March 2023

COVENANT NEWS

A monthly publication of Covenant Presbyterian Church • Charlotte, North Carolina

From Bob Henderson

Dear friends:

Without fail, springtime feels like a gentle breeze running through my spirit. I awaken more cheered and hopeful, approach the day with glad anticipation, and close (most of!) my days with gratitude. It's a welcome shift after a few months of dark, damp and cold.

This year I've decided to deploy some of that renewed zest toward cultivating a more dynamic spiritual life. I've never been one for grand proclamations of intent, but I am going to try a few little things, like re-connecting with gratitude before my feet hit the floor in the morning, re-engaging with some rich devotional literature (Howard Thurman, in particular), and finding a way — at least on occasion — of being proximate to the poor. In addition, I find myself being shaped as a I prepare this year's Lenten series (both small group and sermon) on the hard teachings of Jesus. I expect you (like I) will find it invigorating, challenging, and helpful as together we navigate our way in a complex world.

In regard to more practical matters, our search for a new church administrator continues as we anticipate Bill Keith's retirement in late April. We welcome your prayers and recommendations as we seek to fulfill this important position in the life of our congregation. To learn more about it, you can view the job description at covenantpresby.org/job-openings. Also, we are thankful for Alyssa Pacheco's fine service as our Middle School Director for the last three years. Alyssa has decided to enroll in graduate school and will be working with us until May. We solicit your prayers and recommendations for her position as well, as Alyssa's legacy is substantial and her program vibrant.

Finally, I continue to be deeply grateful for the wide array of commitment and talent that characterizes the life of Covenant. Signs of life abound, and we have much for which to be grateful.

I look forward to seeing you often in the Lenten season.

Warmly,

Bob

We have 2,557 active members!

Statistics can be boring, but these numbers are worth celebrating because people are our most valuable asset and we treasure every one.

Covenant continued to grow last year with a net gain of 60 members over 2021. We also celebrated 41 baptisms.

While total membership grew by 2.4%, children and youth members increased by 7.6% over 2021.

See the breakdown of membership below:

Youth In Congregation	2022	2021	Change
Age 4 and Under	208	174	19.5%
Elementary (K-5)	243	258	-5.8%
Middle School (6-8)	93	82	13.4%
High School (9-12)	78	64	21.9%
Total Youth	**622**	**578**	**7.6%**

Age Distribution of Members	2022	2021
25 and under	463 / 18.1%	196 / 7.9%
26-40	705 / 27.6%	778 / 31.3%
41-55	602 / 23.5%	625 / 25.1%
56-70	447 / 17.5%	467 / 18.8%
Over 70	340 / 13.3%	423 / 17.0%

COVENANT
presbyterian church

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

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

www.covenantpresby.org
facebook.com/CovenantPresby
@ covenantpresbyclt

Adult Groups & Programs

Share, Learn, Support, Grow

Whether on Sunday mornings, Wednesday evenings or other times during the week, adults of all ages and stages gather to live into faith together.

Climate Change & Creation Care

Sunday, April 2 (Palm Sunday)
Fellowship Hall
9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Congregation member Lori Collins sees "room for optimism on climate change" from her unique perspective as an energy and climate consultant over the past 14 years. Lori will share what led her to transition from a career in business and banking to one focused on this emerging humanitarian issue.

This talk will be in-person and on ZOOM. More at covenantpresby.org/adults

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

Schiele Museum of Natural History in Gastonia
March 15 at 9:15 a.m.

After our self-guided tour of the museum, farm, and outdoor trail, we'll stop for lunch at O'Charley's, returning to Covenant around 2:30 p.m. Group rate for the museum is $5.00 each. Lunch is extra.

Please RSVP with Michelle Williamson at michelle.williamson@covenantpresby.org or 704-804-7560.

Young Adults

Parents and Families Lunch: Dilworth Bar and Grill on Sunday, March 26 following 11:00 a.m. worship.

First Sunday Lunch: Join us at 12:30 p.m. on April 2 at Velvet Taco in Park Road Shopping Center.

Second Saturday Service: April 8 with McCreesh Place.

