



The Network

Winnetka Covenant Church

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January, 2014

Simeon's Invitation

Among all the moving parts of the moving story of the first Christmas, none is more touching than the moment when Simeon takes the Christ child in his arms and blesses God. An angel had visited him too, promising him even at his advanced age that he would not die before he would see the Messiah. Simeon's life is a parable of both the long waiting for and the sudden appearance of salvation for which Israel hoped.

He takes Jesus in his arms, and says,

“Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.”

These are the words that the Church locates in the face of death, at the end of the funeral service, as the casket of the deceased is moving out of the sanctuary and toward the cemetery. A wonderful prayer, and what a blessing, indeed, to be able to die in peace, because you have seen for yourself, you have held in your arms, in your heart, the Messiah.

And while living smack dab in the middle of life (or so it seems), and viewing my own death at some distance (who knows?), Simeon's words nevertheless invite me into peaceful life, into joy, here and now! If indeed, I have seen Jesus for myself, might I echo the words of Simeon, take them as my own?

Lord, now let your servant live in peace, according to your word;
For my eyes have seen your salvation ...

Here's the truth. God is faithful, and we have been so richly blessed with the coming of God's Son, a Savior. Oh, how I want to die like Simeon, with a deep sense of peace, AND oh, how I want to live too with that same peace having invaded my spirit. The key to it all, it seems, rests in God's faithfulness to follow through on a Holy Promise and the chance we have with precious day and breath of life to take Jesus in our own arms and bless God.

Because we have seen Jesus, we see God's salvation come to life, and we live and die with peace. That's the invitation old Simeon sends to us, this real possibility of a life full of peace. May it be so as you begin a new year!

Peter Hawkinson

January 5-12
Family Promise

January 17-19
Jr. High Retreat

January 31-
February 2
Women's Retreat

February 5
Annual Meeting
& Celebration

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Children's Rotation Sunday School

What is it?

We're now in another great year of Rotation Sunday School. What is Rotation Sunday School? This curriculum style focuses on teaching major Bible stories and concepts through kid-friendly, multi-media workshops, such as: art, drama, music, cooking, puppets, storytelling, games, audio-visual, and woodworking. Children learn the same Bible story four consecutive weeks, rotating to a different workshop each week. Personal connection, familiarity and continuity are provided by a volunteer called a "shepherd." These individuals accompany the children each week and focus on building relationships.



2013-2014 Theme: THE WORD OF GOD

The Word of God, as passed on to us through the Bible and the lives of the faithful, is a multifaceted jewel providing for us many different ways to enter into the story of faith. It is from these words that we receive guidance and support as we travel on the journey of faith. From the ancient text of Genesis to the power of Revelation God's word continues to be relevant to our lives.

January 12, 19, 26, & February 2
Rotation Sunday School
Ezekiel

Workshops:

Moved by the Spirit: Kids will learn the story of Ezekiel through an interactive drama and pace off the scope of Ezekiel's vision of the new Temple in Jerusalem while the teacher acts as tour guide.

Thou Art: Kids will watch excerpts from Disney's "Lion King", making the connections to Ezekiel's story, and create pictures of Ezekiel's "dry bones" visions using pastels.

Garden of Eatin': After hearing about Ezekiel's call as a prophet, kids will make crepes as a reminder that God told him to eat the scrolls and taste multi-grain bread to remind them of the anticipated hardship of the exile.

Puppetry: Kids will create a black-light puppet show featuring trick-or-treaters who ponder the skeletons they learned about in Sunday School. The African-American spiritual "Dry Bones" is the featured song using glow-in-the-dark life-size skeletons.

Adult Sunday School

Outlive Your Life: Discover How You Can Make a Difference

January 12, 19, 26, & February 2
9:30—10:30 in the Upper Room

Everyone wants to know that their time on earth has some significance. We all want to make a difference.

These are difficult days in our world's history. Billions of people are poor, millions go hungry or thirsty every day. Disease claims thousands of lives daily. But you and I have been given an opportunity to make a big difference. What if we did? What if we rocked the world with hope? Infiltrated all corners with God's love and life? We are created by a great God to do great works. He invites us to outlive our lives, not just in heaven, but here on earth. What if you lived in such a way that your death is just the beginning of your life?

