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Holy Happenings

December 2009

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Join us on Sunday mornings at 8:30 and 11:00 as we await and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

On Sunday, December 13th during both worship services, the Chancel Choir will perform special Christmas music.

On Christmas Eve, we will have 3 services with communion and candlelight: 6:00pm, 8:00pm, and 11:00pm.

Sunday, December 27th we will have only one service at 10:30am, and there will be no Sunday School. Nursery will be available for children through age 5.



Night in Bethlehem

On Sunday, December 6th from 4-6pm, travel back in time with us as we see what Bethlehem was like when Jesus was born. There will be a soup supper following. Bring the whole family and experience life in Bible times!



Breakfast with Santa

Hey kids! Bring your parents and your lists for Santa, and come have pancakes with us! The date is Saturday, December 12th, from 9:00-10:30am. Santa will be here for you to visit with, and to tell that extra special gift you want!

A Time of Change...



Rev. Jay Jackson
Senior Pastor

Welcome to
our new
members

Brian &
Stefany
Marchewka

Vence &
Jennifer
Salvato

I used to be fascinated by a clock at my grandparents' home. It was a small, old fashioned clock that had a pendulum that helped keep the clock wound and operating. I remember staring endlessly as the pendulum swung back and forth signaling the movement of time. In so many ways, the time ticked off much slower then. Days felt longer and things seemed to change much slower.

Today, most people don't even relate to a clock that is not digital. I find that I have to look twice before deciding what time it is on a traditional clock. Days zoom by and the pace of change is so rapid in most aspects of life that we can't even keep up with the ever changing trends and fads. I imagine that old clock at my grandparents' house and think of that swinging pendulum looking like the wings of a hummingbird.

Not all change is bad! Few of us would enjoy worshiping in the heat of the summer without air conditioning. Most of us would prefer to watch color television on big, flat screens with remote controls on cable or satellite, rather than old, black and white sets with hand dials and rabbit ear antennas (can't do that anymore).

We are constantly faced with the challenges of incorporating the new with the traditions of old. We face this in worship, just like we do in the changing environment of families who are increasingly spread out and changing in appearance in so many ways. We no longer find Christianity as the sole expression of faith in our diverse, global community. We also find that the church is now confronted with an increasingly competitive environment. Churches vie for the attention and participation of congregants...with one another and with other entities like sports teams, leisure opportunities, and work demands. The social movement has been toward the more secular and the more competitive environment, just as we have turned to that which is more entertaining and consumer oriented.

The good news, from my point of view, is that I see signs every day of the pendulum swinging in the other direction. People are increasingly seeking that which is authentic and transforming. People are turning to where they can have an impact and serve, rather than simple being pacified or entertained. It is exciting to see people give of their weekends to help those who are hurting, rather than just serve themselves. Folks are going the extra mile to help families with Christmas who fall outside the bounds of community care organizations. Supporting the Heifer Project to help others during this Christmas season, rather than purchasing poinsettias is another sign of change. I pray that we will all embrace that kind of change in our lives and in God's world. I also pray that we will take the time in our chaotic world to experience God and offer faithful worship to God as we share in community with one another. I'll see you on Sunday.

Hurry-Up and Wait

The lines in the stores are long, with hurried people holding their coupons proclaiming a **ONE TIME ONLY** sale opportunity. People flock to purchase the newest and most impressive item on the market for the ones they love most deeply, hoping that this will be the *best sign of love* they could ever offer. Preparations are made, travel itineraries confirmed, gifts purchased, and then what? We wait. We wait for a cold-ish night in December when we finally go to sleep KNOWING that we will wake up to Christmas. This is a luxury.



Rev. Stephanie Lind
Assoc. Pastor

I imagine that there was hurry and anticipation for the ones who waited for Jesus, the Messiah to be born among us. I wonder how our lives would be different if we longed for Jesus as much as we long for stuff or for circumstantial change. This Advent, I am going to practice waiting... not being in a hurry... not rushing to the best part of the story. I invite you to practice with me. As we wait, we work, we play, we worship. We do all this because the one who gives us life is the *best sign of love* we will ever know. Yet, the best sign of love yet to be offered is the promise of Jesus' return, to finally bring about true hope and peace and joy and yes, even true, no-strings-attached love.

More on Missions

Cover Up our Community Coat & Blanket Drive

– Because of your generous donations, we were able to collect 20 blankets and 33 coats during our November drive. These will be distributed in our own Katy community. May the love of Jesus Christ provide the true warmth to those in need.

Operation Christmas Child – Samaritan's Purse Shoebox Collection – Many thanks to the children's Sunday School Classes and those from the congregation who joined in to offer an opportunity to share the Good News of the Savior with a hurting child. Visit www.samaritanspurse.org/occ to find out more about this ministry throughout the world. We were able to collect just shy of 100 boxes!



