



THE CONNECTING LINK



Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church

8426 W. 95th St.

Hickory Hills, IL 60457

(708) 598-3100

www.hickoryhillspres.org

Fax (708)598-3108

Email: HHPC@hickoryhillspres.org

FEBRUARY 2016

Letter from Laura

Tuesday would have been my mother's 105th birthday. Ruth Louise. As I think back over the world she grew up in: horses more common than cars; her learning to tat, crochet, knit and make a sampler in preparation for her future as someone's wife; from the age of 8 on taking the train alone from Wisconsin into downtown Chicago because it was both normal and safe to do so; routinely writing letters; raising her oldest while waiting for her husband to return from war; buying a first washing machine; a first home; raising more children; watching men walk on the moon; hating flying; installing air conditioning for the first time at age 80; living in her widowhood for 29 years...I also reminisce over the theme, the story that shaped her days and the ways she lived in the world.

Ruth's story of course shaped the story of my siblings and myself and in turn shapes her grandchildren and great grandchildren. I wonder if her grandchildren will experience the variety of changes she did in almost 88 years of living? What will be the integrating themes and stories of their days? I wonder if they will have her sort of resilience and capacity to love life as she did?

I have a special fondness for church people shaped with the same values that shaped my parents: they are indeed *like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season* (Ps. 1:3). Living through the Great Depression, the Great War, the progression of industrial development within our country following WWII and the subsequent fall out and movement of jobs overseas, these folks have nonetheless remained

rooted deeply in their faith. They have remained faithful to the God who is always faithful to them. They are tremendous assets for us in their wisdom, balance and capacity to take the long view on life. When I am weary, I restore my soul by going to sit in the shade of such saints, resting in their quiet strength, enjoying their stories, hearing the witness rising from them over and over: God is good....all the time. All the time....God is good.

Knowing the stories, remembering the stories, passing the stories on. This year, we'll be remembering our stories and plumbing them for their riches as we prepare to embrace the future God is even now preparing for us. Some of the questions we'll ask are: why do we exist? Where does God want us moving now? Which of our stories will help us answer these questions? In what ways are we *like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season?*

I am intrigued by what lies ahead and curious about all of it. Sam and I believed that God called us here from the particular place we were in our life together as a great gift and blessing for this time. Your outpouring of love and support following his unexpected death assures me that you and I have been called together to serve the purposes of God in ways we do not yet know. I give thanks to God every day for you, and look forward to how we will yield fruit together this year.

Blessings,
Rev. Laura

UPDATES FROM THE SESSION MEETING

The Session:

-Met on Monday January 11th and discovered that next month we'll need an additional table in the room in our meeting room so we can all fit comfortably. What a great problem! It is good to be functioning with a full board.

-New board members Gina Ciametti, Gordon Home and Melanie Swindle were welcomed to this ministry, while Kim Ambrosat had an excused absence and will be welcomed to her service next month. The Session wrote notes of thanks to those who have just retired from service on the Session.

-Standing committee leadership was determined: Cheryl Huenecke, Ed Kasper and Scott Zimmerman - Building and Grounds; Jean Swearingen - Christian Education; Susan Frangella - Fundraising, Dave Delaney and Mel Swindle - Mission; Tom Morrell and Gordon Home - Outreach, which has added a social media component - Gina Ciametti; Worship and Music/REV - Melanie Swindle and Scott Zimmerman, Stewardship - Karen Hoffman.

-Gina Ciametti and Gordon Home are the elders serving on the 2016 Nominating Committee, a committee of the congregation.

-Wilda Duncan and Susan Frangella continue as Treasurer and Financial Secretary and Shirley Brunell continues as the Clerk of Session.

-Office responsibilities are being covered by Rev. Laura and Andrew Witek for at least the first quarter of the year.

-Session established an Accountability Partnership between Rev. Laura and Cheryl Huenecke, Karen Hoffman, Tom Morrell and Jean Swearingen serving for the Session.

