

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.



JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2026

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.

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Small Actions, Big Impact

Written by Dynamis Ministries

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Do you ever wonder what kind of impact you can truly make in the world? You might look around and see people who are more skilled than you, have more resources or have more opportunities, and then question whether the limited time, gifts or resources you possess can ever make a difference. It's so easy to doubt our impact when it seems like others are doing bigger, greater things. But the truth is, we can make an impact in the world! No matter how little we may think we have to offer, we can use it to make a significant difference for the good. There are many real-life examples that prove this. If you're skeptical, consider this one that might inspire you today.

Jadav Payeng grew up in a rural community on the largest river island in the world, located in the northeast region of India. As a boy, he witnessed the environmental impact of erosion on the island, leaving the land barren and desolate. Moved by the sad reality that his homeland could not sustain life, he set out to do something about it in the simplest way he knew how: to plant trees.

In 1979, at the age of 16, Jadav planted a tree sapling on the island's desolate landscape and has continued this practice every day for the past 40 years. Over these four decades, the island's entire ecosystem has revived. Today, the island features a forest nearly twice the size of Central Park in New York City, providing a habitat for wildlife including elephants, rhinos and tigers. Animal species that had left the island decades earlier are now returning to their natural habitat. This revival of growth and life is the result of one man who has faithfully planted tiny seeds into the ground every day for the last 40 years. It's no wonder Jadav has been dubbed "The Forest Man!"

The Forest Man's work is an inspiring story on many levels, from the value of persistence to delayed gratification to the importance of environmental stewardship and even an example of the ripple effects we can create. It also serves as a powerful analogy for how generosity works and can encourage us to believe that our simplest acts of generosity may create a bigger impact than we could ever imagine!

When Jadav planted his first tree, he had no idea what would become of it all these years later. Similarly, when we live out a spirit of generosity, we may never know what kind of seeds we are planting that will bear fruit down the road. Who knows, maybe a single act of service can become a catalyst for a new ministry idea, a small gift to someone in need may develop into a life-changing relationship or a simple gesture of kindness could revive a person's hope.

The truth is that small acts do make a big difference. Sometimes we see the impact quickly, but other times it may take years before we realize it, as the seeds we've planted have had time to grow and bring forth new life. As we go forward today, let's not underestimate the impact our smallest acts of generosity can create. Rather, let's be faithful in planting seeds, no matter how small, and live with expectancy that they can grow into something far greater than we ever imagined!

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Shown here are Scriptures to focus on for January and February. You can prepare for worship by reading and reflecting on these and the questions on page 4 of this Newsletter.

Join us Sundays at 10:00 AM in person or virtually. If you miss a service, they are available on our website at:

www.hickoryhillspres.org

<p>January 4 Epiphany of the Lord Readings: Jeremiah 31:7-14 John 1:1-18</p>	<p>January 11 Baptism of the Lord Readings: Isaiah 43:1-7 Luke 3:10-22</p>
<p>January 18 2nd Sunday after Epiphany Readings: Psalm 36:5-10 John 2:1-11</p>	<p>January 25 3rd Sunday after Epiphany Readings: Isaiah 61:1-4 Luke 4:14-21</p>
<p>February 1 4th Sunday after Epiphany Readings: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 Luke 4:21-30</p>	<p>February 8 5th Sunday after Epiphany Readings: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 Luke 5:1-11</p>
<p>February 15 Transfiguration of the Lord Readings: Jeremiah 17:5-10 Luke 6:17-26</p>	<p>February 22 1st Sunday in Lent Readings: Psalm 37:1-11 Luke 6:27-38</p>





REFLECTIONS
"CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD" | GENESIS 1:26-27
BE T E R T E C T I O U S

January 4, 2026 - Epiphany of the Lord - John 1:(1-9) 10-18 (The Word Became Flesh)

- Where do you see "The Word" as flesh in the world around you?
- Why do you think it was important that Jesus came into the world in a human body?
- Think about your current relationship with Jesus.
Do you find Jesus more satisfying than anything else the world has to offer?
What steps can you take to know Jesus in this way?

