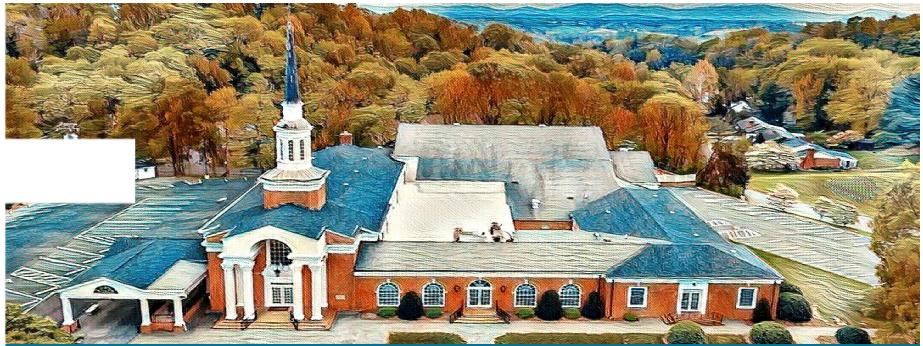


JANUARY 26, 2026  
STAUNTON, VA



# COVENANT CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS A THREAT TO JUSTICE EVERWHERE.

Martin Luther King Jr.

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### *From the Pastor's Desk*

Last week, I attended the annual community service in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As always it was an inspiring event, one that I have regularly attended and at which I have spoken occasionally across the years. A few thoughts and observations from this year's event:

- ◆ The service is the most diverse event at which our community gathers, and it is diverse in many respects. There is racial diversity, town-gown diversity, with many folks from the community and from Mary Baldwin attending, age diversity with students from the university as well as older folks and children from the community attending, ecumenical diversity with folks from across the religious community participating and attending – I found myself for the second year in a row seated next to A.J. Heine, rector at Trinity Episcopal Church!
- ◆ Dr. King's legacy lives on through the power of his words, oratory, and life that continue to inspire and move us almost sixty years after his death; they are as relevant to the challenges of today as they were to the challenges of his day.
- ◆ The students do not hesitate to speak the truth as they perceive it and to call out the injustices they see; their passion for justice is inspiring and humbling!
- ◆ Edward Scott, as master of ceremonies, keeps us focused on the issues at hand and Dr. King's legacy, while also commanding and encouraging the various participants.
- ◆ We would benefit by gathering more often with such a cross-section of our community.

(continued on page 3)

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



## GREETERS

FEBRUARY 1 -

8:30 AM....Gary & Nancy Gourley  
10:30 AM....Dan Drumheller, Janet Surratt

FEBRUARY 8 -

8:30 AM....Jeanne & Mick Lambert  
10:30 AM....Melissa Druff,  
Dan Drumheller, Jane Wimmer

## FLOWER COORDINATORS

Susan Polly and Christy Davis

## CHURCH OPENING and CLOSING

FEBRUARY — Tom Bellamy

## 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/3MD9wXO> at least two weeks before your desired date.

Questions? Contact Susan Polly or Christy Davis.

## Ushers/Greeters Needed



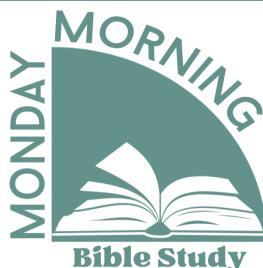
Help is always needed!  
If you are available at the  
8:30 or 10:30 service,  
please sign-up at  
<http://bit.ly/3KPmamT>

## *With Sympathy*

*Please keep in your prayers:*

- ◆ Debbie Smith and her family on the death of Debbie's sister, Virginia Hale Meredith, in hospice care in Florida on January 14.
- ◆ Melinda Bare, wife of Chuck Bare, their son Michael, and family on the death of Chuck, a long-time Covenant member, on January 17 after several weeks of declining health.

May God grant Virginia and Chuck eternal rest and resurrection joy, and grant to the families comfort and peace.



