

JANUARY 16, 2023
STAUNTON, VA

COVENANT CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

From the Pastor's Desk

Among the questions that Session wrestled with at its annual retreat on Saturday was this: How is church changing as we come out of the pandemic? Perhaps the question might have been better phrased "as a result of the pandemic" as our return to orange/red in the CDC COVID map this week reminds us that the virus is not done with us yet! In either case, what changes have we experienced in being church over the past three years?

On the positive side, our livestreaming of worship services has enabled more folks to join us week to week. On any given Sunday we have folks on vacation who join us from distant spots, friends who live in different states or at the other end of Virginia who worship with us weekly, members who are hospitalized or homebound as they recover from illness or surgery who worship with us from the hospital or home, visitors who join us virtually on Sunday morning or in the replay of the service during the week – some of whom later come to worship with us in person! COVID accelerated our move into the virtual world, helping us reach more people. Our use of Zoom has expanded participation in our Bible study as folks who could not otherwise be with us in person are able to join from places near and far. We also have seen increased giving online as more donors take advantage of the convenience online giving offers. In worship we no longer pass the plate each week as placing

(continued on page 3)



What's INSIDE

- Sunday Volunteers.....2
- With Sympathy.....2
- Inclement Weather.....2
- From the Pastor's Desk (cont).....3
- Called Congregational Meeting.....3
- Session Highlights.....3
- Thank You.....3
- Outreach.....4
- Prayer List/ Birthdays.....5
- Calendar.....6
- Grief Support.....7
- Children's Choir.....7
- New Study.....7
- Presbyterian Women.....8
- MLK Vesper Service.....9
- Ice Skating.....back cover

VISIT US ONLINE AT
WWW.COVENANTPRESSTAUNTON.ORG



GREETERS

JANUARY 22 -

8:30 AM....Mick & Jeanne Lambert

10:30 AM....Troy, Carter &
Mason Lawson

JANUARY 29 -

8:30 AM....Dale & Ginny Poynter

10:30 AM....Randy & Debbie Smith

COVENANT KIDS (10:30 AM)

JANUARY 22 - Joan Sayers

JANUARY 29 - Amanda Campbell

FLOWER COORDINATORS

Susan Polly and Christy Davis

CHURCH OPENING and CLOSING

January - Mike Riddell



***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), the home page of the church website (covenantprestaunton.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.

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.

With Sympathy

Please keep in your prayers:

Jack and Kathleen Wilkers on the death of Jack's brother Dan in North Carolina on Sunday, January 1st. Dan was a retired Presbyterian minister. May God grant him eternal rest and resurrection joy, and grant to Jack and Kathleen comfort and peace.

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

the plates at the doors of the church has worked well.

On the flip side, we continue to struggle to return to pre-COVID attendance levels in worship in person. Through the fall, attendance was roughly 2/3 of the numbers we had prior to COVID. Some of you may be those who have yet to return. For some it has been continued hesitancy about gathering in large groups; for others it has been getting out of the habit of coming each week; for others yet it is reluctance to give up worshipping in pajamas with a cup of coffee at your side. We have noticed the same trend in many of our programs as participation has not yet returned to pre-COVID levels. Is this the new normal or will we see incremental increase in the coming months? Time will tell, but we hope that folks will return – not for the sake of numbers, but for the sense of community that is essential to our call as disciples of Christ. A new year offers a chance of a new beginning – and we hope many of you who have been slow to come back, will return soon! We miss you!

As a church Reformed and always being re-formed by the Spirit, we must be open to change, hard as that sometimes is. Some of that change is planned; other changes arise in response to changing circumstances. In all those changes are new possibilities for ministry and mission as we seek to be faithful to God's call, for the children's song gets it right: ***I am the church. You are the church. We are the church together!***



Items for the next newsletter are due by **9:00 AM on Friday, January 27th.**

Please email Martha at: covenantpcusastaunton@gmail.com

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

At its retreat on Saturday, January 14, the Session took the following actions:

- ◆ Approved a discount policy for families with multiple children in the preschool
- ◆ Adopted Session Priorities for 2023
- ◆ Accepted the resignation of Laura Lawson as interim director of youth effective January 1, 2023 with gratitude and appreciation for her years of service

THANKS *from the* HEART

At a congregational meeting on Sunday, January 8, changes to the terms of call for John Peterson were approved, reflecting a 5% increase in compensation. In response, John writes:

"Many thanks for this generous increase and for your love and support throughout the year and years, especially in these last months in my recovery from my hip surgery. Karen and I are indeed blessed to be called to serve here as part of the Covenant family!"



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 PANTRY

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 or in the Narthex.



500 lbs. = a bench

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 2200 lbs. of plastic. The 4th bench has been ordered!

