

November 2011

Covenant Life Link

A Message From Pastor Steve

As a staff, we are always reading a book together and discussing it at our weekly meetings. Currently, we are reading Jim and Casper Go to Church by Jim Henderson & Matt Casper. Jim is a pastor who asked Matt, an avowed atheist, to join him in this project. Together, they traveled to 12 of America's best- and least- known churches. The book is a report of sorts, detailing both of their reactions to churches like Saddleback and Willow Creek, Mosaic and The Potter's House. It is a fascinating study of assumptions, right and wrong, and reactions from both a Christian and an Atheist point of view.

In the chapter about their visit to Willow Creek Community Church, Matt asks Jim, "Is this what Jesus had in mind for church?" I've been reflecting on that question and asking it of our own community; "Is what we are doing at Hillcrest what Jesus had in mind for church?"

What would it take for Hillcrest to become the kind of church Jesus envisioned? A place where worship was authentic, effective, and inviting; where fellowship meant not another potluck but a number of Care Communities where every person attending was able to care spiritually for the others in their group through listening, giving biblical advice, accountability and unconditional love; where every person took ownership of their own spiritual growth and sought out ways to grow more like Jesus every day through study, service, and relationships; where leadership was about opening opportunities for the above to happen in the lives of anyone who sought it.

I think we are moving in the right direction toward becoming the kind of church Jesus might have envisioned. We will continue to work at this goal with practical but achievable steps. In last month's article, I asked everyone at HCC to be part of some form of Care Community, whether a study group, a service group, a board, a fellowship of friends, someplace where you receive spiritual care, and I will renew this call more publically soon. If you are not currently in a group where you can receive the kind of care spelled out above, please let me know so together we can find a place for you.

I thank God for the ways that Hillcrest is acting like the Church, worshipping God, serving each other and the community, growing in faith. And I look forward to the changes that will come in time as we work purposely and diligently together to become the church that Jesus envisioned.

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Sander Family Prayer and Praise



Dear Friend,

Thank you for praying with us in these days and months! God is good and we thank Him for answering our prayers.

1. We praise God that Gary was able to attend the Covenant World Relief Associate meetings held in Chicago in October. The Colombia Covenant and Covenant World Relief have many projects that they have worked on together and that they are working on currently. This partnership is vital for ministry in reaching the communities where the Covenant is located in Colombia and we pray for further development and growth of this partnership.

2. Pray for Yvonne DeVaughn, the Director of AVA: Advocacy for Victims of Abuse, her husband, William, and Teresa Hillis, as they will come to Colombia on November 14-21, to teach 40 people/coaches. These coaches (some of whom are seen above) are being trained to be AVA advocates on behalf of those who have been hurt and shamed because of abuse, and to share these teachings in their churches, in their homes and in their communities. Pray for this international partnership as it moves forward.

3. Praise God for the good gatherings of the Colombia Covenant FIPEC Executive board and the Colombia Social Projects training and equipping workshop. These were important gatherings as the Covenant moves forward in reaching the communities through the Churches and the community ministries and in their future planning and preparation for the next two years of ministry. The Covenant of Colombia is preparing itself for some big events and possibilities and covets your prayers.

4. Praise God that Gary was able to spend a few hours with Covenant Project missionaries, Julio and Katie Isaza, who now have their visas in hand for their arrival in Colombia in the first days of January 2012. As Gary and the Isaza's were sharing together, it was clear that God has been preparing this partnership in ministry for many years and we look forward to accompanying God as he puts this partnership into action in Colombia.

5. Thank you for your continued prayers for Mary Lou and Gary as they are getting their calendar together for their three-month Home Assignment, February – April of 2012. Dates and trips are coming together and we are encouraged for this time in the U.S.

6. Thank you for your continued prayers for Gary's mother, Ruth, and the family. She continues to wake up each day with another day of life and is as comfortable as possible as she receives care at her home.

7. Praise God that our son, Skye, secured a job this past week that he is excited about and looking forward to spending his time at. We pray with him during this transition.

Love, Mary Lou and Gary

Don't forget to check out our website regularly www.pactocol.org

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The Cross in Our Bodies

A couple of days ago I was running (I use that term very loosely) on my treadmill, watching a DVD sermon by Louie Giglio... And I was BLOWN AWAY! I want to share what I learned.....

