

HICKORY HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Connecting Link

December, 2016



Be patient.
until the
coming of
the Lord.

JAMES 5:7

NOVEMBER 27 – FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT – COMMUNION - WORSHIP AT 9, 10:30 AND 5:00

MATTHEW 24:36-44 AND ISAIAH 2:1-5 “IN DAYS TO COME”

DECEMBER 4 – SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – WORSHIP AT 9, 10:30 AND 3:00 (NO REV)

MATTHEW 3:1-3 AND ISAIAH 11:1-10 “REPENT!”

3:00 PM – BLUE CHRISTMAS – A QUIET SERVICE OF PRAYERS, CAROLS, MEDITATIONS, THAT ALLOWS FOR GRIEF IN THE SEASON OF JOY. BRING A FRIEND. LIGHT REFRESHMENTS AFTER THE SERVICE.

DECEMBER 11 – THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT – WORSHIP AT 9, 10:30 AND 5:00

9:00 – ISAIAH 35:1-10 AND JAMES 5:7-12 “UNTIL THE COMING OF THE LORD”

10:30 – **CHRISTINGLE SERVICE** – AN INTERGENERATIONAL SERVICE FEATURING OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH (THIS REPLACES OUR TRADITIONAL HANGING OF THE GREENS SERVICE HELD ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF DEC)

5:00 – REV

DECEMBER 18 – FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - WORSHIP AT 9, 10:30 AND 5:00

LESSON AND CAROLS AT ALL SERVICES

DECEMBER 24 – CHRISTMAS EVE – SERVICES ARE AT 4:00 AND 11:00 PM.

REV BAND PLAYS AT THE LATER SERVICE ONLY

DECEMBER 25 – CHRISTMAS DAY – SERVICE IS AT 10:30 ONLY. NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

IT'S A PJ CHRISTMAS! COME IN YOUR PJs, SING FAVORITE CAROLS, HEAR THE OLD, OLD STORY.

JANUARY 1, 2017 – NEW YEAR'S DAY SUNDAY – SERVICE IS AT 5:00 PM ONLY

I love to make my way through December by reading one of Ann Weems' devotions each day. Here's a reflection I especially like about God's ongoing presence with us:

Angels Still Appear



Angels still appear to those ready to receive blessings in spite of the barren impossibility of their lives. Elizabeth still recognizes Jesus and calls him Lord, receiving him to her heart, in spite of the distraction of her own blessing. Blessings still come to those who believe that nothing is impossible in the hand of God. Mary still gives birth, not just every Advent, Mary still gives birth each day to this Child who advents into hearts, unexpectedly and forever. Herods still live who would kill this Child, but Mary and Joseph still flee into the desert, and the night, to protect the One given into their keeping.

It is not done!
It is not done!
It is not done!
The birthing is not over;
The blessings continue.
Angels wait in the wings!

How true this is – that we can live in hope, that God is not done with us, that angels do wait in the wings! Listen for them every day.

Advent blessings,
Rev. Laura

Doors still slam in the inns of this world, Herods still plot to kill, deserts and darkness still threaten our safety, but God still lives. In spite of war and terror, Mary gives birth to the Prince of Peace. In spite of hunger, Mary gives birth to the Bread of Life. In spite of lost sheep, Mary gives birth to the Good Shepherd. In spite of those pregnant with hatred, Mary gives birth to LOVE.



Session Shorts

The Session met on Monday November 14, and conducted the following business:

Shared as joys the celebration of REV's 10th anniversary on 11/13 and all the hard work of the congregation for the Craft Bazaar. The sale of food and baked goods went well and as always, Shirley Dragas outdid herself in the creation of gift baskets. All proceeds from those baskets benefit the church. We are also thankful for the work underway to deal with water issues in the Youth Room, for the dedication of volunteers, for the particular beauties of this season of the year and for Jane Bunnell's preaching.

