



COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 2025-26 FALL BROCHURE

Covenant is known throughout the Athens community for putting its big heart for mission into action and welcoming all of God's diverse children with open arms. Covenant feeds the hungry every Thursday through the weekly food pantry, offers rich and vibrant worship for those seeking to follow Christ, and builds connections through a variety of groups and volunteer opportunities with local mission partners.

Covenant Presbyterian Church is an all-inclusive family of faith whose mission is to live out Christ's example of serving others, with a focus on worship, spiritual growth, fellowship, and outreach in the Athens community and the world.

From Pastor Tom

Dear Covenant Family,

As I begin my second year as your pastor, my heart overflows with gratitude for the journey we are on together. In just twelve months, I have witnessed the strength, resilience, and deep faith of this remarkable congregation. You are people who care deeply — about worship that moves the soul, service that changes lives, and a community where all are truly welcome.



This year, we are embracing the theme of “A New Beginning.” It’s more than a stewardship slogan — it reflects a Spirit-led moment for us as a church. With the Session’s new vision to guide us, we are leaning into a renewed sense of purpose: to be an inviting, neighborly, worshipful, thoughtful and justice-seeking, supportive, and serving congregation.

We are not just returning to old rhythms — we are being called forward into something vital and new. We are becoming, together, a church where invitation is not a program but a way of life ... where worship is not a routine but a re-enchantment ... where justice is not a sideline but a gospel imperative ... and where community means holding one another with tenderness, courage, and grace.

As you read through this year’s brochure, I hope you’ll sense the energy and promise of this moment. The Spirit is stirring among us — in worship and song, in classrooms and coffee hour, in food pantry lines and prayer circles. Whether you’re a lifelong member or brand new to Covenant, there is a place for you here.

Let’s step into this new beginning together, open to God’s leading and ready to grow in love.

Grateful to be on this Journey with You,
Pastor Tom

Sunday Worship

All are welcome to worship every Sunday morning at 11 a.m. in the Worship Center.



SUNDAY WORSHIP ALWAYS INCLUDES:

- Beautiful music including a broad repertoire of choir, handbells, and congregational singing
- Rich liturgy including carefully crafted language and prayerful silence
- Powerful preaching that is always attentive to scripture, the needs of the congregation and the challenges of the world
- Intergenerational worship leadership by lay readers and musical offerings by people of all ages
- The Lord's Supper is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month
- Liturgical seasons are expressed through visual arts as well as music and liturgy
- Services are live streamed every Sunday and available on our YouTube Channel: youtube.com/cpcathens

SEASONAL SERVICES INCLUDE:

Blessing of the Animals service
Christmas Eve service
Christmas Choral Worship
Ash Wednesday service
Maundy Thursday service
Good Friday service
Easter Sunday service
Pentecost service

CHILDREN IN WORSHIP

All children are welcome in worship all the time!

Worship bags are available for children of all ages on the pew outside of the worship center doors. A rocking chair and table are also right outside the worship center doors for parents who prefer to feed or sooth young children. Nursery care is available in the Education Wing during Sunday School and Worship.

PUNCH & COOKIES

(Summer months)

Join the whole congregation for this time of fellowship and refreshment after worship every week during the summer months!

Music at Covenant



ADULT CHOIR

The Covenant Adult Choir sings regularly at worship services throughout the year, providing a variety of choral and solo music. There is special music during worship several times a year, including Palm Sunday, Easter, and during the Advent season, which culminates in a well-loved Candlelight Christmas Eve Service.

COVENANT BAND

The Covenant Band performs at Christmas Choral Worship and is under the direction of Aaron Carter-Enyi. If you play an instrument and want to be a part of an ensemble consider joining this group.

PRAISE BAND

The Praise Band is an intimate (yet fun) group to join if you like more upbeat contemporary praise music and is under the direction of Aaron Carter-Enyi.



