



New Covenant Connection

New Covenant Presbyterian Church

www.newcov-church.org

(302)378-4446

When asked by the priests and Levites from Jerusalem
"WHO ARE YOU?" John the Baptist said -

*"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness. Make
straight the way of the Lord, as the prophet Isaiah said."*

- John 1: 23

Dear friends,

In one month, when Advent descends upon us, we will once again be hearing these words from John the Baptist. John came to "prepare the way of the Lord" and we are called to prepare ourselves since very soon, at Christmas time, Jesus will be born in our midst. So, in our scripture lessons, we haven't yet met Jesus face-to-face. We have only learned of him through the prophet, John, but this prophet proclaiming the coming of Jesus was no ordinary Joe.

Although there were other prophets roaming the countryside, this was not an ordinary occurrence, nor were the baptisms John performed ordinary rituals. John certainly called attention to himself with his clothing (a garment of coarse camel hair and a leather belt), food (locusts and honey), his sharp words, and his baptizing. It is no surprise that the Pharisees were drawn to investigate him, worried about what he might say and how he might rile up the crowds.

People who speak truth, especially truth which is hard to hear, are often met with suspicion. We are living in a time when the truth is difficult to find, and too often mistruths abound. We all remember the story of Pinocchio whose nose grew longer as a punishment for telling lies. The moral of this story is that bad behavior leads to bad consequences, and not just for ourselves, but for others too. Oh that we could all tell the truth more often! There are just so many voices - so much shouting - so much fighting, so how are we to discern truth (especially during this season of elections)? Shall we listen for the voices who speak what we want to hear? Or, shall we risk opening ourselves to truths we don't want to hear?



2024

- A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR .. 1
- CALENDAR 3
(EVENTS, BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES)
- CLERK'S REPORT 4
- TRUSTEE REPORT 4
- CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 5
- MISSION REPORT 6
- FELLOWSHIP 7
- STEWARDSHIP/FINANCE 8
- WORSHIP 9
- OUTREACH 10
- FROG CORNER 11



A Note From Our Pastor (Cont.)



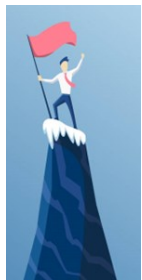
John was very clear in pointing to the truth. He said, “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.” One of the reasons we know John is speaking truth is that John was NOT calling attention to himself. He was pointing toward someone else. He was paving the way for Jesus. We, of course, have the benefit of time - we can look backwards in time to see that what John spoke was the truth. The things he prophesied did come to pass.

We might use similar measures to determine truth today. Are the people, who are speaking or shouting, pointing toward themselves or something that benefits only them? Or, are they speaking of a greater good that benefits humanity? Are their words consistent with the words of Jesus? Does their agenda proclaim exclusivity, hatred, and inequity, or does it proclaim peace, justice and love?

Truth is hard to discern among the many and varied voices with which we are inundated, but it does exist and it is not impossible to find. Many times, truth comes in the form of a small voice which points to God, or the ways God calls us to live. But too often, the truth is stifled or not spoken at all due to the fear or discomfort it might provoke.

As disciples of Christ, we cannot afford to ignore when something we do or even something we witness hurts creation or a child of God. We are called to SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE to assist God in making peace and love the patterns of life God wants for and from us. Many times in my ministry I have seen or heard things that were hurtful, and I can't stand by and allow such things to happen without speaking up, even if I must pay a price.

It's just part of being imperfect human beings that sometimes we say or do things that do not express love and caring. Too often we act before we think and our actions hurt others. And when the reaction to a comment or action causes people to turn away from the church, and from God, then, we are called to have courage and to speak the truth IN LOVE.



It's not always easy to take a stand to help someone, or even to change our own behavior, but that is what God wants from us. When we allow things we say or do to hurt others, then they don't just hurt one part of the Body of Christ. It hurts the whole Body, and it grieves the heart of God. At those times, each of us needs to consider speaking up and saying something to redirect unloving behaviors. Otherwise, we cannot call ourselves faithful disciples of Jesus.

And so I would encourage each of you to commit yourselves to being loving witnesses to Christ's love. And when you witness something happen which is unloving, have the courage to speak up in a very loving way, and try to redirect that behavior toward something Christlike, that we might create a loving Body of Christ here at New Covenant.

