



## Covenant Presbyterian Church

...a compilation of stories from 40 years of God's miracles”

*“Then a shoot will spring up from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.”*

*~ Isaiah 11:1*



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### *Dedication*

*Dedicated to the memory of Charlie Foote, whose vision inspired this book ~ and to the honor of all the faithful who laid the cornerstone and continued to build up the body of Christ.*

## Introduction

*“Now to Him who by the power  
at work within us  
is able to accomplish  
abundantly far more  
than all we can ask or imagine,  
to Him be the glory  
in the church and  
in Christ Jesus  
to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”  
~ Ephesians 3:20-21*

If you live in Grand Junction, Colorado, you've probably noticed that little church in the country along 32 Road on top of the hill about a mile south of the river. That's us – Covenant Presbyterian! Our people-friendly congregation was formed in the early 1980's – and God continues to thrive in our small church family.

Covenant has always had a particularly outstanding reputation for genuine friendliness and acceptance of others. It would take considerable effort to be lonely in this outgoing, warm and loving church! Covenant is a church of real folks, sincere, down-to-earth Christians who have a deep desire to live out the love of Jesus Christ! We encourage you to join us in all this friendliness! Make it a point to get involved in our worship services, committees, projects, and fun events! You will be blessed with a sense of belonging! As you are, you will discover the joy of growing in faith with your Christian brothers and sisters!

Our Sunday service features a blended (traditional and contemporary) format. Services are streamed live and saved as videos on Facebook, and sermon podcasts are available through Google Play Store to enjoy at your leisure. Our worship is familiar to Presbyterians and easy for visitors to understand.

Pastor Chuck Jerome is an inspiring and enthusiastic spiritual leader of our congregation -- since 1989! His sermons focus on helping us to understand the Word of God and how it relates to our lives in the “real world.” They are Biblical, easy to follow, relevant and spiced with a touch of humor.

Several Christian Education opportunities are available – for all ages! We enjoy fellowship and invite you to join us for our many dinners, luncheons and potlucks.

Our congregation's history is a great testimony to God's constant love and amazing miracles--this has built a strong sense of purpose and unity, and an abiding belief that, in all circumstances, God will see us through! The history of Covenant Presbyterian Church is a history of miracles!

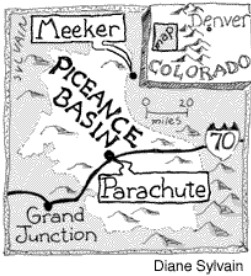
Come visit us!

## 1980's

*"Go into the World and preach the gospel to all creation."*

*~Mathew 28:19*

### **In the Beginning**



In the late 1970's and early 1980's, our corner of western Colorado was experiencing the "oil shale boom." Mesa County's population was growing rapidly. There was no end in sight--or so people believed. A need for a new Presbyterian Church was being recognized and in 1979 2¾ acres were purchased at E and 32 Roads for \$27,000 for that purpose. This site was later sold in 1981 for \$80,000 and replaced with the present Orchard Mesa location.

Several members of First Presbyterian Church in downtown Grand Junction started having Bible studies in the Clifton area, and they began to pray over beginning a new Presbyterian church to serve the east end of our valley and the anticipated population growth that supported oil shale development. Eventually, the idea was presented to the Presbytery of Western Colorado, which convened the first meeting of the "Clifton New Church Development Committee" on May 27, 1980. Before the end of the year, the congregation had a pastor (Austin Patty) and a name—Covenant. Early church committee members were led by Reverend Jim Anderson and included Reverend Dick Jones, Lowell Clark, Keith Kerr, Joe McMillan, Jim Roberts, Jim Byron, and Irene Bowman.

The first service was held on September 7, 1980 in the second floor of the Odd Fellows' Rebekah Hall in Clifton and was followed by a potluck lunch at Palisade Park. There is a story that comes from those early days that is quite inspiring. A young mother (Cindy Graham) was seeking fellowship in a church and heard about Covenant. Hearing that it had a number of young people, she was in hopes that her family might fit in well. She gathered her courage, invested the extra effort it takes to get three kids ready to go to church on a Sunday morning, and headed off to Rebekah Hall. When she arrived, an older lady was standing outside the building greeting newcomers. The greeter explained that the service would be on the second floor, pointing, "right up these stairs." Cindy took one look up the narrow, poorly lit, old wooden staircase, and had a feeling of panic. She started walking away, when the older lady spoke up. "Go on up, dear, and you'll find the love of God!" Cindy took this as a sign and made her way up those stairs-kids in tow. When she recalled this

**COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
At Rebekah Hall on 2nd Street in Clifton, Colorado 81520



*This cup which is poured out for you  
is the new covenant in my blood.  
Luke 22:20*

#### **OUR MISSION OUTREACH**

Presbyterian National Missions Fund  
Presbyterian Ministers' Retirement Fund  
One Great Hour of Sharing  
Scholarships to Youth Camp  
Salvation Army Christmas Fund  
Grand Junction Food Bank

#### **Prayer Support:**

Rev. Niles and Ann Reimer – Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Rev. George and Ann Tewksbury – Pakistan  
Sandra McCrorv – Addis Ababa, Ethiopia





story, she simply said warmly, "You know, that lady was right. In all these years at Covenant, I really have found the love of God!"

A Building Planning Committee was formed on September 20, 1980 with members the Clarks, Lamperts, Fitzgeralds, Jim Austin, and Austin Patty. A down payment of \$20,000 was made in June 1981 on 5 acres of land. The Building Committee applied for a loan from the Presbytery of Western Colorado that was used to complete the purchase of the parcel (our present property on Orchard Mesa) in 1982.

Covenant became an official Presbyterian congregation on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1982 under a tent set up on the property.

Page 12—The Daily Sentinel, Grand Junction, Colorado

Saturday, May 8, 1982



Sentinel photo by Robert Grant

**Home of Covenant Presbyterian Church until building is up**  
...Sunday service to feature clown troupe

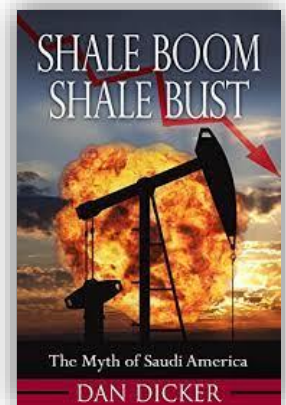
The tent was a used circus tent that members of the congregation drove to Powell, Wyoming, to purchase. At our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Lowell Clark recalled, "That tent had a lot

of holes and it had to be mended before it could even be put up.” A member at that time, Bill Ellicott, related a story about that tent: “A small group of folks met at my farm, stretched out the tent, set an industrial size sewing machine on top of a piano dolly, and rolled the sewing machine around in order to re-stitch the seams. That was a crazy day!”



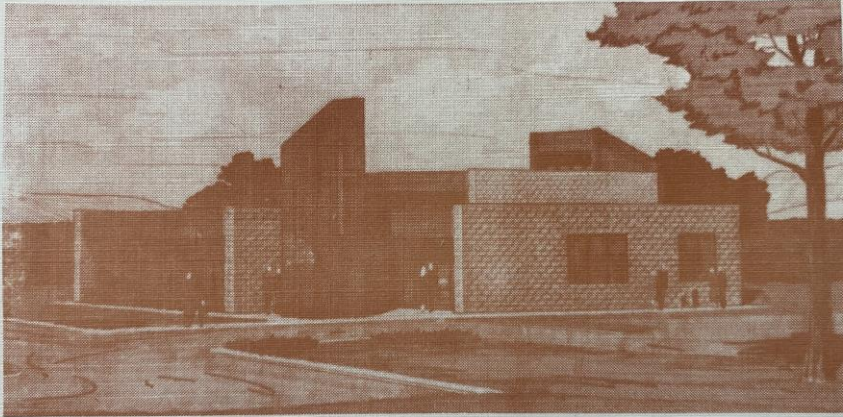
The 1982 ceremony involved many Presbytery representatives, and included the launching of helium balloons with a scripture attached. A few weeks later, a farmer in Orient, South Dakota, wrote that his son had found one of the balloons in his field!

Despite an enthusiastic beginning, the congregation started under the shadow of a devastating blow to the economy and population of Mesa County as a result of the pullout of oil shale operations by Exxon Corporation. Known to locals as “Black Sunday”, the Exxon decision was announced on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, only eight days before our church became official. Exxon shut down its “Colony Project”, putting thousands out of work and devastating the valley’s economy.