January 11, 2026 - Baptism of the Lord - Matthew 3:13-17

- Do you remember your baptism?
- How did your baptism change your life?

January 18, 2026 - 2nd Sunday after Epiphany - John 1:29-42
(Jesus, The Lamb of God, Jesus gathers his Disciples)

- John the Baptizer saw the Spirit of God in Jesus. How do you recognize Jesus

January 25, 2026 - 3rd Sunday after Epiphany - Matthew 4:12-23
(Jesus begins to Preach and calls his first Disciples)

- Where do you hear Jesus calling you to follow Him?
- How easy is it to follow Jesus in today's world?
- Would you be able to put aside your current interests, hobbies or even your job, to follow this Rabbi?

February 1, 2026 - 4th Sunday after Epiphany - Matthew 5:1-12
(The Beatitudes)

- How can the poor, the meek, those who mourn be "blessed"?
- Do you consider yourself blessed when someone insults you for your faith, for your beliefs?

February 8, 2026 - 5th Sunday after Epiphany - Matthew 5:13-20
(Salt and Light)

- What does being the "Salt of the Earth" mean to you?
- When you lose your "saltiness," how can you replenish and gain back that seasoning?
- How do you let the light of Christ shine in you? Can others see that light?

February 15, 2026 - Transfiguration of the Lord - Matthew 17:1-9

- What spiritual "mountain top" experiences have you had?
- What fears hold you back from getting close to God? Why?
- Do you hear the voice of God, do you feel that you are in the presence of God?
- Do you have moments when you feel yourself standing in the Glory of God?
How hard is it to go back to "real" life from an experience like that?
- When Jesus assures you with the words. "Don't be afraid," do you listen to him?
- What can you do to give yourself more fully to Jesus?

February 22, 2026 - 1st Sunday in Lent - Matthew 4:1-11
(The Temptation of Jesus)

- Which of Satan's three methods of attack tend to represent the most dangerous temptations you face?
- When have you experienced God's guidance when you faced temptations?
- How did Jesus fight against Satan's Temptations? What can you learn from this?
- How do you resist the temptations around you?
- Jesus fasted in the desert to meditate and hear the voice of His Father.
What methods could you use to help hear the voice of God?

Prayer Requests

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Philippians 4:6

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED OF HEALING...

Ally (Toni) **Benny** (Toni) **Bernie** (Barb K) **Chris** (Mel) **Danny** (Jeni V) **Everleigh** (Jeni V) **Jaden K** (Toni) **Jerry** (Toni) **Kristen** (Charlie) **Lois** (Darlene D) **Karen G** (Grace) **Jeff** (Deb H) **Marg** (Bernie) **Melissa** (Charles S) **Linda** (Wilda) **Mary Jo** (Deb H) **Melissa** (Bernie) **Mary, Robin, Nick** (Mel) **Mave** (Cheryl) **Charlotte** (Deb H) **Rich** (Rick) **Shirley** (Deb H) **Kathy M** (Deb H) **Lori** (Debbie Z) **Mike & Ann** (Deb H) **Irene** (Deb H) **Ray J** (Sandy) **Diane** (Jeni V) **Doris** (Wilda) **Janice** (Sheri S) **Patricia** (Deb H) **Jeff** (Deb H) **Kathy** (Deb H) **Andrew** (Darlene D) **Sara** (Mel) **George** (Kim) **John** (Grace) **Sue** (Grace) **Laurie** (Sheri) **Dani** (Andrew) **Tricia** (Deb H) **Helen** (Deb H) **Chris** (Susan) **Tommy** (Evelyn) **Sandy** (Bernie R) **Anthony** (Cindy) **Donna A** (Cindy) **Mario** (Cindy) **Monica, Dolores** (Deb H) **Colton** (Diane) **Katie B, Kirsten** (Deb H) **Donna** (Katie) **Frannie** (Debbie Z) **Grace M** (Cheryle R) **Delores O** (Debbie H) **Kenneth B** (Deb H) **Frank** (Deb H) **Kristey S** (Debbie Z) **Tina S** (Debbie Z) **Simone** (Debbie Z) **CJ** (Debbie Z) **Robbie** (Diane C) **Vince C** (Sandy B) **Marj N** (Charlie S) **Donna** (Ruth) **Jerry** (Debbie Z) **Jamie** (Mel) **Rene** [Arlene Kasper's daughter] (Jeni) **Shanon** (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) **Dee & Joel** (Jeni V) **Don** (Jeni V) **Esther E** (Grace M) **Katie & Joe & Kevin** (Cheryl) **Landon** (Jeni V) **Lisa E** (Grace) **Lucy** (Wanda M) **Mike & Suzanne** (Sandy B) **Natalie** (Bernie) **Patti & Randy** (Jeni V) **Savannah** (Darlene) **Stacy** (Deb) **Jessica** (Susan) **Millie** (Toni) **Janice** (Katie) **Jacqui** (Katie) **Kathie** (Jeni V) **Ted** (Grace) **Scott** (Grace) **Gary** (Katie) **Sheri** (Barb K) **Kathy** (Jeni V) **Ruth** (Jeni) **Bud** (Diane C) **Tony** (Deb H) **Dawn** (Jeni V) **Jane** (Jean) **Janet** (Bernie) **Yolanda** (Bernie) **Howie** (Jeni) **Joe** (Katie) **Madison** (Cindy) **Linda** (Deb H) **George N** (Sandy B) **Dave W** (Sandy B) **DeWanna** (Jeni V) **Geraldine** (Jeni V)

