

HICKORY HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THE CONNECTING LINK

Connecting together to worship and praise our God!



JANUARY 2021

Worship with Us

10:00 a.m. Virtual Morning Worship (*Currently no in-person worship until further notice.*)

Livestreamed on our Facebook page at *Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church* and also recorded and available for viewing on our website at hickoryhillspres.org by noon on Sundays.)

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

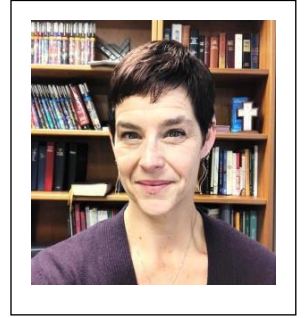
10 TOP NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

1. Intend more love.
2. Think more love.
3. Feel more love.
4. Share more love.
5. Express more love.
6. Give more love.
7. Receive more love.
8. Create more love.
9. Celebrate more love.
10. Be more love.

INSIDE:

A Letter from Rev. Edie	2,3
Worship Services, Readings, Reflections	4
Women's Bible Study	5
Prayer Requests	6
Ministry Updates	7,8
'Round Our Church	9,10
LOL Time	11
Birthdays, Changes to Contact Information	12
Calendar	13

A Letter from Rev. Edie



Rev. Edie Lenz
Pastor

Grace and Peace to you! Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

The New Year comes often with great plans and expectations. I know last year I was brimming with ideas, plans, and hopes for the coming year. Little did we know what would come. This year I sense a tempering of our expectations; a hope tinged with doubt. We hope for a better year than last year, but we just aren't sure. We hope to be able to set some plans and carry them out – but we hold them loosely knowing that life is fragile and things can change in an instant. But we are a people of faith and so we step into the new year claiming the promise that God is with us, even now; that there is hope to be had for an end to this pandemic; an end to the loss of life; and, a return to something that used to be normal.

But if we are truly honest with ourselves, we know that this will still take time AND that things are not just going to go back to the way they were; they can't. You see we have changed, our world has changed, there is much that has been seen that cannot be unseen.

There is much we have learned that we cannot unlearn. And so, whatever the year 2021 will bring, it is not going to just be a reboot of 2019. What then, what ARE the plans for 2021; what do we anticipate, look forward to? What do we hope for in the coming year for our congregation and for our individual lives?

I want to begin by focusing on the church (for that is my area of responsibility) and then to challenge you to spend some time thinking about your own individual hopes as well. What IS the plan for HHPC in the coming year? What WILL we be doing? The short answer is I am not at all sure; but that belies what I do know and what I can say. The longer answer is this: we believe we need to recommit ourselves to the work we set a year ago, work that was upended but must continue. That work is a focus on three areas that we believe we need to grow as a people of God:

Multi-Generational, Mission, and Relationships. If we still believe God is calling us to be a part of the work of God in the world, to join God on mission in this world, and that we can best do that through relationships and seeking to connect with all generations, then we have work to do.

This work cannot wait until the pandemic is over; this work cannot wait until after “normal” reappears. Rather, I believe that we must begin to look at what we are doing together now. What we have done in the past and what we may hope to do in the future, and hold it all in these lenses: are we joining God's mission? Does this work grow our relationships to God, community, and one another? How can we connect in real ways to more than 1 or 2 generations? I believe we need to evaluate all of our hopes and plans through these areas of focus.

I believe God has called us to this work, in a particular place, at a particular time. I believe that this space we are in – a new year that is still in some ways paused, invites us to a time of reflection and evaluation. Who are we? Who has God called us to be? Where can we best serve our community? How do we learn to be better neighbors? What do we have to learn? What might we need to stop doing? What might we need to start? You see there is so much possibility before us, but we must be

(Cont'd on next page.)

(A Letter from Rev. Edie cont'd from previous page)

intentional as we go. We must take the time to prayerfully consider the call of God for HHPC and for our individual lives. So often (especially this past year), we find ourselves reacting to what is happening rather than setting intentions and being proactive. How can we begin to make plans, loosely held but still plans for the future of our congregation?

