

THE COVENANTER

August 23, 2020

Member NE GEORGIA Presbytery, Synod
of the South Atlantic, General
Assembly of the Presbyterian Church
(USA)

Please click here to view Covenants Worship Service, Sunday, August 23rd :

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCkRp1t3MnecoYXnds4X03A>



**Parents and Friends of Our Covenant Children...
Save the date!**

Rally Day Drive-Thru

**Tuesday, September 1, 5- 7 p.m. and Wednesday, September 2,
2 - 3:30 p.m.**

Steer your car through our food pantry drive-thru and pick up a bag filled with surprises, Sunday School materials and supplies, and a home-baked treat!

DAILY BIBLE READINGS— Aug. 24-30

Monday	Exodus 3: 1-15
Tuesday	Psalm 105: 1-6
Wednesday	Psalm 105: 23-26
Thursday	Psalm 105: 45c
Friday	Romans 12: 1-8
Saturday	Romans 12: 9-21
Sunday	Matthew 16: 21-28

Our partner in mission, Rev. Cheryl Barnes, will preach the Good News on location in Malawi, Sunday, August 30th. Let's hear what God says to us through her ministry with our brothers and sisters in Christ a world away!

COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1065 Gaines School Road
Athens, Georgia 30605
706-548-2756 or 706-613-2344
www.covpresathens.org
covenantp@covpresathens.org

Prayer Concerns: Our Nation, for protesters, police, elected officials and church leaders; John, Mary Sue, & Elizabeth Brewer with health issues; for those who are affected by the COVID-19 illness, as well as their caregivers, our healthcare professionals, government leaders and those who are working around the clock to minimize the impact of this virus; Anna Holshouser recovering well at home; Ginger Davis-Beck undergoing cancer treatments; Anne Page at Avery Place #145; Pauline Marshall at Highland Hills #112 .

GRADUATES ZOOM LUNCHEON !

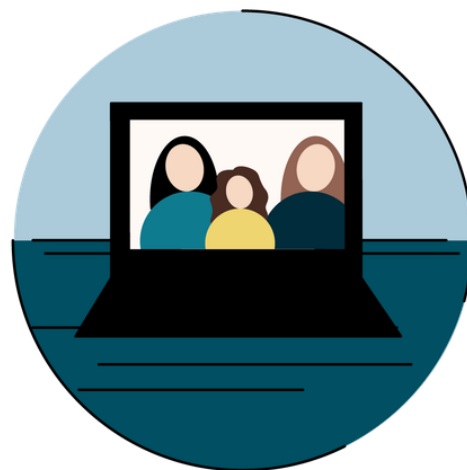
Tuesday, September 8

12:30pm

Dig out your fine china, make your lunch and join us for a virtual gathering!

We will “check in” with each other, share a short story about the best thing that happened to you since we last met, and enjoy one another’s company!

Contact **Betsy Pless**, Older Adult Ministries Coordinator, for your ZOOM invitation at bppless@gmail.com



Dear members, the Session Nominating Committee needs your help!

We currently have two members who have graciously agreed to be nominees for the upcoming 2020 class of Elders. ***We are in need of two more.*** We ask that you please prayerfully consider serving Covenant in this manner. ***If you are willing to be a nominee please contact one of the Nominating Team members ASAP.***

Helen Epps

eppshelen@gmail.com

Patti Huberty

pattih720@gmail.com

Bill Barstow

webarstow@gmail.com

Notes to the young, the YAAD, and the young at heart from a "Newby" on the Session and as a delegate to the 106th Stated Meeting of the NEGA Presbytery meeting (i.e., wider church business as she understands it):

On Saturday morning August 15 2020 I served along with fellow Covenant Presbyterian Church of Athens ruling elders Steve Rathbun and Katy Terry as a voting commissioner delegate to the Zoomed 106th Stated Meeting of the NEGA Presbytery hosted this time by the Dahlonaga Presbyterian Church. What, you ask, is a Stated Meeting? And how, you ask, did you get to go? And, you ask, can I go too? The answers are that yes, you can view these meetings online, but unless you are registered as a voting commissioner you can only watch but not vote. The Stated Meeting is a business meeting, in this case of the Northeast Georgia Presbytery. A Presbytery is a grouping by region, of churches of Presbyterian USA denomination (There are about 50 churches in the NEGA Presbytery. There were about 110 persons in attendance. Not sure how many viewed the meeting online but we know there were some because they submitted questions during the meeting). Elders on the Session from each church were invited to volunteer to represent the congregation at this wider regional meeting. The church pastors and ordained ministers were an important presence as well. Our own Reverends Mark Harper and Rindy Trouteaud were there.

In keeping with the governance of the Presbyterian USA denomination a voting commissioner votes according to personal conviction after prayerfully considering a matter and seeking to be well informed. Order was kept by sticking to an agenda. The work of keeping order was done by the NEGA Presbytery officials, who were very kind and proper (presiding over all was General Presbyter Reverend Hilary Shuford, a warm and loving Christian woman, very smart and efficient and whom you may hope will one day be working the Pearly Gates with St. Peter, telling him good things about you). And, you ask, what did you all do?

