

# COVENANT *News*

A monthly publication of Covenant Presbyterian Church  
Charlotte, North Carolina



**'For unto you is  
born this day...!'**

## ***IN THIS ISSUE***

**5** See our 2018 mission trips

**6** New series: Getting the most out of storytime

**7** Christmas Eve Offering will lift up children in need

## Message from Bob



Dear friends,

A number of years ago, a controversy broke out around the Advent hymn with which we will begin our traditional worship services during the next four weeks. "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, which mourns in lonely exile."

Some hear thinly veiled racism in that phrase. In fact, a New York City rabbi even wrote that "Jews are not awaiting the advent of a savior to ransom us." A Christian theologian couldn't resist the opportunity to respond and said, "Whatever Israel is doing right now, it's anything but mourning in exile!" I decided it would be wisest to stay out of the fray.

But it has made me reflect on this issue of exile, and I'm struck by how many of us – even those who seem to have every advantage of home baked into our daily existence – live with a sense of displacement, not-belonging, and exile. For some, it's today's political realities. For others, it has to do with race and inequality. For still others, it has to do with economics, family, or faith. Yet, nearly all of us feel some sense of living in exile.

That's why this Advent and Christmas, I'll be taking extra measures to stay centered, to cultivate gracious inward space and to reside in closer proximity to God and those I love. I plan to read, to worship, to pray, to play, and to give thanks as often as possible. By December 25, I trust I will have a deeper sense of home, of sacred space, of clear belonging.

I invite you to join me. In this newsletter, you'll read of rich worship opportunities, Advent devotionals, places to serve and give and a host of other ways to prepare for the Good News of One who comes.

Peace,

*Bob*

## Year-End Giving Update

Did you know that each year, Covenant receives 16 percent of annual contributions in December? Please consider a tax-deductible contribution in these ways:

- **During Sunday morning worship.** Contributions made during services through Sunday, Dec. 31, will be credited to 2017 unless otherwise noted.
- **Online via our secure giving site at [covenantpresby.org/give](http://covenantpresby.org/give).** Any contribution must be complete before midnight Dec. 31.

To be deductible in 2017, your gift must be received or postmarked prior to midnight on Dec. 31. Church offices will be open until 3 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 29. For information on stock gifts, please contact Virginia Rumbley or Bill Keith at the church office.

## Update on campus safety and security

### Message from security task force

The mass shooting at First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, left all of us stunned and heartbroken. We grieve the loss of life and we pray for victims of gun violence in this tragedy and too many others.

At Covenant, the safety of our campus is of utmost concern. Last year, a task force of church members interviewed nearly a dozen peer churches and recommended a plan to implement new technology, coordinate ushers and work with off-duty police officers.

Here are actions that Covenant has since taken:

- Two uniformed, off-duty CMPD officers are with us Sunday mornings, primarily to direct traffic on Morehead Street. The officers are available to provide safety assistance as needed.
- Cameras at key points around campus are monitored through a smartphone app.
- Enhanced door controls are now in place for the Sanctuary office entrance, Preschool entrance and Fellowship Hall entrance. A smart phone app allows for two-way communication and remote unlocking of doors.
- Key staff members are attending a two-hour safety seminar hosted by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department for local houses of worship. CMPD will provide knowledge and strategies to make the campus a safer place for all.
- Ushers and Greeters are invited to attend a refresher presentation on the current procedures on Sunday, Dec. 10 at 8:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Our enduring goal is to maintain a welcoming atmosphere while also acknowledging the realities of the world around us. If you have any questions, please contact Task Force Chair Gene Wood at [WoodGene52@gmail.com](mailto:WoodGene52@gmail.com).

# A joyful season of Advent awaits

From caroling to Christmas Crafts, make plans for worship, festivities

## Contemplative Advent service

**Wednesday, Dec. 6 at 6:30 p.m. in Chapel**

In the hustle and bustle of Advent, it can be hard to find time to reflect on the true meaning of the season. Covenant will offer a contemplative Advent service in the Chapel on Dec. 5.

