

THE COVENANTER
April 26, 2020

Member NE GEORGIA Presbytery, Synod
of the South Atlantic, General
Assembly of the Presbyterian Church
(USA)

**Update on Stewardship Pledges for 2020-2021**

We are in the middle of our annual stewardship / pledge program but with “sheltering in place” this year is anything but normal. In past years, we would have already celebrated together at our Stewardship Luncheon after all the pledges had been received and next year’s budget finalized. So far, just over 50% of the pledge cards have been returned. This is understandable because in past years you probably just dropped off your pledge card when you came to church. But this year, we need to have everyone mail, or email, your pledge to the church office.

Your pledge commitment is needed to help us plan for our summer activities and community missions. Your support in the past has helped us make a difference in our community and around the world. I would like to encourage you to make a pledge to the mission and ministry of our church. You will be a part of transforming lives! If you have not returned your pledge card, please mail it to the church soon. You can also call the church office to request a new pledge card if you misplaced the original. Thank you for your continued support!

Please click here to view Covenants Worship Service, Sunday, April 19th :

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCkRp1t3MnecoYXnds4X03A>

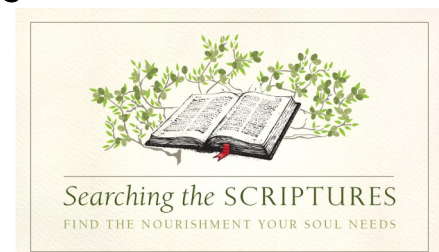
Prayer Concerns: Ginger Davis-Beck diagnosed with pancreatic cancer (please no phone calls at this time, but emails are welcome, gingerdb@bellsouth.net) Abby Horvath’s grandmother, “Gma” diagnosed with Coronavirus; Mark Harper’s Aunt Mary-Morrison and Uncle Herb Harris of Philadelphia, both with Coronavirus; For those who are affected by the COVID-19 illness, as well as their caregivers, our healthcare professionals, government leaders and those who are working around the clock to minimize the impact of this virus; Shirley Reinert slowly recovering from a car accident; Mike Swanson recovering at home from chemotherapy; Paula Zimdars recovering at home and awaiting radiation treatment ; Anne Page at Avery Place #145; Ruth Brewster at Arbor Terrace #222; Pauline Marshall at Highland Hills #112; John & Elizabeth Brewer, & Anna Holshouser at home.

COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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DAILY BIBLE READINGS—April 27—May 3

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Monday | Psalm 116: 1-4, 12-19 |
| Tuesday | Psalm 117 |
| Wednesday | Psalm 118: 1-9 |
| Thursday | 1 Peter 1: 17-23 |
| Friday | Acts 2: 14a, 36-41 |
| Saturday | Luke 24: 13-27 |
| Sunday | Luke 24: 28-35 |



Dear friends of Covenant,

I was asked to share Ton's and my experience with you so you might know what to expect when getting tested for COVID-19 via a Clarke County Public Health drive up testing site. In addition, I was asked to share those symptoms which caused our doctors to suggest coronavirus testing.

Our ages: over 60, thus considered higher risk. Our symptoms, even during our post-overseas-travel 14-day self-quarantine which had ended April 5, never included fever. We thought we had allergies, but when they worsened we thought we'd better contact our doctors. What sent us to our doctors: strange lung sounds you could hear from the bottoms of our lungs while lying down. We also had experienced: headache, eyes out of focus, sore throat, muscle aches, runny nose, lots of congestion, dry cough, malaise (tiredness unexplained), dizziness (more like listing to one side like a boat), brain fog, and recent travel overseas (we cut our trip short because of COVID-19 and returned March 22 from Amsterdam, but 14 day self-quarantine had ended already). We thought that possibly any of those could be hayfever. Each of our doctors felt that we were experiencing COVID-like symptoms and offered testing. The Clarke County health department screening looked also at our ages (over 60), recent travel overseas (yes, but quarantine was over), contact with anyone who had a confirmed case of COVID-19 (no), and at the presence of fever (no), headache (yes), sore throat (yes), dry cough (yes), dizziness (yes), malaise (yes), change in taste/smell (no), body aches (yes), diminished appetite (no).

