

Covenant URC

“And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’” - Romans 10:15

Our Newsletter - Covenant URC in Fresno, CA (<http://fresnourc.com>)

Issue # 1 - January 2010

Professions of Faith

It is great to start the new year with the Lord sustaining His church.

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Community Bible Study is Going!

Our community Bible study is rolling.

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Increased Visitors

Our facility is shrinking or our congregation is growing.

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Upcoming Conference

We are planning a conference to use as another avenue to open our church to the community.

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Members Using Material

It is a joy to see our members continuing to dialogue with friends and family.

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Remember Us

We appreciate your support, and ask that you would continue to do so.

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Professions of Faith

When individuals start a New Year people talk about resolutions or *New Years resolutions*. These resolutions are personal resolves to make the most out of the upcoming year, or to learn from the mistakes of the previous year. Sometimes it is the hope and prayer that the struggles of the previous year are left in that previous year.

Covenant URC in Fresno had such a hope for 2010. Covenant URC has been through some trials. At times it has been hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel. However, this year started off great for us as a church. We started the year with two professions of faith. This does not add people from the outside, but at the same time it is encouraging to start the year with people desiring to publicly profess their faith before the congregation of saints, and commit to our particular church.

In addition to the two professions of faith we had a retired couple move to Fresno from Hanford. They have requested to join our congregation. Lord willing we will receive them into our membership by the end of January. We hope that this is a sign that our church is turning a corner.

Community Bible Study

In the previous newsletters I mentioned our community Bible study. It was difficult to get this

study started. The pastor went around our office complex and tried to start a brown bag Bible study. The point of this study was for community members to get together and discuss the Bible. The pastor only received one phone call, and it was fairly discouraging. The idea was laid to rest as it seemed the Lord closed the door. However, by the providence of God, a study did get started with a member in Fresno desiring to learn more about the reformed faith.

Now, a group of five men are meeting consistently at a local Mexican restaurant in town. This particular restaurant has a buffet of really great food, and they have a sectioned off area in the front of the restaurant that makes for an accommodating place to have the study.

In the study we continue to work through the catechism Lord's Day by Lord's Day. I am happy to say that the Lord has been blessing our discussion and fellowship together. As a result of this study we have picked up a family that has been faithfully visiting our church since the end of last summer. There is also a single man who attends this study that has expressed interest in fellowshiping with our church after he finishes some obligations at his current Baptist church.

Increased Visitors

I mentioned that our church has had some trials. One of the discouraging things we experienced in the past summer and fall was the lack of visitors coming to check out our church. Well, this

year that has been changing. Our sanctuary seats 43 people and if all the congregation shows up, plus our consistent visitors, we are packed in this sanctuary. This is a nice thing for us to experience.

As a result of this growth we are in the process of searching for a new facility. One individual who knows different people in a variety of churches is trying to help us find a facility that we can share. We are very thankful for this individual's interest and concern for our church. Please pray that the Lord opens doors.

Upcoming Conference

In addition to our worship services and Bible Studies, we are having a mini conference on the five points of Calvinism. Lord willing this conference will be in May. We are going to have the conference from April 30 through May 2, 2010.

Our hope is that we can expose our community to Calvinism, and start some good edifying discussions on this topic. The name of the conference is "The Doctrines of Grace." Right now Rev. Findley, Rev. Lindemulder, and Rev. Cotta (son of an elder in our church) will be speaking. Please pray that the Lord would bless this effort as we try a different way to get our church anchored in the community.

Members Utilizing Material

One of the many compliments we get at our church is the amount of material we have on the back table. There are several reasons we do this, but one of the main reasons is so that as our members dialogue with their friends and family, they have material that they can give to them. I am happy to report that I am getting many requests and e-mails from people in our congregation about what they can give their friends about particular topics or how to answer particular questions that their friends have raised. This tells me that our people continue to dialogue with their non-Christian and non-reformed friends and family. Please pray that we see fruits of these efforts, and that these opportunities continue to manifest themselves.

Please remember us:

We want to once again thank the churches for their generosity, but also ask you to keep the following requests in your prayers:

- Please pray that we would continue to see fruits of our efforts of reaching out to the community.
- Pray that the Lord continues to sustain our church.
- Pray that the Lord would bless our efforts in this conference.
- Please pray that the Lord would continue to add to our congregation so that we will be self sufficient.
- Pray for wisdom and encouragement for pastor and elders as they discern God's will and faithfully lead His church.

Thank you again for your support and remembering us in your prayers.

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