



The Ark of The Covenant

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

January 2010

The Annual Congregational Meeting & Potluck

will be held on **Sunday, January 24, 2010**

immediately following the 11:00 AM worship service.

The purpose of the meeting is to receive the 2009 Annual Report, receive the 2010 Budget as approved by Session, review the adequacy of compensation for the Pastor and Associate Pastor, and to elect members for the Congregational Nominating Committee.

Please bring a dish to share for the potluck following the meeting (what a wonderful way to use up some holiday leftovers!).

Thank You to the following people who are retiring from positions on Session and the Board of Deacons. Your hard work and contributions are very much appreciated!

Elders

Dave Arrasmith
Ed Cole
Agnes Holswade
Woody Owens
Bill Wahlert

Deacons

Sharon Franz
John Frey
Laura Gillespie
Lissa Kowalski
Stephanie Marks
Nancy Ramirez

And Welcome to the new Elders and Deacons. We look forward to your energy and ideas.

Doug Doerfert
Lindsey Gilbert
Dennes Goswick
Laura Matzen
Jane Plunkett
Scott Rancher

Kirsten Bennett
Karen Doerfert
Brent Gillespie
Mary McGee
Vicki Mirabal
Stacy Parks
Nancy Ramirez (returning)
Todd Rancher

Ark of the Covenant

Covenant Presbyterian Church
The Rev. Dr. Catherine Robinson, Pastor
The Rev. Seth Finch, Assoc. Pastor

Correspondents this issue:

Anne Arrasmith, Cyndy Eizner, Chuck
Evans, Seth Finch, Doris Hopping,
Kimberlee Conway Ireton, Bob Mennonna,
Catherine Robinson, Alice Segrist, Wynell
Tyler, Bill Wahlert

Deadline for next issue: January 22, 2010

Contributions

Office – 299-3621

Flower Ministry – The Flower Chart sign-up is posted on the Narthex bulletin board. Sign up to purchase flowers for the Communion Table. Cost is \$20.00.

Rio Grande Food Bank – The first Sunday of every month is *Food Bank Sunday*. Put donations in the shopping cart in the Fellowship Hall.

Transportation – If you can occasionally provide a ride for other members of our congregation living in or near your neighborhood, please notify the office.

New Year's Prayer

Dear Lord, I thank You for this day, I thank You for my being able to see and to hear this morning.

I'm blessed because You are a forgiving God and an understanding God. You have done so much for me and You keep on blessing me.

Forgive me this day for everything I have done, said or thought that was not pleasing to you. I ask now for Your forgiveness. Please keep me safe from all danger and harm.

Help me to start this day with a new attitude and plenty of gratitude. Let me make the best of each and every day to clear my mind so that I can hear from You.

Please broaden my mind that I can accept all things. Let me not whine and whimper over things I have no control over. And give me the best response when I'm pushed beyond my limits. I know that when I can't pray, You listen to my heart.

Continue to use me to do Your will. Continue to bless me that I may be a blessing to others.

Keep me strong that I may help the weak. Keep me uplifted that I may have words of encouragement for others.

I pray for those that are lost and can't find their way. I pray for those that are misjudged and misunderstood.

I pray for those who don't know You intimately. I pray for those that don't believe. But I thank You that I believe that God changes people and God changes things.

I pray for all my sisters and brothers, for each and every family member in their households.

I pray for peace, love and joy in their homes; that they are out of debt and all their needs are met.

I pray that every eye that reads this knows there is no problem, circumstance, or situation greater than God. Every battle is in Your hands for You to fight.

I pray that these words be received into the hearts of every eye that sees it in Jesus' name. Amen!

Contributed by Anne Arrasmith

“As the Spirit Moves Me”

Dear Covenant Kin,

When this newsletter arrives, Christmas will be fading and our thoughts will be moving toward how much we have overeaten or overspent during the holiday season. Many of us will be resolving to exercise more, spend less, have more family time, or de-clutter a closet. (I have one particular cabinet that I call “the last frontier.” I think that it would take a whole year just to organize that one cabinet!)

Sometimes New Year’s resolutions become important moments of change in our lives. Much of the time, however, they become distant memories by Valentine’s Day.

In the church, we take an opportunity in January of each year not for New Year’s resolutions, but to remember who we are and Whose we are. We do this on the second Sunday of January (January 10 this year), which is the Sunday when we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus. On that Sunday, as we remember Jesus’ baptism, we also renew the covenant made in *our* baptism. Once again, we remember that we are baptized—that before we ever knew what love was, God loved us. Once again, we make the baptismal promises, committing to live our lives as followers of Jesus, and to serve God in the church.

