

Please click here to view Covenant's Worship Service on YouTube for
Sunday, Dec 21, 2025 at 11am: <https://www.youtube.com/cpcathens>
Link to the bulletin: <https://www.covpresathens.org/bulletin/>

THE COVENANTER December 21, 2025

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



Dear Covenant Family,

As Christmas arrives and we stand on the edge of a new year, I want to share a word of gratitude for all of you — for the care you extend to one another, for your thoughtful faith, and for the ways you continue to show up with generosity and hope in a complicated world.

At the heart of Christmas is the astonishing claim that God chooses *closeness*. God does not remain distant or abstract, but enters our lives as *Emmanuel* — “*God with us.*” Born into vulnerability, Christ meets us not in strength or certainty, but in the midst of real human life. That is *good news*, especially in seasons when the world feels heavy or unsettled.

As we move into a new year, many of us do so carrying a mixture of anticipation and fatigue, hope and unanswered questions. Whatever you bring with you into this season, know that Covenant is a place where you are not alone. It is truly a *family* in which faith is nurtured, doubts are welcomed, and love is practiced in ordinary, faithful ways. I give thanks for the many quiet acts of kindness, service, and courage that so often go unseen, yet reveal Christ's presence among us.

I also want to say, from the bottom of our hearts, how grateful Lisa and I are for the love you have shown us — in this season and always. Your generosity, prayers, and tangible expressions of care and support have meant more to us than we can simply put into words, and they have been a profound reminder of what it means to belong to a community shaped by grace.

My prayer for you this Christmas is that you may experience the steady peace of God — not a peace that denies the world's pain, but one that holds us within it. And my prayer for us in the year ahead is that we will continue growing into the church God is shaping us to be: a community of welcome, depth, and compassion, rooted in worship and sent out to serve our neighbors with humility and joy.

May the light of Christ shine gently in your life this Christmas, and may the Spirit guide our shared journey in the year to come.

With gratitude and hope,

Pastor Tom



Meals on Wheels Offering—

to be received in the month of December and at the Christmas Eve service to 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 6.8 older Athenians for this year. The congregation is encouraged to give generously. Please mark in the memo portion of your check MOW. Consider making a special gift in honor or memory of a loved one.

Youth Alumni Sunday

Covenant Presbyterian Church, December 28, 2025
Breakfast at 9:30 a.m. and Worship at 11:00 a.m.

Close out the year where so many of your best memories began. Chef Patrick and his team return with their legendary pancake breakfast—fluffy stacks with warm maple syrup, thick-sliced bacon, and fresh fruit. Come hungry. But the real feast? Hearing your stories. We'll pass the mike and catch up on where life has taken you since your days here. Who you've become. What adventures you've experienced. The moments that still make you smile when you think about your time at Covenant.

Please RSVP so we can prepare enough food (though you're welcome either way). After breakfast, join us in the worship center for special music and the chance to reconnect with the people who shaped your early years—the ones you called "Mr." and "Mrs." who remember you when you were young and full of questions.

Some things change. Some things don't. The welcome for you at Covenant? That's the same as it always was.

See you, December 28th!

Brian Herndon, Christian Ed Team herndon.brian1@gmail.com (706-714-1464),
Warren Combs, Worship Team wecombs@gmail.com (706-521-2530)



Join us Wednesday, Dec 24 at
5:30pm for our Christmas Eve
Worship service with
Carols, Communion and
Candle Light.

This time of year offers many opportunities to help others, and so many families need help to share a memorable holiday with their kids. There are a multitude of opportunities for each of us to give to others and one you might consider is Family Promise.

Below are opportunities to give your time or financial support to Family Promise families:

Financially and In-Kind...

