

The Cedar Chips

ONLINE

publication of Cedar Hills Community Church

December 2010

Three December Things (reflections) with Kent...

1. Advent

I am never ready for Christmas. (Especially when it shows up in October.) For me, Christmas is clearly a December thing – unless it is Christmas in July. Advent is another December thing.

Advent means coming and it is a season of preparation for the coming of Jesus. I believe that Advent is part of the December thing God wants to do to help us reclaim Christmas. By addressing consumerism, hurry-sickness and the annual debt hangover, we will enjoy Christmas as it is meant to be – a celebration of Jesus' birth – not a retail circus that depletes our pocketbooks and defeats our spirits.

We will start this four-week journey to Christmas on November 28 with an Advent conspiracy designed to replace Christmas overload with Christmas joy. The **Advent Conspiracy** will call us to **Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, and Love All**. Don't miss a single week.

2. Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve is always a December thing. A 12/24 thing to be precise. I can also say with absolute confidence that Christmas Eve is one of the December things God wants to do at CHCC.

Friends, family, neighbors, co-workers – even the dog catcher – still recognize the significance of this holiday. It is a great time to invite someone to come with you to worship. These services will be meaningful and moving with a clear and powerful presentation of the Gospel we love. **Who will you invite to experience this December thing?**

On 12/24 services will be at 5, 7, and 11. At the early services something we have never done before – we will light 1000 candles to remind us Jesus is the light of the world. At 11:00, an intimate service of carols and communion.



3. End of year.

I hate to close the books on 2010 because I believe it has been one of the best years we've ever had as a congregation. Yet, I'm sensing that God is not through with us yet – that God wants to do another December thing.

My wife, Mary, and I have recently been counting our blessings. We can't begin to recount all the ways God has touched our lives in the past year. God is so amazing. Because of God's blessings our hearts have welled up with gratitude and so we've been engaged in a little exercise I'd like the whole congregation to enter into as the year draws to a close. Will you commit to the following:

Surrender all you have to God. We are blessed and we see it all as a gift from God so place it all on the table before God in complete surrender and gratitude.

Listen to God. Ask God: "What do you want me to do with this?" Ask God in an attitude of surrender and then listen.

Obey. Whatever God tells you to do – do it. With this kind of prayerful surrender, listening, and obedience as the year 2010 ends, I believe God will do a December thing unlike anything else we have ever experienced. That is until 2011 comes and God pours out the next wave of his blessings on us.

Enjoy the December thing God has planned for you.

~Pastor Kent

This Month's Vision

Advent Conspiracy

Are you tired of how our culture has stolen the soul of Christmas? This year take a stand! Join a groundswell of Christ followers who are choosing to make Christmas what it should be – a joyous celebration of Jesus' birth that enriches our hearts and the world around us. Join the **Advent Conspiracy**. Plan now to attend every week and be transformed by the power of God.

Nov. 28 – **Worship Fully**

Dec. 5 – **Spend Less**

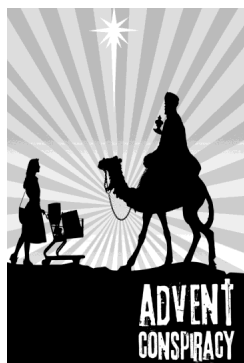
Dec. 12 – **Give More**

Dec. 19 – **Love All**

Dec 26 – **Boxing Day**

**Grow deeper in worship every
Sunday**

@ 8:30 or 11:00



Worship @ The Bridge

Our daughter congregation The Bridge meets to worship every Sunday @ 10 AM at the Hotel @ Kirkwood Center, 7725 Kirkwood Blvd SW. Please pray for those who attend this service and for those who lead this service. This service is reaching people in our community who are exploring faith in God. We encourage CHCC regulars to visit, offer encouragement, and continue to pray as our new baby finds her way.

