



Covenant News ***4th Quarter*** ***2008***

Worship Schedule

9:00 a.m. - First Worship Service
10:30 a.m. - Second Worship Service

Nursery care is available during both services.
Children's Worship during both services.

Communion is celebrated the first Sunday of the month.

Weekly Schedule

Monday	10:15 a.m. - Senior Energize
Tuesday	9:30 a.m. - Crafters 2:00 p.m. - Prayer Study
Wednesday	10:15 a.m. - Senior Energize 12:00 p.m. - Rev. Dan's Discussion Group 7:00 p.m. - Bible Study
Thursday	7:00 p.m. - Exercise Class
Friday	9:00 a.m. - Deacon's Food Pantry 10:15 a.m. - Senior Energize

Junior High Youth meets Wednesdays,
Senior High Youth meets Sundays.
Please check out the bulletin board for schedules.

Monthly Schedule

Session Meeting	4th Monday of the month, 7:00 p.m.
Deacons Meeting	2nd Thursday of the month, 7:00 p.m.
PW Coordinating Team	1st Wednesday of the month, 1:00 p.m.
Lydia-Ruth Circle	2nd Monday of the month, 7:00 p.m.
Mary-Sarah Circle	2nd Wednesday of the month, 10:00 a.m.
Fellowship Committee	1st Wednesday of the month, 7:00 p.m.

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday

From our Pastor

A Sabbatical Update Or, Rest After the Holidays

As most of you are aware, I was honored to receive the Lilly Endowment Award for Clergy Renewal, which is a competitive grant acknowledging achievements in ministry through the funding of sabbatical activities. The grant that I wrote will allow me to experience an amazing journey diving in several areas around the world. The most challenging will be to explore the cenotes of the Yucatan. These are underwater caves that were objects of Mayan and Aztec worship for centuries. Diane and I will also be living on a dive vessel over a hundred miles offshore in the Pacific Ocean near the Philippines.

The purpose of a sabbatical is to provide a period of separation from ministry to renew and revive a sense of pastoral calling. I am honored after 20 years of ministry in the local parish, the larger community, and the denomination to receive this gift. I also know that many of you may worry that I will not be returning the SLPC. This is NOT the purpose of my sabbatical. I am looking forward to every year that God allows me to minister to the church community here in Spring Lake.

You, the members and friends of SLPC, will have an opportunity as well during the three and a half months that I will be absent and beyond. My sabbatical grant will fund almost \$10,000 of church activities during the 2009 church year. An exciting small group study entitled, "Seeking Him" will lead those so inclined to participate through a period of personal revival and renewal as well. I have ensured that fellowship opportunities, staff events and pulpit supply will receive funding from the grant.

I hope, in this season of gifts and giving, that you might receive a special blessing for your faithfulness. I also hope that you may find the opportunity for rest and renewal in your life as well.

In His Service,

Rev Dan

From our Associate Pastor

Have you noticed the signs appearing around church asking, "Are you thirsty?" They're not curious if you're drinking enough ounces of water each day; they're asking "Do you want more?". Are you feeling a little dry in your soul? Are you thirsty to find a stream of the water of life?

Four years ago, our church kicked off our small group Bible studies with Rick Warren's "The Purpose Driven Life". Following that series, we have continued to join together in studying God's Word, reflecting on sermon topics, and spending time sharing our stories with one another. We've studied Jesus' journey to the cross, the book of Hebrews, the armor of God, principles of Christianity, and a survey of the Old Testament.

These groups have developed their own personalities, changing as people come and go. Some meet together year round, others convene for our 6-8 week studies; some are more intellectual, others more often call on the heart to respond; some study the lesson and go, others linger to eat and pray; some are intense; others lighthearted. Amazing that this much variety can come even as we study the same topics! And encouraging that, there just might be a group out there where I can fit in, and there just might be a group out there where I wouldn't feel connected at all.