1. Donate \$25 Walmart Gift Cards - drop by Resource Center (205 Bray Street, Bldg 100) or mail to PO Box 581 Athens, GA 30603
2. Buy a \$25 Family Promise ornament for your tree or for a gift! <https://www.familypromiseathens.org/events>
3. Donate online: <https://www.familypromiseathens.org/donate-now>
4. Amazon Wish list: https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3FIKASQITIFKK?ref =abls_nvfly_yl
5. Participate or support the Family Promise Holiday party! Join in spreading holiday cheer in our community as Family Promise hosts an afternoon of fun for families. Kids and parents will have the opportunity to "shop" for gifts for the family as well as participate in activities, and get pictures with Santa! Looking for a variety of gifts for different ages/genders including parents. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090F4CA5AA29A4FE3-60650263-family#/>

Volunteering...

1. Volunteers are needed to help with the activities on Monday, December 22nd, from 2 pm - 5pm. We will have a holiday party here at the resource center for families in our program; there are a variety of ways to volunteer on our sign up link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090F4CA5AA29A4FE3-60650263-family#/>
2. December is an open month for the shelter, sign up for an additional meal during the month: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090F4CA5AA29A4FE3-47300007-2024#/>

IN OUR PRAYERS: Lauren & Michael Capie in the passing of their father, Bill Capie in Florida; Amy Baer and family in the passing of her father, Kenny Tillman; John Wilkins' and family in the passing of his brother in law, Jim Negro; Pastor Tom's mother, Becky Buchanan recovering from a kidney infection; Austin Cooper, friend of Brian and Valerie Stone, with a cancer diagnosis; Kirk Blumenshine, Ansley Tweedell's uncle in law, at and having rehab; Ann Anderson at home; Heide Wiegel recovering from hip surgery after a fall; Michael Shaffer a neighbor with health issues; Raquel Bartra with serious illness; DeLynda Tweedell's sister, Brandy going through a difficult time; Bob Placek in skilled nursing at PVA and Joyce at home; our country.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Isaiah 7: 10-16, Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19, Romans 1: 1-7,
Matthew 1: 18-25, Titus 2: 11-14, Luke 2: 1-14 (15-20),
Isaiah 52: 7-10, Psalm 98,
Hebrews 1: 1-4, John 1: 1-14

Financial Summary for Week #24

Anticipated Pledges— \$ 205,992.928

Pledges Received— \$ 213,543.73

Thank you Covenant for your faithful giving!

Meals on Wheels: \$ 8,018.25



Congratulations to Regan Colestock & Benjamin Leimkuehler on the birth of their son on December 13. The happy couple live in Atlanta. Proud great grandparents are Sharon and Alan Edwards.

Athens Area Emergency Food Bank is still in need of brown paper bags. Please put them on the table as you enter the gathering room. (please no egg cartons) Thank you!



THE FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY TEAM MEETING

Based on feedback and not wanting to throw another thing out there pre-Christmas,

we decided to have our **Fellowship Ministry Team meeting on Friday Jan 2 at 12 PM.**

It gives us a chance to enjoy the Holidays and hit the ground running in the New Year.

We will meet in the Library and bring a bag lunch if you would like. Thanks everyone!! Cheers,

Rebecca Silver 706-207-0118
Fellowship Ministry Team Chair

Caly DePalma 865-599-3187
2025 Co-Chair of the Fellowship Ministry Team

SAVE THE DATE, 1/4/26

The Fellowship team sends wishes for a very Merry Christmas. After the holidays, we sadly must take down the decorations and our tree in the Fellowship Hall. If you are able to help, this task will take a very short time. Please join us on Sunday, January 4, 2026, right after the church service to help complete this task and sip a cool beverage. May your Christmas season be filled with blessings!

Rebecca Silver and Caly DePalma,
Fellowship Ministry Team Co-Chairs



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN!

LET'S GATHER TOGETHER FOR
OUR ANNUAL GATHERING

First Presbyterian, Monticello GA
SATURDAY MARCH 21, 2026





SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:30 am Nursery

9:30 am Church School
for all ages

11:00am Worship –
4th Sunday of Advent

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

LITURGIST: Lisa Buchanan

GREETERS/USHERS: Hank & DeLynda Tweedell, Alan Edwards, Judy Capie

CANDLE LIGHTERS: Covenant’s Green Dream Team

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28

LITURGIST: Kirche Rogers

GREETERS/USHERS: Caly DePalma, Katy Terry, Sandy & Jim Whitney

Congregational Care Coordinator for December: Barbara Burnett

**JOIN OUR
NURSERY
VOLUNTEERS**



We’re looking for caring, dependable volunteers to serve in our church nursery.



