



The Looking Tree

Love lives here, Love flows from here... December 2019

Hello Members and Friends of Head of Christiana,



Pastor Hilary Livingston

A Community of Hope at Advent

According to our denomination's *Book of Order*, "The Church is to be a community of hope, rejoicing in the sure and certain knowledge that, in Christ, God is making a new creation. This new creation is a new beginning for human life and for all things. The Church lives in the present on the strength of that promised new creation" (F-1.0301). Advent is a season that gives us space to live into this calling to be a community of hope in our hurting world.

The word *Advent* means "coming" – it is a season of preparing for the coming of Christ to earth. Advent prepares us once again for Christ's first coming to earth as a humble baby born in a manger. Yet, Advent also points forward to Christ's second coming, when he will come to fulfill God's promise of new creation. During this season, we reaffirm this promise of new creation, and we prepare ourselves for its coming in fullness.

To prepare ourselves for this season, it is helpful to engage in some specific spiritual practices that will help us align our hearts and minds with God's purposes in Christ. This Advent season, there are several opportunities to engage in such practices. First, I'm hosting an Advent prayer group based upon our study of The Lord's Prayer. We've learned about the prayer – now, we'll actually pray it together! (More details can be found inside this newsletter). Second, I'm offering a series of daily Advent Bible readings to focus us on the meaning of this season. You can follow along on our Facebook page, or if you would prefer a printed copy of the calendar, please let me know.

My hope and prayer for us this Advent season is this: *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* (Romans 15:13).

Blessings,

Hilary

HoC HAPPENINGS



Giving Opportunities at HoC

As is our tradition, we will once again be collecting your donations of Hats, Mittens/Gloves and Scarves for the Elkton Help Center and Settlement House. Your donations of these much-needed items will help keep folks in need warmer this winter.

We are also collecting men's flannel shirts (sizes large and extra-large) which will be given to Settlement House Men's Shelter benefitting the homeless. Please wrap the shirt(s) and attach a tag with the size on it.

Please bring your donations in by Sunday, December 15th so they can be delivered before Christmas. Thank you for your continued support and generosity. Merry Christmas!



Christmas Joy Offering

We will be collecting the Christmas Joy Offering from December 1st – 24th. This denominational offering addresses the support needed by some of our leaders, including supporting leadership development for communities of color, and providing support for Presbyterian church workers in their time of need. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Envelopes are in the pews, or you can donate online at:

<https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/christmas-joy/>

Thank you for your generous gift to this offering!

CHRISTMAS EVE

CANDLELIGHT & CAROLS

DECEMBER 24TH @ 7:30PM

PRELUDE MUSIC STARTING AT 7:00PM

Café Church

December 29th at 11:00am

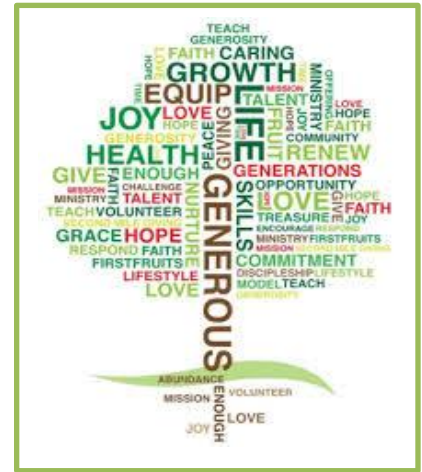
in Fellowship Hall



The Unglued Church Project by Katie Gillespie

The Unglued group has been looking at the demographics of our immediate area and taking a look at how folks feel about church and their spirituality. On October 25th our Pittsburgh consultant, Susan Rothenberg, visited and we took a tour of the neighborhoods surrounding the church to get a feel for the nearby community and the people who live there. We discussed the challenges that are faced reaching out to people who live in these neighborhoods.

On November 2nd we met in Chestertown with the other churches that are participating in the project. We got to hear about their neighborhoods and some of the challenges they face in regards to demographics. We also engaged in group activities in which we identified the needs of our “neighbor” and coming up with a specific plan to tackle a particular problem in the community. All in all, a productive day and a time of good fellowship.



