



# SYCAMORE

weekly newsletter: November 18, 2018



## Reserve Your Tickets for Sycamore's Christmas Concerts | December 15 & 16

As the holiday season approaches and your calendar fills up, pursue the holiness of the season by joining us for an evening of Christmas worship and celebration:

-Saturday, December 15, at 7:00 PM: Concert with Sanctuary Choir, Orchestra, and Christmas Youth Choir.

-Sunday, December 16, at 4:00 PM: Concert with Sanctuary Choir, Orchestra, Men's Choir, and Sycamore Ringers.

### Click [HERE](#) to reserve your concert tickets.

Tickets are FREE, but there is a suggested donation of \$12 per ticket. You may make your donation online, when you pick up your tickets, or during the concert. Tickets will be available for pickup:

- in the office during regular office hours Monday-Friday 8:30 AM-4:30 PM
- on the mornings of Sunday, December 2 and Sunday, December 9.

Would you like to see a previous year's concert on YouTube? Just click [here](#). If you have any questions, please email or call the church office at 804-794-0238.

## NEWS & EVENTS

**Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! -Psalms 34:10**

**Thanksgiving Feast — THIS Sunday, November 18 | 5:30 PM**

Every year our congregation gathers together to eat and give thanks to the Lord for his goodness, grace and provision. Join us for the annual Thanksgiving Feast this Sunday, November 18, at 5:30 PM in the sanctuary. Please bring two sides or a side and a dessert to share. The main course (turkeys, of course!), will be provided. After dinner, there will be a time for sharing blessings for those who would like to participate. You'll leave with a full belly, and a full heart!

For young families, there will be childcare options during the feast:

**Infant-Three year olds:** Please feed your child at the feast before bringing him or her back to the nursery

**Four year olds-5th Grade:** From 6:30-7:30 PM, there will be a Thanksgiving celebration in Room 3.

If you have questions or would like to volunteer to help with the feast, please email Judy Righter or call her at 804-402-1810. If you have any questions regarding childcare, please email Becky Boone.

**\*NEW\* Grounds Beautification Day — Saturday, December 8 | 8:30 AM**

Calling all willing hands and feet! The deacons have organized a church-wide cleanup day for the church grounds on Saturday, December 8 starting at 8:30 AM. Some breakfast food and coffee will be provided to get the day started. Please bring your own gloves,

rakes, blowers and other gardening equipment you may need. Let's work together to get Sycamore spruced up for the holidays! Questions? Please email Chris Wells.

### **\*NEW\* Elder Nominations**

Do you know a man at Sycamore who is exemplary in many ways? Would he make a good elder or deacon? Elders focus on the oversight, shepherding and instruction of the Body in sound doctrine. Deacons focus on service to both the physical and spiritual needs of the Body. If you have a man in mind, please prayerfully consider the qualifications and abilities for the offices of elder or deacon.

Before submitting a nomination, please ask your nominee if he is willing to be nominated. If he is, please fill out and drop off a completed nomination form in Stephen Righter's box. Nominees will attend mandatory training, be examined by the session and elections are scheduled for late April.

Please note, nominations will not be accepted after Sunday, December 16. If you'd like more information, please ask an elder or email Stephen Righter. If you'd like a Nomination form, please email or stop by the church office.

### **\*NEW\* Prayer Chain Administrator**

Sycamore would like to thank Ellen Faris for her many, many years of faithful service as our Prayer Chain Administrator. As Ellen transitions to other ministries, Sycamore is looking for someone to carry on this important ministry. If you're interested in serving the congregation in this manner, please contact Marty Cates.

### **\*NEW\* Sycamore Directories — Pick One Up Today!**

The Sycamore Directory has been updated! You may pick up a copy in the church office at your convenience.

The directory is continuously updated. If you'd like to

make a change to your listing, or you were not included but would like to be, please notify the church office by email or calling 804-794-0238. Your change will be reflected in the next printing; typically we print 50 copies at a time.

### **\*NEW\* Thanksgiving Holiday — Office Hours and Ministry Closings**

Next week, Sycamore's church office will be closed Thursday, November 22 and Friday, November 23 in celebration of Thanksgiving. We look forward to serving you the following week, Monday-Friday during our regular office hours of 8:30 AM-4:30 PM.

Also, please be aware that the Women's Wednesday morning Bible Study will not meet on November 21 due to the Thanksgiving holiday. ESL classes on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday of next week are also taking a holiday break. We look forward to seeing everyone the following week!

### **Care Packages for College Students**

Love on our college students as they enter their final days of the Fall semester! This is a stressful time for them as they strive to finish projects and study for finals. You can brighten their day and show them they are loved and cared for by their church community by sending a gift card or care package.

You'll find already addressed envelopes (with letters inside) in the foyer. Just pick one up, tuck in a gift card or put together a care package, and send it before the end of the month. Questions? Contact Grace Keen.

### **Kid's Christmas Party & Parent Date Night — Friday, November 30 | 6:00-9:00 PM**

Bring your kids for a Christmas Pajama Party at Sycamore while you enjoy a date night!

Children are in for a blast as they get creative with a craft activity, enjoy a pizza dinner, and watch a fun movie as they snuggle in their blankets and enjoy fresh popcorn! Sign up [HERE](#). Questions? Contact Becky Boone.

