

# 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 God's peace be in your hearts  
and homes this Christmas season and  
throughout the New Year.**

**Note:** As we continue in-person worship, masks and social distancing practices are required. Should the COVID-19 situation change, preventing us from worshipping in person, 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](http://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, Thursdays & Fridays at 9:00 a.m. on *Facebook Live* at *Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church* or at another time later in the day.

### CONTACT US

Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church  
8426 West 95<sup>th</sup> Street, Hickory Hills, IL 60457  
**Phone:** 708-598-3100  
**E-mail:** [hpc@hickoryhillspres.org](mailto:hpc@hickoryhillspres.org)

### VISIT US ONLINE

**Website:** [www.hickoryhillspres.org](http://www.hickoryhillspres.org)  
**Facebook:** *Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church*

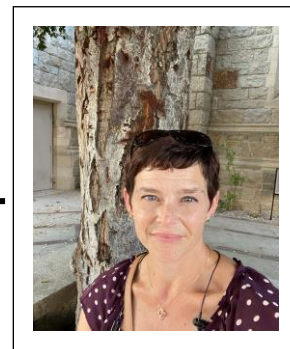


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## Christmas Devotions from Rev. Edie



Rev. Edie Lenz  
Pastor

*In place of my monthly letter, please enjoy the following Christmas devotions written by Greg Town and I, followed by some selected poems. May God's love and peace be with you all during Christmastime and through the New Year.*

### Child-like?

*Text: Matt. 18:1-5  
Beloved Children  
by Greg Town*

I know very few adults who wouldn't bristle if another called them a child or childish. It would certainly heighten my defensiveness and cause me to hear little of what the other would have to add. Being child-like wouldn't seem to rise to the surface as a trait among church and community leaders, yet throughout Scripture God's people are referred to as children of God. And we're told by Christ that unless we change and become like a child, we will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. We're also told to put aside our childish ways and live in maturity and love (such as 1 Cor. 13 and 1 John 3).

The mixture of God's Word shows us the ways of being child-like without being childish. We are guided into the recognition of our ability, capacity, and calling to act out of thoughtfulness, maturity, wisdom, and love rather than out of our childish reactivity (like conflict, distancing, blaming, etc). We are shown again and again that God's people are to remain centered in a child-like humility, as we look to God for provision and love.

And perhaps that is what it means to be a child of God as an adult who is called to lead within Christ's Church, to center ourselves always in the love and care of God, just as my own children come to me when they are hungry or hurt or in need of something they know they cannot obtain without the care of a loving parent. Unless we start in love and in our belovedness in God, our work and our being will be misguided by self-ambition, pride, and shame.

In what ways do you remain connected to your belovedness? When do you find it most difficult to say that you are God's beloved child? What could it mean for you to remember you are God's beloved child, at all times, through all things?

The work of the Spirit's transformation in Christ and our work as leaders is remaining child-like while also growing in maturity. What better season than Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany to surface the child within us, in all the belovedness, wonder, vulnerability, and courage of a child!

#### **BELOVED IS WHERE WE BEGIN**

If you would enter into the wilderness, do not begin without a blessing. Do not leave without hearing who you are: Beloved, named by the One who has traveled this path before you. Do not go without letting it echo in your ears, and if you find it is hard to let it into your heart, do not despair. That is what this journey is for.

I cannot promise this blessing will free you from danger, from fear, from hunger or thirst, from the scorching of sun or the fall of the night. But I can tell you that on this path there will be help. I can tell you that on this way there will be rest. I can tell you that you will know the strange graces that come to our aid only on a road that fly to meet us bearing comfort and strength, that come alongside us for no other cause than to lean themselves toward our ear and with their curious insistence whisper our name:

Beloved.  
Beloved.  
Beloved.

*by Jan Richardson,  
from Circle of Grace*

*(cont'd on p. 3)*

Christmas Devotions from Rev. Edie (cont'd. from p. 2.)

## **Child-like?**

*Text: Matt. 18:1-5*

*Courageous Like Children*

*by Rev. Edie Lenz*

My son LOVES American Ninja Warrior. If you are unfamiliar with the TV show, it is an obstacle course competition involving feats of physical endurance and strength I didn't know were possible for the human body. My son spends hours in our basement hanging from the rafters and learning to swing and jump from one thing to another. In his Ninja classes he takes at a gym centered around these obstacles, he delights in any new obstacle introduced, anything that allows him to challenge himself, try something new, stretch the limits of what he thinks he can do. He is fearless in his willingness to take on new challenges. He often falls the first few times, crashing down onto the mats placed over the floors. But I have never seen any kid at the gym fail to jump up and try again.

It can be challenging as adults to try new things, particularly in public; we don't like to fail, we don't like to look foolish. We don't want to fall on the first 16 tries. This level of self-consciousness is virtually absent in children; it is something they seem to learn as they grow. We all learned to walk, talk, write, read, etc. by failing and trying again. Children are constantly learning, constantly risking getting it wrong, making a mistake, having to start over. As adults, perhaps particularly as leaders, we long to insulate ourselves from this kind of courageous experimentation. We become cautious, overly concerned with looking competent and capable. As leaders, we want to appear to have it together – who will trust us if we don't?

But change cannot happen without risk, as leaders we are tasked with the need to lead forward, into new directions, to seek the calling of God. This cannot be done from a place of caution; we are to be courageous like children: willing to try, and try again, willing to learn as we go.

We must grow our courage muscles to try new things AND perhaps more importantly to be able to reflect on what we tried. Like my son, analyzing why he fell on that new obstacle and trying it a bit differently the next time –we, as leaders, are to reflect on what has been tried, what has been learned and what can be gleaned to move forward in courageous possibility.

### **A BLESSING FOR NEW BEGINNINGS**

In out-of-the-way places of the heart, where your thoughts never think to wander, this beginning has been quietly forming, waiting until you were ready to emerge.

For a long time it has watched your desire, feeling the emptiness growing inside you, noticing how you willed yourself on, still unable to leave what you had outgrown.

