

# Country Covenant Crossroads

January 2009

Country Evangelical Covenant Church

43W510 McDonald Rd. Elgin, IL 60124

847.464.5381

[www.countrycov.org](http://www.countrycov.org)

**A Place to Believe, to Belong, and to Become**  
**Pastor Mark Harder**



## Under Construction...

This year that extra 10 pounds is coming off! That habit that's controlling me is going to be stopped this year. I'm going to be a better father, mother, parent this year. These are all great resolutions we make for ourselves each New Year.

But as a follower of Christ, what are the things that we need to work on for the coming year? Let me suggest a few to you for 2009.

1. Let the Grace of God rule in your life.  
Be a person who not only receives grace but also shares grace with others.
2. Become more like Christ.  
Don't let those around you discourage you from being Christ-like. This takes hard work and only the Holy Spirit can move you toward it.
3. Share the Good News of Christ's love with others.  
Have courage as you prepare to share your faith story with others. Begin to walk across the room.
4. Pray, Pray, Pray!  
Let prayer be your first language. The first thing you start with and the last thing you do each day.

My prayer for each of you is that God may be your focus for the New Year.

Looking forward to partnering with you to reach others with the Good News,

Pastor Mark and family



## Dates for your calendar:

- Jan. 7 – Church Council Meeting
- Jan. 14 – Wednesday Night Study begins
- Jan. 18 – Church Annual Meeting & Potluck
- Jan. 25 – Guest Preacher: Judy Peterson
- Feb. 7 – Women's Winter Retreat
- Feb. 8 – Women Ministries Sunday

## January Preaching Series:

January 4, 11, and 18 Pastor Mark's message will focus on our church mission statement:

**A Place to Believe, to Belong, and to Become**

On January 25, we'll welcome Judy Peterson back to the Country Covenant pulpit!

## Wednesdays:

How well do you answer questions on your faith? What does the Bible say?

On Wednesday nights in 2009 we will explore 26 "formational footholds of faith". These studies are for both new and mature Christians, offering resources for deeper understanding into faith.

**RockSolid** is the study guide we'll be using. It provides a journal with scripture passages and insightful articles that will help explain the footholds and their application to daily life.

Plan to join us on Wednesdays at 6:30pm.

## Annual Meeting

Our Church Annual Meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 18** following the morning worship service. This meeting includes election of council members and approval of the budget for 2009.

## Women...

Look ahead just a few weeks and reserve this date: **Saturday, February 7** for the 2009 Women's **Winter Retreat**. This will be just the fun and inspiring day you need in the middle of winter. And is there a friend you'd like to invite? Sylvia will be our presenter, and we're looking forward to a great time together between 9:30am and 2:00pm. Please tell Linda Palm or Mindy Gourley that you'll be there.

## Let the Spirit Lead!

what the Sunshine Boys & Girls have been up to...

- Window was installed in nursery door.
- Attic stairs were repaired.
- Fence sign was changed from PEACE to HOPE
- Nativity scene was set up for the Christmas season as a reminder of what happened in the manger long ago! (Thanks to the Tashe's for the use of their nativity.)
- Carpet was cleaned: parsonage basement steps, church foyer, halls and steps. If you would like to help with this expense (\$483) please note it on your check. Thanks!

## Angel Tree

On Saturday, December 20 our Angel Tree gifts were delivered. Seven families were given a Bible and Christmas books, and 18 children received both fun and clothing gifts. Thank you for your generous participation! This is a great opportunity for us to reach out and show God's love; and we're looking at continuing our connection with one of these families throughout the year.

In addition to the Angel Tree gifts, each child was given a hat, scarf, and two pairs of mittens or gloves from our overflowing mitten tree. And there were extras! These will go to Centro de Informacion. More thanks to all who made this possible!

## Outreach opportunity updates...

Our December food collection was down – only 6 bags of food items. It was announced that the buying power of [Centro de Informacion](#) is much better than our retail price of food items. For example, through the [Northern Illinois Food Bank Network](#), Centro can purchase:

- 20 lbs of frozen meat for \$5 – that's beef, pork, & chicken for .40/lb.
- cereal as low as .20/box
- pasta as low as .04/box

We asked for a cash gift instead of food items for December and we received \$125. This \$125 is equal to 25 \$5 units. If it was all spent on meat, it would purchase 500 lbs. If we estimate 1/4lb serving per person, that would equal 2000 servings! WOW!!

And on December 22, 8 people from our church helped Centro pack and deliver Christmas food baskets to about 130 area families in need.

[Russian Radio](#) offering:

November was \$84.00

## Wise words from Lynn...

Prayer for the new year –

“Keep me ever aware, God, that my life and experiences are not a mistake. Help me remember that you are allowing me to go through what I need to go through to prepare me for the joy and love I am seeking.”

## November financial information:

Receipts	\$ 13,635.74
Expenses	<u>7,036.60</u>
Difference	6,599.14

## Year-to-date financial information:

Receipts	\$ 103,500.24
Expenses	<u>113,222.80</u>
Difference	-9,722.56



### Green Tip:

More than 25 million Christmas trees are sold in the US each year. Natural Christmas trees are 100% biodegradable as long as they aren't buried in landfills. They can be recycled into mulch and hiking trail chippings. Some cities have even recycled Christmas trees into barriers for shoreline stabilization and beachfront erosion prevention. If you haven't dumped your tree yet, recycle it. Christmas-tree recycling information can be found on these websites: [www.christmastree.org](http://www.christmastree.org) and [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com)

Are you saving those **aluminum cans**? Keep them out of the landfills and we can turn them into cash for a project to be named later. Drop them off at Lynn's house or bring them to church.

### Trash to Treasure...

Are you looking for something – or have something to give away? This newsletter may be your best resource. Give your info to Nancy or Linda and it will be listed in this section...

### Reminder!

**If you're the last one out of the church, please check to be sure all the lights are turned off and the doors are locked.**

Dean Lundgren writes a newsletter for recipients of the Covenant Pension Plan (Covenant pastors, spouses, etc.) Larry Dieckman thought we would appreciate the following article from that December newsletter:

"My mother, Elsa, age 94, who had a second hip replacement in mid-November and is doing well, frequently sends me as her only son, words of advice (as only mothers can and will) including a list of ways to reduce stress. You may also find some of them helpful.

- Go to bed early and get up on time so you can start the day unrushed.
- Allow extra time to get where you are going.
- Laugh. Then laugh some more!
- Live within your budget. Don't use credit cards for ordinary purchases.
- Slow down.
- Have backups: an extra car key in your wallet, an extra house key buried in the garden, extra stamps, etc.
- Write down thoughts and inspirations.
- Keep your mouth shut (except during dental visits.)
- Develop a forgiving attitude. Most people are doing the best they can.
- Say no to projects that won't fit into your schedule or will compromise your mental health.
- Do something for the kid in you every day.
- Be kind to unkind people. They probably need it most.
- Remind yourself that you are not the general manager of the universe. "

### Newsletter info...

Do you have news for next month's newsletter? Please submit it to Nancy in the church office by **January 20**.

