

# THE CONNECTING LINK

Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church 8426 W. 95<sup>th</sup> St. Hickory Hills, IL 60457

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### **DECEMBER 2012**

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain."

(Isaiah 40:3-4)

I saw a cartoon a few years ago, hanging in a church office, which is a perfect illustration of this verse, calling us to "prepare a way in the wilderness". The panel was divided into two parts. On the left side, someone stands alone, on a featureless ground, hand to mouth, calling out. This person is calling out to those on the other side of the picture. And are these people on the other side of the picture listening? Not really. You see, the right half of the cartoon pictures crowds and mobs of people, rushing back and forth in the middle of the holiday rush hour, arms full of packages, making their way through crowds, lights, and sales of the century. The caption reads, "A voice crying out in the holiday wilderness."

The picture on the left is meant to portray perhaps the prophet Isaiah, carrying the message from God that we hear in the Old Testament. Or perhaps it is John the Baptist, whom the writer of the gospel of Mark names as the voice crying in the wilderness. But whoever this lone figure is, there is a larger point being made in this cartoon; for there are two wildernesses portrayed here.

Webster's dictionary gives several definitions of "wilderness". One definition is "an area essentially undisturbed by human activity." Another is "a confusing multitude or mass." Both are shown in this cartoon. The first wilderness is the one where the lone figure stands in an empty wasteland, calling out. He is in the "area essentially undisturbed by human activity." He is calling out to be heard by those on the other side, but to no avail. They are in a wilderness of their own, a "confusing multitude or mass", and they cannot hear the messenger. They have not invited the messenger in. They are too busy jostling through the tangle of presents and decorations, advertisements, and holiday marketing. The messenger's voice is drowned out by the ringing of bells and the blaring of Christmas music, the ch-ching of cash registers and the hurried parade of feet through mazes of malls.

Advent is the season of joyful preparation. We are not only preparing to celebrate once again the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we are preparing our hearts and lives for the day when Christ will return. We are celebrating the advent of a new heavens and a new earth. We are preparing the way so that Christ will find a home in our hearts and our lives.

Advent is the time to prepare. To prepare a way in the wilderness. But what does this wilderness look like? And what does it mean to prepare the way?

There is so much to prepare during the Christmas season – concerts and cookies, presents and parties, dinners and decorations. It can wear us out rather than energize us with the joy of Christ's coming. This chaotic and crowded wilderness can threaten to drown out the message of the prophet, and the tiny cry of the baby whose birth we celebrate. These are the mountains of human invention which must be brought low.

And although Advent is a time of celebration for many, for others it is a difficult time of year to make it through one more time. For the sick, for the poor, for those who are alone, for those who are grieving loss, Advent – a time of warmth and of coming together for so many – can be a time of feeling stranded in a barren wilderness, separated from community by, of all things, the birth of our Lord. These are the valleys of despair which must be lifted up.

The shortest distance between two points is always a straight line. Twists and turns only lengthen the distance we must travel on any path. And mountains and valleys are only curves that go up and down instead of side to side. For a highway to be made through the wilderness, every valley must be lifted up and every mountain and hill be made low in order for the path to be smooth and easily traveled. For a highway to be made through the wildernesses of life — in order to prepare the way to our hearts for the coming of the Lord — the obstacles must be removed, so that there is no distance remaining between us and the Lord. There are valleys to fill and mountains to bring down. Let's get to work and prepare the way. See you in church on Sunday!

In Joyful Anticipation,

Pastor Lara



# HHPC PRAYER REQUESTS

- -Stacy Flynn's friend, Colleen, for health concerns
- -Alexa & Family on the passing of her uncle
- -Eva Nestor & family on her sister Rose's passing
- -Dave & his mother, Rose, for strength
- -Praise for Lisa Radetski's Marriage
- -Praise for Stacy Flynn's Marriage
- -Evelyn's friend Dorothy for health concerns
- -David Krueger & family
- -Eleanor Watson for health concerns
- -Hollie Fox's friend, Emily Beazley (9 yrs old),

who has Stage III T-Cell Lymphoblastic

Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma

- -Frank Coffey for health concerns
- -Maryann's grandson, Michael, for health concerns & Maryann
- -Karen Golema's daughter, Amy,

for health concerns

- -Gordon Home's niece, Kellie, for health concerns
- -Private Gregory Enokian, Tasha's friend,

