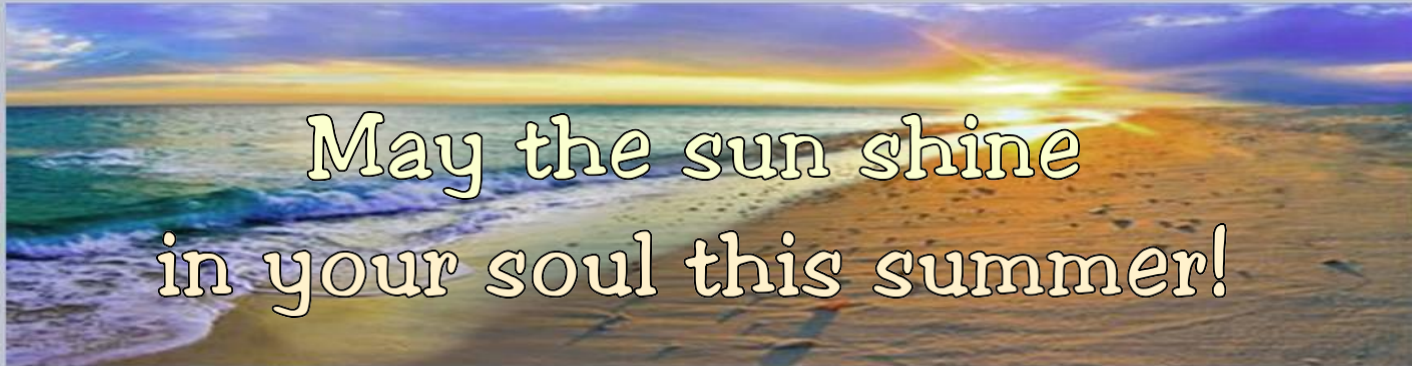


THE CONNECTING LINK

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We are called to **SEEK** God's Word, to **SHARE** and **CELEBRATE** God's love, and to **SERVE** Jesus Christ in the world.



May the sun shine
in your soul this summer!

JULY-AUGUST 2021

Note: As we return to a more "normal" life, vaccinated individuals are welcome in the building without masks. For those who have not been vaccinated, please wear your masks. If you have been to church and been diagnosed with COVID-19, please call the office immediately.

Should the COVID-19 situation change or safety guidelines change, you will be notified. Sunday worship continues to be *livestreamed on our Facebook page at Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church* and is also recorded and then available for viewing on our website at www.hickoryhillspres.org on Sundays by noon.

WORSHIP WITH US ON SUNDAYS

10:00 a.m. (Traditional Worship)

5:00 p.m. (Contemporary Worship)

PRAY WITH US

Join us for Daily Devotions and Morning Prayer on Tuesdays and Thursdays 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

E-mail: hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org

VISIT US ONLINE

www.hickoryhillspres.org



Our
lifeguard
walks on
water.

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A Letter from Rev. Edie



*Rev. Edie Lenz
Pastor*

Summer is often a quieter time around the church. People head out on vacation or to spend time at cottages, kids head off to camp or are involved in summer programs.

Churches give their regular programs a “summer break,” pausing Sunday School, bible study and other “regular programs.” Sure, we add in a VBS or some other special events, but summers are usually a slower pace for the church. Often, we think of this as a programming break centered more on practicality and the reality that fewer people are around in the summer, rather than an intentional rest or pause. But what if summer is an opportunity to engage not in a pause of programs, but an intentional choosing of Sabbath rest?

Sabbath is a commandment of God – 6 days shall you labor, but the 7th day is to be holy for your God.

In the ancient world, Sabbath was practiced rigidly and with a legalistic determination. No cooking, cleaning, or work of any kind was to be done, only the barest of necessities like taking the flocks for water was to be done. Some of you may also have grown up in traditions that took a strict legalistic view of Sabbath. Others of you were never taught much about Sabbath. Sure, Sunday is God’s Day, but that just meant going to church, not necessarily much else. And what of those of you who work on Sunday-- how can you practice Sabbath? This idea that Sabbath is about a specific day of the week or a set of specific practices is an old one, but to set Sabbath as Sunday (or Saturday) and to define it as simply a day off of work is to miss the point of Sabbath entirely. What then is Sabbath and how might we as a people engage a season of Sabbath this summer?

Sabbath was intended as a gift from God to creation – not just to humans, though we benefit from it the most. Sabbath is an invitation to be still and trust that the world will keep spinning; that the work that “has to be done” can wait for tomorrow. Sabbath is about more than just not working; Sabbath is about rest for your very soul. Sabbath is intended to be a way of living, not just one day (or one part of a day), but a way of living your whole life, trusting that you are enough, have enough, that there is enough that you can choose, even for a little while, to set down your burdens and rest along the road.

