

# Covenant Call

October 2021 Newsletter

## SHARED WORK & SHARED WITNESS By Pastor Dan Milford

- 1 The mountains declare the glory of God;  
the forests proclaim the work of his hands.
- 2 Day after day they pour forth a magnificent  
explosion of color;  
night after night they reveal knowledge.
- 3 They have no speech, they use no words;  
no sound is heard from them.
- 4 Yet their silence fills the earth,  
their unspoken truth rings through the valleys.

In the mountains, God has stretched a canvas.

- 5 He meticulously paints every leaf on every tree  
in bright yellow, green, orange, or red,
- 6 Color flashes across the landscape  
from one horizon to the other;  
nothing is deprived of its beauty.

As we experienced the beginning of fall in New England, I found myself adapting Psalm 19 to express awe and wonder at the beauty of the landscape the way the psalmist had done in contemplating the skies. In addition, I began to notice some of the many lessons the beauty of a New Hampshire fall can reveal to us.



It all begins with the shared work of the countless leaves across the mountains and valleys. All spring and summer, each leaf transforms light energy into food for growth, contributing to the creation of the forest. For trees to grow tall and strong takes decades. For the forest to cover and fill the landscape after a fire could take a century or more. For it to mature to “old growth” status could take several centuries. No one leaf gets much credit for anything. Their shared work over many years creates the result that we marvel at.

Likewise, the witness of any one leaf—or even any one tree—while beautiful, does not begin to match the sense of wonder at their shared witness. It takes billions of leaves create the full display—balsam firs and spruce trees steadily provide the same forest green presence in the

midst of change around them. The leaves of red maples and pin cherries turn a “poinsettia” red. Large toothed aspen, sugar maple, and white ash leaves provide splashes of orange. White birch, quaking aspen, striped maple, and witch hazel leaves fill in with yellow. Each leaf on each tree plays a small part in creating the beautiful symphony of color that rings out across the mountainsides.

While the leaves work hard all spring and summer helping the trees to grow in strength, health, and majesty, the witness that is most compelling is in how they die. No one travels to see live oak trees change their leaves in the spring. The compelling witness of the trees in the White Mountains of New Hampshire is in how they die, changing in color as the chlorophyll (causing green color) breaks down in the leaves, allowing yellow, orange, or red pigments to become prominent.

Despite their compelling witness arising from their ultimate sacrifice, not everyone who sees it will appreciate even that. Since I am somewhat colorblind, I can see some of the color change in individual leaves or trees, but the witness across the mountainside is lost on me. In addition to people not appreciating the trees’ witness due to personal limitations, they can fail to be able to see that witness when the leaves are obscured by rain, fog, or nighttime—circumstances of the moment.

Nevertheless, year after year the trees continue to sing forth a psalm of praise to their maker, knowing that often enough, their witness will break through and cause others to join in the song.

May we learn from the witness of the fall leaves in the White Mountains, each playing our part in the grand symphony of our Master, trusting that even when our part seems underappreciated, our Master will use our witness to promote God’s own purposes in our world.

Grace & Peace, Dan

# DELIGHT

*Adventures in Discipleship*

## Adult Sunday School

*Delight! Discipleship as the Adventure of Loving & Being Loved* by Justin Rossow

**“You bring God joy.**

**And God intends the feeling to be mutual.**

This book will help you lean into Joyful Delight, Thoughtful Delight, Playful Delight, Delicious Delight, and Desirable Delight in your life with God. Delight! invites you into a real, accessible, and down-to-earth way of experiencing the adventure of following Jesus.”

Grab a cup of coffee and together we'll study the book *Delight!* Each week, we will gather at 9:00am in Mission Hall and on Zoom (for those not ready to be in person) to explore and discuss the lessons from one of the book's chapters.

*Delight! Discipleship as the Adventure of Loving and Being Loved* by Justin Rossow can be purchased at your favorite bookstore. We encourage you to consider purchasing the book and adding it to your devotion time this Fall!

