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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BOOKLET | 2026-27

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WELCOME TO SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WORSHIP • WELCOME • SEEK • SERVE

- Beginning Sunday, September 13, 2026: Early Worship Service, 8:45 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; Late Worship Service, 11:00 a.m.
- If you have any questions about the church, please visit www.spres.org, call us at 540-343-3659, or email info@spres.org.
- The church building is accessible to people with disabilities, and the elevator makes it possible to reach all three levels with ease.
- Second Presbyterian Church is honored to offer an excellent preschool program which provides full-day options for those who need it. If you would like more information, visit www.sprespreschool.com or call 540-342-6405.
- View the church calendar: www.spres.org/connect/calendar/

— Follow Us on Social Media —



@SPRESROANOKE



This Is Our Story

RALLY DAY PICNIC & FALL KICKOFF

BRAELOCH PAVILION, VINTON, VA | SUNDAY, AUGUST 30, 2026

"We will tell the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord..." – Psalm 78:4

"This is my story, this is my song..." For generations, Christians across denominations and in many different languages have sung these familiar words. But our stories are never ours alone to hold. They are woven into the larger story of God's people—a story of grace, worship, service, and learning that stretches across time and continues to build and unfold in each new generation.

This year, our Christian education theme, "This Is Our Story," invites us to remember that faith is something we share together. We gather around Scripture in community not simply to gain knowledge, but to be formed as disciples of Jesus Christ. In sanctuaries and classrooms, fellowship halls and mission projects, choir rehearsal rooms and meals shared around tables, we learn God's story so that it becomes the story that shapes our lives.

As Presbyterians, we are part of a tradition that has cherished education as an act of faithful discipleship for centuries. From teaching children to read the Bible to nurturing thoughtful faith across a lifetime, the church has always understood loving God involved both heart and mind. Christian education is not confined to a classroom or to an hour on Sunday morning, but is the lifelong work of growing together in wisdom, compassion, and love.

Our own congregation traces its roots to a Sunday school class some 135 years ago. In our story, there have been countless teachers who prepared lessons, volunteers who loved and welcomed children, mentors who asked young people thoughtful questions, and faithful members who shared their gifts across generations. Each member has added another page to the story God is writing among us.

Whether you are testing the waters and dipping your toe into an adult education class or returning to a group of seekers you already know and love, there is a place for you in this year's journey. Called together, we will learn, ask questions, laugh, serve, pray, and witness anew the good news of God's great love.

Welcome to another year of learning, growing, and belonging!

This is our story. This is our song.

AUGUST 30 RALLY DAY PICNIC SCHEDULE @ BRAELOCH PAVILION:

- 10:00 a.m. Worship
- 11:00 a.m. Picnic Lunch / Rally Day Presentation & Celebration

Sunday school for all ages begins on September 13.

CHRISTIAN ED CALENDAR 2026-27

AUGUST

- Rally Day Picnic: Sun. Aug 30

SEPTEMBER

- Labor Day (office closed): Mon. Sept 7
- Sunday School, Youth Group Kickoff Cookout & Parent Meeting, CWW, & Kids' Fellowship Begin: Sun. Sept 13
- College of Elders Dinner: Th. Sept 17
- Third Grade Bible Presentation: Sun. Sept 20

OCTOBER

- All-Youth Retreat: Sat–Sun. Oct 3–4
- World Communion: Sun. Oct 4
- Commitment Sunday: Sun. Oct 11
- Preschool Sunday: Sun. Oct 18
- Men's Retreat: Fri–Sat. Oct 23–24
- Trunk or Treat: Sun. Oct 25

NOVEMBER

- All Saints Sunday: Sun. Nov 1
- Gals' Gathering Women's Retreat: Fri–Sat. Nov 20–21
- Advent Workshop: Sun. Nov 22
- Thanksgiving (office closed): Th–Fri. Nov 26–27
- Advent Begins: Sun. Nov 29

DECEMBER

- Annual Christmas Dinner & Children's Pageant: Sun. Dec 6
- Youth Christmas Party: Sun. Dec 13
- Longest Night Service: Mon. Dec 21
- Christmas Eve: Th. Dec 24
- Christmas Day (Church Office Closed): Fr. Dec 25

