



Large umbrellas were added to the Gryphon Garden this week.

QUID NOVI

THE NEWSLETTER OF NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

SEPTEMBER 14, 2020
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MAJORIS



TURNING 30: FOUR KEYS TO A SUPERIOR EDUCATION

by John Heaton, Headmaster

Exactly 30 years ago this month, 16 students had enrolled in the newest school in Central Virginia. It was called New Covenant, and for that first month the children were busy with lots of field trips because the curriculum that had been ordered late in the summer had not yet been delivered. The children gathered in a one-room school house, a small church, provided to them by the Reformed Episcopal Church. No one could have imagined what the next 30 years would bring.

The student body of 16 jumped to 65 the next year requiring a relocation to a larger space. The next year it jumped again, and again the year after that. By the time five years had elapsed, the numbers were nearing 150, and the school had moved three times. What was driving the interest? The same thing that continues to drive the interest 30 years later.

New Covenant was founded to recover and maintain a distinctive curriculum in the classical,

Christian tradition. It was a new school founded on a very old idea. The program of instruction was built around grammar, logic, classical rhetoric, Latin, mathematics, and the arts and sciences. There was much more to it, of course, but these distinctives quickly separated New Covenant from other schools, not only by its faith tradition, but as a school that was serious about academics.

What makes classical, Christian education unique? We teach students not just what to know, but how to think. Young children enjoy acquiring facts for their own sake, but soon children want to know the “why?” and the “how?” A classical education indulges such questions and makes the pursuit of knowledge mandatory. There are four keys to achieving a superior education.

First, there is the mode of direct teaching or lecture. Teachers use this mode when students are introduced to new information they have not encountered before. Classrooms are teacher-

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WHAT'S NEW?



A generous gift from a grandparent, Mrs. Sandra van Burk, provided funds for the renovation of the faculty lounge this summer. The work was completed just as school began and included relocation of the refrigerator and the faculty mailboxes. Simple changes in the floor plan enabled the school to use the space more efficiently, providing seating capacity for about 15 persons at a time. At peak loads we sometimes have a dozen faculty or staff members present. The faculty lounge is also connected to a patio where sunshades were installed last spring, making this space more accessible during warmer months.

FACULTY LOUNGE RENOVATION

THINK. LEARN. LOVE. LIVE.

H O N O R A R I A

EXPLORING THE LIMITS *by Stacey Hester, Guidance Counselor*

Our School of Rhetoric students have many opportunities to explore their interests both here at school and in their local communities. During their junior semester amidst turbulent times, current seniors **Titus Brenning** and **Tessa Hackenbracht** settled into NASA's Virginia Aerospace Science and Technology Scholars program (VAST), a course designed to meet international STEM standards and stretch students' content expertise and collaborative leadership skills.

Both Titus and Tessa completed their coursework with excellence and exhibited the sturdy work ethic, technical expertise, and collaborative skill required to receive an honorary invitation to the VASTS summer intensive. Working alongside 11 other team members and mentored by

seasoned scientists, students planned and executed a simulated mission to Mars.

As the Risk and Safety Analyst on the Mission Integration Team, Tessa reflects that "the School of Rhetoric Harkness seminars prepared me for this role. I had to listen to my teammates and understand their ideas so that I could effectively communicate and advance our team's mission. The most challenging parts were the deadlines—the limitations of time." As Laboratory Designer, Titus reflects that his "research for senior thesis most contributed" to his team's mission.

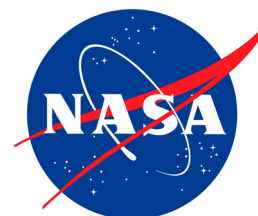
On behalf of faculty and staff, congratulations, Titus and Tessa, on your accomplishments in VASTS! We look forward to watching the Lord continue to use your gifts for His glory.



**Titus
Brenning**



**Tessa
Hackenbracht**



THE NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

DID YOU PAY INCOME TAXES IN THE STATE OF VIRGINIA THIS YEAR?

Sure. You paid taxes. Even if you received a tax refund, you paid income taxes—a refund means you actually overpaid and received the balance back. The average Virginian pays 5.75% of their salary in income taxes.

What if you could redirect your tax dollars at no cost and help a qualified student attend New Covenant Schools?

