

SUMMER 2026

# COVENANT NEWS

A publication of Covenant Presbyterian Church • Charlotte, North Carolina



## A Note from Bob Henderson

Dear friends:

Summer months bring a welcome cushion to the more frantic months of the program year. In recent years, I've enjoyed choosing experiences that nourish my heart and mind and invite you to do the same.



This summer, I'll again attend Aspen Ideas - Health, a conference featuring thought leaders on a wide array of topics in the field of health. In addition, the week of July 5th, I'll be attending the Chautauqua Institution where I'll have the opportunity both to preach and to attend a wide variety of lectures and artistic performances. I'm grateful for it all.

Fortunately, we have a variety of opportunities for similar enrichment through the life of our congregation. As you peruse this newsletter, you'll find multiple opportunities to read, discuss, gather, and infuse your life with friendship, value, purpose, and insight. These are qualities another book (*Lost Connections* by Johann Hari) suggests are essential to our well-being. Whatever your summer looks like, I hope you'll find a way to participate in some kind of service, learning, and community in the coming months. I'm sure we'll all be richer for it.

You'll also notice that our summer worship schedule has been streamlined to our two Sanctuary services. This gives musicians, ministers, and administrative staff some of that aforementioned 'cushion' during the summer months. If you can't be here in person, please make a habit of joining us online. We love knowing of your presence and hearing from you.

With gratitude for you and the privilege of sharing the journey,

*Bob*

KATHERINE KERR

## My Summer Sabbatical

Friends,

This summer I have the great joy and privilege of taking a sabbatical. Between May 17 and August 7, I will be away from Covenant for an intentional time of renewal. As I am preparing to step away from the regular rhythms of ministry, I am deeply grateful to you as individuals and as a community both for the joy of serving alongside you as well as this gift of sabbatical rest.



I hope to balance my time between personal renewal and time with family. Bill, Caroline and I will take an extended vacation out west where we hope to experience something of the majesty and splendor of our country as we receive the gift of unhurried time together.

Please know that I will hold you all in my heart and my prayers throughout this time. I look forward to reconnecting with you at the end of the summer.

Take care,

*Katherine*

*Parish Nurse Karen Willis is available for congregational care while Katherine is on sabbatical. Contact Karen at 704.804.7561 or karen.willis@covenantpresby.org.*

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### SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

9:30 a.m. Contemporary Service

11:00 a.m. Traditional Service

*Both services are in the sanctuary*

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## SUMMER SUNDAY SERIES 2026

### Faith 250: Sacred Bonds, Shared Hopes

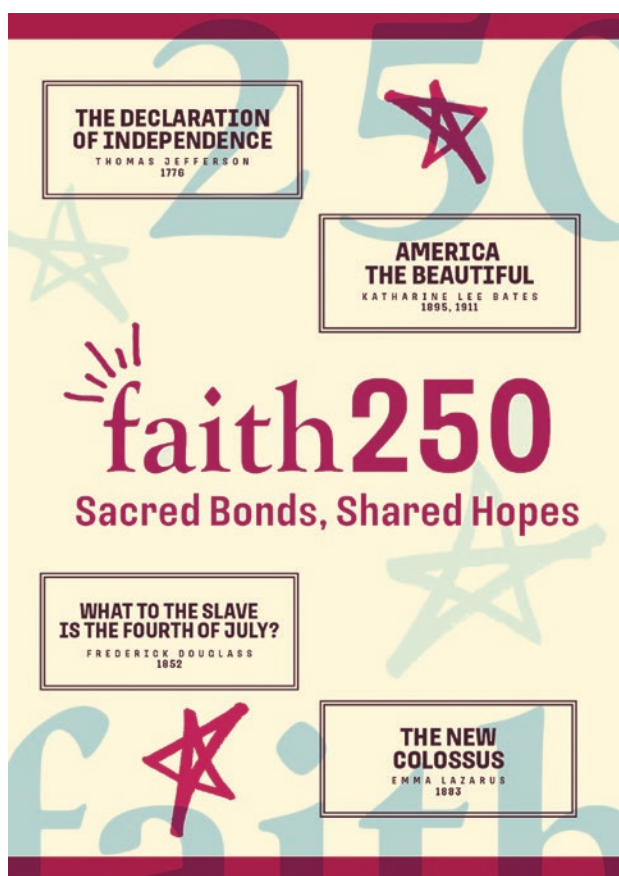
June 7, 14, 21, 28

Fellowship Hall Rooms 203 + 205

9:30 a.m. (gather in the breakfast nook)

As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary, Covenant joins thousands of congregations participating in the Faith 250 series for a four-week Sunday school series exploring texts that have shaped American identity and imagination. Together, we will reflect on *The New Colossus* by Emma Lazarus, the United States Declaration of Independence, *America the Beautiful*, and *What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?* by Frederick Douglass through the lens of our faith, history, hope, and honesty. No preparation is required, though participants are welcome to read the short texts ahead of time.

