

2025 DISCIPLESHIFT PLEDGE

# THE GAME

Matthew 9:37-38 (NIV)

# **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

**PASTOR'S WORD** PAGE 2 **BWS FAMILY LIFE CENTER NEWS** PAGE 4 CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PAGE 8 YOUTH MINISTRY **PAGE 15 HEALTH & WELLNESS PAGE 16** 



COVUCC.ORG | @ G @ COVUCC







# PASTOR'S WORD

# REV. DR. PATRICK L. DAYMOND, SENIOR PASTOR

Dear Church Family,

The first quarter of 2025 has been one for the books. Life change and transformation continue to happen through our ministry and yet there is much happening in our country and world that calls for alarming concern. Our mandate in this season is not only to rejoice in the Lord, but to resist the enemy and everything that stands against the inclusive love ethic of Jesus Christ.

Resistance takes courage. It's making decisions about what you value most. What is being revealed even now is that many of the institutions of this world do not value what we value as disciples of Jesus Christ. It is even more urgent that we stay in the fight, "get in the game," and make the declaration each day to stand on the Lord's side, building programs and ministry to address the needs of the total person. Where government will not, we must fill in the gaps.

I want to thank everyone who is doing that work, not only in our church ministry but in your communities and vocational

spaces. I know the task may seem arduous, but you are making a difference, bit by bit. Victory means fulfilling God's mission by living bravely for His glory and guiding others through our actions. We all have a part to play to make God's dream of justice and equity a reality in our world. Your contribution matters!

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 reminds us, "For just as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one part, but many." Each believer has a role to play, and when we work together, we not only reflect the unity of Christ's body, but we operate in the power of that unity.

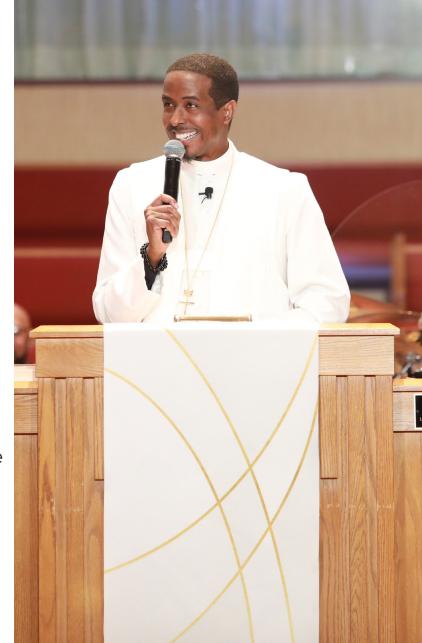
This is the season that we must get in the game. Sitting on the bench is not an option. This is not the time to spectate. This is the time to participate. God is calling us to actively engage, not to sit idly by. Everyone has a unique role



to play in fulfilling God's purpose. As 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 reminds us, "Run in such a way that you may win," we're called to run the race, not watch from the sidelines. But we must prepare ourselves. The Coach's goal (Jesus Christ) is always for our good—to train us to be effective for His purpose and ready for the moments when He calls us to the field. Hebrews 12:11 reminds us. "For the moment. all discipline seems not to be pleasant, but painful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness." God's training equips us to fulfill God's divine mission.

For those who have made the choice, thank you for getting in the game. For those who are still on the sidelines, what are you waiting for? Join us.

Love U2 Life,



PD



# **BWS FAMILY LIFE CENTER NEWS**

# REV. DR. TROY UNDERWOOD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Barbara W. Smith Family Life Center continues to make a meaningful impact across all areas of its programming. Here are some recent highlights and exciting things on the horizon.

# Food Pantry | Lighting the Community with SMART Technology

Covenant's Food Pantry does more than distribute food to its neighbors. The pantry also helps our clients reduce their costs by providing energy-efficient light bulbs. With spring in full swing, we are excited to expand this support by offering our neighbors smart plugs, socket lamps, and weatherstripping through the ComEd Energy Efficiency Program.

