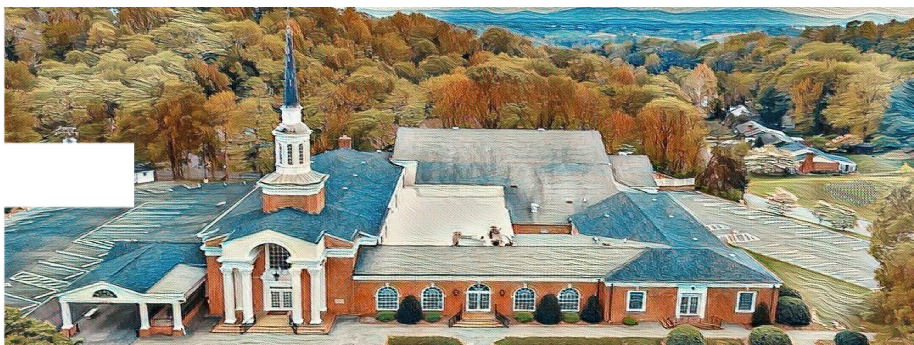


APRIL 21, 2025  
STAUNTON, VA



# COVENANT CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

In our Lenten book study of *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?* author John Fea suggests that Samuel Adams believed that republics could survive “only when their citizens sacrificed self-interest for the common good and lived upright and moral lives.” He took issue with “America’s sinful obsession with entertainment, luxury, ‘Assemblies and Balls,’ gambling, the latest fashions, the endless pursuit of wealth and diversions and ‘depravity of manners’ that distracted ordinary people from practicing the kind of virtue necessary to sustain the Republic.”

Amid the current concerns about the fragility of our democracy and republic, Adams’ assessment is helpful. If we are to survive as a democratic nation, then we must have a sense of the common good that transcends our selfish interests. Jesus encourages his disciples to do just that – to deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow him; to love their neighbors as themselves; to serve others rather than seeking to be served. In his death and resurrection, he sacrificed his life in order that ALL might be saved. For him the common good had no limits. He breaks down the boundaries that would limit those with whom we share that common good. There is no “America First” or “Christian First” or “Presbyterian First.” Our responsibilities for the common good transcend political, geographic, ethnic, or religious boundaries, for we are ALL created in the image of God. We are called to love and serve ALL our neighbors, to sacrifice selfish interests for the common good, so that ALL may thrive.

(continued on page 3)

Stand firm  
in the faith;  
be courageous;  
be strong.

1 Corinthians 16:13



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

*Serving*  
**GOD**  
*Together*



### **GREETERS**

APRIL 27 -

8:30 AM....Janice & Rae Rockwell

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

MAY 4 -

8:30 AM....Gary & Nancy Gourley

10:30 AM....Beth Jennings, Janet Surratt,  
Jane Wimmer

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

*(sign up below to volunteer)*

APRIL 27 - **Volunteer Needed**

MAY 4 - **Volunteer Needed**

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

*(sign up below to volunteer)*

APRIL 27 - Melanie Shoup-Knox

MAY 4 - **Volunteer Needed**

### **FLOWER COORDINATORS**

Susan Polly and Christy Davis

### **CHURCH OPENING and CLOSING**

APRIL — Kent Diduch

MAY — Bill Terry




### **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 via opt-ins each Sunday.



## Sanctuary flowers SIGN-UP

Provide flowers in memory or in honor of someone, or just to decorate the sanctuary. Directions are given on the sign-up form. Questions? Contact Susan Polly or Christy Davis. Please sign up at <https://bit.ly/3MD9wXO> least two weeks before your desired date.

### CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



## 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.

**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)

But Adams also suggests that we need to live moral lives. In that regard, his critique of the sinful obsessions of the nation in his day seem relevant to our society today – though we might substitute “arenas and stadiums” for “Assemblies and Balls”! We too are plagued by the dogged pursuit of wealth – in college sports where any relationship to education is sacrificed at the altar of more money for athletes, coaches, and college coffers alike; in cuts to Medicaid and programs that help the poor in the search of tax cuts that disproportionately benefit the wealthy; in turning a blind eye to the impact of climate change in pursuit of cheap energy. The rise of gambling across our nation and the endless pursuit of screen entertainment are addictions and afflictions; last year I heard a presentation from a major investment firm that reported that 750,000 young men between the ages of 18 and 29 are not in the workforce because they are playing video games at home! Drugs and alcohol continue to be escapes from reality for far too many people of all ages. In the memorable words of Neil Postman, “We are amusing ourselves to death!”

