



Covenant Baptist Church

Reformed and Refreshing

December 13th, 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.

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

Order of Worship

(December 13th, 2020)

Call to Worship: Psalm 1:1-6

Angels We Have Heard on High—227

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:39-56

The First Noel—223

Come, Behold the Wondrous Mystery—184

Message:

The Prayer of Christ for Believers,
Part 6: True Unity
John 17:13-23

Prayer and Benediction

Closing Hymn: My Heart Is Filled With Thankfulness—374

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On-Call Deacon List:

- December 13: Campbell
- December 20: Shumpert
- December 27: Smoak

Church Cleaning Schedule:

- December 19 Kyzer (K&R)/Bean
- December 26: Allen

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 will observe the Lord's Table next Sunday December 20th.

All are invited to a Christmas Eve Service at Pineview Baptist Church at 5PM, December 24th. Mask are required for the service. Brandon Sandifer is pastor. 3010 Leaphart Rd, West Columbia, SC 29169 (803) 794-4478

If you would like to be added to the church cleaning list for 2021, please contact Chris Waddell at (803) 447-8257.

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. Begin spreading the word and inviting others to come. This will be a very important conference on discerning truth in these troubled times.

November and December are the months 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, veterans 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 Bible Sticks.

For those who would like to participate, we will be offering a Christmas Card Exchange this year. Drop off your Christmas cards in the fellowship hall in the designated card drop box. Each week leading up to Christmas, you can drop off cards and pick up cards from our temporary mailboxes in the kitchen area.

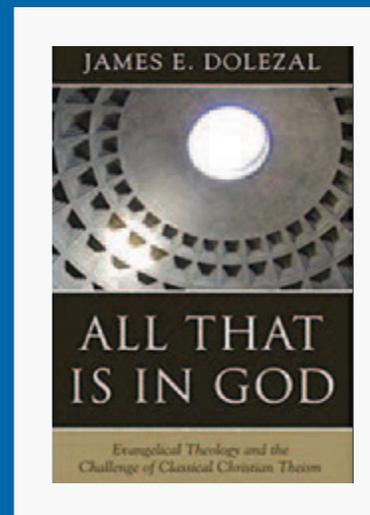
Mark your calendar for Friday, December 18 from 10:30am-1pm and join us for the Children's Christmas Social. We will have a time of devotion, lunch, and a service project. If you'd like to help with the social, please contact Kerri Olds at (843-819-5080). Please RSVP by December 15. The focus at the Children's Christmas Social is showing our first responders our appreciation & support for all they do for our community. The children will be assembling care packages for police officers and firemen to deliver next month along with tracts. We are asking the congregation to help by donating individually wrapped snacks, cases of water & Gatorade, packs of gum or mints, canisters of coffee, packs of HotHands, chapstick, small packs of tissues, etc. If you'd like to donate a monetary gift towards this project, please see Kerri Olds or Carrie Fudge. We are also making no-sew blankets for children that are impacted by fire or other events in which first responders assist kids. If you are able to donate fleece fabric for this project, please see Kerri Olds.

Book of the Week: All That Is In God, by James. E. Dolezal

Increasing numbers of conservative evangelicals are denying basic tenets of classical Christian teaching about God, with departures occurring even among those of the Calvinistic persuasion. James Dolezal's All That Is in God provides an exposition of the historic Christian position while engaging with these contemporary deviations. His convincing critique of the newer position he styles "theistic mutualism" is philosophically robust, systematically nuanced, and biblically based. It demonstrates the need to maintain the traditional viewpoint, particularly on divine simplicity, and spotlights the unfortunate implications for other important Christian doctrines, such as divine eternity and the Trinity, if it were to be abandoned. Arguing carefully and cogently that all that is in God is God Himself, the work is sure to stimulate debate on the issue in years to come.

Purchase at:

<https://www.amazon.com/All-That-God-Evangelical-Challenge/dp/1601785542>



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.*

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/>



Why Did God Make Viruses?

