



December 2024 & January 2025

COVENANT MATTERS!

The Newsletter of the Saints at
Covenant Presbyterian Church

Please remember CPC in your estate planning!

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From the Pastor's Heart:

"Finally..."

It's a common running joke among preachers to note how often the apostle Paul says "Finally" in his epistles and then goes on for several more paragraphs! Well, this is going to be short and sweet because it is finally time for Karen and me to say goodbye to Covenant as I've managed to achieve the one goal of being your Interim Pastor — finally "to work myself out of a job" as you await your new called pastor.

As this is my last opportunity to communicate with you in writing as your pastor, I thought maybe we could explore together the concept of God's "guidance" since, as Christians, it is with this understanding that we move about and make decisions concerning our present and future ministries.

Knowing many of you enjoy the art of dancing, I thought you would enjoy the following meditation which poignantly and cleverly illustrates the concept of GUIDANCE:

When I meditated on the word guidance, I kept seeing "dance" at the end of the word. I remember reading that doing God's will is a lot like dancing. When two people try to lead, nothing feels right. The movement doesn't flow with the music, and everything is quite uncomfortable and jerky. However, when one person relaxes and lets the other lead, both bodies begin to flow with the music. One gives gentle cues, perhaps with a nudge to the back or by pressing lightly in one direction or another. It's as if two become one body, moving beautifully. The dance takes willingness, attentiveness, and surrender from one person, and gentle guidance and skill from the other. My eyes then drew back to the word guidance. When I saw "G," I thought of God, followed by "U" and "I" — G-U-I-DANCE — God, You, and I dance. This is what guidance means to me. As I relax and lower my head, I must become willing to trust that I will get guidance about my life. Once again, I must be willing to let God lead. — Author Unknown

It's obvious the problem we have "dancing" with God is that we often want to lead and not follow, even though Scripture is very specific that we are to "follow" (Matthew 16:24). But what I like most about this meditation is not just the part that God needs to lead, it is that you and I also need to "dance" together. And, in fact, "U" comes before "I" — and not the other way around!

In other words, in a community of faith, it's not about a lone person dancing with God but everyone doing so and with one another, always yielding to one another, with "I" being last. And that's why Jesus' final prayer for his disciples was "that they may all be one" (John 17:21), and that his "new commandment" was for them to "love one another" (John 13:34). When God's will is done, it affects all of us.

I firmly believe that in God's kingdom there are no lone rangers and that we are all
... Continued on next page

SESSION

Class of 2024

John Anderson
David Beardsley
Beverly Grady
Mary Lee Mann

Class of 2025

Mary Watford Armes
Chris Larson
Verona Lawson
Deborah Maurer, *Clerk*

Class of 2026

Pat Arner
Madeleine Doran
Richard Shafer
Rosemary Wallace

Rev. Bill Teng

Moderator / Interim Pastor

DIACONATE

Class of 2024

Barbara O'Neil
Dorothy Mae Wert
Patricia Zimmerman,
Moderator

Class of 2025

Tamera Bilicic
Jane Kaserman
Hank Sawyer

Class of 2026

Allan Engler
Beth Richter
Karen Tasman
Connie Willhite

TRUSTEES

Beverly Beardsley (2024)
Victor Arias (2025)
Wilson Wheeler (2026)

COVENANT MATTERS!

Edited by Deanna Gordon
Submissions due by
the 20th of each month to
cpcpublications@covpcfm.com

... from the Pastor's heart, continued

interconnected because we are all God's children. And so when one hurts, everyone hurts. When one rejoices, everyone rejoices. And that's why all of us must learn how to care for one another and to minister harmoniously alongside each other (1 Corinthians 12:25-26).

Karen and I are profoundly appreciative of the last two years and nine months that we've shared together as a family of faith. We're especially grateful for the many of you who have sustained us with your constant prayers and encouragement. I'm sure my ministry was that much more enjoyable and effective just because you've been there for me. As for those whom I have failed and to whom I was not able to minister effectively, I beg your forgiveness. I rejoice with you in the anticipation of Pastor Becky's arrival in mid-January. As I've informed Session, my last Sunday with you will be on **December 22**, and my last service will be on **Christmas Eve**.

