

Weekly Newsletter of Covenant Presbyterian Church - March 12, 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

*Jesus answered, "I assure you, unless someone is born anew, it's not possible to see God's kingdom."
Nicodemus asked, "How is it possible for an adult to be born?" John 3:3-4*

The phrase "born again Christian" has so much theological and political baggage that many people want nothing to do with it. But I think we need to reclaim it. At the heart of this metaphor is our need for change, the need for new beginnings, and new ways of seeing the world. We need that right about now. Jesus invites Nicodemus, a well-respected Pharisee, to be born anew, and Nicodemus makes the mistake of taking Jesus' words literally. Jesus clarifies he is speaking in metaphor of beginning again, and all beginnings are hard. When we've been taught to see the world a certain way, it's difficult to begin again.

Being born physically happens once in our life, but being born again happens over and over. Jesus says, "The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." When the Spirit of God takes us places we never imagined we'd end up, we are born again. God has destinations for us travel, the likes of which we know nothing about. Right now, our church is considering taking new steps of welcome and inclusion toward people who have been systemically excluded from churches including this one. These steps mark a new beginning for Covenant, one that many of you welcome and others of you might not be so sure. It's hard to begin again.

While no one knows where the Spirit will lead us next, one thing we can know for sure, wherever God is leading us, it's all for the sake of love. Because with God, that's what it's all about. That's all it's ever been about, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him [whoever trusts in this love], may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16). When we trust in love, eternal life starts now. Jesus came as the embodiment of divine love, a love that does not condemn us but saves us. In this time of new beginnings, God's love will save us again, and again, and again.

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, MARCH 5)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/561355339281166/>

YouTube: <https://youtube.com/live/IFNCpSuibsU?feature=share>

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

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL AGES!

Adult Forum Class - Sundays from 9am-9:45am in the Lounge. Presentation on Welcoming & Inclusion Task Force.

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.

SANCTIFIED ART

You likely have noticed illustrations on the back cover of the Lenten Sunday worship bulletins. These illustrations were created by 5 artists in the *Sanctified Art* group - a collective of artists, writers, musicians, poets, and pastors. *Sanctified Art* creatives produce resources for churches to use during the Lenten and Advent seasons. Their illustrations are featured in our Lenten Devotional booklet, "*seeking: honest questions for deeper faith*". Images of these artworks are currently on exhibit in the lounge; each accompanied by an Artist Statement. The Lenten theme this year is *Seeking*. The artworks are based on Bible verses shared during *The Gospel Reading* preceding the *Sermon* each Sunday during Lent.



covenant
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday
March 12, 2023
10 AM Service

2070 Ridgecliff Rd
Columbus, OH 43221

Illuminati

The Sacred Music Ensemble of
the Columbus Gay Men's Chorus

Illuminati works to demonstrate that we all have a place in sacred spaces, and are whole, holy, and loved.

Illuminati's mission is to demonstrate, through song, that ALL people have a place in the religious community.

If you are interested in singing with Illuminati, please visit our website www.cgmc.com and fill out our contact form or send an email to our membership director at membership@cgmc.com

PREACHER FROM THE PEW SERVICES

Our Preacher from the Pew Services will start at 7pm on Wed., March 1, in the Sanctuary. You are invited to our annual series where our members will enlighten our Lenten season by presenting their faith journey. Distinguished lay preachers this year are: March 1: Bonnie Beth Mitchell; March 8: Racine Brown; March 15: Dick Lewis; March 22: Josh Battistone; March 29: Gene McEvoy. Please see our display in the hallway.

Preacher from the Pew

Please join us every Wednesday at 7:00pm in Lent for our annual series where our members will enlighten your Lenten season by presenting their faith journey. Read their bios on display in the hallway or on our church website.

