimate with God as we pray without ceasing. I am inviting all to acknowledge and recount God's works for us, wherein God saved us and redeemed us from our sins. As we move into the season of Advent, in our waiting and celebration, let us give thanks in all circumstances. Yes, we can give thanks in all circumstances because we can do all things through Christ, who strengthens us and give us joy. We give thanks to the God who was born in a manger and born in our hearts.

## Merry Christmas!

Giving thanks to God for you,  
Pastor Roeline



## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Elmer Delos Reyes
- 5 Robin Tarullo
- 8 Norma Ares
- 13 Melinda Lim
- 19 Francesca Cuppari
- 20 Jane Reilly
- 21 Charlotte Jacobs
- 23 Emmanuel De Armas
- 25 Janielle Carino
- 26 John Drescher



*"May your birthday be the beginning of a new chapter filled with love and happiness. Happy birthday!"*

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### WHAT THE CAT SAYS TO GUESTS

When visiting my house, please remember...

- 1. If you don't like cat hair, stay off the sofa.
- 2. I live here. You are the guest.
- 3. You will be sniffed and possibly licked. Deal with it.
- 4. To you, I am the cat. But here, I am the baby.
- 5. They like me more than they like most humans.
- 6. They love me. They're only friends with you.

## SUNDAY ADVENT THEME: "BORN IN A MANGER"

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday: Hope in Bethlehem
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday: Emmanuel God is with Us
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: The Shepherds and the Good News
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: God Son - the Love of God
- 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday: A Blessed Gift

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### ABOUT ADVENT

- 1. The four candles of Advent represent the four Sundays of Advent. They respectively symbolize hope, peace, joy, and love.
- 2. A tradition is that each week represents 1,000 years - (representing the 4,000 years from Adam and Eve until the birth of the Savior.
- 3. Three candles are purple and one is rose. The purple candles symbolize the prayer, penance and preparatory sacrifices and good works undertaken at this time.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> candle, purple, symbolizes hope and is sometimes called the "Prophecy Candle" in remembrance of the prophets, especially Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> candle, purple, represents faith. It is called the "Bethlehem Candle" as a reminder of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> candle, pink, symbolizes joy. It is called the "Shepard's Candle", and is pink because rose is a liturgical color for joy.
  - 4<sup>th</sup> candle, purple, lit to mark the final week of prayer and penance as we wait for the birth of our Savior. It is called the "Angel's Candle" and symbolizes peace.
- The white candle, placed in the middle, is lit on Christmas Eve. It is called the "Christ Candle" and represents the life of Christ.

## CHRISTMAS BIRDS

From All God's Creatures, Nov./Dec. 2022

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*  
~John 1:14

One of my favorite Christmas cards has a red cardinal against the backdrop of a green holly bush with snow-tipped leaves. The bird reminds me of my summertime encounters with my feathered friends.

In the summertime, our backyard seems to be a hatchery for baby birds. We have had as many as five different birds' nests developing their young. In the days when the fledglings are leaving the nest, I become anxious. *Will they be able to fly? Will they stay safe?*

During those days I may notice a baby bird with a tufted head perched on a hydrangea leaf. He will flap his wings, struggle to fly, and falter on the leaves. He eventually settles down and just sits on the ground. How I wish I could help him fly and remind him that it is not safe to just sit there because the neighbor's cat is on the prowl. If only I could become a bird, I would be able to explain how best to fly and how to stay safe.

In the Advent season, I think about my desire to help those birds. For that is what Jesus did – He became one of us in order to communicate how we are to live and die. He, the Word, became flesh. He is the Incarnate. He dwelt among us and experienced what we experience. He showed us how to have a relationship with God and with others, and He showed us the way to eternal life.

During this season, I am reminded that I am like that fledgling – in danger on the ground and needing to learn. While I may struggle in this lifetime, I have access to the Creator of the universe because He humbled himself to become one of His created.

*Incarnate One, thank You for becoming flesh and dwelling among us. May we recognize and learn from You. Amen.*

~Virginia Ruth

## CHRISTMAS WISH

By Walter Sosnosky, December 2020

I wish for the hungry to be fed.

