



The Messenger

Monthly Newsletter of Hillcrest United Methodist Church

December 2020

From Pastor Kerry

THOSE
WHO
DREAM

"When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream."

Psalm 126:1, NRSV

Greetings Dreamers,

Yes, you ... I'm talking to you. We all have dreams. We all have aspirations. Sometimes dreams are dashed, sometimes dreams are fulfilled beyond our wildest dreams. This Advent we will enter God's dream for us. A dream that sees creation as good, very good. Throughout the Bible we see God's dreams placed on people who become participants in the fulfillment of God's dream. The Advent series - *Those Who Dream* - takes us through some of those dreams and the dreamers who become involved. It brings us into the dream and asks us to dream.

November 29—1st Sunday in Advent

Scripture: Mark 13:24-37; Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Theme: THOSE WHO DREAM ... *Keep Awake* (Hope)

December 6—2nd Sunday in Advent

Scripture: Mark 8:1-8; Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

Theme: THOSE WHO DREAM ... *Prepare the Way* (Peace)

December 13—3rd Sunday in Advent

Scripture: Luke 1:46-55; Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126

Theme: THOSE WHO DREAM ... *Sow Joy* (Joy)

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December 20—4th Sunday in Advent

Scripture: Luke 1:26-45; 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Theme: THOSE WHO DREAM ... *Are Not Alone* (Love)

December 21—MONDAY - The Longest Night

Combined worship experience with South Bend Grace, South Bend Broadway Christian Parish, Granger New Salem, and Elkhart Hillcrest. This online-only service, held on the longest night of the year, the winter solstice, lives into the struggles of today, It is a time for lament, for mourning, and to grieve what has been lost this year. It is a time we plead to God to remember us and to let justice and mercy flow in a hope against hope that "God will set all things right over the earth." 2 Samuel 2:10, MSG

December 24—Christmas Eve - Thursday - 4:00 p.m.

Scripture: Luke 2:1-20; Isaiah 9:2-7

Theme: This Night We Are ... THOSE WHO DREAM

December 27—First Sunday After Christmas

Scripture: Luke 2:22-40; Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Theme: THOSE WHO DREAM ... Will Not Keep Silent

January 6—Epiphany - Happy New Year

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12; Isaiah 60:1-6

Theme: THOSE WHO DREAM ... Persevere

As John Lennon wrote,

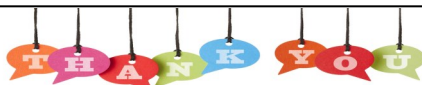
You may say I'm a dreamer

But I'm not the only one

I hope someday you'll join us

And the world will be as one.

May we all dream big for the glory of God and the fulfillment of God's dreams. Advent is upon us. Thanks be to God.

Pastor Kerry

Thank you to everyone who sponsored a walker for CROP Walk in October. We raised \$620!

In the midst of this weird year, a strange holiday season with distancing from loved ones, we still care for others. Our families, the poor, the emotionally distressed are our concerns, along with the persons who have continued to serve us even while risking their own health.

The staff at Hillcrest is among those who have served the congregation and others this year in situations that required risk and servanthood. With that thought in mind, the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) has developed a plan for the congregation to participate in a staff Christmas gifting by sharing financially whatever amount is appropriate for one's means.

The gifts are for our pastor and family, our musicians, our custodian, our administrative assistant and our HCCM director. We would note that the pastor's family has had a year of extraordinary demands: COVID-19 infections; Baby Sullivan; and a serious accident for son Stuart. Through it all, they have met our needs as physically possible. These situations, plus other personal ones, then put additional challenges to the rest of the staff. We as a congregation have been blessed with their services, which are given graciously and without complaint.

Without a usual budgeted way of taking care of this we propose the following:

Your gift to the STAFF GIFT FUND as a check made out to and mailed to Diane Lewandowski, Ministry Council chair, at

21781 Lodgepole Lane
Bristol, IN 46507

no later than December 21.

On December 6, 13, and 20, Diane, if she is in attendance, will accept cash before or after the morning service. However, the best alternative this year is to mail your gift to Diane, as above. Another possibility is to leave cash in an envelope marked STAFF GIFT FUND in the church office during the week. The total gift fund will be apportioned by SPRC and given in the form of gift cards by Christmas Day.

