

HICKORY HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THE CONNECTING LINK

Connecting together to worship and praise our God!

Lent IS A TIME TO
GROW CLOSER TO JESUS

FEBRUARY 2021

Worship with Us

Due to the current coronavirus pandemic and the State of Illinois Stay at Home order, the 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Sunday worship services inside the church will **not** be held until further notice. You can participate in virtual Sunday worship with sermon and music (*prerecorded*) and posted on our website. Additionally, Sunday Prayer is on *Facebook Live* with Pastor Edie Lenz at 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Pray with Us

Join us for Daily Devotions and Morning Prayer on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at 9:00 a.m. on *Facebook Live* at *Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church*.

Contact Us

Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church
8426 West 95th Street, Hickory Hills, IL 60457
Phone: 708-598-3100

Visit Us Online

www.hickoryhillspres.org



Lent offers us an opportunity to hold out our cups if they are empty and to share from abundance if they are full.

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A Letter from Rev. Edie



I say all of this in deep humility, knowing that I am as guilty as anyone else of what I am naming. I say this not because I have answers, but because I believe the right questions are vital. I say this to name something I am seeing; to wonder about how we learn and move forward.

Scapegoating and “othering” are easy; it is easy to point the finger at a group, individual, or belief system and name it as the problem. It is easy to say it is your fault, you did this, it is because of you. It is easy to look outside ourselves, outside our systems, outside our own lives and look for blame. It is far easier to condemn someone outside ourselves than it is to wonder about our own responsibility.

This is not to excuse anyone; I believe that those responsible for violent storming of the U.S. Capitol must be held accountable; their words and actions betrayed a deep hatred of what I understand our freedoms to be about. But rather to say to myself (and to you) that looking at the events of the past few

“It is not the responsibility of government or of any other authority to create a better world; it is ours”

weeks as an aberration or as something “other” is to miss the point. We have gotten here by a road that is long and has many different forks in it. We have ended up in this place for reasons that are not outside or someone else’s issue or problem. We cannot lay the blame for what has happened at the feet of one man (though he also must be held accountable for his words) or at the feet of a party or even extremist groups. That simplifies our reality, diminishes responsibility, and allows anyone who was not actually there, and maybe even some who were to wash their hands of it all.

Together we have come to this place of hatred, division, partisanship, and failure of leadership over generations. This is not an aberration; it is a result of a system perfectly designed to get the results it is getting. We have come to this place by choices that have been made, priorities set, voices given priority or silenced over a very long time. Just as we didn’t arrive at January 6 by accident, but took a long road to get there, so also, we will not suddenly find ourselves on a different

(cont’d. on next page)

road on January 20. There is no magic here, the transition of power is as symbolic as anything else, but in itself it changes nothing; there is real work necessary to change anything.

The road we took to get to this level of division and “othering” will not take us where we need to go. As a people we must find another road. Whether you believe that January 20 marks a new and hopeful day or whether you are deeply terrified at who it says we are becoming or what will be done, it is not as simple as flipping a switch. What I am saying is this: one person, one party cannot really make all the difference we are currently assigning.

Our way forward as a country, as a people, as individuals isn’t out there. It is easy to point fingers and assign blame – we are deeply skilled in this sort of blaming. Rather, we have to confront our own responsibility, our own actions and inaction. We can look outside to place blame, but it will not change what is happening within us, in our own communities, neighborhoods, workplaces, places of worship or other gatherings. It is not the responsibility of government or of any other authority to create a better world; it is ours.

Until we are willing to confront our own hatred, prejudice, fear, isolation, and sin, we will not find it changed in any meaningful way in the world in which we live. Until I am willing to look at my own responsibility, comfort, my own preferences, my own fears, I cannot believe that things will be different

because someone “out there” is trying something new. What are the things that matter most to you? What are the deepest concerns that you have for the future of our children or for our country? How are you participating in or complicit in keeping these things in place? What lies deep inside of you--how are you choosing to live out that value? What are the disconnects in your own heart? Where are you saying one thing and doing another?

