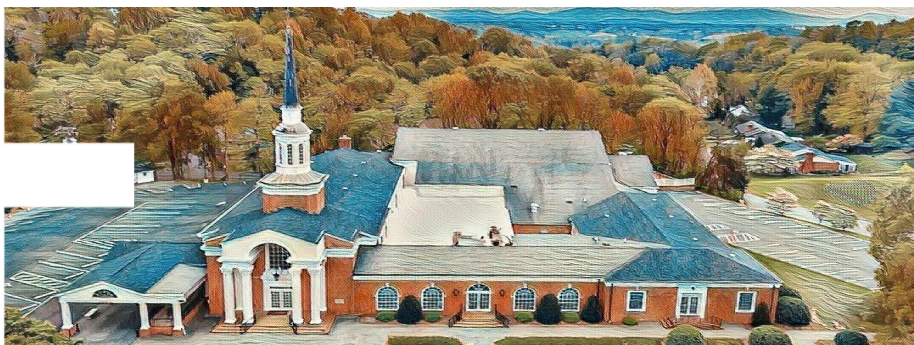


NOVEMBER 21, 2022
STAUNTON, VA



COVENANT CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

From the Pastor's Desk

This is one of those years when the aromas of Thursday's Thanksgiving dinner are still lingering in the air as Advent begins on Sunday. As a nation we pause on Thanksgiving Day to offer thanks to God for the many blessings we enjoy; as a church we pause in Advent to prepare to celebrate the great blessing of God coming among us in the birth of a child in Bethlehem. Thanksgiving is an ending, rooted in offering thanks for a bountiful harvest; Advent is a beginning – the beginning of a new church year and the beginning of our journey to Bethlehem. But in another sense, these celebrations are a beginning and an end – the beginning of offering thanks to God for our blessings (thanks which should continue throughout the year) and in Advent preparing for Christ's return in glory at the end of time.

"I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end," says the Lord. Perhaps the convergence of these seasons is a reminder that all our beginnings and all our endings – and every time in between – are in God's hands. Now thank we all our God is mingled with Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus! We live at the intersection of these holidays – offering thanks to God even as we prepare for Christ's coming. These are holidays that are holy days, days in which God should be front and center in our thoughts and minds. Are these holy days for you this week, or are the trappings of Thanksgiving and the countdown of shopping days until

(continued on page 3)

*Let Us
Give Thanks*



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VISIT US ONLINE AT
WWW.COVENANTPRESSTAUNTON.ORG

Serving
GOD
Together



GREETERS

NOVEMBER 27 -

Chris & Becky Earhart
10:30 AM....Tad Shuey,
Dan Drumheller

DECEMBER 4 -

8:30 AM....

Gretchen & Mel Allmond
10:30 AM....Janet Surratt

COVENANT KIDS:

NOVEMBER 27 -

Kristin Gaffney, Jane Maxton

DECEMBER 4 -

Cora Leigh Clark, Mandy Drumheller

FLOWER COORDINATORS

Susan Polly and Christy Davis

CHURCH OPENING and CLOSING

November - Craig Whitacre

December - Paul Sorrell

TO OUR VISITORS

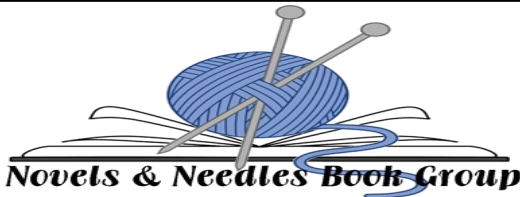
If you have been visiting and are interested in learning more about Covenant, our ministries, or membership, please give John Peterson a call at 540-885-2138.



Monday Morning Bible Study

Join us each Monday at 10:30 AM

We look at the text for the next Sunday's sermon. Come dive a little deeper into God's word, share your insights, and get a head start on the next sermon. We offer this meeting virtually through Zoom.



Novels & Needles Book Group

Novels & Needles Book Club
will meet at 10:00 AM on
Friday, December 9
at the home of Joan Swift.

The book being discussed is
True Biz by Sara Novic.
The Staunton Public Library
has two copies.

Members are encouraged to bring
Christmas treats to share!
Please join us!



