

SPRING 2026

# COVENANT NEWS

A publication of Covenant Presbyterian Church • Charlotte, North Carolina



## A Note from Bob Henderson



Dear friends:

“So, you prefer a ‘Groundhog Day’ approach,” she said. “No distinction between yesterday and today; today and tomorrow. Every day just the same.”

It was a pretty vigorous retort, given that we were discussing something so innocuous as the liturgical calendar, specifically whether or not to use a choral introit to begin worship or stick with our tradition of offering a warm welcome and spoken call to worship. Still, the statement stuck with me, and I’ve thought about it since. What rhythm does life require? What sense of movement and change, flow and direction is needed to tap into the fullness of our journey? An older friend recently spoke of the power of such rhythm, saying that the first spring day always convinces him he’s going to live another year.

As we enter the Lenten season, I encourage you to consider embracing a new spiritual rhythm, to intentionally enter a season of spiritual practice that focuses on the substance of Christian faith. This year’s theme, *Moments that Matter: Decisions on the Way to the Cross*, is loosely based on a theological notion called Kenosis, which technically means “self-emptying,” an idea central to Christian faith yet rarely mentioned in today’s faith practices.

To help, we’ll host several special worship services, provide small group study opportunities, and carefully crafted devotionals, complete with poetry and art specifically commissioned for this endeavor.

I hope you’ll join in as you are able and discover that when we’re living wisely, one day is not just like the other, because to live fully requires embracing spiritual rhythm, movement in our hearts and minds that open us to new depths of meaning.

With gratitude for sharing the journey with you,

*Bob*

## STEWARSHIP UPDATE Thank You, Covenant!

Dear Covenant family,

We hope you have enjoyed the snowy start to 2026, or at the very least, are glad we are that much closer to spring! We have so enjoyed the experience of being Stewardship Chairs over the past few months, and witnessing the many ways God is at work through and among this community.



Last fall, we invited you to reflect on what your heart knows about our community of faith and respond with intention about the ways you could invest more deeply at Covenant. Your response has encouraged us and continued to overwhelm us with gratitude for the people that we have the privilege of learning, growing, and doing life alongside here at Covenant.

If you were unable to attend the congregational meeting in February where the 2026 budget was presented, we want to summarize some highlights for you:

- **In 2025, the congregation’s giving exceeded budget by \$149,455.**
- **In 2026, pledged giving increased by 4%.**
- **265 families increased their pledge or pledged for the first time in 2026.**

Your generosity will allow Covenant to enhance worship and expand adult, children, and youth ministries; expand Congregational Life and Inclusion Ministries, and staff the programs that support our congregation while allowing Covenant to serve as the hands and feet of Christ.

Thank you for your support. We look forward to another full year of ministry, trusting in God’s provision and excited for what lies ahead.

With gratitude,

**Lacy and Nate King**  
**2026 Stewardship Campaign Chairs**



Join us for daily Lenten devotionals and Lenten Life Groups during this sacred season. Learn more and sign up at [covenantpresby.org/lent](http://covenantpresby.org/lent)

## Lent & Holy Week Schedule

### **Wednesday, February 18: Ash Wednesday**

Noon Traditional Service in the Chapel

6:30 p.m. Traditional Service in the Sanctuary

*Following the service in the chapel at noon, we will be offering a soup lunch in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome!*

### **Sunday, March 29: Palm Sunday**

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

### **Thursday, April 2: Maundy Thursday**

6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

*Contemporary worship with a dramatic interpretation of the events leading to Jesus's death. Childcare provided.*

### **Friday, April 3: Good Friday**

6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

*The last words of Christ from the cross relayed in scripture and music with a traditional tenebrae service led by the Covenant Choir with guest instrumentalists. Childcare provided.*

### **Saturday, April 4: Children's Easter Service**

10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

*Kindergarten class performs the Easter story followed by Easter Egg hunts on our playground. Put flowers on the cross and pet the animals on the Circle and enjoy a sweet treat!*

### **Sunday, April 5: Easter Service**

8:45 a.m. Traditional Service in the Chapel

9:30 a.m. Contemporary Service in the Sanctuary

11:00 a.m. Traditional Service in the Sanctuary

### **Easter Monday April 6: Holiday**

*Church Offices are Closed. Enjoy your holiday!*





Open Table Dinners, prepared by Chef Johnny, are served from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Cost for dinner 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. Gluten-free options are available. Meals may be paid for in person or prepaid on our website: [covenantpresby.org/wednesdays](http://covenantpresby.org/wednesdays)

Many of our Open Table speakers are live streamed on Zoom. Find the links at [covenantpresby.org/wednesdays](http://covenantpresby.org/wednesdays)

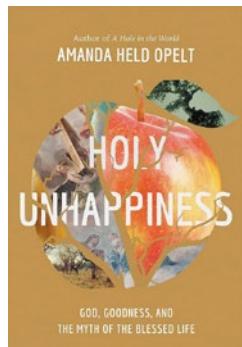
## Amanda Held Opelt

February 25 at 6:30 p.m.  
in the Chapel

You're invited to an evening of thoughtful conversation and reflection with Amanda Held Opelt, author of *Holy Unhappiness* and *A Hole in the World*.

