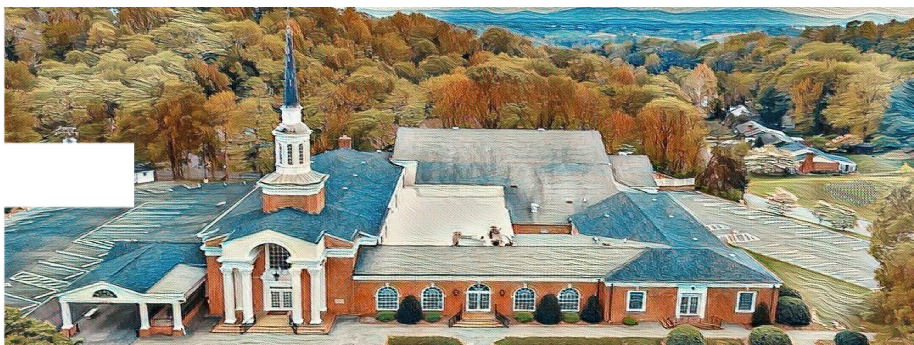


NOVEMBER 18, 2024  
STAUNTON, VA



# COVENANT CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## From the Pastor's Desk

This year's presidential election elicited a host of emotions across the political and theological spectrum. Trump's rhetoric of violent retribution, misogynistic and xenophobic name-calling, and apocalyptic consequences, and Harris' warnings about threats to democracy and the mental instability of her opponent inspired anger and fear among the faithful on both sides of the political spectrum and exhaustion among the bulk of Americans nationwide. As a result, some were elated at the results of the election while others were despondent. Some see a bright future while others anticipate dark days ahead for our nation and world.

The psalmist seems well acquainted with the angst of such times and offers a couple of helpful songs to offer perspective and hope for the people of his day and ours. In Psalm 146 he sings:

*Praise the LORD! I will praise the LORD as long as I live;  
I will sing praises to my God all my life long.  
Do not put your trust in princes,  
in mortals, in whom there is no help.  
When their breath departs, they return to the earth;  
on that very day their plans perish.  
Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,  
whose hope is in the LORD their God! (Ps. 146:1-5)*

The psalmist reminds us that no mortal – no prince or president – is the one who will save us. It is God alone who reigns, God alone who endures across the generations, God alone who is the source of our help and our hope. God can work in, through, and despite whatever leaders are chosen, for the

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VISIT US ONLINE AT  
[WWW.COVENANTPRESSTAUNTON.ORG](http://WWW.COVENANTPRESSTAUNTON.ORG)

*Serving*  
**GOD**  
*Together*



### **GREETERS**

NOV 24 -

8:30 AM... Bill von Seldeneck

10:30 AM... Sue Morley, Randy Smith,  
Jane Wimmer

DEC 1 -

8:30 AM... Bill von Seldeneck

10:30 AM... Dan Drumheller, Harry &  
Sarah Boney

### **NURSERY (10:30 AM)**

NOV 24 - Laura & Aubrey Lawson

DEC 1 - Barbara Gough

### **COVENANT KIDS (10:30 AM)**

NOV 24 - *volunteer needed*

DEC 1 - *volunteer needed*

### **FLOWER COORDINATORS**

Susan Polly and Christy Davis

### **CHURCH OPENING and CLOSING**

NOVEMBER — Bill Terry

DECEMBER — Randy Smith



## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**HELPERS (age 14+) ARE NEEDED ON  
SUNDAYS DURING THE 10:30 SERVICE  
(10:00 during July/August)**

These volunteer spots are for the  
second adult present to satisfy our  
Child Protective Policy.

**SIGN UP FOR NURSERY:**

<https://bit.ly/FallNurserySignUp>

**SIGN UP FOR COVENANT KIDS:**

**(Sept. - mid May)**

<https://bit.ly/CovenantKidsHelpers>



## **Monday Morning Bible Study**

### **Join us Mondays 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 meet **in person** in Room 6 **and**  
also offer this meeting **virtually**  
through Zoom. A link to the  
Zoom meeting is sent out



Would you like to contribute to the  
Greenery Fund to help provide  
items such as wreaths and  
garlands to beautify the church  
during the Advent season?

Make checks payable to the church  
and designate "Greenery Fund" in the  
memo section. Checks may be  
placed in the offering plates on  
Sundays or brought to the church  
office during the week.

