

# The Cedar Chips

## ONLINE

publication of Cedar Hills Community Church



December 2011

### This Really Matters

*What we believe and why we believe it.*

My least favorite part of this season is the darkness. I hate that it gets dark so early. I feel like I am ready to go to bed by 6:30. Darkness is depressing. My favorite part of this season is the lights. I love Christmas lights.



My favorite holiday movie is Christmas Vacation. I love that scene where Chevy Chase goes to turn on his massive display and plugs it in only to discover that it does not light. Not a single bulb. I don't know anything more frustrating than lights that won't light.

My least favorite holiday activity is dealing with lights that won't light. I once had a friend who would work through a string of lights one by one in an attempt to find a bad bulb. And if it were not discovered the first time through she would go again – bulb by bulb. If I have a bad string of lights I shake them and if they do not respond, I pitch the whole thing. Life is too short.

My favorite Christmas activity is listening to music. I love carols. Old and new. I love "Silent Night! Holy Night!" It brings me peace – "all is calm, all is bright..." I love the final verse: "Silent Night! Holy Night! Son of God. Love's pure light."

My next favorite activity – listening to music in candle light. Carols sound better in flickering light. And my next favorite activity is playing with a lit candle while listening to Christmas music.

My favorite Christmas verse is Isaiah 9:2. "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. Those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them a light has shined." So much hope. It seems like a universal thing that people prefer light over darkness. Light shining in darkness really matters

My next favorite Christmas verse is Luke 2:11 – "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ

the Lord." This is the good news we celebrate at Christmas. This is the light that breaks into the darkness. This is the reason for Christmas. A savior has been born!

My favorite night of the year is Christmas Eve. Everything seems to shine more brightly on Christmas Eve. Every year I am amazed that people will come to worship on this special night who never darken the door of the church at any other time. I wonder what draws them. Is it the shine?

My favorite seasonal activity is seeing someone move from light to darkness. I hope that the good news of light shining in the darkness will shine in someone's heart in a brand new way and so change his or her life forever. A little Christmas light to shatter the deep darkness. I love it.

My hope for this year is more shine than we have ever seen before.

~Pastor Kent

*"O holy night! The stars are brightly shining:  
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth.  
Long lay the world in sin and error pinning,  
Till He appeared and the soul felt it's worth.  
A thrill of hope - the weary world rejoices,  
for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!  
Fall on your knees!"*



## This Month's Vision

### *Shine*

Advent is the season leading up to Christmas. Advent is about preparing for the coming of Jesus. This year we will prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior by looking at the prophetic call for peace and justice. This call was fulfilled in Jesus who shines the love of God into a lost and broken world.

*"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. Those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them a light has shined." Isaiah 9:2*

### **Advent Worship on Sunday @ 8:30 or 11:00**

November 27 – *Shine Love*

Waiting for Justice - people walking in darkness need a great light.

December 4 – *Shine Peace*

The gift of Justice - people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

December 11 – *Shine Hope*

The power of Justice - when walking in darkness a very small light can shine hope.

December 18 – *Shine Joy*

*The shine of Justice - when light comes in darkness people rejoice.*

### **Christmas Eve @ 5 PM & 7 PM**

*December 24 – Shine Jesus Shine*

### **Christmas Day @ 11 AM (One service only)**

*December 25 – Arise, Shine!*

### *Christmas Eve*

Worship together on our favorite night of the year. Celebrate with family and friends as we sing the great carols of Christmas and rejoice in the birth of our Savior. Services at 5 PM & 7 PM. Be inspired by a message entitled "Shine Jesus Shine." Christmas Eve is the best time to invite someone to come with you. When we invite people to come - they do. Begin praying that God will shine into the life of that special person you want to reach!

### *Christmas Eve @ The Bridge*

Our daughter congregation, the Bridge, will be holding its first ever Christmas Eve service at the Hotel @ Kirkwood Center a 4 PM on December 24. This service will be a great celebration of Jesus with music that is upbeat and a message that is inspiring.

### *Worship Together*

One of the best ways to grow a deep, vibrant faith is to worship together with others on a regular basis. All our worship services are designed to help each of us encounter the love of God while being touched by transformational truths about God. And the Christmas season is one of the best times of the year to worship.

