HICKORY HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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.



DEC. 2022 - JAN. 2023

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WORSHIP WITH US

Sunday Morning Worship at 10:00 a.m.—Join us for worship, in-person or online. Our services are also recorded and made available later. You can find us on Facebook at Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church and on our website at hickoryhillspres.org REV Worship meets at 5:00 p.m.

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

VISIT US ONLINE

www.hickoryhillspres.org



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Worship and Music

A Letter from Rev. Edie



Rev. Edie Lenz

Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, New Year's, **Epiphany** all seem to rush and jumble together in this season of festivals, festivities, and celebration. This end/beginning of every year is a busy and bright season that often leaves us around the 8th of January exhausted, slightly depressed, and having already broken any promises or resolutions we have made for ourselves. Here at HHPC, we are not immune to this faster pace, greater activity and then a let-down or release. It often seems that when January comes, we are left wondering, now what? What do we do now? I want to invite you then, at the beginning of this

hectic season, to pause, take a moment or two and notice what is happening inside you and around you.

In the season of Advent we prepare for the coming of the Messiah, the Christ Child, both as an infant at Christmas and His promised return. At Christmas we celebrate the birth, the messy, noisy, ordinary and extraordinary birth of a baby. At Epiphany we celebrate the coming of the Magi, but also the coming of the light of Christ, not just to a few, but to the world. In all of this, we are celebrating flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone, humanity. You see, we are

preparing and celebrating not just an idea or a spiritual truth, but the coming of a Savior: fully God and fully human. It matters to us; it matters to God's plan that Jesus came as a human being born to a human family. Have you ever paused to wonder just what that might mean for us as human beings? Why does it matter that Jesus was one of us?

Often, we think of this in abstract ways. We think of Jesus experiencing the same kinds of struggles that we do, the same pains of growing, learning, and living as a human. It

(cont'd on p. 2)

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

matters that Jesus had to learn like we do to navigate the challenges of emotion: anxiety, fear, hope, joy, anger, grief, laughter, and all of the range of the human emotional landscape. We might think of Jesus like us learning to navigate human relationships with family, friends, and even enemies. But there is more. Jesus, like us, was flesh and blood. Jesus didn't just have a head and a heart, he had a body. This means that the Son of God felt pain, weariness, and hunger. The Son of God felt the heat of a summer's day and the cool breeze blowing in the evening. Jesus knew what it was like to long for human connection and touch. Our Lord and Savior knew what it was like to be a human being, just like you and L

What then does this mean for us? Why do you suppose it matters that Jesus appeared in flesh?

As we make ready and celebrate the season, I want to invite you to pause. Take stock, not just of where your head might be, trying to calm all of the things that you think need to be done right now. Notice your heart and soul; how is it with your spirit? With rushing thoughts or a pounding heart, it can be hard to be still and notice what is going on within us. But then, notice your body; notice what your feet, back, hands, or gut might have to say. I invite you to spend a little time wondering about being a whole person; what was it like for Jesus, and, what is it like for you? Who is around you, what is it like for them?

You see, in this busy season, it is easy to forget to breathe, forget to notice, forget to slow down. But the Savior of the world came as one of us, to be with us, that we might have not just life, but have it more fully. Who has Christ placed in your path? How might you be more present to yourself and to those around you this season?

Christmas Peace in Christ, Rev. Edie



Worship, Readings & Reflections



The prophet Isaiah spoke often of the promises of God and the coming Messiah.

As you read the texts each week, wonder:

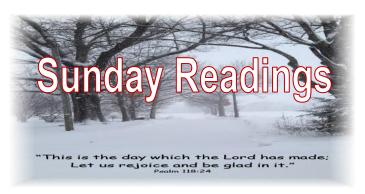
- How does Isaiah understand the Messiah?
- What does the Kingdom of God look like?
- What are the qualities of the coming Savior?

Jesus came as a human being, tiny and frail: what does this tell us about God?

Why do you think it matters that Jesus came in flesh and not just in Spirit?

What is the significance of Jesus being just like us?

Jesus came proclaiming that the Kingdom of God is come; what is Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God? How is it already here? What is not yet?



The following are readings and sermons that Rev. Edie will focus on 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 hickoryhillspres.org.