And let me be the first to start the process. I want you all to know that if I have ever done anything that, in any way, hurt you or anyone else, then I ask for your forgiveness. I never intentionally do such things, but I am very aware that I am human, and sometimes I fail at being truly and completely loving. And so, let us join together as we transform NCPC into a Community of Christ who deliberately and intentionally seeks to be Christlike. Rather than berating anyone, even if we strongly disagree, speak the truth in love and extend the hand of koinonia (Christian fellowship). Let's work together to make New Covenant a truly God-fearing, loving and peaceful community!



Your partner in ministry,

Carol

November 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Our Daily Bread 	2
3	4 Deacons' Mtg @ 10	5	6	7	8	9
10 Trustee Mtg; @ 11:30	11	12	13	14	15 11/15 - 17 I'll Be Home for Christmas	16
17 Congregational Meeting 11 am	18	19	20 Session Mtg 1pm	21	22	23
24 Movie & Dessert Night 6 pm	25	26	27	28 	29	30

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)

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

- 11/1 **First Friday @ Our Daily Bread**
- 11/3 **24th Sunday after Pentecost**
Birthday- Bonnie Lawrence
- 11/4 **Deacon's Meeting 10am**
- 11/6 **Birthday- Sandy Phillips**
- 11/10 **25th Sunday after Pentecost**
Trustee Meeting 11:30am
- 11/14 **Birthday - Skip Leeson**
- 11/17 **26th Sunday after Pentecost**

- 11/20 **Session Meeting 1pm**
- 11/24 **Christ the King Sunday**
Birthday- Russ Morris
- 11/25 **Birthday- Jim Driscoll**
- 11/28 **Thanksgiving Day**



Reports from the Clerk and Trustees

CLERK'S REPORT

The Session's regular Stated meeting was held on Wednesday October 2nd.

The calendar for the Presbytery meetings for 2024 & 2025 is as follows:

December 3rd (in-person or by Zoom) - Jane Adams

January 4th (in-person) Moderators Installation and Lunch

May 17th (in-person or by Zoom) Ocean City, MD

September 20th (in-person or by Zoom) TBD

December 2nd (by Zoom only)

Membership: remains at 50

The Church's general email address is: ncpc2middletown@gmail.com



Paul Willbanks, our long time Treasurer, has submitted his letter of resignation effective December 31, 2024. He has served us exceedingly well for many years, and we will miss him in this post very much and wish him well.

A Congregational meeting is being planned for Sunday November 17th to vote on the slate of officers to begin service in 2025.

Our Vital Congregations meetings have been on a pause for the past few months due to scheduling difficulties and vacations. We will continue with the community interviews and information gathering phase of the program during the remainder of the year. In the new year, will reassess when to move into the next phase of the program.



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, 10 Nov 2024.

Thanks to Jay Fisher, the Picture Rails have been painted in the Fellowship Room.

The one heater/AC in the Fellowship Room will be completely insulated and closed off after we are sure that no rain gets in. We need a good hard rain to check this out.

We are in contact with our State Representative, Kevin Hensley, in reference to plans for the church entrance as proposed by DeDOT and New Castle County. He is in the process of setting up an "On Site" meeting with DeDOT, Blenheim Builders, and us to see if it can be made easy for us all to enter and depart our property in a safe and convenient manner.

The need of a mic for our Children's Message was discussed so everyone can hear when the children of God are talking. We will experiment with this to see if this helps. We are also looking at the possibility of purchasing, a single large TV Screen in our sanctuary in lieu of the 4 smaller screens. It looks like the cost is coming down on these so we will try to discern what is best for all.



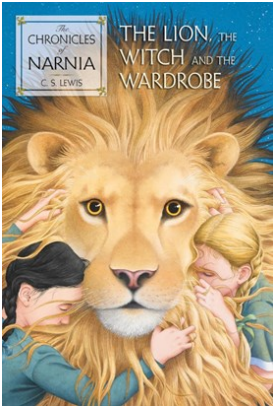
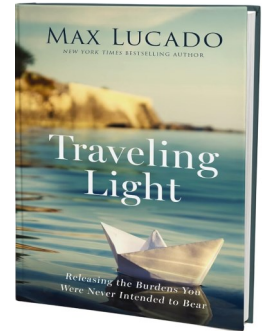
Your Friendly Trustees,

Al Grimminger, Bill Shields, & Bob Megonigal

Christian Education Report

Christian Education Classes

We are in the midst of studying Max Lucado's *Traveling Light* book on both Sunday mornings (8:30 am) and Tuesdays (10:30 am).



We are beginning planning for our Advent Study of C.S. Lewis *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, led by Pat Wright and Jane Adams. All are invited to watch the movie on Movie Night on 11/24, along with dessert.

Christian Education is important for ALL AGES because it can help students develop a biblical worldview, grow their faith, and learn to live a life that is pleasing to God.