For the tired to be rested.

I wish for the broken to be whole.

I wish for those whose hearts are full of hate to be filled with love.

I wish that black, white, brown,  
Christian, Muslim, Atheist, and Jew  
love one another as brothers and  
sisters do.

I wish for the guns, cannons, and bombs  
to be still.

All these wishes can come true if we have  
the will to do.

To all, may GOD's light shine upon you  
with peace and love.

Merry Christmas.

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## Jesus

HE CAME NOT TO A THRONE,  
*but to a manger.*

HE LIVED NOT AS A KING,  
*but as a servant.*

HE CHOSE NOT A KINGDOM,  
*but a cross.*

HE GAVE NOT JUST A LITTLE,  
*but everything.*



~Holley Gerth

# PRAYER REQUESTS



**For Blessing, Guidance, Protection, Comfort, & Healing:** Peace to all nations, Mary Ellen, Elaine Puma and her husband, Janielle, Mari, Ofelia, Olie, Elsie Hudsick, Allan Nunez, Margaret Nunez, Margaret (friend of Doris), Pastor Don and Elba, Charles & his caregiver, Janet Crowe, Betsy, Deana King, Bob, A. Restrepo Family, Fuquay Family, Oshust Family, Opacity Family, Silva Family, Kelly Family, Richard Fisher, Yen & Will, Viuya Fam., Adrian M, Al Bowman, Mike Johnston, Evelyn S., Reden C., Robin T. Jane R., Ms. Toni, Kathleen, Beverly A & family, Noemi DA, Levine family, Janet H., Mom Grace, Drew & Gracielle Restrepo, Mary O., Mary R., Faith S., Ptr. Tamie, Mr. Tony S & Family, Touch of Color Staff, Caffrey family, Ptr Heme Ares and Family, Rachel A., Sharon, Dustin, Leonardo, Carmelita, Dale S., Luz, Luisa, Lucianna, Blanco Family, Wilson Family, Francis Family, Valez Family, Jeremias Family, Freda Family, Crissi and Johnston Family

**FOR CHURCH GROWTH:** Programs & ministries of the church – ESL, Care Pantry, Treasure Shop, UMW, UMM, Children & Youth group. Prayer Meeting and Bible Study

**FOR PROTECTION AND WISDOM:** Board Officers. GNJ Annual Conference staff, Men & women in service. Government officers. Religious leaders: Pastor Roeline Ramirez & family, Pastor Nova & family.



For your prayer concerns and pastoral care, please contact Pastor Roeline.  
Text or call at 973-282-6237  
email: [ramirezroeline@gmail.com](mailto:ramirezroeline@gmail.com) [igniteumckenilworth@gmail.com](mailto:igniteumckenilworth@gmail.com)

## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The United Methodist Women will meet on Wednesday, December 13, 2023. After the program and a short business meeting, the women will enjoy lunch and fellowship.

All women are welcome to join us. Zoom will be available for those who are unable to attend in person.

Lunch this month will be at the Huck Finn Diner on Morris Avenue in Union.

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## COMMUNITY CARE FOOD PANTRY

The Food Pantry in Fellowship Hall served thirteen families from 4:00 p.m. to

5:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup>.  
The next distribution date will be on Thursday, December 21, 2023.

We will again provide each family with an Acme Gift Card to help supplement their Christmas feast, and Pet Smart cards as needed. THANK YOU to the many people who donated to our food pantry so this mission can be continued.

God bless you all!

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## THE TREASURE SHOP

The Treasure Shop is open on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., rain or shine! We thank all those who have made donations, and all those who come to get great bargains. All are welcome to visit. Holiday hours will be announced.

## FROM THE FISHWRAPPER

October 17, 2023

1. A young girl asked her father if all fairy tales begin with "Once upon a time."

"No," he replied. "A whole lot of them begin with 'If elected I promise.'"

### 2. THOUGHTS TO PONDER

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear! It soothes sorrows, heals wounds, and drives away fear.

### 3. WILL YOU BEND A KNEE?

Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that he can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He can deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, and pour out peace.

