



The Looking Tree

Love lives here, Love flows from here... December 2020

Hello Members and Friends of Head of Christiana,



Pastor Hilary Livingston

Christmas During Covid

It's hard to believe that we're entering another Advent and Christmas season! The year 2020 has been a challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our regular holiday plans will be different this year, and this includes our worship and celebrations here at Head of Christiana. We will be worshipping virtually for Advent and Christmas Eve this year due to safety concerns arising from the pandemic. It will be a very different experience, but I trust that God's grace will get us through this season. The promise of Christmas is that God sent his own Son to earth to be our Savior.

The Christ Child, called Emmanuel, means, "God is with us." God is truly with us through all that we experience. This has been a difficult year, and you may be approaching this holiday season with mixed emotions. Whatever you are experiencing as you approach this Advent and Christmas season, may this prayer, written by the Rev. Kelly Fitzgerald, help you prepare your heart for the coming season. Whatever this coming Advent and Christmas season will bring, we trust that God is with us through it all!

May you and your family have a blessed Advent and Christmas season!

Blessings,

Hilary

let it go..

"Let It Go"

*prayer by the Rev.
Kelly Fitzgerald
(used with permission)*

God-with-us, we have a long list of things we want to see on Christmas Eve. Experiences we want to have, feelings we want to feel, friends and family we want to hug, songs we want to sing, and even cookies we want to eat. We hold all that before you today. Some of things might be realized. Many will not. But still, Christmas will come. You still show up in our world and fill us with awe and wonder. You will once again renew our hearts and minds to fully hope, to express unconditional love, to share contagious joy, and find peace - peace that passes all understanding.

We release to you the ghosts of Christmas past and ask for the Spirit to fill us with energy an imagination for the Christmas that is to come. In your Holy Name....

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. Donations must be in by December 13th.

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

Please bring your donations in by Sunday, December 13th so they can be delivered before Christmas. Thank you for your continued support and generosity. Merry Christmas!

We will notify you detailing where you are to bring your donations to the church very soon.

Christmas Joy Offering



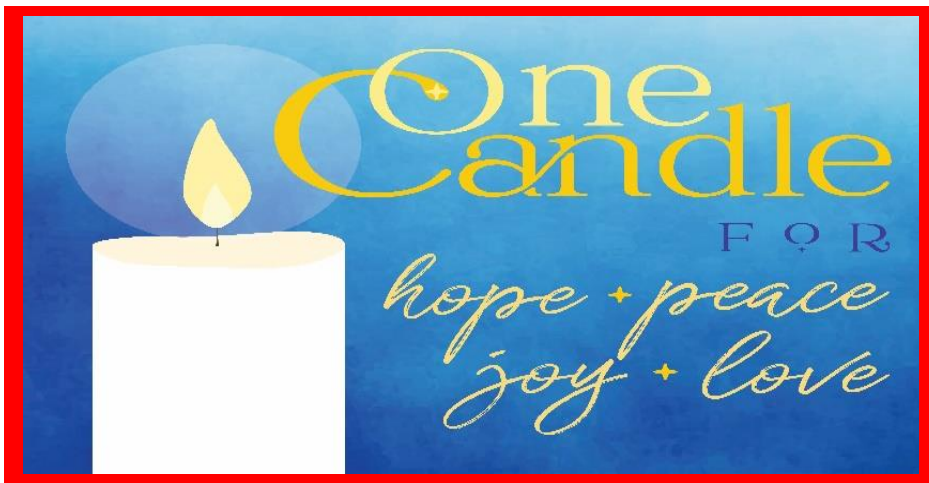
We will be collecting the Christmas Joy Offering from December 1st – 24th. This denominational offering addresses the support needed by some of our leaders, including supporting leadership development for communities of color, and providing support for Presbyterian Church workers in their time of need.

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 will be available on the table where the water jug is located, or you can donate online at: <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/christmas-joy/>

Please note on the memo line of your check: Christmas Joy Offering.

Thank you for your generous gift to this offering!





This year's Advent season will be different due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will be worshipping virtually in our homes instead of in our sanctuary.

To help you make your at-home Advent worship experience more meaningful, we are going to be using a special litany for the four Sundays in Advent and Christmas Eve using just one candle (instead of the traditional four candles of the Advent wreath). The Worship Commission is providing HoC members and friends a special candle, one per household that can be used at home as part of your virtual worship experience during the Advent and Christmas season.

