



Covenant Connection

March 30, 2020 | Bi-Weekly Newsletter of Covenant Presbyterian Church

Connect *with the* Pastors



While so much of the world and our lives seem to have come to a grinding halt, creeping crawl, or slow walk over these last weeks, the warming weather, blossoms, and budding trees remind us that life goes on. COVID-19 may delay the opening day of baseball season, but it cannot slow the coming of spring in all its glory. It cannot slow our march through these forty days of Lent toward the cross and empty tomb. It cannot nullify the promises of God for all of us, including that promise upon which we rely so strongly in these challenging days: **DO NOT BE AFRAID! I AM WITH YOU!**

Holy Week begins this Sunday, though it will be different from any Holy Week we have experienced in the past. There will be no parade of children waving palm branches down the church aisles, though there may be pajama parades through the halls of your home. We will gather at separate kitchen tables, dining room tables, and coffee tables to break bread and drink a cup in remembrance of Jesus on Maundy Thursday. Alleluias will resound from the walls of our homes instead of the walls of the church on Easter morning (apart from the handful of us who will broadcast the service from the sanctuary on Facebook Live). Our celebrations and remembrances will indeed be different from years past, but the underlying events and meaning remain unchanged and are perhaps even more essential to us in these uncertain times. God still reigns! Death is still defeated! Jesus is crucified, yet risen! Love conquers all! We dare to make those bold affirmations in the face of COVID-19 and all the uncertainties in our day to day lives.

So do not forget these holy days amid these trying days in the coming days! Remember them, Christ who is at the center of them, and the hope we hold because of them. Take time to read the Gospel accounts of Jesus journey through Holy Week and to remember his death and resurrection for you. Take time to worship with us through Facebook Live as we affirm that the church is not bound by the walls of any building. Take time to pray for our community and world as we remember the One who came to save us one and all, the One who is with us today, tomorrow, and always! May the peace of Christ be with us all!

**A Bible Verse to
Think About
Proverbs 21:3**

To do
righteousness
and justice
is more
acceptable to
the LORD than
any sacrifice.

*Please keep in your prayers:
Bill Hanna and family on the death
of his brother,
Mike Hanna, who passed
away on March 11.*

Condolences

Items for the next
newsletter are
due to Martha by
9:00 AM on Friday,
April 10th.



Please email her at:
covenantpcusastaunton@gmail.com

Monday Morning Bible Study



*The Monday Morning Bible
Study will be canceled until
further notice in light of the
covid-19 outbreak.
Please be safe and healthy!*

THESE DAYS

Daily Devotions for Living by Faith

Copies of These Days
(April, May, June edition)
are available at the church
for pick-up. These are a
great resource for a
daily devotional time.

Nursing Nook with Kathy Henderson, RN



Each day, the news about Covid-19 seems more alarming: Death rates are doubling, political and health leaders squabble publicly about a best course of action – and we’ve all been told to go home and wait out this invisible, deadly illness. Dozens of websites offer advice for maintaining emotional equilibrium. Eat well. Exercise. Get plenty of sleep. “Keep things in perspective... get the facts (and) keep connected,” the American Psychological Association advises, offering a link to the CDC’s information page, where we are told to “take breaks from ... news stories (and) social media (but) connect with others.” After reading scores of these lists, it occurred to me that our Covenant family – whose mission is engagement with one another, the community and the Lord – might have pertinent, real-world advice.

I emailed or called several families, asking “how are you coping?” The responses were eloquent, informative, laugh-out-loud funny and very, very helpful. I wish I had space to print them all, but here are a few excerpts:

“Routine is hard for me,” wrote the new-to-homeschooling mother of two young children. “We don’t yet have a... rhythm that works for us ... It’s like a holiday so far (so) I’m relying on (computer) screens far more than I’d like... I’m trying to practice grace with myself.” But, she added, no one seems bored yet, finding fun in home and kitchen projects, writing letters, learning to use google video chat, and participating in a round-robin journal that connects far-flung family members.

Having adolescents in the house full-time is challenging, especially when work-at-home parents and online students are competing for the same bandwidths.

“It’s been an exercise in patience, understanding, perspective and good humor,” one mother wrote of establishing new routines for people not usually at home all day.

“We have scheduled set family times – and it’s mandatory to do them together ... We’re making some unpopular choices, but for the most part (it’s) working and keeping us connected.” More difficult is explaining why we’re all at home and “social distancing” from family and friends. “It’s a balancing act – and a lesson in responsible dissemination of information to your teen. You want them to (have) correct information but you don’t want to feed their terror.” “It really makes me wish they were two years old again and my biggest problem was trying to get through an episode of Teletubbies without gagging.”

One couple, at the young edge of what the CDC calls the “vulnerable elderly” (60+), dodge boredom with date nights (yummy snacks included) and card games usually reserved for vacation. They – and several others – advised video chats with the grandchildren we can’t hug.

One active octogenarian suggested: “Search the church directory for someone you miss and call them. They probably miss you, too,” a sentiment echoed by another member whose calls, emails and texts “lift my spirits as much as it does theirs.”

