



**Covenant Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ)**

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Volume 26 Issue 2

### **"Instructions for Living a Life"**

Confession is good for the soul, they say. So, here goes...my Christmas tree is still up and decorated as is the fireplace mantle! Lighten up on the harsh words of judgment and hide the smirk on your face when I see you next...Better yet, I have a suggestion for those of you who kicked your tree to curb the morning of December 26; or all others who have finally swept up the last of the needles and long since packed up your decorations: contact me to sign up for the Covenant "De-decking Crew"—not to be confused with a "Wrecking Crew..."

And know that I do not stand alone...there are several other households among us in the same predicament... Of course one alternative would be to add hearts for Valentine's Day; shamrocks for St. Patrick's Day; bunnies & eggs for Easter; flames and wind chimes for Pentecost Day...Hmmm...on second thought, I'm kinda likin' this alternative...☺

Actually the ornaments & lights on the tree continue to be a welcoming sight at the end of a busy day and the candles on the mantle sparkle with a warm glow...serving as a great backdrop to quiet times of reflection. If I'm behind on taking down my tree, what makes you think I've had time for considering any personal plans for the New Year...(thank goodness, it's only January 26 as I write)...

And even if you're still able to hold fast to your 2012 resolutions and promises, I want to share something with you to ponder as I ponder; written by the contemporary poet, Mary Oliver:

**"Instructions for Living a Life:"  
Pay Attention!  
Be Astonished!  
Tell About It...**

Wow! It's a great way for us to approach not only the remaining 330 days of 2012, but as Oliver offers, our entire lives from this day forward. As I reflect on these three instructions, they sum up what God is saying to you and to me over and over again, throughout all scripture; throughout all of life's experiences.

Just think if we took these 3 instructions and made a daily prayer/mantra of them...We'd be so busy paying attention to all God is doing; being astonished by it all; & then telling about it all wherever we go; there would be no time for fussing & feuding; selfishness & greed; jealousy & pettiness; anger & hostility; keeping score or holding grudges...

What a great life it would be!--not just for ourselves but for all whom we claim as family and friends and for all the strangers we meet along the way...Take a chance as we leap into this year...such wonderful experiences of life and faith await us...*Blessings, Rev. Joanne*

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### **News from Your Moderator...**

What would you do if you suddenly had an extra day in your life? Would you spend it with your family, sandwich in some extra work at your job, or allow yourself a day off? Twenty-four extra hours.... Think of the possibilities!

This year, we have that opportunity. It's Leap Year, so we get an extra day in February. I know, I know. It falls on a Wednesday, so we'll all continue doing our usual Wednesday stuff, right? But it's an intriguing thought.

Maybe instead of wishing for an extra day, we should take a closer look at how we spend the time we have. There are lots of things out there that demand our time. What if we gave a few more minutes each day to God? What difference would it make in our lives and in the world? What about committing more of our time and talents to our church?

In the coming weeks, the Nominating Committee will be extending invitations to become leaders of this faith community in the 2012-2013 program year, as officers, elders, deacons, etc. As you think about how you spend your time, whether it's on February 29 or another day, I hope you'll consider accepting the call to one of these positions, as together we carry out our shared mission and ministry. --*Darla Baldwin, Moderator*

# Come, Satisfy the Hungry Heart

## Love and prayers are with:

Derek Edmisten and family in the recent death of Derek's grandfather, Ager Vanderburg, Boone, NC;  
Patricia Mills & family in the recent death of her great-uncle, Dr. Lawrence-Movell Clark, Sr.