Join us Mondays  
at 10:30 AM  
IN ROOM 6  
OR VIA ZOOM

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.

A link to the Zoom meeting is sent out via opt-ins each Sunday.



Join us each Friday  
at 10:30 AM  
at Baldwin Park  
beginning on  
February 6th

Act III is a ministry geared for older adults who are navigating the blessings and challenges that come with age. In this group, we study scriptures through the lens of aging and explore our vocation and discipleship in this particular stage of life.

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

- ◆ Throughout the program and in the quotes of Dr. King, there were echoes of Scripture to encourage us, challenge us, and at times unsettle us.
- ◆ On a cold January night at a time when the NCAA National Championship Football game was being played, First Presbyterian Church was packed with folks for whom that remembrance and gathering was a greater priority!
- ◆ If the event is just a remembrance and a feel-good moment, then Dr. King would be disappointed. The challenge for all of us – whether you attended or not – is to live into that vision of the beloved community and to work to make it a reality. That work continues throughout the year and dovetails with our commitment as a Matthew 25 congregation to address issues of systemic poverty and structural racism.
- ◆ We remember and honor the heroes of the civil rights movement, like Dr. King, which leads me to wonder how future generations will look at our response to the rise of authoritarianism, Christian Nationalism, racism, and injustice in our own nation and around the world these days. Are we rising to the occasion and practicing what we preach?

May Dr. King's vision of the beloved community come to greater realization in our lifetimes, and may we be instruments by which that holy work is done, for it is indeed holy work – God's work through us!



Items for the next newsletter are due by **9:00 AM on Friday, February 6th.**

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



The Outreach Team would like to thank the members and friends of Covenant Presbyterian Church for your inspiring generosity and continuing support for Glorious Gifts. Because of your support, the following disbursements were made:

\$2,247	Decapolis
\$3,861	ICare
\$14,536	Verona Food Pantry
\$3,772	EVACE
\$2,312	Habitat for Humanity
\$1,477	Renewing Home
\$28,155	TOTAL

If you'd like more information about each organization, please see the individual websites listed below:

[www.decapoliscenter.org](http://www.decapoliscenter.org)  
[www.shenpres.org/Ethiopia/icare](http://www.shenpres.org/Ethiopia/icare)  
[www.veronafoodpantry.org](http://www.veronafoodpantry.org)  
[www.evace.org](http://www.evace.org)  
[www.sawhfh.org](http://www.sawhfh.org)  
[www.renewinghomes.org](http://www.renewinghomes.org)





The Endowment Fund was established in 1999 to support the long-range ministry and mission of the Church. It invests in stocks and bonds for the purpose of providing Session with additional resources to address special needs, to expand existing ministries, or to fund other unique outreach opportunities. The Endowment Fund Committee oversees the investment and management of the Fund under guidelines approved by the Session.

Every year a portion of the income from the Fund is transferred to the General Fund. That amount is equal to 4% of a 3-year rolling average of the value of the Fund. The principal remains untouched for future growth.

Gifts to the Fund come from three sources: gifts made specifically to the Endowment Fund, one-half of all gifts made to the Church in memory of someone who has died that are otherwise undesignated, and any bequests from an estate to the Church that are not otherwise designated for a particular purpose.

As of the end of 2025, the Endowment Fund balance was \$317,994, an increase of \$23,897 compared to the 2024 balance. During 2025, 4 church members donated \$23,890 to the Fund, and \$9,902 was transferred from the Fund to the General Fund. Consider giving to the Endowment Fund. A gift today will create a stream of income for years to come.

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The Memorial Fund was established in 1999 and is used to fund specific projects for the Church, as selected by Session. Gifts to the Fund come from two sources: gifts made specifically to the Memorial Fund and one-half of all gifts made to the Church in memory of someone who has died that are otherwise undesignated. The Memorial Fund accepts both lifetime gifts and bequests.

