



the **New Covenant**

Window

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Sharing God through love and service

Welcome to *The Window* 2.0

The 2019 New Covenant UMC Newsletter Re-boot!

What you are about to read is the first issue of our church newsletter in nine months. Our previous newsletter guru, Elesia Atherton, had to depart New Covenant for new horizons last June. For four years, Elesia used her considerable creativity and expertise to put together a seamless, first-rate newsletter – entitled ***The Window*** – every month without fail. Her departure left a void in our ability as a congregation to communicate with each other about all sorts of activities, ideas, accomplishments and people.

So here we are putting together a refurbished newsletter launch. March 2019 issue. A new crew is on board, so this will basically be a newsletter made from scratch. Therefore, expect to see improvements in it as time goes by.

We of course hope you will make reading this a regular part of each month. Our goal is to provide a warm, informative touch of our church during the Monday thru Saturday shift. We will work to include relevant content, and we'll depend on our readers to make sure we learn how to become better at doing that.

We appreciate how every person at New Covenant contributes to our growth and spirit. From our new enthusiastic pastor to our exceptionally welcoming congregation to the down-home comfort of our 38-year-old barn-like building, we truly are blessed with an outstanding church. We want to reflect that fact in this newsletter.

I believe God breaks into a big smile when He thinks about New Covenant. We are communicating out of love and gratitude for Him. We all have something to say related to our personal relationship with God. ***The Window*** is, among other things, a forum for sharing experiences and reflections.

Please know that everyone at New Covenant is enthusiastically invited to contribute.

Contributors to this issue:

Rev. Dana Norton	Jeff Browning	Tori Childers	Troy Childers
Linda Dunn	Linda Easton	Kerri Embrey	Jim Handy
Jean Miller	Naomi Norton	Barbara Reed	Mike Reed
Kathy Rogers	Sharon Smith	Cindy Wolfe	

The Entrance of Reverend Norton

Pastor Dana Norton initially entered New Covenant's doors last July, the standard time of year for transition of United Methodist clergy. She brought with her Andy and their two daughters, Naomi and Anna. All four of these family members were quickly found by the congregation to be genuinely likeable and were fully accepted into the fold.

In her first sermon, Pastor Dana took time to introduce herself and her approach to serving as our pastor. She began with an energetic enthusiasm that I'd rarely seen at the pulpit before; then said something that I've never heard: "My job is to love you" she told the congregation. "Your job is to decide where our church goes from here".

Our minister has lived up to these words since day one. Her love is evidenced in her interactions with each of us individually and as a group. And although she is quite skilled at strategic planning for church healthy growth, she has also proved to be open, democratic and supportive in encouraging congregation members to take the lead in deciding and implementing New Covenant's destiny. As a result, I can't think of a time in recent memory when New Covenant has been as busy in following the lessons of Christ, especially the ones about loving your neighbor and helping those less fortunate.

I've attended this church long enough to have worshipped God under the guidance of all seven ministers who have had a turn at shepherding New Covenant. Every pastoral transition that brought us a new minister also came with a host of systemic, spiritual and cultural changes. A few of these transitions were a little bumpy, but most of them ended up becoming a true blessing for New Covenant's life.

I've decided that Reverend Norton is one of those blessings. So I'd like to use this forum to thank God for her presence; and to officially offer my belated Welcome to our (relatively) new pastor and her family. We are glad and grateful that you are here, Dana.

... Jim Handy

A Time of Preparation

Greetings Sisters and Brothers in Christ!

It is difficult to believe that we've already been here nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of a year. The time has flown by. Some days it feels as if we just arrived. Other days it seems as if we have been here forever because the good people of New Covenant have been so welcoming. You have embraced me and my family as your own and we truly feel that we belong here. We have been through our first Advent and Christmas, our first set of charge conference & year-end reports, and, by the time you read this, our first stewardship campaign. Confirmation class is ongoing. There has been even more, but rather than looking back, let's keep our focus ahead.