I pray as we continue to seek God's GUIDANCE in our respective future ministries, we are able to learn from our past mistakes and move on to becoming more effective ministers in God's kingdom. And may this charge and blessing by the late Dr. Richard Halverson, Presbyterian minister and Chaplain of the U.S. Senate, continue to remind you that:

*You go nowhere by accident;
wherever you go, God is sending you;
wherever you are, God has put you there —
God has a purpose in you being there.*

*Christ, who indwells you, has something he wants to do through you, where you are.
Believe this, and go in his grace, and power, and love!*

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Bill



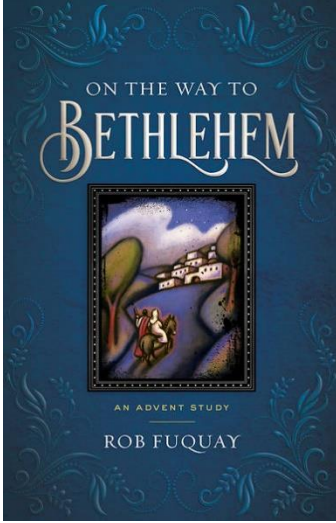
We are so proud of our youth!

When these kids heard that the cost of upkeep for the van was too much, they came forward with fundraising ideas to help out! One of those ideas was a yard sale. In trying to schedule this event, we realized that it would likely interfere with the sale that PW has January 25. At a circle meeting, it was proposed for them to work together and share the proceeds.

Another idea was a talent show involving the whole church. This would include dinner and acts performed by any and all members who want to share their talent; more on this in a separate article.

Friends, this is what it means to live in community; working together, to do what needs to be done for the benefit of us all. Please keep these ideas in mind as you prepare for the holiday, cleaning, decluttering and assessing the value of things in your home. You can bring your items to the church whenever you are ready. The youth and our ladies will prepare them as needed.

ADVENT STUDY



On the Way to Bethlehem follows the long journey to Christmas. The story begins in Rome with a decree issued from the seat of worldly power for a census, setting into motion events leading to the birth of the Savior of the world in a town that represents the very opposite of worldly power, Bethlehem.

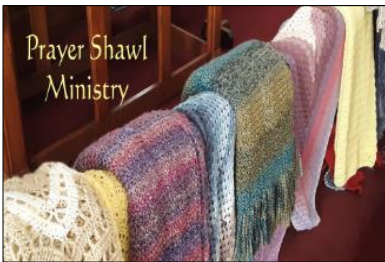
Author Rob Fuquay provides insight into the geographical and historical significance of Rome, Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Bethlehem, along with the important characters through whom the Christmas drama unfolds. You will be drawn into those places in a way that helps you experience the spiritual truths each location holds. The reflection we give in these places prepares the heart and soul to experience wonder, awe, mystery, and joy.

Wednesdays, December 4, 11, & 18

9:30 – 10:30AM in Chapel

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| December 4 | Advent Study begins (Chapel) |
| December 8 | Alternative Christmas Market (Courtyard) |
| December 13 | Christmas Concert |
| December 21 | Blue Christmas Service-3pm (Chapel) |
| December 24 | Christmas Eve Candlelight Service-6pm |
| January 3 | Concert ~ SW Florida Historical High Brass Ensemble |
| January 17 | Concert ~ Fred Moyer Jazz Trio |
| January 19 | New Pastor's First Sunday Worship Service |
| January 25 | Installation of Officers |
| January 26 | PW Fundraiser |
| January 31 | Annual Congregational Meeting |
| | Concert ~ Gabriel Martins - Cello |



We will meet Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 10AM in room F207.
 There will be no meeting in December.



CONGREGATIONAL MATTERS

We have received **64 Faith Promise Cards**, totaling an amount of **\$339,320** in pledges to this church.

If you have not yet made your commitment to God and completed your *Faith Promise Card*, it's not too late! Bring your card to church and drop it into the offering plate or mail to:

Covenant Presbyterian Church
2439 McGregor Blvd.
Fort Myers, FL 33901

Lost your card? We have extras! You may pick up a new one in the back of the Sanctuary or in the church office.

Thank you for making your commitment to God and completing your *Faith Promise Card* so that Covenant can plan the budget for this coming year.



