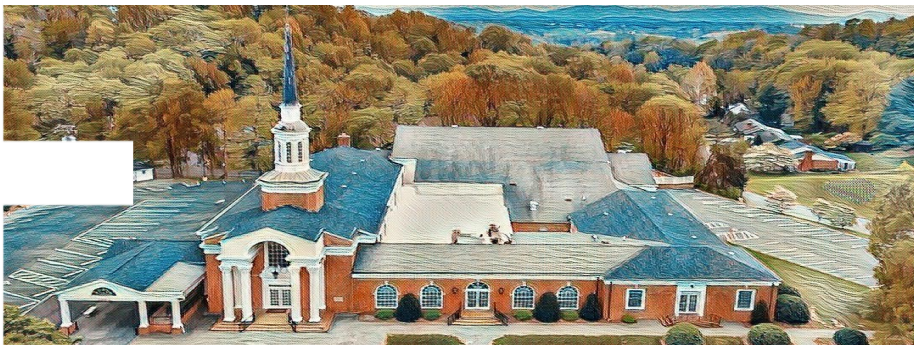




SEPTEMBER 8, 2025
STAUNTON, VA



COVENANT CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



FRIENDS  CHRIST

What's INSIDE

Sunday Volunteers.....	2
Usher Volunteers Needed.....	2
Flowers.....	2
Monday Morning Bible Study.....	2
From the Pastor's Desk (cont).....	3
Session Highlights.....	3
Anti-Racism Policy.....	4
Nursing Nook.....	5
Presbyterian Women.....	6
Novels & Needles.....	6
CareGivers Group.....	6
Join the Choir.....	6
Prayer List/Birthdays.....	7
Calendar.....	8
Christian Formation.....	9
Ongoing Outreach.....	10
Martha's Meals on Wheels	11
Save the Date.....	11
Graphic.....	Back

From the Pastor's Desk

Last month the Session adopted an anti-racism policy for Covenant (see page 4 of this newsletter or go to <https://bit.ly/CPCanti-racismpolicy> to read the full text). At the direction of the General Assembly of the PCUSA, all Presbyterian churches are to adopt such a policy in affirmation of our commitment to be welcoming communities for worship, fellowship, Christian formation, and service. For us, it is also living into our pledge as a Matthew 25 congregation to fight structural racism and promote congregational vitality; we need to practice what we preach!

I am currently reading *These Truths: A History of the United States* by historian Jill Lepore, and it is striking how deeply embedded racism is in our history as a nation. European settlers drove native Americans from their lands and claimed them for themselves, and as Americans began pushing west, they pushed the native Americans further out on a Trail of Tears. Americans imported slaves in chains from other nations (especially African nations) and used them as labor, predominantly but by no means exclusively, on southern plantations and fields. Last week President Trump decried the portrayal of too much of the negative side of slavery by the Smithsonian, as if there were a positive side to the abomination which was and is slavery! Our Declaration of Independence may declare that "all men are created equal", but that was not the practice of many

(continued on page 3)

VISIT US ONLINE AT
WWW.COVENANTPRESSTAUNTON.ORG

Serving
GOD
Together



GREETERS

SEPTEMBER 14 -

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

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

SEPTEMBER 21 -

8:30 AM....Cindy Bowman

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

FLOWER COORDINATORS

Susan Polly and Christy Davis

CHURCH OPENING and CLOSING

SEPTEMBER — Craig Whitacre

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.



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.



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.

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)*

of those who signed it and was certainly not the practice for generations thereafter. Even those who supported the abolition of slavery often articulated words of equality, but did not fully embrace them for all races. The stain of that legacy continues to impact us today, more than 70 years after Brown v. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Act. The rise of white nationalism and racist violence in our nation, as we who live just over the mountain from the march in Charlottesville are aware, confirms that racism continues to rear its ugly head.

