

April 2021

Dear Friends,

April is finally here.

Christ is risen!

You know how to respond. Say it to yourself.
Or with someone you love.

“Christ is risen, indeed!”

The trees and flowers are in full boom!
Vaccines are going into more arms!
Hope springs eternal.
The Church is alive and at work in the world.

And Covenant remains steadfast and committed:
to loving God, loving people, and making disciples!

In this April edition of **Covenant Connections**,
I hope you will get a taste of what is on the horizon.
Here’s a sampling . . .

There’s good news in the March Session Highlights!
I mean, really good news! Don’t miss it!

There’s an old friend, and maybe more,
from the neighborhood, coming to celebrate
Bright Sunday with us. That’s during worship on
April 11th at 9 AM . . . check it out, and
invite a friend to join us virtually or in-person!

Covenant CAFE “rocks on” on Wednesday night’s
at 6 PM on Facebook Live! Feel the rhythm,
sense the wonder, of life made new!

There’s a **Children & Youth Sunday Service** set
for **April 18th**, and an **Earth Care Sunday Service**
on **April 25th**. Lots of joy here!!!

Feel the energy! Seize the days ahead!
Read all about them! Celebrate them!
Live them to the glory of God! Get involved!

Can you tell I’m excited? I am, I really am,
and I hope you are, too!!! Spring has sprung!
The old is past. The new has come!

Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed!

May we rise, too. Now. Forever.

To love Christ. To serve Christ. To honor Christ.
Alleluia! Amen!

Kyle

“Ordinary Things, Extraordinary God”

(Tune: “Go to Dark Gethseman” *Glory to God* #220)
by Kyle Allen

Extraordinary God,
you walk with us on the way.
In the ordinary things, we encounter every day.
Dust and shoes and oil and bread
by your grace we’re drawn and fed.

Extraordinary God,
soon you’ll face your final hour.
At your table we’ll recall
your redeeming love’s great power.
By thorns, coins, the coats, and cup
We’ll affirm that you’re with us.

Extraordinary God,
on Palm Sunday you were praised.
On this holy night of nights,
lo, your cross is in plain sight.
Let us not betray you now,
But in humble service bow.

Extraordinary God,
that last Friday was so sad.
From our Lord his life we took,
what we did to him, so bad.
Yet your love eternal reigns,
from whose death was not in vain.

Extraordinary God,
in such ordinary things.
Life and death and love between,
makes our hopeful hearts to sing.
Of the cross and empty tomb,
Stones removed and life made new.



Let Us Pray . . .

Church Members: Christine Beck, Cindy Eades (Maggie Moen), Mary Jane Fisher, Karl Ford, Alice Garrett, Lynnemarie Hancock, Suellen Hodges, Pattie Muller, Lindsey Nanz, Ann Cecil Renick, Carol Ryan, the Simmons Family, June and Forrest Smith, Jo and Wayne Wilson, caregivers, military service members and families.

Family and Friends: Lowell Bashlor, Jr. (Audrey Bashlor's son), Kenneth Benner (Lynnemarie Hancock's brother), Josh Birch, Rachel Erb Birch, Ann Caddell (Anne Currin's mother), Kevin Carter (Cheryl Floyd's brother), Patrick Dooley (Lynnemarie Hancock's friend), Larry Ford (Sherry Moran's brother), Dickie Hinchee (Leigh Singh's grandmother), Rob Kidder's brother, Bill Miller (Mike Miller's brother), Mike Overacker (Mark Overacker's brother), PCUSA Mission Workers Tyler and Rochelle Holm and Jim and Jodi McGill, Denise Pillow (Presbytery of the Peaks), Shirley Robertson (Barbara Robertson's mother), Laura Robinson (Carol Merritt's sister), Mair Rubin (friend of Pranav Singh), Dr. Martha Sommers, Tim (Lynnemarie Hancock's friend), Geraldine Webb (Mandy Culley's mother), Norma Webb (Jeff Webb's mother), David Wiley (Mary Glenn Aydlett's nephew), Daniel Woodbury (Lynnemarie Hancock's cousin). **Special Prayers:** Our hospital staffs and families, hospital patients and families, residents of assisted living facilities and those in nursing home care; Dakota Hurst, 16 year-old with osteosarcoma.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

~ Philippians 4:6

Please send requests for the prayer list to gails@covroanoke.org or call the church office. Requests will be shared with the pastor and the Congregational Care Team.

Food for the Soul

Meditations from Centering Prayer

**"I came that they may have life,
and have it abundantly."**

John10:10b



Covenant . . . You Are Now A Certified Earth Care Congregation!!!