Drawing from her writing and lived experience, Amanda will explore what it means to live a life of faith amid the very real struggles of being human. Together, we'll consider how our culture defines happiness—and how Christ offers a different vision; why unhappiness is so often treated as failure; how grief, lament, and naming our sorrow can be acts of worship; and the difference between hope and optimism.

*The evening will include time for audience questions and shared conversation, creating space for honesty, depth, and grace.*



**Hannah's Heart**  
Second Wednesdays  
6:30 – 7:30 p.m. | Room 201  
Fellowship Hall

A support group for women who desire to become mothers. Join us to connect and pray together.

### 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

## Lenten Life Groups

Starting February 25  
6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

Step into a Lenten Life Group and join others in an engaged, thoughtful exploration of faith. Together, we will explore the theme "Moments that Matter," engaging scripture and weekly reflections as we consider how small, faithful choices shape a life of discipleship.

These groups are built for lively conversation, shared discovery, and learning together as we wrestle with the questions that shape our lives. Life Groups are a place to bring curiosity, listen deeply, and be stretched by perspectives beyond your own.

Join anytime. No preparation required.



**CARE • LEARN • GROW**

## COVENANT LIFE GROUPS

If you're interested in joining a Lenten Life Group, visit [covenantpresby.org/lent](http://covenantpresby.org/lent) to learn more and sign up.

## NAMI Charlotte: You are Not Alone

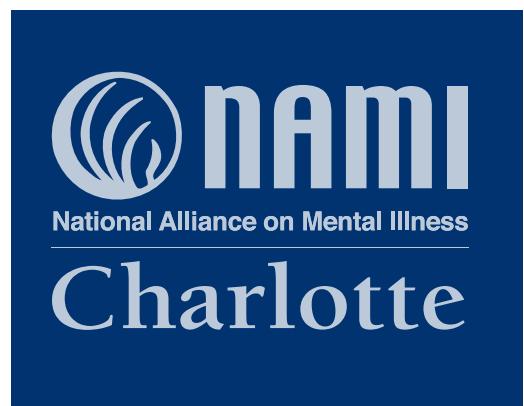
### A Community Conversation on Mental Wellness

#### Wednesday, March 4 at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall Room 203

Join us for a warm, welcoming conversation about mental wellness and hope. Together with NAMI Charlotte, the local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, we'll share a brief, down-to-earth look at mental health in our community and how NAMI's peer-led, grassroots work supports individuals and families affected by mental health conditions.

You'll hear practical, compassionate ways to care for yourself or someone you love, learn about free local resources like the NAMI Navigator, and have space for questions and open conversation. This gathering is non-clinical, judgment-free, and rooted in the simple truth that no one has to walk alone.

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## Mystery and Mysterium

Led by Rev. Michael Lindvall

Wednesday, March 11, 18, 25 at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall Room 203

A three-week series exploring contemporary spiritual questions through the rich and compelling tradition of the mystery novel. Each session will be led by the Rev. Michael Lindvall, co-author of the Ludington-van der Berg mystery series, who will guide conversation at the intersection of storytelling, theology, and everyday life. Participants are encouraged—but not required—to read *Ashes to Ashes*, the first novel in the series, available by visiting [covenantpresby.org/wednesdays](http://covenantpresby.org/wednesdays)

### MARCH 11 - MYSTERY AND MYSTERIUM

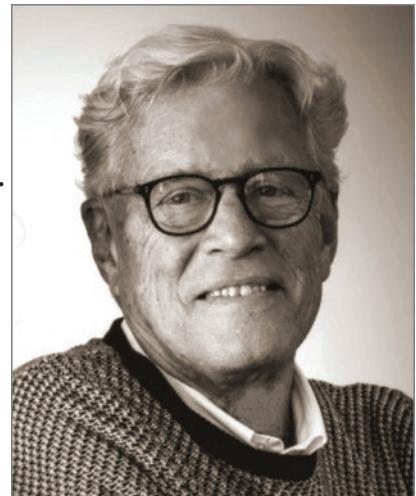
The very surprising relationship between Scripture, Christian theology and conviction, and (believe it or not) mystery novels.

