



There wasn't a precedent for 2020. It's been a pile up of complication, complexity, and calamity. A long overdue set of conversations about racial injustice and the need for criminal justice reform, the polarizing slog that was the campaign, and of course the global pandemic have all coalesced to form a year that will make for quite a chapter in the history books. It's taken a toll on everyone. Life has been lost. Opportunities have been diminished. Celebrations have been postponed. So much else has been put on hold as we wait things out and hope for an end to this interminably long, unforgettable time.

Truth is, we still don't know when all of the headaches and the tragedies that began in 2020 will end. Undoubtedly there are more tears yet to shed. But even as our grief and confusion continue, we can look forward to the future with hope, confident that our circumstances will change.

We will be able to gather again with friends, with family and with our church community. We will be able to function in a new normal. We will be able to reengage pursuits that have been curtailed or slowed. We will be able to recommit and reconnect to so much that still feels far away.

But the hope that's on the horizon isn't just about mere resumption. It's not just the chance to start again. It's the chance to start again in new ways. With new hopes and new dreams. Perhaps never before has there been a time so ripe with the opportunity to reimagine. Along with the unprecedented pain, heartache, and confusion we've experienced collectively, there's also been an unprecedented chance to reevaluate and reconsider. We've had and still have space to think critically and prayerfully about the way things have been. And when the limiting factors of the pandemic conclude and we finally get to live fuller lives again, those fuller lives don't have to be the same as they were before. They can be better, brighter, more creative. They can include new insights we're gaining and new wisdom we're learning. They can have a broader perspective with wider eyes to see more and wider imaginations that hope for more.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the people of God are instructed to observe a Jubilee every 50th year. It was to be a year of liberation and debt forgiveness, a year of new beginnings and new opportunities, when the people of God were to be freed from the circumstances their pasts had created and given a new future filled with new possibilities. Jubilee was their opportunity to take stock and start again. It was their chance to reconnect with God's vision for their lives and their community. It was their chance to reimagine and recommit.

2021 can be for us a Jubilee. It can be for us a chance to take stock and reimagine. It can be liberative and transformational. It can be a year when we are freed from the determinative sense that things will always be as they have been and granted the opportunity to seek something new and more authentic, something that deepens our connections to God and to our neighbors.

## **Epiphany Sunday with Foundry414**

During Advent we experimented with collaborative worship. Pooling resources and combining energy with Foundry414 each week along with some collective efforts with Memorial UCC and The River, contributed to a meaningful season of expectation. Diversified expressions of faith and a broader set of traditions from which to draw made for a richer experience than it may have otherwise been, giving us a bigger picture of the hope that Christ's arrival initiates.

In the year to come we will keep on experimenting. In fact, we will have another collaborative service with Foundry414 on January 10th. That Sunday we will be celebrating Epiphany, the culmination of the Christmas season, when the church acknowledges all that is revealed when the light of Christ's love dawns. That Sunday promises to be another chance for our congregations to learn from and be encouraged by one another.

## **Building Project Update**

Constructive conversations between Common Wealth Development and representatives of Arbor Covenant Church continue. While there are multiple facets to a future project, a central issue has been structuring a framework for Arbor's future usage of space after a project is agreed to and eventually built.

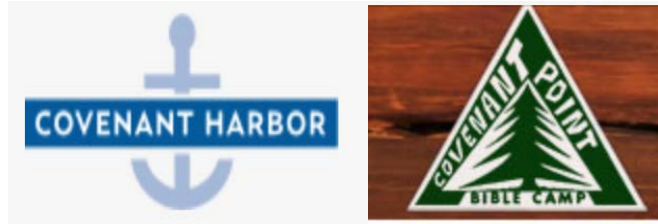
More likely than not, part of a deal with Common Wealth will essentially be an exchange. Arbor will exchange ownership of its land and current facility for a no-cost, long-term lease either in the current building or a comparable space in a new one. So as we press forward and consider what this project could mean for the congregation and the community, chief among the details and specifics that need to be hashed out are the terms of this potential lease.

Initial conversations as well as precedent from projects that share similar characteristics indicate that a standard timeframe for a lease like this is around 30 years. Besides aiming for stable, affordable housing in our neighborhood and coming to agreement about maintenance/upkeep and utilities, our primary goals are ensuring that this lease is conducive to our congregational and ministry goals, provides flexibility so we can grow and change and adapt to new opportunities and potential partnerships both formal and informal. The lease must also ensure that Creek Day Preschool can sustainably maintain its much-needed program, the Personal Essentials Pantry can continue to operate, and community activities can be supported.

We've been working with these and other considerations as we've put together a list of priorities that we want to see reflected in a future lease agreement. But as we continue to shape, compile and refine these considerations, we'd like to discuss them with the congregation.

