

HARVESTING THE FRUIT



SPIRITUAL
FORMATION
FALL 2018

covenantpcusa.org



And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes from Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1: 9-11

Dear Friends,

As I write this, my garden seems to have burst forth in extravagant glory. It is spending itself, using every molecule of sunlight and raindrop to become. I harvest basil and zinnias, thyme and nasturtium – and peace. Sitting within this sensory overload of wonder, of scent, of something totally beyond my control, I harvest the fruits of the Spirit. Gentleness suffuses my soul. Kindness begins to be replenished. Joy bubbles up from my deepest places. Love knows no bounds.

For me, sitting in this place is a spiritual discipline. It is a practice that nourishes my soul and reminds me of who and whose I am. And, oh, the harvest is good.

You will find that this little booklet is packed full of other good things to nourish our souls and that participating in them will lead to rich harvests of grace and deepening faith.

You and I harvest the fruits of our life in God on a regular basis – even while we are still turning up soil and hunting for seeds. (Maybe even clearing brambles and some rocky patches.) Experience has taught us. Broken places have grown back stronger. We've read a few things and seriously listened to some wise people. Prayer has removed obstacles and increased the flow of the triune God in and through us. We are growing in faith and love. Maybe even in humility and wisdom.

Taste and see that the fruit of the LORD is good, for the Living God is bringing us all the way alive.

Yours in all this wonder,
Katie Kinnison, Associate Pastor for Spiritual Formation

Gratitude Practices

Only with thankful hearts can we truly harvest the fruit of our lives. In Brene Brown's research about shame-resistant, whole-hearted people, she found that *practicing gratitude*, not merely being grateful, is absolutely essential. This fits with the wisdom of spiritual teachers throughout the ages: ***we practice.***

So here are a few ideas: (and check out gratefulness.org for more)

1. Let "Thank you, God" be the first words you speak in the morning.
2. As you sip your morning coffee or tea, be still and open your heart to what is around you. Say thank you. Name the wonder.
3. Begin a gratitude journal and explore the good things in your life.
4. Do some art work – collage, sketching, poems – around the theme of gratitude.
5. Write a card each week to a person for whom you are thankful. Be specific in explaining to this person why you are so grateful for him or her.
6. When you pick up your child from school ask, "What is one thing today for which you are grateful?" You say one too.
7. At one meal each day, share with one another three things for which you are grateful.
8. Every day say to someone, "I really appreciate the way you...." or "I love it when you..." or "It makes me so happy that you...."
9. Take a fast from complaining. (You can start with 10 minutes. ☺)
10. Fall asleep counting the wondrous gifts of your life, anything good, all the beauty. Be amazed.

Deepening Your Worship Experience

Sunday Mornings

Have you ever considered doing some things to prepare yourself for worship?

I know. Sometimes the best we can do is race to get here. We have to wake up and get our acts together. Shoes have to be found. Life can be hard.

But maybe you could start preparing for worship before Sunday morning. Maybe on Tuesday or Thursday when you open up that email about the sermon that will be coming your way, maybe then you could start to prepare.

You could...read the scripture listed. Maybe even figure out its context.

You could...think about what you would preach.

You could...say a prayer for the preacher.

You could...pray that you will stay open to the word of the Living God.

You could...be expectant.

If you are able on Sunday morning, maybe you could spend a few minutes in silence: breathing deeply, opening up that space around your heart, letting your mind let go of all those monkeys racing around in there. (Metaphoric monkeys.)

Remind yourself to show up, to let go of anything in the way, to be here for God and for the rest of us.

Men's Spirituality Group

**Alternate Sundays, beginning September 9th
(Check the bulletin to be sure of the dates)**

9:30am in Room 120

The first meeting of this group will be a discussion of a paper called "Environmentalism and Ecology." Who knows what will happen after that? The contact person to get a copy of the article and more information is Bob Tannehill.

Agora – an open space used for public assembly (formerly, The Forum)

September 9

Our Youth: Ghost Ranch & More

Led by Erin Wise and Covenant Youth

9:45am, coffee and doughnuts in the Lounge. Program at 10:00am.

