



COVENANT MATTERS!

The Newsletter of the Saints at Covenant Presbyterian Church

Please remember CPC in your estate planning!

INSIDE

Session Highlights	2
Walk Humbly	3
Book Club	3
Presbyterian Women	4

STAFF

Rev. Bill Teng

Interim Pastor

bteng@covpcfm.com

Rev. Dr. Winston Lawson

Pastor of Visitation

lawsonjam4577@gmail.com

Dr. Warren Apple

Music Director/Organist

rwa10@hotmail.com

Barbara Sheets

Director of Christian

Education/Co-Youth Director

bsheets@covpcfm.com

Juan Pablo Oliva

Co-Youth Director

Youth Band Leader

jpablo606@gmail.com

Gary Brothers

Business Manager

gbrothers@covpcfm.com

Mary Callaway

Finance & Membership

Secretary

mcallaway@covpcfm.com

Jean Ann Gogerty

Bookkeeper

jagogerty@live.com

Alana Nanz

Director of Publications

cpcpublications@gmail.com

Barbara Thrasher

Jayson Ford

Custodians

From the Pastor's Heart: "Who's Ministering to Whom?"

Since I've been your *Interim Pastor* in the last two years, you may have noticed that the Sunday worship bulletin has been different: other than the obvious "Order of Service," there are intentional pages and sections — such as the "Welcome" page, the "Announcements" page, the "Prayer Concerns" section, the "Daily Lectionary Readings for This Week" section, the ever-popular "What Happened on This Day in Christian History" box, and the "Church Weekly Calendar." But have you ever noticed that under the Church Calendar, there's the "Church Directory" that begins with these words, "**Ministers:** Entire Congregation / **Assisted by:**" followed by a list of the church staff?

Some people may say, "Wait a minute, I thought our church staff is who we pay to do the work of the church?" However, this centuries-long traditional roles of the clergy or staff and laity — with the clergy or staff doing the pastoring and the laity receiving it — is woefully inadequate to care for all the needs of people in our churches today, nor is it the proper understanding of discipleship.

According to Presbyterian pastor and writer Melvin J. Steinbron, author of *The Lay-Driven Church: How to Empower the People of Your Church to Share the Tasks of Ministry* (WIPF and Stock Publishers, 2004), there are two mindsets people sometime have when dealing with the Church — which he refers to as the new vs. the old:

Old: The pastor is called by God to be a minister.

New: *Every Christian is called by God to be a minister.*

Old: Ministry is the task of the pastor, supported by the people.

New: *Ministry is the task of the people, supported by the pastor.*

Old: The people assist the pastor in doing what they believe God is calling the pastor to do.

New: *The pastor assists the people in doing what they believe God is calling the people to do.*

Old: The pastor has all the gifts required to nurture and care for a congregation.

New: *All of the people together have the gifts required to nurture and care for a congregation.*

Old: The pastor bears the burden of the ministry. The people hold the pastor up in prayer.

New: *Both people and pastor bear the burden of the ministry. They hold one another up in prayer.*

Old: The pastor is accountable to God and the members for doing the ministry. Lay people who serve are accountable to the pastor.

New: *All Christians are ministers and are accountable to God and the church leaders.*

Continued on next page ...

SESSION

Class of 2024

John Anderson
David Beardsley
Beverly Grady
Mary Lee Mann

Class of 2025

Mary Watford Armes
Chris Larson
Verona Lawson
Deborah Maurer

Class of 2026

Pat Arner
Madeleine Doran
Richard Shafer
Rosemary Wallace

Rev. Bill Teng

Moderator / Interim Pastor

DIACONATE

Class of 2024

Barbara O'Neil
Dorothy Mae Wert
Patricia Zimmerman,
Moderator

Class of 2025

Tamera Bilicic
Jane Kaserman
Carroll Negley
Hank Sawyer

Class of 2026

Allan Engler
Beth Richter
Karen Tasman
Connie Willhite

TRUSTEES

Beverly Beardsley (2024)
Victor Arias (2025)
Wilson Wheeler (2026)

COVENANT MATTERS!

Edited by Alana Nanz
Submissions due by
the 20th of each month to
cpcpublications@gmail.com

... From the Pastor's Heart, continued

Old: Seminaries are to educate and train certain "called" people for the ministry.

New: *The church is to educate and train all members to be ministers.*

Our Reformed understanding of "Priesthood of All Believers" (1 Peter 2:9-10) and the apostle Paul's admonition about our spiritual gifts in the metaphor of "One Body with Many Members" (1 Corinthians 12) apply to *all* followers of Jesus Christ, and not just some! Our various gifts are to be used to minister to one another.

Yes, the Church should be about God's people doing God's work *together* — both clergy and lay. I believe it is only then that we would realize the kingdom of God and fulfill Jesus' commission for all of us for His Church.

Yours in Christ,



Session Highlights

After the unexpected passing in February of our beloved long-time Clerk of Session, **Barbara Heflin**; at its March Stated Meeting, the Session unanimously elected **Elder Deborah Maurer** as its new Clerk. At its April 15 Stated Meeting, the Session considered the following items:

- Approved Vacation Bible School for July 15-19 (6:00-8:30pm) with curriculum for both children and adults;
- Received Finance report that March giving was again over budget with several significant gifts, but the annual budget still has a projected \$115,000 deficit;
- Received Finance report of an anonymous donation of \$250,000 earmarked specifically for property maintenance and repairs, and will be kept in a separate bank account for that purpose; and
- Approved motion from Human Resources to combine the Administrative Assistant position with the Director of Publications position, and to offer it as a six-month interim parttime position at 25 hours per week.

