

Highland Park Church of God

A New Life Fellowship

“Connected in Christ, Serving in Spirit, Growing in New Life Together”

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Web Site: www.highlandparkcog.org

District Website: www.chogeast.org
National Website: www.chog.org



December 2017



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>*Regular Sunday Schedule: 9:30 AM Sunday School for All Ages 11:00 AM Morning Worship 3:30-5:00 PM Youth 5:30 PM Choir Practice</p>					<p>1 (Romans 5) 8:00 AM Ladies' Prayer Noon Retirees' Luncheon</p>	<p>2 (Romans 6) Making Breakfast at Ronald McDonald House</p>
<p>3 (Romans 7) 1:30 PM Youth Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser</p>	<p>4 (Romans 8) 7:00 PM Ladies' Crafts at Laura's</p>	<p>5 (Romans 9) 9:00 AM Men's Bible Study (Lee) Making Sandwiches for SHAN</p>	<p>6 (Romans 10)</p>	<p>7 (Romans 11) 6:30 PM City Christmas Parade</p>	<p>8 (Romans 12) 8:00 AM Ladies' Prayer</p>	<p>9 (Romans 13) 9:00 AM Men's Fellowship Breakfast At Westville UMC</p>
<p>10 (Romans 14) Youth Destination Unknown</p>	<p>11 (Romans 15)</p>	<p>12 (Romans 16) 10:00 AM Staff Mtg.</p>	<p>13 (Psalm 1)</p>	<p>14 (Psalm 2) Friday Morning Prayer Group Xmas Luncheon 7:00 PM Grief Share</p>	<p>15 (Psalm 3) 8:00 AM Ladies' Prayer</p>	<p>16 (Psalm 4) Ladies' Christmas Party in Fellowship Hall</p>
<p>17 (Psalm 5) 9:30 AM Intergenerational Sunday School 11 AM CBO Offering 6:30 PM Cantata</p>	<p>18 (Psalm 6) </p>	<p>19 (Psalm 7) 9:00 AM Men's Bible Study (Roland)</p>	<p>20 (Psalm 8)</p>	<p>21 (Psalm 9) 7:00 PM Grief Share</p>	<p>22 (Psalm 10) 8:00 AM Ladies' Prayer 6:30 PM Open House at Don and Pastor Deb Conners' Home</p>	<p>23 (Psalm 11)</p>
<p>24 (Psalm 12) No Youth Fellowship 7:00 PM Candle Lighting Service</p>	<p>25 </p>	<p>26 (Psalm 13)</p>	<p>27 (Psalm 14)</p>	<p>28 (Psalm 15)</p>	<p>29 (Psalm 16) 8:00 AM Ladies' Prayer 5:30-8:30 PM Open House at the Huntsingers'</p>	<p>30 (Psalm 17) </p>
<p>31 (Psalm 18) No Youth Fellowship 8:00 PM Singspiration 9:00-Midnight Celebra- tion Activities at Church</p>						



**Family
Fun
Night!**





Dear Church Family and Friends,

My wife and I have been enjoying Hallmark's Countdown to Christmas on many evenings since the beginning of November. Charles Dicken's wrote of there being a "magic" in the very name of Christmas that he wished would spread throughout the entire

year. Magic, hum? Two of the specials that my wife and I watched had magic in them. In one, there was the gift of a carved wooden angel that magically, over a span of 50 years, brought two persons together. In the other there was a magical stocking given to a woman by a mysterious vendor at a church Christmas sale that miraculously produced various items that were needed in the near future. The stocking's gifts helped all the persons to find the love that they needed to bless their lives. Now, I believe in magic and magicians – they exist! But, is Christmas about a sleight of hand, fairy god-mothers with stockings, or something even more miraculous that we are to experience during the season? The magic or special quality within Christmas is Christ. Christmas is about Jesus Christ. It is about the Incarnation where God the Son took on flesh and blood and lived among us. It is about God's love and concern for the well-being of humankind becoming tangible and visible for a short time in human history. The Jesus Story is a love story, where God reached out in love and physically touched our world. The rest of the Jesus Story as recorded in God's Word is about His Ministry and ongoing work of reconciling people to His Heavenly Father. In our choir cantata this year, you will hear the phrases, "It's about the cross, it's about my sin. It's about how Jesus came to be born once so that we can be born again. It's about a stone that was rolled away, so that you and I could have *real life* one day." Christmas is the beginning of the Jesus chapters in God's Story of bringing His love and forgiveness into this world so that we might become a part of God's family – now and into eternity. This year we will have a nativity float in the city parade on December 7th so that the real reason for Christmas is visibly displayed. God's salvation came to our world that first Christmas Day! Brothers and Sisters, I love Hallmark Channel's wholesome entertainment, but Christmas is about Christ above all else. When we embrace and understand the true meaning of Christmas, then all the other important things will fall into place as well – love for family, friends, and our fellow man. This Christmas season, let us remember to put first things first in our hearts and lives, so that we may experience the greatest gifts God has for each of us.

