



February 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:

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." This is the line that is common to all of the Epistles from Romans to Philemon (and a few times here or there in later letters). Sometimes the phrasing may be a little shorter, sometimes it may be a little longer. But grace to you and peace is offered as a salutation each and every time.

The next sentence was often one of thanksgiving. "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world," (Romans 1:8). "I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you," (Philippians 1:3-4). "In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints," (Colossians 1:3-4).

Both of these statements seem so appropriate for my first newsletter article as the pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church. Like Paul and the other New Testament letter writers, I want to offer grace and peace to each of you. While I know that not everything in our individual or collective lives feel 100% grace-filled or peaceful, it is my prayer that in our faith together this church can be a place where all feel welcomed and loved - from our oldest or longest-standing member to our youngest or newest. Grace to all of you and peace.

The next thing in my head is not a wish or hope for us, but a fact - something that has already started and continues to occur. I give thanks to God. I give thanks to God for each of you and I give thanks for the mission and ministry of this church in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. While I'm not sure I can truthfully claim CPC's faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world (yet), I can say it is a faith that is proclaimed strongly and proudly among us and our partners in ministry. We simply have to continue, in our prayers and in our actions, to be the kind of church who are the hands and feet of Christ's body in the world. Much like the churches in the New Testament Letters.

Another common aspect of the early churches is their desire to be together for meals, for fellowship, and for service. In my first three weeks, I have spent a good deal of time talking with our elders, deacons, and staff. We have wonderful leadership at Covenant. But, one of the things each group mentioned is that it would be helpful to have a few more folks on their committees. The Deacons are looking for folks who would be willing to help restart

... Continued on next page

SESSION

Class of 2025

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

Class of 2026

Pat Arner
Madeleine Doran
Richard Shafer
Rosemary Wallace

Class of 2027

John Anderson
Mary Lee Mann
Anna Siemen

Rev. Becky Schwandt

Moderator / Pastor

DIACONATE

Class of 2025

Tamera Bilicic,
Moderator
Jane Kaserman
Hank Sawyer

Class of 2026

Allan Engler
Beth Richter
Karen Tasman
Connie Willhite

Class of 2027

Connie Burkert
Linda Nelson
Karen Viele

TRUSTEES

Victor Arias (2025)
Wilson Wheeler (2026)
Beverly Beardsley (2027)

COVENANT MATTERS!

Edited by Deanna Gordon
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... from the Pastor's heart, continued

the Fellowship Committee. Do you already help with decorating, preparing, or cleaning up after church events and memorial services? Perhaps you would be willing to work with the three Deacons hoping to get that group up and running again.

Perhaps you have a heart for new or newish members and helping them get connected to the wonderful groups or programs we have to offer; or maybe you love our church so much you find yourself telling others about the work of Christ happening through Covenant. If you fit into one of these categories, the Session is hoping to breathe new life into the Membership, Evangelism, and Communication Committee. Something crucial to the life of our congregation.

The lectionary reading for our first Sunday together reminded us of all the gifts we are given and how we are called to publicly share those gifts. Remember, that it is only together that we can continue to be the Body of Christ, faithfully serving our members, friends, mission commitments, and of course, our Lord Jesus Christ.

I look forward to serving in ministry with you as we share grace and peace and thanksgiving in and among the community of Ft Myers.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Becky



February Birthdays



- 02 Marion Vale
- Lydia Willock
- 03 Mary Kellner
- Mary Ellen Scherzer
- 07 Janice Reid
- 08 Gary Brothers
- 09 Jim Johnson
- 12 Chuck Lambing
- Libby Jones
- 13 Carol Costigan
- 15 Beverly Campbell
- 19 Chardee Stiles
- David Viele
- Deborah Maurer
- TJ Singer
- 23 Amanda Chazal
- 24 Pam Coyne
- 27 Karen Neubert
- 28 Doc White
- Caren Auriemma

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- February 14 Concert ~ Astralis Trio
- February 18 Pine Manor Mobile Pantry
- February 20 "Leasure" Time Book Club at 11AM-Library
Presbytery ~ Community Presbyterian Church
in Englewood, FL
- February 23 Installation Service of Pastor Becky Schwandt
and Reception to follow in Heflin Hall
- February 28 Misión Peniel
- March 1 InAsMuch Event Day
- March 15 Concert ~ Juan Pablo & Friends



DO YOU REMEMBER
"Gathering
In His Name"?

