

Newsletter

MORE THAN AN INVESTMENT

We're building for the future

Spring is here and it is a reminder that God makes all things new. We are filled with hope and anticipation especially following Lent and Easter. We are in a profound season of the church calendar, and the calendar of our daily lives. As we enter this endemic phase of the Covid pandemic and life has returned to the new version of normal, our souls feel joy and sorrow as we are able to gather again with those we love. We have shared moments of deep grief like Mary experienced when she saw her son hanging on the cross and life-changing joy that Mary Magdelene felt when she saw an empty tomb, then her Savior. Friends, we live life together, the joys and sorrows, the triumphs and tribulations. As our calendars fill with appointments and meetings, may we always remember that we are stronger together. In this newsletter, you'll read stories about Safety Harbor Covenant Church in Safety Harbor, Florida, and REAL Community Covenant Church in Marion, Indiana. Both churches have buildings in the heart of their respective cities. One is an affluent community, the other a post-industrial city where many residents fall below the poverty line. However, both churches have been intentional in using their buildings to serve their communities as the hands and feet of Jesus.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Are your vision and action plans aligned to transform the world?

I recently heard someone reference a quote by the world-famous futurist Joel A. Barker who said, "Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world." What an insightful thought, especially now as we all live in a rapidly changing world where our old ways of doing things may not be applicable or effective any longer.

We are blessed to be able to build on the vision and legacy of David Johnson who recently passed away. Serving as the second president of NCP, David demonstrated clear steps in his passion to support the local church to transform their communities. His faithful efforts have allowed the current team at NCP to continue to serve the Covenant.

During this time of change, our team at NCP is fortunate to be able to work with many church leaders who are re-assessing how to do ministry in a post-pandemic world. Through our experienced real estate services team, we are coaching and dreaming with church leadership how to use their facilities for the benefit of local communities most days of the week. *(Continued on page 3)*



Back row: Rob Hall, Heidi Corral, Rollie Persson
Peter Hedstrom, Paul Kruit, Kathy Lucht
Front row: Angel Sinchi, Jill Hall, George Uribe, Maren Spaulding

SAFETY HARBOR COMMUNITY CHURCH

Safety Harbor, Florida

Safety Harbor Community Church in Safety Harbor, Florida, is a community of generous and faithful Christ followers. Through the generosity of their congregants and a partnership with National Covenant Properties, they were able to purchase their current church building in the heart of downtown Safety Harbor. Their property spans almost an entire city block, and has become a light for the community and destination to locals and visitors alike. When Andrew Larson began serving the church as pastor six years ago, the congregation was roughly 40 people with a nearly nonexistent children's ministry program. Today, the congregation size has more than doubled and Harbor Kids is a thriving ministry.

Andrew was quick to state that their building is a ministry tool. In 2021, Safety Harbor received a call from a local teacher who wanted to start a preschool, but didn't have a location. The community needed an affordable preschool, and Safety Harbor had the space and a prime location to house it. The preschool opened their doors in early 2021 with three classes and has now expanded to five classes two years later. Although the preschool is not a direct ministry of the



church, the relationship has been a gift to both the church and the local community. The Harbor Kids' space has been renovated without an impact to the church's budget and, the community now has a state-funded preschool program two blocks from the local elementary school that is open 7:30 – 5:30 five days per week.

On Christmas Eve in 2020 when most people worshiped from home, Andrew decided to set up a TV and some chairs on the front steps of the church so those who were uncomfortable being in the building could still worship in person. (The perks of Florida weather in December.) Over two years later, there are still 10-15 people at church on the steps each Sunday. The TV has also drawn people in as they walk to the farmer's market or yoga.

Some of those passersby are now active members of the church. The stoop worship is part of the ethos of Safety Harbor; to be present and to be faithful.

Each Sunday the church shares a meal in their fellowship hall after service to be in community and eat together. Although

their service ends at 11, the parking lot and building remain full until after 1 pm.

NCP has been a partner of Safety Harbor for years. Rob Hall, vice president of real estate services, or the "NCP folk hero" as he is known by the church, has been a source of wisdom and guidance for years. Andrew stated that they are "so so grateful for Rob, we wouldn't be in our building without his assistance and knowledge. It makes a huge difference having a lender that is our ministry partner, not a traditional bank." Together we are weaving the fabric of ministry for generations to come.



**BEING PRESENT.
BEING FAITHFUL.**



IN MEMORY OF DAVID W. JOHNSON



We were saddened to learn that the former president of National Covenant Properties (NCP) and our colleague, David Johnson, recently went home to be with the Lord. David faithfully served the Covenant and NCP for 32 years in the role of Controller for the Evangelical Covenant Church and as the president of NCP until his retirement in 2007. He continued to serve NCP as a member of the board

of directors from 2010 to 2019. Jon Brorson, chair of the NCP board, said "We mourn the loss of David, but are grateful and thankful to God for his service to the Church through his leadership at NCP." During his time as president of NCP, David was instrumental in growing ministry by providing relevant investment and loan options to our churches and broader Covenant family. David was a humble and dedicated servant of the Lord committed to assisting churches nationwide in sharing the good news in their communities. All of us at NCP and the Covenant have benefited from David's tremendous legacy of faith! He will be missed. Peace to his memory.

(Continued from page 1)

If you are exploring avenues to align your plans for your church building as a tool for ministry, please reach out to our real estate services team who are committed to serving you and support your vision for your church.

