

Covenant Life Link

VOLUME 10 ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2009

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Message from Pastor Steve

“May you be covered in the dust of your Rabbi.” – First century Jewish blessing

One year ago, we proclaimed 2008 as a “Year of Fellowship” at Hillcrest Covenant Church. Through the year we focused on our fellowship – our unity and relationships with one another. We held events specifically for that purpose. We encouraged each other to choose and work toward goals that would strengthen our fellowship. We taught about, preached about and lived together in fellowship. So, after a year of Fellowship, how did we do? Do you see us closer in relationship and unity than we were a year ago? I do. I see it in the excitement of our times together – we like just being together! I see it in our meetings as we talk about the promising future and pray together about how God will lead us there. I see it in the way people talk together, eat together, play together and most of all care for one another in our church.

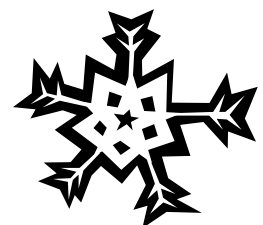
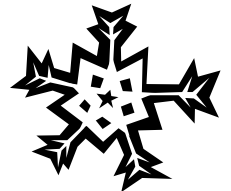
This fall, we held smaller meetings in homes to talk about where we should focus in 2009. Those conversations were brought to our Exec. board retreat in October where they were discussed and a new focus was chosen. That focus was presented to the Church Board in November and accepted by the board. Therefore, 2009 will be a “Year of Discipleship” at Hillcrest Covenant Church. As a church, we will focus this year on our discipleship through our classes, sermons and activities together. While not losing our unity and relationships (Fellowship), we will set church-wide and personal goals to grow in the area of Discipleship. At the Annual Meeting on Jan. 25, we will be encouraging each other to choose an area of personal discipleship in which to grow this year. This could include attending Sunday School or small group regularly if you currently don’t. It could include joining with others to read through the whole bible in 2009 (see elsewhere in this newsletter for a daily reading schedule for January.) It may mean taking on one of the Spiritual Disciplines and practicing it throughout the year (I recommend Richard Foster’s [Celebration of Discipline](#) for further explanation.) Our Christian Formation Board will be helping us to grow in this area this year.

What are we really talking about when we say Discipleship? That’s what we’re going to study this year, but for starters know that the word “disciple” really means “learner” or “follower”. When a Rabbi (teacher) called someone to be a disciple, that disciple left everything from family and friends to home and occupation to follow and learn from the Rabbi. For years that disciple literally followed the Rabbi everywhere and learned how to act, think, talk and live like their Rabbi. They often walked so closely behind their Rabbi that the dust from the Rabbi’s sandals (along with whatever else he may have stepped in that day) would kick up and cover the front of the disciple’s robe. The half-hearted disciple had no dust on them, for they didn’t follow very closely. The devoted disciple was covered. How dusty you were spoke volumes about how closely you followed your Rabbi.

This year, as we learn what it means to “come and follow” Jesus our Rabbi, may the Jewish blessing from Jesus’ day be yours as well, and “may you be covered in the dust of your Rabbi.”

Pastor Steve

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHURCH CHAIR

We have had another busy and exciting month and with that 2008 is coming to a close. We were not able to attend the Thanksgiving Eve service but we hear it was another wonderful evening of worship and desert. The Smorgasbord/Christmas party was also a wonderful evening. Gabriella is still singing “GO Tell it on the Mountain”.

On the business side there is not much to report this month as the December Executive Committee meeting was a Christmas party at the Bickner’s. We had a wonderful evening and what a wonderful group. It was great to get together with Executive Committee members and spouses and fellowship – it was my favorite meeting so far as Chair.

The Mutual Ministries Committee is in the process of interviewing candidates for the open Administrative Assistant position and has made good progress and we are hoping to fill the position soon. Please pray for the committee as we bring that process to a close.

Also remember to keep January 18th on your calendar for the Comedy Café and January 25th is the all-Church Annual Meeting.

