

# Stromsburg Cov News

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A Publication of Stromsburg Covenant Church, Stromsburg, NE

## *A Word From Pastor Craig*

With the Evangelical Covenant Church's opportunities to meet together nearly wiped out due to the Co-Vid 19 pandemic, the denomination has recently sent information about some of the things being done throughout our constituency, as well as some financial updates. We thought this was worth your knowing, so we'll try to highlight what we've been given.

Perhaps most noticeable from a logistical standpoint is the decision this summer to sell the denominational headquarters building located near O'Hare Airport in Chicago. From what we'd learned, few of the denominational leaders were actually working on campus during the months of March through June – our president John Wenrich was in Portland, OR, where he'd been a pastor nearly two decades ago and had his home base, for example – and some of this change was in the works before Co-Vid 19 hit; back when Pastor Mary and I worked for denominational offices, it was mandated that high-end leaders would move to Chicago. But in recent years, I think the lost opportunities to hire gifted leaders who didn't want to re-locate was a sign that perhaps things needed to change to find the best leaders our denomination had to offer. The fact that a large office space costs a large amount of money likely was another factor. And because much business had to be done virtually, I think people realized that it could be done this way once Co-Vid 19 issues were gone.

One thing communicated to Pastor Mary during a Zoom meeting with denominational representatives was that this change in locale does not change the overall mission or priorities of the ECC. One positive of this 'new normal' would be that denominational

leaders would be more involved in local ministries and even regionally to keep a pulse on what's going on all over the U.S. The drawback would be that there's no longer a central hub and because we've been unable to have on-campus denominational meetings there has been the perception we're disconnected. But our Midwest Conference had been working off a hub system for years (one person in Iowa, one in Colorado, one in Kansas), with superintendent in Omaha.

A key question that is being considered is whether conference ministries will take a larger role in the overall leadership. It is one reason why – when churches give to the ECC, we ask for 6.5 percent for ECC funding and 3.5 percent to our respective conferences. Personally, we've seen the conference step up in virtual educational and spiritual offerings this spring and summer; the ECC is trying to add to this also. Next week, Pastor Mary and I will be part of a virtual pastor/spouse retreat being coordinated via conference resources, for example. And given that our Midwinter Pastors on-site conference in Colorado has been cancelled, these opportunities are even more valued.

Due to not having our annual business meeting this summer in Arizona, some decisions were made by leadership that normally get voted upon by church delegates. One significant movement in the ECC's mind was a solidarity statement by numerous ECC leaders in response to the death of George Floyd in MN, the goal being "to practice solidarity with all who are vulnerable, marginalized, and oppressed." Some of that has occurred via multiple Covenant churches sharing

*Strengthen Faith Cultivate Community Care for Neighbors*



## A Word — Continued

resources in Minneapolis to help care for those in the area near where Floyd was killed. We know of Covenant presence in Louisville, KY following the death of Breonna Taylor and recent grand jury trial, and with Chicago congregations following acts of violence in that city. And in educational experiences given throughout the ECC, 2,650 participated in various racial righteousness and reconciliation experiences.

In other areas, the denomination started 21 new church plants throughout the U.S., a water initiative the ECC has going in Congo has helped over 57,000 in the city of Gemena have access to clean water, and we've upped our global mission presence with personnel serving in 59 countries in five continents (Asia, Africa, Europe, South America, and North America). On a more personal level, it's heartening to know that some of our nearly 2,600 credentialed ministers were able to receive help from nearly \$600,000 in monies from a Ministers Care and Crisis Fund. We'd heard stories of pastors who were bi-vocational and out of work during Co-Vid 19, or people that had other tragedies occur where some extra funds were needed. We're glad for them that this extra resource has been available.

A new administrative team is being organized to help the ECC envision ministry in the coming years and, as mentioned previously, Pastor Mary had opportunity to hear a little about that on a recent Zoom call. We know that some administrative positions are open, including a director of church engagement that will be a liaison to local congregations and help resource them in areas like stewardship. Recently, North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago called Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom to be the school's new Dean of the Seminary, replacing David Kersten. In the past year, Mary Surridge was called to be the new President of North Park University. Both are highly thought of by their local communities; Michelle's recent contribution was helping start and strengthen a School of Restorative Arts to 77 inmates at Stateville Correctional Facility in Illinois, with another 20 at a facility in Logan, further downstate.

Mary was our neighbor 18 years ago when she

was an assistant women's basketball coach with her husband Jack and a new mom to boot. What I (Pastor Craig) learned back then was that she was an excellent communicator and highly organized, but her extensive business background was something I didn't know about, but clearly North Park did. She's provided stability in a rough period of transition from what I've gathered from the connections I still have around campus.

Financially, about \$22.5 million was given to the ECC in 2019, nearly equally (\$10 million) from churches and individuals, along with \$2.5 million from bequests. National Covenant Properties helped the giving this past January by presenting President Wenrich with a check for \$2.5 million to be used for two particular ministry initiatives. NCP had experienced some unparalleled good fortune in its investments over a few years (monies give loans to churches), which allowed them to surprise the president with its excess.