—by *Jean Lightner*

If God created everything good and with a purpose, why are there disease-causing bacteria and viruses in the world?

There are some fundamental differences in how creationists and evolutionists view life. Biblical creationists believe that God created various forms of life according to their kinds with the ability to reproduce and fill the earth (Genesis 1:21–22, 24–28). This view includes the concepts that God had purpose in what He created and that it originally was very good (Genesis 1:31; Isaiah 45:18). I

In contrast, evolutionists view life as all descending from a single common ancestor by chance processes. Evolutionary arguments tend to imply that life isn't really very complex or well designed. For example, 100 years ago a cell was promoted as being nothing more than a blob of protoplasm, implying that it wouldn't be difficult for it to arise by chance. This proved to be wrong; cells are incredibly complex structures. At one time evolutionists argued that organs or structures with no known function actually had no function; at the time, this included hundreds of organs and structures in the human body. Instead, these were believed to be vestiges of evolution. This argument has become rather vestigial itself, as these organs have been found to have function.

Yet this argument reappeared in genetics. Most of the DNA in our bodies does not code for proteins, so it was labeled “junk DNA” by evolutionists who assumed it has no function. As research continues, it is becoming clear that this DNA has numerous essential functions. The evolutionary worldview has a dismal track record for anticipating the astounding complexity in life uncovered by scientific research.

If God created everything good and with a purpose, why are there disease-causing bacteria and viruses in the world? It is true that we first learned about bacteria and viruses because of the problems they cause. Bacteria have been studied in considerable detail and are now recognized to be mainly helpful and absolutely essential for life on Earth; bacteria that cause disease (which developed as a result of the Fall) are the exceptions, not the rule. But what about viruses: what purpose could they possibly have?

What Is a Virus?

Viruses are a bit of an enigma. They contain DNA or RNA that are found in all living things. This is packaged in a protein coat. Despite this, viruses are not usually considered living because they are not made up of cells and cannot reproduce by themselves. Instead, the virus will inject the DNA or RNA into a living cell, and the cell will make copies of the virus and assemble them so they can spread.

Viruses vary considerably in their ability to cause disease. Many known viruses are not associated with disease at all. Others cause mild symptoms that may often go undetected. Some, like the HIV virus that causes AIDS in people, appear to have come from another species where they do not cause disease. Given our current knowledge of viruses, it is quite reasonable to believe that disease-causing viruses are descended from viruses that were once not harmful. It has been suggested that they have played an important role in maintaining life on Earth—somewhat similar to the way bacteria do. In fact, they may play a role in solving an intriguing puzzle that faces creationists.

A Creationist Puzzle

The biblical record tells of a global Flood when all created kinds of unclean land animals were reduced to a population of two, the pair that was preserved with Noah on the Ark (Genesis 7). After the Flood, these animals reproduced and filled the earth again (Genesis 8:15–19). Today, many of these kinds are represented by whole families. For example, the dog family (Canidae) is believed to represent a

created kind. However, this is a very diverse group of animals. There are foxes that are adapted to living in the arctic, and others that live in the desert. There is incredible variety seen in modern domestic dog breeds. Where did all this variety come from? And how could it arise so quickly given that the Flood occurred around 4,300 years ago?

The answer to this puzzle is probably quite complex. Some of the variety would have been carried by the pair of animals on the Ark. When parents pass traits on to their offspring, these traits can appear in new combinations in the offspring (Mendelian genetics). Natural selection can weed some existing traits out of a population. However, a close examination reveals that genetic changes have also arisen in this time. Many of these changes do not appear accidental and do not directly cause disease. For this reason, some creationists have proposed that God “designed animals to be able to undergo genetic mutations which would enable them to adapt to a wide range of environmental challenges while minimizing risk.”

Isn't That Evolution?