-after approving some building usage and requests for activities from CE, the Session viewed a DVD called "The Art of Possibility" as part of officer training/leadership development and adjourned with prayer at 9:00 p.m.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Join us in prayer for:

Richard Fellers for healing and Maryann for strength
Andrew's friend Jacob for health concerns
Gert's son Richard for health concerns
Flood victims in Illinois and Missouri
Rev. Laura's family and friends on Sam's passing
Shirley B's great grandson, Miles, for health concerns
Cliff Pilgrim for health concerns
George DeJong for courage & strength
Harry & Wanda, Jeni's parents, for strength
.Grace Muszynski for healing
Gigi & Katrina for strength
Joann Jackson for health concerns & strength
Cindy B. for healing
Rob B. for healing
Patty for health concerns- Jeni's friend
Debbie for direction- Laura's friend
Billy for strength
Laura & Joe for health concerns & strength
Joan Panko for healing
Cindy for guidance & strength
Bev for healing & strength
Lauren for seeing the light & strength
Joe for direction & strength
Joyce's friend Rose, for peace & strength
Mary Orr for health concerns
Angie Swindle for strength
Cos & Francine Costello for health concerns
Shirley D's sister, Shirleen, for health concerns,
Joe, Uncle Bob & Pat
Enid Scholefield for health concerns
Barbara Monczynski for health concerns
Dawn R.'s friend, Debbie, for health concerns
Eleanor Watson for health concerns
Blanche Barker for health concerns
Our children & youth & our ministry to them
Larry's niece Olivia for health concerns
Christians in Middle East for strength
& protection & others
Pete McKinney for health concerns
Jimmie's aunt, for comfort & strength
Jean Somerstorfer for health concerns
DelPrete family for strength, faith, & hope during Jen's battle

Due to privacy policies, hospitals no longer contact the church to let us know you are there (even if they ask you the name of your church). If you or someone you love needs a hospital visit, please call or text Rev. Laura on her cell phone (815) 822-0557. Her cell is always the best way to reach her 24 hours a day.

PRAYER & CARE



“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.”

- *2 Corinthians 4:7-10 (RSV)*

Sometimes we feel we can't go on. Sometimes we think it can't get any worse. We are hurting because those we love are hurting. Thank God – He is always available! We pray. We praise. We weep. We wait.

“Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord”

- *Psalm 31:24 (RSV)*

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”

- *John 13:34 (RSV)*

We continue to read and make comments on the Gospel according to John. Rev. Laura led our class on January 18th for which we are grateful. Do come and join us as we study to show ourselves approved...



LEANING INTO LENT AND EASTER

Soup and Study - Weekly Wednesday studies

During Lent (the forty days, not counting Sundays, which lead up to Easter), we have a tradition here of spending extra time in study and devotional practices. We imagine ourselves walking alongside Jesus on his final trip to Jerusalem, where it is quite certain he will die. For 2016, Rev. Laura is creating two separate study series for our Wednesday Soup and Study times, which are scheduled for noon and 7:00 p.m. every Wednesday from 2/10 through 3/16.

On Ash Wednesday, 2/10, join us at 12:00 noon for soup downstairs or upstairs **in the sanctuary at 12:25** for a service that includes the imposition of ashes.

If you cannot join us at noon, be sure to join us at **6:15** that evening for soup downstairs. We will have a traditional **Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 p.m.** in the sanctuary, which will include the imposition of ashes and communion.

The soup for both gathering times is provided by volunteers. Arlene Pearson is organizing the noon time soup and Dianne Flynn is organizing the evening soups.

For the next five Wednesdays, (2/17-3/16), plan on joining Rev. Laura either at noon for **Soup and Study**, using Marjorie Thompson's book “Forgiveness” or at 7:00 p.m. for a series on “Praying in Color”

Holy Week

The last week of Jesus' earthly life is observed during Holy Week. Beginning with special services on Palm Sunday, 3/10, we will continue with a Maundy Thursday service on 3/24 hosted here at HHPC for ourselves and Savior Divine. On Good Friday, we will go to Savior Divine Lutheran Church to share worship there. Greg Rolla is asking for volunteers to see him if you have an interest in singing with a combined choir at the Good Friday service.

Easter Sunday

There will be three worship services on Easter Sunday at 8:30, 10:30 and 5:00. There will be an Easter breakfast at 9:30 served in the Fellowship Hall.

What is Per Capita?

