



the BRIDGE

DECEMBER 2011



Wassail: Make plans to join the rest of the FECC family in “kicking off” the Christmas season by coming to the annual Wassail on Sunday evening, Dec. 4, at 5:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Please bring some Christmas cookies to share. Come enjoy the wonderful music, fellowship and, of course, the delicious hot spiced cider.

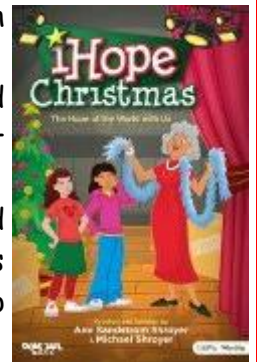
Christmas Program: The annual Christmas program will be held on Sunday morning, Dec. 18th, during the worship service. It is titled “iHope Christmas—The Hope of the World is with Us.”

A special group of kids create their own web show called “iHope Live”, based on the name of the main character - Hope. They want to do a Christmas special but feel like they need more inspiration and information before going “live.”

To find what they're looking for, they seek out Hope's great aunt, who used to be in show business. At the local theater Hope and her friends find themselves with some pretty eccentric “showbiz-type” people who inspire them and help them discover what makes Christmas spectacular. They are taught to:

- * *Vow, Listen to God's Word!*
- * *Bow, Submit to God's Word!*
- * *Now, Live out God's Word!*
- * *Wow, Celebrate our faith in God that helps point others to the saving grace of Jesus!*

Come encourage the children and the people who have been working so hard on this program and enjoy the fellowship with the FECC family. Cookies and punch will be served after the program.



Holiday Schedule:

Sun., Dec. 4—5:30 p.m. Wassail

Wed., Dec. 14—Catered holiday meal for Wednesday Night Supper (\$5 adults; \$2 kids; more details to come)

Sun., Dec. 18—Christmas Program during Worship

Sun., Dec. 25—no Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship (*note time change*)

Sun., Jan. 1—no Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Worship

Sun., Jan. 8—regular schedule resumes

Wed., Jan. 11—regular Wed. Night Activities resume

Please note:
* no Wednesday Night
Activities on Dec. 21,
Dec. 28 or Jan. 4
* no Christmas
Service on Dec. 24 Eve

[see detailed practice schedule on next page]





DECEMBER PRACTICE SCHEDULE:

Children are dismissed at 9:45 from Sunday School
on Dec. 4th and Dec. 11th
for Christmas Program practice

Sat., Dec. 3

- 1:30 pm—Worship Band practice for Christmas Program
- 2:30 pm—Musical Christmas Program practice: Choir, Children's Choir, Band
- 3:30 pm—Speaking parts for Christmas Program

Sun., Dec. 4

- 9:00 am—Choir practice for Wassail
- 9:40 am—Youth Handbell practice for Wassail
- 4:15 pm—Adult Handbell practice for Wassail
- 5:00 pm—Youth Handbell practice for Wassail
- 5:30 pm—WASSAIL

Sat., Dec. 10

- 10:00 am—Worship Band practice for Christmas Program
- 11:00 am—Musical Christmas Program practice: Choir, Children's Choir, Band
- 12:00 pm—Speaking parts for Christmas Program

Sat., Dec. 17

- 1:30 pm—Worship Band practice for Christmas Program
- 2:30 pm—Musical Christmas Program practice: Choir, Children's Choir, Band
- 3:30 pm—Speaking parts for Christmas Program

Sun., Dec. 18

- 8:45 am—Christmas Program run-through
- 10:30 am—CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP INFO:

This month for Advent we will be using a tradition called a Jesse Tree during our worship time. A Jesse tree is simply a branch or tree that has symbols representing Old Testament stories of the people who make up Jesus' family tree. These stories are important not only because they point to Jesus being born in a manger at Christmas, but describe our need for the Savior and exactly who He is.

Over the next few weeks we will be reading some of the stories and making some of the symbols for the Jesse Tree. Families may wish to make their own Jesse Tree at home, or add the ornaments to a Christmas tree. In Children's Worship we will be using devotions and ornaments found on the Reformed Church of America website www.rca.org/advent, following the links to Jesse Tree. Daily devotionals (both for families and for adults) are available, along with corresponding symbol designs that can be made into ornaments.

