

*Covenant Presbyterian Church
Butler, Pennsylvania*



**Welcome Back Sunday
September 10, 2017**

The Rev. Dr. James E. Swanson, Pastor
Pastor's Phone: 724-752-8383 / 724-712-1407
Church Office Phone: 724-287-773
Website: <http://covenantbutler.org>
Social Media: facebook.com/covenant230

**Order of Service for Worship
Welcome Back Sunday
September 10, 2017
Eleven O'clock, A.M.**

Rev. Dr. James E. Swanson, Pastor
Organist/Music Director: Beverly Antis
Liturgist of the Month: Nancy Rice

THIS IS GOD'S HOUSE ~ ALL ARE WELCOME HERE !

To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest; to all who mourn and long for comfort; to all who struggle and desire victory; to all who sin and need a Savior; to all who are strangers and want fellowship; to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness; and to all who will come—this church opens wide her doors and offers warmest welcome in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace and the Light of the world.

PRELUDE

Prelude on “Lasst uns Erfreuen”

Gerhard Krapf

CHORAL INTROIT

I Will Worship the Lord

John Rutter

*I will worship the Lord all the days of my life;
I will tell of his glory and will show forth his praise;
I will sing and rejoice, for the Lord is my stronghold.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

—John Rutter

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN # 455

All Creatures of Our God and King

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

*PRAYER OF ADORATION

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 149: 1-9

(Pew Bible OT p. 508)

INVITATION TO CONFESSON

CORPORATE PRAYER OF CONFESSON (in unison)

We confess to you, O God, and before one another, that we have sinned.

We are a strong-willed and stubborn people who often insist that things must be done our way. We want to be leaders, and we chafe at the idea that we may have to be followers sometimes instead. We even resist your efforts to lead us to a life of joy and peace.

Forgive our foolishness and grant that by the power of your Spirit we may be open to the wisdom of others and responsive to the guidance of those in authority, not least of all our brothers and sisters in the church. Most especially, help us to quiet our own willful desires and follow where you lead.

Softn our hearts, renew our minds, forgive our sins, and grant us your peace in Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Lord.

A TIME FOR SILENT CONFESSION

THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pastor: This is God's plan and intention for us
and for all the world: that our sins,
though as scarlet, be made white as snow.

Friends, we may with confidence embrace
the Good News of the gospel:

Let us declare the good news of the gospel:

People: **In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!**

*GLORIA PATRI 579

GLORIA PATRI

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Disciples of Christ

**We believe in God, who made us in His image.
We live, we love, we laugh, because we are like Him.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ,
the Son of God, our Lord and Savior.
He had the last laugh on the devil
when He rose from the dead.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son.
Our counselor, our guide, our motivator –
He is our joy!**

**We choose to believe:
that light is better than darkness,
sharing is better than hoarding,
truth is better than deceit,
mercy is better than revenge,
love is better than indifference,
God is stronger than chaos.**

**We choose to have faith in the God who is love
and we know that choice will be affirmed
on the long and narrow road of life.**

**By grace, we choose life and we choose faith.
Thanks be to God!**

*GREETINGS OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP

A FEW MOMENTS FOR MISSION ~ Audrey Carlson

-- “Mission Projects Appreciation”

BLESSING OF THE DONATIONS

Diapers / Wipes ~ "100,000 Diapers in 100 Days"

SHARING OF JOYS, CONCERNS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Bless the Lord, O My Soul Robert Lau

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, my soul,
and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, my soul.*

—Psalm103:1

FIRST LESSON Exodus 12: 1-14 (*Pew Bible OT p. 51*)

Liturgist: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND LESSON Romans 13: 8-14 (*Pew Bible NT p. 923*)

Liturgist: Here ends the second lesson.

All: **Praise be to you, O Lord.**

*GOSPEL READING Matthew 18: 15-20 (*Pew Bible NT p. 799*)

Pastor: The Gospel of our Lord.

All: **Glory to You, O Christ.**

*CONGREGATIONAL CANTICLE ~ Hymn #333

Seek Ye First LAFFERTY

**Seek ye first the kingdom of God And His righteousness,
And all these things shall be added unto you.
Allelu, alleluia!**

**Ask and it shall be given unto you, Seek and ye shall find,
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you.
Allelu, alleluia!**

—Matthew 6:33

SERMON

*" WHERE TWO OR THREE
ARE GATHERED "*

Pastor Jim

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

CHORAL AMEN

Three-fold Amen

Beverly Antis

HYMN # 421

The Church of Christ in Every Age

WAREHAM

A PRAYER AS WE RENEW OUR MINISTRY OF MUSIC (unison)

O God, we give thanks for the return of our choir this fall and for the ministry of music which Covenant Church is privileged to offer as a blessing to others. You have made us so that in music we hear your voice, and through it our hearts are more fully lifted to you.