Gratefully His,

Pastor Bill



A New Way to Give

TITHE.LY

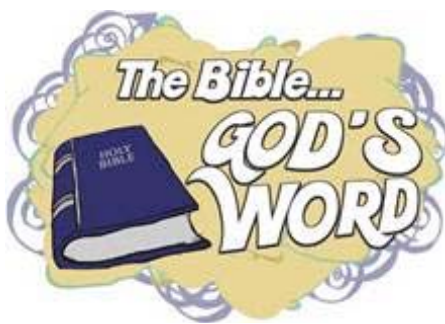
**Download the app from your app store or click the “Give” button on the church website!
(www.highlandparkcog.org)**

It is really simple. Just use your smart phone to download the app and set up your giving through that. If you wish to give using your computer, just go to our church website and click the “Give” button on the top right. This will take you to Tithe.ly where you can set up your account.

When making your gift, please indicate any additional information or the breakdown of your gift **in the memo line**. You will receive an e-mail confirmation for your gift.

As with any credit card or e-transaction, there are transaction fees involved. There is a 30 cent per transaction charge plus a percentage fee that the church will pay. Bank account transactions are assessed a 1% fee, and credit/debit cards are assessed a 2.9% fee. (American Express, 3.5% fee.) These fees are paid by the church unless you click to indicate you would like to cover them. Whatever you decide, you will be credited for the full amount of your gift.

If you need assistance, please contact the church office!



***Chapter-a-Day Bible
4-Year Bible Reading
Program ~ Dec. 2017***

Romans 5-16
Psalms 1-18



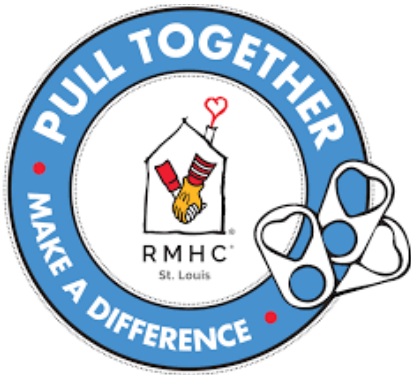
Families Making an Impact—Wednesday evenings
at 6:15 beginning January 10.

Embrace Grace – Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM
beginning January 18.

Mayor’s Prayer Breakfast at Elizabeth Ballroom—
Saturday, January 20

December 5

Making Sandwiches for SHAN



**Please donate can tabs to
Ronald McDonald House.
You can find drop-off
bins in the Narthex.**



**Coming to
HPCOG
December
2017!**



*At the Huntsingers'
Home*

*December 29
5:30-8:30 PM*

And

*At Don and Pastor
Deb's Home
December 22
6:30 PM*



**Men's Fellowship Breakfast
Come Sing, Dine, Pray and Share!**

**Saturday, December 9 from 9 AM to 10:30 AM
At Westville United Methodist Church**

Guest Speaker: Rev. Pete Broomall

**We do need to RSVP, so please sign the sheet in
the Narthex if you plan to attend.**



Winter Snow Policy



If there is snow overnight the evening before a planned morning church event from Monday through Saturday, due to snow removal factors beyond our control, the event will be canceled. If there is no school or early dismissal for the Gloucester City School District, all afternoon and evening activities will be canceled. We will make every possible effort to see that the lot and walks are cleared for Sunday School and Sunday morning worship. Sunday afternoon and evening activities will have winter weather cancellations at the discretion of their appointed leadership.





Why Tithing?

The main principle behind tithing and giving offering, is the fact that what we do with our money shows where our heart is. Matthew 6:21 says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also". When we are able to give part of our income to God's kingdom, instead of keeping that money for ourselves, it shows that our heart isn't tied to our money and that we love God more than we love our money

Is it Mandatory to Tithing?

The Lord commanded the Israelites in the Old Testament to give a tithe..that the tithe would be set apart (holy) to the Lord. (Lev. 27:30) The New Testament does not command us to tithe; Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice so that we no longer need to give sacrifices. On the other hand, there are many practices in the Old Testament that don't make sense to us today, yet many of these ancient ways carry over to the New Testament Law of Grace as part of Christ's promise to not abolish the law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). I personally don't believe that God will curse us or send us to hell if we don't tithe, for we are not saved by our Earthly works. However, God also says, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse... Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it!" Malachi 3:10

Why is 10% of my Income Significant in Tithing?