**Sign up on our website at [covenantpresby.org/sunday-events](https://covenantpresby.org/sunday-events) to receive weekly materials and updates or simply join us as many weeks as you can.** Consider inviting a friend or neighbor, as the conversation will be richer with a variety of voices and experiences in the room.



## Encounters with Jesus

July 12, 19, 26 & August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

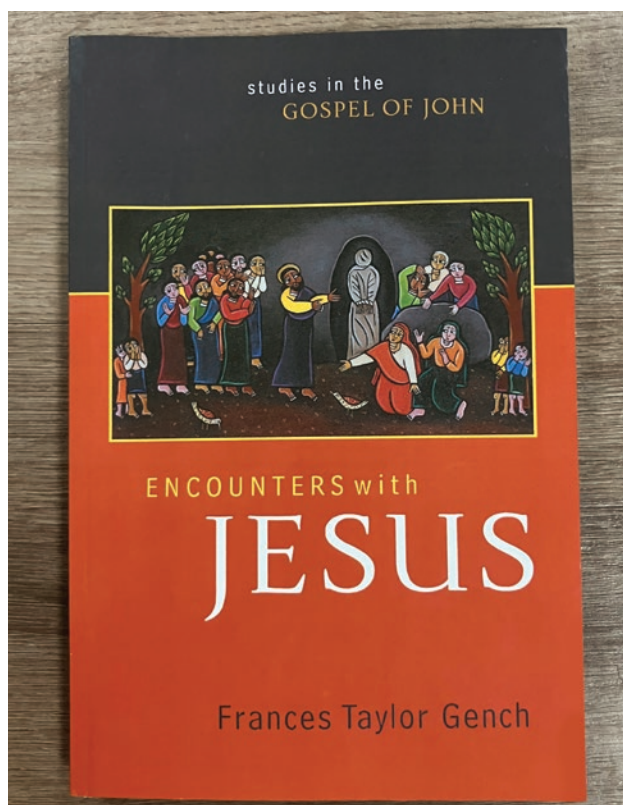
Fellowship Hall Room 205

9:30 a.m. (gather in the breakfast nook)

This July and August, our Sunday school series will journey through the gospel of John using *Encounters with Jesus* by Frances Taylor Gench as a guide. Paired with our summer sermon series, this class offers space to expand our understanding of the gospel of John as we read it each week in worship.

Together, we will explore passages including John 5:1–15, John 6, John 10, and John 11, considering how John's Gospel invites us into deeper trust, fuller life, and renewed encounter with Christ. Whether you are a longtime student of scripture or simply curious to explore more deeply, this series offers space for thoughtful conversation and shared reflection.

Participants are encouraged, but not required, to read ahead each week. **Sign up at [covenantpresby.org/sunday-events](https://covenantpresby.org/sunday-events) to receive the reading schedule and weekly materials, or simply join us as many weeks as you are able.**



## Summer Classes & Events

### Prime Timers & “Covenant Serves”

**Tuesday, July 21 at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall**

Save the date for our summer Prime Timers gathering! This event will focus on the upcoming *Covenant Serves* cookbook. We will be celebrating the stories, recipes and fellowship that have nourished our church community through the years. Details to come via mail or contact Karen Willis.

### Mah Jongg After Church

Whether you’re a seasoned player or brand new to the game, all are welcome! Contact Lora Borrelli at [lora.borrelli@covenantpresby.org](mailto:lora.borrelli@covenantpresby.org) or 704.804.7562.

### Functional Fitness for Aging Bodies

**Tuesdays & Thursdays from 1:45–2:45 p.m.**

**Cost: \$8/class in the Recreation Wing**

**Drop-ins welcome—no registration needed.**

Led by Suzi Rosen (physical therapist). The class will focus on building strength, improving balance and posture, and increasing core stability, with modifications for all levels. Questions or optional RSVP: [kevin.harper@covenantpresby.org](mailto:kevin.harper@covenantpresby.org) or [suzrose20@gmail.com](mailto:suzrose20@gmail.com).



