



Covenant Baptist Church

Reformed and Refreshing

November 22nd, 2020

Welcome to Covenant Baptist Church. We are a Reformed church committed to three things:

- **The Exaltation of God**

We desire that the people at Covenant truly understand who God is and His rightful place in their lives as their Lord and sovereign Savior.

- **The Edification of the Saints**

We consider it extremely important to correctly teach the Bible, verse by verse, so we can properly have the Holy Spirit apply it to our lives.

- **The Evangelization of the Sinner**

We understand that God has given us the responsibility to be stewards of the Gospel and that means sharing it exactly like God gave it to us with those who need Jesus.

<https://covenantbaptistsc.org>

Service Times:

Bible Education Hour (Puritans and Systematic Theology)
~ 9:30 A.M.

Sunday Worship ~ 10:30 A.M.

Wednesday Prayer Service ~ 6:00 P.M., 7:00 P.M.
—RESUMING SEPT.2 (See p. 2 for more info)

*(We are not interested in traditional worship
or contemporary worship. We are only
interested in true worship.)*

Order of Worship

(November 22nd, 2020)

Call to Worship: Psalm 57:1-3

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty—2

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 7:23-8:1

The Love of God—91

Speak, O Lord—388

Message:

The Prayer of Christ for Believers, Part 5:
Unity without Compromise
John 17:17-23

Prayer and Benediction

Closing Hymn: Doxology—440

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On-Call Deacon List:

- November 22: Lucas
- November 29: Egan
- December 6: Rogers

Church Cleaning Schedule:

- November 28: Egan/Fudge
- December 5: Olds/Shealy
- December 12: Wheat

Church Bookstore:

Purchases (cash only) can be made by seeing Annsley or Cristan Smoak,
or following the instructions left near the bookstore entrance.

Announcements

We are excited to announce that Justin Peters will be with us in February for a 4 day conference. Please be in prayer as we work out the details for this conference. Begin spreading the word and inviting others to come.

This will be a very important conference for discerning truth in these troubled times.

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On Wednesday, November 25, there will be no services due to Thanksgiving holiday.

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Don't forget to check out the digital bulletin on our website. The information for today's worship is there, plus a lot of helpful articles and links.

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We would like to thank Mandie Green for her faithful service as Treasurer of CBC. She has honored our Lord with her service. She will be stepping aside due to health reasons. We are also thankful that Theresa Todd has agreed to serve in this position. She has extensive experience in this area will do will do a great job for our Church. Please pray for Mandie and Theresa.

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November is a month in which we recognize all that we are thankful for: our nation, our veterans, and the Bible. As the spiritual war for truth rages on in our country and around the world, we need to equip our active duty service members and veterans with the life-giving truth of God's Word in a format they can truly engage, Military BibleSticks. Every \$25.00 gift provides a valuable service member or veteran with a Military BibleStick and more... Your generosity will also equip others— those living in the outermost areas of the world who have little or no access to truth—with the vital weaponry of audio Scriptures. Thank you for reaching out to bless our troops and veterans troops and their families in a practical way by providing God's Word through Military BibleSticks. \$25 sponsors one service member and their family. Please make checks payable to Covenant Baptist Church and indicate it is for BibleSticks.

(<https://cdn.faithcomesbyhearing.com/resources/fcbh/mbk-resources/mbk-vision2033-poster-small.pdf>)

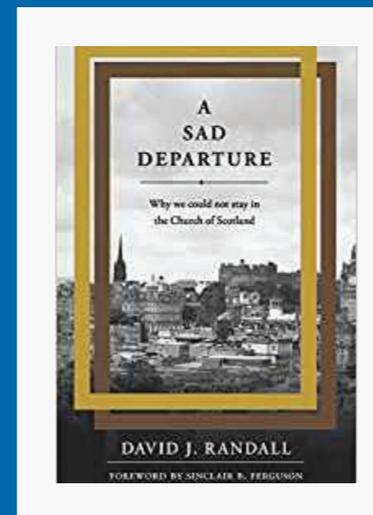
Book of the Week: A Sad Departure by David J. Randall

From the Forward by Sinclair Ferguson:

A Sad Departure tells a dark story, almost novelesque in character. A church's Theological Commission reaches a unanimous conclusion on the teaching on marriage given in its ultimate authority, the Bible. But then its General Assembly acts in a way that ignores, demeans, and rejects that teaching. Thus behind these sad departures lies the prior and much sadder departure of the Kirk from its sacred constitution.

