



New Covenant Connection
 New Covenant Presbyterian Church
www.newcov-church.org (302)378-4446



2025

A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR ..1
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Dear friends,

With all the construction of homes and a shopping area all around our church, how could we NOT be considering **“How to Be Hospitable and Loving to Our New Neighbors.”** I don’t think any of us consciously chooses to “not love” our neighbors, but I do think we allow it to happen by not consciously choosing to love them in a **PROACTIVE and INTENTIONAL WAYS**. So, I am hoping that each of us will use these characteristics to evaluate our routines and habits in ways that allow us to be more welcoming to potential new friends and neighbors.

I often read books and share my thoughts with you about making room for neighbors and the **importance of cultivating community**. I hope that you notice the word **cultivate**. It implies activity on our part - activity which doesn’t happen all by itself. It’s simply a reality that most of us don’t know the people who live near us, like we used to when we all hung out on our front porches or worked in a community garden. Now we have to make **room in our hearts and schedules** to be with our neighbors.



~continued~



A Note From Our Pastor (Cont.)



And with all the changes in our world, too often we hold back from engaging with others due to all the things that divide us, because we don't want to stir the waters. Unfortunately, with the current state of the world, we do need to be careful not to alienate ourselves from others to keep the peace. But I have to ask: **Is keeping the peace by holding back from engaging with others really worth missing out on cultivating real deep and meaningful relationships that can truly enhance your life?** Personally, my answer is **NO**, and I hope that you will reconsider your own actions that limit the enrichment of your life.

I recently read a story entitled *Only a Stranger Once.* It spoke of a couple who was hurriedly leaving the grocery store when they noticed an elderly gentleman looking confused. Most of us probably see people like this on a fairly regular basis, but how many of us stop to help? This gentleman had forgotten where he parked his car, and how many of us have experienced this same thing? In any case, this couple helped this stranger locate his car and he warmly thanked them.



As this couple started to walk away, the man said, "Wait a minute," as he reached in his pocket. The couple, thinking he wanted to give them some money, insisted that this wasn't necessary. But the man replied, "It's only a thank-you card. My name is on it so you can know the name of the person you helped today." The couple graciously took the card and said goodbye. The card indeed had the man's name and address written on the outside of the envelope, and inside, there was a small blessing or gift - enough for 2 cups of coffee.


Dear friends, how often do we go through the motions of our lives, occasionally taking the time to help strangers, or to be helped by one, without ever truly investing the time to get to know each other, thus enriching both of our lives? Some of us have been taught to refuse thank you gifts while others believe **When someone offers you a gift, don't say no. Take it and let them bless you!**

When we reflect on the fact that our God knows us all by name and even numbers the hairs on our heads, why don't we take more time to get to know, appreciate and love one another? I hope you will join me in slowing down and taking more time to smell the roses along your life's journey—and chief among them is the beauty that comes our way in the blessing of friends and neighbors. Let's be intentional in working to discover more ways to prioritize relationships in our lives! **Your partner in ministry,**



Carol



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3  Our Daily Bread	4
5	6 Deacons' Mtg@ 10	7	8	9	10	11
12 Trustee Mtg- 11:30	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 Session Mtg 1pm	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

PLEASE NOTE TIME & DATE CHANGES: DEACONS NOW MEET ON THE MONDAY FOLLOWING THE 1ST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH AT 10 AM (with some exceptions); TRUSTEES CONTINUE ON THE 2ND SUNDAY FOLLOWING WORSHIP; SESSION NOW MEETS ON THE WEDNESDAY FOLLOWING THE 3RD SUNDAY AT 1 PM (with some exceptions)
New church office hours: Tuesday and Wednesday 10am to 3pm

EVERY SUNDAY - WORSHIP AT 10 AM; FELLOWSHIP 11AM; CHRIST. ED - SUNDAY(8:30 AM) AND TUESDAY (10:30 AM)

