



From the Pastor

Hello Southminster

There are seasons when faith feels full—when prayer flows easily, when Scripture opens like sunlight through a window, when gratitude rises without effort. And then there are other seasons—when words dry up, when God feels distant, when belief itself feels like a fragile thread.

Many of us carry a quiet shame about these moments, as if doubt or dryness were failures rather than part of the life of faith. Yet Scripture tells another story. The Psalms are full of cries like, “How long, O Lord?” and “Why have you hidden your face from me?” Even Jesus, from the cross, voices the desolation of Psalm 22: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” These are not words of unbelief, but of a faith honest enough to wrestle, to question, to cling even when sight is lost.

When faith feels thin, God is not absent. Often, God is working in ways too deep for us to perceive. The Spirit intercedes “with sighs too deep for words” (Romans 8:26), praying through our silence when we cannot. Sometimes faith’s most courageous act is simply staying—keeping the small candle lit, showing up to worship, whispering a prayer we’re not sure anyone hears. That, too, is faith.

Thin faith may actually be truer than we realize. It leaves little room for pride and much room for grace. When our certainty is stripped away, what remains is trust—trust not in our own grasp of God, but in God’s steadfast grasp of us. The Good Shepherd does not love us less when we wander; he seeks us more urgently.

And often, through the kindness of others—a word, a song, a shared silence—God’s presence becomes tangible again. Faith is not sustained by strength of feeling, but by belonging: to Christ, and to the community that holds hope when we cannot.

If your faith feels thin just now, take heart. You are not alone, and you are not lost. The God who met Elijah in the whisper, who walked with doubting Thomas, who wept beside a tomb, meets you still. Thin faith can yet hold the weight of God’s promise, because grace does not depend on the thickness of our belief, but on the steadfastness of the One who believes in us.

God is with you.

Rev. Jock O’Connell

Mitten Tree Project

The Southminster kids will decorate our Mitten Tree in worship on **Sunday, December 7th**, and they need your help! We are asking you to bring new winter hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves to church that Sunday, which will be distributed to local schools prior to winter break. Last year we were able to assist ten schools in our community with winter gear for students in need.

Chalkley Elementary Coat Drive

Southminster is helping Chalkley Elementary School with a winter coat drive for its students. New winter coats for children and pre-teens can be brought to Southminster and placed on the designated coat rack. The coat rack will be in the Fellowship Hall during office hours, and in the Food Closet after hours. If you don't have time to shop, you can give a monetary donation, and we will purchase the coats. The deadline to donate is **Friday, December 5th**.

Worship & Education

All Saints Sunday

All Saint's Day, also known as All Hallows Day, the Feast of the Saints, the Feast of All Hallows, the Solemnity of All Saints, and Hallomas was first practiced in the 4th century to commemorate Christian martyrs. By the 9th century people of the British Isles moved the celebration to November 1st and started celebrating all saints both known and unknown who had passed away. Pope Gregory IV recognized this celebration and extended these commemorations to the whole Catholic Church in the 9th century.

We at Southminster Presbyterian Church will take time on Sunday, November 2nd to recognize, commemorate, and celebrate those members of Southminster and loved ones among our congregation who have passed away. May God bless us all as we take time to celebrate our Christian lives both here on earth and unto to the next. Those who have come before us have truly left a lasting impact.

Laura Pearson

Community Thanksgiving Service

Southminster will be participating in the annual Community Thanksgiving Service at Friendship Baptist Church on Tuesday, November 25th at 6:00 PM. We encourage all Southminster members who are able to join their neighbors in the spirit of thanksgiving and fellowship. The Thanksgiving Community Offering will be in support of CCHASM and its mission to better the lives of our friends and neighbors.

Children's Christmas Play

On Sunday, December 7th during our 11:00 AM worship, the Southminster kids will present *A Christmas Story*, featuring our very own "Kiki Claus" and her flock of children. Listen to the story of Jesus' birth and experience again the wonderful gift. All children are invited to participate. We will rehearse after worship on November 16, 23, and 30. Each rehearsal will last approximately 30 minutes. We will have additional dress rehearsal at a date to be determined. Please reach out to Laura Pearson at 804-387-3913 for more information or if you would like to volunteer.

