

Covenant NEWS



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Pastor's Spin

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

This is slightly embarrassing to write, but I tried to do my own way of “prepare [Christ a] room” (*Joy to the World*) growing up by watching the usual lineup of Christmas movies. *It's A Wonderful Life* didn't make an appearance for quite awhile, I'll be honest; but nevertheless, there was *Home Alone*, *Home Alone 2*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, *A Muppet Christmas Carol*, *A Garfield Christmas*, among others. It was as if I was convinced that if I watched all those movies I would “get” Christmas. I would “get” that Christmas spirit. I would even “get” a bit of Jesus. And, of course, more often than not, after all the presents were unwrapped and after all the visiting family had left, I was left with disappointment. It was as if I missed out on that certain feeling that was supposed to be inside of me... whatever it was.

I suppose there is a bit of irony with this whole Advent and Christmas time of year. We think of Advent as a way to spiritually prepare for both the Second and First Coming of Christ. Except, of course, no matter how wondrously magnificent and soulfully enriching the Christmas Eve service may be: as if we can somehow trick ourselves into believing that Jesus Christ is being miraculously born again... well, he already was: quite awhile ago, in fact. And, no matter how much we pastors try to convince entire congregations to prepare for Christ coming again... well, he's already here, has been for quite awhile, in fact. Granted, we're talking about Jesus' bodily return to fully redeem, to finish what he started, to finally bring complete “joy to the world.” So, yes, there's still some more-than-valid reasons to immerse ourselves in the entire Advent journey.

But maybe we should just not expect an extra dose of Christ's presence in the world on Christmas Eve night, or even Easter Sunday morning, or any day in particular. Christ is just as present with us in the middle of July as Christ will be on December 24. That doesn't mean we won't feel a little extra something special with more people than usual in the pews with all the extra worship fanfare, not to mention family gatherings at home, and even the Christmas specials streaming on television. There's something to be said for all of that.

There's also something to be said for accepting the cultural reality of the absolute mass chaos that will ensue to make so many holiday things happen, and all the pent-up hostility that will boil over, because we're convinced that Christmas will not happen unless we fulfill the entire “to-do list” that's even longer than Santa's cute naughty-or-nice list. Except, well...it

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The Lutheran Church of the Covenant

19000 Libby Road, Maple Heights, Ohio 44137 Phone: (216) 662-0370 Fax: (216) 662-0371

CovenantLC@sbcglobal.net Web site: www.covenantmaplehts.org



December 2017 - & January 2018

Save the Date!

Friday, 12/1, 6:45 - 8:30 PM:
St. Nick Nite children's event.
See back cover.

Sunday, 12/2, 2:00
United Handbell Choir performs
at Gallery One, 7003 Center St.
(Rt. 615) Mentor, 44060

Tuesday Evenings 6:00-7:15
Dec. 5, 12 and 19
Joyful Prayer & Songs
Lutheran Church of the Master
invites you to their
Advent gathering series.
Enjoy prayers, songs & soup.
RSVP: 440-232-5577.

Sunday, 12/24, 7:00 PM:
Christmas Eve Eucharist

Monday, 12/25:
No Christmas Day service
at Covenant

Thursday, 12/28, 5:00 PM:
Covenant-Hope-Faith Walk
Fellowship Community Meal

Sunday, 12/31/17, 9:00 AM
Holy Eucharist

Office Closed

After an Advent season which is sure to be blessed and memorable, but also busy at Covenant, the office will be closed beginning Mon. 12/25 and will reopen on Tues, 1/2.

Changes to Bulletin Format

Beginning with the season of Advent, we are testing a new format for the service bulletins. For each season, we will have a reusable folder with the current liturgical elements, and then a weekly insert with the readings, hymns and announcements. We hope everyone will become comfortable with the format, and we welcome suggestions for improving the design.

will, already taken care of quite awhile ago, in fact.

