

Weekly Newsletter of Covenant Presbyterian Church - February 1, 2023

Laurie Johnson, Office Manager & Newsletter Editor



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

From our pastor

"When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he began to speak and taught them, saying: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'" Matthew 5:1-3

How do you integrate the negative experiences of your life into a larger vision? That's what the Beatitudes are all about, Jesus' first teaching in the Gospel of Matthew. The Beatitudes are not if-then statements. Jesus is not saying, if you are poor in spirit, then you'll receive the kingdom of heaven. These are not recipes for how to receive God's blessing. No, the Beatitudes are Jesus speaking blessings over people who appear to be anything but blessed: the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, and the persecuted. If these are blessings, no one wants to receive them.

A helpful way to understand the Beatitudes is to see Jesus as bestowing honor. We could translate him, "How honorable are the poor in spirit." Jesus is not telling us how to feel. Instead, he speaks honor over those who feel vulnerable, shamed, and dishonorable. He is telling us that those moments of our lives we wish we could erase, God honors those too. They belong too. It's not that you wish them upon yourself or upon others. It's not that God wishes them upon you, but God respects your suffering, and so can we. The Beatitudes create a container large enough to fit life's most difficult experiences. In them, we discover that our pain has a place. It belongs too. Our pain can be integrated into a larger story, the human story, which includes poverty of spirit, sorrow, humility, and persecution. If we don't push our pain away, but sit with it, and honor it, then we discover that struggle connects us to each other.

The truth is that all of us are struggling. Instead of using our pain as an excuse to lash out, the Beatitudes teach us that struggle is just part of being human. It connects us to the great kinship of humanity. If we live long enough, we will go through times in our lives that don't make any sense. The very first thing Jesus teaches us is that those experiences and those people we consider shameful can all be integrated into the story God is telling, the story in which we all have a place, and everything belongs. For it is through the chaotic imperfections of our lives, that the light of grace enters in. Beloved, the suffering of your life is not an aberration, nor is it shameful. Your pain connects you to the great web of life, the kinship of all creation. May God grant you the grace to see that everything belongs.

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.](#)

LAST WEEK'S SERVICE (SUNDAY, JANUARY 29)

Youtube: <https://youtu.be/VWhXNjAy5ho>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/503926011645320/>

Faithlife: <https://faithlife.com/cpc-vj/files?filter=kind%3A%22video%22>

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL AGES!

Adult Forum Class - Sundays from 9am-9:50am in the Lounge. The Adult Education Forum will feature a special three-week series on Islam on Sunday, February 5, 12, and 19. On Feb. 5, David Connolly will offer a presentation and discussion of 'Jesus in the Koran'. You might be surprised to learn that Jesus's life and work are mentioned numerous times in the sacred Islamic scripture! And on Feb. 12 and 19 we will learn some of the basics about Islam from special guests, Lubna and Mohammad Ahmad of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society of Dublin, Ohio. We often hear about the Muslim culture and society in news headlines in various contexts--join us for this series to deepen your knowledge! Church Lounge, Sundays at 9-9:45 a.m.

Children Christian Education: Ages 3 years to 5th grade meet Sundays at 9am in room 115 for music, stories, crafts and conversation.

Youth Group: Youth grades 6-12 meet Sundays at 11am in room 115 for lunch, learning and a whole lot of fun.



Save the Date for VBS 2023! Hero Hotline: Called Together to Serve God is coming this summer!

Join us June 12-15 at the Hero Hotline Headquarters where everyone's gifts are valued and every hero has a role to play. Kids 3 years-5th grade are invited to join us for stories, crafts, songs, play and games as we assist hero teams everywhere! Lots of teen and adult volunteers are needed too! More information and registration will be coming in March. Please see Erin with any questions.



Almost There!
Deep Gratitude for your pledges!
If you haven't pledged, please do so to help us meet the goal to...

