



# The Network

**Winnetka Covenant Church**

1200 Hibbard Rd • Wilmette IL 60091 • 847.446.4300

December, 2012

Children's  
Christmas  
Program  
December 9

Choir  
Christmas  
Concert  
December 16

Christmas Eve  
Services  
4:00 & 10:45

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## Beginning at the End

*The one who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon."*

*Amen. Come Lord Jesus!*

*The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen. (Revelation 22:20-21)*

These last words of the Bible, the end of the story, call us into advent, and a new year. Scripture and Spirit plead with us to remember that advent is not getting ready for the Christ child of Christmas,

but for an eternity with our risen Lord Jesus. The call is to light a candle and savor a season of longing expectation... longing expectation. Listen to the words of an early American Hymn:

*With inward pain my heartstrings sound, my soul dissolves away;  
Dear Sovereign, whirl the seasons round,  
Dear Sovereign, whirl the seasons round,  
And bring, and bring the promised day, and bring the promised day.*

The Risen Christ says, "Surely I am coming soon." And the saints say, "Amen (so be it!). Come Lord Jesus." This is the invitation of advent; to live with a deep longing for the last things, most of all Jesus' glorious coming to complete his Easter work. As Paul Tillich has said, "*We are waiting for the breaking in of eternity. All time is expectation. Time itself is waiting for that which is eternal.*" Light a candle in the darkness. Take time to remember the glory never-ending, still to come, and that it could be today, or tomorrow, or this year.

But Christmas happened for Easter's sake! And Resurrection leads Jesus to ascension, and a still unfulfilled promise. Someday soon you and I shall see, really see the face of Jesus Christ!

Can you remember during advent with me, while we are still waiting, as surely as weary old Simeon was, while we've been waiting with the Church for a long, long time - can you remember that someday our waiting will end, that Jesus Christ will come again, and that we shall be finally home with God?

The culture around us conspires against this deep longing for eternity. We are inundated with reasons to snuff the candles out; more than ever during December, we have things to do and places to be. How do we listen to our heartstrings? Christmas is wonderful - the food, the gifts, the family and friends, and that wonderful story of what happened when God came to be with us.

Worship God with vigor this advent. Find that place deep in your spirit where you can hear Jesus say, "I am coming soon.", and add your "Amen". The end of the world looms large at the beginning of a new year. Light a candle. Come Lord Jesus!

*Peter Hawkinson*

## Rotation Sunday School, November 11 - December 16

### The Covenant: Messengers of the New Covenant

Continuing in December, Sunday School will be slightly different than our usual rotations because the kids are practicing for the Children's Christmas program (Sunday, December 9 at 5:00 p.m.). They will practice from 9:30-10:10 a.m. in the choir room. Then age 4 through grade 5 will be combined for 20 minutes of class time in room 203/205 (10:10-10:30) for this special workshop, following their Christmas program practice.

In this workshop, kids will hear the Christmas story, ponder the future life of Jesus Christ, hear the song, "Mary, Did You Know?" and create a slideshow for each of the scenes in the song. On December 16, the kids will get to see the premier of their completed slide-

show and have a Christmas party. We'll share the slideshow with the congregation at some point as well. On December 23, we'll combine kids and adults for a special intergenerational Sunday School hour in the Upper Room.

Thanks to Dwight and Sue Samuelson and Dave and Barb Scheibe for leading this workshop!




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## Adult Christian Formation Options

Wait  
for the  
Lord



**Intergenerational Advent Sunday School**  
**High schoolers and adults in the Upper Room**  
**December 2, 9, 16, 23**  
**9:30-10:30am**

*Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.*  
*Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!*  
--Taize Community

Come gather together for fellowship and worship as we listen to the still small voice of the One who came to be with us. Parents, grandparents, teenagers, friends and visitors are invited to come and wait during this Advent season together.

We'll eat together, share together, and attend to the presence of God together.

Come, rest, wait.

***The Story* continues on Sunday mornings at 9:30 or Wednesday evenings at 6:45 in Room 203**

*The Story* is scripture condensed into 31 accessible chapters. It allows the stories, poems, and teachings of the Bible to read like a novel. Each week we read a brief chapter, then gather to watch a brief video presentation and have a chance to reflect on our story and God's story. Join us in room 203 on Sunday mornings at 9:30, or on Wednesday evenings, 6:45-7:45.