HANDBELL CHOIR

We welcome new and experienced ringers, adults and high school students, who can read music. No prior handbell experience required.

Rehearsals: Wednesdays, 6:00 – 7:15 pm in the handbell room.

We rehearse during the school year and ring approximately once a month for Sunday worship services and other occasions. We ring Malmark five octaves handbells and 4.5 octaves chimes. For more information and to join us, contact David Boardman, Handbell Choir Director, at makeminesupine@hotmail.com.

NEW HORIZONS BAND

Wednesdays, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. Directed by Joyce King, the New Horizons Band is an outreach of the University of Georgia's Hugh Hodgson School of Music. We provide music-making opportunities for adults, generally over the age of 50, including those with no musical experience at all, and those who were active in school music programs, but have been inactive for a long period. For more information, and to register and play in this vital and active band, go to: <https://www.music.uga.edu/newhorizons>

Sunday School

CHILDREN'S CLASSES

All classes meet at 9:30 a.m.

JUNIORS (K-3rd) CLASS

This multi-age class, taught by Katy Arora and our volunteer Shepherds, meets 9:30-10:30 each week (August-May), in the downstairs "Temple Courtyard" classroom.

MIDLERS (4th-7th) CLASS

This multi-age class, taught by Betsy Burmeister, meets 9:30-10:30 each week (August-May), in the downstairs "Potter's Workshop" classroom.

Each week, these two classes begin with a lovely music time with Betsy Burmeister and then, using "Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible Curriculum," they enter into sacred space together, read from their story Bible, pause for a time of wondering, engage their curiosity and imagination with God's story through art and drama, wrestle with their place in God's story through activities and discussion, and bless one another with God's grace. Please join us for this time of Growing in God's Love!

NURSERY (AGES BIRTH TO 5)

Begins at 9:30 a.m. and concludes after the 11:00 a.m. Worship Service

ADULT CLASSES

All classes meet at 9:30 a.m.

THE GOD-BOTHERERS CLASS

Are you a God-Botherer? God-Botherers can be faithful churchgoers or terminal seekers, those whose faith is usually strong or those whose faith is on life support. They are doubting believers, or believing doubters, who have all kinds of questions about faith, but can't quite walk away from the crazy thought that there is a God who won't walk away either. Led by Pastor Tom, this class meets in the Library and is for anyone of any age who wrestles with tough questions!

THE JOURNEY CLASS

This class meets in Room 216 and welcomes all adults who wish to participate in a discussion format usually including a book study led by class members.

THE UPPER ROOM CLASS

This class meets in the "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."

Children & Youth

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

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COVENANT YOUTH CONNECTION

Starting back in September, Covenant's Middle and High School youth will gather each week on Sunday evenings from 5-7 p.m. for recreation, a meal, and a program led by Pastor Tom, Brian Herndon, Bert Ballard-Myer, DeLynda and Hank Tweedell. We will also enjoy special outings, parties, and trips, plus gatherings with other church youth groups in our Presbytery!



Small Groups

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MIDSTREAM

New in Fall 2025!

Life doesn't slow down in mid-life — if anything, it flows faster, deeper, and sometimes a little more chaotically. Whether you're navigating careers, caring for kids or aging parents, finding your way through transitions, or simply seeking friendship and meaningful connection, you're not alone. We're starting something new at Covenant: a social and spiritual fellowship group for those of us in the "mid-stream" of life. Think: casual gatherings, good conversation, shared snacks, maybe a book, and always a place to belong. Look out for announcements as we organize this new group!

THE RETIREES

*Every Second Tuesday
(September to May)*

Retirees of all ages and stages enjoy active fellowship and renewing friendships with this older adult group. We meet for a covered dish luncheon, an engaging program and lots of fun and conversation.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

*Second Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.
in the Library*

Covenant's women meet for a time of Bible Study, fellowship and service. We are guided in our study by "PW/Horizons" Bible Study, the PC(USA) Presbyterian Women Curriculum. Childcare is available upon advance request. Bring a friend!