### *20/20 Vision*

In the past year, we've been discerning God's vision for CHCC. We've heard God say, "Build Capacity" in four key areas:

1. **Build Volunteer Capacity** – We believe God is calling us to a season of leadership development and volunteer growth. God is at work to grow people more deeply and then get the right people engaged in ministry so that by 2020, we will have 80% of our members serving in the right place.

2. **Build Outreach Capacity** – We believe God is calling us to sharpen our outward focus in both evangelism and church multiplication. God is at work to save lost people in Cedar Rapids so that by 2020 we will see dozens of people come to faith in Jesus and we will see two new congregations formed.

3. **Build Financial Capacity** – We believe that God is calling us to grow in generosity and reduce our debt. By aggressively seeking to grow our generosity, as a congregation, we believe that God will greatly reduce our debt by 2020.

4. **Build Facilities Capacity** – We believe that God wants to enhance our facilities so they can be used more effectively to reach our community. Part of our 20/20 vision is to discern what additional building space God is calling us to complete by 2020.

### *News and Notes*

On November 17, the Consistory and Staff were able to hear a review of the surveys recently completed by our congregation. 240 different individuals responded, so we



# Worship Ministries

were very pleased with the results. Our consultant shared that this number of responses gives us 95% confidence in the results. Some of the highlights included:

- The worship services at our church are exceptional in both quality and spiritual content.
- Persons who serve as leaders are representative of the membership.
- Our senior pastor communicates with people in a way that keeps them informed and connected.
- The music in our congregation is outstanding in quality and appropriate in style to our congregation.
- In important decisions in our church, adequate opportunity for consideration of different approaches is usually provided.

These factors have the greatest impact on how our congregation feels about our congregation overall. And the survey showed that our congregation has both high satisfaction and high energy. This response puts us in the category of being a transformational church.

The data revealed two goals that were unusually strong for our congregation. The first goal was to strengthen the process by which members are called and equipped for ministry and leadership. The second goal was to enlarge or improve the physical facilities to expand or enhance ministry. Other top goals included developing outreach strategies, healing ministries, and financial generosity.

The report was very affirming, while also pointing toward areas for continued improvement. We will continue discussions as we move through the listening phase and hope to share much more as we process all the information received. Thanks to everyone who participated - the information compiled has already been a huge benefit to our discernment process.

The detailed report is available in the office for anyone interested in digging deeper.

## *Staff Update*

The Bridge Steering Team is pleased to report that JR Henderson has accepted the call to be the planting pastor at The Bridge. JR and his wife, Terri hope to join us in early December. Praise the Lord!

The Youth Search Team continues to make progress and has moved to the interview stage. We have successfully completed six phone interviews and will now narrow the field as God leads us. Keep praying for wisdom for this search team.

## CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS DAY

The holiday schedule looks a little different this year in light of how the holidays fall on the weekend.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES—**5pm & 7pm**  
CHRISTMAS DAY—**11am**



The theme for Advent and Christmas this year is “Shine.” Did you know the first public announcement of Jesus’ arrival as a baby on earth was the appearance of a bright star in the sky? Astronomers and kings alike saw the star and were aware of its significance in signaling the presence of a new King.

Before Jesus appeared in human form, before he began to interact with us flesh to flesh, His light made a statement to the darkness and the darkness knew its time was drawing to an end. Before Jesus had even performed one miracle, His light had already made itself known that change was coming.

We are bearers of the light of Christ. We get to step into the dark places and announce to the darkness that its time is coming to an end. In our workplaces, in our homes, before we ever make a change, our very presence as the light of Jesus signals that something good is coming. This is our theme for Advent this year: Shine. Be a light. Recognize your identity as a bearer of the light of Jesus. And then move. Make a difference. Following Jesus, we have an opportunity to set something that is wrong, *right*. And like the star that moved to guide the wise men, the light of Christ will move us, lead us, show us where and how to shine our lights. “This little light of mine, I’m going to let it shine.”

~ Leah  
Director of Worship

## Compassion Update



### HELPING BABIES BY EDUCATING PARENTS

Many parents of Compassion-assisted children have no education. They can't read or write. They don't know how to handle domestic violence or child abuse situations. Most don't know how to care for their child's health and development. Compassion helps parents learn to take better care of their children through prevention, education and awareness with:

- Adult literacy education.
- Domestic violence and child abuse seminars.
- Training on child development, health topics and basic parenting skills.
- Culturally appropriate training such as AIDS awareness and prevention.

