



Covenant Church of Easton

The Salt Shaker

HE'S COMING BACK!

As we read the Gospels we quickly discover that the “heart” of Jesus was filled with love for people – all people. OK, there were those who irritated Him, but even for them He prayed for His Father’s forgiveness. Clearly, Jesus had a heart full of love for people.

One day as He and many of His followers were walking near the town of Nain, He was about to pass through the city gates when a funeral procession came by. The only child of a widowed woman had died, and Dr. Luke wrote: “*When the Lord saw her, His heart went out to her . . .*” (**Luke 7:13** - Today’s NIV). Then Jesus stopped His own journey, stopped the funeral procession, and went up to the lifeless body of this young man and proceeded to make him live again.

While love in the heart is a great beginning, it is only that. Love from the heart is meant to live out of us in tangible ways. We may not have the power to bring a dead body back to life – but we can bring life to others: the life resulting from paying attention, the life resulting from encouragement, the life resulting from a good and needed deed.

Jesus expressed His love in many ways – words of truth and enlightenment, touches that restored health, absolution that set people free from guilt, etc. And one way in particular was the promise of Jesus to come back.

In 1914 Ernest Shackleton led an expedition to Antarctica. His goal was to walk to the South Pole. Everything was going according to plan until a rapid drop in temperature trapped the ship and crushed its hull. Shackleton and his crew managed to make their way by lifeboat to a small island. Everyone was to remain there while Shackleton and a small crew were to set out to South Georgia Island (800 miles away) for help. Shackleton made a promise to his crew, “I will come back for you.”

In a rigged lifeboat, and with only a sextant to guide them, Shackleton made it to South Georgia Island, procured another ship and returned for the men he had left. The end of the story is that “no man was left behind.” Shackleton was true to his word, his heart was devoted to his crew.

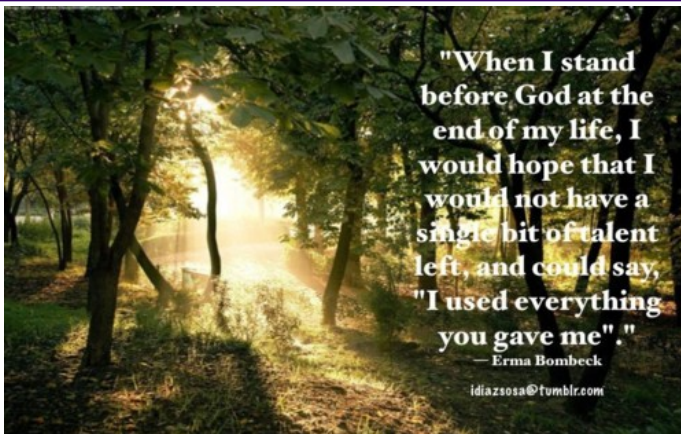
Jesus, whose heart is for us, has declared, “I’m coming back!” He’s coming back for those who have given Him their heart . . . their life. There are some who lately have told us they know when He is coming. Don’t believe them! The Bible (including the very words of Jesus Himself) are very clear, “No one knows when!” What we do know is this, “If you are His, He will come back for you!”

Pastor Craig



Are You Hiding Your Talent Under a Basket?

“Follow Me,” Jesus simply but powerfully commanded of the Apostles and they did. That call is made to us as well on this day and in this time. How do we follow Jesus? We try to live our lives as He did – the example of the perfect steward. Stewardship is the care and use of all that we have been given by God.



there are so many opportunities for you to use your talents right at church. You can serve through worship – for instance, be a greeter, help with communion set up & clean up, give of your musical talents, or offer to serve on the worship ministry team. Serve through church programs – join any of the ministries that interest you and where you can use your

Last month we talked about the stewardship of our time – using each day wisely, giving of our time generously and becoming a pipeline for God’s love. Stewardship involves more than our time, and a big part involves sharing our talent. You may be thinking “I’m the least talented person you know,” but the Bible says otherwise. Romans 12:6 says, “We have gifts that differ according to the grace given us...” And 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 says, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone”.

Stewardship of talent means nurturing, developing and using the God-given abilities which define us as unique individuals. Talents are special blessings each of us has received from a loving Creator

who values us as part of His ongoing creation. When we volunteer to work for our church or help our neighbor, we share “who we are” for the good of others.