in boot -camp

-Gert Vickers' daughter-in-law, Pat,

for health concerns

-Sandy Beal's friend, Kathy Kellogg,

for health concerns

-Gert & family, on her son-in-law, Al's passing

- -Kirk's Aunt Claudia for health concerns
- -Arlene's neighbor, Barb, for health concerns
- -Laura Curtis for healing
- -Heather for health concerns
- -Kirk MacGregor's brother, Scotty,

for health concerns

- -Mary's nephew, Jerry Bemis, for health concerns
- -Shirley Dragas' sister, Sheryl, for strength & her husband Jerry Smith, for health concerns
- -Jean Somerstorfer for health concerns
- -Jim Kupka for healing & Marcia for strength
- -Margaret Dawson, Jimmie's aunt,

for health concerns

- -Darlene Kibort's daughter-in-law, Carla Murray, for health concerns
- -Mary Richer's son, Larry, for health concerns
- -Bev & Linda Kahn for strength, &

Richard Kahn for health concerns

- -Family of Susan's friend, Leda, on her passing
- -Kyle Krueger, in Marine Corps
- -Dorothy Allen for strength & healing
- -Our Service Men & Women and their families
- -Policemen, Firemen, and their families
- -DelPrete family for strength, faith, & hope during Jen's battle

Prayer Groups meet on Tuesday at 6:30 p.m., and Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. We encourage you to attend this Vital Ministry of our church.

# **Annual Report Deadline**



Annual Report Articles are due to the church office no later than Sunday, Jan. 6, 2013.

Emailed articles would be appreciated! Send your articles to: hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org.

Or you can leave your article in the secretary's mailbox in the church office.

If you are a committee chair person, please make sure an article about your committee gets submitted. And if you are involved with a committee, please don't assume "someone else will take care of that."

Please make sure it is done!

The sooner you get your article in to the office, the better for everyone.

Thank you for your cooperation!

# **DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS**

Friday, Nov. 30:

5:30 pm - Hanging of the Greens Rehearsal-If you are involved in the Hanging of the Greens program, please be at the church for Rehearsal at 5:30 p.m. before the Advent Workshop.

6:30 pm - Advent Workshop-

One of the many Christmas traditions at our church. The evening begins with a potluck dinner at 6:30 p.m. Then, we make holiday crafts and sing Christmas Carols around the piano. This evening of

beautiful crafts, songs, and stories is a night that our kids love and our adults cherish. It is an ideal way to kick off the Christmas season. (Please bring a dish to share and a free will donation for our craft projects. See the sign-up sheet in narthex & downstairs).

# Sunday, Dec. 2:

# 10:30 am - Hanging of the Greens-

Our Children's Christmas Program-during the 10:30 a.m. Worship Service. Our kids tell the story of the birth of Christ and our sanctuary comes alive with the sights and sounds of Christmas. Parents: Please help us by making it a priority to be here with your children. Our whole congregation is blessed with this program.

### Sunday, Dec. 9:

# 9:00 and 10:30 am - Worship-

We celebrate the **Sacrament of Holy Communion**. We continue to transform our sanctuary as we hang our **Chrismons** on our sanctuary tree.

### Tuesday, Dec. 11:

# 7:00 pm - Women's Christmas Tea-

Another wonderful Christmas Tradition for the ladies of our church. Come and enjoy tea and sweets, singing and fellowship. (See sign-up sheet downstairs- RSVP requested. Please bring a plate of your favorite Christmas cookies to share).

### Sunday, Dec. 16:

# 10:30 am Worship-Lessons & Carols-

Be sure to be in worship, to enjoy the wonderful gift our Choir gives as they present a Service of Lessons & Carols. There will also be a **Congregational**Meeting following the 10:30 service.

# Sunday, Dec. 23:

White Gift Offering- We bring our food items, wrapped in white tissue, before the crèche. These items will be used in our Food Pantry. The sanctuary continues to be transformed with beautiful poinsettias.

### Monday, Dec. 24:

7:00 pm & 11:00 pm - Christmas Eve-Come to worship and celebrate the birth of our Savior, with a candlelight service.

# TWILIGHT PRAYER

Many times, small acts of kindness are delivered not by mouth but by prayer. These are the times unknown to you that someone is thinking of you in a special way. Prayer may be personal as many say, but it reaches hearts in many ways. Bring your bow and arrow to prayer. You won't miss your target as it sails through the air and hits its mark, as you sit there. Are you a target?