BINGO – Oh how the children love the game especially as they assisted at the Grace Care Community Center in Katy. On November 1, nine of the third, fourth, and fifth graders from the Sunday School Classes hosted the game of BINGO. A great time was had by all and they look forward to doing this again in the very near future. Thanks to our wonderful children as they show that there is a ministry for all ages.

Angel Tree – Please take a moment to visit Covenant Walk on November 29 & December 6 to assist the Prison Ministry in connecting parents in prison with their children through the delivery of Christmas gifts. These gifts and the Gospel are delivered to the children in the

name of their prisoner-parent. Angel gift tags in denominations of \$1, \$10, & \$20 will be available to help with this powerful way to lovingly answer the biblical call to minister "to the least of these" (Matthew 25:40). The smaller \$1 denomination is available so that children can feel a part of the true spirit of giving. For more information, contact Modelle Brudner @ mod-elle.brudner@sbcglobal.net, 281-497-3361.

Refugee Family from Burundi – Just an update that Adeline, Desire and Stella have started school! Adeline is in high school, Desire, in junior high, and Stella in elementary school. We have been working with them with the alphabet, set up a desk in their bedroom, and am in the process of getting backpacks and school supplies. Leonia, the mom, is ever so grateful for the love of Holy Covenant and thanks us from the bottom of her heart! Eric, who is 20 and the "man of the house", started his first job last week. Please keep him and this family in your prayers as they adjust to school and Eric as he works a job that is challenging from a transportation standpoint. The family hopes to visit us for a night in Bethlehem on Sunday, December 6, so if you see them, please stop by. You can sing Jingle Bells to them and they'll sing along in Swahili!



Covenant Kids Sunday School

December's B.I.G. Theme: The Messiah is Born

December B.I.G. Idea: We believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah.

December's B.I.G. Bible Verse: "You will name him Jesus." Luke 1:31

December 6: The Angel's Message

December 13: Mary Visits Elizabeth

December 20: Journey to Bethlehem



Brendan and a friend enjoying a game of Bingo at Grace Center.

*December 6
A Night in
Bethlehem*

*December 12
Breakfast with
Santa*

PARENTS NIGHT OUT

**SATURDAY,
DECEMBER 12TH**

4 - 8PM

**RESERVATIONS:
JUDY KOEHN
281-391-2052**

Night in Bethlehem

The halls of Holy Covenant will be transformed into an ancient Bethlehem market place on Sunday afternoon December 6. Here families will see, taste, and smell what daily life was like when Jesus was born. There will be shops and activities for kids of all ages - so bring your whole family. We are also anticipating visitors from that time long, long ago when our savior was born.

Join us Sunday, December, 6 from 4-6 p.m.

A soup supper will follow.



Santa is coming to Katy and he is making a stop at Holy Covenant.

Date: Saturday, December 12

Time: Breakfast will be served from 9:00-10:30

Location: Covenant Hall

Don't forget your camera!

CDC News

The children are busily preparing for the Christmas season. They are singing Christmas songs, learning about the birth of Jesus and making special surprises. Our preschoolers will be performing their songs in programs the week of Dec. 7 – 10th. The three year olds will have their programs in the afternoon on Tuesday and Thursday of that week. The four year olds and Transition will perform at 6:30 pm Thursday night. If you're at the church during those times, stop by the sanctuary for a real Christmas treat!

The CDC has chosen once again to work with the Ronald McDonald House for our school mission project this year. As a year round mission project, we're collecting pop tabs from aluminum cans. For the month of November, we collected items for the Ronald McDonald House Santa Store. Families staying at the house can go to the store to shop for Christmas presents. Both adults and children can shop. Proceeds from the CDC book fair this year were used to purchase books that were donated to the store. In addition, we asked our families for new stuffed animals, books, small toys and even gift items for parents to donate to the Santa Store. Thank you to all who helped in this worthwhile project.

DEEPLY ROOTED YOUTH MINISTRIES



CHRISTMAS PARTY: Junior and Senior High youth, we're going to have a Christmas party at the Oglesby's on Dec. 20 (Directions coming soon). We will be having a gift exchange \$5-10 max. and each youth is encouraged to bring a \$5-10 youth cash donation for Heifer International! Guys please bring something salty and Girls bring something sweet. It's going to be a blast!!