### October's Sessions:

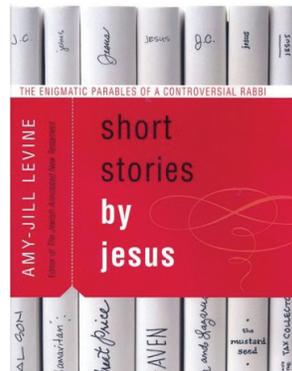
Oct. 3 – God's Will Directs Your Adventure  
Led by Pam Klinzing

Oct. 10 – God's Work Shapes Your Adventure  
Led by Khristina & Joe Fielder

Oct. 17 – God's Word Propels Your Adventure  
Led by Denise Haley

Oct. 24 – Living With Delight

Oct. 31 – Mission Focus Sunday



## SMALL GROUP WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Rejoice in a new perspective of the parables with

*Short Stories by Jesus*  
by Amy-Jill Levine

*“In Short Stories by Jesus, author Amy-Jill Levine takes you back in time and explains how original audiences understood Jesus' parables. You'll learn how new interpretations of the parables continue to challenge and provoke contemporary readers.”*

All of our groups are open groups—meaning anyone can join at any time. Please note that we do offer one Women's Bible Study and one Young Adult Bible Study. (Information about our Saturday morning Men's Bible study can be found in a separate feature in this newsletter.)



## Weekly Meetings

Zoom and In-person groups available.

**Tuesday evening (7:00pm)** via Zoom:  
Meeting ID: 876 4294 3211 Password: 696769

**Young Adult Bible Study**  
**Tuesday evening (7:15pm)** via Zoom:  
Meeting ID: 961 6414 3935 Password: covenant

**Wednesday Morning Women's Bible Study**  
**(10:00am)** via Zoom and in-Person @ Covenant:  
Meeting ID: 831 1529 2998 Password: 051831

**Wednesday evening (7:00pm)** via Zoom:  
Meeting ID: 844 5191 8536 Password: 355303

As always, you can always find the Meeting ID's and Passcodes for all of our weekly Bible studies on our webpage:

<https://www.covenantcares.org/weekly-bible-study/>

## Men's Saturday Morning Bible Study - 7:30 a.m.

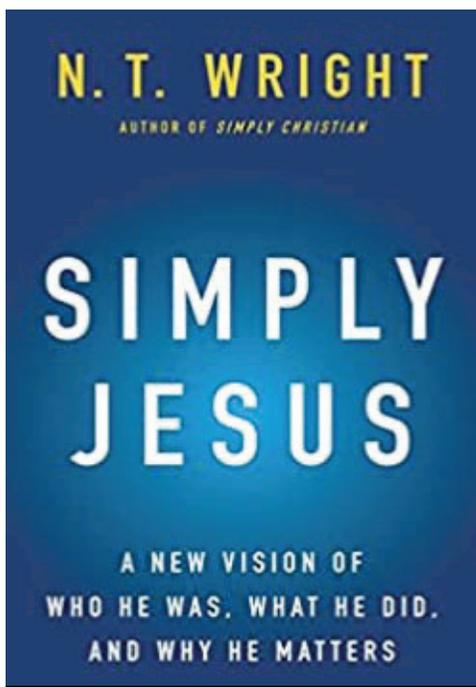
*Simply Jesus* by N.T. Wright

Led by: Jay Pitcher & Al Kissling

Meeting ID: 880 4315 3155

Passcode: 095022

Each Saturday, Covenant's men come together for fellowship and study. We invite you to join us for our current study, *Simply Jesus* by N.T. Wright. This study looks at the 1st Century A.D. context of the life, work, teachings, and actions of Jesus of Nazareth. The goal of the study is to look at the story of Jesus from the perspective of a historian to help us understand Jesus of Nazareth more fully. All men are welcome to join us for this study.



will focus on God's actions with the people in the Old Testament and celebrate that God never stops acting in the world—including with us today!

This Fall, our Children's Sunday School class will meet online via Zoom as well as in-person in our Esperanza classroom. Parents can access the Zoom link and password by contacting Chad Bosse ([chad@covenantcares.org](mailto:chad@covenantcares.org)).

