

Redeeming Times

January, 2011

CHURCH OF THE
REDEEMER



Happy New Year from
The Taylors!

by Jon Taylor

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Internet Links:

www.covenantpc.com

Our home church, Covenant
Presbyterian Church in Easley,
SC

www.newlifehome.org

Our local mercy ministry, a Christian
treatment home for women and
children

www.pcanet.org

Home page of the Presbyterian
Church in America

www.intownmanchester.com

Website of events and
information about the City of
Manchester

www.redeemernh.org

Our website

The Hand of Providence

It's hard to believe that it has been a year since our last newsletter. It has been quite eventful, and one in which we have seen God's hand of Providence in our lives.

Our particular providence has been grappling with the diagnosis of our son Hudson (born April 19th) with Down Syndrome. It has caused us to search our own hearts to determine how we will measure our son's accomplishments and, more fundamentally, the source of his worth. We all think we know the answers to those questions, but when "normal" gets redefined, we need to answer them intentionally rather than taking them for granted. I believe that our own difficult providence has made us more sensitive to those difficulties borne by others, and, I pray, will help us to bear and live the gospel better where God has placed us. Thank you all for your loving words, prayers and deeds on our behalf as we have walked the beginning of this journey.

CTR Happenings:

The early months of this year saw some exciting ministry begin at CTR, the culmination of years of prayer and preparation. In January we began our first set of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes on Monday nights here at the church. We were able to hold a special Easter celebration and an end of

the year cookout where the gospel was shared with the students. It was a joy for me to visit occasionally and see the excitement among the teachers and students and the relationships being built. This Fall the ministry has grown, with at least half a dozen languages represented and both Christian and non Christian students. Our teachers are involved in the lives of their students, attending cultural events, helping with baby showers and celebrating accomplishments such as one student achieving US citizenship. I praise God for the devoted staff of this ministry and the deepening relationships.

We also completed our first Pioneer Clubs year in May with a dozen children attending regularly, most of them from the neighborhood. We've been careful to wait and watch for the Spirit's work in these children rather than pushing for a "decision," and have seen many encouraging signs. Many of these children are in verbally abusive situations at home, and they thrive on simple love and affection. This fall brought twice as many children, bringing both challenges and blessings. The children have taken special trips and had opportunities, many for the first time, to do woodworking and other crafts. We are thankful for the dedicated staff God has provided for this ministry.



Our Friday Women's Bible Study



One of our ESL students after becoming a US citizen



Girls from our Summer Kids Club



All the Taylor boys apple picking this fall



Brian Freed, my Bible story co-teacher, and I at Summer Kids' Club

It has been exciting to see how God has been calling people at CTR to take on leadership roles, especially when Allie and I needed to take several steps back later this spring and summer to help our family adjust to Hudson's arrival. Our new elders, Dan Filicicchia and Ken Butler, have helped in shepherding the congregation. Our children's ministry and ESL ministry are in capable hands. This January we revamped our worship team, enabling me to pass off leadership to capable and talented musicians. We recently became a learning site for LAMP Seminary, a PCA discipleship and training program for training leaders in the local church, with one student. This fall we also began a Sunday night discipleship program called *Veritas* (from the Latin word for "truth"). I'm teaching through the Westminster Confession of Faith while "Kids' Quest Catechism Club" and a communicants' class meets. These classes are a means of giving our congregation a solid doctrinal foundation.

This July 26-30 we held our second annual Summer Kids' Club at a nearby park from 1-3 p.m. each day. We learned lessons from last year and made some helpful changes. One thing is always sure with this ministry: there are no "sure things!" We had 50 mph winds, weed wackers, yelling crowds and children hurling insulting comments about Jesus. Through it all

our staff loved each child that attended. Several children from Kids' Club have come faithfully to Pioneer Clubs this fall.

We were privileged to host the Northern New England Presbytery Missions conference in November. Our plenary speaker was Dr. Michael Milton, CEO-elect of Reformed Theological Seminary. He spoke eloquently about the challenges of "ploughing in concrete" but inspired us with the opportunities here. We had missionaries from Romania and NNEP members who shared about mission trips in India, Uganda and New Orleans. We also heard about our newest church plant in Lewiston, Maine. It was exciting to hear the prospect of upcoming mission trips, including a trip for the youth in the presbytery. This January our presbytery welcomed Joseph Penzak, a campus minister at the University of Connecticut who will be planting a church in Burlington, Vermont. We are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. I will be traveling to Charlotte, NC in March with one of our elders to recruit an intern for the summer or fall at CTR with an eye toward possible church planting in the future.

Thank you again for your prayers and support on our behalf. It's encouraging to know that you are standing with us as we reach Manchester with the gospel.

Prayer and Praise

- We praise God for one young neighborhood girl who went to camp with a CTR family and made a profession of faith. Please pray for these children, that Christ's love would transform their broken families.
- Pray for grace and strength as we seek to help families that are broken emotionally and financially, with our limited resources.
- Pray for God to bring students to our ESL program and children to Pioneers, and for families to be

affected.

- Pray for our session as we seek to shepherd the congregation and ground them in sound doctrine.
- Pray for interns for this summer and beyond who can help us minister to Manchester.
- Our need for space is outpacing our facility. Please pray that God would guide us to just the right place and provide the funding needed.



Elena, an ESL student (in pink) at a baby shower



Some of our Pioneer Club kids on a hike



A beaming smile from Hudson

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Family Matters

I shared at our Thanksgiving service how grateful I am for God's goodness to our family. Hudson has been a marvelous reminder of how "God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong" (1 Corinthians 1:27). Hudson's smile lights up the room and brings all of us great joy. He has therapy on a weekly basis and has already met most of the specialists in the Northeast! Our church family and many guests joyfully celebrated Hudson's baptism in September.

Charlie is four and attends a musical preschool in the neighborhood three mornings a week, providing a much-needed break for Allie. He is at the same time the most spiritually sensitive and the "busiest" child of our whole crew! There is never a lack of conversation with Charlie around.

Jonathan and Jacob are blessed with a new school this year, Concord Christian Academy. We're grateful they can benefit from a school where the teachers know and love Christ. I teach a Bible class there (9th/10th grade) three mornings a week. The commute is a new experience for us, but has given us time to be together, talk, do schoolwork, and other important things (like listening to sports talk radio!).

Allie has her hands full at home with countless medical appointments for Hudson, but continues to exercise her gift of encouragement through Bible study and in the lives of women both inside and outside the church. While this season of life feels like we are in "fast-forward," we are especially grateful for the time we get to spend together as a family.

Support Status

We are so grateful for God's provision through so many of you, especially during difficult economic times. Giving financially to support this mission is a great sacrifice. Please know that we appreciate your support and value your partnership greatly.

Every year of CTR's existence, our internal giving has increased. That has continued, but we are still not yet fully self-supporting. God has met our needs and, with outside support, our income is nearly meeting our expenses. We continue to be amazed at God's provision for our needs through your faithful support.

If you are interested in partnering with us in prayer or financial support or know an individual or church that might be, please contact us via the information in this update. You can also mail a contribution to MNA at the address (on left) or give online at www.pcanet.org/mna.