Through scripture, poetry, art, and silence, we will slow down and ready our hearts for the coming of the Christ child. Anna Dickson and Grady Moseley will lead us.

## Photo time with Santa

**Wednesday, Dec. 6 beginning at 5 p.m.**

Visit the Fellowship Hall Library for photos with our favorite Santa Claus, who returns for another year of service.

## A new tradition begins

**Christmas Caroling with Covenant friends**

Join us on Wednesday, Dec. 13 for a new Christmas tradition as we sing carols to our Covenant neighbors.

All ages are invited for favorites including: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, The First Nowell and Silent Night.

5 p.m. - Soup and sandwich dinner in the Fellowship Hall

5:45 to 6 p.m. - Practice singing our carols

6 p.m. - Depart on foot to visit homes of our neighbors (They're expecting us). We'll carry song booklets and light-up candles.

7 to 7:30 p.m. - Return to church for cookies and hot chocolate.

## Lessons & Carols is Sunday, Dec. 17

**Featuring Covenant Choir, handbells**

This historic service will feature prelude music from the CPCC Early Music Consort. The service will be led by the Covenant Choir with handbell music from Covenant Ringers, as well as children's choirs at 11 a.m. and Youth Chorale at 5 p.m.



## Christmas Eve Worship Schedule

**Four services on Sunday, Dec. 24**

**9:30 a.m.** Children's Worship  
(with nativity animals on the Circle)

**11 a.m.** Traditional Worship

**3 p.m.** Contemporary Worship

**5 p.m.** Traditional Worship

# CIC 2017: A memorable day of service + community

Thank you, volunteers!

**Covenant Impacts Charlotte brought together 500+ folks of all ages for a weekend of service in our community.**

*From interior and exterior work at Highland to sandwich-making for Urban Ministry Center, our Covenant community made a difference in the lives of those we serve.*

*As our friends at Charlotte Family Housing told us in an email, THANK YOU to everyone for the energy, enthusiasm and plain old hard work!*



# Join a mission team in 2018

## Serve with Covenant groups in Yucatan and Africa



Carla Leaf  
Co-director of  
Mission and Outreach

### Yucatan, Mexico

Trip Leader: Stephanie Guffin  
Dates: June 24-30  
*We will work with Accion Ministries to support the work of their school and local Presbyterian churches.*

### Kenya, Africa

Trip Leader: TBA  
Dates: September 2018  
*We will serve at Renguti School, a small, rural school outside Nairobi, to support teachers and work with children.*



### Alternative Gift Market

**Sunday, Dec. 3, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

*Do your holiday shopping in the Rec Wing...arrive early!*

This Christmas market offers a different way to give during the holiday season. All proceeds benefit our mission partners.

**What you'll find:** Pottery and artisan wares, olive oil and food items from Palestine, jewelry and crafts from Africa and much more. As always, we'll have honor cards from all mission partners, including Heifer International.



### Save The Dates

**Coffee with our summer interns:** Join our 2016 and 2017 People in Mission Interns and hear their reflections on serving our vulnerable neighbors in Charlotte. We invite all college students who may have an interest in this life-changing internship. *Sunday, Dec. 17 at 10:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall Library.*

**College Student Christmas Party:** College students will gather for the annual College Christmas party at Carla Leaf's house. *Monday, Dec. 18 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Pizza and snacks will be served!*

**Mission Festival Auction:** A fun event on Sunday, Feb. 25 that makes it possible for people to go on mission trips. We sell anything from a week at a mountain house to gift baskets full of goodies.

