



Fifth graders out for a nature walk as part of their Nature Science class.

QUID NOVI

THE NEWSLETTER OF NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

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MAJORIS



SENIOR THESIS: THE CAPSTONE PROJECT *by John Heaton, Headmaster*

New Covenant is well-known for its emphasis upon reading and writing. From preschool through the earliest years, our students are given a strong foundation in language skills, not only in English, but in Latin as well. One of our highest goals is to help a student become eloquent in the written and spoken word.

The pathway to achieving this is a curriculum that offers students great literature, so that they learn to hear their mother tongue in its most beautiful form. This means that they memorize poems, read great books, and learn recitations in every class. It also means that students will learn to write—and writing is hard. Their earliest attempts begin with copying and learning to create simple

summaries of things that have been read. In middle school this advances towards book reports that analyze characters, plot development, settings and mood. Because writing is “foreign” to the brain, it is an exercise that must be repeated over and over. It’s rather like playing the violin; it requires practice which, in the early stages, neither sounds good, nor is it fun.

As students emerge from middle school as “rough writers,” they move to the School of Rhetoric where they begin to study classical rhetoric techniques. They learn that writing takes many forms and that, depending upon the form, it requires particular kinds of content. If one is writing to persuade, for example, there are various kinds of

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WHAT’S NEW?

Our Hands & Hearts project is a multi-faceted event. It provides opportunity for our students across the grades to serve the community in various venues. Hands & Hearts functions as a yearly fundraiser for our school providing for our school and those we serve.

It also allows students another opportunity to discover their artistic skills in the yearly Hands & Hearts

t-shirt contest. All students are invited to submit a piece of art for consideration on the yearly t-shirt. This year art teacher **Michael Dunaway** chose five famous pieces of art and asked students to modify one incorporating the Hands & Hearts logo. He received many beautiful entries which were narrowed down to 35 semi-finalists. Then the School of Rhetoric house heads selected five finalists from

HANDS & HEARTS 2021 T-SHIRT

which the final winner was chosen.

Congratulations to all of those who were chosen and to 8th grade student

Jenna Ng for her winning entry. All of the finalist entries may be seen hanging outside the science classrooms on the 100 hallway.



THINK. LEARN. LOVE. LIVE.

H O N O R A R I A

JUNIOR GRYPHONS CHAMPIONSHIP



Front: John Sorenson, Joseph Deyo, Richter Harris, Joseph Lee, Charlie Kershaw, Christopher Moody. **Back:** Coach Nick Newsome, Judah Weber, Coach Carter Newsome. (Not pictured: Luke Hottle)

The New Covenant 5th/6th Grade Junior Gryphons Gray boys' basketball team took home the "Winning Goal" League Championship this weekend with a final score of 22-18. New Covenant entered two teams into the league made up of teams from Thomas Road, Hyland Heights, Homeschool groups, and New Covenant. The Gray team finished with a regular season record of 7-1 and overall record of 9-1 en route to the championship!



SENIORS AND THESIS DEFENSE TOPICS

Titus Brenning—*Modern Problems Require Modern Solutions: A Defense of Nuclear Energy Production*

Stone Clark—*Music of the Modern Seeker Church: Glory to God or Performance for the People*

Hannah Craven—*The Problem of Sleep Narcotics: Why Sleeping Pills Should Not Combat Sleep-caused Suffering*

Ellen Anne Deneen—*9/11 and the Communications Failures Around It: Should We Blame the Government for the Attack on 9/11?*

Tessa Hackenbracht—*Woven into a Rope: Does the Modern Diversified Curriculum Fulfill the True Purpose of Higher Education?*

Thaddeaus Heaton—*The Dropping of the Atomic Bomb: A War Crime*

Carmen Horne—*The Psychological, Physical, and Social Effects of Abortion*

Brandon Hostetler—*The Mistakes and Damages of the Great Society*

Konner Johnson—*Euthanasia: An Argument for Death with Dignity*

David Keenan—*Peron's Argentina: How Peron Crippled Argentina*

Elizabeth Kittrell—*Mental Health Matters: An Argument for the School's Role in the Mental Health of Its Students*

Christopher Matney—*How to Live Longer: Disease Prevention Through Genetic Testing*

