

## THE COVENANT

March 2011

Volume 11, Issue 3

### Sign-Up for the May Walk-A-Thon

**A**fter the success of our previous Walk-A-Thons, we are holding the event again this year on Saturday, May 7th starting at 1:30 p.m., to raise funds for the church. There will be two distances that can be walked (three and five miles), and you are welcome to bring your friends and pet dogs along as well (make sure they get sponsored too!).



If you would like to participate in this event and receive sponsorship forms, please fill in the sign-up form in this week's worship bulletin and place it in the box in Fellowship Hall. If you do not want to walk, but would like to sponsor a walker (or a group of walkers), then please contact the organizer Ian Tiele at 708-387-1611 or via his email [ian@holycovenantmcc.org](mailto:ian@holycovenantmcc.org). Walkers and sponsors can also sign-up online at <http://www.holycovenantmcc.org/Walk.html>.

### Spring: Inspiration Blooms

*If it looks like the end, it's the beginning.*

**L**ife is a series of seasons. In the spring my garden is bursting with buds and blooms - daffodils, hyacinths and tulips - where just a few weeks ago there was only what looked like barren earth. The magnolia buds are ready to "pop," and the weeping cherry and flowering crabs won't be far behind. I love Spring! The rebirth of my garden is wonderful to watch.

Easter morning two millennia ago, the world thought that Jesus' life was ended. Then the season changed - and He was Risen! His "end" was really The Beginning.

Seven weeks later, a new Church sprouted in an upper room only fifty (penta) days into the new Season - blooming with love and enthusiasm to tell the world of the wonder of Christ's new Life...and the possibilities for ours.

God has given us the gift of seasons. Not only has He given us four Seasons of rest and growth, every day is a new beginning - a new season. He has promised that while the earth remains seedtime and harvest...winter and summer...day and night shall not cease. (Gen. 8:22)

As the earth warms, there is lots of work to do. It is seedtime. The tilling and planting and weeding and "garden stuff" that gets done now will insure a plentiful harvest of beautiful beds and blooms all summer long. I love the feel of rich earth in my hands. I savor joy the excitement of a visit to the local garden center to check out the variety of annuals, perennials and shrubs.

I enjoy the planning and the planting, the anticipation of a summer of color and beauty. I will see the results of what I do today several tomorrows from now when I'm sitting on the deck admiring my garden in summer.

Every day is the beginning of a new season, and the "seeds" planted today will bloom in their season of harvest. Seeds of love, compassion, effort, ideas, faith, even good money management will result in a harvest of goodness, plenty and peace. They have to - seedtime and harvest shall not cease.

The world is going through a season also, a season of harvest from seeds sown through the ages of greed, hatred, anger, frustration, and selfishness. But...what looks like the end will become a beginning. God promised it. And He gave us the seasons so we would always be reminded to have hope. If it looks like the end, it's really the beginning.

*Ruth Seebeck*



## Pastor's Corner - Rev. Danny Spears



### Choosing Greatness: A Different Way of Looking at Lent

In January, I was honored to be one of 18 MCC leaders selected for MCC's Leadership Mentoring Retreat held in Sarasota, Florida. It was a wonderful—albeit intense—time of learning, discussion, networking, and worship in community. Plus, I have to admit 70 degrees and sun beats 12 degrees and below 0 wind chills any day!

The book assigned for this retreat was "Practicing Greatness: 7 Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders" by Reggie McNeal. In this book, McNeal discusses 7 disciplines he believes separate good spiritual leaders from extraordinary spiritual leaders. I wasn't on board with all of McNeal's comments; still the disciplines he discusses are excellent practices, not only for spiritual leaders, but for EVERYONE to develop. These disciplines are: self-awareness; self-management; self-development; mission; decision making; belonging; and aloneness. I think most of us would agree that you don't have to aspire to "formal" leadership to see the value of these practices.

With these thoughts in mind, I decided to launch a sermon series on this book beginning March 6<sup>th</sup>, and ending on Easter Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. "Hold it!" you may think, 'don't we have to dress in sack cloth and ashes and play dirge music at church during Lent?' "Aren't the sermons supposed to be somber and point out what losers we are?" You might be pleasantly surprised to learn the answer is, "No." Now, that answer doesn't mean faith communities who observe Lent in somber ways are doing something wrong; it just means not all Christian communities of faith observe Lent—and those who do, do so in different ways. That is, there is no one "right way" to observe Lent.

So this year, rather than choosing sack cloth and ashes, I am encouraging us all to choose greatness for our lives. Great-

ness doesn't necessarily mean we will be rich and famous, leaders in our fields of choice, or major power brokers. Greatness comes in less obvious forms, too. For example, I think people who face their addictions one day at a time, and help others to do the same are great people. I think sincere teachers are great people. I think faithful ministry volunteers are great people. And I am sure you can add to this list of great people, too.

Choosing greatness doesn't mean ignoring our weaknesses, either. Believe me, when we practice self-awareness, we won't be able to ignore those weaknesses. To me, choosing greatness simply means not dwelling on those weaknesses. You see, when we spend too much time focusing on our weaknesses, we waste energy that is better used building on our strengths so we can make a positive impact in our world. And as we build on our strengths, we just might be surprised at how many weaknesses we address at the same time.