What we did, that really helped, in addition to taking antibiotics prescribed for secondary infection: deep breathing protocol to clear our lungs (draw slow deep breath then hold 6 seconds, repeat 5 times, on the final breath expel air forcefully coughing). What we are still dealing with: a lot of coughing, some that is now productive rather than dry, warm itchy upper airway, and Ton still has experienced a sore throat. What happens after the test: Persons who test negative are contacted by their health care providers. Persons who test positive will be followed up by an epidemiologist for contacts and tracing. You're handed an info sheet that includes a phone number to call, and told that it takes 7-10 days for the results. Our providers called us with results within 3-5 business days. Our COVID-19 test results: negative (Tamara) and negative (Ton).

Our Good Friday COVID-19 testing experience

Turning left onto Dearing Street with Ton by my side looking like a sickly robber in his bandana mask (copied off of a CNN demo by Dr Sanjay Gupta) I thought, we are going to suffer a little, on Good Friday. I remembered Jesus' promise that His yoke is easy, His burden light. It seemed to come to me as a promise for this very time, and I felt calmed. As we drove up to the testing site it looked terribly official, with police cars, white tents, everyone masked, some gloved, some garbed from head to toe in protective gear. There were rules for me to follow, among them in big letters KEEP YOUR WINDOW CLOSED AT ALL TIMES UNTIL DIRECTED TO OPEN, and NO PHOTOS, NO VIDEOS, and so on.

A masked man was waving his gloved hand, beckoning me to drive toward him, holding a big traffic sign. It read, SLOW. I slowly approached. He turned the sign around. It read STOP.

Another man approached me from the left, holding up a sign I could read when he stood about 10 feet from my car, window still closed. KEEP YOUR WINDOW CLOSED. CALL THIS NUMBER: xxx-xxx-xxxx. I dialed the number and was asked for the PUI number, assigned to me by the Health Department after my doctor called them yesterday. I answered a series of health-related questions and then it was Ton's turn. Then we were beckoned to drive around to the next stopping point.

We saw at least two tents, and as I approached the first it seemed to me that maybe this was going to be a student training opportunity - maybe these were first year med students, as they looked young and, dare I say, green. They had on flimsy masks and disposable nitrile or latex gloves similar to those I'd bought for my homefirst aid kit. They changed places with each other at the tables, fiddled with clipboards and chattered nervously, as though unsure of where to be.

(see page 3)

To my relief we drove past the first tent, and were directed to stop at the second tent. As my retired BSN, RN trained eye sized up the second tent I relaxed. We were in good hands.

Two people stepped toward us. A young woman garbed in full shield and mask, gloved, gowned, shoes covered, approached my window and instructed me to lower it. She attempted to scan my temperature but her scanner failed three times. The second team member, a young man, called out to the crew that they could not obtain a temp. The scanner was then handed off. The first then handed us two masks (in case we hadn't brought our own), a paper towel (for cleanup after the swab test), and some papers to look at later. Her summer blue eyes peered kindly from over her mask as she explained that the test would be uncomfortable, and that if I could try to remain still it would be less so. She asked me to turn my face toward her and rest my hands in my lap. She drew up a long thin swab, and asked me to tilt my head back a bit, and then the swab went into my left nare (I think it was the left) all the way back to my throat. As she rotated and withdrew the swab I realized with some surprise that it had not been painful. She placed the swab in its designated tube, placed the tube in a plastic specimen bag, handed it off to the second team member, and my turn was over. The whole sequence was repeated with Ton in the front passenger seat, from his side. In a few moments we were all done and thanking the woman (DR? PA? NP? RN? RT? – I searched for her name and credentials but they were likely under her protective gear) for her technique and wishing her continued good health. We waved goodbye to both team members. I drove home thinking that we didn't suffer much with Jesus on this Good Friday after all.