We are about to enter into our first Lent and Easter together. Lent is really about preparing our hearts, minds and spirits for Holy Week. We will begin with Ash Wednesday when I hope you will join me in a fast (as your health allows). After worship and imposition of the ashes, we will break our fast together with a shared meal.

Our worship throughout Lent will explore Gifts of the Dark Wood. There are gifts to be found even (perhaps especially) in the dark night of the soul. If you're not in a dark night right now, you've likely been there before and will surely go there again. The gifts we will find there will guide us not only through the darkness, but will draw us closer to God.

In addition to our worship, we will travel through the dark night that is often a part of grief in a 6-week grief group on Saturday mornings. This group will be open to anyone experiencing recent or distant loss through death or other loss of relationship (though we will focus on loss through death). This will not be a 'preachy' group so literally anyone should feel welcomed.

We will service our community with an Egg Hunt and hot dogs on April 13 (day before Palm Sunday) from 1-3 p.m. at the Sunnyvale Park. And before we enter Holy Week, we will join the parade, celebrating as we wave palms.

And this year we will walk through Holy Week together. Many are eager to rush from the parade of Palm Sunday to the resurrection of Easter morning. But it is through the full experience of Holy Week that Easter reveals the glory of the Kingdom of God. Our youth will lead us through Maundy Thursday and our combined choirs will shepherd us through Good Friday with a Tenebrae Service.

At the close of the Tenebrae Service, we will enter together into a time of contemplative prayer as we move from the death of Jesus to his resurrection. You will be invited to sign up to be a part of our continuous 'In The Tomb Prayer Chain'. Some will pray in our sanctuary while others will pray during the night at home. Details will be coming soon.

On Easter morning we will 'flower the cross' as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, the glory found in the Kingdom of God that is ours. Sisters and brothers, we must first empty ourselves (Lent) so that we may experience the glory of resurrection (Easter) in expectation of the coming of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost).

I am blessed to be living out my own life of faith among you.

Peace be with you,
Pastor Dana

Mark Your Calendar

- March 6:** Ash Wednesday Service
Break-Fast
- March 9:** Grief Group Begins
- March 11-15:** Pastor Dana's Vacation
- March 17:** Student's Singing at
Waterford
- March 30:** Celebrating Women
Luncheon
- April 13:** All Church Clean-Up
Community Egg Hunt



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 4:** Lou Gonzales
Bill Price
- 6:** Bob Norton
- 9:** Tori Childers
- 10:** Wayne Duke
Ava Mattox
James Wheeler
- 12:** Karen Crownover
- 13:** Keith Willis
- 14:** Nicholas Payne
- 17:** Kevin Moore
- 19:** Norma Robertson
Elyse Wahl
- 20:** Gwynn Getto
- 25:** Randy Smith
- 27:** Emily May
- 30:** Carol Dockins

Pray It Forward!

Come join us to pray for Our Church, Our Community, Our World,
and those who need others to pray for them in their life struggles.

When: Wednesday
Time: Weekly @ 5:45 pm
Place: Hallowed Grounds

Matthew 18:20

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Lent 2019

Ash Wednesday - March 6, 6:00 pm in the Sanctuary
(A "Break-Fast" meal of soup and bread to follow)

Weekly Sunday Lenten Series
The Gifts of the Dark Wood by Eric Elnes
There will be a unique communion opportunity each week.

Palm Sunday – April 14, 8:30 am / 11:00 am

Maundy Thursday – April 18, 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall
Presented by our Youth/Children

Tenebrae – Friday, April 19, 7:00 pm
A musical service filled with anthems and congregational hymns

In the Tomb Prayer Chain
A continuous prayer vigil beginning Friday, April 19 following the
Tenebrae Service and ending Easter Sunday, April 21 @ 6:00 am

Easter – April 21, 8:30 am / 11:00 am

He is Risen!!

Please join us on
Saturday, April 13, 2019 from 1:00pm-3:00pm
for a Community Easter Egg Hunt!

