

Third graders held their annual Egyptian Day last week, donning the apparel of ancient Egypt and presenting their project studies to family, friends, and students. (Pictured: Mrs. Liu's class.)



THE NEWSLETTER OF  
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

# QUID NOVI

FEBRUARY 9, 2026  
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## WHAT WE ARE REALLY DOING HERE

by Kathryn Martin, Middle School Principal

When I was a university student in the '90s studying to be a teacher, schools like New Covenant were extremely rare. In fact, my educational philosophy course did not even recognize classical, Christian education as an option. As I attended my education classes, I had a deep sense that something important was being omitted from my training, though I could not articulate what it was.

It was around this time that I began hearing ninety-second radio segments entitled *Reflections on Education*. I recognized the voice as my former biology professor, Dr. Robert Littlejohn, who was also the founding headmaster of New Covenant Schools. During these radio spots, he spoke about classical, Christian

education (CCE). He used words like the *trivium*—a word I did not yet understand. He also talked about the importance of teaching students *how* to think. While I cannot recall the eloquence with which he communicated these ideas, I remember with clarity the moment I realized he was articulating precisely what I felt was missing from my own preparation for the classroom.

I found myself talking back to the radio: "YES. Exactly!" As I drove my '84 Chevy Malibu down Fort Avenue, I grabbed a pen and wrote the name of this school in the flyleaf of my Bible. I did not yet fully understand what I was hearing, but I knew I wanted to learn more about what this school was up to.

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## WHAT'S NEW?

### Ash Wednesday Service and Pancake Supper

On **Wednesday, February 18** you are cordially invited to our annual observance of Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. The service is offered with our affiliate parish, All Saints Church, with the Rev'd Davidson Morse presiding. We begin at 7:00am and parents, students, faculty and staff are welcome. It is a very early service and concludes promptly at 7:40am so that school staff can be about their regular morning duties. Many in our school community may be unfamiliar with our

church calendar and with this particular part of it. Beginning with Ash Wednesday, the season runs for 40 days through Holy Week, and is designed to create space in which we prepare for the great celebration of Easter. Comparatively speaking, Christmas is a 12-day celebration preceded by four weeks of Advent. Easter is a 40-day celebration preceded by six weeks of Lent! Yes, Easter is the greater festival. During Lent we practice prayer and fasting, and works of charity. This often

requires that we temporarily "give up" other things we normally enjoy, so that we might focus on the good of others, particularly those in need.

One more thing—you are also invited to a pancake supper on **Tuesday, February 17 at 6:30pm** in the Moomaw Center. This is free of charge, and requires that you register so we know many pancakes to cook! Let us know you are coming here: [bit.ly/NCSpancake2026](https://bit.ly/NCSpancake2026).

THINK. LEARN. LOVE. LIVE.

## HELM TAKES BEST NCS FINISH EVER IN SHAKESPEARE COMPETITION

**O**n Saturday, February 7, **Ruby Helm** competed in the annual Shakespeare Competition in Staunton, Virginia. This competition, sponsored by the English Speaking Union, brings together drama students from across Southwest Virginia. Representative schools included Covenant School, Charlottesville High School, Fluvanna High School, Regents School, and six others. Students are tasked with presenting a Shakespearean monologue and a sonnet. Students deliver these performances from the stage of the Blackfriars Theater and are judged by professionals in the field. The competition on Saturday was fierce. Judges were listening specifically for the delivery of the language and assessing minute movements of the body as actors connected with the material they were presenting. In the end, Ruby won third place, the best finish New Covenant Schools has ever had in this competition. Ruby also received a cash prize for her placement. *Congratulations, Ruby!*



## BREAKFAST WITH THE HEADMASTER

**Y**ou are cordially invited to join John Heaton for breakfast along with other New Covenant parents. These meals will be available at various times throughout the spring with the first one being this week! Meet us at the home of **Clifton and Jennifer Griffin** on **Wednesday, February 11 at 8:45am** for about an hour. Headmaster Heaton looks forward to visiting with each of you, answering questions, and sharing ways to support your child and participate in our school community. Please RSVP here: [bit.ly/HHbreakfast26](https://bit.ly/HHbreakfast26).



