



RIVERSIDE WATERLINE

Riverside Covenant Church

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December 2008

Thoughts From Pastor Dan

The Christmas season can be a wild time for all of us. Not only will many of us be traveling, but we will likely be scrambling to find last minute gifts and racing off to a variety of Christmas parties and gatherings. Although the Christmas season (known amongst Christians as Advent) has become a part of the yearly rhythm of our culture, it has always been a part of the yearly rhythm of the Christian calendar. In fact, it is the beginning of the Christian calendar year. This only makes sense. The story of God and His people begins with humanity waiting for the Messiah.

Although our culture has distorted Christmas in many ways, there is a part of the Christmas season that our culture gets right. The simple mention of Christmas to children evokes a deep sense of anticipation. By Christmas Eve the eagerness is often so strong that children cannot think of anything else. Often we carry these expectations with us into adulthood. While our excitement may not be directed towards potential gifts, it is often directed towards Christmas "spirit." We yearn for eggnog. We love listening to Christmas music. We enjoy spending time with family. We are mesmerized by Christmas

lights and decorations.

Our culture understands Christmas expectation and anticipation. The problem is that our cultural expectations are shallow. The feelings may be the same, but the object our cultural indulgence in Christmas is radically different than our Christian understanding. The objects of Christian affection should not be gifts, eggnog, music, family, lights and decorations. The object of the Christian's affection must always be Jesus.

It is not at all that we cannot enjoy the "stuff" of the Christmas season, but that the "stuff" is not what we celebrate. We must continually remind ourselves that all the things of the Christmas season gain their value from the fact that they point towards the real "reason for the season." The Christmas tree is an ancient symbol that exalts the value of life. The evergreen tree naturally remains unchanged through the harshness of winter. The lights that decorate the Christmas tree and homes symbolize that Jesus Christ is the light of the world. This is especially meaningful when it is the Christmas lights that shine through the darkness of night. Christmas

songs are filled with rich lyrics about the birth of Jesus. We share gifts with one another in an effort to pass on some of the blessings that we have received. We give not just material gifts, but spiritual gifts of love, grace, hospitality, and mercy.



As we journey towards celebrating the anniversary of Christ's birth, let us strive to peer through our cultural Christmas "spirit" towards the true Spirit of Christmas – the Christ. Let us reclaim the symbols of Christmas and make them physical representations of a much deeper spiritual reality. May the Christmas season and all its symbols help us to experience God in all that we see and do. And may our lives be an aid to others in doing the same.

December Sermons:

- *December 7: (2nd Sunday of Advent) Mark 1:1-8-Hope: Prepare the Way*
- *December 14: (3rd Sunday of Advent) John 1:6-28 -Hope: A Witness to the Light*
- *December 21: (4th Sunday of Advent) Luke 1:26-38 (Crystal Kirgiss)*
- *December 24: (Christmas Eve) Luke 2:1-20-Hope: Good News of Great Joy*

Inside this issue:

Youth Ministry	2
Small Groups	2
Promiseland Chatter	3
Thank You	3
Thank You cont.	4
Missions Committee	4
Women's Ministry	4
Riverside Library	5
Thanksgiving Dinner	5
Calendar, Birthdays, Financials	6



Youth Ministry

Where did November Go?

Well I don't know about you, but for the Youth Group, November of 2008 will go down as the month we worked our tails off in service and fundraising with a lot of laughs and food to mix it up-all for God's glory!

We started the month serving hot chocolate at the Purdue games-a little more than chilly-but we had fun serving the crowds and spilling hot chocolate all over our feet and money! Then the leaves started to fall and we began to rake, rake, and rake some more. What a blessing those who allowed us to invade their yards were to us! We were welcomed and fed and given lots of chocolate-anytime food is involved you can expect the youth to get pumped!

I was able to spend some good one-on-one time with the Junior High girls at Prophetstown State Park-we found a half-day and spent it trekking through prairie grass and talking about how awesome God's creation is-it was a gorgeous day to meet Him, especially in such a beautiful setting.