KNITTERS & KNOTTERS

*Every Thursday, 2 p.m. in the
Library*

Join us for a great time of fellowship and ministry as we gather to make blankets, hats, scarves, pillows, etc. for those in need. Everyone is invited and beginners are welcome.

During the Week

COVENANT CONNECTION

Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m. (Sept.–May)

Join us midweek for a time of nourishment — body, mind, and spirit. Come for dinner at 5:30 p.m. followed by a variety of opportunities to grow in faith and community!

- First Wednesdays feature engaging guest speakers who bring fresh insights, perspectives, and stories to spark meaningful conversation.
- On remaining Wednesdays, Pastor Tom leads an accessible and thoughtful Bible Study at 6:15 p.m. in the library — all are welcome, whether you're a regular or just curious.
- Adult choir and handbell choir rehearsals meet following dinner.

LUNCH BUNCH

Every First Tuesday, 12:30 p.m., DePalma's (Eastside)

Join us each month for this casual fellowship lunch. All are welcome!

THE COVENANT FORUM

Quarterly at various times, see Covenanter and socials for dates
Join us for featured speakers, panel discussions, and stimulating presentations, bringing together the heart and the mind for the life of faith!

ART OF SABBATH

Monthly at various times, see Covenanter and socials for dates
Join us as we explore sabbath practices through the arts! In the hope of fostering a stronger connection to God, finding joy and renewal and reflecting on our connections with one another, we will engage our creativity through pottery, painting, drawing, fibers and cookie design.

HOLY HAPPY HOUR

Every Third Thursday, 5 p.m., Authentic Brewing

Join us each month for this fun-filled discussion of faith and current events.



Serving at Covenant

Serving together is a vital part of Covenant's community. Particularly, our church focuses on hunger, homelessness, and LGBTQIA+ advocacy. By hosting our own church programs as well as partnering with a number of local and national organizations, we work to fulfill our call to love our neighbors as ourselves.

For more information about volunteering with any of the following programs, please reach out to Amy Baer at abaer@covpresathens.org.



COVENANT FOOD PANTRY

Every week, Covenant operates a drive-through food pantry funded by the church, run by volunteers, and free and open to anyone in need of food. This pantry serves more than 1,000 people per month including an average of 325 children and 200 seniors.

How you can get involved:

The food pantry has two weekly volunteer shifts year-round:

9:30-11:30 am: Unloading, packing and preparing food bags
12:30-2:30 pm: Distribution of food at drive-through pantry

ATHENS FREE CLINIC AT COVENANT

In partnership with UGA and the Medical Partnership, Covenant hosts the Athens Free Clinic, a

free health clinic with a team of medical students advised by a doctor. The doctor is able to write prescriptions, test for diabetes, hypertension, and HIV, and do referrals to specialists.

COVENANT COOKS: FIRST TUESDAY MEALS

Covenant prepares and delivers a delicious meal to our neighbors at either the Athens Area Homeless Shelter or The Table on the First Tuesday of the each month. We have learned that Covenant is really good at serving our neighbors who are hungry ... if it's about food, Covenant does it really well.

Serving at Covenant



OUTREACH TO NEIGHBORS IN NEARBY SCHOOLS: GAINES ELEMENTARY AND CEDAR SHOALS HIGH

Covenant seeks to be a good neighbor by serving those most in need at our nearby public schools. We collect items for their most vulnerable families, show appreciation for the teachers and staff, and provide support as needed throughout the year.



LGBTQIA+ ADVOCACY

It is central to Covenant's mission to welcome all God's people, and send a clear signal to all persons identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender that they will find welcome and acceptance at Covenant. We are annual sponsors of Athens Pride & Queer Collective and participants in PrideFest.



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY SATURDAY BUILDS

Covenant members join as a group to volunteer for Habitat Saturday Builds.

