

# COVENANT CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MARCH 24, 2025  
STAUNTON, VA

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

Amid all the doom and gloom from the chaos in our country and world these days, there are some rays of sunshine that offer hope for the future. Three experiences over the past several weeks have inspired such hope for me. The first is the group of students from the University of Maryland who spent last week with us on their spring break so that they could work with Renewing Homes Augusta. They ate and slept here at the church and worked on projects during the day, building a porch and installing a ramp for neighbors in our community. Rather than basking on a Florida beach or chilling at home, they chose to spend their free week here, helping strangers in need in a community that none of them had ever visited before. They are great young people, and their commitment to give of their time and themselves in service to others is inspiring. Our thanks to all who helped to make them feel welcome in their brief time here!

The second experience was the baptism of little Ellie last Sunday with the host of our young children all around her. In baptism we welcome a new child into our family of faith, and we commit to show her the love of God and to teach her the stories of Jesus. We made the same commitment to most of those kids gathered on the steps near the font, and their enthusiasm for church and their embrace of a new sister in Christ remind us that the good news is passed on

*(continued on page 3)*

I give you thanks,



O LORD, with my whole heart.  
Psalm 138:1

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VISIT US ONLINE AT  
[WWW.COVENANTPRESSTAUNTON.ORG](http://WWW.COVENANTPRESSTAUNTON.ORG)

*Sewing*  
**GOD**  
*Together*



### **GREETERS**

MAR 30 -

8:30 AM....Frances Craig

10:30 AM....Harry & Sarah Boney,  
Janet Surratt

APR 6 -

8:30 AM....Janice & Rae Rockwell

10:30 AM....Sally & Jonathan Griffith,  
Janet Surratt

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

MAR 30 - **Volunteer Needed**

APR 6 - Kara Miller

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

MAR 30 - **Volunteer Needed**

APR 6 - **Volunteer Needed**

### **FLOWER COORDINATORS**

Susan Polly and Christy Davis

### **CHURCH OPENING and CLOSING**

MARCH — Craig Whitacre

APRIL — Kent Diduch



## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED** in Sunday School,

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.

**SIGN UP HERE:**

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



*With  
Sympathy*

Please keep in your prayers Dave and Jane Maxton and Cassy Whitacre and their family on the death of Dave's mother Ruth in Ohio on Sunday, March 23rd, at the age of 99. May God grant her eternal rest and grant to Dave, Jane, Cassy, Craig, and Faith comfort and peace.

## 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>

## 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. Questions? Contact Susan Polly or Christy Davis. Please sign up at <https://bit.ly/3MD9wXO> least two weeks before your desired date.

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

from generation to generation in just such ways – through loving and welcoming the next generation of the children of God!

And the third experience was Youth Sunday when our youth led the service and shared their favorite stories from the Bible. Some of those kids grew up in the church and some came later in their lives and some came as friends of friends. But they came, and they keep coming and learning and sharing. They are the present and future church, and the nurture of the faith in them week in and week out is important ministry in which we all participate. For, that work happens not only in Sunday School, Youth Group, and worship; it happens too in your encounters with them in church and in the community.

Keep your eyes open for such rays of hope for the future of our church, our community, and our world. For God is at work in and through their lives, as in our own, binding us together as one family of faith – the church – and blessing us one and all!



## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

At its stated meeting on March 16, the Session took the following actions:

- ◆ Received a report on the February meeting of presbytery
- ◆ Approved engaging Worship Times for development of the church website

## *Baptism to Celebrate*

*Sunday, March 16, at the 10:30 service we celebrated the holy baptism of Eleanor Hope Stouffer, daughter of Suzanne and Chuck Stouffer and granddaughter of Karen Edwards.*



Items for the next newsletter are due by **9:00 AM on Friday, April 4th.**

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







## CHRISTIAN FORMATION

RACHEL WATSON • (540) 885-2138  
[revrachelwatson@gmail.com](mailto: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/](http://www.covenantpresstaunton.org/christian-formation-opportunities/)

### A NOTE FROM RAE —

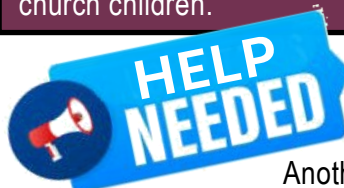
Spring is upon us! And with the beginning of the spring comes all the excitement of planning for summer and dreaming about the new academic year in the fall. Offering spaces for thoughtful discussion and wonder, opportunities for relationship building and story sharing, and robust foundation building for discipleship require a lot of hands on deck.

Every Sunday morning, 16 people are helping shepherd learners across this building. That doesn't include the ones that give up their time on Friday evenings or Sunday afternoons for youth group or confirmation or the ones that build spaces for fellowship outside of our classrooms. We are blessed with a team of dedicated teachers, but as our programs grow, we need more people who are willing to share in this work.