In *Outlive Your Life DVD-Based Study*, Max Lucado presents four sessions that follow the real-life stories of people who are making their lives count. Each session will show us not just *why* but *how* to live intentionally so that everything in our lives - our time, our skills, our passions - all add up to something bigger than each of us.

Come and join in another great discussion about issues that are integral to our faith.



Music Notes

January? Already? I'm not - or don't WANT to be - there, yet. It's only December 22 and I want to enjoy ALL of 2013.

Still, I do have some plans for 2014. Choir will reprise the fun and splendid: "Let There Be Light" for Epiphany, January 5. On January 19, "He Put a New Song in My Heart" will echo Psalm 40.



During one of Pastor Peter's challenging Advent messages, I reflected on the general focus of music for our worship. I aim for three main things:

- Does the text fit the spiritual/scriptural theme?
- Does the music make an inspirational, emotional communication?
- Is there suitability, challenge! and variety for our choir (and congregation)?

As always, I appreciate your feedback and input. New musical contributions are always welcome too.

2014 is a clean slate as we endeavor to ...

"Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
Bow down before Him his honor proclaim:
With gold of obedience and incense of purity
Kneel and adore Him, the Lord is his name."

For music in service of our Savior in 2014, *Dawn*

WCC Trustee Report through Mid-December, 2013

As of mid-December 2013, we are still considerably behind in meeting our giving commitments. We have slightly reduced our deficit since November, however, we are still far short of meeting our actual 2013 expenses! In early 2014, the WCC Trustees will finalize the 2013 financials and develop a 2014 budget proposal for discussion and approval in our 2014 Business meeting in February. This proposal will be based on our 2013 actual, and your planned pledges for 2014.

Thank you to those who have responded to our financial and operational needs in 2013 and to all who have acted on our call for 2014 pledges.

» Projects:

- WCC sign permit process is in its final stages. We anticipate the project to start in early 2014. Contact Marty Spellman or René Nelson with any questions.
- WCC playground permit has passed. We anticipate this project to start in Spring 2014. Contact Linnea Johnson with any questions.
- WCC property landscape design subcommittee is developing a draft master plan to be available by late January. Members include Kurt Kovacic, Peter A. Nelson, Roger Schmitt, Chris Lyngso, Gary Eanes, Judy Isaacson, Emily Voit and Dawn Pegis.

Service Opportunity

A Just Harvest Community Kitchen

Food Preparation in our kitchen, 1:00 p.m. until completion (about 3:00):

January 2, with Ted Garrison as the contact person; January 16, with John Anderson as the contact person

Serving at the kitchen:

January 16, at 4:30 (meet at church at 4:15)

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. -

Meet on the **second Thursday of each month** for fellowship and service. Watch the weekly bulletins 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. We will meet on **January 23** at Baker's Square. You'll enjoy the fellowship! Call Marian Eckhardt with questions.

Stitch and Study -

Stitch and Study, combining Bible Study, prayer, conversation, and craft/needlework projects, meets on the third Tuesday of each month at the home of Marilyn Nelson at 7 p.m. 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. **The January meeting will be on the 21st.**

Women's Retreat

The date set for our **retreat** is **January 31-February 2, 2014**, held at Geneva Bay Center at Covenant Harbor. This year we are pleased that we will have our own **Judi Geake as the speaker** for the retreat. The official registration deadline has passed, but spots remain available if you are still considering going. Contact Joan Wallgren to register. We always welcome those who are only able to come for the day on Saturday.

6-week moms' Bible study in the works for January and February - Help with child care needed

A group of moms with kids up through 5th grade is interested in having a small group Bible study, and we're looking for some other women to help with child care. Might you be interested in helping make this time of formation possible for them?

We're looking at starting 2 groups, both meeting for six weeks - one on Monday evenings beginning on January 6 at 7:00, and another on Friday mornings beginning on January 10 at 9:30. Both will meet at church so that children can be cared for in the preschool and nursery rooms.