### MARCH 18 - ASHES TO ASHES

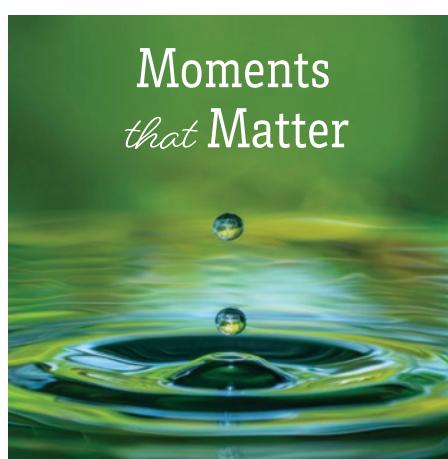
Fear for the Future: Despair, Optimism, and Hope.

### MARCH 25 - ASHES TO ASHES

Secrets and Shame, Guilt and Grace.



## Moments that Matter



## Lenten Daily Devotionals

### Moments that Matter: Decisions on the Way to the Cross

This Lent, we walk with Jesus through the defining choices that shaped his journey to the cross — choices of trust, compassion, courage, and love. Each week invites us to reflect on the moments that matter in our own lives, where discernment meets decision and faith takes form. We'll discover how following Christ's way transforms the choices we make and the lives we lead.

**Lenten Daily Devotionals are available as emails or as a printed booklet at the church while supplies last. You can sign up online to receive a daily email at [covenantpresby.org/lent](http://covenantpresby.org/lent)**



Adult Sunday School  
9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall & Zoom  
Details and links: [covenantpresby.org/sunday-events](http://covenantpresby.org/sunday-events)

## Dr. Martha Moore-Keish

March 1 at 9:30 a.m.

Join us to learn about the Christian practice of truth telling — how naming our missteps and telling the truth about ourselves and our world opens the way toward healing and wholeness. Dr. Martha Moore-Keish is the J.B. Green Professor of Theology at Columbia Theological Seminary. She earned a Ph.D. in theology from Emory University, worked in the PC(USA) Office of Theology and Worship, and taught liturgical studies at Yale Divinity School. In addition to research on liturgical and sacramental theologies, she has long-standing interest in interreligious issues, particularly Christian-Jewish relations and the religions of India. She serves on the PC(USA) committee to write a new confession for the Book of Confessions.



## Dr. Josh Morris

March 8, 15, 22 at 9:30 a.m.

Feeling overwhelmed by decisions? How do I show up to the problems our world is facing? What role can I play in mending divisions in our country? Should I keep going in this career or head in another direction? Dr. Josh Morris is a Professor of Practical Theology at Union Seminary, an army chaplain, former pediatric hospital chaplain, and a pastor in the United Church of Christ tradition. He will lead us through a three-week study considering how our faith can, and does, shape the decisions we make from small everyday decisions to how we show up in our public lives. His schedule of topics is as follows:

- **MARCH 8:** Seeing with Gospel Eyes: Practical Wisdom for Public Life
- **MARCH 15:** Conscience, Community, and Criteria: How Christians Make Tough Calls
- **MARCH 22:** Guided by Light: Christian Decision-Making in Daily Life



## Bible Study for Dads

Thursdays from 8:00 – 8:35 a.m. through Memorial Day  
Welcome Center Room 204

Calling all fathers (and father figures) of young children: if your mornings are full and your days short, check out this study opportunity. Each week we begin at 8:00 a.m. with a short reading to spur conversation and reflection. We will wrap up promptly at 8:35 a.m. Feel free to come early and stay a few minutes late to enjoy time with new and old friends. No preparation necessary. Email Michael Bender at [michael.bender@blvdrea.com](mailto:michael.bender@blvdrea.com) for information, or Grace Lindvall, Associate Pastor for Education, at [grace.lindvall@covenantpresby.org](mailto:grace.lindvall@covenantpresby.org).

# Bring Your Pets for a Blessing

Sunday, March 15 at 4:00 p.m.

Blessing of the Animals at Covenant

*Join us and invite your neighbors.*

*All animals and their people are welcome!*

Whether your companion has fur, feathers, scales, or a shell, our Blessing of the Animals invites you to bring the creatures you love into God's presence. Since 2022, our Pet Ministry has watched families, children, neighbors, and pets form friendships.