## Music Notes

*Sweet coming for which we long;  
Soft coming of star-voiced Child;  
Still coming in fragrant meal;  
Swift coming of wondrous weal.  
Sure coming, both hope and trial;  
Soon coming, our wistful, wistful song.*

- words of Susan Palo Cherwein in Brad Ellingboe's setting. We'll be singing this wistful song December 16 as we consider the breath of new life given.

For weeks we've been preparing for - looking toward Christmas. Now, we're on the threshold of Advent - awaiting the Promise. For weeks there were just notes on the page. Now, sweet voices of children; wondrous 4-part harmony. The anticipation of new birth gives way to life's promise. Christmas! God's love made visible.



Musically, both children and adult programs trace the road to Bethlehem. December 9 at 5:00 p.m. the children follow the star asking "How far is it to Bethlehem?" They remind us to bring our hearts and hands.

On December 16 at 5:00 p.m. we overlay Michael Burkhardt's "Kneeling in Bethlehem", a Festival of carols and anthems, with newly composed poems by Richard Spears and others by Chesterton, Fanthorpe, and Gosling. Also featured will be David German's new tune on "O Little Town of Bethlehem" directed by his son, Dominic, our Music Intern.

Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing.  
Come adore on bended knee,  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King!

Celebrating the incarnation! *Dawn*

### December at Winnetka Covenant Church

December 1—Lucia Festival (details on page 6)  
December 8—Advent Unplugged Mini-Retreat (details on page 7)  
December 9—Children's Sunday School Christmas Program (details above)  
December 16—Choir Christmas Concert (details above)  
December 20—Friendly Towers Christmas Party (details below)  
Christmas Eve, December 24—Family Service at 4:00 p.m. and Candlelight Service at 10:45 p.m.  
New Year's Eve, December 31—Communion Service at 6:00 p.m.

On Sundays, December 30 and January 6 there will be no 8:30 service and no Sunday School.

### Friendly Towers Christmas Party

Once again we will be hosting our annual Christmas party for senior residents at Friendly Towers, 920 W. Wilson, in the Uptown neighborhood in Chicago. Our sharing tree will be in the narthex Sundays in December. For many of these seniors, this is the only Christmas gift they receive. Join with another family, your Sunday School class, or koinonia group to buy one of the more expensive gifts if you would like. We have a request for a computer, Does anyone have one they no longer use, or knows of a place to get one that is less expensive?

Choose a gift request. As you remove the tag from the tree, it is most important that you sign your name on the lower half of the tag, detach it, and paste it on one of the lists on the table near the tree. We ask you to do this be-

cause we carefully check that we have a gift for each resident. If we do not have all of the gifts, we must purchase those that are missing.

Please make a new tag for your gift. If you must use the same tag that was on the tree, cover over the printing that says what is inside. If you are bringing a gift certificate, please put it in a gift bag or a box. Just a plain envelope can easily be lost.

All gifts should be wrapped and returned to the tree by Sunday, December 16. If you intended to bring your gift directly to the party, please be sure to notify Gladys Johnson.

You are invited to join us at the party on Thursday, December 20 at 4:30. We are grateful for your generosity. For our friends, this is the high point of their year.

## Mission News

**From Christine Buettgen -**

Greetings to you all! I wanted to give you an update on my work as a Covenant Project Missionary in The Democratic Republic of Congo. I am working in “community development” which includes training women to make purses and jewelry to generate income, training in improved farming techniques to increase crop production, teaching project planning and community health, and translating lessons for basic business management and bookkeeping for small-scale entrepreneurs in our community. All of this has helped me to use my community development knowledge, apply my research and improve my French and Lingala skills, but most importantly helping me to understand the people and culture I am living amongst. Projects are an important part of why we are here, but I am learning that the first year or two living in a new culture is about building relationships, learning and being present, more so than complete projects. An activity that has brought me a lot of joy is teaching an English class to high school aged girls two nights a week. Almost everyone here has a strong desire to learn English. There are two families that have really taken me in and made me their daughter and friend, and I thought that having an English class for their daughters would be a great way to give back and say thank you. It’s been fun to have my own little “youth group” here.