From Our Clerk of Session

A special congregation-corporation meeting of Head of Christiana Presbyterian Church was held on Sunday, November 10, 2019, following the morning worship for the purpose of acting on a motion from the Nominating Committee. The congregation voted to approve reducing the size of session from 9 members to 7 members in 2019 (effective 2020) by consolidating some of the existing committees and commissions.

- Personnel will become part of the Administration and Finance Commission.
- Mission and Outreach Commissions will merge into one entity.
- All other commissions will remain as they are for now.



Brian Huffman (l) with Tom Parkins (r) from the Newark Empowerment Center in front of Brian's vehicle, loaded with Go Bags. Tom says "Thank you and God bless you" to Head of Christiana's congregation.



DONATE A PORK ROAST and/or CANNED GOODS **DECEMBER 2019**



The **Newark Area Welfare Committee's Holiday Food Box Program** requests your help in acquiring pork roasts and/or non-perishable food for the estimated 325 food boxes we expect to assemble for local families in need this season.

We are requesting that you consider pledging a pork roast and/or canned goods soon. You may store the non-perishable food items and/or pork roast in your home or contact the person listed below who will gladly arrange storage for you.

If you would like to participate by donating a pork roast, canned goods and/or to help with **SORTING, ASSEMBLING, or ASSISTING** with **PICKUP** at First Presbyterian Church Newark, please fill out the bottom portion of this page and return it to: Polly Sierer, 15 Farmhouse Road, Newark, DE 19711.

If you purchase and store a pork roast, please bring it to First Presbyterian Church of Newark, 292 West Main Street, Newark between 8:30-9:30am Saturday, December 21st.

If you are collecting non-perishable food for us, please deliver it to the church listed above by 1:00pm on Thursday, December 19th or simply contact the person above and we will gladly pick it up.

If you would like to volunteer with sorting, assembling or assisting with pick up, please volunteer for **ONE TIME SLOT ONLY**. We have numerous volunteers and would like everyone to be able to help this year

If you would like to make a monetary donation to this community project, please mail it to the Newark Area Welfare Committee, P.O. Box 951, Newark, DE 19715-0951. You may also donate online at our secure website www.newarkareawelfare.org

Thank you for your kind consideration and generous help.

OUR PLEDGE

Name _____ Phone No. _____

Address _____ email _____

PLEASE CHECK APPROPRIATELY

_____ Will bring a pork roast to First Presbyterian Church-Newark at 292 West Main Street, Newark between 8:30-11:30am Saturday, Dec. 21st

_____ Will bring non-perishable food to First Presbyterian Church-Newark by 1:00pm Thursday, December 19th

_____ Would like to arrange storage/pick up for our donation: _____ Pork Roast _____ Canned Food

_____ Please accept our monetary donation enclosed _____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ other
(make check payable to NAWC)

_____ Want to volunteer: First Presbyterian Church-Newark **(CHECK ONE ONLY)**

_____ December 19th - **SORTING FOOD** 9:00-11:00 _____ 11:00-1:00 _____ 1:00-3:00 _____

_____ December 20th - **ASSEMBLING FOOD - BOXES** 9:00-11:00 _____ 12:00-2:00 _____

_____ December 21st - **CLIENTS PICK UP FOOD** 9:00-11:00 _____ 11:00-1:00 _____



PLEASE NOTE: TO BE ALL-INCLUSIVE, WE ARE ALSO COLLECTING DONATED FROZEN TURKEYS.

ADVENT SEASON at HoC

Praying *The Lord's Prayer* for Advent



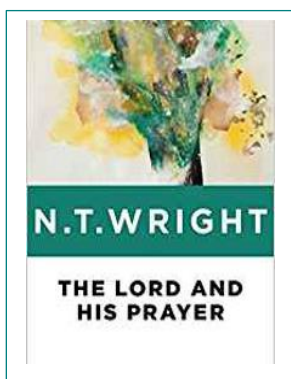
Mondays in Advent - December 2, 9, 16 & 23 from 6:30 – 7:30 PM

We've learned about this classic prayer. Now, we're going to pray it for ourselves, for our church, for our community, and for our world.

