

God paid a ransom to save you . . . and the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.

1 Peter 1:18-19

The Clarion

APRIL 2010 • THE NEWSLETTER OF COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

He whispered life . . .

Years ago, a missionary serving in Brazil discovered a tribe of Indians in a remote part of the jungle. They lived near a large river. The tribe was friendly and in dire need of medical attention. A contagious disease was ravaging the population, and people were dying daily.

An infirmary was located in another part of the jungle, and the missionary determined that the only hope for the tribe was to go to the hospital for treatment and inoculations. In order to reach the hospital, however, the Indians would have to cross the river—a feat they were unwilling to perform.

The river, they believed, was inhabited by evil spirits. To enter the water meant certain death. The missionary set about the difficult task of overcoming the superstition of the tribe. He explained how he had crossed the river and arrived unharmed. No luck.

He then led the people to the bank and placed his hand in the water. They still wouldn't believe him. He walked out into the river and splashed water on his face. The Indians watched closely yet were still hesitant. Finally, he turned and dove into the water. He swam beneath the surface until he emerged on the other side.

Having proven that the power of the river was a farce, the missionary punched a triumphant fist into the air. He had entered the water and escaped. The Indians broke into cheers and followed him across.

Nearly 2000 years ago, Jesus saw people enslaved by their fear of a cheap power. He explained that the river of death was nothing to fear. The people wouldn't believe him. He touched a boy and called him back to life. The bystanders were still unconvinced.

He whispered life into the dead body of a little girl. The people were still cynical. He let a dead man spend four days in a grave and then called him out. Was that enough? Apparently not. For it was necessary for Jesus to enter the river, to submerge himself in the water of death before the people would believe that death had been conquered.

But after he did, after he came out on the other side of death's river, it was time to sing and time to celebrate! My prayer for you is that you too will follow Jesus across that river and will overcome your fears, your loneliness, your heartache, and your loss—and find new hope!



Christ has risen! He has risen indeed!

Yours in Christ,

Reverend Daniel Hagmaier

Holy
Week

March 28
Palm Sunday Service
10:00 A.M.
(Eggstravaganza at 11:30!)

April 1
Maundy Thursday
Service
7:00 P.M.

April 4
Easter Sunday
Services
8:00 & 10:00 A.M.

Cedarkirk Family Camp

We have reserved the weekend of
October 22–24 for our Covenant Family!

Approximately thirty-five campers joined us at Cedarkirk Camp last year for a lot of fun, fellowship, and relaxation!



More photos on our website at covpcf.com

Activities included mixers, games, “creative” Bible study, swimming, canoeing, and hiking. A hayride and campfire were also weekend highlights! Cedarkirk, which is accredited by the American Camping Association, is a year-round camp and conference center located in Lithia, Florida. The facility is owned by the Presbyteries of Tampa Bay and Peace River. For more information on the facility, visit their website at www.cedarkirk.org. More details to come on Covenant’s campout!

Books Featured in the Church Library

- *To Try Men’s Souls* by Newt Gingrich and William R. Forstchen: “A novel of George Washington and the fight for American freedom”
- *Presumed Guilty* by James Scott Bell: A legal suspense novel
- *Rachel’s Secret* by B. J. Hoff: Rachel’s secret comes out when a wounded riverboat captain bursts into her Amish community.
- *I Am With You Always* by Chip Ingram: “How Christians can hold to God in times of fear, depression, crisis, and personal failure”
- *The Holiness of God* by R. C. Sproul: Revised and expanded edition of the classic best-seller

FREE! Eggstravaganza!

Fun for the Entire Family!
Palm Sunday, March 28
11:30 - 1:30
(Following the 10:00 Service)
Egg Hunts • Games
Crafts • Food • More!

Please bring an Easter basket
for each child and one large
bag of candy (individually
wrapped pieces).

Kids, I heard there’s going to be a
water slide at the Eggstravaganza,
so bring a change of clothes and
a towel for the wild ride!



Parents’ Day Out!

A Special Program for Members of
Covenant Presbyterian Church
Parents, if you’d like some free time,
we’ll care for your kids, ages three
months to kindergarten, on most
Fridays, 9:00 AM–1:00 PM.* Please
provide each child with a sack
lunch, and we’ll do the rest! Simply
show up and sign in your children!

*NOTE: PARENTS’ DAY OUT
won’t be held April 2 or 9
while we observe Holy Week,
but it will resume April 16!

Misión Peniel

Covenant is scheduled to return to Misión Peniel on Friday, April 16. The need becomes greater every week as they are serving over 1,000 meals now. We need a crew of at least 10-12 to travel to Immokalee in the church van. We will be serving a hot meal and distributing clean used clothing for men, women, and children. (Any donations of clothing, toiletries, cookies are greatly appreciated and can be brought to the church office any time before the 16th.) Our work day is a long one, and you will return home very tired, but you will realize how blessed you are, and the fatigue will be gone by morning. Please give prayerful consideration to signing up at the connection station for a day of mission just an hour away. You will be glad you did!