You probably have talents you don’t even know about just waiting for you to try them out. Never been a committee chairperson? Try it out. Never sung in the choir? Try it out. Seek out a variety of tasks, not just the same old one you have been doing. You can also develop the talents that you already have – become even better! Good singers don’t often get that way magically. They just keep practicing. Look for training opportunities. Seeking different ways to use your talents improves them and makes the time spent more interesting for you.

Now that you have freed up your time to use it for the common good of the Body of Christ (see last month’s Salt Shaker article)

talents on the fellowship, service, properties & maintenance, discipleship, stewardship & finance, evangelism, children/youth, or women’s ministries. You could also teach a Sunday school class, Adult discipleship class, or share your own life experiences and personal expertise with a class.

Be a good steward of your talents by recognizing your gifts, accepting God’s mission for you, doing your best, developing existing talents, flexing your talent muscles, trying out new ones, and becoming a pipeline for God’s love.

“When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, ‘I used everything you gave me.’”
— Erma Bombeck

**The Stewardship
& Finance Ministry**

Membership Class

If you would like to learn more about Covenant or want to become a member, a Membership Class will be held Sunday, February 12 from 2-5:00 pm. For more information or if you plan to attend, please speak with Pastor Craig.



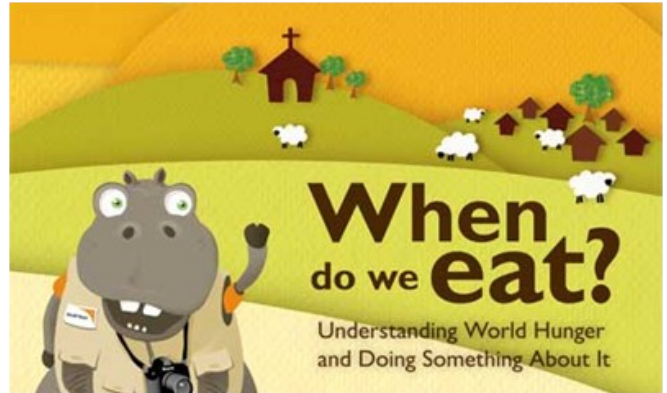
Children's Ministry

Friends' Night Out

6:30 - 7:45 pm
Grades K-5

*When Do We Eat:
Understanding World Hunger and Doing
Something About It*

No FNO on 2/21— Winter Recess



*Children's Valentine's
Day Party
Tuesday, February 14
6:30-7:45 pm*

Save the Date

VBS 2012

July 30-August 3

Look for more information coming soon!

Camp Squanto

Registration is open for Camp Squanto!

You don't want your kids to miss out on the Camp Squanto experience!

Pathfinders	Entering Grades 2-3	June 27-30
Trailblazers	Entering Grades 4-5	July 1-7 or July 22-28

Register online at www.pilgrimpines.org. Squanto offers a sliding scale, and our church has Schneider Camp Scholarships available. Contact Roseann Slater for more information.

Situations Wanted

Elana Fischetti (Bobbie Morgan's daughter) is looking to obtain jobs that involve walking local dogs, caring for family pets, house cleaning, house sitting, or babysitting. If interested, please contact Elana — (203) 362-8003 or by email fshhd923@yahoo.com.

WinterFest Retreat Tweets

If my math is correct, it appears 31 highschoolers and adults attended this year's WinterFest at Lake Champion in New York on January 6-8.

Pastor Cary asked all who attended to send a **"Retreat Tweet"** and answer two questions about their weekend experience:

1. What did you hear from God during WinterFest?
2. How did God work in you at WinterFest?

Here are many of the responses that were received.

"I heard Him say don't give up on life and that He will be with me through it all. He worked in me by helping me through it all."

"During WinterFest, God told me that I need to make time for things that are important in my life. At WinterFest, God worked through me by making me more social, causing others around me to talk more."



"He opened my eyes to really look into His scripture and grow closer to Him."

"I heard that He was with me. He told me to keep my eyes on Him."

"God was very present for me when I needed Him over the weekend. The speaker brought his word and related it very well."

"WinterFest was a blast! God's presence was felt and told me to stop and listen to His voice."

"I heard God tell me what I should do with my life."

"God spoke to me and told me to glorify Him through music."

"WinterFest helped me get closer to God and pray more."

