

The Connecting Link

NOVEMBER, 2016

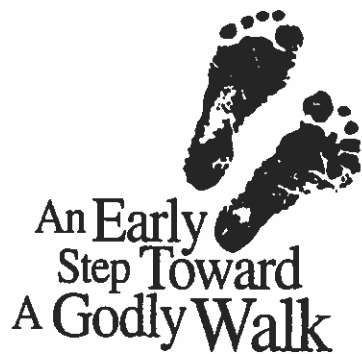


1. *Pick a tag*
2. *Buy an age & sex appropriate gift*
3. *Do not wrap it*
4. *Tape tag to gift*
5. *Return no later than November 27th*
(Sunday after Thanksgiving)

SERTOMA is coming! SERTOMA is coming! SERTOMA is coming!

In a burst of spontaneity, we have decided that having folks out in the parking lot starting Sunday November 27th, when the SERTOMA Christmas trees sales begin at noon is a great way for our congregation to reach out and welcome those who come here to shop for a tree. We want to have members out there greeting at least on Friday thru Sunday each week, with a brochure and a small Christmas gift. Watch for sign up sheets or talk to Gordon and Gina with any questions. Plan to spend an hour or two being the smile of HHPC for those who shop for trees!





Letter from Laura

Time flies when you're having fun. I can't believe I've been here a year. I've seen a lot of changes come over you. I hear you laughing. I see your enthusiasm for projects – once you know what it is that's needed, you jump right in and get it done. The level of communications has risen. Last night I listened to the Deacons report with joy and thoughtfulness on the connections they've made in the last month with their clusters. I already knew you are tenacious and resilient, but to see you stepping out this way is exciting. Whether you know it or not, you are setting your face to the future, to a new pastoral relationship and are showing your best side more and more.

Our next step towards the pastor who even now is being prepared for you by God includes you learning how to see what you're good at, where your growth edges are, and how you need to be stretched, pulled, supported and led. What does a healthy pastoral relationship look like for HHPC? It's going to be a little like developing a new friend. What qualities does a friend need to have for us to enjoy her? How do we find him to be trustworthy? What common interests and values do we share? Can we be ourselves in her presence? I don't know if we've ever approached a pastoral search this way. I don't know if at the end of a pastoral search we have been able to speak with enthusiasm and confidence about the pastor that's coming to join us. The more we know who we are, what we're strong at, what we like, what we value and where we need help the better this next search will be.

The Presbytery is being very flexible with us in our calling process. Instead of doing a traditional mission study, we will be working with Holy Cow! Consulting through the Samaritan Center for Congregations in Naperville and partnering with the presbytery. The presbytery pays the majority of the fee; we contribute 200.00 towards the cost. The Session has set the dates of 1/20/17-2/17/17 as the time for us to use the Congregation Assessment Tool here (often called the CAT). This is an 85 question on line assessment done by members and affiliates of a congregation. For those without computer access or knowledge, we will provide a hard copy of the survey for you to complete which will then be put on line by a selected volunteer. The resulting Vital Signs report will tell us who we are and how people experience us.

You'll hear a lot more about the CAT process over the next few months. If you are a member or affiliate, live "in town", have been active in the past year, and are 16 years or older, you will be invited to share in this opportunity come January. We are praying for a high level of participation, honest answers and everyone's viewpoint.

I am eager to hear your perspectives on yourselves as we continue to grow into being the congregation God wants planted here in Hickory Hills.

Blessings,

Rev. Laura



Session Shorts

The Session met on Monday October 10th and conducted the following business:

Opened with what we like that we see going on around the church, joys and concerns. Lifted up in particular - the positive response to the use of the parking lot by SERTOMA to sell Christmas trees and the children's message on 10/9 when 100 food items were put on a table and 10 items then moved to another table. God gives us all that we have and only asks us to give back 10%. We shared pastoral concerns for Adam's family (son of Hanna's co-worker who died 10/5), for a member whose mind is slipping, and frustrations in career development and job searches. We continue to be in prayer for Dave's son Bob who continues in rehab following his post surgical paralysis.

The Session approved the Session minutes of 9/12 and a usage policy regarding the communications gift received at the 9/12 Session meeting. Minutes of the Deacons, Worship and Music and Christian Ed were received. The Treasurer's report was received after noting that the deficit for Sept comes from the decision to pay insurance on an annual basis.

