



the

New Covenant

Window

April 2021

Keeping you in the know!

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Sharing God through love and service.

A Rule of Life



Don't you just love rules!! Stop laughing. I'm about to get serious. Most of us can agree that, to live together in an ordered society, we need at least some rules. Traffic rules help reduce the number of accidents and most accidents are connected to someone not following a rule. Most agree, that there's a good reason for speed limits. Especially if you prefer to drive slowly...so what you really like is to have a rule for fast drivers to make them do what you want them to do. Those who prefer to drive fast are not as crazy about speed limits. And what about stop lights. Everyone sees the point, right? Except there was that time when the light was red, no cars were in sight, and

Dad needed a bathroom...the rules don't count then...do they? At the risk of turning over a few tables, we're all good with the rules that we agree with...and we're good with enforcing those rules on people who don't agree with us. But if it's a rule that we don't agree with...well...now you're just trying to take away my freedom. Before you get your hackles up, know that we are all in the same boat. We don't like to follow rules imposed on us by anyone else. Ask any teenager!

Fortunately, when I talk about a rule of life, I'm referring to either one you agree to take on or one that you create for yourself. Most of us have (or have had) a rule of some sort no matter what we might call it. Think of those rhythms, the way that you order your life. Life in a monastery follows a rule. Agreeing to the rule is required to live there...sort of like living in a homeowners' association. You agree to pay your share of the general upkeep and follow rules about upkeep and changes to the exterior of your property. A life rule, on the other hand, encompasses all areas of your life. Even to not have a rule in some areas is a rule of sorts. I've read a book or two on the Rule of Benedict and learned that it's not just about a bunch of ridge rules for when or how to pray. It provides an established order for when to eat, to work, to play, to read and study, to worship, to pray that vary by the Christian season of the year. There are even exceptions provided for when it's not possible to follow the rules and how to lovingly bring someone back into community with others after we fall away from the rules.

A year ago, I had a clearly established rule for my life. There were certain tasks that I accomplished on certain days. If I wasn't going to be available on a particular day, I made plans in advance for when, how, or even if a task would still be accomplished. My rule was not just for ordering work that brings me a paycheck. I had a time set aside each day for scripture reading, meditation and prayer. There were times that life got in the way, but they were the exception rather than the rule. I had set days and time off work, sometimes dedicated to myself and sometimes given to my family. There was time set aside for friends and retreats. As a pastor, sometimes boundaries in my own life can seem a bit blurred...but they were still in place. There was a time for work, for play, for family, for self, and most definitely for God. Those boundaries allowed for balance in my life.

A year ago, just like all of you, my life was thrown into a tailspin. Everyone was a bit dazed and confused as if a bomb went off in our midst. And I threw the doors open wide. As a full-time staff person, so did Barbara. At what felt like warp-speed, every moment of our lives became consumed with how to be church right now. Every moment was consumed with questions about how can we bring down everyone's anxiety; how to create a space for worship; how can we make it better; how can we meet with more than one other person on a phone call; how can we have a bible study; how do we help everyone manage the stress;

Continued on next page....

A Rule of Life (cont.)

how do we get checks printed...and then signed; what are the advantages and disadvantages of live streaming platforms and should we switch; how do we make better use of Zoom; how can we pivot on a dime; how do we prepare for in person that will really be both/and worship; how can we do it all without anyone noticing our stress? And neither one of us would choose to have done a thing differently.

You may not know that in the last few months I began a series of courses that will lead to a UMC certification in spiritual formation. As I was finishing up the first course, the class was asked to respond to questions about a Rule of Life. How did we feel about living by one? Would we be willing to create and abide by one? That sort of thing. That's when it hit me. I'm not living by my own Rule. Not at all. None of it. It's totally gone. Now I do still read, study, and pray. But it has become more a part of my work/job than imbedded in my way of life. There is very little order left. Boundaries have become so blurry that I can't find some of them. And the very next day, Barbara started talking to me about how her life is in the exact same place. So she and I have made a commitment to one another and I'm sharing it with all of you.