DECEMBER

JANUARY

DECEMBER 4, 2022

2nd Sunday of Advent

Readings: Isaiah 11:1-10;

Matthew 3:1-12

Sermon Title: God's Shalom

DECEMBER 11

3rd Sunday of Advent

Readings: Isaiah 3:1-10;

Matthew 11:2-11

Sermon Title: Fertile Deserts

DECEMBER 18

4th Sunday of Advent

Readings: Isaiah 7:10-16;

Matthew 1:18-25

Sermon Title: Dreams

DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve

Readings: Isaiah 9:2-7;

Luke 2:1-20

Sermon Title: Now in Flesh

Appearing

DECEMBER 25

Christmas Day

Readings: Isaiah 52:7-10;

John 1:1-14

Sermon Title: Word Made Flesh

JANUARY 1, 2023 (New Year's Day)

1st Sunday of Christmas

Readings: Isaiah 63:7-9;

Matthew 1:18-25

Carols and Prayers

JANUARY 8

Baptism of the Lord

Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6;

Matthew 2:1-12

Sermon Title: Good Gifts

JANUARY 15

2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Readings: Isaiah 42:1-9:

Matthew 3:13-17

Sermon Title: Baptism

JANUARY 22

3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Readings: Isaiah 9:1-4:

Matthew 4:12-23

Sermon Title: Beginning of Jesus'

Ministry; Calling Disciples

JANUARY 29

4th Sunday after Epiphany

Readings: Micah 6:1-1;

Matthew 5:1-12

Sermon Title: Blessed



The following is a complete list of those we are remembering in prayer. If you are on this prayer list and wish to be <u>removed</u> or you would like to be <u>added</u> to the list, please call the church office at 708-598-3100 or e-mail us at hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org.

You can also send prayer requests online through our website at

hickoryhillspres.org/prayerrequest/

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

Addy; Ali (Susan); Bay (Rick); Benjamin (Kim A); Bob; Bob (Tom K); Bobby (Toni); Brad (Andrew); Bruce (Jeni); Carrie (Jeni); Craig (Bernie); Dan (Diane C.); Danny F (Jeni); Dave D (Darlene); David; Diana (Wilda); Doris (Diane's Mom); Esther (Grace); Francie (Karen G); Frankie (Bernie); Gary and Valarie (Kim); Gert; Gordon (Diane); Ira (Scott); Jane (Jean); Janet (Evelyn); Jay (Susan); Jenette L (Sandy B); Jill (Jeni); John (Debbie's brother); Joe (Shirley D); Kathy (Bernie); Kathy (Linda L); Katie & Joe B; Kim B (Jeni); Larry M (Karen G); Leanne; Linda L; Liz (Evelyn); Mark (Dianne); Mary (Doral); Matthew; Michael; Michael (Shirley); Michele (Katie); Papa John (Jeni); Pat; Pete (Esther); Peter B (Esther); Rae (Karen G); Ryan; Ruth S (Jen); Sandi (Karen G); Shannon; Sherry (Peggy); Shirley A (Karen G); Sonja (Nick); Sonya (Michelle V); Suzanne (Bernie); Tammy (Gordon); Tierney (Shirley D); Tracy (Debbie Z); Victor M (Debbie Z); Wanda (Jeni)

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED OF STRENGTH AND HEALING.

Andrew & Evan (Darlene); Alice L (Grace); Angela (Katie); Beth (Teresa); Bill (Bernie); Brian K. (Debbie); Bob (Dave D); Bob (Grace); Bree's Mom (Evelyn); Carol S; Dan (Diane C); Debbie Z; Dina and Al (Cindy); Dotty (Debbie); Douma Family (Evelyn); Edward (Evelyn); Esha (Rev. Edie); Evy (Timothy); Fran; Frank; Grace; Irene and Tiffany (Katie B); Isaiah (Kim); Howard (Karen); Janet (Evelyn); Janice (Gert); Jessica (Joan); Joan P; JoAnn (Cheryle R); Joe C; Kevin (Teresa); Kirsten (Kim); Laura (Bernie); Lillian (Teresa); Lisa, Lorrie (Debbie Z); Marj (Charlie); Maureen (Teresa); Michelle (Katie); Michelle V (Bernie); Mike B (Jeni); Pam (Katie); Patrick (Susan); Patti (Jeni); Renee M; Robert (Gert); Sam (Debbie Z's dad); Sean (Kim); Shirley D; Slava (Katie); Stephanie, Mackenzie and Savino; Sue (Grace); Susanne L (Sandy B); Tina (Evelyn); Tommy (Evelyn); Yolanda (Bernie)

WE PRAY FOR GROUPS WHO ARE IN NEED.