Join Hilary in the Pastor's Study for a special four-week prayer series on Monday evenings during Advent.

We'll have a short devotional reviewing the meaning of the various petitions in the prayer, then we'll spend the bulk of the time praying using *The Lord's Prayer* as a model.

Recommended, but not required: *The Lord and His Prayer* by N.T. Wright (This book picks up on themes from the adult Sunday School class, but contains **different** material). Order a copy on Amazon, or wherever you purchase books, or see Pastor Hilary.



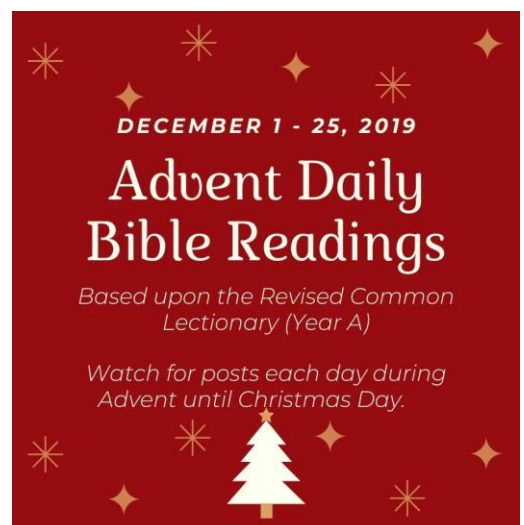
Facebook Daily Advent Bible Readings

These brief Bible readings focus on the main themes of Advent – a great spiritual practice for the season!

Watch for posts on the **Head of Christiana Facebook page** for the daily reading reference and read along!

Like and share with your Facebook friends!

If you would rather participate offline, that's fine too! Just see **Pastor Hilary** for a printed calendar of readings.



DECEMBER

December Coffee Hours

- Dec. 1 – Pot Luck
- Dec. 8 – Pot Luck
- Dec. 15 – Pot Luck
- Dec. 22 – Pot Luck
- Dec. 29 – Pot Luck
- Jan. 05 – Pot Luck



Coffee Fellowship

Interested in hosting a Coffee Hour??
Speak to any member of the Care & Fellowship Commission
and it can be arranged.



December 8th
Prizes for the
ugliest sweater



HOC TAKES A WALK IN THE PARK NOV. 3, 2019



HOC TAKES A WALK IN THE PARK



The "HOP" Event *by Alex Oakes*

October 30, 2019

For the fourth and final HOP trip of 2019, we once again ventured to Wilmington for lunch at Bank's Seafood Grille followed by a play at the Delaware Theater. Entitled "One November Yankee," the play featured Hollywood actors Harry Hamlin and Stephanie Powers and was packed for the matinee performance. Special thanks to Kay Brook for spotting this play early on and snapping up tickets right away.

Next spring we'll be restarting the HOP activities with the ever popular Vita Nova luncheon in early March. We're still working on additional events so stay tuned for the upcoming announcements.



