



The Messenger

Monthly Newsletter of Hillcrest United Methodist Church

January 2020

From Pastor Kerry

Happy New Year!

Thank you for all the kind Christmas wishes and for the generous Christmas gift. You all have been such a positive support to my family.

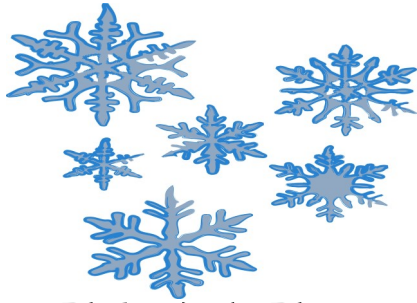
Psalm 148:1 says, "Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights!." As we enter this new year, I hope that we will all find something that we can praise the Lord about as we enter. What have you to lift your praise to God today?

Christian blogger Ben Crenshaw tells of the book *The Hiding Place*, which is the story of Corrie Ten Boom, her sister, Betsie, and their father who hid Jews in their home during World War II.

"They were eventually found out and taken to concentration camps to live under despicable conditions. The sisters were placed in Barracks 28, where Corrie despaired of hope. Betsie suggested that they give thanks—that it would encourage their hearts. Corrie said that she could give thanks for everything but the fleas, which were everywhere and horrible to live with. As the days wore on, Corrie and Betsie had the freedom to talk to other prisoners, read the Bible with them, and minister without interference. Then one day a prisoner asked a guard to settle a dispute, and the guard said, 'That place is crawling with fleas. I'm not stepping through the door.' Corrie realized why they had been given such liberties in that place—even the fleas were instruments of God. **Who knew!? God.**"

I have a praise that we just completed our Stewardship Campaign and that many of our members responded. In an attempt to be transparent, I am sharing with you my pledge for 2020—\$3200 to the General Fund and \$2500 to the Building Fund. I praise God that we will be able to fulfill that pledge and that I can show that I have not asked you to do something that I will not do myself. If you have not yet turned in your pledge card, please drop it off in the offering plate or send it in to the church office.

The next five months I will not be in the building during the week too much; I will be completing all the work I need to do to achieve my Master of Divinity degree from Garret Evangelical Theological Seminary. Don't worry, I'll still be here most Sundays, and Patty Moore, Cathy Bloss, Bob Whitmer, and Janice Dean will be covering the day-to-day administrative and care functions of the church while I'm away. Please keep me in your prayers as I complete this journey last leg of the journey. Peace.



This 'n' That

Susanna's Kitchen

Our next serving date is Monday, January 6, at 10:30 a.m. Questions? Contact the kitchen at 522-5893 between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Journey Through Grief will meet Tuesday, January 14, at 10:00 a.m. in the HeBrew Café classroom (depending on weather conditions).

—Cathy Bloss

Our next Caregivers Support Group will be Thursday, January 30, at 1:00 p.m. in the He-Brew Café classroom.

—Cathy Bloss



Happy New Year! We'll be adding six new children to our growing roster, bringing the total preschool and daycare to 80. Although growth brings challenges, we are excited to see God blessing our ministry.

We want to thank the L.I.F.T. group for collecting supplies for our ministry. Your contributions were a help and an encouragement to us!

—Lori Loucks, HCCM Director

Special
Days
Celebration



January birthdays and anniversaries will be celebrated Sunday, January 5, in the HeBrew Café after the worship service. Everyone is invited as we sing to those of our congregation with special days in January.

"Greetings to our sister church, Hillcrest UMC. May this Advent and Christmas season be a blessing to the people who meet at your place."

—Pastors Char and Jorge and
New Hope/Casa

Pastor Clear:

Thanks for the opportunity to present the Gideon's Ministry to your congregation. God Bless You!

Juan Hermosillo
Elkhart North Camp
Gideon International

We want to say thank you to Hillcrest for the Christmas bonuses this year. We are grateful for your friendship and support, as well as for the opportunity to serve here.

In Christ,
Lori Loucks
Julie Lininger

Primetimers

Taking a break for the winter months.
See you in April!

Thank You

from Maria Purciarele

Thank you so much to everyone who helped in any way to make the Cookie Walk a success again this year. It was so appreciated. So many helped in so many different ways ... and we had a good time while working hard.

We always get great feedback from customers and many say they are doing their Christmas baking at our Cookie Walk.

We brought in \$1,420 this year. It was divided between our church, preschool scholarships, and Project Linus.

Again, thank you all so much. I really appreciate all of you, and I'm looking forward to doing it all again next year.

and ...

Thank you so much for helping to make Operation Overseas a success. We sent 54 boxes this year, the most we've ever sent. I know getting the love and support from home means so much, especially during holiday time.

Again, thank you for all the support and help on both projects. We are a very loving and caring church, and I feel very blessed to be a part of it.