Please pick up a candle for your household any time between now and the first Sunday of Advent, November 29, 2020. You can pick up your candle at the church – **they will be in a plastic container outside the church office building.** Questions? Please contact Pastor Hilary.

You are encouraged to have this candle available during virtual worship for the four Sundays of Advent and Christmas Eve. You will be instructed in the worship video when to light the candle during each week's worship service. You will also have this candle as a keepsake reminding you of the light of Christ's presence throughout the year.

We hope this special candle ritual will help you and your family find hope, peace, joy and love this Advent and Christmas season!

And please join us for our **virtual Christmas Eve Worship Service of Lessons and Carols on Thursday, December 24th at 7:30pm.**

The link will be posted on our **HoC Facebook page** and **YouTube channel**.
Don't forget to have your special candle ready for the worship service!



Thoughts on

stewardship



by Alex Oakes

As we approach the New Year, it's hard to imagine that it's been nearly ten months since we've had to stop having live services in our little church in the valley that sits so forlorn and lonely. It's not hard to imagine that it's hoping that someone will come to light some candles for Advent and perhaps decorate a tree to celebrate the birth of our Lord.

In the meantime, our church continues to have many financial obligations to meet regardless of not being open. Salaries must still be paid, as well as costs for building and grounds maintenance, utilities, insurance, missions we support, supplies, etc. As always, our congregation remains generous, but it's certain that our expenses will exceed our income.

Now that our Stewardship campaign has been completed for the coming year, we hope that you'll be thinking about how you can help us meet our goals. A few ideas that we've presented previously to help you help the church are highlighted below. I hope you'll find them worthy of reconsideration.

Appreciated Securities — Using appreciated securities can provide you with additional tax savings since you do not realize long-term capital gains. The value at the time of the donation, rather than your cost, may be reported as an itemized deduction. Appreciated securities include stocks, bonds and mutual funds, among others.

IRA Distributions — Donors who are 70½ years or older can make charitable gifts directly from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) through the required minimum distribution that must be taken from the IRA. However, a provision in the law provides that if we directly transfer a part or all of that distribution from our IRA to a Qualified Charitable Organization we are not required to pay Federal taxes on that donated distribution.

Online Giving — Many people appreciate the convenience of making their contributions online and thanks to Brian Huffman our church now has the ability to accept contributions online. This service allows you to give using a debit or credit card or via electronic funds transfer. To access online giving, navigate to our website's giving page via <https://hocpc.org/give/>.



ADVENT SEASON at HoC

VIRTUAL CHURCH



Please join us for **virtual worship** on **Sunday mornings** at **11:00am** on our website at:

<https://.org/online-worship/>

or on our hocpc **YouTube channel** at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjuPGVIASRtLTGrDabSTpJA>

or on our **Head of Christiana Presbyterian Church Facebook Page**:

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/HeadOfChristiana/posts/>

You don't need a Facebook account to access the page.



We will also be having a **Zoom Fellowship Hour** on

Sunday mornings at 10:00am prior to our virtual worship service.

Click this link to access:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85307878063?pwd=SWhXOEJCR1dvWnY1TEN5S3FXVmNiQT09>

Meeting ID: 853 0787 8063

Passcode: 957260

(This is a new link – it is valid through January 3, 2021.)

If you don't have internet access, you can call **1-646-558-8656 or **1-301-715-8592.****

You can call in just like you would call someone on a regular phone.

We are also **mailing hard copies** of the weekly bulletin and sermon to those who don't have internet access. **Please let Nancy or Pastor Hilary know if you would like to be added to the mailing list.**

HoC Special Congregational Meeting

Sunday, December 6, 2020 at 12:00 PM via Zoom

HoC members, please attend this brief, but important congregational meeting for the following purposes:

- Electing officers for session and deacons
- Receiving the session-approved budget for 2021
- Approving the pastor's terms of call



Here is the link to access the meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82011458197?pwd=V21SZU9aaGVickx6TVVWeFVvM2lnZz09>

Or you can dial one of the following numbers, just like you would on a regular phone:

1-646-558-8656 OR 1-301-715-8592

Thank you for participating!