JANUARY

- January Pancake Breakfast: Sun. Jan 3
- Confirmation Sunday: Sun. Jan 10
- MLK Day (office closed): Mon. Jan 18

FEBRUARY

- Ash Wednesday: Wed. Feb 10
- Youth Sunday: Sun. Feb 14

MARCH

- High School Sprint Retreat: Fri–Sun. Mar 12–14 (tentative)
- Palm Sunday: Sun. Mar 21
- Easter Sunday (No SS): Sun. Mar 28
- Easter Monday (office closed): Mon. Mar 29

APRIL

- Trent Symposium for New Ministers: Fri–Wed. Apr 16–21 (Trent Dinner: Apr 20)
- Great Day of Service: Sat. Apr 17

MAY

- Legacy Sunday & Over 80's Luncheon: Sun. May 2
- Youth End of Year Party: Sat. May 8
- Senior Recognition: Sun. May 16
- Youth Council Retreat 2027–28: Sun. May 23
- Last day of SS & CWW: Sun. May 23
- Memorial Day (office closed): Mon. May 31

JUNE

- Evening Vacation Bible School (all ages): Sun–Wed. June 6–9
- Youth At-Home Mini Missions: Mon–Wed. June 7–9 / 14–16
- Juneteenth Observed (office closed): Fri. June 18
- High School Youth Mission Trip: Sun–Sat. June 20–26

JULY

- Morning Vacation Bible School (Pre-K–5th grade): Mon–Th. July 19–22
- Montreat High School Youth Conference: Sun–Sat. July 25–31

AUGUST

- Churchwide Retreat: Fri–Sun. Aug 20–22

SUNDAY MORNINGS

NURSERIES

(Infant, Toddler, and 2's Room, near Fellowship Hall)

Nursery Coordinator: Aubrey Beeson



The nursery is open and available for infants and toddlers during both morning worship services and Sunday school. During the Sunday school hour, volunteer teachers lead the children in a special, age-appropriate class. Nursery staff and volunteers are under the nursery coordinator's supervision.

WORSHIP

CHILDREN, WORSHIP & WONDER (CWW)

Pre-K–1st Grade

(Children's Worship Center, Third Floor)

Volunteer Coordinator: Lisa Miller



During the Sunday school year, children ages pre-k through 1st grade enjoy their own special time of worship and wonder at CWW. Following the Children's Time during the 11:00 a.m. worship service, children are excused to the Children's Worship Center on the third floor. They learn the stories of our faith and worship God in a setting and style geared toward their needs and stages of development. Biblical stories are told in the context of a worship experience that includes singing, response time, and "the feast." We hope this will nurture their innate sense of wonder as they develop a sense of awe and reverence for worship.

For more info or to serve as a storyteller or greeter, contact Lisa Miller (lisa.a.johnson83@gmail.com).

FOR CHILDREN

PRESCHOOL

3's and 4's Sunday School

(Preschool Classroom, Third Floor)

Our 3- and 4-year-old children will enjoy learning about God's Word through many different learning styles. Teachers work with children using age-appropriate lessons and play through art, music, and storytelling. This class will use curriculum which walks through key Old Testament and New Testament Bible stories each year.

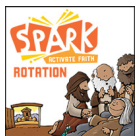
THE RIVER (K–3RD GRADE)

(Third Floor)

Coordinator: Maria Blackshaw

Younger elementary-aged children will enjoy our Workshop Rotation Model Sunday School called *The River*, a name the children chose themselves. Using the *Spark Rotation* curriculum, kindergarten through 3rd graders will spend four weeks on a Bible story, and visit different workshops each week in order to experience the same story from different perspectives. The workshops include "MArts" (Music & Arts), "God's Table" (Cooking), "Holy Word, Holy Motion" (Bible Storytelling through games and drama), and "Holy Explosion" (Science). This year, *The River* will study the following units:

- The First Sin (Genesis 3:1-24)
- Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 12:1-9, 18:1-15, 21:1-7)
- Hannah and Samuel (1 Samuel 1:9-27)
- Jesus is Born (Matthew 1:18-25, 2:1-12; Luke 1:26-58, 2:1-20)
- Four Friends (Luke 5:17-26)
- Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42)



