



This summer's American Girl Doll camp participants show their 80s-themed style.

THE NEWSLETTER OF
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

QUID NOVI

AUGUST 9, 2021
VOL. 24 NO. 02 MAJORIS

WHAT I DID ON MY SUMMER VACATION *by Bridges Spiva*

Bridges Spiva teaches in the middle school and is also tasked with coordinating faculty development across the sections.

One of my favorite sounds during the school day is hearing our younger Gryphons, with hands on their hips, chanting during Latin class, “What do I do in school? *Quid facio in ludo?*” Another delightful moment occurs when these same young students see their teachers outside of school. Often their shocked and excited faces reveal that they had no idea their teachers ever left school much less shopped for groceries! This got me thinking that students and their families probably do not know what their teachers are up to during the summer and may have their hands upon their hips asking, “What do teachers do in summer? *Quid faciunt magistri in aestate?*”

While many of us, at times, do sleep in and lounge in our pajamas long enough to drink an extra cup of coffee or two, many faculty members are recharging their batteries through the pursuit of lifelong learning. Here are some highlights from some this summer:

- **Mrs. Uminn** completed two doctoral courses and said she is eager to apply her coursework by utilizing current neurological research on memory and mastery to better assist her students in developing good habits for completing work, studying, and understanding new material. She is nearing the dissertation phase of her PhD.
- **Mrs. Newsome** completed a graduate course in curriculum and instruction and acquired

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WHAT'S NEW?

Chapel Construction



During the summer, renovations on the Marie Macdonald Chapel have been underway. As the students departed for break, demolition crews moved in and dismantled the east end of the structure (called the apse). Once the debris was carefully removed, a job handled by rising seniors **Dalton Foster** and **Michael Marotta**, footers were poured

and an extended foundation was laid. As we go to print today, the framing has been nearly completed and the roof trusses will be installed by crane later this week. The project has enjoyed a stretch of good weather, although labor shortages and supply chain interruptions have delayed it slightly. Our contractor, **Rodney Foster**, is still optimistic that

we will stay on schedule for a dedication of the new space on **Sunday, October 31**, the evening of All Saints Day.

The parking lot is currently being used as a staging area for construction, but the drop-off lanes will be cleared before school starts. There should be minimal interruption to our normal traffic patterns.

H O N O R A R I A

WELCOME TO OUR NEW FACULTY AND STAFF

As we begin the new school term we welcome several new faces to our faculty and staff.

Teresa Angell, RN, has assumed full responsibility of the New Covenant Clinic and is tasked with keeping us all healthy. She moved into this position as **Beth Mayberry** retired at the end of the last school year. Teresa has also assisted—and will continue—as the orchestra coach with **Joe Nigro**. Her specialty is the cello, but she works with middle and high school orchestras meeting a variety of musical and administrative needs.



Anya Ballanger has joined the School of Rhetoric faculty. She grew up in Los Angeles and was classically educated in a rigorous homeschool program. She studied Latin, read the Great Books, and went on to study at Liberty University, where she earned the BS degree in Interdisciplinary Studies—History and Physical Sciences. While loving the literary canon of the West, she was employed by LU to tutor chemistry students as an undergraduate! Ultimately her first love was history, and she went on to earn the MA in History at LU. She worked at Lynchburg City Schools during the pandemic and was also a tour guide at Poplar Forest. She joins us with optimism, hoping to “share a passion for learning, academic excellence, history, and Christ with my students.”



Bethany Hartman Caswell (class of 2012) joins the middle school faculty as an instructor in Bible and History. After graduating from New Covenant Mrs. Caswell attended Virginia Tech where she earned the BA in Fine Arts in 2016. She then pursued the MA in



Teaching from Liberty University, which she obtained this year. Mrs. Caswell brings a range of gifts to New Covenant, chief of which is a desire to teach. She formerly taught art in the Gifted Program in Roanoke County Public Schools to students in grades 4 and 5. She has been featured in a number of art shows around Lynchburg, including Riverviews Artspace (2019), Percolator Art Gallery (2018), Armory Gallery and the Edna Curry/John Bower Exhibition (2016). In addition to her academic classes, she will be teaching a few middle school sections in art. Mrs. Caswell is the fifth New Covenant alumnus to join the faculty.

Katie Eldridge returns to our faculty after taking a scheduled hiatus two years ago. Miss Eldridge formerly taught Latin in the middle school, where she was a favorite among students.



