

Covenant Call

October 2022 Newsletter

Beyond Great By Dr. Dan Milford

In studying the Reformation, we learn mostly about charismatic, visionary, and uncompromising figures like Martin Luther and Huldrych Zwingli. Martin Luther launched the Reformation in Wittenberg, Germany on October 31, 1517 with his 95 Theses protesting the sale of indulgences. Huldrych Zwingli, within fifteen months of Luther's protest, had initiated the Reformation in Switzerland, as well.

Often, we view the past through the lens of the "History of the Great Man" theory—ignoring the wide range of social forces pushing toward change and the surprising number of leaders who step forward at about the same time to make an unexpected future possible. Instead, we look at the past as though a single person (typically a man) drove the change single-handedly.

During my sabbatical, we enjoyed learning about the beginnings of the Reformation in Europe, visiting many of the cities and churches that provided the leadership for change. In doing so, we discovered that each major Reformer was accompanied by leaders who were theologians, consensus builders, and implementers, as well as a myriad of other major contributors to the work of Reformation, most of whom should not be considered to be "lieutenants" to the figure most familiar to us, but rather major contributors in their own right following their own convictions.

A variety of social forces enabled the Reformation, including the growing desire for independence from Rome by the increasingly powerful secular leaders in each region, the rampant corruption of the Papacy (at its climax of corruption under the Medici popes from 1513-1534), the focus on original sources promoted by humanists like Erasmus (rather than on the authority of the church's hierarchy), and offense from the masses against the great wealth of the church (with blinged out churches and large monastic holdings).

Sometimes the winds of change shift suddenly and rapid change sweeps through the church (more under the power of those shifting winds than the influence of any one leader). During the Reformation, there were radical changes that involved the break from Rome, the changes in church polity, the translation of scripture and worship into the language of the people, the ability of clergy to marry, the stripping of the churches from ornamentation and art, and many others. It was stunning to realize how much change

took place in just a five to ten year window of time. It was also fascinating to hear the number of different people who were all pulling in basically the same direction within a city or region.

For example, in Zurich, Zwingli was the charismatic visionary whose name is best known. At his side, though, were a variety of strong leaders. First, Katharina Von Zimmern was the "Abbess of Fraumunster and imperial abbess of Zurich." Fraumunster was the cathedral for the convent across the Limmat River from Grossmunster (cathedral for the monestary), where Zwingli served. As the Reform efforts grew, she closed the convent and donated the property for use in caring for the poor in Zurich. Next was Leo Jud, Pastor at St. Peter's in Zurich (just a few blocks from Fraumunster), who worked with Zwingli to start the Profezei (Latin school to train church leaders), translate the Bible into German, write liturgy in German, rid churches of statuary and icons, and implement many other reforms.

Just as the leaders most remembered in history weren't always "great" because they single-handedly led change, they also weren't always all that "great" because they did some shockingly awful things. Zwingli and Calvin were both complicit in the execution of critics who wanted to push reforms further than they did. And Zwingli and Calvin were angels compared to John Knox!

It seems to me that we can undermine our own efforts to serve faithfully when we buy into the idea of the "History of the Great Man." In doing so, we may find ourselves looking for a "savior" in human form who is going to fix everything for us, we may fail to appreciate the shifts in history that can make great change possible, we may undervalue the many "small" contributions from people that go unnoticed in history books, and we may continue the pattern of overlooking horrific acts of leaders whose positions we support.

It may be that in getting beyond the search for "great" that we find ourselves caught up in God's call for us to be deeply faithful. I suspect it will be in our taking up the call to be faithful rather than great that we will be most useful to God.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Dan

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN
PRESENTS:

FREE FAMILY EVENT!

