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.



SEPTEMBER 2023

WORSHIP WITH US

Morning Worship on Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

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 Contemporary Worship on Sundays at 5:00 p.m.

PRAY WITH US

Daily Devotions and Morning Prayer

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:00 a.m. on Facebook Live at Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church

CONTACT US

Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church

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VISIT US ONLINE

www.hickoryhillspres.org



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A Letter from Rev. Edie



This past Sunday, we met for our first Potluck and Planning. Later in the newsletter, there is information for those of you who missed our time to see a little of what came up in the meeting. But I wanted to focus in on a brief conversation at the Worship and Music Committee table--a conversation about distraction.

Perhaps you have had the experience of your mind wandering, a sudden urge to check something on your phone, a word or a phrase that seemed to hit you wrong, the slides not advancing fast enough. The reality is we are a distractable and distracted people. There is so much to catch our attention, so much going on around us and in us that it can be difficult to quiet our hearts, it can be hard to settle our minds, it can be hard to be fully present in the moment — any moment.

What do you do when you find yourself distracted? Do you have tools in life that draw you back to your present, ways of reminding yourself of what you said you were going to get done? Do you find more often than not that you have drifted again? We live in a world that tells us we can multi-task, that we can pay attention to multiple things all at once. We live in a fast-paced world that constantly bombards us with different stimuli (music, machinery, tv, video, phone alerts, etc.). How many tabs are open on your server? How many things are you trying to pay attention to even as you read these words?

All of this while the best and brightest of those who study neurology and the brain cry out – you can't actually multi-task. Your brain is switching back and forth constantly, NOT paying attention to multiple things at once. (This is why distracted driving has become such an issue.)

If this is what we are experiencing in our daily lives, how hard is it then to quiet ourselves or to focus on worshipping God? We know that worship is supposed to be about being present with God. We know that the words of scripture are important, but it is just so hard to stay focused, isn't it? For some of you, it is the challenge of every-day focusing, for others it is the stresses of the day, for others it is the need to make sure that their piece of worship is going well. What do we do with our distracted reality? How can we, as God's people, be more intentional about setting aside that which distracts, that which draws our attention, and work to be present with our God?

I confess, I do not see one clear or specific answer, in part, because what distracts us is unique to our own situation or how we are showing up. But I do have some suggestions, some tools, some possible ways in which we, together, may be able to find ways to be less distracted and more present to God.

(cont'd on p. 3)

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

The first is a reminder that God is always present (even when we are too distracted to notice). The challenge then is not being still and waiting for God to approach as if God were a baby deer, but to still the noise within long enough to pay attention. This can't be something we try to do once a week. As with anything else in life, stilling our minds, calming our hearts, takes practice daily (if not more frequent).

I would challenge you to begin small, start with just one or two minutes a day. Turn off all the distractions you can, settle your body and breathe. Focus your mind on the air coming in and out of your lungs. Just breathe for a minute or two – you can add time or frequency as you wish.

Another practice is regular devotions or scripture reading. Find a book of the bible, a short devotion or an app on your phone (there are several free I can recommend) that provide you with a 10–15-minute time to center your life with God each day. There are many more practices that we can use to train ourselves, calm ourselves and practice limiting distractions, but we have to begin somewhere.

And what about Sunday morning? How do we deal with all those distractions? I want to try beginning worship a little different in the coming weeks. Worship will begin with an acknowledgement that this can be hard, but also an invitation to allow the space and quiet to still what rumbles within you. I would encourage you to do your part--what do you need to quiet yourself a bit more? I have a few other ideas, but they will take a bit more time to work out...stay tuned.

I am challenged and intrigued by this question of distraction. I know I am not alone in acknowledging how hard it can be to intentionally get still or settle ourselves. Will you join me in wondering, join me in exploring, how can we more fully engage in worship and in the presence of God in our lives?