Jesus tells us that we cannot take the speck out of a neighbor’s eye until we have removed the log in our own. It is much easier for us to look outside, to blame those who have been, will be, or are in authority, but the reality of our life together requires much more. It requires a look in the mirror. It requires that you and I make choices about our lives, how we live, what we value and live them out. This is much harder work, but it is the work of discipleship, it is the work of faith, it is the work that will actually make changes, real changes in our world.

So the question is, when you look in the mirror – who do you want to be and what do you need to do to get there? Who do you need to hold you accountable on the journey?

*Love and peace in Christ,
Rev. Edie*





Reflections

- How do you understand the meaning of the word *covenant*?
- We learn of covenants that God has made with our ancestors; how do these covenants carry forward into our lives?
- What is the covenant God has made with us?
- What are our responsibilities and roles?
- What has God promised for us?

Due to the safety restrictions in place, in-person Worship Services have been suspended until further notice. You can participate in worship virtually on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. on *Facebook Live*. Our services are also recorded and available on our website at www.hickoryhillspres.org by noon on Sunday.

The readings and sermons that Rev. Edie will focus on during Sunday worship are shown below. If you don't have Internet access, you may read and reflect on these Scripture passages in your bible.

Virtual communion will be celebrated Sunday, February 7 at 10:00 a.m. Please make sure to have bread and cup available for worship.

February 7

Readings: 1 Corinthians 9:16-23;
Mark 1:29-39

Sermon: Mission and Purpose

February 14

Readings: 2 Kings 2:1-12;
Mark 9:2-9

Sermon: Clear Eyes

February 21

Readings: Genesis 9:8-17;
1 Peter 3:18-22

Sermon: God's Covenant: Noah

February 28

Readings: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16;
Romans 4:13-25

Sermon: God's Covenant: Abraham



WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

NOTE: We will resume in-person study starting Monday, February 8 at 1:00 p.m.
Hope to see you there and remember your mask.



As we think about love this Valentine's Day, here are some scripture passages you may want to reflect on which express God's unconditional love for us--today, tomorrow and forever.

John 3:16
Isaiah 54:10
Psalm 86:15
1 John 3:1
Deuteronomy 7:9
Ephesians 1:5-6
1 Chronicles 16:34
1 John 4:7-8
Romans 8:31-32
John 14:21
John 15:9

Anagrams are meaningful words made after rearranging all the letters of one word. Here is a phrase formed from all the letters in the word "Presbyterian" and one we can certainly admit is an important part of our mission here at HHPC. Can you find any more?

PRESBYTERIAN: BEST IN PRAYER



Submit your prayer requests online at hickoryhillspres.org, by e-mail at [hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org](mailto:hhcp@hickoryhillspres.org) or call the office at 708-598-3100.

FOR THOSE IN NEED OF HEALING AND WITH HEALTH CONCERNS

Addy (Karen H); **Amanda and Angel**; **Bill and Sara** (Rev. Edie) **Bob**; **Bob F** (Ar); **Brad** (Andrew); **Cindy** (Katie); **David** (Karen H); **DeSean** (Kim); **Gabriel** (Katie); **Gary and Valarie** (Kim); **Gene** (Grace); **Jackson**; **Jerry** (Joan); **Janet** (Evelyn); **Joe** (Shirley D); **Joyce** (Sandy B); **Julie W** (Andrew); **Justin** (Karen H); **Kathy** (Bernie); **Katie B and her husband Joe**; **Kiley** (Katie); **Kyle W**; **Lynn** (Diane); **Mackenzie** (Bernie); **Marj** (Charlie); **Michael** (Karen H); **Michelle** (Grace); **Mike** (Karen H); **Mike** (Kim); **Pat** (Gert); **Patty** (Katie); **Paula** (Bernie); **Peter** (Katie); **Phyllis** (Katie); **Rae** (Karen G); **Raymond** (Diane C); **Richard** (Diane C); **Rick** (Sandy B); **Roger** (Sandy B); **Rose** (Katie); **Sandy** (Mel); **Shannon**; **Sharon** (Tom M); **Suzanne** (Bernie); **TJ** (Katie); **Tim** (Charlie); **Tracy** (Noelle L); **Trevor** (Donna); **Wanda** (Jeni); **Willa** (Diane)