The Christian Education Team asks for your understanding as our community makes the transition to include both our Zoom participants as well as our in-person participants during the Sunday School hour. Please know that this is a work in progress, and your patience and grace is greatly appreciated!

We hope your child will join us on Sunday mornings!

For the Zoom link and password, please contact [chad@covenantcares.org](mailto:chad@covenantcares.org).



### Children's Sunday School

#### *Growing in Grace & Gratitude*

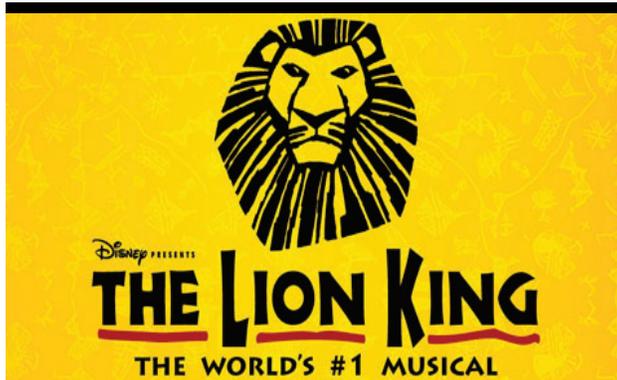
Sundays @ 9:00am

Covenant's Children's Sunday School class features the curriculum, "Growing in Grace & Gratitude", which helps transform the lives of children and those who love them, shaped by grace and gratitude. Each session shares a Bible story that reveals God's grace for us. Through fun, age-appropriate activities, and prayer, children will celebrate the meaning of this grace in their lives as they encounter a living God. Continuing in October, we

**FELLOWSHIP OUTING** - Join us for an evening out at the Majestic Theater to see Disney Presents The Lion King on Wednesday October 27th! We will meet up for dinner and some time for fellowship before the show. You're invited to join us for dinner, the show, or both!

Tickets for The Lion King are going fast, so go online to see options at

<https://www.majesticempire.com/shows/the-lion-king-2021>.



While we may not be able to sit together in the show, we would love to meet up for dinner before! We will meet at Acenar (<http://acenar.com/>) at 5:30 p.m. on the 27th. If you are interested in joining for dinner, please RSVP to Martha Wright at [wright.martha@gmail.com](mailto:wright.martha@gmail.com) by October 20th so reservations can be made.



August 29, 2021

**Cookout or “Sandwich-Out”** whatever you want to call it, thank you to all who joined as we kicked off the start of our fall program Delight: Adventures in Discipleship! Come by Mission Hall over the coming weeks to share your Delight and celebrate other’s on a wall featuring pictures, words, and stories of our lives!



## Experiencing Life Love Together through Prayer & Our Prayer Chain

by Denise Haley

One of the ways we care for and love one another is by praying, and our Prayer Chain is a way we do that as we share joys and concerns in our community. Those joys and concerns are emailed to the Prayer Chain email, [covenantprayerchain211@gmail.com](mailto:covenantprayerchain211@gmail.com), or emailed or called in to the church office and then sent to the Prayer Chain email.

*When people pray with us and for us, we are reminded that we are not alone. As we take a fresh look at how we care for and love one another, we want to help ensure that everyone has the opportunity to have the Prayer Chain available as a way for us to pray with and for each other.* If you use email and are not on the Prayer Chain, you're invited and encouraged to subscribe (see the email address above). If you do not use email, call the church at (210) 342-5253 and let the office know you would like to be added to the Prayer Chain and a Congregational Care Ministry team member will get back with you.

Also, when sending a prayer request for someone other than yourself or your immediate family, please get the okay from that person about sharing information, and if cards, calls or emails would be appreciated, the addresses and/or telephone number so that Prayer Chain members can reach out to him or her.

Thank you for subscribing, for submitting, and for your prayers we we grow in experiencing life love together through our Prayer Chain ministry.