Christmas Eve

Don't miss it! We will be celebrating Jesus at 3 Christmas Eve Services this year. Join us on December 24 at 5, 7, and 11 PM. At the two early services we will experience the stunning beauty of 1000 candles pointing the way to Jesus as the light of the world. At 11:00 we will enjoy an intimate worship experience centered around carols, communion, and a single candle. These services are perfect for inviting that friend or family member you love. Pray for God to lead you to that someone special who needs to meet Jesus this Christmas. You will be giving the best gift ever.

Congregational Meeting

We met on Sunday, November 7 at 6:30 for our annual congregational meeting. After enjoying desserts, we celebrated what God is doing and wants to do in the life of our congregation. We are riding a wave of God's grace that is carrying us along. This wave will change us for the better and will change our community forever. Deb DeHaan and Jeff Rasmussen were elected as elders. Bob Brecke and Greg Hupke were elected as deacons. We approved our 2011 budget of \$871,000. (Of that figure, \$20,000 is budgeted toward the Bridge's 2011 budget of \$88,000.) Core team leaders also shared ministry highlights including:

- The Open Hands Food pantry.
- Impact of our Worship services.
- Growing deeper in discipleship.
- Gifted staff and leaders.
- The launch of The Bridge.

A challenge was offered to the congregation to hang on as we continue to ride the wave of God's grace into the new year. We are all invited to consider three steps to grow our hearts as we move forward:

- 1. Surrender all we have to God.** Offer up all our resources and gifts. Put everything on the table.
- 2. Listen to God.** Ask God: "What do You want to do with the resources You have given?" Listen for God's answer.
- 3. Obey.** Whatever God tells us to do – do it. Follow God in obedience no matter what.

As we take these steps, we are absolutely convinced that God has more to accomplish in us and through us than we can ever think or imagine.

Consistory News and Notes

In November, we dug into a study of the transcendent worthiness of Christ. We began a review of the purpose and outcomes of consistory. We formed a study team to explore the effectiveness of our current ministry management structures. We reviewed the congregational meeting and nominations process. We reviewed the Bridge goals and celebrated how God has been working through our church plant. The Bridge team is encouraged to continue executing their plans according to the established guidelines. The Executive Team will report next month on a procedure for calling a church planting pastor and recommend improvements in how we execute the clerking duties of the consistory. We are a blessed people being used by God to impact the world. Please keep the congregation in your prayers.

Compassion Update



What Is God Really Like?

We saw God working at a youth conference a few weeks ago where we presented information on Compassion's *Bite Back* malaria program. A couple of years ago we attended the same event, but were very new in our mission work with Compassion. This time we had the opportunity to share and we were not certain how our mission would be fulfilled. We approached the weekend with hope, but things did not begin very smoothly. We placed our faith, hope, and patience in the Lord. We truly knew it wasn't up to us. It was up to the Him. And we asked Him to fill us with the words we needed to share with the 250 youth attending the event.

Saturday morning came and we shared our message with the youth and their ministers. We watched a great video and issued the youth a challenge to "rethink" how they could make a difference that weekend. Five minutes of our time and even before we got back to the table, youth came willingly to purchase a malaria net and save a child. . . and their family. An awesome experience as they stood, waiting patiently to give of themselves to help others in need.

By Sunday morning when the event ended, a total of \$440 was raised – enough funds to purchase 44 malaria nets. We saw what God is really like – through the children. May you find yourselves equally blessed as you see what God is really like as you live your life!

