



The Network

Winnetka Covenant Church
1200 Hibbard Rd • Wilmette IL 60091 • 847.446.4300

January, 2015

**January
9, 16, 23, 30
Friday Night
Fellowship**

**January 11-18
Family
Promise Week**

**February 4
Annual
Meeting**

Inside this issue:

Christian Formation	2
Music Notes,	3
Concerns Group, Local Missions	4
Trustee News, Youth Notes	5
Women's & Men's, Ministries	6
MOPS, Women's Retreat	6
Mailbox, Family News	7

Light in the Darkness!

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.
(John 1:5)*

Epiphany is the season between Christmas and Lent. Its hallmark is light, such a wonderful focus in the darkest part of our year! We remember the Magi following the star, and our Lord Jesus taking up his public ministry in the world. We also remember that our Savior, who said "I am the light of the world," also said to his disciples, "You are the light of the world." There is light in the word, in the coming of Christ, and in our ministry with and for him.

I'm struck by the practicality of light. It's pithy, but true, that one small candle brings light to a whole room. Darkness, engulfing us in one moment, seems to flee when light shows up. Hope Lives! God is so good.

Well, for more than 75 year now the Covenant Church has been active in God's mission to bring hope, to bring light to the human suffering going on in Congo. Many of our own dear friends have served there as missionaries, and we are grateful. Yet, darkness prevails. Of the 187 countries listed in the United Nations Index of Human Development, Congo ranges 187! 3 out of 4 people have no access to clean water. Malnutrition thrives. 82,000 children under the age of five die every

year. The need is desperate, the darkness heavy.

But there is hope. Light in the darkness, as we continue to hear our God's call and will to transform these realities, to love demonstrably. **Covenant Kids Congo** (www.covchurch.org/covenantkidscongo) is a partnership between the Covenant Church and World Vision International. Through Child sponsorship, issues of clean water, nutrition, education, health, and microenterprise will be addressed, and new plans implemented.

Through the month of January you will be hearing more about CKC. Christine Buettgen will be here to share with us on February 8, and we will have a Hope Sunday with opportunities for child sponsorship on February 15. By reaching out to a child in need, you can answer God's call to serve the poor.

Light in the darkness!

Peter Hawkison

Christian Formation

Sunday Mornings For Children

Rotation Sunday School is for children age 4 through grade 5

Theme for the year: *Test of Faith*

Throughout the scriptures, people faced many challenges to their faith. From Adam and Eve to you and me, there are times when we do well and live in ways that are pleasing to God. At other times we find ourselves in need of God's grace because we have missed the mark. Through the stories of faith, we learn that God's grace is always extended to us.



January 11, 18, 25, and February 4

New Rotation Sunday School Unit: Daniel

They'll experience 4 new workshops:

Moved by the Spirit: Kids will play a variety of lion bean-bag games to understand how much Daniel relied on God and how God was active in his life.

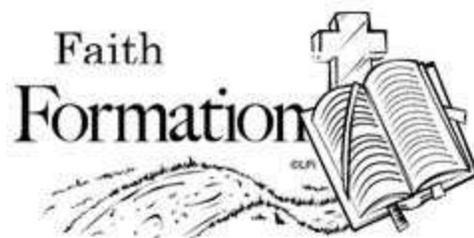
Kingdom Characters: Daniel is the storyteller, using magic tricks to understand the difference between hocus-pocus and God's ultimate power.

Puppetry: Using the book "The Story of Daniel in the Lions' Den" for the script, kids will create a puppet show with kitchen utensils as the puppets.

Disciples' Drama: Kids will imagine the conversations that Daniel and his friends had as they progress through the story. They'll create a behind-the-scenes videotape of simple dialogues that may have occurred.

Sunday Mornings For Adults

Beginning January 11, adults will begin a 7-week series in the Upper Room entitled, "Black and White: What the Bible and the Christian Tradition Have to Say about Race," led by Kurt Peterson. We hope you'll join us!



Wednesday night all-church activities

Beginning with a delicious dinner, served from 5:30-6:15, all members and friends of Winnetka Covenant Church are encouraged to come each week for a night of fellowship, singing & praise, and learning. Following dinner and singing/skit time, the whole group breaks up into activities for every age group. Nursery is provided for children up to age 2, and age group activities are planned for everyone from 2 years of age and older, including adults.