- Palm Sunday – Easter Sunday (Luke 19:28-40, 22:14-23, 24:1-12)
- Lydia (Acts 16:11-15)
- Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26)

THE BRIDGE (4TH & 5TH GRADE) (Third Floor)

Facilitators: Degra Nofsinger, Christal Pearson

The Bridge builds on the biblical stories and foundational concepts students learned in The River, inviting 4th and 5th graders to explore Scripture with greater depth and independence. Through history, geography, and an introduction to the Bible's structure and literary forms, students begin to see Scripture as a rich, connected story.

Throughout the year, students will create a personal faith scrapbook of maps, timelines, family trees, artwork, and reflections. Together, we are growing curious, thoughtful disciples and laying a strong foundation for a mature faith and Confirmation.

FOR YOUTH

MIDDLE SCHOOL COMPASS CLASS (The Intersection)

Facilitators: Jim Baynton, April Lewis

This middle school class will explore faith and build upon the basics they learn as children, connecting Scripture with their daily lives. This fall, the class will be using the PC(USA)'s *Faith Questions* curriculum to respond to real faith questions posed by Presbyterian youth from across the denomination. Each unit encourages young people to look to Scripture, as well as our faith traditions, in relevant and responsive ways.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

(The Intersection)

Facilitators: Lauren Ellerman, Ken Lyons

Confirmation is the bookend of our baptism, when our young people take personal responsibility for their faith. Confirmation class follows the *Confirm Not Conform* curriculum, which helps youth claim their place in the priesthood of all believers. By engaging youth in Scripture, discussion, testimony, and debate, *Confirm Not Conform* empowers youth for ministry and empowers them to think deeply about their own faith. Teachers and mentors build important and lasting relationships with the young people of this class, and work as a team to support and love these students throughout the year and beyond. This year's confirmation class is open to all youth who are in 8th grade or older who seek to be confirmed as full, active members of the church.

HIGH SCHOOL SUNDAY SCHOOL

(The Intersection)

Facilitators: Sarah Bishop, Aaron Copeland, Chasity Fitzpatrick

High School Sunday School will be split into two semesters: fall and spring. The fall class will be a conversation-based class focused on Scripture and how it relates to our everyday lives. Using the *Feasting on the Word Youth Curriculum*, this class encourages youth to vocalize their questions about faith, seek understanding from one another, from Scripture, and from tradition, and explore aspects of faith through fun and fellowship. In the spring, the class (now combined with Confirmation Class) will walk through *Unoffendable*, a curriculum that takes a long hard look at "righteous anger." Throughout

the spring, this class will explore practical ways to live life with less stress and more care by becoming unoffendable. If students cannot attend each week, we still strongly encourage them to come whenever they are able. Volunteers often provide breakfast, so come hungry!

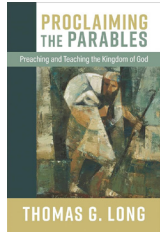
FOR ADULTS

REFORMED AND ALWAYS REFORMING

(Trent Room, Hybrid)

Facilitators: Dr. George Anderson, Suzanne Fischer, Dan Hodges, Al McLean

Join us as we explore the parables of Jesus and what they reveal about the Kingdom of God.



Guided by *Proclaiming the Parables: Preaching and Teaching the Kingdom of God* by Thomas G. Long, we'll examine these familiar stories in their biblical and theological context, discovering that they are far more than simple

moral lessons. Instead, the parables proclaim the surprising, transformative reality of God's Kingdom and continue to challenge, encourage, and shape Christ's church today.

Purchasing the book is optional. Weekly parables and Scripture passages will be provided so participants can prepare by reading directly from the Bible, and the class will be taught with the expectation that not everyone has the book.

Come ready for thoughtful discussion as we deepen our understanding of Jesus' teaching and grow together in our appreciation of the wisdom, grace, and power of Jesus' parables.

