

The Covenant Contact

May 2025

What's Your "One Thing?"

I don't know about you, but with a lot of things pulling our attention, it seems it's really hard to get up the motivation to be passionate about anything these days.

So much demands our attention that we tend to spend our days in a kind of auto-pilot "survival mode." We may consult our calendars and our lists to see what needs to get done immediately, but the idea of dreaming about or envisioning something else for ourselves seems . . . well, exhausting. Or maybe even pointless.

A few years back I began a program called the Soul Care Institute. Designed for pastors and ministry leaders, its intention was to give us the tools to prevent burn out in ministry. In our first week in person together, the professor asked us what our dreams were.

It stumped a lot of people.

We get on auto-pilot, and we know that's not ideal, but we don't always know what else to do. Stuff has to get done, right? The tyranny of the urgent is very real. So we don't make space to dream much anymore.

Last Fall when we walked together through our new Vision Statement, I asked you all what you were passionate about. And 35% all said the same thing - you are passionate about your family.

We do a good job serving families at this church. We do a lot of family-friendly events. We offer Trailblazers for younger children and youth group for older kids. Most recently, I've seen two different people take their passion and turn it into a service for families - one was offering sewing classes and another created Parent's Night Out once a month. I'm seeing people with a passion for baking, sewing, music, and crafts use that passion in service to others.

One thing the Soul Care Institute taught me is that when I am in survival mode, I don't dream about my future. I don't envision something deeper outside of myself and my circle of influence.

But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

"One thing I do."

One thing.

Pressing on toward the goal to win the prize.

It can be easy to think that Paul is talking about the prize being salvation . . . which ultimately leads us to heaven. It's easy to read this and think about what sounds really good to us right now – in our overwhelmed, over-exhausted, over-scheduled, survival-mode life – eventually ending up in a place of perfection where there is no more pain and no more tears.

But the prize he is talking about is not heaven. It's not eternal life.

You know how I know that? Because Paul is saying that the goal is something HE is striving toward. And we cannot earn eternal life in heaven.

The prize is Christ himself.

The prize is the relationship with Jesus.

When was the last time you considered Jesus as the one thing you are passionate about?

When Jesus is our center, all the hopes and dreams and desires flow from that. When we remain in him we will bear fruit that most honors him. Which is the point – to be a reflection of God to the world, so that all may know him.

God gives us passions outside of ourselves – like our family, like jobs and hobbies – but if we do not center Jesus first, our

lives become disordered. Overwhelmed. Over-scheduled. Without Jesus, we simply run on survival mode.

To passionately pursue Jesus is to begin in the right place, to order our lives so we don't become disordered in our hearts.

May he always be our "one thing."

In Christ, Pastor Stephanie

Thank you from the Ryans

Dear Covenant Church Family,

Thank you very much for the wonderful farewell you gave us. We were deeply touched and felt truly loved and appreciated. The Covenant Church of Thomaston had been our home for decades, and saying goodbye was very difficult.

As we settle into our new life in Ohio, we're finding it challenging to fully embrace the reality that Connecticut is no longer our home. Our days are filled with unpacking boxes, finding new doctors, decorating our apartment, and getting to know the wonderful people and activities in our new community.

An unexpected blessing is that our daughter Sharon and her husband Casey have been assigned to a new church and have purchased a home just two miles away from us! We plan to start attending their church in Columbus when Casey is established there in July as their new Senior Pastor. We have done some church exploring since coming to Ohio, but generally we stay home on Sunday morning and watch Casey's service on our computer.

Thank you for helping us keep in touch with the happenings at the church through emails and an occasional note or phone call. It's wonderful to know that the church is thriving and moving forward in its ministry. You are always in our prayers.

With love and gratitude, Ted and Ann

Summary: Board Meeting of April 6

Pastor's Stephanie's most recent doctoral class was on curriculum planning. She will be planning a five-week training series for the church based on two books by Thom Rainer, *Anatomy of a Revived Church*, and *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*.

General Fund offerings through March 31 are \$37,890.60, or \$2,953.65 below the budget goal of \$40,844.25. We still are feeling the effects of the two canceled worship services in February. Available unrestricted funds as of March 31 are \$17,295.50, with new unpaid bills amounting to around \$10,000.

The church gave \$200 to Our Savior Lutheran church to help with its food pantry. Peggy Schwetz has been added to the diaconate. Plans for summer outreach opportunities are being made.

The water pressure coming into the building from the street has been tested and is too high, which is the likely cause of recent water problems. A valve can be installed to regulate this.

A local business has donated enough to pay for one child to go to camp. A lasagna dinner on May 9 will raise more campership funds. The last day of Sunday school will be June 8. VBS will be August 17-19 at Nystroms Park. Sunday school children will participate in the worship services once a month.

Missions & Evangelism started a Monday night Zoom prayer meeting, which will be opened to wider participation once it is going well. The goal is to pray for God's help in reaching others.