It watched you play with the seduction of safety and the gray promises that sameness whispered, heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent, wondered would you always live like this.

Then the delight, when your courage kindled and out you stepped onto new ground, your eyes young again with energy and dream. A path of plenitude opening before you.

Though your destination is not yet clear you can trust the promise of this opening; unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning that is at one with your life's desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure, Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk; soon you will be home in a new rhythm, for your soul senses the world that awaits you.

*(cont'd on p. 4)*

Christmas Devotions from Rev. Edie (cont'd. from p. 3.)

## Child-like?

Text: Matt. 18:1-5

*Curiosity and Wonder of Children*

by Greg Town

I'm hoping you've had the joy of sitting with an inquisitive 3- or 4- year-old, being peppered with all sorts of questions, some with simple answers and some that would leave even an astrophysicist scratching their head. Or perhaps you've been able to visit a museum, a zoo, or a festival or fair with a child, and experienced the wide-eyed wonder that occurs when one must take in the biggest and smallest of details.

Somewhere in our youth, most individuals lose that innate sense of wonder and curiosity. We stop asking questions. We stop seeing all the parts of our world and ourselves with wide-eyed wonder. We begin to think we know enough to get through life. When we're anxious, curiosity is often the first thing to be silenced within us, as we jump to defensiveness, easy answers, and quick-fixes.

I've visited the same museums and zoos multiple times with my own children. Very little has changed in these places over the years, yet my children are always excited to go again, because they know there's something they missed before. I used to find myself reluctantly accompanying them on subsequent visits, wondering why on earth we're going to the same place again, yet somewhere along the way the Spirit challenged me to take on my children's joy, to join in their curiosity, and to connect with the awe they have at all manner of things. This practice, as a parent, has overflowed into other areas of my life - my calling and career, my church and community, my inner self and my relationships. I've begun to allow wonder to have its way, to connect with and express awe, to remain curious and ask questions, and especially to do this when anxiety is high in myself and others.

How might your leadership and relationships change if you started asking more questions and sought a deeper and more genuine curiosity with those around you?

How have you seen curiosity influencing other leadership traits in yourself, like creativity, hopefulness, compassion, and empowerment?

The invitation of Christ, the work of the Spirit, and the call to leadership often means reconnecting with and rekindling the child-like curiosity and wonder.

### **HELP ME UNBURY WONDER**

O God of the miracles, of galaxies, and crocuses, and children, I praise you now from the soul of the child within me, shy in my awe, delighted by my foolishness, stubborn in my wanting, persistent in my questioning, and bold in asking you to help me unbury my talents for wonder and humor and gratitude, so I may invest them eagerly in the recurring mysteries of spring and beginnings, of willows that weep and rivers that flow and people who grow in such endlessly amazing and often painful ways; and I will be forever linked and loyal to justice and joy, simplicity and humanity, Christ and his kingdom.

*by Ted Loder, from Guerillas of Grace*

Christmas Devotions from Rev. Edie (cont'd. from p. 4.)

## Child-like?

Text: Matt. 18:1-5

Vulnerable as Children

by Rev. Edie Lenz

Children are often referred to as “vulnerable.” By this we usually mean that they are in need of care, protection, nurture, and “scaffolding” to help them thrive. Children don’t inherently know who is safe, what is good for them, or how to navigate the world –for that they need wise, loving, and dedicated guides. When we love our children well, we don’t control every moment of their being, we don’t do all things for them – rather we invite their curiosity, playfulness, and let them learn. As leaders we often find ourselves hit by the reality – we don’t always know what to do, where we should go, or how we are going to get there. In this admission is a vulnerability that is often uncomfortable and deeply challenging, but lies at the heart of who we are called by Christ to be.

Brené Brown writes of vulnerability as “uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure. But vulnerability is not weakness; it’s our most accurate measure of courage. When the barrier is our belief about vulnerability, the question becomes: “Are we willing to show up and be seen when we can’t control the outcome?” –

Brené Brown, *Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone*

Jesus invites us to become like children: to be vulnerable. As leaders, we are invited into the risk and uncertainty of not having all the answers, needing to learn new things, needing partners and new ways of thinking. This vulnerability flies in the face of what we often hold up as “good leadership”; the leader on a pedestal, the person with the answers, the charismatic leader who knows exactly what to do. But, uncertainty, risk, and the possibility of emotional exposure – these are the makings of a Christ-like leader.

In the face of overwhelming change in the past 2 years, leading a small congregation I often feel the vulnerability of not having the answers. I have a lot of questions, but not the answers. To sit with my leaders and say, “I don’t know.” is at once deeply vulnerable and deeply freeing. Reality is – I don’t know, I don’t have the answers for our future but I am committed to deep discernment, prayer, and wondering together. Is it frightening? Yes. Uncertain? Absolutely. Faithful? I am committed to finding out.

## VULNERABILITY

Vulnerability is not a weakness, a passing indisposition, or something we can arrange to do without, vulnerability is not a choice, vulnerability is the underlying, ever present and abiding undercurrent of our natural state.

To run from vulnerability is to run from the essence of our nature, the attempt to be invulnerable is the vain attempt to become something we are not, and most especially, to close off our understanding of the grief of others. More seriously, in refusing our vulnerability we refuse the help needed at every turn of our existence and immobilize the essential, tidal and conversational foundations of our identity.

To have a temporary, isolated sense of power over all events and circumstances, is a lovely illusionary privilege and perhaps the prime and most beautifully constructed conceit of being human and especially of being youthfully human, but it is a privilege that must be surrendered with that same youth, with ill health, with accident, with the loss of loved ones who do not share our untouchable powers; powers eventually and most emphatically given up, as we approach our last breath.

The only choice we have as we mature is how we inhabit our vulnerability, how we become larger and more courageous and more compassionate through our intimacy with disappearance, our choice is to inhabit vulnerability as generous citizens of loss, robustly and fully, or conversely, as misers and complainers, reluctant and fearful, always at the gates of existence, but never bravely and completely attempting to enter, never wanting to risk ourselves, never walking fully through the door.

by David Whyte

## **WORSHIP, READINGS AND REFLECTIONS**

The following are readings and sermons that Rev. Edie will focus on at Sunday worship during December and January. 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 at 10:00 a.m. Sunday mornings or recorded and posted on our website at [www.hickoryhillspres.org](http://www.hickoryhillspres.org) by noon on Sunday.