Bring yourself and bring a friend to join in the fun.

Wednesday Night Opportunities for Adult Formation

Called to Be Church—The Book of Acts for a New Day

This is a simple time of Bible reading and reflection on the life of the early Church and our own journey together in Christ's community these days. Using the Acts of the Apostles as our text, we wonder together:

- What was at the heart of their life together?
- What challenges did they face?
- What was their mission?
- How did they approach ministry in their culture, time and place?
- Who were the characters active in the infant Church?

Of course, as we do this, we are reflecting also on our life as the Church these days, and our own stories. We read and reflect together. Come and join us!

Concerns Group

Prayer Room

This group is for anyone in the church, ranging from the curious to the passionate, who is interested in exploring current issues of compassion, mercy and justice. In this group we will talk about the issues and listen to each other's opinions and ideas, using books, films, articles, and special guests as resources for discussion. The group decides whether and how they can or will take action together or as individuals to make a difference.

Music Notes



The daily grayness has been getting rather familiar - even welcome these days - rather than all the early and forever snow we had last year. I even left the Christmas lights on the fence ON through the day because you could SEE them. Now today, the sun shines brightly!! How refreshing! It reminds me why light is such a symbol of hope and blessing. Jesus, the LIGHT OF THE WORLD!! Yes! In 2015, we will continue to celebrate his coming, his bringing light to our spiritual eyes; "Light for our journey."

January 4 - the Thomas family women sing 'Sing We Now of Christmas'

The rest of January, the choir sings:

January 11 - 'Alleluia' - Randall Thompson

January 18 - 'Lead Me, Lord' - Will Todd

January 25 - 'Let There Be Light' - Craig Courtney

"I pray that the eyes of your heart will have enough light to see what is the hope of God's call, what is the richness of God's glorious inheritance among believers, and what is the overwhelming greatness of God's power that is working among us believers." (Ephesians 1:18-19)

Into a glorious new year, *Dawn*

A New Opportunity for Learning Together in 2015

Community Bible Experience

Early February through early April

This is a congregational experience of reading through the New Testament in 8 weeks. Each person is given a text called "The Books of the Bible," which is the NIV new testament in book form. Digital editions are also available for free download for ebook and mp3 audio. There is also a kids audio version. Individuals may also sign up for daily e-mails to read and listen to each days' text online.

There will be gatherings throughout the week at the Church and in homes to reflect together around 5 simple questions:

- A. What was new or compelling to you?
- B. What questions did you have?
- C. Was there anything that bothered you?
- D. What did you learn about loving God?
- E. How might this form/change the way we live?

Congregation Meetings

There will be a brief congregational meeting following church on Sunday, January 25, for the purpose of voting on new members. The Annual Meeting of the congregation will be on Wednesday, February 4.

From the Concerns Group

The Concerns Group has been meeting on Wednesday nights with discussions about how to serve the needs of our community. Our church has so many wonderful organizations that we already support, so the Concerns Group is seeking to enhance those service opportunities and to bring them to the congregation's attention. For example, we were overwhelmed by the donations of gifts to bring Christmas for the seniors at Friendly Towers Thank you!

One project we are currently working on: do you have any musical instruments lying around that you would consider donating to Old Orchard Jr. High, where Polly McClellan teaches? I know my parents bought Peter (Nelson) a nice, shiny saxophone once upon a time, only to have him give up playing after about three months. The saxophone, however, remained in our home for many years! There are a few kids at OOJH that are unable to join the band or orchestra because they cannot afford the rental fees of the instruments. The school has a few instruments to loan, but having a few more on hand would make a tremendous difference in a few kids' lives. Please contact Polly McClellan with questions or donations. Thanks so much!

Also, we would like to encourage people to sign up for 2015 for serving at A Just Harvest and the Greater Chicago Food Depository. Signup sheets are in the Narthex to begin filling in those volunteering opportunities early.

Our group is rather small on Wednesday nights. We are quite friendly, and we could use some more brains, feet, hearts, and ideas! Please join us anytime! In addition, if you have some ideas of how we can show concern for the communities around us, let us know. Feel free to talk to Polly McClellan, Art & Laurel Nelson, Steve & Mollie Sudhoff, Kelly & Colette Quackenbush, Reuben Hanson, or Val Hausman.

