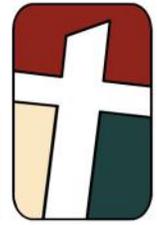


Serving the Lancaster Community Since 1884

Covenant



ECHOES Newsletter

United Methodist Church

April / May 2026



From the Pastor's Desk...

By Pastor Derrick Gutierrez

Christ is Risen!

Every year, Easter arrives with flowers, friends, family, and guests; with music that lifts the roof and hearts that feel like anything is possible. And then Monday comes. The music fades. The crowds thin. And too often, so does our sense that the resurrection has anything to say about the week ahead.

The resurrection was not simply an event for us to commemorate. It is a reality we are called to inhabit.

Paul writes in Romans 6:4, "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." Read that again slowly. We too may live a new life. Not someday. Not in theory. Today, in the present tense, in the dailiness of our ordinary lives.

That word may is not permission. It is a possibility made available to us through the power of the risen Christ. And with that possibility comes a serious question: Are we actually living it?

The resurrection demands something of us. It demands that we release what holds us captive — the old habits, the unresolved bitterness, the fears we have dressed up as wisdom. It demands that we stop treating Easter as an annual reminder and start treating it as our daily address.

The Holy Spirit does not simply observe our struggle. He empowers us to walk differently — to be people whose lives look like something has actually changed, because something has.

Spring declares this truth every year. Life pushing through cold ground. Color returning to bare branches. Creation itself preaches resurrection.

Continued on next page ...

Sidelights

COVENANT'S VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Our Vision Statement: **Bringing Christ's Light into the Community and Beyond.**

Our Mission Statement: **We Invite, We Welcome, We Nurture, We Serve.**

WAYS TO CONTINUE GIVING

Thank you to our faithful members who continue to support Covenant Church. Here are options for you to give your personal tithes and offerings:

- Mail checks to 110 N. Mulberry St., Lancaster, PA, 17603
- Give online. Go to our website www.covenant-umc.com and click on the GIVING link and follow the directions.
- Text 717-769-1063. After the initial setup, giving is easy.

Please call the church office with questions.

Sidelights

PRAYER CHAIN

Covenant is a praying church. There are times when an urgent or emergency concern may arise in your life. Covenant has a Prayer Chain ready to jump into immediate action to notify our Prayer Warriors to lift that concern up to God.

This phone call system is managed by Patti Willard, 717-872-7561, who will reach out to our "callers" who will then call our Prayer Warriors to stop and pray. If you are available to pray for these urgent concerns & would like to be added to our prayer chain, please contact Patti. If you need to activate our Prayer Chain, please contact Patti or the church office. Indicate the urgent/emergency need when calling.

LOBBY GREETERS

1st Sunday of the Month
Bob & Cindy Hean

2nd Sunday of the Month
Carole Horn

3rd Sunday of the Month
Linda Henning

4th Sunday of the Month
Bonnie & Barry Miller

5th Sunday of the Month
Janice McElroy

We Worship Together

Sunday Worship

In-person worship will be held each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. The service will also be livestreamed on Facebook for those who wish to worship at home.

Additional Online Opportunities During the Week

- Wednesday at 10 a.m. join our prayer group in the church library.

Continued from previous page...

So here is my challenge to Covenant: Don't leave Easter at the church door. Carry it into your week. Let it change how you speak to the people who frustrate you, how you face what frightens you, how you love the people in front of you.

Christ is risen! Let's live like it. Let's love like it.

In the joy of the risen Lord,
Pastor Derrick Gutierrez

Good Friday at the Cross at Christ UMC

For Good Friday on April 3, Lancaster Mission Link, comprised of pastors and laity from the Lancaster City United Methodist Churches, has planned a Walk to the Cross at Christ UMC from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M. This event will provide a united Holy Week experience for the congregations of those city churches as well as a united gospel outreach to the community of East Lancaster.

Seven engaging outside stations will allow those who come to experience the story and hope of Jesus's walk to the cross, and a service in the church sanctuary at 3:00 P.M. will provide a worship experience with music and reflection on Jesus's words from the cross. During the service time, activities for children will be held on the lower level of the church, including making salvation bracelets and a symbolic washing away of sins.

