

*Covenant Presbyterian Church
Butler, Pennsylvania*



September 17, 2017

“We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love.

There is some good in the worst of us, and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.”

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

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](https://www.facebook.com/covenant230)

Order of Service for Worship

September 17, 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 Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace and the Light of the world.

PRELUDE

"Arioso"

J. S. Bach

Lars Morrison, solo flute

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 # 559

We Gather Together

KREMSER

*PRAYER OF ADORATION

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 114: 1-8

(Pew Bible OT p. 491)

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

CORPORATE PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

Loving God, we can scarcely comprehend the scope of your forgiveness, the wonder of your unconditional love for us. We confess that too often we have closed ourselves off from you; we have misplaced our priorities; we have neglected your charge to be peacemakers, healers and prophets in our own day.

How often, Father, we have lost our bearings, drifted apart from your divine will, and then come running back to you for forgiveness; and yet you never tire of loving us!

Through the power of your grace, heal our brokenness; grant us peace for our souls, and strength for tomorrow. Set us free to be truly your children. In the name of Jesus, the Lord of our lives, we lift our prayer.

A TIME FOR PERSONAL CONFESSION (in silence)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pastor: Though we be lost in sin, God never abandons us to desolation.

People: **God so loved the world that he sent his only Son:
not to condemn the world,
but so the world through him might be saved!**

Pastor: In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.
We are not alone!

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

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

*GLORIA PATRI 579

GLORIA PATRI

*THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH A Contemporary Profession of Belief
Auburn University

**We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, power
and love, whose mercy is over all his works, and whose will is
ever directed to his children's good.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of man, the
gift of the Father's unfailing grace, the ground of our hope,
and the promise of our deliverance from sin and death.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit as God's divine presence in
our lives, whereby we are kept in perpetual remembrance of
the truth of Christ, and find strength and help in time of
need.**

**We believe that faith should manifest itself in the service of
love as set forth in the example of our blessed Lord, to the
end that the kingdom of God may come upon the earth.**

**Glory be to the immortal and all-wise God, in whom we
have had our birth, in whose care we are constantly kept, and
unto whom we shall return when our days on earth are
ended.**

*GREETINGS OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP

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 14: 19-31 (*Pew Bible OT p. 53*)

Liturgist: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND LESSON Romans 14: 1-12 (*Pew Bible NT p. 923*)

Liturgist: Here ends the second lesson.

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

*GOSPEL READING Matthew 18: 21-35 (*Pew Bible NT p. 800*)

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!

SERMON “*THE MATHEMATICS OF FORGIVENESS*”

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 # 298 *There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy* IN BABILONE

PRESENTATION OF TITHES, OFFERINGS & GIFTS

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

May God Bless and Keep You Robert Wetzler

*May God bless and keep you till we meet again;
May God walk beside you, all your griefs to bear,
May God's arms enfold you, keep you safe with tender care,
May God bless and keep you till we meet again.*

*Angel hosts protect you till we meet again;
May they gently lead you where the quiet waters flow;
Guide you through the meadows where the fragrant flowers grow;
Angel hosts protect you till we meet again; till we meet again,
Till we meet again, God keep you.*

May God bless and keep you till we meet again; meet again.

—Paul Abbot

*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.**

*RECESSIONAL HYMN #281

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah CWM RHONDDA

*THE BENEDICTION

*CHORAL RESPONSE

May God Bless and Keep You Robert Wetzler

*May God bless and keep you
till we meet again; meet again.*

*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!**

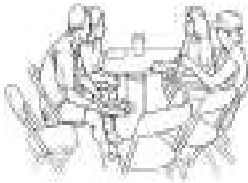
*POSTLUDE

Voluntary in B Flat

Maurice Greene

* THOSE WHO ARE ABLE, PLEASE STAND

YOU WERE GREETED TODAY BY Connie Brown.



JOIN US FOR FELLOWSHIP TIME !