The annual WM graduates picnic will be held in June

The Pastoral Relations Committee has reviewed Pastor Stephanie's performance and has set church ministry goals for 2025:

Church ministry goal:

- 1) Pastor Stephanie will develop short (5 minute) messages to post online;
- 2) Pastor Stephanie will assist CHYG with resources and curriculum;
- 3) The pastor and the Diaconate will work together to improve congregational care, contacting active members of the congregation;
- 4) The pastor and the congregation will work together on outreach to peripheral people and the pastor will continue to help the congregation develop the needed skills for this;
- 5) In-person and Zoom Bible study classes will continue;
- 6) Pastor Stephanie will reach out to find ways the church can connect locally (food bank, library, schools, Opera House, etc.).

Pastor Stephanie's goals for 2025 include:

- 1) Continuing participation in BSF on Tuesday evenings;
- 2) Continuing morning prayer with her Soul Care community;
- 3) Spending one day per quarter near a body of water to commune with God;
- 4) Practicing 24 hours of silence monthly to commune with God;
- 5) Continuing her doctoral program at Trinity International University.

John Bedosky, Church Chair

Zoom Prayer

Join us on Monday nights, 7:00-7:30 pm, to pray about our community, how to reach the lost and those who don't know Christ, and our congregation's prayer needs. Jessica Bedosky will email the link (203-910-0945 or jbed546@aol.com).

Women Ministries



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

- **WM OUTING:** ON Saturday, May 3, we visit Elizabeth Park to view the tulips, followed by lunch. Meet at the church to leave at 9:30 am. Sign up in the Potter's House. Contact: Martha Tillow (matillow@yahoo.com).
- **WM Kitchen Detail:** Wednesday, May 7, 9:00 am
- **Book Club** The group next meets on Thursday, May 29, at 6:30 pm at Cathy Fredlund's (298 Valley View Road, Thomaston). The book to read is *Peace Like a River* by Leif Enger.
- **Walking Nystrom's Track** instead of Zumba, Monday evenings at 6:30 pm, weather permitting. No one is required to walk together, but it's nice knowing that others are there for safety. Contact: Peggy Schwetz (schwetzzy@optimum.net or 860-294-5057).

Fellowship Time after Worship

- **Coffee Fellowship after worship** is hosted by the boards (CE, M&E, Trustees and Diaconate), Women Ministries, and the Social Committee, with each group responsible for two months per year.

Since some of these groups have a lot of overlap, it would help if other individuals (or a group of friends) could sign up to host for some particular Sunday. Food and beverages are provided by the church, so what is needed is setup, serving, and cleanup.

Sign up for your turn on the clipboard located by the Kitchen. Thank you.

Youth Groups

Trailblazers/Pathfinders is for students in Grades K-6. Leaders are Brenda Tousignant, Lori Vigeant, and Haley Morton. They meet once a month

5/10 Bowling



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. Pastor Stephanie is the leader. They meet on Sundays at the 9:00 am Sunday School time.



CHYG (Covenant High Youth Group) is for all students in grades 7-12. The leaders are Beth Campbell and Sue Sundell.

5/4 Regular meeting

5/18 Mother/Daughter Mini-Retreat



Liturgical Dance is for girls in grades 1-8. The leader is Jessica Bedosky. Practice times vary and are in the Sanctuary.



Christian Education

Lasagna for Camperships! Save the date of Friday, May 9, 4:30-6:30, and plan to come for a delicious dinner made by our own talented cooks. Prices are \$10 for adults, \$7 for children, (maximum \$40 per family). Get your tickets ahead of time. Takeouts available.

Save the Date

Night of Hope at the Opera House: Several Thomaston churches and their Worship Teams will join together on Friday night, May 30, at 7:00 pm to worship and sing together and raise funds for the Town Pantry. Contact: Glenn Hafele (glennhafele11@gmail.com or 860-309-2065).

Banquet of Blessing

- **Need**, solid white tuna, Spaghettios, canned green beans, creamed corn, mixed vegetables, paper towels, toilet paper.
- **No perishable foods. Check expiration dates.** We don't give away out of date food.

Kids Snack Packs

Snack Pack bags need donations. Please put "snack pack" in your check memo or leave food donations on the Potter's House counter. Thank you!

Prayer Chain

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

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).