Senior High Girls Slumber Party

We were also excited to help other ministries this month. We went as a group to gather supplies to send to Elim, Alaska. It was hilarious to watch them try to find the best deals so we could get more things-it was so encouraging too when our \$25 budget just had to be stretched because we needed to buy just one more toothbrush and bottle of body wash-they didn't want to leave anyone out!

When the call went out for Operation Christmas Child the youth were more than ready to fill some boxes! We went out as a group on a Wednesday and found lots of fun things to fill the boxes-we had to get Moonsand for Miranda, and Thomas was willing to try on Batman underoos to find the right size for our kids!

The Senior High girls finished up the month with a slumber party at Dar's

house-cookies, nail-polish, and The Little Princess made for a pretty fun night-we got a chance to chat about what signs we're putting out there and how others perceive us.

Moving into next month we're launching our daily devotional contest, having lot's of opportunities for fellowship, and taking our faith and steps of service and applying it-DAILY.



Senior High Girls watching a movie and having fun.

My hope for the Christmas season is to create an

atmosphere where the youth see how much they need Christ everyday-taking steps to make it happen-and being open to talk about how God is changing them from the inside out!

Get ready for...

Devotional Launch

Movies Nights for Junior and Senior High

Making Gingerbread Houses

Hot Chocolate and ornament giveaway

And.....SKI RETREAT 2009!!!

Small Groups

Did you know that Riverside has a range of opportunities for you to benefit from the encouragement and support of others in living the Christian life? These opportunities include Men's and Women's bible studies, the Discovery Hour on Sunday morning, and our small groups. Small



20 Something Small Group

groups meet in homes, typically once a week, for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship. You can see a list of the current small groups on our webpage www.rcovenant.org/small-groups/fall-2008-small-groups

or talk to Dave Timmerman or Tom or Debby Smiley who coordinate this ministry.





Promiseland Chatter

Winter and the holiday spirit have arrived in the halls of Promiseland as we look forward to celebrating the birth of our Savior this month in Discovery Hour and Children's Church.

Every character in the Christmas story comes to life in the 3-5 year-old class, from the angels and shepherds to Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. They will be given the opportunity to act out the story and have time for a class celebration. The week following Christ-



Practicing playing hand bells.

mas, they will be introduced to the wise men.

Children in Discovery Hour K-3rd grade will hear and celebrate God's unstoppable love, which He showed us by sending His Son, Jesus, at Christmas. They will celebrate the birth of Jesus in a music celebration, and will experience the first Christmas through the eyes of a young shepherd boy.

God loves us so much

that He sent His Son to earth as a baby. His love could not be stopped by any person or circumstance. 4th and 5th graders will learn God would not allow anything to stop His wonderful plan to redeem the world. With music they will celebrate Christmas in their small group.

We will conclude our celebration of Christ's birth by bringing gifts to the manger at the Christmas Eve service.

May your families experience the redemptive love and hope found in Jesus this Christmas season.

Merry Christmas!
Dar Muehlhausen

Thank You

From LifeCare Services

Dear Pastor Dan and friends at Riverside Covenant Church,

We were so excited to receive the lovely dresser filled with wonderful new baby clothes, blankets, toys and supplies. What a blessing it will be to a mother and her baby. We wish all of those involved in creating this gift of love could be here to see the huge smiles of gratitude when our mom picks up her dresser. Also many thanks to Matt and Dar Muehlhausen and their granddaughter, Hannah for delivering the dresser to LifeCare.

Thank you for caring so much for our mothers and their families. Please know that what we do would not be possible without each of you!

Sincerely,
Dana M. Hobson
Director, LifeCare Services

From Compass Women's Ministry

The Board of Compass Women's Ministry would like to thank you for the use of your facility for our Compass Ministry meeting. Your facility is beautiful and your sound system/power point system is wonderful and met our every need.

You went above and beyond in facilitating the meeting's needs. Thank you for all you do for our Lord.

Our event was well attended and received. Your facility made that all possible.

Once again thank you. May God bless your church's endeavors.

