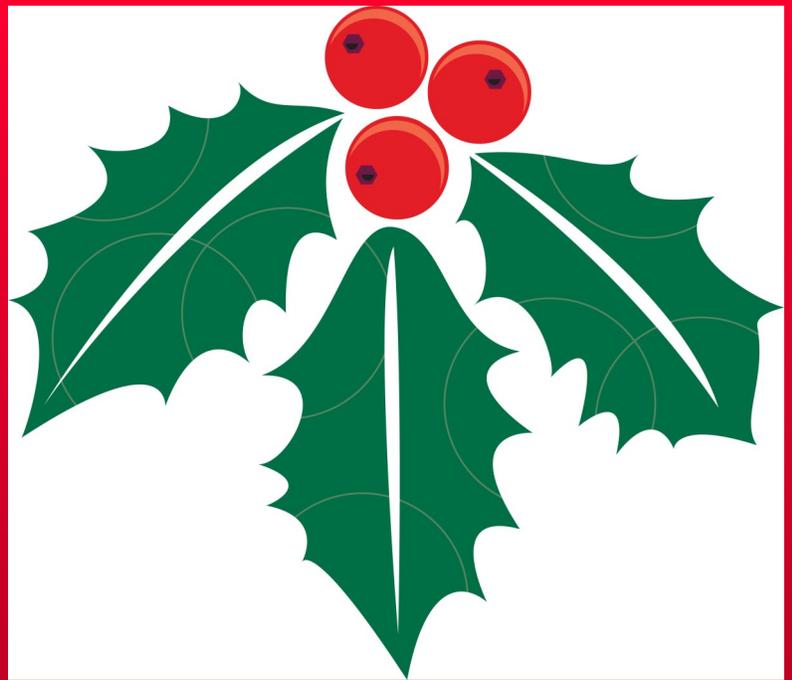


Hillcrest Calling



December 2020

The promise of the future

A nursing home resident who longed for fresh Georgia peaches discovered a pit overlooked in his serving of canned fruit. In an old coffee can, he planted the stone, which sprouted! The man gave the small tree to friends to plant. Years later, the peaches were so abundant the neighbors had to give some away.

Lila Docken Bauman recounts this story for the *Christian Century*, saying the man who took that gamble “did not live to see [it] grow into the tree that ultimately produced this harvest. But when he looked at that pit years ago he saw the promise of fresh fruit. ... ‘Who despises the day of small things?’ asks the prophet Zechariah. It’s in those small things that the promise of the future rests.”

Just so, some 2,000 years ago, in a small baby born in a tiny town — both seemingly inconsequential — rested “the promise of the future” — the salvation of the whole world.



December birthdays

Diane Meester, 1st
Jennifer Jefferies, 2nd
Amanda Sigourney, 4th
Mary Morrissey, 6th
Stephanie Baker, 18th
Brandon Sigourney Sr, 21st
Sammy Miller, 30th
Patricia Burton, 31st

December anniversaries

Norm & Diane Meester, 6th
Ronnie & DeAnn Riggs, 18th



Dear Hillcrest Family,
Thank you so much for your continued support. This month, we are celebrating our 9th birthday — all because of generous hearts like yours. Our ladies thank you!

In His Grace, Kelly Harriis, **Safe to Sleep**

Dear Friends of **John Calvin Presbytery Disaster Assistance**,
On behalf of the survivors of disasters in this country and around the world, we want to thank you for your contribution of the disaster clean-up buckets for the 2020 JCPDA bucket effort. On the 16th of November, Kathy and I delivered 31 clean-up buckets to the warehouse at the Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center. Thanks for your support, Todd and Kathy Morris

Thank you so much for your gift! Your support means so much to us!

Patty from **Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services**

Dear Hillcrest Friends,
Thank you so much for your recent gift to support **Crosslines of the Council of Churches of the Ozarks!** Your generosity make our work possible, and we are truly grateful to partner with you to serve our community. Let us continue to work together to improve the quality of life through compassionate service to our most vulnerable neighbors in the name of Jesus Christ.

Sincerely, Rick George, COO



Please pray for:
Healing and recovery from surgery for Norm Meester (Hernia) and Dianne Hutchins (cataracts).
Jack Throne who has pneumonia and blood clots in his lungs.
For all those sheltering at home to not get the virus—that God will comfort them.



This year, in order to keep numbers down and to allow for social distancing, we will be making reservations for our Christmas Eve service. There will be two services to pick from: 5:00 and 6:30pm. Please call the office and let them know which service you would like to attend and how many people in your group will be attending. Each service will be limited to 30 people. This is an effort to allow for as many people to attend as would like. Also, if we have a great response, we may have a later service.

October Financials

Beginning Balance	\$ 8,676.01
Decrease	3,503.69
Ending Balance	\$ 5,172.32
Building Load Balance	
10/04/20	\$289,563.70
Building Fund Balance	
	\$ 18,608.40

The electronic giving terminal is located in the Narthex.

Just know that God blesses a cheerful and generous giver.



Thursday, December 10th the Shooting Fellowship will be meeting at 5:30pm

Monday, November 9th Session will be meeting at 6pm.

Monday, December 21st, the Book Club will be meeting at 7pm. This month's book is "A Gentleman in Moscow" by Amor Towles

Please remember, you must wear a mask whenever you are in the church and please use our hand sanitizer whenever you enter the church. We do this to protect each other and in so doing show the love of Jesus.

Reminder: Our church premises is weapon free, carrying firearms is

Men of the Bible - Joseph & John

Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus

There's not much in the New Testament about Joseph. But what is there tells us a lot about the man.

