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January 2022

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**DEACON ORDINATION**

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 9**

**JUANITA LYNN**

## A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

What does 2022 have in store for us as a church? Well, of course in general we can map out our year, expect the unexpected, and make resolutions all which we will try to achieve at least for a week before giving up. In other words, we are not going to start off 2022 with the Eeyore mindset and a defeatist attitude, right? This said, here are a few possibilities to ponder for the New Year:

1. Reflect thankfully upon the blessings of 2021 and bring the thankfulness over into 2022. What were you thankful for in 2021? Suffice it to say without numerating that I personally am thankful for so much in 2021 that I never would have dreamed of in 2020. Yup, I am sure we all had trying moments in 2021 but hopefully they did not ruin our lives and turn us into Frankenstein.
2. Do some soul-searching right now, right where you are, and keep and improve on the good things and throw out the refuse that is of no good. Refuse is that stuff that is poison to your relationship with Christ and with others.

3. Enter 2022 with tremendous anticipation. One way to feed this anticipation is as a church to see that the Lord has provided us through a bequest from the late Ms. Louise Lowry with a new place of worship.

The Lord provides indeed. The Lord provides what we need and at times adds icing to the cake by throwing in a little extra. But God expects much of us.

As we transfer our worship from the old sanctuary to the new sanctuary, I caution us not to believe this means our work is finished. It is not. Our work for the Lord is never finished, is not finished, and will never be finished this side of heaven. If anything, the Spirit of God is moving us to greater challenges and responsibilities now. To work toward making a reality the vision of Hillcrest, "being a place for all people," we, as the saying goes, must "pick up our game." For example, Institutionally, each committee must function as it was designed to function or consider being merged into another committee. And, as with anything else, any committee is only as good as the folks who commit themselves to the work of the committee.

Another example is tithing. Tithing is an institutional component in church life. It is necessary and undergirds the functioning of the church. For people who have the means by which to tithe and do not, reconsider what you are doing. If this is you, what is your agenda? Why do you withhold God's money? I have no interest whatsoever in hearing something to the effect, "Well, I give of my time, or I will buy this or that if the church needs it." Hogwash. Tithing is not a bartering system.

Tithing to the general fund is what keeps the lights on, the heat on, and pays the bills. If you want to do things beyond tithing to the general fund, that is great. That is fantastic. But it does not replace the responsibility to support your church's general fund items.

On a side note, folks are funny about others knowing or not knowing what they tithe. That is okay too. But I do not have that problem. If you want to know what Trish and I tithe, simply ask one of us. Be happy to tell you. And we will not even ask you in turn what you tithe. Secrecy in tithing is way over blown. After all, we are church.

Of course, there are other institutional aspects to church. There is also the "church" aspect to church. By this, I mean there is Sunday school (the teaching component to church). Already we have a strong focus on teaching children and have the physical space suitable for this task. Our teachers have a program and plan in place to achieve and meet the goal of not only instructing children but also informing parents of the teaching

objectives of any given Sunday. That is huge, and I thank each person who has been involved with this work.

While so much foundational Christian teachings are essential to teach at an early age, classes for others tend to have a little bit of a different slant leaning toward not only understanding Scripture and Jesus's teachings for example but also what it means for life where we are in our own lives.

On a side note, a class I originally designed for parents, who had kids down the hall in a class, exists as well for anyone who has not been in a class. No robbing of Sunday school folks from other classes.

Another part of church life is worship which has many dynamics in play or should. There are prayers, Scripture readings, music, and sermons. Of these the two most memorable are music and sermons. Music as an essential element of the worship experience must create moments when the body has gathered to uplift, inspire, and move. And if these are not happening, something is amiss and needs recalibrating.

Music has a unique feature unto itself that other media of communication do not: it is a language that others of different languages can understand. Dynamic music is just that: dynamic meaning at least for me right now in my life it is unpredictable and alive, which I love.

Sermons. Sermons should never be the same. They should have strong content and be presented in ways that are not predictable

either and simply not be time filler. Sermon delivery may be given by the points system (1, 2, 3, etc.), deductively (like the point system), inductively (this is fun), conversationally (like the inductive approach). Each of these can be accomplished expositively, topically, thematically, prophetically, and so on. Fresh and new.

As we enter 2022, we are entering a new time and place (like the Hebrews entered a new land). We can be the energy-filled, dynamic church (excited about entering a new time) or we can protest and dig our heels in (Hey Moses, we prefer Egypt rather than this, this uuuhhh, new place). Thing is, if God leads us into a new time (2022) and a new place and we do not enter, God will absolutely shut the door. Ask Moses how it felt to see the Promised Land but refused entry.