With the use of an app like Alexa on a smart device, imagine never having to come home to a dark house. What a great way to save on energy bills by setting a schedule to turn lights on or off!



15W A19 LED Bulbs **Energy-efficient** all-purpose light bulbs.



**LED Socket Lamps** Use in ceiling fixtures or plug directly into an outlet for immediate light.



Closed-Foam Weatherstrip Seal up narrow gaps to prevent air leaks.





**Smart Socket / Plug** Turn any light or appliance into a smart device and control it remotely.

# Green Team | Arbor Day Event - May 3, 2025, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Join the BWS Family Life Center for a free community event celebrating the power of trees and the beauty of Spring!

# What's Happening:

- Free Trees & Saplings (limited supply)
- Tree Experts offering planting & care tips
- Resources on tree health, environmental impact, and community greening
- Connect with fellow tree lovers, volunteers, and local partners

# **Get Involved:**

Register using the QR code or grab a flyer in the Narthex. We're also seeking volunteers and local "tree champions."



# **Questions?**

Contact Angie Butler Townsend at atownsend@covucc.org or see her after service.





# Housing Ministry Program | Navigating Senior Housing — **Empowering Seniors, Supporting Families**

# **A Community Conversation**

The Housing Ministry Program recently hosted Navigating Senior Housing: A Community Conversation—an insightful seminar designed to equip seniors and their families with the knowledge and resources they need to make informed decisions about aging and housing. As senior living options, healthcare systems, and legal planning become increasingly complex, this timely event brought together expert voices to provide clarity, compassion, and actionable quidance.

The event featured wisdom from experienced professionals:

Karen Wingfield-Bond, Medicare Insurance Consultant, K.K.N.B. Enterprises, Inc., opened the seminar with essential insights into Medicare and Medicaid, ensuring that seniors understand their healthcare rights. "When you know better, you do better," she emphasized, highlighting the importance of informed decision-making. As a public servant and advocate, she grounds her work in faith, guided by Hosea 4:6: "My people perish for lack of knowledge."

**Linda Myles,** Senior Housing Property Manager, provided a compassionate and clear breakdown of independent living, assisted living, and memory



care. She helped families assess the best options for their loved ones and shared, "I am thankful to God for allowing me the daily experience of helping one of our most vulnerable populations." Her deep commitment to elder care was evident throughout her presentation.

Cathe Evans Williams, Attorney at Law, The Evans Williams Law Group, brought essential legal knowledge to the discussion, covering wills, powers of attorney, estate planning, and advanced directives. She reinforced the necessity of preparation, stating that her mission is to stress the importance of protecting one's assets and honoring legacy with intentional planning. With nearly three decades of legal experience, Cathe also serves as Business Administrator and General Counsel for Covenant UCC.

The seminar concluded with a dynamic Q&A session, where attendees had the opportunity to engage directly with the speakers and gain personalized insights. Many left feeling more confident and prepared to navigate the challenges of senior living.



The Housing Ministry Program remains dedicated to uplifting the community by providing ongoing support, resources, and education for seniors and caregivers.

To stay connected, contact Brenda Morgan or Tina Hobbs at housing@covucc.org.

"We are here to guide, inform, and walk with our elders every step of the way."



# Second Chance | Expungement Summit, Saturday, August 8, 2025, 9 a.m.

# Join Our Planning Team for the Annual Expungement Information Summit!

Second Chance is preparing for its Annual Expungement Information Summit, an event dedicated to providing essential resources and services to juveniles and adults seeking to have their criminal records erased or sealed.

# **Volunteer for Our Annual Expungement Summit Event!**

To join our planning team, please email Rev. Dr. Troy Underwood at revunderwood@covucc.org for our meeting schedule.



Y.E.S. Summer Camp
The Youth Enrichment
Scholar (Y.E.S.) Program
Summer Camp applications
will be available soon.



