

## THE COVENANT

September 2011

Volume 11, Issue 9

### Third Annual Progressive Dinner - September 17th

**T**he 2011 Holy Covenant progressive dinner is scheduled for Saturday, September 17th. For a \$35 contribution to Holy Covenant, you can be part of this fun social event that revolves around FOOD.

This will be a great way to celebrate the end of the Chicago summer. Pastor Danny and Richard have confirmed that they will host the soup course, while the salad will be at Mike Shewmake's home. Ross Lee and Karen Baribeault will serve up the main course at their house. Final details will be available soon with information about two additional courses and the logistics for the dinner.



This is a great way to spend an evening with some friends and raise money for the church! The 2009 and 2010 progressive dinners were sell-outs so be sure to make plans early to join us - tickets are going fast! Call Bruce Myers (708-997-4611) or Karen Baribeault (708-870-6870) to make your dinner reservation.

### Yoga Restarting on September 6th

**A**fter its summer break, yoga classes will be restarting on Tuesday, September 6th at 7:00 p.m. People often think that yoga is just stretching, but it is really about creating balance in the body while developing strength and flexibility. The balance is created through poses which have specific physical benefits. In time, you will discover that healing and balancing the physical body helps bring clarity and focus to the mind as well. Remember: Yoga is more than a workout; it is about working on yourself.



Practicing yoga regularly may even guide you to greater spiritual enlightenment. Come see what it's all about! Holy Covenant member Kelley Eckmayer is instructing and has been practicing yoga over 14 years. An offering of \$8 per class is recommended with 100% of the proceeds going to the church. Beginners and enthusiasts are welcome!

### Early Stage Memory Loss Seminar

**A**ging Care Connections' Early Stage Memory Loss Seminar is an eight-week program designed for individuals diagnosed with early stage Alzheimer's disease or another dementia and their family members and friends. Group sessions will offer participants the opportunity to explore what memory loss means to them and to learn ways to: cope with changes, maximize strengths, enhance communication, and plan for the future. Participants will meet in two separate groups--those experiencing memory loss in one group, and family members or friends in another. The groups provide education, emotional support, and social interaction in a safe and supportive environment. Individuals will have the opportunity to give and receive support from those in similar situations.

Begins: Wednesday, September 14th, 2011. Ends: Wednesday, November 2nd, 2011. Sessions are from 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Location: Aging Care Connections  
111 W. Harris Avenue  
La Grange, IL 60525

For information and enrollment, please call Ruth Folkening at 708-354-1323, extension 228 or visit their website at [www.agingcareconnections.org](http://www.agingcareconnections.org).



## Pastor's Corner - Rev. Danny Spears



### Who Do You Say I Am?

I think if we were honest, we would all admit we care—at least a little bit—about how certain people see us. We want employers to see us as good, competent, even promotable and worthy of a raise in pay. We want spouses, partners, family, and friends to see us as trustworthy, lovable, and—in the case of spouses, partners, and lovers—attractive and desirable. While it is true we may not care much about what strangers think of us, when it comes to people we know well, the question, “Who do you say I am?” carries a certain amount of weight.

“Who do you say I am?” is also the question Jesus poses to Peter in the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. For Peter, Jesus was the Christ—the Messiah—the one who would deliver the Jewish people from oppression. And Jesus seemed pleased with Peter’s answer. I also believe Jesus was pleased not because Peter was right and everyone else was wrong; but because Peter had not allowed anyone else to define his opinion of Jesus.

I say Jesus was the Christ for Peter because “Who do you say I am?” is an identity question that each of us must answer for ourselves—whether that question refers to another person, to ourselves, or even to Jesus. Unfortunately, however, there are people who have been trying to answer this question about Jesus for us—and everyone else—for centuries. Some of these folks even tell us we *must* believe what they have told us—that is, if we want to go to heaven when we die, or at least be part of their communities.

That was my chosen path for many years, too. After all, everyone needs a supportive community, right? In the last year or so, however, I have started to answer this question about Jesus differently than I have in years past. At this point in my spiritual journey, Jesus was an extraordinary human being—a sage, spirit person, prophet, teacher, and healer. I believe Jesus “saves” through his moral and ethical example of living that can help us connect with the divine presence which is within us.

“Why the change?” you might ask. Well, I see the concept of Jesus as God Incarnate as a cosmic “stacking the deck.” That is, if someone is really God Incarnate, where’s the big challenge with things like resisting temptation, walking on water, even rising from the dead? A “fully human” person who is so

connected to the “God within” that he lives and loves in a peaceful, inclusive, and powerful way, and is even willing to die for those values? Now, *that* makes a serious impression on me. Such an example gives me hope that I can at least attempt to follow Jesus’ teachings; whereas a supernatural Christ on a mission to rescue the world via bloody sacrifice provides me with what author and Pastor Robin Meyers calls “a deity I can worship and admire from across an abyss, but not emulate.” And if we think about it, if the purpose of Jesus’ life was to die for the sins of the world, then, well, what’s left for us to do other than sit around and wait for either the second coming or for the planet to die under the weight of humanity’s abuse? I mean, our ticket to heaven is already punched, right? And if I read my Bible correctly, Jesus—the one whose teachings we try to follow—wasn’t much on sitting around and navel gazing.

Finally, you might wonder why I am sharing my view of Jesus with you. There are at least a couple of reasons. First, it is a matter of integrity for me. As the Pastor of Holy Covenant, I believe it is important for you to know what your Pastor believes and why. That does *not*, however, mean you have to believe what I believe in order to be part of our community. I support and welcome each person’s responsible search for meaning and truth.