Come hear the youth discuss their trip to Ghost Ranch. They'll share photos and stories, and they will discuss the impact this trip made on their lives. We'll also talk about further plans for youth trips and events, and dream about what we want the future of our youth ministry to look like. Come celebrate where we have been and share your ideas for where we are heading.

October 14, 21 and 28

Parker Palmer's *On the Brink of Everything*

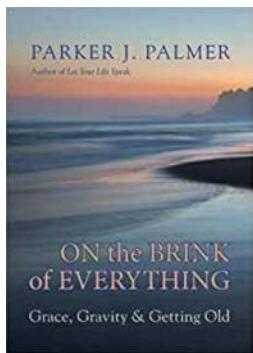
9:45 am in the Lounge

Led by Jim Mehler

"The laws of nature that dictate sundown dictate our demise. But how we travel the arc toward the sunset of our lives is ours to choose: will it be denial, defiance, or collaboration."

Looking back on eight decades of his life, Palmer writes about cultivating a vital inner and outer life, finding meaning in suffering and joy, and forming friendships across the generations.

Books are available near the welcome table & on the cart for \$15.



The After Party

12:15pm Lunch. 12:30pm Learning.

If you loved Bible & Lunch, you'll love the sequel. Worship at Covenant is rich and engaging and something you never want to miss. But the fun and the fellowship does not have to end when that is over. Join us for *The After Party*: food and good teaching and conversation. This year we are doing many smaller series that cover a variety of topics. These come from requests made by last year's folks. All are welcome. Come when you can.

You May Also Be Interested In...: Alternative Gospels, the Gnostics and What Didn't Make the Cut

September 9, 16, 23 and 30

Led by Katie Kinnison

We will begin with a brief discussion of canonization and what is not in our Protestant bibles. Then we will wonder what we might learn from ideas left outside orthodox Christianity that may yet tell us something about Jesus and the Way of Love.

September 9	<i>What the Gnostics Knew</i>
September 16	<i>The Gospel of Thomas</i>
September 23	<i>The Gospel of Judas</i>
September 30	<i>The Gospel of Mary Magdalene</i>

Buddhism 101: A Quick Peek

October 7, 14

Led by Katie Kinnison

Designed to complement reading *The Book of Joy* by the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, this is a quick introduction to the fundamentals of Buddhism. We will also pause to consider how learning about other faith traditions may deepen our engagement with our own.

Field Trip!

The Spaghetti Warehouse & The Jubilee Museum

Sunday, October 21

Stay tuned for more details

Save the date and join us for lunch together and then a trip to The Jubilee Museum on Grubb Street in Franklinton. Check out their website at jubileemuseum.org and then come with us to see the Lego Vatican and more. Admission is \$10.00; \$5.00 for children, students and senior citizens. Email Katie or call the church to RSVP and let us know if you want a ride.

Sermon Talk-Backs

October 28 and November 25

Led by Tracy Keenan

These sermon themes are particularly chosen for talk-backs because they are “hot topics.” We come to these issues with strong values and the best of intentions, even we don’t agree on solutions. Join us for some deep listening and rich conversation.

The Lost Gospel of Q: The Original Sayings of Jesus

November 4, 11, 18

Led by David Connolly

This series is an exploration of a book by Marcus Borg. His friend John Dominic Crossan said of it, “*Read carefully this manifesto of the kingdom of God.*” Getting down to the bones of Jesus’s teaching, this collection of sayings was unearthed by scholarship rather than archeology. Over the course of some 150 years, bible scholars surmised the existence of a book of Jesus quotes that they believe was used to compose the gospels of *Matthew* and *Luke*. This is an attempt to reproduce that book. Borg calls it “a guidebook to the land of the soul” and goes on to write, “It provides simple advice on getting along in the world. There are instructions on the everyday and the eternal.”