So, we say Happy New Year! Let the New Year indeed be Happy! Let it encompass everything God is leading us into and requiring of us. From institutional church life to church life, let's get ready to go into 2022 with gusto with the wind of God behind us pushing us forward and with God ahead of us directing us. Look out 2022. Here comes Hillcrest! Happy New Year!

Grace and Peace,

*Clarke*

### **CHRISTMAS BOX MINISTRY**

I want to thank everyone who wrapped boxes, helped put items in the boxes or participated in any way in the Christmas Box Ministry. This ministry is an almost two-month long event. There are lots of moving parts and

a lot of work too. Between Hillcrest, the six churches that partnered with us and the Hanover Christian Firewood ministry, 28 families had a Christmas filled with the love of Christ.

Pray for these families! The ministry is more than we knock on their doors, say Merry Christmas and leave boxes full of gifts. It's about sharing God's love as many times a year as possible. Pray they will feel God's love whenever they use any of the many gifts they received. Pray they will feel God's presence. That's our mission, purpose and prayer.

And now.....a new year begins. Happy New Year everyone. Blessings, good health and prosperity in 2022.

In Christian Service,  
Jerry Edwards  
Ministry Coordinator

### **TREASURER'S NOTES**

I hope everyone has had an opportunity to pick up their 2022 boxed Offering Envelopes. If not, please pick them up from the table in the atrium. If you cannot find your envelopes, please let me know and I will find them or get you a set.

Your financial support is critical to the operations of Hillcrest. Thank you for all your support. We are all in this together.

Jerry Edwards, Treasurer

### **NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL**

#### **CLASS**

Each Sunday I teach a class for "students" (participants) who are inquisitive, willing to invest a little

outside study time, and who are hungry to learn. While study is focused, the class atmosphere is casual, conversational, and relaxed. The class begins at 9:45 and we follow weekly scriptures of the Revised Common Lectionary, which can be found at: <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu>.

Come join us and feel free to bring refreshments such as coffee and donuts.

לחיים

*Clarke*

(434) 962-7992

### **BACKPACK MINISTRY**

The Backpack Ministry in November and December had a lighter schedule due to the holidays. Now that January has arrived, we will be delivering backpacks every week until the end of school. The only week we do not deliver is Spring Break in April. This month is inventory rebuild time. We will be purchasing heavy amounts of food items to stock up for the rest of the school year. The cost of food has really increased in price (like we don't already know that) so we are in need of financial contributions. Please consider your gift and donate by marking your donation envelope "Designated Backpack Ministry." Together we can do great things through Christ. He will provide! He always does. Twenty-six kids are being fed every weekend through your donations and works.

Jerry Edwards  
Ministry Coordinator

### **HALLWAY YARD SALE**

Free plastic storage containers of various sizes in good condition are available in the hallway near the SS office. Come check them out.

Debra Edwards  
Sunday School Director

### **HAVE YOU EVER DREAMED OF OWNING A CHURCH**

#### **PEW?**

If so, please let the New Sanctuary Building Committee (NSBC) know. Per the Hanover County code, the pews in the current sanctuary must be removed before an occupancy permit will be issued for the new sanctuary. With that in mind, we would like to offer the pews free of charge to our church members; the only catch is you must arrange removal and pick up. Please contact the church office at 730-1500, and leave your name and the number of pews you would like to have. This will be on a first come, first serve basis. A deadline for removal of the pews will be set at a later date.

Thank you.

Jason Lipinski and Trish Hawkins  
Co-chairs, NSBC

### **WELCOME NEW MEMBER**

Stephen Crisp made his profession of faith on December 19. Stephen will be baptized on January 16.

His address and phone number are:

5449 Winsmith Drive  
Mechanicsville, VA 23116  
804 -350-2860

## **JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

Earl Painter (1-1)  
Don Pike (1-2)  
Connie Foster (1-3)  
Christy Lipinski (1-5)  
Jim Willis (1-7)  
Brian Keeler (1-7)  
T.J. Bell (1-8)  
Todd Collier (1-9)  
Bob Barnes (1-12)  
Grayce Taylor (1-12)  
Amy Miles (1-15)  
Mary Tyree (1-18)  
David Rainier (1-18)  
Christie Tripp (1-22)  
Sydney Collins (1-23)  
Seth Collins (1-23)  
Jerry Edwards (1-24)  
Lou Blackman (1-24)  
Hope West (1-26)  
Jean Sharp (1-30)  
Carolyn Mathias (1-30)  
Samantha Fleming (1-31)

## **GENERAL FUND RESULTS**

General Fund Balance as of November 1	\$33,988.98
November Receipts (Egiving and regular)	\$16,903.19
November Expenditures	\$9,476.82
Balance as of December 1	\$41,415.35