Local Missions and Other Opportunities

A Just Harvest -

January 1 and January 15 at 1:00, cooking in our kitchen. Ted Garrison is the contact person for the 1st and John Anderson is the contact person for the 15th. Many thanks to Ted and John for the faithful way they lead this ministry month after month. On the 15th we are also asked to send a crew to the Kitchen to serve the food. They will meet at church to depart at 4:30 and return about 7:00. There is a sign up in the narthex.

Family Promise -

Family Promise is a ministry in which we participate, along with other local congregations, which provides housing and assistance to temporarily homeless families. About four times a year we host the families here at church, providing dinner, evening supervision and fellowship, overnight housing and breakfast for one week at a time. During the day the children attend the school they were attending before the family became homeless and the parents are either working or spending time at the Family Promise day center, working with the director of the program to secure employment and permanent housing.

Our next week of hosting will be **January 11 - 18, 2015**. There are numerous opportunities to volunteer, from providing dinner, to hanging out for the evening, to staying overnight here at church. There is a board in the narthex where you can sign up or you can go to the church website (www.winnetkacovenant.org). Thanks in advance for your help with this important ministry.

Greater Chicago Food Depository -

Every other month we have the opportunity to serve at the Greater Chicago Food Depository, repackaging food for distribution to local food pantries. Our participation benefits the North Park Friendship Center. We can use 20 people on **Saturday, January 10, from 1:00 - 3:45**. The minimum age is 14 and long pants and closed-toe shoes are required. Signup sheets are in the narthex.

Sankofa - A Journey toward Racial Righteousness

Sankofa journeys, sponsored by the Covenant denomination, are trips that begin in Chicago and travel to the deep South, visiting sites of importance to the Civil Rights movement. The next one is scheduled for February 26 - March 1, 2015. For more details and to register, please visit the Covenant website (www.covchurch.org) and go to the Love Mercy & Do Justice page.

The Winnetka Covenant Church financial summary through November 2014:

As of the end of November 2014, our financials remain healthy compared to last year. Given historical giving patterns it will be the last weeks of 2014 that should get us to our Giving budget. Thank you for your continued financial support and please send in your pledges for 2015.

YTD Financials

- o General Fund Giving and Receipts through November 2014 - \$915,350
We are about \$54K short in General Fund giving.
- o Expenses are running at 2014 planned budget.

Comparisons to Prior Year and Budget:

	2014 Actual	2013 Actual	%	2014 Bud.	%
General Fund Receipts	\$ 915,350	\$ 873,134	105%	\$ 977,692	92%
Expenses	\$ 975,340	\$ 980,888	100%	\$ 972,422	100%
Net Operating Income / (Loss)	\$(59,989)	(\$ 107,755)			

	<u>11/31/2014</u>	<u>11/31/2013</u>
Cash -General Fund	\$(75,850)	\$(107,984)
Building Fund*	0	3,050
Exchange Accounts	90,348	103,261
Depreciation Set Aside*	0	40,878
Petty cash	125	125
Memorial/Bequest Funds*	<u>21,090</u>	<u>249,389</u>
	\$35,713	\$288,721
Investments*- Memorial/ Bequest Funds	\$190,004	\$65,885
General Fund	<u>12,240</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	\$202,244	\$65,885

** Investments consolidated into NCP DIA investment funds.
Includes \$22,303 for Andrea's Fall 2015 sabbatical grant.

Projects

- o The Trustees are starting the budget planning for 2015. If you have any suggestions or input, please contact a Trustee or the Church Office.

Youth Notes

Junior and Senior High Youth Groups are having a fun and busy fall/winter season of activities. A full fall calendar has been communicated to the students and their parents but here are some of the highlights:

1. **Sunday School** - There are offerings for jr. and sr. high (separately). The High School class meets in Christy's office, and the Jr. Highers are in the youth room upstairs from 9:30-10:30 on Sunday mornings before worship. Sunday School has a different feel than youth group gatherings - hope the students can be part of this time.
2. **Youth Group Meetings** -
 - Sr. High** - January 4, 11, 18 and 25.
Gathering for coffee on Wednesdays, January 7, 14, and 21.
 - Jr. High** - January 7, 14, and 21.
3. **Retreats** - We look forward to our winter retreats: Junior High (Deep Freeze) at Covenant Harbor is Jan. 16-18. High School (One Life) at Covenant Point is Feb. 13-16
4. **Special Events** -
 - Friday, January 23 - "Chummy Awesomeness: Part Tres - Broomball Night" High League night with North Park Covenant Church, which we are hosting. Timing TBD.
 - We host Covenant Youth Collision for the high schoolers on February 8 for our second annual Open Mic Night.