Children's Worship will not meet on Sunday, Dec. 25.





CHRISTMAS GREETINGS: A reminder to the church family that Covenant Women Ministries will prepare a Christmas Greeting for friends at FECC (10 words or less). They would appreciate an offering to match the cost of cards and postage—minimum is \$4.00. The Greetings may be purchased now through Sun., Dec. 18th. All donations go towards the Food Bank.

CHIC 2012 Fundraiser: “Make your list and check it twice” - to guarantee Christmas delivery of SCRIP cards, the final Sunday to make an order will be this coming Sunday, Dec. 4th.....so plan ahead!

Good news, though: SCRIP cards will continue to be sold throughout the coming months, which means they would make great birthday, anniversary, you-name-it gifts. Come support our FECC youth and make gift-giving easy on yourself!



Adopt-A-Family: Each Christmas season, instead of buying gifts for teachers, families are encouraged to purchase gifts for a family in need. This year we have 3 boys, 2 girls and a mother who need a little help this Christmas season. The families that participate in our Adopt-A-Family program are referred to us by Kids First staff or church members and we know that they have a genuine need. This is a wonderful opportunity to teach children about loving our neighbor and helping others. If you would

like to purchase items, please sign up on the lists near our sign in/out table. You may also donate gift cards for gas or groceries if you do not have a chance to sign up.

Closed: Kids First will be closed the week of December 26-30th.

Christmas Program: Mark your calendars for the annual Kids First Christmas program “T’was the night before...”! Each class will be singing and reciting Bible verses, plus our school agers will perform a traditional Christmas program telling about the birth of Jesus, along with original songs. We always hold our program in January, so that it does not conflict with other holiday activities—this year our program will be on Thursday, January 12th, at 6:30 pm. We would love to have the FECC family attend! If you would like to provide cookies or bars for the fellowship time after the program, please call Sara or Emmy Lou 402-489-8866.

2012 Council:

The nominations for the 2012 First Evangelical Covenant Church Council have been completed. The slate of officers are listed below:

- Chairman—Dan Byers
- Vice Chairman—Gary Bredensteiner
- Treasurer—Bob Timme
- Secretary—Tina Madvig
- Financial Secretary—Ron Carlson
- Christian Education—Susie Carlson
- Fellowship, Nurture and Care—Jennifer Flynn
- Outreach and Evangelism—Julie Brown
- Properties—Syl Luhring
- Stewardship—Jen Davidson
- Worship and Music—Bruce Rowe

The vote for this slate of officers will take place at the Annual Meeting in January. Please pray for these individuals. If you have any questions, please contact Julie Anderson, Nominating Committee Chair.





DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

2nd—Deb Cada
 2nd—Phil Tupper
 3rd—Eva Ehrich
 7th— Deb Swanson
 8th—Addison Byers
 8th—Cody Johnson
 9th—Dorothy Potts
 11th—Cathy Ebers
 12th—Dale Anderson
 14th—Libby Mattison
 14th—Brynn Pratt
 16th—DeAnna Masterson

17th—Tim Erickson
 20th—Allison Schinstock
 21st—Ashley Carlson
 21st—Anthony Munson
 22nd—Sally Bredensteiner
 22nd—Alison Rowe
 23rd—Dorothy Nelson
 27th—Taylor Byers
 27th—Bob Timme
 29th—Denny Miller
 31st—Jody Schultz

Nursery Workers:

Dec. 4

S.S.—Cheri Staswick

Worship—infant-Aaron Stover family
 toddler-Joy Walton; Julie Brown

Dec. 11

S.S.—Megan Shoemaker

Worship—infant-Amber Carlson; DeAnna Masterson
 toddler-Andy & Sara Voss

Dec. 18

S.S.—Moriah Reinwald

(no Worship nursery due to Christmas program)

Dec. 25

(no SS)

(no Worship nursery)

Jan. 1

(no SS)

(no Worship nursery)

