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Covenant Presbyterian Church

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www.covenant-reno.org

facebook

Come Closer

By Pastor Jay Hull

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- 2 Corinthians 5:20-21

Dear Friends:

We have just finished our Advent Season and our "Tableau – MSI" Christmas Messages investigating the angels, men, women and baby represented by our traditional Manger Scene figures. As the New Year begins, though, we are still in the midst of the Season of Christmas. The "Twelve Days of Christmas" are the days from Christmas (12/25) and Epiphany (1/6) which is the day we remember and celebrate the coming of the wise men to Bethlehem.

We began Advent with our Nativity Tableau, building a living Manger Scene portrait and encouraging folks to remember and celebrate the real Christmas story throughout the month. As part of that presentation I shared the following message for us and



Kathy & Ryan Ludwig play Joseph & Mary in the 2011 Nativity Tableau. Photo by Kay Blakely.

for our family, friends and neighbors who were in attendance. Some of you have asked about it, so here it is. I offer it again as a sort of bookend to our 2011 Christmas Season here at Covenant.

I have a secret. Would you like to hear it? If you want to hear it clearly and well, you must come closer...

Continued on Page 2 ►

A New Year's Blessing

May God make your year a happy one!

Not by shielding you from all sorrow and pain,
But by strengthening you to bear it as it comes;

Not by making your path easy,
But by making you sturdy to travel any path;

Not by taking hardships from you,
But by taking fear from your heart;

Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,
But by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows;

Not by making your life always pleasant,
But by showing you when people and their causes need you most,
and by making you anxious to be there to help.

God's love, peace, hope and joy to you for the year ahead.

—Author unknown



Chimes Newsletter Submissions

E-mail:

chimes@covenant-reno.org or
julie@covenant-reno.org

Church Office:

Place articles & submissions on the desk in office

To be a part of the Chimes "Creative Team" contact [Julie Minedew](#)

Deadline for the February Issue:

January 8th

Come Closer - continued from page 1

I remember a Thanksgiving Day. It was 15 years ago, and it seems like yesterday. It was my turn to put our youngest, 6-year-old Maggie, to bed. She scampered up the stairs ahead of me and climbed into the big bed at Grandma's house.

When I sat down beside her she reached her arms up as if to say "Come closer." So I bent down and put my face right next to hers. I gave her a big kiss and then, once again like so many times before at bedtime, I said to my little girl: "I have a 'sweecut.' Would you like to hear it?" ("Sweecut" was her chosen way of saying "secret.")

"Yes, tell me!" she cried.

And then I put my face again right next to hers, and I whispered in her ear... "I... love... you."

And she squeezed my neck real hard and said "And, Daddy, I have a 'sweecut' too!"

"Tell me, I said.

"I... love... you!... Do you know how much I love you, Daddy? All the way up to the sky, and all the way down to the deepest ocean, and all the way around the whole world!"

That was a beautiful way to end a joyous Thanksgiving Day.

We hope this Nativity Tableau proves to be for you a beautiful way to begin a joyous Christmas Season. This is the moment we have been leading up to for months. The

costumes have been fitted, the beards grown, the lights aimed, the actors coached, the music learned, the strings tuned, and now here it is. Our Tableau Vivant, our living picture has been painted. Here it is!... It's beautiful. Thank you for sharing it with us tonight.

But there are different ways to look at a picture.

You may see this picture as a visitor sees a great painting hanging in a fine

museum, appreciating the craftsmanship without being moved by its message. If so, my invitation is simply this: Come closer!

You may see this picture as part of a seasonal promotion for a religious organization called The Church which is always in the business of attracting new members. If so, may I extend to you this invitation: Come closer!

Maybe you can see this picture as one of many in a grand "living family photo album" depicting life in God's Family. And maybe you wonder if there are any pictures of you in such an album or even if you could belong in such a family. If so, please do this: Come closer!

Come closer and stand next to the wise men who dropped their important eastern

**I have a
"sweecut".
Would you like
to hear it?**

Continued on Page 3 ►

Come Closer - continued from page 2

business and followed a star to Bethlehem because they believed something big was happening there. And ask yourself, what business do I have that is more important than my relationship with God?