### **A December Reflection**

In this Advent season, you are invited to slow down, breathe awhile and notice yourself; how are you? Are you a part of the weary world, ready for a time of resting in the midst of holiday chaos? Are you struggling with grief, uncertainty, or darker emotions, wishing you could feel some sense of joy? Are you well-rested, joyful and ready to engage the season?

Wherever you are, Advent is a season of preparation for the coming of Christ. Not just his coming as a baby, which is a big deal, but also his coming again, which hasn't happened yet.

This Advent, I want to invite you into a space of simple reflection. Without all the noise, chaos, and glittering things.

This season, I want to invite you to remember the simplicity and uncertainty of the first Christmas, in an out of the way place where so few noticed what God was up to. As you reflect on the scriptures in this season, I invite you to two simple questions:

**Where do you see God at work?**

**How might you join with God's work?**

### **Reflections (cont'd)**

#### **A January Reflection for the New Year**

As the Advent and Christmas seasons come to an end and as the new year begins, spend some time reflecting on the following questions to help you become aware of how you might be a light to the world using the gifts bestowed on you by the Spirit.

**How are you shining? The Spirit gives to each of us gifts, what are the gifts you are aware you have? What are the gifts you see in others? How are you loving yourself and your neighbor?**

## **READINGS**

### **DECEMBER 2021**

#### **December 5, 2021 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent**

Readings: Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79  
Sermon: Prepare

#### **December 12 - 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent**

Readings: Zephaniah 3:14-20; Luke 3:7-18  
Sermon: Joy

#### **December 19 - 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**

Readings: Luke 1:39-5; Micah 5:2-5  
Sermon: Shalom

#### **December 24 - 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**

Readings: Luke 2: 1-20; Titus 3:4-7  
Sermon: Wonder

#### **December 26 - 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas**

"Carols and Scriptures"  
Readings: Psalm 96; Colossians 3:12-17;  
John 1:1-14

### **JANUARY 2022**

#### **January 2, 2022 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas**

Rev. Marge Vander Wagen will celebrate worship and will choose the readings and sermon.

#### **January 9 - Epiphany Sunday**

Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 15:21  
Sermon: Light to the People

#### **January 16 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany**

Readings: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11;  
John 2:1-11  
Sermon: Gifts

#### **January 23 - 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany**

Readings: 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31;  
Luke 4:14-21  
Sermon: Body of Christ

#### **January 30 - 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany**

Readings: 1 Corinthians 13: Luke 4:21-30  
Sermon: The Greatest of These



*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.*

*The following is a complete list of those we are remembering in prayer.*

*If you are on this prayer list and wish to be removed or you would like to be added to the list,  
please call the church office at 708-598-3100 or e-mail us at [hpsc@hickoryhillspres.org](mailto:hpsc@hickoryhillspres.org).*

**WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED OF HEALING  
AND THOSE WITH HEALTH CONCERNS.**

**Addy**; (Karen H); **Angie and family** (Debbie Z); **Arlene P**; **Bay** (Rick); **Bob**; **Bob F** (Ar); **Brad** (Andrew); **Bruce** (Jeni); **Cindy** (Katie); **Chris** (Bernie); **Chloe** (Kim); **Danny F** (Jeni); **Dave D** (Ar); **David** (Karen H); **DeSean** (Kim); **Diane** (Wilda); **Doris** (Diane's Mom); **Esther** (Grace); **Francie** (Karen G); **Gabriel** (Katie); **Gary and Valarie** (Kim); **Gene** (Grace); **Gert** (Ar); **Glenda** (Melanie); **Gordon** (Diane); **Gracie** (Kim); **Kathy** (Scott); **Hunter** (Karen G); **Jackson**; **Janet** (Evelyn); **Jay** (Susan); **Jenette L** (Sandy B); **Jim V** (Bernie); **Jim** (Bernie); **Joe** (Shirley D); **Justin** (Karen H); **Kathy** (Bernie); **Kathy** (Linda L); **Kim B** (Jeni); **Kyle** (Jeni); **Leanne** (Karen H); **Linda**; **Liz** (Evelyn); **Mackenzie** (Bernie); **Margie** (Katie); **Mark** (Dianne); **Matthew** (Karen H); **Michael** (Karen H); **Michael** (Shirley); **Mike** (Kim); **Mike B** (Jeni); **Papa John** (Jeni); **Pat** (Karen H); **Patty** (Katie); **Pete** (Esther); **Peter** (Katie); **Rae** (Karen G); **Rose** (Katie); **Ruth S** (Jen); **Sandi**; **Sandy** (Mel); **Sandy J** (Bernie); **Shannon**; **Sharon** (Tom M); **Sherry** (Peggy); **Stan P** (Bernie); **Suzanne** (Bernie); **Tierney** (Shirley D); **TJ** (Katie); **Todd** (Charlie); **Tracy** (Debbie Z); **Wanda** (Jeni); **Yvette** (Kim)

**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 unemployed, under-employed and those seeking workers; those in isolation; those living in domestic violence situations; those battling addiction; fire and police departments tasked with keeping the peace; systemic racism and social challenges in our country; victims of abuse and their abusers; mental health struggles

**WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO MOURN.**

For family and friends of the Buck family on the death of **Pat** (Rick); for the Gardner family on the death of **Joe** (Susan); for family and friends of **Irene K** (Faithwalking) on the death of her daughter **Katie**; for the **Scheid family** on the death of **Thain**; for the Krizik family on the sudden passing of their sister **Trish**; for the Wheeler family and friends on the death of **Cathy**; for the Antoszkiewicz family and friends on the death of **Deb** (Dan Ciametti's cousin); for family and friends of **Stacy McGinnis** (Tom); for family and friends of **Julie Witek** who passed away; son and brother (Karen H); for **victims and families affected by violence**; for those who are being impacted

**WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED  
OF STRENGTH AND HEALING.**

**Bob** (Dave D); **Carol S** (Ar); **Dan and Sara** (Rick); **David** (Bernie); **Dina and AI** (Cindy); **Douma family** (Evelyn); **Edward** (Evelyn); **Elizabeth** (Darlene); **Erin Beal and children**; **Frankie** (Bernie); **Grace and Christy** (Kim); **Guy K**; **Gwynn** (Katie); **Harry** (Katie); **Irene and Tiffany** (Katie B); **Isaiah** (Kim); **Jessica** (Joan); **Joan Panko**; **Joellen** (Mel); **Karen K** (Ar); **Michelle** (Katie); **Mike B** (Jeni); **Natalie** (Bernie); **Pam** (Katie); **Patti** (Jeni); **Robert** (Gert); **Sandy D** (Ar); **Shawn** (Kim); **Stan** (Bernie); **Stephanie, Mackenzie and Savino**; **Sue** (Grace); **Susan** (Katie)

**WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED  
DURING VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.**

For **Dali, Nafe, and Yanko** awaiting custody hearing; for the current situation in **Afghanistan**; for all those who tested positive for **COVID-19** even without symptoms; **violence against civilians and those living in fear**; **churches who are struggling** to reach members and care for people; those who provide **essential services** we need; **Ethiopia**; **Gina** (Bernie); **Haiti**; **Holly** (Evelyn); **Kaitlyn** (Karen G); for those who are **struggling mentally and emotionally** at this time; for **Missionaries in Haiti**; **students and teachers**

**WE GIVE THANKS FOR THE THANKFULNESS OF GOD.**



## Discipleship Report

by Jean Swearingen

### HHPC's "TRUNK OR TREAT" EVENT

Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church (HHPC) held our first ever "Trunk or Treat" event on Sunday, October 31, 2021. Our parking lot was transformed into a safe alternative for community and HHPC youth. The creativity of décor was BOO-tiful! There were 15 "trunks" and volunteers to greet our participants and oversee our games. The weather cooperated. We had a costumes so great that her own relatives did not recognize her! An estimated 110 Trick or Treaters passed through our parking lot.

#### AND THERE WERE WINNERS!

**Best Decorated: Scott and Debbie Zimmerman** – awarded a Subway gift card

**Best Theme: Alvin and Michael Swearingen** – awarded a Buona Beef gift card

**Best Costume: Tasha Swindle (as Harley Quinn)** – awarded a Target gift card

We hope all Ghosts, Goblins and Witches are now sleeping soundly in preparation of HHPC's Halloween "Trunk or Treat" 2022! A HUGE Thank You to everyone who helped to make our first "Trunk or Treat" a success!

### HOLIDAY MAGIC

HHPC has decorated a Christmas tree at Brookfield Zoo's *Holiday Magic*. An energetic group from HHPC spent the afternoon of November 13 at the Zoo. They decorated HHPC's tree and enjoyed the sights and sounds of Brookfield Zoo. If you are lucky enough to visit Brookfield Zoo for this event, HHPC has tree #455. Once again, the dates for *Holiday Magic* at Brookfield Zoo are:

**Wednesday – Sunday  
December 1-5 3:00 PM - 9:00 PM**

**Wednesday – Sunday  
December 8-12 3:00 PM - 9:00 PM**

**Wednesday – Sunday  
December 15-19 3:00 PM - 9:00 PM**

**Sunday – Friday  
December 26-31 3:00 PM - 9:00 PM**

**ADVANCED TICKETS  
FOR HOLIDAY MAGIC ARE REQUIRED!**

#### *Holiday Magic Trivia*

**This is Brookfield Zoo's 40<sup>th</sup>  
Holiday Zoo celebration.  
The first celebration had 16 trees!**

**Note: This year's  
HHPC decorated  
tree is #455.**

### 2022 IS ON THE WAY!

Discipleship wishes everyone a Healthy and Happy 2022!

Discipleship is already planning for 2022!

Plans are in progress to hold Souper Sunday on Sunday, February 13, 2022. We're not sure what this event will look like. Stay tuned!

Plans are in progress for Lent.  
Ash Wednesday is March 2, 2022.  
Easter IS Sunday, April 17, 2022.  
Stay tuned!

Discipleship is moving forward with plans for 2022. We will keep a close eye on that dastardly pandemic and make responsible decisions. Stay tuned for the February 2022 newsletter.

*Peace, Comfort and Joy! Jean*





# Mission Report

*by Kim Ambrosat*

## **Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**

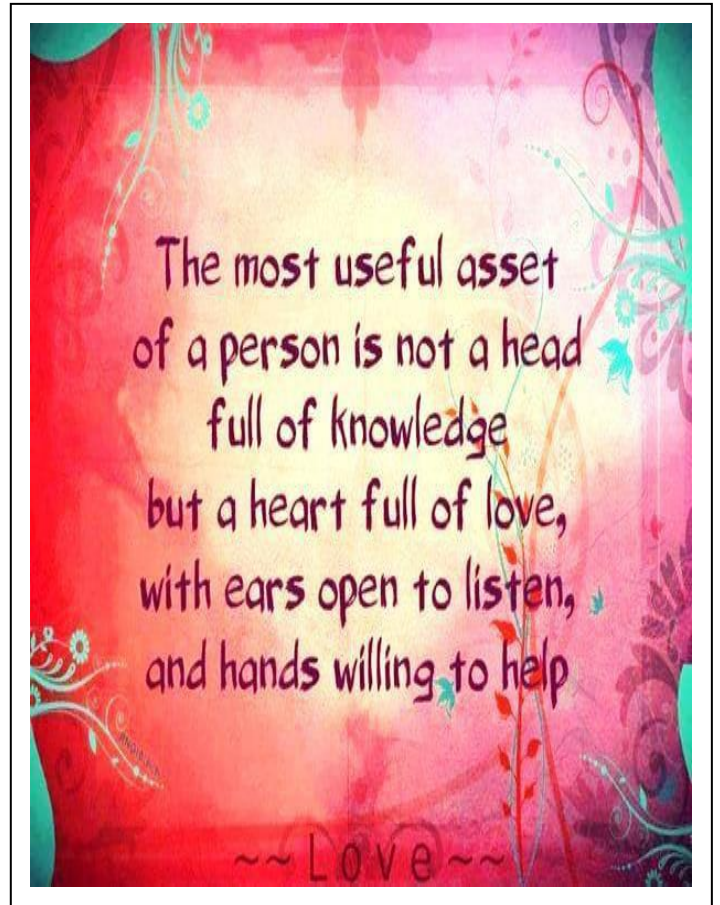
Our continuing collection of hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves has been wonderful! Thank you for your generosity!