On Sunday, January 17 at 11:45 am, Arbor will host a zoom forum, during which we can discuss the lease concept and what we all hope to see in the long-term lease. During that time we can cover some of the specifics that have begun to take shape as well as dream together about what sort of future God might be leading us towards as a community. This conversation will be a precursor to further discussions including one during our Annual Meeting on January 31. .

If you have input or questions, please feel free to reach out to Pastor Peter or Mark Hanson. Either of them would be glad to share more information and eager to hear your ideas.



Did you know that The Covenant Camps (Covenant Harbor in Lake Geneva and Covenant Point in Iron River, Michigan) have rentals during the winter? If you are interested in getting away during the winter and enjoying outdoor activities in beautiful settings, check out the camp websites.

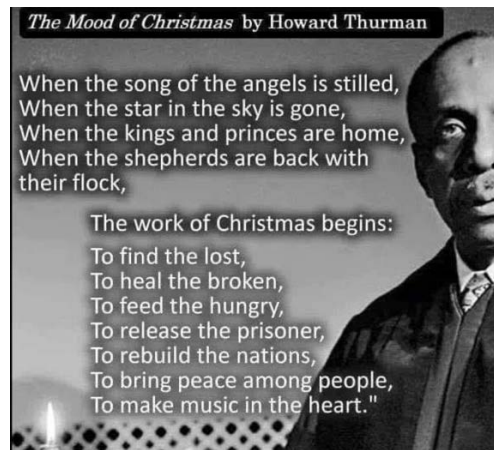
Covenant Harbor  
Covenant Point

[covenantharbor.org](http://covenantharbor.org)  
<https://www.cpbcc.com>



Covenant Point and Covenant Harbor have opened registration for summer camps on January 5. There are several changes to structure and schedules at both camps, so that programs can safely operate in our COVID world. Check out the schedules and options for families and kids on the website. While many questions remain about specific details, safety protocols are listed on websites also. Contact Rachel Woofter with any questions or advice – [Rachel.Woofter@gmail.com](mailto:Rachel.Woofter@gmail.com).

AND--let's be praying for our camps and staff as they eagerly look towards a summer with kids again!



Submitted by Joyce Bogges

January 1, 1863, was a "mild and bright day" in Washington

January 1, 1863, was a "mild and bright day" in Washington. Lincoln had sent the manuscript of the proclamation to the State Department in the morning for copying, and Secretary Seward brought the official version to the White House for Lincoln's signature. Lincoln noticed an error in the document that required amending, which was not accomplished before the annual New Year's reception at the White House, at which Lincoln shook hundreds of hands. Seward and his son Frederick brought the corrected proclamation to the White House later in the day for the president's signature. Frederick Seward recalled External Lincoln saying "I never in my life felt more certain that I was doing right, than I do in signing this paper." Lincoln steadied his tired arm as he signed the document, telling witnesses that any sign of a tremor in his handwriting would be interpreted as a mental reservation about the proclamation. And with a signature that was "clear, bold, and firm," Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. January 1, 1863 was a "mild and bright day" in Washington.

December 31, 1862 fell on a Wednesday

December 31, 1862 fell on a Wednesday, and that night members of African American churches throughout the country came together to pray that President Lincoln would sign the long awaited Emancipation Proclamation Bill.



**Watch Night** An illustration of African Americans waiting for the Emancipation Proclamation

**Watch Night, also called Freedom's Eve**

Watch Night, also called Freedom's Eve, is a Christian religious service held on New Year's Eve in many African American churches, with a celebration and remembrances of the Emancipation Proclamation (enacted January 1, 1863), which freed slaves in the Confederate states during the American Civil War. Many mainline Protestant churches in the United States continue to sponsor a Watch Night service on New Year's Eve. Each year members of the congregation gathered on this night to welcome the New Year and to ask for God's blessing on the city's African-American community.

*Heard & Moseley, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (reproduction no. LC-DIG-ppmsca-10980*

## Heading into our Ninth Year

Heading into our ninth year, we as a multiple church community need to reflect on how God's work is being done through the Good Neighbors Personal Essentials Pantry. Volunteers and contributors from Arbor Covenant, Memorial UCC, All Saints Lutheran, The Church at Christ Memorial and Foundry414 have all come together to provide personal and household hygiene products to our neighbors who have experienced difficult times due to chronic poverty, debilitating illness, dysfunctional family situations or societal barriers. We all need certain products like laundry soap, shampoo, toilet paper, deodorant, feminine products and diapers for our babies in order to live functional lives with dignity. Our guests are no different but these products are expensive, and stretched family budgets may limit the ability to attain these crucial items.

