



HEAD START

December 3, 2017

Our community Thanksgiving dinner was a phenomenal success!! I am very thankful for Mark McHugh's and Barb Stark's families who did all the work to make it happen. Those who attended were a wonderful combination of daycare families, people from the community and some of our own folks.

This coming Sunday will be the first Sunday in Advent. The theme for this year is "Hope Overflowing". Our hope has been growing by leaps and bounds! Romans 5:3-5 says "...our troubles (HSPC has had many) ... produce endurance, endurance brings God's approval, and his approval creates hope. This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us." The hope we are experiencing is from God, is dependent on God and a sure sign of the Holy Spirit in us. Hope is indeed bubbling up and overflowing!

The scripture for this Sunday will be **Matthew 24:36-44**. The context for these verses, all of chapters 24 and 25, are difficult teachings and parables of destruction and the coming of the Son of Man. Please read both chapters before coming to worship this Sunday. In Matthew 24:36-44, what hope does it give us? It talks about being ready for "...the day your Lord will come." What do we have to do to be ready?

Christmas is about celebrating the birth of Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. Advent is about the anticipation of the "second" coming, the coming again of the Christ.

Christmas Eve

We will have worship services at 10:00 am and 7:30 pm on December 24th. Please be praying and thinking about whom you will invite to join you in attending both of these services. Then ask them. I will preach at the morning service and Mark will preach at the evening service.

-Ralph

A Message from Mark McHugh

This past Thursday, sometime between serving the mashed potatoes and the turkey, and around the time strangers shared their stories and some laughter too, a family member of mine turned to me and said, "This is what the Kingdom of God looks like."

It was a simple observation, but one that raised an important question for me this week: "How was our Thanksgiving Community Supper like the kingdom of God?"

Upon reflection, here is what I decided...

At a time when many struggle with issues of food scarcity and economic instability, I watched as bellies were filled and "to-go" boxes were packed.

At a time when people are increasingly divided across any number of differences (I'll leave you to name what those differences may be), I saw a sanctuary filled with people sitting *together* around tables, and looking their neighbors in the eye.

At a time when communication between young and old has become harder and true connection more difficult, I watched as old and young delighted, each in the company of the other.

At a time when those who are "unchurched" feel increasingly ostracized by the Church, I saw people who were longtime members of this community engaged naturally and lovingly in conversation with folks who, admittedly, had grown leery of the Church.

At a time when families continue to divide and where single parents face sometimes overwhelming challenges in raising their kids, I watched as a single mother relaxed in an adult conversation, taking comfort in knowing that her kids were safely playing in the hallway.

As I watched, I started to see what my family member meant:

This was the time; the Kingdom of God was near!

It's interesting that when Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God, he so often uses metaphors or symbols that stretch the imagination of those to whom he speaks. He compares the Kingdom of God, for example, to a mustard seed and to a sower, to yeast and to a merchant, to a net and to a treasure (to name a few). And what I think Jesus is getting at with these comparisons is that the Kingdom of God is always larger than the thing happening on the surface and bigger than the event that is taking place right in front of your eyes. It is the mustard seed, yes. But it's more than the mustard seed. And so, Jesus uses these symbols because the Kingdom of God is a way of seeing time, not as void of meaning and endlessly sequential, but time as pregnant and time as gift—time exploding at the seams with meaning and transformation and newness and hope.

And so, yes! A sanctuary filled with strangers eating mashed potatoes and turkey, sharing stories and laughter. But if you look a little closer and listen a little more perceptively, you'll notice the Kingdom of God just beneath the surface of things as God's Spirit works in our midst—moving, renewing, making all things new. "This is [indeed] what the Kingdom of God looks like."

-Mark

December Family Night

On Wednesday, December 20th, from 3:30-6:30 PM, Harrison Square will be putting on its second "Family Night" outreach to the Daycare families at *Joyful Noise*. Through this important ministry, families will experience firsthand the love of God this Christmas. Our December Family Night will include a special visit from Santa and his helpers, live music, dinner, the Abundance Pantry, and gift giving. We hope you'll join us in being a part of this new ministry at HSPC by being a cook, a socializer, or an Abundance Pantry set up and tear down person. Come join us in spreading God's love this Christmas!

Let Mark McHugh know if you'd like to get involved (markemchugh@gmail.com).

Daycare Benevolence Fund

As you know, for many in our community the Christmas season is a challenging time. This much has become clear to us as needs are increasingly becoming known with folks in our Joyful Noise Daycare. In an effort to bring God's hope and love to our community this season, we're working to establish a Benevolence fund at HSPC to help with needs as they arise. The Benevolence fund will go towards providing scholarships for Daycare families, towards providing Christmas gifts to kids in the daycare, and towards helping to address one-off challenges that families bring up (needs for car seats, strollers, cribs, etc.). For those of you interested in spreading hope to families in our Daycare this Advent, bring a specially marked envelope to church over the course of the next few Sundays and your generosity will go towards this effort. Additionally, if you're interested in supporting the Benevolence Fund with a monthly donation or on an ongoing basis, please be in touch with Barb Stark (b_starkhspc@outlook.com or call 360-669-5050).