Regards, C. Lou Pearson

# PADS UPDATE

Practice makes perfect or so they say. I have to agree in every way.

We have become so proficient in serving our friends.

We create music as we strike up the band. Of course we are pitching in with our hands.

You do this, I'll take care of that.

Toss me that rag as I clean up this mess.

In all our action, we strive to please, as we work together without a sneeze.

We will stay in the kitchen till the job is done, and again we will return to have more fun.

52 we did serve, never from our mission, did we swerve.

WOW!

Regards, C. Lou Pearson

A·men (ā·men') adv., interj.

# **PRAYER & CARE**

"As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."

COLOSSIANS 2:6-7 (RSV)

With Thanksgiving just behind us, may we be reminded daily of the graciousness of our Heavenly Father as we enter the Christmas Season. Thanks be to God for the gift of His Son who came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. From the faithful prayer warriors to you: MERRY CHRISTMAS!



# WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

"After all this, there is only one thing to say: Have reverence for God, and obey his commands, because this is all that man was created for. God is going to judge everything we do, whether good or bad, even things done in secret."

ECCLESIASTES 12:13-14

Solomon was unlimited in what he could do. He tried knowledge, pleasure, projects, and possessions. And yet, he was restless- isolated- frustrated- longing- for the simple things of the good old days. We thoroughly discussed this book with concern, humor, questions, and wonder. Next in line will be Song of Solomon. Join us if you dare. Miss you Carol Heins, Bev Kahn, Micki Kluska, Millie Neil, & Eva Nestor.

# **Christian Education**

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Approximately 70 lap blankets were blessed by the congregation on November 18. The blankets were displayed throughout the church and a special blessing was given by the congregation of the 10:30 AM service. These blankets will be given to the residents of the Hickory Hills Pavilion located at 93rd and Roberts Road. The Prayer Shawl Ministry has been working for two years to make enough blankets for everyone at the Pavilion. We sincerely hope the prayers and well wishes will help to warm the recipients and remind them of the peace which is found during this special season of Thanksgiving. Thank you to Pastor Lara and all the congregation for making this gift such a blessing.

The annual Advent Night was a huge success. Thank you to Debbie and her dedicated crew who set up all the tables and chairs. Thanks for the people who took down everything and put it all away in preparation for the Sunday worship services. Everyone who attended thought the food was delicious! Thank you for bringing in your favorite dishes to share with all who came. The fellowship made the hall buzz with anticipation of making new ornaments and decorations to begin the long awaited season of Advent.

"The Hanging of the Greens" was a memorable event as well. Did you happen to see the "Baby Jesus" (our very own, Hunter)? Wasn't he one of the cutest babies? Did you recall the story of the first Christmas? Did you delight in the sights of all our children and young adults as they shared their talents with the

congregation? Now that's a great start to the Advent Season! Hope it helped get you into the right spirit. Thank you to all the people who helped behind the scenes. How could this presentation ever begin without your help and organization skills? Thank you.

The Women's Christmas Tea will be on December 11th at 7 PM. Make arrangements now to attend. We will feature a storyteller who will help bring back some treasured memories. Fellowship surrounds you as you enjoy tea, cookies, games, laughter and merriment on this special night. Be sure to invite your friends and sign in on the sheets at the tables outside the Fellowship hall. We will want to be prepared with enough tea and seating. Bring a tray of your favorite cookies or sweets to share. A freewill donation will help us with the costs.

Once again our secret friend has purchased a tree for the Kids Club to decorate at the Brookfield Zoo. Families and friends met at 10:30 AM on November 17th to decorate the tree with the ornaments the kids from Kids Club have made throughout the years. Many of the faces have changed but the feeling is the same as when we first began. "Kids are #1" at Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church. The decorators had a great time and even a bit warmer weather to get the tree decorated. If you happen to visit Brookfield Zoo during the next few months, stop to see the tree and all its decorations. We are tree # 42 found on the South mall between the Swamp and the Hamill Family zoo house.

The Junior High Youth Group will not meet on November 22, December 27 or January 3. On January 5 they are scheduled to attend Feed My Starving Children and on January 25-27 they are planning a retreat.

