

A LAMPSTAND

FOR MOUNT AIRY

COVENANT REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PASTOR SCOTT WILLET

NOVEMBER 2023

Money Business

We don't talk a lot about money here at Covenant. Thankfully, the reason for that is that money is not a problem. We rely upon the generous giving of tithes and offerings by God's people, given to the Lord happily and freely (2 Corinthians 9:7). With "all the tithes [being brought] into the storehouse" (Malachi 3:10), we pay our bills and our budgeted expenditures. We don't ask for pledge cards, we don't schedule fundraisers, we don't plead (or beg) for money stressing dire circumstances or giving any sense of obligation for paying some sort of "dues." God has been faithful. God's people have been faithful!

I focus on money, however, in this article in order to emphasize two things. First, a philosophy. I've just stated it. We don't operate on a "pay as you go basis," charging (or asking for money) for individual activities or projects as they arise. Special offerings are very much limited by comparison to the weekly collection in our morning worship service. We ask God's people to give freely and generously as an act of faith and worship. That's it! Then we spend our money as a whole church rather than as itemized groups within the church. We spend according to a budget which provides the necessary accountability and structural organization. We do it together, as a unified whole, one body.

Welcome!

To our visitors,
we welcome you to
Covenant Reformed
Presbyterian Church.

Visitors, please take a copy of
the burgundy colored
Welcome!
folder located on the foyer
table next to the bulletins.
Please fill out a visitor's card
and either give it to an usher
or put it in the offering plate.

"But now God has set the members,
each one of them, in the body
just as He pleased."
(1 Cor. 12:18 NKJV)

It is good to realize that our denomination is funded and supported the same way. The active mission of the OPC is carried out by three separate "program" committees—Foreign Missions, Home Missions, and Christian Education. The money needed for that whole, combined work of the whole church is given the label "Worldwide Outreach." In other words, we (individuals or individual churches) support our missionaries (home and foreign) and all our work of Christian education with a single, combined offering. The reality of that is that each missionary and each activity or publication is funded by a common budget rather than each one assuming the burden of raising their own support. Thus, when we (you) give to Worldwide Outreach, you are giving to the whole work of the whole church. We do it together, as a unified whole, one body.

Our church budget reflects that commitment, as we contribute a substantial amount of money to Worldwide Outreach, a number based upon our membership and specific "Askings" defined by the denomination. Our regional presbytery operates on the same philosophy, and we contribute substantially to that as well. As a church, the whole of our missions budget is in excess of 10% of our total budget.

Additionally, every year at Thanksgiving we receive a special Thank Offering, providing the opportunity for individual members who wish to do so to contribute directly to that combined mission of the OPC. The Thank Offering will be given entirely to Worldwide Outreach in addition to our budgeted allocation. Accordingly, you see bulletin inserts these current weeks regarding Foreign Missions, Home Missions and Christian Education. Those inserts will give you a sense of how the money is spent. We will be receiving the Thank Offering on Sunday, November 26.

The second purpose for this article is to emphasize very unusual circumstances in 2023. We (the Session) decided to complete the pavilion project which had been begun during COVID. So we determined to purchase the steel pavilion and high quality picnic tables back in May, along with electrical service. We also determined to complete the much-needed paving of our church parking lot in September. We made the decision and commitment to those extraordinary expenditures in light of a healthy balance in our general fund which we have carried over for many years. As I wrote back in May, that obviously isn't the most important item in terms of our eternal destiny, but in terms of the safety and protection of our members and visitors simply getting into the church building, it is important.

In the interest of full disclosure, those two projects cost approximately \$25,000 each (using very round numbers). You can see more specific numbers at the bottom of this page, indicating that our expenditures are approximately \$50,000 greater than our giving to date. Our General Fund balance is now down to about \$22,000.

None of that was unanticipated nor should be classified as a financial crisis, given the reserves we have had. It is, however, a substantial change and therefore wise to bring to your specific attention. There is an obvious sense that if anyone wished to give an additional offering, this would be a very good time to do so. No browbeating here, but a specific invitation offered in the context of these special circumstances.

I should also note that our monthly giving continues to be down this year. Typically, there is increased giving at the end of the year, but our average giving thus far in 2023 is just over \$12,000 per month, noticeably down from the past two years when monthly giving averaged \$13,352 (in 2021) and \$13,785 in (2022).