Come closer! Stand by the shepherds who trembled when they heard the angels but were brave enough to come and see if what they said was true. And ask yourself, could the angels be singing for me tonight? How can I check to see if what they say is true?

Come closer! Kneel between Mary and Joseph, an ordinary woman and an ordinary man, who had great faith in God and so were used by Him to fulfill key roles in human history's most astounding event. And ask yourself, what might Almighty God be able to accomplish through somebody ordinary like me if I truly trusted in Him?

Come closer! Closer still. See the baby. Helpless. Tiny. Fragile. Human. God. Jesus.

So here is my "sweetcut."
Somebody told me, and I

believe it is true. And I want you to know it too... Come closer...

See how close God has come to us! All the way from heaven to earth, God has bent down to put His face right next to ours. Can you hear the Heavenly Father whisper to you tonight?

"I... LOVE... YOU!"

**Blessed to be Christ's
ambassador with you,**

Jay Hull, Pastor✝

In the First Light

*In the first light of a new day no one knew He had arrived.
Things continued as they had been while a newborn softly cried.*

*But the heavens wrapped in wonder knew the
meaning of His birth.*

In the weakness of a baby they knew God had come to earth.

*As His mother held Him closely, it was hard to understand
That her baby, not yet speaking, was the Word of God to man.*

*He would tell them of His kingdom, but their
hearts would not believe.*

They would hate Him, and in anger, they would nail Him to a tree.

*But the sadness would be broken as the song of life arose,
And the firstborn of creation would
ascend and take the throne.*

*He had left it to redeem us, but before His life began
He knew He'd come back, not as a baby,
but as the Lord of every man.*

Hear the angels as they're singing on the morning of His birth.

*But how much greater will our song be when
He comes again to earth.*

When He comes to rule the earth!



Covenant's Family Meeting

By Pastor Jay Hull

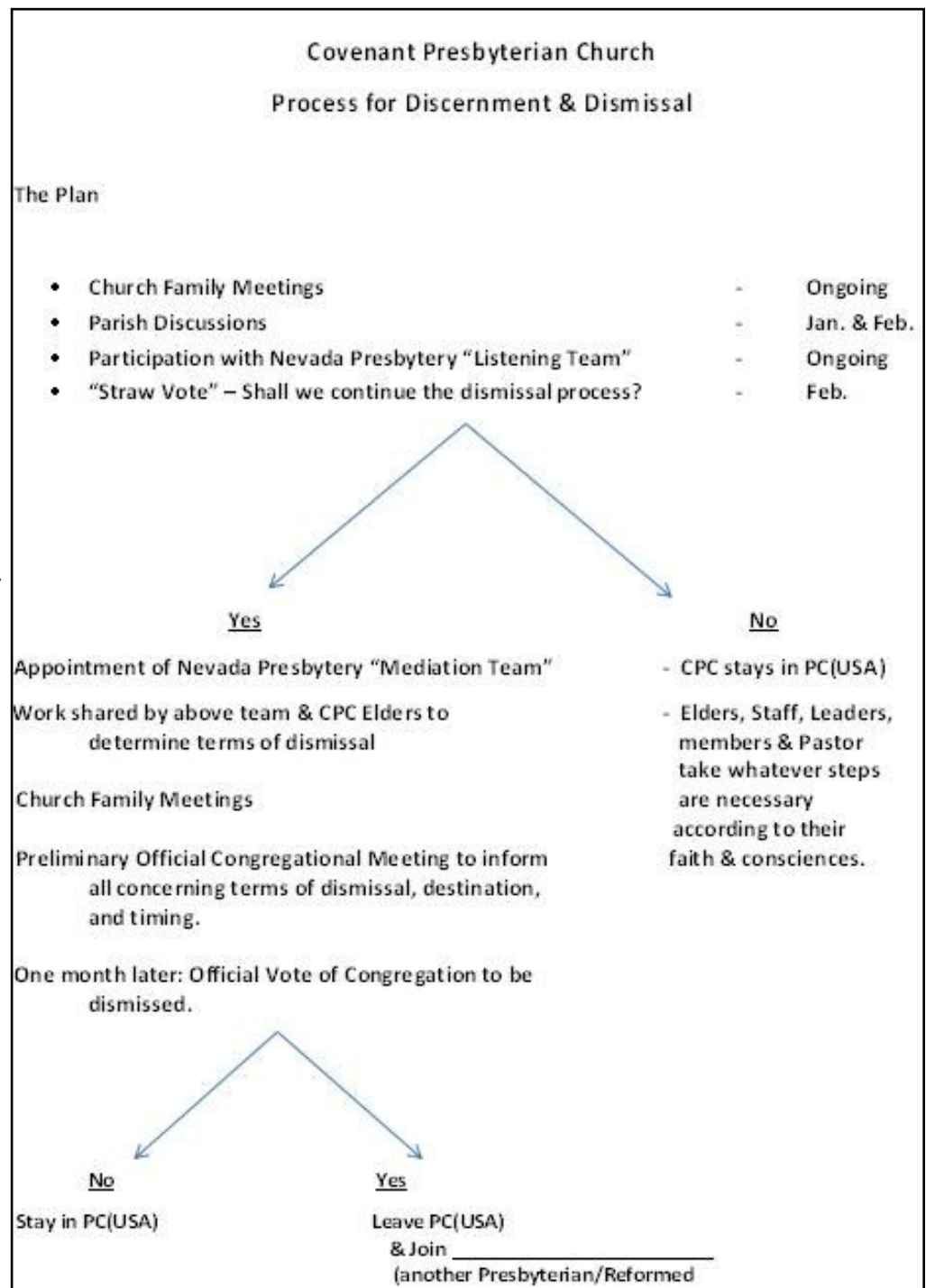
On Sunday evening, December 11, we held our second Covenant Family Meeting to discuss our relationship with the PC(USA) and consider our Elders' recommendation that we seek dismissal to another reformed and Presbyterian body. Sixty three of us met together, shared our thoughts, and were introduced to members of the Nevada Presbytery's "Listening Team" who will help us through the process of discernment and possible dismissal according to our Presbytery's Gracious Dismissal Policy. You will find an outline of this process included here. Note especially the next step of "Parish Discussions." Your Elders will be calling together each of our parishes to give more of our members an opportunity to listen and share our feelings and ideas about our present circumstances in the PC(USA) denomination and our hopes for the future of our church. These meetings will happen in January and February, so be ready to respond to your Elder when he or she calls.