The Kids Club will be having a break for the holidays as well. No meetings are scheduled for December 24 or 31. We will begin 2013 with a meeting on January 7th. We will have a celebration on December 17th. Children will learn the meaning of the Advent Wreath and have discussions during the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Stories and More will have a break around the holidays too. There will not be any meetings for November 20, December 25 and January 1 Meetings for Stories and More will begin again in 2013 on January 8.

The Women's Bible Study is preparing for another celebration. They will have a luncheon to celebrate Christmas. Check with Arlene Pearson for the exact time and date. They are currently having a wonderful time discussing the Bible with new faces always welcome to join. Monday at 1 PM is the meeting to join in the fellowship and even learn something new. Come check out the Women's Bible Study.

Confirmation classes begin in January. Anyone in grades 6 thru 8 who is interested in joining the Church is asked to attend the weekly classes. Our usual dedication and confirmation service is held on Palm Sunday. More information is available by contacting Pastor Lara MacGregor or Dianne Flynn at the office: 708-598-3100.

The entire committee wishes you a

memorable holiday season. Be sure to make it extra special by attending the worship service held on Christmas Eve at 7 and 11PM. It is something you really do not want to miss. Hope to see you throughout the Advent Season as we prepare to celebrate the Birth of Christ.

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# JUST A REMINDER

# Friday, November 30

5:30 p.m. Children meet in Sanctuary to Practice for Advent Program

6:30 p.m. Advent Family Night
Potluck Dinner and Crafts

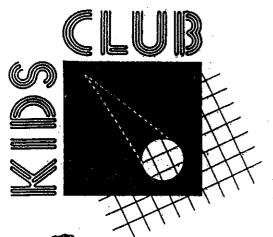
# Sunday, December 2nd

9:00 a.m. Practice for Advent Program

10:30 a.m. Advent Program Presented

"Hanging of the Greens"





Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church 8426 West 95th Street, Hickory Hills, Illinois 60457 708/598-3100

Dianne Flynn, Director

"We all love because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19

In December our Christian Learning will center around the scripture and stories found in the books of Ephesians and 1John. Weekly we will open our lesson time with the lighting of our Advent Candles.

The themes for our study this month are;

Playing by the Book - Bible study helps us become more like Christ.

The Power Play - Prayer connects us to the power of God.

Playing by the Rules - Showing the importance of being obedient to God

World Record Event - Gift of Love/Christmas

Congratulations to Seth who celebrated winning the Snicker Balance for October.

The Advent Family Night will be held on Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> with the potluck dinner starting at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is invited. Bring a friend and enjoy this time together. The crafts we will be making on this evening are displayed in the lower level of the church. Please sign up today to attend.

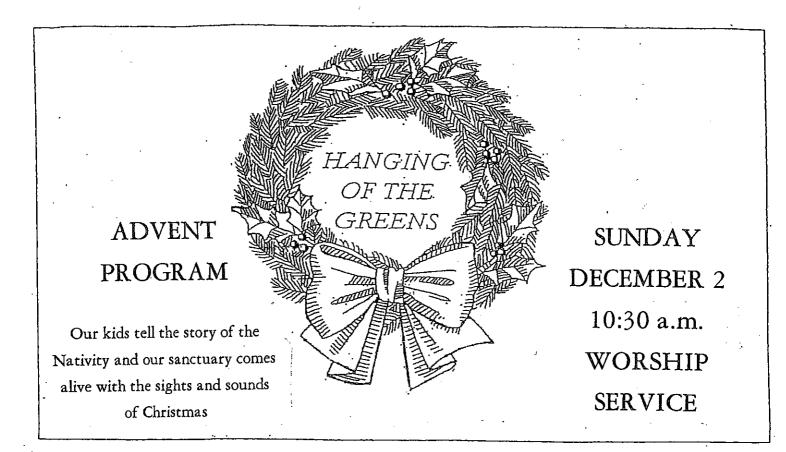
We encourage you to visit our decorated Christmas Tree at the Brookfield Zoo Holiday Magic celebration and enjoy the ornaments made by our kids. The tree is number 42 and located on the South Mall between The Swamp and Hamill Family Play Zoo. The 31<sup>st</sup> annual Holiday Magic will run all weekends in December (Saturdays and Sundays) and December 26 - 31. For more information on their scheduled programing check out www.brookfieldzoo.org

KIDS CLUB Holiday Schedule: We will host a Christmas Party on December 17<sup>th</sup>. Kids Club will not meet on December 25<sup>th</sup> or January 1<sup>st</sup>. We will resume our regular schedule on January 7<sup>th</sup>.

