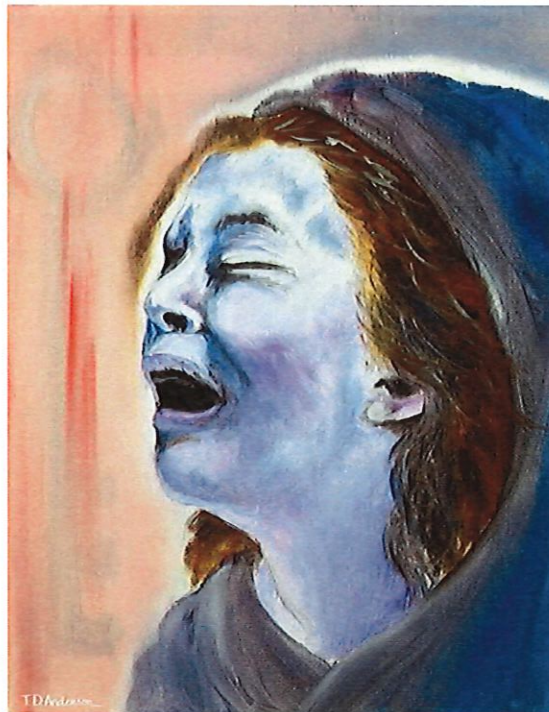


Weekly Newsletter of Covenant Presbyterian Church - December 15, 2021
Laurie Johnson, Office Manager & Newsletter Editor



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



"Redemption Song"
by Rev. T. Denise Anderson

From our pastor

This past Sunday, we looked at Mary's visitation with her elder cousin Elizabeth. My sermon focused on the safety Mary found in Elizabeth's presence. What I didn't address much is the incredible song Mary composes during that visit. The Magnificat, as it's come to be known, is more than a song of praise. It's also a protest song, calling on God to overturn the power structures of this world. She sings:

God has pulled the powerful down from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. God has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed. God has come to the aid of his servant Israel,

remembering his mercy, just as he promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever. Luke 1:52-55

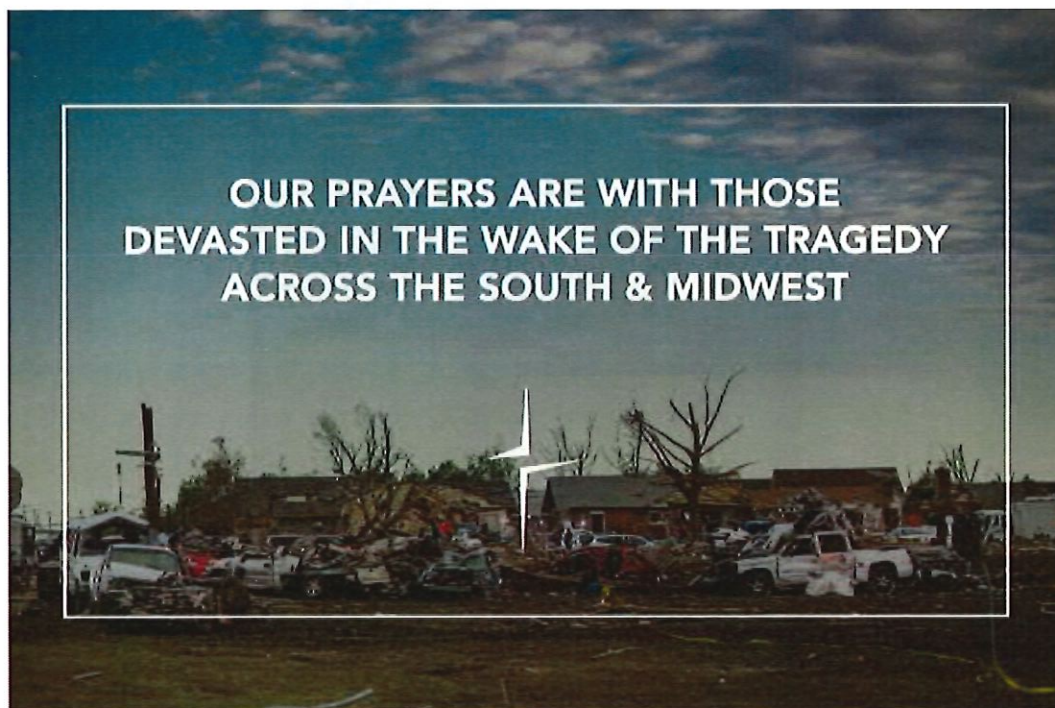
Mary's song anticipates a day when injustice will be no more, and those who have been toppled are uplifted, fed, and blessed. She notes that this has been God's plan from the beginning, to bless the entire world through Abraham's family (Gen 12:1-3). This painting by Rev. T. Denise Anderson captures Mary's cry for both justice and mercy, which in the end are one in the same. With the devastating tornadoes of this past week, we've witnessed whole communities toppled, and many people crying out for help. As severe weather events increase in frequency, the cry for justice and mercy will only increase. May we keep our ears and hearts open to these cries, doing our part to alleviate suffering wherever we can. There are many ways to help, but one is to give to [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#), as they seek to alleviate suffering of those affected.