And what about your new year? What intentions have you set for yourself? Are you a setter of resolutions or do you just enter the year without much reflection? I want to challenge you to not just enter the new year without thought, but also to not set a bunch of resolutions you know you can't keep. Rather, I want to invite you to reflect – what is God inviting you to this year? Where do you

need to grow? How can you deepen your faith? Are there spiritual practices you need to take on? Are there parts of your life you need to say no to and gather people around you to help you keep saying no?

I want to invite you to set aside one hour in the first two weeks of January. One hour for reflection. You do not need to be still but you do need to be quiet. Silence your phone, tell your family you need an hour, go for a walk or sit down at the table. Create a space for reflection and ask: Where God, are you calling me this year? Allow your imagination to wander, if you get distracted, call your mind back to the question. At the end of the hour, find one word that will allow you to summarize what you are thinking. One word that you can

write on a post-it note or in your phone that will help you call your intentions to mind. What one word will you set for yourself in the coming year? Finally, if you are feeling very brave, share your word with someone else, someone who will remind you, invite you and challenge you to remember. You see, the point is not to create a "new you for a new year," but to be intentional about the work you are called to do.

As we enter 2021, let us do so mindfully, intentionally, and with hope, not in the things of this world, but in the God who created us all. Happy New Year.

**Love and peace in Christ,
Rev. Edie**

FAITHWALKING DATES AND TIMES FOR 2021

- Faithwalking Module 1 will begin the week of January 18 on Zoom.
- Faithwalking Module 2 will begin on Tuesday, January 12 at 11:00 a.m. at HHPC.
- Faithwalking Module 3 will begin on Wednesday, January 13 at 7:30 p.m. on Zoom.

***We wish all those participating in Faithwalking
a blessed journey of faith and personal insight.***

(Additional information on Faithwalking can be found on p. 10.)

Put God
first
and everything else will
follow

Worship Services, Readings and Reflections

The following are readings and sermons

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

You can participate in virtual Sunday worship livestreamed on *Facebook Live* at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings and recorded and posted on our website at www.hickoryhillspres.org by noon on Sunday.

****Communion will be celebrated Sunday, January 3 at 10:00 a.m. Please be sure to have bread and cup available for virtual worship.****

Sunday, January 3, 2021

2nd Sunday of Christmas

Readings: Isaiah 60;1-6;

John 1:1-9, 10-18

Sermon Title: *Arise, Shine*

Sunday, January 24

3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Readings: Psalm 62:5-12;

Mark 1:14-28

Sermon Title: *Call of God: Disciples*

Sunday, January 10

Baptism of the Lord

Readings: Genesis 1:1-5;

Mark 1:4-11

Sermon Title: *Words Create Worlds*

Sunday, January 31

4th Sunday after Epiphany

Readings: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13;

Mark 1:21-28

Sermon Title: *Freedom and Stumbling Blocks*

Sunday, January 17

2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Readings: 1 Samuel 3:1-10;

John 1:43-51

Sermon Title: *Call of God: Samuel*



A TIME FOR REFLECTION

The bible contains story after story of people called and used by God. From the Magi to Samuel and the disciples of Jesus. God uses people to do God's work.

- How have you experienced God's call in your life? What might God be calling you to do, say, stop doing?
- Where is God calling HHPC in the coming year? What do you imagine for the church?
- Reflect on the power of words; we have the power to harm and to heal; how are you using your words?



WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Odyssey and Any Long Adventuresome Journey

Matthew 1:17:

"So all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon, 14 generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ, 14 generations."

Matthew records Joseph as the legal father of Jesus. Luke traces the genealogy of Jesus through Mary, his mother. Both Matthew and Luke omitted some names. Mark states the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. John relates the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. Each tells the truth according to them.

As each of us have had a long journey through 2020, was it a myth? Of course not! Lest we forget, yesterday is gone and so is 2020." Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. We read in Hebrews 13:8: "May the Lord God continue to give us all that we need."

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his surpassing greatness! Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! 6Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
(Psalm 150:1-6)

On November 9th, four of us met for the last time reading *Revelation 19* which was "Praise to God for judgment and the marriage supper of the lamb." After the 19th chapter each of us read aloud *Psalm 147*, *Psalm 148*, *Psalm 149* and the above *Psalm*.

May we suggest you do the same as we look forward to 2021 with confidence in his hands.

*Love and Hugs and Happy New Year,
Arlene Pearson*

Let us Pray for you...

