



December 2011 & early January 2012

The Mountain View

A Newsletter of Monadnock Covenant Church

Christmas Fellowship and Worship Opportunities

Saturday, December 10:
Santa Lucia Festival
(See article on page 3)

Sunday, December 11:
Our **Children** will sing
during Worship

Sunday, December 18:
The **Choir** will sing
during Worship

Saturday, December 24
Christmas Eve Service
4:00 pm & 6:00 pm

Sunday, December 25 and
Sunday, January 1
Family worship; child
care for infants,
toddlers and
pre-schoolers only

Council Members

Mark Pride, Chair
Bob DeJong, Vice Chair
Nancy Karlson, Treasurer
Karen Williams, Financial
Secretary
Annalee Timmer, Secretary
Hannah Arvidson, Children's
Ministries
Jim Condap, Worship
Ken Cook, Missions, Outreach &
Evangelism
Alice Funk, Prayer & Care
Jim Funk, Finance
Steve Gustafson, Property
Nate Manlove, Youth Ministries
Cheryl Stinson, Hospitality
Steve Toegel, Adult Christian
Formation

Pastor's Pen

One of the fondest memories I have growing up was seeing my parents' joy during the Christmas Season.

I'm confident that my mother did most of the planning and most of the work to get ready for Christmas. I learned later in life that my dad started HIS Christmas shopping on Christmas Eve day, but I'm pretty confident that he was the one who did most of the "assembling" that needed to be done after the kids went to bed on Christmas Eve. So he did his part eventually. But apparently all the work that went into making Christmas special for our family was worth it, because my parents both showed great enthusiasm and much joy throughout the holiday.

Their joy was infectious: During our younger years our annual Christmas Eve family gathering in our home always included neighbors and family friends. As we got older, my parents encouraged us to invite our high school and college age friends – anyone we wanted to invite – to come to the house on Christmas Eve. There were always baked goods, egg nog and "pop" (as we called bottled soft drinks in Michigan) in the house to share with whoever showed up. Everyone who came to our house experienced my parents' joy, and was grateful to have been invited to our home because of it.

My parents' joy continued on Christmas morning. I didn't know during my childhood years how limited our family's resources were (just like all the families in our neighborhood) because all of our needs were always met. And yet the gifts my parents gave at Christmas were always generous. I think it thrilled them to be able to give us those gifts. Clearly, whatever sacrifices they had to make in order to give such gifts were "nothing" compared to the joy they experienced in the giving.

As I think of my parents' joy at Christmas, I am reminded of the gift of joy that God wants all people to experience all the time: joy that comes from knowing we are loved unconditionally by our creator and joy that comes from living in a dynamic personal relationship with Him ... but also joy that comes from doing our part for the Kingdom of God – including the joy of offering hospitality and care to others, and the joy of being generous-to-the-point-of-sacrifice on behalf of others who are in need.

As we prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth through the season of Advent, and as we gather together with loved ones and friends at Christmas to give and receive gifts, may we all experience the fullness of God's joy deep in our soul.

Respectfully,

Garth McGrath

Our Volunteers are Cooking Up Care

by Alice Funk

Over the past year we have had many generous people within our church make meals for those who have been sick, had deaths in the family or had a family crisis. I would like to thank all who have been so generous of their time and wonderful cooking abilities. Thank you to: Peggy Breed, Margretta Bromley, Linda Clark, Erin Condap, Linda Cook, Jenn Dafeldecker, Diane DeJong, Lorraine DiGeronimo, Jan Ferguson, Gayle Gray, Janet Green, Helen Hope, Debbie Hutchings, Nancy McGrath, Jan James, Lara Larson, Emily Pratt, Neva Parker, Paula Pitz, Jeanne Pride, Diane Riley, Marion Rzasas, and Samantha Stevens.

If you are willing to make a meal for a family, please contact Alice Funk at 603-352-4611 or by email at alicefunk@rocketmail.com to sign up. Please give her your name, town you live in, phone number and email address, as well as how you prefer to be contacted (via phone or email). You can find a sign up sheet in the church foyer as well.

We've exhausted our meal-makers from Keene and Swanzey these past few months. We are looking for more willing cooks to volunteer from these areas and surrounding towns. Please volunteer to cook for someone in need. It will bring a smile to those in need and a warm feeling in your heart when you deliver the meal.

CHIC 2012



July 15th-20th at our denomination's triennial event named CHIC (Covenant High In Christ), where there will be engaging gatherings with nationally known bands and teachers. You will have the opportunity grow in your faith, be trained and empowered to be change agents for the kingdom of God, all while connecting with others from around the nation and having new experiences. This will be a week that you do not want to miss! For more information contact Kevin Kokx at kevinkokx@gmail.com or visit the website www.chic2012.org.

