



The Covenant Key

Covenant Presbyterian Church • 1025 - 28th Street, West Des Moines, Iowa 50266

December 2011

Phone: 515.225.2254

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A Note from Music Ministries

December brings extra-special musical offerings for Sunday services. Advent has begun, and Christmas music is on the way!



December 11th is the date set for Covenant's children's program, this year titled: **Christmas Presence: Bring Your Gifts to Him**, which features many well-known carols for congregational singing. Is there anything that says "Christmas" more than the littlest children singing *Away in a Manger*? Definitely a can't-miss event! The next Sunday, December 18th, the Chancel



Choir and Crescendo Bell Choir will present a Christmas Cantata, featuring music both contemporary and traditional. In addition to using hand bells and piano for choral accompaniment, we will be using the "King of Instruments", the organ, to bring our cantata to a joyous close as we celebrate the coming of the Christ child.

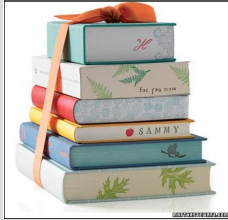
Christmas Eve services have been set for 6 PM on December 24th. And since Christmas falls on a Sunday this year, we will have Sunday worship at our usual 10:30 AM time on Christmas Day.

See you in church!

Julianne Lawrence
Director of Music Ministries



December Book Club



Come one, come all!
Join us for a special
holiday Book Club
on Thursday,
December 1 at 7:00
p.m. in Fellowship
Hall. A special guest
will be joining us!

Alice Meyer, owner of *Beaverdale Books* will be our special guest. She is going to do a book talk, and will also be bringing in some popular books that you can purchase if you are so inclined. There will be 10% discount on books purchased that night. Alice has also offered to give us some book suggestions for those hard-to-buy for book lovers on our Christmas lists.

Holiday refreshments will be served, and we hope you will join us for this fun event - even if you are not a regular Covenant Book Club participant.

The Covenant Key

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Next KEY Deadline:
December 14, 2011

Fellowship News



Christmas Candy Donations Needed: The Children's Christmas Program will take place during the December 11th worship service. Traditionally, we give each child a bag of treats following the service. **If you would like to donate some candy for the treat bags**, place it in the marked container on the table on the east wall in Fellowship Hall. Individually wrapped pieces only, please.

- Betty Ratekin
Fellowship Chair



The first **Thanksgiving Day Potluck** was a big success! Thank you to all who came and so generously shared all of the wonderful food!

Spiritual Uplifting by the Covenant Shepherds

Life is.....

*Life is an opportunity, benefit from it.
Life is beauty, admire it.
Life is bliss, taste it.
Life is a dream, realize it.
Life is a challenge, meet it.
Life is a duty, complete it.
Life is a game, play it.
Life is a promise, fulfill it.
Life is sorrow, overcome it.
Life is a song, sing it.
Life is a struggle, accept it.
Life is a tragedy, confront it.
Life is an adventure, dare it.
Life is luck, make it.
Life is too precious, do not destroy it.
Life is life, fight for it.*

Author: Mother Teresa

Submitted by Susie Thompson,
Covenant Shepherd



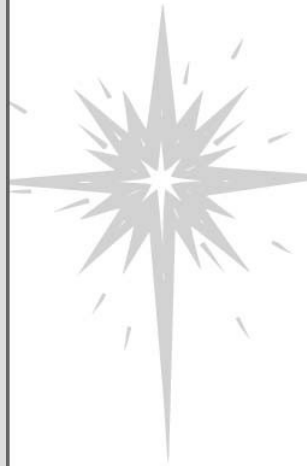
December Ushers & Greeters

12/4	Lee & Judy Cox, Bob & Susie Thompson
12/11	Eleanor Short, Julie Severt, Bob & Marilyn Johnson
12/18	Julie Severt, Norma McLaughlin, Warren Pitcher, Mark Hilliard
12/25	John & Kathie Eft, Marie Michael, tba



Please contact one of the others from the list to switch if you are unable to serve that week.
Notify the church office at 225-2254 of the changes by the Wednesday before for the bulletin.

