

MARCH 1, 2021
STAUNTON, VA



COVENANT CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

From the Pastor's Desk

Last week we had the first meeting of the newest iteration of the Long-Range Planning Committee as we begin the year-long process of developing our next long-range plan. This will be the fifth plan that we have developed in my time here at Covenant, and previous plans have been key to our growth as a church in a variety of ways. Each plan is unique to the time and circumstances in which it is developed, and this plan is no exception. The impact of COVID on our community will no doubt be significant in discerning our vision for the future and plans for making that vision a reality. As in past plans, there will be opportunities for your input along the way. This season of Lent might be a good time to give thought to some of the questions that we will be addressing as we look to the future:

- ◆ What are your hopes and dreams for who we might be and what we might do as a church?
- ◆ What do you value about Covenant and what do you most look forward to returning to after this pandemic?
- ◆ What might a healthy Covenant Presbyterian Church look like in a post-pandemic world?
- ◆ What traditions will we hold on to, what practices will we return to, and what new things will we try?
- ◆ How has COVID changed the way we are church and the way you want to participate in it?

Our hope is that as vaccines become more widely available and recommendations for restrictions for safe gatherings ease,

(continued on page 3)

What's INSIDE

Presbyterian Women	2
From the Pastor's Desk (cont) ..	3
Youth Activities	3
Nursing Nook	4
Christian Education	5
Outreach	6
Calendar	7
Prayer List/ Birthday List	8
Equal Exchange Sale	9
Fellowship	10
Worship	11
COVID Vaccine Info	12
Session Highlight	13

VISIT US ONLINE AT
WWW.COVENANTPRESSTAUNTON.ORG

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Almost as soon as a baby is born, that baby is swaddled in a blanket. Lots of children carry their 'blankie' with them throughout toddler-hood. Think about Linus and how important his blanket is to him. Children take enormous pleasure at having their blankets 'tucked in' by a loving adult at bedtime. And a sick child is comforted when wrapped in a warm blanket and snuggled into 'feeling better.' Did you ever arrange the dining room chairs and top them with blankets to create a tent when you were a kid? And teenagers can burrow themselves under blankets. More than one college freshman packed a special blanket amongst the things they brought from home. Throughout our lives, blankets are important to us. In fact, in many traditions, caskets are covered with a kind of blanket called a pall for the funeral. Throughout our lives blankets warm us, comfort us, and provide security.



But what if there was no blanket? Perhaps homeless. Or trying to survive a disaster of some kind. Lost. Afraid. How very precious a blanket might be. Out of a desire to provide the familiar warmth, comfort and security of a blanket, Church World Service seeks monetary gifts in their annual campaign to purchase and distribute blankets where and to whom blankets are needed and can help. Your financial gift supports the work of CWS. If you are willing, please send or drop off at the church a check made out to **Covenant Presbyterian Church** with "**Blanket Sunday**" noted in the memo line. Your gift, along with the gifts of others, will provide comfort to a person in need — warming body and soul.

Items for the next newsletter are due by **9:00 AM on Friday, March 11th.**

Please email Martha at: covenantpcusastaunton@gmail.com



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK *(cont'd)*

we will be able to return to in-person worship on a weekly basis by sometime in the summer. In the meantime and beyond, we will continue to broadcast Sunday morning worship via Facebook Live for those who cannot be here in person or are not yet comfortable in doing so. It has been a long year, and while there is light at the end of the tunnel, we are still in the tunnel. So, be safe. Wear your mask, wash your hands, and socially distance. Get your vaccine as soon as it is available to you. Be patient. A repeated refrain of the prophets is: *The days are surely coming...* For us, the days are surely coming when we will be back together in-person to worship, to study, to serve, to share fellowship, and in all things, to glorify God!



YOUTH Activities

Laura Lawson
covenantyouthstaunton@gmail.com

YOUTH Group Sunday, March 7 @ 7:00pm

We will meet via Zoom to explore poverty. Please contact Laura Lawson for a link to the meeting.

