

Serving the Lancaster Community Since 1884

Covenant



ECHOES Newsletter

United Methodist Church

October/November, 2025



From the Pastor's Desk...

By Pastor Derrick Gutierrez

As the air cools and the leaves show their bright colors, I feel grateful once more for God's creation. Autumn is a season of change—a reminder that change can be both lovely and necessary. The crisp mornings, changing light, and harvest all encourage us to pause, give thanks, and reflect on how God is active in our lives and within our church.

This fall, our worship will focus on commitment and thanksgiving. Just as the season calls us to prepare for what lies ahead, our faith invites us to be “all in” with our commitment to Christ. Following Jesus means more than just believing — it means living out our faith every day with courage, love, and without any strings attached. We are called to take risks for the sake of the Gospel, work for the common good, and embody the generosity and grace Christ has poured into us.

Paul writes in Ephesians 4:22–24, “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” Many of us think this happens once in our lives. When we accept Jesus, we are transformed instantly. Our Wesleyan tradition teaches us that renewal is not a one-time event. It takes us a lifetime to become Christ-like. It is a continuous process of growing in faith. Just as trees shed their leaves each fall, making way for new growth, we are also invited into an ongoing process of transformation. In Romans 12:2, Paul reminds us, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

This season, I encourage you to embrace the practices that help us understand God's will together—prayer, generosity, and regular Scripture reading. As we fully commit ourselves to Christ, let us watch with anticipation for the new things God is doing among us. Together, we will grow, serve, and give thanks, trusting in the One who makes all things new.

In His Service,

Pastor Derrek Gutierrez

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.

Child Care Center Update

Our school year is off to a great start! We've welcomed 14 new children to our center since mid-August and are looking forward to welcoming new infant families in the coming months. Here's what's been happening at Covenant Child Care...

Our center has welcomed several new staff members to help support our growing enrollment. They've already become positive additions to our team.

Teddy Bear Portraits was in our center for picture day at the end of September.

Our Older Toddler class celebrated Seniors Day in many ways – including making cards for some of our older church members.

Our older classrooms are learning a lot about families and community helpers this fall.

What's coming up...

- For our Fall Fundraiser the center will be selling Apple Dumplings. More information will be coming if you are able to support our center in this way.
- Our center has been selected as Business of the Year for supporting individuals with disabilities by the Lancaster Employment Coalition. Emily and Pastor Derrick along with several child care staff members will attend a ceremony in October to receive the award.
- Halloween Parade: On Friday, October 31st at 10:00 our center children will be walking in our annual Halloween Parade. Children will be dressed in their Halloween costumes and will trick-or-treat around the building. All church members are invited to participate. You can watch our parade from the Gathering Area and are welcome to bring goodies to hand out to the children.
- The week before Thanksgiving our classes will participate in A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving. We watch the classic movie on the big screen in Bethany Hall and eat the same meal Snoopy prepares for his friends.

The center is always in need of and appreciative of donations. If you are interested, we are continually in need of the following items: Lysol or Clorox wipes, Lysol aerosol disinfecting spray, art supplies such as crayons, colored pencils, markers, coloring books, construction paper, dry erase markers etc.

Thank you for your continued support!

Here's to Good Health!

I know I am going to sound like a broken record, BUT I need to remind you about some important facts about the flu vaccine. The flu vaccine can be the best protection against flu season. If you get the flu vaccine you are less likely to need treatment for the flu by a health care provider. It can also reduce the need for antibiotics, reducing lost time from work, winter time fun things, reducing hospitalization, and even death.

Getting the flu is a known risk factor for having cardiovascular events such as heart attack and stroke. Flu can worsen stress, heart failure or other conditions that can stress the cardiovascular system, such as diabetes or asthma.

So, remember to get your flu vaccine!

Another thing you can do to keep from getting that nasty flu bug is when you have been out and about, wash your hands when you get home! If you don't feel well, stay at home.