**Proposed New Building  
COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

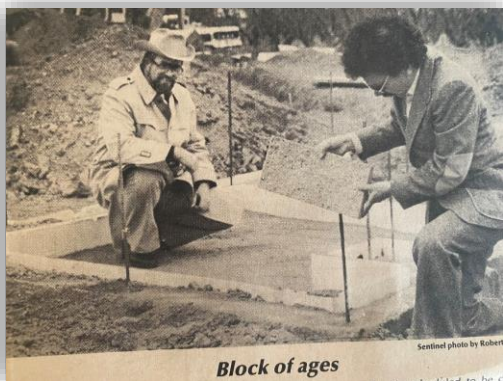


**Help us build a new church building to provide a Christian day-care center and pre-school for our community. Donate your time, materials, or money.**

**A New Church**

From the beginning of our church, Covenant folks have always shown perseverance. They simply don't give up to adversity when they believe in what God leads them to do! They believe deeply in God's power to do amazing work despite dire circumstances. Thus, construction began on the present church building later in 1982 using a \$107,000 loan from the national Presbyterian Church. Architect Chuck Brenner of Gray-Brenner

Architects, emphasizing a multi-purpose design with an "ultra-modern kitchen," designed the church. Chuck Brenner was a member of the congregation and surveyed members for ideas on the design. Art Butts Construction Company was the builder, and volunteers helped with brick laying, painting, and other jobs. The present church building was completed and dedicated on Easter Sunday, 1983. A special feature of the dedication was the ringing of the 100-year-old church bell donated by the Olathe Presbyterian Church.

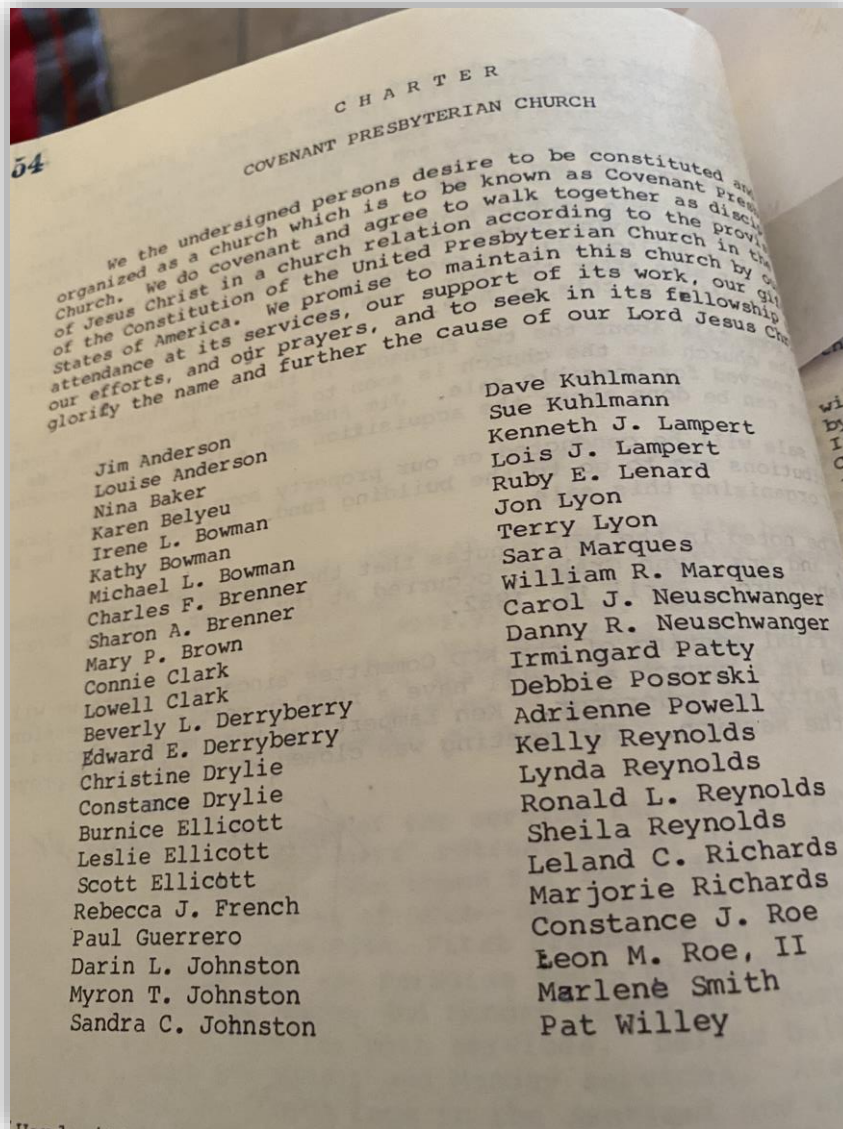


*Block of ages*

Sentinel photo by Robert  
scheduled to be c







Twenty-nine families were listed as charter members at the dedication and included present members the Clark family, Pat Crooks, the Reynolds family, and Ruby McCall. The charter members developed a vision statement that affirmed the importance of becoming a church, "with a sense of being a community, a family, where no one will feel like a stranger." This "vision" has been fulfilled in many beautiful ways over the years!

### ***Ups and Downs***

Our first pastor, Austin Patty, resigned in 1984 and was followed by Pastors Darline Makin (1985-1986) and Gordon Jones (1987-1989). There were many months without a pastor, and William "Charlie" Brown stepped in to serve as our Session Moderator. The years 1984-1989 were very unsettled, and whenever Covenant was without a pastor, numerous retired Presbyterian ministers stepped in to lead worship services on interim basis. These included William "Charlie" Brown, Tom Smalta, Dick Jones, George Moore, Carl Grondorf and Glen Owens. In addition to the support of retired pastors, the senior pastor at First Presbyterian, Skip Herbert, was also quite supportive in the work at Covenant.



These early years were also marked by a crushing debt (to the General Assembly and the Presbytery), which the congregation was unable to sufficiently address. Finances and participation were in dire straits. Despite the problems, the enthusiastic congregation shared many fellowship activities ranging from rafting, skiing, and hiking to potlucks and picnics. A day care center-Covenant Children's Center-was also successfully operated during this period. Our church property included a pear orchard and the congregation would tend the orchard and can and sell pears to support the church. Sheila Reynolds recalled, "I still remember the summer I canned 72 jars of pears in our church kitchen. I decided never to can pears again, and I haven't!" The pear trees were all cut down since the pear business wasn't profitable (even with all of


the volunteer help).

Membership in the mid-1980's was 50-60 people. Average church attendance finally bottomed out in 1989, and payments on the mortgage were insufficient to even pay the interest and were making no effect on the principal. The Presbytery was considering closing Covenant and "cutting its losses." However, the congregation and Al Ruth, the Executive Presbyter for Western Colorado, were not ready to give up. Al believed Covenant had tremendous potential, and Grand Junction was beginning to recover from the oil shale bust. Some people thought Covenant was ending but Al saw 1989 as a new beginning. Al was a person who really believed in miracles, and his amazing faith was contagious.

Our story of the 1980's is going to end in August, 1989. The remainder of 1989 better fits with the 1990's when Covenant's strong sense of commitment, community, family, dedication and love for one another carried us into another eventful decade.



**WHY WE GO TO COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN**




We are finding Covenant Presbyterian Church just the ticket for our needs. The feeling of love and real caring among its members is quite refreshing. With Austin Patty at the helm we are finding that starting a new church is an inspiration in our lives.

*The Richards*

Lee and Marj Richards

Not too many people have the opportunity in their lives to help start a new church. We recognize this unique challenge because we feel this is the most important contribution that we can make to this community. As this area grows, so will this new church because it will be serving the community.



We find the congregation to be a nice mixture of all ages and interests; where each individual feels free to inject his ideas and know that his input is listened to and seriously considered. We find the friendly, warm, and caring atmosphere to be just the place where we can give more fully of ourselves and in turn grow as individuals.

Lowell and Connie Clark and Sons

We appreciate Rev. Patty's depth and insight. His Bible based sermons are inspiring and applicable to our daily lives. All in all, we find Covenant Presbyterian Church to be an intellectually, emotionally and spiritually filling experience.

