

**Covenant Presbyterian Church
Butler, Pennsylvania**



December 31, 2017

“For last year's words belong to last year's language
And next year's words await another voice.
And to make an end is to make a beginning.”

– T.S. Eliot

The Rev. Dr. James E. Swanson, Pastor
Pastor's Phone: 724-752-8383 / 724-712-1407
Church Office Phone: 724-287-7731
Website: <http://covenantbutler.org>
Social Media: [facebook.com/covenant230](https://www.facebook.com/covenant230)

Order of Service for Worship

December 31, 2017

1st Sunday After Christmas Day

Eleven O'clock, A.M.

Rev. Dr. James E. Swanson, Pastor
Guest Musician: Alison Carey
Liturgist of the Month: Lars Morrison

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

Even as the world seeks to judge or divide us according to our economic, racial and ethnic groups, ages, gender, abilities, preferences, politics and theological positions, we believe that in Christ there should be no such division.

Our congregation is strengthened through difference and diversity, and in the name of our Lord, we welcome all who come seeking refuge and healing from condemnation, prejudice and discrimination.

PIANO PRELUDE

CHORAL INTROIT

Of the Father's Love Begotten Plainsong, Mode V

*Of the Father's love begotten, Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been, And that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore! Amen.*

—Aurelius Clemens Prudentius

*OPENING HYMN #22

Angels from the Realms of Glory REGENT SQUARE

*PRAYER OF ADORATION

PSALM OF THE DAY Psalm 148: 1-14 (*Pew Bible OT p. 508*)

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

CORPORATE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God of compassion, you send forth your Spirit, yet we ignore your commands and turn away from you.

Angels herald good tidings and peace on earth, but hostility and treachery are everywhere to be seen; the poor cry out for relief, but their cries go unanswered; the sick are not healed, the oppressed are not freed, and the grieving wait to be comforted.

As people of God, we repent and plead for grace. Make us worthy to receive Christ into our lives and send the peace that passes all understanding.

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pastor: The God of all mercy and consolation has reconciled the world through Jesus Christ, offering us true forgiveness for all our sins. Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

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

*GLORIA PATRI 579

GLORIA PATRI

*THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH from *“The Confession of 1967”*

God’s sovereign love is a mystery beyond the reach of the human mind. Human thought ascribes to God superlatives of power, wisdom, and goodness. But God reveals divine love in Jesus Christ by showing power in the form of a servant, wisdom in the folly of the cross, and goodness in receiving sinful men and women.

The kingdom represents God’s triumph over all that resists the divine will and disrupts God’s creation. Already God’s reign is present as a ferment in the world, stirring hope in all people and preparing the world to receive its ultimate judgment and redemption.

With an urgency born of this hope, the church applies itself to present tasks and strives for a better world. It does not identify limited progress with the kingdom of God on earth, nor does it despair in the face of disappointment and defeat. In steadfast hope, the church looks beyond all partial achievement to the final triumph of God.

*GREETINGS OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP

SHARING OF JOYS, CONCERNS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION Sarum plainsong, Mode IV

*Creator of the stars of night, Your people’s everlasting light,
O Christ, Redeemer of us all, We pray You, hear us when we call.
Amen.*

—Latin, 9th century
Trans. John Mason Neale

FIRST LESSON Isaiah 61:10 - 62: 3 (*Pew Bible OT p. 604*)

Liturgist: This is the Word of the Lord.
All: **Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE LESSON Philippians 2: 1-16 (*Pew Bible NT p. 954*)

Liturgist: Here ends the second lesson.
All: **Praise be to you, O Lord.**

*GOSPEL READING Luke 2: 22-40 (*Pew Bible NT p. 833*)

Pastor: The Gospel of our Lord.
All: **Glory to You, O Christ.**

Hymn 14, **vs. 4** - *Savior of the Nations, Come*

**Brightly does Your manger shine,
Glorious in its light divine.
Let not sin o'ercloud this light,
Ever be our faith thus bright.**

—Ambrose of Milan, 4th century
Para. Martin Luther
Trans. William Morton Reynolds

