

January 2012
Volume 19, Issue 1

THE COVENANT

Saving The Best For Last

Movie lovers always look forward to December. Blockbusters descend on us in the summertime, but the truly amazing films are released just as the year is ending. When I look at all the choices that look wonderful that have just come out or will be out in the next few weeks...**Hugo, Tintin, War Horse**, and so many others...it's an embarrassment of riches. I might not get to the theater to see all of them this winter, but my DVD queue at Netflix will get a bit larger as they come out!

As most of us probably know, they really do save the very best films for last. That's because Oscar voting follows soon after the new year. The movie studios want to have their most prestigious films still in the minds of the members of the Academy when they cast their ballots. The only problem with that arrangement is that January and February become a dumping ground for all the movies that just didn't come together the way they should have. Everybody wants to see December movies...nobody wants to see February movies.

What's true about movies is also sometimes true about life. December is a time of excitement, of celebrating the Savior's birth, of singing familiar carols and seeing old friends and, yes, even giving and receiving presents. But the doldrums easily hit come the "bleak midwinter." When days are short and cold and we settle back into our routines, it's easy to lose sight of the Savior we've just heralded at Christmastime. Our trials and hardships seem to follow after us year after year. The words of the writer of Ecclesiastes hit us strongly: "meaningless, meaningless...all is meaningless!"

But Scripture tells us there is an end to the cycle. We are not condemned to live forever in the vicious circle of sin and shame and death. New life is coming. That new life has been shown to us in Jesus Christ, who in His resurrection shows that something incredible is on the way. The world expects death to have the final word because it has for so very long. But in Jesus Christ, we who believe can live even now with the hope of eternity. Our days may be dark, but darkness no longer has its grip on us; through faith, Jesus has set us free to live in His light and reflect His light to the world.

And just like Oscar season, Scripture promises us that the best is still on its way. Funny enough, Scripture isn't big on details about the afterlife. What it does tell us is that believers will be restored to the full image-bearers of God we were always intended to be. There will be no more sorrow or pain. And most importantly, God will be with us forever. He will live among us and be with us. What we believe on faith now will then become sight. No matter what else eternity entails, it will be spent in the wonderful loving presence of our Savior and King.

So the question is: have you purchased your tickets yet? We just got done celebrating Christ's first coming...are you prepared for His second coming? If you're not sure, simply follow what the Scripture says...turn from sin, believe in Jesus Christ, follow Him where He leads...and know that no matter what happens in this life, the best is yet to come!

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Jason



SCRIPTURES & SERMONS

Jan. 1

Scripture: To be determined
Sermon: Guest Pastor, Rev. Dan Heaton

Jan. 8

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 5:10-6:2;
1 Thessalonians 4:9-12; Mark 6:7-13
Sermon: Discipleship 202: Just a #2 Pencil

Jan. 15

Scripture: Ezra 8:21-23; Acts 12:24-13:4;
Matthew 6:16-21
Sermon: Discipleship 202: School Lunch

Jan. 22

Scripture: To be determined
Sermon: Guest Speaker

Jan. 29

Scripture: Isaiah 56:1-8; Matthew 5:38-48;
1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Sermon: Discipleship 202: Field Trip!

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Session has called for a short congregational meeting on Sunday, January 8 following the worship service for the purpose of electing Elders and Deacons.

ELDERS

The church elects two Elders each year for a three year term. These Elders meet together as the Session; they are the governing board of the church. Each Elder is the chair or co-chair of one of the standing committees of the church. They decide on programming, budget, staff, finances, outreach, mission, worship and Christian Education. Soon we will be nominating Elders for a new term. All the standing committees are in need of assistance, and you do not need to be a church member to help on a committee.

Deacons

Deacons are part of the Covenant ministry. They prepare communion, send cards for birthdays or illness, visit people in the hospital or at funeral homes and are in charge of the food pantry. If you would like to help the Deacons with any of their ministry, please speak to the Pastor or any Deacon.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation of Church of the Covenant will be on Sunday, January 29, 2012 following the church service. The purpose of the meeting is to give our members information on the activities of the church during 2011. There will be a short report from each of the standing committees, a list of membership gains and loss, an update of the expenses and income of 2011, the budget for 2012 as well as reports from the Deacons and Euchre night. Please try to attend.