Commitment: Once every four months



Times: 9:30AM ■ 11:00AM



Where: Church Nursery Room

If you love little ones and want to support young families in our congregation, this is the perfect opportunity!

No experience necessary – just a willing heart.

For more information or to sign up contact Ellen Stoneburner at ellenstoneburner@gmail.com

OPEN & CLOSE THE BUILDING

Chris Wilson	1st Sunday	Judy Capie	2nd Sunday
Pam Knox	3rd Sunday	Tim Foutz	4th Sunday
		Brian Striggow	5th Sunday

GROUND'S STEWARDS

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
 5th Monday Week—Ellen Stoneburner



DECEMBER 21, 2025

Nancy Alila, Ansley Land,
DeLynda Tweedell

DECEMBER 28, 2025

Nancy Alila, Marie Ballard-Myer, Brian Herndon



COVENANT CONNECTION
will resume

January 7, 2026

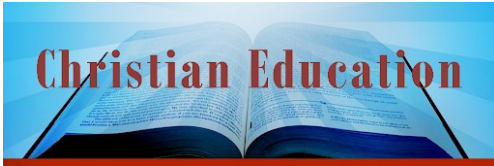
KNITTERS & KNOTTERS—

will resume Thursday, January 8, 2026

The beautiful blankets on display were lovingly made by Covenant’s Knitters & Knotters. They will be gifted to the clients of Project Safe.

The lovely decorative lantern in the worship center was give by Gloria Pylant and the McMaster Family. It has been recently updated with seasonal décor.





“THE GOD-BOTHERERS” Class will meet December 21 at 9:30 am. Facilitated by Pastor Tom this class is currently studying “troubling texts of the Bible.”

The “UPPER ROOM” December 21 at 9:30am Location: "Upper Room" Classroom at the top of the ramp and via Zoom. James Malone hosts and different class members facilitate the discussion of the weekly chapter in The Present Word. If you would like to participate, via Zoom please contact James at gillbillvolume1@yahoo.com.

The “JOURNEY” December 21 at 9:30 am. This Sunday morning our selection for discussion will be on the movie *The Help!*

Juniors (K-3rd) Class December 21 at 9:30am

Middlers (4th—7th) December 21at 9:30am

Covenant Youth Connection—5:00pm Covenant Youth Christmas Party



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Covenant Food Pantry (Every Thursday)

Sign-up to volunteer here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409084AA5AA22A20-covenant#/>

For Christmas week the Food Pantry Distribution will be on Tuesday, Dec 23rd and New Year’s week it will be on Tuesday, Dec 30th.

The students will be gone until January 12 and we need your help to pack up and distribute food on Thursdays for Covenants Food Distribution. Thank you!

For the month of November Covenant served 2,487 food insecure neighbors.

Thank you Covenant and may we all have enough!

UPDATE ON THE PHOTO DIRECTORY!

Due to the diligence of DeLynda and Ansley we have received digital copies of the directory photos. If you would like yours please bring in a memory stick and I will download them for you. The office will be open on

Tuesday, December 23, 10am—4pm.

We will be closed Dec 24, 25, and 26.



Covenant's Green Dream Team—Update – December 2025—

Thank you to everyone for embracing composting. Since starting this fall, we have composted over 30 five-gallon bags of food scraps and paper—an amazing accomplishment!