RAISE THE HARVEST HOME LOAN RETIREMENT PLEDGE

Thank you, Covenant members! Thanks to many generous pledges, as of early January, **only \$10,000 remains** to reach our \$270,000 goal for the *Raise the Harvest Home, Loan Retirement Appeal*! Thank you for your financial support to retire this loan for repairs to our roof and HVAC system in only three years.

If you haven't pledged yet, please do so.

Prayerfully consider the impact of Covenant's ministries on your household and our community. Maintaining our church home helps us continue and grow our mission to be a..... *Welcoming, accepting community sharing the Glory of God's love with all!*

In Gratitude,

Rev. Joel A Esala, Charlie Bergmann, John Griffin, Cathy Levy, Dana Rudmose, and Betsy Sebastian

Freedom a la Cart

An invitation



Interested in walking alongside a survivor in our community on her journey to self-sufficiency? Interested in creating a lasting friendship and providing guidance and support? If you said yes, then we need your help! We are in need of mentors to join our mentor program.

Freedom a la Cart partners with CATCH Court to provide supportive services to the survivors in the program. While

the women of CATCH Court have support from many agencies to help them navigate the new life journey they are beginning, Freedom a la Cart provides personal mentors to offer life coaching and emotional support (a.k.a YOU!)

If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please join us for our next mentor training!

Date: February 4 | 9 am - 12 pm

Location: Freedom a la Cart | 123 E Spring St



DONATE METAL WATER BOTTLES for those who visit the OPEN SHELTER

Thank you for donating stainless steel water bottles with sturdy carrying loops for the people who visit the Open Shelter! Reach out to **Cathy Levy** with your questions; she answers a few of them, below:

Question: Why stainless steel?

Answer: We've learned that stainless steel bottles are healthier to drink from; also, they are easier to clean.

Question: What do you mean by "sturdy carrying loops"?

Answer: See the picture; each bottle's lid includes a sturdy loop for hooking your fingers through or hooking a carabiner hook through.

Question: What is a carabiner hook?

Answer: A metal loop with a spring-loaded gate used to quickly and reversibly connect components. In this case, with the loop on a water bottle, a carabiner hook helps people attach the bottle's loop to their belt loop or backpack strap (see the picture).

Question: Must we donate a carabiner hook too?

Answer: No, we'll buy boxes full of those and add them to each water bottle to make it convenient for all. If you do decide to donate hooks, make sure they are sturdy with a strong spring.

Question: Where do I put my donation of bottles?

Answer: Put them in the marked bin in Covenant's Donation Center, which is in the coat closet closest to the main entrance to the sanctuary.

Question: When will you take them to the Open Shelter?

Answer: For decades, we take 175 sacked lunches to the Open Shelter on the second Friday of the month. Included in these deliveries, we bring drinks, including bottled water. The availability of high quality stainless steel water bottles will reduce the demand for bottled water, thus improving the impact on the environment. Reusable bottles are preferred by many over disposable! We take them with our monthly delivery of the lunches.

The Open Shelter is an Advocacy Center & Day Services Shelter for homeless and marginally-housed people in Central Ohio.



COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Covenant Presbyterian Women (CPW), would like to say thank-you to all the Covenant members who made pledges to CPW, and for purchasing Peanut Brittle, cookies, baked goods, and items the sewing circle made! You made it possible for CPW to make over \$11,000 to give to WorldWide and local mission and to CPW and CPC projects. Thank you!

