

SEPTEMBER 2023

COVENANT NEWS

A publication of Covenant Presbyterian Church • Charlotte, North Carolina



Grounded & Growing



From Bob Henderson



When on sabbatical more than a year ago, I sensed a vague calling/impulse/curiosity about what might happen if we as a congregation took a journey — a pilgrimage really — focused specifically on deepening and expanding our spiritual lives. What grace might be born? What growth might be wrought? What transformation

might emerge if we took nine months of an intentional spiritual pilgrimage together?

I'm pleased to say those musings have crystallized into a carefully coordinated year-long program we're calling "Grounded and Growing." From September-December, we'll focus on grounding our lives in faith, deepening our knowledge and growing deeper roots in our spiritual practice. In this newsletter you'll see an array of small groups, large studies, guest lectures, and worship opportunities intended to 'ground' us in a healthy and dynamic faith. I hope you'll accept the invitation to join other pilgrims on this journey and see where we are led.

Beginning in January, we'll turn our focus toward the 'growing' portion of the pilgrimage, which will include engaging readings, topics, and speakers who will challenge us to become more than we are presently. I tell you that now so you can prepare by cultivating healthy spiritual soil from which growth will surely occur. You can start by joining me each morning in offering this prayer titled "Beginning the Day" by Steve Garnaas-Holmes:

*A glass of water.
A slow walk.
Sitting still, opening,
being present in the Presence.*

This is the day the Lord is making.

*Today is a day of unfolding Being,
a day to take in grace,
to open to my belovedness.*

*Today I will encounter many things,
feel many things,
and You will be with me in it all.*

*Today I will meet none but the
blessed of God,
none but those who seek grace,
none but myself in other clothes.*

*I will love them;
You will love them through me;
I will love them as myself.*

*I make no demands of this day.
I trust you who accompany me.
I open the eyes of my heart.*

*I ask only that the infinite loving
kindness of God
may flow through me this day
into all Creation.*

*I am breathing.
I am beloved.
You are here.
I am breathing.
I am.*

With gratitude for sharing the journey with you,

Bob

Why I Joined a Men's Group



BY TONY BROWN

When I was asked to join a Covenant men's group, my initial thought was to say no. Why? TIME!

I'd never been a part of a men's group before, and I thought the group would demand hours of studying the Bible, awkward breakout sessions, and possible presentations on specific topics. I joined the group despite the unknown, and I am so glad I did. My group is the support I didn't know I needed. I have a full work schedule and responsibilities as a father and a husband, but I was missing a sounding board of support from other husbands and fathers experiencing similar struggles and challenges in life.

The format of this one-hour weekly program offers the flexibility to share opinions or just listen and absorb the insightful information coming from the group. Hunter Hoover, our fearless leader, has reignited my desire to learn more about Jesus' teachings. In less than a year, Hunter has taught me more about the Bible than I've previously known, and I'm excited about my spiritual journey with this group.

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Covenant Presbyterian is a dynamic Christian community that gladly invites all people into a transformational experience of faith; boldly proclaims the gospel; bravely works toward a whole and just world; and passionately nurtures discipleship.

SUNDAY WORSHIP
Starting September 10

8:45 a.m. Traditional Service in the Chapel
9:30 a.m. Contemporary Service in the Sanctuary
11:00 a.m. Family Service in Fellowship Hall
11:00 a.m. Traditional Service in the Sanctuary

www.covenantpresby.org
[@covenantpresbyclt](https://facebook.com/CovenantPresby)

Wednesdays: OPEN TABLE

Open Table Dinners, prepared by Chef Johnny, are served 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Gluten-free options are available. Cost is \$9 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 \$36. Programming is available for children, youth, and adults. Meals may be paid for in person or prepaid on our website: covenantpresby.org/wednesdays



Beginning this Fall, we're organizing our small groups under the umbrella of Covenant Life Groups. Any group that meets regularly and focuses on care, learning, and growth, is considered a life group, and all are invited to participate in one or more.



