



COVENANT ALIANZA

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH • IGLESIA PRESBITERIANA

FEBRUARY 2024

COVENANT ALIANZA

Worship Facility Address:

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Harrisonburg, VA 22801

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9:00–4:00 p.m.
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Welcome, Worship, and our Place on the Hill

Todd Pruitt, Lead Pastor

*“Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples!
For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised...”*

—PSALM 96:3-4

Psalm 96 is a sort of touchstone for Covenant Presbyterian Church. Along with so many other Scriptures, Psalm 96 provides a biblical, theological, intellectual, and imaginative framework for our church’s vision to **Welcome** our neighbors to **Worship** King Jesus. Even as God’s people have been called to be separate and distinctive from the world (and perhaps especially because of this) we are also to extend a purposeful welcome to the world—a welcome that is simultaneously a summons to believe in Jesus and to worship him as Lord.

Throughout the Scriptures we see that the highest expression of worship is corporate worship. The perfected worship in the new creation is without exception described in corporate terms. And so our corporate gatherings on the Lord’s Day have eternal significance. They function as a kind of dress rehearsal for eternity.

The church’s worship also has an expansive outward looking purpose as we see in Psalm 96 and so many other passages of Scripture. In 1 Kings 8 we read of the dedication of Solomon’s temple.

When it was finally completed the Ark of the Covenant and the other holy vessels were brought in and put in their places. It was all done with great reverence and ceremony. And the glory of the Lord was so great that the priests could not even remain in the temple. And then Solomon prayed. One of the things we learn from his prayer is that the Gentiles were *expected* to know what was happening at the temple. Indeed, the Gentile nations were expected to abandon their idols, come into the temple and worship the Lord. As Solomon prayed:

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“Let these words of mine, with which I have pleaded before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God, day and night, and may he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires, **that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other**” (1 Kings 8:59-60).

The temple was never intended to service Israel’s private religious experience. It was to serve as a place that would draw all the nations to worship and serve the LORD.

Psalms 96 lays the groundwork that everyone, everywhere, in every nation and tribe needs Jesus. The Scriptures testify to this repeatedly. And the place where we begin our labors in this great purpose is right here with our most immediate neighbors. In as much as we welcome our neighbors, make a place for them to come and hear the gospel, and call them to believe in Jesus and join the chorus of His praise, we are being faithful to the age-old mission of God’s people.

While we no longer have a temple, nor is there a single holy city, it is still the expectation for the world to know what happens as God’s people gather together. Our neighbors ought to know what happens on the hill on Mosby Road each Lord’s Day. Rising early on Sunday mornings, getting ready, and driving up the hill to church in order to gather with people (many of whom are so different from you); standing next to them to sing, to pray, to confess sin, and listen to God’s Word preached is an increasingly weird thing in our community. Indeed, such a regular practice is countercultural in a way that is very much like the weirdness of God’s old covenant people gathering in the temple, was to all the pagan nations around them. Each Sunday we continue in that great other-worldly vision as we worship a God so different from the gods of the world.

That is why this place in which we gather is so vital to our mission as the church of Jesus Christ. It is in our church home where we gather to worship, to bear witness to Christ and his faithfulness, to receive God’s Word, to be taught the Scriptures and pray together, to laugh together and weep together, to receive neighbors from all manner of backgrounds and circumstances. This place on the hill is where we are formed. It is where we become the church, so that we can be the church “out there” as well.

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It would be difficult to exaggerate the kindness that God has shown to Covenant during our nearly 40 years. Even now, when it would be easy to wind down and coast on past blessings, the Lord continues to give us new opportunities for evangelism and disciple making. Our ministries to children and youth have flourished in quite remarkable ways. We have welcomed hundreds of guests into our church to hear the gospel through such ministries as *Christianity Explored*, English as a Second Language, and Kids’ Club. Not only that, each Lord’s Day we are blessed to meet a variety of people from our community who hear the Word of God proclaimed. God continues to meet the financial burden of these growing ministries and Lord’s Day services through the faithful giving of the people who make up Covenant Presbyterian Church.



Every week as we drive to our place on the hill, we see new homes being built with plans for even more. This is cause to thank God that over 20 years ago he located us on this particular piece of ground. Each Sunday as we crowd into the foyer of our building it is a reminder that God continues to entrust us with a growing number men and women, students and children.

As you know, our church’s building committee has been actively meeting and moving us forward on a plan to address our needs for additional space for Bible

teaching, for welcoming, for gathering and fellowship, space that will give us much needed options for children's church and our Spanish speaking service, and, at long last, proper offices on site. All of this will make our place on the hill more welcoming to our neighbors, more conducive to teaching and learning, more present to our neighbors, and more effective and efficient for our pastors, ministry directors, and ministries.

Finally, please pray. Pray that the Lord would continue to guard us and guide us as he has so faithfully over the last 40 years. Pray for the Lord's protection of the hearts and minds of the Session, the Deacons and the ministry staff. Pray also for the building committee as they labor to present us with plans for our facilities that will help us be all the more faithful to **Welcome** our neighbors to **Worship** Jesus. ✱



A Door-to-Door Opportunity

Aaron Roberts, *Pastor of Adult Discipleship*

In February of 2023 we began our 5th annual outreach entitled *Christianity Explored*. This 8-week course around a meal and Bible study brought us together as we invited our friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues to tell them about the good news of Christ. Since we started in 2018, we have hosted over two hundred guests. Among them internationals, who have only been in the country, some of them, for a few years. We have been thankful for the fruit of this ministry, and as we begin 2024, we see a new opportunity before us.





For those of you who have been in the Valley long enough, you have witnessed significant change in the last fifteen years. Remember when there was no by-pass? (Townie-speak for Stone Spring Road...) Do you remember when RMH was just a big field? These, and many more changes, are signs of an ever-growing community. Even today, all throughout the Valley, where acres of woods once stood, are now filled with construction cranes, cement mixers, hotels, townhomes and single-family homes. Since 2010 Rockingham County has been blessed with an 11.8% population increase. That's over 10,000 people who have made Harrisonburg home! And this may very well mean you are one of those to recently

plant roots here. How blessed we have been to make the Valley our home?!

In God's providence, we now see new developments right in our church's backyard! This burst of construction led our staff to ask the question: What might it look like to extend the same welcome we've received to our new neighbors?

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Therefore, we decided to take a break this year from Christianity Explored and go meet our neighbors. Beginning in March we will take three evenings to go door-to-door and extend the invitation. Who knows? Maybe God will do something special.

Please be in prayer as we prepare for this outreach and be on the lookout for more information. We are looking for go-getters, who love to have winsome conversations with new people. If that's you, **please click here** or **scan the QR code below** and fill out the form.

We want to meet and welcome our neighbors, ask them how we can help, and invite them to church. In our day and age of constant division, malcontent, and loneliness, we're praying these conversations will bear good fruit.

For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God (Hebrews 13:14-16). ✱

ARE YOU A GO-GETTER, WHO LOVES WINSOME CONVERSATIONS WITH NEW PEOPLE? SCAN THE QR CODE AND FILL OUT THE FORM!

