

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.



DECEMBER 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 www.hickoryhillspres.org.

CONTACT US

Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church

8426 West 95th Street
Hickory Hills, IL 60457

Phone: 708-598-3100

E-mail: hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org

VISIT US ONLINE

Website: www.hickoryhillspres.org

Facebook: Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church



INSIDE...

Letter from Rev. Edie	2
Tea Party Invitation	3
Worship Readings, Sermons, Reflections	4
Prayer Requests	5
Discipleship Report	6
Mission Report	7
Musicians Corner	8
Coming up at HHPC	9
Mission Council 8 Events	10
Round Our Church	11-12
Time to Laugh	13
November Birthdays/Other Observances/	14
December Calendar	15

A Letter from Rev. Edie



Rev Edie Lenz, Pastor

“I’m hungry.” Is a statement made often in my house, being the parent of a teenager means that questions about when dinner will be or the searching for snacks between meals are regular occurrences. At least twice a week Caleb will head to bed only to return a bit later for yet another snack. We are all familiar with the rumbling of our stomachs or the grumpiness we now refer to as “hangry” when we are physically hungry. We also have an awareness of the greater reality of hunger in our world; the instability of life for those who struggle to put food on their table or who are unsure where the next meal will come from.

Hunger is a universal human experience. At some point, we all experience the feeling of hunger. The need for nourishment is vital for survival; we human beings long for nourishment to thrive. We all need food and water to survive. But food is not our only hunger; what other things do you hunger for? If you were to settle yourself for a few moments, what would you notice about your own hunger? Humans hunger for more than basic nourishment; we hunger for peace, meaning in life, joy, connection, hope just to name a few.

As we enter the season of Advent, I want to invite you to take the time to notice your hunger. The season of Advent is an annual reminder of the longing of a broken world, the hunger for healing and redemption. Advent invites us to return again to our own longing, our own hunger for the world to be set right, for the coming of Jesus into the world. What stirs in you as you read these words? Can you put name to the hunger you are feeling today?

In this season we are going to play with and wonder about hunger and longing. We are going to begin in a place I have never really thought about before. I took Hebrew in seminary; I learned about words

and the meaning behind them. I learned about the way Hebrew often takes two words and puts them together to create a place name. For example: Bethlehem literally translates as the house of bread. House of Bread, Jesus was born and laid in a manger in the city called House of Bread. Jesus was born in a stable because there was no room in the inn, and he was laid down to sleep by his weary parents in a feeding trough – a manger. I have never wondered before how we might understand more about Jesus, his birth and God’s plan through the lens of Bethlehem itself.

What could it mean for us today that the one we sometimes call “Bread of Life” was born in the “House of Bread?” God does not do things by accident, there is I have no doubt wisdom and new insight to be gleaned as we play with and wonder about hunger this season. We will wonder about hunger in the wider sense I asked you to think about earlier even as we also seek to continue to engage the work of feeding a hungry world. Throughout the Advent season there will be a basket beside the manger, you are invited to bring gifts of food throughout the season and place them beside the manger.

Join me as we journey from the manger, as we explore the longings and hungers of a world waiting for a Savior, a Savior whose return we await as well.

Grace and Peace in Christ,

Rev. Edie

Please Join Us

Christmas Tea Party
Sunday, December 8, 2024
1:00 PM—3:00 PM

Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church
8426 W 95th Street
Hickory Hills, IL
hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org
708 598 3100

Featuring Martina Mathisen
"Twas the Night Before Christmas"
American Christmas Traditions



Fellowship

Fun

*Free will donations
accepted and are
appreciated*



Refreshments



Shown here are Scriptures to focus on for December. You can prepare for worship by reading and reflecting on these and the questions below.

