

Network

Volume 12 Issue 1

January, 2011

Dates to Remember:

DECEMBER 31

New Year's Eve Service

JANUARY 5

Wednesday evening activities resume

JANUARY 9

Early Worship and Sunday School resume

JANUARY 6 & 20

Community Kitchen Dates

JANUARY 12

Camp Rally Night

FEBRUARY 9

Annual Meeting

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A Long, Sudden Moment

It's always amazing to me how quickly we move in the Church from Christmas to Epiphany, from the season of incarnation into a time of realizing the identity and mission of the Christ child. In Epiphany, there is an accelerated learning curve for Christ's Christmas people. It was stunning just this last week, only 36 hours after singing "O Come, All Ye Faithful" at midnight on Christmas Eve, we read about Herod slaughtering children, and Joseph and Mary on the road again running away to, of all places, Egypt!

Epiphany is defined as "a moment of great or sudden revelation", and it is a spiritual and theological roller coaster ride through the life and mission of Jesus. It begins with the visit of the Magi, it's "Christmassy" enough; it's the end of the slow ride up the hill. Then, all of a sudden, there is that first giant drop, Jesus shows up a grown man wading into the Jordan river, where in his baptism God reveals his identity. From there the Epiphany ride is wild, and fast, wonderful and out of control - Jesus is on the move, finding friends, revealing a miraculous power to heal and do good, even like roller coasters these days, turning the world upside down with news of a new and unexpected Kingdom that has come. The Epiphany ride always ends with Jesus' transfiguration which gives his disciples a real live glimpse of the glory all around them.

Epiphany is usually very short, like a good roller coaster ride. In the span of a whole year, it's usually only about a month before Ash Wednesday arrives, and Lent begins. This year our great and sudden Epiphany moment is unusually long, over two months. Ash Wednesday will not come until March 9. We have the gift this year of a long sudden moment. The gospel that will form our worship is exhilarating and scary; Jesus will call us, teach us, model for us God's glory, and lead us toward his own suffering and self-sacrifice. His life and ministry is what connects incarnation and resurrection.

Epiphany is the first wild ride, and Lent the second, one right after the other like a rainy day at Great America, when the crowds are low and you have the rare chance to just stay in the car and ride all over again!

Easter will come very late this year, April 24. Epiphany is our time now to learn about all that Christmas and Easter mean. Enjoy the long, sudden moment before us. Read, reflect, worship, and wonder, take up the invitation to follow the Christ who is calling. Linger with Him on the seashore, and hillside, and follow him toward old Jerusalem.

Peter Hawkinson

CHRISTIAN FORMATION NEWS & EVENTS

CHRISTIAN FORMATION MISSION STATEMENT of WINNETKA COVENANT CHURCH
To teach the Christian faith and develop disciples growing in Jesus Christ
through the Word of God, through the witness of teachers, through the family of faith,
by the power of the Holy Spirit.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ALL AGES: 9:45 a.m. - There is no Sunday School on January 2

FOR ADULTS:

January 9-23: Brian Madvig leads a class entitled “Creating Through Loss”. Every one of us faces loss. Losses include loved ones, dreams, health and other things important to us. While we grieve what we have lost, at some point we are also given an opportunity to create through that loss. In this experiential adult Sunday School class, Brian tells stories from his own life and gently encourages the participant to find new ways to be with loss - maybe even to create from it.

January 30 - March 6: Kurt Peterson leads a class entitled “The Established Church: From Nicea through the Middle Ages” We will pick up the history of the church from the Council of Nicea (325AD) and go through the High Middle Ages, ending with St. Thomas Aquinas and his proofs for the existence of God. Along the way we will talk about St. Augustine, the rise of the Papacy, the growing breach between Eastern and Western Christendom, and the relationship between church and state. The lessons won't be too “heady,” but are designed to discuss in the present lessons from the past.

Ongoing intergenerational class: Pastors Erik & Andrea lead a time of experiential learning, storytelling, relationship-building and intergenerational fun. Meeting in room 203, for high school and adults of any age.