Make & Take Sunday, March 14

More information forthcoming. Stay tuned!

OPEN TABLE(s) Sunday, March 21 @ 4:30pm

We will meet via Zoom, cook for our families, and have discussion around our tables. Contact Laura to RSVP and get a shopping list.



NURSING NOOK *with Kathy Henderson, RN*

Blood Pressure 101 (A Refresher note)

Heart Health Month has passed, but the need to track our blood pressure should be a year-round effort. We all know the magic “less than 120/80” reading we’re supposed to maintain (see the accompanying chart). Yes, those numbers indicate that our hearts are pumping along efficiently, moving blood through our bodies smoothly, but *please* remember that everyone’s “norm” is different. Talk with your health provider about what *your* norm is.

As the church’s “BP Lady,” I’m often asked what brand of home BP monitor is most accurate – and how best to use it. Omron, LifeSource and Welch-Allyn are three well-known, reputable brands that come in a variety of price ranges. Although the American Heart Association and most medical providers recommend monitors that use arm cuffs, wrist monitors can be a good alternative for users uncomfortable with (or unable to manage) the cuff style. Consistency is the key to accurate monitoring. Check your home kit against your physician’s – or mine. When checking BP at home:

- ◆ Keep a small notebook, noting dates, times and what you were doing just before checking. Although the American Heart Association suggests checking at set times of day, random readings may supply a more accurate picture of your true “heart health.”
- ◆ Sit quietly, back straight and feet on the floor (No crossed legs! No chatting with other people in the room!), with your arm supported on a flat surface.
- ◆ If your reading looks “off” (significantly higher or lower than your norm), remove the cuff from your arm, wait a few minutes and try again.

Check the American Heart Association’s user-friendly website, www.heart.org for helpful information. Feel free to call/text/email me with questions. I’m also available for “front-porch” BP checks.

Blood Pressure Categories



BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120-129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1	130-139	or	80-89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

©American Heart Association, 03-15580 8/20

heart.org/bplevels

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION


SARAH WOLF • (540) 885-2138
revsarahwolf@gmail.com

The COVID pandemic has disrupted our in-person opportunities for Christian Education learning. But all is not lost! There are still ways that we are able to come together virtually or ways that we can study God's word individually that fill some of our Christian education needs.

While we cannot meet in person, your Christian Education Team wants to be sure that you are aware of all of the opportunities for Christian Education in the coming months.

Watch opt-in emails for announcements of study opportunities.

Contact Sarah if you have any ideas for Christian Ed.



Christian Education Links are at the Covenant website: www.covenantpresstaunton.org/christian-education/

Monday Morning Bible Study

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.

Wired Word

Check out the Wired Word each week which provides a Christian perspective on current events. You can find the link on the church website. See link above.

Presbyterian Women's Bible Study

This year's PW study is "Into the Light: Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament" by Lynn Miller. Each month a different member of Covenant's Presbyterian Women group will lead via a YouTube video. The link is updated the second Tuesday of each month. Find the link at the church website. See link above.



OUTREACH

Peanut Butter Sunday First Sunday of Each Month

You can drop off your jar of peanut butter in the vestibule area just outside the church office.



FILL THE BUCKET - HELP RESTOCK THE VERONA FOOD BANK

Help feed our neighbors in need! Donations can be dropped off in the **RED BUCKET** located in the vestibule area just outside the church office.



Boys and Girls Club

We continue to participate in the Nextrex Program. **So far we have collected 440 pounds of plastic bags to go towards a park bench.** 500 pounds = 1 bench. Collect your bags and bring to the church office vestibule to drop in a designated receptacle, or drop off at RefillRenew, 110-1 Baldwin St. 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 Sommerfield of the weight, and drop bags off at Food Lion. If you would like to help, you can sign up at: www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0A4AAAE2BA6F94-covenant1

Donate supplies to Boys and Girls Club: school supplies (especially dry erase pens, lined paper, Kindergarten lined paper, pencils, crayons, and colored pencils). Look for a drop off box in the church office vestibule.