As of the end of 2025, the Memorial Fund balance was \$28,119, an increase of \$4,865 compared to the 2024 balance. During 2025, 24 church members and 17 non-church members donated \$10,215 to the Fund, and \$5,350 was spent on memorial garden plaques and maintenance. Consider giving to the Memorial Fund to honor a family member or friend who has died.



# memorials & gifts

*Gifts made in 2025*

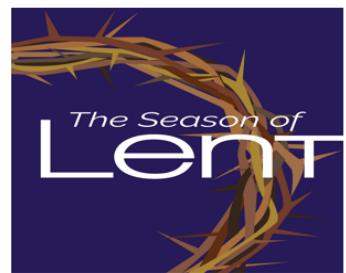
**Memorial gifts have been made to  
Covenant Presbyterian Church in memory of:**

Betty Bonham, Earl Chittum, Pat Dindinger, Lou Dolve, Madge Drumheller, Richard Esther, Carolyn Hensley, Mary Huppuch, Emma Jordan, David Stahl

**The gifts were made by the following donors:**

Anne Avery, Baldwin Park, Betty Bonham, Mike and Ginger Burwell, George Conner, Judy Cox, June Collie, Charlotte Downing, Chris and Becky Earhart, Andrea and Edward Ennis, Judith Gardner, Richard Graves, Homer and Joyce Hite, Tom and Bruce Hemp, Jeanette Homes, Carol Jennings, Thom and Peggy Jennings, Andrew Johnson, Bob and Ashley Kane, Lisa Knutzen, Leslie and Kenneth Langslow, Bill and Jane Lobb, Becky and Jerry Maier, William McAllister, Joe and Elissa McDonald, Dave and Debbie Metz, Anne Mitchell, Sue Morley, Clem Morrison, Ellen Mullins, Troy and Jean Rexrode, James Ridenour, John and Joan Sayers, Lynn Theobold, Barb Severinghaus, Laura Stahl, Martha Ware, Paul and Martha Vames, Mary Wetherbee, and Terry Westhafer.

Unless otherwise indicated, memorial gifts are divided equally between the Memorial Fund and the Endowment Fund.



February 18 @ 7:00 PM



**Taizé'**  
*Services*

Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM  
February 25 - March 25



**PALM**  
*Sunday*

March 29 @ 8:30 & 10:30 AM



**MAUNDY**  
*Thursday*

April 2 @ 7:00 PM



**EASTER**  
**SUNDAY**

April 5 @ 8:30 & 10:30 AM



## SOUP, HOST & HELPERS NEEDED

For each TOW, we need one host and two helpers to assist with clean up.

TOW will be serving soups during the Lenten season. We need five (5) crockpots of soup with one being a vegetarian option each Wednesday. TOW begins at 6:00 pm so please have your soup in the Great Hall by at least 5:45.

Hosts are responsible for bringing salad and bread and helping with set up and clean up. Hosts will be notified about how many people rsvp'd and will be reimbursed by the TOW fund.

If you have any questions, contact Kristen Lambert.

Sign up at:

<https://bit.ly/TOWSoup26>

or call the church office  
(540-885-2138).



Join us for

Together on Wednesday

GOOD FOOD / GREAT FELLOWSHIP

Wednesdays at 6:00 pm  
in the Great Hall

February 18 - March 1  
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/TOWATTEND26>

OR sign the Friendship Pad on Sunday  
OR contact the church office at 540-885-2138.

