

Covenant Call – August 2026

A Letter from Caitlin

Beloveds,

On July 15th, Kent, Melissa, and I gathered at Wesley Theological Seminary for a staff retreat. We began with a devotional on 1 Corinthians 12:4–11, reflecting on the gifts we each bring to Covenant. We grounded our time in three foundational truths:

1. Christ is head of the church,
2. We are part of a covenant community,
3. We are reformed and always reforming.

Fueled by Cava for lunch and guided by God’s grace with our holy imaginations, we got to work! We mapped out six months of worship, music, and Christian Formation—filling sheets of flip-chart paper that now double as art in my office (ha!). While leaving room for the Spirit to shift our plans, we felt energized by proactive, collaborative visioning.

We closed our retreat by creating a *Covenant of Mutual Support*, grounding our work in an accountability framework of grace and the shared promise that "we are human first, committed to supporting each other and Covenant with joy and grace."

I left feeling deeply hopeful, excited, and anchored in the work God is calling us to do right here and right now. If you have ideas for worship, music, or Christian Formation—and/or if you’d like to help bring an idea to life—I’d love to hear from you!

August Blessings,

Caitlin

Table of Contents

* A Letter from Caitlin	(pg.1)
* Summer Worship	(pg.2)
* Creation Worship	(pg.2)
* General Assembly	(pg.3)
* Indonesia Independence Service	(pg.3)
* Special Offerings	(pg. 4)
* Hunting/Fishing License	(pg.5)
* Mission Moment	(pg.5)
* Directory Updates	(pg.6)
* August/September Birthdays	(pg.7)
* Upcoming Events	(pg.7)
* Connect with Covenant	(pg.8)

Covenant 10:00am Summer Worship! *



Sunday, August 2nd - Worship w/Communion & EIPC @ 10am in Sanctuary

Sunday, August 9th - Worship led by laity @ 10am in Sanctuary

Sunday, August 16th - Worship led by guest preacher Hananiel Setiawan @ 10am in Sanctuary

Sunday, August 23rd - Worship led by Kent Hamaker featuring Spiritual Practices @ 10am in Sanctuary

Sunday, August 30th - Worship led by Melissa McMahan featuring a Hymn Sing @ 10am in Sanctuary

*** Always on Zoom as well**



Creation Focus at Worship on August 9 at 10 am

In the first week of August, we have given all three Covenant staff—Caitlin, Kent and Melissa—a well-deserved week off! And so, your lay leaders will be leading worship on August 9, and they need your support: Y'all come (as Caitlin would say)!

Our focus will be the Genesis Creation Story, along with some scientific and Native American narratives on how our world came into being. Sarah Godwin has graciously agreed to play piano, and Elders Hille Blackshaw and Susan Tarr will lead worship. In lieu of a sermon, we will present a choral reading (originally performed at Covenant in 2006), with readers Eugene Godwin, Pat Tarr and Hille. Come celebrate the gift of Creation with your Covenant friends.





Highlights and Short Overviews of General Assembly Action Items
by Rev. Alex Evangelista, Stated Clerk

The National Capital Presbytery sent this year's Stated Clerk, Rev. Alex Evangelista, to Milwaukee, Wisconsin for the 227th General Assembly to help discern our faithful responses to many issues and opportunities facing the church, and how the church may interact with the larger world. While some of these highlights and overviews may also be found in resources from the [PCUSA website](#) or from the *Presbyterian Outlook*, Alex offers his own reflections [HERE](#).



**You are invited to participate in a worship celebrating
Indonesian Independence Day on Saturday, August 22nd at 11:00am.**



PCUSA Special Offerings 2026

The Church of the Covenant has been a faithful supporter of two of PCUSA's Special offerings – One Great hour of Sharing and the Christmas Joy Offering for many years. In the past Covenant has not supported a third special offering collected after One Great Hour in conjunction with Pentecost.

Recognizing the lack of support for the Pentecost Special offering, PCUSA has launched a new cycle of Special Offerings this year with three Church-wide Special Offerings: Christmas Joy, One Great Hour of Sharing, and World Communion. PCUSA urges all Congregations to participate in the three denominational-wide special offerings.

We, at Covenant need to decide if we want to include the new, **World Communion Offering**, as part of our offering or remain with the two we currently support. Session will decide at its September meeting whether to support this new offering. Please talk to me (Hille), or any elder if you have any questions or concerns. Your voice and opinion counts!

Listed below are the three denomination-wide offerings collected by the PCUSA. Please note that each offering is dedicated to a different cause or action supported by PCUSA.

The World Communion Offering (New) Received on World Communion Sunday, the first Sunday in October. Funds received will support,

- Racial, and Gender Justice
- Peacemaking and Global Witness
- Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations
- Causes and distribution include grants issued to other councils of the Church reflecting the values of the World Communion Offering of justice and peace.

The Christmas Joy Offering. (Covenant) and received Sunday before and Christmas Eve services. Funds received will support,

- children-at-risk, youth and young adults;
- leadership development for people of color, Presbyterian-related Schools and Colleges Equipping Communities of Color; and
- servants of the church in need through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions.

One Great Hour of Sharing, (Covenant), Lent, received on Palm Sunday and/or Easter Sunday. Funds received will support, -

- disaster assistance and relief;
- hunger; poverty;
- climate change; and
- immigration, migration and refugees.



