

Hope Happenings

Connecting the congregation in ministry.

Hope Evangelical Covenant Church
451 Ackman Road
Crystal Lake, IL 60014

December 2011

www.hope-covenant.org
815 455-6340

Matt King, Associate Pastor
Youth Ministries



Hope Covenant Church is partnering with The Salvation Army by helping put gifts under the Christmas trees of local families. The method is a little different this year as The Salvation Army makes a change, we ask your participation in providing unwrapped gifts by December 18. You can sign-up at the Ministry Table - select an age group and whether it is for a boy or girl. Age groups: 0-16 months, 1-5 years, 6-9 years, 9-13 years, and 13-16 years. Gifts should be in the \$20 to \$30 range.

The Salvation Army needs individuals to join their **Bell Ringing Team**. This is a great opportunity for the families at Hope Covenant Church to make a difference in the lives of people in our community.



The need is for people to volunteer as little as two hours of their time during this holiday season to simply **"ring a bell"** in order to help people in need. The **"Red Kettle"** program helps raise the funds that are needed to provide necessary services at Christmas and throughout the New Year for McHenry County. To volunteer please call Audry at **1-815-455-2769**.

Sermons in Advent

This Advent season we will be reading stories of God working in the lives of individual people as He brings Jesus to Earth. (December 4) We will first be reading of Elizabeth and Zechariah, then (December 11) Mary and Joseph, and finally (December 18) Simeon and Anna. We will see God's majesty, His people's obedience and together celebrate God's wonderful work.

December 4 Second Sunday in Advent

2nd Hour – Adult Sunday School *Preparing for Christ*. Focus on selected text of Handle's *Messiah*. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people..." Isaiah 40:1-5
3:00 p.m. First Half of Annual Meeting.

December 10 Feed My Starving Children

We have an opportunity to serve Christ as we serve children in desperate need of basic food. We will be packing a couple thousand meals over the course of a couple hours. We meet at the church at 1:00 p.m. drive to the packing facility and then return by about 5:00 p.m. Please join us as we serve in this wonderful way. Information is on Ministry Table.

December 11 Third Sunday in Advent

2nd Hour – Adult Sunday School *The Light Shines*. Focus on selected text of Handle's *Messiah*. "For behold, darkness shall cover the earth..." Isaiah 60:2-3; Isaiah 9:2,6.



Three Wee Kings Annual Christmas Program

6:00 p.m.
December 11

Three Wee Kings - The children (and some adults) of Hope have been working hard on their acting skills in this Christmas Musical. The musical tells of the Three Kings seeking the new King. We meet lions, stars, lambs and shepherds who think that perhaps one of them will be the new King. Also in the cast of characters are camels, donkeys, goats, angels and of course the Holy Family. All find out that the King is not what any of them expected. Please join us as we discover the Reason for the Season with delightful songs and colorful costumes.

Let's honor all the efforts that have gone into this program by our attendance! See you there.

More December events on next page. →

December 18 Fourth Sunday in Advent

Carols and Cookies — immediately following the worship service we will continue by singing favorite Christmas Carols and sharing cookies. Bring your favorite Christmas cookies to share! Children will return from Action Zone so they can be included. Talk to Jenny Winn if you have a question.

Adult Christmas Dinner



Don't miss out on the event of the year! On Sunday December 18 we will be celebrating the birth of our Savior with our annual Christmas Dinner. Our very own Mike Stevens will be preparing and serving his delicious food. New to our congregation, our Worship Director Geoff Twigg is preparing a fantastic

performance including a string quartet and band. The evening will begin with hors d'oeuvres at 5:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 6:15 p.m. Tickets are now being sold! See Jenny Winn. Child care will be provided by our high schoolers!

