

# Covenant Call

July 2018 Newsletter

## A Deep Commitment to Listen by Pastor Dan Milford

As I write this newsletter article, I'm attending the 223rd General Assembly of the PC(USA). As I attend the meetings of the Middle East Issues committee, the committee to which I was assigned, I am struck by the deep commitment we have to listening. To begin with, our committee is comprised of over 40 commissioners who are either ruling elders or teaching elders (Presbyterian elders or pastors/chaplains). We come from all over the country, representing both genders, many ethnicities, differing political convictions, and a commissioner in his early 20's to several in their late 70's or 80's. And yet that group just represents the beginning of the diverse voices that we listen to.

We also have about a dozen Young Adult (18-25 years old) Advisory delegates, two Ecumenical Advisory Delegates, a Missionary Advisory Delegate, and a Theological Student Advisory Delegate. All of these advisory delegates have both voice and vote. They broaden the diversity of perspective that we hear. For instance, our Missionary Advisory Delegate serves in Israel/Palestine and one of our Ecumenical Advisory Delegates is from the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East and lives in Beirut, Lebanon.

Even that broad group of over 60 persons does not complete our challenge and invitation to listen. Instead, we're invited to hear from a variety of resource persons and overture advocates about the business before us. For every overture or commissioner's resolution that we consider, the original drafter is given time to speak. Additionally, resource persons—denominational staff members and General Assembly advocacy group members—are made available to respond to questions regarding the overtures before the committee.

But that's not all! (Now I sound like a 1980's era commercial for Ginzu knives or Parachute luggage!) The General Assembly has a surprising and intriguing

requirement. It states, in essence, that no item of business can be considered by the Assembly (or any of its committees) without providing time for open hearings. Anyone—whether Presbyterian or not—can speak to the Assembly committee considering the item of action. Sign-ups are made available and a specific time communicated to facilitate this openness to outside voices. We have heard from Jewish Americans speaking on both sides of multiple overtures and Palestinian Americans speaking on both sides of multiple issues. We've heard from Presbyterians involved in interfaith dialogue with Jewish partners who have been in favor of overtures before us, and those who have been opposed to these overtures. The perspectives we've been invited to hear have been broad and deep.

I've thanked most of the folks (on both sides of issues we're considering) who have come from outside the PCUSA to speak to us. Many have expressed their wonder that they have been welcomed to come and speak to the committee. They've noted that they are not given such an opportunity from many other faith communities. And so we listen.

Listening is such an important part of our life of faith. Listening with an openness to learn. Listening to people who are surprised to discover our openness and attentiveness. Listening for the Spirit to speak to us from any source. Listening.

We give a meaningful witness in our listening. I believe we also generally reach better decisions following our listening. May we be inspired by the intentional openness of our General Assembly in each of our lives as individuals and in community. May we find the courage to listen and the hopefulness that it will lead to deeper understanding.

# July Sunday School Schedule:

Weekly Summer Sunday School  
for all ages in July!

**Preschool (2 years – Kindergarten)**  
West Wing Room 107

**Elementary (1st – 5th Grade)**  
West Wing Room 103

**Middle School/Senior High (6th -12th Grade)**  
West Wing Room 201 (Youth Loft)

## Adult Summer Sunday School *Partial Truths* - 9:30am

Emmaus Room - Continuing in July

There are a multitude of phrases that many of us have heard before, or perhaps hear on a regular basis. Some of us have even said these phrases. These phrases sound Christian—perhaps something one might find in the Bible. These phrases have an element of truth, and yet they seem to miss the point in important ways.

Join us this summer as we look at common phrases and platitudes which are used in conversation. Each week, a different guest teacher will take a close look at one phrase and explore how it is partially true. The class will then examine ways in which the phrase does not capture the truth of the Bible and will explore how these common phrases can become stumbling blocks for us as well as for those whom the phrases are directed.

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Partial Truth</b>
July 1st	God helps those who help themselves. Teacher: Scott Simpson
July 8th	God won't give you more than you can handle. Teacher: Rebekah Hernandez
July 15th	All you need to do to go to heaven is ask Jesus into your heart. Teacher: Pastor Dan Milford
July 22nd	There but for the grace of God, go I. Teacher: Steve Haney
July 29th	No Partial Truths Class today. Please join us in Mission Hall for the Town Hall about this year's 223rd General Assembly in St. Louis.

