

# ***The Covenant Contact***

January 2019

## ***Light Supersedes Darkness!***



*Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Isaiah 60: 1-2*

I love what Rick Mylander said (Covenant Companion, December 2014):

*It is curious to me that the first day of winter (Dec 21) is also the first day of winter's demise. Just as we brace for winter's chill (and thunder snow!), we start receiving more light. Lengthening sunshine mocks winter, scoffs at cold, derides the bleakness, and each day thereafter, the sun rises just a little earlier and sets just a little later. Winter anticipates spring, death foresees life, dark predestines light, cold envisages warmth: these are the paradoxes of the seasonal change!*

What does this truth hold for us, given that Jesus Christ is the Light of the World and we are to shine his light?

In the passage at the top Isaiah exhorts the readers to “arise, shine.” The problems of returning from the Babylonian exile had worn them down. They felt insignificant against the world powers. They couldn’t get along with each other. Into that mix, the prophet calls on the people to “arise.” From their despair, they should lift themselves up.

Next come astonishing affirmations. The world and its people live in darkness. The darkness and the cloud represent the separation of the nations from Judah’s God. The glory of the Lord will rise upon the people. If the Lord has seemed distant and unresponsive, the people will experience the Lord’s glory. God’s

presence will be available to them. Then, the nations will come to the Judean people for light.

Then the people are exhorted to lift up their eyes (verse 4) and look around. God will bring back the exiles, both sons and daughters. The verse reminds the people of God’s promise to restore the community. It promises that God will revive them even if it seems impossible now. This experience will cause such joy that the people will experience a glow from within.

Isaiah 60 also promises that the nations will come to God’s people for light because they find their darkness so oppressive. If we lift up our own eyes, if we arise and do our ministry, letting the Lord lead us, we will find the ways that God acts to dispel the darkness of the world. That is, one person, one family at a time!

In 2019, let the Covenant Church arise to its mission and look out to see where God is working. However strong the darkness, we take heart. However powerful the rest of the world seems, God has chosen to work through the church. When we recognize the needs around us, and embrace the light of the Lord, we can arise out of any paralysis and engage in our ministry.

We have gained an hour of day light in the past few weeks! Light dispels darkness, not the other way around. Light shines into darkness; it illuminates and always will. Be filled with the light of God’s spirit every day. Light supersedes darkness! And so does our life in Christ!

*The Lord is my light and salvation; whom shall I fear!*

*In Christ, Pastor Tim*

## ***Membership Class***

This starts January 6 in the Fellowship Room and runs for 4 weeks. Anyone who is new to the church and/or seeking to become a member is invited to meet with Pastor Tim

## ***Christian Education***

**Adult Sunday School class:** January 27 begins a new adult Sunday school class. We will be running the Alpha course at 9 a.m. in the Fellowship Room. You've heard about Alpha; you may have even considered going, but perhaps it didn't work for you on a Thursday night. We are now offering it on Sunday mornings so you can come and see what it's all about! I hope you will join us; the coffee pot will be on!

**Movie Night:** Sunday January 13. Join us at 4 p.m. in the Gathering Room as we watch the award-winning film "I Can Only Imagine." The movie tells the backstory of how a song came to exist, not just any song, but the best-selling Christian single of all time. Some audiences crave conflict and drama, while others seek inspirational uplift. This story of Mercy Me's breakout song aims to satisfy the latter. Snacks will be provided; bring your own tissues!!!

## ***Leadership Workshop***

**January 12, 9:00 a.m. – Leadership Gathering: Owning Vision**  
Coffee will be on at 8:30 and we will have a time of worship, prayer, and visioning together. There will be updates from the Generosity Cohort, Prison Ministry and Safe Church background checks. All who serve on church boards and ministry leaders are invited to attend.

## ***January 20 Dedication of Altar and Potter's House Fellowship Brunch Annual Business Meeting***

This will be a meaningful Sunday, as we worship and, dedicate our church facility and ourselves anew to the Lord's work. We will have a meal together and then do the business of the church.

