

Covenant Call

August 2022 Newsletter

Mary & Martha's Priorities By Denise Haley, Elder

What a summer we're having! Who would have thought we'd be feeling the heat day after day of 100-plus-degree temperatures and zero percent chances of rain? Or the effects of the COVID virus that has come to many of us? Thankfully, everyone is recovering and no one has been hospitalized, as far as we know. Or the stress of rising prices and dwindling finances? These are only a few of the things causing us to shift some of our priorities – when we go outside, how we care for ourselves or have others care for us, when and how many times we run errands, or what and how much we buy only scratch the surface of the choices we make every day to prioritize how we live.

In his message on July 17th, Elder Karl Hays used an illustration familiar to many of us about priorities. "The Professor and the Jar" story begins with the Professor showing his students a jar "filled" with stones and asking if the jar was full. He then added sand around the stones, again asking if the jar was full. Finally, he added water to the stones and sand and asked one last time if the jar was full, and at last it was. His lesson to the students was that to really fill the jar, the big pieces needed to go in first.

The Bible lesson that day was the familiar story of sisters Martha and Mary and the day Jesus and his disciples were coming to visit. Martha was working furiously so that everything would be perfect and they would be giving Jesus their best, and then got really mad at Mary for not helping her by sitting at Jesus' feet instead. She even complained to Jesus and told HIM to tell Mary to help her. Jesus told Martha (I'm paraphrasing here) that Mary was the one who had the right priorities.

We all have times in our lives when we're a lot like Martha. We get focused on so many things – tasks and chores, family emergencies that come up suddenly, work deadlines, volunteer schedules that somehow get filled with activities all coming at the same time, commitments involving our children, our parents, and others we care for, and any number of other valuable, worthwhile, and necessary activities. We then find ourselves frustrated and overwhelmed.

What if we looked to Mary's example and reset some of our priorities so we could sit a little longer at Jesus' feet? What would that look like? It will look different for everybody. Even only a few easy choices could help us do that. Maybe we recommit ourselves to a routine of Bible reading and prayer. (We could even have a "prayer circle" wherever we are, around the same time every day, and pray together. How powerful would that be!) Maybe we listen to timeless hymns or contemporary Christian music for reminders of Jesus' love and grace. Maybe we listen to a podcast or sermon, read a devotional, join a weekly Bible study, or watch our worship service on Facebook during the week if we're not in worship on Sunday. Or maybe we recommit ourselves to the habit of worshipping together on Sunday mornings and being in Sunday School if we're able, at Covenant or the faith community we call home.

Martha's example isn't all bad, though. We still need some of her kind of energy and interest in making things clean and beautiful in our own homes and our church homes, too. That old saying "Many hands make light work" is so very true. Applying just a little more energy around our campus – from helping our plantings survive by hand watering the landscape, to tidying up inside, to helping organize the kitchen or supply cabinets, and so many of those "many hands make light work" activities can help beautify our surroundings, inside and out.

We know that fall is coming and it won't be this hot forever, and even though it looks like COVID isn't going to go away, we are better equipped to live with it, and that rising prices and financial uncertainty will eventually stabilize. As we think about our priorities and what following Mary's and Martha's examples might look like for each of us, we can rest in the assurance of God's love for us. And that is Good News!

As always, feel free to contact any session member with ideas and suggestions. We'd love to hear from you!

BACK to SCHOOL SUNDAY

August 21st

9:00AM Sunday School Hour

- Parents of children are invited to meet Chad Bosse in Mission Hall to hear about educational opportunities for children for the upcoming year.

10:30AM Sunday Worship Service

- We will recognize students, teachers, and educators with a special blessing for the new school year.

11:45AM Back to School Luncheon & Gospel Sing-a-long

- Please bring your favorite school lunch style sandwiches or salads to share with the congregation. **Chips and fruit provided.**
- **Ice Cream Sundaes will be provided to enjoy during our Gospel Sing-a-long.**

Mission Giving Opportunity: Those who are wanting to support kids going back to school can make a monetary donation to be split equally between Larkspur Elementary School and Presbyterian Children's Home & Services (PCHAS).



NEWS

On July 9th, the 225th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) concluded three weeks of meetings, conversations, and worship. Issues addressed ranged from approval of declarations on Ukraine, Israel/Palestine, Immigration, and fossil fuel divestment to continuing commitment to structural changes, Gun Violence, Race and Gender Justice. More complete information on all this, and the election of two co-moderators, can be found at:

<https://ga-pcusa.org/>

<https://www.pcusa.org/news/2022/7/12/summary-general-assembly-actions/>



Mindfulness By: Rebekah Hernandez

As we get closer to the end of summer, schedules start filling up and everyone seems to get busier with each passing day. How can we not get caught up in the hustle and bustle? One strategy to try is mindfulness.

Mindfulness - “state of greater awareness [achieved] by consciously and deliberately noticing what we’re attending to in the present moment instead of remaining on autopilot,” according to clinical neuropsychologist Jennifer Wolkin, PhD. Put more plainly, it’s truly being in the moment and focusing on the people or activity that you are participating in. But actively being mindful is not always easy to do, especially when there is a lot to think about, plan, and do. Let's explore a few techniques to help keep us focused - grounding, meditation, zoning in on the details, and acknowledging and accepting your feelings in the moment.