With that I would just like thank you all for your efforts in making 2008 a wonderful year in the life of Hillcrest Covenant Church and wish you all a blessed holiday season and pray that you all have a great 2009.

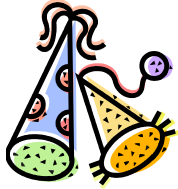
To God be the Glory,

Joe Bothe
Church Chair

Hillcrest Covenant Church
Financial Report thru November 2008



January Birthdays



Dave Vollstedt
 Joe Bothe
 Jo Swan
 David Livingston
 Cheri Auman
 Becky Sisler
 Steve Klopfenstein
 Martha Snyder
 Carol Hegberg
 Mary Lou Sander
 (missionary)
 Ian Gaertner
 Pat Kevin
 Jeanne Holly
 Dave Wessel



The Christian Education board would like to, on behalf of our Hillcrest family, thank everyone who was a part of the Annual Smorgasbord and Christmas Program. What a wonderful way to celebrate this Advent season! As a church family, we have definitely outdone ourselves with the fantastic food and tremendous talent that we were treated to on the evening of December 14! This kind of event doesn't just happen and we would like to especially acknowledge all the people who have volunteered their time and talents to prepare for this evening.

Lois Miller (soon to be confirmed official "HCC party planner") coordinated and decorated yet another memorable dining event and dessert course! Thank you Lois for all the time and talent you put into this very special annual Smorgasbord-125th anniversary division.

Carol Hegberg, playwright created the story that the children performed so beautifully. Thank you Carol for gifting us with your wonderful talents! Debbie Reingold, Carol Hegberg and Heather Larson, thank you to each of you for coordinating the writing, acting, directing, production and music for the Christmas play. You dedicated many hours and your efforts paid off – the show was exceptional!

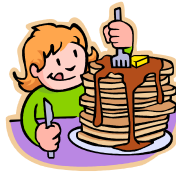
The superb performance by the children attested to the time and energy that went into the preparations. Thanks go to each and every Sunday school student who participated from preschool through 6th grade (plus one 7th grader). You were all GREAT. The story you told through words and music created a very special memory for our church!

Comedy Cafe needs your best desserts!
 Please contact Becky Sisler, 815-756-3066
 or just email at scottbeckysisler@hotmail.com



FUNDRAISER BREAKFAST

We will have a fund raising breakfast for campers going to Covenant Harbor or Covenant Point this summer. It will be Sunday, Feb. 22 at 8:30 (before Sunday School). If you are going to camp and would like to help raise some money to go, contact Susan Kauffman no later than Jan. 15. All proceeds from the breakfast will be divided among those helping out!



Tacka dig!
 (Thank you!)

Registration has started for the 2009 summer.

Register early for those hard to get camps & skills! Remember when signing up for camps: Covenant Harbor goes by the age you are right now and Covenant Point goes by the grade you will be entering next fall.



If you have any questions about the camps or registering, please contact Susan Kauffman.

There are scholarships available through the Julie Grimm Scholarship Fund and also through each camp. The camps and our church do not want a camper to miss out on camp due to financial reasons! Contact Pastor Steve or Susan Kauffman for more info. on scholarships.



To all the folks who dedicated their time and talents to support the rehearsal and set design, as well as the audio-visual, music support on the evening of the program- Amy, Dave, Stephanie and Mark Wessel, Herb and Wendy Kuryliw, Sam Kevin, middle school confirmation students, Lois Miller, Rob Ferguson, Richard Reingold – thank you! To the families who made arrangements to help with learning lines, music and rehearsals – wasn't it worth it?

Thanks to our great God for blessing us this holiday season!

DEACONS' CORNER – 2009 Happy New Year

As we conclude 2008, we will continue our theme of **Fellowship**, defined as “our life together as a church.” This means contact, prayer, caring and building relationships. We extend Fellowship as we welcome new members to Hillcrest Covenant Church. Joining in January will be Mike and Jenny Pianovski (their children are Austin and MacKensie) and Kim Severson (husband Scott and son Ryan).