### Summer Dinner Gatherings

Enjoy dinner with Covenant folks at restaurants across Charlotte, featuring a variety of cuisines and price ranges. This is a great way to connect with old friends and make new ones. If you’re interested in organizing a dinner, contact Lora Borrelli at [lora.borrelli@covenantpresby.org](mailto:lora.borrelli@covenantpresby.org) or 704.804.7562.



TRAVEL, LEARN & CONNECT = TLC

**Sally Brewster of Park Road Books**

**Wednesday, June 3 at 10:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall**

Join TLC as they host Sally Brewster, owner of Park Road Books, as she shares the inside scoop on all the latest books for your summer reading list! Come at 10:30 a.m. for social time before the program begins at 11:00 a.m. Wear your red, white and blue as we have an early July 4th celebration.

Covenant Recreation and TLC Present:

### Recess Revelation Camp

“Don’t grow up, just show up!” Join us on Mondays in June (June 8, 15, 22 and 29) for a time of connection, movement and creativity. This program is perfect for anyone looking to build community, have fun, and enjoy a little play.

**Each day will include:**

- 9:30 – 10:00 a.m. Social Time
- 10:00 – 10:45 a.m. Physical Activity
- 10:45 – 11:00 a.m. Snack Time
- 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Creative Arts

**To RSVP for the above events, contact Aisha Council at [aisha.council@covenantpresby.org](mailto:aisha.council@covenantpresby.org) or 980.256.5656.** TLC is a group of active adults who enjoy monthly trips to interesting local destinations, along with lunch and fellowship.



## The Importance of Listening



BY JESS BORGNIS

One of the most interesting truths for me in both faith and music is this: it all begins with listening. In John 10:27, Jesus says, “My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.” Before we follow, we must hear. In order to hear, we must listen. It is

through this listening that we hear the voice of God calling us to follow.

As the new director of contemporary music and worship arts, I want to begin by listening. I affectionately call it a “listening tour.” My hope is to listen, to hear your stories of faith and worship, to hear and understand what worship here means to you, what has been lifegiving, and where you feel God moving in this community.

Great musicians don’t just play well. They listen – to each other, to the room, to the silence between the notes. Listening is what creates musical unity and turns individual voices into harmony. I believe this is also true for the Church. As we grow together, we are being called to listen well, to hear God’s voice, and to follow. I invite you into this season with me. I would love to hear from you! Tell me your favorite song, share your faith journey with me. I am excited to be here, and I am listening for God’s voice as He calls us forward together.

Email me at [jessica.borgnis@covenantpresby.org](mailto:jessica.borgnis@covenantpresby.org) or call me at 704.804.7585.

### *Recruiting audio/visual & set-up team!*

Do you have a heart to serve and a willingness to learn? We’d love to invite you to be part of our Audio/Visual and Setup Team! No experience is necessary—training will be provided. Whether it’s helping run sound, operating slides, setting up equipment before worship, or helping with tear-down after services, your involvement plays an important role in creating a meaningful experience for everyone.

If you’re interested in serving behind the scenes and being part of a supportive team, we encourage you to join us! For more information or to sign up, please contact [jessica.borgnis@covenantpresby.org](mailto:jessica.borgnis@covenantpresby.org).



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# Freedom School Summers with Covenant

**Freedom School Partners (FSP) is a Charlotte-based nonprofit that runs a respected summer literacy and enrichment program.**

Modeled on the original Freedom Schools of the Civil Rights Movement, the program serves children in grades K–8 each summer through a rigorous, culturally affirming curriculum. This connects reading to children’s histories, identities, and futures. The results are clear: students maintain or improve their reading levels over the summer break.

Freedom School Partners operates out of a Covenant-owned property, and our congregation has supported this ministry as donors, volunteers, and advocates from the program’s inception in 1999. This summer, the program runs from June 22 through July 31 across the city, including one location at Highland Renaissance Academy, our partner school. One of our goals this year is to involve more of our congregation than ever before. If you’ve wondered about this program, consider this your personal invitation!

## Ways to Get Involved This Summer

*There are several meaningful ways to engage:*

**Harambee Volunteers:** Each morning’s opening ritual is an energizing and inspiring experience—and you’re invited! No special expertise required, just enthusiasm. Harambee leaders (ages 16+) may sign up for an early morning slot (convenient for anyone with a 9-5 job), participate in an interview conducted by one of the scholars, and share their favorite children’s book with the class. It’s a fun way to start your day!

**Great Day of D.E.A.R.:** You may know the acronym—Drop Everything And Read! Join the children in celebrating literacy by signing up as a reading buddy for our Great Day of D.E.A.R., July 8th.