Join us on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. and Christmas Eve at 4:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. in person or virtually. If you miss a service, they are available on our website at: www.hickoryhillspres.org

December 1

1st Sunday of Advent

Readings: Jeremiah 33:14-16;
Matthew 14:13-21

Sermon Title: Hope Grows

December 8

2nd Sunday of Advent

Readings: Luke 1:68-79;
Luke 10:1-6

Sermon Title: Peace Grows

December 15

3rd Sunday of Advent

Readings: Zephaniah 3:14-20;
Luke 19: 1-10

Sermon Title: Joy Grows

December 22

4th Sunday of Advent

Readings: Luke 1:46-55;
Matthew 9:35-37

Sermon Title: Love Grows

December 24

Christmas Eve

Readings: Isaiah 62:6-12;
Luke 2:1-20

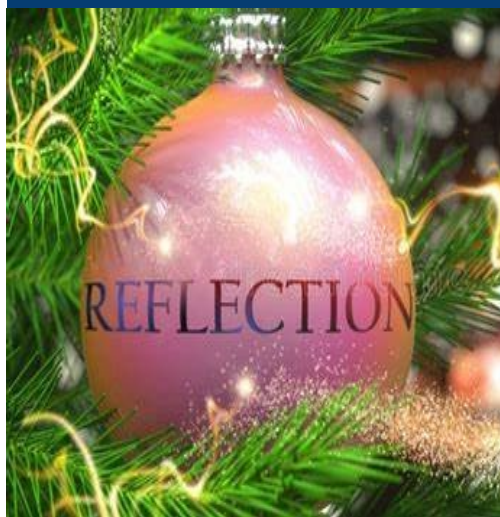
Sermon Title: Good News Has Come

December 29

1st Sunday of Christmas

Readings: Isaiah 9:2-7;
John 1:1-14

Carol Sing



As we enter the Advent season, we are entering the theme "From the Manger". We will be spending a lot of our time centered on that manger in Bethlehem. These questions can be used as you reflect on the season or on the scripture passages.

Each week we are reading the promises of God found in the prophets, what is the promise of God we read? What meaning might it have for us today?

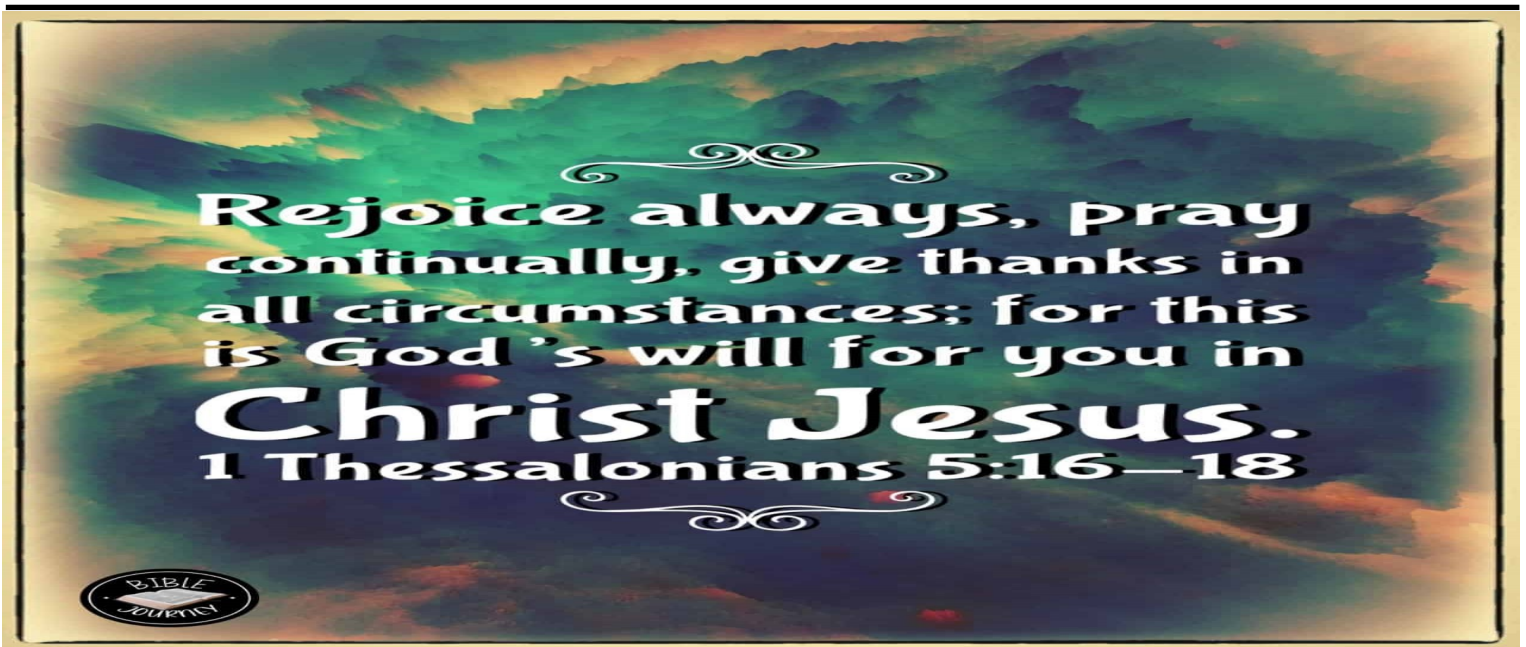
How might you grow hope in yourself or others this season?

