



Scenes from the Middle School Fall Festival held just before the Thanksgiving Break.

THE NEWSLETTER OF
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

QUID NOVI

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WE TEACH WHO WE ARE

by Kathryn Martin, Middle School Principal

When people are asked to name the five most influential persons in their lives, two or more of them are often teachers. I can say this is true for me. I learned to love history from Dr. Putney and to love my students from Dr. Sherman. Some of us can even remember when a teacher's comment or question began the whisper that led to our lives' callings. In her essays in *What Is a Teacher?*, Louise Cowan reflects on the importance of such a calling: "Teachers are consecrated persons who have made the choice to lead others into learning. If they are to lead others into learning, they must continue themselves to be learners."

Years ago, I decided to evaluate my own teaching

by taking a video of myself instructing my then-4th grade class. When recording day arrived, I felt well-prepared with robust content, interesting anecdotes, and plenty of enthusiasm. At the height of the discussion, I asked a question meant to illumine the big idea. Hands went up, a student answered my brilliant question correctly, and I felt satisfied.

And then I watched the video.

What I noticed surprised me. At the crescendo of my lesson, three boys in the back row had created eraser-bots and were engaged in an all-out war. It reminded me of a truth I have tried to remember since: I teach students first and my subject second. Even in my 28th year at New Covenant, my growth as a

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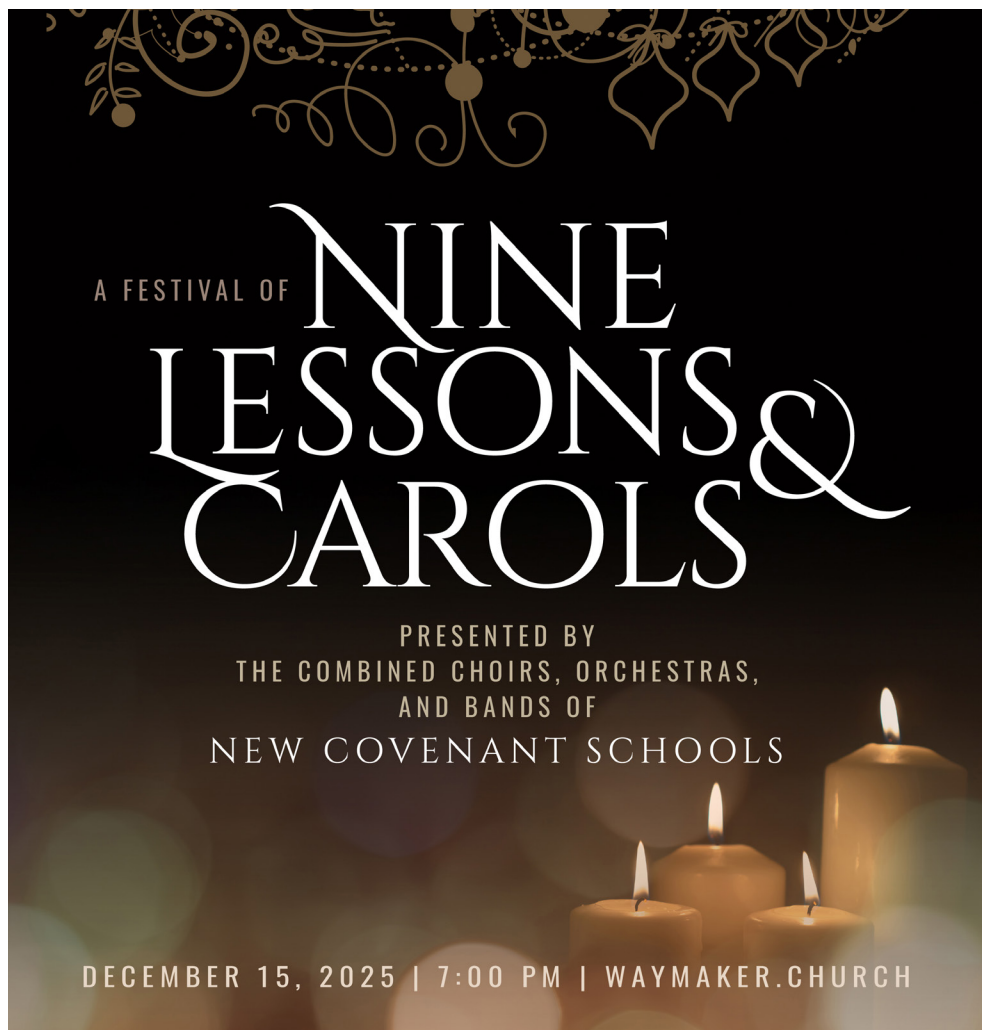
WHAT'S NEW?