Second, if my reading of books, online commentary and blogs, and my private conversations with people are any indication, I am not alone on this journey of change. If that is the case for you, I hope this article gives you the encouragement you need to share your opinions and to even answer the question, “Who do you say I am?” about Jesus for yourself.

After all, how we answer this question can make a big difference in how we live, love and simply “be” in this world.

On the Journey with you,  
Pastor Dan

## Calling All Handy (and even not-so-handy) People!

**A**t Holy Covenant we are very blessed to own our building. And, as with the blessing of home ownership, comes the responsibility of our “home’s repairs.”



Jen Eckmayer has assumed the responsibility of maintaining and updating our church building and grounds “Honey Do” list. With fall and winter approaching, we have a few projects to cross off that list before the leaves (and snow) start falling:

Stain the back stairs, picnic table, and deck.

Sign Repair. This task includes replacing and painting the wood trim with a cover over the top to keep moisture from running into the lettering area.

Replace the down spout with a folding piece and anchor it to the wall.

Repair and paint the garage soffit (trim).

See? Nothing too difficult, right? So, why not join us at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 10th for a Church Work Day? We’ll supply the materials. And you know there is always food available! What if it rains on the 10th? Just mark your calendars for September 17th! Please use the sign-up sheet on the Pastor’s office window, or you can sign-up online at <http://www.holycovenantmcc.org/Service.html>.

## Youth Group Forming at Holy Covenant



**A**re you an adult interested in mentoring/teaching and empowering young people? Are you a teen looking for a safe place to explore your questions of faith and to hang out with other positive young people? Join us Friday, September 9th at 4:00 p.m. as we explore the possibility of establishing a Youth Group at Holy Covenant. For more information, please contact Laura Cleveland at 708-442-1909.

# September 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat							
				1	AA Meeting 12:30	2	AA Meetings 12:30 & 8:00	3					
4	Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00	5	AA Meeting 12:30 <i>Michael Brown's birthday</i>	6	AA Meeting 12:30 Yoga 7:00	7	AA Meeting 12:30	8	AA Meeting 12:30	9	AA Meetings 12:30 & 8:00 Youth Group 4:00 <i>Bruce Myers' birthday</i>	10	Church Work Day 9:00
11	Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00	12	AA Meeting 12:30 Saving Jesus 7:00 <i>Jeff Wood's birthday</i>	13	AA Meeting 12:30 Yoga 7:00	14	AA Meeting 12:30	15	AA Meeting 12:30 BOD Meeting 7:00	16	AA Meetings 12:30 & 8:00	17	Inquirer's Class 10:00 Progressive Dinner 7:00
18	Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00	19	AA Meeting 12:30 Saving Jesus 7:00	20	AA Meeting 12:30 Yoga 7:00	21	AA Meeting 12:30	22	AA Meeting 12:30	23	AA Meetings 12:30 & 8:00	24	
25	Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00	26	AA Meeting 12:30 Saving Jesus 7:00	27	AA Meeting 12:30 Yoga 7:00	28	AA Meeting 12:30	29	AA Meeting 12:30	30	AA Meetings 12:30 & 8:00		

**HOLY  
COVENANT MCC  
CHURCH  
BROOKFIELD, IL**

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

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Danny Spears

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**Social Action Ministry:**

Karen Baribeault  
Ross Lee

**Covenant Editor/Admin Assistant:**

Ian Tiele

## September Prayer

Some say it was Krishna  
Who came to save and please us.  
Some think it was Buddha,  
Yet others that it was Jesus.

Some say the Laws of Conduct,  
To Moses God had said.  
Some that God had spoken  
But to Prophet Mohammed.

Like the frog which was certain  
That its pond was all the sea,  
Every one is slightly right  
As far as he does see.

Our sun is surely brilliant:  
None can this deny.  
But does it make much sense to say  
There's naught else in the sky?

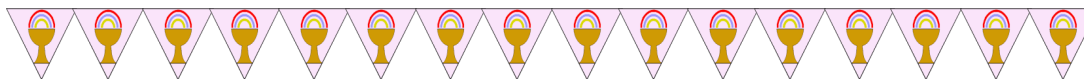
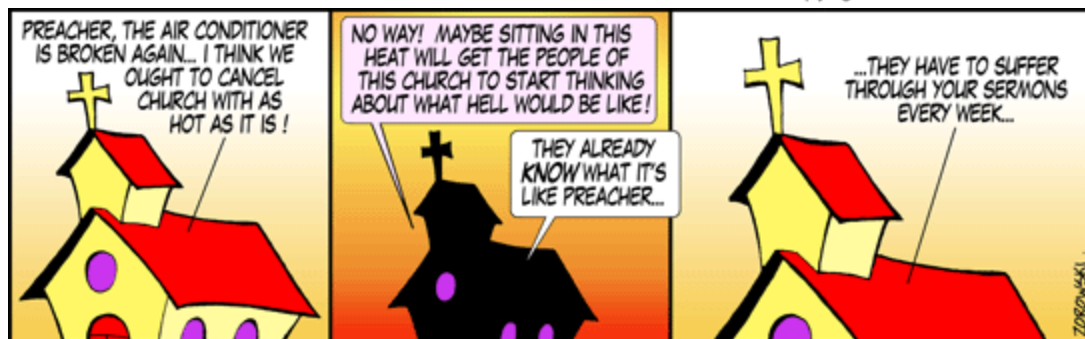
If religious frogs just jump out  
Into the big, big sea,  
They'll know there's much more  
To religious ecstasy!

Religions are volcanoes:  
Powerful sure they are.  
But they come from a deeper Source  
That's grander, oh by far.

[grand religion - v. v. raman]

## 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](mailto:ian@holycovenantmcc.org). Contributions will be published at the discretion of the editor and may be subject to revision and space limitations.

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