



Headmaster Heaton rallies the students on Friday as NCS wraps up the opening week of school.

THE NEWSLETTER OF
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

QUID NOVI

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GOD AS POET: TRUTH, GOODNESS AND BEAUTY

By John Heaton, Headmaster

The following is an excerpt from the Headmaster's address at the 32nd Convocation held on Sunday, August 14. To listen to the full audio version, click on www.newcovenantschools.org.

In his letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul makes the statement that "we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." In this single statement St. Paul announces the beginning and the end of man, his origin and his purpose, or what we refer to as "telos."

The word translated as "workmanship" brings to mind the activity of a craftsman, and the verb form

of this work means to make, or to do. Used here it indicates a "making," and it is this word that comes directly into the English language as our word "poem." For us a poem is a literary "making," a manipulation of language into pleasing patterns, meters or rhyme schemes. Good poems obey the rules while capturing and expressing emotions or profound realities.

God as Maker, or, if you like, God as Poet, has created us in Christ Jesus, and he has created us for doing our own good works. Our existence has its beginning in Christ, and our end or purpose is to achieve the good. Here, in just a short statement, we have discovered one of what we call transcendentals. In our tradition we speak of three transcendentals.

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WHAT'S NEW?

History in First Person

Children love to sit and listen to adults tell stories and I bet the parents and grandparents in our community have some stories to share. Several years ago, I started a project called iHistory to give you the forum to come to our classes and tell your personal stories.



The project is being revived this year, and you could be one of our greatest resources. Did you or a relative serve in WWII, Korea or Vietnam? Did you, or did your relative immigrate from another country? Do you like telling stories? The purpose of iHistory is to acquaint our children with first-person narratives to open their imaginations, get to know you, and to increase their appreciation for the not-so-distant past. If you would like to participate, I'd like to speak with you about joining our panel of iHistory storytellers. Feel free to contact me at heaton@newcovenantschools.org to place your submission.

THINK. LEARN. LOVE. LIVE.

ANNUAL PICNIC BACK-TO-SCHOOL

Friday September 9, 2022

**gryphon
growler**

1K / 3K / 5K

Watch for More Information

TRAFFIC PATTERNS

New Covenant started smoothly this year in every respect. Even our traffic patterns were manageable though congested in the afternoon carpool lines. Here a few things to remember.

GENERAL RULES

- Always drop and pick up at the location of your youngest rider, even if he/she is absent that day.
- PK, K, 6-12, please drop/pick up at the front circle.
- 1-5, please drop/pick up on the chapel side (second entrance).
- Do not speed on the neighborhood cut-through's of Woodway and Ridgeway. Respect our neighbors by keeping to 25 mph.

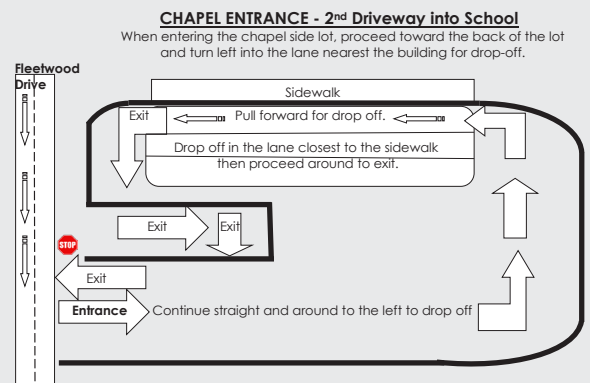
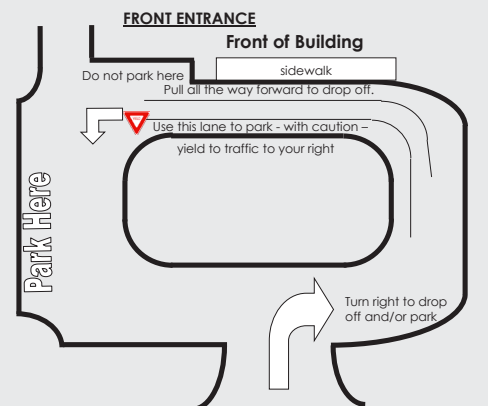
INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FRONT CIRCLE

- When dropping off in the morning, please do not stop at the flagpole to drop your riders. Pull as far forward as possible so that we can maximize the number of cars in the circle and minimize backup on Fleetwood Drive.
- If at all possible remain in your vehicle and drop your children on the sidewalk –not out of the left side of the car.