That's a part of the Christmas story I have to come to cherish. As it's told in Scripture, God doesn't seem to check with humanity to see if it's okay to show up in Jesus Christ. God doesn't check if the timing is right, or if we're ready just yet, or if we "prepared him room." God just...does it. God just shows up. And God will again, and not just on December 24/25, mind you. Every day. Ready or not, God has most certainly come...for you. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Pastor Brad



In Memoriam

It is with a heavy heart that we share the news of the passing of a member of the Covenant family, John Lanese, on October 9. He and Nel married at Covenant in 1976, and raised their sons, John Jr. and Jason in Bedford and in the Covenant congregation.

Although health problems forced him to move in to Aurora Manor at a relatively young age, he was an active, generous friend in that community, calling the bingo numbers, and welcoming visitors.

We thank God for having given John to us to know and to love as a companion in our pilgrimage on Earth. We share with Nel, John Jr. and Jason, and the rest of the family in their sorrow, and we rejoice in the hope of the Resurrection, that we all may rise to new life in Jesus Christ.

Memorial Offerings Honoring Interim Pastor Anderson

Reflecting upon the valuable work by the Rev. Kenneth J. Anderson during his two services of ministry as interim at Covenant (2008-2009 and 2014-2015), we have decided to collect donations to support the Synod's annual Intentional Interim training for those interested in doing interim ministry, with the National Association of Lutheran Interim Pastors (NALIP) as trainers. The Synod provides partial scholarships (up to 50%) for those pastors in our Synod who need help with the fee, which is about \$1200. If you would like to contribute, please mark your donation "Pr. Anderson Interim Training," and put it in the offering basket or in the mail to Covenant.

Berean Bible Class & ELCA Good Gifts Program

During the past year the Berean Bible Class supported various ministries through their collection each Sunday morning; Lutheran Disaster Relief, The Hunger Center, Meals on Wheels, World Hunger and the Hunger Walk, to name a few. Last year, before Christmas, the Bible Class decided to make a gift of \$200 to the ELCA Good Gifts program. That gift purchased 4 goats for a family or families somewhere where there is a need. Fresh milk from a goat provides daily nutrition for children and their families, and the offspring can transform a community when they are shared with other families in need. We will be building up our account for a future investment in some type of farm animal to make a lasting impact through the ministries of the ELCA.

If others in the congregation would like to contribute to the Good Gifts program see Alex Hohenstein or Pastor Harry Werner.

Thank you!

Alex Hohenstein
Treasurer, Berean Bible Class

Fiftieth Anniversary of the Mosaic on the Altar

One of the most eye-catching features of the sanctuary of The Lutheran Church of the Covenant is its majestic mosaic. It is not original to the building, however. It was dedicated on October 22, 1967. In honor of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the alteration of the altar, we pulled the following from the church archives:

A Word About The Mosaic - 1967-10-22

First the message of the mosaic is contained in the words of the Preface of the Holy Communion: "Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Thy glorious name, evermore praising Thee." The mosaic reminds all who worship here that saints on earth join with the saints in glory singing The Sanctus to the Lord of Glory.

Next, this basic idea was translated into line and color through the artistic talents of Rudolph Sandon of Higlás, Incorporated a subsidiary of Holzheimer Interiors, Cleveland. Under his supervision the mosaic was made at the Venetian School of Mosaic in Venice, Italy. Mr. Sandon personally selected the colors of the glass mosaics and carefully scrutinized every detail. The mosaics range from pieces of glass smaller than one-eighth inch to those which average three-eighths of an inch.

The eight wood carvings set into the reredos are the handiwork of Ferdinand Straslesser of Ortisei, South Tyrol, Italy. The symbols of the carvings represent the Old Testament Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel and their New Testament counterparts, the Four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

In his liturgical writings Martin Luther says: "The altar should not remain where it is, and the priest should always face the people as Christ undoubtedly did in the Last Supper."

Of course, this statement of Doctor Luther is not an edict. However, it is interesting to note that that which the Reformer suggested in 1525 is quite generally accepted today.

