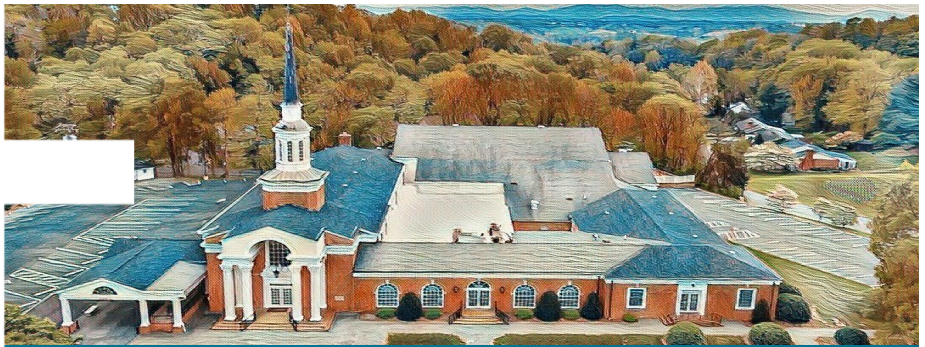


DECEMBER 2, 2024
STAUNTON, VA



COVENANT CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

From the Pastor's Desk

With Advent we begin a new church year as we prepare once again to celebrate the birth of Jesus. It is fitting that we move from a season of giving thanks (as a nation) for all our blessings to a season of hope-filled expectation (as Christians) in the coming of God's greatest blessing! In these tumultuous times with so much anxiety in our nation and world about the present and future, it is all too easy to take those blessings for granted and dwell on the problems and perils. Both Thanksgiving and Advent encourage us to pause and count our blessings, and in so doing to express our gratitude to God from whom all our blessings flow. Some counselors encourage those dealing with sleepless nights or anxious days to pause at the end of the day and write down five blessings of that day. It is a discipline intended to attune us to the good in our midst that can too often be forgotten or crowded out by the din of disasters and disappointments.

This Advent season, consider taking time each day to count your blessings; you don't have to write them down, but you could. Some of them may bring a smile to your face and some may offer joy to your heart. Some may be exceptional and some exceptionally ordinary; blessings come in all shapes and sizes! Some may spur you to action – write a note to a friend whose face crossed your mind, or allow yourself a few minutes to savor the cup of cocoa that offers you comfort and joy, or pay forward the kindness someone showed you

(continued on page 3)



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VISIT US ONLINE AT
WWW.COVENANTPRESSTAUNTON.ORG

Seeing
GOD
Together



GREETERS

DEC 8 -

8:30 AM... Gary & Nancy Gourley

10:30 AM... Harry & Sarah Boney,
Randy Smith

DEC 15 -

8:30 AM... Becky & Chris Earhart

10:30 AM... Randy Smith, Jane Wimmer

NURSERY (10:30 AM)

DEC 8 - Kara Miller

DEC 15 - **volunteer needed**

COVENANT KIDS (10:30 AM)

DEC 8 - Melanie Shoup-Knox

DEC 15 - **volunteer needed**

FLOWER COORDINATORS

Susan Polly and Christy Davis

CHURCH OPENING and CLOSING

DECEMBER — Randy Smith



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. Volunteers are needed for Sunday School, Covenant Kids, Nursery, and Youth Group.

SIGN UP HERE:

<https://bit.ly/3Z80CXM>



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.

Hanging of the Greens



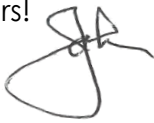
Help us begin our joyful preparations for the Christmas season as we decorate the church with greenery and decorate the Christmas tree! You are invited to the Hanging of the Greens, which will be held Saturday, December 7th, beginning at 9:30 AM. If we have enough folks, we should be finished by 11:00 AM. Enjoy hot drinks, Christmas goodies, and good fellowship!

Donate to the Greenery Fund

Would you like to contribute to the Greenery Fund to help provide items such as wreaths and garlands to beautify the church during the Advent season? Make checks payable to the church and designate "Greenery Fund" in the memo section. Checks may be placed in the offering plates on Sundays or brought to the church office during the week.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK (cont'd)

unexpectedly, or declutter your calendar to make room for those joys of the season that are too easily squeezed out by the Christmas rush. Take note of the daily blessings that you too often take for granted, and perhaps you will appreciate them a little more and find them adding a little more joy to your life. Along the way, remember to thank God for the loves and joys and peace in your life, for the story of Christmas is full of those gifts as proclaimed by the angels: tidings of great joy and hope for all people in all times – including you and me in this time! Blessings to you and yours!



Introducing
our
**NEW
STAFF!**

We are pleased to welcome Debby Bibens to our staff in a newly created position as Financial Secretary. Debby will be working with the treasurer (Paul Sorrell) in handling finances for the church and pre-school. She will be onsite at the church on a part-time basis. Please welcome her warmly!

