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Weekly Newsletter of Covenant Presbyterian Church - November 24, 2021
Laurie Johnson, Office Manager & Newsletter Editor



***Covenant is an accepting, welcoming community
sharing the glory of God's love with all.***

From our pastor



This Sunday is the beginning of Advent, which is my favorite season in the church year. We are utilizing resources from A Sanctified Art (sanctifiedart.org), and this year's theme is *Close to Home*:

When something hits close to home, it affects us deeply. During the Advent and Christmas season, we journey through scriptures and rituals that are tender, heavy with emotion, and vulnerable. We carry the memories and truths of this season close to our hearts. Close to Home acknowledges the "already but not yet" tension of our faith: Emmanuel is with us, and yet, God's promised day—our everlasting home—is not fully realized. It names our deep longing for God to come close to us.

Close to Home also names the pain many of us will carry into this season. The holidays can poke at our grief. Many will be missing loved ones lost to sickness and tragedy. The traumas of the pandemic will still be with us. Many will have lost homes—due to natural disasters, economic hardship, and unjust policies. Many do not feel safe in their own homes due to poor living conditions or harmful family dynamics. Many feel alone and

isolated at home. Churches are discerning transitions with their physical buildings; many of our spiritual homes are changing.

This Advent, may we be comforted by the One who dwells intimately with us. May we expand safety and sanctuary for everyone wandering far from home. May we come home— wherever home is found—to live fully with joy, hope, and courage.

You can pick up two devotionals this Sunday (*Close to Home* and *The 2021 Covenant Advent Devotional*, written by our own members). As we enter another winter of pandemic and promise, I pray you come home to Covenant and discover God's presence in our midst.

Adult Forum Class: Welcoming the Stranger

This Sunday, Rev. Dr. Nathan Esala will return to conclude his class, "Welcoming the Stranger: Genesis 18 and Today." After several weeks of rich dialogue on Genesis, this week we will turn our sights fully to the here and now. How might God be calling us to welcome the stranger in our midst? I hope you'll join us this week at 9am in the Lounge.

One Struggle to Love,

Rev. Joel A. Esala



Advent Event

Sunday, Nov. 28 at 11:00 - 11:30am

Everyone's invited to join us after worship in Fellowship Hall for our Advent Event! Pick up your advent devotional (for adults and families) and a bag of crafts to work on at home during the advent season. Help us decorate our Covenant Family Peace Tree and make some ornaments while you are there! Everyone is welcome!

COVENANT'S SUNDAY 10:00 a.m. INDOOR, IN-PERSON WORSHIP SERVICE

Sunday Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.



COVENANT'S SUNDAY 10:00 a.m. VIRTUAL WORSHIP SERVICE

FACEBOOK for Sunday, 10:00 a.m.

services: <https://www.facebook.com/covenantpcusa/>

Look for the most current video, labeled "PREMIERE: Current Date".

YOUTUBE for Sunday, 10:00 a.m. services: <https://www.youtube.com/user/covenantpcusa>

Look for the most current video, labeled "PREMIERE: Current Date"

For past services, special music, and other church video content, visit our main YouTube page: [Covenant Service Archive](#).

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL AGES!

For adults, the Forum takes place in the Lounge at 9am. This week we will continue our class "Welcoming the Stranger: Genesis 18 and Today."

Children gather in the Multipurpose room (former administrative offices) at 9am before splitting into our classes. We sing, read, learn and dream together. Youth (6th-12th grades) meet in the chapel at 11am for snacks and discussion.

ART EXHIBIT & PRESENTATION IN COVENANT LOUNGE

Please check out the newly installed art exhibit in the lounge. The original artworks are by Cody F. Miller, the featured artist in this year's "Horizons" study booklet for Covenant Presbyterian Women's groups. Cody lives in Columbus, is a graduate from Columbus College of Art and Design, and has received numerous awards and recognitions for his art. His works are shown in solo and group exhibits, art festivals, museums, and galleries in Ohio and around the US. His illustrations appear in Christian publications. He will be speaking at the PWC coffee Dec. 1, 9:30 in Fellowship Hall. The exhibit will remain in the lounge till the end of December.