While originally scheduled for Reservoir Park as published earlier, this event has been moved to Christ Church to have electricity for amplification, accessibility to bathroom facilities, and a dry location if it rains. Door hangers announcing the Good Friday event were distributed to houses around the neighborhood of the church on Palm Sunday to invite the community to participate in the event.

Come and make this Good Friday a memorable experience about Jesus's walk to the cross and his death on that cross for our salvation.

Here's to Good Health!

Do you ever think about taking care of your brain? I am sure we all want to keep our brains healthy. For this article, I want to share with you some tips for keeping your brain strong and healthy.

1. Work your brain every day. Learn a new skill. Work on a word search or crossword puzzle. Read. If you come across a word you don't know, look it up. Use a dictionary or ask your phone.
2. Encourage young people to stay in school. Maybe you could even take a class online or pick up a class of some sort at one of our local schools.
3. I keep telling you to move. It is almost time to garden. Think about having a raised bed garden or even some veggies in a pot on the deck. Go for a walk and get some fresh air and sunshine.
4. Do you ride a bike? Be sure you wear a helmet. Always use your car seatbelt.
5. Don't smoke. It is never too late to stop.
6. Take blood pressure medicine as ordered and get your pressure checked.
7. Diabetic? Control your sugars with healthier eating habits, get some exercise, and take medication as ordered.
8. Watch your weight. Talk with your PCP about what is a good weight for you.
9. Eat right. Choose foods low in fat. It is almost time for fresh veggies and fruits, so be sure to add those to your diet. Choose lean meats and fish. Use fewer processed foods.
10. Sleep is good for your brain. Don't use phones and other screen devices just before bed. Sleep in a comfortable space, and try to minimize disruptions. If you have sleep related problems, talk with your PCP.

Take care of your brain!

Cindy Smith,
Wellness Coach

Bible2School Concludes for this School Year

Mid-April will mark the ending of Bible2School for Fulton Elementary students at Covenant Church for this school year. For the first time since our church has begun this released time program for public school students, we were able to sponsor classes for second, third, and fourth grade Fulton students. Ten second graders have been studying the Old Testament on Monday mornings at the church over their recess time. They have learned about God and several Old Testament men and women of faith and about Jesus at Christmas and Easter.

On Tuesdays seventeen third graders and ten fourth graders came to the church as separate classes to learn about the New Testament and more about Jesus. All three classes were possible this year with enough volunteers, seven of them, working along side the new Bible2School site director Angela Licata. Our hope is to hold Bible2School classes for all three grades again next year.

May God continue to help these children grow in their faith.

Sidelights

COVENANT MEMBERS IN BUSINESS

Aunt Sandy's Attic

Sandy Leonard—Antiques, Collectibles, Books, Art, etc.
545 W. Market Street, Marietta,
PA 17547, 717-426-5091

Dale Building Designs

www.DonDaleDesigns.com

Groff Family Funeral & Cremation Services, Inc.

Thomas S. Buter, 394.5300
528 W. Orange St.

Willard Hypnosis Center

Roger J. Willard
3304 Main Street, Conestoga PA
17516, 717.872.7561 or
willardhypnosis.com

VISIT SANDY LEONARD AT MULBERRY ART STUDIOS

On Friday, April 3rd, after attending the joint community service, visit Covenant's Sandy Leonard at Mulberry Art Studios, 19-21 N Mulberry Street for her artist reception from 5:00-8:00.

Her art exhibit of originals and limited edition giclee prints will be on display during the month of April.

Hope to see you there.

Sidelights

THE WOW FELLOWSHIP

The women and men's group that has been meeting once a month after church for lunch and Bible study is now called The WOW Fellowship, which means **W**orship God, **O**bey His Word, and **W**itness to others. The group will be meeting the second Sunday of every month in Bethany Hall following the Worship Service. Lunch is provided.

