

COVENANT CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

AUGUST 25, 2025
STAUNTON, VA

*... he leads
me beside
still waters;
he restores
my soul.*

Psalm 23:2-3, NRSV

From the Pastor's Desk

The recent water main break and its consequent boil-water advisory in Staunton remind us how vital clean water is to our daily lives. It is something that we generally take for granted - until it is unavailable. Clean water is essential for drinking, cooking, bathing, and so many other needs. Fortunately we have alternatives - bottled water, other drinks, the means to boil water - that make such an event an inconvenience, but hardly a threat to life. Yet there are many places in the world that are not so blessed. For them, clean water is a luxury or a practical impossibility. Desert climates and droughts exacerbated by climate change make any water hard to find in some areas. Floods and heavy rains may provide a surplus of water, none of which is potable. In some war-torn lands, poisoning of wells is a tactic to attack enemies and drive them from their homes and towns. Agricultural, industrial, and municipal pollution of the waters has endangered waterways as vast as the Chesapeake Bay and Great Lakes while tainting the very rivers from which people draw their drinking water. The battle over water - among farmers and ranchers, sprawling cities, industries, and recreational venues - provokes intense conflict in parts of our own nation and among nations around the world. We may well find that clean water is as precious to us in this century as oil was to the economies of the 20th century!

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VISIT US ONLINE AT
WWW.COVENANTPRESSTAUNTON.ORG

Serving
GOD
Together



GREETERS

AUGUST 31 -

8:30 AM....Becky & Chris Earhart

10:30 AM....TBD

SEPTEMBER 7 -

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

10:30 AM....Janet Surratt

FLOWER COORDINATORS

Susan Polly and Christy Davis

CHURCH OPENING and CLOSING

AUGUST — Bill Terry

SEPTEMBER — Craig Whitacre

With Sympathy

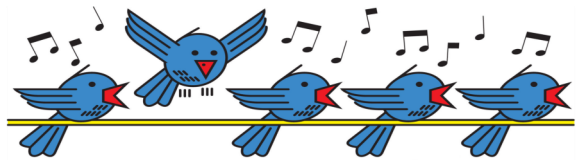
Richard Esther,
a long-time Covenant member and
much-loved Sunday School teacher,
died August 8, 2025 in hospice care
at English Meadows in Harrisonburg.

Earl Chittum,
a Covenant charter member,
died August 15, 2025 in hospice care
at English Meadows in Fishersville.

May God grant them eternal rest
and resurrection joy, and grant to
their families comfort and peace.

NOTE TO OUR VISITORS!

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



Join the Covenant Choir

We Sing
We Learn
We Laugh
We Worship

In the light of the Holy Spirit
In the company of one another

Rehearsals begin on September 4th
at 7:00 PM and run every Thursday
night through June. You can join us in
the joyful singing of songs for Advent,
Lent, and all the Sundays in between.
Plus we have select seating for you
in the balcony! No auditions required.
Contact Jeff Ryman with any inquiries.



Sanctuary flowers SIGN-UP

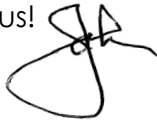
Provide flowers in memory or in honor
of someone, or just to decorate the
sanctuary. Directions are given on the
sign-up form. Please sign up at
<https://bit.ly/3MD9wX0> at least two weeks
before your desired date.

Questions? Contact Susan Polly or
Christy Davis.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK (cont'd)

Water is a gift from God for which we bear responsibility as stewards of all creation. We should not take it for granted but should do our part to assure that it is available to those who need it. We should support initiatives to clean up polluted waters and to build and repair water infrastructure. We can support projects like Living Waters that drill wells for communities around the world that have no other access to fresh water. We should be economical in our use of water and conscientious about not polluting or littering the land and waters around us while holding accountable those who do. We can oppose efforts to build communities, homes, or industrial sites that exceed the capacity of clean water to sustain them or endanger the very waters that are vital to communities around them.

Water is precious in our Christian tradition. It is through the waters of baptism that we profess our faith, join the church, and affirm our place in God's plan. It plays a significant role in biblical stories from the waters of creation to the parting of the Red Sea, from the rock at Meribah providing water to thirsty Israelites in the wilderness to Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River and his turning water to wine at the wedding at Cana. Do not take it for granted! Give thanks for the blessing that clean water is to all of us, and do your part to assure that it is available to this generation and to future generations. For, that is what faithfulness demands - of all of us!



Items for the next newsletter are due by **9:00 AM on Friday, September 5th.**

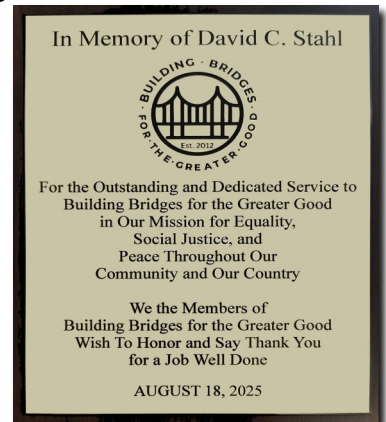
Please email Martha at: covenantpcusastaunton@gmail.com

BUILDING BRIDGES HONORS THE LATE DAVID STAHL



Building Bridges for the Greater Good honored the memory of David Stahl at their monthly meeting with this cake and other refreshments. They presented Laura, Julie, and Zoe Stahl with a plaque commemorating David's work with the organization.