During the Clerk's report heard that communion was served at all three services on 11/6 and will again be served at all three services on 11/27, the first Sunday of Advent. Rev. Laura shared information from Westminster College, PA, recently received in the office, with the Session. Westminster, along with the 50+ colleges in the US affiliated with the PCUSA, offer significant financial aid to Presbyterian college students. We founded more colleges in this nation than any other denomination, because we follow the ministry of John Calvin, who creates the first public school in the world in Geneva, Switzerland because he believes the "human mind and conscience are freed for obedience to God through learning...education (for Calvin) is key to responsible citizenship in society and in the kingdom of God...in order for societies to be democratic (another hallmark of Reformed theology), education must be available and accessible to all persons. Rooted as we are in (this conviction about learning), Presbyterians **love** education as a primary form of Christian witness to (where and how God acts in this world)" (from 2009 MYOP). If you are in high school and are looking for financial aid to college, we can provide you with the names of Presbyterian colleges and help you with scholarship applications.

Received the minutes of Session, Deacons, Christian Ed and the Treasurer and approved building use on 2/4/17 by MC8 for their meeting. Any questions about the SERTOMA Christmas tree project should go directly to Scott Zimmerman, the liaison for this experiment.

The Allen Organ company came out and conducted a thorough inspection of the organ in October. Their recommendation is to replace, not repair, the organ. Worship and Music recommended to the Session, and Session agreed, to not spend funds on a refurbished or new organ (\$30000 to \$60000). Arrangements are being made to remove the organ.

Session heard the Craft Bazaar raised 3500.00 and heard a report from Tom about activities with the new software system, ChurchTeams and the purchase of a refurbished iPad. He has been asking people to update their profiles in the system on Sunday mornings by asking them to log into their household information and review and correct it.

The Session also heard many updates from Mission Council 8 (see report elsewhere) and approved the concept of hosting the spring Mental Health day at HHP. Session also called a Congregational meeting for Sunday 12/18 after the 10:30 service for the purpose of conducting elections. There being no further business, the Session adjourned with prayer at 9:10 p.m.

Summary submitted by Rev. Laura





A CHURCH ON A MISSION

Mission Council 8 Updates

We are part of Mission Council 8, the Presbyterian churches on the far south side of Cook County. Through the years, we have come together to pray with and for each other, to go on retreats and to do mission projects with each other. This past year we have supported Jones Center, Feed My Starving Children Mobile Pack and the Kentucky Mission trip. Here are some MC8 events for December 2016 and 2017 that we want you to know about.

Sat, Dec 10, starting at 8 a.m. – **Breakfast with Santa at the Jones Center.** Help is always needed to set up, serve and clean up. We have already been buying gifts for the children that will be sent to Jones the week of Nov. 27th. Please see Dave Delaney for ways you can help.

Sat, Jan 14, 9 at Pullman Presbyterian – **MC8 meeting** – open to all

Sat, Jan 21, 9:00 to 3:00 at Chicago Heights – **Systemic Racism** - Continuing the Conversation on Race and Cultural Awareness. RSVP by Jan. 10th - \$20.00 registration fee.

As Debbie Dennis writes in her invitation to this event *I think it is safe to say we are living in a time of great divisiveness. I do not think that any one of us would consider ourselves racist, but I am not certain we completely understand what that actually means. Without knowing, some of our cultural attitudes and beliefs have been so thoroughly ingrained that we fail to realize how our words, actions and deeds impact a person different from us. We will not begin to understand and respond to these differences until we take the time to sit down to listen and talk with one another."*

Sat., Feb. 4, 9:00 a.m. – we host **MC8 meeting** at Hickory Hills. Come and learn for yourself ways you can be involved.

Fri., Feb. 17 – **Trivia Night** fund raiser at Jones

Sat., Feb. 25, helping Pullman **host the Presbytery assembly** which runs from 9 to 3. John Fyfe, from Faith in Tinley Park, is being installed as Moderator. Pullman needs our help hosting this event from set up on Friday through restoring the church for Sunday worship. Hosting, serving food, providing technical assistance, registering folks and selling meal tickets are just some of the ways we can help. An insert will be in the weekly bulletins for you to check off your interests for volunteering a few hours to help with this event.

