

Spectrum

NEW COVENANT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
P.O. Box 2262, Columbia, MD 21045 (410) 370.9663
www.newcovenantmcc.org

Fasting Through Lent ~ *A Pastoral Invitation*

As the early church began a system of welcoming new Christians into the community, they saw Easter, and specifically the Great Vigil of Easter held on Saturday night, as the appropriate time for initiation. The new initiates were baptized and brought to the Communion Table for the first time in one service. As the sun rose on Easter morning, the Body of Christ was newly constituted by the addition of the baptismal candidates (called "Catechumens"). The season of Lent came from the final 40 days of preparation for the Catechumens, corresponding to the forty days of intense preparation Jesus spent in the desert.

During this more intense period, they were encouraged to simplify their lives so that any distractions might be cleared as they came closer to the life-changing day of their baptism.



The welcoming of adults and families through this initiation process fell into disuse and was reorganized throughout the years, and yet the church continued to celebrate this holy season of preparation for Easter. The season thus lost its focus on baptismal preparation, and Lent became a time for all of us to prepare and simplify our lives as we drew near to the great festival of the resurrection. Fasting was seen as a way to clear distractions and simplify one's life. (It also would ease up the demand on the limited food supplies left from winter's store.)

Some of us grew up with an image of Lent as the time to give something up. Some folks removed something that they really loved from their lives, or took some time off from a bad habit for the 40 day period, and would wait for Easter morning...(sometimes very early Easter morning) to start up again.

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New Covenant MCC Vision Statement

Creating Community

Inspiring Spiritual Growth

Transforming the World Through The Love of Christ





- **If you are worshipping with us for the first time**, we are especially glad that you are here! Please don't leave without visiting our information table in the narthex and picking up useful information about our community's life, ministry, and activities. We would love for you to fill out a **"Let's Get Acquainted Form"** and place it in the offering basket as your contribution to us this evening.
- **If you would like to become a designated "Friend"** of New Covenant MCC and receive a permanent name tag each week, please complete a green "Friend's Registration" form from the information table.
- **All guests, members, friends – please take a moment to sign the Friendship Pad** in the atrium to record your attendance. This helps us keep track of our attendance records and gives you the opportunity to indicate your interest in any of the community events that are announced.
- **Offering Envelopes** are available on the information table. If you would like us to keep a record of your giving for your tax purpose, please legibly print your name and address on the envelope. Please see an usher, host, or the pastor for any additional information about our community. Let us worship God!

Lenten Christian Education Series!
Finding Wisdom in the Book of Job
Tuesdays, 7:00 p.m.
beginning March 6

Our Christian Education program starts up again this Lent, beginning March 6th. This time around, we will study one of the most intriguing books of the Bible, the book of Job. And we will explore one of the most intriguing questions of our faith, the question with which Job wrestles: ***"Why do bad things happen to good people?"***

The series will be a five-part discussion which utilizes a similar format to the one we used last fall. We will watch an opening video reflection (15 minutes) to guide our discussion. This year, our video curriculum is presented by Dr. Charles Melchert, a professor at Lancaster Theological Seminary. Then Pastor Lance will facilitate our exploration. Don't miss out on this important opportunity to become more acquainted with the Bible and your fellow community members!

Session One (March 6): Who is Job and What's His Problem?

Session Two (March 13): The Debate between Job and His Friends

Session Three (March 20): Job Files a Lawsuit against God

Session Four (March 27): Where Shall Wisdom be Found?

Session Five (April 3): Resolution?

(continued from page 1)

I would like to invite you to re-consider the idea of fasting as we prepare for Easter in our community and in our individual lives. The idea of fasting is to clear away excess and distractions so that we can refocus on the elemental things we truly need – God’s gifts of love, sustenance, relationship, and mission. For some, limiting our food intake on days like Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and perhaps on other days throughout Lent help us reorient ourselves to these necessary gifts. For others, the absence of music on the radio or a CD player may make it very clear that something different is happening in our lives, and cause us to reflect. Perhaps it is the act of clearing away visual clutter (spring cleaning?) or the act of preparing clothes or food to give to those in need that remind us that it is God, not our “buying power”, who gives us worth and fulfills our needs.