Good News of **Great Joy**



The Christmas Joy Offering is split evenly between the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and scholarship funds for Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges.

Help us support these faithful servants and students in their hour of great need and hour of great promise. Look for the Christmas Joy Offering envelope, and then please give generously. **Thank You!**



Dear Covenant,

I want to thank everyone for all the cards, phone calls, meal, and the cozy hand knit shawl that has been keeping me warm during my recovery from back surgery. You've made my recovery more enjoyable. Hopefully it won't be long until I'm back ringing bells.

Karen Anderson

Covenant Family!

*A thank-you bouquet
For the special way
You happied up my day!*



I was happy to be on the coffee and kitchen committee for the years I did. Wish I still could.

Thank you very much for the great cup and gift card to Hobby Lobby.

With God's blessings to all.

Love,
Marie Stuber

Reflections on the Holy Ordinary

Seasonal Music



I enjoy the seasonal music all of us know so well, except when it seems we haven't even celebrated Thanksgiving without already having had four *previous* weeks of Christmas music. It is disconcerting to be wandering around a retail establishment on a beautiful, sunny fall day, not shopping for any gifts, and hear sung "weather outside being frightful." I guess I would like to think that music should be time and situation sensitive rather than a trigger to get us into the buying mood.

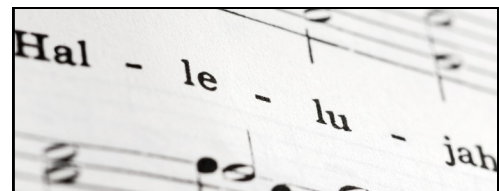
Seasonal music draws from us all sorts of images and memories; one song can make me melancholy about who knows what and another make me want to dance and celebrate. I do wonder what the words to some of the seasonal music mean to those who are struggling financially, uncertain about their future, carrying grief or guilt in not being able to provide for their families as they have in the past. It would seem there could be a

big disconnect between the idyllic and perfect images of Christmas songs with the predicament people find themselves in and that sound speaker overhead in a store is just reinforcing that disconnect. In our culture which celebrates consumption as the elixir to life, people really are harmed when the image of Christmas does not match what is going on in their lives.

As Christians, we are fortunate that our seasonal hymns confirm to us why we celebrate and what Christmas can mean in our lives. The hymnal contains no songs of reindeer, sleigh rides or white winter scenes but hymns of proclamation and hope, trial and triumph, struggle and joy and I would think messages such as these are what people really hunger after.

May the music of our Advent and Christmas season remind you of the greatest gift from all the rest—of a Lord who walks with you. Let's sing with conviction that message!

In Christian love,
Pastor Jan Scott



El Salvador Delegation 2011



The delegation of Teri Springer, Lisa Albers, Weldon and Marie Michael would like to thank the congregation for the support both spiritually and monetarily. We had asked for donations of school supplies, floss for the bracelets and medical supplies. We were able to gift to the San Isidro school board an entire suitcase full of crayons, pencils, books and other supplies. We also were able to provide a gift bag to each family filled with Band-Aids, toothbrushes, toothpaste and pain relief tablets. This gift bag was wonderful, but what was more special were the hand delivered cards that adopted Covenant families sent with pictures and messages of hope and prayer for the San Isidro families. And this poor community in turn gave to us bananas, chickens, limes – all that they had. (unfortunately we could not bring these things back on the plane). Like the widow with the least coin – they gave from the bottom of their heart.

We had a wonderful vacation to a third world country that changed each of our lives for the better. It was a growing experience for each of us. We met lots of wonderful people who happened to be born in different circumstances than we experience here in Des Moines. Yet they live a life of love, laughter, and a feeling of knowing God's love. It's a very difficult life they live to provide even the basics of food and shelter for their families. We hope that each member of Covenant would have the opportunity to experience what we did.

Some may ask 'Why El Salvador'?