Spring 2017 (after Easter) – MC8 will host a **Mental Health Workshop**

We anticipate that this event will be held on a Sunday afternoon and evening at HHPC.

Spring 2017- watch for a **MC8 Take it to Town** day for spring cleaning at Jones

Dakota Partnership – June 2017 – MC8 will raise \$3000 for a truckload of produce

FMSC – October 2017

The Feed My Starving Children Mobile Pack we sponsored in Feb. in Tinley Park packed over 100,000 meals in one day. What will our next cooperative pack look like? Stay tuned...

SERTOMA

We plan to be in the parking lot midday on Saturdays and from noon to 5 on Sundays to greet visitors that are coming to buy their Christmas trees. Please see sign-up sheets in east room and outside Fellowship hall to help us show our neighbors how warm and friendly we are!

See Gordon or Gina with any questions.



THE WONDROUS GIFT IS GIVEN - Christmas Joy 2016

The Christmas Joy Offering celebrates the coming of Jesus Christ, the "wondrous gift" of God with us. Jesus arrived in a humble stable in small and insignificant Bethlehem, to lead and teach in truth and love, and bring about God's salvation to the world. What a "wondrous gift" indeed! This was a gift so profound that the only response was the bringing of more gifts; the Magi arrived with gold, frankincense, and myrrh to honor the Christ child.

Devoted and caring leaders have led many of us in the way of Christ. They have been church workers equipping us to respond to the grace we have known in Jesus Christ, and they have been God's gifts among us. As we celebrate Christ's coming, and think of the profound impact these individuals have had on us, the Christmas Joy Offering provides a way for us to offer a gift in response.

Half of the Christmas Joy Offering supports the continued ministry of educating and forming Christian leaders. The other half of the Offering honors those leaders who serve and have served us well. Through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, current and retired church workers who experience need because of tragedy, health concerns, or financial hardship can receive assistance from the church they have served so well. In gratitude to God for the wondrous gift of Jesus, we invite you to join this celebration of God's presence with us by supporting those in need of help and hope.

POTLUCK



SUPPER

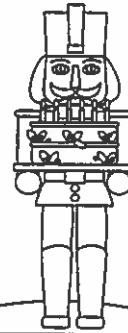
ADVENT FELLOWSHIP NIGHT

**Friday, December 2
6:30 P.M.**

**POTLUCK DINNER
CHRISTMAS CRAFTS
FELLOWSHIP**

**COST:
FOOD DISH TO SHARE FOR OUR MEAL
AND
FREE WILL DONATION FOR CRAFT PROJECTS**

Sign up today for this all church event



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Darlene Delaney
- 1 Melanie Swindle
- 4 Scott Hoffman
- 5 Dawn Morgucz
- 5 Tristan Grisko
- 11 Ruth Payton Hill
- 12 Tom Trecanni
- 12 Bryan Ambrosat
- 15 Gabriel Meyer
- 16 Jayden Kenealy
- 16 Gina Ciametti
- 18 Riley McKinney
- 19 Steven Beal
- 20 Natasha Swindle
- 22 Kyle Freiberg
- 25 Natalie Orsic
- 26 Halimah Al-Ashqar
- 26 Tristan Dabrowski
- 29 Laverne MocarSKI
- 31 Carla Zabelka

Woman's Bible Study

"And when he had spoken this, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And they all wept and embraced Paul and kissed him. Sorrowing most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they should see his face no more. And they brought him to the ship."

Acts 20:36-37

It is often very difficult to say good bye. As members of this class, many are no longer with us physically but in our memories. As one gets older, the network of family and friends becomes essential to health and well being. Praise God, He has provided the church to promote His Love! A place to draw people together. A place to experience Him. A place to foster relationships.