**Field Trip and Enrichment Support:** This summer, we’re planning enrichment experiences focused on social justice, African American history and culture, and the arts. Volunteers are needed to chaperone and participate in these events alongside students.

**Service Projects:** On July 27, we’ll be leading a hands-on service project with Freedom School students at Covenant. This is a wonderful way to build relationships and work side-by-side with the scholars while helping

children cultivate a love of mission and service.

Sometimes, the most powerful thing a congregation can offer is simply showing up consistently. There are ample opportunities to be a familiar, caring face in students’ lives throughout the full six-week program, such as participating in family nights or being a reading buddy. Whether you have one free morning or want ongoing involvement, there’s a spot for you.

**If you’d like to volunteer, contact Courtney Shudak at [courtney.shudak@covenantpresby.org](mailto:courtney.shudak@covenantpresby.org) for details.**



# You Can Make a Difference in Avery County



BY MICHELLE MCDEVITT ASKEW

Many of us remember exactly where we were when Hurricane Helene tore through North Carolina. I was at the Charlotte airport, en route to visit my parents in Florida. They were both navigating the difficult reality of my father's decline due to Lewy Body dementia. Standing in that terminal, watching the national news, it was surreal and heartbreaking to see such devastation hitting our neighboring towns, friends, and family while I was due to travel so far from home.

Growing up, my Dad taught me how to use a variety of tools. It was his way of passing down what he knew, but more importantly, it was how we spent time together in his workshop. Today, volunteering in Avery County helps me feel connected to him, even though he passed away a year and a half ago. The beauty of this work is that you don't have to be an expert with tools to show up. There is a wonderful team of volunteers who—much like my father—are proficient, patient, and have a fun time collaborating.

I am so grateful that Covenant is committed to Avery County for the long term. We aren't just fixing or restoring homes; we are getting to know families and allowing their stories to shape (and restore) us. Volunteering takes me back to my youth group days, where mission trips first began to expand my perspective of the world and my privileged place in it. Donald Miller wrote in *Blue Like Jazz*, "The mission field is the space between your feet." We don't have to travel far to care for our neighbors, but when I step out of my



comfortable routine and into a zip code redefined by tragedy, I am always humbled. Seeing their resilience and their resolve to recover reminds me of what community truly means. You don't need to be an expert to make a difference; you just need to show up with an open heart, a teachable spirit and a pair of work gloves.

**We are committed to Avery County for the long haul, and there is a place for you on the team—no power tool experience required. Contact Mandy Keith at [mandy.keith@covenantpresby.org](mailto:mandy.keith@covenantpresby.org) or visit [covenantpresby.org/serve](http://covenantpresby.org/serve) to see our upcoming volunteer dates and help us support our neighbors in Avery County.**



## Avery County Adult Service Trip

**TRIP DATES: July 28 - August 1**

We're heading to the N.C. mountains to spend a week with our mission partners in Avery County immersed in mission work and fellowship. We will do a variety of projects including hurricane relief home repair, volunteering with Reaching Avery Ministry (RAM), and spending time at Crossnore Communities for Children. We'll also go on a hike and enjoy a delicious farm-to-table meal at the Liar's Table. All meals and lodging are included in the cost. For questions, contact Mandy Keith at [mandy.keith@covenantpresby.org](mailto:mandy.keith@covenantpresby.org).

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# Room in the Inn: Lives Shared, Lives Changed

This winter marked another season of Room in the Inn (RITI) at Covenant, and as we reflect on the past several months, one truth rises above everything else: relationships changed us. Again and again in this ministry, we return to the phrase, “The stranger has a gift to offer that we cannot receive any other way.” This season, our congregation received that gift in abundance.

Across 22 nights of hospitality, volunteers welcomed guests through cold snaps, plumbing problems, schedule changes, and countless unexpected moments. People showed up anyway — preparing meals, driving vans, making beds, folding sheets before sunrise, and sitting across dinner tables from neighbors whose stories now live in our hearts. What happened here was never simply about providing shelter. It was about recognizing Christ in one another.

One volunteer reflected, “You realize how much more in common you have with our unhoused neighbors than you think.” Another shared, “As a morning driver, I got to hear all the thank-yous from our guests after having such a nice night at Covenant.” These moments of connection became the true center of the ministry.

This season brought profound joy alongside deep grief. We welcomed infants into our care and tucked babies in for the night. We sat with teenagers carrying burdens no teenager should have to bear, creating space where they could simply rest and be safe. We also walked through heartbreaking loss together.

