



# Covenant Presbyterian Church

...a spiritual home where 'God's love has the run of the house'...

400 Lancaster Avenue, Malvern (Frazer), Pennsylvania 19355

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Rev. Alex Becker, *Lead Pastor*

Rev. Maggie Niles, *Associate Pastor*

Dara Harris, *Director of Children and Youth Ministries*

Amy McLoughlin, *Director of Music*

Bonnie Sumerfield, *Pianist*      Patti Mann, *Bell Choir Director*

James Looney, *Worship Technology Coordinator*

## Sunday Worship Service

*A Stephen Ministry Congregation*

**Sunday, April 21, 2024**

**10 a.m.**

*To our guests: Welcome! We invite you to respond with bolded words during prayers and readings.*

*\*All those who are able, please stand*

### **Assemble in God's Name**

*The church opens wide its doors and in the name of Jesus bids welcome to our Lord's house.*

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE.....**Salt & Light Ringers**

*With Great Joy* arr. Susan E. Geschke

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

From the mountains in the north,

**and the deserts to the south;**

from the seas in the west,

**and the prairies to the east;**

God's people gather to praise and to feast!

**Let us worship God.**

\*OPENING HYMN.....**683**

*Lord of All Hopefulness*

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Holy Lord, God of life, hear our prayer:**

**Forgive us when we follow those paths that do not lead to life,**

**that lead instead to violence, or hate, or fear, paths that lead to dread and death.**

**Forgive us when we forget that you offer us life: life that is abundant and eternal,**

**life that began at the creation of all things.**

**Forgive us, turn us to the right path,**

**and let your love and grace flow over us and the world.**

**We pray in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

**Proclaim God's Word**

*The God who speaks in Scripture addresses us now.*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE ..... **Rev. Maggie Niles**

*Children are always welcome to remain in worship! Or, after the children's message, children ages 3 - gr. 5 are invited upstairs for Children's Church during the service. Please pick up your children after the benediction.*

SCRIPTURE ..... **Genesis 2:10-25**

SERMON ..... **Rev. Maggie Niles**

*Till*

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER (p.35)

MOMENT FOR MISSION – Rise Against Hunger

THE GIFTS OF THE PEOPLE

*Offerings may also be given online at [covenantfrazer.org/give](http://covenantfrazer.org/give) or in the offering box in the Gathering Space.*

\*DOXOLOGY

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

BLESSING OF THE OFFERING

**Go in God's Name**

*The Holy Spirit sends us forth to be instruments of God's peace:  
To do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly with our God.*

\*SENDING SONG ..... **37**

**Let All Things Now Living**

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

\* This worship service is livestreamed and recorded ([covenantfrazer.org/live](http://covenantfrazer.org/live))

**Thank you for worshipping with us! We are working together to create comfortable worship spaces for all our members and visitors.**

- Join us in the sanctuary. Children's activities for the pew are located through the back doors of the sanctuary or on the windowsill near the front of the sanctuary.
- Adults and children are also invited to the Gathering Space for worship. A children's table with quiet activities and a rack with children's books are available for little ones.
- If you need a quieter worship space, the parlor is available.
- The nursery is open for children birth through age 3 during the service.
- A mother's nursing room is available at the end of the hallway past the bathrooms (Rm. 108).
- Please join us in the Gathering Space following the service for Covenant Connect, a time of food & fellowship.

**The rose** this morning is in honor of the birth of Dillon Ray Lyden, born on March 13th to Jennifer and Josh Lyden. The grandparents are Peter & Judy Culeman and Carmel Lyden.

**Adult Christian Education** will meet on April 28 at 9 - 9:45 in Rm. 207 and continue a four-week study of "Care for Creation". The lesson for Week FOUR will be "Restore Creation". All are welcome! If you have any questions, contact Jim Godbold (JHGodbold@gmail.com).

**Women's Retreat, Saturday, May 11th, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.,** St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley, \$20 suggested donation, Includes breakfast and lunch. The theme of the retreat is "Spirituality in Daily Life; Encountering God in Ordinary Ways" and is for any woman of any age who wishes to discover God in our daily rhythms of life. This will be a day of spending time in nature, reflecting, journaling, and getting in touch with our spirituality. Please RSVP to Pastor Maggie at mniles@covenantfrazer.org or by calling the church.

