

# COVENANT CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 9, 2024  
STAUNTON, VA

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

In my reading lately three words have recurred repeatedly: retribution, reconciliation, and reparations. Perhaps these are not the 3 Rs you remember from elementary school, but they are worthy of consideration as we seek to be faithful disciples in a fractured and fractious world.

**Retribution** has to do with getting even for a wrong done; its roots are in that Old Testament verse that sanctions "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." It is the source of much pain and suffering! In the Middle East, retribution continues to perpetuate conflict and violence across generations. Most recently, the terrorist attack by Hamas on innocent Israelis gave rise to retribution by the Israeli government that far exceeded the scope of the original attack, with over 40,000 Palestinian deaths including thousands of children. Homes and neighborhoods have been leveled; hospitals have been bombed, and hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been displaced. Just as Hamas should be distinguished from the Palestinians (most are not Hamas), so the Israeli government should be distinguished from all Israelis as there are significant voices in Israel condemning the government's actions. The Israeli government has justified this violent retribution on the basis of Hamas' attack and a need to exterminate Hamas. Lost on them is that in seeking retribution, they are sowing the

*(continued on page 3)*



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[WWW.COVENANTPRESSTAUNTON.ORG](http://WWW.COVENANTPRESSTAUNTON.ORG)

Serving  
**GOD**  
Together



### **GREETERS**

SEPT 15 -

8:30 AM....Jeanne & Mick Lambert  
10:30 AM....Jim Britton, Dan Drumheller,  
Janet Surratt

SEPT 22 -

8:30 AM....Jeanne & Mick Lambert  
10:30 AM....Janet Surratt

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

SEPT 15 – **Volunteer Needed**

SEPT 22 – Jacki Dull

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

SEPT. 15 – Reagan Gwaltney

SEPT. 22 – **Volunteer Needed**

### **FLOWER COORDINATORS**

Susan Polly and Christy Davis

### **CHURCH OPENING and CLOSING**

SEPT -- Tom Bellamy



## Monday Morning Bible Study

**Join us on Mondays at 10:30 AM  
Beginning on September 9th!**

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.



### **The Covenant "Yarn Store" is Open!**

**Attention Covenant Knitters & Crocheters!**  
**Are you looking for your next project?**  
**Why not consider making a Prayer Shawl?**

Our **Prayer Shawl Ministry** is part of the Congregational Care Team and provides handmade shawls and lap robes to members of our church community that are in need of some extra comfort and a warm reminder of love and support. We can provide materials, patterns, and even personalized instructions. The "Yarn Store" is located in Room 5. Need more information? Contact Ruth Arnold ([arnoldruths@gmail.com](mailto:arnoldruths@gmail.com))



### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**HELPERS (age 14+) ARE NEEDED ON  
SUNDAYS DURING THE 10:30 SERVICE  
(10:00 during July/August)**

These volunteer spots are for the second adult present to satisfy our Child Protective Policy.

**SIGN UP FOR NURSERY:**

<https://bit.ly/FallNurserySignUp>

**SIGN UP FOR COVENANT KIDS:**

**(Sept. - mid May)**

<https://bit.ly/CovenantKidsHelpers>

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

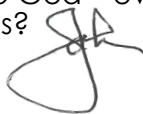
seeds of future violence among yet another generation of Palestinians who have been violently displaced and bombed and may seek their own violent retribution in the future.

Jesus offers an alternative to retribution – **reconciliation**. He rejects the “eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth” mentality in favor of forgiveness and turning the other cheek. In our modern world, many reject that approach as overly idealistic and unrealistic, but Jesus seems to think it is faithful to who God calls us to be. Reconciliation seeks to break the cycles of violence and hate that are so much a part of retribution. It begins with recognizing our common humanity and seeks common ground upon which to build relationships. God calls us to that reconciling work, but it is hard work!

**Reparations** acknowledge that sometimes it is not enough to simply say, “I’m sorry.” Sometimes more is needed to right the wrongs of the past. We are much better at recognizing that need when we are the ones wronged than when we are those who have done the wrong. And determining what reparations are appropriate is often difficult. Currently there is debate about what reparations might be appropriate for the wrongs done to Black and indigenous peoples in our nation across the years. The stain of slavery, discrimination, and racism are not only sins of our past, but have placed subsequent generations at an economic and social disadvantage as compared to those who benefited from racist structures. What was done was wrong! But figuring

out what should be done to right the wrong is hard!

