

Covenant Life Link

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 3

MARCH 2008

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Message from Pastor Steve

Last month our community was changed forever. The shootings on the NIU campus stole five of our students, friends and members of our community, and with them peace of mind, comfort and for some, hope. Today, life goes on at NIU and in our community, but not like it was. Something has changed.

This month we will celebrate together Holy Week. And as we do, I will be thinking of the disciples that witnessed it. On that Good Friday, their world was changed forever. As they watched their Lord and Messiah crucified, less than a week after He was cheered into Jerusalem by the masses, they must have felt that their peace, comfort and hope was dying on that cross, too. They knew life would go on for them, but not like it was. For them, everything had changed.

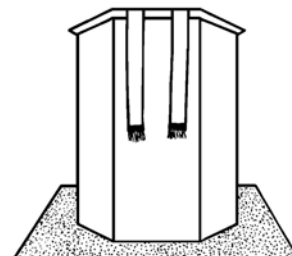
Praise God that is not where the gospels end. If we continue on in their story, we find that for a time, they grieved, they sought the comfort of each other and familiar routine. They joined together for prayer and safety, and then came Sunday. Hope was reborn as God raised His Son from the dead. Through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus our Messiah, the doorway to eternal life was opened and their hope (and ours) was reborn.

As Christians, we grieve, we seek the comfort of each other and the return to familiar routines. As we deal with our fear, anger and sorrow in the wake of last months events, though, we do so "not as those who have no hope." The very celebrations of Good Friday and Easter Sunday in which we will join together in a few weeks are the reminders that God has given us the hope of eternal life with Him. And so we grieve and comfort and show God's love to those around us, knowing full well that we are in the middle of the story, not the end, and that the end to come is itself just the beginning. (see 1 Thess. 4:13-18 for more.)



Upcoming Sermons

- March 2: "Who is Jesus? - The Lamb"
- March 9: "Who is Jesus? - Our Redeemer"
- March 16: "Who is Jesus? - The Messiah"
- March 23: "Who is Jesus? - Our Savior"



TRUSTEE'S REPORT

Repairs to the church's fascia, soffits and siding have now been completed. Ken Spears Construction worked through some difficult weather conditions to make this happen as scheduled. The trustees are now in the process of replacing lower level ceiling tiles that were water stained by leaks before we put on the new roof and completed the siding work.

The last major project on the Trustee's list is renovation of our bathroom facilities. Following discussion with the Executive Board, the Trustees are soliciting competitive bids for such project, to include making such facilities ADA compliant. A proposal will be presented to the congregation later this spring.

In March the church office will have a new copier machine. The current copier has been in place since the mid 90s and is no longer doing the job. The new machine will be purchased from Gordon-Flesch which submitted the lowest bid on the specified equipment. Developments in technology will enable us to cut our annual maintenance costs by more than half.

The Trustees are replacing the refrigerator next to the range in the kitchen. The old refrigerator needed a repair the cost of which suggested replacement would be more economic in the long run.

Expenses through February are on track, with the exception of snow removal costs which are over budget due to the larger than normal snowfall that we have received.

Bruce Bickner and Larry Schultz,
Co-Chairs

MUSIC & WORSHIP ARTICLE

Jesus and the disciples are in a boat crossing the Sea of Galilee. A storm suddenly arises and what was placid becomes violent – monstrous waves rise out of the sea and slap the boat. Mark describes it: "A furious squall came up and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped."

Imagine yourself in the boat. It's a sturdy vessel, but no match for 10 foot waves. It plunges nose first into the wall of water. The force of the wave dangerously tips the boat until the bow seems to be pointing straight at the sky. A dozen sets of hands join your in clutching the mast. All of your shipmates have wet hands and wide eyes. You tune your ear for a claming voice, but all you hear are screams and prayers. All of a sudden it hits you – someone is missing. Where is Jesus? He's not at the mast. He's not grabbing the edge. Where is he? You turn and look and there curled in the stern of the boat is Jesus, sleeping!

You don't know whether to be amazed or angry, so you're both. How can he sleep at a time like this? How could he sleep through the storm?

Simple, he's in charge of it.

Jesus "got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!'" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm" (Mark 4:39). The raging water becomes a stilled sea, instantly. Immediate calm. Not a ripple.