Sister's in Christ!!!!
Compass Women's Ministry

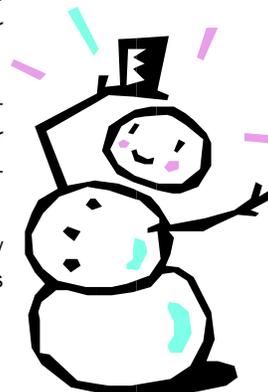
From Pastor Terry & Teresa Allen

Dear Friends,

Thank you to everyone of you for taking time to let us tell you about our ministry in Elim, Alaska. Your prayers and encouragement means so much to us.

God bless each of you.

Pastor Terry and Teresa Allen



Monday morning, November 24th after receiving the packages that the Riverside women assembled and shipped to Elim Covenant Church: You cannot possibly get the full picture of what happened at Elim Covenant Church yesterday unless you had been here. On Saturday, Teresa went over to the church and put up some fall decorations for our special (Continued on page 4)



Thank You, Cont.

Thanksgiving service. She put up a table in the back of the church and sorted all the things you had sent (except of course the fabric for kuspuks) into categories and covered it with a sheet until after the service. An announcement was made that after the service these things would be available to all those that wanted and could use them. It was amazing to see the appreciation on the faces as they picked up soap, lotion, shampoo, deodorant, yarn, etc. So many of the folks asked if we could send our thank



you to all of you for the wonderful gifts. You can only imagine what this is like when you realize that it costs as much as \$8.00 for a bottle of shampoo at the store. You have put the "Thankfulness" into their Thanksgiving! God bless all of you that participated in this outreach to our little village.

From Allan & Renee Witkowski

Riverside Family,

We just wanted to send a note of thanks for your faithful partnership in our ministry. We deeply appreciate your prayer and financial support. Thank you for making it possible for us to serve as your ambassa-

dors for Christ in China.

Blessings,

Allan and Renee Witkowski

For Christmas Decorating

Thank you to Karen & Stanley Hickman, Chris Kilgour, Janet Mauck, and John & Judy Wade for decorating the sanctuary and Welcome Center for Christmas.

"...ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you..." Ephesians 1:15, 16

Missions Committee

While you may think Operation Christmas Child as complete, it is only just beginning. The Riverside Mission Committee set a goal of donating at least 100 filled shoes boxes to the Samaritan's Purse ministry. After the worship service on November 23rd, slightly more than 100 boxes from the Riverside congregation began their journey to bring gifts, joy and the Good News of Jesus to children a world



away from the life we know here in Indiana.

While our task of filling a shoebox (and more than 1 for some) is complete for this year, there are still ways to help. First, continue to keep this ministry in your prayers. Those shoeboxes are just beginning their trip to children needing the love of Jesus in their lives. Pray for safe delivery and for all the workers con-

tributing in a multitude of ways for the boxes to be placed in a child's hands. Second, if you missed the opportunity to provide a shoebox, you have another chance. At www.samaritanspurse.org click on "Give" to find out how you can make a donation.

A warm felt "Thank You" to everyone that has helped to make this a successful mission project.

Women's Ministry

Christmas Brunch

It's time again for our annual Women's Christmas Brunch! The brunch will be held at the home of Dar Muehlhausen on **Saturday, December 13th at 9:30am**. Please bring a food item to share. We will provide the drinks and paper products.

You will be challenged and encouraged by



our speaker, enjoy great food and sweet fellowship with other women, and savor the Christmas Spirit as we worship together and do a Christmas craft. There is a sign up sheet at the Welcome Center or you can email Rhonda Ausk at Rhonda@AuskInternational.com to sign up. Hope you can join us to celebrate the joy of Christmas!



Riverside Library

New Books

We have had a donation of several good books on parenting. If you have teenagers or children approaching the teen years, these may be of interest.

Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens by Paul D. Tripp

How to Keep Your Kids on Your Team by Charles Stanley

And Then I Had Teenagers by Susan Yates

Deep Justice in a Broken World: Helping Your Kids Serve Others and Right the Wrongs Around Them by Chap Clark & Kara Powell

Book Review

Slightly Bad Girls of the Bible

Ladies, do you remember the Bible study we did a few years ago by Liz Curtis Higgs, Bad Girls of the Bible? If you enjoyed Liz's humor and stories, you will enjoy her book



Read a good book. Check out the Riverside Library!

