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Holy Happenings

November 2009

Holy Covenant Receives Historic Grant from Texas Annual Conference

Holy Covenant has recently learned that it will receive a \$200,000 grant from the Center for Congregational Excellence of the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. This grant is the largest ever offered by the Conference to an existing United Methodist congregation. The sole purpose of the grant is to specifically support staffing necessary to assist our efforts to expand our ministry and congregation's reach into the lives of the rapidly growing and changing area in which God has placed us. "I'm excited about the confidence the Texas Annual Conference has shown in Holy Covenant through this grant. They, like us, see great potential to grow our ministry here in Katy. So many times in the past we have seen a need to add staff to enable ministry growth but our financial status has not allowed us to follow through. Now, with this grant, we can add the staff needed. Praise the Lord!!" said Bill Bradford, our Lay Leader.

Rev. Jackson, with the unanimous support of our Development Council, developed the **Jump Start** proposal to assist us in getting ahead of the growth heading our way and overcome the financial and resource limitations to develop and support ministry for the expanding area we have the opportunity to reach for Jesus Christ. This jump start enables us to accelerate our ministry development and build upon the strong heritage of faith that has made Holy Covenant a great church for nearly a quarter of a century.

The grant will be spread over three years with Holy Covenant matching the funds from the Conference with \$100,000 over the same period of time. With these

added resources, we will add a full-time music and worship director to our staff and a full-time associate pastor with emphasis on age-level ministries and pastoral care support. We will additionally hire a facilities manager for upkeep of our church facilities and reduction of our maintenance costs, and a part-time administrator focused on communications coordination and inviting/equipping support. Tony Scialo, Staff Parish Relations Chair said, "As far back as I can remember we have talked about how short staffed we have been for a church our size. Our current staff is excellent and has done an outstanding job of going the extra mile in supporting our vision. I am excited that the jump start program has not only solidified the faith the conference has in us but will accelerate the opportunity to provide those key positions that will expand our mission of bringing people to Christ."

The Annual Conference has seen the great strides we have made to free resources for expanded ministry, strengthen our financial condition, and reduce our indebtedness through Stepping Forward in Faith and other faithful initiatives. They were able to see the opportunity ahead based upon the expanding neighborhoods and increased accessibility due to road infrastructure changes planned for our area. They also recognize the dedication this congregation has to reach this expanded area and meet the needs of those people who are unchurched in our area. As Jim Wilkins, Council on Ministries Chair, put it, "The Jump Start initiative will provide our church an opportunity to focus specific resources towards new and exciting ministry opportunities. Jump Start will help HCUMC in responding to God's calling to be creative and visionary in reaching out and serving others."

Giving Thanks



Rev. Jay Jackson
Senior Pastor

I am thankful... This will be the beginning of many sentences voiced around our country in the days ahead as we communally celebrate Thanksgiving. I also realize that many will search for the words and struggle with the sentiments given the difficulty and hardship so many experience these days.

I recall many years ago when I was the lay leader of the Junior High youth ministry at Grace UMC in Baytown, Texas. Thanksgiving loomed around the corner and I asked the youth to spend some time for our lesson to finish the sentence that began with those same three words, I am thankful. For the next 30 minutes, I listened to the endless list of things for which those youth were thankful. It wasn't all that different from the many things for which many of us are thankful. What did astound and alarm me was that not one of those youth mentioned that they were thankful for their families or for God's love in Jesus Christ. It just broke my heart how every one of them were more focused on the things and activities they enjoyed than they more meaningful aspects of life. A few mentioned their friends, but only after their stuff.

What are you truly thankful for? Are you finding it hard to be thankful? What is most important to you? I realize that many are facing great challenges, have experienced loss, or are struggling in some aspect of their lives. However, we all have so much for which to be thankful.

