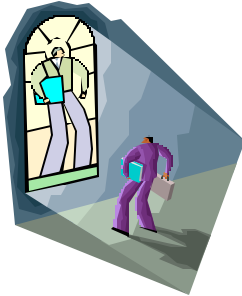


Simi Covenant Church – 4680 Alamo Street – Simi Valley, CA 93063 – Phone: 805-526-8855



From the Leadership Team

By: **Arvid Krueger**
Church Chairman

Before we head into 2005, it would not hurt to reflect on what has transpired in 2004. For some of us, it has been a time of personal joy (like maybe being grandparents for the first time), and for others it has been a very trying year and we are really glad that the year is over. Whichever it has been for you, I really hope this fact may be a comfort to you: that God has watched over us and has blessed us, no matter the circumstance. For some, it may mean really having to dig deep to find that blessing, but I know it is there.

2004 was a very significant year for the Simi Covenant family. It saw us installing Bruce as our Senior Pastor and starting a new era in our “Family.” What can be more exciting than that? We have seen the end of a very successful Dare to Dream Capital Campaign, where, in 3 short years, a congregation our size raised over \$800,000! That is truly a sign of God’s hand in this. All three Missionary outreaches to Albania, Mexico and the Philippines saw an outpouring of our generosity. We have started the search for our new Associate Pastor for Youth, which means the start of a new era for our ministry to our most important area, the youth- and future-- of our church.

What can you expect in 2005, you ask? Well, I can assure you that the Leadership Team is working on different aspects of our church ministry. One of our continual important priorities is to keep each of our family members up to speed as much as possible on what is going on. One way is

through our updated Web Page, which I encourage you to pull up and see what is happening. You will soon be hearing about another avenue the Leadership Team is working on, a series of home meetings, which will probably be held the first part of April. At these meetings, Bruce will be sharing his vision of where God is leading us. Also, the Leadership Team will be presenting for discussion such things as plans for handling the significant facility repairs that are needed.

As we start 2005, let each of us be asking God for His continual blessing of our family and also be asking Him how we can serve and be a positive force for the work ahead of us.

God bless you in 2005!



“Ask the Pastor . . .”

By: **Bruce Bruns**,
Senior Pastor

What is Tithing?

Tithes, offerings, gifts – giving. We talk about it a lot at churches and we do it for a couple of reasons. The first is very pragmatic: churches - Simi Covenant included - operate by the gifts of those who call Simi Covenant home. The simple reality is we function by the giving of our people, so we have to talk about giving.

The second, and more important reason, is that God asks us to give. A growing, healthy, mature relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ includes giving.

So what’s “tithing?” The definition of “tithe” is a tenth. For many years the church has taught tithing - giving a tenth of all you

have to God's work - as the norm. But that's not what scripture teaches. The tithe began with Abraham, when he gave a tenth of all he had to Melchizedek, the king of Jerusalem, but that "tithe," that ten percent, was not supposed to become the norm.

Here's what God expects of us when we give.

First and foremost, God wants us to give **JOYFULLY**. Our giving should not be grudging: it shouldn't be a burden. Our giving should be in grateful response to the understanding that everything we have is a gift from God. Giving should be an act of worship, not another chore.

Second, we should give **SACRIFICIALLY**. God has promised to provide for all our needs, not necessarily all our wants. That means sitting down and looking at our finances and deciding what we truly need, and what are things that we want, that we would like, but that we choose to sacrifice as an act of worship in response to God's goodness toward us.

Third, we are supposed to give **REGULARLY**. We aren't supposed to just give what we have in our pocket. We aren't supposed to give what we have "left over." Our attitude toward giving should be that it is something we have in our budget as a required monthly expense, not, "If I have it after everything else." Again, we are supposed to sit down, thoughtfully and prayerfully consider our finances, and see what we are able to give to God and to God's work on a regular basis.

Those are the basic guidelines, and here's what that means. For some of us, a "tithe," ten percent, is only the beginning of what we can give to God and God's work. For some, that ten percent is simply more than we can give at this time. Circumstances in life change and the amount we are able to give to God's work will change with it. And God understands that, as long as we give **Joyfully, Sacrificially,** and

Regularly. It's the heart that God is concerned with, not the percentage.