SERMON “ *THE TIE THAT BINDS* ” Pastor Jim Swanson

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 *Two-fold Amen* Beverly Antis

HYMN # 438 *Blest Be the Tie That Binds* DENNIS

**Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.**

**Before our Father’s throne,
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts, and our cares.**

**We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.**

**When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.**

PRESENTATION OF TITHES, OFFERINGS, GIFTS

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *Behold That Star* arr. H. T. Burleigh
(Words & Melody from the collection of Thomas W. Talley)

[Refrain:]

*Behold that star!
Behold that star up yonder!
Behold that star!
It is the star of Bethlehem.*

*There was no room found in the Inn.
It is the star of Bethlehem.
For Him who was born free from sin.
It is the star of Bethlehem. [Refrain]*

*The wise men came on from the East.
It is the star of Bethlehem.
To worship Him the Prince of Peace.
It is the star of Bethlehem. [Refrain]*

*A song broke forth upon the night.
It is the star of Bethlehem.
From angel hosts all robed in white.
“Glory to God world without end,”
And peace on earth, good will to men.
It is the star of Bethlehem.
Behold that star!*

*DOXOLOGY - Hymn #36, vs. 4

CRANHAM

**What can I give Him, Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet, what I can I give Him: Give my heart.**

—Christina Rossetti

*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**In gratitude and love, O God, we pour out our thanksgiving
and praise for all your blessings. Receive our gifts and shape
our lives by your grace so we may be messengers of the good
news of your love for all peoples. Amen.**

*HYMN # 31

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

MEDDELSOHN

*THE BENEDICTION

*CHORAL RESPONSE

Come, Lord Jesus

Thomas Olivers

Harm. Ralph Vaughan Williams

*Come, Lord Jesus, Come, Lord Jesus,
Come, Lord Jesus, Everlasting Christ, come down!*

—Charles Wesley

*LITURGY OF BLESSING & SENDING

Elder: Eternal God, you fill us with every good thing and your steadfast love endures forever. We thank you for Pastor Jim Swanson, his family, and for our life together at Covenant Church. As they depart for retirement, send them forth with your blessing, fill them with your Spirit, and keep them always in our cherished memory of the years we have spent in work and worship in the name of Jesus Christ, the loving Shepherd of this flock.

Now let us go in Peace, and serve the Lord!

People: **Thanks be to God!**

*POSTLUDE

YOU WERE GREETED TODAY BY *Connie Brown*

JOIN US FOR FELLOWSHIP TIME!

...Immediately following worship each Sunday, downstairs in the Assembly Room.

Hosting Today: *"The Christmas Elves!"*

THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED

for New Year's Holiday

Tomorrow, Monday, January 1, 2018

Tuesday, January 2, 2018

& Wednesday, January 3, 2018



If you have a special need, please call Nancy Blewett (Clerk of Session) at 724-287-0169

Guest Musician



WELCOME TO

Alison Carey

Guest Pianist

Alison Carey graduated from Westminster College with a degree in Music education in 1993. She has been working in the Karns City Area School District for 24 years as a music teacher. She currently teaches fifth and sixth grade band and music directs for the KC High School musicals. Alison is active in the Butler community through her work with the Butler Musical Theater Guild and the Butler Little Theater. She resides in Butler with her husband, Jeff.

Reminder: Seekers Class

No Seekers Class today, Sunday, December 31st.

Seekers will resume in the new year

Sundays @ 9:45 am in the Assembly Room

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT
About the 3 pm service today

Due to a change in Miss Beverly Antis' health, Mr. David C. Daugherty has graciously offered to serve as Organist and Lars Morrison will direct the combined choirs at this afternoon's Festival of Christmastide Lessons & Music. We thank them for their generous spirits and compassion and are grateful for their needed support at this time.

