



Covenant United Methodist Church 20301 Pleasant Ridge Dr. Montgomery Village, MD

Contact Us:

Pastor Dawn Stewart
 Dawn.Stewart@covenant-umc.org
 301-926-8920
 office@covenant-umc.org
 Send articles and comments to
 newsletter@covenant-umc.org

Brothers and sisters, as I sit to write my final newsletter article, it is with a sense of sadness at leaving behind my role as pastor of Covenant and anticipation for new things to come....for you, as Pastor Sherri Woods-Powe comes to lead you forward in faith, and for me, as I venture into new forms of ministry and time with family. I have worked with Pastor Sherri during this time of transition and am excited about the gifts and graces she will bring to our church.



July 20, 2024

God has drawn me to Philippians 1:3-11 in this time of transition. Paul remembers and gives thanks for these people who have shared with him in the work of the gospel. He prays for them and is confident that God will complete the good work he has begun in them. I will remember; I give thanks; I will pray for you; and I am confident of what God will continue to do in and through you and the body of Christ at Covenant UMC. I especially like the translation of verse 9 and 11 that I shared with our preschool children: “My prayer for you is that you will overflow more and more with love for others, and at the same time keep on growing in spiritual knowledge and insight. May you always be doing those good, kind things which show you are a child of God, for this will bring much praise and glory to the Lord.”

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It is important as we navigate this transition that you know that while most of my pastoral duties end on my last Sunday, June 23, I will continue to provide emergency pastoral care and funeral support to you through the end of June. Reach out to your lay leader, Dick Church, who will contact me. Additionally, there is a protocol to be followed now, and I will include it verbatim at the end of this message. In short, it requires an outgoing pastor to cease all pastoral activity. I intend to follow that. This is to create space for Pastor Sherri to take her place as your new servant leader. This does not negate friendly connections that have to do with family, my latest culinary or stained glass creation, or Kevin’s latest science fiction read. But it does prohibit discussion of church and church activities and my participation in these things.

May God’s love overflow in you and may you continue to do all the good, kind things that show you are a child of God.

Grace and peace, Pastor Dawn

(Continued on p. 2)



@covenantumcmontvill @covpreschool



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(Continued from p. 1)

From the Baltimore-Washington Conference Manual of Policies and Procedures (para. 4015):

As of the effective date of a new appointment, a pastor shall immediately cease all pastoral counseling and pastoral visitation with members or member families in the previous appointment. Since appointments are generally announced several weeks in advance, each pastor has adequate time in which to effect closure and make appropriate referral to another for the pastoral care of members.

Pastors shall have a clear understanding with former congregations that they will not return to officiate at baptisms, weddings and funerals, or do pastoral counseling or pastoral visitation in that parish. Pastors, active or retired, shall respectfully decline to participate in such duties when invited by members of a former congregation. Declining all such invitations is the responsibility of the previous pastor. The present pastor, at his or her discretion, may invite the previous pastor to return for pastoral functions. However, the present pastor should never be under any pressure to invite the previous pastor. This policy is ongoing and doesn't have an expiration date.



Paul's first letter to the church in Thessalonica is one of the earliest works in the New Testament. Paul had traveled to this city and established a church. This letter is written after a follow-up visit from Timothy. Timothy told Paul that all was generally well with that church, but their overall faith could use some strengthening.

So Paul writes this letter, and in closing, he says: "But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you, and have charge of you in the Lord, and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves....See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (I Thess 5:12-13, 15-18)



My faith could use a bit of strengthening right now. As finance chair, I can tell you that our finances are tight. Our check book balance is low. We did dip into our savings account once (\$8K) to help pay for snow removal in January, but that was the only time. Since then, we are paying our bills, but just barely. I'm thankful for that but worried that we won't be prepared for next winter's snow let alone this summer when offerings traditionally drop as people take those planned vacations.

How can I rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and be thankful in all circumstances? Only with your support. Working together, joining together in commitment, we can continue to maintain the ministry of Covenant Church: not just keeping the doors open on Sunday morning, but in ministry to our neighbors through scouting, AA, hosting our SDA brothers and sisters, food distributions, support for Stepping Stones, and so much more.

Join me. Commit to maintaining your support for Covenant Church this summer as we prepare to welcome Rev. Dr. Sherri Wood-Powe as our new pastor. Together, we can keep the faith strong.