# MISSIONS

across the street & around the world

**Mission Focus Sunday**  
**October 31, 2021**  
**9:00 AM in Mission Hall**

Join us to hear Ms. Banner Huggins, Development Officer for San Antonio and Coastal Bend, with Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services. She will update us on PCHAS' ongoing and new programs for helping San Antonio families and children as well as those in several other states. We have been a Ministry Partner with PCHAS for many years, and several of our members currently support this mission. Please come and hear about how this remarkable organization makes life better for many families who otherwise would not have a chance at success. Breakfast tacos will be served.

Also, please consider making plans to attend the PCHAS sole fundraiser on October 21, 2021, at noon at the San Antonio Country Club. There are tables of 6, and we would love to fill up one or more with Covenant members. The luncheon is always good, and often former PCHAS residents speak about their experiences. If you are interested, please contact Kathy Simmons at (210) 787-9789 or [Ksimmons1023@gmail.com](mailto:Ksimmons1023@gmail.com).



The gnomes would like to express their appreciation for the volunteers that helped assemble and install our new picnic tables. These tables are a welcome addition to the church property and lend additional utility to our Memorial and Community Gardens. We hope that having these tables in place will promote more outdoor church activities and corresponding fellowship.



Along those lines, please mark your calendar for the last Fifth Saturday event of the year. That event will take place on October 30 from 9:00 – 11:00. We will be doing some light landscaping by planting additional groundcover in the front of the church between the entrances to the Narthex and Education wing. Additionally, we will finish installing plants and putting down mulch adjacent to Mission Hall. There will be a picnic lunch afterwards where we can use our new picnic tables! Hope to see you there.



Covenant members and friends and families from our Cub Scout Pack 537 enjoyed an evening of fun and fellowship at our own "Covenant Presbyterian Night" at the San Antonio Missions Baseball game on Friday, September 3rd. It was a perfect night to be at the ball park, with breezy weather, plenty of ball park goodies, and wonderful conversation. Plans are to have another "Covenant Night" (or more) in 2022.



Join Us for

# Harvest

CELEBRATION EVENT

SUNDAY OCT. 24, 2021

ACTIVITIES BEGIN @ 4PM

Fall Family Games  
Pumpkin Painting  
Music  
Mummy Wrap

Everyone is encouraged  
to wear a fun  
Halloween Costume  
(Please no scary costumes)

**\*\*Please Register for this event by Sunday, October 17th\*\***

Covenant Presbyterian Church - 211 Roletto Drive - San Antonio, TX  
[www.CovenantCares.org](http://www.CovenantCares.org)

# Fall Harvest Festival Covenant Children & Parents Sunday, October 24th

4:00 – 6:00pm

\*Please register by October 17th!

Covenant's children and parents will gather together on Sunday, October 24th from 4:00-6:00pm for the annual Fall Harvest Festival event!

Join us for some fun family activities! We have a bundle of games and activities that the whole family can enjoy together, including: painting pumpkins (Bring your own Pumpkin!), the famous "Mummy Wrap", and more!

This year's Fall Harvest Festival will take place in the back part of our parking, near the Prayer Garden. Each family will have a designated table where all the family games/activities will take place. Masks will be optional once everyone is at their designated family table.

We do ask that each participating family brings their own pumpkins to paint, water to drink, and snacks to eat.

We also ask that participating families **register by Sunday, October 17th** by e-mailing Chad Bosse ([chad@covenantcares.org](mailto:chad@covenantcares.org)).

This will help us to make sure we have all the supplies for the planned activities. As always, if you have any questions about this event, please contact Chad Bosse. We hope your family will join us!

**Covenant's Young Adults** had a great time during September's Game Night! After some pizza and trivia, the young adults went outside and engaged in a friendly round of spraying paint onto each other. Many laughs were shared and each participant walked away a bit more colorful than when they arrived. Stay tuned for the next Young Adult activity!



**FAMILY NIGHT** - Covenant's children and families had a wonderful time at their September Family Night event! As an act of service, the children drew pictures with messages of hope to be included in the Compassion Bags. Then, after lunch, all participants took some time to paint a picture, known as "Fall Glimmer". Each family had a wonderful time working and playing together during the painting portion of the afternoon. It was a beautiful experience!