## ***Sermons Now Online!***

Sermons from our worship services are now online on our website. Go to [www.covchurchthomaston.org](http://www.covchurchthomaston.org) and click on Sermons to select which sermon to listen to or to share with a friend.

## ***Annual Meeting Reports Due***

Our annual meeting will be on Sunday, January 20. After worship we will share a potluck brunch, with the meeting following at noon.

**Annual Reports:** Reports to be included in the Annual Report on January 20 that are already typed are due in the Church Office by January 4. If your report will need to be typed, please submit it no later than noon on Monday, December 31. Reports are needed from:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Pastor (including entries into the church record and membership summary) | Sunday School Supt.                      |
| Financial Secretary  | Sunday School Treasurer                  |
| Treasurer/Budget Committee   | CHYG Youth Group                         |
| Missions & Evangelism Chair  | CHIC Fund Report                         |
| M & E Treasurer  | Memorial Committee Treasurer             |
| Diaconate Chair  | Women Ministries Co-Chairs               |
| Diaconate Treasurer  | WM Treasurer                             |
| Trustee Chair  | Nominating Committee (slate of officers) |
| Christian Education Chair  | Investment Committee Chair               |

The Safe Church Task Force needs to present a report.

All boards and committees are reminded to meet before the Annual Meeting on January 20 to elect officers. Diaconate, Trustees, Christian Education, and Missions & Evangelism Boards must also appoint a representative to the Nominating Committee. *(If you were Chair of any Board or Committee in 2018, please convene an organizational meeting, before January 20, of that group even if you will not be serving with that group in 2019.)*

Auditors must audit all financial records before the Annual Meeting on January 20.

## Prayer Focuses for January

- **For individuals in prison and for their families.** We are connected to a few such families. How do families manage when one is in prison? What happens when the time served is over? Pray for a clear vision of how God wants us to minister.
- **That our hearts would overflow in generous gratitude for all God has done for us through Jesus:** The Bible does not hold back about urging us to demonstrate our faith with physical acts of service, kindness, and generosity. Pray for us to become aware of where God wants us to act and to be generous toward serving him there.
- **For our government leaders.** Pray for God to guide them regardless of whether or not you agree with their politics or policies. (1 Timothy 2:1-3: First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior.)

- **For the needs of the congregation:** parents with families; our children and youth, work situations and employment conditions, marriages in trouble, persons battling cancer, addictions, and other illnesses; families of those with addictions; our elderly and shut-ins;



- **For the Potter's House ministry:** Pray about committing a certain time to staff so we can be open more hours per week (must always be two persons together). Pray about training for staff and discovering and collecting referral resources that can be passed along to visitors.
- **For the Potter's House Visitors:** Pray for them to long to know God better and to keep seeking.

## Keeping Up



- Christmas greetings from Jack and Linda Lundbom are posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.
- Thank you, Church Family, for your generosity and prayers. Christmas seemed to come early and your gift is much appreciated. We love you and love serving with you!  
*Tim and Lisa Olsen*
- Ginny Guisti's new address: 715 South Buncombe Road, Suite 231, Greer, SC 29650. She really enjoys hearing from us. Please continue to keep her in prayer.
- Thank you so much for your generous Christmas gift to me. As you already know, I love being your "churchmouse," and I deeply appreciate your love and support. *Ruth Johnson*

## Women Ministries



Women Ministries events are for all women of the church and their friends.

