

HICKORY HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Connecting Link

January, 2017



"THIS IS MY
BELOVED SON,
WITH WHOM
I AM WELL
PLEASED."

MATTHEW 3:17, ESV

Jan. 1 – New Year's Day.

One service at 5:00 PM

Jan. 8 – Baptism of the LORD and
Communion

Matthew 3:13-17 at 9, 10:30 and 5

Jan. 15 – I Corinthians 1:1-9

Services at 9, 10:30 and 5

Jan. 22 – I Corinthians 1:10-18

Services at 9, 10:30 and 5

Jan. 29 – **FIFTH SUNDAY – ONE
SERVICE at 10:30 only**

I Corinthians 1:18-31

ANNUAL MEETING at 11:30 &
Potluck

LETTER FROM LAURA

I recently came across a quote from the cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead, who made this observation after studying many cultures around the world: *"Having someone wonder where you are when you don't come home at night is a very old human need."*

Because I am privileged to stand in people's sacred spaces with them, I have come to believe that this need – to have others care enough about us to let us be aware that they are thinking of us is essential to our well being. I have been keenly aware of this myself in the past year. Sam's life was so intertwined with mine that the presence of his absence can be overwhelming. My peace in this circumstance comes from several places. First, I am keenly aware of being held up in prayer by people known and unknown. How often I get a text or an email from a friend asking about my condition or noting that he/she is thinking of me in that moment. The sense of being somehow held or suspended in love is both gentle and comforting. Next, I derive peace by reaching out in response to my own loneliness. The best thing to do when we're down is to get up out of our chair, go outside and pay attention to someone else. Turning our gaze outward is one of the simplest pick me ups we have. Third, I pray. I stop, drop what I'm doing and say, God, I need your help right now and talk about it with Him. Last, I stay busy. This year, I worked more than a hundred hours a week through the end of October because I had to in order to make progress on the estate. That's scaled back to a more manageable load now. I am grateful for your support in being satisfied with my persistence

even on the days my passion has not been there. Your steadfastness with me has helped me be steadfast to what I've needed to do. Thank you for this enormous gift of love and encouragement you have given me.

On November 27th, we started a new book of the Bible for 2017. Since we read through a three year cycle of Matthew, Mark and Luke, in church we are now back in Matthew, a gospel that gives us peculiar comfort when we wonder who will miss us if we don't come home at night. Matthew's strongest message is that we are **never** alone. In Matthew 1:20ff we hear the angel tell Joseph not to fear Mary's pregnancy but to embrace it for the child within her is holy and is to be named Jesus (he saves) and Emmanuel (God is with us). After Jesus is raised from the dead, he travels with his disciples to Galilee, and before leaving them for the last time, Matthew 28:18ff tells us that Jesus instructs his followers to go, make disciples, baptize, teach, obey and remember that Jesus is with us always, to the close of the age. This is the age old promise. Never, anywhere, at any time, are we promised that our lives will be pretty. What we are promised is God with us, Emmanuel. Matthew will remind us all through 2017 that God is with us.

My Christmas prayer is that we will come to believe in this promise so deeply it will free us to develop into who it is God is calling us to be now.

Blessings,

Rev. Laura

SESSION SHORTS by Rev. Laura

The Session met on Monday, Dec. 19th instead of Monday, Dec. 12th at the request of the Moderator. We lifted up what's been going on at REV, the SERTOMA use of the parking lot, Lessons and Carols and the Christmas Tea as things we've liked that we see going on around the church and then conducted the following business after opening with prayer.

We reviewed the rolls of the church and determined who we will contact to inquire as to whether they wish to be considered as active members since they have not visibly participated in our congregational life for an extended period of time.

Called the Annual meeting for Sunday, 1/29/2017 immediately after the 10:30 service. Following the meeting, we will enjoy a pot luck meal and receive an introduction to the CAT survey which will open on line the next morning. The following Sunday (Super Bowl Sunday) we will provide an opportunity for folks not comfortable with doing the survey on line to do it manually while enjoying soups at our traditional Soup Sunday.