The hunt will begin at 2:00 pm. The afternoon will be filled with hot dogs, games, prizes, music, and fun for the whole family. Everyone is invited!

New Covenant is hosting the event located at
Town Center Park Pavilion
356 Tripp Road
Sunnyvale, Texas 75182

If you would like to donate plastic eggs and candy (no chocolate please), we would greatly appreciate it. These can be dropped off at the church. If you would like to volunteer your talents and help us, we would love to have you. For further information, please contact Kerri Embrey. (kerriembrey67@gmail.com or 469-877-7221)

Happy Easter!



The Waterford Ministry Led by God's Spirit

By Jean Miller

In order to give true insight to this spirit of God ministry, let me share how it all began.

Prior to the opening of The Waterford Community in Mesquite, lay speakers from New Covenant UMC and New World UMC spoke to management and asked permission to hold a Sunday worship service. Permission was granted and at 10:45 AM the first Sunday in October 1999, three lay speakers held the first service in the rotunda of the building on the second floor. Three residents were in attendance and each Sunday thereafter attendance grew. So from three charter members it has now grown 20 to 30 in attendance each morning.

The services grew so quickly they were moved to a larger room and then again to an even larger room that holds up to 40 in worship.

The chapel was decorated with metal crosses made by one of the residents' friends. Other donations of pictures and flower arrangements were made to the chapel. A generous gift of an altar, bible stand, bible, candles, and pulpit were made by a NCUMC member. The chapel was complete even with an electric keyboard/organ purchased by donations and offerings from The Waterford residents.

It was agreed from the beginning that the morning worship would include a full service, excluding a children's message. Bulletins are printed weekly and hymns chosen specific to the desires of the group. Residents share their gifts and talents as well. In the beginning residents asked the worship team to include an offering so they could participate in giving. Funds from these offerings provide bulletins, new hymnals, bibles and supplies for the worship services. A designated fund was set up and through donations padded armchairs were purchased for the chapel.

Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month. The New Covenant pastor consecrates the elements prior to being taken to The Waterford. If requested, communion can be provided to the residents in their apartment.

What a joy the lay speakers receive from the residents that attend each Sunday. Each of us contributes: Sharon Smith, who leads music and shares in giving messages; John Elfers, whose devotion and faithfulness not to mention talent in playing the organ; Bill Gilbert who on fifth Sundays presents messages. Others who present messages include Mark Thompson, Denny Leeds and myself. Each of us remark continuously that we receive the greatest blessings by being with all of the senior residents who attend regularly.

Two of the charter members, Mr. and Mrs. Elvin Kilpatrick became the official ushers; handing out the bulletins and registering each person in attendance. Following the passing of Mr. Kilpatrick, his family donated a much-needed sound system.

Special occasions have been held in the beautiful chapel; four couples married and continued living and worshipping together at The Waterford. Our services have been honored to have retired Methodist ministers, Reverend Greenhaw and Reverend Scott and their wives, who lived there, worshipped with us. Many Sundays they would lead us in prayer and even bring an occasional message. Many veterans are recognized regularly, one of whom is a highly decorated WWII officer, Full Colonel Lee James, who recently celebrated his 105th birthday and rarely misses a Sunday worship service. Holidays are celebrated with special gifts for those who attend as we don't want any of our attendees to be forgotten on special days of the year.

The ministry at The Waterford has grown and has been successful for many reasons:

God has been present from the initial planning.

Special respect and understanding between the management of The Waterford and the lay speakers who lead services.

God is always present during the services and in the chapel.

God's love is sent through the messages presented and hymns sung.

There is deep affection between the lay speakers and the residents.

Many have noted how these services have established and strengthened their bonds with God.

To sum up The Waterford Ministry; God's love continues to bless all in our continued support of the needs of the aging residents. So, thanks to you all for your support, love and prayers as this ministry continues to thrive. October 2019, we will celebrate with a special service for the 20th Anniversary of The Waterford Ministry.

acolyte



2 Samuel 22:29 - O Lord, you are my lamp. The Lord lights up my darkness.

Merriam-Webster defines it this way: 1: one who assists a member of the clergy in a liturgical service by performing minor duties 2: one who attends or assists :follower.

