

Please click here to view Covenants Worship Service, Sunday, Mar. 21

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

THE COVENANTER

March 21, 2021

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



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

WHEN WE ALL DO A LITTLE,
IT ADDS UP TO A LOT.



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING 2021!

For more than 70 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has provided us a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need. In fact, OGHS is the single largest way Presbyterians come together every year to work toward a better world. Presbyterians have joined with millions of other Christians through One Great Hour of Sharing to share God's love with people experiencing need. Your gifts support ministries of disaster response, refugee assistance and resettlement, and community development that help people find safe refuge, start new lives and work together to strengthen their families and communities. The Presbyterian Hunger Program receives 36

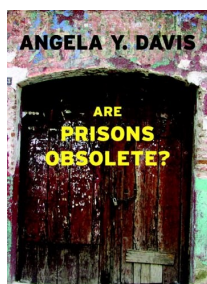
percent of undesignated gifts, while Self-Development of People and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance each receives 32 percent. Please indicate on the memo portion of your check or giving envelope OGHS. *Thank you for your generous giving!*

Covenant's Re-Opening Task Force met on Thursday, Mar. 18 via Zoom. Those present included Rich Reaves, Chris Wilson, Mark Harper, Rindy Trouteaud, Jennifer Frey, Pam Knox, and Julie Bower, chair. We noted with delight the downward trend of COVID-19 cases in our local area and around the country. While cases are still too high (180 new cases in Clarke in the last two weeks) to project a re-gathering date for Covenant, we do believe that if the community follows the CDC safe practices (wear a mask, keep a 6 ft distance to others when out and about, get the vaccine, avoid crowds, etc.) that we will be able to plan for a safe re-gathering in the Fall. The major concerns, even as the case rate declines, is that people in the community are tiring of the safety limitations, understandably, and easing up on the safe practices. Spring Break for area public schools could become a super spreader holiday that causes another spike in cases, delaying our ability to re-gather. The other potential delay could result from a surge in the variant cases, such as has happened in Europe.

Rich Reaves reported on investigations related to the HVAC system. Members of Building and Grounds ministry team will meet with members of the Worship ministry team next week to come closer to decisions on the best course to take to prepare our building for a safe return to worship. All who are involved in this journey to keep folks safe take this responsibility very seriously. The Task Force members agreed that the age demographics of our church warrant a "stay the course" attitude. We care too much about the health of every person to risk a mistake that brings us back together before the case rate is in the safe zone. Our task force will meet again on April 15 at 7 PM. Respectfully submitted by Julie Bower



During the season of Lent when we are invited to deepen our awareness of our relationship with the God who creates, redeems, and sustains us, the Christian Education Ministry Team will provide materials - online and paper - to guide and enrich your individual and family times for reflection.



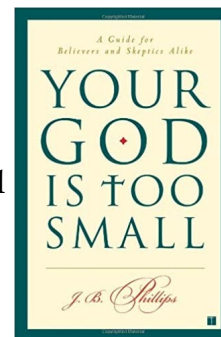
Covenant Social Justice Book Club! Monday, March 22 & 29 at 7pm, we will work through Angela Davis' "Are Prisons Obsolete" and explore the history of the American prison system through the work of one of our country's most impactful justice activists, Angela Yvonne Davis.

For this first session please read chapters 1-3 (or pages 1-59) and then during the second session we will finish the rest of the book (or pages 60-128). Email twilliams@covpresathens.org for more info. Email kwetherington@covpresathens.org for a Zoom Invitation.

TUESDAY MORNING BOOK STUDY – beginning Tuesday, March 23 at 10am.

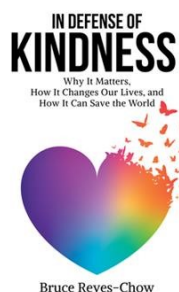
Join us as we look at the book, *Your God is Too Small!*. A groundbreaking work of faith which challenges the constraints of traditional religion. In his discussion of God author J.B. Phillips encourages Christians to redefine their understanding of a creator without labels or earthly constraints and instead search for a meaningful concept of God. Facilitated by Mark Harper.

