



# THE HAPPENING

November 2016

## What's Happening

### Events

Family Movie Night  
Saturday, Nov 5th 6:30 PM

Wed Night Studies  
Dinner @ 6PM  
Classes 6:30-7:45 PM

Open Gym Thursday Evenings  
6:00 PM

### Chosen servers

Nov 6 Muller  
Nov 20 Mobley

### Inside this issue:

Office of President	3
Announcements	5-6
Nov. Birthdays/Shut-In	6
Serving in Worship	6

## November 2016 Minister's column by Rev. Craig Pinley

It started when I was in kindergarten, an after-school activity, and as I grew up and became more interested in the people then the traditions grew in importance as well. For a time, I fell away from my first love, but have returned after having had a rebirth (of sorts) in. I've been told I need more patience, but it seems like I've been waiting forever to see the fruits from my efforts.



My church experiences have helped form me as a Christ follower and my baseball experiences have often mirrored the ebbs and flows of faith in being a fan of the Chicago Cubs baseball team. When I arrived home from Stony Creek School as a kid, the Cubs would be on WGN television and I'd see the final innings of games starring such players as Milt Pappas and Billy Williams. It became a habit every bit as much as the habit of attending Trinity Evangelical Covenant Church on Sundays, where it took every bit of faith to believe in a formless God as it did a franchise that was in the midst of a 108-year championship drought.

Of course, the more you know the players, the more the story of the church or a team becomes your own and in both religion and baseball this has rung true. A decade and a half after watching Milt Pappas toss a no-hitter on TV, Milt was watching me nearly throw a no-hitter for North Central College - Milt's son Steve was a former teammate of mine and Milt had coached at North Central years earlier, so they came to watch us play.

A year out of college I was a sports editor assigning myself to a Fellowship of Christian Athletes event because Billy Williams was the guest speaker. It turns out Mr. Williams is not only a Hall of Fame ballplayer, he's a stellar Christ follower that has given gobs of time to his local church and to local charities.

At my home church, I was privy to a more personal look at Rev. Evan Goranson, who allowed himself to be vulnerable in our growing relationship and whose steadfast faith over some 40 years of ministry has provided a lens from which to examine how I want to live as a pastor. Later, as I returned to Trinity after college, I gained insight about the parents of my childhood church buddies by singing with them in the choir and it helped give understanding to the ways my friends were raised. And then on a music tour stop, I stayed at the home of a former associate pastor at Trinity when I was a kid, learning more of the inside story of our congregation.

(continued page 2)



The Evangelical Covenant Church

But alas, with both my home church and my Cubs, there was a period of disillusionment – as I ministered in a few California congregations, I was given other models of ministry to examine and in helping those churches carve out their vision for ministry, I probably grew too critical of the church that had raised me in the faith. And, with my move west, I fell out of fandom with the Cubs during a period where I was a sportswriter covering the San Diego Padres' playoff teams of the mid-1990s. By then, the Cubs were a revolving door of managers while the Padres had hired a future Hall of Fame manager and had developed a fine system of young talent.

Yet it's true we come home again (in religion and sports fandom) and I did too. In moving back to Chicago, I was able to reframe my home church experience, preaching a few times there and being reminded of all those who'd been praying for my spiritual life and affirming my evolution into ministry. The same with my Cubs – there was a 10-year period where I never saw the team win a game at Wrigley Field, yet when I attended the 2014 Cubs Convention at age 50 and heard the words, "Be patient" from the new owner of the Cubs Tom Ricketts, I actually tried to do just that. And now that patience has been rewarded with consecutive playoff appearances, a 103-win season, a hip manager that we trust, and a general manager that has already built a World Series champion elsewhere. I can endure staying up until 3 a.m. watching a playoff loss, I am willing to schedule our move to Ohio around a Tuesday night Cubs game in Cincinnati, and I can deal with being the only Cubs fan in our neighborhood, though I have one loyal Cubs fan with me at Redeemer (thanks Steve Muller).

With this rekindled appreciation for my childhood team comes a renewed understanding of the love of a church a few dozen people have had for Redeemer Church over the decades. Reading dozens of historical records and old newsletters has enabled me to see a bit into the stories of some of our longest-tenured members. It's given me pause to consider how God has worked in and through the normal ups and downs of a congregation that's been in existence for 124 years. That historical look has also crystallized a determination to examine what might help us down the road so that we'll continue to be a viable ministry presence in the area. Because, here, I'm more than just a fan, I'm considered the closest thing to a manager our team has; the season-by-season ministry calendar is an important part of what I examine and I'm called to help you grow in your spiritual walk as much as possible.

So with that in mind, I want to offer a tool to help us all in our faith journeys and thought processes about our future together as a church. On Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup> (10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.), our conference is sponsoring a multi-seminar training event at Covenant Community Church in Fairfield (near Mercy Hospital off Mack Road). A large-group session in the morning and choices among six options in the afternoon should provide some great learning opportunities together – eight have already signed up. The cost is \$35 per individual, although we'll help defray costs for anyone who needs assistance. If you want more information, call me at church (513-863-3323) or email me at [craigpin@yahoo.com](mailto:craigpin@yahoo.com).

IN CHRIST,

*Pastor Craig*



The Evangelical Covenant Church

## President of the Congregation

The leadership at Redeemer Church would like to let you know that we are anxious to begin a new year in the life of our church and to continue the mission of being part of God's arsenal in our community.

On October 9<sup>th</sup>, we held our annual congregation meeting. The tone of the meeting was one of what we would call resolved optimism. It would be disingenuous to say that we do not have matters of concern in the upcoming year. We certainly do. What church doesn't? We will pray about those issues and act upon them as God provides direction and instruction.