She wanted to acquire another language in addition to her Latin and Spanish, so she took leave of New Covenant and travelled to South Korea where she taught English and studied Korean! COVID, of course, upended some of her plans, but she returned safely and we are pleased to welcome her back to Latin instruction in the School of Rhetoric. She holds the BA in Classical Studies, the BA in Spanish, the MA in ESL/ELL.

Tiffany Fulcher joined our staff last spring as our SoR assistant and School Nurse, **Beth Mayberry**, retired. Tiffany cross-trained last spring and assumed full administrative duties this summer working with **Andrea Adams**, our Office Manager. Her tasks are varied, from ongoing support to the SoR in particular, but handling a myriad of office duties with parents, students, teachers, and staff. She is mother of two girls, **Hayden (1st)** and **Madison (pre-K)**.



Carrie Johnson joins the Grammar School faculty in fourth grade, where she will teach alongside **Sara Fritz**. Mrs. Johnson joined the faculty last year as a substitute and an adjunct teacher in 5th grade. She holds the BS in Communications from Liberty University and brings to our community years of experience in homeschooling, where she not only taught her own children, but directed the local community of Classical Conversations, serving homeschooling families. She organized, developed curriculum, and even taught some classes herself. When Mrs. Johnson subbed last year, we saw her skills in classroom management and her passion for character development in children. We look forward to seeing her gifts and talents play out in fourth grade.



Katherine (Katie) Sakai joins the staff in the Development Office working with **Dayna Renalds**, our Development Director. Katie will be responsible for alumni affairs, website and social media management and other duties that support ongoing relationships with former students, alumni, and donors. In addition to her administrative duties, she will also teach Latin as an adjunct instructor in the School of Rhetoric. Miss Sakai is a native of southern California and was classically educated in a homeschool program through high school, after which she obtained a perfect score on the Reading & Writing portions of the SAT. She moved across the country and obtained her BA degree in Administration and Communications from Liberty University. In related teaching positions she has given instruction in music, English, and most notably in Swing Dancing! She plays the piano, the ukulele and hand chimes.



NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

COVID-19 MITIGATIONS MESSAGE

AUGUST 9, 2021

A Word About Governor Northam's Press Conference

At his most recent press conference last week, the Governor refrained from placing the Commonwealth under another State of Emergency. Rather, he urged schools to follow the CDC guidance. The Governor left the impression that following the CDC guidance was the law of Virginia, citing an act of the legislature to open public schools for 5-days-a-week in-person instruction. The sponsor of this bill, and others, strongly disagreed. Moreover, the Governor did not distinguish between public and private schools, stating that the law covered "all schools" in the Commonwealth. This is inaccurate. As of last week, nothing has changed regarding local

option control of COVID mitigations for private schools. New Covenant is not required to file a re-opening plan with the Commonwealth (which was done last year), and is free to apply mitigations consistent with our community, needs, and purposes. What follows, therefore, is an overview of our procedures. **Please be aware that these are also subject to change as circumstances may require.** The following guidelines have been established with guidance from the Virginia Department of Health. Our goal is to maintain quality in-person instruction while mitigating the risk of COVID-19 within our school community.

The following guidelines have been established with guidance from the Virginia Department of Health. Our goal is to maintain in-person instruction while mitigating the risk of COVID-19 spread within our school community.



PREVENTION: VACCINES AND FACE COVERINGS

First and foremost, we will focus on prevention. COVID-19 vaccines, although not required, are currently available to adults and children twelve and older, and are projected to become available to children aged 2-11 during the course of the 21-22 school year. New Covenant is not requiring a child or an adult to be vaccinated, or to disclose vaccination status. Faculty are requested to share this information voluntarily. Face coverings **are not required at this time**, but we reserve the right to temporarily reinstate a mask requirement if significant outbreaks occur within our school community. If you wish for your child to be masked, you may certainly do so.

Our decision to forgo required masking has been carefully considered. After a year of teaching in masks in 20-21 we have concluded that it significantly impacts the quality and effectiveness of teachers in the classroom. The younger the student, the more pronounced this is. Effective teaching is heavily dependent upon a child seeing a teacher's face, and, conversely, a teacher reading feedback on a child's face. After a year of the pandemic, we now know that risk of transmission to children is low, and the danger of the virus to children is lower still. Thus we are committed to returning to as normal a teaching environment as possible.