**Congratulations:** Ted Glasener on the birth of a great grandson

**Recent:** At home: Jerry Miller, Sr.; Kelly Hurley & family; Suzanne Hopkins; Anne DeHart (K. Nolan);  
Fatima Falconi; Martha Ross

**Continuing Prayers:** Elaine Fry; Art & Hazel Brothers; Mary Toney;

**Parents:** Phama Larsen-Johnston; **Mothers:** Roxie White; Don Brooks; Ann Hall; **Fathers:** Jeremy Hopkins;  
Debbie Miller; Megan Larsen; **Daughter:** Hoffman's; **Grandmother:** Vicki Wilkinson; **Grandfather:** Dana  
Kropf; **Grandchildren:** Hall's; Kennel's; Sally Shelly; **Brothers:** Don Brooks; Phama Larsen Johnston; Terry  
White; **Sisters:** Kathy Smith; **Aunts:** Jeff Miller; Melanie Bunn; Ann Washington; Cathy Downs. **GranNieces:**  
Jeremy Hopkins; Sally Shelly; Patricia Mills; Terry White; **Nephew:** Misty Mowrey; Terry White. **Great Niece:**  
Nancy Jones **Great-Nephew:** Barishes. **Cousins:** Jerry Hall; Elaine Fry; Mary Lou Jackson; Terry White; **Son-**  
**in-law:** Misty Mowrey; Hoffman's ...

**Remembering Others:** the family of Kelley Canady; Michelle Day; Dave Lloyd; Suzanne Newell; Jeff Cheek;  
Dane Smith; Fabian Marquez; Adam Rubin; Cheyenne Craven-Crozier; Rev. Dr. Kay Northcutt; Christine & Sara  
Bronson; General & Regional Church Leaders; DoC new church starts...

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## Amazing Grays Luncheon

Thursday, February 16, 11:30a

Torrero's Mexican Restaurant

1207 Kildaire Farm Rd at Farmington Woods Dr, Cary (next to The Loop)

RSVP February 13 to the Church Office: 481-4715

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## Showers of Blessings



## For a Holste Family Addition!

Laura, Randy, Tate & Avery are joyously awaiting the birth of their new little one and it's time to celebrate with them! The due date is March 9! In addition to the less glamorous donations of diapers and wipes, which of course they will need, they need a double stroller and a new car seat! So that they can choose these items for themselves, along with other practical items we want to shower them with gift cards to Babies R Us and Target!

We want to do this as a church family. You can help by donating any amount to the "Holste Blessings Fund" and SCRIP cards to Target & Babies R Us will be purchased on your behalf! Make your check payable to Covenant Christian Church; earmarked "Holste Blessings Fund." We plan to present the cards to them during worship, February 26.

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## 2012 Regional Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in NC Scheduled to meet at the North Raleigh Hilton April 27-29

Regional Assembly is a big family reunion for all the NC Disciples congregations which meets every other year. This year all the DoC churches in the Coastal Plains District-from Durham to Macclesfield and all points in between, will serve as hosts for this event. A Vision Team made up of representatives from all the District churches have been hard at work for over a year now. Carole Tyler, is coordinating the musical experience for the entire event...and yes, there will be an All-Assembly Choir. Rev. Randy is working with his counterparts at Hillyer, St. Paul's CC, FCC Rocky Mount & Wake Forest CC as they plan exciting youth events.

Covenant & Wendell Christian Church congregations are responsible for Hospitality for the expected 800-1000 NC Disciples. I thought it was a great assignment since we're known for doing such a great job at making people welcome! **One of our responsibilities is to secure a variety of items to fill 1000 donated cloth bags!** Every Covenant member & guest is urged to put your thinking caps on and let Rev. Joanne know if you are willing to approach area businesses; agencies and institutions to ask for donations of 1000 items, ie. nail files; pens/pencils; coupons; small notepads, etc.

**The deadline for collecting these items is March 1—only one month away!**



## Valentine's Fundraiser Sunday, February 12, 9am-12:30pm

Serve your special someone(s) delicious gourmet treats while supporting Covenant! We will be offering truffles, cupcakes, whoopie pies and chocolate covered Oreos that will be sure to leave you wanting more! We will also be selling \$1 raffle tickets for 2 irresistible cakes for someone to take home.

We strongly encourage you to pre-order by e-mailing Suzanne Hopkins ([suzanne@hopkins-family.org](mailto:suzanne@hopkins-family.org)) or you can turn in your order form to the church office.

**The deadline for pre-orders: Tuesday, February 7.**

All orders are available for pick-up at the church, Sunday, morning February 12 from 9am-12:30pm.

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## Church Family Game Night Friday, February 24, 6-9pm We had so much fun in October, let's do it again!

