

THE COVENANT CONNECTION

Volume XVII No. 4
November 16, 2011

Covenant United Methodist Church

Remember to save your **PINK Yoplait Yogurt labels** for the Susan G. Komen breast cancer research fund. The collection box is on the counter next to the office door. We will send them in before the December 31st deadline.



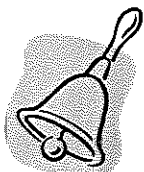
Church Snow Removal -

The snow removal sign up sheet is in the narthex. Please help us keep the sidewalks and walkways clear for everyone using the church.



Holiday Hand Bell Choir Starts!

We ring every Tuesday evening at 7pm starting Nov. 15. We will ring at the 9:30 service on Dec. 18. Your participation is one way to serve Covenant in a BOLD and BEAUTIFUL way.



Ethical Buying Guides

All I Want for Christmas
Can be answered with a very long list.

Sometimes we want new clothes and toys
Reverting back to our days of young girls and boys.

And while a happy image can be conjured of hard-working jolly elves
The reality of STUFF is that it doesn't just affect our personal shelves.

Real people labor, real environments produce materials
Real companies set prices in face of ethics-do we examine these criteria?

This holiday season begins by waiting,
Hope, Joy, Love, and Peace a replacement for exasperating.

So in this time of thoughtfulness and anticipation
Why not make ethical examination a part of your buying participation?

We offer you guides to direct your spending
Toward products worth having and companies worth befriending.

These catalogs aren't a new law; Jesus came for that cause,
But by following His example, we shop better and can even influence
Santa Clause.

The Worship Committee will offer Ethical Buying Guides to the congregation beginning Nov. 20. These guides are a gift from the church. If you want to offer a small donation in appreciation, the committee will use it to offset their costs. Each book is \$5.

If instead of having your own copy of the guide you would like to rent it out for a short while, Karen in the office will have them available. Guides are meant to be helpful to Covenant people and beyond so please share with friends and family.

Hanging of the Greens

Advent begins Sunday, November 27. We are decorating the church with greens and the tree with lights. Come join us before service at 8:30am and be nourished by goodies.



Faith Formation Opportunity

Marty and Jayce Keeling intend to offer an experiential study of the book The Heart of Christianity beginning in January. This study will be presented as a Faith Formation group, and will last for 12 weeks. The group will meet every week, in a home or at church, depending on numbers. Sessions will last approximately 2 hours. We strongly encourage regular attendance.

We are using an excellent guide created by Tim Scorer, and we're excited about the format since it fosters individual in-depth reflection as well as sharing in the group. At each meeting there will be a time for connection, meaningful ritual, and blessing. Each person taking the class will need to have a copy of The Heart of Christianity by Marcus Borg. We will be reading one chapter each week. If you place an order with us, we will purchase the books and have them ready for you.

We need to hear from you if you would like to be part of this group. Please email at razjam@gmail.com or phone us at 466-1027. Once we have a sense of the number participating we will discern, with your input, time and place. It appears quite likely that we will be meeting on Wednesday evenings.

United Methodist Student Day provides scholarships and loans for students attending United Methodist-related and other accredited colleges and universities.

Scholarships and loans funded through United Methodist Student Day prepare leaders for The United Methodist Church and the world. The financial support students receive helps keep them in school and focused on their studies.

Please consider a gift to this special offering on November 27, 2011.



COVENANT
STEWARDSHIP
2011

STEWARDSHIP SEASON

This Sunday will be a time to rejoice and celebrate God's work in our lives and how we have chosen to respond to the call to **"Live & Give Boldly"**. Please attend this special service, wrapping up the Season of Stewardship and celebrating all we have to give. The Stewardship Committee is providing some special treats after worship services and complimentary Covenant Coffee drinks – using the coupon below (which expires this Sunday, so use it or lose it as they say!). A

final skit will be presented with the Stewardship Committee as the cast of *characters!*

If you have not already returned your estimate of giving card, we ask that you do so by this Sunday – either bringing it to service or otherwise to the church office (more cards are available at the Greeters' table if you need them). We really appreciate the time you have taken to be in prayer and ponder the Stewardship messages as they have been presented through the sermons, skits and handouts. We are all blessed by the collective responses to **"Live & Give Boldly"** through the coming year.