We will be launching new groups on Wednesday evenings starting September 13. Groups are welcoming new members and are made richer by them, we would love for you to join a life group.



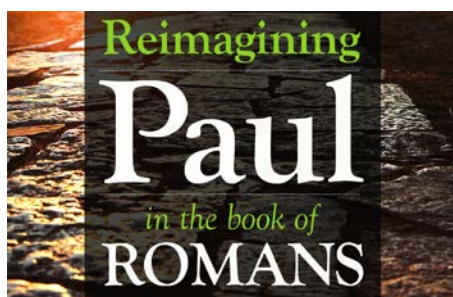
Envision Listening Session

September 6

6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Fellowship Hall & ZOOM

How do you want Covenant to grow and evolve through our ministry, in our community and our world?



Reimagining Paul: Romans

Classes on September 13, 29, 27
6:30-7:30 p.m. | Room 207
Fellowship Hall

We'll discuss major themes of Romans and how to use them in our lives today. Signup for daily emails at covenantpresby.org/wednesdays



Moment of Peace

Wednesdays
Starting September 13
6:00 - 6:30 p.m. in the Chapel

All are welcome for a time of meditation, restoration and prayer. Led each week by a minister or member of the community.



Children & Youth

5:15-5:45

Choir for preK/kindergarten

5:45-6:30

Choir for 1-3 grades
BLAST for 4-5 graders

6:30-7:30

Choir for 4-5 grades
BLAST for K-3 graders

6:30-7:30 p.m.

Youth Programming

Envision Covenant

Listening Sessions Launch in September

Starting in September all are invited to share their voices as we listen and learn from each others' thoughts and hopes about how we can continue to live vibrantly into our vision.

The Envision Covenant team will launch a series of open invitation listening sessions beginning September 6.

The schedule for those sessions is:

Wed, September 6	6:30 p.m.	Fellowship Hall
Sunday, September 24	10:45 a.m.	FH 207 A & B
Sunday, September 24	12:15 p.m.	Fellowship Hall
Sunday, October 8	10:45 a.m.	FH 207 A & B
Sunday, October 8	12:15 p.m.	Fellowship Hall

We hope to hear from as many voices as possible across our community of faith, so if you are able, please mark your calendars to attend one of these sessions. This will be a time of meaningful connection.

If you are unable to attend a listening session and would like to share your thoughts on how you hope and imagine Covenant will continue to live into its vision, you can share via email at Envision@covenantpresby.org or mail at Covenant Presbyterian Church, ATTN: Envision, 1000 East Morehead St, Charlotte, NC 28204.

In addition to the opportunities listed above we are also working with various groups around the church (Middle and High School youth, SOS, our members living in retirement communities, etc.) to schedule listening sessions at times and in locations that work best for them.

If you are part of a group at Covenant that would like to have an Envision facilitator visit with your group you can send a note to Envision@covenantpresby.org

Keep up with us at covenantpresby.org/envision



Grounded in Friendship and Community

Presbyterian Women Circles

September 17

As a part of our new Life Groups initiative, we hope you'll join us after the 11:00 a.m. service to learn how to get connected with a women's circle. All ages are invited!

Men's Fellowship Outing

October 28

Join us for breakfast, fellowship, and an afternoon outing. Bring a friend! For more questions, please contact Bill Saunders at billsaunders1963@gmail.com.

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

September 20 at 10:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Julia Tranquillo and Dr. Chris Hux from OrthoCarolina discuss the best ways to maintain strength, flexibility, and balance. RSVP with michelle.williamson@covenantpresby.org



Outdoor Ministry Calendar

Visit covenantpresby.org/outdoor-ministry

Sunday, September 10

Community Care Stream Clean
4:00 p.m. at Chantilly Preserve

Saturday, September 23

Day-Hike & Picnic at Little Lost Cove Cliffs/
North Harper Creek Falls, Avery County.