As the days get shorter and we head into winter, it can become easier to become depressed with the clouds and cold weather. Depression is a condition in which a person feels discouraged, sad, hopeless, unmotivated, or disinterested in life in general. We all can go through times of depression, but if they last longer than 2 weeks, and the feelings are interfering with daily activities, it is time to look for some help.

Depression is a real illness. A person can't just snap out of it. Depression can creep in when you are overwhelmed by stress, have gone through a loss, have a difficult relationship, are having financial problems, experience a change either unwelcomed or desired. Any of these things can trigger a depression episode.

Some signs of depression include:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or empty mood
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Weight loss or over eating
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering and making decisions
- Feelings of guilt
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment
- Thoughts of death or suicide

The first step for treating depression is to get a physical exam to rule out a physical cause.

Antidepressant medications can be an effective treatment. You can't fight depression on your own; it is okay to ask for help.

Always remember God loves you, and is with you even in times of depression!

Cindy Smith, Wellness Coach

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.

Miller Optical

Glenn & Maryanne Miller,
393.2020
Glasses, Contacts, and Exams
Lancaster & Willow Street

Willard Hypnosis Center

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Care & Share Luncheons, 10/4, 11/1

Food Box Distribution, 10/11, 11/8

IMPACT! Missions, 10/18, 11/15

ExtraGive Concert, 11/21

Community Table, 10/13, 11/10

Family Movie Night, 10/17, 11/21

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



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.

Blessed to Belong—It's Coming!

PLEASE WATCH FOR DETAILS!

During Advent we will again be providing a worship service for those who may be experiencing any kind of loss, resulting in a season of grief. You may remember this as a tradition for Covenant, as we approach the end of the year.

This will be the 3rd Advent Season that we have partnered with St. John's Episcopal Church (across the street, on the corner of Mulberry and Chestnut, and The Groff's Family Funeral Home. If you happen to have a loved one (A family member or close friend) who has experienced a loss during this year, please let them know that they do not have to be a church member to attend this service. Their loss might include the loss of a loved one, or a job, or a pet, or a home, or anything else which has filled their life with meaning.

Our colleague, who serves as Senior Rector at St. Johns Episcopal, Rev. Amanda Knouse, has just returned from a sabbatical. As soon as Pastor Derrick and I are able to re-connect with her, and with a representative from Groff's, we will announce a date, time and place for this service.

How well I remember seeing a banner in a church building, with this message: "JOY IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF SUFFERING, BUT THE PRESENCE OF GOD." As I think of my loved ones who have passed on, I think first of my grandparents; then a brother four years older than myself, my parents, and a number of close friends. This Service of Hope for Times of Loss answers for me the question, "How can we reach out with God's Healing Power to those who are hurting?"

Again, details for this year's "Service of Hope for Times of Loss" will be announced as soon as we begin planning with our partners.

-Pastor Sally Ott

Music Position Search

Covenant Church is searching for someone with a heart for music ministry and the skills needed to become our new Pianist/Keyboardist/Accompanist. The process of securing and interviewing candidates is underway. The main responsibilities of the position include playing piano and keyboard for our 10:30 A.M. service and at the 8:00 A.M. service as needed as well as rehearsing with and accompanying our Chancel Choir and Praise Team.

Tiffany Iraheta has been serving in this position on an interim basis throughout the summer, and we have been so blessed to have her with us. However, fall has arrived, and we are still working to fill this position on a permanent basis. So if you know of someone you think would be interested in this opportunity, please alert that musician that applications are continuing to be accepted through the church office.