## Young Adults Upcoming Events

*Join us at any time. Get connected: [jen.christianson@covenantpresby.org](mailto:jen.christianson@covenantpresby.org)*

### YA First Sunday Brunch

Sunday, Dec. 3 at noon  
*Stop by the Alternative Gift Market on the track in the Rec Wing (opens at 8:30 a.m.), then join us at the Mayobird on East Boulevard.*

### YA Christmas Party

Tuesday, Dec. 12 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.  
Queen Park Social  
*Bring \$5 for shoes if you'd like to bowl; we'll have lanes reserved, along with shuffleboard. Check out the arcade, too!*

### YA Winter Retreat

Jan. 12-15, 2018 (MLK Weekend)  
*Join us for a weekend of reflecting on the "Good Life." Contact Jen - space is limited!*

### YA Men's and Women's Small Groups

*Men:* Devotions & Drafts at Dilworth Grille on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 7 p.m.  
*Women:* 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at church & in members' homes at 7 p.m.  
*Women:* Sundays at 6 p.m. in members' homes. Led by Jessica Patchett.



# Open Table @ Covenant

## Upcoming Wednesday programs

### Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m., Jan. 10, 17, 24, 31 Fellowship Hall (Main)

Join us for a fun, lively and innovative series designed to help youngsters learn to love books.

This workshop is geared toward preschool-age children. Parents are encouraged - but not required - to bring their little ones. Childcare and elementary-age activities are available for kids not attending the program.

Experts from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library and Read Charlotte will reveal the art and science behind "active reading" - i.e. reading a book *with* a child rather than to a child.

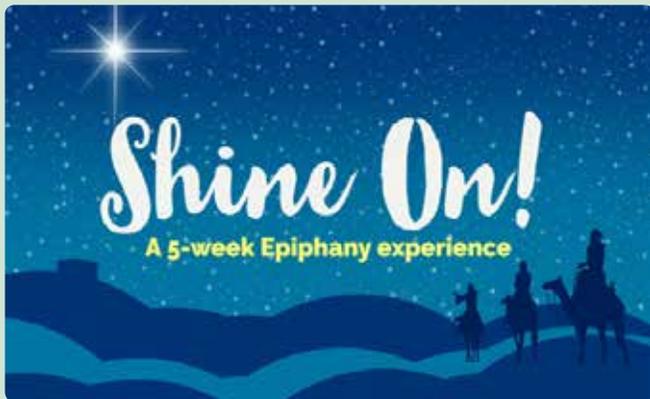
**RSVP:** Reserve a spot via email at [reservations@covenantpresby.org](mailto:reservations@covenantpresby.org). We can accommodate up to 20 participants. Families will receive a new book each week.



**Connect words with pictures.** Point to pictures in the book to help children understand the meaning of words. Example: Who is wearing a bonnet? What color is it?

**Act out the book.** Use facial expressions, sounds, or physical movements to demonstrate what words mean.

**Connect new words to words they already know.** Example: A bonnet is a type of hat, like the red hat that you wear.



### Wednesdays, Jan. 10 to Feb. 7 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

**An illuminating hour celebrating the sacred Epiphany story and how it's unfolding in us today.**

Stay tuned for details on this series led by Sandra Boozer. You can reach Sandra at [sandramboozer@me.com](mailto:sandramboozer@me.com).

## TLC Upcoming Events

*Travel, Learn, Connect – Covenant's active adults group enjoys learning and travel (and good food).  
RSVP: [Mary.mattiacci@covenantpresby.org](mailto:Mary.mattiacci@covenantpresby.org)*

### A gingerbread tour in Ballantyne Lunch and a festive 'home tour'

Join us for lunch at the Gallery restaurant and a tour of the gingerbread house collection on display at Ballantyne Resort. You can vote for your favorites with \$1 to support Levine Children's Hospital.

*Wednesday, Dec. 13. We will leave Covenant at 10:45 a.m. and return by 2:30 p.m.*



## Grief and Healing - Taking the Journey Together

*Beginning Wednesday, Jan. 10 at 6:30 p.m. in the Parlor*



Covenant's care ministry is pleased to offer a discussion and support group for bereaved adults who are experiencing loss from the death of a spouse, parent, sibling or friend.

The group will be small and help integrate an understanding of grief, assist in the healing process and find a path forward.

Facilitators are Judith Allen, Licensed Practicing Counselor (LPC) and Susan Ferone, LCSW. Judith has 23+ years counseling experience with 15 of those years as a support group leader with KinderMourn.