Because of generous donations from all of you, the Pantry has been able to serve hundreds of families during their times of need and we have forged meaningful relationships with many. These relationships have allowed us to understand each other in new ways and to realize that we are more alike than different. We all value our kids, our work and our friends, and for many, our spiritual lives. We want to help our neighbors in any way we can and we want to be treated with kindness, dignity and respect. This mission has taught us tolerance and patience with each other as we all muddle through life. An example of God's sense of humor exhibited itself one day a few years ago when a guest got angry with me because I respectfully prevented her from being first in line even though she thought she should be. She was at a table with several women and I was aware that she was talking about me in a less than positive way. After a while, to ease the tension, I went up to her and said, with a sincere smile on my face, "Are you going to be mad at me for the whole day?" She looked seriously at me for a couple of moments and said, with a laugh, "Well, maybe just for a few hours!" We've been friends ever since. God is presenting his grace and love to all of us no matter what role we play – volunteer, guest, friend, or donor. This mission is so much more than merely giving products away. It allows us to value and show love for each other each and every week.

Jan Gietzel

### **Good Neighbors Personal Essentials Pantry**

Item of the Month

Diapers (size 5 and 6)

Please bring donations to church during the hours we staff the Pantry (see calendar)



I SAID TO THE MAN WHO STOOD  
 AT THE GATE OF THE YEAR,  
 "GIVE ME A LIGHT THAT I MAY TREAD  
 SAFELY INTO THE UNKNOWN."  
 AND HE REPLIED,  
 "GO INTO THE DARKNESS  
 AND PUT YOUR HAND INTO THE HAND OF GOD.  
 THAT SHALL BE TO YOU BETTER THAN LIGHT  
 AND SAFER THAN A KNOWN WAY."

THE GATE OF THE YEAR  
 MINNIE LOUISE HASKINS - 1908

ARBOR COVENANT CHURCH FINANCIAL OVERVIEW					
January 1, 2020 - November 30, 2020					
	Offerings & Creek		Actual Expenses		Net Income (Loss)
	Reimbursements Received		Year-to-Date		Year-to-Date
	Year-to-Date				
General Offerings and CD Interest	\$ 51,843.26				
Creek Day School Reimbursement	\$ 23,685.00				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 75,528.26</b>		<b>\$ 85,858.52</b>		<b>\$ (10,330.26)</b>
***PPP Loan***	\$ 14,700.00				\$ 4,369.74
<b>Special Funds (Non-Budgeted) Received YTD</b>					
	<b>TOTAL</b>				
Deacon	\$ 307.00				
Good Neighbors Pantry	\$ 11,475.22				
Levin Camp	\$ 725.00				
Memorial	\$ 440.00				
Women's Ministries					
World Relief	\$ 400.00				
Youth Mission					
Other	\$ 1.92				





### January Birthdays

Michelle Stachowiak	January 23
Dan Meyer	January 24
Kristina Keillor	January 31

### January Anniversary

Doug and Sherry Keillor	January 11
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### Booklist

Several people have asked for a 2020 Booklist. Have you read any good books during this pandemic? If so, please send information to Kris Brown ([kristinelbrown@yahoo.com](mailto:kristinelbrown@yahoo.com)). This should include the title, the author, and a brief description of the book. All genres are welcome.



## January 2021 Calendar

					<b>1</b> Happy New Year	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b> 9:30 AM-10:25 AM Sunday Morning Study Group  10:30 AM-11:30 AM Worship (Zoom)	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 7:00 PM Small Group Study (Zoom)	<b>8</b> 10:00 AM- noon Good Neighbors Personal Essentials Pantry (Arbor Parking Lot)	<b>9</b>
<b>10 Epiphany</b> 9:30 AM-10:25 AM Sunday Morning Study Group 10:30 AM-11:30 AM Worship (Zoom) (with Foundry)	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 7:00 PM Small Group Study (Zoom)	<b>15</b> 10:00 AM- noon Good Neighbors Personal Essentials Pantry (Arbor Parking Lot)	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 9:30 AM-10:25 AM Sunday Morning Study Group 10:30 AM-11:30 AM Worship (Zoom) 11:45 Common Wealth Discussion	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 6:45 PM Leadership Team	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 5:30 PM-7:00 PM Good Neighbors Personal Essentials Pantry (Arbor Parking Lot)  7:00 PM Small Group Study (Zoom)	<b>22</b> 10:00 AM- noon Good Neighbors Personal Essentials Pantry (Arbor Parking Lot)	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 9:30 AM-10:25 AM Sunday Morning Study Group  10:30 AM-11:30 AM Worship (Zoom)	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 7:00 PM Small Group Study (Zoom)	<b>29</b> 10:00 AM- noon Good Neighbors Personal Essentials Pantry (Arbor Parking Lot)	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 9:30 AM-10:25 AM Sunday Morning Study Group  10:30 AM-11:30 AM Worship (Zoom)  11:30 AM Annual Meeting(Zoom)						