I want to share a few of mine in hopes that they will resonate with many of you. I am thankful for God's gracious love through Jesus Christ. I am thankful for God's sustaining power and work in and through my life. I am thankful for the love I experience through my wife, my children, and my family. I am thankful for the community of faith and church family I have at Holy Covenant. I am thankful for deep and abiding friendships that bless my life.

Here's a couple you may not be expecting. I am thankful for the opportunity God gives me to face challenges and serve the needs of others. I am also thankful for the grace of God that allows God to be glorified and powerfully experienced in spite of me.

Welcome
to our
new
member

Zach
Chilton

A New Tradition: Heifer International

There is something about Autumn that reminds us of our traditions. It reminds us of the things that have formed us, have always been, and we hope will always be. As we grow and change, God brings new traditions into our lives, giving us the opportunity to be transformed in new ways, by God's vision.

This year God is giving us a new tradition. In lieu of purchasing poinsettias, we are able to use our gifts to honor and remember our loved ones by donating to Heifer International. This organization provides livestock and training for families whose lives will be changed by a simple flock of chicks, a goat, or even a llama. As we remember how blessed we are to live in a nation where we have more than enough, let us give some of our resources to those who need what we have. The same resources that once filled our chancel area with bright flowers, will now give children the gift of protein from the eggs produced by their new flock of hens. We are blessed to be a blessing to others. Let us truly step forward together in faith to a new tradition of thankfulness inspired generosity.

If you would like more information about Heifer International, you may access their website at www.heifer.org. The gifts will be available for purchase at the end of November, on the first Sunday of Advent.



Rev. Stephanie Lind
Assoc. Pastor

More on Missions

Samaritan's Purse –Operation Christmas Child's shoebox of goodies. Please join the children's Sunday School classes as they prepare shoeboxes of treasures for children around the world. Boxes can be prepared for specific age groups and genders and will be available on Covenant Walk on November 1. The blessing of the boxes will take place on Sunday, November 15, during the 11:00 service. So please join the children and fill a box of books, crayons, toothbrushes, stuffed animals, dolls, candy (no chocolate please), a cross, trucks & cars, hair ribbons, or anything else. This ministry is an opportunity to reach out to the children of the world and share with them God's glorious love. For more information, contact Amy Garcia or Nancy Krahel and visit www.samaritanaspurse.org.

KCM's Santa's Sleigh – it's that time of year again as we partner up with KCM and "adopt" a family or senior citizen for the holidays. Please contact Twilla Oman @ twilla_oman@hotmail.com to get paired up with your "family" or for more information.

Anahuac Comeback, another hurricane recovery effort – we're teaming up with other churches to finish four homes (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) damaged by Hurricane Ike be-



fore the holidays. This is an ambitious effort spearheaded by a church in the Richmond area who has asked for our assistance. Thanks to the team of folks that gave up their Saturday on October 24 for a day of construction in Smith Point, TX. Our next trip is scheduled for November 21. Please consider joining our team for this rewarding mission opportunity by contacting Orv Wiens ([wiensOJ@yahoo.com](mailto:wuensOJ@yahoo.com))

Tutoring @ Golbow Elementary – If you would like to be part of a tutoring group that assists struggling students just down the road from our church, please contact Kerrin.browning@gmail.com to find out how you can help out.

Thanks MKT Volunteers! Many thanks to the dozen and a half volunteers who made Miss Helen's day by building a wheel chair ramp, putting in a new porch floor, changing out a hot water heater, cleaning, and just sharing a story or two. What an outpouring of generosity from our volunteers in our own Katy Community. Thanks Bill LeCompte for an outstanding job as project manager! Thanks too to the Young at Heart and Faithbuilder's Sunday School class for providing such a wonderful lunch!





November's B.I.G. Idea: We believe that it is good to give thanks to God with our whole hearts.

November's B.I.G. Theme: It is good to give thanks.

November's Bible Verse: "I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds."

Psalm 9:1

This month the children will hear biblical stories of people who gave thanks. The children will recognize the need to give thanks for God's miraculous goodness.