For Dali, Nafe and Yanko as they await immigration; for the people of Ukraine and all those who have been injured or who have died during this war; for firefighters injured in the line of duty; for healthcare providers; for those in hospitals and facilities with health needs; for those unemployed, underemployed 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; those with mental health needs

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO MOURN.

For family and friends of **Sharon Morrell** who recently died; for **victims and families affected by violence**; for those who are being impacted by **disasters and other environmental challenges**

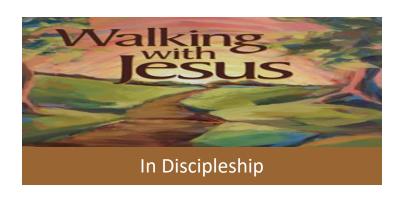
WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED DURING VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.

For churches who are struggling to reach members and care for people; for Darlene (Evelyn); for Elise; Eric (Ashley); those who provide essential services we need; Ethiopia; Haiti; Holly (Evelyn); Jenni D (Dianne); Kaitlyn (Karen G); for Karl and Kevin and all who are serving in the military (Debbie Z); Moreira; Michael (Scott); Owain (Rev. Edie); for those who are struggling mentally and emotionally at this time; for students and teachers; violence against civilians and those living in fear

WE GIVE THANKS FOR THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD.

For the healing of **Patrice** (Katie)

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.





DISCIPLESHIP REPORT

by Jean Swearingen

Trunk or Treat

Thank You to all who helped make *Trunk or Treat* a success! Our winners were:

Best Entry: Deb and Scott Zimmerman **Best Costume**: Leslie Ambrosat and her

well-dressed canine

Super Sunday

Stay tuned for Super Sunday plans that will be in the February newsletter.

Next Discipleship Meeting: Monday, December 12, 2022 - 6:30 p.m.

From the Discipleship Committee:



BOARD OF DEACONS REPORT

by Kim Ambrosat

The Deacons were so glad to have had so many join us in the Gratitude gathering! Conversation, cardmaking and delicious apple and pumpkin treats seemed to have been well received.

Mark your calendars now! The Deacons will host our first- ever **Chili Cook-Off** on Sunday, January 8! Simply make a batch of your favorite chili, bring it in a crock pot along with the fixings you would normally serve along with your chili.

In consideration of those with food allergies, we request you make a specific list of all the ingredients used. For example, you might want to use gluten-free flour to dredge meat—that way more people would be able to taste and judge your chili.

Whether cooking or not or just coming to enjoy some chili, you'll be asked to judge your 1st and 2nd favorites.

In order to have enough outlet plugs, please let us know if you can make it by signing on the sheet in the narthex. Hope to see you there!



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Board of Deacons. May you feel the love, peace and comfort of our Savior this Christmas and in the New Year.



May we have eyes to see, hearts to love and hands that are ready to help those in need.

MISSIONS REPORT

by Jeni Vogl

Our monthly **Drive-thru Community Meal** continues at HHPC. In November, we served 58 meals.

A *Yule Log Service* hosted by *The Center* in Palos Park was enjoyed by some of our HHPC family. Each participant had the opportunity to add a twig into a blazing fire which symbolized a fresh start for 2023!

Thank you to everyone who brought in food or donated for our **Blessing Baskets** in November.

We were able to restock **Micro-pantry** and provide blessings to Elsie's Pantry.

Our **Tree of Warmth** will be up through Christmas for donations of gloves, mittens, hats, socks and scarves.

We are collecting warm, fuzzy blankets for the Jones Center through December 11. *So far, we have 50 blankets.*

You are invited to join us at **Feed My Starving Children** on December 17.