Prayerfully on behalf of the children,
Craig and Debbie Mrkvicka
cr4compassion@mchsi.com
Child Advocates for Compassion
www.compassion.com or 1.800.336.7676

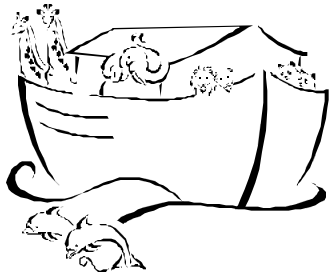
Change a life forever. Sponsor a child today!
http://www.compassion.com/sponsor_a_child/default.htm?referer=111649

Growing Disciples Deeply Rooted in Jesus

- Passionately **love God above all** – before every other thing and every other being. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Matthew 6:33)
- **Admit the ugliness** of his or her **sins and failures** because God is a safe place of forgiveness, restoration and peace. (Psalm 51)
- Develop an **intimate relationship with God nourished by God's word** throughout the day. (Psalm 1)
- **Focus on character** over comfort knowing that joy does not depend on circumstances or environment. (James 1:2-4)
- Know that faithfulness and obedience spring from **deep gratitude** to God. (Romans 11:35-36)
- **Love openly** and freely – even those who can never love back. (Luke 6:32-36; Luke 14:12-14)
- Care more obsessively about **God's kingdom coming** to this earth than about life being safe and comfortable. (Matthew 5)
- **Obey God** – even if it does not make sense in terms of worldly measures. (John 15, Matthew 7:13-23, Revelations 3:1-6)
- **Battle pride** so she or he will seek to make themselves less known and Jesus more known. (Matthew 5:16)
- **Bear the Fruit of the Spirit.** (Galatians 5)
- **Discover joy** – not burden – in serving others. (Matthew 13:44; John 15:8)
- **Give generously** with particular awareness of those who are poor around the world. (1 Timothy 6:6-13; James 2:14-26)
- **Connect with the poor** in special ways. (1 John 2:4-6; Matthew 16:24-26)
- **Think about** heaven frequently orienting all of life around **eternity.** (Matthew 24:42)

Adapted from *Crazy Love* by Francis Chan

Noah's Ark Preschool News



What a fun month we've had! We talked about all the things that we are thankful for in our lives. We also made some very cute turkey crafts. Thank you so much to the families that donated to our Open Hands Food Pantry. Your donations are welcome anytime of the year and we also accept personal hygiene items.

Picture Day went smoothly this year. We are so excited to get all the pictures back. The older classes visited Methwick again. Both generations had a great time! We will not visit in December but will start back in again in February. A big thank you to the Linn County Conservation crew for coming to visit the older classes and teaching us all about owls.

I want to remind all the parents about our policy on bad weather days. We follow the CR Schools. If they cancel school due to bad weather conditions, we will cancel also. But if they have a 2-hour delay, we still have AM classes on schedule. Hopefully this will cut down on missed days. We reserve the right to "override" the CR School's decision. For example, if the electricity is out in the CR Schools and our building is not affected, we will have class. Staff is available 30 minutes prior to class if you need to call. You can also check our website at www.chccrca.org for any announcements.

This is a very busy time of the year for everyone so be sure to look at your child's calendar closely for special events and days that we are off due to the holidays. We are so thankful to all our preschool families and we count each child as a blessing! **GOD** is great and we wish everyone a safe and blessed Christmas season!

In Christ,
Leslie Clauson, Director

Children's Ministries

One survey I read asked parents, which quality they most desired in their children. Intelligence topped the list, followed closely by personality, then creativity, and, lastly, imagination. I wonder...what happened to trust, love, faith, and honesty?

Think about what you talk about with your kids. What do you point them to? What activities do you reward them for? What achievements thrill you most?

You are called to "Home School" your children in the ways of the Lord.

December Calendar Dates

- Dec 1~ASJF 6:30
- Dec 5~ Sunday School
- Dec 8~ASFJ 6:30
- Dec 12~Sunday School
- Dec 15~ASFJ
- Dec 19~Sunday School
- Dec 24~Christmas Eve Services
5pm, 7pm and 11.
- Dec 26~ NO Sunday School



ASSISTANTS FOR DECEMBER

Information Specialists:

Dec 5	8:30	Leanne Moen
	11:00	Dianne Martens
Dec 12	8:30	Ulmers
	11:00	Lovells
Dec 19	8:30	Carol Ruedy
	11:00	David & Susan Wise
Dec 24	5:00	Dianne Martens
	7:00	Chuck & Sally Rohrer
	11:00	
Dec 26	8:30	Gary & Jan Matson
	11:00	Sankots

Coffee Shop:

Dec 5	7:30	Doug Elam
	10:45	Lisa Smith
Dec 12	7:30	Jodee & Brian Sanny
	10:45	
Dec 19	7:30	Jenn & Jon Wagaman
	10:45	Jenn & Jon Wagaman
Dec 26	7:30	
	10:45	

Sign up for one of the open shifts! - office@chccrca.org



RETIREES LUNCH

Saturday, December 4, 11:30am @ Cibos
685 Marion Boulevard
Questions? Contact Sally Donnan, 396-9842

*For it is by grace you have
been saved, through faith—and this
not from yourselves, it is the gift
of God—not by works, so that
no one can boast.*

~Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

Children's Worship:

Dec 5	8:30	Maire Family
	11:00	
Dec 12	8:30	Gaffney Family
	11:00	Vander Broek Family
Dec 19	8:30	Oppermans / Jesse Schoettmer
	11:00	Jungling Family
Dec 26	8:30	
	11:00	Christiansen / Tehya Johnson

Nursery:

*Please check the schedule in the Nursery.

Greeters:

Check your mailbox for Greeter's Schedule.

*Please arrange a substitute if unable to greet.



SPAGHETTI DINNER

Boy Scout Troop 85 invites all members and friends to the second annual spaghetti dinner, Friday, December 10, serving from 5-7pm at CHCC. A free-will offering will be taken. Proceeds will help troop purchase camping supplies.

YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIAL DATA (through October)

Budget	\$700,141
Total Contributions	\$622,279
Actual Expenses	\$629,495
Net Income (Loss)	(\$ 7,216)
General Budget Reserve Balance	\$ 50,032

November Contributions (through Nov. 21)	\$ 45,564
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The Cedar Chips is available online and can be found there by following the *Members* link on the church website, www.chccrca.org

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN DECEMBER?

WEEKLY EVENTS

Sundays

8:00am	Prayer Time	138
8:30am	Sanctuary Service	MPR
9:45am	Coffee & Fellowship	GS
9:45am	Sunday School - All Ages	Multiple
11:00am	Celebrate Service	MPR
6:30pm	SUMMIT	GS/Multiple

Mondays

5:00pm	Open Hands Food Pantry	112,116
5:30pm	Grey Worship Team	MPR
6:30pm	Anchor Worship Team	MPR

Tuesdays

6:00pm	Boy Scouts of America	GS, 135
6:45pm	PRISM®	117

Wednesdays

9:00am	Women's Bible Study	117
10:00am	Open Hands Food Pantry	112,116
6:00pm	Sanctuary Worship Team	MPR
6:30pm	All Stars for Jesus	113/114, 128
6:30pm	LINK	GS/Multiple
6:35pm	Choir	MPR
7:35pm	The Bridge WT	MPR

Thursdays

9:00am	Spare Timers	GS
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Fridays

10:00am	Open Hands Food Pantry	112,116
7:00pm	Alcoholics Anonymous	MPR/GS

SPECIAL EVENTS

Sun Dec 5

9am	Waffle Breakfast	GS
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Tue Dec 21 & Wed Dec 22

	Preschool Christmas Program	MPR
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Wed Dec 15

	Cedar Chips News Due	Office
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Fri Dec 24

5pm	Christmas Eve Service	MPR
7pm	Christmas Eve Service	MPR
11pm	Christmas Eve Service	MPR

Sat Dec 25

	Carolans Family Christmas	GS
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Tues Dec 28

	80th Birthday Party	GS
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DECEMBER TEAMS & OTHER EVENTS