Please email Karen at karenwetherington@covpresathens.org for a zoom invitation.



WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON BOOK STUDY –

beginning Wednesday, March 31 at 4p.m.



When did kindness become a sign of weakness? What if kindness actually has the power to change the world? Join us as we share a conversation about kindness using Bruce Reyes-Chow's book, *In Defense of Kindness: Why It Matters, How It Changes Lives, and How It Can Save the World*. According to Reyes-Chow, culture is at a crossroads when it comes to kindness. These days we either view kindness as an inert act based on the absence of being a jerk, or we see acts of kindness as heroic and herculean, beyond the reach and capability of mere mortals. Choosing kindness is also exhausting. The public and private back-and-forth exchanges of hatred and de-

-humanizing that is more about ratings, retweets, and winning than relationships and community is taking a toll on our motivation to even contemplate kindness as a valid response. *In Defense of Kindness* makes a case that we each can choose kindness as a way to experience community and wholeness in new ways. With a playful spirit, tender heart, and unwavering commitment to justice, "kindness enthusiast" Reyes-Chow explores the many ways in which kindness can bring about healing, wholeness, and hope in ourselves and the world. Through unfiltered sharing of his own experiences, he invites the reader into an adventure of discovery and rediscovery of kindness of heart, mind, spirit, and action. Rindy Trouteaud will facilitate our conversations. If you would like a copy of this book, please call the church office and speak with Karen Wetherington, 706.548.2756. If you would like a ZOOM invitation for our conversations, please contact Rindy Trouteaud,

Saturday, March 27, 11 am - 1:00 pm, middle schoolers are invited to hike the trails at the Sandy Creek Nature Center, 205 Old Commerce Road, Athens. Snacks and drinks will be provided. If you plan to attend, please contact Rindy, rindy@trouteaud.com.



Thank you to all who have provided floral arrangements in the past. We especially appreciate the amazing talent of Juergen Wiegel, who has contributed his time and skill to provide beautiful arrangements and to coordinating the floral schedule for many years. If you would be willing to provide a flower arrangement for weekly virtual worship services, please check the dates below. We are now hoping to provide arrangements for Mar 21 through June 27. It is important to note that the services are actually recorded on Fridays, every week. This means that the flowers need to be placed in the worship center on Friday morning, by 10 AM. Please use the following link to view the available dates and to sign up. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409084AA5AA22A20-provide> . For further information please contact Julie Bower (bower.julie@gmail.com) or Karen Wetherington (kwetherington@covpresathens.org) The Worship Ministry Team appreciates each one who contributes to the beauty of our worship services in this way. Thank you!



"The Partnership Working Group of the ECCB and the Czech Mission Network of the PC(USA) invite You to an on-line meeting to share our experiences and ideas about the worship in our churches during the pandemic.

"PRAYER AND PRAISE IN THE PANDEMIC: *A Conversation About Worship in the Season of COVID-19*"

The meeting takes place on March 21, 2021 at 2pm. EST.
7pm Czech Time

The meeting will open with theological introduction by Dr. Petr Sláma and be followed by three short witnesses of three churches. The scope of the meeting is a conversation of the participants about what has worked well during this year in our churches and where has it pushed us.
All are welcome!

Those interested in taking part in the meeting, please contact Rev. Mark Harper (mharper@covpresathens.org) by 20 March 2021 to obtain the zoom link.

PRAYER CONCERNS: Nancy Omdahl's exploratory surgery revealed cancer around her esophagus; Juergen Wiegel recovering from a broken rib; students and teachers as they return to school; Anne Page with a hip infection and in hospice care at Avery Place; Pauline Marshall at Highland Hills #112.