March 1: Bonnie Beth Mitchell

March 8: Racine Brown

March 15: Dick Lewis

March 22: Josh Battistone

March 29: Gene McEvoy

Preacher from the Pew



Bonnie Beth Mitchell
March 1; 7:00PM



Racine Brown
March 8; 7:00PM



Dick Lewis
March 15; 7:00PM



Josh Battistone
March 22; 7:00PM



Gene McEvoy
March 29; 7:00PM

CPW LENTEN BREAKFAST

Mark your calendars for the annual Lenten Breakfast on Saturday, March 18th at 9:30 am sponsored by Covenant Presbyterian Women. Using works from the collection of the Columbus Museum of Art, docents Mary Gahbauer and Anne Peterson will feature art with the themes of Hope and Renewal.

The program will be concluded with communion. There is no charge for the program, but registration to attend is needed. Registrations can be made between services or by contacting the office at 614-451-6677.

SOS FOOD PANTRY

THE SOS FOOD PANTRY CONTINUES TO MAKE EMERGENCY FOOD DELIVERIES TO FAMILIES IN NEED IN OUR COMMUNITY. OUR VOLUNTEER DRIVERS ARE HEARING FROM OUR CLIENTS HOW MUCH THEY NEED THE FOOD AND HOW MUCH THEY APPRECIATE IT! OUR SHELVES ARE ABOUT TO BE EMPTIED AND WE ARE IN NEED OF



FOOD DONATIONS ONCE AGAIN.

PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION OF ANY OF THESE ITEMS:

CANNED GREEN BEANS AND CORN
PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY/JAM
BOXED MACARONI & CHEESE
CONDENSED CHICKEN NOODLE AND TOMATO SOUPS
BAKED BEANS
CANNED FRUIT

CEREALS
SPAGHETTI AND SPAGHETTI SAUCE
CANNED TUNA FISH
CANNED BEEF STEW

PLEASE PLACE YOUR DONATIONS IN THE SOS PANTRY DROP OFF BIN INSIDE THE NORTH ENTRANCE.

THANK YOU TO OUR MANY SUPPORTERS AND VOLUNTEERS!

CHILDREN'S CENTER NEWS



Now enrolling for Summer Camps
and the 2023 - 2024 School Year!

Summer Preschool Camp (ages 3 – 5)

This 4-hour camp is for children ages 36 months through 5 years old who have not yet attended kindergarten. Children must be potty trained and 3 years old by the start of their session. Camp starts at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 1:00 p.m. Children should eat breakfast before attending camp. Parents must provide a packed snack or lunch.

Focus on Fundamentals Sports Minicamp (ages 6 – 9)

Focus on Fundamentals is more than a sports camp. While campers work on basic moves and strategies that will increase their fun and enjoyment of sports, they also receive positive coaching on collaboration, teamwork, and how to build good relationships. The daily 2-hour schedule includes a team meeting, warmups (calisthenics, stretching), skill drills, special games, snack from home (fuel up), game time (play the game!), and a closing huddle-up. Enrollment is limited to 12 children per day.

2023 – 2024 School Year Programs

CDO for toddlers, Preschool, Pre-K, and After School (grades K-5)

Visit our webpage at
<https://covenantpcusa.org/childrens-center>
for program details and application forms

Questions? Contact Caroline at childcenter@covenantpcusa.org or 614-451-7172

**Covenant Presbyterian Women was joined by
Covenant Congregation
To Create a Very Successful**

Community Outreach Project For Crazy Faith Ministries for the Homeless February 5-25, 2023

Rev. Dr. Susan Smith asked for new underwear as the greatest need.

We responded!

Men

200 pairs of white socks
82 white tee shirts
110 briefs
4 grocery bags of sanitary supplies

Women

74 pairs of socks
68 camisoles
156 briefs

Thank you to all for your caring and generosity!

