



Covenant Church of Easton

# The Salt Shaker

## All Is Grace

I am a fan of Brennan Manning – author, lecturer, former Franciscan priest, one time husband, ongoing alcoholic, and as he refers to himself, the “notorious sinner.” Some of us heard him speak at a New Canaan Society event a few years ago. The Covenant brought him to a Midwinter Conference around the same time so I heard him again – and still carry notes from his presentation.

His books include “THE RAGAMUFFIN GOSPEL” and “ABBA’S CHILD”. I just finished his unique autobiography “ALL IS GRACE” and once again am deeply moved by the transparency and depth of such a broken yet profoundly loved man.

For me, the recollection of his life’s experiences: in and out of relationships, in and out of alcohol treatment, in and out of the church, yet always the recipient of God’s love – and most of the time knowing that. He writes: “*God loves you unconditionally, as you are and not as you should be, because nobody is as they should be.*” That strikes a strong chord with me – the constant love affair God chooses to have with us; the ongoing struggle to be the person I could be.

He writes about experiences with God that moved him from being a religious person to being a relational person with God Himself – something that he longed for as a child, teen and young adult. He summarized his relationship with God this way: “*Christianity was not some moral code; it was a love affair, and I had experienced it firsthand.*”

While there are mystical moments with God, most of his experiences were “. . . where Abba’s love was mediated, grace via the cloud of witnesses who have cast shadows on my bedraggled, beat-up, and burnt-out life.” The people of faith being the people of love blessing him.

I reflected on the “cloud of witnesses” who have impacted my life; and for whom I may have been one of the “witnesses.” Those thoughts have worked on me for several days – and I am grateful to God to have experienced being the object of the “cloud” as well as a part of the “cloud.”

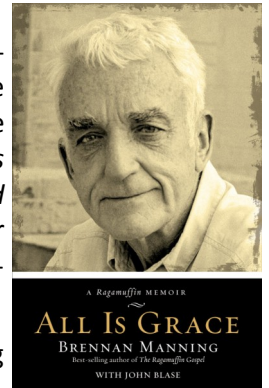
At the end of his book he writes the following . . .

*Now there’s no more crowds and no more lights, still all is grace.  
Now my eyes are wrapped in endless night, still all is grace.  
Now I pace the dark and sleep the day yet I still can hear my Father say –  
“all is grace.”*

*It was easy as a younger man to squander in the far off land.  
Where sin was sin, like black is black. But older brother sin is white,  
this doubt that creeps me up at night “does Jesus love me still?”*

*Now I take my meds and hear the game, still all is grace.  
Now old friends drop in and bless my name, still all is grace.  
Now a prodigal I’ll always be yet still my Father runs to me.  
All is grace.*

It’s a great read that I highly recommend. May this Holy Week and season of Easter remind us anew of the Good News of the love of Jesus Christ for us; the Good News that declares that “all is grace!”



# Holy Week Schedule

Maundy Thursday – April 5<sup>th</sup>

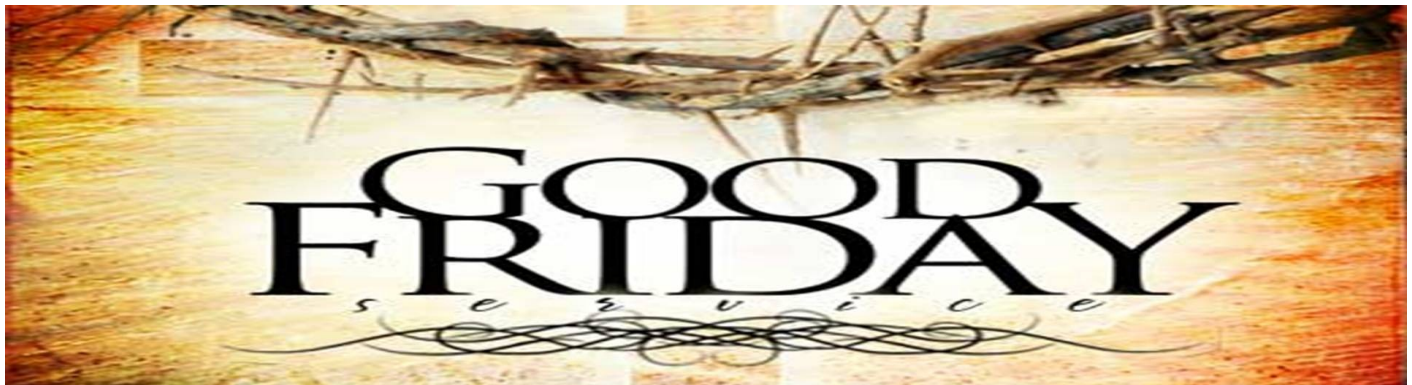
7:00 pm

## HOLY COMMUNION

We commemorate Jesus' Last Supper with His disciples.

