New Covenant Connection

New Covenant Presbyterian Church

A Word from Your Pastor

Dear friends,

The other day I was reminded that one of the nicknames for Presbyterians is the "frozen chosen." I've never particularly appreciated this view but, I have to admit, that it can seem true at times. I think we would have to admit that Presbyterians, compared to many other denominations, tend to be cerebral and orderly, with a lot of emphasis placed on the intellectual side of faith and not much attention given to the emotional side.

Creative tension between STRUCTURE & SPIRIT

This being said, I want to reflect on the creative tension that exists between ***structure*** and ***spirit*** (or charisma). By nature, organizations tend to desire internal efficiency, rationality and consistency. We put into place rules and policies so that we can operate "decently and in order." We Presbyterians have *The Book of Order* and *Robert's Rules of Order,* and each congregation develops its own unique way of doing things.

As a Presbyterian pastor who has promised to uphold our constitution (which includes *The Book of Order* and *The Book of Confessions*), I struggle with balancing this with freedom of spirit. Jesus did say that he "did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it" (Mt. 5: 17), but Paul reminds us that "It was for freedom that Christ set us free...(Gal 5:1). So, how do we find the ***balance***?

Churches tend to lean one direction more than the other. For Presbyterians, the balance leans more toward the tendency to allow our need for order to snuff out the charisma, or stifle the free movement of the Spirit of God. For many other Christian denominations, the tendency is to lean toward emotions and the

~continued~

2025

A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR ..1

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A Note From Our Pastor (Cont.)

free expression of faith in emotional terms. Whichever way we lean, it is clear that without God and God's vision for the church, we will perish.

So, balance is needed. We need to allow the Spirit to lead us, but we also need structure to guide and protect us. We are much like the American government which has its own set of checks and balances, set up for our own good. Structure can protect us from charismatic leaders who go too far, and it will keep us honest and accountable. Structure and organization help us to be able to discern if it is the Holy Spirit leading us, or just excessive enthusiasm. But we must continually remind ourselves to be led by God rather than our own preferences.

Healthy congregations have reliable and respected ways of doing things. When we take note of ways of doing things which are not helpful, we make an effort to change and improve them. This is good and it makes us feel comfortable, but we also need to allow for the **free flow of ideas**, realizing that the Spirit may be leading us in new directions, which can ruffle some feathers. And yet, it's like **opening the windows and doors** of our church, and ourselves, to allow the Spirit to blow through it. Sometimes, God may lead us to create new structures IF we are open-minded and listening to the Spirit.

Open wide the windows of our spirits and fill us full of light; open wide the door of our hearts, that we may receive and entertain you, O God, with all our powers of adoration and thanksgiving.

I have found many helpful principles in Anthony Robinson's book, *What's Theology Got to Do With It?* I share these with you so that we might have conversation about the preferences of New Covenant, and discern how we might be open to the leading of God's Spirit. I believe we can do great things together as we seek to faithfully follow Christ and serve our church family and community. May God bless us as we **learn and grow** into becoming the congregation we are called to be.

Your partner in ministry,

Carol

AUGUST 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Our Daily Bread	2
3 Communion & ODB offering	4 Deacons' Mtg CANCELED	5	6	7	8	9 Earlene Kelter 90th Bday Party 2-4pm
10 Trustee mtg @ 11:30	11	12	13 Session Mtg CANCELED	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30/31

PLEASE NOTE *TIME & DATE* : DEACONS NOW MEET ON THE MONDAY FOLLOWING THE 1ST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH AT 10 AM; TRUSTEES CONTINUE ON THE 2ND SUNDAY FOLLOWING WORSHIP; SESSION NOW MEETS ON THE WEDNESDAY FOLLOWING THE 3RD SUNDAY AT 1 PM

EVERY SUNDAY - WORSHIP AT 10 AM FOLLOWED BY FELLOWSHIP
CHRISTIAN ED - ON SABBATICAL FOR THE SUMMER

8/1 First Friday @ Our Daily Bread
8/2 Birthday - Jason Easter
8/3 8th Sunday after Pentecost
The Lord's Supper & ODB Offering
8/4 Deacons' Meeting @ 10:00 am
8/10 9th Sunday after Pentecost
8/12 Birthday - Earlene Kelter
8/14 Birthday - Ken Hudson
8/15 Birthday - Bill Shields
Anniversary - Jim & Katheryn Driscoll
8/17 10th Sunday after Pentecost
Birthday - Carol Fisher
8/23 Birthday - Jay Fisher
8/24 11th Sunday after Pentecost
8/27 Birthday - Betty Lou Schafer
8/31 12th Sunday after Pentecost

Clerk's Report

CLERK'S REPORT:

The Session met on July 23rd for our regular stated monthly meeting.