Beginning a new year in 2009, our new theme at Hillcrest Covenant Church will be **Discipleship**. This new “engine” of Discipleship and Fellowship build on each other – it involves a person investing time, energy, prayer and commitment into the life of another person – developing a relationship where the person being disciplined learns, grows and draws closer to God.

Christian discipleship is more than being a believer – it’s about being a follower. Once we make a decision for Christ, we must become His disciples and follow Him. If you have chosen to follow Christ, then you are a modern-day Christian disciple. It begins when you make an active choice to get to know Jesus better. . .it is accomplished by:

- Study His Word – read the Bible daily, join a Sunday school class, a Bible study group or a weekly prayer group.
- Become involved in Hillcrest Covenant Church’s fellowship activities.
- Seek the companionship of other Christians who are growing in Christ.
- Participate in ministry – prayer chain, fellowship/hospitality committee, provide meals, meet the needs of others.
- Share what you’re learning about Christ with others.

Be a modern-day Christian Disciple by forming relationships and seeking to do the above suggestions. You, too, can be a believer who becomes a follower and messenger!

By Marcia Born

CHIC 2009 UNDONE

CHIC is a triennial Christian conference for high school students sponsored by the department of Christian Formation of the Evangelical Covenant Church. In 2009, CHIC will be held at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, from **Sunday July 12 through Friday July 17, 2009**. Thousands of youth from all over North America and around the world will gather for a week of fun, friends, and worship.

The vision for CHIC 2009 :

- Being: a Christ-centered community of students – Genesis 28:3
- Knowing: confident in their relationship with Christ – Romans 8:38-39
- Doing: committed to doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with their God—Micah 6:8

High school students have received the information sheets and the early bird registration is due by January 31, 2009. If you are a student or a parent of a high school student who would like to attend CHIC next summer, please email Beth Ferguson at bethlferg@dnacom.com or call 815-761-2944 and leave a message by December 31, 2008. We will have a planning meeting for fundraising in early January. Please prayerfully consider attending and make contacting Beth a priority. She looks forward to hearing from you!

January 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Office Closed	2 Office Closed	3
4 SS 9:30am Worship 10:45am	5 CE 6:30 pm	6	7 GG's 6:30 pm Confirmation 6:30 pm AWANA 6:30 pm	8 Music & Worship 7 pm Outreach 7 pm Mission Comm 7	9	10 Men's Breakfast/Bible study 7:30 am ?Why 7-10 pm
11 SS/Choir practice 9:30am Worship 10:45am	12 Deacon's mtg 6:30pm @ Born's	13 Precepts 6:30 pm	14 GG's 6:30pm Confirmation 6:30pm AWANA 6:30pm	15 Exec Comm 7:00 pm	16	17 Men's Breakfast/Bible study 7:30 am
18 SS/Choir practice 9:30am Worship 10:45am Comedy Cafe	19	20 Precepts 6:30 pm Trustees 7:00 pm	21 GG's 6:30pm Confirmation :30pm AWANA 6:30pm AWANA Leader Meeting 5 pm	22	23 Jr. High (X4J) to Deep Freeze at CHBC (thru Sunday)	24 Men's Breakfast/Bible study 7:30 am ?Why 7-10 pm
25 SS/Choir practice 9:30am Worship 10:45am X4J Home from Deep Freeze Congregational mtg @ 12:15 pm	26	27 Precepts 6:30 pm	28 GG's 6:30 pm Confirmation 6:30 pm AWANA 6:30 pm	29	30	31 Men's Breakfast/Bible study 7:30 am ?Why 7-10 pm

Missionaries We at Hillcrest Covenant Church Help Support

Gary & Mary Lou Sander

Apartado Aereo 55276
Medillin, Colombia
www.pactocol.org
pactosand@yahoo.com

Lisandro & Patricia Restrepo

Serving in Monterrey, Mexico
Mailing address:
P.M.B. 147
1001 S. 10th St. Suite G
McAllen, TX 78501
lisrestrepo@yahoo.com
prestrepo2002@yahoo.com

