

OCTOBER 2015

Covenant Presbyterian Church  
2439 McGregor Blvd.  
Fort Myers, FL 33901  
239-334-8937  
www.covpcfm.com  
info@covpcfm.com

### WML 2016: Community Lecture Series

The Wednesday Morning Live series will take place in January and February 2016. All lectures are free of charge and open to the entire community. Authors will have books available for purchase. Coffee and snacks will be served beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the upstairs chapel and the lectures take place from 10 to 11 a.m. in F207.

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Jan. 6  | The Rev. Dr. Jeff DeYoe, Senior Pastor, Covenant Presbyterian Church               |
| Jan. 13 | Lydia Black, Director of Alliance for the Arts: "State of the Arts"                |
| Jan. 20 | Gwendolyn Howard, "A Story of Courage"   |
| Jan. 27 | Jeanne Struve, Dietitian, "What's Eating You"                                      |
| Feb. 3  | Frank Mann, County Commissioner, Author of "Jungle Cruise, From Hell to Hereafter" |
| Feb. 10 | Jim McLaughlin, former WINK anchorman: "Insider View of Good News"                 |
| Feb. 17 | Betty Parker, News Columnist: "The Other Side of Politics"                         |
| Feb. 27 | David Dorsey, Author: "Fourth Down in Dunbar"                                      |

OCTOBER 2015

# The CLARION

THE NEWSLETTER OF COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN

## A Message from our Pastor...

Greetings,

I will be honest and say that as a pastor, bringing up matters of church finance is not my favorite part of the job and is something that throughout my career I have done very sparingly. For the most part, around stewardship season in the life of churches I have served I sought to put this whole matter into a theological/faith framework, and mostly in line with how Jesus reflected upon such earthly realities. I cannot know for sure, but I would guess that in his mind it was not the most important thing on his priority list, but the fact is that he talked about it a lot throughout the gospels. From my reading and understanding of biblical context, he brought it up as often as he did because he saw how it was getting in the way of people doing the work of God's Kingdom.

Church financial challenges have been front and center since the first day I walked into Covenant as your pastor over three and half years ago. We are a congregation of just under 600 members, up from the original 400 or so who committed themselves to a new beginning eight years ago. We are a congregation for which that new beginning meant having to take care of a church facility that once served the needs of twice as many people. We are a congregation that still has a staff structure in which a number of needed key players are volunteer and do not receive a salary. We are a congregation that has known the blessings of having a volunteer base for these past eight years that has made the difference in being able to afford this ministry. Many have contributed to the work of maintaining our large facility so that we have had not to call service people as often as most churches do. And many have contributed programmatically so that often the costs of simply doing ministry we all take for granted have been greatly reduced and even eliminated. To you, who have given of yourselves even beyond your financial giving we are very thankful and in many ways indebted.

We are quickly arriving at a place that church leaders and I have seen coming for awhile. The property committee has actually discussed the fact that most of them can no longer climb up on high ladders to do the difficult work of maintaining the building. When they are unable to do that our costs inevitably go up. They have done well to help us defer, but the things that once could be fixed and held together with a little magic are quickly becoming items where we need professional service to fix, replace and maintain. Recently, someone from the city code enforcement department came onto church property unannounced, inspected the cosmetic, soffit-type structures that can be seen above as you enter the elevator/office area from the parking lot, and determined that they are a hazard because the stucco is breaking up and falling down. There is now yellow caution tape below these structures and the city

Continued on page 2...

Continued...

has given us 60 days to correct the code violations. The property committee has been aware of the problem for some time. It is the result of many years of maintenance failure on the church's part, and is one of those matters we had to defer as of late because we had more serious facility problems to address. Now we will have no choice and wonder how we shall proceed with no financial reserves at this point in time.

Last year, the Session voted to cut budget and presented a bottom-line to the congregation that was less than the year before. This year, the finance committee has called upon all committees to cut their proposed 2016 budgets by at least 5%, and preferably as close to 10% as they can. Because the "fat" of the budget has been gone for a long while, we will be cutting into that which we would describe as the heart and soul of church program and mission. At the same time, we anticipate the possibility of not offering salary increases to our paid staff for 2016.

