



# Reaching Heights

A Newsletter of Heights Christian Church

VOLUME 27, NO. 6

December, 2016

## 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.

December 4

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent – Peace**

Isaiah 11:1-10

December 11

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent – Joy**

Isaiah 35:1-10

Christmas Caroling at Campbell Court (see pg. 5 for details)

December 18

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent – Love**

Matthew 1:18-25

### *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 25 Merry Christmas — 10 a.m. Worship**

A casual worship experience in the Campbell Room around the fireplace

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

### UP-LIFTING DEVOTIONALS



The congregation offers free Advent reflections for adults. Partners in Prayer Advent 2016 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 holiday hustle is soon to arrive. In the midst of all the “warmth and good cheer”, make room for God’s Time. Taking a trip? Pack up the Our Daily Bread devotional booklet for 15 minutes of God’s Time. Avoid the winter blues—start your day with God’s Time. It does wonders!

Enjoy these great devotionals that are available on the Narthex and Campbell Room tables.

# Along The Path...



On this late November, near 60-degree day, change is in the air. Winter (the season and the weather) will be upon us soon and we've already moved from Ordinary Time to Advent in the church calendar.

Other changes have and will be taking place at HCC. A few weeks ago we started adding small pictures to our bulletin for our non-reading younger members. These will continue though we will be varying their number and size (and if you're a parent or guardian of a non-reader I hope you'll point these out as a way to let them know what's coming next in the service). If you've been in worship the last few weeks you've seen television screens in our sanctuary. This will also continue (see "Sanctuary Update" article from our Worship Ministry Team) as a way to enhance our worship in an increasingly visual society.

Other "changes" have (Open Mic Night, Wall of Kindness) or might (solar panels, new mission projects, additional building tenants) take place. Each of these changes has a purpose, which, ultimately, is to serve others and reach out to the community with the good news of Jesus Christ. Remember – the church is not here to meet our needs but to serve a broken, hurting world. May it be so for us this Advent.

...from your Prayer Ministry

Even though we know what time of year it is, it always feels as though Advent somehow "sneaks in" while we're not looking! Somewhat suddenly, we are into the reading and thinking of a celebration of the greatest gift ever: Jesus, "a baby born of quiet, simple parents in a poor, little town of Bethlehem; Jesus, a rejected preacher, the naked man on the cross, **he** asks for our full attention.



The work of salvation continues to shout, scream, and overwhelm us with its claims and promises." (Henri Nouwen, *Advent and Christmas Wisdom*, 2004) We live in a world of chaos, noise, meanness, sometimes even of cruelty, disparate access to the riches of the world and its natural resources. In such a world, it is a challenge to respond to the quiet call for inner stillness, inner acknowledgement that we are engaged in the process of salvation by our acceptance of the grace-filled opportunities in these days.

Again this year, we'll present for your reflection, thoughts related to the themes of the four weeks of Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. These will be offered by 4 authors: Ina Hart, Kris Eggert, Bernadette and Joe LaGuardia. We hope to have these in your box each morning.

If you prefer to NOT receive these, you may write to Kese to have these stopped at any time.

... 'til next time, let us pray for each other in this grace-filled season of Advent

## BECAUSE YOU CARE *Illness—Surgery—Hospitalization*

Martha Cubberley	Andrena Sharp	Ray Everett	Jane Campbell	Liz Perdue
Grace Loudenstein	Natalie Eichar	Neil Chase	C.D./Lois Clark	Elizabeth Newman
Bernadette LaGuardia	Shirley Reading	Janelle Eccleston	Joe Feudi	Patty Monroe
"Cas" Castleberry	Henry Sharpley	Lisa Peabody	Alma G. Jones	Nancy Wilson
Joe/Barbara Tolley	Sidney Mallory, Jr.	Peggy Yeager	Merle Passell	JoAnn Brown
Paul/Shirley Hummel				

## MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

As I sit here in November writing this piece, it is a glorious day, sunny and unbelievably warm with temperatures predicted to reach 70 degrees! How out of the ordinary a day like this is! It is truly a gift, warming the soul as well as the body! On a day like this anything seems possible!

Our church life this fall has also been soul-warming and heart-warming. We have welcomed additional staff, as well as celebrated 10 years of Pastor Roger's and Debbie's ministry among us. We have worshipped, shared fellowship, committed our resources in our Stewardship Campaign and engaged in mission together. We have sponsored the movie "Kindness Is Contagious" and the resulting wall of kindness and kindness campaign are up and running. I believe this effort can truly be life-changing if we follow through on our commitment to kindness as a way of living.