Working with children and youth can be a daunting task. But it is also rewarding beyond measure. I would like to build our teams for the fall now, so that in May and during the summer, I can support them with strategies to help them feel comfortable facilitating learning in children's Sunday School classrooms. Curriculum is only part of that. Understanding how our children learn, how to manage emotions and behavior, and how to invite them into learning spaces is also vitally important to create nurturing learning spaces our children need more than ever these days. If you are interested in learning more about our Christian formation teams, the commitment of time, and the specific tasks of each member of the team, talk to me.

In April and May, I will be leading a Sunday School class about parenting and faith. We will discuss how to help nurture our children's

emotional and mental health, practical tips for encouraging faith formation at home, and how we are already more equipped for this work than we think. Anyone can come to this class and learn how to be a church parent for all the church children.



We have ten kids going to Montreat this summer.

Another six are heading to Massanetta. This is amazing!

Camps and conferences like this offer a time for kids to solidify bonds with their church friends and allow them to set aside all the mess of the world and sit with God's word in loving community with kids from all over the United States. It lets them see how big this faith thing is and how they are part of much bigger family.

But they can't go alone. We need more chaperones to go with us – one more for Montreat and one more for Massanetta. Chaperones are invited to participate fully in the life of the conference, attending worship and back-home group meetings, as well as taking part in small groups and recreation time. But you are absolutely able to participate in ways that value any limitations you have – you don't have to do cartwheels and climb mountains if you don't want to. The only thing you **HAVE** to be able to do is drive a couple of kids to and from the conference and care about our kids!

We are going to Massanetta on Thursday, June 19 and returning Sunday, June 22. The Montreat trip is from Sunday, July 6 to Saturday, July 12. Prayerfully consider whether God is calling you to serve in this way and let me know if you have any questions or are ready to sign up!



## ONGOING OUTREACH

### Peanut Butter Sunday

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.



### PLASTIC BAG COLLECTION MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

**THANK YOU, COVENANT!** We have kept over **3392 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)



### SHELBURNE PANTRY RESTOCK

**Donations are always needed!**

Please place your donations of laundry and cleaning items, hygiene products, and foods such as canned vegetables, canned fruits, soups, and snacks in the boxes outside the church office or in the Narthex.

*Thank you for your continued support of this Outreach Project!*



**Wednesdays at 6:00 pm  
in the Great Hall**

**March 5 - April 9**

**Menu is Soup, Salad, & Bread**

Make a reservation by noon on the Monday before the TOW you plan to attend so we know how many to prepare to feed.

Sign up online at

<https://bit.ly/4jBxYYQ>

OR sign the Friendship Pad on Sunday

OR contact the church office  
at 540-885-2138.



**At 7:00 pm after TOW beginning on March 5, join us  
for Lenten Taizé Worship Services in the Sanctuary.**



## Spread the Word

One of the priorities that session set for 2025 was "Spread the Word by developing and implementing a communication plan that tells our story within and outside the church".

One way that we can spread the word is through the use of our social media. You may have already noticed an uptick in our social media activity in the last couple of months. We want to continue this initiative!

Have a fellowship event, opportunity for service, educational opportunity, or other activity to share? Call Martha at 540-885-2138 or send an email ([covenantpcusastaunton@gmail.com](mailto:covenantpcusastaunton@gmail.com)) and have it added to our social media feed! This will allow it to be advertised broadly but will also let the community at large know all the great things going on at Covenant! — Technology Team

## Follow us

(like, comment, and share so you keep seeing us in your feeds)

**Facebook:**

[www.facebook.com/CovenantPresStaunton](http://www.facebook.com/CovenantPresStaunton)

**Instagram:**

[www.instagram.com/covenantpcusastaunton](http://www.instagram.com/covenantpcusastaunton)

**YouTube:**

[www.youtube.com/@CovenantStaunton](http://www.youtube.com/@CovenantStaunton)

**Check out Upcoming Events on our**

**website:** [www.covenantpresstaunton.org/upcoming-events/](http://www.covenantpresstaunton.org/upcoming-events/)



A vibrant, colorful poster for an Easter event. At the top, a string of colorful triangular bunting flags hangs across the frame. Below the flags, a dark teal rounded rectangle contains the date and time. The main title 'EGG HUNT & BRUNCH' is written in large, bold, teal letters, with several orange and black butterflies fluttering around it. In the center, a cute white rabbit with pink inner ears and a red collar sits on a patch of green grass with small white and orange flowers. Behind the rabbit are several large, colorful Easter eggs with various patterns like stripes, polka dots, and zig-zags. The background is a light blue sky with a few small purple and blue dots. At the bottom, there are more green grass, yellow daisies, and several more colorful Easter eggs. A small red ladybug is visible on the grass near the bottom right.

SUNDAY, APRIL 13  
@11:45 AM

# EGG HUNT & BRUNCH

**Bring your favorite  
breakfast casserole,  
quiche, fruit salad, or  
lunch food to the potluck  
brunch in the Great Hall**

Egg Hunt begins at 12:45 pm.  
There will be games and activities for ALL ages  
during the potluck and the egg hunt.