Daily Bible Readings—March 22—28

The six-week Lenten journey is an opportunity to take on a new spiritual discipline. This year, congregations are invited to pray with Scripture as a way of discerning God's movement in our personal lives and in the life of the world around us. These devotions **start** with **Ash Wednesday** and will guide your journey through Holy Week. Please click on this link to access this weeks devotions for March 22 - 28



<https://www.covpresathens.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Lent-Devotions 2021 FULLset.pdf>

Little Food Pantry – We encourage you to help us keep our Little Food Pantry stocked with pop-top single serve canned goods that do not require cooking, peanut butter, packaged crackers, healthy snack items. Small individual personal hygiene items (ie: soap, deodorant, toothbrush and toothpaste, and shampoos) in a zip lock bag with a granola bar of some kind is also needed. Please remember everything must be sealed (air tight) to prevent ant infestations...*Please no raisins. Thank you to all that help keep the Little Food Pantry stocked.*

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

FINANCIAL REPORT
FISCAL YEAR TO DATE - Week #38
Anticipated Pledges \$ 328,846.30
Actual Pledges— \$ 334,812.14
Thank you for your faithful giving!

Our friend Reginald Willis from East Friendship Baptist Church is inviting us to a celebration honoring the 60th anniversary -- yes, 60th! -- of the Rev. James Kendrick as their pastor. Please contact Reginald through Facebook if you would like to participate in any of the virtual events. MARK YOUR CALENDARS! CELEBRATING 60 YEARS AS PASTOR OF EAST FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH. APRIL 17-18, 2021. ON APRIL 17 AT 11AM THERE WILL BE A DRIVE BY PARADE IN HONOR OF PASTOR AND 1ST LADY KENDRICK. WE ARE INVITING ALL OF ATHENS TO JOIN US IN THIS PARADE. (details will be coming soon) Feel free to inbox me. ALSO ON APRIL 17TH at 6:00pm THERE WILL BE A VIRTUAL BANQUET (via Zoom) TO HONOR PASTOR AND 1ST LADY KENDRICK. WE WILL CULMINATE WITH MORNING WORSHIP ON APRIL 18 AT 11AM (via Zoom) with Dr. Derrick Dewitt Sr, Pastor of First Mount Calvary Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland bringing the message. LOOKING FORWARD TO YOU ALL SHARING WITH US. (if you plan to participate in the parade, please inbox me so I will be sure to get detailed info to you)



Calling all Ministry Team Chairs!

Now is the time to submit your new and improved 2021–2022 Ministry Team Budget.

Please email them to Pam Knox at

pnknox@yahoo.com as soon as possible. Thank you to all the Ministry Team Chairs that have already submitted their budgets.

ITEMS NEEDED! Yes! Covenant is still collecting these items for families in need. They will be distributed during the food pantry distribution. Gently used: COATS for ADULTS & KIDS, WARM SOCKS, WARM HATS and SCARFS. Also needed are sweatpants, sweatshirts and socks! Please drop them off at the church during Food Pantry hours, Thursdays 1pm – 4pm or Office hours, Tuesday 10am – noon, and Fridays 10am – 4pm. *Thanks!*



TerraCycle: Spotlight on Toothbrushes, etc. Are you wondering what the best thing is that you can save for TerraCycle? If so, the answer is worn-out toothbrushes, empty toothpaste tubes and empty floss containers. Why is that? TerraCycle provides UPS shipping labels for boxes of these items and it also pays the Green Dream Team 2

cents for each item sent. This does not sound like much, but between October 2012 and March 2020,

TerraCycle paid the GDT a total of \$166.02. This is important because TerraCycle does not provide shipping labels for other packaging materials such as cheese and candy bags and wrappers. The GDT uses the \$\$ that it earns from some items to pay the shipping cost for other items. I have an almost-full box of toothbrushes, etc. and I want to ship it soon! Please bring all that you can to either the church or my house! Caren Snook for the Green Dream Team



The University of Georgia 4-H Program will hold the Georgia 4-H Gala on August 14, 2021. **Diane Davies**, retired Extension 4-H Specialist and Senior Public Service Associate, is the ninth recipient of the Georgia 4-H Lifetime Achievement Award. Congratulations to Diane. Georgia 4-H is grateful for the contributions she made to the Georgia 4-H Program and her leadership in the development of the Georgia 4-H Environmental Education program

Presbyterian Women met last week, focusing on lamenting creation. The discussion included things individuals and Covenant are currently doing to care for the earth and what more we can do. One action is the support of the proposed solar panels at Covenant which would have immediate and long-term benefits for God's creation. Thanks for considering this project. Ellen Stoneburner and June Meyers



Covenant Presbyterian Church was certified once again as an Earth Care Congregation by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Presbyterian Hunger Program through February 2022. This honor speaks to the great commitment that Covenant Presbyterian Church has made to care for God's earth.

