



HYDE PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

February 2025 Church Mouse



Dear HPPC Family,

I followed an SUV most of the way into Austin today. It had a giant window sticker of Jesus on its rear window. Jesus was smiling and wearing the crown thorns, his head thrown back almost like he was laughing. Once we reached MoPac this Jesus-clad SUV wanted to get into another lane and when the car in that lane didn't let them in, the driver made certain hand gestures out the window and I could tell they were yelling based on the way their hands and arms were flailing about.

The other day I was online catching up with friends and events and happened upon a bio of a person who had left some hateful comments on a friend's page. Their bio said they were a "God-fearing, Jesus-loving BELIEVER who shined Christ's light into the world". Their harsh and mean comments made my friend cry.

It is not my job (or the job of any of us) to judge the quality of faith for either the driver of the SUV or the person who left harsh words for my friend or for anyone really, but the incongruency of their claims regarding their identity as followers of Christ and the way they are living in the world stopped me in my tracks and made me wonder...

Does who I say I am and how I live my life match up?

This has been on my mind a lot lately as I watch the news and read about the ways things are unfolding in our country. What does it mean to be a Christian? What does it mean to be a follower of Christ? How am I living that out in my daily life and in all of my interactions? I should point out that I know I am not doing it perfectly, but it does seem like an important thing to consider.

My prayers is that we keep considering and keep asking ourselves... does who we say we are and how we live our lives match up?

We are the hands and feet of Christ in this world. We won't get it right every time, but we can certainly keep trying.

May it be so.

Peace,

Emily



Monthly Giving Report



Volunteer Calendar February 2025

Date	Usher	Refreshments	Liturgist	Communion
2	Ross	Ann	Ann	Set Up: Kathryn
9	Ross	Luncheon	Boram	
16	Ross	Anna	Anna	
23	Ross	Elsa	Jack	

Financial Report



It is through the seeds of faith that we grow.

December 2024	
Plate Income:	\$6,053.00
Expenses:	\$9,498.76
Total:	-\$3,445.74



Thriving through Prayer, Service & Generosity.

2024 End of Year Report	
Plate Income:	\$64,395.18
Other Income:	\$15,264.48
Expenses:	\$85,984.11
Total:	-\$6,324.45

Thank you for your generous contributions as we continue to build for our future.

Food Pantry



As you give thanks for God's many blessings, please remember those who are hungry and in need. Your donations are greatly appreciated as we provide groceries to our neighbors. We will be providing an update on the Food Pantry on our website.

Between January 7th and January 28th, 31 people received groceries.



FEBRUARY



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Angela Singavarapu's Birthday
2 HOB Groundhog Day	3	4 Food Pantry World Cancer Day	5	6	7 Send a Card to a Friend Day Nat'l. Wear Red Day	8 Sara Tapsak's Birthday
9 Luncheon Women's Group Super Bowl	10 Karen Laffere's & Martha Richardson's Birthdays	11 Beth Gray's Birthday Food Pantry	12	13	14 Valentine's Day	15
16 Session ASH	17 Keith Alan Geer's Birthday Presidents Day Random Acts of Kindness Day	18 Food Pantry	19	20 Nat'l. Love Your Pet Day World Day of Social Justice	21 Nicolas Zalles' Birthday	22 Alan Constant's Birthday
23	24	25 Food Pantry	26	27	28	



What a great feeling to open your mail and find an unexpected greeting card. Surprise someone you care about with a special note on Send a Card to a Friend Day on **FEBRUARY 7TH!**



Pause to recognize the need for a society free from injustice, poverty, discrimination, and equality of rights on World Day of Social Justice on **FEBRUARY 20TH!**



Our pets bring so much joy to our lives. Show them how much you love and appreciate them on National Love Your Pet Day on **FEBRUARY 20TH!**