Racism has no place in a Christian community or in our nation! We are all created in the image of God, every one of us! As the opening statement of our anti-racism policy affirms: *"Covenant aspires to what Jesus called the abundant life for all of God's children. We believe in, and will continue to work for, the promotion of human dignity, respect for all people, and the value that diversity brings to our church and our community."* And the commitments we make to live into that pledge are:

1. *As a Matthew 25 church, participate in our community to combat individual, institutional, and structural forms of racism.*
2. *Promote racial equality by creating environments within and beyond the church where all individuals can feel valued, respected and empowered to succeed.*
3. *Foster diversity by nurturing an inclusive community so that individuals*

from all backgrounds are welcomed and can thrive.

4. *Welcome all persons into the life of the church and celebrate the blessings of diversity and inclusivity as a loving community of Christ.*

That is our policy, but more importantly that is our practice and our theology – a theology and practice of love and inclusivity as a community of the risen Christ!



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

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

- ♦ Approved hosting a table at the Staunton Pride event
- ♦ Adopted an anti-racism policy as required by the Book of Order
- ♦ Approved changes to the Child Protection Policy
- ♦ Approved moving the church database to Flocknote
- ♦ Approved \$2,000 from the Building Fund for painting of sanctuary windows

Items for the next newsletter are due by **9:00 AM on Friday, September 19th.**

Please email Martha at: covenantpcusastaunton@gmail.com



Title: Antiracism Policy

Policy Statement:

Covenant Presbyterian Church aspires to what Jesus called the abundant life for all of God's children. We believe in, and will continue to work for, the promotion of, human dignity, respect for all people, and the value that diversity brings to our church and our community.

Foundational Principles

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I loved you, you also should love one another. John 13:34 NRSV

The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution. Book of Order, *Unity in Diversity* (F-1.0403)

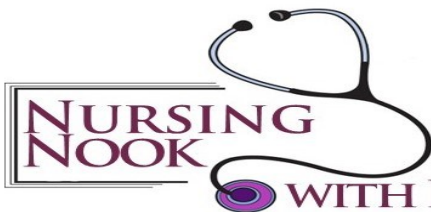
The mission of God in Christ gives shape and substance to the life and work of the Church. In Christ, the Church participates in God's mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God's love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, and calling all people to discipleship in Christ. Book of Order, *God's Mission* (F-1.01)

Implementation: In furtherance of these principles, Covenant Presbyterian Church commits to:

1. As a Matthew 25 church, participate in our community to combat individual, institutional, and structural forms of racism.
2. Promote racial equality by creating environments within and beyond the church where all individuals can feel valued, respected and empowered to succeed.
3. Foster diversity by nurturing an inclusive community so that individuals from all backgrounds are welcomed and can thrive.
4. Welcome all persons into the life of the church and celebrate the blessings of diversity and inclusivity as a loving community of Christ.

References: *Facing Racism, A Vision of the Intercultural Community Churchwide Antiracism Policy*, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2016

Adopted by Session, 08/17/2025



Kathy Henderson, RN • (540) 290-6396

covenantnurse@gmail.com

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

SAVE THE DATE: A FLU VACCINATION CLINIC IS COMING TO COVENANT OCT. 8.

This season's first TOW "event" is a flu shot clinic – and you're invited! Gayle Schultz, RN Health Educator in Augusta Health's community outreach department, will lead the clinic from 5-6 PM.

We at Covenant are a generally healthy bunch, so it's easy to forget how deadly flu can be. Last year (Oct 2024-May 2025) more than 26,000 people died of "just flu" – and the number multiplies when "flu-related" illnesses like pneumonia are factored in. "The 2024-2025 influenza season ...was classified as high severity—a designation not used in more than 7 years (with) the highest rates of hospitalizations and outpatient visits for flu-like illnesses in 15 years," according to a "Pharmacy Times" report published in July. The CDC estimated that more than 47 million flu illnesses – and 610,000 hospitalizations -- were recorded during that time. The true number, of course, is much higher, because many victims chose to care for themselves at home.