*The Clarks*

**COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

## 1990's

*“May the God of hope  
fill you with all joy and  
peace in believing, so that you may abound  
in hope by the  
power of the Holy Spirit!”  
- Romans 15:13*

### A New Start

God has always been powerfully at work in the life of Covenant Presbyterian Church – and the decade of the 1990's was really something special. I wrote the early description of the 1990's in “first person” because it reflects my own perspective on a remarkable decade in the life of Covenant Presbyterian Church. We've been so blessed! - Pastor Chuck (Jerome)

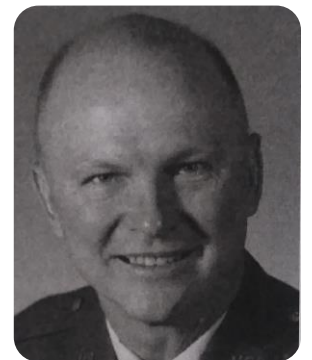
The story of the 1990's really begins earlier. In late 1989 I served as Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in the small town of Shenandoah, Iowa, from 1985 to 1989.



One afternoon in Iowa in the summer of 1989, I received a phone call from Al Ruth, the Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of Western Colorado. His demeanor was so friendly that he started the conversation with, “Hello, Chuck. This is Al” - not entirely taking into account that I wouldn't know whom “Al” was! I soon discovered that this was

characteristic of Al, a man who never knew a stranger and who soon became a wonderful friend of our Church.

Al said that he felt that my church development interests were quite compatible with Covenant Presbyterian Church in Grand Junction. He honestly explained the financial concerns Covenant was facing. He also explained that the Presbytery was considering whether to close the church altogether. Nevertheless, Al believed in Covenant's future and felt that the congregation had great potential. He invited me to come to Colorado and attend a Presbytery meeting in which the subject of the future of Covenant would be discussed.



I was immediately excited about the prospect of going to Colorado to tell people why I felt called to this! I was invited to that Presbytery meeting, and set out to try to convince some discouraged

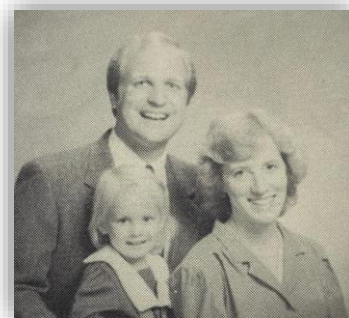


Presbyterians that an outsider like me, not having lived through the trouble, could have an advantage in the situation.

I still remember explaining my feelings about all of this in front of the Presbytery. It seemed as though I was just opening my mouth and God was doing all the talking! I remember hearing a very welcome and surprising round of applause and then a unanimous vote to keep the church alive. The provision was limited to a two-year trial.

I then spent time being further updated on Covenant's situation with Al, Katy Trimm, a member of the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery, and Pat Crooks, a member of Covenant and the Clerk of the Session at the time.

On July 23, 1989, I preached a "neutral pulpit" sermon for First Presbyterian Church of Glenwood Springs with Covenant's Session in attendance that day. After the service, I signed a preliminary "call" (contract) and Session then recommended me to the congregation. I preached for the first time at Covenant on August 23, 1989, and the congregation elected me to serve as their pastor. This action was in turn approved by a specially-called Presbytery meeting at First Presbyterian Church in Montrose on August 25<sup>th</sup>.



Later I enjoyed an official installation service on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. We can still remember that Rev. Roy Altman, pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Glenwood Springs, preached the installation sermon. Roy shared a sermon on the blessings of Covenant's tradition of forming a circle and holding hands for the benediction each Sunday. He actually climbed a ladder during the sermon to say that many Christians see faith as an upward climb but that God comes to us in our circle of good friends to offer us His salvation. Years later, whether they remember the point of the sermon or not, many folks remember Roy wearing a simple robe and sandals (like Jesus) - and standing on that ladder! Roy continued to be a great friend and mentor for our church.

I remember how exciting it was that as early as November 5<sup>th</sup>, only a few weeks later, the very first couple of my Covenant ministry were received as members. (Mark and Debra Clymer joined the church and their son Sean Michael Clymer was baptized!)

I can remember very well the feelings of adventure, excitement, and enthusiasm as I began my ministry at Covenant! I had a strong sense of God's unmistakable call to serve as Covenant's pastor!



## Growth

Covenant began the new decade of the 1990's by reevaluating our membership and actually reducing the number from an inflated 56 to a more realistic report of 46 members. Yet, even while this decision was being made, we were already hosting a class for 11 newcomers to our church.





Comments were made by several of these newcomers about why they liked Covenant. The comments included friendliness and a lack of pomp and formality. By the end of 1990, we had already seen an increase in membership from 46 to 82 and had baptized 16 people. By 1992, we had reached 106 members and had a special celebration on the occasion of having more than 100 members! The congregation was on a growth spurt, but never lost its characteristic friendliness.

### **Changes**

In the 1990s, we began work on a new homemade sign in front of the church along 32 Road. What wonderful fellowship and camaraderie we enjoyed as we capitalized on the many talents in our church in building that sign! We now had a new way of saying to our community that we are pleased to be here and assertively let them know we welcomed their fellowship! (The sign was a miracle, too. It was built from special cash donations, donated materials and volunteer labor).



### **Debt Retirement Efforts**

In the chapter on the 1980's our debt problem was mentioned. Financing for the purchase of our building and grounds were represented by two loans. The General Assembly (national offices of our denomination) had loaned us \$107,000, and our Presbytery of Western Colorado had loaned us an additional \$55,000. These amounts, which may not seem huge by today's standards, were certainly huge burdens to our small church back then!

With guidance from the national church, we embarked on a strong new program to raise funds to take our debt by storm. In one year, we increased our overall annual giving from \$46,000 to \$82,000 and a new "capital fund" of \$40,000 (included in this) was created for the purpose of paying down our debt! Now we could see legitimate hope that our debt would not swallow us. We renegotiated the terms of the loans and managed to receive a bit more leniency from the General Assembly and the Presbytery of Western Colorado. Thanks to the Lord for the generosity and commitment of Covenant's growing membership and the fair treatment and support of the denomination, we now had an achievable goal in front of us.

## The Nitty Gritty Committee

Our new 32 Road sign caused us to think about the need to improve the overall appearance of the property, so we formed a new landscaping committee entitled, "The Nitty Gritty Committee." That group was a very hard-working bunch, and participation in landscaping efforts by nearly the entire congregation built a strong sense of fellowship and camaraderie for most of the 1990's.

## Teamwork and Addition of a Christian Education Annex

This was plenty exciting ~ we found our small church building to be pretty limiting for a growing children's ministry. In fact, the sounds of children in our south rooms were making it rather distracting for worship. We had been praying for a solution to this problem – a wonderful problem to have. Late in 1990, we received a phone call from the ever-opportunistic Al. As Executive Presbyter, Al explained that the Presbytery owned a modular frame house which he felt could be moved to our location so we could borrow it possibly for "Sunday School or something like that."



Now, anyone reading this story who doesn't believe there is a God should reconsider your position! Covenant was becoming a place where one miracle would follow another, over and over again. New members were coming, debts were being paid down, an amazing new advertising sign was under construction, and now we were getting a house free of charge. The Presbytery even paid for the moving costs and delivered that house right to our gravel parking lot!

Later in 1996 a generous donor (L.O. Griffith) not only paid for the paving of our gravel parking lot for our church but even oversaw the project himself.

The churches in our Presbytery began to adopt us in many ways. They, too, were excited that the

Covenant project was going well. When a beloved and dedicated Sunday School teacher, Elizabeth Sutherland, a member of the Presbyterian Church in Eckert, Colorado, passed away, memorial contributions were given for the cause of Christian Education. The kind folks at Eckert did not keep the funds for their own program, but forwarded the entire amount to Covenant's "Sunday School building program!" Next, we started a whole series of fundraisers that had the added benefit of increasing fellowship, participation and pure fun!



# The Parable of the Talents



One of the most fulfilling of all these efforts was kicked off on a Sunday early in the summer of 1991 when the sermon was on the parable of the talents from Matthew 25:14-30. In this parable, Jesus praises the servants of a master who invested what belonged to the master while he was away, thus bringing a profit to the master. Then Jesus relates this story to God as the master and believers as the servants. After the worship service that day, we handed out envelopes, each filled with \$25 in cash (from the Eckert church gift). People would use their skills and abilities to add a little "sweat-equity" to whatever they received. We explained that we would receive back at the end of the summer whatever was gained.

People got busy on all kinds of projects. One young man used the money to buy gasoline for his lawn mower, mowed many lawns, and multiplied the amount given him many times over. We enjoyed a summer full of activity – arts and crafts, handy work, and specialty projects galore! By the end of the summer, we had tripled what we handed out!! Our finance committee moderator (Stacia Brethen) commented - "I never have heard of a church that handed the money OUT!"

