



Covenant Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

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“The Work of Christmas Has Begun...”

This is a phrase from a poem by Howard Thurman, also set to music in the hymn, “I am the Light of a World.” The first verse recaps the Christmas story: “When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the magi and shepherds have found their way home...” and suddenly without warning, we’re told, “...the work of Christmas has begun...”

It’s Epiphany...the season in the church year that sheds light on the Child born in a manger; the One who has come to earth as one of us; to live among us; to bring light to our path that leads us to a fuller, richer relationship with God. Finally, the Magi can be placed in your nativity scenes ☺. They have found their way to the infant Jesus, paying homage to him and offering him gifts of gold, frankincense & myrrh before going on to share the Good News of God with others as they make their way home...

Christmas propels us into Epiphany...No time for Christmas vacation; no chance of taking a day off; no rest for the wicked or even the weary from the meaning and message of Christmas...No time for any grass to grow under the feet of the faithful...We’re called to jump right in and begin the work that the coming of the Christ Child symbolizes and the work he began as he grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and humankind.

We’re called to find those who are lost and lonely; those who live broken lives; those making their way beyond broken dreams and broken relationships. We’re called to feed the hungry; to free those who are oppressed—those who find themselves chained to a plethora of injustices; to bring hope and peace in everything we do; to dance and bring joy; to celebrate the diversity of all peoples everywhere.

In other words, you and I are called to follow the Light...the Light of the World...

Gracious God,

May we continue looking for meaning, seeking peace, praying for light, dancing for joy, working for justice, and singing your praise. We go into this New Year filled with great anticipation, with a smidgen or two of worry; yet ever-hopeful, knowing that you are right here beside us and within us...reminding us that we never go it alone.. And may we be always attentive to your leading. Give us the strength and the courage of our convictions as we commit and recommit our offerings of time, energy, creativity and finances in a deeper relationship with you in the community of family, friends and faith. Take us into the New Year, Creator of Beauty, Wonder & Joy, blessed with your companionship and grace... Amen.

God’s blessings be yours as we begin and immerse ourselves in faith throughout 2013...Rev. Joanne

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From the Moderator:

Happy New Year! I love the new beginning that January brings. Somehow a new calendar page--or screen--and all those resolutions seem filled with so much promise and potential. As I write this, it’s December 21, so I haven’t broken a single one of my 2013 resolutions yet!

A long time ago, I read a book called *Space Station Seventh Grade*, written from the perspective of a twelve-year-old boy as he goes through his seventh grade year. I recall it as a really funny book, but one part that stuck with me was the chapter about New Year’s Day. Instead of making resolutions, the main character’s dad encourages him to look back at the previous year, listing all the year’s big events and weighting them for how significant they were to get an overall, big-picture view of the year that just ended.

Oftentimes, in January, I find myself caught between these two ideas: looking back and looking forward, evaluating what has been done or goal-setting for what still needs to be accomplished. Certainly there’s value in both, right?

Looking back at 2012, our community of faith can see areas where we may have fallen short and areas where we’ve accomplished a lot, losses of those we loved and new friends in our midst... And looking ahead to 2013, we have opportunities to help one another and those in the greater community, a renewed sense of purpose in our ministry, and the necessary energy for making it all happen.

And we thank God, who provides us with the opportunities and the resources, in whose name we work and worship and play and serve, who blesses our efforts in ways we can only imagine, and who offers us both the opportunity to look back and infinite possibility for the future every day of our lives.

Darla Baldwin, Moderator

Come, Satisfy the Hungry Heart

Our love and prayers are with the family of Wallace (Wally) Teto who died December 27. A memorial service is planned for early 2013.

Recent: Deb Nystrom at home; Chris Grennan.

Continuing Prayers: Art Brothers; Robin & Jeff Miller; Mary Toney; Vicky Vanderford.

Family: Kathy Smith; Donna Jones; **Mothers:** Chris Kidd; Vicky Vanderford; **Fathers:** Vicki Wilkinson; Debbie Miller; Chad Moses. **Daughters:** Hoffman's; Maryanna Myers; Cathy Teague; **Brother:** Joe Busby;

Sisters: Alan Wilkinson; Carol Carson; Patricia Cadle. **In-Laws:** Renié Palmer;

Grandmothers: Vicki Wilkinson; **Grandfathers:** David Williams; Jasmine & James Cowan.

