

NOVEMBER 2023

# COVENANT NEWS

A publication of Covenant Presbyterian Church • Charlotte, North Carolina



## Covenant Impacts Charlotte

**CIC takes place November 9 - 12**

*Sign up at [covenantpresby.org/CIC](https://covenantpresby.org/CIC)*

Fall brings a cool breeze, golden leaves and many reasons to be thankful for our blessings and our church. This beautiful season is also when we share our time and talents with the community through our three-day event known as Covenant Impacts Charlotte — or simply by the initials CIC — where everyone can participate in projects large and small, across the city or on our campus. This is a great way to meet new friends while making a difference for those in need.

**Our 2024 stewardship theme is “Rooted in Love.”**

If you didn’t get a brochure in the mail, pick one up in the sanctuary or our Welcome Center to learn more about our theme for this stewardship season and how you can support our continued growth in worship, education, care, and missions for all ages. Fill out the brochure card, a pew card, or visit our website to make a pledge. Make a gift anytime online at [covenantpresby.org/ways-to-give](https://covenantpresby.org/ways-to-give).

**Watch our video with several members of the congregation telling where they see our church rooted in love: [covenantpresby.org/stewardship](https://covenantpresby.org/stewardship)**





# From Bob Henderson



Dear friends:

The tumultuous ways of our world have distilled for me (again!) the essential mission this congregation, vigorously committed to love of God and love of neighbor, whomever that neighbor may be.

I'm regularly heartened by meals served at shelters, support extended to mission partners, sponsorship and love extended to children in our own congregation, across the city, and even across the world. With the rhetoric and reality of war echoing across our globe, it seems like an essential time to remember that when Jesus was asked to boil down everything about faith, he said, "Love God; Love Neighbor."

Your engagement in the activities of this church family and financial support of our mission allows us to embrace such commitments. God has aligned a stunning array of talent at Covenant, and that talent gets put to work in God's service in more ways than I can describe. And, many of you are extremely generous, investing heavily in our initiatives – here and abroad – to demonstrate God's love to the most vulnerable.

May I suggest that it's worth it, truly worth it, in this deeply conflicted world to have a vibrant community that is deeply rooted in God's love. I hope you agree, and that you'll signal your agreement through personal commitment — identifying and using your gifts in God's service – and through prayerfully considered generosity.

The world needs you, as does this congregation. If you need help finding your way of service, please reach out to any staff or elder. We'd be glad to assist.

Warmly,

*Bob*



## Welcome our New Elders!

A Congregational Meeting was held on September 17th for the purpose of electing ten Elders and two Youth Elders. All Covenant members present were eligible to vote.

Tommy Lawson and Grace Williams served as Co-Chairs of the Nominating Committee (ENC). The ENC members were Alan Atwell, Amber Brown, Mary Clare Chinery, Richard Magrath, Carolyn Renner, Jen Thomas, Susie Vincent, and Linsey Zalecki. Bob Henderson served as staff liaison.

Nominees for the Elder Class of 2026 were Bill Cathey, Janet Delery, Vincent DiSandro, Jim Dobbins, David Frost, Jacquelyn McAbee, John McAlister, Thomas Porter, Lou Watson, and Sarah Wilson. Nominees for Youth Elder Class of 2024 were Payton Majors and Preston Manning. These were approved unanimously.

Lawson reviewed the criteria for Elder Emeritus: any Elder who has faithfully served three full terms or at least nine years in Covenant Presbyterian Church and has attained the age of 70. Jerry Jernigan, who has served on Session for a combined 18 years, agreed to accept the ENC's nomination for Elder Emeritus. The motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved. Congratulations to our Elders!

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Covenant Presbyterian is a dynamic Christian community that gladly invites all people into a transformational experience of faith; boldly proclaims the gospel; bravely works toward a whole and just world; and passionately nurtures discipleship.

