

THE COVENANT

May 2011

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Put Safety on Your Home Improvement Blueprint

Now that spring has arrived, we start thinking of spring-cleaning and home improvements. Home improvement accidents send hundreds of thousands of people to the emergency room each year. If you're determined to tackle a do-it-yourself (DIY) project, good for you! Just be sure safety is part of your plan.

Safety Tips for the Amateur DIYer

Keep a first aid kit handy. Anticipate those bumps, scrapes or something more serious with a basic first aid kit that's easy to carry, latches securely and can be opened quickly when needed.

Use the 4-to-1 rule for proper ladder placement. For every four feet of ladder height, the bottom of the ladder should be one foot away from the wall or object it is leaning against. Remember to read the instructions and warning labels before using a ladder. They'll help you determine the proper ladder for the job and give you ladder weight and height limits. Pay attention to ladder length. Always use a ladder long enough for the task. A lot of accidents happen because the ladder is too short.

Wear safety glasses to protect your eyes from debris and avoid jewelry while using power tools. Don't wear watches, bracelets and long sleeves that can get caught in moving parts. If you're operating a loud power tool, wear earplugs to minimize damage to your ears.

Follow instructions, not intuition. As with any household appliance, power tools should be maintained and used according to the manufacturer's warnings, precautions and instructions. Also, check the switch on a power tool or garden appliance to make sure it's "OFF" before you plug it in. Never leave an active power tool unattended. Unplug power tools before leaving the room and store them out of children's reach.



Be aware of your surroundings. If you're working with someone else, make sure you know where they are at all times to prevent accidents. Be aware of people entering your work area and keep children and pets away from tools and projects. Keep your workspace clean. Properly store or place power tools, sharp tools and other dangerous materials on high shelves out of a child's reach. Also, make sure your workspace is well lit.

Always start your mower outdoors. Never operate it where carbon monoxide (CO) can collect, such as in a closed garage, storage shed or basement. Never operate an electric or gas-powered lawn mower on wet grass.

Use the right extension cords. If you're tackling an outdoor project, make sure extension cords are rated for outdoor use. Look for the UL Mark. Always look for the UL Mark before buying a power tool, garden appliance or electrical product. The UL Mark means representative samples of that product have been tested against stringent safety standards for fire, electric shock and other safety hazards.

Don't be too confident. Products are made certain ways and have safety features for specific reasons. Never try to use a product in a different way than intended, alter it in any way or remove safety features such as blade guards or electric plug grounding pins. As a rule, inspect your power tools. If you're reusing last year's tools, inspect them for frayed power cords and cracked or broken casings. If the product is damaged, have it repaired by a qualified technician or replace it.

Use two hands on a power tool. Use clamps or a vise to hold work in place. It's safer than using your hands and frees them to operate the tool. Even when using a conventional hand tool, watch where you place your hands.

Know your limits. Only tackle those projects you feel comfortable handling. Some are best left to trained professionals and not worth the risk.

Take your time. Rushing to finish a job leads can lead to carelessness, accidents or injuries.

Use proper ventilation when painting. Open doors and windows and use fans when painting indoors. If the area cannot be properly ventilated, wear a respirator and work in short intervals.



Pastor's Corner - Rev. Danny Spears



Yet Another Coming Out Story

In our community, when we hear the words “coming out,” we usually associate those words with the issues of sexual orientation and/or gender identity. In fact, in the United States we even have a National Coming Out Day each October 11th. I am a big supporter of coming out, too; I see it as healthy, freeing, and educational. I understand, too, the fear some people have about coming out. I came out in a redneck southern town of 15,000 people, and like MCC's founder, Rev. Elder Troy Perry once said, “I burned that closet down.” Still, the longer we allow our fear to keep us closeted, the longer and harder the road to equality becomes—not to mention the emotional, physical, and spiritual toll the closet can take on our lives.