Covenant Presbyterian Women's Circles meet for fellowship and discussion of the Horizons Bible Study "Celebrating Sabbath, Accepting God's Gift of Rest and Delight"

- 1st Tuesday at 7:00 pm, Elizabeth Circle, Mona Connolly, moderator via Zoom
- 1st Wednesday at 9:30 am in the Church Lounge, Eunice-Lydia Circle, Susan Imel, moderator
- 3rd Monday, at 9:30 am in the Church lounge, Deborah Circle, Lynn Elliott, moderator

Other circles:

- Every Thursday at 1:00 p.m. Mission Sewing, Diana Sanders
- 2nd and 4th Fridays at 9:30 a.m. in the Church Lounge, Prayer Shawl Circle, Louise Davidson and Nancy Davidson

The **Prayer Shawl Circle** provides shawls upon request! Over the years we have made and blessed over 1,000 shawls and prayed many other times when those with shawls have needed prayers once again (re blessing them). We would like to remind you shawls are not only for illnesses or death of a family member or a friend. They are for happy occasions – birth of a baby (and great for nursing), weddings, special birthdays, graduations, you name it! They are not only for church members, but for friends far and wide. Two even went to New Zealand! So contact Nancy Davidson or Louise Davidson when you would like a handmade shawl. Many colors and textures are available!

Horizons magazine, a magazine dedicated to Presbyterian women, is currently running a subscription special. Details are in the link below.

<https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2022-BOGO-Horizons-flier.pdf>

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.

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROJECT

February, 2023

The need for clothing for homeless individuals and families in Central Ohio is greater than ever. CPW has supported Crazy Faith Ministry, founded and led by Rev. Dr. Susan Smith, by providing white socks for men in the past. We would like to broaden our support for this ministry outreach in the following way.

Men

White cotton socks in packages
White underpants in packages
White undershirts in packages

Women

White cotton socks in packages

White or pale underpants in packages
White or pale camisoles in packages
Sanitary supplies

All donations should be new and if not purchased in packages, please leave price tags on and put them in zip lock bags. It is important that we provide new clean items.

We invite the members of the congregation to participate as they wish. This project will begin Sunday, February 5th and conclude on Sunday, February 26th. There will be a large box in the atrium marked CPW Crazy Faith Ministry donations.

If you have any questions, please contact Ann Teske by phone 614-302-9609 (or text). Thank you for your generous support.

Ann Teske, Chair
Involvement and Action

WOMEN'S THEOLOGY

Members of Women's Theology will meet on February 3rd to continue discussion of Brian McLaren's book, *Do I Stay Christian?* They will discuss chapters 21, 22 and 23. New participants are always welcome. Meetings are held on Zoom, so check with Susan Imel or Louise Davidson for information and to join the discussion, the first and third Fridays each month from 9:30 to 11 am.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT & ADULT LEARNING COMMISSION

- **Wednesday Bible Study 1:00-2:00 pm:** This Wednesday, we will continue our study of the book of John. (You can find an overview of John at bibleproject.com.) This gathering will be in person, in the Lounge. We will continue offering zoom for those who cannot meet in-person. 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.-** Thanks to those who were able to attend our discussion of the beautiful book by Stephanie Saldaña, 'A Country Between'. Our February title, 'Apeirogon' by Colum McCann, will continue our focus on the Palestine-Israeli situation. Columbus Metropolitan Library owns 48 copies of this book, and 33 of them are available. The genre is fiction; following is a New York Times link describing the true story upon which it is based: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/24/books/review/colum-mccann-apeirogon.html>.

Our next meeting is scheduled for February 8 at 7:00 pm, via Zoom. Please contact the church or Tori Vazquez for the link.

Amazon description: "Bassam Aramin is Palestinian. Rami Elhanan is Israeli. They inhabit a world of intractable conflict that colors every aspect of their daily lives, from the roads they are allowed to drive on, to the schools their daughters, Abir and Smadar, each attend, to the checkpoints, both physical and emotional, they must negotiate. Their worlds shift irreparably after ten-year-old Abir is killed by a rubber bullet and thirteen-year-old Smadar becomes the victim of suicide bombers. When Bassam and Rami learn of each other's stories, they recognize the loss that connects them, and they attempt to use their grief as a weapon for peace."