**CANDY DONATIONS NEEDED!  
BRING TO CHURCH OFFICE BY TUESDAY, APRIL 1**



# MARCH



# APRIL

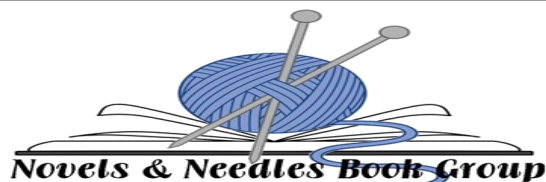
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><b>24</b></p> <p><b>COVENANT CONNECTION PUBLISHED</b></p> <p>10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study</p> 	<p><b>25</b></p> <p><b>APRIL 1</b></p> <p>5:00 PM Endowment Committee</p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>9:30 AM Yoga Class</p> <p>5:00 PM TOW Talks</p> <p>6:00 PM Together on Wednesday (TOW)</p> <p>7:00 PM Taizé Service</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>28</b></p>	<p><b>29</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>9:00 AM Spring Clean-Up</p> 
<p><b>30</b> 4 Cents a Meal</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 Fellowship Team</p>	<p><b>31</b></p> <p>10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>9:30 AM Yoga Class</p> <p>5:00 PM TOW Talks</p> <p>6:00 PM Together on Wednesday (TOW)</p> <p>7:00 PM Taizé Service</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>5:45PM Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>6:15 PM Outreach Team</p> <p>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>9:00 AM Newsletter Submission Deadline</p> <p>6:30 PM Faith Explorers (Grades 2-5)</p>	<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>9:00 AM Executive Team</p> <p>10:00 AM Novels &amp; Needles Book Group</p>
<p><b>6</b> Peanut Butter Sunday 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 Egg Hunt Prep</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p><b>COVENANT CONNECTION PUBLISHED</b></p> <p>10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study</p> <p>5:30 PM Congregational Care Team</p> <p>7:00 PM Facilities Team</p> <p>7:15 PM Worship Team</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>9:30 AM Yoga Class</p> <p>5:00 PM TOW Talks</p> <p>6:00 PM Together on Wednesday (TOW)</p> <p>7:00 PM Taizé Service</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>12</b></p>	



# JOIN THE OFFICE VOLUNTEER TEAM

Are you looking for a way to contribute to the work of Covenant? We're seeking individuals to join our team of office volunteers. Help us with tasks like answering phones, greeting visitors, and more, based on your skills.

Volunteers substitute when the church administrative assistant needs to be away from the office for vacation, appointments, or illness. For more information or to volunteer, contact Martha at the church office (540-885-2138).



## *Novels & Needles Book Group*

Novels & Needles Book Club will meet at 10:00 AM on Friday, April 11th in the Breezeway with Peggy Roberson, discussion leader.

The book being discussed is *The Lion Women of Tehran* by Marjan Kamali

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, April 20th** 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.



The next **Equal Exchange** Sale is **Sunday, April 6th.**

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](mailto:bettyandcliff@comcast.net).

# THANKS *from the* HEART

Dear Covenant Family, Thank you! Thank you for your visits, cards, prayers and meals. Your support has meant everything. I have a ways to go yet but I hope to worship with you in church in a few weeks. Blessings to all a very sincere thank you!! — Joan Swift

## Greater Allen A.M.E. Church



**Sunday, April 6**  
**11 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

936 SUDBURY ST.  
STAUNTON, VA

FEATURING  
JAVON JACKSON TENOR SAX  
JOHN D'EARTH TRUMPET  
LEW TAYLOR PIANO  
NEAL PERRINE BASS  
MARLON FOSTER DRUMS  
ROBERT MOTT TROMBONE  
REV. EDWARD A. SCOTT

## 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](http://www.covenantpresstaunton.org).

COVENANT



Presbyterian Church of America

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Staunton, VA 24402

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



MATTHEW 25

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



Lenten Taizé Service in the Sanctuary (no live stream)  
Each Wednesday March 12 through April 9 at 7:00 PM

Palm Sunday Services in the Sanctuary:  
Sunday, April 13 at 8:30 AM and 10:30 AM (live streamed)

Maundy Thursday Service in the Sanctuary  
Thursday, April 17 at 7:00 PM (live streamed)

Easter Services in Sanctuary:  
Sunday, April 20 at 8:30 AM and 10:30 AM (live streamed)

Live streams can be viewed at  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC\\_2d6A2fCHNPM03MmXFFY5w/live](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_2d6A2fCHNPM03MmXFFY5w/live)

# SPRING CLEANING

**APRIL 5TH  
9 AM - 12 PM**

Yearly indoor and outdoor cleaning from 9 am -12 pm. Tasks for all ages, any help appreciated!

**WHAT'S INCLUDED:**

- Refreshments
- Satisfaction that you helped the church

**FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT RANDY SMITH**