Within all age groups, Facetime, WhatsApp, Zoom and other video chat applications received high marks for helping friends and family feel engaged. The most succinct advice offered? “It’s OK to feel what you feel... Name those feelings and own them.”

Anyone with more anecdotes/advice to offer, I’d love to hear from you. Call 540-290-6396 or email covenantnurse@gmail.com.

Please be careful about news consumption: There’s a lot of misinformation out there. Helpful, reliable news resources include: CDC.gov, APA.org and Goodnewsnetwork.org.

Spiritual/emotional resources: Covenant’s Church and Covenant’s YOUth Facebook pages. Sunday service is live-streamed and a children’s book is read each week via the church’s video feed. John and Sarah are always available by phone.

Highlights from Session

At a called meeting on Sunday, March 29, the Session took the following actions:

- Cancelled all worship services and programs at the church through April 26 in light of CDC recommendations. Virtual services will continue.
- Approved the rescheduling of two weddings
- Approved virtual communion for virtual worship services
- Approved a refund policy for the preschool and extended a payment due date
- Approved first quarter payment of Outreach funds to agencies serving critical needs during the pandemic (\$3,850)

News from SACRA

SACRA is closed due to concerns of COVID-19 exposure, but is working with Salvation Army to provide rent assistance as it may be needed. SACRA will be open on Wednesdays only to distribute emergency food assistance from 9:00 —11:00 AM on SACRA's front porch. The SACRA office will reopen for normal operations when the CDC, Department of Health, and state leaders indicate it will be safe to do so for our volunteers and clients.

Shelburne Support Project

The Task Force for Children in Poverty established the “Shelburne Support Project” early this month, before schools were closed and families faced greater problems than we’d ever imagined ... and through your giving our Covenant family has been a wonderful help to so many children & their families!

The project is still underway, and with the changes brought by the pandemic it is expanding to reach students throughout Staunton schools. Meals are now being delivered to drop-off points throughout the city, which will continue for the foreseeable future . . . and the ‘care packages’ we are helping make possible are still being assembled & distributed.

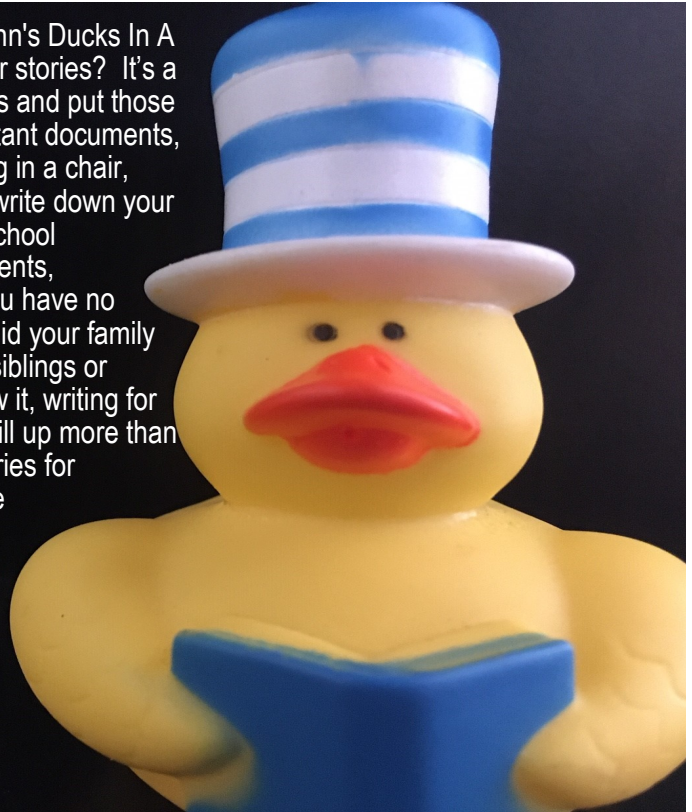
We continue to be in touch with the organizers in the school division, and our original ‘shopping list’ remains nearly the same: hygiene items like deodorant, shampoo, washcloths, snacks like granola bars, easy-to-prepare items like peanut butter and jelly, soup, pasta, and now household items like paper towels and toilet paper are needed. They are already supplying items to two families that are self-quarantined, and we know that number will grow.

Labeled boxes are located in the outer entrance area by the church office, and your contributions continue to be delivered to the school each week. Please join us in “being a blessing” to our young neighbors in need. Thank you!

Residents of Brightview enjoying our first live stream worship.



Meet Sam the Storyteller Duck (from Mary Ann's Ducks In A Row). Have others in your family written their stories? It's a good time to dig through the boxes or shelves and put those stories in one place. If you run across important documents, keep them together, too. While you're resting in a chair, keep a notebook (or computer) nearby and write down your own memories. What was your first day of school like? What do you remember about your parents, grandparents, and great grandparents? If you have no memories of them, tell why that was. What did your family do together? You might have to check with siblings or cousins to get more details. Before you know it, writing for 5-10 minutes several times a week, you will fill up more than one notebook (or a folder) with priceless stories for your family. The younger people may not be enthralled with them now, but when you are gone, they will cherish them. I guarantee your experiences of growing up will be different than theirs!