On March 10th of this year, Covenant's Earth Care Team received word that Covenant has been certified as an Earth Care Congregation by PCUSA through its Presbyterian Hunger Program. What does that mean? First, Covenant met the 25 points required in each of 4 ministry areas: worship (105), education (62), facilities (91); and outreach (93); total points 351 with things Covenant was already doing. Second, Covenant submitted its plans for 2021. And third, Covenant's Session agreed to the Earth Care Pledge.



So why did Covenant do this? Simply put, God entrusted creation and its care to humankind (Genesis 1:28). When humankind lived closer to the land than we do today, they had a deep reverence and a respect for the land. They studied it and learned how to use it and helped it regenerate. As people moved into cities and suburbs during the Industrial Revolution, our deep connection faltered. Earth Care at Covenant was created to promote, educate, and provide practical ways for the congregation to use the earth and care for it. May we reclaim that connection! Let's be about that!

So far this year, Earth Care has helped with the Lenten bags, led the March 7th "Spark" Sunday education hour (a special thanks for all who participated!), used biodegradable containers for the Seder meal, and is helping create an Earth Care Sunday worship service on April 25th.

And what's next? Some ideas: rain barrel building workshop; community garden with food donated to the needy; bluebird and wren bird house building workshop; guest speakers; Earth Care educational series for children, youth, and adults; field trips; preschool garden, wren house, simple hydroponic set-ups; explore Roanoke's food desert issue; and more.

What does this mean for you? What would you like to hear about? What would you like to do? Join the Earth Care team; participate in an Earth Care project; share your ideas and interests; or . . . ? Watch for the Earth Care article in Covenant's monthly newsletter – you'll find interesting information, practical ways to care for the earth, upcoming projects, and more.

If you have ideas or suggestions, we want to hear them. Contact Judi Barnes (Earth Care Team Lead) at jpb0844@aol.com or 540-420-6683.

Come!!! Join in the Fun !!!



Covenant's next week to "host" Family Promise is April 4th – 10th

Family Promise is currently serving four families: Two in the Family Promise duplex, and two in apartments in different locations. **Covenant will provide dinners to two of the families on Tuesday, April 6th; Wednesday, April 7th; and Thursday, April 8th.** (Raleigh Court United Methodist Church will provide dinners for the other two families on those dates. The other nights the families will prepare their own meals.) **We are looking for people who would be willing to help provide dinners for Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday!** We can pick up food and deliver it. Please contact Lee Cutright or Maggie Moen by Friday, April 2nd if you can help. Thank you!

Blood Drive



American Red Cross

The need is constant.
The gratification is instant.
Give blood."



Red Cross Blood Drive @ Covenant

Thursday, April 8th ♦ 10 AM – 4 PM

Schedule your appointment today
online or by phone!

Go to redcrossblood.org and enter
"COVENANT" in the search box
or call 1-800-RED-CROSS.

Covenant is participating in the Habitat for Humanity "Apostle Build"

This is a group of Christian Churches who have gotten together to sponsor and build a house for a deserving family as part of the Habitat for Humanity program. The house we are sponsoring will start construction this week, with each church taking a Saturday to provide the labor, under the direction of Habitat. **Covenant's Saturday is May 1st. To participate, please call the church office and add your name to our volunteer list.** We will email you with more information.



We will coordinate the volunteers and jobs for the May 1st date. Some jobs may be providing food, some may be working with the homeowner and her children, and many will be providing construction labor – no experience required!

If you would like to volunteer on days other than Saturday, May 1st, please contact Paul Weary at paul.weary@cox.net or go to the Roanoke Valley Habitat website, habitat-roanoke.org/volunteer/individuals; scroll down to "Volunteer Sign Up Sheets" and click on "Help Build the Apostle Build 2021" to sign up for the date of your choice. Please add a note that you are with Covenant Presbyterian Church.



Chris's Coffee and Custard Is Open!!!

This unique coffee and custard shop is creating opportunities for gainful and meaningful employment for individuals with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities – all while serving wonderful coffee, delicious custard, and more! When you stop by Chris's at 1824 9th Street SE, Suite B in Roanoke, be sure to look for our own Elizabeth Allen. Chris's hours are Tuesday – Friday 7 AM-2 PM/4 PM-8:30 PM and Saturday 9 AM-9 PM (Closed Sunday/Monday). Find out more at chrisscoffeandcustard.com.