Beginning Easter morning, Barbara and I will each begin again to live through our own Rule of Life. The first rule is that it will evolve over time and change to meet the continuing changes in our world. But it will be intentional. We are working on how we will both set a boundary at home that states: I'm at the office or I'm at home. We have not taken regular days off in a year. Beginning Easter Sunday, we will both be off on Fridays and Saturdays. If you have an emergency, call me. Barbara will not be answering her phone and neither of us will be responding to email until Sunday or Monday. Barbara's office hours (Monday through Thursday) will be 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. We both usually eat at our desks, so call away. And Sundays will be pretty much all day... got to love meetings! My own hours will be more flexible since I work some evenings. However, Barbara is off the clock at 4:00 p.m. Of course, I remain available for emergencies any time day or night.

We will also be setting boundaries to allow for our spiritual lives. Please don't call me (except for emergencies) before 10:00 a.m. because I will be spending the morning alone with God. And Barbara would like to return to Bible study. This means that NO work related questions will be allowed. None of us want to focus on the business of the church during our private or collective God time. I suspect this will be good for all of us. Bible study is just that. A phone call during office hours will take care of business. I don't know about you, but I would really love it if Barbara was able to attend to some of her own spiritual care with us rather than elsewhere. This is one reason it is typically so difficult for church employees to find a spiritual home where they work. To make space for study to be study, worship to be worship, etc. would be a healthy rule for all of us.

As Barbara and I each go about establishing our own Rule of Life, a support network will begin for all of our staff to encourage and build one another up in our spiritual journeys and in maintaining our own Rules. We'll call it a staff meeting. What a concept for church staff meetings! And as a staff, we will be encouraging all of you to join us. We've all been thrown off balance over the last year. It's time to establish and re-establish the rhythms and patterns that create a Rule for our lives...making room to eat, to work, to play, to read and study, to worship, to pray...to live life as God intended us to live.

May the peace of Christ be yours,

Pastor Dana

NCUMC Bunny Trail

Drive-Thru Easter Event

March 27, 2021
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Similar to Trunk or Treat we will be lining up in the parking lot to play games with the kiddos and hand out prizes. There will be a photo op at the end of the trail as well where kiddos will get a bag filled with fun Easter games and candy filled eggs.



APRIL
BIRTHDAYS

13	Molly May	14	Linda Dunn
20	Hannah Browning	20	Joseph Browning
20	Carol Duke	29	Kathy Rogers
30	David Montemayor		





New Covenant UMC Finance Moment		
February Income:	\$14,344.28	(↓ 11.5% vs. 2020)
February Expenses:	\$19,996.21	(\$877.32 under budget)
Difference:	\$ 5,651.93	
Income Total 2021 YTD:	\$37,874.52	(↑ 11% vs. 2020)
Apportionments Paid To Date 2021:	\$ 4,570.25	\$17,643.00 Total Due \$13,072.75 Outstanding

Thank you for your continued faithfulness to our church.

We were challenged as we planned music for Holy Week. Due to the flooding we had to quickly work out our recording situation. We appreciate St. Stephens willingness to allow us in their space but we discovered that our schedules would not work in the long run. With the help of Cathy Wheeler, Jeff Browning and Barbara Reed we were able to set up our fellowship hall to be a comfortable recording space. All music has been recorded and is ready to present for every service through Good Friday. All of our musicians presented beautiful specials and Dana and Barbara have worked their magic to include them in our worship.



Our next adventure is to complete Easter and prepare for the season following. God is good, the music continues.



Facebook Live
YouTube Live
www.newcovenantumc.com

««April 1st

April 2nd»»

7:00 pm



Austin Street

Kathy Rogers will purchase 10 gallons of milk and collect muffins for Austin Street on Saturday, March 27th. St. Stephen UMC will provide cereal, fruit, and other items.

Ewing House

Kathleen Skelton and Linda Easton took pizza, salad, cakes, and tea to Ewing House on March 17.



Project Transformation

I will be attending a virtual meeting on Tuesday, March 23rd, to find out how the summer program will proceed. There will be a virtual “luncheon” program on April 16 at noon accompanied by a week-long auction, if anyone is interested.