SUNDAY OCTOBER 23rd

FALL HARVEST FESTIVAL & TRUNK OR TREAT

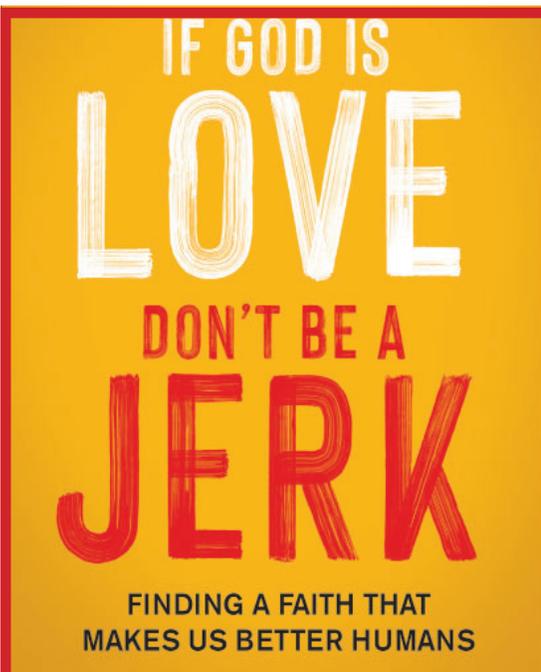
GAMES MUSIC FOOD
4PM - 6PM

TRUNK OR TREAT @ 6PM

EVERYONE IS ENCOURAGED TO WEAR A FUN COSTUME
(PLEASE, NO SCARY COSTUMES)

211 ROLETO DRIVE SAN ANTONIO, TX 78213

WWW.COVENANTCARES.ORG



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

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

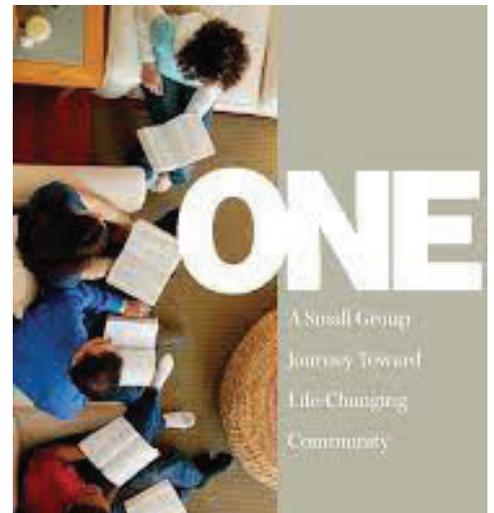
toward others. By taking a good, honest look at how the beliefs we hold can shape our relationships with God and our fellow humans—we uplift our hope to make sure that love has the last, loudest word.

Fall Weekly Small Group Bible Study

*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).



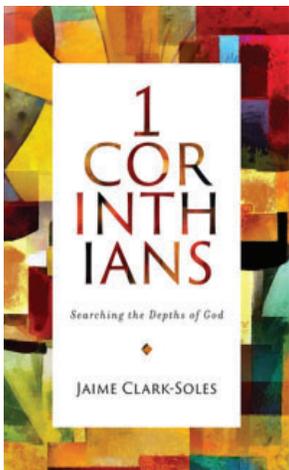
POTLUCK & STUDY

Wednesday, October 12th 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 October 12th.

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.



Peace & Global Witness Offering

Through PCUSA's Peace and Global Witness Special Offering, Covenant reaches around the globe to further the ministries of peacemaking and reconciliation. The offering concludes October 2nd, World Communion Sunday. Be sure to join person, or online, as we worship with Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church, and learn more about bringing peace and reconciliation to our own community. If you have any questions, please contact any member of the Mission Ministry Team.



Update on 2023 Build and Holy Smoke

Habitat for Humanity (H4H) is "Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope". Homeownership is still a greatly desired dream for many families in San Antonio. The number of applicants for a home has increased

in the last year, and the Cluster is glad to report we remain committed to continue our partnership to bring decent affordable housing to another family.

Homeowners are usually expected to put approximately 500 hours of "sweat equity" into their own or other H4H house. 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 Presbyterian Cluster will be building its 28th house in partnership with Habitat for Humanity in 2023. Since 1996 volunteers from Covenant Presbyterian Church and from as many as 25 other Presbyterian churches have come together to build for a family in need. Because of how expensive things have become we have seen a massive increase in applications to our homeownership program. By the end of 2022 we are on track to have processed 4300 applications, which is a 67% increase from 2020. The need is great which is why we need the community more than ever to help us continue building.

