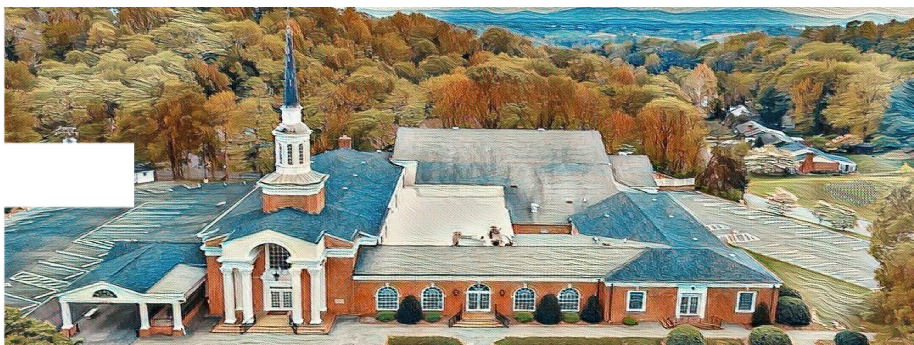


DECEMBER 30, 2024  
STAUNTON, VA



# COVENANT CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

The dawn of a new year offers an opportunity for a fresh start but also engenders some anxiety about changes to come. New year's resolutions commit to a new and better path. For those for whom 2024 was a difficult year, the new year raises hope that 2025 will be better. For those who are anticipating changes – the birth of a baby, a marriage, a new job, retirement – a new year's dawn can spur great hopes and expectations mixed with a dose of fears of the unknown.

In a year of presidential transition in our nation, the new year offers hope-filled possibilities for those who embrace the new president and his brand of politics, and anxiety for those who view his erratic behavior and spiteful rhetoric as ominous signs for our nation and world. Across the years, the one constant in new years is change which demands of us creative and resilient solutions to new problems and opportunities.

What are your hopes and expectations for this new year? Are you optimistic, pessimistic, or apathetic? Do you take the opportunity to embrace the new year as a time to reboot your life and way of living, or are you desperately trying to hang on to the old through whatever changes may come? Within the pages of Scripture, the prophets speak of new things that God is doing. Those new things are intended to encourage the people to embrace new possibilities, to reassure them of God's presence with them, and to offer hope in God's hand at work in their lives.

(continued on page 3)



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

*Serving*  
**GOD**  
*Together*



### **GREETERS**

JAN 5 -

8:30 AM....Cheryl & Rick Fauerbach

10:30 AM....**volunteers needed**

JAN 12 -

8:30 AM....Becky Earhart

10:30 AM....Melissa Druff, Dan Drumheller

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

JAN 5 - Mandy Drumheller

JAN 12 - **volunteer needed**

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

JAN 5 - **volunteer needed**

JAN 12 - Reagan Gwaltney

### **FLOWER COORDINATORS**

Susan Polly and Christy Davis

### **CHURCH OPENING and CLOSING**

January — Mike Riddell



### **Monday Morning Bible Study**

Join us Mondays at 10:30 AM  
We will begin again on January 6th.

We look at the text for the next Sunday's sermon. We meet **in person** in Room 6 **and** also offer this meeting **virtually** through Zoom.



Pat Dindinger, an elder and long-time Covenant member living at Kendal at Lexington, died on December 14th at the age of 95. Pat stayed closely connected to Covenant even after her move to the retirement community in Lexington several years ago. A memorial service for Pat will be held here in the Memorial Garden at a future date. Please keep her children and their families in your prayers.

Please keep in your prayers Janey Terry and her family on the death of Janey's mother, Gladys Crouse, in Fredericksburg on December 22nd. May God grant to Gladys eternal rest, and grant to Janey and her family comfort and peace.



### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Our Children and Youth Protection Policy requires that we have two adults (present whenever we are working with kids. This helps keep our kids and our volunteers safe. We have a fantastic team of Christian Formation program leaders that work hard to prepare for our kids, but we simply cannot provide these programs without help. Volunteers are needed for Sunday School, Covenant Kids, Nursery, and Youth Group.