Regarding this latest Covenant Family Meeting, I was grateful for everyone's participation and willingness to listen and share. I am excited about the opportunity God seems to be giving us to

think seriously together about our faith in Jesus Christ, the value and authority of God's Word, and the nature and purpose of His Church. I am blessed to be part of the

Covenant Family with you, and I look forward with great hope to the new adventure God has for us here at Covenant.

- Pastor Jay



Annual Meeting, Luncheon & Dessert Auction

Covenant will hold its annual meeting, Luncheon & Dessert Auction on Sunday, January 29th.

The morning will begin with a combined worship service at 10:00 am. Immediately following the worship service we will gather in the Sanctuary to hear reports from the Elders and Ministry Team Leaders at Covenant as they recap the year's events and activities. We will also hear from the budget committee and discuss/approve the proposed 2012 Church budget.

Following the Annual meeting all are invited to attend a potluck soup luncheon. To help us to plan enough soup, please sign the sign up sheet on the information board if you are planning to bring soup.

Covenant's Youth Groups will again sponsor a silent dessert auction featuring a wide variety of delectable treats on which you can place a bid. Please bring donated dessert items to the Narthex before the Worship Service or Congregational meeting. Youth



Elder Tim Ball previews the desserts available at the 2010 Dessert Auction

group members will help you to label your dessert and place it on the table with a bidding sheet. †

Schedule of Events

10:00 am Combined
Worship Service

11:15 am Annual
Congregational Meeting*

12:15 pm Luncheon &
Dessert Auction*

*Times are approximate

Super Resource for Christian Women

Ladies - are you looking for great Christian teaching for women but find it hard to free up the time to attend a Bible study or small group? Check out the podcasts, blogs, "30 Day Challenges" and other resources available at Revive our Hearts (www.reviveourhearts.com).