Please contact Pastor Andrea if you have interest in helping with child care, or if you are a mom of a young child and would like to participate in the group.

Thursday Bible Study -

Thursday afternoon Bible Study will resume meeting in January with a new course of study. Please be watching your bulletins for an announcement of the new topic.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study -

Tuesday morning Bible Study class will resume our study in Isaiah on **Tuesday, January 7** with page 65, "Surrounded by Enemies" (Chapter 17:12 - 23:18), and the questions as they apply to those verses. As always, study begins at 9:30 but you are welcome to come early for coffee and conversation. Contact Joann Larson with any questions.

Two New Bible Studies -

Two new Bible study groups are forming for moms of young children, each of which will run for six sessions. One will be on **Monday evenings at 7:00, beginning January 6** and running through February 10. The other will be **Friday mornings at 9:30, beginning January 10** and running through February 14. Please see the notice below for more details, including the need for childcare volunteers.

Service Opportunity

Family Promise - January 5 - 12

Family Promise is a network of area churches that take turns hosting temporarily homeless families for one week at a time, providing dinner, overnight housing and breakfast each day of that week.

During the days, the children of the families are able to stay in whatever school they attended before their families lost their housing and the adults work with the Director of the program to secure employment and permanent housing.

Our next scheduled hosting week begins on January 5 and continues through January 12.

Please check the website (www.winnetkacovenant.org) to find out where during that week you might be able to help out.

Mailbox

A sincere thank you to all my church family for your love and support during my lengthy confinement at Glenview Terrace. Your visits, telephone calls, lovely flowers, and cards were so encouraging and uplifting. I am very grateful, too, for your many prayers on my behalf - which I know hastened the healing process.

I am now recuperating at home and am eager to be back among you soon.

Patty Frazer

Dear Winnetka Covenant Church Family.

Greetings from Grand Rapids, MI, I hope all of you are doing well.

I moved into my shared living home in Grand Rapids, it's called Hope House. I love living at Hope House with my

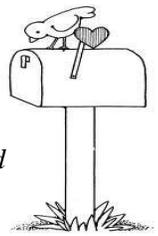
five housemates. Their names are Beth, Robin, Angie, Liz and Melanie. We all get along so great! We have two Hope House parents named Rhonda and Tim who are the best. We are all so blessed to have them in our lives.

During the week, I am going to a school at Grand Valley State where I attend school. It's a special needs program helping people get the skills to get a job.

The First Evangelical Covenant Church here has been incredibly supportive of our home and we attend Wednesday night dinners. We thank them so much for their continued support.

I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year. Miss you all.

Love, Laurel Siebrasse



Men's Ministries News

Opportunities for service and fellowship occur throughout the year, some on a regular schedule, others 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. All men are invited to participate. Start the New Year by joining. It's worth getting up for!

Men's Work Crew - Painting parties, carpentry projects, and service projects are a regular part of the Men's Ministries.

Workers will be recruited as the needs arise.

Men's Share and Support - If you're expecting a medical procedure, test, treatment, or new medication, get connected to someone who's been there and done that. Pastor Hawkinson will try to link you to someone with experiences to share and who can help turn anxiety into anticipation. Men who are willing to share and support can also contact Pastor Hawkinson.

Men's Retreat - Please save March 14-16, 2014 for the annual Men's Retreat at Covenant Harbor.

Youth Ministry Dates

- Sr. High League - January 5, 12 (North Side Youth Collision and we are hosting!), 19, 26 - 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- Junior High Youth Group - January 8, 15, 22, 29, during Wednesday night activities
- Coffee (High School) - January 8, 15, 22 (no coffee on the 29th)
- Junior High Deep Freeze Retreat - January 17-19
- January 11: Winnetka and North Park Covenant Church Night (High School) - "Chummy Awesomeness: Part Dos" (hosted at NPCC or WCC - tbd)

It has been several years since our last photo directory was made and we are badly in need of a new one. We are looking for several people who would be willing to form a committee and oversee the production of a new photo directory. This is a short-term commitment but a very important one. If you like to organize, then this is the opportunity for you!