- 1/1 **New Year's Day**
- Don Cooke—Birthday**
- 1/3 **Our Daily Bread**
- 1/5 **2nd Sunday of Christmas & Communion**
- 1/6 **Deacon's Meeting (10 am)**
- 1/6 **Epiphany of the Lord**
- 1/12 **Baptism of the Lord**
- Trustee Meeting (11:30 am)**
- Marcy Murphy—Birthday**
- 1/14 **Dorothy Burkley—Birthday**
- 1/16 **Ryan Emerick— Birthday**
- Alice Megonigal—Birthday**

- 1/16 **Ethan Stoecker—Birthday**
- 1/18 **Ecumenical Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins**
- 1/19 **2nd Sunday after Epiphany**
- 1/21 **George Wright—Birthday**
- 1/22 **Session Meeting (1 pm)**
- 1/26 **3rd Sunday after Epiphany**
- Hazel Emerick—Birthday**



Reports from the Clerk and Trustees

CLERK'S REPORT

The Session's regular Stated meeting was held on Wednesday December 18th.
Approved to send \$600 , designated as Per Capita, to NC Presbytery (2024).
Approved the 2025 Budget as presented by the Trustees.
Approved hiring Pat Wright as new Office Admin.(6 hrs/wk, 50 weeks/yr (2025).
Elected Carol L. McBride as Treasurer for 2025.
Elected Pat Wright as Clerk of Session for 2025.
Approved the new Terms of Call for Pastor Carol for 2025.

The Calendar for the Presbytery meetings for 2025 is as follows:
Sat. Jan. 4th (in person) Moderators Installation and Lunch, Chestertown
Fri. Feb. 28–Sat. Mar. 1: (in person) Bay Retreat, Hyatt Place, Dewey Beach, DE
Sat. May 17th Ocean City , MD (Hybrid)
Sat. Sep. 20 TBD (Hybrid)
Tue. Dec. 2 (via Zoom only)

Membership remains at 50.

Yours in Christ,

Pat Wright, Clerk

TRUSTEE REPORT:

The Trustee Meetings are open to all and is normally scheduled each month on the 2nd Sunday after Church Service. Our next Trustee Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, 12 Jan 2025.

We have purchased a NEW SINGLE LARGE screen for our sanctuary to be used in lieu of the 4 smaller screens, which will be installed after the Christmas season. This should allow us to read the words more clearly.

The one heater/AC in the Fellowship Room will be completely insulated and closed off after another heavy rain. We may wait until the spring of 2025 to complete this.



As you can see, we added additional Christmas Decorations to the outside of our church property, which we plan to continue to use in upcoming years. We have a small nativity near the new sign and a LED Christmas tree near the old sign.



We are looking at the extended use of the mic for our Children's Message because members on line (ZOOM) cannot hear what is being said. This part of our message needs to be available to all people who are on line.

The completion of our new entrance to our church is a work in progress.

Your Friendly Trustees,

Al Grimminger, Bill Shields, & Bob Megonigal

Mission Report

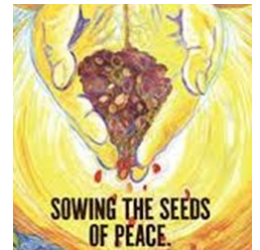
Our Daily Bread: We served 160 meals at our First Friday meal in December. In addition to providing 7 hot meals each week, the Our Daily Bread Dining Room, maintains a Community refrigerator and freezer. These are stocked with donated food, food rescued from local stores and restaurants and any extra meals that are left over from the meal service. The community is welcome to take what they need, when they need it, 24/7. ODB is there to serve anyone who is hungry. There are no questions and no means test. ODB is a vital part of our Matthew 25 Mission.