Merry Christmas,

Arlene



Prayer and Care

"For I will be merciful towards their iniquities, and I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE." (emphasis mine)

Hebrews 8:12

What a wonderful statement. The Lord doesn't just forgive, he forgets. He refuses to keep a list of my wrongs. As we celebrate the birth of Christ our Savior, let us not

forget why he came. Do have a very Merry Christmas from the prayer warriors...



The season between Thanksgiving and Christmas is an emotionally charged time. Our culture pressures us to spend money, be happy and full of good cheer.

We also tell people that this is a time to be together, remember the past and enjoy our family. For those who are hurting, for those whose memories are far different – for all sorts of reasons – the expectations and atmosphere of this time of year can increase feelings of pain, grief, loneliness, or despair.

The "Blue Christmas" worship service is a time and place for people who are discouraged or sad to come together quietly, acknowledge their pain and realize they are not alone or wrong to feel as they do.

The gathering will be on

Sunday, December 4th at 3:00 p.m.

in the Sanctuary of the

Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church

8426 W. 95th Street, Hickory Hills 60457

Call 708-598-3100 for more information

Free and open to the public

A time of light refreshments follows the service

Christmas Tea



An Invitation to All Ladies of our Church and
Community

You are invited to join us for

"A Cup of Christmas Tea"

Start a holiday tradition and fill your heart with love,
laughter and joy.

Holiday Entertainment will be provided by

Gabriella Ciametti

Mikaela Sullivan

with

Accompanist – Greg Rolla

Place: Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church

Date: Thursday, December 8th

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Please bring a plate of your favorite Christmas cookies
or sweets

to share on our refreshment table.

A freewill donation will be accepted for the program.

Invite a friend and together share in the warmth and
love that is Christmas.

Valet parking will be available

RSVP Requested

Questions: Please contact Dianne at 708 598-3100



Fundraising Committee

Thank you, thank you to everyone who either
helped, donated and/or supported our craft
bazaar on October 29. It was a wonderful day
of Fellowship, Food and Fun!

38 tables were rented to crafters/vendors, we
sold \$690.00 of baked goods, and our kitchen
ladies never got a break as they served hot,
delicious food all day.

Our penny social/raffle dream team did it
again—sold \$475.00 of raffle tickets. Great job.

And, as always, a very, very special THANK YOU
to Shirley Dragas who created 68 beautiful
baskets once again. Amazing!!



After expenses, our profit was \$3,750.00. These
monies have been deposited in our Fundraising
account and will be used when necessary for
non-budgeted items.

Breakdown of Income:

Crafter table rental	1,170.00
Bake Sale	690.00
Penny social/raffle	475.00
Kitchen	422.00
Shirley's baskets	758.00
Donations	300.00



PASS IT ON!

KIDS CLUB



During the month of December we prepare each week for our Christian Learning time by lighting and discussing the meaning of a candle in our Advent Wreath. We hope you will join us for our Advent Fellowship night where each family will be given the opportunity to make their own Advent Wreath.

Our topics of study for the month of December are:

Studying The Bible – The Bible is God’s message of love and He wants us to read

this and share the good news with others

Serving Others– We learn how to serve others

Loving Others– We follow Jesus’ example and show love to everyone even in difficult times.

The winner of the Snicker Balance Contest for this month was **Kacper**. The kids strive to have the opportunity to participate in this contest. To be eligible they must have perfect attendance at Kids Club for the month.

Our Halloween Party, held October 31, was a success. The afternoon of games and prizes, crafts, face painting, good snacks and lots of music was enjoyed by all. Thank you to everyone who provided the little extras we needed to make this day special for the kids.

Kids Club will not be in session on Monday, December 26 or January 2.

To our Kids Club Families, we wish you a Merry Christmas and pray that the peace and joy of Christmas be with you now and throughout the upcoming year.

Your Kids Club Staff

Debbie, Grace, LeAnne, Linda, Mike, Nancy, Shannon, Shirley and Dianne.