GREEN DREAM TEAM

Covenant members meet quarterly and facilitate sustainability efforts for the whole church including hosting speakers about environmental issues, collecting items for recycling and proper disposal, and facilitating field trips and service projects in our region.

Serving at Covenant



HOLIDAY PROJECTS FOR CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Various groups within the church do projects for the children served by Athens Area Homeless Shelter, Project Safe and Family Promise (ie. Valentines, Easter Baskets and Halloween Treat Buckets)

COVENANT BIRTHDAY BRIGADE

Each month, Covenant bakers provide a themed and personalized birthday cake for each child currently living within one of the Athens Area Homeless Shelter programs.

PARTNERSHIP WITH UGA'S CAMPUS KITCHEN AND UGARDEN

Covenant is excited to host UGA's Campus Kitchen in our commercial kitchen 4 days a week. This program is staffed by UGA student volunteers and provides more than 600 meals per week to people in need throughout the Athens area.

UGarden also brings fresh vegetables from their farm to supplement our food pantry bags throughout the year.

KNITTERS & KNOTTERS

Covenant members meet every Thursday at 2 p.m. for fellowship and fun while making blankets for people recovering from illness and for clients of Highland Hills, Family Promise and Project Safe.

ATHENS ACCESS TO JUSTICE LEGAL POP-UP CLINIC

Covenant hosts the AATJ Legal Pop-Up Clinic one Saturday per year in the Fellowship Hall. AATJ brings volunteer lawyers, paralegals and notaries to offer pro-bono answers to basic legal questions for our neighbors most in need.

LITTLE FREE PANTRY

Covenant has a small free food pantry on the West side of the building. Feel free to leave small items like canned goods and shelf-safe items.

Serving our Community



If you are interested in learning more or joining us in any of these programs, please reach out to Amy Baer, Director of Outreach, at abaer@covpresathens.org.

ATHENS PRIDE + QUEER COLLECTIVE is dedicated to the advancement of equity, affirmation, diversity, and wellness of queer populations in the greater Athens area through outreach, social connection, education, and events.

Covenant's Participation
Covenant is an annual sponsor and participant in PrideFest.

FAMILY PROMISE provides homelessness services to families including emergency shelter, workforce development, education, financial capability, health and wellness, and so much more.

Covenant's Participation
Covenant members serve Family Promise for four weeks a year, cooking meals and helping with transportation.

ATHENS AREA HOMELESS SHELTER serves the vast majority of families in Athens experiencing homelessness through several programs including an emergency shelter, an educational shelter program for families with a parent pursuing a degree, and a year-long rental assistance program.

Covenant's Participation
Covenant members serve at AAHS by providing birthday cakes for children in all shelter programs, cooking meals for the emergency shelter, doing various holiday projects to benefit the families and children, and regular repair and painting projects for family shelter units.

Serving our Community

THE TABLE (UGA) has been an active ministry at the University of Georgia since 1940. They seek to be a community of belonging for all college students equipping and empowering them through hospitality, worship, study, advocacy and service.

Covenant's Participation

Covenant members serve and enjoy dinner together with the students of The Table on designated Tuesdays through the semester.

ATHENS WELLNESS CLINIC has a 33 year history of providing health and dental care at no cost to our uninsured neighbors.

Covenant's Participation

The church and individual members donate and volunteer with the clinic.

PROJECT SAFE works to end domestic violence through crisis intervention, ongoing supportive services, systems change advocacy, and prevention and education.

Covenant's Participation

Covenant supports Project Safe with blankets from our Knitters & Knotters group and individual volunteers in their thrift store.

MEALS ON WHEELS delivers nutritious meals to home-bound people unable to prepare their own food. This service is essential in order for many of our neighbors to remain independent.

Covenant's Participation

Covenant members deliver meals weekly year-round.

OUR DAILY BREAD serves meals Monday through Friday providing more than 75,000 nutritious meals per year with gracious hospitality to our neighbors in need.