Neighborhood House: In 2024 we donated 54 bags of non-perishable foods. Neighborhood House Inc, is a multi-purpose, non-profit community center founded in 1927. The facility in Middletown was opened in 1997. The agency is a United Way Partner and a National Mission Institution of United Women of Faith. On a foundation of Christian principles, Neighborhood House provides transformational programs that impact low to moderate income individuals, families and communities. Their programs include the following: Emergency food closet, financial assistance/leveraging funds for utilities, rent, and heat; Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets, budget management and nutrition education, Send-a-kid-to-camp program, a clothing closet, book bags with school supplies, Adopt-a-Family Christmas program and many more services. The Housing Counseling program assists individuals and families in all phases of housing including rental and purchase.



Peace and Global Witness Special Offering: In the month of October, we collected \$350 to go towards this important offering. 25% stays with our congregation to use for local ways to witness to the love and mercy of God.



Bundle Up Coat Drive Winter Warmth for Others: Thank you to everyone that donated items for the Bundle Up Coat Drive. We teamed up with the Megan Aitken Team of Keller Williams and we collected 21 coats, 4 scarves, 11 hats or headbands, and 6 pair of gloves/mittens. It's nice to know that many local people will have warm winter clothing as we go into winter. We are blessed to be a blessing to others!

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Mission Cont'd & Christian Education

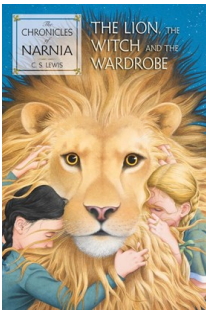
Operation Christmas Child: On December 4th Pam Leeson was able to go to the Baltimore Processing Center to help with packing shoeboxes for shipping. That day the boxes were being shipped to Tanzania. Every box was opened and inspected. We had to remove bars of soap because that country wouldn't let them through customs if there was soap in them. Next year that will be standard for all boxes. Apparently the scent from the soap may throw off the possibility of there being drugs in the box. We had processed 27,000 boxes by 2pm when I left. What an amazing thing to participate in! So many children and their families will learn about Jesus through these shoeboxes! I feel blessed to have been able to take part in this project. Praise God!



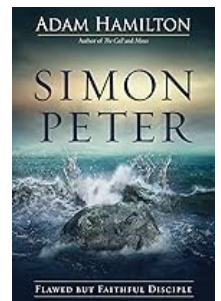
Christmas Joy Offering: This Special Offering is collected during December and supports the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions which assists past and present church workers in times of need and also supports Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. There are 3 such institutions in the USA; Menaul School in Albuquerque, NM, The Presbyterian Pan American School in Kingsville, TX and Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, AL.

Pat Wright, Mission Elder

Christian Education Classes



We thoroughly enjoyed our Advent Study of C.S. Lewis *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, led by Pat Wright and Jane Adams, during December. It was really interesting to view this wonderful story written for children from an adult point of view. Much joy and many insights were shared by one and all. In January, we plan on studying Adam Hamilton's *Simon Peter, a Flawed But Faithful Disciple*. Let Jane know if you are interested in participating.



Skip Leeson continues teaching the Bethel Bible Study on Sundays after Fellowship Time (around 11:45 a.m.). The class began in late September and continues, with occasional breaks, throughout the year. This study is a chronological study of the Bible and it requires some time each week devoted to reading and studying the materials.



Come one and all to learn more about God's Word. All are invited to participate. If you are interested, please contact Skip so he can make sure everyone will have a book.

**Jane Adams,
Christian Education Elder**

Personnel Report



CHRISTMAS LOVE OFFERING FOR OUR NCPC STAFF

Thanks to the congregation for showing your love and support of our staff! We were able to collect money to share with them as a Christmas Love Offering. We may be a small congregation, but we have BIG hearts and we love and appreciate the staff we are blessed to have.

We also wanted to let you know about a change in our staff beginning this month. We are saying goodbye to Karen Montazella, our Office Administrator. As you may know, Pat Wright, who serves as an elder on Session and is our Clerk of Session, has been volunteering in the church office for a while now, typically on Wednesdays. Her niece, Karen, was hired this year as a replacement for Georgia Mackay when she left her position. Karen's responsibilities and commute time for her other job are increasing and so she decided that it would be best for her to resign her position at NCPC. Since she, her mom (Barbara Montazella), and Pat all live together in Bayberry, she spoke with Pat about this and Pat offered to replace her.