GROCERY CARDS

Giant (\$25 and \$50) and Stauffer (\$50) grocery cards are available for purchase. Five percent of the proceeds goes to support the Mission Outreach of Covenant Church.

Please make out checks to Covenant UMC, and put "grocery cards" on the memo line. You can also see Carole Horn on Sunday mornings, or contact the church office (717-393-1561) Monday-Friday mornings if you want to make a purchase.

A/V HELP NEEDED

There is room for you on the sanctuary sound board. Interested? Training will be provided. Please see Darwin Tyson for more information.



Legacy Giving Part 2

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Faithful stewardship is not only about how we give today, but how we prayerfully prepare to bless future generations. One simple and meaningful way to extend your witness is by naming the church as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy or retirement account. These gifts cost nothing today, can often be arranged with a straightforward beneficiary form, and may provide significant support for the ministries that will shape lives long after we are gone. Legacy giving allows your faith to continue bearing fruit by supporting worship, outreach, discipleship, and mission for years to come.

This article is the second in our series on legacy giving. Many members are surprised to learn how easy it can be to designate a percentage or portion of an existing policy or account to the church while still providing fully for their loved ones. If you are interested in exploring this option, we encourage you to speak with a qualified financial advisor or estate planning professional to determine what is appropriate for your situation. Thoughtful planning today can become a lasting testimony of gratitude for God's faithfulness tomorrow.

Congregational Meeting on April 19

On Sunday, April 19th, we will gather as a congregation in Bethany Hall for an important and prayerful conversation about our identity and our future. Our current mission statement—We Invite, We Welcome, We Nurture, We Serve—describes our commitment for today. It reflects how we live out our faith in tangible ways. Our vision statement—Bringing Christ's Light into the Community and Beyond—expresses our inspiration for tomorrow. It names the future toward which God may be leading us.

But faithful churches do not simply preserve words; they continually discern God's call. Who are we in this season of ministry? Where do we see the Holy Spirit at work among us? And who is God calling us to become for the sake of our community and the world? This conversation is not about change for its own sake. It is about clarity, courage, and alignment with God's purposes. Your voice matters deeply. Whether you have been here for decades or only a short time, your experiences, hopes, and prayers are essential to this discernment.

As your pastor, I am asking every member and regular attendee to make this gathering a priority. This is not a meeting for a few voices, but discernment for the whole body. Your presence and participation are essential. I fully expect us to show up for one another, to engage thoughtfully, and to seek God's direction together with humility and courage. Let us come ready to listen deeply, speak honestly, and trust the Spirit to lead us forward.