Saturday, November 4 (November 11 rain date)

Hike through woods and shoreline of Mountain
Island Lake. Jim and Jolene Powell, Pathfinders.
9:00 a.m. at Latta Nature Preserve

S.O.S. (Surviving Our Spouses)

Kandy Cospers, kandycospers@gmail.com

September 9 at 9:00 a.m.

Gather at the columbarium to restore the eight
wooden benches.

September 10 at noon

Second Sunday lunch at noon at Capishe, a ca-
sual restaurant on Morehead St. at Caldwell St.

September 30

Fall Picnic on the patio of Fellowship Hall.

October 15 following 11:00 a.m. worship

Meet with Covenant's Envisioning Team to ex-
plore the future of our church.

Young Adult Gatherings

Retreat: October 13-15

Spend the weekend at Dreaming Stone, an Arts and Ecology
Center in Rutherfordton. Enjoy disc golf, hiking, camping,
and worship. Cost is \$200 with a \$100 deposit. Register at
covenantpresby.org/young-adults

Park Play Date

Saturday, September 9 from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

YA Parents and families are invited to gather in Latta Park.
We'll meet by the playground (with coffee!). Email Frances
Yarbrough at francesltimmons@gmail.com.



My Summer Travels with Covenant

BY PAYTON MAJORS



This summer, I had the amazing opportunity to join in on the Avery County Mission Trip, as well as the Montreat Summer Youth Conference. These trips were not only fun, but incredibly rewarding to me, as somebody wanting to deepen her relationship with God.

The Montreat Youth Conference taught me to move through life as a joyful Christian, and every lesson I learned helped me build on my theological knowledge, and strengthened my relationships each day. The Habitat Mission Trip taught me valuable lessons about always striving to help others, and each job completed reminded me how important it is to give back where you can.

The lessons I learned this summer are ones that I will never forget, and the memories I've made with my friends are ones that will stay with me for the rest of my life. Covenant Presbyterian has had a deeply positive impact on the person I've become, and this summer has given me the chance to reflect on myself, my relationship with God, and my relationship with my peers. In my remaining two years as a high school student, I will seize every opportunity I have to immerse myself in my church, and my love for this community continues to grow with every trip I go on.



We Got Mail — From Our Friends in Kenya!

BY TRICIA SMITH



It felt like Christmas morning a few weeks ago at Covenant. A package arrived from Kenya, and we ripped into it, hoping it was the photos and letters we were awaiting.

The colorful collage of letters and pictures revealed how our sponsored students at Mountain Park Academy are learning and thriving. The updates on their lives are uplifting; their words of determination inspiring; their hope and gratitude contagious.

Like students in the U.S., they dream of becoming lawyers, teachers, farmers, doctors, and engineers. These students are keenly aware that an education is a privilege not to be squandered. With maturity beyond their years, they uniformly conveyed their sense of responsibility to their communities and for lifting up Kenya.

“I want to be a lawyer and judge when I grow up....I would like to be the best peacemaker and the best lawyer and a good example. In my life I want to be best in that subject because the foundation of tomorrow we build it today.”

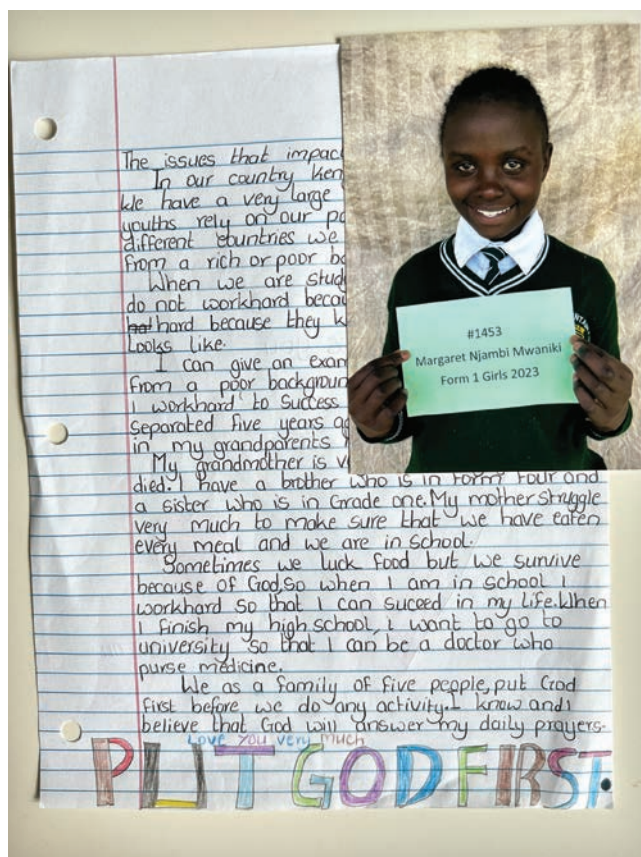
— Hannah, age 17.