Christy Bouris

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 22** at Baker's Square. You'll enjoy the fellowship! Call Marian Eckhardt with questions.

Stitch and Study -

Stitch and Study, combining prayer, conversation, and craft/needlework projects, meets on the **third Tuesday of each month** at the home of Marilynn Nelson at 7 p.m. New participants are always welcome to come for the prayer and conversation, with or without a project. The **January meeting will be on the 20th.**

Tuesday morning Bible Study -

The Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study's study in the Gospel of John resumes on January 6. Plan to join us in the New Year. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." John 1:14a.

New Thursday afternoon study coming soon -

Sensible Shoes is the fictional story, written by Covenant Pastor & Spiritual Director Sharon Garlough Brown, of four women's walk together on a spiritual journey. You are invited to walk that same three-month journey with Judi Geake. Using reflection questions and group discussion we will look at how the women are responding to (or resisting) the presence and love of God. They will become windows and mirrors into seeing ourselves more clearly as we consider our own life with God.

This study will run 13 weeks beginning Thursday, February 5, from 1:00-2:30 p.m. Books will be available for \$15 at the first introductory session prior to the 12-week journey.

MOPS Comes to Winnetka Covenant

The Winnetka Covenant Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) group started in September and will continue through the year. The theme of this year's MOPS group is entitled *Be You, Bravely*.

It meets the first Friday of each month from 9:30-11:00 and is open to mothers and their children, ages birth to 5 years. **In January, the meeting will be on the 9th instead of the first Friday.** For more information about MOPS you can contact Elizabeth Schwartz or visit mops.org. Childcare will be provided while mothers in the community connect and better equip themselves for the journey of life. If you would like to volunteer for childcare, please contact Elizabeth. Cost will be \$50 for the year.

Women's Retreat—February 6-8, 2015

The women's retreat will soon be here and we are pleased that Judi Geake will be our speaker again this year, with the theme "Happiness Is a Choice." **It's not too late to register**, if you weren't sure of your availability back in October during the "official" registration period. Call the church office and talk to Joan if you are able to register.

Men's Ministries News

Men's fellowship meets the first three Saturdays of each month at 8:00 a.m. Men, watch your e-mail messages and the bulletins and Network for details.

Watch also for information on opportunities to participate in work projects and for singing together. If you would like to be included on an e-mail list for notifications of events, please contact Paul Christmas.

Mailbox

Dear Winnetka Covenant Church friends,

How can I adequately express my thanks to my church family for your visits, prayers, and concerns this past year. The outpouring of your love has had no limits.

Vivian Edstrom

To my dear Winnetka church family,,

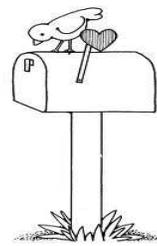
I am overwhelmed with thankfulness to God and all you dear friends for your prayers on my behalf since my accident at the end of September. I have been the grateful recipient of beautiful cards, plants, calls, and also visits from Pastors Peter and Art - all of these seemed to come at a time when most needed. God has been so good to me, giving me renewed energy and increased walking agility. My deepest thanks to everyone.

Elizabeth Johnson

Dear friends,

Thank you for the beautiful poinsettia to brighten my room. I also wish to thank Pastors Peter and Art for the many visits these past months. I appreciate the prayers, cards, and visits from so many friends. It is a blessing to be part of Winnetka Covenant Church.

With love, Ken Pearson



Dear "Cheerful Givers,"

Thank you for again making Christmas special for the seniors at Friendly Towers. Your participation is much appreciated. Also thanks to Christy Bouris, Sarah Hawkinson, and Samantha Yang for their leading the singing for us, to Maeve Johnson for her great solo, and to so many who joined with us for the party. See the thank you notes on the bulletin board. We brought 87 gifts to our friends in Uptown. That's a miracle!