### SUNDAY WORSHIP

- 8:45 a.m. Traditional Service in the Chapel
- 9:30 a.m. Contemporary Service in the Sanctuary
- 11:00 a.m. Family Service in Fellowship Hall
- 11:00 a.m. Traditional Service in the Sanctuary

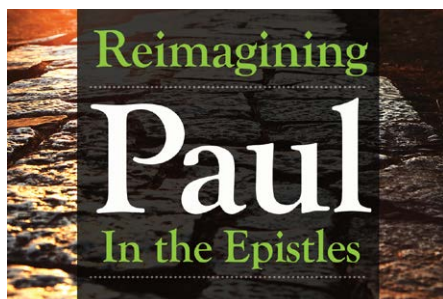
[www.covenantpresby.org](http://www.covenantpresby.org)  
[@covenantpresbyclt](https://facebook.com/CovenantPresby)

# Wednesday Dinner & Classes

Open Table Dinners, prepared by Chef Johnny, are served 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Gluten-free options are available. Cost is \$9 for adults and youth in the sixth grade and above, \$6 for children two years old through the fifth grade, with a family maximum of \$36. Programming is available for children, youth, and adults. Meals may be paid for in person or prepaid on our website: [covenantpresby.org/wednesdays](http://covenantpresby.org/wednesdays)



We'll take a holiday break in December and return January 10, 2024



## Reimagining Paul In The Epistles

**November 1, 8, 15, and 29**  
**6:30-7:30 p.m.**

**Fellowship Hall | Room 207**

We'll read Galatians, Philippians,  
1 Thessalonians, and Philemon.  
More at [covenantpresby.org/wednesdays](http://covenantpresby.org/wednesdays)



## Moment of Peace

**Wednesdays**

**November 1, 8, 15, 29**  
**6:00 - 6:30 p.m. in the Chapel**

## Grief Support

**November 15**

**6:30-7:30 p.m.**  
**Fellowship Hall Library | Room 103**



## Children & Youth

**5:15-5:45**

Choir for preK/kindergarten

**5:45-6:30**

Choir for 1-3 grades

BLAST for 4-5 graders

**6:30-7:30**

Choir for 4-5 grades

BLAST for K-3 graders

**6:30-7:30 p.m.**

Youth Programming

**FIRST SUNDAY**  
**grounded**

## First Sunday with Bob McKillop

**Trust, Commitment and Care: We are all Coaches**

**Sunday, November 5**

**9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall and on Zoom**

Bob McKillop is the former head coach of men's basketball at Davidson College where he won 23 conference titles over 33 years and coached Steph Curry, one of the top players in the NBA. Coach McKillop will share his thoughts on grounding ourselves in trust.

Davidson alumni are invited to gather in FH207 at 11:00 a.m.



# The Joy of Attending Sunday School

BY BRUCE A. CHAPMAN



An enduring feature of our storied Presbyterian and Reformed tradition is its fidelity to the journey of the mind. As part of Christ's body we have been "thinking the faith" at least since John Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion (1536) inscribed its line in the shifting sands of Christian thought.

Nor would we forget other ancestral occupants in our pantheon of Christian thinkers whose gifts, wrapped in life experience, offer insight and wisdom. Enshrined there with Calvin find the apostle Paul, too in company with Roman Catholic Saints Augustine, Aquinas and Hildegard of Bingen. Lately find Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, Hans Kung, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Douglas John Hall present also. Venerable teachers such as these—disciplined in study, prayerful and thoughtful in reflection—have marked a path for inquisitive disciples intent to think the faith to follow.

Covenant Presbyterian disciples (Latin, disciplina, instruction, knowledge; a "disciple" is a "learner") today find solace in good company in Sunday School. (Nothing quite matches "getting schooled", eh?) There, teachers with prepared lessons prompt contemporary thinking and learning. At least one Sunday School class opens weekly with a hymn, keyed by piano accompaniment.

A recent Book of Revelation study stretched imaginations while another lesson viewed biblical stories through art. Our Sunday School classes regularly consist of person-to-person interactions, not PowerPoint presentations. They are a shared, one-hour journey of mind and heart.

"Sunday School" as we know it gained widespread popularity in 19th Century America. However, its popularity has recently waned. Still, the church's, if not our own need for intellectual adventure and clearer thinking remains unabated—Sunday school or not. One might argue that this need is even more acute today, given our contemporary context and condition.



While motivated to participate in Sunday school for multiple reasons, impetus emanates from a prevailing sense of wonder, a commitment to think the faith. Sunday school has proven a viable venue for that practice, if only to stem my own winsome tides of ignorance.