Our next Community Meal is scheduled for December 6th from 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., then again on January 3rd. As usual, the meals will still be served in drive-thru fashion. *Want to help? Contact Evelyn or Debbie.*

The Jones Center children's gift tags are in the narthex waiting for removal for your gift giving. At the time of writing this newsletter, Mark from The Jones Center hasn't told me when they need the gifts. Please watch/listen for a date, shop early and bring your unwrapped donations.

Our micro-pantry is still being used as a local source of staples. Thanks for your generous donations!

Keep your (clean) bottle caps coming in! Mike is busy weighing them. If you're interested in how many hundreds of pounds we have, ask him – thank him - for overseeing this mission!



Continue to pray for one other and the work HHPC continues to do in our corner of the world. May the joy of the coming months engulf you!

*Peace, Kim*





# Women's Bible Study

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the women of our Bible study group.

Join us Mondays at 1:00 p.m. at Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church in Fellowship Hall.

We finished the stories in the book, *She Is Called: Women of the Bible*.

### Here is what we learned:

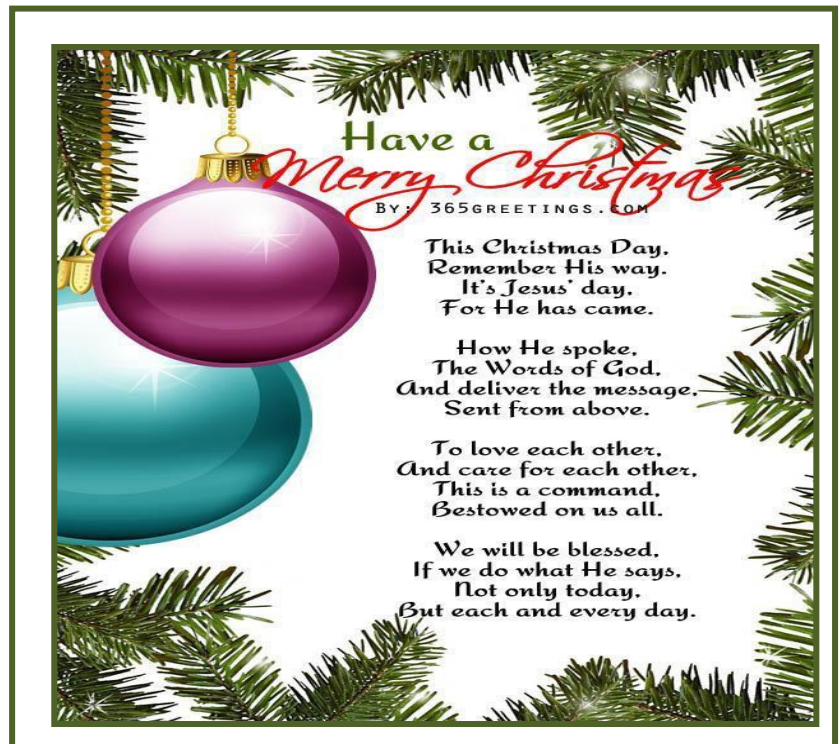
- Some stories were inspiring through good leadership and generosity.
- One story was of a disciple and evangelist.
- Another was about two queens who knew how to repond to the circumstances in which they lived.
- Another two women who encouraged one another.
- A wife and her husband working together for the good of the church and the cause of the Kingdom.
- One story reminded us of the roots of blood.
- Another was a worshipping warrior hearing God's voice.
- Two women who had faith which made them well.
- One woman had a tragedy turned into triumph.

*Our class dug deeper and we grew stronger!*

**We, the Body of Christ, must be rooted in the spirit and love of Christ. We need a healing that allows us to bear witness to our experience.**

### NOTE

The Bible Study group is taking a holiday break and will resume on Monday, January 10, 2022 at 1:00 PM.



*A Blessed Christmas and Happy New Year to All!  
Love & Hugs, Arlene and Debbie*



## **December and January Events**

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**BREAKFAST WITH SANTA  
SUNDAY,  
DECEMBER 5, 2021  
JONES CENTER  
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM**