You can. The Commonwealth of Virginia offers tax credits in addition to charitable deductions for gifts to the New Covenant Schools Scholarship Foundation. The good news is that you most

likely qualify. You don't have to be wealthy to benefit. You only need to be a taxpayer.

If you would like to understand more about how your tax money can provide a classical education to a deserving student, contact **Dayna Renalds** in the Development Office at drenalds@newcovenantschools.org or call her at 434.847.8313. This is a unique tax opportunity the state provides to its taxpayers and students. Your situation may vary, but nearly everyone benefits from this provision in the tax code.



E T C E T E R A

SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

QUID NOVI

EVERYONE

PROGRESS REPORTS

Parents will receive emails containing their students' progress reports on **Wednesday, September 16**.

SCHOOL PICTURES

TSS Photography will be on campus **Thursday, September 17** to take individual and class photos. Please make every effort to have your student on time and do not plan any appointments on this day. All photo ordering will be done online, and nothing is needed from you in advance. Senior class, individual, formal and casual portraits will be taken on **Tuesday, September 22**.

MOMS IN PRAYER

This group invites you to join them as they gather to pray for students and staff of New Covenant Schools. They meet **Wednesdays at 9 am** in the Grammar School Commons. Contact **Mindy Oppenheimer** at josh_mindy@yahoo.com with prayer requests or questions.

LUNCH DEADLINE

Make sure you place your student's lunch order for October by this **Friday, September 18**. Please note this change from previous years—**Friday pizza must be preordered**. Lunch is delivered daily to your child's classroom and ordering ahead is the best method to ensure availability of food items. You will find details on the school website under the My NCS tab followed by clicking My Meal Plan and then the link highlighted in the heading "View instructions for ordering lunch." Questions should be directed to **Debbie Williamson** at dwilliamson@newcovenantschools.org.

EASY WAYS TO SUPPORT NEW COVENANT

Do you or your family members have a Kroger Plus Card? A portion of your purchases at Kroger comes to New Covenant simply by linking your Kroger account to our school. It's easy. Log in to your Kroger account online and select New Covenant Schools to receive your community rewards. Our organization number is IX901.

Collecting Box Tops earns money that will go toward special purchases for our school. Download the Box Tops app on your smartphone and start collecting.

Do you shop Amazon? You can make every purchase count. Visit www.smile.amazon.com and support New Covenant through your purchases. Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to New Covenant.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Here at New Covenant we understand that good financial stewardship is important to your family and we want to help you in that effort. Join us for coffee and doughnuts on **Wednesday, September 16 at 7:30 am** to hear from Headmaster Heaton and Director of Development Dayna Renalds on how to save money by routing it through the Virginia 529 Savings Plan or gifting to the Scholarship Tax Credit Improvement Program. Click here to sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409084BAFAB2CA3F58-newcovenant5>. We look forward to sharing with you.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL RETREAT POSTPONED

This event which was originally scheduled for **September 17-18** has been postponed. School will be in session as normal.

SCHOOL OF RHETORIC

SOR DC TRIP POSTPONED

The DC Trip is postponed and school will be in session on **October 14-15** with a noon dismissal on the 15th.

PSAT TESTING

All students in Grades 10 & 11 will be taking the PSAT on **Thursday, October 29**. Take note of this new, rescheduled date. As is our custom, the School of Rhetoric (grades 9-12) will not begin until 9:00 am that day (the rest of the school starts on time). This is to allow students the opportunity to get a bit more sleep before this testing. If you need to drop off your SOR students at the normal time, we will have supervised study halls.



THINK. LEARN. LOVE. LIVE.

E T C E T E R A

SO FAR – SO GOOD

We've completed four full weeks of school, and we are very relieved that our reopening plan has worked well. With no positive cases of record at New Covenant, we are happy to be open and in good health. This is a reminder of our goals.

First, it is our highest goal to be at school and in-person. We set forth a mitigation plan which you can access on our home page (www.newcovenantschools.org) which details our commitment in our homes, in our classrooms, in our common spaces, and elsewhere. Our mitigations, while inconvenient, are nevertheless helping to ensure that we remain on campus together.

Second, in all of our previous notices, we have stressed that we would open in a constrictive posture, but that we would review our mitigation strategy, working with local public health officials each step of the way. Our nursing staff has spoken with the health department routinely, and our first policy assessment with New Covenant staff was held on Friday afternoon (9/11). One week after Labor Day, we were virus free; four weeks into school the situation remains clear.