Yet our world often forgets how deeply connected we are—to God, to one another, and to creation. Pets give us unconditional love, comfort in grief, and daily joy, yet we rarely pause to bless them or thank God for them. Long before Covenant began this tradition, Christians were blessing animals in the thirteenth century, inspired by St. Francis of Assisi, who taught that all creatures belong to God's family. Each year near his feast day, churches across the world remember that truth.

This year's Blessing of the Animals also marks a new chapter. Our mission is clear: "Covenant Presbyterian Pet Ministry is a caring Christian community that celebrates the gift of pets in God's creation, nurtures discipleship by deepening our faith through community outreach and caring for pets and their families." On March 15, you'll see that mission come alive—in prayers spoken, hands laid gently on pets, and hearts opened to God's love.

When you leave, you won't just walk away with a blessed pet—you'll carry gratitude for God's creation, a stronger sense of community, and a reminder that love, in all its forms, is holy.



# Presbytery-Wide Day of Mission

Saturday, March 21 from 8:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

C. N. Jenkins Presbyterian Church

1421 Statesville Ave, Charlotte, NC 28206

Come connect with others from across the Presbytery as we pray, worship, serve, and fellowship together as one body of Christ. All ages and abilities—children, youth, and adults are welcome. Interested in serving? Contact Donna Fair at [dfair@myersparkpres.org](mailto:dfair@myersparkpres.org).



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

Trip to Davidson College

February 25, depart at 9:00 a.m.

We'll celebrate Black History Month with a visit to Davidson College's new memorial, "With These Hands: A Memorial to the Enslaved and Exploited." Our day will include a presentation by Chaplain Rev. Daniel Heath, a tour of the memorial sculpture and museum, and lunch on campus. RSVP to Aisha Council at [aisha.council@covenantpresby.org](mailto:aisha.council@covenantpresby.org)

## S.O.S. (Surviving Our Spouses)

Game Day Gathering on Sunday, March 8

5:00 – 7:00 p.m. in the Parlor

Party games and pizza - a classic combination for a fun evening. RSVP to Maribeth Damron at [damronmaribeth@gmail.com](mailto:damronmaribeth@gmail.com) by Thursday, March 5 to claim your seat and slice!



SAVE THE DATE  
Women's Dinner  
May 7 in Fellowship Hall

# Strengthening Our Fellowship and Care

## *A New Ministry Structure at Covenant*

When Session created the new position of Associate Minister for Congregational Life in July 2025, in addition to creating new opportunities for Covenant to develop deeper relationships with other churches in our community, it separated the Ministries of Life and Care, creating new space for enhanced ministries of fellowship and support.

Under the new structure, the Ministry of Congregational Life holds responsibility for ministries of fellowship, engagement, stewardship, and cross-church engagement. Some of these ministries include TLC (Travel, Learn, Connect), The Outdoor Ministry, Women's and Men's Ministry. These initiatives are staffed by Serenitye Taylor and Lora Borrelli and led by elders Judy Emken, Kim Mosely, Jim Dobbins, Ellen Holloway, and Breiten Brown.

The Ministry of Congregational Life focuses on providing broad and inclusive programming that fosters deep fellowship and active engagement across the congregation. Grounded in our belief that we are called to live in meaningful relationships with one another and with our wider community, this ministry cultivates partnerships beyond our walls, particularly with congregations and organizations that strengthen the city's social fabric and deepen Covenant's spiritual connection with communities of color. Within the church, the ministry supports visitors and members alike, encouraging active participation and belonging within our church family. Through collaboration with other ministry groups, the Ministry of Congregational Life seeks to nurture ongoing relationships, provide opportunities for discipleship, and sustain a welcoming, hospitable environment where all can grow in faith together.

Congregational Care is a new committee on Session this year, with a focus on supporting and enhancing ministries of support and nurture within the congregation. Staffed by Katherine Kerr and Parish Nurse Karen Willis, and led by elders Anne Gildea, Alan Morrow, and Janet Delery, this committee includes ministries such as Stephen Ministry, Older Adult Ministries (Prime Timers, Covenant Visitors, Extended Communion), Grief Support, Health and



Wellness and caring outreach ministries like the Soup Ministry and Covenant Knitters. Through these varied programs, Congregational Care seeks to provide a loving response when church members face challenges in life and provide opportunities for people to share their gifts of compassion and care. This new structure provides more opportunities for church members and friends to participate in fellowship and acts of care.

**If you'd like to know more about any of the programs listed above, please contact any of the leaders listed.**

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### NEW MINISTRY LAUNCH LGBTQIA+ Community Engagement

Covenant is launching a new ministry focused on supporting LGBTQIA+ community events and initiatives. If you are interested in serving on a planning committee or learning more, please contact Serenitye Taylor at [serenitye.taylor@covenantpresby.org](mailto:serenitye.taylor@covenantpresby.org).