Eric & Kristi Peterson

(InterVarsity Christian Fellowship)
1048 Reasor Ave.
Louisville, KY 40217
peterson97@peoplepc.com



Sander Family Missionary Letter

December 2008

Dear Covenant Church Family

God did it! He called us to begin a task and we accompanied him in carrying it out. In the span of the past 14 months, Gary and Mary Lou have traveled to the city of Barranquilla eight times to meet with the pastoral couples for spiritual mentoring, spiritual growth and building of relationships. We had been hearing God call us to this emphasis in our ministry for some time. While we lived in Bogota we often sought out the Covenant pastoral couples and initiated some gatherings and ministry amongst them. One major reason for our move to Medellin eight years ago was to carry on this spiritual mentoring and pastoral ministry amongst the pastoral couples and families in the Covenant. We have been doing that now in through various means and gatherings for the past years. When we became an "empty nest" couple, God began to grow a call in our lives to expand this "pastoring of those who pastor in the Covenant" to the other regional areas where the Covenant has churches. The first regional area we went and talked with was the North Caribbean Coast Region. The first time we came there we asked the pastors' wives to join us to talk about the possibility of getting together for spiritual enhancement and mutual ministry. The wives had never been included in a meeting such as this since most of the time it was just their husbands who were included. They were so impressed that they were being considered to be a part of this kind of ministry that they readily agreed to give it a try. We agreed to meet together every two months, for a 48 hour spiritual retreat. We agreed to commit for one year and celebrate together what God did amongst us at the end of the year. God kept all of us faithful to the task. We just concluded our "Celebration Weekend." Everyone was present. Even the youngest, Yenedi Ortega, born during our year together and just 5 months old, came and celebrated with us. We celebrated God's relationship with us as a group. We had prayed with each other and for each other over the year and now we were able to finish our study of the "Devotional Classics", 52 spiritual readings from authors over the centuries of Christianity. That was quite an accomplishment to have everyone participate in leading the group through the study of various spiritual writ-

ings. We were so glad to be able to study Listening Prayer, as well as Spiritual Tensions we find in our ministries. We celebrated how God had developed the relationship amongst us as pastoral families by decorating our "North Coast Team Visors" together and sharing a meal together in the new Panorama Mall. (The Panorama Mall is a new shopping mall that none of the families had ever been to. A meal there was a special treat for everyone.) We celebrated God building the unity of the Covenant working together through a combined service on Sunday afternoon. And we celebrated the life we enjoy together in Christ by heading out to the beach together, all 20 of us, squeezed together in a 15 passenger van. We spent the morning on the beach and the afternoon in a pool and everyone laughed and played together. And the best thing is we've been blessed so much by God that we're committing to continuing to accompany God as he ministers among us on the North Coast for who knows how long? We'll be together again by March of 2009. Now we've got to figure out how to include in the calendar schedule the other two regional conferences of the Colombian Covenant who are hearing God call them to include this ministry in their regions as well. God is doing it.

Love, The Sander Family



Dear Hillcrest Family,

As many of you already know, in the coming months I have a great opportunity to serve the Lord in Mexico. This is something I have taken steps toward and prayed about over the past year and I am excited to have a chance to serve Him beyond our borders.

I'll be working with an organization called Merge, which is within the World Missions department of the Covenant Church. From January until August I will be assisting short-term teams from the U.S. as they serve for a week or two at a time alongside churches throughout the entire country of Mexico. Each team is unique in that they all have different ministry goals and plans for what they want to accomplish during their time.

With that being said, the most common trips involve tackling some kind of work project and connecting with the church and community through ministry with the people. Work projects typically involve working on buildings, pouring concrete, painting, tiling, roofing, demolition, moving dirt, etc. Additionally, in my past experiences the people ministry has included activities such as Vacation Bible School, English classes, soccer tournaments, pastoral classes, crafts and biblical teaching for women, as well as medical/dental care. In my first few months I will be assisting full-time Merge staffers with these teams, but as my Spanish improves the plan is for me to run my own teams by summer.