Third, we have evaluated the possibility of a return to athletic competition, and have extended our protocols for athletes that permit a limited fall season for soccer, volleyball and cross country.

There are four additional things we have adjusted as we move forward:

- 1) Beginning **September 15**, we will continue to greet students each morning with medical personnel, but, as planned, we will omit the taking of temperatures at the door each morning. We will verify that they are wearing a mask, and ask them to wash hands.
- 2) Beginning **September 21**, we will allow both sections of each grade level to participate in outdoor activities together. For example, both sections of 3rd grade play together at recess.
- 3) Beginning **September 21**, class sections in grammar school will go to the Moomaw Gym for lunch on a rotating schedule; on the day they go to the gym, ice cream will be available for purchase.
- 4) Beginning **September 21**, class sections in grammar school will begin to go to the art room for art instruction on a rotating schedule. The room will be cleaned between classes.

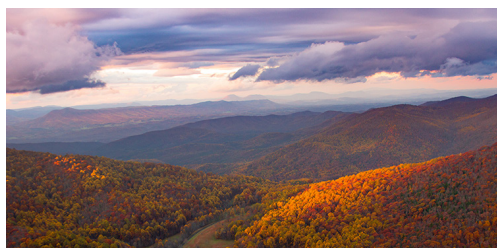
We will continue to review our mitigations and, where possible, return slowly to our familiar routines, so long as it is safe.



C U R R I C U L U M

*Kaleidoscopic leaves
swirl and camouflage winter's
relentless approach*

Carol Nation



QUID NOVI

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CLASS OF 2021 • Mike Lovell • Kristin Durand • CLASS OF 2022 • Dr. Tim Brophy • Bob Price • Leslie Moeller • Dan Vollmer • Amy Bonebright • Class of 2023 • Kristin Hampton • Darryl Whitesell • Nancy Hall • Sam Mizener • Tom Rogers • Anne Scruggs

EX OFFICIO

Rev'd John Heaton

OUR MISSION

New Covenant Schools is an educational community serving families of Central Virginia, providing an exceptional education in a classical curriculum within the framework of historic Christianity, furnishing the student with the tools of education and the inspiration to be a lifelong learner.

new covenant schools

POETRY DOESN'T STOP FOR COVID *by Marion Patterson*

This delightful autumn haiku conjures images in our minds of cooling temperatures, crisp air, and clear blue skies in central Virginia.

But at New Covenant Schools, we associate something more with autumn. It's harvest time for verse, with the entire student body learning and sharing classic poems each year. We bring into the barns a harvest of richly crafted language, poems that build our abilities to read, write and speak. The good news is that even in this unusual season of our lives, the learning of poetry is still available to us as a way of knowing and understanding ourselves and our world. Poetry at New Covenant never stops, not even for COVID.

During this year's faculty training, our teachers tackled strategies for returning to school while keeping everyone healthy; but we also took some time to focus on the enduring nature of what we do and teach. The work of poets and other artists is important not only to classical schools, but also to the culture as a whole—especially in challenging times. Poets and writers help to supply a people with a commonly understood language and references that are accessible to all. They bear the responsibility to show readers how things look from another's point of view. They decorate our common values by celebrating them in poetry, song, and film. Often they challenge our understanding, bringing clarity, wisdom and grace.

Children in particular benefit from learning and repeating poetry. At the

youngest ages, they take delight in "the chanting of rhymes, the rumble and thunder of polysyllables; one enjoys the mere accumulation of things." (Dorothy L. Sayers) As they learn poems by heart, they train their attention and memory and develop innate and automatic understandings of rhythm, rhyme, meter and the cadence of English speech. The images and (dare I say) the moral lessons of the material they are learning land deep inside their hearts and last a lifetime.

Students in the middle years grapple with more subtle poetic devices, images that suggest rather than prescribe truth, and comparisons that reveal new ideas to those who seek them. Slowing down long enough to learn a poem by heart can open an appreciation for beauty and impart (dare I say) moral lessons in a way that is palatable to even a middle schooler prone to argument.

Our high school students are able to recite poetry with polish and presence, using their voices and faces to convey the humor or tragedy or—if I may be so bold—the moral lessons revealed to them through study and rehearsal of one substantial poem. They bring together the three ways of classical education, grammar, dialectic and rhetoric, in this one project.