OUTREACH

Several new volunteer lists are being prepared. Please sign up for one or more Sundays. There is a place for everyone to help on Sunday. All volunteers will be greatly appreciated.

Friday, January 20, 6:00 p.m.

The Covenant Outreach Team is again serving as hosts for our famously free, monthly Community Meal and a Movie Night at our church on Friday, January 20 starting at 6:00 p.m. Attending church members are encouraged to let Gary know if you will bring a dish to share with others as a part of the meal. In addition to the meal and a recently released movie, we will be providing a free box of food from our pantry to community members who ask for food assistance for their families in advance by calling Gary Cynowa at (586) 291-0399.

Sunday, March 4, 12:00-3:00 p.m.

The Outreach Team in cooperation with our Deacons will be preparing a free meal for the homeless and hungry people in Mt. Clemens at Zion United Church of Christ on Sunday, March 4. We need about 12 volunteers to help with the cooking, serving, and cleaning up at the Zion Church site. Please let Gary or Gloria Cynowa know if you can help on that Sunday after our usual Covenant Church worship service.

COVENANT FOOD PANTRY

Please remember to bring canned or boxed food for our emergency food pantry. Suggested items to purchase are frozen meats, soup, peanut butter & jelly, cereal, spaghetti and jars of sauce, macaroni and cheese, and cans of tuna, chili or stew. When you contribute to the Deacon's Fund on the first Sunday of the month, the money helps to restock the food pantry. We are able to give people enough food for a few days and then refer them to the Hope Center Pantry.



BEST WISHES

January Birthdays

- 1/2 Jeff Fuller
- 1/3 Samantha VanVyve
- 1/4 Tracy Cascio
Pastor Jason Huff
- 1/6 Mary Keebler
- 1/15 Allison Remesz
- 1/16 Lydie Kepseu
- 1/20 Zachary Fuller
Walt Lechniak
- 1/29 Sabrina VanVyve
- 1/31 Jeanne Zale



January Anniversaries

- 1/27 Mike and Jill Alm

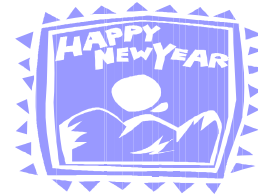
(Please let the church office or a Deacon know if we have missed a birthday, anniversary, or special occasion in your family. We also appreciate notice on change of address, phone number, or e-mail as well.)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

There are many opportunities for volunteer work here at church.

- We need a few more people to bring cookies once every two months for coffee hour.
- There is also a need for a few people to prepare and serve at coffee hour once every two months.
- Ushers are needed to pass out bulletins and take up the offering.
- Greeters are needed to stand at the door and welcome everyone.
- The Memorial Committee is in need of a person to write thank you cards for donations made after a funeral.
- One or two hostesses are needed for the Women's Breakfast in April, June, August, October and December.

Sign up sheets will be on the front hall table.



CHURCH OF THE COVENANT VOLUNTEERS

Head Usher — Gloria Cynowa

Elder of Month —

	<i>Jan. 1</i>	<i>Jan. 8</i>	<i>Jan. 15</i>	<i>Jan. 22</i>	<i>Jan. 29</i>
Ushers	Gary & Coleen Heacock	Curt & Vicki Reynolds			
Greeters	Sandi Haapala	Jean Plonkey	Jerri Portlance		
Scripture Reader	Gary Cynowa				
Coffee Hour	Gay Rapin & Gloria Cynowa	Mary Jane Harcourt	Vicki & Curt Reynolds	Jerri Portlance	
Cookies	Scottie Sowden & Kristie Brackett	Gloria Cynowa & Phyllis Haase	Jean Plonkey	Jerri Portlance & Betty Kamps	Margaret Neebes
Nursery	Natalie Heacock	Gay Rapin	Sara Byks		

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

THE ARK

We are looking forward to fun-filled adventures in the ARK and more great conversations with Nick and Cooper. Join us every Sunday because you don't want to miss a minute of fun!