Janice Dean, SPRC chair, will be glad to talk (574-210-1594) with anyone who has questions about this plan.

Thank you!



Once again, we've grown! We've recently added a few more children, bringing our total to 100!

Again, we're asking that the general public ages 65 and over stay out of the building while the children are here, per guidelines given to us by the Family and Social Services Agency. Thank you for your patience and cooperation with this matter.

Please continue to pray for wisdom, health, and strength for us.

—Lori Loucks, Director

December's Mission of the Month

Soup of Success

Soup of Success is an intensive 20-week (20 hours per week) program that addresses the whole woman mentally, physically, and spiritually, Empowerment is at the core of everything they do. They help the participants find their voices, discover their direction, establish their goals, and then help them figure out a way to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals. Women must be at least 21 years old, be literate, and be drug-free. If they don't already possess a diploma or GED they must be willing to enter into a GED program. Women put their names on a waiting list and must undergo an interview before being accepted in the Soup of Success program.

Along with the 20-week program of learning job and life skills, women learn skills while actually running a small social enterprise. Proceeds from sales of their products go directly to paying the training wages for the women in the program.

Their current products are: gourmet soup mixes, dessert mixes, dip/dressing mixes, gift baskets, greeting cards, and recycled wool mittens.

Soup of Success plants seeds of hope in the participants. Some of the things graduates have been able to accomplish are:

- Leave a relationship filled with domestic violence
- Regain custody of their children
- Get a job they love
- Move out of a homeless shelter and into their own safe, affordable housing
- Learn many helpful life skills

All loose change and any designated monies will go to Soup of Success.

Thank You,
The Missions Task Force

The Bishop's Christmas Offering for Children

Will you help make a difference in the lives of children around the world this year? Each year, our Indiana Annual Conference supports The Bishop's Christmas Offering for Children, which is divided to meet the needs of the following ministries:

- Impact 2818, the Indiana Conference camping ministry
- The three Indiana United Methodist-related children and youth homes
- Local outreach projects
- United Methodist advance projects (national and global)
- Bishop's fund for emergency children's projects and the promotion of this offering

Write your check to Hillcrest United Methodist Church, but please write "Bishop's Christmas Offering" on the memo line so there is no confusion. Thank you!

Lifestyles Class

Last year at this time, I was preparing my mind and heart for Advent ... the Advent book we were going to study, decorating our classroom, planning our class Christmas lunch at Bent Oak Restaurant, and on and on. What a wonderful Advent time we experienced in 2019!

Fast forward to 2020 ... the year of the pandemic ... wearing masks, social distancing, and hand washing over and over again. A year of loneliness for many, a year of disappointment in not being able to do the special things we've done in the past, a year of not meeting with our Christian brothers and sisters.

The Wise Men saw the bright Star of the East, which guided them to the Christ child. We must look for the light that Christ brings to all who choose to be His followers. The bright and beautiful lights of Christmas remind us of the light and love the baby in the manger brought. It is the same light we must turn to during this time of darkness ... the same light that will take us into 2021! The same light of hope that the resurrection will bring at Easter! Let's keep that hope alive as we look forward to next year when we can all meet again and share in Christian fellowship.

In the meantime, a devotional by John Greenleaf Whittier says, "The joy that you give to others is the joy that comes back to you." Here is the remainder of the devotional:

Somehow, not only for Christmas,
But all the long year through,
The joy that you give to others,
Is the joy that comes back to you.
And the more you spend in blessing,
The poor and lonely and sad,
The more of your heart's possessing,
Returns to you in glad.

"If you give, you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use in giving — large or small— it will be used to measure what is given back to you." (Luke 6:38)

We have heard people say, "You can't out-give God." Well, you can't out-give yourself either. You don't need to be wealthy to possess a giving heart. Give a smile, lend an ear, extend a hand. However you give, God's promise is tried and tested, and you'll see the blessings multiplied and returned back to you.

—John Greenleaf Whittier

So during this time of Advent as we face this unprecedented pandemic, let's follow Whittier's advice and give joy to others through the light of Jesus Christ, and you'll see the blessings multiplied and returned back to you. Keep the faith, keep the hope, and sometime in the next few months, we'll be meeting together again in our Lifestyles class. Merry Christmas to all of you!