***The weather outside is frightful!
Are church services or events canceled?
Want to know the answer?***

Information is available via an opt-in email, through the Covenant Facebook page (www.facebook.com/Covenant-Presbyterian-Church-163891301309), on the home page of the church website (covenantpresstaunton.org), and on WHSV-TV. If you are not on the opt-in email list and would like to be, please contact Martha in the church office at 540-885-2138.

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

Christmas making them less-than-holy holidays?

This year, consider making these holidays holy by keeping God at the center of the celebrations – by offering thanks to God for all your blessings at the table on Thanksgiving Day and by preparing not just your home but also your heart for the celebration of Jesus' birth throughout this Advent season. And may the God to whom we offer our Thanksgiving thanks, the God who blesses us all, the God who is Emmanuel – God with Us – bless you in the holy days of this week and season with great joy, great hope, and great peace!



Hanging of the Greens

Help us begin our joyful preparations for the Christmas season as we decorate the church with greenery! You are invited to the Hanging of the Greens, which will be held Saturday, December 3, beginning at 9:30 AM. If we have enough folks, we should be finished by 11:00 AM. Enjoy hot drinks, Christmas goodies, and good fellowship!

Items for the next newsletter are due by
**9:00 AM on Friday,
December 2nd.**

Please email Martha at:
covenantpcusastaunton@gmail.com



Hey, it's cold outside!

Yup . . . it's time to start the furnace and get your winter clothes out of those boxes under your bed. Have coats you won't be wearing this season? You can bring the coats to Covenant to help newly released inmates of Middle River Jail. Hoodies, jackets, and coats sized L, XL, and XXL will help keep them warm while they face the many challenges of returning to the community.

There will be a table by the library where you can deposit your donation. We will collect and deliver coats now through December.

Thank you for starting their return to a new life with a warm coat.





**gingerbread
house
Making**

Come out for
a fun, family event on
Wednesday, December 7th
following the TOW Pizza
Dinner in the Great Hall.
Please call the church office
at 885-2138 by December 5th
to RSVP.

Candy
donations are
being accepted.
Please drop the
candy in the
box outside
the church
office
by Sunday,
Dec. 4th.



**Christmas
Caroling**

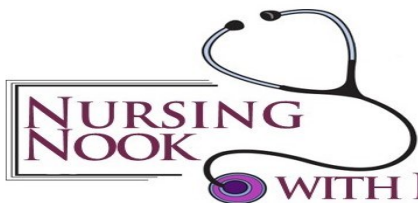
**Saturday, December 17th
@ 2:00 pm**

*We will board a bus to go to various
locations and spread holiday cheer as
we visit our Covenant family & friends.
Upon our return to the church, we will
have snacks & sweets in the Great Hall.*

**Please RSVP to the church office (540-885-2138)
by Monday, December 12th.**

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FINANCIAL STATEMENT (as of 10-31-22)

	CURRENT	YEAR TO DATE	BUDGET
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	55,369	440,974	584,521
TOTAL OTHER RECEIPTS	251	31,866	0
TOTAL RECEIPTS	55,620	472,840	584,521
OUTREACH	4,019	57,416	72,000
PERSONNEL	28,228	293,652	357,521
FACILITIES	11,643	106,243	128,100
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	0	4,193	8,000
FELLOWSHIP	121	1,978	2,900
STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE	90	3,332	5,000
CONGREGATIONAL CARE	132	2,475	4,600
WORSHIP	350	3,019	6,400
TOTAL EXPENSES	44,583	472,308	584,521
NET GF INCOME	11,037	532	0



Kathy Henderson, RN • (540) 290-6396
covenantnurse@gmail.com
Contact Kathy with medical questions or
for a blood pressure check.

WITH KATHY HENDERSON, RN

While preparing for this week's Thanksgiving feasts, remember that "thanksgiving" and "gratitude" are synonyms – and that gratitude is good for our mental and physical health.

Formal scientific studies linking gratitude and good health are relatively recent, dating back only to the early 2000s. In a 2010 study published in *Psychiatry journal*, the authors provided a "practical, clinical definition" of gratitude as "a general state of thankfulness and/or appreciation," citing several studies demonstrating "an association between gratitude and a sense of overall well-being." The authors' conclusion? "Only future research will clarify the many questions around assessing and enhancing gratitude."

