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January 2017

The CLARION



A Message From Our Pastor

Greetings,

Dawn Castner is making me write my New Year's newsletter article while I am still trying to get Christmas Eve all figured out. But I won't get sympathy from her because she has to get the thing printed in the busiest time in the year, while she also has to take care of the details of our early 5 p.m. Christmas Eve family service. That's along with everything else she has to do around here.

All I would like to do is think about the New Year's message I am supposed to write to you, but I'm having a hard time because of all the worship services I have to worry about. You see, *Barbara Heflin* is making me write worship bulletins for two Christmas Eve services, one Christmas Day service, and even the Sunday worship bulletin for New Year's Day! But I can't complain too much about that either because she is up to her ears in putting together all the parts that go into all those different bulletins. Barbara is the person who reminds me of everything I have to do. If she wasn't around nothing would get done, or it wouldn't be done right anyway. At the same time, she is keeping *Nanette Smith* busy with the parts of all the bulletins that she has to get done, and Barbara really has to crack the whip because Nanette is thinking about that Christmas cruise she is going on with her family for which they all leave on Friday. So we need her copy before she blows this joint. *Dean Heflin* is looking pretty peaceful out there in the main office. He wonders where all the coffee cake that was brought in by yesterday morning's receptionist has gone...but I can honestly say I only ate two pieces. Large pieces, yes, but only two. But Dean is waiting for the floodgates to open, because once Barbara puts the last touches on all the bulletins, he'll be chained to the copy machine for days.

Actually, for all the whining I do about being overworked this time of year, I have it fairly easy when it comes to writing up the required bulletins. After all, *Warren Apple* has turned in all his music; *Eric Nanz* knows what the youth band will be doing for the services; the scripture lessons were picked many decades ago by the wise old biblical scholars who came up with the lectionary; there are plenty of prayers and responsive readings for the season in all kinds of resources out there, unless I decide to write my own; and we all know what the hymns are—the basic rule of thumb in seminary worship class was that you didn't pick Easter hymns for Christmas, so that's not hard to do if you were paying attention in class. I am very cognizant that for every piece of music Warren and Eric turn in for the bulletins there are hours of practice going on. There are choirs and singers and bell choirs and instrumental pieces and bands that must all be practiced and ready to go for a couple of the big worship services of our year. And I am thankful for their commitment and for the "blended" feel in our common worship. Coming up with blended worship is not an easy task, if you do it wrong it can feel contrived. But I am not a separate-into-contemporary-service/traditional-service kind of person. I want us all together. I want us all sharing our gifts with each other however different they might be. Being different is not incongruity if it is about gathering all the good gifts of God into one voice. Jesus got gold, frankincense and myrrh—very different from each other. Mary and Joseph might have wanted food instead. But they were given gifts representing the differences of the places from whence those wise guests originated. And worship in my mind and heart is always about the gathering of the gifts of many, during the holidays, but throughout the entirety of the church year.

Talking about gifts, and along the line of music, *Maria Bahruth*, has been hoping to sing in worship on Christmas Eve, but it was evident while lighting the Advent wreath on the Fourth Sunday of Advent with her family that she is suffering from a chest cold. The previous week she directed the Chapel Choir in a

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS FOR DECEMBER

The Session met on Tuesday, December 20, 2016 with Rev. Jeff DeYoe moderating the meeting, twelve elders and two newly elected elders in attendance. Others present: Barb Sheets, Deacon; Gary Brothers, Facilities Manager; and Barbara Heflin, Clerk of Session.

- Approved the 2017 Operating Budget \$655,844 which is approximately \$6200 less than last year's budget.
- Approved the Shafer family's request to establish the Judge Robert T. Shafer Memorial Endowment Fund to assist a member of Covenant Presbyterian Church, who is a recent high school graduate, with a one-time \$500 scholarship to attend a regionally-accredited college or university.
- Approved the Property Committee's request for \$7,000 to replace the air-conditioning unit in F206 and the restrooms upstairs with the expense coming from the emergency reserve funds.
- Donations received for the Alternative Christmas Gift Market totaled to-date \$5,613.18.
- Sunday, January 15, 2017 has been designated as Deacon Sunday.
- Officers' Training has been changed to Saturday, January 7 at 1:30 pm in F207 and Installation of Officers during the worship service on January 8th.
- The Stewardship Committee continues to receive pledges for 2017.
- The annual financial review prepared by Richard Shafer and Jef Farlow was received.
- Our thanks to Gary Brothers, David Beardsley and Maurie Salvesen for their efforts in repairing the submersible pump which provides water for the irrigation system. The individual assisting with this repair billed the church \$350 for his services and then marked the invoice a donation.
- Reports for the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 22nd are due no later than Thursday, January 5th.