~Ezra Taft Benson

4. If you fear God, you really need fear nothing else.

### 5. IRRITATION, AGGRAVATION, AND FRUSTRATION

A boy asks his father to explain the differences in irritation, aggravation, and frustration. Dad picks up the phone and dials a number at random. When the phone is answered, he asks, "Can I speak to Roger, please?"

"No! There's no one called Roger here." The person hangs up.

"That's irritation," says Dad. He picks up the phone again, dials the same

number, and asks for Roger a second time.

"No, there's no one here called Roger. Go away. Don't call again."

"That's aggravation," says Dad.

"Then what's frustration?" asks his son.

The father picks up the phone and dials a third time. "Hello, this is Roger. Have I received any phone calls?"

6.

### **FEAR**

does not stop death  
– it stops life.

### **WORRY**

does not take away  
tomorrow's troubles  
– it takes away  
today's peace.

### 7. DISSOLVING AGENT

Alcohol is a very effective dissolving agent. It dissolves families, marriages, friendships, jobs, bank accounts, and brain neurons. However, never problems.

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### **GOOD MORNING**

Dear God,

Thank You for another day of life.  
Please be with us in all that we do today.  
Be our strength and fill us with your peace.

Thank you, Lord.

Amen.

## CHRISTMAS

By Walter Sosnosky

Once again, Christmas is upon us. With it comes the excitement, the dread, and the stress.

The days before us collapse. How could Christmas be so close? It was a month away yesterday, or so it seems. Now let me see. I sent the cards, I wrapped the gifts, the turkey is in the fridge with all the rest, stuffing, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin pie.

Is there anything I missed about Christmas? I missed the importance of CHRIST in Christmas. The son of GOD who brought peace and love, was born on Christmas day. The warmth and glow that fills our hearts and souls is a blessing that CHRIST bestowed. We reach out to our fellow man in need, a warm coat to wear, a hot meal to eat, and shelter for a good night's sleep. These things we do is what CHRIST did.

My message to you this Christmas day, celebrate with family and friends, enjoy the feast that makes your belly ache, but most of all remember to keep CHRIST in CHRISTmas.

Peace on earth, good will to men.

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### BEST CHRISTMAS JOKES

1. What is the Christmas carol that you can sing to fruits on the happy event?  
*"Have Yourself A Berry Little Christmas"*

2. How did the reindeer know it was going to rain?  
*Because Rudolph the red-knows-rain, dear!*

3. Why do mummies like Christmas so much?  
*Because of all the wrapping!*

4. Why wouldn't Ebenezer Scrooge eat at the pasta restaurant?  
*It cost a pretty penne!*

5. How long are an elf's legs?  
*Just long enough to reach the ground!*

6. Where would you find a snowman dancing?  
*At a snowball!*

7. What athlete is warmest in winter?  
*A long jumper!*

8. What did Adam say on the day before Christmas?  
*It's Christmas, Eve!*

9. What song do you sing at a snowman's birthday party?  
*Freeze a jolly good fellow!*

10. What's worse than a reindeer with a runny nose?  
*A snowman with a fever!*

11. What's the Grinch's least favorite band?  
*The Who!*

12. What did one cranberry say to another at Christmas?  
*Tis the season to be jelly!*

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### What is Christmas?

It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future. It is a wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal and that every path may lead to peace.

~Agnes M. Pahro

## WHAT PRAYER CAN DO SNOW ANGELS

Step outside on any December day in my childhood home of Plattsburgh, New York, and you'd find snowmen, snowball fights, snow forts, and snow angels. Any December, that is, except the year I was eight. The Year of No Snow.

"I'm dreaming of a brown Christmas..." my mother sang cheerfully when she found my four-year-old brother and me staring gloomily out the window on Christmas Eve morning. The frozen mud, barren trees and yards sprinkled with only a few dead leaves were nothing funny to us. Without snow, it just wasn't Christmas.

For weeks, I'd been asking God to send us snow, and every morning I woke to a day even drearier than the last. "It's like the clouds dump more mud while we sleep," I grumbled later that day as I got dressed for the Christmas Eve service.