Read the full description and purchase at:

https://www.amazon.com/dp/1848716613/ref=cm_sw_r_sms_c_api_i.LpODbDPQXYWM



Covenant Baptist Church Events

Greek Class—*On hold*

Biblical Counseling Class—*On hold*

Second Sunday Dinner—*December 13th. Please plan to bring a dish to share and stay for the fellowship. Also remember that we usually have visitors who stay for the meal, and you are encouraged to bring more than a small side dish so that there is plenty to go around.*

Planned Parenthood Gospel Outreach—*Tuesday, Nov 17th and Friday, Nov 20th*

Other Events:

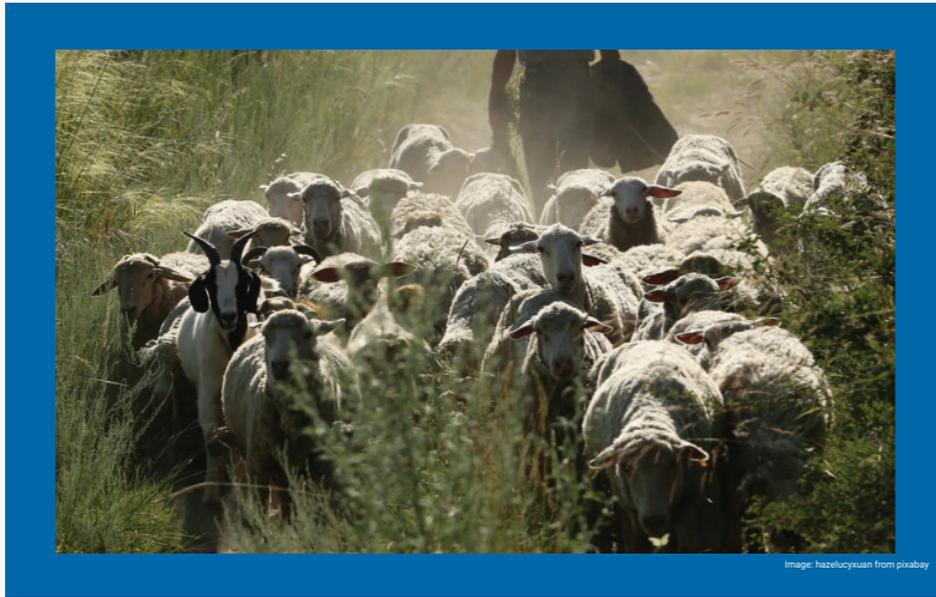
Truth: Answers for Women, March 27-28 2020—*(Williamstown, KY)*

DELAYED UNTIL 2021

More at: <https://answersingenesis.org/outreach/event/answers-for-women-2020/>

2021 National Conference | Ligonier Ministries, March 18-20—*(Orlando, FL)*

More at: <https://www.ligonier.org/events/2021-national-conference/>



The Merciful Mystery of Unconditional Election

—by Jon Bloom

Election is a topic currently absorbing the attention of Americans (and a watching world), given the significant political event about to take place in the United States. In our democratic republic, qualified citizens cast free and secret ballots to elect those we wish to represent us in our executive and legislative branches of state and national government.

This is an example of conditional election, meaning the “elect” are chosen based on their superior merits relative to opposing candidates. The elect merit or win their election.

In this sense (and others, of course), the American doctrine of election is quite different from the biblical doctrine of election. Whenever the term election or elect is mentioned in Scripture, it always refers to God’s choosing those he has purposed to redeem from fallen humanity. God does the choosing — the electing — not man (Ephesians 1:3–6). And when God chooses to redeem a person, he does so based not on that person’s merit, but on his mercy alone (Romans 9:10–16).

Theologians have termed this unconditional election, which John Piper concisely defines as “God’s free choice before creation, not based on foreseen faith, to

which traitors he will grant faith and repentance, pardoning them and adopting them into his everlasting family of joy.” In this case, the elect do not merit or win their election, but receive it as a free gift from God based solely on his grace toward them (Ephesians 2:8–10).