It is an established mission within the Des Moines Presbytery of 10 years and more. Covenant is the 9th church within the Presbytery to join in a partnership with a canton in El Salvador. We have a very capable mission co-worker with Kathy Mahler there. She works with a group of 5 El Salvadoran volunteers who are committed to helping the poor in the surrounding cantons of Berlin to make life better for the folks there. They have a joyful, working relationship with the leadership in the cantons. They realize that with just a little bit of money from the U.S., a better life can be had for the people there. The 5 pastoral team members are experienced in ideas to help the cantons and it is to them that we look for guidance for projects that will make a difference in the canton of San Isidro. While there, we looked at their bookkeeping of the money that we had already sent down for fertilizer and beans. Every penny is accounted for and every penny went directly to the people in the canton. There is no overhead or other expenses, which I am sure cannot be said of any other mission project.

Jesus said to 'feed the people'. Let us feel confident as a church that we are making a difference with the money we send to San Isidro. And the added benefit is personally seeing with our own eyes how it helps each and every family with which we partner.

~ Marie Michael
Mission & Action

Covenant Connections

Wednesday Night Dinner Help Needed

Many thanks to all of the cooks and helpers who have provided delicious meals for us this fall. We are booked through December. We need volunteers for January through April 25. Usually three to four people work together on a meal and help is always available for desserts and other needs. In the kitchen, there are booklets with instructions and sample menus with recipes.

If there is a Wednesday that you would be willing to work or if you would just like more information, please call or e-mail. Thank you!

Mary Marshall 225-0473
Judy Cox 225-0675

mjrf.marsahl@gmail.com
leeandjudycox@msn.com



*Caroling, caroling, through the snow,
Christmas bells are ringing!*

Please join us this Sunday afternoon, December 4th, at 2 pm for Christmas caroling. Let's make our spirits "merry and bright" as we lift the spirits of others! We'll meet at the office entrance of the church, and maps will be provided. If you have a van or larger car, we would love to have you drive, so that we can take as few vehicles as possible. See you Sunday!

~ Julianne Lawrence
Director of Music Ministries

P.S. Don't forget, we'll warm up afterwards with Kevin Littleton's special hot cocoa and marshmallows in Fellowship Hall!

Head Start Needs Gently Used Children's Boots

As part of our seven year partnership with Head Start, Covenant has helped Head Start develop and maintain a supply of extra gloves, hats, scarves, jackets, snow pants and boots for use by students during daily playground opportunities. This year, an additional 6 pair of children's boots, size 11 or 12, are needed to build up Head Start's winter clothing reserve.

If you can donate gently used boots or can find a "great deal" on new boots, please contact Marilyn Johnson, Head Start classroom volunteer, at 278-2585 or marbob10505@aol.com. Thanks to Covenant for continuing support of the 50 toddlers and preschoolers served by Head Start's Ashworth program.

COG Shopping Trip

The chaperone list has been sent in to WDM Human Services for the COG shopping trip on December 10, 2011. Those of you signed up will receive notification of your arrival time and bus schedule sometime before the shopping trip. Thank you for volunteering your time to take these children shopping and thanks for the financial support as well.

~ Deb Hayes & Karen Anderson



“YES, I Can Do That!”

Calling all Outstanding 2012 Pledges

The 2012 Stewardship Campaign wrapped up with the dedication of 2012 pledges on Sunday, November 6, 2011.

As of November 14, 2011, there were still 58 outstanding pledges out of 140 families/pledging units. The 58 represents 42% of our congregation that have not pledged.

I realize that some members prefer to not pledge but do contribute their church offerings on a regular basis. Those offerings are a very important part of the funds that are required to pay for the variety of activities and expenses associated with the operation of Covenant Presbyterian Church.

If you do plan on pledging for 2012, please return your pledge form to the church office or give it to Warren Pitcher.

If you have misplaced your pledge packet, contact Warren (225-3802) or the church office (225-2254) and a packet will be mailed to you.

Thanks for returning your 2012 pledge form.

Warren Pitcher
Stewardship Elder



Covenant Connection: Adult Forum – Winter/Spring 2012

January

Social justice is defined as “an interactive process whereby members of a community are concerned for the equality and rights of all”. The theme for the month of January will be “Social Justice for Children” in which we will address three social issues involving children especially in our area.

