



# THE COVENANT WEEKLY

. . . reaching our community.

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## For Me, For Us, For God

by John Marcott, Pastor of Ministry Development

Martin Luther famously said, "The heart of religion is in its personal pronouns." Many of us have made the same discovery as the reformer did when we were captured by the glorious truth that Jesus Christ died on the cross not just for the sins of the world, but also *for me*. An important, 'second turning' happens when we come to the realization that *for me* is part of a bigger *for us*.

The personal love and attention of God *for us* as individuals is mind-boggling (King David responds: "such knowledge is too wonderful *for me*, too lofty *for me* to attain", Psalm 139:6 and compare Luke 12:7). God's love *for us* as a community shows the expansiveness of his love and also his tender provision for our needs. For, we are not only made with a 'God-shaped vacuum in our hearts which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus," as Pascal wrote; we are also wired with a 'human-shaped void' expressed by God in the garden as he observed Adam apart from and before Eve: "It is not good for man to be alone." The need for human interaction and relationship is hard-wired into our genetic makeup. We were created for relationship with God AND relationship with other human beings. The creation of the church, the community of believers (God's love *for us*) is at the center of God's eternal plans, but also a supernatural gift that meets natural needs.

The love and grace of God *for me* makes me a child of God, and the love and grace of God *for us* makes us the family of God. Now that reality alone should cause us to pause and be thankful, but it gets even better. The Bible tells us that Christians are also considered "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God" (1 Peter 2:9). As a group, we're God's prized possession, a national entity set apart for divine service, kingly clergy, and a specially selected team from God's perspective. Each one of these phrases is pregnant with associations, and exceeds the highest aspirations than any of us could have imagined. All of this comes through Christ's death and resurrection. And that's how it becomes all from and *for God*.

These astounding labels that the apostle Peter assigns to the church are not simply to be basked in for their own sake. He goes on to specify the ultimate goal that all of this points to, namely, "that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." God's love is *for me, for us*, but ultimately *for God*.

This all sounds so tidy. So what's wrong with the church? Well, frankly, me (for one)! You see, my default mechanism is to value everything through the "what's in it for me?" filter. I'm very content to arrest my development in the *for me, for me, for me* of the gospel. And besides these childish, selfish desires, the *for us* of the gospel introduces me to all the demands and inconveniences involved in loving imperfect 'others.' I have my own boatload of issues, and now you expect me to share yours? Besides that - what about all those hypocrites in the church? These are the usual complaints about the church. But, in a very real sense - all these strikes against us - this is what makes the whole enterprise of the church, "a group of people aiming to give glory to God" something way beyond our abilities to achieve. Beyond our abilities, beyond our best plans, forcing us to count on God, depend on God, place our only and full hope on God being among us, otherwise, we're doomed. And, it is that stance of desperate dependency upon a God who can be counted on, is the posture we need to maintain so that we rise above our own promise (or lack thereof!). All this *for God!*

# Church Happenings

## Upcoming Events & News . . .

### **American Red Cross Blood Drive: 38 signed up so far!**

Wednesday, February 8th - appointments run every 15 minutes from 1:30-6:30 p.m. Call the office today to sign up or sign up via the internet at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) and enter sponsor code: 0227881. Help save a life! If you can't give, please consider helping by making phone calls to get donors or by making cookies for the day of the drive.

### **Marriage Matters Seminar, Saturday, February 11th from 10am- noon**

The title of a recent book that helped me so much in my marriage says it all: Relationships: A Mess Worth Making. I have always told couples coming for pre-marital counseling that marriage is the easiest thing to do wrong (just be yourself!), and the hardest thing to do right (you'll need to die to yourself). Putting two sinners in close proximity surrounded by four walls is just begging for problems! Come for a no nonsense, honest and realistic short seminar on the great and dangerous divine gift of marriage. Sign up on Sundays or call the church office today.