The altar of Covenant has been moved forward from the east wall of the sanctuary. It is now a "free-standing" altar. The cost of moving the altar has been underwritten by The Altar Guild.

The present location of the altar will permit liturgical use in either position: the traditional which is toward the reredos, or that which is suggested by Doctor Luther, toward the people. Soli Deo Gloria!

("reredos" an ornamental screen covering the wall at the back of an altar.)

Did You Know?

A swatch of the fabric that was in the original reredos is now set in the baptismal shelf near the piano in the sanctuary.

Blessed Birthday Wishes to...

A blessed birthday to the following Covenant members born in

December:

- 6th - Laura Bewsey
- 8th - Mary Kaye Bernardo
Gwen Susaneck
- 14th- Jane Gradert
- 15th- Peggy Smith
- 18th- Heather Lasher
- 20th- Kara Constant
- 24th- Olive Evanofski
- 26th- Courtney Wright
- 28th- Dick Ptak
- 29th- Sheila Werner



January:

- 5th - Linda Wright
- 10th - Maud Wright
- 12th- Joshua Reddig
- 14th- Kelly (Constant) Bhatnagar
- 16th- Rebecca Werner
- 17th- Phyllis Nemeth
- 20th- John Werner
- 22nd- Alivia Kyle
- 24th- Bryan Treichel
- 25th- Janet Wilkens, Karen Zack
- 28th- Jean Smith
- 29th- Jean Rusher



First Sunday of Advent

1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:33-37

Keep awake! Stay alert! Advent is the season of the church year when we focus on Christ's coming into our lives and are called to fully engage in that coming. The disciples can't seem to stay awake in this gospel text. They keep falling asleep. Perhaps they weren't stimulated enough in that garden or were genuinely tired after the ministry tasks alongside of Jesus.

For us, the challenge might be just the opposite. We are bombarded by hoards of information and entertainment. There is always noise, and it's easy to become a spectator, instead of a participant. But Paul reminds the Corinthians (and us) that they have indeed been given the gifts to actively wait for Jesus' coming.

What experiences have alerted you to Christ's love and presence in the world? What gifts have you been given that you can use in your personal and social life to awaken Christ in others?

Reflections on The Gifts of Advent



*You are not lacking in any spiritual gift
as you wait for the revelation of
our Lord Jesus Christ.
(1 Corinthians 1:7)*



Third Sunday of Advent

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

Clear the path! Point to Jesus! Life in Christ is both rich in metaphor and specific in practices of faith. John the Evangelist draws upon the image of Christ as light. Light helps us to see everything that is present, from obstacles in the road to clearings in the path. Spiritual light allows us to move beyond illusions to trust the truth that is both in Christ and in ourselves. Living in the truth of Christ, we are moved to action.

Paul instructs the Thessalonians in the concrete ways of faith. The light of Christ allows us to give thanks in all things, rejoice always (even when the path seems dark), and refrain from evil. When we actively participate, we clear paths that point to Jesus.

Where are the places that seem the darkest to you? Where are the places that are most full of light (physical and spiritual)?

*Resources for Discussion & Reflection
from the Lutheran-Catholic Covenant Commission*



Second Sunday of Advent

2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

Keep watch! Be on you guard! Sometimes the greatest gifts we receive come through people. Disguised in camel's hair and behind that breath of locusts, John the Baptist is a gift that announces the coming. He prepares people's hearts and minds to experience the message and person of Christ.

John is watchful, scanning the horizon for both lurking danger and tremendous promise. His proclamation draws from the traditions, history, and scripture of the church. John points to Jesus. He boldly tests everything, using the Lamb of God that he announces as his lens.

What people have announced Christ's coming in your life? What resources (traditions, scriptures, scriptural readings) help you in encountering the lurking dangers and tremendous promises in everyday life?



Fourth Sunday of Advent

Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

Behold! Don't fear! When Gabriel greets Mary, he addresses her as 'favored one.' This name is not given in isolation; it is in deep relationship with God. Mary is most favored as she receives the precious gift of Jesus. Mary doesn't gloat upon receipt of this gift, nor does she withdraw from community in unworthiness. She responds with great humility and remains always the handmaid of the Lord.

