



Reaching Heights

A Newsletter of Heights Christian Church

VOLUME 26, NO. 6

December, 2015

WORSHIP AND WONDER ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT HEIGHTS CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Advent is a time of waiting, a time to prepare ourselves for the coming of Emmanuel, God With Us.

November 29 **1st Sunday of Advent – Hope**

Scripture: Luke 21:25-36

Message: “Waiting”

Bring your family and friends as we also celebrate this **Family Fifth Sunday**

December 6 **2nd Sunday of Advent – Peace**

Scripture: Malachi 2:1-4

Message: “Refined”

Fair Trade Sale after Worship (see pg. 2 for details)

December 13 **3rd Sunday of Advent – Joy**

Scripture: Zephaniah 3:14-20 Message: “Saved”

Christmas Caroling at Campbell Court (see pg. 4 for details)

December 20 **4th Sunday of Advent – Love**

Scripture: Micah 5:2-5a

Message: “Secure”

Christmas Tasting Party

Following morning worship, we will gather in the Campbell Room to share and celebrate this festive season with our annual Tasting Party. Everyone is asked to bring your favorite finger food to share with our HCC family, friends and guests.

December 24 **Christmas Eve—7:15 p.m.**

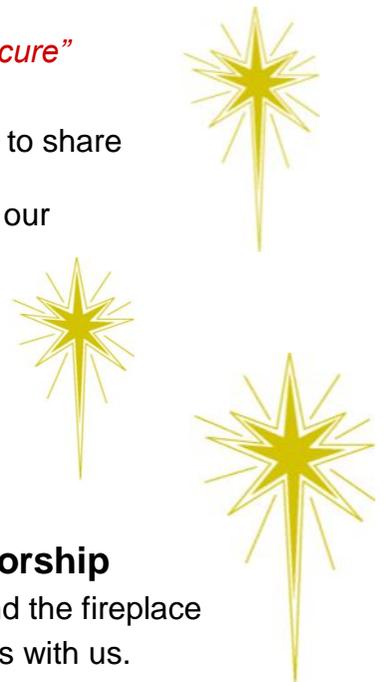
Our traditional Christmas Eve candlelight service. We will prepare our hearts for the birth of the Savior. Come be a part of the celebration in song, word and prayer.

December 27 **Keeping the Christmas Spirit—10 a.m. Worship**

A casual worship experience in the Campbell Room around the fireplace. The singing group Elegie will be sharing their talents with us.



*Neighbors, friends and family are always welcome
Sharing love in and around the Community!*



Along The Path...



I am writing this about one week after the terrorist attacks in Beirut and Paris. Which is not the kind of topic I would choose to write about for a newsletter article leading up to Advent and Christmas, but there it is.

Much has already been done, written and said in response to these horrific acts and a good deal of the response has come out of fear. This is a completely understandable and very human response. Fear is an evolutionary survival mechanism, but also the underlying cause for most if not all of the evil in the world; fear of scarcity, fear of loss of power, fear of failure. It was the response of the shepherds outside Bethlehem at the news of Jesus' birth and of the Disciples in Jerusalem after his death. And the response from the angel and Jesus? Do not be afraid. Peace be with you.

In this season we gather to wait for and then to celebrate the God who suggests that in the midst of our fear we can still hope, that we can set aside fear for peace, that our fear will be replaced with joy, and that we can overcome fear with love. May it be so for each of us this Advent!

... from your Prayer Ministry

"Take more time, cover less ground." These words were written in a journal of Thomas Merton as a piece of advice to himself. He was bemoaning the fact that even in his cloistered life of the monastery, he found his mind often filled with trivia; his inner self not at peace even though he lived in an environment designed to foster that very quality!



These words sound strange to our ears because we are surrounded by devices that promise they will help us to do just the opposite: cover more ground in less time! We can get world news as it's happening; we can press a button and have an entire book delivered to our phones or tablets in seconds. No need to take time to go to the library or bookstore! We can watch a muted sports event on our TV so that we can still listen to an audio book or play a computer game. If we record a favorite TV show, we can fast forward through the commercials so we don't "lose a minute"!

Merton continues: I was created for your peace and the holiness of your deep silence. I wait for your grace to still my mind, and to accept that you will allow me to recognize that you are giving yourself to me at every moment.

How can we focus on the peace and holy silence of God this Advent? What would happen if we deliberately tried to focus on developing our relationship with God by taking more time and covering less ground?