How might you grow peace in yourself or others this season?

How might you grow joy in yourself or others this season?

How might you grow love in yourself or others this season?

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, literally the "House of Bread" what is the significance of Bethlehem? Why might it matter that the "Bread of Life" was born in the "House of Bread?"



WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED OF HEALING...

Ally (Toni) **Benny** (Toni) **Bernie** (Barb K) **Chris** (Mel) **Dan** (Evelyn) **Danny** (Jeni V) **Everleigh** (Jeni V) **Jaden K** (Toni) **Jerry** (Toni) **Kathy & Jim** (Jeni V) **Kristen** (Charlie) **Lori** (Deb) **Lori** (Evelyn G) **Raymond** (Diane C) **Lois** (Darlene D) **Drew** (Evelyn) **Jason** (Peggy) **Sharon S** (Debbie) **Steve & Dawn** (Jeni V) **Karen G** (Grace) **Maria** (Debbie) **Jeff** (Deb H) **Marg** (Bernie) **Melissa** (Charles S) **Nancy** (Debbie Z) **Cheryl** (Evelyn) **Linda** (Wilda) **Mary Jo** (Debbie H) **Kelsey** (Susan) **Melissa** (Bernie) **Mary** (Mel) **Robin** (Mel) **Mave** (Cheryl) **Charlotte** (Deb H) **Rich** (Rick) **Lily** (Kim) **Shirley** (Debbie H) **Todd** (Charlie) **Lou** (Cheryle) **Jackie** (Debbie Z) **Chuck Z** (Debbie H) **Kathy M** (Debbie H) **Lori** (Debbie Z) **Mike & Ann** (Deb H) **Irene** (Deb H) **Kathy V** (Barb K) **Ramon** (Mel) **Shirley** (Evelyn) **Jamie** (Toni) **Patrick** (Susan) **Blayke** (Jeni)

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED OF STRENGTH...

Anne C (Deb H) **Bill** (Bernie) **Bob D** (Dave D) **Bob M** (Grace M) **Carrie** (Deb H) **Cindy** (Deb Z) **David D** (Karen G) **Dee & Joel** (Jeni V) **Don & family** (Jeni V) **Esther E** (Grace M) **Katie & Joe & Kevin** (Cheryl) **Landon** (Jeni V) **Lisa E** (Grace) **Maria's Mom** (Sandy) **Mike & Suzanne** (Sandy B) **Natalie** (Bernie) **Patti & Randy** (Jeni V) **Savannah** (Darlene) **Stacy** (Deb) **Wanda M** (Jeni V) **Francie** (Karen G) **Jessica** (Susan) **Kaitlyn** (Kim) **Millie** (Toni) **Janice** (Katie) **Faulk Family** (Diane C) **Jacqui** (Katie) **Mary** (Mel) **Bob** (Edie) **Kathie** (Jeni V) **Madalynn** (Wanda) **McKenna** (Jeni V) **Kieran** (Jeni V) **Maria D. & Family** (Sandy) **Ted** (Grace) **Scott** (Grace) **Russell Novack Family** (Tom M) **Mary** (Wanda) **Gary** (Katie) **Artie** (Doral) **Sheri** (Barb K) **Toni** (Edie)

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED OF COMFORT...