CHRISTMAS Giving Opportunities

CHRISTMAS GIFT BOXES FOR KIDS FROM MWA* - The Mid-Ohio Workers Association* creates gift boxes for the children within their member families. You can help in any of these ways:

- provide a gift for a child, or
- join the Toy Sort with other MWA* volunteers in Fellowship Hall when we sort donated gifts into boxes for each family on **Thursday, 12/16 from 5-8pm**, or
- help host the party when the Gift Boxes will be given to the families at the MWA* Christmas Party in Covenant's parking lot on **Saturday, 12/18** (setup at noon, party at 2pm, cleanup around 4pm).

With respect to donating a gift, please choose gifts worth between \$10 and \$35. MWA* needs gifts for all ages, newborn to 17 years of age. Please deliver your donation to one of these locations at Covenant):

- Cathy Levy's home at 3679 Scioto Run Blvd. If she's not home, go ahead and leave it on her front porch. Just leave her a text or voicemail at 614-506-8139 so she'll look for it when she gets home.
- Contact Cathy at 614-506-8139 or cathy.levy@gmail.com to arrange for her to pick up donations from your doorstep if needed before Thursday, December 16.
- During normal business hours or Sunday mornings, drop off your donation to the marked bin within Covenant Presbyterian Church's Donation Center, which is in the coat closet nearest the sanctuary.

Signup to help in any of these ways online here: <https://bit.ly/MWAGiftBoxesCPC>, or after the church service in the lobby, or by contacting Cathy Levy at cathy.levy@gmail.com or 614-506-8139.

**The Mid-Ohio Workers Association (MWA) offers ways to celebrate holidays with their members. Members of the MWA are low-paid workers or underemployed workers. They help one another as members of the association through various programs to help lift one another out of poverty. Also, area church members (including Covenant) help as volunteers and givers.*

HOLIDAY - Adopt a Family - The Covenant Deacons are proceeding with the Adopt a Family Mission for 2021. We expect to have 5 or 6 families. The process will be the same as 2020. Covenant volunteers buy gifts on a family wish list. One gift per person. The gifts will be given to families at Broad Street Presbyterian Church through a drive through event on Saturday, December 18 at 10am. If any Covenant volunteers are interested in participating in the drive through event, they will be welcome. Volunteers who adopt a family will wrap the gifts and put name cards on the gifts. Volunteers may bring the gifts to the 12/18 event at Broad Street Presbyterian at 9:30am. Alternatively, deliver the gifts to Steve St. Martin's (skstmartin@hotmail.com) or Jim Buchanan's homes or have the gifts collected by Steve or Jim by Wednesday, December 15. Please contact me with any questions and to receive a family description and wish list. Jim Buchanan (jim.buchanan@juno.com; 614-558-1845).

LIST OF CHRISTMAS GIFT GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

At Covenant Presbyterian Church, we always find ways to share the glory of God's love, especially at Christmas time.

On our website, you can download a document that summarizes how to participate in any of these opportunities including deadlines and contact information for each:

<https://covenantpcusa.org/advent-2021>

Or, you can contact the church office, Cathy Levy, or Beth Askue, who will get you a copy, or you can get a printed copy from the table in the church lobby.

We've updated the list with additional details for #4 and #8 below, we've added a new opportunity (#11), and we've re-ordered the ministries into deadline order.

Ministries include:

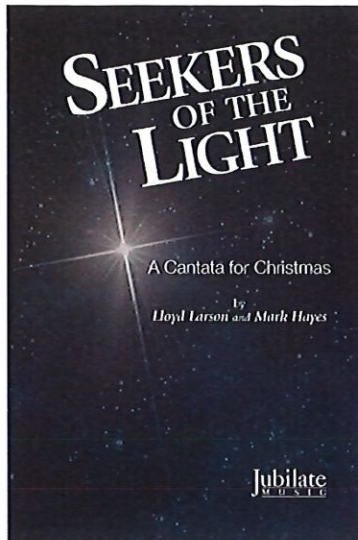
1. Layette Supplies (Sandy St. Martin)
2. Support for FCCS' Holiday Wish (Sandy St. Martin)
3. Cap City Helping Hands' Holiday Shop (Susan Imel)
4. Adopt-a-Family from CATCH Court (Barbara Marshall)
5. White Socks for Homeless Men (Betsy Sebastian)
6. Cause Cookies (Barbara Marshall)
7. Christmas Joy Offering (Beth Askue)
8. Covenant Deacons Adopt-a-Family (Jim Buchanan)
9. Christmas Luncheon for Survivors (Barbara Marshall)
10. Gift Boxes for Kids from MWA (Cathy Levy)
11. Christmas Party at HM3 (Mona Connolly)
12. Deacons' Christmas Eve Offering (Terry Kennedy Mancini)

