
Spectrum

NEW COVENANT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
P.O. Box 2262, Columbia, MD 21045 (410) 370.9663
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Pastor's Ponderings:

In the last two editions of Spectrum, I have used this column to explore answers to the question, "Why go to church?" In doing so, I put forth what I believe are the two most important and compelling theological reasons for regular church attendance:

1. Jesus promised to be present with us in a particularly life-giving and crucial way whenever "two or three" gather as a community in his name.
2. Our worship gives us a weekly "rehearsal" for the life of discipleship. By participating in the liturgy, we learn – and practice – how to engage the world as people of faith.



I hope my ponderings have helped you engage your own reflection concerning why you go to church. But to cap off this three-part series, we're going to explore our question from a different perspective. This week, David M., one of our church leaders (who also happens to be our resident theologian *and* my beloved life-partner), offers his own personal reflection concerning why he goes to church. I know you will find his story helpful for your continued reflection.

I'm grateful to be on the journey with you all!

In the Spirit,
Pastor Lance

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!



It's Back to School time at New Covenant!

Mark your calendars for "Christianity 101"

An exciting 8-part series held at New Covenant
on Wednesdays this Fall
beginning September 26th!

Do you have questions about Jesus, the Bible, the Church?

Do you want to deepen your personal relationship with God?

Do you desire to make friends who will help you be a better disciple?

Then mark your calendars for this (Re)Introduction to the Christian Faith!

Christianity 101 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 *deepen* our personal relationships with God, *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.

This is a ***"high-commitment"*** course, which means...

Registration is required and registrants must pledge to make attendance a high priority. You are asked to attend ***all eight*** of the sessions unless you are ill, out-of-town, or have an unavoidable conflict. To enroll, pick up a flyer from the information table in the narthex and drop it in the offering or give it to Pastor Lance. You can also contact Lance for more information.

Why Go to Church? Part III

by Dr. David M.

Why go to church?

This is a question I have pondered throughout my life. Raised as a Roman catholic, I was taught that attending church (the Mass) on Sunday was an important obligation. In fact, the obligation was so important that the church made it clear that missing Mass on Sunday was a mortal sin. In case you don't know what that means, it means that I was putting my soul in jeopardy. In the Roman Catholic tradition, mortal sins, when not confessed and absolved by a priest, could entail a trip to hell upon one's death, pending God's mercy.

Perhaps, then, it's no surprise that attending church is a topic I have considered. For many years, the fear of going to hell or the fear of at least making God unhappy was a motivation for me to go to church every week. In addition, the fact that most of my family members also believed that missing Mass was a mortal sin significantly increased the burden of my obligation. Missing Mass would be a matter of angering God and my family. Needless to say, I was very diligent about attending church. I wanted to be a good son. The fears that motivated my behavior were powerful and accompanied me through many years of my life, even as a priest.

I remember the moment when those fears failed to motivate me. I was sitting in the small guest room of the Carmel Mission in Carmel, California. I was having my morning cup of coffee and preparing to pray my morning prayers (the prayers that Roman catholic law required of me as a priest) when I realized I couldn't say another prayer or attend another Mass just to keep God, my parents, or the Roman catholic church from being angry with me. My fears didn't disappear that morning. My spirit simply had no more energy to satisfy them. I was tired of trying to make God happy with me, to make God love me. I was exhausted.

So, I stopped praying and stopped attending Mass on a regular basis and began exploring what I believed about God, the church, and my call in the world. I slowly realized that my experiences of God and of going to church didn't match well with my fears of a God who would cast me into hell because I didn't attend Mass. Going to church was one of the few moments in my week when I knew I wasn't alone in the world. There I was surrounded by my community of faith, as well as the great community of believers who had gone before me in faith. Going to church was one of the few experiences that kept me from falling into isolation. Even when I had no strength to pray, I knew I was carried along with the prayers of my community.

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Once I realized how prayer and attending church had changed my life, I renewed my commitment to both. The quality of my presence at church and at prayer is better now too. I am there, not because of my fears, but because of what I trust God can do with us and through us.

Going to church has changed me and offered me glimpses of my better self. That's not to say that going to church always made me feel good. Taking time to pause and to be reminded of my connection with God, the world, and my neighbor sometimes has left me challenged. However, the greatest grace I have encountered through attending church each week is that God offers me, offers all of us, a wider and deeper way of living. Each week I am invited to enter into God's vision for the world. Although that vision may challenge me, it excites me and assures me that with the grace of God, that vision is possible.

Attending church each week has become an important spiritual practice that gives me life. Even when I arrive feeling tired or distracted I am renewed by God's presence in the community of the faithful, in the proclamation of the Word, and in the breaking of the Bread. In your presence and through your presence, I am made anew. And I desperately need to be made anew, again and again. That's why I go to church.



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!

SAVE the DATE ~
**Fall Congregational Meeting
 and Third Anniversary Party!!**

Make plans now to attend our important Fall Congregational Meeting, followed by our Third Anniversary Party! That's right... New Covenant is turning three years old. In November we will celebrate the completion of our third year as a fully accredited MCC congregation, and we will be partying in style (of course!)

SATURDAY, 17 NOVEMBER

Congregational Meeting – afternoon, time TBD

Third Anniversary Party – immediately following

SUNDAY, 18 NOVEMBER

Anniversary Worship – 6:30 p.m.

A Special Call for Committed Leaders! Board Members Needed!