Advocacy | **Get involved! Hunger and Health Illinois Regional Summit in Chicago!** 



Registration link: https://registration.extension.illinois.edu/start/2025-hunger-and-health-illinois-regional-summit-chicago

# **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS**

# REV. DR. CARMIN FREDERICK-JAMES Growing in Faith Together

Greetings! As your Associate Pastor of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation, I'm thrilled to be on this journey of "DiscipleSHIFT" with you. Our approach centers on actively engaging with the Holy Spirit as we seek to live out our mission of "connecting the disconnected to Christ and equipping the connected to be like Christ"

For me, **Christian Education** is more than just understanding biblical facts. True spiritual growth blossoms when that knowledge resonates in our hearts, deepening our personal relationship with God, ourselves, and each other.

is about learning to recognize and respond to God's voice, shaping our character and strengthening

our connection
with the Divine.
Through practical
application, we
allow God to
be our ultimate
guide, leading
to continuous
development in
our faith.

I believe spiritual formation is essential because it acknowledges that learning is deeply relational and has the power to transform every aspect of who we are – our thoughts, feelings, and how we serve. Here at Covenant United Church of Christ, we are dedicated to nurturing both your understanding of scripture and your ability to hear God, fostering growth in knowledge and in your personal relationship with God, yourselves and each other.

We've had a vibrant start to the year!
From January 7th to 14th, our "7:14
Prayer" initiative fostered a powerful sense of collective connection with God through daily morning and evening prayer.
Our Dynamic Connect Groups during Lent, centered on Jill Duffield's "Lent in Plain Sight," offered a transformative experience for many. We also launched our inspiring 5th Sunday Book Study, currently exploring Laurie Beth Jones' "Jesus Life Coach: Learn from the Best." If you missed our first session, you can still sign up by scanning the QR code below and join us in June!



Looking ahead, we have exciting opportunities for connection and growth. Beginning in May, we'll be hosting **6-week New Member Connect Groups** for those who joined Covenant on or after January 1, 2023. We'll explore "Space for God" and "The Meaning of Discipleship" together.

Registration is currently open for the **New Member Connect Groups** using the QR code below.



We're also offering Connect Group Host training from June through September (June 21st, 9 AM - 1 PM; July 19th, 9 AM - 11 AM via Zoom; and September 13th, 9 AM - 11 AM) as we prepare for our Fall Connect Groups, starting in early October! To learn more, contact me at revcfjames@covucc. org.

Our Christian Education and Spiritual Formation offerings are designed to meet our community's diverse needs, both inperson and online.

● Word Therapy
Resumes May 6th,
Live Tuesdays at 7PM
(and On-Demand) on
our YouTube channel.
Scan the QR code to
watch.



# • If My People Prayer Call

Wednesdays at 7:14 AM via prayer line: 1-760-548-9759

# Noon Bible Study

Wednesdays at 12 PM In-person and Online via Facebook and our website.

# Connect Groups

6-week sessions held at least twice a year.

• Liturgical Season Connect Groups
Special sessions for sacred seasons like
Lent and Advent.

# Sunday School

Currently held in-person each Sunday from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

We sincerely hope that you will take advantage of at least one of the Christian Education and Spiritual Formation experiences we offer so that you can "Get in the Game" at Covenant United Church of Christ, but most importantly, so that you might "Get in the Game" for Jesus!

I am truly looking forward to continuing this journey of faith and growth with each of you!





# **COVENANT SCHOLARSHIP MINISTRY NEWS**

# DR. ANTONIA DAYMOND

**Covenant Hosts FCEA's Annual TRIO Summit: Empowering Students for Success** 



This past February, we were honored to host Family Centered Educational Agency's (FCEA) annual TRIO Summit at our campus, aligning with their mission to provide education to families through holistic community and economic development, and direct human services. The event was a resounding success, thanks to the many students and parents who attended, seeking to further their education and improve their lives. During the summit, students had the opportunity to network with top professionals in their desired fields, receive one-on-one expert guidance on completing the FAFSA, and get personalized support in reviewing their financial aid award letters to maximize their funding opportunities.



