

# Covenant Call

September 2022 Newsletter

## Bringing Our Best By Denise Haley, Elder

September brings the start of another season in the life of our church – new education opportunities, nominating and electing new leadership, and the “generosity season” of stewardship.

As we say goodbye to our “Sabbatical Summer,” we have much to be thankful for and people to thank for bringing their best and stepping in as we experienced life together while Pastor Dan has been on Sabbatical:

- Rev. Sonja Dalglish has been a steady, loving presence as our pastor for pastoral care needs during the past four months and our worship leader many Sundays -- from her first message that contained a big “What if?” our community became so known for being loving that people would be drawn here, and always ending Sunday worship with the charge to “Go in Peace, and Serve the Lord.” Thank you, Pastor Sonja.
- Rev. Dr. Sallie Watson, our General Presbyter; Rev. Laurie Palmer, our Presbytery Stated Clerk, and Elder Karl Hays, a life-long member of this congregation, all of whom have great passion for God and sharing God’s message, have challenged and inspired us in worship. Thank you, Sallie, Laurie, and Karl.
- Rev. Jon Watt moderated our session meetings. Jon is the Pastor at Northwood Presbyterian, and his wisdom, guidance and observations have helped our session grow to be better leaders. Thank you, Jon.

We also want to acknowledge and thank our staff and all our volunteers for their energy, work, and care, especially during these past four months. We’re grateful to them for bringing their best and for

taking care of the day-to-day things that so often go unnoticed by most of us. Thank you.

While there are day-to-day things that go unnoticed by most of us, as well as some big things that are taken care of without much fanfare – repairing a burst pipe, bringing our elevator up to code, or replacing an air conditioning unit, to name a few – some things are definitely noticed! Our campus has a fresh, new look now that our exterior repairs are completed, and if you use our kitchen, you’ll see a new freezer. Special thanks to Mike Flinn and the Maintenance and Technology team for all their work.

In addition to the special “Sabbatical Summer” filled with new experiences, people, and opportunities, the ministry teams coordinated by a session member – Planning, Finance and Stewardship, Evangelism, Outreach/Mission, Congregational Care, Worship and Music, Maintenance and Technology, Christian Education, Youth and Young Adults, Adult Ministries, Clerk/Communications, and Fellowship – continue to do the work of their ministries.

As we begin the “September season,” you are invited, and encouraged, to bring your special gifts and talents – your best -- to a ministry team. “Working” together is how connections are made, friendships are developed, and the feeling of belonging grows. Please get in touch with me or any session member with your ideas or questions.

Finally, on behalf of the session, I’d like to thank you for your encouragement and support. We’ve heard great feedback, and we appreciate it – and YOU. Here’s to looking forward together to what God has in store for us next, and to – with God’s help – bringing our best.



**Welcome Home Dan & Nadia!**  
**Luncheon - September 4th @ 11:30AM**

**Pastor Dan Milford and wife Nadia will be returning to Covenant on Sunday, September 4th. Join us in welcoming them home after Pastor Dan's four month sabbatical. We hope everyone will join us for a Mexican themed luncheon. Sign-up in the Narthex to bring a dish to share.**