"[God showed me] how to love others and see beyond their flaws. God presented Himself to me through the music, people, pastor and the message of the weekend."

"God told me I can do everything I dream to do with His help."

"[God told me] to love those around me. [God worked in me] by the realization that He made everyone deserving of love and respect."

"I felt that God was telling me to live a better life for Him."

"[I had] a spiritual experience that changed my life."



"[God told me] that no matter what happens in my life, He loves me. He is always there for me."

"On WinterFest, He told me about how I need to be nicer to my brother. He let us connect when we were there."

"God spoke to my heart and is still remaining in my heart and I will not let Him out."

"During WinterFest God reminded me of all the good things that I have & are happening in my life. He reminded me that all things come from Him and that He loves me completely."



East Coast Conference News

Rev. Jason Condon, our Associate Superintendent is settled in his new home in Connecticut with his wife Linda and 2 boys Jaron (13) and Bryn (10). He is Director of Church Planting for the East Coast Conference.

The church planting movement is guided by these three words: **"Equip, Encourage, Multiply"**. It is a sustaining church planting movement. Jason has been busy doing just that. As I said last month, there are new churches ready for their yearly review and Jim, my husband, and I are going down to one of those churches, Metro Hope, a Harlem church plant, with Jason. Board members have been asked to attend the churches and the review with Jason. We are excited about this visit. Go to their web page at www.metrohopenyc.org and see what Metro Hope is about. In the March Saltshaker I will tell you how the visit went.

The ECC has a pilot program called "Navigate" for churches intent on healthy missional ministry. This



launch is one of the newest developments in the Covenant across the various Conferences. The 12-14 month framework guides the critical moment of stable churches toward a healthy missional church. Features of "Navigate" include a large national gathering, regional cohorts, monthly pastor "triads", and two retreats. Jason has been coming alongside our three pilot churches and their pastors, with preaching, consulting, and collaborating together. Jason asks us to pray for much fruit, and that other pastors and congregations would follow the example of these churches: Haddam Neck Covenant Church, Rev. Shelly Timber; Hilltop Covenant

Church, Rev. Scott Jones; and Orchard Covenant Church, Rev. Nancy Ebner. The teams report great encouragement from being "in it together"!

The quarterly meeting of the ECC Board is coming up on January 20 and 21. It will be held in the Bethany church in Berlin. I'll have information from that meeting for you in the next Salt Shaker.

We are all part of the ECC. Strengthen all our work with your prayers so that the Lord's hand can be seen.

Alma Kearns



CHIC 2012 AUCTION

Saturday, March 31st will be our second youth fundraiser for CHiC 2012. The funds raised will be used to send our high school students to the Covenant High in Christ Conference (CHiC) this coming July.

Not sure how you can contribute? Here is an idea that everyone can use to get items for the Auction. Think about all the organizations you give your business to - hairdresser, massage therapist, manicurist, dentist, grocery store, coffee shop, restaurant, etc. Ask the manager or owner for a donation for your church's youth group from an establishment you are a frequent patron; or perhaps there is a family-owned business that would like to contribute. Despite the economy, many places are very willing to help out.

Second Chances

Even the Bible says everyone needs to have a second chance and to forgive 77 times. The question is, when should second chances be given? This is something I struggle with.

About five years ago I got talked into working for a company that I didn't believe in because they offered me a good paycheck. Sadly, I took the job that put me on a road that I not only didn't want to be on, but I didn't know how to handle. The pay rate took me out of low income and put me in a privately owned building where all the rules that I lived by all my life didn't apply. So I found myself filing complaints and dealing with taxes for the first time and I was totally lost. I was working a job out of my bedroom to pay the bills

to keep myself in a bedroom with no where to go. It drove me crazy! My name was being used to sell junk to disabled people who couldn't talk and trusted that I was promoting a good product. I was totally miserable! Yet around the apartment building I was expected to be a gentleman. I lost it, I totally lost it because there was not one thing going for me. I hated my job, not having privacy, not having bus service, and I hated EVERYTHING! Some people thought I needed medication. No, I just wasn't happy and had no way to change anything. I had to go to bed at night knowing some kid got a device that would never help them communicate. And if I quit my job, I wouldn't have been able to pay my rent.

