

2011



DECEMBER

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Covenant Courier

Greening of the Church will be on Saturday, December 3rd at 9:30 a.m. Contact Lynnea Hunter with any questions. (P.S.: Save the morning of January 7, 2012 to un-decorate. We will need some strong backs for this! Thanks!)



WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE SEARCH FOR A NEW MINISTER?

1. Between now and calling an Interim Minister:

- As already noted, we have pulpit supply ministers lined up to lead worship through Christmas Sunday.
- The Session, its committees, and each member of the congregation continue to do the work of the Church with faith and mutual encouragement.

2. Calling an Interim Minister:

- The Session is responsible for this process and has decided that it should call an Interim Minister for one-half time.
- This Call would be for a six-month period or until a permanent minister is available (whichever comes first), and will be renewable.
- The Interim Minister will be responsible for worship leadership, pastoral care, various other administrative tasks, and can moderate the Session.
- The Session has established an Interim Minister Search Committee. Members of this committee will be John Merriss, Charles Trifiletti, Maureen Knechtel, Josh Parsons, and Lauri Zembower.
- If you have suggestions for an Interim Minister, please speak with one of these Interim Minister Search Committee members.

3. Electing a Pastor Nominating Committee:

- A Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) is elected by the congregation at an appropriately called Congregational Meeting and, once elected, is responsible to the whole congregation.
- A PNC is to be representative of the congregation.
- Covenant's Officer Nominating Committee (current members are Max Wilson, Hal Hunter, Sally Nagle, Bob Hart, Sharon Benner, and Tony Madden) will nominate people for the PNC.
- If you have suggestions for members to serve on the Pastor Nominating Committee, please speak with one of these people.

The Session hopes that everyone will ask for God's love and guidance during this important time in the life of Covenant. Though the future is uncertain, it is also exciting. Current session members are (or soon will be) Helen Davis, Hal Hunter, Lynnea Hunter, Melanie Jones, Evelyn Kemp, Alan Lewis, Anne Smith, Andrea Sutter, Charles Trifiletti, Max Wilson and Christian Zembower. Next year's class consists of Eileen Madden, John Merriss, Sally Nagel and David Wood.

YOUNG ADULT CHRISTMAS PARTY—FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9

This month's Young Adult get-together will be Friday, December 9 at 6.30 p.m. at Lynnea Hunter's, 512 W. Maple St. Johnson City. It will be a potluck dinner, so bring your favorite Christmas munchie dish. And bust out the Christmas sweaters! (The one with the most fake glitter-snow wins!)

We'll enjoy food, fun, friendship, and possibly even an A Christmas Story quote contest. You'll just have to show up to find out. Contact Lynnea (828) 266-1917) to let her know you're coming and, as always, bring yourselves and your friends! Feliz Navidad!

ADVENT AT COVENANT

The theme of Advent this year is “The Wonder of Waiting.” Covenant is blessed to be led by the Advent planning team of Bill Hyers, Melodye Sparks, and Barb Edema with help from Earle Barron. What a wealth of knowledge, variety and experience they bring! We’ll have our traditional Advent wreath and beautifully decorated sanctuary. As we wonder what will be different this year, it is known who will be leading worship services:

- Nov. 27: Earle Barron
- Dec 4: Barb Edema
- Dec 11: Bill Hyers
- Dec 18: Barb Edema
- Dec 24: Barb Edema
- Dec 25: Barb Edema

Join with your Covenant family, as together we experience “The Wonder of Waiting” this Advent.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15th!

There will be no Third Thursday Dinner in December, but there will be a brand-new, one-time only, absolutely not-to-be-missed Third Thursday Montreat Fundraiser Trivia Night! As many of you know, several youth from our church (and some adults) had a great time at last summer’s Montreat Youth Conference in Montreat, NC. This summer’s conference will be June 10-16, 2012, and the theme is “Perfectly Imperfect.” Covenant has a whopping 18 eligible youth (“eligible” is anyone currently in grades 8-12) and we’re hoping that most of them can go. With food, housing, transportation and conference fees, the total cost \$476 per person.

Now, you may be asking yourself what this has to do with you. Maybe you don’t have any youth that can go, or maybe you’ve never had a chance to do anything with the youth group before. Fear not! There’s a first time for everything. As a community and family in Christ, we—the members of Covenant Presbyterian Church—have a great opportunity to help our children.