On behalf of the KIDS CLUB staff I would like to wish you and your family a Blessed and Happy Holiday Season.

Peace and Joy, Dianne

KIDS ARE NUMBER 1 AT THE KIDS CLUB



# WE CECEBRATE

# December Birthdays

- 3 Lucia Rosails
- 5 Tristan Grisko Jeffrey Johnson
- 12 Brian Haack
- 13 Karley Peterson
- 14 Danny Rodriguez
- 15 Gabriel Meyer
- 16 Jayden Kenealy
- 18 Riley McKinney
- 20 Natasha Swindle
- 24 Claudia Serajin
- 25 Natalie Orsic

# Perfect Attendance

# **October**

Grade 3

Jayden Kenealy

### Grade 5

Jacob Morrell

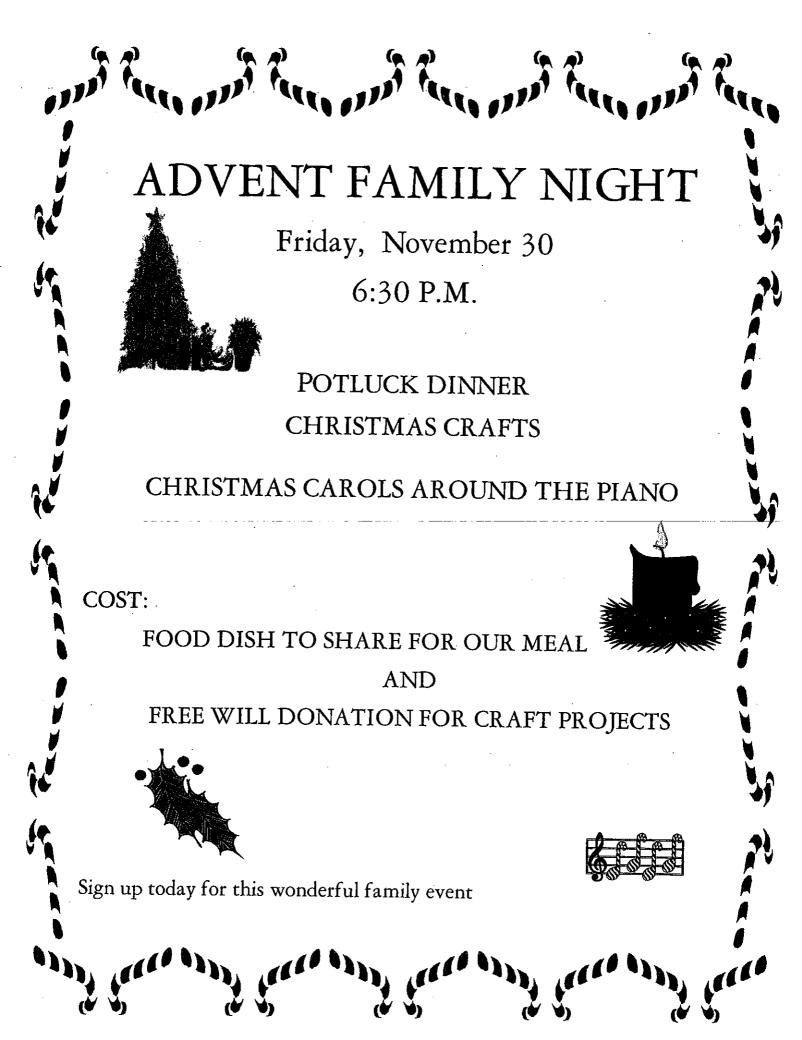
# Junior High

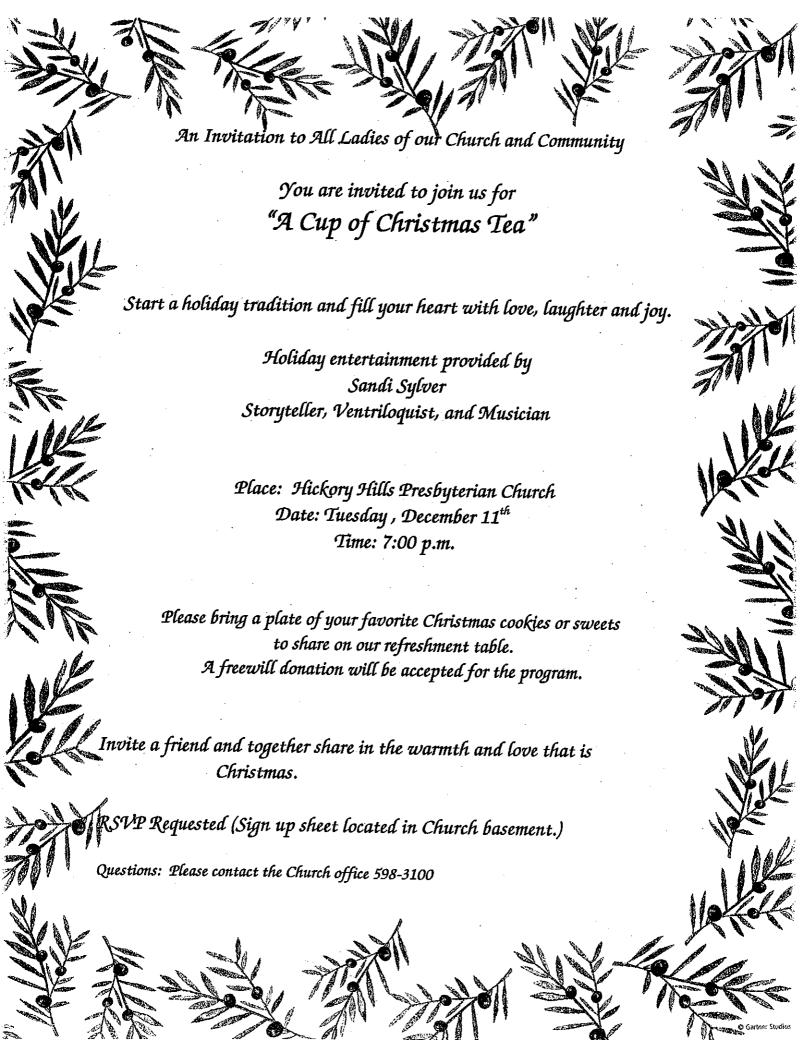
Danny Orsic

# Senior High

Ashley Maranto

Brittany Maranto





# 60th Year Anniversary Celebration

# You are cordially invited to join us in celebration of Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church's $60^{\rm th}\, Anniversary$

Interdenominational Service of Worship on January 20, 2013 at 3:00 PM followed by a time of Fellowship and Refreshments

Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church 8426 West 95<sup>th</sup> Street Hickory Hills, IL 60457 708-598-3100

We are called to seek God's Word, to Share and Celebrate God's love and to Serve Jesus Christ in the world

