

THE BRIDGE BUILDER
Consecration Sunday/ Women's Association Thank Offering Sunday
November 20, 2016 –Joshua 1: 1-11
The Church of the Covenant

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with the milk and honey of the Living Waters of the Holy Spirit. HE is our life. HE is our TRUTH. HE is our WAY. He leadeth me beside the still waters and into the greenest of pastures. HE, Jesus, is the new Promised Land of rich perfect, personal, intimate relationship with the One True and Living God. We pass over the BRIDGE HE has BUILT through His life and death and resurrection. Out of our wilderness of separation from God and into the new Promised Land of a rich and life-giving, powerfully alive relationship with HIM!

We say that our Mission Statement here at The Church of the Covenant is "TO KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN TO THE NEXT GENERATION." To KNOW CHRIST is to know all the riches and blessings of entry into the new Promised Land that has been prepared for us by Jesus. It is to cross out of whatever wilderness we find ourselves in, to cross over the bridge built by others for us, and into the new deep relationship with God forged by Jesus on the cross at Calvary. Its parallel is our scripture for today: "You are to pass over this Jordan, to go in, and take possession of this land." (v. 11) We are to follow Jesus on the path HE has trod, to get us into that perfect relationship with His Father, GOD. HE is the way, He is the truth, He is the Life. HE IS THE BRIDGE. No one, as John 14 notes, No one comes to the Father but by Him. We are to Know Christ and Him as the only way to life and eternal life in Him. Ah, but then we are to want to share that life with others. We have been given this gift to give away. We are the ones who are to build the bridge that others may cross in order to find HIM. Yes, we are TO KNOW CHRIST. But that is not enough. We are then also TO MAKE HIM KNOWN TO THE NEXT GENERATION. We are to build a bridge across the Jordan so that others may pass over to the other side. Out of the wilderness of death and separation from God, over the Jordan, and into the promised land of rich life-giving relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We are the BRIDGE. We are also the WAY for others to come to know HIM as we know HIM. We are the Bridge Builders for those who follow us...

This past week we hosted the very moving funeral service for Officer Scott Bashoum here in our church. Two thousand people showed up. They were all in the wilderness of feeling lost and sad. I know I was. Our church rose to the occasion, as we always do. People came out of the wilderness of loss and seeking a blessing of new Promised Land of hope. I asked for the young person who was the crucifer to sit next to me during the service. Because I wanted that young person to witness firsthand the loss and grief of the family sitting in the first pew, but also the victory of a Living Savior, Jesus Christ, coming in person to minister to the hearts of those family members, and community members, and police officers, and police officers' families. I wanted this young person to see and remember for the rest of their life what God can do. And whether we realized it or not we built a bridge this past week. People saw in our church and in our people a faith and a strength that came from the Lord. We could be strong and courageous, not because we felt like it, but because we know Christ and we know HE WILL NEVER LEAVE US NOR FORSAKE US, no matter what. We can move out of the wilderness, across the Jordan, on a bridge built for us by Christ and those who have gone before us, and into a new Promised Land. And I wanted that young person to see it for themselves, what God can do through the people of The Church of the Covenant when we choose to build a bridge.

And then I wish every person in this church could have ridden with me in that funeral procession, to see all the love being poured out by the people of our community. The tears being shed. The signs being raised. The flags being waved. The ballcaps being placed over the heart by young people. O beloved, there is a new Promised land a'coming. There is HOPE. Don't believe the naysayers. Do not fear, nor despair, nor give up hope. Be of good courage. There is a new love and a new spirit being poured out by God in our community. Through what we did here. Through being the church God is calling us to be. We built a bridge out into our community. And people experienced the new Promised Land. They knew Christ because they saw Christ in us. That's The Church of the Covenant and you can take that to the bank!!!!!!

BUILD A BRIDGE FOR SOMEONE TODAY. That fair-haired youth, too must cross in the twilight dim. Good friend, I am building this bridge for HIM! Amen and Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, Pennsylvania
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*