Grandchildren: Bettyann Christopher; Cathy Teague; Hoffman's; Donna Jones; **Aunts:** Terry White; Greg Stelmack; Jeff Miller; Patricia Mills; Cathy Downs; Marilyn Williams; **Uncles:** Jeff Miller; Angie Ballard; Marilyn Williams; **Niece:** Misty Mowrey. **Great Nieces:** Nancy Jones; Betsy Mebane; **Nephews:** Nancy Jones; Stelmack's; Misty Mowrey. **Cousins:** Jerry Hall; Mary Lou Jackson.

Remembering Others: Larry Harris; Sharon & Dave Garrett; Rev. Raye Feltner-Kapornyai; Hudson Mimlitch; Jacob Stallings; General & Regional Church Leaders; DoC new churches...

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With Grateful Hearts...

Thank you so much for our special Christmas gifts! We appreciate the generosity of your spirit! It is a joy to share in ministry with you and we look forward to a wonderful 2013 as we move forward together into God's future. With love, appreciation and blessings in the New Year,

*Rev. Joanne VerBurg, Rev. Randy Holste,
Cameron Aiken, Mary Lou Jackson, Robin Miller & Patricia Mills*

Our Gifts & Expenses

December

| | |
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| General Fund Contributions Needed Per Month | \$ 16,417 |
| General Fund Contributions | \$ 29,908 |
| (Year-end financial records available mid-January) | |

YEAR TO DATE ACTUAL:

| | |
|--|------------------|
| General Fund Contributions through November 30 | \$177,474 |
| Fundraisers and Other Income through November 30 | <u>17,751</u> |
| Total Income through November 30 | \$195,225 |
| Total Expenses through November 30 | <u>\$195,806</u> |
| Balance as of November 30 | \$ (582) |

Detailed financial reports are availab

Outreach Ministry Project Updates

Thanks to you, Covenant continues to provide services to the community through your Outreach Ministry. We can be proud of all that we have shared out of our abundance in 2012 & look forward to an even better 2013.

During December 2012, our church family donated:

- More than 199 lbs. of food to the Urban Ministries Center Food Pantry;
- 386 disposable diapers to the Dorcas Ministries "Adopt-A-Shelf" program;
- Clothing and toys for 25 "Angels" sponsored by the Salvation Army.

Hunger continues to exist in our community and the Urban Ministries food pantry appreciates our donations of:

- Canned fruits and vegetables (no green beans or corn)
- Canned soups and canned beans
- Breakfast cereals; grits, powdered or boxed milk
- Dried beans, Mac & cheese, peanut butter & jelly
- Pasta, dry and canned past a meals, rice
- Juice, juice boxes

Families with infants and toddlers will continue to need our donations of disposable diapers during 2013. All children's sizes are appreciated, the greatest need however; is infant size 4.

Please know that if there is a need in the community that you would like for Covenant to consider, do not hesitate to let any member of the Outreach Ministry know – Shirley Kennedy; Becky Stiles or myself.

May God continue to bless you during 2013 so that you can continue to be a blessing to others.

René Palmer, Outreach Ministry Chair

Christian Education is in Full Swing ...

...with children, youth, and adults excited about sharing God's love with friends and strangers. Our next Covenant Time will be Jan. 13. We will once again be tracing and coloring characters onto white cloth squares, only this time we will transform the squares into pillows: Comfort Pillows! Lunch is "bring your own" or enjoy pizza at \$1 a slice. Weather permitting; we'll also have outdoor activities for the young and restless. Be sure to save the date and join us!

Rev. Misty Mowrey and Beth Kearney, Education Co-chairs

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Amazing Grays...

We'll have a **Pot Luck** supper this month on Thursday, January 17 at 5:30p at the home of Mary Lou Jackson: 1413 Applethorn Dr. Apex 27502. Beverages will be provided. Contact Mary Lou if you plan to attend and what you will bring; and also if you want to carpool or need directions: maryloujackson@nc.rr.com or 919-362-6506.

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Disciples Men Dive into 2013 with Vigor!

Looking back to 2012, our Disciple Men got our ship turned around in service to the church and each other with support for our fundraisers, helping buy a new church computer, buying and moving new "round" tables, getting new table covers, enjoying sports outings, beginning the first four study sessions on the "History of the New Testament", and helping with church grounds cleanup. We simply plan on more of the same in 2013, so watch for meeting dates both at the church and at some of our men's homes. A new emphasis will be on getting some of our younger adult men involved as well as our teenage boys...*Ted Glasener, President, Bob Kennel, Secretary*

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Women's Ministry News...