Covenant challenges you...  
to a night of cards, Monopoly, UNO, Clue, etc.

There will be pizza, fun and fellowship  
with a bit of a friendly competition!

So bring your favorite game & join in the fun!  
*(Childcare available for infant and toddlers)*

**RSVP** to Covenant: [covenantcc@bellsouth.net](mailto:covenantcc@bellsouth.net) by February 22,  
so we know how much pizza to order. Thanks!

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## Covenant Proudly Presents ...



## Church Family Movie Night Friday, March 23rd: 6-9pm Featuring "The Muppets" and "The Help"

Join us as we get together to enjoy an evening of fun, food and fellowship.  
Snacks and refreshments will also be available for a great movie experience.

## Stewardship Ministry Update...

As we begin 2012, the Stewardship Ministry would like to invite you to take a moment to join us in thinking about how we are truly blessed at Covenant Christian Church. We have an abundance of Love, Caring, Creativity, Talent & Commitment. These "gifts" are blessings from God who wants us to have life and to have it abundantly.

Sometimes what we see in the physical world and from our "human" perspective does not align with what we are trying to believe spiritually. However, God asks that we have faith. And prayer can help us develop stronger faith so that we can see and believe in the abundance we already have.

In Mark 11:24, Jesus instructs us in how we can pray with faith: **"Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you."**

With this teaching in mind, the Stewardship Ministry challenges us to take time this week to stop and pray an affirmative prayer for the abundance that we that we all have as God's children and together here at Covenant.

As our faith becomes stronger, Luke 6:38 reminds us of the "law of reciprocity"—giving and receiving: **"...give and it will be given to you., A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back..."**

As we start this New Year and look for ways to strengthen Covenant's mission to share God's Love with the world, consider the different ways we can be living witnesses of Jesus' "law of reciprocity" as we give of our money as well as our time, energy & creativity. Here are a few suggestions:

- Plan ahead and find ways to participate in **The SCRIP Program**—it generated over \$3000 toward last year's Operating Budget. We believe that this number could double or even triple this year.
- Shop for Valentine's Day gifts at **Covenant's Valentine Bake-Sale** by buying Valentine's candies, cupcakes & goodies...order by February 7 with pickup on February 12!
- **Spring Daze**, Saturday, April 28 is one of our major fundraisers. This year is especially challenging as this is the same weekend we are helping to host the Regional Assembly of the Christian Church (DoC) in NC-Yikes! Consider helping with setup; food prep & sales; and/or cleanup at our food booth at Bond Park. Please plan to get involved in whatever way you can.
- **Spring Plant Sale in May**. Plan to purchase your spring plants; share order forms with co-workers; family & neighbors.
- **Volunteer** to share your time and ideas with one of our many ongoing program ministries: Children & Youth Ministries; Outreach; Property; Worship; Invitation; Membership & Hospitality; and Stewardship.
- **Anyone available to help update the Covenant website?** Stewardship want to create a link on our site that will keep the opportunities for giving & receiving at the click of your mouse!

In the meantime, do you have any ideas for how we can strengthen our mission and purpose at Covenant?

If so, send your ideas to: [cccsteward@gmail.com](mailto:cccsteward@gmail.com) or contact: Karen Nippert: 919-830-1003; or

Don Brooks: 919-650-3017. All ideas, no matter how big or how small are welcome...Thanks for helping us move into God's future together...

*Karen Nippert & Don Brooks, Stewardship Ministry Co-chairs*



## Covenant's SCRIP Update

Winter have you down? Have you walked past Starbucks and thought how warm and enjoyable a nice latte or hot tea would be during a cloudy day? Well, our SCRIP inventory carries \$25 Starbucks gift cards to quench your thirst and warm your spirits. Do you just want a simple yet flavorful cup of joe? Tired of lattes filled with artificial flavorings and sweeteners galore? Both Bruegger's Bagels and Panera Bread brew Fair Trade coffees. Panera Bread \$25 cards are available every week in our inventory, and \$10 cards can be ordered for both Bruegger's Bagels and Panera Bread.