Grounding techniques are exercises that may help you refocus on the present moment to distract yourself from anxious feelings. It can vary from person to person and in different situations, it could be eating something sour to ‘shock’ yourself out of an anxiety spiral, or focusing on your breathing and/or your senses, or moving to a space where you can be peaceful, or stepping outside into the fresh air.

Meditation can help to clear the mind and set intentions for the day/week. There are a lot of different ways to meditate, so find one that helps you. I’ve found that arranging cut flowers has helped me calm my mind. When you are trying to zone in, you focus on the things you see, shapes, colors, textures, etc.

Acknowledging and accepting your thoughts and feelings in the moment can help to stop a dark thought spiral or anxiety from taking over. It can also offer you a moment to contemplate a particular thought or feeling, as well as how you want to respond or react to that thought or feeling.

All of these techniques help us lower stress and get into a calmer state. But it won’t happen by just trying it once, just like with most things it takes practice, repeated practice. Psychologist Justin Puder, PHD says “At first it may be hard, but you can strengthen your mindfulness muscle the more you do it.” These exercises get us “out of the thought cycle you are caught in to help you to refocus your energy on the present so you can challenge the thoughts, find acceptance, and/or make a change that better aligns,” says Amber Beenziger, LPC.

As we start to practice mindfulness, we can start to enjoy all the moments and focus less on the stress and having everything perfect (something I struggle with). Let’s move forward in this journey together, feel free to connect with me and others to share experiences around becoming more mindful.

THE SIMPLEST WAY TO CHANGE THE WORLD

BIBLICAL HOSPITALITY
AS A WAY OF LIFE

NEW! Adult Sunday School *Simplest Way to Change the World* by Dustin Willis & Brandon Clements Emmaus Classroom @ 9:00am

How to make disciples using hospitality.

Deep down, every Christian wants to make a difference. But for many of us, the years come and go and we never do. The good news is: **change can be as simple as opening your front door.**

The Simplest Way to Change the World is about biblical hospitality and its power for the gospel. Since people will sooner enter a living room than a church, hospitality is a natural and effective way to build relationships for Christ. You'll learn:

- How the home can be a hub for community
- How hospitality leads to joy, purpose, and belonging
- How it grows families to love the things of God
- How it's not about being the perfect host
- How to be hospitable regardless of your living space

Hospitality is a beautiful legacy of the church, and a great way to make disciples. As you open your life up to others, you share in the very character of God and experience His joy. And you get to witness as lives change—including your own.

Participants can purchase *The Simplest Way to Change the World* by Dustin Willis and Brandon Clements from their favorite bookseller. The class will take a closer look at the concepts in the text, and share ways in which we all can use our gift of hospitality to affect our world.

We invite you to join us on Sunday mornings—either on our campus in the Emmaus Classroom or online via Zoom for this unique study! Zoom information can be found on our webpage:

<https://www.covenantcares.org/sunday-school/>



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.

This summer, we explore what is NEW! With the rush of a mighty wind and flames igniting the spirits of the followers of Jesus, life was breathed into a NEW church. We'll learn about NEW disciples and how they worked to spread the message to everyone that Jesus provides NEW life.

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). We hope your child will join us on Sunday mornings!

Maintenance & Technology Update

Renovations to the church exterior made possible by the generous Pilgrim Alena donation are now complete. Work consisted of removing, replacing, and repainting gutters; replacing old and installing new gutters; completely repainting the church exterior; and minor tree trimming and roof repairs. The Maintenance and Technology Ministry hopes you are happy with the result and were not too inconvenienced by the effort. It is important to maintain our facilities for the use and enjoyment of current, and future congregations. With that in mind, we hope to implement additional renovations and repairs in the very near future.

San Antonio Missions Baseball Game Night



Tuesday, August 2nd, 7:05pm

Nelson W. Wolff Stadium

Join us for a "homerun" of a time.

Contact Rebekah Hernandez or Denise Haley for more information.

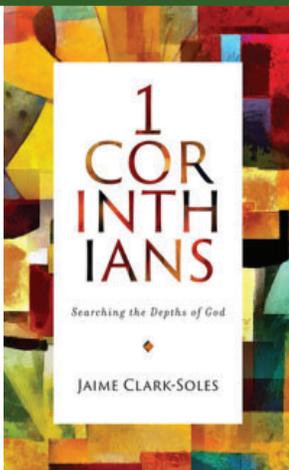
Summer Weekly Small Group Bible Studies *Christ, Culture, and Cinema: How Faith and Films Intersect* by Jeffrey Skopak



Movies have influenced American culture for years: from the release of Star Wars in 1977, to cult classics such as The Princess Bride. Entire universes have been made from movies, like the Marvel Universe, and they live on in the hearts of those who loved them. But how do even the most secular looking movies intersect not only with the culture, but with Christianity? How can some of the most loved movies of the 21st century circle back to teach about the faith and show Christ?