... 'til next time, let us take more time to listen to the silence within us.

BECAUSE YOU CARE

Illness—Surgery—Hospitalization

Jani McWilliams	Bob Hassler	Allen Crowley	Jan Everett	Jesse Hall
C.D./Lois Clark	Shirley Reading	Janelle Eccleston	Joe Feudi	Patty Monroe
"Cas" Castleberry	Lyubov Nikolenko	Henry Sharpley	Lisa Peabody	Alma G. Jones
Nancy Wilson	Joe/Barbara Tolley	Dorothy Mathis	Sidney Mallory, Jr.	Peggy Yeager
Paul/Shirley Hummel	John/Carmen Hassel			

Death

November 7th—*M.L. Walling*

Father of HCC's past minister, Rev. Gary Walling

MODERATOR'S MUSINGS



Come, Lord Jesus, come into our hearts!

Soon the choir will be singing these words as Advent begins on November 29th. I am a perennial grouser as I see Christmas being commandeered by stores and merchandisers who seem to start their “specials” and displays earlier and earlier every year. I keep trying for an attitude adjustment. After all, shouldn't I be glad that the birth of Jesus and his message of reconciliation is getting more press? I guess that would be easier to believe if the season didn't have such a commercial focus.

And yet, I do feel the stirrings of the Christmas spirit and the Christmas message in my soul. It starts as the choir begins to rehearse Advent and Christmas music. It starts as I hear news at the Trustees' meeting for Christmas caroling at Campbell Court and for providing gifts for the Family Promise program.

It begins for me here at church and it will grow through the words, music and fellowship of this season of amazing joy! The story of the baby born in Bethlehem never grows old. I hope that you will be present with me as we journey through Advent and arrive at the manger together. For I know, as you do, that Lord Jesus will indeed come into our hearts in these days!

Jane

MISSION MINISTRY

Heights Christian Church is a missions oriented congregation. Giving to those less fortunate is what we do. Let us continue to give as God has blessed us.



The Outreach Committee made a Thanksgiving donation to a local Hunger Center. The *Christmas Offering* will benefit children at the Cleveland Christian Home here in Cleveland and help fund the work of our regional ministry, including Camp Christian. This offering will be collected on Sunday, December 20th and Christmas Eve. Thank you for your generosity.

Outreach Committee volunteer, Grace Loudenstein is coordinating gift collection for Family Promise Holiday Shopping event. (See pg. 7)

Joan Fronck and Val McMillian, are our Campbell Court Liaisons. They are planning Thanksgiving and Christmas meals for persons who won't have family or friends with whom to spend the holidays.

Green Chalice has had successful Fall activities making our environment a greener place to live. The last was our recycling event on November 7th. Thank you for your donations.



Up-Lifting Devotionals



The congregation offers free Advent reflections for adults. Partners in Prayer Advent 2015 focuses on all of Advent—a season in which we prepare for the celebration of the birth of the Christ Child. This devotional can be found at every entrance to the Sanctuary and in the Campbell Room.

Also . . . The new addition of, Our Daily Bread booklets will be available on the Narthex and Campbell Room table baskets.

It has been said that “blessing comes from seeking wisdom and living by it.” wasn't Jesus the very personification of this concept? This winter, discover the treasures of wisdom in Our Daily Bread and receive a daily blessing.

Pick-up a copy of each book on Sunday.

FAIR TRADE SALE

Sunday, December 6—11 a.m.



IRTF (the Inter-Religious Task Force on Central America) will bring tables full of fair trade items to help you get an early start on your Christmas shopping (not to mention for yourself). This sale will take place in the Campbell Room immediately after worship.

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS



The Church office will be closed beginning December 25th, opening January 4th. Voice mail and emails will be checked periodically. If there is an emergency, please contact Pastor Roger at 216.246.9179 or Jane Troha at 216.991.8010.



The Worship Committee will be decorating the church for the holiday season on Saturday, December 5th at 9:00 a.m. Anyone who would like to help is welcome and would be appreciated.

NEED CHRISTMAS SHOPPING IDEAS?

Looking for something light, small and easy to mail? Something always appreciated by the recipient? How about some **gift cards**?



Did you know that many members use gift cards for Heinen's, Giant Eagle and Dave's when they shop for groceries each week?



Did you know that the sale of gift cards supports our church budget?



Did you know that some of the top cards that generate income for the church are Macy's, Texas Roadhouse, Boston Market, Outback Steakhouse and Red Lobster?