wonderful Advent carol, so she's been burning the candle on both ends too. Even a holiday season doesn't always prevent colds. So she may sing on Christmas Eve (we hope so), or may not, but I am grateful for her contributions all year round.

But I do have a role in all of this. I have to come up with sermons, meditations, messages. That's not hard for me, except it is always a little more challenging when you have to come up with titles for four different sermons, days, even weeks in advance. So...if you heard a sermon around the time of Christmas and New Year's that didn't sound like the title it was given way in advance because the bulletin needed to get printed, now you know why.

While I am doing my work and watching the work of others swirling all around me, *Gary Brothers* is dressed in his manual labor duds because the pump for the irrigation system on the church property is giving us fits and he's having to crawl down in some hole you'd never find me getting into. The week before Christmas and you're down in a hole rooting around trying to figure out why the irrigation isn't right. At least we are doing Christmassy things. He's down in a muddy hole...but the shepherds probably didn't get time to shower before coming to the manger either. In the meantime, *Barbara Thrasher* is running around with all kinds of marching orders about how the sanctuary has to be for one service, and then switched out another way for a different service, and in the meantime making sure everything looks good and presentable and clean for the members and guests who will show up on Saturday and Sunday. Barbara loves this place, it is evident every minute she's here and her care for it is a gift. And... this place loves her.

The fact that Nanette just walked into my office and laid my last paycheck of the year on my desk reminds me that our bookkeeper, *Jean Ann Gogerty* got all the year-end check writing business for Covenant done in the middle of the Finance Committee meeting in my office to try to finalize next year's budget so she could be off to do her holiday thing with family up north somewhere. And this week, our financial secretary, *Mary Callaway*, was working hard to get the Monday morning deposit ready so she and Steve can head up to Atlanta to be with the family at Christmas. You may not know this, but Christmas is always a big challenge because all the different giving has to be plugged into all the different slots for which the givers intend it. She comes into my office and asks me about this, that and the other thing and I say: "I dunno." I'm a lot of help. But even though they fly the coop for the holiday season, along with Nanette on that Caribbean cruise (Do I sound jealous? They are even going to attend a Christmas Eve service *on the boat!*), the commitment of our finance staff all year round is huge. I see it regularly and I am thankful.

Then, with all my comings and goings around here, we have a whole team of *good folks at the church reception desk* making their contributions by fielding calls and meeting the public so everyone else I have mentioned can do what they have to do.

So there you go... In the middle of complaining about all I have to do for Christmas and New Year's celebrations in the church, I wound up mentioning everyone who really does all the work around here. And at the end of 2016 and for the beginning of 2017, I give thanks for every one of them because it's their ministries that make all the difference at Covenant Presbyterian Church.

Peace and Grace, Jeff



Thank you for all of the Christmas goodies that were provided to the staff and volunteers in the office during the Christmas season!

They were very much appreciated!

The 2017 Wednesday Morning Live series

The "Wednesday Morning Live" community lecture series 2017 has a great lineup for you. Each session opens with coffee and continental breakfast starting at 9:30 a.m. Speakers begin their lectures at 10:00, allow time for a brief question-and-answer session, and end at 11:00. Authors will also have books available for purchase. There is no charge for attending; donations are accepted for breakfast. This could become your favorite hour-and-a-half of the week!

This lecture series is possible because of the vision of its founder and leader, Dr. David Robinson, to bring informative programs to our church and community. Other members of the planning committee this year are Barbara Griffith, Tom Koester, Shirley Koester, Mary Lee Mann and Don Berglund.