- **Men's Study Breakfast** On Saturday, Feb. 4, the Men's Fellowship Group will meet for pot-luck breakfast at 8 a.m. in the church lounge, followed by viewing and discussing Borg & Crossan's 'Eclipsing Empire: Paul, Rome and the Kingdom of God', Part 11 on "Icons". Bring some food to share and be ready for some interesting learning time together.

Do You Know of a Student Seeking Higher Education??

Nurture & Outreach needs your help! If you have a child or a grandchild who is going to College or currently attending higher education classes, we would like to send them a "Box of Goodies" from Covenant. Please send their name, shipping address, any dietary restriction, and their spring break dates in an email to covenant@covenantpcusa.org and in the subject line type Nurture & Outreach/Nancy Davidson by February 6.

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 1272 Genessee Ave. in the Linden area. Volunteers work on the house on Thursday mornings 8:30 until noon and Saturdays from 8:30 to 3:00. Lunch on Saturday is provided. Work on the house will begin on February 4 and will be completed by August 31.

We are in need of men and women volunteers to help with the construction. You can just show up either day at 8:15am 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.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Anti-Human trafficking committee met last week, and we would like to help education the congregation about human trafficking.

Human trafficking is defined as "the recruitment, harboring, transporting, providing or obtaining, by any means, any person for forced labor, slavery or servitude in any industry or site such as agriculture, construction, prostitution, manufacturing, begging, domestic service or marriage."

Opportunity to Serve by Providing Lunch through the OPEN SHELTER

Do you want to do hands-on mission once a month or occasionally? We would love to welcome new people to the Open Shelter Lunch Making Team!

Covenant helps out people in need (including people who are homeless and marginally-housed) served by the Open Shelter by providing 175 sack lunches on the **second Friday of every month**. *Join us! You could help by shopping, pre-assembling, preparing on Friday morning, and/or delivering on Friday morning (see below for details). Our next delivery date is **Friday, February 10th** or you can help in any future month. **We particularly need help with SHOPPING at this point in the year, as some of our top shoppers take winter vacations. Let us know if you can help; it's fun, and shopping can fit into your schedule that week.***

Here are ways to join in:

- Anytime, donate **sturdy, stainless-steel water bottles with a loop** that participants can use to carry water easily. Drop your donations off in the marked bin within Covenant's Donation Center, which is in the coat closet nearest the sanctuary. We're hoping to provide more safe, cleanable water bottles to reduce the impact on the environment of disposable water bottles and to support a sustainable future.
- Anytime, you could **drop off your clean, lidded take-out containers** (reusable disposable food

containers) to shelving on the counter under the windows of Covenant's kitchen. We take them to the Open Shelter to help people take home leftovers from donated restaurant meals. When these meals are donated, people are encouraged to take sack lunches with them to-go as well.

- You could help with supplies for the sack lunches; we would let you know the quantity, and you'd deliver them to Covenant's kitchen by the Thursday before the delivery day (church closes at 4pm) or by the second Friday of the month at 8:00, when we assemble the sack lunches. The costs for these supplies may be reimbursed by submitting your receipts to our Financial Administrator, Tanvi Bhowmik. Ways to help include:
 - You could **shop** for supplies (like paper bags and napkins from GFS, drinks, plastic bags, sandwich makings, bananas...)
 - You could make **45 or 90 bags of unsalted nuts** at your home.
 - You could make **45 or 90 bags of baby carrots** at your home.
 - You could make **30 Peanut Butter and Jelly sandwiches** at your home.
- You could **help make 160 ham and cheese sandwiches with the team at Covenant's kitchen, and then assemble** the lunches into paper bags and pack them in boxes and into a car (or two) between 8:00 and 9:10 am on the second Friday of the month.
- You could **transport** the lunches and other supplies from Covenant to the Open Shelter on Parsons Ave. by 9:30 on the second Friday of the month. This takes either two drivers or one driver with a larger hatchback car or minivan.

By splitting up the work, we can get more people involved sharing the Love of Christ in our community.

