

FALL 2025

COVENANT NEWS

A publication of Covenant Presbyterian Church • Charlotte, North Carolina



A Note from Bob Henderson



DEAR FRIENDS: Our remarkable summer kicked off with a Memorial Day celebration like none other as we dedicated the new sanctuary windows and the stories they now tell. It was a historic day in the life of our church, for which I am deeply grateful. Our summer culminated

with the installation of Serenitye Taylor as our newly called Associate Pastor for Congregational Life, another historic day in the life of our congregation. We're excited about Serenitye's work and trust it will expand the life and mission of our congregation.

This fall, we will launch our program year with characteristic energy and purpose by welcoming distinguished thought leaders from the three Abrahamic faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Together, we will explore how their respective traditions offer wisdom and guidance for living peaceably with others, especially in the Holy Land. See page four in

this newsletter for specifics and know how deeply grateful I am to serve a congregation ready to engage such a vital and complex topic with both intellectual curiosity and heartfelt respect. We're fortunate to host speakers of such depth and insight. There is much to learn from them, and I warmly invite you to approach each presentation with a spirit of appreciative inquiry.

Finally, we are elated to welcome Emily Floyd as our new Director of Traditional Music. Emily's talent is matched only by her energy, and I can't wait to watch her leadership build on the solid foundation of traditional music at Covenant. If you have ever considered participating in any dimension of the music program at Covenant, now would be a great time to start. Simply write Emily at emily.floyd@covenantpresby.org or speak to her any Sunday morning. I'm confident you'll be glad you did.

With gratitude for the privilege of sharing the journey with you...

Bob

Wednesdays: Open Table

Dinner, prepared by Chef Johnny, is served 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Gluten-free options available. Cost is \$10 for adults and youth in the sixth grade and above, \$6 for children two years old through the fifth grade, with a family maximum of \$38. Pay in person or prepay on covenantpresby.org/wednesdays



Join Your Friends and Family at Open Table!

Enjoy a delicious meal and stay for a variety of programs and classes for all ages.

Life Groups Wednesday Nights (and More)

TIMES VARY BY GROUP

Life Groups are an expression of dynamic Christian community, in which groups of 5-15 individuals are nurtured in discipleship and in faith. We hope you'll join us in study and conversation centered around discernment using a curriculum titled, "God's GPS: Finding Your Way With Faith."



The majority of Life Groups will meet on Wednesday evenings, following Open Table.

Visit our website to signup:
covenantpresby.org/wednesdays



Hannah's Heart

**Second Wednesday of the Month
6:30 p.m. in Katherine Kerr's Office**

A support group for women who desire to become mothers.
katherine.kerr@covenant.presby.org



Get Your Vaccines Here

**Wednesdays in October
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.**

Stay healthy with vaccines for flu, COVID-19, and RSV in the Welcome Center. **Details on page 10.**

Wednesdays Through November Children's Programs

5:15-5:45 p.m.

Choir for preK/kindergarten

5:45-6:30 p.m.

Choir for 1-3 grades

BLAST for 4-5 graders

6:30-7:30 p.m.

Choir for 4-5 grades

BLAST for K-3 graders

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Middle & High School Youth

5:15 - 6:00 p.m.

Youth Handbell Ensemble

Dinner 6:00 p.m.

Program 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Meet in Fellowship Hall for dinner then gather for programming.



Teach Us To Number Our Days

The Wisdom of Planning for the End of Life

Wednesdays in September
6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

For most of us, thinking about and planning for the end of our lives, or those of our loved ones, is something we'd rather put off for another day. But responsible, faithful thought and preparation for the inevitability of the end of our earthly lives can be a true gift to ourselves and our families. In this series, we will consider what it means to take seriously the truth of our mortality, and what we can do now to be more prepared in the future.

September 10

Hospice and Palliative Care

Led by Walt Windley, Senior Director of Spiritual Care and Grief Services, VIA Healthcare Partners.

September 17

Advanced Directives

Angela Beamer-Ratliff, MSW, ACM-SW, Advance Care Planning Regional Coordinator, Choices and Champions for Novant Health, Inc

September 24

Witness to the Resurrection: Funerals and Memorial Services at Covenant

Katherine Kerr will walk through the process of planning and preparing for a funeral or memorial service at Covenant, including options for burial and cremation, elements of the worship service, and care for families at the time of a loved one's death.