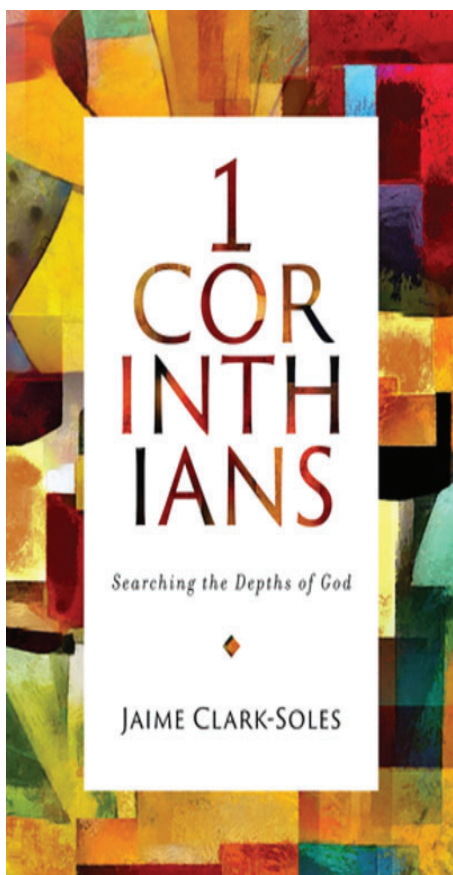
## **POTLUCK & STUDY**

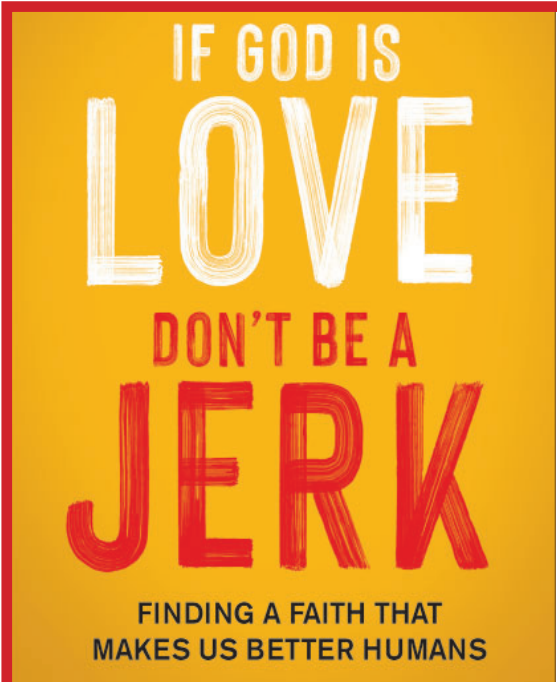
**Wednesday, August 31<sup>st</sup> & September 14<sup>th</sup>** Doors open at 5:45pm for dinner

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. Mark your calendar for August 31<sup>st</sup> and September 14<sup>th</sup>.

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.





## Adult Sunday School

*If God is Love, Don't Be a Jerk*

**Beginning September 11th - Emmaus Classroom @ 9:00am**

### **Thou Shalt Not Be Horrible.**

Imagine for a moment what the world might look like if we as people of faith, morality, and conscience actually aspired to this mantra.

What if we were fully burdened to create a world that was more loving and equitable than when we arrived? What if we invited one another to share in wide-open, fearless, spiritual communities truly marked by compassion and interdependence? What if we daily challenged ourselves to live a faith that simply made us better humans?

This discussion-based study will explore how we can embody this kinder kind of spirituality where we humbly examine our belief system to understand how it might compel us to act in less-than-loving ways toward others. By taking a good, honest look at how the beliefs we

hold can shape our relationships with God and our fellow humans—we uplift our hope to make sure that love has the last, loudest word.

## Children's Sunday School Children at the Lord's Table class

**September 11th, 18th, & 25th - 9:00am**

During the first three weeks of Sunday School in September (11th, 18th, 25th), our children's classes will be learning about communion in the Bible, in our church, and our Book of Order. Children participating in the class will celebrate by participating in the communion service on October 2nd, World Communion Sunday!

Beginning October 2nd:

Classes will focus on foundational truths about God using the Bible, storybooks, art, music, and games. This year, all children will gather together at 9am to participate in an opening time together in the Sanctuary. This opening time will feature music and energizers. After, children will be dismissed into their class where they will be invited to explore topics of faith in a unique way.



