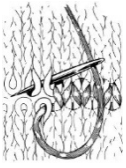


# The Covenant Contact

April 2024

## ***Woven Threads***



The sleeve of my favorite black sweater got a tiny rip where the cuff meets the sleeve, so the other day I got out a needle and thread to fix it. As I carefully recalled childhood memories of how my mother taught me to hide those tiny stitches, I also noticed this drip of coffee on the outside of the cup on the table and suddenly I felt this strange moment of beauty for the imperfect things around me.

I don't know about you, but I love filling my home with things that mean something. In every room I try to have items with a story, and those stories are connected to memories or people in my life. In my living room sits an enormous stuffed teddy bear, about 3 feet high, that my brother gave me when I was in the hospital 4 years ago. It reminds me of his playfulness and his compassion. In my office at the church is a framed group of sticky notes, written by two friends and placed all over my office the night of my ordination in the Covenant. And in my bedroom is a photo of Forest Park in St. Louis that my friend Jenny took, in a frame made from a tree hit by lightning, which was lovingly made by a couple in my small group. It was given to me by my church after I graduated seminary, and always reminds me of them when I see it. Each room in my life has multiple items with stories like these – all from my past. Not all of them are traditionally beautiful, but all have a story that has become part of my larger story as a person.

A.W. Tozer writes in his book, "The Pursuit of God,"

*“. . . to rip through the dear and tender stuff of which life is made can never be anything but deeply painful. Yet that is what the cross did to Jesus and it is what the cross would do to every man to set him free. Let us beware of tinkering with our inner life, hoping ourselves to rend the veil. God must do everything for us. Our part*

*is to yield and trust. We must confess, forsake, repudiate the self-life, and then reckon it crucified.”*

Our lives are made up of complicated and messy woven threads of people we like and dislike. Of people we trust and don't trust. Of those that hurt us and those we hurt. People that healed us and people we healed. What are we to do with these woven threads? Threads that have the good colors and the ugly colors, colors that fit neatly in our color scheme and those that don't? I know, deep down, that the people and situations we dislike are part of our story and what matters is what we do with their part in our story. But my inner child wants to have a temper tantrum because those big ol' mean people JUST DON'T DESERVE IT! *\*harrumph\* \*stomp\* \*fist clenched\* \*snort\**

My adult side will simply say that my sense of justice hates that the negative stuff has altered me. I should be stronger than that, right?

I wish the negative stuff didn't matter. I wish that, when I was a child in music class, the one class where I excelled, it weren't a painful moment to not be chosen when we partnered up in the 6th grade for the spring concert to play ukuleles. And since our class had an uneven number, I was by myself and it was immortalized on film and in a photo album. (And in my brain, too, I guess.) I have a lot of stories like these. I hate that they still sting. I hate that they still matter.

What I'm realizing, with all these messy and mismatched woven threads of my life, is that they still matter not just because they are part of my story, but because they have, in fact, shaped me into the person I am, no matter how my inner child throws a tantrum because she doesn't like it. But I cannot see the big picture of my life, so it is always hard when the messiness of life happens and we struggle to understand the good in it. In the same way that we cannot see every tiny stitch in a large woven tapestry, we cannot always see what God is doing in us with each small moment.

Roman 8:27-28 comes to mind as I write about mending and stories.

*“And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*

I pray we remember we are part of God’s big story, with all its highs and lows and bumps in the road, and are grateful for the ways God uses each moment to weave together the grand story of our life.

*In Christ, Pastor Stephanie*

### ***Discovery Class***

Join Pastor Stephanie for a 2-part series about our denomination and our church, coming up on April 21 (Session 1) and 28 (Session 2) in the Potter’s House. A simple lunch will be provided as we discuss who we are as a church, what our denomination is all about, and what it means to be part of this community. Contact Pastor Stephanie or Cathy Fredlund (cbfredl@optonline.net or 203-841-7239) **by April 14** if interested.

### ***Pastor’s Study***

“Distorted Views of God,” starts on April 4 at 6:30 pm in the Potter’s House: We all bring our own lens with which we view the world. Likewise, we come with assumptions about who God is. Based on experience, misunderstanding of Scripture, or otherwise, understanding the character of God is essential to understanding the gospel properly. Join us as we dismantle the distorted ways we tend to view God and look to Scripture for the truth.

### ***Prayer Chain***

Contact Prayer Coordinator Mary Butkevich for prayer concerns and rejoicings.