We are convinced that God continues to have a place for Redeemer in his plans. That being the case, we are not inclined to be pessimistic or unenthusiastic as we move into a new year in the life of Redeemer Church. Indeed, as noted above, we are resolvedly optimistic. Some would say that there's a very thin gap between being optimistic and being just plain foolish. Mark Twain had a great quote about being foolish, he said: *"I am a great and sublime fool. But then I am God's fool, and all His works must be contemplated with respect."* That's logic that is tough to argue with.

Of course, we all know that there are forces at work in this world that want to quash any hint of optimism. Those forces seek to take advantage of our very weak and frail natures to prevent us from recognizing where and in what ways God is acting in our lives. Psalms 10:9 captures this deception at its very root.

9 like a lion in cover he lies in wait.  
He lies in wait to catch the helpless;  
he catches the helpless and drags them off in his net.

Well my friends, Redeemer is not helpless. Not as long as we seek to move forward in the missions that God has set before us. The list of positive contributions that spring from the comparatively tiny seed that is Redeemer Church is astounding. We as a body of Christ followers contribute to the well-being of homeless individuals in our own community. We bring smiles to the faces of children who must deal with circumstances that many of us would have considered unbelievable and impossible in our youth. Our reach... the branches of our ministry even cross the oceans to Thailand.

It is absolutely amazing that we were able to influence twelve different and distinct ministries in the past year. It's not amazing because of the actual number. There are churches out there that probably have many more outreach programs and ministries than we do. It's amazing because we accomplished what God wanted us to do. Those are areas that were placed before us because they were important enough to God for Him to bring them to us through the loving hearts of our fellow church members. How could you not be excited knowing that you had done something that pleased God? Isn't that our goal? Don't we all want to hear those words, "this is a member of Redeemer Church, a church with which" 'I am well pleased' "?

We don't know what the coming year will bring to Redeemer Church but we pray that our efforts will be pleasing to God and in accordance with his will. That's the true measure of the health of our church. If you have been unable to attend for health reasons or other circumstances, please let us know so that we can pray for you. If you have not been attending for any other reason, consider renewing your interest in Redeemer and bring any concerns or questions you might have to the attention of leadership. Our primary mission remains...

To Know the Son, to Follow the Son and to Share the Son.

## Amanda Wittmer

(This update was sent to Pastor Craig on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 from Thailand, where Amanda has been doing mission work since early July; she'll continue her missionary work until March 2017.)

Hey Everyone!

Being in Thailand has been great! I am with Remember Nhu, which is an organization that prevents children from getting into sex slavery. I am working as an intern and living in one of the children's homes. I live with 50 Thai children, and five Thai staff, so life is always exciting. I have been trying to learn the language and really get to know the girls. It has been such a blessing to get to live life with them and get to know all their different personalities.

During the day, I have been teaching a girl English, but before I was either working on the land or cleaning the homes teams from America would stay in. Now, I am spending time teaching this girl who has been pulled out of school for behavioral issues. It's definitely been a challenge, but it has been cool to see the Lord working through our time together. On weekends, we hang out with the girls and sometimes make jewelry or practice crocheting and knitting. We play games like Uno or Spot It, and watch movies. It's just fun spending time with them and knowing them.

This week we celebrated 10 years of Remember Nhu being an organization. People came from around the world, to celebrate how much this organization has grown. There are now 65 homes in 12 countries, and it was so cool to be a part of something so big. I was also able to meet Nhu, the girl who helped start this organization. It was one of my favorite things about the trip! This past month has been crazy and jobs have changed around a lot, but it is sinking in that this is my home. I have been here longer than short-term interns, and it definitely is not a visit anymore. I cannot believe I am one-third through my trip. It has been going by so incredibly fast!

Next, plans have changed, I might be staying in Chiang Mai and working for an intervention organization here. It is called the Lighthouse, and they have a bar ministry as well as a coffee shop for women to work in. They also teach vocational skills in crafting jewelry. I would love prayer about possibly going here! With this option, I can still visit the girls at Remember Nhu and see the senior girls graduate!

Thank you to all who have donated, prayed and supported me. Because of your monthly offerings and contributions through selling my t-shirts' and giving, I am now fully funded for Remember Nhu! I could not have done it without you, my church family.

I am truly blessed by you brothers and sisters in Christ! Continuing praying for these children and ways I can serve while being here. And continued prayers on where I go after Remember Nhu! To be further updated feel free to look at my blog: [amandagwittmer.blogspot.com](http://amandagwittmer.blogspot.com) or add me on Facebook and I can add you to the Facebook group where I show more pictures and updates. God bless you all and thank you!

Amanda Wittmer



The Evangelical Covenant Church

# YOUTH GROUP

Are you a young person grades 7-12? Got one living in your house? Youth group - every Sunday night from 6:00 - 7:30pm. At the Muller's, 5612 Red Oak Ct in Fairfield. Join us for games, songs, skits, and teaching for both junior and senior high. We'll tackle some hard stuff and some

## STUDIES @ REDEEMER



### Sunday Morning

Children's Sunday School program is Dig In, from Group Publishing. Offered during both services each Sunday in the Children's wing.

### Tuesday Night Groups

Men's Study — Men Under Construction, God @ Work — 2nd & 4th weeks—7:00 to 8:30 PM  
Women's Beth Moore Study: The Patriarchs — 2nd & 4th weeks—7:00 to 8:30 PM

### Wednesday Night

Family Studies Adult and Children  
Dinner @ 6 PM—classes 6:30 - 7:45 PM

Community Thanksgiving worship service is Tuesday, Nov. 22, 7PM at First United Methodist Church, Hamilton. Pastor Craig is part of the preaching team that evening.



Come join us on Saturday, Nov 19th at 9:30 AM for the Hanging of the Greens. Share this time with others as we decorate the church in preparation for the Advent season.