Did you know that Panera cards are always handy to have in your pocket, as are Arby's, Wendy's and Subway cards?



Did you know we have cards for Target, Walgreens and CVS?

Gift cards are for sale each Sunday after worship, and in the church office during the week. Payment is accepted by cash or check only.

So grab a cup of coffee at Starbucks, head over to Macy's, pick up a quick supper at Bob Evans and swing through Walgreens for a bottle of aspirins, and take care of that holiday shopping while helping your church!! Thanks!!



ATTENTION: CHRISTMAS SHOPPING WITH DOUBLE BENEFITS



Many new things have arrived in our Thrift Shop just waiting to be bought for someone special on your list and every cent you spend in the shop goes for our church and its youth and missions. So it is a win/win situation.

We hope all church members will come and bring their friends to take advantage of this holiday shopping benefit.

Hours are Thursdays: 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Spread the word and help us have a record month!

FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY

On Sunday, December 13th—5 p.m. Come be a part of this intergenerational event as we package fruit baskets and then travel to Campbell Court to carol and visit with the residents there.



Each family is asked to bring one bag of fruit (10-12 pieces). Please select according to your last name. (A-H: red apples, I-P: green apples or pears, Q-Z: oranges).

We will enjoy punch and cookies afterward. We are also asking for contributions of 1 dozen holiday cookies from families or any one else who could contribute. A wonderful way to share the Christmas spirit of love. Come, join the fun!

On December 20th, we will hold the annual Christmas Tasting party during second hour. Everyone is asked to bring a holiday treat to share.

Also, remember to look for the sign up sheet in the Campbell Room for fellowship hour snacks.

COMBINED HOLIDAY MEETING



CWF Ecumenical Women's Group and the Meditative Art Circle will meet on Dec. 9th at 1:00 PM in the Campbell Room to enjoy a Christmas Favorite Family Dessert Table where you can taste your choice of a variety of family favorite recipes.

The program will then follow on how Meditative Art releases stress through creative drawings using Mandalas and Zentangle line drawing.

Donita Singerman, our in house artist teacher, and Rosalind Powell, master of World Mandala Art, will be with us to lead us in this creative meditation work done to music. It is guaranteed to relieve stress around the holiday season.

Call the church office letting us know that you are attending (561-4800) so we will know how many to plan for.

Please bring Sharpie Permanent Markers, (all colors) ultra fine points and regular pts. You will go home with your own masterpiece and with lots of new ideas for holiday family activities.

ADMINISTRATION MINISTRY TEAM

Property Committee

The Property Committee was busy this Fall, performing some work itself (and with help from other HCC members), such as installing storm windows in the sanctuary, and arranging for other work to be done, including the sealcoating of the flat roof. Additionally, the committee put together an updated “wish list” of work items for the church, with varying levels of cost and difficulty.



Stewardship

The financial part of HCC’s stewardship efforts for this church year began with an initial appeal to the leaders of the church. Following that, letters and estimate-of-giving cards went out to other members and friends of the church the latter part of October. The campaign got off to a promising start, and people were responding generously as of the time for submitting articles for this issue of Reaching Heights (in mid-November, before Commitment Sunday). A year ago, pledges ultimately totaled approximately \$127,000. An amount larger than that would be extremely helpful this time, so anybody who has not yet turned in a pledge is encouraged to do so.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee continues to wrestle with creating a 2016 budget that will not include funding from the Endowment Fund, because that Fund has been completely depleted. In 2015, the budgeted draw against the Endowment Fund was \$40,800. The committee’s next meeting is December 8.

SECOND HOUR IN DECEMBER

Those who attend Bible Study decided to finish the book that has been our source in studying the book of Genesis, *Genesis for Normal People* by Peter Enns and Jared Byas. There are four chapters remaining in the book, including the Conclusion. After finishing this book, the Bible Study will continue with Brian McLaren’s *We Make the Road by Walking*.

November 29 Climate Change—Alice Bows-Larkin

Climate researcher Alice Bows-Larkin connects her academic research to the broader policy context, helping create policies to deal with our changing planet.

December 6 Why Climate Change is a Threat to Human Rights—Mary Robinson

Mary Robinson served as president of Ireland from 1990 to 1997, and as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights from 1997 to 2002. She now leads a foundation devoted to climate justice.