Laura Pearson

Commitment Sunday

Join us on Sunday, November 23rd for Commitment Sunday! Please bring your pledge cards with you to dedicate during worship as we celebrate our commitment to God's mission at Southminster for the coming year. Stewardship season is the time to take a step back, give thanks, and remember why our faith community is so important to us.

Facility Alert: Inclement Weather Policy

In case of inclement weather on a Sunday morning, the decision to cancel services will be made by the pastor and the facilities chairperson by 7:30 AM. By 8:00 AM, closing notices will be submitted to local Richmond CBS, NBC, and ABC stations, a notification will be sent to the email list, and a notice will be posted on the church Facebook page. You may also call the church office where the voicemail message will be updated with appropriate information.

Thanksgiving Office Hours

The Southminster office will be closed Wednesday, November 26th thru Friday, November 28th. On Monday, December 1st the office will be partially staffed, open from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. We will resume normal operating hours on Tuesday, December 2nd. We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday weekend.

Witness & Outreach

CCHASM Thanksgiving Baskets

Southminster is proud to support the CCHASM Thanksgiving Basket program which provides families in need with a full holiday meal. We have made a pledge for 40 full baskets this year. Be on the lookout for our "scoreboard" at the back of the Sanctuary so that you can track our progress and see where we have gaps. You may give individual items from the list below or put together an entire basket. You can also help by making a monetary donation to the Thanksgiving Basket fund. We will start accepting donations on October 12th. Food should be brought to the church no later than **November 9th**.

Contents Of A Full Thanksgiving Basket

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | 40 oz can of yams / sweet potatoes | 2 | Boxes of stove top dressing |
| 1 | 13 oz box of mashed potatoes | 2 | Cans or packages of gravy |
| 1 | 14 oz can of cranberry sauce | | <i>(No glass jars, please)</i> |
| 2 | 15 oz cans of corn | 1 | Box of hot chocolate |
| 2 | 15 oz cans of green vegetables | 1 | Box of tea bags |
| | | 1 | Large box or bag of cookies |
| | | 1 | \$20 gift card to Food Lion, Kroger or Walmart |

Mark Sunday December 7th On Your Calendar!

Girl Scout Pancake Breakfast

Girl Scout Troop 603 will host a Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, December 7th from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is invited to come and enjoy a hot breakfast before worship. The Pancake Breakfast is a fund raiser for the Girl Scouts. We suggest a donation of \$5 per person which helps support the Troop.

Children's Christmas Play

After pancakes we will move into the Sanctuary for worship at 11:00 AM. The Southminster kids are working on a very special Christmas play as part of our service (*see page 2*).

Mitten Tree Project

And finally, don't forget about the Mitten Tree! (*See page 2 for details.*) Bring your donations of hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves to worship at 11:00 AM, and the kids will deck out the Mitten Tree.

2025 Poinsettia Dedications

Poinsettia dedications are a wonderful way to remember and honor loved ones during the holiday season. The poinsettias will decorate the Sanctuary on December 14th and 21st. An insert with the dedications will also be included in the bulletin on those Sundays. Order forms will be available in the bulletins beginning in November. You may also order by contacting the church office at office@southpreschurch.org. Poinsettias are \$15.00 each. Orders must be received by Monday, December 1st.

Chrismon Project

Over ten years ago, sixty-four Southminster cross stitchers created the beautiful Chrismon ornaments that decorate the Christmas trees in our church during advent. It is fun to look on the back of the ornaments and identify members from the past, as well as current members that used their talents to glorify God.

Pat Abbott is interested in creating some new cross stitched Chrismons and would like to share patterns with any other stitchers that might be interested. Get in touch with Pat Abbott or Karen Stafford if you would like to take part in this project. It is never too early to think of Christmas!