The waves were his subjects, and the winds were his servants. The whole universe was his kingdom. (Max Lucado – 40 days of Devotions)

We worship the God who owns the universe. That's the God that we have the chance to come face to face with each Sunday morning in praise and worship. Through our praise songs, hymns, choir, bells and all that we do, let's come into our sanctuary each Sunday in awe of Jesus the way the disciples must have been in awe the day he calmed the seas. I would have loved to stand next to them and sing praises that day. I bet worship would have been a special time. Take for granted the opportunity to stand next to your brother in worship – not a chance. Not take in the majesty and awe of God while singing and worshipping – I can't imagine.

In Christ,
Greg Howells
Music and Worship Committee

March Birthdays

Sean Holly
 Mort Carrel
 Ava Bickner
 Neil VanderWeide
 Pat Vollstedt
 Steve Larson
 Ashley Klopfenstein
 Kristi Peterson
 (Missionary)
 Greg Howells
 Ryan Schultz
 Carly Bothe
 Gabriella Bothe
 Nikki Smith
 Heather Larson
 Eric Peterson
 (Missionary)
 Tucker Code
 Mike Wales
 Michelle Vogl
 Samuel Restrepo
 (Missionary son)
 Kim Rasmussen
 Dale McBride

Help Needed

The Music and Worship Committee is looking for someone interested in overseeing the burning of our worship services to CD. Contact Greg Howells 815-895-2331 for more details.

Prayer Requests

If you or a loved one would like to add a name to the 'People To Pray For:' section of the bulletin, please let Pastor Steve or the church office know. We will then print that name for two weeks unless a longer time is specifically requested.

March Anniversaries

Olle & Mary Lou Larson
 Kathy & Randy Aichele
 Rick & Christine Shaff

Men's Breakfast and Bible Study

The Men's Breakfast and Bible Study meets every Saturday morning from 7:17 - 8:45. We are currently studying the Sermon on the Mount. This is an excellent opportunity to enjoy fellowship with other men and dig into God's Word. All men are invited.

HOW TASTY!!!!

Hillcrest is compiling a 125th Anniversary Year Celebration Cookbook. We are part of a church with a tremendous history and reputation of great cooks.

Please share your best recipes. You need not be a member of our church. All you need to do is copy your favorite recipes (legibly) using the cookbook publisher's recipe forms, which are available in the narthex. Then place the recipe in the narthex recipe basket. Copies of the forms are also available on-line at www.cookbookpublishers.com. Go to the *download link*, then to *recipe form*. Every recipe needs to be written on these forms before they can be sent to the publisher.

The sooner we complete our collection, the sooner the cookbooks can be made available. Watch for more information, including deadlines for recipe submission.

Cookbook chair person: Becky Sisler

Thank You Notes

DeKalb Covenant friends,
 What a terrific Covenant family-being willing to be the first church to welcome a couple of missionaries from Mexico back home. We're going to recommend you!
 Blessings,
 Jerry & Vicky Love

Thank you so much for the awesome Valentines Day package! It is greatly appreciated! It was a really fun surprise, thanks again!
 Kelly Metcalf

Knit 'n' Chat group

Any women interested in getting together to (learn how to) knit and chat are invited to join Sherri Howells and Victoria Young Thursdays at 7 pm at Victoria's house, 190 Buena Vista Drive, DeKalb. Beginners and experienced knitters welcomed. Work on a group patchwork blanket or your own project. Please see Sherri or Victoria if interested.

Palm Sunday and Easter Choir

The choir would like to invite any extra singers to join us on Palm Sunday and Easter. It would be special to have a full choir on those two important celebratory Sundays and we need your help! We can use singers in any part, but we especially need sopranos. Please consider joining us on March 9 (rehearsal), the 16th (Palm Sunday) and the 23rd (Easter). Rehearsals are at 9:30 a.m.

It's A Boy!

The HCC family would like to welcome baby Isaac, born to Glenn & Chanda VanderWeide on January 25.

Mission Moment Summer 2007 - Joel Howells

God has taught me many lessons through the mission trips I have taken. I think most who have gone can attest to the fact that God typically does more in your own heart and life than anything we could possibly do for those we go to serve. I have many examples from my two trips this past summer and look forward to sharing in more detail sometime in the coming months. In the meantime, I would love to share just one thing that God showed me this past summer.

After serving in Monterrey with Hillcrest and Elim Covenant Churches, Alex Velasco, a full-time covenant missionary, asked if I would be interested in returning later in the summer to help with some other short-term mission teams. I prayed about it and felt like God wanted me to go back, and several weeks later I was on my way to a small village in central Mexico called La Purisima. I experienced plenty while in this poor village without many things we take for granted, like flushing toilets. However, the interesting thing is God had to teach me a lesson before I even took one step into the village.