December 13 A Realistic Version for World Peace—Jody Williams

Nobel Peace laureate Jody Williams brings tough love to the dream of world peace, with her razor-sharp take on what “peace” really means, and a set of profound stories that zero in on the creative struggle — and sacrifice — of those who work for it.

December 20 Holiday Tasting Party - No Second Hour

December 27 No Second Hour

WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR?

I’m thankful for being retired and putting my talents to work at HCC.

– Valencia McMillan



FAMILY PROMISE *HOLIDAY WISHES 2015*

The holidays are fast approaching and it is time to consider our friends at Family Promise. There is a wish list below. They are requesting new items for their store where Family Promise people can come and shop for free. Gift cards are also welcome and there are a number of requested cards on their wish list.

Please bring all items to the church no later than Sunday morning December 13. The “New and Unwrapped” donations will be delivered to the East 152 Street location that afternoon. If you have any questions, please call Grace Loudenstein at 216.381.4438.

Children (2 mos-8 yrs.)

Action Figures
Arts & Crafts Supplies
Building Sets & Blocks
Character Toys & Apparel
Books
Games & Puzzles
Learning Toys
Movies
Multicultural Dolls
Pretend Play & Dress Up
Trucks & Cars

Mom and Dad

Shaving Kits
Robes/Slippers
Fashion Accessories
Handbags
Movies and Music
Perfume & Cologne Gift Set
Watches
Shaving Kits
Tool Kits

Gifts for all Ages

Outerwear
Robes
Slippers
Snow Boots
Socks & Underwear
Winter Accessories
Winter Clothes
Winter PJ Sets

Tweens (9-12 yrs) & Teens (13-18 yrs.)

Arts and Craft
Bath and Beauty Products
Bead and Jewelry Kits
Board Games
Character Toys & Apparel
Movies & Music
Nails Polish Sets
Sports
Journals
Video Games