If you or someone you know is struggling with a death of a loved one, please join us in healing together. Contact [Susan.ferone@covenantpresby.org](mailto:Susan.ferone@covenantpresby.org) or call 704-804-7585.

# Christmas Eve Offering

Bringing joy to children at home and around the world

## Pool party for Tomorrow's Youth Organization

Help sponsor a very special adventure for young people served by Tomorrow's Youth Organization, a nonprofit working in conflict zones in the Middle East.

Children in the West Bank will have a pool and pizza party and get brand new swim clothes - a time to escape the worries of everyday life in a refugee camp.



## Coastal science trip for Crossnore Elementary

Help support our friends at Crossnore, a community in Avery County where everyday life can be a struggle. Many of these children are raised by elderly grandparents and have never left the mountain.

We'll take fifth graders on a three-day trip to Salter Path, NC, where they will tour the beach, saltwater marshes and maritime forests.

## Old Salem and Camp Harrison for Highland Renaissance

Help provide field trips for students at Highland Renaissance Academy, our CMS partner school just north of uptown.

With our help, fourth graders will tour Old Salem and fifth graders will visit Camp Harrison for a day of science, nature and recreation. Many of these kids have never traveled beyond Charlotte.



## Advent - A great time to join Adult Small Groups

Here's a look at small groups welcoming you to join. Contact Lora Borrelli at [Lora.borrelli@covenantpresby.org](mailto:Lora.borrelli@covenantpresby.org) to get connected.

### During the Week

#### Uptown Bible Study - Advent series kicks off Dec. 5

Tuesdays at noon

A diverse group led by Jessica Patchett meets for lunch at Foundation for the Carolinas.

#### Tuesday Lunch Group

Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m. in FH Library

All-ages group with diverse opinions. Currently studying biblical wisdom literature.

#### Women's Bible Study

Thursdays 9:30 to 11 a.m. in Parlor

Newcomers from diverse faith journeys are welcome. Led by Lucy Crain.

#### South Park Bible Study - Advent series kicks off Dec. 7

Thursdays at noon, Union Seminary Room 201

#### Thursday Lunch Bible Study - A great beginner's group

Noon in FH Library  
New group led by Anne McQuiston & Jen Christianson.

### On Sundays

#### Men's Bible Study

8:30 a.m. in FH205  
Men interested in faith and conversation. Led by Andy Ball, Drew Quartapella and Paul Steffens

#### Fellowship Class

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in FH203

Adults 60+ with weekly conversation topics

#### Open Door

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in FH201

A diverse gathering of adults; great for newcomers

#### People Class

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in FH Library

Adults who enjoy vigorous dialogue on many topics

#### Foundations

Sundays at 10:45 a.m. in FH205

A small group for parents of young children

#### Sunday Evening Young Adult Women's Small Group

6 p.m. Women in our late 20s and 30s who gather for friendship in members' homes. Led by Jessica Patchett.

Sign up for Sunday morning classes & weekday small groups: [covenantpresby.org/smallgroups](http://covenantpresby.org/smallgroups)

# Health & Wellness

## My weight loss journey

At the beginning of 2017, I found myself stressed and overweight. I had fallen into eating unhealthy. Not sweets or sodas, but large portions of red meat and potatoes.

Steaks, burgers, fries, baked potatoes loaded with butter, all are my favorites. Combine that with having a young child, life stress and not exercising regularly, I found that I had gained weight. I was unhappy. My back and neck hurt and I was sleeping poorly.



You may think, "But James, you know better than to let that happen!" Yes, I did know, but it was a gradual progression and I didn't see it until it was too late.

At the end of February I decided to make a change. I altered my diet and started weight training regularly in Covenant's weight room. I do have a "cheat" meal from time to time and miss a day of working out, but generally I stick to my plan.

I am proud to say that since February, I have gained strength, flexibility, confidence and lost 34 pounds.