FOR THOSE WHO MOURN

For the Netter family in the loss of **Mollie's brother Benjamin and sister-in-law Futhi** who have passed away in South Africa from COVID and for their children, Dali, Nafe and Yankho who are orphaned and still very young; for families who have lost loved ones in this time and cannot mourn for them as we normally would; for victims and families affected by violence

FOR THOSE IN NEED DURING MISCELLANEOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

Coronavirus upsurge throughout the world; **Jenny D** (Andrew); those who provide essential services we need; churches who are struggling to reach members and care for people; the injustice and violence around the country

FOR THOSE IN NEED OF STRENGTH AND HEALING

Aiden (Debbie); **Bob** (Dave D); **Bob Z** (Carla); **Dick** (Jeni); **Diane and Nancy** (Jeni); **Dina and Al** (Cindy); **Edward** (Evelyn); **Erin Beal and children**; **Frankie** (Bernie); **Guy K**; **Gwynn** (Katie); **Harry** (Katie); **Isaiah**; **Jessica** (Joan); **Joan**; **Karen K** (Ar); **Marj and Dar** (Melanie); **Natalie** (Bernie); **Pam** (Katie); **Patti** (Jeni); **Sandy D** (Ar); **Stephanie and Savino**; **Vickie** (Bernie)

WE GIVE THANKS

FOR THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

For the gift of our Savior and the hopes of a new year.

FOR GROUPS WHO ARE IN NEED

Healthcare providers and others in harm's way, especially **Jean, Kaitlyn, K, and Mollie**; those in hospitals and facilities with other health needs besides COVID-19 who cannot have loved ones with them; those in lockdown and isolation; teachers, students, and parents challenged with e-learning; those living in domestic violence situations; all who are coping with being furloughed from their jobs or who have lost their jobs; those battling addiction; fire and police departments tasked with keeping the peace; the systemic racism and social challenges in our country



**We cling to the promises that God is always with us;
that there is NOTHING that separates us
from the love of God in Christ.**



February Update: **DISCIPLESHIP**

by Jean Swearingen

*Come,
follow me. . .*

HHPC's Discipleship Committee met virtually on Sunday, January 3, 2021. We looked back at the Christmas season. We survived! HHPC was busy!

Our Christmas tree on display as a part of Brookfield Zoo's *Holiday Magic* survived the season. Even with several days of high winds, very few ornaments were lost. The *Warming Tree* in our East Room was the recipient of gloves, hats, mittens, scarves, and socks. These items filled 4 boxes, which have been given to organizations for distribution to those in need.

Please continue to save your pop tabs in your home. They will be used toward our goal of donating 1 million pop tabs to the Ronald McDonald House in Oak Lawn, Illinois.

HHPC will celebrate Souper Sunday in a different way on February 7.

Souper Sunday, just like Super Bowl 55, will look different this year. HHPC usually gathers in fellowship to share a variety of soups/stews. In 2021 we will be welcoming cans of soup to share with others. (*See our Souper Sunday announcement on p. 9!*) Whatever you donate will result in a *TOUCHDOWN* for someone in need!

Discipleship continues to look toward the future. We know there will be challenges. We know there will be blessings. We are **THANKFUL** for Pastor Edie's leadership and for all our committees working hard for HHPC!

February Update: MISSIONS

by Kim Ambrosat

I hope you are all well, safe and warm in your homes.