The Covenant has changed a lot over the years Pastor Mary and I have been part of its ministries and we recognize this. It's been only 16 years since we've left Covenant Offices and yet so many colleagues are gone from that ministry. But we still feel a kinship with many of its leaders and a trust that those leaders are solid people and good at what they do. When I traveled with Covenant Heartsong's year-long ministry, I met pastors Howard Burgoyne and Mark Stromberg on tour; they're now two of the 11 regional superintendents. A third one, Danny Martinez, was a youth pastor Pastor Mary and I worked with in Chicago back in the day. Two others, Garth McGrath and Curtis Ivanoff, were doing youth ministry when I was during my young adulthood. A sixth, Garth Bolinder, I met through writing stories for the ECC. A seventh, Tammy Swanson-Draheim, was our colleague in Mason City, IA. And one of the newest administrators, Paul Lessard (who oversees the Start and Strengthen Churches ministry), was one of the ones who trained our Heartsong team for its tour.

My hope is that we can evolve well as we live into this new period of ministry. And I hope we can find ways to maintain a connectedness to the larger ministry.

In CHRIST,

Pastor Craig





Haylee Conkling	Oct 3
Jeff Jones	Oct 10
Charlotte Greenwall	Oct 23
Kent Erickson	Oct 24
Ivy Mentink	Oct 24
Cheryl Erickson	Oct 25
Kim Conkling	Oct 29



## Dates to Remember in October

**Sunday, Oct 4:** Worship with Communion, 10:30 am



**Thursday, Oct 15:** Rescue Mission Meal, 5:30 pm

**Oct 18-24:** Week of Prayer, (watch for details in the bulletin)

**Sunday, Oct 25:** Talk Back Sunday, right after worship.



## Financial Update

2020 Budget Summary (1/1/20 through 8/31/20)

Needed Income: \$85,846.66  
Actual Income: \$63,548.91  
Difference: **\$22,297.75**

Budgeted Exp: \$85,846.66  
Actual Exp: \$80,939.88  
Difference: **\$ 4,906.78**

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



## Ministry Team Leaders

**Lead Team:**  
Dennis Nuttelman  
402-366-9803

**Worship Ministry Team:**  
Sue Rosenbaum  
402-560-6759

**Fellowship & Hospitality:**  
Pat Everingham  
402-764-0345

**Christian Formation:**  
Judy Hanson  
402-764-6681

**Outreach:**  
Dave Schram—402-710-8858  
Shayla Hier—402-764-0261

**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](mailto:prayerchain@stromsburgcov.org).



## Ministry Partners

### Sunday, Oct 4

**Greeters:** Bob & Eleanor Greenwall

**Coffee:** Cindy Orsborn

**Scripture:** Pat Everingham

**Worship Team:** Dennis & Connie Nuttelman, Craig & Mary Pinley, Sue Rosenbaum

**Audio/Visual:** Dale Hennessy, Kohen Hier

### Sunday, Oct 11

**Greeters:** Doug & Linda Johnson

**Coffee:** Johanna Nielsen

**Scripture:** Dennis Nuttelman

**Worship Team:** Craig & Mary Pinley, Sue Rosenbaum

**Audio/Visual:** Dale & James Hennessy

### Thursday, Oct 15—Rescue Mission Meal

Johanna Nielsen & Friends

### Sunday, Oct 18

**Greeters:** Kent & Cheryl Erickson

**Coffee:** The Nuttelmans

**Scripture:** Eleanor Greenwall

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

**Audio/Visual:** Dale Hennessy; Kohen Hier

### Sunday, Oct 25

**Greeters:** Gaylen & Jeannie Ahlquist

**Coffee:** The Hiers

**Scripture:** Jeannie Ahlquist

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

**Audio/Visual:** Dale & James Hennessy

# October 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			 1	2	3	
4 8:30 Worship Team 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:45 Fellowship	5 	6 7:00 pm BSF	7 6:00 pm Kids' Club	8 9:30 am BSF (Free church)	9 	10 
11 8:30 Worship Team 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:45 Fellowship 6:30 Lead Team Mtg	12 	13 7:00 pm BSF	14 6:00 pm Kids' Club	15 9:30 am BSF (Free church) 5:30 pm—Rescue Mission Meal 	16 	17 
18 8:30 Worship Team 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:45 Fellowship	19 	20 7:00 pm BSF	21 6:00 pm Kids' Club	22 9:30 am BSF (Free church)	23 	24 
Week of Prayer						
25 8:30 Worship Team 9:30 Sunday School 10:30 Worship 11:45 Talk Back Sunday 	26 	27 7:00 pm BSF	28 6:00 pm Kids' Club	29 9:30 am BSF (Free church)	30 	31 