



The Looking Tree

Love lives here, Love flows from here...

September 2022

Hello Members and Friends of Head of Christiana,



Pastor Hilary Livingston

What Next? – Discerning Where We’ve Been and Where God is Calling Us
The session gathered in August for a half-day retreat where we did some prayer, discernment and discussion around the theme, “What Next?” We used a resource published by the denomination which helped us do brainstorming and discussion looking at where we’ve come as a church during the pandemic period, as well as looking forward to discern “what’s next?” Where is God calling us as a congregation in the post-pandemic era? After a time of worship and prayer, we began our discernment together.

First, we brainstormed words that described HoC at our best. The top words were Charitable, Caring, and Traditional. We also discussed the top reasons why we gather together as a congregation. The top five in this category were Worship, Fellowship, Spiritual Comfort, Mission/Service and Music.

We took some time to review some of the ways we adapted to doing and being church during the pandemic. Session members identified several successful adaptations we made during this period, including transitioning to virtual worship and fellowship, online giving and overall greater generosity, developing technological skills (particularly with video communication through Zoom), using our outdoor space for worship and fellowship, finding innovative ways to serve those in need in our community (developing “To-Go” meals for Hope Dining Room and Elkton Community Kitchen), and experimenting with fun, creative activities like outdoor community with apple cider and donuts for World Communion Sunday.

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We discussed the needs we have, both within the congregation, as well as out in the broader community. Of course, the need for more members and volunteers was mentioned at several points. We also discussed the need for greater intention, visibility, relevance, and forward thinking. We also acknowledged that our congregation members need care, nurture, and connection with one another. And we pondered the many needs that those in our neighborhood have – the need for kindness, respect, inclusion, safety, an inner sense of security, and reassurance. We also recognized broader social issues needing attention in our broader community, including food, affordable housing, and reduction in gun violence. We also agreed that we all need an abundance of grace.

We looked at our current resources – God has abundantly provided us with a wonderful building and outdoor space for all kinds of creative ministry opportunities. We also looked realistically at our constraints – having fewer people and resources than we had at previous times in our history. We discussed the phrase, “We can’t because…” (not enough people and resources, aging congregation, don’t know where to start, too complicated/overwhelming, fear of change, etc.) We countered this with a discussion of “We can, if _____” (we take our time, we break into smaller tasks, find additional resources, partner with others, etc.) We closed with a discussion of the worship survey conducted earlier this summer, and we will continue to discern (in conjunction with the worship commission) on what elements we want to bring back to the worship service.

All in all, it was a productive, generative day. Of course, this discussion is only the beginning – we will continue prayerfully discussing and discerning where God is calling us to go in this post-pandemic period, trusting that God will both lead us and equip us for the journey. We’re so blessed as a congregation, and I’m blessed to be your pastor and work with such caring, thoughtful, dedicated session members along the journey. Please pray for us as we continue to lead our congregation into “what’s next” in this post-pandemic period. In the meantime, ponder some of the questions we discussed at the retreat:

- What three words would you use to describe HoC at our best?
- What needs do you see in our congregation? In our broader community?
- What resources has God given our church? How might these be used to bless others?
- How would you complete the phrase, “We can, if _____”?

Blessings,

Pastor Hilary



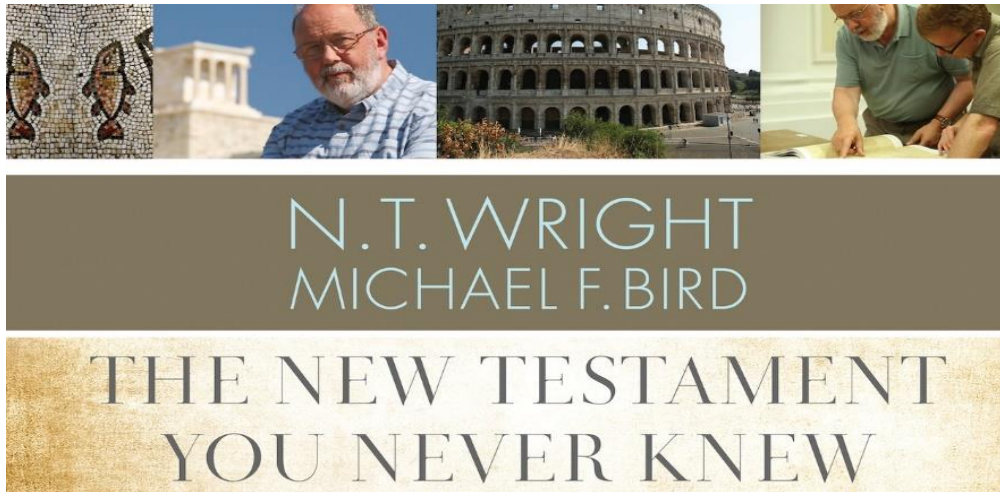
RALLY DAY/KICK-OFF SUNDAY

September 11th

Sunday school for all ages begins at 9:30am.

Donna Reed and Aileen Burmeister
will be leading the children and youth class.