Women's Bible Study

Is starting back this month...we will have two meetings in the month of January...January 9 and January 30 beginning at 6:30p. We are studying the books of 1 and 2 Peter, 1-3 John and Jude. Invite a friend to join you...all are welcome.

Women's Breakfast Meeting

Another year has barely begun, and our next women's breakfast meeting is planned for Saturday, February 16, at 9:00a. We will focus our minds and spirits during the holy time of Lent. Please watch the Sunday bulletin, newsletters, and email inboxes for more information. Wishing you God's choicest blessings for 2013! Please invite a friend to the breakfast meeting. *Warmly, Nancy J Jones, Chair, Women's Ministries*

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Covenant's SCRIP Update

Thank you to everyone who participated in Covenant's SCRIP program in 2012. We earned well over \$2000 for the church with our everyday purchases! Many of you have been asking the SCRIP volunteers questions about how this program works and about how Covenant earns money with this program.

Here is an example of how we earn money on a \$100 order of fairly common purchases:

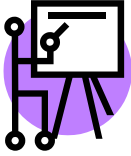
- \$25.00 Bath and Body Works (with a 13% discount) - CCC earns \$3.25
- \$25.00 CVS (with a 6% discount) - CCC earns \$2.25
- \$25.00 Target (with a 2% discount) - CCC earns \$0.50
- \$25.00 Shell Gas (with a 2.5% discount) - CCC earns \$0.63

So, if this household ordered these four cards and paid Covenant Christian Church \$100.00 for this order, Covenant purchases these cards from the Great Lakes Scrip Center for \$94.12, keeping the difference, earning \$5.88 on this one order. While this may not sound like a lot, all of these purchases add up to help Covenant earn thousands of dollars each year with this fundraiser. One of the great things about this program is that every little bit helps, and, what's even better, there is no upper limit to how much we can earn.

Not sure how to start? Try starting with a gas card. We keep two \$25 Shell cards in our inventory each week, and you can order cards from BP, Exxon, Chevron, Mobil, Sam's Club, and Sheetz, just to name a few. You can use the gift cards just like you would use a credit or debit card at the pump - they even tell you the amount left on the card before you pump your gas. Questions? Stop by and visit the friendly SCRIP volunteers in the church library after each service. Or, you can contact Robin Miller at doghowse@msn.com or 919-852-3986.

Robin & Jeff Miller, SCRIP Coordinators

Sunday School Teachers Needed!



Are you trying to find a way to "fit in"? Are you seeing all the cool things happening with children's ministry and saying "I wish I could be a part of that?" Here's your chance!

WE NEED FAITH PARTNERS-AKA - Sunday School Teachers
to help with our Pre-School & K-1 classes!

As a teacher you will be right in the middle of all the action! Your commitment is minimal - one or two shadowing sessions and a scheduled rotation for Sunday mornings! Also, with our AMAZING curriculum minimal prep-work per session required (roughly 30 minutes to an hour per week)!

If you are interested in becoming a SS teacher, or want more information, please contact Randy at the church office: 919-481-4715 or randy-ccc@bellsouth.net

Children/Youth News - Calendar!

JYF (Rising 3rd-5th Graders)

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| <u>January 13th</u> – Covenant Time (Comfort Pillows) | 12 – 2 PM |
| <u>January 20th</u> – Lunch & Ice Skating! | 12 – 3 PM |

CHI RHO (Middle Schoolers)

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| <u>January 4-5th</u> – Chi Rho Lock-In @ Church (Theme Party!) | Fri. 7p – Sat. 9a. |
| <u>January 20th</u> – Youth Advisory Board Meeting! | 3:30 PM – 5 PM |
| <u>January 20th</u> – Program @ Church! | 5 PM – 6:30 PM |
| <u>February - March</u> – Weekly meetings – Bullying/Self-defense w/Officer Michael Marcario. | |

CYF (High Schoolers)

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| <u>January 13th</u> – Bowling Night@ Buffalo Lanes (Cary). | 6 PM – 8 PM. |
| <u>January 20th</u> – Youth Advisory Board Meeting! | 3:30 PM – 5 PM |
| <u>January 20th</u> – Program @ Church – Anti-Theism & the Church! | 6 PM – 7 PM. |