Slightly Bad Girls of the Bible. Her stories of contemporary women are compared to the lives of "good" women of the Bible. Sarah, Hagar, Leah and others are good and faithful women; however, they are seriously flawed. Liz reminds us, in her humorous and chatty way, that God is merciful and forgiving.

Thanksgiving Dinner

Two weeks ago, Dan sent me an email asking me if I would be willing to organize Thanksgiving Dinner for the fifteen men at Trinity Mission. I (naively) said yes. Our initial vision was a "family" style dinner shared with both men from Trinity and families from our church. We estimated about fifty people. Quite honestly I was skeptical that we would even come up with that many. How wrong I was! Our official total 93! I can only speak for myself and a few others I have talked to but the evening was amazing. Everything I had hoped for

and more. Once again I am overwhelmed at the outpouring of generosity from this branch of the body of Christ. To all of those who brought food-my sincerest thanks. The food was delicious and plentiful and I know the Trinity men will appreciate the leftovers. To those of you who came early and stayed late to help set up, decorate and tear down--there are not enough words to express my gratitude. This is the truth--this is not my area of giftedness and I am always amazed when I find people who serve in this way. And finally to all of you who came and ate, sang with gusto and loved on those men--I honestly do not know how they received all of this, and we may never know, but this I know 1 Thessaloni-

ans 5:11 says, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." Thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus and for all working together to make Monday night a success.

Megan Mills



Dan welcomes the large group to Thanksgiving dinner.



"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11



Abundant food...and pie!



Megan leading the hymn sing.

“Working together to help people discover Christ and develop a growing relationship with Him”

**2008 Riverside Covenant
Financial Snapshot**

2008 Year-to-Date Giving
Needed

\$263,520

2008 Total Giving to Date
\$232,639

Weekly giving needed to meet
budget

\$5,490

Average weekly giving
\$4,847

2008 Year-to-Date Expenses
\$245,803



December 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

December Schedule of Events:

- Sundays, December 7, 14, 21, 28
 - Discovery Hour @ 9 a.m.
 - Worship @ 10:15 a.m.
- Sunday, December 7 – Jr High meets 3-4:30 p.m. & Sr High meets 6:30-8 p.m.
- Sunday, December 14 – Jr & Sr High meets 3-5:30 p.m.
- Sunday December 21
 - Staff meets @ 11:30 a.m.
 - Missions Committee meeting @ 11:15 a.m.
 - Jr High meets 3-4:30 p.m.
 - Sr High meets 6:30-8 p.m.
- Sunday, December 28
 - Jr & Sr High meet 3-5 p.m.
 - Parent Info meeting about youth ski retreat 5-5:30 p.m.
- Mondays, December 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
 - Men's Bible Study @ 7 p.m.

- Tuesday, December 2, 6-10 p.m. – Youth service project
- Wednesdays, December 10, 17
 - Jr High meets @ 6:30 p.m.
 - Sr High meets @ 8 p.m.
- Wednesday, December 24, 5:30 p.m. – Riverside Christmas Eve Service
- Friday, December 5 – Senior High movie night 7-9:30 p.m.
- Friday, December 12 – Junior High movie night 7-9:30 p.m.
- Saturday, December 13, 9:30 a.m. – Women's Christmas Brunch @ Dar Muehlhausen's
- The office will be closed December 24, 25, 31 and January 1

Looking Ahead:

- January 1-4 – All Youth Ski Retreat
- Sunday, January 18 – Congregational Meeting

December Birthdays

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 3 Amanda Watt | 20 Jan Fisher |
| 6 Mark Kirgiss | 21 Jacob Wittke |
| 6 Sandra Fisher | 21 Paul Wittke |
| 7 Kathy Nelson | 22 Jalen Pollard |
| 10 Lindsay Romeo | 23 Erin Toth |
| 12 Emily Farley | 27 Brandon Watt |
| 16 Malcolm Springs | 27 John Swift |
| 17 Harold Smith | 28 Alexander Farley |
| 18 Stan McDowell | 28 Kristin Kilgour |