### ***Summary: Quarterly Meeting of March 10***

The Diaconate is forming a team to work with Pastor Stephanie to update the church’s mission statement. She wants us to build a firm foundation so that our work will last. The Palestinian-Israeli class concludes just before Palm Sunday.

General Fund offerings through 9 weeks were \$31,989, above budget by \$5,171. All bills are up to date. \$10,000 has been moved to a CD at Thomaston Savings Bank. The General fund balance is \$24,031.94.

Everyone in the church directory is being prayed for by the Diaconate; each deacon is assigned a page or pages of the church directory.

The Trustees have had some unusual expenses for a classroom ceiling leak and new locks and keys for doors. The confirmation classroom will be repainted. Caution is advised in the back parking lot at night especially when it’s raining and foggy. The church owns only 12 feet of the back lot (near the street) and it tapers to 9 feet where the building is closest to Osowiecki’s at the fence. Mike Barrett is in charge of maintaining the church van. Old storm window/screen units on some of the church windows will be removed.

The Family Dance Party raised \$450 for UNITE. Several new families came. Funds are being raised to provide summer camperships. On April 5, Christian Education and the Missions and Evangelism boards are hosting a workshop on protecting children who use cell phones. Vacation Bible School and a possible Zumba class are being considered.

The “Secret of the Apps” workshop on April 5 will also feature a light supper. The M & E Board is consulting the Town’s social services department for local service ideas. The Playground Project has one full shipping container, with more playgrounds becoming available. Ron and Janet Zieglebaur, Covenant Missionaries in Africa, plan to visit us in May.

The Women Ministries book club is for all women, not just church members. WM is helping Christian Ed to raise funds for camperships. The Exhale women’s retreat at Pilgrim Pines is April 26-28. A Mother’s Day project is being considered and a

(Summary, Quarterly Meeting)

spring outing is being planned.

A training session will be provided for the church's sound system so that more congregation members understand it.

The PRC and Pastor Stephanie have set Ministry Goals for the year:

1. Boards will cooperate to provide bi-monthly fellowship get-togethers to promote fellowship and to invite the community.
2. Regular East Coast Conference updates will be given to keep us connected with the rest of the conference.
3. Pastor Stephanie will attend some meetings of the other boards besides the Diaconate.
4. Pastor Stephanie and the Diaconate will hold two sets of Discovery classes.
5. Pastor Stephanie will lead a series of Bible studies.

The church will be open for pray-ers to come in from 9 am to 2 pm on Thursday, May 2. the National Day of Prayer.

Pastor Stephanie and Mary Butkevich will attend the East Coast Conference annual meeting, April 26-27 in

Manchester CT. *John Bedosky, Chair*

### **Diaconate News**

- **Why are we here?** The church is in the process of reviewing and updating our purpose statement (see below). The Diaconate is pulling together a Church Purpose Team to work on this. They will begin meeting in April to discern the Lord's voice in the work he is setting before us. Please pray for this work. Contact Cathy Fredlund with any questions.

**Our current Purpose Statement (from our Constitution)** *The purpose of this church is to unite believers in fellowship for spiritual edification, for the winning of persons to Jesus Christ, and for the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ through missions home and abroad.*

### **Women Ministries**



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

- **Movie Night:** Friday, April 12, at 6 pm in the Potter's House! The movie is *The Boys in the Boat*, based on the book by Daniel James Brown, about the improbable triumph of the American rowing team at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. The movie is approximately 2 hours, and we will have refreshments. Sign up in the Potter's House so we know how many to plan for. Bring a snack or drink to share if you wish. All adults are welcome!
- **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, April 2, at 9:00 am.
- **Women's PM Study** *has been discontinued.*
- **WM Book Club:** next meets on Wednesday, April 3, at 6:30 pm in the Conference Room. The book is *The Women* by Kristin Hannah.

### **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

## Youth Groups

**Pathfinders** is for students in Grades 1-3. Leaders are Brenda Tousignant 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, 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, Sue Sundell, and Gina Whaley.

**CHYG UNITE: 7/15-19/2024 @ Bowling Green State University, OH.** Contact Beth Campbell 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. 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.

## Movie Night

Plan for Friday night, April 12, at 6 pm in the Potter's House! The movie is *The Boys in the Boat*, based on the book by Daniel James Brown, about the improbable triumph of the American rowing team at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. The movie is approximately 2 hours, and we will have refreshments. Sign up in the Potter's House so we know how many to plan for. Bring a snack or drink to share if you wish. All adults are welcome!