December Ushers

Mark Haas
 Bruce Rowe

December Youth Ushers

Joel Ebers
 John Ebers

December Greeters

Ana Burgers
 Mark & Cathy Ebers

JHAMS

Dec. 2 and Dec. 16—7:00 pm

Middle School Girls Bible Study

Monday afternoons at Sherri's—3:30 pm

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Dec. 4, Dec. 11, and Dec. 18—2:00 pm

Sr. High Bible Study

Tuesday evenings at Staswick's—7:00 pm

Financial Update (as of 11/29/11):

General Fund:

Beginning Bal.	\$	12,558.86
Receipts		187,044.64
Expenses	-	195,610.89
Ending Balance	\$ +	3,992.61

Building Fund

Beginning Bal.	\$	20,657.44
Receipts		63,613.81
Expenses	-	64,768.00
Ending Balance	\$	19,503.25





Confirmation Program

FYI: listed below is a summary of FECC's Confirmation Program for 7th & 8th graders.

Description:

The Confirmation program is academic-style course designed to develop an intellectual base for our growing faith through study of the Bible, Biblical scholarship, and church and denomination history with the purpose of the students desiring to confirm their faith in Christ and in the tenets of the Christian faith. For many students this will be a definitive part of their spiritual journey to step out of the faith of the Christians around them and move into their own vibrant personal relationship with Christ, either through the rebirth of salvation or renewal through a maturing of their faith.

After completing the various elements of this formal study, students will have the opportunity to confirm their faith publicly through the Rite of Confirmation. Students may choose to be confirmed only if they can honestly affirm the statements of faith.

Our confirmation program is a ministry designed for middle school students, typically 7th and 8th graders. However, it is not required of middle school students. Conversely, the goals of confirmation are not limited to 7th and 8th graders. Older friends and members of the congregation who did not have a confirmation experience and are interested are encouraged to speak with the Chair of the Christian Education Ministry.

Clarifications: Confirmation is not a requirement for salvation. Nor is it required for a student to have confessed a personal faith in order to participate in the Confirmation program. We recognize that salvation or renewal may occur at any time and pray that students may come to know Christ and accept Him as Savior and Lord during the Confirmation study if they have not already done so. To participate in the Rite of Confirmation, however, a student must have accepted Christ as their personal Savior, as this is a time to publicly confirm that faith.

Goals:

- To come to faith in Christ or to see significant growth in that faith.
- To grow in understanding of the nature of God, His plan for you and the life to which he calls you.
- To live a life that reflects a growing, more mature relationship with Christ

Requirements:

At-home study—Students will be required to use the Confirmation/Discipleship journal on a regular, preferably daily, basis. As disciples, we want to spend time with Jesus, following Him, learning from Him, and developing a relationship with him. The hope is that this personal time that begins as a requirement will become a habit, and then develop into a desire and hunger for God's Word. The journal answers will not be evaluated, but will be checked to make sure you are completing the journal work. In addition to providing a beginning framework for your personal time with God, taking time to work through these questions on your own will contribute to a more interesting, meaningful, and engaged discussion in class.

Class—There is a lot of information to be covered each week. Class time will be used to bring up questions you have and to dig deeper into the material. Class meets each Wednesday evening during the school year. Regular attendance is expected.

Sermon Notes—Taking sermon notes helps you focus on the message so that you can be more engaged and begin to think critically about teachings you hear about God. In addition, you are asked to apply thoughts from the sermon to your own life. After extracting the facts from the sermon, the important question is "So what?" How is this relevant in your life? For this reason, you will turn in the sermon notes on Wednesday night, so that you may be thinking about the applications as you begin your week and then discuss the relevance with your classmates. Sermon notes are to be completed for a minimum of 12 sermons.

Building Blocks—The "Building Blocks" presented in the journal focus on basic questions regarding our faith. These questions are answered and supported by a scripture verse. The purpose of the Confirmation program is to understand and grow in our faith. As mature Christians, we need to understand what we believe and be able to articulate that understanding. To that end, each student will be required to memorize a number of these Building Blocks. Of the 28 presented in this study, each student will be familiar enough with a minimum of 14 to be able to write them out, using prompts. Each student will then choose a minimum of 5 of the Building Blocks to memorize and be able to recite, without prompts.

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