

Please click here to view Covenants LIVE STREAM Worship Service on YouTube for **Sunday, December 12 at 10am:**
<https://www.youtube.com/cpcathens>

THE COVENANTER
December 12, 2021

Member NE GEORGIA Presbytery,
Synod of the South Atlantic, General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA)



MEALS ON WHEELS is received for the month of December and at the Christmas Eve service. Please consider sponsoring persons who receive a daily meal through the “Meals on Wheels” program. The annual cost (including food & expenses) to provide meals for one person is \$2,000.00. Last year’s offering enabled Covenant to support 7.5 older Athenians for this year. Did you know: *Many of our Meals on Wheels clients are vulnerable adults, living alone. This leaves them at an increased risk for medical emergencies, falls and other accidents. Our Meals on Wheels volunteers are trained to ensure that a watchful eye accompanies each meal delivery. Volunteers immediately notify ACCA staff, family members and/or emergency personnel in the case of an emergency.* The congregation is encouraged to give generously. Consider making a special gift in honor or in memory of a loved one.

Come
Worship
With Us

In its meeting earlier this week, the Session voted to lift the attendance cap on Sunday morning worship. First and foremost, we believe that the adults who participate in person on Sunday mornings are vaccinated, and we will continue to require masks, until further notice. Those are the two most effective steps we can take to protect the in-person worshippers. *Continued on page 3*



Once in our world, a stable had something in it that was bigger than our whole world.
- C.S. Lewis-

As is our beautiful tradition at Covenant, we will celebrate Christmas Eve with a family-friendly service at **5:30 PM**, on Friday, December 24. Communion will be served to all who wish to participate. All are welcome in this place and at our table. Masks are required for adults and school-age children.

'tis the
SEASON

Please join The Fellowship Ministry Team for some holiday fun!

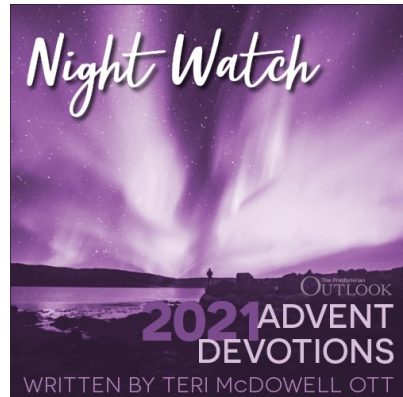
Thursday, December 16th at 6:30 pm. Walk the UGA Botanical Garden Winter Wonderlights together! You can read about the event and purchase your ticket for the 6:30 pm start time at: <https://botgarden.uga.edu/wonderlights/>. Parking is available at the UGA soccer/softball complex with shuttle service to the Botanical Gardens.

See Kay Brooks if you have any questions.

PRAYER CONCERNS: Nancy Omdahl recovering from surgery on Tuesday, which went well, now waiting on the pathology report. She will resume chemo later this month, hopefully; DeLynda Tweedell's dad, Larry Davis has aortic valve stenosis plus his lung cancer has returned. He is on oxygen and waiting on more tests to be done and prayers for his wife Clarice who is his care giver; family and friends of Wayne Roberts, Delynda Tweedell's former boss, who passed away on November 14 with prostate cancer; Robyn Malone's dear friend, Celia Ansley, recovering from surgery and now in rehab; Pauline Marshall at Highland Hills #112; the food insecure and homeless as the holiday season approaches; and our nation.

Daily Bible Readings December 13—19

Monday	I Kings 19: 4-8
Tuesday	Psalms 3: 1-6
Wednesday	Psalms 23
Thursday	Psalms 121
Friday	Luke 21: 37
Saturday	John 9: 1-5
Sunday	Matthew 25: 1- 13



The **Worship Ministry Team** would like to encourage everyone to submit **Concerns and Celebrations**, and **Announcements** to Karen Wetherington at kwetherington@covpresathens.org or 706-548-2756, each week, for placement in the **Covenant**. We have listened to many people raise the issue of how much time we devote to these important additions to our service. For that reason we ask that you help us move these important additions to the **Covenant**, so that our services may end in a timely manner. Let's all give it a good try. Please submit those to Karen by Wednesday, each week. It will continue to be the pastor's discretion to highlight concerns, celebrations, and announcements that he or she feels necessary during worship. *Thank you from the WMT.*