WE NEED YOU!

The Christian Education Committee is looking for adults and youth to help us as an extra pair of hands in the classroom on Sunday morning. Whether its one Sunday or once a month we welcome everyone who was a kid, has kids, has grandkids, or is still a kid themselves (you should be able to find yourself in this list somewhere). Please see Catha Huff, Diana Byks or Barbara Chadwick for more information or to volunteer. We appreciate your continued support as we strive to provide creative, fun and educational learning opportunities for children at Church of the Covenant.



SHOW ME JESUS

The children's Sunday morning program is called "Show Me Jesus" and it will concentrate on families. As the children begin to develop relationships outside the family circle, home becomes a core/foundation of their life and a way to teach them about what it mean to be a part of God's wider family. They will be challenged to trust and obey the loving heavenly Father who has called them to belong to His family and has revealed who He is through His Word.

Heading To The Hospital?

Some congregation members remember when a pastor or elder would show up at the hospital to visit and pray with you. They didn't have a hotline to God, though! At one time, it was standard practice for doctors and hospitals to call pastoral staff before scheduled surgeries or in emergency situations. However, due to modern privacy laws, your doctor and hospital will **not** notify the church. Pastor Jason and the elders would be happy to go with you or visit with you at the hospital. If you would like a visit – even a regular home visit – please call the church office at 948-2440 or email us at pastorjason-huff@aol.com. It is a blessing to stand with you in prayer in both joyous and difficult times...so please let us know how we can be in prayer with you!

COMING EVENTS

SENIOR CARDS & SACK LUNCH

A group for fellowship and card playing meets at the church at 11 am on the 2nd. and 4th. Tuesday of every month. Please come and chat or play Euchre or Pinochle. Bring your sack lunch, coffee will be available and there is a 50 cent donation to defray expenses. This group is open to everyone in the community; talk to Phyllis Haase if you have questions.

EUCHRE NIGHT

The next Euchre Night is on Saturday, January 28 at the church. Registration begins at 5:30 and play starts at 6:00 pm. Please be on time. Refreshments are for sale and prizes are given.

WOMEN'S GROUP

Thank you to Catha Huff for inviting the women and girls of the church to her home on Saturday, December 17 for breakfast. Everyone had a wonderful time. The next meeting will be on the third Saturday in February at the home of Gloria Cynowa.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

All high school and college age women are welcome to study at the Huff Home on Thursday evenings at 8:30. Catha is leading this group and we are studying Max Lucado's book *Traveling Light*. Feel free to come and join us as we dive into the Word and grow together.

ADULT Bible Study

The evening Bible study is meeting on Wednesday at 7:00pm at the church. We are starting a new series in January. Please come, make new friends, and study the Bible together.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

According to the Presbyterian Book of Order*, all persons who believe in God and desire to become part of the fellowship and ministry of His church are welcome as members.

Church members are entitled to vote in congregational meetings and have family members baptized, confirmed, married or have their relative's funerals conducted in the church. Members may be nominated for leadership positions such as Elder or Deacon.

Please consider joining Church of the Covenant, either by a transfer of membership from another Presbyterian Church or by professing your faith after taking a short class with Pastor Jason.

