



In the Spirit

A newsletter for the Libertyville Covenant church community about local happenings and Christian issues.

December 2023

Volume 30 Issue 11

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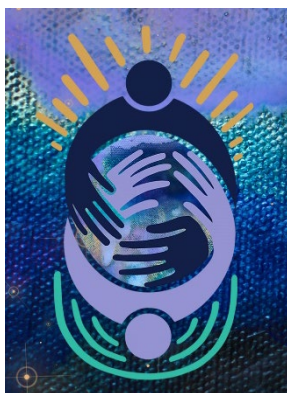
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A New Way to Rejoice

“It’s the busiest time of the year!” Ok, the grammar isn’t great, but I think this rewording of the famous Christmas tune strikes a chord in most of us. With Advent looming, our schedules are full, our stress is ramping up, and we are preparing not for the peace of Christmas night but for the tornado of activity that December has become. From Christmas concerts for the kids to work parties for the adults, from weekly

activities at church to family coming home, “Christmas” has become hectic to the point of exhaustion. It’s enough to weary us before it even begins.

But rather than scolding us for losing “the reason for the season”, or commiserating our self-inflicted scheduling explosions, let me offer a solution, not for over-full calendars (nothing can stop that!) but for ways to rejoice and celebrate even in such a whirlwind time as this. How can a weary world rejoice?

First of all, we need to find the joy in our togetherness. This can be pretty easy for extroverts, but for introverts it is harder. Rather than focusing on how many celebrations we have planned, look forward to opportunities to celebrate together. Is a Christmas dinner at work or church a chore or a box to tick off, or is it a chance to hang out with friends and share stories of Christmas past and present? Is wrapping presents and sending cards a hassle you’d rather avoid? Ask someone to join you as you do it and make it a quiet time together with a friend. Or friends. A present wrapping party? An envelope stuffing get-together?

Second, let yourself really feel the joy of this season. Take a walk (or a drive) to see the lights nearby and ponder the joy that those lights represent. Listen to Christmas carols, but really listen this year. Ponder the words as much as the tunes and remember or rejoice in them. Go sledding with a child or build a snowman, drink hot cocoa by a fire and let yourself smile in the warmth of both the fire and the company you’re with. Try doing the work of enjoying the season rather than accomplishing it.

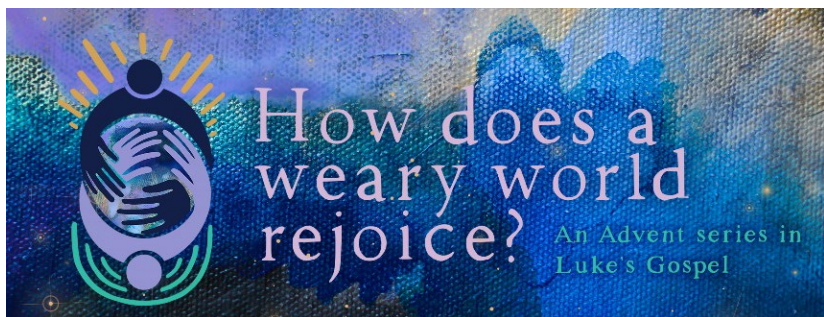
Third, make room for someone new this year. Whether that’s a new relative or friend, or a stranger you can invite in to your celebrations, make room for someone

new this year. This can be as simple as baking cookies for a neighbor or as complex as inviting someone to your Christmas dinner.

Finally, take time every day – yes, every day – this Advent to remember how much you are loved. Read the Christmas stories and remember that God did all of this for you. Sing some carols and think about how they apply directly to your life (“Joy to _____ (insert your name here), the Lord has come!”). Or as we’ve talked about this fall, set aside a special Advent prayer time just to ponder how much God loves you and to thank Him for it.

This Advent, we’re going to talk more about these and other ideas for rejoicing amidst our weariness. So make it a habit to come in person to worship this season no matter how you feel. Join us for the Smorgasbord, the Progressive Dinner, our Longest Night/Blue Christmas service, and our Christmas Eve worship. Remember the joy of worshipping together rather than alone, singing with others rather than just with the radio, and joining together to praise God for His amazing gift of Jesus Christ.

December Worship



From the third book of the bible through to the last, we are called nearly 300 times to rejoice! We are to rejoice always, and rejoice in every circumstance. But in a world so weary of war and injustice and loneliness, how are we to rejoice? This Advent season we will look at the nature of joy through the story of Jesus’ birth and learn how to rejoice in our weary world. Join us for worship every

Sunday at 10:30am in the sanctuary or on our [YouTube channel](#).