# Covenant to Serve up a New Cookbook

In 1977, the Presbyterian Women of Covenant produced a different kind of church cookbook. *Covenant Shares* contained not only popular dishes but also poetry, blessings, sentiments by which to live, and household tips.

Nearly fifty years later, the Health and Wellness Ministry is poised to publish another unique offering: *Covenant Serves*. This community-driven church cookbook will showcase treasured recipes and stories from congregants, promote healthier habits through education, provide spiritual nourishment through scripture and reflections, and further mission and outreach efforts through its proceeds to community partners like Nourish Up. The target publication date is 2027, which will help commemorate the 80th anniversary of Covenant Presbyterian's charter.

Parish nurse Karen Willis and I recently convened with Kandy Cosper and Jane H. Taylor to discuss the project. In 1997, Kandy wrote the church's history book titled *Covenant Presbyterian Church: The First Fifty Years*. Jane brought along her own mother's tattered, beloved copy of *Covenant Shares* — as well as recollections from growing up in the church.

Our conversation yielded details well beyond lemon bars and what being a "Covenant hostess" entailed. When it comes to food and fellowship, Covenant has always had a rich tradition. As Lynn Wells wrote in *Our State* magazine, "Church cookbooks are treasured time capsules and archives of homemakers, families, and communities who raised generations together. They hold memories of small talk, gossip, laughter, and conversations between adults shocked by how fast the children have grown since their last visit. They are artifacts to preserve along with the recipes and names that fill them."

With contributions from our members, insights from health professionals, and reflections from our pastoral staff, *Covenant Serves* will bridge relationships within the church and the gap between physical wellness and spiritual wholeness. It's not just about what's on the plate; it's about the stories, the prayers, and the fellowship behind each recipe. To quote Kandy, "It's more than a cookbook. It will reflect the many ways that Covenant serves — within our congregation, the community, and the world we live in."



## Want to Help Us?

If *Covenant Serves* tugs at your spiritual gifts and interests, consider being a part of the project. A variety of skills (not just culinary) are needed!



Use this QR code to signup or contact these team leaders:  
Shannon Blair at [shannonblair@gmail.com](mailto:shannonblair@gmail.com),  
Karen Willis at [karen.willis@covenantpresby.org](mailto:karen.willis@covenantpresby.org)



## Healthy Heart Luncheon

Friday, February 27 from Noon – 1:30 p.m.  
Fellowship Hall | Cost for Lunch: \$15.00

Join us for a flavorful lunch and an engaging talk focused on caring for your heart. Learn about practical insights on risk factors, warning signs, and symptoms of heart disease in both women and men, along with steps that support prevention. Enjoy meaningful conversation, and trusted guidance in a warm, community-centered setting.

Look for registration information in the bulletin and weekly email or call Karen Willis at 704.804.7561; email her at [karen.willis@covenantpresby.org](mailto:karen.willis@covenantpresby.org)

# Kinship & RITI: A Call to Transformation



BY ELLEN HOLLOWAY

“It’s time for me to go,” I sadly announced long after I should have departed. “It’s past your bedtime.” Suddenly—unexpectedly, almost forcefully—the fourth grader with shining eyes and a bright smile threw her arms around me in a smothering goodbye hug.

We had spent the evening at Room In the Inn (RITI): sharing a hearty meal, making crafts, and singing karaoke (Mariah Carey was her first choice!). She shared her hopes and dreams—her older sister and dad were getting their very own apartment the next day—how she would decorate her room, her favorite school subject (math), her pride in earning all P’s on her report card, and what she hopes to be when she grows up (working with animals).

In that moment, the perceived differences—race, class, age—began to melt away. What grew in its place was shared humanity, kindness, and the unmistakable presence of God’s love.

Each March, Covenant offers Kinship, a small-group experience grounded in scripture, shared readings, and honest conversation. Kinship invites participants to learn about homelessness in Charlotte, explore long-term affordable housing solutions, and commune with our guests through five consecutive weeks at RITI. But Kinship isn’t primarily about service; it is deeply inward work.

It is not about changing others...it changes us.

Through Kinship, we are invited to examine and dismantle our own assumptions and prejudices—to notice where fear, judgment, or distancing lives within us. We practice listening deeply to the lived experiences of others and learning to believe their stories. This inner work is essential, because it reshapes how we show up in the world and expands what we imagine is possible.

Outwardly, Kinship calls us to act. At RITI, that action may look simple—serving a meal, sitting in conversation, playing music, or holding a child. But



these acts are grounded in a larger commitment: to be present as equals and to work toward a society in which homelessness need not exist.