So that's our Good Friday story. By Wednesday afternoon both of us were contacted by our providers that our test results were negative.

May God bless those who are sick with restoration and healing, and may God bless all who are essential workers, and give special care to those tested in the extreme for the sake of others' well-being.

Tamara and Ton

HOW TO GIVE. There is a new online giving option through the Presbyterian Foundation at this link <http://covpresathens.org/wp/contributions/> . Or you can click on this link www.covpresathens.org and click on online giving. And as always you can mail your check to the church office. Thank you for your faithful giving!



FINANCIAL REPORT
FISCAL YEAR TO DATE - Week #42
Anticipated Pledges \$374,284.68
Actual Pledges \$364,051.59

Thank you for your faithful giving!

Family Promise (IHN)

The 3 families in the Family Promise (IHN) program continue to be housed at the amazing hosting site at Athens Church of Christ on Mars Hill Road. Volunteers from Covenant along with other local congregations are providing hosts onsite day and night as well as furnishing evening meals and financial assistance. Our primary hosting week ends this Sunday, 4/26, but we are asked to continue helping out as able during this time of critical need. If you're willing to participate, please visit the Sign-up Genius site (<http://bit.ly/FPApril>) to see what openings are available that you might fill for this vital ongoing local ministry. If you have questions you may contact either Steve Rathbun (rathbun@uga.edu or [814-418-0785](tel:814-418-0785)) or Phil Hale (phale50@hotmail.com or [706-614-0812](tel:706-614-0812)). Thank you!



WHAT YOU CAN RECYCLE:
Writing instruments and packaging.
For more details, visit: www.terracycle.com/BIC



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Working from Home? Save Empty Writing Instruments for TerraCycle!

TerraCycle has not ended at Covenant; it will resume eventually. Meanwhile, I hope you are continuing to save plastic items that would otherwise end up in the landfill. If you have started to accumulate a mountain of cheese and candy bags, it may be more worthwhile to concentrate on a couple of other items that don't take up so much room. For instance, toothpaste tubes, floss containers and toothbrushes. Worn-out razors are also accepted by TerraCycle.

Just this week, TerraCycle has added a new program that even children can participate in. They are now accepting all brands and types of used-up pens, mechanical pencils, highlighters, glue sticks, water color trays, and the plastic packaging they come in. (See accompanying photo.) Bic is the sponsoring company, but all brands are acceptable. (Please note, markers are not acceptable.) Please save everything at home for now, and bring it to Covenant when the church opens up again. *Caren Snook* for the Green Dream Team.



FAITH FORMATION—Until we gather again as a community of disciples, please join these virtual opportunities to grow in your faith. The assignments and ZOOM meeting times will be updated weekly. Because of security concerns, all classes are by invitation only, and if you are interested in attending, please contact the host and you will be issued an invitation to participate in the ZOOM meeting. Not familiar with ZOOM? Let your host know and, if necessary, alternative means of participating in the class (FaceTime, cellphone call) will be arranged.

ADULTS

B.A.S.I.C Class via ZOOM using film resources created by Travis Reed of Work of the People. We are in the process of working out the means for such a class which would invite participants to view a film segment and consider questions that would shape the ZOOM meeting discussion. All of this information will be updated on the church website, www.covpresathens.org.

Emmaus Road Class—Sunday, April 26, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m., Bob Trouteaud hosts and facilitates, and this week we'll discuss, "A Case for the Un-Hired Hand". Contact Bob for copies of the chapter and an invitation to participate, bob@trouteaud.com.

Upper Room Class- Sunday, April 26, 9:45 - 10:45 a.m., James Malone hosts and Jim Bowden facilitates the discussion, "The Lord Loves Justice", *The Present Word*. If you would like to participate, please contact James at gillbillvolume1@yahoo.com, to receive your ZOOM invitation. If you need the Spring 2020 volume of *The Present Word* curriculum, contact Rindy Trouteaud at rindy@trouteaud.com, and a booklet will be mailed to you.