I can tell you that although I don't welcome this, it does not come as a surprise to me. Congregational giving has been pretty much holding steady since I have been here, but the reality is that we were losing ground bit by bit over that time because such giving has not really increased to meet our ongoing need. We actually would have been in this place a year or two earlier if not for the fact that in my first fall season here we ran a Miracle Sunday campaign to make up the budget deficit and wound up with a little extra to commit to reserves. Then, as you might remember, we headed into that New Year and had a major failure of the old sanctuary air conditioning system and had to have another campaign (your worst nightmare is to run a successful financial campaign and shortly thereafter have to run another one), which along with some of the reserves we acquired earlier enabled us to replace that system. There are other AC systems serving other parts of the facility, by the way, that we have been nursing along for quite some time and we keep hoping and praying that they will hang in there a little longer.

There are a lot of people we can thank for their selfless contributions to helping us "stay afloat" around here. There are many "worker bees", who if we did not have them we'd be in financially deeper than we are now. There are also those "angels" who have, above and beyond their regular pledge, heard about projects that absolutely had to be done and contributed even more to the cause. I want to commend Gary Brothers, our facility manager, who looks for every possible way to cut costs, and looks for creative ways to address needs that would be much costlier without that kind of commitment.

My message to you, the CPC congregation, is that we are at a place in which we need, most importantly your prayers, but also your attention and concern. The Session has voted to change its stewardship season back to this fall (as it had been traditionally done) simply because delaying the process of budgeting and planning to meet our church needs until well into the first quarter of our fiscal year has not worked well given the challenges we are facing. You will hear more about this soon, but the key to success is to realize that when all of us give just a little more big needs do get met.

As I said at the outset, this is not the kind of newsletter message I like to write and I really don't like being the bearer of bad news. Yet, given what we know and the challenge before us I would not be fulfilling my responsibility as your pastor if I said nothing. It is my hope that we will all pray about the needs of our church ministry and respond accordingly. This is a great place to worship and pray, study, be in fellowship, and work together in the mission and service of Jesus Christ. I look forward to getting beyond these particular challenges so that we can serve God together as we always have.

While serving my first parish there were a number of times when the parish treasurer approached me on payday and said: "Jeff, we have to wait until after the offering is received on Sunday in order to pay you..." More than once I thought to myself that this rural parish would not survive much longer. Thirty-four years later, those churches still exist and are doing ministry. This is consistent with what God has shown me as a minister: God is faithful to his church. I have seen that truth play out throughout my career and it is one upon which I have always stood.

Peace and Grace, *Jeff*



Covenant Presbyterian Church hosts a full calendar of events for all youth in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:nanzet@gmail.com).

#### **Youth Activities for October:**

- 10/4 - Sunday School
- 10/9 - Cedarkirk Family Camp
- 10/11 - Sunday School (*for those not attending Cedarkirk*)
- 10/18 - Sunday School & Evening Fellowship at 5 p.m.
- 10/25 - Sunday School & Evening Kickball Game at 5 p.m.



### **COVENANT PRESBYTERIANS AND FRIENDS IN PALESTINE**

On October 5<sup>th</sup> a group from Covenant Presbyterian Church, as well as others from elsewhere in the United States (14 in all) are heading for Israel and Palestine and will return on October 19<sup>th</sup>. The main reason for going on the trip is to participate in the Palestinian olive harvest taking place in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, otherwise known as the West Bank. The Covenant group is traveling there as the U.S. Presbyterian contingent, known as Keep Hope Alive, that will join a larger international team of anywhere from 50—75 people from Britain, Europe, and Australia. The program is organized by the Joint Advocacy Initiative of the East Jerusalem YMCA and the YWCA of Palestine. Its purpose is to assist Palestinian farmers and their families in harvesting the annual olive crop. It is very often the case that even while the land upon which these olive trees grow has been owned by Palestinian families for generations, the Israeli military prevents the owners from working their own land. The reason is because Israeli law stipulates that farmland in Palestine which has not been worked for two successive years is subject to eminent domain. If the military can prevent any work being done for that period of time, the government automatically takes it in its increasing effort to make Palestinians landless. The tree planting program, in which a group from Covenant participated in February 2014, and the olive picking program which occurs in the fall, is an effort by the global Christian community to prevent this injustice from occurring. In addition to the harvest, travelers will have the opportunity to learn about Palestinian culture, as well as life under a 48 year occupation. In addition to the work we will be doing, the group will also visit holy sites in the Galilee region, as well as visiting Jericho, Bethlehem, Old City Jerusalem, the Dead Sea, Masada, and Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. Those on the trip are: *from Covenant*—Pat Arner, Jeff DeYoe, Nora Harmon, Skip Laukemper, Laura and Jack Ruzicho, Richard Shafer, Betty and Bill Whitaker, and Barb Chapin; *from elsewhere*—Patty and Robert Abell, Lexington, KY; Tina DeYoe, Los Alamos, NM; and Dan Schumacher, Worthington, OH. Please keep the whole Covenant team and international team in your prayers this month.