Immediately following worship each Sunday we gather for a time of fellowship. Please join us for conversation (and food!) downstairs in the Assembly Room.

Hosting today: *Brian Graff*



Celebrating Our Heritage

You will find installment #20 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.)

The Noisy Offering of Loose Change

Next Sunday, September 24th ~ 11 AM Worship

To benefit Refreshing Springs Ministry, Aliquippa-Ambridge

APPORTIONMENT REMINDER

**~ \$44 per adult member on the
Active Roll of Covenant Church ~**

Extra envelopes are available in the narthex if you have not had the opportunity to contribute. Please make checks payable to Covenant Presbyterian Church marked “per capita” in the memo section and place on this morning’s offering plate. If enclosing cash, please write your name on the envelope.

Seekers Class

Next Sunday, Sept. 24th !

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. 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 contain 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

PICNIC & SESSION MEETING

This Wednesday, September 20th

@ 5:30 pm ~ at the Home of

Ione & Bob Mathias



Our church officers—currently serving, just installed and those recently retired from service—and their spouses, relatives or significant others will be enjoying an early fall picnic at the home of Ione & Bob Mathias. A brief Session meeting will follow.

Our hosts, Ione and Bob Mathias will provide the main course (on the grill), the beverages and table service. **Picnic goers are asked to bring a side dish or dessert to share.**

Directions to the Mathias' home will accompany an email sent out to each church officer.

Congregational Survey

Today is the final day to return your survey.

It is still not too late! Extra surveys are available in the narthex if you have misplaced, forgotten or did not receive your copy. Please *"let your voice be heard"*, fill out and return the completed form in the envelope provided and place on this morning's offering plate.

Results will be presented during the Fellowship Hour next Sunday, September 24th with a time for listening to your thoughts.



Collection Week ~ November 13-20, 2017

For anyone interested in participating in this wonderful project again this year, colorful "shoeboxes" are available in the Assembly Room.

Fill the shoebox with fun toys; hygiene items, such as comb, soap, washcloth, hand towel, hair brush; and school supplies.

Important to Note: Do NOT include: candy; toothpaste; used or damaged items; war-related items, such as toy guns, knives or military figures; seeds; chocolate or food; liquids or lotions; medications or vitamins; breakable items, such as snow globes or glass containers; or aerosol cans.

This year a donation of \$9 is requested to cover shipping and project costs.

Samaritan's Purse works in more than 100 countries around the world. It has played a key role in African Relief with operations in Kenya and South Sudan. The humanitarian efforts in Elgeyo Marakwet, Narok, Busia, Meru, Kajiado and Baringo regions has seen tremendous improvement in the livelihood of vulnerable orphans and widows.

Prayer Concerns

James W. Prichard (father of John Prichard); James is 92 years old with a pacemaker and was admitted to the hospital in Arizona last week; kidneys are not functioning properly; his white cell count is up, and he has colitis; expected to be transferred to palliative care at the hospital or transferred to hospice care at home.

We offer **thanksgiving to God** for the good news that relatives and friends of our church family weathered the recent Hurricane Irma safely and that properties remained, for the most part, in good shape; pray for the ongoing relief efforts and for survivors of weather-related storms in Texas, Florida and elsewhere.

In Sympathy

The love, prayers and sympathy of the congregation are extended to the family and friends of Rev. Dr. Bill McGary, age 68, who passed away on Friday, September 8, 2017.

Each December, Rev. McGary opened his home to friends and neighbors for a traditional Williamsburg Christmas. On one of Covenant's many Discovery Trips from the past, we carpooled to Volant on Saturday, December 1, 2007, for the Colonial Williamsburg Farmstead Open House, which included a tour of Rev. McGary's home and outbuildings with cider and hearth-baked cookies provided, as well as period music by our own minstrels, Lars Morrison and Beverly Antis. On another occasion, Pastor Bill hosted a "session dinner" at his home.