Membership in the Church of Jesus Christ is a joy and a privilege. It is also a commitment to participate in Christ's mission and to be involved in the ministry of the church. (*2011-2013 Book of Order, G-1.03 thru G-1.0304)

JANUARY 2012



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9am Music Rehearsal 10am Worship Happy New Year	2 7pm AA Meeting	3 Deacons, Outreach, Administ. & Worship Committees 7 pm	4 Bible Study 7 pm	5 Praise Team 7 pm	6 Take down Christmas Decorations 6:30 pm	7
8 9am Music Rehearsal 10am Worship Communion Congregational Meet- ing	9 7pm AA Meeting	10 11-2 Senior Cards Session meeting 7 pm	11 Bible Study 7 pm	12 Praise Team 7 pm	13	14
15 9am Music Rehearsal 10am Worship Ordain / Install Elders & Deacons	16 7pm AA Meeting	17	18 Bible Study 7 pm	19 Praise Team 7 pm	20 Meal & a Movie 6 pm at church	21
22 9am Music Rehearsal 10am Worship	23 7pm AA Meeting	24 11-2 Senior Cards	25 Bible Study 7 pm	26 Praise Team 7:00 pm	27	28 Euchre Night 5:30 pm
29 9am Music Rehearsal 10am Worship Annual Meeting of the Church	30 7pm AA Meeting	31				

PRAYER CONCERNS:

Armed Forces Members, including: Mark Alm, Cory Cynowa and Nikkila Scott
 Angie (eye problems)
 Church of the Covenant
 People who are moving away
 Marge Fuller & the Fuller Family
 The family of Norm Haase
 Herrington family in death of daughter
 Linda (surgery)
 Ruth McGraw
 Margaret Neebes
 Peace in the World
 Melissa Putt
 Betty Radcliffe
 Shover family in death of their father



Contemporary Worship Sun. 10 a.m.
Come and praise the Lord
Sunday Morning Classes for Children
Coffee hour after service

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 (586) 948-2440 www.covenantmacomb.org
 Pastor Jason Huff

The Church: A Missionary Society

Is the church a missionary society? That has been the historic affirmation of Presbyterians, and it needs to be claimed anew in our day.

It was the General Assembly in 1837 that first declared that the church, by its very nature, is a missionary society. That General Assembly, which created our denomination's first Board of Foreign Missions, lifted up for the whole church a central gospel truth. As Christians we have been baptized into a community whose central reason for existence is to share the love of God in Jesus Christ in word and deed with all the world. What unites Presbyterians is not only our polity, confessions, and form of worship, but also our faithful witness to the gospel as members of a missionary society.

Prior to 1837 Presbyterians had certainly been involved in mission - both in this country and overseas. However, mission involvement had often been understood as an "optional" activity that was usually carried out through voluntary (para-church) organizations rather than the structures of the church. The 1837 General Assembly made it clear that mission was not "optional" for Presbyterians and that the carrying out of mission should be at the very heart of the life and structures of the Presbyterian Church (US A). It was this vision that launched the Presbyterian Church (USA) as a major force in the national and world mission of the Church.

That vision is alive and well in the Presbyterian Church (USA) today! It needs the enthusiastic support of every member of our church. For the last fifteen years it was my privilege to be involved in the leadership of the world mission enterprise of our church. In that role I have seen first hand the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of countless women, men and children on all six continents. We live in a time in which there both are incredible human need and suffering and an incredible growth of the church and its witness, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America. As one part of the body of Christ (and a very affluent one at that!), this is not the time for Presbyterians to pull away from the partners with whom we are privileged to share in mission around the world. I am delighted that the 214th General Assembly sensed this call and is launching a Mission Initiative, which I hope every Presbyterian will want to be a part, to raise \$40 million to support Christ's mission through international mission personnel and through new church development, especially among racial ethnic and new immigrant groups in the U.S.A.

We have learned much about mission in the last 165 years. We have learned:

- that it is not our mission, but God's mission, that is important,
- that the church in each nation has the primary responsibility for mission and evangelism in that place,
- that evangelism and social justice are two sides of the same coin,
- that respect for people and their cultures is always integral to an authentic sharing of the gospel, and
- that mission is a two-way street in which we have as much to receive as we do to give in our partnership with Christians around the world.

But, I hope that most of all we have learned that the church truly is a "missionary society" and that mission is never optional for Christians. Through our baptismal vows we are all a part of a missionary society that has received the love of Christ to share it with all the world.

by Clifton Kirkpatrick

(An on-line publication of the Office of the General Assembly, July 2002)