“I come from a poor background....My mother struggles very much to make sure that we have eaten every meal and we are in school....when I am in school I work hard so that I can succeed in my life. I plan to be a doctor.”

— Margaret, age 15.

In the impoverished Renguti community, most students do not have the opportunity to pursue an education past the eighth grade. Covenant now partners with Mountain Park Academy, a faith-based secondary boarding school that provides rigorous STEM curriculum as well as trade school programs. We are grateful that Hannah and Margaret and over 60 other students will be attending high school at Mountain Park in the new year.

These dedicated students need ongoing support. Sponsorships of \$500 cover tuition, room, and board. For further information, contact Mandy Rencher, Director of Mission and Outreach, at mandy.rencher@covenantpresby.org.



Grounded in Singing Skills with Anton Armstrong



September 23: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the Adult Choir Room

September 24: 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary

11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Dr. Anton Armstrong, renowned conductor of the St. Olaf College Choir, will be at Covenant working with singers of any experience level and ability to polish existing vocal skills, teach new techniques, and inspire our singing in worship. Youth and adult singers of every experience level are welcome and will benefit from this opportunity. Regular choir attendance is not required for participation. Contact Heather Potter for more information.

Ground Your Worship in Participation; Grow Your Skills in Music Leadership

Weekly Covenant Choir Rehearsals

Wednesdays, 6:30-8:15 p.m., join at any time

Weekly Covenant Ringer Rehearsals

Mondays, 6:00-7:00 p.m., beginning September 11

Grounded in Celebration, Growing in Expression: Singing the Music of Advent and Christmas

Wednesdays in November and December, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Sing the music of the season with Covenant Choir. Come for one-hour rehearsals in November and December to sing through Advent.



Music Opportunities for Youth & Children



Children's Choirs

**Wednesdays beginning
September 10**

5:15-5:45 p.m.

Angelus Choir preK/kindergarten

5:45-6:30 p.m.

Chorister Choir 1-3 grades

6:30-7:30 p.m.

Jubilate 4-5 grades

*Register for children's
choir by September 1
with QR code*



Youth Singers

Sundays 10:30-10:50 a.m.

Education Wing Room 315

Begins September 10

Youth Handbell Ensemble

Wednesdays 5:15-6:00 p.m.

Education Wing Room 320

Begins September 6

Youth Strings Ensemble

Wednesdays 5:30-6:00 p.m.

Chapel

Begins September 6

Now We Can Hear Every Word

Covenant Installs Hearing Loops in Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall

If you've been in our sanctuary or Fellowship Hall over the past few months you've probably seen the signs for our new hearing loop system. For congregants and visitors who use hearing aids, a "hearing loop" (otherwise known as an audio induction loop) can provide extra clarity to the voices of our ministers, choir or teachers — especially for the listeners who are sitting towards the back of the church or classroom. The loop allows your hearing aid to pick up sound from this enhanced system, rather than distracting background noise in the area.