You're living alone, or you have no way of fixing something that's not working right at home. What do you do? In the church bulletin each week, there is a little one paragraph entry under "Care and Compassion" that says **Operation Care** and a phone number to call if you need help.

The list of repairs includes such things as a leaky faucet, a bad door latch, a bathroom fixture that's broken or needs replacing, a burned out light bulb that's out of reach and too risky to try and replace yourself. The list goes on and on. For those more complex repairs, the church has a list of people who have volunteered to help, but they can't unless you or a loved one call and let us know you need our help.

Operation Care was never meant to be a general contractor, but rather a little help for our fellow Simi Covenant Family members. We provide the labor at no charge, but if materials are needed, we'll ask you to take care of that portion. Help is available there, too, if needed. Call us. If we can do the job, we'll do it. If not, we'll recommend someone who can. One way or another we'll get it taken care of. Call me, **Gordon Holmberg**, at **583-0089**.

While we're on the subject of helping others, are you in a position to offer your handyman or professional services to our family of members? If so, please call Gordon.

"Determine that the thing can and shall be done and then...find the way."

Abe Lincoln

A Very
Special
Ministry At
Simi
Covenant
Church

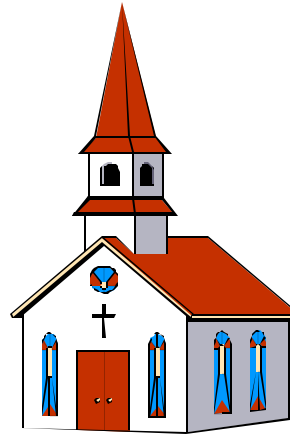


We have a little ministry here at Simi Covenant Church that some of you may not know about, while others of you have experienced it. We provide meals for families or individuals who may be recovering from an illness, surgery, or sometimes the death of a family member.

Usually, the church office will contact **Becky** or **Mariana** with the name of a family in need of meals, and they will call them to get specifics and then set up a plan. We have lists of wonderful women who have volunteered to provide a meal, and they are contacted and given the information and a date convenient for them.

Becky Wilkinson is responsible for the East end of the valley and **Mariana Abarta** for the West end, so that no meal provider has to drive too far to deliver the goodies.

Here is a list of our kitchen angels:
Cindy Norton, Judy Cameron, Norma Wozniak, Lora Simonsgaard, Sheri Stroud, Sue Klinedinst, Ann Johnson, Nina Ball, Helen Devoe, Lisa Kruse, Sue Miller, Susan Abbott, Becky Wilkinson, Mariana Abarta, Joan Miller, Polly Hammock, Cletha Hale, Judy Larsen, Martha Cope, Kathy Lowry, Alida MacKenzie, Donna Willard, Dana Margetin, Cindy Kornspan, Cindy Price, Michelle Powell, Lisa Hillner, and Stacey Borquez Many thanks to all these terrific women for making this ministry possible.



Why Do I go to Church?

We started this section in the last newsletter and here is a response much different than the one you read last issue. Why do you go to Church?

Iwould answer I come to worship my God because I love him so much. That is because I love his word, an amazing living book and I love books. From studying it, I have come to realize just a little bit how magnificent and far above anyone we can imagine in our human form in intelligence, that created unending splendid galaxies (the big worlds and the further out we get the more we find) and cells (the little worlds, his information systems so far superior to our computers or any we can even imagine) this God who did all that and so much more loves us many humans, even me. He has proven himself to me in numerous ways throughout my life and if I don't go gather with his church, which is the people of his kingdom, to worship him, I have missed something very wonderful he wanted us to do. My whole week is better, even though every day he's as near as my thoughts. (Psalm 105:4 means to always keep him on your mind.) That our service is wonderful and full of talent is a plus. We are so fortunate. Not until I understood a little about God's greatness, and what he did for us while yet sinners (Jesus) did he help me to love everybody. Aren't we an interesting, motley assortment? How dull it would be if we all looked or thought alike.

