



Varsity Gryphon Women take a win, 42-33, against Timberlake Christian on Dec. 16.

THE NEWSLETTER OF  
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

# QUID NOVI

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## EMBRACING THE SEASONS—LIFE IN THE SCHOOL OF RHETORIC

by Erin H. Uminn, Principal, School of Rhetoric

As we gather during Christmastime, I am joyful in anticipation for the coming winter months. The twelfth day of Christmas will be celebrated tomorrow, January 6th, and twelfth night parties will dot the globe just as we celebrated New Year's Eve on December 31st. In Scandinavian countries, where some of my ancestors hailed from a century ago, the people settle in to appreciate small joys such as light, warmth, food, and company to weather the cold and snow. It is not a season to simply "get through," rather, it is embraced.

We often think of the winter months as dormant, and I have, admittedly, thought this way over the years. Winter is when everything is sleeping, right?

However, I have come to learn that it is anything but dormant! In January, my yard is peppered with a menagerie of bluebirds, cardinals, swallows, and more, flitting and fluttering like they are hanging out at a hotel along the row of green thujas that line our property. Three types of woodpeckers show up daily to enjoy the suet my husband leaves out for them. The squirrels dig for their hidden acorns and craft secret ground nests with leaves and newspaper. We've even had a lovely mole aerate our front lawn this month, and we pay him with deadening, underground tree roots that house the insects he loves. Note the bit of sarcasm in my voice, but also note my interest and admiration for Mr. Mole's work,

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## WHAT'S NEW?

### New Podcast: Pursuit of Beauty



Be sure to listen and share New Covenant's newest podcast episode which has been sent electronically with today's Quid Novi. In this month's edition, Headmaster Heaton interviews **Derek Brooks** of Benedictus Art and discusses the pursuit of beauty and its necessity within the school context. In a survey taken by Independent School Management, parents ranked safety, curriculum and a caring faculty as the highest drivers in their consideration of a school. Only 16% indicated that an attractive campus or attention to beauty influenced their choice. Such surveys naturally "harvest" top-of-mind issues, but in this podcast we share a fascinating discussion on the importance of beauty in the life of an academic community and the societal pressures that tend to suppress it and shape our imaginations. Mr. Brooks has been engaged by the Headmaster to offer guidance in the development of an art collection that will both beautify the campus and serve as an invitation to students to engage with art in various mediums. The podcast can be found on the schools' website and also on Podbean under the title "Gentle Folk."

THINK. LEARN. LOVE. LIVE.

# HONORARIA

## SOR BRINGS THE DRAMA FOR THE SHAKESPEARE COMPETITION

**O**n Thursday, December 11 students competed in the annual Shakespeare competition. This competition has students present a Shakesperean monologue to a group of judges. The winner goes on to represent New Covenant at the regional Shakespeare competition in February. This year's winner was **Ruby Helm**. Second place was **Ashe Smith**. Third place was **Wyatt Copenhaver**. Congratulations to all who participated.



Ruby Helm



Ashe Smith



Wyatt Copenhaver



Judges evaluate a noted Shakespeare monologue.

## J-TERM OFFERINGS FOR SCHOOL OF RHETORIC STUDENTS

Below is a listing of the course students are able to select and participate in over the next week and a half.

### HISTORY AND TRAVEL

- Study abroad trip to Rome, the Vatican, Pompeii, and Sorrento
- "The 99% Invisible" Lynchburg – **Mrs. Brandi Marchant**

### COMMON ARTS

- Blacksmithing Intensive – Vector Space with **Mr. Chris Deneen**
- Woodworking Course – Vector Space with **Mr. Chris Deneen**

### CUISINE

- Around the World in Seven Dishes – Various staff
- Geography of Tea: Camellia Sinensis Across the Globe – **Mrs. Lauren Helm**