Where then does that leave us? Hopefully with a rejection of retribution, an embrace of reconciliation, and a willingness to consider what reparations might be appropriate to take a step to righting the wrongs done. All of this is hard work, but Jesus never said following would be easy. He told us it would be hard. Are you up for that hard work as a disciple of the One who did the hard work of reconciling us to God – even when it led him to the cross?



## INQUIRER'S CLASS

**Have you wondered who these Presbyterians are or how we differ from the tradition in which you grew up? Do you have questions about Covenant, what we believe, or why we do things the way that we do?**

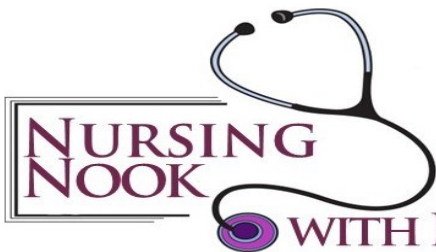
If so, you are invited to join us for an **Inquirer's Class** during the Sunday School hour (9:30-10:15) **beginning Sept. 15** in Room 5 in the Christian Formation wing. This class will be led by John Peterson, and while it is oriented toward new members and those who may be considering joining . . . everyone is welcome.

Items for the next newsletter are due by **9:00 AM on Friday, September 20th.**

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







Kathy Henderson, RN • (540) 290-6396  
[covenantnurse@gmail.com](mailto:covenantnurse@gmail.com)

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

**Disturbing news** from Blue Ridge Poison Control Center: **Calls related to vaping products increased by more than 35 percent last year.**

In 2020, the Center received just 20 vaping-related calls: By 2022, the number had risen to 73; in 2023 the tally was 99 vape-related calls, many of them child or adolescent-related. A scary statistic lurks behind these not-too-impressive numbers (the Center receives hundreds of medicine-related calls annually). The nicotine content of e-cigarettes is very high, with a single vape pen (e-cigarette) sometimes containing as much nicotine as 20 cigarettes. Worth noting: *The FDA has approved only 23 e-cigarette products, all of them unflavored.* The CDC reports that last year 2.1 million US middle and high school students used e-cigarettes; *more than a half million of them were middle schoolers.* A quarter of these students reported vaping daily, with almost 90 percent of them using the non-approved but easily purchased *flavored e-cigarettes.* In Virginia, advocacy group Tobacco Free Kids reports, 14.3 percent of all high school students use e-cigarettes, with just 2.8 percent smoking cigarettes. (The Central Shenandoah Health District would not provide local or regional numbers.) The Virginia Department of Health has assembled a comprehensive toolkit for anyone wanting to learn more about vaping. Find it at:

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/196/2024/02/TFCC-Toolkit-Final-2024-1.pdf>

**Online pharmacy safety** has become a very big deal. At any given time, *35,000 online pharmacies are selling prescription medicines – and 95 percent of them are operating illegally.* This slightly terrifying information comes from the Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies (ASOP), a non-profit, global group working to eradicate the dangerous and mushrooming business of selling defective, out-of-date or otherwise unsafe medicines to unsuspecting patients. There are plenty of legitimate online pharmacies selling all sorts of prescriptions for far less than our regular insurance covers. (The most commonly bought meds are antidepressants, cancer drugs, painkillers and sexual aids, AARP reports.) Fortunately, online pharmacies can be checked out without too much difficulty. Start with the following four suggestions from the FDA. A legitimate online pharmacy will always:

- Require a doctor's prescription;
  - Provide a physical address and telephone number in the U.S;
  - Have a licensed pharmacist on staff to answer your questions;
- Be licensed with a state board of pharmacy.

The *single most comprehensive* resource I found comes from the Center for Safe Internet Pharmacies (CSIP), a nonprofit consortium of internet and e-commerce companies. <https://safemedsonline.org/>

The *single most useful* website I discovered is from ASOP. It includes easy-to-find ways to verify online pharmacies' legitimacy – and even has "please contact us" (the staff) features. <https://asopfoundation.pharmacy/>

# Missionary UPDATE

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

Part of missions work is connecting resources and people. In January, we learned from Millstone Child Recovery Foundation that there was an orphanage that housed both orphans and recovered victims of child trafficking in Uganda that was struggling to produce enough food on its farm to feed the children. We knew we had the knowledge to help them, but Uganda is on the other side of the continent, so we called up our Equipping Farmers, International (EFI) buddies from Uganda who had been in our training group in Zimbabwe last year to see if they could help to provide the hands-on training in regenerative agriculture for the orphanage. And they did!