Open Doors, Uneven Floors

The Struggle for Home in Charlotte

Wednesdays, October 29 – November 12
6:30 p.m. in the Chapel

What does it mean to seek justice in a city where not everyone has a place to call home? Join us for this three-part series featuring local leaders who bring wisdom, challenge, and hope to the work of housing equity. Come hungry—for dinner, for dialogue, and for a more just future. All are welcome

October 29

Liz Clasen-Kelly (CEO of Roof Above)

will open the series with a powerful look at how housing insecurity and homelessness are changing—and what the faith community can do.



November 5

Laura Belcher (CEO of Habitat for Humanity of the Charlotte Region)

will speak about building pathways to homeownership and the systemic barriers that keep families out.



November 12

Dr. Tom Hanchett (community historian and author of *Affordable Housing in Charlotte*) will trace how the past shapes today's housing challenges—and what Charlotte's history tells us about America.





SUNDAY SPEAKER SERIES

An Ethic of Peace for the Holy Land

Three Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

Explore the spiritual and ethical foundations of peace in the Israeli-Palestinian context through the perspectives of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Featuring leading voices from each tradition, the series invites engagement with the teachings, movements, and moral visions of justice, reconciliation, and the flourishing of all people.



SCHEDULE

September 7: Peter Beinart

Peter Beinart is a journalist, political commentator, and professor at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY. Author of *Being Jewish After the Destruction of Gaza*, he is a leading voice on American politics, foreign policy, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Editor-at-large of *Jewish Currents*, MSNBC commentator, and fellow at the Foundation for Middle East Peace, Beinart is known for his moral clarity, historical insight, and compelling advocacy for equality and shared humanity. Books will be available for sale.



September 14: Mitri Raheb

A frequent visitor to Covenant, Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb is the Founder and President of Dar al-Kalima University in Bethlehem, as well as the most widely published Palestinian theologian, author of 50 books translated into thirteen languages. Former Senior Pastor of the Christmas Lutheran Church, he is a social entrepreneur, NGO founder, and member of the Palestinian National and Central Councils. Recipient of global honors including the Olof Palme Prize, his work is featured by major international media, advocating justice, dialogue, and cultural resilience.



September 21: Hadia Mubarak

Dr. Hadia Mubarak is Associate Professor of Religion at Queens University of Charlotte and author of *Rebellious Wives, Neglectful Husbands*. A specialist in Qur'anic exegesis, Islamic feminism, and gender reform, she has taught at Guilford, UNC Charlotte, and Davidson, and serves as Scholar-in-Residence at the Muslim Community Center of Charlotte. Mubarak holds a Ph.D. from Georgetown University and was the first woman elected president of the national Muslim Students Association.

Sunday Mornings for Adults



Nurturing Your Faith & Spirituality While Parenting

A six-week educational session for parents
October 12 – November 16
9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall Room 205

As parents, we gain a deeper appreciation for the “seasons of life” as we watch our children grow through each stage of development. Nothing can fully prepare you for how your heart will expand, grow weary, and carry so much along the way. Scripture reminds us:

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (Proverbs 4:23).

Our heart — spiritually and metaphorically — shapes our thoughts, feelings, and actions. Yet cultivating a spiritually healthy heart often requires more mental, emotional, and even calendar space than we feel we have. Knowing we need to protect our heart is one thing; learning to create consistent and sustainable rhythms of spiritual practice is another.

This series will explore practices and rhythms that help you protect and nurture your heart in the midst of your parenting season. As you grow in your own relationship with God, you’ll also model spiritual heart-care for your children.

Every week includes a 20-minute presentation, followed by plenty of time for discussion and community-building.

While each session builds on the last, you are welcome to join as often as you’re able.

Sign up on our website:
covenantpresby.org/sunday-events

: SCHEDULE

: **Week 1: Protecting Our Heart.**

: What makes this important for parents; what the bible tells us
: about protecting our heart. Led by Grace Lindvall.

: **Week 2: Getting Curious About Your Spiritual Life**

: Build on conversations/learning from Covenant’s book study:
: *The Spiritual Child: The New Science on Parenting for Health*
: *and Lifelong Thriving*. Reinforce the idea of kids having a
: sense of spirituality, as young as three years old, and it being
: something they long for, while providing parents with support
: to respond to their kid’s innate sense of curiosity and wonder.
: Led by Leigh Ann Hall.