He (Louie) was talking about how inconceivably BIG our God is... How He spoke the universe into being.. How He breathes stars out of His mouth that are huge raging balls of fire.. Etc. Etc. Then He went on to speak of how this star-breathing, universe creating God ALSO knitted our human bodies together with amazing detail and wonder.

At this point I am LOVING it (fascinating from a medical standpoint, you know.)

And I was remembering how I was constantly amazed during medical school as I learned more and more about God's handiwork. I remember so many times thinking, 'How can ANYONE deny that a Creator did all of this???'

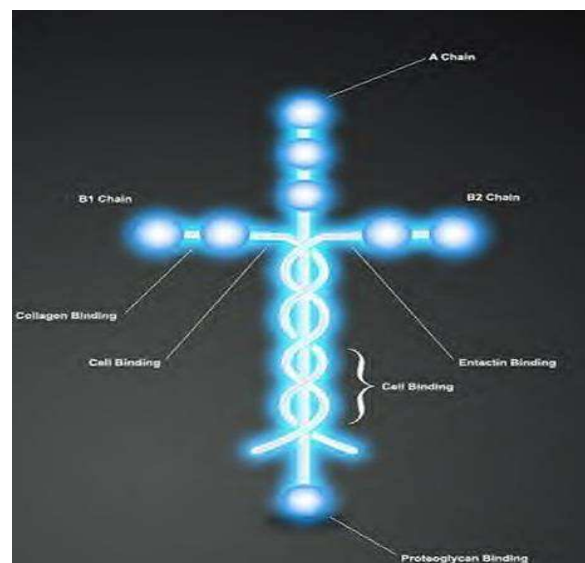
Louie went on to talk about how we can trust that the God who created all this, also has the power to hold it all together when things seem to be falling apart...how our loving Creator is also our sustainer.

And then I lost my breath. And it wasn't because I was running my treadmill, either!!!
It was because he started talking about laminin. I knew about laminin..

Here is how Wikipedia describes them: 'Laminins are a family of proteins that are an integral part of the structural scaffolding of basement membranes in almost every animal tissue'

You see.... Laminins are what hold us together... LITERALLY. They are cell adhesion molecules. They are what holds one cell of our bodies to the next cell. Without them, we would literally fall apart. And I knew all this already. But what I didn't know is what they LOOKED LIKE..

But now I do. And I have thought about it a thousand times since (already)....Here is what the structure of laminin looks like... AND THIS IS NOT a 'Christian portrayal' of it.... If you look up laminin in any scientific/medical piece of literature, this is what you will see....



10th Annual Comedy Café

The Outreach team has been planning our church 10th annual Comedy Café. This event is not only one of the funniest events but also one of our most successful evangelism and outreach events we do each year. We encourage everyone that enjoys laughter and fun to attend this annual event. More importantly, we encourage everyone to bring someone to this unique event so they can get to know the Hillcrest Covenant Church family. Outreach wants to challenge you to fill a whole table with friends, neighbors, co-worker and perhaps strangers to join you at this event. We encourage you to purchase tickets and just give them away to someone that you think are in need of a church family. The ticket price will be \$10 for show only and \$20 for the dinner and show. The event will be held on Saturday January 28th with dinner starting at 6:00 and the show at 7:00.

The comedian that we have chosen for the 2012 Comedy Café is one of America's top inspirational comedians that keep the toughest audiences laughing. His name is Nazareth – yes, that's his real name – he was born the youngest of three brothers in the Holy Land. He lived for part of his life in Kuwait. Nazareth's inspirational comedy has reached millions on television broadcasts as varied on Comedy Central, The 700 Club, and the NBC Nightly News. He's toured with the Temptations and the Righteous Brothers with his act that appeals to all ages. The New York Times reports on one his tours: "The show had the audience convulsing. "Nazareth served as the president of the Christian Comedy Association, a group of over 300 members - including Chonda Pierce and Sheri Shepherd (The View). Beyond the stage, Nazareth and his wife of thirteen years, Maha, and their three young children reside in Southern California. With all his accomplishments, Nazareth insists that his biggest credit is that he's a husband and a father.