You know best what would help you let go of excess and distractions and re-focus on the sustaining presence of God. I would encourage you to pray over it, and to make some type of fasting a part of your Lenten observance this year.

In the Spirit ~ Pastor Lance

“How to Fast”

Fast from judging others; feast on the Christ indwelling in them.

Fast from emphasis on differences; feast on the unity of all life.

Fast from apparent darkness; feast on the reality of light.

Fast from words that pollute; feast on phrases that purify.

Fast from discontent; feast on gratitude.

Fast from anger; feast on patience.

Fast from pessimism; feast on optimism.

Fast from worry; feast on trust.

Fast from complaining; feast on appreciation.

Fast from negatives; feast on affirmatives.

Fast from unrelenting pressures; feast on unceasing prayer.

Fast from hostility; feast on nonviolence.

Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness.

Fast from self-concern; feast on compassion for others.

Fast from personal anxiety; feast on eternal truth.

Fast from discouragement; feast on hope.

Fast from facts that depress; feast on truths that uplift.

Fast from lethargy; feast on enthusiasm.

Fast from suspicion; feast on truth.

Fast from thoughts that weaken; feast on promises that inspire.

Fast from idle gossip; feast on purposeful silence.



from “The Essential Lenten Handbook: A Daily Companion.”

God of the prodigal son, of the woman at the well, of Peter who denied you, and of all who are in need of repentance. We are the people who gather in your name. We are aware of our faults and weaknesses, conscious of our sins, but hopeful of your love and forgiveness. We ask that you change our hearts, liberate us from prejudice and judgment, and set us free from whatever keeps us from you. Enable us to reach out to one another with love. Permit us to recognize this gift of nourishment the pledge of your love and faithfulness. Amen.

from "The Essential Lenten Handbook: A Daily Companion."

Some notes about worship during Lent...

Liturgical Color: The color of the season is traditionally purple, the same color for the season of Advent. The two seasons have much in common as both are *preparatory* seasons that invite the faithful to reflect upon their lives and reorient their priorities in preparation for the major feasts of Christmas and Easter. Purple is traditionally a color for vigils, and it therefore calls us into the Lenten stance of vigilance as we reflect upon our spiritual lives and prepare to renew our baptismal vows at Easter.

"Fasting" from Alleluias: During Lent, we simplify our liturgy (as well as our lifestyles) so that we may concentrate on essentials. In this vein, one traditional practice has been to "bury" alleluias during Lent, refraining from singing or saying that word of praise during worship. We do this not to pretend to be gloomy or to put a hiatus on joy. Instead, this practice is meant to help us experience an appropriate austerity that will help us focus on God's presence in a different way. When we reach the end of our preparations and sing our "alleluias" in celebration of the risen Christ at Easter, we are then enabled to experience the heights of praise from a new perspective.

Two Great On-Line Resources for Lent

An online resource of six Lenten meditations is available at the link below.

<http://www.explorefaith.org/lent03/week1.html>

A very good resource on the meaning of Lent can be found at:

<http://www.cresourcei.org/cylent.html>.



Food Pantry Collection

Partnering with Oaklands Presbyterian to Transform the World!

Our host church, Oaklands Presbyterian, runs a food pantry for local individuals and families who cannot afford enough food for themselves. Oaklands works with Laurel Advocacy and Referral Service (LARS), which assesses the needs of local individuals and refers them to area churches and non-profits that supply them food. In December 2006, Oaklands provided food for 11 individuals and 14 families – that a pretty significant number of hungry folks who have been fed, especially given that Oaklands is a fairly small congregation.

New Covenant has just begun a new partnership with Oaklands to help stock and organize the pantry. **We need people to bring non-perishable food items on an ongoing basis.** *If each of our members does her/his part, we can make a significant contribution toward the world's transformation!* **Do your part – consider bringing at least one bag per month!**

For more information, please contact Penny S. or Debbie D.,

Thank you for supporting this important effort!