: **Week 3: Moments of Intention**

: Routines you can muster and soul rhythms. Finding the acts
: of faith or spiritual practices that are resonant for you and
: your season. Led by Hunter Hoover.

: **Week 4: Creating A Practice Of Honest And Vulnerable Prayer With And For Our Kids.** Led by Grace Lindvall.

: **Week 5: Quieting The Societal Noise In Community**

: Discover how community can help quiet the noise of outside
: pressures and offer space for grounding and renewal. Togeth-
: er, we’ll explore practices of centeredness, shared purpose,
: and familial values—learning what it means to walk alongside
: others who are truly with you. Led by Ashlee Anderson.

: *(No class on November 2)*

: **Week 6: What Does God Want You To Know?**

: Details to come

Small Group Events

SOS Kicks Off Busy New Fall Season

Surviving Our Spouses (SOS) offers a warm, casual space to connect with others who have also lost a life partner—whether recently or years ago—and to enjoy meaningful fellowship with both old and new friends.



September 6 at 10:30 a.m.

Apple picking at Windy Hill Orchard in York, SC. We'll enjoy apples, cider and a cute restaurant for lunch. Contact Shannon Hall at shannonyarbroughhall@gmail.com

September 14 at 12:30 p.m.

Our kickoff luncheon in the private dining room of Rooster's Wood-fired Kitchen, SouthPark. Contact Shannon Hall at shannonyarbroughhall@gmail.com

October 25 at Noon

Our popular fall picnic on the church patio under the magnolia tree. Chef Johnny will prepare lunch for us, sponsored by Congregational Life and Pastoral Care. Contact Susan Murphy at susanmurphy400@gmail.com

November TBD: Staining Columbarium Benches

SOS members have been refurbishing the benches for three years now. A new coat of stain takes us a little over two hours to complete. All are welcome!

November 16: CIC Project

We will take part in this special day of service with a project designed for our SOS members and friends.

December 23 at 12:30 p.m.: Memory Tree and Open House in the Welcome Center

One of our most cherished traditions is dedicating a Christmas tree with ribbons in memory of loved ones. After a brief service we tie ribbons followed by refreshments in the Welcome Center. The congregation adds their ribbons after the Christmas Eve services.

T.L.C. (Travel, Learn, Connect)

With Fall on the horizon, TLC is ready! We have planned wonderful programs and a trip that we hope all of the congregation will attend. Contact Serenity Taylor at serenitye.taylor@covenantpresby.org.

September 24 at Covenant

Cori Faklaris from UNCC will speak on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and help us to understand what we can expect in the future with this technology.

October 15 at Covenant

The Pearl is Covenant's neighbor on McDowell St. and home to the Wake Forest/Atrium Medical School and IRCAD North America, a surgical training and research center. IRCAD North America is the organization's first North American headquarters, created to educate physicians in the latest minimally invasive and image-guided surgical techniques through advanced simulation and robotics. Our speakers will be Amaya Daniel, Senior Business Analyst for The Pearl, and Marcus Kimbrough, Local Government Lead & Community Engagement Strategist of Atrium Health.

November 12 in Kannapolis

We will visit The NC Music Hall of Fame (did you know that even existed??) and a NASCAR facility.

December 3 at Covenant: Christmas Bingo Party

We will again bring sweet treats/drinks to provide a Christmas Snack Cart for the staff at Highland Renaissance Academy.

As always, TLC welcomes all Covenant members, friends, and neighbors for our programs. As our ministers say, "Come and bring a friend!"



Small Group Events



Third Quarter Ministry

No Age Limits, Just Fellowship!

Our ministry, centered on connection and community, is going strong! This summer, we've shared some great moments together—from relaxing poolside at a wonderful social hosted by Barbara and Hugh Lewis in July, to soaking in art and inspiration at the Annie Leibovitz exhibit at the Mint Museum. And we're just getting started!

This fall, we're planning more opportunities to gather and have fun, including a day at the Whitewater Center, an evening of bowling, and cheering on the Panthers as they (hopefully!) take down the Packers on November 2.

Whether you've come before or are thinking of joining for the first time, we'd love to have you with us. All are welcome—just bring your sense of fun and friendship!