- If you have baggage, please park and come inside.
- Never leave your vehicle unattended in the drop lane.
- When picking up in the afternoon, please form three lines in the circle. This will mean that cars in the left and right lanes may put their tires in the grass. The circle widens as you proceed. The goal is to get as many cars as possible in the queue so that Fleetwood is not blocked.
- PLEASE USE BLINKERS to indicate your intention. Drivers of oncoming cars and those directing traffic need to know what you are thinking!

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CHAPEL SIDE

- When dropping off in the morning, pull as far forward as possible. In the afternoon this is particularly important. If there is no room in the queue for your vehicle, remain on Fleetwood and pull into the line when you are able.



EVERYONE

SAVE THE DATE

Our annual Back-to-School Fellowship Picnic and Gryphon Growler will be held **Friday, September 9th**. Plan to bring your family and join us for a good time together! More details to come.

STUDENT ABSENCES/PICK-UPS

If your child will be absent, please send an email by 9am to ncsoffice@newcovenantschools.org indicating the reason for their absence. If you need to pick up a student early for an appointment, email the time you need your student in the lobby. An early notice allows us to have your student ready causing less interruption in the classroom. A parent or guardian must sign out all non-driving students and if they are returning to school, they must be signed back in by the parent. Parents who wish for their child to drive themselves to a

medical or dental appointment during instructional time (a scheduled class period), regardless of grade, must provide written permission for each occasion. Driving students are required to sign in and out at the lobby desk.

GRYPHON OUTFITTERS

The school store is open each Thursday from 2:30-3:30pm when school is in session. For any questions, please contact **Lara Haupricht** at Gryphonstore@newcovenantschools.org

RIDE SHARING

Be sure to update Facts Family Portal regarding who can pick up your child. If someone comes to pick up your child and you have not given them permission in Facts Family Portal, we will be calling you to confirm the dismissal. To indicate who can pick up your child, log into Facts Family Portal, and go to: School - Web Forms - Family Demographic Form

Transportation - Transportation Form. Enter those individuals who are allowed to transport your child. Click save when finished. (If your child is getting picked up early, a notice to the office is required.)

DOWNLOAD THE APP

The new NCS Gryphons App is here! Download the app to have lunch ordering, grades, schedules, announcements, financials, and so much more at your fingertips. *Please be sure to turn on notifications, which will allow the school to quickly get important school closures and announcements to families in addition to emails.* Find it on the App Store at New Covenants Schools.

SPORTS SCORES 8/19

JV Volleyball lost 0-2
Varsity Volleyball won 3-0
Varsity Soccer won 4-0
All vs Grace Christian
(Mechanicsville)



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You know them as truth, goodness and beauty. We embedded them into our Portrait of the Graduate: A New Covenant Graduate is a lover of truth, goodness and beauty.

If something is transcendent, it is ultimate. It exists and it is pursued for its own sake. There is no further end beyond it. It is not a means to an end or of utilitarian value. It is valuable in and of itself. It is objective and exists outside of us. These three are fundamental to reality because they are properties of God himself. God doesn't just know truth, he is truth itself; God doesn't just do good things, he is goodness itself; God doesn't just have beauty, he is beauty.

Truth, goodness and beauty are expressions of the divine nature and

they characterize the world he made —his creation, his making, his poem. Fundamentally, what it means to be human is simply this: humans are ordered to communion with reality. We are made for the world as it is. In fact, truth, goodness, and beauty are three separate ways in which the reality of God's world is apprehended. When these are present in our lives we say that we are achieving the fullness of human flourishing. Late English philosopher Roger Scruton says:

The experience of beauty, for example, tells us that we are at home in the world, and that the world is already ordered in our perceptions as a place fit for the lives of beings like us. Our need for beauty is not something that we could lack and still be fulfilled as people. It is a need arising

from our condition. We can wander through the world alienated or we can find our home here, coming to rest in harmony with others and ourselves.

