

THE COVENANT

April 2011

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Spiritual Renewal

Spiritual renewal in hard times is essential for well being in our spiritual journey. All around us each day, we face the negative side of life staring us in the face. Gas prices take us prisoner and a failing economy, devastating weather conditions, even television and movies saturate us with negativity. What we place our attention on is what we become. Therefore, spiritual renewal is absolutely necessary today for survival.

Quote:

Men are made for happiness, and anyone who is completely happy has a right to say to himself: "I am doing God's will on earth." - *Anton Chekhov*

It is time for spiritual renewal. From a Soul overview, renewal means waking up the heart to divine love, humor and right discrimination between the virtues and vices of life. Divine neutral love is the roadmap to a peaceful heart. We, as Soul, were created to be happy spiritual beings. We were created to be spiritually free. We were created to accept and bring joy and happiness into our lives, the lives of our family, coworkers, the environment around us, animals and all life. This is being a co-worker with Divine Spirit, which brings a peaceful heart in the good times and hard times.

Story:

Spiritual Renewal From a Blue Jay and Her Three Babies: The Simple Things in Life Holy Spirit's simplicity of divine love surrounds us each and every minute of the day. However, the question is – where is our attention? Is it on the blessing or on the hardships, discontent, and stress? A spiritual life offers unlimited gifts and blessings. All we have to do is determine whether we want to be happy or unhappy.



Nature and animals are one of my secret gardens of divine love. Every day, I keep my heart awake to their blessings. The other day, I was sitting at my desk working on a new book. I looked out of the bay window of my office to find a large branch of an old oak tree bouncing up and down. My heart opened instantly. My Blue Jay friends were offering another gift during their daily visit. I got up, climbed onto the couch and looked out the window. A mother Blue Jay had brought three of her new babies to visit. They were just learning to fly.

The mother Blue Jay and her three babies were perched on the branch, which was rubbing against the window, staring into my eyes. They were so cute. The divine love flowing through them brought tears to my eyes. This was a spiritual experience direct from Holy Spirit that opened my heart to even more divine love.

These miracles of a changed consciousness surround us each and every second of our day. However, how many of these precious divine gifts go unnoticed in our busy material day filled with stress? To renew your heart, each day choose purity over pollution. Choose consciously and carefully not to contaminate the mind, heart and emotions. The duality of the physical material distractions is here to imprison the heart and steal happiness and joy from life.

Begin to watch for divine miracles like the one in the story in your own life. Then life will miraculously transform into a miracle.

With a peaceful heart, hardships silently slip away. We only have the ability to hold one single thought in our minds at a time. That is why it is critical to consciously choose purity over pollution by living in the divine moment of NOW. This is the sacred moment when we discover spiritual renewal.

Article written by Sandy Paris



Pastor's Corner - Rev. Danny Spears



Now What? One Way of Looking at Easter

March 21st was a very important day in my life. That was the day I passed my final Doctor of Ministry evaluation, which now clears me for graduation May 22nd. Among all the congratulations and well wishes, one question kept coming up: "Now, what?" or "What's next?" You don't know how many times I wanted to steal the old tag line from those Disney commercials. Remember it? "You've just won the Super Bowl, and have been voted MVP! Now what?" And the reply? "I'm going to Disney World!"

Seriously, however, it's a good question; and it is one I asked myself within an hour after hearing those glorious words: "Congratulations! You've passed." Four years of hard work, lots of travel and financial sacrifice—not to mention balancing those things with a relationship and pastoral responsibilities. Without the love and support of many people—including the people at Holy Covenant, and especially Richard—none of it would have happened. Now, "it is finished," so to speak. Now what?

I think this question is one way we can frame the Easter experience, as well. Many scholars estimate Jesus spent about three years in public ministry. Jesus put everything he had into his mission—literally. And what did he get for all that love and hard work? Crucified!

Of course, in Christianity, we teach that crucifixion wasn't the last word on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. I think it is important, too, to point out that different Christians have different viewpoints regarding the particulars of the Resurrection—even the Gospels don't see this event in the same way. Still, the point remains that death did not have the final say on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

OK. So Jesus was born, lived, died, and yet his Spirit still lives within our hearts. Now what?

What I personally take from Easter isn't that Jesus died and rose again so God will love me and welcome me into heaven one day. What I take from Easter is that, however we interpret the Resurrection event, there is nothing that can kill the Christ Presence that lives within each of us.

So, now what? Well, we can say this Presence is a source of strength that can encourage us to live with integrity as the people God called and created us to be—regardless of how others may try to "crucify" us. This Presence is a source of strength that helps us face all life's adversities with the assurance that no matter what may happen to us, God will never leave us nor forsake us.

And that, my sisters and brothers, is good news indeed!

Amen?

God bless you, and amen.