Service Opportunity

Greater Chicago Food Depository - Saturday, January 11, 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Volunteer to support the North Park Friendship Center food bank by helping to package food at the Chicago Food Depository. Age 13 and older welcome, long pants and closed-toe shoes required. Sign up next to the kitchen or call the office.

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Wilmette, Illinois, 60091

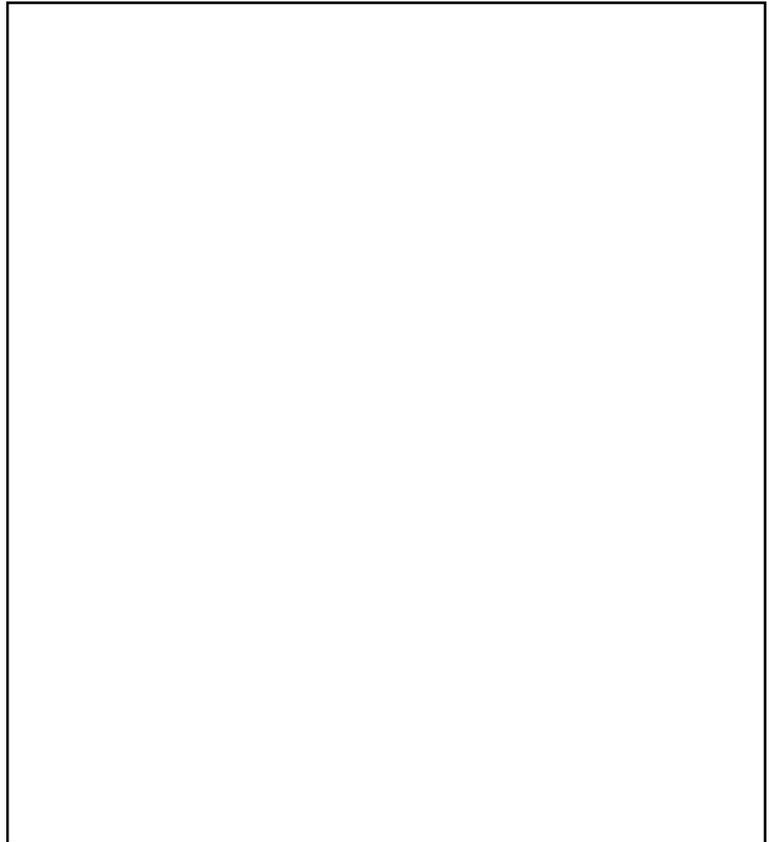
847-446-4300
www.winnetkacovenant.org

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

The Marriage Course is coming! Will you join us? Hosted by Winnetka Covenant Church as a 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.

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, January 10-February 21
Where: Winnetka Covenant Church, Upper Room
Cost: \$50 per couple: includes dinner, child care & materials
Register at www.winnetkacovenant.org by January 5.

The Parenting Children Course

A ten-week course on Wednesday nights, beginning January 15, 6:45 - 7:45 p.m.

Family life is under great pressure today and parents face bewildering choices about how to parent effectively. Children do not arrive with an instruction manual! And no role we undertake is more important than parenting. Discovering we are not alone in the challenges we face and picking up ideas from other parents can make a huge difference. We can all learn how to make even the happiest family better.

The Parenting Children Course is for parents, step-parents, prospective parents, or care-givers of children aged 0-10 years. Each week participants view a short DVD segment and engage in small group discussion. Cost: \$10 per person for the whole course, includes guest manual. Register on-line at www.winnetkacovenant.org

Help make Parenting Course possible for interested parents! Volunteers are needed to help with our Wednesday night children's programs during these 10 weeks to make it possible for some parents to attend the Parenting Course. 2-3 adults are needed for child care in the 2's & 3's room and nursery. 2 adults are needed to serve as "Guides" in grades 3-5. If you'd like to help, please contact Pastor Andrea.