



COVENANT AFFIRMATIONS-NEW YEAR, NEW SERIES

What's nearly 140 years old, serves its constituency around the world, and owes its existence in part to a potato famine in Sweden?

The Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) officially began its ministry as a denomination on February 20, 1885 as influences from Lutheran, Congregationalist, and Evangelical Free denominations helped in shaping Covenant theology. Its current denominational headquarters are in Chicago, it numbers nearly 900 congregations in North America, and more than half of the Covenant congregations were planted less than two dozen years ago. Its roots are in the Swedish national church and in the mid-1850s, some Swedes wanted to have small group Bible studies called conventicles in their homes. The Swedish national church said this was not allowed and there was protest; a potato famine in the country also had an effect on some of those people who were feeling religious persecution, as the U.S. offered free land to people willing to farm here through the Homestead Act of 1862.

As a result, a lot of Swedes began emigrating our way (900,000 in a 30-year period). More than a decade before the denomination came into being, a congregation in Swede Bend, IA began as a Swedish Mission Society – the original building still stands and is used by a Covenant camp. Early Covenant churches had actually begun with Lutheran affiliations of some sort. The Evangelical Covenant Church in Paxton, IL, where we had previously served a decade ago, had organized in 1878 after a group of folks were excommunicated from the local Lutheran church.

Since its beginnings, the Covenant has been a highly missional denomination – more than 75 years doing medical missions in the African nation of Congo have resulted in more than 200,000 attending Covenant churches in that country, for example. Along with Africa and North America, our mission sites include the continents of South America, Europe and Asia.

Currently, the largest populations of churches in the U.S. can be found in Chicagoland, the Twin Cities in Minnesota, and California. We have over 90 in our Midwest Conference, comprised of CO, NE, IA, KS and MO congregations. As of a few years ago, more than half of Covenant churches were averaging 100 or less in Sunday attendance, but we have a congregation of over 20,000, as Life Church (started in Edmond, OK) has a host of satellite congregations after Rev. Craig Groeschel started the initial congregation out of his garage.

I have been a Covenanter since I was 5 in the Chicago area. At age 24, I traveled to more than 50 Covenant churches (a 29-state tour) over 10 months as part of the musical group Covenant Heartsong, which served as the catalyst for my considering full-time ministry. Serving congregations in California over an eight-year period gave me even more insights on the denomination. And there have been later ministry stops in Iowa, central Illinois, Ohio and now Nebraska.

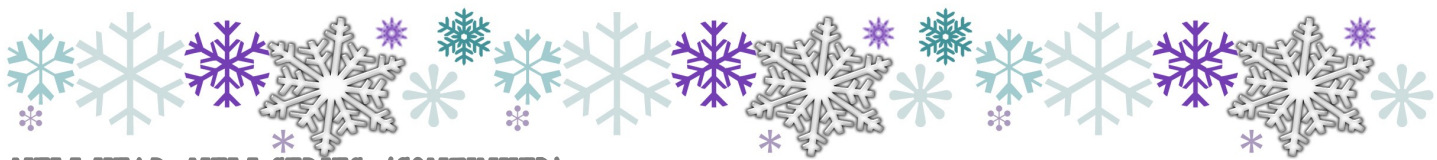
When Mary and I both worked at Covenant Headquarters together from 2000-04, we gained great respect for how the denomination was being led and its overall values. I gleaned much from traveling with the denomination's president to conference annual meetings and sitting down with him to talk church growth strategies.

Mary was a two-year short-term missionary to Colombia and also spent time in Mexico helping organize mission trips with churches in the U.S. No denomination is perfect, but we're proud to have our pastoral credentialing from the Covenant, having both been ordained in 2007.

Stromsburg Covenant Church is going on 148 years as a Covenant congregation (organized in the spring of 1874) – so it may seem as if we **'know it all'** about our denomination. But even for established churches, the values we espouse are an ever-changing thing. In fact, the ECC has added a

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STRENGTHEN FAITH, CULTIVATE COMMUNITY, CARE FOR NEIGHBORS



NEW YEAR, NEW SERIES...(CONTINUED)

Covenant Affirmation in the past decade to account for those changes. So I believe it will be helpful to give you a larger explanation about what the ECC espouses as a denomination.

This month and next, I will preach a six-week sermon series on Covenant affirmations, the primary values the ECC centers its ministry from.

- ◇ **Week one (Jan. 9)** will be a quick primer on Covenant Affirmations, focusing upon the *centrality of scripture* on the life of the Covenant (using Psalm 1 and 2 Timothy 3:14-17).
- ◇ **Week two (Jan. 16)** - using the story of Nicodemus from John 3 – we'll probe how our relationship with Jesus Christ ("*the necessity of new birth*") guides how we dialogue with each other as we discern God's will for the church and live for him each day.
- ◇ **Week three (Jan. 23)** - using Matthew 25:31-46 – we will focus on what it means to commit to *the whole mission of the church* and what that means for the ECC.
- ◇ **Week four (Jan. 30)** - using Ephesians 2:11-22 - we will discuss what it means when the Covenant says it is "*a fellowship of believers.*"
- ◇ **Week five (Feb. 6)** - using John 14:15-27 - will probe into the idea that we affirm "*a conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit,*" and
- ◇ **Week six (Feb. 13)** - using I Corinthians 12 - we will affirm the idea that there's *freedom in Christ* to express your gifts a little differently than the person sitting next to you.

Please join us for these worship services – and bring a friend or two.

