



# THE NEW COVENANT CONNECTION

New Covenant Presbyterian Church



Dear friends,

You have heard several of us say that our congregation is fully participating in Vital Congregations Initiative designed by our denomination and offered by our presbytery. Even some of us on the Session aren't completely sure what it is all about but I feel the need to keep the congregation informed as much as possible.

So, my article this month is about the **Vision Statement for Vital Congregations**. Here are 4 of the most basic questions:

**Question 1:** What is this initiative?

**Answer:** It hopes to be the beginning of intentional, authentic relationships between the PCUSA Mission Agency and mid council leaders and pastors to:

- Come together as the people of God
- Pray: Re-turn to faithfulness in God
- Inspire openness to the Holy Spirit's transformation/change
- Honestly assess, discern and act
- Resource, equip and support leaders and pastors
- Practice missional evangelism and faithful discipleship
- Equip vital congregations and develop a praxis of sustainability and ongoing assessment
- Capture congregational stories and develop new measurements of vitality

**Question 2:** What it is **NOT**:

- Answer:** It is not:
- A universal program instructing churches and assuring vitality and sustainable life
  - Another plan that promises an immediate fix

~ continued ~



**JULY 2023**

**A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR.. 1**

**CALENDAR.....3**

**(EVENTS, BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES)**

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### Question 2 Answers (continued):

- A guarantee of revitalization for every congregation
- An attempt for the PCUSA to tell churches what to do
- An institutional survival guide for membership, numbers and buildings
- An encouragement to tweak, yet remain the same
- A return to glory days gone by, nor a guidebook on calling the young pastor

### Question 3: What is the basic belief or premise behind this initiative?

**Answer:** There is more than 1 response to this -

- This is a necessary re-turn to God and re-forming of God's people
- This is a crucial time of awakening throughout our communities, nation & the world
- The Holy Spirit's power is changing, re-forming, revitalizing the Church
- This is necessary to rediscover faithful discipleship in a 21st century context
- God is calling the Church to transform and transcend cultures and contexts
- We must move from inward institutions to neighborhood relationships and mission



### Question 4: What are the basic values held firm in this initiative?

**Answer:** They are:

- Courage, conviction, and commitment to faithful discipleship
- Prayerful discernment
- Reliance upon Scripture
- Persistence - emboldened/enacted faith
- Honest assessment
- Resilience
- Intentional pursuits of reconciliation
- Hopefulness in change



Friends, this is where your leaders are putting their time, energy and prayer as we work alongside our facilitator to discern where God is leading us. We are always open to conversation as we move along this new path and your input is valued.

Your partner in ministry,

*Carol*





# JULY 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 COMMUNION & SPECIAL COMMUNION OFFERING NO DEACON MTG	3	4	5	6	7 Our Daily Bread	8
9 Congregational Mtg—end of worship Trustee Meeting 11:30 Vital Congregations Meeting 5	10	11	12	13	14	15 Garden Party at the Shields 4:30
16 Session Meeting Cancelled	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 / 30	24 / 31	25	26	27	28	29

## EVERY SUNDAY—WORSHIP AT 10 AM FOLLOWED BY FELLOWSHIP

**7/2 NO Deacons' Meeting**  
 7/4 Scott Burkley's birthday  
 Richard Shrout's birthday  
 7/7 1st Friday @ Our Daily Bread  
**7/9 Congregational Meeting**  
 Trustee Meeting  
 Vital Congregations' Meeting  
 Christina Schafer's birthday  
 7/14 Pam & Skip Leeson's anniversary  
**7/16 NO Session Meeting**

7/21 Ben Urban's birthday  
 7/24 Georgia Mackay's birthday  
 7/25 Judy Cooke's birthday  
 7/26 Tom Kimble's birthday  
 7/28 Carolyn & Paul Stoecker's anniversary

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AT END OF WORSHIP ON 7/9 TO ELECT AN OFFICER**

**CHOIRS ON SUMMER BREAK**

**CE CLASSES AT 8:30 ON SUNDAYS -**

7/9, 7/16, 8/13 & 20

# Fellowship

**JUNE**

**ANNUAL NCPC PIGNIC ON JUNE 18TH**

We had our annual Pignic on June 18.



The weather was beautiful, nice and cool. Great food was supplied by many attendees.