Bible Study at Covenant

Sunday Evenings

6:30pm in Room 120

1, 2 Kings: led by Dick Campbell

Come join our small group as we read the Bible together. Our mission is to discern what the bible is saying to the people of God then and now. For more information, contact Lisa Wallace: lrw002000@yahoo.com.

Wednesday Afternoons

1:00pm in Room 120

1, 2 Samuel: led by Katie Kinnison

“*We want a king!*” This is the cry of the Hebrew people as they begin their lives under the rule of a human king. We will read about the struggles of Saul, Samuel and David, and about those of the people of Israel. We will make connections with our own lives, as we struggle to be faithful to the Living God. It is true that we profess that Jesus Christ is Lord, but are there some other “lords” competing for our allegiance? Even perhaps winning that allegiance from time to time?

Covenant Presbyterian Women’s Circles

The 2018-2019 Horizon Bible Study

God’s Promise – I Am With You

Elizabeth Circle: 1st Tuesday of the Month, 7pm

Eunice-Lydia Circle: 1st Wednesday of the Month, 9:15am

Miriam Circle: 1st Thursday of the Month, 9:30am

Naomi Circle: 1st Thursday of the Month, 7pm in Room 120

Through nine lessons, we will discover how God’s promise speaks to our circumstances, as individuals and as community. We will be encouraged to know of God’s presence with us wherever we find ourselves on this life’s journey – through uncertainty and discouragement; during trials and times of powerlessness; when we seek God’s guidance and, yes, during our everyday lives.

The Artist's Way

a plan to get your creative juju going

Select Mondays, Beginning September 10th

1:00pm in the Lounge

Led by Katie Kinnison

The Artist's Way is a book by Julia Cameron, but more than that, it is an invitation to open up to possibilities of which you may have only dreamt. With morning pages, artist dates, and exercises, the joy and deep satisfaction of creating can be yours. And there's more. You will have a community of support and encouragement. Books are available on the book carts in the hallway, and they are \$12.

September 10 **An Introduction**

September 17 **How Did the First Week Go?
(and beginning Week 2)**

October 8 **Beginning Week 5**

October 22 **Beginning Week 7**

November 5 **Beginning Week 9**

November 19 **Beginning Week 11**

December 3 **We Did It!
Artist's Way Potluck and Celebration**

Spiritual Cinema

**Third Monday of the Month
6:30-9:30 pm in the Lounge**

Lion

September 17

A five-year-old Indian boy gets lost on the streets of Calcutta, thousands of kilometers from home. Twenty-five years later he sets out to find his lost family.

More Than a Game

October 15

This documentary follows NBA superstar LeBron James and four of his talented teammates through the trials and tribulations of high school basketball in Ohio and James' journey to fame.

The Milagro Beanfield War

November 19

The story of one man's struggle as he defends his small beanfield and his community against much larger business and state political interests.

Movies are subtitled so no dialogue is missed.

Contact Beth Askue, 614-284-1767

or Susan Imel, 614-262- 7444
for more information.

Tuesday/Wednesday Spiritual Formation

Parenting Together

Occasional Tuesday Nights

5:30-7:00pm with Dinner & Childcare Provided

Led by Katie Kinnison and Erin Wise. Please RSVP to Katie.

September 25 *What About Communion?*

Join us for a conversation about how we understand this sacrament. We'll explore how we can help our children engage in this Lord's Supper and what they are learning about it during Treasure Finders (Sunday School). All this in preparation for World Communion Sunday on October 7th.

October 9, 16, 23 *Save These Dates*

Do you have thoughts about what we might discuss? We invite you to help shape our conversations. Contact either one of us and share what you thinking.

Spiritual Practices That May Save Your Life

Wednesdays: September 19 (in the sanctuary)

September 26 (in the Lounge)

7:00pm. Led by Katie Kinnison

In *An Altar in This Place*, Barbara Brown Taylor asks this question: *What is saving your life right now?* For these two weeks Katie is leading a workshop about practices she has found to be life-saving. They include Centering Prayer, Walking the Labyrinth, Darts of Longing Love, Body Check-Ins, The Welcoming Prayer, Mindful Breathing, Morning Pages and more.