1/11 Social Justice for Children “Hunger”

Backpack Buddies is a program of the Food Bank of Iowa that provides a sack of child-friendly food to low-income kids on weekends, when they do not have access to the federal free and reduced-price school breakfast and lunch programs. Coordinator, Sarah Bonefas, will speak about the issue of childhood hunger in our area and how the Back Pack Buddy program is being used, with special attention to the program at Fairmeadows Elementary school here in West Des Moines.

1/18 Social Justice for Children “Homelessness”

Resource Coordinator for the Iowa Homeless Youth Centers, Jim McWeeny will speak about youth homelessness in our area and the services that are provided by Youth & Shelter Services, Inc. here in Iowa. Author of The “Reggie’s Place” and shelter volunteer, Colleen Mullen will be working with the Kids On A Mission program about the topic of homelessness.

1/25 Social Justice for Children “Medical Attention”

What are the basics that children need, food, shelter, and clothing? How might children suffer if one or more of these basic needs were not met? One’s everyday living conditions can greatly affect their health. What about preventative measures? What we assume as standard are sometimes luxuries or just not an option for others. Hear what local medical professional have to say is happening in our schools for these children.

February

In February, three congregational members will share their own personal faith journey through different aspects and/or events in their life thus far. Join them for an insight to their life and a personal sharing of their faith.

2/1 My Faith Journey with My Family Latsamy Hilliard

Leaving one life to start another takes incredible amount of courage and faith, but what if your faith is small or new, just starting to grow? Latsamy Hilliard will share her personal faith journey as she and her family traveled from their native country of Laos to the United States.

2/8 My Faith Journey with My Church Dave Hamilton

In May 2007, a single shooter began an attack on the town of Moscow, Idaho which started at the courthouse and ended in the First Presbyterian Church, leaving 3 dead and more injured. Hear how, then congregational member, Dave Hamilton and his fellow members of the First Presbyterian Church of Moscow dealt with the tragedy in their town that ended in their church with one of their own as a fallen victim.

2/15 My Faith Journey in My Profession Stacey Neu

Stacey Neu shares her unique faith journey as a medical professional. How her faith influences her, how she relies on and uses her faith in her profession and the fine balance between personal belief and professional practice.

2/22 Ash Wednesday – *Service Only* *No Meal or Regular Program*



Covenant Connection: Adult Forum – Winter/Spring 2012

4-Week Lenten Series

Wednesday's Word on Sunday's Sermon: "King David"

Pastor Jan Scott will present a 5-Sunday series on King David during the Lenten season (February 26-March 25). Join us for Adult Forum each Wednesday evening during Covenant Connection for a reflective discussion on the previous Sunday's King David topic. Each discussion group will be lead by a different lay person from the congregation with sermon notes and guidance provided by Pastor Scott.

** There will be no Covenant Connection March 21 due to Spring Break.*

2/29 Lenten Series Part 1:
Title & leader announced in February Key

March

3/7 Lenten Series Part 2:
Title & leader announced in February Key

3/14 Lenten Series Part 3:
Title & leader announced in February Key

3/21 Spring Break
No Meal or Regular Program

3/28 Lenten Series Part 4:
Title & leader announced in February Key

April

4/4 Holy Week

No Meal or Regular Program

4/11 TBD

4/18 TBD

4/25 Yard Party!!

Join us for a potluck starting at 5:30 and then fun and games in the yard (rainout option will to move indoors). Croquet, Bocce Ball, bags, bounce houses, and a whole lot of fun, Fun, FUN! Please join your Covenant Family as we celebrate the close to another wonderful Wednesday night program year.



Note:

Adult Forum will begin at 6:30PM each Wednesday, following the meal. Most classes will be held in the North classroom. Any changes to this original schedule will be posted on the bulletin board in the west hallway, in Covenant Corner, and in the Key when available. Other notifications will be made on Sunday morning and/or Wednesday evening during announcements. A sign-up sheet will be placed on the west hallway bulletin board for interested participants to indicate their intended participation. This will help that staff and speakers to better prepare their setting and materials. If you have any questions, please contact Renae Woodworth, Director of Christian Education, at 515-556-7086 or email rwoodworth@wdmcovenant.org.