## SPRING ATHLETIC REGISTRATION

Our spring sport season begins next month. This year we plan to offer the following sports and age divisions:

### BOYS' LACROSSE

Jr. Gryphons (5th/6th), Middle School (7th-8th\*), Varsity Lacrosse (8th-12th)

### TRACK & FIELD

Coed Varsity (8th-12th)

### BOYS' TENNIS

Varsity (8th-12th)

### GIRLS' SOCCER

Jr. Gryphons (5th-6th), Middle School (7th-8th), Varsity (9th-12th)

### GOLF

Coed Varsity (8th-12th)

*\*Note on 8th-Grade Lacrosse: 8th-grade players may also have the option to join varsity for practices and games.*

Students must register to be placed on a team. If your Middle School or SOR student plans to participate, please complete the registration form by using the following link:

<https://www.newcovenantschools.org/athletic-sign-up-form/>

# E T C E T E R A

## EVERYONE

### VALENTINE'S DRESS DAY

Although St. Valentine's Day falls during Winter Break, students and faculty/staff are invited to celebrate by wearing a red, white and/or pink shirt with jeans or regular uniform bottoms **Wednesday, February 11**. As always, shoes must be closed-toe shoes and jeans must be free of rips and tears.

### PROGRESS REPORTS

Second quarter progress reports will not be sent due to the snow days; please check FACTS for current grades and reach out to teachers with any questions or concerns.

### WINTER BREAK

School will be closed for Winter Break from **Thursday, February 12** through **Monday, February 16**. Students return on **Tuesday, February 17**.

### SAVE THE DATE FOR HANDS & HEARTS

Our schoolwide service day will be **Wednesday, April 22**. Parents are welcome to work alongside students

completing tasks for area nonprofit groups. Watch for more information in the next few weeks.

### GENERATIONS DAY

Generations Day will be held on **Friday, March 13**. Grandparents and other special guests are invited to join students in class for the morning. **There will be an 11:00am dismissal on this day.**

### ASH WEDNESDAY

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, **February 18**. New Covenant Schools, with its affiliate parish, All Saints Church, will hold an early service at 7:00am for faculty, staff, and the school community. The service will conclude promptly at 7:40am to accommodate daily schedules. This well-attended tradition offers a meaningful way to begin the Lenten journey—please join us!

### PANACHE PRESENTS

The School of Rhetoric is proud to present *Cinderella*. Tickets are on sale now and may be purchased online at <https://www.newcovenantschools.org/ncs-tickets> or on the app under Forms. See the flyer

for show dates and times and a special invitation for Grammar School students to dress in your best royal attire to meet Cinderella, Prince Charming, and other cast members at select shows!

### ART FAIR / ART AND SCIENCE FAIR

Submissions for the Art Fair are due this **Wednesday, February 11**. Students in grades K-12 may submit two pieces of art in painting, mixed media, sculpture, photography, and/or film. Students' work in grades 4-12th will be in the judged art show. Artwork must be unframed and can be directly submitted to Mr. Dunaway or Miss Eshleman. For more details see the flyer in last week's QUID NOVI. The Art and Science Fair will take place on **Monday, March 9**.

### MOMS IN PRAYER

All moms are invited to this weekly meeting for a time of prayer. Come join us in this new year as we pray for our children and our school community. We meet **Wednesdays from 2:00-3:00pm** in the Marie Macdonald Chapel.



FUNDRAISING REPORT		
	GOAL	RECEIVED
Annual Fund	\$300,000	\$312,700
General Scholarship	\$10,000	\$53,070
Scholarship Foundation	\$300,000	Pledged Received \$463,700 \$440,511

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.

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Perhaps you are relatively new to the New Covenant community or have been here a while and find yourself, as I once did, trying to put words to what makes this place distinctive—what it is that we are really doing here. Recently, the Middle School faculty team reflected together on the philosophy and principles of classical, Christian education. Over the past twenty years, the Society for Classical Learning (SCL) has done much to articulate clear and coherent definitions of the broad contours of CCE—its goal, focus, curriculum, and pedagogy, or more simply stated, how we teach. Together, these principles give shape to both the *aim* of classical, Christian education and the *daily practices* that support it.