April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
<p>8a Bilingual Worship Ser</p> <p>9a Adult, Children & Youth</p> <p>10a Worship & FaceBook</p> <p>3p All Saint's City Church</p>	<p>7a MOOS</p> <p>9a Words of Wisdom Bible</p> <p>9:20a Bible2School 2nd</p> <p>7p Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>7a MOOS</p> <p>8a Community Table</p> <p>10:05a Bible2School 3rd</p> <p>12:20p Bible2School 4th</p> <p>1p Staff Meeting</p> <p>6:30p Bible Study</p>	<p>7a MOOS</p> <p>10a Conference Call Pray</p> <p>10:15a Prayer Group</p> <p>7p Covenant Chorus Ref</p>	<p>7a MOOS</p> <p>9a All Saint's City Church</p>	<p>7a MOOS</p>	<p>9:30a Food Box Distribu</p> <p>12p Care and Share Lun</p>
<p>12</p> <p>8a Bilingual Worship Ser</p> <p>9a Adult, Children & Youth</p> <p>10a Worship & FaceBook</p> <p>3p All Saint's City Church</p>	<p>13</p> <p>7a MOOS</p> <p>9a Words of Wisdom Bible</p> <p>9:20a Bible2School 2nd</p> <p>7p Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>14</p> <p>7a MOOS</p> <p>10:05a Bible2School 3rd</p> <p>12:20p Bible2School 4th</p> <p>1p Staff Meeting</p> <p>6:30p Bible Study</p>	<p>15</p> <p>7a MOOS</p> <p>10a Conference Call Pray</p> <p>10:15a Prayer Group</p> <p>5:30p Handbells Rehear</p> <p>7p Covenant Chorus Ref</p>	<p>16</p> <p>7a MOOS</p> <p>9a All Saint's City Church</p>	<p>17</p> <p>7a MOOS</p> <p>6p Free Family Movie Ni</p>	<p>18</p> <p>9a IMPACT! Missions Wo</p>
<p>19</p> <p>8a Bilingual Worship Ser</p> <p>9a Adult, Children & Youth</p> <p>10a Worship & FaceBook</p> <p>12p WOW luncheon and</p> <p>3p All Saint's City Church</p>	<p>20</p> <p>7a MOOS</p> <p>9a Words of Wisdom Bible</p> <p>7p Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>21</p> <p>7a MOOS</p> <p>1p Staff Meeting</p> <p>6:30p Bible Study</p>	<p>22</p> <p>7a MOOS</p> <p>10a Conference Call Pray</p> <p>10:15a Prayer Group</p> <p>7p Covenant Chorus Ref</p>	<p>23</p> <p>7a MOOS</p> <p>9a All Saint's City Church</p>	<p>24</p> <p>7a MOOS</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26</p> <p>8a Bilingual Worship Ser</p> <p>9a Adult, Children & Youth</p> <p>10a Worship & FaceBook</p> <p>3p All Saint's City Church</p>	<p>27</p> <p>7a MOOS</p> <p>9a Words of Wisdom Bible</p> <p>7p Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>28</p> <p>7a MOOS</p> <p>1p Staff Meeting</p> <p>6:30p Bible Study</p>	<p>29</p> <p>7a MOOS</p> <p>10a Conference Call Pray</p> <p>10:15a Prayer Group</p> <p>5:30p Handbells Rehear</p> <p>7p Covenant Chorus Ref</p>	<p>30</p> <p>7a MOOS</p> <p>9a All Saint's City Church</p>	<p>1</p> <p>7a MOOS</p>	<p>2</p>

May 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
					7a MOOS	12p Care and Share Lun
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Holy Communion 8a Bilingual Worship Ser 9a Adult, Children & You 10a Worship & FaceBook 12p WOW luncheon and	7a MOOS 8a Community Table 9a Words of Wisdom Bib 7p Narcotics Anonymous	7a MOOS 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	7a MOOS 10:15a Prayer Group 5:30p Handbells Rehear 7p Covenant Chorus Ret	7a MOOS	7a MOOS	9a Community Closet 9:30a Food Box Distribu
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
8a Bilingual Worship Ser 9a Adult, Children & You 10a Worship & FaceBook 12p WOW luncheon and	7a MOOS 9a Words of Wisdom Bib 7p Narcotics Anonymous	7a MOOS 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	7a MOOS 10:15a Prayer Group 7p Covenant Chorus Ret	7a MOOS	7a MOOS	9a IMPACT! Missions Voi
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
8a Bilingual Worship Ser 9a Adult, Children & You 10a Worship & FaceBook	7a MOOS 9a Words of Wisdom Bib 7p Narcotics Anonymous	7a MOOS 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	7a MOOS 10:15a Prayer Group 7p Covenant Chorus Ret	7a MOOS	7a MOOS	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
8a Bilingual Worship Ser 9a Adult, Children & You 10a Worship & FaceBook	7a MOOS 9a Words of Wisdom Bib 7p Narcotics Anonymous	7a MOOS 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	7a MOOS 10:15a Prayer Group 7p Covenant Chorus Ret	7a MOOS	7a MOOS	10a Spring Fest

Update from the Lead Team

In 2026, Covenant continues to utilize a new leadership model, the Lead Team. This model consists of church members who represent various ministries and committees. The Lead Team itself serves as the Trustees, Finance Committee, and SPRC Committee. We combined all the administrative committees into a single committee to minimize meetings and support our ministry focus. The committee meets every two months, beginning in January on the 3rd Tuesday at 6 pm. Here is an update from the March 2026 meeting:

- The Lead Team met in early March to approve a plan by Brunner and Associates to repair and restore our 100-year-old Casavant Organ.
- We have been informed by a contractor working with PPL that power to the church will be disrupted on April 6th to replace a pole on Mulberry Street. The Child Care Center will be closed for that day.
- The Lead Team discussed the Vision and Mission conversation with the congregation scheduled for April 19th.
- Donations gathered for Tenfold were delivered.
- The Child Care Center created a plan on how to interact with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, based on recommendations from the State of Pennsylvania.
- The church is seeking an affordable firm to perform a financial review or audit.