January Session Highlights

- Kathryn Roberts met with the group and expressed her desire to join the church. She was welcomed by all.
- Alan gave an update on his work to help fund the food pantry. He has listed our food pantry on Amplify Austin, a website that opens avenues for organizations to receive money. Although giving can begin as early as January 29th, if one waits to donate on March 6th, the funds will be matched. Prizes are also available. He also has made a Facebook page for the food pantry.
- Doris presented the financial report for December and the year 2024. The church received two large donations in December designated for the food pantry.
- Emily will be out on February 23rd as she is leading a Women's Retreat at Westminster Presbyterian Church.
- Emily and her family will be out March 17th -21st for Spring Break.
- The future of the food pantry was discussed at length. It was decided to continue keeping it open weekly with some changes. Those wanting food will be given a list of food available and will only receive what they indicate that they need. No one will be allowed to enter the food pantry area but will be asked to wait in the living room.
- Several ideas were mentioned about ways to fund the food pantry this year including:
 1. Involving the neighborhood;
 2. Taking up money on communion Sundays for the food pantry;
 3. Henry will continue to look into grants; and
 4. Take up an offering on Christmas Eve designated to the food pantry.
- It was decided to drop Mobile Loaves and Fishes from our benevolences as they are very well funded and to replace that with the Food Pantry.
- The budget for 2025 was presented by Henry and approved by the session. It will be presented to the congregation on January 26th.
- Emily has purchased a book for a Lenten book study entitled "Turning Over the Tables: A Lenten Call for Disrupting Power" by Kathy Escobar. More information to follow.
- Esther graciously sent out 13 cards in November and 9 in December.
- Thank you to Bennie and Karen for getting us prepared for the cold weather.
- Karen signed a couple up for a wedding in May.
- Thank you to Juan Manuel and all who sang for the beautiful Cantata.



Valentine's Day Around the World



We are used to celebrating Valentine's Day with cards, candy, and exchanging sweet sentiments with those we love. Countries around the globe celebrate the holiday in different, unique ways (and sometimes on different dates). Below are a few of the fun traditions from around the world.

Columbia and Guatemala: Valentine's Day is called the Day of Love and Friendship. Romance is less of the focus in these countries. Friends give anonymous gifts to one another and residents of Guatemala City have a parade in honor of senior citizens while wearing bright colors and traditional Mayan clothing.



Denmark: Men write *gaekkebrevs*, or "joke letters," similar to anonymous cards from secret admirers. They are funny poems on creatively cut-out pieces of paper signed with dots representing the letters of their name. The recipient tries to guess the author. If she does, the admirer gives her an egg at Easter. If she can't guess correctly, the admirer reveals his identity on Easter.



Philippines: Valentine's goes in a completely different direction. Mayors across the nation perform mass weddings for up to hundreds of couples. They are referred to as the "wedding of the city." Some mayors offer compensation for childbirth for married couples in the future, money to start their new lives together, and financial rewards on milestone anniversary dates.



Italy: Couples don't just exchange boxes of chocolate but give *baci perugina*, which are filled with hazelnut and *baci* means "kisses" in Italian. Every candy has a love note written inside in five languages. Another Italian tradition is that the first man a single woman spots on Valentine's Day will become her husband within a year.



Wales: Valentine's starts early and is celebrated on Dwynwen's Day on January 25th. St. Dwynwen is the patron saint of lovers. Some go to local carving shops on the day to craft love spoons. This tradition dates back to when love-sick Welsh sailors carved designs into their spoons to give to their loved ones upon returning home.



Japan: Valentine's Day is divided into two days. On February 14th, women give male friends and co-workers *giri-choco*, an obligatory chocolate gift, and *honmei-choco* ("true-feeling chocolate") to those they care about. Men return the favor on March 14th, known as "White Day" with white chocolate and other valuable gifts.





Welcome to the World



HPPC is so excited for the Eyob family as they have welcomed precious Ezra. Below is what Emily shared regarding their newest addition.

Ezra Tesfay Eyob was born in the early morning of January 11th. Weighing a full pound more than his sisters at 8 pounds 7 ounces, he came in happy and healthy. He was named Ezra Tesfay because Ezra means “The Helper” and Tesfay means “My Hope.” We felt that the world could use more helpers and a lot more hope and fully believe he will bring both - at least into our little world. Sisters Charlie and Lia are already in love and have enjoyed having the new addition even if he isn't much of a playmate yet. We are so in love with this little guy and can't wait for everyone at Hyde Park to meet him.





Welcome to the World Cont'd.