TO MY (HARD TO SAY *MY* INSTEAD OF *OUR*, BUT, FOR ME, COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WILL ALWAYS BE *OUR* BELOVED CHURCH FAMILY) -my heart is so full of love and thanks and appreciation for so many who have done so much to help Jim and me walk through the dark valley of his cancer. You were with us when he started the Keytruda treatment in June. You rejoiced with us when PET scan 2 in September showed cancer cells were shrinking. And then, when PET scan 3 November 16 gave us the bad/sad news that what we thought were side effects of the drug were in actuality the spreading cancer, you enfolded us in deep prayer and care while at the same time respecting our family's need for time to say good-bye to a husband of 63 years, a father, a grandfather, a brother. Jim was not afraid to die – he was ready to cross to the other side into the spiritual arms of a loving God – where David, Stacey, and other beloveds were there to welcome him. He was a good man. He touched so many lives. I can hear God saying to him “Well done, good and faithful servant...Enter into the joy of your Lord.” I now ask for your continued prayers as we all learn that he is gone from us but will remain forever in our hearts, My love & thanks to all of you – *Jere B*

Library Corner: *Fifty Sandwiches*

Justin Wilder Doering learned that 3.5 million people in America experience homelessness annually. His response was to take a three-and-a-half month, 34-city, 14,000-mile journey across the country, interviewing people who were homeless and wished to share their stories. It includes many photographs. This is a beautiful book you will never forget. To learn more, visit FiftySandwiches.com. Our library's copy can be found in Bay E, Shelf 4. –*Valerie Stone*



Folks - Volunteers to open and close the building for Sunday morning worship now are being sought. This is a function of the Worship as well as Building & Grounds ministry teams.

Primarily this involves unlocking the doors to worship space, turning on lights, setting HVAC controls an hour before the service; and closing down these facilities about 30 minutes after worship.

Contact the church office or Rich Reaves, 706-248-2819, to sign-up and for further details.

Speaking in Celebration, the B&G MT commends the following volunteers as weekly Grounds Stewards each month.

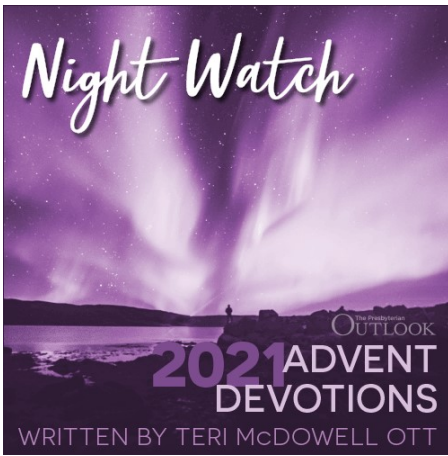
First Monday week = Katy Terry & Chris Wilson; Second Monday week = Don Bower & Alex Clark

Third Monday week = Phil Hale & Phil Koehler; Fourth Monday week = Susan & Randy Parish

Fifth Monday week = Ellen & Dan Stoneburner

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1—We will continue to monitor the safety guidelines for all who enter our church. We are watching the behavior of the newest Covid variant, Omicron, and if we need to modify our best practices we will absolutely do so.

We have not chosen to return to our practice of passing the offering plates. While the data show the transmission of the virus is most prominently by particles in the air, we made a decision some time ago to reduce contact with others by keeping the offering plates in the back of the Worship Center, where they are in plain sight. Thanks to all for your faithful commitment to monetary gifts, as well as your gifts of time and talent. It is by God's grace that we are so abundantly blessed. Hope to see you Sunday morning...in person, or on your favorite YouTube screen!



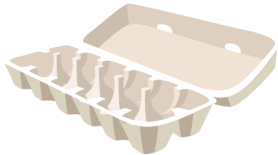
Hope is hard to find during a long pandemic. Dark feelings of grief, loss, anger, betrayal and despair plague our souls and our communities. As the light fades and the evenings grow long this December, the season of Advent reminds us that God is with us in the night. We can see and observe God at work in the dark, marvel at the beauty of creation lit by moon and stars, and rest from the day's labor. Darkness is often associated with evil and suffering, but a devotional exploration of "night" bears witness to Christ's Good News. Exploring biblical happenings that occur at night – visions, angel visits, prisoners set free – we will move through this Advent season as watchful disciples, keeping vigil for the One who is promised to arrive like a thief in the night.

Please email Karen at kwetherington@covpresathens.org if you would like a hard copy of this years Advent Devotional. [Click on this link](#) to access the devotional online.

Meet and Greet for Kira and Dana Waters Let's welcome and get to know Dana and Kira! The Fellowship Ministry Team is organizing in-person gatherings for coffee, lunch, or light supper with approximately 10 – 12 individuals. Please go to the Sign Up Genius at [this link](#)! to find a time and event that works for you.



EGG CARTONS! EGG CARTONS!