Bishop Seeks Prayers for Annual Conference

As we prepare to gather for the 2026 Annual Conference in Wildwood this May, I want to invite you to join me—and one another—in a shared season of prayer. From April 8 through May 15 on Mondays-Fridays leading up to Annual Conference, we will engage in a brief prayer meeting over Zoom from 7a.m.-7:20. These meetings will be led by leaders from across EPA & GNJ, and grounded in the reflections from *Dynamite Prayer*, by Rev. Dr. Rosario “Roz” Picardo and Rev. Dr. Sue Nilson Kibbey.

Prayer is not an afterthought for the church; it is our foundation. The world around us is marked by uncertainty, division, and deep need. Yet the people of God have always responded to such moments by drawing closer to the heart of God. When we pray together, we remember that our hope is not in our plans alone, but in the faithful guidance of the Holy Spirit who leads the church.

For 28 days we will intentionally pause each day to seek God’s wisdom and grace. We will pray for our congregations, for those who lead and serve, for the communities entrusted to our care, and for the work of holy conferencing that awaits us. My prayer is that this shared rhythm of prayer will prepare our hearts long before we arrive in Wildwood.

Continued on next page...

Sidelights

MEMORIALS GIVEN

Gift in Memory of Lori Brown, from Carole Horn.

HOSPITAL VISITATION

Don’t forget to notify the church office when you or a loved one is in the hospital. Our Care Team is available to visit and share prayer.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Bilingual Worship Service
Every Sunday, 8-9 a.m.

Maundy Thursday Service, 4/2 at 7 p.m.

Good Friday, 4/3, at Christ UMC, 2:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross, 3:00 Worship Service

Resurrection Sunday, 4/5. Worship at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Care & Share Luncheons, 4/11, 5/2

Food Box Distribution, 4/11, 5/9

WOW Fellowship Luncheon and Bible Study, 4/19, 5/10

IMPACT! Missions, 4/18, 5/16

Community Table, 4/6, 5/4, 8-9 a.m.

Free Family Movie Night, 4/17, 6 p.m. Zootopia 2

Words of Wisdom Bible Study
Every Monday, 9:00 a.m.

COVENANT

United Methodist Church

110 North Mulberry Street

Lancaster, PA 17603-3507

Office Telephone: 717.393.1561

Senior Pastor's Phone: 717.682.2374

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Church Staff

The Reverend Derrick Gutierrez, Senior Pastor

The Reverend Sally Ott, Visitation & Witness

Jeffrey McGary, Echoes Editor

Email

Senior Pastor...pastorderrick@covenant-umc.com

Admin. Asst....nicole@covenant-umc.com

Echoes Editor...jcmcgary@comcast.net

Web Page...<http://www.covenant-umc.com>

Continued from previous page...

As we devote ourselves to prayer in these weeks ahead, may God renew our courage, deepen our love for one another, and open us to the vision God has for the church in this season.

I invite you to set aside time each day to pray and to encourage others in your congregation to do the same. Together, across our conference, we will be joined in one spirit as we seek the presence and leading of God.

You do NOT need to be a delegate to Annual Conference to participate in 28 days of prayer. You do NOT need to read the book. You do NOT need to turn your camera on if you are not a morning person! Just come as you are and pray with us.

Know that I am praying for you, and I look forward to the ways God will move among us.

Peace and blessings, 

Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi
United Methodists of Eastern Pennsylvania

Return Service Requested

Covenant United Methodist Church
110 N. Mulberry St.
Lancaster, PA 17603-3507