Volunteers are needed for the **Rise Against Hunger Meal Packaging Event in the CCLC on May 18<sup>th</sup>**. 10-15 people are needed for set-up from 8:30-10 a.m. and 65 people for packing from 10 a.m.-12 noon with clean up immediately following. Sign up to volunteer at the welcome desk or online at [covenantfrazer.org/RAH](http://covenantfrazer.org/RAH). We have fully raised the funds needed for this event! Thank you for your donations!

**Camp Firelight (Vacation Bible School) will be taking place June 24-28, 2024! Online registration is open at [covenantfrazer.org/vbs](http://covenantfrazer.org/vbs).**

**VBS Volunteers are needed!** We are specifically in need of four guides for the different age groups. Your job is to guide and support, no prep or teaching required. We are also looking for someone who would take photos and videos during the week (phone camera/video is fine!). Sign up on the board in the Gathering Space or contact Dara ([dharris@covenantfrazer.org](mailto:dharris@covenantfrazer.org)).

**Youth Plant Sale!** Order forms are available on the information wall across from the welcome desk. Orders are due by **April 28<sup>th</sup>**. Annuals, perennials, vegetables, and herbs are available. Plant pick-up will be **May 4th**. All proceeds benefit youth summer trips.

**Covenant softball** is back for the 2024 season! Come join us for intergenerational fun under the sun on Sundays from mid-April to early July. The Upper Main Line Church softball league is a co-ed league for all ages (14 and up). Last year, we had more than 25 men and women play at least one game with the team. If you can only make one or two games, that's ok! If you haven't played much, that's ok too! The goal of the league is fellowship and fun while glorifying God's name on the softball field. The team's first games are part of a double-header on Sunday, May 5th at 3:00 pm and 4:30 pm at the field in Berwyn. If you are interested in learning more or participating, please contact Noel Langlois at 267-264-7007 or [langnoel93@gmail.com](mailto:langnoel93@gmail.com).

## This Week at Covenant

### Sun. April 21

- 9 a.m. – Adult Christian Education
- 10 a.m. – Worship Service
- 11:15 a.m. – Covenant Connect
- 11:15 a.m. – Salt & Light Ringers
- 4:30 p.m. – Youth Group
- 7 p.m. - Overeater's Anonymous

### Mon. April 22

- 10 a.m. – LIFT
- 6:30 p.m. - Promise Keepers
- 7:30 p.m. – Session Meeting

### Tues. April 23

- 10 a.m. - Covenant Quilters
- 6:15 p.m. – Unity Handbell Choir

### Wed. April 24

- 9 a.m. – People's Pantry

### Thurs. April 25

- 7 p.m. – Chancel Choir
- 7 p.m. – Women's Bible Study

### Fri. April 26

- 6:30 a.m. - Promise Keepers

### Sat. April 27

- 8:45 p.m. – People's Pantry

### Sun. April 28

- 9 a.m. – Adult Christian Education
- 10 a.m. – Worship Service
- 11:15 a.m. – Covenant Connect
- 4:30 p.m. – Youth Group
- 7 p.m. - Overeater's Anonymous

*See more events at [covenantfrazier.org/events](http://covenantfrazier.org/events) and subscribe to our emails at [covenantfrazier.org/newsletter](http://covenantfrazier.org/newsletter). For more information, call the church office at 610-648-0707, Monday - Friday 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.*



Scan to give



Connect Card

**1** As you gather, read the other side of this page about the topic for today. Once gathered, spend a few minutes introducing everyone. Open the session by reading Psalm 65:9-13.

**2** Watch the YouTube video “One Earth—Environmental Short Film” ([bit.ly/FMOneEarth](https://bit.ly/FMOneEarth), 4:27). As you watch, reflect on the repeated affirmation expressed in Genesis that the creation is good.

