

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.



FEBRUARY 2024

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

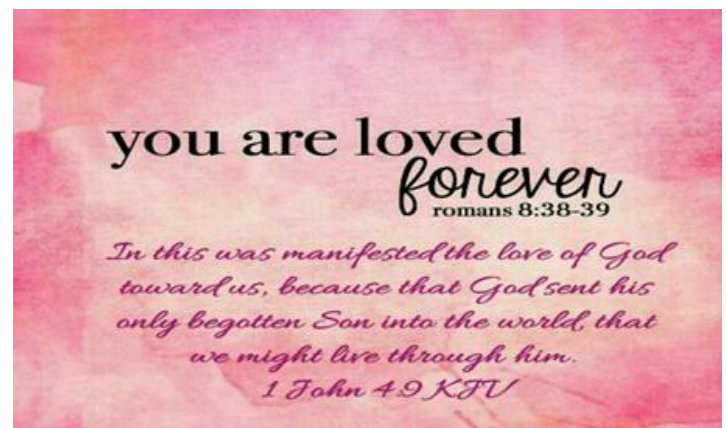
Evening Worship on Sundays at 5:00 p.m.

CONTACT US

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A Letter from Rev. Edie



Rev Edie Lenz, Pastor

Perhaps it all feels as rapid to you as it does to me, but Lent is almost upon us. Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's Day this year, and Easter comes before the end of March. It is early, it is very soon, but it is almost here; and I am truly looking forward to our journey together through Lent. As in years past, we will center all our worship, gatherings, and life together during this season on a central theme: *Cultivating and Letting Go*". The bible is full of images from the natural world, Jesus often used images of farming and growing in his teaching. Throughout the season of Lent, we will engage the questions: What is God seeking to cultivate? What is God inviting be let go?

These two questions can be deeply personal. God is likely inviting you to let go; of an old wound, a burden, a grief, an old habit, just to name a few possibilities. We are invited throughout the Lenten season to let go. Sometimes by making an intentional sacrifice of giving something up, but hopefully also engaging the deeper invitation to let go. God is also cultivating new growth in you. You are

never too old to learn, never beyond God's tender care and nurture. What might God be seeking to cultivate in your life: relationship, new ways of seeing, a calm sense of assurance, just to name a few possibilities. During the season of Lent, we are invited by our God to wonder, release, be still, to allow things to grow within us. As we enter the Lenten season, you will be asked again and again: What is God cultivating in you? What do you need to let go?

These questions, however personal they can feel, are not just intended for the individual. We are a part of the family of God, the Body of Christ, this invitation to cultivation is also intended for the church. What might God be cultivating and growing within us as a people located in Hickory Hills? What might God be calling out of us, growing in us? What is already stirring and at work around us that God is inviting us to nurture, encourage, and grow? But we cannot just grow, in order to clear space for the new, we must let go of the old. What might God be inviting us to

release or to let go? Are there things that hold us back? Are there old wounds that need to be healed? What do we together need to let go? What might God be clearing the way to cultivate if we are willing to let go? Perhaps these seem like easy questions for you. Perhaps you have a very clear answer, or maybe you have no idea where to begin. Either way, I invite you to enter the season gently, though it may feel rapid and rushed, I invite you to walk gently, to breathe deeply and take your time entering. Allow the Spirit to speak to your heart as we prepare for the season, allow your mind to be stilled a little bit and your body to slow down long enough to become more present. Let the questions rest on you and don't feel that you need the answers. Lent is about a journey, not about the destination. In Lent we choose

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

to walk with Jesus. In Lent we choose to set our faces towards Jerusalem, knowing how the story will end. Knowing what is to come.

As we embark upon this journey of Lent, we will have many opportunities to gather, to sing, pray, eat, and fellowship. We will

worship together on Sundays. We will eat together on Wednesdays for our Lenten Suppers. As we gather, I invite you to hold in your mind the invitations of the season. To let go of that which no longer serves you or God, to allow God's careful cultivation of your heart,

mind, soul, and body that together we might grow in faith. Beginning on February 14 for Ash Wednesday and continuing through the celebration of the resurrection on March 31 I invite you to *Cultivate and Let Go*. Won't you join me?

A Few Things to Mention...

