

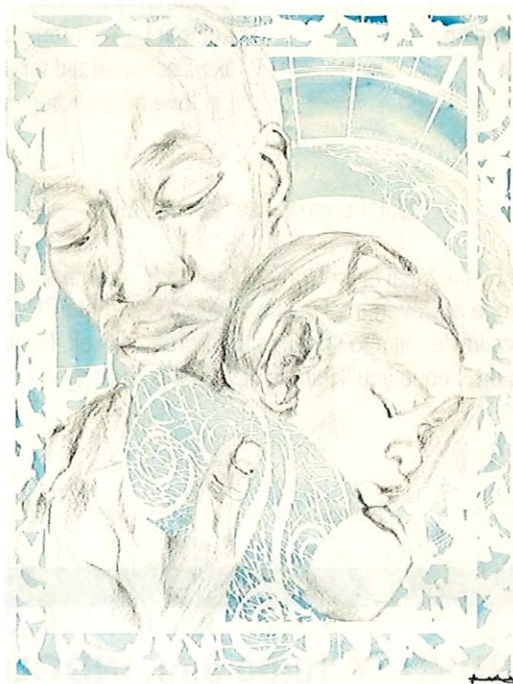
Weekly Newsletter of Covenant Presbyterian Church - December 8, 2021

Laurie Johnson, Office Manager & Newsletter Editor



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

## From our pastor



"Berakah"  
by Hannah Garrity

In week 2 of Advent, we heard Zechariah sing a song about God's tenderness to his new born son John in Luke 1:57-80. I'm not sure how many of us are used to thinking about God as tender. We often pray to Almighty God, but how often do we pray to All-Tender God? To us, tenderness looks weak, but it's precisely in God's tenderness that we see divine strength. God's strength is most evident in the willingness to become human, to live and die with us, all as an act of love. This season, as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, may our strength be seen not in our toughness but our tenderness. Receive Rev. Sarah Are's poem inspired by this text, "Words for the Beginning" as a tender gift of love to you:

If I could give you words

so I would go on to say,



for the very beginning-  
for the stretches  
and the yawns,  
and the opening of eyes,  
for the first hiccups,  
and the first smiles,  
and the first purse of the lips,  
I would say,  
"Oh, dear child,  
how you are loved."

But the thing about love  
is you can't stop there,

And then I might say,  
"This world is a mess,  
but it is your home,  
and you can make it better,  
so always try to make it better.

And maybe most important of all:  
there is a love  
that is bigger than my understanding,  
that moves through this world,  
and I call that love God.  
And that love is here,

"You are strong,  
stronger than you think.  
And you are not alone-  
look at these parents who adore you  
and these doctors and nurses fighting for  
you.  
And you are enough, already enough.

You haven't done anything yet.  
You've just been here,  
breathing,  
sleeping,  
and already, you are enough.

here in this room,  
and that love knows your name by heart."

Those are the words I would say to you  
as you stretch and yawn and open your  
eyes  
on the very first morning  
of your very first day.  
Let that be your foundation,  
like Zechariah did for John.  
Let love be your beginning.

Adult Forum Class: Cody F. Miller

This Sunday, we will be joined by the local artist Cody Miller. Cody is a mixed-media artist whose work is currently on display in the Lounge at Covenant. He spoke last week at the CPW Christmas Coffee and did such an excellent job that we've invited him to speak to the Forum as well. He will share some of his own story with us and what animates his art. I hope you'll join us at 9am this Sunday!

One Struggle to Love,

Rev. Joel A. Esala

## 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 Sunday, we will be joined by the local artist Cody Miller. Cody will share some of his own story with us and what animates his art.

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.

## SPECIAL OFFERING

Each year, Covenant has four special offerings. The fourth is the **Christmas Joy offering** which will be received Sunday, December 12. This money provides a lifeline for students and pastors in need. This special offering is distributed equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges. Look for more details in the Sunday bulletin.

## DEACONS' CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING

The offering at the Christmas Eve and Maundy Thursday services supports the work of the deacons. The Board of Deacons is not funded through the church budget. It is through this offering that the deacons serve our members and the community.

How does the Board of Deacons Serve? Deacons transport members to medical appointments through the C.A.R.E.S. ride program. Meals are prepared and delivered to those recuperating, celebrating births, and grieving. The deacons host memorial receptions. They are responsible for communion preparation. They also host the Red Cross Blood Drives. A special event will be held for our Super Seniors in the Spring. Emergency funding is available for members and those in the community.