The summit was a shining example of the impact that can be made when organizations come together to support students and families. We're grateful for the generous donations of laptops to students, which will undoubtedly aid them in their academic pursuits. We're also thankful for the involvement of the U.S. Department of Education and Chicago State University, who invested in our youth and provided expert quidance.



Inspiring leaders like State Rep. Thaddeus Jones, Congresswoman Robin Kelly, and Dr. Jonathan McKenzie emphasized that access



to quality education is every student's birthright, and that by investing in our young people, we're investing in a brighter future for all.

As we reflect on the TRIO Summit, we're reminded that empowering students is not just about providing resources, but about investing in the potential of each individual.

We're grateful for the opportunity to support FCEA in this way and look forward to continuing our collaboration, knowing that our collective efforts are building a brighter future for generations to come, and fulfilling our calling to serve and uplift our community.









# **EVENTS OF THE QUARTER**

LEADERSHIP MEETING, MARRIED COUPLES RETREAT, SPRING REVIVAL, SISTER TALK, ASH WEDNESDAY, AND MUCH MORE!







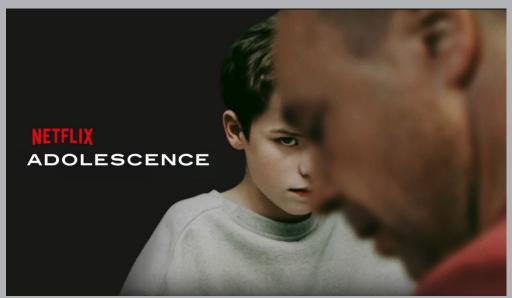


# **MORE PICTURES FROM** THE QUARTER



# COVENANT YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

# MINISTER KEVON CARTER







Just last week, my wife and I decided to watch a new series on Netflix called Adolescence. The 4-episode series offers a look at some of the challenges faced by today's youth. While I started the first episode thinking it was all about today's youth, I completed the series feeling like it was more about the importance of parental awareness and involvement. The narrative shows that even parents with good intentions can overlook critical warning signs, demonstrating the need for active involvement and open communication in children's lives.

The series reminded me of the influence of online communities. Our children's online interactions can significantly mold their values, behavior, and identity. Our kids are spending hours in DMs, inboxes, snaps, shorts, reels, and following pages filled with content that's not always healthy - some of it is negative, toxic, even shaping how they see themselves and the world.

Are we paying attention, or just hoping for the best while scrolling past it all ourselves? Monitoring our child's social media doesn't mean we have to breathe down their neck 24/7. It's not about control, but it's about staying engaged, having honest conversations, and guiding them through a digital world that's shaping their identity every day.

Lastly, beyond the impact of the online communities, the series hit on the impact of our own influence as parents. The truth is our unhealed struggles as parents don't just stay with us. Our kids can absorb them, too. Without even realizing it, they pick up our patterns, our reactions, and sometimes our pain. But, the good news is when we heal, grow, and invite God in, they benefit from that too. So, let's show up, speak life, and be the example our children need. They're not just watching YouTube, TikTok, and anime, they're watching us. And the truth is, we carry what they really need.

Respectfully,

Minister Kevon Carter Youth Pastor



# **COVENANT HEALTH AND** WELLNESS NEWS

# **REV. ETHEL SOUTHERN**

# **Pastoral Care**

On January 12, 2025, we were blessed to ordain six new deacons. Our Senior Pastor, Rev. Dr. Patrick Daymond, facilitated the training of our Deacons in Training (D.I.T.). Two married couples were among the six. and two other members were included in the class. Some of the D.I.T.'s began their journey not knowing each other. While studying and praying with one another, they developed a brotherhood and sisterhood. They are a great addition to the deacon board and are welcomed with love.