**Membership/Information Class: Inquirer's Class: Sunday, February 12th** following the 2nd service. If you are new to Covenant or want to find out more about the church, please plan on attending this informational class. **If you have been attending a while and are now ready for membership then this class is for you also!** This is the first step if you are interested in membership, but you are under no obligation by taking the class. **This class is designed for 9th graders through adults.** Please contact the church office to sign up and **let us know if you require childcare by, Sunday, February 5th.**

**DAVE RAMSEY'S FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY IS COMING TO COVENANT!** Dave Ramsey's "Financial Peace University" empowers churches to train their congregations to handle God's money according to biblical principles. In each 2-hour weekly session (starting Saturday, February 18th and lasting till May 19th) your class will watch an entertaining lesson on DVD and then engage in an active small group discussion. Participants will need to purchase a membership kit (\$93) which includes the FPU workbook, Audio CD library of the lessons, cash management system, best-selling book, and a lifetime membership. The cost is per couple/family. Call John for more information at 267-880-3713, ext. 101 or at [johnm@covenant-church.org](mailto:johnm@covenant-church.org) Sign up on Sundays or by calling the church office. *Scholarships are available.*

The Adult Fellowship Team of Covenant Church is planning **an adult winter escape** and we hope you will join us! The event will be held on **Saturday evening, February 25<sup>th</sup>** in the Worship Center so very little travel is involved! Join us for a COVERED DISH SUPPER and enjoy a delicious dinner, a chance to see or meet new friends and evening of fun entertainment! We held this event a couple of years ago and it was a huge success. Save the date and details will follow soon!!!

Mark Your Calenders for March 14-17 & April 18-21st. We are gearing up to have a **BRAND NEW photo directory published through Olan Mills**. There will be plenty of spots available to have your picture taken. Signs ups will start soon. We'll keep you posted. Every family unit will receive one FREE directory plus a \$25 gift certificate to put towards a packet. You are under NO OBLIGATION to purchase any pictures, but we'd like to have as many faces in print as possible. This is a much needed tool for our growing congregation. The online version will be updated also through this process.

### **MLK Day of Service - Thank You!**

Thank you to all who donated to the pancake breakfast and snacks for the snack packs. It was a huge success. We donated close to 500 lbs of snacks to the Bucks County Housing Group. They were so thankful and overwhelmed by your generosity. We were so blessed to be a part of this day of service with you all! from the MOPS Group.

## Covenant Church

### Contact Information . . .

4000 Route 202  
Doylestown, PA 18902

**E-Mail:** [covenant@covenant-church.org](mailto:covenant@covenant-church.org)

**Web Address:** [www.covenant-church.org](http://www.covenant-church.org)

**Phone:** 267-880-3713

**Fax:** 267-880-3716

### Staff Telephone Extensions and Email Addresses

Bob Myers ..... 100 .... [bobm@covenant-church.org](mailto:bobm@covenant-church.org)  
John Marcott .. 101 .... [johnm@covenant-church.org](mailto:johnm@covenant-church.org)  
Andrew Poe .... 102 .... [andrewp@covenant-church.org](mailto:andrewp@covenant-church.org)  
Micah Skipper . 103 .... [micahs@covenant-church.org](mailto:micahs@covenant-church.org)  
Kim Hathaway 104 .... [kimh@covenant-church.org](mailto:kimh@covenant-church.org)  
Josh Crum ..... 105 .... [joshc@covenant-church.org](mailto:joshc@covenant-church.org)  
Bob Clark ..... 302 .... [bobc@covenant-church.org](mailto:bobc@covenant-church.org)  
Angela Maxwell ..... 303 ..... [amaxsteppingstones@yahoo.com](mailto:amaxsteppingstones@yahoo.com)  
Birth - 4th Grade ..... [kids@covenant-church.org](mailto:kids@covenant-church.org)  
Z56 (5th & 6th Grades) [z56@covenant-church.org](mailto:z56@covenant-church.org)

## At a Glance

### Calendar for this Week . . .

#### Thursday, January 19

- PALS: 9:15-10:15am (Farm)
- Coffee Break: 10-11:30am (Room 205)
- Worship Team: 7:30pm (Worship Center)
- Men's Bible Study: 7:30pm (Room 125)

#### Saturday, January 21

- Men's Travel Study: 6 a.m. (cafe)
- Safe Families Training: 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.

#### Sunday, January 22

- Worship Services: 9:00 & 10:45
- Children's Classes for birth - 6th grade
- Crave: 6-8 p.m.

#### Monday, January 23

- Facilities Team Meeting: 7 p.m. (Room 205)

#### Tuesday, January 24

- Men's Early Morning Bible Study  
6:45-8:00am (Room 125)
- Shift: 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- Session Meeting: 7 p.m. (Room 205)

#### Wednesday, January 25

- Precepts Bible Study: 10-11:30 a.m. (Room 205)
- SHAPE: 6-7:30pm (Multipurpose Room)
- Celebrate Recovery: 7:00pm (Conference Room)