I did not expect the intensity of the emotional ‘both-and’—the deep duality Kinship reveals. There is both joy and sadness, laughter and tears, held alongside grief at the needless inequities we have created and continue to uphold. Kinship teaches us not to look away from these tensions, instead, it invites us to hold them with honesty and compassion.

A few weeks ago, I returned to RITI and found myself cradling a toddler, limp with fever, clearly sick. I was grateful he was safe in our warm sanctuary—and terrified of what awaited him at 6:00 a.m., when he would return to the street, still ill. Moments like this make clear why Kinship matters: service alone is not enough. We are called to transformation—personal, communal, and systemic.

Kinship invites us into that discomfort—not to remain there, but to be changed by it. As the inner work of dismantling prejudice begins the outer work of building relationships and advocating for systemic change follows, and we begin to glimpse a different future: one where housing is a human right, dignity is nonnegotiable, and love moves us beyond service toward justice.

# Reynosa: Out of My Comfort Zone and into God's Kingdom



BY DYLAN WELCHMAN

I am truly a child of Covenant. I was baptized at Covenant, grew up going to Pre-school at Covenant, went to Sunday school, sang in the youth choirs, and went to youth group.

Basically, if Covenant has offered something, I have probably participated in it, and that includes the church's expansive lineup of mission and outreach opportunities.

When I signed up for a mission trip to Reynosa my sophomore year of high school, I was really excited because I had heard so many people talk about how amazing the trip was — but I was also nervous. I don't speak Spanish, I didn't know the other high school youth that well, and Mexico in the summer with no air conditioning didn't sound very pleasant (I'm told there is A.C. now). I was very quick to come up with reasons NOT to go on the trip. Ultimately though, with some encouragement, I did sign up.

I still vividly remember crossing the border in our convoy of 15 passenger vans and the culture shock that overwhelmed me as we drove through Reynosa to get to our compound — the old school buses seemingly used for public transport that were covered in bright graffiti murals and blasted latin music, the bustling atmosphere, the street vendors on every corner and median of every intersection — it was all very different and striking to me.

Every day the group would repeat our routine; breakfast, prayer, and work at the worksite; lunch, more work, afternoon worship, fellowship, dinner, devotion. Despite this routine, at least one thing would catch my eye every day and remind me that God was with us and present in that place. One day it was neighbors buying Coca-Cola for us, despite living in a home cobbled together with corrugated steel and plywood. Another day it was a small group of flowers popping up through the hard, dry, dirt ground.

The last thing I'd like to talk about is the community that is built between everyone that goes. It's a special connection based on teamwork and trust as you work together to accomplish a goal and overcome

challenges along the way. Then you get to sing songs, share stories, and process everything you saw and experienced throughout the day with those same people. I can honestly say that some of the deepest, most authentic friendships that I have are a direct result of Covenant mission trips.

Going on a mission trip can be a scary thought. Putting yourself in an uncomfortable situation with people you may not know very well is not easy, and making the decision to go on a mission trip can certainly feel like you're taking a leap of faith. My encouragement, though, would be to take that leap. Push yourself out of your comfort zone just a little bit while you make meaningful, lifelong connections and experience the vastness of God's kingdom.



## Mission Trips 2026

### Reynosa, Mexico: March 1 – 7

Please pray for our team as we serve and learn alongside our partners.

### Avery County, NC: July 28 – August 1

A domestic mission trip centered on building homes and continuing long-term hurricane recovery efforts alongside our partners in Avery County. Register at [covenantpresby.org/serve](http://covenantpresby.org/serve)

### Kenya: September 25 – October 4

An international mission trip focused on building relationships with students at Renguti Learning Academy and spending time with mission partners. Email Mandy Rencher at [mandy.rencher@covenantpresby.org](mailto:mandy.rencher@covenantpresby.org) to learn more.

# Introducing Our Congregational Care Resource Library



BY KAREN WILLIS

As your parish nurse, I'm often reminded that caring for one another includes having trustworthy guidance when questions arise and decisions feel heavy. Sometimes you just want a place to browse and learn. With that in mind, I'm happy to share a new resource that's now available to support our congregation: a Congregational Care Resource Library.

This library includes pamphlets, information and books that include information on many of the situations and seasons our community walks through together. You'll find resources related to advance directives, grief and loss, caregiving, aging well, navigating chronic illness, mental health support, hospice and palliative care, preventive medicine, and much more. These materials are meant to be practical, compassionate, and easy to understand, something you can turn to whether you're planning, supporting a loved one, or simply seeking clarity.