Although we had a significant increase in our overall financial giving, our debt-reduction efforts meant that the funding for the day-to-day operation of the church was still very tight. We were amazed by the generosity of the also-small Presbyterian Church of Delta, which donated \$3,000 to Covenant in 1991 to help with our church operating expenses! What a wonderful blessing it is to be in fellowship with our sister Presbyterian churches!



Also in 1991 a member of the Delta congregation (Norm Campbell) donated a solid-state church organ for our worship music. Our old one had been a gift from First Presbyterian Church of Glenwood Springs years earlier. Since retired pastor Charlie Brown had been the former pastor there, we asked him to tell us a story about the old organ and to help us "say goodbye to it." In his remarks, he mentioned "I've been asked to do many things in my career as a pastor, but I've never been asked to do a funeral for a church organ!"

Finally, we raised the funds needed to pour a permanent foundation for the Sunday School building and to hook up the utilities. Just as expected, God sent the children and the teachers, and that little building was abuzz with activity each Sunday. For a while, we even used it as a great place for pre-worship choir practices. In addition, we made it available for many different community purposes over the years: Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, Alcoholics Anonymous, and the Literacy Program all of whom have come to call that little house their home, too! On March 3, 2005, the Presbytery, in acknowledgement of what Covenant had accomplished and how important the house was to its ministry, officially signed the house over to our congregation for \$1! We certainly appreciate the many ways our wonderful Presbytery has supported us over the years!



## New Land

In 1994 we had a project to put a new church sign on the B½ Road frontage. It seemed that a sign on B½ Road would have appeal to people who actually lived nearby. So we approached the church's next-door neighbor who lived in the house on the corner to see if he would mind if we placed such a sign on his property. The neighbor proceeded to say he would be happy for us to put up our sign, but that it probably couldn't be a permanent arrangement since he was planning to put the house and five acres up for sale.

To make a long story short, our Session, our congregation, and Presbytery supported acquiring this new land; and thus our total property increased from five to ten acres and now borders B½ Road. A few years later, when our parking lot was expanded and paved for the first time, we used part of the new property for the expansion. (A new advertising sign was installed adjoining B ½ Road in 1997.) We now have adequate land for future use, and the areas of our property not currently



used for church purposes are farmed by Mel Rettig, our neighbor north of B½ Road. Mel does a wonderful job of keeping up the agricultural portion of our grounds, keeping the weeds under control, and also paying rent to the church. (Mel actually comes around once a year to voluntarily raise his own rent!)

## Worship and Fellowship



In the 1990's Covenant had a small but active youth group and confirmation classes. On more than one occasion, the Youth Group led a "Youth Sunday" worship experience. The young people also took turns serving as church greeters one Sunday each month. We enjoyed the fellowship of several new members, who also brought new children into our Sunday School. We had so

many new children that the church actually hired a "nursery care provider." Sunday School for children was a strong program for our small church in the 1990's – with three different age levels of education being offered.



Fellowship activities from our earlier days continued along with many new activities. More information is found in the chapter on "Outreach and Activities."

## Serendipity Preschool

In 1994, a young woman named Lora Rohlman approached Covenant with an offer to rent weekday space from the church to have a preschool, which she called "Serendipity Preschool". One young family became active in our church as a result. We believed in providing a place for children to learn and grow right here in a church setting. Serendipity Preschool continued with us for several years.





## Ministry Candidate

In 1993, one of our active members, Bill Rudy (who had been teaching an adult Sunday School class and whose wife, Kathy, was our church pianist) expressed to the Session that he was sensing God's call to the ordained ministry. Guided by our Presbytery, our Session helped Bill to explore his call and supported him throughout his three-year Seminary education. Bill became the only person in the history of Covenant to become an ordained Presbyterian minister from among our ranks. Bill was ordained at Covenant on July 7, 1997, and from there went on to serve a church in Linn Grove, Iowa.



## New Church Development

In 1997, Covenant members Walt Copeland, Lowell Clark, and Lois Reynolds served on the "Redlands New Church Development Committee." These were the origins of what is now "Monument Presbyterian Church."

## Leaders in the Church Office

Our congregation has always been blessed with a wonderful support staff. Church Secretary, Pat Owen, was an early office secretary starting in the late 1980's.

After Pat, our Church Secretary was Erma King. Erma came to us with extensive secretarial experience in the corporate world. In 1999, Erma told us of her plans to move to Missouri to be closer to her family. Before she left, however, she agreed to serve on a committee to help us hire her replacement.

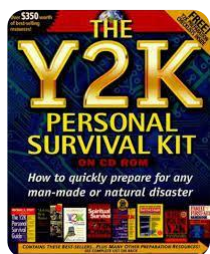


That's when Brigitte Evenson came whistling into our world with her positive and happy demeanor! Our committee was immediately taken by Brigitte – her vivacious personality, her credentials, and her wisdom and good judgment. We had previously been spoiled by the dedicated and capable volunteer labor of Elaine Buda in managing our church finances, but Elaine understandably expressed feeling weary of the task. Brigitte was perfect for the job because in addition to being a whiz with all things administrative, she also came to us from the banking world as a former bank officer. We needed her leadership in both arenas, and she was happy to oblige. So we dropped the title "secretary" in favor of a more comprehensive one: "Office Manager." Brigitte has been a true joy! Hired in April of 1999, Brigitte has the longest tenure in the church office – 23 years and still counting! Pat, Erma, Elaine and Brigitte have been such a Godsend in the history of our congregation!

## 2000's

*“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” ~ Jeremiah 29:11*

### A New Millennium



December 31, 1999 ~ a time of great anxiety for the coming of a new year, a new decade, a new century and a new millennium! Everyone “simply knew” our entire infrastructure was going to crash at the stroke of midnight. We had done it all to prepare ~ updated our computer operating systems and software, purchased a storehouse of food and essential items (in case grocery stores spontaneously burst into flames), considered buying a generator for electricity (and the gas needed to feed it), filled our bathtubs with water (to supplement our multiple cases of bottled water)...and anticipated the arrival of 12:01 am with just a hair of fear...

Boom! The New Year, new decade, new century and new millennium arrived...and all was well. And, yes, **we should have known that** as we know the earth and all that is on it is the Lord's. All was well at Covenant, too! We continued with our ministries and engaged in many new opportunities to reach out to our community in the love of Christ.

The miracles continued...

## Covenant Presbyterian Church celebrates its 20th anniversary

### *Papers from paid mortgage to be burned*

By CHRISTOPHER BARGE  
The Daily Sentinel

Chuck Jerome is not a person you would call unenthusiastic.

The 43-year old pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church on Orchard Mesa is, in fact, known for his contagious energy. So are the church's 133 members. It's fitting, then, that the congregation on Sunday will celebrate its 20th anniversary by burning the papers from the mortgage the church paid off last month.

The congregation borrowed the money to build its sanctuary on 32 and B<sup>1</sup> roads exactly one week after the oil shale bust sent Grand Junction into an energy crisis of the pocket and the soul.

"This mortgage almost killed us, and now we're killing it," said Jerome.

The congregation, whose members come from all over the Grand Valley, has welcomed everyone to attend an Easter service under an old-fashioned tent Sunday.

They're holding the 10 a.m. worship service under a tent for nostalgic reasons — just like they used to, during the year they built their church. They're also expecting a large turnout for the service, Easter egg hunt and youth group skit on the history of their church.

"We don't think the building is large enough for everyone we think will come, so we'll meet in the field," said Jerome.

"The thing I like about this church is it's like a big family," said Lynn Graham, the only one of three celebrants who has been a member of the church for all of its 20 years.

"Our son Joe was born in June of 1960," said Graham. "He was the first baby to be baptized in the church, and he was baby Jesus in the first Christmas play. I was Joseph, and my wife Cindy was Mary."



GRETEL DAUGHERTY/The Daily Sentinel

SOME MEMBERS of the Covenant Presbyterian Church gather in front of their building. This Sunday the parishioners will celebrate their 20th anniversary and having paid their mortgage.

Like the story of Easter, Covenant Presbyterian's has been a story of rebirth.

Christopher Barge can be reached via email at [cbarge@gjds.com](mailto:cbarge@gjds.com).

### Mortgages and Remodels

We started the new millennium with four loans totaling \$163,677. Two of the larger loans were paid in full in 2000 ~ and we celebrated our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Easter Sunday with the burning of our mortgage. The retired Rev. Tom Smatla “lit the match”. In 2007, we made our last payment on the remaining two loans. We were finally free of our debt burden!