Regional MCC Multi-Church FUNdraiser for Social Justice!

We have been invited to partner with MCC of Northern Virginia in a collaborative venture for fellowship *and* for social justice! A regional MCC committee is forming to plan a party or dance that would serve as a fundraiser. The money raised would support an immediate MCC ministry need, most likely our denomination's important initiative to protect the extremely oppressed GLBT community in Eastern Europe.

Our own Brad E., who has extensive experience planning large-scale events of this type, has volunteered to serve on this planning committee. (Thank you, Brad!) He will be working with other area MCC leaders to coordinate this event, and he will need members of our community to help with the endeavor. If you have experience in planning community activities (or have even thrown a party in your own home!) and have some time and passion for this initiative, please let Brad know!

Special Thanks to our Shrove Tuesday Planners!

Four words: Best. Shrove. Tuesday. Ever. That about sums up my thoughts concerning our community's kick-off to the season of Lent. It was a joy to see once again how much our community members enjoy being together. The social was fun, the food was fabulous, and the hospitality was touching. I've heard from several people who have commented not only on how much fun they had at the potluck, but also how meaningful the Ash Wednesday service was for them. It was a truly intimate and inspiring way to enter this holy season of the church year.

Special thanks go to:

- our planners/organizers extraordinaire, Chris L. and Patty G.!
- our gracious host, David K., who opened up his great home for the event!
- Greg Satorie and Stacy R., who enhanced our prayer with inspiring music.
- and all of you who came and contributed your incredible culinary creations!



I'm already looking forward to next year's event!
In the Spirit,
Pastor Lance



Mark Your Calendar Now for Holy Week Worship!

This year, we have two opportunities to worship together during Holy Week. Make plans now to have a week of renewal preceding Easter!

A Lenten Service of Prayer with Anointing – Wednesday, 4 April, 7:30

On the Wednesday of Holy Week, we will be having a special worship service of readings, song, and prayer. We will include a remembrance of the last supper and the rite of anointing with oil for healing and wholeness. Stay tuned for more information.

Good Friday Worship – Friday, 6 April, 7:30

On Good Friday, we gather for our annual service of prayer and reflection upon the death of Jesus, the Christ. On this day, the church gathers to hear the proclamation of the Passion, to pray for the life of the world, and to meditate on the cross -- an instrument of torture that gives way to the New Life of God. More information will be forthcoming.

Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS

HIV/AIDS continues to affect the US African American community disproportionately, and the impact is taking a tragic toll. In 2004, African Americans accounted for 49% of the new AIDS cases diagnosed in the U.S., and according to the CDC, AIDS is among the top three leading causes of death for African American men aged 25-54. It is also among the top four causes of death for similarly aged African American women.

The 18th annual Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS takes place March 4 – 10. It is the largest AIDS awareness campaign targeting the African American community. Despite the widespread nature of the epidemic in the U.S., discrimination and stigma in the church and the community at large are still major factors contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS, and are major obstacles to HIV prevention.

For more information on the Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS, visit www.balmingilead.org.

Pray for our New Covenant Members participating in the National Black Justice Coalition Summit!

The National Black Justice Coalition will hold its 2nd Annual Black Church Summit 2007 on March 10 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The National Black Justice Coalition is a civil rights organization dedicated to empowering Black same-gender-loving, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people.

As part of the Summit, Greg Satorie and our own NCMCC ensemble will be sharing music! Participating members of our community include Stacy R., Annette D., Jamison M., and Marsha M.. Our ensemble will also be joined by Kevin and Bill, vocalists from among Greg's colleagues in Positive Voices. Please pray for them as they share the light of Christ at this important gathering.

Applications Accepted for MCC's U.S. Board of Pensions

Applications are now being accepted for appointment to the U.S. Board of Pensions of Metropolitan Community Churches.

The MCC Board of Pensions manages the pension program for U.S. clergy as well as the funds held within the pension program. The Board meets once each year in May and during each General Conference Session.