Additionally, there will be weeks at a time when I will not be working with teams. During those time periods I will be living at a seminary, La Buena Tierra, located in a north central Mexican city called Saltillo. While there, I will be working with a tutor and focusing on improving my Spanish, as well as working on more specific projects for Merge's full time missionaries.

I thank everyone who has already signed up to pray for me while I am gone. I know how important prayer is and that it is the backbone of making missions happen. I plan on sending monthly ministry updates to let you know how things are going and how you can be praying. If this is something you might be interested in doing, send me an email at joel.g.howells@gmail.com, and I would be happy to add you to my list.

After recently praying with and talking things through with the missions committee, I also wanted to give people an opportunity to partner with me and support this ministry financially. Any donations will cover food, rent, health and car insurance, travel to different sites, visas, language classes, and various other expenses. If you feel led to do this, please refer to the information below that describes how to provide financial support to this ministry.

I feel blessed to have the opportunity to represent all of you, and our church, through working with Merge. Thank you for all of the encouragement and support.

In His Love,
Joel Howells

Covenant Mission Connection Support

Joel Howells
5101 N. Francisco Ave.
Chicago, IL 60625



One Camp Booster for Covenant Camps!

Promote Covenant Camping opportunities for children and adults through newsletter updates, communications with Sunday school kids and communication with pastor.

Serve as contact person for Covenant Camp information.

Skills needed –

Love the Lord and Love Covenant Camping!

Camp booster is part of Christian Formation/Education with extra support from a Covenant Camp board member who formally held this position and has GREAT ideas! Interested? Contact Beth Ferguson at 815-217-0075 or bethlferg@dnacom.com

Local Help Needed

The missions and stewardship committee wants to make everyone aware of some local service opportunities. **The Salvation Army** has some big plans in 2009. A local person has committed funds to remodel the basement of the Salvation Army for a new food pantry and soup kitchen. They are looking for anyone with contacts in the contracting industry who may be interested in serving on a committee to help with this project. If interested, contact Scott Sisler.

Due to the economic climate, **Hope Haven** is having challenges also. There are serious space issues presently and the board is brainstorming ways to alleviate this problem as fast as possible. Some people have resorted to renting mobile storage units for shelter to stay out of the elements even though there is no heat. If you feel called to service, contact Joan Bickner or Sue Guio.

Hillcrest Awana Clubs

Exciting things continue to happen at Hillcrest. We were blest & thankful for the Holy Spirit's work in our clubs, especially for the decision that Jacob Adams made to accept Christ! A majority of our clubbers are not from Hillcrest. A few do not go to church at all. Each week it is exciting to see their interest in God grow. Our clubbers filled 4 Operation Christmas boxes in November & they want to do more for others in the future! Our clubbers continue to bring friends to our clubs & we continue to add clubbers to our rooster!

Needless to say, all of the above could not take place without prayer support. We have a prayer group here at Hillcrest who is specifically praying for us. Thank you! We also got in the mail a note from the Awana Ministry Advancement Team & they are praying for us 4 times a week! Wow!

Steve & I recently had lunch with the Awana Missionaries for our area. It was neat to hear how much they care about our Awana ministry as well as our ministry outside of Awana. Bruce & Marti Brumfield, our area's Awana Missionaries serve all Awana clubs in northern Illinois helping facilitate training, providing prayer support, providing wisdom from their many years of experience with the Awana ministry. They serve like any other missionary in the world through financial support from whoever is willing to support their ministry. For more information about how you can support them as our area missionaries, see Heather.

Speaking of missionaries, our clubbers will have their very own missionary, Joel Howells. Awana involves teaching children how to serve & one of those ways is to expose them to missionaries, teaching them what they do & ways they can support missionaries. As they personally know Joel, we have chosen to adopt him as our clubs' Awana missionary). Our clubs will work to keep in touch with him the rest of this school year & pray for him on a regular basis.

As mentioned above our clubs are growing, and with growth come a need for more leaders. God has provided 4 new leaders! Mike Pianovski will be taking Joel Howells place in January as a T&T team leader. Jorden., a high schooler & friend of Ashlee Gregory is joining the Sparks club team as a Leader in Training (LIT). Chris Shaff will be joining the Sparks club team as a Sparks team leader. Jo Swan will be joining the T&T club team as a T&T team leader. God continues to provide as we grow!