Grace and Peace in Christ, Rev. Edie



Faithwalking Classes Begin Soon

Have you often thought about signing up for the Faithwalking classes, but have not, as yet, done so? Well, there's still time! Classes will begin Mondays starting September 11 at 10:00 a.m. and Wednesdays starting September 13 at 7:00 p.m.

What is Faithwalking all about?

Faithwalking classes are offered as six 10-week segments (modules) intentionally designed to take you on a journey of growth, transformation, and formation. Each module includes six group sessions, four coaching sessions, and assignments to be completed between coaching sessions.

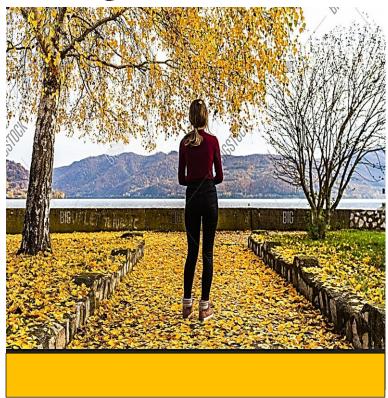
The modules focus on six topics--self-awareness, authenticity, managing anxiety, emotional maturity, integrity, and living on mission with God. This module will focus on *Managing Anxiety*.

Come journey with others as we move towards our Creator's intended design for our lives.

If you are interested, please contact Rev. Edie by September 10.

Worship Readings, Sermons & Reflections





In what ways does your life reflect your faith? Can people see what you believe by how you choose to live?

How might Jesus live your life if Jesus was living the life you have?

Our God is lavish with forgiveness. Is there anything God has forgiven you for that you also need to forgive yourself for?

Is there someone in your life you struggle to forgive or rebuild a relationship with? Have a conversation with God about that person.

The following are readings and sermons that Rev. Edie will focus on during Sunday worship services. 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.



Sunday Readings

Sunday, September 3, 2023 14th Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: Psalm 26:1-8; Romans 12:9-21

Sermon: Live This Way

Sunday, September 10 (Rev. Liz Hulford)

15th Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 18:15-20 (Rev. Liz Hulford will select her sermon title.)

Sunday, September 17 16th Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: Psalm 103:8-13; Romans 14:1-12

Sermon: Accountable to God

Sunday, September 24 17th Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: Jonah 3:10-4; Matthew 20:1-16

Sermon: Generous God – Humans, Not So Much



CELEBRATING GERT VICKERS ON HER 100 YEARS!



Family and friends gathered to celebrate **Gertrude** (**Gert**) **Vickers** on her 100th birthday at a reception held in her honor on Saturday, August 12, 2023, in Fellowship Hall.

Fond memories were shared with Gert and cards and gifts from guests were presented to her on this very special birthday. (A few more pictures taken at the gathering appear on the next page.)

Gert, we ask that God's blessings be showered upon you and wish you wonderful dreams of tomorrow and delightful years yet to come.

Happy 100th Birthday, Gert!



Gert's 100th Birthday (cont'd from p. 5)