Adult Forum Class: Close to Home

This Sunday, we will spend our class sharing insights and blessings of the Close to Home Devotional. I hope you'll join us at 9am this Sunday!

One Struggle to Love,

Rev. Joel A. Esala



We arise this morning to the tragic news of the loss of life and property brought about from a string of tornadoes which blew across the South and Midwest. Families, homes, churches, businesses, and civic centers were devastated in its wake. Early estimates of the loss of life range from 70 to over 100 people. Recovery efforts have begun, which may be months, if not years, to culminate.

The faith community of Louisville Seminary join in prayer for those lives lost and families who are impacted across the Commonwealth of Kentucky, especially in Mayfield, KY, Bowling Green, KY, and Campbellsville, KY. We pray for the faith communities whose places of worship have been damaged or destroyed. We encourage the Louisville Seminary community to do what you can to check on family, friends, loved ones, colleagues and others. We also encourage you to follow your heart's lead in response to the call of help from these communities.

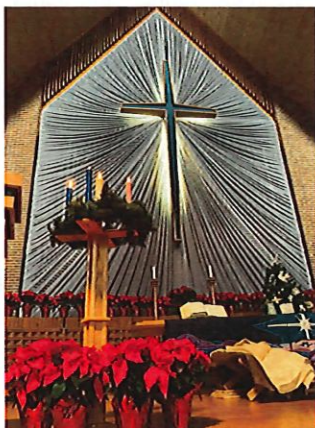
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has reached out to the Presbytery of Western Kentucky during this time of search and rescue. To support PDA's response, gifts can be designated to DR000015 by clicking [here](#).

Other ways in which the LPTS community can provide assistance through include:

- Presbytery of Western Kentucky
- Presbyterian Mission Agency
- United Methodist Committee on Relief
- Kentucky Baptist Convention Disaster Relief
- Community Foundation of West Kentucky
- American Red Cross South Central Kentucky
- Diocese of Owensboro, Catholic Charities

God of all comfort, strength, provision and love, may your loving grace, mercy and power be with the affected families and communities, the public service personnel working toward rescue and recovery, and all whose hearts are moved to actions of altruistic service. Amen.

Alton B. Pollard, III
President, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Friday, December 24

5:00pm Family Service - Children & Youth will serve as readers & musicians

8:00pm Choir & Candles - The Chancel Choir & String Quartet will lead us on this holy night.

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!

Adult Forum Class: Close to Home - This Sunday, we will spend our class sharing insights and blessings of the Close to Home Devotional. I hope you'll join us at 9am this Sunday in the Lounge!

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.