Another really exciting project I am involved in is the World Vision partnership with the Covenant church here, called *Covenant Kids Congo*. I took part in capacity building trainings to sensitize local leaders on how they can participate in the transformation of their communities, including projects like capping springs to provide clean water sources, improving agricultural practices, micro-finance, and encourage local advocacy

### Mission trip - 2013

The intergenerational mission trip for 2013 is set for July 13-20, when we will travel to Montana to work at the Crow Nation Indian Reservation. Complete details and registration information will be in the January Network and will be posted on the website soon.

and civil engagement. Please let me know how I can be answering your questions about the work of World Vision here in our region of Congo.



This is the most forgotten region in one of the most neglected countries in the world. Any time someone from outside says “we care enough to make investment in your community” it brings hope for a brighter future, a future with improved education and with capacity to live the future that the youth here envision for themselves.

Please pray for me as I continue to learn French and Lingala, as I adjust to life here, and most importantly, please pray for the youth and women of this nation. I truly believe that investment in Congolese young people is the best way to see a better future for this country. Corrupt leadership and a mentality of poverty are the two largest spiritual strongholds that keep this country from modernizing and supporting its population to have “enough”. Praying for youth here will change this nation. And pray for women, who have few rights in their own homes. They are the foundations of their churches and families, but get very little recognition for the work they do and the sacrifices they make. It is women here that have made me feel at home and that have invited me into their lives, sharing both joys and struggles. Their plight is always heavy on my heart, so join me in praying for their joy and their liberation in a culture that keeps them oppressed in too many ways.

If you have questions or want more information, please read my blog [www.christinemerle.blogspot.com](http://www.christinemerle.blogspot.com), or e-mail me at [christine.buettgen@covchurch.org](mailto:christine.buettgen@covchurch.org).

## Youth News

Our Christmas tree is  
not electrified, is not  
covered with little lights  
calling attention to themselves  
(we have had enough  
of little lights calling attention  
to themselves). Our tree  
is a cedar cut here, one  
of the fragrances of our place,  
hung with painted cones  
and paper stars folded  
long ago to praise our tree,  
Christ come into the world. *Wendell Berry*

I was introduced to Wendell Berry's work about five years ago, and this poem was an early favorite. I don't claim to be a literary expert, and for awhile poetry felt too sophisticated for me. But, more recently, I've felt free to interact with the words and it intimidates me less.

When I listen to Berry here, he encourages me to consider what I am attending. Besides the obvious reference to the Christmas tree, his words fit appropriately in the Advent season. Much clamors for our attention! Many people, activities, and opportunities say to us, "Attend to me! Look at me!" We can become captivated by these "little lights" - things that are not worth all the attention that they proclaim to deserve. I hope we can find a rhythm during this season that points us to the big Light, the Light of the world - the One who came to walk with us in the darkness. God with us! Emmanuel! Pray for the Church, as we seek to be a community that - rather than calling attention to ourselves, points to the coming of Christ into the world.

God's peace be with you,  
Christy Bouris, *Youth Pastor*

### Junior and Senior High Parent Gathering - Monday, December 3rd, 7-8:15 p.m.

#### Junior High

##### Junior High Youth Ministry:

Wednesday evenings, 6:00-7:45p.m.

December 5, 12, 19

All 6th-8th graders (and friends!) are welcome!

**Merge:** Mondays, December 3 & 17, 3:30-5:00 at church

**Jr. High Youth Group Christmas Party** - Wednesday,  
December 19th (during Wednesday Night Activities)

#### Senior High

##### Senior High League Ministry:

Sundays, 7-9p.m.

December 2 will be a regular meeting.

December 9th - Progressive Dinner

December 16th - North Side Youth Collision

December 23rd - High League Christmas Party and  
Alumni/Graduate Reunion.

**High School Sunday School offering:** This fall, we are holding a **book group** during the Sunday School hour for all high school students in Christy's office. Come join Pastor Christy on Sunday mornings and immerse yourself in some good words, and discussion together. Hope to see you there!