**THANKS**  
*from the*  
**HEART**

It's true: A loving and supportive communi-  
ty is very good "medicine," indeed. I am so  
grateful for the cards, calls, occasionally  
hilarious texts, visits, and food (glorious  
food that included desserts) you've offered  
since my surgery. Thank you, Covenant  
Family, thank you. — Kathy Henderson

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

Lord is God of all! In the 46th Psalm, he offers this encouragement:

*God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.  
Therefore, we will not fear,  
though the earth should change,  
though the mountains shake in  
the heart of the sea;  
though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble  
with its tumult ...*

*"Be still and know that I am God!  
I am exalted among the nations,  
I am exalted in the earth."*

*The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge.  
(Ps.46:1-3,10-11)*

Any new president will bring about change – some more than others. As I have said many times: in the Valley **CHANGE** is a four-letter word – and that word isn't **HOPE**! People are anxious around change. The psalmist reminds us that in the midst of all change, God is a constant – there to support us, there to calm our fears, there to reassure us that God still reigns and offers to us a refuge from the disruptions of whatever changes may come. As you look to the coming years, be it with great anxiety or great expectation, do not lose sight of God's promises for us and God's expectations of us:

to be faithful where we are by loving  
the Lord with all that we are and  
loving our neighbors as ourselves,  
to do justice, love kindness, and walk  
humbly with our God.

By doing so, we may find that what unites us in Christ is greater than anyone or anything that might divide us, and we may find hope and peace, trusting the God of the psalmist who is our God too!



Items for the next newsletter are due by **9:00 AM on Friday, November 29th.**

Please email Martha at:  
[covenantpcusastaunton@gmail.com](mailto:covenantpcusastaunton@gmail.com)

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

At its stated meeting on November 17, the Session took the following actions:

- ♦ Received a report on the November meeting of presbytery
- ♦ Approved tuition and salary increases for preschool for next year
- ♦ Approved hiring Debby Bibens as Financial Secretary
- ♦ Approved funds to support bell ringers attending a bell festival
- ♦ Approved holding a Longest Night service on December 18
- ♦ Approved holding only one worship service on December 29 at 10:30 AM with communion by intinction (as at 8:30)
- ♦ Elected to the Endowment Committee: Ty Tysinger to fill an unexpired term in the Class of 2025 and Karen Hanna to the Class of 2027



**There will be a Congregational Meeting to elect elders to the Class of 2027 immediately after the 10:30 service on Sunday, November 24th.**







**Kick off the  
holiday season!  
Have fun!  
Spread cheer!**

On **Thursday, December 5 at 10:00 AM**, **Christmas Greenery Baskets** will be assembled in the Fellowship Hall and delivered to several Covenant family members. Garden clippers or shears are good tools for working with the evergreens so if you have these, bring them. If you do not have them, someone will share them with you.

**All Are welcome!** Everyone is invited to assemble the baskets. No professional training or experience required!! Basket delivery is a lovely opportunity to bring cheer to the homes of Covenant family.

**Gathering of Greens.** If you have evergreens like spruce, cedar, pine, yew, boxwood, magnolia, or others (**no** holly or nandina, please), and would like to share them, please bring them to the Fellowship Hall on Thursday, December 5 at 9:45 AM. If you need help cutting the greens, contact Linda Foster or Jane Wimmer.



CareGivers will meet immediately after the 10:30 service on **Sunday, December 8th** in Room 5. Anyone caring for a loved one who would like to talk with others in similar situations is invited to come. For more information, please contact Ruth Arnold.



**Sunday, November 24th,  
at 11:45AM in Room 5.**

With the holidays fast approaching, November and December can be a prolonged period of pain and remembrance. We hope to explore and share specific coping strategies for managing grief during the holiday season. Our group offers a welcoming and safe place to share, connect, and support each other. We hope you can join us!

We meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month immediately after the 10:30 service. Contact Eileen Cooper if you have any questions.



The next  
**Equal Exchange**  
Sale is **Sunday,  
December 1st.**

Available are:

- ♦regular coffee for \$9
- ♦decaf coffee for \$10
- ♦tea for \$4
- ♦dark chocolate for \$4

Make your purchase between the 8:30 AM and 10:30 AM worship services and after the 10:30 service. You can place a pre-order by contacting 540-290-1089 or [bettyandcliff@comcast.net](mailto:bettyandcliff@comcast.net).