Sabbath, then, is a restful gift from God, an opportunity to sit, be still, to let the noise of life fall quiet and to just breathe a while

(cont’d. on next page)

A Letter from Rev. Edie (*cont'd. from p. 2.*)

Sabbath can be the gift of a slow dinner around a table with friends when no one feels the pressure to hurry up, get the table cleared and move on to the next thing. Sabbath can be the gift of a quiet morning on a patio with a cup of coffee. Sabbath can be the intentional setting down of your work for the day and NOT turning your computer back on after dinner. Sabbath can be a walk, a bike ride, a stillness in nature. Sabbath is not one thing, and it is certainly not limited to one particular day of the week. Sabbath is intended as rest (not vegging out in front of the tv), but real rest for your soul.

As VBS has now drawn to a close and as we are able to gather more freely than we were before, how will we, as a body of believers, choose to practice Sabbath together? How will we encourage one another to get the rest we need? There is great opportunity for us, to not just do what we always have done, but to be intentional, to slow down, to wonder about what we are doing, why we are doing it, and what we maybe don't need to be doing. As we enter this season that is "quieter" around the church, we are invited into Sabbath rest. We are invited to slow down, to notice the work of God among us, to be still long

enough to remember that we do not keep the world spinning – not even our own little worlds.

Come, let us be still a little while, to rest in the arms of our God who has given us all things. Let us encourage and invite one another to enter into the gift of Sabbath.

*Peace and love in Christ,
Rev. Edie*

Scripture Passages Relative to Summer

Summer is a time when we slow down and take that much needed vacation. We all need a change, a break from our usual routines. Here are a few scripture passages relating to summer with some thoughts on which to ponder.

Matthew 24:32

From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.

Here Christ compares the signs he has described to the budding leaves of a fig tree. People in that region would have learned by experience that tender branches and new leaves mean summer is near. Jesus wants his followers to understand that when the things he has described begin to happen, they are signs of when his return begins, and his arrival is near.

Proverbs 6:6-8

Go to the ant, you lazybones; consider its ways, and be wise. Without having any chief or officer or ruler, it prepares its food in summer, and gathers its sustenance in harvest.

Work hard no matter what you are doing, and do what you are supposed to do whether it's cleaning the house, picking up toys, teaching your kids, or running a household.

Psalm 74:17

You have fixed all the bounds of the earth; you made summer and winter.

God is creator over everything we see, feel, taste, and smell. He has made the earth and the four seasons.

Song of Songs 2:12

The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.

This verse describes a change in seasons. An interesting fact to note is that the turtledove is a kind of dove that hides away in the wintertime and appears again in the spring/summer seasons. Its voice is never heard in winter unless it is a fine warm day!



A Time for Reflection

Where are you seeing God at work around you? How are you joining God in that work?

We are commanded to love God with our whole selves – mind, body, spirit. How are you living into that love as a whole self?

We are called to actively pursue a life lived in connection with Jesus. How are you choosing to be connected to Jesus?

Who are you praying for or concerned about? Have you told this person that you are praying for them? Have you shared your love and concern?

Practicing gratitude is a way of living our faith and increasing joy. What are you thankful for? How are you actively practicing gratitude?

~ ~ ~



Worship Services and Readings (July & August)

The following readings and sermons are ones that Rev. Edie will focus on during Sunday in-person worship. You can participate in virtual Sunday worship livestreamed on *Facebook Live* at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings and then recorded and posted on our website at www.hickoryhillspres.org by noon on Sunday. If you are worshipping from home, and don't have Internet access, you may read and reflect on these scripture passages in your bible.

Sunday, July 4, 2021

6th Sunday after Pentecost
Readings: Luke 18:35-43;
Acts 3:1-10

Sermon Title: *On Mission: Neighbors*

Sunday, July 11

7th Sunday after Pentecost
Readings: Luke 5:17-26;
James 2: 14-26

Sermon Title: *On Mission: Holistic*

Sunday, July 18

8th Sunday after Pentecost
Readings: Luke 10:1-11,
17-20; Acts 13:2-5
Sermon Title: *On Mission: In Community*

Sunday, July 25

9th Sunday after Pentecost
Readings: Mark 4:26-33;
Ephesians 4:1-7
Sermon Title: *On Mission: Embodied*

Sunday, August 1, 2021

10th Sunday after Pentecost
Rev. Jewel Thomas will preside.