See the calendar on page 5 for other December and early January youth group meeting dates.

by Kevin Kokx, Youth Pastor

Parents and High School Students: Join us for an exciting gathering on Sunday, January 15th beginning at 11:45 am, where you will hear about this summer's big trip to Knoxville, Tennessee. Thousands of High School students will be gathering this summer on

Thanks for Giving

by Mark Pride, Church Chair

As Chair of the church, I want to express my thankfulness for your faithful stewardship this year. While we may not meet our budget for this year – a pattern for several years that we fully intend to break this next year – we are moving in the right direction. Thank you for your costly generosity, whether it was something fairly simple, like my giving up Fribbles and Woopie pies to give a bit more, or some difficult wrestling with your budget. People have invested well into MCC and we see the fruit of that as time goes by. There are great opportunities ahead for next year and some potential budget changes that may make it possible for us to invest in even greater ways as we continue our faithful stewardship.

At this time of year, many of us receive numerous requests for year-end giving, most of them from worthwhile groups making important contributions to a better world and, in many cases, in the name of Jesus. If you are inclined to give such special gifts, I would ask you to consider the unified budget of MCC as well. We would like to finish the year strong and any special gift you may consider would enhance that greatly. Thank you for considering such.

Celebrate Santa Lucia with Breakfast at MCC

by Diane Riley

There is only one Sunday left to purchase tickets for the annual Santa Lucia Christmas Breakfast and Program, to be held Saturday, Dec. 10, at 9:30 am at Monadnock Covenant Church. Proceeds from the breakfast will benefit the mission trip to Mexico planned for February 2012.

Come celebrate a fun Swedish Christmas tradition, watching children and teenagers reenact the story of St. Lucia. Afterwards, enjoy a full breakfast of Swedish pancakes with lingonberries and maple syrup, cheese, breads, and more while seated at beautifully decorated tables. Following the breakfast, Swedish baked goods and decorations will be for sale.

The event is held each year to ring in the holiday season and to celebrate the Evangelical Covenant Church's Swedish heritage. Families across Sweden, and many American families of Swedish descent, celebrate St. Lucia's Feast Day on Dec. 13. The family's oldest daughter rises early that morning and prepares a traditional Swedish breakfast. She dresses in a white robe, with a red sash, and wears a headpiece of greens and lighted candles. She brings the breakfast to her parents' room and to the rooms of any holiday visitors, waking them to the tune of "Santa Lucia."

Lucia was a young woman in Italy who devoted her life to the poor and to persecuted Christians. At a time when being a Christian was against the law in Rome, Lucia carried food to Christians hiding in catacombs, wearing candles in her hair to light the way. Lucia, who was from a well-to-do family, refused to marry a pagan and had her dowry distributed to the poor. The Catholic Church later named her a saint.



It is believed that Catholic missionaries brought the story of Lucia to Sweden. Pre-Christian Sweden already celebrated festivals of light in winter, so telling the story of Lucia was one way to introduce Christ to the people. Later, the story was incorporated into Sweden's folktales and legends, as people reported seeing Lucia during times of famine.

Tickets for the Santa Lucia breakfast are \$8 for adults and \$3 for children age 8 and younger. They will be available for sale in the hallway following worship on Dec. 4, and from Diane Riley. Reservations/ticket purchases are required, as this is always a sold-out event. For ticket information, call Diane Riley at 357-1056.

Thanks for Pies!

*by Cheryl Stinson,
Hospitality Chair*

The reception following the Thanksgiving service had a variety of pies for everyone to enjoy. Here's a very special **Thank You** for each of you who provided pies for this wonderful time of Thanksgiving and sharing.

Thank you so very much to those who helped in the kitchen with your many helping hands and sense of humor. We all had a good time.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!

Stephen Ministry Update

by Ken Cook

At Monadnock Covenant Church nine people are being trained as Stephen Ministers. They are being equipped to provide one-to-one care, prayer and support to those who are going through a difficult time. If you would like more information on our Stephen Ministry please call Ken or Sharon Cook at 603-363-8307.

Children's Ministry Still in Need of Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to serve once a month in our children's ministry during the worship hour, or to serve as substitutes. If you are willing to help, contact Hannah Arvidson Trombley at 831-0672, or at hannah_a719@hotmail.com

Update from Grant and Miho Buchholtz

After two months of Junior High ministry, the Buchholtz's can sense a closeness developing with several teens. A pumpkin carving event on October 30 created great memories and allowed the teens to open up to Grant and Miho.

Grant recently had the opportunity to travel to the north of Japan to serve with an earthquake and tsunami relief team from all over Japan. The sight of town after town along the way turned to rubble was heartbreaking. The team visited a couple of temporary housing sites where they held a mobile cafe where people could come, relax, and enjoy some drinks and food. They also delivered food to homes in a small town that lost all grocery stores. The mainly elderly residents received everything that was delivered and seemed extremely appreciative. The team heard accounts of several families and individuals coming to faith through this tragedy.

Grant and Miho continue to wrestle with concerns over the safety of their daughter Allie given the radiation in Japan. They plan to return to the U.S. for a month and a half after the Christmas season, which is full of ministry events, to rest, pray, and discern what God wants them to do and how to deal with the ongoing situation.

Thanks from Amy Kimble for Generous Support

Amy and Jordan Kimble worshipped with us – and served on the worship team – while students at Keene State.

