

Central Avenue CRC Covenant Plan for Christian Education

Why We Use the Covenant Plan

Central Avenue CRC has consistently supported Christian day school education for more than one hundred years, in keeping with denominational directives. Already in 1870 the CRC Synod declared that Christian schools are the "nursery" of the church and that every consistory had the duty, if possible, to establish such schools. The Church Order (Article 71) states: *"The Council shall diligently encourage members of the congregation to establish and maintain good Christian Schools and shall urge parents to have their children instructed in these schools according to the demands of the covenant."* With this conviction, the local Christian school began holding classes in the basement of our church in 1901 and flourishes to this day in our community, along with many others.

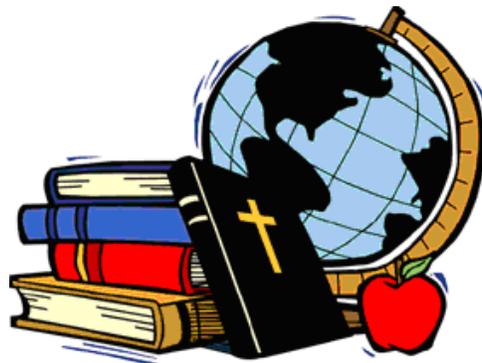
The basis for this policy is the vow the congregation takes in the sacrament of infant baptism, when we say *"We do, God helping us"* to the question: "Do you, the people of God, promise to receive these children in love, pray for them, help instruct them in the faith, and encourage and sustain them in the fellowship of believers?"

The CRC for more than one hundred years has understood this baptismal vow to require Christian day schooling, unless special circumstances or unique educational needs dictate otherwise. Fulfilling the vow, however, is beyond the financial means of some families and may even preclude sending their children to Christian schools, when they deeply desire otherwise. That is why Central Avenue CRC adopted the Covenant Plan some ten years ago, in order to fulfill our covenant responsibility.

The common metaphor is the three-legged stool of the Christian home, Christian church, and Christian school. A child needs all three to grow to spiritual maturity in Christ. The school is critical because children spend the bulk of their waking hours there. They need teachers committed to Christ-centered curricular materials and classmates who are being raised in the Christian faith. Here they are shaped in their thinking and make life-long friends.

How the Covenant Plan Works

The Central Avenue Covenant Plan makes Christian school tuition a General Fund obligation of the congregation. The plan pays the full cost (less an administrative discount of \$100 per student) for pre-school through high school at



schools affiliated with Christian Schools International (CSI) for all families who are members of Central Avenue CRC and decide to participate in this ministry. The tuition cost is a "line item" in the general budget that the members vote on at the annual congregational meeting. Although participation of parents is vital to the sustainability of the program, the expense thus becomes the obligation of every member. The Christian Day-School Education Committee (CEC) administers the plan.

Each family is also required to fill out a FACTS financial aid form through their local Christian school. This provides aid to the church for tuition.

Pledge to Share Information

The CEC meets with the congregation periodically to discuss the Covenant Plan and its out-workings, and to respond to queries, concerns, and suggestions. The CEC also meets with parents of school-aged children every January to evaluate the Covenant Plan, determine which families will participate for the next school year, and calculate the budget amount for Christian education. This is the single largest item in the budget, demonstrating our commitment to Christian education.

This does not mean, however, that those who choose other schooling options are not enfolded into the Central Avenue family — not in the least. There are many valid reasons for choosing schooling elsewhere. All children and families are welcomed and a deliberate, church-centered education and discipleship in God's Word is provided for each family. We do encourage each family to seriously consider Christian education and want to help make it a viable and realistic option.

Covenant Plan Blessings for Central Avenue CRC

One might ask whether this expense is worthwhile. Many families continue to take advantage of this opportunity. The Christian education obtained for these children will ensure leaders in our congregation and the church of God in the next generation. We believe we are honoring God and keeping our baptismal vows through this program.

Central Avenue CRC Christian Education Committee

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NOTE: For planning purposes, families must be members of Central Avenue and notify the Christian Education Committee chair by April 1 to have their children participate in the Covenant Plan for the following school year. Please contact an elder or pastor regarding membership. Enrollment in the Covenant Plan is an additional step beyond enrolling them at their given school. (Currently, the Central Avenue CRC Covenant Plan applies to all Christian School

International (CSI) schools in the area that have a mission statement consistent with a Reformed Christian perspective). Families are also required to fill out a FACTS financial aid form through their school.