“There are no great men, only great challenges that ordinary men are forced by circumstances to meet.”

Admiral William F. Halsey

So, how would you answer the question? Submit your response to the office in a plain envelope marked newsletter editor and we'll publish it next time, anonymously if you so desire.



Thoughts & Comments from the Editor

There's less than 330 days left 'til Christmas! Better get ready now to avoid the rush. Who am I kidding? We've all got too much to worry about before December 25th rolls around again. Let's get serious for a moment.

Elsewhere in this newsletter is an article by **Greg Slocum** on the work the Facilities Committee is doing here at SCC. Greg doesn't like to boast about himself, so I'll do it for him. He's single-handedly taken on the task of identifying areas inside and outside the physical buildings that need to be addressed. The committee has prioritized them, and, because of Greg, a whole bunch of the items have been cleared up already. But there's a down side to the list. Several of the items are going to take some serious money to correct.

As most of you know, we've been in a cash crisis for several years, but *you've* turned us around, and now we must address those physical facilities issues we've neglected in the past. For example, the roof on the Worship Center needs to be replaced. The 30-year material now on the roof has failed, and we need to pull it off, repaper the roof, and put on a new cover to protect the interior.

The **east parking lot** (not all of it, just parts) needs to be totally replaced. The rest of the lot, including the area to the south of the preschool and the area around the Worship Center, needs two coats of slurry seal, and we can save that portion for a few more years.

The **bathrooms** all need renovating: tiles need to be replaced, walls strengthened, fans replaced, etc. Yes, the outside of every building needs a new coat of paint, and some of the wood needs to be replaced.

So why am I telling you this? For one, we'd like you to pray for the wisdom of how to deal with these projects. Second, **we'd like your**

input on those areas you'd be willing to subsidize over a period of time. And finally, we'd like you to think five and ten years down the road on how you'd like to see this church facility look. Give us your feedback! Please!

Changing directions for a moment, I can't get the **JOY 2004** Christmas musical out of my head. Wasn't that a wonderful testimony to our Lord and the gifts he has given to the choir and its musical director? Great job, choir. Great support staff, too! Thanks to everyone who had a part in putting the event together and presenting it to the community, free of charge.

Donuts and Coffee, what could be better on a Sunday morning? We might have to find out. In the first six months of this fiscal year, we're about \$180.00 in the red on the welcome table. What should happen is we receive enough free-will gifts each Sunday to pay for the donuts and the coffee and the super supplies. It all adds up. Coffee and Donuts are not part of the budget, so please, kick in a little each time you visit the table. Thanks.

Have you taken a look at the **Simi Covenant web site** lately? It's all new! We've changed hosts, and, consequently, the look and feel is different. Do you like it? Really, do you like it, or would you like to see something different? We'd like to hear your comments. Go to the site and at the bottom of the web page, click on **webmaster@simicovenant.org** and let us know how you feel. After all, it's your church, and we want it projected to the world in its most positive light.

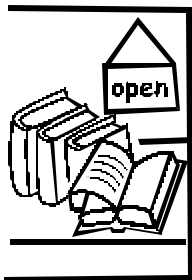
Are you aware that if you buy something, anything, from **Amazon.com**, you are supporting Simi Covenant? But only if you access Amazon.com THROUGH our web site. Don't ask how it works, but believe it does! Somehow their computer knows from where you are coming and automatically registers a "commission" to SCC, which they send to us every quarter. So the next time you need a gift, order books, toys, anything, go to www.simicovenant.org & click on **Links** then on Amazon.com. It's that simple. Let us know if you have any problems, and we'll get to the bottom of them.



Preschool News

Simi Valley's
Best Place to Be
for kids!

The highlight of the month at Covenant Preschool is our annual Science Fair on Saturday, January 22, from 9:00 to 12:00. At this event each classroom displays a variety of science experiments ready for children and parents to try. Topics include Air, Light and Dark, Optics, Senses, Magnets, and Outer Space. Children are able to make many scientific discoveries, including learning about shadows, the power of air, how a magnet works, how to make new colors, and how sound travels. This is always a popular and enjoyable event for our preschool families. We are very blessed to have the dedicated ladies on our staff, who put in many long hours preparing for this activity. They are awesome!



