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Stouffville Lions Club celebrates 60 years of service with big bash

KATE GILDERDALE
 Correspondent

In 1998, the Stouffville Lions Club will celebrate 60 years of service in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Established 20 years after Lions Clubs International was founded, the local organization was formed by Hugh Bannerman and has since become an integral part of community life, assisting needy families, helping out at numerous local events and raising funds for a host of charities. Anniversary celebrations will be held at

Markham Fairgrounds Feb. 28 and everyone in the community is invited to attend.

The anniversary dinner and dance "is more of a party celebration than an awards and speeches evening," explained Carl Johnston, who is chairing the special event.

"There will be a live band and a guest speaker and anybody who wants to get involved is more than welcome to do so."

Letters of invitation have already been sent to local businesses, council members and other clubs in the district, as well as federal and provincial members of parliament. Tickets for the evening are \$25 each and Dan Stapleton will lead the band which performed at the Thicketwood Bowl on Canada Day, said Lions president David Barthau.

The Stouffville club was responsible for starting the community Santa Claus parade and has helped to establish a number of local hockey teams, as well as being one of the driving forces behind the town's first arena. This year, the club continues to help struggling families celebrate the season with its Christmas basket program, collecting toys, gifts and food for those in need.

As always, referrals to the program

COMMUNITY

are warmly received and club members promise complete confidentiality for recipients. "This year we have a couple of corporations in town who have asked to look after a family each," said Johnston. And one Stouffville family decided that instead of exchanging presents with each other, they would use their annual gathering to contribute gifts for people on the Lions' Christmas list.

"When we sell the Christmas trees, some people give us \$50 or \$100 and tell us to keep the change as a donation and all the money we raise goes back into the community." The club also organizes the pre-Christmas tour of homes for seniors, so that they can enjoy some of the beautiful displays of Christmas lights. Members will also be helping out with First Night on New Year's Eve.

Anyone who would like tickets or information about the 60th anniversary can contact any member of the Lions' Club, or call Johnston at 640-5554. New members are always welcome and the club now offers an affiliate membership for those who cannot attend regular meetings.