Again, no browbeating. But since we don't often talk about money, it is good to be reminded of the pastoral encouragements of God's word with regard to our money. Those encouragements include both a promise and a challenge, made especially clear in the personal and pastoral words of the Apostle Paul to the church in Corinth:

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

Yours with a pastor's heart,

Schedule of Preaching

November 12

AM Genesis 11:10-32
PM Matthew 9:1-13

November 19

AM Genesis 12:1-9
PM Matthew 9:14-26

November 26

AM Genesis 12:10-20
PM Matthew 9:27-34

December 3

AM Genesis 13:1-18
PM Matthew 9:35-38

December 10

AM Pulpit Supply: Earl Blackburn
PM Pulpit Supply: Earl Blackburn

December 17

AM Genesis 14:1-16
PM Matthew 10:1-15

December 24

AM Pulpit Exchange: Calvin Keller
PM Matthew 10:16-25

December 31

AM Genesis 14:17-24
PM Matthew 10:26-33

Treasurer's Report

Monthly Income

July	\$10,891.75
August	\$18,427.00
September	\$7,869.00
October	\$13,182.25
YTD	\$121,821.36

Monthly Expenses

July	\$12,301.54
August	\$12,375.20
September	\$9,429.54
October	\$43,048.79
YTD	\$173,431.58

Income minus Expenses

July	(\$1,409.79)
August	\$6,051.80
September	(\$1,560.54)
October	(\$29,866.54)
YTD	(\$51,610.22)

Monthly Average Income

\$12,182.14

Monthly Average Expenses

\$17,343.16

Monthly Budget

\$14,750.00

Third Annual
Festival of Lessons and Carols

Friday, December 22
7:00 PM

We will recount the birth of Jesus by reading a variety of Scripture verses alternating with the singing of Christmas carols corresponding to those verses.

Please feel free to invite friends, believers and unbelievers, noting the the whole of the "Christmas story" of Jesus' incarnation will be read and sung through these alternating lessons and carols.

Men's Reading Group

Each Friday, 9:00 AM
at the church
studying the book *The Glorious Body of Christ*
by R.B. Kuiper

All the men and young men of the church are invited
for a time of study, prayer and fellowship.

Women's Fellowship

Meeting at the church
Second Monday of the month
Prayer/Program/Discussion

Monday, November 13
10:15 AM - 12:30 PM

Bring your lunch and stay for fellowship (optional).

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Everyone is invited and encouraged to come to our weekly Bible study
each Wednesday evening at 7 pm.

We are studying the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*.
Meeting at the home of Marvin and Susan Kaye, 419 Spring St., Mount Airy

A Personal Note from Pastor Willet

As I approach eight years of ministry here at Covenant, I want to express how grateful I am to the Lord for this congregation. I find myself content and happy, thankful for the Lord's blessing of fruitful labor and appreciative of the respect and friendship you have offered to me as your pastor.

I have been thankful for your generosity shown to me in many ways. I thank you specifically for the generous gift you have gave me last month for *Pastor Appreciation Month*, and as thankful as I am for the monetary gift, I am all the more thankful for the spirit with which you have received my ministry among you and received me personally.

Deacons Fund Offering

We receive an offering designated for the Deacons Fund following the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of every month.

The Deacons Fund (currently administered by the Elders) is used to meet specific financial requests of those in need, with a priority given to members of the church but with a willingness also to help those outside the church. (Galatians 6:10) This monthly offering will give everyone who wishes to do so the opportunity to contribute to this fund. Please give generously as you are able, as we care for one another in love.

Session Actions

Actions of the Session in previous months include:

Interviewed for membership Chuck and Marti Eagle, and Jim and Cheri Silva.

Transfer of membership for Elizabeth Woltz to her current church in Florida.
Discussed the circumstances of other members who have moved away or are not currently attending Covenant.

Approved pulpit supply for the vacation weeks observed by Pastor Willet.

Received monthly Treasurer's Reports and Deacons' Fund Reports, with preliminary discussion of the 2024 budget.

Reviewed and discussed the various activities and ministries of the church.

Scheduled the church picnic (October 14) and Reformation Day program with Hank Belfield (October 31).

Scheduled our third annual Festival of Lessons and Carols on Friday, December 22.

Discussed the need for a specific outreach event with specific preparation for our next meeting.

Received a report from the Security Committee and discussed possible recommendations.

The session has an extended season of prayer for all church members and visitors each meeting.

Next meeting date will be December 30, 10 am at the Vigilant Cyber System office building, 1326 N. Main St.

Live Stream and our Website

Please be aware that a LiveStream is available for all our Sunday morning and afternoon worship services and our Wednesday Bible study, for those who are unable to attend in person.

The website address is: www.mtairyopc.org

The Live Stream is available as a single click on the home page, or directly:

<https://mtairyopc.org/live-stream/>

Recent sermons are available as a single click on the home page, and a full archive of all sermons and worship services is available as a click on the Live Stream page, or directly:

<https://mtairyopc.org/sermon-archive/>

Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church

495 S. Franklin Rd.
Mount Airy, NC 27030
336-673-3176 (Church office)
336-907-0202 (Pastor's phone)

mtairyopc.org

Pastor Scott Willet: sswillet@mac.com

Sunday Services

Sunday School Classes
10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship Service
11:00 AM

Fellowship Luncheon
12:30 AM

Sunday Evening Worship Service
2:00 PM

Other Activities

Wed. Night Bible Study
7:00 PM

The Westminster Shorter Catechism
Meeting at the home of Marvin and Susan Kaye
419 Spring St., Mount Airy

Men's Reading Group
Friday 9:00 AM
Meeting at the church

Session Meetings

The Session meets approximately every six weeks, at the conference room of the Vigilant Cyber Systems,
1326 N. Main Street in Mount Airy.
Our next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, July 1 at 10:00 am.