Trustee Report

Financial:

Our 2011 budget provides for member giving and total expenditures balanced at \$318,000 each. Year to date our expenditures are running about \$20,000 in excess of member giving. We have funded this giving shortfall through cancellation of \$20,000 in certificates of deposit, using the proceeds to pay for the year-to-date operating deficit. We began the year with certificates of deposit totaling about \$40,000. Our certificates now total \$20,000. A substantial increase in member giving over the remaining two months of 2011 will be necessary if the congregation is to avoid a significant operating deficit for the year.

All Church Work Day:

Our all church work day is scheduled for Saturday morning, November 12, from 9 a.m. to noon. Beverages and donuts will be available to get everyone off to a good start. Bob Donaldson will be supervising interior window washing. John Guio and Ed Peterson will be supervising raking, other outdoor clean-up and some reseeding. Come and bring rakes, tarps, leaf blowers and window cleaning supplies. This is an excellent opportunity to work side-by-side to maintain/freshen-up the Lord's house.



Project Update:

In the past month the Anderson room walls have been repainted. In addition, we have improved handicapped access to the front entrance and replaced deteriorating concrete at the north entrance. These access/safety projects have been funded from the building sinking fund.



Bruce Bickner, Mort Carrel, Bob Donaldson, Jessie Flippin, Ron Grimm, John Guio, and Ed Peterson

Hillcrest Christmas Program

The annual Smorgasbord and Christmas Program will be presented on Sunday evening, December 4th. Our church family and guests are invited to gather in the fellowship hall to enjoy our delicious smorgasbord then join us in the sanctuary to share a memorable evening of wonderful music, meaningful readings and Christian fellowship. The Christmas program will begin right after the Smorgasbord at 6:30 p.m. There will be plenty of time to eat with your family and friends before the program begins.

If you would like to share your talent (all ages welcome) at the Christmas Program, (singing, playing an instrument, reading a Christmas poem, etc.), please see Wendy Kuryliw, call her at 815-758-4709 or send her an email at wkuryliw@gmail.com. Come join us as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Christ the Lord!

Pictures Wanted

Wanted: Christmas and/or winter pictures (serious or silly) are needed for the Christmas Program. As in years past, we hope you take this opportunity to share some of your family memories through the pictures you provide. If you would like to share a few pictures of you and/or your family members with us, please contact

Wendy Kuryliw (815-758-4709 or wkuryliw@gmail.com), leave them in an envelope in the church office or email them to the address above. All pictures will be returned. We hope to have a lot of pictures this year so please consider submitting some of your favorites. Thank you!



Meet & Eat

Please join us for another Meet & Eat on Monday, November 14th at 6:15 p.m. when we will meet at Portillo's located on Sycamore Road next to Menards. Come as you are, no sign-up necessary. This is just a chance to gather informally and share a meal together.



WANTED

Snack items for AWANA. We are in need of the following items:

- Popcorn
- Candy corn
- Graham crackers
- Peanut butter
- Bugles
- M&Ms
- animal crackers
- Party mix
- Christmas cookies
-

If you are interested in helping out in this way see Lois Miller or sign up on the chart in the foyer.

Missions Update

Last month we filled almost 50 shoe boxes at our annual packing party for the Samaritans' Purse. These shoe boxes will be delivered to our local drop off church the week of November 11, 2011. If you would like to pack a box of your own to include it's not too late. Details are on the foyer bulletin board. See Lois Miller with any questions.





A Message from the Chair

Dear Hillcrest Family,

I am always encouraged and amazed how our congregation comes together to support the many different ministries we have at Hillcrest Covenant Church. On Sunday October 23rd the church held its Triennial CHIC Auction. What a great event for our congregation. We had wonderful food, fun activities for all ages and great fellowship. This auction raises enough money to make sure all of your high school youth have a chance to experience a life changing event at CHIC with thousands of youth from across the United States. In the past our congregation has raised \$10,000.00 or more at this event and this year I think we as a congregation did it again. Thank you to all who planned, donated items and again to those who generously gave to help fund this great trip for our youth. When you get a chance please let Pastor Jen know what a great job she did in coordinating, advertising and getting people excited to participate in this event. This event takes an amazing amount of time and organization and Pastor Jen was behind the scenes coordinating it all. Thanks again for a job well done. This is one of those events that brings all of our generations together and shows what we as a group can do as one body and is a great example for our younger generations to experience and to look forward to.