Pastor Hilary's Virtual Holiday Open House

Sunday, December 13, 2020 from 12:30 – 2:00pm

Pour yourself a cup of hot cocoa and join your HoC friends for some holiday fun and fellowship! Take a virtual tour of Pastor Hilary's festive holiday decorations and show off your holiday décor. Enjoy conversation with your HoC friends. Pop in and out as you are able – stay for a little or longer! Wear your ugliest Christmas sweater, and we'll vote on the best (or worst?) Winner receives a special prize!

Click the link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82248505063?pwd=VEdQMkdRaU0wYXVZMkh3VlFrZDhQdz09>

Meeting ID: 822 4850 5063 Passcode: 513526

Or dial in, just like you would on a regular phone at either **1-646-558-8656 or 1-301-715-8592.**

VIRTUAL



Just because we can't gather in person, doesn't mean we can't have any fun! Photograph yourself in your ugly sweater, upload it to our HoC FaceBook page, vote by "Liking" your favorite by Dec. 12th.

The winner will be announced during our FaceBook live virtual Open House following worship on Sunday, December 13th.

Merry Ho Ho!





Longest Night Outdoor Service

Sunday, December 20th

at 3:00pm

(Weather Permitting)

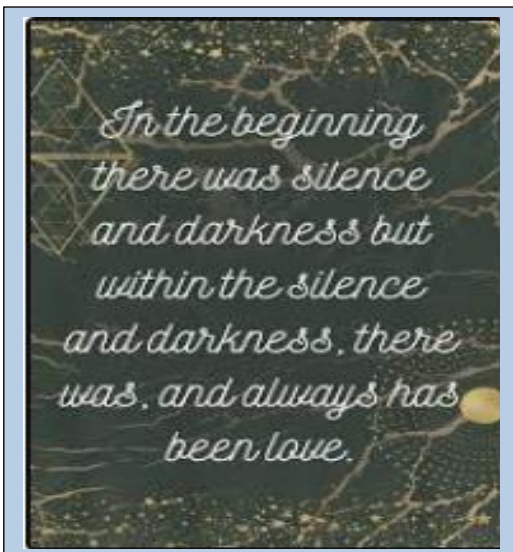
On the eve of the Winter Solstice, the Longest Night of the year, it is a good time to hold space for the variety of emotions we feel around this time of year. For some, the Christmas season is a joyful time of celebration and happiness, while for others it can bring up feelings of stress, sadness and grief. Especially this year, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us are experiencing mixed feelings approaching this holiday season.

If you would like to have a space to express and process the myriad of emotions you may be experiencing this season, please join us for this special outdoor service. Together we will have a place to share all our feelings about this holiday season, whether we're happy, sad, anxious, stressed, fearful, calm, angry, grieving, or grateful (or a combination of these!)

We will share together, pray together, and be there for one another, whatever we are experiencing. Then, we'll end on a hopeful note, singing some socially-distanced Christmas carols and enjoying some hot cocoa and cookies.

Bring a chair, a mask, and whatever you are feeling about this holiday season.

We hope you will join us!