So, we thank Karen for her service and wish her well in her endeavors, and we officially welcome Pat as our new Office Administrator! It is a natural fit since Pat has already been volunteering to help out with office work and, this month, Karen graciously taught her how to do the worship slides. Even though it is only a 6 hour/per week job (mostly Tuesdays and Wednesdays 10-3), the work she has done, and will continue to do, for the church will be invaluable. Isn't it amazing how God provides!?! Thank you Karen and welcome Pat!

Pam Leeson,
Elder for Personnel

MAY WE ALL BE PROUD
OF THE WORK WE DO,
THE PERSONS WE ARE,
AND THE DIFFERENCE WE
MAKE.

Ministry of Fellowship

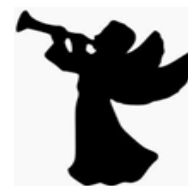
DECEMBER :

12/8 at 5 pm

Dinner at the Inn Drama Theater



On December 8th, our church's Drama Troupe put on our Christmas Dinner Theater - *Dinner at the Inn*. We had a total of 45 people attend and we had our nativity play. Thank you to all who participated and to all who cooked or baked for this fun event. Merry Christmas to one and all!



12/27 from 7-9 pm **Shields' Christmas Open House**

Come one and all to an Open House at the home of Bill and Cheryl Shields on Friday, 12/27. Lots of fun to be had. Bring some finger foods and cookies and some Christmas Cheer!

JANUARY **1/19 at 5 pm** **Chili Cookoff**

On Sunday, 1/19, we will have our Chili Cook Off! Once again, in our fellowship room we will join together to feast on chili and enjoy one another's company. Last year, we actually had 5 participants, and even voted on the best cornbread. Please let Cheryl Shields know if you are interested in entering a chili. A signup sheet will come shortly after Christmas. We may even show some old-time westerns after dinner.



Stewardship & Finance



Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on." Mk. 12:41-44

It is not good manners to watch what other people put in the offering plate, but in this Scripture passage, Jesus and his disciples seem to be doing just that. On this occasion, they are hanging around the temple, watching people place their offerings in the temple treasury box and commenting on the size of their gifts.

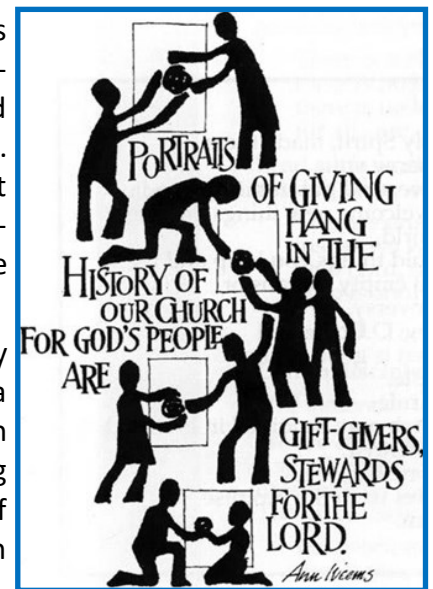
There are two ways to give at the temple: for ordinary gifts, there were big boxes with trumpet-shaped funnels for placing coins. Extremely valuable gifts would be brought right up to the doors of the treasury. Most people would have kept their eyes on the people who drove up in their limos, got out with their entourage to deliver gifts to the treasury, and then took their parade out of there. But we know, Jesus was not a big fan of religious shows.

Instead, Jesus notices the slight figure, identified as a widow by her threadbare dress, as she slips up to one of the boxes and drops in a few coins. Then Jesus delivers God's assessment of the various gifts: "She has given of all that she has, even her very life." To Jesus, the poor widow is the star of the giving parade at the temple.