We are a busy family of congregants! Coming soon, on the heels of our gathering to give thanks, will be times to relax at a production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat", times to serve by helping at our Krafty Kids Kare and caroling at Campbell Court and times to give in support of our gleaning efforts and collections of items for "Move Out" bags and Christmas gifts for Family Promise. Wow! It is astonishing what our small congregation can and does accomplish!

But now, Advent arrives. In the midst of a season that all too often gets hijacked by commercialism and by having too much to do in too little time, we have the opportunity to remember the true purpose of this liturgical season. It is a time for us to wait in quiet anticipation for the arrival of our savior, Jesus Christ. As we move through these days of hope, peace, joy and love, I plan to devote additional time and attention to my prayer life. In a hurting world, I believe our gift of quiet time in communication with God can and will make a difference. Amazing things are possible through prayer!

Will you join me?

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## SO MUCH HAS BEEN GOING ON ALL AROUND US!



Have you noticed all of the changes around the Church building lately? Under the leadership of Nancy Carpenter and the decorating committee, the Campbell room has been painted and new carpeting has been installed. Thanks to Mark Cubberley for a great job of removing the wallpaper and doing the painting. Stage three of the project will involve some new furniture to replace the current red couches and chairs, which will be moving to Fellowship Hall for the youth to use during Open Mic nights.

Thanks also go to Val McMillan who donated the beautiful art pieces above the fireplace. Many thanks to Nancy Carpenter for all of her time, energy and creative ideas in shepherding this project, and to Holly May, who has advised the decorating committee. The Campbell room looks lovely!

Mark Cubberley was also busy painting the main hall. New brighter lighting was installed there by Mike Faust. Mike also replaced old lighting fixtures in the Nursery School area. In addition, a window in the hall of the Nursery School is soon slated to be replaced due to significant water damage.

Have you been upstairs? Mike had a very busy summer remodeling the two restrooms on the second floor. New sinks and toilets, a vanity, tile and dividers have given these old and tired rooms a new bright and modern look. The improvements are much appreciated by the Youth Center staff who work upstairs during the week. Many thanks to Mike for his willingness to tackle these projects, and all the skills and craftsmanship he brings to the job!

These projects were approved by the Board of the Church upon recommendation by the Capital Resources Advisory Committee. This committee is charged with determining how to make areas of the building more ready for mission as we welcome the community into our church. Funds for these projects have come from a special portion of the Campbell Court monies set aside specifically for this purpose. Additional projects will be underway in the future.

Lynda Ackerman, for the Capital Reserve Advisory Committee

## SANCTUARY UPDATE



Over the last several years there have been numerous occasions when our worship together has been enhanced by the use of projected images, visual presentations, and short videos. These kinds of multimedia resources are creative aides for drawing us into worship and deepening our relationship with God.

Unfortunately, due to the limits of the technology that we currently own, these resources have sometimes been less effective than we would have liked. At the November board meeting, Pastor Roger asked the board to give some consideration to purchasing and installing large screen TVs in the sanctuary so that these materials could be used more effectively. With the strong support of the Worship Ministry Team, the board voted to approve this project and pay for it out of General Memorial Funds.

Look for these screens to appear over the doors at either side of the chancel in the next week or two. We believe that this will add another rich resource to our worship together. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact us or Pastor Roger.

Larry Watson, Worship Ministry Team Leader and Rosalind Powell, Assistant Team Leader

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## OUTREACH ACTIVITIES



Hurry! Time is drawing nigh, but giving hasn't ended. December 11th is the last day to bring your gift for the Family Promise **Holiday Shopping** donations.

The Outreach budget is 4% of the church financial collection. 55% goes to our denominational and Regional offices. The Outreach Grants Committee will review and assign funds to community applicants who meet the criteria. This Fall we have received one application. We encourage others to apply.\* As of October the available funds totaled approximately \$1,500. These will be allocated to small grants along with other miscellaneous items.

Andrena Sharp, Outreach Chair

\* applications are available on the church website



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## KATE'S COGITATIONS

### Kindness is Still Contagious!

We launched our Kindness campaign in November with the viewing of the Kindness is Contagious film at Shaker Square, followed by the building of our Wall of Kindness on the front lawn of the church, and by Pastor Roger's heartfelt message in worship on November 13.



