

Covenant Church Newsletter
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A Christ centered covenant community;

Loving God,
Loving People,
Making Disciples

January 2021

Pastor's Ponderings

The question on all our mind is when will it end? When will we be done with the hell that broke out early last year? When will life, go back to normal? Will it ever?

I am of the opinion (and this is *only* my opinion-not speaking for the Session or anyone else), that the end may be in sight. Setting aside new mutations and such, it seems to me that there is reason for hope, as either herd immunity or the vaccine or both will soon see the numbers start to fall. I'm not saying we will be done with masks and other precautions in the next couple of months, but I do think that by the end of February we will see a definite turning. So, there is my new year's prediction in print. We can all look back in a few months and see what happened 😊

In the meantime, of course, we go forward as a people of faith and prayer. Actually, that's why I don't mind making such a prediction. Granted, I would like to infuse our society with a needed dose of hope, but beyond that, I know (as do you) that all will be well because all is in the hands of our powerful and loving God.

And so, we go forward, in faith and prayer, and continue to do what we can. And one of those things might be to attend the 2021 ECO National Gathering. As you may know, our new denomination gathers every winter at a national level. Many of our elders have attended these national gatherings over the years, and they are always a great opportunity for fellowship and refreshment. Every other year there is a business meeting, in which elected commissioners vote on anything that needs that level of approval. As a sign of the overall health of ECO, these business meetings are not only infrequent, but also short!

On the alternating years (like 2021), the whole time is given over to education and enrichment. High caliber speakers are brought in to inspire, provoke, and stir us. AND THIS YEAR YOU CAN ATTEND! That's right, the 2021 National Gathering will be completely virtual, meaning our whole congregation can be part of the excitement! Simply go to <https://eco-pres.org> and click on the link that says National Gathering. You have to register, but its

free! The Gathering will be January 29-30, and of course, you need not attend every session, but some of the content may be of interest to you. Register today!

Another way we are moving forward is that Covenant has recently been approved to be chartered as a full church. Many won't know (and won't really care), but for the past five years our official status within ECO has been as a "church plant." Our Session voted in December to seek "official status" as a full church, and we have been accepted. There will be no change whatsoever in what you experience in terms of our day-to-day, week-to-week life together—in many ways this is simply a paperwork technicality. But in other *very profound* ways, this signals the completion of a long journey begun by a small group of people with a big vision almost six years ago. All of us who worship and find fellowship at Covenant Church owe that group of faithful friends a big "THANK YOU" and we will look forward to celebrating at some point early in the new year, and formally installing me as Pastor (instead of "Church Planting Pastor"). Look for more information to come!

Whatever happens in 2021, I give thanks that we are a close knit, loving family of God, a fellowship of hearts who love our Lord Jesus Christ, and who will continue to seek to serve Him and love others!

In Christ,

Brant

P.S. Karen and I want to thank the Covenant family for all the Christmas cards and gifts you sent our way last month. We are so blessed to be a part of this congregation, and we love you all so much! Thank you!!!

FROM THE CLERK

Although we took one Sunday morning off from in-person worship, we are happy that our safety protocol was successful and we are able to again meet in person. Sermons will continue to be posted on our website for those who wish to listen from home.

The next ECO National Gathering will be January 29-31st, 2021 and will be online and open to all. We hope many will tune into the wonderful presentations, but you must individually register. Go to the ECO website to register eco-pres.org.

The November 5th Sunday Mission offering netted \$730 to help start the Newcomers and Neighbors Club. Our January 5th Sunday Mission offering will go to our local Habitat House. They are hoping to raise at least \$50,000 locally for this house. If you write your check directly to Habitat, it can be returned to you, dollar for dollar as an Arizona Tax Credit for up to \$800 for a couple or \$400 as an individual.

Pledge/commitment cards for 2021 will be available at worship the next few Sundays or at the end of this newsletter. We will have a time of commitment and bringing forward the basket of our cards during our worship service on February 7. Our yearly congregational meeting will also be on February 7 immediately following worship. We will be sharing Annual Reports and the 2021 budget adopted by the Session. If you cannot be there in person, you can mail your pledge (before February 7 if possible so it can be placed in the commitment basket). If you will be mailing it, you may want to mark the envelop "2021 pledge card" so that it will only be opened by the appropriate person

Men's Bible Study

The Men of the church meet each Thursday at 11:30am, all men are welcome, and you can bring a sack lunch if you like. Wearing a mask is optional. If you would like to be part of the Bible study, please call Brant for more information (520-876- 2888 or 480-458-7628).

Neighborhood Help Team

The Neighborhood Help Team is continuing a service for those who could use a little bit of help. We would like to help you in replacing A/C filters or with some landscape trimming on the 4th Saturday of each month. Contact Nelson Moore in person or call him @ 520-483-0461.

January Calendar

- 3 Communion
- 13 Prayers at the flagpole at McCartney Ranch Elementary, Wed., January 13, 9:00am.
- 13 Prayer night, Wednesday, January 13, 6:30pm at Carol & Wiley's.
- 14 Worship Team Meeting, Thursday, January 14, 1:00pm.
- 21 Session Meeting, Thursday, January 21, 6:00pm.

January Birthdays

- 27 Rob Shuster

January Anniversaries

- 4 Rob & Lori Shuster

**COVENANT CHURCH
2021 Commitment**

Name(s) _____

Address _____

In grateful recognition that all our time, treasures and abilities come from God, I/we gladly join my/our Covenant Partners in the support of Christ's church and her mission in the world.

\$ _____ per week per month annually

(please circle one)

Signature/s _____ Date _____