Our next Community Meal is scheduled for Monday, February 1 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. We will serve in the same fashion as we did in January. Last month, the chili and hot dogs were a wonderful warmer-upper with 45 meals served! Questions? Want to help? Contact Evelyn or Debbie. Join us on the February 1 for chop suey, rice and fortune cookies.

Two groups went to *Feed My Starving Children's* packing event in Aurora on January 30--4 in the morning and 5 in the afternoon. Even though things were different because of COVID-19, the camaraderie amongst the packers was still there. Listen for updates from Rev. Edie as to how many meals were packed.

When the Mission Committee met in December, it was decided to put in writing our mission ideas for the year. In doing this, it is our hope that if you know what is upcoming, you can shop for sales. This is in addition to our regular collections of pop tabs and bottle caps.



HIS HANDS HIS FEET

February – Hands & Feet of Jesus – Gloves and Socks for Beds Plus

March – Baby items –
South Suburban Family Shelter

April – Tabs and Detergents;
Possibly Meal Preparation

May – The Undie 500 – Underwear Collection
for Beds Plus

June – Dakota Partnership –
Swimsuits and Towels

July – School Supplies for local schools

August – Feed My Starving Children

September – Hygiene Kits -
Church World Service

October – Tree of Warmth

November – Reverse Advent Calendar -
Elsie's Pantry

December – Jones Center –
Children's Gifts

Continue to pray for one another and the work HHPC continues to do. We are truly blessed!

Looking forward to seeing (more of) you again! Stay warm! Kim

'Round Our Church

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**HHPC
DRIVE-THRU
COMMUNITY MEAL
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1
5:30 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.
Menu: Chop Suey Rice
and Fortune Cookies**



**PRE-RECORDED
ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17
AVAILABLE AT 9:00 A.M. ON HHPC
WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK LIVE**

**Also, join Rev. Edie for in-person Lenten
Devotions every Wednesday during Lent
at 11:00 AM.**



KEEP OUR "FAITHWALKERS" IN YOUR PRAYERS

As our participants continue on their *Faithwalking* journey, please keep them in your daily prayers. Thank you.

Interested in Faithwalking?
Contact Rev. Edie for details.



LET'S MAKE IT A GAME ON SOUPER SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7!



Changes in the world have resulted in changing how Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church will host its **Souper Sunday, February 7, 2021**. Since we will not be able to gather in fellowship and enjoy a variety of soups for Souper Bowl Sunday as we have done in the past, we will, instead, be welcoming cans of soup to share with others!

How do I donate?

The Discipleship Committee asks you bring cans of soup to be used toward the missions of HHPC.

Where will the donations go?

The number of cans of soup collected will be divided between HHPC's Micro-pantry and Elsie's Food Pantry.

LET'S MAKE IT A GAME!

Safety = 2 points . . . Donate 2 cans of soup

Field Goal = 3 points . . . Donate 3 cans of soup

Touchdown = 6 points . . . Donate 6 cans of soup

After Touchdown Extra Points

1 point (Field Goal) . . . Donate 1 can of soup

2 points (Touchdown) . . . donate 2 cans of soup

All donations are appreciated!



Mirroring Jesus

Reflecting on some of the wondrous traits of Jesus can help us to evaluate our own lives and try to become more like Jesus.

Compassionate Jesus

Jesus never looked away from the people he met. He always was kind and compassionate. Some had physical problems and others, spiritual. Jesus always took the time to actually notice that people were hurting and his deep compassion drove him to help them.

Serving Jesus

Jesus was the great teacher, but he also taught his followers to serve others as he actually did so often. He did the opposite of seeking praise by humbling himself and serving others.

Loving Jesus

Jesus' love was demonstrated in all that he did as he networked with many people. He also said that "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." The next time you look at Jesus on the cross, be encouraged by his great love.