The word "tithe" comes from an Old English root meaning "one tenth." God knows that each of us cannot give an equal amount of income because we all have different resources, jobs, etc., so He gave a percentage ensuring that everyone can participate. Many of us, if we let our over-analyzing minds decide how much to give, would likely opt for a lot less than 10%. Having a standard keeps us accountable. The act of giving allows God to change our hearts so that ultimately we end up doing so cheerfully. Looking at this from a functional standpoint, our tithing goes to the electric bill, the water bill, the pastors' salary, selected missions, outreach, physical building expansion, etc. The church needs our tithing to grow and become what God intends for us to become.

Can I Trust the Church with my Tithing?

Those who express trust issues with handing over their money to The Church reveal two potential problems that need to be addressed:

- 1) The individual's trust isn't in God (or the church God has placed him/her in)
- 2) The individual is attending an untrustworthy church and should consider finding a new one

The truth is, church leaders are responsible for using church money in a responsible way; they have more accountability for that than we do. I full-heartedly believe we are in a church where you can trust our leaders to do what is right. But just remember, you're responsible for what you are led to give, and the church leaders are responsible for how to use it for the goodness of God; God takes care of the rest.

In closing, I'd like to point out that the percentage you ultimately give is between you and God. However, there are many who do give 10% and want to offer encouragement to others to do the same. Think about it: If some individuals are willing to give 10% of their income (or more) to their church and want to encourage others to experience the same blessings they've been experiencing through trusting God with their money, isn't it something we should pray hard about?

In His service,
Kaylee Conner



Sunday School for ALL Ages Sunday Mornings at 9:30 AM

Special Intergenerational Sunday School Class
December 17 at 9:30 AM
All classes will meet in the fellowship hall.

I would like to send out a BIG THANK YOU to all of our teachers and support people. As we finish a time of Thanksgiving, our church is thankful to those who go above and beyond to teach our students of all ages that God loves us and that He has a plan for our lives, a good plan. Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) says, " 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' "

We are blessed to have a program to help us grow in the Lord!

Serving Him,
Don Conner

*Let them give thanks to Lord for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for men,
for He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things. Psalm 107: 8-9*

GIVE THANKS



**Ladies' Christmas
Party
December 16 at 6 PM
In the Fellowship Hall**

Please watch for the sign-up sheet in the Narthex. We will be having a \$5 Pollyanna gift exchange. If this is difficult for you, please see Pastor Deb, Ann or Sandy. We look forward to all of our ladies attending!



The Highland Park Church of God food pantry (for our church family members in need) is low on a few items.

If you would like to help meet this need, we are requesting donations of canned meats such as chicken, tuna, chipped beef, salmon, etc. We are also low on canned soups, cereal, green veggies and pasta sauce.

Your donations have been such a blessing! Thank you for caring!



Dinner & Sing Along

12/3/17 – 1:30pm

Sunday, December 3, 2017

1:30-3:30 p.m.

Highland Park Church of God
111 Baynes Avenue
Gloucester City, New Jersey

Cost: DONATION TO YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Spaghetti Dinner

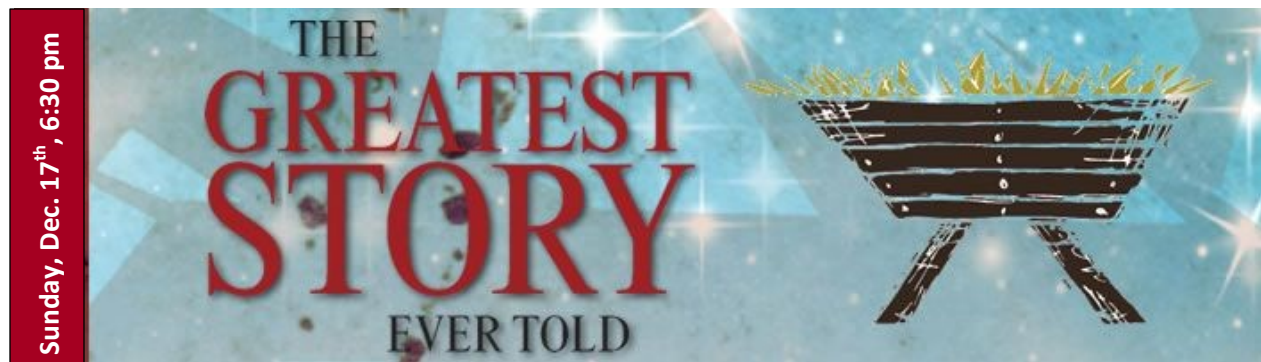
Salad – Bread – Desert – Beverages

Christmas Sing-Along

Led by a BRASS QUINTET & our YOUTH!

Reservations **MUST** be made in advance
For reservations call the church office (856-456-3364)
Or email: debconner824@gmail.com

All funds raised will support youth ministry
and our trip to IYC 2018.