Is it possible that we will face outbreaks in school? Yes, of course. If and when that occurs, we will quarantine appropriately (see p. 4).



SOCIAL DISTANCING

We will maintain social distancing within the primary classroom setting by spacing desks three feet apart where possible, and we will ensure continued excellent ventilation within the school building. We will not separate the students into cohorts.

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ISOLATING THE INFECTED

Current CDC recommendations for isolation due to symptomatic COVID-19 infection (or suspected COVID-19 infection without testing) are as follows:

For symptomatic COVID-19 infection:

Isolate for 10 days from onset of symptoms; end of isolation is contingent upon 24 hours free of febrility without use of antipyretic medications, and improvement of other symptoms.

For asymptomatic COVID-19 infection:

Isolate for 10 days from positive COVID-19 diagnostic test; end of isolation is contingent upon no development of symptoms.

For exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19:

Quarantine for 10 days from date of last exposure or PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test at 5 days or beyond, breaking quarantine at 7 days if PCR test is negative.



CLEANING SURFACES

Our students, faculty, and staff made regular cleaning of frequently-touched surfaces part of their daily routine during the 20-21 school year, and we will preserve this simple prophylaxis. Disinfectant products recommended by EPA as effective against coronavirus will be utilized to disinfect spaces occupied by persons who test positive for COVID-19.



HAND SANITIZING

Students may enter the school building beginning at 7:30am, and faculty will greet them with hand sanitizer before they proceed to their designated classroom. Frequent handwashing has proven effective at reducing transmission of infectious disease in general, and faculty will continue to enforce good hand hygiene.



MONITORING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS

It is the ongoing responsibility of students' parents and guardians to closely monitor for signs and symptoms of illness before children arrive at school. **A temperature of 100.4 or greater is ALWAYS sufficient cause to keep a child home.** If at any point during the school day a student develops symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 infection, they

will be provided a mask and quarantined to the clinic, at which point their parent or guardian will be required to retrieve them expeditiously.



CONTACT TRACING

Our school nurses, **Teresa Angell** and **Nancy Freerksen** will conduct contact tracing within the school community, partnering with VDH where indicated, when a student or teacher tests positive for COVID-19.



MONITORING THE INDICATORS

As we progress through the school year, we will use frequency and severity of outbreaks, student absenteeism, and staff capacity as indicators to help us determine if and when to instate a temporary universal masking protocol. A universal masking protocol may be imposed should multiple outbreaks occur.



SICK? STAY HOME

Above all, we urge parents and guardians to keep their students home when sick. Faculty and Staff will observe the same requirement.

With diligence, patience, and consideration, we will have another blessed and fruitful school year of in-person instruction.

Teresa Angell, RN

EVERYONE

CONVOCATION

Everyone is invited to join us for our Convocation on **Sunday, August 15 at 6pm** to be held at Rivermont Evangelical Presbyterian Church at 2424 Rivermont Ave. Notice this change of venue. Bring your family to this service and join us in asking God's blessing on this coming school year! Childcare will be provided for ages 2-4 years. **Note for seniors:** You will need to stop by the school office this **Wednesday (11th)** or **Thursday (12th) between 12-4pm** to pick up your robes, caps and tassels. If you have any questions, contact **Tiffany Fulcher** at tfulcher@newcovenantschools.org.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

The first day of school for the School of Rhetoric begins at **8am on Monday, August 16**.

The first day of school for Grammar School and Middle School begins at **8am on Wednesday, August 18** with a noon dismissal for PreK, K and 1st grades.

MEET YOUR TEACHER

Meet Your Teacher is **Monday, August 16 from 3:30-6:00pm**. Schedules and teachers may be found on Renweb on **Sunday, August 15 after 5pm**. To view, simply log into your Renweb account, select student information, and click the classes tab. You will receive a sign-up genius link to sign up for a time to meet your class/homeroom teacher. Please sign up for a time slot, and make sure you are signing up for the correct teacher.

TEARS AND CHEERS

Parents are invited to a social event on the morning of the first day of Grammar/Middle School on **Wednesday, August 18 from 8:00-8:45am**. Dropping off your

children and entering a new school year may bring you tears, or perhaps cheers. Wherever you find yourself, we would like to walk with you in the journey so after dropping off on the 18th, plan to stay for a few minutes to enjoy coffee and breakfast. We will be outdoors near the playground right off the main parking lot. Hope to see you there!

