

Hilltop Hallelujah

January 2019

Volume 7, Issue 7

from the Interim Pastor's Perspective

In this issue:

Pastor's Message	p. 1-2
Daycare Director	p. 1
Epiphany Sunday	p. 2-3
Opportunities to Serve	p. 3
Christmas Card Tree	p. 4
Year-End Giving	
2019 Envelopes	
MOPS	
Staff Thank You	
Special Dates	p. 5
Study & Gather	p. 5
Adult Sunday School	
Clean-up	
Color of Epiphany	p.5
January Birthdays	p. 6
Camp Squanto	p. 6

A New Year provides the opportunity for a fresh start and a rededication to being "transformed by the renewing of our minds" (Romans 12:2). It's like God is giving us a new beginning with the New Year – similar to what the prophet, Jeremiah wrote in Lamentations 3:22-26, "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness . . . The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD."

Every morning, God provides a new day with a new beginning; and every year God provides a new year with a fresh start to be transformed by "the renewing of our minds." Such transformation is possible when God's people commit to God's Word and way. Commitment to God's Word and way is more than ambition, however – it is to be recast in God's image and become the people and the church He plans for us to be. Any New Year's resolution should include such a commitment by God's people.

Studying the Bible books Ezra and Nehemiah provide an important account of Israel returning to Jerusalem from captivity to rebuild the Temple, the city walls, and return to a right relationship with God.

(continued on page 2)

Hilltop Preschool and Daycare

Happy 2019! I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and feels well rested after a few days off from work.

Please remember to bring a hat, gloves and warm coat for your child so they stay warm when we go outside. When there is snow on the ground you can also send in snow pants and boots. Please try to label everything with your child's name.



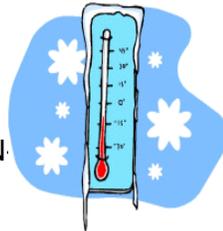
During the winter months we have Pajama Fridays at Hilltop. If your child would like to wear slippers, remember to bring sneakers/boots for going outside.

pajamas.
all day.

For parents of school-age children, there is a ½ day on Wednesday, January 16th and no school on

Monday, January 21st. As the date gets closer be sure to let us know if your child will be here on the 21st so we can plan accordingly.

In the event of a severe winter storm, we will announce a closing or an opening delay on NBC CONNECTICUT'S Storm Alert. You may view this on television or at www.nbccconnecticut.com. Click on *Weather*, then *School Closings*. We will be listed as HILLTOP DAYCARE, CROMWELL. Please note, there is a similarly named school in Torrington named Hilltop Christian Nursery School. You may also subscribe to an automatic email or text message that will be sent to you in the event of a closing or delay. The link can be found by clicking *Weather*, and then *Storm Closing Alerts*, on their website.



Ms. Laura

(Interim Pastor's Message, continued from page 1)

An examination of these Old Testament narratives reveals God's Word through the priest, Ezra, and God's way through the rebuilding process as led by Nehemiah and Zerubbabel as they focus Israel on God's faithfulness and the people's courage to obey God in spite of strong opposition from within their own ranks and from fierce regional enemies who attempt to disrupt a successful return.

Through Ezra and Nehemiah, God calls us to submit to His spiritual authority through a renewed obedience to His Word, a recommitment to prayer, and a re-devotion to His work. Their stories provide today's church some valuable lessons in faithful obedience, leadership management, and spiritual motivation – God's way.

Ezra and Nehemiah were then – as they are today – an encouragement to the people of God (the Church) to magnify Him in worship as our first priority; to emphasize the need for God's Word as our only authoritative rule for living; and to be concerned about the work God's people provide to the community around us. God is just as intimately involved in our lives as He was with Ezra and Nehemiah. And like these men of God, we may experience the gracious hand of God as He enables, empowers, and encourages us to do the impossible and the unexpected as every living believer is being built into a living Temple where the Holy Spirit dwells (1 Corinthians 6:19; 1 Peter 2:4-6).

Pastor Kevin

SERMONS ON LINE

If you missed a Sunday sermon, you will be able to hear it on our website by the end of the day on Tuesday following the Sunday you missed; in other words, two days after the worship service.

www.hilltopcovenant.org



Thank you Jonathan Beatty for making this possible!