After some discussion of the congregational meeting held on Sunday, December 18th, the Session agreed with Rev. Laura that she was incorrect in her ruling about the quorum and set aside the meeting as being invalid. Elections will be conducted during the Annual meeting instead. While we recognize that we appear to be in a cycle of severe weather since the first snowfall on December 4th and the Sundays since and while we want people to be safe, the congregation is also reminded of the importance of your presence for congregational meetings and the need for your participation. Please put the annual meeting on your calendar and plan to attend if at all possible. This being a fifth Sunday, the only worship service being held on 1/29/2017 will be at 10:30. Thank you.

The proposed budget for 2017 was reviewed and approved, pending attending to a few details. While we are thrilled with the increase in estimated giving for 2017 of 8000.00, we are still projecting a deficit budget. Thank you for your faithfulness in supporting the ministries of the church.

The Session also received a report from the educator, the Deacons' minutes and requests for building usage by Evelyn on 1/28 and 2/18 for card workshops and on 2/11 for Family and friends. Session did not approve a request from a baking business to use the kitchen on a routine basis and approved a contract with a different garbage company, which will reduce our bill for trash removal by at least two thirds in 2017.

Received mission updates that we sent 53) hygiene kits to the Presbytery Assembly (a value of 795.00) along with a check for shipping and handling of 106.00. The 46 Christmas gifts for children in the Jones Center after school programs were delivered the week of 11/28.

Received from Rev. Laura some information about her upcoming calendar. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned with prayer at 9:30 p.m.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Advent Fellowship Night had plenty of food and high spirits as we began the season of Advent. It was a festive night for all who attended. There were some very creative crafts for the children and adults. A great time was had by all. Thank you to Debbie and Mike for setting up and taking down the tables and chairs. Thank you to Barb Brown for greeting everyone at the door with a smile. Thank you to the people who volunteered to man the tables and be the instructors for some of the more complicated crafts. This could not have been so successful without your help.



The "Christingle" Service was another great event to help prepare for the coming holiday celebration. The service came off without a hitch. Thank you to all the volunteer readers and the people helping to make the Christingles. It was a service to remind everyone of the gift sent to the world on Christmas. A very special thank you to Rev. Dr. Laura Reason for suggesting this special service. It was beautifully done. Thank you to Dianne Flynn for organizing the readers and helpers. Thank you, one more time, to Debbie for setting up all the tables and supplies.

The Christmas Tea was another annual event which helped get everyone into the holiday spirit. Those who ventured into the snow and cold were treated to an evening filled with magical melodies by Greg Rolla on the piano. They enjoyed the beautiful voices of Mikaela Sullivan and Gabriella Ciametti. What a fantastic night! Of course, there was tea and cookies to be shared by all. Thank you to everyone who brought in their favorite sweet treats. Thank you to Barb Brown for making sure everyone was wearing a name tag and had their name added to the door prize raffle. Thank you to Mike Swearingen for keeping the hot water coming. Thank you to Debbie and Mike for setting up the tables and chairs. Thank you to Shirley Dragas and Linda Lavaretto for helping to decorate the tables. Thank you to Dianne Flynn for organizing the whole event. Thank you to Cheryl Huenecke, Jean Swearingen and Rev. Laura for leading us through the evening's events. Once again, you made the night a memorable one.

Kids Club will not be in session December 26 or January 2. We look forward to seeing everyone back on January 9.

Our fellow elder, John Fyfe, has been elected to become Moderator of the Presbytery of Chicago on 2/25 . Mission Council 8 has committed to providing the volunteers needed to help host the Assembly at Pullman when John is installed.

Presbytery Assembly Meeting Saturday February 25, 2017

Volunteers Needed Pullman Presbyterian Church

Name _____ Phone# _____

I can help to host the Presbytery Assembly meeting on February 25, 2017, as circled below.