Session Highlights

- Approved September financial report.
- Approved request from Chalkley Elementary School to include coats as part of our Mitten Tree Program.
- Approved the 2025 holiday office schedule for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Below is the Thanksgiving schedule. The Christmas schedule will be published in the December newsletter.
 - Wednesday, November 26 – office closed
 - Thursday, November 27 (Thanksgiving) – office closed
 - Friday, November 28 – office closed
- Approved 2026 Communion Dates which will be shared in a later newsletter.

Save the Date: Progressive Dinner

The Southminster Progressive Dinner will take place on Saturday, December 13th. Dinner guests will progress from host house to host house, beginning with appetizers at 6:00 PM, followed by dinner at 7:15 PM and dessert at 9:00 PM. The cost of the dinner is \$20.00 per person to help our hosts defray the cost of food. RSVP and hosting forms will be available in the Sunday bulletins starting in November. For more information, please contact Brown at 804-347-8895.

Advent Cantata: Sunday, December 14th at 11:00 AM

Our beloved Advent musical service is just around the corner! While the format will be a little different this year, the spirit remains the same. Instead of a Lessons and Carols service, the choir will present an Advent Cantata. This will feel very familiar, as the cantata is a collection of musical pieces and readings, just like Lessons and Carols, but all thematically connected into a single, beautiful work put together by one composer instead of a collection of separately composed works. We look forward to sharing both cherished hymns and inspiring new music with you.

If you enjoy singing, we invite you to join the choir just for this cantata. It's a wonderful way to participate in the season's music without the pressure of a full-year commitment. We meet for rehearsals on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. All are welcome to come and sing with us!

Directory Updates

Lynne Reeser

harperp688@gmail.com
804-516-6158

Susan Edwards

Preferred Phone:
804-920-1085

We Pray For:

Ramona Clopton, Jean Derrenbacker, Bob Hall, Patsy Hevener, Winki Lampe, Jim & Jane Lewis, Shirley Martin, Donna Medicus, Nancy Peters, Lynda & Charles Reed, Billy Smith, Susan Teller, Art & Ginny Williams, Lora Anderson

For the full list of Joys & Concerns, please see the pastor's weekly email.

Contact pastor@southpreschurch.org if you or a loved one would like to be added to the list.

Southminster Notes

Just want to thank everyone for their kind expressions of caring and prayers during my recent surgery. Anne and I are truly blessed to be a part of such a supportive and loving church family.

Blessings,
Gary Smith

Notes will be published as space permits. Some notes will carry over to next month's newsletter.

November Birthdays

- 1 Ron Hepp
- 3 Rick Schaffer
- 4 Patricia Ervin
- 5 Robin Lapsley
- 7 Amanda Bunkholt
- 8 Rick Abbott
- 11 Donna Medicus, Eric Stahl
- 12 Jean Derrenbacker
- 13 David Huff
- 15 Tammy McDonald
- 16 Debbie Dugger
- 17 Caroline Solaimani, Brian Singleton
- 23 Jim Dugger
- 25 Andrew Swenck
- 27 Mark Williams
- 28 Melanie Miller, Tim Weddle
- 29 Mel Bookman

November Anniversaries

- 2 Katie & Justin Roland (6)
- 3 Jane & Brent Tarter (25)
- 5 Andrew & Natira Bookman (12)
- 5 Andrew & Marit Smith (9)
- 7 Gary & Anne Smith (44)
- 19 David & Lynne Reeser (8)
- 19 Michaela & Tyler Anthony (3)