Session has set our Annual Congregational Meeting for **Sunday, January 26, 2025**, immediately following worship.

The following nominees for Officers were voted in by the church members at the Called Congregational Meeting held on November 10, 2024. They will be ordained and installed as Officers January 19, 2025.

Elders: John Anderson, Mary Lee Mann, and Anna Siemen

Deacons: Connie Burkert, Linda Nelson, and Karen Viele

Trustee: Beverly Beardsley

We want to say thank you to those Officers that have completed their term ~

Elders: David Beardsley and Beverly Grady

Deacons: Barbara O'Neil, Dorothy Mae Wert, and Patricia Zimmerman

We appreciate your commitment to Covenant and your hard work, love and concern of its members during your time in office.



WELCOME TO OUR NEW PASTOR!

DECEMBER Birthdays

- 01 David Michalewsky
- 03 Carolyn Lambing
Lori Demeter
John Rimes
- 07 Todd Costigan
- 08 Linda Borchering
Mercedes Bunner
- 09 Lin Mulloy
- 12 Sallie Atkin
- 14 Paul Young
- 15 Margaret England
Megan Schorle
- 16 Lesley Burker
- 20 Bob Adkins
- 22 Joann McWilliams
Maddie Negip
- 23 Anne Ragland
- 29 Ginny Shea
Debbie McEwen
- 30 Pastor Bill Teng



DECEMBER Anniversaries

- 05 Pat & Ron Bailer
- 31 Angelette & Victor Arias



The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) of Covenant proudly announces extending a call to, and the acceptance of that call by, **Rev. Rebecca "Becky" Schwandt**. Pastor Becky conducted the full worship service at Covenant on November 24. Immediately after that service, a Congregational Meeting was held where an overwhelming affirmative vote was taken to make Becky our next Pastor!

Becky comes to us from Springfield, Missouri where she held dual roles of Pastor at Ozark Presbyterian Church and as Stated Clerk of John Calvin Presbytery.

Becky will formally start her ministry with us on January 13, 2025 with her first Sunday of Worship on January 19, 2025. We welcome her and look forward to Becky bringing her many gifts to our church and our community.



Covenant's Concert Series

Christmas Concert featuring Covenant's Concert Choir
Jubilate Ringers, Instrumental

Friday, December 13, 2024 7:30 p.m. – Sanctuary
Free Admission – Freewill offering 2439 McGregor Blvd. Ft. Myers, FL 33901

Stop by the Christmas Joy Toy Drive Table and Pick up a Gift Tag!

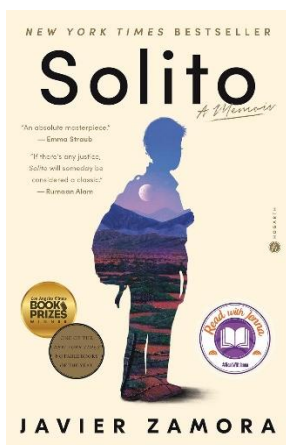


Please stop by the Christmas Joy table in the Courtyard and pick up a gift tag for one (or more!) gift for a boy or girl, ages one to 12. Help us help Misión Peniel bring joy to more than 500 children this Christmas season.

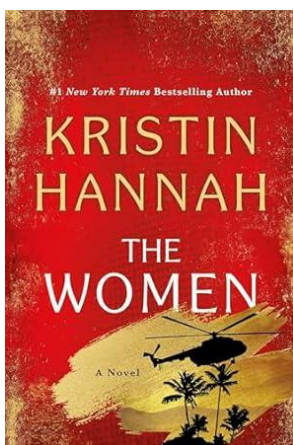
The price range for the gifts this year is \$25 to \$30. Don't worry about providing a gift bag. All gifts will be sent to Misión Peniel in similar gift bags that the mission is supplying. Gifts are due back at the church before December 15.