That was perfect timing! Our pulpit Bibles were getting pretty worn after years of weekly congregational use. Our enthusiastic folks initiated several fund-raising projects to help defray the cost, and our new Bibles arrived! Pastor Chuck planned a Bible dedication service during worship ~ and we decided to "hide" the Bibles so it would be a surprise for everyone! The very tippy-top cabinets in the kitchen seemed a perfect spot ~ a step ladder is needed to safely reach these cabinets, so it seemed unlikely that someone would ever look into them. In the meantime....we had quite the rainstorm...the rain came in through our "patch no longer works" roof and into our kitchen cabinets. Water was all over the countertops and it seemed certain that our Bibles would also be water-drenched. With much trepidation, we pulled the stepladder to reach the two upper cabinets to retrieve what we anticipated to be water-logged boxes with destroyed Bibles. Yes....the cartons were essentially "melting" from all the water. But...the Bibles inside were 100% bone-dry!!! It is impossible to **physically** explain how that happened ~ but when we explain it through the way of faith, we know the explanation comes from another miracle of God.



Speaking of the leaky roof...it was time to do more than patch up leaky spots...and it was also time to consider taking on the other "deferred maintenance" projects in our church building. (You can only move furniture so much to cover "the bald spots" in the carpet.) In that we were enjoying our new "debt-free" status, we were reluctant in taking on any debt and decided we would save up for these projects. After years of fundraising efforts, we finally raised enough money to take on these much-needed

endeavors. In 2007, we replaced the largest section of our sanctuary roof. The spray foam roof product stopped those drips right in their tracks and it felt good to be nice and dry inside our church. Now that the "indoor rain" stopped, we felt comfortable in addressing our interior "situations." And so, the "2008 Big Remodel" adventure began! The pulpit area

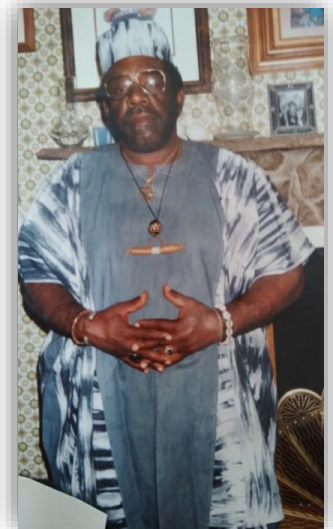


was completely redesigned to include movable platform levels easily adaptable to whatever the need may be. Our folks took on completely repainting the interior to the "new neutral" shade of sage...and we felt so "trendy". The nearly bald carpeting was finally replaced with carpeting that included a nap/pile all around! Next in line was a complete refresher to all window treatments ~ our ladies sewed up a storm and all of our windows were now beautifully draped in the latest fashions.



Outdoors needed a bit of touch up as well... The much-used children's playground area was ready for a "re-do!" Memorial donations for long-time friend, Clarene Yonkers, provided the funds needed to replace the "safety pebble-sized stones" and purchase a new swing and slide set for the children. Seeing that some were beyond the "safety belt swing set" age, Chris Stamps built quite the climb, swing and slide apparatus for the older kiddos. We also repainted the nursery in memory of Clarene.

*"♪ Pick your toys up off the floor...pick your toys up off the floor...pick your toys up off the floor and put them all away... ♪"* For many years, custodial services were provided on a contract basis. "Action Clean" retired from the tidy-up business and we were faced with finding a suitable replacement. Enter Andy Bradfield...Andy and his wife, Rosetta, owned Third World Connections, a delightful retail shop that sold everything African! Andy was known to be pretty tidy ~ always roaming through his store with a feather duster and sweeping the outdoor sidewalks. Andy brought his feather duster and began providing custodial services in 2004. Rosetta often joined him lending a hand and soon another Bradfield became a part of the crew - their preschool granddaughter, Ukhari! She came with her own mini feather duster and floated through the church capturing as much dust as she could. Saturday afternoons were Andy's typical "clean up the church" times ~ when Pastor Chuck was often at the church perfecting his message for Sunday worship. This gave the two of them perfect opportunity to visit and exchange theories on "why the world was the way it was," and Ukhari loved being around! Sadly, for us, in 2008, Andy went to be with the Lord. His family, knowing how special Andy's times were at Covenant, still wanted to "clean his church"... Enter Belinda Bradfield (Andy & Rosetta's daughter and Ukhari's mother). Belinda was our "tidy up go-to gal" for a year, ultimately realizing that working full time, raising a youngster





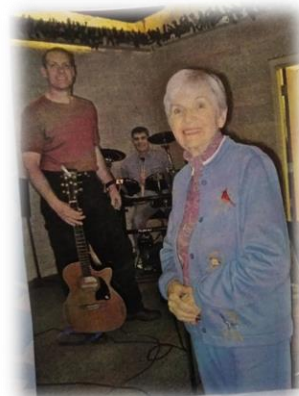
AND cleaning the church was just a bit more than she could take on. Yet "family legacy" continued. Randy Fosburgh took the over reins in 2010 and is still with us today! We so miss our friend Andy ~ pretty sure he is dusting angel halos in heaven and sweeping around the Pearly Gates!



Our sound system was in need of modernizing. (It was like we were still in the "eight track tape" era). Slowly, but surely, we started revamping this audio system and longtime member Perry Buda led the efforts. Sadly, in September of 2008, Perry went to be with our Lord. A separate memorial fund was established to fully upgrade the system in his memory. We were able to completely replace each and every component from receivers to wires and bring a whole new level of sound to our world!

The timing could not have been more perfect! In 2010, we launched our first contemporary worship service as a result of a congregational survey which showed overwhelming support for this idea. As contemporary worship utilizes music as a large part of worship, our new sound system was

ready to "take it on." We had inputs for guitars, drums, electronic keyboards and additional microphone jacks. Our new small "praise team" was plugged in and instrumental in helping us to broaden our appeal to our community in offering the contemporary style worship setting. ...Then in 2009, we even added *another* worship style service to our Sunday list...read on!



### **A New Congregation**

*Hola! Como Estas!*



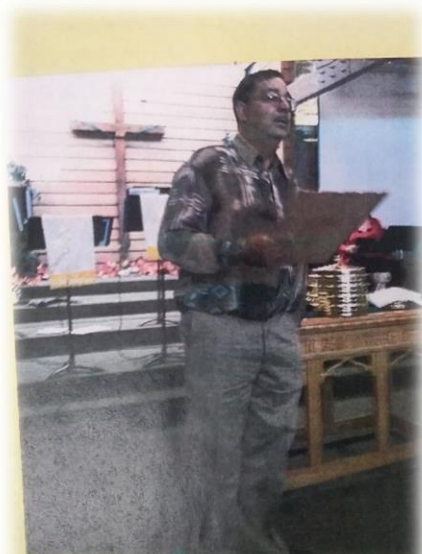
Yes, that's a new language being heard in our Covenant midst...and we were blessed to welcome a group of Spanish speakers to our church family! What a wonderful opportunity to serve our Lord and learn a whole new culture!

Covenant was a long-time host site for the Share Colorado food distribution program (a special mission program that started in the late 1990's and continued to flourish several years into the new millennium).

A Spanish-speaking family had been picking up their Share Colorado food at Covenant for a few months. One Saturday in 2009, they approached Pastor Chuck and indicated that they were looking for a church home for approximately 20 Spanish-speaking folks and felt Covenant was "the spot." Some of our new friends could speak English, but most were limited to their native language. We were more than thrilled to welcome our new friends,

but we needed to learn how to make accommodations for a meaningful worship experience for all of us!

We had an amazing amount of support in making this adventure possible! The Presbyterian Church (USA) offered a multi-cultural conference in Chicago just at the right time for us! Pastor Chuck Jerome, Elder Rich Stoddard and Spanish-speaking group leader Bernardo Escalante attended the conference and returned with a plethora of information and ideas for our new program. To help overcome the language barrier, we built a sound-proof room and purchased personal listening devices ~ The liturgy and sermon were both translated in this little room so that Spanish-speaking participants heard the words in their native language. Bernardo Escalante and his friends translated our printed worship bulletins, so God's word was provided in both languages. This was all made possible by the Presbytery of Western Colorado Al Ruth Award. Al had a passion to spread the Good News. To honor his memory, the Presbytery wants to promote evangelism efforts in Western Colorado. We received the award in 2009 to help fund our efforts in Spanish-speaking outreach.



And so, we added a third worship service: Spanish with English translations. The people who came to our church as a result of this opportunity became regular members of the church and served as elders and deacons.