## 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.

## 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



# April 2024

(Rev 3/29/2024)

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>1</b> 10:45 39ers (Fellowship)	<b>2</b> 9:00 Kitchen Detail  6:30 Prayer (Church Office)	<b>3</b>  6:30 WM Book Club (Conference Room) 6:30 NA (Fellowship)	<b>4</b>  3:30 Children's Sewing Lessons (Fellowship) 6:30 Pastor's Bible Study (Potter's) 7:30 NA Subcommittee (Gathering)	<b>5</b>  6:00 Secrets of the Apps (Fellowship Room)	<b>6</b>  11:00-2:00 Private (Fellowship, Potter's)
<b>7*</b> 11:30 Diaconate (Conf Rm) 11:30 C E (Gathering Rm) 11:30 M & E (Youth Rm) 11:30 Trustees (Potter's)	<b>8</b> 10:45 39ers (Fellowship)	<b>9</b>  6:30 Prayer (Church Office)	<b>10</b>  6:00 Purpose Team (Conference Rm) 6:30 NA (Fellowship)	<b>11</b>  3:30 Children's Sewing Lessons (Fellowship) 6:30 Pastor's Bible Study (Potter's)	<b>12</b>  6:00 Movie Night(Potter's House)	<b>13</b>
<b>14*</b> 11:30 Church Board (Gathering)	<b>15</b>  6:30 Tres Dias Secretariat (Fellowship)	<b>16</b>  6:30 Prayer (Church Office)	<b>17</b>  6:30 NA (Fellowship)	<b>18</b>  3:30 Children's Sewing Lessons (Fellowship) 6:30 Pastor's Bible Study (Potter's)	<b>19</b>  6:00 Crafty Fridays 6:30 Tres Dias Secuela (Fellowship) (Potter's)	<b>20</b>  9:30 "Chosen" group, Chubbas
<b>21*</b> 11:30-1:30 Discovery Class (Potter's)	<b>22</b> 10:45 39ers (Fellowship)	<b>23</b>  6:30 Prayer (Church Office)	<b>24</b>  6:00 Purpose Team (Conference Rm) 6:30 NA (Fellowship)	<b>25</b>  3:30 Children's Sewing Lessons (Fellowship) 6:30 Pastor's Bible Study (Potter's)	<b>26</b>  East Coast Conf. Annual Meetings (Pastor Stephanie away)  Women's Exhale Retreat (Pilgrim Pines) 6:00 Crafty Fridays	<b>27</b> East Coast Conf. Annual Meetings (Pastor Stephanie away)  Exhale Retreat
<b>28*</b> 11:30-1:30 Discovery Class (Potter's) Exhale Women return	<b>29</b> 10:45 39ers (Fellowship)	<b>30</b>  6:30 Prayer (Church Office)	<p><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.</p>			

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

Coffee Fellowship sponsored by: Trustees Board \*\*

**\*\*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:	
4/7	Lori Vigeant	5/5	Gina Whaley Lauren Whaley	4/7	Communion, none	4/7	Dawn Roaix
4/14	Courtney Ayer	5/12	Sue Sundell	4/14		4/14	Dave McClay
				4/21		4/21	Jessica Bedosky
				4/28		4/28	Gina Whaley
4/21	Cathy Fredlund Haley Morton	5/19	Christy Barrett Savannah Acevedo	5/5	Communion, none	5/5	Ann Ryan
				5/12		5/12	Ted Ryan
4/28	Patricia Vigeant Megan Campbell	5/26	Lori Vigeant	5/19		5/19	Liz Montambault
				5/26	Ruth Johnson	5/26	Peggy Schwetz

## 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 7-12) 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

## March Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays				Anniversaries	
1 Samuel Duke	9 Wynne Norck	18 Sarah Jackson			17 Denise & Gary Merrill
1 Glenn Hafele	10 Kelsey Dayton	23 Karen Anticoli (80)*		<i>Karen Anticoli</i> 66 Upper Valley Road Torrington 06790	23 Drew & John Conlon
5 Celeste Bergamo	11 Larissa Vigeant				
6 Ginny Gilbert	13 Maya Holway				
9 Everett Dobos	14 Jonathan Bedosky				
9 Ella Holway	14 Emily Butkevich				

## 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