# Sacrament of Holy Communion- Dec. 9, 2012

SUNDAY	USHERS	LAY READER		
Dec. 2, 2012	K. Dritz, C. Pilgrim	Darlene Kibort		
Dec. 9, 2012	D. LaCognata	Rick Vogl		
Dec. 16, 2012	B. Ambrosat, F. Esparza, M. Maranto	Ken Dritz		
Dec. 23, 2012	D. Barker, D. Ciametti, T. Morrell	Kim Ambrosat		
Dec. 30, 2012	S. Zimmerman	Kirk MacGregor		
SUNDAY	COUNTERS	ACOLYTES		
Dec. 2, 2012	Susan Frangella	Jayden Kenealy, Jacob Morrell		
Dec. 9, 2012	Susan Frangella, Karen Hoffman	Jacob Morrell, Bobby DeVries		
Dec. 16, 2012	Susan Frangella, Sandy Beal	Jayden Kenealy, Bobby DeVries		
Dec. 23, 2012	Susan Frangella, Shirley Brunell	Jacob Morrell, Danny Orsic		
Dec. 30, 2012	Susan Frangella	Danny Orsic, Jacob Morrell		

Communion Servers: Darlene Delaney, Lou Pearson, Ivy Taebel

Jesus came to serve and give to others. This Christmas season, consider how you can follow Jesus' example by giving your time, love and kindness.  Directions: Gross out every my, me and mine. Then write the remaining words on the blanks below to read 2 Corinthians 9:7, NIV.	WIN.7:9
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Answer:
"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."
2 Corinthians 9:7, NIV