Here's how Compassion helped Mahindra in eastern India, a father of two, whose own father is an alcoholic. Drinking in their community is commonplace. Mahindra doesn't drink and prefers his children don't drink either. Before Compassion's parenting sessions, Mahindra was uncomfortable speaking to his father and neighbors about the consequences of alcohol. But after one session, he had the knowledge and skills to express himself and his concerns. Thanks to Compassion, Mahindra is confident he can change his children's lives by teaching his community about the dangers of alcoholism.

This program is part of Compassion's education needs. Check out the web site for additional details or contact us. May God bless your compassionate hearts.

Craig and Debbie Mrkvicka  
[cr4compassion@mchsi.com](mailto:cr4compassion@mchsi.com) or 319.390.0027  
Child Advocates for Compassion  
[www.compassion.com](http://www.compassion.com) or  
1.800.336.7676

## Caring Corner

### DECISIONS

This is the time of year in my mind that decisions seem to be the order of the day. Who gets which Christmas letter or card? What did I get for so and so in 2010? Whose turn is it to host the family for Christmas Day? Should we go to a tree farm to buy a real tree? Do I place a gift in the salvation army kettle even though I have already done it six times? (The bell-ringers look so cheerful even though they have to be freezing.)

I have another decision to make in this column. Do I share some thoughts on Advent or do I provide you with possible ideas for New Year's Resolutions?

Four resolutions for 2012 was my decision. (Note: I had some insider information that Advent Worship Services will be informative and inspirational.)

1. In 2012, I will keep all prayer requests that are in the Sunday bulletin or are received via email. I will keep the requests in a special place and refer to them each and every day of the week.
2. In 2012, I will make a special effort to contact individuals who submitted requests and follow up with them either by email, phone, or at worship.
3. In 2012, I will set a personal goal to memorize one passage of scripture per week. Perhaps in January you would have a goal of memorizing the following Psalms: 23, 42, 46, and 100. If you choose this resolution and want help for February, let me know.
4. In 2012, I will share the Psalm that I memorized with others in times of need.

My last decision is to wish you and yours a memorable and safe holiday season. The Good News of Christ's birth is filled with hope, joy and love.

God loves you and so do I.

~Pastor Doc



# ASSISTANTS FOR DECEMBER



*Information Specialists:*

Dec 4	8:30	Leanne Moen
	11:00	David & Susan Wise
Dec 11	8:30	Gary & Jan Matson
	11:00	Mark & Amber Matson
Dec 18	8:30	Carol Ruedy
	11:00	Anita Bosch
Dec 24	5:00pm	Dianne Martens
	7:00pm	Tracy & Annette Sankot
Dec 25	11:00	Dianne Martens

*Coffee Shop:* Sign up for a shift: [office@chccrca.org](mailto:office@chccrca.org) or stop by on Sunday! Bring treats or help serve. 1st shift-7:30am, 2nd shift-10am.

*Children's Church:*

Dec 4	8:30	Jessi Schoettmer/Emily Ellis
	11:00	Lori & Dave Gleason/Libby
Dec 11	8:30	Carol & John Gaffney
	11:00	Johnsons/Kelsey Clauson
Dec 18	8:30	Oppermans/Jessi Schoettmer
	11:00	Browns/Alexi Grave
Dec 25	*There will be no Children's Church	

*Greeters:*

Check your mailbox for Greeter's Schedule.

\*Please arrange a substitute if unable to greet.

*Nursery*

Dec 4	8:20	Olivia Geiger/Jessi Schoettmer
	10:50	Lovell Family
Dec 11	8:20	Loughner Family/Emily Ellis
	10:50	Angela Corrigan/Jessica Wise
Dec 18	8:20	Paulsen Family
	10:50	Brown Family
Dec 25	*Nursery will be open, but not staffed.	

**MONTHLY STEWARDSHIP REPORT**

*2011 Stewardship Goal: To grow in generosity.*  
 We know that God is a good and generous God, and that everything we are and have belongs to God. Because of this we live as generous and responsible caretakers of all the resources God gives us. In response to God's abundant giving, we increasingly submit our resources to Christ's Lordship, displaying a spirit of generosity and cheerfulness in supporting the work of the church.