Every painting is unique, and they are currently hanging in Mission Hall for Covenant's community to enjoy for a few weeks before the families take them home. We invite you to come take a look and enjoy the art display!





# Adult Ministry presents: Financial Preparation for Aging Parents

October 24, 2021 2:00PM Mission Hall

As parents age, adult children often need to make numerous decisions about how to manage their parents' finances as well as protect them from financial fraud. Starting to have conversations early and creating a plan before an emergency happens will not only reduce stress for you and your parents, but it may also protect your parents from elder financial abuse, identity theft, credit card fraud, or even losing their home. Join Deborah Royster, Esq., Assistant Director, and Lisa Schifferle, J.D., Senior Policy Analyst, from the Office for Older Americans at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, as they provide insights, guidance, and resources on financial caregiving and financial exploitation.

## This webinar will address the following topics:

- What is financial caregiving?
- Informal financial caregiving
- Formal financial caregiving, including the role of a fiduciary
- Choosing a financial caregiver
- Planning for diminished capacity
- Protecting loved ones from financial exploitation
- What is elder financial exploitation?
- Who are the abusers?
- Why are older adults at risk?
- What are the signs to watch out for of elder financial exploitation?
- How do I report a suspected case of financial abuse?



## About the presenters:

**Deborah M. Royster** serves as Assistant Director, Office for Older Americans, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Prior to this role, Ms. Royster served as Chief Executive Officer of Seabury Resources for Aging as well as General Counsel to the District of Columbia Department of Aging and Community Living, where she served as Chair of the agency's Elder Abuse Prevention Committee and led efforts to implement community service programming focusing on elder abuse prevention and awareness, including financial exploitation.

She also has served in senior legal and executive management positions in the private, nonprofit, and government sectors, focusing on consumer-oriented issues, including health and aging services, telecommunications, and public utilities. As Regional Counsel and Vice President, Government Relations, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc., Ms. Royster led efforts to provide access to affordable health coverage for small businesses, individuals, and families. As Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary of RCN Corporation, Ms. Royster led efforts to bring competitive broadband services to consumers in major U.S. markets, and, as Deputy General Counsel of Pepco Holdings, Inc., she managed regulatory issues affecting consumers in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Delaware.

**Ms. Royster** also has an extensive record of civic involvement as a member of the governing board of nonprofit organizations, including the American Society on Aging; Leading Age; Montgomery County (Maryland) Commission on Aging; Forest Hills DC; Center for Nonprofit Advancement; and St. Ann's Center for Children, Youth, and Families.

**Lisa Weintraub Schifferle** is Senior Policy Analyst, Office for Older Americans, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, where she is the national lead of the Managing Someone Else's Money program. She also supports the Office's work to combat elder financial exploitation. Ms. Schifferle's career in consumer protection spans more than 20 years. She previously spent 12 years at the Federal Trade Commission, where she trained consumers, businesses, and advocates on scams, identity theft, and cybersecurity; served as Identity Theft Coordinator; and litigated fraud and data security cases. Ms. Schifferle spent eight years at the Maryland Legal Aid Bureau, as a Staff Attorney and Supervising Attorney, representing low-income clients in consumer, bankruptcy, housing, public benefits, and employment cases. She graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Yale College and received a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Virginia School of Law.

Questions? Call Demarius Douthit for more info.



## Presbyterian Cluster Habitat

An update on the Presbyterian Cluster Habitat as we continue to build decent affordable housing for families in San Antonio.

Habitat for Humanity International, generally referred to as Habitat for Humanity or Habitat, is a US non-governmental, and nonprofit organization, which was founded in 1976 by couple Millard and Linda Fuller. Habitat for Humanity is a Christian organization, and as of 2020, Habitat for Humanity operates in more than 70 countries.

The mission statement of Habitat for Humanity is “Seeking to put God’s love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope”.