# Class of 2025 New Deacons



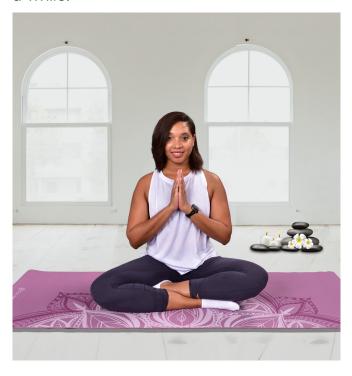
Deacon Annice Hite Deacon Tiphne Sharpe Deacon Mira Davis Deacon Ardie Davis Deacon Venetia Thomas **Deacon Samuel Thomas** 

If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the father will honor him. John 12:26 ESV

# **Health and Wellness**

Chair Exercise & Line Dance is back. We began our spring sessions with over one hundred participants and our numbers go up each week. It is a blessing watch members of CUCC and the community coming together weekly to exercise and move to the sounds of music. Our line dancers participate in the Alzheimer's event and learned how movement affects the brain in a positive manner.

YOGA continues to attract more members. Our instructor, Erica Carthan, says more people are attending the bimonthly classes. The classes are held for individuals on all levels, from beginners to those who have been practicing voga for a while.





# Alzheimer's Health Awareness

On March 22, 2025, Covenant's Health & Wellness Ministry and the BWS Family Life Center, in collaboration with the Alzheimer's Association Illinois Chapter, hosted a community-wide Alzheimer's Health Awareness event. The event welcomed over 140 community members and featured participation from Northwestern Hospital, UChicago Ingalls, Rush Hospital, and several other vendors. Rush Medical Center also provided free screening services for more than 50 attendees.

Phillip Bennett from the Alzheimer's Association Illinois Chapter led a Q&A session addressing concerns about Alzheimer's and dementia. He highlighted that there are over 100 different types of Alzheimer's and dementia and shared important statistics during his presentation.

One of the key points discussed was the disproportionate impact of Alzheimer's disease on Black Americans, who are estimated to be nearly twice as likely to develop the disease compared to white Americans. In addition to the higher prevalence, Black individuals often face challenges in receiving timely and accurate diagnoses.

Research from the National Institute on Aging's network of Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers (ADRCs) revealed that Black participants in Alzheimer's research were 35% less likely to be diagnosed with Alzheimer's or related dementias than white participants. This is despite broader national data indicating that Black Americans have approximately double the risk of developing dementia. Furthermore, the study found that Black participants with dementia displayed more risk factors, more significant cognitive decline, and more severe symptoms compared to white participants. These findings were published in the Alzheimer's & Dementia Journal.



# **Key Statistics Highlighted:**

- **Higher Prevalence:** Black Americans are at greater risk for Alzheimer's and other dementias compared to non-Hispanic whites.
- Racial Disparities in Diagnosis: Despite their higher risk, Black individuals are less likely to receive a diagnosis.
- Healthcare and Societal Barriers: Challenges such as limited access to care and medical mistrust can influence diagnosis and treatment.

# • Genetics and Health Risks:

Factors like the APOE e4 gene and conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes may contribute to the increased risk.

# • Community Impact:

The disease places a significant emotional, societal, and financial burden on the Black community.

We are committed to continuing our partnerships with healthcare providers and fostering meaningful conversations and services that support our community's health and well-being.



# CURRENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS





We're launching Spring Connect Groups exclusively for members who've joined CUCC since January 2023. These six-week sessions will focus on "The Meaning of Discipleship" or "Space for God."

We can't wait to connect and grow with you!

3C 0005

**CHAIR EXERCISE** & LINE DANCE

March through July 2025



COVUCC.ORG | © @COVUCC



# **MOTHER'S DAY LUNCHEON**

SATURDAY, MAY 10 10:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.

