



# THE COVENANT WEEKLY

. . . reaching our community.

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## *Table of Intimacy*

by Pastor John Marcott

Someone caught me after last Sunday's worship service. They said that they hadn't associated the serving of the Lord's Supper as coming from a table of intimacy (something I mentioned during the service). Not that this was a new thought nor a particularly profound or novel idea to them, but just one that was not stressed or emphasized enough. And, maybe, it's just possible that the manner in which we serve the bread and juice – by platters distributed across rows in individual portions – lends itself to this disassociation.

We need to remember that long before FACEBOOK, texting and tweets, in fact long before emails and even telephones, a household meal was the central hub for social networking, interaction, and relationship-building. Even today, across the world, there is nothing like a shared meal around the table to build friendships and strengthen communities (just ask some of our small groups!). A shared meal expresses hospitality, acceptance, intimacy, interaction and relationships.

Therefore, it's key that we remember that our practice of celebrating the Lord's Supper as having originated in a meal among friends *and* that it also looks forward to a greater meal shared with all of God's friends forever. Right before the Last Supper, Jesus said, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:14-16). Jesus looked forward to this last time of interaction between himself and his closest followers, associates, friends. The time of interaction would be encouraging interaction and intimacy for himself before his own suffering. The interaction would also serve to strengthen and encourage the disciples for the events about to unfold. Jesus would be betrayed by one of them, deserted by all of them, rejected by his own nation, sentenced and executed by the world's powers, and die a humiliating and painful death, apparently abandoned and cursed by God. The disciples, in turn, would be disappointed in themselves, disillusioned and downright depressed by this turn of events. It was only after the resurrection, after Jesus rose triumphantly from the grave, that they would appreciate the meaning of his suffering and recognize him in the meal (see Luke 24:30,31).

Jesus' table manners got him into trouble. Not so much from his inability to distinguish a soup spoon from a tea spoon, but rather from the company he kept! He earned the reputation as a "glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and 'sinners' (Luke 7:34). Now, whereas that reputation served to dismiss and disqualify Jesus by the religious elite of his day, for me, it gives Jesus great credibility, and it gives me great hope – that I might actually 'qualify' to be welcomed to his table, too.

One story in the gospels that assures me of this great hope is the story of Zaccheus (Luke 19:1-10). It might be a familiar Sunday School story to you: Zaccheus was the short tax-collector who had to climb a tree to see Jesus. Jesus calls up to him, "Let's do lunch!" The crowd must have been shocked. You see, according to religious traditions of Jesus' day, tax-collectors were the lowest of the low. It was permissible to lie to tax-collectors, to treat them like you would an animal. They were considered enemies of the state, the lowest vermin among men, because they had sold their countrymen out to the government, all for the money. The Romans wanted their taxes, and they knew that an outsider wouldn't know the truth about income. However, an insider could prevent friends, neighbors and relatives from lying on their income taxes. He would pressure them to pay, and he was permitted by the government to tip himself whatever he wanted on top of the tax collected as his pay. These double-crossers ripped everyone off, to their own benefit and to the nation's loss. Jesus ate a meal, had a relationship, developed intimacy which such a scoundrel. By visiting such a one, he found one who was lost. He rescued one who had bought into lies and brought him to the truth, to the Truth - Himself. He does the same to each of us that realizes we are not worthy to receive him but who welcome the One who came to seek and to save those who are lost.

# Church Happenings

## Upcoming Events & News . . .

### Christmas Eve Survey

We attached a survey to this issue of the weekly plus they are available at the Welcome Desk and on the website to evaluate the Christmas Eve Services. We value your opinions whether this was your first visit, you brought a friend or you have been attending for a short while or many years. Please drop your surveys off in the box in the lobby or the church office during the week. Surveys will be available through January 15th.

### New In 2012!

#### How to Get the Most out of Your Bible

Although you want to read your Bible more, are you frustrated by the foreign names, the strange concepts, and the outdated customs? Do you feel like you're entering some strange literary and cultural time warp when you open its pages? Join us for 90-minutes for a directed 'BIG PICTURE' orientation to and tour of the Bible. For adults and children (K-6th grade) (two tracks offered by both John and Andrew) on Saturday, January 14<sup>th</sup> 10am-11:30am. Contact the church office to reserve your place! *...if you think "it's all just Greek to me" - it doesn't have to be anymore!*

#### Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service- Monday, January 16th from 9-11 a.m.

Eating for a Cause....Second Annual Pancake Breakfast at Covenant Church January 16th from 9-11 am. Come and eat delicious pancakes and sausage for a good cause. Suggested donation \$4 per person.

During the two hour pancake breakfast, we will assemble snack packs for at risk children of Bucks County to take to school. This is a great need in our community and an opportunity to help children in our area! Please bring non-perishable, healthy, individually wrapped snack items such as juice boxes, pretzels, raisins, apple sauce, pudding, granola bars, goldfish, etc to the church to be included in the snack packs. You can bring your donations on MLK Day or drop them off in the MOPS basket in the foyer any time between now and Jan.16th.

If you plan to attend our MLK Day of service, please RSVP to Rachel Cawood at [rachel@iqnection.com](mailto:rachel@iqnection.com)

#### American Red Cross Blood Drive:

Wednesday, February 8th - appointments run every 15 minutes from 1-6:45 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.

#### 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)

## Covenant Church

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## At a Glance

### Calendar for this Week . . .

#### Wednesday, January 4

- Stitching In His Name: 7:00pm (Lounge)
- Celebrate Recovery: 7:00pm (Conference Room)

#### Thursday, January 5

- MOPS: 9:15-11 a.m.
- Worship Team: 7:30pm (Worship Center)
- Men's Bible Study: 7:30pm (Room 125)

#### Saturday, January 7

- Men's Travel Study: 6 a.m. (cafe)

#### Sunday, January 8

- Worship Services: 9:00 & 10:45
- Children's Classes for birth - 6th grade

#### Tuesday, January 10

- Men's Early Morning Bible Study  
6:45-8:00am (Room 125)
- Women's Bible Study 9:15-11am (Room 125)
- Session: 7 p.m. (Room 205)

#### Wednesday, January 11

- SHAPE: 6-7:30pm (Multipurpose Room)
- Celebrate Recovery: 7:00pm (Conference Room)

#### Thursday, January 12

- 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)