Director of Special Programs, Erica Lawless, of Sunnyvale ISD acknowledged New Covenant’s contributions with a thank you note. I am waiting to hear after spring break if there were any additional items that are particularly needed for the spring.

Eagle Scout Jeremiah Townsend picked a full box of hygiene and other items and donations for Women in Need emergency domestic abuse shelter on March 15th.



I received an envelope from New Covenant United Methodist Church with a very generous supply of gift cards. We are so thankful for this generous gift and we are excited to provide these gift cards to our families in need. Please tell your church family how appreciative we are of this generous gift.

Erica Lawless
Director of Special Programs
Sunnyvale ISD



Palm Sunday

Recorded Palm Sunday processional with JAM group.

Easter

Drive-through Easter event scheduled for March 27th. 5 cars have signed up to participate so far.

Similar to Trunk or Treat we will be lining up in the parking lot to play games with the kiddos and hand out prizes. There will be a photo op at the end of the trail as well where kiddos will get a bag filled with fun Easter games and candy filled eggs.

VBS

VBS tentatively scheduled for July 28 – 31.

More details to come closer to the summer.

Mission Trip

Staycation style mission trip scheduled for the second or third week in June, that could include doing projects for members of the congregation.

Graduation

Naomi & Philip are our graduates this year. Once church construction has been completed, there will be cards left there for people to sign. Along with one for Mark Young since he didn't get one last year.

- * Moving along with remodel. It's an ongoing challenge to get everything done, but it is going well.
- * Trustee's has voted to replace the roof, wood and repaint the soffit for the breezeway walkway, which was quoted at \$5,500.
- * Trustee's also voted to have 2 offices constructed on either side of the back part of the sanctuary for a Music Ministry Office and an A/V room.
- * Finance voted to release \$2,500 of John Barham's memorial fund to Trustee's to purchase (2) 75-inch TVs, mounting equipment, cables, and installation, that will be placed on either side of the sanctuary to improve worship services.





In the Tomb Prayer Chain

*Holy Saturday is the day in the Christian liturgical calendar that celebrates the 40-hour-long vigil that the followers of Jesus Christ held after his death and burial on Good Friday and before his resurrection on Easter Sunday. Holy Saturday is the last day of Lent and of Holy Week, and the third day of the Easter Triduum, the three high holidays before Easter, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.*¹

This season following our Tenebrae service on Friday, April 2nd through Easter Sunday at 6:00 AM, we will hold a prayer vigil. This prayer vigil will take us through that dark time that is Holy Saturday.

We will form a continual chain of prayer. Each person praying for one hour and then passing the baton, per se, to the next member on the list by calling them when their hour begins. We will pray from home or wherever we are.

Life this past year has been full of pain and suffering for many, we have been isolated and separated from loved ones. I do not remember a more unsettling time in my life than now. And although we will not be together physically, this is an opportunity to join as one body in prayer for God's will, plan, and purpose for New Covenant UMC.

Please consider what hour you would like to serve in prayer. Barbara has created a sign up at the following link <https://signup.com/go/bVLMOYu>. If you are unable to reach that link, please call and specify what time you would like. AND although there are 35 spots on our list, that does not restrict us to 35 participants. I would love to see more than one name an hour.....wouldn't that be grand!! So, feel free to invite friends and family members to join us. God loves to hear from His children.

Cindy Wolfe and The Pray It Forward Team

Maytag9713@sbcglobal.net

214-315-9992

¹ <https://www.thoughtco.com/holy-saturday-541563>

CARROT PINEAPPLE CAKE

From Allrecipes.com

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups white sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups shredded carrots
- 1 cup flaked coconut
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 (8 ounce) can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter, softened
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar

Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease and flour a 9x13 inch pan.
- Mix flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt and cinnamon. Make a well in the center and add sugar, oil, eggs and vanilla. Mix with wooden spoon until smooth. Stir in carrots, coconut, walnuts and pineapple.
- Pour into 9x13 inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees for about 45 minutes. Don't panic, the center will sink a little. Allow to cool.
- To make the frosting: Cream the butter and cream cheese until smooth. Add the confectioners sugar and beat until creamy. Decorate as desired.