## TENEBRAE

Tenebrae means "darkness". It is a worship service first experienced in the 4<sup>th</sup> century that helped Christians enter into the darkness of our world that led Jesus to the cross. Together we will be called to listen, reflect, and pray . . . allowing the Holy Spirit to impact us as He will!



Good Friday – April 6<sup>th</sup>

12:00-3:00 and 7:00-9:00 pm

### COME SIT AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

Our church sanctuary will be open for you to spend time in quiet prayer and reflection

### Good Friday at Covenant

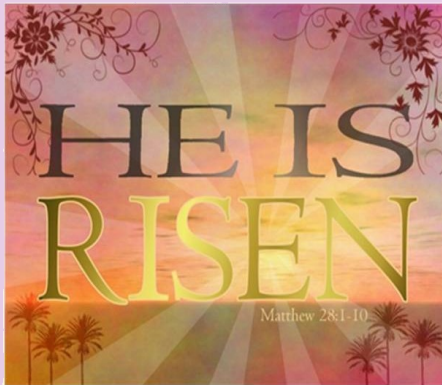
Our candle lit Sanctuary will be open from 12 to 3 pm, and from 7 to 9 pm for meditation and prayer at the cross.

The earlier time coincides to the hours Jesus was on the cross; the later time makes this service option available for those who must work on Good Friday. People may come when they can and leave when they must.

### Other Options Available for Good Friday

1. The Greater Bridgeport Council of Churches Good Friday service will be held 12 to 3 pm at Golden Hill United Methodist Church on 210 Elm Street in Bridgeport. The theme is "*THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST*". Pastor Craig will be speaking at 1:20 on the words "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*"
2. Calvary Evangelical Free Church in Trumbull will hold its annual "*Seven Last Words*" 12 to 3 pm.

# EASTER SUNDAY – April 8<sup>th</sup>



**6:30 am**

Easter Sunrise Service

**9:00 am & 10:45 am**

Easter Worship Celebration

## Prayer Vigil for Pastoral Search

Thank you for your prayers for our church as we seek our next pastor and God's will for our future! Now that our church profile is completed the Search Committee is entering the interview process. At this time, we would like to hold a Prayer Vigil on the Saturday after Easter, April 14<sup>th</sup>, to have a specific time of prayer for the search. You may sign up for a 30-minute time between 6:00 am and 9:30 pm on the poster in the Welcome Center to pray in our chapel or at home. (Someone will be stationed outside the chapel so you won't be alone!) What a blessing it is to come together as the body of Christ!

*The Pastor Search Committee*



## Senior Luncheon Sunday, April 15

Steve & Kasia Lindeberg and Nancy McDonald will be hosting a luncheon for all Seniors on Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup> after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Worship Service. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Marilyn Steel. Cost is \$6.00 per person.



# Treasurer's Report

The financial results of the Unified Operating Fund for the two months ended February 29, 2012 were as follows:

## INCOME

Unified Receipts	\$89,163
Investment & Other Income	(15)
Total Income	\$89,148

## EXPENSES

Excess of Income over Expenses	<u>\$9,144</u>
--------------------------------	----------------

It is very good to see a healthy margin of income in excess of expenses. Receipts are actually about 3% ahead of the financial plan for the first two months. This happy circumstance is due to a substantial one-time contribution, over and above normal giving, in February. We are thankful for the faith and generosity behind this gift. But we should not be lulled to sleep because the financial picture looks so good at this early point in the year. Expenses will catch up with income

as we go along, particularly as the Search Committee gets deeply into the search for a new senior pastor. So please keep your giving up to date. If you go on a Spring vacation, consider advancing your contributions for the week(s) you will be away.



The mild winter has had a favorable effect on the cost of electricity and we haven't had to do much snow plowing.

These savings will be available to be used for some of the other initiatives that were identified in the financial plan approved by the congregation, such as renewing the contract for an outside service to handle the lawn mowing.

