



Orchard Covenant Church

95 Berkshire Street
Indian Orchard, MA 01151

The Messenger

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413-543-4204



MESSENGER

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THE PASTOR'S PAGE

Lent 2012: 40 Days with the Jesus Creed

In recent months our Council has defined the vision and mission of Orchard Covenant Church.

Our vision is a picture of our preferred future:

Our vision is:

to be God's heart and hands in the Orchard and beyond.

Our mission defines how we will accomplish that vision;

Our mission is:

**to develop mature disciples of Jesus Christ
who love God and love people.**

A religion scholar of Jesus' time noticed that Jesus was speaking wisely of the things of God. So he thought Jesus might be able to answer the question he always pondered: he wanted to follow God's will, but where should he begin among the hundreds of laws in the Hebrew Scriptures? So he asked: *What is the most important command of God?* Jesus answered by combining two commands: Deut 6:4-5, and Leviticus 19:18 into what we now call "The Jesus Creed:"

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart,

With all your soul,

With all your mind,

And with all your strength.

The second is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself"

There is no commandment greater than these.

This passage will be the basis of our 40 Days of Lent. Lent begins February 22. Start by saying and praying the Jesus Creed every day. Listen for God's word to you and let God transform you day by day. Worship with us on Sundays, and watch for other chances to grow such as small groups or prayer, Sunday School or service to church and others. Make Lent a special time of devotion and prayer, considering these questions: ***How do I follow Jesus and make his most important command my most important rule of life? How do I love God? How do I love my neighbor? How can I be God's heart and hands in this world?***

See you in church! Pastor Nancy Ebner



What
disciple look like?

does a mature

Fruits of the Spirit:

Open the Bible

Love God

Love Others

Overcome with hope

Worship with God's people

Just pray always

Excel in giving

Servant leaders

Use God-given gifts to serve

Spirit-filled and Spirit-led

A mature disciple **Follows Jesus.**

Which of the above characteristics are true of you? Which of the above characteristics is God calling you to grow in, or add to your life?

If you don't know how to answer, open a bible and start reading about Jesus. And please know that Pastor Ebner is available to talk with you about your questions.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

February 3- Joy Benoit
February 5- Cameron Benoit
February 6- Heather Boettcher
February 6- Gloria Mitchell
February 9- Connie Clark
February 9- Roberta Glassman
February 11- Agnes Bromage
February 11- Nancy Anderson
February 12- Jackie Hudson
February 13- Michael Marshall
February 16- Charles Mullins
February 19- Isaiah Martinez
February 20- Dale Jennings
February 21- Callie Clark
February 22- Fabrise Nyonkuru
February 26- Gordon Clark
February 28- Albert Kenyon

ANNIVERSARIES

February 19 -Gordon and Ellen Clark

[If your date is wrong or your name has been omitted, please contact the editor.]

DATES TO REMEMBER

February 2 – National Prayer Breakfast
February 6 – Church Council Meeting
February 18 – Men’s Prayer Breakfast
February 19 – Ministry Fair
February 22 – Ash Wednesday; 6:00 pm
February 25 – Church Membership Class

Visit our church website at:
www.orchardcovenantchurch.org

The Men’s Connection

Saturday, February 18
Time: 8:30 to 9:30 am
at the Orchard Covenant Church
Breakfast will be served.

This is the time of year for flu and bad colds. Remember that hand washing is one of the best prevention methods. Sing Happy Birthday twice as you wash your hands with soap!

NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY

A new directory will be printed soon! Please be sure the church office has your current information. If you are not in the directory and would like to be, please contact Toni Wapner in the office at 543-4204.

TRINIDAD / TOBAGO TAKE OUT

Gail and Marlon Joseph are having a Food Sale of Trinidad and Tobago Cuisine at their home at 83 Fisher Street Springfield. The Menu for February is:

Saturday, February 11th, Curried Chicken, potatoes, chick peas, pumpkin, anchar mango in Paratha Roti and a drink. The cost for the meal is \$12:00.

Saturday, February 25th, Stewed Oxtail, fried rice, fried plantain, mixed vegetables and a drink. The cost for the meal is \$13:00.

They also have home made snacks such as Coconut and Strawberry Ice cream, Yogurt, Red Mangoes, Khurma and Meat pies. To order, please call 209-8548. Inquiries can be made concerning the menu.

THANKS

Dear friends at OCC,

On behalf of ACTS, I want to thank you so much for the generous offering that was taken at the combined Thanksgiving service with ECC. It was such an encouragement to all of us that you chose ACTS as the ministry for this donation. We love the partnership with both churches, each one having a vibrant site of active and eager students and tutors. Good work goes on in both places in helping to motivate students to learn and grow both in their school work and in developing a relationship with God.