Wed Dec 1

5:15pm	Beth's Small Group	125
6:30pm	Deacons Meeting	138

Thu Dec 2

9:15am	MOPS	GS
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Sun Dec 5

6pm	Church Multiplication	117
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Mon Dec 6

5:15pm	Connectors Meeting	138
6pm	Foster/Adoptive Parents	134/135
7:15pm	SUMMIT Leadership	

Tue Dec 7

10am	Ministry Staff	138
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Wed Dec 8

5:15pm	Beth's Small Group	125
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Fri Dec 10

5pm	Spaghetti Dinner	GS
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Sat Dec 11

10am	Loving Stitches	137
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Sun Dec 12

4pm	Consistory	137
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Mon Dec 13

6pm	LINK Leadership	
6pm	Foster/Adoptive Parents	134/135
7pm	Food Pantry Leadership	112

Wed Dec 15

5:15pm	Beth's Small Group	125
6pm	Welcome Team	138

Thu Dec 16

9:15am	MOPS	GS
5pm	Noah's Ark Board	116
6:30pm	Boy Scout Parents	138

Sun Dec 19

6pm	Church Multiplication	117
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Mon Dec 20

6pm	Foster/Adoptive Parents	134/135
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Thu Dec 23

6:30pm	Ministry Management	116
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Sun Dec 26

3:30pm	Elders	137
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Mon Dec 27

5:15pm	Connectors	138
5:30pm	PMB Sewing Guild	137

Tue Dec 28

6pm	Adult Discipleship Team	138
6:30pm	Exec Meeting	111

Fri Dec 31

Office Closed

Worship Ministries

Advent: *Advent Conspiracy*

“The story of Christ's birth is a story of promise, hope, and a revolutionary love. So, what happened? What was once a time to celebrate the birth of a savior has somehow turned into a season of stress, traffic jams, and shopping lists. And when it's all over, many of us are left with presents to return, looming debt that will take months to pay off, and this empty feeling of missed purpose. Is this what we really want out of Christmas? What if Christmas became a world-changing event again? Welcome to Advent Conspiracy...”

From www.adventconspiracy.org

This season of Advent we are doing something that gets back to the true meaning of Christmas. We hear that phrase a lot: “the true meaning of Christmas.” Hollywood broadcasts their meaning in lots of feel-good, warm and fuzzy holiday stories on the Hallmark channel, Lifetime, and the like. Sometimes we get the frenzied comedic versions of Christmas in stories like *Christmas Vacation* and *Home Alone*. Often we think we know “the true meaning of Christmas,” but what if we have missed the mark? What if the spirit of Christmas that began over 2000 years ago at the birth of Jesus has morphed into a mutated version of the original and looks and feels nothing like that which was intended?

And when the secular world has gone crazy around us, how can life look different for one who calls Jesus “Lord”?

This is the Advent Conspiracy.

[Worship Fully]
[Spend Less]
[Give More]
[Love All]

Join us as we begin the season of Advent on Nov. 28th.

Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve services will be held Dec. 24th at 5pm, 7pm, and a candlelight service at 11pm. Invite your friends and family as we welcome The Light of the World into the world.

~Leah
Director of Worship

The Caring Corner

IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA...

Paul Donnan, our building superintendent, shared with me the saying on one of his son's tee shirts. It states, “It seemed like a good idea at the time.”

In our minds we can recall some of our own experiences that seemed like a good idea at the time. The reason we might remember such tasks is that they turned out quite differently than when we first thought about them.

This Advent Season consider the idea that Mary and Joseph had when Mary was told she would be the mother of Jesus. Although the pregnancy caused both Mary and Joseph some apprehension, they went on with their plans to get married and to be parents. Seemed like a good idea at the time.