Jesus calls us to live as resurrection people, sharing the good news, living with hope, and following his example of self-sacrificial love and service. He never said it would be easy or lucrative to do so; he suggested it would be something else – faithful! May we all be so faithful!



## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

At its stated meeting on April 13, the Session took the following actions:

- Removed from the rolls Joe Mills who has joined St. Francis Catholic Church and Mike Gabel who has joined Williamsburg United Methodist Church in Williamsburg, VA
- Elected Jane Wimmer and Dori Walk as commissioners to the May meeting of presbytery
- Approved a request for Covenant to host the November meeting of presbytery
- Approved the purchase of a basket cart for use by Outreach
- Approved Sunday worship times for July and August to be 8:30 and 10:00 as in past years



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

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







**FUN  
FOR  
ALL  
AGES**  
(PLAYERS &  
SPECTATORS  
NEEDED)

# Kickball & Tailgate

**Sunday, April 27**  
**2:00 PM**

**COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Tailgate with us  
on the front lawn.  
Bring a savory or  
sweet snack/dessert  
to share. Covenant  
Fellowship will  
provide popsicles,  
lemonade, and  
water!

Kickball will be on  
the field across the  
street. We will  
gather with other  
churches in the area  
for fun & fellowship.  
Be sure to bring a  
chair and/or  
blanket.



## 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 RAE —

**What you need to know about the Parenting and Faith Class – April 27, May 4, 11, & 18 @ 9:30AM**

When people think about Christian formation, they tend to envision Sunday School classes, youth groups, confirmation, and mission trips. These important elements of Christian education, the process of teaching what the church does and believes, make up one part of the task of Christian formation, the ongoing process of forming people for changed and faithful living our whole lives long. We are the church when we gather on Sunday morning. We come together to be refreshed and renewed for our work in worship and to remember who we are as children of God and what we are working for as citizens of the kingdom of God. But we are also the church wherever a church member goes throughout the week. Christian formation involves equipping congregation members to do this, growing habits of personal devotion that last a lifetime and applying what is learned at church to our everyday lives.

This means providing education, experiences, support, and resources for developing personal practices of prayer, study, and spiritual disciplines that can form and inform us as disciples our whole lives long. And it also means supporting our parents as they do this work for their children. Faith formation

begins in the home, but many parents feel overwhelmed with the enormity of this task. And faith formation in the church can be daunting for prospective Sunday school teachers. Kids ask hard questions, can be amazingly energetic, are super busy, and are still learning social skills and emotional regulation. Youth are dealing with incredible stress, are very busy, have huge questions about life, and are in a season when they most need us to show them why this faith stuff is important.

On April 27, May 4, 11, and 18, I will be leading a class during the Sunday School hour about children and their faith. During the first week, we will focus on understanding the changing world in which children are growing and how we can nurture their social and emotional well-being. (In other words, how can we build practices of empathy, cooperation, and “good” behavior?) In the second week, we will dig into practical tips for encouraging faith formation at home, including what to do when kids ask the really tough questions for which there are no easy answers. In the third week, we will explore youth mental health and how we can faithfully support our kids during this critical life stage. Then, we will finally discuss how the church can and might support parenting and faith formation for parents, children, and youth. Everyone is welcome to learn how to be a church parent for all the children in the church.





## 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.



### PLASTIC BAG COLLECTION MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

**THANK YOU, COVENANT!** We have kept over **3458 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)




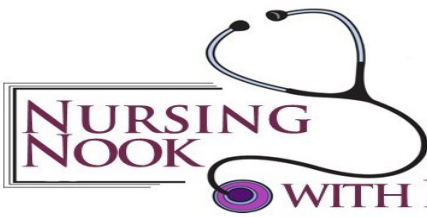
### SHELBURNE PANTRY RESTOCK

**Donations are always needed!**

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

*Thank you for your continued support of this Outreach Project!*

MAY						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 <b>21</b> <b>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</b> <b>COVENANT CONNECTION PUBLISHED</b> 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study	<b>22</b>   					