Church Directory Update

We will be putting the church pictorial directory together January 8. When they are finished being printed, they will be sent to the church.

"Our hope is not in the new year, but in the One who makes all things new." —Unknown

Love in Action

Martin Luther King Jr., whose life and legacy we honor this month, spoke often about the power of love. In fact, he equated the practice of nonviolence with "absolute commitment to the way of love."

Love, declared the minister and activist, "is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend." And, he said, anyone who's "devoid of the power to love" is "devoid of the power to forgive."

King distinguished between true love and "empty sentimentalism," however. He taught — and showed — that love is "the active outpouring of one's whole being into the being of another."

Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is the ultimate "active outpouring" of love, and we can choose to follow his example daily.

"Because of Calvary I'm free to choose," writes Max Lucado in *When God Whispers Your Name*. "No occasion justifies hatred; no injustice warrants bitterness. I choose love. Today I will love God and what God loves."

Is it true?

Is it kind?

Is it necessary?



Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Ephesians 4:29

January's Mission of the Month

Ribbon of Hope

Ribbon of Hope is affiliated with Elkhart General Hospital and committed to serving adult cancer patients at any stage of the disease. All services are non-medical and offered free of charge as an expression of the caregiver's relationship with God. Since each patient or caregiver has a unique set of needs, attention is personalized. Ribbon of Hope's goal is that No One Stands Alone in their battle with cancer.

Services offered are:

- *Personal attention
- *Monthly encouragement notes
- *Phone calls
- *Hospital visits
- *Occasional household assistance
- *Transportation to medical appointments
- *Faithful prayers and spiritual encouragement
- *Bereavement care
- *Cancer resource information

Your support of Ribbon of Hope makes a difference in God's Kingdom. All contributions through time, talent, finances, and prayer touch lives and bring people closer to God.

All loose change and any designated monies during January will go to Ribbon of Hope.

Thank You,
The Missions Committee

Scoutmaster Minute


by Ronn Foster

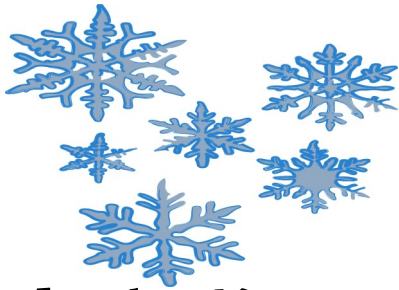
I recently had a conversation with someone about when is the right time to give up on something. That is an interesting question. For a Scout it may be when to give up on a certain merit badge, or when to stop trying to learn a new skill that the Scout just cannot seem to master. For adults it can be the same. When is the right time to stop trying to learn a new skill! When is a good time to stop contributing to an organization! The list goes on and on.

New parents, I think, have the answer. One of the least fun parts of being a parent is potty training. It can be a long, drawn out process with many peaks and valleys along the way. At what point would any parent throw up their hands and say, "Well, our child is not going to learn this so why try any longer?" Never! Parents keep at it and celebrate small victories along the way.

So, when is a good time to stop chasing your goals? Never! Keep at it and celebrate the small victories along the way.

January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Happy New Year!	2 11:30 a Yoga	3	4
5 Communion Sunday 1:00 p Brentwood service	6 10:30 a Susanna's Kitchen 6:30 p Scouts	7 9:00 a L.I.F.T. 6:00 p TOPS 6:00 p El Refugio practice	8 9:00 a The Mat Makers	9 11:30 a Yoga	10	11 8:00 a Scouts in HeBrew Cafe
 12 Mission Sunday: Ribbon of Hope 1:00 p Brentwood service	13 6:30 p Scouts 7:00 p Trustees	14 10:00 a Journey Through Grief 6:00 p TOPS	15	16 11:30 a Yoga	17 Newsletter deadline	18
19 1:00 p Brentwood service	20 5:00 p Ministry Council 6:30 p Scouts	21 6:00 p TOPS 6:00 p El Refugio practice	22 5:30 p Champion Force	23 11:30 a Yoga 5:30 p Champion Force 6:00 p Women's Book Club	24	25
26 1:00 p Brentwood service	27	28 6:00 p TOPS 6:00 p El Refugio practice	29	30 11:30 a Yoga 1:00 p Caregivers' Support	31	
	6:30 p Scouts	6:00 p El Refugio practice	5:30 p Champion Force	5:30 p Champion Force		



In the Know

"No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another."
—Charles Dickens

Your Presence includes	
Brentwood Service	
November 24	67
December 1	74
December 8	60
December 15	321
December 22	80
December 24	85

January Birthdays	
1	Sharon McSorley Ginny Peters
15	Lukas Gaylor Clifford Whisler
24	Margaret Grieb
25	Marilynn Anson Nikki Behne Helen Fillio Sheri Korovesis Gerri Marsh
27	Jerry Rowe
28	Heidi Clear
30	Gari Lewandowski
No January Anniversaries	
Please let the office know if your special day was missed.	