Many over the centuries have found the biblical doctrine of election a source of great hope and comfort. But many others have found it a source of confusion, anxiety, and even offense. God means for us to experience the former, not the latter. He has revealed election in Scripture not so we will comprehend all its mysteries, nor so we can easily identify all who are elect, but so we will put our full confidence and trust in Jesus Christ and find him our all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Great Clarity and Great Mystery

Scripture’s revelation regarding election is clear: God “chose us [in Christ] before the foundation of the world” and “predestined us for adoption to himself . . . according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace” (Ephesians 1:4–6). If there’s any question as to the unconditional nature of this election, all we need to do is follow the apostle Paul’s logic in Romans chapter 9.

But Scripture does not reveal the mechanics of election. The Bible tells us God is completely sovereign and free in his choosing those to whom he will and will not grant the gift of repentance and saving faith (Romans 9:15–16), and that humans are morally accountable if they do not repent and trust Christ (John 3:18). But the formula for how this works is a mystery known to God alone.

In an American political (conditional) election, mystery surrounding the results could signal a corrupted process. The founders of our nation had a healthy respect for human depravity and designed the American systems of government with that in mind. They wisely devised many forms of accountability in order to mitigate the myriad forms of corruption that inevitably occur whenever humans pursue and possess power. That’s why American elections should be as transparent and un-mysterious as possible.

But with divine election, the opposite is true. In this case, mystery is a great mercy to us for at least two reasons.

Two Mercies of Mystery

First, we simply do not possess the intellectual or perspectival capacities to comprehend God's purposes in election. As Michael Horton says,

All of the great truths of God's Word are mysteries in this sense. They elude our ability to capture their essence. They do not contradict reason, but transcend it. (For Calvinism, 111)

Second, and even more important, as fallen, depraved creatures who tend to corrupt election processes we do comprehend, we lack the moral capacities to be entrusted with such knowledge. Our great downfall was desiring and aspiring to "be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). We must trust God's wisdom and kindness when he withholds information from us. This is why John Calvin gave this wise pastoral warning against probing the mysteries of election:

[The curious] will obtain no satisfaction to his curiosity, but will enter a labyrinth from which he will find no way to depart. For it is unreasonable that man should scrutinize with impunity those things which the Lord has determined to be hidden in himself. . . . As soon as the Lord closes his sacred mouth, [we] shall also desist from further inquiry. (For Calvinism, 113)

The wise will say with Moses, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29). For the wise understand that God is merciful not to tell us everything.

How Does God Reveal His Elect?

After the voting deadline for next week's national elections has passed, determining the "elect" hopefully will be fairly straightforward. The ballots will be painstakingly collected and counted, and the candidates who receive the majority of their citizens' votes will be publicly declared the winners (unless, as in 2016, the electoral college presidential vote totals differ from the popular vote totals).

Once again, this is very different from how God reveals his (unconditionally) elect children whom, through Christ, he has ransomed and redeemed "from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Revelation 5:9). Jesus described his method with a parable:

"A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." As he said these things, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (Luke 8:5–8)

God calls out his elect through the indiscriminate broadcasting of gospel "seeds." He makes his appeal to all through us, the messengers of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:20). Those planted in good soil, those with seed that takes root, those who have ears to hear, they prove to be the elect.

Fruit of and Endurance by the Spirit

This parable illustrates not only Jesus's method, but also our limitations. Both the rocky and thorny soils appear to us as good soil at first. Only later, after faith has been tested (Luke 8:13), or the cares and pleasures of life have choked out what looked like gospel life (Luke 8:14), do we realize that someone may not be elect.

Note my words: "may not be elect." God does not grant us knowledge of who his elect are in this age. He mercifully hides this knowledge, which is too heavy for us to bear. Some soils can remain path-hardened for eighty years, only to become soft and receive the seed at the end. Other soils can appear good for decades, only to have the stem wither and die from rocks or thorns.

When the apostles assessed the faith of professing Christians, they looked for the evidence of the Spirit, especially faithful enduring of trials (1 Thessalonians 1:4–7), and were quick to encourage what they observed: "I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge" (1 Corinthians 1:4–5). But if later other evidence gave them concerns, they could say to the same Christians,

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you fail to meet the test! (2 Corinthians 13:5)

One reason they issued such warnings is because they knew the Spirit would use them as a means to keep the elect fighting to persevere in the faith. Exhortations

help saints resist “the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:12–13).

But at the end of the day, it’s not our job to determine who ultimately is or isn’t the good soil of the elect. That’s God’s job. Our job is to sow gospel seeds or water them, and trust God to give the growth (1 Corinthians 3:7).