There are two other ways you can bring joy this year. In addition to purchasing gifts:

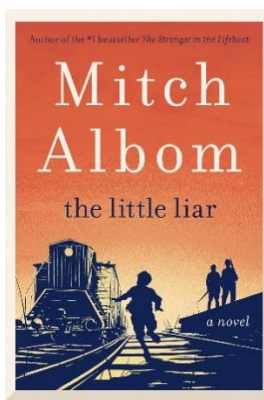
- You can **order from their Walmart register list** and have the toys shipped directly to the mission for the children!
<https://www.walmart.com/registry/ER/bc786b0d-356e-41ee-bd22-8f83d974165e>
- You can also **make a donation online** at:
www.misionpeniel.com/general-5 if you wish the Misión Peniel staff to decide on the best gift. You can also contribute by mailing a check to the mission, noting the "Christmas Joy-Drive" designation. Their address is 208 Boston Avenue, PO Box 1204, Immokalee, Florida 34143.



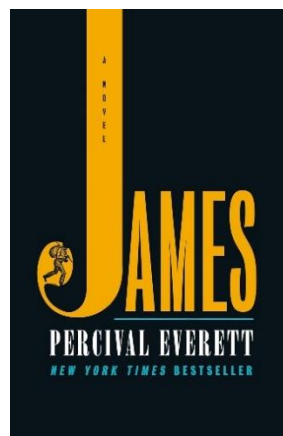
January 23, 2025



February 27, 2025



March 27, 2025



April 24, 2025


Covenant's "Leisure" Time Book Club's Upcoming books and meetings:

- There will not be any official book club meeting in December because of the timing of the holidays.
- Thursday, January 23, 2025 at 11AM is "**Solito: A Memoir**" by Javier Zamora (2023) 416 pp. Our library will have *one* book in English y uno libro en Español.
- Thursday, February 27, 2025 at 11:00AM: "**The Women**" by Kristen Hannah (2024) 480 pp.
- Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 11:00AM: "**The Little Liar**" by Mitch Albom (2023) 328 pp.
- Thursday, April 24, 2025 at 11:00AM: "**James: A Novel**" by Percival Everett (2024) 320 pp.

LIBRARY NEWS

We still need volunteers to help check out books and puzzles in our library on Sunday mornings, before and after the worship service. You can sign up for just one Sunday each month. Bookworms are hired on the spot!

~Beverly Campbell campbell.beverly@gmail.com



Many of us receive mailed catalogs this time of year. If you don't want to receive them, before recycling, call the company with your customer number in hand and unsubscribe. If we all do this think of the trees we will save! Trees benefits include carbon capture, oxygen production, cooling from shade, pollutant absorption, and biodiversity restoration.

Shop This Year at Covenant's Alternative Christmas Market!

This is Covenant's 10th year offering an alternative "shopping" marketplace. In it, you can give a gift to a family member or friend by contributing in their name to one of our missions.

On Sunday, December 8th, "gift-giving" tables will be set up in our courtyard, displaying information about the local and global organizations we support. You can then choose one – or more – non-profit organizations for your donation.

The organizations you may support are:

- Covenant's "Together We Grow" Garden
- Misión Peniel, (pictured below is Marifrans Castillo, head of the Misión)
- El Fuerte Presbyterian Church
- Cultivate Abundance
- the INASMUCH Foster Child Program
- Lee Interfaith for Empowerment and
- The Community Cooperative Soup Kitchen

If you cannot shop on December 8th, you are welcome to bring a donation gift into the office or mail in your completed order form to the church. Order forms will be available at the market.

Merry Alternative Christmas is sponsored by Covenant's Mission Committee. Help spread the spirit of the season across our local and world communities!!



Marifrans Castillo is head of Misión Peniel, an important service supporting Immokalee's farmworkers. To support, Misión Peniel, stop by her table!

Linda Nelson, the mastermind of Covenant's "Together We Grow" Community Garden, will be available to talk about this mission.



The Rev. Rebecca "Becky" Schwandt led Worship on November 24, 2024. The service was followed by a Congregational Meeting to elect and approve the Terms of Call for her to become Covenant's new Pastor/Head of Staff. *Welcome, Pastor Becky!*





YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Thank you to our volunteers for helping set up and serve food at various receptions. Interested? Come join in!



Psst!

