

Covenant Connection

December 10, 2018 | Bi-Weekly Newsletter of Covenant Presbyterian

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

12-11

PW Board Meeting
PW Circle Meeting
Stewardship & Finance Team

12-12

TOW-Together on Wednesday
Gingerbread House Making

12-13

Executive Team
PW Christmas Basket Assembly
Bell Choir Rehearsal
Preschool Christmas Program
Covenant Choir Rehearsal

12-14

Novels & Needles Book Group

12-16

Caregivers Group
Wrestling Through Faith (youth)
STATED SESSION MEETING

12-17

Monday Morning Bible Study

12-20

Bell Choir Rehearsal
Covenant Choir Rehearsal

12-23

Open Gym

12-24

Christmas Eve Services

12-30

5th Sunday Event - Bowling
& Pizza

Connect with the Pastor ...



What is Christmas to you? Is it a hectic holiday, a season of wonder, a joyful festival, a painful remembrance? Jim Simpson, our dear friend in Scotland, suggests: "Christmas is not a date; it is a state of mind." The date itself is somewhat arbitrary, chosen not because it is the date on Jesus' birth certificate, but because it is the day of the pagan festival celebrating the winter solstice and that day has been appropriated by Christians to celebrate Jesus' birth. So if Jim is right and Christmas is not a date but a state of mind, then it is fair to ask: what state of mind are you in this Christmas? Are you eagerly anticipating Jesus' birth with the wonder of a child, or are you dreading the shopping and wrapping and cooking and toy assembly that must somehow get done before December 25?

Advent is a season for us to get our state of mind right. It is a time to recall the promises of God fulfilled in Jesus' birth, a time to begin a new pilgrimage through the Christian year with expectations that are pregnant with possibilities, so to speak. This year, instead of focusing on getting the decorations just right or finding just the right gift or wrapping the presents perfectly or not burning the cookies, try focusing on getting your state of mind just right – with Christmas carols and passages of Scripture and prayers and peaceful pauses amid the chaos – and with Mary ponder the wondrous things of Christmas with your heart – and with

Continued on Page 3

A Bible Verse to Think About Isaiah 7: 14

Therefore the Lord will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Monday Morning Bible Study



Please join us for Bible study on Mondays at 10:30 AM in the Conference Room (near the church offices). We will look at the text for the next Sunday's sermon. Come and dive a little deeper into God's word, share your insights, and get a head start on the next sermon.

Items for the next newsletter are due to Martha by **9:00 AM on Friday, December 21st.**

Please email her at:
Covenantpcusastaunton@gmail.com



Words of Thanks



God Bless You, Everyone!
The following came out in the true spirit of Christmas to help "hang the greens":

Louise Solvensky, the Sommerfield family (Brandan, Robyn and B.C.), Janie Ballurio, Janey Terry,

Joan Swift, Anne Mitchell, Sue Morley, Charlotte Downing, Carol Jennings, Ruth Arnold, Jerry Lynn and Roller Shipplett, Seth Ward, The Melvin Family (Debbie, Henry and Grace),



Jane Wimmer, Cheryl and Rick Fauerbach, C.K. Polly, Bill Hanna and the tall John Peterson, who placed the angel at the top of the tree!

*Please keep in your prayers:
Bob and Herbert Wetzel and family
on the death of their mother,
Virginia Wetzel,
on Sunday, November 22nd.*

*Whit Menefee and family on the passing of his mother,
Sue Menefee, at age 95.*

*Stu Allen and family on the death of his wife, Clarice Allen on
Thursday, December 6th.*

Condolences

Connect the Pastor ... Cont'd

your mind! *Let the same mind be in you that is in Christ Jesus*, writes Paul to the Philippians. May you have the same Christmas state of mind that is in Christ Jesus as you prepare for his coming! *Gloria in excelsis Deo!*



Reading Buddies Needed

Most of us take for granted the benefits we enjoy simply because we can read well. Conversely, a failure to master reading early in life can doom a child to a life of temporary, low paying and unfulfilling jobs, or even prison. According to the Department of Justice, "the link between academic failure, violence, and crime is welded to reading failure." Covenant's Joint Task Force on Child Hunger and Education invites you to help break this cycle in Staunton by volunteering to help children with their reading and other homework at the Booker T Washington Boys' and Girls' Club after school program. For more information, contact Janie Ballurio at homepro-1@comcast.net.