The Athens Emergency Food Bank are still in need of egg cartons and brown paper grocery bags and heavy duty plastic bags.

Thank you *Covenant* and may we all have enough!

Please click on this link <https://www.covpresathens.org/documents/session-minutes/> for the session minutes. When you scroll down you will see links to earlier minutes. If you would like minutes from 2020 please let me know at kwetherington@covpresathens.org.



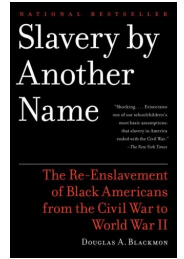
The Worship Center will be graced with beautiful poinsettias for the Christmas holidays. If you would like to purchase one in honor or memory of someone please contact Karen at kwetherington@covpresathens.org or office number 706-548-2756. They are **\$15.00** each. (due to price increase) You can mail a check or put it in the offering plate. Please indicate in the memo portion of the check Poinsettias and indicate who they are in honor or memory of. Thank you!

HOW TO GIVE. There is a new online giving option through the Presbyterian Foundation at this link <http://covpresathens.org/wp/contributions/>. Or you can click on this link www.covpresathens.org and click on online giving. And as always you can mail your check to the church office or give in person. Thank you for your faithful giving!

FINANCIAL REPORT
FISCAL YEAR TO DATE - Week #23
Anticipated Pledges — \$188,759.39
Actual Pledges — \$200,953.38
Thank you for your faithful giving!
Thornwell—\$2,052.75

SOCIAL JUSTICE BOOK CLUB

Thursday, December 16 at 7pm we will begin our new book study on the book *Slavery by Another Name* by Douglas Blackmon. There will probably be one session. Prof. Blackmon will be joining our group to discuss his influential work. It will be awesome! December 12 at 7pm. Look for your Zoom invitation the day before.



Church School Classes via ZOOM!

Upper Room Class

Sunday, December 12 at **11:30am**, James Malone hosts and different class members facilitate the discussion of the weekly chapter in *The Present Word*. If you would like to participate, please contact James at gillbillvolume1@yahoo.com, to receive your ZOOM invitation.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Journey Class—Sunday, December 12, **8:30am – 9:30am**, Steve Rathbun hosts and different class volunteers facilitate discussion using Isabel Wilkerson's book, *Caste – the Origins of Our Discontent*. If you would like to participate, please contact Steve at rathbun@uga.edu, to receive your ZOOM invitation.

Groups Meeting at Covenant:

(these small groups may or may not be meeting at Covenant at this time)

Sunday, Monday, Tuesday—Campus Kitchen (UGA),

Monday—Scouts at 6:30pm; Bells of Northeast Georgia Choir 7pm,

Tuesday- More Than Four Quartet 9:30am—11:00am; (2nd Tues of each month) Stamp Club 7pm in Fellowship Hall

Wednesday—Covenant Handbell Choir 6pm—7:15pm; 12 step group 7pm (downstairs)

Thursday– Knitters & Knotters 2pm (conf. room); 12 Step Group 7pm(conf. room)

Saturday—(upper room) 12 Step Group 10:30am; 11/20 UGA Campus Kitchen at 12 noon

Sunday (upper room) 12 Step Group 12:30pm; 11/21 UGA Campus Kitchen at 12 noon

Knitter and Knotters –

Thursday, December 16

(Please be sure and wear your mask)

Join us for a good time of fellowship and fun!

Covenant Church Office Hours

Monday – closed

Tuesday – 10am – 12 noon

Wednesday – closed (*working from home*)

Thursday & Friday 10am – 4pm

Designated Opportunities to Give
Covenant Presbyterian Church
2021 - 2022

Dear Members and Friends of Covenant:

As the Christmas season approaches with the New Year 'just around the corner' practicing generosity to help others brings delight to our hearts and to the holiday season. Someone has said, "The best way to catch the spirit of Christmas is to give it to someone else."

To help us restore life-giving balance, Covenant offers alternatives, so that giving can once again become the sign of the season which celebrates the gift of God's serving love, born in a stable in Bethlehem long ago. Below are descriptions of the special opportunities to give.

On the back of this page are other benevolent opportunities to support along with a list of special offerings received during the year for your planning. Make your check payable to: Covenant Presbyterian Church and designate how you want your contribution to be used.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE DURING ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

Meals on Wheels - to be received in the month of December and at the Christmas Eve service sponsor persons who receive a daily meal through the "Meals on Wheels" program. The annual cost (including food & expenses) to provide meals for one person is \$2,000.00. Last year's offering enabled Covenant to support 7.5 older Athenians for this year. The congregation is encouraged to give generously.