It is a way Presbyterians share equally, responsibly, and interdependently in the costs of governing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), no matter the size of their churches. Per capita contributions are:

- requested from every congregation
- based on each church's total active membership



Per Capita helps churches

Through per capita, Presbytery of Chicago churches:

- Help congregations with pastoral transitions
- Train and support interim ministers
- Resolve congregational conflicts
- Care for ministers, Christian Educators, and their families
- Help prepare people for service as ordained ministers



<i>2016 Per Capita Rates</i>	
General Assembly	\$7.12
Synod of Lincoln Trails	\$3.81
Presbytery of Chicago	\$22.07
Total Per Capita	\$33.00



This complete per capita brochure is available at:
[http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/
wp-content/uploads/2015/10
2016PerCapitaBrochure_10272015_KR.pdf](http://www.chicagopresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2016PerCapitaBrochure_10272015_KR.pdf)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



A great big thank you to Gordon Home who volunteered to continue to teach the Sr./Jr. High Sunday classes. Thank you to Debbie Zimmerman who has agreed to help Dianne teach the Pre-K thru grade 5 class on Sunday mornings. We are in need of more volunteers to take the Pre-K thru grade 5 class. Please pray about helping out and talk to Dianne. The children deserve to have more dedicated and enthusiastic teachers. They deserve to have knowledge which will help them to make the right choices. They will benefit with a strong Christian base as they meet life's challenges by understanding the word of God through reading the Bible. Won't you make an attempt to help them learn by donating your talents and time to teaching Sunday class?

Get ready for the Souper Sunday on February 7. Immediately after worship we will meet in the Fellowship Hall to share our choice of delicious homemade soup. Several people have signed up to bring in soup. All that is missing is your name on the sign up sheet downstairs. Join us for Souper Sunday and enjoy the fellowship as well as a delicious bowl or more of soup.

The annual Lenten Program, the Jerusalem Marketplace, will begin on February 10. It is an evening program designed to give the adults time to worship and prepare for Easter while the children are taught about common skills which were needed when Jesus walked among us. The evenings begin with a soup

dinner at 6:15 to 6:45 PM. That is followed by a time to worship in the sanctuary. Then the children will be sent to their age appropriate stations downstairs where their parents can pick them up to go home. This year we plan to have six projects which will be three weeks long. The popular J.C. Workshop, the Bakery and Confectionary, and the Mosaic shop are returning this year. We hope everyone will make an attempt to join us on the six week journey.

We have decided to send the children to Stronghold for summer camp this year. There were such rave reviews about the time spent there last summer that we hoped more children would want to attend this year. The Jr. Adventure camp for grades 3-5 and the Jr. High Adventure camp for grades 6-8 are held July 24-29. Anyone interested in sending their child to camp needs to contact Dianne Flynn, the Children's Ministry Coordinator, to find out about procedures to register and tiered payments. We hope more children will attend camp this summer.

"The Builders" have a fun filled couple of months planned this new year. In January, the group went to bowl at Palos Lanes on January 10 and will have pizza with games at the church on January 24. They will be attending the Feed My Starving Children on February 13 as well as going to Whirly Ball in Lombard on February 28. Thank you to Dawn and Bryan for your leadership of the Sr. High/Jr. High youth group.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry has completed enough lap blankets to donate to Bria, a senior citizen retirement home. We plan to have the congregation pray over the new lap blankets on February 14 and distribute them to the residents on February 21. The Stampers met on Wednesday, January 13. We completed several cards which included ones for birthday celebrations, get well, missing you and encouragement. It was a great time to meet since we have not worked together in over a month. Anyone interested in stamping with us for the Prayer and Care group, for Christian Education, or for Prayer Shawl Ministry can check the calendar or talk to Barb Brown for exact dates. Our next planned meeting dates are February 3 and 17. We meet at 10 AM in the Jr. High room or the library.

The attendance for Kids Club has hovered close to 25 children. We enjoy games with Debbie in the gym, making a special craft with Shirley and Nancy, playing board games, completing our homework assignments with Nancy, learning about the stories in the Bible with Linda, and snacks where we can make new friends and share with our buddies. It is a great time to share fellowship and fun. Children who wish to share their experience are always welcome to bring in a friend.



We Celebrate

February Birthdays

18 Karrington Wreza

28 Kevin Lorenz



Summer Camp Stronghold Retreat Center Oregon, IL

Mark Your Calendar!

Jr. Adventure III (Completed grades 3-5)

July 24 - 29



Jr. High Adventure I (Completed grades 6-8)

July 24 -29

Sr. High Adventure I

July 24 -29

CLUB



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

Dianne Flynn, *Director*

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others....."