Bible Study: Every other Wednesday night at 7:00 p.m. in the Welcome Center Room 203.

Coffeehouse: Meet every third Sunday at 9:30 a.m. in the Welcome Center for coffee, treats, and fellowship.

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

Did He Really Say That?

6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall 207 A/B and Zoom

This Lenten season we'll focus on challenging parables and statements made by Jesus. Join us on Wednesdays at Open Table to study our Lenten scriptures with our ministers.

Open Table Bible Study Schedule

March 1: Love Your Enemies / Bob Henderson
March 8: Forgive as You Have Been Forgiven / Katherine Kerr
March 15: Do Not Worry / Serenitye Taylor
March 22: Judge Not / Mary Kate Sykes
March 29: Turn the Other Cheek / Nikki Zimmermann

Pick up a Lenten Devotional Book in the Sanctuary and Welcome Center while suplies last. Sign up for daily email reflections by visiting: covenantpresby.org/wednesdays

Artwork by Katherine Roehrig

Grief Support

March 15, April 19, and May 17
6:30-7:30 p.m. | Room 201
Fellowship Hall

Grief is a natural response to loss and can take many forms. Join a group of compassionate hearts on Wednesdays at Covenant.

Moment of Peace

Wednesdays through April
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

5:45-6:30 p.m.
Children's choir for K-3 graders
BLAST for 4-5 graders

6:30-7:30 p.m.
Children's choir for 4-5 graders
BLAST for K-3 graders

6:30-7:30 p.m.
Youth Programming

To learn more about these programs email Katherine Kerr at katherine.kerr@covenantpresby.org

Mission & Outreach

Serve in the Community and the World

National and International Mission Trips for 2023

God calls us to stand in solidarity with the marginalized, poor, and oppressed, regardless of their nationality or country of origin. We recognize that boundary lines are a human endeavor and have no place in the kingdom of God. Therefore, we travel into spaces and places of need to support our neighbors and expand our vision of a whole and just world.

Yucatan: June 18-24

Leaders: Sven Bader and Nikki Zimmermann
Cost: $850

This summer, we'll work with our mission partner in the Yucatan, Accion Ministries, to support their work of strengthening Mayan communities. We'll help Accion with various construction needs as well as support the larger town by leading Vacation Bible School with the local children.

Palestine: October 21-30

Leaders: Ariel Gritter and Lucy Crain
Cost: $1900 for trip and $1350 for the extension

Support our partners working for peace and justice in the Holy Land. We'll spend three days working at Tomorrow's Youth Organization in Nablus and three days helping with the olive harvest at Tent of Nations outside of Bethlehem. There's an optional travel extension to Jordan to tour the ancient city of Petra, Mt. Nebo, the Wadi Rum Dessert and the city of Amman.

Civil Rights Tour: September 14-17

Leaders: Larry Bosc and Nikki Zimmermann
Cost: $400

September 15, 2023 marks the 60th anniversary of the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama. Over this weekend, we'll join our friends from Smallwood Presbyterian Church to participate in a civil rights tour. During this weekend, we'll visit the church and see various sites from the civil rights movement.

Stapleton-Davidson Interns

This summer we'll host students from Davidson College through the Stapleton-Davidson internship program. Each intern will be placed at one of Covenant's mission partner sites and will be housed by a Covenant family. **Contact Lucy Crain if you're interested in housing an intern.**

Have questions about mission trips? Email Lucy Crain at lucy.crain@covenantpresby.org or Nikki Zimmermann at nikki.zimmermann@covenantpresby.org

Covenant Youth

Discovering a Love of Service and a Passion for Prayer

We recognize the immense potential of each and every young mind – the potential to shape, not only our congregation, but the entire community.

Middle and High School Youth: Report on Winter Retreats

The Covenant Youth Winter Retreats were a huge success! Martin and Alyssa took their groups up to Winterplace, West Virginia to celebrate winter weather.

The High School Youth went snow skiing, shredding down the slopes, and had a great time doing it. The Middle School Youth went snow tubing, belly-flopping onto innertubes — and were squealing all the way down the mountain! Everybody had a great time with no injuries and only minor property damage.