I want to add that I give my thanks and lift prayers for the continuation of this ministry. As a Habitat homeowner, someone who did try the “traditional” ways of seeking homeownership, I would not have my home in Van de Walle Acres if this ministry did not exist.

Homes are built using volunteer labor and Habitat makes no profit on the sales. Habitat has helped more than 35 million people construct, rehabilitate or preserve homes since its founding, and as of 2013, Habitat was the largest not-for-profit builder in the world.

The Habitat for Humanity San Antonio family selection committee chooses homeowners based on their level of need, their willingness to become partners in the program and their ability to repay the loan. Every affiliate follows a nondiscriminatory policy of family selection. Neither race nor religion is a factor in choosing the families who receive Habitat houses.

Homeowners are usually expected to put approximately 500 hours of “sweat equity” into their own or other project homes. Once construction on the home is finished and the sweat equity is completed in full, in the United States the homeowner purchases the home with a 0% to 2% interest mortgage. The typically no interest mortgage payments permit a family the freedom to manage their finances more effectively, the end goal being to provide a ‘hand up’ and not a ‘hand out’.

The churches that make up the Presbyterian Cluster are asked to provide volunteers, lunch for the volunteers and contribute towards the \$57,000 financial support to the project.

COVID-19 affected many aspects of our lives, and Habitat for Humanity is not an exception. Because the 2021 Build was not fully funded by the Presbyterian Cluster Habitat, the Poerner Family Foundation provided the other half of the sponsorship, and together a home for

Karolyn Munguia and her young son was built on time in the spring of 2021 under COVID-19 safety criteria.

For 2022 we are hoping the Cluster may again be able to raise the entire \$57,000 required for full sponsorship.

At our July meeting the Cluster’s financial position was less than half of the amount needed to make the commitment to fully sponsor a house. The committee members were asked to return to their churches and share the financial status of the Cluster, and to ask how each church might respond so that the full financial sponsorship may be met.

I met with our Mission Team with a request for two specific motions. One is to designate the November Thanksgiving service offering to the 2022 Build. The second was a request that a donation of \$2000 from the church’s undesignated mission funds be made to the Presbyterian Cluster Habitat for the 2022 Build. This would be in addition to the contribution already in the church budget. This congregation has a well-earned reputation for being mission-oriented. The result was that the Mission Team approved the funding, and the Session approved the designation of the Thanksgiving Service offering. Thank you on behalf of a future Habitat homeowner!

Holy Smoke is the combined fundraiser of the Presbyterian Cluster. It is an evening of food, fellowship, prayer, an update on the build and an opportunity to meet the new homeowner. For many supporters who can’t volunteer at the build site any longer, this is also a great time to see familiar faces.

We had hoped to hold Holy Smoke this year, but with the uncertainty of the Delta variant, we will have **Holy Smoke Lite on Sunday, October 17, from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. via Zoom and in the Socially Distant seating in the sanctuary.** The link is in the bulletin, on the Holy Smoke Lite flier, and on the Covenant website.

More details of the 2022 Build will be provided as they become available.

In the Presbyterian Cluster I am the average age of a volunteer: I am 61, and while I expect to keep volunteering as long as the Lord allows, we sure can use a little more height and strength. Could 2022 be the year you volunteer at the Build Site?

If it is, you will be pleasantly surprised how the Lord blesses the volunteers by bringing us together to work and fills that day with smiles and laughter and at the end of the day you leave with a good feeling that the time was very well spent.

**Thank you for your continued support of this ministry and if you would like to make a donation please make checks payable to: “Presbyterian Cluster Habitat” with “Holy Smoke Lite” on the memo line, and mailed to 211 Roletto, SAT 78213.**

To clarify, only contributions made to the Presbyterian Cluster Habitat will go towards the Presbyterian cluster build. Donations to Habitat for Humanity will be used by that wonderful ministry, but will not be applied to the Cluster’s financial responsibility.