### **Save the Date:**

**Fall Harvest Festival & Trunk-or-Treat  
Sunday, October 23rd**

Each year, Covenant Presbyterian Church hosts a Fall Harvest Festival & Trunk-or-Treat. This year, we will be hosting this free event in our 410 Parking Lot and inviting the community to spend some time enjoying the inflatables, games, and music. In order to make this event successful, we will be needing some volunteers to help make it happen! We will have more details on the volunteering opportunities soon. Until then, please mark Sunday, October 23rd on your calendar as the date to help!





## Maintenance & Technology

By Elder Mike Flinn

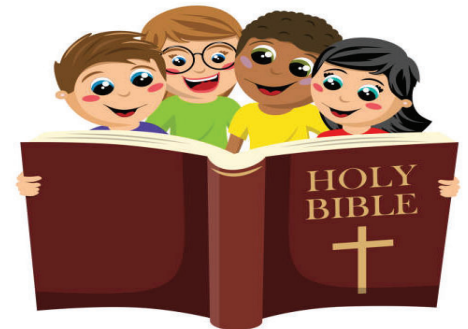
It takes significant material, personnel, and financial resources to operate and maintain a large facility. Covenant Presbyterian Church is no different. This past summer was particularly challenging. Although the Pilgrim Allende funds were a blessing for helping us to renovate the exterior, they were not available for the more routine items. The freezer in the kitchen stopped working a sometime during the pandemic downturn. Since in

person activities were not taking place, that was not an immediate concern. As events started picking up again, we needed to replace it. At about the same time, we learned that our elevator needed to be brought into compliance with current safety codes. Our Church Administrator (Bethany Borak) did a masterful job of coordinating the work of three separate contractors to accomplish that task. We also lost the air conditioning unit in the Information Technology room. The AC unit there is critical to keep the IT equipment from overheating and we had to replace as well. Somewhat related to that problem was our monthly cooling bill. We are not too far removed from the summer that we have forgotten the long period of 100+ degree days. Add to that some inefficient cooling units and rate increases related to Winter Storm Uri and our electrical bill resulted in some unpleasant surprises. While we are on the subject of utility bills, we also had a pipe break beneath the sidewalk outside of the entrance to Mission Hall. To get to the pipe, the plumbers had to dig four feet beneath the sidewalk. There were four plumbers on site for most of the day. You may be able to imagine the magnitude of that bill!

The bottom line is that our maintenance budget was severely strained this past summer for reasons that were mostly unable to anticipate. But these are the cost that are incurred to keep our church a safe and comfortable place to worship and fellowship. Please keep these considerations in mind as the stewardship period comes around and you assess how much you can contribute to help the church continue in its mission.

## Children's Bible Presentation September 11th

Covenant Presbyterian Church would like to gift our 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, & 4<sup>th</sup> grade students their very own NIRV Bible on September 11<sup>th</sup> during worship. These bibles are written at their reading level and are given as a gift. If your child is in 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> grade and would like to receive an NIRV Bible, please contact Chad Bosse ([chad@covenantcares.org](mailto:chad@covenantcares.org)).



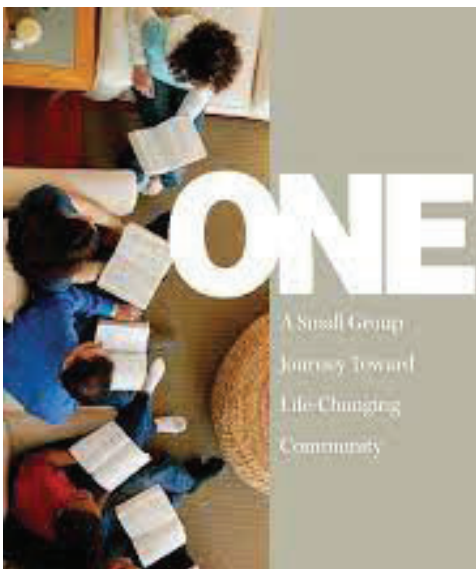
## Fall Weekly Small Group Bible Study Begins Week of September 11th

*ONE: A Small Group Journey Toward  
Life-Changing Community*

Life is better shared...especially in a Christ-centered community. This study's larger purpose is for participants to embrace meaningful relationships with their fellow Christ followers by lifting one another up, pushing one another forward, and sending one another out. Covenant has several small groups that meet each week currently, but additional groups are welcome to form!