Beyond our doors, a monthly breakfast is prepared and served at Ronald McDonald House. Deacons take a meal and join in fellowship with those at Hoge for HM3. We fight hunger through the Crop Walk, provide joy by organizing Adopt-A-Family at Christmas, and supply assistance to the Mid Ohio Workers Association. The deacons also extend support to the Mid Ohio Food Collective and COMPASS at Broad Street Presbyterian Church.

## 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. To learn about how to participate in any of these giving opportunities (including deadlines and contact information for each), please stop by the table in the church lobby for a copy of the list. Or, contact the church office, Cathy Levy, or Beth Askue, who will send you a copy. Or, download the list from here: <https://covenantpcusa.org/advent-2021>

Ministries include:

- Adopt-a-Family from CATCH Court (Barbara Marshall) - DEADLINES THIS WEEK



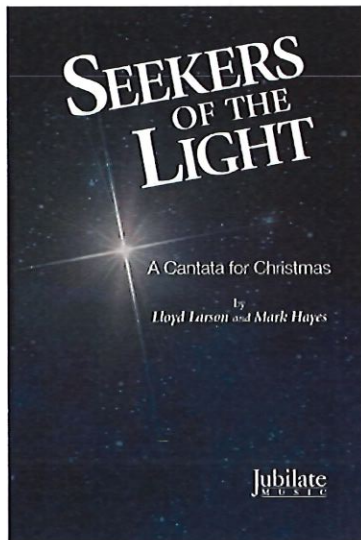
- White Socks for Homeless Men (Betsy Sebastian) - DEADLINE TODAY, 12/8
- Cause Cookies (Barbara Marshall)
- Christmas Joy Offering (Beth Askue)
- Covenant Deacons Adopt-a-Family (Jim Buchanan)
- Christmas Luncheon for Survivors (Barbara Marshall)
- Gift Boxes for Kids from MWA (Cathy Levy)
- Christmas Party at HM3 (Mona Connolly)
- 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

## 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. 15<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:grammyseb@gmail.com), or Charlie Bergmann at 614-572-5059 or [ctbergmann@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto: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 CPW Christmas Coffee* held on December 1<sup>st</sup> was a special time to be together. The program offered by Cody Miller, artist, was wonderful! You can hear him speak again and view his art next Sunday morning, the 12<sup>th</sup>. Don't miss it!

*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. Circle members look forward to meeting again in January,

Other circles:

- Every Thursday at 1:00 p.m. Mission Sewing, Diana Sanders
- December 10, 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](mailto:covenant@covenantpcusa.org) with CPW/Sandy St. Martin's name in the subject line.



#### **CPW Christmas Coffee**

Cathy Levy (second from right) received the quilt in the drawing. With her are Diana Sander, Gail Griffin and Gerlinde Lott, members of the Mission Sewing Circle, quilt creators.



#### **CPW Christmas Coffee**

Table setup for this lovely event cherished by all.

## **WOMEN'S THEOLOGY**

Members of *Women's Theology* gather on the first and third Friday each month from 9:30 to 11 am. Next meeting is December 17<sup>th</sup>. The group will discuss chapters 5-7 of Joan Chittister's challenging book, *The Time is Now*. For information, send email to [covenant@covenantpcusa.org](mailto:covenant@covenantpcusa.org) and in the subject line type Women's Theology/Susan Imel. 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.

Covenant will host the **CATCH Christmas Lunch** on Thursday, December 16 from 12 noon to 2:30pm. To help host this joyful party, please contact Barbara Marshall.





Image taken when Barbara Marshall, Lynn Hamilton, Susan Imel and Louise Davidson took the first Thursday lunch to CATCH Court. There was two wagons full of the food for the tables. Everyone had a great time talking with the women we were serving.

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT & ADULT LEARNING COMMISSION

**Wednesday Bible Study 1-2 pm: Wednesday Bible Study** - December 8, from 1-2 pm, 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](mailto:lauriejohnson@covenantpcusa.org)

**Wednesday Evening Book Study 7:00-8:00 p.m.** - The CPC Book Group resumes this Wednesday, December 1 at 7:00 p.m., with the first of a three-part discussion of Borg and Crossan's *The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Birth*. We will cover the first section. Please contact Tori Vazquez or the church for a Zoom link.

**The Men's Spirituality Reading Group** - Sunday, Dec. 5, the Men's Spirituality Reading Group will meet at 9 a.m. in room 120 for continued exploration of Richard Rohr's *'Universal Christ'*. All are welcome - please reach out to David Connolly for more information.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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

- 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.

## Stay in touch!

[Click here to receive our weekly emails.](#)



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