SIX WEEK SESSIONS BEGIN MAY 3 **SCAN TO REGISTER** 



# YOGA CLASSES

SATURDAYS (CHECK SCHEDULE) 9:30 - 10:30 A.M.



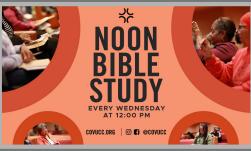
# EXERCISE / LINE DANCE

**EVERY 2ND, 3RD, & 4TH WEDNESDAY** 5-6PM / 6PM-7:30PM



# WORD THERAP'

**RESUMES MAY 6TH** EVERY TUESDAY AT 7:00 P.M. EXCLUSIVELY ON YOUTUBE



**EVERY WEDNESDAY AT NOON** 



EVERY WEDNESDAY @ 7:14 A.M.
With Rev. Dr. Patrick L. Daymond
Dial: 760-548-9759



SATURDAYS 9:30 A.M. - 12 P.M. | CUCC WEST 1102 EAST 154TH STREET SOUTH HOLLAND, IL 60473

# JOIN US VIRTUALLY AND IN PERSON

# WEEKLY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### **SUNDAY WORSHIP**

Sunday Worship 7:30 A.M. and 11 A.M. Sunday School 9:30 A.M.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

FB & Instagram

## **EMAIL**

Info@covucc.org

### **WORD THERAPY**

Tuesday at 7 p.m. Exclusively on YouTube

## **BIBLE STUDY**

Wednesday at 12 P.M.

## **RADIO BROADCAST**

Friday at 12:30 P.M. – WYCA 102.3

# SUBSCRIBE TO OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

https://bit.ly/ CUCCSouthHollandYouTube

## **CHECK US OUT ON TIKTOK**

https://www.tiktok.com/@covucc

## **FACEBOOK LIVE**

Covenant United Church of Christ

## **WEBSITE**

covucc.org

### **CONTACT US**

1130 East 154th Street South Holland IL 60473 Phone: (708) 333-5955 Fax: (708) 333-4220

# **CHURCH LEADERSHIP & STAFF RESOURCES**

# **REV. DR. PATRICK L. DAYMOND**

Senior Pastor

# REV. DR. OZZIE E. SMITH, JR.

Pastor Emeritus

## **REV. ROBERT BUCKNER**

revbuckner@covucc.org
Adult Education and Formation

# REV. DR. CARMIN FREDERICK JAMES

revcfjames@covucc.org
Online Engagement and Community
Outreach

# **REV. ETHEL SOUTHERN**

revsouthern@covucc.org
Pastoral Care & Wellness

## **REV. DR. TROY UNDERWOOD**

revunderwood@covucc.org Executive Director, Barbara W. Smith Family Life Center

### **REV. DR. RAMAH E. WRIGHT**

revrewright@covucc.org
Director of Ministry Programs
and Events

# **REV. KIM GRICE**

revkgrice@covucc.org Associate Minister

## MINISTER KEVON CARTER

kcarter@covucc.org Minister to Youth

## **BRIAN W. SMITH**

<u>bsmith@covucc.org</u> Minister of Music

### **CATHE EVANS-WILLIAMS**

<u>cevanswilliams@covucc.org</u> Church Business Administrator

## **ISAAC GREENE**

igreene@covucc.org Director of Finance

# **MARK HALL**

mhall@covucc.org
Director of Technology

## **SEENA BRODNAX-BROWN**

sbbrown@covucc.org
Executive Assistant

# **BOARD / COMMITTEE / COUNCIL CHAIRS**

# **DARLENE WASHINGTON**

Deacon Board

### **SHIRLEY HALL**

Pastoral Relations Committee

## **JORDAN JONES**

Youth Representative

## **SHANNON STATON**

Trustee Board

## **CONNIE LINDSEY**

Financial Oversight Committee

## **KAY GILES-SLAUGHTER**

Member at Large

# SCAN TO VISIT

