



*Middle School cross country boys' and girls' teams off to a fast start at the home meet last Tuesday.*

THE NEWSLETTER OF  
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

# QUID NOVI

SEPTEMBER 29, 2025  
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## THE BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

*by John Heaton, Headmaster*

It's a curious but time-honored tradition. Each year on the Friday closest to October 4 we gather parents and students with a menagerie of pets and other domesticated creatures for the annual "blessing of the animals." And it's a hoot! Dogs bark. Children laugh and share with their friends. A few bearded dragons remain motionless in their cages. Cats cower in their carriers. Once I blessed a goat which had failed in breeding, and within the year the nanny had twin kids! On the other hand, I blessed a milk cow, which within a few months tragically

expired. The whole business prompted a friend of mine to quip, "Is this really necessary? Who made this up anyway?"

Of course it's not "necessary," but I'm always up for a good time with my students. It does, however, run a little deeper. So many of our holiday traditions are freighted with liturgies which, if you stop to think about it, persist in spite of the fact that the underlying reasons no longer hold sway in our imaginations. Kids in costumes holler, "Trick or treat!" with no thought for how or why the annual

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## WHAT'S NEW?

### Volunteer Projects



From time to time New Covenant has a few projects that are not included in the normal scope of work. These projects require extra from our staff and demand time that is not available on a normal workday. You may have the desire and skill to help us with some of these jobs. Each of these projects will require 3 - 4 people.

1. Building a ramp onto an existing shed
2. Cutting through a concrete sidewalk and installing electricity to a shed
3. Repairing or rebuilding the garden boxes in the Gryphon Garden
4. Clearing brush from a tree line on our property

If you would like to help with one of these projects, contact Tiffany Fulcher at [tfulcher@newcovenantschools.org](mailto:tfulcher@newcovenantschools.org).

THINK. LEARN. LOVE. LIVE.

# H O N O R A R I A

## NCS COMMUNITY HITS ITS STRIDE IN THE VIRGINIA 10-MILER & 4-MILER

Congratulations to our students, staff, and parents who participated in the Virginia 10-Miler and 4-Miler this weekend!

### AWARD WINNERS

Tinley Tucker	1st, Ages 9-14, 4 Mile
Gia Barlow	2nd, Ages 15-19, 4 Mile
Max Fuhr	3rd, Ages 9-14, 4 Mile
Jesus Castaneda	5th, Ages 70-74, 10 Mile
Sue Barlow	1st, Grand Masters, 10 Mile

### OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Kelly Hoskins	10 mile
John-Paul Gauger	10 Mile
Michael Seckman	10 Mile
Enoch Tan	10 Mile
Eli Rose	4 Mile
Graham Schaap	4 Mile
James Harrison	4 Mile
Eleanore Seckman	4 Mile

## STEWARDSHIP YOUR FINANCES

You must have been busy ...

But there is still time to hear about a way to have a voice in where and how your state tax dollars are spent. Informational meetings will be held **each Wednesday during October at 7:45am** to discuss the VA 529 savings plan which offers above the line tax deductions and the scholarship foundation which gives tax credits to donors. The meeting will last about 30 minutes and then you can get to work. Sign up here to reserve your spot: <http://bit.ly/4p4aVs8>.

Please make time in your schedule to attend one of these meetings. It will not be a waste of your time!



## SPORTS RESULTS

### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

<b>7/8 BOYS' SOCCER</b>	
North Cross	0
New Covenant	7
<b>7/8 GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL</b>	
New Covenant	2
North Cross	0

### TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

<b>VARSITY MEN'S SOCCER</b>	
New Covenant	9
Hargrave	0
<b>7/8 GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL</b>	
Westover Christian	0
New Covenant	2
<b>JV GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL</b>	
Westover Christian	0
New Covenant	2
<b>VARSITY WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL</b>	
Westover Christian	0
New Covenant	3
<b>CROSS COUNTRY</b>	
MS Girls	1st Place
MS Boys	4th Place
Varsity Boys	5th Place

### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

<b>VARSITY MEN'S SOCCER</b>	
VES	2
New Covenant	3
<b>JV GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL</b>	
New Covenant	1
Eastern Mennonite	2
<b>VARSITY WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL</b>	
New Covenant	3
Eastern Mennonite	1

### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

<b>VARSITY MEN'S SOCCER</b>	
Fishburne Military	1
New Covenant	9
<b>JV GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL</b>	
Chatham Hall	0
New Covenant	2
<b>VARSITY WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL</b>	
Chatham Hall	0
New Covenant	3

### CROSS COUNTRY INDIVIDUAL TOP PLACEMENTS—9/23/25

Michael Seckman	4th Place (of 85)
Gia Barlow	7th Place (of 82)
Avery Hinson	4th Place (of 82)
Tinley Tucker	3rd Place (of 59)

# E T C E T E R A

## EVERYONE

### SCHOOL PICTURE DAY

HJ Photo will be on campus **Tuesday, September 30** to take individual and classroom photos. **Please make every effort to have your student on time and do not plan any appointments on this day, if possible.** All photo ordering will be done online, and nothing is needed from you in advance. Senior class, individual, formal and casual portraits will also be taken on this day, so please make sure to have a casual outfit in accordance with dress code guidelines, Tuesday's school uniform, and your cap and gown.

### LUNCH ORDERING

Today is the last day to order lunch for 2nd quarter (**October 14 - Dec 17**). If you order milk and other lunch options by quarter, prices are greatly discounted. Please remember that quarterly orders only appear on the lunch calendar the first week of the quarter but apply to the entire quarter. Please log in to your FACTS app or desktop account to place your orders. Pizza does not have to be preordered unless you require a gluten-free or dairy-free pizza. Questions? Refer to the Lunch Times that was sent home recently, or contact **Debbie Williamson** at [dwilliamson@newcovenantschools.org](mailto:dwilliamson@newcovenantschools.org).

### BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Parents of students in K-8th grade are invited to bring household pets for a blessing on **Friday, October 3**. Please bring Grammar School students' caged or leashed pets to the Bell Tower area at 2:00pm. Middle School will follow at 2:40pm. If you plan to take your student directly from the area, please make sure to sign out the student with their teacher.

### END OF QUARTER

Mark your calendars for the end of the

1st quarter on **Wednesday, October 8**. Report cards will be emailed to parents on **Wednesday, October 22**.

### LOST AND FOUND

The Lost and Found bins are purged at the end of each quarter. Be sure to check for any lost items before **Wednesday, October 8**.

### PRE-K/KINDERGARTEN 2026-27

Now is the time to submit a new-student application if you intend for your child to begin Pre-K or Kindergarten for the 2026-27 school year. We offer early enrollment to our current families. Sibling applications for all other grades are also being accepted. **Please note, if your child is currently enrolled in our Pre-K program you do not need to re-apply.**

Your application for a new sibling will receive priority in our admissions process until **Friday, October 17**, but we encourage you to apply today! Application is easy. Simply log into your FACTS Family Portal on a desktop and select *Apply/Enroll* on the left side menu then choose *Application*.

School tours are also open. If you would like to learn more about our Pre-K-12 program or know another family who is interested in our school, please use this link to schedule a tour <https://www.newcovenantschools.org/admissions/schedule-a-tour/> or contact **Eliza Olson** in the admissions office by emailing [eolson@newcovenantschools.org](mailto:eolson@newcovenantschools.org).

### CONCESSIONS MANAGER NEEDED

Parents or high school students interested in managing concession during the winter season can apply by emailing **Andrea Adams** at [aadams@newcovenantschools.org](mailto:aadams@newcovenantschools.org). Shifts would be 3-5 hours at a time depending on the

number of games, and managers would be helped by parent volunteers.

### MUSIC LESSONS

Allegro Music is now offering on-site lessons for saxophone and clarinet! Please visit [www.allegromusic.school](http://www.allegromusic.school) or text (610) 350-1780 for info.

### MEN'S RETREAT

This year's Men's Retreat will be held on **November 14-15**. Watch for more details to come.