It is important to recognize that biologists use several distinct definitions for evolution that are often blurred together as if they are synonymous. Evolution is sometimes defined as “change in the genetic makeup (or gene frequency) of a population over time.” This has been observed; both creationists and evolutionists recognize this as important in building models to help us understand what likely happened in the past. A second definition of evolution involves the idea that all life descended from a common ancestor over millions of years through naturalistic processes. This has not been observed. In fact, it is in direct opposition to the testimony God (the eyewitness to creation) gives us in the Bible. The idea that all life has a common ancestor requires the assumption that the Bible’s history is false, and the assumption that changes which do occur could produce the variety of life we see today from a single-celled ancestor.

With regard to the first definition of evolution, creationists and evolutionists differ in the pattern of genetic changes they should expect to see. The creation model predicts that degenerative changes can occur because mankind sinned and brought death into the world (Genesis 3). It also predicts that adaptive changes could occur because God cares for His creation and intends for the earth to be inhabited (Psalm 147:8–9; Isaiah 45:18; Matthew 6:25–34). Both types of changes have been observed. The fact that some foxes are adapted to live in the arctic while others are

adapted to live in the desert fits perfectly with this biblical teaching. While evolutionists accept that these types of changes occur, their model requires that most genetic changes add information to the genome. This pattern has not been observed. Without this pattern, they cannot account for the many organs and complex biochemical pathways that exist in animals today. Scientific observations show that there is an overall pattern of decay seen in the genome, which is the opposite of what the evolutionary model would predict.

Another difference is the source of the genetic change. Evolutionists assume that random mutations and natural selection can account for the genetic changes that are seen. Since the underlying mechanism is naturalistic, changes were expected to be very slow. Contrary to their expectations, rapid adaptation has been observed, and evolutionists have had to adjust their thinking to accept this. Furthermore, detailed studies of the pattern in genetic differences within related animals don’t make sense if mutations are assumed to always be essentially random events. Something else is clearly going on here. It appears that God has placed some incredible programming into the genomes of the animals He created, and viruses may play some role in this.

Evidence of Horizontal Gene Transfer

Interestingly, there are some portions of DNA in animals that look like they came from a virus.¹⁹ While some of these were likely originally present in the genome since they have essential functions, others may have been introduced by viruses.²⁰ A number of years ago, one creationist proposed that horizontal gene flow (genes picked up from somewhere in the environment rather than inherited from parents) may help to explain rapid adaptation and the interesting pattern of DNA in animals. In fact, the author lists 13 different biological phenomena that might be explained by horizontal gene flow.²¹ Since viruses carry genetic material (DNA or RNA), they are the most logical agents to suspect in transferring genes. While horizontal gene transfer would not change the identity of an animal (i.e., it would still belong to the same kind), it could rapidly provide a source of genetic variability that allows for rapid adaptation. If this is the case, then viruses were created “good” (as in Genesis 1), with a support role much like bacteria are known to have.

While the evidence is largely circumstantial, further scientific investigation does seem to support these ideas. In fact, a recent PNAS article has brought some new information to light. Previous studies had suggested horizontal transfer between

closely related species. This study identified a large section of DNA (~2.9 kb) that was approximately 96 percent identical in a marsupial (opossum), several placentals (mouse, rat, bushbaby, tenrec, and little brown bat), a reptile (anole lizard), and an amphibian (African clawed frog). It was absent from the 27 other animals surveyed (which included human and Jamaican fruit bat). This sequence appears to have been incorporated into an existing functional gene in rats and mice, although its specific function is not yet known. Because of the pattern observed, it appears that horizontal gene transfer was concentrated at some time in the past and perhaps occurred via a DNA virus. Interestingly, several species (anole and opossum) are from Central/South America, several are restricted to Africa (bushbaby, tenrec), and the others have a wider geographical distribution. This suggests that the transfer may have occurred early post-Flood or been intercontinental in scope.