We remember Rachelle, a guest who stayed with us three times this winter and became part of our community. During the January storm, she died while sleeping outside in her tent alongside another regular guest. Her loss weighs heavily on those who knew and loved her. We hold her memory with tenderness and continue to pray for the community of friends grieving most deeply.

Even amid sorrow, we witnessed signs of hope and renewal. One family shared with volunteers on their second night at Covenant that it would be their last night in the shelter system because they were moving into housing the next morning. Covenant became the final place they stayed before crossing that threshold



into stability. It was a sacred privilege to accompany them during that transition.

Another family experienced the steady support of the Room in the Inn community while navigating a medical crisis. One of our regular guests remained hospitalized for much of the season with critical kidney issues, while Roof Above continued serving as a haven for her husband and young son. Covenant volunteers had the privilege of offering a safe, warm place where this family could rest together following hospital visits and difficult days.

Alongside the overnight shelter ministry, the Kinship Project expanded this work beyond hospitality into deeper relationship and theological reflection. Through shared meals, conversations around the Gospel of Luke, and engagement with Kevin Nye’s *Grace Can Lead Us Home*, participants explored what it means not simply to serve others, but to belong to one another. Hospitality became mutuality — a shared encounter with grace.

The church does not exist merely to run programs. The church exists to be the body of Christ in the world: broken open, poured out, and fully present. This winter, through every meal served, every conversation shared, every late-night arrival and early-morning goodbye, Covenant lived that calling faithfully. For every volunteer, donor, driver, cook, and coordinator who made this season possible, thank you.

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# Building Skills, Strength and Community

## *Kevin Harper's Impact on Covenant's Youth Goes Beyond the Gym.*

If you spot Kevin Harper walking across Covenant's campus, chances are you'll also see children running up to greet him—hands raised for high-fives, faces lit with excitement. Kevin returns every greeting with enthusiasm, calling each child by name. It's a small moment that says a lot: he knows these kids, and they know they matter to him.

As Recreation Ministries Director since 2018, Kevin brings a background in exercise physiology and a passion for child development to everything he does. Each week, he leads up to 16 physical education and motor movement classes across Covenant's Weekly Preschool, Child Development Center (CDC), and Epiphany School. His approach blends movement with learning, incorporating numbers, letters, and colors into activities so children develop both physically and intellectually.

Kevin is especially attentive to developmental stages. While not a diagnostician, he keeps a close eye on whether children are meeting key milestones and offers extra support when needed. "If a child needs a little more time to catch up, we can give them that attention," he says.

Beyond the school day, Kevin oversees a variety of after-school programs, including Discovery Art, Sports Kids, Discovery Science, and Soccer Shots. These programs, along with summer offerings like Sports Camp, Creative Camp, and Imagination Station, give children opportunities to explore new interests, build friendships, and stay engaged. Recreation Ministries also plays a key role in Vacation Bible School, leading activities and providing aftercare for families.

Kevin's influence is perhaps most visible in Covenant's Youth Basketball Program, which he helped launch a decade ago. What began with less than 100 local teams has grown into a league of more than 200 teams, with Covenant fielding 43. Open to ages six through 18, the league prioritizes inclusion, requiring every player to participate in each game.

Rather than focusing on wins and losses, the program emphasizes sportsmanship and teamwork— which



Kevin believes will matter far beyond the court. "Those two skills are valuable in any career, whether you're a basketball player or a coach; if you're a nurse or a doctor or a teacher or anything else. And the kids will come back years later and tell me about the special moments where a coach gave them a nugget of wisdom that they held on to and carried with them."

At the heart of it all, Kevin emphasizes relationships. "If kids don't buy in, it doesn't matter how good the content is," he explains. That philosophy extends to the volunteers he recruits and trains, as well as staff — especially his enthusiastic and always-smiling assistant Zach Dawkins, who also teaches classes and camps, as well as provides administrative support.

Whether in a class, a camp or on the court, Kevin approaches every moment as ministry—intentionally creating spaces where children are known, valued and invited into something deeper, helping bring Covenant's mission to life as young hearts are shaped in faith, community and purpose.

**If you'd like to learn more about Covenant's Recreation Ministry camps and programs, contact Kevin Harper at [kevin.harper@covenantpresby.org](mailto:kevin.harper@covenantpresby.org) or 704.804.7566.**

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# Walking Together Through Grief and Healing

BY PAT VISER

“I’ll Be There for You,” the familiar theme song from the classic TV show *Friends*, perfectly captures the spirit of Covenant’s Bereavement Committee — a ministry many people may not know about until they need it most.

