

Spectrum

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

Pastor's Ponderings:

Why Go to Church? Part II

"All the world's a stage and most of us are desperately unrehearsed."

~Sean O'Casey

In the last edition of Spectrum, I gave my first answer to the question "Why go to church at all?" As I wrote then, one of the primary reasons we go to church is because Jesus promised to be present with us whenever "two or three" gather in his name. When we gather as a community of Jesus-followers, we encounter the living presence of Christ in a more profound and crucial way than we can when we are alone. I hope that, when you have gathered with your sisters and brothers around God's table, you have been tangibly aware of Christ's presence. Perhaps a transformative encounter with the living Jesus in this community is what has brought you back to worship and keeps you coming regularly, even in these summer months.

As I began considering a second answer to our question, "Why go to church?", I thought of a quote by the Irish playwright and writer Sean O'Casey. Playing on the famous quote by Shakespeare, "All the world's a stage," O'Casey made a humorous and insightful addition: "All the world's a stage **and most of us are desperately unrehearsed.**" The first time I heard this quote, I immediately knew how true it was – at least for me. In so many situations, I feel that I could have benefited from a good rehearsal before being pushed out onto center stage. Do you ever have conversations... workdays... or whole weeks that you're certain could have been better if only you had been allowed a practice shot at them first?

(continued on page 3)

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!

An Important Opportunity for Ministry!

Take part in the formation of an NCMCC Children's Ministry!

Patrick H. and Pastor Lance are in conversation about the possibility of creating a new Children's Ministry at New Covenant! It is crucial that we provide support for our community's current child and for all the children who might come to us. By the Fall, we are hoping to have a "Children's Church" program available during worship on 1-2 Sundays every month, and we need a few good ministers to support this effort! All Children's Ministers will be given resources and any needed support. And all are subject to background checks and an affirmation from the Board of Directors.

If you have the slightest "nudge" to participate in this special ministry – or even if you would like to be part of the conversation as we build this program – please let Pastor Lance know! Supporting and nurturing our children is a vital way to "transform the world through the Love of Christ!"

"Let the little children come to me..." ~ Jesus (Mark 10:14)

(continued from page 1)

Well, worship can be thought of as a rehearsal for our life in the world. One of the main reasons we come together for our weekly liturgy is so that we can learn – and practice – how to engage the world as people of faith. Our worship gives us a framework for seeing the world in light of the Reign (or what Jesus called “the Kingdom”) of God. And not only do we learn to see things in light of God’s Reign, but we rehearse what life will be like *in* God’s Reign: we are welcomed home by our loving God, we confess the truth of our lives to God and to one another, we receive and share God’s mercy and forgiveness, we listen for – and proclaim – God’s Good News for the brokenhearted, we claim the faith that unites us, we speak our needs to God and to one another, we are invited – with both friends and strangers – to feast at God’s table as one family, and we are then sent forth from that table with God’s blessing in order to *offer* God’s blessing to all our neighbors in the world. This is the Reign of God “in miniature”! For an hour and fifteen minutes every Sunday, we pattern our lives together to reflect the Great Feast until it comes in its fullness.

We desperately need this weekly rehearsal, I think. To engage our daily lives as if we were already living in God’s Reign requires practice! I know I need as much rehearsal as I can get if I am to have any hope of doing the works of justice, peace, and mercy God calls us to do from day to day. Being the very presence of Christ in the midst of a world that has other priorities is hard to even envision sometimes – let alone to do. Each Sunday, we are given a new opportunity to experience the Christ-life, so that we can go forth newly equipped to live that life in the world. This is a gift worth treasuring.

And here’s an added bonus: Gathering weekly to rehearse the Reign of God not only empowers us to live lives that reflect that Reign until it comes... but it ensures that we will be well prepared to live *in* that Reign when it does get here!

I look forward to rehearsing God’s Reign with you this Sunday... and all the Sundays to come!

In the Spirit,
Pastor Lance

We’re Proud of you, Debbie and Penny!

Special thanks go to Debbie D. and Penny S. for all their work planning our booths at this year’s DC and Baltimore Pride festivals. Our tables were beautifully decorated and our “giveaways” attracted streams of people who found out about our community of faith. Plus, we raised \$328.79 for Moveable Feast, an organization that supports people living with HIV and AIDS. Thanks also go to the many folks who generously offered your time to staff the booths! Good work, people!

THANK YOU!
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!

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 an ongoing 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!