We can always use help with our Drive-thru Community Meal. Contact Debbie Zimmerman if you are able to assist.

Look in the bulletin for other opportunities as the months go on.

Join us for a meeting exploring our vision and hopes for the coming year on December 6 and 7:00 p.m.





Worship & Music

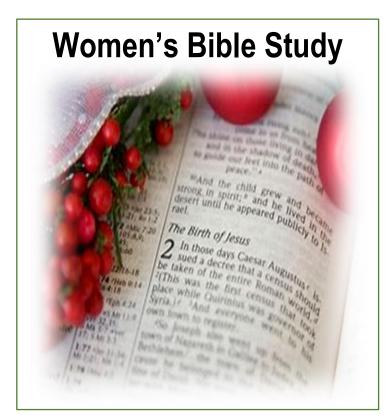


Together as an HHPC family, we continue to worship and praise the Lord, together.

On **Christmas Eve** we will gather at 4:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. for a Candlelight Service. The bell choir will be playing at 11:00 p.m. and the service will be livestreamed. We will be gathering on **Christmas morning** for worship and continental breakfast at 10:00 a.m. Join us to celebrate the New Year on Sunday, January 1, with a Carol Sing.



Note: Our worship services will not be livestreamed on December 25 or January 1. Livestreaming will return on January 8, 2023.



Join us as we study the minor prophets together on Mondays at 1:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.





Sunday, December 4 "A Christmas Tea" – Tea, entertainment & fellowship

1 PM – 3 PM in Fellowship Hall

Monday, December 5 **HHPC Drive-thru Community Meal**

5:30 PM - 6 PM

Saturday, December 17 Feed My Starving Children Meal Pack in Aurora

11:30 AM – 1:15 PM (Sign-up sheet in narthex)

Carpooling available

Saturday, December 24 **Christmas Eve Candlelight Services**

4PM & 11 PM (Bell Choir will perform at 11 PM only)

Only the 11 PM Worship will be livestreamed

on Facebook Live.

Sunday, December 25 We will gather together for Worship and Breakfast

> downstairs at 10:00 a.m. Come as you are— Sunday Best, Ugly Christmas Sweaters, PJs!

Sunday, January 8 Ordination of Elders & Deacons

(During 10 AM Morning Worship) PLUS

Board of Deacons' Chili Cookoff

11:30 AM in Fellowship Hall

All are welcome & for those who will make chili,

Sign-up sheet is in narthex.

Monday, January 9 **HHPC Community Meal**

5:30 PM - 6:00 PM

Sunday, January 29 **Congregational Meeting** immediately following worship

See page 11 on how you can make others happy this Christmas!

Church Musician's Corne

by Greq Rolla

The Church's Singing Tradition

What is the longest book of the Bible? What is the one book that consists entirely of songs and hymn prayers to God? The answer to both questions is Psalms.

From the church's earliest days, the singing of "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" with thankfulness to God has always been part of Christian worship. Early church music derived from the synagogue and temple, not only by Jews of the Holy Land, but also those scattered throughout the Greek and Roman empire.

Plain song or *plainchant* is the body of song used in the Western Church liturgies with Latin texts. It was the





exclusive form of Christian church music until the 9th century. Some of our beloved hymns came directly from this early music. Two of which come immediately to mind (especially this time of the year) are "Of the Father's Love Begotten" and "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

When we sing these during worship, we are connecting to the historical church going back thousands of years!

May each of you and your families have a most blessed Christmas and Happy New Year!



MAKE SOMEONE HAPPY THIS CHRISTMAS!

HHPC's Mission Committee continues its tradition of offering opportunities to help others in need at Christmas. Here's how you can be part of that tradition! We thank you and may God bless you for your generosity.



Tree of Warmth

HHPC's "Tree of Warmth" is once again on display in the narthex during this Christmas season adorned with donations of hats, gloves, socks, scarves and mittens for all ages from our members and friends. These items of warmth are donated to our local community and the Jones Center. If you are able, this will help someone stay warm this winter. We thank you for your generosity.



Our Micro-pantry continues to be used daily and is always in need of replenishment. Your donations of food is just another way that you can help others. Thank you!