Thanks to Richard Strout and Jay Fisher for cooking up our hamburgers and hotdogs. We had about 30 people who attended. It was a time for fellowship with friends and family. As Porky the Pig would say, "That's all folks!"

**JULY**

**ANNUAL GARDEN PARTY**

**JULY 15TH AT 4:30 PM**

The Shields will host their annual Garden Party on the 15th and ALL are invited. Please feel free to bring a side or dessert to share.

Please bring a lawn chair and good cool weather. If you have a pop-up tent that you can lend, please let Cheryl know. Also, please sign up at church so we can get a count of who will be attending.

Thank you, Cheryl and Bill Shields

302-602-1638



# Worship & Outreach

## COMMUNION—THE LORD'S SUPPER—HOW DO WE RECEIVE IT?



Last month, we let you know about our new method of receiving the Sacrament of Communion. Our current method of distributing the sacramental elements is **INTINCTION**.

Each person is invited to come forward to receive a piece of bread and dip it in the juice. Both the pastor and lay leader will ensure safety by sanitizing their hands prior to distribution.

Of course, since this is a new procedure, it will involve some direction so that we can all process and recess in an orderly fashion, but there is no doubt that it can be done. Please be patient with us as we all adjust. This new method will allow ALL of us to receive the elements as we actively participate in receiving it from God.



## OUTREACH TO OUR COMMUNITY

Our committee of 3 continues to work on becoming a truly welcoming church. The Session discussed the idea of

having a FOOD TRUCK in our parking lot as a way of inviting people to get to know us and how much we care about them. We have no details yet but stay tuned. We may need some help and since we know how great YOU are at being friendly, we know that we can count on you!



# Clerk's Report

The Session's regular Stated meeting was held on June 18<sup>th</sup>.

Our Vital Congregations' meeting was held on June 4<sup>th</sup>. Our focus was on COURAGE. We reflected on what our strengths are and we were reminded that we see ourselves as the "just in time" church, a church that sees itself as a Family Church that does not give up. When faced with an obstacle we find a way to alter course/pivot to get the job done. This is our "Church SUPERPOWER". We viewed a video on Kitchen Nightmares where the menu of choices was too long and then were asked "What can we do to share our courage/strengths with others? Who are we going forward? Our next meeting, July 9<sup>th</sup>, we will focus on VALUES and will look at our budget to see if it reflects our values.

We approved the use of our facilities by the Lees who have a vision for beginning a Korean congregation in Middletown. May we all support them with our prayers!

Please read about our **NEW SPECIAL OFFERING TO COVER THE COST OF FOOD** for Our Daily Bread in the Mission Report.

Our recurrent prayer: (John 14:27)

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.

I do not give to you as the world gives.

Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

On Sunday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, right after the morning Worship Service, a Congregational Meeting was held to elect the members of the 2023 Nominating Committee. The slate was unanimously approved and consisted of: Jane Adams (Elder) Chair; Cheryl Shields (Deacon); Al Grimminger (Trustee); Tom Kimble and Ken Hudson (At-large members )

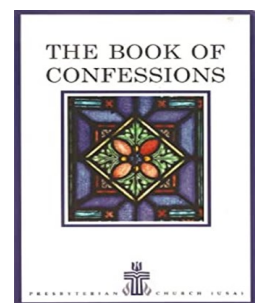
The committee will begin the process of selecting the new slate of officers for the Class of 2026 and a replacement for Fred Noll (Class of 2023), who resigned his position on the Board of Trustees.

The Session voted to cancel their regular Stated meeting for July due to summer breaks and vacations. Next Stated meeting of the Session will be held on August 20<sup>th</sup> following the Sunday Worship Service.

Yours in Christ,

*Pat Wright*

Clerk of Session



# Christian Educ. & Deacon Reports

## Regular Christian Education Classes On a Summer Break BUT

### That Is NO Reason to Stop Learning and Growing

Typically, in the summer months, our regular classes take a break. But this summer we were approached with a new opportunity:



Cheryl Shields is offering to lead a class based on *Prophecy Watcher* videos. This series offers a variety of presenters such as Gary Stearman, Mondo Gonzales and Brandon Holthaus. They explore current events and relate them to Biblical Prophecy.