Give us the gifts to impart your love and grace through this ministry; help us to remember that whatever we do, or say... or sing... we do it all to your glory, now and always. Amen.

PRESENTATION OF TITHES, OFFERINGS & GIFTS

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *The First Song of Isaiah* Jack Noble White

REFRAIN:

*Surely, it is God who saves me;
I will trust in him and not be afraid.
For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense,
and he will be my Savior.*

VERSE:

*Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing
from the springs of salvation.
And on that day you shall say,
Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name; [REFRAIN]*

VERSE:

*Make his deeds known among the peoples;
see that they remember that his Name is exalted.
Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things,
and this is known in all the world. [REFRAIN]*

VERSE:

*Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion,
ring out your joy,
For the great one in the midst of you
is the Holy One of Israel. [REFRAIN]*

*THE DOXOLOGY

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below,
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*THE UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**O God, accept our offerings, and use us to bring life and
health and hope to your world. Make us generous and
faithful stewards of your mysteries, doing your will and
proclaiming your word; through Christ we pray. Amen.**

*RECESSATIONAL HYMN #477

Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim HANOVER

*THE BENEDICTION

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE, with CHOIR IN CANON

Go with Us, Lord TALLIS' CANON

**Go with us Lord, and guide the way
Through this and every coming day,
That in Your Spirit strong and true
Our lives may be our gift to You.** —Mary Jackson Cathey

*A TIME OF SILENCE

*THE CHARGE AND DISMISSAL

Pastor: Now may the blessing of God rest on our heads,
And the Truth of God set us free from all dangers,
real and perceived;
So that in our labor and in our leisure,
In our rising up and our sitting down,
In hours of joy or in days of sorrow,
We shall with gladness of heart
Commend our lives wholly unto Him
who keeps us from falling.
Go in peace! Serve the Lord!

People: **Thanks be to God!**

*POSTLUDE

A Joyous Alleluia

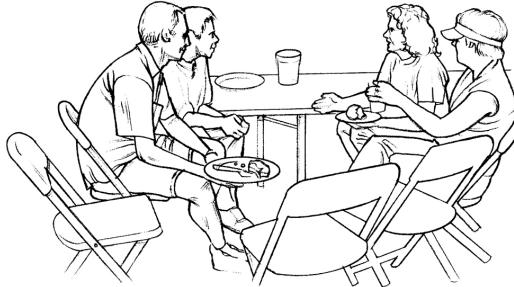
Tom Birchwood

* THOSE WHO ARE ABLE, PLEASE STAND

YOU WERE GREETED TODAY BY Connie Brown.

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR
FELLOWSHIP TIME TODAY!**

**EVERYONE
IS CORDIALLY INVITED!**



Welcome Back Luncheon Today

immediately following this worship service
directly downstairs in the Assembly Room

~ Pot Luck Cuisine ~

COURTESY OF MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

*Are you visiting today?
Did you forget to bring a dish?
No Problem !!
There will be plenty to eat for all!*

Please stay!



Celebrating Our Heritage

You will find installment #19 of the book "Through Succeeding Years" - an historical account of the history of First Presbyterian Church from 1813-1938 - in this morning's bulletin. Future installments will be forthcoming.

(Back issues available in the narthex.)

Upcoming Committee Meetings—

Interfaith Committee Meeting

Tuesday, September 12, 2017
@ 1:00 pm ~ Assembly Room

Worship & Music Committee

Wednesday, September 13, 2017
@ 1:00 pm ~ Assembly Room

Elder Picnic/Session Meeting

Wednesday, September 20, 2017
@ 5:30 pm ~ Mathias' Home in Chicora

WE WELCOME OUR CHOIR BACK TO THE LOFT !

We are pleased to welcome these choristers returning to another season with Covenant Choir:

Sopranos: Jennie Benson
Amy Cannard
Jess Oliver

Altos: Leanne Heaton
Pam Patterson
Darla Peterson
Mary Reefer

Tenors: Ian Steward
Chas Tanner
Gideon Zoeller

Basses: Frank Paden
Nathan Turley

Choir Director: Miss Beverly Antis



CHOIR REHEARSALS

***Each Sunday Morning
@ 9:15 AM ~ Sanctuary***

If you are interested in joining the choir, you are invited to attend any of the Sunday morning rehearsals or for more information, contact Beverly Antis, Choir Director, at 724-991-8240.

Note: *No Thursday evening rehearsals
during the 2017-2018 church season.*

Seekers Class

Next Sunday, Sept. 17th!

Always interesting, always educational !