Dec. 3	We Acknowledge our Weariness	Luke 1:1-23
Dec. 10	We Find Joy in Connection	Luke 1:24-45
Dec. 17	We Allow Ourselves to be Amazed	Luke 1:57-66
	Dec. 17 we will worship in a Lessons and Carols format led by our choir	
Dec. 24	We Sing Stories of Hope	Luke 1:46-55, 67-80
Christmas Eve	We Make Room	Luke 2:1-20
Dec. 31	We Root Ourselves in Ritual	Luke 2:21-38
Jan. 7	We Trust Our Belovedness	Luke 3:21-22

Advent Happenings



Advent night at LCC!

Everyone is invited to begin the advent season on Family Advent Night, Wednesday, 11/29 from 5:30-7:30. Activities include dinner for all, Advent craft, Jingle Jam and more! Join the church family as we anticipate the birth of Jesus!



ADOPT-A-FAMILY for CHRISTMAS

Thank you to all that participated in this year's Adopt-A-Family. All 40 names have been spoken for. **The wrapped gifts should be returned to church or to Joan Groody's home BY December 3rd.** The child's name and ID# should be on the package. If the request is expensive, please feel free to substitute another item. If you have any questions, or to arrange a drop off time, contact Joan Groody (847-951-7533).

***Middle School Christmas Party, Dec 1st** We will require an RSVP for the party so that we have enough food and transportation for the night. See Details in the Youth Section of the Newsletter.



***Christmas Smorgasbord, Dec 8th beginning at 11:30 a.m. in the narthex**
It's Christmas Smorgasbord time! Please join us on Friday, December 8 at 11:30 am. around the narthex fireplace. We will enjoy our favorite Swedish Christmas foods, carols, and warm fellowship as we begin the season together. If you have questions or would like a meal delivered to you, please contact Kris Nikkel (847-543-8861) or kjnikkel@aol.com. See you there! Click [HERE](#) to RSVP.

***Senior High Christmas Party, Dec 10th** See Details in the Youth Section of the Newsletter.



***All Church Progressive Dinner, Dec 16th** The annual Progressive Dinner will be held Saturday, December 16th. The evening will begin at 6:00 p.m. with appetizers all together held at one home, followed by dinner and dessert at 7:30 held at several host homes. Please join together for a very enjoyable evening! For more information, please contact Lori Hartnett or Kristen Bethancourt. Click [HERE](#) to RSVP.

Fellowship

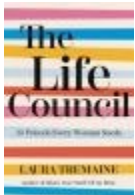


food.faith.fellowship - LCC FUN!

Coffee Hour: The following dates are still available for Sunday Coffee Hour: December 10, 24, and 31. The 2024 Year Sign Up sheet through May is available in the narthex. Please contact Christy James, Heather Larson or the office if you have questions.

NEW MEMBER: Susan Samuelson

Please welcome Susan Samuelson to membership at Libertyville Covenant Church. Susan and her late husband, Dwight, have been attending for over a year. Some of Susan's family are long-time members at LCC – Christine (daughter) and Mark Cederberg and their children Klara and Henry. Need a conversation starter with Susan? Ask her about her unusual email address!



The next reading selection for the Sensible Ladies Book Club will be The Life Council: 10 Friends Every Woman Needs, by Laura Tremain. Come join us for what is sure to be a great discussion! Friday, January 12, 2024 at 7:00 pm at LCC. Questions? Contact Caren Vollrath or 224-637-4422.

Offering a path for a new way to think about friendships, *The Life Council* will inspire and equip you to be a better friend, make new friends, and appreciate how different types of friendships can bring a richness to your life like never before.

Christian Education Discipleship



Registration Opened
November 15th, 7:00 a.m.!!

Last year some weeks filled up within 7 minutes. Register early to get the week of your choice.

cpbc.com and covenantharbor.org

BROCHURES ARE IN NARTHEX

Youth Ministries



GRATEFUL: A 4-Week Series from the Gospels on Christmas.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

This Christmas, what are you grateful for? Your favorite Christmas memories might involve snowball fights, presents, or time with the people you love most . . . but feeling grateful and expressing gratitude are two pretty different things. When we really think about it, there's so much we can be thankful for — even when things don't work exactly how we planned. God has given us so much, and the birth of Jesus is a great way to focus on all of the gifts we've received this year, and to say thank you too! In this four-week series, we'll look at four classic Christmas stories to see what they can teach us about gratitude as we celebrate Jesus' birth. As we do, we'll be reminded to be thankful for each other, what God has done, and God's promises, and to be thankful even when it's not easy.