The presenters weave scripture into their talks and these videos can be found on their official YouTube channel – Prophecy Watchers. These leaders have an important message to share about the plans and purpose of their organization. They try to provide a message of hope and encouragement, grounded in the soon return of Jesus Christ.

This class will be offered on Sunday mornings from 8:30 - 9:40 AM. The dates are: July 9 & 16 and August 13 & 20. Please let Cheryl know if you are interested.



Your deacons work diligently to ensure that all are cared for and that we offer fellowship opportunities to allow this portion of the Body of Christ to know and appreciate one another better. If you have any suggestions, we are always open to hear them. We are hoping to make some visits to our homebound members soon. Never doubt that we hold each of you in our hearts!



# Mission Report

**Our Daily Bread:** We served 122 meals on First Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The cost of providing 120 -130 meals each month to this very important mission in our community has become more than can be handled by “in kind” donations only and so the Session presents the congregation with a request (and opportunity), to assist the mission team with some financial support.

New Covenant provides 1 meal on the first Friday of each month. The cost of the meal, which consists of a grilled ham and cheese sandwich, pasta salad (in the summer) or soup (in the late fall and winter) and a small bag of potato chips or raw vegetables, is about \$130-150 each month. We do not have these funds available in the regular budget and so I asked the Session for some guidance. We decided to have a **special collection each month, on Communion Sunday, for the Our Daily Bread/First Friday meal mission. This request was approved at the June Session meeting.**

We will have a BREADBOX located at the back of the sanctuary for this special collection. Thank you for whatever you are able to give.

**Neighborhood House:** We continue our regular donations of non perishable food items to the community organization that services the Mid-

NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE



NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

dletown-Odesa-Townsend area. Friends, we may be small but we are mighty. In the first 6 months of 2023 (January-June) our congregation has contributed the following items to Neighborhood House:

26 grocery bags of non-perishable canned and packaged goods, 24 packages of Hot Dogs, 1 Case of Ramen Noodles, 1 large ziploc bag of individual toiletry items (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, creams, shavers, shaving cream etc.) You, the congregation, continue to share your blessings with the community and remind us all of what being a

Matthew 25 Congregation really means.

**Mission:** Nancy and Paul arrived home safely from their mission to Kenya. From all accounts so far, it was a great success and they have been requested to return again next year. God Bless you both and we hope to entice them to do a presentation to the congregation sometime later this fall.



# Frog Corner

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

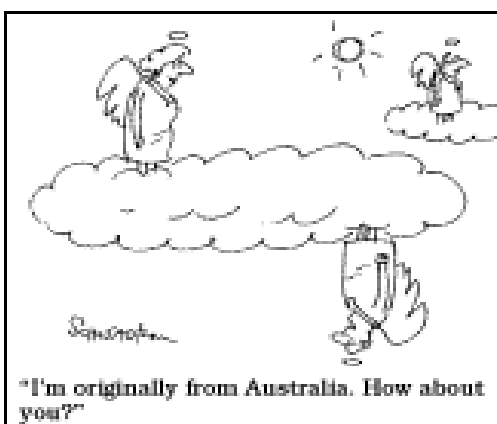
Don't forget the meaning behind the acronym **R I B B I T** :  
**R**evere, **I**nvoke, **B**less, **I**nspire, and **T**rust in the Lord.

### Out of the mouths of God's "kids":

A woman invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to her six-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?" "I wouldn't know what to say," the little girl replied. "Just say what you hear Mommy say," the mother said. The little girl bowed her head and said: "Dear Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

A man had been shipwrecked on a remote island in the Pacific, and was alone for 20 years. When a ship finally arrived, his rescuers were impressed with the three buildings he had built and asked him about them. "Well," the man replied, "this is my house, and that building over there is my church. It's a wonderful church and I hate to leave it." "And what is the third building yonder?" a rescuer asked. "Oh, that is the church I used to go to," the man replied.

Rev. Robert A. Pollauf of Detroit passed on this account of how Daniel saved his life in the lion's den: King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was astonished that the hungry lions had not eaten Daniel. He summoned Daniel and promised him that if he would reveal his secret, the king would give him his freedom. "It was easy, your excellency," Daniel said. "I went around and whispered in each lion's ear — 'After dinner, there will be speeches.'"