THE OPEN DOOR CLASS

(Session Room, Hybrid)

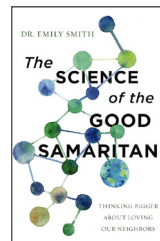
Facilitators: Nancy Gray, David Howell, Chris Link, Bruce Stockburger. Host: Kay Saleeby

Join the Open Door class as they begin the fall by studying the following two books. The class will select a third book to read in spring 2027.

The Science of the Good Samaritan:

Thinking Bigger About Loving Our Neighbors by Emily Smith (2023).

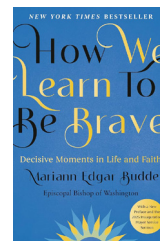
Written by an epidemiologist who teaches at Duke University's Global Health Institute, Dr. Smith uses stories and data to explore



what one of Jesus' most well-known parables can teach readers today about "neighboring." For her, epidemiology is "the quantifying of a need through data." The interpretive lens of the Good Samaritan helps Smith explain difficult ideas like historical inequities, structural violence, and systemic racism and challenge Christians to "not walk by" but choosing to center what Jesus centered on and see our vulnerable neighbors.

How We Learn to Be Brave: Decisive Moments in Life and Faith by Mariann Edgar Budde (2023).

Budde is the Episcopal bishop of Washington, DC who gained a level of notoriety because of her interactions with President Trump; first



in 2020 as a result of Black Lives Matter protests in Lafayette Square and secondly in 2025 during the inauguration prayer service where she beseeched Trump to "have mercy on those in our country who have fear." Weaving together stories from the Bible, from history, from

popular culture, and her own life, Bishop Budde delineates decisive moments people face and calls readers to act courageously in ways that align with their values in such moments.

FAITH, FACTS, AND FELLOWSHIP **(Reading Room, Hybrid)**

Facilitators: Louise and Andrew Gerhards, Shevaun O'Connell

It's a rebrand, baby! Welcome to the next phase of Covenant Conversation. The class will now be called Faith, Facts, and Fellowship: Exploring Christianity through History, Devotion, and Conversation.

Faith, Facts, and Fellowship will be a deep dive into topics that have been sitting on the edges of polite conversation for some time and are just begging for a closer look.

Topics like what?

- When was the Bible first written down? Why?
- What does it mean to live your life like Jesus?
- Where did Israel come from?
- What do we actually know about Mary from Magdala?
- What does the Bible actually tell us about homosexuality?
- How can we be true Christians in a dysvan-gelical America?
- Where is and what the heck is the Ark of the Covenant?
- Where did our version of Satan originate?

These will be short, 1–2 week lessons crafted to challenge your mind and open your heart.

We can't wait to start the conversation!

WORDS ON THE WORD **(Lemon Library, Hybrid)**

Facilitators: Bill Blaylock, Mia Copeland, Rich Raymond, Dave Speno

Adults see the world through the lens of their life experiences, backgrounds, and transitions. Participants in the Words on the Word class bring diverse perspectives, including different religious experiences. Our goal is to deepen our understanding of Scripture and explore how God's Word speaks to our lives today.

The class uses the *Feasting on the Word* curriculum, which follows the



lectionary readings for each Sunday. Each week, we engage with a Gospel reading along with selections from the Old Testament, Psalms, Prophets, New Testament, and Epistles. On September 13, our first Sunday of the school year, we will explore Matthew 18, Romans 14, and Psalm 102.

The lectionary follows a three-year cycle, covering approximately 90% of the New Testament and 20% of the Old Testament. Our ministers often draw their sermons from these same readings, providing additional insight into the day's Scripture.

The class also occasionally explores secular literature that offers fresh perspectives on the biblical texts. Through discussion, reflection, and shared exploration, we seek to engage Scripture in meaningful ways.

So, dust off the Bible on your nightstand or bookshelf and join us as we explore God's Word together in this weekly adult Sunday school class.

CONFIRM NOT CONFORM FOR PARENTS

(Café, Fall Series)

Facilitators: Chris Lewis, Rev. Ben Brannan

Geared toward the parents of confirmands, this companion class will parallel parts of what our youth will be learning in confirmation this year, encouraging conversations at home. Meeting 6–8 times in the fall, participants will be invited to ask questions they have always wanted to ask and explore their faith from an adult perspective. The emphasis will be on building an authentic faith, and lessons will cover basics on the Bible, creeds, sacraments, and topics which may have been ignored or lost in the mists of time.