As a member of Covenant's Outreach Team, David kept Covenant aware of opportunities of service offered by Building Bridges. Just before his death he had asked the Outreach Team to help start a fund to boost publicity for their activities. The Team and Session approved his request and delivered a check for \$1000 to Building Bridges for the Greater Good this month.



Missionary UPDATE

FROM FAITH'S HEART — June & July '25 Updates
(Crystal & Raphael)

On June 14, news from Nigeria made it across American airwaves. There had been an overnight attack on a village in Benue State—the details were horrific: over 200 people killed and hundreds more displaced without homes or possessions. In some cases, entire families were wiped out. One of our volunteers lost several family members in the attack. This type of insecurity is a fear that many of our farmers face on a daily basis. Most farmers' fields are located in isolated areas away from their homes. They fear being attacked in their fields, or having their fields destroyed, or having to flee their communities and leave their crops behind. We sometimes receive messages that say "We please ask that you pray with us against killing and kidnapping happening here." Or: "I haven't planted because of insecurity." However, we have been encouraged to hear from some of these beleaguered farmers that the regenerative farming methods they have been taught (especially that they can farm enough to feed their families on just a small plot of land) are helping. "We cannot go to our farms, but with what we have been taught, we can at least plant something small near our home and have enough to eat." We thank God for His provision through the land to provide for us when stewarded faithfully, and we ask for continued prayers for the safety of our farmers and their families and for our team as they travel around the country to share the love of Christ through regenerative farming.



This might look like an insignificant home garden, but there is a story of redemption here! Regenerative agriculture is not only about farming. It also connects to the regenerating work of God in our lives, through the Holy Spirit. We recently received an encouraging report from one of our new trainers. A local believer in their community had decided that God was calling him to do nothing but evangelism. Well-intentioned but misguided, he closed down his barber shop and stopped

farming. Soon, he was unable to pay his children's school fees or even provide basic needs for his family. Due to the hardships he had brought on the family, his wife left him, and all the efforts of local believers to persuade him to go back to farming were of no avail. However, when our trainer shared with him how regenerative farming is a way of serving God and being stewards of the earth the way that God intended, the man agreed to start farming again, and now his wife is ready to come back home. This small plot of land is the beginning of hope - the redemption of a broken home. We love how God is using the teaching of faithful stewardship of His earth to open doors and hearts to redeem and renew not only people's relationship with the earth but also with each other and with God. Please pray for our team as we strive to be faithful ambassadors of Jesus and His ministry of reconciliation.

checks: Commission to Every Nation

online: www.cten.org/crystalraphael

PO Box 291307

Kerrville, TX • 78029-1307



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 Covenant donates 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 **3633 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

SHELBURNE PANTRY



SCHOOL IS BEGINNING SOON - LET'S RESTOCK THE PANTRY

School starts August 6th, and it would be great if the pantry was fully stocked to cover a range of needs to help the kids/families who have not had that support all summer get 'caught up.' Items needed: canned foods like fruits and veggies & soups; small jugs of laundry detergent and dish soap; hygiene products such as toothbrushes, hygiene items, and shampoo; and packaged snacks like trail mix, nuts, dried fruit, and jello. There are boxes outside the church office and in the narthex waiting for your generous donation.

Thank you for your continued support of this Outreach Project!



PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

Presbyterian Women will gather on **Tuesday, September 9th at 10:30 AM in the Breezeway.**

All women are invited to participate. Our new study book is ***Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ***

by Rhashell D. Hunter. Study books (\$14) can be purchased from Frances Craig or at the meeting.

Linda Foster is facilitating the conversation about *Finding Resilience: Mary Magdalene, The Tower*. As we struggle to find resilience in our changing, challenging world, we will be finding inspiration through Bible characters like Mary Magdalene. The scriptures for the first lesson are John 20:11-18 and John 11:17-27.

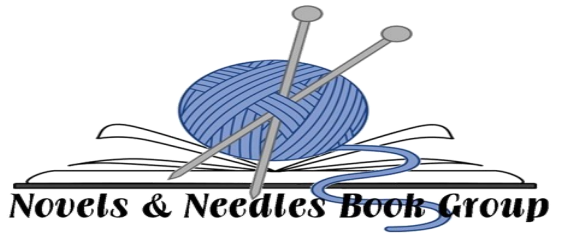
NOTE: The Thank Offering gathering with a light lunch and the installation of officers will be celebrated at the October 14th meeting this year.