WITH KATHY HENDERSON, RN

Kathy Henderson, RN • (540) 290-6396

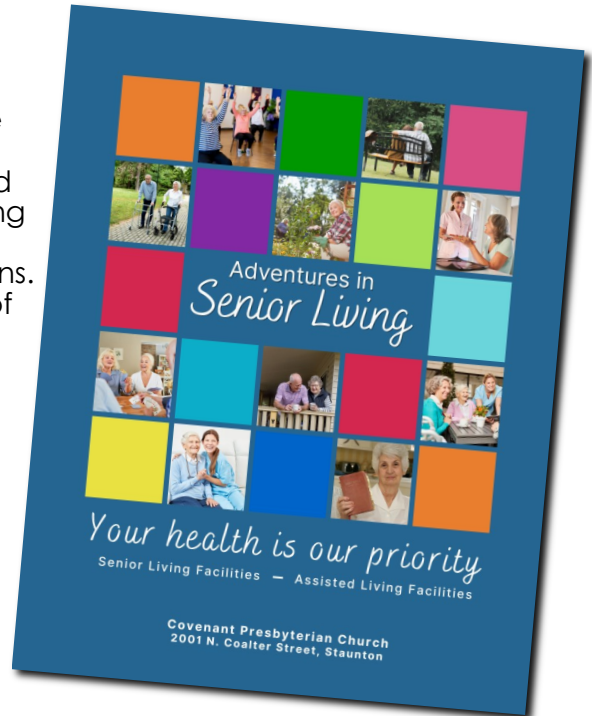
[covenantnurse@gmail.com](mailto:covenantnurse@gmail.com)

Contact Kathy with medical questions or for a blood pressure check.

### It all started over coffee. . .

when Jane Wimmer idly wondered if it was time for her to explore future living options. What would it be like to have someone else shovel snow, find repair people, and rake leaves before they were knee-deep? Would she find it stifling? Freeing? Depressing? Being a careful, analytical person, she decided maybe it was time to start comparing options. Would I be willing to provide a second set of eyes and ears for some of the visits?

Sounded like fun to me. Besides, her questions echoed sentiments I hear in my office several times a month, so I needed to find answers. And just like that, our own "Adventures in Senior Living" began. Now, many months and countless hours later, the book "**Adventures in Senior Living**," is available in both print and digital editions. The guide is Covenant-directed and created with the hope it will save families time and confusion when exploring senior living options in the SAW-Harrisonburg area.



One or both of us spent time at each of the communities included. We took the official tours, chatted with staff and residents whenever possible – and did several return visits. We discussed (sometimes debated) our observations and research, cutting through the marketing hype to produce detailed fact sheets about each community. Additionally, we included verified trustworthy reference links, a brief "dictionary" of senior living jargon, and a couple of sample checklists to use when touring facilities.

Several print copies of "Adventures in Senior Living" are available (and more can be made, if needed) Find them in the Church Office and the Nurse's office.

"Adventures" is also available on the Church website, in the "Resources" section.

<https://www.covenantpresstaunton.org/senior-living-handbook/>

We began this project to answer our own questions. Please feel free to offer suggestions or more questions.





On Sunday, April 13th, following the 10:30 worship service, approximately 100 adults, youth, and children gathered in the Great Hall for a brunch featuring a variety of delicious breakfast and lunch items. At 12:45 PM, the children ventured outside to collect as many candy-filled plastic eggs as they could find from the 1,100 eggs hidden by the youth. The youth, along with the Fellowship Team, had come together on April 6th to fill all of those eggs. Everyone had a wonderful time! *(Thank you to our neighbor across the street for providing the picture!)*



**Registration is  
Now Open!**  
jonesgarden.org

**Registration is now open for the Nourishing Strides 5K!** When you participate, you enable Jones Garden to ensure that all members of our community have easy and affordable access to fresh foods. Come May 3rd for a fun and fulfilling morning at Montgomery Hall Park. Register online at <https://donorbox.org/2023-nourishing-strides-5k-2>



### **Children's & Youth Sunday Christian Formation**

**Nursery** | Birth – Age 3 | 9:30-11:45AM |

Nursery

**Growing in God's Word** | Age 3-Grade 6 | 9:30 -10:15AM | Education Wing

**Follow Me** | Grades 7-12 | 9:30-10:15AM | Youth Room

**Covenant Kids** | Grades PK-1 | 10:45-11:15AM | Covenant Kids Chapel

### **Children's & Youth Fellowship**

**Faith Explorers** | Grades 2-5 | 6:30 - 8:00PM | First Fridays | Great Hall

**Middle School Manna** | Grades 6-8 | 12:00 -1:30 PM | 1st Sundays | Great Hall

**High School YOUTH** | Grades 9-12 | 12:00 - 1:30 PM | Typically Third Sundays | Great Hall

### **Adult Christian Formation**

**Follow Me: Discipleship Study** | Sundays | 9:30 - 10:15AM | Fellowship Hall

**Monday Morning Bible Study** | Mondays | 10:30 - 11:30AM | Room 6 and via Zoom

**Presbyterian Women** | Second Tuesdays | 10:30AM - noon | Breezeway



*Sunnyside Communities*  
MORE THAN A CENTURY OF CARING



Sunnyside | King's Grant | Summit Square

## **MOTHER'S DAY OFFERING - May 11, 2025**

The Mother's Day Annual Offering supports the Fellowship Fund and provides charitable aid to our residents that have outlived their resources. In many situations these residents have no other means of support and often no family.