# Trustee & Miscellaneous Reports

The Trustee Meetings are open to all and they are scheduled each month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Worship.

We are looking into finding a suitable way to reduce background noise in the Fellowship Room. There are times that you cannot hear someone talking across the table.

We need to see if anyone in our Church Family would be willing to weed whack the grass that is growing up in our parking lot and put weed killer down before we need to get an outside company to do it at a high cost.

The lights on our entrance sign have been installed and adjusted so the complete sign can be read at night. This is with the help of Bill, Jay, Beth and Ivonne.

We need a new member for our Trustees to take the place of Fred Noll. The Nominating Committee will get to work on this very soon.



The Lees have requested to be able to use our facilities on Saturday mornings for prayer and on Sunday for worship/fellowship. The trustees made this recommendation to the Session and it was approved. This should begin soon and our prayers go with them as they seek to grow a Korean Church in Mid-dletown.

Your Friendly Trustees,  
Al and Bill

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## CLERK OF SESSION & OFFICE VOLUNTEER



Pat Wright continues to volunteer in the church office, usually on Wednesday from 10 — 1. If you need help with anything, give her a call to confirm that she is available. Many thanks to Pat for filling in where needed! Georgia, our Office Administrator, continues to work on the worship slides and newsletter from home. Isn't it great when a need arises and a volunteer pops up just when you need it!

# NCPC STEWARDSHIP

## HOW CAN OUR CONGREGATION BE HEALTHY = BY DEVELOPING GENEROUS PEOPLE

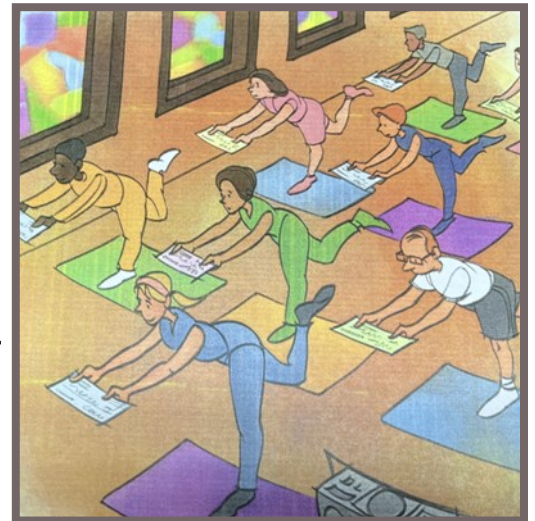
GOD DOESN'T WANT US TO JUST  
FEEL GRATITUDE, BUT FOR US  
TO SHOW IT BY GIVING THANKS  
TO GOD WITH OUR LIVES.

What are the marks of a healthy congregation? According to the experts, healthy congregations:

- Focus on mission, challenge, and strengths
- Have leaders who are mature and motivated, and who accept the role of being stewards of the congregation
- Are well-prepared to manage tension and trauma; while they do not escape conflicts, they do NOT allow conflict to fester due to indecision or unresolved issues
- Are characterized by a mood and spirit that is uplifting
- Intentionally practice clarity; for example, roles and expectations are clearly defined and widely understood.

### GENEROUS PEOPLE

One of the most surprising discoveries made about healthy congregations is that they develop generous people. Perhaps this should not be a big surprise. Health, including physical health, is connected with generosity. The word “misery” comes from the word “miser.” To hold on to everything you have is to invite unhappiness, loneliness, and anxiety. The only one you can trust and the only one who counts is YOU. But heart surgeon, James Lynch, writes that COMPANIONSHIP is the best form of life insurance. Hans Selye, the pioneer researcher into stress, notes that GRATITUDE enhances the immune system. *Giving thanks is life affirming.*



What promotes generosity? Healthy congregations are centered in God's grace. Grace is something you can never get but only be given. When received in gratitude, grace shapes one's acts of giving. A thankful heart is expressive. Giving becomes not an obligation, but an opportunity, a readiness, or a flow of gratefulness. “Freely you have received, freely give” (Mt. 10:8). The spirit of giving is gladness. Humans are an incredibly giving species. Donation is rare in species other than our own. We know that to live is to be given to and to give. Gladness springs both in our offering and in our receiving. May God lead us to become **GENEROUS IN OUR GIVING!**