Ever had that day when you feel your stomach growling and realize that you need to go grocery shopping? SCRIP can help you there! Our program now carries Lowe's Foods cards in \$25, \$50, or \$100 denominations. Our inventory also has \$25 Target and Walmart cards for your grocery shopping convenience. If you want to purchase groceries at Whole Foods or need a different denomination of SCRIP cards from Target or Walmart, we can order them for you and have them in your hand by the next Sunday!

So if you just want to buy a few items or need to stock your freezer, our dedicated SCRIP volunteers can help you obtain the cards you need. Just see Robin or Jeff Miller in front of the church office after the 9a Gathering or 11a worship any Sunday to purchase your SCRIP cards. Remember, every card bought from our SCRIP program returns a part of that purchase to our church. So help us help you....to help Covenant.

*Blessings, Jeff Miller, Guest columnist and SCRIP volunteer.*

## Education Ministry News...

### COVENANT NEEDS YOU!

We are in the midst of a challenging transition within our Education Ministry. We are committed to the ongoing quality of our children & youth ministries and need willing and dedicated people to share your gifts in the following ways:

### Sunday School Teachers for Pre-School-Kindergarten and Grades 1 & 2

"As one who has taught our children for several year, I can't tell you how gratifying this experience is. I have grown to love "my kids" and take great joy in seeing them grow and develop. Teaching Sunday School is something that anyone can do, all you have to do is have a high regard for children. We use the "**Live Big**" curriculum which has an explicit guide for teachers. All of the recommended activities are scripted for you and the instructions are very clear." (Beth Kearney)

### Worship & Wonder

Worship and Wonder is a Montessori-influenced program that allows children to learn about God through Bible stories and their own experiences. This program is offered during the 11:00 a.m. service. We need 3 different kinds of volunteers and the responsibilities of each function are described below.

- **Coordinator** - this person sends out the schedule by e-mail to the storytellers and greeters, checks on supplies used each Sunday, requests name tags and artwork folders for new incoming children, coordinates the summer schedule by selecting books to be read and sends out the calendar to greeters and storytellers, coordinates putting away the stories before the summer reading sessions begin (storytellers help with this), and schedules meetings with the greeters and storytellers as needed (typically every three months).
- **Greeters:** We need at least 2 "Greeters" per session. prepares the room by placing the mats on the floor; putting crackers and juice in cups/baskets just prior to the 11 o'clock worship hour; leads the children down the hall to W & W room at the conclusion of the children's moment; and helps to keep the group focused on worship during their Worship and Wonder time. Greeters are trained right here at Covenant by the Worship and Wonder coordinator or an experienced Greeter.
- **Storytellers:** If you have a love for storytelling, we have just the job for you as well! Worship & Wonder storytellers actually tell the Bible stories. Don't worry, extensive training is provided for this position and after training your gift of storytelling will be greatly enhanced! Typically you would present a story every six weeks.

### Special Events Volunteers

Perhaps your children have participated in the Easter Extravaganza & Egg Hunt, Camp Day, VBS, the Pool Party, "Trunk or Treat" or the Christmas Play. We always need many volunteers to ensure that these programs continue to bless us and our children. We need volunteers to serve as Directors or Co-Directors, Emcees, craft leaders, refreshment providers and so much more. Our children are counting on us to continue to provide these programs. If you are willing to help, contact Rev. Randy: [randy-ccc@bellsouth.net](mailto:randy-ccc@bellsouth.net); 481-4715.

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*Join Our Youth as we  
FIGHT HUNGER!*



Covenant's teens are transforming Super Bowl Sunday, February 5, with youth from around the country, into the nation's largest youth-led weekend of giving through the Souper Bowl of Caring. This event encourages people of all ages to care for their neighbors in need. Young people, with soup pots in hand, in all 50 states and Canada, will be collecting monetary donations and cans of soup on February 5, to be distributed to local charities that help to feed the hungry.