Do your part to promote "herd immunity:" Come get your shot. Vaccine will be either Fluarix or Flulaval. Although "high dose" (quadrivalent) vaccine is not being offered, those over 65 are welcome to attend. A study published last month in the New England Journal of Medicine, concluded that "a high-dose inactivated influenza vaccine did not result in a significantly lower incidence of hospitalization for influenza or pneumonia than a standard dose among older adults" who are in generally good health and not immunocompromised.

When: 5-8 PM, Wednesday, Oct. 8

Where: Covenant. Exact location within the church will be announced in an Opt-In.

Who: Anyone 15 or older.

(Those under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian)

Appointment: Not required, although it would be helpful to know approximately how many plan to attend. Sign-up sheet is on Covenant Nurse's office door, or text/call to let me know. 540-290-6396.

Bonus: Sign-up **and** show up – and dinner is free!

FOR MEN ONLY: A free Prostate Cancer screening event will be held 5-8 PM, Sept. 16 at Augusta Health. The screening – which includes a PSA (Prostate-Specific Antigen) blood test and an optional DRE (digital rectal exam) – is open to all men 55 or older who are not currently patients of a urologist. Men 45 or older with a family history of prostate cancer also are eligible.

"Prostate cancer is the most common cancer diagnosis among men in the U.S., accounting for 30% of male cancers in 2025" and the rate of metastatic prostate cancer is increasing, according to an American Cancer Society (ACS) study published Sept. 2. This year, the ACS estimates 313,780 new cases of prostate cancer and 35,770 deaths will occur.

Please take this opportunity to check your health. Appointments are required. To make an appointment or request more information, call 540-245-7910.



PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

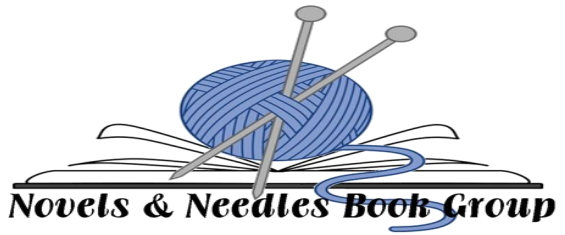
Presbyterian Women will gather on **Tuesday, September 9th at 10:30 AM in the Breezeway.**

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.



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.

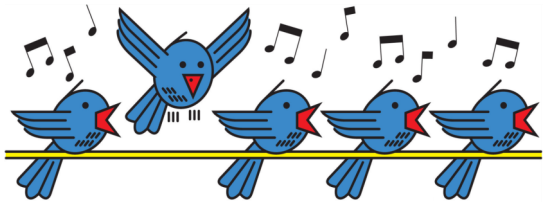
Please join us!



CareGivers will meet immediately after the 10:30 service on **Sunday, September 21st** 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.



Join the Covenant Choir

Rehearsals are every Thursday night at 7:00 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.

SEPTEMBER						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 	8 Covenant Connection Published 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study  5:30 PM Congregational Care Team 7:00 PM Facilities Team	9 9:30 AM PW Coordinating Team 10:30 AM 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
14 8:30 AM Worship Service 9:30 AM Christian Formation Hour 10:30 AM Worship Service and via Live Stream 11:45 AM Christian Formation Team 11:45 AM Outreach Team 4:00 PM Technology Team via Zoom	15 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study 	16 7:00 PM Stewardship & Finance Team 	17 9:30 AM Yoga Class 	18 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 	19 9:00 AM Newsletter Submission Deadline 9:00 AM Executive Team 6:30 PM Middle School Manna 	20
21 8:30 AM Worship Service 9:30 AM Christian Formation Hour 10:30 AM Worship Service and via Live Stream 11:45 AM CareGivers Group 12:00 PM Confirmation Class 7:00 PM STATED SESSION MEETING	22 Covenant Connection Published 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study 	23 	24 9:30 AM Yoga Class 	25 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 	26 	27



CHRISTIAN FORMATION

RACHEL WATSON • (540) 885-2138
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/



The Christian Formation Team seeks to provide innovative and relevant learning opportunities consistent with the Reformed Tradition of Covenant Presbyterian Church. Sunday School classes are offered from September to May for toddlers, preschool, and elementary-school-age children. A vibrant youth ministry is offered for middle school and high school students. A variety of learning opportunities are provided for adults, including short-term topical studies, Bible study, and book discussion groups. The Fall 2025 brochures are linked below.