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

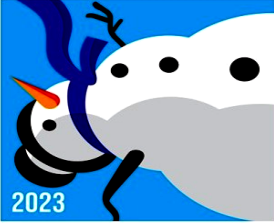


The Shelburne Pantry is currently short on cereal and peanut butter but any donation will be put to good use. They can still use additional canned fruit or fruit packs, veggies, grab & go breakfast bars.

Your donations give the students many of the basic foods that they love and are greatly appreciated!



JANUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
2023 	16 COVENANT CONNECTION PUBLISHED 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study	17	18	19 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	20	21
22 8:30 AM Worship Service in Sanctuary 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 Fellowship Team 11:45 AM Grief Support Group 5:00 PM APNC	23 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study	24	25	26 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	27 9:00 AM Newsletter Deadline	28
29 4 Cents a Meal 8:30 AM Worship Service in Sanctuary 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service in Sanctuary 10:30 AM Worship Service via Live Stream on Facebook 2:00 PM Ice Skating at Generations Park 5:00 PM APNC	30 COVENANT CONNECTION PUBLISHED 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study	31	FEB. 1	2 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	3	4



With the holidays now behind us, we hope to share coping and self-care strategies that helped you manage during the holiday season. We would also like to explore goals for the new year ahead.

The next Grief Support Group will meet on **Sunday, January 22nd, at 11:45 AM in Room 5**. Our group offers a welcoming and safe space to share, connect, and support each other. We hope you can join us!



The Alpha and Omega Choirs are taking a break from now through Jan. 29. We will resume practices on Sunday, February 5. I look forward to seeing everyone then and anyone who wishes to sing.
Peace and blessings,
Joan Swift

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO JOIN OUR BOOK DISCUSSION



The ongoing book discussion on **Collateral Damage**, written by the late Reverend James Atwood, continues through February 26, 2023. We meet each Sunday morning in the chapel from 9:30 until 10:15.

Upcoming topics include:

- ◆ guns in public places
- ◆ the economic toll of gun violence
- ◆ the interface of guns, racism, and poverty
- ◆ exposing falsehoods and advocating for the truth
- ◆ discussing reasonable proposals for change
- ◆ building an honest partnership about gun violence across racial and economic lines within our own community
- ◆ moving forward with hope

The following quote is a compelling and powerful statement from Reverend Atwood. "God created the church to lead, out front, and to bear witness to the love and justice our Lord described in Matthew 5 and 25. The almighty God did not commission us to serve as a mirror for a self-seeking, self-serving society. God created us to be a light in the darkness which the darkness cannot extinguish. (John:1-5)"

We hope you will be able to join us for this important discussion!

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Presbyterian Women of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic are offering a \$2,500 scholarship to seminary students who are members of a church in our synod and attending a PCUSA seminary. The applications for the Centennial Scholarship are due February 1, 2023. The scholarship may be renewed for a second year. An application can be accessed via Doogle Doc at: <https://bit.ly/3GHBM9j> (you will need to request access). You may contact Pam Snyder at pamsnyder1063@gmail.com if you have questions or if you need a PDF version of the application.

Presbyterian Women Advanced Notice: Watch for upcoming information about our February 14th regular meeting and Blanket Sunday, February 19th. As we go through these winter months, remember to practice the message of our *Celebrating Sabbath* study — **REST**.



“THE TIME IS
always right
TO DO
what is right.”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Honoring MLK

WORSHIP
with us

BLENDED WORSHIP
Sundays @ 8:30 am
The Blended Service is a less formal service with communion by intinction each week.

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP
Sundays @ 10:30 am
Music plays a central role in worship. Communion is served the first Sunday of every month. This service includes a Children's Moment with the pastor.

VIRTUAL WORSHIP
Sundays @ 10:30 am
via Facebook
This is a live-stream of the Traditional Worship Service. Worship with us wherever you access Facebook! The link is: www.facebook.com/Covenant-Presbyterian-Church-163891301309/videos/

30th

MB MARY BALDWIN
UNIVERSITY

In collaboration with the Staunton
branch of the NAACP

Martin Luther King, Jr.
Community Vesper Service
for Peace and Justice

Monday January 16, 2023

7:00 P.M.

Central United Methodist Church

14 North Lewis Street

Featuring:

Anointed Voices of Praise
Mary Baldwin University Choir
Greater Things Dance Ministry
Voices of Unity

Snow date January 23, 2023

**COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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Staunton, VA 24401

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Office Hours:

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

FRI, 8:15AM - 12:15PM



MINISTERIAL & PROGRAM STAFF

John C. Peterson

Pastor

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.

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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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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**Pray for
the World**

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

Ice Skating



Sunday, January 29th, 2:00PM
@ Generations Park in Bridgewater
Hot Cocoa & Cookies
will be provided.

Skaters & spectators welcome!
Skaters, please sign-up at
<https://bit.ly/3iwpI1v>