Presbyterian Women

**PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN CIRCLE MEETING
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11 @ 10:00 AM
COVENANT BREEZEWAY**

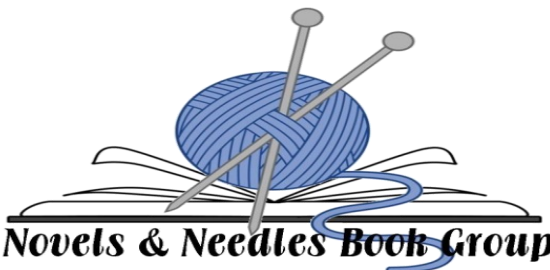
**CHRISTMAS BASKET CONSTRUCTION
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13 @ 9:30 AM
FELLOWSHIP HALL**

"God with Us When We Seek God" will be led by Peggy Roberson. Primary scripture is from I Chronicles 28:1-21 and I Kings 11. Hostesses will be Sue Morley and Louise Slovensky.

Won't you join us? At our November meeting, we enjoyed warm apple cider, fruit and two kinds of delicious cakes! We learned that "God's promise of presence gives us courage, strength, boldness, and hope when on our own we would lose heart."

On Thursday, December 13, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall to assemble Christmas baskets of greenery. We will deliver them to many Covenant members that same day.

Come and enjoy this time of fellowship and giving. No experience needed.



Novels & Needles Book Club will meet at 10:00 AM on Friday, December 14th at the home of Joan Swift.

Dear Mrs. Bird by A.J. Pearce will be discussed.

Members are encouraged to bring their knitting or crocheting which could benefit the Covenant Prayer Shawl Ministry.

Please join us!

First Fridays Program

Covenant's Joint Task Force on Child Hunger and Education is excited to launch a First Fridays program this Spring at the Boys and Girls Club in Staunton! On the First Friday in February, March, and April, the kids will learn about local food sources and purveyors, hone culinary skills, and the program will culminate with a celebratory dinner for the kids, their families, and volunteers. Opportunities to help abound and include:

- ◆ Volunteers to help with activities on February 1, March 1, and April 5 from 2:30PM to 5:30PM (help on the days you are available).
- ◆ Sharing your knowledge of food purveyors in the Shenandoah Valley: Do you keep bees? Do you literally shepherd your own flock (of chickens or the like)? Are you involved in agriculture? Do you know someone who is? We are looking for individuals willing to share their knowledge and expertise with the kids.
- ◆ Individuals willing to donate supplies for the lesson (i.e., project supplies, food ingredients, paper products, etc.).
- ◆ Programming/idea gurus – do you have other suggestions? Ideas for this program or future programs in ALL subject matters (i.e., music, art, science, etc.) are welcome.

If you would like to get involved, or simply learn more, please contact Robyn Sommerfield at robysommerfield@gmail.com.

Letters to Covenant

To Covenant Presbyterian Church Family: Thanks to all again for the kindness sent my way during the past few weeks. How wonderful to be part of such a loving church family. With love, Lois McClure

Nursing Nook

with Kathy Henderson, RN



“Holidays are stressful” has become an eye-rolling cliché for a reason. We rush through these celebratory last weeks of the year in fast-forward and too often suffer physical and mental fall-out.

After reading an overwhelming number of “how to take care of yourself during the holidays” articles and blogs, I discovered that a few basic “holiday to-dos” emerged. Following, the essentials:

- ◆ **Breathe:** Stop at random moments and breathe in to a count of four, out for four. While doing this, empty your mind or ...
 - ◆ **Try to experience Gratitude.** Gratitude, psychologists tell us, increases the same feel-good hormones (dopamine and serotonin) as vigorous exercise. Even better, neurological studies show, we don't even have to actually find reasons to be grateful: The mental exercise of just asking the question triggers the production of the good hormones.
 - ◆ **Clean your hands.** Washing with soap and hot water is best, but hand sanitizer will do the trick.
 - ◆ If you haven't yet gotten your **flu shot**, stop in at your nearest pharmacy and do so.
- With wishes for a healthy, joy-filled season.

Statements Sent Out

Contribution statements have been sent as of December 2, 2018. If you do not receive it soon, please contact Dave Metz at dmetz@ntelos.net or call him at 540-292-8864.