For more information, contact Serenity Taylor at serenitye.taylor@covenantpresby.org

Pet Ministry

Covenant's Pet Ministry shares the unconditional love of pets with our church and community. We sponsor several events during the year, and we're always looking for new ways to spread joy and comfort through this ministry. We want to hear from you! **Send your thoughts to Karen Willis at karen.willis@covenantpresby.org**



New Initiative from P&E

Creation Care Task Force

BY AMY VARDELL CAPITANO

Fall invites us to pause and notice the beauty of God's creation—leaves turning brilliant colors, apples and pears filling the farmer's market, and creatures preparing for the winter ahead. It's also a season to reflect on Covenant's role in caring for that creation. At the request of the Planning and Evaluation Committee, a new Creation Care Task Force was formed this summer to help us do just that.

The group is charged with taking a holistic look at Covenant's call to care for God's world and making recommendations in two key areas:

- **Identifying focus areas where Covenant can live more fully into this calling.**
- **Exploring how Creation Care can be integrated into the church's ongoing life and leadership.**

The task force includes Andrew Morrison, Blaine Sanders, Campbell Carter, Erin Hines, Julian Wright, Mary Gaertner, Amy Capitano, and Katherine Kerr.

Members bring both passion and hope to this work. Erin reflected, "When my husband and I first came to Covenant, I was delighted by the Butterfly Highway signs in the parking



lot and the references to the natural world in prayer. It was the first time I had attended a church that included all of Creation in God's redemptive work. The Bible is clear about our responsibility as stewards, and I'm excited to explore how Covenant can deepen this commitment."

The team is currently researching creation care practices and learning from other churches. In September, they will host listening sessions to hear your ideas. October and November will be spent in discernment and data gathering, with recommendations to P&E planned for December.

We invite you to support this work—by sharing your voice, attending a listening session, or holding the task force in prayer.

A Garden of Love in Memory of John Dickson

Tomatoes & Testimony

If you've walked by the Covenant vegetable beds lately, you've likely seen a quiet miracle growing—vines full of tomatoes stretching toward the Carolina blue sky. But look closer and you'll see something even more extraordinary: a legacy of love, community, and faithful witness taking root.

John Dickson, a beloved member of our congregation who died last year, was many things—a pilot, a professor, a man of deep intellect and even deeper warmth—but to many at Covenant, he was our tomato whisperer. John's joy in nurturing the garden outside our Education Building wasn't just about produce. It was about presence. He showed up, quietly and faithfully, tending what God gave.

This spring, a group of church members decided to carry that joy forward. Led by Ann Watkins and others, the tomato garden John so carefully cultivated has returned to life—this time as a shared ministry. There's been soil and sweat, laughter and learning, and yes, a little singing to the seedlings (John would approve). As one observer put it, "It makes my heart so happy to see this ministry continuing under loving care."



These tomatoes are not just tomatoes. They are testimony. A sign of the fruit that grows when a life is lived in generous love—and when a community chooses to remember by doing.

So come take a look. Say a prayer. Pick a tomato. And give thanks for John, whose legacy reminds us that resurrection sometimes looks like a garden bed full of hope.



Outdoor Ministry

Sowing a New Garden Generation

Thanks to a dedicated team of gardening volunteers, Covenant's Children's Native Garden is gaining momentum and putting down roots! At the heart of every garden is its soil. Beyond light and water, soil is what determines seed germination, root health, and ultimately, fruitful flowering. As garden design team member Terry Loeb reminds us, "It's all about the soil!"

With a good soaking of timely rain, we'll soon re-cover the garden for another solar incubation period, allowing organic material to continue breaking down. This conditioning, stretching into winter and beyond, will enrich the ground and prepare it for future plantings. What we're after is humus—earthy stuff echoing Adam's beginnings—that will nourish an ecosystem designed to flourish.

Where Should We Go Next?

The Outdoor Ministry team is looking for new activity ideas! Have you been on a hike or walk you think Covenant members would enjoy? Perhaps there is a place for a Sunday evening stroll? Or a place for a bike ride with friends. We're gathering ideas and we want to hear from you! **Send suggestions to Mary Gaertner at magaertner@carolina.rr.com**

Help a Child Fall in Love with Reading



BY ALAN MORROW

Covenant has a long-standing partnership with Highland Renaissance Academy, a Title I elementary school serving an inspiring community of students and families. One of the most joyful and impactful ways we support Highland is through monthly visits with its third-grade classes.

