



### *From the Pastor*

Dear Friends,

It is no secret that today's public life feels increasingly charged. Politics and cultural debates saturate our conversations, our media, and even our friendships. And this reality does not stop at the church door. Pastors and church leaders find themselves navigating an environment where every sermon, prayer, or program can be heard through political filters. What was once received simply as Scripture or pastoral counsel is now too easily interpreted as "taking sides."

This creates a unique stress for clergy. Many ministers entered the vocation with a deep love for Christ and a desire to shepherd God's people. They are trained to open the Word, to preach the gospel, to comfort the brokenhearted, and to build up the church in love. Yet today, every word they speak may be weighed for its political implications. A sermon on justice, peace, or even compassion may trigger suspicion or division. Silence, on the other hand, may be heard as avoidance or tacit agreement. Either way, pastors are caught in a bind.

And this isn't just a matter of perception — the numbers bear it out. In a recent survey, over **40% of pastors** across North America said they had seriously considered leaving ministry in the past few years. The most common reasons were exhaustion, political polarization, and loneliness in leadership. A Canadian study of more than 500 clergy found much the same: stress from long hours, unclear role expectations, and isolation. These findings remind us that the weight of ministry today is not an individual problem, but a widespread challenge across the whole church.

The effect is real: exhaustion, discouragement, and sometimes isolation. Ministry is already a calling that requires emotional and spiritual resilience. Add the constant pressure of navigating politically charged expectations, and many pastors feel as though they are walking a tightrope week after week. The result can be burnout, a loss of joy in ministry, or even leaving the pastoral vocation altogether.

But the impact does not stop with clergy. Congregations also suffer. When pastors are drained or fearful of saying the wrong thing, their preaching and leadership can become cautious or muted. The church risks losing its prophetic and pastoral voice, precisely when the world most needs to hear the good news of Christ. A stressed pastor cannot pour deeply into the life of a congregation, and the body as a whole feels the strain.

The good news is that this is not where the story has to end. The church has a gift: the body of Christ, where we bear one another's burdens. Congregations can help turn the tide — by praying intentionally for their pastors, offering encouragement, allowing space for rest and renewal, and remembering that ministry is never a one-person job. It is the work of the whole people of God.

Thank you for being a community that lives this truth. Your support, kindness, and faithfulness not only strengthen your pastor, but also give witness to the One who promised, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

With gratitude, *Rev. Jock O'Connell*

### **Oyster Roast**

Brown Pearson will host the annual Men's Oyster Roast at his cabin on the Pamunkey River on Saturday, October 11th from 1:30 PM – 6:00 PM. Southminster men ages 8 and over are invited to spend an autumn Saturday in the country. There will be horseshoes, volleyball, and football (touch and televised). We'll roast oysters throughout the afternoon with a cookout dinner at 5:30 PM. RSVP and information forms will be available in your Sunday bulletins. Contact Brown at (804-347-8895) for more information.

### **Pastor's Aide: 2025 – 2026**

The Pastor's Aids are back for a new year! They have resumed their monthly calls to the members of Southminster and their monthly meetings. Any concerns or joys are passed on as needed. Thank you to all the Pastor's Aides for this invaluable service.

### **Mitten Tree Project**

Knitting needles ready? Looking for sale items for our Mitten Tree Project? Last year we were able to assist 10 different schools throughout our community with hats, gloves, mittens and scarves. Our Mitten Tree date is **December 7, 2025** during worship. We will be asking the children once again to help decorate our tree. The items will be collected and taken to different area schools prior to winter break.

### **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!

## ***Worship & Education***

### **Peace & Global Witness Sunday**

Each Sunday we greet our fellow pew mates with our wish for them, "The peace of Christ be with you" because we love them. On **October 5<sup>th</sup>**, as we celebrate Peace & Global Witness Sunday, we will have the opportunity to relay that same message of love and tangible support to peoples outside of Southminster that are in small or large conflicts - locally and worldwide through the Peace & Global Witness offering. You will find envelopes in your bulletins on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **A Prayer for Our Pastors**

Loving God,  
you have called shepherds to guide your people.  
Strengthen our pastors when they are weary,  
encourage them when they are discouraged,  
and surround them with the love of Christ's body.

Help us, as your church,  
to bear one another's burdens with grace and joy,  
so that together we may shine your light in the world.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Finance Committee Report

The finance committee is now meeting monthly to review church financial policies and procedures to ensure that we remain good stewards of the church's resources. Several established financial policies have been reviewed and updated and recommendations have been made to Session for their approval.

## 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.

## Back Door Refurbishment Project

The outside double doors leading to the kitchen and Fellowship Hall have undergone a much-needed rehabilitation of their hardware. This was becoming a security and wasted-energy issue, and it has now been addressed. Thank you all for your patience during this project.

## Stewardship Dedication Sunday

Mark your calendars for Stewardship Dedication Sunday on November 23, 2025. Watch your upcoming bulletins, newsletters, and mail for information about how you can support Southminster in 2026.

# 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 12<sup>th</sup>. Food should be brought to the church no later than **November 9<sup>th</sup>**.