***Have we missed your birthday or anniversary?
Let the church office know: 804-276-1749.***

Presbyterian Women

Anna Circle

November 10th at 6:30 PM
Debbie Greenberg's Residence

Martha Circle

November 12th at 10:00 AM
Conference Room

Ruth Circle

November 4th at 2:00 PM
Conference Room

November Schedules

***If you cannot be present on your scheduled day,
please notify your schedule's organizer.***

Communion

- 2 Team 2

Elder Servers: Jerry Davis, Frank Grier,
Susan Edwards

Church Closer for November

Frank Grier

Ushers

- 2 Tracey Williams, Susan Wiedmaier
- 9 Curtis Radt, Sue Rhodes,
Mary Stahl, Rich Kowalski
- 16 Curtis Radt, Sue Rhodes,
Mary Stahl, Rich Kowalski
- 23 Rick & Pat Abbott, Pat Ervin, David Huff
- 30 Rick & Pat Abbott, Pat Ervin, David Huff

Food Closet

- 4 Gene Rhodes, Karen Stafford
- 6 Cherienne McCall, Jane Williams
- 11 Frank Grier, Pat Ervin
- 13 Bonnie Kowalski, Gail DeCosta
- 18 Mary Stahl, David Stahl
- 20 Shelley Murray, Carol Todd
- 25 Ann Potts, Freya Harper
- 27 *Closed for Thanksgiving*

Children's Sunday School

- 2 Fall Lesson 5: Baby Moses
- 9 Fall Lesson 6: The Burning Bush
Children's Choir
- 16 Fall Lesson 7: Manna, Quail, and Water
- 23 Winter Lesson 1: A Ruler from Bethlehem
- 30 Winter Lesson 2: The Angel's Visit

Southminster Presbyterian Church

November 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 7:30 PM: IPCN
2 Communion 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 3 PM: IPCN	3 12 PM: Chair Yoga 6 PM: BSA Scouts	4 Food Closet 2 PM: Ruth Circle 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	5	6 Food Closet 10 AM: Balladeers	7 7:30 PM: IPCN	8 7:30 PM: IPCN
9 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 10:15 AM: Pastor's Aids 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 3 PM: IPCN	10 12 PM: Chair Yoga 6 PM: BSA Scouts 6:30 PM: Anna Circle 7:30 PM: IPCN	11 Veterans Day Food Closet 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	12 10 AM: Martha Circle	13 Food Closet 10 AM: Balladeers 6 PM: Surreywood Annual Meeting	14 7:30 PM: IPCN	15 7:30 PM: IPCN
16 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 1 PM: Session 2 PM: IPCN (FH) 3 PM: IPCN	17 12 PM: Chair Yoga	18 Food Closet 11 AM: Conrad Funeral and Reception 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	19	20 Food Closet 10 AM: Balladeers	21 7:30 PM: IPCN	22 12 PM: IPCN (FH) 7:30 PM: IPCN
23 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship Commitment Sunday Service 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 3 PM: IPCN	24 12 PM: Chair Yoga 6 PM: BSA Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	25 Food Closet 6 PM: Community Thanksgiving Service (Friendship Baptist) 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	26 Office Closed	27 Thanksgiving Office Closed 10 AM: Balladeers	28 Office Closed 7:30 PM: IPCN	29 7:30 PM: IPCN
30 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 12 PM: Officer Training 3 PM: IPCN	31 6 PM: BSA Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	Notes November 2: All Saints Sunday November 2: Daylight Savings Time ends November 9: Rev. Katherine Jackson preaching				

SOUTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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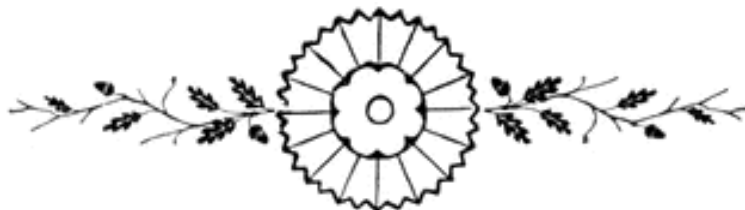
Return Service Requested

November 2025

Commitment Sunday

November 23, 2025

Join us for service at 11:00 AM



Would you like to receive your newsletter electronically?

Send an email to office@southpreschurch.org with *Add Me To Newsletter List* in the subject line.