Sunday, August 8

11th Sunday after Pentecost
Rev. Abbi Heimach-Snipes will preside.

Sunday, August 15

12th Sunday after Pentecost
Readings: Proverbs 9:1-6,
9-10; 1 Kings 3:3-14
Sermon Title: *Seeking Wisdom*

Sunday, August 22

13th Sunday after Pentecost
Readings: Psalm 84;
Ephesians 6:10-20
Sermon Title: *Armor of God*

Sunday, August 29

14th Sunday after Pentecost
Readings: James 1:19-27;
Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23
Sermon Title: *Inside Out*



God has called us to pray together and for one another.

The following is a complete list of those we are remembering in prayer. If you or someone you know are on this list and wish to be removed or would like to be added to the list, please call the church office at 708-598-3100.

We pray for those in need of healing and those with health concerns.

Ady; (Karen H); **Bob**; **Bob F** (Ar); **Brad** (Andrew); **Bruce** (Jeni); **Cindy** (Katie); **Chris** (Bernie); **Chloe** (Kim); **Dave D** (Ar); **David** (Karen H); **Dennis** (Charlie); **DeSean** (Kim); **Francie** (Karen G); **Gabriel** (Katie); **Gary and Valarie** (Kim); **Gene** (Grace); **Gert** (Ar); **Glenda** (Melanie); **Heidi** (Diane C); **Gracie** (Kim); **Ira and Kathy** (Scott); **Jackie** (Karen G); **Jackson**; **Janet** (Evelyn); **Jay** (Susan); **Jerry** (Joan); **Jerry** (Sandy B); **Jim V** (Bernie); **Joe** (Katie); **Joe** (Shirley D); **Joyce** (Sandy B); **Julie W** (Andrew); **Justin** (Karen H); **Kathy** (Bernie); **Kathy** (Linda L); **Katie B and her husband Joe**; **Kim B** (Jeni); **Kyle W**; **Leanne** (Karen H); **Lynn** (Diane); **Lisa** (Bernie); **Mackenzie** (Bernie); **Marj** (Charlie); **Michael** (Karen H); **Michael** (Shirley); **Mike** (Karen H); **Mike** (Kim); **Noreen** (Jeni); **Papa John** (Jeni); **Pat** (Karen H); **Patty** (Katie); **Paula** (Bernie); **Pete** (Esther); **Peter** (Katie); **Phyllis** (Katie); **Rae** (Karen G); **Rick**; **Roger** (Sandy B); **Rose** (Katie); **Ruth S (Jen)**; **Sandi**; **Sandy** (Mel); **Sandy J (Bernie)**; **Shannon**; **Sharon** (Tom M); **Suzanne** (Bernie); **Tierney** (Shirley D); **TJ** (Katie); **Tim** (Charlie); **Todd** (Charlie); **Tracy** (Noelle L); **Yvette** (Kim); **Wanda** (Jeni); **Wanda C** (Jeni)

We pray for those in need of strength and healing.

Bob (Dave D); **Carol S** (Ar); **Dali, Nafe and Yankho**; **David** (Bernie); **Dina and Al** (Cindy); **Edward** (Evelyn); **Erin Beal and children**; **Frankie** (Bernie); **Guy K**; **Gwynn** (Katie); **Harry** (Katie); **Irene and Tiffany** (Katie B); **Isaiah** (Kim); **Jessica** (Joan); **Joan**; **Joellen** (Mel); **Kaitlyn** (Kim); **Karen K** (Ar); **Kirsten** (Kim); **Martha** (Bernie); **Michele** (Rev. Edie's mother-in-law); **Michelle** (Katie); **Mike B** (Jeni); **Nancy** (Rev. Edie); **Tabby, Grace and Christy** (Kim); **Tammy** (Gordon); **Natalie** (Bernie); **Pam** (Katie); **Patti** (Jeni); **Sandy D** (Ar); **Stephanie, Mackenzie and Savino**; **Susan** (Katie)

We pray for those who mourn.

For family and friends affected by the building collapse in Florida; For family and friends of the **Kazzi family** (Greg); for the **Lunt family** on the death of their father (Kim); 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

We pray for groups who are in need.

Healthcare providers and others in harm's way, especially **Jean, Kaitlyn, K, and Molly**; those in hospitals and facilities with health needs; those in isolation; 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 the conflict with **Israel and Palestine**

We pray for those in need during various circumstances.

For **Dali, Nafe, and Yanko** awaiting custody hearing; for those who are struggling mentally and emotionally at this time with the prolonged isolation; Coronavirus upsurge throughout the world; **Gina** (Bernie); **Dimmick family**; **Jenny D** (Andrew); **Jenny G** (Bernie); those who provide essential services we need; **Ziarko family**; 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 birth of Darlene and Dave Delaney's grandson **Jack** born in June.