A Note of Thanks



In just eighteen days from the time this Spectrum newsletter “hits the stands,” I will be departing for this year’s MCC Mission Trip to the Dominican Republic. My participation in this mission would not be possible without the generous financial support that you have offered me. Once, again, you have shown your commitment to “transform the world through the love of Christ,” and you have also demonstrated your trust in me. The Board of Directors unanimously voted to contribute \$200 from our church’s outreach fund, and six individual “angels” within the congregation generously donated a whopping \$1400.00. In addition, another “angel” donated his time – as well as some material donations – for the fundraiser held at Remingtons in DC. Because of all these invaluable contributions, I have enough money to contribute for my share of the mission’s budget! God is truly good!

I do not receive your gifts lightly, but I pledge my full presence and participation on this mission, and I promise to represent New Covenant well. I will have lots to share with you when I return, and I look forward to “reporting back” to you, my generous supporters.

Thank you, thank you, thank you, for helping me live further into our mission to “transform the world through the love of Christ!” And thanks be to God, “from whom comes every good and perfect gift.”

In the Spirit,
Lance

**“Back to School” time is only a few weeks away...
and it's not cheap!**

Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.
-- Mark 10:14

Imagine that you're a parent, and some weeks, it's difficult for you to even put food on the table for your children. Then, imagine that you see a list of school supplies that will cost you about a hundred dollars... for *each* of your kids! Doesn't sound like a pleasant situation, does it?

New Covenant MCC has decided to help some of the less fortunate students in the Laurel area by providing them with school supplies for the 2007-2008 school year.

We're going to be buying school supplies for Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School in Laurel. (If you lived at Oaklands Presbyterian, and were in 7th or 8th grade, that's where you'd attend school!)

What we need:

- *School Supplies* – There's a list from the school in this Spectrum (see p.6). We'll have a sign-up sheet closer to the deadline, but use your own good judgment – obviously, things like paper, pencils, and pens are more important than sticky notes.
- *Your networking* – do you know someone who works in the office supply business? Would they be willing to make a contribution?
- *Help hauling* – Arthur A. is coordinating this, and will do all the hauling he can. But he just has a Prius, so if this drive is as successful as we hope, a second vehicle might be needed.

The schedule:

- Starting now – Go shopping! If you see a good price on an item on the list, buy it!
- August 12 – Last day to bring supplies to church. Please try to bring as much as possible that day – school supplies are bulky, and I don't have a lot of room to store them.
- August 13 – 17 – Deliver the supplies to Eisenhower Middle School
- August 20 – First day of school

More Information:

Contact Arthur!

School Supplies for One Child

<i>Item</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Unit Cost</i>	<i>Total</i>
3" Three Ring Binder	1	\$4.99	\$4.99
Wide Rule Notebook Paper	5	\$2.19	\$10.95
Tab Dividers	4	\$0.99	\$3.96
Pack of Blue or Black Erasable Ball Point Pens	1	\$2.69	\$2.69
12 pack of number two pencils	1	\$0.99	\$0.99
Ruler, English and Metric	1	\$0.79	\$0.79
Highlighter	1	\$0.99	\$0.99
Pencil Pouch or Bag for Inside Notebook	1	\$1.99	\$1.99
Composition Book	6	\$1.99	\$11.94
Set of Colored Pencils	2	\$2.79	\$5.58
Clear Protractor	1	\$1.99	\$1.99
Floppy Disk	1	\$0.50	\$0.50
Pack of Small or Medium Post-It Note	1	\$1.00	\$1.00
Backpack	1	\$20.00	\$20.00
Compass (the geometry kind, not the map kind!)	1	\$1.99	\$1.99
Large Box of Kleenex	1	\$2.00	\$2.00
Hand Sanitizer	1	\$5.99	\$5.99
Large Roll of Paper Towels	1	\$3.00	\$3.00
1/4" Graph Paper	1	\$3.79	\$3.79
Pocket Folders with Fasteners	2	\$0.70	\$1.40
Covered Pencil Sharpener	1	\$0.79	\$0.79
Large Fabric Book Covers	4	\$2.59	\$10.36
Several Large Pencil Erasers	5	\$0.60	\$3.00

Grand Total
\$100.68

Christian Education Update...

We wrapped up a wonderful session of Christian education last month, with our “Pride” series on “Homosexuality and the Bible.” It was a truly enriching experience, during which we re-examined our relationship with the Bible and explored what it really says (and doesn’t say!) about same-sex love. We will be taking a break for the remainder of the summer, but be on the lookout for information on our Fall series:

“Christianity 101”

This 8-part series will be held on Wednesdays at Oaklands, beginning on September 25th.