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



IN MEMORIAM

Rev. Dr. William Richard McGary

Born ~ August 22, 1949

Joined the Church Triumphant September 8, 2017

The Rev. Dr. William Richard McGary, age 68, of Vosler Road, Volant, Pa., passed away at his residence Friday morning, Sept 8, 2017, of natural causes. He was born in New Castle, Pa., on August 22, 1949, to the late William David and Ina Mae Ramsey McGary.

An active member of the Shenango Presbytery for nearly 40 years, Rev. Bill served as Pastor of Wampum Presbyterian Church since 1978. He was a 1967 graduate of Wilmington High School and then graduated with a BS in Education from Slippery Rock University in 1971. He earned a Masters in Education from Westminster College, a Masters in Divinity from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 1979, and a Doctor of Ministry from Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Va., in 1989.

Rev. McGary had a great passion for his faith and his family. He enjoyed his farm and taught at Butler Community College, Slippery Rock University, and Geneva College.

Survivors include a sister, Patricia Aull and her husband Rev. Dr. Don Aull of Edinburg, and two brothers, Robert E. McGary of Volant and James S. (Beverly) McGary of Volant. Also surviving are two nieces, one nephew, and his special friend, Carol Monk of Ellwood City, Pennsylvania (the Swanson's next door neighbor).

A funeral service was held on Thursday, Sept. 14, 2017 with the Executive Presbyter of Shenango Presbytery, Rev. Dr. Ralph Hawkins, officiating. Interment at Volant Cemetery, Volant, Pa.

Celebrating Birthdays:

Peter Schlicht (*Sept. 20th*)

Christopher Foringer (*Sept. 21st*)

Amanda Gilliland (*Sept. 21st*)

Vanessa Helen Drohan (*Happy 14th Birthday, Sept. 23rd*)

--daughter of Matt & Samantha Drohan

59th Wedding Anniversary!

Rev. J. & Jennie Jamieson ~ September 13

Congratulations with love and blessings to the Jamiesons, who celebrated their 59th Wedding Anniversary last Wednesday, September 13.

Math Mondays

For Students in grades 5 and 6

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.*



To volunteer, or for more information:

Call Peggy Cartwright, Director @ 724-421-9141

A Note of Thanks...

Received from Catholic Charities

Dear Friends,

Thanks to all! We truly appreciate your helping us reach our goal of obtaining 100,000 diapers in 100 days for our Pregnancy and Parenting program.

The 2,365 diapers and 56 packs of wipes you supplied will keep a lot of babies dry and give their grateful parents the supplies they need but can't always afford. Thanks to every one of the Covenant Church members and friends for helping us!

The diapers and wipes will be distributed to expectant and new parents through our Pregnancy and Parenting program, which provides necessary items to parents in need. As you may know, our clients are often not able to obtain even their basic needs.

All the items you supplied will be given to anyone in need at our Butler County Outreach office.

Thank you again for helping us to help others.

Sincerely,

Amber Crowe, Program Director



2017
International
Peacemaker
Rev. Pek Muan
Cuang
FROM MYANMAR

Speaking at
Center Presbyterian Church
in Slippery Rock
on Sunday, Sept. 24th at 7 PM.

An ordained pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar (PCM), Rev. Cuang is passionate about the challenges facing his country. He sees the religious community as playing a significant role in providing leadership, assistance, relief and comfort. With a population of more than 60 million, his Buddhist-majority country faces daunting problems from flood devastation, poverty, and divisiveness among groups, in addition to antiquated systems education, transportation, electrical access, and health care (many of which are fraught with corruption).

At this moment, a humanitarian crisis is unfolding in a northern province of Myanmar between Rohingya Muslims and the government's army, creating a refugee crisis at the Bangladesh border. While Rev. Cuang is able to speak on all of these issues, he is currently involved in research for his PhD on the Myanmar prisons, which have some of the worst prison conditions in the world.

Don't miss this opportunity to hear Rev. Cuang's presentation, followed by a time for Q & A.

TO FORGIVE IS TO SET A PRISONER FREE AND DISCOVER THAT THE PRISONER WAS YOU.