## Ornament Exchange — Thursday, December 6 | 6:30 PM

Ladies—Mark your calendars for the Sycamore's Annual Christmas Ornament Exchange on Thursday, December 6 in the sanctuary. Bring a new ornament in a gift bag and "steal" an ornament to take home! We'll have cider, Christmas goodies, and Christmas carols. Invite friends & neighbors to this fun event, and help them discover Jesus and the true meaning of Christmas.

Questions? Please email Barbara Markland or call her at 804-921-8989.

### Very-Important-Persons Needed in the Nursery!

Adults and teens in the nursery come in all shapes and sizes—some with lots of experience and some with very little. They can be called many names: "workers", "caregivers", "aides", "baby-sitters", "attendants", "helpers". But no matter what the name is, these people are very important: they're teachers. They may not consider themselves teachers, but at no other time in little ones' lives are children learning so much, so quickly. Almost everything caregivers do teaches and influences the babies and toddlers in their care.

As a teacher, the nursery caregiver creates a safe and interesting environment with age-appropriate activities, provides physical and emotional care and encourages interaction among children and adults (among other caregivers and parents, too!). The caregiver's influence is so significant, yet it cannot be measured, and here's one reason: first impressions are lasting impressions.

Please prayerfully consider being a teacher in the Sycamore nursery! You can view the schedule here to see the number of people and dates that it is needed.

Who are we looking for? Anyone who has a heart for kids and the Lord! Parents, singles, seniors, college students, empty-nesters. Young teens that want to be helpers! Men are an essential part of a quality nursery too.

### What's required?

- Membership for 6 months or regular attender for

one year.

- Background check (if 18 or older)

- Training (when provided)

So, what would you be doing? Sitting on the floor (if you can), singing songs and telling stories, and giving TLC to show God's love!

Why volunteer? Smiles are given away for free, you'll see kids growing right before your very eyes, babies and toddlers will think anything you do, say or sing is perfect, you'll make lots of friends, and you'll be following Jesus' example of welcoming children to the family of God!

How often do you serve? Only about one hour, every other month!

How else can you help? Maybe you want to support the nursery, but don't feel comfortable serving due to getting sick easily or you are too busy. We are in great need of coordinators. Once, every other month, I will email you the list of volunteers for the upcoming Sunday and you will confirm (via email or phone) with volunteers that they are still coming and assist them if they need to switch or find a sub. You can volunteer straight from home! Many coordinators also serve because it truly is such a joy to be with the little ones and get to know the families!

Interested? Email Becky Boone or call her at 804-363-2557.

### Year-End Giving

While Christians do not tithe to receive tax benefits, our tax laws provide for reductions in taxable income for taxpayers who itemize rather than claim the standard deduction. Recent changes in our tax laws significantly increased the standard deduction such that it no longer is advantageous for many donors to itemize.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 has introduced many Americans to the concept of bunching. Bunching is a strategy of combining the charitable contributions of two years into one. It would be carried out by doubling up on donations in one year and skipping donations altogether the next. The bunching strategy is used every other year. In the bunching

year, donors give two years worth of charitable donations and itemize their deductions. In the years in between bunching, donors skip giving and take the standard deduction. The PCA Foundation provides information on bunching [HERE](#).

There are two ways of accomplishing bunching. Donors can give directly to a charity or can give through a donor-advised fund which then will distribute contributions as directed by the donor. Information on the PCA donor-advised fund can be found [HERE](#).

To allow for proper planning and reporting, we ask that you notify our bookkeeper, Sheree Coy, of the amount of your giving made directly to Sycamore in a calendar that is intended for the next calendar year.

Unchanged with the new tax law is the advantage of giving appreciated securities directly to charities and, thus, avoiding the tax on capital gains. Below is information relating to transferring securities to the church's broker:

Broker: T.D. Ameritrade  
Account Name: Sycamore Presbyterian Church  
Account No.: 882743416  
DTC No.: 0188

*Sycamore does not act in the capacity of a tax or financial advisor. For personal tax advice, please consult with a qualified professional.*

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## MISSIONS & LOCAL IMPACT

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### Mercy Mall — Blankets, Sheets and Warm Coats Drive

We're hosting a donation drive! Mercy Mall is in need of queen-sized blankets, sheets, and warm coats of all sizes. There will be a box available beginning today through Wednesday, November 21, in the foyer to drop off these items. Please help our community stay warm this winter!

Questions? Email Grace Keen.

### MNA SecondCareer — Seeks Volunteers with Website Skills

Did you know that MNA SecondCareer Ministry has volunteer opportunities across the continent where lay people of all ages can serve PCA ministries by giving practical help? Currently, we are looking for volunteers with skills in website design and maintenance. Current needs include Cali Noland of Griot Arts in Clarksdale, MS, needs someone to update their website; Hernando Sáenz of MNA Hispanic American Ministries needs a Webmaster; and Mick Leary of All Nations Church in Charlottesville, VA is seeking a Website Content Manager.

Needs are everywhere. If you are interested in learning more, please either email Barbara Campbell, call her at 804-339-5005 or check out the MNA Second-Career website.

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## COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

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**Author Tom Becker — Sunday, November 18 | 5:00 PM**

The Richmond Center for Christian Study presents author Tom Becker speaking on his new book *Good Posture: Engaging Current Culture with Ancient Faith* on Sunday, November 18, at 5:00 PM at Redemption Books, 3008 Stony Point Road, Richmond. Refreshments provided. For an advanced copy of Tom's book, call the bookstore at 804-330-2812.