Christmas Dinner Menu

House Salad
Beef Burgundy with Mushrooms
Glazed Pork Tenderloin
Chicago Style Crab Cakes
Chicken Enchiladas
Rice Pilaf
Garlic Roasted Potatoes
Dessert Selections

December 24 - Christmas Eve

5:30 p.m. Candle Light Family Service

December 25 - Christmas Day

9:30 a.m. Family Worship Service

The service will be designed for both children and adults and Pastor Matt will be giving a narrative sermon. Please make worshiping together at Hope a part of your Christmas celebration. There will be no Sunday School.

January 1, 2012 - New Years Day

9:30 a.m. Family Worship Service

Brunch will be served immediately following the service. Start the new year with fellowship!

Thinking about 2012?

What personal spiritual goals do you have for 2012?
What spiritual goals do you have for your family?
Remember the reason for the season!

Student Ministries

For Junior and Senior High Youth

Junior High Youth - Sunday School at 10:45 a.m.

Senior High Youth - Sunday School at 10:45 a.m.

Youth Group Meetings

Senior High - Sunday evenings at 6:00

Junior High - Wednesday evenings at 6:30

Confirmation

Wednesday evenings at 7:30.

See other opportunities listed on the front page.

Pastoral Search

The Search Committee continues to meet regularly as the process for selecting a new Senior Pastor continues. Recently we've discussed the criteria that will be used to narrow the pool of candidates. We are also using that criteria to develop interview questions. We hope to be at a point very soon where we will begin considering candidates.

The committee has received valuable input from the congregation and we are carefully considering all comments as we move forward. Please continue to bring your concerns and questions to any committee member. Your next opportunity to hear an update will be at the first half of our Annual Meeting that will be held on December 4.

As always, continue to keep our church, the Search Committee, and our yet to be identified Senior Pastor in your prayers. We know that God will answer those prayers and bring us together with the person who will join us as we do the work of the kingdom here at Hope Covenant Church.

Women Ministries - -

Spring Celebration 2012

Women Ministries of the Central Conference invites you to *Refocus! Refocus! Rejoice!* Friday, March 16 from 5:00 p.m. until Saturday at 3:00 p.m. which is hosted by the Fox Valley District women at Hillcrest Covenant church in DeKalb. See Kim Olsen for details.

Just for you . . .

Seasonal Help

As you confer with Santa about his upcoming deliveries, keep in mind family and personal devotional books, Bibles, and prayer journals. The Covenant denomination offers a resource for choosing appropriate Bibles for children of all ages: <http://www.covchurch.org/children/reading-guide/>.

Let's Celebrate Together

December Birthdays

4 Sarah Greenwood	15 Gracie Stille
5 Herb Snider	16 Alex Ferro
6 Briana Hollensbe	21 Sarah Caspari
6 Judy Frazier	23 Amy Caspari
6 Stephanie Kuligowski	24 Betsy Rickard
7 Frank Schmidt	28 Avery Kuligowski
11 Al Winn	29 Cindy Wegener
13 Jessica Olsen	

December Anniversaries

2 Bob and Cindy Wegener	2006
15 Dave and Lisa Greenwood	1990
29 Jerrad and Betsy Rickard	2001
31 Jim and Joy Adams	2008

Send a card, make a phone call or say it in person.
Let them know you remembered their special day.



*Meeting the first and
third Thursday from
9:30 to 11:00 a.m.*

The MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) at Hope Covenant were busy this fall. In October we enjoyed a trip to the Prairie View Educational Center in Crystal Lake, enjoying the beautiful autumn scenery as we hiked with our kids, and got to know each other better. Later in the month many MOPS families met for a hay ride through Randall Oaks park. The weather was somewhat chilly but afterward we warmed up by the fire as our kids were busy roasting marshmallows. Much fun was had by all!

In November we participated in the annual Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child project. Each mom had an opportunity to work with her children in filling up shoe boxes with gifts for children in other parts of the world. We donated a total of 40 filled boxes. Also, at one of our meetings, MOPS moms made no-sew blankets for some of the residents at Turning Point, a shelter in Crystal Lake.