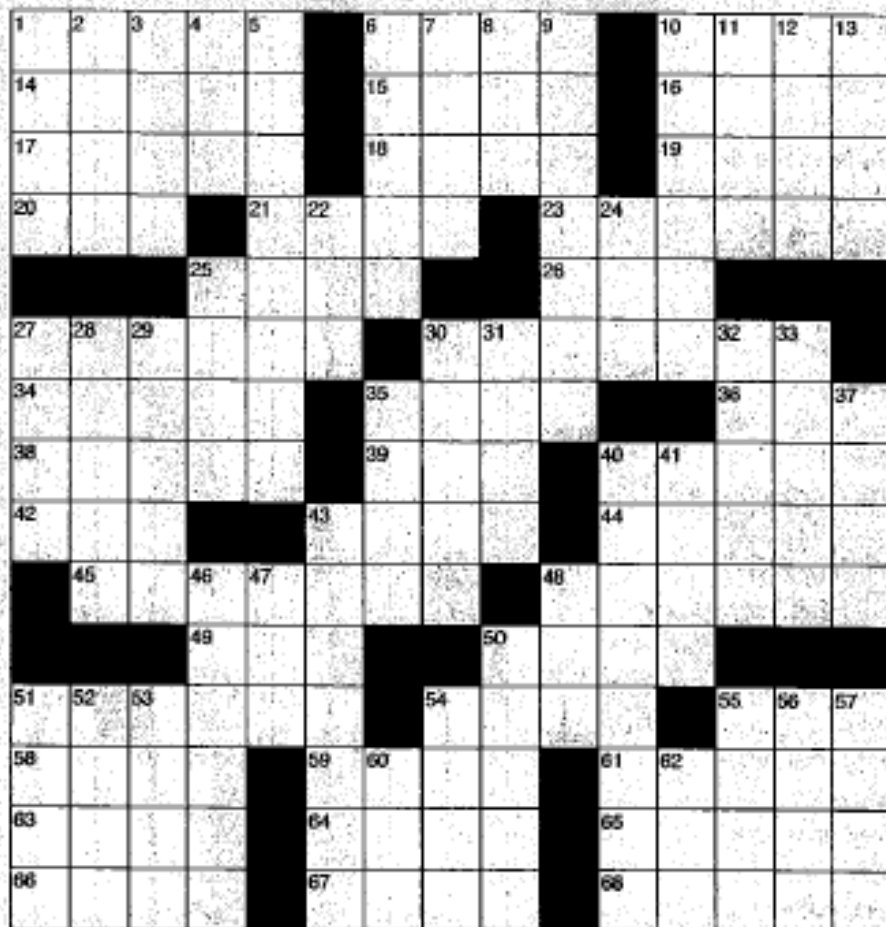


CERAMICS

Solution on page 22

ACROSS

- 1 Canals
- 6 Afloat
- 10 Rushed
- 14 Decorate by inserting
- 15 Liquid form of clay, typically poured into a mold to form shapes
- 16 Member of an alliance
- 17 Water or oil-based paint not fired
- 18 Tip
- 19 Fail to keep
- 20 Flirtatious
- 21 Double-reed instrument
- 23 Annuler
- 25 Small dirty area
- 26 Cram
- 27 Must (2 wds.)
- 30 Forum
- 34 Excuse
- 35 Baby horse
- 36 Wing
- 38 Three-masted Mediterranean boat
- 39 Possessive pronoun
- 40 Large, whitish antelope
- 42 Evening
- 43 Pretentious
- 44 Indian corn
- 45 Eludes
- 48 Literature
- 49 American College of Physicians (abbr.)
- 50 Ceramic pyramid that melts to a known temperature
- 51 Jobholder
- 54 Musical repeat
- 55 Professional
- 58 Glob
- 59 False god graven image
- 61 Club rule
- 63 Opaque gem
- 64 Lawyer dress
- 65 Acquire knowledge
- 66 Connection
- 67 Snaky fish
- 68 Vertical lines on a graph (2 wds.)



DOWN

- 1 Saucer
- 2 Preposition
- 3 Earthy substance
- 4 Mai ____
- 5 Taking same point of view
- 6 Large wide scarf
- 7 Swerve
- 8 Goddess
- 9 Attire
- 10 Italian sausage
- 11 Diagram
- 12 Otherwise
- 13 Tinter
- 22 Ghost's greeting
- 24 Slab on which clay is handled
- 25 Compass point
- 27 Mist
- 28 Pain reliever brand
- 29 Vibrations
- 30 Apple juice brand
- 31 Effortless
- 32 Lowest point
- 33 Ceramic paint typically composed of opaque or transparent colors
- 35 Cook or bake in a kiln
- 37 Chopping tools
- 40 Obediently
- 41 Citizen of Denmark
- 43 Notify
- 46 Fire clay body slowly at a ramp speed
- 47 Expert
- 48 Supreme being
- 50 Young horses
- 51 Economics (abbr.)
- 52 Dog food brand
- 53 What cars travel on
- 54 Rolling out clay into rope-like pieces
- 55 Listerine alternative
- 56 Uncommon
- 57 Has
- 60 What's owed
- 62 Congressional vote

