



The Covenant Key

Reflections on the Holy Ordinary

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“Change’ and Leadership”

Last month, I mentioned about the Audio/Visual Task Force and the Communications Task Force which have begun evaluation and planning for changes at Covenant and this month I wanted to explain further some work which the Session is undertaking.

We have been blessed by the leadership of elders, but some of them are going off the Session; we will be further blessed by the adding of those newly elected leaders who will guide the mission and ministry in the years ahead. During the training of the newly elected elders coming on the Session, attention is given for the full integration of these new elders into the Session conversations which have been underway the last two years. What conversations have been going on?

If you recall from the pastor’s report in the Annual Report, the Session has been undertaking *discernment* work as the model for healthy engagement of ideas. The discernment model as a model to use in guiding a governing body in making decisions originating from 2006 when the General Assembly directed churches and judicatories to explore this method of governing and decision making. Then at the 2008 General Assembly in San Jose, the model was put in place in a GA committee and embraced by the newly elected Moderator, Bruce Reyes-

Chow, as he led the GA in its business. Currently the use of discernment has been applied in one church in the Presbytery of Des Moines to bring them through what could have been a destructive situation and two other churches are studying the possibility of using discernment as a tool to get them through some decisions before them.

Long in use by the Presbyterian Church of Australia and the Presbyterian Church of Canada, *discernment practices are used to empower decision making and reduce destructive incidents of disagreement*. Discernment does not replace decision making or vote taking, but is to provide the environment for positive outcomes from potentially negative situations. Discernment will not prevent disagreements, but may reduce the damage which can be done when two parties have differing beliefs or desires. The polity offer in the Book of Order will continue to guide the governing, but discernment will bring forth the tone and temperament of governing.

Why is this needed? Because “change” which a church may be attempting is never a neutral event; it brings with it negative and positive connotations and is hardly ever without some effect on a congregation. Therefore the work required *before* a change is decided or even endorsed by a Session and its congregation is where much of the preliminary effort is undertaken. Discernment is then that practice, that prelude, needed for healthy change and decision making.

Where is this discernment happening? In the monthly Session meeting, the main focus of the meeting is some-

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Special points of interest:

- April Calendar Page 6
- El Salvador Coffee Pg. 3
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Keep these
friends in your
prayers

John Muggé

Debra Scott & family

Edith Harris, Hal Harris' mother

Wefel Warner, friend of Pastor Jan

C A R I N G C O R N E R



"To be a Caregiver is to be the Hands of God"

A hunter set traps to catch animals so he can sell their pelts. When his son was old enough, he took him out to teach him how to trap. It was not long until he began having trouble catching any animals. One day, after setting the traps, he saw his son go out into the woods, so he followed him. The boy went from trap to trap, springing those which were empty, and freeing the animals from those which had done their job. The father stepped into view of his son and asked him why he was doing such a thing. The boy responded that he couldn't stand to think of the creatures being killed so he was setting them free. The father ceased taking his son with him, but he never forgot the sympathy and compassion his son displayed.

Sinners are caught in traps of their own design, but they are deadly nonetheless. As Christians we have an obligation to do everything we can to free them from their traps, and save them from certain destruction. If we will endeavor to bring the truth of Christ to those who desperately need it, God will find favor with us and He will bless us all the days of this life, and the next.

From: *Wisdom From The Bible, Daily Thoughts From the Proverbs*

Submitted by Jack Brown, Shepherd

USHERS



- April 4th - Clarice Sapp, Mark Hilliard,
Jim & Barb Woodworth
- April 11th - Jerry & Jean Caster,
Bob & Joan Anthony
- April 18th - Bev Countryman, Tanis Mueller,
Mary Kay Barker, Norma McLaughlin
- April 25th - Tom Brown, Deb Hayes,
John & Kathy Eft



El Salvador coffee

Please sign up on the sheet on the narthex bulletin board or contact me to order great El Salvador coffee. This project directly supports our sister parish in Berlin, El Salvador. It's great coffee for a great price. Everytime you drink a cup you know you are giving funds for medicines, water, schools and general wellness of this very poor community. It's not just a cup of coffee, but "A JUST Cup of Coffee"

Marie Michael 334-8003



I would like to thank our Covenant friends for their expressions of sympathy on the death of my sister.

- Beth Miller

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL BLOOD DRIVE

Once again, members of Covenant Presbyterian Church came to the Fellowship Hall and rolled up their sleeves to donate their precious blood!