At New Covenant United Methodist Church our Acolytes bring God's light into worship and take it out at the end of the service. Every week we witness this most profound occurrence. The light is brought in and remains with us through our entire worship experience. Then the light is carried out before us as a representation of our duty to carry the light out to the world. How awesome is that!!

Now, I could not speak of this ritual without speaking of the people who serve God in this capacity.

Sandy Childers for the Traditional Service and Laura May for the Non-Traditional Service organize and ensure that our younger members are prepared and ready to carry the Light of God into our worship. The light reflects their purity as children of God while they carefully carry his light in and out with reverence. Behind these young ones, stand Sandy and Laura checking their wicks and reloading when necessary, lighting their wicks and sending them down the aisle; giving them a slight nod at the end of service to remind them when it is time to carry His light out. This is all done quietly, with great care and with little accolades. Thank you Sandy and Laura and the youth/children that serve.....we are very blessed!!

Much goes on in worship to ensure that we experience the presence of God through symbolism that reminds us of His great and awesome power. I encourage you to watch and reflect on Him as those that serve bring in His glorious light!!!

Cindy Wolfe,
Worship Chair

The following was written by Bill Bernardy, a member of another church, and initiator of the Prayer Post. It has been edited for brevity and clarity. Bill is a co-worker of Sharon Smith.

The Story of the Prayer Post



“I received the vision from Jesus. I started to think about how I could make my house a “house of prayer”. The Prayer Post came into my mind. I began to ask, ‘What is it for?’ To show [my neighbors] that I love them... I could let them know I was willing to pray for their needs. The post could be a place where they could drop off their prayer requests.

“Over the next few months, I researched what materials to use in building the post and the full design began to develop. ...it was to be lit at night because we have people walking in our neighborhood at all hours. It would be accessible 24/7.

“The Prayer Post was put in the ground on July 5th, 2014. We had our first note the next day; it simply said “God bless you!!” What a way to start out. About thirty percent of the requests and notes of encouragement are put in during the night. I wake up at 3:00 a.m. to get up and start praying for them.

“You will find that God will give you an enormous love for your neighbors. They will come to you. In fact they will go out of their way to tell you how much they appreciate what you are doing. The secured mailbox is to let them know that you are protecting some of their deepest pains, hurts and concerns.

“Jesus wants you to love your neighbors as much as you love yourself. You will sense He is near and you are in His will. He wants a deeper relation with you. Be ready!”

God bless,
Bill

The Prayer Post is growing in popularity. Some homes have planted a post near their sidewalk. We hear that some churches are getting involved as well. Seems to be catching on.

Checklist: “This ol’ House...”

Our church building is a haven, a sanctuary, our home, and, above all, a sacred place to worship God. All of us share in the responsibility for keeping it clean, safe, efficient, and reflective of the dignity that it deserves. The following tips are offered to help us accomplish this. Most are simply common sense, but it never hurts to have a list to help us remember.

- If you are the last to leave, turn off all lights.
- If you are the last to leave, verify that all doors are closed and locked (this is often overlooked).
- If you adjust any thermostat, please use the up and down arrows but DO NOT use the hold button.
- We have a company doing cleanup weekly, but please pick up after yourselves when possible.
- Let the office know if you see or have a problem with something.

Leaving notes does not always get to the Trustees Committee.