The Resource Library is an extension of our shared commitment to care for the whole person: body, mind, and spirit. My hope is that it serves as a quiet companion, offering guidance, reassurance, and a reminder that you are not alone on this journey.

**Our new library is located in the hallway to Katherine Kerr's office in the sanctuary basement. Please know that I'm always available to help you find what you need or to talk through your health-related questions.**



## Blood Drive

Our last blood drive was our most successful of the year! We had 16 units of blood donated. This will help save up to 48 people in and around Charlotte. **Use the QR code to sign up for the next blood drive.**



**NEXT BLOOD DRIVE:**

**Sunday, February 22**

**8:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.**

*Look for details in our weekly email and Sunday bulletin announcements.*



## Centering Prayer

**Wednesday Afternoons**

**12:30 - 1:00 p.m. in the Parlor**

Lent invites us to slow down, let go, and make room for God. Centering Prayer is a simple, quiet practice that helps us rest in God's presence beyond words.

No experience needed. All are welcome.

## Events & Classes for Children



### Egg Stuffing Party

March 19 from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. in EW 204

Please join this Easter Egg stuffing party as we prepare for our Children's Easter service. Lend a hand, enjoy light bites and coffee, and share in fellowship. RSVP to Amber Brown at [amber.brown@covenantpresby.org](mailto:amber.brown@covenantpresby.org).

### 5th Grade Milestone

April 29 from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Our 5th graders will gather for a special milestone focused on discipleship and invitation. Together, they will explore what it means to follow Jesus and how to share His love with others. This milestone will conclude with each 5th grader choosing a meaningful way to invite a friend, loved one, or classmate to our Easter service.

### Faith and Sexuality Workshop

May 1 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

May 2 from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

For this two-day workshop, 4th and 5th grade adolescents and their parents learn about body image and healthy attitudes toward God's gift of sexuality. Breakout discussion groups are led by trained facilitators. Parents meet for their own session, then parents and children finish the afternoon together.

### Children's Easter Service

April 4 at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

For this service, our Kindergarten class will perform the Easter story, followed by Easter egg hunts on the playground. Older children will enjoy games and a steeple tour. Children and their families are invited to bring flowers to decorate the cross. There will be live animals to pet outside and sweet treats to enjoy.

## HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

### Peace and the Walking Monks

*A group of Vietnamese Buddhist monks from Texas passed through Charlotte on January 15 as part of their 2,300-mile "Walk for Peace" to Washington, D.C. The 120-day journey aimed to inspire unity, reduce division, and awaken peace within individuals, advocating for a kinder, more mindful world. This unique event inspired several members of Covenant to support the monks as they walked through the city.*



#### BY GRACIE CROCKFORD

Watching the monks walk by in quiet unity felt calming. The whole crowd quieted as they approached and their peaceful presence made me slow down and reflect. I felt a deep sense of hope just from witnessing their journey. When one of them handed me a rose, it made me feel special and seen and I felt that this simple gesture carried so much meaning behind it. It felt like a reminder that kindness doesn't have to be loud to be powerful and their passing of peace will still be within us, long after they're gone.



#### SAVE THE DATE

#### YOUTH SUNDAY: APRIL 19

Join us for a Sunday of worship, art, music, and celebration led by Covenant's Youth.

## Recreation Wing Classes & Events

*The Recreation Wing is heating up as we head into the spring and summer with new programs and opportunities to stay active. Check out our offerings and sign up: [covenantpresby.org/recreation-ministry](http://covenantpresby.org/recreation-ministry)*

### MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

The Rec Wing offers memberships to fit your needs that give you access to our wonderful facilities with an indoor track, fully equipped weight room, cardio equipment, pickleball, and more.

### HORNETS GAME DAY

Check out the Hornets when they play the Memphis Grizzlies on Saturday, March 21. Go to the Recreation Ministry page to purchase tickets.

The first 25 kids that purchase tickets through our link will get to go to the "Fan Tunnel" where the players run out.



### PERSONAL TRAINING

Whether you're prepping for a 5K, rehabing an injury, or just wanting to feel more energetic: sign up with one of our nationally certified personal trainers. They will work with you to meet your specific goals and needs. Email [kevin.harper@covenantpresby.org](mailto:kevin.harper@covenantpresby.org) to get more information.

### GROUP CLASSES

Don't want to workout alone? Join a group! We've got a variety of yoga classes, senior balance classes, and more. Visit our website for descriptions and schedules.

### PICKLEBALL FRIDAYS & SUNDAYS

Want to play the fastest growing sport in the country? Come join the Covenant Pickleball crew on Fridays and Sundays from 1:30-3:00 p.m. No reservations needed. Beginners and experienced players are all welcomed. It's a \$5 drop in fee for non-Rec Wing members and free if you have a Rec Wing membership.

