

THE MESSENGER JANUARY 2026

A WILL FOR CHANGE

As we look to the year ahead, one word that comes to mind is “change.” Now, perhaps that goes without saying. New Year’s brings with it those infamous “resolutions” that I, admittedly, have a love/hate relationship with, as in “I love the idea of starting over and working on becoming a better pastor/husband/person, but I hate having to come up with those resolutions and the pressure of ‘diving into the deep end’ with those new habits.” Maybe some or all of that strikes a chord with you. Regardless, this is not the “change” I am referring to here.

2026 is a mid-term election year, which may or may not bring with it a host of changes on the county, state, and national levels. However, those changes are yet to be determined and seen. In the more immediate, though, we have a change within our own church walls with the changes to our board. We have re-elected Ken Heischman to serve another three-year term and have elected Jackie Horton to replace Nancy Williams (our



outgoing president) on the board, and the board has elected Jenny Bryson as its new president.

To commemorate this “changing of the guard,” we will have our annual soup luncheon on January 18th after church, where we will also start talking about the possibility of an even bigger change.

As you may have heard, our church has been in discussions with Northminster Presbyterian Church in Cuyahoga Falls regarding the potential of a yoked relationship. However, before we jump into a formal relationship, we would do a 6-month “trial period” where we would figure out how best to share my time and whether a formal relationship would work.

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NEW COVENANT
COMMUNITY CHURCH

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Upcoming Meetings

Governing Board

January 26
6:00 PM

**Worship
Committee**
January 5
4:30 PM

Finance Committee

January 20
11:00 AM

**Mission
Committee**
January 20
1:30 PM

**Fellowship
Committee**
January 6
10:30 AM

FIT
January 8
1:30 PM



From the President's Pen

Hello New Covenant Community Church Congregation!

Most of you have known me a very long time, my whole life even, but I wanted to just send a quick introduction as the new President of the Governing Board.

I'm excited to be serving our congregation for the 2026 year, and with Ken Heischman as my Vice President, I am confident we will make a great team! I have never served as our President before, but I do have many years of experience sitting on boards and serving as President of those boards, and I am sure that skill set will transfer over into this new role.

Just to give a little background, my husband Mike and I have been married for 26 years. We are parents to Jake, 25, Josh, 24, and Emma, 21. I have 2 BAs in Political Science and American History. Mike and I work at Ken Ganley Subaru Bedford, where our son Jake also works. And up until recently, our son Josh worked there as well- truly a family business! I am our Customer Relations Manager and our Love Encore Redelivery Specialist (fancy terms for making sure our guests are happy and enjoying their new cars while also showing them how to use all the cool features in their new ride). When I'm not at work, Mike and I enjoy hiking and traveling, usually with all our kids and their significant others and our 2 sheepadoodles McFlurry and Moo!

I am easy to get a hold of if you ever need anything so please don't hesitate to reach out. I can sometimes answer phone calls during the day, but leave me a voicemail if I don't answer. I can answer texts and emails very quickly. I am here to serve our Lord and to serve you, our congregation.

Peace, Jenni



AAIC NEWS

AAIC will be meeting January 13th at noon at Mustard Seed Market in Highland Square. Come, meet and greet, and hear plans for the beginning of 2026. Grab lunch then go to the large room upstairs in the back of the café. Guests are welcome.

- January 29th

AAIC is planning a prayer vigil against gun violence, which will be

held at
Prince of
Peace Baptist
Church.

Watch for
more details
in the weekly
announcements.



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Prior to that, though, there's still some information we need to get from them (e.g. their finances) and some agreement would have to be reached as to when the start date for that trial period would be and what it even would look like. Having said that, the Long-Range Planning Committee will do a presentation at the luncheon to talk about what our hopes are in doing this, when we're looking at for a start date, what next steps might look like, and any other information we feel would be good to share. There will also be an opportunity for you all to ask questions, which, at best, we can give you a definitive answer, and at worst, we simply say "I don't know" and those questions then guide future discussions between our churches. Nonetheless, all that's to say this is a potential change in the coming year.

Then, of course, there is the ICCC. As of my writing this, the Personnel Committee for the ICCC is looking for DeAnne's replacement. Also, the Ministerium has on its "list of topics" discussion of having the ICCC nested within another organization/denomination and of the potential for dissolution (an absolute last resort, mind you, but a possibility nonetheless). If nothing else, there will surely be some changes voted on in the business meetings of our Annual Conference, even if just changes to the budget.

In the end, then, I find that the year ahead is fraught with changes, both those that are very real and those that are simply possible. As such, it's understandable that such a prospect can be, frankly, a little scary to think about. We grow accustomed to how things work, the way things go, all of that, but even so, what we must realize is

that these changes, if and when they happen, are all working towards God's ultimate plan for us, both collectively and individually. Our resolutions are nothing less than the stirring of our spirits towards being better versions of ourselves and being all that God knows we can be. With the changes to the governing board come some new voices and new opportunities. As for the possibility of yoking in all its potential scariness, there comes along with it the possibility of greater financial stability, a resulting increased longevity to our congregation, and/or simply collaboration between God's children, just as They intended. As for the ICCC, it has been a beacon of light in its doing God's will, even before doing God's will was popular, and as such, I would imagine what changes may happen will help that light to continue to shine for longer than any of us will be alive. Change, for all the stress it causes us, is ultimately part of Creation itself, whether it be the celestial bodies that light the sky, the seasons, a caterpillar becoming a butterfly, or otherwise. So I would invite you to wonder with me: What changes do you see happening for you in this coming year, and how might they be reoriented to be seen as "God's Will"?