## ONGOING OUTREACH

### Peanut Butter Sunday

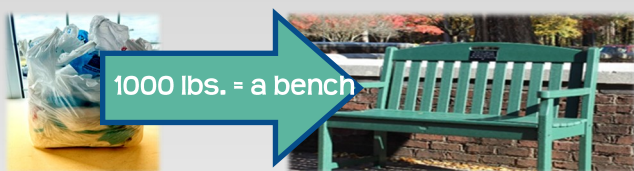
First Sunday of Each Month

You can drop off your jar of peanut butter in the vestibule area 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 may be dropped off in the **RED BUCKETS** located in the vestibule just outside the church office or in the Narthex.



## MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH PLASTIC BAGS

**THANK YOU, COVENANT!** We have kept over **3254 pounds** of plastic out of the landfills. **AND** we've provided benches to the Boys and Girls Club and Covenant Preschool. **We are now working towards a sixth bench!** Keep up the good work:

- Please make sure your bags are **CLEAN, DRY** and **FREE OF FOOD RESIDUE**.
- Plastic bags need to be stretchy. Look for a #2 or #4 recycling symbol (polyethylene films).
- You don't need to cut off zip tops or remove paper labels.
- Please no cellophane (as in snack bags) or metallic films (see nextrex.com for details)

**WANT TO HELP?** Volunteers are always needed to do the weekly weigh-in and take bags to Food Lion. Sign up at <https://bit.ly/3CzoJTW>  
**Questions?** Contact Robyn Sommerfield at [robysommerfield@gmail.com](mailto:robysommerfield@gmail.com)



## RESTOCK THE SHELBURNE PANTRY

**THE PANTRY HAS A CONTINUING  
NEED TO BE STOCKED!**

Donations needed are laundry and cleaning items, hygiene products, and foods such as canned vegetables, canned fruits, soups, and snacks. Please place your donations in the boxes outside the church office or in the Narthex.

*Thank you for helping our community's children and their families!*

# NOMINEES FOR SESSION CLASS OF 2027

## Sally Griffith

Covenant has been our home for 13 years. In that time I have served on the Worship Team, Preschool Team, and Session and as an usher and wedding coordinator. I grew up in central Illinois but have called Staunton home for 25 years. I have taught math in local schools and am currently at Staunton High School. I am the wife of Kevin and mom of Jonathan. We enjoy traveling, sporting events, and supporting Jonathan's latest interests.



## Linda Tenney

I was born and raised in Virginia and spent 38 years as a Social Worker for Shenandoah Valley Social Services. During that time, I did Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services and Adult Services. I am married to Stacey Baker who still works part time at Once Upon A Time Clock Shop. We also have a couple of antique booths at the Factory Antique Mall for fun; definitely not to make money. We enjoy auctions and yard sales. I like to garden, travel, read, and go to the local Y four days a week to keep fit. We have two sons; one lives in Richmond and one locally. We also have a whole collection of animals including a dog, two cats, chickens, a horse, and a pony. They are all rescue animals except the chickens. As you can imagine, I do stay busy. I enjoy the volunteer work I am doing on the Outreach Team and am a relatively new Covenant member.



## Clay Robinson

My wife, Ellison, and I moved to Staunton in July 2023. Ellison was born in Lexington, Virginia, and we had visited her family there throughout our marriage. When our three children grew up and left home, I was eager to see more of the Shenandoah Valley. Having worked as a lawyer for many years, I was also eager to do something else. We left a vibrant church, where we were active in various ways. As a visitor to Staunton, and then as a new resident, Covenant simply felt right. You welcomed us. I have enjoyed meeting many of you through service: delivering food to families in need; serving on a Trinity lunch team; and delivering food you have donated to the food pantry in Verona. I have worked with some skilled congregation members here on various facilities projects. I am thankful for their supervision of my efforts. I have benefited from learning here: worship; Adult Sunday School; and Monday Bible Studies. I enjoy discovering new attributes of this beautiful area; spending time with our adult children and one grandchild, every chance we get; and hikes or bike rides nearby.



## Bob Stripling

Mary Ann and I joined Covenant soon after our arrival in Staunton in 2000 when I assumed my duties as City Manager. We are both legacy Presbyterians. Our parents and grandparents were Presbyterians. We met at Texas Tech as part of the same carpool attending the Presbyterian Church in Lubbock. I served as an elder or deacon in Presbyterian churches in Texas, Blacksburg, and Charlottesville. I was the chair of the Covenant Long Range





Planning Committee and am a member of the Endowment Committee. I served as an officer in the United States Navy after graduating from Texas Tech and saw a bit of the world. I received an MBA from UVA after my Navy tour and then served in several positions in local government over a 30-year period including Assistant City Manager in Charlottesville and Town Manager in Blacksburg. I managed and taught in a master's program at Virginia Tech after my retirement from Staunton until 2015. Mary Ann and I have one child, Cathy, who lives and works in Pulaski, Virginia. I love to teach, play tennis, read, travel internationally, and cheer for UVA in all their sports, especially men's basketball.