We worshipped (and muted Zoom while singing, because we were told that Zooming hymns together sounds horrible), and prayed. We confessed our shared faith in Jesus Christ, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit. (This was wonderful - to worship with others across northeastern Georgia.) We conducted business - some boring and some exciting. Boring stuff included adopting the docket or business agenda for the meeting, approving minutes from the past meeting, receiving guidance on the Consent agenda, hearing the Stated Clerk's report, agreeing to conduct the October Stated Meeting by Zoom instead of in person, and such.

Exciting stuff included ratifying the Coordinating Team's Joint Statement of Justice (because Black Lives Matter indeed!), redirecting the February offering (the first intended mercy didn't happen so the money went to help another worthy cause), agreeing to advance John McCroskey from Inquirer to Candidate, conferring Honorable Retirement on Reverend Travis Adams, and best of all, witnessing and participating in the examination and ordination of Dallas Thompson as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament, called to serve as Chaplain Resident at NEGA Health System, Gainesville GA. (She was afraid of hospitals but during her chaplaincy internship fell in love with the Word and Work there, during the scary time of COVID19). There was additional interesting stuff, such as reading the report of a YAAD who attended the 224th General Assembly.

What, you ask, is a YAAD? And what, you ask, is a General Assembly? Well, first, the General Assembly is a gathering of representatives of all the churches within the denomination across the whole USA (right?). YAAD stands for Young Adult Advisory Delegate. The young adult who attended is named Jay, is a lifetime member of First Presbyterian Church of Athens, and pointed out that young adult advisory delegates do not have a vote in these meetings. He said this was a problem when it came to issues that matter for the future because young adults will be there in the future, and have insights into the present that older people who lived in the past might not have. He gave as an example the General Assembly discussion about racial justice, which apparently went rather badly according to him and others. In his view, part of the problem is that, because young people do not get to vote, it takes far too long to react to current issues like racial justice (since older people tend to resist change - a lot). I agree with him, and so I emailed him to offer support should he want to work on giving YAADs a stronger voice.

Other exciting stuff discussed at the NEGA Presbytery meeting included COVID19, graduations, helping the needy, and Presbyterian Women. The meeting could be improved with snacks, but since we were Zooming no one wanted to be disrespectful to speakers by gnawing on food while others had something important to say. What was accomplished through this meeting overall? A wise preacher said recently: "No one stands outside God's circle of love." I do believe that we need eyes on and prayers sent up from God's wider circle, that these are healing and of help in refreshing us and keeping us from growing insular as a local church community. Showing up for each other, being a blessing and a help to one another and keeping each other sharpened so that we are ready to be God's light and salt...that is what was accomplished there. Thanks very much to the hosts in Dahlonaga! *Tamara Stam*

FAITH & JUSTICE PANEL

August 25, 2020

6:00 - 7:30 pm

MODERATED BY:
Deborah Gonzalez, Esq.

PANELISTS:

Chaplain Cole Knapper, National Action Network, Charles Knapper Project

Rev. Daryl G. Bloodsaw, Ebenezer Baptist Church West

Rev. J Ricardo Smith, Browns Chapel Baptist Church

Rev. B A Hart, AME First Church

Facebook Live:
@DG4DA Facebook Page



Paid for by Deborah Gonzalez for DA

Thank you!



Dear Covenant Family & Friends,

Thank you so much for the cards, phone calls and prayers . It means so much and I am doing so much better.

Anna Holshouser

Highlights of our Covenant Re-Opening Task Force meeting this week include the following.

Using the NEGA Presbytery Phase-In document as the foundation for our work, we examined the Phase One recommendations. This phase is structured around maximizing virtual worship services only. In Covenant's Phase One we have progressed from the pastors recording those services at their respective homes to recording those services at the church, in the worship center, with a minimum of musicians, vocalists, and tech support. Much of the desk work of the pastors and office staff can be done from home, but on occasion each one has the prerogative to return to the office to complete necessary work. Rich Reeves reports that all grounds work is completed by individuals working alone or in the same timeframe as one or two others. All groups who are organized for study or church work do so virtually via Zoom. There have thus far been no requests for weddings or funerals. The Task Force recommends that all such gatherings should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Each necessary situation (i.e., weddings and funerals) will be planned and executed to keep all attendees safe. This task force emphasizes that outdoors is safer than indoors, and small numbers gathering are safer than larger groups.

Using two documents for reference, the Fulton County Schools Reopening Matrix and the CDC Proposed State or Regional Gating Criteria (the benchmark that is established to feel safe to progress to the next phase of regathering), the group discussed gating criteria for Covenant's Phase One. There was universal agreement that we are in a very dynamic environment where new insights about COVID-19 hit the media weekly, if not daily. Scientists studying this virus are forced to modify the best ways for us to protect ourselves and those around us. Complicating the local scene is that neither the University of Georgia or the Clarke County Schools have returned to in-person instruction. As UGA students return to classes we anticipate the positive cases of COVID to rise, perhaps dramatically, unless the students and staff commit to wearing masks and social distancing. Likewise, if the public schools return to classrooms we will once again face possible increases in the local infection rate. These local school-related data will have an impact on our regathering timeline, but may also have new insights about how to regather and how not to regather; and how this new virus behaves in various age groups.