The total per person cost of \$476 has been divided into thirds; the participating youth will be expected to raise a third of the cost, the families of the participating youth will raise a third, and we, as the church family, will help raise a third. Ergo, our “Third” Thursday Montreat Fundraiser Trivia Night! Mark your calendars for December 15, 6.30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Donations will be accepted at the door, and all the proceeds will go to support the church’s third of the Montreat cost! So come join the fun!

For more information on Montreat Youth Conferences, go to www.montreat.org. For more on Covenant’s participation or financial questions, contact Lynnea Hunter.

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PRISON FELLOWSHIP ANGEL TREE MINISTRY

Save the dates!

Sunday, November 27, after worship

The Angel Tree will be in the Narthex. We still have 11 Angels on the tree that are looking for someone to send them on their way to a child who has a parent in prison.

By Sunday, December 4th

Bring your gifts to the church, wrapped and labeled.

On Sunday, December 11th: Angel Tree delivery!

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CHRISTMAS EVE MUSIC

Christmas Eve is a special time in the life of our Church. It is also a time that many welcome home children, grandchildren, and other family members. Perhaps one of your family members sings solos or plays a musical instrument.

Prior to the 6:00 service on Christmas Eve, there will be a 30-minute time of Christmas music. If you or one of your family members would like to share music during this time, please call Melodye Sparks at (843) 655-2557 by December 11th.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING—

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18

Meet at the church at 4:30 p.m. to carol at various members’ houses and nursing homes. After caroling we will bring snacks to share at the Sutter home. (Snacks can be brought to the church and given to Andrea after morning services that day.)

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Each year we are given the opportunity to provide monetary gifts to the Elder's Fund, the majority of which is used for Christmas honoraria for our fine staff. Our congregation has always been very generous in providing donations to the fund. Our members are appreciative of the dedication of our staff members, and this is a wonderful opportunity to show that appreciation.

We ask that each member consider making their donations as generous as possible and, since it would be helpful for the staff to have their gifts well before Christmas, to make their donations as soon as they can. Just mark "Elder's Fund" on your checks and place in the offering plate or send to the church office. We know we can count on our membership, as we always have.

Thanks so much,
Max Wilson, Chair

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ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

Is it too late?! Not for Alternative Gift giving. Each mission could still use and appreciates your help, this year more than ever.

If you missed the Alternative Gift Fair and would like to give a gift in a friend or family member's name, there is still time. Missions are: Missionaries Kristi and Bob Rice, The River, Interfaith Hospitality Network and Living Waters for the World. You may use the Alternative Gift forms on the table in the Narthex to indicate your support. Brochures describing these missions are on the table in the Narthex. (Cards and envelopes for your use are available in the church office.) These forms may be turned in any time during Advent.

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PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Friendship (Afternoon) Circle

The December meeting of the Friendship Circle will be a Holiday Luncheon on Tuesday, December 13th at 11:30 a.m. We will meet at the home of Janet Powell (417 Shade Tree Way, JC), and we welcome all of our regular members as well as any others who would like to join us for lunch! Please call Janet at 610-0445 to let her know that you are coming and to find out what to bring. We will study Lesson Four after lunch.

Hostess: Janet Powell, Co-Hostesses: Helen Davis and Sally Nagel
Lesson Four Leader: Jan Paveglio

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Joy (Evening) Circle

December 27, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.

Contact: Anne Smith (929-1604). Meeting will be at the church.

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From the Property Committee and Stewardship Committee

In attempting to be good stewards of our resources, we have reprogrammed the thermostats throughout the church for the winter months. On recommendation of the Power Board, the heating temperature is set at 68 degrees. We realize that we cannot achieve a setting that is ideal for everyone so we are asking that you keep this in mind when dressing for events this winter. There are also blankets under the table in the Narthex which may be used if needed.

If you have a committee meeting or other reason to use the building during the winter, please use an area that is independently heated. The Library has a portable heater that keeps it comfortable most of the time. If it is in use with a scheduled group/function, use the office or one of the classrooms and be sure to turn off the heater when leaving. Also, on Sunday mornings, it is important to turn off the heaters when classes are over.