## **COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**We at Covenant,  
by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
will continually provide an accepting community  
where everyone is actively invited to be part of God's family  
where we all can be encouraged and nurtured  
by the reconciling love of God in Christ Jesus.**

~~~

**Nostros en Alianza,  
Con el poder del Espíritu Santo,  
Proporcionaremos continuamente a una  
Comunidad que acepta,  
dónde todos son invitados activamente a  
formar parte de la familia de Dios,  
dónde todos nosotros Podemos ser  
favorecidos y Podemos ser alimentados,  
por el amor que reconcilia don Dios en  
Jesuscristo.**

The history of our congregation is a great testimony to God's constant love and amazing miracles. The many people who have benefited from Covenant's fellowship have witnessed the work of God over and over, and as a result, faith has grown in many souls! We made it through the first decade of the new century further affirming our strong sense of purpose and unity, and an abiding belief that, in all circumstances, God will see us through!

And we know  
that God causes  
all things to  
work together for  
good to those  
who love God, to  
those who are  
called according  
to His purpose.



Romans 8-28

<http://www.writing-illustration.com>



## 2010's to Present

*“Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,  
Your faithfulness to the clouds.”*

*~ Psalm 36:5*

We made it through the first decade of the first century of the new millennium unscathed ~ and God's miracles continued!

### **Worship**

We continued with our three Sunday worship services (traditional, contemporary and Spanish-speaking), the Wednesday evening service, two Bible study groups, a youth group and a weekly prayer group. Our Spanish Language worship flourished. In the Spanish service, Bernardo Escalante would preach every week, and Pastor Chuck would preach once a month. Thankfully, we were equipped and staffed to provide English/Spanish translation at any of our worship services. Everyone was welcome to attend all services ~ whether they predominantly spoke Spanish or English, we were ready!

In 2014, a bilingual sister in the Lord who was born and raised in the South American nation of Colombia felt a calling to help these Spanish-speaking folks with group covenants and structure. It was obvious that her leadership was just what they needed. Sensing the Lord was in this, the group moved on to her congregation, Clifton Christian Church, with our blessing. Our ministry with our Spanish-speaking brothers and sisters was a meaningful and important time for the folks in both language groups. We all grew spiritually from the enriching diversity within our common faith (...and we still buy our tamales from the best tamale maker in the valley!).

### **More Changes**

The Board of Deacons was busy with a number of enhancements to our outreach ministries. We teamed up with Central Orchard Mesa Community Church (COMCC) to provide meals for Homeward Bound (one of our local homeless shelters). “Many hands make light work” ~ partnering with COMCC allowed us to provide more days in meal preparation than when we were doing it on our own.



What a decade for outdoor improvements! Our building and grounds folks (under the leadership of Kerry King) installed a sprinkler system ~ and, thus, the beginning of big, beautiful green space. Yes! We seeded lots of acreage with grass, and now that we had the system to water it all, it grew into a plush carpet around our church buildings. Plans were well underway for the addition of a memorial rose garden now that “we had water”. With such a large lawn, we now needed storage space for all the equipment required to maintain the grounds ~ a new metal shed was added to provide the needed room. As the

years rolled by, we soon realized that the original plot for the memory roses was simply too small...it was moved to its present location in 2015.

We celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Pentecost Sunday 2012. To “match” the Pentecost color scheme, we all sported red and enjoyed a church picnic following worship.

In 2012 Covenant was pleased to serve as host site for a meeting of the Presbytery of Western Colorado. Attendees were provided a truly authentic Mexican supper prepared by our Spanish-speaking friends!



We received a substantial gift from Rhy and Sharon Paris to upgrade our computer systems and to add all the equipment we needed to provide video screens for worship and other events. By 2014 our new video system and upgraded sound system were up and running.

Dara Fubler from our sister church (Monument Presbyterian) spent hours with our video staff providing training for use of this new and exciting addition to our worship experience! Rhy went to be with the Lord later that year.



This was also the year we decided to launch Unity worship services ~ on months with a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday, we would combine our Sunday worship services into one with a potluck to follow.



In 2014, we celebrated Pastor Chuck and Sue's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with Covenant! A joyous worship service with potluck and fun fellowship!

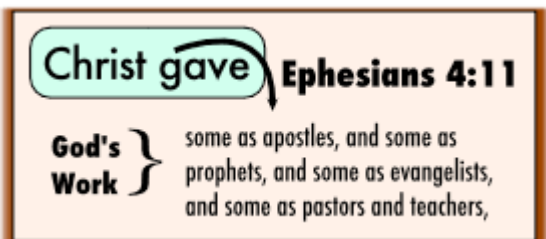


In 2015, our bell tower was renovated in memory of long-time member Allegra Copeland. The brick walls were repainted and the severely chipped old yellow ceramic tiles were replaced with beautiful blue stone tiles. Floodlights were installed. Dedication of the wall and remembrance and honor occurred during Sunday worship on February 15, 2015. When



Allegra's husband, Walt, went to be with the Lord in 2018, the memorial bell tower plaque was updated. We have all been touched by the inspiration of Walt and Allegra Copeland ~ to grow and serve the Lord.

2016 started like any other year. Ron Reynolds led the buildings and grounds team. A new riding lawn mower was purchased, everyone tried it out to make sure it "passed the mustard" and a unanimous decision was made to keep this wonderful piece of lawn trimming equipment! This was also the year of the great "LED lighting conversion", replacement of weary door latches, a new key entry system and redesign of the gas line system. (Church was evacuated one Sunday morning due to suspicion of a natural gas leak.) We also installed a new hot water heater and with the skill and expertise of Mel Oliver and Jeff Cardin rerouted some of the water lines to accommodate our new heater. John Colvin, who can fix nearly anything, continued to keep most everything in the church working.



In the history of our congregation, we have also nurtured four candidates for the ordained ministry in their time of growth and decision. This is an especially meaningful endeavor in the life of any church! One of these candidates was Bill Rudy, who was ordained at Covenant on July 7, 1997, and went on to become the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Linn Grove, Iowa.

Another candidate we sponsored is Steve Barrows, who had been enrolled as a candidate for the Presbyterian ministry, but later felt a calling to work in a Christian school. Steve eventually became the principal of the Christian K-12 School administered by Landmark Baptist Church in Grand Junction. Another was Jennifer McKenzie who, as a member of First Presbyterian Church in Grand Junction, came to Covenant for an internship here. Jennifer went on to be ordained in the Presbyterian Church, served as a Hospice Chaplain in our community and is active in the Presbytery of Western Colorado. We were honored to support Dan Branaman as he pursued his calling to lay ministry. Dan does a great job leading our Adult Sunday School and the Wednesday evening Bible Study.



We were thankful to participate in a Mission Studies consultancy program offered by the Presbytery of Western Colorado. Dr. Stan Wood moderated the two-year process beginning in 2018. As an essential ingredient in our consultation time with Stan Wood, and after months of prayer and consideration, our Session voted on the wording of our new Vision Statement: "Follow Jesus...Make Friends...Offer Hope." This is what we really believe God calls us to do here at

Covenant Presbyterian Church!



In 2018, Stan was with us for two different Session and two congregational gatherings, which we called, "Vision Sunday" and "Vision Sunday II." The two "Vision Sunday" experiences provided for plenty of ideas to be expressed by the congregation regarding our calling and practical ways to achieve these. As a Session, Board of Deacons and a congregation, we hope to continue to tap data from our Vision Sundays in order to develop ideas and ministries in the future.

Our plan is to take all we learned through the consultation process and create short-term and long-term goals and objectives – and begin to follow-through on them! We want everyone to work together to study, hear and respond to God's calling, and share their insights as we seek to "Follow Jesus...Make Friends...Offer Hope!"

### **Problems and New Technology**

*"Like a thief in the night, you come stealing through the night."* (from "Like a Thief in the Night" by Wayne Perry). Sadly, someone decided that they needed what was housed in our church more than we did. So when we discovered the theft, it was a pretty shocking morning. The door to the office was forcibly removed from its hinges and the office ransacked. Desk and file cabinet drawers were removed with the contents dumped all over the floor...all as our nightly visitor sought treasures. Ultimately, the church office computer, sanctuary projection equipment and our surveillance system were stolen. Our visitor had a heart though...on the office desk was the computer's back up hard drive and all the cords necessary to make it functional.



The theft of items and damage to the facility (although traumatic) was not in the forefront of our thoughts...overall security of the people in our church was the priority and the Session took steps to reach this goal. We enhanced our security systems (adding several more cameras), upgraded our locks on doors and windows and redid our outdoor lighting system.

**The church  
has left  
the building.**



At the September 2018 Presbytery meeting, our church was honored to receive the Al Ruth Award for our Facebook ministry. The Al Ruth Award for Evangelism and Church Development is given in recognition of ministries that celebrate and promote the Gospel and fulfill the Great Commission to go into the world and make disciples. We are using this monetary award to enhance our existing ministry by improving our media equipment.