**HHPC CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP**  
*(Bell Choir will perform)*

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24**

**4:00 PM & 11:00 PM**

*Only the 11:00 PM worship  
will be livestreamed  
on Facebook Live.*

**HHPC COMMUNITY MEALS  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2021**

**AND**

**MONDAY, JANUARY 3, 2022**

*(Menus to be determined)*

**HHPC BREAKFAST  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26  
9:00 AM – FELLOWSHIP HALL**

**MORNING WORSHIP WITH  
“CAROLS AND SCRIPTURE”  
WILL FOLLOW AT 10:00 AM.**

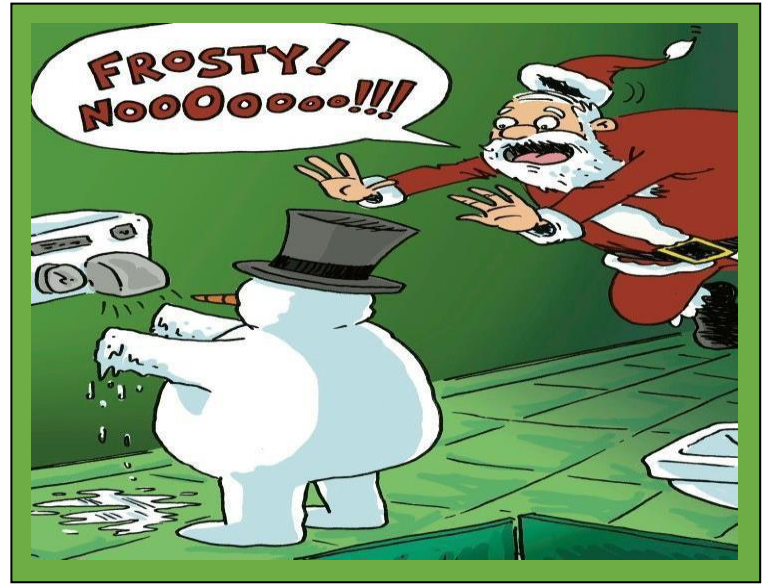
**SOUPE SUNDAY  
FEBRUARY 13, 2022**

**Plans are in progress, but we're  
not sure what this event  
will look like. Stay tuned!**

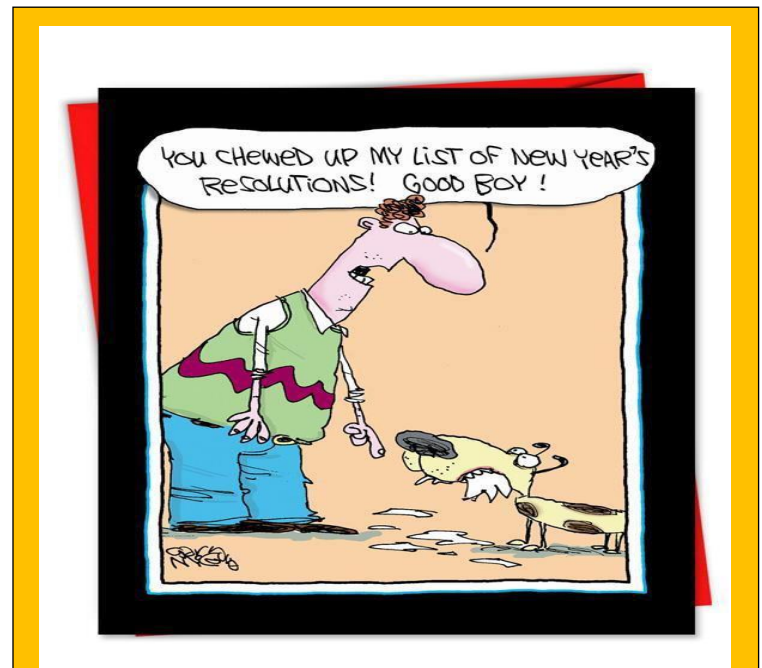


# LOL Time

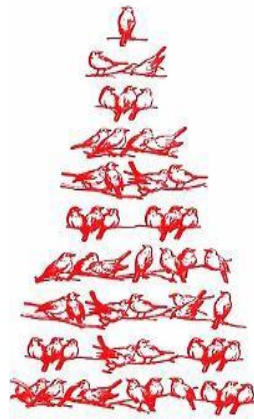
**For Christmas and  
the New Year**



*I'M GOING TO  
ORDER A PIZZA  
BEFORE NEW  
YEAR AND WHEN  
THEY ARRIVE I'M  
GOING SAY I  
ORDERED THIS A  
YEAR AGO!  
LOL!*



# "All Things Christmas"



## Spelling Out the Meaning of Christmas

- C** - stands for **Christ**. If we leave Him out of Christmas it is like celebrating a wedding without a groom.
- H** - stands for the **Hope** He gives us - hope of a life without end.
- R** - stands for the **Revolution** He began: turning hate in to love, war in to peace, and everyone into everyone's neighbor.
- I** - stands for **Israel**, the land where He was born. But it also stands for me, for Christ could be born a thousand times in Bethlehem, but it would all be in vain unless He is born in me.
- S** - stands for the **Salvation** He brought: those who lived in darkness saw a great light.
- T** - stands for **Thanks** - thanks to the Father for the gift of His Son. The best way to say thanks is to make room for Him in our hearts.
- M** - stands for **Mary** who brought Him to birth. She will help to bring Him to birth in us also.
- A** - stands for **Angels** who at His birth sang: "Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth!" - the sweetest music ever heard on earth!
- S** - stands for the **Star** that led the wise men to Bethlehem. Now Christ is the star we follow. His is the light that will guide us through the night until the sun of eternal day dawns upon us!

## A CHRISTMAS TREE BLESSING

Lord Jesus,

Encircle this tree with your blessing. May its twinkling lights remind us of the hope and promise of your coming.

May we find joy in the memories we share in its tinsel and trimmings. May the presents we place beneath is give rise to an appreciation for the gift of your presence among us. We ask this in Your holy name, Amen.

*Thanks  
for coming  
Jesus*

## A Memorable Christmas Tree

Aside from decorating the family Christmas tree why not have your guests participate in decorating a miniature Christmas tree. Here's how.

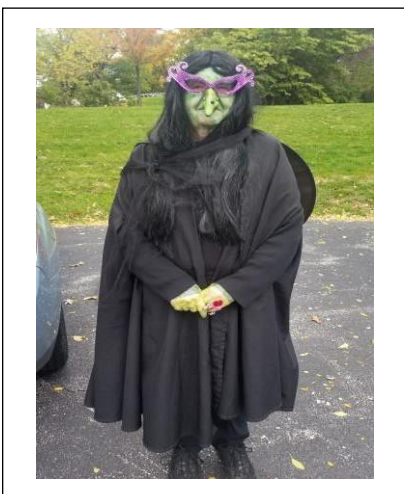
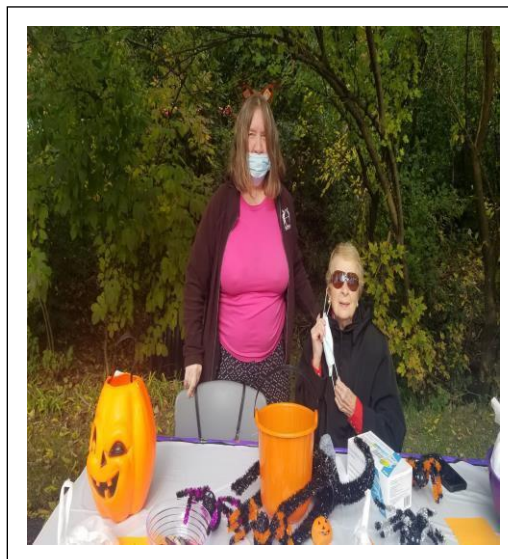
Go to your local craft store and buy a small, green artificial tree (approx. 12" high) and some miniature Christmas ornaments that your guests will use to decorate the tree. Also buy a miniature star ornament that will be the tree topper.