If we must cancel a church service, our closing information will be listed on our Facebook page (Hillcrest UMC—Elkhart Indiana), our website at www.hillcrestelkhart.com, WNDU Channel 16, and their website, www.wndu.com, and WSBT Channel 22, and their website, www.wsb.com.

Blessed are the single-hearted, for they shall enjoy much peace. If you refuse to be hurried and pressed, if you stay your soul on God, nothing can keep you from that clearness of spirit which is life and peace. In that stillness you will know what his will is. —Amy Carmichael

Serving in Worship						
Date	Communion	Greeters	HeBrew Café Workers	Media	Scripture Readers	Ushers
January 5	Diane and Gari Lewandowski Bernice Simms	Patty Moore Wayne Rowe	Diane and Gari Lewandowski L & C Vredingburgh		Mary Herschberger	Sharon and Stan McSorley
January 12	---	Patty Moore Wayne Rowe	Diane and Gari Lewandowski L & C Vredingburgh		Diane Lewandowski	Diane and Gari Lewandowski
January 19	---	Patty Moore Wayne Rowe	Diane and Gari Lewandowski L & C Vredingburgh		Phyllis Osborne	Nancy and Jerry Rowe
January 26	---	Patty Moore Wayne Rowe	Diane and Gari Lewandowski L & C Vredingburgh		Kasey Clear	Bernice Simms Rene Wenger

AIM IMPACT Update

Editor's Note: The Indiana UMC Conference is presenting a series of workshops for the next 18 months (every other month) designed to help small membership churches reach their potential. Several of our members are attending these meetings, which began in July. Please be praying for the leaders and attendees as they meet to learn, be challenged, and grow.

What Is it Like to Be in a Small Church?

by Gerald Huntington

In our recent AIM meeting, we all discussed the make-up of a small church. We all know Hillcrest is small compared to Grace, Granger, Trinity, and Faith both in building and congregation. Did you know that there are churches that are even smaller? There are churches that have twenty to thirty active members, and the Conference still recognizes and supports them!

What are the benefits of having a small church? Love. A small church has plenty of love to go around. Why is that? Everyone knows and appreciates everyone that comes in the doors. 90 percent of all UMC churches have plateaued or are shrinking, and small churches are feeling this first. When this happens, we need to look at where and what we are doing. Our church should exist for God's will, not our own. It is whatever He wants done that we should be doing.

So what is God calling us to do? How do we know? First, we need to look at our mission. Are we driving the mission or is the mission driving us? All of our committees in the church should be driven by the mission of the church, and nothing else. Who are the stewards of the mission? The Trustees are. The Trustees are responsible for keeping us all focused on our mission and vision.

In a small church, almost everyone works. For example, in Hillcrest we have multiple committees headed up by different people. On those committees or ministries, there are people that are on more than one. I am sure that you have seen people usher, do the offering, and do communion all in one day! It is not uncommon for multiple people to wear multiple hats in the small church. This is called a Simplified Church Structure. While we are not a total simplified structure, we are close to it.

Under our leadership, we do have an accountable leadership style. I believe that we are all responsible, accountable, and for those that have authority, we must use it wisely with good counsel and direction. Who does what under this umbrella? The Ministry Council is governance, which works to enforce the rules and boundaries of the church. The pastor is to lead by teaching, giving us the vision and giving us direction. The staff is to manage everyone in doing what the pastor assigns us. They equip and coordinate members with the tools we need to share the gospel. The most important role is done by members, us, and that is to minister to others and share the gospel with everyone we come in contact with.

In summary, with love being our guiding force to do God's will, it doesn't matter the size our church, it's where our heart is. When our heart is focused on God's will, we will listen to Him the most. When we listen to Him the most, we will ultimately carry out His vision for us to do, and that is to go out spread the word of God as it relates to today's world.

HILLCREST WOMEN'S MINISTRY

2020 Women's Ministry Board:

Leader: Cathy Bloss
 Board members: Terri Longacre,
 leaders of the ministry groups
 Advisor: Martha Sims

Circle of Friends Stamping Ministry

Our year is almost over. We have ended on a good note and next month I will let everyone know which mission agencies we will be supporting with our profits. Again next year we will be doing birthday cards for a financial business and will be adding to our supply of every day greeting cards. We are excited to continue with our stamping.

Thank you for your prayers and support this past year. May each and everyone at Hillcrest have a very blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

—Marilynn Anson

L.I.F.T. (Ladies In Fellowship Together)

1st Tuesday of each month – 9:00 a.m.
 Perkins Restaurant (107 N. Pointe Blvd., Elkhart)

L.I.F.T. met December 3 with 24 ladies in attendance.