The Greatest Story Ever Told

**A Musical for Christmas
Presented by
The Highland Park Church of God Choir**

**Sunday, December 17, 2017
6:30 p.m.**

**Highland Park Church of God
111 Baynes Avenue
Gloucester City, NJ 08030**

“It’s not a fairy tale, a myth, or a bedtime story. It is the true story of God’s Son being born of a virgin, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger in Bethlehem. Angels told shepherds, and stargazers came from the Far East to be among His first worshipers. It is a beautiful story that we recreate every Christmas to remember God’s great gift of love.”

Come...hear the Greatest Story Ever Told!



What Child Is This?

This is a question we will be exploring throughout the Christmas season. We will see this baby through the eyes of Mary and Joseph, Shepherds and Wise Men. Ultimately we will be challenged to answer this question for ourselves.

Who is this Child to me? ... Who is this Child to you?

Please join us for worship
As we embrace this amazing gift...
wrapped in swaddling clothes...

A Gift of Love...Hope...Peace...JOY!

Sundays, 11:00 a.m.

December 3rd: Mary's Story
December 10th: Joseph's Story
December 17th: A Shepherd's Perspective
December 24th: A Word from Wise Men
(on the 24th we will also be featuring a brass quintet!)

Nursery available for infants/toddlers & Super Church for kids up to 5th grade.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Sunday, December 24, 2017
7:00 p.m.

What Child is this? He is the One we have been waiting for...
He is Emmanuel... God With Us.

You are invited to share a time of celebration and worship on Christmas Eve. This is a family time, appropriate for children of all ages. There will be music, the Christmas story and the lighting of candles as a reminder that the Light of the World...Jesus...has come to us and continues to come to us.

For more information, contact the church office: 856-456-364.



New Year's Eve Celebration!

December 31, 2017

8:00 p.m. – 1:00 a.m.

Highland Park Church of God

Join the Gloucester City Churches as we “ring in” the New Year!

8:00 – Christmas Carol/Hymn Sing...where YOU get to choose the songs!

9:00 – Refreshments...Games...Karaoke...Wii Fun...Movies...Fun for ALL AGES!

MIDNIGHT – New Year Celebration & Worship

We hope you will join us!



Embrace Grace
Thursdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Beginning January 18, 2018
107 Baynes Avenue
Gloucester City, NJ 08030

If you are in an unplanned pregnancy...You are not alone.

Join the Embrace Grace Group!

- Make new friends in similar circumstances
- Receive a baby shower with new baby items.
- Be inspired and hope-filled through an awesome support system.

A new group will begin on January 18th and runs for 13 weeks, meeting on Thursday evenings.

For more information, or to sign up for the next session of Embrace Grace, contact the church office (856-456-3364).

If you would like to learn more about how you can volunteer with Embrace Grace contact Deb Conner (856-456-3364).

For more information on Embrace Grace, check out the website at www.embracegrace.com or visit our facebook page: **Embrace Grace – Highland Park COG.**



Family Nights: Making an Impact!

Wednesday Nights / 6:15 – 7:30 p.m.

January 10th – February 7th, 2018

Highland Park Church of God Fellowship Hall

- Families will eat together...learn together...play together and serve together!
- Free Dinner served at 6:15 pm
- Learn about who Jesus says He is: The Bread of Life, the Light of the World, Our Good Shepherd, The Resurrection and the Life, the Vine.
- Engage in service projects for local missions.

JOIN US!!!

Highland Park Church of God

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP in DECEMBER!



December 3rd, CHRISTMAS DINNER & SING-ALONG

Fundraiser for IYC! We will be preparing/serving a spaghetti dinner followed by a sing-along with a brass quintet upstairs in the sanctuary. We will meet IMMEDIATELY after Sunday School to set up tables and chairs and decorate the fellowship hall. Following morning worship we will meet back down in the fellowship hall to finish decorating and completing food preparation.

EACH YOUTH – Please bring a dessert for us to set out. Invite people to come! Make sure they call the church or email: debconner824@gmail.com for a “reservation.” There is limited seating!

December 7th – Gloucester City Christmas Parade

December 10th – DESTINATION UNKNOWN

Don't be afraid...we have a beautiful Christmas surprise for you! Look for more details coming soon!!!

December 17th – Youth Christmas Celebration

We will meet immediately after church at the youth house to celebrate Christmas with our youth “family.” We will have lunch together, a \$2 pollyanna exchange and Christmas fun! Please come!!

December 24th, 7:00 p.m. – CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Our annual Christmas Eve candlelight service. Come experience Christmas...the joy of God's greatest Gift, wrapped in swaddling clothes...Emmanuel...God with us!



December 31st, 8:00 – Midnight – New Year's Eve Celebration!

Meet at the church at 8:00 p.m. for a Christmas hymn-sing with folks from churches throughout Gloucester City. Following will be food...games...karaoke...music ...movies, etc. At midnight, we will ring in the New Year with worship! JOIN US!! (Keep a look-out for more information!)



What Child Is This? Who is this Christ Child to YOU?