## Fellowship Sunday School Class

**9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall Room 203**

A traditional Sunday School class taught by a variety of church members with thoughtful and unique perspectives and presentation styles. Adults ages sixty and above. To learn more, contact the following class leaders:

**Nancy Sutton at [nancyss08@gmail.com](mailto:nancyss08@gmail.com)**

**Ed Jenkins at [EJenkins@jenkins.com](mailto:EJenkins@jenkins.com)**

## People Class

**9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall Room 201**

A Sunday School class for those who enjoy discussing relevant topics based on religious books, scripture study, or world and church events. Adults ages sixty and above. To learn more, contact the following class leader: **Kay Tawney at [kaytawney@gmail.com](mailto:kaytawney@gmail.com)**



# Grounded in Friendship and Community

## Outdoor Ministry

Visit [covenantpresby.org/outdoor-ministry](http://covenantpresby.org/outdoor-ministry)

**Saturday, November 4 (November 11 rain date)**  
**9:00 a.m. at Latta Nature Preserve**  
**Jim and Jolene Powell, Pathfinders.**

The hike is approximately 2.75 miles long. We'll walk through the woods and near the edge of the lake, stopping to take short side trails to the water's edge. We'll visit two prominent viewing areas, Wash Rock and Buzzards Rock. At a leisurely pace, the hike should take approximately an hour and a half. Rest rooms are available.



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## S.O.S. (Surviving Our Spouses)

Kandy Cospers, [kandycospers@gmail.com](mailto:kandycospers@gmail.com)

**SOS Wine and Cheese Party**  
**November 4 at 4:00 p.m.**  
**Mere's in The Courtyard, 2400 Park Road.**

The next gathering of Covenant's Surviving Our Spouses" group is a Wine and Cheese Party. For questions and to sign up, contact Anne Gildea, [anne.m.gildea@gmail.com](mailto:anne.m.gildea@gmail.com). Bring \$28 in cash and enjoy charcuterie, fine wine, and good fellowship.



Under beautiful blue skies, twenty-five Covenant widows and widowers enjoyed the annual SOS Fall Picnic recently, chaired by Anne Gildea and Susan Murphy. Chef Johnny prepared lunch, and group member Walter Coley added his famous homemade tarts to the dessert table.

## Music & Song

Grounded in Celebration, Growing in Joyful Expression

**Singing the Music of Advent and Christmas Wednesdays, November - December 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

Sing the music of the season with Covenant Choir. Come for one-hour rehearsals in November and December to sing throughout Advent.



**Sing with Youth Singers for Advent and Christmas. Rehearsals on Sunday mornings 10:30-10:50 a.m. | Room 315**

**Weekly Covenant Choir Rehearsals Wednesdays, 6:30-8:15 p.m.**

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## T.L.C. (Travel, Learn, Connect)

**November 15**  
We will be traveling to the new Habitat for Humanity Charlotte Region warehouse for a program with Laura Belcher, then back to Covenant for lunch at Dilworth Neighborhood Grille. RSVP: Michelle Williamson at [michelle.williamson@covenantpresby.org](mailto:michelle.williamson@covenantpresby.org)

**Save the Date**  
December 6th TLC's BINGO Christmas party!



# Praying This Journey Stays with Me

BY ELLEN SCHUBERT



Toward the conclusion of our four-day journey, depicting the evolution of slavery and the Civil Rights Movement, I entered the Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama. Our Tour Guides had forewarned us that we would be embarking on an emotional walk through this time

in history, which was remarkably absent from my private school education in upstate New York. The clear message I heard from the three previous days was that “this is not over.”

Amidst the powerful displays of silhouettes, statistics, and documentaries, I began to follow the dedicated pathway that led me through this chronological journey. I started to hear indistinguishable voices and saw to the left and to the right of me, dramatic representations of inhuman “living” quarters all of which included bars, like what you would find suitable for caged animals. I started to focus on a voice, a beautiful voice of a woman singing. I kept walking toward that voice until I found its source. She sang clearly, passionately, and beautifully of her faith in her God and in her Christ. From behind bars.

Across from this image was a bench, placed by the Museum, for visitors to sit and face the singer. I turned, and saw the youngest member of our group, sitting, watching the woman, and sobbing. I froze, uncertain of whether to sit with her and comfort her, offer my hand on hers, or leave her in this very private and personal moment. All I could do was stand motionless, unsure if she would welcome the comfort of a white woman. “Would she want me there” was all I could wonder. Was I any better than the generations before me in her mind. I stayed motionless and immovable, until the moment (which felt like an hour) had passed and she went on.

It isn’t over, but I pray every day that this pilgrimage stays with me and makes me stronger and more brave and never again motionless.



# Extended Communion Resumes

BY JUDY GRUBBS



In August, Covenant resumed serving extended communion after pausing it because of Covid. Once a quarter, following the celebration of communion at Covenant, teams of two take the bread and cup blessed in worship to share with home bound or hospitalized members who desire to be served.