October 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28 Holy Communion 8a Bilingual Worship Ser 9a Adult, Children & Youl 10a Worship & FaceBook 12p Nurture Team Meeti	29 7a MOOS 9a Words of Wisdom Bib 9:20a Bible2School 2nd 7p Narcotics Anonymous	30 7a MOOS 10:05a Bible2School 3rd 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	1 7a MOOS 10a Conference Call Pra 10:15a Prayer Group 5:30p Covenant Ringers 7p Chancel Choir Reheal	2 7a MOOS 7p Praise Team Rehears:	3 7a MOOS 6p Chocolate Chip Cooki	4 12p Care and Share Lun
5 8a Bilingual Worship Ser 9a Adult, Children & Youl 10a Worship & FaceBook 12p Nurture Team Meeti	6 7a MOOS 9a Words of Wisdom Bib 9:20a Bible2School 2nd 7p Narcotics Anonymous	7 7a MOOS 10:05a Bible2School 3rd 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	8 7a MOOS 10a Conference Call Pra 10:15a Prayer Group 7p Chancel Choir Reheal	9 7a MOOS 5p Child Care CPR Traini 7p Praise Team Rehears:	10 7a MOOS	11 9:30a Food Box Distribu
12 8a Bilingual Worship Ser 9a Adult, Children & Youl 10a Worship & FaceBook	13 7a MOOS 8a Community Table 9a Words of Wisdom Bib 9:20a Bible2School 2nd 7p Narcotics Anonymous	14 7a MOOS 10:05a Bible2School 3rd 12:20p Bible2School 4th 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	15 7a MOOS 10a Conference Call Pra 10:15a Prayer Group 5:30p Covenant Ringers 7p Chancel Choir Reheal	16 7a MOOS 7p Praise Team Rehears:	17 7a MOOS 6p Free Family Movie Ni	18 9a Ad Lib Music Workshc 9a IMPACT! Missions Wor
19 8a Bilingual Worship Ser 9a Adult, Children & Youl 10a Worship & FaceBook	20 7a MOOS 9a Words of Wisdom Bib 9:20a Bible2School 2nd 7p Narcotics Anonymous	21 7a MOOS 10:05a Bible2School 3rd 12:20p Bible2School 4th 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	22 7a MOOS 10a Conference Call Pra 10:15a Prayer Group 7p Chancel Choir Reheal	23 7a MOOS 7p Praise Team Rehears:	24 7a MOOS	25
26 8a Bilingual Worship Ser 9a Adult, Children & Youl 10a Worship & FaceBook	27 7a MOOS 9a Words of Wisdom Bib 9:20a Bible2School 2nd 7p Narcotics Anonymous	28 7a MOOS 10:05a Bible2School 3rd 12:20p Bible2School 4th 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	29 7a MOOS 10a Conference Call Pra 10:15a Prayer Group 5:30p Covenant Ringers 7p Chancel Choir Reheal	30 7a MOOS 7p Praise Team Rehears:	31 7a MOOS	1 12p Care and Share Lun

November 2025

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26	27	28	29		31	1 12p Care and Share Lun
2 Holy Communion 8a Bilingual Worship Ser 9a Adult, Children & You 10a Worship & FaceBook	3 7a MOOS 9a Words of Wisdom Bib 9:20a Bible2School 2nd 7p Narcotics Anonymous	4 7a MOOS 10:05a Bible2School 3rd 12:20p Bible2School 4th 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	5 7a MOOS 10a Conference Call Pra 10:15a Prayer Group 11a Care Team Meeting 5:30p Covenant Ringers 7p Chancel Choir Reheal	6 7a MOOS 7p Praise Team Rehears	7 7a MOOS 6p Chocolate Chip Cooki	8 9:30a Food Box Distribu
9 8a Bilingual Worship Ser 9a Adult, Children & You 10a Worship & FaceBook 12p WOW luncheon and	10 7a MOOS 8a Community Table 9a Words of Wisdom Bib 9:20a Bible2School 2nd 7p Narcotics Anonymous	11 7a MOOS 10:05a Bible2School 3rd 12:20p Bible2School 4th 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	12 7a MOOS 10a Conference Call Pra 10:15a Prayer Group 7p Chancel Choir Reheal	13 7a MOOS 7p Praise Team Rehears	14 7a MOOS	15 9a IMPACT! Missions Wor
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23 8a Bilingual Worship Ser 9a Adult, Children & You 10a Worship & FaceBook	24 7a MOOS 9a Words of Wisdom Bib 9:20a Bible2School 2nd 7p Narcotics Anonymous	25 7a MOOS 10:05a Bible2School 3rd 12:20p Bible2School 4th 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	26 7a MOOS 10a Conference Call Pra 10:15a Prayer Group 7p Chancel Choir Reheal	27 Thanksgiving 7a MOOS 7p Praise Team Rehears	28 7a MOOS	29