Christian Education

The **winter quarter** for Sunday School begins on December 4. Our teachers include **Gordon Home** in the Jr/Sr. High School, **Dianne Flynn** in the 1-5 grades, and **LeAnne Kommenich** in the pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten. Once again, the Christian Education committee thanks you all for the dedication and caring you have shown to our youngest members of the Church. **Dave Delaney** will continue to lead the Adult class held on Sunday mornings at 9 AM. **Arlene Pearson** will continue to lead the Women's Bible Study held on Monday afternoons at 1 PM.



We are again asking your help in donating hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, socks and anything which can keep a child or adult warm in the winter of Chicago. We are asking you to decorate our **Tree of Warmth** located in the East Room with your donations. It will be up during December. All items collected will be donated to local area sites, and a few left to supply the local children and their families.



The "**Christingle**" worship service is planned for December 11. People who have volunteered to participate should attend the practice sessions held on Saturday, December 10, 9:30-11:00 AM. Helpers to pre-assemble the candle holders will also be needed at this time.

Come see the **tree at Brookfield Zoo!** It is #85 located on the South Mall between the Swamp and the Hamill Family Play Zoo. The people who decorated it think it is beautiful and hope you come to see it. Some of the ornaments are recycled from last year. Some of the ornaments were made this year by our kids in Kids Club. Can you tell which is which?



PRAYER REQUESTS DECEMBER, 2016

Please consider joining us for Prayer and Care group each Wednesday at 9:30 a.m.

We pray for those in need of healing and those with health concerns: Cheryl, Gert's nephew, Norman, Christopher (Gordon), Rick V, Jacob M, Katie H, Karen G's friend Judy, Jerry & Joan Panko, Andrew's friend Jacob, Cliff, Mary Orr, Cos & Francine, Shirley D's sister Shirleen and her friend's son Brian, and her cousin Pat L, Dawn R's friend, Debbie, Eleanor Watson, Blanche Barker, Jean Somerstorfer, Vince, Adrian's brother, Bob D, Sawyer, Lucy, Barb M, Aunt Sherry, Cathie W, June, Cori (Ivy), Alice, Brett

We pray for those in need of strength: Susan's cousin Randy, Tom & Sharon M, Donna's sister Shirley, Gigi & Katrina, Billy, Jeni's mom Wanda, Eva N's friend, Jane and Dorothy, Marge

We pray for those in need of strength and healing, or with health concerns: Lori and her Mom, Judy, Lou's Family, Kim, Kiana, Howie, Elaine & Harry. Wilda & Susan's friend Tracy, the entire Cassiello family, Donna's friend Ken, Grace's relative Edith, Bev, Darlene D, Laura A, Eva M.

We pray for groups: Israel, Zika victims and solutions, Our children & youth ministry, Christians in Middle East for strength & protection; people of other faiths; our country's divisions; policemen and firemen, persecuted Christians, Our enemies, India Train derailment victims, Tennessee School Bus victims

We also pray for those in need during miscellaneous circumstances: Shirley D's friends Pat Z, Eleanor R, Eddie M and Bob B, Karl Haack and Mark Gulotta in the Marines, Shannon for peace & direction, Jimmie & Jimmie's aunt for comfort & strength, Laura's friends Debbie & Chris for direction, Cindy for guidance & strength, Lauren for seeing the light & strength, Joe for direction & strength, Joe, Uncle Bob & Pat, DelPrete family for strength, faith & hope as Jen awaits a new trial, Jen's mom, Maria, Gloria (Laura V) North Dakota Pipeline Explosion

We pray for those who mourn:

Jeanne Leavitt's family, Remy's family and friends, India's victims & families, families & friends of the deceased children from the bus accident. Families of Ruth, Families of June. San Antonio family & friends of policeman who was killed

If you or someone you love needs a hospital visit, please call/text Rev. Laura on her cell (815) 822-0557