As part of his sermon, Roger urged each of us to commit to doing acts of kindness and to encourage others to pay it forward. Paper "bricks" have been designed on which we write our acts of kindness to be posted on the Wall of Kindness as a witness to the good we can do in the world, and Kindness Cards have been printed to share with the recipients of your kindnesses. People in the community have noticed, as well as people as far away as Australia (via Facebook). In the [cleveland.com](http://cleveland.com) news article on this, Pastor Roger says, "The idea for this project came as a reaction to the harsh rhetoric uttered during the recent presidential election campaign. We wanted to show that there was a better way to interact with each other based on our belief in a loving and welcoming God."

We plan to have the Wall of Kindness up through the rest of the calendar year, and we encourage you to engage in acts of kindness (both random and planned) and to fill out a "brick" stating what you did for someone else. The purpose is not to "toot our own horns" or seek glory for our actions, but rather to present a vocal and visible witness of love in a dreary and scary world.

So please continue to do acts of kindness for your friends and neighbors, and for strangers as well. Share with your recipients the Kindness Cards we've produced to encourage them to pay the good deed forward, for we know this helps kindness multiply exponentially and has the power to transform our world. And let us know of your kindnesses for our combined testimony to a Love more powerful than hatred and more welcoming and inclusive than any political party or platform. Help HCC live into our call to be a Shalom congregation in this community, and feel the power of Love shared and multiplied with others.

## COMBINED SECOND HOUR ADVENT STUDY



You only have to think back to your own girlhood or boyhood to remember the excitement and anticipation of the weeks before Christmas. Often the wait seemed unbearable. In ancient Christian times, these weeks were called "Advent," which means "The Coming." They were full of special liturgies and banners and prayers. They were joyful. Christians pored over the Hebrew Scriptures to find prophecies of the Emmanuel who has come to us. They loved the 5<sup>th</sup> verse of chapter 9 in Isaiah: "For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace."

During second hour in Advent, we shall look at each of those titles in the hopes of increasing our understanding and move a little closer to God's embrace as we come to know these names. Joe LaGuardia will lead the study, based on a little paperback by renowned Scripture scholar and ordained UCC Minister, Dr. Walter Brueggemann. Although it is not necessary to buy the book, it can be obtained from Amazon for \$9.39. The Kindle electronic version is only \$2.99. The title is *Names for the Messiah*.

We hope everyone will contribute to our Advent discussions. We will have three weeks to study the four chapters, and we'll start with the last chapter on December 4 then do chapters 2 and 3 on Dec. 11, concluding our study on Dec. 18 with Chapter 1 and hoping to parallel our four great Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

December 4	Prince of Peace
December 11	Mighty God and Everlasting Father
December 18	Wonderful Counselor



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## CAROLING—SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11TH—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).

A light dinner will be provided by Pastor Roger and Debbie and we will enjoy punch and cookies afterward. We are also asking for contributions of 1 dozen holiday cookies from anyone who could contribute. A wonderful way to share the Christmas spirit of love. Come, join the fun!

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## CFW Holiday Luncheon Nov./Dec. Meeting Dec. 14th at 12:30 in the Campbell Room

Joan Brown Campbell will be speaking on "New Links to Interfaith Doors in Cuba." What are the Possibilities? Bring your favorite dish for this Christmas Potluck and enjoy the fellowship. Please call the church office to let us know you are coming (561-4800)

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## Thrift Shop Begins a "Reachout" Campaign



Because of many more Resale Shops and Thrift Stores in the community, we are starting an Ad Campaign to encourage more customers. Sylvia Farley has been taking fliers up and down Lee Rd. and if you can help in your neighborhood, pick up some fliers in the church office. Also we want to encourage all church members to stop in and buy an item or two for your Christmas gift giving. Beautiful glassware, jewelry, purses, picture frames, scarves etc. are all waiting to be wrapped and best of all, every dollar spent goes back into our church/mission work. It's a win/win for everyone. See you there!

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### HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

The Church office will be closed beginning December 26th, opening January 3rd. 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.

### EARLY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Due to the Christmas holidays we need to have all articles for the January's Reaching Heights submitted by December 12th. Any articles submitted after that date may not be able to be included in the January issue. Thank you for your cooperation.