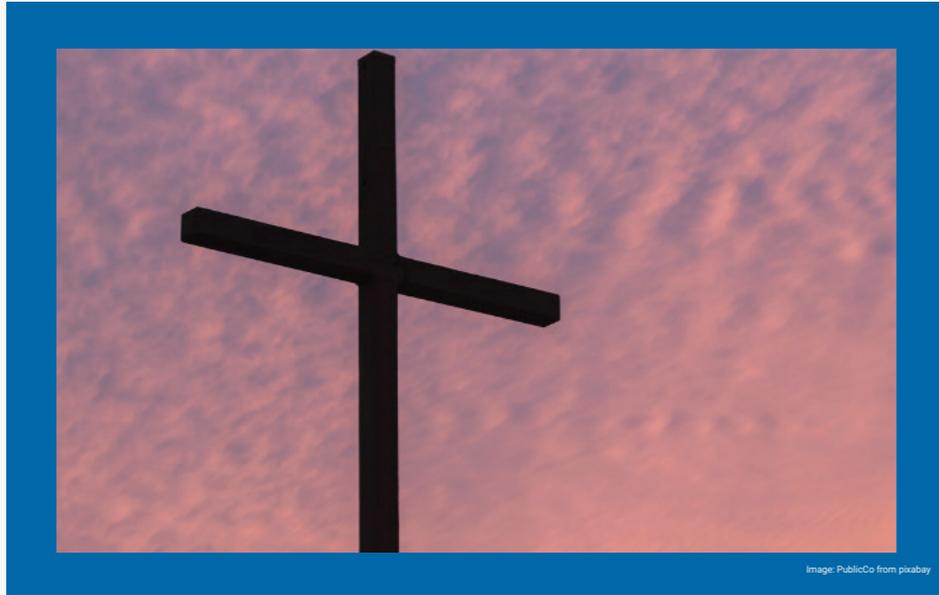
Since most scientists are heavily influenced by the evolutionary worldview, they often miss indicators of purpose. For example, the section of DNA discussed above is a transposon (a type of mobile genetic element or transposable element). After the putative transfer, it was copied and integrated into several different parts of the genome in the various species. This requires that the proper tools (e.g., enzymes) be in place so that the section of DNA can be incorporated into the genome initially, then modified and copied appropriately. Given that decay has occurred over time, it is not surprising to creationists that there are examples of transposons where this process doesn't work properly and disease occurs.

Diseases draw attention and research dollars, so the problems associated with transposons have been recognized before the benefits are understood (much like was true of bacteria). Many people still view these mobile genetic elements as "parasitic" or "selfish." However, they are quite widespread in the genome of plants, animals, and man. If their insertion was always purely "random," it seems they should more consistently cause problems in a complex system such as the genome. Therefore, it seems more logical to believe that transposons have purpose and were designed in a way to benefit their possessor.

The Bible Explains the Paradox

The biblical view explains an important paradox we see in the world around us. It anticipates the complexity that is constantly being uncovered by scientific research; God is an all-wise Creator and would be expected to use awesome design patterns and programming. It also explains the decay observed because mankind sinned

and brought death into the world; the world is now in bondage to decay (Romans 8:20–21). This is an exciting time to be a creationist researcher, as the tremendous volume of scientific research is helping to provide answers to questions that have been asked for decades.



Salvation is of the Lord

—by *Jorge Marsano, Peru, Oct 26, 2020*

“Although this month had its share of trials and sadness for me and my family, it was not at all absent of the Lord’s help in evangelism. He does His work by His Holy Spirit in the hearts of people that have heard the gospel of salvation and of the only Savior, Christ Jesus. I recognize that apart from the grace of God working by His Spirit, there could be no advancement in evangelism. Personally, I don’t find it difficult to converse with whoever I come across, but I do find it difficult—no, impossible!—to convince anyone to recognize Jesus as Lord and Savior. This is not only because of their intellectual resistance but because of their hardness of heart.