Story Slam

led by Tracy Keenan

Wednesday, October 3

Do you ever listen to the *Moth Radio Hour* on Public Radio? Ordinary people like you and me get up in front of a crowd and share a story about their lives based on a general theme. Covenant is having our own *Story Slam* off site at a local restaurant (TBD). Each story needs to be a true story from your own life as you remember it, and no longer than 7 minutes. Come with a story, to hear some stories, to enjoy your people! Watch for the location in the bulletin and weekly emails. Contact Tracy for more information.

The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World

By His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Wednesdays, October 10, 17, 24 at 7:00pm in the Lounge

Led by Katie Kinnison

Yes, you remember correctly: some of us read this book and talked about it one night this summer. Everyone there wanted more: more conversation, more opportunity to explore and to revel in these wonderful ideas and practices. These two extraordinary spiritual teachers met together for a week to discuss one question: ***how do we find joy in life's inevitable suffering?*** This book is full of wisdom, stories, and daily practices that can help us all move deeper into joy. Books are available on the Welcome Table and Book Cart.

Celebrating the Dead

Tuesday, October 30

7:00pm, In the Lounge

Led by Katie Kinnison

All Hallow's Eve, All Saints, Day of the Dead – these days we turn our thoughts to those who have gone before us. What are they about? How did they come to be? What might they have to teach us about living? Come learn.

Death Café

Wednesday, November 7

7pm in the Lounge

Some tea and treats and conversation. We dare to speak our stories, our questions, our hopes and fears about death. Let's see where this takes us.

Walking in the Dark

Tuesdays, November 13, 20, 27

7pm in the Lounge

Led by Tracy Keenan

This is loosely based on Barbara Brown Taylor's book, *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, which is about learning to navigate even when we don't have the answers, which is actually much of the time. "Darkness" is such a loaded word, but God's presence is sometimes described as being a kind of luminous darkness as experienced by the Israelites at the giving of the commandments, and by many of our ancestors who have gone before us through the valleys of the shadow.

Centering Prayer

Fridays, 8:15am in the Lounge

You cannot fail at this – except fail to show up. The idea is to allow yourself to be present with the Holy One, to let go of all that gets in the way of our openness to God’s presence within us. This is a kind of meditation or contemplative prayer.

The metaphor Thomas Keating uses to describe what we do is this: imagine you are a diver on the bottom of a river bed, watching boats go by over your head. The boats are your thoughts. Noticing them is not an issue. But when you find that you have swum up and climbed into a boat and are sailing down the river – when you find yourself planning your day or rehearsing a conversation from the day before – *ever so gently* say your sacred word and fall over the side of the boat and float back down to the bottom.

The method is this. Sit with an erect spine in a comfortable position, feet flat on the floor. The idea will be to not move for the twenty minutes of silence.

Choose a sacred word – *God, Jesus, Spirit, Yes, Love* – which will serve as a touchstone back to letting go of all that is not simple openness.

Most people close their eyes. When we do this prayer practice together, we use a cd with a couple of minutes of cello music before and after the silence. Take some deep breaths as the music begins, maybe say a prayer or get the kinks out of your neck and shoulders during this part. Settle your body.

When the silence begins, let go. Let go of any planning or figuring out or naming of things. Just be. When we are able to do this, it is immense spiritual rest, a surrendering into the arms of the Holy One. Sometimes the prayer time seems like nothing but thinking and saying your word, thinking and saying your word.... Then you have had an aerobic workout at surrendering yourself to the Living God. How bad is that? We are practicing *kenosis*, or “letting go.”

The recommended method is to do this practice for twenty minutes twice a day. If you have any questions, read Thomas Keating’s *Open Heart, Open Mind* -- or see Katie Kinnison for more information on this and other contemplative prayer practices.

Women's Theology

1st and 3rd Fridays

9:30 – 11:30am in Room 120

On September 7th this group will begin discussing *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor. The book is about concrete ways to discover the sacred in all we do. For more information, contact Louise Davidson or Susan Imel.