Give the Gift of a Commemorative Brick

Gifts come in all shapes and sizes. New Covenant continues to offer personalized engraved bricks for that unique gift or special stocking stuffer. Our commemorative bricks are nice way to honor or memorialize a loved one and leave a legacy on the campus of New Covenant Schools. The bricks are placed under the bell tower and in the walkways around the Workman Field House for others to read and acknowledge. Each standard brick size is 4"x8" and is available for a contribution of \$500. Inscription space is three lines with 18 characters per line. For more information, contact **Dayna Renalds** at drenalds@newcovenantschools.org or 434-847-8313.



H O N O R A R I A



A FESTIVAL OF **NINE LESSONS & CAROLS**

PRESENTED BY
THE COMBINED CHOIRS, ORCHESTRAS,
AND BANDS OF
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

DECEMBER 15, 2025 | 7:00 PM | WAYMAKER.CHURCH

INCLEMENT WEATHER / SCHOOL CLOSURE POLICY



Winter weather is quickly approaching, please review the following:

If school is closed or delayed, Headmaster Heaton will make the call no later than 6:00am. If school is delayed, it will always be a 2-hour delay. In such a case, do not drop students off before 9:45am, we cannot guarantee supervision before then.

You can find out about any changes in our schedule in three places: 1) Check your email—Mr. Heaton will send a “Gentle Folk” notice indicating the plan for the day; 2) Check closures/delays on WSET website or TV, which is the only media outlet we utilize; 3) Call the school weather hotline at 434-847-5707.



FUNDRAISING REPORT

	GOAL	RECEIVED	
Annual Fund	\$300,000	\$232,700	
General Scholarship	\$10,000	\$2,650	
Scholarship Foundation	\$300,000	Pledged	\$291,200
		Received	\$190,942

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.

EXCETERA

EVERYONE

MS PLAY AUDITIONS

Auditions are scheduled this week for *Beauty and the Beast* and *Little Mermaid*. Grades 5 and 6 will be **Tuesday, December 2**. Grades 7 and 8 will be **Friday, December 5**. Both auditions will be from **3:00-4:30pm** in the Chapel. Auditions will include acting and singing. Students should prepare for the singing portion of the audition by practicing “Do You Want To Build a Snowman?” from *Frozen* and “A Million Dreams” from *The Greatest Showman*. For any questions, contact **Ethan Roberts**, eroberts@newcovenantschools.org.

5TH & 6TH GRADE CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Join us on **Monday, December 8** at **9:00am** to hear our 5th and 6th grade choir, band, and orchestra perform their Christmas concert.

LUNCH ORDERING

Third-quarter lunch ordering will open **Monday, December 1** and will cover lunch dates from January 5 to March 12. SOR students off campus all day during J-Term may still order quarterly options; their account will be credited for the days they are gone. Questions? Refer to the *Lunch Times* article [here](#), or contact **Debbie Williamson** at dwilliamson@newcovenantschools.org.

TEACHERS' FAVORITES

Each year faculty and staff fill out a favorites sheet listing interests, hobbies, favorite foods, etc. If you would like a copy of a teacher's favorites list, please

check the resource documents section of the app, or stop by the lobby desk and ask to see the Favorites Book.

LESSONS & CAROLS

Join us for our annual service of Lessons & Carols on **Monday, December 15** at **7:00pm** at Waymaker Church (1650 Hooper Road, Forest, VA). This special program will feature the combined orchestras, bands, and choirs of students in grades 7-12. Childcare is available for children birth to four years old. Cookies and coffee will be provided before the service. All are welcome!

DELAYED START TIME

New Covenant Schools will open on **Tuesday, December 16** at **9:00am**. Students should arrive no earlier than 8:30am.

CHRISTMAS DRESS DAY

On **Thursday, December 18**, all students may wear a Christmas themed shirt or a red and/or green shirt and jeans or uniform bottoms with closed-toe and closed-heel shoes. Grammar School girls may choose to wear a Christmas dress.

LOST AND FOUND

All items left unclaimed in the Lost and Found will be purged and donated on **December 18**. When visiting our campus during any of our events, please take the time to check for any of your family's personal items.

CHRISTMAS BREAK

The beginning of Christmas Break is on **Thursday, December 18**. We will have an 11:00am dismissal on the 18th and school

will break for Christmas through **Friday, January 2** with students returning on **Monday, January 5**.

TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) for 2026-27 school year is accepting applications through **January 15, 2026**. For more details, refer to the email sent **Monday, October 27** from **Tiffany Fulcher**.