Our life in Christ is never in isolation. We remain in relationship and are named Children of God, Handmaids of the Lord. The gifts we have been given are to be used for the proclamation of Christ now. Keep awake. Keep watch! Clear the path! Behold! Our active participation does indeed proclaim Christ among us.

How do you feel, knowing that you are favored in the sight of the Lord? When you receive a gift that you really like, how do you respond?

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant

December 2017

See page 9 of this PDF for landscape-oriented calendar for convenient viewing online.

Server Schedule	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 6:45 – 8:30 St. Nick Nite	2 2:00 Handbells at Gallery One 5:00 Sat. Euch at Covenant
AM: Nel Lanese Cruc: Emily Garberich Ush: A. Treichel & B. Treichel AG: Plak, Lanese, Bewsey Greet: Mary Kaye Bernardo	3 Advent 1 9:00 Eucharist 10:15 Sunday School Hour	4 ***** 8:00 – 2:00 ECOT Testing in Parish Hall Dec. 4-15 *****	5 7:00 Worship & Music Meeting	6	7	8	9 5:00 Service at Triune
AM: Bert Zahn Cruc: Katie Garberich Ush: Schirmer, Frajter, Dobushes AG: Plak, Lanese, Bewsey Greet: Bert & Marie Zahn	10 Advent 2 9:00 Eucharist 10:15 Potluck & a Movie 5:00 Confirmation	11	12 7:00 Council Meeting	13	14 7:00 Bd of Ed Meeting	15	16 5:00 Saturday Eucharist at Covenant
AM: Marie Zahn Cruc: Avery Lockmiller Ush: Garvin & Zahn AG: Rusher, Senderak, Skowronski, Susaneck Greet: S& C Senderak	17 Advent 3 9:00 Eucharist 10:15 Sunday School Hour	18	19 7:00 Ev & Soc Mfn	20	21	22	23 NO Saturday Eucharist
9:00 AM: AM: Steve Dobush Cruc: Katie Garberich Ush: Senderak & Besednjak AG: Rusher, Senderak, Skowronski, Susaneck Greet: Annie Copeland	24 Advent 4 9:00 Eucharist 4:00 Service at Triune 7:00 Christmas Eve Eucharist *	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28 5:00 Cov.-Hope Commun. Meal	29	30 NO Saturday Eucharist
AM: Alex Hohenstein Cruc: Emily Garberich Ush: Senderak & Besednjak AG: Frajter, Garvin, Zahn Greet: Nancy Langtry	31 9:00 Eucharist 10:15 Sunday School Hour						

Triune = Triune Lutheran Church 4810 W. Mill Road, Broadview Hts. *

***** Office Closed - December 25 - January 2*****

* Server Schedule for Christmas Eve: 7:00 PM December 24:
AM: Allan Treichel; Lector: Ted Lockmiller; Proclaimer: Steve Dobush;
Cruc: Jody Bernardo; Ush: Frajter, Garvin, Besednjak, Senderak;
AG: Rusher, Senderak, Skowronski, Susaneck; Greet: Arlene Lasher

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant

January 2018

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		1 New Year's Day Office Closed	2 7:00 Worship & Music Meeting	3	4	5	6 5:00 Saturday Eucharist at Covenant
AM: Nel Lanese Cruc: Jody Bernardo Ush: A. Treichel, B. Treichel AG: Frajter, Garvin, Zahn Greet: Dick & Madeline Plak	7 Epiphany Sunday 9:00 Eucharist 10:15 Sunday School Hour	8	9 7:00 Council Meeting	10	11	12	13 5:00 Service at Triune
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AM: Bert Zahn Cruc: Katie Garberich Ush: Garvin & Zahn AG: Werner, Copeland, Hohenstein Greet: A & P Hohenstein	21 9:00 Eucharist 10:15 Congregational Assembly Meeting	22	23	24	25 5:00 Cov.-Hope Commun. Meal	26	27 5:00 Service at Triune
AM: Marie Zahn Cruc: Emily Garberich Ush: Sondrak & Bosednjak AG: Plak, Lanese, Bewsey Greet: Lois Gerstenberger	28 9:00 Eucharist 10:15 Sunday School Hour	29	30	31	Feb. 1	2	3 5:00 Saturday Eucharist at Covenant