Emilee Newsome—*Capital Punishment: The Death of the Death Penalty*

Elizabeth Olmsted—*Redefining the Female Athlete: How Title IX has Altered the Standards of Athletic Programs*

Caleb Oppenheimer—*Understanding the Complex World of Mercenaries: Do Private Armies Violate Human Rights?*

Phoebe Prillaman—*The Rat Race for Cures: The Use of Animals in Biomedical Research*

Janna Renalds—*The Foster Care System: Lacking in Support, Overwhelmed with Children*

Virginia Robert—*The United States Rules of Engagement 2000-2005: The Two-Fronted War Fought by American Soldiers Against Terrorists and US Legal Systems*

Natalie Rogers—*Animals Used for Entertainment: Why Wild Animals Should Only be Held for Conservation Purposes*

Joshua Ruck—*Cars, Culture and Creativity: The Introduction of the Automobile and Its Effect on the Youth of Society*

Sophia Rucker—*Privacy Issues With Surveillance Apps: The Damaging Effects These Apps Have on Children*

Cayli Snipes—*The Human-Animal Bond: How Animals Can Aid in Your Mental and Physical Health*

Ann Claire Terrell—*Divine Love and Human Suffering: A Defense That God is a Loving God, Despite Human Suffering*

Taylor Toone—*The Powerful Left: The Left's Hypocrisy, Lies, and Double Standards*

Jadon Walker—*NBA versus WNBA: Why the Wage Gap Is What It Is*

Izabel Zealand—*Building Successful Relationships Using the Enneagram Profile*

E T C E T E R A

EVERYONE

IT'S TIME FOR LUNCH

Lunch ordering for April is open and runs through **Friday, March 19**. Log in to your RenWeb account and place your orders before the deadline.

IMPORTANT—TIME TO UPDATE YOUR STUDENT'S INFORMATION FOR 2021-22

This afternoon you will receive an email with instructions to update your student's information and select a billing plan for next year. Please read the email and follow the directions to complete the online packet. If you have any questions please call or email **Linda Simon** at lsimon@newcovenantschools.org or 434-847-8313.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Students in Grades PreK-8 will have a **noon dismissal this Wednesday, March 17**. Grades 9-12 will dismiss at **12:15pm**. This marks the end of the 3rd Quarter.

JEANS AND GREENS DAY

Faculty and students are invited to wear jeans and a green top in celebration of St. Patrick's Day **this Wednesday, March 17**.

LOST AND FOUND

Please check the lost and found bins for any items your student may be missing. The lost and found will be purged **this Thursday, March 18**.

REPORT CARDS

Parents will receive an email with a link to view student report cards on **Friday, March 26**.

SPRING BREAK

This year's Spring Break and Easter Break will run together from **March 29 – April 5**. Students return on **Tuesday, April 6**.

HANDS & HEARTS

Don't forget to complete your Hands & Hearts sponsorship packets and have them returned to the office by **Wednesday, March 24**. If you would like your business logo to be included on the back of the Hands & Hearts t-shirt, please contact **Dayna Renalds** for information at drenalds@newcovenantschools.org.

SCHOOL OF RHETORIC

EXAMS

Students of the SoR will sit for block class exams on **Wednesday, March 17**.

WINTER ATHLETIC AWARD WINNERS

VARSITY SWIM

Most Improved – Dylan Abaidoo
Gryphon Award – Madeline Duncan
MVP – Jack Marotta

JV GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Most Improved – Piper Knapton
Gryphon Award – Ava Zealand
MVP – Olivia Kidd

JV BOYS' BASKETBALL

Most Improved – Luke Libbey
Gryphon Award – Nate Kirshberger
MVP – Douglas Powell

VARSITY GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Most Improved – Brielle Walker
Gryphon Award – Janna Renalds
MVP – Phoebe Prillaman

VARSITY BOYS' BASKETBALL

Most Improved – Dalton Foster
Gryphon Award – Jude Vollmer
MVP – Jadon Walker

COVID PROTOCOL UPDATE

As we move into spring and into the final quarter of school, we are pleased that we have maintained in-person instruction throughout the year. While rolling quarantines have been disruptive, we have managed to remain open and successfully meet our goals with our children. Our medical staff led by **Beth Mayberry** has done an outstanding job monitoring and responding to the weekly statistics published by local, state, and federal authorities.