Epiphany Sunday, January 6, 2019

Epiphany may also be called "Three Kings Day" and "Twelfth Day," It falls on the twelfth day after Christmas. The 12 days between Christmas and Epiphany are known as the "Twelve Days of Christmas." (I think there's a song in there!) Epiphany celebrates the manifestation of God to the world in the form of human flesh through Jesus Christ.

January 6, the chosen date for Epiphany, falls on a Sunday in 2019 and then not again until 2030! Come a few minutes early for a light "celebration feast" prepared for worshippers in the narthex.

From Snopes.com: *"The Twelve Days of Christmas ... is a delightful nonsense rhyme set to music. But it had a quite serious purpose when it was written. It is a good deal more than just a repetitious melody with pretty phrases and a list of strange gifts. In England during the period 1558 to 1829, it was a crime to" show one's faith, in public or in private.*

*"The Twelve Days of Christmas was written in England as one of the 'catechism songs' to help young Catholics learn the tenets of their faith – a memory aid, when to be caught with anything in **writing** indicating adherence to the Catholic faith could not only get you imprisoned" and worse!*

In addition, "The Twelve Days of Christmas is said to have been developed by Christians who could not openly practice their faith because they lived in societies where Christianity was forbidden. Locating a place in the western world where the practice of Christianity was banned during the last several centuries is difficult enough, but trying to discern the usefulness of a Christmas song as a method of preserving tenets of Christianity in a society where the practice of Christianity itself was outlawed is truly a mind bender, since in such a society all facets of Christmas celebrations would surely be banned as well.

(continued on page 3)

(Epiphany continued from page 2)

The songs gifts are hidden meanings to the teachings of the faith. The "true love" mentioned in the song doesn't refer to an earthly suitor, it refers to God Himself. The "me" who receives the presents refers to every baptized person. The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In the song, Christ is symbolically presented as a mother partridge which feigns injury to decoy predators from her helpless nestlings, much in memory of the expression of Christ's sadness over the fate of Jerusalem: 'Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How often would I have sheltered thee under my wings, as a hen does her chicks, but thou wouldst not have it so...'"

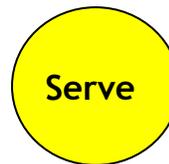
The other symbols mean the following:

- 2 Turtle Doves = The Old and New Testaments
- 3 French Hens = Faith, Hope and Charity, the Theological Virtues
- 4 Calling Birds = the Four Gospels and/or the Four Evangelists
- 5 Golden Rings = The first Five Books of the Old Testament, the "Pentateuch", which gives the history of man's fall from grace.
- 6 Geese A-laying = the six days of creation
- 7 Swans A-swimming = the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit
- 8 Maids A-milking = the eight beatitudes
- 9 Ladies Dancing = the nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit
- 10 Lords A-leaping = the ten commandments
- 11 Pipers Piping = the eleven faithful apostles
- 12 Drummers Drumming = the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle's Creed



Sally Huggins

OPPORTUNITIES TO



Communion: January 6, 2019		Brian & Dale Chiffer		
GREETERS	USHERS	READERS	COFFEE TIME	
Jan. 6 Barbara Damon	Sally Huggins, Bob McNaughton	Sally Huggins	Carolyn Johnson Liz Pierson	
Jan. 13 Shari Pekarovic	Nicole & Jordyn Pekarovic	Rick Brown	Dale Comstock	
Jan. 20 Dale Comstock	Brian & Joan Armet	Candace Cunningham		
Jan. 27 Lorrey Hamilton	Barbara Damon, Laura Winoski	Barbara Damon		

Christmas Card Tree



This year we sent \$55.00 to the "Covenant Minister's Aid Fund." Your contribution made it possible for the Conference to minister to those, in time of need, who spend their lives ministering to us.

Greetings were received from:

*Rick & Vicki Brown
Carola Chaffin
Brian & Dale Chiffer
Candace & Julia Cunningham
Barbara Damon, Joe & Avery
Bill & Amanda Drew & family
Sally Huggins
Carolyn Johnson
Dolly & Ray Larson
Jim Magson
Bob & Lucielle Stromberg
World Vision
Janet & Ron Ziegelbaur*



Many thanks from the church staff to all who gave so generously to the "Staff Gift". We pray that you were as blessed in your giving as we were in the receiving of these gifts.