Update: DISCIPLESHIP

by Jean Swearingen

Marks of a Disciple

A heart for God alone

Arms of love

Hands in Prayer

Voice to speak

Spirit of a servant

I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

--Philippians 1:6

Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church (HHPC) hosted Vacation Bible School June 14–17, 2021. Our numbers were low. Our spirit was high. We completed the week with new friends and full hearts. The theme, CONCRETE & CRANES, introduced our participants to a variety of tools and construction equipment. It also taught everyone that just as these tools can help to build foundations, Jesus' love will provide a foundation for life that lasts.

Current world events resulted in VBS being different in 2021. The majority of VBS was held outside! Great

creativity was present. Our volunteers looked great in hard hats and construction safety vests! Discipleship thanks everyone who donated their time and efforts to make this year's VBS a success.

God graced HHPC's VBS in many ways.

- HHPC had the BEST volunteers!
- The weather was wonderful.
- Shade for areas of the parking lot occurred at the best times.
- The State of Illinois unknowingly helped support our theme. They provided construction sites at our two corners on 95th Street.
- Pallets, construction

cones, construction signs, parking lot barricades and a bobcat appeared!

- The Singing Program was wonderful – we learned new songs and celebrated songs from previous years.
- Lessons were presented in ways to be understood by all ages.
- And, there were GAMES!!!!!! Sometimes they involved water balloons. Sometimes it was an obstacle course.
- Crafts were created. They were beautiful.
- Snacks were served disguised as construction site lunches!



VBS: ANOTHER THUMBS UP EVENT!

HHPC's Vacation Bible School 2021 themed *Concrete and Cranes: Building on the Love of Jesus*, was an amazing time for all our participants and dedicated volunteers. We hope to see a lot more of our kids in the summer of 2022. The pictures below attest to all the fun we had.



THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!



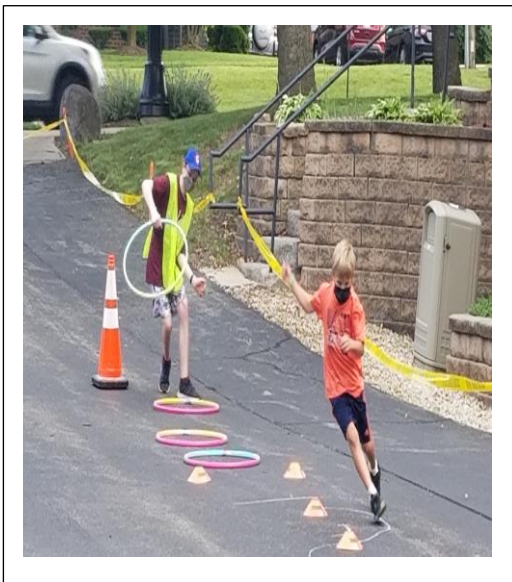
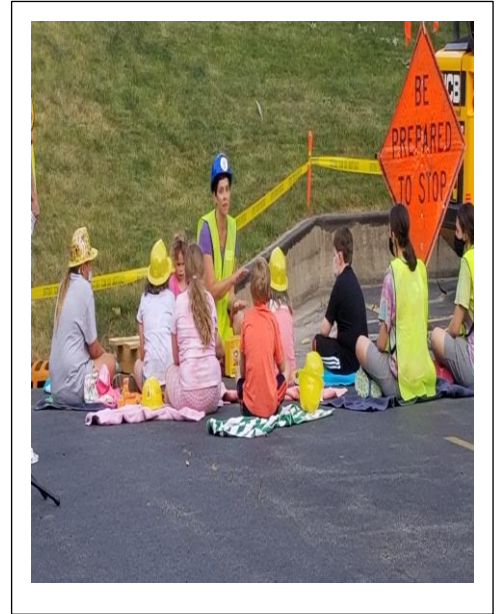
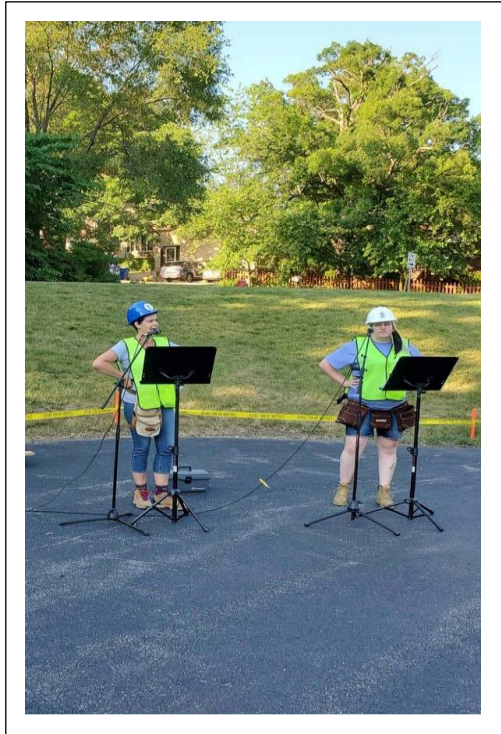
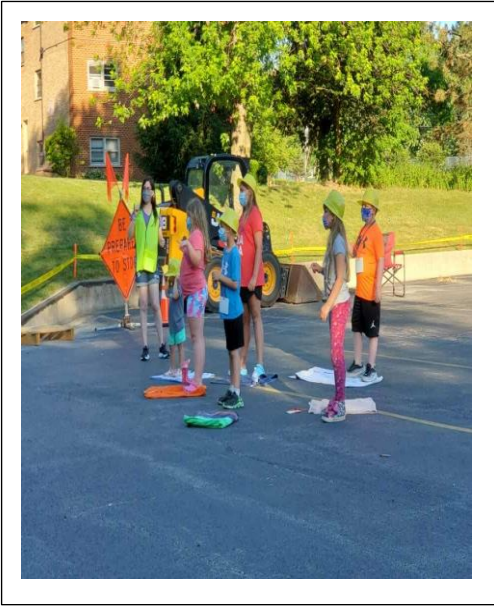
Our Amazing 2021 VBS Team