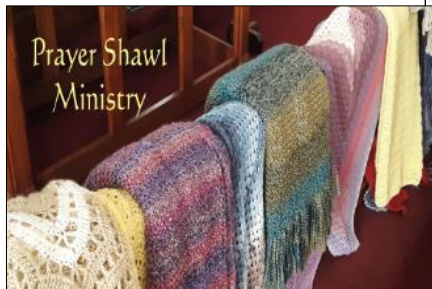
It will start back up in March. The groups gathered at various homes for dinner. Interested? Sign up to be a host or a guest. The sign-up sheet will be located at the Welcome Center on Sunday mornings. It's a great way to get to know other people that attend the same church as you do. For more information, see Linda Nelson.

MISSION OPPORTUNITY ~

Members of Covenant Presbyterian Church will be volunteering at Misión Peniel in Immokalee on the fourth Friday of each month from 11a.m. to 1p.m. Some of the members of the group carpool from the church parking lot at 10a.m. If you are interested in participating, please contact Chris Larson at celarson582@gmail.com or Linda Nelson at chipswessner@yahoo.com



We will meet Tuesday,
February 25, 2025 at
10AM in room F207.





Our Annual Congregational Meeting was held on Sunday, January 26, 2025, immediately following worship to review the Annual Report. The approved budget was presented and the slate of Members at Large for the 2025 Nominating Committee were elected. The Annual Report is available in the church office if you did not receive a copy.

Thank you to our outgoing Elders and Deacons. Their last official day in office was January 19, 2025.

Thank you to David Beardsley, Beverly Grady, Barbara O'Neil, Dorothy Mae Wert, and Patricia Zimmerman for graciously giving of your time and talents to Covenant Presbyterian Church and your service as an Elder or a Deacon.

LIBRARY NEWS

We still need volunteers to help check out books and puzzles in our library before and after the worship service on Sunday mornings! Sign up for just one Sunday each month.

Bookworms are hired on the spot!

-Beverly Campbell campbell.beverly@gmail.com

Thank You!

It is with a heavy heart that we say thank you to all who have traveled with us, the 12-year journey of our beloved Kris Hayward. Some have prayed for him and his family since the beginning; others joined the fight more recently. Your support and prayers have helped us get through this. Thank you to those who attended his Celebration of Life. Please know that we are all doing well, knowing that Kris is no longer suffering and as Kasey said, he is doing backflips in heaven.

Barb and Kent Sheets

Meredith (Merrie) White joined the Church Triumphant on January 30, 2025. There will be A Service of Witness to the Resurrection on **February 8, 2025 at 11AM** at Covenant Presbyterian Church. Reception will follow in Heflin Hall. Please pray for Doc and their family and friends during this time of bereavement.

Do you like to cook?

Would you like to participate in **Shared Plate**? We prepare dishes for members needing a helping hand. Please contact Linda Nelson to join the team.

chipswessner@yahoo.com



Thank you, David for volunteering to be our photographer at Covenant. We have enjoyed all of your photos. We love the opportunity that you have provided for us to use them in different areas and give us great memories. If you see him..... smile. He might have his camera pointed at you!



Goodbye to Tom and Diane Means. You have deepened our joy and lightened our grief. We will certainly miss your smiling faces. We will be praying for you as you move back to be close to family and long-time friends. Safe travels!

VOLUNTEER!

Join the Fellowship Team! We help decorate for Memorial and other various receptions; prepare dinners and luncheons. We also assist serving the food and cleaning up afterwards. Come join the fun in the kitchen!



Spending \$ + Using energy. In Caring for Creation, we need to save energy, right? Be conservative, if not thrifty, with energy and resources in general. Every time we spend money, we have spent energy. We buy groceries, energy is spent on production, transportation and sales. Buy a service (TV, internet, or going to the hair salon) all take energy. Here are some ideas: don't waste food, read a book, unplug, go an extra week between hair appointments, buy fewer items. Use less, need less, and save energy. "Use it up, wear it out, make do or do without." After all, what did Jesus have but the clothes on his back.