We Approved the Minutes of the Stated Meeting of June 18, 2025.

Next Stated Session meeting will be September 24, 2025.
The August Session meeting has been cancelled for vacations.
New Castle Presbytery Meetings

Sep 20th (Sat 10am) TBD (Hybrid) Pam Leeson & Carol
Dec 2nd (Tues 4pm) Zoom Only Jane Adams & Carol

Jenny Hugh and Barbara Bookhart were able to secure 35 folders of new Bell Choir music and some Taize music from the Presbyterian Church of the Covenant in Wilmington which is closing. The Session approved a $150 donation to the church which will continue to be used for community activities.

Financial Statements:
The Session received 2025 Year-to-date statements from the treasurer. We are currently in the black.

Membership 46

Email Addresses:

Clerk: *clerk.ncpc24@gmail.com*

Office: newcov.office2@gmail.com NEW

Treasurer: treasurernewcov@gmail.com NEW

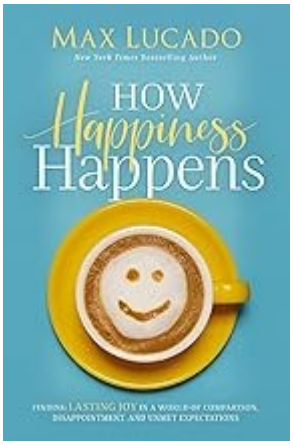
Pastor: pastornewcov@gmail.com

Yours in Christ,

Pat Wright, Clerk

Christian Education Report

Christian Education Classes



We are on sabbatical from our regular Sunday and Tuesday morning Christian Education classes. In the fall, beginning on the Sunday following Labor Day, we will begin our regular schedule (Sundays at 8:30 am and Tuesdays at 10:30 am). We will start with the second half of the book, *How Happiness Happens* by Max Lucado. We already covered the first half of the book and we will restart with Session 4 - *Forgive One Another* which will require reading chapter 10 in the book. So, you can restart your reading anytime you'd like and we'll see you in September!

A BETHEL CLASS BEGINS IN SEPTEMBER

Skip Leeson is planning on teaching the Bethel Bible Study starting in the fall after Fellowship Time (around 11:45 a.m.). The group finished up the Old Testament during the summer and looks forward to gathering again to study the New Testament. Please let Skip know if you are interested. Come one and all!

Jane Adams,
Christian Education Elder

SUMMER IS A TIME TO -

READ

RELAX

RENEW

Ministry of Fellowship

JULY

4/5 Frank and Gina Cerniglia's Wedding and Reception

The wedding was held at the church and the reception was held at Bill and Cheryl Shield's home. Several of Frank and Gina's family members and friends were able to attend The Reception was a great party and enjoyed by all.

4/13 Ice Cream and a Movie

Good Ice cream, brownies and good movie. The movie was a modern version of the story of Joseph and his brothers. A very delicious and enjoyable evening for all.

AUGUST

8/9 Earlene Kelter's 90th Birthday Party

There will be a birthday party for Earlene on Saturday, August 9th from 2-4pm in the Fellowship Room. The menu will be Ice Cream and cake provided by her family and a few nibbles provided by some of the congregation. Come join the party and say happy birthday to Earlene.

Mission Report

Our Daily Bread: We served 80 meals on the First Friday in July. Our First Friday July 4th holiday lunch was a great success. We served hot dogs, potato salad, chips and cookies. Since ODB is normally closed and not serving meals on holidays we did not expect that we would serve as many meals as typical. In addition, this was a lunch not a dinner, and there was no dine-in service. This was something of a trial for us and for ODB and we believe that it was quite successful. Thank you to those of the team who were able to give up part of their holiday to serve this meal.

