



# Life Together

From the Pastor's Desk....

## 2011: A Year of Spiritual Breakthroughs

Dear New Covenant Saints,

Do you remember the story of Jesus healing a boy with an unclean spirit? A father in distress brings his son to Jesus' disciples. The boy is tormented by a spirit that makes him mute — and whenever that evil spirit seizes the boy, "it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid" (Mark 9:18a).

As a parent, you can imagine how you'd feel if your son or daughter was suffering like that. How desperate you would be to find help and deliverance! So you can imagine the disappointment of this father when he finds Jesus' disciples are powerless to do anything to help him: "So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able" (Mark 9:18b).

Jesus doesn't let his disciples off the hook for their lack of spiritual power. When they ask their Master, "Why could we not cast it out?," Jesus gives two penetrating answers. First, "Because of your little faith" (Matthew 17:20). And second, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer" (Mark 9:29).

Friends, there is a profound spiritual connection between powerful faith and prayer. And we're going to devote this year of our Lord, 2011, to exploring that connection.

Your elders believe that there are spiritual breakthroughs needed in our church and in our community that can only come about through believing prayer. So we intend to lead our church into a year of earnest, focused, devoted prayer for spiritual breakthroughs in specific ways.

Each month we will announce a specific prayer focus in the *Life Together* newsletter and in our weekly bulletin. We will pray about this theme in our Sunday morning worship services. Then toward the end of the month (most months on the last week of the month) we will devote a Wednesday to prayer and fasting, culminating with three hours of prayer at the church in the evening.

**Our first day of prayer and fasting will be on January 26.**

Here's a preview of the spiritual breakthroughs we are going to be praying for in 2011:

**January:** *Pray for a breakthrough of the fear of the Lord.*

**February:** *Pray for a breakthrough of holy love.*

**March:** *Pray for a breakthrough of relational reconciliation.*

**April:** *Pray for a breakthrough of power in gospel outreach.*

**May:** *Pray for a breakthrough of power in global outreach.*

**June:** *Pray for a breakthrough of the joy of the Lord.*

**July:** *Pray for a breakthrough of nationwide revival and awakening.*

**August:** *Pray for a breakthrough in the discipleship of our children & youth.*

**September:** *Pray for a breakthrough of sanctified suffering.*

**October:** *Pray for a breakthrough of biblical reformation.*

**November:** *Pray for a breakthrough of gospel gratitude.*

**December:** *Pray for a breakthrough of longing for Christ's appearing.*



(Continued on page 2)

**To bring glory to God  
through Spirit-transformed lives  
by the beauty and power of the gospel of Jesus Christ**

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## Pastor's Desk continued.....

Fasting can take on many different forms, so don't feel badly if you're unable to go without food. Maybe it will involve turning off your computer for a day so that you can have more time to meditate on the Word and to pray. Maybe it will mean skipping lunch and going out for a prayer walk. However the Holy Spirit leads you to more intensely focus your heart and mind on prayer, you can trust that there will be rich spiritual benefits for others and for yourself.

Our Wednesday prayer times will be structured so that you can come for all three hours or for just an hour — however your schedule permits. And no one will be required to pray out loud who doesn't feel comfortable doing so. All of us are just beginners when it comes to prayer — and we all can help one another to grow in our communion with God as we meet together. So be encouraged that God wants to do a great work in your life as we come to these prayer meetings. The schedule will look something like this:

**5:30-6:20:** Praise and worship; Scriptural meditation on the theme of our prayer time.

**6:30-7:20:** Focused intercession along that theme.

**7:30-8:30:** Testimonies & prayer requests for one another.

Next week's *Life Together* article will focus on how to pray for a breakthrough of the fear of the Lord during this first month of the year. For now, focus on Psalm 25:14, and ask God to teach you more about what it means to live in the fear of Him so that you can enjoy His friendship and the benefits of his covenant: "The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant."

Let's look forward expectantly to what God is going to do among us and throughout the Fox Valley region as we devote ourselves to praying for spiritual breakthroughs. A.W. Tozer encourages us like this:

"Unbelief says, 'Some other time, but not now; some other place, but not here; some other people, but not us.' Faith says, 'Anything he did anywhere else he will do here; anything he did any other time he is willing to do now; anything he ever did for other people he is willing to do for us.' With our feet on the ground, and our head cool, but with out heart ablaze with the love of God, we walk out in this fullness of the Spirit, if we will yield and obey. God wants to work through you!"

Hoping in God,

Pastor David Sunday

**Psalm 25:15**

*The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.*

**Weep With Those Who Weep**

Our hearts grieve with our dear sister, Evelyn Armstrong, as her son, Ken, went home to be with the Lord on January 5. Please pray that the peace of God which passes all understanding will continue to guard the hearts and minds of Evelyn, her children, grandchildren and extended family.

Visitation will be tomorrow, Friday, January 7, 2:00-9:00 p.m. at Ryan-Parke Funeral Home, 120 South Northwest Highway, Park Ridge, IL 60068.

A memorial service will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 8, at Northfield Community Church, 400 Wagner Road, Northfield, IL 60093.

**SPECIAL EVENT!**

**We will be having a Potluck Dinner for Matthew & Jennifer Allen & Family!**

Mark your calendar for January 16 following our morning services.

The Allen's will be leaving for Honduras and we want to have a time of fellowship with them. Be sure to plan to join us.

If you last name begins with:

A-F Bring a salad to serve 15

G-R A main dish to serve 15

S-Z A side dish to serve 15

**New Adult Ed Classes  
Begin on January 16**

**8:45 HOUR:****ISAIAH: CRUMBLING KINGDOM TO COMING KINGDOM**

Taught by Tim Axford, Dennis Freidel & Ed Leman

**REDEEMING THE REALITIES OF MARRIAGE\***

Taught by David Sommer, Ross Stern and Justin Taylor.

**10:30 HOUR:****LANDMARKS IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH (PART 1 OF 2)**

Taught by Jim Gordon and Isaac Ferrell

**MARKS OF THE MESSENGER\***

Taught by Frank Chihowski, Dave DeHaan and Marvin Newell

\*These classes "flip-flop" times in the next quarter.