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED OF COMFORT...

Chickie M, **Ed N**, **Reagen Family**, **Renee G** (Susan) **Family of Wanda Mellvoy**, **Family of Fran Lense**, **Family of Randy Warlyn**

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED...

Dali, Alinafe, Yankho (Molly) **Diana** (Wilda D) **Kaitlyn** (Karen G) **Janet** (Evelyn) **Theresa J** (Barb K)

WE PRAY FOR THE BLESSINGS OF GOD...

Leslie N, Braiden (Deb H)

DISCIPLESHIP

The Discipleship Committee of Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church (HHPC) hopes everyone was able to enjoy some good memories during the 2025 Christmas Holiday! These memories can be peaceful moments for some and family chaos for others.

HHPC's annual Christmas Tea was celebrated on Sunday, December 7, 2025. 62 attendees were present. The gym was filled with friendly chatter of friends and family! Our entertainment was provided by "The Arlingtones". This acapella group provided a program religious and commercial Christmas songs. Please see pictures from this event in this newsletter on page. We send special thanks to Dianne Flynn and Debbie Zimmerman, both who have worked to oversee this event for years!

We *WISH YOU A HAPPY NEW YEAR!* We hope your 2026 is blessed!

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL continues to be offered the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month. Hope to see our youth on Sunday, January 4, 2026.

SOUPER SUNDAY! - - - Sunday, February 8, 2026 - - - Souper Sunday sign-up sheets are available on the Narthex table. Stay tuned for announcements from the pulpit as this event gets closer!

LENT begins on Ash Wednesday, which is Wednesday, February 18, 2026 - - - Lent sign-up sheets will be available soon. Announcements for this event will also be forthcoming from the pulpit.

EASTER - - - Sunday, April 5, 2026!! - - - More info to come!!

Welcome
2026

OUR CHURCH MISSION

Mission Committee Report for January/February 2026

Once again 2025 has proved that the congregation of HHPC is indeed very generous. To prove the point, just look at the tree of warmth in the narthex.

In late November several of us, including Lily, attended a FMSC mobile pack in Glen Ellyn. That was our third FMSC pack in 2025. The next one will be in March 2026 at Illinois Benedictine.

During the month of November our priorities shifted to Elsie's Pantry. Food donations were accepted and taken to the pantry. A monetary donation of about \$950 was also made. Some of this money was from a fund that Edie left when she departed for other pastures. Our mini pantry continued to be stocked as well.

The aforementioned Tree of Warmth is up in the narthex. As of this writing many, many items have been placed on or around the tree. They will be taken to a suitable charity in January 2026.