**YEAR-TO-DATE FINANCIAL DATA (through Oct 11)**

Total Contributions	\$632,574
Total Expenses	\$666,737
Net Loss	(\$ 34,162)

November Contributions (through Nov 20)	\$ 45,868
---	-----------

December Budget Goal	\$ 67,000
----------------------	-----------

*"For God so loved the world  
 that He gave His only son  
 that whoever believes in him will not perish  
 but have eternal life."*

~John 3:16

# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN DECEMBER?

## WEEKLY EVENTS

### **Sundays**

8:00am	Prayer Time	138
8:30am	Sanctuary Service	MPR
9:45am	Coffee & Fellowship	GS
11:00am	Celebrate Service	MPR
6:30pm	SUMMIT	Multiple

### **Mondays**

9:30am	Attendance Team	138
5:00pm	Open Hands Food Pantry	112,116
6:30pm	Celebrate 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
6:40pm	Sanctuary Choir	MPR
6:30pm	LINK	GS/Multiple
6:30pm	All-Stars for Jesus	Multiple

### **Thursdays**

9:00am	Spare Timers	GS
6:30pm	Boy Scout Parent Meeting	138

### **Fridays**

10:00am	Open Hands Food Pantry	112,116
7:00pm	Alcoholics Anonymous	MPR/GS
7:00pm	Overeaters Anonymous	138

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### **Thu Dec 1**

6:30pm	Chicc Café	GS
--------	------------	----

### **Sat Dec 3**

11:00am	Retiree Lunch	Cibo's
---------	---------------	--------

### **Thu Dec 15**

	Cedar Chips Deadline	office
--	----------------------	--------

### **Sun Dec 18**

4:00pm	Children's Christmas Program	MPR
--------	------------------------------	-----

### **Sat Dec 24**

4:00pm	The Bridge-Christmas Eve	The Hotel
5:00pm	CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE	MPR
7:00pm	CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE	MPR

### **Sun Dec 25**

11:00am	WORSHIP (ONE SERVICE only)	MPR
---------	----------------------------	-----

## DECEMBER TEAMS & OTHER EVENTS

### **Thu Dec 1**

6:00pm	Bells Rehearsal	138
--------	-----------------	-----

### **Sun Dec 4**

6:00pm	Church Multiplication	138
--------	-----------------------	-----

### **Tue Dec 6**

10:00am	Ministry Staff	138
6:30pm	SUMMIT Leadership	138

### **Wed Dec 7**

5:00pm	Doc's Bible Study	Clarion
5:30pm	Deacons	138

### **Thu Dec 8**

6:00pm	Bells Rehearsal	MPR
--------	-----------------	-----

### **Sat Dec 10**

10:00am	Loving Stitches	137
---------	-----------------	-----

### **Sun Dec 11**

4:00pm	Consistory	137
--------	------------	-----

### **Mon Dec 12**

7:00pm	Food Pantry Leadership Meeting	112
--------	--------------------------------	-----

### **Tue Dec 13**

11:15am	Staff Tactical	135
---------	----------------	-----

### **Thu Dec 15**

5:00pm	Noah's Ark Board	138
6:30pm	Boy Scout Parent Meeting	138

### **Sun Dec 18**

3:30pm	Elder's Meeting	138
6:00pm	Church Multiplication	138

### **Tue Dec 20**

11:45am	All-Staff Meeting	138
---------	-------------------	-----

### **Wed Dec 21**

5:00pm	Christmas WT Rehearsal	MPR
--------	------------------------	-----

### **Thu Dec 22**

9:15am	MOPS Steering Team	GS
--------	--------------------	----

### **Mon Dec 26**

#### **Office & Food Pantry Closed**

5:30pm	Sewing Guild	137
6:30pm	Sunday School Team	114

### **Tue Dec 27**

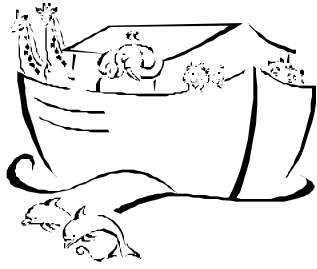
11:15am	Staff Tactical	135
6:00pm	Adult Discipleship Team	138
6:30pm	Exec Meeting	111

### **Thu Dec 29**

6:30pm	Celebrate Worship Team	MPR
--------	------------------------	-----



# 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 very smooth 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 up again in February.