Please contact Chad Bosse for more information:

[chad@covenantcares.org](mailto:chad@covenantcares.org)



# THE SIMPLEST WAY TO CHANGE THE WORLD

## BIBLICAL HOSPITALITY AS A WAY OF LIFE

### 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/>

# SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH



September is Suicide Prevention Month and as the second leading cause of death (after accidents) for people aged 10 to 34 and knowing older adults make up 12% of the US population, but account for 18% of all suicide deaths, it is clear that suicide is a serious public health problem.

In 2020 in the United States, over 45,000 people died by suicide. An estimated 1.4 million adults attempt suicide each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). More than one in five people who died by suicide had expressed their suicide intent.

Men are more than three times more likely than women to take their lives. Firearms are the most common method of suicide (used in about half of all suicides).

Yet, suicide is preventable. Knowing the risk factors and recognizing the warning signs for suicide can help prevent suicide.

Suicide is linked to mental disorders, particularly depression and alcohol use disorders, and the strongest risk factor for suicide is a previous suicide attempt.

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center defines risk and protective factors and warning signs:

- Risk factors are characteristics that make it more likely that an individual will consider, attempt or die by suicide.
- Warning signs indicate an immediate risk of suicide.
- Protective factors are characteristics that make it less likely that individuals will consider, attempt or die by suicide.

## Risk Factors for Suicide

Certain events and circumstances may increase risk (not in particular order, except first one).

- Previous suicide attempt(s)

- A history of suicide in the family
- Substance misuse
- Mood disorders (depression, bipolar disorder)
- Access to lethal means (e.g., keeping firearms in the home)
- Losses and other events (for example, the breakup of a relationship or a death, academic failures, legal difficulties, financial difficulties, bullying)
- History of trauma or abuse
- Chronic physical illness, including chronic pain
- Exposure to the suicidal behavior of others

In some cases, a recent stressor or sudden catastrophic event, failure or can leave people feeling desperate, unable to see a way out, and become a "tipping point" toward suicide.

A recent CDC report highlights the complexity of suicide. While a mental health condition may be a contributing factor for many people, the report notes that "many factors contribute to suicide among those with and without known mental health conditions." A relationship problem was the top factor contributing to suicide, followed by crisis in the past.

CDC reports that about half, 54 percent, of people who died by suicide did not have a known mental health condition. However, many of them may have been dealing with mental health challenges that had not been diagnosed or known to those around them.

## Warning Signs

- Often talking or writing about death, dying or suicide
- Making comments about being hopeless, helpless or worthless
- Expressions of having no reason for living; no sense of purpose in life; saying things like "It would be better if I wasn't here" or "I want out."



- Increased alcohol and/or drug misuse
- Withdrawal from friends, family and community
- Reckless behavior or more risky activities, seemingly without thinking
- Dramatic mood changes
- Talking about feeling trapped or being a burden to others

### Protective Factors

- Contacts with providers (e.g., follow-up phone call from health care professional)
- Effective mental health care; easy access to a variety of clinical interventions
- Strong connections to individuals, family, community and social institutions
- Problem-solving and conflict resolution skills

As with mental illness, one of the biggest barriers to preventing suicide is stigma, which prevents many people from seeking help.

### What You Can Do

If someone indicates they are considering suicide, listen and take their concerns seriously. Don't be afraid to ask questions about their plans. Let them know you care, and they are not alone. Encourage them to seek help immediately from a knowledgeable professional. Don't leave them alone.