Over the years since this study, research has exploded, with neuroscientists, cardiologists, the federal government, and others weighing in. Study after study has shown that gratitude in general – and "gratitude intervention" exercises – have positive effects on both mental and physical health.

A brief list of the benefits scientists have found among those practicing an "attitude of gratitude":



- ♦ Increased production of serotonin and dopamine, neurotransmitters, sometimes referred to as "happy hormones" for their role in mood and emotion regulation;
- ♦ Lower blood pressure, improved sleep, enhanced immune systems, and increased ability to deal with chronic pain (possibly because grateful people tend to be happier people who take care of themselves, researchers note.)

Although research continues to produce sometimes-conflicting conclusions about the benefits of gratitude on mental and physical well-being, one activity repeatedly shows promising results. "Gratitude intervention," described in the *Journal of Occupational Health* as engaging "regularly in activities designed to cultivate a sense of gratefulness," is considered a "most effective psychological intervention." So what, exactly, is a gratitude intervention? Keeping a gratitude list or journal, prayer, and meditation, actively expressing gratitude to others, actively participating in a faith community. So here's my health tip for the week: Come to church, to a Sunday service, or Together on Wednesday. And at least once a day, stop and remember: "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

For more in-depth information about the science of gratitude, check out the following:

- ♦ "The Science of Gratitude," a Templeton Foundation white paper, provides a good overview of the concept of gratitude and research so far. www.templeton.org/discoveries/science-of-gratitude
- ♦ A slightly more light-hearted look at the science of gratitude – and how to use it – comes from Harvard Medical School's blog — www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier
- ♦ The CDC offers all sorts of "Ideas for Practicing Gratitude," including printable "gratitude checklists" and journal templates. www.cdc.gov/howrightnow/gratitude/index.html

NOVEMBER 2022 **DECEMBER**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	21 COVENANT CONNECTION PUBLISHED	22	23	24 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED  HAPPY THANKSGIVING	25 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	26
27 - 1st Sunday of Advent 4 Cents a Meal 8:30 AM Worship Service in Sanctuary 9:15 AM Children's Choir (grades 1-3) 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service in Sanctuary 10:30 AM Worship Service via Live Stream on Facebook 11:45 AM Children's Choir (grades 4-8) 11:45 AM Fellowship Team	28 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study	29 7:00 PM Stewardship & Finance Team	30 6:00 PM Together on Wednesday (TOW) in the Great Hall	DEC. 1 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	2 9:00 AM Newsletter Deadline	3 9:30 AM Hanging of the Greens
4 - 2nd Sunday of Advent Peanut Butter Sunday Presbyterian Coffee Project 8:30 AM Worship Service in Sanctuary 9:15 AM Children's Choir (grades 1-3) 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service in Sanctuary 10:30 AM Worship Service via Live Stream on Facebook 11:45 AM Children's Choir (grades 4-8) 12:00 PM Outreach Team 4:00 PM Elder Training	5 COVENANT CONNECTION PUBLISHED 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study 5:30 PM Congregational Care Team 7:00 PM Facilities Team 7:15 PM Worship Team	6	7 6:00 PM Together on Wednesday (TOW) in the Great Hall 7:00 PM Gingerbread House Making 	8 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	9 10:00 AM Novels & Needles Book Group	10

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

ALL women of Covenant are welcome to attend Presbyterian Women Bible Study meetings. On Tuesday, December 13, PW will gather for study in the Breezeway at 10:30 AM. Carol Jennings will present "Sabbath and Surrender," chapter 4 in our study book **Celebrating Sabbath** by Carol Bechtel. Two days later on Thursday, December 15, PW will gather at 9:30 AM in the Great Hall (change of location from previous years) to make our traditional Christmas Baskets. Bring pruning shears and any greenery available from your yard, except boxwood. Come and enjoy the fellowship of other church women and maybe meet a new friend!



Thanksgiving Blessing Bags


"THANK YOU! THANK YOU!
THANK YOU! THANK YOU!"

These are words to the Covenant Church Family from folks at Shelburne Middle School. With our offerings, we filled 25 Bags with foods and a grocery store gift card to make a Thanksgiving meal. The staff at Shelburne will deliver the Thanksgiving Blessing Bags to families this week.



