



# The Church of the Covenant

## 2016-2017 Annual Report



Throughout the gospels, Jesus performs miracles that seem instantaneous: a blind man suddenly can see, a woman's hemorrhaging suddenly stops, five thousand people are fed simultaneously with just a few loaves and fishes. Could our knowledge of these stories lead us to believe that all miracles should happen this quickly?

Consider this: although Jesus's own miracles are often instantaneous, the parables he tells suggest that God's work often takes much longer: the seed is sown and eventually grows into a plant that bears fruit; a treasure is buried in a field and decades later someone buys the field to claim the treasure; a king entrusts his servants with his wealth and returns after many years to judge their stewardship. Apparently, many miracles are of the slowly unfolding variety.

The pace of our world has increased exponentially in the last few decades. When I started college, email was the hot new thing and when I talked to my family once a week it was over a landline; today we can communicate instantaneously with friends and strangers around the globe, and receive instant notifications on our devices when any event happens that someone deems newsworthy. Does this mean that Jesus's allusions to slowly unfolding miracles are outdated, no longer valid? Surely not. It means that as people of faith sometimes we need to take time to notice the miraculous as it percolates and unfolds around us. It also calls us to be patient when God's timeline does not match ours!

In these pages you can glimpse the unfolding mission and ministry of the Church of the Covenant in the last year, based on our vision statement to *be a welcoming spiritual home, live God's inclusive love, express Christ's compassion, and do justice in the world*. What is included is by no means exhaustive, but it shows some of the new ways God has moved us to live into our vision statement this year. Each picture offers a glimpse into an ongoing story founded on the history and tradition of this community, and each shows how we are building on this foundation as we follow God into the future. May the ministry we have done and are doing inspire you to notice the fast and slow miracles God is working even now, in your life and in our life together.

The Reverend Amy Starr Redwine  
Pastor / Head of Staff

### *Be a welcoming spiritual home*



The Covenant community joined with Covenant Student Ministries to take a picture welcoming the CWRU community to the Church of the Covenant. This is a part of CWRU's **#YouAreWelcomeHereCWRU** campaign to welcome international students.

Jesus Was A Refugee



ALL Welcome Here

**The Covenant Student Ministries Connection Center**, located on the lower level of the Education Building, is a new space open for all CWRU, CIA, and CIM students to hang out, study, or work collaboratively, with free WIFI, snacks and drinks.

## *Be a welcoming spiritual home*

**We welcomed** ten new members and two pastors to the Covenant community in October and four members and one pastor in March.

**Music and Readings for the Season** provided a brief respite during the Tuesday noon hour for reflective music, readings, and prayers for the season of Advent.



George Leggiero serenaded with Christmas carols those gathered for **Christmas in July**. The Friends of the McGaffin Carillon sponsored summer Friday Lunchtime Carillon Concerts, which were repeated on Sundays.



**"God's Neighborhood"** was the theme for Youth Sunday May 7.



**Covenant Dwellers** (4<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup>) and **Sowers** (8<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup>) at Fairmount Presbyterian Church, joining with Fairmount Presbyterian youth.



A highlight of our month-long study of the Psalms was **A Psalm Festival with Pamela Rutter-Feenstra**, Sunday morning, February 12. These banners created for the Psalm Festival may be found in our Sanctuary on selected Sundays.



### *During this year, we . . .*

Introduced the celebration of **communion** the first Sunday of each month.

Welcomed **children and youth to worship** in their own space on first Sundays.

**Opened the front of the sanctuary** by removing pews.

Introduced **Prayer Stations** during Lent.



Music Department intern **Abraham Ross** joined Kaori Hongo in working with the children's choir.

### *New Opportunities for Prayer, Study, and Spiritual Growth through . . .*

Christian Meditation Lenten Study  
Seasons of the Soul discussion  
Wednesday Prayer and Song  
Enneagram discussion group  
Financial Peace University



Welcomed the **Penn State Glee Club** in worship Sunday, March 5.

## Live God's inclusive love



**Covenant Eights** dinner groups share one of our favorite pastimes--eating--while getting to know one another!



**President's Day Interfaith Service of Prayer: Prayers for Peace** Open to people of any faith, prayers for reconciliation, mercy, justice, and wisdom were offered for our leaders, our nation, and ourselves.



Covenant's **Young Professionals Gathering** share a progressive meal in University Circle.

Covenant Classics "**Oberlin Adventure**" trip. Covenant Classics also visited the **Sears think[box]** on CWRU's campus.

## Express Christ's compassion

### New Outreach Partnerships



Giving Tree gifts for **Cleveland School of the Arts** students.  
Lunches for organ transplant patients and their families at **Transplant House of Cleveland**.

Supplies for **Camp Kesem**, a camp for children of parents challenged by cancer.

Space for **Classrooms to Corporations** youth training program.

### Ongoing Outreach Opportunities

Serving meals at **North Presbyterian Church**.

Tutoring with the **Saturday Tutoring Program** and **Daniel E. Morgan** second graders.

Rehabing homes with Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity **Apostles Build**.

**God Before Guns** to reduce gun violence.

**Trunk or Treat** for neighborhood and Covenant families.



For their **summer mission experience**, our youth and their leaders worked with the Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community, which partners with area organizations helping serve the urban population of Pittsburgh, PA.



**The Covenant Cache turned 40 this year!** Cache volunteers gathered at the home of Marilyn and Chris Langmack to celebrate this special birthday.

Covenant youth and leadership with other Presbytery of the Western Reserve youth, participated in the **Presbyterian Youth Triennium** at Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.

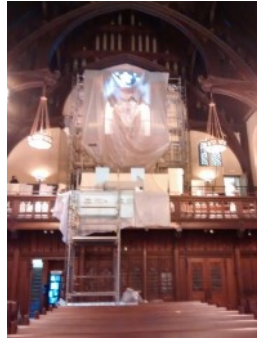
## Do justice in the world

*"It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."*

~ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The lighting mechanism for our Rose Window was replaced with a smaller, energy efficient one.

Hundreds of lights throughout our building have been upgraded for increased energy efficiency and improved visibility.



**Covenant is part of the Cleveland 2030 District**, a movement to reduce the environmental impacts of building construction and operations.



**"Making the Space to Talk about Race."** Members of the Covenant and Fairmount Presbyterian Church communities engaged in conversations about race, privilege, and power on Sunday evenings in early 2017.



**"Unpacking Black Lives Matter" Adult Forums in February.** Dr. Zachery Williams, Associate Professor of African American History, University of Akron, helped us unpack the various understandings, implications, and numerous questions surrounding the "Black Lives Matter" movement.



**Pray for Peace** - June 15: a time of prayer, meditation and music to stand in solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community, remembering the lives lost in the Orlando shooting, and all affected by gun violence. A prayer wall for ribbons was placed on our front lawn.



Covenant participated in the **DIS-GRACE conference** in Montreat, North Carolina, October 10–13, to consider what might be a faithful response to the embedded and structural racism in church and culture.



**Prayers for Peace** during the Republican and Democratic National Conventions, July 18–21 and July 24–28.

**Mr. Morris Dees**, co-founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center, spoke at Covenant on Sunday, October 2, 2:00 pm; "With Justice for All in a Changing America."

*Thank you to the many photographers who generously share their pictures capturing the life of the Covenant.*



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