Ada S (Susan) **Doris** (Diane C) **Barbara** (Evelyn) **Janet** (Evelyn) **Mary** (Debbie) **Karen & Fam** (Cheryl) **Nora-Loss of Brother** (Deb Z) **Zikus Family** (Debbie H)

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED...

Dali, Alinafe, Yankho (Molly) **Diana** (Wilda D) **Kaitlyn** (Karen G) **Christopher** (Edie) **Bob C** (Barb K)

disciples. it's who we are.
discipleship. it's what we do.

Discipleship Committee Report

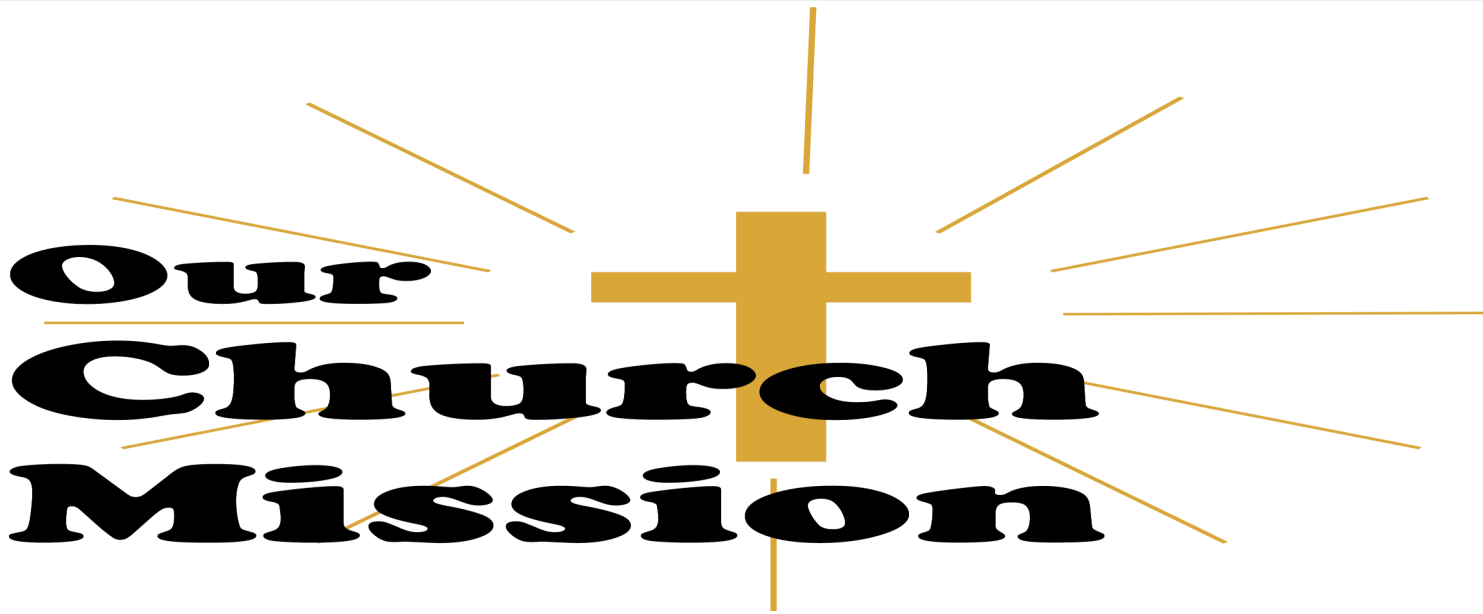
The Discipleship Committee wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Our December report is short. HHPC's Tea will be held Sunday, December 8, 2024 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. (See Page 9 of this Newsletter for Flyer) You are invited to join us for the program and fellowship. Please bring a tray of cookies/treats to share.

Our Sunday school continues to meet the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month. Debbie Z. continues to teach our older youth. We thank Bernie for working with our younger group during September thru November. We welcome Jeni, who will work with the younger group November thru January.