**Women Ministries Sunday:** This is on January 27 and Lisa Sundell Olsen will be speaking during worship.

**Officers for 2019** are: Chair, Lisa Sundell Olsen; Treasurer, Martha Tillow; Board, Elsa Hurlbert, Karen O'Connell, Ann Ryan, Sandy Miller, Dawn Johnson

### Continuing Activities

1. **Stitching with Spirit:** Monday evenings at 7:00 at Karen O'Connell's (250 Reynolds Bridge, Apt. B2, Thomaston)
2. **Women's PM Study: (for women who work during the day)** Meets in the church Library every other Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. (1/8, 1/22, 2/5, 2/19, 3/5, 3/19).
3. **Women's Study:** Meets on Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in the Potter's House. The book is an Old Testament survey, *Step by Step through the Old Testament*.
4. **Women's Book Club:** Information coming soon

## Youth Groups

**Pathfinders** is for students in Grades 2-3. The group meets once a month. The leaders are Linda Hansen and Brenda Tousignant.

Watch Sunday bulletin for announcements



**Trailblazers** is for students in Grades 4-6.

Trailblazers leaders are Rachel Ewers and Christie Grabherr. If you have questions, need to register your student or want to help out, contact Rachel Ewers (203 907-7052 or [kyliejax@optonline.net](mailto:kyliejax@optonline.net)). Sessions are 5-7 p.m.



1/6 Trailblazers  
1/13 Trailblazers  
1/20 Trailblazers  
1/27 Trailblazers

**D/C (Discipleship/Confirmation)** is our Junior High ministry. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students have two years of Bible and teaching, with close friendships, service projects, fun activities, and a retreat. The leaders are Pastor Tim and Vic Whaley. Meetings are 5-7 p.m.



1/6 5:00 pm Session 12, Jesus is King!  
1/13 **4:00 pm** Movie: *I Can Only Imagine*  
1/20 5:00 pm Session 13, The Lord's Supper  
1/27 5:00 pm Session 14, Arrest & Crucifixion

### **Feb 8-10 Winterblast Retreat**

Go to [Pilgrimpines.org](http://Pilgrimpines.org) for online registration. The church van will leave around 4:15 pm Friday and return early afternoon on Sunday.

**CHYG (Covenant High Youth Group)** is for all students in grades 9-12. Leaders are Lisa Olsen and Nick Samela. Sessions are 5-7 p.m.

1/4-1/6 **WinterFest** retreat at Lake Champion, NY

1/13 CHYG  
1/20 CHYG  
1/27 CHYG



## Missions and Evangelism

**Banquet of Blessing:** Please remember to keep us stocked (with good expire dates, please – we cannot give away out of date food).

**Benevolence Needs:** Some in our church community are struggling financially. If you are able to, please consider supporting others in need by making an extra donation to the Pastor's Benevolence Fund. Use the special envelopes in the pews or write Pastor's Benevolence Fund on your envelope or check.

## Potter's House



**The Potter's House** is open for coffee, conversation and prayer on **Friday nights, 7:00-10:00**, staffed by Peggy Steinis and Pastor Ann. A signup sheet is in the Potter's house for any who would like to share in staffing this (must be two people present always). Please share a Potter's House flyer or business card (in the Potter's House) with anyone who might want to come in.

## Meal Coordinator

Providing a meal to someone during a difficult time is one way to show how much we care. If you know someone who might benefit, contact Sandy Dunn (860 483-2015 or [daytondunn@mac.com](mailto:daytondunn@mac.com)).

## Online Giving

If you are a person who has committed to give the same amount every week or every month, this really makes sense. To set up regular online giving to the Covenant Church go to the website ([covchurchthomaston.org](http://covchurchthomaston.org)) and click on the "About" tab.