Also, please carefully review the statement and if you find an error, please let him know as soon as possible.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
16 3rd Sunday of Advent 8:30 AM Blended Worship 9:10 AM Alpha Choir (K-3rd) 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Traditional Worship 11:30 AM Omega Choir (4th-7th) 11:45 AM CareGivers Group 6:00 PM Wrestling Through Faith (youth) 6:00 PM STATED SESSION MEETING	17 10:30 AM Bible Study	18 9:30 AM PW/ Board Meeting 10:00 AM PW Circle 7-15 PM Stewardship & Finance Team	19 6:00 PM TOW - Together on Wednesday 7:00 PM Gingerbread House Making	20 9:00 AM Verona Food Pantry 5:45 PM Bell Choir 7:00 PM Covenant Choir	21 9:00 AM Items due for Newsletter	22
23 4th Sunday of Advent Christmas Joy Offering 8:30 AM Blended Worship 9:10 AM Alpha Choir (K-3rd) 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Traditional Worship 11:30 AM Omega Choir (4th-7th) 3:00 PM Open Gym	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 4:00 PM Family Christmas Eve Service 7:30 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Covenant Connection Published	25  Church Office Closed	26	27 9:00 AM Verona Food Pantry	28	29
30 4 Cents Per Meal 8:30 AM Blended Worship 10:30 AM Traditional Worship 1:00 PM 5th Sunday Event - Bowling & Pizza						

DECEMBER 2018

Christmas Eve Services

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24TH

FAMILY CHRISTMAS SERVICE

4:00 PM

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

7:30 PM



Strike Up Some Fun

The Fellowship Team will be hosting
December's Fifth Sunday Event:

Pizza & Bowling

Sunday, December 30th

1:00 - 3:00 pm

Staunton Lanes

(831 Greenville Avenue)

Cost is \$5 per person

**Includes lane fee, shoe rental & lunch
(pizza, soda & cupcakes)**

RSVP to the church office by Dec. 28

Friends & family welcome!

Join us for a fun time!

An Update on the Children's Bibles

After their debut in the sanctuary last week, we discovered that the version of the children's Bibles in the pew racks was not the same edition of the children's Bibles that the Children's Education team had thought we were getting. We are returning the Bibles in exchange for the Sunday school edition of the Spark Story Bible which was previously approved. It is the same format, but this version has 50 more stories than the other Bibles and will mean we have more opportunities to pair the texts being preached each week with the children's Bible. The company has been very easy to work with us to get it right while acknowledging the confusion. We thank you for your patience while we make sure we have the best Bibles possible for our youngest readers!

Gifts to contribute to the purchase of the Bibles for the pews in honor or memory of a child, grandchild or other loved one may be made for \$15 each. We are only ordering 50 Bibles for the pews, so this will be on a first come, first serve basis. Please email Sarah Wolf at revsarahwolf@gmail.com, if you would like to dedicate a Bible.

Christmas Offering

The Christmas Joy Offering of the Presbyterian Church supports church workers and their families who have retired, those who continue their ministry, and those who will be our future leaders. Each of us gives thanks to someone who points us to God and the gift of Jesus Christ in our lives. Please consider giving to this special offering which will be collected on Sunday, December 23.





*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.
— Luke 2:11*

Children's Corner



Connect Through Outreach

The mission of the Verona Community Food Pantry (VCFP) is to provide for the nutritional needs of our underserved neighbors in Augusta County and the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro. The pantry is operated entirely by volunteers who give their time, talents, and energy. The VCFP is located behind the Augusta County Social Services offices.

The pantry serves between 4,800 and 5,000 people monthly representing about 1,800 families. Approximately 3.7 million pounds of food are distributed each year to our neighbors in need.

Our church has been an active supporter of the food pantry for many years. We contribute \$1,500 from the 2018 budget, \$2,400 from Glorious Gifts, 4 Cents a Meal, and food from the Red Bucket. The pantry has started a capital campaign to meet their operating expenses for vehicle maintenance, fuel, packaging, a freezer, forklift, and many more capital needs. The campaign with a goal of \$251,000 is over a three year period. Please consider giving to this goal separately or for Glorious Gifts. Our community will be better for our concerns and Christian service for our neighbors.

A number of church members have been volunteering over the years doing various jobs to help make the program run smoothly and with Christian love. If you are interested in volunteering for this mission, please contact a member of the Outreach Committee or Charlie Huppuch at 540-248-4939.

*Celebrate the Joy of Christmas
this New Year*

A Benefit Concert
for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank Network

Wednesday, January 9, 2019
7:00 PM

Combined Choirs of
Olivet Presbyterian Church
and Staunton Church of the Brethren
with mini-orchestra under the
direction of David MacMillion

The Blue Ridge Christian School
Elementary Choir will perform
at 6:40 PM

Free Will Offering
Reception following the Concert
Staunton Church of the Brethren
1615 N. Coalter Street, Staunton



Take control of your financial future!
Financial Peace University
is the money class that will change
your life. Sign up today!