We are also excited about the new site which has opened this month at Bethesda Lutheran Church on Island Pond Road. Please join us in praying for that site, which is the eighth site for ACTS, and for the continuing efforts of ACTS to “provide free one-to-one tutoring and mentoring to the elementary children of Springfield in the Spirit of Christ.”

In His service, John F. Howell, Executive Director

Please extend our sincerest thanks to your congregation for its generous gift to Covenant World Relief! We are happy to partner with your church in CWR’s community development and disaster relief work around the world. Thanks again, Orchard Covenant Church, for your support.

Blessings, Kellynne Meyers

CAN YOU HELP?

Let Wally Ebner know if you are willing to help clear the snow this winter. You can’t do this in July!

Cell: 860-202-4469 or e-mail w.ebner@comcast.net.

THE HORSE AND HER BOY

From the Daily Bread of December 14, 2011

David Roper

When I was about five years old, my father decided that I needed a horse of my own to care for. So he bought an old bay mare and brought her home to me. I named her Dixie. Dixie was a formidable beast for me at my age and small stature. No saddle was small enough, no stirrups short enough for my legs, so I rode bareback most of the time. Dixie was plump, which meant that my feet stuck straight out, making it difficult to stay astride. But whenever I fell off, Dixie would simply stop, look at me, and wait while I tried to climb on her back again. This leads me to Dixie's most admirable trait: She was wonderfully patient.

I, on the other hand, was less than patient with Dixie. Yet she bore my childish tantrums with stoic patience, never once retaliating. I wish I could be more like Dixie, having patience that overlooks a multitude of offenses. How do I react when others aggravate me? Do I respond with humility and patience? To overlook an offense. To forgive 70 times 7. To bear with human frailty and failure. To show mercy and kindness to those who exasperate us. This is God's work.

FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR

The new flower calendar for 2012 is posted in Community Hall. If you would like to purchase flowers for the altar, please sign your name and what you would like the bulletin to say, on your chosen date. This is a wonderful way to remember an event or loved one, while beautifying the Sunday morning worship service. The office will order flowers for you; the cost is \$25.

WALKING ON WATER

Danusia Pringle

In our Bible Study group, we have been using John Ortberg's book, "If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat." It is an in-depth study of Matthew 14:25-32 where Peter responds to Jesus' invitation. Peter walks on water in faith, and although he falters and almost drowns, he has a profound experience that he could not have had on his own. This study is an inspiration for me personally; it is showing me that I can get out of my comfort zone to serve God, and that I can trust that He will be there if I stumble. I am willing to get my feet wet (at least a little) and see what adventures God has in store for me!

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP CLASS

Saturday, February 25, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Pastor's Study. Thinking about becoming a member? This is your first step!

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting on January 22nd opened with a video presentation by Wally Ebner of the major events of 2011 both in our region and at OCC. Pictures from the various storms highlighted the challenges of this past year.

Highlights from the meeting included:

- having an increase of 13 pledging units bringing the total to 24
 - having all of our bills paid, although there was a shortfall of \$5,618.41 from the budgeted amount of \$151,078, "thanks to careful spending and generous giving of time, energies and supplies by our faithful congregation"
 - giving to missions, including denominational support and benevolence, of \$28,522.49, which represents 18% of total giving
 - approving a sabbatical leave for Pastor Nancy of 8-10 weeks in the spring-summer of this year
 - approving the amended budget of \$158,793 which includes \$5000 for the sabbatical
 - giving thanks for our new roof and siding covered by insurance except for a \$1000 deductible
 - approving repairs and painting of the bell tower
 - receiving Danusia Pringle, Marlon and Gail Joseph into membership
 - identifying five critical success factors for 2012 which include adequate finances, continued building maintenance, new leadership development, developing mature disciples and bringing new people to Christ
- voting the following council for 2012:

Chairperson	Rich Forbes
Vice Chairperson	Jon Abrahamson
Secretary	Roberta Glassman
Treasurer	John Hayden
Financial Secretary	Danusia Pringle & Art Lawler
At Large	Evans Jumba
Care and Nurture	Toni Wapner
Christian Formation	Phil Foster
Evangelism and Outreach	Alice Jumba
Properties	Wally Ebner
Worship and Music	Mike Foster

MINISTRY FAIR

February 19 during Coffee Hour there will be displays from the various ministries of our church, which will celebrate all that we do and list ways, big and small, in which others may help. Come and consider how you might join in the ministry of Jesus here at Orchard Covenant Church!