## The Bible and the newspaper: God help us. Reading the Newspaper and the Bible in Context of Lectionary Readings

Beginning July 1st  
9:30am  
Samaritan Room

Karl Barth is quoted as saying "Take your Bible and take your newspaper, and read both. But interpret newspapers from your Bible." Newspapers, he says, are so important that "I always pray for the sick, the poor, the journalists, authorities of the state and the church--in that order. Journalists form public opinion. They hold terribly important positions. Nevertheless, a theologian should never be formed by the world around him--either East or West. He should make it his vocation to show both East and West that they can live without a clash. Where the peace of God is proclaimed, there peace on earth is implicit. Have we forgotten the Christmas message?" - Time Magazine 1963

Exploring Karl Barth's idea, this class will focus on reading the newspaper and the Bible together. Participants will be expected to pick one lectionary text (there is a choice of four) each week and bring a newspaper article to class from the week that relates to that text. This is a participatory class (not a lecture), and participants are asked to come prepared to discuss each Sunday. We invite you to bring a cup of coffee (or your choice of beverage) and your articles for an insightful discussion. Al Kissling will lead the discussion each week.

July 1st **First reading and Psalm:**  
2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27; Psalm 130

**Alternate First reading and Psalm:**  
Lamentations 3:22-33; Psalm 30

**Second reading:** 2 Corinthians 8:7-15  
**Gospel:** Mark 5:21-43

July 8th **First reading and Psalm:**  
2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10; Psalm 48

**Alternate First reading and Psalm:**  
Ezekiel 2:1-5; Psalm 123  
**Second reading:** 2 Corinthians 12:2-10  
**Gospel:** Mark 6:1-13

July 15th **First reading and Psalm:**  
2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19; Psalm 24

**Alternate First reading and Psalm:**  
Amos 7:7-15; Psalm 85:8-13

**Second reading:** Ephesians 1:3-14  
**Gospel:** Mark 6:14-29

July 22nd **First reading and Psalm:**  
2 Samuel 7:1-14a; Psalm 89:20-37

**Alternate First reading and Psalm:**  
Jeremiah 23:1-6; Psalm 23

**Second reading:** Ephesians 2:11-22  
**Gospel:** Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

July 29th **First reading and Psalm:**  
2 Samuel 11:1-15; Psalm 14

**Alternate First reading and Psalm:**  
2 Kings 4: 42-44; Psalm 145:10-18

**Second reading:** Ephesians 3:14-21  
**Gospel:** John 6:1-21

# GET CONNECTED

- **Website:** [www.covenantcares.org](http://www.covenantcares.org)
- **Prayer Chain** – send an email to [covenantprayerchain211@gmail.com](mailto:covenantprayerchain211@gmail.com)
- **Church News by Email** – send an email to [office@covenantcares.org](mailto:office@covenantcares.org)
- **No email? Telephone prayer chain** or church information lists - call the church office (210) 342-5253.



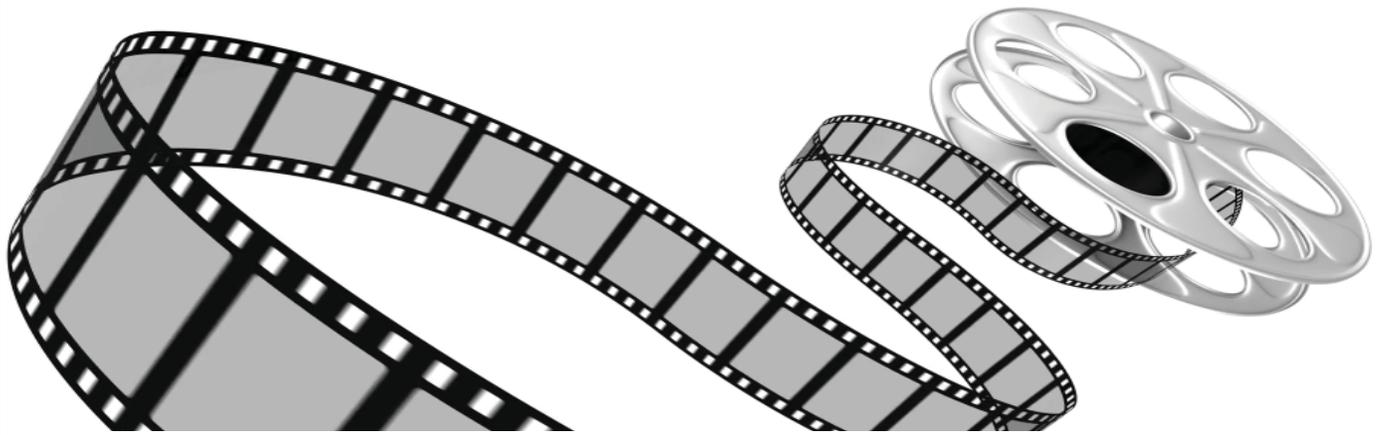
All are invited to join Young at Heart Friday nights at 6:30PM in Mission Hall for Game Night. This is a time of laughter, fun, friendship, and fellowship.

