

\*CHARGE AND BLESSING

\*CHORAL RESPONSE.....African-American Spiritual  
*Go! Tell It on the Mountain*

POSTLUDE.....Grudzinski  
*Tidings*

*(Please be seated for the Postlude or exit the sanctuary quietly  
while the Postlude is being played.)*

\*Those who are able, please stand.

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*Children are always welcome in the Sanctuary during worship.  
Children's worship folders are available in the Narthex.  
Should you find that your child grows restless, there is childcare  
available in the nursery for ages 3 and under.*

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*(Hymns and streaming used by permission One License A-715880)*

### Welcome!

*Whether you are a long-time member, occasional worshiper, or  
new visitor with us, we hope that in this service you will encounter  
the living Christ and be strengthened by God's promises for you.  
Please visit our website at [covenantpresstaunton.org](http://covenantpresstaunton.org) to learn  
more about our ministries and Covenant life together. We are  
happy to have you as part of our church family today!*

The flowers this morning are given in celebration of  
Bob and Mary Ann Stripling's 57<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

### COVENANT CHURCH DIRECTORY

PASTOR..... John C. Peterson  
ASSOCIATE PASTOR..... Rachel Watson  
MINISTER OF MUSIC..... Jeffrey Ryman  
ORGANIST..... Christopher Wszalek  
HANDBELL DIRECTOR..... Alan Cameron  
DEVELOPMENTAL PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR..... Mitzi White  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT..... Martha Pierce  
FINANCIAL SECRETARY..... Debby Bibens  
TREASURER..... Paul Sorrell  
COVENANT NURSE..... Kathy Henderson  
CUSTODIAN..... Cleo Holly



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STAUNTON, VIRGINIA • 885-2138



# Covenant Presbyterian Church

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

DECEMBER 21, 2025  
FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

10:30 AM

*As we prepare our hearts and minds for worship, please silence any mobile devices.  
This service is live streamed on YouTube*

### STRIVING TO BE FAITHFUL DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

PRELUDE..... Daquin  
*Noel Suisse*

JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE CONGREGATION

INTROIT..... The Covenant Ringers  
*O Come O Come Emmanuel — arr. by Paul McKlveen*

CONGREGATIONAL INTROIT

One: *O come, Desire of nations, bind  
all peoples in one heart and mind;  
bid envy, strife, and discord cease;  
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.*

**All: Rejoice, Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE – The Miller Family

### WORSHIPING WITH JOY

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: All creation waits in anticipation.

**People: The time is almost here!**

Leader: The heavenly choir of angels waits for their cue to sing.

**People: Excitement is all around us!**

Leader: Prepare your hearts—the love of God takes on human form.

**People: We gather to make ready our hearts for the coming of Christ!**

\*HYMN No. 105.....BESANÇON

*People, Look East*

\*INVITATION TO CONFESSION

\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**God-with-us, Emmanuel, we confess that we are not ready. We say we anticipate your coming, but we are set in our ways. We are slow to respond when you call us to serve. We need to be certain of the outcome before we take a single step to help. We question other's worthiness before lending a hand. We let fear keep us from welcoming your children. Forgive us, Lord. Teach us to love as you love. Give us courage to be open to your surprising call to see and to serve you in each person we meet. Lord, hear our prayer. . . (silent confession) . . . Amen.**

\*DECLARATION OF PARDON

\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE – Hymn No. 121, Stanza 4

***O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell.  
O come to us; abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!***

ANTHEM.....The Covenant Ringers  
*Change Ring Prelude on 'Divinum Mysterium'— arr. by Fred Gramann  
'Of the Father's Love Begotten'*

### **GROWING IN FAITH**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST READING.....Pg. 665 of the Old Testament, *Pew Bible*  
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

SECOND READING.....Pg. 1 of the New Testament, *Pew Bible*  
Matthew 1:18-25

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON.....RACHEL WATSON**

**"JOSEPH, DID YOU KNOW?"**

MUSICAL REFLECTION

\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (*From the Confession of 1967*)

**In Jesus Christ God was reconciling the world to God's self.**

**Jesus Christ is God with us.**

**He is the eternal Son of the Father, who became human and lived among us to fulfill the work of reconciliation.**

**He is present in the church by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue and complete his mission.**

**This work of God – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – is the foundation of all confessional statements about God, humanity, and the world.**

**Therefore, the church calls all people to be reconciled to God and to one another.**

**To God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations! Amen.**

\*HYMN.....MUELLER

*Oh, Joseph Awaken*

***O Joseph, awaken — let go of your fear.***

***The spirit is speaking; believe what you hear.***

***The promise of ages is whispered, but clear.***

***A new day is dawning, salvation draws near.***

***God needed a body, hand, feet, eyes, and skin,***

***and Mary's provided the place to begin.***

***She bears our deliverance from shame and from sin;***

***the heartbeat of justice grows stronger within.***

***The way of salvation will always surprise,***

***It creeps past defenses, makes fools of the wise:***

***The Sovereign of heaven, in infantile guise!***

***Awake! But keep dreaming — awake, and arise.***

### **SERVING IN LOVE**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

DEDICATION OF TITHES, OFFERINGS, AND OURSELVES

OFFERTORY.....Lauridsen

*O Magnum Mysterium*

*O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament,*

*that animals should see the newborn Lord, lying in a manger!*

*Blessed is the virgin whose womb was worthy*

*to bear the Lord, Jesus Christ. Alleluia!*

PRAYER

\*HYMN No. 104.....VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN

*O Lord, How Shall I Meet You*

*(Order of Worship Continued on Back Page)*

HYMN No. 105  
*People, Look East*

*People, look east. The time is near  
of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able;  
trim the hearth and set the table.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the Guest, is on the way.*

*Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,  
one more seed is planted there.  
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,  
that in course the flower may flourish.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the Rose, is on the way.*

*Birds, though you long have ceased to build,  
guard the nest that must be filled.  
Even the hour when wings are frozen  
God for fledging time has chosen.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the Bird, is on the way.*

*Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim  
one more light the bowl shall brim,  
shining beyond the frosty weather,  
bright as sun and moon together.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the Star, is on the way.*

*Angels, announce with shouts of mirth  
Christ who brings new life to earth.  
Set every peak and valley humming  
with the word, the Lord is coming.  
People, look east and sing today:  
Love, the Lord, is on the way.*

HYMN No. 104  
*O Lord, How Shall I Meet You*

*O Lord, how shall I meet you,  
how welcome you aright?  
Your people long to greet you,  
my hope, my heart's delight!  
O kindle, Lord most holy,  
a lamp within my breast,  
to do in spirit lowly  
all that may please you best.*

*Love caused your incarnation;  
love brought you down to me;  
your thirst for my salvation  
procured my liberty.  
O love beyond all telling,  
that led you to embrace  
in love, all loves excelling,  
our lost and fallen race.*

*You come, O Lord, with gladness,  
in mercy and goodwill,  
to bring an end to sadness  
and bid our fears be still.  
In patient expectation  
we live for that great day  
when your renewed creation  
your glory shall display.*