We all pray and wish for God's all-present mercy, comfort and peace for Beverly at this particular time. She is now at the **VNA Inpatient Hospice** facility located at 154 Hindman Rd, Butler, PA (just off Benbrook Rd.) – Room 5



TODAY, December 31, 2017

@ 3:00 PM ~ ALL AREA CHURCH WORSHIP SERVICE

Service & Music based on the style of Lessons & Carols— but less formal. Covenant and other church choirs (including bell) as well as clergy and musicians from area churches will be participating in this joint collaboration in the Sanctuary.

There will be no reception following the service so that those attending New Year's Eve celebrations can be home in time to celebrate the evening!

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Will be celebrated:

Next Sunday, January 7, 2018

During the 11am Worship Service ~ Sanctuary

(Communion is "come forward")

Guest Preacher Next Sunday—

Sunday, January 7th, 2018

11am Worship Service

Rev. Alan Adams, Executive Presbyter
(Beaver-Butler Presbytery)



Volunteers needed !

Saturday, January 6th, 2018

@ 9:00 AM

“Helpers” needed to take down
and put away the Christmas decorations
for another year.

Please contact Connie Brown @ 724-285-3872.

The New Flower Chart for 2018

... **NOW POSTED**

on the Assembly Room bulletin board.



Please sign up for any open Sunday.
The cost is currently \$35 for two vases.

Please make checks payable to Covenant Presbyterian
Church.

Flowers are ordered through the church office
unless otherwise requested.

*Flower forms are available in the narthex.
Please submit payment with your order. Thank you.*

\$\$ Financial Snapshot ~ NOVEMBER 2017 \$\$

Total Budgeted Expenses	\$ 18,487
Budgeted Income from All Sources	\$ 11,783
Taken from Reserve Funds to meet expenses	\$ 6,704

UPPER ROOM DAILY DEVOTIONAL

January/February 2018 Edition

Copies now available in the narthex -- Take one, they're free !



Dear friends,

I would like to wish you a joyous and blessed new year. I would also like to thank you for the delicious bag of fruit. There is always a nice variety of fruit in each bag.

This year I had to share it with my grandkids, Charlotte and Henley. They really loved the apples.

I am doing as well as expected. I would like to thank you all for the cards and prayers. They help brighten each day.

Sincerely, Pat Foringer

Prayer Concerns

Bev Antis ~ We love you, Bev! May the melody and harmony of God's comfort bring peace to your soul and strengthen you on your journey.

Gil & Carol Wagner & Family – sympathy upon the death of David Wagner, age 47, on December 21, 2017

Allen Kitchen (husband of Rev. Mary Kitchen) ~ surgery last Friday, December 29th at Cleveland Clinic to remove a tumor on his kidney. Doing well in recovery.

Diane Dancik ~ friend of Mary Reefer who has been diagnosed with cancer which has spread to her liver and bowels

Donna Hobaugh ~ keep her in prayer; Donna has Alzheimers and lives at 100 Newhaven Lane, Rm. 6-B

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



**Farewell ~
not goodbye...
but “so long” until we
meet again!**

The church family would like to offer their prayers, warm wishes and love to Pastor Jim as he officially retires as minister of Covenant Presbyterian Church on this day, December 31, 2017. We send our love to the entire Swanson family: Karen, Danny, Leah, Andy, Shari and Aedan, who have been a part of our church family since 2004. We wish them all the best in the coming years – happiness, good health and God’s richest blessings.

We will miss you all, but we must lovingly release you to enjoy the next chapter on your journey of life that God has planned for you!



Happy Birthday!

Ava Elise DeLorenzo (*Happy 8th Birthday, December 31*)

--Daughter of Matt & Karen (Reefer) DeLorenzo

--Granddaughter of John & Mary Reefer

Abby Flick (January 1)

Jim Swanson (January 3)



IN MEMORIAM

David E. “Wags” Wagner

Born ~ July 14, 1970

Joined the Church Triumphant December 21, 2017

The love, prayers and sympathy of the congregation are extended to Gil and Carol Wagner & Family upon the death of their son, David E. “Wags” Wagner, who died on December 21, 2017.

David E. “Wags” Wagner, 47, of Butler, died peacefully at his home Thursday morning, December 21, 2017 after a long battle with Leukemia.