‘Abide in Me’: The Place of Assurance

So, if God veils not only his purposes in election but even the elect themselves in mystery, can we ever be sure that we are among the elect?

God most certainly wants everyone he’s given the right to be called children of God (John 1:12) to live in the holy comfort of knowing they are children of God (Romans 8:16). But he does not want us to seek this comfort in our spiritual gifts, ministry effectiveness, past experiences, or the deceitful labyrinthian corridors of introspection. He wants us to find this comfort by finding Christ our all in all, our very life (Colossians 3:4). Which is why the invitation to assurance Jesus extended to his disciples was this:

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:5–11)

The joy of assurance, Jesus’s very joy in us, comes from one place: abiding (remaining) in him — trusting him solely for the forgiveness of our sins (Colossians 1:14), every grace needed in this age (Hebrews 4:16), and in the age to come, eternal life (Luke 18:30).

This call to abide may sound like it places greater emphasis on our responsibility than on God’s electing power, like conditional election rather than unconditional election. But don’t be fooled. We’re simply experiencing the marvelous mystery that is divine election, the paradoxical place where God’s sovereign decree from

eternity past and our call to respond here and now are shown to be, not at odds, but in perfect harmony.

Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27). The elect respond to Jesus’s call to follow him and abide in him. In mercy, God withholds from us mysteries of election we aren’t equipped to grasp, yet he graciously gives us a simple means by which we can find joyful assurance that we belong to and love Jesus: that we willingly respond to and obey him (John 14:15).

Do you hear his voice? Will you follow? “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts” (Hebrews 4:7).



Massachusetts prepared to legalize abortion up to moment of birth

—by *Peter Heck*

Massachusetts State Representative Claire Cronin has filed an amendment to the state budget that would enshrine as law the ability to abort a full-term fetus up until the moment of birth. Cronin and her fellow Democrats, who hold staggering majorities in both the State House of Representatives (127-31) and State Senate (36-4), are attempting to pass the controversial legislation after seeing Amy Coney Barrett confirmed to the Supreme Court in October.

The pro-life Massachusetts Citizens for Life objects to the parliamentary move to shortchange the legislative process and enact such a provocative law.

”[T]he bill would enable girls as young as 12 to obtain abortions without any adult, except the abortionist, knowing about it,” the group said, as well as “remove life-saving medical equipment from rooms where abortions are performed, risking the lives of babies, Massachusetts citizens, who survive the procedure.”

Despite overwhelming support by Democrat lawmakers, a poll conducted by the Susan B. Anthony List in 2019 revealed that 62% of Massachusetts citizens opposed legalizing late-term abortions.

Should lawmakers pass the amendment as expected, Republican Governor Charlie Baker has indicated he might veto it as unnecessary.

“Baker has said he supports a woman’s right to choose to have an abortion, but doesn’t necessarily see a need to change the current abortion laws in Massachusetts,” according to the State House News Service.

Nine other states currently have laws that would allow abortion up until the moment of birth, including New York, New Jersey, Colorado, Oregon, New Mexico, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Alaska.

On Abortion, from Tony Miano

Many Christians object to front line abortion clinic ministry. Some insist that it is too confrontational, too abrasive, impractical, unloving, and ineffective. Many Christians who object to this kind of ministry do so from the perspective of Crisis Pregnancy Center ministry.

Christian Crisis Pregnancy Centers are an important element to the Christian fight against abortion. Unfortunately, too few CPC's include the gospel of Jesus Christ in their ministry to men and women either contemplating abortion or looking for post-abortion counseling.

What many Christians fail to realize is the difference between front line abortuary ministry and CPC ministry.

When a woman walks into a CPC she is looking for help. When a woman walks into an abortuary she is looking to murder her child.

When a woman walks into a CPC the counselors have time to speak the truth in love to a person who is contemplating murdering her child. As a woman approaches the door of an abortuary, the Christians on the front line of battle, who want to save not only the life of the child but also the soul of the parents bent on murdering the child, have just a matter of seconds to change the parents' minds.

Such extraordinary circumstances, such critical incidents require fast thinking, stern talk, immediate prayer, and risk. The hope is that the murderous parents will stop long enough for the front line Christian soldier to talk to them about alternatives to murder and to proclaim the gospel to them.