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

Addy; Ali (Susan); Agnes D (Grace); Bob; Bob (Tom K); Bobby (Toni); Bonnie (Grace); Brad (Andrew); Brian (Bernie); Bruce (Jeni); Cathy (Mel); Cindy (Debbie); Dan (Diane C); Danny F (Jeni); Dave D (Darlene); David; Deb (Jeni); Dee (Jeni); Delores (Grace); Diana (Wilda); Doris (Diane's Mom); Emma (Sue D); Esther (Grace); Fran (Jeni); Francie (Karen G); Gert; Glenda (Melanie); Grace (Katie); Ivette (Kim); Jaden (Toni); Janet (Evelyn); Jay (Susan); Jerry (Toni); Jess (Susan); Jill (Deb); Jim (Deb); John (Debbie's brother); Joe (Shirley D); Jon (Charlie); Kait (Kim); Kathy (Bernie); Kathy (Jean); Kathy & Terry O'Shea (Debbie); Kathy (Linda L); Katie B; Kim B (Jeni); Kyle (Katie); Larry M (Karen G); Leanne; Linae (Tom); Linda L; Lilli (Kim); Liz (Evelyn); Lucy (Wanda); Marge C (Bernie); Mary (Doral); Matthew; Michael (Shirley); Michele (Katie); Nancy (Debbie); Nora; Papa John (Jeni); Pat; Patrick (Katie); Paul (Deb); Pete (Esther); Rae (Karen G); Raymond (Diane C); Rose Marie (Toni); Ryan; Rick & Ruth S (Jen); Sandi (Karen G); Sherry (Debbie Z); Sherry (Peggy); Shirley (Ed); Steve (Debbie); Suzanne (Bernie); Tammy (Gordon); Terri (Debbie); Tierney (Shirley D); Tom (Charlie); Tom (Karen G); Tom S (Karen G); Tracy (Debbie Z); Victor M; Wanda (Jeni)

FOR THOSE IN NEED OF STRENGTH AND HEALING.

Amy (Jeni); Angela (Katie); Ashley & Andrew K (Debbie); Beth (Teresa); Bill (Bernie); Bill (Katie); Brian K (Debbie); Bob (Dave D); Bob (Grace); Bob & Lisa (Darlene); Bree's Mom (Evelyn); Bruce & Kathie (Jeni); Carol S; Chandra (Debbie); Dameon (Cheryle); Delores (Grace); Dina and Al (Cindy); Douma Family (Evelyn); Edward (Evelyn); Ethan (Grace); Evelyn G; Everleigh (Jeni); Fran; Irene and Tiffany (Katie B); Howard (Karen); Jack (Debbie); Janet (Evelyn); Janet T (Bernie); Janice (Gert); Jessica (Joan); John & Terry (Debbie); Joan P; Joe C; John (Katie); Josh & Ruth (Mel); Karyn (Mel); Kathy (Gordon); Kevin (Teresa); Kurt & Maya (Debbie); Landen (Jeni); Laura (Bernie); Lillian (Teresa); Lisa, Mandy (Mel); Marj (Charlie); Marson (Scott); Mathius Family (Debbie); Michelle (Katie); Michelle V (Bernie); Michelle (Toni); Mike B (Jeni); Mike R (Bernie); Pam (Katie); Patti & Randy (Jeni); Paul (Debbie Z); Phil (Andrew); Renee M; Robert (Gert); Roger (Karen); Rosalee (Deb); Sam (Debbie Z's dad); Scott (Deb); Shirley D; Slava (Katie); Stephanie, Mackenzie and Savino; Susanne L (Sandy B); Tina (Evelyn); Todd (Charlie & Peggy); Tommy (Evelyn); Yolanda (Bernie)

FOR GROUPS WHO ARE IN NEED.

For the people of Florida who were affected by Hurricane Ivaldi and those who had died; for those affected by the devastating Hawaii Wildfires and those who have died in its path; for Dali, Alinafe and Yanko as they await adoption; the people of Ukraine; healthcare providers; those in hospitals and facilities with health needs; those unemployed, under-employed and those seeking work; 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; those with mental health needs; those who are being impacted by disasters and other environmental challenges; students and teachers

FOR THOSE WHO MOURN.

For the crisis of violence and mass shooting victims, crisis on the border and in Chicago

FOR THOSE IN NEED DURING VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.

Darlene (Evelyn); Elise; Holly (Evelyn); Jonathan (Kim); Kaitlyn (Karen G); Karl, Kevin and Michael and all who are serving in the military (Debbie Z)

WE GIVE THANKS FOR THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD.