--Lewis B. Smedes, ethicist & theologian

OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARY

Exodus 14:19-31

“There Was Violence On Both Sides?”

--WRITTEN BY RICHARD LOWELL BRYANT

Those Egyptians; they were a great, tremendous, and huge civilization. If all I knew about the Egyptians was from the many documentaries I've watched on the Discovery Channel, National Geographic, and PBS; I'd know quite a bit. The Egyptians were an inventive people. They were infrastructure builders on a scale so grand some refused to believe they did it without help from above.



“It must be aliens,” conspiracy theorists argue. But it wasn't extraterrestrials. The Egyptians were master builders, planners, and architects. They governed large areas of North Africa in an empire when Europe couldn't find the Bronze Age on a map. Economically, they were tied in trade with countries and people all over the Mediterranean Sea. They exported their wealth and brought prosperity to their neighbors.

Egyptian armies, equipped with modern chariots, were nearly invincible on the battlefield. Grain grew in the Nile deltas and the vast deserts turned green. The land yielded crops to feed Pharaoh's people.

Out of this cauldron of intellectual fervor and creative ferment, the Egyptians developed a complex series of religious beliefs to understand the world they inhabited and the world yet to come.

A pantheon of gods came to be worshipped. Priests served these gods in grand temples. The sun god, Ra, reigned supreme. The Pharaoh came to be viewed as a living God who dwelt among his people. Out of the need to worship and the desire to tell the stories of their god's interactions with each other, written forms of human communication evolved.

Culture, writing, and storytelling -- they took hold and grew from these early Egyptian endeavors. You might say the Egyptians were a civilization, the likes of which the world had never seen before. Some could argue the Egyptians were a great and good people who believed, based on their success, their gods had blessed them. If we were to examine the evidence at hand, they look like "the" success story of the ancient world.

But there is another side to the Egyptian story. It is a story of untold brutality and human suffering on a scale that it nearly impossible for us to imagine. For every amazing achievement, grand pyramid, and epic tomb; there unknown Hebrew slaves who paid with their lives. For every harvest that fed an Egyptian, there was famine in an Israelite home. For every new life brought into an Egyptian house, there was death delivered to an Israelite home.

There are *not* good people on both sides of this debate. One side commits genocide. This side (while the Egyptian people watch) carries out a holocaust. The other side... they keep on dying.

Someone stands up and says, "But wait, wasn't there violence on both sides?" "Wasn't there this Israelite who was raised as an Egyptian prince? He was having an identity crisis and goes down to see these slaves, who he thinks he's related to and sees an Egyptian guard whipping some other Israelite. Didn't he get so angry that he beats the real Egyptian to death? Isn't this proof of violence on both sides?" How can I condemn the Egyptians when Moses committed murder?

The Egyptian genocide of the Israelite slaves and Moses' murder of an Egyptian soldier are not the same. There's no moral equivalency between the Egyptians and anyone. Yes, Moses killed someone. Yes, there was violence on both sides. However, know this: the Egyptians are wrong. They will never be right. They are not good people. They never will be.

For Moses, killing an Egyptian wasn't a tactic, it was a response. It wasn't the proper response and Moses knew it. The Egyptians used murder, torture, and beatings as a matter of course. Moses realized, from that moment forward, liberation from exile meant this: God's people don't stoop to the level of those who kept you in bondage. Those words keep coming back again and again in the Torah.

In Exodus, justice is left to God. Thankfully, we don't get to decide who lives and dies. Moses works for unity among God's people. Moses carries God's message. Moses does as God originally promised; he speaks the words God gives him.

The unfinished business between Pharaoh and the Israelites is settled by the Red Sea. Moses does not part the waters. You've seen the movie; it looks like Moses has the power. He doesn't. The miracle of salvation (the Israelites were saved that day) is not something Moses or any single individual accomplishes alone. There's always another side to the story; except for the Egyptians. They were really bad dudes.