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Philippians 4:6

FOR THOSE IN NEED OF HEALING AND WITH HEALTH CONCERNS

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

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; Guy K; Gwynn (Katie); Harry (Katie); Isaiah; Jessica (Joan); Joan; Karen K (Ar); Marj and Dar (Melanie); Pam (Katie); Patti (Jeni); Peggy (Katie); Sandy D (Ar); Stephanie and Savino; Vance (Rev. Edie); Vickie (Bernie)

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

FOR THOSE WHO MOURN

For family and friends of Ivy Taebel who recently passed away; for family and friends of Michael Kincaid (Melanie's cousin) who recently passed away; for family and friends of Richard (Diane Ciamenti's father) who recently passed away; for family and friends of Theresa A (Rev. Edie); for family and friends of Eva Mason who passed away November 28; 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

Central America flooding; Coronavirus upsurge throughout the world; for wildfires out West and those in need on the Gulf coast; 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

WE GIVE THANKS FOR THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

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

**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.**

Ministry Updates

Discipleship Report

by Jean Swearingen



The Discipleship Committee of Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church (HHPC) wishes you peace, health and happiness in 2021.

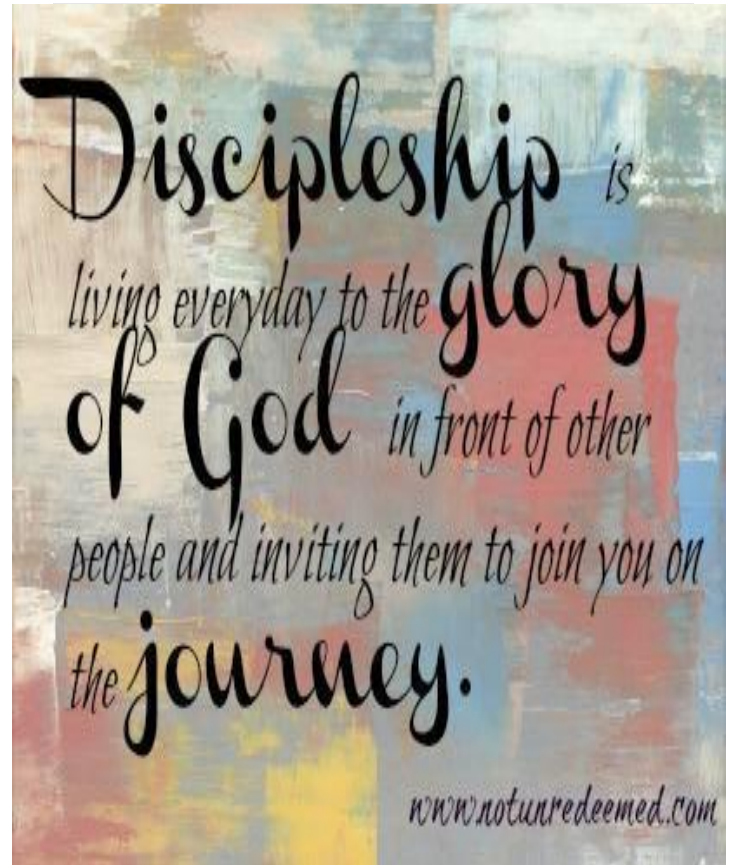
Being that we had scheduled meetings every other month, a December meeting was not held.

We have no knowledge what challenges and blessings 2021 will bring.

We welcome any thoughts and ideas regarding how Discipleship can serve our congregation and extended HHPC family.

Discipleship's next virtual meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 3, 2021.

*Happiness and peace to all
in the new year, Jean*



Ministry Updates

Missions Report

by Kim Ambrosat

Happy New Year to each and every one of you!

Let's pray we will be able to see more of one another in 2021 than last year.