Please see Clerk of Session **Elder Deborah Maurer** or **Pastor Teng** for any questions.



Covenant members volunteering with Ruth DeYoe at Mision Peniel in March.

Walk Humbly

“All who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted” (Luke 18:14).

The saints, servants, and sages of the church are frequently praised for their humble lifestyle. They delight in simple things, avoid the spotlight, eschew material goods, downplay their accomplishments, and make their lives among the lowly. What does humility have to do with following Jesus? Why is this such an important element of Christian life?

Although Jesus possessed equality with God, he chose to give it away. Jesus poured out everything he had and everything he was in order to share a humble, human life, even to the point of a cruel and shameful death, He gave his life for the life of the world. We are called to do the same, emptying ourselves to fill the world with God’s grace.

Walking humbly is to follow God’s way to abundant life. This does not mean putting ourselves down or hiding our gifts; it requires putting aside our obsessions with wealth, reputation, and power. It means we stop our anxious grasping and instead rest secure in who we are and who God has called us to be: God’s beloved children.

The phrase *walk humbly* comes to us from the prophet Micah: “God has told you, O mortal, what is good, / and what does the Lord require of you / but to do justice and to love kindness / and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). The three things that God requires in Micah 6:8 are not separate items on a to-do list. They are interconnected and complementary. In particular, doing justice without walking humbly often devolves into self-righteousness. Practicing loving-kindness without walking humbly can turn into mere charity. Christians talk a lot about God’s call to justice and love. Micah shows us that walking humbly is key to embracing that call.

Remember That You Are Dust – May 5 – Genesis 2:7; 3:19b – Zoom, May 6

Favor the Lowly – May 12- Luke 1:46-55; 4:17b-19 – Zoom, May 13

Avoid Judging Others – May 19 – Luke 18:9-14 1 Cor 12:14-26 – Zoom, May 20

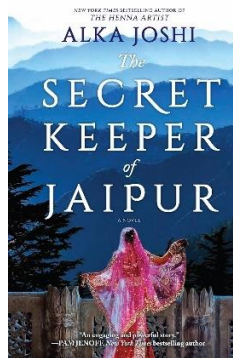
Speak Less, Listen More – May 26 – Ecclesiastes 5:1-2

Book Club

Our May selection is *The Secret Keeper of Jaipur: A Novel* by Alka Joshi (2021) (The Jaipur Trilogy, Book 2).

- **June 27:** *Violeta* by Isabel Allende (2023)
- **July 25:** *Hello Beautiful: A Novel* by Ann Napolitano (2023)
- No meeting in **August!** See you in September on the 26th!

We are selecting the books for 2024-2025 Book Club during our April and May meetings. Please share what books you have loved (suggestions from bookworms are welcome whether you regularly attend or not!). Some of the books that have been suggested are *The Women*, *James: A Novel*, *Horse*, *The Frozen River*, and *Remarkably Bright Creatures*.



May Birthdays

- 1 Angelette Arias
- 3 Richard Davis
Kathy Engler
- 4 Ellen Moore
Caroline
Palmenberg
- 5 Aldin (Al) King
Margie Willis
- 8 Teddy Bubliss
Ronald Willock
- 10 Julian Martinez
- 11 Doris Harlacher
Jimmie Robinson
Shirley Wagenseil
- 12 Emily Coyne
Jesswein
- 15 Barb Chapin
Hank Sawyer
- 16 Diane Means
- 17 Ron Bailer
Becky Garrison
- 18 Nancy Kendall
Marylee Grace
Mann
- 19 Brittany Jackson
Christopher
Lambert
Sean McClellan
- 21 Darci Hillyer
- 22 Ed Christenbury
Sarah Jane
Essebaggers
Reed Kaserman
- 25 Jared Charles
Juan Pablo Oliva
- 26 Marcia Lopata
- 27 Lois Lee Currie
- 28 Heather Cotton

Summer Classes

Adult Sunday morning classes will continue through the summer in a more casual format. Maybe you would like to drop in?

Presbyterian Women

All women attending Covenant Presbyterian church are welcome! Our Circles will wind down our year with a combined Circles meeting in May. Deborah Circle and Naomi Circle will meet on **Monday, May 13** in Room 207 at 12:30pm. Those attending are welcome to share a lunch item. We'll reflect on our last lesson in the Bible Study, *Sacred Encounters*, Lesson 9. Our study leader will be **Diane Means**.

In addition to the study, we will have a short annual meeting of the Presbyterian Women and elect and install our officers for the coming year:

- Ellen Moore – Moderator
- Dorothy McDowell – Vice Moderator
- Anna Siemen – Treasurer
- Mary Lee Mann – Secretary
- Membership – Jane Kaserman
- Together in Service/Missions – OPEN
- Leadership and Resources – OPEN



Members of the former Lydia Circle are welcome to attend this meeting as well as any other women in the congregation that would like to enjoy the fellowship.

Picnic: May 26

Please join us for the final gathering sponsored by the Continuing Education Committee. We'll finish with a picnic, hot dogs and hamburgers provided by CE and the balance will be potluck. We also honor our four amazing young women graduating from high school, who will be beginning a new chapter! Also, included are two college grads!

Prayer Shawl Group

The next Prayer Shawl meeting is Tuesday, May 21, at 10am in F207.



COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2439 McGregor Blvd.
Ft. Myers, FL 33901
Phone: 239-334-8937
Website: www.covpcfm.com
Email: info@covpcfm.com