As we move along this mission-minded journey together, NCP is committed to offering relevant services to our Covenant family. Later this spring, we will add a few new investment options to our array of fixed income products. We are tremendously grateful to all our loyal and faithful investors, and we trust that our new products will continue to serve your objectives in your support of the vision of NCP.

If your church leadership is looking for ways to better steward your finances and align your budget with your ministry plans, you may want to consider attending our Financial and Real Estate Seminars. The dates and locations are listed above, and more details about the topics covered can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

We are looking forward to seeing you at one of the upcoming conference annual meetings this spring. I would encourage you to connect with the NCP representative at those events about how we may be able to assist you and your team with your changing ministry needs. It is a pleasure serving the Covenant and aligning our combined resources in developing actionable plans as ministry partners.



Peter Hedstrom, President

CALENDAR

FINANCIAL & REAL ESTATE TRAINING

APRIL 20

Workshop offered at the Alaska Conference annual meeting
Mat-Su Evangelical Covenant Church
Wasilla, Alaska

APRIL 28

Workshop offered at the Pacific Southwest Conference annual meeting
Mountain View Church
San Juan Capistrano, California

MAY 6

First Covenant Church of Omaha
Omaha, Nebraska

MAY 20

Maple Grove Covenant Church
Maple Grove, Minnesota

SEPTEMBER 23

Great Lakes Conference
Detroit Area, Michigan

NOVEMBER 4

Pacific Southwest Conference
Los Angeles Area, California

GATHER 2023

JUNE 28 - JULY 1

Hyatt Regency Orange County
Garden Grove, California

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REAL COMMUNITY COVENANT CHURCH

Marion, Indiana

REAL Community Covenant Church, an acronym for relational, authentic, evangelical, loving, is a seven-year old church plant. When telling the story of his vision to plant the church, Andrew Morrell is quick to share the acronym, REAL is intentionally located in the heart of Marion, Indiana. A place Andrew describes as too big to be a town but too small to be a city, Marion is an industrial community blighted with poverty, drugs, and crime. However, he views these

"We wish to be a place of shalom in the community for god's glory and neighbor's good."

challenges of his hometown as beautiful stories of the resilience, hope, and love of a community that participates with others in love. REAL is striving to be a light and live into different types of reality and bring hope to a community that often feels hopeless or



forgotten.

They are located in a 10,000 square foot warehouse style building in downtown Marion. Their vision is be a place of shalom in the community, for the community for God's glory and neighbor's good. REAL has been slowly building out and renovating their space to match their vision for worship and community service throughout the week.

Andrew shared the story of a single mother he would see visiting the Family Resource Centers who attended a wholistic wellness event at REAL where he was asked to share a spiritual practice. He would always say hello to her when he saw her around the building, but their conversations never moved past a quick greeting. That day when the event ended, the woman asked Andrew if he was a pastor. He said yes. She asked if they were in a church building and he said yes again. He gave her the service details and she came the following Sunday and hasn't missed a

Sunday since. Andrew's voice broke when he shared this story because this is what it is to be REAL. To be the living breathing gospel in the community.

REAL houses the Family Resource Center that focuses on righting child maltreatment, an adult education program for Grant County, Indiana where 50 to 70 people come each week to study and earn their GED. REAL also houses a Spanish immersion preschool, Hope House (a local addiction recovery program), and a newly renovated industrial kitchen that serves the preschool and provides a space for social enterprises within the community.

NCP has partnered with REAL since the church was planted. Our Real Estate Services team has worked with Andrew to be consistent source of grace and wisdom in how to share a building well.

FINANCIAL & REAL ESTATE TRAINING

Does financial stewardship matter?

As we share together in ministry, we are excited to offer financial and real estate training as another tool and resource for you and your team as you continue to make a difference in your local community and Conference. These trainings are designed for pastors, staff, treasurers, and church leadership. We partner with the regional conferences and partners of the Evangelical Covenant Church and Capin Crouse to offer these training sessions. Capin Crouse is a national, full-service CPA firm based in Indianapolis, Indiana that has served mission-focused not-for-profit organizations, churches and denominations, higher education institutions since 1972.



If you are interested in coordinating with NCP and/or hosting a training session at a conference or regional location, we are happy to structure a seminar to meet your needs. Call Peter Hedstrom at (773) 442-6582 or send him an email at peter.hedstrom@nationalcovenantproperties.org to schedule a session.

We invite you to join us and other Covenant leaders at one of the scheduled sessions in your conference to learn best practices on how to steward your church financial resources well.

Attendees will learn:

- How healthy and missional churches manage their finances
- How to structure your budget to make key ministry decisions
- The latest tax regulations for pastors
- Best practices to communicate the financial reports to leadership and the congregation
- How to use and interpret financial dashboards, to assess whether your facility is a tool for effective ministry
- Understand why capital fund-raising is good for your church

Topics that will be covered:

- What is the big deal with my church's financial statements and reporting?
- Aligning your budget to your ministry plans
- Ministerial compensation and taxation
- Fraud risk assessment and prevention
- Intro to Real Estate Services
- Why church buildings matter
- Capital fund raising

Presenters include:



PETER HEDSTROM

President
National Covenant Properties



PAUL KRUIT

Vice President Real Estate Services
National Covenant Properties



ROB HALL

Vice President Real Estate Services
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National Consulting Practice Leader
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