In Christ, Martha G. Flores

# Thoughts About Wellness - Bridges to Care

Beautiful Minds Coalition - October 2021

**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12:** *Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.*

Source: [https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/themes/Ecclesiastes/4/9#thematic\\_title\\_9278](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/themes/Ecclesiastes/4/9#thematic_title_9278)

Covenant Presbyterian is partnering with National Alliance on Mentally Illness (NAMI) in a program called Bridges to Care-San Antonio (BTCSA) that has as its goal developing a cadre of religious communities that are welcoming and accepting of people who are working toward mental health. BTCSA encourages volunteers to partner with people who are struggling emotionally, behaviorally and/or cognitively in their efforts to move toward and maintain Mental and Behavioral Health. It focuses on people supporting each other as equals. It is consistent with the PCUSA's Mental Health Network which states:

**“Our mission is to educate and equip the church to walk compassionately alongside people living with mental health issues, recognize neurodiversity, and encourage mental well-being.”**

Rather than focusing on what is wrong with a person, BTCSA chooses to focus on the path to wellness and how people can partner together in that journey. BTCSA strives to “focus people on language of wellness, health and resilience.”

To that end, it is worth taking a bit to reflect on “What is mental and behavioral wellness?”

The World Health Organization defines mental wellness as: “A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”

It seems obvious, but nevertheless needs to be said, that all of us are on different paths to mental and behavioral wellness and we are at different places along the path. As you read through the following indicators of wellness, think about where you are on each dimension and where others you may know who are not at the same place think, feel and behave. One way we share our humanity and make connections with those who are struggling to obtain and maintain mental wellness is to recognize that we too need the following to be well:

**Realize abilities-**realizing one's abilities involves a person's self-awareness. It requires an honest appraisal of strengths and weaknesses. It focuses on the strengths a person brings to his or her life, either innate or learned. It recognizes that everybody has knowledge, skills and abilities they bring to bear on their life, their relationships and their work and it affirms that most people are doing the best they can, given their unique needs, background and skills. It values and affirms the person's unique efforts and their abilities to gain health rather than focusing on their shortcomings. People need to recognize their strengths and sometimes they need others to point them out.

**Coping with the normal stresses of life-**it includes resiliency and coping-The Cleveland Clinic says, “Coping skills help you tolerate, minimize, and deal with stressful situations in life. Managing your stress well can help you feel better physically and psychologically and it can impact your ability to perform your best.”

**Coping skills** are those thoughts, feelings and actions that allow people to function well or at least adequately in life. They include the ability to recognize and analyze a problem and find a solution to it. They involve planning, anticipation of problems and the ability to evaluate the consequences of our actions. They include the ability to recognize and manage emotions and stress. Not everybody has good coping skills. None of us have the knowledge, skills and abilities we need to deal with all the stresses in our lives. We certainly were not born with the requisite skills. We have to be educated and learn them or learn to consult with others who may have the skills and can be trusted to use them in the person's best interests. Our community and relationships are good sources if we have ones that are accepting of us and trustworthy. Coping requires:

- **Maintaining positive relationships-** positive relationships involve ones that are accepting, encouraging, understanding, trustworthy and patient. Good relationships involve both quality and quantity of time. It requires that we take the time to build trust and to show understanding. And, it requires that we engage people and allow others to engage us at a deeper level than every day chatter. Often, folks who are struggling with finding wellness have a history of being wounded by “significant others” in the past. Trust is difficult for them. So, it takes time to demonstrate our ability to be trustworthy.

- Having a good support system- a support system is one that a person can go to when they need expertise outside of their knowledge, skills or abilities—a network of people who provide an individual with practical or emotional support. Support may be financial, temporal, emotional or knowledgeable. We can contribute our money, our time, our understanding and our knowledge of resources outside the church as we walk with others or when they walk with us. BTCSA has a place for everybody in the effort to develop community. Not everybody can befriend people on their way to health. Being supportive does not mean being a therapist. It means being a friend. AND, friendship comes in many forms. We will need to people who want to be companions to those struggling and we will need people to support the effort with administrative and financial support.
- Having a good self-image- Christianity is particularly and uniquely prepared to help others and ourselves in the area of self-image. We are broken and forgiven people; redeemed by Jesus and supported by the risen Christ. Bringing others who are working on mental wellness into our community and walking with them as they grow mentally, emotionally and spiritually will help them and us develop a positive self-image; an image of a person valuable enough to God that he sent his son to redeem them and us.
- Having a positive attitude- a positive attitude is not one that denies the hardships in life. It is one that helps us deal with those hardships. It involves what Psychologist Martin Seligman calls learned optimism. That is optimism is recognizing that trouble is: time limited; doesn't ruin all of life; and rarely is all the person's sole responsibility.