## **Janet Surratt**

I joined Covenant in 1959 in the first Confirmation class. I was employed for 16 years by Staunton City Schools as a nurse. I am mom to five, grandmother to 12, and great grandmother to one. I currently serve on the Congregational Care Team and have served on the Worship Committee, Long Range Planning Committee, Preschool Team, Nominating Team, and Trinity Lunch Program. I attend Monday Morning Bible Study, Act III Ministries, TOW, and greet on Sundays as often as possible. When I'm not helping out at the church, I enjoy spending time with family and friends, attending soccer games and helping with school pick-up for Gus, walking with friends, working out at the Y, going to the beach, and spending time by the fire with a good dog Ben.



## **Dori Walk**

I am honored for the opportunity to serve on the Session at Covenant, and I look forward to ways I can support, learn, and become more involved in the church. I grew up in Falls Church, Virginia, and was baptized and raised in a Presbyterian church in Alexandria where my grandparents were charter members. My husband, Steve, and I joined Covenant two years ago. I enjoy attending the Monday Morning Bible Study, helping out with children by reading at Community Child Care, delivering school assignments during COVID, and serving on the Covenant Preschool Team. I worked as a teacher and administrator in Staunton City Schools for 30 years, retiring in 2017. I love spending time with our two sons, daughters-in-law, and four granddaughters, traveling to fun cities, reading, walking, and rooting for my favorite teams – Wake Forest and the Orioles.



## **Jane R. Wimmer**

My husband, Bastian, and I moved to Staunton in March of 2014, and that November I became a member of Covenant. In the ensuing years I became active in Presbyterian Women, serving as moderator, and now help to coordinate the PW Christmas basket project. I have served one term on session as clerk of session. Last year I was a member of the 2023 APNC team who brought Rae to Covenant. I also like to take on small jobs like the plastic recycling project, ushering, providing transportation, or substituting for Martha in the office, but I'm again ready to serve on Session. I enjoy reading, following politics, walking, keeping in touch with friends, and baking.



Nominees for the Nominating Committee are Anne Bell and Debbie Melvin.

# NOVEMBER

# DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<div>Grateful</div> <div>THANKFUL</div> <div>and</div> <div>Blessed</div>	<div>18</div> <div>COVENANT CONNECTION PUBLISHED</div> <div><div>10:30 AM</div><div>MONDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY</div><div>Exploring the Word Together</div><div></div></div> <div>7:00 PM</div> <div>Christian Formation Team</div>	<div>19</div> <div>10:30 AM</div> <div>Act III Ministries</div> <div><div>ACT III</div><div></div><div>FAITH FORMATION FOR THE OLDER ADULT YEARS</div></div>	<div>20</div> <div>9:30 AM</div> <div>Yoga Class</div> <div>5:30 PM</div> <div>Blood Pressure Checks</div> <div>6:00 PM</div> <div>Together on Wednesday (TOW)</div> <div>7:00 PM</div> <div>Bible Study w/Rae</div> <div>7:00 PM</div> <div>Stewardship &amp; Finance Team</div>	<div>21</div> <div>5:45 PM</div> <div>Bell Choir Rehearsal</div> <div>7:00 PM</div> <div>Choir Rehearsal</div>	<div>22</div> <div>6:30 PM</div> <div>Middle School Manna</div>	<div>23</div>
<div>24</div> <div>8:30 AM</div> <div>Worship Service</div> <div>9:30 AM</div> <div>Sunday School</div> <div>10:30 AM</div> <div>Worship Service and via Live Stream</div> <div>11:45 AM</div> <div>Grief Support Group</div> <div>2:30 PM</div> <div>Fellowship Team</div>	<div>25</div>	<div>26</div> <div>10:30 AM</div> <div>Act III Ministries</div> <div><div>ACT III</div><div></div><div>FAITH FORMATION FOR THE OLDER ADULT YEARS</div></div>	<div>27</div> <div>9:30 AM</div> <div>Yoga Class</div>	<div>28</div> <div>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</div> <div><div>Happy Thanksgiving</div><div></div></div>	<div>29</div> <div>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</div> <div>9:00 AM</div> <div>Newsletter Submission Deadline</div>	<div>30</div>
<div>DECEMBER 1</div> <div>8:30 AM</div> <div>Worship Service</div> <div>9:30 AM</div> <div>Sunday School</div> <div>10:30 AM</div> <div>Worship Service and via Live Stream</div> <div>11:45 AM</div> <div>High School Youth</div>	<div>2</div> <div>COVENANT CONNECTION PUBLISHED</div> <div><div>10:30 AM</div><div>MONDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY</div><div>Exploring the Word Together</div><div></div></div>	<div>3</div> <div>10:30 AM</div> <div>Act III Ministries</div> <div><div>ACT III</div><div></div><div>FAITH FORMATION FOR THE OLDER ADULT YEARS</div></div>	<div>4</div> <div>9:30 AM</div> <div>Yoga Class</div> <div>6:00 PM</div> <div>Together on Wednesday (TOW)</div> <div>7:00 PM</div> <div>Gingerbread House Decorating</div> <div></div>	<div>5</div> <div>9:00 AM</div> <div>PW Christmas Basket Assembly</div> <div>5:45 PM</div> <div>Outreach Team</div> <div>5:45 PM</div> <div>Bell Choir Rehearsal</div> <div>7:00 PM</div> <div>Choir Rehearsal</div>	<div>6</div> <div>6:30 PM</div> <div>Faith Explorers (Grades 2-5)</div>	<div>7</div> <div>9:30 AM</div> <div>Hanging of the Greens</div> <div></div>