I was scheduled to take a 6:45 a.m. flight out of Chicago to McAllen, Texas, where I planned on spending the day with Alex before our departure the following morning. Up late packing the night before, I slept only a few hours before my 4:00 a.m. wakeup. I was flying standby and we figured the earlier the flight the better chance I had of getting on. Unfortunately, there had been some delays the night before and I missed the first flight by a few people. I figured it was no big deal and that I surely would get on the next one. I was sadly mistaken. I watched flight after flight take off that day without me and began to wonder if I would make it down there in time to leave with the team the following morning at 8:00 a.m. Around 8:00 that night after 14 hours in the airport I began to wonder if God really wanted me to go back. I remember praying this prayer, "God, if there is anyway that you can get me there, I trust that You will do it." Long story short, I ended up catching a 9:00 p.m. flight to San Antonio, arrived around midnight, rented a car, drove through the night to McAllen, slept a little over an hour on a tile floor and got up that morning to leave with the group for La Purisima.

I realized afterward that God needed to show me who was in control before I even left. I had everything mapped out in my head, but God said My will Joel, not yours. My focus needed to change. I like the way Oswald Chambers puts it, "The goal of the missionary is to do God's will, not to be useful or to win the lost. A missionary *is* useful and he *does* win the lost, but that is not his goal. His goal is to do the will of the Lord." God let me know that He was in control and that my focus needed to be on His will, and that in turn He would make everything fall into place just as He wanted it to.

John O'Donahue was an Irish priest and poet, who died January 3, 2008, in his sleep at age 52. He spoke Irish and Gaelic.


Beannacht ("Blessing")

On the day when
the weight deadens
on your shoulders
and you stumble,
may the clay dance
to balance you.
And when your eyes
freeze behind
the grey window
and the ghost of loss
gets in to you,
may a flock of colours,
indigo, red, green,
and azure blue
come to awaken in you
a meadow of delight.

When the canvas frays
in the currach of thought
and a stain of ocean
blackens beneath you,
may there come across the waters
a path of yellow moonlight
to bring you safely home.
May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
may the clarity of light be yours,
may the fluency of the ocean be yours,
may the protection of the ancestors be yours.
And so may a slow
wind work these words
of love around you,
an invisible cloak
to mind your life.

~ John O'Donohue ~

March 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 Men's Breakfast & Bible study 7:15 a.m.
2 Communion Sunday Sunday school & Choir practice 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. VanderWeide baby Shower @ the Howells 2:30pm-5	3 Christian Education meeting 6:30 pm Worship & Music Committee mtg 6:30pm	4 Mutual Ministry mtg 7:00 pm	5 Confirmation 6:30pm Grace's Girlfriends Bible study 6:30pm	6 Knit 'n' Chat group 7pm @ Victoria's	7 Women's Bible study @ Panera 6:00am	8 Men's Breakfast & Bible study 7:15 a.m. "spring ahead" 1 hour tonight!
9 Sunday school & Choir practice 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Special business mtg Love INC luncheon 125th kick-off event 5pm-7pm <i>Daylight Saving Time begins</i>	10	11	12 Confirmation 6:30pm Grace's Girlfriends Bible study 6:30pm	13 Deacons mtg 6:30pm @ the Born's Outreach mtg 7:00 pm Knit 'n' Chat group 7pm @ Victoria's	14 Women's Bible study @ Panera 6:00am	15 Men's Breakfast & Bible study 7:15 a.m. Executive Committee Retreat @ CHBC 9 am - 5 pm Executive Committee mtg
16 <i>Palm Sunday</i> Sunday school & Choir practice 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. X4J to Game Works 1 pm - 9 pm	17 <i>St. Patrick's Day</i> 	18 Trustees mtg 7:00pm	19 Confirmation 6:30pm	20 Knit 'n' Chat group 7pm @ Victoria's Covenant-wide Maundy Thursday Service 7:00pm @ Batavia Cov Church	21 <i>Good Friday</i> Women's Bible study @ Panera 6:00 am Good Friday Service 6:30 pm	22 Men's Breakfast & Bible study 7:15 a.m.
23 <i>Easter Sunday</i> Choir practice 9:30am Worship 10:45 a.m.	24 April newsletter deadline	25	26 Confirmation 6:30pm Grace's Girlfriends Bible study 6:30pm	27 Knit 'n' Chat group 7pm @ Victoria's	28 Women's Bible study @ Panera 6:00am	29 Men's Breakfast & Bible study 7:15 a.m.
30 Sunday school & Choir practice 9:30am Worship 10:45 a.m. Maple Fest @ CHBC	31					

Missionaries We at Hillcrest Covenant Church Help Support

Gary & Mary Lou Sander

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Medillin, Colombia
www.pactocol.org
pactosand@yahoo.com

Lisandro & Patricia Restrepo

Serving in Monterrey, Mexico
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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

March 2008

Dear Covenant Church Family,

We thank God for you and for your being a part of our larger family. Thank you for your prayers on our behalf.