Covenant Presbyterian Church sponsors blood drives twice a year – in February and August. The goal is to have 30 donors appear on the day of the blood drive. On February 8th, twenty-four (24) donors arrived at the church between 2:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. on a snowy Monday afternoon.

Two were first time donors at Covenant's blood drive; two walked in; one donated Double Red Cells (which counts for 2 units of blood) and 21 donated one unit of whole blood for a total of 23 units collected. Two (2) potential donors were deferred for various reasons such as having a slight temperature or iron count too low. Two (2) potential donors cancelled due to poor health or bad driving conditions.

It seems that we always have some donors deferred on the day of the blood drive. It is necessary since the Blood Center of Iowa has rigid guidelines to guarantee the quality and safety of the blood supply. We are fortunate to have a safe supply of blood available at all times here in Central Iowa due to the faithful donors who take the time

to donate their life saving blood.

The following individuals came to the blood drive to donate: Larry Lowe, Beth Miller, Tom Brown, Rick Storzjohann, Jan Scott, Sam and Larry Streiffeler, Russ Marshall, Bob and Marilynn Johnson, Lisa Albers, Jerry Caster, Dodie Jabour, Wayne Nikolish, Terri Springer, Lee Cox, Chuck Hart, Tamara and John Sprole, Hannah Wolf, Kent, Marilee and Ryan Myers and Warren Pitcher.

Margaret Milroy helped with publicity and bulletin inserts; Gary Van Verth helped with the set up and the take down of the tables and chairs; Beth and Gordon Miller helped unload the Blood Center truck, set up equipment and staffed the Canteen area; Claudia Pitcher helped make phone calls to donors.

The Blood Center of Iowa staff are always very pleased to come to Covenant for the semi-annual blood drive. I want to share their praise with all of the donors who may not realize how important their contributions are to the Blood Center and their continual need to acquire vast quantities of blood every week. Many blood drives were cancelled this winter due to snow.

In addition to the "thanks" from the Blood Center, I also want to thank the donors on behalf of all of the patients and their families who also appreciate your blood donation and the time you were willing to spend during your busy day to complete the donation process.

As you know, there is NO substitute for human blood!! We need donors to provide 100% of the needed blood until a safe blood substitute is developed.

See you in August 2010!!

Warren (O+) Pitcher



April Personal Product Collection – Baby Wipes and Baby Powder

In April we're collecting baby wipes and baby powder, for the DMARC personal product collection. Place your donations on the lower shelves of the Food Pantry cart in the Narthex. Your donations will be given to CROSS Ministries or WDM Human Services (an official DMARC Personal Product Pantry.) We'll be collecting feminine hygiene products in May.

Thank you for your donations of toilet paper, toothpaste and other toiletry items this winter.



Church Facility

The Property Committee has been working on a number of issues over the last few months.

New Furnaces:

The brutal winter took its toll on 2 of our furnaces

serving the North end of the Church. As we dealt with these problems, it was decided that we should look at the other Carrier Furnaces, which were approaching 20 years old.

Working with Schaal Heating & Cooling, we were able to replace the 8 existing Carrier Furnaces. Schaal provides us with a competitive bid. Carrier provided a \$1,000 per furnace trade in credit because of a defective part. Energy rebates were received through Mid American Energy. Head Start contributed \$2,500 toward the cost of the 2 Furnaces heating the Head Start Classrooms. The Head Start Furnaces were equipped with special variable speed fans, which are intended to help reduce radon levels.

As a result of the above factors, we were able to install 8 new Carrier Furnaces at a cost of slightly less than \$1,000 per furnace.

Building Use Guidelines and Policies:

Building use Guidelines and Policies have been developed and formalized. Three Guidelines and Policies do not apply to Weddings and Funerals, which are covered by other documents. The intent of these Guidelines and Policies is to provide an orderly means by which we can determine whether or not the requested use of our building is compatible with our Mission and stewardship of our Building.

The Guidelines and Policies have been approved by the Session. If you have a situation where you are considering using the Church Building, please obtain a packet of materials from Margaret Milroy, Office Coordinator. Applications for use of the Building will be reviewed for approval by the Property Committee.



New Keys and Locks:

It appears that we have, over the years, lost control of the persons who have keys to the church. It has been decided that we should re-key the locks and reissue keys. Re-keying is a common practice for organizations and the last time it was done at Covenant was in 1990. This proposal has been approved by the Session and will be implemented in April.