# J. A. N. U. A. R. Y.

F·E·B·R·U·A·R·Y



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>26</b> Covenant Connection Published 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study  <b>MORNING</b> Bible Study	<b>27</b> 7:00 PM Stewardship & Finance Team 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study  <b>MORNING</b> Bible Study	<b>28</b> 9:30 AM Yoga Class  <b>YOGA CLASS</b>	<b>29</b> 12:00 PM Youth Leader Meeting 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>2</b> Peanut Butter Sunday Presbyterian Coffee Project 8:30 AM Worship Service 9:30 AM Christian Formation Hour 10:30 AM Worship Service and via Live Stream 11:45 AM Outreach Team 12:00 PM Confirmation Class 	<b>3</b> 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study  <b>MORNING</b> Bible Study	<b>4</b> 9:30 AM Yoga Class  <b>YOGA CLASS</b>	<b>5</b> 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>6</b> 9:00 AM Newsletter Submission Deadline 10:30 AM Act III Bible Study  FOR THE OLDER ADULT TEAMS	<b>7</b>	
<b>8</b> 8:30 AM Worship Service 9:30 AM Christian Formation Hour 10:30 AM Worship Service and via Live Stream 11:45 AM Outreach Team 12:00 PM Confirmation Class 	<b>9</b> Covenant Connection Published 10:30 AM Monday Morning Bible Study  <b>MORNING</b> Bible Study	<b>10</b> 9:30 AM PV Coordinating Team 10:30 AM Presbyterian Women  <b>PRESBYTERIAN</b> WOMEN	<b>11</b> 9:30 AM Yoga Class  <b>YOGA CLASS</b>	<b>12</b> 5:45 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> VALENTINE'S DAY  because He first loved us. John 4:19
<b>11</b> 4:00 PM Technology Team via Zoom	<b>12</b> 9:00 AM Executive Team 10:00 AM Novels & Needles Book Group  10:30 AM Act III Bible Study 6:30 PM Faith Explorers (Grades 3-5) 	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 9:00 AM Executive Team 10:00 AM Novels & Needles Book Group  10:30 AM Act III Bible Study 6:30 PM Faith Explorers (Grades 3-5) 			

Welcome to Heart Health Month.  
 Check out the following suggestions and try a few!

## 28 Days Toward a Healthy Heart

Try one of these tips each day for a month, then keep up the momentum and make your favorites part of your regular routine.

#OurHearts  
 are healthier together

**Day 1**  
 Call a friend and join the #OurHearts movement.



**Day 2**  
 Make a heart-healthy snack.

**Day 9**  
 Walk an extra 15 minutes today.

**Day 8**  
 Get your blood pressure checked.



**Day 3**  
 Schedule your annual physical. Discuss your heart health goals with your doctor.



**Day 4**  
 Sport red today for National Wear Red Day.

**Day 10**  
 Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity today.



**Day 11**  
 Plan your menu for the week with heart-healthy recipes.



**Day 15**  
 Swap the sweets for a piece of fruit for dessert.



**Day 16**  
 Stress less. Practice mindful meditation for 10 minutes.



**Day 17**  
 Head to bed with enough time to get a full 7-8 hours of sleep.



**Day 18**  
 Add a stretch break to your calendar to increase your flexibility.



**Day 22**  
 Call a relative and ask about your family health history.



**Day 23**  
 March in place during commercial breaks to get your heart going.



**Day 24**  
 Get a tape measure and find out the size of your waist.



**Day 25**  
 Ask a family member or neighbor to join you for a walk.



[nhlbi.nih.gov/heartmonth](http://nhlbi.nih.gov/heartmonth)

**Day 5**  
 Squat it out. Do 1 minute of squats.



**Day 6**  
 Make today a salt-free day. Use herbs for flavor instead of salt.



**Day 7**  
 Visit [Smokefree.gov](http://Smokefree.gov) to take the first step to quitting smoking.



**Day 12**  
 Reduce stress using relaxation techniques.



**Day 13**  
 Give the elevator a day off and take the stairs.



**Day 14**  
 Protect your sweetheart's heart: Plan a heart-healthy date.



**Day 19**  
 Eat vegetarian for a day.



**Day 20**  
 Share a funny video or joke that makes you laugh.



**Day 28**  
 Pay it forward and tell a friend about *The Heart Truth*®.



National Heart, Lung,  
 and Blood Institute



# Valentine's Day Cookies



for

## Verona Community Center

Please Deliver to the Great Hall Kitchen  
Sundays, February 8<sup>th</sup> & February 15<sup>th</sup>