Christmas Joy Offering

The Christmas Joy Offering provides assistance to current and retired church workers and their families in their time of need, and develops our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. 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 25 (please designate on your check "Joy Offering"). You may also give online at pcusa.org/christmasjoy or by texting CHRISTMASJOY to 91999.



Christmas with Massanetta

This year, Christmas with Massanetta will take place on Saturday, December 3rd from 5:00 to 8:00 PM. Adult tickets are \$23; youth (12 and under) tickets are \$16. Massanetta's own David Crull is preparing a holiday feast for guests! A ticket just for the concert is also available for \$10. Registration deadline is November 28th.

To register go to:

<https://massanettasprings.org/programs/christmas>

MENU:

Baked Ham

Tomato Cream Spinach Chicken

Butternut Squash Parmesan

Stuffed Potato

Vegetarian Option

Salad Bar

Hot Chocolate Cheese Cake

Christmas Cake

Dietary restrictions? No problem!

Let us know when you make your reservation and we will accommodate.

ReScored will be performing the concert this year. They are one of James Madison University's lower-voice a cappella groups. As a group they are focused on creating enjoyable music to sing along to and building community among our members as well as with our Harrisonburg community.

Christmas Benefit Concert for SACRA



Memorial Baptist Church

224 Taylor Street, Staunton

540-885-8033

Monday, December 5

7:00 pm

doors open at 6:30

*Featuring Local
Musical Artists*

The Faithful Men
Male Vocal Ensemble

The Boogie Kings
Ragtime, Boogie & Rockabilly Trio

Mr. Jefferson's Bones
Trombone Fun

Come join us for a time
of music, fellowship and
an offering to SACRA

(Staunton Augusta
Church Relief Association)

A "Meet and Greet the Artists"
time with refreshments
will follow the concert



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.

Fun Fact: On average you donate over 80 lbs. of food per week. That's a lot of peanut butter!

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.



BAGS TO BENCHES

Turn your plastic bags into benches for the Boys & Girls Club. (500 lbs. = 1 bench) Bring your plastic bags to the church and drop in a designated receptacle located in the office vestibule. You've donated 2039 lbs. of plastic. We should be getting that 4th bench soon!

WANT TO HELP? Volunteers are needed to help take the bags collected at the church to Food Lion. Contact Robyn Sommerfield or sign up at <https://bit.ly/3CzoJTW>

SHELBURNE PANTRY



The Shelburne families can still use some additional canned fruit or fruit packs, veggies, grab & go breakfast bars.

Your donations give the students many of the basic foods that they love (especially those squeeze fruit snacks so 'in' with middle schoolers) that are hard to afford after you pay for backpacks, new clothes, and all the back-to-school trappings. We (and they) can't thank you enough.

— Ron Ramsey, Project Manager

Update on the Afghan Family

Aimal works in Harrisonburg and, along with his family, greatly appreciates our community's help. Malalai, an excellent cook and seamstress, stays home with their 2-year-old son, Enron. The older children — Kahlil, Iqbal, and Dina — have experienced the fun of Halloween with neighborhood children and enjoyed playing with community folks. Daughter Dina is all smiles at Covenant Preschool. Kahlil and Iqbal (10 and 9-year-old sons) would love to share some soccer-playing time with guys their age. Covenant, with other community groups, is helping the family with transportation, financial, and social support. If you would like to help, contact Elissa McDonald by emailing her at elissamcdonald107@gmail.com.



COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2001 N. Coalter Street,
Staunton, VA 24401

Office — 540-885-2138

Fax — 540-885-4399

Office Hours:

Mon - Thurs, 8:15AM - 3:15PM

FRI, 8:15AM - 12:15PM



MINISTERIAL & PROGRAM STAFF

John C. Peterson

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:
Worshipping 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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Staunton, VA 24401

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Pray for
the World

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

Please let us know you are coming!



In order to prepare the correct quantity of food, we ask that you **make a reservation by noon on the Monday** before the TOW you will be attending.

Two options to reserve a seat:
sign the Friendship Register
in the pew on Sunday

OR

call the church office
at 885-2138 or email

Covenantpcusastaunton@gmail.com



November 23

NO TOW DUE TO
THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
November 30 @ 6 pm

Mexican Food Night

December 7 @ 6 pm

(last TOW until Spring)

Pizza and Salad

Join us after TOW to make
Gingerbread Houses!

*Vegetarian options are
available at all meals.*