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. Lent is a season for turning and returning. Lent is a season for release, a dying to ourselves and a letting go. Lent is a season of preparation for resurrection. We know unless the seed falls to the earth and dies to its "seed-ness" it will not grow. To prepare for the resurrection, we must be willing to die – to die to our old habits, attitudes, ways of being, and maybe even to ourselves. We must be willing to return to the God who knit us together and called us good. We must be willing to turn again towards the one who called us by name. We begin this season not with a litany of our sins, though they may be many, but with a confession of our belovedness. Together we acknowledge that we are loved beyond our understanding, beyond our earning or our deserving.

I want to challenge you to make a commitment for this season of Lent, whatever it is that seems wisest for your journey right now. Perhaps you need to give something up; this could be the traditional food item, it could also be about taking on too much, or giving up worry or shame. Perhaps you need to take something on, intentionally, a new practice, prayer, meditation, a time of exercise. I want to invite you to be intentional about your Lenten journey. Choose a way that God can walk with you throughout this season and share what you are doing with someone else. Allow others to join you on the journey, talk about what you are learning, where you struggle, and the joy you are finding.

Beloved of God, as we walk this Lenten Road, let us walk in hope, dedication, and wonder for God is near.



WORSHIP READINGS, SERMONS AND REFLECTIONS



What is the current “rhythm” of your life?

How are you tending the health of your heart and soul?

Is there something you can do to prepare for the Lent season to nurture your walk with Jesus?

Where have you found light in the darkness?

As we enter a season of “Cultivating and Letting Go”, what might God be inviting you to release or let go of in this season?

What are you being called to cultivate or nurture?

Sunday Readings

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. on Sunday mornings or recorded and posted on our website at www.hickoryhillspres.org.

February 4, 2024

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Readings: Isaiah 40:21-31; Mark 1:29-39

Sermon Title: *Rhythm of Life*

February 11

Transfiguration of the Lord

Readings: 2 Corinthians 4:3-7; Mark 9:2-9

Sermon Title: *Light in the Darkness*

February 18

First Sunday in Lent

Readings: Romans 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13

Sermon Title: *Cultivating Trust,
Letting Go of Control*

February 25

Second Sunday in Lent

Readings: Psalm 27; Lk 13:31-35

Sermon Title: *Cultivating Resilience,
Letting Go of Self-Reliance*

PRAY IN THE SPIRIT AT ALL TIMES

Ephesians 6:18

Shown at right 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, e-mail the church office at hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org, call the office at 708-598-3100 or enter your prayer request online at hickoryhillspres.org/prayerrequest/

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED OF HEALING...

Ally (Toni) Carroll C (Sandy B) Charlie (Evelyn) Chris (Mel) Danny (Jeni V) Everleigh (Jeni V) Fanny (Molly) Fay B (Sandy B); Fran (Jeni V) Francie (Karen G) Jaden (Toni) Jarett (Kim) Jay (Susan F) Jerry (Toni) Jill R (Jeni V) Joe R (Jeni V) Kathy & Jim (Jeni V) Lori (Deb) Lori (Evelyn G) Mike & Suzanne (Sandy B) Philomina (Diane C) Rae (Karen G) Raymond (Diane C) Rick & Ruth S (Jeni V) Susanne L (Sandy B) Joyce (Renee M) Pat (Renee M) Lois (Darlene D) Dave (Renee M) Drew (Evelyn) Sam (Debbie Z) Katie (Barb)

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED OF STRENGTH...

Bill (Bernie) Bob D (Dave D) Bob M (Grace M) David D (Karen G) Dee & Joel (Jeni V) Don & family (Jeni V) Doris (Wilda D) Esther E (Grace M) Gert V (Jeni V) Jayden K (Joel) Katie & Joe Kevin (Cheryl) Landon (Jeni V) Lisa E (Grace) Lucy (Wanda M) Margaret (Wanda M) Mike B (Jeni V) Natalie (Bernie) Patti & Randy (Jeni V) Savannah (Darlene) Stacy (Deb) Toni Valentine (Doral) Wanda M (Jeni V)

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED OF COMFORT...

Ada S (Susan) Bruce & Kathie & family (Jeni V) Doris (Diane C) Georgene (Jeni V) The Home Family (Gordon) Barbara loss of her father (Evelyn) Janet loss of her sister (Evelyn) The Vickers Family on the passing of Gert

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED...

Dali, Alinafe, Yankho (Molly) Diana (Wilda D) Kaitlyn (Karen G)

WE PRAY FOR THE BLESSINGS OF GOD...