Recently we were blessed with a few more Moppet volunteers. Thank you to those who give so much of themselves for the sake of the children! We are currently in need of two more MOPS mentors. We rely on our mentors for spiritual guidance and support. If you are interested or would like more information about being a mentor, please contact Carrie McCune or Kristine Witt. We are most grateful to Hope Covenant for its support of this important ministry.



**Adventure
Club** MORE than a club-
it's an ADVENTURE

**Wednesdays
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

Two-Week Hiatus for Adventure Club

Adventure Club will not be meeting on Wednesday, December 28 and Wednesday, January 4. Club resumes on Wednesday, January 11, 2012.

Adventure Club in 2012

Clubbers will be traveling with Jesus as well as New Testament and modern day friends. They will be learning Godly traits like generosity, prayer, obedience, friendliness, worship, stewardship, forgiveness, accepting others, and creativity. Adventure Club is a mid-week Bible ministry for boys and girls in grades K-5. Club meets on Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at Hope Covenant Church. Don't miss the adventure... invite a friend and join us!

Action Zone During Advent

December 4: "I needed clothes and you clothed me..."

Bring in a coat or warm clothes next week for the Salvation Army. We will make fleece hats in Action Zone to be donated to the Salvation Army this day.

December 11: "I was sick and you looked after me..."

We will make Christmas cards to give to someone who is sick.

December 18: "I was a stranger; you invited me in..."

We will make invitations to bring someone new to Christmas Eve or Christmas Day service. Let the "stranger" know that he/she is Jesus' best present.



Thank You Congregation!

The Care Team would like to thank our congregation who expressed love, compassion and mercy in 2011 by providing meals and play dates, designing and creating cards, purchasing items for care baskets, honoring birthdays and anniversaries, and providing transportation and visitation to Dagny Jensen.

Something special for 2012:

Mission Trip to Mexico

In late June 2012, Hope Covenant Church will be sending a group to do mission work with local people in Chetumal, Mexico. We expect to see God work in truly amazing and meaningful ways in us and through us. If you would like to be a part of what God is going to do through this trip, contact Pastor Matt. Give special consideration to participating.

Hope Happenings

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At Hope Covenant Church

Saturday Evening

5:30 pm Worship

Sunday Morning

9:30 am Worship

10:45 am Sunday School
For all ages

Sunday Worship in December

See the front page of this newsletter.

Saturday Evening - 5:30 p.m. WORSHIP

We invite all to participate as Hope Covenant Church worships on Saturday evening.

Prayer Gathering
Tuesday Evenings,
7:00 to 8:00 p.m.



"My house will be called a house of prayer. . . ."
Matthew 21:13

Each Saturday and Sunday at worship we gather your prayer requests. These requests are honored during the week as people gather to pray. Please let us join you in prayer when there is a need or concern on your heart. Just fill out the back of the *Welcome Card* with your request(s) and drop it in the offering plate or leave it at the Welcome Center.

To pray, I think, does not mean to think about God in contrast to thinking about other things, or to spend time with God instead of spending time with other people. Rather, it means to think and live in the presence of God. All our actions must have their origin in prayer. Praying is not an isolated activity; it takes place in the midst of all the things and affairs that keep us active. In prayer a "self-centered monologue: becomes a " God-centered dialogue."

Henri Nouwen, *Clowning in Rome: Reflections ... Prayer*
Quoted in *The Holy Longing*, Ronald Rolheiser

Our Church Library

The church library is there for your benefit. Make it a priority to visit the Library for reference material, **books and CD / video / DVD** recordings. Notice the seasonal items displayed on the cart, which are available for your use.

Your Church Leaders

Church Chair - Tim McNaughton

Church Vice Chair

also Board of Spiritual Life Chair - Al Winn

Please send newsletter contributions by
December 27
to <Dale.hopehap@sbcglobal.net> for the
January 2012 issue of *Hope Happenings*.

Pray for our military personnel

Mehrvarz Yavaliollah (Army)

Christopher Ellis (Navy)

May you find joy in your celebrations this Christmas season.