Springtime will bring more adventures for your Covenant Youth

Eighth Grade Youth in the Quest program will head down to Camp St. Christopher in Charleston, S.C. March 17 - 19 for their Spring Retreat.

Seventh Graders are invited to participate in their yearly milestone on the evening of March 26th, learning more about their calling and spiritual gifts, and all about Covenant's volunteer opportunities.

High School Youth will head to the beach for their Spring Retreat April 21 - 23.

All of Covenant's youth are eagerly preparing for Youth Sunday on April 30.

It's also time to sign up for summer adventures, mission trips and youth conferences.

Families can find more information on the Youth page of the Covenant website at www.covenantpresby.org/youth

To learn more contact Martin Pruitt, Director of High School Youth Ministries, at martin.pruitt@covenantpresby.org

Children's Ministry

A Welcome and Vital Part of Our Community

On Sundays, Wednesdays and through our weekday preschool, we share Christian values in a variety of ways — through songs, drama, crafts and service.

Children's Easter Saturday

April 8 starting at 10 a.m.

- **Children's Service in the Sanctuary**
- **Egg Hunt after Service**
- **Live Animals in the Circle Outside**

Join us for our Children's Easter Service the Saturday before Easter Sunday when our Kindergarten class will perform the Easter story in the Sanctuary. After the service, we'll have egg hunts for two-year-olds to Kindergarten-aged children on our Pre-School playgrounds. Our first through fifth graders will be invited to flower the cross. All ages are welcome to pet the animals on the Circle and enjoy a sweet treat!

Contact Dailyn Sailor at dailyn.sailor@covenantpresby.org

Vacation Bible School (VBS)

August 7-11, 2023 | Registration is OPEN

Whether they're preschool or elementary aged, kids will move to follow Jesus here, there, and everywhere with this engaging, hands-on Vacation Bible School program. Summer 2023 will inspire kids to:

DO What He Says
BELIEVE Who He Is
LOVE Who He Loves
SHARE What He Did
GO Where He Leads

Sign up at covenantpresby.org/children

PreSchool Summer Fun Weeks

Summer Fun Weeks are open to toddlers currently enrolled at Covenant and anyone ages two through rising Kindergarten. Registration opens March 6.

June 5 – 9
June 19 – 23
July 10 – 14
July 24 – 28

Learn more at covenantpresby.org/preschool

Music & Arts

Worship Actively Through Music and Arts

Sing Easter music with us! Come to the adult choir room on Wednesdays in March from 6:30-7:30 p.m. to prepare Palm Sunday and Easter music.

Alex Strickland

Gale Pendergraph

Sawyer Abeya

Choir Members Speak on Why They Sing

"I like to sing in church because it makes you feel like you're a part of God." **— Alex Strickland, Chorister Choir**

"No matter where you are from or where you are going, art speaks a universal language to us all. I sing to make that connection. To give glory and thanks for all of my blessings. To me, singing allows us a moment to live together in our shared experiences, bringing us closer together." **— John Watson, Covenant Choir**

"It's fun!" **— Annabel Isaacs, Youth Singers**

I sing "to give back to the church for all the church has done for me." **— Gale Pendergraph, Covenant Choir**

"Singing is calming." **— Sawyer Abeyta, Chorister Choir**

"I love singing in the Covenant Choir. I get to sing with purpose: to enhance the worship experience and glorify God. I also love singing under the direction of Dr. Kenney Potter; he teaches us so much about singing and choral music at every rehearsal and makes it all so fun. And finally, I feel like I am part of a very special, caring community when I sing with the Covenant Choir." **— Ann Reed, Covenant Choir**

These singing benefits are available to you! Short- and long-term singing opportunities are open this spring. Contact Heather Potter at heather.potter@covenantpresby.org for more information.