Place the undecorated tree in the middle of your table for the centerpiece. When guests sit down at the table, pass around a basket with the mini ornaments in it and have each guest pick out one ornament.

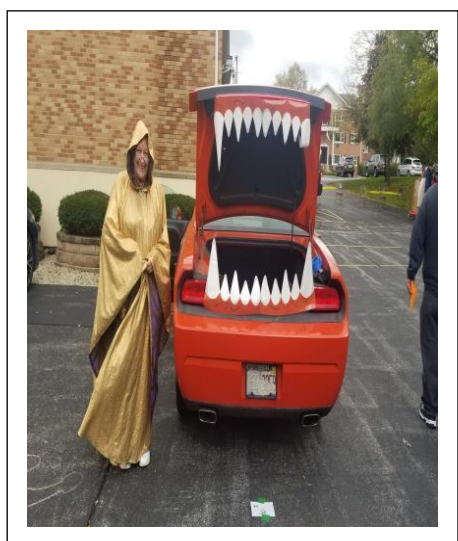
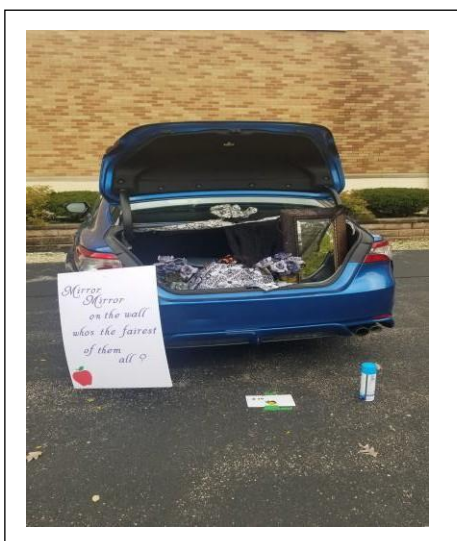
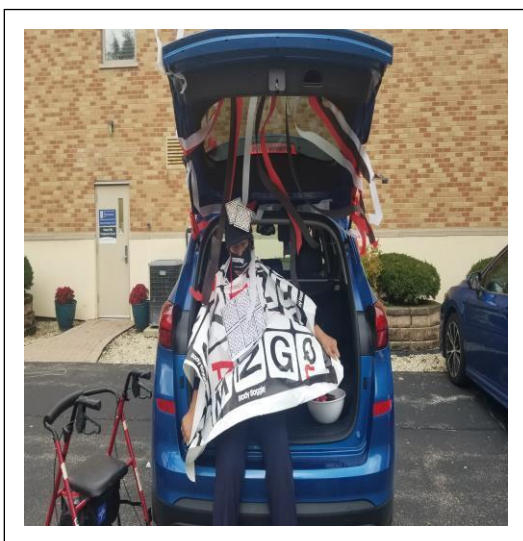
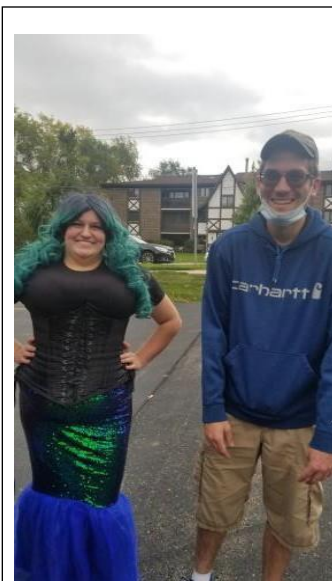
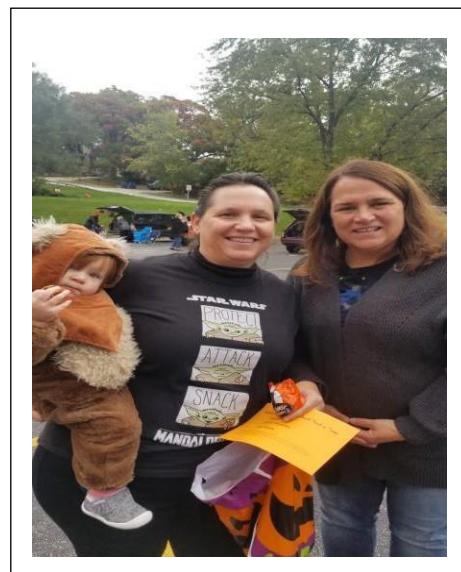
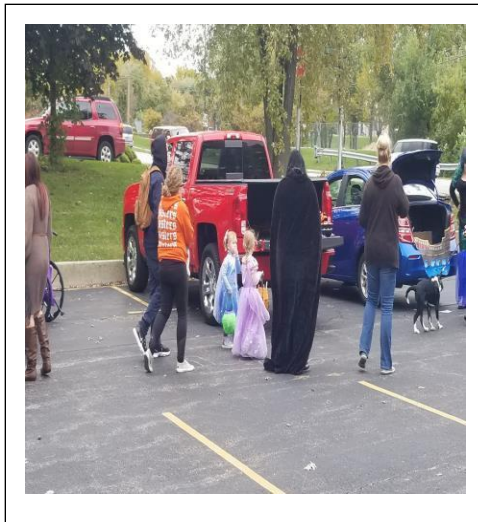
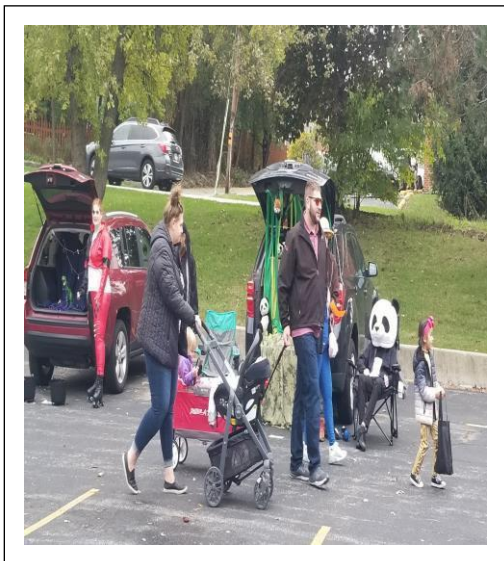
After all guests have selected their ornament, pass around the tree and have each guest hang their ornament on it. The host will then top the tree with the miniature star and place the guest-designed Christmas tree in the center of the table.