**Sunday, August 31st
at 11:15AM in Room 5.**

We will continue to explore ways to navigate the emotions, experiences, and questions of grief in order to move forward in our individual grief journeys. Our group provides a welcoming and safe place to share, connect, and support each other. Please contact Eileen Cooper if you have questions or would like more information.

This is a change in our schedule . . . we typically meet on the 4th Sunday of each month.



Novels & Needles Book Group

Novels & Needles Book Club will meet at 10:00 AM on Friday, September 12th in the Breezeway.

The book being discussed is ***Frozen River***
by Ariel Lawhon

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,**
September 7th.

Available are:

- ♦ regular coffee for \$9
- ♦ decaf coffee for \$10
- ♦ tea for \$4
- ♦ dark chocolate for \$3

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 calling 540-290-1089 or emailing bettyandcliff@comcast.net.

SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 7
@ 9:30 AM
GREAT HALL

Rally Day is the day
we gather to kick off
a new year of
Christian Formation!
Come for breakfast at 9:30.
The fun continues after
church with a potluck!



Milestone Celebrations
Introduction of Teachers
Program Preview
Crafts
Singing and Energizers
Games

After the 10:30 service, the Fellowship team invites you to jump into the new year at a **picnic potluck and water day**. Bring your favorite picnic dishes to share and then get energized for some water play. We will have a slip and slide, yard games, water games, and a chance to soak your Sunday School teachers with water balloons.





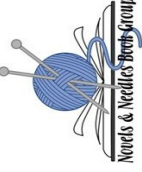

So bring your swimsuit and towel and let's play!



AUGUST



SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	25 Covenant Connection Published	26	27 9:30 AM Yoga Class	28	29	30
31 – 4 CENTS A MEAL 8:30 AM Worship Service 9:15 AM Happy Half Hour 10:00 AM Worship Service and via Live Stream 11:15 AM Grief Support Group	SEPT 1 Church Office Closed 	2	3 9:30 AM Yoga Class	4 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	5 9:00 AM Newsletter Submission Deadline	6 11:00 AM Memorial Service for Richard Esther
7 – PEANUT BUTTER SUNDAY PRESBYTERIAN COFFEE PROJECT 8:30 AM Worship Service 9:15 AM Rally & Breakfast in Great Hall 10:30 AM Worship Service and via Live Stream 11:45 AM Outreach Team 11:45 AM Potluck Picnic & Games 	8 Covenant Connection Published 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study 5:30 PM Congregational Care Team 7:00 PM Facilities Team 7:00 PM Personnel Team 7:15 PM Worship Team	9 9:30 AM PW Coordinating Team 10:30 AM Presbyterian Women  PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN 5:00 PM Preschool Team	10 9:30 AM Yoga Class	11 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	12 10:00 AM Novels & Needles Book Group  6:30 PM Faith Explorers (grades 3-5) 	13

WELCOME

New Members

On Sunday, August 10 at the 10:00 service, we welcomed new members Maggie Harmon, Chris Huppuch, Hayden Terry, and Kathy Vestral.



Pictured left to right: Bill Terry, Maggie Harmon, Chris Huppuch, Charlie Huppuch, Janey Terry, Kathy Vestal, Hayden Terry, Karen Peterson



Stewardship & FINANCE

Covenant welcomes Debby Bibens as our new Financial Secretary/Bookkeeper. Debby is responsible for the day-to-day accounting activities of the church. Please stop by the office and greet Debby. Her office hours are Wednesday and Friday mornings.



Our current Treasurer, Paul Sorrell, is retiring and we need to fill the Treasurer position. The Treasurer's main responsibility is to approve the payment of the church's expenses and provide oversight of the church's finances. If you have an interest in serving Covenant in this capacity, please contact any member of the Stewardship & Finance Committee or John Peterson.

THANKS *from the* HEART

Fifteen tractor loads of sand!

These are the first loads of sand that will be used to make bricks to build a new training hall at the permanent site of Decapolis. Your Glorious Gifts and special Outreach grant are helping us move forward. Thank you!

— Crystal & Raph in Nigeria



FALL/WINTER

Dinner Groups Begin Soon

How do dinner groups work?

- Groups are made up of eight people (singles or couples); you don't have to be a church member to join a group.
- Each couple/single will take turns hosting either at home, in a restaurant, or at another location.
- The group divides the work by bringing a dish; the host provides the main course.

DEADLINE TO SIGN UP IS SEPTEMBER 14

YOU CAN SIGN UP AT

<https://bit.ly/falldinnergroup>

OR BY CONTACTING BRUCE HEMP

(BRUCEHEMP@GMAIL.COM OR 540-294-2496).



Monday Morning Bible Study

Join us Mondays at 10:30 AM

**OUR STUDY BEGINS ON
SEPTEMBER 8TH.**

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.

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.



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MATTHEW 25

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

**Save
the Date!**

Together on Wednesday (TOW) will
begin on October 8th at 6:00 pm
for food, fellowship, and fun!
Watch upcoming newsletters and
opt-in for more details and sign-ups!