Ann Teske, Chair
Involvement and Action
Covenant Presbyterian Women



**“God is our refuge and strength ... though the mountains shake.”
- Psalm 46:1-3**

The scale of the disaster facing Syria and Turkey after the Feb. 6 earthquake is becoming clearer. The 7.8-magnitude quake and its aftershocks have left more than 11,000 people dead and thousands more injured; these numbers will rise as search and rescue continues. Buildings have been reduced to rubble, and roads and bridges have been severely damaged, resulting in dangerous conditions for first responders. In some places, such as Aleppo, this destruction is compounding the damage of the now 11-year war in Syria.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is providing emergency relief and short-term recovery in the impacted areas through long-standing partners in Syria, in addition to ACT Alliance members in Syria and Turkey, all of whom are already on the ground. PDA will remain active throughout the entire recovery process, accompanying our partners in the area as they determine long-term program needs and providing financial support for building and resilience.

GIVE. ACT. PRAY.

GIVE:

Financial support for relief efforts can be designated to [DR999999-ST earthquake](#). Gifts can be made [online by clicking here](#), by phone at (800) 872-3283, or by check made payable to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with “[DR999999-ST Earthquake](#)” written on the memo line and mailed to

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),

CPC BOOK GROUP

In March, we will have the opportunity to join with Pastor Jacqui Buschor of The Church at Oakland Park (ELCA) and several other churches for a study of Barbara Brown Taylor's 'Learning to Walk in the Dark'. This study will be held on Thursday evenings at 7 pm on Zoom, keeping our Wednesday evenings free for Preacher from the Pew. Here is her description of the book and a link to sign up:

"Jacqui writes: 'This book explores the dichotomies of light and darkness and the spiritual meaning and significance we often attribute to each. Together we'll explore how, though it is easier to see God and goodness in the light, God is equally present and moving in the dark and how the darkness sometimes has unique gifts to offer us that we could never find in light alone. This will be a five week study meeting on Thursday evenings at 7pm beginning March 2nd. [Just fill out the registration form](#) so we can get Zoom information to you and keep you updated in case of changes.'"

Then in April, a field trip! Many thanks to Terry Kennedy-Mancini for calling it to our attention. Matthew Desmond is coming to Columbus to give a talk on Wednesday, April 19 at 7:00 p.m. at CCAD. Matthew Desmond is the author of 'Evicted', which the Book Group read with Dr. Stephanie Pierce. He has a new book coming out, 'Poverty by America', a copy of which is included in the cost of the \$30 ticket. We will meet at the church and carpool-- early dinner before would be an option. Tori Vazquez will order the tickets all at once and each of you could reimburse, if that would be helpful. **Please let me know by Friday, February 17, if you are interested.** A link is below if you would prefer to order your own ticket. We will read and discuss our new book in May!

An Evening with Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author of EVICTED, Matthew Desmond!

Pulitzer Prize-winning and bestselling author, acclaimed sociologist Matthew Desmond, in conversation with WOSU Public Media's Ann Fisher! www.eventbrite.com



DONATE METAL WATER BOTTLES for those who visit the OPEN SHELTER

What: Donate Stainless Steel water bottles with sturdy carrying loops

For Who: The people who visit the Open Shelter on Parsons Ave.

Why: Stainless steel bottles are healthier to drink from and easier to clean. Each bottle's lid should include a sturdy loop for hooking fingers through or hooking a carabiner hook through because folks must carry all their belongings. No need to donate the carabiner hooks; we will buy them by the box and add them to each water bottle before taking them to the Open Shelter.

Where: Place your donations in the marked bin in Covenant's Donation Center, which is in the coat closet closest to the main entrance to the sanctuary.

When will the Open Shelter receive them? For decades, we take 175 sack lunches to the Open Shelter on the second Friday of the month. We also bring drinks, including disposable bottled water. The availability of high quality 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.

Questions? Reach out to **Cathy Levy**.