A Night in Bethlehem

Get ready to take your family back in time and make some family memories that you'll treasure forever. Reserve Sunday, December 6 from 4-6 p.m. for A Night in Bethlehem. As soon as you set foot into Covenant Hall, your family will travel back to ancient Bethlehem. You will taste, see, 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.

Bring a crock pot of soup to share as we complete this family event with a dinner of soup and bread.

Breakfast with Santa

Santa Claus is coming to town and is making a stop at Holy Covenant on Saturday, December 12. Pancakes will be served from 9:00-10:30.

Holy Covenant will be hosting a Blood Drive on Sunday, December 6th

8:30am - 1:00pm in Covenant Hall

To schedule an appointment, visit www.giveblood.org and login to Digital Donor. Enter sponsor code 4787 or contact Hendrix Rowell.

CDC News

School is in full swing and fall brings many exciting activities. Our students love to dress up for our fall costume parades and parties. Wow, they have some cute and clever costumes! November will be busy with our Thanksgiving Feasts and Scholastic Book Fair. The book fair will be held in Covenant Hall the week of November 16 - 19th during school hours. These books are very reasonably priced and make great gifts for birthdays and Christmas. Also, if you ordered any items from our Yankee Candle fundraiser, the orders will be delivered during the first week or two of December.



DEEPLY ROOTED YOUTH MINISTRIES



CULLEN PARK DAY: Join us on Sunday Nov. 15 after the 11:00 worship service as we fellowship, play games (football, kickball, Frisbee, softball, etc...), grill hotdogs, and have a blast with Grace Christian Church's youth ministries. We will meet in Covenant Hall and have your ride pick you by 5pm!!

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

Nov. 1: Combined MYF/Kitchen Training 5-7

Nov. 4 WNL The Burning Bush

Nov. 8: Split MYF

Nov. 11 WNL Moses & Pharaoh

Nov. 14: HEARTWARMING 9-4

Nov. 15: Cullen Park Day!!

Nov. 18: WNL Parting the Red Sea

Nov. 22: MYF Service

Nov. 25: WNL Manna!

Nov. 29 MYF Split

WNL: 6:30-8 in Youth Lounge

MYF Split: 5-6:30 Middle School, 6:30-7 Snack Supper, 7-8 High School



Several youth and adults from HCUMC went to the Brookwood Community to share in a time of fellowship and worship with the residents. Such a meaningful day created excitement to continue being involved in such an amazing ministry!



Attention Youth & Parents:

Look for sign ups in October on [Covenant Walk](#)

for the [Sandwich Shoppe](#) as well as the [Jewelry Sale](#) to help at [Heartwarming](#).

And we need anyone who is available on Friday, November 13th to help prepare and mix the chicken salad.

Contact Garrett Cone at garrett@holycov.org if you have questions.

HEARTWARMING CHRISTMAS

Saturday, November 14, 2009

9 am. to 4 pm.

It's time for our 20th annual Heartwarming Christmas Show here at Holy Covenant. The United Methodist women sponsor this show to earn money for our mission projects. We will have over 68 booths. Our fabulous Tea Room will be filled with homemade wassail and so many baked goods. The Sandwich Shoppe is sponsored by the youth to earn money for their mission projects.

We need your help....we need people to clean out Sunday school rooms, to greet at both entrances and serve in the tea room. We need decorators and basket makers. We need people the day of the show to relieve crafters and keep the bathrooms clean. We also need a lot of homemade cookies, candies and bar-type goodies. We will need baskets for the silent auction. Any individual or group may donate a basket(s).

We will have sign-ups on covenant walk the end of October or you may send me an email if there is anyway for you to help. Much of the preparation is done the week before, so there are many opportunities to participate.

Please help make this another wonderful year for Heartwarming Christmas. We have so much fun, so please come and enjoy the day...if you have any questions, please call Bettie Rowell, 281-347-0316 or bettie_bar@hotmail.com



CHURCH WIDE THANKSGIVING DINNER

Bring a dish to share and join your Holy Covenant Family as we fellowship together and enjoy the Thanksgiving holiday.