HHPC 2025 Tree of Warmth

Upcoming Events at HHPC



COMMUNITY
meal

HHPC COMMUNITY MEAL

MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2026

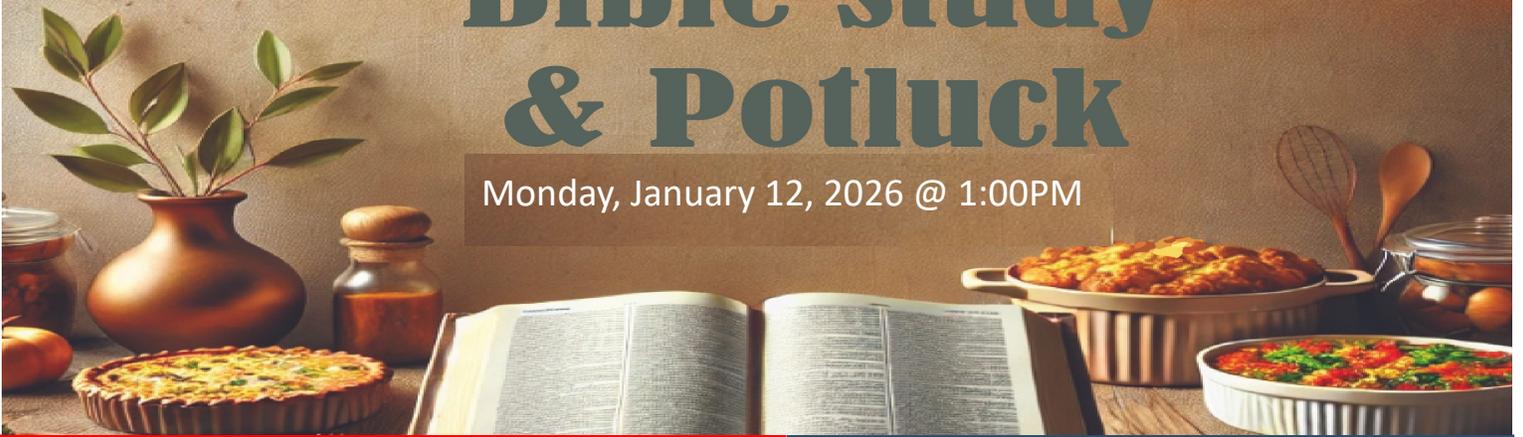
5:30—6:30 PM

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2

5:30—6:30 PM

Bible Study & Potluck

Monday, January 12, 2026 @ 1:00PM



YOU ARE INVITED!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25, 2026



Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church
8426 W 95th St, Hickory Hills
11:30 A.M. IN FELLOWSHIP HALL

Join in the fun tasting the many varieties of chili recipes.
There will be a chance to vote for your favorites!

JOIN US FOR
HHPC's ANNUAL



FEBRUARY 8, 2026

FUN → **11:30 AM** ← **FELLOWSHIP**

FELLOWSHIP HALL

If you plan to make soup for this event,
there is a sign-up sheet on the Narthex table.



♪ The Arlingtones ♪





62 in attendance. A great time was had by all!



***Thank you!
To everyone that
planned, set-up, and served!***



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
Audrey Sowa	January 31



Pat Frangella	February 2
Scott Zimmerman	February 5
Sam Swearingen	February 5
Mike Swearingen	February 5
Kaitlyn Ambrosat	February 13
Thomas Kerr	February 18
Alyssia Kommenich	February 20
Shirley Dragas	February 27
Rick Vogl	February 27
Sandy Beal	February 28

Why Does the New Year Start on January 1?

In many countries the [New Year](#) begins on January 1. However, this wasn't always the case. In fact, for centuries, other dates marked the start of the [calendar](#), including March 25 and December 25. So how did January 1 become New [Year's Day](#)?

We can partly thank the Roman king [Numa Pompilius](#). According to tradition, during his reign (c. 715–673 BCE) Numa revised the [Roman republican calendar](#) so that [January](#) replaced [March](#) as the first [month](#). It was a fitting choice, since January was named after [Janus](#), the Roman god of all beginnings; March celebrated [Mars](#), the god of war. (Some sources claim that Numa also created the month of January.) However, there is evidence that January 1 was not made the official start of the Roman year until 153 BCE.