WORD SEARCH 4: CATTLE DRIVE

C	O	R	N	K	N	A	L	F	E	F	L	E	I
C	T	F	E	D	O	L	L	R	O	W	S	R	N
B	S	W	R	L	R	O	I	N	G	R	E	O	D
P	R	A	H	O	G	F	I	N	O	M	G	E	G
O	G	A	A	E	P	N	S	H	U	A	L	S	N
I	U	R	N	M	R	E	A	D	W	D	O	L	A
N	O	Y	A	D	A	D	A	R	D	S	U	F	M
T	S	C	O	W	B	O	Y	A	W	L	T	T	E
I	S	E	C	H	A	P	S	S	F	O	R	A	R
O	A	L	L	O	W	T	H	E	H	C	I	I	O
E	L	R	D	R	N	Y	T	C	C	N	D	R	F
E	D	E	P	M	A	T	S	F	T	O	E	A	M
M	N	I	G	H	T	H	A	W	K	R	R	L	K
Y	S	T	E	E	R	S	W	P	T	B	Q	L	R



BRAND	LASSO
BRONCO	NIGHTHAWK
CAMPFIRE	OUTRIDER
CHAPS	POINT
COWBOY	REMUDA
DRAG	SADDLE
FLANK	STAMPEDE
FOREMAN	STEERS
HERD	WAGON
HORSE	WRANGLER
LARIAT	

Solution on page 20.

SUDOKU 7 & 8

7					3	4	
			1	7			
			4		8		7
	1	6		9			5
3	5	7			4		
				3			
4	6			8			3
	7	3	5				1
	9						6

SUDOKU 7

6							1	7
			3	1	4			2
1	5		9	7		8	6	
	8				5	3		
							2	
	2	3	5			4	7	6
7			8					
				6			3	

SUDOKU 8

Solution on page 20.

4

The Gold Wrapping Paper

Once upon a time, there was a man who worked very hard just to keep food on the table for his family. This particular year a few days before Christmas, he punished his little five-year-old daughter after learning that she had used up the family's only roll of expensive gold wrapping paper.

As money was tight, he became even more upset when on Christmas Eve he saw that the child had used all of the expensive gold paper to decorate one shoebox she had put under the Christmas tree. He also was concerned about where she had gotten the money to buy what was in the shoebox.

Nevertheless, the next morning the little girl, filled with excitement, brought the gift box to her father and said, "This is for you, Daddy!"

As he opened the box, the father was embarrassed by his earlier overreaction, now regretting how he had punished her.

But when he opened the shoebox, he found it was empty and again his anger flared. "Don't you know, young lady," he said harshly, "when you give someone a present, there's supposed to be something inside the package!"

The little girl looked up at him with sad tears rolling from her eyes and whispered: "Daddy, it's not empty. I blew kisses into it until it was all full."

The father was crushed. He fell on his knees and put his arms around his precious little girl. He begged her to forgive him for his unnecessary anger.

An accident took the life of the child only a short time later. It is told that the father kept this little gold box by his bed for all the years of his life. Whenever he was discouraged or faced difficult problems, he would open the box, take out an imaginary kiss, and remember the love of this beautiful child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us has been given an invisible golden box filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, family, friends and God. There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.



HOC CALENDAR — Dec. & Jan. Happenings

Sunday	Dec	06		Second Sunday of Advent
Sunday	Dec	06	12:00pm	Special Congregational Meeting via Zoom
Sunday	Dec	6-20		Christmas Joy Offering
Tuesday	Dec	08	★ EARLY	★ LOOKING TREE DEADLINE ★
Thursday	Dec	10	7:00pm	Mission / Outreach Zoom Meeting
Sunday	Dec	13		Third Sunday of Advent
Sunday	Dec	20		Fourth Sunday of Advent
Sunday	Dec	20	3:00pm	Longest Night Outdoor Winter Solstice Service (weather permitting)
Thursday	Dec	24	7:30pm	Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols (online service)
Friday	Dec	25	MERRY CHRISTMAS	



Sunday	Jan	03		Annual Reports due to Nancy
Wednesday	Jan	06		Epiphany of the Lord
Sunday	Jan	10		Ordination & Installation of Officers
Monday	Jan	11	7:00pm	Session Virtual Meeting
Thursday	Jan	14		Annual Reports to be distributed
Sunday	Jan	24		Annual Congregational Meeting via Zoom



*The magic of Christmas
is not in the presents,
but in His presence.*



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



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