While I hope you never need us, chances are that someday you will. The Bereavement Committee provides care and support for Covenant members who have lost a loved one. Our ministry begins with a handwritten condolence note, letting families know their church family is there to walk beside them through their grief.

When a memorial service or funeral is held at Covenant, we reach out with a phone call to offer a listening ear and practical support. Whether families need advice about planning a reception, recommendations for local florists, reserved parking spaces, or simply someone to answer questions, we are there to help. We also make sure they know about the Soup Ministry if they would appreciate meals for the family.

Although the ministers oversee the memorial service itself, many other decisions must be made during a deeply emotional time. Some families are surrounded by support, while others may be facing the overwhelming responsibilities of losing a parent or spouse largely on their own. They are often required to make significant decisions and financial commitments in a very short time, all while grieving.

As cremation and columbarium services have become increasingly common, there is often no funeral home representative present to guide families through the process. In those situations, we help fill the gap. We pick up the floral arrangement for the columbarium from The Blossom Shop and make sure it is in place before the service. Before the memorial begins, two committee members typically greet the family in the parlor and remain with them throughout the service and reception.

We answer questions, offer reassurance, and serve as hosts for whatever may be needed. Grief affects everyone differently and can surface in unexpected ways. During those moments, people often need “a friend” — someone who understands what they are experiencing and can gently guide them through it.



The Bereavement Team also helps host the reception, making sure there are enough cups and lemonade, cleaning up spills, and answering guests’ questions. Many families like to take a group photo, and we are happy to help organize that as well. We also photograph the floral arrangements and food tables. When older children or teens are present, I often encourage them to choose a “Memory Flower” from one of the arrangements. It becomes a meaningful moment that helps involve the entire family in remembering their loved one.

After the reception, we box and label leftover food for the family, help load any floral arrangements they wish to keep, and make sure extra bulletins and guest books are sent home with the designated contact person. Several days later, I follow up with a phone call to see how the family is doing.

Every service is unique, and every family grieves in its own way. Our goal is simple: to make sure no one walks through that journey alone — because they always have a friend.

**If you’re interested in volunteering or learning more about this ministry contact Pat Viser at 704.572.7960 or [patviser@icloud.com](mailto:patviser@icloud.com).**

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# A Lasting Gift to Our Children: Peace of Mind



BY HUGH LEWIS

Last year, Barbara and I attended the funeral of a very close friend who was our age. We realized that the end of our lives was much closer than we liked to think. We wanted to make sure our children did not face the same chaos

we did when our parents died.

We planned to speak with someone at the church about our funeral arrangements, but when requesting an appointment, we learned about the four-week end-of-life program that Katherine Kerr and Karen Willis would lead on Wednesday nights. We chose to attend that program before scheduling a meeting with the church.

The program guided us through everything from discussing our final plans with family and loved ones to hospice care and the rules governing funerals and memorial services at Covenant. It also advised us on how to plan for the transfer of our assets and who would be responsible for making the final decisions.

Barbara and I took all this information to heart and created an “End-of-Life Plan.” We presented it to our children when we were all together in Charlotte for

the Christmas holiday. We were apprehensive about having this discussion with our children. However, because we had everything organized and ready to go, the children became invested in the process. There was a wonderful, open discussion about who would take responsibility for what. It ranged from who would be our power of attorney to making sure that everybody knew how to open the finicky old safe that had been in my family for four generations, find all the paper documents, and access them in digital form.

I want to thank Karen Willis and Katherine Kerr for organizing the program to help us feel comfortable with our passing when the time comes. There are always a few loose ends, but we know the children will not be scrambling to figure everything out or wondering, “Is this what mom and dad would have wanted?” We appreciate the church considering the peace of mind of its congregation regarding earthly matters, as well as the welfare of our souls.

**Covenant provides resources for congregants interested in end-of-life planning. See our Resource Center outside of Katherine Kerr’s office or contact Parish Nurse Karen Willis at 704.804.7561 or [karen.willis@covenantpresby.org](mailto:karen.willis@covenantpresby.org).**



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# Serving Time! Submit Content for Covenant's New Cookbook



BY SHANNON BLAIR

*Covenant Serves* is officially underway! To make this church cookbook truly special and representative of our wider congregation, we need your recipes and food & fellowship stories.