Many thanks, Gladys

Dear, Dear WCC Friends,

There simply is no way for us to express adequately the loving affirmation of the church at the recent Harvest Dinner "Talent show." Peter was completely surprised! Bonnie and the kids, and everyone else was NOT! Thank you for the joy of the night, for the overwhelming gift, and mostly for just being the Christ-like community you are!

Peter and Bonnie

Family News

Congratulations to the Balsam family on the recent addition of two babies:

- **Camille Joy Bjorklund** was born on Tuesday, November 25 to Ashley and Seth Bjorklund in Minnesota. Camille joins her big brother Otto in the family.
- **Phoebe Duane Balsam** was born on Monday, December 8 in Chicago to Aimee and Aaron Balsam. Phoebe weighed 9 lb., 12 oz. at birth, and joins her siblings, Andrew and Junia at home.

Carl and Barbara Balsam are the proud grandparents of all of these children.

Village Fellowship

Village Fellowship is a group of members and friends of Winnetka Covenant who live at Covenant Village in Northbrook. They gather for fellowship and coffee every other month with one of the pastors. The meeting time and place will be changing in 2015. The January meeting will be on Monday, January 19, at 2:15, in the South Village room of the Town Center. At this meeting the group will decide the meeting day and location that works best for the group.

Winnetka Covenant Church Network

1200 Hibbard Road
Wilmette, Illinois, 60091

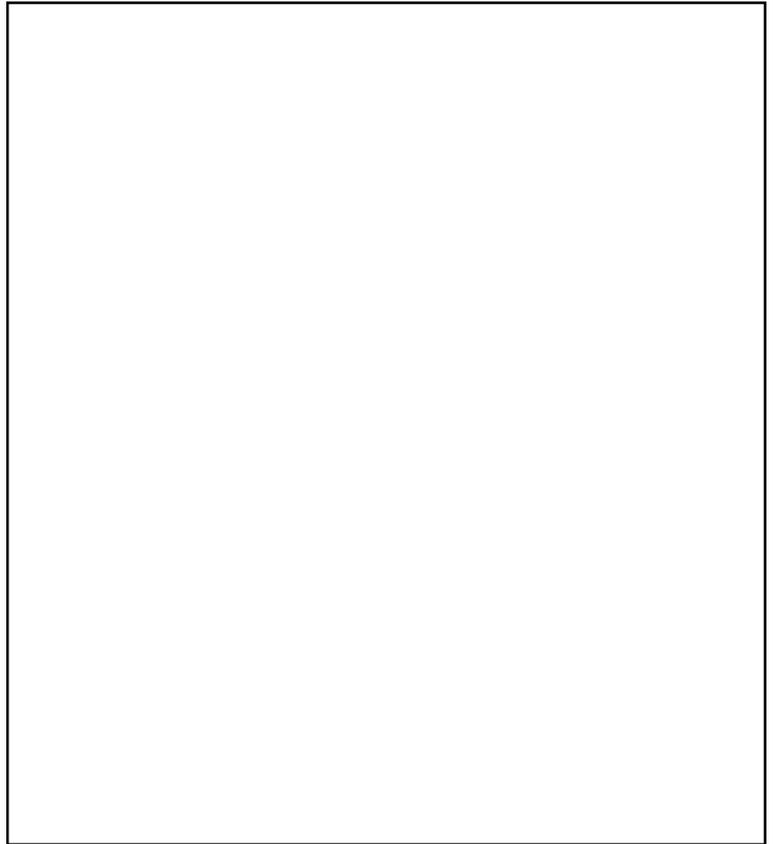
847-446-4300
www.winnetkacovenant.org

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.



Upcoming Events and Opportunities

Friday Night Fellowship

September 12, 2014 through January 30, 2015 - 7:30 p.m.

Come and fellowship with your Church family! Get to know new friends, and enjoy dessert! Each week a gathering will take place in someone's home. The host provides coffee and lemonade, and the rest of us bring a dessert to share. There will be time for informal conversation, and we will gather together for a time at the end for group conversation and prayer for the Church and for one another. Here's the best part ... no RSVP needed! Just come and join us when you can. Hosts are listed on the calendar included in this publication.