

Covenant Connection

September 14, 2020 | Bi-Weekly Newsletter of Covenant Presbyterian Church

Connect *with the* Pastor



The specter of racism that has long haunted our country is finding its place in the forefront of our national consciousness these days. There is a heightened awareness of the continuing inequities that people of color experience in this pandemic (disproportionately suffering more infections and deaths), at the hands of law enforcement (George Floyd, Breanna Taylor, et al.), and in our economy. The frustration over these continuing injustices has given rise to protests, prayer vigils, and in some places unfortunately, rioting and violence that are themselves unjust. Across our nation there are long overdue calls for change not only in the systems that perpetuate racism and racial injustice, but also in individual hearts where that change must begin.

This summer many of us read *Waking Up White* which challenged us to consider our own complicity, knowing or unknowing, in perpetuating racism and White privilege. As Debby Irving notes, *"To really get racism...it's not enough to feel empathy toward people on the downside; white people must also see themselves on the upside to understand that discrimination results from privilege. You can't have one without the other. . . Seeing and feeling one's privilege proves a much harder task than seeing and feeling discriminated against."* If all we do is talk about the need for change and bemoan the lack of justice, then we are, to paraphrase Paul, "just noisy gongs and clanging cymbals". God asks more of us as individuals, as a nation, and as the Church.

At its meeting this summer, the General Assembly of the PCUSA responded to these pressing issues with a Declaration on Racism which opens by quoting the prophet Isaiah (58:12) and then makes this statement:

This 224th General Assembly of the PC(USA) declares that Black lives matter; that our country's most important institutions have been built to sustain white privilege, to protect white lives and white property at the expense of our siblings of color; and that the church, through ignorance, denial, and in some cases deliberate action, has participated in this injustice. We have been slow to face the

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OUTREACH TEAM NEWS

The Outreach Team in Covenant's name supports Valley Supportive Housing, an organization providing housing and support for citizens with mental health needs. We have sent this organization \$11,500 this year so that they can refurbish ten housing units to bring the ten apartment's flooring to a liveable condition after years of use. We received a thank you which was read at the September Team meeting and we wanted to share it with you:

*Dear Covenant Church,
Once again you have made a generous gift to*



Valley Supportive Housing, and we are most grateful. Soon you will receive a letter from our office relating our decisions and plans for the future — the expectation of future purchases and sources of income. Meanwhile, we work to support our tenants and expect to increase our number of units. Without your support all this would be impossible. Many thanks again,

Jane Manning for VSH

Thank you, my Covenant Church family, for your thoughts, prayers cards, calls, and emails in the recent death of my brother Raymond Diehl. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated. — Charlotte Lotts

Items for the next newsletter are due to Martha by **9:00 AM on Friday, September 25th.**

Please email her at: covenantpcusastaunton@gmail.com



Dear Covenant Family:

WOW! What a summer! It started with the death of Brent's uncle, progressed through the passing of both Amy's grandmother and stepfather. Then the knock-out punch came when the ENTIRE family fell ill with COVID-19.

Throughout these incredibly difficult times, one thing has remained constant — the love, support, and prayers we've received from our church family at Covenant.

From home-cooked meals to trips to the pharmacy, from prayers to groceries for quarantine, we have been blessed beyond measure by the love and generosity of this amazing body of Christ's followers.

For all of this and more, please know that we will be forever grateful for our church, our family, our Covenant Presbyterian Church.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you!

With love,
Brent, Amy, Julia, Carter,
Wyatt & Rebecca Bussey

Please keep in your prayers:

Diana Bohart and family following the death recently of Helen Dalton.

Helen was grandmother to Diana and great-grandmother to Dalton and Chloe.

Condolences

Connect *with the* Pastor (*continued*)

reality of systemic racism. We have been slow to acknowledge the pain of our fellow Presbyterians, of our fellow Christians, of our fellow citizens, and of those who have come to America for a better life, whose value has been judged by the color of their skin. We pledge to join hands and hearts with our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) siblings to actively confront and dismantle systemic racism in our church and in society at large, and to work for a more just, merciful, and peaceful country that allows all of God's children to flourish.