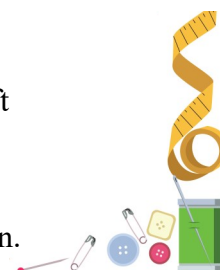
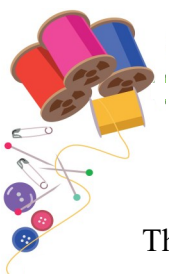
— Ken Fell, Finance Committee

Secret Shop

Secret Shop will be on summer break beginning Tuesday, July 9th. Craft workshops will resume on Tuesday, September 3rd.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

The 2024 Secret Shop will be held on Saturday, December 7th, from 9 AM – noon.



Pastor Transition

Pastor Dawn Stewart, our Senior Pastor since July 2019, will be taking a leave of absence beginning June 30th. We are deeply grateful for the service Pastor Dawn has provided to Covenant and wish her the best during her leave and in her next mission in service of God's will.

In the five years she has led our congregation, Pastor Dawn has accomplished so much. It was only a few months into her time at Covenant when we and the world were beset by the COVID-19 pandemic. Pastor Dawn led us through those trying and uncertain times, quickly overseeing online worship, a phone tree, and other activities to maintain our fellowship and care for one another. It is through those efforts that Covenant now live streams our worship service each week and makes recordings available on YouTube for those unable to attend in person.

Pastor Dawn also has led our spiritual growth, teaching us new ways to worship through art, through meditation, and through all of our senses. She introduced us to a multitude of themed worship studies, with worship studying the theology of Vincent Van Gogh, *Les Miserables*, and so many other topics. In addition, Pastor Dawn helped organize new groups and new ways of building community, including a Monday prayer group, a "me too" group, family worship time, and the Rough Draught young adult gatherings. Finally, Pastor Dawn led us through a number of discernments, helping us to establish goals of welcoming and inclusion and to make the decision to become a reconciling church.

Please join us in worship on June 23rd for Pastor Dawn's final Sunday leading Covenant. We will have a luncheon to thank Pastor Dawn immediately following the service. We hope you can join us.

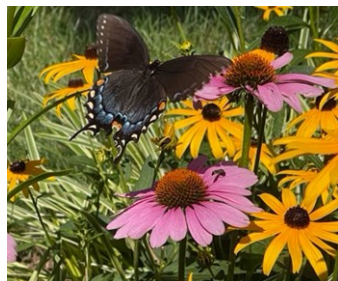
As we wish Pastor Dawn well on her journey, we also welcome a new pastor to Covenant. Dr. Sherri Wood-Powe, formerly of Oak Chapel UMC in Silver Spring, will be joining us as our pastor on July 1st. Her first service with us will be Sunday, July 14th. We will be hosting coffee hour on July 14th to help introduce ourselves to her.

An Atlanta native, Pastor Sherri relocated to Montgomery County in 2013 with her husband Doug and her now college-age son (a sophomore at The Ohio State University). She has been in ministry since 1995, serving in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the United Methodist Church, and leading congregations in the District of Columbia, Georgia, Missouri, Kansas, and Maryland. In several appointments, Pastor Sherri has crossed race and gender boundaries, serving as the first female pastor or first African American female pastor. One of her passions is worship, and she served as Chair of the Worship Team for the Baltimore-Washington Conference's Annual Conference in May. She also loves the outdoors and spending time with her rescue dog, Smokey. We welcome Pastor Sherri and her family to Covenant!

SAVE THE
date

You're invited to attend a Luncheon on **Sunday, June 23**, right after worship, in Fellowship Hall. We welcome all to come out and thank Pastor Dawn for her service to Covenant and to wish her well in her next mission.





It's
SUMMER BREAK TIME
for these groups:

- Sunday Evening Bible Study
- Monday Bible Study
- Tuesday Night Live

In **September**, we welcome ALL to join us:

- Sunday Evening Bible will meet at 6PM on Zoom
- Monday Bible Study will meet at 1PM on Zoom
- Tuesday Night live will meet at 7PM in person in Classroom 6 AND on Zoom.

If you have questions, contact Mary Church at mmchurch70@gmail.com, or 240-429-9452.