Committed Jesus

Jesus' life was a life of commitment. Wherever he was or whoever he was in the company of, he was always fully in the moment and completely committed to them. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus did not

walk away from his commitment to suffer and die for us, but instead he prayed and believed wholeheartedly that this was the will of his Father and he continued forward.

Forgiving Jesus

As Jesus hung on the cross, he asked God to forgive those that persecuted him. His words, "Forgive them for they know not what they do" show us the power of forgiveness.

Prayerful Jesus

No matter how busy Jesus was, he always had time for prayer. Jesus would disappear for a while to spend alone time with his Father.

Gentle Jesus

There were times when Jesus used stern words and could really turn up the heat, but he also knew when gentleness was appropriate. His heart was filled with kindness and concern. As the children came to him, he asked the disciples to let them come to him.

Self-controlled Jesus

While being tested in the wilderness by the devil to accept food, power and other things, Jesus displayed total self-control by not giving in to all the temptations. Instead, he turned them over to the will of God. His desire to do God's will was stronger than temptation, and he accomplished what he set out to do.

Humble Jesus

Jesus had every opportunity to demand praise for his miracles and teachings, but he chose not to. Instead, he wanted to seek, serve and save and offer forgiveness to all.

Patient Jesus

As we read the gospels, Jesus is portrayed as being very patient. His disciples doubted him at times, and the Pharisees and Sadducees frequently questioned and attacked him. The

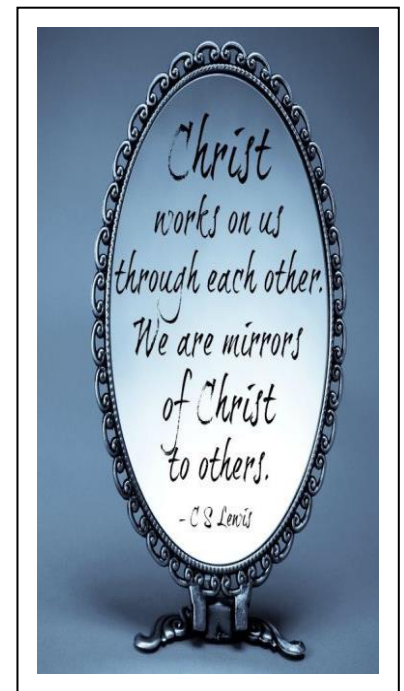
large crowds of people he encountered wouldn't leave him alone. He always "kept his cool" and responded in an appropriate manner.

Enduring Jesus

Feeling the horrific pain as he was scourged, crowned with thorns, weighted down by the cross and the incredible anguish on the cross, Jesus endured because he believed what he lived and died for was the will of his Father and to provide us a path to eternal life.

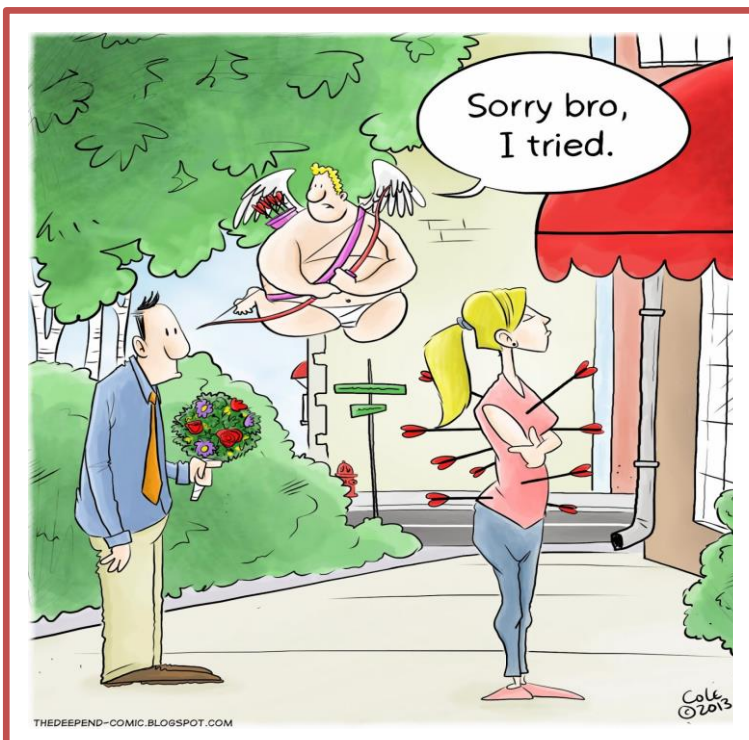
What Would Jesus Do? is a slogan we have all heard. We might use these words to guide us in mirroring the example of Jesus.