HHPC was gifted a tree to decorate for Brookfield Zoo Chicago's Holiday Magic (see pages 9-10 of this newsletter for pictures)! We thank our donor for this yearly opportunity to represent HHPC to a large number of Chicagoland's population. It is fun to read the signs of those who decorate trees and the areas they represent. A group representing HHPC gathered on Saturday, November 9, and decorated Tree #478. It is located in the North Mall area at the zoo. We hope you might be able to visit and see our tree. Brookfield Zoo Chicago's Holiday Magic features over 2 million lights. The hours for 2024 are 3:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. on the following dates:

November 22-24; November 29-30, December 1, December 5-8; December 12-15;
December 19-22, December 26-31

*Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year*



Our Church Mission

Mission Committee Report-Dave Delaney

Feed My Starving Children

On November 8-9 Kim Ambrosat (1 session), Andrew Witek (3 sessions) and Dave Delaney (4 sessions) participated in a mobile pack at Christ Church in Oak Brook. The event packed 356292 meals which meant that somebody(s) labeled 59,382 bags. Our next planned FMSC event will be March 7-8 at Illinois Benedictine in Lisle. This is scheduled to be a big pack and many volunteers will be needed.

Plastic Caps

Keep those caps coming. We have tentatively scheduled another cap sort-a-thon for early January 2025. Again we ask that the caps be clean when brought to the Church. This can be done in a dishwasher or a washing machine or hand washing each individually. If the cap is meant to be opened to use contents of the container, please make sure to open the flap(s) before washing. If possible, get the paper liner out of the cap. And we are still collecting pop tabs.

Future Plans

Thank you for supporting Elsie's pantry again this year. Cash donation are always welcomed. If giving a monetary donation please specify if it is for Elsie's pantry or HHPC's micro pantry. Many have benefitted from our micro pantry. Some have said that they had nothing in their pantry so they came to ours and were blessed. **Throughout the Advent season there will be a basket beside the manger, you are invited to bring gifts of food throughout the season and place them beside the manger.**

Items intended for the dime store at the Jones Center will be taken to there at the appropriate time. Arrangements for Breakfast With Santa, scheduled for December 14 are being handled through Mission Council 8. We have agreed to provide hot and cold cups for the event.

HHPC Tree of Warmth

The giving tree is up in the Narthex ready for donations of gloves, hats, socks, leggings, sweatpants and coats throughout the month of December. All items will be donated to Green Hills Library which is partnering with Beds Plus.

Musicians Corner

“A Song in My Heart” by Greg Rolla

For as long as I can remember, I would, many times, wake up in the morning with a hymn playing in my head. Of course I've always been interested in how the mind processes music. I did graduate research on it and even had a book published about it many years ago.

Robert Morgan published A Song in My Heart (Revell Press) a few years back. In the introduction he writes, “Hymns are distillations of the richest truths of God...set to music, and released in the mind and from the mouth. They are miniature Bible studies.” (Morgan, p. 5) And as such, they should be prayed (the words, with or without the music). I've incorporated this concept into my morning prayer. Sometimes it solely becomes my prayer.

In this season, it is usually normal for us to inwardly ‘hear’ Christmas music. For me, it's carols that come into my mind, for the most part. An example: O Little Town of Bethlehem.

Here's the background:

A well-known Boston pastor, Phillips Brook, visited the Holy Land in 1865 and stopped in Bethlelem, the birthplace of Jesus. He was so moved by the experience that he wrote a hymn for the children in his Sunday school class. When he returned, he gave the

words to his church organist, Lewis Redner, asking him to compose a melody for it. It wasn't until the day before the presentation of the hymn that Redner came up with a tune that matched the words perfectly. It was an instant hit, and eventually became one of our most popular Christmas carols. If you pray through the words they become an inspiration, deepening one's own faith, and allowing the author to share his experience with us.

O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see Thee lie
Above Thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by

Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in Thee tonight

*Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea
in the days of Herod the King.
Matthew 2:3*

Have a blessed Christmas season and a
Happy New Year.