DISCIPLESHIP REPORT by Jean Swearingen



Your Discipleship Committee met following morning worship on Sunday, August 13, 2023. We all agree the year is flying by! We are busily planning for HHPC's fall schedule of events. The kickoff of our Fall happenings will bring two events to HHPC on September 17, 2023:

- 1) **SUNDAY SCHOOL** Sunday School for our youth will begin on September 17, 2023. We have youth who are enthusiastic and inquisitive in their faith. We are also contacting those who are part of our HHPC family. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please let the office know.
- 2) **FUN, FOOD, & FAMILY** A potluck meal will take place following our September 17, 2023, Morning Worship. Main course and drinks will be provided. We will be enjoying burgers and hotdogs from the grill. Watch for signups for sides/salads/desserts! There will be activities for all ages **AND**THERE WILL BE B-I-N-G-O!

 Fall Blessings, Jean



TRUNK OR TREAT SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2023

It's time to start planning for this fun activity! Spooky? Scary? Funny? Yummy? All are things to think about as you begin planning for *Trunk or Treat 2023*. A sign-up sheet will be available beginning September 17.

Note: We need to have 8 participants signed up by October 15 to proceed with this outside event.



CHRISTMAS TEA SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2023

Planning for our **Christmas Tea** is underway and is scheduled for Sunday, December 3, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.

We did not need to look far to find entertainment! Our very own pianist, Greg Rolla, will be sharing his amazing musical skills to brighten the afternoon! Stay tuned for more information.



Our next Community Meal is scheduled for September 11th from 5:30 to 6:00 p.m. As usual, the meals will be served in drive-thru fashion. *Want to help? Contact Debbie Zimmerman.*

Our **Micro-Pantry** is still being used as a local source of staples. Thanks for your generous donations! This month, we are especially in need of spaghetti (*or any type of pasta*), sauce, cereal, and peanut butter, chunky or plain.

We are looking forward again to a pack at *Feed My Starving Children* on Saturday, September 23.
Two time slots available: 9:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. <u>and</u> 2:30 – 3:45 p.m. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex.

Keep your *(clean)* bottle caps coming in! Mike Swearingen and REV friends are busy weighing and cleaning them. Mike reported that we have **211 pounds** of clean, sorted caps! Please thank Mike for overseeing this mission.

Continue to pray for one other and the work HHPC continues to do in our corner of the world.

Hoping for an extended summer!

Peace,





The Worship & Music Committee met on August, 1, 2023.

We welcomed Rev. Jewel Willis Thomas on August 6th, Rev. Linda Wygant on August 13th, and will welcome Rev. Liz Hulford on September 10th when Rev. Edie will be away.

Greg Rolla's piano recital was a joyful experience with various genres of music, was well attended, and we hope to have another one in a couple of years. We thank Greg for all his time and effort in sharing his wonderful talent with us.

An experimental **All-Committees' Planning Meeting** was held on August 20th following worship service, as well as anyone else who wanted to attend, to share new ideas for our committees. It was a very successful gathering and we hope to implement a number of these new ideas.

The **Bell Choir** will resume rehearsals on September 17th and we are hopeful that all our previous bell ringers will be able to participate. If anyone else would like to join, we would be happy to welcome you.

All Saints Day is November 1st when we celebrate the lives of those we have lost in the past year. This year, Sharon Morrell will be remembered.

The Swindle and Swearingen families will decorate the church for Advent. We appreciate their efforts.

Christmas Eve services will be held on Sunday, December 24 at 10:00 a.m., as well as a candlelight service at 11:00 p.m. There will be no worship service on Monday, Christmas Day. There will be a 10:00 a.m. worship service on Sunday, December 31st.

Please feel free to let us know if you have any ideas or suggestions you would like to share.

Autumn Blessings,

Darlene

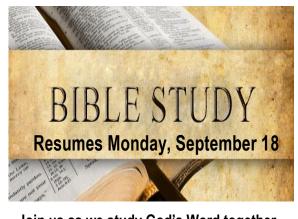




HHPC PURCHASES DEFIBRILLATOR

Working towards his Eagle Scout badge, Caleb Lenz had an amazing idea. He would begin a campaign at HHPC to raise \$2,800, the cost of an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) for our church. Through generous donations from our members over the summer months, Caleb raised enough funds to purchase the AED. Training for our members will be offered in the fall.