Ann Ayers recently shared her reflections on this ministry, saying “Live streaming is such a blessing to our members who can’t attend worship in person. Yet on communion Sundays, though they can see the elements and hear the words, they miss the sensory experiences of taste and smell and touch. Extended communion invites them into the complete holiness of the sacrament.” That sense of holiness can occur in a living room, an activity space in assisted living, or at the bedside in a hospital.

Those who serve extended communion in homes or health care settings frequently find that family members or fellow residents ask to join in the sacrament. As is the case when communion is served at church, all are welcome.

Sherry Ward reflects, “Serving extended communion to our home bound members is one of the BEST things that Covenant does. I am always humbled by the peace that settles over the room as scripture and prayers are spoken. Often I leave the homes feeling that I have been in the presence of a saint – many of these members being those who once led Covenant – making it possible for us to experience such a rich life of worship and service today.”



Emily Reinicker is another elder who has faithfully served. She says, “The folks I have visited are so glad not to be forgotten. Many of these members have been pillars of our church; I love to hear the stories of teaching Sunday School and raising families in the church.”

If you or someone you care about would like to receive extended communion, contact Laura Capranica at [laura.capranica@covenantpresby.org](mailto:laura.capranica@covenantpresby.org). To serve with this ministry contact Judy Grubbs at [jgrubbs@earthlink.net](mailto:jgrubbs@earthlink.net) or Mary Wood Stallings at [mwoodstallings@yahoo.com](mailto:mwoodstallings@yahoo.com).

## Safety First

New procedures for weekday visitors



During the week our church is home to three schools and a large staff, as well as a place of hospitality for a number of members and visitors attending classes, meetings, and events. For this reason our Director of Operations, William Lucas, has implemented new procedures to secure the safety of everyone on our campus.

To limit access to our schools we have added a special lock to the interior door of the Education Building which can be opened with a staff card or by the Welcome Desk personnel.

Monday through Friday we’re requiring anyone who isn’t on staff — every member or visitor — to sign in at the Welcome Desk before proceeding to their desired location.

We appreciate your willingness to take these extra steps in the spirit of care and responsibility for those attending our campus during the week.





# Celebrating Habitat's Carter Work Project

A host of Covenant members worked alongside Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood during Habitat for Humanity's 2023 Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project. More than 70 members volunteered for at least one nine-hour workday as part of Covenant's team, and many more volunteered with their employers or civic groups.

The Project took place at the Meadows at Plato Price affordable housing development during the week of October 1-6, and made significant progress in the construction of 27 affordable homes.



Covenant members' participation was not limited to driving nails, and extended to nearly every aspect of the Project. Mission and Outreach Chair Tim Kendrick described the breadth of members' involvement: "It's never hard to find a reason to be proud of Covenant Presbyterian but it was especially easy last week

with the Carter Habitat for Humanity Build here in Charlotte. We were incredibly lucky to have Covenant represented with Laura Belcher as the overall leader (what an awesome job she did), Kerr Collins driving overall operations, Jason Graffis and Heather Potter leading the Children's Choir, and Katherine Kerr with her amazing invocation during the opening ceremony. The Covenant volunteers did excellent work and, thanks to Steph Guffin's coordination, had the experience of a lifetime."

Covenant's volunteer efforts at the Carter Work Project complement significant financial investment in the Meadows at Plato Price. Covenant members contributed more than \$350,000 toward the development, which was presented during worship on September 10. This gift makes Covenant one of the largest financial supporters of the project, corporate or nonprofit. The Meadows at Plato Price is named for the Plato Price School, which served a thriving African-American neighborhood until its closure in the 1960s.



## Thanksgiving Dinner at Moore Place & The Rise on Clanton

For the second year, we will be serving Thanksgiving dinner to the residents at both Moore Place and The Rise on Clanton, two of Roof Above's permanent supportive housing sites. We need your help in providing home-cooked side dishes and desserts as well as volunteers to serve the meal itself on Tuesday, November 21.

**Email Mandy Rencher:**  
[mandy.rencher@covenantpresby.org](mailto:mandy.rencher@covenantpresby.org)



## Sharon Towers/Roof Above Project

The congregation members at Sharon Towers continue to organize hygiene items for Roof Above Emergency Men's Shelter. Current needs include: men's deodorants, disposable razor blades and travel sized shampoos.

**To donate items look for a "ROOF ABOVE" box in the Welcome Center**



# Racial Justice Author Speaking in February

BY BRETT SHUDAK



I was invited to join a Covenant book club and read *The Color of Compromise* by Jemar Tisby in preparation for his visit to Covenant next February.