Remembering our baptism is very different from making a New Year’s resolution because remembering our baptism is more about what God does than about what we do. We also know that we will need to be reminded again...and again, and again, and again. This is not something we’re doing and imagining

that we’re going to get it right forever and ever. We *know* that we’ll mess up!

That’s why we need to be reminded again...and again, and again, and again. God loves us and gives us gifts beyond our imagining. And because of our gratitude for these gifts, we commit to offer our gifts in ministry.

We also ordain and install officers on the Sunday of the Baptism of our Lord. Before they are ordained and installed, elders and deacons do well to remember their baptism. They have been called to leadership because of particular gifts that they have, and trained for their service—but their baptism is their first and most basic call to ministry.

I hope that you can join us for worship on January 10, as we renew the baptismal covenant, and as we ordain and install officers.

And I look forward to seeing what God will do with us in 2010!

See you in church!

Peace,
Catherine

P.S. Elsewhere in the newsletter, you will find a very short article on prayer, titled “Pray Where You Are,” by Kimberlee Conway Ireton. It is from a resource called “The Presbyterian Leader” that we receive at the church. I commend the article to you! It may help you if you are yearning for ways to remember God’s presence during your day.

Membership Memos

Telephone Directories

We are planning on printing new phone directories in February. Toward that end, please check the listing on the table in the Narthex and correct any information on your address, various phone numbers, and email addresses (and for your children). You can also call the office to review your information.

Looking for Liturgists

Are you looking for a way to be more involved in the work of the church? Consider signing up to be a liturgist during worship services. A schedule is made at the beginning of the year and your turn generally comes up two – four times a year. The sign-up sheet is located on the table in the Narthex. **If you have been a liturgist this past year, your name will automatically be included on the new rotation unless you notify Alice Segrist.**

By Alice Segrist

...and Ushers

The 2010 usher schedule is being prepared. If you would like to serve in this capacity or if you wish to be removed from the usher list, please call Wynell Tyler at 292-2539.

By Wynell Tyler

Finance

Covenant's Future Foundation

Making a bequest or charitable gift is a way to express your gratitude for the blessings received throughout your lifetime. It can provide support for Covenant and its mission for generations to come, creating a lasting legacy of faith and generosity.

By Chuck Evans

Mission Works

Blood Drives...

2010 will begin a new chapter in blood donations at Covenant. In an attempt to gain more donations, and to make giving easier for regular donors, we will hold six blood drives, eight weeks apart, beginning in February. This will allow donors to donate at every blood drive. The dates for the 2010 blood drives are: February 21, April 18, June 13, August 8, October 3, and December 5.

As you consider what you might be able to do in the way of mission giving in 2010, please consider becoming a regular blood donor. The donation of one pint of blood may save up to three lives.

Committee Members...

What can you do in order to get involved at Covenant? Why not participate in one or more mission projects / activities. There are local neighborhood, city wide, and national involvement possibilities. Help build a Habitat for Humanity house, donate blood, volunteer at Sombra del Monte Elementary School, bake pies for Asbury Cafe' to support the homeless, cook a meal for the residents of Dismas House, go on an intergenerational mission trip, and others. For a look at what lies ahead for the Mission Committee in 2010, come join us at our January 13 meeting at 7:00 PM at the church. If you like what you see and hear, you might even want to become a member of the committee.

By Bob Mennonna

Stewardship

As you read this newsletter article, I no longer chair the Stewardship Committee for the church. I think the congregation should know

Opportunities

that this Stewardship Committee was the first of its kind for this church. It was a great pleasure and challenge to start up a committee that had been buried deeply in the previously known Business, Stewardship and Finance Committee (BS&F).

The committee was comprised of the following fine individuals:

Reverend Doctor Bill Hedrick, without whose expertise in fundraising we could never have accomplished what we did in making Stewardship a year-round project.

Lindsey Gilbert, head of Menaul School, who brought an expertise to the committee that melded synergistically with Dr. Hedrick to flesh out the map we would follow. His background as an educator was of invaluable service to our committee.

John Frey, our Deacon Representative, donated his expertise as a businessperson to polish the final product and make it attractive to the congregation. He is skilled at offering advice on advertising and delivering the product to the church.

Eric Wallace offered a youthful approach to the stewardship year-round aspect. He gave us the perspective of the young adult in the church, and served on our committee as well as on the Worship Committee.