In early July, with Millstone helping to cover the costs, 20 orphanage staff and local farmers participated in a one-day training that included practicals in compost building, setting up a Pfumvudza plot, and preparing vegetable gardens. Two weeks later, two of the farm staff from the orphanage attended a full 5-day training at African Bible University in Uganda, where they were part of the very first batch of trainees to receive the International Certificate in Conservation Agriculture through Dordt University (Iowa) and EFI, certifying them as trainers in this holistic, Bible-based approach to farming. We are so excited to see the orphanage be able to feed the vulnerable children whom they minister to, and we are so honored that we could be a part of that.

See more photos from the training at: <https://bit.ly/UgandaOrphanageTraining>

Learn more about the work of Millstone Child Recovery Team at

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

*"I planted, and Apollos watered, but God made it grow."* ~1 Corinthians 3:6

If you would like to help support the work of Decapolis in Nigeria and beyond, donations can be sent to:

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](#)

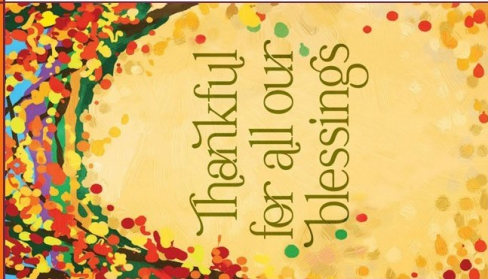
[WEBSITE](#)

[YOUTUBE](#)

[EMAIL](#)



# SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>9</b> 	<b>9</b> <b>COVENANT CONNECTION PUBLISHED</b> 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study 5:30 PM Congregational Care Team 7:00 PM APNC 7:00 PM Christian Formation Team 7:00 PM Facilities Team 7:15 PM Worship Team	<b>10</b> 11:00 AM Presbyterian Women in Great Hall 5:30 PM Preschool Team 7:00 PM Stewardship & Finance Team	<b>11</b> 9:30 AM Yoga Class	<b>12</b> 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>13</b> 8:00 AM Executive Team 10:00 AM Novels & Needles Book Group 6:30 PM Middle School Youth	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 8:30 AM Worship Service 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service and via Live Stream 11:45 AM CareGivers Group 7:00 PM STATED SESSION MEETING	<b>16</b> 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study 7:00 PM Personnel Team	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 9:30 AM Yoga Class	<b>19</b> 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>20</b> 8:00 AM Executive Team 9:00 AM Newsletter Submission Deadline	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> <b>FIRST DAY OF FALL</b> 8:30 AM Worship Service 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service and via Live Stream 2:30 PM Fellowship Team	<b>23</b> <b>COVENANT CONNECTION PUBLISHED</b> 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 9:30 AM Yoga Class	<b>26</b> 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>



PRESBYTERIAN  
WOMEN

**Tuesday,  
September 10  
11:00 am  
Great Hall**

Gather with old friends and new ones in the Great Hall at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, September 10. It is time to resume gatherings of the women of the church and all women are welcome.

**Coordinating Team 2024 – 2025**



Moderator:  
Frances Craig



Co-Moderator:  
Mary Ann Stripling



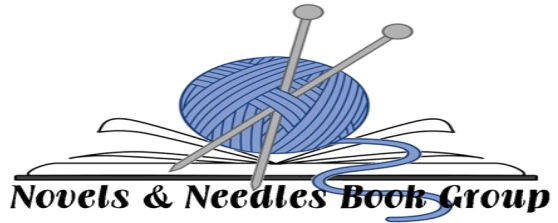
Secretary:  
Nancy Headifen



Treasurer:  
Linda Foster



Circle Leader: June Shipplett



Novels & Needles Book Club will meet at 10:00 AM on Friday, September 13th in the Breezeway.

The book being discussed is *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt.

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 10:00 service on **Sunday, September 15th** 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.





# CHRISTIAN FORMATION

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

Christian Formation Links are at the Covenant website:

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

The 2024-2025 Christian Formation year has officially begun! 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!

## Adult Christian Formation

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

We will be learning more about discipleship and faithful practices this year. We will start with a study on the practice of lament. All are invited to attend whenever they can.