# January 2019 (Rev 12/30/2018)

Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.  
Hebrews 10:24, 25

| Sun   | Mon  | Tue   | Wed  | Thu   | Fri  | Sat   |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| <p><b>*Sunday Schedule – 9:00 Prayer in South Wing Prayer Room; 9:00 Sunday School (Adult study, Library); 10:00 Worship; 11:00 Fellowship</b></p> <p>Meetings are at the church unless otherwise indicated. Stitching with Spirit is at Karen O’Connell’s (250 Reynolds Bridge Road, Apt.B2, Thomaston).</p> |  | <p><b>1</b> NEW YEAR’S DAY</p> <p>6:30 Prayer (Potter’s)</p>  | <p><b>2</b></p> <p>6:30 NA (Fellowship)<br/>7:30 Choir</p>                 | <p><b>3</b> 6:30 Men’s Study (Potter’s)<br/>9:30 Women’s Bible Study (Potter’s)</p>                                     | <p><b>4</b></p> <p>CHYG Winterfest retreat<br/>4-9 Private (Youth Room)<br/>7-10 Potter’s House Open</p>     | <p><b>5</b></p> <p>Winterfest<br/>9:00-5:00 Private (Youth Room)</p>                            |
| <p><b>6*</b></p> <p>CHYG returns<br/>5:00 D/C, Trailblazers</p>   | <p><b>7</b> 9:30 39ers Study (Gathering)<br/>6:30 Stitching with Spirit<br/>7:00 Safe Church (Library)</p>   | <p><b>8</b></p> <p>6:30 Prayer (Potter’s)<br/>6:30 Women’s PM Study (Library)</p>                                 | <p><b>9</b></p> <p>6:30 NA (Fellowship)<br/>7:30 Choir</p>                 | <p><b>10</b> 6:30 Men’s Study (Potter’s)<br/>9:30 Women’s Bible Study (Potter’s)</p>                                    | <p><b>11</b></p> <p>7-10 Potter’s House Open</p>   | <p><b>12</b></p> <p>8:30 Leadership Visioning Workshop</p>                                      |
| <p><b>13*</b></p> <p>4:00 Movie Night<br/>5:00 CHYG, D/C, Trailblazers</p>  | <p><b>14</b> 9:30 39ers Study (Gathering)<br/>6:30 Stitching with Spirit</p>   | <p><b>15</b></p> <p>6:30 Prayer (Potter’s)</p>  | <p><b>16</b></p> <p>6:30 NA(Fellowship)<br/>7:30 Choir</p>                 | <p><b>17</b> 6:30 Men’s Study (Potter’s)<br/>9:30 Women’s Bible Study (Potter’s)<br/>1:15 Grief Support (Gathering)</p> | <p><b>18</b></p> <p>7-10 Potter’s House Open</p>   | <p><b>19</b></p>  |
| <p><b>20*</b></p> <p>11:15 Fellowship Potluck<br/>11:45 Annual Meeting<br/>5:00 CHYG, D/C, Trailblazers</p>   | <p><b>21</b> MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY<br/>Pastors to Midwinter Conf. (Denver)<br/>10:00 La Leche League (Nursery)<br/>6:30 Stitching with Spirit</p> | <p><b>22</b></p> <p>Pastors at Midwinter Conf.<br/>6:30 Prayer (Potter’s)<br/>6:30 Women’s PM Study (Library)</p> | <p><b>23</b></p> <p>Pastors at Midwinter Conf.<br/>6:30 NA(Fellowship)</p> | <p><b>24</b> 6:30 Men’s Study (Potter’s)<br/>9:30 Women’s Bible Study (Potter’s)<br/>Pastors at Midwinter Conf.</p>     | <p><b>25</b></p> <p>Pastors at Midwinter Conf.<br/>5:00 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE<br/>7-10 Potter’s House Open</p> | <p><b>26</b></p> <p>10:00 Soup Kitchen (Torrington)<br/>Pastors return from Midwinter Conf.</p> |
| <p><b>27*</b> WOMEN MINISTRIES SUNDAY<br/>5:00 CHYG, D/C, Trailblazers</p>  | <p><b>28</b></p> <p>6:30 Stitching with Spirit</p>   | <p><b>29</b></p> <p>6:30 Prayer (Potter’s)</p>  | <p><b>30</b></p> <p>6:30 NA(Fellowship)</p>                                | <p><b>31</b> 6:30 Men’s Study (Potter’s)<br/>9:30 Women’s Bible Study (Potter’s)</p>                                    |  |   |

