

Members in Need of Prayer

Rose Marie and Joe Starr, Sr. and Joe Starr, Jr., Donna Short, Beth Walborn, Shirley Beach, John Parker, Clay Stephenson, Mary Dawn Stuenkel, Kamara Reade, Cynthia Lange

Prayer Concerns: If you have an urgent prayer concern, please contact Kamara Reade at 828-430-0760 or kay.29@netzero.net. She will send it out to New Covenant members.

Souper Bowl Of Caring

New Covenant collected food and monetary donations for BUCM on February 12 to help feed those who are hungry in Burke County. New Covenant members donated 117 pounds of food and over \$400. Thank you! This will help to feed a lot of hungry folks.

Carolinas Mission Region Disaster Response – Hygiene Kits



Thank you to everyone who donated items for the NALC Disaster Response hygiene kit collection. It was a huge success! New Covenant collected more than it was assigned and the items filled the back of Pastor Marty's car. Pastor Marty joined in the fellowship with other Carolinas Mission church members to build the kits in Chapin, SC on February 25. They were planning to assemble 300 kits but instead made 704 because of everyone's generosity.



Volunteer For Commissions

Want to share your gifts from God? Then consider joining a commission. Three Commissions (committees) have been created: Spiritual Development Commission (includes Worship & Music and Christian Education), Church and Community Life Commission (includes Outreach, Congregational Life, and Social Ministry), and Parish Management Commission (includes Property and Stewardship). If you are interested in becoming a member of a Commission and helping to increase the kingdom of God, please see Pastor Ramey, Eric Stuenkel, or Angela Williams.

A Giving and Sharing sheet will be distributed during Lent (March) to ask you how you will share your God-given gifts and talents through New Covenant's ministries.



New Covenant News

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New Covenant Lutheran Church in Morganton, NC



MISSION STATEMENT: New Covenant Welcomes God's People
Founded in Faith, United by Love, and Gifted to Serve

From the Pastor:

(Jesus said:)...return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love... Joel 2:12-13

THE SEASON OF LENT

The season of Lent began with Ash Wednesday on February 22nd. From the weekly worship planning page of Sola Publishing, these words help us understand the importance of Ash Wednesday and the penitential season of Lent for our spiritual growth:



The lessons for Ash Wednesday encourage us as followers of Christ to turn from sin and live more fully in the grace and mercy of the one who claims us as his own. The Lenten journey...is one of reflection, sacrifice, and repentance. Even as we examine our own mortality, we are blessed beyond measure by the promise of God, who vows to offer us his steadfast and eternal love.

<http://www.solapublishing.com/files/worship/20160210worshipworksheet.pdf>

The English word *Lent* is a shortened form of the Old English word *len(c)ten*, meaning "spring season" and may be derived from a derivative of an Old German word meaning "lengthen," possibly in reference to the lengthening of the days during spring. Lent is a penitential season in the church. Our liturgy and traditions reflect the penitential character of Lent. Purple vestments and paraments are used during Lent. Purple is the color of royalty, the color of the robe that Jesus was mockingly dressed in during his trial, but a reminder that he is indeed our king. At the midpoint of Lent—Laetare Sunday, the fourth Sunday of Lent—rose vestments are traditionally worn as a sign of joy: we rejoice at the

midpoint because we are half-way through the preparation and anticipate the coming joy of Easter.

On the first Sunday in Lent, we “put away” the alleluias, continuing to use the Kyrie but omit singing the opening Hymn of Praise, and we use the Gospel Acclamation (*Return to the Lord, your God*) appointed for Lent. Based on the Hebrew word, *halleluyah*, meaning “Praise the Lord,” alleluia was prominent in early Christian liturgies. Because of the penitential character of the season of Lent in the Western church, singing or saying the word “alleluia” has historically been suspended during Lent's forty days. The omission of alleluia during Lent goes back at least to the fifth century in the western church. The custom of actually bidding it farewell, however, developed in the Middle Ages. The post-Communion canticle during Lent is Simeon’s prayer, the *Nunc Dimittis*, in place of “*Thank the Lord, and sing his praise*” with its alleluias.

During Lent, we do not use fresh flowers on the altar; rather dried arrangements may be used, or flowers omitted entirely. As we reflect on our need for God’s forgiveness through the sacrifice of his son on the cross, dried arrangements remind us that in our baptism, our sinful self dies and we anticipate the resurrection we share with Christ as the celebration of his Resurrection approaches. These changes remind us of the reverential character of the season. It is not a time for gloom, but our worship is of a more serious nature as we remember the sacrifice God made for us and seek to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit guiding us to true repentance.

The words from the prophet Joel above are from the readings for Ash Wednesday, calling us to return to God in repentance and humility. During Lent, we consider and reflect on our need for him. It can be a time to begin or re-commit to practicing disciplines that encourage us to grow in our relationship with our God.

One of the most important practices we can engage in is that of prayer. During this season of Lent, may each of us seek to engage more deeply in prayer, developing it as a daily habit that will help us individually but will also help move the congregation of New Covenant into hope and a spirit of endless possibilities for outreach and ministry in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Let New Covenant make this Lenten journey one grounded in prayer!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Marty

Bible Study

Pastor Ramey is leading Bible study on the book of Revelation on Thursdays at 10:30 AM at the church. There is no Bible study on the Thursday following Church Council meetings. Church Council meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. Come, bring your Bible, and invite a friend!



NALC Lenten Devotional

The NALC Lenten Devotional 2023, *Loved and Freed*, is available from the NALC website. You can find information about the devotional and how to download it or receive a daily text by visiting <https://thenalc.org/lent>

Wednesday Lenten Services

Pastors from the Carolinas Mission Region will rotate to offer Wednesday evening Lenten services at 6:30 PM at New Covenant. The schedule is given below in the table.

March 1 st	March 15 th	March 29 th
The Cross as Atonement Pastor Todd Cook	The Cross as Demonstration Pastor Ric Smith	The Cross as Redemption Vicar Rebecca Foster
March 8 th	March 22 nd	
The Cross as Investment Pastor Dave Hefner	The Cross as Reconciliation Pastor Marty Ramey	

Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday will be on April 2. We will celebrate Jesus’ triumphant entrance into Jerusalem with the waving of palms during the Sunday worship. The Maundy Thursday service, where we remember the Last Supper, will be held on Thursday, April 6 at 6:30 PM. The Good Friday Tenebrae service, where we remember Christ’s ultimate sacrifice for sinners, will be held on Friday, April 7 at 6:30 PM. Please join us for these special and meaningful services leading up to Easter where we celebrate the resurrection and our risen Lord who conquered death and the grave.

Church Council Meeting

New Covenant’s Church Council meets the second Wednesday of each month at 6 PM. All are welcome to attend. The next meeting is March 8. If you have an item that you want the Church Council to discuss or consider, please contact Eric Stuenkel at westuenkel@bellsouth.net or Angela Williams at 3521awilliams@charter.net