## What kind of recipes?

Think beyond sweets... or send us a sweets recipe with a healthy twist or nutritious ingredient swap. *Covenant Serves* content collection is open to all recipes, especially ones with a connection to Covenant Presbyterian's history. Still, we are hoping for contributions that promote healthier lifestyles or ways of cooking at home with ease. For example, do you have a kid-friendly recipe that is also vegetarian? Are you known for a potluck dish that is also gluten-free and budget wise? Other recipe attributes that are helpful include quick prep, "Covenant Classic," make ahead, healthier choice, comfort & care friendly, and freezer friendly.

## We are accepting recipes in the following categories:

- Apps & Snacks
- Mains
- Soups and Stews
- Sides
- Sweets
- Breakfasts & Breads
- Sauces / Dressings
- Beverages
- This & That (miscellaneous recipes non-food)

## What do we mean by food & fellowship stories?

Covenant Presbyterian is abundant in history and relationship – often forged around shared meals. When the cookbook team met with church members Kandy Cosper and Jane H. Taylor, our conversation yielded details beyond lemon bars and what being a "Covenant hostess" entailed. We learned about an annual Boar's Head Feast (complete with actual head on a platter) to a certain sanctuary pigeon incident where the bird may or may not have been served?

When it comes to food and fellowship, Covenant has always had a strong tradition. Founding members literally fasted to make possible Covenant's construction, and Joe Martin inspired a series of "Bring



a Friend to Lunch" Fridays to build bridges during a time of division. Other fun facts? Covenant's treasure trove boasts an award-winning Nilla Wafers recipe for Maple Elegance. An official youth retreat cook used to come along for the ride; these days, we thankfully have Martin, from whom we'll be sure to request a recipe or two.

Do you know of any tales that should be told? Please consider sharing them with us, long or short, with or without pictures. We can help with editing, if needed.

## Okay, got it! Now how do I deliver recipes and stories? There are two main ways:

1. Visit this QR code to submit using our online form.
2. Type your content or bring a legible copy to the Welcome Center reception desk.



**Request help or direct questions/comments to Parish Nurse Karen Willis at [karen.willis@covenantpresby.org](mailto:karen.willis@covenantpresby.org) or Health & Wellness Ministry member Shannon Blair at [shannonblair@gmail.com](mailto:shannonblair@gmail.com).**

## Good Food, Great Fellowship: A HeartSmart Success!



BY JANE H. TAYLOR

In February, a delightful and informative Healthy Heart luncheon was held in the Fellowship Hall. The dining staff prepared a delicious Mediterranean gluten-free meal, with the menu planned by Karen Willis,

Shannon Blair and Gill Williams. Our guest speaker was Kelly Roberts, Registered Nurse with Atrium Pineville's cardiac rehab program.

Kelly described how the heart performs and shared how to recognize when one is having a heart attack or possible artery blockage. Signs that a heart attack could be in progress include chest pain or pressure, shortness of breath, shoulder or arm pain or numbness, light-headedness, cold sweats/ clamminess, nausea and/or vomiting, and discomfort in other areas such as the neck, back and upper abdomen. In women, jaw pain is a symptom that is sometimes mistaken for a toothache.

Kelly also discussed the use of a defibrillator (AED). Covenant has 5 AEDs, which are mounted in white boxes in each of our buildings. When the AED is turned on, an automatic voice will tell the user exactly the steps to take in utilizing this valuable equipment to possibly save the victim's life. Someone should also immediately call 911 for medical help.

**For more information on our AEDs or learning CPR please contact our Parish Nurse, Karen Willis.**



## Fuel the Fellowship: Serve as a Church Van Driver



BY LOUISE ROGERS

Want to connect with people at church beyond your usual circle? Or hear first-hand stories from those who helped shape our church into what it is today? Maybe you've been looking for a simple, meaningful way to serve while attending on Sunday mornings.

Consider joining our team of Sunday drivers.

Each week, we provide rides for members from The Sharon, The Cypress, and The Village on Morehead so they can attend the 11:00 a.m. service. It's a small commitment that makes a big difference, offering fellowship, connection, and care to those who might not otherwise be able to join us.

And if you're worried about driving the church van, don't be. It's easier than you think (very similar to driving an SUV), and we'll make sure you feel comfortable before you start. Each of us drives about one Sunday every two months. If you're interested, we'd love to have you be part of this ministry.