Yes, from dust we came and to dust we shall return. In the meantime, however, we don't have to live there.

Let's choose greatness by being the fabulous people of God we are!

*Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Dan*

## Go Green - Recycle Your Old Ink Cartridges and Cell Phones



**D**on't throw away your old printer ink cartridges and cell phones – Recycle them! Place your old printer ink cartridges and cell phones in the recycling box in the church basement. Let's all help the environment.



## The Easter Bunny is Coming!



**F**or all those bunny helpers out there, we are looking for hopping volunteers to start delivering flyers for the annual “Breakfast with the Easter Bunny,” to be held on Saturday, April 16th between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. The flyers will be available for delivery from March 6th onwards.

We are also looking for volunteers to donate supplies and to prepare food on the day. There is a sign-up sheet on the Pastor’s office window and you can also sign-up online at <http://www.holycovenantmcc.org/Bunny.html>. If you have any questions or suggestions, please see Jess or Vic Rubino.

This is a golden opportunity for Holy Covenant to share with the neighborhood, the joy and pleasure you experience being a part of the church body.

## Cleaning for a Reason



**I**f you know any man or woman currently undergoing chemotherapy, please pass the word to them that there is a cleaning service that provides FREE housecleaning - once per month for 4 months while he or she is in treatment. All they have to do is sign-up and have their doctor fax a note confirming the treatment. Cleaning for a Reason will have a participating maid service in his or her zip code area arrange for the service.

This organization serves the entire USA and currently has 547 partners to help those in need. It's our job to pass the word and let them know that there are people out there that care. Be a blessing to someone and pass this information along. More information can be found at <http://www.cleaningforareason.org>.

## Inquirer’s Class - March 12th

**A**re you interested in becoming a member of Holy Covenant MCC? If so, please attend this class on Saturday, March 12th, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. This class is a requirement for membership of Holy Covenant. Please see Rev. Danny Spears for more information.

# March 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Yoga 7:00 <i>Anthony McCully birthday</i>	2 Embracing an Adult Faith Class 7:00	3	4	5
6 Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00	7 <i>Codi Killis birthday</i>	8 Yoga 7:00	9 Ash Wednesday Taize Worship 7:00	10	11	12 Inquirer’s Class 10:00
13 Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00	14	15 Yoga 7:00	16 Embracing an Adult Faith Class 7:00	17 BOD Meeting 7:00 p.m.	18	19
20 Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00	21 <i>Sam Cook and Jeff Wood anniversary</i>	22 Yoga 7:00	23	24	25	26
27 Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00	28	29 Yoga 7:00	30	31		

**HOLY  
COVENANT MCC  
CHURCH  
BROOKFIELD, IL**

9145 Grant Ave.  
Brookfield, IL 60513  
708-387-1611

Email: [office@holycovenantmcc.org](mailto:office@holycovenantmcc.org)  
[www.holycovenantmcc.org](http://www.holycovenantmcc.org)



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*We celebrate Christ's call to:  
Care for one another  
Reach out to others  
Explore our faith  
Worship God*

Pastor: Reverend Danny Spears

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**Covenant Editor/Admin Assistant:**

Ian Tiele

## March Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, enkindle the fire of your love.  
Transform all that is fearful into boldness of heart.  
Inspire us with wonder and awe at the mystery of your Presence.  
Confirm us in compassion and forgiveness.  
Whisper discernment in the midst of confusion.  
Be wisdom in the time of trouble;  
Reverence in the face of diversity;  
Patience with the unfolding of life  
And forever anoint us with joy.  
Amen.

[Pat Bergern, CSJ, 1999]

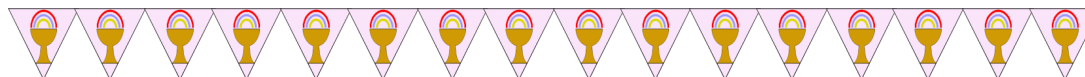
## Taize Style Ash Wednesday Worship - March 9th

**O**ur Ash Wednesday worship will be a Taize-style service on March 9th at 7:00 p.m. What is Taize Worship? Taize worship includes candlelight, prayers, readings, silence, and soft music with repetitive words led by keyboard and flute, or violin, and other instruments. The service is very meditative and offers a wonderful opportunity to be silent and center on The Lord. Come as you are -- and listen. We will still offer the imposition of ashes as part of this service.



## Church Mice

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### Covenant Publications

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual authors, unless otherwise indicated, and do not necessarily reflect the views of Holy Covenant MCC. The publication of the name of any person, business, or organization should not be construed as an indication of sexual orientation or political affiliation.

The Covenant welcomes new items, articles, poetry, and of course suggestions. Written contributions may be submitted to the Editor of the Covenant at the address herein or by email to [ian@holycovenantmcc.org](mailto:ian@holycovenantmcc.org) Contributions will be published at the discretion of the editor and may be subject to revision and space limitations.

The April 2011 COVENANT DEADLINE for any articles is NO LATER THAN Monday, March 28th, 2011. Late submissions will be made on an "available space basis."