Our church office kitchen is in need of a new or gently used refrigerator. We use this refrigerator for the employees and many volunteers that work around the church, as well as for the receptions and activities held in the courtyard. If you would like to donate a new (or gently used) refrigerator, please speak to Pastor Becky Schwandt.

Our Worship service on January 12 included a Renewal of Baptism with Rev. Aimee Goldmeyer. It was a touching moment for many.



Dedication of Heflin Hall ~
Sunday, December 22, 2024

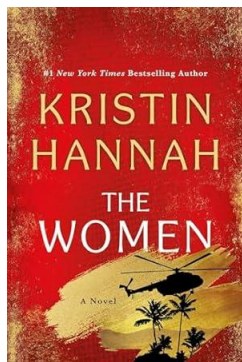
In honor of Dean & Barbara Heflin and in celebration of their 50 plus years of tireless and dedicated service to God and Covenant Presbyterian Church.

CALLING ALL 2025 GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS! Scholarship award applications are being accepted now! Covenant has three scholarships available for graduating high school seniors to use toward tuition to continue their education. Recipients will also have the opportunity to apply for additional funds to help defray the cost of required class materials. Below are the descriptions of each scholarship.

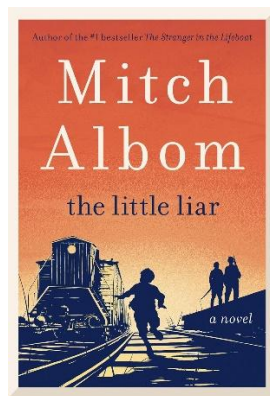
1. The Claude and Alice Allen Memorial Scholarship: Lee County man or woman that intends to pursue higher education at a private or public institution.
2. The David G. Robinson Music Scholarship: designed to assist seniors who have been involved in the church's music program. It acknowledges hard work and pursuit of music education in the future.
3. The Robert Shafer Scholarship: designed to assist a senior with exemplary Christian values. If you would like an application please email RichardHs28@gmail.com

ALL APPLICATIONS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN APRIL 15, 2025 in order to be considered.

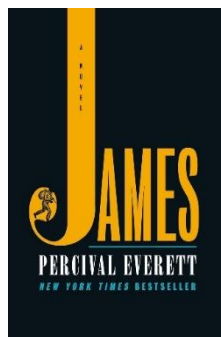




February 20, 2025



March 20, 2025



April 17, 2025

Covenant’s “Leisure” Time Book Club Is Switching from the 4th Thursday back to the 3^d Thursday for Our Meetings!

As of February 2025, the THIRD THURSDAY of the month is our new Book Club Day, same time (11AM). Hopefully, this change in week will be OK with all you bookworms! We try our best to keep the book discussion meeting to one hour.

Our book for February is one of the rare novels that everyone has raved about. “*The Women* by Kristin Hannah follows Frances “Frankie” McGrath, a young nurse who serves during the American conflict in Vietnam in the late 1960s. Raised in privilege, 20-year-old Frankie is eager to find purpose and quickly grows from a naïve woman to a skilled Operating Room (OR) nurse. However, the horrors of war make acclimation to civilian life challenging. Through Frankie, Hannah hopes to elucidate the lesser-known women of the Vietnam War.” We hope that those who have enjoyed reading this author and this novel can join us February 20 at 11AM.

Upcoming Books and Meeting Dates:

- Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.: “**The Women**” by Kristen Hannah (2024) 480 pp.
- Thursday, March 20, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.: “**The Little Liar**” by Mitch Albom (2023) 328 pp.
- Thursday, April 17, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.: “**James: A Novel**” by Percival Everett (2024) 320 pp.

13TH ANNUAL INASMUCH

Save the date: March 1st is InAsMuch Event Day! This is a multi-denominational volunteer day of service for people in our community in need. Your gifts, talents, and time can be used in many ways:

- ❖ Blessing bags for the homeless
- ❖ Creating Kindness cards for nursing homes
- ❖ Free laundry service for individuals
- ❖ Minor home repairs
- ❖ Landscape mulching
- ❖ Bag of Hope for Foster children

Covenant has led this project for 13 years. We began by filling 50 bags with gently used clothing. Today, we fill 270 bags with all new items, sizes newborn to 12 years old. When a child is removed from a dangerous situation, they are frightened and only take what they are wearing. Our bags are filled with basic necessities including a dress outfit, 2-3 playsets, pajamas, underwear, toiletries, and socks. Offering as much love and comfort that we can offer means a snuggle fleece throw or quilt, a plush-lovey toy and books.