Events of Advent 2017



"Deck the Hall" Christmas Decorating Fun

Saturday, December 2, 10:00 am

Bring Christmas goodies! Help decorate the church!

Westminster Bells 30th Anniversary

Christmas Celebration

Sunday, December 10, 7:00 pm at Harrison Square

HSPC Christmas Dinner

Tuesday, December 12, Punch Bowl at 6 pm

*Mark McHugh ~ Christmas Devotional
Christmas Music ~ Singing Carols*

Tickets: \$15.00 per person / \$25 per couple
Available on Sundays in Foyer or Church Office

Sunday, December 24th Christmas Eve
10:00 am Worship & 7:30 pm Candlelight Service

News & Announcements

A Freeway Rest Stop Ministry: Don't blink or you'll miss what the Spirit is up to next at Harrison Square! Weary travelers will be blessed! Daycare families will be blessed! All this because our great Pacific Northwest freeways are unique in the country. While other states let big business rule the rest stops, our DOT partners with non-profits to offer refreshments for donations. We will soon have the opportunity to touch the lives of so very many. And true to the Spirit, yes, you will be blessed too! If you are interested in learning more, come to the meeting after church on December 10th in Room 207 for a ten minute presentation and Q&A session.

Poinsettia Christmas Gifts: To provide a donation in memory or in honor of someone, fill out an envelope provided at the church or mail to Harrison Square Presbyterian Church, 1227 Harrison Avenue, Centralia, WA 98531, or email your information to church@harrisonsquarepc.com. *Proceeds will go toward "Daycare Scholarships."* An insert of those remembered or honored and those providing gifts will be in the Sunday morning worship bulletin on December 24th. Deadline to turn in gifts is Sunday, **Dec. 17**.

Harrison Square Men's Group: *Keith Nicholson* is leading the group that will meet each Wednesday at Judy's Country Kitchen, 3210 Galvin Rd. Stop in between 7-8:00 am (changed, not 6-8) for food and fellowship!

Safe Family Ministries Holiday Fundraiser: Dinner & Live Auction, Sat., Dec. 2, 5:30 pm, at The Aerie Ballroom, 219 S. Tower Ave. Dinner choice of Baron of Beef, Rosemary Baked Chicken, or Vegetarian Eggplant Parmesan. Cost \$30; register and pay at SafeFamilyMinistries.com. Questions, call 360-740-9150.

December 3-10, 2017

Sunday, December 3 First Sunday of Advent

Food Bank Collection - bring non-perishable items and place in the red barrel by the office

9-9:45 am "Getting Involved with God" Class, led by Mark McHugh, Room 207

9:45-9:55 am Men's Advent Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

10:00 am **Worship / Communion / December Birthday & Anniversary Celebration**

10:00 am Infants-5 Years Old, 210 / Kindergarten-5th Grade, 207

Following Worship, Fellowship and **Birthday & Anniversary Cake**, Foyer

11:15 am-12:00 noon Men's Advent Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

11:30 am Deacons Meeting, 207

11:30 am Prayer Group, led by Ron Vernon, 205

1:00 pm Hogar de Fe Worship Service (Hispanic Congregation), at HSPC

4:00 pm **Hogar de Fe Potluck**, HSPC Foyer

Monday, December 4

6:30 pm Session Meeting, 207

Tuesday, December 5

9:15 am Staff Meeting, 205

Wednesday, December 6

7-8:00 am (Changed Time—not 6-8 am) HSPC Men's Group, at Judy's Country Kitchen, 3210 Galvin Rd

7:00 pm **Hogar de Fe** Worship Service, at HSPC

Thursday, December 7

1:00 pm Adult Study & Support Group, 207

Friday, December 8

Church Office Closed

Sunday, December 10 Second Sunday of Advent

9-9:45 am "Getting Involved with God" Class, led by Mark McHugh, Room 207

9:45-9:55 am Men's Advent Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

10:00 am Worship

10:00 am Infants-5 Years Old, 210 / Kindergarten-5th Grade, 207

Following Worship, Freeway Rest Stop Meeting, 207

11:15 am-12:00 noon Men's Advent Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

11:30 am Prayer Group, led by Ron Vernon, 205

1:00 pm Hogar de Fe Worship Service (Hispanic Congregation), at HSPC

7:00 pm **Westminster Bells 30th Anniversary Christmas Concert**, at HSPC

Church & Daycare Phone Numbers - The main number to call is still **360-736-9996**. Direct lines for each office:

360.669.5054 HSPC Reception Desk

360.669.5053 Pastor Ralph Carr

360.789.6585 Mark McHugh (Cell)

360.669.5051 Ginger Peters

360.669.5050 Barbara Stark

360.669.5048 Ron Vernon

A Joyful Noise Daycare Office:

360.669.5049 Daycare Reception Desk

360.669.5052 Shalii Crownover, Daycare Dir.

Church Office Hours: Monday-Thursday from 9am to 2pm. Closed Fridays ~ **Daycare Hours:** 6am-6pm Monday-Friday