Wishing you joy,
Patty Moore

HILLCREST WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Circle of Friends Stamping Ministry

Looks like our group will not be meeting during the last couple of months of 2020. Hopefully things will improve for us to again get together and stamp starting in January, weather permitting. I will be putting out Christmas cards in our rack for you to view. You can call me if you want more of any of the designs.

Thank you for your prayers and support during this time. Stay safe and have a wonderful holiday season.
—Marilynn Anson

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

The 44th sleeping mat made by Hillcrest's Mat Makers was donated to Guidance Ministries in November.

When we first decided to try this project in November of 2017, we hoped to complete two or three mats. Little did we realize what a suitable long-term project this would be for our congregation.

We're very grateful for all of your contributions. Who all is helping? We don't really know. We only know that used bags, trimmed and flattened bags, 2-1/2" strips, and balls of looped strips continue to appear in our storage room, allowing our ladies to pick up what they need and continue their work.

Bev Slaughter will continue to work on mats this winter while she's away, and Mary Herschberger has rejoined our crocheting team now that her schedule isn't quite so hectic.

If you aren't getting out during the pandemic and can't drop off or pick up supplies at the church, just call or email me and someone will help. We promise to keep our distance and wear masks.

Our sincere thanks for your support, and God bless each and every one of you.

Martha Sims

(574) 264-9740 (home) or 596-4918 (mobile)

simsville3537@comcast.net

Hillcrest Women's Book Club

4th Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m.

Diane Lewandowski, Leader

We are taking a break for the holidays, but we'll "see" you in a few months!

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

1st Tuesday of each month – 9:00 a.m.

Perkins Restaurant (107 N. Pointe Blvd., Elkhart)

Since COVID-19 doesn't seem to be going away anytime soon, we will not be having breakfasts at Perkins until at least Spring. At that time we will reassess the situation. —Gloria Griffith



The Christmas message is that there is hope for a ruined humanity — hope of pardon, hope of peace with God, hope of glory — because at the Father's will Jesus Christ became poor, and was born in a stable so that 30 years later he might hang on a cross. —J.I. Packer

Scoutmaster Minute

by Ronn Foster

Over the past month, our Scouts have focused on things that we are thankful for. Some of the answers we have heard are family, homes, school, jobs, church, etc. What about things that are not as joyful but eventually bring joy. Sometimes joy comes disguised, does it not? School may not be a joy while one is under the pressure of school demands, but the rewards are often worth the struggle. Work may not be joyful every day, but the fruits of work certainly are. My point is, happiness is everywhere. We just have to look for it.

Often, people struggle during this time of year. A few years ago, one of my mentors, while teaching focus, challenged his students to write down at least one thing that made them happy. Further, the students were instructed to do that exercise for 10 days. I completed the 10 days and enjoyed the renewed spirit I had. I then decided to take it a step further and extend the exercise for the entire next year. So, for 365 days I spent every morning thinking about what made me happy. The results at the end of the year were astounding.

My challenge to you is simple. On January 1, 2021, I challenge you to keep a journal about what makes you happy. It may be as simple as "kittens" or as elaborate as you wish. It is up to you. Feel free to send them to me, or to simply keep them private. If you post them on social media, please let me know by using the hashtag #365DaysOfHappinessChallenge. I would love to follow along.

Hillcrest United Methodist Church

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Charles Mwale

Ministry Council Chair:

Diane Lewandowski

Staff Parish Chair:

Janice Dean

Trustee Chair:

Ryan Wireman

Hillcrest Community Childcare Ministry:

Lori Loucks, Director

574-266-7427

hccmdir@gmail.com

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

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

JANUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: *December 18*

Looking Ahead:

Trustees

Monday, December 14, 7:00 p.m.

Ministry Council

Monday, December 21, 5:00 p.m.

Brentwood Service

Weekly on Sundays at 1:00 p.m.

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.wsbt.com.

December Birthdays

1 Marie Young

9 Mike Franks

Beth Laughman

30 Mike Hershberger

December Anniversaries

No anniversaries

Please let the office know if your special day was missed.