FOR CHILDREN:

The Rotation Format for Sunday School is going very well. We've completed two units - Creation and Passover & Plagues. The kids are adapting well to the rotation model, and many of them find it exciting to be in a different room with a different teacher each week. Every workshop reviews the story and text while expanding the experience with a different activity. Please feel free to peek in and see what's going on from week to week!

We'd like to thank the rotation leaders who have helped out so far: Val Hausman, Marilyn Nelson, Mary Johnson, Doris Laser, Kris Heintzeman, Polly McClellan and Rebecca Young. Having people willing to share their time and their gifts with the kids makes all the difference. We continue to enjoy the leadership of the shepherds, who follow the kids each week: Mike Magnusson, Darlene Foss, Jane Rivi, Ben Steel, Debbie O'Donovan and Sharon Johnson. These people give their time each and every week to provide consistency and a friendly face.

Coming Soon (January 9): Feeding the 5000! God does big things with whatever (no matter how small) we can give. As adults we see this miracle every day - now we'll share that idea with the kids. The workshops will be Art (making fish print t-shirts to remind us of the story), Service (reaching out to groups with which our church has a relationship), Drama (creating a newscast of the story) and Cooking (making fish-shaped pretzels). As of right now, those workshops are fitted with volunteers to lead.

But ... there are still places to lend us your gifts. In February, our unit will be The Lord's Prayer. Rachel Rescorl will lead the drama workshop and Rebecca Young will lead the Sign Language workshop (but she'd love a sidekick to help). We still need Art and Music (teaching the Lord's Prayer hymn) leaders. In March we will discuss The Last Supper. All the workshops (Art, Drama, Movement/Music and TBD) need leaders. Please contact Linda Johnson, Andrea Johnson or Polly McClellan if you'd like to share in this great experience interacting with the kids of the church.

Coming Wednesday, January 12 during Wednesday night activities: Camp Rally Night - We invite you to come and learn about week-long summer camping opportunities for your children and your families at the two conference camps: Covenant Point and Covenant Harbor.

MUSIC NOTES

Many thanks to the musicians who participated in the concert and Sunday morning music throughout the Advent and Christmas season and a special thanks to Dawn Pegis for the many hours she spends planning and preparing for special events and each weekly service.



As January is so often a time for making resolutions and new beginnings in your lives this might be a good time for you to consider participation in the music ministry of the church. Have you thought you might enjoy singing in the choir? What a good time to start, at the beginning of a new year. Choir rehearses each Wednesday night at 6:45 and new singers are always welcome. Talk with Dawn ahead of time or just show up! You will be received warmly.

STEPHEN MINISTERS

Our Commitment: Caring, Christian Companionship, Confidentiality.

Stephen Ministers don't just provide for someone experiencing a major crisis. They also provide care and support for people weighed down by the little things in life. If you're feeling down, lonely, stressed or discouraged, you could benefit from the care, support and encouragement of a Stephen Minister. It's free. It's confidential. And it will really make a difference in your life! To find out more, talk to one of our pastors or Stephen Ministry leaders Meg Madvig or Cathy Norman Peterson. Our Stephen Ministers are there to care.

THANK YOU FOR PREPARING THE CHURCH FOR ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

We all appreciated the beauty of the church throughout the Advent and Christmas season and have many people to whom we can express appreciation:

- ◆ General Planning for Advent and Christmas Decorating - Linnea Johnson, Lindsay Macfarland, Gretchen Hall, Rene Nelson, Colette Quackenbush, Dawn Pegis, Barbara Balsam, Sharon Johnson, Andrea Johnson, Denise Johnson, Cindy Buettgen
- ◆ Banners - Barbara Balsam, who designed and created the banners and to Dawn Pegis and Gretchen Hall who assisted her in making them and Andrea Johnson who contributed design and scripture input. Also to Tom Johnson and Jon Pegis who assisted in hanging them.
- ◆ Sanctuary, Narthex & Outside - Sharon Johnson, Rene Nelson, Colette Quackenbush, Gretchen Hall, Denise Johnson and Dawn Pegis, along with assistance from Peter Nelson, Erik Strom and the high school students.
- ◆ Art Exhibit coordinated by Mary Gingrich.
- ◆ Advent Bulletin Cover Art - David Westerfield
- ◆ For help in so many ways throughout the Advent and Christmas season whenever and wherever asked - Bruce and Peter Strom

As this list shows, it takes many people to create the atmosphere that we all enjoy. If you are interested in helping with the planning and decorating of the church in 2011, please contact Cindy Buettgen or Denise Johnson.