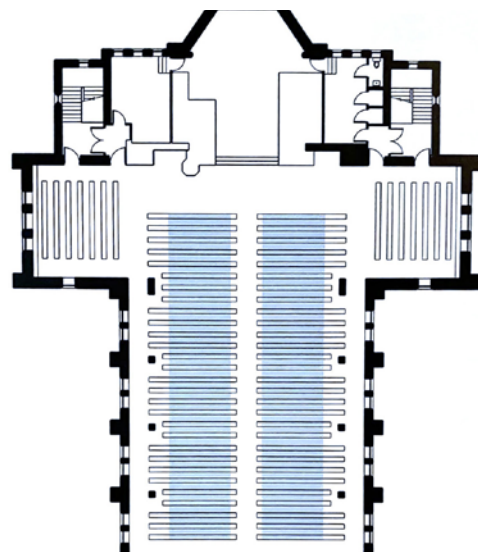
The central seating area of our sanctuary has a special wire installed in the floor underneath a two-inch wide strip of brown vinyl. Anyone sitting inside this section (as seen in blue on our sign outside the sanctuary) can turn their hearing aid to the "T" setting and hear the service more clearly. If you sit outside of the indicated area, the loop won't be available.

Jim Watson, a Covenant member with hearing loss due to heredity and military service, acted as an advisor for our loop installations. Jim says, "Several years ago, my wife Lou and I attended service at a church that had hearing loops. I could hear every word of their sermon — yes, every word! Not long after that, our Session approved hearing loops for Covenant's sanctuary, and recently added hearing loops in the Chancel, as well as Fellowship Hall's event space and classrooms 207 A and B. That has been a tremendous blessing for me and for other church members. Now we can hear every word at Covenant!"

For those who do not have a hearing aid with a telecoil or "T" setting, or those who don't own a hearing device and need one for a class or service, Covenant is offering free hearing devices. Pick up a "Contacta" listening device to hang around your neck and a set of individually bagged earbuds. Please return the listening unit at the end of the service/event/class, but keep the earbuds to reuse the next time.

Also, you can bring your own wired headphones or earbuds to use with the "Contacta" listening units, which accept any headphones or earbuds with a standard headphone plug.

If you have questions about the technology contact our Communications Director Lou Kinard at lou.kinard@covenantpresby.org or call her at 704-804-7565.



Hearing Loops Available

Please switch your hearing device to "T" and sit in an area of the sanctuary indicated by blue on the map above.



Walter Coley was Born to Bake

BY KATHY PICKARD



If you see Walter Coley walking toward you with a cake plate you know your taste buds are in for a treat. Walter joined Covenant in 2008, with his wife Carroll, and soon became “that guy” who always brings a cake, or brownies, or cookies, to meetings and to the staff as well.

Cooking became his avocation when, at age 12, Walter decided to bake a cake himself when his mom wouldn’t bake one for him. By the time he was in high school, Walter’s cakes were sold at the farmer’s market near his Eastern NC home, along with blackberries he picked. Not only did he finance his own baking efforts, but those efforts, together with his school bus driver income, financed his pharmacy degree from UNC in 1956.

At UNC he not only earned that degree, but found Carroll Moore, a beautiful young teacher who became his wife and kitchen sidekick in 1961. In true Walter fashion, he made their wedding cake, which was featured in his hometown, Raeford’s, newspaper. No less creative, his lovely bride created her own wedding gown.

Walter left his Raeford pharmacy behind when he and Carroll followed their children to Charlotte. He’s the sole chef in his kitchen these days, though he says his children, Tom and Mary Parrish (Covenant members as well), developed a love of cooking and are pretty good cooks themselves. “Mary is probably the best, though,” Walter will admit when pressed.

Thank you for sharing your delicious baking talents with us, Walter!



Our Summer Intern Thinks the Kids Are Alright

BY DAVIS PREVETTE

I am fortunate to have grown up at Covenant. While I currently attend UNC Chapel Hill, this summer I was an intern at our church where I accompanied our youth on four different trips. My first was the High School Youth mission trip to Avery County, where we helped build a house for Habitat for Humanity. When we arrived at the work site half of the kids didn’t know how to hold a hammer, but by the end of the week — on one of the hottest days of the year — these kids were nailing boards to the walls like they’d been doing it their whole lives. Without complaint, they worked so hard I had to make them take breaks.