### GRAPHIC DESIGN/TECHNOLOGY

- Gryphon Design Group – **Mr. Mark Hernandez**

### THEOLOGY

- Go Into the Desert – **Mr. Kevin Rhea**

### LOGIC

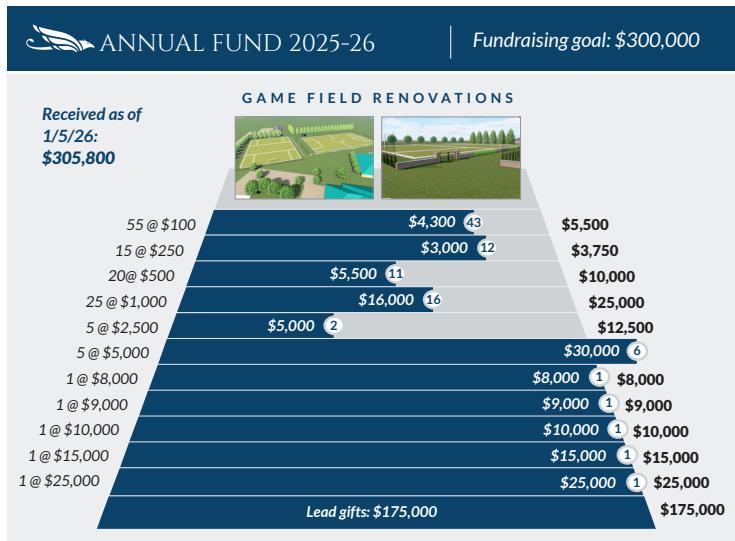
- Puzzling Under Pressure – **Ms. Starlet Baker**

### ART

- Hooked on Crochet – **Mrs. Amy McCarty**
- Give My Regards to Broadway – **Mrs. Gail Mitchell**

### POLITICAL SCIENCE

- The Supreme Court in Session – **Dr. Erin Uminn**



### FUNDRAISING REPORT

	GOAL	RECEIVED
Annual Fund	\$300,000	\$305,800
General Scholarship	\$10,000	\$2,990
Scholarship Foundation	\$300,000	<i>Pledged</i> \$443,700 <i>Received</i> \$423,084

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.

# ET CETERA

## EVERYONE

### HOMECOMING

We hope all our alumni will join us for Homecoming 2026! This special event will take place this **Friday, January 9**. Some of the evening highlights are a special reception for alums at **5:30pm** (this includes a special gift for all those attending). After the reception, come help us cheer on the Gryphons! Both Men's and Women's Varsity teams will be taking on the Lynchburg Home School teams. (Women's game time at 6:00pm; men's game time at 7:30pm).

### 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.

### CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT CONTRACT

In order to simplify reenrollment, New Covenant uses a Continuous Enrollment

Contract for students, allowing them to be automatically enrolled each year until graduation without having to re-sign a contract. **PARENTS WILL NOT BE ASKED TO REENROLL FOR NEXT YEAR. The opt-out deadline for enrollment for the 2026-27 school year is February 1, 2026.** The Continuous Enrollment Fee of \$150 will be charged to your account in February if you do not opt out. Please contact **Linda Hackenbracht** at [lhackenbracht@newcovenantschools.org](mailto:lhackenbracht@newcovenantschools.org) if your plans for next school year have changed.

### MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

There will be no school **Monday, January 19** in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.

### ACADEMIC TESTING

Students in grades 2-8 will sit for CTP-5 testing **Tuesday, January 20** through **Friday, January 23**. Ninth grade students will test from **Wednesday, January 21** through **Friday, January 23**. Please help

your students have the best experience by bringing them to school on time, and avoiding unnecessary appointments and absences.

### SPELLING BEE

Parents are invited to attend the Middle School Spelling Bee on **Friday, January 9, at 8:15am** in the Moomaw Center where 40 finalists from grades 5-8 will compete for the honor of becoming our School Bee Champion and going on to represent New Covenant in the district bee!

### NO SCHOOL FOR SOR

The SOR will not have school on **Wednesday, January 14**.

### ALLEGRO MUSIC LESSONS

Allegro Music will offer on- and off-site music lessons and group classes this semester. There are openings for most instruments. Visit [www.AllegroMusic.School/Programs](http://www.AllegroMusic.School/Programs) or text (610) 350-1780 for info.