Jordan joined the Air Force after graduation, and is currently stationed Anchorage, Alaska. Amy prayed about what God wanted her to do in Alaska, and asked Him to use her. She was put in touch with Covenant Youth of Alaska (CYAK), whose mission is to reach, disciple and develop the Native youth and young adults in Alaska. Amy has been placed with the youth pastor at First Covenant Church of Anchorage, where she will teach Sunday school and youth group to high school students, work with an afterschool club run by Youth for Christ at a junior high school, and visit with Native college students at the University of Alaska in Anchorage. In the summers, she will be helping out at Bible camp in Unalakleet, where over 75 young people come from all over the state. While Amy reports feeling a sense of peace and joy knowing that she is following God's will, her heart breaks for the deep need of the Native youth in Alaska for stable, healthy relationships.

Jordan's Air Force position will cover the couple's living expenses, but Amy needs to raise about \$10,000 for ministry expenses. Amy visited MCC in October, and received a number of contributions that morning. She sent the following thank you note:

Dear Pastor Garth and MCC Family,

11/1/11

I want to thank you for allowing me to speak at your church a few weeks ago to share about CYAK. I feel so blessed to share with you that I raised \$1100 that day! What an amazing gift. I am truly shocked at how generous the MCC family really is.

MCC was our home for five years...very important "growing" years for both Jordan and I. We will always consider you home and hope to some day settle down nearby.

Thank you for your generosity and prayers.

Sincerely, Amy Kimble



Amy has also asked for prayer for CYAK's mission and for the people of Alaska, for doors to open for her work, and that she is able to raise the necessary funds. (Note: If you wish to contribute to Amy's ministry expenses, see the instructions at <http://www.cyak.org/give.html>)

Truthseekers Reaches Low Castes in India

Noel Becchetti also visited in October, and gave an update on the work of Truthseekers. Noel and his wife, Kyle, serve in the U.S. to communicate and raise funds for the work of Truthseekers in India. Much progress is being made:

- Dozens of caste leaders are now on the path toward Christ
- Millions of their members are seriously considering the message and practice of *Baliraja Yeshua* (Jesus Christ)
- Children are getting their first chance at an education
- Phase One of their Bible translation project – Genesis 1-11 and John 1-5, in language that the low castes can accept – **is in print this month.**

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Men's Group, 6:30 am	2	3
4 Worship, 10:15 am Salt & Pepper gathering, 1:30 pm Youth Group, 6-7:30 pm	5	6	7 Stephen Ministry Training, 6:30 pm	8 Men's Group, 6:30 am Sacred Rhythms Study, 6:30 pm	9	10 Santa Lucia Breakfast 9:30 am 
11 Worship, 10:15 am Youth Group, 6-7:30 pm	12	13 Mom's Bible Study, 9:15 am	14 Stephen Ministry Training, 6:30 pm	15 Men's Group, 6:30 am Church council, 6:30 pm	16	17
18 Worship, 10:15 am Youth Group Christmas Party, 6-7:30 pm	19	20	21 Stephen Ministry Training, 6:30 pm	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Services @ 4pm and 6pm
25 Worship, 10:15 am 	26	27	28	29	30	31
January 1 Worship, 10:15 am	2	3	4 Stephen Ministry Training, 6:30 pm	5 Men's Group, 6:30 am	6 Senior High Students leave for Winterfest	7 Senior High Students at Winterfest

**Monadnock
Covenant Church**
Phone:
603-352-6816

**We are striving
to become
genuine followers
of Jesus Christ
in our personal
lives,
our homes,
our church,
and our world.
Please join us on
the journey.**



Important Dates: 2012 Budget and Congregational Meeting

January 22, 2012

- Proposed Budget available for ALL members and friends of MCC to review

January 29, 2012

- Budget Information / Discussion Meeting, 9:00-9:45 am, Monadnock Room – ALL are welcome

February 4, 2012

- Annual Meeting gathering. ALL members and friends are invited to an evening of fellowship around a shared meal, a time of worship, and decision making of our stewardship of our resources – time, talent and treasure – for the ministry of 2012. All are welcome to contribute ideas and comments. Only members may vote on the various items under consideration.



MCC Receives Covenant Foundation Grant

by Mark Pride, Church Chair

When it became clear that Kevin Kokx was going to fill the role as youth pastor, rather than the intern we originally set out to find, we began thinking of ways we could expand his time of ministry to youth while still following the orderly expansion of our budget towards a full-time youth pastor position in two years. The Covenant Foundation – no connection to the denomination of which we are a part - has partnered with us before with grants. We sent a proposal to them regarding our youth position and the exceptional person God had sent to us. Being familiar with our church, the Foundation was very excited about the opportunity this represented. Thus, they are going to partner with us once again with a grant of **\$10,000** for 2012 and **\$5,000** for 2013!! We will celebrate this-and make a proposal of how to invest the grant-as part of our work together at the Annual Meeting on February 4th.

**Monadnock Covenant Church
90 Base Hill Road
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