I share this with you to let you know anyone can fall into a rut. We are all human. Sometimes it just takes setting goals and staying with them. Remember, it is a journey. There will be pitfalls, but any gain is a gain!

— James Huffman, Rec Wing Director

### Christmas Basketball Camp with "Yes I Can Basketball"

Dec. 26 -29 Tuesday–Friday

Boys Only ages 6-9 from 9 a.m. to Noon

Boys and Girls ages 9-12 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

To register, go to [www.yesicanbasketball.com](http://www.yesicanbasketball.com)

### Winter Basketball Camp with Ricky Price & GameReady

Boys and girls ages 9 -16

Ages 9-12 — Mornings, 9 a.m. - Noon

Ages 12-15 — Afternoons, 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Session 1: Wednesday, Dec. 20 & Thursday, Dec. 21

Session 2: Friday, Dec. 22 & Saturday, Dec. 23

Register: Visit [gamereadSD.com](http://gamereadSD.com)

## Save the Dates

### Men's & Women's Retreats

**Men:** March 9-11 at Etowah Valley Golf Club & Lodge

**Women:** Feb. 2-4 at Pinehurst, NC



## Nurse's Note

Contact me at [Mary.mattiacci@covenantpresby.org](mailto:Mary.mattiacci@covenantpresby.org).



Mary Mattiacci  
Parish Nurse

Dear Ones,

The holidays are a time to celebrate, give thanks and reflect. They are also a time to pay special attention to your health. Here are some suggestions from the Centers for Disease Control on how to have a healthier Christmas season.

1. Wash your hands often. Keeping your hands clean is the most important step you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs.
2. Stay warm. Stay dry and dress in several layers of clothing. Pay special attention to children, older folks and pets.
3. Manage stress. Balance work, home and play. Don't over-commit or over-spend. Both will increase your stress level. Try to keep a relaxed and positive outlook. Get enough sleep.
4. Travel safely. Whether you are traveling across town or around the world, take steps to ensure your safety. Don't drink and drive. Don't let others drink and drive. Wear a seatbelt.
5. Eat healthy and be active. Choose more vegetables and fruit. Let yourself enjoy small portions of your favorite temptations. Find fun ways to stay active, like dancing to your favorite music.

Take care,

*Mary*

## Sisters in Spirit Breakfast Tuesday, Dec. 12 in Fellowship Hall

*Pat Taft on New Life: Filling the Empty Spaces*

**When:** Breakfast and program from 7 to 8 a.m.

**RSVP:** Send an email to [reservations@covenantpresby.org](mailto:reservations@covenantpresby.org).



# First Sunday Talks

## Sunday, Dec. 3: "What I Love Most About Being Jewish"

Hear from Rabbi Dusty Klass of Temple Beth-El.

Rabbi Klass is passionate about youth work, social justice and meeting people where they are. She was ordained from the Los Angeles campus of Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion with Masters degrees in Hebrew Letters and Jewish Educational Leadership.



Rabbi Klass will speak at 9:30 a.m. in Room 207 of the Fellowship Hall.

### A special invitation on Dec. 15

Covenant members are invited to Temple Beth El on Friday, Dec. 15 at 5:15 p.m. for a special MeckMIN event. RSVP by Dec. 8 to [jen.christianson@covenantpresby.org](mailto:jen.christianson@covenantpresby.org).

# Covenant Kids Education



*Congratulations to our third-graders on receiving Bibles.*

### Children's Christmas Eve service:

Sunday, Dec. 24 at 9:30 a.m.

Children in the 5s/Kindergarten Sunday School class will present the Nativity play at this annual service. The Covenant Preschool Cherub Choir will sing. Between the 9:30 and 11 a.m. services, a petting zoo of "Nativity animals" will visit the Circle, and birthday cake for Jesus will be served in the Fellowship Hall.

### Volunteers make all the difference

Volunteering is a great way to: 1) serve God, 2) connect with other parents, and 3) get to know the kids in your child's or grandchild's class. If you haven't found a place to connect with Children's Ministry, please visit our Volunteer Spot page.