FAITHFUL FAMILIES

(Klein Classroom, First Floor)

Facilitators: Margaret Ashburn, Rev. Ben Brannan, Rebekah Gunn, Rev. Elizabeth Link

Faithful Families is an adult Sunday school class for couples, parents, and individuals seeking to grow in faith through meaningful conversation, Bible study, and authentic community. We believe that every stage of life offers opportunities to deepen our relationship with Christ and learn from one another.

We'll begin the year by exploring themes of grace, redemption, forgiveness, hope, and purpose through the lens of popular culture, including *Ted Lasso*, *The Good Place*, and *Wicked*. From there, we'll branch into a variety of biblical and contemporary topics throughout the year, always seeking to connect God's Word with everyday life.

Come join us as we learn, grow, and encourage one another in Christ.

POP-UP SUNDAY SCHOOL

(Fellowship Hall, First Sundays)

Facilitators: Varied

Gather the first Sunday of the month for POP-UP Sunday School. Drop in for an interesting topic or guest speaker. Topics will include updates from our mission partners, stories from the history of Second, religion in art, and other important topics facing the modern church.

BELIEVING AND BELONGING

(Hospitality Room, Seasonal)

Facilitators: Dr. George Anderson, Rev. Elizabeth Link



Join our ministers George Anderson and Elizabeth Link for a seasonal two-week class on what it means to be a Presbyterian, and what it means to be a member of Second Presbyterian Church. This is a great class for visitors and new members! **The fall class will meet September 20 & 27. Spring dates: TBD.**

SUNDAY EVENINGS

KIDS' FELLOWSHIP: AGES 4 (BY SEPT 1)–5TH GRADE

(Sundays 5–6:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall)

Kids' Fellowship provides an opportunity for children ages 4 (by Sept 1) through 5th grade to come together outside of a formal classroom setting. The evening begins with dinner provided by families. After dinner, the children divide into two groups by age and enjoy activities such as recreation, games, and art. Each group will spend part of the evening participating in Music, upstairs in the Children's Choir Suite. The fo-

cus is on the fun and joy of making music using voices, instruments, and movement. Kids' Fellowship presents a Christmas pageant each December and sings in the worship service several times a year.

YOUTH GROUP

When: Sunday nights, 5:00–6:30 p.m.

Who: 6th–12th graders and Youth Advisors

Where: The Intersection

What: Middle and high school youth, and all the friends you bring, gather to build relationships and connect with each other and with God. This time is set apart to enjoy food, fellowship, and fun while exploring various aspects of faith. This year's Youth Group theme is *Rise & Shine*! This theme is an invitation to wake up to God's presence, rise into the person God created you to be, and shine Christ's light in a world that desperately needs hope. It reminds students that faith isn't simply believing the right things—it's living as people who reflect the light of Jesus every day: in classrooms and cafeterias, on sports fields and stages, online and offline, in moments of joy and moments of struggle. We don't rise because we have everything figured out. We rise because Christ has already met us with grace. And we don't shine to draw attention to ourselves—we shine so that others might catch a glimpse of the God whose light is already transforming us from the inside out. So, come join us this year as we *Rise & Shine*: wake up to our identity, rise up as we grow, shine bright as a witness, and light the world through mission.

A weekly youth email is sent to parents and youth who wish to receive it. To be added to the email list, please reach out to Rev. Ben Brannan.

2PC CLUBS

(Beginning in October)

Looking for a small group where you can build friendships and enjoy your favorite hobbies? 2PC Clubs are the perfect place to connect! Check out the clubs available and sign up by Sunday, September 13 at www.spres.org, by scanning the QR code, or by calling the church office. You may sign up for more than one club. Club coordinators will contact members by phone or email; the first meetings will be in October. *Clubs include: Book, Coffee, Knitting, Lunch, Morning Walking, Movie, Pickleball, Restaurant, and Roots & Wings.*



MIDWEEK

MIDWEEK MANNA

When: One Wednesday a month, 6:30–8:00 p.m. (dates/times subject to change)