## Town Hall Meeting - Sunday, July 29th @ 9:30am in Mission Hall

From the Office of the General Assembly  
PCUSA website ([oga.pcusa.org/section/ga/ga/](http://oga.pcusa.org/section/ga/ga/)) :

**The General Assembly of the PCUSA meets every two years to review the work of synods and resolve controversies in the church. It also is responsible for matters of common concern for the whole church and serves as a symbol of unity for the church. The GA seeks to protect our church from errors in faith and practice and is responsible for assuring that the expression of our theology remains true to the biblical standards in our historic confessions. The GA presents a witness for truth and justice in our community and in the world community. It sets priorities for the church and establishes relationships with other churches or ecumenical bodies.**

**We invite our congregation to a Town Hall meeting in Mission Hall on Sunday, July 29th during the 9:30am Sunday School Hour. Come hear some of the highlights, discussions, and decisions that happened during the 223rd General Assembly in St. Louis. Pastor Dan, who attended this year's GA as a commissioner, will lead the Town Hall. We hope you will join us!**



## BEAUTIFUL MINDS COALITION (BMC) GOES TO THE MOVIES

For those HOT summer days and nights when keeping cool in the air conditioning sounds like your best choice, Covenant's Beautiful Minds Coalition is offering some suggestions for movies which feature characters who struggle with mental illness. All can be requested through San Antonio Public Library or check your favorite streaming service.

### Family-Friendly, PG rating

- **Frozen** – Elsa, one of the main characters, was written to show signs of anxiety and depression. If you didn't notice, it's something to look for on a repeat viewing. This could be used to build awareness or as a springboard for discussion.
- **Inside Out** – This Pixar classic features a main character whose life is changing in many ways. Several emotions are personified, which could help the viewer identify and talk about emotions in real life.

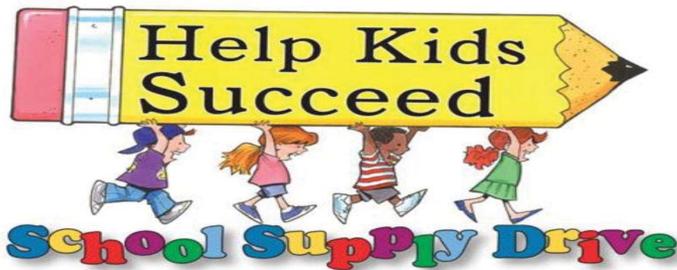
### PG-13 Rating – All are based on books of the same name. The Soloist has an additional subtitle.

- **A Beautiful Mind** (2001) is based on the true story of John Nash, a mathematical genius and Nobel Prize winner who lived with the delusions and paranoia of schizophrenia.
- **It's Kind of a Funny Story** (2010) deals with the experiences of a depressed adolescent with suicidal ideation who spends time in an adult psychiatric unit and learns the patients are ordinary people doing their best to cope.
- **Matchstick Men** (2003) is the story of two con men, one of whom struggles with severe Obsessive Compulsive Disorder as well as agoraphobia and panic attacks but must face life challenges.
- **The Perks of Being a Wallflower** (2012) is about the adolescent journey of a lonely, anxious boy who is navigating high school after dealing with childhood trauma and spending time in a psychiatric hospital.
- **The Soloist** (2009) is the true story of a writer who meets and writes about a gifted cellist who is living on the streets due to struggles with schizophrenia, and how the two help each other to make positive life changes.

### R-Rated

- **Brothers** (2009 remake of a Danish movie based on a Danish book) is the story of two brothers and the turmoil in both families when one brother returns from his fourth tour in Afghanistan with severe post-traumatic stress disorder
- **The Silver Linings Playbook** (2012, based on the book of the same name) tells the story, before and after diagnosis, of a man who lives with bipolar disorder.
- **Welcome to Me** (2014) – We follow the life of a woman with Borderline Personality Disorder as she strays from her treatment plan and then returns to it while dealing with major life events.

*Come join our BMC sharing group on Sunday mornings during  
the 10:30 fellowship time. All are welcome!*



## Summer Mission Trip Hurricane Harvey Recovery July 31st – August 3rd, 2018

We are excited to have over 20 participants commit to this summer's mission trip to help with Hurricane Harvey recovery in the Coastal Bend region! We invite the congregation to lift up our group in prayer as they will be working hard with the Coastal Bend Disaster Recovery Group (part of the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance strategy to coordinate volunteers) to assist people affected by last summer's hurricane. Updates, including pictures, will be posted to Covenant's Facebook Page ([www.facebook.com/covenant.satx/](http://www.facebook.com/covenant.satx/))

The Mission Committee is sponsoring the collection of school supplies for three agencies which our church sponsors, The House of Neighborly Service (HNS), Transitional Living Center of San Antonio Metropolitan Ministries (SAMM's), and the Christian Assistance Ministry (CAM). A description of each of these ministries can be found in our Mission Partners' Opportunity Book found in the Narthex. The House of Neighborly Service is located in one of the poorest sections of San Antonio and has been a Presbyterian-sponsored entity since 1917. The Transitional Living Center is located on Blanco Road south of Loop 410 and is for families going from homelessness to independent living. The CAM center is located downtown and provides aid to people in crisis.