The key statistics published for dynamic management of K-12 schools have continuously fallen for more than two months. The positivity rates for Lynchburg City and our health district are now at their lowest rate since July 2020—lower than when we began school in August! As a result, we will begin the final quarter operating on the Reopening Plan we published last July. This is compliant with the Governor's EO 63 which requires face coverings for all, aged five and older.

To be clear: the current state of transmissibility and infection in our region

is such that we are moving to implement the mitigations that were in our *original plan*. Shortly after school opened in the fall, those numbers elevated such that we implemented more stringent mitigations. **Our position now is to revert to the re-opening plan**, and to new protocols published by the CDC. Here is what is affected:

Reduced individual quarantine. Current guidance from the CDC adjusts this from 14 days to 10 days if there are no symptoms when isolation from the positive person is possible. We ask that

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evidence that can be employed.

Throughout three semesters of rhetoric as freshmen, sophomores and juniors, students write various papers employing the techniques they've learned. Moreover, they are given extensive instruction on how to research, what qualifies as a good source, and, very importantly, how to document such sources in footnotes and bibliographies. All of these tools are essential for success in college and in life. The writing process trains a student in the art of expression, and the ability to formulate thoughts with precision and to express them intelligibly. Eventually, writing becomes a way of discovering knowledge as thoughts put to paper stare back at them, begging to be edited, reformed, supported, or reversed.

Good writing habits underlie and inform good speaking habits. Our high school students have spent years at New Covenant standing in front of their peers, reciting memorized passages, or explaining their work in short speeches. Standing before a group and speaking is a normal part of their experience at New Covenant, and most of them left stage fright behind long ago.

As our students reach maturity in their senior year, they are ready for the capstone project of the Senior Thesis.

This project begins at the end of the junior year, and includes research over the following summer, and the final writing project begins in earnest in the fall. The students are encouraged to treat a question of significance, what we call a "great question." It is always a debatable question, and sometimes very controversial. Source reports—short commentaries on how a significant source will be used—and first drafts are completed by the time students leave for Christmas vacation. (A list of this year's thesis titles can be found on page two.)

In the second semester, student papers have been read by thesis advisors (every student has two readers), and they are returned with suggestions, criticisms, questions, and yes, a grade. Students have until February to revise their work into a second and final version. This version is read again, and a student is given a "ready to defend" status, or the paper is referred to them for final tweaks and revisions.

By the end of March, the students are ready for thesis defenses, where they prepare a 15-minute PowerPoint summary of their arguments and publicly explain what they have written, while fielding questions from their thesis advisors. The normal school schedule is suspended for the high school students as

we model defenses as a type of academic conference with multiple seniors presenting at once. Food is abundant in the Commons, and parents, along with faculty readers and their fellow students, are on hand to share in the great day. (Current COVID mitigations will modify our tradition this year.) Upon completion, the sense of accomplishment is palpable. Students know that they have finished a signal achievement.

The New Covenant student experience therefore concludes with a demonstration of the many tools of learning students have acquired in the long journey to graduation. The end result is a student who is eloquent in the written and spoken word, a young adult who thinks critically, and who is well-spoken on matters on which he is informed.

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you contact the medical staff with any instances of exposure or symptoms, and they will help you determine the appropriate actions for your situation.

Class quarantines. We will no longer quarantine a whole class if a child tests positive, just students in the immediate area. We have *not* experienced any classroom spread in cases where positive students were removed. Teachers who are fully vaccinated are no longer required to quarantine.

Gender-divided physical education. We are now being flexible to divide groups by gender for PE when the schedule allows.

Reintroduction to the lunchroom. On some days of the week students in middle school may eat lunch by cohort with spacing between cohorts.

Recess and breaks. Cohorts may mix within grade level (ex. 3A & 3B) outdoors and indoors. Grades (ex. 3 & 4) may mix outdoors as well as indoors in PE or Music.

Finally, New Covenant faculty and staff continue to build herd immunity in the school. We currently have a total of 56 vaccinated faculty/staff and 10 laboratory confirmed cases. That means approximately 66 individuals, an overwhelming majority, who are in the building regularly now have some level of immunity.

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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