I tried to tell myself that I had plenty to look forward to. Tomorrow would be Christmas, the best day of the year! *But not really*, I thought as my family made our way across the muddy church parking lot. *Not without snow.*

After the church lights had dimmed for the candle ceremony, I offered up one last prayer for snow before joining everyone else in singing "Silent Night." The words of the carol made me think about how Baby Jesus had had so little that first Christmas and yet how much he'd given the world.

*God, I thought, maybe there's someone else who needs snow more than we do. You can skip us this year. Amen.*

By the time the song ended, the whole church was aglow. Christmas was all around us everywhere. Even without snow.

We gathered up our coats. The ushers opened the church doors, and at first I thought I was dreaming. The parking lot had turned into a white, fluffy cloud. A thick blanket of snow covered the asphalt. Thousands of fat crystalline flakes were drifting down. I quickly packed a snowball and threw it at my brother. He ducked, laughing.

The snow had finally arrived. But Christmas got there first.

~By Louise Edwards Sowa, Anniston, Alabama;  
from GUIDEPOSTS Dec/Jan 2022  
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## THE UP SIDE From GUIDEPOSTS Dec/Jan 2022

1. "I've learned to honor dark times as much as bright ones, knowing both will pass. What remains is a belief that, even as I navigate the peaks and valleys, God cradles me in his palm." ~*Good Morning anchor Robin Roberts, from Brighter by the Day*
2. "December's gifts – custom, ceremony, celebration, consecration – come to us wrapped up, not in tissue and ribbons, but in cherished memories." ~*From Simple Abundance: A Daybook of Comfort and Joy by Saran Ban Breathnach*
3. "Let your hands be so busy catching blessings that you don't have the capacity to hold on to grudges." ~*Stephen Labossiere, relationship coach, author and speaker*





# NOVEMBER 2023



Free One Day Ukelele Class



Youth Hangout



Young Disciples Time



Worship Service



Prayer Meeting



Ethics Study with Pastor Ben



Moment of Silence for the departed

**Kensworth Interfaith Fellowship**  
**Thanksgiving Service**  
Monday, November 20, 2023 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Join us to celebrate Thanksgiving with a special service featuring a variety of musical performances, prayers, and a special message from our guest speaker.

**Ugwa UMC participated in Interfaith Thanksgiving Service**

Thanksgiving is a time to give thanks for the many blessings we have received. We invite you to join us for a special service featuring a variety of musical performances, prayers, and a special message from our guest speaker.



Women's Group



Preparing for Christmas

## ACCEPTANCE

“The Father gives me the people who are mine. Every one of them will come to me, and I will always accept them.”

*John 6:37 (NCV)*

The Lord does not see as man sees;  
for man looks at the outward appearance,  
but the Lord looks at the heart.

*1 Samuel 16:7 (NKJV)*

If God is for us, who can be against us?

*Romans 8:31 (ESV)*

Before he made the world, God chose us to be his very own through what Christ would do for us; He decided then to make us holy in his eyes, without a single fault – we who stand before him covered with His love.

*Ephesians 1:4 (TLB)*

Like the perfect Father you are, you accept me as I am. You have decided that I am worthy through your Son. All are worthy who choose to believe. All are welcome. As this acceptance is in your heart; let it be in mine.

*How does God's acceptance of you help you be more accepting of others?*

From the book, Prayers and Promises for Women

From the Introduction: “This book is a topically organized collection that guides you through lessons of beauty, confidence, joy, wisdom, and more. Heartfelt prayers and prompting questions give you an opportunity to think more deeply about the promises found in God’s Word. Be encouraged and strengthened as you dwell on the faithfulness of God.”

Editor’s note: While this book was written for women, I believe the messages it contains can be applied to *all* people.

## AVAILABLE TO ALL

By Ester Novaria (West Java, Indonesia)

“Allow the children to come to me.” Jesus said.

“Don’t forbid them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people like these children.”

~Matthew 19:14

I often think of my younger brother as a child who doesn’t really understand. Yet he understands a lot of information better than I do. Young children are often considered unable to understand or do things well. But having this mind set means we can miss the wisdom children have to offer.

In Jesus’ day, society looked down upon not only children, but also women, people with disabilities, and those who were poor or uneducated.