Questions? We would love to answer them! Would you like to join us in one or more of these ways? Fantastic! Please contact us to discuss this and/or sign up at covenant@covenantpcusa.org.

In Christ,
Betsy Sebastian, Mona Connolly, and Carrie Mellen

Join the team
creating
175 Sack Lunches
for the
OPEN SHELTER
on Parsons Ave.
on the 2nd Friday
of every month from
8:00 to 9:10am



Contact:
Betsy
Sebastian,
Mona
Connolly,
Carrie
Mellen





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

*Many thanks to the volunteers of the SOS Food Pantry
led by Mark Owen who served on 1/21!*

*The next meal will be prepared and served by the Deacons
on Saturday, February, 18.
To help as a chef or as a server from 4-7pm, please contact Karen Hjelm.*

Hoge Presbyterian Church offers the HM3 program every Saturday for its community in Franklinton including Music, Message, and a free Meal. Area churches assist with the Meal, and Covenant creates and serves a hot, home-made meal every 3rd Saturday. Current attendance at HM3 leads us to bring enough for 50 meals.

- **Please help us establish the groups who will serve in 2023! Please sign up as an individual or as a group. We need help for these Saturdays: Jul 15, Aug 19, Sep 16, Oct 21, and Nov 18.**
- Groups have signed up to serve for several of the months of 2023... THANK YOU! **Group leaders:** If your group is lacking servers or chefs, let Cathy know; she has contacts for volunteers who can join your team.
- **Chefs:** Consider cooking at home, or consider cooking at Covenant together, as a group (it's fun)! In any case, your team will transport food to Hoge to be kept warm (or cold) until serving time. Your expenses incurred in cooking may be reimbursed through our Financial Administrator, Tanvi Bhowmik.
- **If you or your kids would like to help out as a chef and/or server (from 4-7pm) during one of those 3rd Saturdays where a group already is signed up, go ahead and contact that groups' leader;** we'll be they would be THRILLED to have help! You can find the leader's name on the website, or you can ask Cathy Levy, and she'll connect you up.

Signup 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

SIGN UP as an Individual or Group for a 3rd Sat. in 2023 to be the hand of Christ in Love and Hospitality cooking and/or serving home-cooked food for our neighbors at HM3/Hoge Memorial Pres. Church

**Contact: Cathy Levy or use
bitly.com/CovenantHM3SignUp**

**Worried about what to cook for 50?
Ask Cathy for a list of the last 17 menus
which included these Main Dishes:**



**BBQ Chicken, Beef, Pulled Pork Sandwiches,
Beef Stew, Chicken Tetrazinni, Johnny Marzetti,
Meatloaf, Sliced Ham, Sliced Turkey**



**PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER
ASSISTANCE**
OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE
Text PDAUKR to
41444 to donate.
<https://pda.pcusa.org/>



Presbyterian Disaster Assistance – Ukraine and Hurricane Relief

Your financial support and partnership enables Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) to bring hope to communities and individuals recovering from natural and human-caused disaster

situations. God's people are called on to stand in the "GAP" – Give. Act. Pray. Give to a disaster/relief effort of your choice by designating the Disaster Response "DR" project you would like to support. View the list of [Active Disaster Responses](#) (includes links to give online)

SANCTUARY FLOWERS



You may 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 but must be received prior to the specific date of worship service.



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 Mike Davis. 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.



WEBSITE REQUEST FORM

Does your Commission need something placed on the website? Does a form need updated, or an announcement need to be made? Click below and submit a website request as soon as possible to have information added or changed on the Covenant website.

[WEBSITE REQUEST FORM](#)

CHURCH FACILITIES POLICY

INFORMATION/MISCELLANEOUS

- Our Financial Administrator's, Tanvi Bhowmik, work schedule is Monday-Wednesday 9:30am-4pm.

[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.](#)



Covenant Presbyterian Church | 2070 Ridgecliff Rd., Columbus, OH 43221

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