Upcoming Events at HHPC



HHPC COMMUNITY MEAL

**MONDAY DECEMBER 2
5:30 PM – 6:00 PM**

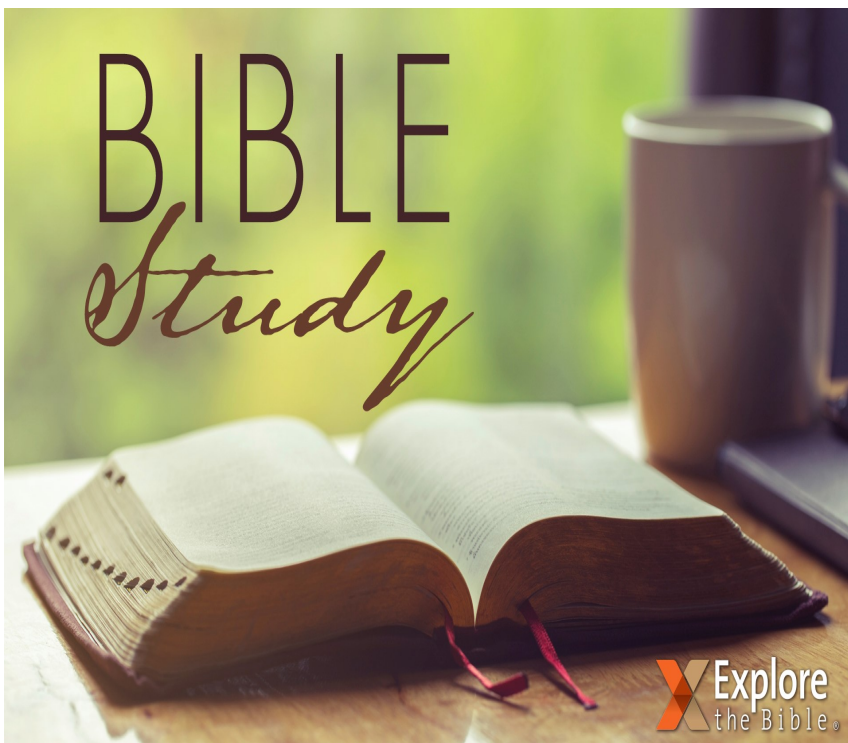
**MONDAY JANUARY 6
5:30 PM – 6:00 PM**

*If you would like to help at this meal,
please see Debbie Zimmerman or Evelyn Garlic.*

We appreciate you!



HHPC Tree of Warmth –Starting November 10 the giving tree will be up in the Narthex for donations of gloves, hats, scarves, etc. All items will be going to Green Hills Library who is partnering with Beds Plus



**Please join us on
Monday Afternoons
@ 1:00 PM**

HHPC Fellowship Hall

**We will gather to study God's
written word on
December 2, 9, & 16.**

We will resume on January 6

Mission Council 8 Upcoming Events

Breakfast with Santa is a mission event that takes place at Jones Community Center in Chicago Heights, 220 E 15th St and has done so for many years in junction with our Mission Council 8 Group. Kids and their families are able to come and have breakfast; take a picture with Santa and shop at a Penny & Dime store to buy inexpensive Christmas presents for their families. It takes place on Saturday, December 14th. The time to be there is 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Our suburban churches, including Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church, are joined together in our local Presbyterian Mission Council 8. We help facilitate this event by providing volunteers, monetary funds to purchase food and collect donated items for the kids to purchase to help put on the event.

What can I /or my church do to help? We Need: 1) Elf helpers to work this event—setting and cleaning tables; serving plates; directing traffic among other things. 2) Items on the list or monetary donations to purchase them. 3) Donated items new or in excellent condition for the kids to purchase--Decorative or personal, for example candles or decorations, holiday items, books. Also Christmas wrapping paper, bows, tags and tape.

If you need more information or would like to volunteer, let your church know you are interested or you can email Lori Siegfried (missioncouncil8@gmail.com) directly.



Reminders of events coming up:

"The Messiah" Concert Saturday 12/7, 3:00 pm at **Morgan Park Presbyterian Church**, 2017 W 110th Pl, Chicago (\$20 donation)

The Christmas Tea Sunday 12/8 from 1-3 pm @ **Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church**, 8426 W 95th St, Hickory Hills. (*Free will*)

Jones Center Breakfast w/Santa 12/14.

Puzzle Palooza event is coming up on January 11, 2025, at Presbyterian Church in Orland Park, 13401 Wolf Road. To register: <https://pcorlandpark.org/upcoming-events/>

Many events to choose from! Please come out and support our MC8 Churches!