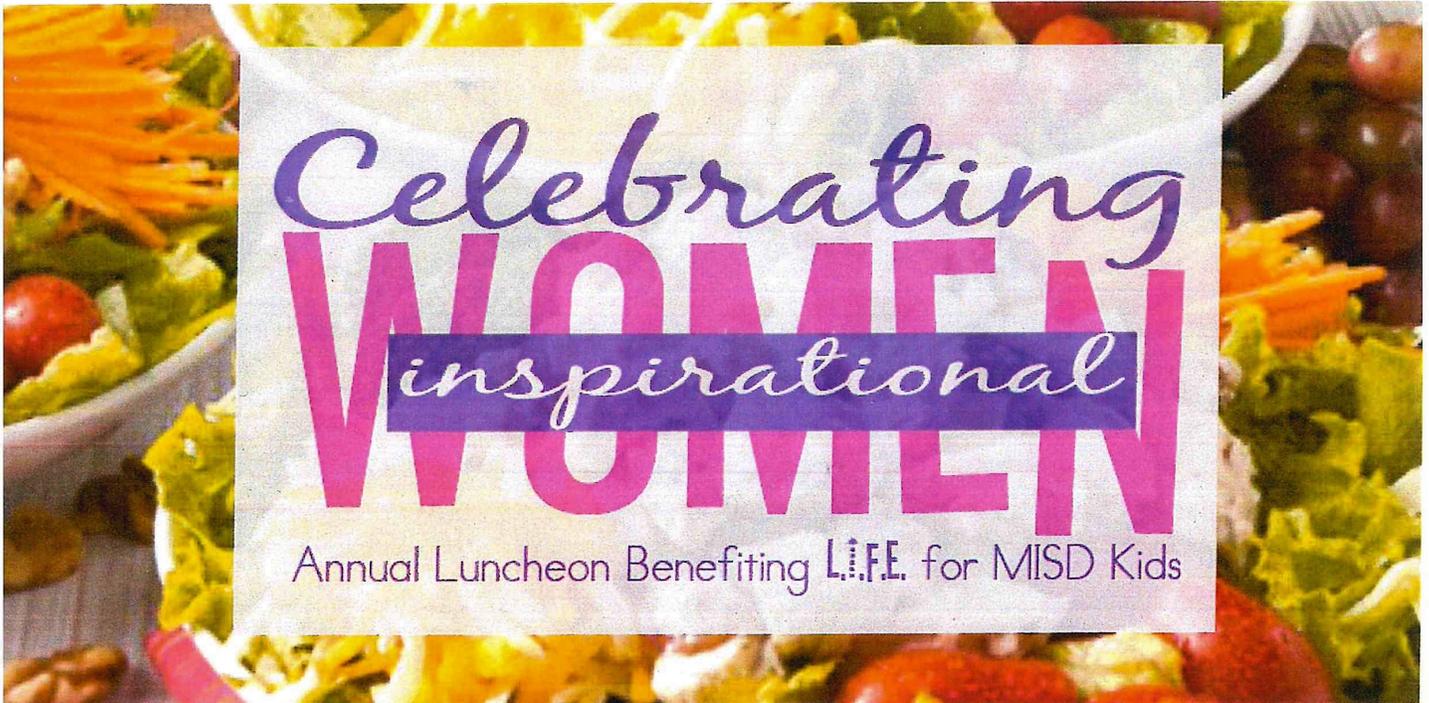
Please mark your calendars:

Our spring cleanup day will be Saturday, April 13th, prior to Palm Sunday.

Our fall cleanup day will be Saturday, November 16th, a week prior to Thanksgiving.

Our building is old and needs continual care. Thanks to everyone for helping maintain our house of God.

*Troy Childers, Chair,
New Covenant Trustees*



Saturday, March 30, 2019 • 11:00 am – 1:00 pm
 A Collaboration of the United Methodist Churches in Mesquite & Sunnyvale

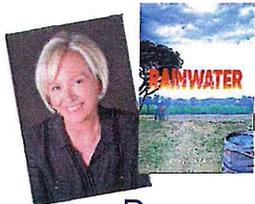
First United Methodist Church
 300 N. Galloway Ave.
 Mesquite, TX 75149

Tickets: \$10
 MINIMUM DONATION

For more info, visit us on Facebook:

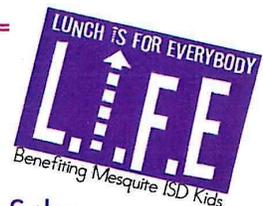


- *Lunch & Dessert
- *Speaker and Q & A
- *Booksigning
- *Doorprizes
- *Silent Auction



The guest Keynote Speaker is Monica Shaw, local author of "The Rainwater Secret". This is the story of her great aunt who became a missionary after the death of her mother in order to teach leper children in Africa.