Pastor Dan

Justice for the Poor

Justice for the Poor: Jesus' life and teaching show a deep compassion toward the poor and marginalized. As Christians, what is our responsibility toward the poor and advocating justice on their behalf? In this 6-week DVD-based group series, Jim Wallis and Sojourners recapture the biblical vision that links poverty with justice and engages small groups to take action.

This class begins on Monday, April 11th, from 7-8:30 p.m. Please sign-up using the sign-up sheet on the Pastor's office window, or online at www.holycovenantmcc.org/Poor.html. We ask for a minimum sign-up of 4 people for the class to "make," and the deadline for sign-up is Sunday, April 10th.

Easter Bunny Breakfast - April 16th



Come join us for an All-you-can-eat Pancake Breakfast with the Easter Bunny from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 16th. The \$6.00 per person price includes breakfast, a photo with the Easter Bunny and an Easter egg hunt. There will also be an Easter basket raffle, with tickets priced at \$1 each or 6 for \$5.

This is a golden opportunity for Holy Covenant to share with the neighborhood, the joy and pleasure you experience being a part of the church body.

Order Your Easter Plants

Easter as we all know is a celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus. We show our jubilation with color, and what better way to celebrate His Resurrection than by decorating our church with beautiful spring flowers. Please consider purchasing one of these plants in memory or honor of a special person, occasion, or event in your life.



A list of all dedications will appear as an insert in the bulletin on Easter Sunday. The suggested donation is \$20.00 for each plant. After Easter services are completed, you may take your plant home with you. Please use the order form inserted in today's bulletin. The deadline for orders is Sunday, April 10th.

Grass Cutters Needed



Now that spring is here, the trees are budding, the tulips will soon be blooming and the grass will be growing. We are looking for people who would like to use their talents and time to make our church one of the most beautiful in the area. So, if you like working in the dirt, cutting the grass, and planting flowers, or you would like to help with the maintenance of the outside of your church, please contact Ian Tiele in the church office or via his email ian@holycovenantmcc.org.

April 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00	4	5 Yoga 7:00	6	7	8	9 <i>Alison Erekson's birthday</i>
10 Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00	11 Justice for the Poor 7:00	12 Yoga 7:00	13	14	15	16 Breakfast with the Easter Bunny 6:00 <i>Chuck Vincent's birthday</i>
17 Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00	18 Justice for the Poor 7:00	19 Yoga 7:00	20	21 BOD Meeting 7:00 p.m.	22	23
24 Worship 9:00/11:00 Sunday School 9:00 AA Meeting 6:00	25 Justice for the Poor 7:00 <i>Jerry Rickert's birthday</i>	26 Yoga 7:00	27 <i>Zach Jarabeck's birthday</i>	28	29 <i>Dave Novak's birthday</i>	30

**HOLY
COVENANT MCC
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We Accept
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Use email address
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*We celebrate Christ's call to:
Care for one another
Reach out to others
Explore our faith
Worship God*

Pastor: Reverend Danny Spears

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Ross Lee

Covenant Editor/Admin Assistant:

Ian Tiele

Prayer for Peace

Send Thy peace O Lord, which is perfect and everlasting,
that our souls may radiate peace.

Send Thy peace O Lord, that we may think, act and speak harmoniously.

Send Thy peace O Lord, that we may be contented and thankful for
Thy bountiful gifts.

Send Thy peace O Lord, that amidst our worldly strife, we may enjoy Thy bliss.

Send Thy peace O Lord, that we may endure all, tolerate all, in the thought of
Thy grace and mercy.

Send Thy peace O Lord, that our lives may become a Divine vision and in Thy light,
all darkness may vanish.

Send Thy peace O Lord, our Father and Mother, that we Thy children on Earth may all
unite in one family.

[pir-o-murshid inayat khan - 1921]

Sponsor A Walker in May's Walk-A-Thon

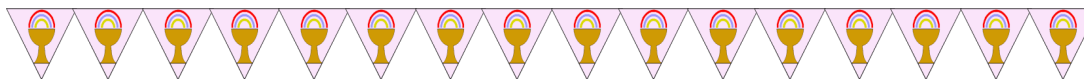


This year's Holy Covenant Walk-A-Thon will be held on Saturday, May 7th starting at 1:30 p.m. Each walker will be walking either a three or five mile course. If you do not want to walk yourself, but would like to sponsor a walker (or a group of walkers), then please contact the organizer Ian Tiele, who will send you a list of those walkers participating this year. Ian can be contacted at 708-387-1611 or via his email ian@holycovenantmcc.org. There is also still time to sign-up as a walker.

Walkers and sponsors can also sign-up online at <http://www.holycovenantmcc.org/Walk.html>.

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 May 2011 COVENANT DEADLINE for any articles is NO LATER THAN Monday, April 25th, 2011. Late submissions will be made on an "available space basis."