The leadership team has been spending a good portion of our time exploring how we as a congregation care for one another. We have been discussing what this might look like to how are we doing now and how can we improve in the future in our care for one another. One of the key steps is working to have everyone in our church family be involved in some type of a small group. We as the executive committee have been challenged to become a member in a small group, if we weren't in one already. These small groups provide a way to have close fellowship and to share our lives with each other, while learning about God. It also allows us to serve one another in our church and outside of our church. If you are not in a small group now please consider joining one or starting one up. If you are unsure contact myself, Pastor Steve or Pastor Jen or Diane Kevin.

The Vitality Team has completed a proposed Hillcrest Behavioral Covenant. A cover letter explaining why this was developed and a copy of the behavioral covenant is being sent in the mail to you as well as enclosed in this newsletter. Please read it and ask any questions you might have about this document. We will be asking the church to vote on accepting this covenant at our November 13th business meeting.



A Message from the Chair (con't)

Please remember to mark your calendars these important upcoming events:

November 12th – All Church Work Day 9 AM – Noon (Great Event for All Ages)

November 13th, 2011 Church Business Meeting 12:00 to 2:00 PM (light lunch included)

November 23rd Thanksgiving Eve Worship

November 26th – Come help decorate the church for Christmas (another great multigenerational event for our entire church family)

December 4th – Hillcrest's Smorgasbord and evening of fellowship and music

December 11th - Christmas Caroling

December 24th Christmas Eve Service

I hope to see you all at these events.

May we continue to lift each other up in prayer and care for one another through service, kind words of encouragement and the love that Christ has shared with all of us.

Your Brother in Christ,
Robert Ferguson
Church Chair

From Kaitlin and Andrew:



Dear Hillcrest Covenant Church,

Many thanks for your generous wedding gifts, and for the support from so many of you. We were very touched by your thoughtfulness, and greatly appreciate your thinking of us. Having spent so much time with you since childhood, Kaitlin will always think of you as family!

Love Kaitlin & Andrew

Upcoming Retiree Event

Celebrate the holiday season by attending our next Retiree event being held on Sunday, December 18th.

We will be going to see the Rockford Symphony Orchestra joined by the Mendelssohn Chorale perform great seasonal music and holiday cheer. You will also have the opportunity to join in a sing-a-long of carols and holiday tunes!

WHEN: Sunday, December 18th

WHERE: Coronado Theater, Rockford. The theater is handicapped accessible.

TIME: Leave the church no later than 1:30 p.m. to attend the 3:00 p.m. performance.

Rides and carpooling available.

COST: \$15.00 per person. Payment should be given to Wendy Kuryliw no later than Sunday, December 4th.

THERE ARE ONLY 15 TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR THIS EVENT. PLEASE SIGN UP EARLY.

Welcome Jasmin Corbin
HCC Administrative Assistant

Jasmin was born on December 7, 1988, in Germany, as her father was in the military. From age 9-18 she lived in Ewa Beach, Hawaii. She misses the beach and the times she spent swimming and surfing with her friends after school. Jasmin's favorite foods are some Hawaiian dishes, such as lau lau, manapua, malasada, kimchee and rice.

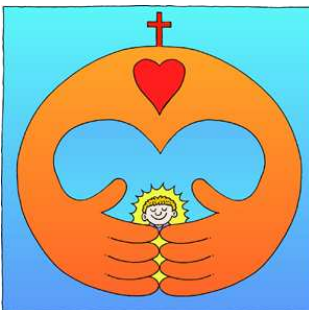


Jasmin is working on an associate degree at Kishwaukee College and will later attend Aurora University, where she will study for a degree in Social Work. She loves helping people and feels that this type of work will be rewarding for her.

Jasmin's church is Jesus is the Way Christian Center, which meets in Holmes' Student Center.

She is very happy to be HCC's Administrative Assistant. If you have not done so yet, I'm sure you will enjoy stopping in and meeting her.

Stewardship Report



The Stewardship Board would like to remind everyone of all the opportunities this fall for serving in His name. Some ideas: Love Inc. (Moving Ministry, Kitchen Ministry, In-

take Volunteer), Feed My Starving Children, getting involved with Network of Nations or Hope Haven, and many others.