He was not one to take revenge when wronged. When he found out that Mary was pregnant, he determined to break the engagement privately and not to make a public shaming of Mary.

He listened to God, especially when God spoke to him in dreams. And he put into action what God told him to do.

He protected Mary and Jesus and kept them safe.

We don't know when he passed on but it is clear that he was there for Jesus throughout his early childhood up until his bar mitzvah.

John, the apostle that Jesus loved

You might ask, why am I talking about him in the same article with Joseph. Well, John the Apostle took Joseph's place when Jesus died on the cross to look after Mary and take her to his home.

John was called to be a disciple along with his brother, James and they were called the sons of thunder. John had some issues of anger and narrowmindedness to deal with before he matured. But after being with Jesus for the three years he became the author of love. He remained with Jesus throughout his final week, the triumphal entry, rejection, last supper, Gethsemane, the trial and the crucifixion. He was the only disciple at the cross with Mary, the mother of Jesus. It was there that Jesus asked him to take care of his mother and take her to his home. This fiery person has become a loving, loyal disciple willing to risk it all to serve Jesus.

Both of these men were willing for God to change their minds about what was going on about them and how to deal with it. God is willing to do this in us if we agree. The key is listening for God to speak in our hearts and minds. Then we see God changing us, first in our minds and then in our actions. Let us all become people of love because that is what the world needs so much today... conduits of the love of God.



We are continuing the Coat Drive until December 15th. Please bring any coats both for kids and adults to the church office. Fred is picking them up and taking them to Glo Cleaners himself.



December

Sunday Services:

Sunday School 9am
 Worship Service 10am
 Hillcrest
 Worship Service 11:30am
 Gibson Chapel

☿ Birthdays

♥ Anniversaries

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
6 2nd Sunday Advent Communion ☿ Mary Morrissey ♥ Diane & Norm Meester	7	8	9	10 Shooting Fellowship, 5:30pm MOW-Meesters	11	12
13 3rd Sunday Advent	14 Session, 6pm	15	16	17 MOW-Nancy & Barb	18 ☿ Stephanie Baker ♥ Ronnie & DeAnn Riggs	19
20 4th Sunday Advent	21 Book Club, 7pm "A Gentleman in Moscow" by Amor Towles ☿ Brandon Sigourney	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Services MOW-Palmertons	25 Christmas	26
27	28	29	30 ☿ Sammy Miller	31 New Year's Eve ☿ Patricia Burton MOW-DeAnn		

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF:

FOSTER A HEALTHY MINDSET WITH SELF-CARE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

COVID-19 has generated its share of unique challenges and stresses. When those collide with the issues and concerns you and your congregation typically face during the holidays and year-end fundraising, challenging times can become even more challenging.

Amid uncertainty, the people you work with and serve are craving confident leadership. Yet confident leadership isn't about having all the answers – it's about coming alongside your staff, volunteers and congregation, providing assurance and guidance so they feel encouraged about the future.

This has never been more important. The number of American adults battling anxiety, depression or both has risen to 34% since the onset of COVID-19 – underscoring the need for people to allocate time, space and resources to care for themselves. You'll want to help your staff, volunteers and members to carve out slices of time for restorative practices and also make time to adopt some of those same practices yourself. By modeling the importance of taking care of yourself, you're reminding people of their value – and the fact that health and well-being are worth investing in.

As we approach a holiday season unlike any other, encouraging and embracing self-care can help foster a healthy mindset for you and those you serve. Some ideas include:

Take Care of Your Body: Eating healthy and exercising may seem routine, but they play key roles in disease prevention, overall well-being and mood. Finding good balance is especially important during the holidays as you're tackling lengthier to-do lists and often surrounded by an influx of delicious but less healthy foods. While this is something your congregation can tackle individually, there's the option to create a Facebook group for sharing good workouts, recipes and tips. And don't forget to get good sleep, as that affects cognitive function and performance, growth and stress hormones, immune system, appetite, breathing, blood pressure and cardiovascular health.

Pursue Spiritual Development: While 49% of spiritual leaders find it difficult to carve out time for their own spiritual development, doing so in a time of crisis will help you hit reset in four worthwhile ways: your sense of connectedness, structure and routine, sense of control and mental space.

Relax With Nature: Whether you step outside, look out a window or admire a nature scene online, the great outdoors helps reduce stress and increase relaxation – just five minutes is enough to change your literal and figurative perspective.

Engage Your Brain: If you notice your thought patterns taking a negative path, find a constructive detour. Crosswords, reading, painting and crafts aren't just relaxing and fun – they also help sharpen the mind and reduce anxiety. Start a gratitude journal during the holidays to help you remain aware and focused on what's going well and what's sparking joy. Or simply dive into something you enjoy – play a game, cook a meal or head out on your bike.

Seek Counseling: It's important for everyone in your congregation, including leadership, to know what counseling resources, family services and group programs are available – and to seek those out when beneficial. For congregations that offer or are considering offering non-professional counseling services, Church Mutual can provide you and your staff with coverage that includes pastoral and family services and lay counseling.

Prayer for a Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced
Remember those whose lives are at stake

May we who have no risk factors
Remember those most vulnerable

May we who have the luxury of working from home
Remember those who must choose between preserving
their health or making their rent

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children
when their schools close
Remember those who have no options

May we who have to cancel our trips
Remember those who have no safe place to go

May we who are losing our margin money in the
tumult of the economic market
Remember those who have no margin at all

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home
Remember those who have no home

As fear grips our country
Let us choose love

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms
around each other
Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors.

Amen