**Coffee:** Wednesdays, December 5, 12, 19

**Advent Retreat** - high schoolers are invited! Register online. Saturday, December 8th.

## Fundraising Opportunities

### For Youth Programs, The Christmas Card Post Office

Beginning Sunday, December 2, the Youth Group will sponsor the annual Christmas Card Post Office. Bring your fully addressed Christmas Cards for members and friends of WCC to the mailbox in the narthex, along with a check for the amount you would have paid in postage. The students will sort them for pickup following the service. Or, if you prefer, bring one card for the congregation, to be posted in the narthex throughout the season.

### For the Playground Renovation Project- Poinsettia Sale

Sundays, November 25th and December 2nd

4" Poinsettia \$ 8.00

6" Poinsettia \$12.00

8" Poinsettia \$26.00

10" Poinsettia \$32.00

Stop by the table in the Narthex after both services to place your order. Plants will be ready for pick-up on Sundays, December 2nd and 9th.

Questions? Contact Kira Johnson or Linnea Johnson

## Women's Ministries Notes

Following are ongoing groups for the women of the church. They all welcome new participants at any time.

### *Quilters, Knitters, etc. and Sharing Group -*

The Women's Sharing Group and the Quilting Group will meet together on Thursday, November 29 at noon for a Christmas luncheon. The luncheon will be at Graziano's, 5960 W. Touhy in Niles. Cost will be \$20.50 and reservations should be made with Esther Johnson. This will take the place of the December meetings of both groups.

### *Stitch and Study -*

Stitch and Study, combining Bible Study, conversation, and craft/needlework projects, **meets on the first Tuesday of each month** at the home of Marilyn Nelson at 7 p.m. The December meeting will be on the 4th. We are using the texts for the coming Sunday as a resource for the study. New participants are always welcome to come for the study and conversation, with or without a project.

### **Lucia Breakfast, Pageant and Boutique are scheduled for December 1.**

The Lucia Breakfast is full, but the Pageant, following the breakfast, is open to all with no reservations. It will begin at about 10:15. The boutique, featuring Swedish deli and bakery items, as well as hand-crafted items by our own congregation's friends and members, will follow the pageant.

### *Tuesday Morning Bible Study -*

The Tuesday morning Bible Study will begin Christmas break on December 11 and will resume meeting on January 8.

### *Thursday Afternoon Bible Study -*

The Thursday Bible Study concludes its current study November 29 and will break for the month of December. Any questions, contact Claire Macfarland.

### *Retreat, February 1-3, 2013*

The speaker for this year's retreat is Jane Hutchins-Peterson and her topic is "Finding the Sacred in Your Ordinary: Connecting your story to The Story." Limited registration still available - check with Joan in the office. Plan to join us - it's a great time to connect with other women.

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## Men's Ministry News

Opportunities for service and fellowship occur throughout the year. Some activities occur on a regular schedule and others arise periodically.

### **Men's Fellowship**

The group usually meets on the first three Saturdays of each month at 8:00 a.m., in either the Upper Room or the Prayer Room. During the month of December, we will meet on December 1 and 15th. December 8th will be the Advent Unplugged Mini-Retreat. The men's fellowship is primarily a discussion group and is worth the effort it takes to rise a little early in order to participate. Questions should be addressed to Richard Spears.

### **Men's Singing Ensemble**

There is a performance coming up, and tenors, basses and baritones of **all ages** are welcome. Our communication is by e-mail. Please e-mail Gary Stenstrom to express an interest in participating.

### **Men's Work Crew Call**

Painting parties, carpentry projects, and service projects are a regular part of the Men's Ministries. Workers will be recruited as the needs arise. Please contact the church office to be put on this e-mail list. Answering the call for participation is purely voluntary and always for a good cause.

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## A Just Harvest

In this season of gift-giving, special events, and gatherings with friends and family, remember that the daily provision of meals continues for the patrons of A Just Harvest Community Kitchen. We will be preparing food in our kitchen from 1:30 to about 3:30 on December 6, with John Anderson as the contact person and December 20, with Ted Garrison as the contact person.