Revive our Hearts is the ministry of Nancy Leigh DeMoss. You will find Nancy to be a rock solid Bible teacher who addresses issues facing women today such as marriage, singleness, parenting, practical Christian living, cultural issues as well as offering in depth studies of the Bible.

I like to listen to Nancy's podcasts while driving or doing housework. They have made a huge difference in all areas of my life.

Do yourself a favor and check out what Revive our Hearts has to offer. You will be greatly blessed by this free resource. †



*Those who bring
sunshine to the lives of
others cannot keep it from
themselves.*
—J.M. Barrie

Ten Questions to Ask at the Start of

Once, when the people of God had become careless in their relationship with Him, the Lord rebuked them through the prophet Haggai. “Consider your ways!” (Haggai 1:5) he declared, urging them to reflect on some of the things happening to them, and to evaluate their slipshod spirituality in light of what God had told them. Even those most faithful to God occasionally need to pause and think about the direction of their lives. It’s so easy to bump along from one busy week to another without ever stopping to ponder where we’re going and where we should be going.

→1. What’s one thing you could do this year to increase your enjoyment of God?

→2. What’s the most humanly impossible things that you will ask God to do this year?

→3. What’s the single most important thing you could do to improve the quality of your family life this year?

→4. In which spiritual discipline do you most want to

make progress this year, and what will you do about it?

→5. What is the single biggest time waster in your life, and what will you do about it this year?

→6. What is the most helpful new way you could strengthen your church?

→7. For whose salvation will you pray most fervently this year?

→8. What’s the most important way you will, by God’s grace, try to make this year different from last year?

→9. What one thing could you do to improve your prayer life this year?

→10. What single thing that you plan to do this year will matter most in ten years? In eternity?

In addition to these ten questions, here are twenty-one more to help you “Consider your ways.” Think on the entire list at one sitting, or answer one question each day for a month.



→11. What’s the most important decision you need to make this year?

→12. What area of your life needs simplifying, and what’s one way you could simplify that area?

→13. What’s the most important need you feel burdened to meet this year?

→14. What habit would you most like to establish this year?

the New Year or On Your Birthday

- 15. Who is the person you most want to encourage this year?
- 16. What is your most important financial goal this year, and what is the most important step you can take toward achieving it?
- 17. What's the single most important thing you could do to improve the quality of your work life this year?
- 18. What's one new way you could be a blessing to your pastor (or to another who ministers to you) this year?
- 19. What's one thing you could do this year to enrich the spiritual legacy you will leave to your children and grandchildren?
- 20. What book, in addition to the Bible, do you most want to read this year?
- 21. What one thing do you most regret about last year, and what will you do about it this year?
- 22. What single blessing from God do you want to seek most earnestly this year?
- 23. In what area of your life do you most need growth, and what will you do about it this year?
- 24. What's the most important trip you want to take this year?
- 25. What skill do you most want to learn or improve this year?
- 26. To what need or ministry will you try to give an unprecedented amount this year?
- 27. What's the single most important thing you could do to improve the quality of your commute this year?
- 28. What one biblical doctrine do you most want to understand better this year, and what will you do about it?
- 29. If those who know you best gave you one piece of advice, what would they say? Would they be right? What will you do about it?
- 30. What's the most important item you want to buy this year?
- 31. In what area of your life do you most need change and what will you do about it this year?

The value of many of these questions is not in their profundity, but in the simple fact that they bring an issue or commitment to focus. For example, just by articulating which person you most want to encourage this year is more likely to help you remember to encourage that person than if you hadn't considered the question.

If you've found these questions helpful, you might want to put them someplace - in a day planner, PDA, calendar, bulletin board, etc. - where you can review them more frequently than once a year.

So let's evaluate our lives, make plans and goals, and live this new year with biblical diligence, remembering that, "The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage" (Proverbs 21:5). But in all things let's also remember our dependence on our King who said "Apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5)

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Family Ministry at Covenant

By Danny Fierro

As the year ends for Family Ministry at Covenant, we are only just beginning to see the fruit of our labor for God as we strive, with His leading, to reach people for the sake of the gospel. Each member at Covenant has been vital in the success of the work that we have put our hands to this year, whether it was as a volunteer, participant, or as a prayer partner.