As a sponsor of a H4H house the Cluster will provide volunteers, lunches for the volunteers and the financial support of \$60,000.00 per build. We will be building in the spring of 2023, and have made the first payment of \$12,000. The work/lunch schedule will go out approximately mid January. We need about 24 volunteers on a work day, and one day will be assigned to Covenant. If you haven't been able to come out on a work day before, please plan on joining us on this build.

The Cluster is very happy to announce that we will hold Holy Smoke, the combined cluster fundraiser on Sunday, October 16th, here at Covenant. The evening begins with dinner and a silent raffle in the Mission Hall, and then entertainment, H4H update, prayer and songs in the sanctuary. Dinner tickets are \$12 pre-sale and \$15 at the door. Raffle tickets are \$1 each or six for \$5. Contact Martha Flores for all the tickets you wish to purchase!

If you would like to make a donation please make checks payable to: "Presbyterian Cluster Habitat", and mail to the church, or place in the offering plate. 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

CANDY NEEDED!



Trunk-or-Treat Candy Donations Through Sunday, October 23rd

Covenant will be hosting our annual Fall Harvest Festival & Trunk-or-Treat for the community on Sunday, October 23rd. This is always a wonderful opportunity to engage with our neighbors in a safe, family-friendly environment. Candy will be passed out to the children who “Trunk”-or-Treat in our parking lot. If you would like to donate candy, the Youth and Young Adult Team would greatly appreciate it. Simply drop off your individually wrapped candy in the collection bucket in the narthex. Thank you!

We need
YOU!

Fall Harvest Festival & Trunk-or-Treat
Sunday, October 23rd
4:00pm – 6:30pm

We're making plans for Covenant's annual Fall Harvest Festival & Trunk-or-Treat event. This event has become a wonderful opportunity for Covenant to engage with our neighbors and local community. 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. We're expecting a great turnout this year!

**In order to make this event successful, we will be needing
some volunteers to help make it happen!**

We would like to invite our congregation to participate by signing up to volunteer with hospitality, games, inflatable play structure supervision, cakes for the cake walk, candy donations, passing out candy from the trunk of your car, setting up, and of course—cleaning up.

Sign up sheets are in the Narthex. For more information, please contact Chad Bosse (chad@covenantcares.org).



Children's Bible Presentation

Covenant Presbyterian Church would like to congratulate our children on receiving their first NiRV Bible! May you use this Bible in your home, Sunday School class, and our worship together!

Children's Sunday School 9:00am - Beginning October 2nd

Beginning in October, our Children's Classes will focus on foundational truths about God using the Bible, storybooks, art, music, and games. Each week, children will gather together at 9am to participate in an opening time together. 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.

For more information, please contact Chad Bosse chad@covenantcares.org

Mission Ministry Team Partner Spotlight West Avenue Compassion (WAC)

1 Place to give back

2 Things to Donate

- Personal hygiene items
- Laundry care supplies

3 Opportunities to Volunteer

- Pack for weekly food distribution of Mondays
- Pack & distribute food on Tuesdays
- Monthly senior distribution

Are you cleaning out your closet for fall? Let's share ALL our clothes with WAC. You are welcome to bring to Covenant's Donation Bin in Mission Hall.



Shareable (clothes pantry)

1. Gently worn shirts, pants, dresses, skirts
2. Sweaters, Jackets, & Coats
3. Shoes in good condition

Recyclable (recycled for cash)



1. Well-worn shirts, pants, dresses, skirts (holes/tears)
2. Worn out Sweaters, jackets, & coats
3. Thoroughly used shoes



October is an active month in the field of mental health. The first week in October is Mental Illness Awareness Week which allows advocates to educate the public on mental health conditions and conquer the social stigma around getting mental health care. October 10 is World Mental Health Day, celebrated in over 100 countries in order promote education, understanding, and activism for global mental health against social stigma (this year's theme: "Make mental health well-being for all a global priority"). The month of October is also National Depression and Mental Health Screening Month.