Our next Community Meal is scheduled for January 4th from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. We will serve in the same fashion as we did in December. The ham and potatoes were a great hit! Forty-one (41) meals were served. Join us on January 4th for chili and hot dogs. *Questions? Want to help? Contact Evelyn or Debbie.*

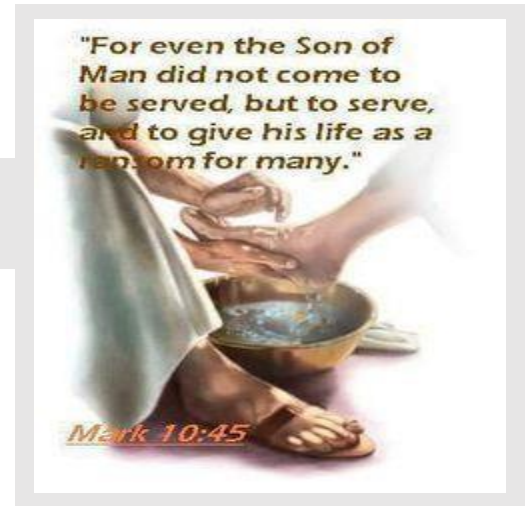
Pastor Edie has e-mailed information for the *Feed My Starving Children* packing event to those who expressed interest on the sign-up sheet. Our intentions are to head out to Aurora on January 30th. We plan on having two times to pack, so we can accommodate different schedules: 9:00 a.m. - 11 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. There's still time to join us.

Let Edie or I know by January 3.

Our "Baskets of Blessings" for Elsie's Pantry was very well received this year. It's a good thing Debbie has a large vehicle as she and Mike delivered over 384 pounds of food to Elsie's Food Pantry.

Dave Delaney took the 30 Jones Center gifts to Chicago Heights for their gift giving.

Thanks go out, not only to Dave, Debbie, and Mike for the way they lovingly distribute our collections, but to you, our caring congregation, for your great generosity, even during these strange times. Take a peek at the pictures of all the food, the Tree of Warmth, and all the toys on the next page. Your hearts are truly in the right place.



When the Mission Committee last met, 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.

January – Feed My Starving Children – Packing event

February – Hands and 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

August – Feed My Starving Children

September – Church World Service - Hygiene kits

October – Tree of Warmth

November – Elsie's Pantry - Reverse Advent Calendar

December – Jones Center – Children's gifts

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

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

'Round Our Church

As the Coronavirus upsurge continues, so does the need for food and other items in our community. Members and friends here at HHPC have always opened their generous hearts to provide groceries and monetary donations for Elsie's Pantry and the Jones Center. **We collected \$850 in donations and 384.5 lbs. of food for distribution!** Where the need is, HHPC is always there! Thank you to everyone for your kindness and generosity.



Bags of food from HHPC family and friends delivered to Elsie's Pantry before Christmas.



Our annual "Tree of Warmth" provides gloves, hats, scarves and socks for families in need.



Gifts to Jones Center sure to have made boys and girls happy this Christmas.

MY COVID CHRISTMAS

(by Cheryl Nirtaut, 2020)

The tree is decorated and the house is festive too!
But, no one will see it except me and you!

Family and friends cannot come inside
because CDC guidelines we all do abide.

Wear a mask and stay far away,
hugging and kissing will be for another day.

We'll open our presents via FaceTime and Zoom
and pretend we are in the same room.

The dining table is set for a party of two,
and just like every day since March,
it's just me and you!

Our stockings are hung with goodies inside—
masks, gloves, bacterial wipes
and oh! a hand washing guide.

My hands to elbow are as sterile as a doctor's I'd say,
from washing them a hundred times a day!
Hand cream would be a great gift to receive,
because, then my hands, I can relieve.

So COVID you've spoiled my Christmas this year
by taking away doing all the things I hold dear.
But wait--not really
because a baby named Jesus was born this night
and with Him on my side,
have faith and everything will turn out right!

So, yes, I admit things are not the same
with a pandemic to blame.
But I'll look on the bright side
like I always try to do,
because very soon I hope to be done with you!

Merry Christmas and Goodbye, COVID!