**Monday Morning Bible Study** | Mondays | 10:30AM | Room 6

This group meets on Zoom and in person each Monday to chat with one of the pastors about the Scripture text to be used in worship the following Sunday.

**Act III Ministries** | Tuesdays | 10:30-noon | Chapel

This ministry is geared toward those who self-identify as older adults and want to explore what faithful discipleship looks like in the 60s and above. **We begin again on Oct. 1st.** Drop in when you can!

### A SPECIAL NOTE FROM RACHEL—

Friends, I was recently asked what my favorite thing was about the start of a new Christian Formation year. My answer was the noise. It's walking through the halls of the church on Sunday morning and hearing the classrooms alive with laughter and conversation. It's gathering with youth and adults throughout the week for play, for fellowship, and for learning. It's hearing the choir warming up before the service and seeing the people chatting in the breeze-way. This faith we celebrate is one of community and the noise that comes with gathered community warms my heart and makes me smile.

Whether you are a child, a youth, or an adult...whether you are a teacher, a learner, or an observer...whether you know everything you need to know or if you are bursting with questions...there's a place for everyone within Christian formation at Covenant. If you haven't checked us out before, come start new with us and help us fill these halls with joyful noise as we journey in faith together!

## Children's Christian Formation

**Faith in Action** | Age 3-Grade 5 | Sundays | 9:30-10:15AM | Education Wing

Each week, we will focus on a different Bible hero and their faithful action. There are classes for early childhood (PK-Grade 1), lower elementary (Grade 2-3), and upper elementary (Grade 4-5).

**Faith Explorers** | Grades 3-5 | First Fridays | 6:30-8:00PM | Great Hall

Kids in grades 3-5 can join us on the first Friday of the month to play and learn together. We will work on mission projects, study Bible stories, worship, and, of course, play games!

## Youth Christian Formation

**Follow Me** | Grades 6-12 | Sundays | 9:30-10:15AM | Youth Room

Our high school youth will be learning about discipleship and faithful practices this year. We will be learning about the practices of lament, crossing borders, and communion.

**Journeys in Faith** | Grades 6-8 | Sundays | 9:30-10:15AM | Middle School Room

Our middle school students will take a look at our liturgy – why do we do the things we do in worship, what does the Bible say about it, and how can we be active participants in worship?

**Middle School Manna** | Grades 6-8 | 6:30-8:00PM | 2ND, 3RD, & 4TH Fridays | Great Hall

All our middle schoolers are invited to gather for fellowship, study, and play. We will participate in mission, worship, and Bible study as we learn together. **First meeting is Oct. 11th.**

**High School YOUTH** | Grades 9-12 | Sundays | 11:45AM-1:45PM | 2ND, 3RD, & 4TH Sundays | Great Hall

Our high schoolers will gather after church every Sunday to play games, learn about their faith, and participate in mission together. This semester, we will be learning about our faith. **Join us for the first meeting of the semester on Sept. 29th.**





## 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.



### **MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH PLASTIC BAGS**

**THANK YOU, COVENANT!** We have kept over **3130 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!*



## Fellowship 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 other location
- ◆ The group divides up the work by each bringing a dish; host provides the main course.

### COME AND JOIN IN THE FUN!

Please sign up by completing the form below and returning it to the church office or by contacting Bruce at [brucehemp@gmail.com](mailto:brucehemp@gmail.com) or 540-294-2496. You may also sign up online at <https://forms.gle/TR4KQGozvARDSFSk8>. Registration deadline is Sunday, Sept. 29th.

### FALL/WINTER DINNER GROUP SIGN-UP

Name of participants \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check if you would like to be the first in your group to host.

Check if you would like to be a substitute.

If you have any food allergies or types of food you do not eat, please list:

\_\_\_\_\_

We want your suggestions or comments:

\_\_\_\_\_

**THANKS**  
*from the*  
**HEART**

We are greatly appreciative of you, our Covenant family, for all your caring aid during our recent struggles with health issues. We are improving but still struggling, yet hopeful that all your prayers will indeed carry us through dark times into the light. A heartfelt thank you for being such a loving Christian family to us. With our love, Mary and Charlie Huppuch

## 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

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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**MATTHEW 25**

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

**GOD HAS MADE  
everything  
BEAUTIFUL  
IN ITS TIME.**

*ecclesiastes, 3:11*