Covenant's Participation

Covenant members serve lunch every 5th Wednesday.

ATHENS AREA EMERGENCY FOOD BANK provides emergency food for families or individuals who live in Athens-Clarke County.

Covenant's Participation

Covenant collects needed items for the food bank year-round and members volunteer onsite.



Serving our World

If you are interested in learning more or joining us in any of these efforts, please reach out to Amy Baer, Director of Outreach, at abaer@covpresathens.org.

PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR SISTER-CHURCH IN OLOMOUC

Partnering with our sister-church in Olomouc, Czech Republic, both churches have sent groups to visit and attend meetings together. For several years, Covenant members operated a one-week English-learning camp for the Olomouc church. Covenant has also supported them in their work with refugees from Ukraine.

CERTIFIED PCUSA HUNGER ACTION CONGREGATION

Covenant intentionally engages hunger action by alleviating food insecurity, educating ourselves about systemic causes of hunger and economic injustice, advocating for just and sustainable food systems, selling fair-trade coffee, and adopting sustainable practices as an Earth Care Congregation.

COVENANT NETWORK OF PRESBYTERIANS

Covenant is an affirming congregation of the Covenant Network of Presbyterians. Through this affirmation we join other congregations in seeking an equity still not fully realized for LGBTQIA+ people in church and society.

MONTREAT "CHURCH PATRON" SPONSOR

Covenant is a "Church Patron" Sponsor of the Montreat Conference Center.

COLUMBIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Covenant supports theological education and the upbuilding of new church leaders by donating annually to our nearby PC(USA) seminary.

MATTHEW 25 MOVEMENT

Joining with more than a thousand other PC(USA) churches, we have pledged to be a "Matthew 25 Church." This means we seek to be about God's reconciling work, serving Jesus by contributing to the well-being of the most vulnerable in all societies. To learn more about the Matthew 25 Movement, go to: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/>

PC(USA) PROGRAMS COVENANT SUPPORTS

Covenant participates annually in special offerings for denominational mission efforts.

Gathering

Leadership

While worship is the heart of all that we do at Covenant, it is our relationships with God and one another that helps to keep that heart beating. Throughout the year, we:

- Gather around the table for food and fellowship as part of Covenant Connection.
- Host game nights, picnics on the church lawn, the Strawberry Festival, the Easter Egg Hunt, the Pentecost Reception, the World Communion Sunday Reception, the Covenant Progressive Dinner each December and the Heart of Covenant Dinner
- Provide care for our members during illness, death, and birth
- Share fellowship, learning and service together with the Presbyterian Women
- Engage sabbath practices through monthly creative classes in pottery, painting and other art mediums at "Art of Sabbath"
- Bless our neighbors with hand-knitted blankets from the Knitters & Knotters
- Meet monthly to learn, eat and to stay connected with our adult groups titled "Mid-Stream" and "The Retirees" and at "Holy Happy Hour"
- Share fellowship every Sunday after worship in the summer months for "Punch & Cookies"

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Co-Chairs: Caly DePalma and Rich Reaves
calyd44@gmail.com
richreav@gmail.com

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

(includes Care & Nurture of Young Children)
Chair: Brian Herndon
herndon.brian1@gmail.com

MISSION OUTREACH

Chair: Bob Brewster
bobbrew@aol.com

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Co-Chairs: Ansley Tweedell and Melissa Cobb
ansley.elizabeth.2021@gmail.com
melissacobb722@gmail.com

FELLOWSHIP

Chair: Rebecca Silver
ohiosilver@windstream.net

FINANCE

Co-Chairs: Kathryn Fowler and Karl Barnett
kathryndfowler@gmail.com
karlbarnett@aol.com

WORSHIP

Co-Chairs: Warren Combs and Pam Thompson
wecombs@gmail.com
pamellajeanthompson@gmail.com

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Chair: Dennis Calbos
dcalbos@uga.edu



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