



COVENANT ALIANZA

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH • IGLESIA PRESBITERIANA

DECEMBER 2023

COVENANT ALIANZA

Worship Facility Address:

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Greetings Covenant!

In the midst of this Advent season, we are pleased to introduce you to the start of our monthly eNewsletter. We see this as an excellent way to update you on the ministries of our church. You can expect to see one to two articles highlighting what God is doing among us and where we believe God is leading us. This month we are excited to share grand news about a vision for our church. Join with us in celebrating what God has done among us, and we encourage you to pray that God continues to bless these efforts.

City on a Hill

Todd Pruitt, Lead Pastor

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

—MATTHEW 5:14

BUILDINGS MATTER

We all know that a family is people, not a house. But what a difference a house makes. In fact, we count it an emergency if a family is without a house. But more than merely shelter, a house becomes something far more to a family than wood and brick. Live in a house long enough and it becomes a home. Homes are places of rest and comfort, of nourishment and laughter and tears. A home is a place where we celebrate birthdays and anniversaries. It's where we battle over homework assignments and have talks long into the night. In our homes we mark everything from annual milestones to the increasing height of our children. It is in homes where countless ordinary and remarkable things happen that make us who we are.

“The church is not an abstract concept but actual people.”

Like a family, the church is people. The church is not an abstract concept but actual people gathered together by God in communion with the Lord Jesus. In fact, the New Testament word for church means “gathered ones.” So we are careful to not erase all distinction between a people and the place they gather. And yet, there is a vital connection between people and place. We see this connection throughout the Bible. God's work of redemption is about people and place. It is about the church of Jesus Christ and that



place of peaceful pasture where he will gather them together in his blessed presence. Until then we worship and grow and fellowship together in specific places.

So, yes, a church is the people, not steel and stucco. But because we are the church of Jesus Christ, this building on a hill in which we gather every week to hear and learn, to give and serve, to laugh and grieve, to give thanks and lament, will never be just a building. It will always be more than the raw materials of which it is constructed. It will be a home.

Think about what happens in this building:

In this building we gather to worship. Here, we receive God's Word proclaimed and his gospel applied. We sing his praise with reverence and joy. We seek God's face and his hand in prayer. We give to the Lord's work. We confess our sins and hear his words of pardon. We confess our faith. We meet Christ in the sacraments and believe his precious promises.

- In this building we conduct three Lord's Day worship services in two languages.
- In this building we teach the Word of God to everyone from children to senior saints; catechizing our children and youth.
- In this building we labor to build bridges to our neighbors who have arrived here from around the world.
- In this building we place the sign of the covenant upon believers and their children, welcoming them into the visible church.
- In this building we welcome Christians into membership in this body.
- In this building we welcome and teach the basics of the Christian faith to those who are inquiring.
- In this building we join husbands and wives together in the holy bonds of marriage.
- In this building we say farewell to our dearly loved friends and family who have gone on before us into the presence of the Lord.
- In this building we serve little ones and those who the world has no use for.
- In this building we share meals together with glad hearts.
- In this building we joyfully receive our neighbors who respond to our welcome.

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN AND WHERE WE ARE GOING

In the summer of 1983 a note was placed in an offering plate at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, VA, stating that someone ought to start a PCA church in Harrisonburg. By winter of 1984, a small Bible study began meeting on Sunday evenings with the view toward planting a church. One year later (June, 1985) Covenant Presbyterian, which had 52 charter members, was "particularized" as part of the James River Presbytery of the PCA. After meeting in various places for several years, on February 25, 2001, the first Lord's Day service was held in our current facility.

Over the years, this place on the hill has served Covenant well. The congregation has grown with two worship services in English and one in Spanish on Sunday mornings. There are active ministries to youth and children and weekly classes for adults. Ministries ranging from Kids' Club to English as a Second Language continue to flourish. And, now, as if to signal the writing of many more chapters of worship and ministry on the hill, new homes are springing up all around. The Lord has truly been kind to grant Covenant Presbyterian Church a wonderful place for worship, ministry, and fellowship.



As Covenant has grown and as we have considered our calling to be a church that makes disciples of and welcomes our neighbors to worship the Lord, it has become clear that adding to our current facilities would contribute to our ability to fulfill those callings well. Specifically, we have identified the most pressing needs as greater space for teaching, fellowship, welcoming onsite offices, and suitable worship space for Alianza.

“The Lord has truly been kind to grant Covenant Presbyterian Church a wonderful place.”

Why we are building

1 Greater growth in Christ

More space for Bible teaching, worship, and fellowship means greater spiritual maturity for our church. We will provide high quality educational space sufficient to accommodate a significant increase in Sunday School attendance, children’s church, and youth Bible study. We desire to provide more suitable worship space for Alianza which will simultaneously give our children’s ministry the much needed space provided by our Activity Room.

2 Greater effectiveness

Sufficient and onsite office space will have an enormously positive impact on the efficiency of our staff and pastors. Currently our office space is cramped, difficult to navigate, unwelcoming, and lacks sufficient storage and workspace. We want our offices to provide proper space for the pastors and ministry directors to be as effective as possible. We want offices that will be conducive to everything from counseling and staff meetings to study and event preparation such as VBS and youth retreats.

3 Greater presence

We want this place on the hill to be brimming with life throughout the week. By placing our offices onsite, we will be a daily presence to our neighbors and church members.

4 Greater hospitality

Currently our foyer is crowded on Sunday mornings, making our building quite difficult to navigate for guests and new members. We desire to expand our foyer such that guests can be properly welcomed and oriented to our building. This, along with more space for fellowship, teaching, and the daily presence of those who serve on staff will help us better fulfill the goal of offering a genuine welcome to our community.

5 Greater visibility

It has pleased the Lord to surround our property with an increasing number of homes. This is a blessed stewardship and wonderful opportunity. Let us build in such a way as to be a welcoming and beautiful presence where God has placed us.

In his Sermon on the Mount Jesus tells his followers, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden” (Matthew 5:14). The church of Jesus Christ is that city on a hill. We are the light that must not be hidden. And yet remember that there is a close correspondence between people and place. We are, by definition, the gathered ones. And in his kind wisdom God has gathered us together on this hill.

Our vision is to welcome and worship in Jesus’ name. That is, we do what God’s people have always been called to do. We face the world and plead with them to join us in worshipping King Jesus. The vision of Psalm 96 is that God’s people would declare his praises within the hearing of the nations. The temple was always intended to be a place where all the nations would stream in and give praise to the Lord. We long to see our neighbors join us in this place. We long to see them confess Jesus as Lord, receive baptism, grow as his disciples, and be part of the worshipping church. So let us, together, be all the more visible, a sincere welcome in an alienated and alienating world, a city on a hill shining in the darkness.