That all ended in August 2011 when I moved to New York. I had everything I ever wanted; jobs, transportation, and a life. But I left my cat and my best friend back in Ohio. My cat was heart broken, to the point

where he kept running away and going back to the house where we lived to find me. He even spent one very cold night under the doorsteps hoping I would come back. I spent all my days and nights in New York crying because what I thought I wanted, made me lonelier than I had ever been in my life.

Finally I had enough and came back to Ohio with only one plan, I wanted to move back into the apartment building. I wrote a letter to the owner asking for a second chance, a letter that never made it to her. No one but me wanted to ask her to let me move back in. So I've been at a hotel with no other options and weekly asking that my request get to the owner because she gave others second chances. Finally my request went to the owner.

She agreed to let me in with no questions asked. I still told her how sorry I was. I now understand that it's a privately owned building and what that all means. AND, I'm getting my cat back that I love, and he loves me. Plus they now have a bus, so I'll be able to go places by myself.

After my rent and bills, I'll have less than \$100.00 to work with a month. But Elaine, the owner, said I'm a smart guy and she knows I can find ways to make money. I have my business back and my music, and she won't be sorry she gave me this second chance. Five years ago none of this was my choice and I had no clue what I was getting into even though people thought I did. This time I have much more of an understanding and I will better appreciate the situation. Saying I'm sorry is not enough, people need to be given second chances. I got mine!

Snoopi Botten



This 'n That

DISCIPLESHIP CLASS

We are currently studying the New Testament texts on the topic of the "Gifts of the Holy Spirit." We have a lively group and would love to have you join us. Every Tuesday evening at church beginning at 7 pm and concluding by 8:15 pm.

PRAYER MEETING

Prayer meeting is held every Tuesday at 8:15 pm in the Chapel. Come and pray for one another, for the Pastoral Search Committee, for our church families, and for our community. Those who regularly attend often speak about the blessings received as we spend time together in prayer.

All are invited and welcome!

VISITOR PARKING

Please note that 5 parking spaces directly in front of the church have been designated as "VISITOR PARKING". Please leave these spots open for those who are visiting. It's another way to help people know that they matter to us and that they really are WELCOME! Thank You!

February



- 2/2 Ryan Koenig
- 2/3 Devin Spisto
Lana Pryde
- 2/5 Helena Zima
- 2/7 Mikayla Lingl
- 2/8 Jill Diana
♥ Jean & Fred Chapman ♥
- 2/9 Hilary Hickey
- 2/14 Eileen Lingl
- 2/14 John Gustavson
- 2/15 Kim Rieger
♥ Bob & Marsha Merritt ♥
- 2/17 Bob Kellerman
- 2/18 Janet Munley
- 2/18 George Sheridan
Chris Stetson
- 2/19 Richard Rosa
- 2/20 Gloria Bannay
- 2/21 Betty Lindahl
Evan Soderholm
- 2/22 Sami Meyer
- 2/22 Victoria Tomasky
- 2/24 Markell Vines
Antoinette DaCruz
Cary Slater
Abigail Slater
- 2/25 Nancy Domyan
- 2/27 Marsha Merritt
- 2/28 ♥ Amy & Roger Wiemer ♥

CELEBRATE TOGETHER

God's provision in covering our expenses & financially supporting the vision of our ministry in 2012



POT LUCK LUNCHEON – FEBRUARY 5th

AFTER THE WORSHIP SERVICE

February



COVENANT CHURCH OF EASTON



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Easton, CT 06612

www.coveaston.org

Phone: 203.371.8335

Fax: 203.373.9025

Covenant Children's Center: 203.374.3049

E-mail: gail.lent@coveaston.org

February Worship

NEW TESTAMENT FLYOVER

BIG SUNDAY—1 Service, 10:00 am

February	5	Ephesians 2:8-10	<i>EPHESIANS — Essential Christianity</i> Pastor Craig Holy Communion Annual Meeting, Part 2
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NORMAL SUNDAYS — 9:00 am service and 10:45 am service

February	12	Philippians 4:4	<i>PHILIPPIANS — Joyful Living!</i> Pastor Craig Mission Moment: Nate & Bethany Johnson
February	19	Colossians 2:9-10	<i>COLOSSIANS — A Healthy Perspective</i> Pastor Cary Children's Message
February	26	1 Thessalonians	<i>1 THESSALONIANS</i> Pastor Craig