[Adult Formation](#)

[Youth Formation](#)

[Children's Formation](#)

Puzzle!

Use the words provided to complete the puzzle. Then write the numbered words in the correct blanks below to complete Psalm 67:6, NIV.

WORDS:

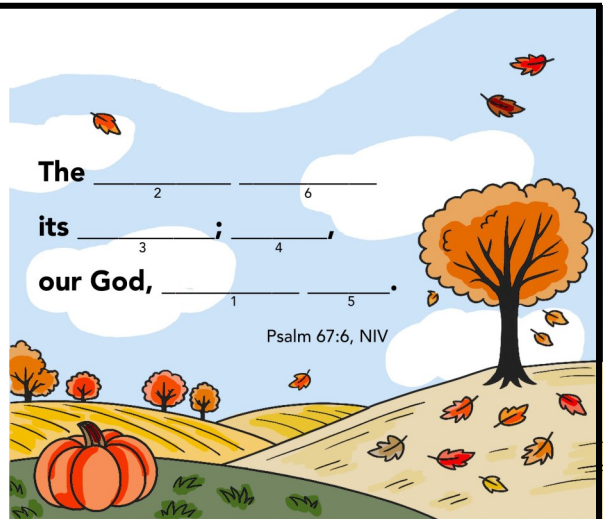
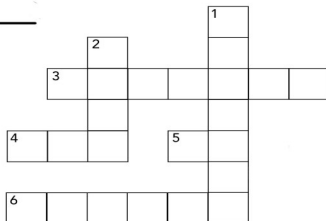
GOD, BLESSES, HARVEST, YIELDS, US, LAND

ACROSS

3. Rhymes with farthest.
4. Rhymes with nod.
5. Rhymes with thus.
6. Rhymes with fields.

DOWN

1. Rhymes with messes.
2. Rhymes with hand.



Answer: The land yields its harvest; God, our God, blesses us. Psalm 67:6, NIV



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.



1000 lbs. = 1 bench

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



**LET'S
RESTOCK
THE PANTRY**

Can you believe that we're already a month into the new school year?! While all donations are always welcome, the Shelburne Pantry is currently running low on items specifically for girls -- deodorant, hygiene products, shampoo, lotion, body wash, etc. If we can make those things a focus for our September giving, that would be a great help in assuring the pantry can provide for those needs. We have our usual labeled boxes outside the church office and in the narthex for your generous contributions.

THANK YOU for supporting our community through this Outreach program!

Martha's Meals on Wheels

(Meals on Wheels of Staunton, Inc.)



ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Join Us for Drive-Thru Spaghetti and Salad Dinner
Sunday, October 12, 2025
4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

--Helping those who are unable to prepare their own meals --

Verona Moose Lodge
1510 Commerce Road (Rt. 11), Verona/Staunton
On the Hill Behind Eye One

Reserved meals available by mail with ticket below
(Cash or Check made out to MMOW)

\$15 adults/12 and up; \$5 children

Meals will be brought to your car

(a limited number of meals will be available for purchase on the day of the event)

For Details, call 540-886-1219

MMOW ANNUAL FUND RAISER	NAME: _____
Number of Adult Meals _____	Please make checks payable to MMOW and mail to:
Number of Child Meals _____	MMOW, PO Box 2354, Staunton, VA 24402
TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____	Ticket Orders must be received by October 3rd
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF MARTHA'S MEALS ON WHEELS	



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!

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.

COVENANT



Presbyterian
Church

PO Box 2948
Staunton, VA 24402

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #188
STAUNTON, VA

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



MATTHEW 25

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