January 4	Rev. Dr. Jeff DeYoe and Mrs. Ruth DeYoe, <i>Intersectionality: A Wider Lens for Understanding Justice</i>
January 11	Scott Saxon, <i>Life in the Theater</i>
January 18	Winston Lawson, <i>Trip to Cuba</i>
January 25	Tom Hall and Robin Tuthill, <i>The Colorful 150-Year History of Fort Myers</i>
February 1	Rick and Ellen Burnette, <i>The Ministry of ECHO</i>
February 8	John Biffar, <i>Children of the Fourth World</i> , his documentary film
February 15	Lyn Millner, <i>The Allure of Immortality</i> ; her book about the Koreshan Cult in Estero
February 22	Melanie Payne, Consumer Advocacy
March 1	Life Line Screening

Life Line Screening, a leading provider of community-based preventive health screenings, will host screenings on Wednesday, March 1, 2017. Register for a Wellness Package which includes 4 vascular tests and osteoporosis screening from \$149 (\$139 with our member discount). **All five screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. In order to register for this event and to receive a \$10 discount off any package priced above \$129, please call 1-888-653-6450 or visit www.lifelinescreening.com/community-partners.**

Inasmuch United Fort Myers

A one day Mission Blitz sponsored by local churches to help those in need in Fort Myers

March 4th, 2017

Sign-ups begin February 26th

Projects will include:

- *Feed the Machines – save your quarters, the Battle of the Home States will begin!*
- *Life Books*
- *No Sew Throws and Sew Throws*
- *Nursing Home Visits with PAWS*
- *Harry Chapin – sort and organize local food pantry shelves*
- *Painting Projects*
- *Playground beautification*
- *Help to the Salvation Army, PACE and other service organizations*
- *Minor Home Repairs*
- *Operation Foster Child – donations are needed for children in the Foster Care system. Wanted are new or gently used dress and play clothes, children's toiletries, diapers, etc. The need is greatest for ages up to 10. See the Foster Child Tree in the courtyard to learn how you can help. On March 4th we'll sort donations and pack the bags.*
- *After Event Celebration Team, Photography Team, Meals for Workers Team, Administrative Team, etc!*

Let's come together to help others, meet new friends, and have some fun!

YOUTH GROUP

Covenant Presbyterian Church hosts a full calendar of events for all youth in 6th through 12th grade! Youth Bible Study is held every Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. before worship. Youth fellowships take place every month on Sunday evenings and include meals, games, activities, music and discussions. A variety of trips, retreats, mission and outreach opportunities are available as well. Youth do not need to be members of Covenant to participate in activities and are always welcome to invite friends! For specific information regarding dates and times of youth activities please contact Eric Nanz at nanzet@gmail.com.

Youth Activities for January:

- 1/1 No Sunday school or youth group
- 1/8 Sunday School & Confirmation session #4 (11:30am - 1:30pm)
- 1/15 Sunday School & Lunch/YG after church (11am - 1pm)
- 1/18 Youth Band Rehearsal (7:00-8:15pm)
- 1/22 Sunday School & Evening Youth Group (5-7pm)
- 1/25 Youth Band Rehearsal (7:00-8:15pm)
- 1/29 Youth Sunday & Lunch in Fellowship Hall (9am - 12:30pm)



King's Brass

Sunday, January 29, 2017

7:30 p.m.

For more than 20 years The King's Brass has performed over 100 concerts each season with three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, keyboards and percussion. Playing a wide variety of music from Gabrieli to hymn classics, from Handel to jazz spirituals, from Christmas carols to patriotic marches, The King's Brass uses all corners of the concert hall to lift hearts in praise.

In November, thirteen members of Covenant (including volunteers and staff) were CPR trained. Eight of those were also trained in First Aid. A huge thank you to Stephanie Barclift for arranging the training and to Fire Chief Christman for providing the training. If you are interested in future trainings, please email us at info@covpcfm.com.

Stephen's Ministry

Another year has flowed past me. At times the waters have been tranquil, warm, and inviting. At others, icy, choppy, full of rapids, rocks, and dangerous unknowns. In front of me lies a new year; a new stream with many adventures and perils to face. But last year's events still move with me and at times appear unending. Do any of us wish to move on life's river alone when problems still trail behind and upon us? If you would like a Christian friend to travel with you for awhile, please, consider asking a Stephen's Minister to join your personal journey.