# NCS HOMECOMING 2026

*Join us for refreshments, visit with fellow alumni and faculty, and receive a free gift. Then cheer on our Gryphons to victory!*

8:15am	Alumni/Parent Reception in library
4:30pm	JV Boys' Basketball vs. Lynchburg Home School
5:30pm	Alumni Reception in the Epic Hallway
6:00pm	Varsity Women's Basketball vs. Lynchburg Home School
7:30pm	Varsity Men's Basketball vs. Lynchburg Home School

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churning my soil so effectively.

As we enter the new semester, we have an invitation to slow down, to observe, and consider all that the natural world, our studies, and our relationships give to and require of us. The third quarter is a respite in our academic calendar in some ways, before the busyness of spring, but it is also filled with its own joys. The school has the benefit of a longstanding, well-developed program, allowing for various features. In the 9th-12th grades, five features of the student experience stand out among many others:

- **Integrated Learning**—Disciplines, or subjects, are never isolated, siloed encounters. Students draw from their foundational knowledge in logic, rhetoric, and narrative and apply them to theology, literature, history, science, language, and math. Likewise, the skills that students develop in the SOR years, such as Harkness discussion and the six parts of rhetorical discourse, are peppered throughout the disciplines and built upon each year. Students actively apply observation, data collection, analysis, and synthesis in each course. An intentionally integrated learning experience allows students to see connections and patterns, guided by our gifted faculty.
- **Fine Arts**—As in previous grades, the fine arts remain essential in the SOR. Drama and art courses are offered by semester four days per week and music runs for a full year four days per week. Students may also earn credit for drama by participating in the Winter Play as a cast or tech member. Panache will present Roger and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* this winter, with over 40 cast and crew members participating.
- **Co-Curricular**—Students earn physical education credit by participating in the various seasonal sports offered at New Covenant at the JV and Varsity levels including soccer, tennis, volleyball, golf, basketball, track, and cross-country. During the winter months, our men's

and women's JV and Varsity basketball teams are active and thriving, with our Homecoming game set this Friday to welcome alumni back for a reception and fellowship. Students may also earn their physical education credit through a semester-long fitness and wellness course that focuses on personal fitness goals, up-to-date research and data on nutrition and mobility, and strength training.

- **Study Abroad**—Each academic year, students may choose to participate in fee-based, study abroad trip options that are carefully selected to supplement New Covenant Schools' program. Today, SOR faculty are currently enroute with 15 students and several parents to Rome and Sorrento for the next eight days. Next year, faculty members will travel to the Caribbean for a once-in-a-lifetime experience at the Roatan Institute of Marine Science. In the summer months, students also have the distinctive opportunity to travel to the Amazon in 2026 and our longstanding mission trip to Curim House in Nogales, Mexico in 2027.
- **J-Term**—January term, or J-Term, runs the first seven days after Christmas break. This term is a remarkable occasion for students to participate in delight-driven learning. The J-Term expands the New Covenant programming without expanding facilities or school days. Courses include: onsite blacksmithing and woodworking at Vector Space; exploring the culinary delights of various countries with hands-on cooking including an onsite restaurant day; diving into the rich history and culture of Lynchburg; engaging in a newly developed graphic design course for all grades; and participating in various classes on puzzles, religion, government, finances, fiber arts, languages, and outdoor adventuring. A number of students participate

in half- or full-day internships at a site of their choosing to meet the J-Term requirement.

In a school the size of New Covenant, students are known by their teachers and deepen the integration of the in-and-out-of-classroom experience. One of my favorite nights of the year is the Senior Thesis celebration, which takes place the final evening of senior thesis defense week. Faculty prepare and present short encomiums to each senior, highlighting student growth and talent throughout the years in the SOR. Parents attend and hear, often for the first time, how well teachers know their student—their strengths, their loves, and how their student will leave a permanent mark on NCS life and culture.

Therefore, I heartily invite you to join me as I slow down to enjoy each day and week of these coming months. Our students and faculty are enjoying monumental, if seemingly mundane, growth that is a hallmark of the New Covenant experience.

## 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