Some fun facts:

According to a 2007 Awana alumni research study, "9 in 10 alumni said Awana played an important role in developing a spiritual foundation for their adult lives. A total of 92.3% said Awana helped shape their moral foundation for today. Alumni place such high value on the impact of Awana in their life that 92.9% said they would like their own children to participate in an Awana ministry someday." Specifically, this research found that Awana alumni rank the highest in believing that God exists, believing that Jesus is God's Son, & trusting the Bible as God's Word compared to most Protestants!

Awana alumni are also more likely to read scripture or other religious books weekly or more, attend worship services weekly or more, pray regularly, take part in a Bible study/Sunday school, participate in small groups/discipleship, become involved in community/missionary outreach, volunteer in their community, give \$10,000 or more yearly to their place of worship & pursue personal evangelism! The final results: "Consistent, long term participation in Awana – accompanied by even stronger spiritual influence from parents – reaps long-lasting results for the kingdom." What an impact Awana can have on our children's lives, our own lives & the life of our church & community! So, do you know someone who could benefit from being a part of our Awana clubs? If so, invite them to join us!

Blessings,
Heather Larson
Awana Ministry Director

Daily Bible Reading Schedule

Have you always wanted to read through the Bible? Have you tried, but given up? Is it a regular practice and you'll do it again this year? I invite you to join a group of us to read the whole Bible together during 2009. We'll be reading the Bible in chronological order, meaning we'll read it as it happened in history. This means while you read the book of 2 Kings, you'll also be reading the writings of the prophets mentioned there. While you read Acts, you'll read Paul's letters to those churches. It is a new way to put the history of the Bible together.

I'll have a sign-up sheet in the narthex for those wanting to try it, and will try to send occasional comments or encouragements to the group. We will print the daily readings in the newsletter each month and on the website as well. To that end, here are the readings for January. Happy reading!

January, 2009

1	Genesis 1-3	12	Job 32-34	23	Genesis 32-34
2	Genesis 4-7	13	Job 35-37	24	Genesis 35-37
3	Genesis 8-11	14	Job 38-39	25	Genesis 38-40
4	Job 1-5	15	Job 40-42	26	Genesis 41-42
5	Job 6-9	16	Genesis 12-15	27	Genesis 43-45
6	Job 10-13	17	Genesis 16-18	28	Genesis 46-47
7	Job 14-16	18	Genesis 19-21	29	Genesis 48-50
8	Job 17-20	19	Genesis 22-24	30	Exodus 1-3
9	Job 21-23	20	Genesis 25-26	31	Exodus 4-6
10	Job 24-28	21	Genesis 27-29		
11	Job 29-31	22	Genesis 30-31		

**We'll be going to the High School Deep Freeze,
February 20-22.**

We'll have high school youth meetings on Saturday nights, January 10, 24 and 31, from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm. If transportation is available we will go out for something to eat.



Hillcrest Covenant Church

1515 N. First St.
DeKalb, IL 60115

Phone: 815-756-5508

Fax: 815-756-5546

E-mail: someone@example.com

Website: www.hillcovch.org

Our Staff

Pastor: Steve Larson

Minister of Music: Victoria Young

Church Office Hours: 9 am - 1:00 pm

Mon - Fri

We're on the Web!
www.hillcovch.org



HillcrestCovenant
CHURCH

Praise

Share

Grow

Care

Serve

**Upcoming Events for Covenant Harbor Bible Camp
Lake Geneva**

Winter Fest (for 4th—6th grades)

February 27—March 1, 2009

Maple Fest

March 29, 2009 (tentative)

Moms & Daughters Weekend

May 1-3, 2009

Summer Wind-Up (for K-6th grades)

May 23, 2009

If you need more information or have any questions, please contact Susan Kauffman at 815-264-7905 or call Covenant Harbor at 262-248-3600.