**3** Read “Summary of the Practice” and “Finding the Practice in the Bible” on the other side of this page. Now read Genesis 2:4b-25. Discuss:

- ➔ How do the ways humans are created differ between the first creation story (read in the first session) and this second version?
- ➔ Which translation of the Hebrew verb *radah* do you prefer: *have dominion* or *take care and till*? Why?
- ➔ How should understanding ourselves as created from soil and returning to soil affect how we treat the land?

**4** Briefly discuss as a group various ways people work and take care of the creation in your context. As you discuss, jot down in this space ways you might deepen this practice.

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**5** Read “Finding the Practice Then and Now” on the other side of this page. Watch and discuss one or both of these YouTube videos:

- The “Food, Health, and Ecological Well-Being Program” at Wake Forest Divinity School encourages ministry students to explore the ways that food and faith intersect. Watch the YouTube video “Food, Health, and Ecological Well-Being Program” ([bit.ly/FMWakeForest](https://bit.ly/FMWakeForest), 5:15) that tells about the program.
- Some churches become certified as an Earth Care Congregation, committing to tend to natural resources responsibly and encouraging others to practice living sustainably. Watch the YouTube video “Our Story . . . Moving Forward: Earthcare Congregation—Jane Hiller” ([bit.ly/FMJaneHiller](https://bit.ly/FMJaneHiller), 3:25).
- More people who enjoy the outdoors and camping are learning ways to improve the environment they are enjoying rather than leave behind trash and such. Watch the YouTube video “What Is Leave No Trace?—REI” ([bit.ly/FMLeaveNoTrace](https://bit.ly/FMLeaveNoTrace), 5:04).

Note: [bit.ly](https://bit.ly) addresses are case-sensitive.



## SUMMARY OF THE PRACTICE

Our biblical ancestors, including Jesus, had no idea about climate change as we understand it today. Jesus did not address greenhouse-gas emissions in any of his sermons to be sure. Yet, as people who lived off the land in agricultural societies, they were aware of where their food came from and how to treat the land and other creatures in order to protect their own long-term survival and well-being.

In some translations of the Bible, the second creation story (Genesis 2:4b–25) has God say that humans should “have dominion” over the creatures of the earth. Unfortunately, *dominion* has too often been wrongly understood as *domination*, leading some to believe that humans can use every resource and creature for our own selfish interests. Our ancestors depended on the land and never dreamt of misusing the very thing that gave them life. The Hebrew verb is *radah* in Genesis 2:15 and a growing number of Bibles translate the verb to mean work and take care of the creation.

## FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

The book of Genesis contains two distinct creation accounts that came from two separate traditions. They were combined into one when the scriptural text was finally written down. Genesis 1:1–2:4a, which we discussed in the previous session, describes the divine work of creation in a poetic, lyrical way. Genesis 2:4b–25 is more of a narrative, in which God is personified, and the role of humanity is quite different. Instead of creating humans in God’s image, as indicated in Genesis 1, this second account describes God creating the first person before any of the other creatures. “There was no one to till the ground,” we are told in verse 5. God then reaches into the earth, picks up a handful of dirt, and creates the first human.

Made *from* the fertile soil, the first human is made *for* it; he is given the vocation to farm it. Consider the popular phrase said at many funerals as we bury the body: “Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” We are created from the earth’s soil and, when we die, our bodies return to nourish the soil. Humanity is not separate from the rest of the natural world, but instead fully integrated in, and created from, the earth.

## FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

- Koinonia Farm is a working farm and intentional living community in Americus, Georgia. Founded in 1942, it is a place where people connect to the land and their community. Inspired by the description of the earliest Christian communities described in the book of Acts, the founders of Koinonia envisioned creating a similar type of community that lived the same values. Learn more at [www.koinoniafarm.org](http://www.koinoniafarm.org).
- Some churches become certified as an Earth Care Congregation, committing to tend to natural resources responsibly and encouraging others to practice living sustainably.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THIS GUIDE

If possible, distribute this sheet to participants before gathering. Be prepared to summarize the information on this page. Bring extra copies, some pens, and a Bible.

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### CLOSING PRAYER

Close with this prayer or one of your choosing:

*Gracious God, we give you thanks  
for the beauty of the earth, sky, and seas.  
May we safeguard them for our posterity  
and the well-being of all that lives.*

**Amen.**