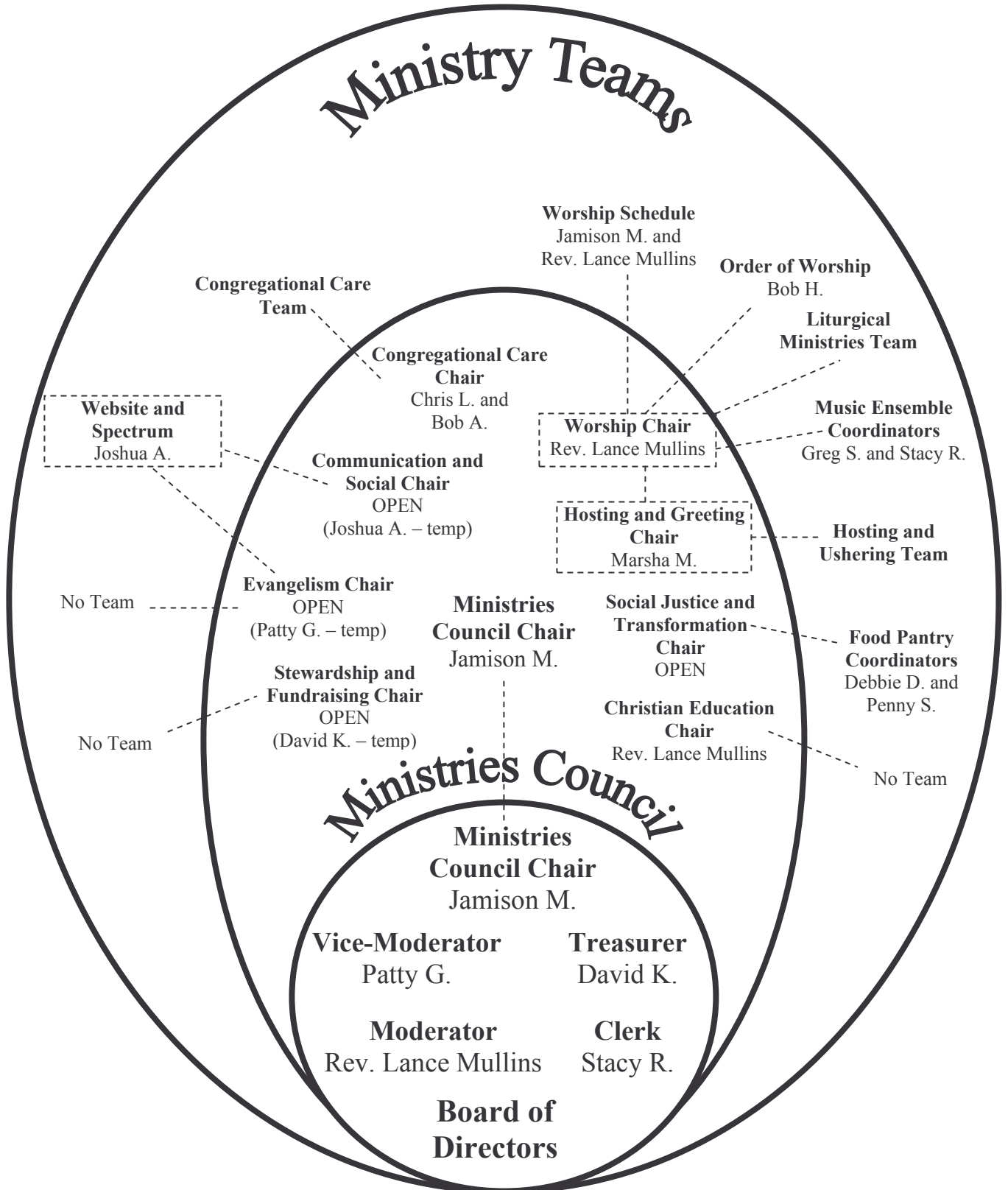
It will provide a welcoming, open forum in which participants will examine – and *reexamine* – some of the foundational practices and beliefs of the Christian faith.

In the process, we will discover anew what it means to be disciples of Christ and encourage one another to embody *the true heart of Christianity* with greater consistency and authenticity in our daily lives.

Stay tuned for more information!

Have you ever wondered how our congregation's ministries are organized?
Are you looking for a way to support our vision
or trying to find a ministry team to join?

We hope this "New Covenant Ministries Council Diagram" helps you...



It's about time to sign up for our second

Film, Food, and Faith Night

at Pastor Lance's and David's home!

On August 24th, we will have the second of two opportunities this summer to gather for a movie discussion night at the home of Pastor Lance and David in Pikesville.

Come together with your community of faith,

watch a thought-provoking *movie*,

enjoy tasty *munchies*,

and join in a *conversation*

about the film and our faith!

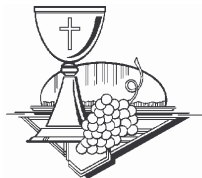
Because of size limitations, there is only room for 10 people. So stay tuned for more information and be sure to sign up when the sign up sheets are made available later this month!