Continuing through August, Covenant's Small Groups will explore several different movies using Jeffrey Skopak's study which examines how movies reflect today's culture. Groups will look at several films to help us understand where Christ's love needs to go.

Covenant has several different Small Group Bible Studies that meet. Each group will set its own schedule for meeting this Summer. If you are interested in participating in this study, please reach out to Chad Bosse (chad@covenantcares.org) and he'll be happy to get you in touch with one of the groups that meet!



POTLUCK & STUDY

Wednesday, August 10th & 31st Doors open at 5:45pm for dinner

Please join us in Mission Hall for a once-a-month study on Wednesday evening, beginning with a potluck dinner. We will study and discuss 1 Corinthians, the story of the first Christian community told by Paul. In August we will meet two times (August 10th & 31st) to to makeup for the canceled session in July.

We will use the text and video series *1 Corinthians: Searching the Depths of God* by Jaime Clark-Soles. First Corinthians is one of the most gripping books in the Bible. In this letter, Paul, the complicated, layered apostle, writes to the people trying a wild new social experiment known as a Christian community. Not unlike the church today, this community dealt with factions, sexual immorality, gender issues, money issues, theological questions, lawsuits, problems in worship, and problems in leadership.

In *1 Corinthians: Searching the Depths of God*, Jaime Clark-Soles explores these topics and the awe inspiring, breathtaking world of the first-century church. Examining the teachings of Paul, she addresses church history, the logic of the cross, spiritual gifts, death, afterlife and the resurrection, human sexuality, and the joys and challenges of living in community. Participants will learn to look at 1 Corinthians from a variety of viewpoints and apply its lessons to their own faith.

You're invited to our annual

BACK TO SCHOOL BBQ

Join us for games, BBQ and fun!

SATURDAY

August 13th
11:30 am - 1 pm

**SAN ANTONIO
CAMPUS**

6355 Whitby Road,
San Antonio, TX 78240

PLEASE RSVP

banner.huggins@pchas.org

210.843.5477

pchas.org



Presbyterian Children's
Homes and ServicesSM

“It Takes a Village”

Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services has been a presence in Texas since 1903, carrying out their mission of “providing Christ-centered care and support to children and families in need.” They have adapted to changing times and now have multiple residential and community programs to support families, children, and young adults. And we are privileged to have a brand new single-parent family residential campus right here in San Antonio. Covenant has always been a huge supporter of PCHAS, and it would be a great time to become more involved with them by volunteering to help on the San Antonio campus. Below are numerous areas in which you could share your unique talents and time to help those in need.

There is an immediate need for Child Care Volunteers to watch children while their single parent attends budgeting classes. 1.5 hour session

Please contact Jennifer Quintero, Volunteer Coordinator at 1-800-888-1904.

On the next page is a list of school supplies needed. The deadline is August 3 for these donations. Please contact Gordon Smith, Mission Team Chairman, at 210-342-5253 if you would like to donate. Please prayerfully consider supporting this Presbyterian organization with your time, talents, and donations.



Presbyterian Children's Homes and ServicesSM

School Supply List for 2022 Back to School BBQ:

- *Please deliver on or before Friday, August 5, 2022*
- *Email, text or call Banner Huggins to confirm drop off arrangements*
 - *Email: Banner.Huggins@pchas.org*
 - *Cell: 210-843-5477*
- *Order online from your preferred vendor & ship directly to the campus address c/o B. Huggins*

San Antonio Campus
6355 Whitby Road
San Antonio, TX 78240

Day Care Needs (ages 3 months – PreK/Kinder):

- Baby wipes
- Diapers size 3-6
- Small Child Back Packs
- Toddler crayons (packs with 8 large crayons)
- Water color paints
- Refillable water bottles

School Supply HUGE NEEDS (kinder-college):

- **Backpacks (no wheels)**
- **Soft side lunch boxes**
- **Folders *with pockets & brads***
- **composition notebooks for all ages (lined journals/no graph paper)**
- **Hand sanitizer (pumps & individual sizes)**
- **Zip lock baggies (quart & gallon sizes)**
- **Refillable water bottles**
- **earbuds**

School Supply needs (kinder-college):

- pencil pouches or boxes (5x8)
- Expo Markers
- Colored pencils
- Thin & big markers
- Rulers (centimeters & inches)
- Scissors for all ages
- Single subject spiral notebooks (70—100 sheets)
- Crayons (24 count packs)
- 3x5 index cards
- No. 2 pencils (no mechanical)
- Kleenex
- Paper Towels
- 3-ring binders
- Ball point pens
- High lighters



Covenant Presbyterian Church
211 Roletto Drive
San Antonio, Texas 78213

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

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS
PERMIT NO. 1091

Return service requested



GET CONNECTED

- **Church News by Email** – We send an email several times a month to inform members and friends on church news and events. Email office@covenantcares.org to have your email added to the list.
- **Website:** www.covenantcares.org - See recorded sermon videos, weekly devotionals, access to event calendar, and links to Zoom Bible Studies.
- **Watch Live Worship Services on Facebook**
<https://www.facebook.com/covenant.satx/>
- **Prayer Chain** – send an email to covenantprayerchain211@gmail.com