Bible2School Back in Session



Children have returned to school, and Covenant Church has begun Bible2School sessions for second, third, and fourth graders from Fulton Elementary School. Praise the Lord that there are enough volunteers to open all three classes this year. Second graders are meeting on Monday mornings; and third and fourth graders are attending on Tuesdays, one class after the other, in the youth room on the lower level of the church. The volunteer teachers walk the students from the school to the church as they miss either their morning recess or come over their lunch time.

This year Angela Licata has stepped in as site director for the programs at Fulton Elementary and Lafayette Elementary Schools. Cindy Hean and Lois Neidermyer continue to volunteer to work with Fulton second graders here at Covenant with Old Testament lessons. Third graders are studying the New Testament, and fourth graders are exploring discipleship.

The requirements for released time religious education programs include holding the classes in a location other than the school, having parental permission for their children to attend, and using no tax dollars to fund the classes. Bible2School, whose office is based in Manheim, sponsors the program for elementary students in the Lancaster School District and in the Central Manheim School District, where the program started over 40 years ago. Other schools throughout Pennsylvania and now in several other states, including Idaho, North Carolina, and Texas, have bought into the program. The numbers of students served thus far is growing with over 2,200 registered by mid September for this school year. Enrollment continues to be open and is expected to climb.

Curriculum for Bible2School also is expanding. Lois serves on the Bible2School Curriculum Team as well as the Prayer Warrior Team. A fifth grade curriculum, based on Hebrews 11 and entitled Foundations of Faith, has just been published. Twenty-five classes of fifth graders are already scheduled with this newly available curriculum. Currently work is being done developing sixth grade lessons based on Hebrews 12 for another new curriculum to be known as Walking by Faith. Thanks be to God for an expanding program and the opportunity to reach more children for Christ.

Sidelights

90+ BIRTHDAYS

Mildred Dyer-11/13
Peggy Loechner-11/15

100+ BIRTHDAYS

Bob Hess-11/18

MEMORIAL GIFTS

In memory of **BJ Wolfgang**, gifts to the Organ Fund from: Lynn Arnold, Thomas Buter, Carole Horn, Cindy Smith, Thomas Diemler, Karl Moyer, Nancy Grau, Jeanne Ritter, and Mark & Kim Barabas.

In honor of **Lois Neidermyer's** birthday, gifts to Organ Fund from: Bonnie Herr, the Heans, Karen Schneider, Esther Mefferd, Pastor Sally Ott, Cindy Smith, Denise Troop, Nancy Grau, the Kimmichs, Barbara Loughery, and Marianne Garrett.

Special Adjourned Annual Conference Session

A special adjourned session of the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference was held on Saturday, September 20, 2025, in historic Tindley Temple United Methodist Church in Philadelphia. The Rev. Derrick Gutierrez as senior pastor, the Rev. Sally Ott as a retired pastor, and Lois Neidermyer as Lay Member from Covenant Church attended the conference along with pastors and laity from across Eastern Pennsylvania.

The session with the Annual Conference theme of "Praise!" began with an inspiring worship service. Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi preached a sermon declaring faithful confidence in God —El Shaddai—who has been steadfast throughout history and who today is stronger than all the evils of this world. She also shared the remarkable story of the evangelist Charles Albert Tindley, the founder and namesake of Tindley Temple UMC. In response to the bishop's message, the Rev. Marcus Simmons, Tindley Temple's Director of Worship, sang a moving rendition of "God and God Alone," by Steve Green.