Budget



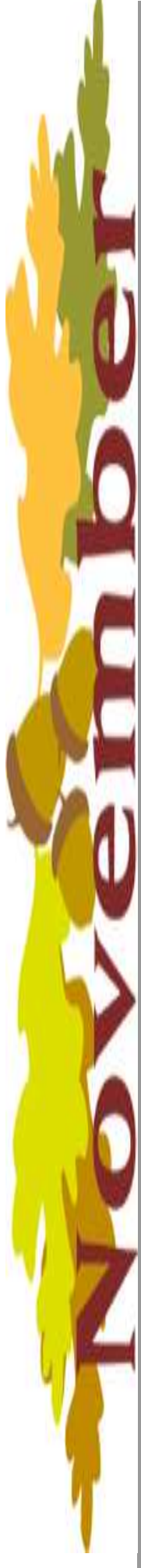
Partly cloudy with a chance of sunshine

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

2	Nolan Erdman	20	Carolyn McBride
	John Kostrey		Nautica Diaz
	Mary Kostrey	22	
6 -			Taylor Ihm
	Lizzie Egerman	23	
10			Tom Ihm
	Gabriel Ihm	24	
11 -			Sheri Cantrell
	Manny Diaz	25	
	Talon Diaz		Jay Elliott
	Kassi Auman		Joan Bickner
13			Peter Burgin
	Skye Sander (son of missionary)	26	
14			Lorna Code
	David Hegberg	28	
14			Stefanie Wessel
	Christine Shaff		
	Patricia Restrepo (Missionary)		
15			
	Dan Ihm		
19			
	Blaize Diaz		



Mort & Ann Carrel



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 All Worship Meeting 1:30 AM Inquirer's Class 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship 4:00 PM Shift 6:30 PM High School Youth Group Pumpkin Carving	31	1 2:30 PM High School Hang Time 6:30 PM Deacon Meeting	2 6:30 PM AWANA 6:30 PM Grace's Girlfriends 6:30 PM X4J 8:15 PM Choir Practice	3 2:30 PM Middle School Hang Time 6:30 PM Christian Formation 7:00 PM Missions Meeting 7:30 PM Vitality Team	4 Acquire the Fire	5 Acquire the Fire 7:30 AM Men's Breakfast and Bible Study
6 Daylight Savings Ends Communion 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship 4:00 PM Shift 6:30 PM High School Youth Group	7	8 2:30 PM High School Hang Time	9 6:30 PM AWANA 6:30 PM Grace's Girlfriends 6:30 PM X4J	10 2:30 PM Middle School Hang Time 7:00 PM Outreach Meeting	11 Veterans Day	12 7:30 AM Men's Breakfast and Bible Study 9:00 AM All Church Work Day
13 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship 12:30 PM All Church Lunch 1:00 PM HCC Business Mtg 1:30 PM X4J Laser Quest 4:00 PM Shift 6:30 PM High School Youth Group	14 7:00 PM Stewardship Meeting	15 2:30 PM High School Hang Time 7:00 PM Trustees Meeting	16 6:30 PM AWANA 6:30 PM Grace's Girlfriends 6:30 PM X4J	17 ANNUAL CARPET CLEANING 2:30 PM Middle School Hang Time 7:00 PM Executive Committee Meeting	18 ANNUAL CARPET CLEANING	19 7:30 AM Men's Breakfast and Bible Study 6:00 PM FMSC
20 Newsletter Finishline 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship 3:00 PM FMSC 4:00 PM Shift 6:30 PM High School Youth Group	21	22 2:30 PM High School Hang Time	23 Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service 6:30 PM X4J 8:15 PM Choir Practice	24 Thanksgiving Office Closed 2:30 PM Middle School Hang Time	25 Office Closed	26 Christmas Decorating 7:30 AM Men's Breakfast and Bible Study
27 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Worship	28	29 2:30 PM High School Hang Time	30 6:30 PM AWANA 6:30 PM Grace's Girlfriends 6:30 PM X4J 8:15 PM Choir Practice	1 2:30 PM Middle School Hang Time 6:30 PM Christian Formation 7:00 PM Missions Meeting 7:30 PM Vitality Team	2 5:00 PM X4J Christmas Shopping	3 7:30 AM Men's Breakfast and Bible Study 9:30 AM Christmas Brunch

Pastor: Steve Larson

Associate Pastor: Jen Zerby

Minister of Music: Victoria Young

Administrative Assistant: Jasmin Corbin

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Hillcrest Covenant Church

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HillcrestCovenant
C H U R C H



We're on the Web!

www.hillcrestcovenantdekalb.org