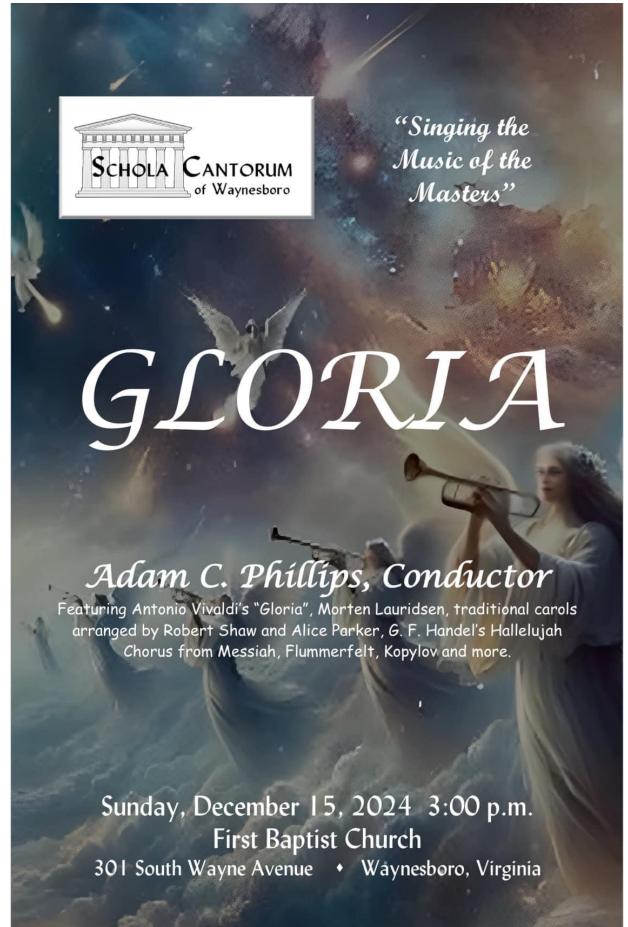
Items for the next newsletter are due by **9:00 AM on Friday, December 13th.**


Please email Martha at: covenantpcusastaunton@gmail.com



It's a Girl!

Eleanor Hope Stouffer was born November 10, 2024. Ellie is welcomed by her parents, Chuck and Suzanne Stouffer; her aunt, Kat McLean; and her grandmother, Karen Edwards.



 "Singing the Music of the Masters"

GLORIA

Adam C. Phillips, Conductor

Featuring Antonio Vivaldi's "Gloria", Morten Lauridsen, traditional carols arranged by Robert Shaw and Alice Parker, G. F. Handel's Hallelujah Chorus from Messiah, Flummerfelt, Kopylov and more.

Sunday, December 15, 2024 3:00 p.m.
First Baptist Church
301 South Wayne Avenue • Waynesboro, Virginia





PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

**Tuesday,
December 10th
10:30 AM
Breezeway**

The fellowship of Presbyterian Women gathers next on December 10th. Lynne Grimm is facilitating the conversation about water justice, lesson #4 in **Let Justice Roll Down ~ God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation**. We begin at 10:30 and meet in the breezeway. All women are welcome! Lynne recommended a book. These are the details: **Forty Chances: Finding Hope in a Hungry World** by Howard G. Buffett with Howard W. Buffett. A Simon & Schuster (New York) imprint, the book was published in 2013.



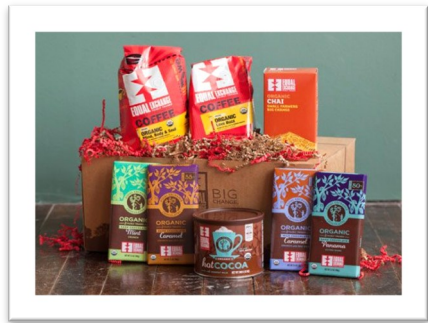
Thank you to everyone who will participate in the **Christmas greenery project** on **Thursday, December 5th at 10:00 AM**.

Creating the arrangements, supplying greenery, and delivering the baskets! Twenty-nine beautiful baskets bring joy at this season! Thank you, Linda Foster and Jane Wimmer, for your leadership!

*In happy moments, praise God!
In difficult moments, seek God!
In quiet moments, worship God!
In painful moments, trust God!
In every moment, thank God!*



CareGivers will meet immediately after the 10:30 service on **Sunday, December 8th** in Room 5. Anyone caring for a loved one who would like to talk with others in similar situations is invited to come.



The next **Equal Exchange** Sale is **Sunday, December 8th**.

Available are:

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

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 contacting 540-290-1089 or bettyandcliff@comcast.net.