1. Pre meeting, building cleaning, maintenance and preparation.
2. Friday night set up , Physical set up of the building , tables and chairs for lunch, registration, displays, meeting rooms, worship area
3. Saturday morning set up, unload Presbytery van , Last minute pre needs. Be on call for any technical issues that may arise during morning sessions or worship.
4. Actual set up after opening worship , physical set up with 6 microphones and table for clerk. Be on call for technical issues.
5. Signage: Creating and hanging informational signs, registrations, restrooms, lunch etc.
6. Registrations: man the registration table, handout table, sell lunch tickets.
7. Lunch crew Determine menu, decide the number (200 minimum) setting up and handing out food, clean up
8. Breakfast crew: Make coffee provide and set out juice, rolls, donuts, cookies, fruit etc.
9. Musician: Director needed Not necessary for entire service.
10. Church Displays: Make a display on the life of our churches. Direct and set up displays and take down.
11. Saturday Clean up crew: Help Presbytery collect and load up van if necessary. Make church ready for Sunday worship
12. Childcare: Arrange for children. Assure that Child Protection Policies are followed. Supervise on day of meeting,
13. Greeters: People placed throughout building to welcome people, guide them and answer questions.
14. Parking: Help guide people so all spaces are used, and people get in and out easily and safely. Advise if cones, signs or radios are needed.

_____ I can help drive people to Pullman

_____ Sorry I cannot Help

Church _____

Please make announcements in your churches and return to Mission Council 8 Representative from your church.
Melanie Swindle or Dave Delaney

SYSTEMIC RACISM

JANUARY 21, 2017

9:00 AM TO 3:00 PM

SPONSORED BY MISSION COUNCIL 8

FEE - \$20.00



LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR
AS YOURSELF.

MATTHEW 22:39

1ST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHICAGO HEIGHTS
900 THOMAS STREET IN CHICAGO HEIGHTS

FACILITATED BY THE CENTER FOR MULTI-CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

LUNCH AND LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

FEES PAYABLE TO: MISSION COUNCIL 8

SEND TO: DEBBIE DENNIS
18030 RIDGEWOOD AVE.
LANSING, IL 60438

Please register by January 10th

Prayer and Care

Communicating is so vital to our wellbeing. Praying to our Heavenly Father is the most important communication we have.

"All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers"

ACTS 1:14 (RSV)

God Almighty has proven Himself as a Faithful Father. We are to be His trusting children. May our faith continue to grow as we look forward to 2017!

The Prayer Warriors wish you and yours a faith filled New Year

Women's Bible Study

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"Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On the principle of works? No, but on the principle of faith"

As we continue studying Paul's letter to the Romans, we find that scripture teaches we all have sinned against God. Faith is the means by which God's righteousness becomes our righteousness which is the result of justification by faith alone. Christ bore our sins. We were reconciled to God by Christ's death through faith.

We will resume our class on January 9th, 2017 with Romans chapter 4.

Have a Blessed New Year

There are 66 books of the Bible. Thirty are hidden in this story. Enjoy.

HIDDEN BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

There are 30 books of the Bible in this paragraph. Can you find them? This is a most remarkable puzzle. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket, on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much; he passed it on to some friends. One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his john boat. Another friend studied it while playing his banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column. Another friend judges the job of solving this puzzle so involving; she brews a cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's a fact. Some people, however, will soon find themselves in a jam; especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. Truthfully, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or scholar to see some of them at the worst. Research has shown that something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in this paragraph. During a recent fund raising event, which featured this puzzle, the Alpha Delta Phi lemonade booth set a new sales record. The local paper, The Chronicle, surveyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As Daniel Humana humbly puts it, "the books are all right there in plain view hidden from sight." Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation that may help is that books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers; also, keep in mind, that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember, there is no need for a mad exodus. There are (really) 30 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph waiting to be found.

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 Kevin, Dawn R's friend, Debbie, Eleanor Watson, Blanche Barker, Jean Somerstorfer, 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 sister Kathie, friend, Lou and mom Wanda, Wanda's friends Jean & Connie, Eva N's friends, Jane and Dorothy, Marge, Maryann's friend, Jack M, Annette, Adeline K

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, Laura A, Eva M. Ar's brother Richie and brother in law Howie