Little did they know where their son's life would go. At 30 years of age their son would begin a ministry that took some difficult steps, including the end of His earthly life on a Cross. What started out as a good idea seemed to end very badly. But death could not hold Him. On the third day “He rose from the grave and reigns forever as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

When we think about that life that began in a cave and would end on a cross, one idea, that seemed like a good idea, remains the fabric of the Cedar Hills Church. The earthly son of Mary and Joseph, who in reality is the Son of God, lived and taught a life of caring. Jesus cared for the sick and for the sinner. Jesus cared for the broken in body and for the broken in heart. Jesus cared for the one who betrayed Him and for the one who denied Him. Jesus was an inclusive carer for people.

My prayer for you this Christmas Season is that you will remember the good idea that God had in sending His Son into the world to show a Father's love. When we accept God's love for us, we perpetuate a Good Idea. We care for ourselves and we care for one another.

Suppose we make this resolution: in the new year, I will CARE EVEN MORE FOR OTHERS.

It seems like a good idea at this time....

God cares for you . . .
Doc

The Bulletin Board



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES



5pm, 7pm, and 11pm

Invite your friends and family!



CHICC FLICK

Return to Me
Irish/Italian Dinner
Great Movie and Girlfriends

Tues, Jan 11 at 6:30pm
Bebe Benzing's Home: 1715 Wolf Dr NW
\$5/Person. Tissues Provided

All adult women are welcome and invited to bring a friend! Tickets available in Gathering Space or church office beginning Jan 2.

Questions? Contact Paula Blessman at
crchiccs@gmail.com or 560-7623.



WHY A PRAYER ROOM?

In the back of the multi-purpose room is a beautiful new prayer room. It is quiet and peaceful – a place where the presence of God can be felt.

Why a prayer room? There are two important reasons. The prayer room is available after each service so that you may come in to pray. There is someone available to pray with you if you so desire. Or perhaps you just want to sit quietly and pray alone. His presence is there.

The prayer room is also available anytime the church is open. Come in, curl up, soak in His presence, read His word and pray. It is a place away from the daily chaos of life.

Seeking solitude was an important priority for Jesus. He made room in His busy schedule to be alone with the Father. Spending time with God in prayer nurtures a vital relationship and equips us to meet life's challenges and struggles. Come visit our prayer room and encounter Jesus.

~Linda Drzycimski



The Bulletin Board



SONGS OF CHRISTMAS

Come join the choir in the singing of three joyful songs at both services December 19th. We will be practicing on Wednesday nights for 3 weeks beginning December 1 at 6:30pm. The songs are from "In the Fullness of Time," which we performed soon after we moved into our new church building. Contact John D. or Leah for more information.



GROW DEEPER WITH PRAYER

Come! Join us for prayer Sunday, December 5 at 3pm. Come pray for our church, our staff, and God's direction for the future. Bring your prayer concerns. Come watch God answer our prayers!



Sweet Life Café

Where Women Savor Time With God

Ladies – Mark your calendars reserve your place now to enjoy the sweet life on Feb. 4 & 5!

You won't want to miss this unique opportunity to develop sweet friendships and savor time with God. The CHiCCs (chicks) of CHCC will have the exclusive use of Zuber's Homestead Hotel, a luxurious 15-room inn in the Amana Colonies. Cost is \$50. Space is limited. Gift certificates and reservations available in Gathering Space until SOLD OUT. Contact Paula Blessman (crchiccs@gmail.com or 560-7623) for more information.



PLANNING YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING?

The Women's Ministry will again be supporting the Christmas Room at Aid to Women by purchasing gifts for children from infant to teen years for clients to give their children. Please plan to bring these *UNWRAPPED* gifts to CHCC on December 5th and 12th and place on a table in the Gathering Space. Thank you for helping make Christmas merrier for these children.



CEDAR CHIPS DELIVERY OPTIONS

If you would like a reminder when the Cedar Chips is available online, please contact the Church Office (396-6608, office@chccrca.org) and ask to have your email address added to the church-wide distribution list.

In addition, please let the office know if you prefer to view the *Cedar Chips Online Edition* and no longer wish to receive a paper copy in your mailbox.