If there is a need to adjust the thermostat, just use the up/down arrows and raise the temperature. Remember, raising the temperature higher (like to 75 degrees) does not make the space warm up quicker. It only makes the HVAC unit run longer and consumes more electricity.

The electric bill is the single largest expense for our church after payroll and we use about 40 % of our electric budget in January – March each year. Thank you for your understanding and assistance in this Stewardship issue. We appreciate your help in keeping these costs as low as possible.

NEW MUSICAL GROUP AT COVENANT....Melodye Sparks

A new year will be here soon. Sounds like a good time for a new musical group at Covenant! I am looking forward to beginning a music ensemble made up of recorders. I love playing the recorder and enjoyed my recorder consort group in Pawleys Island very, very much.

Some of you may be wondering if I'm talking about that little instrument that you, or perhaps your children, played in Elementary School. Yes, that is what I'm talking about. Beyond "Hot Cross Buns" there is a big, wonderful world of musical literature written for the recorder to play. In addition to the soprano recorder that one often calls to mind when the term 'recorder' is used, our consort would also have alto, tenor and bass recorders.

As with most new ideas, there are things that must happen in order for a group such as this to become a reality. 'Interest' would be a very important one. Usually, before one knows if interest exists, a little more information is necessary.

The price of recorders ranges from a few dollars to a few thousand dollars. There is one that I really like that costs less than \$30.00. It can be purchased online or ordered through a local music store. I will give you the brand and model number so that you can acquire your instrument.

No prior recorder playing experience is necessary. It is necessary to have a basic ability to read music (note names and simple rhythms). I will teach you how to play the recorder.

The meeting time for this group will be chosen based on the make-up of the group. I will try to accommodate the schedules of interested people. Rehearsals will be weekly and last one hour.

Once we are ready, we will provide music for worship every four to six weeks.

There is no limit to the number of people who may participate in this group.

If this sounds interesting to you, please give me a call. I am looking forward to making music with you in a new way!

Melodye

(843) 655-2557

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Good News of Great Joy

2011 Christmas Joy Offering—December 18th, 2011

Like the shepherds, we are stunned to hear the news that God's love has come among us as one of us, accompanying us, and working to transform us. As we open our hearts to that love, we find it will not be contained but yearns to be shared with others. One of the ways Presbyterians have traditionally responded to the news of this gift is by sharing our own gifts through the Christmas Joy Offering.

The Offering supports racial ethnic education at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges, helping students develop their gifts and find their calling. It also helps families of active and retired church workers meet unexpected needs through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions. As we celebrate the good news of great joy that the angel announces – God's love in human form is now among us – may our gifts bear joyful witness to that uncontainable love.

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GATEWAY TO WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Gateway to Worship is our worship program for 4-yr.-olds through 1st-graders. We are making some changes in the teaching materials which will give Gateway leaders a chance to choose their own lessons.

Although we are not doing Gateway during the season of Advent, and we do not always have children in this age group at church, we still need to keep this important ministry available. We are in desperate need of volunteers willing to lead Gateway when it starts up again in January 2012. If you would like more information, please contact Rosemary Whitson at 282-2177.