John Watson

Annabel Isaacs

Ann Reed

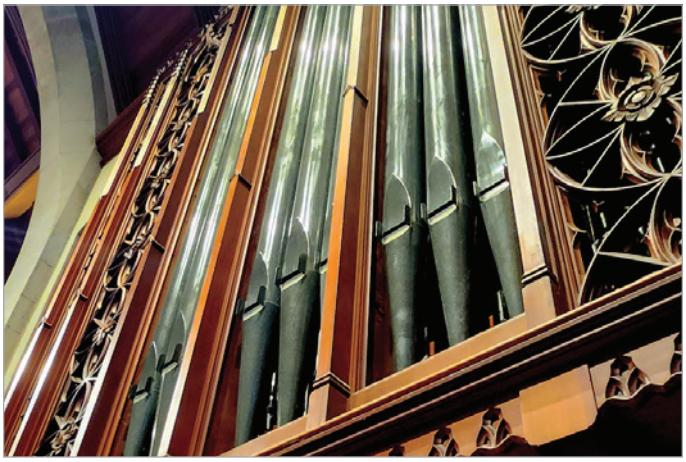
Peek Music Weekend:

A Festival of Choral and Congregational Song

Sunday, March 19 at 6:00 p.m.

Mark your calendars for this special event taking place at Covenant when we host to the annual Peek Music Weekend. Organist and conductor Tom Trenney will be at Covenant March 17-19 sharing wisdom, insight and beautiful music. The weekend will culminate in a hymn service with a mass community choir combining singers from area churches leading the congregation in worship.

Contact Rob Dicks at rob.dicks@covenantpresby.org



What's New Around Our Campus

Announcements and Information about Covenant and our Members

Lucy Bush Carter Honored by the Governor of N.C.

Since 1963, North Carolina's governors have reserved the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, their highest honor, for persons who have made significant contributions to the state and their communities through their exemplary service and exceptional accomplishments.

In May 2022, Lucy Bush Carter, our former Clerk of Session, longtime member at Covenant, and former Executive Director of Friendship Trays, received this award for her 35 years of outstanding service to the Charlotte community.

Lucy was also honored with the first-ever Ann Elliot Award. Ann Elliot founded Friendship Trays in the 1970s in a church kitchen with the simple but difficult mission of making sure neighbors in need of home delivered meals were served. The Elliot family presented the award in honor of Lucy's service and commitment to Friendship Trays, first as a volunteer and then as Executive Director.

Congratulations to Lucy, and to the Covenant congregation for our many years of supporting the mission of Friendship Trays.

Caregiver Support

Thursdays, March 2 - April 6
10:30 a.m. - Noon
Fellowship Hall Room 201

If you need support in your role as a caregiver, please join us at any point over the six Thursdays we're meeting. Everyone is welcome.

Topics will include:

- Your multiple roles as a caregiver
- Communicating with those involved
- Empowering yourself as a caregiver
- Caring for yourself while caring for another
- Different perceptions of caregiving needs
- Strengthening your support system and finding help

Contact Laura Capranica at laura.capranica@covenantpresby.org

College & Seminary Scholarships

Covenant awards scholarships to deserving college students for undergraduate and graduate studies through the Douglas E. Matthias Scholarship Program. The undergraduate fund provides need-based support for graduating high school seniors and current college freshmen. Scholarships are also available for study at Union Presbyterian Seminary and any graduate study that leads to a life of Christian service.

Applications are due May 1.