### Open Table Wednesday nights

A Bible class for grades 1-5 meets in EW218 following Open Table supper. Activities include games that develop basic Bible proficiency, prayer, and conversations about the Christian Faith. Drop off and pick up in the Rec Wing. Taught by Anne Lowrance and Mollie Lee.

### Save the Dates

#### 2nd Grade Ready, Set, Worship - Baptism

Sundays, Jan. 21 and 28, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. in the Chapel

#### 5th Grade Faith & Sexuality Workshop

Saturday, Jan. 27 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (open to 4th graders also).

### Children of the Covenant

We'll celebrate babies born or adopted in 2017. Join us Sunday, March 18 in worship at 9:30 and 11 a.m.

# Sunday Mornings

## Early Childhood First Floor, EW

Child Care 8:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.  
Crib Nursery (infants-walkers)  
Toddler Nursery (walkers to 2 years)

9:30-10:30 a.m. Sunday School  
(2 years - Kindergarten)  
10:30-11 a.m. Play Time  
11-11:30 a.m. Music & Bible Story  
11:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Snack & Playground or Gym

## Elementary Education

### Grades 1-5, Second Floor, EW

9:30-9:45 a.m. Small Groups  
9:45-10:10 a.m. Large Group  
10:10-10:30 a.m. Small Groups  
11 a.m. - 12 p.m. Elementary kids attend worship

## Youth (Grades 6-12)

### Education Wing, 9:30 a.m.

Base/6th & 7th Grades EW318  
Quest/8th Grade EW312  
PEAK/9th-12th Grades EW207

## Adult Sunday School

9:30 a.m. unless noted

### Men's Bible Study

**8:30 a.m. FH205**

Open to all men, studying scripture and reflections.

### Millennials

**FH105**

A class for (self-defined!) Young Adults

### Foundations (10:45 a.m.)

**FH205**

A supportive network for parents nurturing families in faith.

### Open Door

**FH201**

A diverse gathering of adults of all ages and a great first class for people new to Covenant.

### People Class

**FH Library**

Adults ages 50s-70s enjoy discussing a wide variety of topics.

### The Fellowship Class

**FH203**

Largely adults 60+, but open to adults of all ages.

### Sun. PM Women (6 p.m.)

**Various**

Women in our late 20s and 30s meet for fellowship.



# Middle School Youth

Reach director Perrin Tribble at [perrin.tribble@covenantpresby.org](mailto:perrin.tribble@covenantpresby.org) or call 704-804-7569.

## Weekly Schedule of Activities

### Sunday School

Explore bold new ways to live out Scripture in our daily lives.

9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

6th and 7th graders, EW318

8th grade Quest, EW312

### Sunday Nights

We play fun games, learn about spiritual disciplines and pursue service opportunities.

Dinner is 5:30 to 6 p.m. in Fellowship Hall Program to follow; locations vary; pick up in Circle at 7 p.m.

### Wednesday Nights - Open Table

Join us for dinner followed by games and recreation in the Gym.

5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Dinner in Fellowship Hall

6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Gym Night in Rec Wing

Sunday, December 3- AM Sunday School, PM Fellowship

Wednesday, December 6- Open Table, MSY Gym Night

Sunday, December 10- AM Sunday School, PM Ice skating Christmas Party

Wednesday, December 13- Open Table, MSY Gym Night

Sunday, December 17- AM Sunday School, NO PM Fellowship-Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 24- NO Sunday School, NO evening Youth Fellowship

Sunday, December 31-NO Sunday School, NO evening Youth Fellowship

## Upcoming Highlights

**Dec. 3-** Quest class and mentors visit Elevation. Meet in the upper parking lot at 9 a.m. Worship is at 9:30 a.m.

**Dec. 10-** MSY Christmas Party will be at Pineville Ice House. We will meet in the upper parking lot of Covenant at 2 p.m. We will return by 5 p.m. Please bring \$10 for rentals, plus socks and warm clothes.