## Volunteers: . . . through love serve one another. Galatians 5:13b

Coffee Fellowship sponsored by: Social Committee

| NURSERY (Ages 0-5) |                                   | ALTAR FLOWERS |                  | LAY READERS: |                    |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| 1/6                | Lisa Sanson<br>Emma Sanson        | 1/6           | Communion – none | 1/6          | Peggy Steinis      |
| 1/13               | Faith Hull<br>Aubrey Jackson      | 1/13          | Melanie Dobos    | 1/13         | Lisa Sundell Olsen |
| 1/20               | Melanie Dobos<br>Kiersten Sundell | 1/20          | Deb Melvin       | 1/20         | Gina Whaley        |
| 1/27               | Maja Cederberg<br>Lauren Whaley   | 1/27          | Melanie Dobos    | 1/27         | Jessica Bedosky    |
|                    |                                   | 2/3           | Communion – none |              |                    |
|                    |                                   | 2/10          | Ruth Johnson     |              |                    |
|                    |                                   | 2/17          |                  |              |                    |
|                    |                                   | 2/24          |                  |              |                    |

## Sunday School Staff

|                                    |                                       |                                   |  |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Pre-K – K Cindy Olbrys, Faith Hull | 3 – 4 Brenda Tousignant, Linda Hansen | 7 – 12 Lisa Sundell Olsen         | <b>Membership Classes<br/>(4 weeks) Pastor Tim (Fellowship Room)</b> |
| 1 – 2 Jane Stoddard, Peggy Steinis | 5 – 6 Sandra Miller                   | Adults – Mary Butkevich (Library) |  |

## Youth Staff

|                                       |                             |   |  |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| CHYG: Lisa Sundell Olsen, Nick Samela | D/C: Pastor Tim, Vic Whaley | Trailblazers: Rachel Ewers, Christie Grabherr | Pathfinders: Brenda Tousignant, Linda Hansen |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|

## January Birthdays & Anniversaries

| Birthdays |                |    |                   | Anniversaries |                         |
|-----------|----------------|----|-------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| 1         | Gordon Decker  | 7  | Roran Ewers       | 19            | Jim Tillow              |
| 2         | Lauren Whaley  | 9  | Jonathan Weisman  | 23            | Justin Kelley           |
| 3         | Geoff Dobos    | 10 | Jane Stoddard     | 23            | Dave Olbrys             |
| 3         | Craig Morton   | 10 | Jamie Weisman     | 24            | Morgan Sanson           |
| 6         | Rachel Bryden  | 11 | Joseph Carr (Jr.) | 28            | Andrew Grabherr         |
| 6         | Denise Merrill | 16 | Mary Butkevich    | 29            | Wayne Hurlbert          |
|           |                |    |                   | 29            | David Roaix             |
|           |                |    |                   | 1             | Sandra & Darrell Bishop |

## Connections:

- Pastor Tim Olsen: pastor@covchurchthomaston.org  
(Study: 860 283-9146; Home 860 283-7434)
- Pastor of Congregational Care: Gary Freimuth  
(860 283-4540 or ggfreimuth@optonline.net)
- Pastor of Visitation: Ann Carr  
(860 567-9178 or aecann@optimum.net)
- Church Chair: Antoinette Krasnowski: ann121959@optonline.net or 860 283-5925
- Treasurer: Barbara Hanley: barbhanley@snet.net or 860 459-0561
- Office "Churchmouse" Ruth Johnson: cmouse@covchurchthomaston.org  
(Office: 860 283-5071; Home: 860 605-8040)
- Prayer Chain Coordinator: Ann Carr; 860 567-9178 or aecann@optimum.net
- Meal Coordinator: Sandra Dunn; 860 483-2015 or daytondunn@mac.com