## 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<br>(No glass jars, please)      |
| 1 | 14 oz can of cranberry sauce       | 1 | Box of hot chocolate                                      |
| 2 | 15 oz cans of corn                 | 1 | Box of tea bags   |
| 2 | 15 oz cans of green vegetables     | 1 | Large box or bag of cookies                               |
|   |                                    | 1 | <b>\$20 gift card to Food Lion, Kroger<br/>or Walmart</b> |

## Rise Against Hunger Event ~ Sunday, October 19, 2025

Newcomers and experienced volunteers are invited to come join us for this extremely fun and rewarding event! Thanks to some additional funds and our history of hard work, we are setting our goal for 20,000 food bags at this year's event. That's a big number and we need lots of people. Once again, our 11:00 AM worship service will start in the Sanctuary and move to the Fellowship Hall to bag meals that will support global hunger efforts. This is too much fun to miss. It is a truly inspiring hands-on experience to serve God's people around the world.

**Date: Sunday, October 19, 2025**

Time:	10:30 AM	Breakfast snacks in the narthex
	11:00 AM	Brief service in the sanctuary
	11:30 AM	Gather in the Fellowship Hall for the work
	1:30 PM	Clean up

### **What is the work?**

The physical set up will look a little different this year to improve our efficiency. But the work is the same: some will measure and fill bags with dried foods; some will weigh and seal the bags; others will box up the bags. We also need 'runners' (a great job for the kids) to take the products from one station to another. Some tasks require standing; others sitting. There is a job for just about everyone.

### **NEW: How do I sign up?**

For legal purposes, participants 18 and over **MUST** register with a waiver online prior to the event. Paper forms will be made available only to minors and to those without internet access. Please use this link to register: [Southminster Presbyterian - Home \(southpreschurch.org\)](https://southpreschurch.org) You can find the link on the Southminster website.

### **How can I support this program if I am unable to attend?**

Southminster has once again fully funded our project. If you want to make a personal donation to the Rise Against Hunger organization separately, you may use the online registration link (above). Using the 'Donate' button sends funds straight to RAH. Learn more about Rise Against Hunger here: [Home - Rise Against Hunger](#)

**PUT YOUR FAITH INTO ACTION AND JOIN US FOR THIS UNFORGETTABLE EVENT**

### **Session Highlights**

- Reviewed and approved August 2025 Financial Report
- Approved minute for missions for Sunday, September 28 during morning worship service
- Approved 2025-2026 Sunday School Teachers
- Approved 2025-2026 Usher Schedule
- Approved 2026 Communion Schedule
- Approved October 11, 2025, for the annual Oyster Roast
- Approved Sunday, November 23, 2025, as Stewardship Dedication Sunday
- Approved Christmas Cantata for Sunday, December 14, 2025 during morning worship service
- Approved December 13, 2025, for the annual Progressive Dinner

## RISC House Meeting

On Sunday, October 5, right after the worship service, our RISC team members will gather for our annual house meeting. This is our first meeting of the 2025-26 year and a great time for anyone who is curious to come and learn more about our work for helping “the least of these.”

In recent years, we have tackled safe and affordable housing and the prevention of gun violence. This year RISC will be adding a new issue; we choose that issue by listening to the members of our own congregations to find out what disturbs them about life in the Richmond area. We would love to have you come join us.

Don't forget to join us in worship on Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup> where our RISC team members will be commissioned during the service.

### Volunteer With The Southminster Food Closet

Southminster's Food Closet has been part of our mission for decades. Any Chesterfield County residents who call us in need of food are directed to call CCHASM (Chesterfield Colonial Heights Alliance for Social Ministry), which acts as a clearinghouse. Once CCHASM has verified a need, clients are referred to one of over a dozen food closets in the county, at least one of which is open every day of the week.

The Southminster Food Closet would not be possible without our dedicated volunteers, and we are always looking for new people to join the team. We are open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 AM until noon and staffed by volunteers from Southminster, St. David's Episcopal, and Lyndale Baptist. We serve as many as 4 families each day. Volunteers are never asked to decide if our clients “deserve” food; their main ministry is to serve and to listen, sometimes to pray, as our clients experience this stressful and sometimes embarrassing time in their lives. If you are interested in helping with this ministry, we can schedule you to suit your preferences. Currently, each volunteer is scheduled only one day a month. Mary Stahl sets up the schedule for an entire year, so if you are interested in 2026, please let her know before **December 1st**. You may also call Shelley Murray for more info.