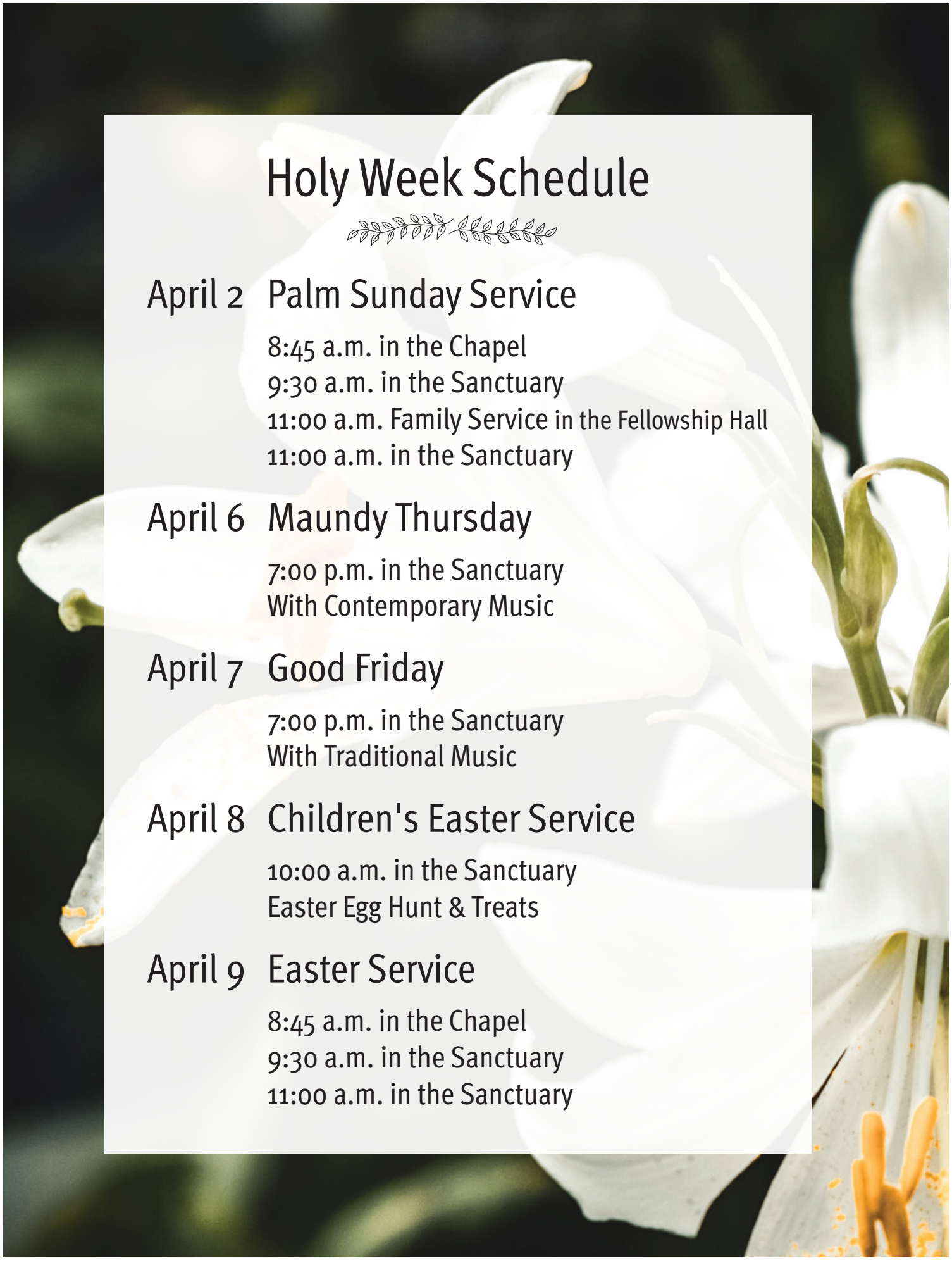
Download applications at covenantpresby.org/scholarships

Outdoor Ministry

Quarterly Stream Clean
Good for all ages.
Equipment provided.
Sunday, March 12
4:00 p.m.
Chantilly Ecological Sanctuary

Earth Day Hike
Enjoy Earth Day with friends!
Saturday, April 22
Stevens Creek Nature Preserve

Sign up at covenantpresby.org/outdoor-ministry



Holy Week Schedule

April 2 Palm Sunday Service

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

April 6 Maundy Thursday

7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary
With Contemporary Music

April 7 Good Friday

7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary
With Traditional Music

April 8 Children's Easter Service

10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary
Easter Egg Hunt & Treats

April 9 Easter Service

8:45 a.m. in the Chapel
9:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary
11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Our New Members & Congregational Notes

Keep up with our Covenant Family.

Congregational Joys & Concerns

OUR SYMPATHY AND LOVE TO

Marinell Bostian and family on the death of her husband, **Ralph Bostian**, December 23.