If anyone is interested and able, ODB has begun a Saturday Sandwich program which has groups and/or individuals who have an hour or so on a Saturday morning to come to the dining room in Middletown to prepare sandwiches to place in the community refrigerator for the weekend. This can help ensure that there are easy meals available in the refrigerator even when ODB is closed for the weekend. If you are interested, contact Pat Wright at church or contact ODB directly at: ourdailybread.2016@gmail.com.

Neighborhood House: We continue to collect non-perishable food items for the food pantry at Neighborhood House. They provide food items for people in the community who have urgent need. They need a wide range of non-perishable items such as pasta, particularly spaghetti, and pasta sauces. In addition, there is always a need for simple items like peanut butter and jelly. A few weeks ago, Jane Adams took 8 bags of pantry items to Neighborhood House from our congregation. Thank you all for your continued support.

Pentecost & the Peace and Global Witness Offering: The Pentecost Offering concluded in June, and we collected $195. 40% of that offering ($78) will remain in our congregation and will be added to the Youth Fund. Our next special offering, Peace and Global Witness, will begin in September.

Operation Christmas Child: Merry Christmas during the SUMMER!

The last few Sundays in July we put together shoeboxes in the Fellowship Room. We currently have 42 boxes and we plan on working some more in the fall. It's never too early or too late to get a jump on preparing gifts for children who really appreciate them. Plus, it's a good time to pick up school supplies since many of them are on sale. We will be collecting during November too which should increase our total number of OCC shoeboxes. For more details, ask Pam or Skip Leeson.

Pat Wright,

Mission Elder

Trustee Report

The Trustee Meetings are open to all and they are normally scheduled each month on the 2nd Sunday after Worship. Our next Trustee Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, 10 Aug 2025.

We are still looking at what we may want to do to increase the security around our property with all the construction going on around us.

The LED lights for our Parking Lot poles are completed for the most part. We still have one pole/light to correct before we can say 100% completed. Still need some landscaping around the main electrical connection so we don't hit the connection when mowing the grass or moving vehicles around that area.

The type of sign(s) we plan on having to let people know how to travel through the development to get to and from our church is a work in progress. We are in the process of setting up a Sign Committee to look at this issue.

The Coffee Truck in our parking lot several times a week should start around 1 Aug 2025. He plans to serve high end coffee/espresso drinks, homemade breakfast sandwiches and pastries.

There is another Food Truck that will use our parking lot 7 days a week which should start on 1 Aug 2025. They are scheduled to be there until about 11:00 P.M. Yes 11:00 P.M. Let's see how this works out.

The cleaning out of our storage room in the CE Building is in progress with a few changes to this room to make it a Meeting/Storage Room. The intent is to allow space for storage behind a wall so as to make the room more usable. There has been a lot of cleaning out, organizing, purchasing some paint, wood, sheetrock, mud and tape for the walls, and some artwork to beautify the room. Still a work in progress.

If there are any questions or comments you would like to make, please let us know. You can use my e-mail address: al.grimminger@icloud.com

Your Friendly Trustees,
Al Grimminger, Bill Shields, and Bob Megonigal

Stewardship & Finance

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the heights above ... sun and moon, praise Him, all you shining stars ... you highest heavens and you waters above the skies ... you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bigging, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth young men and women, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the Lord... He has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his saints, of Israel, the people close to his heart. Praise the Lord. Psalm 148:1, 3-4, 7-14

In a famous organ piece by Johann Sebastian Bach, the organist plays a sustained bass note on the pedals, adds another pedal note, then adds note after note after note from the keyboards until an incredibly elaborate, dissonant chord resounds. After a few seconds, it resolves into a lush, powerful, major chord.

Psalm 148 reminds us of that lush chord. The psalm lists things in creation calling on each in turn to praise its maker. Mountains and hills, rivers and streams and the occasional sun, moon and stars indicate the whole of creation by invoking complementary parts. The psalm moves through the elements of earth and sky to the plant and animal realms, calling on each to praise the Lord. Nothing is left out. Fruit trees get equal billing with cedars; wild animals share the limelight with the domesticated creatures. Fish, fowl, birds, insects – all are included.

Can our imaginations keep up with Psalm 148? It is hard enough to imagine dogs and cats praising God, but how do rocks and trees praise God? Isn't it safer to assume that the psalmist is using hyperbole to highlight the need for humans to praise God? But the Bible is full of such animation: trees clap their hands, valleys shout for joy and sing, mountains and hills leap. All creation responds to its Maker and its responding gives praise to God.