Our Media Team at Covenant Presbyterian Church oversees all visual, audio and social media of the church. Our team members operate our projection screens and sound system during services as well as manage our fun and interactive Facebook page and website.

The Facebook/social media ministry is reaching a large number of people with the Gospel who are not otherwise able or available to attend worship in person with us. We do not take this lightly. We are diligent about keeping our posts alive and current every day.



In addition to these interactive posts, we also provide “live streaming” of our worship services. You do not need to “join Facebook” to access our page. We have discovered that the largest single population in our ministry area is described as “Digital Dependents” – young adults who depend on the digital world for their inspirations more than they value attending church. We realize the great need to reach these kinds of folks with the Gospel, and we are tailoring our evangelism strategy through the Facebook ministry.

We realize that many people who see us on Facebook may never cross the threshold of our church. Even so, as this ministry continues to be successful in evangelism – reaching folks with the Good News of Jesus Christ - we can plant a seed of truth and hope in their lives. We’re tapping into the un-churched world - the world of the purely curious, the world where some folks have never heard of Jesus, and the world of folks struggling with faith.



Covenant sermons are available in Podcast form! It’s easy to download the app ~ search for “covenantsermons” (without the quote marks) in Google Play Store. At the top of the list, you should see a dark cross with the text “Covenant Sermons. David Jerome. Music & Audio”. That’s it! Click on “open” and it will download in just a few seconds.

When you open the app, you’ll see a listing of Sunday sermons by date and title. Our church podcast brings God’s message into followers’ regular lives and offers a sense of connection throughout the week.



Our building and grounds committee lost one of our great leaders in 2019 ~ Ron Reynolds went to be with the Lord in March. Ron and his family were among our church’s charter members. Ron worked fervently in so many aspects to support our church. An ordained Elder and Deacon, Ron most recently served as leader of our buildings and grounds team. He is fondly remembered for always supplying the donuts on “Saturday Work Days.”

Ron’s legacy continues in the faithful devotion of his wife (Toni) and daughters (Sheila Reynolds and Kelly Faverman) in our church.



**Galileo's Village**  
A Co Op of the Grand Valley



We were blessed to serve as “the spot” for Galileo’s Village, a free STEAM/STEM based local home-school cooperative. Church member, Tabbatha Apple developed the enterprise to enhance the home-schooling experience and to offer support for parents tackling this sometimes daunting venture.

The weekly gatherings began in 2018 but were sadly brought to a halt in 2020 with the onset of COVID-19. Yet the cooperative continues to thrive – check out their Facebook page!



We started 2020 thinking it would be just like any other...In the background COVID-19 was looming, yet none of us could foresee the impact that this virus would have on us, our community, our nation and our world.

By the end of March, we found ourselves in the midst of a full-blown epidemic and we were on lockdown... It was shocking to say the least...yet we thankfully were all set for

“virtual church” through our Facebook ministry. Covenant was one of the few churches in our area that was already streaming Facebook worship. Who would have thought that a pandemic would show us how fortunate we were to already have this media in place. This allowed our folks to still participate in worship and maintain contact with each other.

For three months, worship was held in a basically empty sanctuary with Pastor Chuck, Stuart, Susan & Phil Gardner, Sheila Reynolds, Cris Limberg-Street and the Praise Team as the only folks present in the church. The music and technological talents of the Gardner family were well-suited in getting us through this period.

After three months of “virtual church only,” we were finally cleared to again open our doors. During this time, our Session took diligent measures to ensure congregational safety when we gathered together. Safety measures such as social distancing, wearing of masks and limiting our traditional events were enacted. Meetings were also held virtually either through Zoom or through a free teleconferencing system.





The pandemic presented many challenges, but the Lord saw (and is seeing) us through them. While we missed our hugs, closer-contact camaraderie and our fellowship events, we still remained in remarkable connection with each other. This prevailed despite everything else.

And...we added Phil Gardner as Covenant's 500<sup>th</sup> member!

As COVID-19 appears to be waning, we hope that 2022 will be the year we restart many fellowship and outreach activities. It is time to rebuild!

### **Addition of North Side Illuminated Cross**



Hal and Peggy Morse were long-time faithful members of Covenant Presbyterian Church generously giving of their resources, time and talents. Handily, they were also our neighbors! Nestled in an agricultural environment, the Morses always seemed to have just the right equipment to lend us a hand with our own acreage. But it went beyond that – in the early 1990's, they invited us to their home for an "immersion baptism." Yes...they had a hot tub and the baptism candidate was very pleased with the immersion option available to her! Hal and Peggy went to be with the Lord in 2016 and 2018.

"Super Deacon" John LaMar ~ that's what his fellow Deacons fondly called their friend John.

John was a natural Deacon ~ well before he was ordained to this office. He was known to warmly reach out to others **all the time...** From dressing up as Santa Claus distributing gifts of joy to children to regularly visiting residents in the hospital and care facilities, John shared the love of Christ and offered hope to others. John went to be with the Lord in 2016.



Memorial funds from both families were provided to erect a back-lit cross on the north exterior wall of our church: a large well-lit beacon of hope for all who traverse 32 Road and beyond. The cross will be dedicated at our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary worship service.

## Outreach and Activities

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because He has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

*~ Luke 4:18-19*

People started Covenant as an outreach project. That tradition carries through still as outreach is such an important part of who we are. Our Vision Statement, “Love Jesus... Make Friends...Offer Hope” supports this tradition.

Our Deacons led the congregation with outreach and innumerable tasks of fellowship in the 1980's. An Outreach Events Committee sponsored many picnics, formal dinners, potlucks, and started “Through the Bible” groups to build friendship and Bible knowledge. They oversaw newspaper advertising and produced a church brochure for distribution. They started an Adopt-A-Highway program on 32 Road from B½ to Highway 50. The Deacons were responsible for the prayer chain; sent cards and flowers to the ill and homebound; donated food, gas and car repairs; took meals to families; compiled and sold cookbooks, funnel cakes, coffee, and apple cider at the Octoberfest.

In the 1990's the Deacons had a “Pennies From Heaven” bowl, a Hunter's Breakfast, and continued to donate gas, food and utility assistance. The Outreach Events Committee advertised the church and they started the “Welcome Neighbor” program, which recognized visitors and members.

The Outreach Events Committee started a Stone Soup Sunday and Valentine's dinners, helped the First Addition Committee with their potlucks, had ice cream socials, a church retreat, a picnic at Island Acres, New Year's Eve parties, monthly game nights, and baby showers. Visiting Presbyterians at St. Mary's Hospital on Tuesdays became a tradition,



Also, in the 1990's, Covenant embarked on a very effective local mission project. At that time, there was a nationwide food distribution program known as “Share” and here in our state, the organization was known as “Share Colorado.” Our congregation became a host site for these distributions of groceries. Participants agreed to pay approximately \$15 for a Share box worth over \$40, provided they also agreed to volunteer for any charitable organization for 2 hours per month. This outreach

was highly successful and enabled us to feed many people while showing them the love

of God! When we began with Share we sold 43 shares. The high mark was 210 shares sold in a single month, but the monthly average settled in at about 80.

To serve the community, our congregation began supporting the Central Orchard Mesa Fire Protection District and the Mesa County Sheriff's Department with an ongoing invitation to all our church functions that includes free tickets to dinners and have given them goody baskets as thanks for their service. The church has also been open for the use of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Boy Scouts met in the Annex and members Perry Buda and Ed Crooks were scoutmasters. The Kairos Prison ministry has also been actively supported.



Covenant operated its own food bank program and gave food baskets at Thanksgiving and Christmas to people whose names were suggested by the congregation up until several years ago. Then we joined the Clifton Christian Church Food Bank, which we support with collected food and monetary gifts. This partnership makes our food baskets and food bank efforts more efficient.

In order to raise funds, Covenant began having annual yard sales in the 1990's. They were always a lot of work, but they helped us pay bills and they increased the sense of connection to our surrounding community. It was always fun seeing just how one person's trash is another person's treasure! For many years, Cleo and Jim Rooks would bring their large horse trailer and we would fill it with the leftovers for the Salvation Army or other charitable organizations.

Covenant has always had a special love for a Presbyterian camp near Crawford, Colorado, known by the old cattle brand, "X-Lazy-F". Church camp has always played an essential role in building the character and fellowship of Covenant. People who attended camp with us each summer made strong, and in many cases, lifelong friendships! That beautiful place is really part of who we are as a church!