We're looking for volunteers to join us once a month on Tuesdays from 10:45–11:45 a.m. During that hour, you'll be with other Covenant members in the classroom helping children explore a variety of books. There is no preparation required—just a love of stories and a heart for encouraging young readers.

Covenant member Alan Morrow has been part of Read, Roar, Soar for seven years and shares why this simple act matters so deeply to him:



"When Covenant first invited me, I wondered, 'Why would I do this?' But then I met the children at Highland who have a remarkable innocence and a fresh way of seeing the world — a natural joy and trust. Reading with them helps support their academic growth, but it does so much more. It nurtures creativity, imagination, and a budding sense of right and wrong. Protecting and encouraging that innocence helps them develop into kind and thoughtful adults. What I didn't expect was how much it would change me. Spending time with these children helps me reclaim a piece of that innocence for myself. Their joy is contagious. Their wonder reminds me to slow down and find delight in life's simple pleasures."

Read, Roar, Soar supports Highland's mission to help every child thrive, while also offering volunteers a chance to grow in love and joy. **To learn more contact Mandy Rencher at mandy.rencher@covenantpresby.org.**

A New Layer of Hospitality at Covenant



BY BILL CATHEY

About a year ago, staff and ushers recognized that Covenant could benefit from an added layer of hospitality on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. With the leadership of William Lucas, Director of Operations, we launched a new volunteer role: the Usher Coordinator for the Day.

Covenant's large, open campus is a gift, but it can feel overwhelming to visitors and new members. The Usher Coordinator helps by serving as a roaming greeter and guide—answering questions, directing people to worship, classes, childcare, or events, and offering a friendly presence.

Coordinators serve Sundays 8:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. or Wednesdays 5:15 – 7:45 p.m. Since the role began in August 2024, six volunteers rotate weekly. Staff are notified in advance of who is serving and can call or text if help is needed. Coordinators also carry a "panic button" feature that alerts staff and ushers in an emergency.

You might see a Coordinator holding an umbrella on a rainy day, helping someone up the stairs, calling the custodian about a spill, or locating a restroom. They also know where AEDs, fire extinguishers, and emergency resources are located. We're even compiling a list of medically trained members to call if needed.



As one of the Coordinators, I can say it's a meaningful way to connect with people and experience the church in a new way. Interested in joining the rotation? Coordinators serve on Sundays or Wednesdays (yes, there's a free Wednesday meal!). **Sign up on your Worship Response Card or contact me, Bill Cathey, Chair of the Ushers, at 704-609-5403.**

Strong Community, Strong Immunity

Vaccine Clinics Coming in October



BY KAREN WILLIS

Vaccines are one of the most powerful tools available to protect our health and the health of those around us. With many viral illnesses still a concern, staying current on your vaccines means fewer sick days, fewer hospital visits, and a healthier community. **We are making it easy for you this fall by offering vaccine clinics on Wednesdays at Open Table.**

The Influenza (Flu) virus changes every year, which is why it's important to get vaccinated annually. The flu shot reduces the risk of severe illness, especially in children, seniors, and those with weakened immune systems.

COVID-19 continues to evolve. Vaccines have been shown to significantly reduce the risk of severe disease and long COVID. Keeping up with the latest booster is key to maintaining protection. COVID vaccine recommendations are changing – stay tuned for who will be able to receive a booster.

RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) can be especially dangerous for infants, older adults, and people with heart or lung issues. An RSV vaccine is available upon request at our clinic for persons over 65. Ask your doctor if it's right for you.

If you're unsure about your eligibility or specific health conditions, speak to your doctor. Your Primary Care Physician can give you personalized guidance to help you make an informed decision.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- **Vaccines given by trained medical professionals**
- **Every Wednesday in October**
- **4:00 – 6:00 p.m. in the Welcome Center**
- **Bring your insurance card and identification**

VACCINES OFFERED

- **Flu** (For ages seven and older)
- **COVID-19** (Ages 18+, more information to come)
- **RSV** (Over 65, available upon request)

Sign ups to come. Questions? Contact Parish Nurse, Karen Willis at karen.willis@covenantpresby.org.