After the meal, have a drawing for one of the guests to take home as their Christmas memory of your time together.

# HHPCC'S FIRST "TRUNK OR TREAT"



Trunk or Treat (continued from p. 14)



# **Church Musician's Corner**

**by Greg Rolla**

## **Christmas Fun!**

Here's something fun to do!  
Match the Christmas carol in  
Column A with the word  
or words of that song in  
Column B shown below.



*Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year to All!*  
Greg



## **List of Christmas Carols**

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| ___ Hark! The Herald<br>Angels Sing | a. <i>come and worship</i>                   |
| ___ Sing We Now<br>of Christmas     | b. <i>Repeat the<br/>sounding joy</i>        |
| ___ Silent Night!<br>Holy Night     | c. <i>frosty wind made<br/>moan</i>          |
| ___ O Come,<br>O Come Emmanuel      | d. <i>O come to my<br/>heart, Lord Jesus</i> |



## Blessings Be Upon You!

**B**e present.  
**L**et the day flow with grace.  
**E**xpect joy. Be positive.  
**S**erve with compassion.  
**S**peak only kindness.  
**I**mpart only love.  
**N**ever forget you're not alone.  
**G**ive thanks for everything.  
**S**ee goodness in others. mary davis

EveryDaySpirit.NET



**God bless all of our dear friends on their birthdays in December and January.**

December 1	Darlene Delaney
December 1	Melanie Swindle
December 5	Dawn Morgucz
December 12	Bryan Ambrosat
December 16	Jayden Kenealy
December 16	Gina Ciametti
December 16	Greg Nirtaut
December 20	Natasha Swindle
December 29	Laverne Mocariski
December 31	Carla Zabelka

January 1	Hunter Treccani
January 1	Lee Lee Vryza
January 4	Stan Flynn
January 7	MacKenzie Netter
January 21	Andrew Witek
January 22	Ashley Fiedor
January 24	Bobby DeVries
January 25	Gwen Lopinski
January 28	Rev. Edie Lenz
January 31	Audrey Sowa

## 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 at 708-598-3100.

### Recent Change of Address: Megan Zimmerman

If you have a change to your personal contact information, please contact the church office by calling 708-598-3100.





## DECEMBER 2021

No Bible Study this month

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			<b>1</b> 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	<b>2</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live 4:30 PM TOPS	<b>3</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> 9:00 AM - 11 AM Breakfast with Santa (Jones Center) 10:00 AM In-person Worship & Fellowship (make tags & cards for nursing homes 11:15 AM Discipleship 5:00 P.M. REV Worship	<b>6</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live  <b>NO BIBLE STUDY UNTIL JAN 13</b>	<b>7</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live 7:00 PM Worship & Music	<b>8</b> 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	<b>9</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>10</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> 10:00 AM In-person Worship & Children/Youth Sunday School 5:00 PM REV Worship	<b>13</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live 7:30 PM Session	<b>14</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	<b>15</b> 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	<b>16</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>17</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> 10:00 AM In-person Worship & Fellowship 11:15 AM Missions 5:00 PM REV Worship	<b>20</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>21</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	<b>22</b> 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	<b>23</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>24</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live 4:00 PM & 11 PM Christmas Eve Worship	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 9:00 AM HHPC Breakfast 10:00 AM In-person Worship & Children/Youth Sunday School 11:15 AM Board of Deacons 5:00 PM REV Worship	<b>27</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>28</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	<b>29</b> 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	<b>30</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>31</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	



## JANUARY 2022

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b> 10:00 AM In-person Worship & Fellowship 5:00 P.M. REV Worship	<b>3</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live 5:30 PM-6:00 PM Community Meal	<b>4</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live 7:00 PM Worship & Music	<b>5</b> 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	<b>6</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>7</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> 10:00 AM In-person Worship & Children/Youth Sunday School 5:00 PM REV Worship	<b>10</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study resumes	<b>11</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	<b>12</b> 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	<b>13</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>14</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 10:00 AM In-person Worship & Fellowship 5:00 PM REV Worship	<b>17</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study	<b>18</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	<b>19</b> 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	<b>20</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>21</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> 10:00 AM In-person Worship & Sunday School 5:00 PM REV Worship	<b>24</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study	<b>25</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	<b>26</b> 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	<b>27</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>28</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> 10:00 AM In-person Worship 5:00 PM REV Worship	<b>31</b> 9:00 AM Morning Devotion Facebook Live 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study					

DEC 2021 - JAN 2022

May God's peace be in your  
hearts and homes this Christmas  
season and throughout the New Year.



*Connecting together to worship and praise our God!*

**HICKORY HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**THE CONNECTING LINK**

**DATED MATERIAL - DO NOT HOLD**

**Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church**  
8426 West 95<sup>th</sup> Street  
Hickory Hills, IL 60457