Skip Leeson is teaching the Bethel Bible Study on Sundays after Fellowship Time (around 11:45 a.m.). The class began in late September and will continue, 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

Mission Report

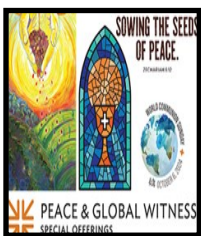
Our Daily Bread: We served 182 meals on First Friday, in October. The number of meals regularly being served each day has risen significantly in the past several months. Typically the number of meals served has grown from 120-150 to 160-210 meals. This seems to reflect a growing need for some level of food subsidy in our greater community. The good news is that the community itself and the businesses in the community are finding a way to share their excess food with those who are in need of help. Truly this is God at work in our community. The Our Daily Bread Fund, collected each month on the first Sunday, continues to fund the cost of preparing our First Friday meal. The Session approved a decision to skip the November ODB special collection, and instead use that communion Sunday to have a special collection for the cost of mailing the Christmas Child Shoeboxes. It takes **\$10 to ship each box** and ODB is well funded.



Neighborhood House: We continue to collect non-perishable food items for Neighborhood House. At this time there is a particular need for spaghetti/pasta, sauce, and jelly but any non-perishable food item is welcomed with open arms. The hunger and food insecurity in our community has not gone away and there is a constant need for both food and personal items.



Kenya Mission Trip: Nancy and Paul led worship in October, sharing all about their experiences on their Kenya Mission trip this past summer.



Peace and Global Witness Offering: The next Special Offering was collected during the month of September through the first Sunday in October. The congregation donated \$350 for this offering. The next special offering will be the Christmas Joy offering in December.



Operation Christmas Child: IT'S SHOEBBOX PACKING TIME!

November 3rd during the fellowship hour we will pack more Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes. We could use more school supplies and things like combs, brushes, washcloths, soap, toothbrushes etc. Please join us in filling more of these boxes. If you are unable to be there that Sunday feel free to pack your boxes at home. The deadline for collections is November 18th, when the boxes will be dedicated! Also consider donating to cover the cost of shipping. **\$10 per box is what is needed!** Thanks, Pam and Skip Leasons



Pat Wright, Mission Elder

Ministry of Fellowship

OCTOBER

HARVEST COSTUME FIRE PIT PARTY



On 10/26, many gathered for a wonderful time of fun, food and fellowship + costumes and a fire pit around which some gathered. There was even a Costume Judging Contest. We really know how to have fun!



Can you believe how talented some people are? Look at the pumpkins that were carved by Carol L. McBride and family, which decorated the porch at the Shields party for the Harvest Party! WOW!!! Sure is nice when people share their talents!

NOVEMBER



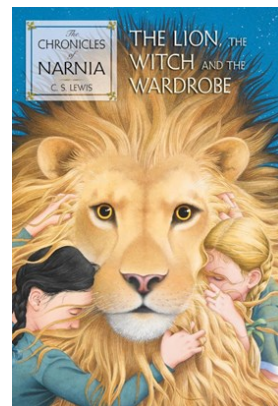
11/15-17 GOD'S POWER AND LIGHT CO. WILL PRESENT "I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS" - a 1940s Big Band Christmas show. This show should lift your spirits and faith as it prepares us for Christmas. See Cheryl Shields for tickets or the box office at Everetttheatre.org.

11/24

6 PM - MOVIE NIGHT + DESSERT

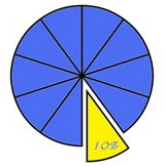
Come one and all to enjoy the favorite movie by C. S. Lewis - *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Everyone is invited to come and see the movie just for fun OR to prepare yourself for our Adult Education class on it, led by Pat Wright and Jane Adams.

Come to Movie Night and bring a dessert to share with your friends! And if you want to learn more about C.S. Lewis and his book, join us for an Advent class on Sundays (8:30 am) and Tuesday mornings (10:30 am). Come one and all!





Stewardship & Finance



Well, friends, it is November and this month, we will focus on Stewardship. Stay tuned for updates during the month. Stewardship refers to how we **manage care for and use** all that God has given us. From the time of creation, God has made humankind stewards of the earth and all that lives upon it. Good stewardship is both a **response** to God’s graciousness in our lives, and a **spiritual discipline** by which we open ourselves to the movement of the Spirit.

Good stewardship is **BOTH** a **means of grace** in our own faith journeys, and **the way that we nurture and support the mission and ministry of the church**. God does not need our gifts; we need to give our gifts to God, for the wholeness of the world and our own wholeness or completeness, as well.