Shelburne Middle School Project

Items continue to be accept-


ed for students and their families. Assorted food items such as cereal, packaged snacks, peanut butter, jelly, and pasta sauce are always welcome. With the move to a hybrid school schedule and most students at the school for breakfast and lunch two days a week, the more important needs have shifted to hygiene items. Donations of shampoo, deodorant, hand sanitizer, toothbrushes, tissues, etc. are now in demand. Collection boxes are located at the church in the vestibule by the office.

McSwain Learning Packets

Distribute Learning Packets to McSwain students. Drop off/Pick up packets once a week in a socially distanced manner to student homes. Contact Karen Peterson to sign up!



March 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 <p>1</p>	<p>COVENANT CONNECTION PUBLISHED 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study 5:30 PM Congregational Care via Zoom 7:00 PM Facilities Team in Breezeway 7:15 PM Worship Team in Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3 6:00 PM Midweek Service In-person service is limited to 60, please sign-up.</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>7 PRESBYTERIAN COFFEE PROJECT PEANUT BUTTER SUNDAY 10:30 AM Worship via Live Stream on Facebook 7:00 PM YOUTH</p>	<p>8 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study</p>	<p>9 5:30 AM Preschool Team</p>	<p>10 6:00 PM Midweek Service In-person service is limited to 60, please sign-up.</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12 9:00 AM Newsletter Deadline 10:00 AM Novels & Needles Book Group</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>14 10:30 AM Worship via Live Stream on Facebook YOUTH Make & Take (more information forthcoming)</p>	<p>15 COVENANT CONNECTION PUBLISHED 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study 1:30 PM Long-Range Planning in Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>16 7:30 PM Stewardship & Finance Team</p>	<p>17 6:00 PM Midweek Service In-person service is limited to 60, please sign-up.</p>	<p>18 8:30 AM Executive Team</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>

EQUAL EXCHANGE SALE



The next Equal Exchange Sale will be Sunday, March 7th. At this time, we have coffee for \$8.00, tea for \$4.00, and dark chocolate for \$3.00. We will set up from 2:00-4:00 PM under the portico on the north side of Covenant, assuring us all of maintaining safe physical distance and rainy weather will not be a problem. Your individual orders will be labeled and placed on a table in front of the steps leading up to the side entrance. There will be a box for you to deposit a check or exact cash. We will be sitting in front of the side entrance if you have any questions or need

to add to your order. To order, call 540-290-1089 or send an email to bettyandcliff@comcast.net. Thank you for supporting Equal Exchange, Cliff and Betty Gilchrest

THANK YOU!!

Wow, thanks to all who signed up so quickly to donate items to put together in Blessing Bags for folks experiencing homelessness. We will continue with two more collection times:

- ◆ Wednesday, March 3, 5:00-6:00 PM at the Portico by the sanctuary.
- ◆ Sunday, March 7, 2:00-4:00 PM at the Portico.

The Bags will be packed, blessed, and delivered on March 7. Knowing that our church family is so interested in sharing God's love, the Outreach Team will have more opportunities to share soon.



Novels & Needles Book Group

is meeting on
Friday, March 12th,
at 10:00 AM via Zoom.
The book for discussion is
Fifty Words for Rain
by Asha Lemmie.
Please contact Susan Polly
for the Zoom link.

A free mobile app to stay connected!

Get our directory on your mobile device! Call and text members easily. Available for Android and Apple devices. Search for "Instant Church Directory" from the Play or iTunes Store. Once installed, you can create a login Using your email found in the directory. Need further assistance? Contact Martha Pierce at the church office.



FELLOWSHIP

Covenant's Virtual Talent Show

Share your secret talents with us!