The legislative part of the conference dealt with two items: the proposed 2026 budget and a new parental leave policy. On behalf of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, the Rev. Steve Cherry described how the 2026 budget was developed and how it is laid out with four main areas of financial activity – Connectional Ministry Fund, Benefits, Trustees and Property, and Camping and Retreat Ministries. He shared how EPA is realizing economies of scale by sharing key staff with the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. He also provided explanations about funding for current initiatives and increases in property and liability insurance premiums. In what was clearly a Holy Spirit movement, the budget passed unanimously without question or conversation. The parental leave policy also passed, providing up to 13 weeks of parental leave for clergy as well as funding for pastoral coverage and pulpit supply. This policy goes into effect on September 30, 2025.

At the close of the conference's business, the Rev. Derrick Gutierrez gave a brief presentation on Compass, Wespath's new clergy retirement plan, which will take effect on January 1, 2026. It is designed to give clergy more agency over their financial planning and to be more affordable for churches.

Next on the agenda Apryl Miller, Site Director of Gretna Glen Camp & Retreat Center, spotlighted EPA's transformational Camp and Retreat Ministries with a video featuring all four camps. Then three people involved as a camper, a mother of a camper, and a camp staff person offered their own moving personal testimonies of deepened faith and response to God's calling on their lives.

This special session concluded with delegates and friends of the EPA Annual Conference sharing in Holy Communion, uniting themselves in Christ along with the great cloud of witnesses who have worshiped at Tindley Temple and throughout the world.

Following the Communion service, the Music Director Emeritus, Mr. Theodore Thomas Jr., played the magnificent pipe organ in the balcony of the sanctuary and filled Tindley Temple with music for reflection on the awesomeness of God. A sing-along of Charles Tindley's hymns then closed the gathering with a resonance of resilience and hope.

Sidelights

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.

UPPER ROOM

You can purchase the Upper Room daily devotional for only \$2. We have regular and large print in the office.



Update from the Lead Team

Under our 2025 leadership model, the Lead Team consists of church members who represent various ministries and committees. Additionally, the Lead Team itself serves as the Trustees, Finance Committee, and SPRC Committee. We combined all the administrative committees into one committee to minimize meetings and support our focus on ministry.

The committee meets every two months, starting in January on the 3rd Tuesday at 7pm. Here is an update from the September meeting:

- The church continues to see worship as a way to attract new people. The Worship committee is working on our online strategy so that newcomers can find us. Starting in October, the Sunday morning Worship order was adjusted to improve the online experience.
- A new 8 am worship service was launched in August. This is a bilingual service designed to engage our neighbors in Lancaster. The service averages 7 attendees. Please keep this service in your prayers.
- The Child Care Center is experiencing a very successful year financially. Staffing remains a challenge.
- We continue to look for a permanent accompanist.
- Beginning in October, All Saints City Church will be meeting in Bethany Hall on Sunday afternoons. This is a means for the church to earn an alternative income.
- Pastor Derrick completed a grant application for \$65000 for facility and security upgrades. If the application is successful, we will upgrade our current system, improve access door security, and add cameras around the church building.
- We have launched our Fall events. On September 19th, we hosted a family movie night with over 60 people in attendance.
- A committee has been formed to plan the celebration for the 100th anniversary of the Casavant Organ in 2026. The church is launching a capital campaign to raise \$100,000 to kick off the restoration of the organ in preparation for the celebration.



COVENANT

United Methodist Church

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Lancaster, PA 17603-3507

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CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE CONCERT SERIES

FIRST FRIDAYS AT 6:00 p.m.

110 North Mulberry Street

**Free Church Parking Lot Entrance on 300 block of
West Orange St.**

Friday, Oct. 3: Vocal Harmonix – A premier women's a cappella show chorus

Friday, Nov. 7: Midst the Noise - Five-member band playing pop songs from the 70's.

Friday, Dec. 5: Music For Everyone Community Chorus – Chorus and audience participate in the Sounds of the Season.

Local artists will display artwork before and after the concerts.

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