If we live in a world that is fixed and stable, a world that is fundamentally ordered by truth, goodness, and beauty, it should be perfectly obvious that the education of children should follow a path driven by a pedagogy that precisely matched what a young human being requires to achieve the fullness of life. It should be a pedagogy of truth, goodness and beauty.

Truth answers the question, what should I know? The pedagogical means to getting there initially is through feeding the child's natural proclivity to wonder and curiosity. When we learn the truth, we say that we have

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overcome ignorance. Good teachers do this. Good teachers are always interesting people. Pursuing truth is an avenue to pursuing God.

Goodness answers the question, what should I do? What kind of actions do I pursue? A human being created in Christ Jesus is designed for doing the good. Thus we train children in moral virtues. Where would we find those? At New Covenant we start with the Ten Commandments. When we act in goodness, we say that we have overcome vice. Acting well, doing good, is an avenue to pursuing God.

My colleagues and I spent a great deal of time during in-service reflecting on this third one, the beautiful. This responds to the question, what should I love? Or what should I desire or enjoy? At this point, many folks might take a knee and just say, you know, beautiful things are nice, but they tend to be expensive. Beauty is optional. We say no. Nurturing and satisfying the innate desire for beauty is fundamental to education because it is fundamental to flourishing human beings.

It is often the case that something that is beautiful has no practical value, and because of that, it is not necessary. Truth, goodness and beauty are, in the end, identical, being separate ways in which a single, positive reality is rationally apprehended. They are like the fingers on your hand, each a distinct digit, but ultimately connected at the base. Put another way, if you strive for truth and goodness, but believe for whatever reason that beauty is optional, you have betrayed the former.

There are more reasons to press the point. As postmodernity has progressed, we are witnessing a surge in individualism and relativism, a worldview that embraces

truth-to-me as normal and which is as individuated as individuals themselves. It is as though each individual is his own story. It installs individual utility deep within as the controlling commitment to self-fulfillment. It is not too surprising to discover that students wired this way are not hostile to faith because they are no

longer threatened by its exclusive claims. It simply doesn't matter that your truth claims conflict with mine.

It is precisely this controlling attitude that is resistant to the older conventions of rationality and logic, the bedrock of classical apologetics. It's not that Lewis' arguments in, say, *Mere Christianity*, are not sound, it's just that no one cares any longer.

Culture has moved students deeper into the realm of the affections, the desires, the loves, well beneath the head. Success in our endeavor will require us to aim lower. We must adjust to the fact that education is a process of formation – *in-formation* – a task that is concerned with shaping a kind of person.

Such a process requires us to intrude into the realm of the imagination, the desires, the affections. A student will grow up to be what he wants to be. That is, he will likely obey his strongest desires, which is why education must seek to cultivate proper notions of beauty—that which should be desired. We become what we love, and what we love is not shaped by mere cognition. The competition for the affections is stronger than ever before, given that technology so powerfully privatizes the world of the individual and caters so powerfully and precisely to the individuated desires of the consumer.

I don't make my living criticizing other schools, public or private, but I will say this.

Our society is being stampeded—perhaps by a minority—but by a strong current that is in denial of reality. Truth has fallen in the street. Pursuing the good especially for others has been replaced with narcissism and self-love. And beauty has been replaced with the ugly, in our architecture, in our art, in our music, in our movies. Our children have been manipulated to love these things. I can assure you that the false, the bad, and the ugly is loose and running rampant in public education here and across the country.

If you wished to summarize a classical, Christian education in just a few short words, you could characterize it as a pursuit of the true, the good and the beautiful. This is a cord of three strands that is not easily broken. Today, students are told that they are not God's making, God's poem. They are their own self-written poem, free to restructure God's poem as they wish. Let us remember that as children of God's making we are created to pursue the true, the good and the beautiful.



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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