(A few of our other team members are not pictured.)



(cont'd. on next page)

VBS: Learning about Jesus and having great fun, too!



Update: MISSIONS

by Kim Ambrosat

**Father,
Every day may
we find an
opportunity to
serve someone
else.**

Our next Community Meal is scheduled for August 2nd from 5:30 p.m. to 6A:00 p.m. (Yes, the committee is taking a well-deserved break.) Currently, the meals will still be served in drive-thru fashion, as in the previous months.

In June, our fabulous planners and cooks served hot dogs, chips, beans and rice crispy treats – 59 meals were served! Want to help?

Contact Evelyn or Debbie. Join us in August. More information will follow.

We will continue our collection for *Feed My Starving Children* in the month of July. Please grab a tube of M&M’s, enjoy the treat, then bring back the tube, perfectly sized for quarters, filled. As buildings are opening up, we will look for a destination to pack

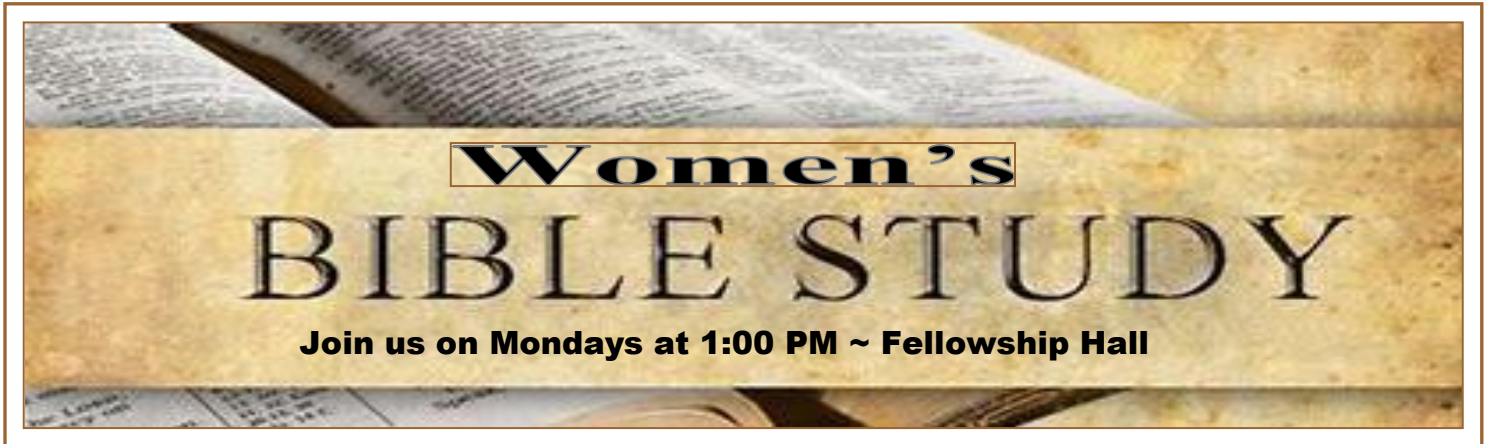
meals. Watch for sign-up sheets!