## Looking Ahead

CROSS (6th-8th grades) June 17-22. Cost is \$295/youth; \$150/chaperones Heifer (Quest only) July 8-14. More information to come in the new year.

To register for summer trips, e-mail [Perrin.tribble@covenantpresby.org](mailto:Perrin.tribble@covenantpresby.org) and pay a non-refundable deposit of \$100 to Covenant. Please let Perrin know if you are interested in serving as a chaperone!



# High School Youth

Reach director Levi Bannerman at [Levi.bannerman@covenantpresby.org](mailto:Levi.bannerman@covenantpresby.org) or call 704-804-7563.

## Weekly Schedule of Activities

### Sunday School

Explore bold new ways to live out Scripture in our daily lives.

9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

9th to 12th graders, EW307

### Sunday Nights

We gather for dinner with MSY and then separate for an hour of programming, ranging from service to recreation.

Dinner is 5:30 to 6 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

Program to follow; locations vary; pick up in Circle at 7 p.m.

### Wednesday Nights - Open Table

Join us for Film + Theology to explore Christian themes in popular movies

5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Dinner in Fellowship Hall

6:30 to 7:30 p.m., EW Theatre

Sunday, December 3- AM Sunday School, PM Fellowship

Wednesday, December 6- Open Table, Film + Theology

Sunday, December 10- AM Sunday School, PM Christmas Party

Wednesday, December 13- Open Table, Film + Theology

Sunday, December 17- AM Sunday School, NO PM Fellowship-Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 24- NO Sunday School, NO evening Youth Fellowship

Sunday, December 31-NO Sunday School, NO evening Youth Fellowship

## Upcoming Highlights

**HSY Christmas Party** - Dec. 10 at 5:30 p.m. at the Ferone house.

# Welcome New Members



Loretta Brown and daughter, Jacquelyn McAbee



Daniel Gibbs, Lila and Hugh

## Interested in Joining Covenant?

We welcome new members every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. in the Parlor, located downstairs in the Sanctuary building. We also welcome new members on the 4th Sunday of each month in the Fellowship Hall Library at noon.

Contact Lora Borrelli, membership and engagement director, at [Lora.borrelli@covenantpresby.org](mailto:Lora.borrelli@covenantpresby.org) or 704-804-7562.

# Session *Digest*

## Highlights from recent Session meetings

- Received an update from the Planning and Evaluation Board on the capital campaign planning progress. Also, P&E presented recommended changes to the Operations Manual.
- Received "Return on Ministry" updates from Education, Mission and Outreach, Congregational Life, Worship, Engagement and Administration Ministries.
- Heard a report from Betty Meadows, leader of the Charlotte Presbytery, on the work being done with funds provided by Covenant.
- During five called session meetings in September and October, received 14 new members, bringing the total year-to-date to 91.

# Financial Update

## Pledge Receipts (Year to date through Oct. 31, 2017)

2017 Budgeted: ..... \$1,991,500  
 2017 Actual: ..... \$2,055,659

103.2% of Budget

Give Online at [www.covenantpresby.org/give](http://www.covenantpresby.org/give)

# Congregational Notes

Do you have announcements? Let Covenant know by contacting: [Cindy.friday@covenantpresby.org](mailto:Cindy.friday@covenantpresby.org).

## Births

Congratulations to Cristina Wilson and Morgan Koukopoulos on the birth of their daughter, Lucia "Lucy" Carmen Bryce Koukopoulos, born September 2; and to Lisa and Jeff Hudson on the birth of their daughter, Isabella "Bella" Grace, born October 31; and to

Erin and William Miller on the birth of their daughter, Clara Comerford Miller, on November 11

## Baptisms

Congratulations to Sarah and Will Gaston who presented their daughter, Jane Larkin Gaston, for the sacrament of baptism on Sunday, October 29.

Congratulations to Sarah and John Gaither who presented their daughter, Hannah Nicole Gaither, for the sacrament of baptism on Sunday, November 26.