► Children's Ministry

Our Children's Ministry team is truly a remarkable group of individuals. Stefany Berry has been amazing to

work with this year. From Children's Prayer Time to thoughtful consideration of Sunday School and Children's Church curriculum we continue to look for ways to impart God's word that will last a lifetime to our Covenant Kids.

I also would like to extend a big thank you to Kellie Crosby-Sturtz for her care and faithfulness to our Nursery Program. It is truly a joy to see parents having confidence in leaving their children in our care as they worship with our faith family here at Covenant.

We also could do none of this without faithful volunteers to our Children's Ministry

Programs. Thank you for being a part of our ministry.

Needs: Our Children's Church and Nursery Programs during both worship services are in need of volunteers. Would you consider volunteering to teach Children's Church or in our Nursery for one of these services in order that our staff may worship with their families each Sunday?

Children's Church meets every Sunday during both Services, Children's Sunday School meets every Sunday at 10:00 am.

► Pioneer Club

In case you haven't been at the church on a Wednesday, we are reaching families in our neighborhood in an amazing way! Pioneer Club has been blessed by the Lord as we get to share the gospel every week with 62 children. This number is remarkable when you consider:

- Half of those children are neighborhood kids (not Covenant Kids)
- Nearly every Covenant Kid is involved in Pioneer Club
- Parents of our neighborhood kids are staying and assisting with the club

I want to thank all of our staff and volunteers that have made this club a success in the Lord. We could not do it without your faithfulness and sacrifice of time and talent.

Needs: As we break into 2012 for our Winter/Spring Sessions we have some needs that our faith family can certainly fill.

- Unit Leaders for the following Life Skill Awards: **First Aid, Cooking, Exercise Fun, Playing Together, Acting, Toymaking, Science Fun, Creative Fun, Sign Language, Make Your Own Games, Grill Chef, Reuse/Recycle**
- Scooter and Voyager lead teachers for our 6:15-7:30 Session

Continued on Page 9 ►



Family Ministry at Covenant - continued from page 8

- Game Leaders and Dinner Table Leaders from 5:30-6:15

Pioneer Club meets Every Wednesday-Session 1-3:30-4:45, Session 2-6:15-7:30

► Youth Group

Our youth group is continuing to thrive as we continue to reach more young adults for the gospel. In our High School Program we have kids inviting people and we are seeing a deeper level of growth. Adam Hemsley is doing an excellent job of working with our Junior High Program and also providing leadership and ideas for creative games and events for our Youth Groups. Here are some of the areas where you can help:

- **Female Leadership**-Our young ladies in Junior High and High School have a need for not only female leadership in youth group but also discipleship in a small group Bible Study. Our young ladies want this but so far we have been unable to fill the need. Would you consider providing the discipleship that these ladies are asking for?
- Our Men's High School Bible Study meets in my home every Sunday afternoon at 4:00 pm. We feed the boy's and have an open discussion of issues that the men are facing each week. Would you consider providing a meal for these boys and perhaps being a guest partici-

pant, offering wisdom as an older man?

Junior High Youth Group is Every Wednesday at 6:15 pm; High School Youth Group is Every Sunday at 6:00 pm

► Adult Education

Our Adult Sunday Schools were a great success this fall. It is wonderful to see people passionate about expanding their biblical and theological education. Here are the Winter Classes we will offer starting January 8th:

- Sunday Morning-Discovery I
- Sunday Morning-World Missions
- Sunday Morning-Gospel of John
- Sunday Morning-Parenting Class
- Wednesday Evening-Marriage Class

Adult Sunday School is every Sunday at 10:00 am, LifeLine Wednesday Adult Classes begin at 6:30 pm

► Marriage

Christian Education would like to take a group of couples to Castro Valley, CA to attend a live Love & Respect Seminar.

The seminar will be at Neighborhood Church of Castro Valley February 3rd-4th.

For more details visit <http://loveandrespect.com/events/details/>

[877](#). If you are interested please speak to me or John Hill.

► VBS

We are beginning to assemble our team for VBS 2012 at Covenant. With the amazing response we have had in Children's Ministry this year we are expecting to be busting at the seams with kids in June. We will need the help and prayers of our faith family to pull this off. If you would like to be on our VBS leadership team please let me know.