These groups were considered immature in faith – even sinful. So Jesus’ words in today’s scripture verse challenged the status quo. He welcomed the children, even calling them the heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus was reminding everyone that God’s love is not limited to certain groups of people; God accepts *all* people.

As followers of Christ, we are also invited to accept all people. We should not demean the faith of anyone, including young children, for any reason. God’s love is available to anyone who seeks God.

*Prayer: Dear God, enable us to love people of all ages and from all walks of life just as you love us. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

From The Upper Room, May-June 2023

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The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion;  
slow to anger, and of great mercy.

~Psalm 145: 8

From 199 Promises of God

## 1955 - STATEMENTS MADE

68 YEARS AGO]

Submitted by Jane Reilly

1. I'll tell you one thing, if things keep going the way they are, it's going to be impossible to buy a week's groceries for \$10.00.

2. Have you seen the new cars coming out next year? It won't be long before \$1,000.00 will buy only a used one.

3. If cigarettes keep going up in price, I'm going to quit; 20 cents a pack is ridiculous.

4. Did you hear the post office is thinking about charging 7 cents just to mail a letter?

5. If they raise the minimum wage to \$1.00, nobody will be able to hire outside help at the store.

6. When I first started driving, who would have thought gas would someday cost more than 20 cents a gallon. Guess we'd be better off leaving the car in the garage.

7. I'm afraid to send my kids to the movies any more. Ever since they let Clark Gable get away with saying DAMN in GONE WITH THE WIND, it seems every new movie has either HELL or DAMN in it.

8. I read the other day where some scientist thinks it's possible to put a man on the moon by the end of the century. They even have some fellows they call astronauts preparing for it down in Texas.

9. Did you see where some baseball player just signed a contract for \$50,000 a year just to play ball? It wouldn't surprise me if someday they'll be making more than the President.

10. It's too bad things are so tough nowadays. I see where a few married women are having to work to make ends meet.

11. It won't be long before young couples are going to have to hire someone to watch their kids so they can both work.

12. I'm afraid the Volkswagen car is going to open the door to a whole lot of foreign business.

13. I never thought I'd see the day all of our kitchen appliances would be electric. They're even making electric typewriters now.

14. Thank goodness I won't live to see the day when the Government takes half our income in taxes. I sometimes wonder if we are electing the best people to government.

15. The fast food restaurant is convenient for a quick meal, but I seriously doubt they will ever catch on.

16. There is no sense going on short trips anymore for a weekend. It costs nearly \$2.00 a night to stay in a motel.

17. No one can afford to be sick anymore. At \$15.00 a day in the hospital, it's too rich for my blood.

WOW! HAVE THINGS EVER CHANGED!

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You may not have everything you want in life, but if you have **Faith** to get you through, **Family** to help you through, and **Friends** to hold onto, then you have everything you need. Amen

Find and circle all of the Christmas words in the search puzzle below. Look for them in all directions, including backwards and diagonally.



### WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

J V H G X L Y K M C W U G N X P X  
S S T O J L J K O Y V E O W E A S  
C Z Z B I E G B W R E A T H T T B  
L J Y M N Z V J Z O A T O N M R H  
K R A O Y U L E T I D E A L J E H  
P F B R C W N L I Y H S O W M E G  
P F O N E H C A N D Y C A N E I I  
R P T A I D R B M S B J J W N Y N  
E E B M V Y T I S O M S S Q U V G  
S O M E I D G T S I F A N D T G E  
E N C N C C R H O T N P O O C X R  
N N G T W E A A L B M N W G R U B  
T P P D N E Y R R L U A Q S A P R  
S Y D X K O M N O U I V S S C J E  
M H H S J V A D I L C N L Z K B A  
E W G R E E T I N G S M R F E D D  
D E C E M B E R I N U A Q H R K R

- |           |            |            |             |
|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|
| JOY       | CHRISTMAS  | PRESENTS   | SANTA       |
| GREETINGS | TREE       | DECEMBER   | GINGERBREAD |
| FAMILY    | NUTCRACKER | CANDY CANE | SNOW        |
| WREATH    | CAROLS     | YULETIDE   | ORNAMENT    |