Corrie Bartell and Jan Sharkey are resigning after three years and the new leaders are Gloria Griffith and Sharon Teeter.

L.I.F.T. is a great way to get better acquainted and have a good breakfast.

Plan to attend in the New Year!

Our Women's Ministry prayer:

Father, thank You for helping us to grow closer as a sisterhood in Your service. Help us to be compassionate and to support each other, to accept our differences gracefully, and to show appreciation for the contributions of others. Remind us to be aware of the impact that our small services may have on others. We ask Your blessing on our sisterhood. Amen .

The Women's Ministry Board will not meet in January.

Hillcrest Women's Book Club

Thursday, January 23, 6:00 p.m.

Diane Lewandowski, Leader

A reader's choice

No, that's not the title of our next selection! It's to announce that all readers who want to participate in the laughing, questioning, opinion-giving Hillcrest Women's Book Club should show up for this meeting.

Each reader is to bring the book of her choice to the meeting, prepared to tell why it "spoke" to her. We think it will be an interesting way to get acquainted with the reading others have enjoyed.

AND it makes for a great opportunity for additional women to join those who have been meeting for a while.

Read this as your join-a-reading-club resolution for 2020!

The Mat Makers

(Sleeping mats for the homeless made from plastic bags.)

2nd Wednesday each month

9:00-app.-11:00 a.m. in the HeBrew Café

Martha Sims and Mary Herschberger, Co-Leaders

We delivered our 28th sleeping mat to Guidance Ministries in December.

We also added \$70 to Hillcrest's Cookie Walk by selling totes made from plastic bag strips. The small ones sold for \$5 each, the larger ones for \$10. There are a few left over, so if you're interested in buying one, see Rene Wenger.

WE NEED: At least one more person to cut 2-1/2" strips from trimmed and flattened bags. Please talk to Martha if you're willing to try this. We can provide you with a cutting mat, a metal ruler, and an X-acto knife plus blades (or a rotary cutter will work just as well if you have one).

We have several ladies who work at home, trimming and flattening bags or looping strips and winding balls for the ladies who crochet. If we have at least one more person to cut strips, it will allow others to spend more time crocheting.

ONE MORE REQUEST: Please don't cut or loop any more 2-1/2" strips from the stiff, shiny bags such as those from Bed, Bath and Beyond. Some of us find these very hard to crochet, so just put them in a recycling bin or pass them on to Mary Herschberger to use in totes.

Want to learn more about this ministry for the homeless? Visit Mat Makers' next meeting on January 8, 2020, 9:00-11:00 a.m. Come to help or just stop by to see what's going on. We'll welcome your interest.

The wise men journeyed to worship Jesus and offered Him gifts. Show each of us, God, what unique gift we might lay before Him.

A Sacred Partnership

Bible scholar William Barclay notes that John the Baptist was "startled and unwilling" when Jesus asked to be baptized. The evangelist thought he needed what Jesus could give, not the reverse!

We are pros at taking our needs to God — indeed he invites this: "Call on me in the day of trouble" (Psalm 50:15). But God also comes to us with needs: "Mortal, I am sending you" (Ezekiel 2:3, NRSV); "Go ... make disciples" (Matthew 28:19); "Carry each other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2, NIV).

Apparently, God prefers partnership to acting solo. From the beginning, God has invited people to name the animals, tend the garden, welcome strangers, build the tabernacle, proclaim his word, ensure justice and mercy, share his love.

What does God need from you, as Jesus needed baptism from John? Salvation is God's alone to accomplish, but then he calls us to share work with him, for the world's sake. So we echo Jesus: "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this" (Matthew 3:15, NIV). —Heidi Mann

At Home With God

Of all persons, the Christian should be best prepared for whatever the New Year brings. ... In Christ he has disposed of a thousand enemies that other men must face alone and unprepared. He can face his tomorrow cheerful and unafraid because yesterday he turned his feet into the ways of peace and today he lives in God. The man who has made God his dwelling place will always have a safe habitation. —A.W. Tozer

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Gari Lewandowski, Harry Sims

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Lori Loucks, Director

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WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:30 a.m. Traditional Worship

10:30 a.m. HeBrew Café fellowship

11:00 a.m. Adult Studies

12:00 p.m. El Refugio Church

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday

8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: *January 17*

Looking Ahead:

Susanna's Kitchen

Monday, January 6, 10:30 a.m.

Trustees

Monday, January 13, 7:00 p.m.

Journey Through Grief

Tuesday, January 14, 10:00 a.m.

Primetimers

No gathering until April

Ministry Council

Monday, January 20, 5:00 p.m.

Caregivers' Support Group

Thursday, January 30, 1:00 p.m.

Brentwood Service

Weekly on Sundays at 1:00 p.m.

Women's Board meeting

No meeting in January

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