ANNUAL MEETING

Plan now and put on your calendars Wednesday, February 9, for the annual meeting of the church. More details will be published through the coming weeks but please plan to be a part of this important part of the life of Winnetka Covenant Church.

A JUST HARVEST COMMUNITY KITCHEN

"The heart which has no agenda but God's is the heart at leisure from itself." Elisabeth Elliot

In my heart I must confess that most of the time I do not feel at leisure with myself. Yesterday, today and tomorrow all blended into a haze of anxiety that my mind wants to make clear. Thank God I am incapable of doing so, for what a contorted will to have Him "renew a right spirit in me". What is clear is that there are people that need help, and that on two afternoons each month I have the opportunity to do something to help them. That's 24 afternoons per year free of myself! (I'm not so sure the rest of our cooks feel the same way about my freedom - but that's another story!)

Being a part of our congregation's effort to support A Just Harvest and share hope with it's patrons is

what we do in our kitchen on the first and third Thursday of each month. For me, this simple act of preparing a meal, the ease with which it gets done by our cooks, and the momentary comfort it brings to those who need it, relieves my heart of its agenda for a while. God tells us that all of life is stewardship - a stewardship of our time, talents, treasures and God's truth. Our church has many good stewards that I have been fortunate to witness and learn from on these Thursday afternoons.

Please join us on the 6th of January with John Anderson as contact and on the 20th with Ted Garrison as contact. We begin around 1:15 and finish by 4 p.m.

Thanks for your support.

John Anderson

FAMILY PROMISE EVENT

Have you volunteered for Family Promise? Karen Olsen, the organization's national president and founder wants to thank you in person for giving our guest families a place in your hearts and congregations. You're invited to the Family Promise Chicago North Shore Volunteer Appreciation Event. Sunday, January 9 at 3:00 at Winnetka Congregational Church (725 Pine St., Winnetka). Please RSVP to info@wcc-joinus.org by January 3, 2011.

SAMARITAN COUNSELING CENTER - CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Many of us today care for a family member or friend with a variety of challenges, including chronic health problems, aging, developmental delays, memory loss and mental illness. Whether we are giving to another person 24 hours a day, helping with weekly tasks or visiting monthly, our own well-being is at risk. The physical, mental, emotional and spiritual toll on the caregivers can be significant, especially when one feels isolated. We will gather to meet others on this journey, share our stories, take a break, laugh and cultivate ideas about resources and our own self care.

When: January 19-March 2, 2011 (6 sessions, no meeting February 16)
Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Where: Trinity United Methodist Church
1024 Lake Avenue, Wilmette

Cost: \$180.00 for 6 weeks (a limited number of scholarships based on financial need are available)
Group Leader: Kate Philben, PhD

For more information and to register, call Liz Morris at 847-446-6955 x 14

SANKOFA

Sankofa is a journey, offered through the Covenant Department of Compassion, Mercy and Justice, of exploration of racial righteousness and justice here in the United States. The participants in the Sankofa journey will explore the history of the Civil Rights movement in the South. The next journey is planned for February 4-7, 2011. You can watch a video about the journey and learn more on the denomination's website at covchurch.org/justice/racial-righteousness/sankofa. The women who were in attendance at the fall meeting with Debbie Blue may remember her speaking about Sankofa. If you have questions you can direct them to Chrissy Palmerlee at 773-907-3301.

MISSION NEWS

A message from World Relief Chicago

I want to thank everyone who has already participated with us in welcoming refugees over the past few months. We have received a lot of quality donations from Winnetka and they are being put to good use. I would like to share the story of a family who arrived recently that deeply impacted me.