- ♦ **Men's Bible Study** meets via Zoom at 8 AM on the first and third Saturday of each month. Please contact John McMillen (mcmilljd@gmail.com) or Jeff Cutright (jcutright4@msn.com) for more information.
- ♦ **Women's Bible Study** will meet at 10:30 AM on Monday, April 12th via Zoom, and on Monday, April 26th (location to be announced). For more information, please email Sharon Nanz at slnanz@aol.com.
- ♦ **Circle of Friends** will meet on Tuesday, April 13th at 7:00 PM on Zoom. Please contact Carol Gentry for details (carolg5@cox.net).

Loving God, loving people, making disciples

This April, Get Showered as Faith Formation Opportunities Abound!

Check out the following special opportunities around Faith Formation at Covenant:

- **April 4th:** *He is Risen!* No Sunday School this week.
- **April 11th:** Sunday School for Children, Youth, and Adults resumes!
- **April 18th:** Children & Youth Sunday – *Join us as our children and youth lead worship this Sunday!*
- **April 25th:** Children & Youth will enjoy Sunday School lessons with an Earth Care theme.

Adult Sunday School: A Survey of World Religions



On April 11th Adult Sunday School resumes its Survey of World Religions! Class takes place via Zoom from 11 AM – noon each week. Zoom links are sent from the church via email each Friday. All are welcome!

- **April 11th:** Overview/Introduction to Islam.
- **April 18th:** Guest Speaker, Dr. Saleem Ahmed, will share about Islam.
- **April 25th:** Guest Speaker, Rabbi Kathy Cohen will share about Judaism.

Children's Sunday School: Surprises!

Children's Sunday School in April will be full of *Surprises!* Children will reflect on how great surprises can be in our own lives and how Jesus' surprise was the greatest surprise ever!



- **April 11th:** The Greatest Surprise of All!
(NOTE: *This is Week 7 in your current Sunday School bag.*)
- **April 18th:** Thomas Wants to See!
- **April 25th:** A special Earth Day-themed lesson!

Youth Sunday School: Questions, Discussion, & Brain Teasers!

Via Zoom at 11 AM each Sunday, Youth will resume its exploration of hand-selected Scripture from both the Old and New Testaments, guaranteed to kindle learning, questions, and discussion. Brain Teasers are regularly provided, and donuts are still bring-your-own!



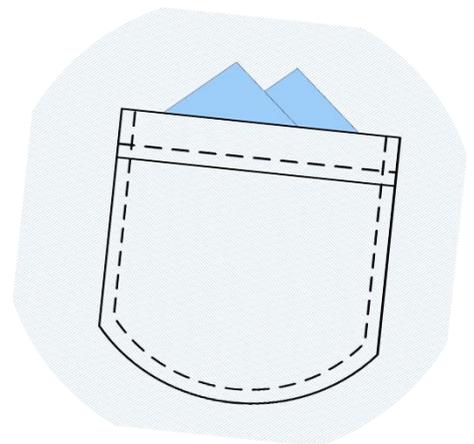
Graduate Sunday! Plans are in process to celebrate Covenant's 2021 Graduates on Sunday, May 16th. Parents will be contacted via email in April and asked to supply biography information for each Graduate. Save the date and celebrate our Graduates!

Mark Your Calendars for VBS 2021: Pocket Full of Parables (Stories Jesus Told)!

VBS will take place in virtual format from **June 21st – 25th** this summer, and the Stories that Jesus Told, *Parables*, will be our theme. We'll look for lost sheep, plant seeds, have a party for our brother, and help a friend in need! You don't want to miss it!

All VBS materials will be provided for our participants this year. Engaging lessons in Bible Drama, Arts & Crafts, Science, Music, Snacks, and Games will be featured each day as we explore the stories Jesus told. By the end of our virtual VBS, we'll have a pocket full of parables to share with others!

Stay tuned for registration information!



Organ Excitement Rises to a Crescendo

After such a difficult 2020, the new year fills one with hope and expectation. We had hoped, in 2020, to fulfill our 5-year commitment of payments to our organ builders, Grooms and Payne. We are thankful for so many whose prayers, gifts and support brought us so close to reaching this goal - now only \$11,000 from completion. We are also thankful that Kelly and George are not only our organ builders, but friends and advocates of Covenant as well. Recognizing the extraordinary circumstances and the strain that COVID19 has placed upon so many, they have responded in an extraordinary way and graciously extended our payment period until the end of this year. They are truly a blessing to our faith community.



Speaking of blessings . . . **Ronn Lowe** continues to lead and lift us up in worship as, each week, he reveals new meaningful ways for our organ to express sometimes familiar works. Thus bolstering their impact and inviting us all into a closer communion with God and each other.

As always, we thank God for the beauty and power of music – and for skilled musicians and organ builders filled with a passion to serve.