Stephen's Ministers are trained Christians who offer a caring, confidential, Christian support for you.
 Pat Arner: 997-9108 Sarah Jane Essebaggers: 616-502-7086 Barb Sheets: 995-8881
 Lyn Sisti-Sommer: 656-1595 Rev. Dr. Jeff Deyoe: 334-8937

November 2016 Financial Report

Income for November	\$47,764
Income Year-to-date	\$595,601
Expenses for November	\$53,384
Expenses Year-to-date	\$585,670
Year-to-date overage	\$9,631
Current Balance on Loan	\$255,615
Principal & Interest Paid in November	\$3,938

**A complete finance report is available in the church office each month.*

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for the prayers when I was in the hospital having surgery. The beautiful flowers were delivered by an angel - Connie Burkert.

Thank you. God Bless You! Cynthia Parker

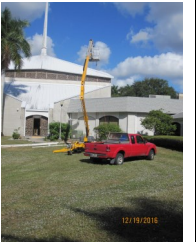
Thank you to Pack 93 Cub Scouts for supplying and spreading the mulch in the playground and around the trees in the courtyard. The pack has also been doing a good job of helping around the church campus on other occasions with weeds and landscaping.

The next time you see Maurie Salvesen, David Beardsley or Gary Brothers, give them a big "thank you" for repairing our deep well irrigation pump.

The submersible pump, located 120 feet below ground level, had broken loose from its pipe, preventing the system from functioning to irrigate our lawn and plantings. The system is necessary as using city water is cost-prohibitive.

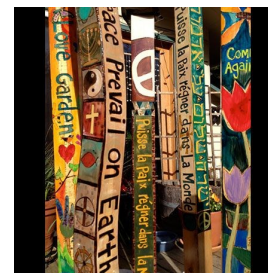
Involved in this repair was the rental of an aerial platform and a qualified well specialist, who billed the church \$350 for his services—then marked the invoice "a donation". This volunteer labor and equipment donation resulted in the total saving to the church for the rehabilitation of the system being nearly \$2000!

Thanks to all for their hard work and generosity!



Family Ministries is Hosting a Peace Pole Making Event:

Sunday, January 22nd, 11:30-1:30 pm and include Pizza Lunch!



Peace Poles have been planted around the world since 1955 with the universal message of: "May Peace Prevail On Earth" in many different languages. On January 22nd, the Covenant community will have the opportunity to make a peace pole which will then be "planted" on site. Those who participate will also have access to all the supplies needed to make their own peace pole, to be planted in your home. We will begin with an introduction as to the significance of the Peace Pole and conclude our time with a short Peace Pole planting ceremony as we "plant" the pole that has been created together.

PLEASE NOTE: This gathering will require signing up in advance at the Connection Station board in the courtyard or by calling the church office no later than Monday, January 16th so that supplies can be purchased in advance. The cost for this event is \$25 per family or household and covers the cost of ONE peace pole that can be "planted" in your yard, porch or other place in your home AND PIZZA LUNCH. There will be a peace pole display in the church courtyard beginning January 1st. If you would like to plan on making more than one peace pole, there will be an additional \$20 charge.

Questions? Contact Ruth DeYoe at 689-8006 or ruthdeyoe@gmail.com

Thanks for Continued Support of Palestine Olive Oil Sales

Thank you Covenant members and friends for continuing support of Palestine olive oil sales at the Alternative Christmas Market. Sales totals were 23 bottles of oil and 5 packets of Palestine Thyme spice mix. Proceeds from these sales support planting of olive trees; production, bottling and packaging of olive oil; art based emotional therapy for Palestinian children and start-up of new businesses in Palestine. Our next olive oil sales event will be on Palm Sunday (in April), but in the meantime, we still have a small inventory of olive oil and spice mix which can be purchased through the Church.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN BIBLE STUDY



PW BIBLE STUDY—Presbyterian Women are studying “Who is Jesus? What a Difference a Lens Makes” by Judy Yates Siker. Pastor DeYoe conducts a monthly Bible study the first Monday at 10:45 a.m. in room F205. Everyone is welcome to attend.