As Rev. Dan embarks under water on his sabbatical of personal revival, through our epiphany to Lent to Easter, we, too, will have the opportunity to take a journey of personal revival together in our small groups. A gift of the Lilly Endowment to our congregation is the purchase of our second published Bible study, "Seeking Him". This 12-week study will take us through some key parts of our faith journey. It will ask us to answer honestly "where am I?". Parts are to be done privately in between group meetings. Then, each week there are questions to work through together as a group on the themes of revival, humility, honesty, repentance, grace, holiness, obedience, clear conscience, forgiveness, sexual purity, the spirit-filled life, and the personal devotional life.

Revival can be a scary word. No, there will be no tent meetings on the church lawn. No, we will not have four-hour-long services for a week straight. Revival is not an event or emotionalism. This introduction to our study explains that revival literally means "to bring back to life". As we begin with the first sermon, "What Is Revival?", on January 11, we encourage you to prayerfully consider whether your soul says "Yes, I am thirsty for more".

As we seek Him together,

Rev. Jen



Upcoming Special Events

- Dec. 14 3-5 p.m. Givin' Again Shopping
- Dec. 15-19 8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer in Sanctuary
- Dec. 16 6-8 p.m. Givin' Again Shopping
- Dec. 17 6:00 p.m. Christmas Caroling
- Dec. 19 11:00 a.m. Cookie Walk and BBQ Luncheon
- Dec. 19 6:00 p.m. Not So Youth Group - Live Nativity Walk
- Dec. 20 Not So Youth Group Progressive Dinner and Children's Christmas Party
- Dec. 21 Children's Program (during worship services)
- Dec. 24 7:00 & 10:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Services
- Dec. 24, 25, 26 Office Closed for Christmas
- Dec. 28 10:00 a.m. One Worship Service only, followed by the Annual Congregational Meeting
- Dec. 31, Jan. 1 & 2 Office Closed for New Year's
- Jan. 4 Commissioning Sunday (ordination and installation of new officers, commissioning of Rev. Dan and congregation for sabbatical)
- Jan. 11 Small Groups Study Begins "Seeking Him"
- Jan. 28 6:00 p.m. Fellowship Fish Fry

Morning Prayer

Rev. Jen's prayer group will be holding morning prayer in the sanctuary on December 15 - 19, from 8 to 8:30 a.m. Anyone interested is invited to join them.

Givin' Again

The Deacons came up with a wonderful idea this year. They have been collecting new and gently used toys and other gifts for children of all ages, and now they are cordially inviting you to come back and do a little "shopping" at the Givin' Again Boutique - FREE OF CHARGE! What a great way to fill the stockings and select a special gift or two without concern about the wallet. Hot cocoa, Christmas goodies, a little music—let's celebrate! Please come on **Sunday, December 14, from 3-5 p.m., or Tuesday, December 16, from 6-8 p.m.** This event is sponsored by the Deacons as a gift for EVERYONE.

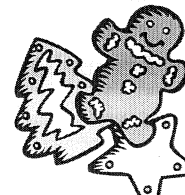
Christmas Caroling

The Junior High Youth are planning an evening of Christmas caroling on **Wednesday, December 17th**. They are inviting the choir and anyone from the congregation interested in visiting, singing, and spreading some Christmas cheer to join them. They will be visiting some of our seniors, those recovering from surgery, those who have lost a spouse, and those who have welcomed a new baby into their family. Please meet at the church at 6:00 p.m. We should be done by 8:00 p.m.



Cookie Walk

On **December 19**, the Crafters will be hosting their annual Cookie Walk and BBQ Luncheon from 11:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. (or until the cookies are gone). Come for a BBQ lunch combo for \$3.00, then buy a container for \$5.00 and fill it up with cookies to eat during the holiday season.



Your cookies are needed to make this a success. Please bring two (or more) dozen "HOLIDAY" cookies to the downstairs kitchen on Thursday, December 18, or Friday morning before 11:00. All proceeds from this event will be going toward more new windows!