Thank you for considering an opportunity to practice our faith and humanity in service of others in this Holy Season!



CAUSE COOKIES

With each \$25 donated to Freedom a la Cart's Cause Cookie campaign, you'll receive a beautifully packaged box of fresh, from-scratch holiday cookies. Each box contains a dozen assortment of chocolate crinkles, pistachio white chocolate cookies, raspberry rugelach, and a traditional Gingersnap holiday favorite. Each donation provides workforce training and wraparound supportive services for survivors of sex trafficking. Order on-line at <https://freedomalacart.org/cause-cookies/> To pick up your order at Covenant on Dec. 11, 11:00-12:30pm, please select Covenant under the "Pick-Up Date" tab.
(For more information, Barbara Marshall, bamarshall@aol.com, 614-204-5665)



COVENANT CHRISTMAS CANTATA

Join us Sunday, December 19th at 10AM

The world was lost in darkness. Roman oppression weighed heavily, and God's people were awaiting a Messiah. There were astrologers, literally following the light of the heavens and prophecies of the coming Messiah. But there were other "seekers of the Light": Mary and Joseph, simple shepherds in a field, and the prophets. Then, it happened: the Light of the World was born. Follow the respective journeys of these "seekers of the light" to learn what we can from their sojourns. May we likewise seek and find The Light for our journey... and transform our lives with a fresh touch of God's miraculous grace and gift of love.

Songs include: Prelude; Sing We Now of Christmas; Prepare!; Come

Near to the Manger; Angels Shout the News Tonight; Hurry to Bethlehem!; Seekers of the Light and Behold! Rise Up! Go Tell! Shine!

Featuring our very own Chancel Choir, soloists, and musicians. Don't miss this special service!

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

Now that we are worshipping in person again, you may once more sign up for flowers to be placed in the sanctuary for Sunday worship to honor loved ones, a special occasion, or just to the glory of God. The dedication information will be listed in the Sunday bulletin. The arrangements will cost \$40.

To order flowers, please contact the church office by sending an email to lauriejohnson@covenantpcusa.org by Tuesday of each week that you wish to have flowers in the sanctuary. Let the office know which date you are requesting, your name, contact information and any dedication information. You may request future dates as well. Payment can be in cash or check.

SOS FOOD PANTRY - THANKSGIVING FOOD DONATION DRIVE

Our pantry is very low on staples and we hope you will consider making a food donation to our pantry during this Thanksgiving season.

Please place your donation either in the SOS Food Pantry drop off bin inside the north entrance or leave on the table in the main hallway inside the north doors.

Our food drive will take place through Tuesday November 30. Monetary donations sent to Ingrid Smith are greatly appreciated and should be marked "SOS Food Pantry".

ITEMS NEEDED

Canned corn and green beans

Canned fruit

Condensed chicken noodle and tomato soups

Tuna Fish

Baked Beans- large and small sizes

Boxed macaroni and cheese

Peanut Butter
Jelly
Cereal
Spaghetti and spaghetti sauce

On behalf of the SOS Food Pantry Team....Thank you so much!!

SOS FOOD PANTRY- DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS requested.....to transport a few bags of groceries to families in need.

This involves selecting items from our food pantry and delivering to an individual or family. You do not have to shop at a grocery store.

All the groceries and perishable items are in the church. The process of selecting, bagging, and delivering food takes about an hour once a month.

Expert training provided. Please call Mark or Betsy Owen at 614-486-0317 if you have questions or wish to join this important mission. Thank you.