For a vertical version of the online Covenant Calendar, go to:

<http://www.wdmcovenant.org/covenantcalendar.html>



December 2011 Covenant Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Personal Product Collection: Shampoo	Coins for Concern: Joy Offering			1 10:00 am Al-Anon 7:00 pm Holiday Book Club	2 7:00 pm AA Mtg	3 9:00 am to 2:00 pm Pampered Chef in Fellowship Hall
4 2nd Sunday of Advent 9:00 am Nursery 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship w/ Communion & New Members 11:30 am Shepherds 2:00 pm Caroling 5:00 pm Choir Party 7:00 pm AA	5 6:45 am Men's Breakfast 9:15 am Staff Meeting 7:00 pm G12 Mtg	6 4:00 pm Iowa Youth Chorus	7 10:00 am Head Start Socialization 10:00 am Coffee 10:30 am Ladies Who Lunch 5:30 Meal - Potato Bar 6:15 Program Rehearsal 6:30 CE Classes 7:30 Chancel & Bell Choirs	8 10:00 am Al-Anon	9 7:00 pm AA Mtg	10 COG Shopping Day
11 3rd Sunday of Advent 9:00 am Nursery 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship w/ Children's Program 6:30 pm Session Mtg. 7:00 pm AA	12 9:15 am Staff Meeting 7:00 pm G12 Mtg	13 10:00 am Morning Circle 4:00 pm Iowa Youth Chorus 7:00 pm Evening Circle	14 KEY Deadline 10:00 am Coffee 5:30 Meal - tba 6:30 Churchwide Christmas Party 7:30 Chancel & Bell Choirs	15 10:00 am Al-Anon	16 7:00 pm AA Mtg	17
18 4th Sunday of Advent Food Pantry Sunday 9:00 am Nursery 9:15 am Sunday School (adults only) 10:30 am Christmas Cantata 7:00 pm AA	19 9:15 am Staff Meeting 5:30 pm Head Start Socializations 7:00 pm G12 Mtg	20 4:00 pm Iowa Youth Chorus	21 10:00 am Coffee 11:00 am Shawl Ministry No CE programming - Christmas Break 7:30 pm Chancel Choir	22 10:00 am Al-Anon	23 7:00 pm AA Mtg	24 6:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service w/ nursery
25 Christmas Day 10:30 am Worship 7:00 pm AA	26 Office Closed 7:00 G12 Meeting	27	28 10:00 am Coffee No programming - Christmas Break	29 10:00 am Al-Anon	30 7:00 pm AA Mtg	31 New Year's Eve

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We're on the Web!
www.wdmcovenant.org



Mission & Action

December Personal Product Collection - Deodorant

For December we are collecting deodorant for the DMARC personal product collection. Items may be placed on the lower shelves of the Food Pantry cart in the Narthex. Your donations will be given to CROSS Ministries and WDM Human Services (an official DMARC Personal Product Pantry. We'll be collecting bar soap in January so stock up when items are on sale. Thank you for your donations!

Covenant International Gift Market

Open through Advent in Fellowship Hall

Browse through items from El Salvador brought back by the last delegation – scarves, toys, bracelets, nativity items etc. Proceeds will fund the San Isidro youth sewing project. Gift cards are also available to purchase for blankets for families in San Isidro. And as always - El Salvador coffee. A portion of proceeds from every bag goes to the pastoral team for their mission work in the Berlin cantons.

Covenant Caring Tree:

Covenant is once again sponsoring three families through the West Des Moines Human Services. We would like to provide each family member with a fun item or toy and a new article of clothing. In addition each family will receive gift cards to Wal-Mart or grocery store to provide their Christmas meal. Gifts are to be wrapped with the gift tag on the outside, so we can keep track of the gifts as they come in and get to the appropriate family. Place them under the Christmas tree in the sanctuary. Thanks for the caring love of Covenant members to those less fortunate.