I was unaware of Tisby's work. Still, I was enthusiastic about a deeper study of a concept I thought I was familiar with, having wrestled with issues of privilege and structural racism during the national turmoil that exploded after the murder of George Floyd in 2020.

Tisby's work was densely packed with a perspective that challenged my own. Page after page, he peeled back the onion on America's relationship with racism from our nation's founding, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and into modern issues we face today told through the lens of the American Christian Church's involvement. Tisby cast light into the complicit action and inaction of our heroes in the faith, honored historical institutions, and the Body of Christ.

Tisby shared difficult historical lessons and truths I am still working to wrap my head around. After George Floyd's murder, corporations, communities, and individuals launched efforts to educate and invest in diversity and inclusion. Yet, it feels like momentum has slowed with pressures in the economy and politicizing of the educational efforts. I am learning it is not just a task to be checked off on our to-do lists.

Jesus set the example of loving his neighbor and challenging the status quo throughout his ministry, becoming the ultimate sacrifice through his death and resurrection. He preached the Kingdom of Heaven and illustrated that this mysterious kingdom would appear upside-down from our earthly vantage points. Participants in this Gospel, we are called as individuals and as the Church to join in bringing about this Kingdom of Heaven through the renewal of our minds, our neighborhoods, our workplaces, and our city.

Tisby claims that "Justice takes sides" and leaves us with the bold charge, "What will the Church do?"



## Jemar Tisby

February 10-11, 2024

**Saturday, February 10: Book Discussion**

**Sunday, February 11: Sermon**

Jemar Tisby is the author of the New York Times bestselling book, *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the Church's Complicity in Racism, How to Fight Racism*, and *How to Fight Racism: Young Reader's Edition*. He is also a Professor of History at Simmons College of Kentucky in Louisville. Jemar is the co-host of the "Pass the Mic" podcast. His writing has been featured in the *Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, and the *New York Times* among others. He is a frequent commentator on NPR and CNN's New Day program. He speaks nationwide on the topics of racial justice, U.S. history and Christianity. Jemar earned his PhD in history and he studies race, religion, and social movements in the 20th century.

**To prepare for his visit, we'll begin a congregation-wide study of Jemar Tisby's work starting in January 2024.**

# Mark Your Calendar

## Christmas is Around the Corner!

As we all know, Thanksgiving dinner means Christmas is almost here. Don't miss these late November and early December events at Covenant.

### The Giving Tree in the Welcome Center November 19 – December 11

Covenant's Giving Tree for Highland students will be available in the Welcome Center beginning Sunday, November 19. Choose an ornament and shop for family gifts to be dropped back off at the Welcome Center by Sunday, December 10 and delivered to the school that week. Questions? Contact Sally Harriss at [sallyhharriss@gmail.com](mailto:sallyhharriss@gmail.com)

### Christmas Crafts

#### Wednesday, December 6 at 5:00 p.m.

We'll have card making, cookie decorating, and ornament making. Santa will be there! Sign up for Santa coming soon.

### Alternative Gift Market

#### December 10

#### 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Save a bit of your holiday shopping and come buy jewelry, nativity scenes, Christmas ornaments and delicious treats, all in support of our partner agencies, both in Charlotte and around the world. You can also purchase an honor card. An honor card is a 100% donation to an organization of your choice that comes in a beautiful Covenant member-designed card to share with a loved one during this holiday season.

### Lessons and Carols

#### December 10 at 5:00 p.m.

Covenant Choir, Youth Singers, Children's Choirs, Covenant Ringers lead the congregation in favorite carols and new songs of the season. All are invited to come sing with the Covenant Choir for Lessons and Carols.

### Christmas Present Drive

#### December 1-15

Covenant volunteers are needed to spend time with the children and families at the Mezzanine as they take photos with Santa and "shop" for presents for their loved ones. We also need donations of small presents in the tubs located in the Welcome Center by 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 13.

## Women's Retreat 2024 Topic: "Growing Together"



February 2-4, 2024

Embassy Suites by Hilton

Greenville Downtown RiverPlace

**SIGN UP:** [covenantpresby.org/retreats](https://covenantpresby.org/retreats)



### Our Guest Speaker is Julianne Clayton

Julianne is the host of the "remind{her}" podcast, a podcast offering faith-inspired reflections for women with anxious hearts and distracted minds. Julianne also serves as a spiritual director and has a Master of Arts in Christian Spiritual Formation and Leadership. To learn more: [julianneelaineclayton.com](https://julianneelaineclayton.com).



