

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023--15TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Covenant

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CHRIST • PEOPLE • COMMUNITY

MISSION STATEMENT

Covenant Presbyterian Church exists to glorify and enjoy God. We live knowing that God calls us to be a place of love, support, hope and acceptance regardless of earthly labels. Jesus Christ commissions us to make disciples and passionately share our gifts with the world through prayer, teaching, and service. The Holy Spirit allows us to determine and carry out Christ's will for our lives and the life of our church and empowers us to seek out and respond to the needs of our local and global community.



Covenant is proud to be an **Earth Care Congregation**, a **More Light Church** – supporting the LGBTQ+ community, and a **PC(USA) Matthew 25 Church** – committed to dismantling structural racism, eradicating systemic poverty, and building congregational vitality.

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Facebook: "Covenant Presbyterian Church (Johnson City, TN.)"

*(As you participate in worship today, you're invited to rise in body or spirit at * and read aloud the **bolded** responses together with the congregation.)*

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

WELCOME

GREETING

One: Choose this day whom you will serve.

All: **We will serve and obey the Lord our God.**

PRELUDE

*CALL TO WORSHIP

from Psalm 78

One: My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth!
I will speak in parables and utter things hidden from of old.

All: **The things we have heard and known, that our ancestors told us,
we will tell them to our children.**

One: We will tell them of your praiseworthy deeds, O Lord,
your power and the wonders you have performed.

All: **We will tell of the Law you established, that you gave to our elders
and commanded we share with the next generation.**

One: Then they will put their trust in you and never forget your deeds.
They will know you are a good and faithful God.

All: **Remember us, O Lord, and be merciful
as we come before you in praise and worship.**

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

*HYMN OF PRAISE *(see insert)*

"Jesus Be With Us"

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of love, we say we want to see you, we say we want to know you, we say we want to serve you, but we also do not want to put in the work. We do not want to prepare for your coming by working for your kingdom on earth. We do not keep alert for signs of you among us, but become distracted by desires that serve our own purposes. Forgive us. Inspire us to put our faith into action. Surprise us with your presence, so we might learn to be ready to greet you at any time, in the faces of friends and strangers. This we pray through Christ, who came to live and love in our midst. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: All who seek the Lord, rejoice and be glad!
God is mighty to save and comes to redeem, restore, and strengthen you.
This is the good news we proclaim: through Christ, we are forgiven.

All: **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

SHARING THE PEACE

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning”

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST LESSON (p. 205—NT)

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

***HYMN OF INVITATION** # 349

“Sleepers Wake!” A Voice Astounds Us

SECOND LESSON (p. 28—NT)

Matthew 25:1-13

One: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Rev. Maggie Rust

RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

from *the Confession of 1967*

Jesus Christ is God with us, the eternal Son of the Father, who became man and lived among us to fulfill the ministry of reconciliation between God and creation, and he is present in the church by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue and complete this mission. The Holy Spirit creates and renews the church as the community in which people are reconciled to God and to one another. God enables us to receive forgiveness as we forgive one another and to enjoy the peace of God as we make peace among ourselves.

OFFERTORY

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.

GOING OUT TO SERVE

***HYMN OF BLESSING** # 362

“Rejoice! Rejoice, Believers”

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

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Large-print Hymnals are available in the back of the sanctuary.

Hearing Assist Devices are located in the rear of the Sanctuary. Disposable ear buds are available for your convenience. **Please note**, only one ear bud receives signal, so please check both buds to determine that the unit is working. Contact the church office with any other issues.

WELCOME VISITORS! We are glad you are here. We invite you to fill out a Visitor Card and place it in the offering plate. If you are seeking a church home, you are welcome to join us in discipleship in our community of faith and service; Pastor Maggie would be happy to talk to you about your journey and church membership.

Please join us in the Fellowship Hall for our Second Sunday Potluck!

SUNDAY EVENING ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

Join us this evening at 6 PM on Zoom as we continue our new Bible Study on Sunday Evenings. This will be a time to prayerfully dig deeper into the morning's texts as we discuss what we're hearing the Spirit say to us and to our congregation.

TRIPRIDE FESTIVAL—SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

The annual TriPride Festival is in Founders Park on Saturday, September 23rd. Covenant will have a table with our friends from First Elizabethton. We are looking for volunteers to help us greet our neighbors. If you're available to help, **please** let the church office know!

LAST CALL: BACKPACKS FOR BABMOC THIS WEEK!

We continue our annual “Backpacks for BABMOC” Campaign! **Backpacks can be filled with school supplies such as pens, pencils, erasers, composition books, pencil sharpeners, compasses, rulers, protractors, and glue sticks.** You may bring these supplies on Sundays or during the week (Mon.-Thurs. from 10a – 3p, same as our Good Sam collection times.) **The deadline is September 15th.** If you're unable to shop and would like to contribute monetarily instead, feel free to do so TODAY and we will be happy to buy supplies on your behalf!

TODAY AT COVENANT

Liturgist: Christian Zembower

Accompanist: Jeremi Lukanus

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Maggie Rust

Music Director: Katelyn Gabler

AV Tech: Harvey Trueblood

Office Administrator: Tina Simon

Admin. Assistant: Artie David