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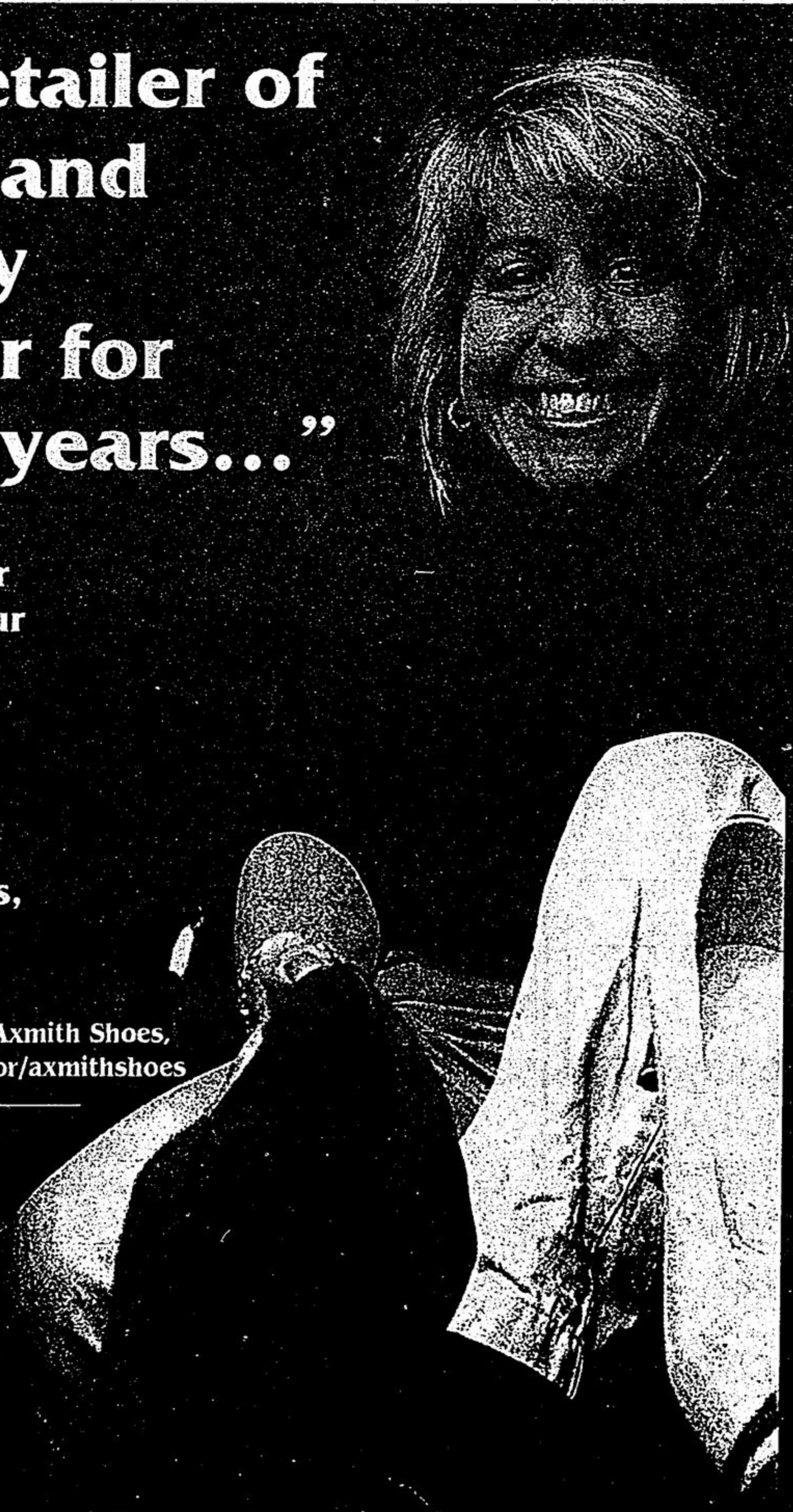
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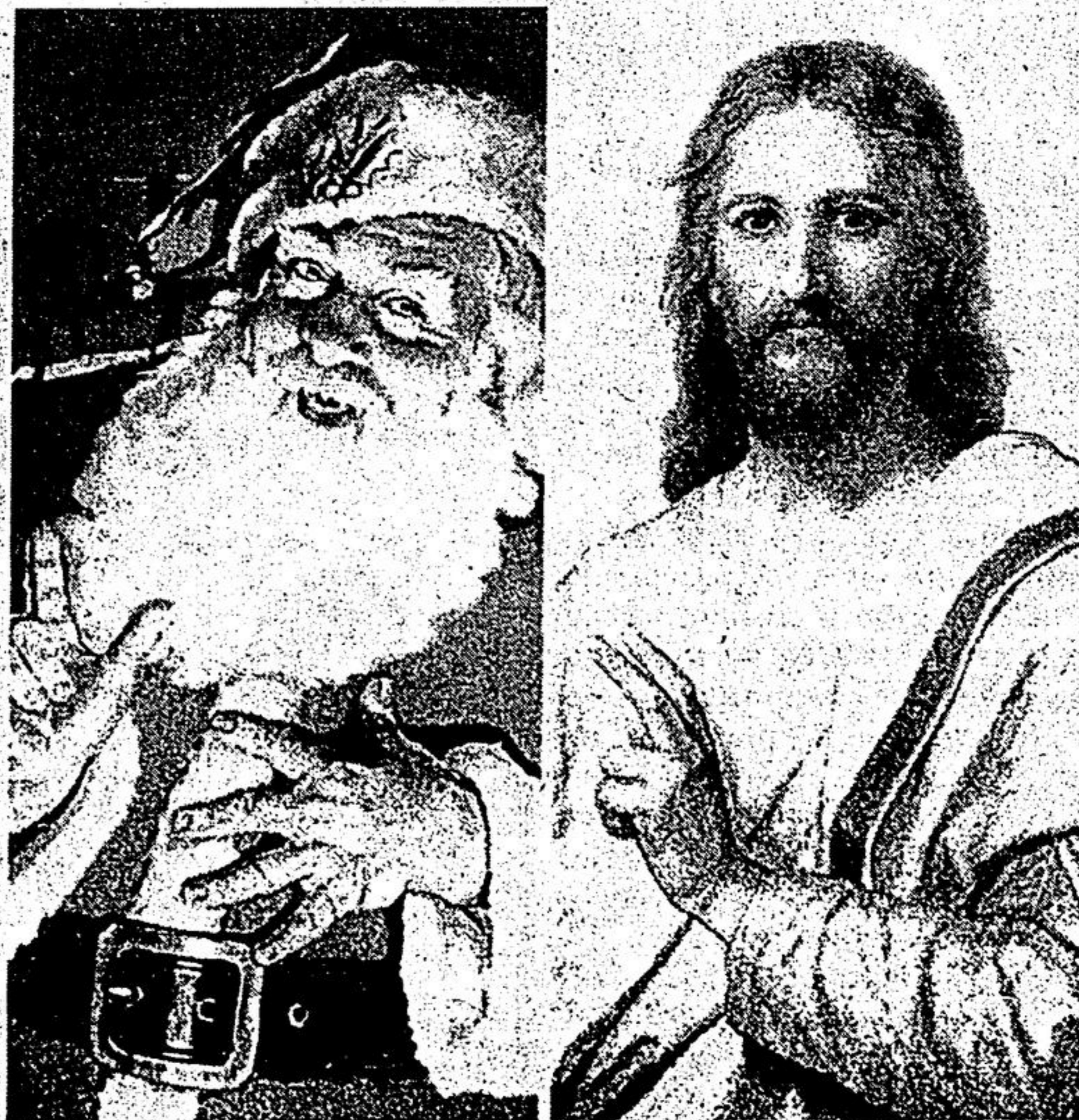
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Sunday, December 21 - Longest Night Service - 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Services:

4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., 8:00 p.m. & 11:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Service: 10:00 a.m.



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