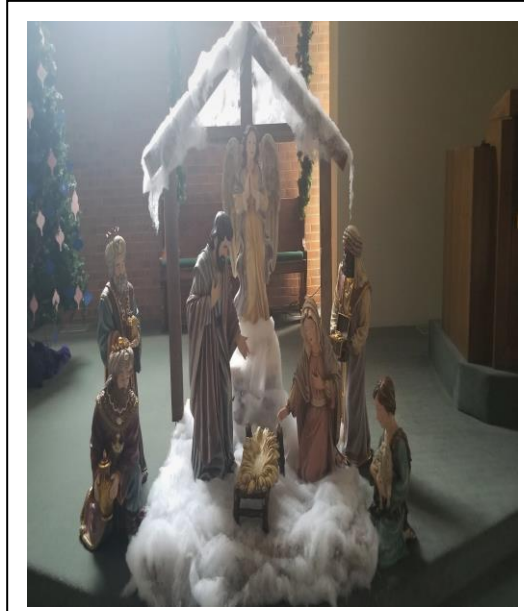
(*'Round Our Church cont'd on next page.*)

(Round Our Church cont'd from previous page.)

HHPC's Preparation at Advent



Each week during Advent, one candle is lit during worship as we await our Savior's birth.



Our Nativity manger awaits Jesus to be laid in it at Christmas.



The Christmas "ornaments" displayed on the Sanctuary tree represent the handwritten joys and sorrows shared by HHPC members.

Faithwalking: An Ongoing Spiritual Formation Journey

Faithwalking is a journey of discipleship. In Faithwalking, explore your faith formation with God and a small group of other people. In Faithwalking we say; "You don't get to decide if you are formed, but you do get a say in HOW you are formed."

Each "module" of Faithwalking is a 10-week class, about one hour a week. You learn some information; you are given opportunities to reflect on that learning and go deeper. You are invited to practice some of what you are learning and then share back with your small group.

If you are resigned and cynical about an area of your life--assuming it or you can never change, Faithwalking is for you. If you have been doing the same devotions for years and are looking for something a little deeper, Faithwalking is for you.

If you are curious about different faith practices or ways of living your faith, Faithwalking is for you. If you want to grow closer to God, to go a bit further on your faith journey, Faithwalking is for you. If you wonder what in the world Pastor Edie is talking about when she shares how important this has been in her own life, Faithwalking is for you.

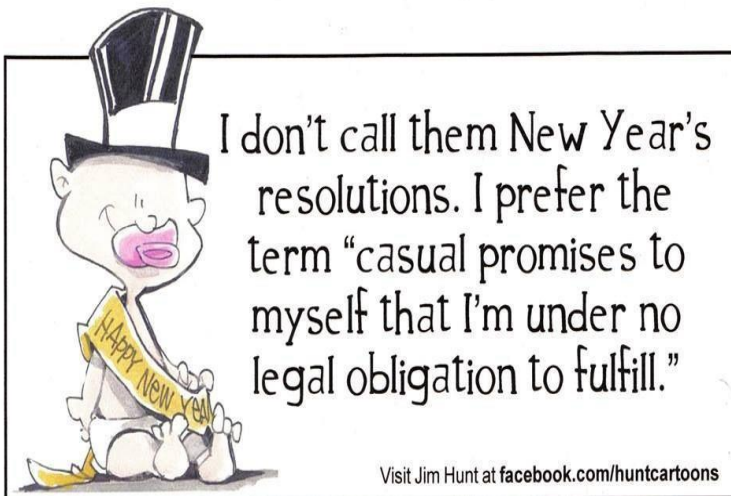
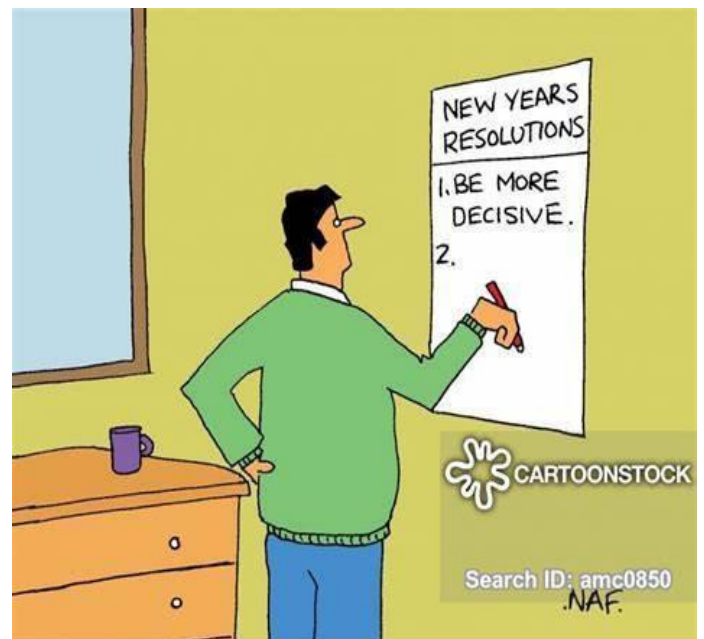
Still not sure? Let us get you in touch with one of our previous participants and you can see what they have to say about the journey or you can visit faithwalking.us to learn more.