Although most of our gardens are planted, think about dedicating one tomato plant, or one pepper plant, or one zucchini vine (you get my drift) for our food pantry. Think about planting a row next year, specifically for the food pantry.

Continue to pray for one other and the work HHPC continues to do. We are truly the salt of the earth.

UPCOMING MISSIONS

July – M & M Containers 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



*Judge not, that you be not judged.
(Matthew 7:1)*

What is Jesus telling us about learning to live without judging others?

When we are faced with a situation where we need to correct someone, what comes to our minds?

How would I want to be dealt with?

Have we have not heard about “The Golden Rule?”

As we researched this chapter during our last meeting with various stories of persons who wanted to deal with the negative behavior of someone, this is what we discussed:

1. Listen to them.
2. Let them know you are available.
3. Pray for this person’s well-being and Jesus’ intervention.
4. Wait.

Note: We will not meet on Monday, July 5. We will finish our class on Monday, July 12 with a luncheon.

**A W.O.R.D. METHOD
FOR STUDYING THE BIBLE**



**The Word
of God**

Select a scripture verse.

Write down what stood out to you in that verse.

Apply what you read to your life, and write down what it revealed.

What do you feel compelled to tell God after reading your verse?

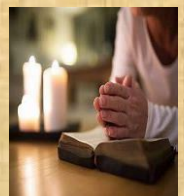
Write it down or pray to God about it.



Observation



Reflection



Devotion

SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER!
LOVE AND HUGS, ARLENE PEARSON

FYI FOR YOUR INFORMATION



Summary

by Susan Frangella

Our church family is AMAZING! Members worked tirelessly for 2-3 weeks to prepare and host our Annual Rummage Sale held on May 20-22, 2021.

Our goal was simple this year . . . sell as many items and raise as much money to help the Netter Family with their guardian/adoption expenses.

We were blessed through sales and donations to raise \$10,872 for the family.

JOIN US!

**SUNDAY, JULY 18, 2021 &
SUNDAY, AUGUST 29
AFTER MORNING WORSHIP**

**“Where Are We Going?”
(A Visionary Meeting)
11:30 PM – 1:00 PM
IN THE GYM**

All are encouraged to join in the conversations.
You can attend one or both sessions.

CHURCH ON THE SOFA
WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AS

CHURCH IN THE SANCTUARY



PLEASE NOTE: AN ADDENDUM TO THIS ARTICLE IS AVAILABLE ON PAGES 19-20.

As church attendance numbers fade across the nation and online services become very convenient (who doesn't love not getting ready in the morning or leaving their homes? *It's important to remember why church attendance for you and your family matters so much.*

You can't serve from your sofa. You can't have a community of faith on your sofa. You can't experience the power of a room full of believers worshipping together on your sofa.

Christians aren't consumers either. We are contributors. We don't watch. We engage. We give. We sacrifice. We encourage. We do life together. The church needs you. And you need the church.

Yes, church on the sofa is nice, but it will never be the same as church in the sanctuary.



HHPC RELAXES PANDEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Effective June 20, 2021, HHPC relaxed its requirements on wearing masks in our building. Vaccinated individuals are welcome in the building without masks. However, those who have not been vaccinated, please wear your masks.

If you have been to church and been diagnosed with COVID-19, please call the office immediately!

During the pandemic, we will continue to monitor and communicate as any changes are made. Information can be found on our website at www.hickoryhillspres.org or contact the church office.

Copies of the Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church Plan for “Phase 5” of Illinois Reopening are now available on our website at hickoryhillspres.org

Church Musician's Corner

by Greg Rolla

I love gospel music; it really stirs my soul. Coming from a Catholic Polish-Italian background, the music was never part of my tradition.

In 2004 I was organist/pianist for a church who had an African-American choir director. He was very active in his own church (Baptist), but wanted to share his talents with another mainline protestant denomination. Imagine my “shock” when he placed before me black gospel arrangements sung, by the way, by an all-white choir who had learned all the right “moves,” singing-style reflections, etc. The music at first was challenging and sometimes incredibly complex.

Well, I was hooked! I loved it. I felt it. There was no going back. Though I grew up performing the “classics,” I developed a lasting appreciation for the gospel style with its joyful (and somber) sounds.

One of my favorite church piano arrangers is Joel Raney who lives in the Chicago area with his family. Growing up in the Southern Baptist tradition, gospel is found throughout his writing style.