David was born July 14, 1970, the loving son of Gil and Carol Wagner. He was a 1988 graduate of Butler High School. He worked for many years at Worsley's Paint and Furniture Store. He was also well known for his bartending, and most recently was employed at the Beer Zone.

David loved the outdoors, was an avid skate boarder and spent a great amount of time on the frisbee disk golf course winning a lot of trophies. He loved sports and was an avid Pittsburgh Steelers fan. He especially loved dogs and his many friends, who knew him as Wags.

David leaves behind his parents, sister Andrea Wagner and his niece Bebe of Granville, OH; sister, Kristin Potter and husband Bob, nieces Danielle, Tara and Heather of Butler; brother, Mike and wife Tina, niece Julia and nephew Jacob of Erie.

Friends were received at the Geibel Funeral Home, 201 East Cunningham Street, Butler, from 2-4 and 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, December 26. Services followed at 8:00 p.m. at the Funeral Home with Rev. Dr. James E. Swanson, officiating.

His family would like to give a special thanks to Vitas Home Health Care, for their care.

Prayer for the New Year

Grant me the strength from day to day
To bear what burdens come my way.
Grant me throughout this bright New
Year
More to endure and less to fear.
Help me to live that I may be
From spite and petty malice free.
Let me not bitterly complain
When cherished hopes of mine prove vain,
Or spoil with deeds of hate and rage
Some fair tomorrow's spotless page.
Lord, as the days shall come and go
In courage let me stronger grow.



Lord, as the New Year dawns today
Help me to put my faults away.
Let me be big in little things;
Grant me the joy which friendship brings.
Keep me from selfishness and spite;
Let me be wise in what is right.
A happy New Year! Grant that I
May bring no tear to any eye.
When this New Year in time shall end
Let it be said I've played the friend,
Have lived and loved and labored here,
And made of it a happy year.

~ Edgar A. Guest (1881-1959)

*Wishing You A Happy, Healthy
“Peace-filled” New Year!*

*From the Staff of Covenant Church:
Pastor Jim, Lars, Tom, Bev & Elsie*

UPDATE on BEV ~ written by Ann Morrison

As you know, Beverly, Lars and I have been on her pancreatic cancer journey since the last week of June 2017. Throughout all her treatment, doctor's visits, and travels to Baltimore, Beverly was delighted that she could fulfill her commitments to all her SRU students and Covenant Church. She had one of the most exceptional Advent season and Christmas Eve services and was at the top of her game each Sunday during the last several weeks. After Christmas Eve service Beverly came to [the Morrison's] house for a relaxed dinner of seasoned scrambled eggs, her favorite challah (from Loafers), wine and conversation. In fact we spent a good amount of time talking about plans for Covenant in 2018. It was a perfect time.

Then, sometime during the night or morning of Christmas Day, Beverly began to throw clots or have TIAs (mini strokes). Hypercoagulation is a side effect of pancreatic cancer. We took her by ambulance to Butler Memorial Hospital on Christmas Day and even though Beverly was on 20 mg of Xarelto, she continued to throw clots. After many tests and a couple of days on IV heparin, we decided, with Beverly, that hospice was the best next option. She checked into VNA Hospice at 6 pm on Thurs., Dec. 28th.

When she is awake, Bev still has a great sense of humor and *does* recognize everyone. We are encouraging visits from friends and students. (She is in Rm. 5 currently). Lars and I are no longer staying 24/7 with her. She has wonderful nursing care. Her speech is thick and slurred at times. She is on a thick liquid, nectar diet and can eat anything she wants. (Currently she loves coconut milk lattes from Cummings.) The VNA has thickener that they add so she can drink it comfortably.

Beverly's right side is paralyzed, especially her arm, so she is challenged to use her recessive left hand. Our prayers are for a continual decline and as painless as possible transition to death. We hope to never have to transfer her, even temporarily, to a nursing home. Thank you to everyone who has supported her and has been blessed by the beauty and exquisite performance of her music throughout all her school, church and community life.