

# The Covenant Contact

March 2024

## ***Brokenness and Building***

Have you seen the movie “Annihilation?” It’s not my usual type of movie (I’m not much into sci-fi or scary movies) but so many friends recommended it, so I decided to take a chance. It definitely wasn’t a feel-good kind of epic sci-fi, but was a “that really made me think and I’m still thinking about it” kind of movie. I can’t even try to explain the plot, but to give you some context, the story follows a group of explorers who enter “The Shimmer,” a mysterious quarantined zone of mutating plants and animals caused by an alien presence.

Near the end of the movie, when trying to explain what she witnessed, the main character said, “It wasn’t destroying . . . it was changing everything. It was making something new.”



What an analogy for the Christian life. For better or worse, we can destroy things and then build them back up into something new.

When I first entered seminary, I had to take a Bible Content

exam, to determine whether or not we needed to take a couple of classes that covered the basics of the Bible and its over-arching story.

I was told how difficult the exam was when I first arrived. It was legendary. The seminary president said he failed it. And it was difficult . . . I was asked questions that completely confounded me. I was asked to outline all the books of the Bible. I was asked obscure questions that were about the facts in the Bible, not really about the point of the Bible. For example, one question was “How long would the Nile River be if it were straight?” (I still have no idea what the answer is on that one.) The theory was taking the test

would humble the students as they entered the seminary experience . . . it would break them down.

I remember being so frustrated that I received a study guide for it four days before I had to take the exam . . . and it was 74 pages long! 74 pages! Was I going to be able to retain 74 pages of information in four days? Of course not. It all felt so obnoxious to me. We were being set up to fail.

But what great things haven’t arisen from failure? When God allows something to be broken down, but doesn’t destroy it, there must be a purpose for a remnant to be left behind. When we receive Jesus as our Savior, we are made new, but we are not bright and shiny with no baggage. We bring ourselves to the party, and, though being made new again truly is a party, we still come with brokenness and a sinful nature as we are being made new.

Sometimes we must break down in order to build something new. Sometimes we can break ourselves down too much and perhaps even build up the wrong thing in its place. This is what’s so tricky about building. We have to start with the right foundation, and build on that foundation what is good and true and right.

The apostle Paul has some profound words to say about this in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15:

*By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.*

*(Brokenness and Building, continued)*

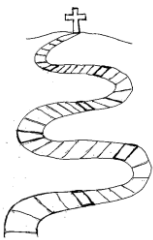
When Paul started the church at Corinth, he was careful to build it on the foundation of Jesus Christ. But, as he needs to address several issues with the church in that letter, he reminds them that what is **built on** that foundation matters, too.

Our firm foundation is Jesus Christ, and if we attempt to build up anything in our lives with the rubbish of our own wisdom, Paul is plain to say that there will be consequences. And if we employ the materials which God has furnished, there will be rewards.

Sometimes it's best to be broken down. Maybe our pride needs it . . . maybe we have some idols that need to be knocked off their pedestals. Whatever the reason, we must take care to build up something much better in its place.

*In Christ, Pastor Stephanie*

### **Lenten and Easter Worship**



Wednesday meetings are at 7:00 p.m.  
Meetings here are in the Potter's House.  
Meetings at the First Congregational Church are in their Fellowship Room. (Enter by the side door near the front of the church.) Pastor Marcus leads here, Pastor Stephanie at the Congregational Church.

3/6	Wed	First Congregational
3/13	Wed.	Here, Potter's House
3/20	Wed.	First Congregational
3/24	Sun.	10 am, Palm Sunday worship, Children participate
3/28	Thur.	7 pm, Maundy Thursday worship, here, Sanctuary
3/31	Sun.,	6:30 am, Easter Sunrise worship, Morton's Pond 9:00 am, Sunday School 10 am, Easter worship, Sanctuary (no coffee fellowship after 10 am worship)

### **Women Ministries**



Women Ministries events are for all women of the church and their friends.

- **Exhale:** Registration is now open for the Exhale retreat at Pilgrim Pines, April 26-28! Join us for a fun and relaxing weekend! More info available at [pilgrimpines.org/exhale](http://pilgrimpines.org/exhale).

#### **Continuing activities:**

- **Kitchen Detail:** Tuesday, March 5, at 9:00 am.
- **Women's PM Study:** Tuesday evenings at 6:45 pm in the Potter's House. Contact: Peggy Schwetz (860-294-5057 or [schwetzy@optimum.net](mailto:schwetzy@optimum.net)).
- **WM Book Club:** next meets on Wednesday, April 3, (to avoid conflict with the Lenten Reflections), at 6:30 pm in the Potter's House The book to read is **The Women** by Kristin Hannah. This is a new book, so it may be hard to get from the library, but, it is available at Costco or Amazon.