The school supplies will go to some of the neediest children in our metropolitan area. To begin with, ordinary supplies such as notebooks, notebook paper, #2 pencils, crayons, colored folders, construction paper, and ballpoint pens are needed. When the school districts provide more specific lists for certain grade levels, they will be furnished to the congregation.

Bins for collection of these items will be found in the Narthex and in Mission Hall beginning June 15 so that we can begin accumulating these needed supplies in plenty of time to take advantage of special sales and be in time for distribution to children before school begins in August.

If you would like to make a monetary donation by check, please make it out to Covenant Presbyterian Church and in the memo line put "San Antonio School Supplies Drive".

### New Church Office Hours

**Monday - Thursday  
10:00AM - 2:30PM  
&  
Fridays Office Closed**

**If you need to get into the church outside of normal business hours, please contact Bethany Borak at the church office 210-342-5253 and make arrangements ahead of time.**



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**FACEBOOK.COM/COVENANT.SATX**

# Youth, Children & Family Service Day @ Children's Hunger Fund

Last month, some of Covenant's youth, children & families participated in a Family Service Day at the Children's Hunger Fund here in San Antonio. Our group joined many other volunteers to help fight the threat of hunger that many people will face by preparing Food Paks. These Food Paks provide 20 pounds of staple foods designed to supplement a family of four for about a week. It was fun to see a variety of ages participate together in providing hope to the world. Way to go!



## The Birthday Fund

Don't forget to celebrate your birthday with us!

Do you want to celebrate yourself and create a lasting legacy?

Do you want to teach your children the importance of giving to others?

Then we have a giving opportunity that is perfect for you. A great way to celebrate yourself and help others!

**It's simple.**

During your birthday month, you contribute a gift to the church that amounts to the age you are turning. Anyone can participate. It doesn't matter how young or old you are.

**Your birthday is a special day that deserves a special celebration!**

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# JOHN KNOX RANCH FAMILY DAY!

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**Saturday, July 14<sup>th</sup>**  
**10:00am – 3:00pm**  
**Carpool from Covenant at 9:00am**  
**1661 John Knox Road**  
**Fischer, TX 78623**

This is an intergenerational event! Young adults, youth, children & families from area PCUSA churches are invited to come and enjoy John Knox Ranch for the day. There will be a variety of activities for people throughout the morning and afternoon—including swimming! A bring your own picnic lunch will be at noon with camp songs and a small devotional.

**Please sign up on the black board in the Narthex by July 8<sup>th</sup>!**

Questions? Contact Chad: [chad@covenantcares.org](mailto:chad@covenantcares.org)

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## **John Knox Ranch Family Day**

This is an excellent opportunity for those who have never experienced John Knox Ranch AND for those who have many experiences with John Knox Ranch to enjoy the day! We would love to have as many youth, young adults, children & families to participate in this wonderful event! We do ask that you please sign up on the black board in the Narthex by July 8th so that we can make proper arrangements for rides.

## **John Knox Summer Camp**

John Knox Ranch offers amazing summer programs for kids! Summer camp can be expensive, which is why JKR is offering scholarships for up to half of the cost of camp tuition.

- **Day Camp** (9am - 3pm Monday through Friday) begins for ages 4 through rising 5th graders.
- **Resident Camp** (Monday - Friday) begins for rising 2nd graders through 9th grade youth.

For more information, please check out JKR's website for more information: <http://johnknoxranch.org/>

Covenant Presbyterian Church  
 211 Roletto Drive  
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**Email:** office@covenantcares.org  
**Phone:** 210-342-5253

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Return service requested

## July 2018 Birthdays

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Monica Simpson	2 Karen Slaven	3 Linda Alwine	4	5 Tom Eisenhut Liz Irvine	6 Sharon Fowler Nancy Sugarek Leila Caperton Lisa Hunt	7 Travis Kirsch Lester Murphy
8	9 Carrie Pitcher	10	11	12	13	14 Shelley Klinzing
15	16 Lisa Hunt	17	18 Lee Moreno	19 Emily Davidson	20	21 Jo Ann Parker
22	23 Natalie Cuellar Eric Melendez	24 David Lytle	25	26	27	28 Barbara Anderson
29 Lorin Douthit	30 Edward Gelsone Tess Pitcher	31 Hamilton Rogers				