Sundays @ 9:45 am in the Assembly Room



Special Guest Speaker:
Rev. Jim Campbell

Topic:

“Science and Theology Shake Hands”

5-part series continues—Sept. 17, 24 and Oct. 1 & 8

Through the centuries, science and religion have lived in tension. Some people cite scientific theories and fundamentals as proof that religion is simply “hogwash.” Others cite religious beliefs as proof that science is completely wrong. But many scientists and theologians have found common ground in their shared quest to understand the universe.

Join us as we explore the relationship between science and theology. Rev. Jim Campbell will be leading our discussions. A retired Presbyterian pastor, Jim taught science for 13 years before entering seminary. In his words, “Isn’t it time for science and theology to shake hands and work together?”

Invite your Friends! ~ All are welcome!

Refreshments at 9:30 am

Upper Room Daily Devotional

September/October 2017 Edition

Now available in the narthex. Take one – they’re free!

Congregational Survey

A Reminder from the Transition Team:

Every member should have received a congregational survey. All surveys that were not picked up last Sunday during worship were mailed out.

The *Transition Team* has the responsibility of helping to chart a course for pastoral leadership and congregational vision once Pastor Jim retires at the end of this year.

You have a hand in helping to plan for Covenant's future in 2018 and beyond. Kindly fill out and return the survey* to the church no later than Sunday, September 17th. Results will be presented during the Fellowship Hour on Sunday, September 24th with a time for listening to your thoughts. ***Let your voice be heard!***

***NOTE:** *If you wish to remain anonymous*, please remove the cover page, and place your completed survey on the offering plate or mail it to: Covenant Presbyterian Church, Attention Transition Team, 230 E. Jefferson St., Butler, PA 16001.



New Fall Study!

The People for Peace



Study Book:

"The Evolution of Faith:
How God is Creating a Better Christianity"
by Philip Gulley

**Begins this Thursday, September 14th
@ 11AM ~ Assembly Room**

*(Class is held 2nd & 4th Thursdays each month
Sept. 14, 28; Oct. 12, 26; Nov. 9, no class Nov. 23; Dec. 14)*

BOOK SYNOPSIS:

The Evolution of Faith

Phillip Gulley, famous for his own controversial theology that affirms universality, urges us in *The Evolution of Faith* to let go of our tightly held beliefs and start the journey toward a dynamic faith. Faith should always be seen as a work in progress, and this accessible guide will be a must-have tool for those interested in where the Christian faith is going today.

This Class is open to everyone!

Nancy Rice, *Class Convener*

Questions? . . . See or contact Nancy @ 724-256-5366

*Study Books are available today for purchase
at a cost of \$8.50 (See Nancy Rice)*

~ Lesson materials will be made available each class period
for those who do not wish to purchase the book. ~

Final update!

"100,000 Diapers in 100 Days"

We are assisting Catholic Charities in collecting diapers (infant up to age 2) and wipes for the Pregnancy and Parenting Support program here in Butler.



**2,149 diapers (56 packages)
56 packages of wipes**

In the Life of Our Church

Prayer Concerns:

- ✓ **Rev. Derek Marotta** (Pastor of the Plains Presbyterian Church in Cranberry Township), his wife Jennifer and children JonMark and Emma – Rev. Marotta is scheduled to have an atrial ablation at AGH on September 12th to correct an irregular heart beat and prevent blood clots from forming

- ✓ Visit **Miss Bev's CaringBridge** webpage –
Site Link: www.caringbridge.org/visit/beverlyantis

In Sympathy:

The love, prayers and sympathy of the congregation are extended to **Mr. Robert Boda & Family** upon the death of Bob's mother, Virginia Edith Boda, age 92, who passed away on Labor Day, September 4, 2017 at Concordia (*Mr. Boda is a Commissioned Ruling Elder and Administrative Assistant at Concord and North Washington churches*)

Celebrating a Birthday:

Alexis Marie Hine (*Happy 1st Birthday, Sept. 11*)

--Laurel & Andy Hine (parents)

--Bob & Ione Mathias (grandparents)

PRAYER CORDON: Meets Tuesdays at 12 noon in the Church Library. To join or for prayer, contact Virginia at 724-287-3920.



Pray for everyone affected by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma (and for the relief workers); Pray for all in Mexico where the strongest earthquake in a century has brought widespread death and destruction.

Math Mondays

For Students in grades 5 and 6
After school Program ... and free!

Begins Monday Sept. 25
3:40 pm - 5:00 pm

Classes held in the Shaffer Memorial Room - 2nd floor -- Use Entrance on E. New Castle St.)



Program Includes:

- ❖ fun with numbers, dice, coins, measuring
- ❖ math games and activities
- ❖ snacks provided
- ❖ prizes
- ❖ adult supervision

Please consider this ministry to our young neighbors.