Doral has a first granddaughter due this summer.

DISCIPLESHIP



DISCIPLESHIP REPORT *by Jean Swearingen*

The Discipleship Committee of Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church (HHPC) met on Monday, January 8, 2024.

Christmas Tea – HHPC’s Dec-Jan newsletter was published prior to our Christmas Tea. Our Christmas Tea was held Sunday, December 3, 2023. The event brought together members of our church family. We celebrated this relaxing event with entertainment and friendships. Our entertainment was provided by HHPC’s pianist, Greg Rolla. His talent amazes all who are able to witness. We thank Greg for the time spent in preparation of the program presented!

Sunday School – Our Youth Sunday School is now meeting the first (1) and third (3) Sundays of each month. We welcome all who have been attending.

Bible Study – HHPC’s Bible Study continues to study David. The first meeting of 2024 was delayed by one week. (It was COLD!!) As this newsletter report is being written, the first Bible Study of 2024 will take place on Monday, January 22. Bible Study meets Mondays at 1pm. All are welcome to be a member of this group!

Souper Sunday – Sunday, February 11, 2024. A sign-up to donate a soup/stew/chili is available in the East Room. The sign-up will also be made available during Fellowship, REV, Bible Study, etc. Unable to donate a soup? Come for the food and fellowship! This event will occur in place of Fellowship Hour. Free Will donations will be accepted. All donations will be used to support HHPC’s Micro Pantry. Donations of cash and/or items for the pantry will be accepted.

Lent – Ash Wednesday is Wednesday, February 14, 2024. HHPC will be hosting Ash Wednesday Service with invited guests from Faith United Presbyterian Church. Sign-up for Ash Wednesday and all Wednesdays throughout Lent is available in the East Room. This Sign-up will also appear during Fellowship and REV and Bible Study. We are in need of food and bodies to help with set-up, serving, and clean-up. Free Will donations will be accepted. Just like Souper Sunday, all donations will go to our Micro Pantry.

Easter Breakfast – March 31, 2024! Our Kitchen Cooks are ready to go! Sign-up for Easter Breakfast will appear in mid-February. As with all events, we will need assist with prep help Easter morning and clean up. Free Will donations will provide for HHPC’s Micro Pantry.

Recognition Sunday – Sunday, May 5, 2024. A day to recognize our graduates! A day to celebrate ALL who help throughout the year!

Vacation Bible School – June 10-13, 2024! Mark your Calendars! 6:30pm – 8:30pm. Camp Firelight is our theme! Stay tuned! Our VBS gang is already making plans!

Pop Tabs – Did you make any New Year’s Resolutions? Yes, or No? Regardless of your answer, HHPC has a challenge for you in 2024! Continue to collect pop tabs and bring them to HHPC. Our goal is to collect 1,000,000 tabs for the Ronald McDonald House in Oak Lawn, IL (RMH-OL). We need 790 pounds to reach this goal. We have provided RMH-OL with 701 pounds. We have approximately 42 pounds boxed and ready for delivery. This will bring our total to 742 pounds, which is equal to 940,114 pop tabs! 48 pounds to go. In the last 15 months, we have averaged collecting 2.6 pounds/month. WE CAN DO IT!

MISSION REPORT *by Dave Delaney*

The word mission often brings up pictures of a military nature or a church sponsored journey of some considerable distance, either domestically or internationally. Here at HHPC we have done both over the years. But mission does not require travelling. Over the years we at HHPC have established a great number of local missions. For the most part they have been generously supported. During 2023 the committee tried to highlight one of those missions each month. Some, such as the prayer shawl ministry, tend to go unnoticed by the congregation at large. Others, such as the tree of warmth and the community meal, are well known because of announcements from the pulpit. We have tried to participate in a Feed My Starving Children food pack quarterly. We responded in great fashion to the gifts (board games) for the Jones Center after school program. Our generous donations for our Tree of Warmth were taken to the Multiethnic Church of Mount Greenwood. Their congregation is primarily homeless, under housed and they have a ministry to the migrants in

Pilsen. All of these missions involved more than one or two people. But are there missions that you can do by yourself? Is there something you feel passionate enough about that you are willing to do yourself?