Five tips from CDC for what you can do if you're concerned about a friend or loved one:

- Ask someone you are worried about if they're thinking about suicide. (While people may be hesitant to ask, research shows this is helpful.)
- Keep them safe. Reduce access to lethal means for those at risk.
- Be there with them. Listen to what they need.
- Help them connect with ongoing support.
- Stay connected. Follow up to see how they're doing

\*If you need help for yourself or someone else, talk with someone you trust about how you are feeling, contact the Suicide Prevention Lifeline call 1-800-273-8255 or chat online at [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

### References:

<https://psychiatry.org/patients-families/suicide-prevention>  
[https://www.aamft.org/AAMFT/Consumer\\_Updates/Suicide\\_in\\_the\\_Elderly.aspx](https://www.aamft.org/AAMFT/Consumer_Updates/Suicide_in_the_Elderly.aspx)

# Beautiful Minds Coalition



Beautiful Minds Coalition will be participating in NAMI Walks Your Way 2022 on October 8th! It's a new day for mental health, and we're going to seize it! This event raises funds for the National Alliance for Mental Illness's (NAMI) free, top-rated programs at a time when we need it most. (We've had these programs at Covenant in the past) It gives awareness of our cause a real boost, because so many people are free to open up and share their stories. The cause is personal for many of us, which is why when you join or support our team, you are contributing to the movement and this moment of opening doors throughout the mental health world. United, we are a force: increasing awareness, raising funds and building a stronger community. We're in this together, and together we will walk toward a future where our dream of Mental Health for All comes true. Please go to: [www.namiwalks.org](http://www.namiwalks.org) and click on "Find a Walk". Search for San Antonio. Register for the walk under the team Beautiful Minds Coalition. If you have questions, please email Shelly Bosse at [shelbosse@gmail.com](mailto:shelbosse@gmail.com)

PEACE  
 BEGINS  
 WITH EACH  
 OF US.



PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS  
 SPECIAL OFFERINGS  
 PEACEMAKING AND RECONCILIATION  
 SEPTEMBER 4-OCTOBER 2, 2022

Through the Peace & Global Witness Offering, PCUSA congregations join hands to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of conflict and injustice across the world. Covenant will use 25% of this offering to connect with the global witness of Christ's peace, locally if possible. Mission Presbytery and Synod of the Sun retain 25% for regional ministries of peace and reconciliation. The remaining 50% helps the Presbyterian Mission Agency advocate for peace and justice in cultures of violence, including our own, through collaborative projects of education and Christian witness.

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## PCHAS Back to School BBQ

August 13th, Lee & Vicki Moreno and Gordon Smith cooked and served a burger and hot dog feast (thanks HEB) to approximately 120 PCHAS Back to School BBQ attendees. Participants aged from toddler to more than four score years. Set on 31 idyllic acres in the heart of the Medical District (6355 Whitby Rd), the San Antonio campus currently provides transitional housing and comprehensive support/educational programs to 16 families. 16 single parents & more than 30 children living on-campus in fully equipped homes. Plus, the San Antonio campus can house up to 5 transitional living young adults who have aged out of foster care.

*“...to whom much has been given, much will be required, and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded”* (Luke 12:48). What has God given or entrusted you with that can assist families at PCHAS as they work to experience lives as beloved children of God? Commit personal time and effort - you will get more blessings back than the gifts of time and talents you offer.

Covenant members can develop face-to-face/personal connections with residents through monthly group childcare (giving parents time for life skills classes), listening to/mentoring all ages, tutoring, and presenting life skills topics according to your area of expertise and certification (ex. personal finance, Microsoft Office apps, job application/interview skills, legal tips and resources, etc.).

**If you hear a call to serve PCHAS in some capacity,**

contact Jennifer Quintero (Mgr. of Volunteers)

**Jennifer.Quintero@pchas.org** or

Banner Huggins (Development) **Banner.Huggins@pchas.org**  
for more information.



**Lee Moreno - Covenant's Grill Master**