In challenging us to live into that vision of a more beloved community, the statement goes on to emphasize the need for repentance, renewal, listening, and action on all our parts. As a framework for response it lifts up the paradigm of Matthew 25, reminding us of Jesus' words: "Even as you do to the least of these, my brothers (and sisters), so you do to me." As we contemplate our responses to these issues – as individuals and as a congregation – consider those words of Jesus in this context: "I was a victim of racism, and you..." How might you and I answer with a loving, faithful response that lives into Jesus' command and into Isaiah's call to be "repairers of the breach and restorers of streets to live in"?



Monday Morning Bible Study



The Monday Morning Bible Study has resumed virtually! Join us each Monday at 10:30 am via Zoom online. A link to the meeting is sent out each Sunday via opt-in email.





Parenting in a Pandemic

meets via Zoom on Monday evenings at 7:00 PM, hosted by Sarah and Laura. This is an informal virtual gathering for parents to discuss the highs, the lows, and the questions of parenting during a pandemic. If you would like the Zoom link for this meeting, please email Sarah to register. (revsarahwolf@gmail.com)



Children's Corner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p>14 Covenant Connection Published 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study via Zoom 5:30 PM Congregational Care Team 7:00 PM Facilities Team 7:00 PM Parents in a Pandemic via Zoom</p>	<p>15 5:30 PM Preschool Team 7:30 PM Stewardship & Finance Team</p>	<p>16 7:00 PM Youth Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p>17 8:30 AM Executive Team 7:00 PM COVID-19 Task Force</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>20 10:30 AM Live Stream Worship Service on Covenant's Facebook Page 4:30 PM Youth Open Table(s) Via Zoom 7:00 PM STATED SESSION MEETING via Zoom</p>	<p>21 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study via Zoom 7:00 PM Parents in a Pandemic via Zoom</p>	<p>22 First Day of Fall </p>	<p>23 7:00 PM Youth Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25 9:00AM Items due for Newsletter</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>27 4 Cents a Meal 10:30 AM Live Stream Worship Service on Covenant's Facebook Page 2:00 PM High School: Have A Little Faith via Zoom 7:00 PM Middle School Squad Up via Zoom</p>	<p>28 Covenant Connection Published 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study via Zoom 7:00 PM Parents in a Pandemic via Zoom</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30 7:00 PM Youth Bible Study via Zoom</p>	<p>Oct. 1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>

SEPT - OCT 2020



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

‘Good Morning, God!’ Isn’t that how some days begin? But some days begin with ‘Good God, morning!’

We all of us cry out to God in one way or another. Think about the times you’ve cried out to God. What was happening in your life that caused you to cry out to God? When you cried out to God, what were you hoping to hear back from God? What words did you use to cry out to God? We cry out to God because we know that God listens. We cry out with our voices but the crying out begins much deeper; it begins in our hearts. The first lesson in this year’s PW Bible study is about those cries from the heart.

A prayer to start: May our love for you, God, be heard in every word we say. Amen. (Adapted from a prayer found on pg. 11 in the study book.) In the gospels of *Matthew* and *Mark*, Jesus is quoted as he cries out to God, and it certainly comes from Jesus’ heart. Too often, we focus on the second part of the quote. The first part seems to be more instructive: “My God, my God . . .” Jesus is affirming the source of his hope and to whom he can cry out from his heart and

be heard. Jesus is using the opening words from Psalm 22: “My God, my God . . .” From ancient days, God’s people have been keenly aware that God hears the cries of their hearts. “My God, my God . . .”! How often in the days of hand washing, mask wearing and sacred distancing, have you cried out from your heart, “My God, my God”?

A prayer for our times: Loving God, you are near to me always and my life is lived in your presence. You are my God and you hear me when I cry out! Amen. (Adapted from prayer found on pg. 18 in the study book.)

The first lesson of the PW Bible study, *Into the Light: Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament*, is called “The Heart of Lament.” PW’s circle co-leader, Mary Ann Stripling, is facilitating the lesson fully in a video posted on the CPC site. Watch and be inspired.

Would you like a copy of the study book? Please contact Carolyn Hensley at 540-885-4533 or 1carolyncat@gmail.com to arrange to acquire a copy. The cost is \$10. Please make checks payable to ‘Covenant Presbyterian Women.’