How does this work? It might be simpler than we think. Thomas Merton once wrote, "A tree gives praise to God by being a tree." In responding to God's call to be, stars, flowers, redwood trees and water buffalo praise their Maker. The God who cares for the sparrow on the housetop receives delight and praise when His creatures flourish. Notice who gets mentioned last in Psalm 148 – humans. This is not to suggest that we are an afterthought. Instead, we provide the words to the music of praise that creation provides. In fact, the psalm indicates two roles for human beings. Not only do we ***sing*** the words, but we are the ones who ***issue the call*** to creation to praise the Lord. Part of our role as stewards is to call creation to its role of glorifying God. We are supposed to steward creation's capacity for praise.

Psalm 19 tells us that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. If, in the course of human events, we obscure the heavens and make it difficult to see God's handiwork, we have muted creation's ability to testify to God's glory. On the other hand, when we tend to creation lovingly, creation's symphony of praise grows even louder.

A few days ago, Win and I were relaxing in our hot tub on a perfectly clear night. We saw so many stars including the big dipper and a shooting star. It was so peaceful looking up at the stars. The tranquility of relaxing in the water and viewing God's creation was juxtaposed with the need to finish preparation for our vacation and neither one of us wanted to leave the moment. Praise the Lord!

Barbara Bookhart, Elder for Stewardship and Finance

Outreach

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Psalm 23, is explained by a shepherd, presumably David. The psalm is familiar to many. Even those who do not attend church have likely encountered it at a funeral. God is depicted as a caring and loving guide for his people. Here at New Covenant Church, our Deacons shepherd 'flocks' of congregational members. This is a caring and loving outreach for their 'sheep'.

Jesus, our Lord, is also depicted as our good shepherd. He continually offers protection, guidance and peace on earth. He does *restore our souls* and *our cup runneth over*. God isn't withholding anything, even during difficult times. When we identify with the sheep **and the** shepherd, we are comforting one another and offering outreach and eternal hope to all.

We are about to experience many new neighbors. The photo at right, shows our church sign and some new construction. A recent visitor, said that our sign is what attracted three of them to enter our church. So, when we **reach out (outreach)**, we will offer our new neighbors a sanctuary for worship and fellowship. Our *cup runneth over* may be a symbolized by the church sign, our new business card, our church informational pamphlet, prayer, a loaf of bread offered to first time visitors, this newsletter and more. We do not carry a rod or staff to guide and comfort people, but when we hand our business card to someone outside, they may use their GPS to guide them to the church. Let us join in welcoming all to NCPC.

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 **R I B B I T :**
Revere, ***I***nvite, ***B***less, ***I***nspire, and ***T***rust in the Lord.

- Two little boys were at sitting together in a church during a wedding ceremony. As the couple said "I do", one of the little boys leaned over to the other and asked, "I wonder how many wives can a man have?" The second little boy looked at his friend like he was an idiot and said, "He can have 16 wives." "How do you know that?" The first little boy asked. "Weren't you listening? The priest just said it. Four better, four worse, four richer, and four poorer.

- Danny had recently passed his driving test and decided to ask his clergyman father if there was any chance of him getting a car for Christmas, which was yet some months away. "Okay." said his father, "I tell you what I'll do. If you can get your 'C' level grades up to 'A's and 'B's, study your bible, and get your hair cut, I'll consider the matter very seriously." A month later Danny, went back to his father who said "I'm really impressed by your commitment to your studies. Your grades are excellent and the work you have put into your bible studies is very encouraging. However, I have to say I'm very disappointed that you haven't had your hair cut yet." Danny was smart and never lost for an answer. "Look dad, in the course of my bible studies I've noticed in the illustrations that Moses, John the Baptist, Samson and even Jesus had long hair." "Yes. I'm aware of that..." replied his father "... but did you also notice they walked wherever they went?"

- After a little girl, dressed in her Sunday best, was running as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Bible School. As she ran she prayed, 'Dear Lord, please don't let me be late! Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!' While she was running and praying, she tripped on a curb and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off, and started running again! As she ran she once again began to pray, 'Dear Lord, please don't let me be late ... But please don't shove me either!'

"If I send my prayer as a text message, will I get a faster reply?"

"I know he said two of each, but I'm telling you bring three of each and I'll fire up the grill."