Hunting/Fishing License

Caitlin discovered an old, framed hunting and fishing license that had been left behind by ANV in the second-floor office in the tower now occupied by IEP. We don't know how it came to be there, but we did some Internet searching and found information about the owner. The resident license was granted in Wyoming in 1923 to Steve Lupcho. He was born in 1901 and lived in the unincorporated settlement of Frontier, Lincoln County, Wyoming. He was married to Mary Josephine, who was born in Italy. They had one son, Steve Eustachio, who served in the Navy during the Korean War and passed away in 2005. Lupcho died in 1946 and is buried in the town cemetery in Kemmerer, Wyoming. He had one grandson, Joseph, and one granddaughter, Penny Irvin, both of whom are deceased. We don't know how the church came to possess an old Wyoming hunting and fishing license, but it led us on an interesting historical search. If anyone can shed further light on this find please let us know.



Mission Moment

Fraser Murcoch, the CEO of Bridges to Independence, visited Covenant for worship on July 26th. He shared a bit with us about his personal story, how he came to head up Bridges, and the work



they do and challenges they face in providing housing to families who have fallen on difficult times. We will be collecting school supplies to donate to Bridges to Independence for their annual Back-to-School Drive. **Bring donations with you to church on Sundays, August 2nd, 9th, and 16th.** Your donation will empower a student to put their best foot forward as they start the school year!

Donations needed:

- Black or blue pens – Pencils - Colored pencils - Sturdy pocket folders - Sticky note pads (3x3 inch) - Glue sticks – Highlighters – Markers – Crayons – Calculators - Graphing calculators
- Tissues - Wide ruled loose leaf paper - Marble composition notebooks - Headphones with microphone – Erasers - Pencil sharpeners - Small bottles of hand sanitizer – Scissors - Backpacks

On the morning of July 13th, Kent and Mary Gibson headed out to the Ballston Metro station to distribute Bagels & Blessings to the morning commuters passing through the station. They handed out baggies that included bagels, cream cheese, cheese spreaders, Covenant information cards, and refrigerator magnets with scripture blessings. They gave away all 30 bags they had with them! It was wonderful connecting with and blessing our fellow Arlingtonians, making their morning commutes a little bit brighter.



On Sunday morning, July 26th, a strong contingent of Covenant members headed downstairs to make lunches for the children attending Camp Verano Alegre at Clarendon Presbyterian Church. Thirty bag lunches were prepared featuring either a ham and cheese or turkey and cheese sandwich, applesauce, protein bar, potato chips, and a juice box. Kent delivered the lunches early Monday afternoon just before scheduled lunchtime.



2026 Directory Updates

Friends, please make the following changes to your 2026 Church Directory

1. **Sherry Gainer** 1947 N. Uhle Street, **Apt # 316**, Arlington, VA 22207
2. **Jason Pinkerton** **4131** 27th Street, Arlington, VA 22207
3. **Karen Stewart**– new email address Karenbstewart2025@gmail.com
4. **Dick Ensor** 5012 Sandy Valley Road, Mechanicsville, VA 2311
 Home Phone: 804 803 0449 Cell 703 336 3102 Spouse, Dee

Birthday List Corrections/additions:
Sherry Gainer - July 13





We're glad you were born! Covenant sends Happy Birthday wishes to:

August 04 – **Lola Rogers**

September 04 – **Clara Aasen (2016)**

August 05 – **Gloria Hurdle**

September 09 – **Lourdes Gonzalez**

August 05 – **Nora Tyagi (2017)**

September 11 – **Marita Dillery**

August 09 – **Laura Orvald**

September 20 – **Ursula Banzhaf**

August 13 – **Paul Vogel**

September 27 – **Don Whalen**



Upcoming Events at Covenant



Zoom Devotional: Thursdays at 12:00pm.

Kent & Melissa on Vacation (out of office): Monday, August 3rd- Sunday, August 9th.

Caitlin on Vacation (out of office): Monday, August 3rd- Sunday, August 16th.

Zoom Book Study: Tuesdays August 11th and 18th at 10:00am.

Bagels and Blessings: Wednesday, August 19th.

EIPC Indonesia Independence Event; Saturday, August 22nd at 11:00 am.

Walking Group: Sunday, August 23rd; 8:00 am at Potomac Overlook Park.

Worship Team Meeting: Tuesday, September 1st @ 7:30pm.



Connect With Covenant



<https://www.youtube.com/@churchofthecovenantarlingtonva>



<https://www.facebook.com/CovenantArlington>



<https://covenantchurcharlington.org/>

Weekly Zoom Devotional; Thursdays @ 12:00 pm:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81145588523?pwd=mk9SSHeaz8cApcDQyzpPSkYEJBtRKG.1>

Church Zoom link:

<https://cofc.zoom.us/j/86035210161?pwd=dUQ2Y2VwdThDUWVVT3B6VGZQldGQT09>



Church of the Covenant 2666 Military Road Arlington VA, 22207

Phone: 703-524-4115

Email: thechurchofthecovenant@gmail.com

<https://www.covenantchurcharlington.org/>

***Office Hours: Tues, Weds, Thurs: 10am-3:00pm**