VBS will be held in the evenings June 24th-28th

► Christian Education Ministry Team

Our Christian Education Ministry Team is now meeting quarterly to execute plans that we develop for the current semester and plan for the next. Our next meeting will be on Sunday, January 15th at 12:30pm. Lunch will be provided.✝



A Tale of Three Trees Returns to Covenant

By Jay Hull

This Winter and Spring our Chimin' Voices Kids Choir will be preparing to present the musical "The Tale of Three Trees" on Sunday April 29th. Mark your calendars and plan to join us for this inspiring story of God's good work through all circumstances. And you won't

want to miss Lumberjack Danny rapping with his tree "homies". More information will be available and auditions for various roles in the play will be held at the Pioneer Club / Kids' Choir which begins again on Wednesday, January 11th. †



I have held many things in my hands, and have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess.

—Martin Luther

Church Staff

Pastor
Jay Hull

Director of Family Ministry

Danny Fierro

Musical Arts Director

Denell Hull

Children's Ministry Director

Stefany Berry

Youth Director

Adam Hemsley

Office Coordinator

Barbara Mize

Office Assistants

John Kanuch

Julie Minedew

Clerk of Session

Kay Blakely

Chimes Publisher

Julie Minedew

Organist

Edith Van Rossem

Elders

Administration

John Kanuch

David MacDonald

Christian Education

John Hill - Chairman

Evangelism

Jim Hemsley

Fellowship

TJ Hill

Mission

Dave Berry

Personnel

Patty Geiger

Chris Rhodes

Worship

Kevin Nolen

Samuel Dueñas

Deacons

Dale & Mary Anderson

Ann Christie

Meg Davis

Joanne Dickson

Jayne Engel

Barbara Kanuch

Roby Monson

Jennifer Oliver

Rita Ringle

New Year's Eve Party & Movie Viewing

Covenant will hold a New Year's Eve Party and Movie Night on Sunday, December 31 at 7:00 pm at the church. We will be watching the movie *Courageous* on the big screen in the Sanctuary

Please plan to bring some finger food to share.

Those with last names A-L are to bring some sweet finger food.

Those with last names M-Z are to bring some savory finger food. †



New Year's Eve Party

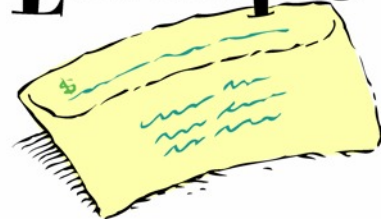
Treasurer's Report October 2011

	MTD	YTD
<u>General Fund</u>		
Revenue	\$37,605	\$282,623
Expense	\$27,780	\$299,606
Net	\$9,825	-\$16,983
Interest Income	\$1	\$155
Net	\$9,826	-\$16,828
<u>Building Fund</u>		
Revenue	\$705	\$46,048
Expense	\$0	\$1,300
Net	\$705	\$44,748
<u>Parking Lot Loans Paid</u>		
	\$0	\$26,000

Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes are available on the table in front of the info board for those who used them last year. If you do not find a box of envelopes with your name on them but would like to have envelopes, please sign your name on the clipboard on the info board. †

Offering Envelopes



Year End Contribution Statements



Contribution statements for the previous year's donations are mailed towards the end of January. Please be sure that your contact information is up to date. Credit for tax deductions in the current year must be received by the church office no later than December 29. †

I MAY NOT BE A "WISE MAN," BUT AT LEAST I NEVER GOT SO LOST I HAD TO ASK HEROD FOR DIRECTIONS.