### **Sewing Lessons**

Children's sewing lessons with Cathy Fredlund (203-841-7239 or [cbfredl@optonline.net](mailto:cbfredl@optonline.net)) are on Thursdays, 3:30-4:45 pm. (Some adults are needed to oversee the safety of the sewers.)

### **Easter Baskets**

As in past years, we are collecting items to fill Easter baskets for Thomaston children identified by the Thomaston Town Pantry. Bring any goodies you want to give by no later than March 17, and the Crafty Friday group will fill the baskets.

### **Summary: Board Meeting of February 11**

The Discovery class is postponed until after Easter. Wednesday Lenten sessions will alternate with the First Congregational church. Pastor Stephanie will lead sessions at the Congregational church and Pastor Lee will lead here. Pastor Stephanie has been adjusting the Sunday order of

worship to make services flow better. She is familiar with using screens during worship and is familiar with the software. Several people will need to train for it.

General Fund offerings through 5 weeks are \$14,593.14. The anticipated budget is \$14,899.05; offerings are under budget by \$305.94.

General Fund balance is \$21,172.29. \$10,000 was moved from a restricted account to a six-month CD with 4.89% interest. An inactive savings account will be moved to the general checking account.

A heating system leak in the Pre-K classroom ceiling was fixed. The ceiling will be repaired and re-painted. Failing door locks and toilet repairs are being addressed.

The LaPlante family's request for Pastor Gary to perform Rogene LaPlante's memorial service was approved. Diaconate and the M&E Board are working together on the church's focus and updating the our official mission statement.

The CE board is hosting a Valentine's party on February 17. Sunday School children will sing on Palm Sunday and the dance team will perform. A Sunday School class for adults and children about Communion will be on March 3 to explain Communion and to equip adults to decide when their children are ready to take Communion. Changing the Confirmation program from 2 years to 1 year is being considered. There will be no coffee fellowship after Easter worship on March 31. Safe Church policy, mandated reporting, how to recognize a child at risk, and how to lead a child to Christ are under discussion.

Missions and Evangelism is reviewing goals for the year. Easter basket items are due on March 17, to be delivered on March 24. On Friday, April 5, at 6 p.m., Detective Rich Marsh from Northfield will present a 90-minute workshop (with a light meal) on internet and phone safety for parents. The program will be open to the community at no charge. M&E is working to identify the needs of the community. Teen Challenge Adult will be return later this year.

*(Board Meeting Summary, continued)*

Some women will attend a one-day women's conference in Springfield, MA, on February 24. WM will put together a "Spring Planting" gift basket for the fundraiser for Patti Kelley.

Pastor Stephanie will represent the church for the East Coast Conference annual meeting on April 25-26. Others may be appointed at the March quarterly business meeting.

The Memorial Committee is being instructed to keep official written records of donations and expenses.

*John Bedosky, Chair*

### ***Easter Sanctuary Flowers***

Flowers in memory of or in honor of a loved one will be \$12 each and there will be a variety. Contact Dawn Johnson (dawnjohnson355@gmail.com) by no later than Sunday, March 24. Pay her in cash or by check (made out to Dawn Johnson, not the church) so she can track how much to give the florist. List how many flowers you want and who they are in memory of. A list of contributors and memorial dedications will be published in the bulletin on March 31.

### ***Diaconate News***

Every year, a Diaconate member is praying for you! We share this information with you so you can reach out directly to that Deacon if you have a prayer need or just want to connect with a Deacon.

Check the 2024 church directory to see which page number you are on, and the names below to see who your Deacon is for 2024. It changes every year.

John Butkevich – pp. 1 & 7	Janet Cappelletti – p. 5
Linda Lawrence – pp. 2 & 9	Cathy Fredlund – pp. 6 & 10
Glenn Hafele – pp. 3 & 11	Jean Morton – p. 8
Dave McClay – p. 4	

### ***Keeping Up***

Thank you, Church Family, for the beautiful poinsettia before Christmas. We especially enjoyed our visit with Glenn Hafele.

Karen & Rick O'Connell



## ***Snack Packs***

Our snack pack bags need the following: fruit cups or applesauce, granola bars, chips, crackers, Goldfish, cookies, other snack items. Please leave any donations on the counter in the Potter's House. Thank you!