Sally, Carolyn and Pastor Kevin

2019 OFFERING ENVELOPES

If you made a pledge for 2019 or are a regular contributor to Hilltop Covenant Church, chances are offering envelopes have been assigned for you and available for pickup in the narthex.

If you did not receive envelopes and would like them, please notify the church office or indicate that on the Ministry of Friendship pad.

2018 YEAR-END GIVING

Any gifts to Hilltop Covenant Church that you would like included on your 2018 Giving Statement need to be received in the church office by Sunday, January 6, 2019.

Your check MUST be dated December 31, 2018 or earlier, for it to be recorded as a donation for 2018.



Frequently asked questions:

How many people do I need to cook for? The meal is typically dinner for 10-12 adults (moms and helpers). That might sound like a lot, but they are all pretty light eaters. We have typically had more food than we've needed! One casserole is plenty.

What time does the meal need to be served? The moms and children eat between 5:30 and 6:00 PM. The meal can be dropped off earlier in the day with instructions to heat, or brought hot and ready to serve.

What do I need to provide? The meal can be pretty simple; an entrée, and salad, or a salad as an entrée. It could be soup, a casserole, crock pot meal or pasta. The moms are not picky and are very appreciative. The only request is that the food not contain nuts. We have the requisite paper products, but a beverage is always a nice addition. The children are fed by the Daycare.

What if I can't prepare a meal, but want to help? People have given donations so that we can subsidize the cost of preparing a meal, for those who need it, or so that we can purchase a meal when no one is available to cook.

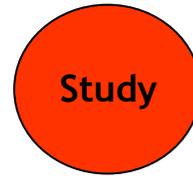
There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex.

The group will resume on Jan. 15.

OPPORTUNITIES TO



AND



The tree in our sanctuary was beautiful this year! Many thanks to Steve Beck for providing it, to Jim Hite and others for setting it up and to many of you – yet unknown – who will help us take it down on Epiphany Sunday, Jan. 6, following Coffee Time!

Carol McNaughton led the group of women who, over 25 years ago, designed and made all the “chrismons”.

However, I think we need to add a few more! Please join me at the church the first Sat. in February, Feb.2, 10:00 AM, for a little crafting event.

Sally Huggins

Clean-Up

After Coffee Time on January 6 could we get some help taking down the tree and putting the Advent, Christmas and Cookie Walk stuff in the attic?

I know you all have 2019 calendars by now - the first Sunday in Advent in 2019 is December 1st!

GATHER:

- Coffee Time
- Adult Sunday School
- Lunch Bunch
- Men’s Breakfast
- Children’s Church
- Clean up from Advent
- Crafting on Feb.2

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Adult Sunday School follows Coffee Time.

Resolve to study God’s Word and the impact it can have on YOUR life and on the lives of those around you!

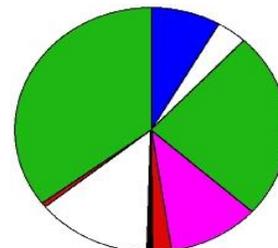
Liturgical Colors

Green is the color used for the season of Epiphany. In many Christian churches Epiphany is a Christian festival, recognized on the 6th of January, that celebrates the arrival of the wise men who came to see Jesus of Nazareth soon after he was born.

When you consider a couple other definitions of “epiphany” -

- * *an appearance or manifestation, especially of a deity.*
- * *a sudden, intuitive perception of or insight into the reality or essential meaning of something, usually initiated by some simple, homely, or commonplace occurrence or experience*

than referring to the next 7 weeks as “Epiphany” is totally logical! The magi certainly recognized Jesus as God incarnate and what could have been more simple and commonplace than his birth?



- Advent
- Christmas
- Epiphany
- Lent
- Holy Week
- Good Friday
- Easter
- Pentecost
- Ordinary Time



2019 REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

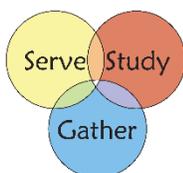
The first opportunity to attend Camp Squanto is the “Mini week” for children having completed grades 2-3 - June 26 - 29. Financial aid is offered to Hilltop families and scholarship request forms are available from the church secretary.

Birthdays in JANUARY

Doris Anderson	1/6
Chris Crawford	1/11
Amanda Drew	1/11
Tricia Hallden	1/12
Joan Armet	1/25



Hilltop Preschool and Daycare
82 Hicksville Road
Cromwell, CT 06416



Circles of Life in Christ