Every penny Covenant raises will be given to Urban Ministries of Wake County. Souper Bowl of Caring is endorsed by NFL owners and has seen over \$50 million given to neighbors in need. Join us as we work hard to fight hunger in the Cary and surrounding areas! Come with your spare change to drop in one of 3 soup pots:

**"Patriots/Giants/and I Don't Care..."**

***What a Great Way to Come Together to Help End Hunger!***



## What's New @ Covenant?

### "Covenant Time"

The children & families of Covenant are embarking on a remarkable journey. All children, youth, Adults, & families (ages 1 to 101) are invited to join us as we develop & enhance "Covenant Time!"

Some of you may be asking..what is "Covenant Time?" "Covenant Time" is a NEW inter-generational event, developed by our Education Ministry It's a time of good community building; getting better acquainted with one another; a time where young & not so young can come together & not only learn about God, but truly experience God as we recognize and enjoy all that God has given us!

We kicked off our pilot program just last week and plan to meet monthly. Each time we plan to eat together, & break into age-appropriate groups for specific programming: K-2nd graders, 3<sup>rd</sup> -5th graders, Middle Schoolers, High Schoolers, & Adults. During each session your group will play, learn, & grow together. There will be mission/service, fun activities, & worship opportunities for everyone! Keep your eyes peeled for the next event!

## Youth News - Calendar!

### CHI RHO (Middle School)

**Sunday, February 5: Souper Bowl Of Caring!** Immediately Following the 9a & 11a Worship... Help us raise \$\$\$ for Urban Ministries of Wake County!

**Saturday, February 18** Prepare bag lunches for "Abraham Build" volunteers! Meet @ church at 10:30a

**Sunday, February 26 @ 5:30p** Program - "What's a Buddha?" (Bring \$4 for dinner & a friend)!

**Weekend of March 2 - 4-** Chi Rho Retreat @ Camp Caroline!

**Registration forms are due by February. 23.**

**Saturday, March 17** - Soup Kitchen @ Moore Square (4-8 PM) Help Feed the Hungry!

### CYF (High School)

**Sunday, February 5: Souper Bowl Of Caring!** Immediately Following the 9a & 11a Worship...Help us raise \$\$\$ for Urban Ministries of Wake County!

**Sunday, February 5**, 5:30p Program- "Is Buddhism a Religion?" (Bring a friend & \$4 for dinner)!

**Saturday, February 18** 8:30a - 12:30p - Working on Habitat For Humanity's "Abraham Build" house

**Must pre-register! Registration information in church office - ask Rev. Randy!**

**March 4@ 5:30p** CYF Game Night! Bring your gaming console and favorite game - Bring \$ for pizza!

**Saturday, March 17** -Soup Kitchen @ Moore Square (4-8p) Help Feed the Hungry!

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### Women's Ministry News

All Covenant women, guests & friends are invited to join us on Friday evening February 3<sup>rd</sup>. at 7:00 p.m. for dessert and fellowship. Our speaker for the evening will be Pat Lykins, Executive Director of the Caring Place. The Caring Place teaches homeless, working families with children life skills for independent living while providing short-term housing and support services. Contact the church office if you need childcare!

We will resume our Saturday morning meetings on April 14 when we will once again participate in a service project. We hope to see you at both meetings.

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### Outreach Ministry

#### Week of Compassion/Month of Compassion/Year of Compassion

You'll be hearing more about the Week of Compassion all throughout February as we prepare to share in this special offering that continues to provide Disaster Relief here at home & around the world

#### Abraham Build Habitat for Humanity

Covenant will partner with St. Paul's Christian Church, February 18<sup>th</sup> to participate in the Abraham Build project. The house at 515 Parnell St. in Southeast Raleigh is coming along fine. It is amazing what people working together can accomplish. We will be partnering with First Baptist on March 10. There is still time to volunteer for this wonderful project. If you are interested, please contact Renié Palmer.

#### Urban Ministries Food Bank

Our donations have decreased, but the need is still great. Please remember to bring your non-perishable food items to church on Sundays and place in the baskets in the entry way.



January 12, 2012

Dear Disciples,

Today as I sit to write, it is the anniversary of the massive earthquake that shook Haiti two years ago. We have experienced the shock of other tragedies since then: the earthquake in Japan, storms across North America, and the on-going drought and starvation in the Horn of Africa (to name a few.)