SCL identifies four pedagogical practices as hallmarks of CCE. Sharing them here may deepen your understanding of what New Covenant students experience every day:

**Teleological:** Classical, Christian education begins with the end in mind (the Greek work “telos” means “ends” or “purposes”). For us, that end is the cultivation of wisdom and virtue, because these are essential to human flourishing. We want our students to be virtuous in whatever college or career path they take.

**Formative:** Classical, Christian education addresses the heart as well as the mind. It awakens wonder and orders loves by orienting students toward what is real—toward what is true, good, and beautiful.

**Traditional:** Classical, Christian education follows a classical course of study that leverages rich and engaging materials. The liberal arts provide the form of the curriculum, while Scripture, the natural world, and the great works of human history and civilization supply its robust and enduring content.

**Relational:** Classical, Christian education calls teachers to lead as trusted guides who invite students to imitate them in their own growth and learning and who understand teaching as a form of discipleship.

These principles are borne out in the daily rhythms of our classrooms. As our headmaster recently noted, one

of the hallmarks of classical, Christian education is **memory**. In a profound sense, the cultivation of memory is the whole of education. Memorization shapes both intellect and character, fostering wisdom and virtue rather than mere recall. It trains attention, strengthens mental discipline, and supports deep learning. Language and ideas that have been committed to memory can be drawn upon in the moment, enriching thought and expression and sustaining lifelong learning.

Because memory forms the soil of the intellect and the heart, classical, Christian education makes generous use of **poetic and imitative knowledge** practices. These find expression in plays and reenactments, the re-creation of important scientific discoveries, logical engagement with great questions, the memorization and recitation of poems or historical speeches, and the imitation of great authors’ writing styles. Such imaginative practices invite students into the wonder of literature and the arts through disciplined memory and embodied participation.

These practices flourish within classrooms shaped by thoughtful instruction and purposeful dialogue. **Didactic and dialectic instruction** lie at the heart of our pedagogy, each expressing the relational and contemplative nature of true education. Didactic instruction, direct teaching of concepts and algorithms, sets before students worthy things such as stories, models, problems, and concepts for shared contemplation during which teachers delight in what students see and—with wisdom and patience—guide that vision toward greater clarity and depth. These practices are not mechanical; they are personal. They reflect the apprenticeship model for education and aim not merely to transfer information but to shape loves and understanding through a guided exploration of what is good. Dialectic instruction draws out students’ thoughts through careful questioning, training them not only to reason, but also to wonder—not only to respond, but to ask.

One of the most enduring hallmarks of CCE is **Socratic discussion**, which teaches the art of questioning. This is not merely

a technique for engagement, but a means of raising questions, evaluating ideas, and engaging with others’ reasoning for the purpose of cultivating habits of reason. When internalized, Socratic questioning becomes a habit of inquiry that serves students throughout a lifetime of learning.

When I think back almost 30 years to being that young teacher driving down Fort Avenue, straining to name what was missing from my education, I am grateful that our students and parents do not have to wonder in the same way. What once felt elusive to me is now well-articulated, practiced, and embodied in classrooms filled with memory, imitation, dialogue, and wonder.

My hope is that as you continue to grow in your understanding of classical, Christian education, you will also grow in confidence to trust the slow and formative work taking place each day, to be patient when progress is not immediately visible, and to remain committed to an education that values wisdom and virtue over efficiency or outcomes alone. Something real is happening here, something enduring, and it is worth the time, attention, and trust it requires through all seasons of the school calendar.

## QUID NOVI

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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John Heaton—Headmaster  
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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

TICKETS GO ON SALE FEB. 9

# Cinderella

## **Saturday Matinee Special!**

Beginning at 12:15pm, bring your camera and dress in your best royal attire to meet Cinderella, Prince Charming and other cast members! This special event is only available for tickets bought for shows on Saturday, February 28 at 1pm and Saturday, March 7 at 1pm.

## **SOR Night!**

Thursday, March 5 is SOR Night! All SOR students and SOR faculty who purchase tickets for this show will receive a free drink!

FEB 26 — 5:30pm	MAR 5 — 5:30pm
FEB 27 — 6:00pm	MAR 6 — 6:00pm
FEB 28 — 1:00pm	MAR 7 — 1:00pm
FEB 28 — 6:00pm	MAR 7 — 6:00pm



2025-26 DRAMA SEASON  
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