Sunnyside Communities was founded as a Presbyterian Ministry of the historic Synod of the Virginias in 1912 and serves more than 800 residents within our three communities:

Sunnyside in Harrisonburg,  
King's Grant in Martinsville and  
Summit Square in Waynesboro

**Make your checks payable to Covenant Presbyterian Church  
and designate "Sunnyside Offering" on the memo line.**

Your generosity provides peace of mind and the security of knowing they will always have a home at Sunnyside, King's Grant or Summit Square.

The words "thank you", never seem adequate to express our gratitude for the love and support you show through this special offering each year.



600 University Boulevard, Suite L, Harrisonburg, VA 22801

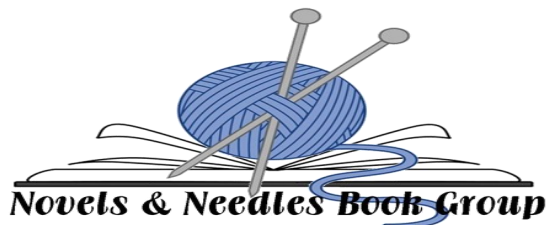
540-568-8234 • [development@sunnyside.cc](mailto:development@sunnyside.cc)

[www.sunnysidecommunities.com](http://www.sunnysidecommunities.com)



**PRESBYTERIAN  
WOMEN**

***NEXT MEETING:  
Tuesday, May 13th  
10:30 AM in the  
Breezeway***



Novels & Needles Book Club  
will meet at 10:00 AM on  
Friday, May 9th  
in the Breezeway.

The book being discussed is  
***The Reading List***  
by Sara Nisha Adams

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!



CareGivers will  
meet immediately  
after the 10:30 service on  
**Sunday, April 27th**  
in the Middle School Room.  
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, April 27th  
at 11:45AM in Room 5.**

Realizing that grief is a process that  
each person experiences in a unique  
way, Covenant offers a place of  
understanding, caring, and support  
where you can feel comfortable sharing  
your experiences and feelings with  
others on the same journey, knowing  
you are not alone. Whether your loss  
is recent or long past, all are welcome.

We hope you can join us!

We meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday  
of each month immediately  
after the 10:30 service.

Please contact Eileen Cooper  
if you would like more information.



# With Sympathy

Betty Bonham, a long-time Covenant member and elder, died April 9 in hospice care. Please keep in your prayers Betty's son Wendell, daughter Nancy, and their family. May God grant Betty eternal rest and resurrection joy and grant to her family comfort and peace.

We received word that Madge Drumheller, a Covenant member living in a retirement community in Ashburn, VA, died on March 30. Please keep Madge's husband Ernie and their family in your prayers. May God grant to Madge eternal rest and resurrection joy and grant to Ernie and their family comfort and peace.

## Outreach Opportunities

The Community Child Care Center provides an opportunity to read picture books to two groups of preschoolers; divided by age. Each reading session lasts about 20 minutes while the children sit in a circle with their teachers. Don't know what to read to the children? The Staunton Librarians are a great resource in locating appropriate books.



The Community Center in Verona utilizes people to work two hour shifts with another volunteer, while folks take showers, use computers, get food, do laundry, and come in out of the weather. The Center can also benefit from donations of water, snacks, personal care items for showers, and cleaning supplies.

If you would like more information or to help with either of these outreach opportunities, contact Linda Tenney.

## 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).



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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



**MATTHEW 25**

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

# PARENTING & FAMILY

Come learn about how to help nurture our children's and youth's emotional and mental health, some practical tips for encouraging faith formation at home, and how we are already more equipped for this work than we think. Anyone can come to this class and learn how to be a church parent for all the church children.

Sundays,  
April 27, May 4, 11, & 18  
@ 9:30 am  
Middle School Classroom



## **MORE INFO?**

Contact Rae Watson  
[revrachelwatson@gmail.com](mailto:revrachelwatson@gmail.com)