During the Building and Grounds reports, approved the snow plowing contract for 2016-2017 for the church. Rev. Laura will continue to make her own arrangements to clear the snow at the manse. Received details of the SERTOMA Christmas Tree Sale: Set up is over Thanksgiving weekend with sale beginning Sunday, November 27th Hours: Monday to Friday 3:00 to 9:00 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday Noon to 9:00 p.m. Approved the use of building by Evelyn for a card workshop on Nov. 19th.

Received a ChurchTeams software presentation from Tom Morrell. Elders will be receiving email invitations to update profiles for themselves and their families. Tom is working with Laura V. to create a basic data file for each church member and friends.

During the report on the September 17 Presbytery report heard of the gracious dismissal of the Palos Park Presbyterian Church to the ECO and of further opportunities to attend anti-racism workshops.

During the pastor's report, the Session received an update on the CAT process and decided to launch it 1/30/2017. While we will promote in advance, we will introduce the survey after the Annual Meeting on 1/29. Since the survey is taken either on line or by hard copy at the church, an opportunity to take it on paper will be provided on Super Bowl Sunday, 2/5/17, during the soup luncheon. The Session renewed the interim pastor covenant with Rev. Laura thru 10/15/17 as previously discussed with COM.

Session was reminded of the Craft Bazaar to be held 10/29, with set up help and baked goods needed on 10/28 and kitchen and clean up help needed all day on 10/29. The Session was reminded that an Open House for the kick off to the celebration of Jones Center's 100th anniversary year will be held on Sunday Nov 6th from 3 to 6 p.m. A donation of a non perishable food item is asked for each attendee. There being no further business, the Session adjourned at 9:30 p.m.



Worship Opportunities

The Worship & Music Committee has several special worship events coming up.

As you know, the regularly scheduled worship services are at 9am, 10:30am, & 5pm each Sunday.

The following Sundays may have special worship times or unexpected elements.

Please note changes on your calendar and join us as often as possible.

November 13th – 10th Anniversary of REV

November 27th – 1st Sunday in Advent – Communion Sunday

and we decorate the tree with **Chrismons**



December 4th – In addition to our regularly scheduled morning services, we will have a Blue Christmas Service at 3pm followed by fellowship in the East Room
(There will be NO REV Worship)

December 11th – 10:30 am Intergenerational Christmas Service

December 18th – Lessons and Carols



December 24th – Christmas Eve - 4pm and 11pm Worship Services



December 25th – Christmas Day - 10:30 am worship only – Come in your pajamas if you wish and enjoy hot chocolate and Christmas Cookies afterwards in the East Room
(There will be NO 9 am or REV Worship)

January 1st – 5pm REV Worship only – Come celebrate the possibilities of the new year with us
(There will be no morning worship services)



Chrismons



Chrismons are Christmas decorations with Christian symbols on them. They help Christians to remember that Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' birthday. They are often used on **Christmas Trees** in Churches and Christian homes.

They were first made by Frances Kipps Spencer at the **Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia, USA**. She also thought of the word, Chrismon, which is a combination of Christ and monogram (meaning symbol). The idea quickly spread to other churches. It is traditional that Christian groups can make their own Chrismons with their favorite symbols.

Chrismons are traditionally colored white and gold. White is the liturgical (or Church) color for Christmas and symbolizes that Jesus was pure and perfect. Gold symbolizes His Majesty and Glory. Chrismons can be made from nearly anything, but paper and embroidered ones are the most widely used.



Prayer and Care

Seek The Lord and his strength, seek his presence continually

PSALM 105:4

How do we make sense of the madness in the world today? Unity is different than unanimity. Conflict is inevitable. Combat is optional. And yet, over 150 years ago, someone said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand" Do you remember reading that in a history book? America was at war because we were divided. We are divided again. A combative spirit is the norm. We are moving faster and faster today because of high technology. Being bombarded with news 24 / 7 gives us little time to reflect on what is really true. This



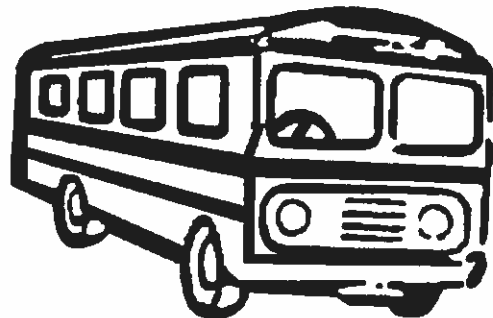
November we will have the freedom to vote. After praying about this opportunity, please remember God's kingdom and what that means to you as a Christian.