Junior High December Programming

(Confirmation) Sunday School Dates and Times: 12/3, 12/10, 12/17 from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

No SS 12/24 and 12/31

Wednesday Youth Group Dates: 12/6, 12/13 (Last one for the year) from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. There will be no meals during these Youth Group Dates.

Merry CHRISTMAS!! LCC Middle School families!!

It is that time of year again when we have much to celebrate. With hopes of finishing out the year with a grand finale I would like to invite all of our students to our progressive dinner Christmas party. We will stop at three different homes enjoying appetizers at the Cederberg's, main course at the Collins', and desserts at the Kocinski's. Be sure to bring along a silly white elephant gift for our gift exchange. These gifts could be something you make, something laying around the house, or something you purchase. To prime the pump with ideas we have had, in the past, enormous whoopie cushions, sour patch themed gifts with matching socks, poop emoji stuffies, etc. Please be sure to not spend more than \$20 if you chose to purchase something. What to wear? Please come dressed with as much Christmas cheer as you can handle! And then put on some more!! Please RSVP to let me know if your student intends to join the fun so we can be sure to save them a spot in the van and a place at the table. Please let me know if your child has any food allergies or restrictions.

Who: You!! Middle Schoolers and Friends

What: Progressive Dinner Christmas Party

Where: Drop off at the Cedarberg's (4786 Kings Way North, Gurnee) at 4:30p.m. & Pick Up at Kocinski's (329 Wethington, Wauconda) 8:30p.m.

When: December 1st, 2023. 4:30-8:30p.m.

Why: Because it is going to be all sorts of fun!! Great Food, Games, Friends, and Christmas Cheer

How: We gather together and let God lead the way!!



Winter Retreat January 19-21 at Covenant Harbor!!

It's all about Movement in 2024. Jesus' life is one of incredible moments of movement. How Jesus turning an ordinary morning on the job fishing into an extraordinary catch; an ordinary meal for two into a meal for feeding thousands are just a couple of examples. Jeff Root, Pastor at Glen Ellyn Covenant Church will be the weekend's speaker and entertainment will be provided by Divine Resonance, God's Glorifying Midwest Alt-Rock band.

Cost is \$183 per student. If a \$50 rebate or scholarship is needed, please contact Pastor Paul. Registration is done directly with Covenant Harbor on their website **BEFORE** December 29th.

Click on this [LINK](#): to register. We look forward to spending this time with you.

Senior High December Programming

Sunday School Dates and Times: 12/3, 12/10, 12/17 from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. NO SS 12/24 and 12/31

Sunday Youth Group Dates: 12/3, 12/10 (Last Youth Group for the year) from 12:00 to 5:30 p.m.

Village Retreat Recap

*John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am **the way and the truth and the life.**
No one comes to the Father except through me".*

This powerful message was delivered by Jesus to his disciples as words of comfort and hope, promise and plain speech, and sobering words for what's soon to take place. These words spoke powerfully to students and leaders from LCC and Hinsdale Covenant Church as we gathered at Covenant Harbor. Pastor Lars Stromberg proclaimed Friday night that Jesus is indeed **the truth**. Knowing that Jesus is the truth we follow after him as our Lord and Savior. The disciples struggled to understand how Jesus was **the way** to the Father as the way to the father was through the cross. Jesus needed his disciples to understand there was so much more life after death. Raise your head up and gaze beyond the cross!! The future is filled with far more than the resurrection but eternal life. Students were invited to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, with the hope that he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. In Genesis 2:7 God breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of the man, and from that day forward God offers life through living waters, daily bread, and through our Savior Jesus. We return to our homes with lives refreshed, renewed, and revived by the hope we have in Jesus. Be sure to connect with our students and ask them about the weekend away at Covenant Harbor. Know your prayers were answered as seeds of faith continue to be planted, others watered, and others were ripened for the harvest. Thank you for your support of the youth ministry at LCC. To God be the Glory. Amen



Merry Christmas! Let's Throw a Party!!

With hopes of finishing out the calendar year with a grand finale I would like to invite all our students to a progressive dinner Christmas party. Stopping at three different homes enjoying appetizers at the Collins', main course at the, and desserts at the Beckstrom's. Be sure to bring along a silly white elephant gift for our gift exchange. These gifts could be something you make, something laying around the house, or something you purchase. To prime the pump with ideas we have had, in the past, enormous whoopie cushions, sour patch themed gifts with matching socks, poop emoji stuffies, etc. Please be sure to not spend more than \$20 if you chose to purchase something. What to wear? Please come dressed with as much Christmas cheer as you can handle! And then put on some more!! Please RSVP to let me know if your student intends to join the fun so we can be sure to save them a spot in the van and a place at the table. Please let me know if your child has any food allergies or restrictions.