Other News:

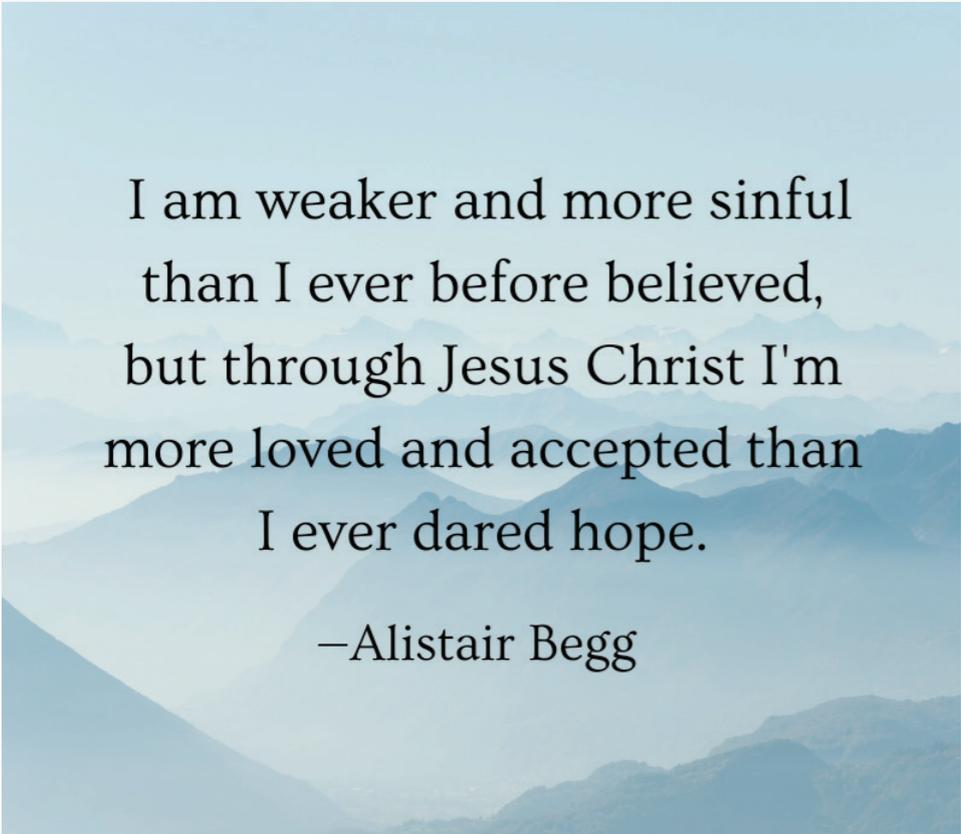
Wikipedia bans editors from expressing support for traditional marriage— <https://www.christianpost.com/news/wikipedia-bans-editors-support-traditional-marriage.html>

Mississippi school forbids 3rd-grade girl from wearing “Jesus Loves Me” mask— <https://disrn.com/news/mississippi-school-forbids-third-grade-girl-from-wearing-jesus-loves-me-mask>

Store guard stabbed 27 times for asking two women to wear masks— <https://www.wtsp.com/article/news/nation-world/store-guard-stabbed-masks-argument-chicago/67-e537ccba-7cb3-4ea2-b11a-c8f9b405a94a>

Middle East Student Ministry Update— <https://heartcrymissionary.com/mission-updates/middle-east-student-ministry-update/>

Quote of the Week:



I am weaker and more sinful
than I ever before believed,
but through Jesus Christ I'm
more loved and accepted than
I ever dared hope.

—Alistair Begg

Biblical Counseling Resources

Strategies for Fighting Depression Well—by Jim Newheiser
<https://biblicalcounseling.com/fighting-depression-well/>

Identity Language in Counseling—by Martha Peace
<https://biblicalcounseling.com/identity-language-in-counseling/>

The Pursuit of Peace—by Sam Stephens
<https://biblicalcounseling.com/the-pursuit-of-peace/>

Defeating Despair—by Tim Pasma
<https://biblicalcounseling.com/defeating-despair/>

Gracious Words Amid Sword Thrusts—by Jim Koerber
<https://biblicalcounseling.com/gracious-words-amid-sword-thrusts/>

You Can Please God—by Kyle Gangel
<https://biblicalcounseling.com/you-can-please-god/>

Crafting Temptation and Repentance Plans to Help Addicts—by Keith Palmer
<https://biblicalcounseling.com/crafting-temptation-and-repentance-plans-to-help-addicts/>

Covenant Baptist Biblical Counseling Class:

A Biblical Counseling class started February 13th at 7 PM here at the church. If you would be interested in participating, please let the pastor know. We are going to livestream the class. Just go to the website at <https://covenantbaptistsc.org> and click the livestream button on home page at 7pm Thursdays.