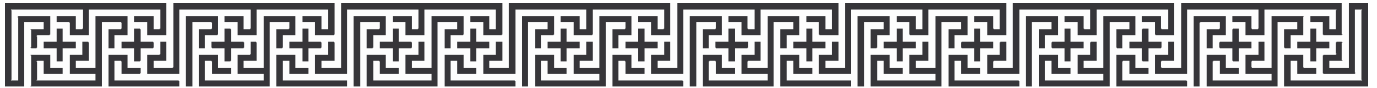
Service on the Board is appointed by the MCC Board of Elders. The term of service for the Board is four years.

Applicants should provide a resume and a minimum of three professional references, and must be willing to undergo a background check.

For additional information, and to access the on-line application form in PDF format, visit <http://www.mccchurch.org/aboutus/BOP/BOPApplication.pdf>.

Completed applications may be e-mailed to RevNancyWilson@MCCchurch.net, faxed to (941) 847- 0867 or mailed to Office of the Moderator, Metropolitan Community Churches, 3293 Fruitville Road, Suite 105, Sarasota, Florida 34237.

DEADLINE: March 15, 2007



Are you curious about what happens at a Board Meeting??

As you may know, all our Board of Directors meetings are open to any who wish to come. They take place on the first Wednesday of each month here at Oaklands. Come on Wednesday, 7 March, at 7:00 p.m. for our time of prayer and business!

And if you cannot make it but are curious about what the Board has been up to, our monthly minutes are posted on the first Sunday of each month (for the previous month's meetings). They are available in our "Board Book," which you can find in the Atrium. This is a great way to stay informed about our church's business!



MCC CONFERENCE UPDATE www.MCCchurch.org/events

Building A Global Community: *Living Our Strategic Goals and Priorities Together!*

General Conference 2007 Registration [NOW OPEN!](#)

General Conference 2007 planning is well underway and registration is NOW OPEN! We are very excited to announce new programs such as a daily Bible Study, a Theological Cafe and a Children's Vacation Bible School . We have powerful plenaries, spirit-filled worship and educational workshops planned. We have several special events to offer including a formal Awards Ceremony (think Academy Awards!) and a time to honor Rev. Elder Don Eastman during his transition into retirement. For more information about General Conference please visit our website, www.MCCchurch.org/GC2007 or email us at conferences@MCCchurch.net.

The Music Team is excited about the upcoming General Conference in Scottsdale and the many ways we will experience uplifting worship and music. To learn more about being part of the conference music ministry, for more information please contact Rev. Candy Holmes (General Conference Music Planning Team Lead) at RevCandyHolmes@MCCchurch.net.

Registration For MCC Institutes [NOW OPEN!](#)

We are pleased to offer educational institutes pre- and post- General Conference. We will celebrate Global Social Justice Day on July 1, 2007 with an Institute and a day of Music for Justice. We will offer Church Planting 101 & 201 institutes on July 7, 2007, as well as an institute on MCC's first-ever Youth Curriculum. For more information on any of the institutes or to register, please visit www.MCCchurch.org/GC2007.

Registration now open for:

July 2-6, 2007: General Conference XXIII - Scottsdale, Arizona, USA
 July 1, 2007: Global Justice Day Institute - Scottsdale, Arizona, USA
 July 7, 2007: Church Planting 101 Institute - Scottsdale, Arizona, USA
 July 7, 2007: Church Planting 201 Institute - Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

2007 Conference Calendar

June 28-30, Clergy Conference 2007 - Scottsdale, Arizona, USA
 July 2-6, General Conference XXIII - Scottsdale, Arizona, USA
 July 1, Global Social Justice Day Institute - Scottsdale, Arizona, USA
 July 7, Church Planting 101 Institute - Scottsdale, Arizona, USA
 July 7, Church Planting 201 Institute - Scottsdale, Arizona, USA
 July 7, Youth Curriculum Institute - Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

To confirm details, or for registration links, please visit:

www.MCCchurch.org/events - For all conference information
www.MCCchurch.org - MCC Churches global web portal
 or contact any member of our team.