- Pastor Brad

Looking Back on 2025

At this time of year, news anchors and the rest of us, often reflect on the year that has just passed. This is my photo reflection of NCCC's year.



March 4
NCCC's First-ever
Mardi Gras Party



March 27
Case School Book Fair



April 19—Easter Breakfast

May 4—NCCC participants
in AAIC's 16th Annual
Hunger Walk



Ukrainian speaker,
Kolya Koretski,
preached at NCCC
then stayed for lunch.

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January 19 - The annual soup lunch and transition to new Governing Board.

Hal Horton
receiving a gift
card as outgoing
Board President.



April 12
Hop-A
Long
Story
Book
Bunny
Trail
Crew



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June 7 & 8 – Mitzvah Days

Susie Stevenor works at sewing project, while Cathy King, along with Ken and Nancy Williams volunteered at the Akron Canton Regional Foodbank.



July 22-24 – ICCC Conference

Ken Williams received a banner during the 75th anniversary celebration. NCCC received advent banners as well.



August 5 - National Night Out Against Crime —NCCC volunteers lent a hand.

August 7 - Attending the Rubber Ducks game, after dinner at the Barley House.

September 21 – Several congregants attended the Concert for Peace.



September 30

Ken Williams and Jim Strandberg manned the grill for our annual hot dog roast.

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October 23 – Fall Fest
NCCC volunteers played a critical role at the annual event at the Northwest Community Family Recreation Center.

NCCC has a long-standing commitment to serve those in need on the second Saturday of each month from 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.



December 4—This year's annual Christmas Party became Trivia night.



December 13 – NCCC members and friends, delivered 30 Christmas baskets, and donated \$1760 to the Akron Canton Regional Foodbank, which was doubled to \$3520 on Double Dollar Day.

In closing, our congregation has been quite active even if we don't have photos of everything. One item not photographed is the new Book Club that started in the summer on Nancy Clem's deck. The next meeting will be January 12th at the church at 2:00 p.m.

This is just a sample of what we, as a small congregation, have done in 2025.

Nancy W.

Mission Projects Supported in 2025 And Calendar of 2026 Mission Opportunities

Projects Supported with Your Mission Dollars:

General Assembly, Synod and Eastminster Presbytery

International Council of Community Churches

ICCC Ohio Fellowship

Solar Under the Sun

Central America Medical Outreach

Valor Home – aid to veterans

Grace House – end of life care

One Family Under Guard

South Street Ministries – support services to children and families.

Hunger Walk – Akron Regional Foodbank

Gennesaret – Feed My Sheep – community meal and food pantry

Christ Woodland Food Pantry – serving Northwest Akron

Portage Path Book Fair

Case CLC Book Fair

Pastor's Discretionary Fund

Transportation for Ukraine Chaplains

Akron Canton Regional Foodbank – Double Dollar Days

Disaster Relief: California Wildfires and Texas Floods

Other Mission Based Projects and Requests

Here is the 2026 Calendar of Scheduled Mission Opportunities:

**February 22 to March 29 – Lenten Super 6 to support
the Akron Regional Foodbank.**

March 9 – Portage Path CLC Book Fair

March 23 – Case CLC Book Fair

March 29 – One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering

October 4 – World Communion Special Offering

November & December – Annual Christmas Basket Project

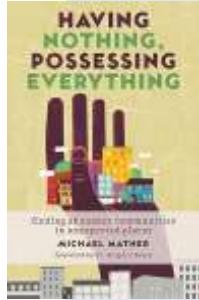
December 31 – Christmas Joy Special Offering

Changes to special offerings starting in 2026:

One Great Hour of Sharing — Supporting ministries of compassion through causes addressing hunger, disaster, poverty, climate change, and immigration/migration and refugees.

World Communion Offering — Calling all God's people to cultivate forms of reconciliation through racial justice, gender justice, peacemaking, global witness and ecumenical and interfaith relations.

Christmas Joy Offering — Supporting causes and ministries that serve God's children, including youth and young adults, children at risk, leadership development for people of color, Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color and servants of the church in need.



BOOK CLUB

On January 12th, the book club will discuss Having Nothing, Possessing Everything: Finding Abundant Communities in Unexpected Places,

by Michael Mather. According to SoBrief.com the author's journey from seeing scarcity to recognizing abundance in low-income neighborhoods is a fundamental shift in approach to community development.

This mindset change allows for:

- Recognition of hidden talents and resources
- Empowerment of community members
- Creation of sustainable, community-driven solutions and
- Practical implementation.

By focusing on what is present rather than what is lacking, communities can:

- Identify and leverage local skills and knowledge
- Foster a sense of pride and ownership among residents
- Create opportunities for growth and development within the community.

The meeting will be held in Fellowship Hall.

FELLOWSHIP NEWS

January 6th, Fellowship Committee will finalize plans for the soup lunch, which will be on the 18th. The sign-up sheet for soups, sides, and desserts is on the hall table. During the event, we'll recognize the efforts of the Governing Board President and Vice President and welcome the new President to her position. The Long-Range Planning Committee will lay out plans that are being considered, that could help the church become more financially stable.



An exciting afternoon of music is planned for January 25th. Ensemble Mercury, a dynamic string quartet, will perform favorite movie music at Westminster Presbyterian Church at 4:00 p.m. From sweeping cinematic themes to beloved film melodies, this program promises something for everyone. The concert is free and open to all, so bring your friends, family, and neighbors and enjoy an inspiring afternoon of music.