To become an Earth Care Congregation, this congregation affirmed an Earth Care Pledge to integrate environmental practices and thinking into their worship, education, facilities, and outreach.

The Earth Care Congregation certification is designed to recognize churches that make the commitment to take seriously God's charge to "till and keep" the garden.

Started in 2010 by the PC(USA), the goal of this program is to inspire churches to care for God's earth in a holistic way, through integrating earth care into all aspects of their church life. The Earth Care Congregation certification honors churches that make that commitment and encourages others to follow their example.

"It is exciting that Covenant Presbyterian Church is one of the 276 churches that chose to dedicate themselves to intentional care of God's earth this year. Particularly in a time of much uncertainty and worry about the future, this congregation's activities and commitment even in the midst of navigating limitations brought about by COVID-19 brings hope to their community. We believe that Covenant Presbyterian Church will inspire others to respond intentionally to God's call to care for the earth," says Jessica Maudlin, Associate for Sustainable Living and Earth Care Concerns for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

For more information on the Earth Care Congregations program visit www.pcusa.org/earthcarecongregations.

A Video for our Friends in Olomouc—As you may have heard, the Czech Republic is currently the nation hardest hit by COVID-19 in all of Europe. This is tragic on so many levels, especially since in the early days of the pandemic they were a model for the rest of us about the positive power of masking. Since then poor decisions by national leaders and a shortage of medical personnel and hospital beds have led to profound suffering, a strict nation-wide lock-down, and the need to send some patients to surrounding countries for care. A recent report indicated that as much as 45% of the population has been infected by COVID-19.

For us, this should resonate on a personal level in light of our close friendship with brothers and sisters at our partner church in Olomouc. As a sign of hope and support, I suggest that we put together a simple video expressing our love for them as well as our faith in the God who always shows us a way out of no way. I imagine a short series of greetings, personal messages, and scripture readings or poetry that could be recorded on your cell phones and then sent to the church where we would edit them together before sending it on to Olomouc. If you feel led to participate, please contact me in the next week (mharper@covpresathens.org).

In addition, please note the announcement in the newsletter on page 1 about a Zoom meeting on March 21st at 2 pm between partner congregations in the U.S. and Czech Republic. It will be a great opportunity to see some of our friends while learning from one another about how the pandemic has impacted our approach to worship. Grace and peace, *Mark*

Volunteer Opportunity

Family Promise

From April 11-17 Covenant hosts three homeless families in the Family Promise program, but not in our facility. Because of COVID, Milledge Ave Baptist will continue to serve as their temporary home, for which we are thankful, but members of Covenant will serve as hosts. We need volunteers to be present throughout our week along with an evening meal. The meal preparers leave the meal inside the door. We also need church members to serve as morning hosts, afternoon hosts, evening hosts, and overnight hosts. Hosts remain in a room on the first floor of the church, and the families reside on the 2nd floor. This church facility enables everyone to remain a safe distance from each other. As a result, the COVID germ has infected NO ONE. Volunteer sign up can be done with the on-line link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090f4ca5aa29a4fe3-fpainterfaith>

Your help is needed, so use this unique opportunity to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ.



Covenant members and friends are invited to bake Easter cookies to be given out on our Thursday food distribution just before the holiday. Please bag the cookies in groups of 8-12, and bring them to the church between March 29 and April 1. They will be given out on the Thursday before Easter.



*Spring flowers
at
Covenant's Memorial Garden*



*....raised bed almost completed by Wyatt Herndon for
his Eagle Scout project*

Covenant's Emergency Food Pantry

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

Covenant's Emergency Food Pantry days and hours have changed.

It is now on 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 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.*

For the month of February: Covenant Volunteers served 890 of our food insecure neighbors. of those, 289 were children, and 107 senior adults. Thank you Covenant and all the wonderful volunteers that make this ministry possible!