# **DECEMBER 2012**

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
						1
2 1st Sunday of Advent 9:00 a.m. Worship (downstairs) 10:30 a.m. Hanging of the Greens 11:30 a.m. Confirmation Information Meeting 11:45 a.m. Prayer Shawl Min. 12:00 p.m. Y.A. Bible Study 12:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 3:00 p.m. Praise Team 5:00 p.m. REV 6:30 p.m. Sr. High Youth Group	3 1:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study 3:30 p.m. Kid's Club	4 9:30 a.m. Cancer Sewing 1:00 p.m. Stories & More 6:30 p.m. Prayer & Care 7:00 p.m. CE Meeting	9:30 a.m. Prayer & Care 2:30 p.m. Staff Meeting 4:00 p.m. Food Pantry	5:00 p.m. TOPS 6:30 p.m. Jr. High Youth Group	7	8 2:00 p.m. Building & Grounds
9 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent 9:00 a.m. Worship & Adult Ed. 10:30 a.m. Worship & C.E. 11:45 a.m. Prayer Shawl Min. 12:00 p.m. Y.A. Bible Study 12:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 3:00 p.m. Praise Team 5:00 p.m. REV 6:30 p.m. Sr. High Youth Group Jan. Newsletter Deadline	1:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study 3:30 p.m. Kid's Club 7:30 p.m. Session	1:00 p.m. Stories & More 6:30 p.m. Prayer & Care 7:00 p.m. Women's Christmas Tea	9:00 a.m. Stampers 9:30 a.m. Prayer & Care 2:30 p.m. Staff Meeting 4:00 p.m. Food Pantry	5:00 p.m. TOPS 6:30 p.m. Jr. High Youth Group	14	. 15
16 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent 9:00 a.m. Worship & Adult Ed. 10:30 a.m. Worship (Lessons & Carols) & Children's Education 11:30 a.m. Congregational Mtg. 11:45 a.m. Prayer Shawl Min. 12:00 p.m. Y.A. Bible Study 12:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 3:00 p.m. Praise Team 5:00 p.m. REV 6:30 p.m. Sr. High Youth Group	1:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study 3:30 p.m. Kid's Club 7:30 p.m. Outreach Meeting	1:00 p.m. Stories & More 6:30 p.m. Prayer & Care 7:30 p.m. REV Committee Meeting	9:30 a.m. Prayer & Care 2:30 p.m. Staff Meeting 4:00 p.m. Food Pantry	5:00 p.m. TOPS 6:30 p.m. Jr. High Youth Group	21	22
23 4th Sunday of Advent 9:00 a.m. Worship & Adult Ed. 10:30 a.m. Worship & C.E. 11:45 a.m. Prayer Shawl Min. 12:00 p.m. Y.A. Bible Study 12:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 3:00 p.m. Praise Team 5:00 p.m. Sr. High Youth Group 30 9:00 a.m. Worship & Adult Ed. 10:30 a.m. Worship & C.E. 11:45 a.m. Prayer Shawl Min. 12:00 p.m. Y.A. Bible Study 12:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 3:00 p.m. Praise Team 5:00 p.m. Praise Team	24 Christmas Eve 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship 31 New Year's Eve	25 Christmas Day	26 9:00 a.m. Stampers 9:30 a.m. Prayer & Care 4:00 p.m. Food Pantry	5:00 p.m. TOPS 6:30 p.m. Jr. High Youth Group	28	29

# **December Birthdays**

### December

- 1 Darlene Delaney
- 1 Melanie Swindle
- 4 Scott Hoffman
- 5 Dawn Morgucz
- 11 Ruth Payton-Hill
- 12- Tom Treccani
- 12- Bryan Ambrosat
- 16 Gina Ciametti
- 19 Steven Beal
- 19 Cliff Pilgrim
- 22 Kyle Freiberg
- 29 Laverne Mocarski
- 30 Marge Brumis
- 31 Carla Zabelka

\*If you wish to receive *The Connecting Link* through email, and no longer receive a paper version, please send an email to: <a href="mailto:newsletter@hickoryhillspres.org">newsletter@hickoryhillspres.org</a> and we will place you on the mailing list. Thank you.



Any omissions or errors should be reported to the church office... 708-598-3100 or

HHPC@hickoryhillspres.org

Please recycle this newsletter when you are finished enjoying it. There are recycling bins located around the church. Thank you.

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