God bless Caleb for his wonderful idea to help save lives and to all our members and friends who helped make this purchase possible.



Join us as we study God's Word together on Mondays at 1:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Our Bible Study, led by Rev. Edie Lenz, will be on David, King of Israel and writer of many Psalms of the Old Testament.

HHPC DRIVE-THRU COMMUNITY MEALS

Drive-thru Community Meals at HHPC are distributed on the first Monday of each month from 5:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. and continue to draw in neighboring residents.

Menus change each month and are served up by our volunteers who continue to bring joy to those who come.

We ask God's blessings on all who come to our Drive-thru and to our dedicated volunteers for their continued service to others. Contact Debbie Zimmerman if you would like to help at these meals.



HHPC DRIVE-THRU COMMUNITY MEAL

Monday, September 11 ~ 5:30 PM - 6:00 PM

HHPC FALL CELEBRATION & SUNDAY SCHOOL KICKOFF

Sunday, September 17 ~ 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM in Fellowship Hall

BIBLE STUDY

Resumes Monday, September 18 ~ 1:00 PM in Fellowship Hall

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN PACKING EVENT

Saturday, September 23 in Aurora

Available Time Slots: 9:00 AM - 10:45 AM & 2:30 PM - 3:45 PM

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

If you are interested in participating in an Adult Sunday School Class, please put your name and the time you would be interested in participating on the sign-up sheet in the narthex.

CHURCH CLEANUP TEAM

We will be cleaning up in and around the church after worship on **Sunday**, **October 15**. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

HHPC Fall Plans In Motion by Rev. Edie

Our first Potluck and Planning

event was held on August 20th. We had a wonderful lunch together and then got down to the business of planning for fall. Thank you to everyone who brought food, stayed to fellowship, and engaged in the work of the church. Everyone had a chance to weigh in on ideas for 5 of our church committees.

Towards the end of our time, a small group at each table was asked to highlight one or two action items for each committee. The following are ideas generated at our planning meeting.

Discipleship. Explore the possibility of an adult education class before or after worship.

Building and Grounds. Sunday, October 15th - Cleanup Day – Rain or shine – something for everyone to do – lunch after worship - then a few hours of work.

Mission and Outreach. Loaf of bread idea from Discipleship – opportunity to further connect with visitors.

Is it time to revisit an adult mission trip, maybe in the spring or fall? Is there interest from other congregations?

Worship and Music.

- **1.** Allow Darlene to retire from the committee find someone to take her spot.
- **2.** Ask Greg to transpose higher hymns down to make them more singable.
- **3.** Do more with songs we already know.

Stewardship/Fundraising.

- 1. Consecration Sunday--Move the collection box. Better communication on finances to the congregation, maybe a quarterly report?
- 2. Script communication coming up.

The **Nominating Committee** will be meeting at another time, but soon, to talk about the coming year for Elders and Deacons.

The **Personnel Committee** will be conducting performance reviews for current staff and beginning to pave the way for Bernie to retire as our Church Administrator. There will be more on this later.

Our next Potluck and Planning will be held on Sunday, November 12.





The Connecting Link newsletter
publishes only the names of those
members who have submitted a
change in their contact information.
However, information can be provided
upon request by calling the church
office.

Recent address changes:

No changes received this month.

REMINDER:

The 2023 HHPC Membership Directory is near completion.

If you have a change to your personal contact information (address, e-mail, phone) and have not yet sent it to us, please contact the church office.

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



May God bless all of our friends celebrating their birthdays in September!