Wednesday, November 18

6:00pm

This will be the last Wednesday Night Live for fall.

We will resume Wednesday, January 13th for the spring session.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!



On November 6th, Young at Heart will make a "return trip" to tour the Painted Churches of Texas. If you've never made this tour, conducted by the Schulenburg Chamber of Commerce, you won't want to miss this opportunity.



In the mid-1800's many Czech and German settlers came to Texas seeking both economic and religious freedom. They established communities similar to their hometowns and a central focus of those communities was a place to worship God.

These churches were usually among the first buildings erected in their communities and are very similar to the familiar churches in their homelands. They became symbols of success for the immigrants in establishing their presence among the State's early settlers.

Our bus will leave the church at 8:00AM on the 6th and the cost of this guided tour is \$12 per person. We will stop for lunch at the Oakridge Smokehouse (Hint – the bread pudding is fantastic!) and will return to Katy around 4:30PM. Contact Mary Ellis or Emily Reynolds to reserve your seat on the bus!

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

YAH enjoying lunch at Fisherman's Wharf.



Prayer of Guidance

Father, we've faced some large mountains in our lives. Some, through faith in you, we've overcome. But others have remained looming before us, in spite of all the faith we've mustered and all the pleading prayers we've uttered. Frightened and confused, we've wondered why we couldn't get them out of our lives. "Why me?" we questioned and then continued struggling to remove our mountains by teaspoonfuls at a time. Finally, after the challenges have tested our faith to the limit, we changed our plea to "Not my will, but yours, Lord." That's when we handed our puny teaspoons over to You and stepped back. You knew a better way to move our mountains!

You, our loving Lord, have taught us to trust You more and yield to whatever outcome You willed for us. Our anxieties disappeared. Our souls felt at peace. We watched in amazement while You worked. The mountains never moved! What moved was our self-made mountains of distrusting your will. Thank you for how You made our little teaspoonfuls into hefty shovels. Before we knew it, together we had tunneled through! *(This devotional is based on **Matthew 17:20** and adapted from Anita Corrine Donihue's book Here I Am, Lord.)*

Condolences: Duke Browning, member of HC; Amelia Davidson's mother-in-law, Mary Catherine Davidson; Penny Mason's mother, Linda Edwards; Craig & Felicia Boatright, Felicia's father, Bob Link; Teri Dmytrewycz's husband John Dmytrewycz



The girls and I would like to express our gratitude to all of you for the generous outpouring of love and support that we received during Duke's illness and passing. We appreciate so much your kind words, cards, flowers, donations of food, etc. There are probably many of you who worked behind the scenes in ways in which we were not even aware. It is truly overwhelming to feel the love of Christ flowing through each of you to us. May God richly bless you all.

Kerrin, Amy, Laura, and Michelle Browning

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

Meeting the Needs of People with the
Power of Christ



When It Is God Versus “Stuff,” Who Wins?

“We live in a culture...that is preoccupied with money. We respect people who have it and write whole television series about how they make it and spend it. While church members hear one sermon a week on average, they are exposed to about sixteen hundred commercials every day, on billboards and bus seats, in newspapers and magazines, on matchbooks and clothes with designer and product logos, on radio and television, each offering advice on how to spend their money. What is the church’s responsibility for guiding them through this cacophony of opportunities?” [*Behind the Stained Glass Windows*, John and Sylvia Ronsvalle]

People who object to any mention of money in the church forget that Jesus talked about it frequently. He said that commitment to “stuff” undermines our spiritual health and challenges his lordship. “Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?’” (Matthew 12:24-26).

On the playing field of your personality, who wins—God or stuff?

Fall Festival 2009

Games and fun
for everyone!



“Peanut Butter & Jelly”
(Brennyn & Bailee)
enjoy the moonwalk!



Lined up for Trunk-or-Treat