Our special thanks goes to those who have shared their time and gifts in the last couple of weeks. Director Brenda Bumann's cast of Ali Bumann, Jilly Greco, Aric Williams and Kendra Sherman were awesome in the *"Price is Slight"* – with the Apostle Paul frustrated by society's desire for material things. William Shockner (played by Mahlon Dirks), was equally frustrated and disappointed in the characters played by Laura Everett, Kirk Foo and Bethany Pyle, all of whom had been rescued by Jesus but didn't seem to appreciate all He had done for them! Thanks Jayce Keeling for directing this impressive group of actors/actresses. The "parade of ministries" also helped us to see some of the great work that goes on at Covenant – all supported by what we give financially, and with our time, efforts and talents. Those of you who boldly came forward in your "costumes" are an inspiration to all of us. A final special thanks to Linda Anderson – who so creatively designed the 2011 Stewardship Logo!

We are a church blessed with an abundance of talents and gifts. It is an amazing journey as the Spirit leads us to share our blessings and grow as disciples for Christ! The Stewardship Committee: The DeFelices, Grays, Greens, Hahns & Shermans



Covenant
Coffee!

COVENANT
STEWARDSHIP 2011

With this coupon, enjoy one free specialty espresso drink (any size/any flavor) as our gift of living and giving boldly!



Covenant Coffee is a program by and for the High School and Junior High youth of Covenant.
Covenant United Methodist Church • 15515 N. Gleneden, Spokane WA
(509) 466-1768 • www.covenantmethodist.org

In our Prayers

Bill & Rena Batt, Jim Thrapp,
Dave Wheat, Gordon & Angelika
Wilson-Wipp.



Prayers of Joy and Celebration

Blake Winston Whorley was born on Oct. 26. He weighed 9 pounds and 2 ounces, and was 20 3/4 inches long. His parents are J.J. & Michelle, he joins 2 year old brother Cole. Proud grandparents are Jack & Pam Whorley.

Staff Christmas love offering

We have a tradition at Covenant of giving a Christmas love offering to our pastor and staff in recognition of the wonderful service they provide throughout the year. Please feel invited to participate and show your appreciation to our pastor and staff by placing a monetary gift in the offering plate during the next few weeks. Please note on your gift that it is for the 'Pastor & Staff Love Offering'. We request that you give your monetary gifts through the Sunday Offering, or through the church office no later than December 19th. Thank you for your support of our wonderful pastor and staff.



Staff Parish Relations Committee:
Barbara Beaton, Diana DeFelice, Mahlon Dirks, Jacquie Hilpert-Belzman, Bob Iller, Gordon Miscoi, Paul Stone & Beth Viren

Poinsettias for Advent

If you would like to purchase a poinsettia plant, in memory or in honor of someone special, please fill out a green form at church and turn it in by Nov. 27.

Plants are \$7 each and can be taken home after the Christmas Eve services.



Adult Education News

Sunday, November 20th

Room 13: 10:45 am

This week Dr. Crossan argues that we need to understand Roman Theology in order to understand Christian theology. The Apostle Paul, the first author of the New Testament, was a Roman citizen and steeped in Roman Theology. Dr. Crossan explores the idea of incarnation in this segment. It is surprising to learn that the concept of incarnation was a significant part of Roman Theology before it became central to the Christian message. The Romans created the notion that Augustus was the human incarnation of the Olympian gods. Augustus, near the end of his life, showed that he understood himself as that divine incarnation. This is revealed to us in The Acts of the Divine Augustus. In the Acts, Augustus recounts the victories he had experienced over his enemies, i.e., the enemies of Rome. He tells of the ways that he was empowered by the gods to become the Emperor and 'The Savior of the World. Don't miss this fascinating presentation.

The DVD format contains about 15 minutes of lecture, and then we will have about 45 minutes of discussion and exploration together.

Ken Cogswell will be the facilitator for this week.

Grab a cup of coffee or tea from the cart in the foyer or from the high school folks in the kitchen and join us in room 13.

PARENT'S NIGHT OUT

When: Saturday, Dec. 10th from 6-9pm

Where: Covenant UMC

Who: 2-12 year olds

How much? FREE. We will accept donations toward the youth program.



Do you need a date night or a few hours to Christmas shop without your kids? The Covenant Youth Group under leadership of Youth Director Bethany Pyle, and Mrs. Canavan will be providing activities for your children on December 10 from 6-9pm. Take advantage of this rare opportunity to spoil yourself during the rush of the holidays, while your kids have a terrific time playing in our safe environment while you are out.

Please sign up! We would like to get an estimate so we can plan accordingly.

