

April 28, 2024



The Covenant Maker

Genesis 9:8-17...[8] Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him,[9] As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, [10] and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. [11]I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." [12] God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: [13] I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

To those once nestled in the ark, God declares a new word: **covenant**. In the ancient Near East, covenant didn't necessarily mean an equality of standing between the partners. Covenant did, however, mean a yoked and committed relationship.

The Mosaic covenant often dominates our understanding of covenant. It narrates a relationship where law figures largely, where caricatures of legalism strip this covenant of its fundamentally gracious character. Yet, according to Genesis, God struck a covenant of grace prior to Sinai, a covenant clearly visible and broadly inclusive.

"As for me..." it begins. The covenant doesn't issue from Noah's hard-fought negotiations or overdue recognition. This Covenant issues from the heart of God, and its blessing comes unbidden save for God's intent: "I am establishing 'my' covenant."

"With you and your descendants." The gracious nature of God's covenant making unfolds in its falling upon generations upon generations of unborn, persons whose choices have not yet revealed what sort of partners they will make. Even the inclusion of Noah underscores covenant's dependence on grace. God's declaration that ark-borne hearts still carry the inclination of evil (Genesis

8:21) doesn't exempt Noah from that assessment. Yet, neither does that assessment exempt Noah from the gift of covenant.

Had God concluded the covenant community at this point we would marvel at the wideness of God's mercy, but now the circle expands to include "every living creature that is with you" (9:10). The grace revealed in life's creation extends itself to the breadth of those incorporated in God's covenant. Turkey and zebra, ocelot and pigeons, cats and squirrels: the list is enough to make one smile. And as if to make sure we understand who the covenant partners are, this passage connects covenant with "every living creature" or "all flesh" four more times.

So, what's the point of God's covenant including animals? Any number of species – especially those species that we humans tend to ignore or by our own ignorance (same root as ignore) have brought to extinction. These animals may rightfully complain to God, "why include the humans?" The purpose of God's including the animals is the SAME purpose behind God's including humans: GRACE! The ability to think or reason isn't the determining qualification for inclusion in this covenant nor is the possession of spirit. God's community takes shape on God's terms. And those terms are grace.

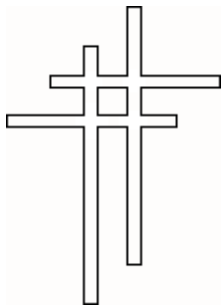
The Noahic covenant stretches the imagination. Whenever we stand ready to narrow the circle of God's community or to act in disregard of those whom we define outside the circle, this particular covenant, by the very breadth of its grace, should give us pause. Somehow the grace of God has seen fit to enter into covenant with people like you and me, with people unlike either one of us – and with every living creature.

Perhaps that's why this covenant takes the rainbow as its sign. Long before words graven on stone tablets or cups and bread shared in remembrance involved reason to perceive the meaning of covenant, all of God's creatures could see a bow in the sky. A bow promised sun's hope in the midst of rain's fall- life's hope from the hand of the covenant maker.

*Shalom,
Jim Sprouse*

Please Celebrate Sunday's Message

Huguenot United Methodist Church is inviting you to our Sunday Morning Worship Service. This in-person service begins at 11 a.m. Please join us and take part in our worship and praise of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!



Pastor Jim Sprouse will provide us with the message

"All Things Begin In Love"

We hope you will join us!

Audio recordings of our HUMC Sunday Morning Worship Services are available at HuguenotUMC.org under the Worship tab. We hope you will find these recordings beneficial and will share them with your family, friends and neighbors.



HUMC Nursery



Our nursery caregivers, Rosalie Koch and Lena Cosmo, are at church every Sunday and ready to welcome infant and toddler children in the nursery during worship from 10:45 a.m.

until 12:15 p.m. Rosalie and a volunteer provide childcare from 9:45 a.m. until 10:45 a.m.

Adult Bible Study / Sunday School

Our Adult Bible Study/Sunday School class begins at 10 a.m. Our class meets in the Fellowship Hall. The title of our lesson for Sunday, April 28, is "Samaritans Encounter the Messiah." The focal passage is John 4: 21-42. The background text is John 4. The purpose statement is "to explore what it means to call Jesus, as the Samaritan woman did, the "savior of the world.""

We look forward to your participation in our class. If you have any questions, comments, or feedback regarding our HUMC Adult Bible Study please do not hesitate to contact me.

Gerry Flinchbaugh (804) 314-4817
gflincb@gmail.com



Volunteers Needed!

Teacher Appreciation Week is coming up May 6-10 and the Parent Committee has a number of things planned to celebrate and thank the preschool teachers. The highest need is volunteers for Playground Duty during Wednesday's Teacher Brunch (May 8 at 11:30a.m. -12:15 p.m.).



If any church members are interested in volunteering, please contact Ronni at (804) 536-3968 ronniwohlford@gmail.com



NEXT Sunday - Coffee Fellowship - May 5

Please join us in the Fellowship Hall after our 11 o'clock worship service, for our **Coffee Fellowship next Sunday, May 5**, for coffee, some light snacks and great conversations. We invite our visitors to join us for coffee fellowship, so we can answer their questions about HUMC and we can get to know them better. **See you there!**



Future Host?