Journey Class—Sunday, April 26, 9:45 - 10:45 a.m., Steve Rathbun hosts and Phil Hale facilitates a "reconnect, regroup" conversation. If you would like to participate, please contact Steve at rathbun@uga.edu, to receive your ZOOM invitation. We will resume our discussion of the book, *Red State Christians*, next week, chapter 8.

MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDIES

Tuesday, April 28, 10:00-11:00 a.m., Rindy Trouteaud will host and facilitate a discussion of Lewis Smede's book, *Keeping Hope Alive for a Tomorrow We Cannot Control*, chapters 1-4.

If you would like a copy of the readings and a ZOOM invitation to participate, please contact Rindy at rindy@trouteaud.com.

YOUTH

High School and Middle School Youth Groups

A word from the Montreat Youth Conference Leadership Team: *As we manage in a time of uncertainty for church programs, we thought it might be a good idea to experience a bit of our summer conference community now, so we asked our 2020 conference leadership if they could help us deliver a little Montreat Now.* In this episode of Montreat Now, Chris Henry, Kim McNeill, and Kyrie Blocker, some of our leaders from the 2020 Montreat Youth Conference weeks 1 and 2, are talking about ways they are keeping calm and being restored in this strange time of self isolation and quarantine. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fo-3j0xCarE>

Confirmation Class—Sunday, April 26 Confirmation class via ZOOM at 2:00 p.m. and our ZOOM meeting with the session, Tuesday, April 28, 6:30 p.m.

CHILDREN

During COVID-19, Illustrated Ministry is supporting local congregations and families by providing free, weekly, faith formation resources for all ages. Resources are free, downloadable, and easy to access simple but meaningful ways to engage faith. <https://www.illustratedministry.com/flattenthecurve/>

The link below will provide many more opportunities for virtual ministry for all ages.

<http://covpresathens.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/virtualspiritualformationresources.pdf>



Covenant's Emergency Food Pantry

Members, and friends of Covenant have been giving generously of their time and talents to the Emergency Food Pantry. As you can imagine, the need is great. For the month of March 331 families were served by the wonderful volunteers of Covenant's Emergency Food Pantry.

we will be following the process one of our volunteers dubbed the "Chick Fi La" approach:

Food will be bagged ahead of time and placed on tables in the fellowship hall. More square footage there allows for ease of social distancing.

Meat and cheese will be added at the time of distribution. (if available)

Neighbors in need of food will be instructed by our "parking lot attendant" to drive up to the side door of the fellowship hall.

Food bags will then be handed off to the neighbor.

Jesus said, "You give them something to eat."

We have masks, gloves and sanitizer for volunteers

Currently, Covenant's Food Pantry is still available on Tuesdays, Thursdays 1pm – 4pm.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

STAY SAFE—If there is any reason at all that you should NOT physically volunteer-consider the following:

Make a financial donation to the Food Pantry by sending a check to Covenant and write "food pantry" in the subject line. (You could send it in at the same time you send in your pledge).

We can use grocery bags (paper or plastic), and small boxes to pack the food. If you call the church, someone could even come out to your car and get it.

If you are able to physically be present as a volunteer:

Click the link below for an easy sign up or call or email Betsy Pless 540-1719
bppless@gmail.com

You can just sign up for 1 day, or for multiple days. You can also share the 3-hour time slot with 2 friends!

HOW TO SIGN UP:

Please sign up for Covenant Food Pantry!

Here's how it works in 3 easy steps:

1. **Click this link** to go to our invitation page on SignUp.com: <https://signup.com/login/entry/611848298042>

2. **Enter your email address:** (You will NOT need to register an account on SignUp.com)

3. **Sign up!** Choose your spots - SignUp.com will send you an automated confirmation and reminders. Easy!

Note: *SignUp.com does not share your email address with anyone. If you prefer not to use your email address, please contact me and I can sign you up manually.*