

December 2023



COVENANT

Inclusive, Open-Minded and Home for Your Soul.

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**Sunday Morning Schedule**  
11:00am in the Sanctuary

See Page 4 for  
livestream sites

**Important Dates ...**

**2023 Office hours:**

Rev. Dr. Sandlin:

M appt. only

W, Th., 9-3

Kate Baird: M-F, 9-3

Dec. 1: Holiday Decorating  
& Lunch, 10:00am-1:00pm

Dec. 2: College Hill Neigh-  
borhood Assn. Wreath-  
Making, Fellowship Hall

Dec. 8: Out of the Garden  
Project

Dec. 10: Pennies 4  
Hunger Collection

Dec. 12: Session Mtg.,  
6:00pm, Fellowship Hall

Dec. 16: D&D Dinner,  
Fellowship Hall

Dec.17: Communion  
Sunday

Dec. 19: InSpire Meditation  
Solstice Service & Lunch

Dec. 24: NO AM Service

Dec. 24: 5:00pm Lessons &  
Carols Service

Dec. 25th: Christmas Day

*Presbyterian Church of the Covenant*



**The Covenant Compendium**

***A Letter from Reverend Sandlin***

Dear PCoC family,

It's Christmas season, which means it's time for me to talk about how we Christians tend to whitewash the Christmas story to the point that it loses a great deal of its original meaning and power. I know that makes me sound like quite the Grinch, but I actually see it as reclaiming the things that give Christianity (and Christmas) real meaning.

When I consider all the killing going on in the world directed by powerful people, there's a particular part of the Christmas story that comes to mind. It's the part of the story where Mary and Joseph and their family had to flee their homeland because King Herod strong-handedly used his power to squash what he saw as a threat to his power.

I can guarantee you two things: One, in the house where Jesus grew up, the narrative of why they had to flee to Egypt, and of the senseless deaths imposed on other families by the powerful, was a story that told time and time again. Two, the focus on abuse of power in Jesus' teaching and his constant willingness to confront it was no accident.

I guess this is just meant to be a gentle reminder that Christmas should cause Christians to recommit to confronting those who abuse power.

In my book, standing up to the powerful when they use power to hurt others is one of the Christmasy things you can do. After all, doing so helps usher in peace, hope, joy, and love. It doesn't get much more Christmasy than that.

PEACE!  
Mark

## Sunday Service Information, December 2023

### December 3:

Music: Stephanie Lindley  
Ushers: Nancy Schaefer, Lem Cox

### December 17:

Music: Stephanie Lindley  
Ushers: Ann Finch, Charlie Finch

### December 31:

Music: Stephanie Lindley  
Ushers: Ann Finch, Charlie Finch

### December 10: *Pennies 4 Hunger*

Music: Stephanie Lindley  
Ushers: Clara Kelly, Barry Barber

### December 24: *Christmas Eve Service, 5:00pm*

Music: Stephanie Lindley  
Ushers: Celia Starling, Frank Starling

## Session Meeting Minutes, November 14, 2023

### OLD BUSINESS

Revisioning Update/offer on buildings: Janet headed the drafting of a counteroffer to the Flywheel Letter of Intent (LOI). A called Session meeting was held to approve the draft, and a congregational vote followed. Still only guessing at time frame for church move.

### NEW BUSINESS

Elder Nominating Committee: Committee hopes to have slate of nominees by end of 2023.  
Presbytery Meeting: Mark thought the most remarkable part of the meeting was the calling of Tony de la Rosa as new General Presbyter by the Presbytery. Dr de la Rosa has a PhD in law and is openly LBGT and has already talked about some new directions for the Presbytery.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Resource Committee:** Working on a prospective 2024 budget. Contributions and pledges are both up, but we have many steps to go to try for a finalized budget.

Ten Month Summary of Finances was presented. Reserves are dwindling!

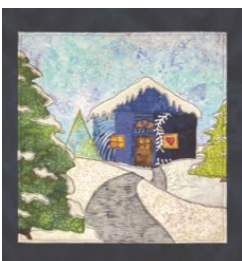
**Spiritual Formation:** Sunday Study Group, meets on Zoom, studying "The Bible With and Without Jesus" by Amy-Jill Levine and Mark Brettler.

**Buildings and Grounds:** Roof repairs done in response to an inspection report. Repaired A/C in choir room. November work day cancelled. Working on lining up snow removal.