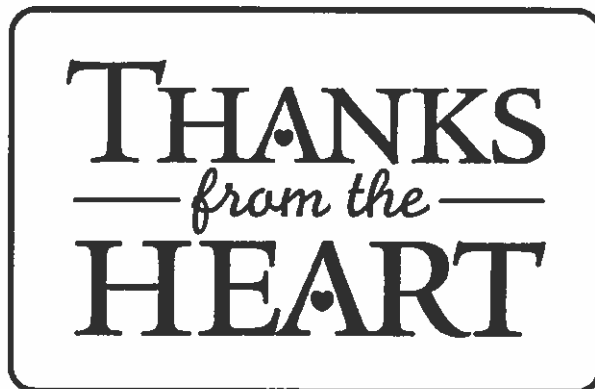


A Special
THANK YOU



This Thank You Note was received from a recipient of the human needs fund:

"The people of Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church are the most loving, charitable and friendly people that gave perfect strangers hope that we are not alone in our battle. Lori is improving slowly but is getting better because of all your prayers because God is listening. We love all of you with all our heart." John & Judy



A letter from Palos Township was received that said the following:

"Dear Ms. Flynn and Members of the Congregation: We want to take this opportunity to thank you and all your members for your help with our school supply program. The generosity shown by your collection of supplies is remarkable and wonderfully kind. It speaks so well of the nature of the awesome and caring people that make up Palos Township.

We are so proud and in awe of the support that our community provides for those in less fortunate circumstances and sincerely appreciate every opportunity to reach out to our families and help when they need it most. If you could picture the delight on the children's faces when they receive their back packs filled with supplies, it would warm your hearts and bring big smiles to your faces as well.

God bless all of you and know that you are so appreciated!"

Warm Regards,

Colleen Grant Schuman

Palos Township Supervisor

December 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
				TOPS 4pm	SERTOMA	SERTOMA
				YOGA 7pm	3-9pm	9am – 9pm
					Advent Fellowship	
					Night 6:30 pm	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Wor/SS 9am	WBS 1pm	Staff 11am	P & C 9:30am	TOPS 4pm	SERTOMA	SERTOMA 9am – 9pm
Nominating 10:00am	SERTOMA	Bible 1pm	Office 9:30am	No YOGA	3-9pm	Jones Breakfast w/Santa 8am
Wor/SS 10:30am	3-9pm	Office 1pm	SERTOMA	SERTOMA		Del Prete Family Hall 10am
C.E. 11:45am	KC 3:30	SERTOMA	3-9pm	3-9pm		Christingle Rehear 9:30-11am
Blue Christmas 3pm		3-9pm		Xmas Tea 6:30pm		
SERTOMA						
12-9pm						
11 Newsletter Deadline	12	13	14	15	16	17
Wor/SS 9am	WBS 1pm	Staff 11am	P & C 9:30am	TOPS 4pm	SERTOMA	SERTOMA
Christingle 10:30am	SERTOMA	Bible 1pm	Office 9:30am	YOGA 7pm	3-9pm	9am – 9pm
REV 5pm	3-9pm	Office 1pm	SERTOMA	SERTOMA		
SERTOMA	KC 3:30	SERTOMA	3-9pm	3-9pm		
12-9pm		3-9pm				
18 Lessons & Carols	19	20	21	22	23	24
Wor/SS 9am	WBS 1pm	Staff 11am	P & C 9:30am	TOPS 4pm		Christmas Eve 4pm - Greg
Wor/SS 10:30am	SERTOMA	Bible 1pm	Office 9:30am	YOGA 7pm		Christmas Eve 11pm – REV Band
SERTOMA	3-9pm	Office 1pm	SERTOMA	SERTOMA		
12-9pm	KC 3:30	SERTOMA	3-9pm	3-9pm last day		
REV 5pm		3-9pm				
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
PJ Christmas 10:30	No WBS	Bible 1pm	P & C 9:30am	4pm TOPS		
	No KC	Office closed	Office closed	7pm YOGA		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7