Specific information regarding the new key policy will be communicated to you in advance of the change in locks.

The Winter:

No recap of recent Property Committee activities would be complete without recognizing the Herculean efforts of many to keep our walks and driveway clear of snow and ice. Al Severt, Bob Anthony, Mike Scott and Jerry Caster have handled enough snow this year to last a long time. Lee Cox has cleaned our driveway again and again and again Without these volunteer efforts, we would be trying to cover thousands of dollars in snow removal in our already tight budget.

- Property Committee

Notice something new in the Sanctuary?

Julianne Lawrence our Director of Music Ministries inquired about the possibility of replacing the old digital piano in the sanctuary. It was over 20 years old, had numerous repairs and limited what she could do with our service music. She recommended it be moved to the old sanctuary where the children practice music on Wednesday evening.

After some research a Yamaha CLP430 Digital Piano has been purchased and installed in the sanctuary. This will allow Julianne to prerecord music for service and connect other musical technology to the piano.

The new digital piano was purchased for under \$2,500 and was paid for out of the Memorial Fund.

STATED SESSION MEETING

February 14, 2010

6:30 p.m.

Clerk's Report: Motion carried to approve minutes from January 10, 2010 Stated Session Meeting. Motion carried to approve minutes from Annual Congregational Meeting on January 31 with the understanding that the congregation will approve them in 2011. Communion was served to 90 on 2/7/10.

Mary Kay Barker had written report on Presbytery meeting in Atlantic on January 16th. The main business was the passing of the 2010 budget which included a sizeable deficit (approx \$20,000). The 2009 budget was changed twice because of less than expected income. The motion for acceptance was NOT passed and the budget committee was told to come back with a realistic budget. A proposal was passed with several steps the budget committee needs to look at. Motion passed that the 2009 budget appropriations be continued to pay personnel, office expenses, etc. until 2010 budget is passed. Two overtures were passed: first one provided pastor and sessions flexibility in making decisions about marriages and second one was that all of us as ordained deacons, elders and ministers of the Word are sinners in need of God's grace and that we are called to live in faithful obedience to Jesus Christ, the head of the Church. (removing the requirement to live in fidelity within the covenant of a marriage between a man and a woman, or in chastity in singleness). These overtures will go to General Assembly and then to Presbyteries to be voted upon. Roberta Victor gave Cross Ministries annual report. Sharpsburg Presbyterian Church held their last service in December. The future sale of Knox Presbyterian Church will help the Cottage Grove Presbyterian Church with its purchase of a new boiler.

Director of Christian Education: Renae's written report listed dates and topics for Adult Forum on Wednesday nights:

3/3 Mission Fair-Mission and Action

3/10 or 3/24: Life until the end of life-Hospice

3/10 or 3/24: Grief and Grieving –Grief Counselor

4/7: Charitable Giving

4/14: Volunteerism

4/21 and 4/28: Pastoral Panel-two nights with Jan Scott, Jim Woodworth and possibly Bernie Saylor. (not confirmed)

VBS will be July 25 through July 29 from 6pm to 8pm.

Volunteers are needed for children's Sunday School program.

Mission and Action: Proportioned quarterly donations were made:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Hope Ministries, Family Shelter | \$1900 |
| General Assembly, Synod, Presbytery | \$1900 |
| Cross Ministries | \$1000 |
| Des Moines Area Religious Council | \$1000 |
| Barb Brown (Campus Crusade-Egypt) | \$500 |

Involvement and Outreach: Shepherds labeled Valentine Day treats and handed them out on the 14th. A calling tree will be set up by shepherds to notify the congregation of any church activities cancelled. Fellowship reported the following activities and dates:

2/28: Potluck and game day

3/27: Easter Party and Egg Hunt

4/18: Birthday potluck

5/15: Progressive Dinner

May or June: Graduates Recognition

7/11: Brunch Potluck

9/12: Covenant Sunday

10/9: Mystery Dinner

Holy Conversations: Mission and Action brought a case study to discuss the Vertical Development of Ministry. There was much discussion on this and the direction Covenant needs/wants to go. We will continue discussions at future meetings.