The local cost for the Faithwalking material is \$60 per person, however, this work is so important that if you are struggling with cost, we can assist you in it. Please don't allow cost to stop you from joining the journey. The deadline for signing up is January 13. You can sign up by calling the church or by contacting Pastor Edie directly at revedielenz@gmail.com

Why I Gave Faithwalking a Try

- Faithwalking was an hour set aside *just for me* each week for six weeks.
- I became more aware of God's presence in my life.
- It gave me a chance to connect with my innermost thoughts and feelings.
- It was a safe place to acknowledge and share some things I wanted to change in my life.
- The gentle coaching sessions gave me a better perspective of my life.
- As I listened to my group members' stories, I realized that I was not alone and that really lifted me.

--Bernie R.



Visit Jim Hunt at facebook.com/huntcartoons

"Ummm."

CARTOONSTOCK

Search ID: amc0850
.NAF.

A New Year's Blessing

May God make your year a happy one.
 Not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain,
 but by strengthening you to bear it, as it comes.
 Not by making your path easy,
 but by making you sturdy to travel any path.
 Not by taking hardships from you,
 but by taking fear from your heart.
 Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,
 but by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows.
 Not by making your life always pleasant,
 but by showing you when people and their causes need you most
 and by making you anxious to be there to help.
 God's love, peace, hope and joy to you for the year ahead.

--Unknown



May the God love and joy bless each of those celebrating their birthdays in January.

Hunter Treccani	January 1
Lee Lee Vryza	January 1

Christopher Witek	January 1
Stan Flynn	January 4
MacKenzie Netter	January 7
Theresa Leavitt	January 9

Sue Orsic	January 17
Emily Raschke	January 20
Jennifer DelPrete	January 20
Andrew Witek	January 21
Matthew Witek	January 21
Bobby DeVries	January 24
Gwen Lopinski	January 25
Rev. Edie Lenz	January 28
Hailey Wreza	January 29
Audrey Sowa	January 31

Note: Should you notice any inaccuracies in the birthday list, please contact the office at 708-598-3100 or e-mail the office at hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org



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 or e-mail us at the office at hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org.

No changes this month.



The *Connecting Link* is always looking for content! If you have a story, an article or a photo to share, please drop it off in the church office or e-mail it to us at hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org Thank you.

JANUARY 2021



13

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live HAPPY NEW YEAR!	2
3 10:00 AM Virtual Morning Worship 11:15 AM Discipleship on Zoom DEADLINE FOR SIGNUP FOR FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN PACKING EVENT SAT. JAN. 30 NO REV WORSHIP	4 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM Community Meal (Chili and Hot Dogs)	5 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live 7:00 pm Worship & Music	6 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	7 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	8 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	9
10 10:00 AM Virtual Morning Worship NO REV WORSHIP ANNUAL REPORT COMMITTEE RPTS DUE	11 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live 7:30 PM Session on Zoom	12 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	13 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	14 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	15 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	16
17 10:00 AM Virtual Morning Worship 11:15 AM Missions on Zoom NO REV WORSHIP	18 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	19 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	20 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	21 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	22 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	23
24 10:00 AM Virtual Morning Worship 12:00 Noon Board of Deacons NO REV WORSHIP	25 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	26 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live CONTENT FOR NEWSLETTER DUE	27 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	28 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	29 9:00 AM Morning devotion on Facebook Live	30 FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN PACKING EVENT IN AURORA Times: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
31 10:00 AM Virtual Morning Worship 11:15 AM HHPC ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING NO REV WORSHIP	NOTE: Virtual Morning Worship at 10:00 a.m. is livestreamed on our Facebook page at <i>Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church</i> and also recorded and available for viewing on our website at www.hickoryhillspres.org by noon on Sundays.					