**Saturday, March 5, 2016**

Sign-ups will begin in February!

At this time, we're collecting donations for the foster children, including "like new" clothing, backpacks and duffels.

Bring donations to the church office.

**Peacemaking Commitment**



Religions are not for separating people from one another; they are meant to bind them together.

Mohandas Gandhi

**Instrumental Ensemble**

The instrumental ensemble at Covenant is actively recruiting all instrumentalists (brass, woodwind, string) to join the group. Rehearsals are each Wednesday in the choir room from 4-6 p.m. and performs in the church service once a month. By-in-large traditional Christian hymns, including some good ole gospel tunes are played! If you are one of our winter visitors and do not wish to travel with your instrument, here is a suggestion for you. Cadence Music in Fort Myers rents musical instruments (short and long term). If this is an appealing thought, please call Todd or Chris at 239-275-6262 at Cadence. If you have any questions about the instrumental ensemble, please contact David Michie at [ddmichie@comcast.net](mailto:ddmichie@comcast.net)

**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.

November 6	Cindy Scaruffi-Klispie, Trumpet
December 11	Covenant Christmas Concert
January 15	Joel Raney, Piano Concert
February 19	Barbary Coast Jazz Band
March 18	Spring Concert
April 1	Caroline Hong Piano Concert
April TBA	Fort Myers High School Concert Choir

**August 2015 Financial Report**

Income for August	\$45,697
Income Year-to-date	\$392,896
Expenses for August	\$55,053
Expenses Year-to-date	\$439,471
Year-to-date deficit	\$46,575
Current Balance on Loan	\$298,202
Principal & Interest Paid in August	\$3,939

A complete finance report is available in the church office.

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

**Barbara Childs, Gloria Gibbs, Betty Gibson, Jack & Gwen Pixler, and Dudley Smith.**

**God Bless You!**

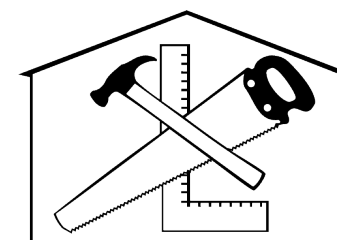
**Sunday Morning Classes Offered at CPC**

All Sunday school classes meet weekly from 9 to 9:45 a.m.

- ⇒ The Adult Bible class continues a study on the Gospel of Matthew in F201 with alternating leaders.
- ⇒ "Living the Questions..." seeks to create an environment where participants not only interact with one another in exploring today's theological thought but together strive to explore the places where faith intersects life. Each class begins with an introduction followed by short video clips of prominent Christian theologians and interspersed with class discussion. Printed resources on the topics are available in advance as well as in class each week. Class is facilitated by Ruth DeYoe and Barb Sheets. Join us in F207.
  - October Topics:
    - Oct. 4 Prayer: Intimacy with God
    - Oct. 11 & 18 Compassion: The Heart of Jesus' Ministry
    - Oct. 25 Creative Transformation
- ⇒ The Youth Group gathers in D3/4 and is exploring a fun and lively curriculum by Spark House—"re:form—Ancestors".
- ⇒ Elementary students in grades K-5 meet in D5. This year's curriculum is *Growing in Grace in Gratitude*.
- ⇒ Preschool children can join us in the Children's Center and participate in a Bible-centered lesson that shapes their hearts to be like and follow Christ by planting the word.

**Having trouble going through the Medicare "Maze?"** Jo Marshall, a SHINE Counselor (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) will thoroughly explain both the Traditional Medicare Plans and The Advantage Care Plans, including the changes that will go into effect in 2016. She'll answer all questions, including how to get help if you're having trouble paying for your prescriptions. Medicare open enrollment is October 15th - December 7th, but don't sign up until you've heard this presentation. Join us on October 26th at 2 pm in Calvin Hall. Please sign up at the Connection Station.