Although it doesn't show in the above data, the Properties & Maintenance Ministry has been able to do some extra work inside the Fellowship Hall because we have funds available from an insurance settlement for damage caused by last year's storms (it was not necessary to spend all of the insurance money to repair the damage) and from a fund to fix a broken glass door in Fellowship Hall, not all of which was required to replace the glass. In addition to the ceiling painting, you will soon see other improvements.

Blessings to you all,  
**Bob Fiscus**, Treasurer

# April



- 4/2 Leanne Austin
- 4/4 Shane McFarland  
Richard Pittera  
♥Sam & Paula Keegan♥
- 4/5 Estuardo Estrada
- 4/6 Lillian Furedy  
Megan Mahoney  
Jessica Goddard  
Jamie Capossela
- 4/7 Michelle Wilber
- 4/8 Jeff Munley  
Dan Bradley
- 4/15 Carl Otten  
Iain Munley  
Erica Anderson
- 4/18 Luke Gibbs
- 4/19 Bibs Smith
- 4/22 ♥George & Karen Sheridan♥
- 4/25 Christina Bradley
- 4/26 Margie Royster
- 4/28 Sam Wolgemuth
- 4/30 Emily Mahoney





# May 5

# Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre

## A NIGHT OUT ON THE TOWN . . . .

### Date

Saturday, May 5

### Time

Doors Open – 6:15 p.m.  
Dinner – 6:30 p.m.

### Location

Covenant Church of Easton  
1 Sport Hill Road, Easton

### Additional Info

Cocktail Attire, please  
Babysitting Provided, upon request

### Join Us!

Join us for this wonderful evening of delectable cuisine and enjoyable entertainment as we help send our Senior High students to CHIC this coming July. Our popular Murder Mystery Dinner returns with an all new plot and storyline.

### 3-Course Gourmet Meal

A specially prepared meal by some of the wonderful chefs at Covenant.

### Tickets on Sale Beginning Sunday, April 8<sup>th</sup>

### Reserved Seating!

Ticket prices \$35/\$40.

**Hurry! this event sells out fast!** Buy your tickets early for best seating.

### Information

Jill Monroe  
(203) 261-3150  
[jjemonroe123@att.net](mailto:jjemonroe123@att.net)

COVENANT SENIOR HIGH CHIC FUNDRAISER • [www.coveaston.org](http://www.coveaston.org) • 203-371-8335

# Secret Pal Brunch ~ April 28th, 10:00 am

---



Spring is here, so that must mean it is time to find out who your Secret Pal has been all year! Our annual Secret Pal Brunch will be held on Saturday, April 28 at 10:00 am. Secret Pal senders please remember to bring a gift for your Pal in the \$15 range to present to your Pal at the party.

Please RSVP to Mindy Hatfield, if you plan to attend. It is very important that senders leave a gift for their Pal even if they cannot attend, and we will have someone "deliver" it on your behalf.

If you are interested in participating in the Secret Pal Ministry, we would love to have you! Our Secret Pals send out cards once a month to bring joy to seniors or folks with special needs. It is truly a blessing to all who participate, and such a simple way to show our love to one another. If you would like to know more, please

contact Mindy Hatfield (203.225.6488 or [mininct@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mininct@sbcglobal.net)).

## News from the East Coast Conference

---

The East Coast Conference Trustee Board had their quarterly meeting at the Christ Covenant Church in Harleysville, Pennsylvania on March 24, 2012. I have news from that meeting for our next month's newsletter.

Remember on Friday, April 20, 2012 we will have the ECC Annual Meeting at our church. Many of

you have volunteered to help host that meeting.

Howard Burgoyne, our Superintendent has sent out the March East Coast Covenanter. Please take time to read it. It contains many interesting articles that announce what is going on in our conference. There are two inter-

**“Remember, on Friday, April 20, 2012 we will have the ECC Annual Meeting at our church.”**

esting conferences available: *Exploring Pathways to Growth* and the other, *Science With a Mission, Inc.* You can also read about the church plants. Continue to pray for the work of the ECC.

**Alma Kearns**

## Miscellaneous Important Things

---

**DISCIPLESHIP CLASS** - We are concluding all the New Testament texts on the “spiritual gifts” and will begin a series of exercises to discern the “gifts” God has given each of us and how those gifts can help build up our church to be even more effective at winning people to Christ and helping those who are hurting. Anyone (and everyone) is welcome to join us on Tuesdays at Church from 7:00-8:15 pm.