Worship Service at 10:30 am each Sunday

Live Streaming

www.facebook.com/pg/Covenant-Presbyterian-Church-163891301309/videos/

Annual Spaghetti Fundraiser – October 18TH!

As October fast approaches, Martha's Meals on Wheels (MMOW) will be having a modified version of our annual MMOW Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser!

This year's dinner, scheduled for October 18th from 4-6 pm at Verona Moose Lodge, will be a drive-thru, take-out event. What can you expect this year? All MMOW volunteers will be wearing masks and gloves, and those who participate will enjoy contact-less service. When you arrive, you will be directed to our delivery station. Simply give your name if you participated in pre-sale or tell us how many meals you would like to purchase (checks or cash payment can be placed in buckets that will be provided), and our volunteers will place meals in your car!

All proceeds will directly support the MMOW program, bringing meals to area residents in need since 1973! Wish to purchase pre-sale tickets? Contact Jane Lobb and she will take your order! (janemlobb@gmail.com) If you are unable to participate in our pre-sale, meals will also be available for purchase at the door. MMOW is thankful for all the Covenant Community support!

Martha's
Meals
on
Wheels



New Office Hours and Covid-19 Protocol



The church office is now open from 8:15 AM to 12:15 PM, Tuesday thru Friday. We are following the schedule of the Preschool, which is now back in session.

In order to keep our employees and pre-school children safe from COVID, we ask that you follow the protocol listed below:

- ◆ Please refrain from visiting the office if you have been sick in the last 48 hours or have been exposed the past 14 days to someone diagnosed with COVID.
- ◆ Please be sure to wear a mask while in the building. This helps limit the germs you might spread AND contract.
- ◆ Please avail yourself of the hand sanitizer upon entering the building.
- ◆ Please practice 6-foot social distancing.

It's important that we all take part in protecting each other from this virus. Thank you for your help!

Prayer Shawls for Comfort

In these crazy, stressful times, would a prayerfully, lovingly made prayer shawl bring comfort for you, or a family member, or a friend? There are quite a collection of colors, sizes, and shapes available for anyone who would like one knitted or crocheted by members of our Covenant Family.



If you want a shawl for yourself, for a family member, or for a friend, you are welcome to pick one out or just ask for one to be delivered. Contact either Joan Sayers at 255-6273 or Marney Gibbs at 255-2253. You may also come by the church (outside, under the covered side entrance) on Sunday, October 4, between 2 and 4. We will be there with the Gilchrists and the Fair Trade Coffee orders. Prayer shawls will be on display for you to make choices.

Praying for peace and comfort, The Congregational Care Team

OUTREACH CONTINUES

Boys and Girls Club —

We continue to participate in the Nextrex Program, collecting plastic bags for a park bench. 500 pounds = 1 bench. Collect your bags and bring to the church office vestibule to drop in a designated receptacle, or weigh your bags, report the weight to Robyn at robynsommerfield@gmail.com, and take them to your local Food Lion. Also, we need volunteers to help with taking the bags collected at the church to Food Lion. Volunteers will need to weigh the bags (there is a luggage scale next to the receptacle at the church), advise Robyn of the weight, and drop bags off at Food Lion. If you would like to help, you can sign up at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0A4AAAAE2BA6F94-covenant1>



Shelburne Project —

We continue to collect toiletry items and non-perishable food items for Shelburne Middle School families. The hygiene items and nonperishable foods will always be useful, but we'd like to start collecting school supplies ... items such as backpacks, hand sanitizer, and binders ... to have on hand for students as they start back to school. **FYI . . . as far as serving our kids . . . we have 105 families at last count who are asking for food. That is 5 times as many as last year!! So, again cereal and peanut butter are always good!** Collection boxes are located at the church in the vestibule by the office.

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2001 N. Coalter Street, Staunton, VA 24401

www.covenantpresstaunton.org

Office 540-885-2138 = Fax 540-885-4399

Office hours: Monday-Thursdays 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.

COVENANT



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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



The Outreach Team
reminds you
"PEANUT BUTTER SUNDAY"
is the first Sunday of every month!
You can drop off your jar of
peanut butter in the covered
area just outside of the
church office.



GOD IS OUR
REFUGE AND
STRENGTH, A
VERY PRESENT
HELP IN TROUBLE
PSALMS 46