Pastor Hilary will be leading the adult class –
an 8-week video series from biblical scholars N.T. Wright and Michael
F. Bird called, *“The New Testament You Never Knew”*
filmed on-location in the Holy Land.



Click the link to learn more: <https://youtu.be/l9Mv2YDPYZg>

All are invited to participate!



Interest Survey

Please complete this simple survey to indicate your interest level in a mid-week Bible study led by Pastor Hilary. To complete the survey online, please click this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9FV9WV2>

Or...fill out the form below and return to the church office or via email to Pastor Hilary at:

heliving@gmail.com Thanks for your participation!

1. Would you be interested in participating in a mid-week Bible study led by Pastor Hilary?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. Maybe

2. What day(s) of the week would work for your schedule? (Please select all that apply.)
 - A. Monday
 - B. Tuesday
 - C. Wednesday
 - D. Thursday
 - E. None of these work for me

3. What time of day generally works for you? (Please select all the apply.)
 - A. Morning
 - B. Afternoon
 - C. Evening
 - D. None of these times work for me.

4. What topics and/or formats would you be interested in using? (Please select all that apply.)
 - A. Bible study guide or workbook
 - B. Book of the Bible discussion
 - C. Christian book discussion
 - D. Topic or theme study
 - E. Other: _____



The choir will be returning this month and will once again be joined by Alena Carhart, Sophia DiLeo, Garrett Thomas and John Murphy.

Choir will begin rehearsal on **Thursday, September 15 at 7:30pm.**

Make sure you're in church on September 25th to hear them sing!



NEW CASTLE PRESBYTERY IS MOVING

New Castle has informed us that they have made the decision to leave their Head of Christiana Presbyterian office space and move to remote work arrangements. They based their decision on the Pandemic having brought changes to how they work, changes that they found can be effectively incorporated into their current every day work arrangements. Concerning movement dates, from the current date forward, Presbytery is anticipating they will be fully remote by the end of this year, December 31,2022. Beyond that, they have committed to paying rent to the Head of Christiana Presbyterian Church through June 30, 2023, or until the Church secures new tenants. We are extremely sorry to see New Castle Presbytery depart. They have been a most welcome part of our physically close worship community. However, we can understand their decision and look forward to continuing our close relationship.

HoC Worship Study Results

In May, the Worship Commission sent out a survey in order to get feedback about a variety of worship-related issues. Below is a short summary of the 25 responses:

1. 80% attend worship in person; 16% attend both online and in person; 4% online
2. 64% attend weekly, 24% twice/month, 8% monthly and 4% quarterly or less
3. 72% attend worship about the same as before the pandemic; 28% less frequently

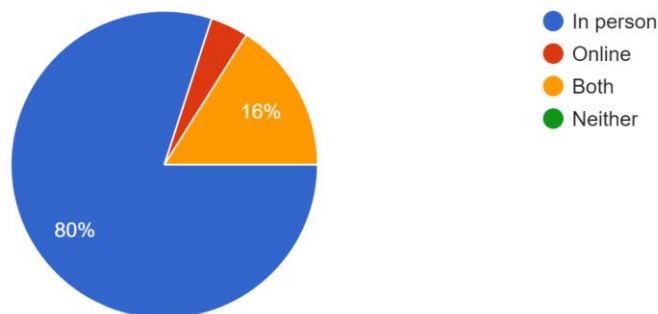
We asked about volunteers needed when and if we bring back certain elements of worship that were paused during Covid and more than 70% are willing to be greeters and pass the offering plate while more than 60% would be lay liturgists. On the other hand, only 3-4 people are willing to run the livestream or prepare communion elements.

Other items of note: There's a strong desire to sing all the verses of the hymns, but neutral as to having a third hymn sung. Folks were not ready yet to bring back contact version of "passing of the peace," but passing the offering plate garnered more support. There's also strong desire to include the doxology and prayer (associated with the offering plate.)

The session and worship commission are discerning what actions to take as a result of this survey and will keep the congregation updated.

Here are the results illustrated in graphs:

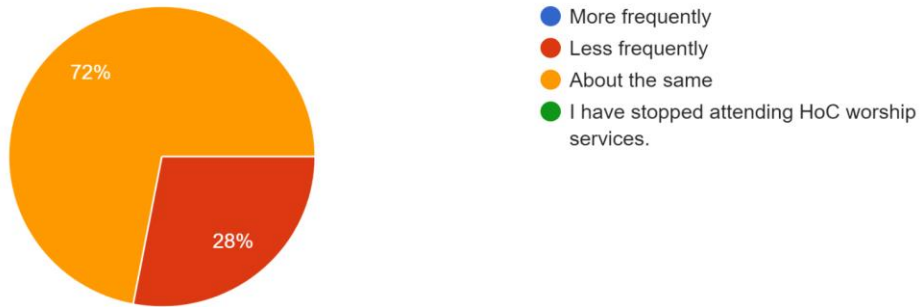
Do you attend worship mainly _____?
25 responses