I now turn this still somewhat rough-hewn committee over to the very capable hands of Mr. Lindsey Gilbert to chair, refine and improve what he has so generously helped to form.

It has been an honor to serve the church as a member of the Session and the chair of the Stewardship Committee for the past three years, and now I look forward to what the Lord has in store for me next...it's certain to be exciting no matter what it is.

By William J. "Bill" Wahlert

Martineztown

Martineztown House Auxiliary will meet on January 14, 2010 with refreshments at 9:30 AM and the meeting at 10:00. New Life and Sandia Presbyterian Women will hostess. The financial status of the Auxiliary will be discussed. Eugenia Cabiedes, Executive Director, will introduce the school staff and we will hear about each staff member's duties. All PW members are welcome to attend.

By Doris Hopping



Well this reflects pretty much how our first semester has gone -- upside down and backwards! But happy to say we have three new families joining us in January and we're on our way to a right side up New Year. Happy Holidays.

"Miss Cyndy" and your Preschool Staff

Pray Where You Are

By Kimberlee Conway Ireton

Introduction

Whenever I meet with the head-of-staff pastor at my church, he always begins our time together by lighting a white candle.

I love that candle. Its light reminds me, each time I look at it, that Christ, the light of the world, is present.

That simple act of remembering Christ's presence is prayer. I think that's why Dan lights the candle—so that each of us, each time we look at it, will remember Jesus, and will pray, even if it's only for a fraction of a second. But those fractions of seconds add up, weaving together the rest of our time, holding it in prayer.

As Christians, and especially as Christian leaders, we need to return early and often in prayer to the source of our call, our strength, and our purpose. Such returning need not be burdensome, but it does require a level of intentionality, at least at first. Soon, though, the practice of prayer becomes automatic, a habituated response in our hearts and minds.

What Is Prayer?

Certainly, prayer is talking to God, be that in thanksgiving or intercession. It is also being quiet in God's presence, listening for that still, small voice that speaks to our hearts.

But what if we broaden our understanding of prayer to include simple awareness of God's presence? Or even the *desire* to be aware of God's presence? Or our longing for more than what this life can be or offer—in whatever realm that longing comes?

I think all those things are prayer. My pastor's candle prompts me to remember the presence of God with us as we gather in Jesus' name. My desire to be aware of God prompts me to pray for eyes to see the divine presence. My longing for more—this happens most when fleeting beauty surrounds me and I long for it to last—is ultimately a longing for God's kingdom, and is both a prayer and a call to prayer.

But it's taken awhile for me to learn to pay attention to those God-ward flickers of my heart and learn to follow them. Two simple

tools can trigger awareness of God's presence, that is, can prompt us to pray.

Visual Reminders

Like my pastor's candle, visual reminders to pray are things we set out in places where we'll see them and, upon seeing them, be reminded to pray. The trick here, of course, is to actually pray when we see them—at first this takes effort and intentionality, but slowly it becomes a habit. My pastor's candle reminds me of Jesus, the Light of the world, but it took awhile for that response to become automatic in me.

A friend of mine lives in an old apartment house in Boston. Outside every door in her building is a small mezuzah, a metal case holding a tiny parchment inscribed with words of the Torah, which were left by the Jewish families who once lived there. When my friend realized what they were, she began to touch hers each time she entered her apartment, a way of reminding herself that God is present in her home and her life.

Similar to mezuzahs are the *lectio* cards another friend posts around his office. Printed with a verse from Scripture that he wants to internalize, these index cards remind him that being formed in the likeness of Christ is his deepest desire, and that whatever else he's doing can wait a split second—or longer if need be—for him to realign his heart with that desire. Placing a verse as the wallpaper on our iPhones, Blackberries, or computer screens can serve the same purpose.

Breath Prayer

Our breath is always with us, and it can be a powerful call to prayer, if we let it. Simply becoming aware of our breath can call to mind the Holy Spirit, the breath of God who sustains our lives.

A breath prayer is simply a short prayer or passage of Scripture, usually the length of one or two breaths, that you can recall with ease and which enables you (with lots of practice) to pray without ceasing.

One of the oldest Christian breath prayers is the Jesus Prayer—*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner*. Praying the Jesus Prayer links us with generations of Christians down through the centuries who have held this prayer in their hearts or spoken it on their lips.