This year, the poetry contest will feel a little different, but its greatest benefits are still there for the taking.

Photo by Isaac Wendland on Unsplash

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directed, not student-centered, and the focus is upon the knowledge of a master teacher, and the authority that entails. The mode of lecture in the hands of such a teacher is used intentionally for a specific purpose. An effective teacher lectures with organized thoughts and at a sufficiently slow pace to provide time for absorption, for questions—not full reflection, but for acquisition of the concept at hand. Sensing the “aha” moment, the effective lecturer will know exactly when to conclude. Lecture is then combined with other forms of active learning, and is the very definition of good pedagogy.

Second, there is the mode of reading. New Covenant students read constantly and they read together. It is not unusual to walk into a class at random and find the students reading with their teacher. Reading a book together is like listening to music. We allow it to proceed at its own pace, not demanding that we understand it as it goes. The most important thing is the experience itself, with analysis following afterward, not unlike what we do when we watch a film or a play. Because we read “real books,” the teacher is a necessary part of the process, guiding, explaining, directing and entertaining new thoughts.

Third, there is the mode of writing. Our students write more than those in

any comparable school in the area. Daily writing enables participants to encounter their own intellectual and imaginative responses to material studied in class. Writing is a “making of meaning” rather than a report of thought that has already been done. Informally jotting down ideas in a Commonplace Book (all students in high school keep one) is a way of liberating the imaginations from the constraints of formal writing. We do that, too, because



editing and reflecting are necessary for effective writing. Both make up part of that formulation and clarification of ideas for which the civilized mind strives. It is no wonder that our students are universally overprepared for college writing. The end result of constant reading and writing is a discriminating mind, an eye for imagination and detail. In short, it produces critical thinking.

The final mode is the mode of seminar. Late in the middle school years around grade 8, our students are introduced to the art of discussion. They are seated in a circle or at a table with a text before them (one that ideally has been read before), and they are shown how to discuss it. In the School of Rhetoric, the name for this is the Harkness method, and, when it begins, no one knows where the discussion will

actually go or how it will develop. This is not a mere sharing of personal opinion; at its best, it is a disciplined exploration of one another’s thought. The text is the main focus, and development proceeds through dialogue with the ultimate aim at consensus. Sometimes that is reached, sometimes not. The process, however, teaches students how to get at knowledge through the civil exchange of ideas.

After 30 years we still feel like the “new school” in town. Truth be told, we’re not doing anything new at all. New Covenant has returned to the oldest tradition in the history of the world, with time-tested content and methods. Our resistance to educational fads and the low standards that often accompany them is what drives the demand for the classical, Christian curriculum. After 30 years of practice, four capital campaigns to develop a distinct campus, and hundreds of students later, these four modes of teaching remain unchanged: lecturing, reading, writing, and seminar. Willing students who engage with the classical, Christian tradition will graduate ahead of their peers, and will be well on their way to becoming educated and civilized human beings.



NEW COVENANT schools

BY THE NUMBERS

1 First classical, Christian school in Central Virginia 	2 Headmasters 	3 Teachers the first year of the school 	4 Study abroad trips offered in high school 	5 Capital campaigns to develop the campus 
6 Buildings the school has called home 	7 Trips to Rome 	8 Total graduates in the Classes of 1996-1998 	9 Summers of American Girl Camp 	10 Oak trees in the front circle 
11 Broadway musicals performed 	12 Columns in the colonnade 	13 Number of seniors ten years ago (Class of 2010) 	14 Overnight high school trips to D.C. 	15 Charlotte's Web celebrations in kindergarten 
16 Students in 1991 	17 Years of Engineering Team competitions 	18 Students per class section 	19 Meals on the weekly lunch menu 	20 Years of AP exams 
21 Senior trips to New York City 	22 Faculty and staff with advanced degrees 	23 National Merit/Commended Scholars 	24 Cotillions 	25 Years of poetry recitals 
26 Seniors taking both math and science this year (all of them!) 	27 Acres of woods and trails on campus 	28 Virginia colleges/universities where our students have been accepted 	29 Athletic teams each year 	30 Suggested amount of your gift to the Annual Fund in celebration of our anniversary 

THIRTIETH



ANNIVERSARY