LUNCH ORDERING

The deadline to order August & September lunches for your student is **Friday, August 13**. Please log into your Renweb account and place your orders before then. To read the lunchroom newsletter, or to view an instructional video on lunch ordering, visit the Resources section when logged into your Renweb account. (To order school milk, click on the first available date under your child's name—**August 16**. Cost is \$30 per quarter.) Contact **Debbie Williamson** with any questions (dwilliamson@newcovenantschools.org).

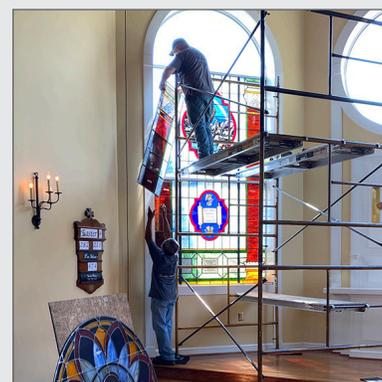
JOB OPENINGS

After-School Care—We are hiring after-school care workers for 3:00-5:30pm, Monday through Friday. A background check is required. Interested persons should contact **Linda Hackenbracht**, Director of Finance, at lhackenbracht@newcovenantschools.org.

Field House—We are in need of a custodian for the Workman Field House, who cleans and maintains the floors, storage and the Fitness Center. Training is offered and will involve 15 hours per week in the evenings. This position might be perfect for a local college student who wishes to be involved in the athletic world and needs only a part-time job. Interested persons should contact **Darren Johnson**, Facilities Manager, at djohnson@newcovenantschools.org

CHAPEL RENOVATION

Renovation work has moved through phases of preservation, demolition and new construction. The expanded venue will increase seating to approximately 160.



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new methods in positive classroom management through her reading of *Better Than Carrots or Sticks* (Smith, Fisher, and Frey).

- **Ms. Martin and Mrs. Spiva** are enrolled in a master’s degree program in Classical School Leadership, and spent two weeks on the campus of Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts. While there, they tackled two intensives, lived in a dorm, went on field trips, carried backpacks, stayed up late writing papers, and ate cafeteria food....just like “real students.”
- **Mrs. Brenning** completed a graduate course in Non-Euclidian Geometry, which focused on Spherical, Hyperbolic, Finite and Taxicab Geometry. She enthusiastically exclaimed that, “While creating a presentation to show the parallel postulate in Hyperbolic Geometry, I dipped pringles in paint and performed the ‘ribbon test’ on a model of a Hyperbolic saddle. Now I see Hyperbolic planes in nature around me— even in a cactus plant.”
- **Miss Barnwell** traveled to Nevada, Utah, and Arizona. She experienced the Grand Canyon and other National Parks for the first time and is looking forward to incorporating her pictures and stories into 1st grade “Trip Across America” lessons.
- **Mr. Forshey** participated in a 12-session reading and discussion group which covered readings from the classical and western tradition. The group discussed how multiracial great thinkers of the past were in conversation about fundamental human issues such as liberty, justice, citizenship, American identity, and living together in community.



- **Mrs. Arango** completed an online course through Hillsdale College covering all three sections of Dante’s *Divine Comedy - Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso*. Her favorite lecture was: *Confronting Disordered Loves*, and *Freedom from Inferno*.
- **Mr. Hernandez** attended an online workshop by Herff Jones (NCS’ yearbook vendor) and received training in theme development, photography, journalism principles, and design fundamentals. He was most excited about the new yearbook-building software tool “eDesign,” which is a significant advancement in technology that he plans to introduce to his yearbook students this school year.
- **Mr. Kirshberger, Mrs. Ballanger, Mr. Hart and Headmaster Heaton** traveled to Charleston, SC to attend the annual conference presented by the Society for Classical Learning, featuring more than 50 speakers and over 130 workshops (two of which were presented by our Headmaster).
- **Headmaster Heaton** enrolled in a course from the Davenant Institute in the Jewish Background of the New Testament that focused on readings in Second Temple Judaism, the Talmud, Mishnah, and other source documents. The findings in the course are relevant for the translation and meaning of the Greek New Testament, which he teaches to students at New Covenant.

A healthy student culture is fed by participation in a healthy faculty culture. Faculty members who are growing and learning themselves create an environment of curiosity, wonder, and a love of learning in students. That’s a significant part of what makes New Covenant such a special place.



Ms. Martin and Mrs. Spiva hitting the books at Gordon College in Massachusetts for their summer of learning.

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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