Presbyterian Women



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Lent is nearly over but it is not too late to give it some thought. Lent, traditionally a time of fasting, is a season of preparation for the celebration of Easter. It is a time of prayer and self-reflection to deal with our shortcomings that get in the way of our relationship with God, others and ourselves. Many Christians engage in 'giving something up' for Lent.

In this particular Lenten season, we have been forced to 'give up' social interaction. As an extrovert, I can assure you that I would sooner have given up chocolate. The batteries of my soul require social interaction to recharge. To say that I look forward to the resumption of social interaction is an understatement!

However, Lent - this time for 'giving up' something - is a time of prayer and self-reflection. It is a time of preparation for change. When this Lenten season, this season of enforced isolation is over, we will be changed.

- We will hug one another more closely and longer.
- We will return to worship in our sanctuary with smiles and tears of joy.
- We will wash our hands for 20 seconds in warm water for the rest of our lives.
- We will have thought about what believing God means.
- We will celebrate! We will celebrate!

There's a Veggie Tales song that is probably familiar to you. It's called "God is Bigger than the Boogie Man." The chorus is:

God is bigger than the boogie man.
He's bigger than Godzilla, or the
monsters on TV.

Oh, God is bigger than the boogie man.
And He's watching out for you and me.

Novel Covid-19 virus is today's boogie man, it scares us, and it isolates us. But it will not last forever and God is, indeed, 'watching out for you and me.' We will get through this because God is with us. From a favorite hymn:

Be still my soul,
Thy God doth undertake
To guide the future
As he has the past.
Thy hope, thy confidence
Let nothing shake.
All now mysterious
Shall be bright at last.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>5 PALM SUNDAY 10:30 AM Live Stream Worship Service</p>	<p>30 Covenant Connection Published</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>April 1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>12 EASTER 10:30 AM Live Stream Worship Service</p>	<p>13 Covenant Connection Published</p>	<p>14 7:30 PM Stewardship & Finance Team</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16 8:30 AM Executive Team</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>
				<p>9 MAUNDY THURSDAY 7:00 PM Live Stream Worship Service</p>	<p>10 9:00AM Items due for Newsletter</p>	<p>11</p>

MARCH - APRIL 2020



Children's Corner

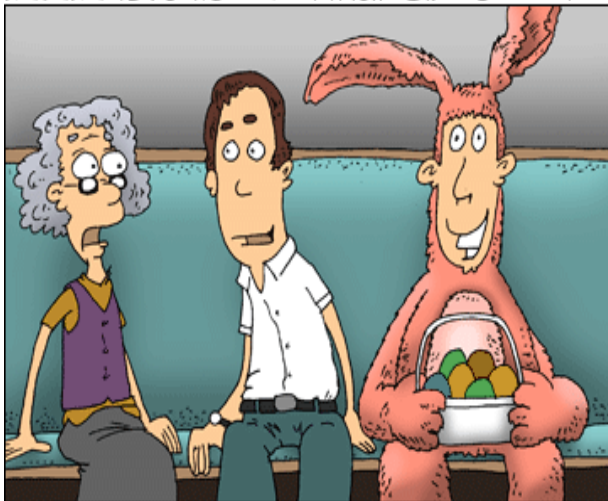




NURSERY WORKERS NEEDED WHEN SERVICES RESUME

The Nursery Team is looking for adults and families who would enjoy playing with our youngest members during the 10:30 AM service. Volunteers are needed the first Sunday of the month. If you would like to join the fun, please contact Susie Oberg

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04-22-2011

YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE HIM ... HE'S
NEW TO THE FAITH AND THIS IS HIS
FIRST EASTER

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COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Friday 8:15AM-12:15PM



MINISTERIAL & PROGRAM STAFF

John C. Peterson

Pastor

Sarah Wolf

Associate Pastor

Laura Lawson

Director of Youth Ministries

Jeffrey Ryman

Minister of Music

Christopher Wszalek

Organist

Lou Dolive

Handbell Director

Joan Swift

Director of Children's Music

Mitzi White

Developmental Preschool Director

Martha Pierce

Administrative Assistant

Paul Sorrell

Treasurer

Kathy Henderson

Covenant Nurse

Cleo Holly

Custodian

The Mission of Covenant Presbyterian Church is Striving to be Faithful Disciples of Christ: Worshiping with Joy, Growing in Faith, Serving in Love.

Covenant Connection is a publication of
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COVENANT



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*Striving to be Faithful Disciples of Christ:
Worshiping with Joy, Growing in Faith, Serving in Love*

We're on the web!
covenantpresstaunton.org

Holy Week - Services



PALM SUNDAY
APRIL 5, 2020

10:30 AM

Live Stream Worship Service



MAUNDY THURSDAY
APRIL 9, 2020

7:00 PM

Live Stream Worship Service



EASTER SUNDAY
APRIL 12, 2020

10:30 AM

Live Stream Worship Service

WATCH LIVE STREAM WORSHIP AT:

www.facebook.com/pg/Covenant-Presbyterian-Church-163891301309/videos/