1Peter 4:10

Mark your calendars now for our upcoming Lenten Series, Jerusalem Market Place, beginning Wednesday, February 10th. You will not want to miss this program which has been developed with a focus on the family. More information can be found in this newsletter. Remember friends are always welcome. I hope you will make it a priority to join us.

Wednesday evenings February 10 - March 16

Soup supper will be served 6:15 - 6:45 p.m.

Program and Worship at 7:00

In February the topics of our lessons are:

Be Thrifty - We study the story of Joseph in Egypt

Be Available - We are reminded that God has a plan for our lives.

Be Honorable - We learn the importance of making good choices.

Be Dependable - What does it mean to be dependable?

Be Humble - We study the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

We will celebrate Valentine Day here at Kids Club on February 15. The staff has planned a special day for the kids.

Yes, the knitting room has opened up to kids wishing to learn to knit or those wishing to improve their skills. Thanks Linda for continuing to share your expertise and knowledge with us all.

Just a reminder Kids Club is open to all kids age 5 through the 6th grade. If you know someone who would like to join us, please invite them.

Peace and Joy,
Dianne

KIDS ARE NUMBER 1 AT THE KIDS CLUB

JERUSALEM MARKET PLACE

LENT 2016

**A BIBLE TIME EXPERIENCE
KIDS AGE 3 THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL
WEDNESDAY EVENINGS
BEGINNING FEBRUARY 10**

“YOU ARE THERE!”

Wednesday evenings during the Season of Lent, we have planned something special for kids age 3 through high school. While adults are in worship, our kids and youth will participate in an age appropriate program that has been designed with learning and fun. It is called **Jerusalem Market Place**. This is a hands on learning time that will provide the kids with a “YOU ARE THERE!” Bible time experience. They will relive Bible time events while exploring and experiencing occupations and events of that time. The kids will participate in different shops throughout the series. They

- SMELL the aromas of bakeries
- HEAR the sounds of carpenters
- SEE the villagers in Bible times attire as you meet the teachers in our shops
- EXPERIENCE learning occupational skills of the times by visiting the shops
Heavenly Buns, J.C. Workshop, and Mosaic Shop
- JOURNEY with friends
- WRITE in Scribes Journal

We hope that your family will be a part of this Holy Land Adventure.

LENT 2016
Every Wednesday
February 10 - March 16

MIDDAY SERVICE

†

*Soup Luncheon - Worship
12:00 Noon*

EVENING SERVICE

†

*Soup Supper Served - 6:15 - 6:45 p.m.
Worship - 7:00 p.m.
Jerusalem Market Place - 7:00 p.m.*

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

Self-Development of People

CONFRONTING THE STRUCTURES OF INJUSTICE

Of 250 abandoned uranium mines, only about 130 have any record of clean up.¹

July 16, 1979 is a day the Navajo Nation in New Mexico will never forget. An earthen dam gave way, releasing 1,000 tons of radioactive mill waste and 90 million gallons of acidic and radioactive liquids into the Rio Puerco. The waste traveled downstream across nine Navajo chapters and the community of Gallup. Residents described “a wave of green liquid” heading their way, covering them as they headed home.

The Uranium Tailings Spill is still listed as the largest uranium spill in United States history. Recently, the Red Water Pond Road Community Association hosted its annual commemoration near Church Rock.

“In 36 years, we’ve had three minor cleanups in the area, but the contaminated waste is still here,” says the association’s Edith Hood. “We’ve been told by the Environmental Protection Agency that they are waiting on the Department of Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to complete their reviews of the area before additional cleanup work can be done.”

Among the organizations connected to the region is the Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment (MASE). This grassroots initiative involves several groups working to remove uranium contamination and prohibit future mines in the area. Participants include the Acoma and Laguna Pueblos, residents of the Navajo Nation, the Post 71 Uranium Workers, ranchers, and other communities throughout the affected area.

In January 2014, the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People (SDOP) partnered with MASE to assist in cleanup and public awareness efforts.

“This community is facing an uphill battle, considering the government’s sensitivity concerning uranium contamination,” says Cynthia White, SDOP coordinator. “This battle is for clean air, land, and water, and about maintaining spiritual harmony and balance in an indigenous community. SDOP is proud to assist the community in its struggle for a healthy existence on native land.”