This is your chance to volunteer

with an excellent group of people and make new friends. Our Fellowship, Presbyterian Women, Worship, Missions, and Concert Series committees (and many more) are a large part of our church functions. If you have been thinking about signing up to volunteer but have not had a chance yet **now is the time!!**



JANUARY Birthdays

- 01 Marti Francis
- 04 Chuck Tebbetts
Laurie Ward
Megan Sprung
- 05 DeAnne Sawyer
- 06 Helen King
- 07 Joan Cady
- 09 Bill Deters
Joan Halpern
Connie Burkert
- 10 Meg Hawthorne
- 11 Don Berglund
- 14 Mary Callaway
Haley Sprung
- 18 Dorothy Campbell
- 19 Frank Mann, Jr.
- 20 Barb Sheets
- 25 Sara Hamilton
- 27 Steve Callaway
Susan Jones
Mark Huff
Chelsea Carter
- 29 Ian Mann

Feliz Aniversario 66
Iglesia Presbiteriana
Reformada en Cárdenas
"El Fuerte"

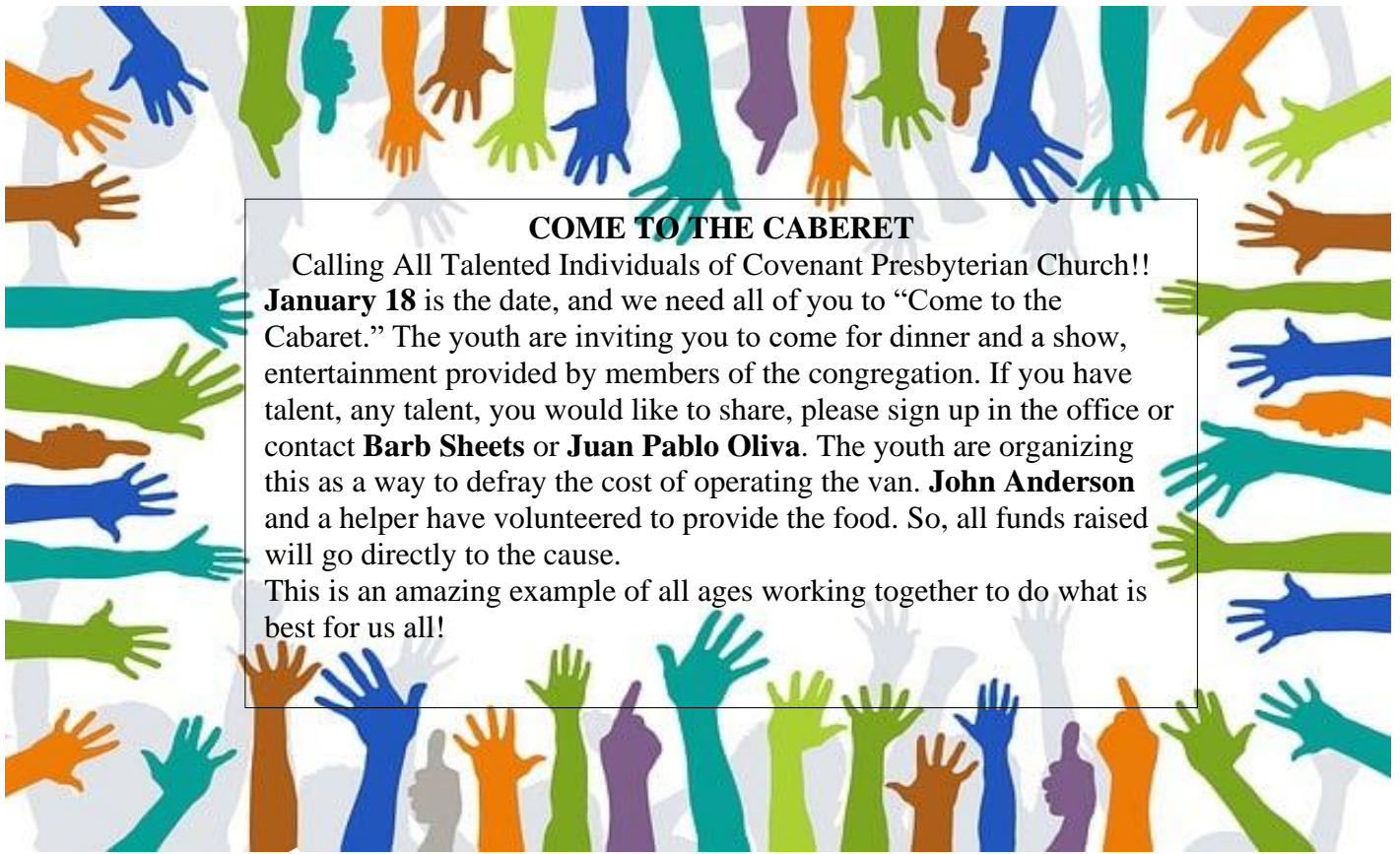
*Jesús es el camino, la
verdad y la vida.*
Juan 14:6