**Live well
and love well
as Jesus did!**



LOL TIME

Valentine's Day is a time for expressing love, sharing love and receiving love and maybe a good time for **L**aughing **O**ut **L**oud as you enjoy these rib-tickling valentine cartoons.





What is Per Capita?

Per capita is how Presbyterians share equally, responsibly, and interdependently in the costs of governing the Presbyterian Church (USA). Per capita is:

- the major source of funding for the Presbytery;
- requested from every congregation;
- based on total active membership of each church; and,
- paid by the Presbytery to the Synod of Lincoln Trails and General Assembly regardless of what we actually collect.

Per Capita for 2021 is \$36.



The Connecting Link publishes only the names of those members who have submitted a change in their contact information. However, more information can be provided upon request by calling the church office at 708-598-3100. If you have a change to your personal contact information, please contact the church office at 708-598-3100 or e-mail us at hpsc@hickoryhillspres.org

Changes this month:

Bryan Ambrosat
Dawn Rellinger



If you notice any inaccuracies on the birthday list, please call the office or e-mail us at hpsc@hickoryhillspres.org or call 708-598-3100.

May God bless those celebrating their birthdays in the month of February and shower them with love, peace and joy on their special day and all year round.

Josh Krueger	February 1
Scott Zimmerman	February 5
Sam Swearingen	February 5
Mike Swearingen	February 5
Julie Witek	February 7
Amy Simone	February 18
Alyssia Kommenich	February 20
Austin McKinney	February 25
Shirley Dragas	February 27
Rick Vogl	February 27
Ryan Brandt	February 28
Sandy Beal	February 28
Kevin Lorenz	February 28



The Connecting Link is always looking for content. If you have a story or article to share, please e-mail it to the church office at hpsc@hickoryhillspres.org.

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live 5:30 PM – 6:00 PM Community Meal (Chop Suey, Rice, Fortune Cookies)	2 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	3 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	4 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	5 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	6
7 10:00 AM Virtual Morning Worship NO REV WORSHIP	8 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live 1:00 PM In-person Women's Bible Study resumes 7:30 PM Session on Zoom	9 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	10 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	11 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	12 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	13
14 10:00 AM Virtual Morning Worship NO REV WORSHIP	15 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live 1:00 PM In-person Women's Bible Study	16 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	17  ASH WEDNESDAY Pre-recorded Ash Wednesday service available at 9:00 AM on HHPC website and Facebook Live 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	18 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	19 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	20
21 10:00 AM Virtual Morning Worship 11:15 AM Missions on Zoom NO REV WORSHIP	22 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live 1:00 PM In-person Women's Bible Study CONTENT FOR NEWSLETTER DUE	23 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	24 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes 11:00 AM In-person Lenten Devotions every Wednesday during Lent	25 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	26 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	27
28 10:00 AM Virtual Morning Worship 12:00 Noon Board of Deacons on Zoom NO REV WORSHIP						

Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church
8426 West 95th Street
Hickory Hills, IL 60457

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

DATED MATERIAL - DO NOT HOLD

THE CONNECTING LINK

A monthly newsletter from the Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church

Lent IS A TIME TO
GROW
CLOSER TO JESUS

FEBRUARY 2021