Longest Night Service

As we prepare for Christmas in this Advent season, we lean into the joy and happiness it brings. We revel in company and in the sharing of traditions. But, for many, this time is also tender, filled with memories of those no longer with us or worries of a world that has fundamentally changed for us because of illness, loss, or broken relationships.

The Longest Night service lets us hold the grief in the midst of this season with a quiet and meditative service that holds both our grief and our hope. Join us on December 18 at 5:15 PM in the chapel. All are welcome!


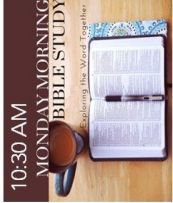


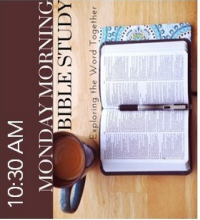
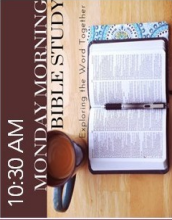




***The weather outside is frightful!
Are church services or events canceled?
Want to know the answer?***

Information is available via an opt-in email, through the Covenant Facebook page (www.facebook.com/Covenant-Presbyterian-Church-163891301309), on the home page of the church website (covenantpresstaunton.org), and on WHSV-TV.

If you are not on the opt-in email list and would like to be, please contact Martha in the church office at 540-885-2138.

DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>1</p>  <p>8:30 AM Worship Service and via Live Stream</p> <p>9:30 AM Sunday School</p> <p>10:30 AM Worship Service and via Live Stream</p> <p>11:45 AM CareGivers Group</p> <p>11:45 AM MEGA Youth Group</p> <p>4:00 PM Technology Committee</p>	<p>2</p> <p>COVENANT CONNECTION PUBLISHED</p> <p>10:30 AM MONDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY <i>Building the Word Together</i></p>  <p>7:00 PM Facilities Team</p> <p>7:15 PM Worship Team</p>	<p>3</p> <p>7:00 PM Personnel Team</p>	<p>4</p> <p>9:30 AM Yoga Class</p> <p>6:00 PM Together on Wednesday (TOW)</p> <p>7:00 PM Gingerbread House Decorating</p> 	<p>5</p> <p>10:00 AM PW Christmas Basket Assembly</p> <p>4:30 PM Elder Training</p> <p>5:45 PM Outreach Team</p> <p>5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>6</p> <p>6:30 PM Faith Explorers (Grades 2-5)</p>	<p>7</p> <p>9:30 AM Hanging of the Greens</p> 
<p>8</p> <p>Second Sunday in Advent Presbyterian Coffee Project</p> <p>8:30 AM Worship Service</p> <p>9:30 AM Sunday School</p> <p>10:30 AM Worship Service and via Live Stream</p> <p>11:45 AM CareGivers Group</p> <p>11:45 AM MEGA Youth Group</p> <p>4:00 PM Technology Committee</p>	<p>9</p> <p>10:30 AM MONDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY <i>Building the Word Together</i></p>  <p>5:30 PM Congregational Care Team</p>	<p>10</p> <p>9:30 AM PW Coordinating Team</p> <p>10:30 AM Presbyterian Women</p> <p>5:30 PM Preschool Team</p> <p>7:00 PM Stewardship & Finance Team</p>	<p>11</p> <p>9:30 AM Yoga Class</p>	<p>12</p> <p>5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>13</p> <p>8:00 AM Executive Team</p> <p>9:00 AM Newsletter Submission Deadline</p> <p>10:00 AM Novels & Needles Book Group</p> <p>6:30 PM Middle School Manna</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Third Sunday in Advent</p> <p>8:30 AM Worship Service</p> <p>9:30 AM Sunday School</p> <p>10:30 AM Worship Service and via Live Stream</p> <p>11:45 AM High School Youth Caroling and Lunch</p> <p>7:00 PM STATED SESSION MEETING</p>	<p>16</p> <p>COVENANT CONNECTION PUBLISHED</p> <p>10:30 AM MONDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY <i>Building the Word Together</i></p>  <p>7:00 PM Christian Formation Team</p> <p>7:00 PM Elder Training</p>	<p>17</p> <p>10:30 AM Act III Ministries</p> 	<p>18</p> <p>9:30 AM Yoga Class</p> <p>5:15 PM Longest Night Service</p> 	<p>19</p> <p>5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>



GINGERBREAD HOUSE DECORATING	WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4 7:00pm Great Hall
HANGING OF THE GREENS	SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7 9:30am Breezeway
CHRISTMAS CAROLING	SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15 11:45am
LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE	WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18 5:15pm Chapel
FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE	TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 4:00pm Sanctuary
CANDLELIGHT SERVICE	TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 7:30pm Sanctuary

Fun for all ages!