Hace 66 años las puertas de nuestra Iglesia se abrieron para todo aquel dispuesto a amar, hacer el bien y seguir las enseñanzas de Jesús , y hoy: aún lo están.
¡Gracias Dios!



JANUARY Anniversaries

- 03 Scott & Deborah Maurer
- 04 Roz & Wilson Wheeler
- 13 Elizabeth & Jason Birkby
- 20 Charlie & Sass Edwards



COME TO THE CABERET

Calling All Talented Individuals of Covenant Presbyterian Church!! **January 18** is the date, and we need all of you to “Come to the Cabaret.” The youth are inviting you to come for dinner and a show, entertainment provided by members of the congregation. If you have talent, any talent, you would like to share, please sign up in the office or contact **Barb Sheets** or **Juan Pablo Oliva**. The youth are organizing this as a way to defray the cost of operating the van. **John Anderson** and a helper have volunteered to provide the food. So, all funds raised will go directly to the cause. This is an amazing example of all ages working together to do what is best for us all!



Presbyterian Women will be hosting an after church gathering on **Sunday, January 19**. All those who wish to participate, bring in your favorite chili recipe in a crockpot to Heflin Hall before Worship. This will be the first Sunday with our new Pastor, so plan to join in the fun and fellowship. Any questions, contact **Ellen Moore** at: ellebmoore@gmail.com.

Have you cleaned house yet for the holidays? Do you need to declutter? Do we have a deal for you! PW Women and the Youth group (youth proceeds will go for upkeep of the church van) will be sponsoring a churchwide Treasure Sale on **Saturday, January 25, 8:00 – 1:00**. We will be accepting household goods, home décor, jewelry, and accessories (such as purses, totes, wallets), baby items, toys and games, books, tools, etc. If you have questions, ask **Ellen Moore** ellebmoore@gmail.com or Barb Sheets sheets5barb@aol.com.



Covenant Presbyterian Church
Biannual Treasure Sale
January 25 – 8:00 – 1:00



CHANCEL CHOIR PRACTICING FOR THE UPCOMING CHRISTMAS CONCERT.

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE MUSIC MINISTRY AT COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH!



Covenant's Concert Series

Historical High Brass Ensemble

Friday, January 3, 2025

7:30 pm
Sanctuary

Free Concert

2439 McGregor Blvd
Fort Myers, FL 33901



Covenant's Concert Series



Friday, January 17, 2025
7:30 p.m. - Sanctuary

Fred Moyer

Jazz Trio and Classical Piano

Free Admission

Covenant Presbyterian Church – 2439 McGregor Blvd.
Ft. Myers, FL 33901



Covenant's Concert Series

Friday, January 31, 2025
7:30 p.m. - Sanctuary

Gabriel Martins

Cello

Free Admission

Covenant Presbyterian Church – 2439 McGregor Blvd.
Ft. Myers, FL 33901



Christmas Concert
December 13, 2024, 7:30 p.m.

Southwest Florida Historical Brass Ensemble
January 3, 2025 7:30 p.m.

Fred Moyer Jazz Trio
January 17, 2024, 7:30 p.m.

Gabriel Martines, Cello
January 31, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Astralis Trio
February 14, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Juan Pablo & Friends
March 15, 2025 3:30 p.m.
Informal – Courtyard

Spring Concert
March 28, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

FREE ADMISSION TO ALL CONCERTS



Covenant Presbyterian Church
2439 McGregor Blvd. Fort Myers, FL 33901
Phone: 239 334 8937 Website: www.covpcf.com

CONCERT SERIES 2024 - 2025



**BOBBY VAN DEUSEN TRIO
NOVEMBER 8, 2024**



Merry
Christmas
and a
Happy
New Year



www.christianwallpaperfree.com



COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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