The latest statistics (2022) reflect that 19.86% of adults suffer from some sort of mental illness. This is approximately 50 million people. 4.9% have severe mental illness. (Mental Health America). Of these adults who have a mental illness, only 43.3% sought treatment. In addition, many suffering from mental illnesses mask their emotional pain by abusing drugs and alcohol resulting in substance secondary disorders. In some cases, community services are unavailable, and in other cases, the stigma is too great for the person or family to seek medical help.

Mental health awareness reminds us that mental illnesses are among the most prevalent health conditions in the United States, even though mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of. It is a medical problem, just like heart disease or diabetes. (American Psychiatric Association).

Additional statistics reveal that:

- More than 50% will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their life
- 1 in 5 Americans will experience a mental illness each year
- 1 in 5 children, either currently or during their lifetime, have had a seriously debilitating mental illness
- 1 in 25 Americans lives with a severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression (there are more than 200 kinds of mental illness).

Psychological and physical health are equally important components of overall health. For example, depression increases the risk of many physical health problems, such as diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. Likewise, the

presence of persistent conditions can double the risk for mental illness.

Mental illnesses are conditions that affect one's reasoning, feeling, mood, and behavior. They may be occasional or long-lasting. They can affect the ability to relate to others and function each day. Character flaws do not cause mental illnesses. Mental illnesses have nothing to do with being lazy or weak. Several factors contribute to risk for mental illness such as one's genes and family history; life events (especially from childhood); traumatic brain injury; use of alcohol or recreational drugs; or having a critical medical condition.

Mental health is the basis for emotions, reasoning, communication, learning, resilience, self-esteem, and emotional well-being. Unfortunately, many people who have a mental illness do not want to speak about it. But as knowledge and understanding of how the brain operates expand, more and more successful treatments become available to support people in handling mental health conditions. These conditions are very treatable and enable those persons to secure the mental health necessary to effectively function in daily activities, have healthy relationships, adapt to change and cope with adversity. (welevelup.com)

If you, a loved one or a friend are experiencing some changes in behaviors, thought patterns, or ongoing emotional issues, please seek support from family or friends. Then seek out professional help or screening for guidance. If there are severe symptoms or harmful or suicidal thoughts, seek help IMMEDIATELY. Remember that here at church, in addition to Dan, we have the Beautiful Minds members who can talk with and listen to you and provide resources. These resources are listed on business cards out in the narthex. Most of all, remember that you are not alone. Let someone share your painful journey with you.

Written By: Kathy Simmons, BMC



Congratulations to our participants in the *Children at the Lord's Table* class!

During the first three weeks of Sunday School this semester, our children's classes learned about communion in the Bible, in our church, and our Book of Order. We're excited to celebrate with these participants when they participate in the communion service on October 2nd, World Communion Sunday!

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

Your Unused Books, Magazines, Games and Puzzles Can Have a New Life!

By Denise Haley, Elder

Do you have books, magazines, board games, puzzles, DVDs, and art supplies you no longer need? One of our members lives in a community that would love to have them to read and enjoy.

Diana Taylor joined the church several years ago when she lived at Westminster Square. She moved to an assisted-living residence a few years later, and is now living at Legend Oaks Healthcare and Rehabilitation of South San Antonio, located on Hutchins St., near S. Zarzamora. We had talked during the pandemic and then lost touch, and have now reconnected with her. I got to visit with her a few weeks ago. It was so great to see her again, and to meet some of the people at Legend Oaks.

Diana now uses a wheelchair to get around, but physical limitations and other health concerns haven't diminished her warm spirit, congeniality, and sense of fun. She is an active member of the Legend Oaks community, and was my tour guide through the building.

When we visited the Activity Room, she mentioned that they have a Library and that they play a lot of games and also have Movie Night. I saw a stack of magazines and shelves of books, which made me think of some I have at home that residents might enjoy. Later, I spoke to the Activities Director, and she told me they can always use more library materials, games, puzzles, and art supplies.



We wanted to make our Covenant community aware of this opportunity and invite everyone to bring their items. **Look for a bin in Mission Hall during October.** We'll take everything to Legend Oaks in November. If you have any questions, get in touch with me or any Congregational Care Team member -- Janelle Allan, Dennie Hawkins, Richard Kilgore, Pam Klinzing, Bill Lucks, Lana McMains, or Mary Rogers. Thank you!