This July I will be performing several of his arrangements during our services.



Listen. Pray. Enjoy!

Let us all refresh, renew and relax during the summer months ahead.



**To all our HNPC family and friends who gave of their precious time and efforts with volunteering at our events held over the past year, thank you.
God bless you for all that you do for the glory of God.**



Make It A Soulful Summer

It's summer and this long-awaited season of the year can provide an opportunity for you to tune into your senses and enjoy some soulful time.

Unplug the TV, stop texting for a while and incorporate some of the ideas below as you tune into summer.

Gaze at the Night Sky

Create an unforgettable evening for you and your family by simply laying a blanket on the grass or moving a lawn chair into a place where you can view on a clear night the beauty of the summer sky. Ponder the splendor of God's awesome creation.

Attract Some Flying Friends

Plant a butterfly garden or set up a hummingbird feeder. Butterflies will come to your garden in larger numbers if you plant a few herbs and flowering bushes that appeal to them. Watching these lovely hummingbirds as they buzz through the air and then land on the feeder to enjoy the food is a spectacular site to see.

Walk Barefoot

Going barefoot on a blanket of grass during the summer can be pleasurable and can help you destress as your feet feel the earth.

Create a Video on Your Phone

Using your phone, take videos of some beautiful fountains in your neighboring parks or nature centers. These beautiful running waters create peaceful, relaxing, and soulful sounds that you can enjoy whenever you need some soulful time.

Walk around areas where there are a variety of beautiful trees and take a video. You can also add audio using your own voice by describing what you see or creating a prayer that you can listen to each morning. The birds singing in the trees can also add the sounds of nature into your video.

Sit Under a Tree

Sit under a great tree and enjoy the comfort and security that it brings. Relaxing under this tree can also bring positive thoughts to mind. You might also do some journaling while you are there and let your stream of consciousness flow as you pen your thoughts.

Enjoy a Spiritual Book

Relax and enjoy a spiritual book, the beautiful and inspiring Psalms from scripture or spiritual poetry. Have a cup of coffee or a nice cool drink at your side. Make this an enjoyable time to refresh, renew and relax.

Take time to do what makes your soul happy!



LOL TIME FOR SUMMER





Summer Quotes

“**Rest is not idleness**, and to lie sometimes on the grass under trees on a summer’s day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time.” — *John Lubbock*

“**Deep summer is** when laziness finds respectability.”
— *Sam Keen*

“**Summer was** our best season: it was sleeping on the back screened porch in cots, or trying to sleep in the tree house; summer was everything good to eat; it was a thousand colors in a parched landscape.”
— *Harper Lee*

“**Some of the best memories** are made in flip-flops.”
— *Kellie Elmore*

“**Live in the sunshine.** Swim in the sea. Drink in the wild air.”— *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

“**It’s a smile**, it’s a kiss, it’s a sip of wine ...
It’s summertime!” — *Kenny Chesney*

**Update your
contact information**

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. If you have a change to your personal contact information, please contact the church office at 708-598-3100 or e-mail us at hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org


Celebrating July and August Birthdays

Happy birthday to all of our friends celebrating in July and August. May God bless and shower his grace on them.

Amelia Huenecke	July 1
Mike Korzeniewski	July 3
Robert Swindle	July 4
Toni Kenealy	July 6
Gabriella Ciametti	July 7
Bernie Roche	July 9
Kaylee Knox	July 13
Andy Betterton	July 19
Jarett Ambrosat	July 21
Kyle Ambrosat	July 21
Dianne Flynn	July 22
Diane Ciametti	July 23
Steve Zabelka	July 24
Cindy Treccani	July 27
Anthony Lavaretto	August 1
Susan Beal Frangella	August 2
Jeni Vogl	August 2
Shannon Bastien	August 3
Molly Netter	August 9
Gertrude Vickers	August 11
Agnes Davidson	August 13
Abigail Rellinger	August 23



JULY 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	2	3
4 10:00 AM In-person Worship No REV 	5	6 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	7 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	8 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	9	10
11 10:00 AM In-person Worship 5:00 PM REV In-person Worship	12 1:00 PM Last day of Women's Bible Study for the Summer	13 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	14 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	15 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	16	17
Rev. Edie's Study Week July 12 through July 16.						
18 10:00 AM In-person Worship followed by Visionary Meeting in the Gym 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM "Where Are We Going?" Visionary Meeting No REV	19	20 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	21 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes 7:00 PM REV Committee Meeting	22 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	23	24 10:00 AM Evelyn's Card Workshop (Fellowship Hall)
Bernie will be on vacation during the week of July 18 and will return on Wednesday, July 27.						
25 10:00 AM In-person Worship 5:00 PM REV Dinner & Fellowship	26	27 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	28 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	29 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	30	31