Not So Youth Group Events

Live Nativity Walk - Trinity Lutheran Church in Muskegon, **Friday, December 19**. Their church members dress up as different Christmas story characters, and rooms and hallways of the church are transformed into different scenes of the nativity. People who come walk through and see and hear the Christmas story. This is a free event, and any families interested in joining can meet at church at 6:00. Then we'll drive up to get towards the front of the line (hopefully). If you can't join us that night, it is also available on Saturday from 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. and Sunday from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Christmas Appetizer Progressive Dinner/Children's Christmas Party - Saturday, December 20. This is a combo event! From 5:00 - 8:00 p.m., the children will have an all-cast Christmas program rehearsal and Children's Christmas Party, with games, crafts, a pizza dinner, and a movie. Please bring \$2.00 for pizza. While the children are at their party, the Not So Youth Group will be attending a Christmas appetizer progressive dinner. There will be three stops. If you would like to be a host or are willing to bring an appetizer to share at one of the stops, please email or phone Rev. Jen.

Children's Christmas Program

This year the children are planning on doing something a little different for Christmas. Instead of performing at the early Christmas Eve service, they will be performing "A Tremendous Christmas" on **Sunday, December 21, at both of our worship services**. You won't want to miss this very special event.



Christmas Eve Services

Even though the children's program will be performed the Sunday before Christmas, rest assured there are still going to be two Christmas Eve Services: one at 7:00 p.m. and the other at 10:30 p.m. Join us as we celebrate the birth of Jesus with Scripture and song.

One Service Only on December 28th, Followed by Annual Congregational Meeting

Because Rev. Dan will be starting his sabbatical on January 5th, the Session voted to hold our annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, December 28th. There will be **one service that day at 10:00 a.m.**, immediately followed by the congregational meeting.

Ordination & Installation of Officers and Commissioning Sunday, January 4th

On Sunday, January 4th, the ordination and installation of our new Deacons and Elders (Class of 2011) will take place at both services. This Sunday will also be Rev. Dan's last Sunday here before he begins his sabbatical, so it will also be a commissioning service for Rev. Dan and the congregation.

Seeking Him

If you plan on joining the small group study, "Seeking Him", beginning on January 11th, we need to order a book for you. If you haven't yet signed up with Donna Rick, Small Groups Coordinator, please contact the office (842-5060) by December 17th so we can put you on the list. We will be placing the book order that week.

Alternative Gift Giving

Don't know what to get for a family member who has everything? Need a suggestion for a gift for the teachers in your life? Looking to give something a little more meaningful? Do you want to help sustain families throughout the world? We have some suggestions for you:

1. Purchase a water filtration system that will provide clean, drinkable water for families in developing countries (through International Aid).
2. Help purchase a cow, goat, chickens, etc. to help people become more self-reliant for food and income (Heifer International).

To accommodate you, we will have a table set up in the Narthex throughout the month of December. Stop by to look over prices and get more information. You may purchase a portion or all of a gift and receive a gift card to give to the recipient. Or you may purchase one gift for many recipients. This is NOT a fundraiser for church - all the monies will be sent to the appropriate agencies.

Deacons' Corner

We are so blessed to be a part of this church community!

A while ago, one of our deacons was contacted through a connection with Hospice. Hospice was assisting a mother with several teenage children, but because their services are limited, they could not address the other physical needs of the family. This particular deacon connected with the coordinator of our church pantry, and together they visited the family, who had no telephone or transportation. They found the family had barely any food in the cupboard or the refrigerator, so they brought a couple of the teens back to our pantry and helped them select groceries and other essentials to keep them going for a while.

Another deacon heard about this family and was compelled to offer services, too. What teenager wouldn't love pizza, and this family had several teenagers. So one weekend, this deacon picked up a couple of pizzas (which turned out to be a God-financed blessing) and delivered them to the family. It was awesome!

As members of this church, we are so blessed to be able to serve others in our community. This family is not from within our church membership, they aren't even within the boundaries of the Tri-Cities, but it doesn't matter - we are led to help where there is a need. Our church as a whole is a reflection of God's love to the world, and He will give us all the opportunity to shine!

Food Pantry

The Deacons' Food Pantry continues to serve record numbers of families. In November, they served 61 families (102 adults and 91 children). This was only in a period of three weeks, as the pantry was closed the day after Thanksgiving! They also provided complete Thanksgiving dinners to 23 families this year. Each of their clients received: turkey or ham, dressing, instant potatoes, gravy, frozen casserole, Jell-O, fruit cocktail, rolls, pumpkin pie makings, and Cool Whip. This gift was in addition to their regular groceries. All the clients were so happy! Everyone left with smiles and plenty of gratitude for the thoughtfulness of our church members.