Stay Connected! - www.LivingFusion.org



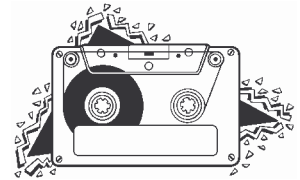


Holy Communion

If you are unable to attend a Sunday worship service due to illness or incapacity, please call Rev. Lance at 410.370.9663. He will bring Holy Communion to you the following Tuesday (or an appointment will be made for a time that is more convenient for you.)

New Covenant MCC AUDIO LIBRARY How It Works:

Is there a sermon that so moved or inspired you and you want to hear it again? Well, you can! Our audio library has tapes of the most recent sermons and our audio archives have sermons from longer than 3 months ago! The library is located in the atrium in the lavender box. Next to it there is a list of available sermons in the library and archives and the library sign out sheet. There are two ways to use our audio library: BORROW or BUY TAPES. If you want to borrow the tape simply sign out the tape on the sign out sheet and check off "borrow", then return it when you are done. If you want to buy a tape then check off "buy" on the sign out sheet and pay \$3 to cover the cost of the tape. We will be keeping the previous three months in the library, any older sermons can be requested from the archives. If you have any questions or comments you can contact Stacy R.



New Covenant MCC Yahoo Group

You can receive the electronic version of Spectrum and important announcements through our Internet discussion group on Yahoo Groups.

Send email to: NewCovenantMCC-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

or go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NewCovenantMCC/> and click join.

March 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
4 5:00 pm Music Rehearsal 6:30 pm Worship! The Second Sunday in Lent	5	6 7:00 pm Lenten Christian Education Series (Session I)	7 7:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting	8	9	10 <u>National Black Justice Coalition Summit Philadelphia.</u> Pray for our Ensemble members
11 <u>Daylight-Saving Time begins</u> 6:30 pm Worship! The Third Sunday in Lent	12	13 7:00 pm Lenten Christian Education Series (Session II)	14	15	16 7:00 pm Team Leaders' Dinner	17 <u>St. Patrick's Day</u>
18 5:00 pm Music Rehearsal 6:30 pm Worship! The Fourth Sunday in Lent	19	20 7:00 pm Lenten Christian Education Series (Session III)	21 <u>First Day of Spring</u>	22	23	24
25 5:00 pm Music Rehearsal 6:30 pm Worship! The Fifth Sunday in Lent	26 <u>The Feast of the Annunciation</u>	27 7:00 pm Lenten Christian Education Series (Session IV)	28	29	30	31

Stewardship Update and Comparison Report

February 2007

Average Weekly Attendance: 25
 Offering: \$3,471.00
 Fundraising: \$48.00
Total: \$3,519.00

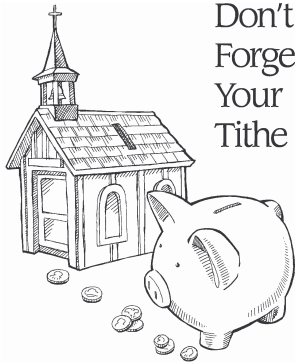
Our monthly expenses total \$4,371.07. That means that last month we collected \$900.07 less than our approved expenses. Please ensure that you are keeping up with your financial commitments to our community!

January 2007

Average Weekly Attendance: 25
 Offering: \$4,365.20
 Fundraising: \$0.00
Total: \$4,365.20

February 2006

Average Weekly Attendance: 29
 Offering: \$3,101.72
 Fundraising: \$36.00
Total: \$3,137.72



Don't
Forget
Your
Tithe

New Covenant MCC Ministry Directory

Board of Directors

Moderator	Rev. Lance Mullins (revlancem@yahoo.com)	410.370.9663
Vice Moderator	Patty G.	
Treasurer	David K.	
Clerk	Stacy R.	
Member at Large	Jamison M.	

Team Leaders

Art & Environment	Annette D.
Minister of Music	Greg Satorie
Coordinator of Worship	Jamison M.
Congregational Care Team	Bob A. Chris L.
Spectrum	Joshua Alexander
Coordinator of Internet Outreach	Joshua Alexander
Coordinator of Christian Education	OPEN

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