## Mailbox

*It was wonderful to connect with many of you at the Harvest Dinner on Sunday, October 28! Thanks so much to Bernie Shelton and to my dad, Tom Buettgen for figuring out how to make it work. Thanks also to Greta Bailey and the missions committee for coordinating the evening.*

*Thanks to you all for your encouragement and prayers, they are felt, even a third of a world away.*

*Much love from Congo,  
Christine Buettgen*

*Dear Friends at Winneka Covenant Church,*

*I would like to thank you for the prayers, cards, and good wishes during the surgery on my foot and now during my recuperation. The surgery went very well and now the healing is going well also. It means so much to have the care and concern of friends. A very thankful Thanksgiving time in so many ways.*

*Ruth Schmid*

*I would like to extend a big and heartfelt thank you to the church for hosting last month's concert to benefit Jitokeze Wamama Wafrika. My colleagues and I felt so welcome; the warmth in the sanctuary that night was absolutely amazing. We are so grateful for your generosity and support, and hope you found yourselves as inspired as we are by the efforts of Jitokeze. Many thanks to everyone for once again making the church such an open-hearted place of love and peace.*

*Dawn Gingrich*

## Directory Changes and Family News

Congratulations and best wishes to:

- Jed and Anne Bassett on the birth of Maja Helen Bassett, born November 1. Maja weighed 8 pounds, 13 ounces and joins her big sister, Ellie, at home.
- Lindsay Macfarland and Kent Salsbery, who very recently became engaged. They met through Park Community Church and look forward to a wedding ceremony at WCC.

**Covenant Companion** - Our church participates in the every-member subscription plan for the Covenant Companion, meaning that we provide the magazine for each member family. If you would like to help defray the cost, the subscriptions are \$18.00. You can pay online in the giving portion of the website ([www.winnetkacovenant.org](http://www.winnetkacovenant.org)) or drop a check in the offering, with Covenant Companion on the memo line.

**Congregational Meeting** - There will be a brief congregational meeting following church on December 2 to vote on new members.

### **Saturday, December 8—8:30-noon**

#### ***Advent Unplugged: Preparing for the Holidays in a New Way, a half-day retreat for adults***

The holiday season is a lot like life, only more so. December often means there is more to do, more to buy, more to decide and more to feel. Advent is one of the most meaningful seasons in the Christian calendar, but how do we faithfully balance it with all the other demands of the season? The scripture stories are filled with people listening for God's call, and we are invited to do the same. In this four-hour mini retreat, you will have a time to prioritize your time, learn a spiritual tool, engage with the advent stories from scripture, and connect more deeply with your church community.

Doug Wysockey-Johnson, Executive Director of Lumunos, will facilitate the retreat. The cost is \$15 and complimentary child care is provided. **Please register to attend on the church website as soon as possible.**

## **Winnetka Covenant Church Network**

1200 Hibbard Road  
Wilmette, Illinois, 60091

847-446-4300

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

### **Our Mission**

To be a Christian community and to proclaim  
the gospel, Worshiping together in love,  
Nurturing people in faith,  
serving others as Christian disciples,  
And 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.

**The Marriage Course is coming! Join us!**

**A fun, free and informative way to grow in your relationship!**

Hosted by Winnetka Covenant Church as a complimentary service to the community....Seven nights set in a fantastic atmosphere...Candlelight dinner at a table for two...Listening to practical talks that are informative and fun, played on DVD and facilitated by a couple...Time for just the two of you...Free childcare. Will you join us?

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!** All couples are invited. You don't have to be a Christian or a member of Winnetka Covenant. Any married or cohabiting couple is invited. Whether your relationship is strong or struggling, we welcome you with no preconceived notions – period! We're folks just like you, wanting a better life together.

**WHAT IT TAKES.** An openness to grow in your relationship. Seven nights that will require two-and-a-half hours – dinner included! You have time to eat, talk and reflect. Thousands of couples around the world have already participated. Seven sessions will include:

Building Strong Foundations, *The Art of Communication*, Resolving Conflict, *The Power of Forgiveness*, The Impact of Family - Past & Present, *Good Sex*, and Love in Action

When: Fridays, 6:30-9:00 p.m., January 11 - February 22

Where: Winnetka Covenant Church, 1200 Hibbard Rd., Wilmette IL

Cost: \$25.00 per couple for the entire course: Includes dinner, child care, and materials.

How do we register? Go to [www.winnetkacovenant.org](http://www.winnetkacovenant.org). Register by December 16