Round Our Church

Brookfield Zoo Christmas Tree Decorating
Saturday December 9.
(See page 5 for details of the event)



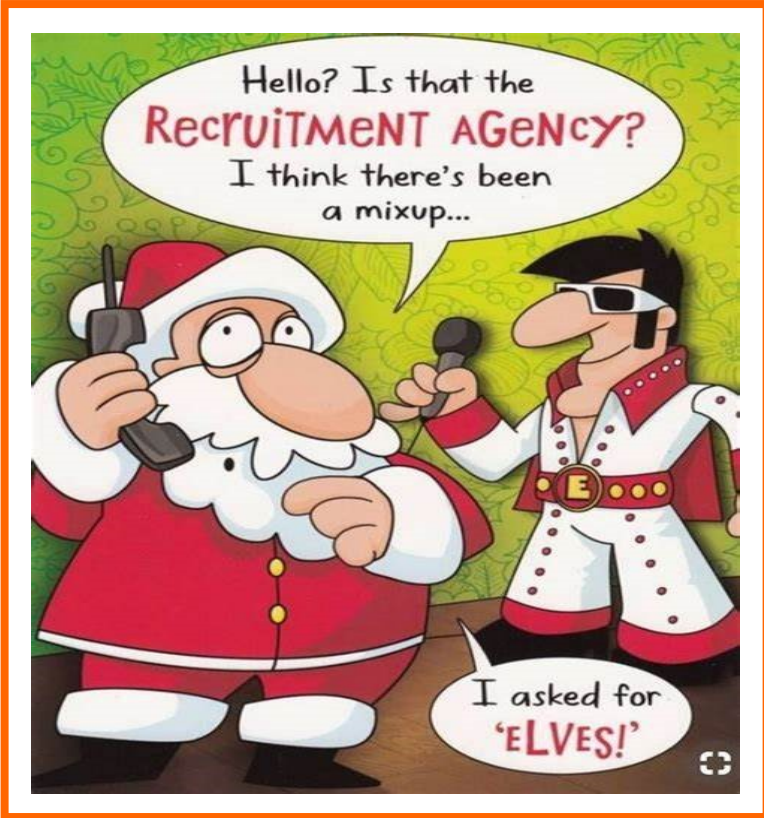
Visit Brookfield Zoo & check out the HHPC tree!



Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church Tree #478 is located in the North Mall area at the zoo.

Time to Laugh

Ecclesiastes 3:4





Darlene Delaney	December 1
Melanie Swindle	December 1
Bryan Ambrosat	December 12
Gabby Meyer	December 15
Jayden Kenealy	December 16
Gina Ciametti	December 16
Greg Nirtaut	December 16
Lynn Majersky	December 17
Natasha Swindle	December 20

Fun Holiday Season Observances






OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS®

Overeaters Anonymous is a fellowship of individuals who support one another in solving their common problem, compulsive eating, and is patterned after Alcoholics Anonymous. Meetings are held at Our Savior Lutheran Church, 8607 S Narragansett Ave Burbank, IL 60459 on Tuesdays at 6:30 PM and 7:30 PM and on Thursdays at 10:00 AM. Other meeting locations can be found at oa.org. There are no dues or fees. For more information call Mary Ann P. at 708-705-1608

If you have a fellowship group that you would like mentioned here or you have an upcoming fellowship retreat or convention and would like to get the word out via this newsletter, please contact Barb K at hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org

December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:00 AM Morning Worship, Children & Youth Sunday School, Fellowship	2 1:00 PM Bible Study 5:30 PM Community Meal	3 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	4 11:00 AM Chair Yoga	5 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	6	7
8 10:00 AM Morning Worship, Fellowship 1:00 p.m. Christmas Tea	9 1:00 PM Bible Study 7:00 PM Session	10 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	11 11:00 AM Chair Yoga	12 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	13	14
15 10:00 AM Morning Worship, Children & Youth Sunday School, Fellowship	16 1:00 PM Bible Study	17 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	18 11:00 AM Chair Yoga	19 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	20	21
22 10:00 AM Morning Worship, Fellowship	23 No Bible Study	24 Christmas Eve Worship  4:00 PM 11:00 PM	25 	26 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	27	28
29 10:00 AM Carol Sing, Fellowship	30 No Bible Study	31 				



The Connecting Link
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