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>

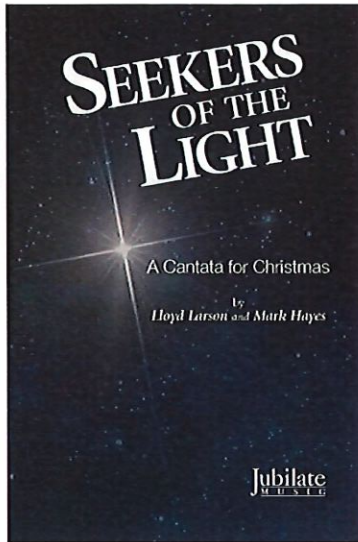
Ministries include:

- Cause Cookies (Barbara Marshall)
- Christmas Joy Offering (Beth Askue)
- Covenant Deacons Adopt-a-Family (Jim Buchanan) - DEADLINE TODAY OR THIS SATURDAY
- Christmas Luncheon for Survivors (Barbara Marshall) - HOSTING THIS THURSDAY
- Gift Boxes for Kids from MWA (Cathy Levy) - TOY SORT THIS THURSDAY, PARTY THIS SATURDAY
- Christmas Party at HM3 (Mona Connolly) - DEADLINE THIS FRIDAY
- 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!

REQUESTING GIFTS FOR THE GOOD PEOPLE SERVED THROUGH HM3 AT HOGE

Hoge Presbyterian Church serves the needs of a homeless and food scarce community, and is led by minister and longtime Covenant member, Tom Billman. Hoge's Session approved an indoor meal for HM3 (Hoge's Music, Message, and Meal program) starting in the summer, and the Elizabeth Circle of Covenant will serve the meal on Saturday, Dec. 18. We will wear masks and serve. Elizabeth Circle will provide a gift bag of sweet treats, a personal holiday card and Kroger gift card for each person (70). Please help stock a Gift Table where participants (kids through the elderly) from the Hilltop/Franklinton area can pick out gifts for themselves or loved ones. The Hoge Session suggests WARM sweatshirts, long underwear, (a hit with adults!) sizes S, M, L, XL, all sizes of socks, gloves/mittens, a hat and/or scarf. Any gifts not distributed will help stock Hoge's Personal Care Ministry, which complements their active Food ministry assisted by the Mid-Ohio Food Bank. Please take donated items to Covenant and put them in the bin marked Hoge Christmas in front hallway by Friday, December 17, 2021. Bless you and may the Advent season bring you much joy! If you have questions please contact Mona Connolly.



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.

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

Effective in 2022, PC(USA) will use one fund, **General Sending and Support E132193**, to support all of our mission co-workers. You can make your gift to the one fund "in honor of" [name of the person]. This will at long last remove the burden of personal fundraising from each mission co-worker. Covenant has a close relationship with Mark Hare and Jenny Bent in Costa Rica; and Elmarie and Scott Parker in Syria and Middle East. You can find out more about each of these co-workers at [Presbyterian Mission Agency Mission Connections](#) | [Presbyterian Mission Agency](#).



COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

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 with CPW/Sandy St. Martin's name 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 meeting is December 17th. 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 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.

SPIRITUAL CINEMA

Wednesday, 12/29, we will gather in the Lounge, wearing masks, at 6:30 pm to watch *The Wife: As Joe* (Jonathan Pryce) is about to be awarded the Nobel Prize for his acclaimed and prolific body of work, his wife Joan (Glenn Close) starts to think about their shared compromises, secrets and betrayals. We will stay for a short time after the film to discuss its merits and message. Come join us.

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.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT & ADULT LEARNING COMMISSION

Wednesday Bible Study 1-2 pm: Wednesday Bible Study - December 15, we will continue 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 CPC Book Group will meet this Wednesday, December 15 at 7:00 p.m. for its third and final discussion of Borg and Crossan's *The First Christmas*. We will resume in January with a title to be determined by a survey of suggested book titles. Be sure to register your opinion by clicking on this link and choosing your top 3: [CPC Book Group Survey](#). Please contact Tori Vazquez or the church for Wednesday night's Zoom link.

The Men's Spirituality Reading Group - On Sunday, Dec. 19, 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 13-14. Newcomers are always welcome - please reach out to David Connolly for additional 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 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

- There will be no children's or youth education at 9am and 11am on Dec. 26.
- The nursery will be closed on Dec. 26.
- In observance of the Christmas/New Year holidays, the church office will be closed from Dec. 27-31.
- 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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