You can recite a poem, tell a joke, choreograph a dance, sing a song, play an instrument, or show off your bike skills! The options are limitless! Record yourself and send the video to Katie Campbell at kscampbell40@gmail.com. If you need assistance with recording yourself or your group let the Fellowship Team know and we can help. Send in your short video by Monday, March 15th. Please keep your submission to under **three minutes**. Covenant's Virtual Talent show will premiere on Facebook in April.



This year, we will be taking a creative spin on the annual Spring Egg Hunt. Rather than joining together for finding eggs, we plan to stuff, deliver, and hide eggs at homes of those interested. Covenant will supply kits to the Eggers which will include baskets, eggs, and candy. Anyone interested is encouraged to participate; hunting for eggs isn't just for kids anymore!

You can:

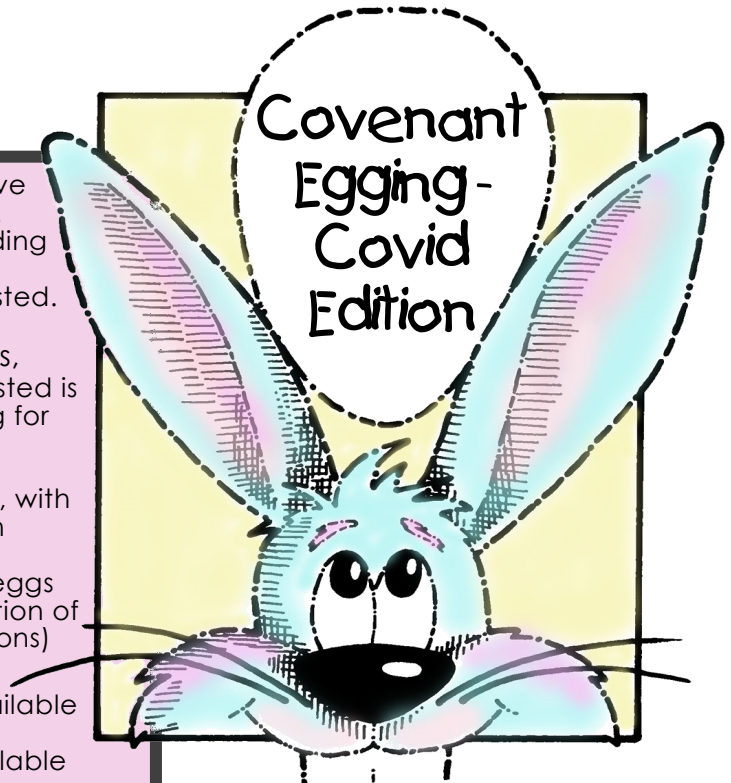
- ◆ Be Egged (have eggs delivered, with an option of them being hidden outside, at your home)
- ◆ Be an Egger (volunteer to stuff eggs and deliver baskets, with an option of hiding them, at disclosed locations)

Dates requiring availability:

March 20 & 21 - Egg kit pickup (available one of these days) only for Eggers

March 27 & 28 - Egging Dates (available one or both of these days)

SIGN UP LINK: <https://bit.ly/3kuw9id>



**Candy donations for eggs
needed by March 18 - Drop off
at church office.**

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Come,
LET US *Worship*
THE *Pord*

MIDWEEK WORSHIP SERVICE (In Person)

PLEASE REGISTER AS SPACE IS LIMITED

To provide an opportunity for safe in-person worship, we offer a service of prayer, Scripture, reflection, and instrumental music in the Sanctuary each Wednesday evening beginning at 6:00 PM. The service is about a half hour in length.

There is no congregational singing or choir as current evidence indicates those have the greatest potential for spreading the virus. Masks and social distancing are required, which means we are limited to about 60 people in the sanctuary for each service. Those who want to attend will need to sign up by noon on the day of the service you will be attending. Register via the sign in offered through an opt-in email or contact Martha Pierce at 540-885-2138 or covenantpcusastaunton@gmail.com.



SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Please join us as we worship together via live stream at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday. Below is the link to the Facebook page where the live stream will be shown. The video for this Sunday's service will be in the top-left spot of the video page.

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

COVID VACCINATION INFO

Everyone — and that means everyone of any age! — please make sure you've registered to receive your Covid-19 vaccinations. Even if you've already registered, please check **vaccinate.virginia.gov**. The website is user-friendly, and provides an easy way to see that (or if) your name is actually on the list. If you prefer to avoid computers, call the Virginia COVID-19 Vaccine Information Call Center at 1-877-829-4682. You'll be asked to punch a few buttons ("enter zip code," "are you over 75?" etc), but you will eventually be asked to "Press 1 to preregister." At that point, a live person will come on the line to register you for an appointment – or confirm that your name is actually on a waiting list. Meanwhile, keep checking CVS's website (cvs.com) to see if any appointments have become available. Good luck, and — as always — feel free to call/text/email me with questions or suggestions.



Kathy Henderson, RN
Covenant's Community Nurse

Puzzle!

Search for these words that are all associated with the Lenten journey.

- | | | | | | |
|---------|-------------|------------|---------|--------|--------|
| crown | donkey | hosanna | penance | Pilate | sins |
| colt | crucifixion | forsaken | kiss | prayer | suffer |
| confess | death | Gethsemane | lots | repent | thorns |
| cross | denial | Golgotha | palms | silver | vigil |

E	N	A	M	E	S	H	T	E	G	R	L	W	Y
C	L	E	U	X	B	M	T	H	B	U	C	X	B
N	R	I	K	Y	P	A	T	E	T	I	Y	P	Y
A	V	J	G	A	L	B	R	E	Y	A	R	D	B
N	W	N	L	I	S	N	L	A	I	N	R	D	X
E	S	M	P	R	V	R	D	H	B	S	R	D	F
P	L	O	G	O	L	G	O	T	H	S	B	S	C
D	T	S	R	O	C	P	N	F	U	O	S	I	K
O	N	N	T	C	P	E	K	W	R	S	U	N	D
M	Z	F	H	N	P	W	Y	D	U	H	F	S	K
U	N	C	O	E	T	K	I	C	S	G	F	S	E
H	V	H	R	E	V	L	O	S	W	Q	F	O	M
H	Q	C	N	E	X	S	S	C	C	J	R	C	O
F	R	U	S	I	F	I	X	I	A	A	Y	L	C

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

At its meeting on February 21, the Session took the following actions:

- ◆ Approved Covenant's 2020 PCUSA statistical report reflecting an increase in membership from 460 to 465
- ◆ Approved continuing with virtual-only worship on Sunday mornings
- ◆ Approved inviting the congregation to participate in an opportunity to support Crystal Gosnell Raphael in the purchase of land for her mission project in Nigeria
- ◆ Approved distribution of the 2020 surplus in the amount of \$18,667 as follows: \$10,000 to Outreach, \$4,000 to Facilities for thermostat upgrades, \$3,401 to Personnel for staff bonuses, \$750 to Fellowship for mission activities, \$516 to Stewardship & Finance for the Audit reserve fund
- ◆ Approved two projects to improve lighting in the north and west parking lots
- ◆ Appointed Kristin Siegel to the Long-Range Planning Committee



REMEMBER TO SET YOUR CLOCKS BEFORE YOU GO TO BED ON SATURDAY, MARCH 13

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2001 N. Coalter Street,
Staunton, VA 24401
Office — 540-885-2138
Fax — 540-885-4399
Office Hours:
Monday - 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.



2001 N. Coalter Street
Staunton, VA 24401

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #188



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

40 DAYS
of Lent

Ash Wednesday - February 17
Palm Sunday - March 28
Maundy Thursday - April 1
Good Friday - April 2
Easter Sunday - April 4

*I call on you,
My God,
for you will
answer me.*

Psalm 17:6, NIV