Who: You!! Senior High Students and Friends

What: Progressive Dinner Christmas Party

Where: Drop off LCC Parking lot at 12:00p.m. & Pick Up at Beckstrom's (2861 Whispering Oaks Dr., Buffalo Grove) 5:30 p.m.

When: December 10th, 2023, 12:00-5:30p.m.

Why: Because it is going to be all sorts of fun!! Great Food, Games, Friends, and Christmas Cheer

How: We gather together and let God lead the way!!

It's not too early to think about a summer job!!



Covenant Point Bible Camp Summer Staff Needed!!
Spread the word! Apply to join us for a summer of camp ministry!
Applications are now open!

Summer Staff: June 2 - Aug 10, 2024

* *Applicants must be 18+ by June 16 and some positions require applicants to be 21+.*

* *Most leadership positions require earlier arrivals.*

* *Some positions require additional certifications. Details at www.cpbcc.com/staffopenings.*

High School Volunteer Work Crew:

* *Both **grounds** and **kitchen** positions are available*

* *Preference is given to applicants 16 years of age or older.*

* *We will accommodate second session work crew members to be out the week of July 14-20 for [UNITE 2024](#) if desired. Work Crew Session 1: June 9 - July 5 (4 weeks), Work Crew Session 2: July 6 - August 4 (4 weeks)*

SUMMER STAFF AT COVENANT HARBOR APPLY NOW!!

Summer camp begins June 9 and completes on August 7. Staff training is for about 10 days prior to the first day of camp depending on the position. Details at: <https://covenantharbor.org/summer-staff/>

Finance

Giving through October 2023

EXPENSES VS. BUDGET

Budgeted Expenses	\$ 464,362
Actual Expenses	<u>426,836</u>
Cost Savings / (Overrun)	37,526

INCOME VS. BUDGET

Regular Giving	387,058
Special Income	<u>20,841</u>
Total Income	407,899
Budgeted Giving	<u>464,362</u>
Giving Excess / (Shortfall)	(56,463)

INCOME VS. EXPENSES

Actual Income	407,899
Actual Expenses	<u>426,836</u>
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	<u>\$ (18,937)</u>

The Leadership Team thanks you all for your continued generous support of the ministries of LCC. We thank God for you and His good work that can be accomplished through your faithfulness. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our finances, please contact our Treasurer, "Kansas" Dave Anderson at 847-910-1696 or danderson@proactiongroup.com.

Thanks, Dave for your work on our behalf!

[LINK to online giving](#)

Checks mailed to the church will also be received and processed on a regular basis. If you have questions, contact John Bethancourt, jbcovenant@gmail.com or 847/837-1690

LCC LEADERSHIP

Please pray for the church

LEADERSHIP TEAM, COUNCIL & STAFF

Contact them if you have questions, ideas or would like to get involved in a particular ministry.

STAFF:

Pastor: Steve Larson (815/508-4450)

Associate Pastor to Youth:

Paul Couleur (847/331-3640)

Office Administrator: Debbie Tometz

Choir Director: Kris Nikkel

Tech Coordinator: Noah James

Organist: Su-Yi Su

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Church Council Chair:

Caren Vollrath

Church Council Vice Chair:

Dave Anderson

Church Council Secretary:

Karen Lundstedt

Treasurer:

Dave L. Anderson

LT Members at Large:

Julie Dahlberg

Dennis Dieball

Owen Youngman

Financial Secretary:

John Bethancourt

Christian Education and Discipleship (CED)

Angela Kocinski/Ann Frost

Deacon Team:

Wes Lindahl

Evangelism & Service Team:

Teresa Anderson

Worship Ministry Team:

Trevor James

Finance & Properties Team:

Kerry Monson

Connections Team:

Heather Larson

Christy James

December Volunteer Schedule

Date	Coffee Hour	Lay Reader	Greeters	Ushers
12/3	Craig & Colleen Sparks	Darilyn Anderson	Marilyn & Larry Cholewin	Bob Harnett and Al Nieslon
12/10		Dan Frost		Same
12/17	STAFF	Jackie Splinter	Roch and Kat Tranel	Same
12/24		Vicki Herrick	Scott and Teresa Anderson	Same
12/31	Dennis & Carol Dieball		John and Nancy McLinden	Same
Date	Sunday School	Prayground	Sunday School Nursery	Worship Nursery
12/3	Pre-School: Angela Kocinski, K-3 rd : Jim Gillette, 4-5: Sarah Palmberg, Lee Vollrath	None Needed		
12/10	Pre-School: Angela Kocinski, K-3 rd Paul and Karin Lundstedt, 4-5: Sarah Palmberg, Lee Vollrath			Caren Vollrath and Jenna Glader
12/17	Pre-School: Angela Kocinski, K-3 rd : Paul and Karin Lundstedt, 4-5: Sarah Palmberg, Lee Vollrath	Vicki Herrick		Ann Frost
12/24	No Sunday School	Caren Vollrath		
12/31	No Sunday School	Angela Kocinski		Kirsten Peterson & Karin Hildebrandt