We have scheduled our Coffee Fellowships for the first Sunday of each month. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board across from the Fellowship Hall to be a future Coffee Fellowship host.



Where the World Meets to Pray

Copies of the **May and June** edition of The Upper Room are now available on the greeting table at the front entrance. Please consider making a donation in the labeled box.

Project Agape Armenia

Thank you, Huguenot UMC, for your contribution to Project Agape Armenia during the Lenten season. Your contribution of \$1000 will supply many necessities for the refugees that the churches are trying to shelter. Armenia is a land with many complications and struggles but because of your contributions, they are feeling God's love and know that a Christian church in the United States has not forgotten them. I can imagine that because you cared enough to help, they are feeling more hopeful. Your contribution is a large blessing and shows your concern for the people of Armenia.



About 26 people in our congregation volunteered to make age-appropriate gift boxes for Armenian children from infants to 17 years of age. Each box holds amazing treasures and will put smiles on the faces of each child that receives one. Jesus "loved the little children" and they flocked around Him when they had the opportunity because of the love they felt from Him. When a child receives one of these boxes, they will know that they are regarded as special and unique and that someone saw them as a child of God.

Lenten is a time of sacrificial giving and a time for Christians to reflect on how much God loves and continues to bless them. You have chosen to give back to God by sending donations to Project Agape Armenia, a place where the need for help is great. Many people are feeling your amazing grace. Thank you for sharing your love with the people of Armenia.

-Sarah Coffey

Volunteers Needed to Assist with Livestreaming of Worship Services

We are close to the point of being able to livestream our Sunday Morning Worship services in order to share them with our congregation and the community. Before we can proceed, we need volunteers who are willing to assist with the livestreaming during the worship using a tablet device to control the video. The tablet and training will be provided. Please contact Gerry Flinchbaugh at gflinchb@gmail.com or 804.314.4817, if you are able to assist with this opportunity we have before us. Thank you!



Preschool Pizza Fundraiser

Our preschool has an ongoing fundraiser with Marco's Pizza. Just use the code: **HUMCPSAF** when ordering over the phone or online and the school receives a portion from each sale all year long. Participating locations include the Marco's Pizza on Sheila Lane and on Midlothian Turnpike.



Wednesday Night Fellowship Save the Date! May 8

Wednesday Potluck Fellowship Dinners are on the second Wednesday of each month. Bring a dish to share and fellowship with your church family and friends. Please come early / stay late if you can assist. Many hands make light work.

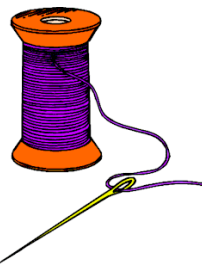
May 8 -

June 12 - PIPS Puppets in Praise and Service performance

**Please join us on Wednesday, May 8,
at 6 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.**

I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together.

Contact Shirley Bradshaw with questions or suggestions.
Sbrads2321@gmail.com 804-240-1240



Joy of Crafts recently began a new project of making activity mats for nursing home patients with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The lap-sized mats incorporate tactile and colorful elements like zippers, buttons, Velcro, elastic and beads to engage patients' mind and spirit. This project is in addition to the other comfort items **Joy of Crafts** makes and donates to From the Heart, a local clearinghouse for providing comfort to nursing homes, dialysis centers, hospitals and shelters. Our donations include fleece hats, mittens, scarves, wheelchair totes, chemo port shirts, drain bags, clothing protectors, neck pillows and dresses for needy girls around the world.

If you are interested in participating in this program, contact Molly Sprouse at mollysprouse@gmail.com.



Nick Anderson
Richard Byrd
Tallulah Heatley
Bruce Morris

In an effort to keep the prayer requests current, names posted will be removed after 30 days unless requested otherwise.



Happy Birthday to
 Elaine Severson (April 30)
 Judy Anderson (May 5)

If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please call, leave a note or send an email to Elaine so she can include you!



Sunday, April 28 – Fifth Sunday of Easter

9:45 a.m...Adult Bible Study/Sunday School
 11 a.m...Worship
 12 p.m...Puppets in Praise & Worship practice (PR)

Wed., May 1

10 a.m...Preschool Parents Tour
 7 p.m...Choir Practice (CR)

Thurs., May 2

10 a.m...Women’s Bible Study (FH)

Friday, May 3

9 a.m...Library Work Session (L)

Sunday, May 5 – Sixth Sunday of Easter

9:45 a.m...Adult Bible Study/Sunday School
 11 a.m...Worship
 12 p.m...Coffee Fellowship following Worship

CR – Choir Room **FH** – Fellowship Hall
K – Kitchen **L** – Library **PR** – Puppet Room



- Wed., May 8 – Fellowship Potluck Dinner at 6 p.m.
- Fri., May 10 – Feed the Homeless at 10 a.m.
- Sun., May 12 – Communion Sunday

Newsletter News

If you have an article for the next *pulse* newsletter, please email it to Elaine *by Wednesday at 10 a.m.*

Please know that submitted articles may be edited to provide clarity and increased inclusion. This newsletter and the Sunday Bulletin are posted on the church website by Friday evening.

Church Office Hours:

Pastor Jim is in the office on Wednesday and Thursday mornings. Elaine is in the office every Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. These hours are subject to change on occasion.

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