Biblical counseling class on hold while teacher recovers from surgery.



Covenant Baptist Church

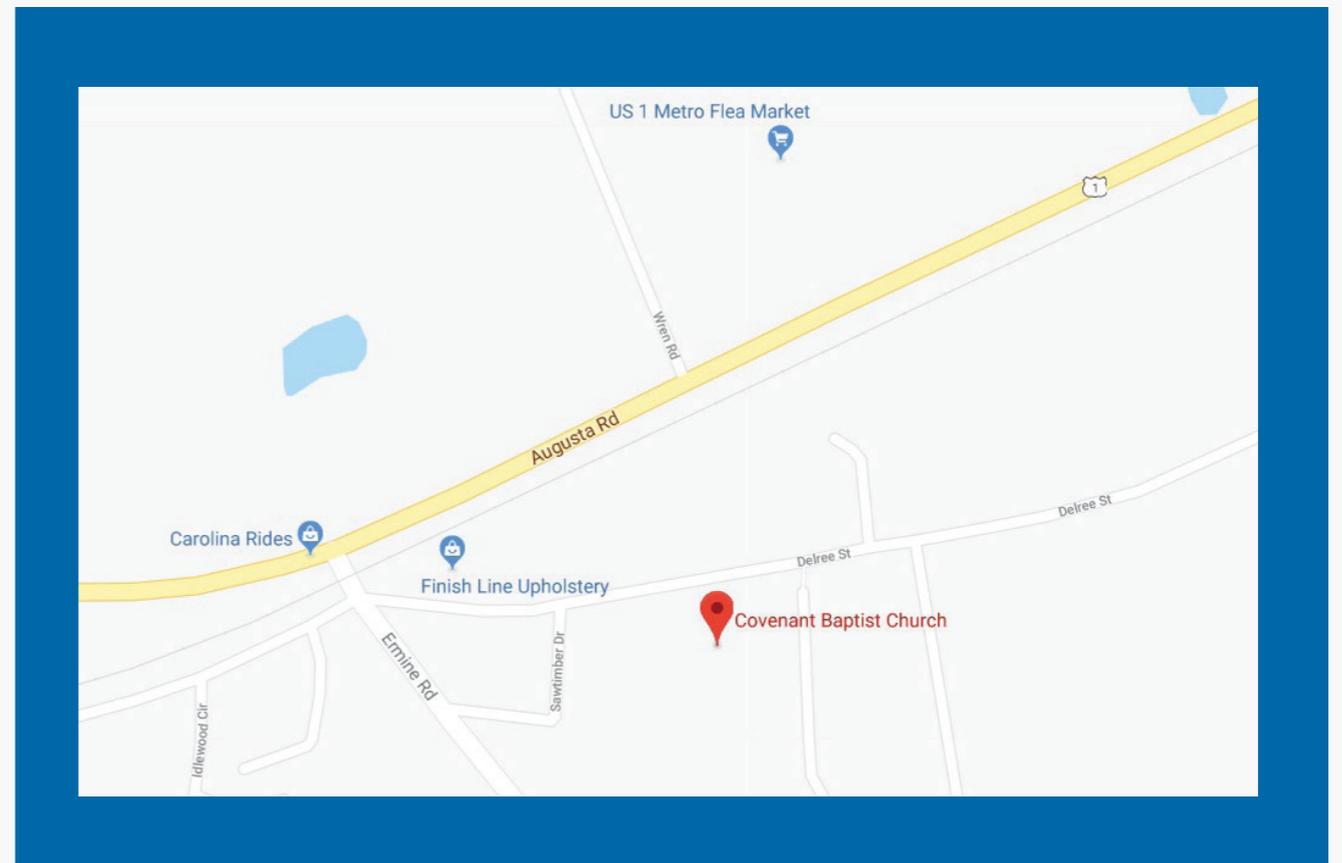
Reformed and Refreshing

3535 Delree Street

West Columbia, SC 29170

<https://covenantbaptistsc.org>

Location:



*If you are interested in joining our church, please speak to one of our elders or deacons.
They will be happy to give you the information you need.*