The Covenant Chimes is a
publication of:

Covenant Presbyterian Church

6695 Mae Anne Avenue
Reno, Nevada 89523
www.covenant-reno.org

Sunday Services

8:30 am

Contemporary Worship Service

10:00 am

Sunday School

11:00 am

Traditional Worship Service



5:45 p.m.
Dinner

6:15-7:30 p.m.
Adult Marriage Class

Mothers of Preschoolers
(MOPS)

Jr. High Youth Group

Pioneer Club (Kids
Pre K-5th Grade)

Nursery Care (Kids birth
through 3 years old)



LifeLine Wednesday

Covenant's Mid-Week Program for the Entire Family

Reaching out with the message and love of Christ

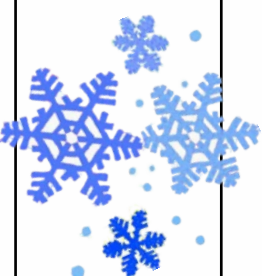
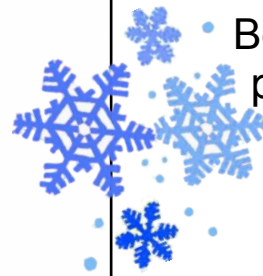
Covenant Chimes



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January 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:00 am Combined Worship Service	2 Church Office Closed	3	4	5 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	6	7 7:45 am Men's Bible Study 9:00 am Un-decorate Sanctuary
8 Chimes Deadline 12:30 pm Worship Meeting 6:00 pm HS Youth Group 6:00 pm Open Prayer Meeting	9 	10 9:30 am Florence Circle 5:30 pm Deacons Meeting 6:30 pm Fellowship Meeting 7:00 pm Admin Meeting Mission Meeting	11 3:00 pm Pioneer Club 5:45 pm LLW 6:15 pm JH Youth Group MOPS 7:45 pm Praise Team	12 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	13 	14 7:45 am Men's Bible Study
15 6:00 pm HS Youth Group	16	17 1:00 pm Martha Circle	18 3:00 pm Pioneer Club 5:45 pm LLW 6:15 pm JH Youth Group MOPS 7:45 pm Praise Team	19 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	20 Youth Winter Retreat	21 Youth Winter Retreat 7:45 am Men's Bible Study
22 Youth Winter Retreat	23	24 10:00 am Chimes Folding	25 3:00 pm Pioneer Club 5:45 pm LLW 6:15 pm JH Youth Group MOPS 7:45 pm Praise Team	26 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	27	28 7:45 am Men's Bible Study
29 10:00 am Combined Worship Service Annual Congregational Meeting / Luncheon 6:00 pm HS Youth Group	30	31 	Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors and let each new year find you a better [person]. —Benjamin Franklin			

Celebrate January



Birthdays

- 9 Gisela Anderson
- 10 Phil Christensen
John Swanson
- 11 Patti Hemsley
- 12 Jenny Chonez
Jadelynn Armer
- 16 Peter Hemsley
- 17 Diane Thorkildson
- 18 Mikayla McEntire
- 19 Becca Engel
- 20 Steve Depweg
Claus Tittiger
Liz Hemsley
Peter Hull
Haylee Shelton
- 26 Denell Hull
Mateo Fierro
- 27 Darci Depweg
- 28 Nate Lynam
Emma Berry

Anniversaries

- 7 Whitney & Brian Hull
- 15 Joannie & Greg Hunt
- 16 Roby & Bruce Monson

Carrot Bran Muffins

So how is that New Year's Resolution coming along? Yes, the one where you were going to eat less sugar and more whole grains? Maybe this will help. This recipe is adapted from Sue Greg's Carrot Bran Muffin Recipe that can be found in her Soups and Muffins Cookbook. (<http://www.suegregg.com/>). You will love the fact that Sue's cookbooks feature whole foods and natural, economical ingredients. You will love that most of her recipes have allergy friendly substitutions. Most of all you will love the fact that her Christian testimony can be found woven through each and every page. These books make great gifts.

- 1/2 cup Raisins
- 1/2 cup Very hot water
- 1 1/2 cups wheat bran
- 1/2 cup honey
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup carrots, grated
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)



1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease or spray muffin pan.
2. Cover raisins with water and set aside to soften.
3. Blend together 1/2 cup of very hot water and wheat bran. Let stand for 5 minutes to soften the bran.
4. Blend together honey and eggs. Mix in grated carrots and buttermilk.
5. Blend whole wheat flour, baking soda, salt and cinnamon in a separate bowl.
6. Blend wet and dry ingredients together until just mixed. Gently fold in drained raisins and walnuts.
7. Bake at 350°F for 20-25 minutes.

Servings: 12
Yield: 12 Muffins