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'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

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@covnantpcusa.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 will meet on Friday, March 17th to conclude discussion of Brian McLaren's book, *Do I Stay Christian?* Discussion will include chapters 27, 28, and the Afterword. The next book will be *Always a Guest* by Barbara Brown Taylor. 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 9:30am to 11am.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT & ADULT LEARNING COMMISSION

- **Wednesday Bible Study 1:00-2:00 pm:** This Wednesday from 1-2 pm, we will continue the study of John. 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@covnantpcusa.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 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 March 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 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."

DID YOU KNOW?

Every year, millions of men, women, and children are trafficked worldwide – including right here in the United States. It can happen in any community and victims can be any age, race, gender, or nationality. Traffickers might use the following methods to lure victims into trafficking situations:

- Violence
- Manipulation
- Romantic relationships
- False promises of well-paying jobs

JOIN THE TEAM creating Sack Lunches serving clients from the OPEN SHELTER

Want to help your neighbor? Are you short on time but big in heart?
Check out these opportunities to join our team! Call us; maybe one of these tasks will fit your schedule.
If yes, great! If not, thanks for considering it!
We want to involve YOU!

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**. *Our next delivery date is Friday, March 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.*

Here are ways to join in:

- Anytime, donate **sturdy, stainless-steel water bottles with a loop** (see the e-newsletter article for details)
- 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.
- Help with supplies! (Costs may be reimbursed by submitting your receipts to our Financial Administrator, Tanvi Bhowmik.)
 - **Shop** for supplies (like paper bags, or napkins, or drinks, or plastic bags, or sandwich makings, or bananas...)
 - **Pre-assemble** at your home (45 or 90 bags of unsalted nuts, or 45 or 90 bags of baby carrots, or 30 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches)
- Join the **Lunch-assembling team at Covenant's kitchen** (help make 160 ham and cheese sandwiches, 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**).
- **Deliver** the lunches and other supplies from Covenant to the Open Shelter on Parsons Ave. by **9:30**. 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? Interested? Please contact us to discuss this and/or sign up at covenant@covenantpcusa.org.

JOIN THE TEAM
creating 175 Sack Lunches serving clients
from the:
OPEN SHELTER on Parsons Ave.



Help as a shopper, early in the month,
delivering items to Covenant

Help as a pre-assembler,
and deliver by the 2nd Fri., 8am, to Covenant

Help the Lunch-assembling team
on the 2nd Friday from 8:00 to 9:10 am

Help deliver to the Open Shelter, loading up
on the 2nd Fri. starting at 8am, delivering by 9:30

Contact:
Betsy Sebastian, Mona Connolly, Carrie Mellen



JOIN THE GROUPS serving a
home-cooked meal with open
hearts for the Franklinton
community through HOGE'S
MUSIC, MESSAGE, MEAL

Want to help your neighbor? Can you help from 4-7pm on a 3rd Saturday?
Check this out! It's fun, easy, and important! We want to involve YOU!

The next meal will be prepared and served by the
Mission and Social Concerns Commission on Saturday, March, 18.
To help as a chef or as a server from 4-7pm, please contact Cathy Levy.

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.

- **Please help us establish the groups who will serve in 2023!** Sign up as an individual or as a group. We need help for these Saturdays: **Aug 19, Sep 16, Oct 21.**
- 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. Costs 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 a 3rd Saturday where a group already is signed up, **go ahead and contact that groups' leader;** they would be **THRILLED** to have help! You can find the leader's name on the website, or 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 a group to share God's love with our neighbors in Franklinton as a chef or server through the HM3 program at Hoge Memorial Presbyterian Church

Contact Cathy Levy or use:

bitly.com/CovenantHM3SignUp



Wondering what to cook for 50? Ask Cathy for a list of the last 21 menus including these meaty main dishes:

*BBQ Chicken, Beef, or Pulled Pork Sandwiches,
Beef Stew, Chicken Tetrazzini, Johnny Marzetti,
Oven-Baked Chicken & Rice, Meatloaf
Sliced Ham, Sliced Turkey*



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 Tuesday-Thursday 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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