We will be asking for your support and answering any questions in the church courtyard after church during February. Also, help is needed in sorting and prepacking during February 24-28.

Thank you for your enthusiastic support!

Remember to save the date of March 1st and join us for InAsMuch.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW PASTOR!



Our new pastor has hit the ground running. **Pastor Becky Schwandt** joined our church team on Monday, 1/13/25. She has been attending as many meetings as she can fit into her schedule and looks forward to meeting all of us. Her Installation service will be held Sunday, February 23, 2025 at 4pm. Make sure to mark your calendars to attend this special worship service and reception. Please join us in giving her a warm welcome.





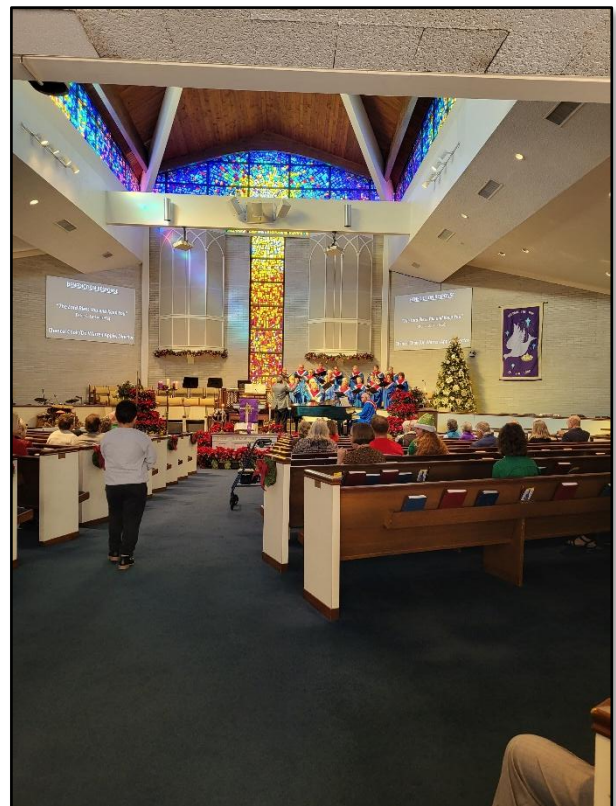
A Good Time Was Had By All!

What a fun night for about 60 folks who came out for the Cabaret/All Church Talent Show. This was a fund-raising event to provide funds to maintain the church van, initiated by our youth. We received overwhelming support, and we thank you! If you missed it, never fear. There will be an opportunity again soon.



SAYING OUR GOODBYES

**PASTOR BILL'S LAST DAY AS OUR
INTERIM PASTOR FOLLOWED BY A
GOING AWAY RECEPTION.
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2024**



**GOING AWAY
RECEPTION FOR
PASTOR BILL AND KAREN
DECEMBER 22, 2024**



**CHRISTMAS CONCERT
DECEMBER 13, 2024**



**HISTORICAL HIGH BRASS
ENSEMBLE
JANUARY 3, 2025**



**FRED MOYER JAZZ TRIO
CLASSICAL AND JAZZ
JANUARY 17, 2025**



**GABRIEL MARTINS
JANUARY 31, 2025**



✦ ✦ ✦
ASTRALIS
CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

— PRESENTS —

FANTASIE D'AMOUR



Angela Massey
FLUTE



Kris Marshall
TRUMPET



Caroline Owen
PIANO

FEBRUARY 14, 2025

COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2439 MCGREGOR BLVD
FORT MYERS, FL 33901

7:30 PM

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CONCERT SERIES 2024-2025
UPCOMING CONCERTS:

Astralis Trio ~ February 14, 2025, 7:30 pm

Juan Pablo & Friends ~ March 15, 2025, 3:30 pm

Spring Concert ~ March 28, 2025, 7:30 pm

FREE ADMISSION TO ALL CONCERTS

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD
that He gave His
Only Begotten Son
THAT WHOSOEVER
believeth in Him
SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE
everlasting
life.
JOHN 3:16



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