**Contact Louise Rogers at [rogers@mintview.com](mailto:rogers@mintview.com) or 704-621-1864 for more information.**



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## Welcome Our New Members



**Olivia Bettis &  
Alex Mozingo**



**Sara Brakmann**



**Lauren & John D'Ambrosio  
with Maggie May**



**Chiedza & Matthew  
Hooker**



**Carlin Taylor & Tammye Layer  
with Serenity & Eliana Taylor**



**Beth Mask & Michael Warden**



**Larry & Sally Nichols  
with Bennett & Sloane**



**Brandon & Holly  
Nicolau**



**Mary Phillips  
with Elise**



**Cait & Matt Van Hoy  
with Whit & Davis**



## Preschool Summer Fun Days

June 1-5, June 22-26,  
July 13-17, July 27-31

Open to Rising 2's currently  
enrolled in the Toddler  
classes and Rising 3's  
through Rising K. For more  
details, scan the QR code.



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## Meet Our 2026 Stapleton-Davidson Summer Interns

### Mary Ellis Beach : Moore Place

Mary Ellis Beach is a rising sophomore from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She has worked as a tutor and mentor for underserved students, volunteered with the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, and founded her high school's yoga club. Mary says, "It becomes a habit to only think about yourself...living on a college campus with limited regular exposure to the suffering of the homeless community." She hopes to gain a more direct understanding of poverty and says this internship will "allow me to gain up-close insight into the lives of those experiencing poverty."

### Mary Kate Berg : The Rise on Clanton (TROC)

Mary Kate Berg, a rising senior from Parker, Colorado, is majoring in Religious Studies with a minor in Philosophy. Her interest in service is rooted in early experiences through her church, and she is drawn to relational, hands-on work. She is eager to step outside the "Davidson bubble," sharing, "I am intrigued to experience Charlotte in all its aspects," and noting that "so much of the work rests in building relationships and forming community."

### Menelik James : Men's Shelter

Menelik James, a rising junior from Newark, New Jersey, is majoring in Computer Science. A Posse Foundation Leadership Scholar, he has experience in virtual reality development, digital design, and ESPN+ broadcast production. His background includes a faith perspective shaped by Rastafarian culture, and he is interested in how spirituality connects with justice and service, sharing that it "aligns with my desire to integrate meaningful community service, personal reflection, and social justice work through a faith-informed lens."

### Juan Orrantia Llamas : Day Service Center

Juan Orrantia Llamas, a rising sophomore from Phoenix, Arizona, is pursuing a double major in Political Science and Latin American Studies. A Posse Foundation Leadership Scholar, he is involved with the Immigrant Justice Coalition and the Organization of Latin American Students. He is interested in

Interns for 2026: Juan Orrantia Llamas, Mary Ellis Beach, Mary Kate Berg, Mercedes Patrick, Menelik James



understanding the root causes of poverty and the intersection of faith and justice, saying, "I want to better understand the systematic causes of poverty, rather than the symptoms that result from poverty," and he believes that "maintaining faith can resolve social and community disparities like homelessness and poverty."

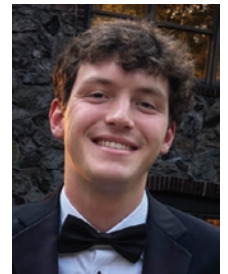
### Mercedes Patrick : Day Service Center

Mercedes Patrick, a rising sophomore from Sanford, Florida, is a Bonner Scholar with a strong interest in justice and advocacy. She has worked with the Davidson Housing Coalition and previously served as a Lead Volunteer Attorney with Teen Court. She says, "I want to learn more about how people experiencing homelessness and poverty view their agency in creating solutions and social mobility," and noting that "true justice requires transforming hearts."

### COVENANT PEOPLE IN MISSION (PIM)

#### Eli James : Habitat for Humanity

Eli James is a rising sophomore studying history at the University of the South (Sewanee) and has been involved in mission and youth programs at Covenant for many years, including local service in Charlotte, a Habitat build on John's Island, and a trip to Kenya in 2024. That experience helped him grow in confidence and connection with others. Eli says his goal is to "find more ways to get involved in volunteer-based ministry work."





1000 East Morehead Street, Charlotte, NC 28204

## Elder Nominations Open

Nominations due by June 15

The Elder Nominating Committee is seeking nominees for Elder and Youth Elder. The church will elect 10 adults and two youths for terms beginning in January 2027. The congregation is invited to submit nominations directly to the Elder Nominating Committee by mail or on the website at [covenantpresby.org/enc](https://covenantpresby.org/enc)

### Mail nominations to:

Covenant Presbyterian Church  
c/o Elder Nominations, Attn. Lynne Koeniger  
1000 E. Morehead St., Charlotte, NC 28204

### 2027 Elder Nominating Committee

Janet Delery (chair), Bill Fryling, Betty Graybeal,  
Phil Koonce, Randy Ripple, Walker Robinson, Erin  
Weeks, Sarah Wilson