Sagita Norris and family on the death of her brother, Andris Harry Freimanis, December 27.

Martha Issacs and family on the death of her brother, Jeffrey Scott McClary, December 28.

Jane Gardner and family on the death of her father Kent Gardner, December 29.

Denise Gibson, Mary Cobb and family on the death of their mother, **Sarah Castles**, January 7.

Tim Shelton and family on the death of his sister, Mary Ann Shelton, February 2.

Zeno Wall and family on the death of his mother, Marie Wall, February 8.

John Zizzi and family on the death of his mother, Eleanor Zizzi, February 9.

Tori Collins and family on the death of her mother, Sue Morhard, February 10.

Donald Holland and family on the death of his father, Linwood Holland, February 16.

MARRIAGES

Perrin Tribble and Mike Andersen, December 30, 2022.

NEW BABIES

Jackson David Yates, October 25, 2022, child of Kirby and Brian Yates.

Charlotte Simmons Starr, November 14, 2022, child of Laura and Conor Starr.

Hollis Stone Shrader, January 14, child of Lauren Voler and Jason Shrader.

Henry Hubert Judy, January 22, child of Kathryn and Logan Judy.

Rowan Kent McCready, February 7, child of Laura and Dan McCready.

BAPTIZED

James Thomas Jacobs, January 15, child of Jessica and Joseph Jacobs.

Alexander John Carter, January 15, child of Kate and Chris Carter.

Virginia Gavigan Bender, January 22, child of Rachel Besnoff and Michael Bender.

Mary Hall Genevieve Petitto and Hugh Montgomery Petitto, February 19, children of Amelia and Ben Petitto.

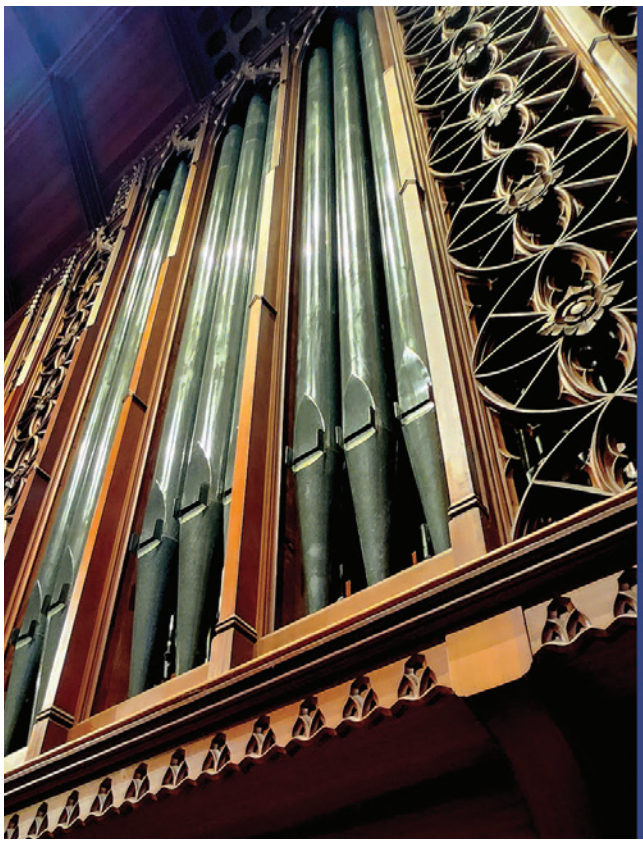
Ashley and Stuart Dorado with Leighton

Sarah Gould

Contact our Director of Membership and Engagement, Lora Borrelli, at lora.borrelli@covenantpresby.org or 704.804.7562.

COVENANT
presbyterian church

1000 East Morehead Street, Charlotte, NC 28204



And May God Give Us Faith To

Sing Always

A Festival of Choral and Congregational Song

March 19 at 6:00 p.m.
Church Sanctuary

With the Covenant Choir joined by choirs from the Charlotte area.

Featuring Tom Trenney
as conductor and organist