### QUESTIONS?

Email Kevin Harper at [kevin.harper@covenantpresby.org](mailto:kevin.harper@covenantpresby.org) to get more information.

## Welcome Our New Members



Emily & Kyle Boster  
with Wesley



Diane Bounds



Martin Bounds



Grace Gardella



Charlotte & Richard  
Hunt



Steve & Cheryl Johnstone  
with Matthew & Ben



Mary Scott Kennedy  
& Drew Mansfield



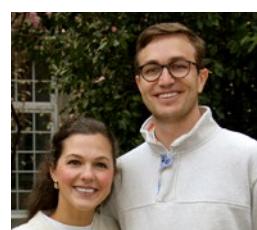
Artie Newcombe



Danny & Bettie  
Pleasant



Francis Walker



Janie West & Curtis Wallin

# Grant Recipients: Extending God's Love into Our Community



BY MANDY RENCHER

Each year, Covenant Presbyterian Church's Grants Committee prayerfully oversees our local grant program, seeking to extend God's love beyond our congregation and into the wider community. Grounded in our calling to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, this ministry provides both financial support and encouragement to partner organizations.

The Grants Committee follows a thoughtful and relational discernment process. Members meet with organizational leaders, conduct site visits, and carefully review grant applications to determine recipients and funding levels. By prioritizing deeper investment in a smaller number of partners, Covenant fosters meaningful relationships, greater impact, and stronger opportunities for congregational involvement.

**In 2026, Covenant will distribute a total of \$180,000 in local grants to support our work across our community.**

Grant decisions are guided by clear and thoughtful criteria. Eligible organizations must be registered 501(c)(3) nonprofits, meet published deadlines, and demonstrate financial sustainability beyond Covenant's support. The committee prioritizes alignment with Covenant's four mission pillars—hunger, housing, vulnerable families, and education—as well as opportunities for meaningful volunteer engagement. Financial health, including the balance

between program and administrative expenses, is also carefully reviewed to ensure responsible stewardship. We are grateful for the faithful leadership of the 2026 Grants Committee, whose members devote significant time, prayer, and care to this important work: Loretta Brown; Katie Coley, Chair; Marilynn Mickle; Jim Hamilton, past chair; Lauren Mulcahy; Kim Moseley; Derek Thomas; and Evan Kluttz.

## Grant Recipients for 2026

*Please join us in celebrating this year's grant recipients and in giving thanks for the partnerships that allow Covenant to live out its mission in such meaningful ways across our community.*

Baby Bundles \*

Charlotte Family Housing

Crisis Assistance Ministry

Foster Village

Freedom School Partners

Hope Haven

Nourish Up

Refugee Support Services\*

Roof Above

Supportive Housing Communities

The Relatives

Wayfinders

*\*Indicates new partners in 2026*

## Christmas Eve Offering 2025: Making Room for Every Child

Each year on Christmas Eve, Covenant designates the offering from all services to support vulnerable children and families locally and globally.

**This year's offering, which totaled just over \$60,000, supported two partner organizations: Charlotte Family Housing and Tomorrow's Youth Organization.**

Though their work takes place in different settings—here in Charlotte and in refugee camps near Nablus, Palestine—both focus on caring for children and families during times of deep vulnerability.

Charlotte Family Housing helps families transition from

housing instability into permanent homes, providing support for expenses such as deposits, utilities, and basic furnishings. Tomorrow's Youth Organization serves children in refugee camps by addressing urgent needs including food insecurity, access to medical and mental health care, and interrupted education.

On Christmas Eve, we remember Christ came into the world as a vulnerable child, and we respond by caring for children beyond our own families and community. We are grateful for these partnerships and for the generosity that allows Covenant to live out this calling.



1000 East Morehead Street, Charlotte, NC 28204



## Children's Choir Sharing Service

Wednesday, April 15  
6:00 p.m. in the Chapel

Join us as we share  
highlights of our work  
and learning in rehearsal  
throughout the year.



## Premarital Workshop

Saturday, March 7  
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

This workshop will equip newly engaged or  
newly married couples with skills and insights  
for cultivating healthy relationships.

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[lynne.koeniger@covenantpresby.org](mailto:lynne.koeniger@covenantpresby.org)  
by February 25 for details and registration



## Peek Weekend

with guest artist Alcee Chriss

March 1 at 4:00 p.m.  
In the Sanctuary

ORGAN MASTER CLASS  
February 28 at 10:00 a.m.