**Productive/fruitful work** - In our society, a value is put on “doing” rather than “being.” Consequently, people tend to be judged on the basis of what they have achieved in life. Self-worth often has to do with work and the value of work. People struggling with achieving Mental and Behavioral health often have trouble getting or maintaining employment. So, they often do not feel worth much because they do not “do” much.

Perhaps a slightly different perspective might benefit us and others in our pilgrimage toward mental and behavioral mental wellness. What if our “job” is to love and to be loved by others? What if our worth were defined as our ability to care for others and to allow others to care for us? How would that change our foundation for work? Starting with a sense of worth, we might feel free to engage in any work that cares for others. The economy would be different than the one defined in terms of dollars and cents. It would help us deal with those of us who are in a different socio-economic status because we would not evaluate or judge them.

**Contribution to community** - being a good support system is just as important as having a good support system. Contributing to community means being involved in goals that are bigger than ourselves. It requires what Mental

#### Wellness practitioners call self-transcendence. It results in:

- A shift in focus from the self to others –consideration of the needs of others.
- A shift in values –reward for an activity is the activity itself.
- An increase in moral concern –a more intensive focus on doing what is right.
- Emotions of elation – self-transcendence can trigger awe, ecstasy, amazement, feeling uplifted, feeling elevated, etc. (Wong, 2017).

#### The Take Aways:

- We are walking the same path as people who are struggling to find Mental and Behavioral wellness.
- We can provide a community which honors the process as much as the outcome- we are all a work in progress.
- Our community provides a diversity of knowledge, skills and abilities that are helpful in building a Behavioral Health Friendly Congregation
- Support comes in many forms: we can contribute time, finances, friendship. What is it you can contribute?
- Getting out of ourselves is essential to our wellness.
- Want to know more? Want to get involved?

Contact: Michael McMains at [mjmcmain@icloud.com](mailto:mjmcmain@icloud.com), 210-831-4321  
or members of the Beautiful Minds Coalition at [www.covenantcares.org](http://www.covenantcares.org).

Covenant Presbyterian Church  
211 Roletto Drive  
San Antonio, Texas 78213

**Website:** www.covenantcares.org  
**Email:** office@covenantcares.org  
**Phone:** 210-342-5253

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## Holy Smoke Lite October 17th

Presbyterian Cluster Habitat - We had hoped to hold Holy Smoke this year, but with the uncertainty of the extent of the Delta variant, we will have **Holy Smoke Lite on Sunday, October 17, from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. via Zoom and in the Socially Distant seating in the sanctuary.**

The Zoom Link will be located on the church website [www.covenantcares.org](http://www.covenantcares.org).

Thank you for your continued support of this ministry. Please make checks payable to: "Presbyterian Cluster Habitat" with "Holy Smoke Lite" on the memo line, and mailed to the church, 211 Roletto, San Antonio, TX 78213, or for Zelle, email the church office at [Office@covenantcares.org](mailto:Office@covenantcares.org) for information on how to give quickly with zero fees to the church. To clarify, only contributions made to the Presbyterian Cluster Habitat will go towards the Presbyterian cluster build. Donations to Habitat for Humanity will be used by that wonderful ministry, but will not be applied to the Cluster's financial responsibility.

### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81878439304?pwd=eLY4TmVqNGtyN3FLRlZHa0Y2dTbKQ'T09>

**Meeting ID:** 818 7843 9304 **Passcode:** 622128