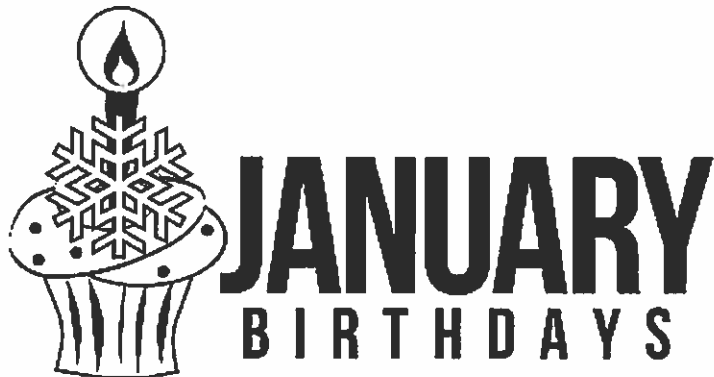
We pray for groups: Israel, Zika victims and solutions, Our children & youth ministry, Christians in Middle East for strength & protection; people of other faiths; our country's divisions; policemen and firemen, persecuted Christians, Our enemies, victims of the collapse of the Nigerian church roof collapse, victims of the Cairo Christian church bombing

We also pray for those in need during miscellaneous circumstances: Shirley D's friend Pat Z, 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, Gloria (Laura V),

We pray for those who mourn:

Elsie's family and friends, Sue's dad and family, Dan C.'s cousin Dorothy's family and friends, family of Bob, Patt's brother-in-law, Aggie's family and friends. Berlin victims and families; Mexico's blast victims and families

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



We send birthday wishes to those celebrating their special day during the month of January. Congratulations to:

- 1 Hunter Treccani
- 1 Christopher Witek
- 2 Jean Somerstorfer
- 4 Stan Flynn
- 7 Mackenzie Netter
- 9 Loretta Koch
- 10 Jacob Leake
- 17 Sue Orsic
- 20 Emily Raschke
- 20 Jennifer DelPrete
- 21 Andrew Witek
- 21 Matthew Witek
- 24 Bobby DeVries
- 25 Gwen Lopinski
- 29 Hailey Wreza

Our prayers of Christian sympathy for Cliff and Patt Pilgrim and their family on the death of Patt's brother in law, Bob Lesniewski, on December 8th. Services were held on December 14th at His Word for All Nations church in Chicago, where Patt's sister Pauline served as pastor.

Our prayers of Christian sympathy for Linda and Tony Lavaretto on the death of Linda's mother and Tony's grandmother, Elsie C. Higgins, on December 17th. Services were held on December 22nd. You may recall that Linda's dad died on Christmas Day in 2000.

Our prayers of Christian sympathy for Stan and Dianne Flynn, Scott Flynn and Stacy Brenz and their families on the death of Stan's mother, Alice Mourning, on December 18th. Services will be held at a later date and details will be provided for you.

January 2017



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 No S.S. 5pm REV	2 No Kids Club No WBS	3 Office Open 1pm	4 Prayer & Care 930am Office Open 930 am	5 TOPS 4pm Yoga 7pm	6	7
8 Wor/SS 9am Wor/SS 10:30am CE 1145am Outreach 1145am REV 5pm Communion	9 WBS 1pm Kids Club 330 Session 730pm	10 Office Open 1pm	11 Prayer & Care 930am Office Open 930 am	12 TOPS 4pm Yoga 7pm	13	14 MC8 meeting 9am Pullman
15 Wor/SS 9am Wor/SS 10:30am REV 5pm	16 WBS 1pm Kids Club 330	17 Office Open 1pm	18 Prayer & Care 930am Office Open 930 am	19 TOPS 4pm Yoga 7pm	20	21 Systemic Racism Workshop 9am – 3pm Chicago Heights
22 Wor/SS 9am Wor/SS 10:30am REV 5pm	23 WBS 1pm Kids Club 330 Deacons 7pm	24 Office Open 1pm Worship & Music 7pm	25 Prayer & Care 930am Office Open 930 am	26 TOPS 4pm Yoga 7pm	27	28 Card Workshop 10am
29 Fifth Sunday Wor/SS 1030 Annual Meeting 11:30am Pot Luck to follow	30 WBS 1pm Kids Club 330 CAT survey Starts thru Feb 17th	31 Office Open 1pm				

HICKORY HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

8426 WEST 95TH STREET

HICKORY HILLS, IL 60457

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