Who: High School Girls

Where: Homes of church members or outings

What: This group of high school girls gathers to take a break from their hectic schedules, check in with each other, and enjoy moments of connection and learning. These nights center around a shared meal and an activity—devotional, craft, game—and the bonds created are long-lasting and meaningful. This group is led by Rebekah Gunn and Julie Mugford. Contact Rev. Ben Brannan for more information.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MINI MANNA

When: Once a month (dates/times subject to change)

Who: Middle School Girls

Where: Location varies

What: This group of middle school girls gathers to learn and grow together, form strong bonds and relationships, and create lasting memories. This time together centers around a shared meal and shared presence. This group is led by youth mom April Lewis. Contact Rev. Ben Brannan for more information.

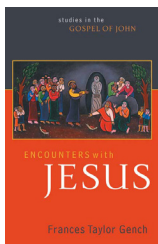
YOUNG ADULTS

Second Presbyterian's Young Adults group is an active group of men and women in their 20s and 30s. We all are at different stages in our life, and this group provides opportunities to gather to eat, to have fun, and to explore faith in various ways. The Young Adults try to meet as much as possible either at someone's home or out for a fun activity. We offer Sunday lunches and weeknight gatherings to fit everyone's schedules. If interested or to be added to the email list, please contact Rev. Ben Brannan.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

(Beginning September 17, Thursdays @ 7:15 a.m., Reading Room, Hybrid)

Facilitators: Bill Blaylock, Aaron Copeland, Jeff Hobbs, Dave Speno



The Men's Bible Study at Second meets weekly to read, pray, and be guided by the Holy Spirit as we faithfully interpret Scripture together for our day and time—right here in Roanoke. This fall, we will begin a study of the Gos-

pel of John using a study guide entitled *Encounters with Jesus* by Frances Taylor Gench.

The Men's Bible Study is committed to a careful, faithful reading of the text. Our approach is exegetical, letting the text speak to us rather than our manipulating the Word to our satisfaction. This practice has deepened our faith, strengthened our community, and most importantly, grounded us more firmly in the Word.

Come participate and enjoy what Christ is saying to us through Scripture today. If interested, please reach out to Dave Speno (davidspeno@gmail.com) for information and to be added to the group email list.

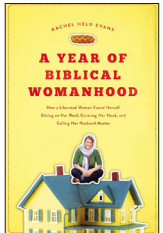
WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

(Beginning September 10, Thursdays @ 10:30 a.m., Session Room)

Facilitator: Rev. Elizabeth Link

What is “biblical womanhood” . . . really?

Join Elizabeth Link this fall for an engaging Bible study and discussion based on Rachel Held Evans' 2012 book, *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*. In this thoughtful and often humorous memoir, Evans chronicles her yearlong experiment of taking many of the Bible's instructions for women as literally as possible—from covering her head and making her own clothes to calling her husband “master” and even spending part of each month outside. Along the way, her unusual journey becomes a springboard for deeper questions about Scripture, tradition, culture, and faith.



Over ten weeks, we'll read the book alongside

Scripture as we wrestle with challenging passages and explore what faithful biblical interpretation looks like today. Together, we'll approach the Bible with both reverence and curiosity, honoring its historical and cultural context while seeking the liberating, life-giving heart of the gospel. Whether you're a longtime Rachel Held Evans fan or reading her work for the first time, you're invited to bring your questions, your experiences, and your whole self.

THE BIBLE IN BLACK & WHITE

(Seasonal | FALL: Wednesdays in October @ Noon, Fellowship Hall | SPRING: Wednesdays in April @ Noon, Fellowship Hall)

Facilitators: Dr. George Anderson, Dr. Bill Lee, and ministers from other participating churches



The Bible in Black & White class is a community of people representing different races, churches and communities who have committed to study and fellowship for greater understanding. The study takes place every fall and spring in the Fellowship Hall of Second Presbyterian Church.

Fall Class: “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

Wednesdays in October at Noon

The class will consider Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” dated April 16,

1963. We will look at the historical context of the letter, its content, its biblical basis, and the impact it made on the nation during the tumultuous Civil Rights era. Together, we will ask what we modern readers need to gain from its reading to continue the pursuit of justice and understanding today.