Which candidates closer fit what you believe according to what scripture teaches? Happy Thanksgiving from the "prayer warriors"

Woman's Bible Study

"And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit" ACTS 13:52

On October 3rd we were filled with joy to have Bev Kahn with us once again. She took 2 buses and was delighted the weather for travel was good.



As we continue to study our understanding of the church, the Jews' and the Gentiles increase. Some mysteries remain unsolved. Paul cut his hair because he had completed a vow. This will be researched.

We miss those of you who have stopped coming. You know who you are...

Arlene Pearson



PRAY FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY



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

*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.*

RSVP Requested

Questions: Please contact Dianne at 708 598-3100

November Birthdays

- | | |
|----|--------------------------|
| 1 | Erik Meyer |
| 3 | Michelle Krumpolc |
| 5 | Katie Huenecke |
| 6 | Steve Porter |
| 6 | Delorus Freiberg |
| 6 | Jean Swearingen |
| 8 | Brittany Maranto |
| 8 | Renee Meyer |
| 14 | Mitchell Huenecke |
| 26 | Alissa Raschke-Janchenko |
| 26 | Beth Ann Kommenich |
| 26 | Linda Rys |
| 27 | Mandy Rodriguez |
| 28 | Shaylin Rys |
| 30 | Amanda Kowalcze |



Christian Education

There will be no Sunday School on October 30, December 25 and January 1. Worship on those days will be only at noon on 10/30, only at 10:30 on 12/25 and only at 5:00 on 1/1/17.



Thank you for your help in collecting School Supplies. Most were donated to Palos Township who distributes them to children with a proven need. We kept a small variety here to help Hickory Hills families as more supplies are needed part way through the school year.



We welcome LeAnne Kommerich to the Preschool-Kindergarten Sunday Class. She will begin teaching on December 4. Our other teachers are Gordon Home and Dianne Flynn. The Christian Education committee wishes to thank you for your tireless efforts to bring quality lessons and caring to our youngest and most impressionable church family members during the 10:30 worship service. Adult

Bible classes are at 9:00 on Sundays. 1:00 on Mondays and on Wednesdays during Lent.

Children's Message



Winter break for The Kids Club will be December 26 and January 2. There will be a party on December 19, when the final candle will be lit on the Advent wreath and many songs enjoyed. When a child has perfect attendance for a month at Kids Club her/his name is eligible to be drawn for the Snicker balance contest. Josh won the September contest with help from his friend Mike. They were able to balance 4 Snicker bars. Registration is always open for Kids Club.



Every year we decorate a tree at Brookfield Zoo. The kids will make some of the ornaments and will go, with their families, to decorate on November 19. Pray for warm and dry weather since those who attended last year reported a record decoration time due to high winds and freezing rains.

Advent Fellowship Night

Friday December 2

6:30 p.m.

Pot Luck Dinner

Christmas Crafts

Fellowship

Cost:

FOOD DISH TO SHARE

AND

FREE WILL DONATION FOR CRAFT
PROJECTS

Sign up today for this all church event



PENCIL IT IN

Need a new way to add to your understanding of the holidays and the symbols which are so often found in and around the church during the Christmas season? Plan to come to the "Christingle" worship service set for **Sunday, 12/11 at 10:30**. While mostly led by children and youth, we will be seeking participants of all ages to lead us in worship that day. The one and *only* rehearsal will be on **Saturday, 12/10 from 9:30 to 11:00**. The Fellowship hour on December 11 will be provided by the Christian Education committee.



Three Prayer Shawls were sent out this month. The members of the Prayer Shawl Ministry are always ready to help you learn knitting or crocheting. We meet in the back room off the Fellowship Hall on Sundays at 11:45. Just come and visit whether you want to make shawls or not.