GIVENS BOOKS & LITTLE DICKENS

This holiday season, as you plan your gift list, consider supporting our school library through purchases made at Givens. Here's how the program works: when your family (grandparents, too!) buy goods of any kind from Givens and mention NCS, we receive three percent of your pre-tax purchase total, which is given annually as a credit to our library. Please make sure that you mention New Covenant Schools to the cashier as you check out, and your purchase will be recorded.

GRYPHON FAN STORE

Show your school spirit by getting something from the new Gryphon Fan Store. All purchases made are shipped directly to your home. Click [here](#) > [New Covenant Schools Gryphons Store](#).

GRYPHON BASKETBALL FAN STORE

Show your school spirit by getting something from the new Gryphon Basketball Fan Store. All purchases made are shipped directly to your home. Click [here](#) > [NCS Basketball Store](#).



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teacher continues.

Classical, Christian education's most notable feature is the formative work it accomplishes in human beings over time. This applies as much to faculty as to students. At New Covenant teachers serve as exemplars, not because they know everything, but because they are committed to the highest aspirations of teaching—to becoming. Just as our students are cultivated in the Portrait of the Graduate, our teachers aspire to the Portrait of a Faculty Member.

Our portrait includes seven dispositions of the master teacher. A New Covenant teacher:

1. **Practices a genuine commitment to Christ and his church.**
2. **Finds teaching to be a deeply satisfying vocation.**
3. **Possesses a believable commitment to the school.**
4. **Exercises benevolence in the use of authority.**
5. **Cultivates authentic, professional relationships with students, parents, and colleagues.**
6. **Nurtures an appetite for the true, the good, and the beautiful, guiding students to the same.**
7. **Demonstrates pedagogical mastery within the unique tradition of Classical, Christian education.**

New teachers are introduced to this portrait on their first day of onboarding. We discuss the rich fabric of faith within the New Covenant community and the role of teaching described by Claudia Allums, Associate Director of the Dallas Institute for Humanities and Culture, as the “daunting and delightful work of calling forth from students a fresh vision of who they can become.” We talk about the mission of the school and our part in its culture. New teachers quickly recognize that culture is shaped daily by their tone, attentiveness, and habits.

We don't expect new teachers to be experts in Classical, Christian education, but as Chris Perrin, founder of *Classical*

Academic Press, said, “It's more about loving the mission and seeking to know it better and better.” We expect them to cultivate curiosity, ask questions, and tackle every year as a deepening apprenticeship in a rich and living heritage.

We talk about authority that grows from a moral bearing toward knowledge—gravitas conveyed through actions and words, and a willingness at times to admit ignorance. Such authority must never be used as a weapon. This naturally leads to conversations about humility, reminding us that students respond best to teachers who carry knowledge with both confidence and kindness.

We also talk about how we each bring ourselves to everything we do in the school community. Teaching at New Covenant is not a performance but a participation; our character and inner life inevitably spill into our classrooms. Thus, we discuss the importance of working to remedy our own defects while intentionally building genuine relationships with students, parents, and colleagues. We talk about the sobering and hopeful truth that we teach who we are. As we grow, our students benefit. The formation we pursue is never for ourselves alone; it becomes a gift our students receive day by day.

As these conversations unfold, one truth rises to the surface: the work of teaching is never merely external. It is not simply about techniques or classroom management but about the kind of people we are becoming. Everything we discuss—mission, authority, relationships, virtue—points back to the inner life of the teacher.

Parker Palmer, author of *Courage to Teach*, wrote, “Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or worse.” If we are to lead others into learning, we must be learners ourselves. Whether it is cultivating a love for the good, true, and beautiful or deepening our pedagogical practices, we seek to become what we want our students to be. Most of that becoming is solitary, personal cultivation outside the classroom—and so it should be.

In *Letters to Greek Young Men on the Reading of Literature*, St. Basil wrote, “To praise virtue in public with brilliant words . . . while in private preferring pleasures to temperance and self-interest to justice, finds an analogy on the stage.” A divided life, he warns, pursues the appearance rather than the reality of virtue, which is “the very height of injustice.”

If we, as teachers, are to be models worth emulating, we must do more than talk about virtue and the life of the mind. We must embody it.

In the end, this is why teaching is a vocation, rather than merely a job. Long after our students leave our classrooms, they may remember a question we asked, a moment of kindness, or a glimpse of conviction that helped awaken something in them. And perhaps someday, when they are asked to name the most influential people in their lives, they will think of a Mr. Deneen or a Ms. Marken from New Covenant—someone whose life, as much as their lessons, helped them hear the whisper of their own life's calling.

QUID NOVI

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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