Unfortunately, the holiday season is not so kind to our planet. Did you know we produce 25% more waste between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day? Here are some simple ways we can reduce waste during the holidays:

Holiday Waste-Reduction Tips

- Wrapping paper: Avoid shiny, glittery, or flocked paper, as these often contain metal or plastic and cannot be recycled.
- Carefully unwrap gifts and save wrapping paper and bows for next year—this can even become a fun game for kids! Mix leftover paper to create colorful, whimsical gift wrap.
- Use newspaper, magazines, or paper bags, decorated with natural items like sprigs, pinecones, or dried flowers.
- Use saved wrapping paper to protect delicate ornaments during storage.
- Shred wrapping paper for use as shipping or packing material.
- Recycle all cardboard boxes.
- Shop locally and sustainably whenever possible.
- Recycle your Christmas tree, or place it in your yard or garden to provide winter shelter for birds.
- Bring ink cartridges and batteries for CHaRM recycling, and plastic grocery bags to be reused by the food pantry.

Upcoming Events – 2026

1. Athens Clean and Renewable Energy Plan Workshop

Wednesdays in January, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Covenant Library—see the flyer on the bulletin board

2. Community Discussion on Data Centers

January 6 | 4:00–5:30 p.m.

First AME Church, Hull Street, Athens

3. Georgia Interfaith Power & Light (GIPL) Summit: "Let Justice Grow"

Saturday, February 7 | 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Atlanta

Email skcobb588@gmail.com if you are interested or have questions about any of these events.

Inspiration:

"We are called to foster life in defiance of all that seeks to diminish it. This is not a passive observance but an active call to push your hands deep into the earth, deep into the heart of the Divine, deep into your own life, and continue to nurture that which sustains life in you, in us, and in every inhabitant of this place we call home."

-Codi Norred, Executive Director of GIPL

Happy and Peaceful Holidays to you!



Please look through these volunteer opportunities at Covenant in November and sign up if you can help!

1. DONATIONS NEEDED: Holiday Gift Cards for 25 families at Athens Area Homeless Shelter
The 25 families (including 55 children) being served by Athens Area Homeless Shelter are in need of Holiday Gift Cards for food and gifts for the children. If you are able to help, you can donate funds at this [link](#) OR drop off \$25 Walmart Gift Cards at Athens Area Homeless Shelter (620 Barber Street, Athens, GA) or leave them with Karen or Amy at the Church Office marked for "AAHS Holiday Gift Cards."

2. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED (January): Athens Free Clinic @ Covenant
Volunteers are needed to welcome the medical team into the church building and to sit at the front desk to greet clients as they arrive for their appointments. Sign-up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409084AA5AA22A20-athens#/>

3. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED (January): Covenant Cooks "First Tuesday" Dinners (Alternating between Athens Area Homeless Shelter for children and families and The Table) Sign up to volunteer here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409084AA5AA22A20-44868340-serving#/>

4. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Covenant Food Pantry (Every Thursday)
Sign-up to volunteer here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409084AA5AA22A20-covenant#/>
The students will be gone until January 12 and we need your help to pack up and distribute food on Thursdays for Covenants Food Distribution. Thank you!

5. MEAL PROVIDERS NEEDED: Covenant Youth Group
Please sign up below if you are able to bring dinner to the Covenant Youth Group on a Sunday evening (approx. 15 people). Sign up at this link if you can help:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409084AA5AA22A20-54091633-covenant>

6. BAKERS NEEDED: Covenant Birthday Brigade
The Covenant Birthday Brigade makes birthday cakes for children with a birthday while living at the Athens Area Homeless Shelter. Please email Amy at abaer@covpresathens.org if you are interested in joining the Covenant Birthday Brigade!

7. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Join the Covenant "Eek" Squad!
We have Covenant members who sometimes need a ride or assistance with last-minute needs. This volunteer group would essentially be willing to be on a group-communication-thread (kind of like a prayer chain) where we can broadcast needs by phone and members can respond in real-time if they are able to help. We imagine that most of the needs in the thread will be for our senior Covenant members who may occasionally need a ride to a doctor appointment, help moving a piece of furniture, etc. **Please message Amy to join the Covenant "Eek" Squad!**

Join us for our next meeting:
Mission & Outreach Ministry
Team Meeting
Wednesday, January 7, 2026,
5pm – 6pm in the fellowship hall