For many Disciples in the US and Canada, however, the disaster that hits closest to home is the economy. We are told the recession is over, yet too many still look for work, too many are still choosing between rent and medicine. A recent Pew Research Center poll indicates: "Conflict between rich and poor now eclipses racial strain and friction between immigrants and the native-born as the greatest source of tension in American society."<sup>1</sup>

What does the good news of Jesus Christ look like at such a time? The story of Jesus' baptism in Matthew 3:13-17 gives us some clues.

There is John the Baptist, stunned that Jesus would come to him for baptism. Does "Your Majesty" bow down to a mere "Mr."? Jesus' request turned the world upside down! Instead of going to the high and mighty for validation, he did "the limbo" (how low can you go?) and turned to a wild man, asking for immersion in water. Water, in the Bible, is more than cleansing, bathing, birth. It is also – *chaos*! In Genesis, God creates the earth by pushing back the watery chaos of space. In the Psalms, watery oceans are the places of monsters and unpredictability. Water, in the Bible, evokes a primal, deep-seated fear of the unknown.

So what happens when Jesus goes into the water? The heavens open. But instead of watery chaos pouring in through those holes in the sky, God's voice wafts down with blessing, and a dove appears as a sign. "You are my son, my beloved," says God. "I am pleased."

Jesus goes through the watery chaos, comes out again to receive a blessing from God and heads into his ministry.

**The good news still involves that same progression – from chaos to blessing to mission.**

When the walls of water are waiting to burst in, this is when the people of God are at our best. When we follow Jesus right into the chaos and come through on the other side to a blessing and a mission. When against all common sense we rediscover our hope.

Jesus told John, "I must be baptized by you." It seemed an idea designed to turn the world on its head, making chaos out of the normal human order of things. But Jesus wasn't afraid of a little chaos. He went for it! And instead of turning the world on its head, the world turned right side up! God spoke. "Beloved, I am pleased." When the massive tornado churned through Joplin, Mo., last year, South Joplin Christian Church was not in the direct path of the tornado, but it was severely damaged on the away side of the tornado by debris being swept in by that powerful vortex of destructive energy. The roof of the church was peeled back and the next several days of rain poured down through all floors to the basement.

I had the privilege of joining with the congregation of South Joplin as they dedicated a refurbished building. Beautiful! A blessing, indeed! A couple of weeks ago, South Joplin also opened their refurbished youth center – now a mission station that will house volunteers who come to Joplin to help rebuild. A blessing and a new mission, too. The people of South Joplin Christian Church, like so many others, dove right into the chaos. It hasn't taken away the pain of loss, but it has given a way forward.

In this year of 2012, chaos may still loom. Decisions beyond our control may affect our economic future. In the U.S., an election year seems bound to unfold with personal attack instead of thoughtful debate about achieving the common good. It's tempting to give in to cynicism or despair. But Jesus leads a different way – right into the middle of the chaos – in a progression through chaos to blessing and a mission.

As we move more fully into 2012, I offer a prayer that we will, as a church, be willing to head into the chaos of our time with a sense of God's blessing and a call to God's mission. Perhaps we will lead a mission trip to Joplin or Tuscaloosa or Southwest Good Samaritan Center. Perhaps we will call our congregation to pray regularly for the healing of the nations. Perhaps we will increase our stewardship for the mission of the church through Disciples Mission Fund, Reconciliation and Week of Compassion. Perhaps we will join with other congregations in our own town to be a blessing to our neighbors closer to home.

Disciples, we are a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. Our calling is to follow Jesus –and that usually means right into the chaos. But also right on through to blessing and to a mission and to a sense of things being right side up at last.

(signed) **Sharon E. Watkins** General Minister and President Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, [Sabrina Tavernise](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/12/us/more-conflict-seen-between-rich-and-poor-survey-finds.html?_r=1&emc=eta1): January 11, 2012, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/12/us/more-conflict-seen-between-rich-and-poor-survey-finds.html?\\_r=1&emc=eta1](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/12/us/more-conflict-seen-between-rich-and-poor-survey-finds.html?_r=1&emc=eta1)