Spring Class: “Hooked by the Word”

Wednesdays in April at Noon

What Scripture passage gets under your skin and refuses to let go? In this session, various community pastors will share the specific biblical texts that have permanently hooked them. These leaders will reveal the passages that continue to deeply disrupt, shape, and inspire their thinking, praying, ministry, and daily behavior in the world.

****Hybrid Classes****

For more information or to receive the Zoom link for any of our adult Sunday or midweek hybrid classes, please contact Pastoral Ministries Coordinator, Meredith Koliba at meredith@spres.org.

SPECIAL EVENTS

MEN'S RETREAT 2026

October 23–24 (Fri.–Sat.) | Eagle Eyrie Conference Center

With Guest Speaker Carter Brothers

Virtuesmaxxing: Either the Next Big Thing or What We Were Supposed to Be Doing All Along

Today's culture seems to be all about maxxing. Social influencers tell us to be all about "looksmaxxing." Our politicians seem to be more and more interested in "vicemaxxing." All the while, the rest of us just experience more and more "sadmaxxing" as loneliness increases and happiness decreases. This fall, the men of 2PC will gather to confront these challenges by "virtuesmaxxing" at Eagle Eyrie on October 23 and 24. Carter Brothers will lead the charge while looking at the Christian virtues highlighted in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and how his story about wizards, hobbits, and elves (oh my!) can teach us how to be more fully human in the 21st Century. We will worship together, feast together, laugh together and, of course, fellowship together!

Carter Brothers is a member of Second Pres who has taught several adult Sunday school classes on Tolkien, Lewis, and Dickens through the years and has helped with music at several Kairos services. He is married to Rev. Jen Brothers (PCUSA) and is the father of three daughters, all of whom love to participate in the family "Tolkien Reference of the Day" challenge.

We are excited to welcome back the Rev. Chris Vogado, Pastor of Salem Presbyterian Church, who will be leading music with Carter. We are also pleased to extend this year's invitation to the men of Salem Pres. We hope you'll join us!

Learn more at spres.org. Scan the QR code to register by Wednesday, October 14, 2026.



VIRTUESMAXXING

Either the Next Big Thing or What We Were Supposed to Be Doing All Along



MEN'S RETREAT 2026

October 23–24 (Fri.–Sat.) | Eagle Eyrie
Ft. Guest Speaker Carter Brothers

REGISTRATION:

Cost: \$75
Register by Wed, Oct. 14.

SPECIAL EVENTS

GALS' GATHERING 2026

November 20–21 (Fri.–Sat.) | Alta Mons Camp and Retreat Center

With Guest Speaker Rev. Donna Hopkins Britt

Advent Waiting | *Scripture: Isaiah 40:3–5*

Many of us feel like we are wandering through a kind of wilderness. Yet even in these challenging places, we can prepare the way for the Lord to come to us. Together, we can identify the obstacles that stand in our way and discern how to address them so that the themes of Advent may be more fully seen, experienced, and lived out in our community. Along the way, we will journey through each Gospel, exploring hope through Matthew's perspective, peace through Mark's, joy through Luke's, and love through John's.

The Rev. Donna Hopkins Britt, though born in Roanoke, took a circuitous path to return, living in several cities in Virginia as well as New York City, Suburban Maryland, and Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. She graduated from James Madison University and later earned a Master of Divinity degree from Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond. Donna has also worked as a Child Abuse Prevention Educator for Children's Trust, followed by time as a Chaplain at Gentiva Hospice. She has served as Pastor of Buchanan Presbyterian since June, 2023. Donna enjoys hiking, crossword puzzles, game nights, and spending time with her husband Brian, her two children Noah and Lauren, her Labrador retrievers, and friends.

Learn more at spres.org. *Scan the QR code to register by Wednesday, November 11, 2026.*



GALS' GATHERING 2026

November 20–21 (Fri.–Sat.) | Alta Mons

Ft. Rev. Donna Hopkins Britt,
Pastor of Buchanan Presbyterian Church



REGISTRATION:

Cost: \$100

Register by Wed, Nov. 11.



PODCASTS

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