The Stampers met on October 19 to make cards for the Prayer and Care group, Christian Education Committee, and the Women's Bible Study group. We are expanding our creations to include cards which are 5x8 inches so Sunday bulletins can be sent along with well wishes. Our next meeting will be in early November, generally on Wednesday mornings. Contact Barb Brown for the exact dates and times.



"Seek and you will find."
- Matthew 7:7, NIV

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7

In our Christian Learning time we become active participants in games and activities that help us to learn how to apply the Biblical truths we study each week. During the month of November we will be studying the following topics:

Telling Others About Jesus – God wants us to tell others about Jesus and what He has done for us.

Being Happy When Others Succeed – We learn the value of encouragement and support for others.

Learning to Pray – We communicate with God through prayer.

Being a Good Friend – As we study the story of Barnabas we are reminded that a good friend gives a second chance when mistakes are made.

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Jessica Panko 12

Jacob Morrell 15

Congratulations to the winner of our Snicker Balance Contest for the month of September, **Joshua L.** The only requirement for eligibility in this contest is perfect attendance at Kids Club for the month.

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

Mark your calendars now for our Advent Fellowship Night held on **Friday, December 2 at 6:30 p.m.** This holiday tradition includes a potluck dinner, holiday crafts for all age groups, with fun and memories for all. It is a wonderful way to begin the season of Advent! The sign up sheet and display of crafts we will make on this night is located on the lower level of the church. This is a great event to bring friends to.

Thank you to the families who have provided snacks, juice, or other supplies for our kids. Snacks are always enjoyed by the kids and thank you for helping to make it possible. We continue to welcome new kids to this program, so if you know of someone who would like to join us Monday afternoons at Kids Club, please invite them.

Peace and Joy,

Dianne

PRAYER REQUESTS

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, Lorraine, 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, 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)

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 relatives Steven Eklund and Edith, Bev, Darlene D, Laura A

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

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, Gloria (Laura V), passengers on LA tour bus

We pray for those who mourn:

Adam's Family, Gavin's family, Teresa's family and friends, Gerta's family, Jeanne Leavitt's family

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

November 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 <small>shutterstock - 156033374</small>		1 ALL SAINTS Office open 1pm Staff 11am	2 Office open 930am P & C 930am	3 TOPS 4pm Yoga 7pm	4 Wedding Rehearsal 430pm	5 Erika Davidson & Jackson Wedding 430pm
6 Wor/SS 900am Wor/SS 1030am REV 5pm Jones Center Open House 3-6pm COMMUNION	7 WBS 1PM Kids Club 330pm	8 ELECTION DAY Office open 1pm Staff 11am Polling Place 6-7pm	9 Office open 930am P & C 930am	10 TOPS 4pm Yoga 7pm Forest view Condo Association 7pm Rev Laura OFF	11 Senior High Retreat Begins 7pm Synod Dream Team Indy	12 Synod Dream Team Indy Mission Council 8 9am
13 REV 10th Ann Wor/SS 900am Wor/SS 1030am CE 1145am REV 5pm REV birthday party 6pm Senior High Retreat Ends	14 WBS 1PM Kids Club 330pm Session 730	15 Office open 1pm Staff 11am	16 Office open 930am P & C 930am	17 TOPS 4pm Yoga 7pm Rev Laura OFF	18 SERTOMA drop off	19 SERTOMA drop off Presbytery Lake Forest 9am Evelyn's card Workshop 10am Kids Club Zoo Trip
20 Wor/SS 900am Wor/SS 1030am REV 5pm NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	21 WBS 1PM Kids Club 330pm SERTOMA set up Rev Laura on vacation	22 Office open 1pm Worship & Music 7pm Staff 11am Rev Laura on vacation	23 Office open 930am P & C 930am Rev Laura on vacation	24 GIVE THANKS	25 SERTOMA set up	26 SERTOMA set up Brookens Family Thanksgiving 9-9pm
27 FIRST ADVENT Wor/SS 900am Wor/SS 1030am REV 5pm COMMUNION SERTOMA 12-9pm Jones Center Gifts Due	28 WBS 1PM Kids Club 330pm Deacons 7pm SERTOMA 3 – 9pm	29 Office open 1pm SERTOMA 3 – 9pm Staff 11am	30 Office open 930am P & C 930am SERTOMA 3 – 9pm			



hickory hills
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**THE
CONNECTING
LINK**

2016

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