The area, known as the San Juan Basin, lacks basic rights to electricity or running water because of radioactive contamination of the land, air, and groundwater. According to MASE, there have been significant numbers of miscarriages and birth defects, as well as confirmed cases of liver and pancreatic cancer in the San Juan Basin.

“There are many with breathing problems, including children suffering from asthma and bronchial problems,” says Hood. “I have worked in one of the mines and have been through chemo treatments for lymphoma.” Hood’s group conducts public awareness activity and has been successful at keeping old, abandoned mines from reopening to this date.

Please, give generously to One Great Hour of Sharing to support oppressed and disadvantaged people in changing structures that perpetuate poverty and injustice.

1 - <http://masecoalition.org/?s=san+juan+basin&x=0&y=0>

SOUPER SUNDAY

Sunday, February 7

Following 10:30 Worship Service

A LUNCHEON FEATURING A VARIETY OF HOMEMADE SOUPS

*Freewill Donations
Accepted*



*Support Our
Kids*

All donations are used to help support scholarships for Summer Camp

OUR NEWSLETTER AS YOU KNOW IT IS CHANGING.

(There are already a couple smaller changes in this issue.)

Andrew Witek (with Pastor Laura Reason) is working on developing the newsletter so that it functions better as a communication piece both internally (for members, friends and families of the church) and externally (for visitors). We are also developing the bulletin to this same end.

Over the next couple months the newsletter will continue to change as we try out different things. Some months this may just be a tiny change or two, and other weeks it may be a complete overhaul from what you are used to seeing.

As we continue to develop the newsletter, we're looking for feedback from the end-users of the newsletter: you. Let us know what changes work, and what changes don't work. Did we add something really helpful? Let us know. Did we get rid of something vital? Let us know. Your input will be critical towards development in the right direction.

The ultimate goal here is to increase communication, both inside and outside our church family and walls. If you have any suggestions or comments, please send them along. Thank you.

February 2016

Every Sunday	Every Monday	Every Tuesday	Every Wednesday	Every Thursday	Every Friday	Every Saturday
9:00 a.m. Worship & Adult Ed. 10:30 a.m. Worship & CE 11:30 p.m. Prayer Shawl Min. 3:00 p.m. Praise Team 5:00 p.m. REV	1:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study 3:30 p.m. Kid's Club	8:00 p.m. AA	9:30 a.m. Prayer & Care 4:00 p.m. Food Pantry	4:00 p.m. TOPS 8:00 p.m. AA		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
		9:30 Sewing Circle 7:00 p.m. CE Meeting	10:00 a.m. Stampers			
7	8	9	10 Ash Wednesday 12:00 p.m. Soup Lunch Worship 6:15 p.m. Soup Supper 7:00 p.m. Worship Jerusalem Marketplace	11	12	13
Souper Sunday P.A.D.S.	7:30 p.m. Session				Feed My Starving Children Mobile Pack	Feed My Starving Children Mobile Pack
14	15	16	17 10:00 a.m. Stampers 12:00 p.m. Soup Lunch Worship 6:15 p.m. Soup Supper 7:00 p.m. Worship Jerusalem Marketplace	18	19	20
11:45 a.m. Outreach Meeting March Newsletter Articles Due	3:30 p.m. Kid's Club Valentine's Day Party	7:00 p.m. REV Meeting				
21	22	23	24 12:00 p.m. Soup Lunch Worship 6:15 p.m. Soup Supper 7:00 p.m. Worship Jerusalem Marketplace	25	26	27
11:45 a.m. Worship & Music Meeting	7:00 p.m. Deacons					
28	29					

Birthdays

February 1 – Josh Krueger
5 – Scott Zimmerman
5--Sam Swearingen
5- Mike Swearingen
7 – Julie Witek
12 – Lorraine Cunningham
16 - Beverly Kahn
17 – Barbara Brown
18 – Amy Simone
20- Alyssia Kommenich
22 – Chris Pilgrim
23- Eva Nestor
25- Austin McKinney
27 – Shirley Dragas
27- Rick Vogl
28- Ryan Brandt
28 – Sandy Beal
28- Kevin Lorenz

*Any omissions or errors should be reported to
the church office...*

708-598-3100 or HHPC@hickoryhillspres.org