**SIGN UP HERE:**

<https://bit.ly/3Z80CXM>



### **Ushers/Greeters Needed**



**Help is always needed!**

If you are available at the 8:30 or 10:30 service, please sign-up at <http://bit.ly/3KPmamT>

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

As you look to this new year – however you look at it – I encourage you to look for the new things that God is doing in our midst. Some of them may involve you, and some of them may be far from you. You may find some of them in news reports or in daily encounters or in quiet “aha” moments or in new opportunities. Look for the hand of God at work in the world and in your life, and make yourself available as an instrument for God to do whatever it is God is doing. For amid all the change, God is constant – constantly present, constantly loving, constantly urging us to trust God’s promises and so to live with less anxiety and fear, with more hope and courage and peace – come what may! In 2025, dare to embrace the words of the prophet Jeremiah: *Surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.* (Jer.29:11) In that promise, may you find hope and peace in this new year!



**There will be a Called Congregational Meeting on January 5, 2025 immediately after the 10:30 service to approve changes to the pastors' terms of call.**

Items for the next newsletter are due by **9:00 AM on Friday, January 10th.**

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

## THANKS *from the* HEART

The family of Bill Roberson will be eternally grateful for the many kindnesses shown him and us during his sudden illness and death. The pastors and members of Covenant extended the love of Christ to us and we are grateful and at peace.

— Peggy Roberson

## SHARE YOUR *memories*

At the memorial service for her father, Bill Jennings, his daughter Kate expressed appreciation for the stories that were shared with her about her dad. She invites any folks who may have further stories to share to write her at [13Kate88@gmail.com](mailto:13Kate88@gmail.com).





# Ice Skating Party



**SUNDAY, JANUARY 19**

**2:00 - 3:30 PM**

**Generations Park, Bridgewater**

**Come skate or spectate!**

**Enjoy Cocoa & Cookies!**

**Skate Rentals - \$4.00**

Sign Up at: <https://bit.ly/3ZTH6je>

The sign up will ask you to let us know if you will be skating or spectating.



Pictured is the December bulletin board at the Verona Community Center to thank and recognize Covenant Presbyterian Church for their generous donations.

## COMMUNITY CHILD CARE BOOKS

Our congregation has an opportunity to promote reading for the children attending the Community Child Care Center, by providing each child with a book to take home. Starting January 5<sup>th</sup> through January 12<sup>th</sup>, there will be stars on the bulletin board located in the Breezeway with the names of winter-themed children's books. Because of the number of children we will need 4 of each board book and 3 of each hardback. A sign-up sheet will be provided to track those providing a book. Additionally, money to purchase a book can be provided by those who would rather not shop. Checks can be made to Covenant Presbyterian Church with CCCC book in the memo.



## 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.



1000 lbs. = a bench

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH PLASTIC BAGS

**THANK YOU, COVENANT!** We have kept over **3294 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 [robynsommerfield@gmail.com](mailto:robynsommerfield@gmail.com)



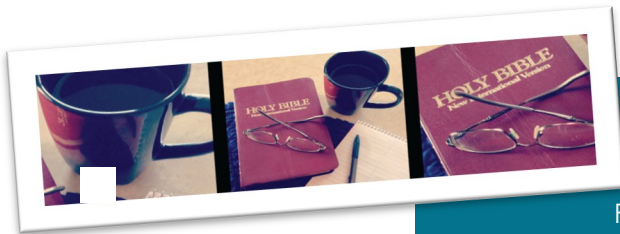
## RESTOCK THE SHELBURNE PANTRY

**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!*





# CHRISTIAN FORMATION

**RACHEL WATSON • (540) 885-2138**  
[revrachelwatson@gmail.com](mailto:revrachelwatson@gmail.com)

There is a place for everyone in Christian Formation with classes for our adults, youth, and children happening on Sunday morning and all week long! Come grow in faith with us!

Christian Formation Links are at the Covenant website:

[www.covenantpresstaunton.org/christian-formation-opportunities/](http://www.covenantpresstaunton.org/christian-formation-opportunities/)

## A NOTE FROM RACHEL—

Why Sunday School? With all the things vying for our time, why should we spend an hour on this? Maybe it's important for our kids, but didn't we graduate with our Christian Education diploma after confirmation? Isn't the worship hour enough?

Well, simply put...because Christian Formation is a lifelong process that grows and changes with us. Because God's not done with us yet and still calls us into partnership throughout our entire lifetime. Because God is a communal God...Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Holy Three, Holy One...and made us for community too, so we need each other to even begin to understand this great mystery of faith. Because the God we praise is a living God whose truths are steadfast but whose church grows and changes as the people of God grow and change. Because Christian Formation classes give us the chance to ask, to dig in, and to imagine together so our faith can be deepened and ourselves transformed as disciples.