Open House for Misión Peniel

BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY

105 South First Street, Suite 2-4
Immokalee, Florida

Sunday, April 11, 2:00–4:30 P.M.

Hot Dogs and Snacks Provided

Tour the Facility and the Community

Worship Service at 3:30 P.M.

Led by Pastor Miguel Estrada

For more information, please call
813-323-4826 or email dave@bethel.info.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The Session met Tuesday, March 16. The Rev. Hagmaier moderated the meeting with eleven elders in attendance. Also present were Ruth Whipple as chair of the Board of Deacons, Myra Baxter, Mary Ellen Harper, Barb Shafer, and the Confirmation Class.

The following items were discussed and/or actions were taken:

- Examined and approved the nine members of the Confirmation Class. They will be received into membership on Palm Sunday, March 28.
- Approved the following Sunday School curriculum: Adult Bible Fellowship Class - *Book of Romans*; ACES Class - Max Lucado’s book *Fearless*; and Middle and High School Class - *What the Bible Is All About*.
- Approved Celebration of Senior Sunday to honor graduates on June 6, 2010.
- Approved VBS for June 28 - July 1 from 9:00 a.m. to noon.
- Approved participation in the “Gabriel House Walk-a-Thon” on May 29 at Lakes Park.
- Approved a request from the Spiritual Care Committee to have a follow-up seminar on April 24 with Mary Ellen Frost.

- Approved a Stephen Ministers’ Retreat and communion at Shell Point Village on April 17.
- Approved the 2009 Statistical Report.
- Approved sending a team to our Sister Church in Guatemala on November 8 - 12, 2010 to assist with Vacation Bible School.
- Received a brief report from the Finance Task Force.
- New committee assignments were made.
- Jack Shea reported an increase in pledges over last year. The plate offering is down compared to January and February in 2009. A complete financial report is available in the church office.
- Ten new members and three affiliates have joined Covenant since January 1, 2010.
- The PW Gathering with a combined Bible study, business meeting, and luncheon on March 16 was well attended. The Rev. Hagmaier led the Bible study. The installation of new officers followed. The Birthday Offering, which was taken at the meeting, totaled \$500 and will go towards Kirkuk Church Kindergarten and Child Care Center, a Presbyterian mission school in Kirkuk, Iraq.
- The next Stated Session Meeting is Monday, April 19, 2010.

WHAT EXACTLY IS STEPHEN MINISTRY?

Stephen Ministry is a special program at Covenant in which trained and supervised lay persons, called Stephen Ministers, provide one-to-one Christian care to individuals facing life challenges or difficulties.

WHY THE NAME STEPHEN?

Stephen was the first lay person commissioned by the apostles to provide caring ministry to those in need, as recorded in Acts 6. His assignment was to feed the destitute widows, but he also fed people the Word of God. Because of his strong witness to the Jews, he became the first Christian martyr.

WHERE DID IT ALL START?

In 1975 the Rev. Kenneth C. Haugk, Ph.D., a pastor and clinical psychologist, saw that the needs for care in his congregation and community far exceeded what he alone could provide. He developed materials and trained nine members

What Is Stephen Ministry?

of his congregation to help him provide quality, one-to-one Christian care to individuals experiencing a life crisis. He commissioned them as "Stephen Ministers," just as Covenant did here last month, and matched them with people with a variety of needs. The program was so successful that other congregations wanted to become involved. Today there are more than 10,000 congregations taking part, representing more than 150 Christian denominations world-wide. More than 500,000 laypersons have been trained as Stephen Ministers, who in turn have ministered to more than a million care receivers.

We are blessed to have this program at Covenant. Please contact a Stephen Leader (David Robinson at 482-5447; Linda Sinclair at 561-4681; Anne Wills at 482-7169; Peggy Salvesen at 936-3384; Pat Arner at 997-9108; Barb Sheets at 995-8881) for more information and/or to receive this special care.



High School and College Students

High School and College Graduates
Seniors will be recognized in church on Sunday, June 6. Graduates, please bring to the church office your picture, parents' names, school name, major, and your future plans. Or please email your photo and information to info@covpcfm.com by April 20.

Book Scholarship
College students who are members of Covenant can receive financial assistance for their book fees. Please call the church office at 334-8937 for information.

Alice Allen Scholarship for 2010
The Alice Allen Scholarship will be awarded to a woman student who will attend an accredited college or university in 2010, with the gift from a memorial endowment honoring the late wife of Covenant's second pastor, Claude I. Allen, Jr. The award will be to a woman who evidences promise of success in higher education, with at least a 3.0 average in previous academic work. Priority will be to members of Covenant; age will not be used in determination of the awards, but participation in the programs of the church may be a consideration. Applications for the \$1,000 award are available at the church office and are to be returned to the office by Sunday, April 4 (the deadline was extended). Previous recipients have been Chelsea Carter, Margaret Bastar, Keely Seaman and Caroline Barclift.