The lovely poinsettias in worship are given in Memory or Honor of the following:

In Memory of:

Mike Swanson, Chris Swanson
 Beth Nunnally, Margaret & Truman Terry
 M/M Cantrell, M/M Fahling
 Virginia Giuffre
 Clara Bishop, Jan Okey
 Ginger Davis Beck, Carol Wheeler
 Dan Stoneburner
 Stan, Doris, & Bob Reaves
 Ruth & David Murden
 Olivia Newton

In Honor of:

McMaster Family, Ellis Family, Reeves Family
 Jennifer Frey
 Covenant Fellowship

Jake Tinga
 Anna, Mae Deane, & Charles Wynes
 Wilma & Archie Silver
 Rev. Charles & Mary Norville

Lily & Fiona Toledano, June R. Meyers & John E. Meyers

George & Marie Zimdars
 Stanley & Pauline Marshall
 Joyce Minor
 Dolly Barstow, Linda McCormick
 Bobby Tyson, Tilden (Tammy) Mitchell

Willene O'Neal

Bion & Marcia Pierson
 Frances & David Glaspey

Given by:

Paige Cummings
 Katy Terry
 Nan & Charles Cantrell
 Barbara & Matt Muir
 Pam & Bruce Butts
 Betsy Burmeister
 Ellen Stoneburner
 Rich Reaves
 Caly DePalma
 Pam Thompson
 Gloria Pylant
 Gloria Pylant
 Gloria Pylant
 Pat Tinga
 Mary Anna Wynes
 Kent & Rebecca Silver
 Kent & Rebecca Silver
 Joe & June Meyers
 Dick Zimdars
 Paula Zimdars
 Pam Butts, Deb Millwood
 Bill Barstow
 Catharine Tyson
 Jennifer Frey
 Lia Bruner
 Judy Capie

Covenant by the Week!

December 21, 2025

SUNDAY -

9:30am Sunday School for all ages

11:00am Worship

2:30pm 12 Step Group

5pm Youth Group Christmas Party

MONDAY OFFICE CLOSED

11:30am New Horizons Band Rehearsal

2pm New Horizons Strings Rehearsal

6:00pm Campus Kitchen

7:00pm 12 Step Group in Journey Classroom

7:00pm Bells of NEGA

TUESDAY

9:30am preparing bags for food distribution

1:00pm Covenant Food Distribution

12 noon—3pm Bigger Vision

4:00pm Socrates Cafe

6:00pm Campus Kitchen

7:00pm 12 Step Group Meeting

WEDNESDAY OFFICE CLOSED

NO COVENANT CONNECTION

5:30pm Christmas Eve Worship

7:00pm 12 Step Group—downstairs

THURSDAY— OFFICE CLOSED

7:00pm 12 Step Meeting

FRIDAY— OFFICE CLOSED

7:00pm AA Meeting in FH for birthdays

SATURDAY

10:30am 12 Step Group

December 28, 2025

SUNDAY - YOUTH ALUMNI SUNDAY

9:30am Youth Alumni Pancake Breakfast

9:30am Sunday School for all ages

11:00am Worship

2:30pm 12 Step Group

No Youth Group will resume on January 4th

MONDAY OFFICE CLOSED

11:30am New Horizons Band Rehearsal

6:00pm Campus Kitchen

7:00pm 12 Step Group in Journey Classroom

7:00pm Bells of NEGA

TUESDAY

9:30am preparing bags for food distribution

1:00pm Covenant Food Distribution

12 noon—3pm Bigger Vision

6:00pm Campus Kitchen

7:00pm 12 Step Group Meeting

WEDNESDAY OFFICE CLOSED

NO COVENANT CONNECTION

7:00pm 12 Step Group—downstairs

THURSDAY— OFFICE CLOSED

7:00pm 12 Step Meeting

FRIDAY—

12pm Fellowship Ministry Team Meeting

7:00pm AA Meeting

SATURDAY

10:30am 12 Step Group