Your kids weren’t always angels (especially when I took away their phones), but I caught glimpses of God working through them to help others. These amazing young adults increased my faith in our youth and helped me see a bright future for our church and our world.



Joys and Concerns of Our Members and Friends

OUR SYMPATHY AND LOVE TO

Jan Tescione and family on the death of her brother Richard Scott Armstrong Sr. on July 19

Deb McNeill and family on the death of her mother Shirley Hancock on July 23

Rob McNeill and family on the death of his mother Mary Elizabeth Teague McNeill on July 30

Matt Lackey and family on the death of his father Hal Lackey on August 8

IN LOVING MEMORY

Theo C. Robinson, October 16, 1938 – July 2, 2023

Jan S. Thompson, September 20, 1933 – July 14, 2023

MARRIAGES

Helen King and **David Jayne**, August 1, 2023

BIRTHS

Anne Miller Hilker, July 11, child of Elizabeth and Matt Hilker

Phoebe Elizabeth Brown, July 25, child of Katie and Barrett Brown

Palmer Rose Mills, August 1, child of Alison and Adam Mills

Roy Grant Kite, August 7, child of Betsy and Jonathan Kite

BAPTISMS

James Webster Kirk, July 16 in Roaring Gap NC, child of Ted and Lee Grainger Kirk

Jun Mark McComb and **Min Chris McComb**, August 13, children of Da-hey Yun and Thomas McComb

Welcome Our New Members



Mary Burritt



David & Cate Cosper
with James and Jack

NO PHOTO:
Chris & Hillary Thompson



Trevor & Rebecca Cox
with Vivi



Liam & Lyndly O'Hara



Dan & Dorothy Warnock



Starting Point

Sunday, September 24
9:00 - 10:30 am

Exploring Covenant?
 Join us for casual conversation,
 coffee, and light breakfast.

Childcare will be available, and
 children are always welcome.

Contact Lora Borrelli
lora.borrelli@covenantpresby.org


Meet Covenant's Elder Nominees

A congregational meeting will be held **Sunday, Sept. 17 at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary** to elect **10 adult elders to the Session class of 2026** and **two youth elders to serve one-year terms beginning Jan. 1, 2024.**

Members of the Elder Nominating Committee: Alan Atwell, Amber Brown, Mary Clare Chinery, Tommy Lawson (Chair), Richard Magrath, Carolyn Renner, Jen Thomas, Susie Vincent, Grace Williams (Co-chair), Linsey Zalecki.

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

**Indicates prior service as an Elder*

 <p>*Bill Cathey Habitat for Humanity Usher Team Leader Sharon Towers van driver</p>	 <p>David Frost Youth Basketball coach Children's Sunday School teacher Men's Getaway</p>	 <p>Lou Watson Adult Ed Council chair Lydia Circle Fellowship Class</p>
 <p>*Janet Delery Elizabeth Circle Handbell Choir Mission & Outreach</p>	 <p>Jacquelyn McAbee Mission Trips Handbell Choir Grants Committee</p>	 <p>Sarah Wilson Hineni Circle Quest mentor VBS Volunteer</p>
 <p>Vincent DiSandro Finance Committee Uptown Bible Study Holy Land Pilgrimage</p>	 <p>*John McAlister Personnel Committee Usher P&E Chair</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>Youth Elder Nominees</p>  <p>Payton Majors High School Youth Sunday School Mission & Outreach</p>
 <p>Jim Dobbins Mission & Outreach Men's Bible Study Usher</p>	 <p>Thomas Porter Young Adult Council Children's Sunday School teacher Youth Volunteer</p>	 <p>Preston Manning High School Youth Sunday School Mission & Outreach</p>