AUGUST 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 10:00 AM In-person Worship <i>No REV</i> 11:15 AM Discipleship Meeting	2	3 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	4 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	5 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	6	7
Rev. Edie will be on vacation the week of July 1 and return to the office and will return on Monday, August 9.						
8 10:00 AM In-person Worship 5:00 PM REV Worship	9 7:30 PM Session meets	10 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	11 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	12 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	13	14
15 10:00 AM In-person Worship <i>No REV</i> 11:15 AM Missions Meeting	16	17 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	18 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	19 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	20	21
22 10:00 AM In-person Worship 11:15 AM Board of Deacons Meeting 5:00 PM REV Dinner & Fellowship CONTENT FOR SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER DUE	23	24 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	25 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	26 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	27	28
29 10:00 AM In-person Worship followed by Visionary Session in the Gym 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM “Where Are We Going?” Visionary Session <i>No REV</i>	30	31 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live				

JULY-AUGUST 2021



HICKORY HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
THE CONNECTING LINK

DATED MATERIAL - DO NOT HOLD

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

Grace and Peace to you,

It has come to my attention that a small piece included in our July/August Newsletter has caused offense for some. This particular piece was submitted by a member and stated “church on the sofa will never be the same as Church in the sanctuary.” After a year of worship online and being reminded that the “church” is not a building, I apologize if this piece has been cause for offense or hurt. It was not intended as such.

At the same time, I wanted to take this as an opportunity to clarify my own thinking about worship, church, and our current reality AND to invite you to wonder about what YOU think. I believe an important part of our faith is learning to ask questions and wonder for ourselves. A rapidly declining skill in our society as a whole is the ability to listen to someone, get curious about what they are saying, and decide for yourself what you think while remaining connected to those with whom you might disagree. So, if you will permit me, here are my own thoughts about who, what and where the church as a whole is:

The church IS NOT the building, the church is the community of believers who gather in the name of Christ and who work together for the good of the world. Our tendency to lump the building, the gatherings and worship all under the umbrella of “church” is a part of the challenge we create for ourselves. The church has never been a building, we see this in the model that Jesus established; yet we call our building a “church”. The church IS community; connection, gathering, being and working together have always been an important part of faith. In the same vein, we refer to worship as “going to church” which is merely one aspect of our faith, not the end of it. Do you have to be in our building to worship God? No, not at all. Worship can happen in the shower or on a hike. Worship can happen in the car or at the kitchen table. Worship can be on the sofa and in the sanctuary. Worship can happen anywhere and everywhere we are choosing to stop, be still, and remain in the presence of the God who created us. Worship is merely one expression of our faith.

In order for faith to flourish, I believe deeply that you need a faithful community who will hold you accountable, support you, and who will encourage your ongoing growth and faith. I believe that the church – the gathered body – should be such a community. Together we learn, serve and grow; together we equip ourselves to be bearers of the image of Christ into the world. This sort of community can be gathered in homes, outside, online, and in-person. However, I will say that for me, from the depths of my soul, being together online is simply not the same as human connection in-person. I also want to acknowledge that your experience may be very different from mine.

Many of you have returned to the building for a myriad of events, ministries, and opportunities to serve. Some of you have been in worship on Sunday morning, others have continued to worship from home. What I can express, as your pastor, those who are not physically present with us when we worship are deeply missed. Those who are no longer able, or who are still uncertain about returning to the physical building for ministries and events are deeply missed. I

do not say this to shame or guilt anyone at all, I do not mean it that way. I am simply aware of the empty chairs at table, the voices that are not being raised in song, the ways our community has changed in the past 18 months.

Finally, I want to offer you two invitations: First, what do you think about what I am saying? Does this resonate for you? Challenge you? Confuse you? Let's wonder together (as a community) about what we believe and how we are (or are not) living it out.

Second, we have been asking the question – “what next” for quite some time now. As things are returning to a more normal state, it is vital that we at HHPC determine where God is calling us to put our energy and valuable human (and financial) resources. To that end, you are encouraged to come on July 18 and August 29 to join in the conversation. These conversations will be after worship and a time of fellowship on Sunday morning and will conclude no later than 1PM.

Again, I am deeply sorry if you were offended or hurt by the piece in the newsletter. I encourage you to continue to have the conversation about “church”, “worship” and “faith”. Let us continue to wonder together about what it means to be a community of believers, together.

In Christ,

Rev. Edie