Business Before the Session

Worship and Music: A request for funds to purchase Yamaha Digital Piano for the sanctuary for \$2495.00 from Critchett's was brought forward. Motion carried to approve use of Capital Funds if Memorial Committee does not approve funds from their monies. Dawn Grandia will write proposal and present it to the Memorial Committee. Motion carried to approve Communion by Intinction on Maundy Thursday, April 1st.

Property Committee: Motion carried to approve Facility Use Policy as corrected and modified.

Motion carried to hold Congregational Meeting on Sunday, March 14th to elect elders.

Motion to adjourn carried and we closed in prayer 8:00 pm.

Barb Storjohann, Clerk of Session

Thanks for Souls 4 Soul Shoe Donations

Many thanks to Covenant members & friends who **donated 110 pairs of used & new shoes** for a local "Soles 4 Souls" collection project organized by Ross & Dory Johnson and their children Collin, Emily & Gavin. Ross' parents, Bob & Marilyn Johnson, supported the project by informally collecting shoes from Covenant. Additional thanks to Covenant member, Joan Anthony, who recruited **Montessori Children's House** to join in the project by collecting **229 pairs of shoes**.

The grand total of shoes collected by churches, schools & offices recruited by the Johnson family was **2,275 pairs!!** On Saturday, March 6, shoes were boxed & delivered to the West Des Moines Hy-Vee store across from Valley West Mall for shipment to a regional collection & processing warehouse in Sheldon, IA. Hy-Vee has a store in Sheldon & donated free shipping to support this community project. These shoes were collected as part of a regional **"Soles for Souls" project to collect shoes for shipment to Haiti**. The Johnson family project originated out of support for their extended family living in the Dominican Republic and a desire to help neighboring Haiti earthquake survivors rebuild their lives. Updated information of the current status of the project will be posted on the Mission bulletin board in the narthex. In addition, check the website www.soles4souls.org for more information.
Bob & Marilyn Johnson

(Continued from Page 1)

thing called "Holy Conversations" where elders explore spiritual and theological ideas and consider long-range practical applications of it. This is a time of engagement and conversation about what your elders believe are important matters before the life of Covenant Church.

The blessing and benefit which we have as Presbyterians is this remarkable event of lay leadership where some are called out of a congregation (not over a congregation) to guide a church in its direction and future. Having first been ordained an elder before being ordained to Word and Sacrament, I place in very high regard the ability of lay leaders to guide their congregation into the changes necessary to remain a vibrant witness to their Lord. Discernment will serve a ready and useful tool for the planning currently underway and the desires about the future of Covenant Church. As life around us changes, Covenant will be well positioned to address and respond to new commands of loving God and loving neighbor.

In Christian love, Jan Scott

April Coins for Concern will go to **Calvin Community Good Samaritan Fund**. The Good Samaritan Fund was established to help residents meet their financial obligations. With the rising cost of health care, there are an increasing number of residents who have used up their finances and need monetary assistance. We urge you to consider a financial gift to Calvin's Good Samaritan Fund which will be used immediately to assist a resident who is in need. Every dollar we receive delivers care within Calvin; your gift to Calvin creates lasting improvements to the home we provide for our residents and extends our care to residents. Tax-deductible donations from residents, families, churches and friends of Calvin Community have been a blessing to many residents and families.



Preparing Communion

The 1st Sunday of each month we enjoy the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as a part of our worship service. I look forward to this event as a special time of worship. As we share

the bread and the cup, we can reflect on that Last Supper, especially at this Easter Season.

Over the past year, I have assisted Marlene, Worship and Music Elder, in the monthly preparation of Communion.

I have found this to be an especially fulfilling task. As I fill the cups and cut the bread, my mind frequently turns to the upcoming Communion event.

I find this as a time for me to talk with Jesus (Prayer).

I think about the special people of Covenant with whom I will share the cup and the bread on Sunday. I think of those for whom we are currently offering prayers because of difficulties they are confronting. I reflect on how I might become a person more worthy of God's everlasting grace.

I am not looking to get rid of this job. I will joyfully prepare Communion for another 2 years.

I did, however, want to let you know of this opportunity to be a special part of the Communion experience. You do not have to be an Elder to prepare Communion. It takes about 1 hour. Training will be provided. You can do it once or as many times as you wish. What a great way for our new Members to become a part of the Covenant Worship experience. What a wonderful family experience to share with your children.

If you want to enjoy the rewards of this task, let Marlene know by phone (278-0239), E Mail (mjhuettl@aol.com), or drop a note in her Elder slot in the Volunteer Office.