We welcomed this family of three who were coming from Cuba. I met them at the baggage claim section of the airport and after doing introductions I suggested that we go to the area where their bags would have already arrived or be arriving. They told me that they did not have any bags. I asked them again just to make sure I hadn't misunderstood them since we were speaking Spanish. But they confirmed what they had already said. **They came here with just the clothes on their backs, not a single bag.**

It was great to be able to welcome this family with warm coats and to be able to bring them to a furnished apartment in Chicago. It is a blessing to serve the refugees that we work with and to make their transition to life in America a little smoother.

We continue to collect winter coats in the narthex and the lists of items we are collecting for the Good Neighbor Kits are posted at the mission display and on the bulletin board across from the office. You can also find the list if you go to the church website (www.winnetkacovenant.org) and look at the October Network. Please contact Matt Johnson to arrange for a drop-off or for us to pick up donations. World Relief Chicago, 3507 W. Lawrence, Chicago, IL, 60625; 773-681-9191.

Matt Johnson - Donations Coordinator. 773-681-8586 or mjohnson@wr.org

COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL CHILD

In 2009 we started to sponsor a child through Compassion International. His name is Samuel Tsegaw, a 9-year-old boy from Ethiopia. He wrote to us in August and says, *"Dear sponsors, how have you been doing? I am doing very well and I have been following my education. I love you very much and please write me. Thank you and God bless you! I learned about creation from the Bible."*

When we first started sponsoring Samuel we put up a monthly signup sheet for anyone who felt moved to pay for one of our monthly obligations. We have come to the end of our list and are in need of new supporters for the coming year. Would you consider taking on a month again or for the first time? It is \$32 a month and for your month you just need to write a check to Winnetka Covenant Church and put Compassion International on the memo line. You can find the new signup sheet located on the missions board in the narthex, along with a couple of letters we have received from Samuel. We would like to have all of the months covered by donors, including the months that have already passed.

GREATER CHICAGO FOOD DEPOSITORY - Local Service Opportunity

Saturday, January 8, 1:30-4:30 p.m. (Note time change)

Every other month our congregation volunteers at the Greater Chicago Food Depository, packaging food that is then distributed to area food pantries for those in need. Our service specifically benefits the North Park Friendship Center, a food pantry located on the north side of Chicago. We have committed to sending 20 volunteers each time we serve. The Food Depository is an amazing operation to experience, and working alongside others to benefit those in need in this way is both rewarding and fun! Many who volunteer continue to come back again and again. However, we are always in need of more volunteers. If you are interested, sign up on the bulletin board near the kitchen, or call the church office. Age 13 and up are welcome. Please wear long pants and closed-toe shoes.

USED GLASSES COLLECTION

Are you hiding USED GLASSES that you could bring to the designated box on the Missions Counter? Then the Medical Mission Team could take them on their next trip to fit them on needy eyes.

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES NEWS

QUILTERS, KNITTERS, ETC. - Join us on the **second Thursday of each month** for fellowship and service. Watch the bulletins each month for details and location of the meeting.

SHARING GROUP - We cordially invite all WCC women to join us on the **fourth Thursday of each month at 12:00 noon** for lunch and fellowship. This month we will meet on January 27. Please watch the bulletins for the location each month. You'll enjoy the fellowship! Call Nancy Klein or Marian Eckhardt with questions. New participants are always welcome.

STITCH AND STUDY - Stitch and Study, combining Bible Study, conversation and craft/needlework projects, generally meets the **first Tuesday of each month** at the home of Marilyn Nelson at 7 p.m. This month's meeting will be January 4. We continue to use our own Covenant hymnal as a resource for the study. We always welcome new participants.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY AND FELLOWSHIP - Beginning on Thursday, January 6th at 1:00 in the library, a new study begins. "Daniel, Lives of Integrity, Words of Prophecy", is a 12-week study by Beth Moore. The 1st six chapters of Daniel model how to develop integrity in an enticing world. Chapters 7-12 explore the thrilling prophecies from the time of Daniel through the 2nd coming of Christ. Member workbooks can be ordered from LifeWay.com or Amazon.com for \$14.95. New participants always welcome. Questions, contact Claire Macfarland.