Wanted: Fluffy Blankets

This year, the Jones Center has asked for donations of fluffy, soft throw blankets for children in lieu of toys. This is a wonderful way to keep a child warm and comfortable this winter. You may also donate \$9 towards the blanket if you prefer not to shop (see Rev. Edie). Donations will be accepted through December 11. Thank you!

We are currently very low on the following food items for our Micro-pantry. God bless you for your kindness!

Canned fruits (all kinds), canned vegetables, pasta & pasta sauce, peanut butter (chunky & smooth), canned chicken, canned tuna, canned soup, cereal, pasta, macaroni & cheese, breakfast bars, juice boxes/bottles.







Cranberry Dip

Ingredients

- 1 (12 ounce) package fresh cranberries
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup apricot jam
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese

Directions: Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine cranberries with sugar in a 2-quart baking dish with a lid, stirring well to coat all the berries. Bake in the preheated oven, covered, for about 30 minutes, until the cranberries pop and release their liquid.

Remove from oven and stir in the apricot jam and pecans. Refrigerate overnight to blend the flavors. To serve, allow the cream cheese to come to room temperature, and pour dip over the block of cream cheese on a serving dish. Serve with buttery round crackers or small pretzels.



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.

> Phone: 708-598-3100 E-mail: hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org



Best Wishes to all our friends celebrating their birthdays in December and January. May God bless them on their special day and always!

DECEMBER

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

JANUARY

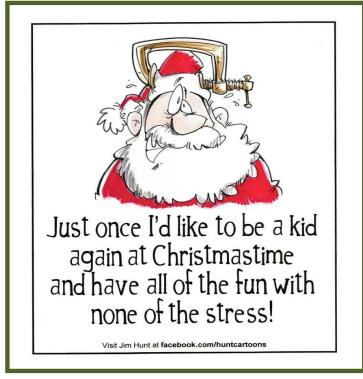
Hunter Treccani	January 1
Stan Flynn	January 4
MacKenzie Netter	January 7
Andrew Witek	January 21
Ashley Fiedor	January 22
Rev. Edie Lenz	January 28



G'mon! Smile and laugh a little! Love ya, Santa xxoo Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!











DECEMBER 2022



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	2	3
10:00 AM Morning Worship 1:00 PM Christmas Tea 5:00 PM REV Worship	1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM Community Meal	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live 7:00 PM Mission meets	7	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	9	10
10:00 AM Morning Worship& Sunday School 5:00 PM REV Worship	1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 6:30 PM Discipleship meets 7:30 PM Session meets	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live 7:30 PM Mission meets	14	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	16	17 11:15 AM FMSC Meal Pack
10:00 AM Morning Worship 5:00 PM REV Worship	1:00 PM Women's Bible Study	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	21	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 11AM & 4:00 PM Christmas Worship
25 CHRISTMAS DAY 10:00 AM Morning Worship & Christmas Breakfast	26 No Women's Bible Study today	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	28	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE
(Downstairs) No REV	Rev. Edie o	on vacation Dec	. 26 – Dec. 30; ret	urns to office on J	Jan. 2, 2023	

JANUARY 2023



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 NEW YEAR'S DAY 10:00 AM Morning Worship (Carol Sing) No REV	No Women's Bible Study today 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM Community Meal	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	4	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	6	7
10:00 AM Morning Worship & Sunday School 11:30 AM Deacons' Chili Cookoff 5:00 PM REV Worship	1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 6:30 PM Discipleship Meets 7:30 PM Session meets	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live ANNUAL REPORTS DUE	11	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	13	14
10:00 AM Morning Worship 5:00 PM REV Worship	1:00 PM Women's Bible Study	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	18	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	20	21
10:00 AM Morning Worship & Sunday School 5:00 PM REV Worship ANNUAL REPORTS AVAILABLE	1:00 PM Women's Bible Study	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	25	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	27	28
10:00 AM Morning Worship Congregational Meeting to follow 11:15 AM Board of Deacons meet 5:00 PM REV Worship	1:00 PM Women's Bible Study	9:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live				

Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church

8426 West 95th Street Hickory Hills, IL 60457

DATED MATERIAL – DO NOT HOLD

THE CONNECTING LINK

A monthly newsletter from Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church