Proceeds from the luncheon and love offering go toward funding LIFE, a mission of the First United Methodist Church to help fund lunches for economically disadvantaged children in Mesquite.



For Tickets: Valerie Palmer 214-212-4983 or Penny Holliday 972-533-2461

Mike and the New Covenant Audio/Visual Domain

By Jim Handy

It was several years ago when Mike Reed was approached by Cindy Wolfe with a request for help with the audio-visual support for our worship services. We had recently lost our part-time AV coordinator/operator, and Cindy, being Worship Committee Chair, was anxious to not only fill in the gap left by the AV guy's absence but to significantly improve on the previous quality of this important part of worship. The congregation has become accustomed to the luxury of not having to hurriedly look up songs or affirmations in the books, so there was no talk of going back to the old process of hymnal-hunting.

"So Cindy asked if you would be willing to work on media and you said 'Yes'?" I tried to rephrase.

"Not exactly", Mike replied dryly. "It's more like she told me what I was going to do, and I said 'okay'."

Mike is one of seven people who volunteer time to provide consistent and, indeed, highly improved, quality AV enhancement to New Covenant's worship experience. With leadership provided by Jeff Browning, this team of folks – which includes Mr. Reed, Dale Wolfe, Michael Payne, Tori Childers, Keith Willis and John Barham – is responsible for ensuring that: (1) each microphone is working and turned to the proper volume at the proper time, (2) appropriate and correctly-sequenced material is programmed into the AV queue, (3) pages [slides] are turned at the precise moment needed to keep the transitional flow smooth, (4) the contrast of text and background is sufficient to easily read what's on the screen, keeping in mind the adverse effects of sunlight coming through windows at particular times of the day, (5) every sermon is video recorded and uploaded to YouTube, and (6) you learn to ignore the disapproving stares from people in the congregation when you mess up in any of these five areas.

Mike had run the audio portion of church worship for nine years when he and his lovely wife, Sarah (our music director), were attending *Pleasant Mound UMC* from 1994 to 2001. So his learning curve has now focused on the "V" portion of "AV", which he has picked up quickly. He and his comrades are now experts in navigating our AV/media needs.

It's become obvious to me that creating an effective environment for worship includes a large number of ingredients, skillfully managed by a large number of sharp minds and competent hands. Every week.

So the next time you see Mike, or Cindy, or Sarah, or any of the others who help keep our worship services robust and meaningful, pause a moment to thank them, and to thank God for their talents and dedication.

As Reverend Dana might say, **what** these folks do is a result of their skills, while the **why** of their work – the stuff that encourages access for the Holy Spirit – is a product of their hearts.

So-Good Chicken Enchiladas

Provided by Cindy Wolfe

- * 1 can refried beans
- * 10 flour tortillas
(I have used corn too....your preference. It just gives a different flavor.)
- * 1 can cream of chicken soup
- * ½ c sour cream
- * 1 rotisserie chicken, meat pulled off and shredded
(In a pinch, canned chicken breast meat works.)
- * 8 oz shredded cheddar cheese
- * 1-2 can enchilada sauce
(The original recipe called for 1 can. I don't like dry enchiladas...play with it.)
- * Non-stick Spray

Combine soup, sour cream and chicken in a bowl. Spread spoonful of beans, chicken mixture and spoonful of cheese down the center of a tortilla. Roll the tortilla and place seam down in a sprayed 9X13" baking dish. Continue until dish is filled. Pack them tightly. Pour enchilada sauce over top and sprinkle remaining cheese over the top. Bake uncovered @ 350°F for 35 minutes or until heated through.