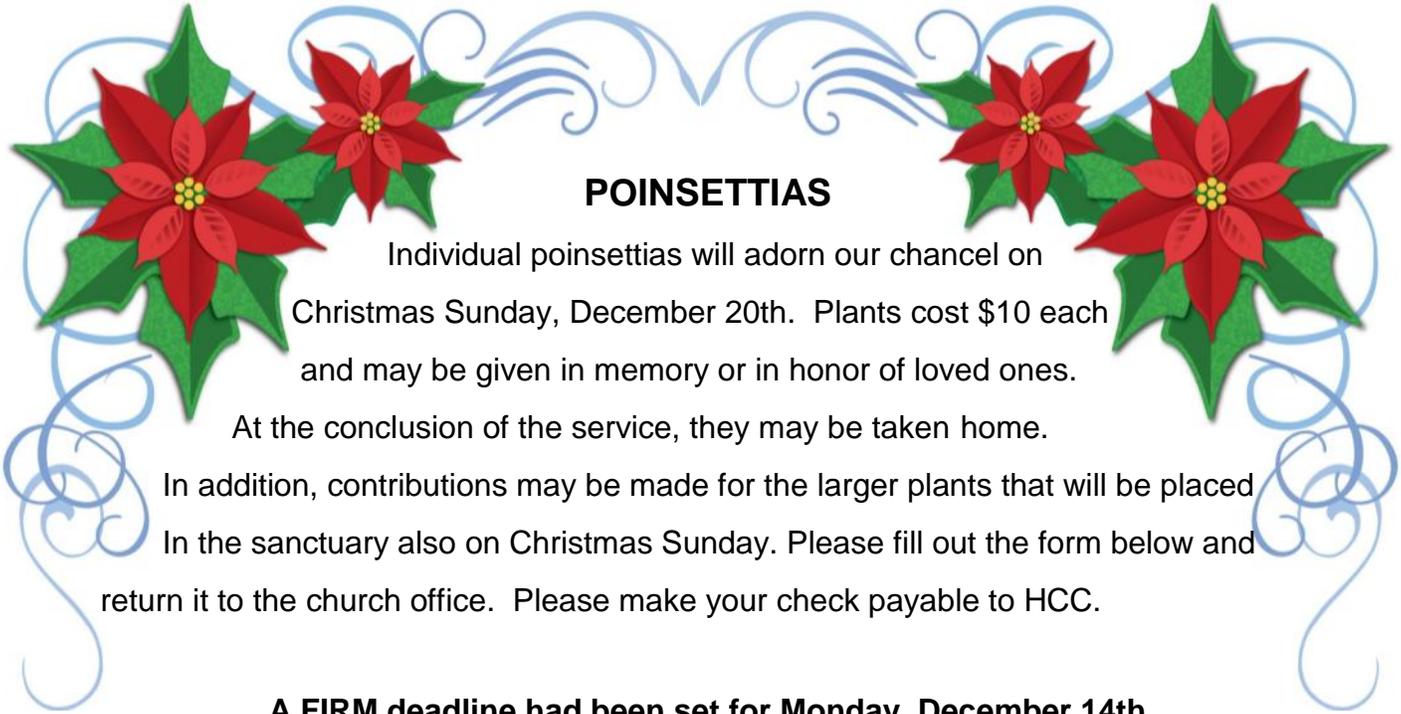
“Make It Like Home” Gifts

Towels/Washcloths
Twin/Full Sheet Sets
Kitchen Linens/Pot Holders
New Pillows
Can Openers
Pots/Pans
Cooking Utensils
Measuring Cups/Spoons
Laundry Baskets/Soap
Cleaning Products

Gift Cards

Giant Eagle, Dave’s, Sav-A-Lot Grocery Stores
Target
Walmart
Dollar General/Family Dollar
Payless Shoes
Fast Food Restaurants





POINSETTIAS

Individual poinsettias will adorn our chancel on Christmas Sunday, December 20th. Plants cost \$10 each and may be given in memory or in honor of loved ones.

At the conclusion of the service, they may be taken home.

In addition, contributions may be made for the larger plants that will be placed in the sanctuary also on Christmas Sunday. Please fill out the form below and return it to the church office. Please make your check payable to HCC.

A FIRM deadline had been set for Monday, December 14th

Poinsettias Order

Name _____

I (we) wish to contribute \$ ____ for the sanctuary poinsettias

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Name _____

I (we) wish to purchase # _____ individual plants.

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

10:00 a.m. Worship Service
11:00 a.m. Coffee Fellowship
11:30 a.m. Education Hour

(Nursery & Preschool care provided)

STAFF

Minister *Rev. Roger D. Osgood*
Assistant Minister *Min. Michele Moreland*
Minister of Outreach *Rev. Joan Brown Campbell*
Director of Music *Dale Hukill*
Director of Gospel Music *Willie J. Wright, Jr.*
Office Manager *Kese Webb*
Facilities Coordinator *Mike Faust*
Childcare *Rosie Scott*

OFFICERS

Moderator *Jane Troha*
Vice Moderator *Valencia McMillan*
Secretary *Grace Loudenstein*
Treasurer *Neil Chase*
Assistant Treasurers *Mike Singerman*
 Jim Donald

TELEPHONE: 216.561.4800

FAX: 216.561.4809

Website: heightscc.org

Email: heightschristian@sbcglobal.net

Or find us on facebook at HeightsCC

MARK YOUR CALENDARS TWO HUGE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD



First, on Saturday, January 16, 2016—4-6 p.m., The Community Advisory Board will be hosting a forum featuring *Daisy Kahn*, an eloquent, Internationally known speaker on Muslim Issues. HCC's Minister of Outreach, Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell, secured this date for Heights Christian Church to host Mrs. Kahn who founded the Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE).

The title of her talk will be "Muslim Women: Promoting Peace and Justice". She has worked tirelessly to promote women's rights and empowering them to fully participate in creating just and flourishing societies. Her talk will extend well beyond women's issues to include a general discussion of Islam and how negative stereotypes of Muslims interfere with our understanding of what the true Muslim faith is. It is an important topic with broad implications for our global future.

The program will begin and end with inspirational musical numbers by the Duffy Liturgical Chorus and Dance Ensemble emphasizing the importance of understanding all cultures in our diverse society.

A reception in the Campbell Room will follow where you can meet and greet our participants. Bring your friends for this important event to kick off Dr. Martin Lu-

Second, The Community Advisory Board along with the Peace and Justice Committee is calling ALL writers, poets, artists and photographers to contribute to an Anthology of your original writings, art and photography reflecting on themes of peace, justice, compassion and community building.

Digital works can be submitted by e-mail to: specialprojecthcc@gmail.com or submissions may be left in the church office. **Deadline for submissions will be Jan. 1, 2016.** The Peace and Justice Committee will then review the material and prepare it for printing in our *Anthology for Peace* to be ready by March of 2016 for sale. Give us your most creative thoughts and art forms and we will do the rest. You will then be in print! Wow!



Merry Christmas From The Heights Christian Church Staff