NEW DAY, TIME & LOCATION

Grief Support Group

**Third Thursday of the Month
11:30 a.m. in Fellowship Room 201**

Join a group of compassionate hearts for a time of support and sharing for anyone grieving a loss.

SAVE THE DATE

**Sunday, November 16
Covenant Impacts Charlotte (CIC)**

Join us for our annual church-wide day of service! We'll gather for worship and lunch, then spread out across the city for volunteer projects that fit every age and interest. Various service opportunities will occur November 14-16. Look for signup links in your weekly emails, Sunday bulletins, and on the website.



Contact Courtney Shudak at courtney.shudak@covenantpresby.org

Restore, Rejoice, Renew — Reflections from Lake James



BY JAMES ARNEY

When I moved to Charlotte a year and a half ago and joined Covenant, I never imagined that this summer I'd be gathered around a campfire in Western North Carolina with 10 new friends from church. But that's exactly where I found myself: helping lead a weekend camping trip for Covenant's young adults at Lake James State Park.

What transpired was more than just a weekend in the woods. For me, it was time set apart from what has been a challenging personal year—time filled with meaningful conversations, campfire meals, laughter, and the quiet kind of joy and serenity that only time in nature can provide. Guided by the theme “Restore, Rejoice, Renew,” we leaned into each part of that invitation.

We restored our bodies and spirits through swimming, paddling, and disconnecting from the usual pace of life. We rejoiced in good company, good food, and the gift of friendships developing around the campfire. And we renewed our sense of belonging, not just to each other, but to the Covenant community and to God's presence all around us.

It was especially meaningful to share my passion for camping and the outdoors, and to give a few folks the experience of camping for the first time. We camped at a boat-in-only site, which added to the adventure, and wouldn't have been possible without the generous help of Sarah and Brian Wilson, and Amanda and Mark Abraham, who shuttled people, gear, and my enthusiastic dog across the lake with care and good humor.

As someone relatively new to Charlotte, this trip was a reminder that I've found something special at Covenant: a supportive community that makes space for connection, growth, and shared experience. I'm grateful to be a part of it, and am looking forward to the next adventure!

To learn more about our Young Adults Group contact Mary Kate Sykes at marykate.sykes@covenantpresby.org



SUMMER REPORT: High School Youth Trips



BY JAMES SERPA

“This summer I attended two High School Youth trips that have changed my perspective for the better: The High School Mission Trip to Avery

County and the Montreat High School Youth Conference. I enjoyed making new friends and many lifelong memories. We had some amazing leaders that made the trips even better including Chuck Morgan, Sarah Wilson, and Martin Pruitt among others. I believe that my relationship with God has grown more in these past trips than ever before. Everyone is so welcoming in this community and I can’t wait to share more memories that I’ll make in the future with everyone that is a part of our incredible community.”

To learn more about our High School Youth Program contact Martin Pruitt at martin.pruitt@covenantpresby.org



A Trip of Faith, Service, and Surprises

A Mother's Perspective



BY SHANNON BLAIR

When my middle schooler said she “wouldn’t mind” if I joined the youth mission trip as a chaperone this summer, I seized the opportunity. Who knows how long she’ll welcome me into her social orbit? Plus, a mission trip has long been something I’ve

wanted to do. I just never imagined my first one would be down the Interstate in Raleigh – not to mention alongside a bunch of tweens and teens.

God is a creative God, though, who often presents opportunities in unconventional ways, so I had to say “yes” when Andy Wertz, Director of Middle School Youth Ministries, asked if I could help out with the trip.

The service projects on this trip felt like play because the middle schoolers and my co-chaperones made it fun and interesting. The youth were curious and diligent while they addressed a variety of human needs: bundling diaper donations for families unable to afford them, securing produce for the hungry before it became food waste, keeping inventory stocked and ready at thrift stores for those needing clothing, and going full-cycle weed to harvest on a food bank farm.

Where these young people really shined was handing out popsicles and engaging in games like soccer and cornhole on a hot June day in the city park. Sounds simple, right? It was anything but. They – and even more so I – had to discern fear versus discomfort as we fellowshiped with unhoused community members.