*Supporting the homeless who seek  
resources at Verona Community Center  
is part of Covenant's ministry through  
the Outreach Committee.*

For more information, contact Cary Dahl  
at 540-849-3205 or email [dahlcary@gmail.com](mailto:dahlcary@gmail.com)

Please sign up at

<https://bit.ly/VeronaCookies>



## BOOK COLLECTION FOR COMMUNITY CHILD CARE CENTER



Once again, the Outreach Team is collecting new books for the children at the Community Child Care Center. The children will be allowed to take

these books home to keep, and hopefully, these gifts will encourage reading. Look for the hearts on the bulletin board in the Breezeway with the names and authors of recommended children's books. There are fifteen 2-year-olds and twenty-five preschoolers who will receive the books. Please take a heart or two and sign up on the sign-up sheet to let us know which book(s) you will be purchasing. Our hope is to distribute these books by February 13 in time for Valentine's Day. So please bring the book(s) you purchased to the church by February 6 and place in the collection carton below the bulletin board. Questions? Please contact Linda Tenney at 540-414-4479.



The next Equal Exchange Sale is  
Sunday, February 1

Available are:

- ♦ regular coffee for \$10
- ♦ 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@gmail.com](mailto:bettyandcliff@gmail.com).

## 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 **3787 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)

LET'S  
RESTOCK  
THE  
SHELBURNE  
PANTRY



For the month of February, the focus is on helping male students keep clean -- items like deodorant, body wash, and lotion are in demand! At this age, the boys are learning that body odor is more of a concern than back in elementary school, so we want to help them have things they now need. Food items continue to be welcome, so you can also contribute granola bars, soup, fruit cups, etc., plus household items like soap and cleaning items. We have labeled boxes in the narthex and outside the church offices for you to drop off items, which we will then take to the school pantry for distribution.

**THANK YOU** for your generosity in helping Shelburne students and families through this Outreach project!

# GROUPS MEETING MONTHLY

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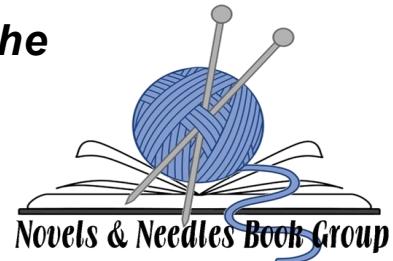


**Presbyterian Women meet the  
Second Tuesday of the Month  
10:30AM in the Breezeway  
Next meeting is February 10**

Join us for Bible study and fellowship.

**Novels & Needles Book Club meets the  
Second Friday of the Month  
10:00AM in the Breezeway  
Next meeting is February 13**

The book for discussion is  
Theo of Golden by Allen Levi



**CareGivers meet the  
Third Sunday of the Month  
immediately after the 10:30 service in Room 5  
Next meeting is February 15**

This group is for anyone caring for a loved one who  
would like to talk with others in similar situations.

**Grief Support Group meets the  
Fourth Sunday of the Month  
11:45AM in Room 5  
Next meeting is February 22**

Our group is open to all and offers a welcoming and  
safe space to share, connect, and support each other.  
Contact Eileen Cooper for more information.



# FAMILY EVENT

ANNUAL

# CHILLI COOK-OFF

# & DESSERT BAKE-OFF

Those not wishing to compete  
are encouraged to  
bring cornbread to share!

## FEBRUARY

# 8<sup>TH</sup>

Begins at  
**11:30 AM**  
in the Great Hall

**#1**  
Best  
Award



Sign-up for the competition and/or your  
attendance: <https://bit.ly/chilidessert>



## 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

**Alan Cameron**

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.covenantpressstaunton.org](http://www.covenantpressstaunton.org).



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MATTHEW 25

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



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

Information is available:

1. via an opt-in
2. email, through the Covenant Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/CovenantPresStaunton#](https://www.facebook.com/CovenantPresStaunton#)),
3. on the home page of the church website ([covenantpresstaunton.org](http://covenantpresstaunton.org)),
4. 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.