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](http://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!

For the Staff & In Christ,  
Leslie Clauson, Director



# Children's Ministries

## 7 WAYS SUNDAY SCHOOL HELPS FAMILIES

**1. Supports Godly parenting.** The church was never meant to be the exclusive faith teacher of children. God's plan was for the two, church and family to form a partnership.

**2. Helps families into more faithful attendance.** Families become more involved in the church when children attend Sunday School.

**3. Provides a great way for unchurched families to get in contact with the Gospel.** Sunday School is the easiest way of reaching unchurched families.

**4. Helps new families get connected.** Children help their parents get plugged in at church.

**5. Helps dads get involved in the church.** For various reasons, fathers have a difficult time getting connected with the church family.

**6. Provides families with meaningful shared experiences.** This is true especially when the whole family can participate in events like VBS, Mentoring or PASS (Parents Attend Sunday School with their child) Day.

**7. Helps answer those hard questions.** Almost every week a child will ask a Sunday School teacher a religious question that has stumped their parents.

~Kris  
Director of Children's Ministries



## Youth Ministries

**LINK – MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP**  
A safe place for students to connect with Jesus.

LINK meets every  
Wednesday, 6:30 – 8PM  
in the Gathering Space.



**SUMMIT– SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP**  
Taking students to new heights of faith in Jesus.

SUMMIT meets  
Sunday nights, 6 – 8PM  
in the Youth Room



### SUMMIT Schedule

11/27 – No SUMMIT  
12/4 – Regular Meeting  
12/11 – Regular Meeting  
12/18 – Caroling and Cookie Decorating!  
12/25 - NO SUMMIT - Christmas Day  
1/1 - NO SUMMIT - New Year's Day  
1/8 - Regular Meeting



### **CHRISTMAS ROOM**

Planning your Christmas shopping? Purchase unwrapped gifts for infants-teenagers for families in need to give to their children. Drop off in the Gathering Space at CHCC Dec 3 & 10.

## CHCC Vision

We are a Christ-centered community of people loved by God.

**CHCC Mission**  
Love God. (Mathew 22:36-38)  
Grow Deep. (Matthew 13)  
Serve Others. (Luke 10:25-37)



### **RETIREEES LUNCH**

Sat, Dec 3, 11:30AM  
Cibo's, 685 Marion Blvd, Marion

RSVP to Sally Donnan, 396-9842 or email:  
[salydee@mchsi.com](mailto:salydee@mchsi.com)



### **SEASIDE ESCAPE**

Attention Ladies! Mark your calendars for the chicc's overnight getaway (annual women's retreat), Feb 3-4, 2012.

Details & registration will begin Dec 1 at the chicc's Café! Contact: [crchiccs@gmail.com](mailto:crchiccs@gmail.com) or 396-6608 with questions.



WHERE WOMEN BASK IN GOD'S PRESENCE

Seek




Love



Grow

Serve


# The Bulletin Board



**S**UNDAYS @  
8:30 AM & 11 AM



Nov 27 - Shine LOVE  
Dec 4 - Shine PEACE  
Dec 11 - Shine HOPE  
Dec 18 - Shine JOY



*WHO WILL YOU INVITE?*

**SHINE**




**CHRISTMAS EVE - 5 PM & 7 PM**  
**CHRISTMAS DAY - 11 AM**



**THE BRIDGE**

**CHRISTMAS EVE**  
**@ THE BRIDGE**



**4:00 PM**  
**The Hotel**  
**@ Kirkwood Center**



**SHINE PROJECT**

We will be supporting Families Helping Families, with opportunities to make monetary contributions of any amount. This is a local organization that supports foster/adoptive families in need with clothing, shoes, winter coats/boots and other necessities for children in birth through adult sizes.

Their Clothing Closet, established in 2006 is run by volunteers & utilized by many families from 14 counties in Iowa each week. In 3 months, 202 children used the Closet!



**FAMILIES HELPING FAMILIES**  
— OF IOWA, INC. —