Habitat for Humanity

Covenant is once again participating in the Habitat NW Partnership Adopt a House by helping to finance and build a house this year. Construction has begun on the house located at 1252 E. 15th Ave. in South Linden. Volunteers work on the house on Thursday mornings and Saturdays from 8:30 to 3:00. Lunch on Saturday is provided.

We are in need of men and women volunteers to help with the construction. You can just show up either day at 8:30am and you will be instructed on how to proceed. John Fisher is the House Lead. All equipment you will need is provided. Just wear appropriate clothing and hard soled shoes, or tennis shoes with a thick sole.

For more information please contact either Betsy Sebastian at 219-208-5602 or grammyseb@gmail.com, or Charlie Bergmann at 614-572-5059 or ctbergmann@yahoo.com.

CENTERING PRAYER

Covenant has reconvened a Centering Prayer practice on Thursdays at 8:30am in the Lounge. The first 15 minutes will be an informal gathering with the practice beginning at 8:45 for 20 minutes. Centering prayer is a method of meditation that places a strong emphasis on interior silence. We allow ourselves to be totally open to God, learning how to gently release attention away from our inner thoughts. For more information, please send an email to covenant@covenantpcusa.org and in the subject line type Centering Prayer or contact Pastor Joel.

GLOBAL MISSION

Michael & Rachel Ludwig, our mission co-workers in Niger, are returning to the United States. They are ending service at the end of December 2021. Please read their farewell letter at [Presbyterian Mission Agency Mission Connections | Presbyterian Mission Agency](#). You can send them a note thanking them for their service at Presbyterian Mission Agency, PC(USA), 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396.



COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The Christmas Coffee Invitation - The Coffee will be held on December 1st in Fellowship Hall. A light breakfast will be served before the program by Cody Miller, artist for the current PW Bible Study. All the women of the church are invited to attend. You can register to attend Sundays, November 21 and 28 in the Hallway. In addition to the program, Mission Sewing opportunities will be available, the 2021 quilt recipient will be announced, and Gail Messick will offer items from Eswatini. There will be an ingathering of items for the **Churchwomen United Layette Project** - disposable diapers for babies 8 lbs. and larger, wipes, bottles, bibs, burping cloths, receiving blankets, onesies, socks, sleepers, baby wash, shampoo, towels, and washcloths. Funds for the layette project and funds for **Franklin County Children's Services** are welcome. Please make checks payable to CPW with either CWU or Franklin County Children's Services on the memo line.

Covenant Presbyterian Women's Circles meet for fellowship and discussion of the Horizons Bible Study, "What My Grandmothers Taught Me: Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus. *Elizabeth Circle* will meet, December 6 at 7:30 p.m., Mona Connolly, moderator. Circles will meet again in January.

Other circles:

- Every Thursday at 1:00 p.m. Mission Sewing, Diana Sanders
- November 12 at 9:30 a.m. in the Lounge, Prayer Shawl Circle, Nancy Davidson

For more information about CPW circles and activities, contact Sandy St. Martin, CPW moderator, covenant@covenantpcusa.org with CPW/Sandy St. Martin, the Circle leader's name or name of the person you wish to contact in the subject line.

WOMEN'S THEOLOGY

Members of **Women's Theology** gather on the first and third Friday each month from 9:30 to 11 am. Next meetings are December 3rd and 17th. The group will discuss chapters 2-4 of Joan Chittister's book, *The Time is Now*. For information, send email to covenant@covenantpcusa.org and in the subject line type Women's Theology/Susan Imel for information. The circle usually meets on Zoom, so contact Susan for location or sign in. New members are always welcome.