At our Congregational meeting, we will be electing officers; we have **THREE** open positions to fill. If you are a member of New Covenant and feel that you could contribute your time and gifts for this calling, we would love to encourage you to prayerfully consider serving in this way. The positions we will be electing are:

- **Clerk:** The Clerk's position is the most well-defined position on the Board, with specific instructions and clear procedures to follow. The Clerk keeps track of attendance and maintains our church database. He or she also establishes quorum and takes/distributes the minutes at Board meetings and Congregational Meetings. Last, but not least, the Clerk maintains official correspondence on behalf of the church. If you like doing simple administration and working with details, this could be the job for you!
- **Treasurer:** If you enjoy working with numbers, this position has your name written all over it! The Treasurer prepares and maintains all financial records. These include a monthly financial report to the Board of Directors and bi-annual reports to the congregation. The Treasurer keeps track of individuals' financial giving and sends out statements for tax purposes. He or she manages the church operating budget and tracks receipts, disbursements, and outstanding financial obligations. The church treasurer's position is a pretty hefty one, but it is a vital and rewarding one.
- **Lay Delegate:** The Lay Delegate represents our congregation with voice and vote at Regional and General Conferences. She or he also communicates with the congregation regarding denominational concerns and policies. To the best of its ability, the congregation funds the Lay Delegate's transportation, registration, and per diem expenses at Conferences, which means you get paid to attend exciting conferences at exotic locales! (That's a pretty cool incentive!) Lay Delegates must communicate proficiently by e-mail (to stay updated on denominational correspondence) and be able to take time off of work for the next Regional Conference and General Conference.

Each Board position is a two-year term. The Lay Delegate's term is three years. The deadline to submit a statement of intent to the Board is Wednesday, November 7th... so you have plenty of time to think it over. See any Board member for more information. Please give this your full consideration, as these positions fill a very important need and provide a great opportunity for service!

Get To Know Your MCC Neighbors

Friday and Saturday, September 7th and 8th. The Northern Sub-Regional Gathering will be held at MCC of the Lehigh Valley in Allentown, PA. \$15 per person, includes lunch.

The Northern Sub-Regional Gathering will be a great opportunity for MCCs in the central part of our region to get together for training, support, and worship. This will be a wonderful chance to meet and network with others in the region. Friday will be an evening of music and prayer. Saturday will begin with worship, with Rev. Rob Apgar-Taylor of MCC Open Door (Boys, MD) preaching. We will receive an offering to help with the cost of bringing people outside the continental U.S. to MCC gatherings. Apart from worship, the focus will be three fold: 1) Breaking the Growth Barriers; 2) Conflict Mediation - setting up effective Conflict Resolution Teams within the local church; 3) The Many Faces of Spirituality. Advance Registration required. Email today to say that you will be attending: jenniferglass@mccchurch.net

Schedule of Events:

Friday, September 7

7:30 pm Opening Event with music

Saturday, September 8

9:30 am Registration

10:00 am Worship

10:45 am Break

11:00 am Sharing Session

12:00 pm Lunch

1:00 pm Workshops:

 Breaking the Barriers

 The Many Faces of Spirituality

 Conflict Mediation

3:30 pm Closing Worship

4:30 pm Gathering Ends

We're Proud of you, Arthur!

Special thanks go to Arthur A. for all his work planning our recent school supplies drive to benefit economically disadvantaged students at Dwight Eisenhower Middle School in Laurel. The idea for this project was born from Arthur's desire to "transform the world through the love of Christ," and his organizational efforts enabled the rest of us to live more fully into this aspect of our common mission. Thanks also go to all those whose contributions packed Arthur's Prius to the brim with backpacks, notebook paper, protractors, pencils, and more!

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

September 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 5:00 pm Music Rehearsal Worship! The Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time	3	4	5 7:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting	6	7 7:30 pm Northern Sub- Regional Gathering MCC of the Lehigh Valley, Allentown, PA	8 9:30 am – 4:30 pm Northern Sub- Regional Gathering MCC of the Lehigh Valley, Allentown, PA
9 6:30 pm Worship! The Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 5:00 pm Music Rehearsal 6:30 pm Worship! The Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time	17	18	19	20	21	22
	September 17 – 21: Pastor Lance on retreat with clergy colleague group					
23 5:00 pm Music Rehearsal 6:30 pm Worship! The Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time	24	25	26 7:00 pm Christianity 101, session I	27	28	29
30 6:30 pm Worship! The Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time	1	2	3 7:00 pm Christianity 101, session II	4	5	6

Stewardship Update and Comparison Report

July 2007

Average Weekly Attendance: 27
 Offering: \$3,656.09
 Fundraising: \$0.00
Total: \$3,656.09

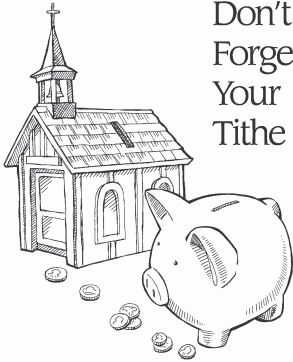
Our monthly expenses total **\$4,371.07**. That means that last month we collected **\$714.98 less** than our approved expenses. Please make sure you are current with your financial commitment to our congregation and give generously as you are able. Our congregation's mission is sustained by your support!

June 2007

Average Weekly Attendance: 26
 Offering: \$4,725.10
 Fundraising: \$0.00
 (Conf. Fund)
Total: \$4,725.10

July 2006

Average Weekly Attendance: 23
 Offering: \$4,128.85
 Fundraising: \$987.00 (conferences fund)
Total: \$4,128.85 (general fund)



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 Hosting and Ushering	Marsha M.

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