We in the church **often approach the issue** of stewardship **with trepidation and embarrassment**. How we care for our resources is a fundamental expression of who we are before God, and because of that, this subject often elicits reactions of fear and anger when we seek to explore it. And yet this is also why focusing on stewardship is such a **fundamental responsibility** for us as Christians seeking to lead faithful lives of discipleship. And we cannot truly cover this important topic without learning about **sacrificial giving**. When people respond to the good news of Jesus Christ, giving is transformed from an uncomfortable duty to an exciting opportunity. Lives are changed and the church is empowered.

Much of the Scriptural witness on stewardship speaks about the tithe, or giving 10 percent of what we earn. And while churchgoers are generally far more generous than non-worshippers, on average even churchgoers only give approximately 2.6 percent of their income away. It is noteworthy that at the height of the Great Depression, churchgoers gave away more of their income than they did in the year 2000, at the height of our most recent economic boom. The hopeful word in these statistics is that if we all increased our giving by a mere 1 percent of our income, we could totally transform the way we live as the church of Jesus Christ.

John Wesley’s view of **tithing** was that it represented the **barest minimum** of what we are called to do as Christians. *Tithing + more* is, of course, a model for New Testament giving. Christ calls us to give sacrificially, reflecting the radical transformation that God has worked in our lives. Zacchaeus, for example, responded to Jesus by joyfully giving half of all he had to the poor and repaying anyone he had wronged fourfold.

Wesley encouraged the growing Methodist communities to **earn** all you can, **save** all you can, and **give** all you can. He lived this admonition by giving away everything that he earned that he did not need to live on. Towards the end of his life, when the proceeds from his writings amounted to a considerable income, this meant that he was often giving over 90 percent of his income to the church.

In Ex. 36, when Moses was building the sanctuary for the Lord, the people respond with such joyful exuberance that Moses had to tell them to stop, so the people were restrained from giving, for what they had already brought was greater than enough to do all the work. What a vision for us as the church: that our desire to give would exceed what we need to accomplish what God wants us to do.

We don’t need to make difficult decisions between buying this or that for the church, supporting important missions, or increasing personnel costs. If we are faithful to what God calls us to **be** and **do**, we will have all that we need to do what God has given us to do. The purpose of stewardship education is to help faithful disciples join together in creating a culture of joyful stewardship. So, jump on this train as we seek to hear God’s call to NCPC and faithfully answer “YES” to whatever that call asks of us and wherever it calls us to go!

January - September 2024	
REVENUE	
Pledge, Non Pledge, Plate	\$97,105.22
Other Income	3.99
Total Revenue	\$97,109.21
EXPENSES	
Buildings & Grounds	16,754.63
Finance/Operations	4,682.41
Personnel	74,715.93
Total Expenses	\$96,152.97
Revenue Net Expenses	\$956.24

Every year on the last Sunday in October, many churches set aside the day as “Reformation Sunday.” If you didn’t grow up with this practice, you may wonder where this tradition comes from, and why some congregations continue to practice it. So ... what is Reformation Sunday, and why should we care?

The History of Reformation Sunday

Our story begins in the 16th century – 1517, to be exact. Bear with us here – what follows is a very simplified explanation of complex theological, political, and economic events that all coincided. Across Europe, the Roman Catholic Church was engaged in one of the greatest fundraisers in all of history.

If a person – out of contrition for their sins and as a sign of repentance – made a financial gift to help with the building of Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome, then the church would furnish that person with a certificate acknowledging that gift and promising that they or their loved ones would be freed from a portion of the misery expected in the afterlife.

In short, the church at that time taught that even those bound for heaven had to be cleansed of their earthly sins, and this cleansing (purging) in the afterlife took place in a place called Purgatory. The certificates offered by the church (called “Indulgences”) promised to lessen this time of cleansing for oneself or others who have already died. There were some very nuanced explanations of this practice at the time. And there were other very crass explanations that basically amounted to people paying to be forgiven.

November 1st was an important day for the selling and buying of these indulgences, known as All Saints Day on the church’s calendar. The day before, a German Monk named Martin Luther, posted a list of 95 Theses – 95 reasons that he objected to this practice of selling indulgences. Along with other writings by Martin Luther, those 95 Reasons went viral. Luther insisted that we are not forgiven because of anything we do – including the buying of Indulgences or doing enough good work. **Instead, we are forgiven because of who God is.** We are loved and forgiven because God is full of grace and mercy. His teachings and writings got Martin Luther kicked out of the church. But he didn’t go alone. Others agreed with him, and after his death those who agreed with Luther became known as Lutherans and also as Protestants. Every Protestant church traces their roots back to this moment in history.