In 1994, we had a sermon on the subject of "koinonia," a word from the Greek New Testament meaning, "fellowship." The Outreach Events Committee saw this as their primary emphasis – to work to increase a sense of Christian fellowship (koinonia), so they cleverly gave their committee a new name: "The Special K Committee." With outstanding participation throughout the church, the "Special K Committee" has brought Covenant many years of great events designed to build fellowship and camaraderie, reach out to others and eventually even to help raise extra funds.

Some of these were:

- Everybody's Birthday celebration
- Valentine Sweetheart Dinners
- Roast Beef Dinners
- Juan O'Patrick Dinners
- Easter Breakfasts
- Mother and Father Days celebrations
- Christmas parties
- Tables for Eight
- Picnics and outdoor events
- Spaghetti Dinners

Family Fun nights started! We gathered on the second Friday of each month and did all kinds of fun things from biking in the park to playing board games. Our new video system enabled us to incorporate movie nights into this gathering. We upgraded our CCLI license to include showing movies without infringing on copyright requirements. Not only did our "Screens Maven" Sheila Reynolds masterfully run our projection system during worship, she also took on planning all of our Family Fun Night events. Yes...she projected the movies, gathered



board games, "spun the cage" for bingo, reserved "park space" for our cycling adventures AND popped corn at every gathering (in our "retro county-fair style" popper)!

In 1996, a member of our church (Marian Cassidy) approached us with an idea. She said that the small-town church she had once attended when she lived in upstate New York had an annual tradition of hosting a roast-beef dinner for the community. Thus started an annual tradition. Dave Trimm oversaw roast beef preparation for a few years, and then Lance Earley took over in 2007 with expert help from Dallas Todd, John LaMar and Ham



Mooreland. Our church had its very first Roast Beef Dinner in 1996 for which the proceeds would be used to replace our leaky church roof. To this day, that upper roof still does not leak! More than that, the Roast Beef Dinner not only became a significant fundraiser, but it brought us an event full of great fellowship and strengthened our connection to our community! In 2019, Covenant hosted its 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Roast Beef Dinner, but sadly, COVID has put a temporary kibosh on it since 2020.

A loving project is our gift of blankets for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit of St. Mary's Hospital with thank-you baskets for their nurses. We support The House, an organization for homeless teenagers by giving food, cash, toiletries, and school supplies including backpacks. We also support the Latimer House, a safe house for women and children, and everyone there is given a Christmas gift. Gifts are also gathered for the migrant center each year.

We have two adopted elementary schools (Lincoln Orchard Mesa and Chatfield) to which we give school supplies and goody baskets for teachers. Another community service is the airing of our church services on Facebook.



A comfort bird project was started in 2021 under the guidance of Charlie Foote. Small wooden

birds are carved and given to persons with stressful conditions, with a card, which reads "I am just a bird, but I was made with love by your friends at Covenant Presbyterian Church just for you. Carry me with you, hold me in your hand, and as you feel my softness, remember that God loves you, we love you, and we



wish you peace during this stressful time. His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me." This program provides fellowship as the birds are made and delivered. The initiative for this program was by Charlie Foote, whose memory is honored in the printing of this book.

Katy Trimm introduced us to the Great Lake Scrip gift card program in 2011 and we "signed up"! This incredible fundraising venue is rather painless and involves ZERO costs to those purchasing gift cards through our Scrip account. Since 2011, \$20,715 in Scrip "gift backs" have been used to support the life and work of our church. Use of these funds has been Session-directed and enabled us to do many things for which we simply "never had the money"...such as:



- parking lot, roof and furnace repairs
- audio/video system needs and electrical overhaul complete with LED lights
- support of our operating account when we faced emergency cash flow deficiencies



City Market shoppers can designate Covenant Presbyterian as their preferred community rewards recipient on their KING Soopers or City Market rewards card and the church will receive a quarterly check for a percentage of purchases. We received \$934 in 2020. A similar program was started through AmazonSmile.

Covenant has a tradition of a wonderful music program. Over the years, a small but mighty choir has supported our worship. In recent years a contemporary Praise Team has joined them in supporting our worship service. Music programs seem to be in a constant state of positive flux ~ new participants, new music styles, new equipment and on and on....

# worship DRUMMER

putting the heart before the beat

We were so fortunate to have Pat Parsons as our music director for over a decade! Not only was Pat an accomplished pianist and choir director, she also had a flare and passion for contemporary music. This made her the perfect fit for this time period! Choir and praise team folks alike flourished under her leadership. Susan Gardner currently serves as our pianist and keyboard accompanist for our Praise team ~ She, as well, provides much leadership in our overall music program.





In February of 2020, we celebrated Nancy Ellyson in her retirement. Nancy was with Covenant Presbyterian Church for 25 years! She was the backbone of our worship music in playing the organ and piano. Nancy also provided accompaniment for our choir and special music presentations. We could always rely on Nancy and were quite sad to see her retire. The legacy of her steadfast commitment and cheerful presence will always be with us.



Covenant has been so blessed throughout the years with such outstanding music leaders and participants!

Fellowship, such an important part of church life, is advanced by the many varied and unique events we have enjoyed over these 40 years. Men of the church meet monthly for breakfast, visit, and take a collection for church.



Christian education is a basic goal for us and essential not only for our children but our adults. Education was what Jesus did throughout his adult life. Book Club Babes hold in-person book discussions. Gospel Gleaners Bible Study, Women's Fellowship luncheons and Ladies Lunch Bunch are held throughout the year. Secret Prayer Pal Dinner is a women's dinner, where those who want to draw a name of a secret Pal whom they pray for during the coming year. Barbara Earley led our adult



Sunday school until her passing in 2019, and then Dan Branaman took up the reins. In 1996 pastor Chuck Jerome started an evening adult Bible study, which had a dinner with a theme related to the weekly sermon. Dan Branaman took over, and now they study a book of the Bible chapter by chapter on Wednesday evenings.

In the early 1990's we shared a joint Vacation Bible School with two local churches (Crossroads United Methodist and Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran). However, in 1994, we felt we had enough children and enough potential for adult help that we began our very



own program. The first VBS of our own was held on "three evenings in August." Later, it became a five-morning program. In 1995 we hit a high-water mark of 40 children and fifteen adult leaders! We continue to offer VBS under the overall dedicated leadership of Joan Forrey and the talents of retired music teacher Ruby McCall as VBS music leader.



The COVID-19 epidemic had temporarily interrupted many activities; however, we look forward to traditional and new activities resuming in the future. This is what a packed house looks like as we carefully move towards the "normal" we all enjoyed before the pandemic ~ Easter worship 2022!



***We at Covenant,  
by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
will continually provide an accepting community  
where everyone is actively invited to be part of God's family  
where we all can be encouraged and nurtured  
by the reconciling love of God in Christ Jesus.***

## The Future

When we look at the history of Covenant Presbyterian Church, we can easily see how God has faithfully provided one miracle after another. Many times, we were not sure how things would ever work out. Sometimes circumstances were so dire that the very future of the congregation seemed to hang in the balance. Yet every time the Lord saved us and gave us hope. This has happened not merely one or two times, but over and over again. Clearly, the history of Covenant is a history of miracles!

That sense of God's loving and consistent way of providing miracles has led us all to a stronger faith in God, which we can apply to our own lives and circumstances.

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians he reassured them with these words: "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

This is the experience of Covenant Presbyterian Church – that God has indeed begun a good work among us! While only God knows the future, including the future of Covenant Presbyterian Church, we have every reason to believe He will "bring it to completion!"

While none of us know the future, it's looking plenty bright because we know that God is in it!

So let us dedicate ourselves to the belief that God has a great calling for us to accomplish in our church as well as in our community and beyond. It's just as our vision statement expresses – that we must strive with God's help - to "Follow Jesus...Make Friends...Offer Hope." For as we do, God will faithfully provide the means for us to accomplish all He calls us to be and do!

So, we at Covenant are confident of this, that the one who began a good work among us will certainly bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ!

- Pastor Chuck Jerome and Clerk of Session, Steve McCall

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."  
~ Romans 15:13*







## **Covenant Presbyterian Church**

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*Follow Jesus...Make Friends...Offer Hope*

*“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,*

*His mercies never come to an end;*

*they are new every morning;*

*great is Your faithfulness.”*

*~ Lamentations 3:22-23*