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY - Tuesday morning Women's Bible Study will resume the study of Hebrews on Tuesday, January 11 at 9:30 a.m. New students are welcome to the class at any time. Please call Sue Abram for details.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Men's Fellowship will not meet on January 1, 2011. On January 8, 2011, we are volunteering for work at the Greater Chicago Food Depository - please sign up individually on the signup sheet in the hallway by the kitchen. At 8:00 a.m. on January 15 we meet again and our topic will be Gluttony. Refreshments provided. Questions about the meetings should be directed to Richard Spears. All men are welcome.

HELP WANTED - SOUND TECHNICIANS!

What

More people are needed to train to run the sound board, both for Sunday services and for special occasions.

Who

Anyone, high school age or older. No special technical expertise is required. You do not need to have any prior experience running a sound board.

When

Training would be on Sunday mornings, during the early or late worship services. Bernie Shelton will train.

How

Cindy Buettgen will coordinate the training schedule. If you can help, please contact Cindy.

RECYCLING AT WCC - We recently became aware that the Village of Wilmette accepts styrofoam cups in their recycling. Please keep this in mind and use the recycling bins placed around the church.

WINNETKA MAILBOX

Dear Winnetka Covenant Church Family,

Creative Kids Corner has truly been blessed to be in your extended church family this past year. We look forward to being with you next year.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Linda Kusel and John Leonard



FAMILY NEWS

We extend our congratulations to members of the Winnetka Covenant Church family -

- ◆ To Ashley Balsam, who was recently engaged to Seth Bjorklund from St. Cloud, MN. They will be married on April 9 in Minneapolis.
- ◆ To Kat Magnuson and Luke Knotts on their engagement. They are planning a late spring/early summer wedding.
- ◆ To Jon and Carmela Heintzelman on the birth of a son, Jonathan Rex Heintzelman III. He was born Wednesday, December 8 and weighed 8 lb., 6 oz. Jonathan joins his sisters, Madison and Gabriella at home in Skokie. He is welcomed joyfully by Jon & Kris Heintzelman, his grandparents, and Jean Heintzelman, his great-grandmother.
- ◆ To Matt and Beth Braun on the birth of their first child, a daughter, Malin Braun. She was born Wednesday, December 22 in Manistee, MI, weighing 8 lb., 12 oz. Jan & Bob Braun are Malin's happy grandparents and Dick & Marion Drimalla are her great-grandparents.
- ◆ To Shawn Dotson, who graduated from North Park University on Friday, December 17. Shawn majored in Biblical and Theological Studies and will become the Youth Pastor at 1st Covenant Church in Iron Mountain, MI.
- ◆ To Aaron Nilson on his graduation from North Park University on December 17 also. Aaron's major was Spanish and Global Studies. Aaron has received the exciting news that he was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and will be traveling to Brazil in February to continue his studies.

WCC BUSINESS DIRECTORY - Would you be interested in having your business information in a directory of Winnetka Covenant members? The purpose of this directory would be to let fellow congregation members know what people are in what professions so that when they need work done they might be able to direct their business to our own congregation members. If there is enough interest, we will develop such a directory over the next few months. Please e-mail Joan at wccjoan@juno.com if interested.

HEARING LOOP SYSTEM - Those of you who use hearing aids may have already noticed that your ability to hear the Sunday services has improved lately. The sanctuary is now equipped with a system that potentially enhances sound reception for hearing aid users. If you use a hearing aid, switch your aid to the telecoil (T) position to make use of it. You may find that the system works better for you if you sit closer to the center of the sanctuary, as the "hearing loop" is located around the perimeter. As always, personal amplification devices are available from the ushers as well.

OUR MISSION

*To be a Christian community and to proclaim the gospel,
Worshiping together in love,
Nurturing people in faith,
And serving others as Christian disciples,
Building a world of justice and hope in the name of Christ.*

GUIDELINES FOR LOVING RELATIONSHIPS

We hold grace as our highest value.

We practice honest, open, direct communication.

We speak the truth in love and listen in love.

We believe the best about each other, valuing others above ourselves, as Christ does.

We allow room for mistakes, acknowledging that mistakes are part of the growth process.