



Report of the President

I am excited to be writing this first report as your president. What a joy it is to serve the denomination I love so much. I have grown up in the Covenant, where I have been nurtured in my faith, developed as a leader, experienced God's call, and served in various settings and contexts. Almost every significant encounter I have had with



Jesus has happened through a Covenant church, camp, or institution. How grateful I am to serve a church that has loved me so well and where I have become deeply rooted in Christ.

It is truly a privilege to pursue God's mission with this beautiful faith family. The work of the Evangelical Covenant Church is rich and robust, reaching people for Christ worldwide. I celebrate the richness of our ministry and the many, many ways we have seen God at work this past year.

I praise God for the 56 church plants supported in the Covenant. I celebrate that more than 2,000 youth were able to encounter Jesus at regional Unite conferences last July! I am encouraged by the financial support Covenant clergy have received through renewal grants, crisis assistance, and financial leadership support. It is moving to see the many local church ministries that have received development grants to focus on justice and mercy in their local contexts, and I am grateful for the generosity of this movement that we, together, can send millions of dollars to engage in serving globally.

Yes, God is at work in and through the Evangelical Covenant Church! Countless lives and communities are being transformed through the ministries of the Covenant. I am grateful to have a front-row seat to witness many of the things God has done and continues to do. This good news energizes me to continue pursuing the work ahead of us.

During this season, I have been reading and reflecting on the story of Jesus and his disciples in the midst of a storm in Mark 4. I resonate with this image—it feels like an excellent descriptor of where we find ourselves in the church right now. Not only as we come through Covid-19 and try to figure out who is

still attending our churches and what our financial situation looks like, but also as we experience the political polarization that has crept into our churches, the racial unrest, and the human sexuality conversation we find ourselves in. I think all of this feels like weathering a storm.

And yet it is important to remember that Jesus is in the boat with us. He takes the posture of being a non-anxious presence. We trust that he can calm the storms around us and help us to the other side.

In my personal effort to follow Jesus's leading, I have felt called to adopt a posture of listening, asking questions, praying, and discerning. Listening to God, the denominational staff, the regional conferences, the ministerium, and local church members has helped me to develop a more holistic perspective on the needs and desires of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

When I began serving as your president, I did not come with a strategic plan already in place to implement and impose upon the denomination. I came into this role with a deep desire to listen well, pray together, and discern God's guidance as we pursue his call on our lives in community together.

Through this listening, praying, and discerning, I have committed to three focus areas in this first season of my presidency: prayer, denominational office realignment, and the work being done to address the divide on human sexuality. Mission will always remain at the forefront, and focusing on these areas will help us commit to our mission with renewed energy and the ability to consider innovative ideas.

As the church, we know it is important that prayer remain at the center of all we do. We cannot do the work God has called us to do if we are not spending time and energy in prayer, entering into God's presence, listening for God's direction, and following his call. I'm grateful for my team's partnering with me on the Deeply Rooted sermon series focused on prayer. This resource was released in the spring and provides churches and pastors with sermon outlines, a small group curriculum, and an invitation to spiritual practices.

We remain deeply rooted in joining God in God's mission to see more disciples among more populations in a more caring and just world. The Covenant Offices leadership team has been in a time of discernment regarding re-organizing our ministry model to better align God's mission with the resources God has provided for us in this season. We want to ensure that we are set up for a thriving future.

Together, we have discerned that we need to make some organizational adjustments in order to thrive. At this year's Annual Meeting, bylaw changes will be presented as we seek to move forward with those

adjustments, which will be implemented in several phases if affirmed. I am deeply grateful for the hard work that has been done to get us to this point. It is an encouragement to experience this level of support and agreement, and I am in awe of how deeply the Spirit of God has been moving through these many meetings and conversations.

A year ago, at the 136th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Covenant Church, I was given the task as president to focus on how best to address the divide within our body around the topic of human sexuality. I have taken this task to heart and committed to listening, praying, and discerning how to move forward in a way that honors God and expresses love and respect for God's people. I want the Evangelical Covenant Church to thrive and pursue our mission together.

The human sexuality conversation is important to the church, and it is a source of pain and division in our body. I have deep, long-standing relationships and friendships with people with differing perspectives on how best to move this conversation forward. The Evangelical Covenant Church did not arrive at this place of division and conflict overnight, and we will not resolve all aspects of this conversation overnight either. This is another area where we need to seek God in prayer, asking for his guidance as we work to bring the church together. I believe one step forward is to adjust how we have these important conversations.

I am grateful for this call on my life. I have loved being with you in your churches, some of your conference annual meetings, and special events around the Covenant and in our global church. Thank you for your questions, your notes and words of encouragement, and most especially, your prayers. It has been an honor to be with and among you, and I look forward to more engagements in the coming years. I don't do this work alone, and I am deeply grateful for the teams I partner with.

A few colleagues at Covenant Offices will be moving onto their own new seasons of ministry this year, and I would like to close with a few words of gratitude for their service.

Steve Klimkowski, thank you for your commitment to the financial sustainability of our ministries. Thank you for your efforts in navigating Covid realities and helping us to manage our finances through that season. We look forward to your leadership as the next president of Covenant Trust Company. Your background and experiences have prepared you well for this new role.

Michelle Sanchez, thank you for your commitment to evangelism and for ensuring that there are helpful discipleship resources for all ages. The addition of Crescendo has been a wonderful incorporation of intergenerational ministry and a helpful tool for churches, alongside children and youth materials. Thank you for ensuring that all our churches can engage in BLESS so that relational evangelism can flourish.

Ann Wiesbrock, thank you for your deep, faithful service at Covenant Trust Company. The support that our clergy, churches, and individuals have received in financial planning is so valuable. Thank you for your leadership and care. We pray God's rest and renewal as you transition into retirement.

Angela Yee, thank you for your countless hours of helping me transition into the office of president. Your perspective, support, and collaboration have been invaluable. We will miss having you in the President's Office. I will miss having you on speed dial. You have been a great ministry partner!

We are in this mission and ministry together, pursuing what God has called us to. Let us continue to lean in and prayerfully pursue God together.

For God's glory and neighbor's good,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tammy Swanson-Draheim". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tammy Swanson-Draheim, President