Why Does Reformation Sunday Matter?

October 31st, 1517 was a long time ago. Why does it continue to matter and be remembered in our churches today?

1. Reformation Sunday gives us a chance to tell our story – a chance to remember. We all have a family story – how we got to this point in history. Stories about parents and grandparents, about the things that have shaped our families over the years. Reformation Sunday is a day when we remember and retell the family stories of our faith. Stories about men and women who came before us and taught us about the faith. Stories about people who risked everything so that we would be able to gather and worship in the manner that we do.

2. Reformation Sunday reminds us of the most important things. Throughout the year we preach about many things in church. About how we live our daily lives, the choices we make, the habits of our faith. On Reformation Sunday we are brought back to the most important thing – the thing that compelled Luther and others to risk their lives. On Reformation Sunday, we return to the core of our faith: **God loved us first, and God continues to shower us with grace and mercy.**

3. Reformation Sunday challenges us to do better. Through retelling our story and returning to the core of our faith, Reformation Sunday prods us to do better. We are called to be more loving and grace-filled, because God was gracious and merciful to us. We are called to repent of the times that we have placed barriers that have kept others from hearing the Good News. We are called to remember that all that we are is a gift from God. In the church in Wittenberg where Martin Luther preached, there is a wonderful painting. In it Luther stands in the pulpit on the right hand side, and the people stand on the left. In between people and the preacher is Christ on the cross. Reformation Sunday is a reminder that this is the bedrock of our faith – the grace and mercy given to us in Jesus Christ. Keeping the most important thing in the center of the picture is the only hope for our faith and for this community that we call “church.” **Happy Reformation Sunday!**

Outreach

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. (John 6:35).

One way we welcome first time visitors to NCP on Sunday mornings, is by gifting the visitor with a loaf of bread. We have pumpkin bread for gifting in October and November. The bread is located in the church freezer. Supplies and gift bags are located on a shelf at the rear of the sanctuary. They include church information and a sign-up card for those wishing to register. Inviting a guest to Fellowship Hour is another way to get to know our neighbors and visitors better.



Session members have learned some Spiritual Listening techniques at our Vital Congregational Meetings with

Pastor Nate Phillips. There are three categories for spiritual listening. They are: Listen to God, Listen to Your Congregation and Listen to Your Neighbors. Just looking at the massive construction outside the church shows a promise of many new neighbors. Maybe you live close by the construction areas. When we meet a new neighbor at church or outside church, we can practice Spiritual Listening. Good questions are open-ended, often they begin with the word "what". Examples are: *What brought you to this community? What do you love about this community? What would you change about this community?* By listening well, we may find ways to interact with our new neighbors and offer assistance available through our church. There are many other questions you might ask. The goal is not to talk about our church or ourselves constantly, but rather to listen with Spiritual Guidance. We can practice Listening to God and practicing centering God with community. May we all continue to practice the art of listening.



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, Invide, Bless, Inspire, and Trust in the Lord.



Black Friday Joke:



Q: Who profits the most on Black Friday?

A: The one who was smart enough NOT to go shopping on that day.

Only in America can you trample people to get a lot more exactly one day after giving thanks for what you already have. For many, "Black Friday" is a day for getting. But listen to what the Bible says about gain...Jesus said, "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:36). As you do your holiday shopping, don't neglect the most important thing of all: Do you know Jesus Christ? Do you have eternal life?

Thanksgiving Humor:

Bill: What did you do to make Thanksgiving special this year?

Ted: We had grandma for Thanksgiving dinner.

Bill: Really? We had turkey!



Some things just shouldn't get confused. The biggest of these is how a person can have eternal life. *Did you know that, according to the Bible:*

- Going to church can't get you into heaven.
- Being good can't get you there either.
- Even being baptized can't help you receive eternal life.

There's only **ONE WAY** and that's by placing your faith in Jesus Christ and surrendering your life to him. Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6).

The \$100 and \$1



Two well-worn bills arrived at the Federal Reserve Bank to be retired – a \$100 and a \$1. As they traveled down the conveyor belt, they struck up a conversation. The hundred reminisced about the interesting life he had, traveling all over the country. "I've been to the finest restaurants, Broadway shows, Las Vegas, and amusement parks," he said. "I even want on a Caribbean cruise once. Where have you been?"

"Oh," said the one dollar bill, "I've been to a Methodist church, an Episcopal church, a Baptist church, and a Lutheran church." "What's a church?" asked the hundred.