Bob Huettl, Deputy Communion Preparer



We extend our sympathy to Debra Scott and family on the passing of Debra's husband, Roger Scott. You are in our prayers and thoughts.

Thank You

We would like to take some time to thank everybody for their well wishes on the births of our children Drew and Mia. We also want to thank the women of Covenant Presbyterian for the wonderful prayer blankets that were presented to our children. We are very thankful that we belong to such a great congregation as we have here with Covenant. It sometimes gets lost in the translation of daily life, but we just felt like we needed to thank all of those around us who have given well wishes and gifts to us.

Thank you, Dave and Kelli Deines

DMARC (Des Moines Area Religious Council) Delegate Report

As Covenant's delegate to DMARC I attended the Winter Assembly, Tuesday, March 9th at St. George Greek Orthodox Church. I thought I'd pass on some of the points discussed during the Assembly:

1. The DMARC Food Pantry will be making a gradual transition to a more health food distribution in the coming months. There will be more information sent out as this transition progresses.

2. DMARC is in discussions with a local congregation about managing a good pantry 2 nights per week and on the weekends. This will be a huge help to those who work and can't get to the Pantry during the daytime.

3. The Food Pantry is also transitioning to 'shelf stable' milk. This will allow the milk given to last longer for the Pantry and the families the milk is given to.

4. As always the Food Pantry can use help distributing food at the Pantry.

5. There were 7,719 single visits to the Food Pantry during 2008. That number climbed to 11,661 single visits during 2009.

The average per member giving by Covenant in 2009 was \$68.24. The average per member for DMARC member congregations was \$7.29 for 2009. Congratulations to all for the support in this area of our Mission giving.

After the Assembly, Father Basil Hickman gave a tour of the Sanctuary for those interested. A very interesting tour and many questions were asked and answered by Father Basil.

Please contact me with any questions you may have regarding DMARC.

~ John Eft

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday Morning
Coffee



10:00 AM
Great Fellowship!!!

Food Pantry Sunday - April 18th
Don't forget your nonperishable items.

Morning Circle

Our Morning Circle will meet Tuesday, April 13th at 9:15 AM in the W4 classroom. Come, sit back, enjoy a wonderful program, and enjoy the fellowship with one another. Co-hostesses are Fran Seago and Glenna Evans. Ginny Ver Ploeg will do the lesson. Dot North will do the devotions.

CPW [Covenant Presbyterian Women] Board Meeting

We will be meeting April 6 at 5:30PM. We need to put on our thinking caps to start planning our luncheon for August 21st.

Save The Date

Covenant's Annual Golf Outing will be Sunday, July 18th at Terrace Hills Golf Course in Altoona. More details later.



The One Great Hour of Sharing Offering - collected Easter Sunday

Please remember all those who have suffered from the disasters recently and those who will suffer in the future. Our offerings are sent immediately and will be there throughout the recovery. In fact, the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is still active in Cedar Rapids and in Mississippi following the floods. The dollars not only help with immediate necessities but help the survivors establish a new life. Please be generous and remember that through this offering we are sharing with the world in Jesus' name, not in a paternalistic manner but as brothers/sisters in Christ.

Birthday Potluck April 18th

Gather after worship service for an all church Birthday Party. Celebrate YOU and Covenant's charter date. There is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board. Birthday cake will be provided.

April Book Club

The book club will meet at Covenant on Thursday, April 8th at 7 pm. We will be discussing "The Girls From Ames" by Jeffrey Zaslow.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance - Volunteers Needed

Village Managers - to oversee the management and function of a Presbyterian Volunteer Village, including hospitality, administration, logistics, leadership, delegation and group facilitation. **Worksite Assignment Managers** - to schedule work for volunteer teams at sites in need of rebuilding, mucking out or other reconstruction projects. **Facilities Manager Assistants** - to help maintain the Presbyterian Volunteer Villages and other facilities in the Gulf Coast states. PDA will provide housing, transportation for work assignments, tools and travel expenses, and a nominal per diem which covers food and incidentals. For more information and to apply, please visit: www.pcusa.org/pda/response/usa/gulfcoast/volunteer-villages-index.htm

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God Be With You & Yours.

WWW.WDMCOVENANT.ORG

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Due: Wednesday, April 21st by noon

Key will be mailed: April 28th

This will cover: May