Consider making a special gift in honor or in memory of a loved one.

COVENANT'S SPECIAL FUNDS

Benevolence Fund - to assist members and neighbors of the church in a crisis.

Bowden Church Vocation Fund – to provide financial assistance toward the education of members who feel called to full-time employment in ministry and to provide support to those who are mission volunteers through PCUSA or specific ministries of outreach supported by Covenant.

Memorial Fund - set up to receive gifts in memory of loved ones to be used for or through Covenant Church in consultation with the family of the deceased.

SPECIAL SEASONAL OFFERINGS

January - Joy Gift - to assist retired ministers by supplementing Medicare premiums and to assist minority Presbyterian colleges.

February - Bowden Church Vocation Fund - to provide financial assistance toward the education of members who feel called to full-time employment in ministry and to provide support to those who are mission volunteers through PCUSA or specific ministries of outreach supported by Covenant.

(continued on Page 7)

DESIGNATED OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE—continued from page 7

Easter - *One Great Hour of Sharing* - to combat hunger, disease, and poverty world-wide.

May - *Presbyterian Homes* - to support our homes for older adults in Georgia.

October - *Peacemaking* - to support ministries of peace throughout the world and within the local community.

November - *Thornwell Home and School for Children* - to provide a home and family and schooling for children and youth who would otherwise be homeless.

December – *Meals on Wheels (see front of sheet)*

COMMUNITY MISSIONS

Covenant's Emergency Food Pantry- Each Tuesday, 1 – 4 serving over 100 food insecure neighbors per week, with food that many times helps to bridge the gap between food stamps and/or other assistance and the new job.

Athens Nurses Clinic—The Athens Nurses Clinic is a non-profit 501(c)(3) health care clinic providing free evaluation, treatment, and education for acute and chronic medical and dental conditions to uninsured low-and-no income residents of Athens-Clarke County and the surrounding communities.

Homeless Shelter - ecumenical ministry to provide lodging and food.

The Ark - an ecumenical referral agency which advises and helps those in need.

The Athens Area Emergency Food Bank - ecumenical agency to feed the hungry. (see the Feed My Sheep table)

Jubilee Partners - a community of Christians who provide food, lodging and help for refugees and immigrants.

Habitat for Humanity - ecumenical efforts to build homes for those in need.

Our Daily Bread Community Kitchen - serves meals Monday through Friday for anyone in need. Annually, our program provides more than 75,000 nutritious meals with gracious hospitality to men, women and children in need and offers a gateway to other transformational services. Partnering with more than 70 volunteer groups, our daily bread has served guests in Athens, Georgia since 1989. We are grateful to the many, many guests, volunteers, and donors who have sustained this ministry over the decades!

Project Safe - a shelter or home to provide a refuge of safety, lodging, and community for women who have been abused physically or psychologically.

Family Promise - Athens Area Churches unite to assist homeless families who become guests of the hosting congregation for one week at a time. Donations are used for supplies for overnight lodging and meals. Covenant currently provides services for IHN four times a year.

Covenant's Emergency Food Pantry

Jesus said, "You give them something to eat." *Members, and friends of Covenant have been giving generously of their time and talents to the Emergency Food Pantry. As you can imagine, the need is great.*

Covenant's Emergency Food Pantry Thursdays, 1pm—4pm.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

STAY SAFE—If there is any reason at all that you should NOT physically volunteer-consider the following:

Make a financial donation to the Food Pantry by sending a check to Covenant and write "food pantry" in the subject line. (*You could send it in at the same time you send in your pledge*).

We can use grocery bags (paper or plastic), and small boxes to pack the food. If you call the church, someone could even come out to your car and get it.

If you are able to physically be present as a volunteer:

You can also share the 3-hour time slot with 2 friends!

HOW TO SIGN UP: Please sign up for Covenant Food Pantry!

Here's how it works in 3 easy steps:

1. [Click this link](#) to go to our invitation page on SignUp.com
2. **Enter your email address:** (You will NOT need to register an account on SignUp.com)
3. **Sign up!** Choose your spots - SignUp.com will send you an automated confirmation and reminders. Easy!

Note: *SignUp.com does not share your email address with anyone. If you prefer not to use your email address, please contact me and I can sign you up manually.*

Isaiah 58:10—Feed the hungry and help those in trouble, then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon.

For the month of November Covenant volunteers and staff served 1,624 food insecure neighbors over 4 Thursdays. This includes 803 adults, 578 children, and 248 Senior Adults!

Thank you Covenant and *May We All Have Enough!*