## Deaths In The Church

The congregation extends its sincere sympathy and love to Stan and Catherine Bracey on the death of her brother and to Mary Clare on the death of her uncle, Robert (Bob) Newland Styres, Jr., of Lenoir, N.C. on October 29; and to

Jeff and Stacy Shjarback on the death of her mother, Janice Schorner, and to Sebastian and Sullivan on the death of their grandmother; and to

Bart and Jennifer Farrell on the death of her father and to Will, Sophia and Owen on the death of their grandfather, John Harder, Jr., of Cedar Rapids, Iowa on November 7; and to

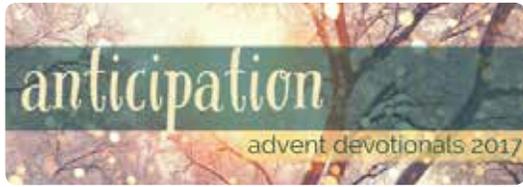
Soraya and Alan Becker on the death of her mother, and to Camille and Walden on the death of their grandmother, Teresinha Quadros Toosi, on November 16, and rejoices with them all in the assurance of the resurrection.

## Wedding

Congratulations to Jessica Saunders and Stephen McNulty who celebrated the occasion of their marriage on Nov. 11

# Advent Devotionals

Series begins via email Dec. 4



Start your day with personal reflections on the Advent journey from members of the Covenant community - including ministers, staff and friends.



Visit [covenantpresby.org](http://covenantpresby.org) to subscribe. You will receive a devotional Mondays to Fridays during Advent, plus Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Here is a sampling of the first devotional from Ben Powell.

Most of us have our pews, don't we? Or at least our quadrant of the sanctuary to which we gravitate, as if with muscle memory.

I've been attuned to congregant seating patterns over the years, and one tendency that I've observed is what I call "book-ending" - the act of sitting at an end of a pew even when the rest of the pew is empty.

At best, it presents a logistical hurdle for others. At worst, it can send a rather uninviting message like, "this pew is taken."

So, during this Advent season, let us suppress our inner book-ender and make room. Make room for the Christ Child in the center of our lives, to be our motivational mooring.

Make room for the immeasurable goodness and grace of Jesus in our heart of hearts to then fuel our hands and tongues. And, perhaps take just a few more steps toward the center of the pew to prepare a warmer place for others amongst us as well.

## Covenant Contacts

Main Office ..... 704-333-9071  
News/Announcements ..... 704-804-7565  
Recreation Wing ..... 704-334-7491  
Preschool ..... 704-333-8658

### Covenant Email Addresses

firstname.lastname@covenantpresby.org

Covenant Web Site: [www.covenantpresby.org](http://www.covenantpresby.org)

Worship Online: [media.covenantpresby.org](http://media.covenantpresby.org)

### Social Media

@covenantpresby

#covenantpresby



1000 East Morehead Street, Charlotte, NC 28204

USPS 005-405 is published monthly by: Covenant Presbyterian Church  
1000 E. Morehead Street, Charlotte, NC 28204

Periodicals postage paid at Charlotte NC POSTMASTER

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PERIODICALS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 005405  
CHARLOTTE, NC  
28204

## Stewardship campaign update

Please make a pledge at [covenantpresby.org/pledge](http://covenantpresby.org/pledge)

Dear Covenant friends,

As of this printing, we are at 60 percent of our pledge goal. We need your help! Here are two possible ways that your pledge could make an impact in 2018:

- Budget cuts have affected our partner schools in Charlotte and Avery County. We could increase funding for after-school care at Highland and help restore tutoring funding at Crossnore in Avery County.
- Our mission partner in Kenya, Renguti School, is doing amazing work with children. We'd like to expand the partnership to include more young students living in extreme poverty.



If you've never pledged before, please prayerfully consider taking action. If you've pledged in the past, know we are grateful and are counting on you again this year.

Please submit a pledge online or during worship (using a printed pew card). By making your pledge now, you enable Covenant to position our ministries for the broadest reach and impact.

Yours in Christ,

Sarah and Will Gaston  
Stewardship Chairs