Noelle Larson	September 7
Terri Lorenz	September 8
Sarah Sizemore	September 8
Frances Nelson	September 10
Evan Grisko	September 12
K Zimmerman	September 13
Stacey Lorenz	September 15
Cheryl Nirtaut	September 15
Stephanie Lorenz	September 18
Dawn Rellinger	September 18
Charles Huenecke	September 19
Dave Delaney	September 20
Debbie Zimmerman	September 22
Ryan Brenz	September 23
Greg Rolla	September 27





AUTUMN LOL

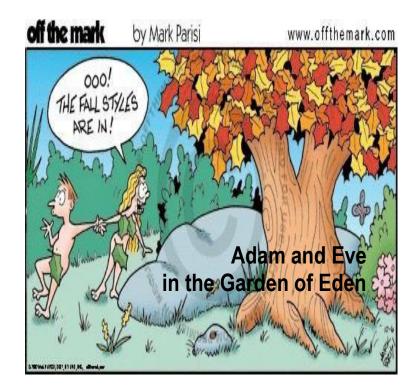
"Let's give
a round of
applause
for the
leaves they really
know how
to fall!"



YOU SHOULD BE ASKING YOURSELF, HOW CAN THIS NOT WORK? PEOPLE LOVE FREE STUFF









Try This Recipe!



Fall Vegetable Casserole

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large onion (diced)
- 3 cups mixed fall vegetables cut into bite-size pieces (carrots, parsnips, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower)
- 2 T olive oil
- 1 cup Organic Low-fat Plain Yogurt
- 1 t salt
- 1/2 t pepper
- 1 t garlic powder
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 1 cup Panko (Japanese breadcrumbs)

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Preheat oven to 325°.
- 2. In a skillet over medium heat, sauté onion and vegetables in oil for 15-20 minutes.
- 3. Place cooked vegetables in a colander to drain excess moisture and set aside.
- 4. In a mixing bowl, combine yogurt, salt, pepper, garlic powder and cheddar cheese and fold together.
- 5. Fold in vegetables.
- 6. Pour into casserole dish and cover with breadcrumbs, press down on top of casserole to even out.
- 7. Bake fall vegetable casserole for 25-35 minutes.

Autumn Picture Prayers

Have you ever gazed at a beautiful landscape or perhaps a painting or picture that profoundly touched your spirit?

On this page you'll find stunning Autumn images. Thoughtfully, look at each picture and try to create a personal prayer to the Lord from your heart based on what you see and feel through these images. Your prayers don't need to be lengthy or filled with big, theological words. Just keep them simple and heartfelt. This can be another wonderful way to give thanks and praise to our God!









SEPTEMBER 2023

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat		
					1	2		
10:00 AM Morning Worship & Fellowship	Happy Labor Day	5 10:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	6 11:00 AM Chair Yoga	7 10:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live 4:00 PM TOPS 7:00 PM Yoga	Rev. Edie off; back in office on Monday, Sept. 11.	9		
10:00 AM Morning Worship & Fellowship	5:30 PM – 6:00 PM Community Meal 6:30 PM Discipleship Meeting 7:30 PM Session Meeting	10:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	11:00 AM Chair Yoga	14 10:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live 4:00 PM TOPS 7:00 PM Yoga	15	16		
17 10:00 AM Morning Worship & Fellowship 11:30 AM Fall Celebration & Sunday School Kickoff 5:00 PM REV Meal	1:00 PM Bible Study resumes	10:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	11:00 AM Chair Yoga	10:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live 4:00 PM TOPS 7:00 PM Yoga	22	Feed My Starving Children Packing Event Time Slots: 9:00 AM – 10:45 AM OR 2:00 – 3:45 PM		
10:00 AM Morning Worship & Fellowship 11:30 AM Board of Deacons Meeting	1:00 PM Bible Study	10:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live	11:00 AM Chair Yoga	10:00 AM Morning Devotion on Facebook Live 4:00 PM TOPS 7:00 PM Yoga	29	30		
	Bernie is on vacation from September 25 to October 2, 2023; returns October 4.							

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