NOVEMBER SESSION HIGHLIGHTS ...by Evelyn Kemp

- Revenue for October, 2011 was \$15,000 and expenses were \$17,600, leaving Covenant \$7,000 behind for the year. The good news is that the mortgage for our building will be paid off in January 2013.
 - Session accepted Cheryl Rice's resignation from the Session with regret.
 - A volunteer is still needed to relieve Fred Dulin as the Christian Education Committee Chair.
 - The youth group will be going out to select the Christmas tree for the church the day after Thanksgiving.
 - The Property Committee requests that thermostats throughout the church be set at 68 degrees throughout the winter months to conserve our limited resources. Please remember to dress accordingly for services.
 - New members can expect to hear from David Wood about being photographed for the New Member Bulletin Board.
 - Two-thirds of the pledges have been turned in so far. Pledge cards are available in the Narthex. (update as of November 23: three-fourths of the pledges have come in, totaling \$155,000 —as compared to \$210,000 last year)
 - Greening of the Church is scheduled for December 3.
 - The theme for Advent is The Wonder of Waiting. Advent Planning Committee members are Bill Hyers, Melody Sparks, and Barb Edema, with the assistance of Earle Barron.
 - There will be to Gateway to Worship during the Advent season so that the children can be present for services.
 - The ETSU group Eight Times A Lady will be singing in the December 11th service.
 - Our accompanist, Jennifer Marshall, has taken a position in Knoxville and plans to leave at the end of the year. A search for a new Accompanist is beginning.
 - There will be no Third Thursday Dinner in December.
 - Christmas caroling will be on Dec. 18 beginning at 4:30p. The group will meet at the Sutter's for refreshments at 6:30p. Snacks can be brought to the church & given to Andrea after morning services that day.
 - Planning for the July 4th community picnic will begin in January.
 - Updating the Picture Directory is planned for 2013.
 - Anne Smith has been nominated to fill Cheryl Rice's unexpired term as Elder.
 - There will be a Congregational Meeting immediate following morning worship November 27th to vote on Anne Smith's nomination.
 - Installation of elders filling unexpired terms will be on December 4 (changed to Dec. 11th.)
- Session voted to hire a part-time Interim Pastor, duties to include leading worship, pastoral care, and oversight of staff.
- An Interim Pastor Search Committee is being formed.

To Committee Chairs:

2011 Committee Reports for the Annual Report need to be e-mailed to Tina before **January 10th, 2012**.

Memorial Gift

GIVEN IN MEMORY OF:
ROGER HECHT
BY

David & Elizabeth Hecht

THANK YOU

So many prayers, cards and calls have come to me during my surgery and recovery I can only cover everyone by a thanks in the newsletter to be sure I reach everyone. I feel the love of you all, and thank you again. Your love and care are so appreciated.

Thank you all,
Sue Sheffield

OCTOBER TREASURER'S REPORT

Income to General Fund
October

Actual \$15,611.43

vs. Budgeted \$20,967.33

Expenses from General Fund
October

Actual \$17,614.18

vs. Budgeted \$20,967.33

Year to Date Income
General Fund

Actual \$187,540.32

vs. Budgeted \$209,673.33

Year to Date Expenses from
General Fund

Actual \$194,443.36

vs. Budgeted \$209,673.33

The 5-Cents a Meal Offering
for October was \$78.00.

Mortgage stands at \$41,568.00.

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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<http://www.covenantpresjc.org>

E-mail: office@covenantpresjc.org

Songfest 2011 - A Bluegrass/Gospel Concert

Benefiting Interfaith Hospitality Network

Sunday, December 4, 2011, From 3:00 – 5:30 pm

FEATURING: Darrin and Brooke Aldridge, ETSU Bluegrass Band, Ed Snodderly, Roger Rasnake, Lisa Pattison, Brandon Story, and others. VA Memorial Theatre, Building #35, Mountain Home Veterans Administration. Tickets: \$15 adults - \$5 children & students. Call IHN at 202-7805 for ticket information.

AFTER CHURCH LUNCH SUNDAY—DECEMBER 11

After Church Lunch for December will be (the ever-so-popular) “Breakfast for Lunch”. Do you have a wonderful egg casserole that is to die for? How about a fabulous coffee cake that makes your mouth water just to think about it? Please bring your favorite breakfast food to share with your church family. If your dish needs to be kept warm or even heated at the last minute, someone will be in the kitchen by 9:30 a.m. to receive your dish and your instructions. We look forward to sharing this fellowship opportunity with you! If you have any questions please contact Andrea Sutter or Lauri Zembower.

2012 PLEDGES

We are working with your pledges for 2012 to develop the budget. It is very important that we receive your information soon to be able to complete the process.

Please remember that as year end approaches, your tithes and offerings will be credited to your 2011 Statement of Giving if made before December 31st. If you have questions, please contact Hal Hunter or Gary Smith.

MISSION STATEMENT

Covenant Presbyterian Church exists to glorify and enjoy God. We live knowing that God calls us to be a place of love, support, hope and acceptance regardless of earthly labels; Jesus Christ commissions us to make disciples and passionately share our gifts with the world through prayer, teaching, and service; the Holy Spirit allows us to determine and carry out Christ's will for our lives and the life of our church, and empowers us to seek out and respond to the needs of our local and global community.