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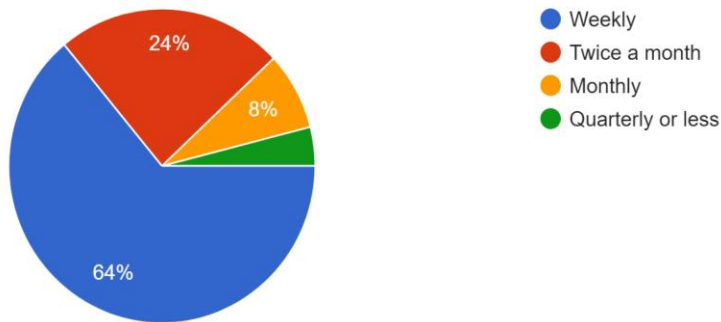
Compared with before the pandemic, do you attend worship _____?

25 responses

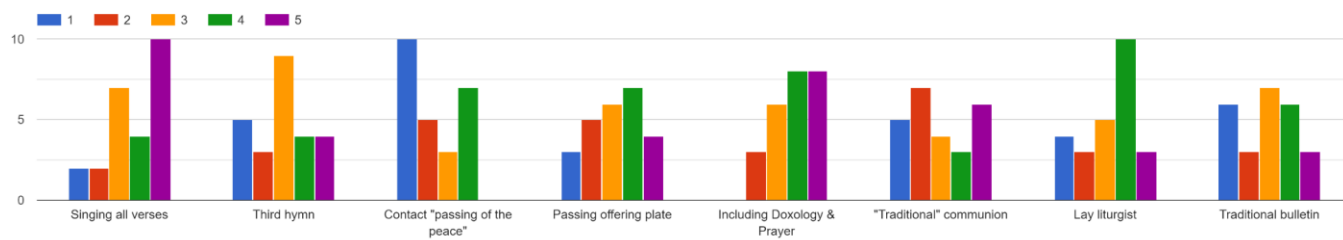


How often do you attend worship services?

25 responses

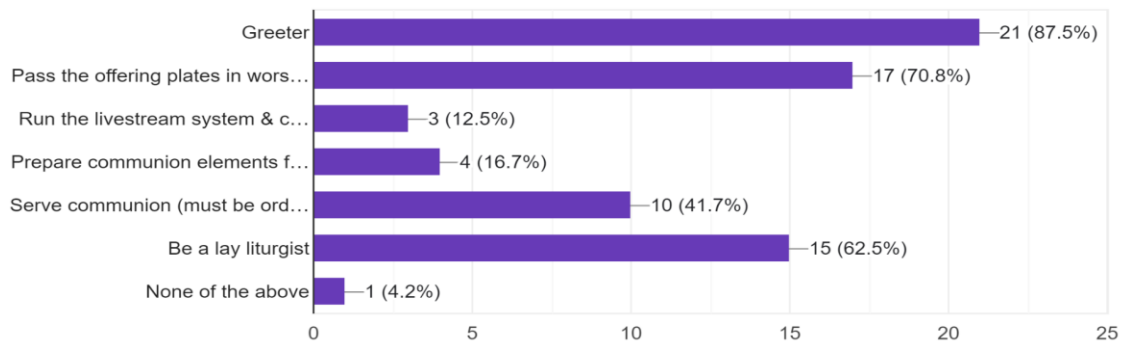


Please rate how strongly you feel about bringing back the following elements to the worship service, using the 1-5 scale, with 5 being the strongest.



Which of the following elements would you be willing to volunteer to do? (Please select all that apply.)

24 responses



CHURCH PICNIC



CHURCH PICNIC





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

bathing suit
 beach
 berries
 bikini
 boating
 camping
 canoeing
 diving
 flowers
 fresh fruit
 frisbee
 gardening
 grass
 hiking
 holiday
 hot

humidity
 ice cream
 journey
 muggy
 ocean
 outdoors
 outings
 outside
 park
 picnic
 play
 popsicle
 recreation
 relax
 rest
 road trip

sandals
 sand castle
 sailing
 sea
 shorts
 sunscreen
 swimming
 tan
 trunks
 travel
 vacation
 watermelon
 wave runner
 waterpark

HOC CALENDAR — September Happenings



Mon	Sept 05		HAPPY LABOR DAY
Mon	Sept 06	11:30am	Nifty-Wiftys @ Wesley's
Sun	Sept 11	9:30am	Sunday School for all ages—RALLY DAY!
Mon	Sept 12		LOOKING TREE DEADLINE
Mon	Sept 12	7:00pm	Session meets in Fellowship Hall
Mon	Sept 26	7:00pm	Admin & Finance ZOOM Meeting

CHOIR PRACTICE – Thursday, Sept. 15 @ 7:30-pm



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS



Sep 3	Cindy Taber	Sep 27	Merle Slack
Sep 9	Barbara Johnston	Sep 28	Rebecca Condliffe
Sep 11	Claire Herrington	Sep 28	Katie Gillespie
Sep 12	Janice Harper	Sep 29	Steve Graham