Our Sister Church

El Divino Salvador Presbyterian Church in Guatemala City, Guatemala, is Covenant's sister church. The relationship, which began in 1995, was initiated by our Peace River Presbytery. A team of Covenant members, which included the pastor and his wife, made the first visit in 1995. Present members who were on the first trip are Jack and Ginny Shea, Mike Verwest, and De Anne Sawyer.

Since 1995, many Covenant mission teams have traveled to Guatemala to work side by side with members of our sister church to establish a mission church in a poor rural area outside of Guatemala City. La Pascua, the mission church, consists of a multi-purpose worship building, a classroom building with a kitchen, a full-time pastor, and the pastor's home. Water and electricity have also been added to the site. These facilities are the result of the partnership of El Divino and Covenant.

The choirs of Covenant and El Divino have had a long and fruitful relationship. El Divino's choir last visited Covenant on Palm Sunday of 2007, and our choir traveled to Guatemala in January of 2008 for El Divino's 60th anniversary. A gift of new choir robes was presented to El Divino in recognition of their anniversary.

Our relationship with the wonderful people of our sister church has been a blessing to all who have had the privilege of knowing them. You, too, can be richly blessed! A trip to Guatemala, El Divino, and La Pascua is planned for early November. Contact Ginny Shea, Sister Church Committee Chair, for further details.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!
James & Marcie Curnutt
Bruce & Blanche King
Marcia Lopata

PRIMETIMERS
Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre
Comedy: "Love, Sex, and the IRS"
Saturday, April 17
Lunch: 11:45 • Show: 1:15
Cost of \$38 includes the show, lunch, and gratuity. Please sign up in the courtyard by April 2.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN
Leaders' Bible Study
Mon., April 5, 11:00 AM, F205
Women's Circles
Deborah: Tues., April 13, 10:00 AM, F205
Elizabeth: Thurs., April 8, 9:30 AM, F205
Mary: Fri., April 9, 9:30 AM, F204
Naomi: Mon., April 12, 6:30 PM, F202
Ruth: Tues., April 13, 10:00 AM, F206
Please call the church for information.

God bless you and your family as we celebrate our victorious Lord Jesus!



Homebound Friends
Please pray for our friends who are unable to attend services: Andy Banse, Herb Beatty, Ethel Bell, Shirley Bellack, Ann Brown, Dorothy Browne, Ellie Bupp, Pearl Cartwright, Barbara Childs, Doris Cox, Loa Dowler, Hilda Eagan, Gloria Gibbs, Betty Gibson, Hazel Halter, Bea Lester, Edith McDaniel, Dudley Smith, Ginny Wand, William Wood.
Wishing you a blessed Easter!

FEBRUARY FINANCIAL REPORT

INCOME		EXPENSE	
\$48,093 Actual	\$55,801 Budget	\$53,299 Actual	\$54,849 Budget
OPERATING FUNDS		RESERVE FUNDS	
\$1,792		\$107,075	
YTD INCOME OVER EXPENSES		\$12,707	
CURRENT BALANCE ON LOAN		\$704,522	

A complete report is available in the office.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

June 28 - July 2
9:00 A.M. - Noon

Your child is invited to another exciting VBS featuring skits, amazing crafts, fun songs, snacks, games, and great Bible stories! Details to come!

AHOY Mates! We have a High Seas Expedition coming to Covenant, and we need ALL HANDS ON DECK to help with set construction, decorating, crafts, snacks, teaching, games, etc.! Contact Captain Castner at 334-8937 to volunteer.

SPECIAL NEED: This year, we're joining with members of Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church to build the VBS set. We would appreciate the help of anyone who is handy with tools, painting, etc. Also, if anyone would be willing to donate gift cards from Home Depot or Lowe's, that would be a great help!



Can You Help?

The four-mile **Walk-a-Thon** to raise funds for Gabriel House is May 29, 8:00 a.m., at Lakes Park. Sponsors or walkers may sign up at the Connection Station in the courtyard. For info., call Barb Chapin, 274-9471.

The Final Performance of Our 2009-2010 Concert Season!

Friday, April 9, 7:30 P.M.

An Outstanding Young Musician Is Featured in the Annual Westminster Choir College Scholarship Concert!

Rebecca Leshures, a native of Alberta, Canada, will complete her undergraduate degree in piano in May at Westminster Choir College. She has been the first-place winner of all four annual piano competitions held at Westminster. Rebecca performed Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto* at the MTNA Conference in Toronto and Schumann's *Concerto in A Minor* with the Princeton Community Orchestra. Please join us in supporting this young artist as she launches her career!



Rebecca Leshures
Pianist

All concerts, which are held in Covenant's sanctuary, are presented free to the community.

Our special thanks to the Concert Series Committee for organizing a successful concert season for 2009-2010! The committee has already scheduled performances for next season when we'll celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Concert Series!



Covenant Presbyterian Church
2439 McGregor Blvd.
Fort Myers, FL 33901

Phone: 239-334-8937
Fax: 239-332-0503
Website: covpcfm.com
Email: info@covpcfm.com

Sunday Mornings at Covenant

9:00 • Sunday School
10:00 • Worship Service
(And at 8:00 on Easter!)