Adolescents can be challenging, but they reflected on their interactions at the end of the week with an insight and authenticity I did not expect. Friendships were forged as we shared some giggles, broke out (or didn’t) from escape rooms, and slurped down frosty drinks after go cart races during an adventure park finale. It was as much a summer fun and faith-growing journey for me, the “adult-in-charge,” as it was for the middle schoolers. I hope my daughter won’t mind if I want to tag along again next summer too!

A Daughter's Perspective



BY NORA BLAIR

On my summer mission trip, I learned so many important life lessons that I will never forget. When my parents signed me up, I assumed we would be helping one organization a day. I soon learned we were doing two—even if you were tired or hot.

At the diaper bank, they told us that one out of three families can’t afford diapers. We packaged them so families could get what they needed without paying the expensive price.

At the food bank, we pulled weeds, planted cucumbers, harvested okra, and packaged onions into five-pound bags. It showed me how important it is to have fresh, healthy food, even if you can’t afford it.

This mission trip helped me understand how important life is and reminded me not to take resources for granted.



To learn more about our Middle School Youth Program contact Andy Wertz at andy.wertz@covenantpresby.org

Joys and Concerns of Our Members and Friends

OUR SYMPATHY AND LOVE TO

Suzanne and Shade Mecum and family on the death of her brother, Charles Chapman, May 20

Jean and Brad Moore and family on the death of his mother, Jeanette Moore on May 23

Mary and Paul Stratos and family on the death of her brother, J. Layton Mauze IV, June 7

Linda, Meg and Mary Dowd and family on the death of Linda's husband
and Meg and Mary's father, Ken Dowd, June 11

Vel Gallegra and family on the death of her sister, Joyce Wilhite, June 13

Kali and Ryan Cox and family on the death of his brother, Matthew Cox, June 20

Beth and Drew Quartapella and family on the death of his mother, Mary Quartapella, June 24

Lilli and Richard Gerardi and family on the death of his mother, Joan Gerardi, July 3

Alexandra and Tyler Morton and family on the death of her father, Martin Carstarphen, July 13

Mike and Cecelia Ramsey and family on the death of his mother, Mary Jane Ramsey, July 15

Mary Ellen Vernon and family on the death of her mother, Edith Shoffner Vernon, July 17

Emily and Adam Schauer and family on the death of her mother, Marilyn Hedgpeth, July 23

Don Moricle, Dee Newton, Molli and Marty Bucher, and Julie Stanton-Ludden and family on the death of
Don's wife and Dee, Molli, and Julie's mother, Brenda Moricle, July 30

IN LOVING MEMORY

Melanie Dawn Wright, June 7, 1963 - May 31, 2025

John Kenneth Dowd Jr., September 3, 1940 - June 11, 2025

Mary C. Quartapella, October 15, 1937 - June 24, 2025

Lina Haden Cunningham, June 28, 1919 - July 6, 2025

Jackson Gerard Benson, Jr, June 9, 1953 - July 8, 2025

Mary Jane Newman Ramsey, December 9, 1937 - July 15, 2025

Brenda Coffey Moricle, January 14, 1941 - July 30, 2025

BIRTHS

Charlie Elen Brundle, daughter of **Caroline Poole and Adam Brundle**, born June 12

Emilia Mary McKee, daughter of **Meghan and Steven McKee**, born on June 16

Annie James Foresman, daughter of **Madison and Derek Foresman**, born June 20

Paul Sullivan Cross, son of **Mattie and Paul Cross**, born June 22

John Phillips Wacker Jr., son of **Jane (Borrelli) and John Wacker**, born July 3

Knox Edward Cherry, son of **Abbie (Henderson) and Gray Cherry**, born July 11

Caleb Miles Kanera, son of **Judith and Justin Kanera**, born July 21

MARRIAGES

Alex Ameli and Andrew Ganey, May 31

BAPTISMS

Chase David Carter, son of **Jocelyne and Mark Carter**, June 15

Cleo Kathleen Yates, daughter of **Kirby and Brian Yates**, June 29

Sebastian Richard Gunning, son of **Anna Bassham and Chase Gunning**, June 29

Drew Hattie Bryan, daughter of **Whitney and Will Bryan**, July 20

Grey Alan Kieb, son of **Allison and Josh Kieb**, July 20

John Milton Childress IV, son of **Tori and John Childress**, August 17

John Russell Erskine Ruhl IV and Walker Davis Ruhl, sons of **Amy and Johnny Ruhl**, August 17