## ***UNITE Fund Raiser***

For Easter! Braided breads and cake rolls for sale by CHYG to raise funds for UNITE. Order yours in the Fellowship Room after worship on March 3 or contact Beth Campbell (bethaberger888@hotmail.com or 203-592-0871). They will be delivered in time for Easter.

## ***Bake Sale for Camperships***

Sunday, March 17, in the Fellowship Room after worship. Help raise money to help our kids to go to Camp Squanto this summer. Bake for the sale – come and buy something good to eat!

## ***Helping Hands***

M & E has a box in the Fellowship Room where you can put requests for small household tasks that you need help with. The Missions & Evangelism Board will find someone to help you.

## ***Banquet of Blessing***

- Need: macaroni & cheese (the kind you don't need to buy milk & butter for), grape jelly, crackers.
- No perishable foods. Check expiration dates We can't give away out of date food.
- No canned green beans, mixed vegetables or vegetarian vegetable soup right now.

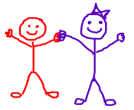
## ***Prayer Chain***

Contact Prayer Coordinator Mary Butkevich (860-514-4343 or marybutkevich@gmail.com) for prayer concerns and rejoicings.

## ***Youth Groups***

**Pathfinders** is for students in Grades 1-3.

Leaders are Brenda Tousignant (203-232-1525 or soxj269@aol.com) and Lori Vigeant.



**Trailblazers** is for students in Grades 4-6.

**We need a leader for this group**

**D/C (Discipleship/Confirmation)** is for students in grades 7-8, a two-year journey, exploring who God is and what God means in our life. All junior high students are welcome to attend. Leaders are Pastor Stephanie (pastor@covchurchthomaston.org or 860-283-9146), Jessica Bedosky, and Glenn Hafele.



Sunday mornings, 9:00 am

**CHYG (Covenant High Youth Group)** is for all students in grades 9-12. The leaders are Beth Campbell (203-592-0871 or bethaberger888@hotmail.com), Sue Sundell, and Gina Whaley.



3/3 4:00 Regular CHYG  
3/24 4:00 Regular CHYG

**CHYG UNITE:** 7/15-19/2024 @ Bowling Green State University, OH. Contact Beth Campbell (bethaberger888@hotmail.com or 203-592-0871) or a member of the CE Board to say you plan to go (**UNITE Registration must be done by the church as a group**).

**Liturgical Dance** is for girls in grades 1-8. The leader is Jessica Bedosky (jbed546@aol.com or 203-910-0945).

Practice times vary and are in the Sanctuary.



### ***Meal Coordinator***

Providing a meal to someone during a difficult time is one way to show how much we care. If you know someone who might benefit, contact Sandy Dunn (860-483-2015 or [daytondunn@mac.com](mailto:daytondunn@mac.com)).

### ***Crafty Fridays***

In the Potter's House, 6:00-8:00 pm. If you have a craft to do, bring it. If you don't have a craft but would like to visit and chat, that's okay! Contact: Ruth Johnson (860-605-8040).

### ***Giving Made Easy***

Give online in just two minutes. You can opt for one time, weekly or monthly donations. Just open the camera app on your phone and scan the QR Code. You will then be taken right to the Giving Page on our website.

Covenant Church of Thomaston

Giving Page QR Code





# March 2024

(Rev 2/23/2024)

Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24, 25

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>*Sundays:</b> 9:00 am Sunday School for Grades Pre-K-6 and Discipleship/Confirmation for Grades 7-8 10:00 am Worship; 11:15 Fellowship <b>Sunday worship services</b> are recorded and posted on the church website ( <a href="http://covchurchthomaston.org">covchurchthomaston.org</a> ). Worship bulletins, which include the weekly announcements, also are posted on the church website.					<b>1</b> 6:00 Crafty Fridays (Potter's)	<b>2</b>
<b>3*</b> 9:00 Communion Class (Sanctuary) 11:30 Diaconate (Conf Rm) 11:30 C E (Gathering Rm) 11:30 M & E (Youth Rm) 4:00 CHYG	<b>4</b> 10:45 39ers (Fellowship)	<b>5</b> 9:00 Kitchen Detail  6:30 Prayer (Church Office) 6:45 Women's PM Study (Potter's)	<b>6</b>  6:30 NA (Fellowship) 7:00 Lenten Reflections (1 <sup>st</sup> Cong)	<b>7</b>  6:00 Israeli-Palestinian Discussion (Potter's)	<b>8</b>  6:00 Crafty Fridays (Potter's)	<b>9</b>
<b>10*</b> DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS 11:30 Quarterly Business Meeting (Sanctuary)	<b>11</b> 10:45 39ers (Fellowship)	<b>12</b>  6:30 Prayer (Church Office) 6:45 Women's PM Study (Potter's)	<b>13</b>  6:30 NA (Fellowship) 7:00 Lenten Reflections (Potter's)	<b>14</b>  6:00 Israeli-Palestinian Discussion (Potter's)	<b>15</b>  6:00 Crafty Fridays (Potter's) 7:00 Tres Dias Secuela (Fellowship)	<b>16</b>
<b>17*</b> Easter Basket Items due Campership Bake Sale	<b>18</b>  6:30 Tres Dias Secretariat (Fellowship)	<b>19</b>  6:30 Prayer (Church Office) 6:45 Women's PM Study (Potter's)	<b>20</b>  6:30 NA (Fellowship) 7:00 Lenten Reflections (1 <sup>st</sup> Cong)	<b>21</b>  6:00 Israeli-Palestinian Discussion (Potter's)	<b>22</b>  6:00 Crafty Fridays (Potter's)	<b>23</b>
<b>24*</b> PALM SUNDAY (Children sing, Liturgical Dance)  4:00 CHYG	<b>25</b> 10:45 39ers (Fellowship)	<b>26</b>  6:30 Prayer (Church Office) 6:45 Women's PM Study (Potter's)	<b>27</b>  6:30 NA (Fellowship)	<b>28</b>  7:00 Maundy Thursday Worship	<b>29</b> GOOD FRIDAY	<b>30</b>
<b>31*</b> EASTER 6:30 Sunrise worship (Morton's Pond)  (No Coffee Fellowship after 10:00 a.m. Worship)						

## Volunteers: . . . through love serve one another. Galatians 5:13b

Coffee Fellowship sponsored by: Social Committee \*\*

**\*\*Only beverages are needed and are provided by the church. If you provide a snack, at least one that is gluten-free, please.**

NURSERY			ALTAR FLOWERS		LAY READERS:
3/3	Patricia Vigeant Megan Campbell	4/7	3/3	Communion, none	3/3 Gina Whaley
			3/10		3/10 Ann Ryan
3/10	Gina Whaley Lauren Whaley	4/14	3/17	Linda Lawrence	3/17 Ted Ryan
			3/24		3/24 Liz Montambault
			3/31	Easter Flowers	3/31 Peggy Schwetz
3/17	Sue Sundell	4/21	4/7	Communion, none	4/7 Dawn Roaix
			4/14		4/14 Dave McClay
3/24	Christy Barrett Savannah Acevedo	4/28	4/21		4/21 Jessica Bedosky
			4/28		4/28 Gina Whaley
3/31	Mary Butkevich				

## Sunday School Staff

K &-Pre-K Grace Duke	3-4 Margrit Saghafi	7-8 (D/C) Pastor Stephanie, Jessica Bedosky, Glenn Hafele	
1-2 Lori Vigeant	5-6 Ruth Hopkins		

## Youth Staff

CHYG (Grades 9-12) Beth Campbell Sue Sundell, Gina Whaley		Trailblazers (Grades 4-6)	Pathfinders (Grades 1-3) Brenda Tousignant, Lori Vigeant
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Liturgical Dance (Girls, grades 1-8) Jessica Bedosky, Peggy Schwetz, Britta Saghafi

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays				Anniversaries
3 Simon Dobos	10 Matt Stancavage	21 Rita Andreoli	*George Anticoli	none
5 Aurelia Barker	12 Gary Merrill	25 George Anticoli (81)*	66 Upper Valley Rd.	
6 Valerie Chausse	20 Josh Gomes	27 Rob Sanson	Torrington 06790	
8 Monique Cyr	20 Sarah Morton			
9 Julia Bond	20 Patricia Vigeant			

## Connections:

- Pastor: Stephanie Nelson: pastor@covchurchthomaston.org or 860-283-9146 (study)
- Church Chair: John Bedosky: jbedosky@outlook.com or 203-770-5304
- Diaconate Chair: Cathy Fredlund: cbfredl@optonline.net or 203-841-7239
- Treasurer: Ken Hopkins: khopkins195@yahoo.com or 860-283-5031
- Office "Churchmouse" Ruth Johnson: cmouse@covchurchthomaston.org or 860-605-8040  
Office/Kitchen: 860-283-5071
- Meal Coordinator: Sandra Dunn; 860-483-2015 or daytondunn@mac.com
- Prayer Coordinator: Mary Butkevich; 860-514-4343 or marybutkevich@gmail.com