



VISION STATEMENT

For more than 60 years, Covenant Presbyterian Church has stood as a beacon of Christian faith in Charlotte. Our sanctuary and steeple are community landmarks that represent a firm foundation in biblical teaching and a remarkable tradition in sacred music. Our expansive campus provides a nurturing, educational environment for children and a warm refuge for adults to renew and grow their faith.

Throughout Covenant's history, that faith has also manifested itself in the innovative ways our congregation improves the lives of those who struggle in our city. Crisis Assistance Ministry, one of Charlotte's oldest and most successful ministries, began in Covenant's basement to help families left vulnerable by the 1970s recession. Freedom School Partners, one of Charlotte's most recent success stories, has blossomed on Covenant's campus thanks to an uncommon partnership with our congregation.

These efforts are an extension of the values of our Christian faith - to love God and to love our neighbors. In Charlotte, that love is found in weeknight meals we serve at the Men's Shelter, and on fall Sundays when our congregation spreads its arms around our city for Covenant Impacts Charlotte. It lives in partnerships we build with distressed public schools, and in relationships we nurture to fight homelessness, poverty and hunger.

Those problems may be enduring - in Charlotte and elsewhere - but so is our resolve. We're a strong church that believes in living fully into its faith by meeting the challenges facing our community. We're excited about three new opportunities to share God's love in this way.

OUR CHALLENGES

As cranes again dot Charlotte's uptown sky, community and faith leaders struggle to keep our city's most vulnerable from being left out of Charlotte's growth and prosperity.

Throughout Charlotte, an expansion of the upscale housing market has resulted in a thinning of critical affordable housing. Our city is about 35,000 units short of meeting affordable housing demand, according to experts, and there isn't enough aggregate funding available to provide housing subsidies to those who need it.

These shortages create additional challenges to families searching for the stability that permanent homes can provide. Studies show that affordable housing opportunities help break the cycle of poverty and contribute to better health and education in children. As Charlotte continues to grow, finding solutions to our housing shortage becomes even more critical.

Similarly, public schools in Charlotte face a steady and growing threat of budget cuts, as well as an organic re-segregation that has left many schools lacking the diversity that contributes to a thriving learning environment. In lower-income communities, families struggle to afford day care, students lack the resources that robust parent-teacher organizations can provide, and teachers face the additional challenge of providing school supplies with paychecks that are among the lowest in the United States.

We believe that with God's grace, we can contribute tangible solutions in these classrooms and these communities. We also believe Covenant's campus is an integral part of that outreach, and we are committed to making our church a more welcoming and inviting home to others.

To do so, we must adapt to the changes in our surroundings. For Covenant in the 21st century, this means connecting with our neighborhood, which is growing rapidly through apartment and condominium development, medical facility expansion and increasing pedestrian traffic. It means situating ourselves as an active congregation in the heart of this city, just as we did in the 20th century.

OUR VISION

To address the challenge of affordable housing, Covenant would purchase condos and/or houses in neighborhoods that have the infrastructure to support lower-income families. The church will partner with a non-profit agency to handle property and resident management. Rent will be set at a subsidized rate, and payments will go toward a maintenance fund, taxes, future housing and mission with our non-profit partners.

To support public education, Covenant would establish a 5-year strategic plan for outreach to a public elementary school in Charlotte. The church will establish a board of directors consisting of Covenant members, school staff and parents/community members. The board will explore enrichment opportunities for students that include attendance awareness with prizes, literacy tutoring, field trips and activities for families. The board also will lift teachers by providing professional development opportunities and an annual dinner to celebrate their efforts.

To provide a 21st Century environment at Covenant, the church would upgrade the Education Building to include a secure main entry that offers a much-needed sense of arrival and orientation, long overdue sinks in all nurseries, re-configured third-floor space to expand our work with the Epiphany School (a school for students with Asperger's or other social communication challenges). This upgrade also would allow the launch of a new full-day, child care program, including a component designed to serve multi-economic families. The new main entrance would consist of two levels and connect the Sanctuary with the Education Wing. It would increase our visibility on East Morehead Street, upgrade community entrance points, and bring long-needed restrooms and an elevator to our principal worship space.

OUR PLAN

Having a vision is important, but having a plan to achieve that vision is at least as important. *Practically speaking, how much money are we talking about?* Here are the numbers we ask you to consider:

- 21st Century Campus: Build Sanctuary restrooms and an elevator; create welcoming entrances, secure and inviting Education Wing, *etc.*
\$4,500,000
- Affordable Housing: Covenant purchases safe and affordable family housing and contracts with local service agencies for placement and management.
\$2,000,000
- Full-Day Child Care Program: Covenant launches, in the renovated Education Wing, a new full-day child care program, including a component designed to serve multi-economic families.
\$1,750,000
- Public Education: Enhanced school partnerships and creation of a fund to support and recognize teachers.
\$1,000,000
- The Epiphany School of Charlotte Enhanced partnership with school housed at Covenant for students with Asperger's or other social communication challenges.
\$250,000

TOTAL: \$9,500,000

OUR NEXT STEP

Covenant Presbyterian Church has an opportunity to lead the affordable housing conversation in the Charlotte faith community. We also can help lift the lives of elementary school students and teachers. We can share a more inviting church campus with our city.

These initiatives align with our Christian faith. They honor our tradition as a voice of integrity and care for the physically and spiritually vulnerable. They fit our vision of Covenant as a dynamic, welcoming, bold congregation.