There may be conflicted feelings by Jesus' comment. For churches and other nonprofits, not all donors are created equal. If an organization has to raise \$100,000 to meet its budget, the man or woman who can write a check for half that amount without batting an eye is a very important person. If someone like Bill Gates comes calling, it makes sense to roll out the red carpet. The bottom line counts. So even Christian organizations throw dinners limited to persons who give over a certain amount. We put names of major donors on college buildings and church education wings. We wine and dine those who give big money. That is just the way it works.

Why does Jesus suggest that God sees things differently than we do? Let us remember that Jesus stands in a respected religious tradition that acknowledges that God has different standards for evaluation than we do. There is an old Jewish story about a priest who scorns a woman's offering of a handful of flour. After all, what can God possibly want with just a handful of flour? You cannot make even a decent cookie out of that much flour (especially without the chocolate chips)! Yet, in a dream that night, the priest receives a stinging rebuke from God: "Despise her not; it is a though she offered her life."

For most of us, there is comfort in Jesus' words. That is because in worldly terms, most of us are scrawny givers. Will any of us see our name listed as a "platinum donor?" I know, I never will. God's inclination to assess a gift as an expression of our commitment, and to relate it to our resources in encouraging to those who may feel they have little to offer. Jesus reminds us that the gift of a poor person who gives \$5 is much more substantial in spiritual terms than that of a wealthy person who gives \$5,000.



Both the Jewish story about the handful of flour and Jesus' story about the widow at the temple treasury end with nearly identical statements about giving one's life. Coming from Jesus – who was soon to give his life as a gift for all of us – that was high praise. Jesus surely was a model of extravagant giving!

Barbara Bookhart,
Elder for Finance & Stewardship

Worship

THE ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SEASONS WERE ENJOYED BY ALL!

Many thanks to all who helped make our Advent and Christmas seasons beautiful and enjoyed. Thanks to those who decorated our sanctuary and Fellowship Building, our Advent Wreath speakers and candle-lighters, to our Lay Leaders, bell ringers, drama folk. You all helped to touch our hearts and minds as we prepared for the birth of Christ and then welcomed him anew.

We enjoyed a wonderful Candlelight and Communion Service of Lessons and Carols service on Christmas Eve. with communion and the candle lighting closing.

On January 5th, we will plan on observing the Lord's Supper and please join your friends to help [un-decorate our sanctuary and Fellowship Building after worship.](#) Thanks for your help!



JANUARY IS FULL OF RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE

Epiphany JAN. 6TH

Epiphany is the celebration of God's self-revelation to the world in Jesus Christ. The word "epiphany" means "appearance" or "manifestation" of God and has roots in the word for sunrise or dawn. In particular, we celebrate the revelation of God's promise and purpose to the nations of the world, as the magi came from the East to worship to the Christ child, and God's covenant of grace is extended to all who believe the good news of Christ Jesus. The symbolism of light is important: not only because of the star that guided the magi, but as it relates to the bright dawning of God's self-revelation in Christ.

Baptism of the Lord Sunday – JAN. 12TH

At the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus presents himself to John to be baptized in the Jordan. The heavens open, the Holy Spirit descends as a dove and we hear the voice of God: "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (see Psalm 2:7).

At this festival of the Christian year, we not only remember Jesus' baptism, but we celebrate our own: the baptism we share with Christ. Accordingly, this Sunday is an appropriate time to celebrate the sacrament of baptism or the reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant. It also foreshadows the season of Lent, as Jesus was immediately driven into the wilderness for 40 days after his own Baptism.



Outreach

NEWNESS

We begin a new year, with anticipation of new works of outreach and mission. Last month, we celebrated the birth of the newborn King. In a few months, we will have the ultimate celebration of our risen Savior and the gift of redemption.



I worked with a man, Larry, to serve worship services in a Juvenile Hall in the San Mateo area. He was from the Tenderloin, a dangerous area of San Francisco. Larry served time in prison. It was there that he met Jesus and accepted him as Lord and Savior. His favorite scripture verse was, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away, see everything has become new". Larry experienced newness in Christ. Indeed, we all know newness in Christ on a continuing basis.