1. Praise God for the joyous reason we have to return to the United States in March – the wedding of our daughter, Leslie to Philippe Wingender, on March 22nd. The wedding will take place in the Covenant Church in Kingsburg, CA at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.
2. Pray for the time that Mary Lou and Gary will be talking with various missionary candidates, sharing in mission teams who will be coming to minister in Colombia this summer, sharing in several services. We really are looking forward to the month of March.
3. Praise God for the successful and well attended Colombia Covenant Annual Meeting. Pray for the

newly elected President, Pastor Alvaro Escallon, as he leads the Colombia Covenant Church into its fifth decade of ministry. (see article <http://www.covchurch.org/cov/news/item6098>)

4. Pray for our daughter, Leah, as she awaits responses from graduate schools and teaching credential programs in which she hopes to study following her graduation from UC Davis in June.
5. Pray for our son, Skye, as he is finally healthy and strong enough to begin training for soccer this spring. Pray for his strength to increase and that God will use him as He wants in the soccer program. Pray also for Skye as he spends Easter week in Mexico with the Westmont Potter's Clay program.

Love,
The Sander Family

125th Anniversary News

Remember! Rejoice! Rededicate!

Our anniversary theme is **Remember! Rejoice! Rededicate!**

The *“Everyone Has a Birthday”* Party has been rescheduled for Sunday night, **March 9** from 5-7 pm. We'll begin the evening with a warm up game or two followed by a birthday supper. Next come the party games. We'll conclude the “formal” part of the evening with a story and birthday cake BUT you are welcome to stay later to play board games or just to chat.



Devotionals

For what I have received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 NIV

English lawyer Frank Morrison was a firm agnostic who did not believe any one could really know if there was a God for sure. Upset by the claims of Christians, Morrison set out to use his powerful legal mind to debunk the faith. He set his target on the cornerstone of Christianity, the resurrection of Jesus. Morrison knew that if he could discredit this plank of faith, the rest of Christianity would collapse. He studied the evidences for the resurrection as he would materials for any other trial. As months went on, Morrison concluded after analyzing the evidence that the only answer to the empty tomb and eyewitness accounts was that Jesus really did rise from the dead. This skeptic became a believer in Jesus and wrote the book, *Who Moved the Stone!*

Are you struggling to believe? Do you wonder if the Christian faith is incredible? Consider the resurrection of Christ. No one has ever found his body. Hundreds testified that they saw him alive after his crucifixion. His followers held this confidence even in the face of suffering and even death. Take time to examine the resurrection and you will find Jesus moving the stone of doubt in your heart!

Hillcrest Covenant Church

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Fax: 815-756-5546
Email: CovChHill@juno.com
Website: www.hillcovch.org

Our Staff

Pastor: Steve Larson
Minister of Music: Victoria Young
Church Secretary: Sue Lazowski
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 at Covenant Harbor

- **Mar 30:** Maple Fest ~ Whole Family Fun! All you can eat Oatmeal Pancakes, sausages & beverages. Fresh Maple Syrup Made on Site! Craft Fair. Activities include Tours of the Maple Syrup Process, Giant Swing, Raffle, Bounce Castle, Face Painting & More!
- **Apr 12** Harbor Point Dinner in Rockford ~ An evening to celebrate the exciting things that God is doing at Covenant Point and Covenant Harbor
- **May 2 - 4:** Moms & Daughters Retreat for all ages! ~ This retreat is a wonderful experience for moms and daughters of all ages. Special events throughout the weekend will help build and strengthen relationships as you enjoy activities or just relax. Special crafts, lots of outdoor activities, mom and daughter look alike contest, great fellowship, solid biblical teaching and great workshops top the weekend. Bring your mom, your daughter, your aunt, your niece; make it a family affair! Grandmothers are encouraged to spend this special weekend with their granddaughters.

For more information on any of these events, contact Susan Kauffman at 815-264-7905 or visit Covenant Harbor's website at: www.covenantharbor.org