Questions? Please contact John McMillen (mcmilljd@gmail.com) or Jerry Barnes (gbarnes57@aol.com).

Gratefully,
John McMillen - Organ Committee Chair

◆ Covenant CAFE ◆ Connection ◆ Adventure ◆ Fellowship ◆ Education ◆

Covenant CAFE returns on Wednesday evenings in April with more entertaining programs for your enjoyment!

Wednesday, April 7th – We are giving our dedicated sound and video volunteers a break but invite you to revisit your favorite CAFE programs via our YouTube channel!

Wednesday, April 14th – Join us Live on Facebook at 6 PM for a wonderful music program with Deanne Vance on Piano, and vocals by Jennifer Mundorff and Kyle Allen!

Wednesday, April 21st – A fun evening with Richard Rudolph and his Marimba Band – Live on Facebook at 6 PM!

Roses, Buds, and Thorns

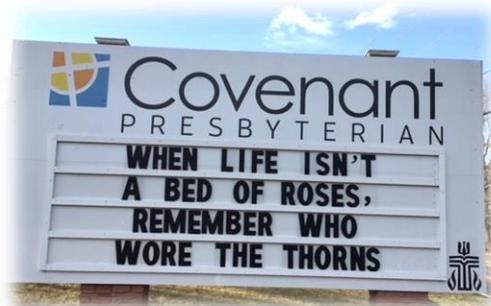
Our Youth, inspired by Rachel Erb, have a tradition of **sharing roses, buds, and thorns** with one another in Wednesday Night Zooms. The sharing connects us as we celebrate roses and buds and endure the thorns with one another.

Would **you** like to participate in sharing buds, roses, and even thorns with one another, too? Here's how it would work: Since Buds come before Roses, let's start there.

- **Bud:** A note you send to a person or family from the church directory. Start the note with "God loves you and so do I." Maybe add a comment or two of your own. When the Bud is received, it blossoms into a Rose . . . a delightful surprise for the recipient.
- **Rose:** The delightful surprise for the recipient of your note. This Rose develops a Bud . . . the recipient's note back to you if they choose to do that.
- **Thorn:** A concern you have about something. If you would like prayer, please include that in your note.

If you want to keep the cycle going, send them another Bud. You can also, if you want to, start a new cycle. Pick another name from the church directory and repeat the process.

Please send me the count of Buds, Roses, and Thorns you collect at the beginning of each month (gbarnes57@aol.com). I will publish those numbers in the *Buds, Roses, and Thorns* section of the Covenant Connection newsletter each month. Better yet, if you'd like to share a specific rose, bud, or thorn to be included in the newsletter, let me know that, too! We will all celebrate our roses and buds, and help one another endure the thorns through prayer and encouragement along the way. – Jerry Barnes





All in a matter of a week or so supplies for the Lenten bags were order, prepared, sorted, printed, bagged, and delivered throughout the entire Roanoke Valley by our many volunteers. The theme for Lenten 2021 is “Ordinary People, Extraordinary God.” It is God’s Spirit that lifts the ordinary and reanimates it into a grace-filled life.

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Kyle Allen | Mary Glenn & Rick Aydlett | Judi Barnes |
| David Brand | Tammy Catron | Gene Collier |
| Ron Cronise | Lee & Jeff Cutright | Anne Currin |
| Wil Dibling | Ioana Farthing | Sherri Harrison |
| Scott Hodge | Ruth and Bruce Johnson | Donna and Walter Jones |
| Ed Mahler | John McMillen | Carol Merritt |
| Maggie Moen | Sherry Moran | John Munton |
| Tomi Nave | Kathryn and Mark Overacker | Jennifer Powell |
| Sandra & Jim Ryals | Gail Schuler | Charlie Simmons |
| Debbie Snead | Paul Weary | |

Thanks to our wonderful Church family for your thoughts and prayers and all the beautiful cards that we received after our brother Harry's death.

Ethel and Charles Simmons

Session Highlights – March 28, 2021 Session Meeting:

- Approved a motion from Personnel and Policy Team that:
 1. Dr. Jennifer Jones Powell be called to serve as part-time (average of 20 hours per week) Stated Supply Associate Pastor (ordained, but not installed), all subject to Presbytery procedures and approvals; and
 2. that Dr. Powell’s service as Stated Supply Associate Pastor shall commence upon a mutually agreeable date subject to Presbytery approvals.
- Approved a motion from Finance:
 1. that the Session form a Long-Range Planning Team (LRPT) of approximately 7-9 persons charged with seeking the will of God and developing a 3-year Long-Range Plan for Covenant intended to foster the future growth, health, and vitality of the congregation in mission, membership, and monetary support; and
 2. that the makeup of the LRPT be representative of the congregation and submitted to the Session at its May 23, 2021 Stated Meeting; and
 3. that the LRPT keep the Session informed of its work on an ongoing basis;
 4. that the LRPT find creative ways to engage the congregation, church officers, other ministry teams, and church staff in developing the plan; and
 5. that the target date for the Session’s approval of the initial plan be scheduled on or before Session’s November 20, 2021 Stated Meeting, with the implementation of the plan to follow upon approval.
- Approved a motion from Communications Team to engage Responsive Technology Partners, Inc. in running Ethernet cable from the office area to the sound booth and to the front of the church with installation of multiple ports in each location. The quote includes all labor and materials and the price is \$1,320 which is to be paid from Memorial Funds.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Meg Munton, Clerk of Session at munton.clerk@gmail.com



The deadline for the May 2021 newsletter is 10 AM on Thursday, April 22nd.

Please submit news, articles, announcements, meeting dates, events, photos, & updates to the church office as soon as possible (gails@covroanoke.org).

Church Office Hours

The church office is open 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday – Thursday, and 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM on Friday.

***Please wear your face mask and maintain social distancing while in the building.
As the staff’s hours and schedules vary, you may want to call or email before coming by.***

Loving God, loving people, making disciples

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| | | | | 1 Maundy Thursday 6:30 Centering Prayer (home) 7:00 Tenebrae Service with Communion | 2 Good Friday 7:00 Stations of the Cross Service | 3 8:00 Men's Bible Study |
| 4 Easter Sunday *Bring Bread 7:00 Outdoor Sunrise Service with Communion 9:00 Worship Service in the Sanctuary with Communion (No Sunday School) | 5 Church Office closed | 6 9:30 Staff Meeting (Zoom) | 7 10:00 Holy Hunch Bible Study (Zoom) 4:00 Centering Prayer (Zoom) 7:00 CovYoGro (Zoom) No Choir Practice | 8 10:00 Red Cross Blood Drive 4:00 Drive 6:30 Centering Prayer (home) | 9 | 10 |
| 11 Bright Sunday *Hunger Offering 9:00 Worship Zoom Sunday School: 10:30 - Children 11:00 - Youth 11:00 - Adults | 12 10:30 Women's Bible Study (Zoom) 7:00 Faith Formation Team meets (Zoom) | 13 9:30 Staff Meeting (Zoom) 7:00 Circle of Friends Meets (Zoom) | 14 10:00 Holy Hunch Bible Study (Zoom) 4:00 Centering Prayer (Zoom) 6:00 Covenant CAFÉ – Live on Facebook 7:00 CovYoGro (Zoom) 7:30 Choir Practice (Sanctuary) | 15 5:00 Preschool Team meets (Zoom) 6:30 Centering Prayer (home) 7:00 Earth Care Team meets (Zoom-J) | 16 | 17 8:00 Men's Bible Study |
| 18 Children & Youth Sunday 9:00 Worship Zoom Sunday School: 10:30 - Children 11:00 - Youth 11:00 - Adults 11:30 Communications Team meets (Teams) 6:00 Session meets (Zoom) | 19 | 20 9:30 Staff Meeting (Zoom) 7:00 Missions Team meets (Zoom) | 21 10:00 Holy Hunch Bible Study (Zoom) 4:00 Centering Prayer (Zoom) 6:00 Covenant CAFE – Live on Facebook 7:00 CovYoGro (Zoom) 7:30 Choir Practice (Sanctuary) | 22 Earth Day 10:00 May Newsletter Deadline 6:30 Centering Prayer (home) 7:00 Earth Care Team meets (Zoom-J) | 23 | 24 |
| 25 Earth Care Sunday 9:00 Outdoor Worship Service Zoom Sunday School: 10:30 - Children 11:00 - Youth 11:00 - Adults | 26 10:30 Women's Bible Study 7:00 Diaconate Meets (Zoom) | 27 9:30 Staff Meeting (Zoom) | 28 10:00 Holy Hunch Bible Study (Zoom) 4:00 Centering Prayer (Zoom) 7:00 CovYoGro (Zoom) 7:30 Choir Practice (Sanctuary) | 29 6:30 Centering Prayer (home) | 30 | |



Covenant
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Loving God, loving people, making disciples

covenantroanoke.org



*To attend in person services, please review our safety protocols and register online at covenantroanoke.org
You may also join us virtually – Live on Facebook or recorded on YouTube*



Covenant Presbyterian Church
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Roanoke VA 24018

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