**BIG SUNDAY** - April 29th is a “5th Sunday” this month which means we will once again enjoy coming

together to worship for **ONE** Service at 10:00 am. There will also be an All-Church Meeting this day to approve new members, consider a recommendation by the Council to hire an interim pastor and a proposed by-law change concerning membership.

**SAVE THE DAY — MARK YOUR CALENDARS**  
A special evening honoring Pastor Craig and Carolyn has been scheduled for Saturday, June 30<sup>th</sup>. Look for more information coming soon!

# Learning To Be Poor

From the time I had a job when I was 16, I worked all my life, up until August of 2011. So in a really weird way, needing help in the past has always been like a nice gesture that wasn't an actual need. It's like going to food pantries, I believe most people do it just to save money, it's not as if anyone will actually starve if they don't go; or at least that's what I thought. I've always viewed food pantries as more of a social gathering rather than a place for actual needy people.

Last year I left a few jobs where I was making \$3,000 a year. I left because I was selling products that I didn't believe in and hated myself for selling. So I got out of that because I had my own small business that I was sure I could easily turn into a big and successful giant. So I built a new website and I put everything on it that I thought would sell. I had a big opening day on my facebook and sold a lot. I really sold a lot until I realized I had fallen asleep at my computer and woke up to having no orders at all. Over a month later I still have no orders. So for the first time in my life I have no income at all. I keep trying stuff because I'm not understanding why I'm not selling anything at all. I mean this is weird, really weird! In a way it's cool because I'll have to actually change my format and find a new market. But it also means having to live on Social Security and only Social Security until I get

something going. I only have \$653.00 a month to work with, and after rent and utilities, I'm left with \$60 for the month with a gas tank to fill and a cat that needs food.

So, I'm having to do things like turn my cell phone off because I can't afford it. I have to pay \$86 just to turn the thing off. That I kind of understand. BUT, I just applied for assistance to pay my electric be-

the help, but I still had a cushion of money to work with. But now that I'm in my own apartment, for the very first time in my life I no longer have a cushion, I have \$30 to my name with bills I can't pay. Emotionally I'm perfect, I just have a financial mess that I can't get hold of. Actually I am, but it's a mess!

I wanted to thank all of you as a Church for putting money aside to help people like me. Everyone is hurting in my area of Ohio, everyone! Churches are closing, assistance sources faced drastic cuts, and it is ugly. There is a new group of poor people in America who are actually poor. It's no longer trying to save money, this is actual survival.

Someone just sent me an email. It was from someone that had just found my new site, a site that I felt like taking down because no orders were coming in and I was just frustrated. This guy wrote me just to thank me for inspiring him when he needed it most. It helped me to remember that we can't let money talk. We have to do what we do because it touches people, and we can't put a price tag on that.

His thank you to me, prompted me to say thank you to all of you. Pastor Craig might be the one making the decision to help me, but all of you give him the tools to help me as I learn to be poor. So, thank you.

**Snoopi Botten**



cause I have nothing to work with. I qualify for assistance, BUT, it costs \$84 to start the assistance. I'm missing something because how is anyone with no money supposed to get assistance when you need money to pay to get the assistance started? I mean I'm finding so many things that don't make any sense.

Covenant Church of Easton has sent me money from your Benevolent Account because for a while I was homeless and living in a hotel. And even in the hotel I needed

# APRIL



## Covenant Church of Easton



1 Sport Hill Road  
Easton, CT 06612

[www.coveaston.org](http://www.coveaston.org)

Phone: 203.371.8335

Fax: 203.373.9025

Email: [gail.lent@coveaston.org](mailto:gail.lent@coveaston.org)

Covenant Children's Center: 203.374.3049

E-mail: [andrea@coveaston.org](mailto:andrea@coveaston.org)

## APRIL WORSHIP

### Sundays at 9:00 am & 10:45 am

#### PALM SUNDAY

April 1      **Luke 19:28-40**      *THE ROAD WE PREFER*      Pastor Craig  
Holy Communion and Baptisms

#### EASTER

April 8      **Luke 24:1-12, 13-32**      *THE ROAD WE AVOID*      Pastor Craig

April 15      **Philemon**      *THE CHRISTIAN CULTURE*      Pastor Craig  
Witness Talk: Jimi Meyer

April 22      *Guest Preacher: Rev. Donn Engebretson*  
Executive Vice President of the Covenant  
Children's Message

### BIG Sunday – 1 service at 10:00 am

April 29      **Hebrews**      *OUR HERITAGE: A LAUNCHING PAD*      Pastor Craig