Often as I'm doing some mindless task, I find myself thinking of other things, other people. I turn those thoughts toward God with a breath prayer, sometimes praying the Jesus Prayer while holding that person in my thoughts, other times pairing the name of the person with a name of God.

To incorporate a breath prayer into your life, it is easiest to begin by choosing one activity that you do repeatedly throughout the course of a given day. For example, each time you check your e-mail, pray your breath prayer. After doing this for awhile, you will realize that every time you check your e-mail, the breath prayer comes to mind without conscious effort. One task at a time, you can include your breath prayer in the routines of your life. Eventually, you'll find it seems to pray itself in you, continually bringing your attention back to Christ.

Conclusion

God is present always, everywhere. In the busyness of living and ministering to others, we forget that sometimes. Visual reminders of God's presence and our own inflowing, outflowing breath can prompt us to remember and to return to God, wherever we are.

This turning—or re-turning—to God in prayer can be the work of a moment. And those moments add up, weaving a pattern of prayer into the fabric of our lives.

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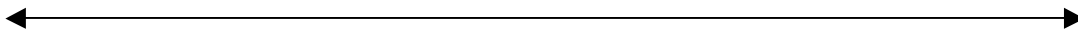


Covenant Presbyterian Church

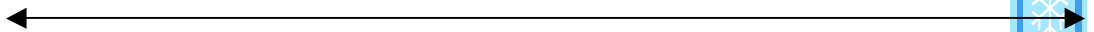
Children's Sunday School



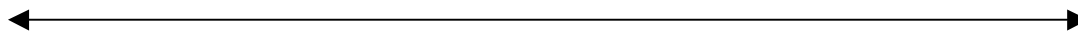
This month our focus in Sunday School will be the story of Esther. We encourage you to take the time to read Esther with your child in your children's Bible in preparation for January's Sunday School Lessons.



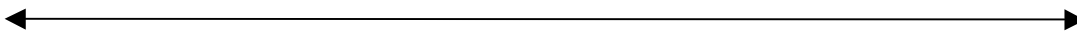
We will be having Sign-ups for Spring Sunday School Teachers during the month of January so please prayerfully consider serving the children of Covenant



If you have any questions or would like to volunteer as a Sunday School Teacher, please call the church office and ask for Seth for more information.



We want to thank everyone involved with making the Las Posadas Pageant a huge success this year! Especially Chris Schueler, Paul Roth, Rebecca Jolly, Jeff Jolly, Diane Jolly and Doris Buckman for their leadership; Elya Arrasmith, for creating adorable costumes; and of course all the kids for leading worship!



We also want to thank everyone who contributed to the Children's Christmas Mission project. We collected over 40 items to give to kids in need at Sombra Del Monte!

Youth News

Youth Schedule

Jan. 3rd—**NO YOUTH**
Jan. 10th—Youth Group Starts again! 12-3:00pm
Jan. 16th—Pie Day 2-5:00pm
Jan. 17th—Pie Auction 9:45 am
Jan. 17th—**NO YOUTH After Church**
Jan. 24th—Youth Group 12-3:00pm
Jan. 24th—**Sr. High Retreat Registration Due!!!**
Jan. 31st—Youth Group (Swing Lessons?) 12-3:00pm



Feb. 7th—Souper Bowl of Caring 8:30-12
Feb. 7th—Football Party @ Finch House 5:30-9pm
Feb. 12th—Set up for Swing Dance 6-9pm
Feb. 14th—Take Down Swing Dance Stuff 12-2pm (notice abbreviated time)
Feb. 19th-21st—Senior High Retreat
Feb. 21st—**NO YOUTH**
Feb. 28th—Youth Group 12-3pm

News:

Upcoming Fundraisers

PIE DAY!!! Jan. 16th, 2-5pm

We have so much fun baking pies for Asbury we decided to do it again in January, only this time the pies will go up for auction in the church to raise money to send the youth to Triennium. We will start baking around 2pm and after we finish we will have some pizza pies for dinner around 4:30 or 5.

Sr. High Retreat Registration Due!!! Jan. 24th

On Feb. 19-21st the Sr. High of the Presbytery of Santa Fe will be joining in our annual retreat at Ghost Ranch. It promises to be an amazing retreat again this year, as the theme is **Freaks and Geeks of the Bible!** If you would like to go and are in 9th-12th grade, we need to have your registrations in by January 24th for a lower registration fee. The cost is \$90, and the church has many scholarships available—talk to Seth if you would like help with this cost. Registration forms are available in the church office, and will be passed out at Youth Group.