CATCH COURT

The Anti-Human Trafficking Team is collecting greeting cards for the use of Catch Court women. Blank note cards, Christmas cards, birthday cards and 2022 calendars are welcomed and may be placed in a box in the Hallway shelves designated for that purpose.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT & ADULT LEARNING COMMISSION

Wednesday Bible Study 1-2 pm: Wednesday Bible Study - There will be no Bible study this Wednesday, November 24. On Wednesday, December 1, from 1-2 pm, we will practice Lectio Divina, a spirit-guided prayer and response to scripture. The following Wednesday, December 8, we will begin our study of the Letter to the Hebrews. Please join us. No preparation is required. Ask for a Zoom link from lauriejohnson@covenantpcusa.org

Wednesday Evening Book Study 7:00-8:00 p.m. - The Book Study will not be meeting this Wednesday evening November 24th. We will resume on Wednesday, December 1st at 7:00 p.m. to discuss Borg and Crossan's The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Birth. Please contact Tori Vazquez or the church for a Zoom link.

On Sunday, Nov. 21, the **Men's Spirituality Reading Group** will meet at 8 a.m. in Room 120 to continue their discussion of Richard Rohr's 'Universal Christ', with focus on chapters 9-10. Newcomers are always welcome - please reach out to David Connolly for additional information.

COVENANT ADVENT DEVOTIONAL 2021

Please consider writing a contribution for the Covenant Advent Devotional 2021. It is such a pleasure to read the thoughts of Covenant members as we move through this important season of the church. The Spiritual Development and Adult Learning commission would like to have your submission by Friday, November 19. Copies will be provided at church on the first day of Advent, and mailed to your home by request. To sign up, please click on the [Sign Up Genius](#) link or contact Tori Vazquez.

HM3 UPDATE – HOGE'S, MUSIC, MESSAGE, MEAL

Hoge Presbyterian Church offers the HM3 program every Saturday for its community in Franklinton including Music, Message, and a Meal. Area churches assist with the Meal, and Covenant creates and serves a hot, home-made meal every 3rd Saturday. Servers and guests are asked to wear masks when not eating.

Current attendance at HM3 leads us to bring enough for 50 meals. We need groups (or individuals) to step forward to serve.

- The third Saturdays for the rest of 2021 are covered! Thank you!
- We're accepting sign-ups for 2022, starting with January 15th, February 19th, and so on.

Please sign up and/or learn more through this tool: <https://bitly.com/CovenantHM3SignUp> or by contacting Cathy Levy (send an email to covenant@covenantpcusa.org and in the subject line type HM3/Levy). By splitting up the work, it's easy, and many of us can help our neighbors with life-giving food offered with open hearts.

Here we share part of a letter of thanks from one of the members of the HM3 community from the October 16th HM3 program. He made several copies and left them on the tables for us to discover, and at the top of the letter, he wrote, "Disseminate widely".

I want to thank you for all the meals that you've provided for me. I know that all of you put in a lot of work, time, for this donation. I compliment the creative efforts in this endeavor. I thank all of you for the respect that you show me (us) while doing this charity service. You are under no obligation (as far as I know) to give your precious resources of time and effort in this charitable endeavor. Time can't be recovered.... Thank you so much....

PRAYER CHAIN



Contact Laurie Johnson (lauriejohnson@covenantpcusa.org) if you would like to join the members and friends of Covenant who pray for those requesting our prayers. The prayers will be relayed to you via email from Linda Van Aman. It is asked that you include the prayer request in your daily prayers for a week. To submit a prayer chain request, please send an email to covenant@covenantpcusa.org and in the subject line type Prayer Chain. Note that the person for whom prayers are requested must give

permission.

CHURCH FACILITIES POLICY

Indoor policy due to Franklin County COVID-19

Covenant's Mask Policy will conform with [CDC guidelines](#). Wearing a mask inside our facility is recommended for everyone. Session will continue to monitor COVID 19 spread in the state of Ohio and adapt our policy as needed.

INFORMATION/MISCELLANEOUS

- The church office will be closed in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday on Thursday, Nov. 25th and Friday, Nov. 26th. Thank you for your attention.
- As a gentle reminder, the church provides disposable face masks but if possible please bring your own face mask for inside the church facilities. Thank you!

[Click here to check out all Covenant events and news on our website.](#)

Our Mission

Covenant Presbyterian Church is an accepting, welcoming community sharing the glory of God's love with all.

Our Vision

- Covenant will offer worship services that invite diverse expressions of faith and enable all who come to draw closer to God.
- Covenant will become a home through which all can practice their faith and humanity in service of others.

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