Becca's Buddies Class

Becca's Buddies is a Sunday School class serving other-abled adults (over age 18). We welcome anyone seeking Bible study and fellowship with a great group of people who love the Lord and are eager to learn more about our faith. We are currently meeting at **8:45 AM** by conference call on select Sundays (see below). If you would like more information about this class, please contact Anita Stonebraker (anitastonebraker@msn.com) or Mary Church (mmchurch70@gmail.com).

Upcoming Becca's Buddies Class Dates:

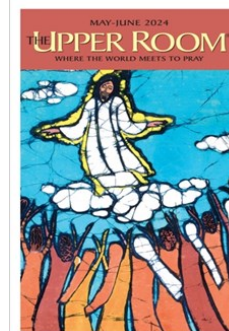
- Sunday, June 2
- Sunday, June 23*



* Please note:
4th Sunday due to Anita's daughter's wedding!



Every **Thursday at 11 AM**, a lively, supportive group of residents meet at Sunrise Senior Living for **Bible Talk**. We gather to deepen our connection with God and one another with a meditation prepared by one of our leaders. We celebrate special occasions, and we always pray and sing! Our source materials include *The Upper Room* and *The Upper Room Disciplines*. Notes of encouragement are also sent to class members each week.



For questions, contact the church office at office@covenant-umc.org or call (301) 926-8920.

Independent Weekly Bible Study

Everyone can be included in Bible study! The Sunrise Bible Talk study is available each week by email or U.S. mail for anyone who seeks to deepen their connection with God. To ask for a copy, please contact the church office at office@covenant-umc.org or at (301) 926-8920.



This is a great chance to make good friends! Join us on the **third Thursday** of the month at **7 PM**. We talk about current issues, social principles, and how God works in the world. Bring an open heart and mind. The **location is TBD**, so ask the church office (office@covenant-umc.org) to include you on the group list for more information.

THE LITTLE FREE PANTRY

school supply drive



All summer long we will be collecting school materials to include in our special August Food and School Supply Distribution. Your donations will help our community kids of all ages!

SHOPPING LIST:

backpacks	pens	3 hole punch pocket folders	composition notebooks
pencils	highlighters	colored pencils	glue sticks
erasers	spiraled notebook	glue sticks	rulers
			pencil cases

Little Free Pantry

The pantry remains very busy.

Urgently needed:

Pancake mix, syrup, canned protein, canned beans (garbanzo, black, baked, etc.), dried black beans, canned soups, canned vegetables (carrots, peas, mixed veggies, green beans, and corn), masa, oil, syrup, peanut butter and jelly, feminine hygiene products, travel-sized lotions, soap, hand sanitizer, baby wipes, and shampoo. Our next distribution will be in June.



Thank you for your faithfulness in helping our neighbors!



	8	Jim Yeates	15	Josiah Flanner	24	Luke Lowery	
	10	Dennis Gurtz	16	Emma Ridgley	25	George Neill	
	10	Samuel John	18	Richard Sillery	26	Sean Bernard	
1	Frederick Herman	12	David Cooper	19	Robin Gordon	26	Suzzie Finn
4	Jim Ashcom	12	Brian McDermott	19	Vannette Tolbert	27	Camber Vincent
5	Michael Spalding	13	Chase Keeler	20	William Pullen	28	RJ Ross
6	Ann Wexler	13	Sylvie Warren	21	Steve Augustino	28	Alyson Wilson
8	Mason Pitts	14	Barbara Boyer	23	Bob Finkbeiner		

3	Matthew Verfuert	10	DeAnne Post	18	Nahdi Nah		
5	Taylor Trammelle	10	Mariana Uhrlaub	19	Jason Broadman		
6	Lynn Schmitt	11	Cathy Slawson	19	Melanie O'Brien		
6	Brian Vermillion	11	Judy Watts	20	Sylvie Favret		
7	Henry Flanner	12	Marilyn Warren	22	Sandra Brunk		
9	Lynn Rabenhorst	15	Scott Crews	24	Anita Stonebraker	29	James Warren
10	Cathy Lipton	16	Caitlin Neill	26	Caleb Head	31	Isabella Lopez



**Covenant United Methodist Church
20301 Pleasant Ridge Drive
Montgomery Village, Maryland
20886-4014**

Return Service Requested

Upcoming Events

- June 23 Luncheon for Pastor Dawn Stewart,
after worship
- July 14 Coffee Hour to welcome Paster Sherri
Wood-Powe, after worship



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