## *Joys and Concerns of Our Members and Friends*

### **OUR SYMPATHY AND LOVE TO**

**John Beyer** and family on the death of his father Alfred James Beyer on August 26

**Julie Bacon** and family on the death of her step-father William Porcher Miles IV on August 15

**Janet Gleeson** and family on the death of her sister Patricia Welton Johnson on August 20

**Jenny Porter** and family on the death of her mother Mary Parham Boles on September 4

**Jennifer Miralia** and family on the death of her father George Arzberger on September 6

**Kathryn Ash** and family on the death her mother Anne Herron Lummus on September 17

**Glenda Helms** and family on the death of her husband Thomas Stephen Helms on September 10

### **IN LOVING MEMORY**

**Annette Timens Bedford**, January 9, 1941 - September 20, 2023

**Thomas Stephen Helms**, September 10, 1946 - October 6, 2023

### **MARRIAGES**

**Janine Rogers and Richard Challenger**, August 31, 2023

**Jess Bilz and Steven Howell**, September 9, 2023

**Whitney Broten and Will Bryan**, October 7, 2023

**Sadye Ball and Will Winn**, October 21, 2023

### **BIRTHS**

**Adam Turner Preece**, child of Courtney and Jeffrey Preece, August 17

**Elizabeth Louise Yarbrough**, child of Frances and Tyler Yarbrough, August 31

**Sophie Citron**, child of Maegan and Daniel Citron, September 1

**Rhodes Alexander O'Hara**, child of Lyndly and Liam O'Hara, September 12

**August Lee Bennight**, child of Mauryn and B.T. Bennight, September 17

**John Steven Christy**, child of Liza and Tom Christy, September 20

**George Pittman Edmiston**, child of Katie and Kyle Edmiston, October 13

**Adelaide Grace Freeman**, child of Jane and Jason Freeman, October 14

### **BAPTISMS**

**Cole Thomas Hayes**, child of Kathryn and Rudy Thomas, October 8

**Emma Thomas Liu**, child of Abby and Bo Liu, October 15

## *Welcome Our New Members*



**Irina Bridges**



**Edna Bacon**



**Kim McCarter**



**John & Emily Kennedy**



**Paul Miller**



**Karen Sharpe**



**Christen & Nick Neubauer**  
**Eleanor**



**Candace & Jay McElveen**  
**Levee**



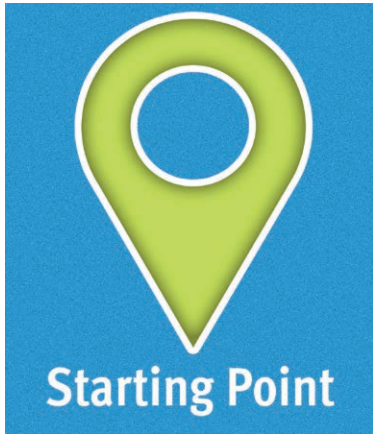
**Pam Manley &**  
**Jamie McFadden**



**Stephen & Lisa Price**  
**Sunny**

**New Members  
without Photos:**

**Katie & Kyle Edmiston**  
**Alexandra & Tyler Morton**  
**Walker & Katie Robinson**



### **Starting Point November 19**

**9:00 - 10:30 a.m.**

Join us for casual conversation,  
coffee, and light breakfast.

Childcare will be available, and  
children are always welcome.

**Contact Lora Borrelli**  
[lora.borrelli@covenantpresby.org](mailto:lora.borrelli@covenantpresby.org)



## **Convocation Sunday: January 7, 2024**

### **Finding Common Ground**

**Descendants of the enslaved and their enslavers build a friendship.**

Michael Mines and Ann Morris learned of their connection in 2020, when Ann was researching her family history and discovered Michael's ancestors were enslaved on a plantation in Virginia at the same time Ann's ancestors were the plantation owners. Together with five cousins — two white Morrisises and three Black Mines — they forged a tight-knit group that met regularly in person and on Zoom for six months.

The two families met in the summer of 2023, along with 180 of the linked descendants, when they gathered to learn and repair relationships on the Virginia plantation.

**Join us in Fellowship Hall on January 7th at 9:30 a.m., when Michael and Ann will be our speakers on Convocation Sunday.**

Listen to their story of how Michael's and Ann's ancestral connection has shaped their lives, and join in conversation about the broader implications for racial justice on a national and global scale.



**Michael Mines**



**Ann Morris**