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



May 2025

(Rev 4/29/2025)

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Romans 12:4-5

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>*Sundays: 9:00 Sunday School; 10:00 am Worship; 11:15 Fellowship Sunday worship services are recorded and posted on the church website (covchurchthomaston.org). Worship bulletins, which include the weekly announcements, also are posted on the church website.</p>				<p>1 East Coast Conf. Annual Meeting</p> <p>7:30 NA Subcommittee (Gathering)</p>	<p>2 ECC Annual Mtg.</p> <p>6:00 Crafty Fridays (Potter's House)</p>	<p>3 ECC Annual Mtg. 8:30-noon Tres Dias Women's Team (Fellowship) 9:30 Wm Outing: Elizabeth Park</p>
<p>4*</p> <p>4:00 CHYG 7:30 M&E Board (Zoom)</p>	<p>5 10:30 39ers Study (Fellowship)</p> <p>6:30 Nystrom's Track 7:00 Zoom Prayer</p>	<p>6</p> <p>5:00 Prayer (Church Office)</p>	<p>7 9:00 Kitchen Detail</p> <p>6:30 NA (Fellowship)</p>	8	<p>9</p> <p>4:30-6:30 Lasagna Dinner (Fellowship)</p>	<p>10 9:00-5:00 Private (Gathering)</p> <p>Trailblazers/Pathfinders - Bowling</p>
<p>11* 11:30 Diaconate (Conf.)</p>	<p>12 10:30 39ers Study (Fellowship)</p> <p>6:30 Nystrom's Track 7:00 Zoom Prayer</p>	<p>13 9:30 Women's Study (Conference)</p> <p>5:00 Prayer (Church Office)</p>	<p>14</p> <p>6:30 NA (Gathering)</p>	15	<p>16</p> <p>6:00 Crafty Fridays (Potter's House) 6:30 Tres Dias Secuela (Fellowship)</p>	17
<p>18*</p> <p>4:00 CHYG Mother/Daughter Mini-Retreat</p>	<p>19 10:30 39ers Study (Fellowship)</p> <p>6:30 Nystrom's Track 6:30 Tres Dias Secretariat (Fellowship) 7:00 Zoom Prayer</p>	<p>20 9:30 Women's Study (Conference)</p> <p>5:00 Prayer (Church Office)</p>	<p>21</p> <p>6:30 NA (Gathering)</p>	22	<p>23</p> <p>6:00 Crafty Fridays (Potter's House)</p>	<p>24 9:30 "Chosen" Group (Esme's & Ruby's)</p>
<p>25*</p>	<p>26 MEMORIAL DAY</p> <p>6:30 Nystrom's Track 7:00 Zoom Prayer</p>	<p>27 9:30 Women's Study (Conference)</p> <p>5:00 Prayer (Church Office)</p>	<p>28</p> <p>6:30 NA (Gathering)</p>	<p>29</p> <p>6:30 WM Book Club (Cathy Fredlund's)</p>	<p>30</p> <p>7:00 Night of Hope Worship Music (Opera House)</p>	31

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

Coffee Fellowship sponsored by: Diaconate **

****Beverages and snacks are provided by the church.**

NURSERY				ALTAR FLOWERS		LAY READERS:		SCREEN MONITORS	
5/4	Lori Vigeant	6/1	Gina Whaley Lauren Whaley	5/4	Communion	5/4	Dave McClay	5/4	Martha Tillow
5/11	Cathy Fredlund Haley Morton	6/8	Sue Sundell	5/11		5/11	Jennifer/Grace Nolan	5/11	Peggy Schwetz
				5/18	Ruth Johnson	5/18	Jessica Bedosky	5/18	Cathy Fredlund
				5/25	Ruth Johnson	5/25	Gina Whaley	5/25	Peggy Schwetz
5/18	Courtney Ayer	6/15	Christy Barrett	6/1	Communion	6/1	Janet Cappelletti	6/1	Martha Tillow
5/25	Patricia Vigeant Megan Campbell	6/22	Lori Vigeant	6/8		6/8	Liz Montambault	6/8	Peggy Schwetz
				6/15		6/15	Jennifer/Grace Nolan	6/15	Cathy Fredlund
		6/29	Mary Butkevich	6/22		6/22	Terry Breen	6/22	Peggy Schwetz
				6/29		6/29	Peggy Schwetz	6/29	Peggy Schwetz

Sunday School Staff

K & Pre-K Grace Duke	3-4 Mary Butkevich	7-8 (D/C) Pastor Stephanie	
1-2 Lori Vigeant	5-6 Ruth Hopkins	Class Helpers: Christy Barrett, Drew Gomes, Patricia Vigeant, Haley Morton	

Youth Staff

CHYG (Grades 7-12) Beth Campbell Sue Sundell	Trailblazers/Pathfinders (Grades K-6) Brenda Tousignant, Lori Vigeant, Haley Morton
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Liturgical Dance (Girls, grades 1-8) Jessica Bedosky

May Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays				Anniversaries
2 Nick Samela	12 Ryan Hurlbert	22 Beth Campbell	28 Cheryl Morton	14 Michele & Bill Dayton
4 Stan Hurlbert (87)*	13 Elin Saghafi	25 Liz Montambault (81)	29 Jamie Saghafi	17 Jen & Nick Samela
5 Linda Chandon	14 Terry Breen	26 Drew Conlon	31 Michele Dayton	28 Jess & John Bedosky
7 Gunnar Barrett	17 Stephanie Nelson	26 Ruth Johnson (80)	*Stan: 52 Babbitt Rd.	
7 Alexa Sanson	22 Willow Bothroyd	28 Cathy Fredlund	Thomaston	

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