Please remember the pantry when you are out grocery shopping. There is a "shopping list" in the Narthex that lists items they are consistently running short on.

Year End "Stuff" from the Office

2009 Giving Envelopes will be available in the Fireside Lounge on Sunday, December 21. Please stop by and pick your box up. If you don't see your box, please call the church office (842-5060) and we'll have one available for you the following week.

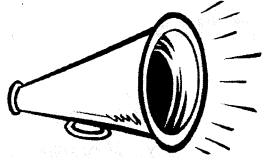
2009 Flower Calendar will also be posted in the Narthex on December 21. Please pick out your special Sunday to beautify the sanctuary. All we need at this time is your name. Prior to your Sunday, you will receive a reminder in the mail, asking you to phone the church with your dedication and to let us know if you want to keep the flowers after the service. Flowers that are not taken home will be given to the Deacons to deliver to our seniors or those ill.

2008 Giving Statements will be available for pickup on Sunday, January 11. We will "close the books" on 2008 giving on January 8th. If you wish to add to your 2008 giving, your check must be dated on or before December 31, 2008 and received in the office by January 8, 2009. If not, it will be credited to your 2009 giving.

Update for Church Directory - We plan on passing out updates for your church directory in mid-January. Please watch your bulletin for more information. If you have noted a mistake in your own information in the directory, please advise the office so we can make corrections.

A note on birthdays and anniversaries - Because there is a birthday and anniversary section in your directory, because we publish birthdays and anniversaries in the weekly bulletins, and because our newsletter is published on the web site and we prefer not to post personal information there, we will no longer be listing birthdays or anniversaries in the newsletters. If you did not receive a directory, but would like the list of birthdays and anniversaries, please contact the office at 842-5060.

From the entire SLPC staff, we wish you a blessed Christmas and peace in the New Year.



Heather Buxton, Office Assistant. Besides helping out in the office, Heather is also working on the church's website. Check it out at www.slpc.org.

Terry Plews, Director of Music. Choir is off to a great start, and the bells won't be far behind! Please give Terry a call if you would be interested in singing or ringing. It's a blast!

Kathy Reminder, Housekeeper. Have you noticed how clean and good-smelling the church has been lately? All thanks to Kathy.

Church Family Update

Births:

- 06/27/08 - Alexis Kate & Ava Marie, twin daughters of Julie & Dave Twa
- 07/08/08 - Francis John, son of Kim & Francis Reminder
- 08/19/08 - Abrielle Kay, daughter of Veronica & Alex Turien
- 08/25/08 - Penelope Ruth, daughter of Jill & Ryan Kelly
- 09/06/08 - Dominic Michael, son of Kim & Mike Gillard

In Memoriam:

- Lois VanderSys, June 21
- Wilbur Closterhouse, June 27
- William Barth, July 31
- David Burnside, August 11
- David Lyons, September 6
- Paul Bulthouse, September 12
- Ruby Prelesnik, October 3
- Dorothy Quigg, October 19

Third Grade Bibles were passed out on 10/26/08 to: Cole Bannik, Brett Batka, Emily Batts, Hailey Benefiel, Mary Ferguson, Tiffany French, Jacob Kugler, Alexander Noren, Madelyn Rabideau, Jake Smith, Samuel Steinhauer, Sophia Veneklasen, and Graham Vink.

We welcomed the following new member ins November: Linda & Lyle Dawson, Danielle Fogel, Nichole & Charles Heinz, Penny & Bill Smits, Verna & Russell Stanton, and George Valler.



Poinsettias are being sold to beautify the sanctuary and honor our loved ones as we also remember the birth of Jesus.

If you would like to honor a loved one, please complete the following form and return it to the church office, with payment, by December 14th. The memorial list will be published in the December 21st and Christmas Eve bulletins.

PLEASE PRINT

Name _____

No. of Poinsettias @ \$5.50 ea. _____

Enclosed \$ _____

In memory/celebration/honor of (please circle one):

(You are welcome to take your poinsettia home following the Christmas Eve services.)