February 4, 2017: AM: Nel Lanese; Cruc: Jody Bernardo; Ush: Allan Treichel, Bryan Treichel, AG: Plak, Lanese, Bewsey; Greet: Don & Ron Schirmer

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See page 10 of this PDF for landscape-oriented calendar for convenient viewing online.

Stewardship 2018

Stewardship is nothing new to us. The Stewardship drives were once elaborate programs with dinners and house calls and other fanfare. Over the years, the programs have become much simpler—temple talks, heartfelt stories of how giving back what has been entrusted to us reaps benefits that we never imagined. We have heard the stories and lived the stories. This year, there will be no temple talks, no such stories. When it comes right down to it, stewardship is a personal thing, between each of us and God.

As a congregation, we are not an extravagant bunch—we spend wisely and carefully. Our numbers may be smaller than we would like or what we remember from the “good old days”, but our hearts are as big as ever. Stewardship is a commitment that needs to be made every day, all year long. Over the next couple of weeks, please consider what commitment you are willing to make to Covenant in 2018. Pledge Cards will be available next week and can be placed in the offering basket.

Each week a Bible verse about stewardship will be in the bulletin and in Wednesday’s Word as a reminder of our year- long commitment.

Gwen Susanek and Barb Gaglione

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant 2018 Stewardship Drive

I/We thank God for all His blessings and support Covenant as it spreads God’s work through:

- Worship services
- New opportunities to serve
- Ministries
- Other activities

Name: _____ Envelope Number: _____

For the year 2018, I pledge to contribute:

\$ _____ weekly \$ _____ every two weeks

\$ _____ monthly \$ _____ annually

I would like to use my talent(s) in the area of :

I am able to give my time as follows (indicate your availability in hours/days/weeks, etc.):

Please cut at dotted line and retain bottom portion for your records

2018 Pledge

Name: _____ Envelope Number: _____

Pledge: \$ _____ per week two weeks month year

Pledge of Time and Talents:

Covenant NEWS

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
19000 Libby Road, Maple Heights, Ohio 44137

Help the Church avoid additional postal fees; please notify us of your address change.

If you would prefer to receive the newsletter online instead, contact covenantlc@sbcglobal.net.
The newsletters are always available our website CovenantMapleHts.org.

*The Lutheran Church of the
Covenant proudly presents
its annual
St. Nicholas Festival*



Friday, December 1, 6:45-8:30 pm

The St. Nicholas Festival is free and open to all children of the community along with their parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and friends, who are welcome to assist the children with crafts and activities. All children **MUST** be accompanied by an adult.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

and is limited to the first 40 children, ages 3yrs-8th grade. Call (216) 662-0370 with names and ages of children, name and phone number of the adult who will attend with them. Festivities Include: Fun Advent Crafts, Christmas Music, The Story of St. Nicholas, Cookies & Punch.

Adopt-A-Turkey Southeast Clergy Hunger Center Thanksgiving Food Drive

The Southeast Clergy Hunger Center continues to feed families and individuals in increasing numbers. Because the U.S. Department of Agriculture is giving less food to the Cleveland Foodbank, the Hunger Center's funds don't go as far.

As a result, the Center is asking member churches to consider an "Adopt-a-Turkey" drive to provide turkeys for the families at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

To that end, Covenant has established an "Adopt-a-Turkey fund". On average, turkeys run from \$12 to \$14 dollars each.

If you are so moved, please make a contribution to the Southeast Clergy Hunger Center, either directly or through the Lutheran Church of the Covenant. Thanks in advance for your generosity.



The Lutheran Church of the Covenant

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