The Christmas Truce

By David G. Stratman

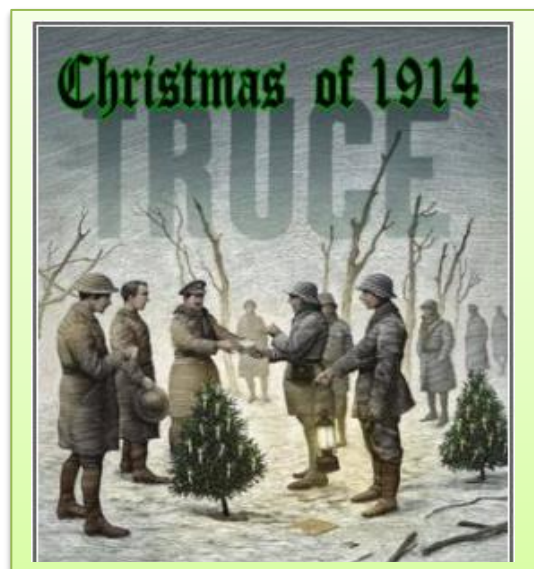
It was December 25, 1914, only 5 months into World War I. German, British, and French soldiers, already sick and tired of the senseless killing, disobeyed their superiors and fraternized with "the enemy" along two-thirds of the Western Front (a crime punishable by death in times of war). German troops held Christmas trees up out of the trenches with signs, "Merry Christmas."

"You no shoot, we no shoot." Thousands of troops streamed across a no-man's land strewn with rotting corpses. They sang Christmas carols, exchanged photographs of loved ones back home, shared rations, played football and even roasted some pigs. **Soldiers embraced men they had been trying to kill a few short hours before. They agreed to warn each other if the top brass forced them to fire their weapons, and to aim high.**

A shudder ran through the high command on either side. Here was disaster in the making: soldiers declaring their brotherhood with each other and refusing to fight. Generals on both sides declared this spontaneous peacemaking to be treasonous and subject to court martial. By March 1915 the fraternization movement had been eradicated and the killing machine put back in full operation. By the time of the armistice in 1918, fifteen million would be slaughtered.

Not many people have heard the story of the Christmas Truce. On Christmas Day, 1988, a story in the *Boston Globe* mentioned that a local FM radio host played "Christmas in the Trenches," a ballad about the Christmas Truce, several times and was startled by the effect. **The song became the most requested recording during the holidays in Boston on several FM stations.** "Even more startling than the number of requests I get is the reaction to the ballad afterward by callers who hadn't heard it before," said the radio host. "They telephone me deeply moved, sometimes in tears, asking, 'What the hell did I just hear?'"

You can probably guess why the callers were in tears. The Christmas Truce story goes against most of what we have been taught about people. It gives us a glimpse of the world as we wish it could be and says, "This really happened once." It reminds us of those thoughts we keep hidden away, out of range of the TV and newspaper stories that tell us how trivial and mean human life is. It is like hearing that our deepest wishes really are true: the world really could be different.



HOC CALENDAR — December Happenings

Sunday	Dec	01		First Sunday of Advent
Sunday	Dec	01		Decorate Sanctuary for the Holidays after worship
Tuesday	Dec	03	★	EARLY LOOKING TREE DEADLINE ★
Wednesday	Dec	04	12:00pm	Care & Fellowship Commission
→ Sunday	Dec	08	12:00pm	Congregational Meeting/Election of Officers Ugly Christmas Sweater Contest
Sunday	Dec	08	12:30pm	Outreach Commission
Tuesday	Dec	10	11a-2:30p	NCP using Fellowship Hall for Luncheon
Friday	Dec	13	12:00pm	Hope Dining Room
Sunday	Dec	15	3:00pm	Newark Band Concert at First Newark
Friday	Dec	20	12:00pm	E C K Holiday Luncheon
Sunday	Dec	22	11:00am	Christmas Joy Offering
Tuesday	Dec	24	7:30pm	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Tuesday	Dec	24		MERRY CHRISTMAS
Sunday	Dec	29	11:00am	Café Church—Lay Led



"Things work out best for those who make the best of how things work out."
~ John Wooden



REMINDER: Christmas Cookies for the Elkton Community Kitchen holiday luncheon on Dec. 20th should be brought in on Sunday, Dec. 15 (see Alex Oakes for details)



CHOIR PRACTICE — MONDAYS @ 7:30pm
PILOXING — TUESDAYS — 7:00PM
TEA & HYGGE – WEDNESDAYS – 1:00PM



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



- Dec 5 Nicole Gill
- Dec 21 Andre Gill
- Dec 28 Annabelle Huffman
- Dec 28 Jillian Gillespie