The year 2025 will surround us, literally, with new homes and retail stores. We want to welcome new neighbors of all ages. As we meet and greet new folks, we can remember that Jesus gave us a new commandment. He said, *I give you a new commandment, that you love one another*. We will need to get to know our new neighbors by asking open ended questions and to learn more about them and build a connection. Your session members have attended *Vital Congregations* meetings for over a year. We were asked to reach out to members of our community and do "neighbor interviews". We asked questions like; *What brought you to this community? What are you passionate about? What would you change about this community? How would you describe your spiritual life?* We found we did learn to get to know our neighbors as we did the interviews. As we all reach out to neighbors in this new year, we can listen and respond by showing Christ's love, and so, we pray that they will perceive us as "good neighbors."



We will continue to offer first time visitors a loaf of bread in a bag that contains church information. Inviting newcomers to Fellowship Hour offers a time to get to know them. Sharing our mission, outreach and Christian Education goals is another way to help newcomers get to now what we are about.

Together We Grow and Meet Needs,
Beverly Cook, Outreach Elder

Frog Corner

F.R.O.G. CORNER: *Forever Rely on God*

Don't forget the meaning behind the acronym **RIBBIT**:
Revere, **I**nvoke, **B**less, **I**nspire, and **T**rust in the Lord.



RECALL NOTICE:

The Maker of all human beings (God) is recalling all units manufactured, regardless of make or model, due to a serious defect in the primary and central component of the heart. This is due to a malfunction in the original prototype units' code named Adam and Eve, resulting in the reproduction of the same defect in all subsequent units. This defect has been technically named "Subsequential Internal Non-Morality" or more commonly known as **S.I.N.**

Some of the symptoms include: (1) Loss of direction, (2) Foul vocal emissions (3) Amnesia of origin (4) Lack of peace and joy (5) Selfish or violent behavior (6) Depression or confusion in the mental component (7) Fearfulness (8) Idolatry (9) Rebellion.

The Manufacturer, who is neither liable nor at fault for this defect, is providing factory-authorized repair and service free of charge to correct this defect. The Repair Technician, Jesus, has most generously offered to bear the entire burden of the staggering cost of these repairs. There is no additional fee required. The number to call for repair in all areas is: **P-R-A-Y-E-R**. Once connected, please upload your burden of **SIN** through the **REPENTANCE** procedure. Next, download **ATONEMENT** from the Repair Technician, Jesus, into the heart component. No matter how big or small the SIN defect is, Jesus will replace it with: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control. Please see the Operating Manual, the **B.I.B.L.E.** (Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth) for further details on the use of these fixes.

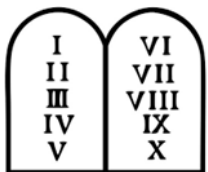
WARNING: Continuing to operate the human being unit without correction voids any manufacturer warranties, exposing the unit to dangers and problems too numerous to list and will result in the human unit being permanently impounded. For free emergency service, call onn Jesus.

DANGER: The human being units not responding to this recall action will have to be scraped in the furnace. The SIN defect will not be permitted to enter Heaven so as to prevent contamination of that facility.

Thank you for your attention,

GOD

P.S. Please assist where possible by notifying others of this important recall notice, and you may contact the Father any time by **KNEE MAIL**.



Applying the 10 Commandments

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six-year-olds. After explaining the commandment to 'Honor thy father and thy mother,' the teacher asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?" Without missing a beat, one little boy answered, "Thou shall not kill."

Reading Signs

Two pastors are standing together by the road, holding up a sign that reads, "Turn back! The end is near!" A man driving by reads their sign and yells, "Go away, you religious nuts! Don't shove that down my throat!" Minutes later, the pastors hear a loud splash. One of them turns to the other and says, "Maybe we should change the sign to say, 'Warning, Bridge Out Ahead'."