**Communications:** Working on 2024 budget.

**Outreach:** Committee continues to be busy: Out of Garden Project; Pennies for Hunger donations. Nancy's "Get out the Goat" campaign raised enough funds for 6 goats for a third world country. Vandalia Presbyterian food drive had 3 volunteers. The 2023 CROP walk raised \$1952!. Served lunch to Habitat for Humanity volunteers on Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>. Spartan Open Pantry donation collections will be December 2, 9, 16; suggestion lists for contributions are on the back table in the Sanctuary.

## Honor Cards and Poinsettias Available Now



Honor Cards are available in the Sanctuary after each service or on weekdays in the church office. This year, we're featuring the Habitat for Humanity cards.

Poinsettias are also available to purchase for \$11 each; sign-up sheets are in the back of the Sanctuary.

They'll be available to take home after the Christmas Eve service. Get yours now!



## Financial News

Through the end of October giving to the Church remains strong. The church received over \$6,000 more than budgeted in contributions which total \$122,740. Rent received from tenants is also above what was budgeted totaling \$73,600. The church was fortunate to receive a substantial bequest from the Jack & Mavin Steele Family Trust of \$11,350. Donations to the music program and income from concerts were close to \$1,400. Total revenue received is \$217,070.

Our expenses, however, exceed our income by over \$12,000. This is mainly due to expensive repairs to the heat and air conditioning equipment and increases in rates for natural gas, water, and sewer services. Building expenses through October total \$103,600; personnel expense was \$97,450; music program expense was \$11,900 and administrative and other committee expenses were \$16,300. Total expenses are \$229,200.

## Holiday Decorating & Lunch on December 1st!

PCoC elves, usher in the holiday season by helping decorate the building with us on Friday, Dec. 1st, 10:00am—1:00pm. A free lunch will be provided. Many volunteers are needed, so please RSVP to the church office so we can get a lunch head count. (pcoc2010@gmail)

## Spartan Open Pantry Food Drive



Give the gift that keeps giving, donate shelf-stable canned and dried foods and personal hygiene products to our annual drive to help stock the UNCG Spartan Open Pantry. A list of needed items is on the back table in the Sanctuary, and donations may also be placed there. Our volunteers will be in the main parking lot on Saturdays in Dec. (2,9,16) between 10:00am—12:00pm. They'll have candy canes and marshmallow or two at the fire pit.

## In\*Spire Meditation Solstice Gathering on Dec. 19th

Our meditation group will celebrate the Solstice on Tuesdays at noon in the Sanctuary for a half hour meditation, to be followed by a soup lunch (contributions welcome!) lunch in the Fellowship Hall. It's a gathering of inspiration and fellowship and everyone is welcome.

## Christmas Eve Service at 5:00pm on Dec. 24th; NO AM SERVICE

Our annual Christmas Eve Service is at 5:00pm in the Sanctuary, featuring special music with offerings from Hope Carter, Brian Blauch, David Bills, Jim North, Ralph Cauthen, Noah Gray, Kate Baird, the Rev. Mark Sandlin, Stephanie Lindley and the PCoC Handbell Choir. We will NOT have our usual Sunday AM service, but PCoC has been invited by Unity of Greensboro to join them at 10:00am for their service. Come join us to celebrate the season!

## Outreach, Fellowship, & Other News



PCoC volunteers provided and served lunch to the Habitat for Humanity work crew and volunteers. Vegetable soup, cornbread, sandwiches, peanut butter crackers, bananas, and cookies were well-received! Our monthly volunteer day at Out of The Garden Project is Friday, Dec. 8th. Contact Charlie Finch to volunteer: tarheelcolonel@gmail.com. We're still collecting plastic grocery bags for Vandalia Presbyterian's Food Pantry in the box at the rear of the Sanctuary. Our monthly Pennies 4 Hunger donation collection is on Sunday, Dec. 10th. The UNCG Spartan Open Pantry donation drive has begun!

# Join us Online for Services and Fellowship

On Sundays at 11:00am, our service is broadcast live at these sites:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCar8ZVg434DF1uTtL86JEhg> (YouTube)

<https://www.facebook.com/PCoC.GSO/>

<https://www.facebook.com/revmarksandlin>

<https://www.facebook.com/marksandlin>

<https://www.facebook.com/TheChristianLeft>

<https://www.facebook.com/christiansmisrepresented>

<https://www.facebook.com/thegodarticle>

And see us on Meetup.com at:  
[Meetup.com/Presbyterian-Church-of-the-Covenant](https://www.meetup.com/Presbyterian-Church-of-the-Covenant)

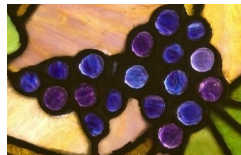


SCAN ME



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