UPCOMING EVENTS

12/6: Night in Bethlehem in Covenant Hall 4-6pm

12/13: Study Break MYF in Covenant Hall 5-7pm

12/20: Christmas Party @ the Oglesby's 5-8 pm

CONFIRMATION: Attention parents of youth in grades 6-8 who want their child to participate in Confirmation 2010. There will be an informational meeting in the Sanctuary on Dec. 13 at 9:45. We will begin Confirmation 2010 in January!



What do you get when you combine 200+ pounds of chicken, tuna & ham, 30 dozen croissants, 20 pounds of sliced almonds, 1 large container of ground black pepper, 12 gallons of Miracle Whip, 4 gallons of sliced dill pickles, 350 bags of potato chips, 100 bottles of water, and 375 cans of soda? Add in an array of fabulously fun jewelry and you get...

*A VERY SUCCESSFUL
Deeply Rooted Youth Fundraiser!*

Thanks to the countless hours of service of Holy Covenant's youth, parents, counselors AND friends, more than \$2,300.00 was raised for Summer Missions and the Deeply Rooted Youth Ministry. The combination of volunteers and donations for the Sandwich Shoppe, and Jewelry mixed with the love and support of our Holy Covenant family make it a success.

We would like to thank Bettie Rowell for inviting our Youth back every year to participate in this wonderful event that reaches so many people in this community. Bettie and her team do a remarkable job and Heartwarming Christmas has become a favorite and much-anticipated craft show for this area.

We would like to give a great BIG thank you to HC member Tommy Gooch for his very generous donation of 200 pounds of chicken and 12 gallons of Miracle Whip. A great BIG HUG from all of our youth goes to the following people for working so hard to prepare everything and for volunteering your valuable time: Liz Callahan, Bonnie & Jim Wilkins, Ruth Newhouse, Evie Spanheimer, Sandra, Robert, and Dottie Houghton, Corine Hurst, Susan Kainer, Kerrin Browning, Pat Plesko, Rebecca Walters, David Berger, Cliff & Marty Cheadle, Wayne Douglass, Mary Wilson, Faith Ashmore, Billie Schuler, Dolores Moehl, Suzie Carter, Marsha Long, Suzanne Craig, Jamie Benjamin, and Angie Adams. "Well done, my good and faithful servant." (Matt. 25:23a).

Our sincere appreciation goes to Katy Budget Books for their large order of chicken salad and sandwiches.

And a special thank you to all of the Holy Covenant youth who served at Heartwarming by serving food and drinks, taking and delivering vendor's orders, preparing sandwiches, and selling jewelry. Holy Covenant youth - you are AWESOME and we love you!

In God's Grace,

Sue Berger & Laura Douglass

Prayers and Praises

Births: Jaxson Porter to Will & Jenny Porter; Elliot Bailey to Donald & Erica Bailey; Lou (Trey) Landry to Lou & Lynn Landry; Colton Ward to Dustin & Krystal Ward

Baptisms: Henry Myles Chilton; Elliot Vidor Bailey

Condolences: Teri Dmytrewyz & Family, John Demytrewyz; Mark & Cindy Harrison, Mark's mother; Mark & Jill Frie & Family, Jill's mother, Doris Parker

Thank you Father, for pouring out your blessings on our church. It's like you've opened the roof and poured your spiritual blessings over us. Our pastor's sermons are filled with power. We have seen how prayers for them and for church leaders have touched their lives. Thank you Father for the revival that has begun and for giving us hope in difficult times. Thank you for helping us depend on and trust in you. Thank you for showing us how to love and trust each other and how to reach out to others whose needs are greater than ours. Make us ready, Father, to receive the gift of your Son Jesus Christ who is our Lord and Savior. Amen.

THANK YOU, LIZ!

We say thanks to Liz Mason for being our newsletter coordinator. Liz is taking on a new role in the church, and that leaves the position open. If you are interested in this volunteer position, contact Carol in the church office.

Spotlight on Ministry: Outreach

"Meeting the Needs of People with the Power of Christ" is the stated mission of Holy Covenant. Few groups within our congregation live this mission more fully than the Outreach Ministry. Drawing on the talents and responsiveness of church members, Outreach is the catalyst for our best efforts in serving others.

Three things stand out about the work of this team. The first is the wide range of projects that the ministry addresses. Whether helping with traditional holiday programs like Christmas Child Shoebox or the on-going efforts to feed the area's hungry through KCM food drives, the outreach team serves a diverse constituency of programs and people.

Another awesome trait of Outreach is the direct nature of many of its efforts. It is often possible to support a cause with our goods, services, or cash. While this is beneficial in many cases, the most effective ministry is often when we give of ourselves. Whether tutoring a child or providing respite for a family caregiver, a personal touch or show of support can have a big impact on the lives of others.