IN CHRIST,

Pastor Craig



JANUARY DATES TO REMEMBER

Wednesday, January 5, 2022—Camp Night! 5:30 pm! Come eat pizza and hear about what's going on at Covenant Cedars Bible Camp and opportunities to be involved.



Sunday, January 9, 2022—Worship with Communion at 10:30 am

(All Ministry Team 2022 budget proposals due)

Sunday, January 16, 2022—Lead Team Meeting at 6:00 pm



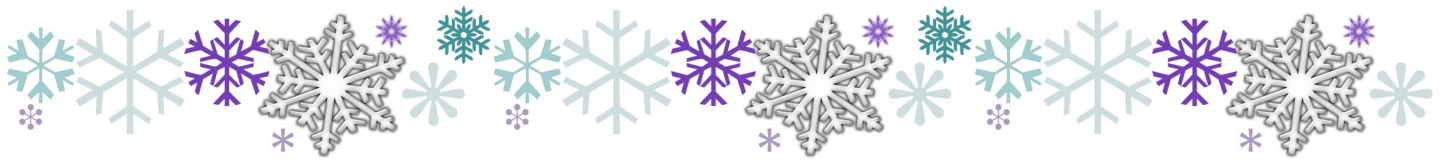
Thursday, January 20, 2022—Rescue Mission Meal at 5:30 pm

Sunday, January 23, 2022—All Ministry Team 2021 Reports due

Sunday, January 30, 2022—Annual Congregational Meeting at 12:00 noon



Kingdom Kids will resume on Wednesday nights in February from 5:30—6:30 pm for pre-K through 6th grades. (at Salem Lutheran Church)



FINANCIAL UPDATE:

2021 Budget Summary (1/1/21 through 11/30/21)

Needed Income: \$ 131,979.82

Actual Income: \$ 112,884.37

Difference: (\$ 19,095.45)

Budgeted Exp: \$ 131,979.82

Actual Exp: \$ 120,686.34

Under Budget: \$ 11,293.48

ONLINE GIVING: To make a one-time or scheduled recurring gift to our church, please visit: www.stromsburgcov.org and click on ONLINE GIVING.



Donna Gerdes	Jan 1	Linda Pelc	Jan 11
Dianne Nielsen	Jan 1	Phil Pelc	Jan 11
Craig Pinley	Jan 2	Judy Hanson	Jan 12
Brittani Platt	Jan 5	Anastasia	
Bob Johnson	Jan 6	Bowerman	Jan 13
Dennis Nuttelman	Jan 6	Tucker Platt	Jan 18
Dale Hennessy	Jan 8	Vicki Platt	Jan 19
Sue Rosenbaum	Jan 9	Charles Noyd	Jan 23

MINISTRY PARTNERS:

Sunday, Jan 2, 2022

Greeters: Bob & Eleanor Greenwall

Fellowship: Linda Johnson

Scripture: Sue Rosenbaum

Pianist: Sue Rosenbaum

Worship Team: Dennis & Connie Nuttelman, Neeli Noyd

Audio/Visual: Sara Noble, Jodi Johnson

Sunday, Jan 9, 2022

Greeters: Dianne Nielsen & Family

Fellowship: The Hier Family

Scripture: Sunni Cooper

Pianist/Worship Leader: Ryan Cooper

Worship Team: Craig & Mary Pinley, Dianne Nielsen, Sue Rosenbaum

Audio/Visual: TBD

Sunday, Jan 16, 2022

Greeters: Doug & Linda Johnson

Fellowship: Judy and Mark Hanson

Scripture: Judy Hanson

Pianist: Sue Rosenbaum

Worship Team: Craig & Mary Pinley, Sara Noble

Audio/Visual: Ellie Pinley, Jodi Johnson

Thursday, Jan 20, 2022

Rescue Mission Meal: TBD

Sunday, Jan 23, 2022

Greeters: Mark & Judy Hanson

Fellowship: TBD

Scripture: Pat Everingham

Pianist/Worship Leader: Ryan Cooper

Worship Team: Craig & Mary Pinley, Neeli Noyd, Sue Rosenbaum

Audio/Visual: Ellie Pinley, Jodi Johnson

Sunday, Jan 30, 2022

Greeters: Dale Fike & Jan Randell

Fellowship: Annual Meeting Lunch

Scripture: Dennis Nuttelman

Pianist: Sue Rosenbaum

Worship Team: Craig & Mary Pinley

Audio/Visual: TBD

MINISTRY TEAM LEADERS:

Lead Team:

Dennis Nuttelman
402-366-9803

Christian Formation:

Judy Hanson
402-764-6681

Worship Ministry Team:

Neeli Noyd
402-363-3082

Outreach:

Julia Schram—402-710-9561
Shayla Hier—402-764-0261

Fellowship & Hospitality:

Pat Everingham
402-764-0345







Properties:

Kent Erickson
402-765-6721

Prayer Concerns? Please contact Connie Nuttelman to have a request go out on the prayer chain or to be included in the bulletin. Connie's number is 402-366-9045 or you can send an email to prayerchain@stromsburgcov.org.



January 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Sundays: 8:30 worship team 9:30 SS—youth/adult 10:30 worship (child ch) 11:45 fellowship			Wednesdays: 9:00 Mom's in Prayer			
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 6:30 Elevate Youth Group	10	11	12	13	14	15
						
16 6:00 pm Lead Team Meeting 2021 MIN' TEAM REPORTS DUE!	17	18	19	20 5:30 Rescue Mission Meal	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
						
30 	31			Will start again on Wednesday evenings in February from 5:30—6:30 pm at Salem Lutheran Church for kids pre-K—6th grade.		