### Directory Updates

#### **Nancy Bare**

4816 Bonnie Brae Road  
N. Chesterfield, VA 23234  
nancyjane1983@gmail.com

#### **Judy Lee**

Preferred Phone:  
804-513-1652

### We Pray For:

Ramona Clopton, Jane Conrad, Jean Derrenbacker, Bob Hall, Patsy Hevener, Winki Lampe, Jim & Jane Lewis, Shirley Martin, Donna Medicus, Nancy Peters, Lynda & Charles Reed, Betty Smith, 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](mailto:pastor@southpreschurch.org) if you or a loved one would like to be added to the list.**

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

## **October Birthdays**

- 2 Joey Williams
- 3 Matt Briggs, Michelle Paulson
- 4 Winki Lampe
- 6 Audrey Pearson
- 7 Cathy Kirtley
- 13 Marley McDonald
- 15 Jan Belote, Frank Willis
- 20 David Kirtley
- 21 Jerry Davis, Mike Ferguson, Sarah Hollingsworth
- 23 Cathy Manke
- 24 Dorothy Dixon
- 26 Samantha Waldron
- 28 David Williams

## **October Anniversaries**

- 6 Gary & Melanie Miller (41)
- 14 Chuck & Debbie Greenberg (53)
- 15 Larry & Bernie Chamberlain (48)

*Have we missed your birthday or anniversary?*

*Let the church office know: 804-276-1749.*

### **Presbyterian Women**

#### **Anna Circle**

October 6th at 6:30 PM  
Debbie Greenberg's Residence

#### **Martha Circle**

October 8th at 10:00 AM  
Conference Room

#### **Ruth Circle**

October 7th at 2:00 PM  
Conference Room

## **October Schedules**

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

### **Communion**

- 5 Team 1

Elder Servers: Curtis Radt, Andrew Swenck,  
Freya Harper

### **Church Closer for October**

Andrew Swenck

### **Ushers**

- 5 Clay Spillman, David Huff
- 12 Judy Lee, Candace Young,  
Chuck & Debbie Greenberg
- 19 Judy Lee, Candace Young  
Chuck & Debbie Greenberg
- 26 Tracy Williams, Susan Wiedmaier  
Dennis & Riki Stone

### **Food Closet**

- 2 Bonnie Kowalski, Gail DeCosta
- 7 Ann Potts, Pat Ervin
- 9 Cheriene McCall, Carol Todd
- 14 Mary Stahl, David Stahl
- 16 Gene Rhodes, Karen Stafford
- 21 Shelley Murray, Freya Harper
- 23 Frank Grier, Deborah Crain
- 28 Jane Williams, Ann Potts
- 30 Bonnie Kowalski, Gail DeCosta

### **Children's Sunday School**

- 5 Lesson 2: The First Sin
- 12 Lesson 3: Joseph & His Brothers  
Children's Choir
- 19 Rise Against Hunger – No Class
- 26 Lesson 4: Joseph Helps His Family

# Southminster Presbyterian Church

## October 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>5 Communion</b> 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 12 PM: RISC Team Mtg. 2 PM: IPCN (FH) 3 PM: IPCN	<b>6</b> 12 PM: Chair Yoga	<b>7 Food Closet</b> 2 PM: Ruth Circle	<b>1</b>	<b>2 Food Closet</b> 10 AM: Balladeers	<b>3</b> 1 PM: RISC Meeting Set Up 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>4</b> 7:30 PM: IPCN 1:30 PM: Oyster Roast (Off Site) 2 PM: Williams Birthday Party 7:30 PM: IPCN
<b>12</b> 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 10:15 AM: Pastor's Aids 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 12 PM: Anthony Baptism Reception 12 PM Nurture Com. Mtg. 3 PM: IPCN	<b>13</b> 12 PM: Chair Yoga	<b>14 Food Closet</b> 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>15</b>	<b>16 Food Closet</b> 10 AM: Balladeers 3 PM: LVS Cooking	<b>17</b> 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>18</b> 7:30 PM: IPCN
<b>19 R.A.H.</b> 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship 11:30 AM Rise Against Hunger Event 3 PM: IPCN	<b>20</b> 12 PM: Chair Yoga 6 PM: BSA Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>21 Food Closet</b> 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>22</b>	<b>23 Food Closet</b> 10 AM: Balladeers	<b>24</b> 12 PM: IPCN (FH) 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>25</b> 7:30 PM: IPCN
<b>26</b> 10 AM: Adult Sun. Sch 11 AM: Worship 11 AM: Childrens Sun Sch 1 PM: Session 3 PM: IPCN	<b>27</b> 12 PM: Chair Yoga 6 PM: BSA Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>28 Food Closet</b> 6 PM: Handbells 7 PM: Sanctuary Choir 7 PM: Girl Scouts 7:30 PM: IPCN	<b>29</b>	<b>30 Food Closet</b> 10 AM: Balladeers	<b>31 Halloween</b> 7:30 PM: IPCN	
Notes <b>Sunday, October 5th: Rev. Arch Wallace III will preach</b> <b>Sunday, October 26th: RISC Commissioning</b>						

**SOUTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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Phone: 804-276-1749

[www.southpreschurch.org](http://www.southpreschurch.org)

[office@southpreschurch.org](mailto:office@southpreschurch.org)

Return Service Requested

**October 2025**



**Join us on Sunday, October 19<sup>th</sup>  
for our meal packing event.**

**Details and registration information inside.**

Would you like to receive your newsletter electronically?

Send an email to [office@southpreschurch.org](mailto:office@southpreschurch.org) with *Add Me To Newsletter List* in the subject line.