### NURSE'S CLINIC

The nurse's clinic will be open daily starting at 8:30am. Prior to this time, the clinic will be available for medication drop-offs, parent meetings, and emergencies only.

### GRYPHON FAN STORE

Show your school spirit by getting something from the new Gryphon Fan Store. All purchases made are shipped directly to your house. Click here: [bit.ly/NCSFanStore](http://bit.ly/NCSFanStore).

### MOMS IN PRAYER

Please join us this Wednesday from 2:00-3:00pm in the chapel for a time of prayer for our students, teachers, staff, and community.

## SCHOOL OF RHETORIC

### DC TRIP

The School of Rhetoric will be taking its annual trip to Washington DC on **Thursday, October 2 - Friday, October 3**. For more information, see email from Maria Hayden sent today (9/29).

### SOR COFFEE HOUSE

On **Tuesday, October 7**, we'll cover practical ways to reduce college costs and to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) that opens **October 1** for the class of 2026.

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scavenging of the neighborhood came to be. It's just fun. When gift-wrapped boxes alone would be enough, we had to add stockings "by the chimney with care," but few remember why this is now mandatory. Think about it. What would Christmas be without stockings stuffed with whatever a sock can hold? And who had the great idea that a live nativity scene would be appropriate in church anyway? That would have been St. Francis of Assisi who was the first to arrange for it in 1223.

But blessing the animals? What's this about? Yes; that's Francis, too. First, it's about having fun, but of course, there's more to it than you might think. The first Friday in October is his feast day, a day we mark in the New Covenant academic cycle. Francis was born into wealth, served in the military during a time of turbulence in the Italian body politic, and eventually came to faith in Christ. His was a total conversion. Well-connected as he was, he shocked not only his parents, but the entire community when he renounced his inherited wealth and founded what we now know as the Franciscan order of monks.

The world was not particularly in a frame of mind to listen to him. Then, as now, the Gospel fell on many deaf ears, and Francis was reported to have taken his preaching to the animals in the forest. While that might not be completely historically accurate, nonetheless, Francis and his order were notable for shunning the comforts of wealth, choosing to live in simplicity and embracing a self-induced poverty in imitation of Christ. As such he was more closely attuned to the natural world, with its goodness and beauty, which were themes of his ministry. The English hymn, "All Creatures of our God and King" is based on a poem he wrote, which first appeared in the *Public School Hymn Book* in 1919 (imagine that!).

Francis came to be remembered in rural settings by those whose lives were more closely dependent upon livestock. Annual prayers for abundant crops and harvest along with prayer for healthy animals are common in the Anglican tradition. With this sensibility comes the annual ritual, writ small for children, in which we affirm man's dominion over the creation, and in which we embrace our responsibility to care for and maintain it.

If you are in your first year of association with New Covenant, please plan to join us with your pet this Friday in the tower courtyard for the annual Blessing of the Animals!

If you're coming . . .

- All pets welcome; dogs must remain on leashes.
- Any domesticated animals are welcome, including chickens, ducks, pigs, and horses!
- All animals must be those that are in the care of our children.
- Grammar School begins at 2:00pm.
- Middle School begins at 2:40pm.
- If you plan to take your student directly from the area, please make sure to sign out the student with their teacher.



# QUID NOVI

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CLASS OF 2026 • John Gauger, Nancy Hall, Chris Misiano, Sam Mizener, Tom Rogers, Anne Umbarger  
CLASS OF 2027 • Dusty Miller, Court Shipman  
CLASS OF 2028 • Neil Bonhert, Scott McCurley, Leann Perault, Leland Seckman

## EX OFFICIO

John Heaton–Headmaster  
Davidson Morse–School Warden

## 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

FUNDRAISING REPORT			
	GOAL	RECEIVED	
Annual Fund	\$300,000	\$185,000	
General Scholarship	\$10,000	\$2,535	
Scholarship Foundation	\$300,000	Pledged Received	\$154,000 \$137,675

Please consider New Covenant Schools in your giving. All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent that the law provides. Donations may be given through cash, check, stock transfers, or IRA distributions. Contact **Dayna Renalds** in the Development Office for more information.