Call Peggy Cartwright, Director @ 724-421-9141

Butler County Symphony Recital Series presents—



Piano - Violin Recital

*"Sharing solo and
chamber repertoire with
the Butler County
community."*

Nancy DeSalvo, Piano

Tanya Satteson, Violin

Saturday, September 16, 2017 @ 7:00PM

(Covenant Presbyterian Church Sanctuary)

Please join us for the exciting series premiere performance of the Butler County Recital Series. Butler County Symphony Orchestra's concertmaster, **Tanya Satteson**, will partner with acclaimed collaborative pianist **Nancy DeSalvo** to present an evening of musical masterpieces.

The concert will feature works by J.S. Bach's powerful unaccompanied *Partita No. 2 in d minor for solo violin*, Beethoven's intricate *Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano*, Dvorak's lyrical *Romance for Piano and Violin, Op. 11*, and Sarasate's entertaining *Introduction and Tarantella*.

Tickets: Adult - \$16.50 / Child - \$11.50

Available Online only at

www.butlercountyrecitalseries.org

(PayPal account or credit card)

SEPTEMBER 5, 2017

OFFICE OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMUNICATIONS

Last week, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II, condemned the Trump administration's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. DACA has provided protection for some 800,000 individuals who were brought to the United States by their parents without proper immigration papers.

Nelson pledged that the PC(USA) would continue to "advocate for just immigration reform" and "for just immigration enforcement that intentionally considers the hardship of family separation and the sincere expressed determination in building family and community in the United States. Dreamers and DACA recipients have done just that."

Here is the full text of Nelson's letter to the president:

Dear Mr. President,

I am appalled that you have ended the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. As the top elected ecclesial officer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a denomination of 1.5 million members, I protest your decision.

DACA has provided safety and protection for approximately 800,000 individuals from detention and deportation. The program offered empowerment to those made vulnerable by a failure in our laws. DACA recipients seized this opportunity by engaging this democracy through civic action. Our nation is better for it. They improved their professional and educational levels. Our economy is better for it. They fulfilled the requirements of the program and provided personal information and submitted themselves to background checks.

Our country is safer for it. Your decision now pushes these empowered and responsible individuals into making unthinkable choices about how to maintain their families. It is an attempt to return them to vulnerability.

The PC(USA), as a national church, supports the presence and contributions of immigrants in the United States. We advocate for just immigration reform. We advocate for just immigration enforcement that intentionally considers the hardship of family separation and the sincere expressed determination in building family and community in the United States. Dreamers and DACA recipients have done just that. They often know this country more than the one they left behind.

They have made friends; they have studied in schools; they have, after years of contemplating a future clouded by the threat of deportation, begun to fully dream about their future.

DACA recipients are not strangers. They are neighbors. They are active participants in civil society. They have fought for their rights. They have been compliant with immigration requirements. Turning your back on them is turning your back on the possibility and potential of what they offer this country. The PC(USA) grieves this decision. We vow to accompany those who are now at risk. We will continue the fight to seek a permanent solution to their immigration limbo. It is the right thing to do. It reflects our values as a church and it reflects our values as citizens of the United States.

“So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest-time, if we do not give up.”—Galatians 6:9

In Christ,



The

Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



A Reflection for Today

--by Karoline Lewis, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

For many churches, this Sunday is the start of the fall schedule, a time to enjoy food and fellowship, a return to the programming and activities that have been “on vacation” during the summer months. This is just the Sunday to remember that each and every time we come together as a congregation, whether it’s two, twenty-two, or two-thousand-and-two... Jesus is there. This is just the Sunday to claim the promise of Jesus’ presence in our gatherings, even when it’s just a few of us, because it makes what we *are* more than what we *do*. There is great comfort indeed in believing Jesus’ promise, “I am there among you.”

We need to hear these words often but especially now, for the victims of Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma and those who have felt the devastating earthquake in Mexico. These words must be repeated, over and over again, “I am there in your midst.”

As the funerals begin for those lives lost; as the rescue and clean up continue; as we look at months (even years) of working to restore “normalcy” again... the only thing possible to say, is “Do not fear. Jesus is here among us.” He brings peace and calm in the midst of chaos.

But the reality is that conflict is often as common as peace – in our homes, in our communities, in our churches themselves. *Following* Jesus is far more difficult than *confessing* Jesus as Lord. Doing God’s will is challenging and life-altering.

Don’t forget: when you are making difficult decisions about where your mission money should be spent, what improvements must be made to your property, whom your church will welcome, or who will provide the leadership your congregation requires... Jesus is there among you. Remember: When you are discussing your vision, your future (unknown and perhaps filled with anxiety)... Jesus is there among you! Thanks be to God!



Covenant Church
has a brand new Website !

Check it out...
Just click the link at
<http://covenantbutler.org>
to visit.

(Note: in a few weeks our domain name will be transferred to the new site, so you will not need to “click” to jump elsewhere)