Not surprisingly, there are other ways of “coming out,” too. For example, some people come out spiritually in one way or another. Some come out of conservative, traditional Christianity and embrace progressive, non-traditional Christianity. Others move from Christian to non-Christian traditions, and vice-versa. Some folks “mix and match” their spirituality too, using a combination of Christian and non-Christian traditions! Whether we are discussing sexual orientation, gender identity, spirituality, or some other life characteristic, coming out *always* involves a journey—and all these journeys are a combination of confusion, fear, pain, education, joy, and ultimately, freedom.

So, why all the talk about coming out—especially when Pride is still almost two months away, and National Coming Out Day several months away? Well, I think it is time—maybe even past time—we started coming out spiritually, both as individuals and as a community of faith.

One of the most frequent questions I hear about MCC in general, and Holy Covenant in particular, is “What do you believe about...?” And you can fill in that blank with any

number of topics—the Bible, creation, God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, virgin birth, resurrection, baptism, second coming, etc. Now, I can tell you what I believe about these (and other) topics; and I have an idea of what a few of our congregants believe about at least a few of these topics as well. For the most part, however, I can't say with any degree of certainty that I know what most of you believe about a wide variety of spiritual topics. Even more to the point, perhaps, is the follow up question: “And how do those beliefs inform our actions individually and corporately?” Because, as I shared on Easter, if our beliefs don't impact how we live, move, and simply be in the world, what's the point? Lately, these questions—coupled with my own shifts in theological perspective over the past few years—have been weighing on my mind. I guess I am coming out all over again.

The reality, I believe, is Holy Covenant—like MCC in general—represents a broad spectrum of theological beliefs and spiritual practices. That is one of the joys and challenges of serving as clergy in MCC, too. We have a rich diversity of theologies; and as a pastor, it makes sermon preparation and teaching interesting. Why? Because you know you are just as likely to both inspire someone and work someone else's nerves at the same time when you preach and teach.

So, with all these thoughts in mind—and now out of the closet, so to speak—how about gathering some friends and having some “holy conversations?” Yes, it will be challenging; still, I believe the education, joy, and spiritual freedom is worth it. Stay tuned for further details.

*Grace and Peace,
Pastor Dan*

Pilsen Outreach Restarts on May 26th

Due to scheduling conflicts, the March and April Pilsen outreach projects were cancelled. However, we will be restarting the program on Thursday, May 26th at the usual time of 7:00 p.m. This month the menu will be Sloppy Joe's. Meg Lestina will again be coordinating things. Meg needs to start gathering volunteers to make the Sloppy Joe's (standard McCormick recipe packet—like the chili) and to donate hot dog buns and cookies (any kind) for dessert. We will also have to bag things individually. If you are interested in helping with this worthwhile outreach project, please contact Meg at 630-244-2689 or via her email meglestina@hotmail.com. You will also be able to sign-up to volunteer or donate online at www.holycovenantmcc.org/pilsen0526.html.

Spring Network Gathering at MCC Illiana

Our next MCC Network Gathering is scheduled for Saturday, May 14th, from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at MCC Illiana in Portage, Indiana (just a short 1 hour drive from us). At this point, we have scheduled a lawyer team from Chicago to discuss legal issues of interest to the GLBT community--including some of the implications of the Illinois Civil Unions law. Our Elder, Rev. Elder Diane Fisher, will offer a presentation on self-care; and we will also have a discussion about what areas of Lay Ministry training YOU think are important for our network. There is no registration fee for this event; we will, however, receive donations to help MCC Illiana offset the cost of hosting this event.

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus Presents Divas!

The Chicago Gay Men's Chorus premier their spring show Divas! at the Athenaeum Theater, 2936 N. Southport, Chicago, IL 60657 on May 20th. There are also matinee and evening shows on May 21st and 22nd at the Peabody Estates in Oakbrook.

DIVAS! The show features the women and songs we love and the icons we adore - Barbra, Aretha, Madonna, Liza. The songs that make us weep, the hits that make us move. *I Will Survive, Fever, Lady Marmalade, Ain't No Mountain High Enough.* Divas! is a fabulous ode to over forty female superstars and the music they made famous. From Edith Piaf to Ethel Merman, Dolly Parton to Donna Summer, Judy, Ella, Tina, Bette and more! Divas! showcases CGMC singing and dancing the most memorable female hits of all time!