Charles Adams Rogers Jr., son of **Grace and Charlie Rogers**, August 17

Welcome Our New Members and Staff



Eva Bender



**Charlie & English Blanton
with Tatum & Anna Jane**



**Caitlin Collins
with Archer**



Josh & Maggie Eidson



Michelle & Bryan Kraak



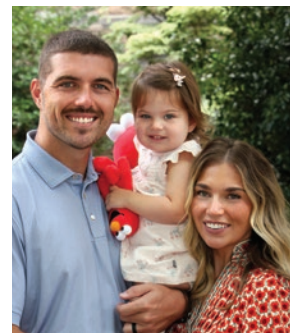
Helen Pan



Daniel Presa



**Thomas & Farah Lisa
Walker
with Elias Belmadani**



**Chase & Allie Walter
with Josie**

Welcome Emily Floyd

Traditional Music Director

Emily brings a wealth of experience from her leadership in churches including Shallowford Presbyterian in Atlanta and First Baptist of Asheville. She currently serves as President of the Presbyterian Association of Musicians and is a sought-after clinician in educational settings.



Search Committee Chair Terry Horne shared, “Emily has demonstrated a deep devotion to traditional music and its place in the church. The committee believes her selection confirms our unwavering commitment to traditional music and its vital role in our worship life.”

Emily writes, “I am imagining my first weeks with you — coffee with church members, the first sounds that each choir will make, and new faces and names to learn. I’m looking forward to being a part of the team!”

Welcome Jacquelyn McAbee

Administrative Assistant for Education and Mission and Outreach

Jacquelyn brings 15 years of professional experience in church administration, having first served in her home church in Virginia and later at St. John’s Baptist Church in the Elizabeth neighborhood. Most recently, Jacquelyn has been the office administrator at KinderMourn, a local nonprofit offering counseling and grief support. Jacquelyn shares, “I am so looking forward to coming to work in my church and being a part of the daily life at Covenant—working with the wonderful staff, meeting more members of the congregation, and assisting with our work in the community and beyond.”



Jacquelyn’s start date is September 15.



1000 East Morehead Street, Charlotte, NC 28204

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Regular Sunday Schedule

8:45 a.m.

Worship Service

Intimate worship with traditional hymns and multi-genre chamber music in the Chapel

9:30 a.m.

Worship and Education Hour

Spiritual formation for adults, youth, and children in classrooms and the Sanctuary

Fellowship

Coffee is provided in the Welcome Center

11:00 a.m.

Worship Services

Traditional Worship with Chancel Choir in the Sanctuary. Family Worship for children in the Fellowship Hall

Meet Covenant's Elder Nominees

A Congregational Meeting will be held Sunday, Sept. 21, at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary to elect 10 adult elders to the Session class of 2028, and two youth elders to serve a one-year term, beginning January 2026.

Members of the elder nominating committee: Amy Hunter (chair), Ben Unger (co-chair), Alice Arwood, Deana Cooper, Natalie Crockford, Carla Haughton, Katherine Lawson, Scott Roehrig, John Schuller, Brian Vincent.

The Elder Nominating Committee will nominate the Covenant members listed below. Additional nominations may be made from the floor during the meeting; the nominee must consent and be present.

***Indicates prior service as an elder**



Tom Coley*
Treasurer
Usher
Men's Bible Study



Lauren McCormick
Children's Ministry Search
Vacation Bible School
Elementary Ed Cmte



Derek Thomas*
Planning & Evaluation Brd
RITI
Grants Committee



Leigh Ann Hall
Adult Education
Life Group
Quest Mentor



Alan Morrow*
RITI
Read, Roar, Soar
Avery County



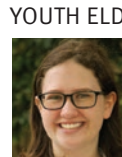
Campbell Tucker
Worship Task Force
Kenya
Quest Mentor



Jim Hamilton
Avery County Trip Leader
Grants Committee Chair
Men's Bible Study



Kim Moseley
Congregational Care
Missions & Outreach
Women's Retreat



Virginia Bouknight
Sunday School
High School Youth
Youth Strings



Ellen Holloway
Outdoor Ministry
Women's Retreat
Mission Trips



Ellen Schubert*
Usher
Life Group
Communion Server



Breiten Brown
Sunday School
High School Youth
Youth Choir

YOUTH ELDER NOMINEES