The Outreach Ministry is also responsive. We know that needs are often large and unexpected. The hurricane recovery trips have given hope to families that had none. The Pregnancy Help Center serves women with nowhere else to turn. Nothing but Nets combats malaria, the largest killer of children on the African continent. But outreach also includes helping people clear yards after a storm, or fixing a roof in a local home. The beauty of our Outreach Ministry lies in its ability to see a need and address it. The challenge of Outreach Ministry is the amount of need.

If you are interested in learning more about this ministry and the important work they are doing, please contact Nancy Krahel (281.578.7107) or Mike Benjamin (281.599.7102). They are always looking for new team members who can help with 'meeting the needs'.



This is part of an ongoing series that highlights the eight ministry teams that comprise the Council on Ministries at Holy Covenant. By increasing awareness of these teams and the work they do, we want to generate interest and move members to action within these groups. Please contact the ministry team leaders (or the church office) if you would like to be more involved.

Join the YAH for a performance of the classic "A Christmas Carol"



Christmas is on the way and to help celebrate the season, Young at Heart will be headed to the Berry Center for a performance of "A Christmas Carol". Scrooge, Bob Cratchit and all those wonderful Dickens characters will be there for the matinee performance on Saturday, December 19th. Following the show, we will be going to Azzarelli's Restaurant for our annual Christmas Dinner...Italian style! The bus will be leaving the church parking lot at 2:00 pm so be sure and contact Mary Ellis to reserve your seat and your ticket! The price of admission to the performance is \$13.00 and you may make your check payable to Holy Covenant if you prefer. Mary will let you know about deadlines and the like when you call to make your reservation.

If you missed the tour of the Painted Churches in November, you missed a really interesting day. Our guide was a native of the area and provided us with all sorts of "insider" information in addition to a great tour of this part of our state's history.

Come make new friends, renew old acquaintances and join the fun as we celebrate life together!

Thank you for all your help with hanging door hangers. Why stop here? We would like to challenge our congregation to extend your efforts of radical hospitality to our growing community around us and invite someone to church. As the holiday season nears we have the perfect opportunity to share the story of Jesus and enlighten others about the true meaning of Christmas.

God bless you all and Merry Christmas.
Will and Charlotte Shutt, Inviting Team

Spring Wednesday Night Live

The Spring session of WNL will kick off on Wednesday, January 13th.

Classes will include:

Drop-in Bible Study

The Inheritance by Beth Moore

Men Worth Knowing

Holy Land Bible Study

Scrapbooking

Watch the December worship bulletins for more information and registration information.

United Methodist Women

There will be no UMW meeting for the month of December. The next meeting will be in January. We are trying to rotate meetings so that every other month will be a Sunday meeting. The other meetings will be on Monday night. This is an effort to include all women in the meetings. Please stay tuned to the bulletin for the January meeting day and time.

Also, if you are on the internet and would like to get you information about the upcoming events for the UMW you may join the Holy Covenant UMW fan page on Facebook. There will also be a UMW twitter page coming in the near future!

**Holy Covenant United Methodist
Church**

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Rev. Jay Jackson, Senior Pastor
Rev. Stephanie Lind, Associate Pastor

Meeting the Needs of People with the
Power of Christ



Count Me in!

An ingenious Sunday school teacher used an exercise in which she asked her children to write a letter to God. "Tell Him in your letter the one most important thing a Christian should say to God," she said.

When she read the letters to the class, she was amazed that one of the students had written a one-sentence letter: "Dear God, Count me in! Your Friend, Johnny."

That is what our church's members are doing with their commitment cards this fall. They are making a strong and personal spiritual statement: "Dear God, Count me in! Your Friend."

(Stewardship Nuggets by Herb Miller)

A Heartwarming Note of Thanks...

HEARTWARMING CHRISTMAS CRAFT SHOW

2009 was such a wonderful day. We had so many people help and enjoy the day. I cannot begin to tell all of you how very much I appreciate all the help you gave to make this day such a success. All my committee heads: Marla Doehring, Sheila Bradford, Modelle Brudner, Joyce Evans, Cindy Vinson, Jackie Shuman, Alicia Deupree, Kelly Phillips, Laura Douglass & Sue Berger. A special thank you to Hendrix and all the wonderful men who come and work tirelessly to clean out all the Sunday school rooms and tote tables and then put it back together again. To Santa for being his usual jolly self. To all the women, men and youth who come make the day be such a glorious example of what we can do if we work together in His name. We raised over \$8,000 once again to support our local missions. The UMW will disperse these funds after the holidays to places like KCM, PHC, Christ Clinic and more. You are all very special to me and I wish I could name each and every one of you, but please know you are in my heart and I couldn't do it without you...blessings to each of you,

Bettie Rowell