And You Know There's More

For this booklet to be complete, we would have to discuss things like going to CATCH Court on the first Thursday of the month to serve lunch when what really happens is that we learn about unconditional love and having each other's backs and telling the truth of our lives with courage because we know we will be loved. We would have to tell you everything you can learn about really loving people who may seem to be quite different from you and how you can practice that at HM3. We would have to discuss all the wonderful books and dvds in our library and go on and on about how much you could be nourished (and intrigued) by reading them. We would probably need to mention how talking to three year olds in Treasure Finders (Sunday School) would be sure to teach you a thing or two and that holding a baby in the nursery is an exercise in awe. Clearly, there is not enough space, and you would have to stop reading such a booklet at some point.

So you will have to explore more ways to gather the harvest and nourish your soul on your own. And with this glorious community. And in the world. Wherever you find yourself, as they say.

Check out our website at covenantpcusa.org. Read the bulletin and your emails. Invite friends to things that interest you. Think about coming to a Spiritual Development and Adult Learning meeting and shaping what we do here. Contact elder Tori Vazquez, the chairperson of the commission, or Todd Cameron, elder.

And let the pastors know what else you would like to learn and explore:

Tracy Keenan at tracykeenan@covenantpcusa.org

Katie Kinnison at katherinekinnison@covenantpcusa.org

Jim Mehler at jimmehler@covenantpcusa.org

Calendar of Spiritual Formation at Covenant

Sunday, September 2 – Saturday, September 8

Wednesday 1:00pm *We Want a King*: 1 Samuel begins, Room 120
Friday 8:15am Centering Prayer in the Lounge
9:30am Women's Theology: *An Altar in the World*

Sunday, September 9 – Saturday, September 15

Sunday 9:30am Men's Spirituality in Rm 120
9:45 coffee and doughnuts in the Lounge
10:00am Agora: Our Youth & Ghost Ranch
The After Party Begins: The Gnostics and More. In the Lounge. 12:15 Fill your plate. 12:30-1:30 Class.
6:30pm Bible Study in Room 120: Kings

Monday 1:00pm *The Artist's Way* in the Lounge
Wednesday 1:00pm Bible Study: 1 Samuel in Rm 120
Friday 8:15am Centering Prayer in the Lounge

Sunday, September 16 – Saturday, September 22

Sunday The After Party: *The Gospel of Thomas*. In the Lounge. 12:15 Fill your plate. 12:30-1:30 Class.
6:30pm Bible Study in Room 120: Kings

Monday 1:00pm *The Artist's Way* in the Lounge
6:30pm Spiritual Cinema: Lion

Wednesday 1:00pm Bible Study: 1 Samuel in Rm 120
7:00pm *Spiritual Practices That May Save Your Life*. Meet in the Sanctuary

Friday 8:15am Centering Prayer in the Lounge
9:30 am Women's Theology in Rm 120

Sunday, September 23 – Saturday, September 29

Sunday 9:30am Men's Spirituality in Rm 120
The After Party: *The Gospel of Jude*. In the Lounge. 12:15 Fill your plate. 12:30-1:30 Class.
6:30pm Bible Study in Room 120: Kings

Tuesday 5:30pm Parenting Together in the Lounge. *What About Communion?*

Wednesday 1:00pm Bible Study: 1 Samuel in Rm 120
7:00pm *Spiritual Practices That May Save Your Life*. In the Lounge

Friday 8:15am Centering Prayer in the Lounge

Sunday, September 30 – Saturday, October 6

Sunday The After Party: *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*. In the Lounge. 12:15 Fill your plate. 12:30-1:30 Class.
6:30pm Bible Study in Room 120: Kings

Wednesday No Bible Study
7:00pm *Story Slam* – off site. Go on the website for details

Friday 8:15am Centering Prayer in the Lounge
9:30am Women's Theologians

Sunday, October 7 – Saturday, October 13

Sunday **Communion Sunday: One 10:00am worship**
The After Party: *Buddhism 101*. In the Lounge. Class will begin after the Potluck.
6:30pm Bible Study in Room 120: Kings