The mission committee strongly encourages you to support our mission work in 2024. We are going to continue collecting plastic caps (please make sure they are clean before donating them) and the aluminum tabs. Those are no cost to you missions. We are going to support Feed My Starving Children feed the need pack March 2-3. Watch for signup sheets for this event. We constant need of donations (breakfast cereals in particular) for our mini pantry. And when the time comes, we plan to support Elsie's pantry at Savior Devine Church.

Again, we thank everyone who helped us in 2023 and look forward to your continued support in 2024.





Lent 2024

Wed February 14		Ash Wednesday: Service of Healing and Wholeness Matt 11:28-30; Isa 43:1-5, 15-19; LK 13:6-9
Sun February 18		Cultivating Trust, Letting Go of Control Luke 4:1-13; Romans 10:8b-13
Wed February 21		Welcoming Deuteronomy 26:1-11
Sun February 25		Cultivating Resilience and Letting Go Self-Reliance Luke 13:31-35; Psalm 27
Wed February 28		Waiting Psalm 27
Sun March 3		Cultivating Self-compassion, Letting Go Perfection Luke 13:1-9; Isaiah 63:1-8
Wed March 6		Hope Isaiah 55:1-9
Sun March 10		Cultivating Abundance, Letting Go Scarcity Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32; 2 Corinthians 15:16-21
Wed March 13		New Creation 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
Sun March 17		Cultivating Lavish Love, Letting Go of Assumptions John 12:1-8; Philippians 3:4b-14
Wed March 20		A New Thing Isaiah 43:16-21
Sun March 24		Cultivating Purpose, Letting Go Supposed To's Luke 19:28-40; Psalm 118:19-29
Thurs March 28	Meal at 6:00 PM Worship at 7:00 PM	Maundy Thursday Service @ Faith United
Sun March 31		Cultivating Joy, Letting Go Expectations John 20:1-18; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

'Round Our Church



**HHPC Tea Party
Thank you to all who came
out for food and fellowship.**



COMING UP AT HHPG

- **Souper Sunday** will be held on February 11 after Morning Worship. Sign-up sheet available in the Narthex.
- **Ash Wednesday Supper and Service** will be held Wednesday, February 14 at 6:00 p.m. Sign-up sheet for those who are available to help will be on the narthex table.
- **Lenten Suppers** will then be held each Wednesday from February 14-March 20 at 6:00 p.m. Sign-up sheet is available.
- **Evelyn Garlic's Card Making Class** will be held on Saturday, February 17, at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.
- **Life Screening for Cardiovascular Health** will be held on Thursday, February 29 in the gym.





So that we can keep our records up-to-date, contact the church office if you have a change to your personal contact information.

Phone: 708-598-3100

E-mail: hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org

The Connecting Link 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.



Blessings to all on their special day!

Scott Zimmerman	February 5
Sam Swearingen	February 5
Mike Swearingen	February 5
Shirley Dragas	February 27
Rick Vogl	February 27
Sandy Beal	February 28



Our readers would enjoy seeing pictures of your events, vacations, and holidays that you would like to share.

Submit the picture(s) with a description to: hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org




Our Micro-pantry located outside our church is being used daily and we can always use the following:

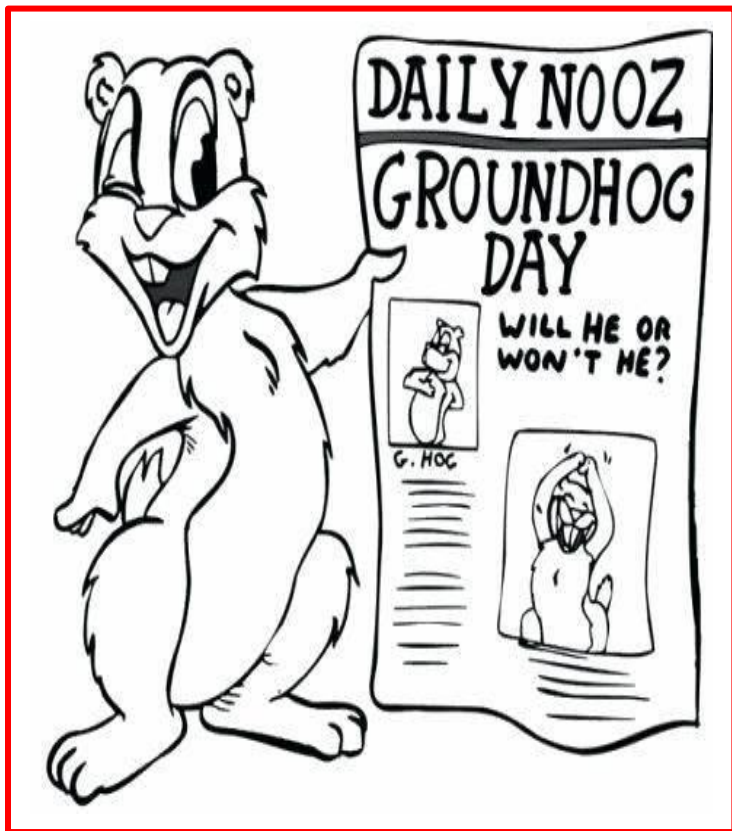
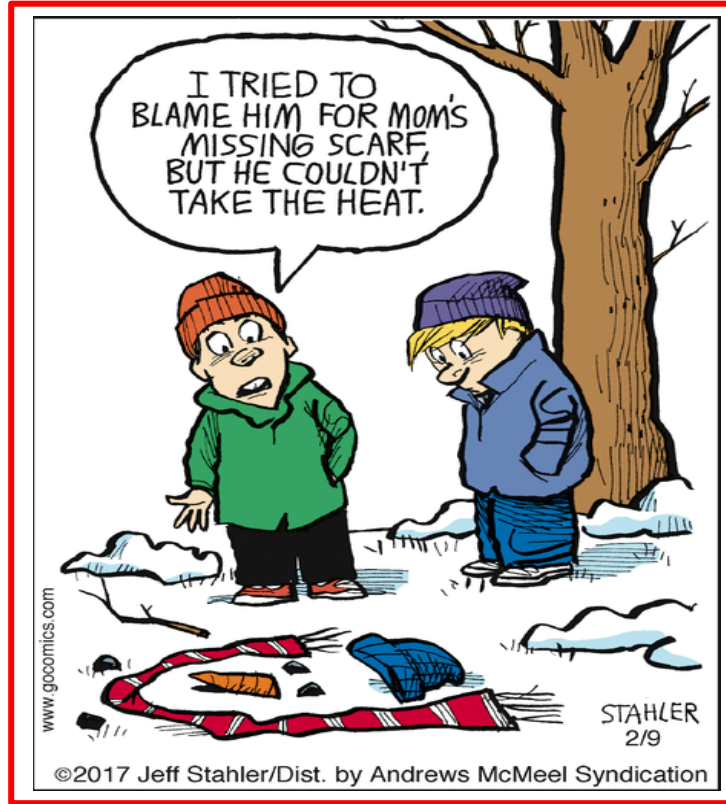
Canned fruits (*all kinds*), pasta & pasta sauce, peanut butter (chunky), canned chicken, canned tuna, cereal, breakfast bars, juice boxes/bottles.

Thank you, everyone, for your generosity!

LOL for February

I'm fairly certain that the person who put the first r in February also decided how to spell Wednesday.

Grammarly Cards 



FEBRUARY 2024

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fr	Sat
				1 7:00 PM Yoga	2	3
4 10:00 AM Morning Worship, Sunday School & Fellowship 5:00 PM Evening Worship	5 1:00 PM Bible Study 5:30 PM Community Meal	6	7 11:00 AM Chair Yoga	8 7:00 PM Yoga	9	10
11 10:00 AM Morning Worship, Fellowship 11:00 AM Souper Sunday	12 1:00 PM Bible Study 7:30 PM Session	13	14 ASH WEDNESDAY 11:00 AM Chair Yoga 6:00 PM Lenten Suppers Begin Today Through March 20	15 7:00 PM Yoga	16	17 10:00 AM Evelyn's Cardmaking Class
18 10:00 AM Morning Worship, Sunday School & Fellowship 5:00 PM Evening Worship	19 1:00 PM Bible Study	20	21 11:00 AM Chair Yoga 6:00 PM Lenten Supper	22 7:00 PM Yoga	23	24
25 10:00 AM Morning Worship & Fellowship 11:30 AM Board of Deacons Meeting 5:00 PM Meal & Worship	26 1:00 PM Bible Study	27	28 11:00 AM Chair Yoga in the Gym 6:00 PM Lenten Supper	29 9:00 AM Life Line Screening Today 7:00 PM Yoga		
Rev. Edie's Study Week from February 26-29. She will be back in the office Monday March 4.						

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A monthly newsletter from Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church

DATED MATERIAL - DO NOT HOLD

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