## FAMILY PROMISE *HOLIDAY WISHES*

Once again, HCC will be participating with Family Promise to help make the holidays special for over 100 families in need. Your contribution will allow these families the chance to shop for gifts free of charge at Family Promise's 2016 Holiday Store

Below is a wish list of items that would be helpful. They are requesting new and unwrapped donations only. If you are considering purchasing gift cards, please purchase them through HCC. We ask that all donations be left at the church no later than December 11th, as that is the last drop off date. 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  
Games  
Learning Toys  
Movies  
Multicultural Dolls  
Pretend Play & Dress Up  
Trucks & Cars  
Books

### Mom and Dad

Fashion Accessories  
Handbags  
Jewelry  
Movies & Music  
Perfume & Cologne Sets  
Shaving Kits  
Tool Kits



### Gift Cards

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

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

Arts & Crafts  
Bath & Beauty Products  
Bead & Jewelry Kits  
Board Games  
Character Toys & Apparel  
Movies & Music  
Nails Polish Sets  
Sports  
Journals  
Ear Buds/headphones

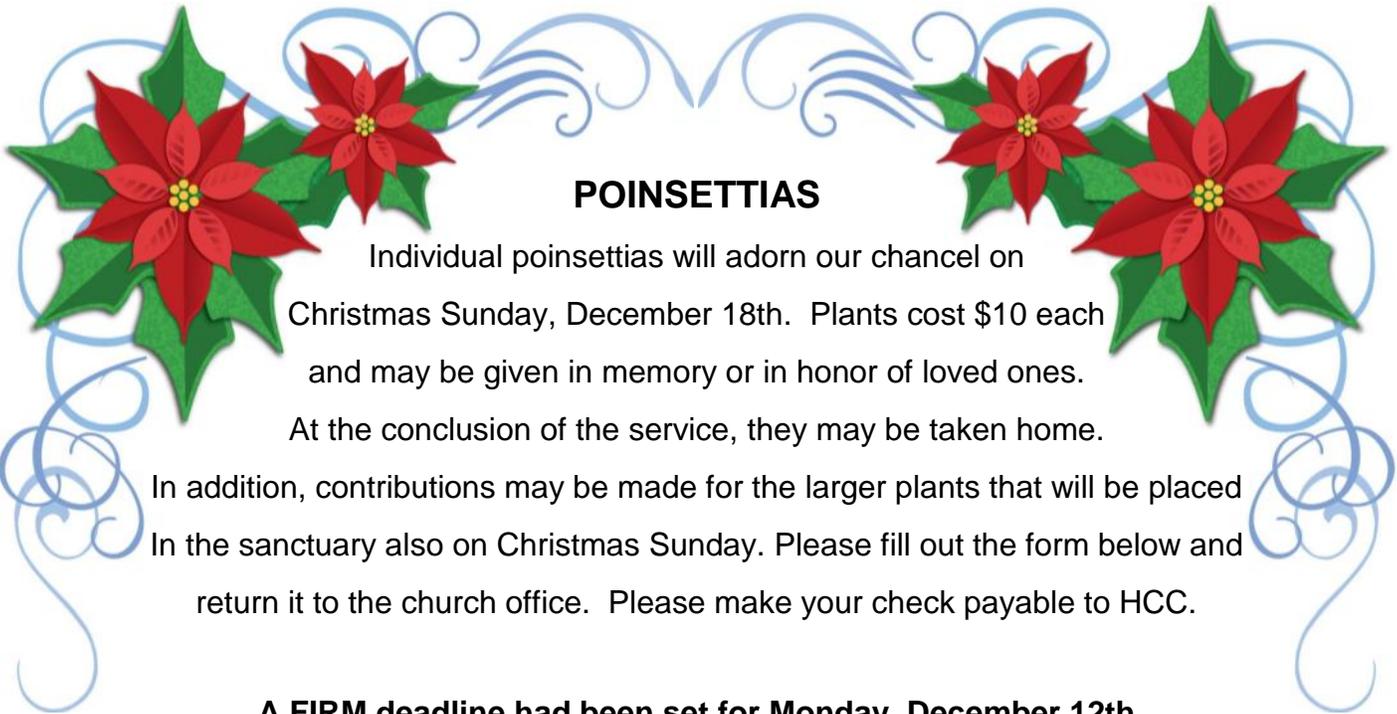
### Gifts for all Ages

Outer wear  
Robes  
Slippers  
Snow Boots  
Socks & Underwear  
Winter Accessories  
Winter Clothing  
Winter PJ Sets

### "Make It Like Home" Gifts

Towels, Washcloths  
Twin/full sheet sets  
Plates, cups, bowls, silverware  
Kitchen Linens, pot holders  
Pillows  
Can openers  
Pot & pans/Cooking utensils  
Measuring cups & spoons  
Laundry Baskets & soap/cleaning Products





## POINSETTIAS

Individual poinsettias will adorn our chancel on Christmas Sunday, December 18th. 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 12th**

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### 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 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