Reference Books in the Library!

By: **Pearl Davids**,
Church Librarian

The library has reference books of various types for those who are doing Bible study or who are curious about a person, place, or thing that is mentioned in Scripture. **Bible commentaries** are useful for figuring out what a particular story or chapter or verse in the Bible is really saying. **Bible dictionaries** are useful for definitions of words found in the Bible. A **topical Bible** is arranged around subjects, such as forgiveness or prayer. **Handbooks** include some historical background. **Concordances** will help you find where a particular verse is located, if you can

remember one or two words within the verse. Our library also includes a set of books listing all of the prophets, kings, prayers, etc. in the Bible. You will find the reference materials in the 220 area of our church library.

Missing Books: *All of the Men of the Bible* and *All of the Women of the Bible*. Both books are by Herbert Lockyear. They are royal blue with a black band on the spine. We would appreciate their return.

To check out a book, locate the card inside the book. Write your name and phone number on the card and allow yourself a month as a due date.

Be sure to use the library soon, especially if you are involved in a Bible study!

Women's Retreat Feb. 11-13 Ojai



Simi Covenant Women's Ministry is currently gearing up for our first retreat coordinated by us for us. It will take place February 11-13 in Ojai. We will have workshops on strategies for how to listen to God (**Carol Tripp**), focus time on our "girl friend connections" (**Phyllis Wilson**) and create a craft to show the light within (**Becky Wilkinson**). It will be a time to build new friendships, become renewed in the Spirit, and grow closer to God.

God is working among the women of Simi Covenant. We had an amazing turnout at our "Thanks a Latte" event and enjoyed an evening of warmth for our soul and food for our bodies (thanks to **Lynn Joseph, Susan Duffield, Lisa Kruse, Mary Hill** and **Joan Miller**).

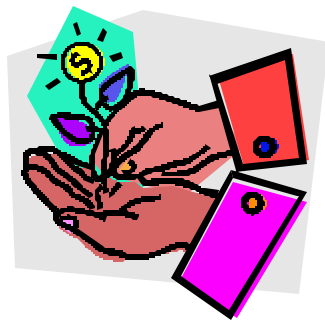
Generation to Generation Tea every month has been an awesome time of fellowship and spiritual conversion. As the generations mix, **Carynn McCann** presents thought-provoking

questions and subjects which get this group chatting and connecting with each other!.

At the end of September or beginning of October this year, will be our regional retreat, where we meet with other Covenant women from Southern California at Alpine. It is our year to sponsor the retreat, so there will be lots of places to be involved.

Lots of fun and exciting events are happening, and we really want the women of Simi Covenant to be a part of it all!

For more information about becoming involved with Women's Ministry, please contact **Rosemary Joslin at 527-2764**.



Facilities Committee

By: **Greg Slocum**

What's on your mind?

It's my great pleasure to have an opportunity to introduce you to a group of people who are serving on the Simi Covenant "Facilities Committee." The Facilities Committee was formed by your Leadership Team for the purpose of sharing thoughts and ideas about what Simi Covenant should look like in the future, specifically the grounds and the buildings. As you can see for yourselves, repairs and maintenance are needed in several areas. The people I'm about to introduce to you have itemized lists and drawings that you may see. Please look for them, and share with them your thoughts for future needs of our church campus. They will inform the Leadership Team of your ideas.

Here are the members of your "Facilities Committee:"

Nina Ball * Keith Boeshaar
Bill Cartwright * Brenda Cartwright
Martha Cope * Bob Hale
Sue Hubbard * Greg Kornspan
Randy Kruse * Lisa Kruse

Andy Lay * Jim Lowry
Pam Perry * Greg Slocum
Tracey Slocum * Al Staie
Stephanie Staie * Craig Taylor
Laurie Taylor * Chas Wilson

These Facilities Committee members are investing their time and sharing their thoughts with the Leadership Team. We are grateful for their service. They are serving you with honesty and integrity. I am happy to report to you this group has worked together with unity of spirit and purpose for what we believe God has planned for our future. We can all be proud of them and their contribution to our church family.