Film, Food, and Faith Night II!

Friday, August 24, 7:15 p.m. - *Normal*

Although undergoing a sex change is not as unusual a procedure as it once was in days gone by, it is still hardly an everyday occurrence -- especially in rural, conservative western Illinois, where *Normal* takes place. After 25 years of marriage, Roy Applewood (Tom Wilkinson) surprises his wife, Irma (Jessica Lange) by announcing that he'd rather be a woman, and in fact has felt like a woman for most of his adult life.

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.)

Open Door MCC's Center for Spirituality

offers an exciting weekend retreat:

LIVING POSITIVELY

August 3-4

Leader: Joshua Love,
Program Director for Metropolitan Community Churches

Join us for a retreat for those living with HIV/AIDS and their partners and/or caregivers. Explore with each other what it means to live positively and develop a spirituality that gives witness to God's power in the face of HIV. COST: \$90.00

Joshua Love is a passionate advocate for LGBT health, HIV/AIDS education, and drug use and additions awareness. He travels to communities around the world to share a message of hope and spiritual renewal. He is a survivor of crystal meth addiction and HIV who brings his personal experiences to the development of community dialogues. He completed his Bachelor of Science in Human Services at Skidmore College, is currently working on his Master of Divinity at Episcopal Divinity School, and has served at the local, regional, and global level with Metropolitan Community Churches. He has participated and worked in LGBT community development and wellness for more than 16 years. Joshua's combination of personal narrative and community dialogue brings light to a set of challenging social and spiritual topics.

THE HOSTING & USHERING TEAM (HUT) IS MISSING A PIECE OF THE PUZZLE!

This piece is vitally important to our congregation. We are looking for the piece that is open to meeting new people, providing a bright candle to light our way into worship, someone who can pass a basket or direct us when it is time to share in communion.

This is not a difficult job: as a matter of fact, it is very rewarding. And the training will be provided. You do not need any special talents to participate in this team. Only a willingness to serve and to be available one or two times per month. And you will be working with other very nice, very dedicated people.

This puzzle piece will raise his or her hand and say, "Yes, I can help with the HUT Team. I can be a host, co-host or usher. I am willing."



ARE YOU OUR MISSING PIECE?

Please contact Marsha M., at the church on Sunday.

July 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 6:30 pm Worship! The Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 6:30 pm Worship! The Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 6:30 pm Worship! The Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	16	17	18	19	20 7:15 pm Film, Food, and Faith Night at Pastor Lance's and David's	21 12:00 noon Congregational Care Team Meeting (see Chris L. for location)
22 5:00 pm Music Rehearsal 6:30 pm Worship! The Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time The Feast of St. Mary Magdalene	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 4:00 pm Ministries Council Meeting 6:30 pm Worship! The Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	30	31				

August 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 7:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting	2	3	4
				 <p>August 2-7 Pastor Lance participating in a mission trip to the Dominican Republic</p>		
5 5:00 pm Music Rehearsal 6:30 pm Worship! The Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 6:30 pm Worship! The Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time <u>After worship:</u> Forum/General Conference Report by Lay Delegate Annette D.	13	14	15	16	17	18
				 <p>August 15-20 Pastor Lance on vacation</p>		
19 5:00 pm Music Rehearsal 6:30 pm Worship! The Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time	20	21	22	23	24	25 7:15 pm Film, Food, and Faith Night at Pastor Lance's and David's
26 5:00 pm Music Rehearsal 6:30 pm Worship! The Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time	27	28	29	30	31	

Stewardship Update and Comparison Report

June 2007

Average Weekly Attendance: 26
 Offering: \$4,725.10
 Fundraising: \$0.00
Total: \$4,725.10

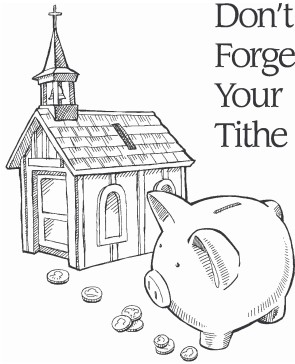
Our monthly expenses total **\$4,371.07**. That means that last month we collected **\$354.03 *more*** than our approved expenses. Thank you for your abundant generosity and commitment to Christ. Our congregation's mission is sustained by your support!

May 2007

Average Weekly Attendance: 26
 Offering: \$5,220.65
 Fundraising: \$0.00
 (Conf. Fund)
Total: \$5,220.65

June 2006

Average Weekly Attendance: 26
 Offering: \$3,707.69
 Fundraising: \$0.00
Total: \$3,707.69



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 S.
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

**Receive the electronic version of Spectrum and important announcements through our Internet Discussion group on Yahoo Groups at: NewCovenantMCC-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