It IS an hour (or two or three) and we ARE people who are bound by limited time. And it's a choice to get up early on Sunday or stay late after the service. No longer is our society built around church time and there are a million things we can and probably should do before the work week starts again, so choosing anything that takes this much time is a big deal. Yet it is our gift and our calling to share our time with each other and with God, so we might be able to figure out this kingdom living thing in a messy world. Our Christian Formation team is deep in discussion about the why and how of Christian formation. We are dedicated to making the time you spend with us valuable, carefully considering what is being taught and how it builds across our entire life and discerning the best ways to steward our time and resources. This includes changes for our middle and high schoolers - incorporating technology - online

gathering spaces, video devotionals, and phone check-ins alongside weekly Sunday School and monthly YOUTH group and Manna events. We're exploring new Sunday School topics for adults and creative ways to meet with parents and older adults that meet their specific needs and challenges.

What do YOU need to feed your spirit and soul? Whether you are already participating in Christian formation classes or are sure you never will, I encourage you to let us know what you would like to learn and grow in faith this year by clicking this link and filling out the (quick, I promise) form.

<https://forms.gle/iZB1GGgNmRLJfSWm9>

## Children's & Youth Sunday Christian Formation

**Nursery** | Birth - Age 3 | 9:30-11:45AM | Nursery  
**Faith in Action** | Age 3-Grade 5 |  
 9:30 -10:15AM | Education Wing  
**Journeys in Faith** | Grades 6-8 |  
 9:30 -10:15AM | Middle School Room  
**Follow Me** | Grades 9-12 | 9:30 -10:15AM | Youth Room

## Children's & Youth Fellowship

**Faith Explorers** | Grades 2-5 | 6:30 - 8:00PM | First Fridays | Great Hall (except in January—we will meet on January 10 this month!)  
**Middle School Manna** | Grades 6-8 | 12:00 - 1:30 PM | 1st Sundays | Great Hall (except in January—we will meet on January 12)  
**High School YOUTH** | Grades 9-12 | 12:00 - 1:30 PM | Typically Third Sundays | Great Hall

## Adult Christian Formation

**Sunday School Follow Me** | Sundays | 9:30 - 10:15AM | Fellowship Hall  
**Monday Morning Bible Study** | Mondays | 10:30 - 11:30AM | Room 6  
**Presbyterian Women** | Second Tuesdays | 10:30AM - noon | Breezeway  
**Act III Older Adult Ministry** | Thursdays | 10:30AM - noon | Chapel (Begins on January 9)

# Missionary UPDATE

FROM FAITH'S HEART — November 2024 Update  
(Crystal & Raphael)

## November 2024



November was a busy month! In addition to training over 100 farmers through two separate 1-day programs in Plateau State and another 30 in our last 3-day program of 2024 in Abuja, Raph and the team worked on the solar panel installation you see on the front of this card for the computing department at the Federal University of Lafia.

While our primary focus is on feeding the hungry and sharing the Gospel through regenerative agriculture, we are also still dedicated to bringing light (and Light!) everywhere we go. With almost half (42%) of Nigerians not even on the national power grid and at least 11 nationwide grid collapses in 2024 alone, reliable energy is a huge need for most of the country. So when the university reached out with a request to assist in procuring the necessary equipment to power their Data Center, we were happy to assist, ensuring they received quality equipment and proper installation for smooth running for a long time.

Doing things with excellence and integrity is how we shine Christ's light and stand out in the darkness of a country often characterized by corruption—not only in government and business but also in the church. Thanking God for new opportunities to shine in the darkness and praying to always be prepared to give an answer for the hope that is in us.

*"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they see...and glorify your Father in heaven."* ~Matthew 5:16

You can support the work of Decapolis in Nigeria through your preferred platform below:

checks: Commission To Every Nation

P.O. Box 291307

Kerrville, TX • 78029-1307

online: [www.cten.org/crystalraphael](http://www.cten.org/crystalraphael)

Helpful links to follow Decapolis  
Community Development Center:



[FACEBOOK](#)

[WEBSITE](#)

[YOUTUBE](#)

[EMAIL](#)