The working of God’s Spirit in salvation is mysterious and perfect. Sometimes He saves the person that, at the beginning of the conversation, did not at all want to listen to me. Other times, the person who listens to me the whole time He does not save. Sometimes He saves the person that refused to listen to me but later listened to another Christian that spoke to them about the gospel. Glory to God for this! Salvation is of the Lord!

Regarding the advances this month in the ministry, I was able to speak more with Joshi and Jhon about the gospel. They work in the stable that is near my house.

Please, I ask you to join me in praying for them, that they would repent of their sins and confess the Savior. I will continue speaking with them.

I was also able to meet a couple that owns a different stable nearby. I have met with them twice to explain to them what true Christianity is in contrast with Roman Catholicism. Each time I’ve spoken with them they have paid close attention and we have begun to develop a friendship. I have also taken them some gospel tracts with Bible verses to reinforce the things that I have spoken to them about. This month I will continue visiting them and reminding them of the urgent need to be made right before God since the day of the Lord is drawing near. Please, pray for this couple.

Other News:

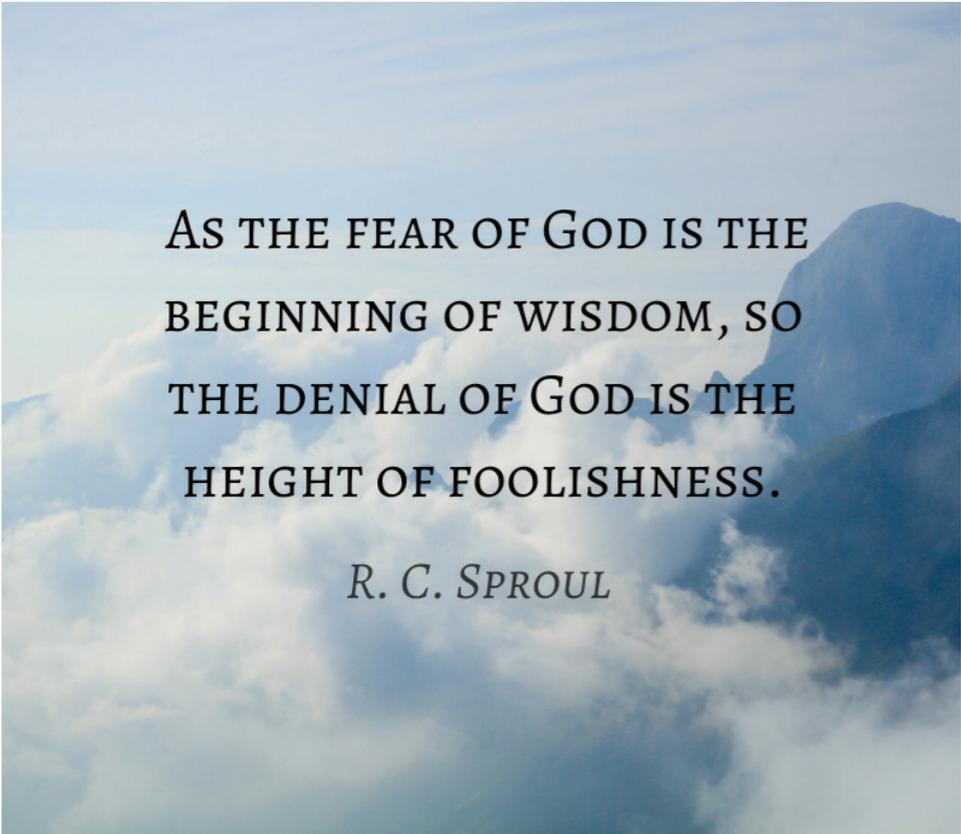
Major LGBT Group Urges Biden to Strip Accreditation of Christian Schools, Colleges— <https://www.christianheadlines.com/contributors/michael-foust/major-lgbt-group-urges-biden-to-strip-accreditation-of-christian-schools-colleges.html>

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>

Quote of the Week:



AS THE FEAR OF GOD IS THE
BEGINNING OF WISDOM, SO
THE DENIAL OF GOD IS THE
HEIGHT OF FOOLISHNESS.