December Events

December 1 Middle School Christmas Party
 December 8 All Church Smorgasbord
 December 10 Senior High Christmas Party
 December 16 All Church Progressive Dinner
 December 17 Staff Coffee Hour
 December 20 Longest Night Service
 December 24 Christmas Eve Worship Service

December Birthdays/Anniversaries

December Birthdays		Anniversaries
12/2 Maggie Johnson	12/20 Carson Hawkinson Earleen Johnson	12/9/1995 Karen and Dave Hinz
12/6 Anja Beckstrom	12/22 Lee Vollrath	12/31/2000 Sarah and Ben Palmberg
12/8 Griffin Johnson	12/24 Amy Keller	
12/9 Wylie Douglass	12/27 Leija Dalton	
12/12 Josh Larson	12/28 Carol Dieball	
12/15 Mark Cederberg Carl Zienty	12/30 Ken Werner	
12/18 Axel Couleur Kajsa Hawkinson	12/31 Jim Pas	

Recurring Weekly Events

Sunday	9:00 Sunday School 9:00 Adult Bible Study 9:00 Women's Small Group 10:30 a.m. Worship 12:00 Choir Rehearsal 5:00 p.m. Sr. High Youth Group
Monday	7:00 p.m. Monday Night Small Group
Tuesday	7:00 p.m. 2 nd week Worship Ministry Team 4 th week Deacon Mtg /4 th week Christian Education and Discipleship Mtg. (Zoom)
Wednesday	5:30 Wednesday Night Together 6:30 Jr. High Youth Group
Thursday	9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study 4:00 p.m. 3 rd Leadership Mtg. 1 st /3 rd /5 th week 7:00 p.m. Men's Ping Pong
Friday	7:00 a.m. Men's Bible Study
Saturday	8:00 a.m. Furniture Ministry (1 st Sat)

December

2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 7:00 Men's Bible Study 4:30 pm Jr. High Xmas Party	2 8:00 Furniture Ministry
3 9 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 12 Choir Reh 5:00 Sr High YG	4 7 Monday SG	5	6 6:30 Jr. High YG	7 9:30 Women's Bible Study 7:00 Ping Pong	8 7:00 Men's Bible Study 11:30 Smorgasbord	9
10 9 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 12 Choir Reh 5 Sr. High Xmas Party	11 7 Monday SG	12	13 6:30 Jr High YG	14 9:30 Women's Bible Study 4 Leadership Mgt	15 7:00 Men's Bible Study	16 6:00 Progressive Dinner
17 9 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 12 Choir Reh 5 Sr. High YG	18 7 Monday SG	19	20 6:30 Longest Night Service	21 9:30 Women's Bible Study 7:00 Ping Pong	22	23
24 10:30 Worship 4:00 Christmas eve Service	25 Christmas Day	26 7 Deacon Mtg	27	28	29	30
31 9 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 12 Choir Reh						



ONLINE GIVING PORTAL: To give online, simply to go the LCC website (www.libcov.org) and click the “give” on the menu. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Congregational Meeting Recap:

If you missed the Congregational Meeting on November 5th, the following items were discussed:

- Kansas Dave presented the plan for using ERC (Employee Retention Credits), money received from the government during the pandemic. It will be used to support tech and staff benefits which aligns with the reason it was provided.
- Jerry and Marcia Junas made LCC the beneficiary of an insurance policy which has been placed in a Memorial Fund. The gift may be used to benefit the church as needed.
- We have an Active Shooter Policy- congregants are urged to be familiar with it. Sunday School teachers and students have been trained on our procedures. You can request a copy from the office.
- The congregation approved the formation of a Camp Staff Scholarship fund to supplement the salaries of students serving as counselors at Covenant camps.
- The congregation approved allowing the Leadership Team to spend up to \$5000 for an unexpected need that falls outside the budget.
- New members were received, Jon and Kris Heintzelman, former members returning to LCC, and Susan Samuelson. Welcome!

If you have questions about the items discussed, please contact Caren Vollrath, Chair carenvollrath@gmail.com
847-549-6906

Libertyville Covenant Church

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