In 46 BCE [Julius Caesar](#) introduced more changes, though the [Julian calendar](#), as it became known, retained January 1 as the year's opening date. With the expansion of the [Roman Empire](#), the use of the Julian calendar also spread. However, following the [fall](#) of Rome in the 5th century CE, many [Christian](#) countries altered the calendar so that it was more reflective of their religion, and March 25 (the [Feast of the Annunciation](#)) and December 25 ([Christmas](#)) became common New Year's Days.

It later became clear that the Julian calendar required additional changes due to a miscalculation concerning [leap years](#). The [cumulative](#) effect of this error over the course of several centuries caused various events to take place in the wrong [season](#). It also created problems when determining the date of [Easter](#). Thus, Pope [Gregory XIII](#) introduced a revised calendar in 1582. In addition to solving the issue with leap years, the [Gregorian calendar](#) restored January 1 as the start of the New Year. While Italy, France, and Spain were among the countries that immediately accepted the new calendar, Protestant and Orthodox nations were slow to adopt it. Great Britain and its [American colonies](#) did not begin following the Gregorian calendar until 1752. Before then they celebrated New Year's Day on March 25.

Over time non-Christian countries also began to use the Gregorian calendar. China (1912) is a notable example, though it continued to celebrate the [Chinese New Year](#) according to a [lunar calendar](#). In fact, many countries that follow the Gregorian calendar also have other traditional or religious calendars. Some nations never adopted the Gregorian calendar and thus started the year on dates other than January 1. Ethiopia, for example, celebrates its New Year (known as Enkutatash) in September.

<https://www.britannica.com/story/why-does-the-new-year-start-on-january-1>

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 	2	3
4 10:00 AM Morning Worship, Children & Youth Sunday School, Ordination & Installation of Elders and Deacons, Fellowship	5 1:00 PM Bible Study 5:30 PM Community Meal	6 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	7 11:00 AM Chair Yoga	8 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	9	10
11 10:00 AM Morning Worship, Fellowship Annual Reports Due	12 1:00 PM Bible Study/ Potluck 6:30 PM Discipleship Mtg 7:30 PM Session	13 1:00 PM NEW! Indoor Walking Workout 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	14 11:00 AM Chair Yoga	15 1:00 PM NEW! Indoor Walking Workout 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	16	17 10:00 AM Evelyn Garlic Card Making Class
18 10:00 AM Morning Worship, Children & Youth Sunday School, Fellowship	19 1:00 PM Bible Study	20 1:00 PM Indoor Walking Workout 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	21 11:00 AM Chair Yoga	22 1:00 PM Indoor Walking Workout 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	23	24
25 10:00 AM Morning Worship, Fellowship, Annual Congregational Mtng 11:30 AM Chili Cook Off	26 1:00 PM Bible Study	27 1:00 PM Indoor Walking Workout 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	28 11:00 AM Chair Yoga	29 1:00 PM Indoor Walking Workout 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	30	31

February 2026

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 1:00 PM Indoor Walking Workout 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	4 11:00 AM Chair Yoga	5 1:00 PM Indoor Walking Workout 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	6	7
8 10:00 AM Morning Worship, Fellowship 11:30 AM 	9 1:00 PM Bible Study 7:30 PM Session	10 1:00 PM Indoor Walking Workout 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	11 11:00 AM Chair Yoga	12 1:00 PM Indoor Walking Workout 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 1:00 PM Indoor Walking Workout 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	18 11:00 AM Chair Yoga 6:00 PM Service, Soup Supper 	19 1:00 PM Indoor Walking Workout 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	20	21 10:00 AM Evelyn Garlic Card Making Class
22 10:00 AM Morning Worship, Fellowship 11:30 AM Deacons Meet	23 1:00 PM Bible Study	24 1:00 PM Indoor Walking Workout 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	25 11:00 AM Chair Yoga 6:00 PM Lent Soup Supper	26 1:00 PM Indoor Walking Workout 7:00 PM Traditional Yoga	27	28



2026

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