*This program is brought to you by your Stephen Ministers.*



**Interested in helping give the elementary Sunday school room a makeover? Contact Dawn Castner at 334-8937.**

## STEPHEN MINISTRY...

### *A thought about grief:*

*When we hurt so much inside but, bury that hurt deep and faraway for no one else to see, we deny our own hurt. It does not make the pain go away or aid in the healing process, rather it delays our ability to heal and can erupt in sudden outbursts that leave us questioning, "Where did that come from?"*

Our Stephen's Ministers are here to help...and care for you! We practice the four C's: Christian listening, Caring, Confidentiality, and Community. Stephen's Ministers bring God's love and care into your life. They'll listen, encourage, and pray with you and for you. If you, or someone you know, are hurting, contact one of these Stephen Leaders today. Being a member of Covenant is not a requirement.

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



Covenant Presbyterian Church will join thousands of others around the nation in sending shoe boxes of Christmas gifts go children in countries around the world. For most of them, this shoe box will be the only gift they receive. MOPS plans to pack at least 100 boxes. Please donate shoe boxes or items from the following (please no guns or other war-type toys)...

Washcloths	Small toys (Barbie Dolls)	Drinking cups
Toothbrushes	Pens, Pencils, markers	Crayons
Flip-flops	Solar Calculators	Notebooks
Paper	Bar soap	Picture books
Scissors	Hair brush or combs	Nail Kits
Jump ropes	Toy cars	Yo-yos
Balls	T-shirts	Sunglasses
Hair clips, bows	Hats	Flashlights with batteries
Hard candies	Jewelry	
Pencil Sharpeners	Small Ziploc bags	

Plan now to be a part of this great mission project. If you can't get out to buy the gift items, you might consider a cash donation to help with shipping costs. Each box is \$7. Make your check out to "Covenant" with OCC in the memo.

Another option to support OCC is to attend the Family Photo Shoot on Oct. 17th. There is a \$90 fee and you will receive 7 -10 edited photos to with all rights. Call Megan to schedule your appointment (239)691-2334.

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS FOR SEPTEMBER

The Session met on Tuesday, September 15, 2015 with Rev. Jeff DeYoe moderating the meeting and eleven elders in attendance. Others present: Gary Brothers, Facilities Manager, Pat Arner, Deacon; and Barbara Heflin, Clerk of Session.

- Approved changing Commitment Sunday to November 15th with Minute for Missions on October 23, November 1 and 8th .
- Approved the 2016 Wednesday Morning Live lecture series. (Watch for further information in the Clarion and Bulletins)
- Approved the Junior League of Fort Myers use of D1 and D5 on Saturday, October 3, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. for a fee of \$75.
- Approved the following times for the Christmas Eve services - 5:00 p.m. Family Service; 8:00 p.m. Candlelight Service.
- Approved Hunter Ferrell, who is director of World Missions in Louisville, to hold a meeting at Covenant on Wednesday, November 18th at 1:30 p.m. He will be the keynote speaker at the Presbytery meeting on November 19th at the Community Presbyterian Church, Englewood.
- The Finance Committee is recommending a 5% - 10% reduction in committee budgets for 2016. Committee budgets are due by the end of October.
- The Nominating Committee will begin preparing a slate of officers for 2016 (5 deacons, 4 elders, and 1 trustee).
- The Peacemaking offering will be received during worship on World Communion Sunday, October 4th .
- Fourteen people will be going with Pastor DeYoe on the olive picking trip to Palestine. The group will leave on Monday, October 5th and return on Monday, October 19th .

## COSTUME PARADE FRIDAY, OCT. 30TH

This is a special event for toddlers and preschoolers. The parade will take place at 10 a.m. in the church office. Please volunteer to hand out candy or simply come and see the kids in their costumes. This is part of our Parents Day Out program.



### PW BIBLE STUDY

Presbyterian Women are studying *Come to the Waters* by Judy Record Fletcher. Pastor DeYoe conducts a monthly Bible study the first Monday at 11 a.m. in room F205. Everyone is welcome to attend.

### PW CIRCLES

We invite you to come and visit or join one of the circles which meet at the following times:

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

For more information about Circles or PW, please call Glenda Van Emst at 694-3905

**Please mark your calendars for Sunday, October 25 and plan on joining Presbyterian Women at our Fall Gathering following the worship service. Our program will honor all veterans and will feature John Sheppard as our speaker. Plan on enjoying lunch with us and then listening to one of Covenant's very special members. Everyone is invited! Sign-ups for this event will begin on October 4th.**