Monday 1:00pm *The Artist's Way* in the Lounge
Tuesday 5:30pm *Parenting Together*

Wednesday 1:00pm Bible Study: 1 Samuel in Rm 120
7:00pm *The Book of Joy*

Friday 8:15am Centering Prayer in the Lounge

Sunday, October 14 – Saturday, October 20

Sunday	The After Party: <i>Buddhism 101</i> . In the Lounge. 12:15 Eat. 12:30 Class.
	6:30pm Bible Study in Room 120: Kings
Monday	6:30pm Spiritual Cinema: <i>More Than a Game</i>
Tuesday	5:30pm <i>Parenting Together</i> in the Lounge
Wednesday	1:00pm Bible Study: 1 Samuel in Rm 120
	7:00pm <i>The Book of Joy</i>
Friday	8:15am Centering Prayer in the Lounge
	9:30 Women's Theologians

Sunday, October 21 – Saturday, October 27

Sunday	Field Trip: Spaghetti Warehouse & The Jubilee Museum. Leave about 12:15pm
	6:30pm Bible Study in Room 120: Kings
Monday	1:00pm <i>The Artist's Way</i> in the Lounge
Tuesday	5:30pm Parenting Together in the Lounge
Wednesday	1:00pm Bible Study: 1 Samuel in Rm 120
	7:00pm <i>The Book of Joy</i>
Friday	8:15am Centering Prayer in the Lounge

Sunday, October 28 – Saturday, November 2

Sunday	The After Party: <i>Sermon Talk-Back</i> . In the Lounge. 12:15 Fill your plate. 12:30-1:30 Class.
	6:30pm Bible Study in Room 120: Kings
Tuesday	7:00pm <i>Celebrating the Dead</i> in the Lounge
Wednesday	1:00pm Bible Study: 1 Samuel in Rm 120
Friday	8:15am Centering Prayer in the Lounge

Sunday, November 4 – Saturday, November 10

Sunday	The After Party: <i>The Lost Gospel</i> Q. In the Lounge. 12:15 Fill your plate. 12:30-1:30 Class.
	6:30pm Bible Study in Room 120: Kings
Monday	1:00pm <i>The Artist's Way</i> in the Lounge
Wednesday	1:00pm Bible Study: 1 Samuel in Rm 120
	7:00pm <i>Death Cafe</i>
Friday	8:15am Centering Prayer in the Lounge
	9:30am Women's Theologians

Sunday, November 11 – Saturday, November 17

Sunday	The After Party: <i>The Lost Gospel</i> Q. In the Lounge. 12:15 Fill your plate. 12:30-1:30 Class.
	6:30pm Bible Study in Room 120: Kings
Tuesday	7:00pm <i>Walking in the Dark</i>
Wednesday	1:00pm Bible Study: 1 Samuel in Rm 120
Friday	8:15am Centering Prayer in the Lounge
	9:30am Women's Theologians

Sunday, November 18 – Saturday, November 24

Sunday	The After Party: <i>The Lost Gospel</i> Q. In the Lounge. 12:15 Fill your plate. 12:30-1:30 Class.
	6:30pm Bible Study in Room 120: Kings
Monday	1:00pm <i>The Artist's Way</i> in the Lounge
	6:30pm Spiritual Cinema: <i>The Milagro Beanfield War</i>
Tuesday	7:00pm <i>Walking in the Dark</i>
Wednesday	1:00pm Bible Study: 1 Samuel in Rm 120
Friday	8:15am Centering Prayer in the Lounge

Sunday, November 25 – Saturday, December 2

Sunday	The After Party: <i>Sermon Talk-Back</i> . In the Lounge. 12:15 Fill your plate. 12:30-1:30 Class.
	6:30pm Bible Study in Room 120: Kings
Tuesday	7:00pm <i>Walking in the Dark</i>
Wednesday	No Bible Study – Thanksgiving Break

Monday, December 3 1:00pm *The Artist's Way* Celebration