GINGERBREAD HOUSE DECORATING	WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4 7:00pm Great Hall
HANGING OF THE GREENS	SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7 9:30am Breezeway
CHRISTMAS CAROLING	SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15 11:45am
LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE	WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18 5:15pm Chapel
FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE	TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 4:00pm Sanctuary
CANDLELIGHT SERVICE	TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 7:30pm Sanctuary

Fun for all ages!

*Gingerbread House Decorating*  
DECEMBER 4 @ 7:00 P.M.  
in the Great Hall

Sign Up to let us know you are planning to attend so we have enough supplies for all!  
<https://bit.ly/housedecorating>

**CHRISTMAS CAROLING**  
Sunday, December 15  
@ 11:45 am

We will spread holiday cheer as we visit our Covenant family & friends in various locations.  
We will gather in the Great Hall to enjoy a pizza lunch before boarding the bus.

Sign Up to let us know you are planning to attend so we order enough pizza for all!  
<https://bit.ly/4hjCn1a>

## Hanging of the Greens



Help us begin our joyful preparations for the Christmas season as we decorate the church with greenery and decorate the Christmas tree! You are invited to the Hanging of the Greens, which will be held Saturday, December 7th, 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!

JOIN US FOR

# WARM BLESSINGS

DINNER AND CONCERT BY  
THE FAITHFUL MEN

SILENT AUCTION FOR HOLIDAY SWEETS & TREATS

**November 24, 2024**

**5:00 - 8:00 PM**

**First Baptist Church**

301 S. Wayne Ave, Waynesboro VA

**\$60 per ticket**

**CALL WARM OFFICE TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT  
540-324-8166**



**WARM is Waynesboro Area Refuge Ministry. Founded in 2011, WARM organizes a cold weather shelter as well as transitional housing and outreach programs. For more information go to:**  
<https://www.warmwaynesboro.org/>

## COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**Mailing Address:**

PO Box 2948, Staunton, VA 24402

**Physical Address:**

2001 N. Coalter Street, Staunton

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

**Rachel Watson**  
Associate Pastor

**Jeffrey Ryman**  
Minister of Music

**Christopher Wszalek**  
Organist

**Lou Dolive**  
Handbell Director

**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](http://www.covenantpresstaunton.org).



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MATTHEW 25

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

Please let us know you are coming!

Together  
on



Wednesday  
GOOD FOOD | GREAT FELLOWSHIP

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.

**Three options to reserve a seat:**

1. Sign up via the email sent out on Saturdays
2. Sign the Friendship Register in the pew on Sunday.
3. Call the church office at 540-885-2138.

**November 20 @ 6:00 PM**  
Asian/Thai/Chinese

**No TOW on November 27**

**December 4 @ 6:00 PM**  
with **Gingerbread House Making**  
Pizza Night

*Vegetarian options are  
available at all meals.*