

Southwest Michigan Episcopal Covenant
Announcements
November 12th, 2021

Covid Update

Masks are required at all times in all areas of our buildings.

Anyone in a ministry that brings you in contact with another person should be vaccinated. If this is a concern, please see Rev. Diane.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

1 Samuel 1:4-20

1 Samuel 2:1-10

Hebrews 10:11-14 (15-18) 19-25

Mark 13:1-8

Services this weekend: St. Joseph 9:30 am Morning Prayer
Dowagiac 10:00 am Holy Communion
Niles 9:30 am Holy Communion with organ

Rev. Diane will be offering an online Advent Study using Adam Hamilton's book, "Incarnation." We will study the four Mondays of Advent, beginning November 29th, at 6:30 pm. The book is available on Amazon in either hardback or Kindle formats. This is the link for the book. Watch here for information on the Zoom link. https://www.amazon.com/Incarnation-Rediscovering-Significance-Adam-Hamilton/dp/1791005543/ref=sr_1_3?crid=13OMJKSBU1J11&keywords=incarnation+adam+hamilton&qid=1636034781&s=books&sprefix=Incarnation%2Cstripbooks%2C115&sr=1-3

If you are interested in this class, please email Rev. Diane.
revdmpike@swmec.org

Covenant News

DOWAGIAC

- The November Food Pantry will be held early in observance of Thanksgiving. Our clients may pick up food on Saturday, November 20th. If you are available to assist, please arrive by 10:00 am.
- If you are interested in discussing the possibility of a House Church, beginning in January, please reach out to Dick Judd. He will take your name and will help with coordinating this effort.

NILES

- The November, December, January Forward Movement *Day by Day* booklets are in. Please pick one up for your daily meditations.
- If you haven't turned in your pledge card, please turn it in this week.

ST. JOSEPH

- There will be a meeting of the Lakeshore Churches on **Sunday at 2:00 pm** at St. Paul's. Anyone interested in discussion about how our four churches might work together, please join us in the parish hall.
- The **Monday Book Group** is meeting again at 10:00 each Monday morning. Come and enjoy fellowship and discussion about the books we read.
- St. Paul's will offer **CPR and/or First Aid** courses on December 5th following the service. Folks from Niles and Dowagiac are invited as well. The fee is \$30 for the two year certification. Please contact Dan Reed, Sr. Warden, at reeddox@yahoo.com, or sign up on the bulletin board.
- **Water Distribution** for our Benton Harbor neighbors is a much needed ministry in the name of St. Paul's. Those of you who have time availability during the day can Volunteer at a couple of locations depending on the day of the week. This is going to be an ongoing situation so there is ample opportunity to serve.
- If you are feeling called to **serve during worship**, we are in need of ushers, Eucharistic Visitors, Lay Readers and Leaders for Morning Prayer (training will be provided).

Mark Your Calendars

An **Advent Evensong** will be held at 4:00 pm on **Sunday, December 12th** at St. Paul's in Dowagiac. The service will be about an hour and provides an opportunity for us to be mindful about the Season of Advent.

Christmas Eve Services: Dowagiac 4:00 pm; Niles 6:30 pm; St. Joseph 9:00 pm

Christmas Lessons and Carols will be held in Dowagiac on **Sunday, December 26th**. This service will feature Christmas readings and beloved hymns and carols. It will be held at 10:00 am and will be our last event as a Covenant. Coffee Hour will follow the service.

Two volunteers for readings are needed from each congregation. Please contact Rev. Diane if you are willing to read. revdmpike@swmec.org

Covenant and Retirement Celebration Saturday, January 1st at Trinity Niles. Brunch 11:00 – 1:00. Come say farewell to our Covenant friends and to Rev. Diane as she begins a new journey of retirement.

The closing service for Dowagiac will be held on **Thursday, January 6th** for the Feast of the Epiphany. Time to be announced later.

Reflection from the Rector

*“This is the covenant that I will make with them
after those days, says the Lord:
I will put my laws in their hearts,
and I will write them on their minds,”*

For hundreds of years the Jewish people were not allowed to read the Torah. It was read in the temple and in public places by priests and scribes. It was often said that the Jews had the Torah “written on their hearts” so they could remember the teachings.

This piece of literature is found in this week's reading from Paul's letter to the Hebrews. Paul references the time when Jews had Torah written on their hearts and minds as a means of remembering the covenant made with God.

As we progress through the epistle Paul explains that the sacrifices made by humans are worthless considering the sacrifice made by Jesus. We can join the heavenly banquet by “passing through the curtain” of Jesus' own flesh. Only the

sacrifice of Jesus is sufficient to bring us forgiveness of our sins; sins that are forgiven for all time.

Paul's suggestion is that we, like the Jews, should keep the covenant of God written on our hearts and minds so that we, too, might enter a life of faithful obedience and confession. He instructs us to love each other, do good deeds in the name of Christ, gather frequently for worship, and to encourage one another in the journey.

It's a tall order, for sure. When we focus our hearts and minds on the love and Word of God Paul's commands become more doable. While we can never achieve perfection on the way, we can strive to be more than we are at this moment. In faith, all our transgressions are forgiven and forgotten. Perhaps this is a blessing for which we should strive.

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