This 9-week class begins on Thursday,
January 17, 2019 at 6:30 PM in
Covenant's Fellowship Hall
Go to fpu.com/1078059 to register and
secure materials.

If you have any questions, call Whit
and Sharon Menefee at 540-560-9607
or email wmenefee@yahoo.com

Read the Bible in a Year

Dec 10	Reflect on God as King of Kings		
<input type="checkbox"/> 11	Amos 8-9	Ps. 141	Matt. 9
<input type="checkbox"/> 12	Obadiah	Prov. 24	Matt. 10
<input type="checkbox"/> 13	Jonah 1-2	Ps. 142	Matt. 11
<input type="checkbox"/> 14	Jonah 3-4	Prov. 25	Matt. 12
<input type="checkbox"/> 15	Micah 1-3	Ps. 143	Matt. 13
<input type="checkbox"/> 16	Micah 4-5	Prov. 26	Matt. 14
Dec 17	Reflect on God as Savior		
<input type="checkbox"/> 18	Micah 6-7	Ps. 144	Matt. 15
<input type="checkbox"/> 19	Nahum	Prov. 27	Matt. 16
<input type="checkbox"/> 20	Habakkuk	Ps. 145	Matt. 17
<input type="checkbox"/> 21	Zephaniah	Prov. 28	Matt. 18
<input type="checkbox"/> 22	Haggai	Ps. 146	Matt. 19
<input type="checkbox"/> 23	Zech. 1-3	Prov. 29	Matt. 20
Dec 24	Reflect on God as Emmanuel		
<input type="checkbox"/> 25	Zech. 4-6	Ps. 147	Matt. 21
<input type="checkbox"/> 26	Zech. 7-8	Prov. 30	Matt. 22
<input type="checkbox"/> 27	Zech. 9-10	Ps. 148	Matt. 23
<input type="checkbox"/> 28	Zech. 11-12	Prov. 31:1-9	Matt. 24-25
<input type="checkbox"/> 29	Zech. 13-14	Ps. 149	Matt. 25-26
<input type="checkbox"/> 30	Malachi 1-2	Prov. 31:10-31	Matt. 26-27
<input type="checkbox"/> 31	Malachi 3-4	Ps. 150	Matt. 28

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I AM RUNNING A CHRISTIAN OPERATING SYSTEM CALLED "STAINED GLASS WINDOWS 98" ... IT'S PRETTY COOL BECAUSE WHEN YOU MAKE AN ERROR THE COMPUTER SAYS "FORGIVE THEM FATHER FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO"

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COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2001 N. Coalter Street, Staunton, VA 24401
www.covenantpresstaunton.org
 Office 540-885-2138 = Fax 540-885-4399
 Office hours: Monday-Thursday 8:15AM-3:15PM,
 Friday 8:15AM-12:15PM



MINISTERIAL & PROGRAM STAFF

John C. Peterson

Pastor

Sarah Wolf

Associate Pastor

Laura Lawson

Director of Youth Ministries

Jeffrey Ryman

Minister of Music

Christopher Wszalek

Organist

Lou Dolive

Handbell Director

Joan Swift

Director of Children's Music

Mitzi White

Developmental Preschool Director

Martha Pierce

Administrative Assistant

Paul Sorrell

Treasurer

Kathy Henderson

Covenant Nurse

Cleo Holly

Custodian

The Mission of Covenant Presbyterian Church is Striving to be Faithful Disciples of Christ: Worshiping with Joy, Growing in Faith, Serving in Love.

Covenant Connection is a publication of Covenant Presbyterian Church.

The newsletter is published bi-weekly to inform members and friends of church programs, news and events. The Connection newsletter is online at www.covenantpresstaunton.org.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*Striving to be Faithful Disciples of Christ:
Worshiping with Joy, Growing in Faith, Serving in Love*

We're on the web!
covenantpresstaunton.org

Let Us Know

You're Coming to TOW!

In order to prepare the correct quantity of food, we ask that you **RSVP by 12:00 PM (noon) on Monday, December 10th.**

You may do this by:

- Signing the Friendship Register in the pew on Sunday
- Calling the church office at 885-2138

December 12th @ 6:00 PM
Pizza Night with various pizzas including a veggie topped pizza and cheese pizza and desserts

Join us after the meal to assemble Gingerbread Houses

Vegetarian options are available at all meals.

TOGETHER ON
TOW
WEDNESDAY