R. C. SPROUL

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

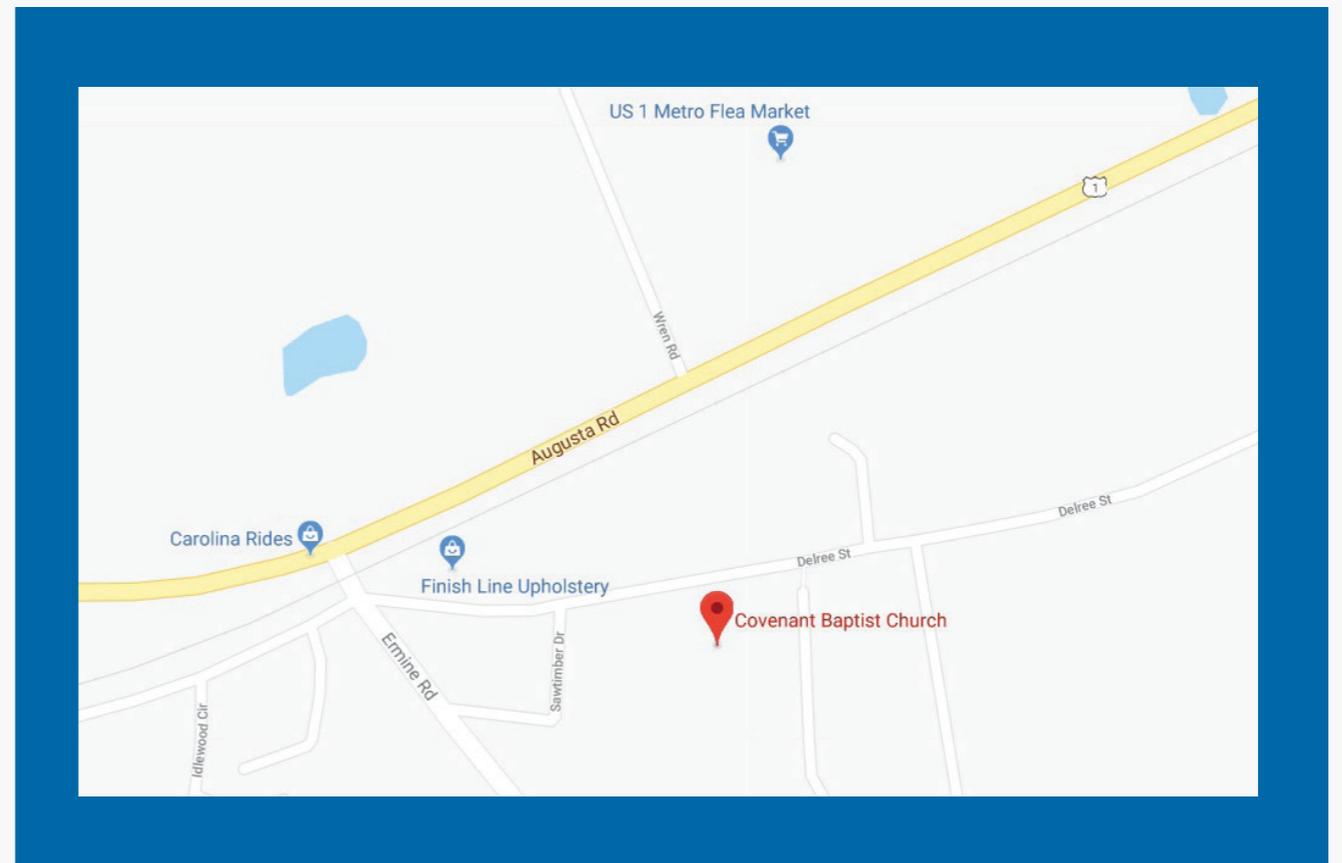
Reformed and Refreshing

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.*