Let me encourage you to talk with the members of this committee. We want to hear from you, and we want you to be informed. Now, and as work progresses, there is opportunity for you to be involved with your gifts and talents. Seek them out. Ask them questions. Share your thoughts, and they will let the Leadership Team know what you are thinking. Most importantly, thank them. They are making a tremendous difference in all our lives with their contribution.

Enjoy your day; be a blessing to God, and may God bless you.



Are you interested in being part of the leadership of this church?

Every year, one half of the church's Leadership Team (LT) is replaced with new members. There are nine positions, including the Church Chairman, on the LT, plus the Senior Pastor (Bruce). New members are proposed and voted on at our June congregational meeting, and those new members serve for two years, with the possibility of one two-year extension.

Have you ever wanted to be part of the team that deals with the present and future of Simi

Covenant Church? If so, you must meet certain qualifications as outlined in the church constitution and by-laws, namely: "A Leadership Team member shall be a member of the church and shall meet the biblical standard of character for church leaders."

If you're interested in applying for one of the upcoming open positions, please contact our Church Chairman, **Arvid Krueger** either by phone or email: (805) 527-3536 arvidkrueger1@mindspring.com



Where were you in 1964?

If you were anywhere in 1964, you'd be 40 plus years old by now. That's how old Simi Covenant Church is. Actually that's how old the Evangelical Covenant Church of Simi Valley is today, as that's our legal name, in case anyone asks.

History is a funny thing. Sometimes we can remember the most insignificant facts but not remember what most people would consider big moments in their lives. So we're asking you all to think back to 1964, and tell us what you remember about this little church we call home. And if you have pictures, or articles, we'll scan them into our computers and get the originals back to you very quickly. If you have information, contact the church office and we'll take it from there.



Give Hope
The Compassion
Ministry of Simi
Covenant Church
By: **Greg Kornspan**

Oftentimes we can show the love of Jesus without using words. It is the desire of Compassion Ministry to do this and reach

others by providing for their tangible needs. By working together with other church families, one of the goals of the Compassion Ministry is to help people reconcile back to their families.

Most of the needs we meet involve critical financial situations. They may include: utility bills, insurance bills, gasoline for vehicles, shelter, and food. Currently we have a food pantry, which is organized by **Sheri Stroud**. There are also several people who continually support this ministry by supplying food for the pantry.

People are referred to Simi Covenant Church by Social Services, the Police Department, and other churches. When people come to the Compassion Ministry for help, we direct them to their real need - God. We direct people to look to God for the answers to their questions and their problems.

By showing compassion to others, we hope to plant seeds for **Jesus**. If you are not involved in this ministry and would like to be, or if you have any questions, please contact me. Thank-you for your support. His servant, **Greg Kornspan 805-368-4144**.

"I've learned that even the simplest task can be meaningful if I do it in the right spirit." Age 72

"I learned that my daddy can say a lot of words I can't." Age 8

"I've learned that couples without children always know just how you should raise yours." Age 29

"I've learned that it doesn't do any good to buy expensive tools if I can never find them." Age 41

"I've learned that after age 50 you get the furniture disease. That's when your chest falls into your drawers." Age 53

From the book: Live and Learn and Pass it on
(by H. Jackson Brown, Jr.)

Simi Covenant Church
4680 Alamo Street
Simi Valley, CA 93063

Where do you want
Simi Covenant in
Five Years? Ten?

Inside this issue you'll find

News from the Church Chairman.

Pastor Bruce explains about Tithing.

Operation Care and what it's all about.

Church Facilities and who's working on what.

Great books in our Library.

Why people go to church, one person's story.

What's new at the Preschool.

Where were you in 1964? A little Church History please.

We're looking for leaders. Are you interested?

Thoughts and comments from the Editor – Good news!

Meals from a special group of women.

Women's Ministry – Ojai, February 11-13th

Have a great 2005 everyone: invite someone to Simi Covenant!