Gingerbread House Decorating
DECEMBER 4 @ 7:00 P.M.
in the Great Hall

Sign Up to let us know you are planning to attend so we have enough supplies for all!
<https://bit.ly/housedecorating>

CHRISTMAS CAROLING
Sunday, December 15
@ 11:45 am

We will spread holiday cheer as we visit our Covenant family & friends in various locations. We will gather in the Great Hall to enjoy a pizza lunch before boarding the bus.

Sign Up to let us know you are planning to attend so we order enough pizza for all!
<https://bit.ly/4hjCn1a>

Missionary UPDATE

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

SEPTEMBER UPDATE: Well, it took a little while to get all of our ducks (or corn cobs) in a row, but it's finally here - our September update! In September, some of our team traveled around the country to visit farmers we've trained who have already started implementing the regenerative agriculture practices. We're so excited to show you their harvest and let you hear, directly from them, how excited they are about what this means for them, their families, their communities, and their ministries. Just click here (<https://bit.ly/MeettheFarmers>) to meet the farmers! We hope you enjoy getting to know them and seeing what a difference your support is making to families and communities in Nigeria.

September 2024

Just ten short months ago, we began our very first small-scale farmers' trainings in regenerative agriculture and using agriculture as an evangelistic tool.

Between November 2023 and September 2024, we trained over 400 farmers! At the end of each training, the farmers create a WhatsApp group where they can continue to receive information, updates, and reminders as well as having a platform to ask questions and order high-quality seeds at wholesale prices. For us, training is just the beginning of the process, not the end. By offering continued mentorship and encouragement as they return to their communities to begin implementing

Thaddeus is a pastor in Kaduna, Nigeria. He did not have the space this year to plant a full plumvudca plot, but he still harvested over 400 lbs. of maize on less than 1/8 of an acre of land, using zero chemicals! This was enough to not only provide food for his family but also allowed him to share 100 lbs. of corn with his neighbors in need!

John withstood the ridicule of his neighbors when he started implementing the new techniques he learned from Decapolis, though he eagerly helped the few who asked him to teach them what he was doing. Now he (and the few who followed his lead) are reaping the rewards. "I've been farming maize here for 4 years, but this



OCTOBER UPDATE:

In October, we were invited to an underdeveloped, rural community in the far interior of Benue State to train 1,000 local farmers! Over a period of six days, Raph and two other team members conducted a series of 1-day trainings and were able to train the first set of almost 400 farmers! We now have invitations to do similar trainings in Plateau State and Oyo State. These 1-day, on-site trainings help us to empower entire communities in an efficient and cost-effective manner while also selecting key people within

the community to receive further in-depth training and serve as community farm supervisors. While it's exciting to be able to help these families feed themselves and start making a profit through regenerative farming, what's even more exciting is the opportunity to talk to hundreds of villagers every day about the redemptive work of Christ. The cost of training 400 farmers: \$2,000 The joy of sharing the redemptive work of Christ through regenerative agriculture: Priceless! "...your message burns in my heart and bones, and I cannot keep silent." ~Jeremiah 20:9

If you would like to help support the work of Decapolis in Nigeria, donations can be sent to:
checks: Commission To Every Nation
P.O. Box 291307
Kerville, TX • 78029-1307
online: www.cten.org/crystalraphael
PayPal: gosnell_c@yahoo.com
Venmo: Crystal_Raphael

Helpful links to follow Decapolis
Community Development Center:
[FACEBOOK](#)
[WEBSITE](#)
[YOUTUBE](#)
[EMAIL](#)



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.



1000 lbs. = a bench

MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH PLASTIC BAGS

THANK YOU, COVENANT! We have kept over **3254 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 robysommerfield@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!

Christmas Benefit Concert
for
SACRA

Memorial Baptist Church

224 Taylor Street, Staunton
540-885-8033

Monday, December 9
7:00 pm

doors open at 6:30

Come join us for a time
of music, fellowship and
an offering to SACRA
(Staunton Augusta
Church Relief Association)

A "Meet and Greet the Artists"
time with refreshments
will follow the concert

*Featuring Local
Musical Artists*

The Faithful Men
Male Vocal Ensemble

The Boogie Kings
Ragtime, Boogie & Rockabilly Trio

Mr. Jefferson's Bones
Trombone Fun

**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.

NANT

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MATTHEW 25

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

Please let us know you are coming!

Together
on



Wednesday
GOOD FOOD / GREAT FELLOWSHIP

In order to prepare the correct quantity of food, we ask that you **make a reservation by noon on the Monday** before the TOW you will be attending.

Three options to reserve a seat:

1. Sign up via the email sent out on Saturdays
2. Sign the Friendship Register in the pew on Sunday.
3. Call the church office at 540-885-2138.

December 4 @ 6:00 PM
with Gingerbread House Making
Pizza Night

If you plan to stay and decorate gingerbread houses, please sign up so we know how many houses we will need.

<https://bit.ly/housedecorating>

Vegetarian options are available at all meals.