Our discussions included whether it is practical to consider any form of outdoor worship. We have both the area used for Easter Sunrise Service and the basketball pavilion as potential sites for outdoor worship. The pavilion offers protection from weather but does not have a path with safe footing to get there. B&G may or may not determine that improving the path to the pavilion is a practical project at this time. The current outdoor worship area used for Easter Sunrise limits the number who could participate, particularly with social distancing, and makes weather issues a concern.

We know that we are in Phase One for the foreseeable future. We will continue to ponder gating criteria for Phase One. For certain, the infection rate must decline significantly and for a reasonable length of time in order for us to regather safely. The commitment of our community to mask wearing, the release of an effective vaccine and an acceptable rate of administering it, and learning the likely length of immunity will all impact our safe return to in-person worship. The Task Force acknowledges that this is a daunting set of circumstances.

At the September meeting of our Task Force we will find out how the Session views the current situation and whether they believe that we should focus on regathering "sooner than later."

Julie Bower, for the Re-Opening Task Force

Covenant's Emergency Food Pantry

Members, and friends of Covenant have been giving generously of their time and talents to the Emergency Food Pantry. As you can imagine, the need is great.

*the **Tuesday Food Pantry hours** are **5PM-7PM**. This is being done with the thought that there may be people who work and are also in need of assistance from the Food Pantry. There also may be volunteers who work but would like to volunteer. The Thursday Food Pantry hours will remain the same: 1PM-4PM. A hearty THANK-YOU to the many volunteers who help feed our neighbors.*

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

STAY SAFE—If there is any reason at all that you should NOT physically volunteer-consider the following:

Make a financial donation to the Food Pantry by sending a check to Covenant and write "food pantry" in the subject line. *(You could send it in at the same time you send in your pledge).*

We can use grocery bags (paper or plastic), and small boxes to pack the food. If you call the church, someone could even come out to your car and get it.

If you are able to physically be present as a volunteer:

Click the link below for an easy sign up or call or email Betsy Pless 540-1719
bppless@gmail.com

You can just sign up for 1 day, or for multiple days. You can also share the 3-hour time slot with 2 friends!

HOW TO SIGN UP: Please sign up for Covenant Food Pantry!

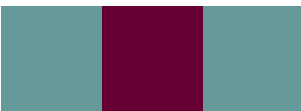
Here's how it works in 3 easy steps:

1. **Click this link** to go to our invitation page on SignUp.com: <https://signup.com/login/entry/611848298042>

2. **Enter your email address:** (You will NOT need to register an account on SignUp.com)

3. **Sign up!** Choose your spots - SignUp.com will send you an automated confirmation and reminders. Easy!

Note: SignUp.com does not share your email address with anyone. If you prefer not to use your email address, please contact me and I can sign you up manually.



HOW TO GIVE. There is a new online giving option through the Presbyterian Foundation at this link <http://covpresathens.org/wp/contributions/> . Or you can click on this link www.covpresathens.org and click on online giving. And as always you can mail your check to the church office. Thank you for your faithful giving!

FINANCIAL REPORT
FISCAL YEAR TO DATE - Week #07
Anticipated Pledges \$60,576.95
Actual Pledges \$57,154.93
Thank you for your faithful giving!



Little Food Pantry— We continue to seek out new and faithful ways to respond to the needs of the food insecure and homeless friends in our community. UGA students built a Little Food Pantry on our church campus. It is located outside the doors of our fellowship hall. Little Food Pantries are scattered throughout Athens, and their purpose is to respond to the emergency food needs of hungry folks. We encourage you to help us keep our Little Food Pantry stocked with pop-top single serve canned goods that do not require cooking, peanut butter and jelly, packaged crackers, healthy snack items. Small individual personal hygiene items (ie: soap, deodorant, toothbrush and toothpaste, and shampoos) in a zip lock bag with a granola bar of some kind is also needed. Please remember everything must be sealed to prevent ant infestations...*Please no raisins.*



The Covenant coffee closet still has lots of coffee, tea, and hot chocolate ! Although the regular office hours and services are suspended, the church is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the Food Pantry from 1 - 4 PM. *Please call the church office at 706-548-2756 and place your order and when you would like to pick it up. A food pantry volunteer will hand your order as you drive through the parking lot.* In this time of uncertainty, let's not forget the hard working farmers and their families who depend on the Equal Exchange folks to buy their coffee at a Fair Price !!!

Any questions please contact Sandy Whitney at sandrawhitney08@gmail.com.



If you need a helping hand or (just someone to reach out to you) during "Sheltering in Place due to the Covid-19 pandemic, please contact Congregational Care Ministry Team and we will do our best to be of assistance. Let us know of your needs by either calling Luanne Rigsby at (706) 769-1066 (home) or (706) 224-3828 (cell) or emailing her at luannerigsby@gmail.com or Don Bower at dbower@uga.edu.