# DECEMBER JANUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>30</b> <b>COVENANT CONNECTION</b> <b>PUBLISHED</b> 	<b>31</b> 	<b>JAN. 1</b> CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED 	<b>2</b> 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>3</b> 	<b>4</b> 	
<b>5</b> <b>Peanut Butter Sunday</b> <b>Presbyterian Coffee Project</b> 8:30 AM Worship Service 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service and via Live Stream 11:30AM Called Congregational Meeting	<b>6</b> 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study 5:30 PM Congregational Care 7:00 PM Facilities Team	<b>7</b> 7:00 PM Elder Training	<b>8</b> 	<b>9</b> 10:30 AM Act III Ministries 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>10</b> 9:00 AM Newsletter Submission Deadline 10:00 AM Novels & Needles Book Group 6:30 PM Faith Explorers (Grades 2-5)	<b>11</b> 
<b>12</b> 8:30 AM Worship Service 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service and via Live Stream 12:00 PM Middle School Manna 4:00 PM Technology Committee via Zoom	<b>13</b> <b>COVENANT CONNECTION</b> <b>PUBLISHED</b> 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study	<b>14</b> 9:30 AM PW Coordinating Team 10:30 AM Presbyterian Women 5:30 PM Preschool Team 7:00 PM Stewardship & Finance Team	<b>15</b> 	<b>16</b> 10:30 AM Act III Ministries 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>17</b> 	<b>18</b> 





PRESBYTERIAN  
WOMEN

**Tuesday,  
January 14th  
10:30 AM  
Breezeway**

The fellowship of Presbyterian Women gathers on **Tuesday, January 14th at 10:30 AM** in the Breezeway. All women are invited to participate. Mary Ann Stripling is facilitating the conversation about air quality justice. Breathing is so essential that our bodies' autonomic systems do it for us. Life begins and ends with breath. In Scripture we read that air is not only crucial to life but also a gift from God. Isaiah 42:5 identifies God as the one who "gives breath to the people upon it [the earth] and spirit to those who walk on it." And from the apostle Paul: God "gives to all mortals life and breath and all things" (Acts 17:25).



CareGivers will meet immediately after the 10:30 service on **Sunday, January 19th** 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.



Novels & Needles Book Club will meet at 10:00 AM on Friday, January 10th in the Breezeway

The book being discussed is  
***The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell:***  
***A Novel***

by Robert Dugoni

Members are encouraged to bring their knitting or crocheting which could benefit the Prayer Shawl Ministry.

***We also welcome those who do not knit or crochet.***

Please join us!

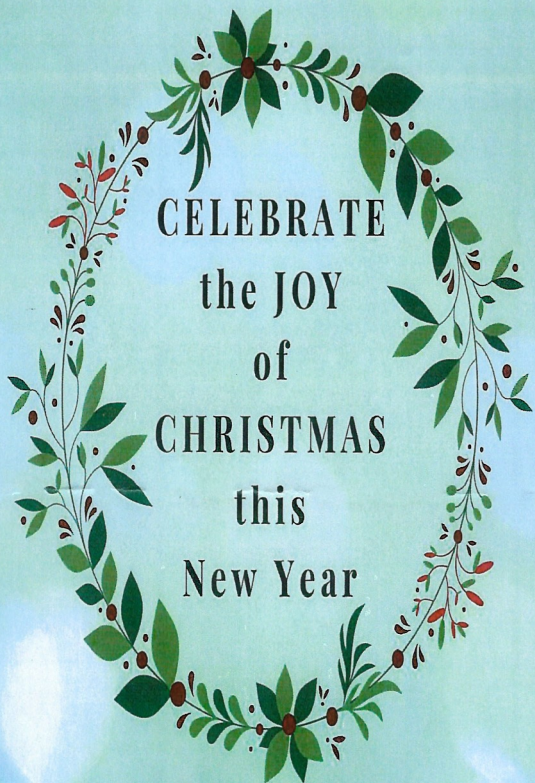


The next  
**Equal Exchange**  
Sale is **Sunday,**  
**January 5th.**

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)**.



CELEBRATE  
the JOY  
of  
CHRISTMAS  
this  
New Year

*Benefit Concert  
for the*

*Blue Ridge Area Food Bank Network*

Church and community choir with chamber orchestra

Under the direction of David MacMillan

*Staunton Church of the Brethren*

*1615 North Coalter Street*

*January 5, 2025 at 7 p.m.*

*prelude at 6:40 p.m. - Massanutten Brass Quintet*

Free Will Offering

Reception following concert

## 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*

**Debby Bibens**

*Financial Secretary*

**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).



COVENANT



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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



**MATTHEW 25**

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



*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](http://www.facebook.com/Covenant-Presbyterian-Church-163891301309)),  
on the home page of the  
church website  
([covenantpresstaunton.org](http://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.

O Lord, let my  
New Year's resolution  
be to  
**follow you**  
**more closely**  
and to  
**trust in your**  
**loving guidance.**