From your Pastor's Heart

"Advent... Waiting"

Hello Friends,

The season of Advent has been with us since the fourth century, although it is not a part of the December observance of all denominations and churches. With the mixing of Christmas and Advent during the weeks leading up to Christmas Day, there is often confusion of the two. Advent comes from the Latin word, *adventus*, meaning "coming." It is a season to prepare for the coming of Christ in various meanings: the promised coming of the Messiah to the Jews, the coming of Jesus being born in Bethlehem, the promised return of the risen Christ in final victory, and the continual coming of Christ into the lives and hearts of believers.

Advent is a season rich in tradition, symbolism, art, music, and liturgical practice. It has its own unique themes as well as those that point the way to Christmas. And yet, many churches annually confront the questions of whether or not to sing Christmas carols early in December. The worry is that by doing so, we allow Christmas to intrude on Advent. We lose the richness and the benefit of experiencing the promise, longing, hope, and expectation of Advent. The world, television, and shopping malls have done all they can to convince us that Advent does not matter; it has no place in our culture; and many of us have come to accept that for our church, as well. Our faith teaches us something very different.

We are trying to facilitate a faithful "waiting" throughout Advent without being legalistic about it. We will hopefully help our focus on the true "reason for the season" in worship and many other ways. One specific thing we will do is provide booklets titled, "Better World Shopper" for each individual or family in our midst, with the idea that we can vote with our wallet on companies as they relate to human rights, environmental impact, community involvement, animal protections, and social justice. More information is provided elsewhere in this newsletter, and we hope to begin this Sunday (before Thanksgiving). I pray that we will faithfully participate in the transformation of our whole world.

You are always in my thoughts and prayers...

Peace,

Gregg

Pastor Gregg

Here are the basics of Advent:

Liturgical Context

Advent, which marks the beginning of the liturgical year, is part of the cycle of seasons that includes Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, all related in some fashion to the coming of Jesus. That cycle is followed by Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and the long Pentecost season.

History

Advent began in France in the fourth century. In various times and locations of the church, Advent has been observed for three, four, and six weeks leading to Christmas. Some churches today are experimenting with incorporating Advent themes and symbols in worship during the weeks prior to the actual start of Advent in the hope that they can avoid the conflict of Advent versus Christmas observance during the immediate weeks prior to Christmas.

The color for Advent has traditionally been purple. Some churches have adopted blue for Advent. In practice, however, as churches increasingly incorporate the symbols and decorations of Christmas during Advent, more and more we see red, green, and gold appearing. *The United Methodist Book of Worship* upholds the traditional color of purple for Advent, signifying penitence and royalty; but it also allows blue, the color of hope.

**Charge Conference
Sunday, December 11th
at 1:00pm**

Potluck Lunch at 12:00pm.

Sunday Schedule

Worship9:30am
Sunday School for all ages10:45am
Sunday Night Live Service 5:00pm

Covenant Staff

PastorRev. Gregg Sealey
Church Secretary..... Karen King
Worship Arts/Children's Ministry Coordinator .. Sarah Marken
Pianist.....Laura Everett
Custodian..... Stan Gray
Assistant Custodian Kyle Smith
Youth Director..... Bethany Pyle
Nursery Supervisor..... Marcy Hansen
Preschool Director.....Angie Canavan

Office Hours:

Mon.-Fri 9:30am-3:00pm

"The Covenant Connection" is printed twice a month by Covenant United Methodist Church. **Deadline to turn in articles for the next newsletter is Tuesday, Nov. 29**

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Christmas at Covenant

Christmas Eve Services on Saturday, December 24

5:00pm: Family Service featuring the Covenant Kids and Youth in ***Bedtime Christmas***, a play of Christmas stories. This service is an hour long with refreshments to follow. Childcare will be provided.

8:00pm: Candlelight Service filled with music, meaning and memories. The service will last about an hour. Childcare will be provided.

11:00pm: Candlelight and Communion Service. This service is quiet and contemplative, preparing our hearts to receive the mysterious and miraculous gift of God's Son.

Christmas Day on Sunday December 25

We will celebrate Christmas at 5pm. This is a service of songs, stories, and fellowship to rejoice over Jesus' birthday.

Sunday Morning Coffee Helpers Needed

This is an easy job! Helpers are assigned one Sunday per month. You can choose to make coffee and set up before church (perfect for early birds), or if you prefer, you can serve by doing clean up, washing cups after church.

Call Karen Dashiell, 466-1129, or the church office for more information.