Divas! showcases the CGMC singing and dancing the most memorable female hits of all time. Please contact Ron Lehman or go to www.cgmc.org for more information.

Tony Thieman to Be Ordained at Heartland MCC - Sunday, May 15th

Many HC folks remember former HC members Tony Thieman and Tony Samora, who moved to Springfield, IL a few years ago. Tony Thieman, who has served as the Interim Pastoral Leader of Heartland MCC for the past year and a half, was recently approved for ordination within MCC. Rev. Elder Diane Fisher will perform this service at Heartland's 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, May 15th. Tony and Tony invite everyone from HC to join them for this wonderful celebration!

May 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00	2 Justice for the Poor 7:00	3 Yoga 7:00	4	5 George Miller's birthday	6	7 Walk-A-Thon 1:30
8 Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00	9 Justice for the Poor 7:00	10 Yoga 7:00 Barb Adams and Mary Ann Latsaras' anniv.	11 Nom Mitchell's birthday	12	13	14 Gary Salois' birthday
15 Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 Mortgage Burning 10:15 AA Meeting 6:00	16 Justice for the Poor 7:00	17 Yoga 7:00	18	19 BOD Meeting 7:00 p.m.	20	21 Spring Network Gathering @ MCC Illiana 10:00
22 Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00	23	24 Yoga 7:00	25	26 Night Ministry Outreach: Pilsen	27	28
29 Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00 Paige Bottari's birthday	30	31 Yoga 7:00				

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

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May Poem - "Divine Dancing"

When you dance
the whole universe dances.
The world dances around the Sun.
The morning light breaks,
Spinning up with delight.
How could anyone
Touched by your love
Not dance like a weeping willow?
Today I spin wildly
throughout the city;
I am the cup-bearer,
My head is the cup.
Perhaps a scholar will see me
and drop his books.
Perhaps the world will see me
and forget all its sorrows.

[Rumi, Sufi mystic]

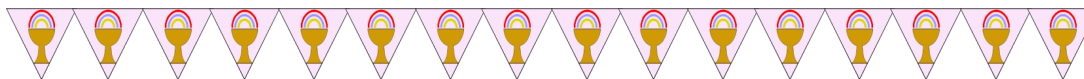
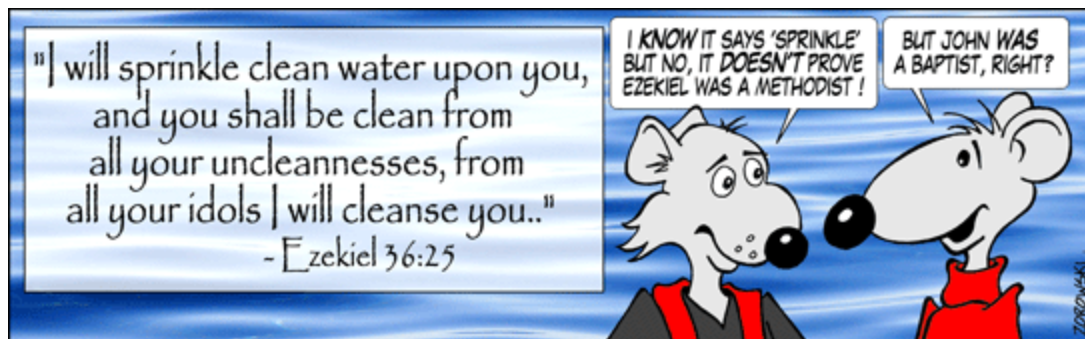
Mortgage Burning Service - May 15th



Join us as we celebrate retiring the mortgage on our church building with a brief mortgage burning service on Sunday, May 15th at 10:15 a.m.

Church Mice

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Covenant Publications

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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. Contributions will be published at the discretion of the editor and may be subject to revision and space limitations.

The June 2011 COVENANT DEADLINE for any articles is NO LATER THAN Friday, May 27th, 2011. Late submissions will be made on an "available space basis."