PW CIRCLES—We invite you to come and visit one of the circles which meet at the following times:

- Naomi Circle - 2nd Monday at 6:30 pm
- Deborah Circle and Ruth Circle - 2nd Tuesday at 10 a.m.
- Elizabeth Circle - 2nd Thursday at 9:30 a.m.

For more information about Circles or PW, please call Nora Harmon at 645-1125

Presbyterian Women will be holding their annual Treasure Trove sale on Saturday, January 28. Be sure to save the date so that you can come and shop, shop, shop! We will have pictures, signs, wind chimes, Knick knacks, novelty picture frames, and many miscellaneous items. Many of the items make wonderful gifts.

Please pray for our friends who are unable to attend services:

Maureen Bashaw, Doris Flaitz, Gloria Gibbs, and Sue Loman.

God Bless You!



**SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 5**

Covenant's Concert Series

continues the tradition of glorifying God through music. Our concerts are designed to enrich listeners and to affect a greater awareness of God's power so that He may be glorified as we creatively use the gifts He has given us. Please invite your friends and neighbors to any or all of these wonderful concerts.

January 29, 2017

Kings Brass

February 10, 2017

John Leavitt, Piano and Organ

March 3, 2017

Coast Guard Academy—Idlers

March 17, 2017

Messiah College Choir

March 31, 2017

Covenant Spring Concert



Peacemaking Commitment

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Covenant's Book Club... Brown Bag 'n' Books meets on the third Thursday of each month at 11 am in F205. Bring your lunch or cup of tea and join us! Book selections are available for lending in CPC library. For more information, stop by our library or email Jo Ann Leasure tcup166@embarqmail.com or Beverly Campbell campbell.beverly@gmail.com Here are the upcoming selections:

Thursday, January 19, 2017 *The Underground Railroad* by Colton Whitehead

*Wednesday, February 15, 2017 at 10 am, Wednesday Morning Live Speaker, Lyn Millner, *The Allure of Immortality: An American Cult, a Florida Swamp, and a Renegade Prophet*. The utopian community relocated to Estero, FL in 1894.

Thursday, February 16, 2017 Book Club "Road Trip" to the Koreshan State Historic Site. The utopian community that is the subject of Dr. Milner's book is now a 305 acre park in Estero. Meet at church parking lot at 9:30 am for car pool to 3800 Corkscrew Road, Estero, FL 33928. We will try to get a private tour of the historic site for our group. After the tour, we will lunch together at a restaurant (to be decided at our January meeting).

Thursday, March 16, 2017 *The Power of One* by Bryce Courtenay.

COVENANT'S LIBRARY IS HAVING A BOOK SALE

January 15, 22 and 29, 2017

Covenant New Member Class- January 29

If you are interested in Covenant Church membership or just want to learn more about Covenant and our Presbyterian Church (USA) denomination, you are invited to attend the next New Member Class on Sunday, January 29 at 11:30 am following worship service in Room F-205. The one hour class will include the following topics:

- Overview of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
- PC (USA) beliefs, creeds and confessions
- Covenant Church history, organization, ministries and missions
- How to become a member of Covenant Church

Covenant also offers Affiliate Memberships for those who want to retain primary membership in their home church.

[Bread for the World Four-Part Christian Study Series beginning on Sunday, January 8, room F207](#)

The 2017 Christian Study Guide includes four small-group sessions rooted in the content of Fragile Environments, Resilient Communities. Session 1 introduces the Report's overall theme and the other three sessions develop specific topics that the Hunger Report emphasizes. Please join us for this timely study. Discussion resources are available in class. May study inspire and empower us to move into new opportunities for serving others, both individually and as a church community!

January 8 - Session 1: Fragility and Hunger

January 15 - Session 2: Causes of Fragility

January 22 - Session 3: Who is the most vulnerable in fragile states and communities?

January 29 - Session 4: No one left behind

[Adult Bible Study meets in F201— "The Psalmist's Cry"](#) exploring the Psalms as scripts for lament-guides for how to express feelings honestly, in ways normally not permitted or expected within Christian community. Renowned author and theologian, Walter Brueggemann, hosts the video segments shown each week, followed by class discussion. Leaders include John Sheppard, JoAnn Leasure, Barb Shaffer and Mary Ellen Frost.